



411 Cooper Street
Camden, New Jersey

**SOUTH JERSEY
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FORUM**

SUMMARY BRIEFING MEMO

**2ND SESSION
APRIL 4, 2006**

THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY
RUTGERS
CAMDEN

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IN ATTENDANCE:

Participants:

Barbara Armand, Chairperson– Southern New Jersey Development Council

Tim Evans, Research Director– NJ Future

Jack Fisher– Gloucester County Administrator

Peter Furey, Executive Director– New Jersey Farm Bureau

David Hojsak, Principal Planner– Burlington County Department of Economic Development

Patrick Kane– Taylor Wiseman & Taylor

Chris Kindbom, President– Builders League of South Jersey

Andrew Levecchia, Senior Planner– Camden County Improvement Authority

Carleton Montgomery, Executive Director– Pinelands Preservation Alliance

Tom Paparone– Builders League of South Jersey

Chris Perks– Southern New Jersey Development Council

Mark Remsa, Director– Burlington County Department of Economic Development

Chuck Romick, Director– Gloucester County Planning Division

Barry Seymour, Assistant Executive Director– Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission

Richard Van Osten, Executive Vice President– Builders League of South Jersey

Senator Walter Rand Institute Staff:

Richard Harris, Director

Amanda Olejarski, Research Assistant

Tim Steinitz, Graduate Assistant

I. INTRODUCTION

On April 4, 2006, the Senator Walter Rand Institute for Public Affairs (WRI), in partnership with the Builders League of South Jersey (BLSJ), convened the second session of the *South Jersey Regional Development Forum* at Rutgers University- Camden. In its ongoing effort to foster regional discussions of critical issues surrounding future development in southern New Jersey, this Forum featured a presentation by Barry Seymour, Assistant Executive Director of the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), on ***Destination 2030: A Vision for the Future*** (hereafter ***D-2030***). The DVRPC is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Philadelphia region, including Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, and Mercer Counties in South Jersey, and provides guidance to promote orderly growth within the region. The ***D-2030*** plan was prepared by DVRPC with the objective of providing goals and a vision for future growth in the region. Mr. Seymour's presentation provided an opportunity for policymakers and stakeholders at the Forum to discuss in a broader regional context the ***Growth Fit Model*** (hereafter ***GFM***) for housing developed by the BLSJ. As the designated MPO, DVRPC adds significant expertise and legitimacy to the discussion of ***GFM*** and regional development.

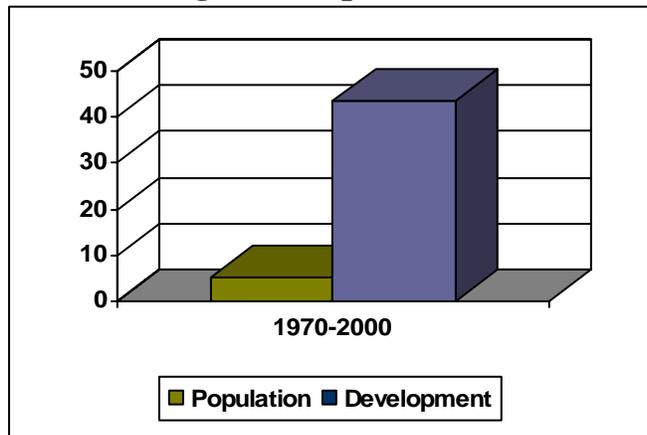
Consistent with Rutgers- Camden's public service mission, WRI is dedicated to the study and analysis of issues facing South Jersey as well as to convene meaningful problem solving discussions around those issues. The discussion in this Forum focused on the complementarity of the ***GFM*** for housing development and ***D-2030*** comprehensive plan. This dialogue will lead into planning for the 3rd Forum, aimed at discussing the political leadership and political strategy prerequisite to a regional plan that can achieve the common objectives of ***GFM*** and ***D-2030***.

II. SUMMARY OF DVRPC PLAN AND BRIEF COMPARISON TO GROWTH FIT

The DVRPC's Destination 2030 Plan

Like many other older metropolitan regions around the nation, the Philadelphia area has experienced extremely high consumption of land relative to its population growth. In addition to out-migration from core urban areas, such as Camden or Bridgeton, the populations of inner ring communities surrounding Philadelphia and other core cities has declined markedly over the last two decades, increasingly shifting to newer, outlying suburban communities. These conditions of declining population density, compounded by this new development taking place on farmland and open space, have contributed significantly to urban *sprawl* throughout the metropolitan region. Indicative of this trend, Table 1 displays relationship between population growth and development in the DVRPC's planning region.

Table 1: Regional Population Growth v. Land Development



- **Regional Population growth of only 5% between 1970-2000**
- **Developed land area grew by over 40% during this period**

Source: DVRPC, “Regional Planning Overview: What’s happening? and Where are we going?”, presented by Barry Seymour, April 4, 2006.

Southern New Jersey, like surrounding communities in Pennsylvania, has become a destination for individuals and families moving out of urban areas. Interestingly, though, South Jersey is home to some of the region’s most densely populated communities (northern Camden County), as well as some of the most sparsely populated areas (south-eastern Burlington County). This characteristic raises the question: is this a healthy pattern of development? Sustainable development and the encouragement of municipalities to place high density development close to existing infrastructure is a major objective of the DVRPC’s vision for regional planning, as articulated in their *D-2030* regional plan.

The DVRPC’s plan seeks to address this problem of declining population densities and increasing abandonment of core cities and inner ring communities. The basic concept of the *D-2030* is the need to “plan regionally but implement locally.” Accordingly, based upon the regional availability of developable land and existing infrastructure, the DVRPC has proposed guidelines for municipalities to follow as they address development and redevelopment in their communities. This vision for regional development is based on the following values:

- Land preservation;
- The support of new development with better design mechanisms;
- The infill and revitalization of urban areas;
- Limiting new growth to designated growth areas. (DVRPC, 2006)

These issues will be addressed, according to the *D-2030* plan, by assessing municipalities around the region based upon: the location of the municipality, the maturity of development in the municipality, and the amount of infrastructure already established in the municipality. After assessing the municipalities, the DVRPC recommends grouping them into one of four categories and proposing a planning strategy based on this classification:

- **Core cities** Revitalization and renewal
- **Older suburbs** Stabilization, maintenance and restoration
- **Growing suburbs** Growth management and enhanced community design
- **Rural areas** Preservation and limited growth. (DVRPC, 2006)

A major focus of this plan is encouraging the simultaneous redevelopment of core cities and older suburbs while preserving land that remains in the rural areas. The DVRPC is committed to supporting the metropolitan area, including southern New Jersey, in addressing the key issues and needs that ought to be considered when developing a regional plan.

Destination 2030 and Growth Fit: Different Approaches to Regional Planning

Similar to the BLSJ’s *GFM*, the *D-2030* plan seeks to establish a “modest change in density” for development and redevelopment throughout southern New Jersey. The presentation of *D-2030* pointed out that the Philadelphia region is falling behind other regions in encouraging higher density development, and the challenge in addressing this issue is to convince municipalities of the policy benefits of higher density development, while allaying political fears of relaxing local control of development. While both plans offer plausible ways to reverse the unplanned decreases of population density, they propose different methodologies to reach their common objectives. Whereas *GFM* centers on a county-mandated average minimum density of 2.5 units/acre, the DVRPC plan classifies municipalities into four categories to determine a minimum density planning strategy.

Both regional planning approaches embrace housing development and redevelopment as well as comprehensive open space planning into their strategies for reducing sprawl. The DVRPC, however, extends its analysis to incorporate consideration of commercial, industrial, and transportation growth in its regional

Table 2: Comparing GFM and D-2030

BLSJ’S GROWTH FIT MODEL	DVRPC’S DESTINATION 2030 PLANS
Regional planning based on county development densities	Regional planning based on municipal development densities
Addresses residential development	Addresses residential and commercial development
Projects to save 40,000 acres in SNJ by 2030	Projects to save 35,000 acres in SNJ by 2030
Regulates development density to help preserve open space	Includes developing comprehensive open space preservation plans

planning and development analysis. Despite the distinctions between *GFM* and *D-2030*, each regional planning model's projected acres conserved by the year 2030 are consistent; *GFM* development would save over 40,000 acres in southern New Jersey, and the DVRPC plan would save 35,000 acres. Citing main similarities and differences between the two models, Table 2 highlights these planning goals and methods in further detail.

III. SUMMARY OF PANEL AND GENERAL DISCUSSION

Panel Discussion

Five panelists were invited to present their views of how *D-2030* may be able to incorporate components of *GFM* into a regional planning discussion. These individuals were selected for their knowledge as stakeholders in regional development as well as for the diversity of geography and interests they represent. Topics highlighted in this section include the need for:

- Strong political leadership;
- A defined regional identity;
- A clear goal and process for developing a regional plan;
- The level of government that will need to take the initiative to promote regional development.

Jack Fisher
Administrator, Gloucester County

Regional planning needs to consist of county-led initiatives under strong, visionary leadership. Strong leadership will provide the vision to understand the long-term need for planned development. It may be possible to use the Route 322 Corridor in Gloucester County as a model of how county-led government can be effective under a "coalition of confidence." Such a coalition would consist of towns with a mutual development interest (in this case, the Route 322 Corridor) that work together on a common development goal as defined by county leader(s). Leadership is needed to encourage shared resources and coordination of development plans. Possible areas for county-led development planning include transfer of development rights, coordination of development and redevelopment plans between municipalities within a county and county consolidation of infrastructure and resources.

Peter Furey
Executive Director, New Jersey Farm Bureau

Fragmented development and lack of planning strategies are providing negative connotations for the farming industry. With respect to farm preservation programs, it should be understood that the goal of preserving farmland in itself is good, but

preservation should not be seen as a substitute for a community development plan. Uses for preserved land should be devised to ensure continuing economic activity and a coherent sense of community. To accomplish these objectives, it is important that stakeholders, including farmers, be involved in developing a plan and that necessary support be provided to ensure a regional plans' successful implementation. The BLSJ's approach of county-level planning and zoning is a good model to achieve these ends.

Carleton Montgomery
Executive Director, Pinelands Preservation Alliance

The fragmentation of traditional development patterns indicates a need to implement a regional development plan. The first step in developing such a regional plan needs to be defining a region to help create a regional identity. This plan should highlight the prominent role municipalities play in ensuring successful implementation, as well as address the roles of county and state governments in regional development. Municipalities will need to take the lead in calling for a regional development plan and they need to begin to recognize that they are interconnected with neighboring municipalities. Support for a plan needs collaboration from municipal, county, and state levels of government. A plan that is developed should also be consistent with the State Plan.

Tom Papparone
President, Papparone Housing Co. Inc., and Former BLSJ President

A regional plan should be developed that will integrate municipal, county, and state development. In order to accomplish this task, a decision needs to be made to determine the best vehicle (legislation, regulations, collaborations, etc.) with which to move forward. This vehicle will allow for intergovernmental involvement of developing regional plans and it may be that state legislation or some other mechanism above the level of municipalities will be necessary to encourage progress on regional development. Gloucester County is one model to deal with this incrementally, but there may still be a chance to move to a state-level or regional vehicle. With the existence of plans such as *GFM* and *D-2030*, is it possible to create a hybrid plan, or is it necessary to seek larger legislative action? It may be useful to base regional plans on the NJ State Plan, as well as to explore plans that may exist for development in other states around the nation and infrastructure financing vehicles such as tax increment financing (TIF) and community development districts.

Mark Remsa
Director, Burlington County Department of Economic Development

The major difficulties that need to be addressed in development are (1) how to climb the “implementation ladder;” (2) home rule; and (3) understanding the market for high density development. To climb the implementation ladder, planners and policymakers need to identify exactly what creates sprawl in an area, why people are moving, and where they are moving. Climbing the ladder would consist of addressing issues in a way that allows for moving beyond municipal control and a municipal perspective to meaningful county or regional roles in planning. Before a regional plan can be developed, home rule realities must be addressed. Organizing county-level planning and zoning may not be as easy as it seems. Finally, the demand for high density housing needs to be considered along with the simultaneous demand for low density housing in rural areas. Convincing the newer, less dense, suburban municipalities to work on developing a regional plan will be more challenging than convincing older communities with higher densities to collaborate. The older communities already have experienced periods of change and decline, but it is the newer, less dense communities that will raise challenges regarding equity in sharing the costs of mandated regional development, new residents who may not fit the demographics of their communities, and NIMBYism.

General Discussion

The trend established by the five panelists reiterated the DVRPC’s idea of “regional planning with local implementation.” The open discussion period covered a variety of issues and several common themes were developed.

- With the governor’s office tackling New Jersey’s fiscal situation, policymakers should not expect an initiative for regional planning to come from state agencies. State agencies are inconsistent as they work to incorporate New Jersey’s State Plan into their policies. Examples were provided of how certain departments, such as the Department of Community Affairs (DCA), are headed by former municipal officials and are not geared towards addressing issues in a regional context. Many participants agreed that these “piecemeal” policy practices are not making regional development easier. Finally, they addressed a need for transparency among state agencies so that planners in municipalities and counties know what to expect if they seek to develop a regional plan.
- The demand for high density communities and misperceptions regarding urban communities also garnered significant discussion time. Issues were raised concerning public safety, minority populations, education and higher tax rates that exist in high density areas. Several participants agreed that

certain communities will be harder to convince than others regarding the need to implement higher density planning.

- Feasibility of tax increment financing and tax sharing were other issues that arouse among many of the participants. They stated that any realistic regional development plan should address the concerns resulting from the ratables chase and encourage tax dollars to be spread among towns within a regional zone to encourage greater resource cooperation. A discussion of tax increment financing and tax sharing are included in the next section of this memo.
- Participants felt that an examination of commonalities among existing development plans in southern New Jersey and the region may help to advance regional planning. This process should consider the New Jersey State Plan, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission's *D-2030* Long Range Plan, and other local development plans (Builders League of South Jersey's *GFM* and Southern New Jersey Development Council's *2006 Regional Profile and Economic Development Agenda*). Another sentiment that was expressed related to whether it may be beneficial to examine regional plans that exist in other jurisdictions.

IV. STRATEGIES FOR ENGAGEMENT IN DEVELOPING A REGIONAL PLAN

The most important conclusions to emerge from this second Forum on Regional Development were: (1) a clear consensus exists among the participating planners, developers, policymakers, and advocates that the present pattern of unplanned development, fueled by home rule and the "ratables chase" is undesirable; and (2) more rational and systematic policy approaches such as the *GFM* and *D-2030* require an effective strategy and framework for municipal cooperation and regional decision-making. While this political challenge will be the focus of our third Forum, the first two sessions suggested three approaches to establishing a more rational planning/development framework.

Municipal Collaboration/Shared Services: Planning from the Bottom Up

This model would entail municipal collaboration on regional development initiatives along the lines of the Route 322 Corridor project in Gloucester County or the Route 130 Corridor project in Burlington County. Under this strategy, neighboring municipalities would work together to design and implement coordinated development. In such cases, while there is a strong logic to redevelopment in older established communities, effective leadership from key freeholders and planning officials provide the essential political supports to overcome the municipal reticence about sharing control and resources. County leadership is working to transfer development rights from municipalities to the county in exchange for receiving county supported sewage and road infrastructure.

Towns are taking the initiative to transfer their development rights to the county so that land in their community will be better developed reduce costs that contribute to higher property taxes.

Under this scenario, it is relatively easy to attract the support of state government. Forum participants agreed that the DVRPC's *D-2030* could play a positive role in encouraging municipalities and county leaders to assess the prospects for cooperation among contiguous communities. This strategy would require political will from key leaders and the use of a variety of available policy tools, including the transfer of development rights, sharing resources and infrastructure, and municipal cross-acceptance procedures. The advantage of this "bottom-up" approach is that there are clear examples of success on which to build. These examples serve as effective redevelopment models for inner ring communities trying to preserve their quality of life and their tax base. The drawback is that they are geographically limited and therefore cannot take full advantage of broader regional planning. For example, the Route 322 Corridor and the Route 130 Corridor projects deal with the problems of mushrooming low density development only indirectly by opening up opportunities for redevelopment of more concentrated communities. Moreover, they cannot effectively address the problems related to *down-zoning* identified by both the BLSJ and the DVRPC.

County Level Planning and Zoning: A Mid-level Strategy

The BLSJ's *GFM* is predicated on county-level zoning and planning, which provides the guidelines necessary to bring development more in line with population growth, to assure a healthy balance between development and redevelopment, and to overcome the inter-municipal competition for ratables. The *GFM* would accomplish these goals by county-mandated average densities that would require the county and municipalities to engage in regional planning. The BLSJ's proposed average density requirement of 2.5 units/acre would apply to new development and redevelopment of both residential properties and would be determined for each county as a whole, therefore leaving counties in control of all land uses. Advocates for county-mandated zoning acknowledge that this regional planning strategy's primary barrier to overcome is municipal home rule. In principle, the approach of minimum average density could be extended to apply to commercial properties as well. In order to implement county-level zoning requirements, some type of legislation must be passed or municipal control ceded to empower counties to exercise the necessary authority. Even more than the "bottom-up" strategy, this mid-level approach must confront the political realities of home rule and define a development framework that does not produce an inter-municipal zero-sum game with respect to property taxes.

State Leadership: Planning from the Top Down

Whether by legislation or regulatory rulings, this development strategy would seek state-led development of regional plans. The most obvious course of action, consistent with a “top-down” planning approach to address sprawl, would be to ramp up significantly implementation tools under the State Plan. Forum participants agreed that the State Plan is a powerful statement of goals and objectives that they all support, but that the implementation tools available do not match the vision articulated in the Plan. In particular, the municipal cross-acceptance process has not provided robust regional outcomes necessary to achieve the Plan’s goals. Moreover there was a strong consensus that the lack of Plan “ownership” at any one state agency has created significant implementation problems. As evidence of this problem, Forum participants cited: (1) the unfortunate experience with the so-called “Big Map” under which the Department of Environmental Protection drove a regulatory effort to mandate where development would happen; (2) the transition from an Office of State Planning to an Office of Smart Growth at DCA followed by varying levels of gubernatorial commitment to this agency; and (3) the independent policies of the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities which affect the siting of development and redevelopment. The discussion suggested, nevertheless, that the State Plan should not be ignored and that state support or legislation would be helpful in the cases of both “bottom-up” and county level zoning. In addition, it was pointed out that state leadership would be essential for fiscal strategies to address sprawl, including tax increment financing or a Meadowlands style revenue sharing scheme. The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs defines tax increment financing, based on the Redevelopment Area Bond Financing Law and Revenue Allocation District Financing Act, as a process that allows “a municipality that has designated an area in need of redevelopment (in accordance with local law) to issue tax-exempt bonds that would be secured by payments in lieu of taxes and/or special assessments on property benefiting from the improvements provided.”¹ The New Jersey Meadowlands Commission was established in 1969 by an act of the state legislature and oversees the development of 14 municipalities in northern New Jersey.² The commission is state funded and oversees the transfer of tax revenues from new development or redevelopment among the participating municipalities according to a specified formula.

¹ New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, “Accomplishments 2002,” <http://www.state.nj.us/dca/02annual/02accomplish.htm>, retrieved 25 April 2006.

² New Jersey Meadowlands Commission, “The Commission,” <http://www.meadowlands.state.nj.us/commission/index.cfm>, retrieved 3 May 2006.

V. POLICY CONSENSUS AND POLITICAL CHALLENGES

Discussion:

A clear policy consensus surfaced among Forum participants that there is a need to significantly improve regional planning for southern New Jersey, yet significant political challenges must be overcome to realize this goal. Specifically, participants noted that they must determine the level at which such development would be initiated, the framework for regional cooperation, and who would provide the political leadership for this initiative. The “piecemeal” activities of state agencies also pose a problem for regional development initiatives, let alone implementing the current State Plan. Broad support was expressed for encouraging the state to clarify its goals in accordance to the State Plan, to designate a single lead entity as responsible for the State Plan, and demanding that state agencies to be consistent when addressing development issues. In order to engage these issues, strong political leadership and the political will to tackle these issues is needed. While the possible strategies, mentioned in the prior section, need to be assessed in more detail, an overarching problem will be finding a way to minimize the risk for sympathetic elected officials to play a leadership role at the county and state levels.

Barriers: Home Rule and the Ratables Chase

A major political barrier to overcome in order to promote regional plan in southern New Jersey is the issue of home rule. Municipalities in New Jersey enjoy a strong home rule tradition that undermines state and county influence over regional planning. Participants of the Forum believe that it is necessary to “tweak” home rule to empower counties and regions. A way in which this can be accomplished is to focus development strategies on regional planning and local implementation. Related to the concerns of home rule is the continuing existence of the ratables chase, whereby municipalities compete with neighboring communities in the development market, inhibiting growth and redevelopment in many towns. It was agreed that these issues were persistent problems affecting South Jersey and a regional plan must provide an effective way of addressing home rule and the ratables chase.

Political Leadership and Political Will

A strong component of the current Route 322 Corridor plans in Gloucester County involves political leadership and political will from key elected officials. Since this kind strong regional planning leadership is dependent on particular individuals and circumstances, it cannot be easily replicated. A regional framework needs to be developed that will encourage such leadership to emerge and to sustain regional planning beyond the involvement of any single individual.

Forum participants expressed the view that political leadership and political will need to be addressed by planners and developers when they consider how best to organize regional development. Before any additional steps are taken, they should assess where political will exists to promote a development plan and whether leadership will come from the municipal, county, or state level. It is not likely that the governor will commit significant time or resources to this issue, so the leadership will most likely come from state legislators, county officials, or municipalities who are willing to work with planners, developers and advocates on regional planning. This Forum can be instrumental in pulling together the different individuals and levels of government that need to be involved in regional planning.

Push/Pull Model to Promote Political Leadership and Political Will

In response to overcoming the public's fondness of home rule, at the first Forum on regional planning and development, participants identified a Push/Pull model. The Push/Pull model calls on a strong coalition of elected officials to push the issues surrounding regional development into the policymaking process. At the same time, an alliance among key stakeholders pulls the issues into the media and public, therefore validating the position of the legislators and the sense of urgency associated with regional planning. Participants of this session reiterated the importance of engaging the support of the public, professionals, interest groups, environmentalists, and other key stakeholders, and in order to achieve this support, legislators and elected officials must be confident that they have political backing.

VI. THIRD FORUM: NEXT STEPS

Following on the first two South Jersey Regional Development Forums, the third Forum will focus explicitly on the problems of governance and politics, that is what a regional planning framework should look like and how the political challenges to regional development can be met. In the interim, the Walter Rand Institute will work with the BLSJ and the DVRPC to integrate the *GFM* and relevant features *D-2030* models into a single policy proposal which we will circulate in advance of the next Forum.

Appendix A

Division of Regional Planning Offices of Burlington County

http://www.co.burlington.nj.us/departments/economic/regional_planning/planning/riverroute.htm

Regional Planning

River Route Revitalization Program



The **River Route Revitalization Program** facilitates the continued revitalization of the River Route corridor by maintaining and updating the **Route 130/Delaware River Corridor Regional Strategic Plan**, staffing the River Route (Route 130) Advisory Committee and facilitating the preparation of regional and local strategic and technical planning documents aimed at reinventing the corridor and improving and the enhancing quality of life within it.

The **Route 130/Delaware River Corridor Regional Strategic Plan** defines a vision to guide revitalization based on an analysis of the strengths, resources and assets of the Delaware River and Route 130 communities extending sixteen miles from Cinnaminson Township to Florence Township and covering 59 square miles within Burlington County. Since adoption of the plan, the new **RiverLINE** light rail transit service was established and nearly a billion dollars in new investment in residential and nonresidential development has taken place.

- History of the Plan
- Planning Resources
- Current Activities

[History of the Plan](#)

The River Route (also known as the Route 130/Delaware River Corridor or Route 130 Corridor) Revitalization Program was initiated by the Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholders in 1995 to reverse a 30-year, gradual decline in economic activity and quality of life involving twelve municipalities located along U.S. Route 130 and the Delaware River:

Beverly City	Burlington City	Burlington Township	Cinnaminson Township
Delanco Township	Delran Township	Edgewater Park Township	Florence Township

The County facilitated the planning process by coordinating efforts with the twelve communities in the corridor and with the private sector. The process of consensus-building with all participants was achieved by forming a steering committee and subcommittees, or “task forces”. A two-and-one-half year planning process culminated in the publication of **Part I: Constraints and Opportunities Analysis** that identified six major areas of concern that, in essence, define the quality of life in the Corridor:

Open Space/Recreation/Environment
 Transportation and Circulation
 Community Services

Economic Development
 Housing
 Utilities and Infrastructure

Policies, actions and strategies for implementation on local, county, state and federal levels were identified and incorporated into the Strategic Plan as **Part II: Recommendations** in October 1998. Upon the completion of the strategic plan in 1998, the Board and the twelve corridor municipalities adopted the plan. In April 1999, the New Jersey State Planning Commission formally endorsed the plan, giving the twelve municipalities priority for receiving state resources and funds through 2012. The New Jersey Chapter of the American Planning Association and the New Jersey Planning Officials issued planning awards to Burlington County in recognition of the plan.

Planning Resources

The following documents are or will soon be available in Adobe Acrobat format through this web site for download or on CD by **request**. (Check back for new postings.)

- **Land Availability Analysis (In progress)**
 - ***RiverLINE Station Areas***
 - ***Route 130***
- **Advisory Committee 2004 Annual Report (April 2005)**
- **Route 130 Visioning Study (November 2004)**
 - ***Overview and Vision Plan***
 - ***Transportation Deficiency Assessment***
 - ***Implementation Toolkit***
- **Zoning Build-out Analysis of the Route 130 Corridor (October 2001)**
- **Route 130/Delaware River Corridor Regional Strategic Plan**
 - ***Part I: Constraints and Opportunities Analysis (December 1997)***
 - ***Executive Summary (December 1997)***
 - ***Part II: Recommendations (October 1998)***

Current Activities

Burlington County and the Corridor communities are now implementing the Delaware River/Route 130 Corridor Strategic Plan. The Regional Planning Division is fully engaged in implementing the recommendations and implementation agendas in the plan.

Burlington County has committed to providing local planning services to municipalities, such as preparing master plans, zoning ordinances, redevelopment plans and various types of analyses. A progress report including the status of the implementation agenda was published in April 2005. Beginning in 2005, the Route 130 Corridor is now marketed as the “River Route.”

The Regional Planning Division is currently preparing an update to the regional plan (the 1998 regional plan was completed before the new **RiverLINE** light rail transit service was established) and will continue working with the twelve municipalities to execute the implementation agenda. Information developed in the State Plan cross-acceptance process is being used to help update and implement the plan.

Public workshops are held from time to time in consultation with the River Route Advisory Committee and its subcommittees, which continue to meet periodically to review plan implementation. For further information, contact the **Burlington County Department of Economic Development and Regional Planning at (609) 265-5055** or by email at **rpcoordinator@co.burlington.nj.us**.

Route of all evil? New proposal seeks to fix 322

Sunday, April 30, 2006

By Pete McCarthy

pmccarthy@sjnewsco.com

U.S. Route 322 in Gloucester County -- 23 miles of roadway from the Commodore Barry Bridge to the Black Horse Pike long seen as a headache to motorists -- might actually see a major facelift.

State senators Stephen Sweeney and Fred Madden are proposing a plan to have the county take the lead on a 10-year project to widen the highway and make other drastic changes.

Looking to partner with the state and the private sector, the project could cost "hundreds of millions of dollars," but no exact figure has been determined.

"This is something that should have been done long

before," Madden said. "It is going to allow traffic to move and flow at a much better pace."

At any given time, especially during rush hour and in the summer months when motorists use Route 322 as a way to get to the shore, it becomes a "slow ride," according to Monroe Township Councilman Bill Julio.

There have been times when Julio said he has spent 45 or 50 minutes in just the Richwood section of Harrison Township without moving.

"I don't know how the heck they'll do it, but the road does need some help," Julio said. "It's a main thoroughfare with archaic results. You slow up and you stop in spots."

If it can work, "traffic gridlock" will be gone, Harrison Township Mayor Phil Rhudy said.

"We'll be cooperative," Rhudy said. "The road is not designed to handle this kind of traffic."

The Harrison Township mayor has heard this story before and he realizes the price tag is going to be tough to swallow.

"People have been talking about it for 20, 30, 40 years," Rhudy said, "so we'll see if something finally gets done."

How is this plan better?

Let the county take the lead and get locals to decide what is best -- not someone in Trenton who hasn't driven the road before, Sweeney explained.

Local officials want to put a plan together and present it to the state, which could happen by the end of this year and residents could start seeing some of these improvements shortly.

Other than widening the roadway to two lanes in each direction throughout most of the 23-mile stretch and adding a shoulder, there could also be major improvements to intersections like the one near Route 55 in Richwood, the addition of minor bypasses, the limiting of "curb cuts" where there is development by putting in service roads, and the creation of parallel roads to be used as alternates.

Maybe even create an alternate road around Rowan University so all of the traffic is no longer traveling straight through the campus, officials suggested.

Keep traffic moving with less access and more "structured" intersections, according to Sweeney.

Different design techniques will be used to address the specific areas.

Pretty much anything is possible.

"Through it, over it, around it or under it," Madden said. "They'll all be looked at. All options are on the table."

For the first time, the idea is to address this entire stretch of road.

There have been studies of Route 322 in Glassboro. There have been studies from the bridge to Route 55.

Sweeney said he can remember when he was first elected to the state post in 2001 and going to town meetings in Gloucester, Salem and Cumberland counties. Residents were asked to identify the worst road in their county. Oddly enough, each of them said Route 322 in Gloucester County.

"We're going to try and fix that," Sweeney said.

Residential and commercial growth has officials expecting 50,000 new jobs to be created along the highway in the next 25 years.

The county's population is expected to increase by 30 percent.

"Whether we want to see development or not, development is coming," Sweeney said. "Now you're talking a lot more traffic and the road is a failure now."

Officials are confident developers will want to participate financially and by giving up land for the improvements because "nobody wants to be in gridlock to and from work."

Now is the time to act, explained Gloucester County Administrator Jack Fisher.

"If you don't do it now, developers will go their own way and sprawl out," Fisher said.

Appendix B



Tax Sharing

How tax sharing works among District Communities

During the creation of the Master Plan, adopted in 1972, it became apparent that a tax sharing plan among communities was essential. The legislators saw the need to create a fiscal device to share the benefits of development as they zoned certain areas for industrial, commercial and residential use and others for parks, highways, open space and other non-taxable public uses. The Master Plan was created on the basis of the best possible use of land based on its location and needs. In approaching zoning on a regional basis, the possibility of financial inequities arose.

Simply stated, if a large section of Community A is zoned for a park and a large section of Community B is zoned for a major office, residential or warehouse project, then Community B should share some of the benefits derived from development.

The tax sharing plan was designed to balance these inequities so that the region could be developed as a unit with town-to-town equality. In short, each community will get a proportionate share of the property taxes from "new" (post 1970) development, regardless of where it occurs.

The legal basis for the Intermunicipal Tax Sharing Account is contained in Chapter 9 of the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission and Redevelopment Act as amended by Chapter 103, Public Law, 1972. A New Jersey Supreme Court decision was handed down in May, 1972, upholding the constitutionality of the tax sharing section of the Act and the formula as it now applies.

How it works

The application of the tax sharing formula is really quite simple. Taxes collected from ratables existing in the Meadowlands portion of a community before 1970 are not subject to the tax sharing procedure. The municipality retains its full taxing collection powers. Properties in the Meadowlands portion of the town are taxed in exactly the same manner as all other properties. The first step in the tax sharing formula calls for payment of county taxes by the municipality. What remains, minus the amount collected on ratables existing in 1970, is subject to the tax sharing plan.

Each community then directly retains 60 percent of the revenues left after payment of county taxes and deduction of pre-1970 ratables. Each community also receives a payment for school pupils living in District residential development equal to the cost

of educating these children and, finally, each town receives a payment reflecting the percentage of property the community has in the Meadowlands District.

Communities whose total credits are larger than the amount subject to tax sharing receive payments from the tax sharing fund; communities whose total credits are less than the amount subject to tax sharing pay into the tax sharing fund. THE Commission RECEIVES NO MONEY FROM THE FUND; IT SERVES MERELY AS THE ROUTING AGENT.

Projections made by the Commission indicate that, at full development, each Meadowlands community will have an excess of tax monies beyond the cost of delivering services to the Meadowlands portion of that community.

Retrieved 4 May 4, 2006,

http://www.meadowlands.state.nj.us/commission/Tax_Sharing.cfm

Appendix C

Office of Smart Growth

Annual Report

FY 2003-2004



Revenue Allocation Districts (RAD)

In January 2005, the Local Finance Board adopted regulations for establishing Revenue Allocation Districts (RAD). OSG coordinated with other state agencies on the regulations and guidelines for the implementation of RADs at the local level. These regulations will implement the Redevelopment Area Bond Financing Law and Revenue Allocation District Financing Act, which was passed in January 2002. RADs provide greater incentives for redevelopment in areas in which private capital investment is otherwise deterred and give municipalities more flexibility in the financing of local redevelopment projects. Municipalities may establish one or more RADs for a range of redevelopment purposes, including land acquisition, demolition, construction, and infrastructure improvements. RAD is a reworking of a technique known as tax increment financing (TIF). The underlying foundation of TIF is that public investment in an area will increase property value, thereby generating additional tax revenue that would not have occurred otherwise. This "increment" in taxable value is captured and used to pay off the bonds issued to support the public investment. RAD expands the TIF concept by permitting municipalities to use other revenue sources such as sales tax, parking fees or payments in lieu of taxes (PILOTs). RAD is a powerful redevelopment tool, and OSG encourages municipalities to incorporate smart growth principles and good, comprehensive planning when putting it to use.

New Jersey Office of Smart Growth, "New Jersey Office of Smart Growth Annual Report FY 2003-2004," <http://www.state.nj.us/dca/osg/docs/annualreport021505.pdf>, Retrieved 3 May 2006.

5:30-1:REVENUE ALLOCATION DISTRICTS AND FINANCING PLANS

5:36-1.1 Purpose; fees

- (a) This subchapter sets forth rules for local government units to follow when applying to the Local Finance Board for approval of a Revenue Allocation District and Financing Plan. The rules are established to:
1. Ensure that the creation of the district complies with the State's smart growth planning requirements and is not in conflict with State development rules; and
 2. Ensure that projects are economically and fiscally responsible and would not otherwise be feasible without creation of the Revenue Allocation District.
- (b) The Board shall charge the applicant fees sufficient to provide for all reasonable professional and related expenses the Board expects to incur for the review, analysis and determination of all elements of the application process.
- (c) An application under this section is not subject to the provisions of N.J.S.A. 2:27D-10.5 et seq.
- (d) Circumstances or conditions not addressed by these rules shall be subject to review and determination by the Chair of the Local Finance Board.

5:36-1.2 Definitions

The following words and terms, as used in this subchapter, shall have the following meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

"Applicant" means the municipal governing body or an entity acting on behalf of the municipality if permitted by the Federal Internal Revenue Code of 1986, or, if a redevelopment agency or redevelopment entity is established in the municipality pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 et seq. and the municipality so provides, the redevelopment agency or entity so established, or any duly appointed district agent acting on behalf of a municipality or redevelopment agency.

"Application process" means the three-step process required for approval of a Revenue Allocation District. The three steps include:

1. Application for approval to create a Revenue Allocation District and Preliminary Revenue Allocation Plan;

2. Approval of a Final Revenue Allocation Plan; and
3. Approval of financial instrument.

The process also includes an optional initial step in which an applicant may request a RAD Plan assessment.

"Assessment" means the process by which the applicant provides information about the project to the Board and other State agencies and receives feedback concerning the application including its consistency with smart growth principles.

"Board" means the Local Finance Board in the Division of Local Government Services and the staff of the Board acting on the Board's behalf.

"Office of Smart Growth" or "OSG" means the Office of State Planning established pursuant to section 6 of P.L. 1985, c.398 (N.J.S.A. 52:18A-201).

"Revenue Allocation District" or "RAD" means the area or areas within a municipality designated pursuant to the Revenue Allocation District Financing Act, N.J.S.A. 52:27D-459 et seq.

"Smart growth" means well-planned, well-managed growth that adds new homes, creates new jobs, and promotes redevelopment and urban revitalization, while preserving open space, farmland, and environmental resources as set forth in the State Development and Redevelopment Plan adopted by the State Planning Commission pursuant to the State Planning Act, N.J.S.A. 52:18A-196.

5:36-1.3 Optional RAD Plan assessment

- (a) Any applicant planning a RAD may file for a RAD Plan assessment pursuant to this section.
- (b) Notice of Intent: An applicant requesting a RAD Plan assessment shall file a Notice of Intent with the Board no less than 30 days prior to requesting a RAD Plan assessment as follows:
 1. The Notice of Intent shall be in the form of a letter advising the Board of the applicant's intention to file a RAD Plan Assessment. The notice shall designate a single point of contact for the applicant;
 2. Following the applicant's filing of the Notice of Intent, the applicant will be contacted by a Board representative to attend a mandatory meeting to review the planned filing; and
 3. It is strongly recommended that potential applicants file a Notice of

Intent as early in their planning process as possible.

(c) RAD Plan Elements: After 30 days from the date the Notice of Intent was filed with the Board, an applicant shall submit a RAD Plan. A complete RAD Plan shall include the following elements:

1. A detailed description of the district and planned projects, including maps, projected life of the district, plans and other documentation that describes the scope of the effort;
2. An impact assessment including a description of the planned RAD's impact on land use, transportation, environmental, economic, utility, and quality of life issues;
3. A "Smart Growth Questionnaire." Applicants will be provided a questionnaire that will enable State agencies with growth and development review responsibilities to assess the RAD Plan. The questionnaire shall require the applicant to describe the project and its conformance with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan, and to relate the project's impact on transportation systems, local utilities, the environment, agriculture, the labor market, municipal planning and zoning, population growth, and quality of life issues. The agencies will provide the Board with a written report describing the impact of State regulations on the proposal; and
4. Public notice requirements. The Board recommends that applicants bring the details of the potential application to the attention of their county government and planning board, constituent boards of education and authorities, and bordering counties and municipalities to obtain their input and comments.

(d) Agency review and conference: Upon submission of a complete RAD Plan, a review and conference shall be conducted as follows:

1. The Board shall distribute the RAD Plan to relevant State agencies. The agencies shall review the proposal and shall submit a report to the Board with their comments;
2. The Board shall have the reports from the individual agencies consolidated into a single "Smart Growth Report." The Board shall provide the Report to the applicant within 60 days of the submission of the RAD Plan pursuant to (c) above;
3. The Board shall hold a Smart Growth Report Conference with the applicant and the relevant State agencies within 30 days after the submission of the Smart Growth Report to the applicant;

4. An applicant may consider revisions and may choose to enter into negotiations with agencies to address or resolve issues raised by the Report;
5. If the applicant decides to make substantive changes to the proposal, such as a change to the physical RAD boundaries or changes in the size or scale of the project, the applicant may submit a revised Plan. Revisions made to comply or fulfill issues raised in the Smart Growth Report will not require submission of a revised plan; and
6. Once the review is completed, a copy of the RAD Plan, the Smart Growth Report, and any amendments to the Plan shall be provided to potential Board consultants to obtain a fee quotation for review of the project when an application is filed. Once a consultant is chosen and fee established, the Board will advise the applicant of the fee for the balance of the review process.

5:36-1.4 Application for approval to create a Revenue Allocation District and Preliminary Revenue Allocation Plan

- (a) An applicant may submit a full application for approval to create a Revenue Allocation District and Preliminary Revenue Allocation Plan to the Board for each project for which financing is required regardless of whether a RAD Plan assessment has been requested. This application may include more than one project. Applicants are encouraged to meet with the Board's staff to review the documentation prior to final submission.
- (b) A complete application shall include the following items:
 1. The introduced ordinance and all attachments, and the proposed preliminary revenue allocation plan set forth in N.J.S.A. 52:27D-462 and 463 and certification by the municipal clerk that the proposed ordinance passed on first reading;
 2. An Executive Summary of the application that highlights the key elements of the application;
 3. An explanation, documentation, or a demonstration explaining why the Board should determine that the application meets each of the criteria required for Board approval as set forth in N.J.S.A. 52:27D-464.
 4. A financial pro forma and financing plan. The financial pro forma and financing plan must describe:
 - i. Proposed non-RAD funding sources and their amounts, and other

funding sources considered and rejected;

- ii. Identification and projection of pledged revenues to be generated by the district;
- iii. Project finance projections for the life of any anticipated debt obligations;
- iv. Projected income and expenditures over the life of the district; and
- v. Terms and conditions of any planned financing;

- 5. A summary of the hearing on the proposed ordinance and, if substantial changes to the plan were made after the hearing, a description of those changes. If the public hearing has not been held by the time the application was submitted, the applicant must submit the summary no later than 30 days after the application was submitted;
- 6. If no RAD Plan assessment has been requested, the Board representative shall advise the applicant of the amount of the fee for the Board's review of the plan within 10 days of the submission of the application. The fee shall be based on the anticipated costs incurred by the Board in performing the RAD Plan review; and
- 7. An "Explanation of Necessity." An individual familiar with the relevant market and financial conditions that make the proposed RAD necessary for the development to take place shall file a written explanation and certification describing those conditions. The explanation shall include how "the planned developments are likely to be realized and would not likely be accomplished by private enterprise without the creation of the district and the revenue allocation financing of the proposed project or projects" pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:27D-464(a). The applicant has the burden of proof to demonstrate that the project(s) meet this requirement.

(c) Upon receipt of an application, the Board shall conduct a review for completeness, as well as financial and economic criteria reviews. The application shall also be reviewed by OSG for compliance with smart growth principles.

- 1. No later than seven days prior to the Board meeting that follows 60 days from day of receipt of the application by the Board, if the Board determines that the application is complete, the Board shall contact the applicant and schedule consideration of the application by the Board at the Board's next regularly scheduled meeting. The 60-day period may be extended by mutual agreement of the Board and the applicant.

2. If the Board determines that the application is incomplete, the applicant shall be advised of the reasons thereof and provided an opportunity to complete and re-submit the application.

- (d) The Board shall act on the application for approval of the ordinance pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:27D-464. The preliminary approval may contain conditions to be met in order to achieve final approval. Upon approval, the applicant municipality may complete the adoption of the ordinance.
- (e) Preliminary approval of a RAD Plan pursuant to this subchapter shall remain in effect for a period not to exceed three years. Prior to the expiration of the three years, the applicant may apply to the Board to request an extension not to exceed two additional years. The Board may approve such extension, provided that the RAD Plan has not been changed since the date of preliminary approval.

5:36-1.5 Approval of a Final Revenue Allocation Plan

- (a) Approval of a Final Revenue Allocation Plan in accordance with this section is required for projects to be included in a given debt issuance. The Final Revenue Allocation Plan shall only be filed when project plans are sufficiently complete and all other financing has been finalized. If necessary and appropriate to the project, an applicant may at the same time file for approval of financing instrument (N.J.A.C. 5:36-1.6).
- (b) The applicant shall submit a Notice of Intent to file for approval of a Final Revenue Allocation Plan no less than 30 days prior to filing an application. The Notice of Intent to file for final approval shall include an attachment describing all changes made to the Preliminary Plan and shall document how any conditions required of the applicant as part of the approval of the Preliminary Plan have been fulfilled.
- (c) The Board shall review the Notice of Intent to file for final approval and shall determine if there have been changes of a substantial nature. If the Board determines that substantial changes have been made to the Preliminary Revenue Allocation Plan, the applicant shall recommence the RAD Plan assessment process. If necessary, an additional review fee may be charged by the Board.
- (d) If there are no substantial changes, the applicant may submit the "Final Revenue Allocation Plan" pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:27D-470 and an introduced ordinance pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:27D-471. During the 30 days following submission, the Board shall review the application and ordinance. The Board may extend the review period for a single, additional 30-days.

1. Following the review period, if the Board determines that the Final Revenue Allocation Plan is complete, the Board shall contact the applicant and set a schedule for consideration by the Board.
 2. If the Board determines that the Final Revenue Allocation Plan is incomplete, the applicant shall be advised of the reasons thereof and be provided an opportunity to complete and resubmit the Final Plan.
- (e) After consideration by the Board pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:27D-471, a vote shall be taken for approval. The Board's approval may contain conditions to be met before any financial instrument is issued.

5:36-1.6 Approval of financial instrument

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:27D-483, the applicant or district agent shall apply to the Board for issuance of any financial instruments. The Board's consideration of such an application shall be limited to the provisions of N.J.S.A. 52:27D-483 and to the costs, terms and conditions of the financing, and its impact on the Final Revenue Allocation Plan.