

## Together North Jersey Draft Plan Comments as of May 15, 2015

### I. Comments Received via togethernorthjersey.com

#### Background/About the Plan

- I suggest we make a much stronger case for the need for a North Jersey vision to keep us competitive. It would be helpful to point out successful examples of how other regions have worked together to achieve regional objectives (starting with South Jersey). Provide some examples of how the Together North Jersey regional CEDS can help the entire region, and then point out the cost of not embracing a regional plan
- Page 4. "experts and officials didn't shape..." I would like to see this starting off emphasizing public participation.
- Page 6. the call out text makes NJ sound like it isn't a place to live, just a place to visit (which isn't the intent)

#### Where we are today

- On the opening page - suggest that you include two bullets that let reader know the two major sections: Strengths and Assets and Issues and Challenges
- Pg. 13 are there 9 national parks or are some otherwise designated
- Pg. 16 TNJ states that millennials are born between 1980-1986; whereas, Plan 2040(pg. 30) states they are born 1983-2000

#### Where we want to go

- Same comment as above. Good to let reader know there are four sections here: Shared Values, Common Interests, Priority Goals and Vision for the Future.
- Suggest switching Vision and Priority Goals ordering so Goals are last. This will lead into the next section.
- The priority goals on page 26 are clear and concise.
- Need to have some overall sense of priorities. What's realistically reachable in the short (1-5 yr), medium (5-10 yr) and long term (10 yr+). We have fifteen focus areas - how do they interrelate? What synergies are possible? What are the priorities in all of them taken together? Much like a land use plan and capital budget at the local level. This would provide helpful guidance for governments.

#### How we get there

- Suggest modifying the outline on right side to be: 5 goals, 4 themes, 16 focus areas and 100+ strategies. Might even consider moving the "goals" from the previous section to this section.
- Would label the page with the 4 themes as "Four Themes"

- While well written, this section is a bit difficult to grasp because there are so many focus areas and strategies. Suggest creating a table in the beginning of this section preferably that simply lists and nests the 16 focus areas and strategies under the themes so someone can get a snapshot.
- If I understood Jon correctly at the Steering Committee meeting, he said the focus areas would be grouped together by their appropriate goals. I kind of like them mixed up, it is subtle but I think if they are lumped under their specific goal it reinforces thinking in silos. I think having a competitive focus area followed by livability followed by resilient helps to reinforce the idea that the goals and focus areas are all interrelated.
- Page 28-29- can you explain how it went from 5 goals to 4 themes?
- It is unclear to me how the four priority goals got translated into the regional strategies and actions. Growing a strong regional economy ties into the competitive strategy, but how the other goals were addressed is harder to understand.

### **Focus Area 1**

- Focus area 1: I don't see any mention of giving any priority to locating jobs in Communities of Concern or other Low Opportunity areas. We believe this is an important issue that should be included in.
- Focus Area 1, Strategy 1 - add DEP to the mix of agencies
- Page 32- "location is less important than it used to be". Location is still very important...Traditional office locations are no longer as important as they used to be? Y

### **Focus Area 2**

- No comments

### **Focus Area 3**

- It seems like the pictures associated with Focus area 3 are dominated by pictures of eco-tourism. I know pictures of infrastructure are not pretty but it seems like another infrastructure picture would be appropriate.

### **Focus Area 4**

- No comments

### **Focus Area 5**

- Focus Area 5, Strategy 2 - add DEP wastewater approvals as major constraint
- Page 42 Consider making strategy 2 more about how those issues affect everyone, and the need for teaching soft skills to all populations especially at risk communities. Currently it comes across as paternalistic.

### **Focus Area 6**

- Focus Area 6: It seems like there should be some mention of preserving and enhancing community character and historic preservation where appropriate. Here is some language suggestions after the 3rd sentence in strategy 1: "...a greater variety of housing choices. Promote regulations that protect and enhance distinctive community character, culture, and quality of life, such as historic preservation ordinances and form based codes. Expedite "by right" development that meets published regulations..."
- Strategy 3, p.56 CHANGE TEXT: Public spaces can be "activated" by creating programs and attractions that draw people to those places -- farmers markets, walks and runs, night-out events, outdoor performances, public art, festivals, First Friday art walks, and streetfairs . . .

### **Focus Area 7**

- Focus Area 7: There should be some mention of where to locate parking and retail around commuter services to draw commuters into the community vs. isolating them and their services at the transit center. Here is some suggested language for Strategy 3, 2nd sentence: "...Transit Hubs can also provide a focal point for local economic and community development, as many shops, restaurants, and other businesses find access to the hub attractive to workers and customers alike as long as the hub is not isolated from neighborhood businesses. For example, instead of placing a sea of parking adjacent to transit station platforms, locate local commerce adjacent to and facing transit platforms with parking connected to, and also serving, the neighborhood."
- Page 57- use of ride sharing applications is helpful, but what about making them safer and cheaper?
- Strategy 3, p. 56 Improvements should include enhanced customer amenities, . . . ADD TEXT artwork to enliven the hubs and increase community pride, identity, aesthetics and ultimately ridership.

### **Focus Area 8A**

- I think the language in this section needs to be strengthened to explicitly say that there should be strategies to increase opportunities in communities of concern, not just increase opportunities to get to areas that have opportunities. Opportunities should be increased in communities of concern.
- Strategy 1 - minimum dwelling size (for other than HUD minimums) has been illegal for at least 25 years
- Strategy 4 - How is this to be done? Funding?
- Strategy 3 - Is 40% really appropriate? Have the economics been worked out?
- Strategy 8A.2, Action 1, we need to recognize the importance of architecture and historic resources in defining community character that contributes to property values and enhances quality of life. Perhaps the most efficient way to do this is to amend this

action to read, “Develop guidance for municipal governments regarding the tools available to encourage housing variety and choice, for example, adaptive reuse of historic sites and structures for housing and mixed use. Include case studies from where tools have been successfully applied.”

- Strategy 3 p. 60 CHANGE TEXT Top right column: region’s residents, especially low and middle income residents, artists and workers.

### **Focus Area 8B**

- What and Why? -Statement that everyone has the right to live where they want to seems a bit extreme. If I can afford it, I can live in Short Hills, but I can't. Seems like it should be stated more along the lines of "Municipalities cannot discriminate against low and moderate income persons and households. The Supreme Court of New Jersey in its Mount Laurel decisions demands that municipal land use regulations affirmatively afford a reasonable opportunity for a variety and choice of housing including low and moderate cost housing, to meet the needs of people desiring to live there. While provision for the actual construction of that housing by municipalities is not required, they are encouraged but not mandated to expend their own resources to help provide low and moderate income housing. (NJ Fair Housing Act NJAC 52:27D-302 h)."
- Strategy 8B.4, Action 9 is a bit of a word salad, probably due to an error in copying and pasting. Please revise to read, “Expand supportive services under Medicaid as a potential alternative to providing Special Needs housing. Use Medicaid savings to the State that will result to fund Special Needs housing where feasible and appropriate.”

### **Focus Area 8B/FHEA**

- Both housing and the broader issues of social equity remain serious concerns. The conclusion found in “Fair Housing & Equity in Northern New Jersey” Conclusions and Recommendations (10.1.2) provides an essential insight into a major source of these problems. As poverty concentrates in a community, businesses often relocate to places with more disposable income to spend on their goods and services. As the businesses leave, there is less opportunity for those who remain in place to find jobs locally. At the same time, a lack of transit to job opportunities elsewhere becomes a larger impediment to finding work. As a result, lower income residents are often left behind in the ability to fully participate in the evolving economy.

### **Focus Area 9, 10, 11**

- No comments

### **Focus Area 12**

- Page 74- first paragraph- very surprising to see health benefits of roads being touted.

- What and Why paragraph 3 p. 74: This means that no matter what their primary mission is – transportation, recreation, arts and culture, housing, natural resource protection
- Strategy 4 p. 76: Personal behavior is an important complement to building healthy communities. . . Partner with the arts to bring awareness and education of individual and community health

### **Focus Area 13**

- Page 78-79. Most of the Strategies titles sound the same to me. Can they be slightly reworded to differentiate them?

### **Focus Area 14,**

No comments

### **Focus Area 15**

- How: p. 82 ADD TEXT:With steps including: incentivizing artistic and cultural activities; public investment in arts organizations and artists, including cultural leaders and artists at the table for all levels of planning; and honoring the mandate for all students have regular, sequential arts instruction throughout their P-12 education.
- Strategy 1: At the beginning ADD TEXT  
Restore funding for the arts, history and tourism to NJ State Fiscal Year 2005 levels over a three year period. This proposed legislation would raise the minimum levels of dedicated support from the NJ Hotel/Motel Occupancy Fee to the level originally intended in the 2003 law.
- At the end ADD TEXT: Add arts programming as an allowable expenses to state agency grant opportunities in transportation, healthcare, human services, planning, community development aging, people with disabilities, workforce development, etc.
- Strategy 2: Local support of cultural programs and activities. Encourage municipalities to connect the benefits of the arts to local challenges. This can be accomplished by encouraging Sustainable Jersey green teams to take on the arts actions: Create a Creative Team (or Arts Council), Develop an Assets Inventory, and enlist local arts organizations/artists in using the benefits of the arts as part of the solution to municipal challenges – also known as creative placemaking.
- Strategy 2: Workforce development section should come out. It's incorrect, we don't need more people in the arts. However, we need all people trained in creativity to boost innovation in NJ.
- Strategy 3: Title Incorrect change to "Integrate arts and culture into the local, county, regional, and statewide planning efforts"
- For Northern New Jersey to employ the arts as part of the solution to civic problems, cultural leaders and artists have to be at the planning tables when developing economic development plans, municipal master plans, redevelopment plans, special improvement

district plans, regional plans and statewide plans. Encourage cultural leaders /artists to sit on planning boards, zoning boards, run for town council and school boards, etc. The Municipal Land Use Law should include an arts element in master planning. This will help ensure that land use policies will include affordable housing/workspace for artists and redevelopment of underutilized properties for arts related activities, such as studios and theaters.

- Strategy 4: Add “Honor the mandate for all students have regular, sequential arts instruction throughout their P-12 education”
- Change text to: “Various studies have identified links between involvement in the visual and performing arts and improved attendance, school engagement, increased academic performance, decreased drop out and discipline rates and higher levels of college attendance — areas of improvement vital to student success. Just as important, the arts develop important life skills including problem solving, critical thinking, creativity and collaboration. Because of the mandate of the core curriculum requirements districts are expected to provide opportunities for learning in ALL four arts content areas using sequential instruction taught by highly qualified teachers. This means the arts programs must have the same level of academic rigor and educational validity as any other core subject such as language arts literacy or math.”
- Municipalities should know how their school arts programs rate among other school districts. If a student who takes four sequential years of the arts in high school scores on average 100 points higher on their SATs, then it is an equity issue if some high schools do not offer arts courses. Towns can work with Sustainable Jersey School program to help insure the mandate is met and to encourage more participation in arts courses.
- Workforce Investment Boards can offer job readiness skills through arts training. 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills like problem solving, critical thinking, creativity and collaboration can all be taught through the arts. In a study of superintendents who educate future workers and employers who hire them, both agree that creativity is increasingly important in the U.S. workplace and that arts training is crucial to developing creativity.

### Leading the Way

- The list of projects is helpful in understanding what other communities are doing to increase their competitiveness. As the report says, they help us test solutions to our challenges in the real world. Based on these projects, what are the lessons learned? Do the communities that are proactive and embrace regional planning enjoy a competitive advantage? Are there some themes that the successful projects have in common?

### Making it all happen

- Needs some discussion of the financing systems and their limitations. Particularly true for the property tax and the balance between increasing taxes to pay for the work to be done and impact on NNJ competitively from doing so.
- I suggest we talk about specific legislative actions that would be needed to make this happen. Lock box issues. Maybe cost of education v welfare/housing of the uneducated

= unable to work. "Pay me now or pay me later." particularly important in road maintenance/housing rehabas well.

- Very good to see the useful, albeit abbreviated, discussion of financing on pg 99. Kudos for statement on the gas tax. Might want to talk about streamlining the processes where possible. i understand that much of the problem stems from the Federal requirements but there must be ways we can shorten the process at the state and regional levels. I'm reminded of Commissioner Jack Lettiere's comments at TPA regarding transportation projects and their accelerating inefficiency. Talk about the freight rail inadequacies.
- Suggest adding something about housing policy under "Aligning existing plans . . ." in the narrative and as a next step. Could be something along the lines of: New Jersey has a strong legal foundation for planning and producing housing affordable to people of all incomes, but the administrative mechanism is no longer functioning."
- Next step: Work with counties and their constituent municipalities to incorporate affordable housing planning and practices into their development efforts that meet the state's court mandates.
- Again I would make the point that sustained collaboration to support Together New Jersey gives our region a clear competitive advantage. Sustained collaboration is not only "difficult" and "doable", it is necessary.
- Leadership is the key. We will do nothing without it.
- Page 100- "On the other hand some fiscal constraints may be more perceived"- is unclear and confusing

#### Other general comments

- Overall I think The Plan looks great and it represents what was heard at the public meetings. Pulling all this together has been a monumental task and you've done a great job.
- Would be helpful if there were some costs - at least order of magnitude - to serve as back drop and wake up call. Statement that the EIT has funded only \$6 billion is interesting but what should they have funded?
- How does our region stack up against south jersey/pa/nys?
- Looking on the entire report, congratulations on a job well done. The report is beautifully researched, prepared and presented. The plan presents a compelling vision for the North Jersey region to collaborate to improve our economy.
- The Somerset County Business Partnership strongly supports this project and will work for its adoption and implementation.
- Very nice effort. This was the easy part. Getting it done will be the challenge.
- The Plan is a beautiful document and an impressive piece of planning, well done!
- I believe I can speak for the entire PNJ board of directors is voicing our disappointment that the draft plan contains no mention of either historic preservation nor heritage tourism. Frankly, I find this lack incredible given the number of pictures of the historic built environment

accompanying your text. Historic Preservation is and has been for many decades an incredible planning tool and at least part of the arsenal of every local, county, regional and statewide planning or development agency. Your draft plan goes as far as encouraging the revitalization of existing neighborhoods, business districts, and housing stocks without even a mention of historic preservation as the foremost agent in achieving the sense of place and vitality you promote. I hope you review the visual components of your draft and revise the verbal content of the plan to reflect the many images you provide of historic preservation successes.

## II. Comments received via email

I am completely against Together New Jersey, because the decisions this plan makes should be made at the local level. Here in Bergen County, towns make agreements on a case by case basis to share services such as waste management. There is no reason planners in neighboring counties can't work together for regional goals directly without creating a bureaucratic mess such as Together New Jersey.

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I am commenting on the DRAFT plan during the "comment period". Please forward this email to the correct person, if not you.

This plan is not acceptable. It is too vague and is based on erroneous presumptions and filtered "facts". The plan is filled with double-speak drawn directly from Agenda 21 - the UN's plan to control people. If that is what you intend, then stop and discontinue this project. And it's a shame that we will have spent so much taxpayer money on this.

Any plans considered in this project need to be specific, analyzed thoroughly for cost vs. benefit, and in total compliance with the Constitution of the United States of America and the State of New Jersey. Then we the people can review them to see if we want to implement any of your suggestions.

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Together North Jersey is an entity based at Rutgers that received \$5 million in taxpayers' money run through HUD to develop recommendations for 13 northern New Jersey, Counties. TNJ was NOT established by the New Jersey Legislature, and HUD does NOT have authority under the United States Federal Constitution to establish planning entities within the several states. Therefore, Together North Jersey is a totally UNCONSTITUTIONAL entity and does not possess the legal authority to establish regional plans. Together North Jersey is attempting to unconstitutionally establish an unauthorized, unelected layer of government between the legally elected state government and the legally elected local county and municipal governments.

The existing five levels of government, each independent of one another, but with the capacity to coordinate (municipal, county, state, regional school districts and federal) are adequate to serve and



protect the interests of the citizens. I reject the need and the alleged authority that TNJ illegally claims to have to establish and exercise "regional authority" over our local elected officials and to redirect the authority and funding of our existing planning authorities.

The make-up of TNJ is intended to tilt control of the TNJ toward the large cities, since five cities are represented, giving them and their related counties extra votes, and takes control away representation from the counties, particularly away from the rural counties. In addition, unelected planning groups and environmental groups receive representation. TNJ effectively takes away the authority of the elected officials in the rural counties and municipalities. The TNJ plan itself makes it clear that it is designed to promote the cities and old developed places at the expense of the rural areas. The TNJ plan bristles with UN Agenda 21, when it uses expressions such as "main streets," "sustainability" and "climate change." The individual municipal planning and zoning boards and sign ordinances should determine the appearance and nature of the "main streets," not a self-appointed extra-legal entity.

There are state, regional, transportation and local master plans, making Together North Jersey unnecessary and redundant. To the extent that TNJ is consistent with other master plans, it is not necessary. To the extent TNJ is inconsistent with the many other plans it will cause confusion and should be struck down.

A quick reading of TNJ makes it clear that TNJ is trying to usurp many areas, such as (1) transportation, which is covered by NJ Transit and North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority; (2) water quality, which is covered by the Highlands Act; (3) sewage, which is covered by county and municipal codes and waste water treatment plants; (4) housing, which is covered by local zoning and COAH; (5) schools, which are covered by regional schools districts, the Abbott Districts, Charter Schools, and the State's Interdistrict School Choice law; (6) the environment, which is covered by the DEP; and (7) workforce training, which is covered by various levels of educational institutions and on the job training.

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I am writing in objection to the Together North Jersey "The Plan 2015." It is an intrusion into every residents individual rights, our Constitutional freedoms to own and control our own property and our local communities via our local governing body. It takes the "Will of the people" out of our hands and puts our rightful decisions and private property rights into the hands of a limited few, many not even elected by the votes. This is something our Founding Fathers never gave any governing body, not did the voters in New Jersey. This plan is nothing more than Agenda 21, packaged with different names but, like Agenda 21, it still takes away OUR local control of our state out of "the peoples" hands also!

This plan is about pushing high-density housing into zones of condo's and "walkable communities" in areas this committee thinks we New Jersey residents should live, not where we choose to live. Should we desire to no live in such "residential zones" this plan forces those of us living outside these zones to bear the cost burden with higher and higher property taxes and regulations choking out our freedoms and rights to live where we choose.

I can continue to list all the other regulations and controls Together North Jersey will continue to implement against the "Rights of the people," but my message to you and the entire committee- This is just WRONG! This PLAN is just a re-run of the same State planning that was Rejected by the people a few years back handily! It has just been renamed, divided up by northern vs southern New Jersey and it violates the U. S. Constitution, including the Bill of Rights... and our individual rights.

It is Government overstepping its bounds ! It is wrong that a small group of individuals can take control of our State, deceiving the people that it is about preserving NJ, it not! It is about violating and destroying individuals freedoms by taking their rights to live, work and play in place of their choice! It is about achieving the U. N. Agenda 21 by pretending it is the environment when it is about control and management by a few over the many!

Opposing Together North Jersey,  
Nancy L. Misasi  
Wanaque, NJ

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I am of the opinion, that the entire body of elements composing the "Together North Jersey" plan-- if successfully implemented-- will bring greater taxation and a lower overall quality of life to north Jerseyans, on two main points. First, given that regional planning agencies are by nature extra-constitutional as it were, an insertion of government authority between county and state jurisdiction, such bodies remain completely unaccountable to the very citizens taxed to sustain them. If, for instance, a TNJ-orchestrated program were found unsatisfactory on a municipal level, the TNJ regional authority would have no constitutional or otherwise legally binding obligation to address a grievance or defect in a given TNJ program; whereas, by comparison, a taxpayer-funded program originating in a given county or municipality would be legally bound to address such shortcomings. Second, central planning-- which modifies existing government infrastructures, and intend to affect the views of officials, individuals, and groups who are responsible for locally-oriented affairs have, historically speaking, never ended well: because, the consequences of such theoretical or statistically-based planning are borne by the individual for whom they were intended at the local level; the he, she, or we, who have no means of suffrage or other venue for protest; meanwhile, those who mastermind such programs have no immediate interest, concern, or lense to accurately guage the success of their programs, and are rarely held accountable for the poor outcomes of such utopian visions.

Neither centralized planning nor bigger government will solve the problems of our era. The civil society and our constitutional republic as it evolved through history must be reexamined and reconsidered as a source and wellspring for the crises citizens now face. The civil society is based on the liberty and sovereignty of the individual and the nuclear family; its origination is by nature empirical, local, and functions ideally as a pluralistic composite of subgroups who influence local government through their own consent to be governed: thus, though a majority consensus might be had on an issue, the rights of minorities who might legitimately and lawfully dissent in their views on a given issue or policy remain protected nonetheless.

Last, one must not forget that local, county, and state government has created, or has charged numerous pre-existing agencies with addressing issues such as education, job creation, commercial development, affordable housing, environmental concerns, and scores of social/personal issues, simply to name a few. New Jerseyans are among the most highly taxed in the nation. Given the history of bigger government, are we to believe that the "Together North Jersey" plan will guarantee immediate and greater prosperity for those of modest means who already pay confiscatory taxes to this state and to the federal government?

Sincerely,  
3305 Balsam Way  
Basking Ridge, N.J. 07920

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There are some nice ideas in the TNJ plan and it is obvious that a great deal of thought went into the plan. There are some ideas that I think will work well, but I also have some major concerns about some aspects of the plan.

Judy Jordan

Focus Area 8A: Expand and diversify the region's housing supply to meet current and future demand  
These strategies include: removing regulatory and other barriers to housing production; providing incentives to encourage production of needed housing types, including housing affordable to a range of incomes levels, protecting the affordability of deed-restricted affordable units, and fostering innovation in the housing sector through pilot programs and demonstration projects.

My comments:

I am concerned that this strategy will interfere with local zoning laws. Local planning boards know the needs of their communities better than people who do not reside in the area. Under the Together North Jersey plan this means municipalities may be required to alter their zoning and planning laws to meet the regional plan. This is wrong; the sanctity of our local zoning laws and boards must be protected.

Strategy 2: Target financial and other incentives to increase production of housing options not well-supplied in the region

My comments:

This sounds like a bad idea to me. Instead of having well planned communities it sounds like developers will be given incentives to create a hodge podge of homes. We have zoning laws for a reason. Again, it sounds like the TNJ plan may be working against or around our local zoning boards. Further, experience shows that government incentives distort fundamental economics and cause capital market and land resource dysfunction. Clear and present examples are government incentives designed to kick-start the renewable energy industry where thousands of acres of developable land were sequestered for solar PV systems. Although regulations were later enacted that allowed developing such systems on only brown-field sites, much damage had already been done. Other examples are federal incentives for many

companies like Solyndra only to have taxpayers resources wasted.

Strategy 3: Increase the supply of housing affordable to a range of household sizes and incomes, especially in areas that are well-served by public transit.

Municipalities should change local ordinances to require that all new housing developments constructed in locations served by or planned to be served by public transit include a minimum of 20 percent affordable units and take the other steps necessary to comply with their obligations under the Fair Housing Act. The legislature should amend the municipal land use law to identify new housing developments that include at least 40 percent affordable units as an “inherently beneficial use” that fundamentally serves the public good and promotes the general welfare. Finally, municipalities should use a range of tools and incentives to encourage developers to build affordable housing, including land banking, relief from parking requirements in transit-accessible locations, expedited review, fee waivers, and tax credits.

On page 6 it states, “It is not a compliance document or another set of regulations or layer of red tape. This is not legislation. It is detailed, field-tested guidance for the kinds of public policy North Jersey needs to improve lives and opportunities for residents and businesses.”

My comments: Giving municipality’s minimum percentages of affordable units and taking other steps necessary to comply with their obligations under the Fair Housing Act sounds too much like a compliance document to me. Local zoning boards must remain independent from any County or TNJ influence and remain solely responsible, and accountable, to the results that they deem beneficial to their community.

Focus Area 9: Create a System of Public Education That Prepares All Students for the 21st Century Economy

Strategy 3: Improve access for pre-K and early childhood education Funding pre-K education for all low income students in the region, as mandated by the SFRA, would contribute significantly to reducing the region’s performance disparities between districts.

My comments:

The funding for K-12 education in New Jersey is currently unfair and larger city districts with more low income residents generally receive more per pupil than schools in suburban areas. Funds are often mismanaged in these districts and the children do not benefit from the extra funds. Also, since there is very little oversight, some districts are currently receiving extra funding for students who do not even qualify as low income students. This hurts all of the students in the state. I have no confidence that funding pre-K will be any different. State influence on children through the education system needs to be limited. And lowering the age (below kindergarten) when such influence begins is therefore a bad idea. Rather families should be strengthened by fostering prosperity for everyone such that families can prosper from the income of a single parent so that the other parent can remain home to raising their children and, if the parents’ desires, to home school their children. Further substitution of government for parental responsibility, as this strategy seeks, is wrong and undermines the rights of

families.

#### Focus Area 11: Transition to a “Clean Energy Economy”

New Jersey’s Global Warming Response Act sets a goal of 80% CO2 reduction by 2050, with a specific focus on both efficiency and renewable energy.

My comments:

While I definitely support recycling and taking care of the environment I have not seen any proof that reducing carbon emissions will make a substantial difference in our environment. People are too focused on reducing carbon when they should be concentrating on a variety of viable forms of energy for the present and future. Reducing carbon will not help New Jersey residents heat their homes in the winter or cool them in the summer. Renewable electric energy sources such as solar PV and wind are fine as intermittent (and exorbitantly expensive) electricity sources and offer curious attraction, but they cannot be relied upon to power our society and therefore cannot be taken seriously.

#### Focus Area 13: Improve stewardship of natural lands, agricultural lands, open space, and parks

Strategy 2: Expand programs to preserve parks, open space, natural and agricultural lands permanently  
New Jersey has successfully preserved millions of acres open space and farmland through a combination of State and local initiatives over the past 30 years or more. Preservation efforts must continue. Land owners (both public and private) can preserve land by applying a deed restriction that permanently prohibits substantial future development on a parcel of land. While preservation alone does not ensure proper stewardship, it does help to limit development and can be used to create contiguous swaths of natural areas necessary to support critical habitats, drinking water recharge areas and resources critical to our region’s quality of life, especially clean air and water supplies.

My comments: This strategy seems to conflict with Focus 8A Strategies 2 and 3. Is the plan advocating preserving land or increasing the production of housing options? Regardless, taxpayers and consumers have for far too long been relied upon to fund the buy-out of land rights by the government. We have plenty of open space at this point and enough of THE most valuable resource on the planet – land, has been forever sequestered and removed from contributing to the prosperity of the community.

Regarding Councils: Our region should also create a “Futures Council,” an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to studying and improving the region’s long-term economic competitiveness. Page 33 The council should employ a professional staff and be guided by prominent North Jersey private sector and institutional leaders. Page 34.

To promote regional planning and coordination in fair housing policy, our region should explore the creation of a North Jersey Fair Housing Council, similar in structure to those that exist in other regions of the country. Such a council could: help to coordinate fair housing assessments, support investigations of

housing discrimination complaints, examine enforcement of fair housing laws, and help coordinate regional initiatives such as mobility counseling and efforts to enhance voucher portability. Page 65  
My comments: I am concerned that creating councils will also create a new layer of bureaucracy. My biggest concern is that these unelected council members will not be accountable to the taxpayers or our elected officials. Our elected officials are accountable to the taxpayers and we know who they are and how to contact them if we have a question or concern. New Jersey taxpayers do not need people, with professional staffs making policies for us. It is not their responsibility nor their right. Be advised that we as citizens are perfectly capable of formulating the policies that we desire without TNJ or any such council that it might advocate.

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Enough with more Govt. We need less so home rule means something. This agency tries to put itself between the towns and State. All part of the bigger picture of Agenda 21. Just like Common Core it does not benefit the citizens of NJ. Only feeds the political hangers on for more and greater perks for themselves. Get rid of another level of Govt.

The Board of Chosen Freeholders  
of the County of Monmouth

DIVISION OF PLANNING



TERI O'CONNOR  
County Administrator

EDWARD SAMPSON, PP, AICP  
Director of Planning

April 2, 2015

Jon Carnegie  
Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy  
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33 Livingston Avenue  
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

RE: Together North Jersey Draft Regional Plan

Dear Mr. Carnegie,

The Monmouth County Division of Planning has had an opportunity to review the Together North Jersey Draft Regional Plan and the Together North Jersey "Fair Housing and Equity in Northern New Jersey" Conclusions and Recommendations. We would like to offer the following comments:

1) Monmouth County is in the process of updating its Master Plan, the first comprehensive revision since 1982. Work on this update began in 2013 and should conclude by the end of this year. The County's plan has been purposely structured to be consistent with TNJ's approach as there are twelve primary elements that center on their individual relationship to land use as well as their relationship to the other plan elements.

As part of the Master Plan, the County is creating a framework for investment similar to that recommended in the TNJ plan (Focus Area 3, Strategy 1). Monmouth County recognizes the importance of focusing investment into places where infrastructure already exists and where growth is to be fostered. However, the County views all places as potential investment areas and provides a distinction between those areas and locations that should focus on investment in growth and redevelopment and those places with a focus on conservation and preservation.

We also recognize that these types of investment areas and locations sometimes overlap when one takes into account not only the locational aspect of an investment, but also the intended purpose for a proposed investment. A good example of this would be the need for a bridge replacement in a rural area due to increased regional traffic impacts caused by growth in the surrounding "primary growth areas" or a rural roadway

improvement that supports the economic sustainability of our regional agricultural economy by enhancing the movement of locally produced goods and farm equipment. The reverse may also be true as there may be instances where investments viewed as "preservation" (e.g. rehabilitation and repurposing of an historic structure or the acquisition of land for parks) are necessary in "primary growth areas" but are not necessarily viewed as primary economic drivers in these locations.

Monmouth County is concerned that the approach proposed in the TNJ plan may eventually lead to the exclusion of certain types of NJTPA funding assistance for public infrastructure investments outside of defined "growth areas". Although mapping criteria is a helpful exercise in evaluating investment strategies, any investment framework used by NJTPA needs to consider the economic development investment of purpose as well as that of place.

2) Monmouth County would like to include its Agriculture and Economic Development Element of the Comprehensive Master Plan update as a case study (page 89, Competitive) as agricultural development is not represented in this section though it is a highlight of Focus Area 3, Strategy 4 (page 43).

Our updated Master Plan will include an Agriculture and Economic Development Element that incorporates long-term agricultural sustainability into the County's overall economic development strategy. The Agriculture and Economic Development Element makes specific recommendations (action steps) for implementation by the Division of Planning designed to support the Master Plan's goals, principles, and objectives. This element also includes almost sixty stakeholder strategies woven through each of the other Master Plan elements providing municipalities, non-governmental organizations, non-profits and other stakeholders with ideas and suggestions on ways they can support agricultural and economic development in their community.

3) Both housing and the broader issues of social equity remain serious concerns. The conclusion found in "Fair Housing & Equity in Northern New Jersey" Conclusions and Recommendations (10.1.2) provides an essential insight into a major source of these problems. As poverty concentrates in a community, businesses often relocate to places with more disposable income to spend on their goods and services. As the businesses leave, there is less opportunity for those who remain in place to find jobs locally. At the same time, a lack of transit to job opportunities elsewhere becomes a larger impediment to finding work. As a result, lower income residents are often left behind in the ability to fully participate in the evolving economy.

Therefore, it is suggested that the report reinforce recommendations that allow for greater participation by lower income residents in the general housing market. The mechanisms identified – employer tax credits and housing vouchers - should help to accomplish this goal. Employer tax credits reconnect housing and employment and create a balance between the supply of and demand for lower income labor. Housing vouchers allow people to move without a direct connection to employment and are particularly important for people with special needs and seniors.



The observation noted in the report that vouchers have not been as successful a tool as hoped suggests the need to provide better focusing of them. The broader goal of vouchers should be transforming "Communities of Concern" into "Areas of Opportunity" by reducing the concentration of lower-income households and expanding the opportunities for the free market. Focusing housing vouchers in places where these concentrations do not exist while aggressively transforming affordable units into market units through the sale of publicly held properties and the eventual elimination of restrictive covenants on privately held housing should begin a new cycle of investment in our "Communities of Concern".

Ultimately, the aim should be to invest in people who are the dynamic social and economic assets of a community, not the buildings. Housing programs should empower people to pursue opportunity by creating mechanisms for participation in a changing market. Every effort should be made to make the employer tax credits sufficiently attractive that employers will actively seek out opportunities to use them. Vouchers should be highly flexible, allowing maximum portability. Poverty should be approached as a temporary and transient state which people are able to overcome when given the opportunity to fully participate in the society and economy.

Monmouth County will be submitting under a separate cover, comments on the circulated draft TNJ Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

Thank you for providing the opportunity to submit remarks and recommendations.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edward Sampson", followed by a horizontal line.

Edward Sampson, PP, AICP  
Director of Planning

- C: Thomas Arnone, Freeholder  
Teri O'Connor, County Administrator  
Vincent Domidion, Chairman, Monmouth County Planning Board  
Joe Barris, PP, AICP, Assistant Director of Planning

**Somerset County Planning Division Review Comments on the  
Draft Together North Jersey Regional Plan  
For submission to TNJ, May 11, 2015**

I. General Comments and Recommendations

Somerset County is supportive of many of the goals and objectives in this plan because it supports many of our planning efforts as well as many of our municipalities' planning efforts. We are pleased to see many of our planning efforts such as our Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and our County Investment Framework cited as case studies and models for others to follow. We look forward to working with Together North Jersey in the future to advance the County's and our municipalities planning priorities.

Throughout the Plan, the issue of stranded suburban assets should be more prominently featured in the various sections. These areas are vital to economic health of our region and New Jersey as well. When reviewing the Plan, the linkages to the Action Strategies as well as the Fair Housing and Equity Assessment and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy are not clear. The Plan should highlight these linkages in a more prominent manner.

The individual Focus Area Strategy and Action documents and Regional CEDS are not referenced in the TNJ Regional Plan Document. Since the TNJ Regional Plan document is the central, unifying element of the plan, it should describe each of the plan components and their relationship, including their purpose and intended use.

The TNJ Regional Plan, associated Strategy and Action Documents and the Regional CEDS should recognize existing public, private and non-profit agencies and organizations and the roles and functions they perform and build upon rather than duplicate their work. The plan should lessen its emphasis on the establishment of new, more complex layers of bureaucracy and work to identify ways the existing institutional framework can be made more efficient and coordinated. How the THJ Plan will be used by partnering agencies including but not limited to the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority should be spelled out in the TNJ Plan. Information as to how the plan will be kept current should be provided.

II. Comments on TNJ Regional Plan (Plan 2015) Document

Historic Preservation: The plan does not incorporate historic preservation in a meaningful way. There are numerous images of historic resources in the document but no strategies or actions related to historic preservation. The plan is inconsistent with the *New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan*, the *New Jersey Historic Preservation Plan*, the *Highlands Master Plan* and the *Somerset County Master Plan*, which all call for the integration of historic preservation into the planning process.

P. 6: The 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph, third line should read: ... "Local culture, abundant natural and historic resources and manufacturing"...

P. 7: Add clarification and detail regarding how the plan is intended to be used by various levels of government, the non-profit and public sectors, and residents

P. 12: High Quality of Life, line 12 should read: “And our vibrant arts, cultural assets and historic sites help to create distinctive communities”...

P. 17: “Stranded Suburban Assets” should be added to the Issues and Challenges section, and the associated discussion should emphasize the recent reversal in suburban population and employment, increase in vacant and underutilized commercial properties, brownfield re-use and damaged green infrastructure assets costs, and reverse commuting patterns.

P. 19: The reference to “Hurricane Sandy” in the right column text under topic: Still Recovering from Recent Disasters needs to be corrected to “Super Storm Sandy” which is a more accurate storm labeling category based on based on verified wind speed at landfall in NJ. This correction should be applied throughout the documents.

P. 26: Show the relationship/linkages between the 5 prioritized Goals on p. 26 and the Focus Areas and Strategies. A numbering system should be applied to these. Under each of the 5 Goals on P. 26 are listed from 3 to 9 “sub-goals or objectives”. Whether the Focus Areas and associated strategies are prioritized is not evident. Color-coding is used to show the linkage between the Focus Areas and the four Vision Statement Concepts, but they are both disconnected from the prioritized goals on P. 26.

With regard to Priority Goals: Protect the Environment, a new bullet point should be added: “Preserve, promote and interpret historic sites”. The 6<sup>th</sup> bullet point under Priority Goals: Great Strong Inclusive Regional Economy should read, “Creatively Reinvent downtowns and Main Streets”.

With regard to Priority Goals: *Great Strong Inclusive Regional Economy*, 3<sup>rd</sup> bullet point -*Ensure the regions workforce has the training and skills needed to support current and Future Industry Needs*” text should be incorporated that acknowledges and supports the critical role of STEAM education, which is recognized as essential in preparing future workforces (US & NJ) to compete and ensure economic and technological leadership & prosperity along with the demonstrated ability to think critically and creatively . Other areas in the plan where this concept applies include *A Vision for the Future*, on P. 27, *Strategies and Actions/Focus Area 1: Create and retain well-paying jobs by supporting growth in our region’s key industries*; and *Take on Initiatives that will make all jurisdictions in the region more Competitive*, P. 33; and *Focus Area 4: Align Workforce training with Industry Needs*, P. 42.

P. 31: Livable, the 5<sup>th</sup> line should read as follows: “...access to arts, culture, history, recreation and high quality schools”.

#### P32-35 Focus Area One

We support the strategies outlined in this section since they are consistent with many of our planning efforts.

## Strategy 1

We support the concept of using the former Sanofi site, now the NJ Center for Excellence, as a case study and pilot site for the re-use of significant properties consistent with the Somerset County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and the County's Access and Mobility Improvements to Support Priority Investment in Somerset County.

## Strategy 2

The creation of the Economic Development District should engage the local and county economic development professionals to ensure local priorities are addressed and advanced.

## P36-37 Focus Area 2

The County is supportive of the strategies outlined in this section. These recommendations and strategies will support growth in our Priority Growth Investment Areas.

### P. 38-41: Focus Area 3: *Strengthen the region's economy by building on existing assets and infrastructure*

This strategy is consistent with the Somerset County Investment Framework. The Plan should target areas where the public and private sector have worked together to identify targeted growth areas and develop packages of infrastructure investments such as utility upgrades, transit and road improvement projects and economic development incentives to help implement investment and growth in these areas.

The text associated with Focus Area 3 should be expanded to recognize the importance of open space in improving the attractiveness of our established communities as places to live and work; and for their important green infrastructure functions. Greenways, neighborhood parks and athletic fields are vital assets in smaller, more densely developed municipalities. They serve as places where people can gather for social, recreational and cultural activities within population centers; and deserve equal attention as compared to the preservation of large tracts of undeveloped land in the more rural areas of the state.

## P42-45 Focus Area Four Align workforce training with industry needs

The County supports the Plans recommendations that work force training efforts need to focus on the needs of the employers in this region. It is vitally important for this region to ensure that these programs are developing the skill sets that the employers need to ensure they stay in this region. The action strategies should ensure groups that represent businesses and promote economic development should be key partners in may if not all of these strategies

P.46-49 Focus Area Five: Locate most new housing and commercial development in places with existing and planned infrastructure.

Somerset County's planning efforts are consistent with strategies outlined in this section. The Somerset County Investment Framework is an excellent example of how the strategies of the section can be

implemented to clearly define where growth can occur that builds upon existing and planner infrastructure. Under *Strategies and Actions*, and “*How*” – It should be noted that history-related tourism has proven to be a very significant tourist attraction and welcomed economic development strategy.

P. 41: Strategy 3, the title should be changed to read: “Strengthen tourism by promoting North Jersey’s art, cultural, historic, recreation and natural amenities at a regional scale”. The second sentence under Strategy 3 should read: “Our region is blessed with many natural resources, forests, parks, historic sites, recreational opportunities, arts destinations and amazing cultural diversity”. The following should be added to Strategy 3: “Regional tourism efforts should coordinate with existing national heritage tourism efforts including the Crossroads of the American Revolution National Heritage Area, the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail as well as the Millstone Valley National Scenic Byway and the Delaware River National Scenic Byway. Other state heritage initiatives in North Jersey include the Warren Heritage Scenic Byway and the Palisades Scenic Byway”.

With regard to *Strategy 3 Strengthen tourism by promoting...arts, cultural, recreation, and natural amenities on a regional scale*, notably absent is “historic” from this list. Historic tourism is a major attractor of out of state as well as in state travelers. It is also the case that North and Central Jersey have a national heritage area and other nationally recognized trails and scenic byways. These certainly call for regional cooperation, promotion and management and this need for collaboration should be recognized in the TNJ Plan. Doing this would contribute to the types of education and leisure activities that are mentioned in the community-oriented section of the report. Not to mention historic tourism and educational opportunities as a special aspect of cultural activity in a state that has the significant immigration population (as highlighted in the report) is an oversight. It will be a major vehicle for promoting positive, engaged citizenship among those new to our shores, advancing community and regional integration.

P. 47-49: Under *Focus Area 5: Locate Most new housing and commercial development in places with existing and planned infrastructure*, the language places too much emphasis on new greenfield development as a strategy for promoting diverse and affordable housing. Greater emphasis is needed on redevelopment, rehabilitation and re-use strategies, which are sensitive to the character of the host neighborhoods and communities, and allow for the environmental and green infrastructure goals of the plan to be simultaneously achieved.

A regional strategy for addressing housing for the disabled is needed, which helps identify appropriate locations that improve the resident’s access to the surrounding community. Sites should be identified within diverse communities throughout the region, rather than concentrate these sites to a few locations in order to increase lifestyle choices and share the impacts of these tax-exempt facilities among many jurisdictions.

P. 50: Under “*How*”, the third sentence should read: “Creating lively, livable communities requires a local vision, design guidelines and historic preservation ordinances that preserve and capture the unique character of a particular place...”

A new Strategy 7 should be added that emphasizes the importance of enhancing transportation linkages and increasing travel options in suburban areas in order to retain empty-nesters and residents that have

reached retirement age, as well as attract younger entry-level “millennial” workers; in order to provide increased access to cultural, recreational and social amenities within the region. Similar language should be added on P. 57.

P. 56: With regard to Focus Area 7, Actions associated with Strategy 3 should including the development of a regional transit hub strategic plan and implementation of a transit hub improvement pilot program with potential eligible locations in North Branch, Somerville, Raritan, Bound Brook and Bridgewater train stations and heavily used bus stops.

With regard to Strategy 5 - *Increase transit system capacity in strategic locations*, re-word sentence as follows, “...Those components include but are not limited to NJ TRANSIT’s Hudson Bergen Light Rail system, commuter rail network and inter and intraregional bus service”.

P. 57: Under *GETTING STARTED* – expand 5<sup>th</sup> bullet as follows: *Improve and Expand trans-Hudson transit capacity and modernize the Port Authority Bus Terminal complex and New York Penn Station.*

P. 66: *Focus Area 12: Improve Health outcomes for our Region’s Residents* – add a new Strategy 8 that addresses the successful role the arts have played in improving healthcare outcomes. As our population’s life span is projected to far exceed (age-wise) that of previous generations, with seniors predicted to live well into their 80s and beyond, the role of arts integration in healthcare will not only enhance quality of life, but provide the capacity, in some cases, to improve health outcomes and save overall cost to the healthcare system.

P. 72: The following sentence should be added to Strategy 1: “Historic Preservation should be encouraged since historic buildings are inherently sustainable. Preservation maximizes the use of existing materials and infrastructure and reduces waste”.

P. 73: Strategy 5 - *Innovate for a more Creative Approach to Clean Renewable Energy* should include a description of the Local Arts Generator Initiative (LAGI) which involves the construction of public art installations that have the added benefit of providing clean energy generation, in a more aesthetically pleasing manner (see <http://www.landartgenerator.org/competition.html>). Current utilitarian methods of generating renewable energy are contributing to visual clutter throughout the TNJ landscape. This model, in addition to being more aesthetically pleasing, also has all the attributes of putting STEAM education into action.

P 78: Focus Area 13 should be entitled: *“Improve stewardship of natural lands, agricultural lands, open space, parks and historic resources”*. Under *“WHAT AND WHY”*, a third paragraph should be added as follows: “North Jersey has experienced the loss of numerous historic sites due to suburban sprawl, lack of proper municipal historic ordinances and neglect of historic resources by both public and private entities. Governments, non-profit organizations and private citizens should be encouraged to preserve historic sites through governmental action, non-profit stewardship of historic sites and maintenance of historic structures by private citizens”.

Two new strategies should be added: “STRATEGY 4: Expand programs to preserve historic resources - New Jersey has expended millions of dollars to preserve historic sites throughout the state. This effort must continue. The New Jersey Historic Trust capital preservation program should be adequately

funded on a yearly basis. Counties should be encouraged to establish historic preservation grant programs through their Open Space, Farmland, Recreation and Historic Preservation Trust funds such as the Somerset and Morris counties preservation grant programs. Local municipalities should be encouraged to adopt historic preservation ordinances consistent with the Municipal Land Use Law and to also establish preservation grant programs as part of their open space funding. A historic preservation certificate program should be re-established to provide historic preservation expertise to members of preservation commissions, not-for-profit boards and private citizens”.

Proposed new Strategy 5 is recommended as follows: “Improve stewardship of publicly owned historic sites- Historic sites need to be properly interpreted to teach citizens about their communities past. In addition, proper interpretation, staffing and amenities are important in making historic sites viable tourist destinations. Funding from the New Jersey Historical Commission and other state sources should be expanded to provide assistance to not-for-profit and publicly owned historic sites to interpret these and provide amenities to make them tourist ready sites”. Under “GETTING STARTED” the following bullet points should be added:

- Adequately fund the New Jersey Historic Trust capital grant programs.
- Re-establish a historic preservation certificate program to provide expertise to the historic preservation community.

P. 102: The 4<sup>th</sup> column, “Continue to work together”, seventh line should be modified as follows: “...arts and culture, historic preservation and others that can complement NJTPA’s...”

### III. Comments on Focus Area Actions and Strategies Documents

#### **Focus Area #2**

As these strategies are advanced, the priorities and focus identified in local Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies should be considered and reinforced

#### **Focus Area # 3**

This strategy is consistent with the Somerset County Investment Framework. The Plan should target areas where the public and private sector have worked together to identify targeted growth areas and develop packages of infrastructure investments such as utility upgrades, transit and road improvement projects and economic development incentives to help implement investment and growth in these areas.

##### Strategy 3.1

Action 3: Under *Responsibility*, a private sector partner is not identified.

Action 4: A private sector partner should be identified under *Responsibility*.

##### Strategy 3.3

In the *WHAT AND WHY* section, identify other studies and opportunities such as initiatives developed through NJTPA studies conducted in the region.

Add Action: Develop a continuing working relationship with governmental agencies that have as their mission advancement of said features.

Add Action: Gather and develop an inventory of these resources to better understand and connect with opportunities that present as linkages.

#### Strategy 3.4

The actions in this section should include County Agriculture Boards as partners to help implement these actions. These actions should reinforce the work programs of these Boards as well.

In the *WHAT AND WHY* section, under description of partners, include the County Agriculture Development Boards as well as the County Boards of Agriculture.

#### **Focus Area Five**

The action strategies in this section should look to reexamine the various economic and tax incentives such as the Economic Opportunity Act so that suburban areas that have designated growth areas incentives have near the same level of magnitude of incentives that are available for urban areas. Places such as Somerset County where the public and private sector have worked together to identify areas where growth and investment should occur should receive higher levels of state incentives.

#### **Focus Area 7**

##### Strategy 7.4

Action 14: Pilot at the local level a requirement for sponsors of major new development projects to conduct transit assessments as part of the NJDOT County access permits and or local zoning reviews. This is a very interesting concept that could help grow transit services and should be further explored by the county and its municipalities.

##### Strategy 7.5

Action 8: Add two rail projects, the Hunter flyover and triple tracking the Lehigh line to this action which currently states, *advance planning and promote enhanced capacity at key locations including Newark Penn Station midline loop NEC Summit Milburn turn back in North Jersey.*

#### **Focus Areas 8a:**

Strategy 8a.3: *Increase the supply of housing affordable to a range of household sizes incomes especially in areas that are well served by public transit.* The strategy includes language that states new housing developments constructed in locations served by or planned to be served by public transit include a minimum of 20% affordable units. This was the previous fair share housing minimum, which was acceptable to many municipalities. However other language in the same strategy 3 states the state legislature should amend the municipal land use law to identify new housing developments that include at least 40% affordable units as a beneficial use that fundamentally serves the public good and promotes



the general welfare. This proposed policy should be discussed further to determine if counties and municipalities would agree with this recommended strategy and analyzed further to determine its economic feasibility. Public funding should be directed to cover contaminated site mitigation costs for redevelopment projects that include 20% or more affordable housing.

Action 8: Specifies the rules and regulations governing municipal affordable housing trust funds to require they be spent down within three years after which time non-profit affordable housing developers can petition the courts to use the funds to support the development of affordable housing in the community. It is recommended the 3 year timeline be doubled, and that only appropriately qualified non-profit developers be able to petition.

#### **Focus Area 8b:**

Strategy 8b.1: Affirmatively further fair housing policies region wide: This strategy supports using the data and analysis from the document to undertake housing assessments. The data recommended for use need further study and examination to insure it is a fair and accurate presentation of existing affordable housing within the County. A key concern with the data is that it must not reflect recent trends and the major demographic and socio-economic shifts that have occurred since the great recession, and post 2010.

Action 2: The establishment of another layer of government appears needed if this action is to be carried out, and will add another layer of complexity. The preparation of fair housing assessments will require a strong level of local knowledge, the need for which cannot be overstated if these assessments are to serve as accurate, valuable planning tools.

Strategy 8b.2: Staff supports further examination into the potential unintended consequences that could be associated with implementing Action 2 involving increasing the transferability of housing choice vouchers among public housing authorities to provide more housing options closer to better job and education opportunities. What kind of controls would be put into place, and how will the results be monitored to ensure this goal is being met?

Strategy 8b.3: *Promote regional housing mobility by fostering innovation in the use of Housing choice vouchers.* This strategy offers a potential innovative ways to offer opportunities for persons to live in areas with better public education, job opportunities and transportation access by tweaking this existing housing voucher program.

#### **Focus Area Nine**

This section should consider adding a strategy regarding the siting of new education facilities in areas that would support neighborhood revitalization and redevelopment efforts.

#### **Focus Area 10:**

Strategy 10.1: Identify the region's vulnerabilities to extreme weather and climate change

Action 1: Re-word first sentence: Conduct Vulnerability and Risk Assessments in all communities and counties for vulnerability to extreme weather.... Add "County" as a "Lead" under "Responsibility".

Action 2: Add "NJ APA and NJAC" as "Lead" under "Responsibility".

Action 3: Broaden action as follows: Conduct Vulnerability and Risk Assessments of regional transit and transportation facilities, broadband communication systems, electric power systems, wastewater and water supply systems, liquid fuel supply chains and critical life support systems including hospitals, 911 Call Centers, etc... to determine their vulnerability to extreme weather and climate change, and develop plans, programs and regulations aimed at minimizing vulnerabilities. Add NJBPU, NJ Water Supply Authority, NJDEP and Counties as "Lead" under "Responsibility".

Action 5: refine language as follows: Identify "communities of concern" as part of Vulnerability and Risk Assessments and identify strategies for addressing the unique issues associated with these populations.

Action 7: Comment: Identify and evaluate existing State Govt. agencies/organizations that may already be performing this role and/or similar roles to avoid duplication of effort and strengthen and/or enhance existing entities where appropriate. The need for appropriate legislation to assure the entity's work is open and transparent, ongoing and supported with the appropriate resources should be determined.

Action 8: Add NJ Office for Planning Advocacy, County Planning Boards and State and County Offices of Emergency Management to "Lead" under "Responsibility".

Action 10: Expand to include the following second sentence: Ensure the risks associated with these sites are addressed in County and Municipal Hazard Mitigation Plans and understood by regional and local emergency management officials. Include this risk information as a factor in the prioritization of site mitigation initiatives. Add affected Counties and Municipalities to "Support" under "Responsibility".

Strategy 10.2: Adapt communities and infrastructure to be resilient to extreme weather events and the impacts of climate change

Action 3: Add NJ BPU and Counties to "Support" under Responsibility.

Action 4: Add NJ DCA to "Lead" under "Responsibility". Add Counties and Municipalities to "Support" under "Responsibility".

Actions 9 & 10: Re-word and combine as follows: "Achieve more resilient drinking water, wastewater, electric, gas, broadband and other utility infrastructure by mandating utility operators prepare and implement capital improvement plans that prescribe a schedule for system-wide routine inspection, maintenance, upgrade and enhancement and identifies financing mechanisms. Require capital improvement plans that take into account needed resiliency improvements as well as upgrades resulting from existing and projected increased demands being placed on the system by growing customer bases. Use innovative technologies where appropriate for accomplishing this work in an efficient, responsible and cost-effective way".

Strategy 10.3: Encourage Floodplain buyout programs and return flood-prone areas to their natural function

Action 1: Re-word as follows: “Areas suffering losses from repetitive flooding should be identified in Vulnerability Risk Assessments and addressed in Hazard Mitigation Plans and Master Plans at the County and local levels; and the relocation of homes and businesses from flood prone areas should be included as implementation strategies where appropriate. Show municipalities and counties as “Lead” under “Responsibility”, and show NJDEP, NJ Future, NJ APA as “Support”.

Action 3: Add NJ JDEP and NJ OPA together with NJ APA as “Support” under “Responsibility”; and add NJ Legislators as “Lead”.

Strategy 10.4: Use green infrastructure solutions to mitigate the impacts of extreme weather and climate change

Action 1: Refine sentence as follows: Analyze NJ’s regulatory structure, policies and funding programs for public investment, as well as construction codes and design standards in order to remove barriers to, and provide incentives for....

Action 2: The concept behind this action is vague. How would green infrastructure strategic plans differ from municipal stormwater management plans? The adoption of ordinances that specify the use of site-specific green infrastructure best practices for all redevelopment and new development projects may be appropriate; and the provision of model ordinances for this purpose are recommended.

Action 3: This action should emphasize the need to for Urban Forestry Plans to address damage reduction strategies associated with falling trees and tree limbs to power lines, property and public safety during sever weather events. The plan should guide tree planting and management by both the public and private sectors.

Action 4: This action should be modified to define responsibility for tree maintenance among utility companies, the municipality and property owners. It should also define responsibility for tree-related debris removal and management. Responsibility for clearing streams and culverts should be specified, in addition to the establishment of a local budget line.

Action 5: Funding sources are not clear. Funding and implementation programs are also needed to retrofit stormwater detention and retention facilities to address water quality and allow for groundwater recharge.

Action 6 & 7: NJDEP has developed a Stormwater Management Best Practices Handbook, which was recently updated, which should be acknowledged here. NJDEP should be added as a “lead” under “Responsibility”. Municipal Stormwater Management Ordinances and Land Development Review standards must be consistent with the State Stormwater Management Rules. The retrofit of stormwater management BMPs at all major redevelopment projects should be required.

Actions 8 & 9: Include NJDEP as a “Lead” under “Responsibility”

## **Focus Area 11**

Strategy 11.1: Reduce energy use through conservation and increased efficiency

Action 1: Re-word first sentence: Require all collected Societal Benefit Charges be used to incentivize the implementation of energy efficiency solutions by both public and private sector consumers. Show the NJBPU as a “Lead” under “Responsibility”, and add NJ Chapter of the Green Building Council to “Support”.

Action 2: Re-word first sentence: Protect and expand the existing NJ Clean Energy Program and NJ Energy Resiliency Bank (ERB), and improve their operation and effectiveness. Add sentence: Expand access to ERB funding for the provision of clean energy technology-based micro-grid systems aimed at supplying reliable power to all critical facilities statewide. Add “NJ Economic Development Authority” as “Lead” under “Responsibility”.

Action 3: Add Legislators as “Lead” under “Responsibility”.

Action 11: Add sentence: Make it easier for electricity providers to support implementation of energy efficiency measures by their customer base by modifying policies, regulations and market mechanisms. Add Legislators as “Lead” under “Responsibility”.

## **Focus Area 14:**

Strategy 14.1 Improve management of Stormwater runoff

Action 2: Include municipal governments as a partner under responsibilities and add the need for enforcement of permits at the local and state level.

Proposed new Action 8: Encourage municipalities to participate in audits conducted by NJDEP as to the effectiveness of existing stormwater facilities, as well as encourage the use of NJDEP BMP manual in designing and incorporating facilities using green design.

Strategy 14.2

Action 1: Include Department of Community Affairs as a partner

Action 4: Add, Identify and develop a credible database of future needs projections

Action 13: Prioritization needs to be predicated upon the level of contamination as well.

Strategy 14.3

Action 8: Add the following: “offer extra points to applications of these utilities when they are applying to the NJ Infrastructure Treatment Trust Program”

#### IV. Comments on TNJ Fair Share Housing & Equity Assessment Document

P. 1-2: Paragraph 3 should be re-worded as follows “Voluntary alignment of state, regional and local plans with the TNJ Regional Plan is recommended by elected and appointed state, regional and local officials and entities, including the NJTPA”. Paragraph 4 notes that “An organization or organizations have committed to shepherding the plan forward after the grant period ends”. Clarification should be added as to who the organizations are, and the actions they will be taken with regard to plan implementation and update.

P. Chapter 2 – Background: The exclusive use of the 1990 and 2010 census data does not allow for recent trends to be taken into account. Major shifts in population growth trends among the region’s counties and municipalities have taken place, and are not acknowledged here.

The basis upon which “inclusive” versus ‘Non-inclusive’ are defined does not take into consideration the actions municipalities have taken to implement the Fair Housing Act, and the changes to the composition of the local housing stock that has resulted. Homes built in NJ remain part of the housing stock for many decades. The historic composition (pre-Mount Laurel) of a municipality’s housing stock, market demand factors and other factors that come to bear on the rate of change in housing stock composition are not considered as part of this determination, and result in penalizing municipalities despite their significant past efforts to implement the Fair Housing Act. This chapter suggests dramatic, costly and unrealistic changes in the composition of the existing housing stock are necessary in the region’s predominantly suburban, single-family communities. It also appears to support the fundamental concepts behind the “growth share” approach that was denounced by the Courts in 2008. In many largely built-out suburban municipalities, wholesale changes including demolition and replacement of single-family residential neighborhoods would be needed in order for them to be considered “inclusionary”. The concept behind this analysis leads toward a homogeneous region, void of the unique community character, diverse landscapes and various lifestyle choices that strengthen the region’s quality of life, economic health, resiliency and competitiveness in terms of attracting both new residents and employers.

P. 2-2: Many municipalities within the region include “centers” comprised of downtown business districts and residential neighborhoods and “environs” comprised of rural/agricultural and open space areas, including larger townships such as Bedminster and Franklin in Somerset County. The analysis should be performed at a census tract level in order to take into account the broad differences in place type that exists across municipalities that include both centers and rural areas. The diversity of the landscape is not recognized in this analysis which uses a blanket approach to characterize municipality types.

P. 3: The factors contributing to the results shown in the Dissimilarity Index, Isolation Index and Predicted Racial/Ethnic Composition Index include the lack of spatial balance in the jobs, schools, infrastructure and housing options available to North Jersey Residents by race and income; and confirm that income does not sufficiently explain the patterns of racial segregation in the region. Yet many of the more urbanize areas characterized by population diversity within the region have the greatest

physical and locational assets such as the presence of rail and bus transit service; colleges and universities; museums and theaters; research hospitals; utilities; freight and port access; sports arenas and beaches and transportation infrastructure systems. The analysis requires greater acknowledgement of the need for restructuring the statewide policies and programs concerning the property tax system, public education funding, affordable housing, redevelopment & brownfield development, transportation, communications and energy resiliency, and more. Without policy changes and renewed focus on investing in the future, sound regional and local land use planning will have limited effect.

P. 9-24: Table 9-6 is missing the six municipalities in Somerset County that have COAH Certified third-round plans.

P. 10.3, Paragraph 10.1.3: The fourth paragraph describes the region's oversupply of nonresidential development as unsustainable and underused. This paragraph should be expanded to recognize that this oversupply resulted from a change in demand preferences and business models; as well as the property tax structure of the state which promotes the municipal "ratable chase". This section should be expanded to recognize the residential/mixed use reuse and redevelopment opportunity underutilized commercial sites represent and the great potential they hold as sites that can potentially accommodate higher density affordable housing projects.

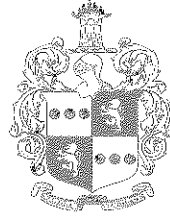
P. 10-4, Paragraph 10.1.5: The Rowan study referenced in this paragraph does not appear to recognize the inclusionary overlay ordinances that were adopted and implemented in Somerset County, as well as the 100% affordable housing projects that were built with local tax payer support, and other strategies which led to the creation of thousands of affordable housing units in Somerset County and nearly 100% compliance with COAH requirements countywide. This report unfairly singles out Somerset and Monmouth Counties and their municipalities.

# MORRIS COUNTY BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS

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Kathryn A. DeFillippo

Deputy Director  
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April 10, 2015

Mr. Jon Carnegie, Executive Director  
Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center  
Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy  
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey  
33 Livingston Avenue  
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

**SUBJECT: TOGETHER NORTH JERSEY INITIATIVE**

Dear Mr. Carnegie:

As the draft plans associated with the subject initiative are released, it is necessary to re-state the Morris County Board of Chosen Freeholder's rejection of the United Nation's *Agenda 21*. As you may recall, the Freeholders adopted the enclosed resolution on June 13, 2012 formalizing our stance against *Agenda 21*.

As the resolution states, "Planning in Morris County is a voluntary, interactive process with municipalities and other stakeholders that identifies needs and arrives at agreed upon strategies to promote economic development, protect vital resources, preserve farmland, improve transportation, protect community character as well as property values and enhance the quality of life in our county."

Morris County seeks to continue the partnerships that we have developed with our local, regional, and state partners that have allowed for improvements to our communities. We will not, however, allow for the Together North Jersey planning documents and an implementation of their recommendations to negatively alter the way of life that we have worked so hard to achieve here in Morris County.

Morris County joined the membership of the North Jersey Sustainable Communities Consortium in order to responsibly oversee the planning efforts taking place in our region. We have accepted no funding associated with the Together North Jersey effort. We look forward to the closeout of this initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathryn A. DeFillippo".

Kathryn A. DeFillippo  
Freeholder Director

Enc.

Copy (with enc.) to  
Morris County Board of Chosen Freeholders  
John Bonanni, Morris County Administrator  
Mary K Murphy, Executive Director, NJTPA  
Deena Leary, Director, Morris County Department of Planning & Public Works



**Board of Chosen Freeholders  
Morris County, New Jersey**

Resolution No. 41

Adopted June 13, 2012

**WHEREAS**, citizens across the United States and Morris County have raised concerns that the United Nations Agenda 21 is a comprehensive plan of extreme environmentalism, social engineering and global political control indicated at the United Nations Conference on Environmental and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992; and

**WHEREAS**, these citizens are concerned that the United Nations Agenda 21 is being covertly pushed into local communities throughout the United States through the International Council of Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI); and

**WHEREAS**, these citizens are concerned that Agenda 21 attempts to erode the local control found in our communities across the nation, and turns home and regional rule over to a global agenda set by the United Nations; and

**WHEREAS**, these citizens are concerned that this United Nations Agenda 21 plan views the American way of life of private property ownership, single family homes, private car ownership and individual travel choices, and privately owned farms, all as destructive to the environment; and

**WHEREAS**, these citizens are concerned that according to Agenda 21 policy, social justice is described as the right and opportunity of all people to benefit equally from the resources afforded us and the environment which would be accomplished by socialist/communist redistribution of wealth; and

**WHEREAS**, these citizens are concerned that according to the United Nations Agenda 21 policy, national sovereignty is deemed a social injustice; and

**WHEREAS**, these citizens are concerned that critical issues such as the environment and green energy, should remain in the purview of the local governments of the United States, elected by the people, with a strong knowledge of local concerns and issues, not within the confines of a bureaucratic international treaty developed by the United Nations; and

**WHEREAS**, planning in Morris County is a voluntary, interactive process with municipalities and other stakeholders that identifies needs and arrives at agreed upon strategies to promote economic development, protect vital resources, preserve farmland, improve transportation, protect community character as well as property values and enhance the quality of life in our county; and

**WHEREAS**, planning in Morris County has taken place since the inception of Morris County and is not in any way tied to Agenda 21.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Morris in the State of New Jersey that the Board recognizes the concerns of these citizens and urges the U.S. Senate to abandon any potential consideration to ratifying any such plan;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that Morris County will continue to plan comprehensively using an inclusive planning process that involves municipalities, residents, and other stakeholders.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the federal, state and local governments across the country be well informed of the implementation of United Nations Agenda 21.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Clerk forward certified copies of this Resolution to the President Barack Obama, Governor Christopher Christie and the New Jersey U.S. Senators and Congressmen.

I hereby certify the above to be a true copy of a resolution adopted by the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Morris at a regular meeting held on June 13, 2012.



\_\_\_\_\_  
Diane M. Ketchum, Clerk of the Board