

The following Action Plan provides detailed strategies and specific actions, serving as a technical guide for implementing the recommendations of The Plan. These action plans are intended to be living documents, being revised and updated as Together North Jersey works with various partners on implementing recommendations in The Plan.



FOCUS AREA 3: Strengthen the region's economy by building on existing assets and infrastructure

What and Why. World-class infrastructure and other amenities have made North Jersey a global hub of people and goods. Long-term investments in transportation infrastructure, open space and farmland protection, arts and cultural institutions and other tourism assets such as our beaches and boardwalks provide an important foundation for targeted economic development activities that can strengthen and grow our region's economy. In addition, proximity to New York City and superior transportation connections to extensive consumer and business markets in the northeast, mid-Atlantic, and mid-west states gives our region a strategic locational advantage. Our region must build on our unique assets and infrastructure and embrace nearby markets to strengthen the regional economy. This will promote economic development and tourism which can grow businesses and create jobs. These assets also contribute to the attractiveness of our communities, making them desirable places to live, work and visit.

How. Asset-based economic development is an approach that recognizes the important role existing infrastructure and unique local resources can play in strengthening the regional economy. It is an approach that seeks to leverage local arts, cultural, natural, historic and recreational assets into sustained economic growth that can benefit the entire region. Toward this end, we need to use our region's transportation system—especially our public transit network—as a framework for future investment. We should also continue the progress made over the past decade by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey to ensure our region's seaport maintains its strategic advantage while bringing needed tax revenue and jobs to the port's host cities. Finally, we should strengthen tourism in our region and leverage New Jersey's heritage as the "Garden State" to support and expand agricultural businesses, urban farming and agritourism.




Strategy 3.1: Use the region's transportation infrastructure as a framework for future investment.

What and why. Our region boasts 25,000 miles of roads; 16 rail lines serving nearly 200 stations; 18 passenger ferry routes crossing the Hudson River to New York City and a system of public and private bus services that includes thousands of buses operating on more than 250 routes. This extensive network of highways, train lines, bus routes, and ferry services provides critical accessibility to the region's workforce and should provide an organizing framework for public and private investment as well as economic development incentives and marketing. In particular, our public transportation system—one of the largest in the country—is a critical and unique asset that sets our region apart. Counties should work with municipalities and the private sector to identify priority growth and investment areas at transit stations and stops, and along highway corridors in strategic locations within their jurisdictions. Once identified, public and private investment, including economic development

incentives should be targeted in these areas to spur job growth in places well served by existing transportation infrastructure.

	<u>Actions:</u>	<u>Suggested Responsibility:</u>	<u>Timeframe:</u>
1.	Perform a best practices analysis of other state and international models of alternative funding resources for transportation systems.	NJTPA, NJDOT, NJ Transit	Short term
2.	Encourage maximization of the region’s transportation system in identifying local priority investments in roadway, public transit, and bike/pedestrian corridors that support access to opportunity by connecting mixed-use centers in the region.	NJTPA, NJ Transit, NJDOT, Municipalities, Counties	Medium term
3.	Establish new partnerships for investment to solicit private-sector input on transportation plans and infrastructure investment.	NJTPA, NJ Transit, NJDOT, Municipalities, Counties	Medium term
4.	Integrate economic development planning, including job creation and private-sector economic investment metrics, in all transportation planning.	NJTPA, NJ Transit, NJDOT, NJDOL, Municipalities, Counties	Medium term
5.	Develop strategies for promoting alternative commuting options that connect workers to jobs in underserved areas. In suburban areas, this could involve utilizing commuter hubs for integrating highway corridors; last-mile travel options; and expanded bus, rail, and shuttle services.	NJTPA, NJ Transit, NJDOT, Municipalities, Counties	Long term

 **Strategy 3.2: Leverage the region’s role as a major freight distribution hub.**


What and why. The Port of New York and New Jersey is the gateway to one of the most concentrated and affluent consumer markets in the world. It is the largest seaport on the east coast and the third largest in the country. The majority of the port’s operations are located in our region. The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which manages most of the port’s assets, has undertaken a number of investments and initiatives designed to ensure the port remains a global hub for the movement of goods. Our region must continue to build on this unique asset and the progress made by the Port Authority to meet a number of additional infrastructure needs. We must ensure that port development benefits local communities by coordinating among agencies, operators, and jurisdictions; redeveloping now-vacant sites into port-related uses; and supporting growth in port-related jobs for local residents. We should also work to optimize the performance of our freight infrastructure by

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targeting investment to address capacity bottlenecks in the freight system; enhancing the efficiency of goods deliveries; expanding rail access; and ensuring that facilities are resilient to extreme weather and sea level rise.

	<u>Actions:</u>	<u>Suggested Responsibility:</u>	<u>Timeframe:</u>
1.	Cooperatively improve facilities, operations, and policies connected with the region’s seaport to enhance the movement of freight, both regionally and beyond. Concentrate on intermodal access, processing and terminal operations, and coordinating improvements across public agencies and private owners and operators. Respecting the character of neighboring communities, reuse brownfields for freight purposes, and support employment in port-related jobs for local residents. Ensure facilities are in good repair, secure, and resilient to weather, climate, or other disruptions.	PANYNJ	Long term
2.	Maximize the efficiency and reliability of freight movement by truck, rail, maritime, and air routes, while working to optimize transport by rail. Concentrate public and private resources to facilitate access to critical retail, manufacturing, distribution, and employment areas. Target critical capacity bottlenecks in the freight system, and enhance truck parking and other support facilities.	Council on Port Performance	Long term
3.	Coordinate among agencies, operators, and communities regarding routes and operations to respect local needs to the maximum extent possible. Minimize pollution and carbon footprint in goods movement, and harden facilities against extreme weather and climate.	PANYNJ, with EPA Region 2, NJ DEP, NYCDOT, NJTPA, NJCCC, railroads, port terminal operators	Medium term
4.	Update the NJTPA truck parking study, which estimated a regional truck parking shortage at 1300 spaces. This effort would revisit the supply of regional truck parking (including amenities), the change in demand driven by the economic recovery, and the revised Hours of Service rules. The study would also identify locations suitable for this use and look for ways to build local support for truck parking. Community incentive programs will be explored along with the potential regional impacts of Jason’s Law. Dual permitting (NJDOT/NJDEP) for truck stop development will be explored as well as sales of alternative fuels at the truck stops.	NJTPA, with counties, municipalities, industry	Medium term

5.	Survey of Regional Complete Streets and Goods Movement best and worst practices. This effort would identify regional examples, for each typology, of how goods movement integration into complete streets works and doesn’t work. It would develop a list of remedies that can be used to properly address goods in the complete streets environment with the clear understanding that there is no one-size-fits-all solution. This would be coordinated with: NJDOT, counties, municipalities, and industry.	NJTPA	Medium term
6.	Explore regional implementation of off-peak goods movement. This effort would: identify best practices; explore the potential of expanding the NYCDOT Off-Hour Delivery Program to northern New Jersey; and look to expand beyond the retail sector to also include other parts of the supply chain.	NJTPA	Medium term



Strategy 3.3: Strengthen tourism by promoting North Jersey’s arts, cultural, recreational, historic and natural amenities.

What and why. As one of our state’s most important economic drivers, the tourism industry generates over \$40 billion in spending and investment per year—much of it in our region. Our region is blessed with many natural resources, forests, parks, historic sites, recreational opportunities, arts destinations and amazing cultural diversity. We also have miles of beaches, bay fronts and boardwalks that attract millions of visitors each year. Building on past and current work, our region must continue to bring together varied stakeholders to identify opportunities to coordinate and promote tourism at the regional level. We should create a network of North Jersey tourism offices and visitor bureaus to share resources and expertise between communities and develop a regional marketing campaign. We can also tap into the power of technology by developing a website and mobile app that improves tourist access to natural amenities, rural attractions, festivals, museums and more. Regional tourism efforts should coordinate with already existing national heritage tourism efforts and state-wide 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.

	<u>Actions:</u>	<u>Suggested Responsibility:</u>	<u>Timeframe:</u>
1.	Continue working with NJTPA’s multiple partners to identify cross-community development opportunities similar to existing initiatives.	NJTPA	Short term
2.	Develop a continuing working relationship with governmental agencies that have as their mission advancement of these amenities	Together North Jersey	Short term

3.	Gather and develop an inventory of these resources to better understand and connect with opportunities that present as linkages.	NJTPA	Medium term
4.	Create a network of North Jersey tourism offices and visitor bureaus to share resources and expertise. This network of local experts can evaluate the opportunities for regional (cross-county) marketing of historical, cultural, and outdoor recreational options in all or segments of the North Jersey region.	NJ Business Action Center	Medium term
5.	Convene a meeting of Destination Marketing Organization (DMOs) in the region to determine regional initiatives that would be valuable. http://newjerseydmo.org	Office of Tourism	Short term
6.	Convene a special task force to identify specific, targeted public and private transit investments across the region that would improve tourist access to natural amenities and outdoor recreational opportunities.	Office of Tourism	Medium term
7.	Create a transit/transportation page/mobile app for the region’s individual tourism and visitors’ bureaus to make it easier for individuals to identify ways to access the region’s historic sites and natural resources using transit.	NJTPA	Medium term
8.	Convene a one-time meeting bringing together arts and cultural organizations with groups promoting natural resources (such as the Highlands, Pinelands, and Meadowlands Councils) to consider ways in which art can be created (and financed) to celebrate New Jersey’s natural features.	NJTPA	Medium term
9.	Organize events in which speakers from tourism, arts, historic, and culture organizations share knowledge and expertise with the communities in the Jersey Shore, Delaware River, and Northwest counties that have tourism offices but have not focused on arts and culture tourism.	NJ Office of Tourism	Ongoing
10.	Taking Hudson County as a model, identify a network of regional organizations and motivated individuals who can provide advisory services, technical assistance, access to grant programs, and audience development initiatives to smaller arts and culture organizations in the region.	NJ Office of Tourism	Medium term

TOGETHER NORTH JERSEY Strategy 3.4: Support and expand agricultural businesses, urban farming and agritourism.

What and why. Our region is home to more than 6,000 farms covering more than 366,000 acres. More than 20 percent of the region’s farmland assets—80,000 acres—are permanently preserved. In fact, there are farms in every one of our region’s counties except Hudson. While many farms—especially

those in the western parts of the region—continue larger-scale operations producing feed corn, alfalfa hay, other grains and livestock production, the number of smaller niche market farms is growing. These smaller operations produce vegetables and fruit, flowers, herbs and a variety of other specialty products. The increased popularity of locally-sourced food, organic farming and small-scale food processing have allowed smaller farming operations to flourish and remain economically viable. To support and expand the agricultural sector in our region, we should continue efforts to permanently preserve farmland through existing acquisition programs. In addition, our region’s economic development and tourism organizations should partner with the Rutgers Cooperative Extension, the N.J. Department of Agriculture, the N.J. Farm Bureau, the N.J. Farmer’s Direct Marketing Association, County agricultural boards and others to develop a coordinated marketing campaign and strengthen farm-to-table initiatives. We should also build partnerships between farmers and community leaders in our region’s cities to foster growth in urban farming and improve urban residents’ access to healthy, locally-grown foods.

	<u>Actions:</u>	<u>Suggested Responsibility:</u>	<u>Timeframe:</u>
1.	Ensure that agritourism proponents are included within the activities proposed for the overall strategy recommendation to promote, enhance and connect North Jersey’s abundant natural and recreational resources.	NJAES, County agricultural boards	Medium term
2.	Create a working group of agritourism organizations in the North Jersey region to determine opportunities for regional marketing and promotion as well as to share information and expertise.	NJAES, County agricultural boards	Medium term
3.	Reach out to existing organizations that have been active in agritourism issues—such as www.visitnjfarms.org , the Rutgers Food Policy Institute, the New Jersey Farmers’ Direct Marketing Association, and the New Jersey Farm Bureau—to incorporate their members and interest in the RPSD process in order to identify issues (if any) that may be addressed on a regional basis. Examples that have been previously identified as challenges to agritourism that overlap with topics addressed in the CEDS and RPSD include: availability and training of workers, access to capital, access to information, municipal and state regulations and land use.	NJAES, County agricultural boards	Medium term

Special note: See also **Focus Area 7** which includes a number of strategies aimed at improving and enhancing our region’s transportation infrastructure and **Focus Area 5** that includes strategies aimed at promoting development around transit hubs and stations as well reimagining and retrofitting suburban office parks into vibrant mixed use developments.