

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 5: Locate new housing and commercial development in places with existing infrastructure

What and why. North Jersey's population is set to grow over the next 30 years, resulting in increased residential, commercial and other development. Choosing the right locations for this development will help maximize economic and social benefits, and minimize the negative impacts on the environment. Our region should work to direct this new development to places with existing infrastructure and capacity to grow, in order to reduce the public and private sector costs of laying down new infrastructure in more distant, less developed places. Further, concentrating development in already developed areas will help to limit encroachment on unprotected, undeveloped open space and agricultural land—including natural areas with critical resources and habitats. Directing growth to places with transit services and walkable areas (a development pattern known as Transit Oriented Development or TOD) will also encourage the use of public transportation, reduce congestion on our roads, and yield a wide range of health and environmental benefits. If designed well, such development can create interesting, vibrant areas and foster greater community interaction. Our region should also consider the reuse of vacant or abandoned office buildings for strategic redevelopment.

How. The North Jersey region presents endless opportunities for efficient development. Even small municipalities boast a train station or transit hubs. There are many rehabilitation, infill development (new housing or commercial space on vacant land between existing uses) and TOD success stories throughout the region, from small Main Streets, to residential neighborhoods, to bustling downtowns. We can build on these successes by ensuring local zoning laws permit this type of development, modifying incentive programs, introducing new incentive programs and funding sources, taking stock of our assets, and raising awareness of new planning tools. Emphasis should be placed on redevelopment that is sensitive to the character of existing neighborhoods and communities and that allows green infrastructure goals to be achieved.




Strategy 5.1: Promote transit-oriented development

What and why. Developers, planning boards, elected officials and other stakeholders in the region should work together to promote TOD by amending local development codes to support development of compact, mixed-use development near transit stations and stops. Our region should also work with state officials to ensure New Jersey's economic incentive programs encourage development near, or easily accessible to, public transit. This includes refining NJEDA's Grow NJ program to foster job growth near transit, and including provisions for affordable housing in TOD grant or incentive programs. We can foster job growth near transit through close collaboration with workforce and economic development professionals. We should also provide programs or training to better educate developers, homeowners and others about the full cost of housing, which includes transportation costs.

	<u>Actions:</u>	<u>Suggested Responsibility:</u>	<u>Timeframe:</u>
1.	<p>Refine the Grow NJ and Economic Redevelopment and Growth program to further incentivize growth and resilient development around transit hubs as follow:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve clarity of information on web and in promotional materials about locational eligibility. • Integrate more diverse workforce development requirements (<i>e.g. range of income and sector types</i>) into the eligibility criteria and include local and regional workforce development partners in the application review process. • Include incentives for residential development that encourage mixed-use development in urban transit hubs. In order to promote diversity and housing equity, any residential development that receives EOA incentives should have minimum provisions for <i>inclusionary and integrated</i> affordable housing, regardless of affordable housing certification status. 	NJEDA	Short term
2.	Pursue a research project to analyze the comparative costs of housing and transportation in TOD and non-TOD scenarios, using NJ locations as case studies.	Rutgers-Bloustein	Medium term
3.	Coordinate with state planning and zoning boards (NJPO) and New Jersey State League of Municipalities to offer courses to local planning officials and elected officials on best practices and the benefits of TOD.	Sustainable Jersey (in collaboration with NJPO and NJLOM)	Medium term
4.	<p>Secure dedicated funding sources for TOD planning initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for the reinstatement of planning assistance funds in the form of a state matching grant program for municipalities to hire professional staff or consultants to manage planning projects. 	NJOPA, NJ Legislature	Long term
5.	<p>Advocate for a legislative package in support of TOD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage development and adoption of form-based zoning in support of mixed-use and TOD (<i>e.g. by formally recognizing and permitting form based zoning codes “as of right” within the MLUL N.J.S.A 40-55D-1 et al).</i> 	NJOPA	Medium term
6.	Increase funding to Transit Village program, Safe Streets to Transit, Safe Routes to School, and other community planning grant programs that link land use to mobility.	NJDOT, NJ Legislature	Medium term
7.	Adopt TOD-friendly land use regulations.	Municipalities	Medium term

8.	Review existing inventory of properties and, as appropriate, proactively seek private-public partnerships to redevelop surface parking lots into TOD with structured parking.	NJTRANSIT	Long term
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Strategy 5.2: Encourage infill and redevelopment on existing vacant and underutilized properties

What and why. There are vacant or underutilized residential properties, surface parking lots, office buildings, shopping centers, old factories and empty lots throughout the region that can be reused or redeveloped. Our region should make more effective use of these properties by reorienting state and local funding, incentive programs and policies to prioritize these areas for reuse and redevelopment. We should start by inventorying these “opportunity sites” throughout the region. State infrastructure funding and incentive programs should target investments in places that would foster infill and redevelopment. This could be accomplished by modifying infrastructure funding programs to favor projects in areas that provide capacity to support redevelopment projects, fostering greater adaptive reuse of historic properties through a state historic tax credit, linking redevelopment incentives to workforce development programming and creating a pilot program for rehabilitation and repurposing of obsolete suburban shopping centers and corporate campuses.

	<u>Actions:</u>	<u>Suggested Responsibility:</u>	<u>Timeframe:</u>
1.	<p>Prioritize state infrastructure funding for infill and redevelopment projects with densities appropriate for center-based development. Specifically,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review all state infrastructure funding laws and regulations in order to inventory existing incentives for center-based development, as well as identify and advocate for additional statewide incentives; • Amend regulations of the NJ Environmental Infrastructure Trust to provide greater grant and loan prioritization, and enhanced financing terms for projects that <i>include higher densities appropriate to center-based development</i> (as defined by the NJ State Development and Redevelopment Plan) • Provide extra priority points for discretionary transportation funding applications to the NJ Department of Transportation should that support or are in centers. • Supporting infrastructure improvements, such as wastewater and sewage capacity, in rural areas appropriate for infill redevelopment. 	NJOPA, NJEIT, NJDOT, APA-NJ	Medium term

2.	<p>Identify, inventory and prioritize infill and redevelopment sites based on smart growth criteria (infrastructure access, contiguity, etc.) and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a comprehensive long-term design framework that supports phased redevelopment in order to discourage inefficient utilization of land Incentivize county/municipal participation in the identification of sites with funding under the NJTPA's Planning for Emerging Centers grant programs 	Municipalities, Counties, NJTPA	Ongoing
3.	<p>Monitor developer incentive programs for efficacy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NJ Economic Development Authority should periodically review their incentive programs to ensure that: 1) subsidies and incentives are not superfluous given changing market demand and 2) incentives to develop in one area of the state do not result in disinvestment or removal of jobs from another area of the state. Municipalities should periodically review their abatement and other similar incentive programs to ensure subsidies and incentives are not superfluous given changing market demand. Create a pilot program to review efficacy of incentive programs in four localities: high value urban, emerging urban, high value suburban and emerging suburban. 	State of NJ, Municipalities, Counties, TNJ	Ongoing
4.	<p>Enact state historic tax credit legislation to promote adaptive reuse of historic properties and ensure historic resources are not lost or impaired in the redevelopment process.</p>	<p>Lead: NJ Legislature and Governor Support: NJ Historic Trust, SHPO</p>	Medium term
5.	<p>Refine NJ Economic Development Authority and NJ Redevelopment Authority redevelopment incentive program eligibility criteria to integrate more diverse workforce development requirements (<i>e.g. range of income and sector types</i>) and include local and regional workforce development partners in the application review process.</p>	North Jersey Partners, NJDLWD, NJEDA, NJRA	Medium term
6.	<p>Create a pilot program to address the rehabilitation and repurposing of underutilized or obsolete suburban shopping centers and corporate campuses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinstate planning assistance funds in the form of a state matching grant to create the final design and redevelopment plans based on the design competition results. Focus a future APA-NJ Planning Assistance Program round to this purpose. 	NJOPA, APA-NJ	Medium term

7.	Establish a technical assistance program to help municipalities through the implementation phase of redevelopment, including private- public partnerships, navigating the approval process, marketing, etc.	NJOPA	Medium term
8.	Adopt and implement an Abandoned Property Ordinance as authorized by the 1996 Urban Redevelopment Act and the 2004 Abandoned Properties Rehabilitation Act (APRA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a pilot program to demonstrate the value of the abandoned properties ordinance. 	Municipalities, TNJ	Short term




Strategy 5.3: Prioritize brownfields for redevelopment

What and why. Brownfields are properties that can be difficult to redevelop because of the presence of hazardous substances, pollutants or contaminants that must be cleaned up prior to reuse. Due to our region’s industrial heritage, brownfield sites are particularly common in North Jersey and impede redevelopment efforts in our region’s cities, as well as many older towns and suburbs. We should make it easier to identify and reuse these sites by developing a comprehensive and regularly updated brownfields inventory that monitors site status, clean up and use. The database should be accompanied by a set of criteria to determine possible reuses of each specific brownfield site given their location, zoning and surrounding land uses. State and federal agencies should then work with local governments to address regulatory barriers to redevelopment, provide incentives and prioritize funding to encourage private sector investment in redeveloping the sites.

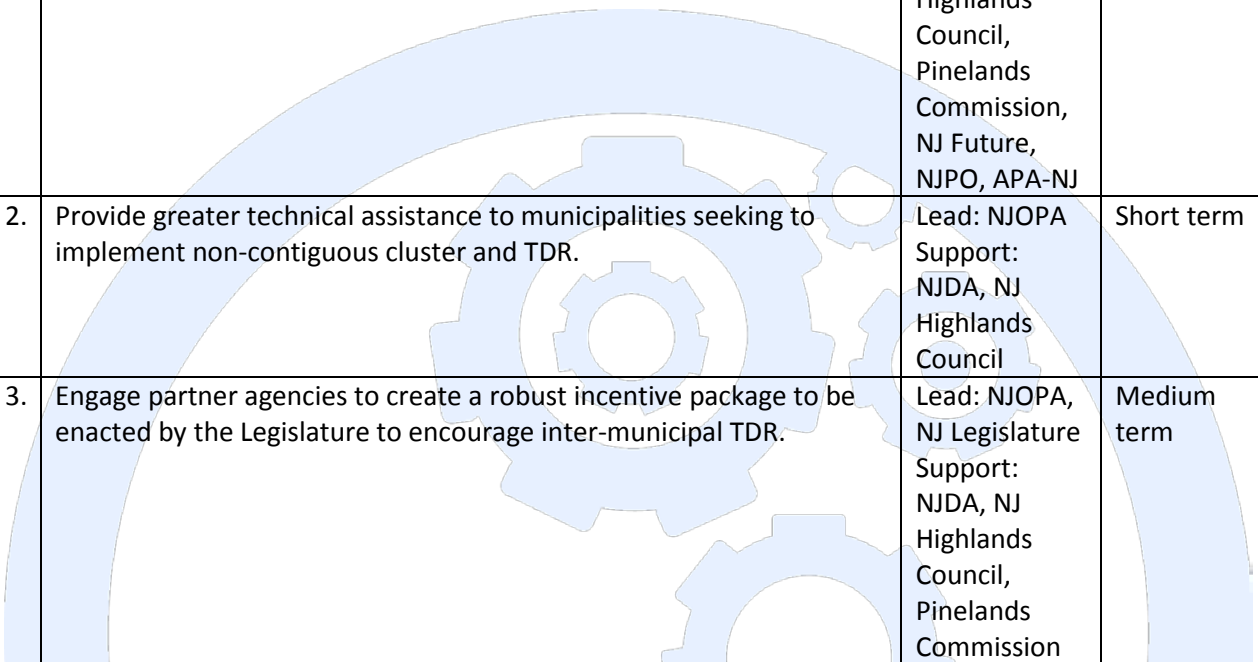
	<u>Actions:</u>	<u>Suggested Responsibility:</u>	<u>Timeframe:</u>
1.	Authorize necessary funding for the NJ Department of Environmental Protection to develop a comprehensive, accurate and regularly assessed brownfields inventory that documents contaminated sites, keeps records of the location of hazardous material and monitors post-remediation status and use.	NJ Legislature, NJDEP with support from NJOPA, NJEDA, municipalities, counties	Medium term
2.	Pursue a research project to develop a set of criteria (contamination, cost of remediation, location, market conditions, etc.) to determine best potential reuse of brownfield sites.	National Center for Neighborhood and Brownfield Redevelopment, Rutgers-Bloustein, other research institution	Medium term

3.	<p>Prioritize state incentives for redevelopment of brownfield sites. Specifically,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the NJ Office for Planning Advocacy Brownfields Redevelopment Interagency Team (BRIT) should review all state development funding laws and regulations to inventory existing incentives for redevelopment of brownfield sites, as well as identify and advocate for additional state-wide incentives; The NJ Environmental Infrastructure Trust should amend its regulations to provide greater grant and loan prioritization, and enhanced financing terms for infrastructure in brownfield redevelopment projects. The NJ Department of Transportation should provide extra priority points for discretionary transportation funding applications that support or are in brownfield redevelopment sites. 	NJEDA, NJDEP, NJOPA BRIT, NJDOT	Medium term
4.	Expand Brownfield Area Wide Planning (AWP) Grant program to include properties with known responsible parties in order to facilitate better local planning.	NJEPA	Long term



Strategy 5.4: Expand the use of innovative planning tools that promote smart development

What and why. There are a number of planning tools that can help encourage “smart” land development. Traditional examples include performance-based zoning, design standards and guidelines, and redevelopment plans. Other less often used tools include: “form-based codes”, noncontiguous cluster development and Transfer of Development Rights or TDR. Form-based codes aim to regulate the form and function of development rather than that particular use of property, essentially letting the market decide what the best use of the land is. Non-contiguous cluster development allows one parcel to be preserved while its density is transferred and instead developed on a different, non-contiguous parcel. Transfer of Development Rights moves an owner’s right to build from one site where development is prohibited or discouraged to a location more optimal for development. An important step in fostering use of these tools will be public outreach and education. We must ensure that developers, local officials and the public are aware of how these tools work and the potential benefits of using these options for development. We should also expand the level of technical assistance and incentives available to municipalities to encourage them to use these tools more frequently and appropriately in particular how the tools can be used effectively while at the same time protecting the rights of individual property owners wipeouts" of zoning, by linking added development potential to conservation.



	<u>Actions:</u>	<u>Suggested Responsibility:</u>	<u>Timeframe:</u>
1.	Partner with land use NGOs to implement an outreach campaign to educate about non-contiguous cluster and TDR.	Lead: NJOPA Support: NJDA, NJ Highlands Council, Pinelands Commission, NJ Future, NJPO, APA-NJ	Short term
2.	Provide greater technical assistance to municipalities seeking to implement non-contiguous cluster and TDR.	Lead: NJOPA Support: NJDA, NJ Highlands Council	Short term
3.	Engage partner agencies to create a robust incentive package to be enacted by the Legislature to encourage inter-municipal TDR.	Lead: NJOPA, NJ Legislature Support: NJDA, NJ Highlands Council, Pinelands Commission	Medium term