

# Bulletin #10

“You Can’t Get There From Here!”

Improving the connection between land use and transportation

March 2009

Morris County Division of Transportation



The Morris County Division of Transportation, in coordination with the Morris County Planning Board, is developing the Circulation Element of the Morris County Master Plan. This is the final in a series of ten bulletins reflecting major countywide and regional transportation issues that will be the focus of the Circulation Element. In addition to the bulletins, a technical document is being developed. This document will reflect detailed county projects, demographics, issues, and projections. It is anticipated that these broad-based bulletins will create an exchange of ideas, therefore becoming an important part of the plan's development.

#### PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED

*Bulletin #1: It's Not Cool to Drive to School – An Examination of School-Related Congestion (June 2006)*

*Bulletin #2: Putting the Brakes on Congestion! – Will it only get worse? (February 2007)*

*Bulletin #3: Not Another Accident! – Improving roadway safety and enhancing emergency response. (March 2007)*

*Bulletin #4: Exercise Your Right to Bike or Walk!! – How can we enhance the bicycle and pedestrian facilities in Morris County? (July 2007)*

*Bulletin #5: Get a move on freight, before it's too late! – Managing and supporting efficient freight movement. (September 2007)*

*Bulletin #6: It's a Bird, It's a Plane... It's Another Plane! – The importance of the aviation industry and its impact on our quality of life. (December 2007)*

*Bulletin #7: Life, liberty, and the pursuit of a parking space – How can we meet current and future transit parking demand? (February 2008)*

*Bulletin #8: All Aboard Public Transportation! – Improving access and mobility for Morris County residents through public transportation. (June 2008)*

*Bulletin #9: Got Funds? – Why isn't there enough money to fix New Jersey's transportation problems? (September 2008)*

Bulletin #10: Land use and transportation decisions help to determine where we live and work, how and where we travel, shaping the look and character of our communities. Land use decisions have been largely influenced by "single-use" zoning, a practice which separates residential, commercial, industrial and other categories of land use from each other. Along with a transportation system that has been dominated by the automobile, this approach has proved to be inefficient by consuming excessive natural and financial resources.

This bulletin, as well as the previous bulletins mentioned above, can be found on the Morris County Division of Transportation's (MCDOT) website at [www.MorrisDOT.org](http://www.MorrisDOT.org). Questions may be directed to Deena Cybulski of the MCDOT at [mcdot@co.morris.nj.us](mailto:mcdot@co.morris.nj.us) or by using the contact information provided below.

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# You Can't Get There From Here!



## Improving the connection between land use and transportation

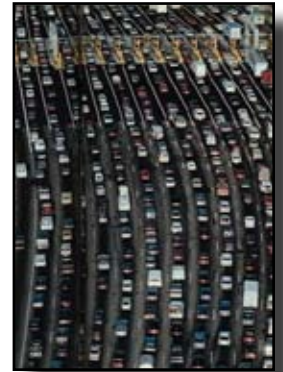
struction of the interstate highway system, the constant separation of uses has led to the growth of low-density, large-lot developments, which are connected only by roads and highways, and are void of public transit options. Otherwise known as sprawl development, this growth model created an auto-dominated society in which most of us now live and which is becoming increasingly unsustainable.



Land use and transportation decisions help to determine where we live and work, how and where we travel, shaping the look and character of our communities. These decisions are implemented through adoption of local zoning ordinances and development standards which define acceptable land use types and locations, densities of development, building heights and sizes and the relationship between structures. The connection between land use and transportation dictate the type and design of travel options, the level of access, and degree of connectivity. However, for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the connections between land use and transportation were often given little consideration.

Land use decisions have been largely influenced by “single-use” zoning, a practice which separates residential, commercial, industrial and other categories of land use from each other. Single-use zoning gained a strong hold after WWII as government policies, such as increased highway construction and subsidized mortgages for veterans, provided incentives for movement from the cities to the suburbs. However, after several decades of implementing this approach, single-use zoning proved to be inefficient and an excessive consumer of valuable land and natural and financial resources. Combined with the con-

The public may recognize the connection between land use and transportation most readily when seeking housing in proximity to places of employment. In Morris County, rising costs have forced many individuals and families to seek more affordable housing options outside of the county. According to the 2000 Census approximately 50% of the employees working in Morris County commute from outside the county, compared to 27% in 1970. The search for affordable housing has influenced commuting patterns, a condition the real estate market refers to as “drive until you qualify.” As housing prices continue to rise, the need to travel further from one’s job to find affordable housing generates increased sprawl and congestion.



In order to break away from this inefficient and costly growth model, local community leaders and planning professionals need to embrace a more comprehensive approach to land use and transportation planning which recognizes and addresses the connections between these concerns. One way of increasing this connectivity is through the use of flexible zoning practices, which provide an adaptable approach to address the sometimes competing interests of land use and transportation. Flexible zoning practices permit municipalities to more readily address physical constraints, changing markets and demographic trends. The benefits of flexible and mixed-use zoning are becoming more apparent as communities begin to redevelop.

In 2003, London put in place a £5 (about \$9) a day congestion charge for all cars that entered the center city (the charge is now £8). This led to an immediate drop of 70,000 cars a day in the affected zone. Traffic congestion fell by almost 20 percent. Emissions of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide were cut by more than 15%.

NY TIMES  
Clear Up the Congestion-Pricing Gridlock, By KEN LIVINGSTONE,  
Published: July 2, 2007



The Transit Village concept, NJ's version of Transit Oriented Development (TOD), is an example of how flexible zoning may be implemented through the complementary planning of residential and commercial mixed-use in association with their transportation requirements. Transit Villages have been designated in Morristown and Netcong with Dover pursuing the Transit Village concept. In the case of Morristown, new flexible zoning policies permit a mix of commercial and high density residential development adjacent to the Morristown Train Station. These standards will result in the creation of a high-density, mixed-use neighborhood within walking distance of the train station and the surrounding commercial core. This type of development results in a more efficient use of land and less reliance on motor vehicles. Netcong is currently planning for the same style of development next to it's train station.

NJ ADMINISTRATIVE CODE  
TITLE 5, CHAPTER 21  
RESIDENTIAL SITE IMPROVEMENT STANDARDS  
<http://www.state.nj.us/dca/codes/nj-rsis/index.shtml>

The relationship between land use and transportation should also be considered within the context of detailed site design. For example, the NJ Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS) defines technical standards for residential subdivisions and site improvements, and

addresses such issues as road design, storm water management, parking ratios and pavement widths. The RSIS permit municipalities the flexibility to develop alternative standards

in consideration of distinctive local characteristics and environmental features. Therefore, municipalities should consider the RSIS a starting point from which they build their own location-specific standards in support of the unique character of their community.

Flexible zoning must be joined by alternative transportation options if we are to shift away from an auto-dominated system. Land use must be coordinated with a transportation system that provides better flexibility and expanded transportation opportunities. Increased investments in walking, bicycling, and public transit would reduce roadway congestion, traffic accidents, roadway maintenance, and parking needs, while saving time, money, and energy. For example, the investment made by NJ Transit for the "Midtown Direct" service from Dover Station to Penn Station in Manhattan provides commuters an option that reduces travel time, is more predictable, and is less stressful than commuting to Manhattan by car.

This shift from an auto-dominated society can only be realized when more compact and mixed use development becomes more widely employed and when viable alternatives to driving are made integral to the overall transportation system. The key to making these alternatives more attractive and viable will be to make them convenient, reliable, and affordable when compared to driving. In addition to expanding transit service and building walkways and bike paths, support amenities, such as pedestrian oriented lighting, bike parking, and bus shelters can be provided through zoning requirements to make alternative transportation a more convenient alternative.

Creating a comprehensive and unified approach to land use and transportation needs remains a challenge. At the local level these decisions are often made without sufficient regard to the connectivity between land use and transportation. A more cohesive relationship can be achieved by evaluating and comparing a variety of transportation options and a mix of land uses to determine which combination works best to meet local needs and goals. This approach will allow local leaders to gain a better understanding of the magnitude these decisions have by comparing costs and evaluating which are the most feasible and financially viable.

The following proposals strive to achieve connectivity between land use and transportation.





# Proposals



## 1 ♦ Encourage Regional Planning of Land Use and Transportation Through Partnerships

Develop partnerships between municipalities, counties, state, and regional agencies to assess and address land use and transportation needs.

### COUNTY ACTIONS

- ▶ *Coordinate with municipalities to provide planning and technical assistance to develop comprehensive circulation plans and complementary master plans and zoning ordinances that achieve regional goals.*
- ▶ *Coordinate with Morris County Economic Development Corporation and transportation industries to ensure regional transportation and land uses are consistent with employment needs.*
- ▶ *Coordinate with regional agencies such as NJDOT, NJ Transit, NJTPA and the Highlands Council to assess regional goals.*
- ▶ *Coordinate with Morris County's Transportation Management Association, TransOptions, to promote ridesharing, travel demand management strategies, and sustainable transportation choices.*



### GENERAL ACTIONS

- ▶ *Establish an ongoing dialog between neighboring governments to discuss land use planning and transportation infrastructure cost sharing opportunities.*
- ▶ *Partner with employers to assess mutual transportation and land use needs.*

## 2 ♦ Increase Efficiency of the Transportation System

Improve the efficiency of existing transportation infrastructure by accommodating all travel modes.

### COUNTY ACTIONS

- ▶ *Support policies and programs that provide for a range of transportation options as part of new development and redevelopment efforts.*
- ▶ *Provide case studies that verify and promote efficient transportation systems using features such as bike networks, improved transit access, and flexible zoning ordinances.*



- ▶ Provide technical assistance and coordination with regional agencies to ensure transportation and land use policies are consistent with mutual goals and objectives such as energy independence, improved air and water quality, reduction of greenhouse gases, affordable housing, economic growth, and universal access.
- ▶ Utilize the Morris County Bicycle & Pedestrian Element of the Master Plan to assist municipalities with advancing priority plans and improvements.



## GENERAL ACTIONS

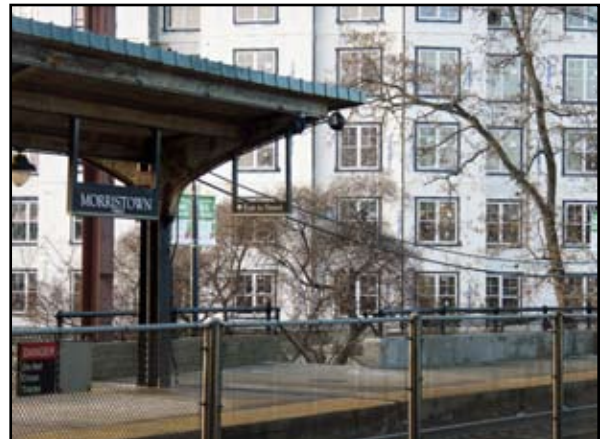
- ▶ Provide expanded transit services in high demand areas which are currently underserved.

# 3. Support an Efficient Transportation System and Use of Natural Resources Through Land Use Planning

Encourage land use policies and practices that reduce the demand for resources and infrastructure investment.

## COUNTY ACTIONS

- ▶ Support the designation and development of Transit Oriented Development (known as Transit Villages in New Jersey) in communities such as Dover, Madison, Boonton, and Lincoln Park.
- ▶ Ensure state and federal funds are targeted toward strategies and priorities that improve the connection between land use and transportation.
- ▶ Preserve and protect rail and roadway rights-of-way for future transit use and multi-modal access.
- ▶ Encourage mixed land uses and support services that promote and enhance pedestrian accessibility, street connectivity, and convenient transit services.
- ▶ Control access management to minimize conflict points and maintain quality of road edge, landscaping, and community context.



## GENERAL ACTIONS

- ▶ Implement flexible zoning standards.
- ▶ Implement incentive zoning that enables and encourages mixed land uses and multi-modal transportation choices.
- ▶ Provide a variety of employment, housing, and transportation options within mixed use developments.
- ▶ Promote the Live Where You Work (LWYW) program, a home mortgage incentive program (currently available in Morristown) that provides low-interest mortgage loans to homebuyers purchasing homes in towns where they are employed.
- ▶ Evaluate feasibility of establishing a scenic corridor program to identify and retain critical components.



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