September
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Regional **Plan** Association
NJ CT NY

Design Matters:

The **June 2005** New Jersey Mayors' Institute on Community Design

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New Jersey Committee

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Regional Plan Association

Regional Plan Association (RPA) is an independent, not-for-profit regional planning organization that improves the quality of life and the economic competitiveness of the 31-county New York-New Jersey-Connecticut region through research, planning, and advocacy. For more than 80 years, RPA has been shaping transportation systems, protecting open spaces, and promoting better community design for the region's continued growth. We anticipate the challenges the region will face in the years to come, and we mobilize the region's civic, business, and government sectors to take action.

The nation's most influential independent regional planning organization since 1922, RPA has a storied history but is more relevant than ever in the 21st Century. RPA's First Plan in 1929 provided the blueprint for the transportation and open space networks that we take for granted today. The Second Plan, completed in 1968, was instrumental in restoring our deteriorated mass transit system, preserving threatened natural resources and revitalizing our urban centers. Released in 1996, RPA's Third Regional Plan, "A Region at Risk," warned that new global trends had fundamentally altered New York's national and global position. The plan called for building a seamless 21st century mass transit system, creating a three-million acre Greensward network of protected natural resource systems, maintaining half the region's employment in urban centers, and assisting minority and immigrant communities to fully participate in the economic mainstream.

RPA's current work is aimed largely at implementing the ideas put forth in the Third Regional Plan, with efforts focused in five project areas: community design, open space, transportation, workforce and the economy, and housing.

Project staff

June 2005 New Jersey Mayors' Institute Resource Team

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Modeled on the national Mayors' Institute on City Design, the New Jersey Institute provides a multi-day retreat for six mayors and a resource team of design and planning professionals. The mayors present planning and design issues that each community is facing, and then participate in a wide-ranging discussion. While addressing the specific concerns raised by the mayors, the resource team members also describe in broader terms how they have approached similar problems. Using examples from other communities, the mayors and resource team members learn from each other.

The Mayors' Institute offers public officials the rare opportunity to discuss a planning issue facing their community with a group of peers and some of the most respected designers and planners in the country. These Institutes focus particular attention on the relationship between community planning and public health, and how better design and development can create healthy, livable communities. Experts in public health participate in the Institute discussions, providing presentations and analyses of how alternative development patterns impact the health of communities.

The June 23-25, 2005, N.J. Mayors' Institute, held at Princeton University, focused particular attention on how better design can promote both smart growth and healthy communities. For those municipalities with downtowns, the Institute emphasized the opportunities for redevelopment as well as a more active lifestyle.

The Mayors
To date, mayors from forty-four municipalities throughout New Jersey have participated in the program. These communities include: Asbury Park, Bordentown, Buena Vista Township, Burlington City, Collingswood, Commercial, Denville, East Orange, Eatontown, Fair Lawn, Greenwich, Hackensack, Highland Park, Hightstown, Hope, Lambertville, Lawrence, Lindenwold, Lumberton, Maplewood, Merchantville, Metuchen, Montgomery, Mount Holly, New Milford, Old Bridge, Oxford, Paterson, Plainfield, Pleasantville, Princeton Township, Prospect Park, Red Bank, River Vale, Rutherford, Somerville, South Amboy, South Bound Brook, Stafford, Tinton Falls, Vineland, Washington Township (Bergen County), West Amwell, and West Windsor.

June 2005 Mayoral Participants
Hon. Patrick J. Brennan, Merchantville Borough
Hon. Charles "Chuck" Chiarello,
Buena Vista Township
Hon. David L. Ganz, Borough of Fair Lawn
Hon. William W. Kubofcik,
Prospect Park Borough
Hon. Alex Lazorisak, Oxford Township
Hon. Pamela Mount, Lawrence Township

Case Studies
The six case studies presented by the mayors were organized into the following categories, which are described in greater detail further in this report:

• making connections;
• creating mixed-use centers;
• linking community design and rehabilitation/ infill.

The most basic lesson for the mayors is to think beyond the confines of their problem, beyond the boundaries of the individual development sites or problem areas to the larger neighborhood or community planning framework. This emphasis on making connections – physical and programmatic – to the larger context is also a fundamental precept of healthy community design.

Resource Team Presentations
Each Institute begins with presentations by members of the resource team. These presentations introduce the mayors to the concepts of community design, educate them in the tools employed by professional planners, and frame the subsequent discussion.

Pratap Talwar, a principal in The Thompson Design Group, began the Institute with a lecture on the principles of urban design. Using photos and other graphics, Mr. Talwar reminded the mayors of the opportunities the community can seize through development or redevelopment.

Elliott Rhodeside, Director and Co-Founder of Rhodeside and Harwell Inc., gave a presentation on the benefits of integrating sustainable landscape design into community planning efforts. By incorporating sustainability as a principle into smart growth efforts, mayors can capture the support and imagination of their community while protecting natural resources.

Brent C. Barnes, NJDOT Transportation Systems Planning Director and former President of the N.J. Chapter of the American Planning Association, offered a primer on techniques for creating pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly communities. With drawings and photographs, Mr. Barnes reminded mayors that engineering standards can be used flexibly to create more livable communities. He also distributed reports on redevelopment, transportation planning and other land-use applications. He offered the participant mayors the assistance of NJDOT wherever opportunities are presented to improve pedestrian or bicycle activity through improved transportation infrastructure planning.

Leah C. Healey, a partner at the law firm Maraziti, Falcon & Healey LLP, explained the benefits of redevelopment to municipalities. Using the legal framework afforded to mayors in New Jersey, Ms. Healey emphasized the importance of leadership and vision to creating opportunities to remake downtowns and areas that might be economically underutilized.

Keynote Addresses

The keynote address at the Institute, the highlight of the program, is delivered by a distinguished figure in the field of planning and design. Open to the public, it draws a wide audience of elected officials, business leaders, civic activists, experts and the media, in addition to the Institute's participants and resources team. Its goal is to introduce the mayors to the best community design practices in the world.

The Keynote Address for the June Institute was delivered by the the **Honorable Richard N. Swett**, former Congressman and U.S. Ambassador to Denmark. Ambassador Swett recently wrote a book, *Leadership By Design*, to encourage elected and appointed officials, as well as architects, planners and others in the design profession to take a more active role in their communities.

As Ambassador to Denmark, Richard Swett became acutely aware of how a community could look if planning and design were taken into consideration in every piece of legislation, every development, and every action that took place in that community. The Danes taught him how to see and appreciate design and to recognize that it could be successfully implemented in an open planning process. The problem, according to Ambassador Swett, is that the United States has an inconsistent record for design as well as a poor reputation internationally due to the bad examples many of us are trying to correct in this country.

As a diplomat, Swett recognized that one of the most effective forms of communication is the sharing of best practices. Through such sharing, a broader understanding of the effort is created and a variety of contributions is absorbed and ultimately implemented by the people who participate in these discussions. Such sharing is what the Mayors' Institute is all about.
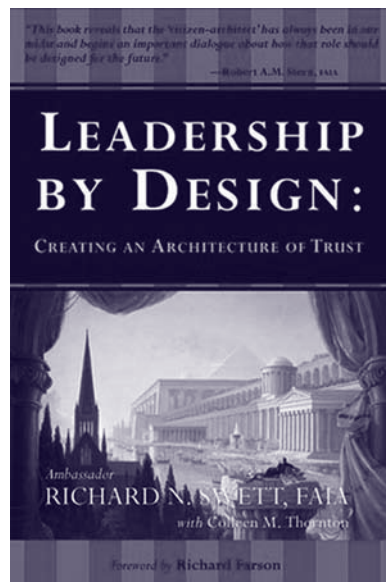
New Jerseyans are aware of the important role that community design and planning have played in the history of our country. At the time of our country's birth, the world was at a loss as to what direction it should take; democracy was a new idea and our Founding Fathers were contending with powerful nations with rigid controls that, in turn, were themselves dealing with the new notion of independence, individual rights and democracy. Our forefathers – men like Thomas Jefferson, an architect in the broadest sense of the word – understood the multitude of competing forces and interlocking pieces that compose our communities and our nation.

What we are facing today, according to Swett, is a similar type of risk to our nation because we live in a time when our leaders no longer possess the broad mind that our Founding Fathers once possessed. That has come about mainly because we have accentuated the divisions among us. Swett noted that we need to find leaders who are able to appreciate the wide complexity of our society. The most practical place for this leadership to be applied is at the mayor's position. Mayors understand that they have the broad responsibility to the entire community to unite and integrate all aspects of that community's life.

Swett recounted that there were many people who were anxious about issues that they couldn't clearly articulate. These anxieties stem from not knowing where they, as individuals, fit in; not understanding where the community should be growing; and why there are still contentions between groups that ought to have been resolved by this point in history. As an architect, Swett was taught to recognize that current practices are creating places that separate and alienate people. Unfortunately, many leaders are unable to understand the need for integration and, as a result, are physically shaping communities that divide rather than unite.

Swett then identified several basic components of good leadership which he called the four building blocks of leadership.

People who wish to be leaders must be able to bring information together from a variety of sources such as the internet, cable television and newspapers and be able to make sense of it. We need people who are able to throw away the unnecessary and get to the information that is important and to structure that information into a format that helps solve the problem.

Sustainability and environmental design must also be a central part of anything a community leader does. Swett noted that

this component is going to continue to increase in importance in the future.

Security requires a broad vision in order to be handled appropriately. Jersey barriers can be constructed anywhere, but that is not a real solution. Swett held that we have to take broader perspectives when dealing with security than just the obvious approach.

Rebuilding community is the most difficult issue, but in the long term it is the one that will have the greatest impact. Swett suggested that one way to rebuild a community is to address the issue of our country's aging infrastructure. By doing so, we have an opportunity to help the businesses of those communities thereby strengthening the local and national economy.

Swett said leadership is not really about ideas, but about people. We've seen in many of our Presidential campaigns the importance of charisma, the importance of a person's approach.

While in Denmark, Swett was afforded the opportunity to watch that country deal with its growing urban centers. Under the leadership of the mayor of Copenhagen, Denmark decided to greatly expand economic opportunities in the vicinity of Copenhagen's airport. The challenge was to develop infrastructure on what happened to be the largest urban bird sanctuary in Europe. By negotiating with the local residents and rededicating funding, Copenhagen's leaders were able to meet their economic development goals while still preserving the sanctuary that had grown up around what was once a munitions dump and firing range. They cleaned up brownfields and disposed of unspent munitions without disrupting the bird sanctuary, and put in infrastructure in such a way that would attract people to come.

Scandinavians are not just interested in the built environment; they place a great value on design. To them, it is much more than an aesthetic consideration, it is an economic engine and an ecological statement because something that is well designed is utilized longer and does not need to be thrown away as early. These are design concepts Swett thought everyone should adopt.

Today, a few organizations such as Projects for Public Spaces and Plan New Hampshire are working to apply these concepts in the U.S. What is unique about the latter is that it is a commission of organizations of architects, engineers, contractors and developers, bankers and anyone who touches the built environment process. Plan New Hampshire's goal is to bring that expertise together in one organization that goes into communities three times a year to helps resolve issues by bring-

ing the community into the exercise and encouraging its participation. Ambassador Swett believes that such a process builds a bridge of trust.

If we can provide the leadership that is lacking today, Swett holds that we have a tremendous opportunity for creating not just better spaces where people interact and get to know each other, but also a better society. Swett concluded that we had only the choice within ourselves to do that because if we did not try, the next generation would reap the fruit of our indifference.

CASE STUDIES:
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The six case studies were organized into the following categories: making connections, creating mixed-use centers, and linking community design and rehabilitation or infill opportunities. The most basic lesson for each of the mayors was to think beyond the confines of his or her problem – beyond the boundaries of the individual development sites or problem areas to the larger neighborhood or community planning framework. In a number of case studies, two or more categories were applicable, and the recommendations seek to implement the vision of a comprehensive approach to creating healthier communities and a higher quality of life.

Making Connections
The healthy communities agenda is represented in each of the problems the mayors present. In the broadest sense, the healthy communities agenda is represented in that most fundamental of urban design principles – the need to establish a relationship to context. This emphasis on making connections – physical and programmatic – to a larger context is also a fundamental precept of healthy community design. The physical connections – new sidewalks, connecting streets, greenways – are not just physical relationships but ways of promoting alternative forms of mobility, including biking and walking, that are fundamental to active community design. The programmatic connections are equally important, demonstrating the ways in which single-purpose facilities can be used by different constituencies at different times of the day, enabling these facilities to be mixed-use in time as well as space. It is clear that the larger urban design and healthy community agendas share a reliance on new and unorthodox partnerships which are the key to the complex implementation strategies needed to bring them about. In a number of the case studies below, making connections in successful, well-established communities requires shared goals, an open and comprehensive planning process and design codes that replicate the best of these towns while requiring a higher standard for new investments.

Lawrence The challenge was to establish and promote a Main Street atmosphere along a State highway by encouraging mixed-use development, slowing car traffic, creating pleasing streetscapes, enhancing pedestrian circulation, and making linkages to nearby community facilities. With many fine examples of quality design just north in Lawrence Township, the Institute reminded us all that design contributes to the success of a community, and that connections matter.

Merchantville This case study involved the potential redevelopment of two downtown sites – currently used primarily for surface parking – in a way that contributes positively to the economy and atmosphere of the borough's historic center by providing much-needed parking and a well-designed mixture of commercial and residential spaces. Much like in the Lawrence example, this case study builds on a successful community's approach to enhancing its downtown by stressing linkages as well as critical investments in infrastructure and development to enhance the community's quality of life.

Creating Mixed-Use Centers
Another related urban design theme that is also a principal precept of a healthy community design is the creation of mixed-use centers – again, mixed use broadly conceived in time and space – and the connections from these centers to the surrounding neighborhoods.

Buena Vista Township Here, the Institute demonstrated how the redevelopment of a key section of the municipality – Richland Village – could serve as a commercial and cultural attraction that would draw local residents and tourists from the Atlantic City/South Jersey Shore region. With the potential of passenger rail service and a charming setting of natural and built attractions, Buena Vista is poised to take advantage of market conditions that make this area attractive to further development. Demanding a higher quality of development through design criteria and an open planning process is the challenge.

Linking Community Design and Rehabilitation/Infill
Finally, several of the case studies at the Mayors' Institute are in communities where redevelopment or infill projects can transform the community. Often, these projects are proposed for areas with former uses that bring special challenges; other times, they evolve from market forces or a reuse of property. Sometimes, these projects occur in the least likely of places. However, in just about every case, the healthy communities agenda is appropriate in meeting the challenges of auto dependency and neighborhood design.

Oxford Township This case study considered redeveloping a textile mill site and making a State highway safer to cross so that downtown expansion and residential development can be accommodated in a way that both strengthens the historic village center while preserving the township's natural environment. In addition, Oxford is considering ways to transfer development rights to meet the goals of the Highlands Conservation Act. The challenge is to promote design considerations in a community that would benefit from redeveloping brownfield and greyfield sites, in a region that looks to preserve water and land.

Prospect Park Redeveloping a soon-to-be abandoned quarry so that it bolsters the borough's tax base while emphasizing the quarry's unique features and connecting the site to the existing neighborhoods, recreational facilities, and the town's business district was the challenge identified. Any successful effort will require an incremental, phased approach to ensure that the process and end result be understood and accepted by the community. Prospect Park is also looking to engage in a transfer-of-development rights program with communities in the Highlands, and could be one of the first towns to benefit from this new program.

Fair Lawn This case study explored ways to capitalize on redevelopment opportunities in the Radburn neighborhood to create new housing, retail and other development that meets the needs of area residents and the region while enhancing the neighborhood's historic character and linking it to the High School and the Recreation/Arts Center. Fair Lawn is facing conflicts between the potential for significant new development and neighbor pleas to preserve open lands, all along a much used rail corridor and on land whose value far exceeds the current vacant status. The Mayors' Institute provided an opportunity for the Mayor and Resource Team to exchange ideas, learn from the other case studies, and encourage additional ideas for consideration.

CASE STUDIES

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP
Mayor Pamela Mount
Mercer County

Square Miles	37.5
Population	29,159

KEY ISSUES

• Identify redevelopment opportunities for underutilized parcels.

• Highlight ways to create safe pedestrian connections through the corridor.

• Institute appropriate design guidelines to help unify and strengthen the aesthetic character of the Route 206 commercial district.

• Develop a well coordinated parking plan that creates a mixture of on- and off-street parking for area businesses.

PROBLEM STATEMENT Establish and promote a Main Street atmosphere along a Route 206 commercial corridor by encouraging mixed-use development, slowing car traffic, creating pleasing streetscapes, enhancing pedestrian circulation, and making linkages to nearby community facilities.

BACKGROUND Halfway between New York and Philadelphia and just north of Trenton, Lawrence is a suburban township with almost 30,000 residents in central Mercer County. Once called Maidenhead by early Quaker settlers and renamed Lawrence in 1816 after a War of 1812 naval hero, the township played a significant role in the Revolutionary War. The Lawrenceville Historic District along Route 206 is filled with historic buildings from the Revolutionary period.

Today, Lawrence is a major transportation hub for the Trenton and Central New Jersey region. Interstates 295 and 95, and U.S. Routes 1 and 206 pass through the township, making it a desirable location for residential and commercial development. Lawrence's attractive location and its high quality of life have spurred a nearly 20% increase in population since 1990. A Main Street designation in the northern end of Lawrenceville on Route 206 during the last decade has prompted a number of streetscape improvements and new business opportunities. The Lawrence School, a private boarding school, anchors that area of town.

Lawrence has undertaken efforts to strengthen other key parts of the township recently, with one focus being the improvement of a stretch of Route 206 between Jasper and Meadowbrook Avenues in southern Lawrence. While a number of homes date back one or two centuries, the area lacks any formal historic designation or regulation. Though it is an active neighborhood commercial district, it lacks a strong sense of visual or physical cohesion and is a difficult area for pedestrian movement – especially crossing Route 206. By taking steps to unify this corridor and make it safer for pedestrians, it will become a more attractive place for nearby residents and others to visit.

RESOURCE TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS
The improvement of the study area on Route 206 should occur in two phases. The first phase should focus on public realm enhancements to make the area more attractive for private investment. A plan detailing the placement of street trees, building setbacks, and identifying elements (common materials or graphics) would be helpful in guiding this effort.

Specific recommendations for improving the public realm in the study area include: making the commercial corridor on Route 206 more visually distinct from the residential areas that border it to the north and south, therefore giving it a firmer identity; the establishment of mid-block alleys to give the area a more pedestrian scale while improving access to individual sites; and the creation of a greenway connection from the High School and Route 206 to the trolley path a quarter mile west to improve pedestrian and bicycle access while providing a recreational amenity.

Once enhancements to the study area's public spaces are implemented, a second phase of redevelopment can begin in which the range of activities (residential, commercial, and civic) and the overall density of the Route 206 corridor are increased. To encourage mixed-use and higher density development where residential units would exist above ground floor commercial spaces, the township may wish to implement "performance zoning," which provides greater flexibility for developers than traditional zoning while setting certain performance standards that help a community achieve its objectives for a parcel or area. A live-work ordinance might also encourage such investments, though the development of buildings to an appropriate height of 3 or 4 stories may require the use of parking incentives (e.g., a "bonus floor" exempt from on-site parking requirements).

To enhance the variety of activities in the study area, it makes sense to leverage two existing assets. One is the fire station, which occupies a prominent parcel on the east side of Route 206. Though it already hosts some community and civic functions unrelated to firefighting, the township should consider adding activities to this space – possibly through building expansion – to reinforce the station as a vibrant focal point for the commercial corridor. A second major asset is Rider University and its 5,500 students. Catering to this currently untapped population with expanded commercial and residential options along Route 206 could serve as a real catalyst.

While parking must be an essential part of plans for redevelopment, there is already enough surface parking in the study area to support significant new development. A shared parking strategy with nearby churches, whose large parking lots are often empty, would help ensure adequate parking for residents and customers of new buildings. At the same time, the establishment of short-term parking on Route 206 would add to the parking supply while helping to calm traffic on that busy roadway. This would improve the pedestrian atmosphere and make Route 206 easier to cross, as would the dual-signalization of some of the study area's zigzag intersections and the addition of a round-about or similar traffic "obstruction." Any new off-street parking facilities should be well-hidden behind buildings.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Create greenway connections to the High School.

Create a pedestrian-oriented Main Street environment between Lawrenceville Road (Rt. 206) along Eldridge Avenue and Lawn Park Avenue.

Create linkages between parking lots behind stores.

Design a new public space at the intersection of Meriline Avenue-Gainsboro Road and Lawrenceville Road (Rt. 206).

MERCHANTVILLE BOROUGH
Mayor Patrick J. Brennan
Camden County

Square Miles 0.6
Population 3,801

KEY ISSUES

• Identify ways to assist the physical and visual integration of the redevelopment, especially the parking components, with the historic character of the downtown and the borough.

• Evaluate design options for the interface between the Chestnut Avenue side of the redevelopment, the Merchantville Mile greenway, and the historic train station.

PROBLEM STATEMENT Redevelop two downtown sites – currently used primarily for surface parking – in a way that contributes positively to the economy and atmosphere of the borough's historic center by providing much-needed parking and a well-designed mixture of commercial and residential spaces.

BACKGROUND Situated in northwestern Camden County, six miles east of Philadelphia, the Borough of Merchantville is a mature urban community of 3,800 residents. The borough's initial development was spurred by the arrival of the Camden and Burlington Railroad in the 1860s. By the time Merchantville was incorporated in 1874, it was a growing residential suburb of stately Victorian homes and a business district which served as the commercial hub for surrounding towns such as Pennsauken and Cherry Hill. Another round of residential development came after the completion of the Ben Franklin Bridge from Camden to Philadelphia in 1926.

For the past several decades, Merchantville has been built-out, with its 0.6 square miles fully blanketed by quiet residential streets and a lively commercial core. The borough's population has held steady at approximately 4,000 residents since the Great Depression, indicating a general stability for most of the 20th century. In recent years, Merchantville has made considerable efforts to maintain and enhance the vitality of its neighborhoods, especially its downtown. Streetscape and façade enhancements have improved the appearance of downtown streets, particularly Center Street, while a new senior housing development has brought life to a former lumber yard on Chestnut Avenue. Merchantville joined New Jersey's Main Street program in 1995.

Currently, the borough is focusing on the redevelopment of two adjacent sites in downtown Merchantville as part of its Merchantville Towne Centre East Redevelopment Plan. At present, the sites are used primarily for surface parking and are seen as opportunities to add to downtown's residential and commercial bases while expanding its parking capacity. By adding to the density of the business district and possibly attracting a major retail anchor tenant, the redevelopment is expected to enhance the downtown's economy and regional profile.

RESOURCE TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS
The revitalization of the two sites identified by the borough's redevelopment plan (a triangular site used primarily for municipal and bank parking, and an adjacent parking lot owned – but rarely used – by Verizon) would serve to strengthen and reinforce what is already a vibrant and distinctive downtown. That being said, it is crucial that any redevelopment

show sensitivity for the historic features and scale of the existing cityscape.

The triangular site (bounded by Park Avenue, Center Street, and the Merchantville Mile greenway along Chestnut Avenue) is rife with opportunities and challenges. A mixture of uses, including residential, commercial, civic, and parking, have been earmarked for the site within a new low-rise building. The most challenging design aspect of such a structure will be the treatment of its frontage along the Merchantville Mile and Chestnut Avenue, a stretch of downtown whose combination of green space, an historic railroad station, and Victorian mansions give it a unique character. As such, the façade along that side of any new structure must show careful contextual considerations: it should be exclusively residential with multiple layers and textures (possibly a Brownstone style) to match the visual interest provided by the ornate homes across the street. This residential frontage and additional landscaping should also screen parking facilities from view.

There are many possible configurations for a building on the triangular site. These include: maximizing the site through complete parcel coverage; creating small alleys or interior greenways connecting to the Merchantville Mile and Center Street; an L-shaped structure with the short leg and a small public square on Park Avenue; or an L-shaped structure with the short leg and a small public square on the Merchantville Mile.

Whatever configuration takes place on the triangular site, development on the Verizon site across Park Avenue should occur at a reduced scale, with less bulk and height than its neighbor. The building should be limited to 2 or 3 stories with additional height being transferred, if possible, to the triangular site to add to its visibility.

Along with structural design issues, circulation issues also contribute to the challenge of redevelopment. By adding to downtown's density and level of activity, development on these sites should serve as an impetus for solving the troubled intersection of Park and Chestnut avenues, possibly through the creation of a green square or round-about. The expansion of the Merchantville Mile to the east and the installation of a signaled bicycle crossing where the greenway crosses Center Street could naturally coincide with that project. To ensure that circulation issues correspond with good design, it is important that access to a new parking facility on the triangular site be limited to Park Avenue so that the character of Center Street and the greenway can be maintained.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Chestnut St.

Greenway

Apts

Parking

Section sketch

Apts

Chestnut St.

Greenway
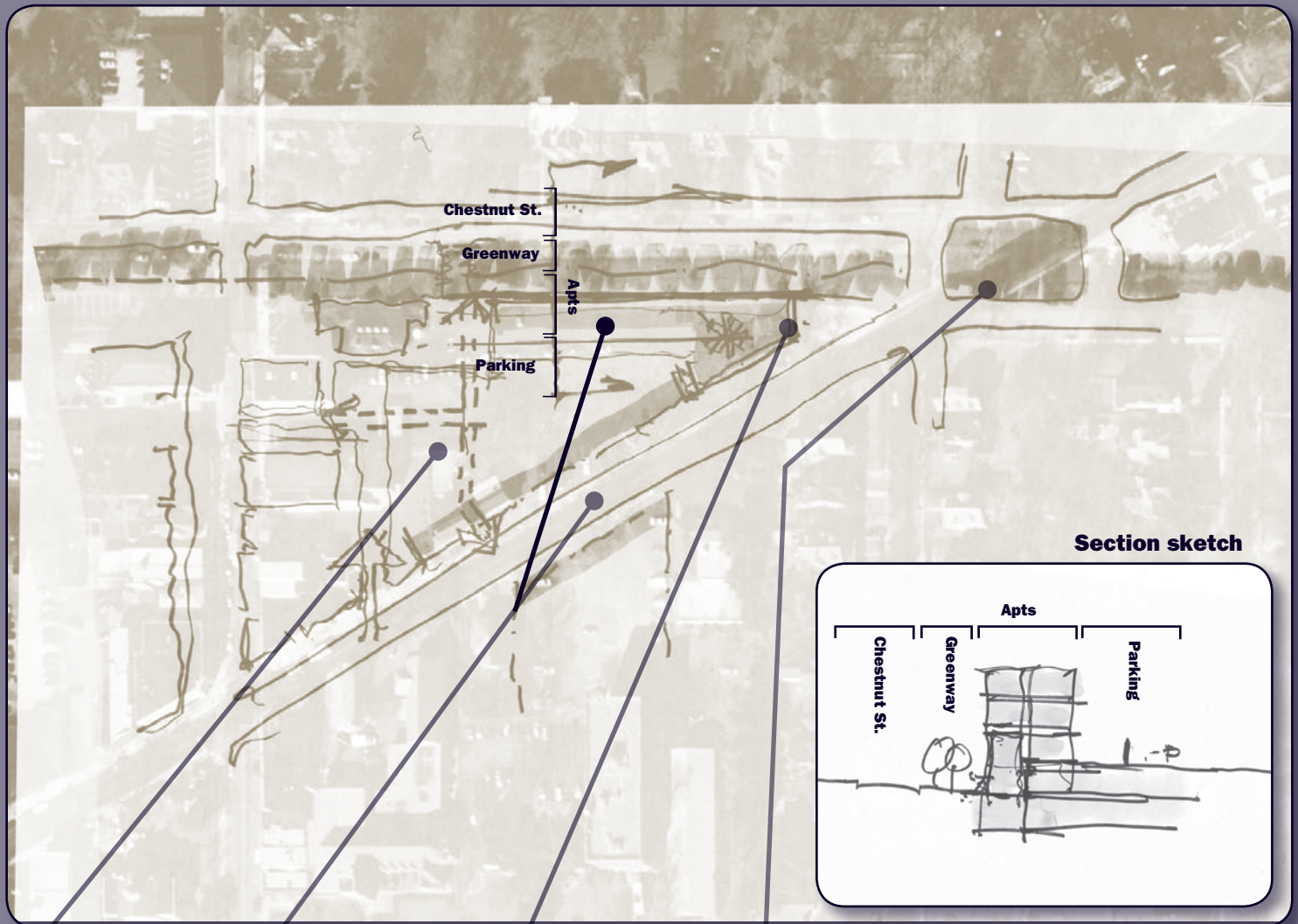
Parking

Maintain small pedestrian alleyways through the block, including potential connections through the new development.

Line the parking deck with activities so that the new development has pedestrian frontages on both principal orientations, Center Street as well as Chestnut Avenue and its greenway. (See section sketch)

Massing should respond to the gateway corner at Park and Chestnut.

Re-organize the intersection of Park and Chestnut to rationalize traffic and create a public space.

BUENA VISTA TOWNSHIP

Mayor Charles "Chuck" Chiarello
Atlantic County

Square Miles	42
Population	7,436

KEY ISSUES

• Identify a central theme around which design guidelines and business attraction strategies can be crafted in order to provide the Village with a sense of cohesiveness.

• Evaluate various design options and ways of integrating historic elements with new development.

• Create a vision for two large town-owned tracts along Route 40.

PROBLEM STATEMENT Redevelop Richland Village as a commercial and cultural attraction that will draw local residents and especially tourists from the Atlantic City/South Jersey Shore region.

BACKGROUND Buena Vista, founded in 1867, is a township of 7,500 residents located in north-western Atlantic County, adjacent to Vineland and thirty miles northwest of Atlantic City. Nearly 90% of the township falls within New Jersey's Pinelands, a fact which underscores the township's rural character and environmental significance. Agriculture has long been the heartbeat of Buena Vista's economy, with the township producing a wide range of fruits and vegetables for export to regional markets. Though dominated by farms, there are a number of small residential and commercial clusters scattered throughout the township, including Newtonville, Milmay, and Richland.

In recent years, efforts have been made to revitalize Buena Vista's historic commercial centers, a critical task given the restrictions that limit development in the Pinelands. A major focus of these revitalization efforts is Richland Village, a small settlement founded in 1880 after the construction of the West Jersey and Atlantic Railroad. During the early 20th century, Richland was a center of commerce and activity for surrounding farms, a role which the Richland General Store has been playing to this day. The settlement never grew to its founders' expectations, however, and the street grid around which Richland is organized is filled with empty lots that have never been developed.

Helping Richland achieve its full potential is now the mission of a redevelopment plan spearheaded by the township. Centered on the railroad line that gave rise to the village, the plan seeks to revitalize and grow Richland as a local commercial center and a regional tourist attraction. Returning passenger service to the rail line in the form of tourist trains is a significant element of the plan, as is the beautification of Route 40 (the main road through town), the adaptive reuse of unique and historic structures, and the construction of new commercial and residential structures to attract tourists and town residents. Thus far, the township has purchased over 40% of the land within the redevelopment area and secured funding for streetscape improvements along Route 40, a public parking lot next to the General Store, and a small park. Establishing a general theme around which to attract commercial outlets, cultural exhibits, and visitors is an important and undecided part of the plan.

RESOURCE TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

A major thoroughfare to Atlantic City, the Route 40 corridor in Richland must be calmed in order to create a friendly atmosphere for pedestrians and pedestrian-oriented commerce. The recently completed streetscape enhancements will go a long way toward creating this environment, but other steps can be taken. Providing on-street parking would slow traffic and provide clearly accessible stopping points for through-traffic, thus enhancing the safety and commercial visibility of the corridor and making it more conducive to high-quality development. In addition, utilizing the area between the on-street parking area and the sidewalk for a unique rainwater absorption system – or "bio-swale" – has the potential to collect run-off, provide a distinctive landscaping feature, and establish Richland as a model for environmentally-sensitive development in the Pinelands region.

Environmental stewardship is just one theme that Richland can genuinely embrace and sell to the world. Buena Vista also has an opportunity to retain and cultivate the community's agricultural and rural character. By enhancing the existing feed mill and chicken coops, and leveraging the drawing power of nearby farmer's markets and vineyards, visitors can be attracted to something both interesting and authentic. Along that vein, the proposed Oak Tree Park should be kept as simple as possible: a centuries-old oak tree on an open lawn with minimal distraction.

Naturally, the General Store should serve as the focal point of Richland because of its history and visibility. Enlisting this and other buildings on the national historic register would provide resources for their preservation and give added clout to design guidelines. All new buildings should be carefully designed to respect and enhance the small town atmosphere. And instead of uniform setbacks along Route 40, a streetscape of uneven setbacks, in combination with a well-landscaped bio-swale, would provide a distinctive aesthetic with varying layers and textures.

Since the General Store is the most prominent feature on Route 40 today, early development can be expected to take shape in its proximity and close to the railroad crossing – where the town controls much of the land. Though a station is absent today, the town is encouraged to continue with its plans to build a replica of the original station. The commencement of tourist service on the line to Cape May, which is likely in the near future, will make Richland an ideal destination for day trippers. Connecting the town's current and potential attractions – several bike paths are already in place – and developing a roster of

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Create a highly variegated, but nevertheless unified and coherent streetscape and landscape strategy, with parking to the sides of and behind buildings.

Make the train station area a distinctive node of activity and development.

Allow residential development in the larger study area at the same densities as the surrounding areas.

Develop greenway connections to the former rail line right-of-way.

Celebrate environmental features and employ creative best management practices for storm water management.
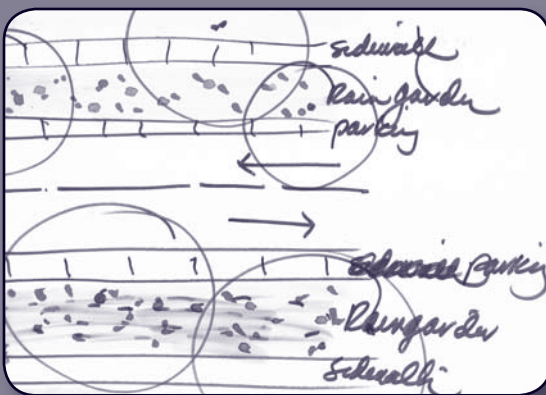
Plan Detail of Street

activities and amenities to keep a family busy for a day will be the key to taking full advantage of increased tourist activity.

Buena Vista is encouraged not to endanger commercial development on Route 40 by permitting other commercial activities – especially strip malls – elsewhere in Richland. A 50-acre parcel owned by the town in southeast Richland should have its development rights transferred to Route 40 to increase the intensity of development along that corridor.* After implementing on-street parking, the need for off-street parking will decline, thus reducing the need to sacrifice land for that purpose. And to truly be a model of smart development in the Pinelands, new residential uses should be a component of redevelopment and the town should continue to pursue wastewater treatment options to permit higher densities.

* Any recommendations outlined here should be consistent with the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan.

OXFORD TOWNSHIP
Mayor Alex Lazorisak
Warren County

Square Miles	5.9
Population	2,307

KEY ISSUES

• Determine how downtown Oxford can be expanded on the east side of Route 31 and how pedestrian flows across the busy State road can be made safer.

• Identify an appropriate density and physical configuration for residential development on the textile mill site.

• Establish a redevelopment concept for the Oxford Furnace site that meets the needs of the township and Highlands Preservation Area development guidelines.

PROBLEM STATEMENT Redevelop a textile mill site and make Route 31 safer to cross so that downtown expansion and residential development can be accommodated in a way that both strengthens the historic village center while preserving the township's natural environment.

BACKGROUND Located in central Warren County amidst the rolling hills of the Highlands, Oxford is a rural township of 2,300 residents. The town's early development was spurred by the Oxford Furnace, one of New Jersey's earliest industrial establishments. The Furnace operated for nearly 200 years (1743-1940) and contributed to the Revolutionary and Civil War efforts. By 1900, the Furnace and other industries supported a population of 3,300. By mid-century, however, the decline of the township's industrial base resulted in depopulation and economic hardship.

In recent years, accessibility to metropolitan job centers has resulted in considerable growth. The township's population expanded by almost 30 percent during the 1990s and the demand for housing – indicated by rapidly rising real estate values – is robust. The town's housing stock includes a recently built 198-unit subdivision in northeast Oxford which supplements more mature neighborhoods near the town's core. Downtown Oxford, centered on the intersection of Route 31 and Wall Street, consists of a variety of small businesses, as well as town offices, a library, an elementary/middle school, and the historic Shippen Manor.

The growth pressures affecting Oxford today present it with the challenge of accommodating growth without compromising the town's environment and quality of life. To accomplish this, Oxford is focusing on redeveloping underutilized industrial tracts adjacent to its downtown while expanding the downtown to strengthen its position as the commercial and community crossroads for the township. All of this must be done with sensitivity to Oxford's position within Highlands Preservation and Planning Areas and its designation as a village center in the State Development and Redevelopment Plan. The transfer of development rights from the town's perimeter to its more centralized redevelopment areas is a key component of this effort.

RESOURCE TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Before development plans can take shape on either side of Route 31, the highway's safety – especially to pedestrians – must be addressed. Currently, Route 31 is too wide and traffic moves too quickly in the downtown area. Recommendations include: rationalizing the Route 31 and Wall Street intersection to allow easier pedestrian crossing;

the placement of a median to narrow and calm the road while enhancing aesthetics; lowering the speed limit on Route 31; and implementing a "Business Route 31" bypass as an alternative to the present alignment. One or a combination of these solutions would make the intersection considerably safer.

Making the intersection easier to cross is the necessary first step in connecting existing and future development on both sides of Route 31. In organizing future land uses, two possible strategies are:

• Extend commercial activities across the highway (from west to east) in a linear pattern to form a continuous commercial corridor that will encourage pedestrian crossings. The east side of Route 31 would also have residential development (on the textile mill site) to support the commercial base.

• Expand commercial activities in the present area (on the west side of Route 31) while allowing only residential development on the east side. A green buffer connected to a new Furnace Creek greenway could separate these two districts while providing a walkable connection.

The Furnace Creek greenway would serve several functions beyond connecting the two sides of Route 31. It could create a stronger relationship between the stream and new development, which could be built along the Creek – though at an appropriate distance – to highlight this natural feature. It can also be used to connect downtown with the elementary school and the Furnace Lake recreational fields to the west. The current parking area next to Furnace Creek and behind the Wall Street commercial buildings should be converted to a park, with the parking spaces transferred to nearby streets.

To successfully create a residential community on the east side of Route 31 (textile mill site), development must be given a framework within which developers can operate, including design and density standards. However, a market for single-family units and townhouses must be determined for the township through a market analysis before the density and scope of future housing can be determined. Expectations should not outpace what the market can reasonably sustain. Nonetheless, densities that can support commercial activities and a lively pedestrian setting are needed to make a true "place," rather than just another subdivision.

A key part of expanding downtown's commercial sector is the reuse of the old mill site on the corner of Wall Street and Route 31. This

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Complete the triangular block bounded by Wall Street, Route 31 and Belvedere Avenue with new infill development and centralized parking.

Reinforce the Main Street character of Wall Street with infill development and a unified streetscape.

Redesign the crossing at Route 31 to make Wall Street the primary link for this area, connecting the existing commercial area, the textile mill site, the small businesses, and other resources.

Promote new development along Wall Street east of Route 31.

Create a linked network of greenways and open spaces, including the Furnace Creek Greenway.
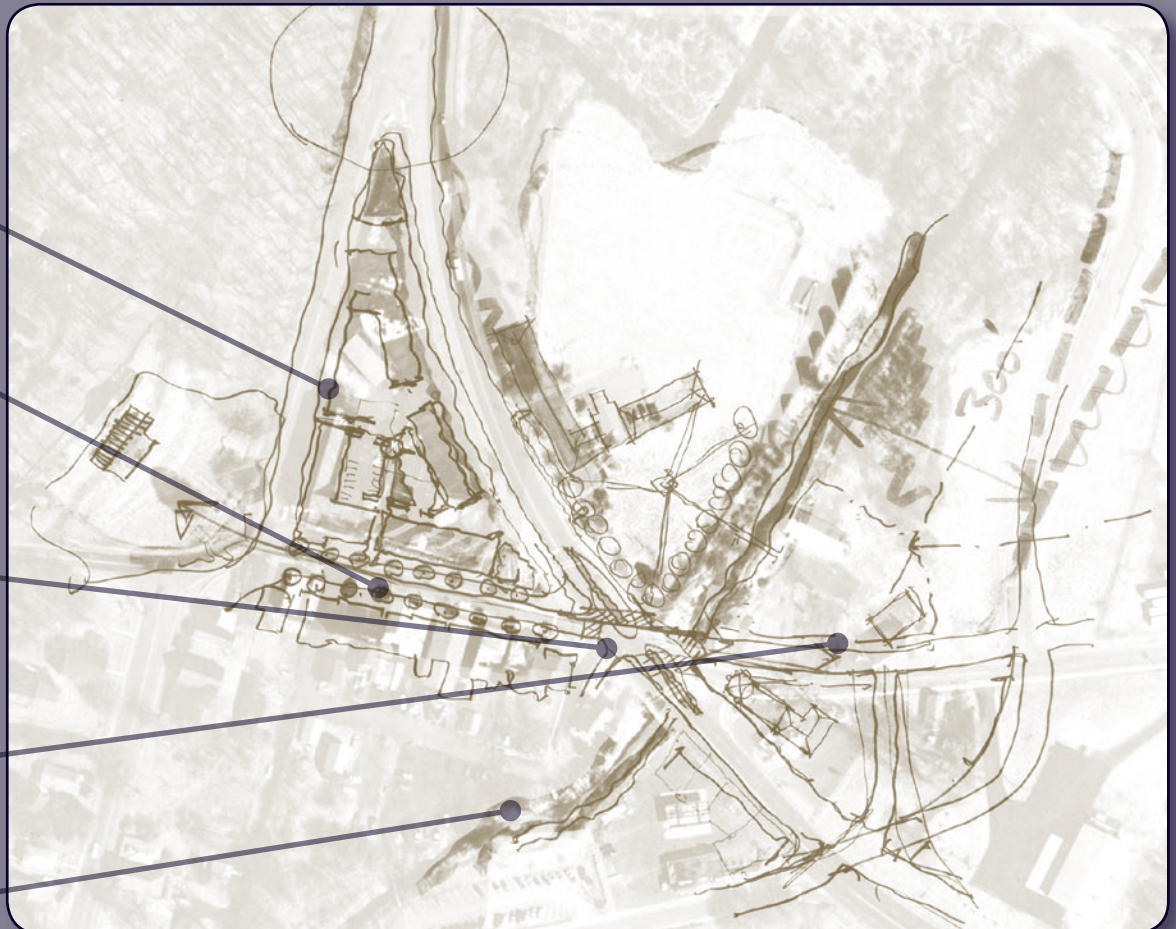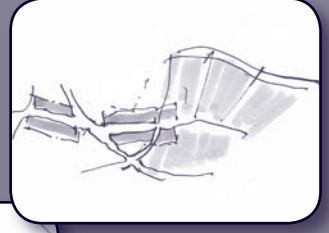
would make Wall Street a two-sided "Main Street" instead of the current situation where shops only occupy the south side. Mixed-use development would fit best here, so that it mimics the south side. Since the old mill site is triangular, creating pedestrian-scale frontages on all sides is essential. A satellite health clinic in this area might serve as an anchor and give commerce a boost.
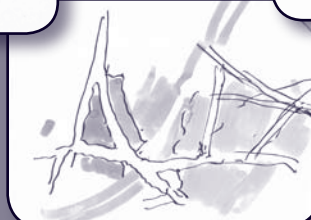
Lastly, the planning process should occur in phases. A community visioning effort should be organized to help inform conceptual and area-specific plans. Next would be the designation of redevelopment areas and the definition of street configurations, greenway corridors, and block scales to guide developers, followed by property assemblage. Through all of this, garnering support from DOT for Route 31 improvements is a must.

Alternate Plan 1
Mixed use on Wall street and Gateway only.

Alternate Plan 2
Promote mixed use along Rt. 31.

Alternate Plan 3
Extend Wall Street mixed use across Rt. 31.

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PROSPECT PARK

Mayor William W. Kubofcik
Passaic County

Square Miles   0.5
Population   5,779

KEY ISSUES

• Determine an appropriate type, magnitude, and style of redevelopment for the quarry site.

• Identify feasible ways to use existing streets and new paths to join the quarry to adjacent Hofstra Park and nearby neighborhoods and municipalities.

PROBLEM STATEMENT Redevelop a soon-to-be abandoned quarry so that it bolsters the borough's tax base while emphasizing the quarry's unique features and connecting the site to existing neighborhoods, recreational facilities, and the North 8th Street business district.

BACKGROUND Prospect Park is a small borough adjacent to Paterson with nearly 7,000 residents in just 0.48 square miles, making it one of Passaic County's densest communities. The borough is built-out and predominately residential, with most residents inhabiting multi-family homes. North 8th Street is the main commercial street, lined with a variety of small businesses and a recently enhanced streetscape with new sidewalks and lighting. Much of the borough is very hilly, with steep-sloping streets offering dramatic views of Paterson and Manhattan. Prospect Park's dominant single feature is a large quarry on the borough's north side.

Following the Revolutionary War, Dutch immigrants settled in what is now Prospect Park, though it was not incorporated as an independent municipality until 1901. The Dutch dominated Prospect Park for most of its history, but many new residents have settled in the community in recent years, many of Hispanic and Arab descent. Persons of Hispanic origin now make up 40% of the borough's population. During the 1990s, the borough grew by over 800 residents, giving Prospect Park its largest population to date.

The main focus for future development in Prospect Park is the large quarry, which comprises nearly 25% of the borough's land and is between 78 and 98 acres. With just five more years of mining activity scheduled at the quarry, the borough would like to prepare a plan for the land's reuse. The eastern periphery of the quarry contains 200-foot cliffs with newly rehabilitated Hofstra Park bordering this edge, while the rest of the quarry is enclosed by smaller but no less spectacular geological features. The challenge is to connect a new community and/or recreational feature within the quarry to Hofstra Park, the North 8th Street business district, and the rest of Prospect Park and adjacent municipalities. The possibility of transferring development rights from the nearby Highlands to the quarry may add to the site's potential.

RESOURCE TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

As the quarry site is incrementally abandoned and reclaimed in the coming decade, it is important that plans for its reuse be carefully phased. And because the quarry's abandonment will coincide with improved conditions for the rest of the borough – due to less truck traffic and blasting – broader plans for the remainder of Prospect Park should be linked, where possible, with these phases.

For the quarry itself, there are numerous opportunities for redevelopment. Of prime importance, however, is leveraging the stunning visual features provided by the quarry. Focusing on the cliffs as a visual landmark can drive the redevelopment process by setting it apart as a unique and novel setting for new development of all types, especially residential and recreation.

Various forms of development that would take full advantage of the site's visual potential include: A San Francisco-like plan that accentuates elevation by building high around the rim and low in the quarry; developing only the rim of the quarry and leaving the inside as a park; inserting "cliff dwellings" into portions of the cliff face; building a bridge across part of the quarry to provide a viewing platform and enhance pedestrian and bike circulation across the site; the continuation of Hofstra Park from the rim into the heart of the quarry (a green slope or ramp); and the inclusion of publicly accessible water features, such as small lakes.

A key challenge for any new development is access to the site. Currently, the quarry has a single point of entry and exit – the quarry road. For redevelopment efforts to succeed, one or two more access routes should be planned for smooth traffic flow and emergency access. Some ideas include: running a long sloping road along the side of the cliff face; creating a second access road where the quarry starts at Planten Avenue; and establishing vertical circulation features, which could be contained within buildings along the quarry rim with elevators providing pedestrian access up and down the cliffs. Parking is also an important accessibility issue, and the inclusion of structured parking in cliff faces may provide a unique and feasible solution while ensuring that valuable space in the quarry is not devoted to excessive surface parking.

Besides broad design and physical accessibility issues, another important consideration is social accessibility. While there may be an inclination toward developing an exclusive or gated community at the quarry – which has occurred at nearby quarry sites – this would be unnecessary and counterproductive. Any development in the quarry could sell itself by its mere location and the quarry's unique features; the addition of gates would provide negligible added incentive for people to invest in property there. Also, public access to the quarry is a must. The quarry should not be viewed solely as an amenity for those who might live within or around it, but as an amenity that enriches the livability of the entire borough.

In order to successfully manage the site's complicated and phased redevelopment, a local development authority should be assembled. This would provide the borough with an organized and focused tool for overseeing the development and implementation of public and private plans. If possible, the borough should try to work with a single developer on a majority of the redevelopment to help ensure the quarry's smooth and harmonious transition to a truly unique neighborhood and regional amenity.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Provide connections to the surrounding context at the higher and lower elevations.

Take advantage of the extraordinary topography to site buildings in creative ways.

Bring the green spaces along the ridges of the quarry into and through the new development
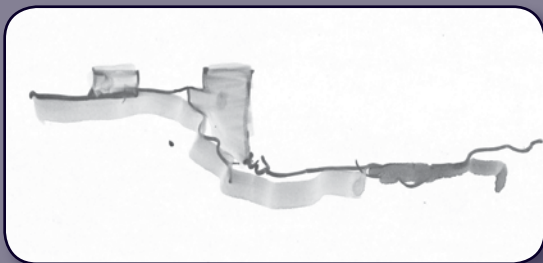
Cross-section of quarry with edge development

Take advantage of the existing landscape to create innovative landscape and water features.

FAIR LAWN

Mayor David L. Ganz
Bergen County

Square Miles	5.2
Population	31,637

KEY QUESTIONS

• Identify parcels for redevelopment as well as appropriate development types and patterns.

• Consider linkages to nearby facilities and neighborhoods, and propose physical and programmatic improvements.

• Determine ways to use the enhanced value from redevelopment and access to transit to finance improvements.

PROBLEM STATEMENT Capitalize on redevelopment opportunities in the Radburn neighborhood to create housing, retail and other development that meets the needs of area residents while enhancing the neighborhood's historic character and linking it to the High School and Recreation/Arts Center.

BACKGROUND In the heart of Fair Lawn Borough is Radburn, a planned residential district dating back to the 1920's. With a brilliant plan by Clarence Stein and Henry Wright, Radburn was initially designed to be a self-sufficient community known as the "Town for the Motor Age." Modeled on late 19th and early 20th century planned communities in Europe, the intent was to build a place with provisions for the complexities of modern life while providing ample greenery and amenities. It was also identified as one of the model satellite communities in RPA's *Regional Plan for New York and Its Environs*, published in 1929. In that plan, RPA looked to create orderly residential and business clusters throughout the tri-state metropolitan region to accommodate future growth.

The challenge in the 21st century is to accommodate growth in Radburn according to the community's original principles while meeting the needs of current residents. One area with growth potential is a series of former industrial sites adjacent to the railroad tracks and to the south of Fair Lawn Avenue and Radburn Station, which is the type of location where New Jersey's State Plan encourages growth. These extremely valuable lands have been owned by the Radburn Association, a community organization that has governed the district for over 70 years. Proceeds from the sale and reuse of these lands will ensure the long-term sustainability of Radburn.

A recent development proposal for vacant parcels totaling 10 acres calls for higher density development to take advantage of Fair Lawn's transit, open space and other nearby amenities. These parcels, which include Topps Cleaners, Archery Plaza, the Hayward tract and Daly Field, had recreational, commercial and industrial purposes for years but have been designated for multi-family residential development by recent borough master plans and interested developers. With the exception of Daly Field, these sites are currently undergoing remediation to prepare them for future residential use. For political reasons, Daly Field itself has been excluded by the Township from redevelopment conversations. The town council is now looking for ways to preserve Daly Field from development.

The nearby High School is a community asset, and enhancing linkages from it to any new development is viewed desirably. The potential expansion of the recreation and arts center next to the High School also creates a major opportunity to encourage greater walking and biking in an area designed to enable cars and people to coexist.

RESOURCE TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

The redevelopment of the vacant and underutilized sites along the railroad in Radburn should not occur in a vacuum where attention is paid only to individual sites. Instead, redevelopment efforts must be integrated with a vision for Radburn, a vision well-articulated by the neighborhood's original plan. Therefore, redevelopment should be guided by the same principles that influenced the neighborhood's original development: the provision of well-designed residential streets surrounding a train station and commercial core. These principles are closely related to the concept of "transit villages," where a mixture of land uses composes a very walkable environment centered on a transit station. Naturally, Radburn Station and the nearby Plaza Building serve as excellent focal points for transit-oriented redevelopment in Radburn.

If Radburn is going to achieve its potential as a transit village in the 21st century, the community must develop more retail and office space (to serve residents and commuters attracted to the regional transit service) and provide more housing (to support enhanced neighborhood amenities and capitalize on the train station). Fortunately, the neighborhood around the train station has several vacant or under-utilized parcels of land. The vacant parcels bordering the railroad just south of Radburn Station and the Plaza Building serve as potential sites to accommodate such development, as do underutilized spaces along Fair Lawn Avenue.

Laying the groundwork for the redevelopment of these sites – and their integration with Radburn – would be greatly aided by a parking and streetscape plan. Such a plan should ensure both an adequate parking supply as the area develops and a consistent street-level design to provide a seamless transition between old Radburn and new. A shared parking structure jointly used by NJ Transit and some commercial tenant(s) is one possibility to provide parking for users of the train and area businesses and also replace surface parking spots lost to new development.

Specific design elements that would improve the area immediately surrounding the train

station, as well as all of Radburn, include: the creation of a green public square in front of the Plaza Building to serve as a grand gateway to Radburn; the formation of greenways linking various parts of Radburn and Fair Lawn – especially new housing to the northwest of the train station – with the new square at the Plaza Building; and establishing a new street grid on the Topps Cleaners, Archery Plaza, and Hayward sites to provide more pedestrian-scaled blocks and expanded street frontages for dense residential development.

Although the Mayor, citing community opposition, specfically removed Daly Field from any development consideration, it was clear to the resource team that Daly Field could also accommodate residential townhouse development on an expanded street grid. Many Resource Team members maintained that a site bounded by train tracks, a highway access ramp and a suburban avenue will be less desirable for open space, especially so close to an under-utilized commuter rail station.

If, however, the community chooses to maintain Daly Field as parkland, it may be practical to transfer development rights from that site to the adjacent sites. Transferring development rights could help pay for preserving Daly Field and also allow higher density redevelopment at the vacant parcels to the north and along Fair Lawn Avenue. Under this scenario, Daly Field should be upgraded to provide a first-class recreational amenity for the community. New development along Fair Lawn Avenue and next to the train station and plaza building could be a mixture of commercial and residential uses, while development at Archery Plaza and the Hayward tract would be entirely residential.

Finally, Fair Lawn is encouraged to apply for Transit Village designation from the New Jersey Department of Transportation, which would provide the town with greater financial, legal, and political resources to pursue appropriate redevelopment projects. Achieving this status requires a commitment to good planning and a willingness to accommodate future growth.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Create pedestrian connections to existing concentrations of residential development.

Create connections to existing streets, the station and to the High School.

Promote infill development along Fair Lawn Avenue that reinforces its mixed use, Main Street character.

Develop for housing the vacant parcels adjacent to the tracks south of Fair Lawn Avenue.

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Regional Plan Association (RPA) is an independent regional planning organization that improves the quality of life and the economic competitiveness of the 31-county, New York-New Jersey-Connecticut region through research, planning, and advocacy. Since 1922, RPA has been shaping transportation systems, protecting open spaces, and promoting better community design for the region's continued growth. We anticipate the challenges the region will face in the years to come, and we mobilize the region's civic, business, and government sectors to take action.

RPA's current work is aimed largely at implementing the ideas put forth in the Third Regional Plan, with efforts focused in five project areas: community design, open space, transportation, workforce and the economy, and housing. For more information about Regional Plan Association, please visit our website, www.rpa.org.