



Transportation for Redevelopment: An Agenda for Newark

Political change in the City of Newark comes as New Jersey faces its biggest “smart growth” test yet. Collectively, we need to decide where to put the additional million residents the state expects in the coming decades. Attractive, vibrant cities are our best option. And the quality of life, vibrancy and business climate of a city is strongly shaped by its transportation system. Newark can lead the way by reversing infrastructure and design policies that have made the city a less attractive place to be, and by accelerating new trends that have already begun to transform some districts and key streets.

Streets for people

Streets are the circulatory system, the places of social interaction and the front yards of great cities. In vibrant cities, streets are critical public spaces, shared by many uses.

But for decades in Newark, the streets have been treated far too much as engineering artifacts whose sole purpose is moving high volumes of cars and trucks. A very high death and injury toll is only one manifestation of the problem. Streets that lack attraction for pedestrians also create a city that is unwelcoming to visitors and residents alike.

Newark can turn its streets around, starting now:

1. Immediately **step up law enforcement** against speeding and other forms of reckless driving. Review whether right-on-red permissions create additional danger for pedestrians.
2. Develop a menu of **“traffic calming”** street installations such as curb extensions and raised cross walks that help level the playing field between pedestrians and motor traffic. Begin testing designs in practice as soon as possible. Traffic calming street designs are the norm in much of the world, but used insufficiently in New Jersey.
3. Develop a **“great streets”** plan that builds on the Broad Street rehabilitation to create an interconnected set of well-designed, attractive urban boulevards. Incorporate into the plan key



locations that now lack attractive pedestrian environments, such as Penn Station and the Performing Arts Center.

Better buses, affordable fares

Newark is New Jersey’s bus riding capital, with **eight of New Jersey’s nine busiest bus routes**. State-wide, bus riders make up two-thirds of overall mass transit ridership, but rail improvements have received the lion’s share of funding for improvements for the past 20 years. It’s time for bus riders’ elected representatives to claim a more proportionate slice of the mass transit pie.



New buses, more frequent service, updated routes, better bus shelters and applications like global-positioning-systems that provide real-time information to riders at stops will improve life for existing riders and attract new ones. Innovations like bus traffic signal prioritization and pre-boarding fare collection can transform bus routes from transportation-of-last-resort to high quality urban transit lines.

The **fare increase** NJ Transit is contemplating for early 2007 will fall disproportionately on Newark’s bus riders, after state government recently declined to raise gas taxes or Turnpike tolls to help fill a giant state transportation budget gap. Newark’s leadership should oppose transit fare hikes until an equitable transportation funding equation is worked out in Trenton.

An urban rail agenda

New Jersey Transit is beset with demands to extend rail service to all corners of the state, and even into Pennsylvania. But the best bang for



the mass transit buck, and most significant state investment in urban growth and revitalization is in **central-city mass transit projects**. Promising ideas like additional phases of Newark-Elizabeth light rail are on the table at NJ Transit — they can make the opening of the new light rail connector between Broad Street and Penn Stations just the start of an expanding urban rail network with Newark at its hub. Newark city government should articulate this vision and work with NJ Transit and in Trenton to realize it.

Relief from truck traffic impacts

Truck traffic is anticipated to increase 50% in the next 15 years, causing significant health and quality of life impacts in Newark. Today, **trucks drive where they will in the city**, creating safety, noise, vibration, air pollution and other



impacts in residential areas. Neither residents nor police nor truckers know the legal network of truck routes defined in local law. The city should immediately mark and begin to enforce its own truck routes, and the new administration should launch a truck impact study analyzing the appropriateness of routes defined decades ago and whether there are options to reduce the proximity between heavily-used truck routes and residential and school areas.

An alliance of cities for urban transportation investment

The critical corollary to smart growth strategies to preserve forests and farms is the **revival of**



New Jersey's cities. Appropriate transportation investments — the largest overall area of state capital spending -- in Newark, Trenton, Camden and other key centers can play a critical role. Jersey City and other Hudson County municipalities are strong examples of mass transit investment strengthening the business and development climates, and even they can use a continuing diet of transportation investments. The new mayor is in a strong position to forge a distinct voice for New Jersey's cities in the transportation funding and investment debates in state government.

TRI-STATE TRANSPORTATION CAMPAIGN



Mobilizing the Region

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