

## **Connecting Community Corridors: A Local Demonstration Project Program**

Monmouth County – Asbury Park, Bradley Beach, Neptune Township

### **Executive Summary**

#### ***Project Description***

This highly focused “strategic plan” encompasses several regional transportation corridors shared by Asbury Park, Bradley Beach, and Neptune Township: North Jersey Coast Line with stations in Asbury Park and Bradley Beach; the parallel Main Street-Memorial Drive north-south dual system; key east-west gateway corridors to the beach communities; and Springwood Avenue with select opportunity sites in these corridors. This effort is a working partnership between the Monmouth County, the City of Asbury Park, Borough of Bradley Beach, Neptune Township, Interfaith Neighbors, and Together North Jersey.

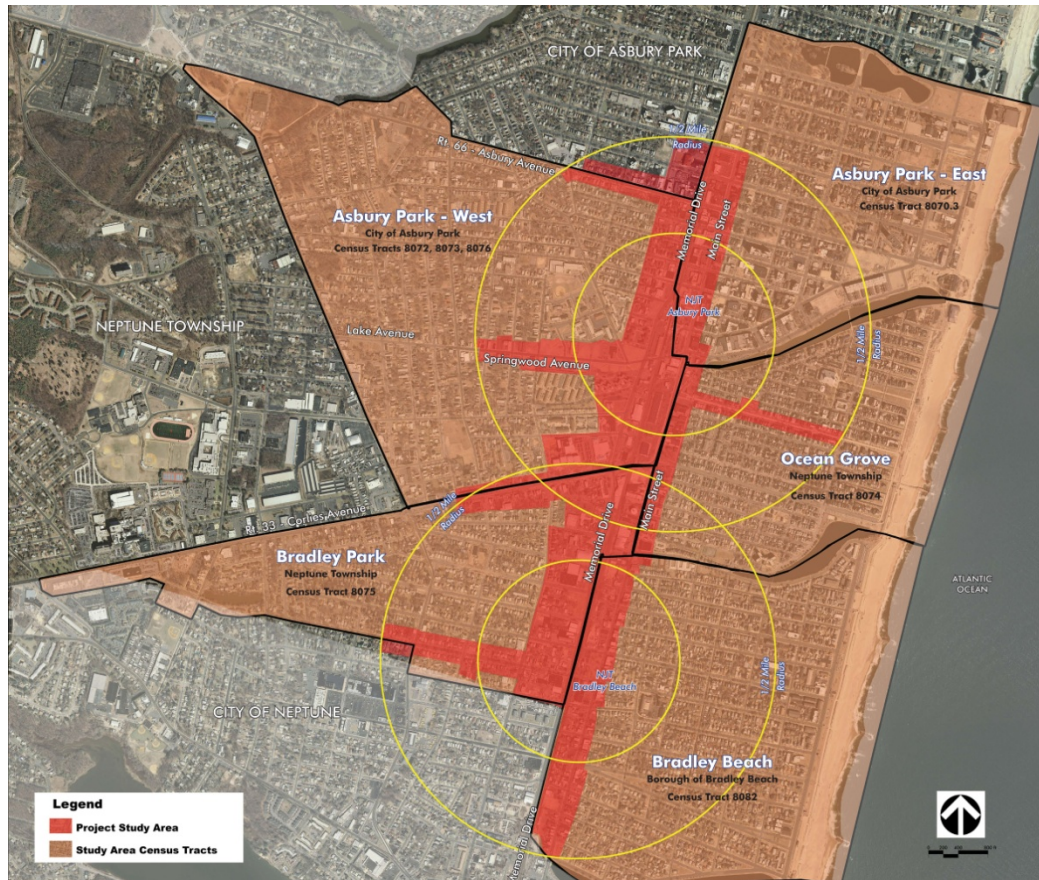
This plan recognizes that a significant amount of prior planning efforts have already been completed and therefore, there is no need to start with a “blank slate”, but rather to build upon past planning efforts as a foundation for this plan. However, the broad range of past plans require working with stakeholders to establish key priorities as a focus for this plan that will generate specific implementable outcomes. The plan evolved out of feedback from key stakeholder groups, including arts and businesses in the Study Area and from a series of public open-house workshops held in each of the communities.

#### ***Project Themes***

The planning process engaged stakeholders in establishing key priorities and goals. Out of the goals and feedback, the plan was organized around several Vision Themes:

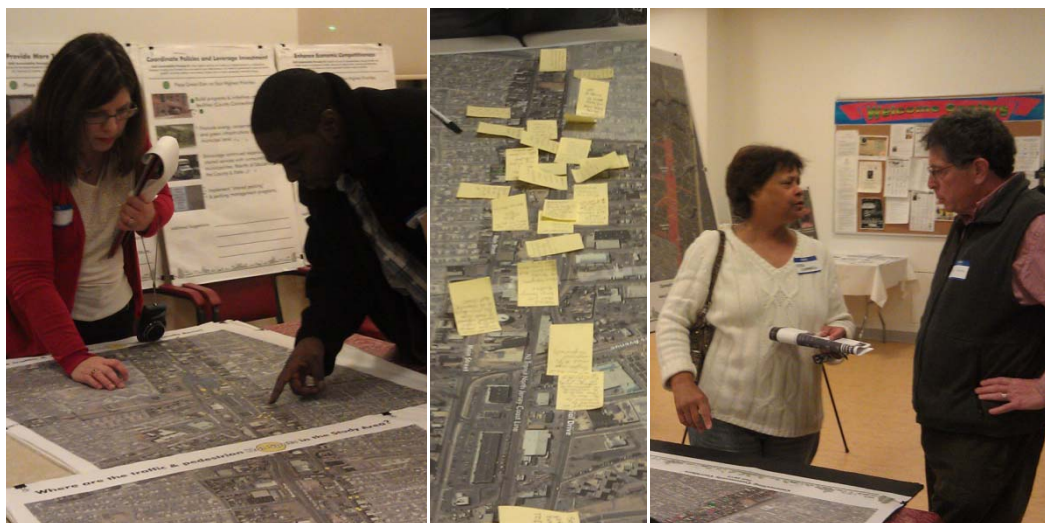
- Arts & Culture Branding & Themes
- Transit-Oriented Infill & Adaptive Reuse
- Enhanced Shuttle Services
- Traffic Calming & Pedestrian /Bike Improvements
- Business Improvement & Main Street Program
- Urban Agriculture & Sustainable Infrastructure

### Study Area



### Public Open House Workshops





### **The Connecting Community Corridors Plan Gateway to Springwood, Cookman, & Ocean Grove**

The concept plan for the area surrounding the Asbury Park Transit Center seeks to connect to the activity and revitalization of Cookman Avenue to the Springwood Avenue Corridor and other parts of the west side. An improved station area with pedestrian enhancements will also create an inviting gateway to Ocean Grove for those coming and going via transit.

The concept plan includes:

- A renovated transit center with “front doors” on both Memorial Drive and Main Street
- Enhancement of the existing transit plaza and rain garden to calm traffic and accommodate public events
- New mixed use buildings with artist’s housing infilled on existing surface parking lot to frame public space
- Relocation and mixed use redevelopment of the public works and key corner properties
- Improvement of the west side of the station with traditional train station green space, improved parking, bus shelters, and streetscape enhancements along Memorial Drive
- Public art and iconic signage for branding and wayfinding
- Plaza treatment, traffic calming and pedestrian upgrades creates “gateway” to Springwood Corridor and permanent home of the Music Heritage Museum
- Future relocation of the Asbury Park municipal complex into a smaller-footprint, multi-story city hall

- Expansion of future parking into a multi-level structure to accommodate parking for the municipal complex, transit center, area businesses, and redevelopment.

### **Reconnecting Bradley Beach and Bradley Park**

Both Neptune Township and Bradley Beach have studied transit-oriented infill in with their respective municipal boundaries. Memorial Drive and the North Jersey Coast Line, as is the case in other parts of the Study Area, act as significant east-west barriers. The concept plan treats the station as the center of a larger mixed use, walkable district spanning both sides of the tracks, reconnecting Bradley Park in Neptune with Bradley Beach.

The concept plan includes:

- Mixed use infill on Main Street
- Upgrade streetscapes & traffic calming on Memorial Drive
- Improve east-west connectivity
- Create hub for additional shuttle & mobility
- Transit Village infill respects the scale & character of neighborhood
- Relocation of the Bradley Beach Municipal Complex to create opportunities for a Main Street anchor

One of the earlier phases of implementation involves working with willing property owners and businesses on Main Street in Bradley Beach to identify key locations for higher-value infill reinvestment. These infill buildings should be three-four stories with active ground floor retail/restaurants and upper floor apartments.

Prospective future development along Memorial Drive (whether infill or redevelopment) will need to complement/reflect the existing scale and nature of development along Memorial Drive (e.g., mix of convenience retail, personal services and low-rise residential units), so as not to undermine the viability of existing uses. New investments in retail and service businesses, whether occupying an existing storefront or developed as a new building, should be small-scaled able to incubate small proprietor businesses. These retail and service businesses should be convenience and/or specialty oriented businesses.

### **Enhanced Shuttle Service**

Through this project's outreach efforts, the communities have expressed an interest in extending beyond the summer peak season to year-round and full-week service. The car-free lifestyle that the shuttles provide is currently seasonal. In addition, expanded shuttle frequency and route expansion to the west will to capture residential travel needs to markets, schools and jobs west

of the tracks. The communities also expressed a need to improve visibility of the shuttle service, to provide easier connectivity between the shuttles and other modes, and to add “permanence” to the shuttle operation through the use of signage and defined station areas with shelters. Overall, more transit options would help reduce, mitigate and manage the demand for parking throughout the study area, which becomes extreme during the summer season.

Building upon the concept with intermodal community nodes, and through community feedback, the expansion of the shuttle bus system was envisioned. Consisting of six connected routes, the shuttle bus system would:

- Create multi-modal nodes for efficient transfers between trains, buses & shuttles
- Extend to destinations west of Main Street/Memorial Drive/railroad, including Springwood Avenue
- Serve regional destinations to the west of the Study Area
- Integrate with alternate transportation options (bikes, pedicab, car share, etc.)
- Be identifiable through coordinated & branded signage, scheduling, marketing & permanent bus shelters

Some of the proposed changes include short-term route adjustments. Any shuttle expansion in geography, number of routes, and frequency would require a detailed feasibility study and clearly identified funding and revenue expansion plans.

### **Traffic Calming & Pedestrian /Bike Improvements**

Pedestrian activity in the study area, especially in the summer months, is fairly robust and there is interest from the community to encourage more pedestrian activity and make it safer, particularly along Main Street to help encourage the patronage of local businesses. Similarly, traffic calming improvements to Memorial Drive can provide better and safer east-west connection throughout the Study Area.

Some specific pedestrian and bicycle improvements that were identified include:

- Bike Lanes in each direction on Memorial Drive
- Share the Road (Sharrows) markings should be considered on several east-west roads
- Additional bike racks and lockers at stations and key community nodes
- Codes adjustments to secure bicycle parking at new development projects

Some specific Memorial Drive improvements that were identified include:

- Modify the speed limit to 30 mph in Neptune & Bradley Beach
- One travel lane each direction with a center turning lane & bicycle lanes on either side of roadway
- Repair/replace sidewalks & consider widening

- Install pedestrian scale lighting

Some of the proposed changes include short-term improvements (bike racks, repair/replace sidewalks, pedestrian lighting). Any traffic calming or physical changes to the roadways would be longer term and would require a detailed feasibility study and partnering with the appropriate local, County, and State agencies.

### **Implementation**

In order to make the improvements in the Connecting Community Corridors plan, the three communities will need to take a series of short and long-term actions. The attached Planning and Implementation Agenda indicates these actions developed during the evolution of this and other planning initiatives over the last several years. The agenda recognizes that successful implementation of plans requires strong local support and action, as well as assistance from Monmouth County and the State of New Jersey.