Transit Oriented Development Plan
Linden Station Area

City of Linden
Union County, New Jersey

Prepared June 2008 for:

City of Linden Planning Board

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This original of this document has been signed and sealed in accordance with New Jersey Law.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Linden Station Area Master Plan Element could not have been completed without the dedication and hard work of the following individuals:

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Prepared with funding from the Smart Future Grant Program administered by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, Office of Smart Growth

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Introduction

This Plan provides the necessary framework to implement a Transit Oriented Development, or TOD, within the City of Linden and to enhance the compact walkable community that is centered around Linden Station. The City is ideally situated along the Northeast Rail Corridor that serves as a catalyst for beneficial growth and development within the City and Union County.

Implementing TOD requires regional collaboration across political boundaries, regulatory agencies, and professional disciplines. This Plan establishes the principles, the City's vision for TOD and the strategies for how to achieve them.

Transit Oriented Development (TOD) refers to residential and commercial centers designed to maximize access by transit, non-motorized transportation and other features to encourage transit ridership. TOD areas have a center with a rail, bus or ferry station, surrounded by relatively high density development, with progressively lower density development spreading outwards. TOD areas typically have a diameter of ¼ to ½ half mile, which represents a five to ten minute walk to transit.

This Plan builds upon recent City planning efforts associated with the South Wood Avenue Redevelopment Plan (adjacent to Linden Station), Theater Redevelopment (located along North Wood Avenue) and recent development approvals to locate mid-rise residential apartments adjacent to Linden Station (See Appendix B).

The City recognizes the many benefits associated with TOD. Accordingly, the City is desirous of being designated by the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) as a transit village. A primary goal of this TOD Plan is to increase the quality of life of existing and new City residents by reducing their dependence on a car for mobility and their every day needs. Components and benefits of a TOD are as follows:

Components of TOD

- A walkable design giving pedestrians the highest priority in comparison to automobiles.
- A focal point location within the City.
- A mix of complementary uses in close proximity to each other, including office, residential, retail, and civic uses that create a distinct place within the community.
- Medium density, high-quality development within a 10-minute walk.
- Planning and design that encourages and supports the daily needs of pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Reduced and managed parking.

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Benefits of TOD

- Public and private investment to improve the City center.
- Increased quality of life.
- Increased attractiveness of Linden as a place for individuals to live, work, play and ride.
- Increased pedestrian traffic and customers for area businesses.
- Increased mobility adjacent to the station.
- Increased transit ridership.
- Reduced traffic congestion adjacent to Linden Station.
- Potential for fewer accidents and injuries adjacent to Linden Station.
- Reduced household spending on transportation, resulting in more affordable housing.
- Encouragement of a healthier lifestyle by increasing walking, which may lessen stress.
- Higher, more stable property values.
- Reduced dependence on oil.
- Reduced carbon dioxide emissions.
- Encourages a more sustainable form of development in comparison to sprawling land uses patterns.
- Encourages the ability to maintain and increase economic competitiveness by creating the "critical mass" necessary to support transit and downtown uses.

This Plan creates a new Vision for Linden Station, by proposing a balance of residential and commercial uses and establishes the groundwork for developing a form based approach to zoning that includes improvements to the streetscape program.

The City Vision

The Linden Station Area in 2020 is a thriving vibrant destination that diversifies the City's economic base, provides significant employment, modern infrastructure, upscale housing and an expanding tax base. Linden Station is the City's retail, service and entertainment hub with a low vacancy rate, an enhanced streetscape and lively street activity.

There is new mixed-use development, a hotel with banquet facilities, restaurants, office, entertainment uses and live-work units within four (4) separate districts: 1) Core District; 2) Wood Avenue District; 3) Elizabeth Avenue District; and 4) an Office Residential Character/Live-work district. Outstanding civic design creates a pedestrian friendly environment and strengthens the sense of place and supports retail spending.

Adjacent to the train station, the Core District revitalizes the downtown as the City's retail, service and entertainment hub with an enhanced streetscape and lively street activity.

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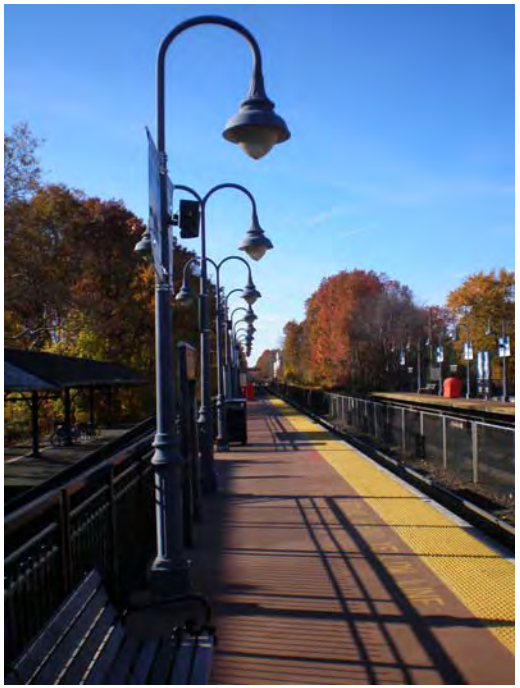
Redevelopment has attracted people to a corridor of restaurants, shops, public spaces, residential uses on upper floors, attractive street furniture and public art. Public spaces create a sense of place and allow space for seasonal outdoor dining, exhibits, and entertainment. The transit oriented development is one of Union County's most desirable places to live, work and play and offers a higher quality of life for residents, commuters, visitors and workers.

Attractive landmarks and landscape treatments coordinated with architectural treatments and building design create distinctive entrances into the station area and creates a Station Area that is

- Unique
- Provides opportunities for shopping experiences in a revitalized and busy transit hub
- Clean and safe
- Friendly/personable
- A place where people gather and linger to shop, dine and recreate
- Pedestrian friendly
- Promoted by the business community

- Capitalizes on Linden's location on the most heavily traveled passenger rail corridor in the United States.



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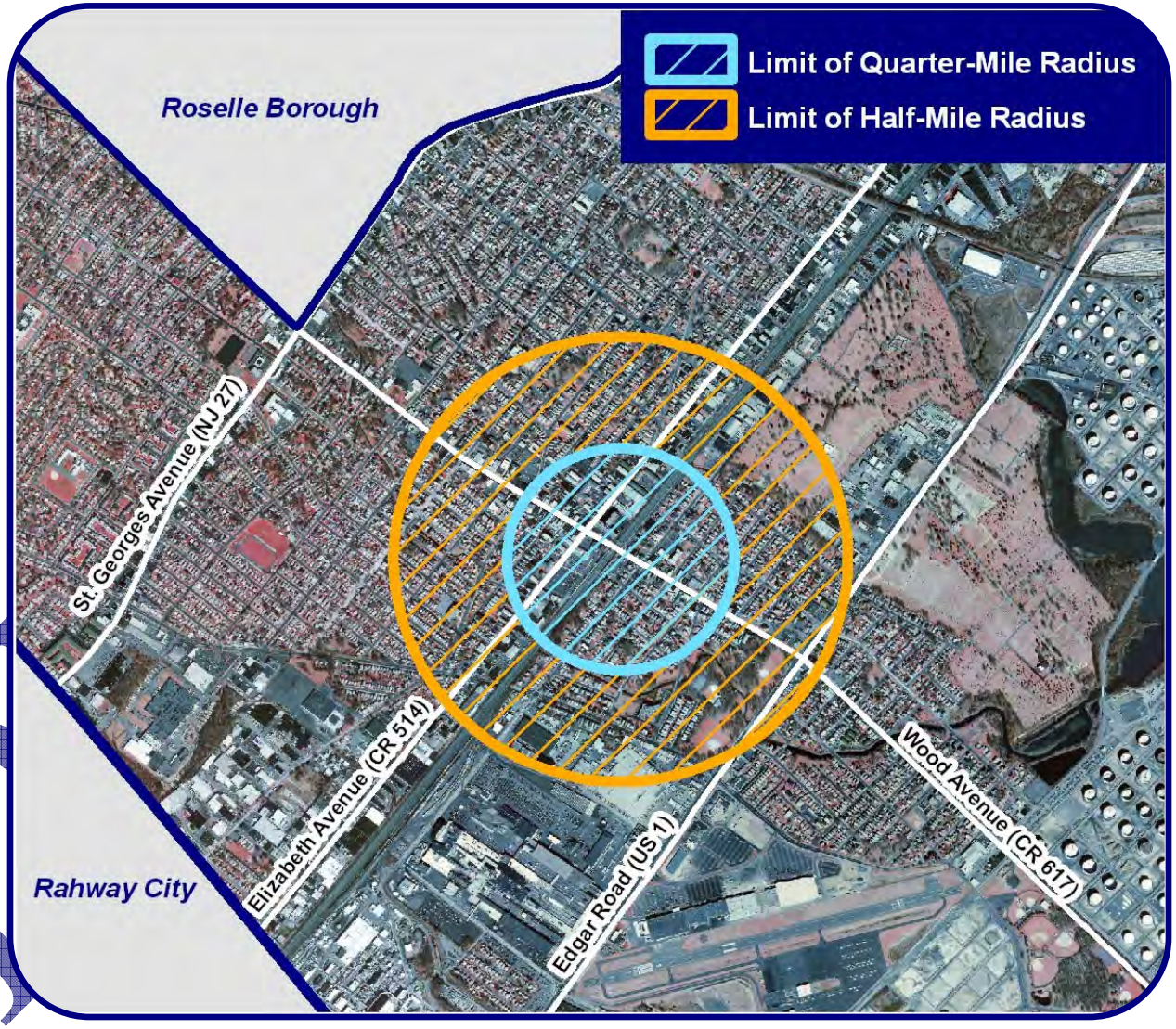
Planning Context

The Linden Station Area encompasses approximately 392 acres (excluding public roadways), and is the City's center for commercial, civic, and residential land uses.

It encompasses all areas within a half-mile radius (on average, a ten-minute walk) of Linden Station, and is bisected by Wood Avenue (Union County Route 617) and Elizabeth Avenue (Union County Route 514).

The baseline information used to prepare this Plan is located in Appendix B and is entitled, "Existing Conditions Report". The Existing Conditions Report, classifies the Linden Station Area into the Primary Study Area, which encompasses all areas within a quarter-mile radius of Linden Station; and, the Secondary Study Area, which encompasses all areas located from a quarter-mile to a half-mile from the Station.



Special emphasis is placed within the report on the Primary Study Area, it examines: general land use patterns; building conditions and characteristics; development intensity; transit accessibility and related concerns; redevelopment potential; and, environmental and regulatory constraints to development.

Factors to Support Transit

Transit oriented development requires at least 6 residential units per acre in residential areas and 25 employees per acre in commercial centers and approximately twice this density for premium quality rail service.[1] These densities create adequate transit ridership to justify frequent rail service and create the critical mass for a vibrant downtown. However, other factors must be considered besides density when evaluating or determining criteria to create a vibrant transit oriented development. Transit ridership is also affected by employment density, demographic mix, i.e., students, seniors, transit pricing, parking pricing, quality of service, transit marketing, walkability and street design. The City of Linden has little or no control over several of the identified factors that support transit, however, the City controls the ability to create development density, intensity, creating units and uses in demand near transit, parking pricing on municipal lots, creating an attractive streetscape and place where people feel safe, comfortable and enjoy being.

As indicated in Table 1, the existing population density within one-quarter mile of the train station is 10.1 persons per square mile. This number does not include recent residential development approvals associated with West Elizabeth Tower and one of four proposed mixed use buildings located within the South Wood Avenue Redevelopment area. Inclusion of these approved projects will increase the residential density to 12.4 units per acre. Full build out of the South Wood Avenue Redevelopment Plan would increase the density even further to 13.4 units per acre and the full Implementation of this Plan estimates a density in excess of 18 units per acre. In conclusion, the City currently has and plans for adequate residential densities to support transit.

[1] Pushkarev, Boris and Jeffrey Zupan. Public Transportation and Land Use Policy. Indiana University Press. Bloomington, 1977 as cited in: Dunphy, Robert, Deborah Myerson, and Michael Pawlukiewicz. Ten Principles for Successful Development around Transit. Urban Land Institute. Washington, DC, 2003. Robert Cervero (2006) "office Development, Rail Transit, and Commuting Choices," *Journal of Public Transportation,* Volume 9, No. 5 (www.nctr.usf.edu/jpt/pdf/JPT%209-5%20Cervero.pdf), pp. 41-55

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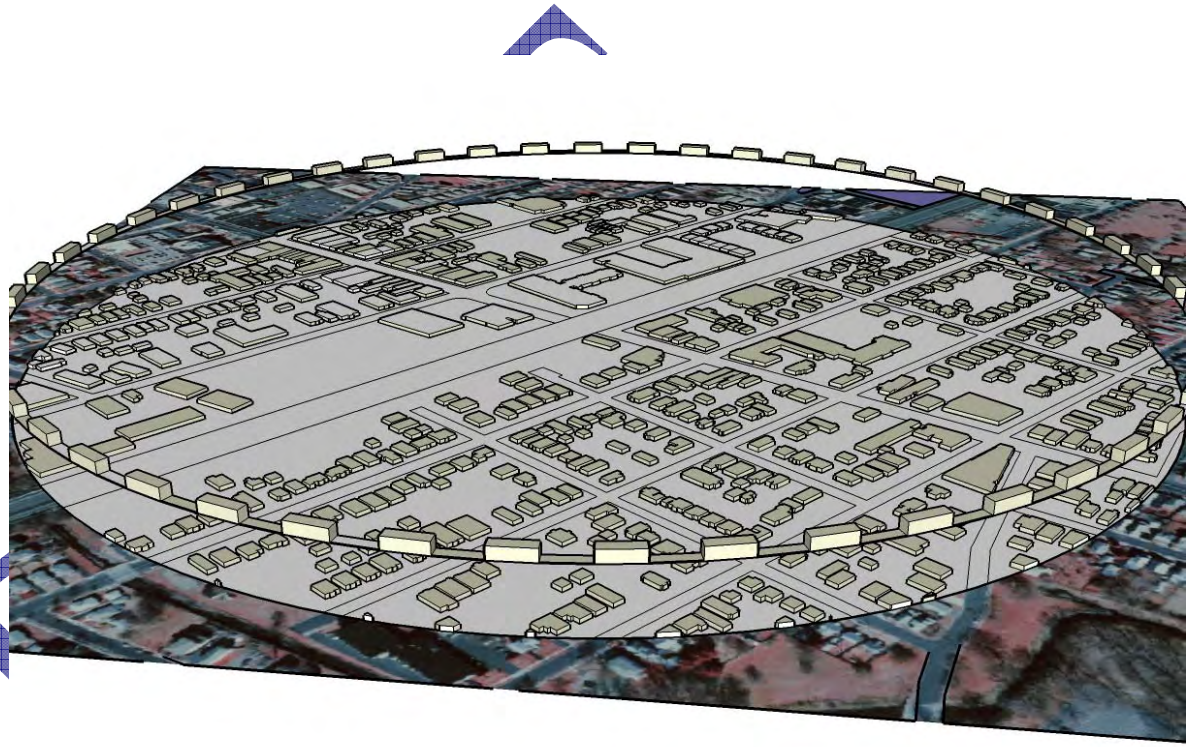
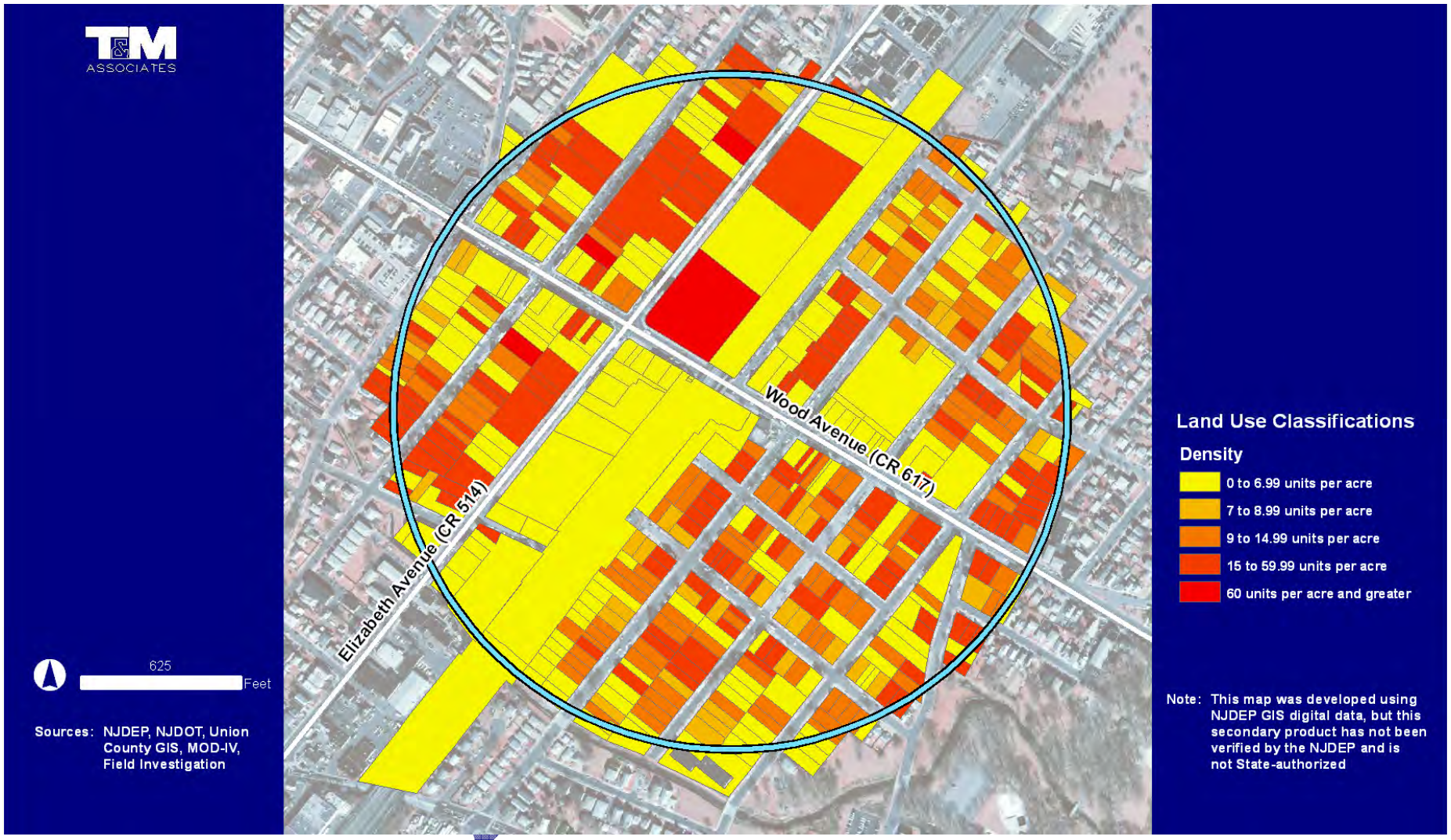
Table 1 – Linden Station Density Statistics (1/4 from Station)

Item	Bldg Type	# of Units
1	Single Resident	367
2	2 Family Resident	396
3	3 Family Resident	30
4	4 Family Apts	104
5	6 Family Apts	12
6	7 Family Apt	7
7	8 Family Apts	16
8	12 to 70 Family Apts	357
	Total Family living units in a Quarter Mile of Train Station	1,289
	Existing Gross Density in a Quarter Mile of Train Station	10.2
9	South Wood Avenue Approved Development	68
10	South Wood Avenue Development - Not Approved (Approx.)	118
11	Gregorio Approved Building	210
	Subtotal	396
	Total	1,685
	Gross Density in Qtr Mile of Train Station (Including Items 9, 10 & 11)	13.4

Source: T&M Associates and City of Linden




T&M ASSOCIATES
Wood Avenue (CR 617)
Elizabeth Avenue (CR 514)
625
Feet
Sources: NJDEP, NJDOT, Union County GIS, MOD-IV, Field Investigation
Land Use Classifications
Density
0 to 6.99 units per acre
7 to 8.99 units per acre
9 to 14.99 units per acre
15 to 59.99 units per acre
60 units per acre and greater
Note: This map was developed using NJDEP GIS digital data, but this secondary product has not been verified by the NJDEP and is not State-authorized

Benefits and Costs of Transit Oriented Development

Linden is a short train ride from the region's two largest employment centers along the NJ Transit line- Newark and New York City. The daily ridership is 2,157 passengers and the travel time to Newark is 21 minutes and to New York City's Penn Station is 42 minutes. The monthly ticket to Newark is $85.00 and to New York is $165.00.

Transit oriented development provides numerous benefits to residents, commuters, municipalities and developers. These include: environmental protection, increased safety, building a sense of community, decreased parking needs (in comparison to suburban areas), increased public health, and increasing transit ridership. Benefits associated with TOD development include:

- A higher average premium over houses that are not within a one-half mile of a suburban train station.
- Increase rents by 20% over comparable nearby apartments outside of TOD.
- Jones Lang LaSalle in Property Futures found that 77 percent of New Economy companies rated access to mass transit as an extremely important factor in selecting corporate locations.
- Bailey (2007) estimates that households in Transit-Oriented Developments drive 45% less than residents of automobile-dependent neighborhoods, saving an average of 512 gallons of fuel and $1,400 in fuel expenses annually.

This Plan identifies several benefits of TOD; however, this section focuses economic benefits realized by other New Jersey communities implementing transit oriented development. As indicated in the following table, there are numerous economic benefits provided by private developers, state agencies, transit organizations and other entities to support community efforts to construct transit oriented development. For example, the Borough of Rutherford leveraged Community Development Block Grant funding to install streetscape improvements, partner with NJDOT and Bergen County to install transportation improvements associated with the Station Square Roundabout. Other improvements/assistance included streetscape improvements to Park Avenue, transportation improvements to West Passaic Avenue and planning and design assistance. Years of planning by the City of Rahway are beginning to come to fruition as the City implements its transit oriented development vision. A three (3) million dollar contribution towards the construction of a new parking garage by NJ Transit is a significant quasi-public investment.

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TABLE 2 - TRANSIT VILLAGE ECONOMIC BENEFITS

TRANSIT VILLAGE	PRIVATE INVESTMENT	PUBLIC INVESTMENT
Rahway	▪ New Public Plaza ▪ 16 Floor Hotel/Convention/Condo (Indigo) ▪ Riverwalk – 86-unit residential Rahway Mixed Use-condos/retail ▪ Hearthstone Plaza LLC- 80 units townhouses and flats ▪ Matzel & Mumford - 130 residential units ▪ Carriage City: 15-story mixed use development by Silicon Group ▪ Dornoch Holdings, LLC: 3 projects: residential with underground parking; residential, office, retail, with a 324-space parking deck; and, Hamilton Laundry conversion	▪ Streetscape Improvements ▪ Relocate City Hall into the Library ▪ Parking deck adjacent to Train Station and Hotel- Rahway Parking Authority $8 million, NJ Transit $3 million ▪ Brownfield Remediation- Warwick Lab
Rutherford	▪ Reconstruction of Station Square ▪ New Parking Deck	▪ Streetscape on Spring Dell Avenue-CDBG $100,000 ▪ Station Square Roundabout- NJDOT $310,000, Municipality $ 390,000, County $100,000 ▪ Streetscape for Park Ave.- NJDOT $350,000 ▪ Improvements to West Passaic Ave.- NJDOT $95,000 ▪ Bike/Ped. Planning Assistance- NJDOT ▪ Streetscape on Glen Rd. and Ames. Ave.- NJDOT $140,000 and CDBG ▪ Transit-Friendly Planning and Design Assistance- NJ Transit

TRANSIT VILLAGE	PRIVATE INVESTMENT	PUBLIC INVESTMENT
South Amboy	▪ Lighthouse Bay -185 Residences ▪ Mixed-use development- Marina, Restaurant, Market, Office, Retail, Post Office, Retail and Residences ▪ Rehab. of Existing Homes, 100-300 Block of Second Ward through NPP	▪ Pedestrian Overpass to access Station NJ Transit, NJDOT ▪ Rail Yard Environmental Cleanup- NJ Transit $6 million ▪ Smart Growth Planning Grant- NJDCA $69,900 ▪ John St. Grade Crossing Upgrade- NJDOT $200,000 ▪ Replace CONRAIL bridge over Main St. –NJDOT $11.13 million, municipality ▪ High-level train station platform & relocated station – NJ Transit $18 million
South Orange	▪ Station renovations for seven stores ▪ Gaslight Commons (L_COR) 200 residential units, 2 4-story bldg, 350 parking spaces ▪ New Market by Garden of Eden- 13,500 SF market and housing by Sterling Homes ▪ Church Street Commons- 2 phases with 40 residential units and 57 parking spaces	▪ Irvington Ave. Streetscape- NJDOT $300,000 ▪ South Orange Performing Arts Center ▪ Wayfinding Signage-NJDOT $200,000 ▪ South Orange Avenue Streetscape- Municipal funds ▪ Community Shuttle- NJ Transit
New Brunswick	▪ Skyline Tower: 13-story building conversion by Penrose Properties includes 70 luxury rentals, and office space ▪ Highlands at Plaza Square by Roseland Property Group ▪ One Spring Street: 121 luxury condos, retail and parking ▪ Five other major projects (housing , hotel, and health institute)	

The Process

The process to create the Linden Station Plan officially began in November 2006, when the City received a Smart Growth Grant from the Department of Community Affairs and the Office of Smart Growth. Subsequently, the City created a Steering Committee comprised of City personnel and residents representing the following groups: Mayor, City Council, Planning Board, Economic Development Committee and the Special Improvement District. The Master Plan Steering Committee was in charge of directing the TOD Plan process. The Steering Committee, with the assistance of the Planning Board was charged with creating a future vision for the area surrounding Linden Station. The Plan stresses positive and pro-active cooperation among property owners, developers, NJ Transit, Union County, New Jersey Department of Transportation and the City to achieve the objectives of the Plan.

The City Economic Development Director is the entity responsible for building continued consensus to implement the Plan. The Plan is a special area master plan element of the master plan that updates the land use plan element of the master plan. It provides policy statements and the framework for the creation, adoption and implementation of ordinances.

The Linden Station Area Plan is the result of a consensus-based process that included interviews with major stakeholders in the community; a transit survey, and interviews with Borough Council members, municipal boards, and groups and officials.

The plan reflects participation from community stakeholders and a commitment to implementation. As the planning effort moved forward, the process used as many outreach strategies as possible to ensure a maximum level of understanding and participation by the residents and business owners.

The following strategies were employed to ensure a broad-based representation throughout the planning process:

Public meeting

A public visioning meetings were held on April 8, 2008 and June 24, 2008. The public meetings were active forums for individuals to become a part of the planning process. Every effort was made to notify interested parties of the upcoming meeting. Resident participation was encouraged during all meetings.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire was created and distributed at the outset of the planning process. In the early part of the planning process, the questionnaire was delivered to all stakeholders and to the attendees at the public meeting A copy of the questionnaire is located in Appendix A.

Posters

Posters announcing the meeting time were displayed at commercial establishments throughout the City, at the municipal building, and at several other locations.

Public Notices

All meetings were advertised in the City's official newspaper.

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OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS WITHIN THE TOD

Opportunities

- Linden Station's location along the North East Corridor line, the New Jersey Coast Line and its access to the regional bus network, provide a significant opportunity for a station area that can serve as a vibrant hub for mixed-used development.
- Location is suitable for redevelopment and rehabilitation.
- The Linden Station Area is ideally located to become a destination within the City for residents, visitors and workers.

Constraints

- There are limited pedestrian and vehicular crossings of the rail lines adjacent to Linden Station.
- A need to improve existing infrastructure and to improve the station facilities and station platforms
- Parcels with narrow frontages require lot consolidation to provide the visibility required by retailers.
- Lots with shallow depth limit the ability to provide structured parking to encourage two to three story infill .development to replace one-story buildings.
- Poor image or sense of place within the Linden Station area.

Principles for Transit Oriented Development in the Linden Station Area

The Linden Station Area Plan is based upon well established principles for transit oriented development. They are as follows:

1. Create and implement the City's vision for the Station Area that is stakeholder centered, focused on implementation, and flexible on realizing opportunities for implementation.
2. Create pubic/private partnerships and public/public partnerships.
3. Encourage higher density around the rail station.
4. Provide enough parking, but not too much.
5. Improve the sense of place or attractiveness of Linden as a place rather than just building independent projects.
6. Develop a strategy which can be counted on to support retail development.
7. Create employment opportunities for reverse commuters and off peak commuters.
8. Incorporate buses into redevelopment and rehabilitation plans.
9. Provide a diversity of housing choices for all income levels.
10. Involve corporations in TOD planning.
11. Encourage shared structured parking in comparison to surface lots.
12. Encourage sustainable site and building design (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design))
13. Encourage adaptive reuse of historic or architecturally significant buildings.

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Plan Principles Specific to Linden Station

1. Enhance the appearance of the Wood and Elizabeth Avenue corridors.
2. Create a new identity and niche markets for Linden.
3. Concentrate development intensity within one (1) block of Linden Station and lower intensity as one moves outward to provide a core area and the ability for private entities to make public improvements (station platforms, plazas, etc.)
4. Build a "sense of place" with good urban design (building massing, streetscape improvements, furnishings, roadway improvements, plazas, etc.)
5. Increase pedestrian connections across the North East Corridor Line.
6. Build a public partnership with NJ Transit and private developers to implement this Plan.
7. Incorporate other types of Transit Service (express bus) Into Future Development / Redevelopment.
8. Provide transit oriented uses and discourage uses that create little or no ridership.
9. Encourage a mix of uses.
10. Create convenient pedestrian connections.
11. Create good urban design:
    a. Create streetscape improvements.
    b. Require high quality architecture
    c. Relate the ground level to pedestrian users
12. Create compact development where buildings are clustered near the street edge.
13. Manage parking:
    a. Provide enough parking, but not too much
    b. Locate parking to the rear and sides of buildings
    c. Over time, phase surface parking to structures
14. Create a sense of place, not a project
    a. Retain site lines to the train station
    b. Create public open spaces
    c. Orient buildings to the street.

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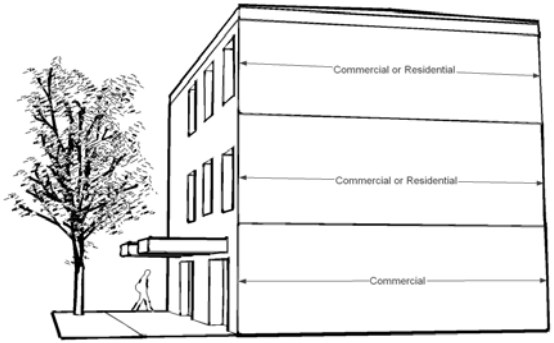
Future Land Use Plan and Map

Figure 1 identifies future land use plan or zoning districts designed to implement the vision and guide the form of development around Linden Station. Streetscapes variations and building to street relationships should be based on this land use plan as illustrated in the following graphic illustrations.



Mixed-use buildings may include a commercial use on the first floor and/or residential upper floors.

Core District – The core district embodies the features of a traditional mixed-use downtown. This district includes retail, office, hotel, trade, vocational and fine art schools, restaurant, apartment uses on upper floors and similar uses. Non-residential uses are required on the ground floor. Buildings are located close to the sidewalk of the street right-of-way (0 to 10 ft.), side yard setbacks are not required. Sidewalks are wide and include continual street tree planting. This district contains the tightest spatial enclosure of buildings and the highest non-residential intensity in the City.

The highest density mixed use development should be located adjacent to Linden Station. Higher building heights are appropriate to provide space areas for plaza's and other amenities located adjacent to the station. A minimum height of four (4) stories and a maximum height of six (6) stories should be permitted for buildings within one block of the station. The proposed heights are consistent with the South Wood Avenue Redevelopment Plan, which permits building heights of five (5) stories and sixty (60) feet.

Buildings that are located in the Core District should express a "storefront character." This guideline is met by providing all of the following architectural features along the building frontage as applicable.

- Regularly spaced and similar-shaped windows with window hoods or trim for each story within a building.
- Large display windows on the ground floor. All street facing structures should have windows covering a minimum of 40 percent and a maximum 70 percent of the ground floor of each storefront's linear frontage. Blank walls shall not occupy over 50 percent of a street-facing frontage and shall not exceed 20 linear feet without being interrupted by a window or entry. Mirrored glass, obscured glass and glass block should not be used in meeting this requirement.

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Wood Avenue District

The Wood Avenue District continues the established front yard setback of 0 to 10 feet consistent with more intensive levels of development in the Core District. This established pattern continues the existing spatial enclosure of the corridor. While the building relationship is consistent with the Core District, the Wood Avenue District represents a progressively lower level development intensity. Uses are similar to the core district as well as downtown character and design. However, heights are limited to three to four stories.

Elizabeth Avenue District

The Elizabeth Avenue district requires greater setbacks in recognition of the lowest intensity of development around Linden Station to transition to neighboring residential uses. The front yard build to line of 15 feet embodies a traditional neighborhood design with opportunities for green space in the front yard. A 25 foot side yard combined setback requires spacing between buildings on separate lots. Uses include retail, office and apartment uses on upper floors. Small café style restaurants shall be permitted as an accessory use or when they demonstrate consistency with the design requirements of this plan. Building heights should range from two to three stories.

Office Residential Character/Live Work District

The Office Residential Character/Live-Work District recognizes the existing residential character of this area on a existing arterial roadway. This district recognizes a desire to retain a residential character, while providing opportunities for professional offices, live-work units in addition to existing residential uses. The front yard build to line of 20 feet embodies a traditional neighborhood design with opportunities for green space in the front yard. A 25 foot side yard setback requires spacing between buildings on separate lots. Sidewalks are four (4) feet wide and wider where necessary. Uses include professional office, live-work units, existing residential.

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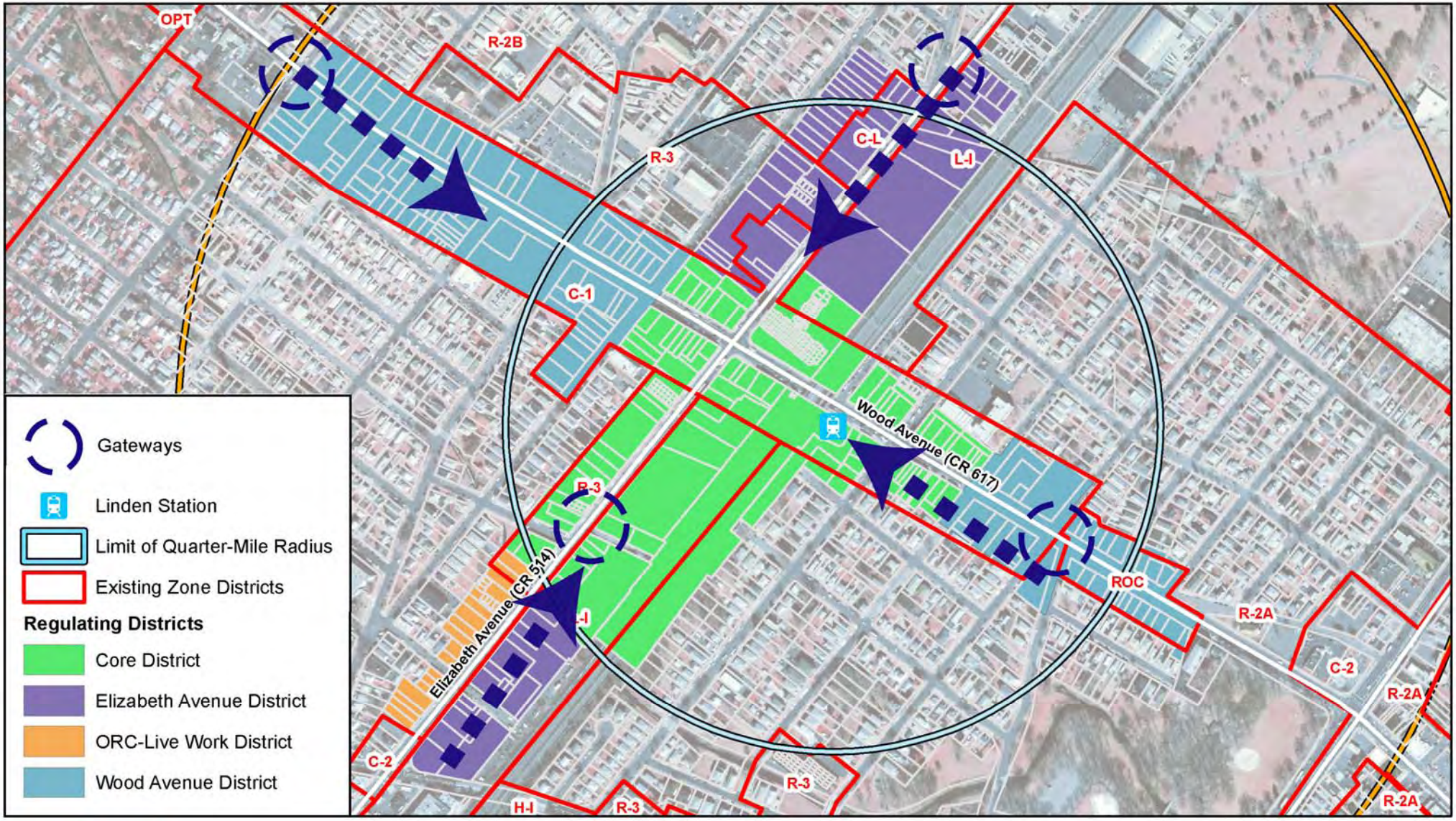

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0 285 570 1,140 Feet

Figure 1
Future Land Use Plan
Transit Oriented Development Plan
City of Linden, New Jersey

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NOTE: This map was developed using New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Geographic Information System digital data, but this secondary product has not been verified by NJDEP and is not State-authorized.

Prepared by: PNR
Source: Union County GIS, NJDEP
File Path: H:\LNPB\00100\GIS\Regulating Plan 11-14-07.mxd

RECOMMENDED DISTRICT STANDARDS

Area, Yard and Building Requirements for the Core District

	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM
Minimum Lot Size	N/A	N/A
Minimum Lot Depth	N/A	N/A
Building Depth	50	N/A
Building Height	4 stories	6 stories
Front Yard Setback	0 ft.	5 ft. (for public plaza areas the front setback may be extended an additional 30 feet).
Side Yard Setback (Combined)	0 ft.	14 ft. (for alleys when continuous building length exceeds 100 feet)
Rear Yard Setback (interior lot)	Sufficient to provide for public walkways and secondary entrances oriented to off-street parking and pedestrian connections.	N/A
Maximum Building Coverage	50 percent	90 percent
Maximum Impervious Coverage		100 percent
Open Space Requirement	0%	10%

Area, Yard and Building Requirements for the Wood Avenue District

	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM
Minimum Lot Size	10,000 sq. ft.	N/A
Minimum Lot Depth	N/A	N/A
Building Depth	50	N/A
Building Height	2 stories	4 stories
Front Yard Setback	0 ft.	10 ft.
Side Yard Setback	10 ft. (one)	25 ft. (combined)
Rear yard setback (interior lot)	Sufficient to provide for loading, refuge, unloading and parking.	
Maximum Building Coverage	N/A	90 percent
Maximum Impervious Coverage		100 percent
Open Space Requirement (Except for plazas and pocket parks)	0%	10%

DRAFT

Area, Yard and Building Requirements for the Elizabeth Avenue District

	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM
Minimum Lot Size	30,000 sq. ft. East Side – 15,000 sq. ft. (West Side)	N/A
Minimum Lot Depth	300 ft. – East Side (150 ft. – West Side)	N/A
Building Depth	50	125
Building Height	2 stories	3 stories
Front Yard Setback	15 ft.	25 ft.
Side Yard Setback	10 ft. (one)	25 ft. (combined)
Rear yard setback (interior lot)	Sufficient to provide for loading, refuge, unloading and parking.	
Maximum Building Coverage	N/A	75 percent
Maximum Impervious Coverage		90 percent
Open Space Requirement	10%	40%

Area, Yard and Building Requirements for the ORC-Live Work District

	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM
Minimum Lot Size	5,000 sq. ft.	N/A
Minimum Lot Depth	100 ft.	N/A
Building Depth	N/A	125
Building Height	2 stories	3 stories
Front Yard Setback	15 ft.	25 ft.
Side Yard Setback	8 ft. (one)	16 ft. (combined)
Rear yard setback (interior lot)	Sufficient to provide for loading, refuge, unloading and parking.	
Maximum Building Coverage	N/A	40 percent
Maximum Impervious Coverage		75 percent
Open Space Requirement	25%	N/A

DRAFT

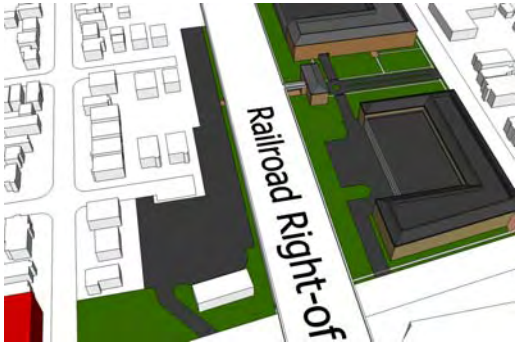
Key Design Concepts
Linden Transit Village Core

The City of Linden envisions a vibrant and attractive setting for Linden Station. To achieve this, the City recognizes that a number of urban design and infrastructure improvements are necessary. These range from pedestrian and parking upgrades to new residential and commercial development; all are aimed at increasing the desirability of the Linden Station Area as a place of residence and commerce.

In order to illustrate these changes, the City has commissioned a three-dimensional conceptual design model. The key elements of this model are presented below and in the accompanying graphic (please note that the number in the list correspond s to the number on Figure 2):

1. Existing Linden Train Station: The existing Linden Train Station building is an icon of the City of Linden. The building should be preserved and its potential for landmark status should be investigated. Though the building is currently underused, cosmetic maintenance and other renovations—including landscape and hardscape improvements such as brick pavers—would help to increase its attractiveness as a focal point for transit oriented development. The possibility of an expanded café, retail spaces, and taxi operation should be explored as a means of maximizing the building's use.

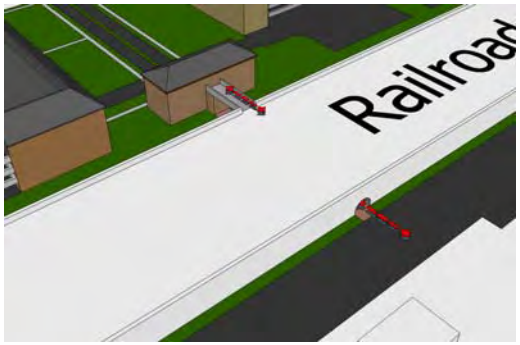
2. Linden Station Surface Parking: Because of the proximity of established single-family dwellings, there is limited potential to increase the intensity of development on the NJ Transit-owned properties to the South of the railroad right-of-way on the eastern side of the tracks by the Train Station. Consequently, the existing use of surface parking continues to be the best use for this site. In order to maximize the attractiveness and utility of this area, resealing of the asphalt and new striping should be provided. Sidewalks should be provided along the railroad right-of-way for the extent of the existing surface parking area; such sidewalks would provide a pedestrian linkage from all parking areas to the existing Linden Station building. Fencing or a wall should also be provided for the entire length of the parking area so as to provide physical separation between the parking area and the railroad right-of-way.



3. Improved Pedestrian Linkages at Linden Station: In addition to the provision of sidewalks in the surface parking area that exists to the South of the railroad right-of-way, improved pedestrian linkages should also be provided along Wood Avenue where it crosses under the railroad right-of-way. Specific improvements in this area should include replacement of sidewalks with brick pavers, improved lighting, and deterrent bird netting on the underside of the railroad overpass. Masking of the bridge to make it more aesthetically pleasing should also be investigated.

4. New Linden Station Building: The Station Area can support additional development on the Westside of the Station as a large portion of the commuter parking currently is underutilized. Coordination with NJ Transit is essential to develop support for any changes on property that is owned or impacted by the proposal. The conceptual model contemplates the creation of a new, two-story Linden Station building to supplement the existing station building. This building would be located on the southbound side of the Northeast Corridor and could include a coffee shop (i.e., Dunkin Donuts) and small bookstore/newsstand (i.e., Hudson News) on the ground floor. The use of the second floor should be limited to a waiting area, public restrooms, and ticket sales. The interior of the new Linden Station building could also feature artwork by local students and artists, or other similar community displays. The conceptual model also contemplates that the second floor of the new Linden Station building will be connected to the southbound platform by means of a pedestrian bridge. The presence of this station will be a great convenience for City residents living to the North of the railroad right-of-way.

5. Pedestrian Tunnel: The conceptual model envisions that the new Linden Station building will be connected to the northbound platform and surface parking areas by means of a pedestrian tunnel that would pass under the railroad right-of-way, as is done at the Princeton Junction, Metropark, Somerville, and other NJ Transit stations. The conceptual design calls for a residential area (see items 6 and 8) that will also provide parking and a promenade to a walkway below the railroad tracks. This promenade feature allows for commercial uses that can include restaurants with outdoor seating and public space to enhance the community and security around the station. This below-grade walkway will be a great convenience to those residents living to the North of the railroad right-of-way as it shortens the walk to the northbound platform.



6. Development of Mixed Use Building with Shared Parking: The conceptual development model contemplates the redevelopment of a portion of the surface parking that is located to the North of the railroad right-of-way into a mixed-use building with ground-level retail/office space and residential units on the upper floors. The building would have a shared parking deck. The height of the building should be limited to 4 to 6 stories and density should be consistent with that of the West Elizabeth Towers site (referenced below). Development of such a building would allow for the creation of a more dynamic and attractive area, and provide increased local support for transit.

7. Redevelopment of Clarke Property: The Clarke Property consists of a commercial shopping center with surface parking at the corner of North Wood Avenue and West Elizabeth Avenue. The buildings are currently set back from the roadways and the predominant features are the surface parking and a freestanding, rotating sign. This property does not exhibit the traditional characteristics of a downtown-commercial site, which is predominant along this portion of Wood Avenue. As a result, the conceptual design model contemplates working with property owners to redevelop the Clarke Property into a mixed-use site with a building with a shared parking deck in the rear. While the City considers the redevelopment of the Clarke property a critical part in creating a vibrant transit village, participation in the transit village would be up to the property owners. This Plan recommends creating zoning incentives to garner property owner interest. However, participation in the Transit Village imitative would be voluntary.

The height of building improvements should be limited to 4 to 6 stories and density should be consistent with that of the West Elizabeth Towers site (referenced below). The mix of residential and commercial space within this building would provide additional support for transit while raising the property's image within the general community.

8. Linden Station Square: The area flanked by the new Linden Station building, the Clarke Property and the above-referenced mixed-use building should be developed into a public plaza, or "Linden Station Square." This square should be landscaped and bisected by dual-directional access to/from the new Linden Station building. This area will help to increase the attractiveness of the Linden Station Area and function as a "village green" in the heart of the City. Additional vehicular and pedestrian connections could be provided between the square and Wood Avenue via the Clarke property.

9. Linden Station Plaza: Plans for a mixed-use building on Block 449, Lots 1, 2, and 8 through 15—all of which are located within the South Wood Avenue Redevelopment Area—have been approved by the Planning Board of the City of Linden. Construction of the approved "Linden Station Plaza" will result in a mix of residential and non-residential development that will support the transit-base of the Linden Station Area.

10. South Wood Avenue Redevelopment Plan: Redevelopment of the areas contained within the South Wood Avenue Redevelopment Area should continue to be planned in accordance with the South Wood Avenue Redevelopment Plan. The redevelopment envisioned by the South Wood Avenue Redevelopment Plan is supportive of the Station Area's development as a Transit Village.

11. West Elizabeth Tower: Plans for a mid-rise residential building on Block 254, Lots 12 and 13 and Block 288, Lots 1, 2, 13, 14 and 15 have been approved by the Zoning Board of the City of Linden. Construction of the approved "West Elizabeth Tower" will result in 210 residential units at a gross density of 70 units per acre. Development at this density is expected to generate a significant amount of transit ridership.

12. Lighting, Trash Containers, Benches, and other Similar Amenities (Unnumbered): In order to support the development of a high-quality image for the area, lighting, trash containers, benches and other similar amenities should be provided in ample supply throughout the Linden Station Area. Furnishings should be of the highest quality and of a unified design theme (i.e., they should be used on an area-wide—not site specific—basis.

13. Station Platform Improvement: Improvements to the station platforms consisting of new ornamental lighting, benches and similar amenities are needed to create an attractive pedestrian friendly environment for passengers and to upgrade Linden Station in a manner similar to adjacent stations.

Figure 2 – Core Area Concept Plan

Rehabilitation Guidelines

The development and street pattern at and around Linden Station provides a good structure for the future refinement of the area into a more desirable place for a living and working environment and as a transit and shopping hub. Better design guidelines are needed for the future development of the area.

This Linden Station Area Plan encourages market driven redevelopment immediately adjacent to Linden Station's Core Area and in areas within a ¼ to a ½ mile radius around the station.

This section establishes guidelines for improved community design within the Linden Station Area. The guidelines provide direction to decision makers, design professionals, and the public in the preparation of development applications that are submitted to the Planning Board as part of the site plan, subdivision or variance review.

Community design is the process of organizing and coordinating the different elements of the City's built and natural environment to achieve a unified, functional, efficient, and visually appealing physical setting. The orientation, form,

Redevelopment and

and relationship of buildings, landscaping, signage, lighting, streets, open spaces, and parking to meet the public need for a well ordered district are basic considerations of community design.

These guidelines are intended to implement the vision for Linden Station by recommending standards for:

- Gateways
- Open Space
- Building Design
- Signs
- Streetscape
- Walls/Screens
- Furnishings
- Parking Lots
- Public Art

To establish a positive community image, sensitive site design is required. This section provides community design guidance.

Gateways

The land use plan (Figure 1) identifies gateway locations, along Wood and Elizabeth Avenues. Such locations will clearly demarcate the entrance into the Linden Station area. At gateway locations, additional architectural features such as a turret, tower, kiosks or other architectural features should be combined with a landscaped entry plazas, public art, inviting signage, etc. Ideal locations for gateway treatments are at the intersection of:

- Wood and Munsell Avenue (eastern gateway) - An opportunity exists to incorporate gateway entrance treatments with the recently designed City Fire Station planned to be constructed at this location.
- Wood and Curtis Street (western gateway and Wood and Saint Georges Avenue (smaller western gateway)
- Ziegler Avenue and Elizabeth Avenue (northern gateway)
- Southern gateway – Limited opportunities exist to create a gateway feature at a full intersection. This plan recommends incorporating a gateway treatment into the approved West Elizabeth Tower project adjacent to Lumber Street and Elizabeth Avenue.

Open Space

Open space in the form of public plazas and mid-block pocket parks should be incorporated as an organizing “place making” element along Wood and Elizabeth Avenue. The public/public partnership between the Union County Improvement Authority and the City of Linden to develop the Raymond Wood Bauer Promenade provides an excellent example of a mid-block “place making” element.

As identified in the Core Concept Plan, opportunities exist to redevelop the one block area around Linden Station with new mixed use buildings, structured parking buildings and public plaza areas. Pedestrian scaled buildings with increased height provide the necessary

incentives for developers to provide this critical "place making" element for Linden Station. As the focal point location of the Linden Station Area, particular emphasis on design and materials of the hardscape and amenities in this area is paramount.

Plaza areas should include amenities for seating, lighting, landscaping, public art, kiosks, vertical elements such as clock towers should be encouraged.

Building Design

New and rehabilitated building design should promote a high quality visually appealing urban/suburban character while incorporating modern Transit oriented development concepts.

Signs

As a general rule, signs should not exceed ten (10) percent of the first story portion of the facade to which it is fixed. Only one (1) sign should be permitted per use and should not exceed sixty (60) square feet in area. Buildings with more than one use should be allowed one (1) sign for each use. Preferred signage includes top lit wood signs and back lit individual lettered signs. Signs should be wall mounted or perpendicular hanging.

Streetscape

Streetscape is "all the elements that constitute the physical makeup of a street and that, as a group, define its character, including building frontage, street paving, street furniture, landscaping, including trees and other plantings, awnings and marquees, signs, and lighting"[2].

One element essential to creating a pedestrian oriented environment is a streetscape with few gaps/breaks for an occasional pocket park and consistent building setbacks. As such, the intention of this Plan is to create a unified harmonious streetscape.

[2] Encyclopedia of Community Planning and Environmental Management by Schultz & Kasen

Seating

Seating is encouraged when space allows for a clear pedestrian walking zone. Seating expands opportunities for people to use the street, especially in commercial streetscapes. Types of recommended seating may be provided by benches, planter walls, edges, steps, or moveable chairs.

Walls and Screens

Walls and screens may be included in a streetscape to direct or screen a view or to provide changes of grade. The height and material selected should relate to building architecture and the character of the district. Walls and screens can be important in creating a continuous sidewalk edge that unifies the street space. Walls are particularly useful in accommodating changes in grade.

Tree Grates

Tree grates are an attractive way to protect trees planted in paved areas. Other options such as modular blocks, brick pavers, and ground covers should also be considered during design phases.

Fencing and Railings

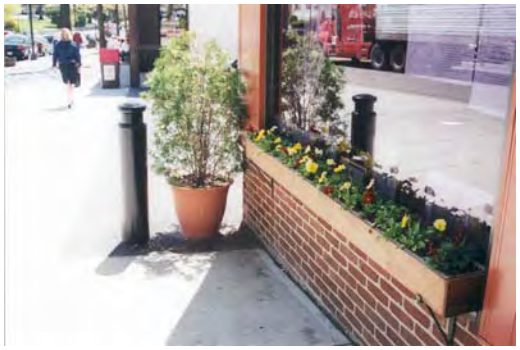
Fencing within a commercial streetscape can be provided to enhance a neighborhood characteristic while in residential districts it helps create a definition of the front yard. Railings may be necessary as a safety feature or as a functional support rail (leaning rail) for people to lean against. Railings and fences can help define the street space.

Bollards

Bollards are generally used to create a low barrier that separates auto and pedestrian traffic, highlights and protects a special feature, emphasizes the character of an area or directs circulation patterns.

Planting Pots and Planters

Planting pots provide an added dimension and color to streetscape planting. They also direct pedestrian traffic, create focal points and provide pedestrian resting areas. Large pots are preferred instead of fixed planter boxes because of potential conflicts with vehicles and maintenance.



Bicycle Racks

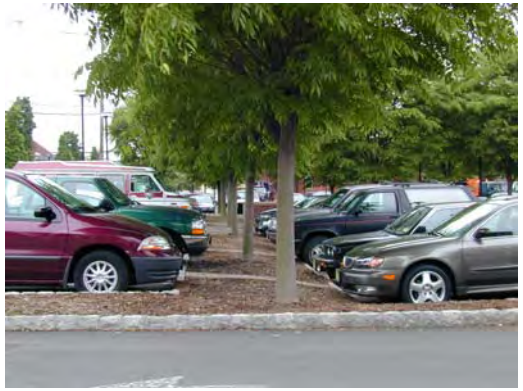
Bicycle racks should be provided within commercial streetscapes and near each station platform to encourage bicycle use.

Awnings

Awnings significantly affect the appearance of streetscapes and the pedestrian environment. Awnings mediate between inside and outside, between private and public and between individual buildings and the urban block. They are hybrids of ownership in that they are attached to private buildings yet extend into and over the public domain.

Parking Lots

Parking lot location and design should minimize disruption of the continuity of retail frontage along the sidewalk. Walls, fences and landscaping should be used to define pedestrian space as separate from parking space.



Street Lighting

Street lighting plays an important role in the quality and safety of streets, especially at night. Lighting illumination levels should be determined by two criteria:

- The uses along the street (commercial or residential)
- The volume of automobile traffic

Street Trees

Trees give many benefits to an urban setting. They supply shade, buffer wind, sun and unpleasant views, help clean the air and reduce glare. Street trees are the most important tool for buffering people from cars.

Civic Art

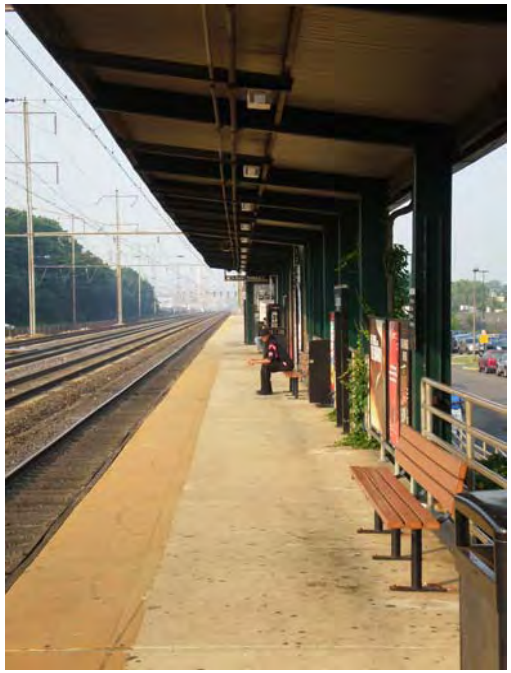
Art and craft in the "public space" provides a human touch to the environment. In some cases, art can be an attraction in and of itself. Either way, the Borough should encourage the use of civic art such as murals, decorative lighting, icons of the City's history.

Civic art elements could be incorporated into building canopies, storefronts, furnishings, lighting, paving, fencing, tree grates and utility elements such as manhole covers.

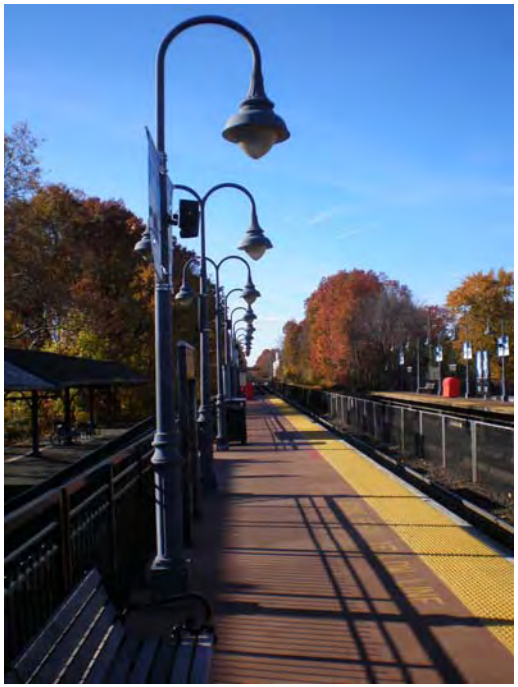
Civic art is most appropriately located at entryways and gateways into the downtown with particular attention to blank building facades. They create a pedestrian space and make the street "more comfortable."

Station Platforms

Attractively designed station platforms with seating, decorative lighting, trash cans and other streetscape elements with a unified design create a safe, attractive pedestrian environment for transit riders. Improvements to the platforms at Linden Station are necessary to create a "sense of place" at Linden Station.



Existing Linden Station Platform



Existing Platform at Westfield Station

Household Lifestyle Trends

The 2002 City of Linden Master Plan and the 2007 Housing and Fair Share Element provide detailed demographic characteristics of Linden based upon US Census data and information from the New Jersey Department of Labor. However, demographic data alone does not always indicate the complex characteristics of an area and shifts in individuals housing preferences.

Many New Jersey suburban communities perceive residential apartments as an unattractive housing type and an occupant's last housing choice. Trends in the real estate market suggest otherwise. A 2004 survey of American housing preferences[3] indicated that 55% of Americans indicated a preference for having a mix of single-family and other housing, sidewalk, shopping and schools within walking distance, commutes of less than 45 minutes and nearby public transportation.

Furthermore, a 2006 article in the Journal of the American Planning Association[4] by Arthur C. Nelson indicates that as baby boomers become empty nesters and retirees, they are drawn to compact, walkable neighborhoods as well as single adults and married couples without children.

The above referenced studies and other planning literature suggests that there is a fundamental shift in the market place in favor of compact living.

Future Marketing Efforts

As part of future downtown improvement efforts, a detailed market analysis should be undertaken to investigate market conditions associated with transit oriented development to develop strategies to market high quality housing and mixed-use development in the Linden Station Area.

[3] The 2004 National Survey on Communities, Smart Growth America and the National Association of Realtors, Planning Magazine, December 2007, page 52.

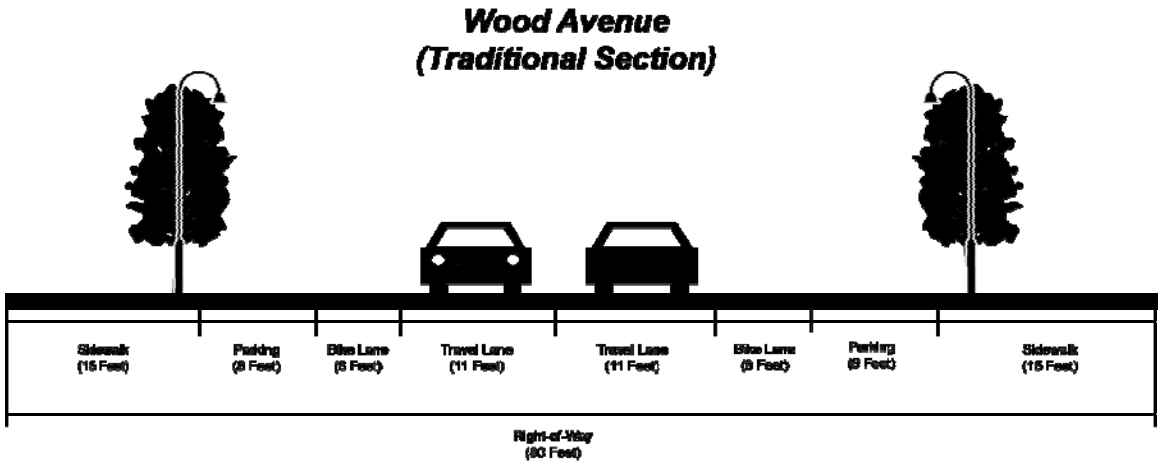
Transportation Improvements

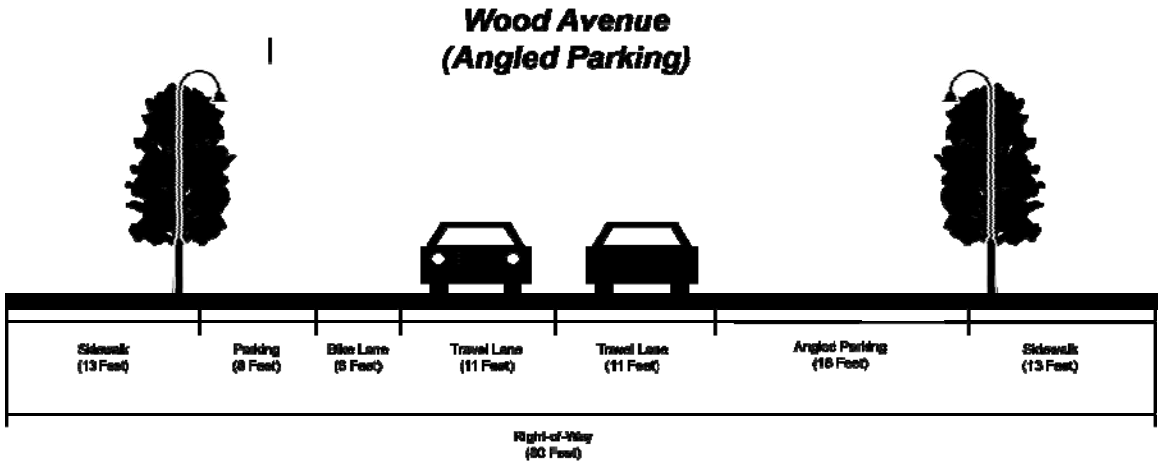
Wood Avenue

The Wood Avenue Right-of-way varies from 80 to 100 feet near Linden Station. The widths of existing travel lanes are wider than necessary for one travel lane in each direction. Accordingly, an opportunity exists to better define the use of the full right of way. Rather than providing excessively wide travel lanes, these areas should be re-striped for bike lanes along Wood Avenue.

As an alternative, sufficient right-of-way width exists to offer angled parking on one side of the street as a means of increasing existing on-street parking.

The Wood and Elizabeth Avenue intersection operates at a failing level of service during peak travel periods. Current and future development requires dedicated left turn lanes at intersections to increase traffic flow over Wood Avenue in all directions. An upgrade of traffic signals along Wood Avenue with advance left turn arrows



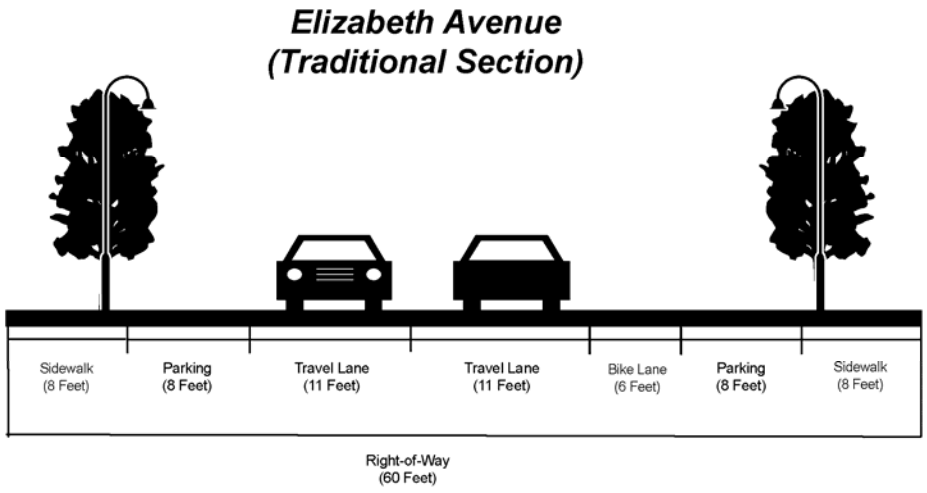


should be considered with the assistance of Union County.

Elizabeth Avenue

The Elizabeth Avenue right-of-way is 60 feet. The existing street design contains a parking lane and travel lane in each direction. The proposed street section encourages the creation of a bicycle lane on eastern side of the roadway to connect with Wood Avenue.

At key intersections dedicated left turn lanes are needed—with the exception of Wood Avenue. Signing and striping for shared use of the travel land and bike lane will also be required. Furthermore traffic signal upgrades with advance left turn arrows should be considered to enhance traffic flow. All improvements need to be coordinated with Union County.



Parking

Off-street parking areas are a necessary component for most development. Their location and appearance can determine the image of the development and the corridor. Parking lots must be designed to serve the needs and the movements of pedestrians as well as the storage and circulation of vehicles. People must travel through the parking lot on foot and the design of the parking lot must meet the pedestrian's needs for convenience, safety, and visual comfort. To establish a main street environment, parking lots and loading areas shall be located behind store fronts. Small parking lots between buildings may be appropriate if no alternative exists, but the design of the lot shall continue the street wall by means of attractive fencing, masonry wall, or hedge. Structured parking shall be placed in an unobtrusive location and may be combined with liner and/or aesthetically appropriate storefronts at the street level. Parking lots need to be designed to make a positive contribution to the image of the area. Outside of the Core Area and Wood Avenue, it is desirable to maintain the front yard of commercial, institutional, and residential areas as landscaped open space with the parking located to the side and rear of the building. An important outcome of transit-oriented development is increased transit use. Lower parking requirements are one action that can be taken to encourage transit oriented development. Shared parking among patrons who use it at different times of the day or week is one way to minimize the space devoted to parking.

One principal to create a successful transit oriented development is to provide enough but not too much parking. Too much parking will reduce the pedestrian friendliness and wastes space that could be used for development. Too little parking can undermine the economic viability of projects and require individuals to park in adjoining residential neighborhoods. This Plan recommends providing as off-street parking as part of all new development or requiring a fee in lieu of providing parking. The fee in lieu would be placed within a separate parking fund to be utilized solely to acquire land to construct parking and to construct new surface and structured parking lots. This Plan recognizes that there are no off-street parking requirements for properties having less than 20,000 square feet in the C-1 district along Wood Avenue. This plan recognizes the potential for individuals to construct additional stories under current and and proposed development standards. This plan specifically recommends that off-street parking be provided on-site or within a few hundred feet for all new residential development. Given the proximity to transit, it is appropriate to reduce Residential Site Improvements Standards (RSIS) for off-street parking.

The following are parking principles that are necessary to implement the Linden Station Area Vision:

Off street parking should be provided for each individual use in the standards proposed in this section. The following reductions in parking would apply where it can be demonstrated that there are either:

- Variations in the accumulation of vehicles by hour, by day, or by season; or,
- When relationships exist among the land uses that result in visiting multiple land uses on the same auto trip; or
- Other shared parking approach.

- The reductions for parking are as follows:
  - o Retail: One (1) space for each 500 square feet of gross floor area.
  - o Apartments: 1.3 spaces per each one-bedroom unit. 1.8 spaces per each two-bedroom unit.
  - o Offices: One (1) space for each 350 square feet. of gross floor area.
  - o Medical Offices: One (1) space for each 250 square feet of gross floor area.
  - o Restaurants, bars & taverns: No parking is required.

- Parking for all structures shall be prohibited in front yard setback areas.

- Parking lot layout, landscaping, buffering and screening shall be provided to minimize direct views of parked vehicles from the street right-of-way and sidewalks, avoid spill-over light, glare, noise, or exhaust fumes onto adjacent properties.

- Parking lot layout shall take into consideration pedestrian movement and pedestrian crossing shall be installed where deemed necessary by the Planning Board. The interior of all parking lots shall be landscaped to provide shade and visual relief.

- On-street parking directly fronting a lot shall count toward fulfilling the parking requirement.

- Design of off-street parking/circulation areas shall provide for the following:
  - △ Buffering and screening at the perimeter of parking areas that includes ornamental walls, fencing and landscaping, including berms
  - △ Internal landscape islands within the parking lot to provide shade and beautification

- The parking requirements may be suspended for select retail uses of 2,000 square feet or less.

- Provide parking based on the needs of each particular user, however, parking requirements may be reduced when demonstrated that a shared parking approach between different uses, and proximity to transit facilities warrant a reduction.

- Design attractive parking lots/structures using context-sensitive design principles, i.e., screen parking lots/structures from adjoining properties and the public right-of-way.

- Loading areas shall be separated from parking areas and screened from public view. Loading areas shall be designed so that trucks can circulate and maneuver off-street and do not back out onto a public right-of-way.

- Pedestrian spaces shall be safe. Sidewalks shall be designed and built free of hazards and minimize conflicts with noise and vehicular traffic.

- Uses should not provide more than 125% of the required parking by ordinance.

Affordable Housing

The City recently adopted a Housing and Fair Share Plan in December of 2007. The City plans on submitting its housing plan to the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) for approval (substantive certification). In accordance with the City's Housing Plan, an obligation exists to rehabilitate existing units and to build new units for affordable housing. This plan encourages the constructing a portion of the City's affordable housing obligation within the Linden Station Area as part of new development and rehabilitation projects.

Impacts on School District

A recent study prepared for the Northern NJ District Council of the ULI (Urban Land Institute), ***Who Lives in New Jersey Housing?*** found that with increased housing opportunities around Train Stations that the incipient growth in the number of students in the school system is very low compared to the anticipated household size that may already live in the area. Most of the housing around the station has limited space, therefore geared to small families including young professionals prior to developing their families, empty nesters, and single head of households. Indications are that the same size and mix of residential units from a 1980 study to this study shows that 500 residential units today generates 88 public school-age children and the 1980 study indicated there were 130 public school age children. The salient values related to household size are the type of housing, size of the units, tenure of unit- owner or renter, price, and location. While overall rates are lower than 1980, those rates dip more as the development is located closer to a transit station. The report continues to indicate that the impacts on public schools are minimal within TOD areas. Extrapolating the findings of this report into recent development approvals associated with the South Wood Avenue Redevelopment Plan and the 210 unit West Elizabeth Tower approximate that the net influx of children is likely to be less than 20 students. A more detailed study would be needed to more fully evaluate specific proposals.

Based on the 2006, ***Who Lives in New Jersey Housing?*** the 396 new residential units (shown on Table 1) near the train station would generate 8 public school children.

TOD residential units have historically generated the least amount of school children in comparison to all other types of residential housing choices.

Implementation Strategy

In accordance with New Jersey land use laws and regulations, there are three (3) separate techniques to implement a transit oriented development plan in Linden. The implementation strategy within this Plan recommends utilizing either rezoning or rehabilitation as the initial approach to create ordinance and design standards for the proposed transit oriented development area. The following sections elaborate upon the requirements to implement each scenario. This Plan also identifies formal redevelopment as an option for plan implementation. Such an option can only be utilized by the City when conditions of blight and similar conditions that affect the general health and welfare of the community have been determined to exist.

Rezoning

To implement the proposed land use plan and recommendations within this Plan, the following steps would be necessary:

The Planning Board would adopt the Transit Oriented Development Plan as part of the City Master Plan. This Plan establishes appropriate population densities and levels of development intensity adjacent to Linden Station.

The City Governing Body would implement the recommendations by the introduction and adoption of an ordinance amending the City's Zoning Ordinance and development regulations. The proposed ordinance would be referred to the Planning Board to determine its consistency with the City's Master Plan.

Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance that are not the result of recommendations contained in a Master Plan Reexamination Report would require notice to the effected property owners in the district and those property owners within 200 feet of the proposed new zone districts.

Rehabilitation Area Designation and Redevelopment Plan

An alternative approach to rezoning would be to designate the Linden Station Area in need of rehabilitation and prepare a redevelopment plan for the area that would contain specific and detailed design and architectural standards for the area. An area may be designated in need of rehabilitation by the municipal governing body if it is determined that the area exhibits the following conditions:

- A significant portion of structures in the area are deteriorated or substandard; there is a continuing pattern of vacancy, abandonment, or underutilization of properties in the area; and a "persistent arrearage" of property tax payments; or
- More than half the housing stock in the delineated area is at least 50 years old, or a majority of the water and sewer infrastructure in the delineated area is at least 50 years old and is in need of repair or substantial maintenance.

Given the nature of the existing development within the Linden Station Area, either one or both of the findings set forth in the second paragraph above are more likely to be determined for the area. The finding that the infrastructure in the area is 50 years of age or older would be based on a certification of the City Engineer or similarly qualified professional.

The procedure for designating an area in need of rehabilitation area is much simpler than the process to designate an area in need of redevelopment. No formal investigation or public hearing is required, and the governing body must only adopt a resolution designating the area in need of rehabilitation. In addition, no special public notice is required, except what would normally be required to publicize any meeting of the governing body. To implement such an approach, the following steps would need to be taken:

- Prior to adoption of the resolution designating an area in need of rehabilitation, the governing body is required to submit the resolution to the municipal planning board for its review.
- The planning board has up to 45 days to submit its recommendations on the designation to the governing body, including any proposed revisions.
- The governing body adopts the resolution designating the area in need of rehabilitation and forwards a copy of the adopted resolution to the Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs (DCA).

- The Governing Body adopts a redevelopment plan for the area in accordance with the procedure described in the following section of this report.
- No amendment to the City Master Plan would be required to adopt and implement the plan, provided that the Planning Board determines that the proposed redevelopment is generally consistent with the Master Plan.
- Pursuant to the LRHL, no property may be acquired by eminent domain in a rehabilitation area. This approach may be particularly appropriate when it is contemplated that private property owners or developers will implement the redevelopment plan and no acquisition of property by the City will be required.

Redevelopment Area Designation and Redevelopment Plan

As noted previously, the City has designated several areas in need of redevelopment. To implement the recommended approach for the Linden Station area, a similar redevelopment area designation may be considered. In summary, the steps in this process as enumerated in the LRHL are as follows:

Step 1: The municipal governing body directs the planning board to undertake a preliminary investigation to determine whether or not the identified area is in need of redevelopment.

Step 2: The planning board conducts an investigation and holds a public hearing on the proposed redevelopment area designation. A written report would be prepared for the Planning Board outlining the findings of the preliminary investigation study. The notice requirements for the hearing are specified in the LRHL.

Step 3: Based on the planning board's recommendation, the governing body may designate all or a portion of the area as an area in need of redevelopment.

Step 4: The governing body prepares a redevelopment plan for the area or directs the planning board to prepare the redevelopment plan.

Step 5: The governing body adopts the redevelopment plan.

Step 6: The governing body or another public agency or authority designated by the governing body as the "redevelopment entity" oversees the implementation of the redevelopment plan.

Step 7: The redevelopment entity selects a redeveloper to undertake the redevelopment project or projects that implement the plan.

This approach may also be combined with the use of a rehabilitation area designation for those areas where no acquisition of private property is contemplated. A redevelopment designation would also allow for lot acquisition and consolidation. Concurrently, a rehabilitation area designation would allow the adoption of a redevelopment plan without the need for property acquisition.

Redevelopment Plan

The preparation and adoption of a redevelopment plan would be the same for both rehabilitation and redevelopment areas. The governing body may direct the Planning Board to prepare the redevelopment plan or it may choose to prepare the redevelopment plan itself, referring

the plan to the Planning Board for its review and comment.

If the Planning Board prepares the plan, it would prepare the plan, review it at a meeting of the Planning Board, and adopt a resolution referring the plan to the governing body for adoption by ordinance and confirming that the plan is consistent with the municipal master plan.

If the governing body finds the referred redevelopment plan acceptable, it adopts the plan by ordinance. The governing body may change or revise the plan, but must do so by a majority vote of its full authorized membership and record its reasons in the minutes of the meeting. The procedures for ordinance adoption include introduction and first reading, public notice, and second reading and public hearing. No special notice requirements are needed beyond those already required by statute for ordinances adopted by the governing body.

Alternatively, the governing body may prepare the redevelopment plan. If the governing body prepares the plan, it must refer the plan to the planning board for review and comment prior to holding a public hearing and adopting the plan. Referral is usually done prior to first reading of the ordinance adopting the plan. The planning board has up to 45 days to review the proposed redevelopment plan and prepare a report offering its recommendations. The report must specifically identify any inconsistencies between the redevelopment plan and the municipality's master plan, and include recommendations regarding these inconsistencies.

The governing body must consider the report and recommendations of the planning board as part of its deliberations. However, the governing body may either ignore or change any recommendation, as long as it does so by a majority vote of its full authorized membership and specifies in its minutes the reasons for not following the planning board's recommendations.

Phasing

The recommended rezoning and redevelopment strategies presented in this report can be accomplished in phases or could be undertaken simultaneously depending on the resources available and the urgency to move forward quickly on the recommendations. If the City chooses a phased approach, the recommended phasing schedule would be as follows:

Phase 1—Implementation of the Core District Plan, including rezoning or redevelopment options; and

Phase 2—Implementation of the Elizabeth Avenue Corridor.

Phase 3 – Infill development and redevelopment Wood Avenue.

Public Infrastructure

In general, the scale and intensity of uses proposed through the rezoning and/or redevelopment and rehabilitation approaches recommended in this report are not substantially different than what would be permitted currently in these areas. Accordingly, it is assumed that the City's current infrastructure, including water or sewer would be able to accommodate the proposed developments. However, if infrastructure improvements are necessary, the necessary infrastructure improvements should be provided and financed by the private developers or designated redevelopers undertaking the projects. Such an arrangement can be

specifically called for in any developer/redeveloper agreement that is entered into between the City and the designated redeveloper of a redevelopment or rehabilitation area. On-site and off-tract improvements necessary due to development under permitted zoning would be addressed pursuant to the procedures specified in the MLUL.

Further Actions/Studies to be Undertaken

As part of the City of Linden's transit oriented development implementation efforts, the following steps and/or actions should be undertaken:

Step One:

- Forge a partnership with NJ Transit to improve properties that it owns adjacent to the Station in accordance with this Plan.
- Educate the community about transit oriented development proposed for the Station Area.
- Evaluate providing density incentives to locate affordable housing and to incorporate Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards within the TOD.

Step Two:

- Revise the City Zoning Ordinance in accordance with the recommendations of this plan.

Step Three:

- Conduct a marketing study.
- Establish a strategy to market the station area. Create public information and marketing materials for the Station Area.

Step Four:

- Submit plans to NJDOT for Transit Oriented Development approval.
- Revise the Transit Oriented Development Plans and ordinances as necessary to reflect recommendations within the market study.
- Establish specific street design details for lighting, pavers, trash receptacles, bike racks, etc. and place on the City website.

Step Five:

- Identify a viable development entity. This Plan encourages creating partnerships with area landowners to take a proactive approach to select a qualified developer(s) with assistance from the City.

Step Six:

- As part of the approval process or rehabilitation/redevelopment process, negotiate and adopt a development or a redevelopment agreement. Such an agreement would indicate the terms and conditions of development. (Who does what and when and under what conditions)
- Determine more formal cost estimates of necessary improvements.
- Investigate utilizing the Special Improvement District as the entity responsible for managing parking and shared parking arrangements in the Station Area.

Implement the Development: The terms and conditions of the Development Agreement will guide development of the project including:

- Private and any public financing
- Preparation of detailed design plans
- Obtaining permits and approvals
- Public and Private Construction

Step Seven

- Create an acquisition program for vacant and underutilized properties to construct off-street parking.

ACTION PLAN			
Action Agenda	Year	Implementation Strategy/ Responsibility	Notes
Regulatory Changes			
▪ Changes to the land use code and zoning map to implement plan	0-1	City Council, Planning Board	
▪ Ordinance revisions to the development standards for parking, possibly establish vehicle trip generation allowances by district, modifications to design and construction standards for streetscape improvements	1-2	City Council, Planning Board	
▪ Negotiate and adopt a development/redevelopment agreement.	3-4	City Attorney's Office, City Council, City Engineering, City Economic Development, City Planning Consultant	
Further Planning and Engineering Analysis			
▪ Coordinate proposed Plan with New Jersey Transit	0-1	City Economic Development	
▪ Market Study/Prototype Pro-forma Analysis	0-1	Special Improvement District	
▪ Prepare a RFP to solicit interest in developing transit oriented development plans	1-2	Economic Development, City Attorney	
▪ Continue to evaluate implementation strategies and refine program as needed	1-2	Tax Assessor – Tax Pros and Con's City Engineer – Evaluation of Needed Infrastructure Improvements City Attorney – Evaluation of Pro's and Con's of Implementation Strategies Planning Consultant – Advise community based upon past experience.	
▪ Create a more detailed corridor transportation plan that designs pedestrian and bicycle improvements.	2-3	Planning Board	
▪ Establish specific street design details for lighting, pavers, trash receptacles, bike racks, etc.	1-2	Planning Board, Special Improvement District, City Engineering	

▪ Creation of a City Capital Improvement Plan	2	City Engineering, Planning Board	
▪ Develop an internal financing and phasing plan for public surface and any structured parking	3-4	Economic Development	
Other Tasks			
▪ Work with property owners to recognize their needs prior, during and after construction phases.	0 – project term	Economic Development, City Engineering	
▪ Create an acquisition program for vacant and underutilized properties to construct off-street parking. Evaluate fiscal techniques to create a dedicated funding source, i.e., require a fee in lieu of providing off-street parking.	0- project term	City Council, Special Improvement District	
▪ Monitor implementation strategies and determine whether incentives are needed to implement the TOD concept.	0- project term	All City Departments	
▪ Apply to become a Main Street New Jersey community	0-1	City Council	
▪ Evaluate project on a yearly basis. Indicate project milestones, constraints and update project schedule	Each Year	Economic Development, City Engineering	
▪ Submit application to NJDOT to be considered a Transit Oriented Development	1-2	City Council	
▪ Secure interests in locations identified for centralized parking.	3-4	Economic Development	
Gateways/Signage/Streetscape			
▪ Design wayfinding and identification signs for the Transit Oriented Development Area	1-2	Special Improvement District	
▪ Design Gateway Treatments	2-3	City Engineering	
▪ Design Streetscape Improvements	2-3	City Engineering	
▪ Build Gateway and Streetscape Improvements	4-5	City Engineering	

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Appendix A – Questionnaire

City of LINDEN
New Jersey
Big enough to lead, small enough to care

T&M ASSOCIATES

TRANSIT VILLAGE SURVEY

1. What types of development are missing from the transit village around the station (check each land use)?

Land Use	Have	Don't Have	Desirable and Needed	Desirable and not needed	Need more of	Need less of
Banks/Financial Services						
Day Care						
Restaurants or Food vendor						
Doctors & Medical Services						
Dry cleaners						
Groceries/Supermarket						
Health Clubs						
Ice Cream Parlor						
Industrial						
Laundromats						
Non-professional services						
Professional Services						
Residential						
Retail stores						
Schools or training academy						
Warehouses						
Other: _____						
Other: _____						

2. Would you like to see more residential development in the Transit Village Zone?

Much More	Some More	A Little More	None	Don't Know

3. If you checked "much more" or "some more"- what type of housing is needed in the transit zone (check all that apply)?

Type of Housing	**Check**
High rise residential units (7 floors or more)	
Mid rise residential units (4 to 6 floors)	
Low rise residential units (2 to 3 floors)	
Mixed use (retail-office ground floor & residential above)	
Attached multi-family residential units	
Duplex or Triplex residential units	
Age restricted residential units	
Single family residential units	

4. Of those items you checked in question 3, what percentage of each do you think would be appropriate for the station are within ¼ mile of the train station (total should add to 100)?

Type of Housing	**Percent**
High rise residential units (7 floors or more)	
Mid rise residential units (4 to 6 floors)	
Low rise residential units (2 to 3 floors)	
Mixed use (retail-office ground floor & residential above)	
Attached multi-family residential units	
Duplex or Triplex residential units	
Age restricted residential units	
Single family residential units	

5. Of those items you checked in question 3, what percentage of each do you think would be appropriate for the station area from more than ¼ mile to within ½ mile of the train station (total should add to 100)?

Type of Housing	Percent
High rise residential units (7 floors or more)	
Mid rise residential units (4 to 6 floors)	
Low rise residential units (2 to 3 floors)	
Mixed use (retail-office ground floor & residential above)	
Attached multi-family residential units	
Duplex or Triplex residential units	
Age restricted residential units	
Single family residential units	

6. What should be the theme or core focus for Linden Transit Village?

Arts & Crafts Center ____

Business oriented ____

Community services ____

Neighborhood Vitality ____

Economic Growth Area ____

Recreational Area ____

Other _____

Don't Know _____

7. Along with this theme- is there a style or appearance that you prefer?

Yes: ____ No: ____ Don't know: ____

8. What areas around or at the station are potentially developable or redevelopable?

Location: _____

Location: _____

Location: _____

Location: _____

No specific area/ Don't Know _____

9. Considering city traffic, how would you rate vehicle circulation in the area around the Train Station?

Excellent	Good	Average	Some delays	Congested	No Opinion

10. Are there specific times of the day that you try to avoid driving in or through the area?

Midnight to 6:00 AM	6:01 AM to 8:00 AM	8:01 AM to NOON	12:01 PM to 4:00 PM	4:01 PM to 7:00 PM	7:01 PM to 11:59 PM	Not applicable/ Don't know

11. Are there specific days, you try to avoid driving in the area?

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Holidays	Don't Know

12. Considering city traffic, how would you rate the ease and safety of walking or riding your bike in the area around the Train Station?

Excellent	Good	Average	Some delays	Congested	No Opinion

13. Are there specific times of the day that you try to avoid walking or riding a bike in or through the area?

Midnight to 6:00 AM	6:01 AM to 8:00 AM	8:01 AM to NOON	12:01 PM to 4:00 PM	4:01 PM to 7:00 PM	7:01 PM to 11:59 PM	Not applicable/ Don't Know

14. Are there specific days, you try to avoid walking or riding a bike in the area?

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Holidays	Don't Know

15. Would you like to see improved sidewalks and pedestrian crossings near the Rail station?

Yes with bricks	Yes with concrete	Better maintenance of sidewalks	More lighting	More landscaping or benches	Greater police presence	Slow down traffic	None Needed	No Opinion

16. Are there improvements that can be made to encourage existing and potential rail users to bicycle to the station?

Dedicated bike lanes	Shared bike and road lanes	Improved security at the station	Improved lighting along bike routes	Don't care	No

17. What improvements to circulation are needed (check all that apply)?

Improved wayfinding signs		More parking	
Turning lanes at intersections		Wider sidewalks	
Left turn signal phase		Traffic calming	
One-way streets		Better lighting	
Pedestrian countdown timers		Other: _____	

18. Are there specific locations that need improvement?

Location: _____

Location: _____

Location: _____

Location: _____

No specific area/ Don't Know _____

19. Are there specific parking needs?

	Have	Don't Have	Adequate Supply	Relocate & Modify Supply	Need More	Need Less	Don't Need
On- street							
Surface off-street							
Public parking deck							
Private parking deck							

20. Any other comments?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Please return survey to:

John C. Jennings, P.P., AICP
Principal Planner
T & M Associates
11 Tindall Road
Middletown, NJ 07748

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HELP CREATE

A Transit Village Plan

LINDEN COMMUNITY INPUT MEETING

- Express your opinion to create a better downtown
- Discussion of: a) What is a Transit Village
  b) A new vision for the downtown
  c) Improvements near the train station
  d) Development types that should be encouraged and discouraged
  e) and More

April 8th - 7:30 P.M.
City Hall
301 North Wood Avenue
Linden, New Jersey

Sponsored by
The City Council and Planning Board

LINDEN TRANSIT VILLAGE PLAN

Appendix B – Existing Conditions Report

Existing Conditions Report
Linden Station Area

Prepared by T&M ASSOCIATES

POLISH AMERICAN CARE AGENCY

Cafe
MACHIATO • LATTE
PASTRIES
CHOCOLATE DRINKS
WIDE ASSORTMENT
OF TEAS

ULASKI MEAT
PRODUCTS Co., INC.
EUROPEAN SPECIALTIES

HOLLYWOOD

Designer OUTLET

NJ TRANSIT
Linden
Station

Existing Conditions Report
Linden Station Area

City of Linden
Union County, New Jersey

Prepared for:

City of Linden Planning Board

Prepared by:

T&M ASSOCIATES
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This original of this document has been signed and sealed in accordance with New Jersey Law.

July 27, 2007

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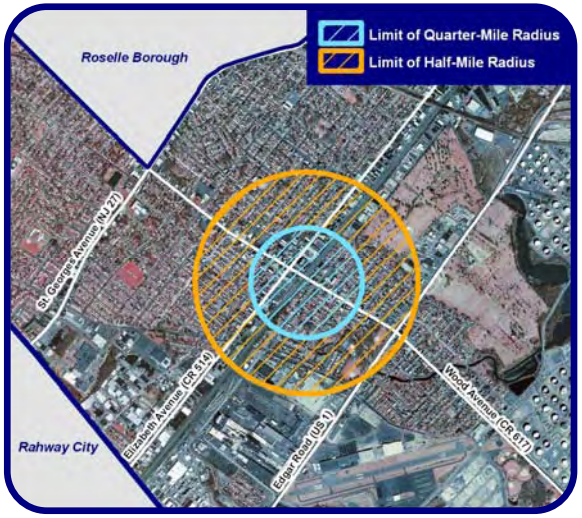
Introduction

The Linden Station Area encompasses approximately 392 acres (excluding public roadways), and is the City's center for commercial, civic, and residential land uses.

It encompasses all areas within a half-mile radius (on average, a ten-minute walk) of Linden Station, and is bisected by Wood Avenue (Union County Route No. 617) and Elizabeth Avenue (Union County Route No. 514). Figure 1 shows its planning context.

Figure 1:
Linden Station Area



Source: T&M Associates

This Existing Conditions Report was prepared as a background study in support of the City of Linden's current Transit Village planning activities. It classifies the Linden Station Area into two parts: the Primary Study Area, which encompasses all areas within a quarter-mile radius of Linden Station; and, the Secondary Study Area, which encompasses all areas located from a quarter-mile to a half-mile from the Station. With special emphasis on the Primary Study Area, it examines: general land use patterns; building conditions and characteristics; development intensity; transit accessibility and related concerns; redevelopment potential; and, environmental and regulatory constraints to development.

General Land Use

Existing Land Uses

The Primary Study Area of the Linden Station Area contains a traditional mix of land uses, including: banks; industrial uses; offices; public buildings and land, including the right-of-way and facilities associated with the Northeast Corridor and North Jersey Coast passenger railroad lines; retail and general service uses; restaurants; automotive-related businesses; mixed-use buildings; and, a full range of residential uses, including apartments, condominiums, duplexes, and single-family dwellings. The Primary Study Area also contains a limited amount of vacant unimproved land. Table 1 provides information on the area that each of these uses comprises, as determined through field investigations and the analysis of digital geographic data.

Table 1:
Existing Land Uses
of the Primary Study Area

Use	Acres	Per-cent
Single-Family Dwellings	24.3	22.5
Apartments/Condos	15.8	14.6
Duplexes	16.2	15.0
Mixed-Use with Residential	6.7	6.2
Auto-Related Businesses	0.8	0.7
Banks (General)	0.7	0.6
General Industrial Uses	5.7	5.3
Offices	1.5	1.4
Retail and General Services	7.0	6.5
Restaurants	0.2	0.2
Public Buildings and Lands	23.6	21.9
Vacant Unimproved Lands	5.4	5.0
Total	**107.9**	**100.0**

Source: T&M Associates

The existing land uses of the Secondary Study Area have been analyzed with property tax assessment information, field surveys, and the interpretation of recent orthophotographs of the area. Table 2 provides complete information.

Table 2:
Existing Land Uses
of the Secondary Study Area

Use	Acres	Per-cent
Single-Family Dwellings[1]	121.8	42.8
Apartments/Condos	6.7	2.3
Mixed-Use with Residential	0.9	0.3
Auto-Related Businesses	1.7	0.6
Banks (General)	0.02	0.01
General Industrial Uses	48.4	17.0
Retail and General Services	15.3	5.4
Restaurants	1.4	0.5
Public Buildings and Lands	86.6	30.4
Vacant Unimproved Lands	1.7	0.6
Total	**284.5**	**100.0**

Source: T&M Associates

[1] May include duplexes and other residential structures with up to four units (i.e., Class 2 residential properties).

Appendix A provides an overview of the existing land use patterns of the Linden Station Area.

Vacancy Rates

As determined by on-site investigations of the Primary Study Area during May and June of 2007, approximately 7.8 percent of the Area's non-residential structures were totally vacant, while an additional 4.9 percent were partially vacant. These buildings are predominantly located along Wood Avenue, with a concentration to the East of Linden Station. We do note that several vacancies are associated with redevelopment in accordance with the South Wood Avenue Redevelopment Plan, which is discussed later in this report.

The best and most recent estimates of residential vacancy rates are obtained from the 2000 US Census, which reported a vacancy rate of 3.5 percent for the residential structures located on the blocks that are fully contained within the Linden Station Area.

The Linden Station Area's residential vacancy rate is slightly higher than the US Census-reported vacancy rates of 3.3 and 3.5 percent for the City and Union County, respectively, but significantly lower than the State's vacancy rate of 7.4 percent.

Please note that the preceding discussion of vacancy rates pertains only to structures, and not to vacant unimproved land.

Building Condition and Characteristics

Building Height

In this analysis, building height is measured in terms of stories, as measured from a streetscape perspective.

The average height of all non-residential structures within the Primary Study Area is approximately two stories, and ranges from one story to a maximum height of seven stories on Block 201, Lot 12. The Area's non-residential, multi-story buildings are generally concentrated along Wood Avenue.

Because of the wide variation in their architectural forms, this analysis does not provide information on the height of the residential dwellings located in the Station Area. However, these structures are

typically one- to two-story homes that are less than 30 feet in height.

Building Cover

Building cover is most often expressed in terms of the percentage of a property that is covered by buildings.

In this analysis, building cover has been estimated with County-supplied digital geographic data on building footprints. While the dataset that was used in this analysis does not result in a level of accuracy that is appropriate for engineering or land surveying purposes, it is particularly well-suited for land use planning.

This analysis revealed that the average non-residential parcel in the Linden Station Area exhibits a building cover of approximately 63 percent. On the other hand, the average residential parcel exhibits a building cover of approximately 39 percent.

The majority of the non-residential parcels with an above-average building cover are concentrated along Wood Avenue. Residential parcels with above average building cover are dispersed throughout the Linden Station Area.

Gross Floor Area

Total gross floor area includes the area encompassed by the exterior building walls of all floors of a building or structure. It is calculated as the product of building cover and height. Basement and attic spaces are not included in the gross floor area, since the presence of such spaces is not reliably identified from a streetscape- or orthophotographic-perspective.

This analysis reveals that the non-residential structures in the Primary Study Area have an average gross floor area of approximately 4,230 square feet. As in the case of building height and cover, structures with an above-average gross floor area are concentrated along Wood Avenue.

Because of the wide variation in their architectural forms, no information is provided on the average gross floor area of residential dwellings located in the Area.

Building Condition

A visual inspection of the condition of the Primary Study Area's non-residential buildings revealed that slightly more than half are in good condition. Buildings were considered to be in good condition when they exhibited no serious signs of dilapidation or disrepair.

Despite the good condition of a large number of the Primary Study Area's non-residential buildings, almost half are in fair to poor condition and in need of significant general maintenance and/or cosmetic improvements. A large portion of these buildings are located along Wood Avenue, to the East of the railroad lines. Buildings were considered to be in fair or poor condition when they exhibited significant signs of dilapidation or disrepair.

With few exceptions, the condition of the Linden Station Area's housing stock is consistently good throughout the Primary Study Area. The most significant exception to this observation is that there is a greater presence of housing stock that is in need of maintenance and/or cosmetic improvements to the East of the railroad lines.

One explanation for the presence of housing that is in need of such work is the age of the City's housing stock, 66.9 percent of which was built before 1959 (2000 US Census) and is approaching at least fifty years of age.

Architectural Characteristics

In general, the Primary Study Area is characterized by functional architecture and most of the buildings lack significant architectural ornamentation and other adornments. Nonetheless, some buildings include decorative cornices and other design features, such as decorative lighting fixtures and awnings. The Primary Study Area would benefit from an increased presence of such features.

Expanded use of architectural ornamentation, as shown above, would benefit the Primary Study Area.

Development Intensity

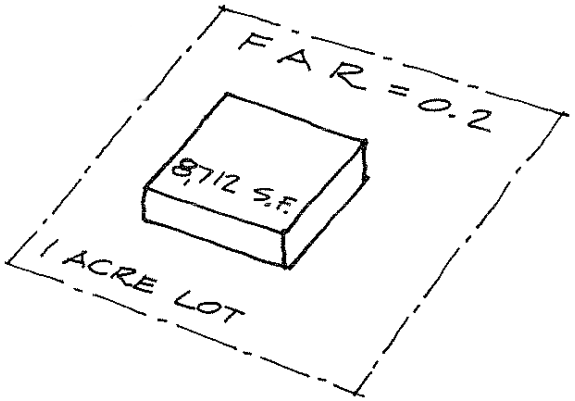
Non-residential Floor-Area Ratio

Floor-Area Ratio (FAR) is a measurement of the development intensity on a tract of land. This analysis includes calculations for non-residential development within the Primary Study Area.

FAR is calculated as the total gross floor area of a building, divided by the total square footage of the site on which it is located. Below-grade areas (i.e., basements) and attics are not included in the floor-area ratio calculations contained in this report, because they are not reliably identified from a streetscape- or orthophotographic-perspective. Figure 2 (right) provides further clarification of this concept.

The average FAR of all non-residential and mixed-use parcels within the Primary Study Area has been estimated to be 0.61, which represents a modest intensity of development where the gross floor area is approximately sixty percent of the site's area.

Figure 2:
Floor-Area Ratio



This diagram illustrates a FAR of 0.2 (8,712 square feet of floor area ÷ 1 acre or 43,560 square feet = FAR of 0.2).

Source: Moskowitz, Harvey S. and Carl G. Lindbloom. The Latest Illustrated Book of Development Definitions. Rutgers University, Center for Urban Policy Research. New Brunswick, NJ. 2004. (Image edited.)

On the other hand, the maximum observed FAR in the Primary Study Area was 2.97, which effectively means that the gross floor area is roughly three times that of the site.

Properties with an above-average FAR are generally concentrated along Wood Avenue and Elizabeth Avenue.

Residential Density

The intensity of residential development is most often measured in terms of density, which is the number of dwelling units located within a specified geographic area—most often one acre.

The 2000 US Census indicates that the blocks that are fully contained within the Linden Station Area exhibit an average overall residential density of approximately 8.5 units per acre.

However, the central areas of the Station Area exhibit a significantly higher overall density. For instance, the portion of the C-1 (Central Business) zone district that is contained in the Primary Study Area has an estimated overall residential density of approximately 11.1 units.

These figures represent overall densities for the Linden Station Area. However, the actual density of individual sites is often much higher. This is particularly evident in the Primary Study Area, where the actual density of all parcels developed with a single-family unit averages at 8.8 units per acre, and those developed with duplexes exhibit an average density of 18.6 units per acre.

Sites developed with a mix of commercial and residential uses usually exhibit even higher residential densities. One typical example is Block 448, Lot 26, which represents an estimated density of 51.7 units per acre.

With an observed total of four dwelling units on a GIS-estimated 0.077353 acres (3,369.5 square feet) of land, Block 448, Lot 26 exhibits a density of 51.7 units per acre (4 units ÷ 0.077353 acres of land = 51.7 units per acre). This is a typical example of higher density on a mixed-use site.

Block 201, Lot 12 is an additional example of a high-density, mixed-use site. It is the location of a seven-story building that contains ground-floor commercial space and a total of 150 residential units. The site is developed at a density of approximately 62.0 units per acre, which is significant since the site is located directly adjacent to the railroad lines and within approximately 150 feet of Linden Station. This provides a high concentration of potential transit riders within very close proximity to the Station.

The residential density of Block 201, Lot 12 is approximately 62.0 units per acre.

In general, it takes a residential density of twelve units per acre to sustain transit[2]. Though the overall densities of the Linden Station Area fall short of this benchmark, the actual density of several mixed-use sites is much higher. This is the case with previously-discussed Block 201, Lot 12, which has a density that is more than five times the cited minimum required density of twelve units per acre.

An intensification of overall residential development patterns within the Linden Station Area would provide increased support for transit. Consequently, it is recommended that the City consider this as a possibility in subsequent stages of the Transit Village planning process.

[2] Pushkarev, Boris and Jeffrey Zupan. Public Transportation and Land Use Policy. Indiana University Press. Bloomington, 1977, as cited in: Dunphy, Robert, Deborah Myerson, and Michael Pawlukiewicz. Ten Principles for Successful Development around Transit. Urban Land Institute. Washington, DC, 2003.

Transportation

Availability of Transit

NJ Transit's Northeast Corridor and North Jersey Coast railroad lines serve Linden Station. These lines provide service to Trenton, Bay Head, Newark, New York City, and intermediate points. On a normal weekday, 116 trains stop at the Station from 4:40AM to 2:30AM, with stops every 15 to 20 minutes during peak travel periods.

Linden Station's direct connection to New York City makes the morning rush very busy.

In addition to the rail lines, the Linden Station Area is also serviced by three NJ Transit bus routes, namely No. 94 (Stuyvesant Crosstown), No. 56 (Elizabeth-Winfield), and No. 57 (Tremly).

Routes 56 and 57 have a stop at Linden Station and serve other areas of the City, as well as Elizabeth, Roselle and Cranford, before reaching Winfield. On weekdays, these routes operate from 6:15AM to 10:30PM.

Route 94 has a stop at Elizabeth Avenue and Stiles Street (Union County Route No. 615), which is in the southern periphery of the Linden Station Area. This route provides connections to Bloomfield, Roselle, Roselle Park, Union, Irvington, Newark, and East Orange. On weekdays, it operates in Linden from 6:15AM to 10:00PM.

Availability of Parking

A total of 618 parking spaces, including 13 Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant spaces, are available to NJ Transit passengers at Linden Station. Use of these spaces costs $4.00 per day or $175.00 per

quarter for City residents ($200.00 for non-residents).

NJ Transit passengers also have access to an additional 74 spaces across Wood Avenue from the Station, along Pennsylvania Railroad Avenue. Use of these spaces is regulated by twelve-hour meters, and costs $4.00 per day.

Thus, there are 692 commuter parking spaces located directly at Linden Station, or along Pennsylvania Railroad Avenue. This closely resembles the total of 710 commuter parking spaces available in the City of Rahway, which is also served by the Northeast Corridor and North Jersey Coast railroad lines.

Appendix B provides an overview of the location of commuter parking spaces within the Linden Station Area.

For those who do not require commuter parking spaces, on-street parking is available along Wood Avenue. These parking spaces are oriented toward the commercial uses of the Area, as their use is generally limited to two hours and regulated by meters.

The City of Linden also maintains a four-story parking structure at City Hall, which is located on Wood Avenue, between Blancke Street and Knopf Street. Use of this structure is reserved for municipal government use and visitor parking.

In addition to the above, many of the commercial uses of the Linden Station Area provide private, off-street parking areas for their patrons.

Pedestrian- and Bicycle-Access

The Area's sidewalks are generally in good condition, with the exception of some limited areas to the East of the railroad lines where cracking and uneven surfaces are present.

The Area does not have any bicycle lanes or routes. Bicycle racks are located at Linden Station for use by NJ Transit passengers. There is not a significant presence of bicycle racks or storage containers in other parts of the Linden Station Area.

Public Spaces

Availability of Public Spaces

Public spaces for passive and active recreation encourage pedestrianism and generate trips to an area. The Linden Station Area contains public spaces, including the Raymond Wood Bauer Promenade (County-owned), Wheeler Park (County-owned), Sixth Ward Park, Miltonia Street Park, Blancke Street Park, and James Dobson Park. Appendix C details the location of these areas.

While there is a considerable number of parks within the Linden Station Area, additional outdoor public space would be a great asset in the development of a Transit Village. Such areas should be located along the Wood Avenue corridor, and could consist of small seating alcoves for visitors to meet and greet. Seating alcoves and other public open spaces would encourage pedestrianism and transit usage in the Linden Station Area.

The Raymond Wood Bauer Promenade provides outdoor seating off of Wood Avenue. It also contains an outdoor amphitheater, which is used for outdoor concerts and other activities.

Environmental Considerations

Constraints

The area is devoid of wetlands mapped by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), although it is traversed by West Brook. Digital geographic data from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) indicates that limited 100-year floodplain areas are associated with West Brook.

Additionally, the Linden Station Area contains thirteen sites that are known to be contaminated by the NJDEP. These sites are known, or suspected to be, points of groundwater and/or soil contamination.

Appendix D details the location of these constraints.

Regulatory Considerations

Land Use Regulations

The Linden Station Area is located within several zone districts, including:

- C-1 (Central Business District);
- C-1A (Commercial District);
- C-2 (Retail Commercial);
- C-L (Limited Retail-Specialized Manufacturing District);
- H-I (Heavy Industrial);
- L-I (Light Industrial);
- R-2A (Two Family – 50 Feet);
- R-2B (Two Family – 40 Feet);
- R-3 (Apartment); and,
- ROC (Residential, Office, Commercial).

Clearly, the Study Area is impacted by a significant number of zone districts. Appendix E depicts the relationship of the Station Area to the City's zone plan. Additionally, Table 3 provides information on the allocation of the Linden Station Area among these zone districts.

Table 3:
Zoning of the Linden Station Area

Zone	Acres	Per-cent
C-1 (Central Business Dist.)	43.8	8.7
C-1A (Commercial District)	14.3	2.9
C-2 (Retail Commercial)	15.5	3.1
C-L (Limited Retail-Special-ized Manufacturing District)	4.7	0.9
H-I (Heavy Industrial)	20.1	4.0
L-I (Light Industrial)	78.0	15.5
R-2A (Two Family – 50 Feet)	157.1	31.3
R-2B (Two Family – 40 Feet)	133.6	26.6
R-3 (Apartment)	31.5	6.3
ROC (Residential, Office, Commercial)	3.5	0.7
Total[3]	**502.1**	**100.0**

Source: T&M Associates

The use standards of the zone districts included in the Linden Station Area are liberal and permit a wide range of uses, including residential, commercial, and industrial activities. Appendix F provides a comparison of the permitted principal uses of each zone.

[3] Includes public roadways.

The variety of the principal permitted non-residential uses of the Linden Station Area lends itself to creating a strong foundation for transit ridership. It includes medium- to high-density residential, office, and retail uses, which generate demand for both peak and off-peak transit ridership and are suggested by NJ Transit for inclusion in Transit Villages[4].

Although the majority (80.5 percent) of the Linden Station Area is located in the C-1 (Central Business), C-1A (Commercial), C-2 (Retail Commercial), R-2A (Two Family – 50 Feet), R-2B (Two Family – 40 Feet), R-3 (Apartment), C-L (Limited Retail-Specialized Manufacturing), and ROC (Residential, Office, Commercial) zone districts, the principal permitted uses of which are generally considered to be transit-compatible, a significant portion of the Area (19.5 percent) is located in the H-I (Heavy Industrial), and L-I (Light Industrial) zone districts. The industrial land use orientation of these districts generates only a very low level of transit ridership[5]. As a result, it may be prudent for the City to consider amending its current zone plan to encourage land use patterns that are more supportive of transit in these areas. This issue should be fully explored in subsequent phases of the Transit Village planning process.

[4] NJ Transit. Planning for Transit-Friendly Land Use: A Handbook for New Jersey Communities. NJ Transit. Newark, NJ. June 2004.

[5] Ibid.

Zone District Bulk Regulations

There is considerable variation within with bulk standards for each of these zone districts. Despite these variations, the bulk standards of the residential districts are fairly consistent with one another.

Additionally, it is important to note that the C-2 (Retail Commercial) district has varying bulk regulations, which are dependent upon the lot width of the subject parcel.

Appendix G provides a synopsis of the bulk regulations of each of the discussed zone districts.

Design Standards

The City's Code lacks extensive design standards. However, effective design standards would help the City to create a sense of place through the development of a coordinated design scheme for the Linden

Station Area. Consequently, the City should consider amending its Code to include design standards for the Station Area.

NJ Transit suggests that municipalities implement design standards to improve the quality of the public environment, which encourages pedestrianism and transit ridership. A sample of the measures that NJ Transit recommends[6] includes:

- The placement of pedestrian-generating uses, such as post offices, bakeries, pharmacies, and variety stores, on the ground floor of multi-story buildings;
- Encouraging visual variety in façades through the use of articulation, building entrances, windows, and awnings to create an interesting streetscape and shorten the sense of walking distances; and,
- Using building height and setbacks to define pedestrian routes.

In addition, NJ Transits recommends adding design standards for streetscape treatments (i.e., trash receptacles, benches, pavers, lighting, etc.). Development of such standards would help to increase the quality of the Station Area by establishing a unified design scheme for the streetscape. This would contribute to an increased visual appeal, which may encourage visitors to not only stay in the Station Area longer, but also to make return trips.

Special Improvement District

A portion of the Linden Station Area is located within the City of Linden Special Improvement District. This area is depicted in Appendix H.

The purpose of the City of Linden Special Improvement District is to revitalize, protect, and promote the District. It provides a range of financial and technical assistance to property owners and businesses for the purpose of, but not limited to: exterior building (i.e., façade) improvements; business promotion through events such as an annual sidewalk sale; provision of low-interest business loan assistance; and, business recruitment, planning and development.

Though the City of Linden Special Improvement District does not impose design requirements, with the exception of certain sign requirements (contained in Section 31-25.12 of the Code of the City of Linden), its establishing ordinance sets the prerequisite that the District Management Corporation review the exterior design of all structures that are the subject of Planning Board applications.

State Planning Areas

The Linden Station Area is also impacted by the land use objectives of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP). The SDRP allocates the State among a series of planning areas, each of which has its own intended purpose.

The Linden Station Area is located within the Metropolitan Planning Area (PA 1). The intent of PA 1 is to:

- Provide for much of the State's future redevelopment;
- Revitalize cities and towns;
- Promote growth in compact forms;
- Stabilize older suburbs;
- Redesign areas of sprawl; and,
- Protect the character of existing stable communities.

Clearly, any Transit Village planning activities undertaken within the Linden Station Area would be in accordance with the SDRP's intent for PA 1.

[6] Ibid.

Redevelopment Considerations

South Wood Avenue Redevelopment Plan

A portion of the Linden Station Area is located within the South Wood Avenue Redevelopment Area. This area is depicted in Appendix I.

The general goal of this Redevelopment Plan is to eliminate substandard building and site conditions that have resulted in underutilized, stagnant, or not fully productive properties, and support the use of the Redevelopment Area in a manner that will better serve the community through private investment.

To effectuate this goal, the Redevelopment Plan seeks to create an opportunity for mixed-use development, renovation and upgrading of Linden Station, and improvements to public parking facilities. Clearly, the Redevelopment Plan supports the development of transit usage within the Linden Station Area, and is a valuable tool for the City to leverage in the Transit Village planning process.

The value of this Redevelopment Plan to the Transit Village planning process is further solidified by its land use requirements. Among the permitted land uses is Linden Station, as well as mixed-use development with ground floor retail and commercial space, and high-density residential uses located on the upper stories. Such mixed-use development will generate both peak and off-peak transit usage, and includes what NJ Transit identifies as primary and supporting transit-compatible uses[7].

With regard to building design requirements, the South Wood Avenue Redevelopment Plan gives prospective developers a significant amount of flexibility. The Plan lacks design requirements like those that have been previously discussed.

However, for those portions of the South Wood Avenue Redevelopment Plan that the Planning Board has received development applications, the Board has required additional building articulation as a condition of approval. This has resulted in the approval of well-designed buildings. Upon the Planning Board's potential adoption of a Transit Village Plan, consideration should be given to amending the South Wood Avenue Redevelopment Plan so that it is consistent with the Transit Village Plan's design objectives.

Theater Site Redevelopment Plan

A portion of the Linden Station Area is located within the Theater Site Redevelopment Area. This area is depicted in Appendix I.

The general goal of the Theater Site Redevelopment Area is to eliminate the substandard building and site conditions that existed on the site of a former theater structure and abutting properties.

The Theater Site Redevelopment Plan envisions a mixed-use development consisting of an amphitheater, open space, office, retail, and dining facilities, all of which generate both peak and off-peak transit usage[8]. The Plan intends that the Redevelopment Area support the urban vitality of the general area, and be an aesthetically pleasing environment for residents, workers, and shoppers.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

Thus far, the Theater Site Redevelopment Plan has been a success. It has been the wellspring of the previously-discussed Raymond Wood Bauer Promenade, and other high-quality development.

The Raymond Wood Bauer Promenade and the building under construction are results of the Theater Site Redevelopment Plan.

Additional Redevelopment Activity

Given the need for improvement in the condition of a large number of the Linden Station Area's buildings, it may be prudent for the City to investigate the possibility of using the redevelopment and/or rehabilitation planning process to improve conditions in the Station Area.

In order to initiate the redevelopment planning process, the City Council must adopt a resolution authorizing the Planning Board to undertake a preliminary investigation to determine whether the Station Area, or any number of smaller parts thereof, satisfies the criteria for being designated as an area in need of redevelopment that are presented in Section 5 of the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (LRHL; NJSA 40A:12A-1).

Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation of the Linden Station Area is another option that may be useful in improving conditions. There are several criteria, under which a municipality may declare an area to be in need of rehabilitation. Of particular relevance to the Linden Station Area is the fact that the LRHL permits municipalities to declare areas in need of rehabilitation if the governing body determines, by resolution, that more than half of an area's housing stock is at least 50 years old. This may be the case within the Linden Station Area, or smaller portions thereof. Consequently, the City should further investigate this issue as a means of facilitating improvements to the Area. Rehabilitation is particularly useful because it provides property owners with the security that eminent domain cannot be used to seize personal property.

Brownfield Redevelopment

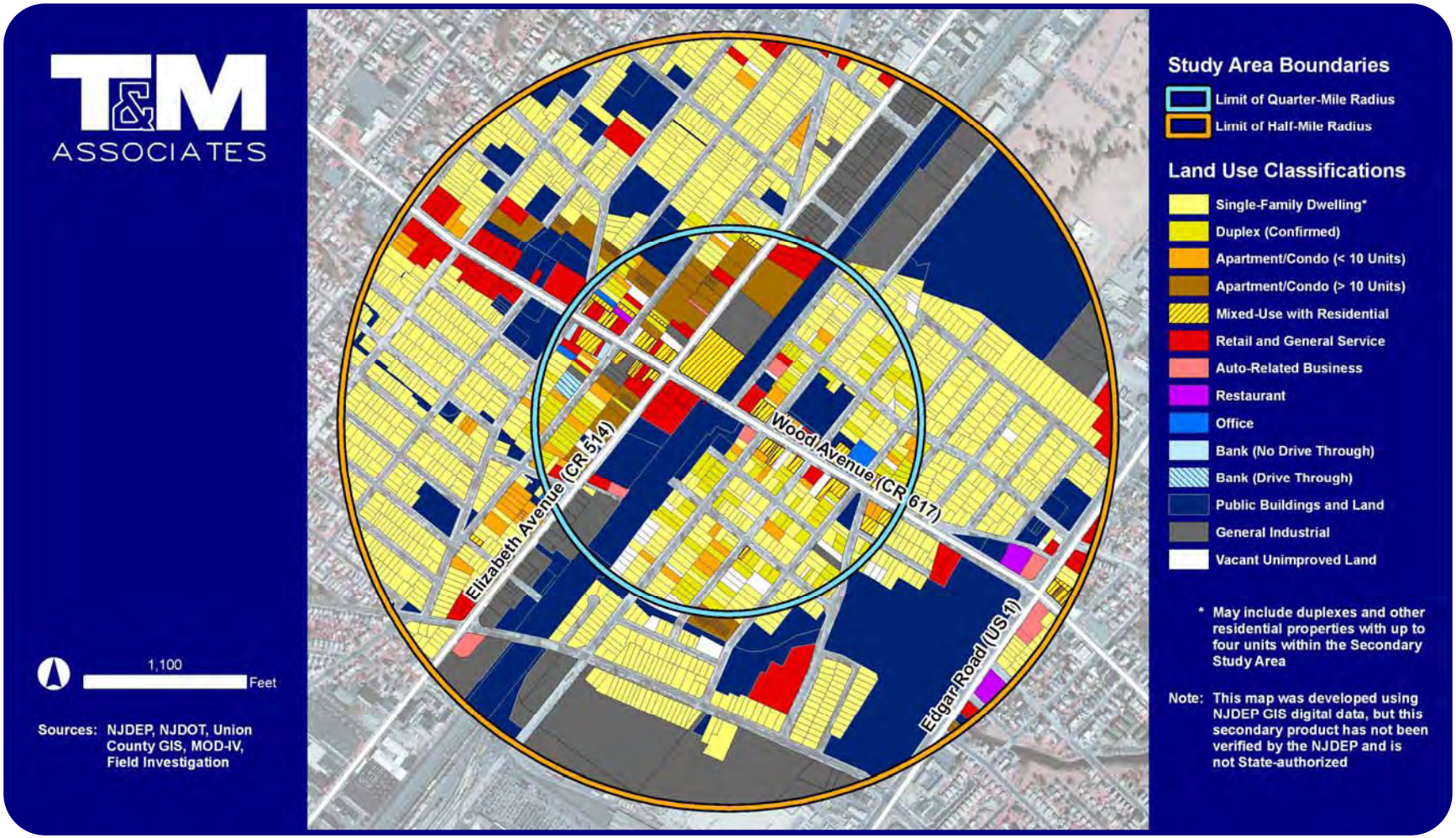
New Jersey Law defines brownfields as "any former or current commercial or industrial site that is currently vacant or underutilized and on which there has been, or there is suspected to have been, a discharge of a contaminant" (NJSA 58:10B-23.d).

The State has established the New Jersey Brownfields Redevelopment Task Force (NJBRTF), which assists municipalities and counties in the local implementation of smart growth strategies through the brownfield redevelopment process and provides a significant amount of technical

and financial assistance. As a result, the City may wish to perform a thorough investigation into whether or not those sites that are known by the NJDEP to be contaminated satisfy the criteria of the LRHL for being designated as an area in need of redevelopment.

Appendix A:
Existing Land Use

Appendix A: Existing Land Use



Appendix B:
Commuter Parking Areas

Appendix B: Commuter Parking Areas

Appendix C:
Public Spaces

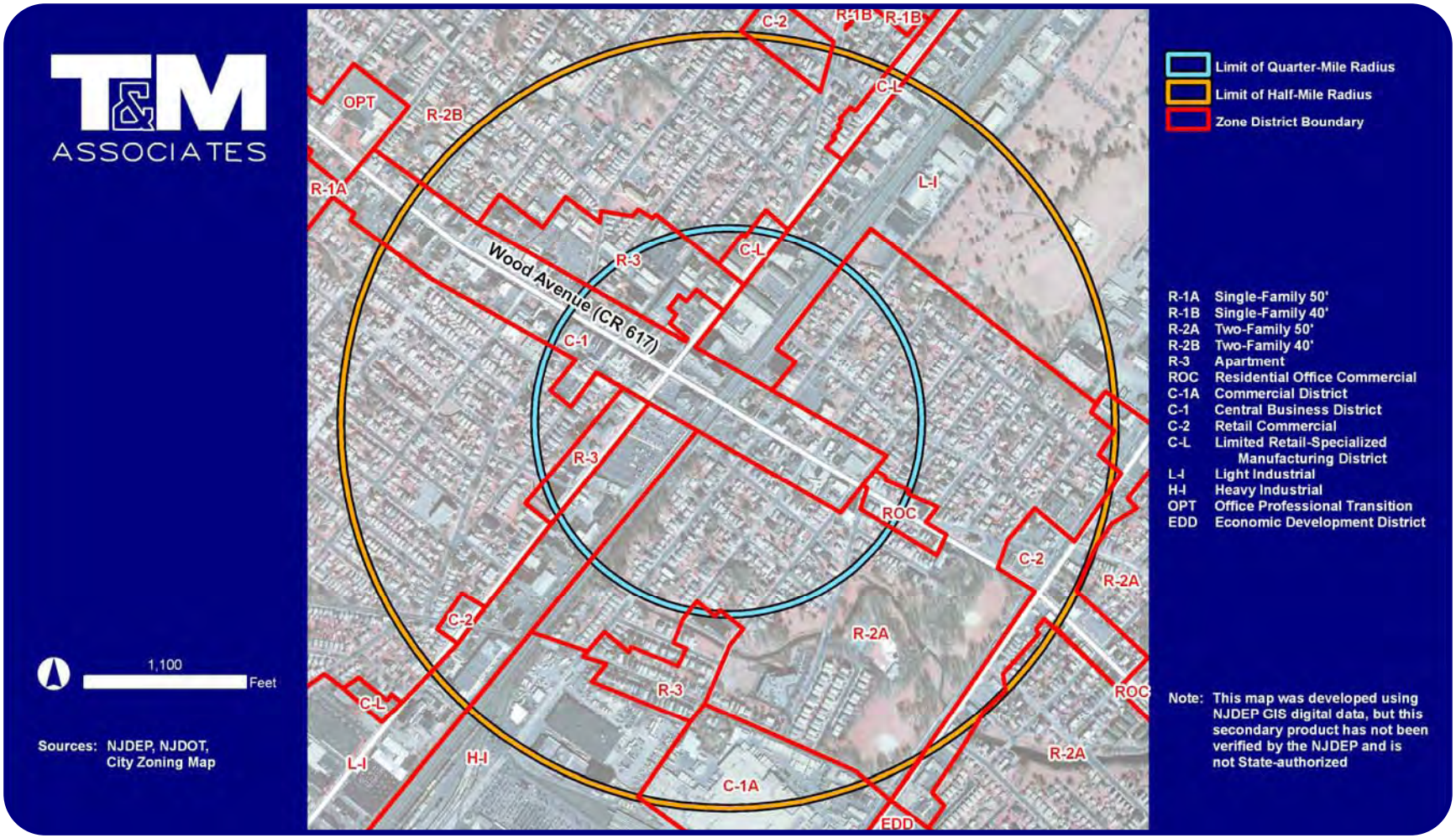
Appendix C: Public Spaces

Appendix D:
Environmental Constraints

Appendix D: Environmental Constraints

Appendix E: Zoning

Appendix E: Zoning



Appendix F:
Summary of Principal Permitted Uses

Summary of Principal Permitted Uses

	Zone Districts									
	C-1	C-1A	C-2	C-L	H-I	L-I	R-2A	R-2B	R-3	ROC
Single Family Dwellings	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Private, Non-Profit & Public Schools	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hospitals	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Churches & Similar Places of Worship	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Duplexes	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Funeral Homes	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cemeteries	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
Three- & Four-Family Structures	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗
Apartments	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗
Clinics & Nursing Homes	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗
Retail Stores for Household Supplies	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
Retail Stores for Office Supplies	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
Retail Stores for Home Furnishings	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
Retail Stores for Office Furnishings	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
Retail Stores for Hardware	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
Food Stores & Variety Stores	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Restaurants	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Retail Stores for Gifts, Clothing, & Appliances	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
Private Parking Lots & Garages	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Federal, State & County Government Buildings	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Finance, Real Estate & Insurance Offices	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Banks	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Professional Offices	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
Business Offices	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Indoor Theaters, Bowling Alleys, Skating Rinks	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗

Summary of Principal Permitted Uses

	Zone Districts									
	C-1	C-1A	C-2	C-L	H-I	L-I	R-2A	R-2B	R-3	ROC
Hospitals	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Non-Profit Clubs & Organizations	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Print., Publish., Data Process. & Communications	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Pool Parlors & Arcades	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Retail Stores for Home Improvement	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Supermarkets	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Office Buildings	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Limited Manufacturing with Retail Sales	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Limited Manufacturing	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Assembly & Packaging	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Building Supply Wholesale & Retail Sales & Yards	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Warehouse & Distribution Centers (No Terminals)	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Airports	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Offices, Research, & Laboratories	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Service Stations, Automotive Supply & Car Washes	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Automotive Repair Shops	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Public Utility Power Generating Stations	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Truck Terminals	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Manufacturing (No Explosives)	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Tank Farms	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗

Note: This table is intended as a summary, and is intended only to be used in conjunction with this Existing Condition Report to provide general land use information. It is not a substitute for the Code of the City of Linden. Please see the Code of the City of Linden for more detailed information.

Source: T&M Associates (Compiled from the Code of the City of Linden)

Appendix G:
Summary of Area, Yard, and Bulk Regulations

Summary of Area, Yard and Bulk Regulations

	Min. Size (Ft.)	Min. Width (Ft.)	Min. Depth (Ft.)	Min. Front Yard (Ft.)	Min. Side Yard (One/ Both; Ft.)	Min. Rear Yard (Ft.)	Max. Height (Ft.)	Max. Cover (%)	Min. Habitable Floor Area (Sq. Ft.)
C-1	3,000	30	N/A	N/A	7/7 (Corner)	15	65	80	2,000
C-1A	40,000	200	100	30	12/24	25	65	55	2,500
C-2 (40) Residential	4,000	40	100	25	5/10	25	35	35	1,000
C-2 (40) Non-Res.	10,000	100	100	15	12/12	15	35	50	5,000
C-2 (60)	6,000	60	N/A	5	7/7 (Corner)	15	35	50	5,000
C-2 (100)	10,000	100	100	15	12/12	15	35	50	5,000
C-L	6,000	60	100	5	7/7	25	35	50	5,000
H-I	40,000	200	200	30	12/24	25	65	60	10,000
L-I	10,000	100	100	30	12/24	25	65	50	2,500
R-2A	5,000	50	100	25	6/18	25	26	40	1,250
R-2B	4,000	40	100	25	5/10	25	26	40	1,000
R-3	4,000	40	100	25	5/10	25	26	40	1,000
ROC	4,000	40	100	25	5/10	25	26	40	1,000

Note: This table is intended as a summary, and is intended only to be used in conjunction with this Existing Condition Report to provide general land use information. It is not a substitute for the Code of the City of Linden. Please see the Code of the City of Linden for more detailed information.

Source: T&M Associates (Compiled from the Code of the City of Linden)

Appendix H:
Special Improvement District

Appendix H: Special Improvement District

Appendix I:
Redevelopment Areas

Appendix I: Redevelopment Areas

STORE
FOR
RENT
201-859-8500

MANCINO'S
SHOE REPAIR
SHOE REPAIR

WELCOME
TO
LINDEN

HOLLYWOOD

PLAZA
FAMILY HAIRCUTTERS
MORTGAGES

JEWEL SHOP
Young Men
& Boys

MANNY'S
TEXAS WEINERS

PSYCHIC

TOSKANA
Leather Warehouse

Permit
Parking
Only
Tow Away Zone

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