



Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
33 Livingston Avenue
New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901

Contact: Miriam Salerno
Miriam.salerno@ejb.rutgers.edu
848-932-2876

January 8, 2015

FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE

MORRIS AVENUE VISION PLAN PROMOTES A WALKABLE DOWNTOWN FOR SPRINGFIELD

Study develops strategies for improved circulation, parking, infrastructure and design in the downtown area along Morris Avenue

Together North Jersey has announced the release of the Morris Avenue Vision Plan final report. The Local Demonstration Project report provides a set of strategies to promote a walkable downtown for Springfield, which generally includes a several block area around Morris Avenue near the Mountain Avenue intersection.



The Morris Avenue Vision Plan creates a strategy for improved circulation, parking, infrastructure and design in the downtown area in Springfield

The Vision Plan was created in conjunction with the Township's on-going redevelopment planning process and recommends creating a vibrant downtown area that is attractive to residents, businesses, and commuters alike. Springfield's downtown has the essential components for creating a great place with unique character: mixed uses, community facilities, an interconnected street and sidewalk network, and access to transportation.

The comprehensive improvement plan was developed by representatives from the Township of Springfield, the Springfield Business Improvement District, Union County, and NJ TRANSIT. The planning process included extensive input from area stakeholders.

"Springfield is making great progress towards improving our downtown as a great place for residents, businesses, and visitors," said Springfield Mayor David Barnett. "The township has been interested in rehabbing the downtown area for years, and this new Vision Plan is a welcome addition that will enhance our existing projects and plans. We're very grateful to the Springfield BID as well as all the local residents and businesses that provided their input."

The final report focuses on several important themes. In order to calm traffic and improve circulation, the plan recommends a Complete Streets approach that will make the road network safe and convenient for all modes of transportation. These improvements include curb



Workshop attendees participate in an interactive Community Vision Survey

extensions to widen sidewalks and calm traffic, upgraded crosswalks and signalization, improved signage, dedicated turn lanes and markings to clearly direct traffic, and improved access to the downtown area for pedestrians and bicyclists.

The report also focuses on relocating and improving bus stops. The downtown area is a key NJ TRANSIT bus transfer location and the relocating stops will create a safer bus hub that could be enhanced with additional amenities, such as bicycle racks, bus schedule information and upgraded shelters.

The Vision Plan also makes recommendations for parking management and operations, stormwater management, public space enhancements, and downtown design and redevelopment standards.

The Vision Plan recommendations dovetail with ongoing planning and development efforts in the Township. The Township has entered into redevelopment agreements on two sites in the area and is layering design recommendations into those plans. The Vision Plan also compliments NJDOT's plans to upgrade the traffic signals at Morris Avenue and Mountain Avenue.

In addition, the Springfield BID is finalizing a branding program for the Morris Avenue area that includes signs directing visitors to the area and enhancing the appearance of streets.

"The Springfield BID will benefit greatly from the recommendations in the Vision Plan report," said Mike Scalera, Co-Chairman of the Springfield Business Improvement District. "Improvements to the streets and public areas around Morris Avenue would support our current efforts for redevelopment and to brand the area as a great place to shop, eat, and open a business."

The final report can be accessed at www.togethernorthjersey.com.

The Morris Avenue Vision Plan is one of 18 Local Demonstration Projects (LDPs) being undertaken by Together North Jersey. Conducted from August 2013 to April 2014, the project brought together county and municipal partners, non-profit partners, transportation providers, business owners, and local residents and youth to explore strategies to improve Morris Avenue.

An evening Open House Workshop was held in the Study Area on November 12, 2013. The workshop included a number of information and input stations, including an interactive Community Vision Survey. All the meeting materials, outreach activities and the Community Vision Survey were made available in a Virtual Meeting format on-line that ran for over three weeks in January and February 2014.

The plan was developed by a multidisciplinary team led by Looney Ricks Kiss (LRK) and contributions by Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Timothy Haahs and Associates, and Equity Environmental Engineering.

The Edward J. Bloustein School for Planning and Policy, along with several other agencies and organizations around the region, provides the organizational capacity and expertise necessary to execute the day-to-day work of Together North Jersey. Technical assistance for individual LDPs is provided by one of NJ TRANSIT's three existing "on-call" Transit Friendly Planning, Land Use and Development Task Order Consultant teams. These teams are led by EE&K, a Perkins Eastman company; LRK; and the Regional Plan Association.



Photo Simulation of proposed changes to Morris Avenue which would include curb extensions to widen sidewalks and calm traffic, upgraded crosswalks, streetscape improvements, and façade improvements