

AN ADVISORY SERVICES PANEL REPORT

# Mercer County New Jersey



Urban Land  
Institute

# **Mercer County New Jersey**

**A Strategy for Redevelopment**

August 1-6, 2004  
An Advisory Services Panel Report

ULI—the Urban Land Institute  
1025 Thomas Jefferson Street, N.W.  
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# About ULI—the Urban Land Institute

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**U**LI—the Urban Land Institute is a non-profit research and education organization that promotes responsible leadership in the use of land in order to enhance the total environment.

The Institute maintains a membership representing a broad spectrum of interests and sponsors a wide variety of educational programs and forums to encourage an open exchange of ideas and sharing of experience. ULI initiates research that anticipates emerging land use trends and issues and proposes creative solutions based on that research; provides advisory services; and publishes a wide variety of materials to disseminate information on land use and development.

Established in 1936, the Institute today has 24,000 members and associates from 80 countries, representing the entire spectrum of the land use and development disciplines. Professionals represented

include developers, builders, property owners, investors, architects, public officials, planners, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, academics, students, and librarians. ULI relies heavily on the experience of its members. It is through member involvement and information resources that ULI has been able to set standards of excellence in development practice. The Institute has long been recognized as one of America's most respected and widely quoted sources of objective information on urban planning, growth, and development.

This Advisory Services panel report is intended to further the objectives of the Institute and to make authoritative information generally available to those seeking knowledge in the field of urban land use.

Richard M. Rosan  
*President*

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# About ULI Advisory Services

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The goal of ULI's Advisory Services Program is to bring the finest expertise in the real estate field to bear on complex land use planning and development projects, programs, and policies. Since 1947, this program has assembled well over 400 ULI-member teams to help sponsors find creative, practical solutions for issues such as downtown redevelopment, land management strategies, evaluation of development potential, growth management, community revitalization, brownfields redevelopment, military base reuse, provision of low-cost and affordable housing, and asset management strategies, among other matters. A wide variety of public, private, and nonprofit organizations have contracted for ULI's Advisory Services.

Each panel team is composed of highly qualified professionals who volunteer their time to ULI. They are chosen for their knowledge of the panel topic and screened to ensure their objectivity. ULI panel teams are interdisciplinary and typically include several developers, a landscape architect, a planner, a market analyst, a finance expert, and others with the niche expertise needed to address a given project. ULI teams provide a holistic look at development problems. Each panel is chaired by a respected ULI member with previous panel experience.

The agenda for a five-day panel assignment is intensive. It includes an in-depth briefing day composed of a tour of the site and meetings with sponsor representatives; a day of hour-long interviews of typically 50 to 75 key community representatives; and two days of formulating recommendations. Many long nights of discussion precede the panel's conclusions. On the final day on site, the panel makes an oral presentation of its findings and conclusions to the sponsor. A written report is prepared and published.

Because the sponsoring entities are responsible for significant preparation before the panel's visit, including sending extensive briefing materials to each member and arranging for the panel to meet with key local community members and stakeholders in the project under consideration, partic-

ipants in ULI's five-day panel assignments are able to make accurate assessments of a sponsor's issues and to provide recommendations in a compressed amount of time.

A major strength of the program is ULI's unique ability to draw on the knowledge and expertise of its members, including land developers and owners, public officials, academicians, representatives of financial institutions, and others. In fulfillment of the mission of the Urban Land Institute, this Advisory Services panel report is intended to provide objective advice that will promote the responsible use of land to enhance the environment.

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# Foreword: The Panel's Assignment

**A**t the invitation of the Mercer County Planning Department, a ULI Advisory Services panel convened to evaluate redevelopment opportunities in an area of the county that has been experiencing physical and economic decline for more than three decades. The panel believes that this area is replete with opportunities for physical and economic revitalization, which can be realized if the region's public and private leaders pursue appropriate anchors and activity drivers to initiate redevelopment efforts.

Mercer County, New Jersey, was significantly affected by two national trends in the last half of the 20th century: economic restructuring and decentralized, uncoordinated development. Located between two major metropolitan markets—New York City and Philadelphia—the county attempted to stabilize its economic base as the manufacturing sector lost its predominance in national markets by shifting from primarily industrial production to a more diverse and service/professional employment-based economy. During this same period, the county's residential and employment centers shifted from the city of Trenton to its suburbs, including the townships of Ewing and Lawrence.

The study area, located at the confluence of Trenton, Ewing, and Lawrence, has been greatly affected by these macroeconomic and metropolitan growth trends, as it lies in a transitional zone at the county's urban edge. Sandwiched between Trenton's urban core and the more affluent adjacent suburban townships, it also is situated between several educational institutions—the College of New Jersey (TCNJ), Rider University, Mercer County Community College, and Thomas Edison State College—a regional hospital, and primary employment centers located both in the urban core and on the suburban edge. The study area is comprised of approximately 800 acres, located primarily along the northern portion of



Olden Avenue in the North Olden Avenue and Spruce Street corridors.

Regional map.

Land use patterns within the study area are suburban in nature, and are comprised primarily of low-density, automobile-dominated development in the form of strip centers and, increasingly, big box stores. Initially, industrial production dominated the area. As economic conditions changed, the North Olden Avenue and Spruce Street corridors became booming regional commercial centers with active street lives that were accessible by multiple modes of transportation.

As retail patterns in the area shifted to enclosed shopping centers, strip malls, and car dealerships, automobile transportation became the sole means of traversing the corridors, which then filled with single-use, low-density spaces that were not oriented toward pedestrians. Undeveloped pockets of land fell into disrepair, and the area's infrastructure deteriorated as well. Vacant buildings and





Strip malls are common along the auto-dominated North Olden Avenue corridor, which traverses the study area.

parcels and the neglected infrastructure—particularly the road network, which lacks pedestrian and aesthetic amenities—all indicate a lack of investment in the study area. The area currently is perceived as a deteriorated, undesirable location. Some development continues, however, and the current trend in the area’s evolution appears to be additional big box stores.

Because of its location at the edges of three communities, the study area resembles the “hole in the doughnut,” as civic attention is focused on other areas that are considered more important and central to each community, resulting in significant physical and economic deterioration. Redevelopment efforts have been largely uncoordinated among the jurisdictions and appear to have been driven primarily by which community and private sector developer was able to land the

“next attractive retail deal.” No evidence exists of a comprehensive land use or economic development strategy for the area.

### The Panel’s Assignment

The panel’s overall objective was to create a guide for the redevelopment of the study area outlining effective immediate and long-term strategies for the county and the municipalities to pursue in their efforts to transform the area’s deteriorated, neglected spaces into important and productive components of all three municipalities. To create such a guide, the panel addressed the following questions in its investigations and presents its findings in this report:

- What physical form should redevelopment take?
- How will redevelopment efforts overcome what frequently has been a jurisdictionally fragmented planning and decision-making process?
- Is an alternative institutional form necessary to produce the desired physical result?
- What are the critical social, economic, and environmental concerns for the study area and its immediate surroundings, and how might they be reflected in the area’s proposed redevelopment?
- How will the three municipalities and the county build consensus and develop the support necessary to implement future plans?
- How can the study area take advantage of the greater region’s relative affluence?

# Overview and Summary of Recommendations

The history of the study area presents a complex story and confounding problems. With the assistance of community leaders and concerned citizens, data from various governmental agencies, and tours of the site, however, the panel's weeklong study resulted in what it believes is a clear understanding of the underlying issues that presently hinder the area's successful redevelopment. The panel's recommendations are summarized below and described in detail later in this report.

## Market Potential

The demand for real estate in the study area will be driven by employment opportunities in the government, education, and health care sectors. Employment growth in the area will be slow but stable, and thus demand for limited office/service, retail, and residential uses is projected to exist there. Overcoming the area's physical constraints—as well as its social and political constraints—and accommodating the needs of all of the municipalities' residents will enable the area to achieve its full market potential.

## Development Strategies

To overcome the study area's challenges within the current historical and geographic context, the overall development strategy should focus on improving the area's physical appearance by establishing an action plan to spur development in concentrated nodes along the regional corridors and to improve signage, streetscapes, building aesthetics, and parking. Improving the image of the area—which presently is seen as a deteriorated, undesirable location—will require abundant and evident physical improvements and economic development activities.

The panel also suggests the adoption of a branding campaign, which will increase civic attention and enable a coordinated vision of redevelopment. To create a rallying point for the execution of a successful revitalization strategy, the panel recommends a new name for the study area: Mercer Crossings.

## Planning and Design

To ensure that development patterns realize redevelopment objectives as well as the study area's market potential, the panel presents recommendations to improve the circulation system within the area and between the area and the surrounding region. In addition, it suggests aesthetic, traffic-calming, and other systems and amenities for alternative modes of transportation as a means to reinstate the sense of place and community that formerly existed within the study area.

Finally, the panel presents design recommendations for the development of concentrated, mixed-use lifestyle centers—which will be connected to nearby uses—at various sites along the area's corridors.

To revitalize the study area, the panel recommends transforming its corridors into destinations.



## **Implementation Strategies**

To overcome the political and fiscal impediments that currently hinder the coordinated redevelopment of the study area, the panel suggests the use of planning tools, an institutional design for a redevelopment agency, and various funding sources to initiate the development effort and ensure its sustainability. Civic leadership must act as a catalyst for the redevelopment by coordinating available resources and pursuing opportunities in the area. Furthermore, the public sector's role is to ensure that service and infrastructure capacity are adequate to attract and sustain new development.

# Market Potential

To identify appropriate land uses that are compatible with the study area's present market conditions and that have the potential to capitalize on future growth, one must consider demographic, zoning, infrastructure, market, social, and political trends.

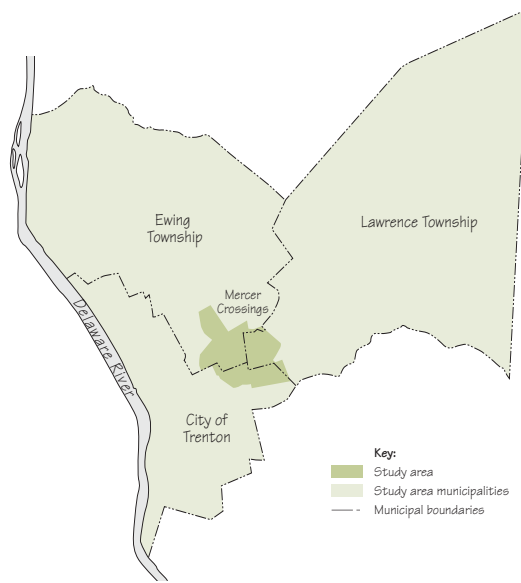
## Demographic Overview

Mercer County's population is estimated to have increased by 8 percent from 1990 to 2000, with additional growth from 2000 to 2010 estimated at 6 percent, which will add almost 23,000 residents. Ewing and Lawrence townships both experienced population gains from 1990 to 2000, growing by 4 percent and 13 percent, respectively, while the city of Trenton's population decreased by 4 percent during this time period. Future population trends in the municipalities from 2000 to 2010 are expected to follow a similar pattern, with positive growth in Ewing and Lawrence projected at 4 percent and 16 percent, respectively, and a stable population forecast in the city of Trenton.

The population within the study area's boundaries has grown by 2 percent from 1990 to 2000 and is projected to increase an additional 5 percent by 2008. The daytime population, comprised of employees, is approximately 50 percent of the full-time population, which indicates that, at all times of the day, a large base of people is located in the area.

The county's median household income in 1999 was \$56,612, which was higher than the nation's (\$41,994) at that time. Trenton's median household income in 1999, \$31,074, was approximately half that of households in Ewing (\$57,274) and less than half that of households in Lawrence Township (\$67,959).

Almost 35 percent of county residents have at least a college degree, but wide variations in the educational experiences of residents exist at the



Located at the convergence of three municipalities, Mercer Crossings has access to a significant number of residents, employees, and shoppers.

**Figure 1**  
Demographic Characteristics of Study Area Municipalities

Subject	Trenton	Ewing	Lawrence
Population	85,403	35,707	29,159
Median age	32.2	37.0	36.7
White residents	32.6%	69.0%	79.2%
Black residents	52.1%	24.8%	9.3%
Median household income	\$31,074	\$57,274	\$67,959
Bachelor's degree +	9.2%	29.1%	50.5%
Foreign-born residents	14.1%	8.2%	17.5%
Owner-occupied housing	45.5%	74.0%	70.8%
Renter-occupied housing	54.5%	26.0%	29.2%
Single-family housing	14.7%	70.2%	53.6%
Median value of housing	\$65,500	\$133,100	\$177,900

Source: U.S. Census, 2000.

To accommodate projected growth, new housing will need to supplement the existing stock.



municipal level. Only 9 percent of Trenton residents have an advanced degree, compared with Ewing and Lawrence's much higher proportions of highly educated constituents, approximately 30 percent and 50 percent, respectively.

### **Housing Stock**

The county comprises a mix of housing types and predominantly older housing stock. Half of the housing stock consists of single-family detached units, followed by attached single-family units (21 percent), with the balance being multifamily housing. The majority of the housing stock is more than 25 years old and has a median value of \$147,400.

At the municipal level, wide disparities exist in homeownership rates and housing values. More than half of all Trenton residents reside in rental housing, while more than 70 percent of Ewing and Lawrence residents own their homes. Although less than 15 percent of Trenton's housing consists of single-family houses, these units make up 70 percent of Ewing's housing and 54 percent of Lawrence's. Trenton's median housing value is just above \$65,500, which is just below half of Ewing's median home value, \$133,100, and slightly more than one-third of Lawrence's, \$177,900.

### **Employment**

Mercer County's workforce is largely made up of white-collar workers, with 43.2 percent employed in management/professional jobs and 26.5 percent in sales. Only 9.6 percent are employed in manu-

facturing, below the 11 percent national average. The predominance of skilled employees in the county indicates potential residential and retail market opportunities for the study area. The primary economic sectors providing employment in the study area and surrounding region include government, education, medical and health services, and professional and business services, as indicated in Figure 2.

### **The Study Area Today**

The demand for real estate is largely contingent upon local employment opportunities. The study area's real estate demands are positively affected by its proximity to the state capital and related government sectors, and to five colleges, universities, and other educational institutions. Current market conditions within the study area are as follows.

#### **Office Space**

The largest office absorption is in the service/business/finance industries. While the broader regional submarket reports a 20 percent vacancy rate, trending lower over prior years, office space availability within the study area is limited, with an overall vacancy rate of 6.8 percent.

#### **Industrial/Flex Space**

Limited industrial space exists in the study area, and very little of it is built to current industrial and/or light manufacturing standards. The existing stock has an overall vacancy rate of 15.3 percent.

## Housing

The residential vacancy rate within a three-mile radius of the study area is approximately 10 percent. While housing prices and rental rates vary depending on size, condition, and location, market-rate rents range from \$600 to \$1,000 per month and purchase prices from \$50,000 to \$400,000, with an average purchase price of approximately \$200,000. The barrier to entry is highest in Lawrence Township, with more affordable housing available in Trenton and Ewing. The least expensive housing generally is in very poor condition and located in impoverished areas.

## Retail Space

The overall retail vacancy rate is estimated to be approximately 10 percent. The land immediately surrounding the study area contains three primary shopping venues featuring an array of local, regional, and national retailers and restaurants, as well as the Trenton Farmers Market. Combined, these retail centers total approximately 800,000 square feet.

## Market Opportunities

On the basis of its preliminary findings, the panel determined that the primary economic base for jobs in the study area will continue to be concentrated in the government, education, and health care sectors. Employment within the community is expected to grow at a slow but steady pace over the next five years for jobs in firms that are tied to the nonlocal economy as well as jobs such as retail, service, and other professional occupations that are affected by local factors. Between 1990 and 2000, employment in the county increased by 7 percent. It is expected to increase another 6 percent by 2010. White-collar employment in the study area increased from 63 percent to 65 percent between 1999 and 2000. Both employment and population growth therefore can be expected to net demand for limited office/service, retail, and residential uses.

To take advantage of this expected growth and to successfully realize the study area's full market potential, the area must add three integral ingredients:

**Figure 2**  
**Study Area Major Employers**

Company	Number of Employees	Type of Business
Bristol Myers Squibb	5,062*	Biomedical
Capital Health System	2,900	Health services
New Jersey Manufacturers Insurance Co.	1,877	Insurance
St. Francis Medical Center	1,069	Health services
The College of New Jersey	1,000	Education
Rider University	954	Education
The Times of Trenton	629	Information

\*2,350 in Lawrence.

Source: Mercer County Planning Department.



The Capital Health System at Mercer is part of the health services industry that is projected to drive population growth in Mercer Crossings.

- Things to buy, in the form of goods and/or services, and things to do, such as public gatherings or other events;
- Housing for the local workforce that is structurally sound, affordable, and located within neighborhoods committed to safety; and
- A place for the community to gather.

To achieve the market potential based upon the area's needs, the panel recommends that the following product types and land uses be introduced gradually into the study area:

### Residential

Both resident and employee threshold populations are needed to patronize local shopping and events. Given existing income levels and a projected increase of approximately 2,800 households during

**Figure 3**  
**Recommended Land Uses\***

Use	Additional Number of Units or Square Feet	Type of Development
Detached single-family residential	0	Renovation/revitalization of existing inventory
Attached multifamily residential	800–1,000 units	Mix of duplexes, townhomes, condominiums, apartments, including market-rate and affordable, for-sale and/or for-lease housing at a density of 10 to 14 units per acre
Office/flex space	30,000 square feet	Mix of small office and warehouse space
Retail/entertainment	100,000 square feet	Mix of tenant sizes and categories; aggregated with other shopping and public space

\*Based on the study area's market potential as determined by the panel.

the next five years, an opportunity exists for the development of new and/or renovated workforce and affordable/moderate-income housing. The panel recommends an additional 800 to 1,000 units of rental and/or for-sale attached housing (apartments, lofts, condominiums, townhomes) within the study area.

#### Entertainment and Retail

To attract new residents to the study area, additional retail development, including restaurants and other civic/public venues for events and cultural activities, will be necessary. As part of this development, the design of public parking areas or other impervious surfaces for alternative uses such as public/farmers markets, festivals, fairs, or other events should be considered. The addition of other entertainment venues such as a movie theater, which could share parking facilities, should be considered.

The panel believes that it is appropriate to improve and expand locally owned boutique shops and restaurants along the North Olden Avenue

corridor and to complement this with regional and national retailers in a lifestyle center format, which could include limited big box stores. Given the existing inventory and consumer expenditure potential, the panel recommends the addition of anchor and specialty (entertainment) retail space totaling approximately 100,000 square feet, integrated with public places and parking spaces.

#### Office/Industrial

The study area needs a flexible mix of office space for small, locally owned service businesses. This should include sales and warehouse space as well as Class A office space. The demand for office/industrial space will grow with economic expansion. Because of the consistent decline in manufacturing employment, the panel does not suggest the development of any additional industrial space. It does, however, recommend the development of approximately 20,000 to 30,000 square feet of small professional office and flex warehouse/office space.

#### Public and Civic Areas

Limited gathering places currently exist where large groups can attend live music concerts, art exhibits, and other events. The community should commit to the creation of a central park and public space that can accommodate at least 200 people. The panel recommends streetscape improvements, sidewalks, and public benches to encourage visitors to stroll and linger, creating a community gathering place, particularly in Ewing, which currently has no such gathering place.

The study area should be reconnected to the historic and traditional town development of nearby downtown Trenton.



## Place Making

Feedback from civic leaders, government representatives, and residents suggests that the community embraces its historical roots as well as its ethnic and socioeconomic diversity. The study area is rich in architecture, ethnic diversity, and culture, which should be celebrated. The challenge is to establish its identity by creating a “sense of place” within a community that previously has been developed in a disconnected, sprawling fashion over time. All redevelopment activities should take into account the context of the area’s historical and cultural origins, as well as the residents’ shared values.

## Market Potential Strategies

To recruit new businesses and residents to the study area, and to retain existing businesses and residents, the panel recommends the implementa-

tion of a marketing strategy in which the private and public sectors collaborate on plans as well as regulatory and financing tools to initiate redevelopment. The strategy should consist of cooperative marketing plans involving both the public and private sectors, and should be prepared with the assistance of an advertising/marketing professional. Such plans will allow the area to “brand” itself with an identity and purpose, which then can be communicated effectively to residents and non-residents, students and visitors.

The panel believes that branding is the most useful mechanism to initiate and sustain the study area’s redevelopment. Although the panel recommends the brand name of “Mercer Crossings” because it suggests the links among the area’s communities, the specific name decided upon by the communities is less important than the act of implementing a branding strategy.



# Development Strategies

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**T**he panel considered how to address and overcome existing challenges in order to realize the study area’s potential. No plan can be successful without a proper development strategy and implementation program. The panel believes that the most effective overall objective for the redevelopment of the study area is to transform it from a collection of incongruent land uses that neither complement one another nor create a sense of place to a cohesive, attractive community that serves the needs of its residents, businesses, and surrounding areas. This could be accomplished by providing a mix of residential, retail, entertainment, and other commercial uses that are easily accessible by multiple modes of transportation.

The panel went on to address specific sites in the study area and offer some detailed recommendations to create near-term enhancements that can catalyze further improvements throughout Mercer Crossings. The recommended core development will support and encourage new construction, redevelopment, and renovation throughout the entire study area.

## Challenges

The panel recognizes that the study area currently suffers from strong negative perceptions in the surrounding neighborhoods and elsewhere in the region. Although some of these perceptions are accurate, others are unwarranted. For example, the area is perceived as poor, even though, as indicated earlier, the disposable income per household in the immediate vicinity of the study area is relatively high. Persistence of this negative perception can be a deterrent to potential development.

Other negative perceptions—particularly the perception that the area has been haphazardly developed and is not well maintained—are accurate

views of actual barriers to new development in the area. The mix of residential, industrial, and commercial uses is not at all cohesive in either design or use. For example, the waste transfer and recycling center is located in the middle of a commercial area. The rundown appearance of many properties is the result of inconsistent or no code enforcement and a feeling that many of the long-time uses, even if they do not represent the highest and best use of the land, must be tolerated simply because they “have always been there.”

Other constraints to development include a lack of land that can be easily assembled, environmental issues such as the presence of brownfield sites and wetlands, and the variety of often conflicting laws and regulations that must be followed in order to develop in the area. In response to these constraints, which limit the type and extent of new development options, landowners have been attracted by the benefits of leasing land to freestanding big box retailers. These big box uses, however, may not be appropriate for all available sites, since they can result in increased noise and traffic, undesirable lighting, and other factors to which residential neighbors may object. These barriers to new development also have promoted low-density development along the North Olden Avenue and Spruce Street corridors, rather than the more appropriate nodal or cluster development.

## Opportunities

The panel also recognizes that the area has several positive attributes and views these as opportunities for making Mercer Crossings a unique place in the region. Mercer County has a strong historical and cultural heritage that Mercer Crossings can use to its advantage. Mercer Crossings is home to a farmers market that has been a regional attraction for many decades. North Trenton’s thriving Eastern European immigrant commu-

nity, stable housing stock, natural areas including parkland and wetlands, and the successful Shop-Rite retail centers all are positive attributes that the area can draw on.

While not within the boundaries of Mercer Crossings, the College of New Jersey (TCNJ) and Rider University have a strong presence in the area and are potential sources of demand drivers that should encourage and enhance new construction and redevelopment within the study area. Residential development is a particularly attractive possibility for Mercer Crossings because the area has a tremendous need for workforce housing for the faculty and staff of higher education facilities, the administrators and health care providers working in the area's hospitals, and other middle-income residents. The growing national trend of empty nesters moving from the suburbs to more urban environments—where they have easier access to retail, entertainment, cultural, and professional services—also could strengthen the market for residential development and renovation within Mercer Crossings in the future.

By taking advantage of these demand drivers, the initial development activities can lead to additional development clustered around specific uses and activities, such as residential units located near retail centers. Concentrating development in activity centers can result in synergistic effects that can, in turn, have a positive impact on the rest of Mercer Crossings.

### Planting the Seeds

The panel's redevelopment strategy for Mercer Crossings likely will not be fully realized for five to eight years. Some changes, however, can be implemented in the near term—most within the next 18 months—and would encourage both existing residents and business owners, as well as developers of potential new projects, to remain in or move to the area.

### Begin by Working Together

The panel heard during its interviews that the local governments—Lawrence and Ewing townships, the city of Trenton, and Mercer County—are willing to work together under a formal agreement to revitalize Mercer Crossings. While



Mercer County's redevelopment activities should build upon existing civic amenities in the study area, such as the local gathering and shopping venue of the Trenton Farmers Market and the services and support of the immigrant community.

the mechanics of this agreement will be addressed in more detail in the Implementation section, the agreement also can be viewed as a development strategy. This cooperative agreement should be designed to allow the creation of a unified vision and development plan for the area. This will send a message to developers that Mercer Crossings has a single, cohesive framework, that one local jurisdiction cannot be played off another. By working together and agreeing on appropriate sites for near- and long-term development, the jurisdictions can help move development forward.

### Improve Transit Connections

The panel heard that the study area suffers from a lack of sufficient public transportation. Improved transit service is necessary and should be provided on a consistent and fairly frequent basis. Many area residents do not own automobiles, and

Mercer Crossings retail establishments would be more heavily frequented if purchase-laden shoppers could return home via bus. The county should work with New Jersey Transit, particularly to improve service along Olden Avenue and Spruce Street.

### Identify Appropriate Areas for Redevelopment and Enhancement

Because few large vacant parcels are available for development, appropriate sites need to be identified for land assembly and, then, for new construction, redevelopment, and enhancement. Many areas in Mercer Crossings do not need to be completely redeveloped; these areas are good candidates for enhancement efforts such as facade improvements, building rehabilitation, and so forth. This is especially true of many of the residential neighborhoods, such as North Trenton.

An inventory of land available for development and redevelopment as well as key areas in need of enhancement will inform developers of where they can invest their resources most effectively. Developers are more readily attracted to areas that actively welcome new development, and identifying appropriate sites—whether they need assemblage, environmental remediation, changes in traffic patterns, or other infrastructure improvements—will be evidence of welcome.

### Attract Students and Educators

When evaluating the market for Mercer Crossings, the panel found that the nearby colleges and university represent untapped markets for the study area. For example, development in the area has not targeted TCNJ, which currently has very few off-campus entertainment or retail options. While the proposed primary area of opportunity described below is approximately 2.5 miles from the campus, this is a quick drive and the panel also believes that it is within walking or bicycling distance. Rider College, which is located in Lawrenceville, just three miles north of Trenton on U.S. Route 206, is another potential market. The development strategy for Mercer Crossings should focus on two key uses to meet the colleges' needs, residential and retail/entertainment uses.

**Residential Development.** TCNJ has a population of approximately 6,000 students. Because of the

paucity of appropriate off-campus student housing, the college has a policy of housing all first- and second-year students on campus. It plans to add 500 more on-campus beds to house as many third- and fourth-year students as possible, but additional off-campus housing for students, faculty, and staff is needed. Even more off-campus housing is necessary to accommodate Rider College's more than 5,500 students and 900 faculty members.

Current housing conditions in the TCNJ area are so limited that both faculty and staff are forced to compromise and either live in low-quality but nearby housing or commute long distances to higher-quality but very expensive housing. New residential construction and redevelopment could provide more convenient housing for faculty and staff, as well as off-campus housing for third- and fourth-year and graduate students, who generally prefer to live off campus.

The panel recommends that TCNJ and the appropriate public officials pursue a cooperative venture to initiate a joint housing program. College officials already have indicated that TCNJ is amenable to participating in some form of public/private partnership to develop new housing in Mercer Crossings. This investment would benefit the college by helping to attract and retain faculty and support staff. A similar partnership should be pursued with the Rider College administration.

**Retail and Entertainment Development.** Most college students and faculty enjoy frequenting bookstores, coffee shops, music stores, cafés, and cinemas. None of these venues are readily accessible to the TCNJ campus at the present time, and the panel believes Mercer Crossings has a tremendous opportunity to provide them. The area in front of the Capital Plaza shopping center along North Olden Avenue could be redeveloped with uses that are attractive to this demographic segment.

### Specific Strategies

Large areas of underutilized or vacant property can be found within the approximately 800 acres of the Mercer Crossings district. These lands are found primarily in the North Olden Avenue corri-



The panel identified a number of sites that are appropriate for redevelopment and can spur revitalization activities.

dor, particularly to the south of North Olden and west of Princeton Avenue. Infill opportunities, however, exist throughout the district on small- and medium-sized parcels. Redevelopment of the four sites described below will help rejuvenate the entire district, providing jobs, housing, retail, and commercial and recreational opportunities. The four areas determined by the panel to be opportunity/catalyst sites are as follows:

- The transfer facility/Boehm site;
- The intersection of Spruce Street and Princeton Avenue;
- Capital Plaza's frontage on North Olden Avenue; and
- The New York Avenue corridor.

It is important to remember that North Olden Avenue, Spruce Street, and the surrounding areas did not fall into their current condition overnight and that they will not be revitalized overnight. Redevelopment projects of this scale take time and effort. The community can, however, take immediate action to catalyze future redevelopment.

### Near-Term Opportunity Sites

Specific development and redevelopment zones need to be identified to determine which areas are most appropriate for the aggregation of symbiotic uses. Focusing efforts on areas that will be catalysts for additional redevelopment and revitalization throughout Mercer Crossings will maximize the use of resources. Given the context of the

study area, the North Olden Avenue corridor is more appropriate for higher-impact uses, while the Spruce Street corridor is more appropriate for residential-scale development and smaller retailers that complement the uses on North Olden Avenue.

**The Transfer Facility/Boehm Site.** The panel believes that the area straddling North Olden Avenue near the Capital Plaza shopping center and the Boehm site and continuing south of the Boehm site can become a focal point for Mercer Crossings and provide a much-needed sense of place for the entire community. The area's many acres of vacant land and buildings present ample opportunities for land assembly. Depending on how the land is assembled, a site as large as approximately 120 acres could be made available for redevelopment. This would be the largest redevelopment site in the district.

The panel's market study of the available space in the study area determined that several uses are appropriate for this site, including destination and neighborhood retail space, housing, restaurants, a movie theater, and other entertainment venues. Development goals for the site should include creating a critical mass of residential development to support the commercial uses, providing housing that is affordable by the middle class and college students, and creating a destination for area residents.

*Entertainment and Retail Development.* To redevelop this site as a destination entertainment

area, the panel recommends moving the existing Trenton Farmers Market to the site south of North Olden Avenue. This site is approximately one-quarter of a mile west of Princeton Avenue, 1,600 feet from the market's current location. This relocation will enable the market to act as an anchor for future development and draw users to the site. Many members of the community want to make the Trenton Farmers Market a major destination within Mercer Crossings, and the panel agrees with this goal. The market's potential to expand at its current site is limited by a lack of available land and insufficient parking. Furthermore, increased activity at the existing location will lead to an increase in traffic issues, which already frustrate current patrons. Moving the market to North Olden Avenue would make possible the construction of an expanded facility that incorporates special programming such as festivals, art shows, senior citizen days, and so forth, as well as adequate, shared parking.

Additional complementary entertainment uses at this site could include a movie theater and restaurants. To help soften the edge of the street and provide services that are useful to and accessible by neighborhood residents, the panel believes that the community should consider supporting the development of freestanding retail and commercial spaces on both sides of North Olden Avenue. Consequently, the relocated and expanded Trenton Farmers Market could become the center of an entertainment district while also supporting smaller retail outlets.

A cooperative board comprised of local farmers currently manages the Trenton Farmers Market. That board, however, lacks adequate resources to manage the facility's expansion and/or relocation. The panel therefore recommends that the co-op partner with the New Jersey Department of Agriculture and the county to pursue relocation and expansion opportunities.

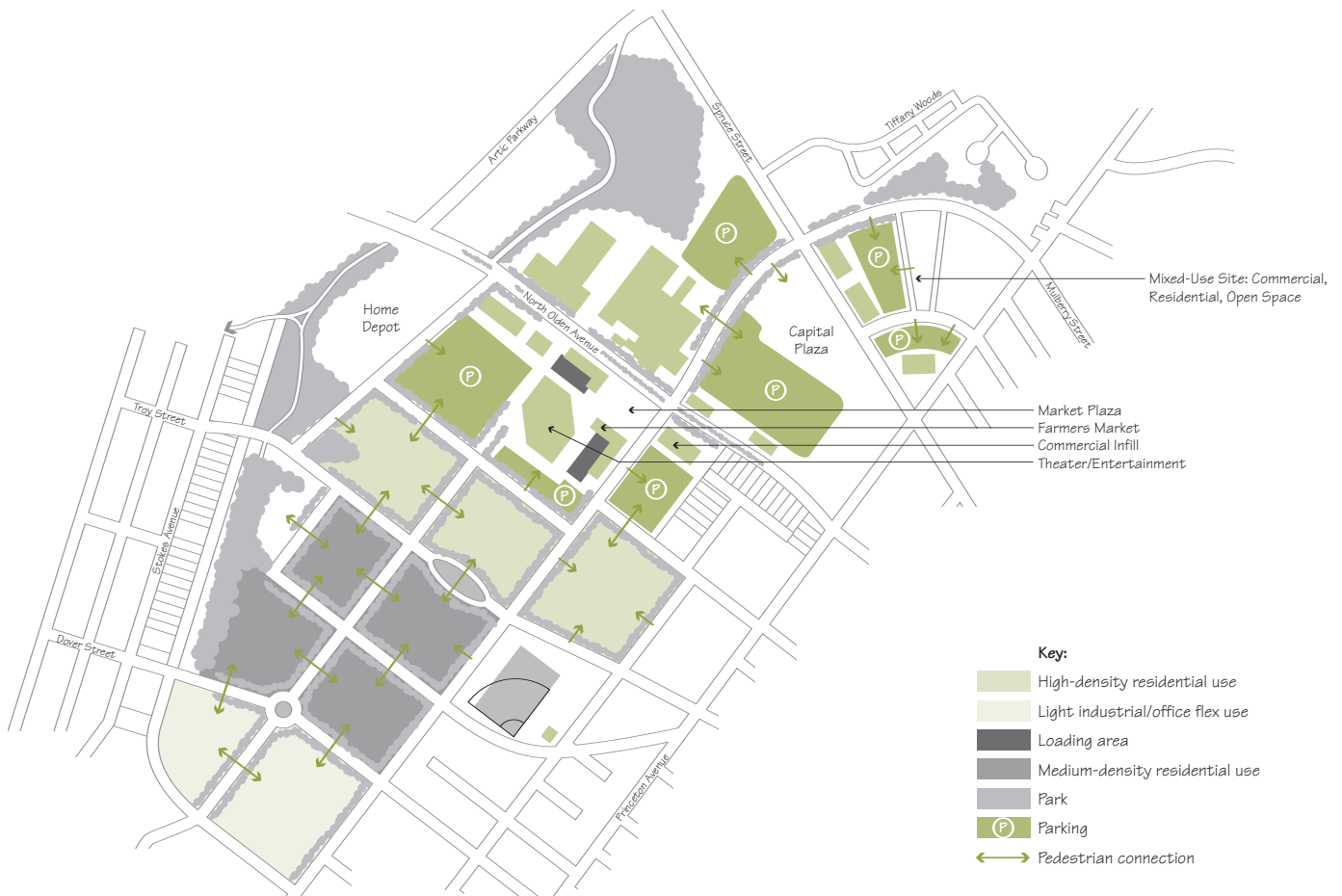
*Residential Development.* The panel believes that the area south of the proposed movie theater and retail spaces along North Olden Avenue could become a new residential community. This housing stock would be a combination of old and new, built on infill sites and assembled land, and include renovations of existing residential property. The

market-rate housing should be targeted to middle-income residents and include both for-sale and rental product. Amenities such as parks and open space also would complement the residential uses in this area. It is important to connect this new community to the entertainment and retail area, particularly through improved infrastructure such as pedestrian paths.

The panel recommends that 800 to 1,000 new, attached, primarily one- and two-bedroom units be built in Mercer Crossings, in addition to the existing housing stock and renovated homes. The new housing should be targeted primarily to young urban professionals, single people, empty nesters, and young families, with some larger (three-bedroom) units targeted to multi-generational families.

*Design.* The panel recommends that the relocated Trenton Farmers Market be surrounded by a new urban plaza and linked to a ten- to 14-screen cinema and entertainment complex. The synergy of these uses would create a place for visiting, shopping, and entertainment and would become the heart and soul of the revitalized district—as well as resemble the way North Olden Avenue was used many years ago. The market could share parking with the theater, since these uses generate peak demands at different times. Other uses to be incorporated along the North Olden Avenue frontage could include ground-floor coffee shops, a family restaurant, and other neighborhood-serving uses such as beauty salons, dry cleaners, and business support services. Second-story uses could include offices for small- and medium-sized tenants. The panel does not believe there is a market for significant retail space, but encourages a mix of uses wherever feasible.

To connect the redeveloped site with adjacent areas and to provide an economic base to support the new development, the panel recommends locating a new residential neighborhood with a variety of housing choices—ranging from duplex units to condominiums and apartments—to the south of the commercial and entertainment core. Developers should be encouraged to construct for-sale rather than rental housing, to help ensure neighborhood stability and build commitment to the area. The panel believes that approximately 800



to 1,000 housing units are feasible, depending on how large a site can be assembled.

The panel recommends that the neighborhood be built around an extension of the city of Trenton and Ewing Township grids and the Calhoun Street extension. Higher-density development could be located adjacent to the commercial core, with lower-density development to the south. The existing Trenton city park at Calhoun and North Willow streets should remain, be enhanced with additional park amenities and signage and, potentially, be expanded to include sports fields that can serve the general area. Connections between the existing greenway at the west side of the site and the park can be accommodated, and will offer good pedestrian connections through Mercer Crossings for both existing residents and new residents. The land adjacent to Beakes Street on the far south could be developed with light industrial/office flex space, which would be compatible with the surrounding context. Finally, the panel believes that this site can be developed in phases as land is acquired and cleaned up and as infrastructure is provided.

If it is determined that the Trenton Farmers Market should not be relocated, or if problems occur with its relocation, the panel believes that this site should continue to be considered as a primary market locale. Furthermore, the strategy of assembling land to increase its market potential also should be considered in any alternative approach to the site's redevelopment.

**The Intersection of Spruce Street and Princeton Avenue.** The intersection of Spruce and Princeton, currently the site of the Trenton Farmers Market, is the second suggested near-term opportunity site in Mercer Crossings. A vacant gas station at the corner and other underutilized parcels currently sit within this approximately 16-acre area. With the relocation of the market, its 7.2-acre parcel would be appropriate for small-scale commercial uses, including medical, legal, and accounting offices as well as shared office space. Such commercial uses should be smaller in scale than those that have historically located in the North Olden Avenue corridor. Much of the site abuts the Tiffany Woods housing development, so residential uses located off Spruce Street are appropriate. The possible extension of Calhoun Street to Mul-

To concentrate development and establish a destination within Mercer Crossings, the panel recommends that the existing transfer facility and Boehm sites be redeveloped as an entertainment center connected to housing as well as civic and open spaces.

The current site of the Trenton Farmers Market is underutilized, with significant parking space fronting the Spruce Street corridor.



berry Street would allow for new parcelization and development patterns.

### Long-Term Opportunity Sites

The panel also identified two sites in the study area as longer-term redevelopment opportunities. These sites include the area between North Olden Avenue and Spruce Street north of Princeton Avenue and the New York Avenue corridor in North Trenton. These areas should be designated as an overlay district in the relevant zoning ordinances, with uses to be determined by current and future market forces. The most cohesive and productive uses of these areas will become clear as the near-term improvements described above bring new residents and businesses into Mercer Crossings.

**The Capital Plaza Frontage on North Olden Avenue.** This location is across North Olden Avenue from the recommended first opportunity site. The parking lot that fronts the Capital Plaza shopping complex on North Olden Avenue is enormous. The distance between the retail buildings is 850 feet—the length of three football fields—in the east/west direction and 500 feet from the roadway to the parallel frontage. The panel recommends that new commercial facilities be constructed close to North Olden Avenue to take advantage of the spacious, often empty parking field. New facilities should be constructed close to the Calhoun Street/North Olden Avenue intersection to capitalize on its high visibility. Either single- or two-story buildings, with a vertical or horizontal mix of uses, could be developed as

appropriate. The implementation of this redevelopment effort should occur in response to market demands.

**The New York Avenue Corridor.** Another important area that may be ripe for new development and reinvestment is the New York Avenue corridor. This area originally was developed because it was accessible by rail, but today it is hemmed in by the Polish Hill neighborhood and the Route 1 freeway. The panel's initial thoughts are that the New York Avenue corridor, which now features largely industrial and light manufacturing uses, should remain a buffer zone between Mercer Crossings and Route 1. Because of the closeness of the freeway, light industrial and office flex uses are more appropriate than housing. Parcel depths are approximately 300 feet and cannot accommodate larger uses such as warehouses and traditional manufacturing facilities. The panel recommends that new users place office uses closer to New York Avenue and high-bay spaces closer to the freeway. As redevelopment occurs, the market demand for industrial and warehouse space probably will shift to more service-oriented uses, such as self-storage space for a growing residential community.

### Achieving the Market Potential

The panel recommends an action plan to help achieve the market potential for the study area and to begin to revitalize this area.

Inconsistent implementation of design guidelines has resulted in parking lots fronting commercial centers along the North Olden Avenue corridor.



### **Brand the Study Area**

The panel recommends branding the study area—establishing name recognition—to help overcome the lack of civic attention to the site and the uncoordinated vision for the area. A branding campaign, like those that have been implemented in other cities around the world as well as by most corporations, will accomplish several things. It will help overcome the existing negative perceptions of the study area; provide a single, recognizable name for the area; and create an “address” for the development that will be taking place.

While the panel has given this area the working name of Mercer Crossings, the stakeholders may well come up with another name. Whatever name or brand is ultimately decided upon, it will work most effectively if used consistently and incorporated into all future materials—such as marketing plans and signage—related to this area. The branding concept also can be extended to smaller neighborhoods within the study area. It already has been successfully implemented by Trenton’s Mill Hill neighborhood.

### **Calm Traffic**

The panel believes that, in order to bring life back to Spruce Street and North Olden Avenue and allow the areas surrounding these arteries to achieve their full development potential, traffic must be “calmed” so that people do not just pass quickly by on their way to someplace else. This calming also will increase the attractiveness of

the existing and future residential development in Mercer Crossings. This concept is discussed in more detail in the Planning and Design section.

### **Create and Maintain Green Infrastructure**

Mercer Crossings contains some natural areas that should be preserved because they provide important amenities, such as urban respites and recreational and other public spaces. Pocket or neighborhood parks and other open spaces also will make the proposed new residential neighborhoods more appealing to potential residents. These benefits will be particularly important if the panel’s suggested residential development strategy is implemented, since higher-density neighborhoods require community open space. Furthermore, given their ecological and civic benefits, the wetlands along Shabakunk Creek should be conserved as a natural area with passive recreation, trails, and interpretive stations.

### **Relocate the Transfer and Recycling Facilities**

The panel recommends that these facilities be relocated within Ewing Township, in order to make this site available for the development of a significantly sized project to be built on land assembled from the transfer and recycling facilities, the Boehm site, and other adjoining parcels. Relocation of these facilities also would reduce the amount of truck traffic in the immediate area. Ewing, in cooperation with the county, should identify an appropriate site for the facilities and commit to relocating them.



### **Consistently Enforce Codes**

The panel believes that land use ordinance codes are not effectively enforced in several key areas of Mercer Crossings. This is evident in residential, industrial, and commercial uses. Enforcing codes related to facade maintenance, trash and vegetation removal, and so forth can dramatically improve the visual impact of the area in a very short time, making it more attractive to potential developers, commercial tenants, and residents.

### **Green North Olden, Spruce, and Brunswick**

The appearances of North Olden Avenue, Spruce Street, and Brunswick Avenue need to be improved. This can be accomplished with landscaped street medians, sidewalk improvements, and spot intersection enhancements. Cost-efficient measures that can be implemented immediately include hanging planters on streetlight supports and installing consistent and interesting signage. The panel understands that there is a plan for the redevelopment of Brunswick Pike and encourages the strategic implementation of this plan.

### **Reconsider the Big Box Strategy**

While the panel understands the desire for big box development in Mercer Crossings, it strongly recommends that the type and location of big box retail be thought through thoroughly in the context of larger economic development strategies and ultimate community development goals. North Olden Avenue may be the right place for appropriate larger retail outlets such as furniture and clothing stores, bookstores, and music stores, but optimally Spruce Street—a narrower street that cannot handle the traffic generated by larger retail outlets—should be reserved for neighborhood-scale stores. The panel recommends that North Olden Avenue become the center of a retail and entertainment area that will be able to support larger retailers, while Spruce Street remain more residential in nature. The larger retail stores on North Olden Avenue can be complemented by smaller, locally owned stores on Spruce Street, and vice versa.

# Planning and Design

The panel evaluated the physical context of the study area and the causes of its current conditions, in order to make design and development recommendations for the various sites and for the overall functioning of the circulation system.

Regional development patterns have seen neighborhood growth expand to the west and north of the study area in increasingly less dense development patterns. The transportation system has a radial pattern that originates in the city of Trenton and provides easy travel along north/south arterial spokes from its downtown to the outlying townships, which accommodate and encourage this growth pattern. Very few east/west routes allow travel among the wedge areas between the arterial spokes. Olden Avenue is one of the few east/west routes available to serve this travel need. Interstates 95 and 295 provide a high-speed roadway that serves a portion of this travel demand, reducing traffic pressure on Olden Avenue and allowing it to serve more local traffic patterns. Olden Avenue and, to some degree, Spruce Street connect trip generators, such as the regional malls located along the interstate, the existing Trenton Farmers Market, and TCNJ. While both Olden and Spruce are part of the county highway system, many of the area's north/south arterial routes are part of the state highway system.

## Development Patterns

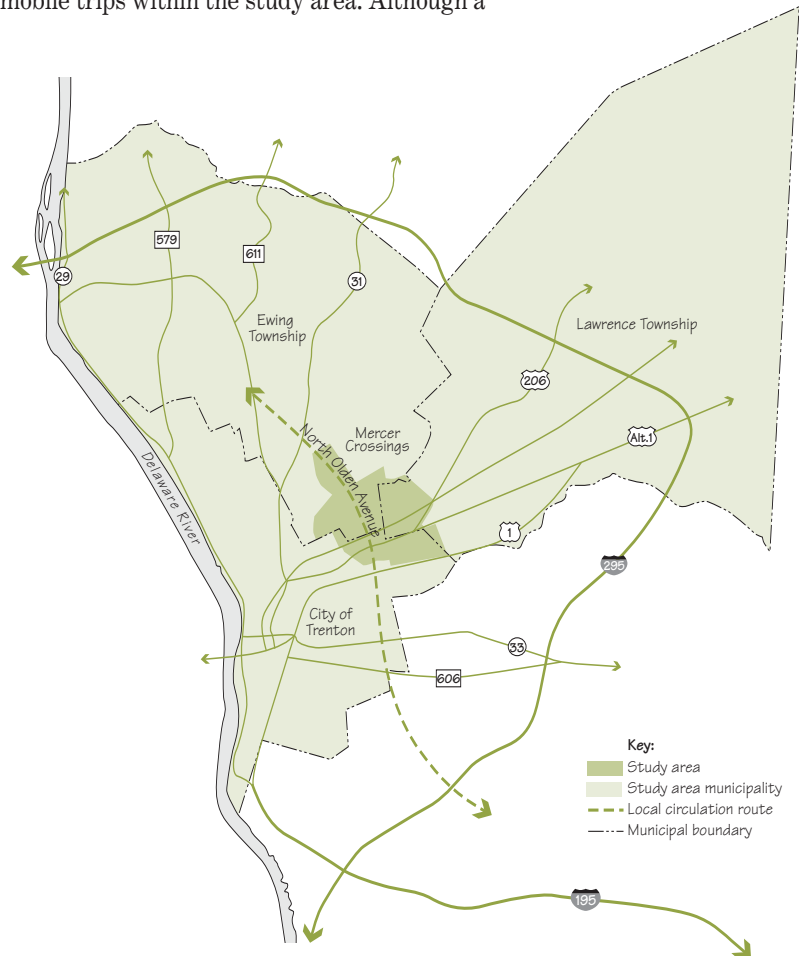
Local development patterns in the study area, which historically have been commercial in nature, have become fragmented and include various-sized parcels and awkward transitions with minimal buffers between neighborhood, business, and commercial land uses. As the panel already has suggested, one extreme example is the county transfer and recycling center, which is incompatible with existing and future development of the North Olden Avenue corridor and fragments the

area. These facilities are a remnant of the area's industrial past; today, they stifle neighborhood and commercial development patterns and local street network connectivity. They also increase truck traffic through a truly local street network, creating a highway rather than a calmer urban street atmosphere.

## Circulation Patterns

The historical change in local development patterns reflects the change from pedestrian to automobile trips within the study area. Although a

Olden Avenue is the major roadway providing local access to Mercer Crossings.





To improve circulation patterns, the panel recommends street extensions and the construction of a new road.

transit route once ran along Olden Avenue, transit in the study area now serves only the north/south travel demand on Calhoun Street, Brunswick Avenue, and Prospect Street. The study area still needs pedestrian and other nonautomotive connections with adjoining high-density neighborhoods—some of which have strong ethnic identities—and college campus student populations. In addition to the lack of east/west travel routes, the study area does not have a strong local street network, which would help local residents make short trips without using North Olden Avenue or Spruce Street. This lack of local street continuity exists in both the east/west and north/south directions.

The existing street system accommodates a combination of local traffic, access for study area destinations, and through traffic. Olden Avenue and Spruce Street provide east/west access to the north/south arterial system and the Route 1 freeway. The lack of cross-town routes has created intersection congestion problems, like those experienced at both North Olden Avenue and Spruce Street for access to the north/south arterial system at Brunswick Avenue and Princeton Avenue. Although the Whitehead Road extension has been proposed to relieve some of this congestion by accommodating some of the cross-town travel demand, this extension would need to cross extensive environmentally sensitive areas yet would not provide direct access to existing commercial developments.

## Circulation Improvements

Access management separates and reduces traffic conflicts by limiting the number of driveways per mile. National statistics show a reduction in street accidents as the number of access points is reduced. Typical access management criteria include shared-access requirements and internal circulation systems, channelized traffic movements, and prohibited left-turn controls. Access management measures could significantly improve traffic flow along study area corridors and support the development of adjacent sites. Mercer County currently is working on a comprehensive access management code. This tool, when complete, should be used to increase the efficiency and safety of streets in the study area.

The study area's land uses and street system need to be knit together with adjacent neighborhoods and arterial roads to serve local travel demand from pedestrians and automobiles. Facilities that have the potential to collectively accomplish this include the following:

- A Calhoun Street extension from south of North Olden Avenue to north of Spruce Street;
- New east/west and north/south North Olden Avenue and Spruce Street connections between Artic Parkway and Princeton Avenue, with the relocation of traffic signals at the Capital Plaza shopping center entrance and new signals on Spruce Street;
- A Fifth Street extension north of Spruce Street along the environmental corridor to Whitehead Road, including a potential pedestrian and bike trail and the widening of Spruce Street between Artic and Fifth streets;
- Secondary extensions of local east/west streets south of North Olden Avenue; and
- The Whitehead Road extension.

All of these improvements have the potential to reduce local traffic demand on arterial roads within the study area by providing a grid of streets to serve local development access and neighborhood circulation patterns.

These transportation system connections cannot be accomplished without the concurrent development and implementation of plans for a pedestrian and bicycle system and the provision of east/west transit service for study area residents and development users who do not own or want to rely on cars. This layering of systems can connect existing neighborhoods and businesses to reduce the need for automobile travel on study area streets. All streets in the study area should have complete sidewalks on both sides. Potential bike routes include a Spruce Street connection from TCNJ to the historic North Olden Avenue Farmers Market commercial area as well as connections to the hospital area and to local recreational facilities.

The implementation of a study area circulator transit route among the colleges, existing ethnic neighborhoods, and commercial development—along with the construction of bus stop amenities such as benches and shelters—could greatly enhance the area’s accessibility and attractiveness to existing and potential new development activities. It also would reduce the need for auto travel in the study area.

To build upon the desire to begin stitching the area back together again, and to help alleviate traffic at congested intersections, a linear street connection should be made that parallels Princeton Avenue between Princeton and Artie. Intersections currently are spaced at half-mile intervals between Artie and Princeton, which is considerably long compared with those between Princeton and Brunswick.

The panel recommends that Calhoun Street be extended due north to connect with North Olden Avenue, creating an intersection at the far west side of the Capital Plaza parking lot. This intersection should be spaced a minimum of 1,000 feet from Princeton to avoid creating further traffic congestion. Calhoun Street should continue to extend due north through the existing shopping center parking lot to Spruce Street. The final leg of the Calhoun Street extension could be a new roadway that curves southeast to meet the traffic signal at Mulberry Street. Implementation of this leg obviously would require moving not only the Farmers Market but also other existing structures. This

link would relieve some traffic destined for the Spruce/Princeton intersection.

Other major circulation considerations should include resolving the circulation problems from Princeton Avenue to the Brunswick Circle. The panel recommends creating a new “T” intersection along Princeton Avenue a minimum of 600 feet north of the signal at Mulberry Street. Finally, adding an east/west connector road between Artie and the Calhoun extension may relieve some of the pressure on North Olden Avenue and Spruce Street and create new future development parcels.

### Aesthetic Design Principles

The first step toward the study area’s renaissance is to make it physically more attractive by increasing the overall curb appeal of Mercer Crossings. Signage and banners, streetscaping in the form of trees and planters, stronger and more consistent code enforcement, the removal of nonconforming uses, and frequent street and sidewalk cleaning and trash collection all will help show that the area is ready for redevelopment.

Another important early step is to develop and implement design criteria for all new development and redevelopment. Consistent design criteria help to promote a sense of place, avoid repeating the hodgepodge nature of the current development, and show new residents and investors that

The panel recommends improving the overall curb appeal of Mercer Crossings by using aesthetic design principles to create an attractive, pedestrian-oriented streetscape.



local governments and existing businesses care about the community. Developers will be encouraged to know that one set of rules has been put in place and will not be changed arbitrarily.

The study area's built structures and its streets both are in need of aesthetic improvements, which are critical elements in place making and traffic calming. The lack of aesthetic amenities along a transportation corridor creates a perception among drivers that the road is merely a passage-way as opposed to a destination, resulting in speeding and an unwillingness to stop and shop.

To create the perception that the corridors are a destination, the sites should be arranged according to stringent design codes. Neither North Olden Avenue nor Spruce Street currently has an urban character; both feature large parking areas, deep setbacks to commercial buildings, wide traffic lanes, billboards cluttering the viewshed, and inadequate accommodations for pedestrians and cyclists. Good urban design should include buildings set at the street edge with appropriate facades. Streetscape design should reflect the following urban, traffic-calming aesthetic principles:

- Access management controls;
- Greened tree-planting areas along sidewalks;
- Wider sidewalks;
- Contextual street-lighting fixtures;
- Buried or relocated utilities;
- Intersection design improvements;
- Pedestrian-friendly crosswalks; and
- Traffic controls, such as enhanced crossing signals.

Synergistic improvements often result from the combined actions of street greening and contextual urban street-lighting design, and from intersection and pedestrian-related improvements. Greening streets by adding planted medians and installing wider grass- and tree-planted areas along curbs can have a major impact on changing a street's character from a high-speed suburban or rural arterial roadway to a slower, local,

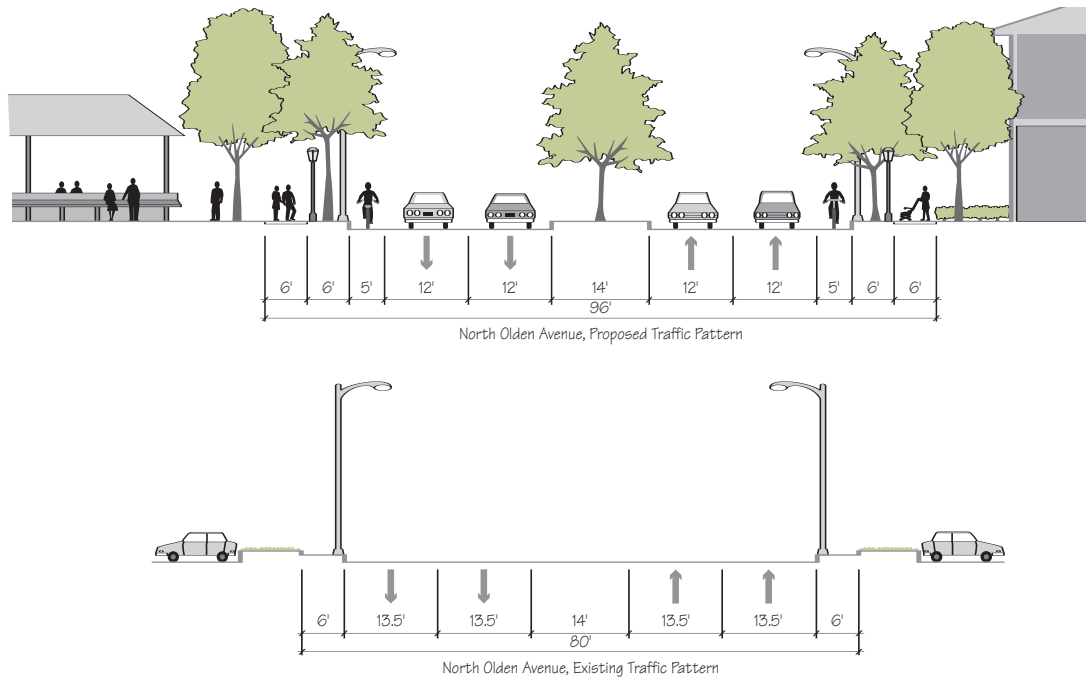
urban street. Replacing cobra-style freeway poles and light fixtures with more urban fixtures also adds to the urban character of a street, making it more a place of interest rather than simply a through route.

Along the study area's transportation corridors, narrow sidewalks without landscaping buffers between traffic lanes currently create an atmosphere that is very unfriendly toward pedestrians. This problem is exacerbated by the location of utility poles along street curbs or on sidewalks, which reduces visibility for pedestrians as well as the sidewalks' effective width. Sidewalks typically need to be at least six feet wide if they are to provide a pathway for more than a single pedestrian. Active pedestrian sidewalks allow two or more people to walk side by side, as well as two-way pedestrian flow, without requiring walkers to step off the sidewalk to give way to other pedestrians. Building access needs to include direct, marked pedestrian linkages from the sidewalk system to building entrances, which should be located within short walking distances of adjacent sidewalks and bus stops.

Crosswalks should be provided at all major street intersections and should be enhanced by street markings and adequate pedestrian signal timing. Enhanced crosswalks can include colored pavement, zebra or ladder pavement markings, in-pavement lighting, advanced pedestrian signal phasing, and/or countdown pedestrian timers fitted with technologies that improve access for handicapped persons.

Urban street design typically eliminates barriers to pedestrians at intersections by reducing or eliminating large, free-flow, right-turn curb radii and channelized right-turn lanes. This design both improves pedestrian capabilities by reducing roadway widths and calms the traffic flow by reducing vehicle turning speeds and free-flow highway operation. The panel therefore recommends (as shown in the illustration on the following page) that a more urban street design be put in place at these intersections.

Current technology and standard traffic controls can effectively change how a street operates, increasing its efficiency and ability to move traffic.



To reconfigure the North Olden Avenue corridor, the panel recommends reducing the roadway width, removing barriers to pedestrians, and creating additional space for pedestrians, bicycles, and landscaping.

Existing traffic signals should be connected and operated as a system, with coordinated, progressive signal timing along the corridor. This can reduce traffic delays between signals, and minimize intersection queuing and vehicle stopping. Upgraded pavement markings and signage also will improve the efficiency of automobile travel in the study area corridors and improve access to adjacent development.

The collective impact of the implementation of these design criteria and aesthetic standards creates the potential to alter the roadway character from that of a highway to that of a more urban street that accommodates all users and calms the flow of traffic. Community leaders need to determine the purpose of their roads. Should they function merely to move traffic as quickly as possible, or should they provide connections among

adjacent land uses as well as opportunities for all residents to travel by a variety of transportation modes, including public transit, walking, and bicycling?

The Olden Avenue Redevelopment Plan and the Brunswick Turnpike South Redevelopment Plan provide consistent and solid urban design criteria compatible with these principles. Implementation of these design principles on all arterial roads in the study area can change the character of the local street system. Street improvement projects should be scheduled in a way that gives priority to North Olden Avenue and Spruce Street, the predominant streets in the area. Aesthetics along these two street segments between Artic Parkway and Princeton Avenue are the most deteriorated in the study area.

# Implementation

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Implementation of the panel's Mercer Crossings plan, using the tools and methods described below, can result in the sustainable and desirable development of the crossroads of Trenton, Ewing, and Lawrence. In the absence of such implementation, the future of the area may continue to be one of inactive interest and disconnected activity. Whether this area continues on its current course or makes a dynamic and exciting transformation will be dependent upon the joint efforts not only of the three municipalities, but also of Mercer County, which can serve as both the facilitator and leader of this change.

The panel recognizes that a number of the planning tools that already exist within the Mercer Crossings area can serve as a foundation for the proposed coordinated effort. Furthermore, the panel finds that county and state laws allow for additional mechanisms that can advance the vision sought by these communities. In this section, the panel identifies the existing issues and the actions needed to implement the plan. The panel wishes to emphasize that implementation is, by definition, an ongoing process. The plan set out by the panel is ambitious and therefore will require phasing. As future public investment and policies attract private capital and development of the area proceeds, unforeseen changes may occur. All plans must respond to changing conditions, markets, and demands. These conditions inevitably will require adjustments to the strategies set forth below.

## Disconnected Efforts, Disconnected Results

Historically, the three municipalities have worked separately to redevelop their portions of the study area without much coordinated effort or unified leadership. The absence of a coordinated effort has hampered their ability to establish the full potential of the area as a target location for new in-

vestment, commerce, and residents. While pockets of success and sustainable development exist, the lack of a unified vision has resulted in disjointed development and missed opportunities that could be captured by a coordinated effort supported by a shared vision. Since similarities currently exist in the form and function of the pockets of development throughout the study area, the purpose of the redevelopment plan should be to make the study area appear to be one seamless place physically as well.

## Existing Redevelopment Plans

All three municipalities have established redevelopment areas within their respective boundaries, as allowed by state enabling legislation. Of specific interest to Mercer Crossings is the Olden Avenue Redevelopment Plan adopted by the Ewing Redevelopment Agency and the Brunswick Turnpike South Redevelopment Plan prepared by Lawrence Township. Both of these redevelopment plans offer guiding policies for the redevelopment of the areas and redevelopment tools such as incentives for new investment within their boundaries, including graduated tax abatements and by-right modifications of the zoning requirements. Both redevelopment areas, to some extent, have achieved successful results, and both plans represent conscious efforts to direct special attention toward these areas.

Unfortunately, both of these redevelopment areas currently stand alone, without any collaboration with their neighbor. Neither plan makes reference to the other or allows for coordinated redevelopment efforts. Moreover, only a very small portion of the Brunswick Turnpike plan lies within the study area. The remainder of Mercer Crossings is not subject to any redevelopment plan.

## Absence of a Coordinated Planning Effort

In the absence of redevelopment planning targeted to the entire study area, development and investment within Mercer Crossings have been

subject to three separate sets of regulations, as prescribed by the zoning ordinances of the municipalities for their respective jurisdictions. Through its review of these ordinances and a field inspection of existing development, the panel found that no coordinated effort has been made to ensure consistency or uniformity in site plan and urban design requirements within the study area.

Each municipality has its own set of rules and its own processes, even though the study area is a physically connected place without any natural barriers. Even the regulations that apply to projects lying within a single jurisdiction can be inconsistent. Within the Olden Avenue planning area, for example, proposals for projects that take advantage of redevelopment incentives are not necessarily subject to the same regulations as other development that does not qualify as redevelopment. The panel believes that the most important element in implementing its redevelopment plan will be consistency and an agreement among jurisdictions to develop uniform regulations that will attract private investment to the area.

### Lack of an Intermunicipal Team with a Shared Vision

Like many other jurisdictions that abut one another, each municipality in Mercer Crossings has rightfully taken a strong home rule focus on the issues and development proposals that lie within its own boundaries. The fact that projects that will result in impacts across municipal boundaries are being approved in each jurisdiction has caused concern and raised awareness of the need for greater communication and cooperation among the communities. During its fact-gathering interviews, the panel repeatedly was advised that the absence of communication and cooperation has created some discord and mistrust among the communities.

Compounding this history of strong home rule policy and the lack of a coordinated planning effort is the absence of any strong leadership to implement a unified vision for the area. Panel members repeatedly were advised that any effort to coordinate planning efforts within Mercer Crossings was inconceivable just a few years ago. Now, with raised awareness about the importance of cooperation among local leadership, the focus of

statewide smart growth initiatives, and the pressures of market forces within the study area, the three municipalities and the county have come together to develop a redevelopment plan with a shared vision. When implemented, this effort can serve as a model for intergovernmental cooperation in a new era of smart growth in New Jersey, an area in which the state already is a national leader. Furthermore, the panel believes that TCNJ's newly created Municipal Land Use Center can play a role in helping to support this cooperative effort.

### An Implementation Strategy

The panel proposes four major steps that it believes must be taken before the stakeholders and leaders of Mercer Crossings can begin to successfully coordinate their redevelopment efforts. These include the following:

- Appoint a local facilitator who can shepherd community support for the creation and adoption of coordinated redevelopment plans for the area;
- Adopt a series of interlocal agreements to allow for the preparation and implementation of the plans;
- Prepare three redevelopment plans as well as a shared, multijurisdictional master plan for Mercer Crossings; and
- Hire an executive director of a newly created redevelopment agency to oversee the coordinated redevelopment planning effort.



Municipal planners discuss redevelopment plans for Mercer Crossings.



### Appoint an Advocate for a Multijurisdictional Redevelopment Plan

To implement the panel's recommendations, leadership that is recognized by all four jurisdictions will be needed to advocate community support for change. This leadership must initiate the planning effort. The panel believes, based on its experience, that a failure to address the need for leadership likely will result in a plan implementation process plagued with frustration and counterproductive effort, and few—if any—positive results. Without the push of leadership, delays could impede the tempo of revitalization and narrow the range of development opportunities presented by current market forces.

The panel proposes that the leadership role be assigned to Mercer County. The county has the resources and means to bring together the appropriate interested parties. Interviewees repeatedly indicated that the facilitator for the redevelopment plan should not be associated with or a staff member of any of the three individual municipalities. Accordingly, the role of coordinator should be assigned to the office of the county executive. While final responsibility should lie with the county executive, the person assigned to this task should serve at the pleasure of the county executive.

### Adopt Interlocal Agreements

Because no means currently exist to establish a cross-jurisdictional redevelopment district without major legislative efforts, and because there appears to be no support for any of the three municipalities to delegate home rule authority, the most appropriate means to achieve collaboration is the use of interlocal agreements or memoranda of agreement (MOA). These can be effective tools for establishing formal roles and responsibilities among the four jurisdictions. MOA will allow each municipality and the county to participate equally in the creation of the following:

- A shared vision for the planning area;
- A collaborative planning strategy or district;
- A master plan for the study area;
- Zoning ordinances for the study area that are based on the shared vision;

- A coordinated site plan review process, pursuant to zoning ordinance requirements;
- A coordinated, multijurisdictional capital improvement program; and
- Opportunities for the transfer of development rights among jurisdictions.

The panel recommends that each municipality and the county be a party to each interlocal agreement that addresses the goals stated above. The adoption of such agreements will create a framework for the more detailed recommendations to follow. In particular, all three municipalities need to adopt a shared master plan with detailed recommendations for land uses, zoning map and text amendments, urban design guidelines, and site improvement standards to achieve the shared vision for the study area.

### Create a New, Multijurisdictional Master Redevelopment Plan

Because the study area extends over three municipal boundaries, each jurisdiction needs to adopt its own share of the redevelopment plan, consistent with the master interlocal agreement. The new redevelopment plan should supersede existing redevelopment plans for the areas lying within the study area boundaries. The master plan should include the following:

**A Land Use Plan.** Land use and zoning changes will be required to encourage the mixed-use focus of the concepts proposed by the panel.

**Zoning Ordinance Amendments.** Each municipality needs to agree to amend its zoning ordinance and zoning map to make them consistent with the proposed master land use plan. These amendments should be specific to the adopted vision for the entire planning area and to the special opportunity sites recommended by the panel. Amendments also should include urban design standards, so the area can be transformed under the shared vision to a pedestrian-friendly environment with efficient automobile circulation patterns. The panel recommends that these amendments include higher standards for site planning; architectural design; access management and comprehensive traffic impact analysis; building placement, height,



Public investment should maintain existing residential uses and attract new residential development to Mercer Crossings.

and bulk; and landscaping and signage. Once clear and uniform development standards are established, the approval process for site plan review and the issuance of permits must be streamlined. The review process must be consistent and timely. Establishing an administrative review process in lieu of board review should be considered for projects with fewer impacts because of their scale, project type, or location. A streamlined review process will serve as an incentive and make the study area attractive to new investment.

**Proposed Incentives for Qualifying New Development and Redevelopment.** The plan should outline the types of incentives to be offered within the study area. These incentives should be as equal as possible across municipal boundaries, so that each municipality is equally attractive to investment. Incentives may include tax abatements and/or tax freezes. Specific results and benchmarks must be integral to incentives to ensure that the intended direct and collateral results are achieved.

**Public Improvements and Investment.** The existing infrastructure in the study area is old and some of it will not support new development. Developers can be expected to upgrade some of this infrastructure in concert with the construction of new projects. When large-scale improvements such as street realignment or extensive sewer line replacements are required, however, public investment may be necessary.

The panel recommends that public improvements be implemented throughout the study area. These improvements should include planned street extensions and realignment, pedestrian improve-

ments, street lighting, district signage, street furniture, bus shelters, underground utilities, stormwater improvements, and landscaping. The panel suggests that state and federal funding sources be used as much as possible to pay for the costs associated with these improvements. The remainder will need to be financed through a bond issued by the Mercer County Improvement Authority. Consequently, some local funds will be needed to repay the bond issue. The county's open-space acquisition and development program also should be included in the plan, to fund the protection of green space within the study area.

The panel identifies the following tools, which can be used to make these public improvements:

- *A capital improvement program.* Municipal land use law regulates the capital improvement program, which is a component of a municipality's comprehensive master plan. The study area's three municipalities should make programming needed infrastructure improvements in the study area a high priority.
- *Mercer County Improvement Authority.* The panel recommends that municipalities take advantage of the financing authority made available by the Mercer County Improvement Authority.
- *Uniform and consistent development standards and processes.*
- *Transfer of development rights (TDR).* The New Jersey State Planning Code is being amended to allow for the transfer of development rights. The panel believes that this tool may serve as a



Leaders of the College of New Jersey's administration and the Municipal Land Use Center discuss the university's role in the redevelopment of Mercer Crossings.

useful incentive to ensure appropriate design and land uses for development projects that include areas designated as open space or wetlands.

- *Streamlined development approval.*
- *Low-interest loans for facade and site improvements.* Particular efforts should be made to obtain funds through signage grant programs.
- *Shared costs for public improvements.* Collaborative cost sharing could be used, for example, to improve streetscapes, upgrade utilities, and place utilities underground.
- *Land assembly.* The jurisdictions have the power of eminent domain and need to be prepared to use it, if necessary, once redevelopment plans are adopted.

#### **Hire a Redevelopment Agency Executive Director**

The panel strongly recommends that an executive director of a newly created Mercer Crossings Redevelopment Agency be hired to oversee the coordination of the redevelopment plan and process among the three redevelopment agencies of North Trenton, Ewing, and Lawrence. The executive director should be an appointee of the county executive, and should serve as an at-will, contractual, salaried employee of the county. The position should be funded equally by the county and the three municipalities. It also should be structured to, in some way, address the problem of the incon-

sistency of leadership that occurs with changing administrations.

Serving as a representative of the county executive, the executive director should be responsible for providing cross-jurisdictional cooperation and coordination. This should include, but not be limited to, the following:

- *Coordinating intermunicipal plan and ordinance amendments.* As redevelopment takes place, it may become necessary to amend the redevelopment plan and applicable zoning maps and zoning ordinances. The executive director should manage this process.
- *Coordinating intermunicipal site plan reviews.* Although each proposed development project will be required to comply with the policies and directives of the master plan, ultimate approval authority will continue to lie with the jurisdiction within which the proposed project lies. The executive director should manage the review process.
- *Seeking funding sources and grants.* The executive director should be responsible for filing applications for grants and funding sources, and for administering those funds to cover the costs associated with public improvements included in the redevelopment plans.
- *Coordinating meetings among the municipal redevelopment agencies.* The executive director will need to schedule intermunicipal meetings on an as-needed basis to reevaluate plan progress, review projects that cross municipal boundaries, and discuss proposed amendments to the redevelopment plans and zoning ordinances.
- *Promoting the redevelopment area.* The executive director should work with local civic groups, chambers of commerce, economic development agencies, building and real estate industry organizations, and other marketing groups to promote development opportunities within the redevelopment area. The director also should be responsible for maintaining a redevelopment area web site that can be linked to the web sites of all four jurisdictions as well as other relevant sites.

- *Securing community development block grant (CDBG) allocations.* The executive director should serve as the lead county agent to secure CDBG monies for the study area. These funds could be used for infrastructure improvements, housing rehabilitation, park and playground development, and streetscaping.
- *Assisting potential developers and other interested parties.* The executive director should serve as a liaison between the municipalities and developers who may be interested in development opportunities within Mercer Crossings. Efforts should include providing market data, information on available redevelopment incentives, area contact information, site availability, and other applicable information.
- *Researching and furthering opportunities for the sharing of ratables and the establishment of tax increment financing.* The executive director should serve as a liaison between the New Jersey Office of Smart Growth and local jurisdictions to pursue opportunities for the sharing

of ratables among the three municipalities, as well as the establishment of tax increment financing. Because this multijurisdictional relationship will be viewed as a model for intergovernmental cooperation, the director should establish relationships with both the state planning agencies and the Municipal Land Use Center at TCNJ. These relationships should be used for further research and, ultimately, legislation that allows for the sharing of ratables for interjurisdictional redevelopment planning initiatives and the creation of tax increment financing districts.

In the interim, and to assist with the establishment of the redevelopment plan and its organizational structure, a committee of representatives from the three municipalities, county agencies, and the Municipal Land Use Center should convene to plan for the early stages of the study area's revitalization.

# Conclusion

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**S**uccessful revitalization efforts have several common themes. First, they take time, patience, and persistence. Some real estate drivers are short term while others are long term, and the community must push forward simultaneously on both fronts.

Second, there is no single easy answer. There is no silver bullet. The best initial opportunities can and do come in small, quickly doable packages. Big catalytic projects have their role as well, but it is the smaller-scale, readily achievable project that gets things going and attracts the attention of new investment.

While economic and social forces seem to have a life of their own, economic and physical redevelopment require more than just opportunities to become reality. They require civic leadership, initiative, and creativity; risk-taking; cooperation; and collaboration on multiple levels. These forces are essential to recognizing and taking advantage of the opportunities presented in the study area. New Jersey is a national model for public sector leadership in smart growth. Evidence of that lead-

ership exists in Mercer County as well. Leadership forces must be applied, in conjunction with a wide variety of available tools and resources, to make the study area a vital and productive place once again.

Beyond providing for the public safety and education, there is no more important role for the public sector than maintaining and augmenting infrastructure. The streets and roadways, the transit systems, the sewer and stormwater systems, the parks and open spaces, the schools, are the bones and muscles around which neighborhoods, through neglect, suffer and wither, and through investment grow and prosper. The county and the municipalities have demonstrated their willingness to pursue the redevelopment of the regional corridor by supporting the execution of this report. The panel is confident in the jurisdictions' ability to revitalize Mercer Crossings through the use of the suggested tools and through persistent collaboration.

# About the Panel

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## Alex J. Rose

*Panel Chair  
El Segundo, California*

Rose serves as director of development for Continental Development Corporation in El Segundo, California. He is responsible for managing all development and construction activities for the suburban office/research and development (R&D) park developer, whose holdings include 3.5 million square feet in southern California's South Bay market and the city of San Francisco. Rose oversees acquisitions and new project development; planning and execution of all tenant improvement, core and shell renovation, and new construction work; major facilities maintenance and upgrades; project budgeting and cost controls; internal project management; and architect, engineer, and contractor management.

Over the past nine years, Rose has overseen the development and acquisition of nearly 1 million square feet of Class A office space, as well as the physical transformation of more than 1 million square feet of single-tenant R&D facilities into multitenant office space, restaurants, and retail and entertainment uses. Prior to assuming his development and construction responsibilities, Rose served as the firm's director of property management. He also has extensive experience in title insurance and is a licensed California attorney, with experience in general civil and bankruptcy litigation.

Rose received an MBA from the University of Southern California (USC), a JD from Southwestern University School of Law, and a BA in political science from the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). He is a trustee of the Urban Land Institute, chair of ULI's Commercial and Retail Development Council, a vice chair of the Institute's national Program and District Council committees, and a member of the ULI Los Ange-

les District Council Executive Committee. Rose has chaired and served on numerous Advisory Services panel assignments focusing on downtown and transit corridor redevelopment and revitalization and office development issues, and has participated in several ULI office sector workshops.

Rose has been a member of numerous other community, industry, legal, UCLA, and USC groups, including the Los Angeles Conservancy, Leadership Manhattan Beach, and the steering committee of New Schools Better Neighborhoods, a broad-based private and public citizen's advisory board which is researching and developing standards and methodologies for the development of more than 100 new community-asset public schools in the Los Angeles metropolitan area.

## Mary Beth Corrigan

*Washington, D.C.*

Corrigan is a planner and policy analyst with more than 20 years of experience working with local governments and private clients in helping address and resolve land use and development issues. As vice president of the Advisory Services Program at ULI—the Urban Land Institute, she has coordinated more than 100 Advisory Services panels for communities throughout the United States and abroad. Her role involves meeting with the panel sponsors to define issues and questions and prepare for the panel's site visit, identifying appropriate expertise for the panel and recruiting panel participants from ULI's membership, overseeing logistical arrangements for the panel, joining the panel for its site visit, providing technical and logistical support, and overseeing the production of the final report.

Prior to joining ULI, Corrigan was with Tetra Tech, Inc, an environmental consulting firm, where she was responsible for developing non-point source pollution control guidelines and best

management practices manuals. She also worked for the South Florida Regional Planning Council as an environmental planner and policy analyst, where she was manager of the environmental sections of the Regional Plan for South Florida, reviewed environmental issues for development of regional impact (DRI) submittals, and managed several projects related to environmental and growth management, including the 1989 Southwest Broward/Northwest Dade Subregional Study, which looked at development alternatives for that part of the region.

Corrigan received a BA from Kutztown State College and an MS in coastal zone management from the Florida Institute of Technology.

### **Allen K. Folks**

*Sacramento, California*

Folks, a licensed landscape architect and planner, directs the design studio at EDAW, Inc., in Sacramento. He has prepared master plans and directed the implementation of a wide range of projects in the western United States and abroad. Folks's waterfront planning experience includes large mixed-use projects in several Bay Area cities and the resolution of issues related to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Folks also was very active in the design and preparation of several key waterfront military base reuse plans, including those for Mare Island Naval Shipyard and the Alameda Naval Air Station.

Folks's current responsibilities include the preparation of specific plans for new developments in the California cities of Napa and Half Moon Bay, a specific plan that addresses urban infill in the city of Walnut Creek, design of Microsoft's new south campus in the city of Mountain View, and the master plan for a new development in Cairo, Egypt.

### **John R. Hixenbaugh**

*St. Petersburg, Florida*

Hixenbaugh is the zoning official for the city of St. Petersburg, Florida, a position to which he was appointed by the mayor. He is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the city's land devel-

opment and zoning ordinances. Hixenbaugh also directly supervises the Development Review Services Division's staff of 11 professional and technical employees who provide zoning, site plan review, platting, sign review, tree removal, landscaping, and other development-related services.

Hixenbaugh began his career with the city of St. Petersburg in 1998. He previously held professional planning positions with the city of Port Orange, Florida, and the village of Schaumburg, Illinois. A member of ULI—the Urban Land Institute, the American Institute of Certified Planners, and the American Planning Association, Hixenbaugh received a BFA in drawing and an MA in urban and regional planning from the University of Florida

### **Paula K. Konikoff**

*New York, New York*

Konikoff is an independent professional real estate consultant with 20 years of experience providing clients with advisory, valuation, and other real estate consulting services. The scope of her practice includes designing and conducting due diligence investigations on properties, conducting and evaluating property appraisals, and advising private and public institutions (both owners and lenders) in connection with the acquisition, development, and disposition of their real estate holdings, as well as their fit within a real estate portfolio. Konikoff has been retained to provide such services concerning properties throughout the United States, from Hawaii to New York, and abroad, from Hong Kong to the Czech Republic.

Konikoff holds both a law degree and a member of the Appraisal Institute (MAI) designation. Prior to establishing her independent real estate advisory practice in 1993, she was director of national real estate valuation services at KPMG. She joined KPMG in 1989 after having served as president of the Hudson Group, a national real estate consulting and appraisal firm. Previously, Konikoff had been an attorney in private practice at the Philadelphia law firm of Dilworth, Paxson, Kalish & Kauffman, where she worked in both the real estate and corporate law practice areas.

An adjunct professor at New York University, Konikoff has taught graduate and undergraduate courses on real estate finance, real estate markets, and real estate appraisal. She also is an instructor for the Appraisal Foundation, where she conducts programs on standards of appraisal practice and on professional appraisal ethical rules. In addition, Konikoff develops and presents real estate valuation seminars for continuing education credits for CPAs and attorneys. She also has served as an expert witness in a variety of cases in which real estate valuation and damages issues have come into dispute.

Konikoff has served as a member of several Appraisal Institute committees, the Appraisal Standards Board, and other professional organizations. She is a member of the real property law committee of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York and chair of its program subcommittee. Konikoff earned a BS from Temple University and a JD from Villanova University School of Law. She frequently speaks and writes on appraisal and other real property issues. Prior to her appointment to the Appraisal Standards Board in January 2003, she presented seminars on standards of practice, ethics, and valuation issues in litigation for the Appraisal Institute.

## **Sakura Namioka**

*Arlington, Virginia*

Namioka, a certified planner with a background in architecture and urban design, is the zoning ordinance program coordinator for the Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development in Arlington County, Virginia. Her major responsibilities include coordinating zoning ordinance reviews and amendments, drafting zoning ordinance amendment reports, reviewing residential and mixed-use development projects, and working with citizen advisory groups.

As a local government planner, she strives to address broader public issues by struggling to define and represent public benefits. Her work experience also includes comprehensive planning, land use laws, environmental reviews, grant applications, project reviews, and citizen participation.

Namioka joined ULI's Public/Private Partnership Council five years ago. She decided to become an architect while in high school and, after receiving bachelor of architecture and master of urban design degrees, practiced as an architect before switching to local government planning.

## **Kathleen Rose**

*Davidson, North Carolina*

Rose is president of Rose & Associates Southeast, Inc., a boutique land planning and development advisory firm specializing in strategic planning, market feasibility, site selection, and due diligence. The firm also specializes in Values Based Planning™ and serves both public and private sector clients.

With more than 18 years of experience, Rose has managed the planning, development, and marketing of retail, industrial, multifamily, hotel, and mixed-use real estate projects. She also is managing partner of Prism Development, a North Carolina-based regional development company.

Rose holds the certified commercial investment member (CCIM) designation of the Commercial Investment Real Estate Institute. She has served on the CCIM Institute's faculty and a number of its national committees, including member services, strategic planning, and as past chair of designation promotion and the international coordinating committee. She was instrumental in advancing the CCIM Institute's global initiatives, including implementing an ambassador program and expanding course delivery to other regions of the world. Rose currently serves on the board of directors for the North Carolina CCIM chapter. She also is a member of the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC), the Urban Land Institute (ULI), the National Network of Commercial Real Estate Women (NNCREW), and the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP).

Rose frequently speaks at meetings of related professional trade organizations and has authored articles for national real estate trade publications such as the *Commercial Investment Real Estate Journal* and *Shopping Center Business*. She is a licensed real estate broker in Connecticut and



North Carolina, and a Connecticut Certified Commercial Appraiser.

## **Ken Voigt**

*Brookfield, Wisconsin*

Voigt, an adjunct professor at the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee with teaching experience at Marquette University and the University of Wisconsin Extension Department, has more than 35 years of experience in the field of traffic engineering and transportation planning. He recently completed the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center workshop on pedestrian-accessible facilities. Voigt also has taught a series of seminars for the Wisconsin Department of Transportation Bureau of Highway Safety on traffic calming. He has

conducted major transportation corridor studies; special event traffic studies for Miller Park, the Kansas City Race Track, and National Airport; and numerous traffic impact studies for small and large developments throughout Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Illinois.

Voigt serves on numerous national technical committees with the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) smart growth and trip generation committees. He is an international director for ITE, vice chair of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) traffic operations committee, and a member of the Transportation Research Board subcommittee on highway capacity for unsignalized intersections.