



## Route 1 Regional Growth Strategy

### IMPLEMENTATION AGENDA

Implementing the Route 1 Regional Growth Strategy will require effort and action by all levels of government, citizens and the private sector. Implementation will also require a sustained and long-term commitment to cooperative action over time. As part of the Route 1 Regional Growth Strategy planning process, many regional stakeholders recognized that the integrated land use transportation “vision” embodied in the growth strategy was meritorious and not in itself controversial; however, they acknowledged that implementing the growth strategy would be very difficult. For this reason, the study culminated in a final collaborative workshop designed to focus on future implementation. The majority of the meeting was devoted to small group work prioritizing next steps and developing action plans for priority implementation strategies.

The overall implementation agenda identified by regional stakeholders to move the Route 1 Regional Growth Strategy from paper to reality includes actions in four main categories:

- Planning, Zoning, and Economic Development – Municipalities must undertake work to revise their planning documents, particularly their master plan and zoning ordinance, to allow and promote mixed-use centers.
- Transportation Project Development and Investment – Public agencies, particularly on the state level, need to identify funding for, design and construct proposed transportation projects.
- Public Engagement, Education, and Influence – Civic leaders at all levels need to engage and educate decision-makers and citizens about the benefits of implementing the Route 1 Regional Growth Strategy.
- Coordinated Decision-Making – Local and state agencies must strive to attain coordinated and consistent decision-making in support of regional planning efforts and implementing the Route 1 Regional Growth Strategy.

The four actions identified by stakeholders as “high priority” next steps for implementing the growth strategy were:

1. **Establish a Regional Entity to “Own” the R1RGS** – Stakeholders agreed that establishing “ownership” of the growth strategy would be critically important to ensuring implementation. One options suggested was The Central Jersey Transportation Forum (CJTF) which provides an existing regional entity, but it does not have administrative authority, and its membership is not coterminous with the R1RGS study area. Other suggested options include creating some type of inter-agency partnership or creating an entirely new entity with true regional “ownership.”
2. **Identify New Sources of Funding for Transportation and Other Investments** – Also recognized as critically important to implementation was the need to identify existing and new sources of funding necessary to support design and construction of the transportation project and other investments identified as part of the growth strategy. Various options may be available for targeting new funding sources. Options include those relating to re-authorizing the Transportation Trust Fund, using Urban Hub Tax Credit funding, revising funding formulae to provide increased funding in support of increased residential development and school costs, and providing funding to preserve targeted open space.
3. **Construct the BRT Core System** – A central component of the transportation component of the regional growth strategy is the creation of a regional Bus Rapid Transit system with an initial focus on constructing the Route 1 BRT core system. The focus of this action is to secure priority funding or new funding for an early action plan, which would involve design and funding for Phase I of the BRT system. Possibilities include obtaining project earmarks or innovative funding, such as through public-private partnerships.
4. **Provide “Carrots and Sticks”** – Regional stakeholders recognized that an important way to encourage implementation, especially with regard to the land use component of the regional growth strategy, is to provide both “carrots and sticks.” Toward this end, they suggested a number of ways to improve interagency coordination and coordinated decision-making to achieve desired outcomes. Among the possible actions are streamlining planning and regulatory approvals for center-based development that meet established criteria and utilizing an incentive system to encourage agreements.

The complete Route 1 Regional Growth Strategy Implementation Agenda includes the following actions:

Actions	Timing	Responsibility
<b><i>Planning, zoning and economic development:</i></b>		
1. Develop guidance materials to assess municipal/county plans/zoning consistency with <i>Regional Growth Strategy</i>	Short	NJDOT
2. Create and fund an MPO-based planning grant program for counties and municipalities to support local planning activities (including public engagement) designed to implement the regional growth strategy.	Short	DVRPC, NJTPA
3. Reexamine municipal/county land use, economic development,	Short	Municipal planning

circulation and transportation plans and ordinances for consistency with the <i>Regional Growth Strategy</i>		boards
4. Facilitate the creation of transit-oriented infill development and redevelopment, including workforce housing, at key locations consistent with the <i>Regional Growth Strategy</i> by changing plans and zoning to encourage mixed-used development at transit-supportive densities at those locations	Short/ Medium	Municipal planning boards / Governing bodies
5. Change plans/zoning to protect areas outside of identified centers and nodes by limiting development of new housing and non-residential development in those areas	Medium/ Long	Municipal planning boards / Governing bodies
6. Re-orient regional and local economic development activities to support implementation of the <i>Regional Growth Strategy</i>	Short, Medium & Long	Chambers of commerce, state, county and municipal economic development agencies
7. Use the current economic downturn to re-position the region to take advantage of opportunities to enhance and create new industry clusters that reflect 21 <sup>st</sup> century economic realities and regional market strengths	Short, Medium & Long	Chambers of commerce, state, county and municipal economic development agencies
8. Use the land development approval process to reserve rights-of-way for future transportation improvements and secure travel amenities such as interconnected sidewalks, bike paths and transit amenities consistent with the regional growth strategy.	Short, Medium & Long	Municipal planning boards
9. Use planning/implementation tools such as redevelopment planning; transfer of development rights, non-contiguous parcel clustering and conservation zoning to support implementation of the <i>Regional Growth Strategy</i> . Provide technical support/guidance and incentives as needed to encourage the use of these tools.	Short, Medium & Long	All
10. Use Fair Housing Act requirements and the COAH process as an opportunity to facilitate the creation of affordable workforce housing throughout the region in a manner consistent with the <i>Regional Growth Strategy</i>	Short, Medium & Long	Municipal planning boards
<b><i>Transportation project development and investment:</i></b>		
1. Work cooperatively with the Governor and Legislature to reauthorize the NJ Transportation Trust Fund in a manner that assures a stable, recurring source of funding to support implementation of the <i>Regional Growth Strategy</i>	Short	All
2. Examine opportunities for creating regional funding sources that can pay for transit capital improvement and on-going transit operating expenses. Examples might include: a local purpose sales tax, regional parking fees, and special transportation assessment districts	Short/ Medium	NJDOT, NJ TRANSIT, counties, municipalities

3. Continue to advance planning, design and construction of the Route 1 BRT Core System and the Greater New Brunswick Area BRT	Short/ Medium	NJ TRANSIT
4. Identify and advance strategic highway and transit investments designed to connect centers and nodes identified for growth and/or otherwise support implementation of <i>Regional Growth Strategy</i>	Medium/ Long	NJDOT, NJ TRANSIT and Municipalities
5. Use planning and implementation tools such as access management, context-sensitive design, traffic calming and travel demand management to support implementation of the <i>Regional Growth Strategy</i> . Provide technical support/guidance and incentives as needed to encourage the use of these tools.	Short, Medium & Long	All
<b>Public engagement, education and influence:</b>		
1. Explore alternative mechanisms and/or governance structures to establish “ownership” of the Regional Growth Strategy and to monitor and support plan implementation	Short	All
2. Use the agreed upon governance structure to provide a unified “regional voice” in advocating for the investments needed to implement that <i>Regional Growth Strategy</i>	Short	All
3. Discuss coordination, advocacy and leadership mechanisms for the <i>Regional Growth Strategy</i> with DVRPC / CJTF and other regional planning and coordinating bodies	Short & Medium	All
4. Adopt municipal resolutions endorsing the <i>Regional Growth Strategy</i> including the shared growth principles, desired community and regional outcomes, integrated land use–transportation vision and implementation agenda.	Short	Mayors / Governing bodies
5. Prepare support materials (presentation slides, handouts, etc) and develop a strategy for undertaking <i>Regional Growth Strategy</i> “road-show”	Short	NJDOT
6. Brief local boards and commissions in each municipality and county on the <i>Regional Growth Strategy</i> initiative.	Short	All
7. Brief relevant state and regional agency staff on the <i>Regional Growth Strategy</i> initiative.	Short	NJDOT
8. Educate residents and other local stakeholders regarding why the <i>Regional Growth Strategy</i> is important to ensuring a sustainable and prosperous future for the region. Topics discussed should include all four components of the strategy and the benefits and costs of transit-oriented and other types of development.	Short	Municipal leaders
<b>Coordinated decision-making:</b>		
1. Consider the <i>Regional Growth Strategy</i> when making government decisions (large and small) related to land use, economic development and transportation matters. Evaluate how short term decisions may impact long term implementation of the strategy and strive to make all decisions consistent with	Short, Medium & Long	All

the strategy.		
2. Build on existing coordination processes (e.g., State Plan cross-acceptance, plan endorsement etc.) to ensure local and state agency decisions support implementation of the <i>Regional Growth Strategy</i>	Short, Medium & Long	State agencies, counties and municipalities
3. Expedite state agency review processes and use discretionary agency funding to prioritize and advance implementation of the <i>Regional Growth Strategy</i>	Short, Medium & Long	State agencies
4. Consider streamlining planning and regulatory approvals for center-based development that is consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy	Short, Medium & Long	Counties and municipalities
5. Encourage shared services to balance fiscal inequities between local governments	Short, Medium & Long	Counties and municipalities