TOD in Your Downtown

Forum Series

Taking First Steps Toward a Transit-Friendly Future

SOUTH JERSEY EDITION

Thursday, November 12, 2026
10:00 am – 12:30 pm

Chamberlain Student Center
Rowan University, Glassboro, New Jersey









NJTOD Transit Friendly Planning

With support from RUTGERS NJ RowanUniversity

SPEAKERS



Lisa Avichal
Senior Planner
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Lisa Avichal is a Senior Planner at the New Jersey Department of State's Business Action Center, Office of Planning Advocacy. Her work focuses on supervising planning staff and assisting municipalities in aligning local planning efforts with the goals and policies of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan. Prior to joining the Office of Planning Advocacy, Lisa earned a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Planning and Design, with a minor in Business and Technical Writing, from Rutgers University. She went on to complete a Master of City and Regional Planning at Rutgers University's Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, as well as a graduate certificate in Geospatial Information Science. During her graduate studies, Lisa worked as a Planner Trainee with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Bureau of Climate Resilience Planning, where she supported municipal planning engagement initiatives and assisted project managers with a range of planning activities.



Elise Bremer-Nei, AICP, PP
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Elise Bremer-Nei, AICP, PP is the Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator for the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) and has worked on local, county, regional and state active transportation projects for more than twenty-five years. Elise has managed NJDOT's Office of Bicycle and Pedestrian Programs, including the statewide Bike Ped Master Plan, and the Safe Routes to School and Local Planning Assistance

programs. She currently oversees the NJDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Resource Center and staff managing the Transit Village Initiative.

Originally from the Midwest, Elise received her Geography degree from Rutgers University and has previously worked for the Monmouth County Planning Board and for Urbitran Associates, a private engineering firm. She represents NJDOT on the New Jersey Trails Council and currently serves as chair of the Multi-Modal Task Force for the AASHTO Committee on Planning.



Stephanie DiPetrillo
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Stephanie DiPetrillo is a Senior Research Project Manager and Strategic Policy & Planning Lead at the Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center (VTC) at Rutgers University. She leads NJTOD, a statewide initiative that advances transit-friendly development through technical assistance, peer learning, and collaboration among municipalities, transportation agencies, and community partners. Her work focuses on transit-oriented development, land use planning, transportation policy, and accessibility. She manages planning, research, and technical assistance initiatives for NJ TRANSIT and the New Jersey Department of Transportation and works with communities throughout New Jersey to support development and redevelopment around transit. Stephanie holds graduate degrees in planning and architecture and a bachelor's degree in economics from Rutgers University.



Kathy Guzman
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Kathy Guzman is a Senior Small Business Liaison for the New Jersey Economic Development Authority. Her role is to share information and educate

business owners and community stakeholders about opportunities available to small businesses in New Jersey. Before joining NJEDA, Kathy ran a marketing, advertising and public relations company serving the unique needs of small businesses. She also served as Business Development Advocate in the Flemington NJ Business Improvement District. Kathy is passionate about sharing information and improving equal access to opportunity for New Jersey small business owners.



Michael J. Manzella, AICP
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Michael J. Manzella, AICP serves as the Director of Statewide Planning at NJDOT. The Division includes the Bureau of Statewide Strategies (BSWS) and the Bureau of Research and Innovation (BRI) and provides broad, future-oriented direction for the Department's missions and programs, engages in strategic, performance-based planning and asset management, and develops innovative transportation solutions to enhance mobility, reliability, safety, and quality of life. Mr. Manzella received a Bachelor of Engineering degree in Engineering Management with a Minor in Pre-Law and Public Policy from Stevens Institute of Technology in 2009 and a Master of City and Regional Planning degree with a concentration in Transportation Planning and Policy from the Edward J. Bloustein School at Rutgers University in 2014. Mike has previously served as the Director of Transportation in both the City of Jersey City and the City of Asbury Park as well as the Deputy City Manager in Asbury Park.



Megan Massey, AICP, PP
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Megan Massey, AICP, PP directs the Transit Friendly Planning program at NJ TRANSIT, a

program established in 1999 to support communities in planning for transit-oriented and transit-supportive development at and around NJ TRANSIT passenger facilities. She joined NJ TRANSIT in 2018 after serving as a Transportation Planner for Hudson County, managing corridor studies, the Open Space Trust Fund update, and several NJTPA-funded planning initiatives. Megan serves on Red Bank's Planning Board and Environmental Commission. She holds a Master of City and Regional Planning from Rutgers University.



Natalie Pineiro
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Natalie Pineiro is the Executive Director of Downtown New Jersey and Founder and CEO of INK Creative Strategies, a consulting firm specializing in campaigns for small to mid-sized entities, nonprofits, and government agencies. Previously, she served as Vice President of Strategic Partnerships at the New Jersey Redevelopment Authority, leading marketing and communication efforts. Natalie also served as Executive Director of the Downtown Somerville Alliance, where she advanced economic development, managed beautification projects, and created experiences that attracted diverse populations. With expertise in public relations, strategic communication, and community engagement, she is a recognized leader in downtown revitalization across New Jersey.



Simran S. Riar
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Simran S. Riar is a Senior Planner at the Department of Community Affairs Office of Local Planning Services providing technical planning assistance to distressed municipalities. Simran specializes in redevelopment and master planning, focusing on expanding access to bicycle and

pedestrian infrastructure through policy implementation and public-private partnerships.



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Jenin Shah, AICP is a Senior Planner with the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA), Division of Local Planning Services (LPS), where she provides technical planning assistance to municipalities across the state. She specializes in master plans, redevelopment plans, main street and transit-oriented planning with a focus on engaging diverse stakeholders through robust community engagement. Jenin has more than seventeen years of experience in urban planning, downtown revitalization, mixed-use development, and community engagement. She is an active member of the American Planning Association.



Jonathan Sternesky, DPA
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Jonathan Sternesky has been with the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (NJHMFA) since November 2018. As Director of Policy and External Affairs, Jonathan's responsibilities include providing data and policy analysis to inform policymakers, developing new programs to further the Agency's mission, and ensuring public and stakeholder knowledge of Agency accomplishments and programs. During his tenure at NJHMFA, the Agency has seen historic investments in affordable housing production, the creation of a permanent funding source for special needs housing, and the passage of landmark legislation. Prior to this role, Jonathan worked for the Township of East Brunswick, as their Economic Development Officer, and prior to

that, as Legislative Director to a member of the New Jersey General Assembly, where he developed and assisted in the advancement of legislation addressing issues in criminal justice, healthcare, housing, and higher education. He has a B.A. from Kean University, an MPA from Seton Hall University, and a Doctorate in Public Administration from West Chester University.



Michael Swan, AICP, PP
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Michael Swan, AICP, PP is the Assistant Director of the Transit Friendly Planning Program at NJ TRANSIT. Michael helps lead the Program's local technical assistance projects, Transit Village Initiative, TOD projects, community engagement activities, and other transit friendly programming. With several years of experience in transportation and land use planning, he has worked on TOD vision plans, long-range transportation plans, community master plans, and TOD projects. Michael holds a Master of City and Regional Planning from the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University. Michael is a licensed Professional Planner in the state of New Jersey.

NJTOD, published since 2005, is designed to keep municipal officials, planners, and advocates up-to-date on the potential for development and redevelopment around transit stations. This partnership between NJ TRANSIT and the Bloustein School's Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center (VTC) at Rutgers University aims to enrich the transit-oriented development (TOD) conversation in New Jersey's diverse communities by highlighting what is happening in the state and around the country: best practices, model programs, legislation, and local problem-solving experiences. Visit NJTOD.org, follow us on social media, or sign up for our weekly newsletter at go.rutgers.edu/njtod-news

The **Transit Friendly Planning Program** at NJ TRANSIT is a community-focused planning program at New Jersey's statewide public transportation agency. It offers decades of experience in assisting municipalities across New Jersey with community engagement, data, education, strategic partnerships, and technical assistance centered around station area planning. The Program strives to promote equitable, economically resilient, and environmentally sustainable development that improves the quality of life for all. Connect with us at njtransit.com/transitfriendly

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