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## **GOVERNOR CORZINE DESIGNATES ELIZABETH AS NEW JERSEY'S 18<sup>TH</sup> TRANSIT VILLAGE**

**Elizabeth** - Governor Jon S. Corzine today announced the designation of Elizabeth City's Midtown Station area as the state's 18<sup>th</sup> Transit Village. Elizabeth was awarded \$100,000 in state funding as a part of its designation.

"Securing this Transit Village designation will provide tremendous support for the people who live and work in Elizabeth, and will help grow the city's economy in a sustainable way," said Governor Corzine. "I congratulate Elizabeth for taking the initiative to revitalize its community through transit-oriented land use planning and redevelopment."

The Transit Village initiative strives to help redevelop and revitalize communities around mass transit stations to make them an appealing choice for people to live and work, thereby reducing reliance on the automobile and strengthening local economies.

"The Transit Village initiative enables the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) to invest in our quality of life by reducing congestion, increasing mass transit use, and building more economically viable and pedestrian-friendly town centers," said NJDOT Commissioner Kris Kolluri.

The Transit Village initiative designates municipalities with a bus, train, light rail station or a ferry terminal that have embraced a Smart Growth vision. That vision includes opportunities for growth and economic revitalization; a commitment to compact, mixed-use development; a strong residential component including affordable housing; and jobs, restaurants, arts and entertainment and preservation of a rich architectural character within walking distance of a passenger transportation facility.

"Transit villages are a great example of how revitalization can occur in New Jersey's municipalities using Smart Growth principles," said Department of Community Affairs Commissioner Susan Bass Levin. "Elizabeth is to be commended for taking this giant step forward in rebuilding their community, while protecting open space and reducing automobile dependency."

The benefits of Transit Village designation include the state's commitment to municipal redevelopment, eligibility for NJDOT Transit Village grants, priority status for state funding, technical planning assistance, and coordination among state agencies as part of the state's inter-agency Transit Village Task Force.

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"In recent years, the city of Elizabeth has experienced a renaissance through the incorporation of booming economic development, new market-rate and affordable housing, and the revitalization of our neighborhoods," stated Elizabeth Mayor Chris Bollwage. "Building upon a vision and the implementation of a focused redevelopment plan, the Transit Village designation will complement and contribute to the city's ongoing efforts to renew its Historic Midtown area, while continuing the new energy that is evident throughout our city."

Applications for Transit Village designation are accepted on a rolling basis and reviewed by the Transit Village Task Force. The task force reviews applications and makes recommendations to the NJDOT Commissioner, who has final approval of Transit Village designations. In addition to NJDOT, NJ TRANSIT, the Commerce and Economic Growth Commission, the Council on the Arts, the Department of Community Affairs, the Department of Environmental Protection, the Economic Development Authority, the Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency, the Office of Smart Growth, Main Street New Jersey and the Redevelopment Authority serve on the Transit Village Task Force.

The Transit Village initiative encourages growth in New Jersey towns where infrastructure and public transit already exist. Studies have shown that an increase in residential housing options within walking distance of a mass transit station increases transit ridership to a greater degree than any other type of development. The Transit Village initiative seeks to bring more housing, businesses and people into communities with mass transit stations.

The Transit Village initiative began designating municipalities in 1999. Pleasantville, Morristown, Rutherford, South Amboy, South Orange, Riverside, Rahway, Metuchen, Belmar, Collingswood, Bloomfield, Bound Brook, Cranford, Matawan, New Brunswick, Journal Square/Jersey City and Netcong were designated in previous years.

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