

**Together North Jersey:
Local Demonstration Project
Program Application**

**Bloomfield
Avenue
Complete
Corridor
Plan:**

**Verona, Montclair, Glen Ridge
and Bloomfield**

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Project Name

Bloomfield Avenue Complete Corridor Plan

Proposing Organizations

Bloomfield Township; Glen Ridge Borough; Montclair Township (Lead) and Verona Township

Key contacts

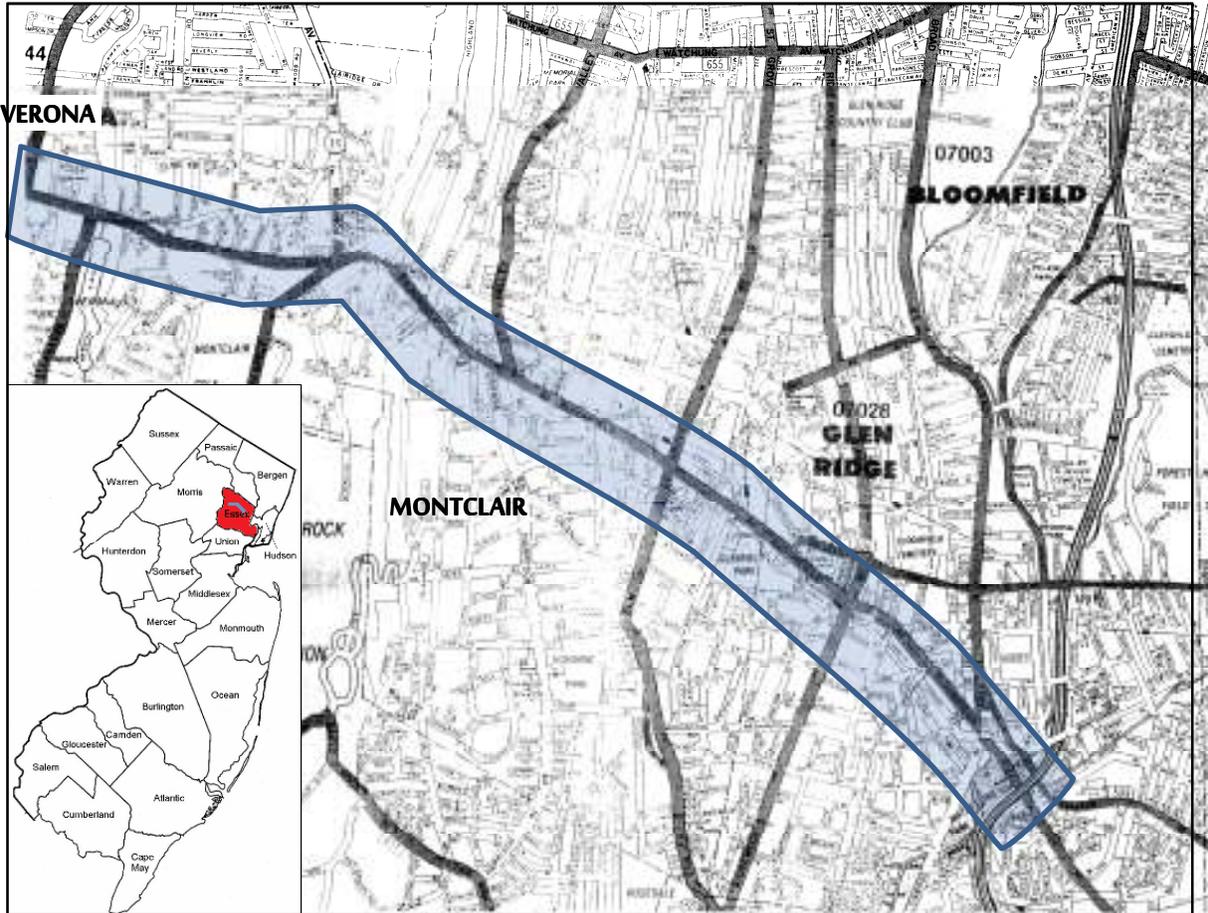
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Figure 1: Project Location Map



Project Description

Name and Location of the Study Area

The study area is the 4.3 mile segment of Bloomfield Avenue from the Garden State Parkway in Bloomfield to Grove Avenue in Verona. Bloomfield Avenue is one of few east-west corridors that connect the far western suburbs of Essex County with the County seat in Newark. It is classified as an urban principal arterial; serving average traffic volumes of 18,000 to just over 25,000 vehicles per day.

Bloomfield Avenue is also a major transit corridor, with bus and rail service along much of its length. Bus service connects Newark with Bloomfield, Montclair, Glen Ridge, Verona, the Caldwelles, Fairfield and Cedar Grove in Essex County; as well as Montclair State University, Little Falls and Wayne (Willowbrook Mall) in Passaic County.

Three rail stations providing service to Newark and New York City are located within 1,000 feet of Bloomfield Avenue at Bloomfield Center, Glen Ridge and Montclair (Bay Street).

Statement of Project Purpose and Need

The purpose of the project is to develop a complete streets plan that addresses the unique characteristics of this segment of Bloomfield Avenue; which traverses several traditional downtown districts, includes two transit villages (Bloomfield and Montclair Bay Street) and carries significant volumes of local and sub-regional traffic. The desired outcome is a plan that will identify the specific improvements needed to make Bloomfield Avenue more pedestrian friendly and pleasant shopping experience, while also ensuring safer, more appropriate vehicle flow.

The biggest problem facing pedestrians on Bloomfield Avenue are the wide roadway and narrow sidewalks. The roadway varies in width from 50 to 60 feet throughout this four-town segment. With a typical right-of-way of 80 feet, sidewalks are constrained throughout to barely 10 feet on each side. The roadway cross-section also varies, with the predominant configuration being four travel lanes (two in each direction) with parking on both sides. In short sections, one or both parking lanes have been eliminated to provide a center left turn lane.

Another problem is speeding traffic. Although the speed limit is 25 m.p.h., in studies conducted in April 2010, we found the 85th percentile speeds in Montclair ranged from 23 to 35 m.p.h. A review of crash data for the Bloomfield Avenue did not reveal higher than average pedestrian crashes (as compared to Essex County as a whole), but there were a significantly higher than expected number of rear end and sideswipe crashes – suggesting that speed may a safety concern for motorists as well.

Other concerns include inefficient and confusing intersection operations – particularly where more than one street intersects. Both Montclair and Bloomfield have these “five corners” type intersections, which can be confusing to motorists and also become a bottleneck due to multi-phased operations. Congestion related to on-street parking is yet another operational concern.

Table 1: Speed and Traffic Data for Bloomfield Avenue, Montclair

Bloomfield Avenue Approaching	85th% Speed		Volume		
	EB	WB	EB	WB	TOTAL
Lackawanna/Gates	28.6	29.5	8,364	9,450	17,814
Valley Rd	33.8	35.2	13,113	10,303	23,416
Fullerton/Church/Glenridge	30.2	32.4	13,898	8,647	22,545
Park	31.8	23.1	10,822	11,465	22,287
Average	31.1	30.1	11,549	9,966	21,516

Source: Montclair Engineering Bureau Studies conducted in April 2010

Significant investments are needed along Bloomfield Avenue to successfully integrate the approved and planned development within the historic context of the area. Bloomfield and Montclair Townships, as well as Essex County have embraced the concept of complete streets by adopting a Complete Streets policy and implementing it on many local roadways to date. The challenge for Bloomfield Avenue is to integrate these policies on a historic regional corridor that serves as the traditional “Main Street” for multiple communities. The conflicting

needs of pedestrian safety and convenience, parking demand and relatively high volume traffic flows will make implementation of a complete street program difficult.

Table 2: Summary of Bloomfield Avenue Crash Statistics, 2010-2012

Collision Type	Bloomfield Avenue										Essex County	
	Verona		Montclair		Glen Ridge		Bloomfield		Study Corridor		All Roads*	
Same Direction-Rear End	155	32.7%	161	31.6%	53	40.5%	189	27.1%	558	30.8%	9,450	19.4%
Same Direction-Sideswipe	107	22.6	118	23.2	16	12.2	158	22.7	399	22.0	6,711	13.8
Angle	45	9.5	49	9.6	14	10.7	91	13.1	199	11.0	9,064	18.6
Left Turn	29	6.1	40	7.9	18	13.7	66	9.5	153	8.4	2,462	5.0
Head On	6	1.3	5	1.0	2	1.5	11	1.6	24	1.3	994	2.0
Overtaken	1	0.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	0.6	5	0.3	146	0.3
Pedestrian	8	1.7	18	3.5	5	3.8	28	4.0	59	3.3	2,341	4.8
Fixed Object	25	5.3	13	2.6	15	11.5	28	4.0	81	4.5	3,968	8.1
Backing	18	3.8	13	2.6	1	0.8	21	3.0	53	2.9	2,908	6.0
Parked Vehicle	67	14.1	80	15.7	4	3.1	86	12.3	237	13.1	10,301	21.1
Bicycle	4	0.8	5	1.0	1	0.8	7	1.0	17	0.9	425	0.9
Other/NR	9	1.9	7	1.4	2	1.5	8	1.1	26	1.4	0	0.0
Grand Total	474	-	509	-	131	-	697	-	1,811	-	48,770	-

* Municipal and County jurisdiction roadways only.

Source: Rutgers University Center for Advanced Infrastructure and Transportation (CAIT), Plan4Safety Database

Anticipated Scope of the Proposed Project

The proposed scope of work will include an evaluation of the existing and projected traffic flow under already planned development and/or land use changes. We will also want to look at operational characteristics and geometric configuration of the various road segments, specifically at major intersections to develop alternate strategies for calming traffic on Bloomfield Avenue.

Specific tasks would include the following:

- A. Attend initial “Kick-off” meeting between project partners and key stakeholders to discuss and clarify expectations for the overall project.
- B. Conduct regular project coordination meetings to review project progress.
- C. Attend public information meetings to share study progress and results with residents, community groups and other government agencies. Note that coordination of these meetings shall be the responsibility of the project partners as in-kind contribution to the study cost.

- D. Assess existing conditions for all travel modes and develop projections for two future development scenarios
- E. Develop simulation models to assess traffic flows for at least two roadway alternatives and for each future development scenario (total of four to six alternates).
- F. Prepare conceptual designs and cost estimates for each alternative.
- G. Prepare a final report summarizing the completed work.

Other Development Issues/ Opportunities/ Challenges

The Bloomfield Center Business District, known as Bloomfield Center, is primarily located along Bloomfield Avenue, intersecting at Broad Street and Glenwood Avenue. This intersection, commonly referred to as Six Points, will be undergoing significant streetscape and pedestrian improvements to facilitate the surrounding redevelopment. The area itself has been designated by the State of New Jersey as a Transit Village. Bloomfield Township has designated several major redevelopment areas along the Bloomfield Avenue corridor to encourage transit village-oriented growth. These projects are listed in Table 1 below.

Table 3: Approved Projects along Bloomfield Avenue Corridor, Bloomfield Township

Location	Project	Dwelling Units	Commercial	Other
Glenwood Avenue between Bloomfield Avenue and NJ Transit train station	Glenwood Village	225	60,000	
Broad Street between Liberty Street and Bloomfield Avenue	Bloomfield College	250	10,000	
	Annie Sez	100	25,000	
Park Street	44-58 Park Street	50	3,000	
Hartz Mountain*	Bloomfield Avenue and Watsessing Avenue	300		
Total		925	98,000	

*Approval pending

The Glenwood Village development will surround a multi-deck parking facility being constructed by the Bloomfield Parking Authority, which will accommodate several hundred vehicles. This development is currently under construction. At Bloomfield College, 250 student dormitory units will be constructed over 10,000 square feet of ground floor retail space - to include a Barnes & Noble Bookstore and café. Construction is set to begin within weeks.

LDP Application - Bloomfield Avenue Complete Corridor Plan
Proposing Organizations: Bloomfield, Glen Ridge, Montclair and Verona

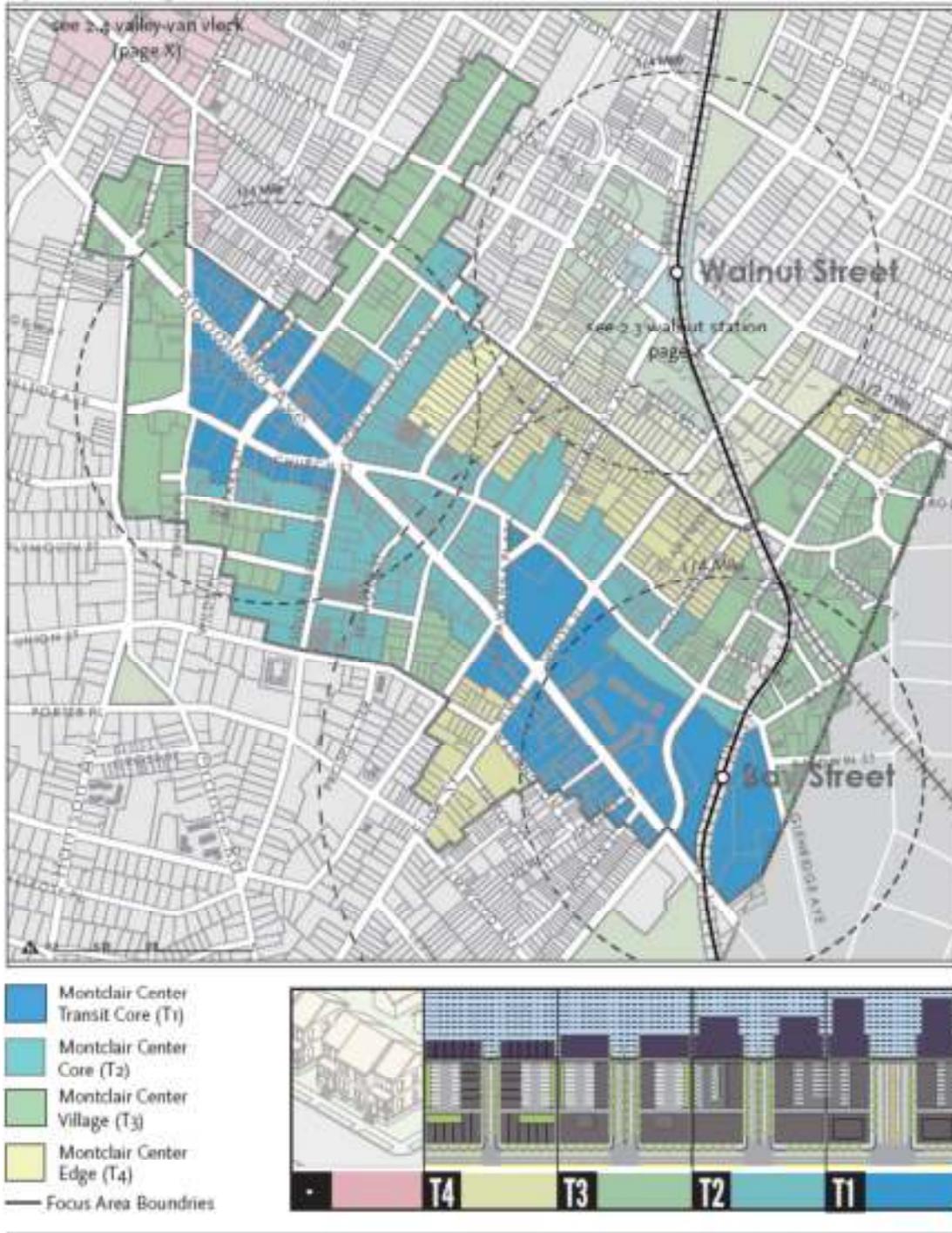
The Annie Sez redevelopment project includes construction of residential units over ground floor retail space. At 44-58 Park Street, residential apartment units over retail space are already under construction.

As indicated all of these projects are either on Bloomfield Avenue or within a short walking distance to Bloomfield Avenue and the various train stations. In addition to the redevelopment projects, Bloomfield Township has received federal funding to reconstruct the intersection of Broad Street, Bloomfield Avenue, Glenwood Avenue and Washington Street (commonly known as Six Points) to improve traffic flow and pedestrian safety. The project will include new traffic patterns, widened sidewalks; enhanced crosswalks with bump-outs as well as street furniture, decorative street lighting and other streetscape amenities. Construction of this project is set for 2013.

Montclair's central business district, known as Montclair Center, is situated along the Bloomfield Avenue corridor. This district, located in the heart of Montclair, is a regional center that provides a variety of retail, office, public and arts and entertainment-related uses. Montclair Township has designated much of the corridor as a historic district in order to protect the historic character and context of the area. Montclair Center has been the focus of significant development over the past ten years, as indicated in Table 1 below. Almost 800 new dwelling units, 103,500 square feet of commercial space and 86,500 square feet of public space has been approved and/or built in this corridor since 2003. Construction of the approved CentroVerde project is set to start in September 2013.

In 2010, Montclair Township received a \$200,000 grant from the NJ Department of Transportation to prepare a Unified Land Use and Circulation Plan. Over the ensuing two years, the Township has hosted a variety of community outreach meetings, workshops and visioning sessions to develop a consensus-based plan. The draft Plan, which is currently pending before the Montclair Township Planning Board, anticipates significant growth around the Township's transit facilities, including the Bloomfield Avenue Corridor, as indicated on the attached map. The draft Plan is based on a transect-style development code, with the higher density transects shown in shades of blue. Transect 1; for example, proposes a density of 100 units per acre and up to 10 stories high while Transect 2 proposes a density of 75 units per acre and up to 6 stories. Both transects include an increase in the amount of development currently permitted in the central business district, which is a maximum density of 55 units per acre and a maximum height of 6 stories.

Figure 3: Proposed Transects/Zoning Revisions in Montclair Center



Source: Montclair Unified Land Use/Circulation Plan, March 13, 2013 Draft

Table 4: Built and Approved Projects along Bloomfield Avenue Corridor, Montclair Township

Location	Project	Dwelling Units	Commercial	Other
Bay Street Transit Village	Pine Ridge	48		
	Residences at Montclair	163		6,000
	Fire Headquarters			20,500
	Montclairion II	40	1500	
Hahne's Redevelopment	Siena	101	20,000	
	Kensington	88	2000	
Elm/New Street Redevelopment	Bullock School			60,000
	190-192 Bloomfield Ave	11		
Montclair Center Gateway	CentroVerde	329	80,000	
Total Built		323	20,000	86,500
Total Approved		457	83,500	
Total		780	103,500	86,500

A comprehensive complete streets plan would greatly benefit these new developments as well as existing businesses in the area. This would also benefit the Bloomfield Avenue corridor and all adjacent communities by providing better traffic circulation, access to mass transit and a variety of retail options.

Although no specific development or redevelopment plans have been put forth by Glen Ridge, the Bloomfield Avenue corridor provides the only commercial center for the Borough. The "Arcade" offers neighborhood stores including a pharmacy, automobile repair shop and a restaurant. Glen Ridge also boasts three bank branches and a full-service post office – all located within several hundred feet of Bloomfield Avenue.

Verona also has no specific development or redevelopment plans for the Bloomfield Avenue corridor; however the study area is fully built out with predominately commercial buildings and occasional residential and public/government uses interspersed throughout.

Other Projects Completed in the Proposed LDP Study Area.

The most recent project completed in the Bloomfield Avenue corridor in Montclair is the reconstruction of South Park Street as a pedestrian-friendly street that supports adjacent retail uses by providing opportunities for social and public interaction. South Park Street is the center of the historic downtown district, joining a busy county road to Church Street, perhaps Montclair's most intimate, successful and regionally significant commercial block. The new streetscape also serves to anchor The Siena, a seven-story redevelopment project at the corner of Church Street and South Park Street. It is now a lovely, tree-lined place to walk, hear music, dine and shop where a very pedestrian unfriendly expanse of asphalt had been before.

Bloomfield Township recently completed the reconstruction of Venner Park, located at the intersection of Bloomfield Avenue, Liberty and State Streets. The small park provides a lovely pedestrian space, complete with lots of seating and a beautiful fountain. From late June through October, the park is home to a weekly open-air farmer's market; featuring farm fresh fruits and vegetables, baked goods, plants and herbs, pickles, prepared foods and more.

Other Resources Available for Project Implementation

Montclair Township has equipment and staff available for collection of vehicular traffic volumes, which can be utilized for the study. The total value would be dependent on the number of counts required, but the value per count location is approximately \$500.

Each municipality will also provide staff time and other resources to facilitate the public outreach portion of the study. In addition, Montclair has an in-house Communications Director /Website Administrator who can provide assistance in publicizing the study and receiving community input.

Relevant Key Policy Issues

The key policy issues that reflect the core purpose of the proposed Bloomfield Avenue Complete Corridor Plan include Land Use and Urban Design; Transportation and Asset-based Economic Development; however the project has a positive impact on a wide range of policy issues.

Land Use and Urban Design

Bloomfield Center is defined by its diverse mix of architecture, transportation opportunities, recreational facilities, educational facilities and governmental institutions that converge around a historic Northern New Jersey commercial, residential and retail core, that is 20 minutes from New York City. Its geographic boundaries are: from Bloomfield College to the North, to the New Jersey Transit Lackawanna Station on the Montclair-Boonton Line to the South; the Garden State Parkway to the East, to the border of the affluent Borough of Glen Ridge to the West.

Today there is a concentrated effort by government officials, property owners, and the citizens of Bloomfield to redevelop Bloomfield Center via public private partnerships. After an extensive and well attended community engagement process, in December of 2008, the Bloomfield Township Council adopted the Bloomfield Center Redevelopment Plan. In 2009, NJ Futures awarded this plan a 2009 Smart Growth Award for its use of smart growth values, extensive community and outreach and design principles by New Jersey Future.

Housing

The corridor currently houses residents with a wide mix of income. As we move forward with transit-oriented development, the corridor will continue to be mixed income and acquire increased density. New housing will only attract and serve the anticipated range of new residents if the local assets, including a pedestrian-friendly Bloomfield Avenue are retained and/or enhanced.

Transportation

The project will develop ways to better connect the business corridor to public transportation; allow for safe and convenient access for visitors; enhance the pedestrian experience and maximize the benefits of being a Transit Village. These improvements are necessary for breathing life into the downtown. This project reflects the connection between public participation and private investment.

One of the primary reasons that Bloomfield Center is such an attractive area for redevelopment is that it is accessible by various modes of transportation. It is a true “Transit Village”. Whether it is by foot, by rail, by bus or by automobile, “you can get there from here.” One of the most attractive aspects of this accessibility is an exit on the Garden State Parkway that brings visitors directly into Bloomfield Center. Unfortunately, the current traffic circulation routes at this egress are so complicated and cumbersome that any advantages gained by this exit are quickly lost. Rather than being a benefit, it has become a deterrent to individuals trying to access Bloomfield Center.

This project will develop alternatives for reconfiguring several problem intersections to create better multi-modal connectivity in the downtown. These intersections include Parkway service road intersections; and the Conger Street intersections with Bloomfield Avenue and Glenwood Avenue.

Natural Systems

One of the current barriers to successful redevelopment of this corridor is the difficulty capitalizing on its “Transit Village” status by providing safe and easily navigable pedestrian routes. Current conditions make the downtown less walkable due to poor sidewalk conditions, unsafe pedestrian crossings, confusing or indirect routes, lack of shading and refuge areas to name a few. Complete streets improvements such as new and wider sidewalks, better lighting, more street trees and landscaping, pedestrian signage, enhanced crosswalks and traffic calming will ensure cohesive natural systems.

Energy and Climate

A core goal of this project is to support and enhance transit oriented development, both in the two designated Transit Villages and more broadly along the transit corridor of Bloomfield Avenue. Supporting amenities and building density in walkable, bike-able areas served by mass transit is key to energy conservation and mitigating long-term climate change. At a micro level, a Complete Corridor is likely to include increased tree planting and increased use of permeable surfaces, thereby reducing road runoff pollution, mitigating greenhouse gasses at the roadside, and making Main Street more pleasant through evaporative cooling by the trees.

Asset-Based Economic Development

The Bloomfield Avenue corridor is experiencing significant organic, privately funded asset-based economic development. This project will support the development already under way and enhance a key local asset that is supporting development. Creative professionals eager for a walkable lifestyle are filling new residential units. Creative economy companies that value people such as those moving into the corridor are renting Class A office space for premium prices. Office vacancy in the corridor is low and new office development has been filled within weeks of completion. The local assets being leveraged by private development dollars include mass transit; traditional, walkable downtowns of first suburbs; parks and other recreational amenities; a rich and varied restaurant scene; tree lined streets; diverse, walkable retail; and New Jersey's Favorite Downtown Arts District. As private car traffic on Bloomfield Avenue has grown, the value of the Avenue as a walkable, traditional "Main Street" is threatened. Much of Bloomfield Avenue is not pedestrian friendly. This was cited as the number one reason for not walking more in downtown Montclair in a 2012 survey of 605 visitors to Montclair Center. It is imperative we support and rehabilitate the local assets that underpin our economic development.

Industry Sector Development

Recent experience and the projections by private developers tell us that the corridor is attractive to creative economy workers. This is a broader target than a typical industry sector and as such, results in a more robust mix of development than targeting a traditional sector. Where creative economy workers have a history of commuting into Manhattan, we now see a trend where creative workers bring the company to where they live. For example, last year, when a repurposed historic Montclair church leased office space, two New York and one Massachusetts business were inaugural tenants.

Business Environment and Entrepreneurial Support

Private projects are well along and redevelopers have been designated. The Bloomfield Parking Authority is constructing a new parking facility in conjunction with a private developer; and once completed it will allow for the street and circulation improvements. The Project will be the impetus for increased confidence by private property owners, the commercial investment market, retail developers and other economic investors.

Health and Safety

The key to any Transit Village and successful, sustainable downtown is promoting multiple modes of transportation. In Bloomfield center, due to the municipal uses, significant public transit options and the location of Bloomfield University, bicycle use is on the rise. This project would provide a key north south and east bicycle lane that connects the college to the train station, open space areas and the downtown. This will improve safety and reduce congestion.

Arts and Culture

Downtown Montclair was recently named New Jersey's favorite Arts District, and the study area is home to over a dozen performance spaces, ten galleries, over a hundred restaurants and regional, award winning art, film and music venues. Dinner and a show is a natural along the corridor. So is a classic car show. A Complete Corridor on Bloomfield Avenue will enhance the appeal and economics of all of the local arts and cultural attractions.

Local Stakeholders and Project Partners

Partners:

Montclair Center Business Improvement District
Bloomfield Center Alliance, Inc. (BCA) Improvement District
Bike and Walk Montclair
Homes of Montclair Ecumenical Corporation (HOMECorp)

Stakeholders:

Essex County
New Jersey Transit

Background on Proposing Organizations and Project Partners

Montclair Center Corporation (MCC) has worked closely with Montclair Township to achieve physical, code and planning changes to rehabilitate and enhance downtown Montclair. Typical involvement includes consensus building, policy advocacy, design assistance and fundraising. We are currently collaborating closely with the township on pedestrian wayfinding in the Montclair Transit Village and a prior collaboration included visioning, preliminary design and consensus building for the revitalization of South Park Street.

The Bloomfield Center Alliance, Inc. (BCA) has been involved in several public and pedestrian improvements. Assisting in the designation of Transit Village status, the BCA has been awarded several grants to improve the streetscape of the area. This includes a public park plaza known as Venner Park; Broad Street Streetscape redesign; Gateway Signage and Center Locator; Six Points Traffic Enhancements; and working with the Township on the Center Train Station Improvements. Additionally, the BCA has been the coordinator between the private and public sectors on the redevelopment of Block 228, known as Glenwood Village; holding a variety of public information sessions and community outreach, along with submitting recommendations and proposals for the Plan.

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Bike and Walk Montclair (BWM), a local bicycle and pedestrian advocacy group, has been collaborating with the Township to make Montclair a safer and more appealing place for bicycling and walking since its inception in 2002. BWM played a key role in obtaining a planning assistance grant from the New Jersey Department of Transportation to develop a Bicycle & Pedestrian Action Plan, many elements of which have been implemented. BWM is also a major participant in the Township's Safe Routes to School Task Force, as the Township implements education, enforcement and infrastructure improvement initiatives to make it safer and more attractive for children to walk and bike to school around town.

Homes of Montclair Ecumenical Corporation (HOMECorp) has partnered with Montclair Township to build and maintain safe and affordable housing for 25 years. Since HOMECorp's founding, they have restored or constructed 35 owner-occupied residential units and 64 rental units – most of which are within ¼ mile of Bloomfield Avenue. By renovating these often barely habitable properties, HOMECorp has transformed streets filled with deteriorating homes into vibrant neighborhoods characterized by the renewed energy and optimism of first-time homeowners. HOMECorp's efforts have also spurred private development of adjoining properties, further improving the housing stock.

We are certain that with the track record and combined experience of our community partners, this effort to re-imagine Bloomfield Avenue will be a resounding success.