

ROUTE 9 CORRIDOR DRAFT COALITION AGREEMENT

November 22, 2004

1. Background and Purpose

The Route 9 corridor subject to this agreement runs from South Toms River to Tuckerton Borough in Ocean County. Historically a two-lane rural arterial, Route 9 serves as a link among the many coastal townships and boroughs of Ocean County. There are significant development pressures on the communities within this corridor. With the Pinelands to the west, the bay to the east, and wetlands and historic sites throughout, potential development and the roadway improvements needed to accommodate them threaten to severely impact these vital community resources. Rapid suburban growth along the corridor and the continuing popularity of the tourist destinations along the New Jersey shore has created tremendous traffic demand on Route 9. In addition, the current development patterns generally do not fit within the overall community character of this corridor.

A Route 9 Corridor Coalition is being formed to lead an initiative to balancing future growth infrastructure needs with the community character.

The Route 9 Corridor Coalition recognizes that as new development comes it puts additional demand on the existing roadway network. Previously, the solution has been to build more and wider roads that have only temporarily curbed traffic problems and have encouraged further unsustainable growth. This pattern of widening also negatively impacted our historic properties, wetlands, and overall quality of life.

The Coalition recognizes that all parties, NJDOT, other state agencies, municipalities and roadway users must come together to address this problem. Therefore, the Coalition is now exploring solutions beyond conventional highway widenings and beginning to look at integrated transportation and land use strategies. The Coalition is looking for solutions that will balance the need to continue to develop while maintaining the community character, preserving and protecting the natural and historic resources, and maintaining or improving the quality of life.

The Coalition would like to develop the tools needed to ensure that the future is something we can all be proud of. As such, NJDOT wants to assist the Route 9 communities in building a more robust transportation infrastructure as well as a more supportive land use framework that can more proactively respond to growth changes. NJDOT also wants to provide solutions that optimize the resources of the state and have an effect more far-reaching than simply temporarily solving individual and recurring symptoms of traffic congestion.

2. The Coalition Agreement

The first step to this new approach is the recently completed collaborative corridor planning process. The major output of this process is the Route Corridor 9 Master Plan as embodied in the Corridor Guiding Principles outlined in Section 5 of this agreement.

NJDOT is ready to implement the Route 9 Master Plan and is seeking willing and able partners among the State and regional agencies, Ocean County, non-profit organizations, and the local municipalities of the corridor to make the Corridor's vision a reality through the formation of the *Route 9 Corridor Coalition*.

This agreement is not intended to be a contract and it is recognized that each agency has different interests, priorities, and responsibilities. However, this document shall signify each Coalition member's intent to commit to, adopt and implement the Route 9 Guiding Principles. Realizing that a close working relationship is necessary among the partners and that not all areas that need coordination may have been identified, this document shall serve as an initial agreement to cooperate and shall be reviewed and amended as necessary.

Further, this document serves as an overall agreement among all Coalition members and shall give guidance to subsequent individual agreements that may be entered between two or more Coalition members. The general nature of this overall agreement may also be modified to more specifically reflect implementation strategy and schedules as these are decided on.

Recognizing that the Coalition will provide mutual benefit among all members, NJDOT is seeking voluntary participation in it. At any time during the corridor master plan's implementation process, a municipality can opt to leave the partnership, understanding that the termination of the agreement signifies the termination of the benefits and privileges that it entails.

Under this agreement, the *NJDOT* is committed to working with each Coalition member to assist them in making local transportation and land use decisions that are consistent with the guiding principles. The NJDOT is committed to identifying, designing and funding strategic improvements along Route 9 and to working with Coalition members to plan, design and fund local network solutions identified in the Route 9 Corridor Master Plan.

For Local Municipalities, this agreement seeks commitment to incorporate the Route 9 Guiding Principles into all future municipal master plans, land use regulations and ordinances, and capital improvement programs. Further, the agreement seeks each municipality's commitment to partner with state, regional and county agencies as well as cross-jurisdictionally with other Route 9

municipalities to implement the strategies outlined in the Guiding Principles.

For County Agencies, this agreement seeks commitment to incorporate the Route 9 Guiding Principles into all future county master plans, land use regulations and ordinances, and capital improvement programs. Further, the agreement seeks the county agencies' commitment to incorporate regulations and programs that encourage multi-municipal agreements and cooperation. When appropriate and requested, the county agencies should also provide technical, financial and staff assistance to each of the Coalition members.

For Regional and State Agencies, this agreement seeks commitment to provide technical and financial assistance, within the limitations of each agency's resources and budget, to local municipalities as they implement the Guiding Principles. Technical assistance includes provision of support for permit application, planning staff and resources, as well as technical training and education. State and regional agencies should conduct intra- and inter-agency evaluation of their application processes, and help streamline programs and projects that conform to the Route 9 Guiding Principles.

For Non-Profit Organizations, this agreement seeks commitment to adopt the Route 9 Guiding Principles in all future plans and programs. Further, the agreement seeks commitment to support the public outreach and education needs of the partnering municipalities and agencies as they implement the Route 9 Corridor Master Plan and any accompanying projects and programs.

3. Immediate Coalition Activities

The signatories to this agreement share mutual interest in the future of Route 9 and agree to expand their cooperation to:

- 3.1 Establish a Route 9 Corridor Coalition Steering Committee. This committee will be comprised of a representative from each signing municipality, state, regional, county and non-profit agency. The coalition shall provide overall coordination among the different Coalition partners and provide guidance to the Corridor Master Plan implementation process.
- 3.2 Survey and select priority land use and transportation projects that can benefit from an early partnership effort among the NJDOT, other state agencies and the municipalities. These priority projects should be able to demonstrate how the Route 9 Guiding Principles can be applied and will have the benefit of NJDOT's planning support and guidance.
- 3.3 Undertake a review of local comprehensive plans, land development regulations and capital improvement programs of partnering municipalities to help ensure that these instruments can help the

communities move toward the Route 9 vision. NJDOT will provide planning support and guidance as each municipality revises their planning instruments.

- 3.4 Formulate new agreements between NJDOT/other state agencies and Route 9 municipalities as necessary to move individual demonstration projects forward.
- 3.5 Cooperate to submit competitive applications for enhanced state, federal or other grant funding and assistance to support the activities of the Route 9 Corridor Coalition.
- 3.6 Collaborate and encourage the coordination of current projects and planning efforts along the corridor including, but not limited to, Transportation, Land Use, Economic Development, Plan Implementation and Intergovernmental Coordination.

4. Programming, Budgeting, Funding and Reimbursement

This agreement is neither a fiscal nor funding obligation. Any transfer of funds between signatories may take place through applicable laws, agreements, existing authorities and procedures.

5. Coalition Structure

The Coalition will ensure that each member is following the principals set forth in the overall Route 9 Corridor Master Plan in its planning, development and infrastructure improvements. The Coalition Steering Committee will meet at least quarterly to discuss issues related to the Route 9 Corridor Master Plan.

The steering committee will be made up of a member of each of the planning boards or town councils in the corridor as well as members of each agency that signs the agreement. A steering committee chair and co-chair will be elected from the group annually, with a term of one year.

6. The Route 9 Corridor Guiding Principles

6.1 Balance Regional Mobility and Local Access Needs

The regional need for mobility must be balanced with the local accessibility needs, various community goals, and the adjacent development forms. In village and urban centers, Route 9 functions as the main street of a community, and is expected to provide access to retail uses and provide a quality streetscape for pedestrians. In suburban areas, Route 9 must provide access to individual properties as well as mobility needs. In rural areas, Route 9 provides higher speed connections for longer distance trips between the village centers and regional activity centers.

6.2 Focus on Improving Capacity Where It Counts

Instead of conventional solutions that call for wholesale widening, communities should explore improving the few intersections, or nodes, that compromise its capacity. In some urban and suburban/transitioning segments of Route 9 where both through and mid-block turning volumes (traffic to and from driveways) are significant, strategic widening of Route 9 to three lanes should be explored. Strategic improvements should offer improved operations but should not provide excess capacity that encourages irresponsible driving behavior and unnecessary community impacts.

6.3 Reconnect and Enhance the Transportation Network

The creation of a connected street network within the corridor will allow all streets to share the traffic burden and to be used at each segment's optimum. Even though each new connection is kept at a neighborhood scale (narrow, multi-modal), the addition of more comprehensive street system allows greater capacity and more route choices which can relieve some of the traffic pressure on Route 9.

Local jurisdictions should leverage the development approval process to require new developments that add to the traffic demand to provide for a corresponding enhancement to the corridor's infrastructure system. A robust transportation system includes expansion of the pedestrian, bicycle and transit network as well. In cases where a regular street connection is not possible, pedestrian and bicycle connections should still be explored. Network opportunities can be explored in new and existing neighborhoods.

6.4 Strengthen Community Character

Land use and urban design strategies are necessary to direct growth to existing communities and allow communities to become stable, sustainable and self-sufficient neighborhoods. This principle encourages the Route 9 communities to:

- Recognize that environmental features rather than political boundaries define neighborhoods. Within each neighborhood, municipalities must work across jurisdictional lines to ensure that there is a healthy mix of land use and housing types and that sufficient infrastructure (roads, utilities) and other services (fire, stations, schools, retail services) are provided.
- Ensure that the cross section of Route 9 changes to adapt to the community it serves. In the centers of towns, villages, and hamlets, the roadway should have physical provisions and traffic speeds comfortable for all users and appropriate for an urban setting. In suburban/transitioning areas, the road needs to serve local access needs as well as through traffic. In rural areas,

Route 9's function is a collector for local travel and a regional facility for commuter and tourist traffic.

- Strengthen the character of each community through urban design interventions that shape how land uses relate to the roadway. These strategies relate to block size, building setback and orientation, and parking and access and are included in the Corridor Master Plan report.
- Design the railroad right-of-way (ROW) based on general guidelines in the Master Plan. Capture the opportunity for the corridor to provide a regional recreation and trail system as well as a roadway component, when it is supported by the community.
- Allow clustering of developments through the process of transferring development rights (TDR) to minimize the inadvertent suburban pattern of development that can result from CAFRA's impervious surface requirements. In a residential development scenario, develop clusters of smaller and higher density lots and consolidate open space and preserve natural resource corridors. //

6.5 Provide Alternatives to the Car

Another key to reducing the pressures on Route 9 is to ensure that walking, bicycling and riding transit are viable transportation choices. Aside from creating an environment that encourages alternative modes of travel, the appropriate level of pedestrian and bicycling facilities should be provided within the Corridor. As new development and redevelopment occurs, municipalities should enforce requirements for connected sidewalks on both sides of Route 9, all streets that connect Route 9 with the Garden State Parkway, and all streets within a mile of a school or a park. All other roads in urban and suburban areas should have a sidewalk on at least one side of the street. The longer-term strategy of achieving higher quality transit service can be achieved through having developments that are mixed-use, concentrated in centers, and walkable.

6.6 Match Growth to Infrastructure Limitations

The type, quantity and arrangement of land uses have a large effect on the amount of traffic generated and therefore capacity demand on Route 9. This principle encourages local municipalities to consider infrastructure limitations, particularly transportation infrastructure, while preparing their future land use plans and providing development approvals. Because transportation infrastructure has complexities that most other areas of public facilities do not have, the communities along Route 9 must cooperate with each other on providing transportation infrastructure. The infrastructure limitations

throughout the county, and not just within the local jurisdiction, must be considered when making local land use decisions.

Signatures

Each member of the Route 9 Corridor Coalition has signed this document. An original, with the signature pages, is on file at the New Jersey Department of Transportation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF: By my signature below,

(organization/ agency name)

_____ becomes a signatory to the
Route 9 Corridor Coalition.

(Signature) Date _____

Typed Name and Title

Organization/Agency