



NEWS TO KNOW

Building on Success: Hamilton Transit Village

In the late 1980s New Jersey Transit and Hamilton Township initiated plans for what has become one of the most successful train stations in the State of New Jersey—beautifully designed with artwork and the most modern accommodations available.

Of course, nobody ever predicted Hamilton Station would today service over 4,000 riders daily and some 3,000 vehicles—even its most optimistic supporters. These numbers were predicted for the year 2025. Following its construction, a multiple level parking garage was added to accommodate the thousands of daily users.

An accompanying transit village was slated to include residential units and appropriate commercial operations, but the original plans for this transit-oriented development were nebulous, mostly composed of a myriad of general ideas. When real estate developers submitted specific site plans, an objection to the number of planned housing units emanated, mostly from concerned Cornell Heights residents. The plan became heavily contested with considerable press coverage.

Today our local government, through the office of Mayor John F. Bencivengo, has created a committee to revive the Transit Village plan. The group—consisting of the site's developer, New Jersey Transit, representatives from the town council and The Hamilton Partnership—is reviewing the proposal with the goal of reaching a reasonable conclusion of how to build the project. The committee has hired an independent professional to study the situation over the next two months and submit a proposal.

There seems to be no problem with the addition of a Transit Village to the station's properties. The interest of the adjoining neighborhood will be given every consideration. Unresolved issues mostly center on the number of units to be built and the impact of traffic on the already crowded roads servicing the station.

One of the troubling aspects of traffic movement is the lack of direct access by the residents of the proposed village to the station. Under the current plan, village residents would use Sloan Avenue, adding unnecessary vehicles and more congestion.

The committee's meetings have generated some creative suggestions that address transportation and tie the station and the surrounding village into the greater community. These include: transporting residents to the train station by trolley; ferrying visitors to the Grounds for Sculpture; linking into a heritage tourism program offering tours of the historic areas in Mercer County; and interior shuttle transportation to potential commercial areas.

We are encouraged by the group's progress. If you would like to provide public input, please forward your comments to the Hamilton Partnership.

About The Hamilton Partnership

The Hamilton Partnership, a non-profit corporation, is a vital forum for the advancement of Hamilton Township's economy. For twenty years, the organization has fostered a critical dialogue with local officials to retain local businesses, attract new commerce, and help business owners capitalize on emerging opportunities while conveying and preserving the spirit and values that are part of Hamilton's quality of life. For more information about the Hamilton Partnership, please call (609) 947-6187.



*Hamilton Partnership Chairman Michael Pratico, Jr.
and Executive Director Jack Rafferty*