

Planning Coordination

Draft

## PLANNING COORDINATION – STATE, REGION AND ADJOINING MUNICIPALITIES

### *State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP)*

The State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP), adopted March 1, 2001, designates South Orange Village as part of the Metropolitan Planning Area (PA1). According to the SDRP, most of the communities within this planning area are fully developed or almost fully developed with much of the new growth occurring through redevelopment.

The objectives for Planning Area 1 are consistent with those of the Township of South Orange Village. The focus of both the State Development and Redevelopment Plan is to revitalize and redevelop existing “centers” such as the South Orange Central Business District. Specifically, the State Plan encourages infill development of mature settled communities to promote economic development. The State Plan also acknowledges the benefits of public transportation and its relationship to more intense development patterns.

The Village’s planning documents and overall planning efforts are consistent with the objectives of the Metropolitan Planning Area (PA1) designation. The Village has a very good performance record toward implementing the goals and policies of the State Plan, which seeks to revitalize older, urban/suburban communities as 21<sup>st</sup> century communities of place with vibrant, mixed-use transit oriented downtowns, stable residential neighborhoods and systems of preserved and enhanced open spaces and natural resources. The Village has successfully implemented the State Plan policy of building upon State investments in transportation to redevelop its downtown commercial core as a 21<sup>st</sup> century, mixed-use core.

According to the SDRP, the State Plan’s intention in the Metropolitan Planning Area, PA1, is to:

- Provide for much of the State’s future redevelopment;
- Revitalize cities and towns;
- Promote growth in compact forms;
- Stabilize older suburbs;
- Redesign areas of sprawl; and
- Protect the character of existing stable communities.

### *Essex County 2004 Cross-Acceptance Report*

The Village participated in the latest round of Cross Acceptance which was included in Essex County’s Cross Acceptance Report submitted to the Office of Smart Growth. The Cross-Acceptance Report indicates that the planning efforts of the Village are consistent with the goals and objectives of the preliminary Plan as well as the Policy Objectives of the Metropolitan Planning Area (PA1).

### *Essex County Park, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan (April 2003)*

Using the same methodology as the Village's Recreation & Open Space Plan and Recreation Element of the Land Use Master Plan, Essex County's Plan identified the same deficit of approximately 63 acres of open space within the Village.

The Plan expresses a desire to partner with municipalities to achieve shared objectives. While no County parks exist with the Village, the Plan recommends improvements to County parks that directly adjoin it.

## *Ivy Hill Park*

Ivy Hill Park, located in Newark, adjoins the easterly portion of the Village near Seton Hall University. The Plan recommends the following park renovations and new facilities: renovation of existing comfort station, refurbish the existing lighted basketball court and replacing fence, refurbishing the existing playground shelter, renovating tennis courts #1-4 and replacing fencing, repairing existing paths, adding safety surface and drainage to existing playground, adding team benches and bleachers at athletic fields, and adding trees and shrubs, benches, litter receptacles, bike racks and to the park for identification signage.

## *South Mountain Reservation*

South Mountain Reservation frames the westerly border of the Village. The Plan offers a number of recommended improvements including the following, which may offer an opportunity for coordination with efforts of South Orange: "along South Orange Avenue provide safer access to Reservation trails and points of interest for bicycles, pedestrians, and motorists."

### *Adjacent Municipalities*

This section addresses planning efforts of adjoining municipalities with emphasis on potential opportunities for multi-jurisdictional projects and plan/project coordination.

#### *Newark*

The City of Newark is located to the east of South Orange. The key connector between the two municipalities is South Orange Avenue. In the transition area along South Orange Avenue between the two municipalities, South Orange is zoned for single-family residential use. The Existing Land Use Map from the City of Newark's Master Plan indicates that the majority of land along the border with South Orange is single and two-family residential, while the properties that front on South Orange Avenue are commercial. Newark's Future Land Use Plan indicates a mixture of low and medium density residential along the border with South Orange, with properties along South Orange Avenue remaining mostly commercial.

There is a potential opportunity for coordination of planning efforts between the Village and the City of Newark along major corridors (e.g. South Orange Avenue), as the 2004 Essex County Cross Acceptance Report indicates that the City of Newark is interested in participating in corridor studies with surrounding municipalities to “better connect Newark to its neighboring suburbs with improved roads and higher quality land uses as a means of promoting economic development and beautification.”

## *Maplewood*

The Township of Maplewood borders South Orange to the south and west. The majority of Maplewood along its border with South Orange is zoned for single-family residential development. A portion of the area is zoned for two-family development, and there are several smaller areas zoned for neighborhood business and office business. In addition, a sizable portion of Maplewood bordering South Orange contains the South Mountain Reservation. The majority of lots in South Orange along its border with Maplewood (including the area adjacent to the South Mountain Reservation) are developed with single-family residential uses; there are a scattering of other uses in South Orange along the Maplewood border, including two-family residential, commercial, public property, and public parks and recreation.

The Township of Maplewood has expressed an interest in exploring opportunities for coordination of planning and economic development efforts, as well as shared services with South Orange. In addition, the November 2005 Master Plan Report on the East Branch of the Rahway River Corridor proposes connections between the majority of the river park amenities in South Orange and Chyzowych Field in Maplewood.

Further, the Township of Maplewood’s 2004 Master Plan contains several recommendations that involve coordination with South Orange Village. These include:

- A recommendation to “develop a comprehensive vision and plan for community facilities, irrespective of jurisdiction of ownership and separate from and subsequent plans for implementation.” This recommendation involves promoting partnerships and joint ventures with other governmental bodies and organizations, including the South Orange Village.
- A recommendation to “establish a long-range plan for developing a bikeway network in Maplewood.” Part of this recommendation involves coordinating and cooperating with surrounding jurisdictions, particularly South Orange and Millburn, to create a “continuous and interconnected bikeway network.”
- A recommendation to “partner with the Village of South Orange to plan for the enhancement of usage of the Old Waterlands Park.” The Master Plan indicates that Old Waterlands, owned by the Township of South Orange Village, is one of the last opportunities for recreational and park expansion in Maplewood, and that both Maplewood and South Orange have “expressed interest in gaining better recreational usage from it.” The Master Plan recommends that discussions be undertaken to see if a joint venture to improve Old Waterlands is “feasible and desirable”.

## *Orange*

The City of Orange borders South Orange to the north. Along its border with South Orange, the City of Orange is zoned for suburban residential, single-family residential, and apartments. The overwhelming majority of lots in South Orange which border the City of Orange are developed with single-family residential dwellings. There are no known opportunities for planning coordination with the City of Orange at this time.

## *West Orange*

The Township of West Orange borders South Orange to the north. All of the areas of West Orange that border South Orange Village are zoned for single-family residential development, and all of the lots in South Orange which border West Orange are zoned for and developed with single-family residential uses. There may exist opportunities to coordinate with the City of West Orange with regard the restoration of the river corridor as well as sharing recreational programs and facilities.

## *East Orange*

A very small portion of the City of East Orange borders South Orange to the northeast. The section of East Orange which borders South Orange is zoned for institutional uses and contains the East Orange Campus of the VA NJ Healthcare System. A small piece of the VA property is located within South Orange. The section of South Orange which abuts the VA property in East Orange is developed with single family residential development. There are no known opportunities for plan coordination with the City of East Orange at this time.

Planning Issues

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## PLANNING ISSUES

An important early first step in any planning process is the identification of key issues. Identification of key issues provides the basis for the development of a strategic vision for the Village. Issues have been identified via the following:

- Meetings of the Smart Growth Plan Committee.

The Committee has met on various occasions to identify and discuss issues to be addressed in the Plan and to develop the public outreach program.

- Initial Public Outreach Program

The Public Outreach Program has thus far consisted of the following:

1. *Community Survey.*

Working with its consultant, the Committee prepared and conducted a community survey. The survey was posted on the Village's website. Paper copies were also made available at Village Hall, the Library and Baird Community Center. The survey was advertised in advance in The Gaslight (the community newsletter which is mailed to each resident and business address in the Village) and was made available to the public for a period of one full month.

The survey covered a variety of topics including:

- Quality of life in South Orange
- The Village's overall strengths and weaknesses
- Identification of planning and development issues in neighborhoods and the Village as a whole
- Potential support for different types of planning programs and regulations
- Evaluation of the Village's commercial districts
- Circulation/transportation issues

The survey was very helpful in identifying and verifying a number of the most pressing planning issues within the Village.

5. *Public Visioning Sessions.*

Two public visioning sessions were conducted. The first visioning session was held on Tuesday, May 23rd, 7 pm at the Marshall School. The second visioning session was held Wednesday, June 7th, 7 pm at the South Orange Middle School. Both sessions were advertised in advance in The Gaslight, on the Village's website and in the News Record. The visioning sessions expanded upon the input received from the surveys by eliciting more "forward thinking" input from the public. The visioning sessions were organized around the following five general topics:

- o neighborhood character/preservation
- o circulation

- o open space, parks, recreation and historic character
- o community development/design - Valley Street
- o community development/design - Irvington Avenue.

This section describes the result of the cumulative input received from the community survey, visioning sessions and the discussions of the Smart Growth Strategic Plan Committee. Appendix A contains a copy of the survey and detailed analyses of the survey results. Appendix B contains a summary of the input received at the two visioning sessions.

### **Strengths**

According to the survey results, residents generally enjoy life in South Orange. Fifty-nine percent (59%) indicated that the quality of life in the Village is "good" or "very good" with only 5% identifying the quality of life in the Village as "poor" or "very poor."

#### ***How would you rate the overall quality of life in South Orange?***

Very Good	Good	Average/Fair	Poor	Very Poor
12%	47%	37%	3%	2%

The survey revealed that the two strongest assets for South Orange were clearly the Village's excellent access to transit and the quality of the residential neighborhoods. Ninety-seven percent (97%) identified the ease of commute by train or bus as a "positive" or "very positive" asset of life in the Village. Ninety-four percent (94%) identified the character of the Village's residential neighborhoods as a "positive" or "very positive" asset.

Respondents also perceived the following as strong Village assets: availability of recreational facilities; the ease of commute by automobile; the stability and appreciation of home values; the availability of recreational programs; the amount of open space; and the availability of cultural facilities. Comments received at the visioning sessions were consistent with the above.

#### ***To what degree do you consider each of the following factors to be a positive asset or weakness of South Orange?***

<b><i>Factors with positive ratings</i></b>	<b>Strongly Positive Asset</b>	<b>Positive Asset</b>	<b>Weakness or Strongly Negative Weakness</b>	<b>Neither a Weakness nor an Asset</b>
Ease of commute by train and/or bus	69%	28%	2%	1%
Character of residential neighborhoods	52%	42%	3%	3%
Availability of recreational facilities	20%	71%	1%	4%
Ease of commute by automobile	20%	48%	9%	19%
Availability of recreational programs	20%	57%	3%	12%
Stability/appreciation of home values	17%	59%	5%	18%
Availability and quality of cultural activities	16%	48%	17%	17%
Amount of open space	15%	57%	14%	14%

### *Key Issues*

The following are the key planning issues in the Village based upon the input received in the survey and visioning sessions.

#### Central Business District

- Seventy percent (70%) of the survey respondents identified the character/appearance of the Central Business District as a “weakness” (34%) or a “strongly negative weakness” (36%) of the Village.
- Of those indicating in the survey that the quality of life in the Village has declined over the last few years, the most frequent reasons cited related to the Central Business District including the pace of redevelopment, the availability of parking, vacant stores, appearance of sites awaiting redevelopment, desire for a grocery store, etc.
- Issues relating to the Central Business District were identified in the survey as the most pressing planning and development in the Village. Thirty-nine (39%) mentioned the pace of redevelopment as one of the most pressing issues. Participants of the visioning sessions similarly indicated that the vacant/undeveloped redevelopment sites negatively affect the character of the community.
- The appearance of storefronts in the Central Business District also is a major issue of concern, as 71% of the survey respondents considered the appearance of storefronts in the Central Business District to be “average” or “poor,” with 20% considering storefront appearance to be “very poor”.
- The availability of stores selling retail goods, however, appears to be the most significant issue in downtown with 76% identifying this factor as “poor” or “very poor” and another 21% rating the availability of retail stores as only “average/fair.” In response to another survey question, 70% identified “access to and variety of retail stores in the Village’s commercial areas” as a “weakness” (37%) or a “strongly negative weakness” (33%) of the Village. Similar comments were expressed at the visioning sessions. The desire for a quality food store in the downtown, in particular, was expressed in the survey and the visioning sessions. Participants indicated that South Orange lacks “destination shopping” and that downtown South Orange “should be like Maplewood, Westfield, and downtowns in other similar communities.” It was suggested that South Orange should seek to bring to in “small name retailers” such as Children’s Place, Gap, etc. It was expressed that South Orange should “learn from past studies and mistakes” in order to understand why such retailers haven’t come to South Orange.
- At the visioning session it was expressed that the width of South Orange Avenue and the amount of traffic (which due partially to the fact that South Orange Avenue is a “regional cut-through”) may hinder the full realization of the downtown area as a “quaint downtown” that is envisioned.

*How would you rate South Orange's Central Business District with respect to the following?*

	Good or Very Good	Average/ Fair	Poor or Very Poor
Amenities (decorative lamp posts, sidewalks, benches, etc.)	58%	30%	10%
Maintenance and litter removal	43%	36%	21%
Availability of restaurants	45%	35%	20%
Availability of personal service businesses (e.g., hair salon, dry cleaners)	33%	34%	31%
Availability of parking	16%	34%	49%
Storefront appearance	10%	32%	59%
Traffic flow	8%	38%	55%
Availability of stores selling retail goods	3%	21%	76%

- Key to improving any business district is providing the services and atmosphere likely to attract more patrons to the area. For the Central Business District, four changes to the area stood out as offering a very high likelihood of attracting additional patrons. Almost 80% of respondents felt that different types of businesses in the area would “very likely” convince them to go downtown, another 19% indicated that they would be “somewhat likely” to go downtown if there were different types of stores there.
- More than 50% felt that improved storefront appearance, more restaurants, and more evening activities would draw them in. Safety improvements through better lighting and more police patrols would also seemingly increase the number of people visiting the area.

*To what degree would the following factors increase the frequency of your patronage to businesses in the Village's Central Business District?*

	Very Likely	Somewhat Likely	Not Likely
Different type of businesses	80%	19%	1%
Improved storefronts	53%	40%	7%
More sit-down restaurants	55%	33%	10%
More evening activities	53%	31%	14%
Improved appearance of the business area in general (appearance of sidewalks, benches and other public amenities)	46%	38%	12%
Increase in cultural and entertainment activities/uses	45%	43%	12%
Safety improvements (e.g., lighting, police presence)	42%	41%	16%
Improved “pedestrian friendliness” within the business area	38%	42%	16%
Increased availability of parking	33%	46%	16%
Improved maintenance and litter removal	28%	41%	25%
Improved pedestrian and/or pedestrian access from your neighborhood	27%	25%	35%
Better jitney service	18%	24%	44%

*To what degree would the following factors increase the frequency of your patronage to businesses in the Village's Central Business District?*

	Very Likely	Somewhat Likely	Not Likely
Availability of delivery services	18%	20%	48%

- When asked to identify the types of businesses that should be encouraged in the Central Business District, respondents expressed overwhelming support for an increase in upscale retail shops (85% indicated that they would encourage or strongly encourage such stores, only 3% expressed a negative opinion). Strong support was also expressed regarding the provision of other types of retail stores, additional restaurants, and as arts and entertainment uses.
- While respondents supported the addition of medical and office space, neither gained the broad support of retail and entertainment uses, indicating that residents want a downtown district that offers more shopping. This notion fits in well with the free response comments of the survey, which express lack of shopping options in downtown. Residents clearly want to see more retail, restaurant and entertainment options in downtown South Orange. Yet, with increased traffic, more must be done to relieve congestion in the area and provide parking options for residents and commuters.

*To what extent would you encourage or discourage the following kinds of businesses in South Orange's Central Business District?*

	Encourage or Strongly Encourage	Neither Encourage or Discourage	Discourage or Strongly Discourage
"Upscale" retail shops that sell items such as clothing, housewares, etc.	85%	12%	3%
Arts and entertainment uses	84%	14%	3%
Sit-down restaurants	82%	15%	4%
Other types of retail shops	82%	15%	2%
Mixed-use development (commercial use on first floor with residential use above)	49%	34%	17%
Office development	45%	40%	16%
Personal service businesses (e.g., hair salons, dry cleaners)	32%	41%	27%
Medical-related uses	34%	49%	18%
Gas stations and other auto service businesses	14%	33%	54%

#### Valley Street

- Seventy-one percent (71%) of the survey respondents identified the character/appearance of the Valley Street business area as a Village "weakness" (35%) or "strongly negative weakness" (36%).
- The Valley Street business area was generally rated "average" or "poor" for most factors in the survey. The worst aspects of the area identified in the survey are apparently the appearance of the storefronts, lack of

retail stores, and the availability of restaurants. Due to those factors, participants of the visioning sessions generally characterized the Valley Street corridor as a “hodge-podge” with no defined character.

- In the survey, traffic flow generally ranked as average or fair, with parking rated average or worse by more than 60% of survey takers.

*How would you rate the Valley Street business district with respect to the following?*

	Good or Very Good	Average/ Fair	Poor or Very Poor
Maintenance and litter removal	15%	43%	27%
Traffic flow	11%	54%	29%
Availability of parking	15%	29%	49%
Amenities (decorative lamp posts, sidewalks, benches, etc.)	11%	35%	44%
Availability of personal service businesses (e.g., hair salon, dry cleaners)	12%	28%	43%
Availability of restaurants	11%	20%	61%
Availability of stores selling retail goods	3%	19%	63%
Storefront appearance	3%	13%	81%

- When residents were asked in the survey to rate which factors would likely increase their patronage of the Valley Street business area, responses centered on the same four areas as for the Central Business District: more retail, more restaurants, more arts and entertainment, and improved storefront appearance. However, unlike the responses for downtown South Orange, greater overall support seems to exist for other options, including slight greater emphasis on improved safety and overall appearance of the corridor.

*To what degree would the following factors increase the frequency of your patronage to businesses in the Valley Street business district?*

	Very Likely	Somewhat Likely	Not Likely
Different type of businesses	56%	38%	3%
More sit-down restaurants	45%	38%	14%
Improved appearance of the business area in general (appearance of sidewalks, benches and other public amenities)	39%	51%	7%
Improved storefronts	39%	47%	12%
Safety improvements (e.g., lighting, police presence)	36%	47%	11%
An increase in cultural and entertainment activities/uses	35%	37%	23%
Improved “pedestrian friendliness” within the business area	32%	45%	14%
More evening activities	36%	29%	30%
Increased availability of parking	18%	53%	23%
Improved maintenance and litter removal	20%	45%	24%
Improved pedestrian and/or pedestrian access from your neighborhood	20%	30%	35%

*To what degree would the following factors increase the frequency of your patronage to businesses in the Valley Street business district?*

	Very Likely	Somewhat Likely	Not Likely
Availability of delivery services	15%	24%	43%
Better jitney service	12%	15%	53%

- Responses to the survey suggest positive opinions of adding most types of businesses to the Valley Street corridor. Clearly restaurants, general retail, upscale retail, arts and entertainment, and mixed-use development would all generally be viewed as positive additions to the area. Participants of the visioning session indicated a desire to have retailers come to Valley Street as well. The area was generally seen as an area where the Village could benefit from tax ratables. Results of the survey and input from the visioning session also indicate that uses such as offices for accountants, doctors, lawyers and small professional offices would generally be viewed as appropriate along Valley Street. Gas stations and auto service uses, however, received generally negative or indifferent responses in the survey.
- As any number of comments on the surveys showed, South Orange residents desperately want more quality shopping and entertainment options in the Village. Yet, unlike the Central Business District, where people clearly demand more retail and restaurants first and foremost, residents seemed to be generally more receptive to other businesses in the Valley Street area. There was also slightly greater emphasis on streetscape and safety improvements.
- Attendees of the visioning sessions generally agreed that they saw Valley Street as a retail corridor currently and in the future, but that Valley Street was in need of improvement in terms of appearance and the types of commercial uses offered. It was generally agreed that uses such as fast-food restaurants, banks, convenience stores and other such retail uses would be appropriate and desirable in the area. However, there was a strong emphasis that any such uses should be appropriate in scale and designed contextually and attractively (e.g., building up along sidewalk, attractive façade and signage, parking in rear, drive-through facilities screened, bicycle and pedestrian friendly design, etc.).

*To what extent would you encourage or discourage the following kinds of businesses in the Valley Street business district?*

	Encourage or Strongly Encourage	Neither Encourage or Discourage	Discourage or Strongly Discourage
"Upscale" retail shops that sell items such as clothing, housewares, etc.	79%	15%	5%
Other types of retail shops	82%	14%	3%
Sit-down restaurants	78%	16%	5%
Arts and entertainment uses	65%	27%	7%

*To what extent would you encourage or discourage the following kinds of businesses in the Valley Street business district?*

	Encourage or Strongly Encourage	Neither Encourage or Discourage	Discourage or Strongly Discourage
Mixed-use development (commercial use on first floor with residential use above)	59%	21%	20%
Office development	59%	32%	9%
Medical-related uses	44%	40%	16%
Personal service businesses (e.g., hair salons, dry cleaners)	35%	40%	24%
Gas stations and other auto service businesses	23%	38%	38%

#### Irvington Avenue

- Seventy-two percent (72%) of the survey respondents identified the character/appearance of the Irvington Avenue business area as a “weakness” (37%) or a “strongly negative weakness” (35%) of the Village.
- While the central business district and the Valley Street business area clearly generate strong opinions about its current condition and future improvements, such is generally not the case for the Irvington Avenue business area, where generally more than 25% of the respondents had no opinion on the area.
- Participants of the visioning session indicated that the Irvington Avenue business area does not have a “sense of place.” “It’s a neighborhood type business zone, but hasn’t taken off.” “While there are some good stores and a couple of restaurants, nobody knows them or knows where they are.” Some attendees had “never been there.” Others indicated that the problem is that the area is “haphazard” in that “the mixture of uses (commercial, residential, auto-related uses, etc.) doesn’t make sense.” Others indicated that façade restorations are ugly or inappropriate on most buildings.
- Much like Valley Street, Irvington Avenue business area also did not receive high marks on its current condition in the survey. The areas receiving the lowest marks are the appearance of storefronts, availability of restaurants and the availability of retail.
- While most of the factors regarding the area were rated as “average” or “poor”, some positives do stand out. The availability of parking stands out as particularly good, with 67% indicating parking as “average” or better. Maintenance and litter removal, as well as traffic flow, were perceived by most to be “average” or better.

*How would you rate the Irvington Avenue business district with respect to the following?*

	Good or Very Good	Average/Fair	Poor or Very Poor
Availability of parking	38%	29%	26%
Maintenance and litter removal	12%	39%	24%
Traffic flow	10%	45%	19%
Amenities (decorative lamp posts, sidewalks, benches, etc.)	16%	27%	35%
Availability of personal service businesses (e.g., hair salon, dry cleaners)	12%	34%	24%
Availability of stores selling retail goods	0%	24%	54%
Availability of restaurants	2%	21%	50%
Storefront appearance	2%	16%	62%

- Similar to the other business areas, most respondents to the survey want to see more stores and restaurants. A significant number of people also want to see improvements to the appearance of storefronts, safety, and overall appearance of the Irvington Avenue area. Some attendees of the visioning sessions expressed a concern that there is nothing for the college kids in the area (e.g., fast food places, laundry, etc).
- Participants in the visioning sessions suggested that there needs to be some vision for the area – e.g., whether it should be geared towards serving SHU students, other residents in that area of town, or the Village as a whole.

*To what degree would the following factors increase the frequency of your patronage to businesses in the Irvington Avenue business district?*

	Very Likely	Somewhat Likely	Not Likely
Different type of businesses	44%	36%	8%
More sit-down restaurants	42%	33%	13%
Improved appearance of storefronts	39%	34%	13%
Safety improvements (e.g., lighting, police presence)	35%	40%	10%
Improved appearance of the business area in general (appearance of sidewalks, benches and other public amenities)	34%	36%	14%
More evening activities	29%	27%	27%
An increase in cultural and entertainment activities/uses	28%	30%	23%
Improved "pedestrian friendliness" within the business area	21%	43%	19%
Improved maintenance and litter removal	19%	40%	22%
Increased availability of parking	17%	33%	32%
Improved pedestrian and/or pedestrian access from your neighborhood	17%	19%	40%
Availability of delivery services or other ways to get shopping and errands done without having to visit business area	15%	16%	42%
Better jitney service	11%	14%	50%

- Positive opinions were expressed in the survey towards adding most types of businesses to the Irvington Avenue corridor. Only gas stations and auto service uses received generally negative or indifferent

responses, consistent with comments at the visioning sessions. Restaurants, general retail, upscale retail, arts and entertainment, and mixed-use development were all viewed as positive possible additions to the area.

*To what extent would you encourage or discourage the following kinds of businesses in the Irvington Avenue business district?*

	Encourage or Strongly Encourage	Neither Encourage or Discourage	Discourage or Strongly Discourage
Other types of retail shops	76%	20%	4%
"Upscale" retail shops that sell items such as clothing, housewares, etc.	66%	26%	7%
Sit-down restaurants	74%	22%	3%
Arts and entertainment uses	57%	34%	8%
Office development	53%	36%	12%
Mixed-use development (commercial use on first floor with residential use above)	50%	35%	15%
Personal service businesses (e.g., hair salons, dry cleaners)	42%	41%	18%
Medical-related uses	43%	41%	16%
Gas stations and other auto service businesses	28%	44%	18%

#### Parking

- Sixty-four percent (64%) of the survey respondents identified the availability of parking as a "weakness" (36%) or "strongly negative weakness" (28%) in the Village. Conversely, only 15% identified the availability of parking in the Village as an asset.
- When asked in the survey whether they would support Village regulations or publicly-funded programs that would improve the availability of parking in the Village's commercial areas, survey respondents indicated strong support. Ninety-two (92%) indicated that they would be either "strongly supportive" (53%) or "supportive" (39%) of such efforts.
- Parking was identified as an important issue in downtown. Eighty percent (80%) of the survey respondents felt that the availability of parking in the Central Business District was "average" or worse, with only 16% identifying parking there as "good" or "very good." The availability of parking in the Valley Street area received similar ratings, while parking seemed to be less of a concern in the Irvington Avenue area. Generally, survey respondents indicated that they would be more likely to visit the Central Business District and Valley Street area if parking was improved, with greater emphasis on the Central Business District.
- Attendees of the visioning sessions discussed the need and desirability of more parking, and in particular structured parking, near the downtown area. It was expressed that "there is no place to park downtown" and that "parking is going to be even worse when the PAC opens." The need for well-sited, but attractive,

structured parking in the downtown area was discussed. It was expressed that “parking decks can be done in nice way” and if done right can look more attractive than surface lots. Wrapping decks with other development (first floor retail with residential above) was one approach discussed. A planned redevelopment project in Harrison next to the PATH station was cited as an example, as was Livingston Town Center and State College, PA.

- It was suggested that a deck with retail on the NJ Transit lot “would kill two birds with one stone, by adding needed retail downtown as well as necessary parking.” However, it was expressed that the design of any such facility would need to be coordinated with the river improvement plans.
- It was also expressed that another “logical place to tuck a lot of cars is the Third Street Rescue Squad lot where it could serve downtown and Valley Street.”
- At the visioning session it was expressed that the “reason for South Orange’s parking problem is that there aren’t safe or adequate bike lanes and facilities.”

### Vehicular Traffic

- Sixty-seven percent (67%) of the survey respondents identified traffic flow during rush hours as a “weakness” (27%) or a “strongly negative weakness” (40%) in the Village. However, traffic flow during other times of the day received much more mixed results with more than half indicating that traffic flow during other times of the day was “neither an asset nor a weakness.”
- Traffic in the Central Business District is generally perceived to be worse than the Valley Street and Irvington Avenue areas. Fifty-five percent (55%) of survey respondents identified traffic flow in the Central Business District as “poor” or “very poor,” while a much lower percentage characterized traffic flow in the Valley Street and Irvington Avenue areas in this way (most identified traffic in those area as “average/fair”).
- When asked in the survey whether they would support Village regulations or publicly-funded programs that would improve traffic flow in the Village’s commercial areas, survey respondents indicated strong support. Eighty-six (86%) indicated that they would be either “strongly supportive” (48%) or “supportive” (38%) of such efforts. However, input from the visioning session expressed concern that traffic flow improvements must be done in a manner that is consistent with the Village objectives of improving pedestrian and bicycle friendliness and must also not negatively affect the Village’s supply of on-street parking.
- Participants of the visioning sessions identified cut-through traffic on residential streets, Montrose in particular, as a significant concern. Input from the survey was consistent with this (i.e., this was one of the key factors identified as affecting neighborhood character). It was expressed that the Village should investigate traffic calming measures. However, it was expressed that the “problem with traffic calming is that it pushes thru-traffic into another neighborhood.”

- Regional traffic through South Orange (particularly on South Orange) was identified as a key issue at the visioning sessions.

#### Walking/Biking/Transit

- At the visioning sessions, it was generally agreed that biking is generally unsafe in South Orange due to a number of factors include the width and design of roadways (including small shoulders and lack of bike paths); missing connections so that major roads to be traveled and driver behavior (including speeding and inattention to bicyclists).
- A desire for traffic calming devices and enforcement of speed laws was expressed, as was the need for bike racks at key destinations, including at the train stations and in shopping areas.
- A need for “yield to pedestrian” signs was indicated at the visioning sessions. However, it was expressed that mid-block crossings don’t work because drivers do not stop for pedestrians. The path from South Orange Avenue to Mead Street needs to be lit, paved, with stormwater runoff problem (pooled water and ice) fixed. The Village should keep and fix (not take out) the little paths on Floods Hill
- It should be noted that improvements to pedestrian and bicycle circulation is addressed in detail in the recently-adopted Bicycle and Pedestrian Circulation Plan, which is summarized in the “Planning Context and History” portion of this document.
- When those who drive to the train station were asked in the survey what options might convince them to use other modes of transportation, Jitney service seems to hold the most potential with 64% indicating that they might use a Jitney service at least some of the time if it were expanded or improved.

*If you usually drive to the train station or are driven to it, how often would you use the following means of access to the train station if improvements were made?*

	All of the time	Most of the time	Some of the time	No difference
Expanded or improved jitney service	12%	21%	31%	36%
Improved pedestrian access	17%	10%	21%	51%
Improved access via bicycle with adequate and safe bicycle storage	2%	9%	21%	68%

#### Parks, Open Space and Recreation

- As indicated above, the availability of recreational facilities and recreational programs was identified as a strong Village asset. Input at the visioning sessions expressed the same general opinion, where it was

expressed that the “Village’s parks, pool and other recreation facilities are good, they just need sprucing up.”

- Suggestions offered at the visioning session included improving the “Baird loop,” improving the Floods Hill area, designating the Middle School lot as a lot for Baird activities, and starting a campaign to encourage walking, especially to parks, and the need for a healthy lifestyle. The “Baird loop” was identified as “really dangerous in that vans and cars speed to the field area from the entrance driveway, lots of cars and vans encroach on pedestrians crossing from parked spaces to go to Baird, lots of cars “cruise” to see who’s there not even stopping as a destination, and kids playing basketball chasing balls onto Mead Street conflicting with cars. It was also indicated that a basketball drop off area is needed in that location (parents drop-off and pick-up kids in the fire lane) and that the pool buildings, specifically the changing rooms and bathrooms, at Cameron Field are fair at best.
- It should be noted that improvements to Village parks, open space and recreation facilities are addressed in the following three recently-prepared Village planning documents: the Recreation & Open Space Plan and Recreation Element of the Land Use Master Plan, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Circulation Plan, and the East Branch of the Rahway River Corridor – Master Plan Report (2005). These documents are summarized in the “Planning Context and History” portion of this document.

#### Community Character

- When asked in the survey to identify the most pressing planning and development issues in their immediate neighborhoods, the most common answers were maintenance of sidewalks, curbs and streets, speeding, traffic congestion and parking.
- Attendees of the visioning sessions identified additional neighborhood character issues, including “tear-downs” and the construction of new homes that are out of character with the character of existing, older homes. Some issues relating to residential zoning were also identified during the visioning sessions, including concerns regarding lot coverage, lot area and lot width requirements; concerns about variances granted by the Zoning Board of Adjustment; potential for additional subdivision and infill development in residential neighborhoods, particularly those with historic character; and a desire for design standards.
- When asked in the survey what action South Orange should take to protect and improve residential neighborhoods, respondents indicated strong support for additional efforts as shown in the table below.

*To what extent would you support regulations or programs that seek to protect and/or improve South Orange’s residential neighborhoods?*

	Strongly supportive	Supportive	Unsupportive	Strongly Unsupportive
Efforts to protect historic districts and historically significant properties	53%	34%	3%	0%

Reduce/slow traffic on local streets	51%	34%	4%	0%
Zoning regulations that restrict potential future development in residential neighborhoods	46%	29%	7%	0%
Specific design guidelines for exterior changes to homes	21%	33%	23%	1%

- When asked in the survey what action South Orange should take to help improve the character of South Orange's business districts, respondents indicated strong support for additional efforts as shown in the table below.

*Regarding all of South Orange's business districts, to what extent would you support Village regulations or publicly-funded programs that seek to improve South Orange's business districts?*

	Strongly supportive	Supportive	Unsupportive	Strongly Unsupportive
Specific design guidelines regarding the character and appearance of buildings in business areas	52%	38%	1%	1%
Streetscape and sidewalk improvements	46%	40%	7%	0%
Creation and/or improvement of public spaces (pocket parks, public plazas, etc.)	51%	32%	5%	0%
Publicly-funded programs to help local businesses maintain, rehabilitate and improve the appearance of their places of business	48%	31%	8%	4%

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