



MLUC NEWS

Fall/Winter 2005 Volume 2 Number 3

At The College of New Jersey

From The Director's Desk

December, 2005

As we approach the end of our second year, it is reasonable to ask where we have been this past year and where we are likely to be headed. MLUC continues to make progress on establishing a credible network of public agencies and non-profit groups, and building a database. MLUC has added value to the conversation taking place around the recently State-mandated training for planning and zoning board members. MLUC has contributed significantly to initiatives throughout Central Jersey. Mercer Crossings and the Flemington-Raritan Route #31 By-pass are just two examples.

The Center also held several workshops and conferences. Among the highlights were the Delaware and Raritan Canal Conference in June, and a February workshop which focused on the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's (NJDEP) Stormwater Rules.

MLUC's relationship with The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) has been strengthened through its new affiliation with TCNJ's School of Culture and Society. MLUC provides technical assistance to administration and faculty, and is contributing to TCNJ's curriculum and supporting course instruction. MLUC employs TCNJ students who are learning about and contributing productively to the region in which TCNJ is located.

Also significant is the series of four workshops MLUC held at different Central Jersey locations between October and December as part of its "New Jersey Smart Choices" initiative. These workshops were done in partnership with the Project for Public Spaces (PPS), a New York City-based, but internationally renowned non-profit group. Each workshop addressed different concerns identified by focus groups held earlier. Yet, all were built upon the same theme of improving the integration of transportation planning and land use decision-making to create more attractive public spaces. The initiative's sub-text was to inform local authorities about changes taking place within the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT), while offering suggestions on ways that municipalities may effectively relate to those changes. Plans are now being made for next steps.

MLUC is about to embark on a project that will include nine municipalities in Middlesex and Mercer Counties located around New Jersey Turnpike's Exit 8A. Over the past two decades, this region has experienced extensive development. This development now includes an odd combination of warehouses, along with age-restricted residential communities. The conflicts among these land uses have become more obvious, and the increasing traffic congestion is unlikely to be resolved by simply adding more lanes.



MLUC Director Martin Bierbaum, and Dean Susan Albertine of TCNJ's School of Culture and Society

Issues related to "sustainability" are also on MLUC's expanding agenda. MLUC is forging partnerships with relevant State departments to promote "sustainability" and "green building" at the municipal level of government. The proposed approach will first raise awareness, then identify and implement effective action steps. It will be similar to the approach taken with respect to "New Jersey Smart Choices" with regard to transportation planning and land use. Interest in sustainability issues was given a boost this fall by the spike in energy prices. However, even with those prices easing a bit, the concept of sustainability promises to have long-term importance. MLUC expects to be instrumental in promoting the concept on the municipal level where real impacts are most dramatically felt, so stay tuned.

Martin A. Bierbaum,
Director

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TRANSPORTATION

“NEW JERSEY SMART CHOICES” WORKSHOPS

Growth and traffic congestion affect just about everyone who lives or works in New Jersey. With the help of a grant from **The New Jersey Department of Transportation** (NJ DOT), and in partnership with the **Project for Public Spaces** (PPS), the **Municipal Land Use Center** (MLUC) hosted a series of four workshops to disseminate information about new and innovative ways to tackle congestion in New Jersey. Over 200 local officials, county representatives, state agency staff and private consultants attended the workshops which were held during the fall of 2005 at four different locations.



Gary Toth, Director of Project Planning and Development, NJ DOT and Dr. Martin Bierbaum, MLUC Director, answer questions at the Middlesex workshop.

Workshops served to unveil NJDOT’s new way of doing business, called **“New Jersey Future in Transportation,”** or **“NJFIT.”** According to **Commissioner Jack Lettiere,** “...How we use the land, what we put on the land, how we connect things creates this phenomenon of traffic congestion.” In response, NJFIT approaches the problem through partnerships between the state and municipalities to better coordinate land use planning with transportation investments. NJFIT promotes mixed use development, network connectivity, non-automobile modes of travel and context sensitive design to address traffic issues, increase accessibility, and facilitate walking, bicycling and transit usage. At the same time, these approaches can help create economic vitality, protect community character, promote active, healthier lifestyles and protect the natural environment.

NJDOT is involved in some dozen or more project areas throughout the state advancing NJFIT principles. Workshop participants had a unique opportunity to interact with NJDOT’s leadership and local officials from these project areas, hearing about successes, obstacles and lessons learned from experiences in implementing these smart growth practices to date. Among the most important lessons learned through these workshops was that successful solutions can be identified and implemented with the



presence of strong leadership, a clear community vision, and partnerships between the state and municipalities.

MLUC will publish workshop proceedings in the next few weeks, which will be available at www.njsmartchoices.org. Staff will continue its outreach and training efforts in 2006 with plans for conducting a symposium and producing case study write-ups, documenting findings, successes and lessons learned through ongoing NJFIT projects.

ROUTE 31 – INTEGRATED TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE PROJECT UPDATE

On Tuesday, November 1st 2005, representatives from Raritan Township and Flemington Borough Planning Boards, Township elected officials and interested community members heard **Marc McCauley** of *Robert Charles Lesser Associates* present a preliminary Market and Fiscal Impact Analysis for the Route 31 project area. The fiscal impact analysis for Raritan Township was developed to allow the community to determine the net fiscal impact of proposed development scenarios, as well as to test other build-out development scenarios. Based on interviews with the regional school districts, township and sewer authority professionals, the model put in place recognized school and sewer capacity constraints that would cap the amount of development potential in the region. Community leaders asked that the data assumptions be verified and that information on the model be provided for feedback. Work is also underway to address community questions about the traffic modeling and the levels of service on the proposed framework roadway network.



Jim McManimon, Ewing’s Business Administrator, speaks to NJ Smart Choices workshop attendees about a proposed redevelopment site.

COMMUNITY PLANNING



“BUILDING LIVABLE COMMUNITIES” GRANTS AVAILABLE THROUGH MLUC

The MLUC is inviting communities interested in adopting more innovative planning approaches to apply for funding through its “**Building Livable Communities**” Grant Program. Approximately \$300,000 in grant funding will be awarded through the program which is open to municipal government entities from Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth and Somerset Counties.

Maximum grant funding for projects submitted by one municipal government is \$40,000. Collaborative projects submitted by two or more municipalities are eligible for up to \$90,000 in grant funds. A mandatory 25% match of the requested grant funding must be supplied either through in-kind contributions and/or financial support from other sources. Collaboration with county governments, between municipal governments from within the five county region and with nonprofit organizations is strongly encouraged.

To assist potential applicants with the grant application process, MLUC will be hosting **Building Livable Communities Grant Program**

BUILDING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES IN NEW JERSEY

On Tuesday, January 31st, **MLUC**, in partnership with the **NJ DEP’s Bureau of Sustainable Communities and Innovative Technologies (NJDEP BSCIT)**, the **NJ League of Municipalities**, and the **Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC)** invites you to join us for an evening workshop at The College of New Jersey. Learn about becoming a sustainable community, and creating a new vision for your municipality.

After a light supper, **Martin Rosen** from NJDEP BSCIT will talk about the rationale for sustainability and discuss the first steps in becoming a sustainable community. Local leaders will share insights on what their communities are doing to become sustainable. Belmar Mayor **Ken Pringle**, Highland Park Mayor **Meryl Frank** and Montclair’s Environmental Coordinator **Gray Russell** will talk about their experiences.

Later, **Anthony Sblendorio** of *Back to Nature Landscape Architects*, and **Mike Ambrosio**, of *M. Ambrosio and Associates, LLC* will discuss green buildings and clean energy initiatives.

Also covered will be the next steps in establishing a network of sustainable communities throughout New Jersey. By the end of the workshop, your community will learn how it may become part of this network.

The workshop will begin at 6:00 p.m. in Loser Hall on the TCNJ Campus with a light supper. To register or for further information, contact MLUC at mluc@tcnj.edu or call **609-771-2832**. Or contact NJ DEP’s Bureau of Sustainable Communities and Innovative Technologies (BSCIT) at 609-633-1161 or visit their website:

www.state.nj.us/dep/dsr/bscit/SustCommunities.htm

Information & Grant Writing Sessions on Wed., January 11, 2006 from 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. at the Lawrence Township Municipal Building; and again from 7:00 to 9:00 pm at the Somerset County Administration Building in Somerville; and on January 17, 2006 at the Monmouth County Hominy Hill Meeting Room in Colts Neck, from 7 to 9 pm. These sessions are intended to allow interested applicants to share their project ideas with MLUC staff, and to provide guidance on completing the grant proposal. Attendance at these sessions is not mandatory, but is strongly encouraged. Information on technical and planning resources that may support the various project categories will be provided during each session.

The grants will be offered for **Integrated Land Use and Transportation projects** and **Strategies for Sustainable Communities projects**.

Copies of the grant proposal may be found on the website at www.tcnj.edu/~mluc or call MLUC at **609-771-2832**.



UPDATE ON TRAINING FOR MUNICIPAL PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD MEMBERS

One last test run of the *Fundamentals of Planning and Zoning* course is scheduled for January 2006 in Camden County. The partnership training group is seeking accreditation of the course from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs as an acceptable alternative course option under the new mandatory training law which will become effective in early 2006.

CAMPUS COMMUNITY

SCHOOL OF CULTURE AND SOCIETY ANNOUNCES AFFILIATION WITH MUNICIPAL LAND USE CENTER

Dean **Susan Albertine** is pleased to announce that the Municipal Land Use Center at the College of New Jersey (MLUC@TCNJ) has formally joined TCNJ's School of Culture and Society. The MLUC@TCNJ has been affiliated generally with the College of New Jersey since 2004. This new affiliation will open up possibilities in many directions for students, faculty, and staff.

Since much of what MLUC does is based in the applied social sciences, it is a good match for Culture and Society. Culture and Society is deeply interested in what it means to be human and to live in a social world. In addition, in its application of social science, MLUC tends to be interdisciplinary in nature, tying the applied social sciences together in ways that address real world problems.

MLUC is currently working on a number of different projects in which students and/or faculty have been involved. In partnership with "Project for Public Spaces," a New York-based non-profit, MLUC recently offered a series of workshops entitled, "**NJ Smart Choices**" (see related article this issue), which focused on land use and transportation issues in the Central New Jersey region. A follow-up symposium will be held this spring.

Another project now underway (*The Trenton Obesity Project Study – TOPS*) involves a member of the Department of Psychology, **Professor Katrina Bledsoe**, and a team of about 13 students, who together with MLUC, are working with Trenton Central High School to study obesity and nutrition issues among youth. MLUC is helping with the GIS (geographic information systems) component of the project.

GIS is also part of a course being taught this semester by Professor **Diane Bates** of the Sociology Department, "Socio-Spatial Analysis - Sociology 403." (See related article in this issue). **Patrick Meola**, MLUC's GIS Manager, has developed the GIS laboratory component for the course and is assisting Professor Bates in teaching it.

MLUC looks forward to providing many opportunities for students and faculty to get involved with our outreach efforts. Students might be interns on MLUC projects or find community-based service opportunities in municipalities that are working with MLUC. Faculty might be involved in research or outreach projects together with staff or affiliated researchers at MLUC. **Dr. Bierbaum**, Director of MLUC, will occasionally teach a

class in the Department of Sociology or Political Science. Special events, programs, and planning initiatives sponsored by Culture and Society will include MLUC.

An MLUC Open House is planned for February 8th from 1:30 to 4:00 p.m. All are invited to stop by the McCauley House (across from Loser Hall) to find out more about MLUC and ways to get involved.

MUNICIPAL LAND USE CENTER HOSTS ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICIALS FROM CHINA

This summer, environmental officials from the Wuhan District of China visited with Dr. Martin Bierbaum and staff of the MLUC @ TCNJ as part of their trip to the United States. The delegation was interested in learning about MLUC's efforts to improve coordination and integration of local municipal land-use decision-making and transportation planning, while at the same time addressing a variety of environmental issues including wetlands restoration, wastewater treatment and solid waste disposal.

The MLUC, in conjunction with the School of Culture and Society, has hosted two follow-up sessions to discuss areas of potential collaboration between faculty at The College of New Jersey and universities in China. MLUC hopes that sharing "lessons learned" here in the U.S. to address the challenges that China currently faces will be the beginning of an ongoing exchange of ideas. We'll keep you updated.

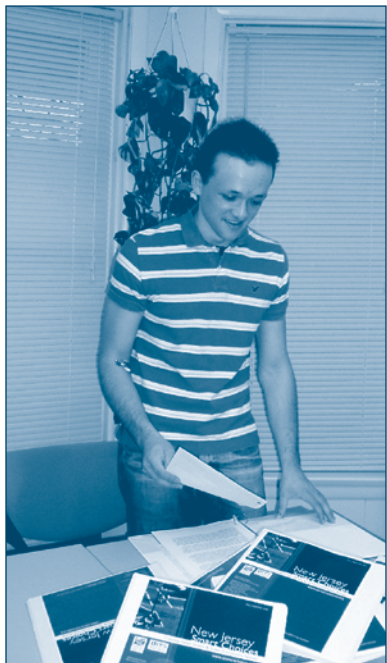


From left: Cao Jia xun, Deputy Director of the Wuhan Environmental Protection Bureau, Hanchun Xin, (interpreter) and Christine Hobble and Brett Bragin, staff of the New Jersey Meadowlands Environmental Commission look at maps showing the wetlands restoration at the Old Mill Marsh.

CAMPUS COMMUNITY

TCNJ STUDENTS INTERN AT MLUC

Jessica Boston is a Social and Community Psychology major and Women's and Gender Studies minor at TCNJ who will be working at MLUC this academic year on various projects, including creating and editing web pages, learning GIS (Geographic Information Systems), assembling conference materials, working on the Exit 8A project, and collaborating with others on Dr. Katrina Bledsoe's Trenton Obesity Project Study (TOPS), pending its grant approval. As a fourth-year student committed to activism, Jessica has held positions of leadership in campus organizations such as Women In Learning and Leadership (WILL) and Amnesty International. Additionally, Jessica worked previously in the spring semester as an intern at the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Division on Women, where she created informational pamphlets, researched the status of women on the county level, and developed variables for a media analysis study by the Office on Women's Policy & Research. This year at MLUC, Jessica hopes to learn more about community planning and how GIS research can inform social policy.



Another new MLUC intern, **Anthony (TJ) Vita**, is a third year business major at TCNJ and is currently pledging Delta Sigma Pi, the co-ed business fraternity. In the short time that he has been with us, Anthony has been assisting with preparing packets for the "NJ Smart Choices Workshops." In the future, he hopes to complete our grant budget spreadsheet. TJ says that he has learned much in the

short time he has been working at MLUC. "I never knew how much behind the scenes work there is in putting

a workshop together. Also, I knew next to nothing about urban planning, sprawl issues or stormwater. I now have an awareness of just how important these issues are, and people actually think about and work on these issues." Anthony is from Montville, New Jersey and enjoys drawing, piano, and reading.

NEW COURSE OFFERED AT TCNJ: "SOCIO-SPATIAL ANALYSIS – SOCIOLOGY 403"

In Fall, 2005, **Dr. Diane Bates** of the School of Culture & Society and **Patrick R. Meola, Jr.** of the MLUC offered a new course at The College of New Jersey, "**Socio-Spatial Analysis - Sociology 403.**" The course integrates Socio-Cultural Theory, Quantitative Research Methods, Statistical and Spatial Analysis, and will build on these skill sets by asking students to design and test real-world hypotheses. This is done in two stages: first, students will become familiar with the US Census and other forms of demographic data. The final section of the course is organized as a workshop. Students will complete a research project of their own design, demonstrating their mastery of GIS software, as well as their ability to propose and test spatially-linked hypotheses.

Utilizing GIS data and demographic data, five teams of three students will be considering the proposed use of a site near TCNJ. The five proposals are: 1. Big box/franchise retail; 2. Commercial; 3. Open or recreational space; 4. Social services; 5. Housing.

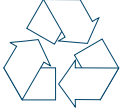
The workshop will culminate with each team of students presenting an oral report to the entire class.

While demography has long been a subspecialty within sociology, the development of GIS presents a new media on which to display demographic information, as well as to perform spatial analysis. GIS helps students to understand real-world problems using data analysis, and this technology is among the most innovative tools in education and research. Since GIS training helps students to develop computer literacy, analytical approaches to problem-solving, and reinforces communication and presentation skills, MLUC has been promoting the use of GIS on TCNJ's campus.



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UPCOMING EVENTS, TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES and RESOURCES:

January 6, 2006: ANJEE Conference at Rider University. MLUC will be presenting on Integrating Technology and Environmental Studies into your curriculum on Friday from 9 to noon. More information can be found at www.anjee.net.

Building Livable Communities Grant Program Information & Grant Writing Sessions

January 11, 2006 at the Lawrence Township Municipal Building from 9:00-11:00 a.m.

January 11, 2006 at Somerset County Administration Building in Somerville from 7-9 p.m.

January 17, 2006 at Monmouth County Hominy Hill Meeting Room from 7 to 9 pm. Contact MLUC at 609-771-2832 or visit the website at www.tcnj.edu/~mluc

January 26-28, 2006: "5th Annual New Partners for Smart Growth" conference in Denver, Colorado. www.outreach.psu.edu/programs/smartgrowth/registration.html

January 31, 2005: Sustainable Communities Workshop at Loser Hall on the TCNJ campus. Workshop is co-sponsored by MLUC and NJ DEP's Bureau of Sustainable Communities and Innovative Technologies (NJDEP BSCIT), the NJ League of Municipalities, and the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC)

FEBRUARY: February 8: Open House at MLUC: 1:30-4:30 - Stop by to learn about the Municipal Land Use Center and its projects.

USEFUL RESOURCES:

"A Toolkit for Organizing a Town Agricultural Commission" is a CD which will guide viewers through the process of organizing an agriculture commission, even providing sample documents which can be customized. In addition, it contains a Power Point presentation which can be used when speaking to local groups about forming a town agricultural commission. Contact: The Pilgrim Resource Conservation and Development Area Council in Massachusetts at **508-295-1317 X130** or **ext.131**.

The Active Living Network offers a great site for case studies of projects on topics ranging from Community and Urban Planning, Schools, Transportation, to Healthy and Active Living. In addition to searching the **"Storybank"** database of case studies, viewers can add their own story. The site also offers a Resource Library and list of funding opportunities. Visit: www.activeliving.org/index.php/Storybank

"Creating a Regulatory Blueprint for Healthy Community Design: A Local Government Guide to Reforming Zoning and Land Development Codes" is available through the ICMA (Internation

al City/County Management Association) at www.icma.org

"Protecting Water Resources through Land Conservation: Funding Options for Local Governments" was a webcast which provided context for the role of conservation finance in land conservation, described critical components for creating successful funding efforts, and showcased local government success stories. A free CD-ROM, "Local Government Land Conservation and Water Protection Toolkit" is available from LGEAN (Local Government Environmental Assistance Network). To order a copy: lgean@icma.org or **call 877-TO-LGEAN**.

"Transit-Friendly Development" is a new on-line newsletter produced by NJ TRANSIT and Rutgers Voorhees Transportation Center which discusses transit-oriented development and design. To download a copy, visit: vtc@policy.rutgers.edu

"Urban Watershed Forestry Manual: Part 2: Conserving and Planting Trees at Development Sites" is available through the Center for Watershed Protection at www.cwp.org. This extensive manual is one in a three part series on using trees to protect and restore urban watersheds. Part 2 presents specific ways to enable developers, engineers or landscape architects to incorporate more trees into a development site.