

15-Minute Neighborhoods

A Pathway to Creating Healthier, More Just, Resilient & Sustainable Communities in New Jersey

What are 15-minute neighborhoods?

Fifteen-minute neighborhoods provide residents with easy access to parks, schools, gathering places, social services, places to buy healthy fresh food, and, in urban settings, public transit, within a comfortable walk or bike ride. They have walkways, bicycle facilities, and other amenities to encourage people to drive less.



Key Findings

Our research revealed numerous challenges associated with today's built environment, but stakeholders at our workshops identified a consistent set of desired outcomes, and there was significant agreement in both the literature and among stakeholders about the solutions that could bring about these outcomes.



Complete streets and active transportation ...

provide a path to improved safety, health, and connectivity, and lower greenhouse gas emissions.



New transportation technologies ...

such as e-bikes and e-scooters have the potential to bring about transformative change.



Green infrastructure ...

and nature-based solutions will be key to addressing climate impacts.



Planning and zoning reforms ...

are needed to facilitate the creation of "complete" 15-minute neighborhoods.



Placemaking and activity programming ...

can increase economic activity, recreation, and entertainment opportunities, promote a sense of community, and foster active mobility and living



Better coordination and creative partnerships ...

between jurisdictions, levels of government, and the private sector are essential to creating a healthier, more just, resilient, and sustainable New Jersey.



Details matter.

Well-designed and maintained streets and sidewalks are essential for people to feel safe and empowered to drive less and walk, bike, and take transit more.

A Vision for the Future

Supported by new federal funding, a focus in New Jersey on building healthy, equitable, and climate resilient communities provides opportunities for investment at a scale not seen in a generation. The following statements and aspirational targets describe a state made better by planning and investments pursued between now and 2050.

Vision

Healthier

People are walking and biking more and driving less. Physical activity is increased, and air quality is improved, leading to reductions in obesity and chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and asthma. Expanding the tree canopy cools the air, especially in urban areas, reducing the risk of extreme heat.

More Just

All age and income groups can access affordable, convenient, and safe transportation, including extensive and well-maintained sidewalks, bicycle lanes and paths, and improved public transit. Incentives dramatically expanded the number of e-bikes, which are the mode of choice for local trips.

Resilient

Communities are better prepared for extreme weather. Investments in green infrastructure such as tree canopy, rain gardens, and wetlands restoration have resulted in less impervious surface, improved stormwater management, and cooler air temperature.

Sustainable

Emissions in New Jersey are reduced 80%. EVs are nearly 100% of the vehicle fleet. Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) are down more than 50%. Expanded tree canopy and green streets reduce air pollution, stormwater runoff, and flooding, improve water quality, and sequester carbon.

Effective Governance

These accomplishments would not have been possible without extensive public engagement; cooperation among jurisdictions, levels of government, and private and nonprofit sectors; and State and Federal funding, especially from the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

Targets

80% of NJ residents in complete, 15-minute neighborhoods



+10,000
miles of protected
bicycle lanes

50,000 low-income residents receive incentives worth 50% of e-bike purchase



+1.5
million NJ house-
holds with e-bikes

	2035	2050
Increase in transit ridership	15%	50%
Residents with access to high-frequency transit	40%	60%
Reduction in per driver VMT	30%	50%

10% reduction in impervious cover

Tree cover in every municipality: **40%**



Planning and Policy Opportunities

Achieving this vision and reaching these targets will require a myriad of actions by the government, the private sector, and individuals. The choices we make about how we build and maintain our communities and how we travel will impact whether this vision can be achieved. To this end, we propose the following ten recommendations.

1 Embrace the 15-minute neighborhood planning model.

2 Develop and implement a statewide VMT reduction strategy.

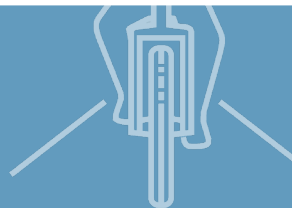
3 Encourage active transportation and expand the availability of micromobility options.



4 Create the first-in-the-nation, statewide network of protected bicycle lanes designed to improve safety, increase access to local destinations, and facilitate longer trips that connect to regional destinations.



5 Create a statewide e-bike incentive program.



6 Make it more convenient and attractive to use public transit and expand transit service where feasible.



7 Integrate nature and green infrastructure in community design.



8 Adapt communities and infrastructure for climate change.



9 Plan and zone for people and places.

10 Advance effective government decision-making.

