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## **NATIONAL TRANSIT EXPERT TO ADDRESS IMPACTS OF REACTIVATING RAIL SERVICE IN N.J. COMMUNITIES**

Address Highlights Eighth New Jersey Mayors' Institute on Community Design

With the potential reactivation of passenger rail service in various areas throughout New Jersey, Regional Plan Association will feature Reconnecting America President Shelley Poticha as the keynote speaker at the Eighth New Jersey Mayors' Institute on Community Design on Friday, October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2005, at Princeton University.

As national expert on transit-oriented development, Ms. Poticha will discuss how local officials, developers, transit agencies, communities and investors can use transit investments to spur a new wave of development that improves housing affordability and choice, revitalizes downtowns and urban and suburban neighborhoods, and creates lasting value and high quality urbanism.

Regional Plan Association has brought together mayors from six New Jersey municipalities along the West Trenton Line in Somerset and Mercer Counties to the Mayors' Institute in Princeton for 2 ½ days to investigate opportunities for better land use planning and design to support mass transit in their communities. Mayors from Bridgewater, Hillsborough, Montgomery, Hopewell Borough, Hopewell Township and Ewing are exploring planning and design issues related to the potential reactivation of a once-thriving passenger rail line. If reactivated, the West Trenton line could help organize development in this growing region of the State and address future traffic concerns.

“Development near transit stops just makes so much sense. Many New Jersey towns are rediscovering the opportunities for promoting smart growth, reducing traffic congestion and raising the quality of life for residents and visitors,” said Thomas G. Dallessio, RPA’s Vice President and New Jersey Director. “This Mayors’ Institute explores the benefits and challenges of redeveloping lands at key stops along a potential passenger rail line. RPA hopes that lessons learned here can be applied throughout New Jersey.”

Regional Plan Association convenes the Mayors’ Institute in cooperation with the NJ Department of Community Affairs – Office of Smart Growth, Princeton University, the Bunbury Company, the N.J. League of Municipalities and the N.J. Chapter of the American Planning Association. Modeled on the national program run by the National Endowment for the Arts, the NJ Mayors’ Institute provides a retreat as well as indoctrination for local officials to promote smart growth and better community design.

The keynote address is open to the public, and will begin with a reception at 4:30pm at Robertson Hall, Princeton University, in Princeton, New Jersey. For directions and further information, please visit the Calendar page of the RPA website at [www.rpa.org](http://www.rpa.org).

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