

NJ Transit Proposes Downtown Development: 'This Plan Meets Character Test'

The city and New Jersey Transit still differ on the density of the downtown redevelopment plan.

By [Claire Moses](#) | [Email the author](#) | September 5, 2012

New Jersey Transit representatives presented its vision for Hoboken's downtown redevelopment plan on Wednesday night.

The proposal followed Community Director Brandy Forbes' presentation of the city's plan, which includes residential as well as commercial development.

While NJ Transit and the city see eye to eye on much of the plans, there are some key differences, mostly the density of the plan.

Where as the city proposes 2 million square feet of development, NJ Transit believes that 3 million square feet is feasible.



"The plan meets the character test," said Executive Director of NJ Transit, Jim Weinstein. "It's not only a huge difference since 2008, we have listened to discussions with the city and the mayor."

Both the city and NJ Transit believe the 52 acre downtown site needs "balanced development."

A plan proposed by New Jersey Transit in 2008 included 70-story towers and a much higher density.

NJ Transit's latest proposal was created by development firm LCOR and architects from Skidmore, Owings & Merrill.

"I think that the number of things similar are far more than what's different (between our plans)," Weinstein said.

Councilman-at-Large David Mello said that the two proposals shouldn't be seen as "competing plans."

In the eyes of the city, that means residential buildings shouldn't exceed 12 stories and office buildings shouldn't exceed 19. NJ Transit, on the other hand, is proposing 19 story office buildings and a 27 story residential building on Observer Highway.

"You have to have a little bit of height to play with," said Kurt Eichler, a executive vice president of LCOR. "There are 16 stories right across the street, we're not breaking new ground here."

The plan, much like the city's plan, includes improvements to the Hoboken Terminal as well as a streamlining of the downtown traffic congestion. The plan also includes multiple pedestrian only spaces, including Warrington Plaza.

Weinstein said on Wednesday night he is "optimistic we can come to a compromise."

Once the plan is passed by the city council—the official redevelopment agency of the city—NJ Transit will have to confirm to the city's laws. Before the plan is passed, a workshop will have to be held and the plan will have to come in front of the planning board.

Whether or not NJ Transit would be willing to come back from the 3 million square feet of development and the height of the buildings, "is a discussion that will have to take place," Weinstein said.

Mayor Dawn Zimmer on Tuesday said that NJ Transit's current plan is not in accordance with the city's master plan. The redevelopment plan, once passed, would serve as a strict zoning guide line for development on the NJ Transit site.

Wednesday night's presentation by NJ Transit was limited to ten minutes. A workshop will be held next week, in which more details from the plan will be presented.