

East Amwell Township

Hunterdon County, New Jersey

Farmland Preservation Plan



November 21, 2025

Prepared by:



**Farmland Preservation Plan
Township of East Amwell
Hunterdon County, New Jersey**

Adopted: January 20, 2026

Prepared by



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The original of this report was signed and
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Davis', is written over a horizontal line.

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Introduction & Vision Statement

East Amwell Township is a community rooted in agriculture both historically and presently. Over the years, the shifting trends of traditional farm production within the Township has closely aligned with that of the State as a whole. The Township's agricultural heritage is inextricably tied to a variety of agricultural production ranging from the livestock production of cattle, sheep, and horses to dairy production and traditional field cropping of corn, hay, wheat, and soybeans.

While some of these traditional agricultural pursuits, such as dairy production, are fading out of practice in the modern day, others still remain strong and viable. Corn, hay, and soybeans, for example, are crops that continue to provide a consistent source of agricultural production. Hay supports the rising trend of equestrian operations of horse boarding and riding lessons, while corn and soybeans continue to have a strong presence in the food and beverage production sector. In addition to these more traditional agricultural activities, in recent decades there has been a greater push for more niche operations as well, such as organic vegetable gardens or the production of alpacas, goats, and organically grown cattle. It is this combination of the traditional and the contemporary that will continue to sustain East Amwell Township's strong agricultural base into the future. In order to adapt to the ever-shifting agricultural landscape, the Township has historically enacted ordinances to encourage and create opportunities for agricultural retention and growth.

As this Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan demonstrates, East Amwell Township has the key ingredients necessary for a sustained and innovative agricultural industry, including its: large contiguous areas of agricultural production; vital agricultural resources; and supportive residents and officials. These resources will ensure that the Township can retain its agricultural base and protect its farming industries into the future.

With this in mind, the Township's long-term goals are to expand the base of preserved farmland and encourage and support the continuation of agricultural production throughout the Township. The Farmland and Open Space Preservation Committee and the Agriculture Advisory Committee strive to promote innovation and high value crops to ensure a renewed interest in farming and locally grown products. These actions will protect and expand large contiguous areas of active farmland, support diverse agricultural activities, and protect vital agricultural resources in order to ensure a sustained farming community.

SECTION I. Agricultural Land Base of East Amwell

Given East Amwell Township's rural community and rich agricultural heritage, preservation of farmland is a priority for the Township. Agricultural lands are found throughout East Amwell Township, including significant acreage devoted to crop production, equine farms, and livestock production.

East Amwell Township is geographically situated within the heart of central New Jersey and is in the southern portion of Hunterdon County. The Township contains approximately 28.6 square miles, or 18,287 acres, of land area. Despite considerable growth pressure from the suburban expansion of both the Philadelphia and New York metropolitan areas, East Amwell is known for its strong commitment to farm preservation and remains one of the leading agricultural municipalities within Hunterdon County. This is further strengthened by the fact that Hunterdon County has the highest number of farms (1,623) and ranks third in terms of farm acreage (91,588 acres) in the state. In fact, Hunterdon County has consistently been a leading agricultural county within the State of New Jersey since 1987. Not only did Hunterdon County consistently have the largest number of farms between the years 1987 and 2022, but it also held the largest amount of farmland acreage as compared to these counties (except for in the years 2002 and 2022).

Table 1 below summarizes US Census of Agriculture data regarding the number of farms and farm acreage within the top six agricultural counties within the state of New Jersey.

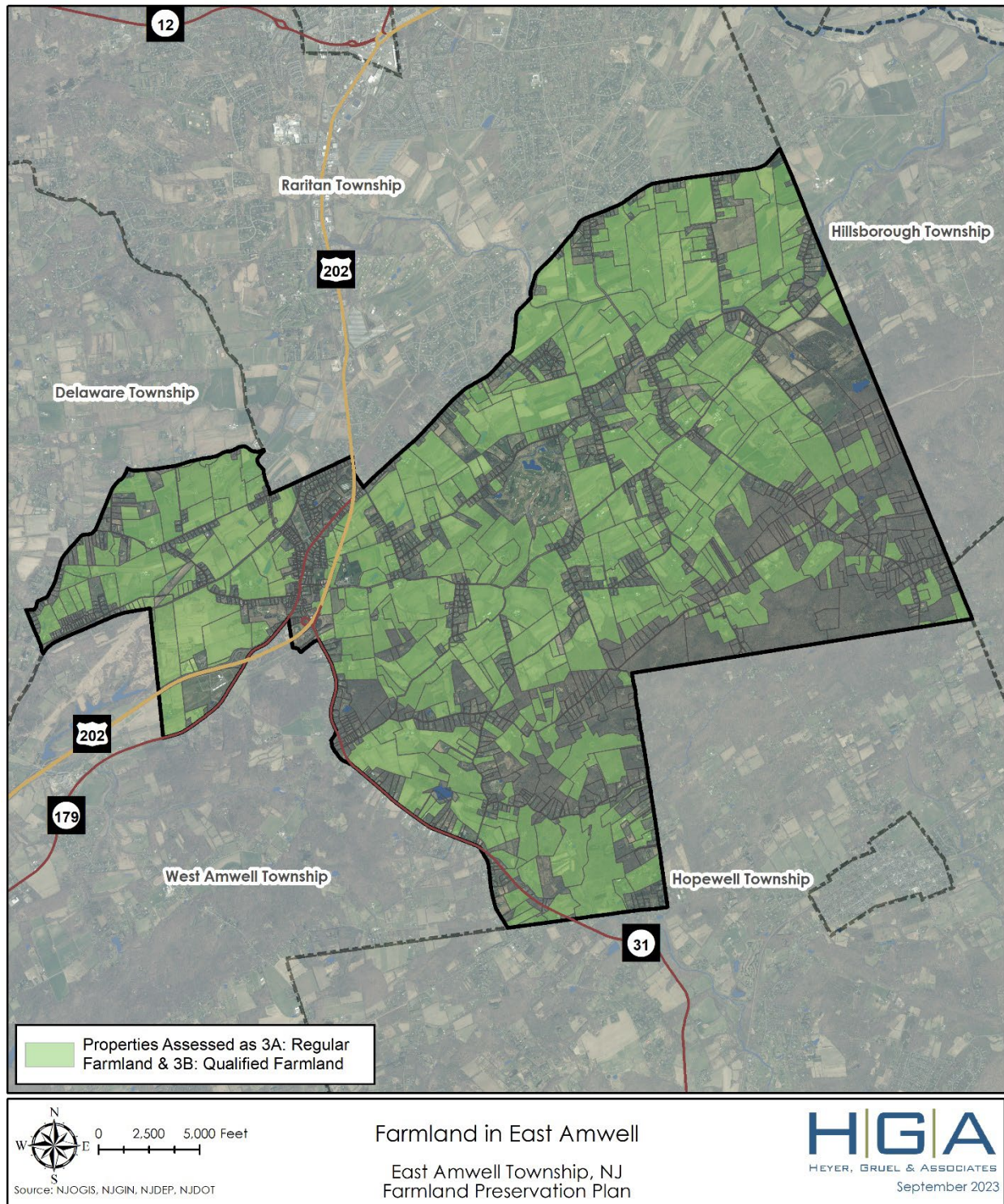
Table 1: Land in Farms, US Census of Agriculture <i>Includes largest NJ Farming Counties & Counties Neighboring Hunterdon County</i>										
Geography**	Item	2022	2017	2012	Adjusted for Coverage*			Not Adjusted for Coverage*		
					2007	2002	1997	1997	1992	1987
New Jersey State	Number of Farms	9,998	9,883	9,071	10,327	9,924	10,045	9,101	9,079	9,032
	Acres of Farms	711,502	734,084	715,057	733,450	805,682	856,909	832,600	847,595	894,426
Hunterdon County	Number of Farms	1,623	1,604	1,447	1,623	1,514	1,461	1,313	1,299	1,398
	Acres of Farms	91,588	101,290	96,025	100,027	109,241	113,975	105,230	106,324	123,698
Burlington County	Number of Farms	925	915	838	922	906	935	857	816	834
	Acres of Farms	93,594	96,256	95,899	85,790	111,237	103,627	103,667	97,186	103,224
Cumberland County	Number of Farms	539	560	583	615	616	622	573	609	612
	Acres of Farms	68,491	66,256	64,526	69,486	71,097	67,194	66,288	68,627	72,406
Salem County	Number of Farms	779	781	825	759	753	716	660	752	697
	Acres of Farms	97,465	98,239	101,847	96,530	96,238	92,890	92,047	98,256	95,265
Sussex County	Number of Farms	1,052	1,008	885	1,060	1,029	920	827	791	776
	Acres of Farms	71,688	59,766	61,033	65,242	75,496	76,461	73,001	75,531	78,641
Warren County	Number of Farms	923	918	784	933	814	802	730	684	666
	Acres of Farms	70,747	73,874	72,250	74,975	78,042	84,494	82,900	87,638	87,583

Source: US Census of Agriculture: 2022, 2017, 2012, 2007, 2002, 1997, 1992, and 1987

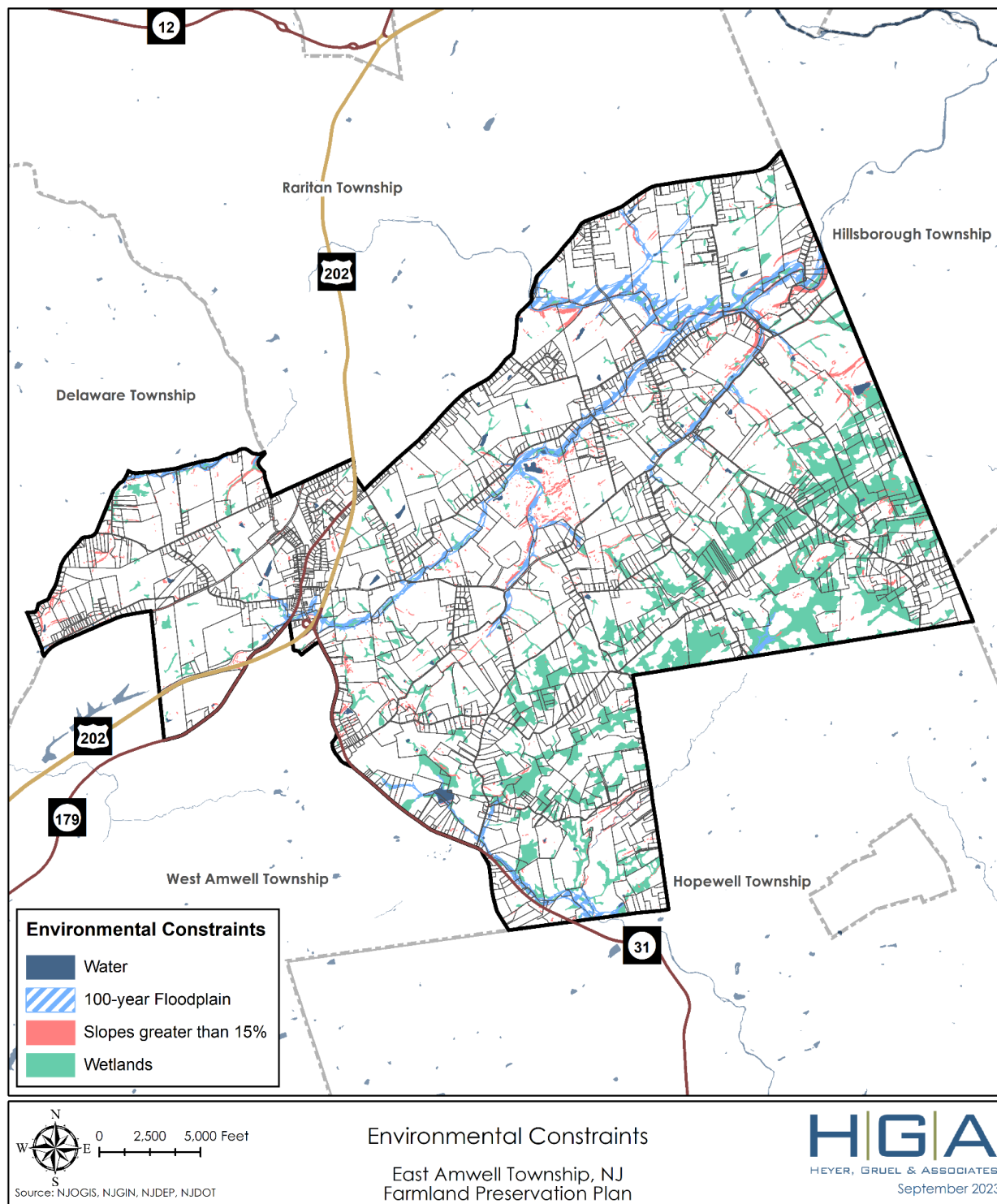
*In 1997, the Census of Agriculture started adding imputed data to account for census forms that were not returned ("Adjusting for Coverage"). Previously, unreturned forms were simply not counted, leading to overall artificially lowered numbers. Only 1997 data are available in both forms.

**The source for the county data in this column is individual county profile reports provided by the National Agricultural Statistics Service. These summary reports are associated with the 2002 Census, but the 1997 Adjusted for Coverage numbers are not in the main report.

The Township has roughly 10,800 acres of assessed farmland. As shown on the following map, "Farmland in East Amwell," farms are located throughout East Amwell Township. These properties are either assessed as 3A: Regular Farmland or 3B: Qualified Farmland. Much of this farmland located along the Township's northern municipal boundary abuts more developed areas, while farmland further south tends to be surrounded by less development.



A considerable portion of the Township's land is environmentally constrained, as shown on the "Environmental Constraints" map. A majority of the southern portion of East Amwell is constrained by wetlands, and there are considerable areas of steep slopes scattered throughout the Township. Further, the presence of waterbodies in East Amwell results in a portion of the Township falling within the 100-year floodplain.



A. Location and Size of Agricultural Land Base

East Amwell Township is a leading agricultural municipality within Hunterdon County. As shown in Table 2 below, 10,720 acres (58%) of the Township's total land-based acreage is in Farmland Assessment. East Amwell ranks third in this statistic as compared to other Hunterdon County municipalities. Tables 3 and 4 document the land enrolled in farmland assessment for both East Amwell Township and Hunterdon County, while Table 5 shows the percentage of assessed farmland for East Amwell Township as a percentage of assessed farmland within Hunterdon County.

Table 2: Leading Agricultural Municipalities of Hunterdon County			
Township	Farmland Assessed Acreage	Total Land Based Acreage	Percent of Total Land Base in Farm Assessment
Alexandria	10,358	18,048	53.57%
Bethlehem	5,399	13,683	37.99%
Delaware	15,295	23,616	61.66%
East Amwell	10,720	17,792	58.09%
Franklin	8,990	14,912	58.04%
Holland	7,100	14,528	46.52%
Kingwood	13,907	22,784	59.38%
Readington	11,882	30,592	36.66%
Tewksbury	11,352	20,352	52.98%
West Amwell	7,569	14,016	52.23%

Source: State of New Jersey, Division of Taxation Farmland Assessment Act of 1964: Data from 2019 FA-1 Forms

Table 3: Farmland Assessed Acres East Amwell Township						
Year	Total Land Devoted to Agricultural or Horticultural Use	Total Non-Agricultural Use	Other Land not Devoted to Agricultural or Horticultural Use	Total Farm Acreage	Total Land in Taxing District	Percent of Total Land Base in Farmland Assessment
2019	10,335	385	57	10,720	17,792	58%
2017	10,486	365	53	10,851	17,792	61%
2010	10,803	415	44	11,218	17,792	63%
2005	10,729	327	82	11,138	17,792	63%
2000	11,351	308	57	11,716	17,792	66%
1995	12,117	299	97	12,513	17,792	70%
1990	12,522	370	89	12,981	17,792	73%
1985	12,112	335	264	13,712	17,792	77%
1980	13,149	271	336	13,756	17,792	77%
% Change 1980- 2019	-21%	42%	-83%	-22%	0%	-25%

Source: State of New Jersey, Division of Taxation and Department of Agriculture Farmland Assessment Act of 1964: Data from FA-1 Forms.

Note: Some inconsistencies in these numbers can be traced to differences between the Division of Taxation and Department of Agriculture's published data. These inconsistencies do not have a significant impact on this study.

**Table 4: Farmland Assessed Acres
Hunterdon County**

Year	Total Land Devoted to Agricultural or Horticultural Use	Total Non-Agricultural Use	Other Land not Devoted to Agricultural or Horticultural Use	Total Farm Acreage	Total Land in Taxing District	Percent of Total Land Base in Farmland Assessment
2019	120,728	6,071	1,713	126,799	279,680	43%
2017	120,493	5,823	1,284	126,316	279,680	45%
2010	126,894	5,796	1,261	132,690	279,680	47%
2005	126,012	3,988	1,952	137,512	279,680	49%
2000	140,245	3,878	1,684	145,429	279,680	52%
1995	146,092	4,051	1,997	155,209	279,680	55%
1990	150,033	4,032	2,310	156,376	279,680	56%
1985	162,411	4,113	5,180	171,616	279,680	61%
1980	161,612	3,665	3,936	169,390	279,680	60%
% Change 1980- 2019	-25%	66%	-56%	-25%	0%	-28%

Source: State of New Jersey, Division of Taxation and Department of Agriculture Farmland Assessment Act of 1964: Data from FA-1 Forms.

Note: Some inconsistencies in these numbers can be traced to differences between the Division of Taxation and Department of Agriculture's published data. These inconsistencies do not have a significant impact on this study.

**Table 5: Farmland Assessed Acres
East Amwell Township as a Percentage of Hunterdon County**

Year	Total Land Devoted to Agricultural or Horticultural Use	Total Non-Agricultural Use	Other Land not Devoted to Agricultural or Horticultural Use	Total Farm Acreage	Total Land in Taxing District
2019	8.56%	6.34%	3.32%	8.45%	6.36%
2017	8.70%	6.27%	4.13%	8.59%	6.36%
2010	8.51%	7.16%	3.49%	8.45%	6.36%
2005	8.51%	8.20%	4.20%	8.10%	6.36%
2000	8.09%	7.94%	3.38%	8.06%	6.36%
1995	8.29%	7.38%	4.86%	8.06%	6.36%
1990	8.35%	9.18%	3.85%	8.30%	6.36%
1985	7.46%	8.14%	5.10%	7.99%	6.36%
1980	8.14%	7.39%	8.54%	8.12%	6.36%

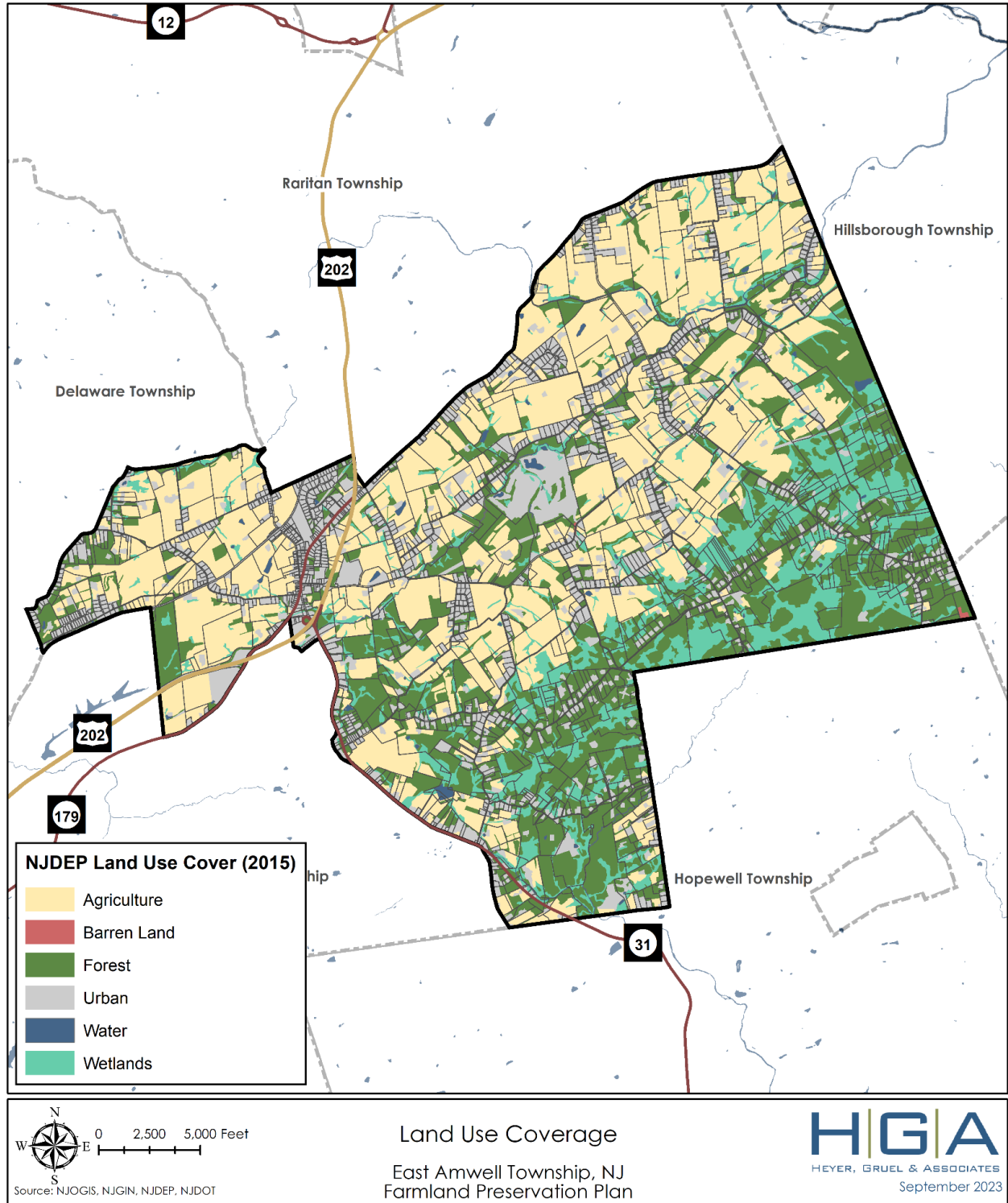
Source: State of New Jersey, Division of Taxation and Department of Agriculture Farmland Assessment Act of 1964: Data from FA-1 Forms. Note: Some inconsistencies in these numbers can be traced to differences between the Division of Taxation and Department of Agriculture's published data. These inconsistencies do not have a significant impact on this study.

A review of the data on Table 3 indicates that the total farm acreage in East Amwell Township in 2019 represented 58% of the township's total land base. Between the years 1980 and 2019 this total area has experienced a consistent decline, resulting in an overall 25% decrease in assessed farmland. As seen on Table 4, Hunterdon County has experienced a comparable shift over the same period, with its percentage of total assessed farmland decreasing by 28% between the years 1980 (60%) and 2019 (43%).

This data reveals that, despite development pressures and county-wide shifts, East Amwell Township continues to be a leading agricultural municipality. Over the last four decades, not only has East Amwell Township's percentage of assessed farmland decreased at a slower rate than that of Hunterdon County's, but it's also continued to surpass the county in its percentage of total land base in farmland assessment.

The trends in both East Amwell Township and Hunterdon County as a whole indicate that the assessed area of 3B farmland has decreased as a percentage of the total assessed area of all classes between 1990 and 2019, although East Amwell Township observed a smaller decrease compared to Hunterdon County. This is partially due to an increase in residential development, as well as an increase in the property values of all assessed lands.

Data contained in Table 5 indicates that the assessed area of East Amwell Township's farmland in 2019 comprised 8.56% of all the farmland in Hunterdon County, though East Amwell Township accounts for only 6.36% of the total assessed lands of all classes in Hunterdon County. Since 1980, East Amwell Township accounted for a consistent 7.5% to 8.7% of the County's total land devoted to agricultural or horticultural use. Agricultural lands are found throughout the Township as shown on the map below entitled "Land Use Coverage"

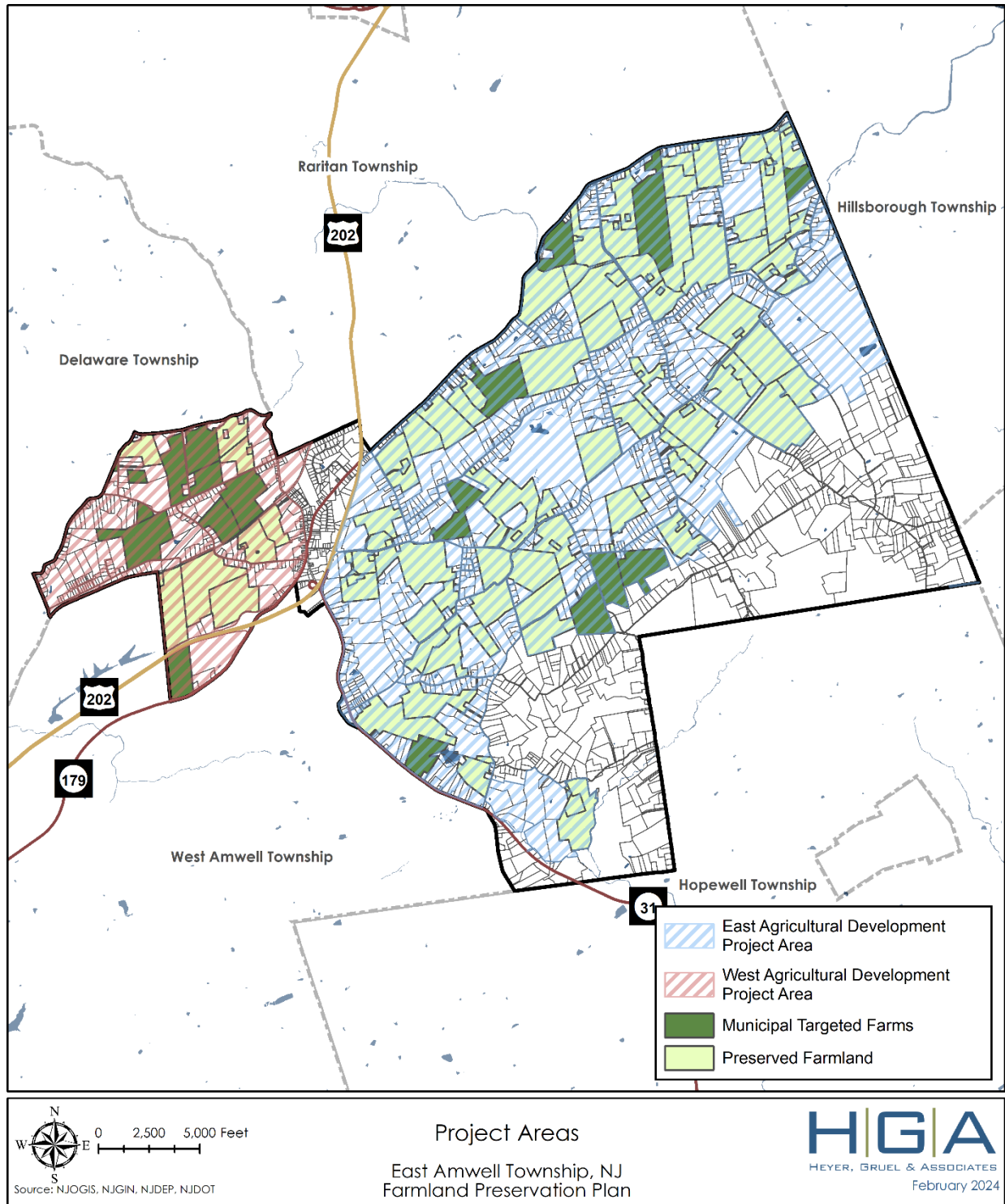


As shown on Table 6 below, in 2022 59.7% of the Township's total area qualified for reduced tax assessment under the Farmland Assessment Act of 1964. Farmland-assessed properties account for the Township's most frequent land use, followed by residential uses at just 19.7% and public property uses at 7.2%.

Table 6: East Amwell Township-Wide Property Classes (2022)		
Property Class	Acres	% of Township Land
1: Vacant	553.5	3.1%
2: Residential	3,509.9	19.7%
3A: Farm (Regular)	150.1	0.8%
3B: Farm (Qualified)	10,648.9	59.7%
4A: Commercial	409.1	2.3%
4B: Industrial	0.0%	0.0%
4C: Public School	23.6%	0.1%
5A/5B: Railroad Class I & II	25.5%	0.1%
15A: Public School Property	31.2%	0.2%
15B: Other School Property	0.0%	0.0%
15C: Public Property	1,283.5%	7.2%
15D: Church & Charitable	12.8%	0.1%
15E: Cemeteries & Graveyards	15.9%	0.1%
15F: Other Exempt	1,142.5%	6.4%
N/A	23.7%	0.1%
Total	17,830.1	100%

Source: 2022 Tax Assessment Data. Acreage is calculated in GIS and rounded to the nearest 1/10th acre.

East Amwell has designated most of the Amwell Valley Agricultural District as its farmland preservation project area. The Township has two distinct project areas which correlate to the Hunterdon Agricultural Development Area (ADA): the East area and the West area. The East Area is the larger project area and comprises 10,962 acres, of which 68% (7,508 acres) are in agriculture. The West Area is the smaller project area located in the northwest section of the Township and comprises 2,339 acres, of which 73% (1,727 acres) are in agriculture. The project areas are predominantly comprised of farm-assessed/qualified land and public property. The County modified the ADA in 2018, so the East Amwell project areas have changed since the last Farmland Preservation Plan. The project areas depicted on the following page are consistent with the County ADA. Table 7 below identifies property class makeup by project area.



The rural nature of the Township and project areas is further highlighted by the 2012-2015 land use/land cover data outlined in Table 8 below. Between the years 2012 and 2015, agricultural land use increased by 1.4% throughout East Amwell. Simultaneously, barren land experienced a significant increase of 509.1% and forested land decreased slightly by 2.5%. Regardless of these shifts, agricultural and forested lands accounted for over two thirds (68.7%) of the Township's land use/land cover in 2015. These uses ultimately contribute to the Township's rural character and serve as testament to East Amwell's distinct efforts to preserve its farmland and support agricultural opportunities.

Table 7: East Amwell Property Class by Project Area (2020)

	East Area		West Area	
	Acres	Percentage	Acres	Percentage
3A/3B: Farm Assessed/Qualified	7,508	68	1,727	74
2: Residential	1,823	17	429	18
15F: Other Exempt	486	4	1	0
1: Vacant	369	3	34	1
4B: Industrial	0	0	0	0
4A: Commercial	333	3	19	1
15E: Cemeteries & Graveyards	11	0	5	0
15A: Public School Property	31	0	0	0
15C: Public Property	384	4	89	4
Church	1	0	4	0
Railroad	0	0	26	1
Apartment	16	0	4	0
Total	10,962	100	2,339	100

The Public Property exempt property class has been added. The acres were derived from the Tax Records, current as of 9/15/2020.

Table 8: East Amwell Land Use/Land Cover (2012-2015)

Type	2012 Acres	2012 % Cover	2015 Acres	2015 % Cover	% Change 2012 – 2015
Agriculture	7,382.36	40.4%	7,484.35	41%	1.4%
Barren Land	1.13	0.01%	6.86	0.04%	509.1%
Forest	5,182.32	28.4%	5,052.76	27.7%	-2.5%
Urban	3,159.10	17.3%	3,183.77	17.4%	0.1%
Water	135.54	0.7%	133.74	0.7%	-1.3%
Wetlands	2,411.68	13.2%	2,410.73	13.2%	-0.04%
Total	18,272.13	100%	18,272.20	100%	--

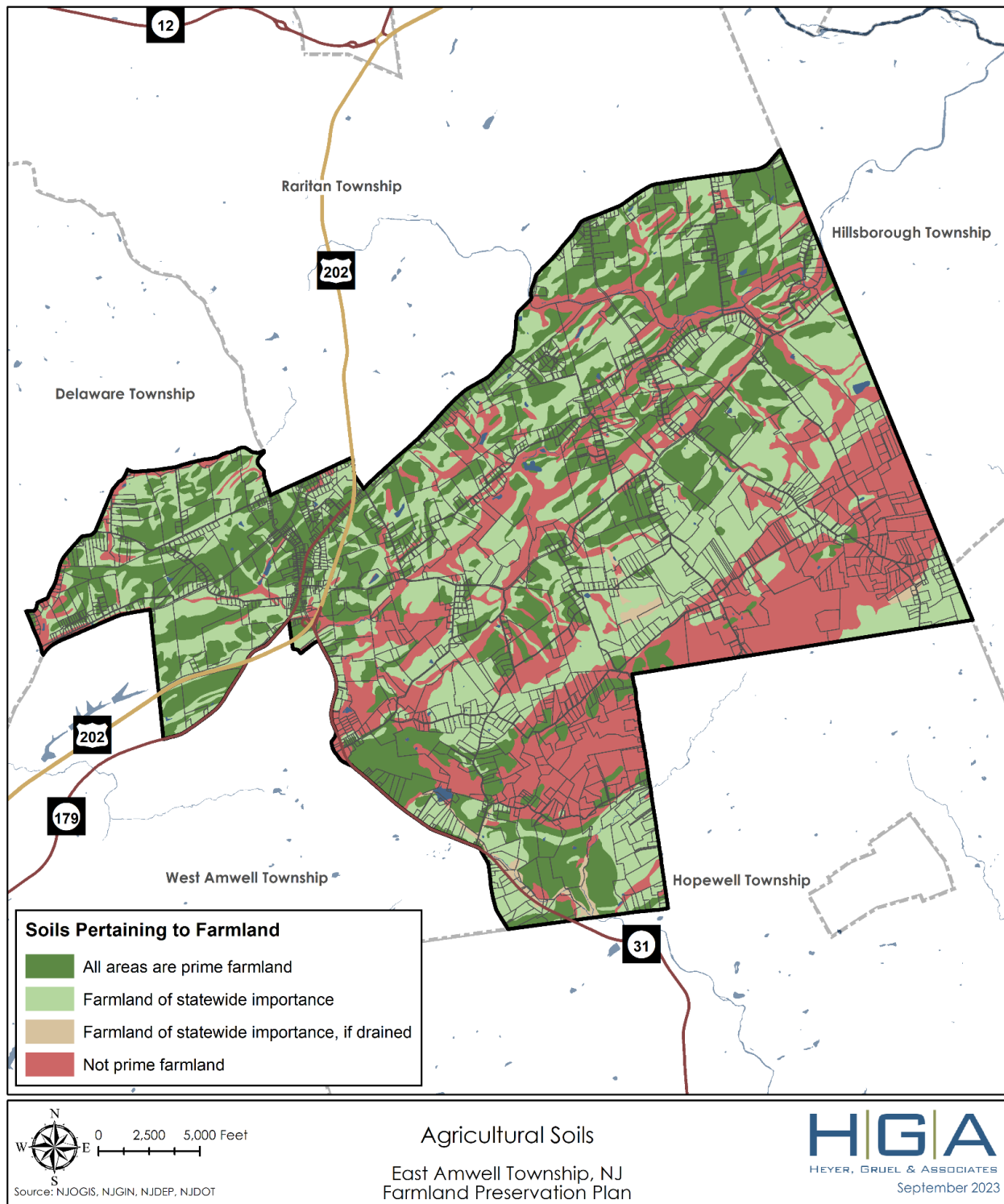
Source: 2012/2015 NJDEP Land Use Land Cover

B. Soil Types & Their Agricultural Capability

Most soils in East Amwell Township are quite suitable for agricultural production. The Township has 12,969 acres of prime farmland soils and statewide importance soils. Collectively, these classifications account for 71% of the Township's soil. Another 0.8% of the Township's soils are classified as statewide importance soils if drained, and not prime farmland soils make up the remaining 28.2% of land area in East Amwell. These findings are summarized in Table 9 below and are illustrated on the map below, "Agricultural Soils."

Table 9: East Amwell Active Farmland by Category (2015)				
Soil Classification	Total Land Area (Acres)	Total Land Area (Percentage)	Active Farmland (Acres)	Active Farmland (Percentage)
Prime Farmland Soils	5,644	30.9%	3,776	66.9%
Statewide Importance Soils	7,325	40.1%	4,517	61.7%
Statewide Importance Soils, if drained	144	0.8%	101	69.9%
Soils of Local Importance	0	0%	0	0%
Soils of Unique Importance	0	0%	0	0%
Not Prime Farmland Soils	5,162	28.2%	2,406	46.6%
Total	18,275	100%	10,799	--

Source: USDA NRCS WSS, NJDEP LULC 2015, Acreage calculated in GIS



East Amwell has five different soil associations, and a total of 20 soils series and 50 soil phases. Of these 20 soils series, the Lehigh-Chalfont-Lawrenceville association is located in the Valley region and is considered deep, nearly level to moderately steep, moderately well-drained and some poorly well drained, and non-stony to very stony.

The USDA-NRCS classifies land capability using Roman numerals I through VII. As numbers rise the land has progressively greater limitations and narrower choices for practical use. According to the “New Jersey Important Farmlands Inventory” soil classifications are defined as:

Prime Farmlands

Prime Farmlands include all those soils in Land Capability Class I and selected soils from Land Capability Class II. Prime Farmland is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber and oilseed crops and is also available for these uses. It has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to economically produce sustained high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. Prime Farmlands are not excessively erodible or saturated with water for a long period of time, and they either do not flood frequently or are protected from flooding. East Amwell Township’s prime farmland soils are summarized in Table 10 below.

Table 10: East Amwell Prime Farmland Soils		
Soil Description	Acreage	Percent
Birdsboro silt loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes	158.87	2.8%
Bucks silt loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes	1,520.46	26.9%
Lansdale loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes	17.54	0.3%
Lawrenceville silt loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes	761.39	13.5%
Mount Lucas silt loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes	113.88	2.0%
Neshaminy silt loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes	252.02	4.5%
Penn channery silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	1,528.13	27.1%
Penn-Bucks complex, 2 to 6 percent slopes	1,026.27	18.2%
Quakertown silt loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes	47.61	0.8%
Raritan silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes, rarely flooded	6.99	0.1%
Raritan silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	58.71	1.0%
Readington silt loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes	152.30	2.7%
Total Prime Soils	5,644.17	100%

Source: United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service Web Soil Survey

Soils of Statewide Importance

Farmlands of statewide importance include those soils in Land Capability Classes II and III that do not meet the criteria as Prime Farmland. These soils are nearly Prime Farmland and economically

produce high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. Some may produce yields as high as Prime Farmland if conditions are favorable. East Amwell Township's soils of statewide importance are summarized in Table 11 below. Table 12 summarizes the soils of statewide importance if drained. These soils can be capable of producing yields as high as state wide important soils when drained.

Table 11: Soils of Statewide Importance		
Soil Description	Acreage	Percent
Abbottstown silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	26.45	0.4%
Abbottstown silt loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes	509.54	7.0%
Birdsboro silt loam, 6 to 12 percent slopes, eroded	15.89	0.2%
Bucks silt loam, 6 to 12 percent slopes, eroded	317.15	4.3%
Chalfont silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	121.99	1.7%
Chalfont silt loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes	941.73	12.9%
Chalfont silt loam, 6 to 12 percent slopes, eroded	997.49	13.6%
Lawrenceville silt loam, 6 to 12 percent slopes, eroded	82.54	1.1%
Lehigh silt loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes	322.84	4.4%
Lehigh silt loam, 6 to 12 percent slopes, eroded	186.54	2.5%
Neshaminy silt loam, 6 to 12 percent slopes, eroded	68.59	0.9%
Penn channery silt loam, 6 to 12 percent slopes, eroded	2,178.73	29.7%
Penn-Bucks complex, 6 to 12 percent slopes, eroded	440.73	6.0%
Quakertown silt loam, 6 to 12 percent slopes, eroded	6.46	0.1%
Readington silt loam, 6 to 12 percent slopes, eroded	35.78	0.5%
Reaville silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	24.46	0.3%
Reaville silt loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes	795.21	10.9%
Reaville silt loam, 6 to 12 percent slopes, eroded	253.01	3.5%
Total Statewide Importance Soils	7,325.13	100%

Source: United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service Web Soil Survey

Table 12: Soils of Statewide Importance if Drained		
Soil Description	Acreage	Percent
Bowmansville silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes, frequently flooded	85.26	59.3%
Croton silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	24.06	16.7%
Croton silt loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes	34.50	24.0%
Total Statewide Importance Soils if Drained	143.83	100%

Source: United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service Web Soil Survey

Farmland of Local Importance

Farmland of local importance includes those soils that are not prime or statewide importance and are used for the production of high value food, fiber or horticultural crops. There are no soils of local importance located in East Amwell.

Farmland of Unique Importance

Farmland of unique importance includes those soils that are not of prime or statewide importance and are used for the production of specialty crops. There are no soils of unique importance located in East Amwell.

Not Prime Farmland

Not Prime Farmland Soils include those soils that are not prime farmland, of statewide importance, unique, or of local importance. These soils lack the physical and chemical makeup which allows for agricultural crops to thrive. Table 13 summarizes East Amwell Township's not prime farmland soils.

Table 13: Not Prime Farmland Soils		
Soil Description	Acreage	Percent
Califon gravelly loam, 0 to 8 percent slopes, very stony	25.16	0.5%
Chalfont silt loam, 6 to 12 percent slopes, very stony	16.48	0.3%
Chalfont-Lehigh silt loams, 6 to 12 percent slopes, very stony	504.56	9.8%
Klinesville channery loam, 6 to 12 percent slopes	135.42	2.6%
Klinesville channery loam, 12 to 18 percent slopes	129.06	2.5%
Lehigh silt loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes, very stony	27.84	0.5%
Lehigh silt loam, 12 to 18 percent slopes, eroded	125.95	2.4%
Lehigh silt loam, 12 to 18 percent slopes, very stony	33.85	0.7%
Mount Lucas-Watchung silt loams, 0 to 6 percent slopes, very stony	1,278.71	24.8%
Neshaminy silt loam, 12 to 18 percent slopes, very stony	374.14	7.2%
Neshaminy silt loam, 18 to 35 percent slopes, very stony	15.33	0.3%
Neshaminy-Mount Lucas silt loams, 6 to 12 percent slopes, very stony	776.35	15.0%
Penn channery silt loam, 12 to 18 percent slopes	655.89	12.7%
Reaville wet variant silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	98.78	1.9%
Reaville wet variant silt loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes	126.44	2.4%
Rough broken land, shale	125.71	2.4%
Rowland silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes, frequently flooded	650.03	12.6%
Watchung silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	20.05	0.4%
Water	42.45	0.8%
Total Not Prime Farmland Soils	5,162.20	100%

Source: United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service Web Soil Survey

C. Number of Irrigated Acres & Available Water Resources

Irrigation is a technique used by farmers to create viable agricultural land in areas previously unsuited for intensive crop production. Irrigation transports water to crops to increase yield, keeps crops cool under excessive heat conditions, and to prevent freezing.

East Amwell Township does not maintain accurate records on the number of acres of farmland that are irrigated throughout the Township. The New Jersey Farmland Assessment Survey, however, has tracked the amount of irrigated agricultural lands for the Township, as seen in Table 10 below. It appears that most farmers in East Amwell do not need to irrigate their crops. Historically irrigation has varied widely. The Farmland Assessment statistics indicate that there were nine acres of irrigated farmland in 2006, one acre in 2005, none in 2004, fourteen acres in 2000 and none in 1993 or 1983.

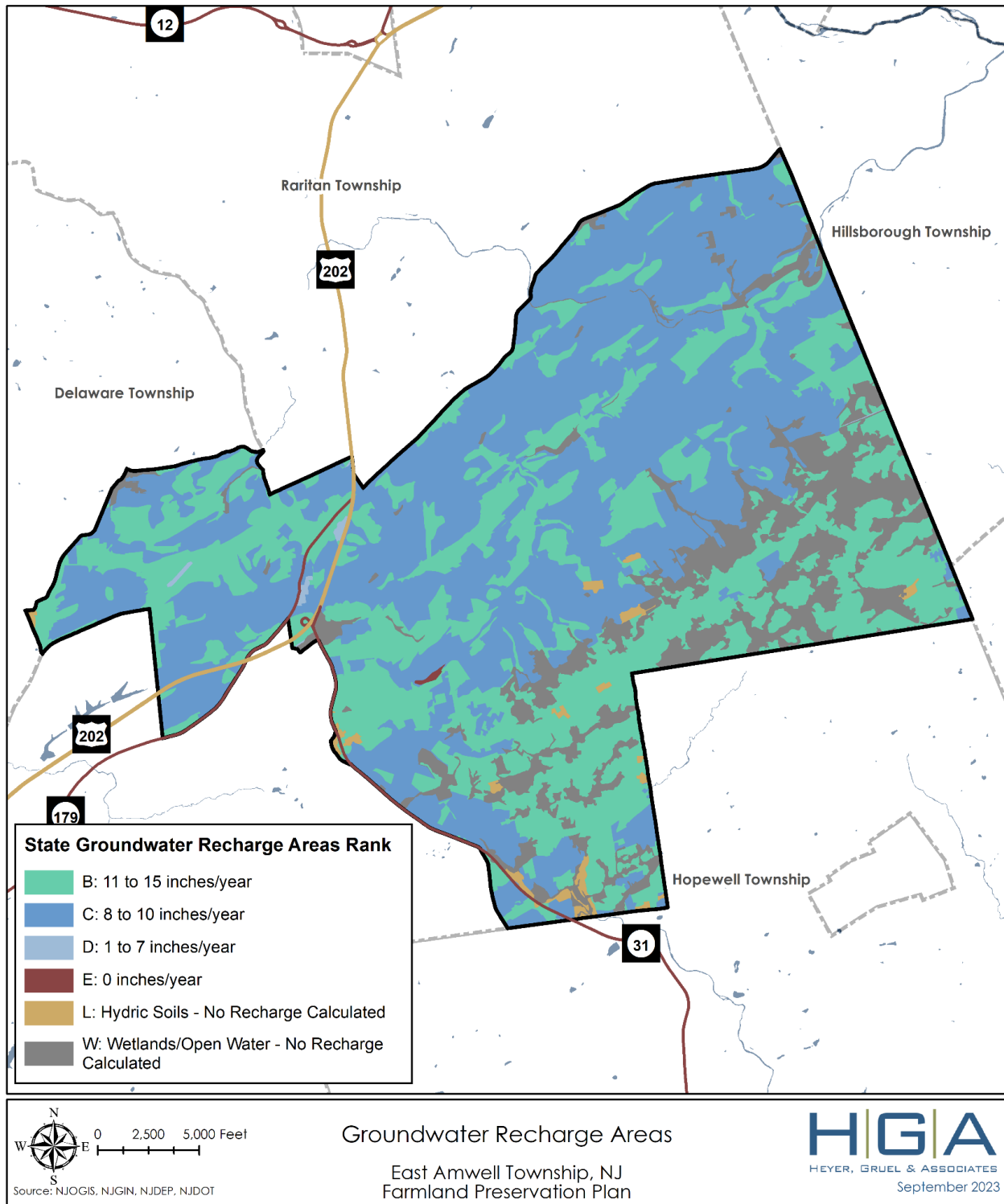
Table 14: East Amwell Irrigated Acres and Other Crops (2010-2017)			
Crop	2010	2017	Percent Change 2010 – 2017
Fruit	0	1	100%
Field Crops	3	2	-50%
Ornamental	0	0	0%
Vegetables	0	5	100%
Total	3	8	62%

Source: New Jersey Farmland Assessment Survey

The “Groundwater Recharge Areas” map shows the ground water recharge areas, determined by the New Jersey Geological Society. As shown on the map and Table 15 below, nearly half of the Township is classified as having a groundwater recharge rank of C which provides 8 to 10 inches of recharge annually. It is important to note that over 13% percent of the Township is classified as wetlands, open water areas and hydric soils, which do not provide any recharge utilizing this data set.

Table 15: Groundwater Recharge		
Rank	Acres	Percent
B: 11 to 15 inches/year	6,845.24	37.5%
C: 8 to 10 inches/year	8,851.19	48.5%
D: 1 to 7 inches/year	46.63	0.3%
E: 0 inches/year	8.99	0.0%
L: Hydric Soils- No Recharge	155.61	0.9%
W: Wetlands/Open Water	2,345.90	12.9%
Total	18,253.57	100%

Source: New Jersey Geological Survey

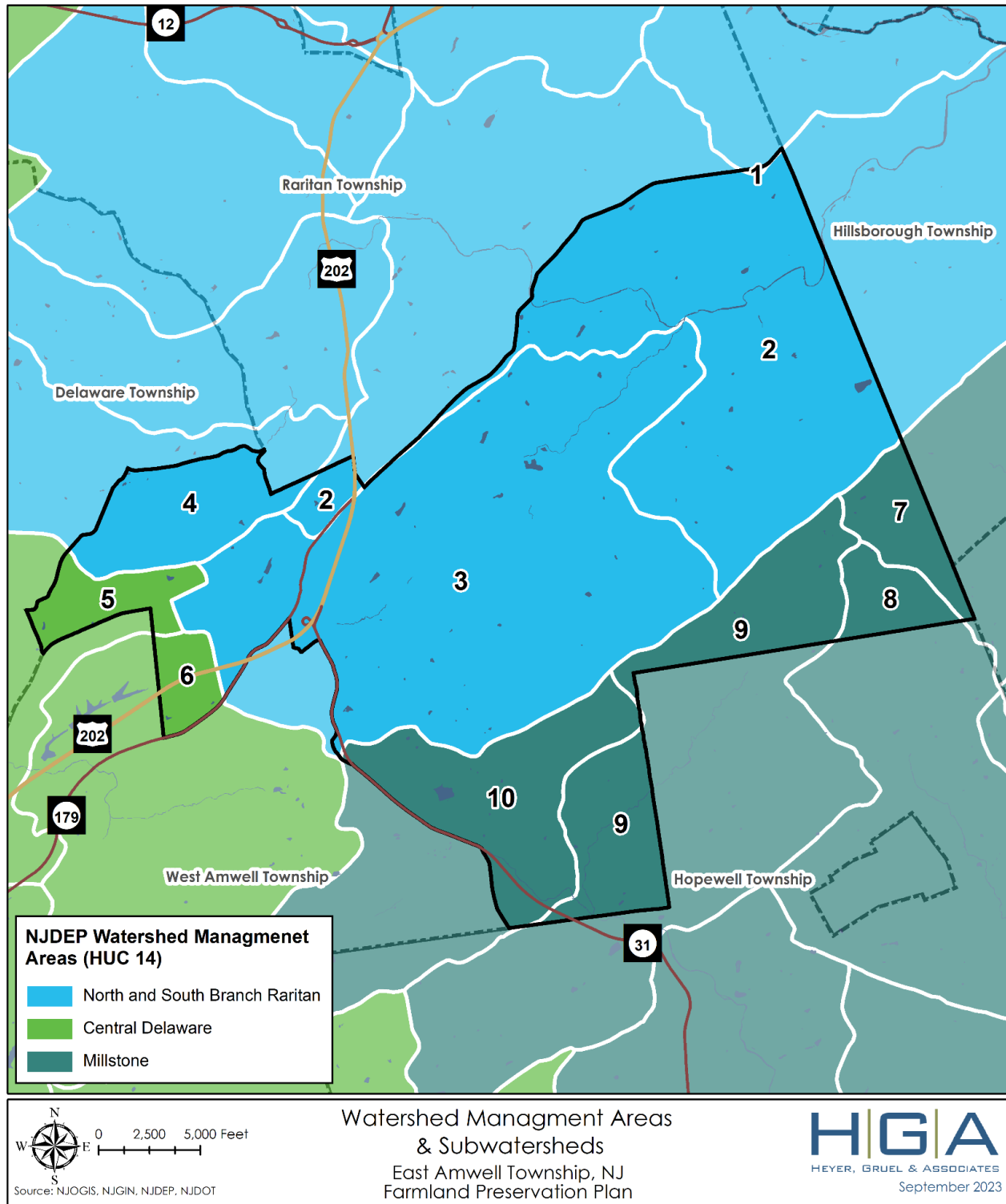


Watersheds and Hydrology

A watershed is an area that drains into a common waterway such as a stream, lake, estuary, wetland, or, ultimately, the ocean. The watershed includes both the waterway itself and the entire land area that drains into it. Geographic features such as hills and slopes separate distinct watershed systems. Watershed Management Areas (WMAs) are the regulatory units of the NJDEP's Division of Watershed Management for categorizing, managing and protecting watersheds throughout the State. East Amwell is split between three watershed management areas: North and South Branch Raritan WMA, Central Delaware WMA, and Millstone WMA.

There are 10 sub watersheds within the Township: Raritan R SB (Pleasant Run-Three Bridges), Neshanic River (Below FNR/SNR Confl), Back Brook, Headquarters Trib (Third Neshanic River), Alexauken Ck (below 74d 55m to 11BA06), Alexauken Ck (above 74d 55m), Rock Brook (above Camp Meeting Ave), Beden Brook (above Province Line Rd), Stony Bk (74d 48m 10s to 74d 49m 15s), and Stony Bk (74d 49m 15s). These sub watersheds are shown on the following "Watershed Management Areas & Subwatersheds" Map and are summarized in Table 16 below.

Table 16: East Amwell Watershed Management Areas					
Watershed Management Area	Watershed	Sub-watershed	Acres	Percent	Map Key*
North and South Branch Raritan	Raritan River SB (NB to Three Bridges)	Raritan R SB (Pleasant Run-Three Bridges)	7.21	0.04%	1
	Neshanic River	Neshanic River (below FNR / SNR Confl)	5,103.67	27.93%	2
	Neshanic River	Back Brook	7,020.52	38.42%	3
	Neshanic River	Headquarters trib (Third Neshanic River)	967.12	5.29%	4
Central Delaware	Alexauken Ck / Moore Ck / Jacobs Ck	Alexauken Ck (below 74d 55m to 11BA06)	475.74	2.60%	5
	Alexauken Ck / Moore Ck / Jacobs Ck	Alexauken Ck (above 74d 55m)	305.50	1.67%	6
Millstone	Millstone River (below/incl Carnegie Lk)	Rock Brook (above Camp Meeting Ave)	534.02	2.92%	7
	Millstone River (below/incl Carnegie Lk)	Beden Brok (above Province Line Rd)	392.54	2.15%	8
	Stony Brook	Stony Bk (74d 48m 10s to 74d 49m 15s)	1,818.57	9.95%	9
	Stony Brook	Stony Bk (74d 49m 15s)	1,647.32	9.02%	10
*Note: The Map Key column corresponds to the Watershed Management Areas & Subwatersheds Map in this Plan and should not be confused with NJDEP's Watershed Management Areas.					



D. Farmland Assessment Statistics & Trends

1. Number of Farms and Farms by Size

Data on East Amwell Township farms were collected from the FA-I forms submitted in July 2018 to the East Amwell Township Tax Assessor for farmland assessment for 2017. The data collected is useful for the determination of agricultural capabilities of the Township. The Farmland Assessment forms were analyzed by the State Agriculture Development Committee and provided back to the municipalities as data for policy review. The Tax Assessor can provide data on farmland assessment properties for further analysis.

Table 17 indicates the distribution of parcels approved for farmland assessment for 2020 by categories of acreage. East Amwell Township had a total of 389 parcels devoted to agricultural and horticultural uses, which represented a total of 10,859 acres in farmland assessment. In addition, according to this data, the average size of these parcels is 28 acres.

Table 17: East Amwell Size Distribution of Parcels Approved for Farmland Assessment (2020)					
	Less than 20 Acres	20-49 Acres	50-99 Acres	100+ Acres	Total
Number of Parcels	241	76	53	19	389
Percent of Total Parcels	62%	20%	14%	5%	100%
Number of Acre	2,107	2,437	3,717	2,598	10,859
Average Acres per Parcel	9	32	70	137	28
Percent of Total Acres	19%	22%	34%	24%	100%

Source: 2017 FA-1 Forms

2. Average or Median Farm Size

The data from Table 17 also indicate that 19 parcels were 100 acres or greater in size; combined, these parcels represented a total of 2,598 acres in farmland assessment and the average parcel size within this category was 137 acres. There were 53 parcels that ranged in area from 50 to 99 acres and the average size of a parcel within this category was 70 acres. This range also comprised 34% (3,717 acres) of the total land area in farmland assessment, which was the highest percentage among all categories of parcel sizes. There were 76 parcels that ranged in size between 20 and 49 acres, collectively comprising 2,437 acres with an average area of 32 acres. Lastly, 241 parcels had an area less than 20 acres, with an average area of 9 acres; this category accounts for the smallest percent of land area as compared to the other area categories.

3. Cropland Harvested, Pasture, Woodland, Equine, Total for Agricultural Use

Traditional farm production in East Amwell Township has largely followed trends of the State as a whole, being partly dedicated to livestock production and partly to traditional field crops. Forest, produce, and horticultural crops have also played a consistent role in the municipality's agriculture. The township is situated in an area with rich natural resources that include highly productive soils, ample water supply, forests, and a temperate climate.

Tables 18 and 19 below document the type of land that qualifies for farmland assessment in East Amwell Township and Hunterdon County. Table 20 indicates the types of land within East Amwell Township as a percentage of the total in Hunterdon County. Tables 18 through 20 highlight the changes from 1980 to 2019 and pinpoint the trends in agricultural land uses in East Amwell Township compared to Hunterdon County, demonstrating the significance of agricultural industry within the Township.

Table 18: East Amwell Agricultural Land Use by Acre												
Year	Cropland Harvested		Cropland Pastured		Permanent Pasture		Woodlands & Wetlands		Renewable Energy		Total Land Devoted to Agricultural or Horticultural Use (3B)*	
	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	% Change
2019	5,115	47.7%	875	8.2%	1,511	14.1%	3,112	29.0%	3.6	0.03%	10,726	2.3%
2017	5,142	49.0%	997	9.5%	1,309	12.5%	3,038	29.0%	3	0.03%	10,486	-2.9%
2010	5,324	49.3%	1,144	10.6%	1,375	12.7%	2,960	27.4%	--	--	10,803	0.7%
2005	5,231	48.8%	1,333	12.4%	1,361	12.7%	2,804	26.1%	--	--	10,729	-5.5%
2000	5,858	51.6%	1,134	10.0%	1,140	10.0%	3,219	28.4%	--	--	11,351	-6.3%
1995	6,960	57.4%	805	6.6%	1,400	11.6%	2,952	24.4%	--	--	12,117	-3.2%
1990	7,003	55.9%	776	6.2%	1,300	10.4%	3,444	27.5%	--	--	12,522	-4.5%
1985	7,628	58.2%	883	6.7%	1,310	10.0%	3,291	25.1%	--	--	13,112	-0.3%
1980	7,656	58.2%	783	6.0%	1,475	11.2%	3,235	24.6%	--	--	13,149	--

Source: State of New Jersey, Division of Taxation and Department of Agriculture Farmland Assessment Act of 1964: Data from FA-1 Forms
 Note: Some inconsistencies in these numbers can be traced to differences between the Division of Taxation and Department of Agriculture's published data. These inconsistencies do not have significant impact of this study.

*Acreage based on FA Forms and varies slightly from NJDEP LULC Data

In 2019, land in East Amwell Township devoted strictly to agricultural and horticultural uses—excluding buildings—comprised 61% (10,726 acres) of the total available acreage in East Amwell Township. Cropland harvested lands represented 47.7% of the total 3B assessed farmland in East Amwell, while woodlands and wetlands represented 29% (Table 18).

Between 1980 and 2019, East Amwell Township's total acres of cropland harvested—which is generally the easiest land to convert to residential development—decreased by 33%. In that same time period, Hunterdon County experienced a 37% decrease in total acres of cropland harvested, a 49% decrease in cropland pastured, and a 38% decrease in permanent pasture, creating a larger percentage of Agriculture lands potentially used for development. East Amwell Township gained a collective 128 acres of cropland pastured and permanent pasture lands between 1980 and 2019, representing a 57% increase.

As indicated in Table 20, the East Amwell Township portion of the county's total cropland harvested acreage remained stable at between 8% to 9% throughout this time period.

Table 19: Hunterdon County Agricultural Land Use by Acre												
Year	Cropland Harvested		Cropland Pastured		Permanent Pasture		Woodlands & Wetlands		Renewable Energy		Total Land Devoted to Agricultural or Horticultural Use (3B)*	
	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	% Change
2019	53,598	45.1%	5,071	4.3%	14,627	12.3%	44,846	37.8%	31.5	0.03%	118,796	-1.4%
2017	54,294	45.0%	5,795	4.8%	14,609	12.1%	45,837	38.0%	48	0.04%	120,535	-5.0%
2010	57,721	45.5%	7,517	5.9%	16,259	12.8%	45,397	35.8%	--	--	126,894	0.7%
2005	57,260	45.4%	7,629	6.1%	16,118	12.8%	43,691	34.7%	--	--	126,012	-9.8%
2000	65,596	47.0%	8,416	6.0%	17,355	12.4%	47,307	33.9%	--	--	139,693	-4.4%
1995	70,747	48.4%	8,488	5.8%	19,482	13.3%	47,378	32.4%	--	--	146,095	-2.6%
1990	75,857	50.6%	9,434	6.3%	20,065	13.4%	44,677	29.8%	--	--	150,033	-7.6%
1985	84,016	51.7%	9,476	5.8%	21,729	13.4%	47,191	29.1%	--	--	162,411	0.5%
1980	85,049	52.6%	9,900	6.1%	23,619	14.6%	43,044	26.6%	--	--	161,612	--

Source: State of New Jersey, Division of Taxation and Department of Agriculture Farmland Assessment Act of 1964: Data from FA-1 Forms
 Note: Some inconsistencies in these numbers can be traced to differences between the Division of Taxation and Department of Agriculture's published data. These inconsistencies do not have significant impact of this study.

*Acreage based on FA Forms and varies slightly from NJDEP LULC Data

Table 20: East Amwell as a Percentage of Hunterdon County						
Year	Cropland Harvested	Cropland Pastured	Permanent Pasture	Woodlands and Wetlands	Renewable Energy	Total Acreage in Taxing District
2019	10%	17%	10%	7%	11%	9%
2017	9%	17%	9%	7%	6%	9%
2010	9%	15%	8%	7%	--	9%
2005	9%	17%	8%	6%	--	9%
2000	9%	13%	7%	7%	--	8%
1995	10%	9%	7%	6%	--	8%
1990	9%	8%	6%	8%	--	8%
1985	9%	9%	6%	7%	--	8%
1980	9%	8%	6%	8%	--	8%

Source: State of New Jersey, Division of Taxation and Department of Agriculture Farmland Assessment Act of 1964: Data from FA-1 Forms

At the writing of this Plan, the largest commercial farm products as represented in production acreage within East Amwell include: hay; nursery stock (trees and shrubs); cultivated crops such as corn, soybeans, and wheat; and horses, sheep, cattle, chickens, and other livestock and fowl. Table 21 below provides a summary of the value of field crops in the Township. Field crops include the largest land area devoted to agriculture in the Township. For detailed information of all agricultural activities in the Township see Tables 22 to 27 in section "II: Municipality's Agricultural Industry – Overview," which offer a wide range information summarizing farming activities in East Amwell Township.

Table 21: East Amwell Field Crop Area and Values (2017)

	Corn for Grain	Alfalfa Hay	Other Hay	Soybeans	Wheat
Acres	417	129	2,063	1,074	281
Yield per Acre in Bushels/Tons	157.3	1.95	2.10	42.2	46.1
Price per Bushel/Ton	\$3.75	\$156	\$125	\$9.30	\$4.60
Monetary Value/Acre	\$590	\$304	\$263	\$392	\$212
Total Value	\$245,978	\$29,216	\$542,569	\$421,008	\$59,572

Source: NJ Department of Agriculture: New Jersey Farmland Assessment 2017, Tax year 2018

Source of crop value information for 2017: US Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS): 2017 Census of Agriculture – County Data

SECTION II. Municipality's Agricultural Industry – Overview

A. Trends in Market Value of Agricultural Products

From its settlement in the mid-1800s into the second half of the 1900s, East Amwell Township's land was predominately occupied by diversified family farms. In the Township's early days as European settlements, each farm typically produced a wide variety of crops and livestock—primarily for the farm family itself—along with sellable goods which generated cash income. The early farms were equipped to grow, process, and store various grains and corn, hay, vegetables, fruit, dairy products, eggs, firewood and timber, and numerous kinds of livestock and poultry, amongst other crops.

Beginning in the latter part of the 1800s, sophisticated mechanical implements were being introduced with tractors following in the early- to mid-1900s. This posed a significant shift for farmers, as some of the Township's older farmers grew up on lands where horses and mules provided the main source of power. After the Second World War farms became more mechanized, and many farms took up relatively large-scale dairy and poultry production.

The value of agricultural products sold in Hunterdon County has been increasing in recent decades. Agricultural products sold in Hunterdon County were valued at \$26,207,000 (\$45,786,599 in 2017 dollars) in 1992, \$69,745,000 (\$82,452,635.74 in 2017 dollars) in 2007, and \$92,246,000 in 2017 according to the 2017 US Census of Agriculture. During this 25 year period, the value of Hunterdon County's agricultural products has increased by over 100%. While data for the products sold on a municipal level are not available, it is known that East Amwell Township accounts for 7% of the County's agricultural areas. With this said, it can be estimated that the Township accounted for \$3,200,000 (in 2017 dollars) of Hunterdon County's agricultural sales in 1992, and \$6,460,000 in 2017. The Township's agricultural sales value during this time period reflects an increase of 101.2%, which is comparable to that of the County.

B. Crop Production Trends over the Last 20 Years

Throughout the process of preparing this Plan, a concerted effort was made to understand the current state of agriculture in East Amwell Township. The NJ Division of Taxation's "Report of data from FA-I forms" was used for a majority of the agricultural activity tables found in Sections I and II of this Plan. Information was gathered for this study from the FA-I forms filled out by local farmers in July of 2016 for the 2017 tax year. In order to qualify for the New Jersey Farmland Assessment Program, anyone farming over five acres of land is required to file this form annually, which applies only to the acreage devoted to agriculture. The State reviews the information and subsequently provides the data to each municipality.

This data gives us a snapshot of local farming activities, including the total number of acres devoted to agriculture, separated into hay, pasture, woodland, and other crops. In addition, it enumerates the types of crops and livestock production occurring in the Township. The program requires each farm to generate a minimum gross income based on its size. In the case that this minimum is met through the sale of forest

products (i.e. firewood and/or timber), the farmer is required to provide an additional woodland management form. The presence of this form implies a forest products-based farm business. Other than this, the economic information provided in the FA-I form is minimal and is not used in this study.

At the writing of this Plan, East Amwell Township's largest commercial farm products include: hay; nursery stock (trees and shrubs); cultivated crops such as corn, soybeans, sorghum, and wheat; and horses, sheep, cattle, llamas, chickens, pheasants and other livestock and fowl. Please refer to Tables 22 to 27 for a wide range summary of information about farming activities in East Amwell Township.

The high production of hay, nursery stock, and cultivated crops are common throughout the state. Nursery stock has often increased in areas where residential development has resulted in a need for landscaping products and services. The use of hay for a growing equine industry has resulted in many farms planting their own areas of hay to support internal operations. In addition, other farms may increase the cultivation of such crops that support the equine industry to take advantage of local demand. In fact, hay growers in the Township are largely supported by equine operations. In 2017 there were 592 horses in the Township, making them the most numerous large animals in East Amwell. These operations contribute greatly to the farm economy, but the data does not include detailed economic information.

In some cases, it is possible to make an estimate of the value of farm production. As shown in Table 21 in Section I of the Plan, the total hay crop in the township was worth almost \$600,000 in 2017. The total value of the corn, soybean, and wheat crops equated to roughly \$730,000. There have been challenges in locating the local price and yield numbers for other crops from 2017.

20 Year Farmland Assessment Survey Trends

The following 6 Tables (Tables 22 through 27) depict the 30-year trend devoted to field crops such as barley, grains, grasses and soybeans as inventoried by the New Jersey Farmland Assessment Survey. As shown on Table 22 below, "other hay" and soybeans are the strongest field crops grown in East Amwell. In fact, these are the only field crops that have not experienced a downward trend in the Township since 1990.

Table 22: East Amwell Land Devoted To Field Crops (Acres)								
	1990	2000	2005	2010	2017	2019	Change 1990-2019 (Acres)	Change 1990-2019 (Percent)
Grain Corn	1,494	915	950	550	384	544	-950	-63.6%
Silage Corn	165	123	20	58	129	87	-78	-47.3%
Alfalfa Hay	517	357	289	357	500	283	-234	-45.3%
Other Hay	1,854	1,593	1,608	1,813	1,820	2,109	255	13.8%
Soybeans	784	705	575	272	955	819	35	4.5%
Wheat	427	347	198	203	409	251	-176	-41.2%
Other Field Crops	63	--	3	22	102	63	0	0.0%
Total	5,304	4,040	3,643	3,275	4,299	4,156	-1,148	-21.6%

Source: NJ Department of Agriculture: New Jersey Farmland Assessment

Table 23 identifies acres devoted to fruit productions. Apples and grapes are the strongest fruit production in the Township. While fruit crops have undergone an overall 45% increase since 1990, much of this can be attributed to the increase in grape production within East Amwell. During this time period, all other fruit crops have decreased.

Table 23: East Amwell Land Devoted To Fruit Production (Acres)							
	1990	2005	2010	2017	2019	Change 1990-2019 (Acres)	Change 1990-2019 (Percent)
Apples	8	2	5	2	2	-6	-75%
Grapes	25	50	32	38	56	31	124%
Peaches	2	28	2	0	0	-2	-100%
Strawberries	5	7	0	1	0	-5	-100%
Total	40	87	39	41	58	18	45%

Source: NJ Department of Agriculture: New Jersey Farmland Assessment

Table 24 depicts the amount of farm acres devoted to vegetable production. A variety of vegetables are still in production with the most acreage devoted to sweet corn. Pumpkins are also a popular crop. These crops target a specific niche group usually sold at farmers market, farm stands and in response to seasonal demand. Overall vegetable crops in East Amwell have seen a decrease of 54% between the years 1990 and 2019, with sweet corn being the only crop to experience a positive trend.

Table 24: East Amwell Land Devoted To Vegetable Production (Acres)						
	1990	2010	2017	2019	Change 1990-2019 (Acres)	Change 1990-2019 (Percent)
Asparagus	1	2	2	0	-1	-100%
Sweet Corn	46	52	57	62	16	35%
Melons	2	5	0	0	-2	-100%
Sweet Peppers	11	1	0	0	-11	-100%
Pumpkins	43	35	16	4	-39	-91%
Tomatoes	32	10	3	1	-31	-97%
Mixed Vegetable Crops / Other	16	14	3	2	-14	-88%
Total	151	119	81	69	-82	-54%

Source: NJ Department of Agriculture: New Jersey Farmland Assessment

Table 25 identifies acres of nursery and tree stock in the Township. This category has seen an overall 45.1% increase primarily due to an overall rise in home sales and in turn, landscaping demands. This table shows wide and varied fluctuations in production among the categories of tree and nursery production, which is understandable given the tendencies of market demand and harvests necessary to respond to large contracts for nursery stock, and then replanting in subsequent years to grow replacement stock. Trees and shrubs and Christmas trees for example appear to be subject to this type of swing in reported acreages.

Table 25: East Amwell Land Devoted To Nursery and Tree Production (Acres)						
	1990	2010	2017	2019	Change 1990-2019 (Acres)	Change 1990-2019 (Percent)
Bedding Plants	0	1	0	0	0	0.0%
Cut Flowers	0	2	5	5	5	5,000%
Trees & Shrubs	59	134	118	122	63	106.8%
Christmas Trees	49	18	40	36	-13	-26.5%
Other Ornamental Crop	5	0	9	1	-4	-80.0%
Total	113	155	172	164	51	45.1%

Source: NJ Department of Agriculture: New Jersey Farmland Assessment

Table 26 below identifies timber and woodland production in the Township. The timber industry as a whole in East Amwell has diminished significantly between the years 1990 and 2019, although fuelwood has seen a slight increase (10.4%) in production. As woodland management has become more important to the overall health of the natural systems, more farms are taking advantage of woodland areas.

Table 26: East Amwell Land Devoted To Timber and Woodland Production								
	1990	2000	2005	2010	2017	2019	Change 1990-2019 (Quantity)	Change 1990-2019 (Percent)
Fuelwood (Cords)	240	169	169	172	210	265	25	10.4%
Timber (Board feet)	519,879	107,681	36,617	733	11,000	230	-519,649	-100.0%
Acres in Federal or Government Program	716	636	725	944	493	322	-394	-55.0%

Source: NJ Department of Agriculture: New Jersey Farmland Assessment

Livestock products such as dairy and beef cattle have seen a dramatic decrease, as shown in Table 27 below. Sheep and equine seem to be stable crop products, while ducks, goats, laying chickens, and bees—and presumably honey products—have seen significant increases between the years 1990 and 2019.

Table 27: East Amwell Land Devoted To Livestock and Poultry Production						
	1990	2010	2017	2019	Change 1990-2019 (Quantity)	Change 1990-2019 (Percent)
Beef Cattle (Head)	454	66	165	153	-301	-66.3%
Bee Hives (Number)	18	6	47	59	41	227.8%
Dairy (Head)	471	191	18	20	-451	-95.8%
Ducks (Head)	98	766	3024	3,031	2,933	2,992.9%
Goats (Head)	33	123	90	169	136	412.1%
Equine (Head)	464	568	592	633	169	36.4%
Meat Chickens (Head)	205	60	200	33	-172	-83.9%
Laying Chickens (Head)	216	553	593	1,065	849	393.1%
Sheep (Head)	318	202	247	268	-50	-15.7%
Swine (Head)	54	9	8	47	-7	-13.0%
Turkeys (Head)	10	32	13	10	0	0.0%
Other Livestock (Head)	23,529	20,765	16,103	16,091	-7,438	-31.6%

Source: NJ Department of Agriculture: New Jersey Farmland Assessment

C. Support Services Within the Market Region

The support services necessary for sustaining East Amwell Township's agricultural industry are regional assets. While the majority of basic support services are available within the region, more specific or large-scale items are often purchased from outside the region, mainly from eastern Pennsylvania or southern New Jersey. Feed and grains are also purchased largely from outside the area, as farmers find it necessary and cost effective to travel for more competitive pricing. For example, large equine and cattle farms in the region have alfalfa and feed trucked in from Lancaster County in Pennsylvania and upstate New York, in addition to other markets. Fertilizer and pesticide are available in Hunterdon County and are generally purchased in regional centers or from local suppliers. Equipment is difficult to locate in the region, although some basic tractors are available and competitive pricing becomes an issue. Most farmers repair and service their own equipment and order parts through the mail. Food processors are available on a regional scale at markets including the Hackettstown Auction and Lancaster County Auction.

D. Other Agricultural Related Industries

Members of the Agricultural Advisory Committee report that support services are available to farmers within the Township as well. The Country Mechanic, D&R Equipment, and Pennington Sales are within 10 miles of the village of Ringoes. In addition to selling machinery parts, these businesses also sell and service farm machinery and equipment. At times, farmers work through equipment dealers in Pennsylvania for various parts not available locally. While most of the machinery dealers in Pennsylvania use overnight delivery for parts, this service still requires an overnight delay and as a result work is halted until the part is received and repairs can be completed. A visit to these dealers for on-site purchases of new machinery or parts requires a drive of about one hour to the Allentown area in Pennsylvania or over two hours to Lancaster County in Pennsylvania.

Crop inputs such as seed and fertilizer are available at a local scale through Rosedale Mills, Sergeantsville Grain and Feed, and Gro-Mark, which are all located within a 10-mile drive of East Amwell. Seeds are generally purchased locally from individual farmers, who work as representatives for various seed companies. This seed sale business is generally done on a part-time basis in addition to the regular farming operation. Furthermore, a well-known and well-equipped equine medical facility known as Mid-Atlantic Equine Hospital is located within the Township boundaries and provides valuable and immediate care to the horses in East Amwell and its surrounding municipalities.

Financial support services are available through the Farm Credit East association office located in Lebanon, New Jersey. Members of the Agricultural Advisory Committee report they offer various services including recordkeeping, tax preparation, estate planning, choice of business entity, and others.

SECTION III. Land Use Planning Context

A. Relationship to the State Plan

The Planning Areas outlined in the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP) provide a regional framework for infrastructure development decisions, including the designation of areas in which growth should be focused, where growth and development should not be encouraged, and where resource protection (such as farmland preservation) should be focused. The SDRP includes seven (7) Planning Area (PA) designations, as described below.

PA1 – Metropolitan Planning Area

Metropolitan Planning Areas are characterized by: densities of more than 1,000 persons/square mile; population clusters of greater than 25,000 persons; land area greater than 1 square mile; existing public water and sewer systems; and access to public transit.

PA2 – Suburban Planning Area

Suburban Planning Areas are characterized by: densities of less than 1,000 persons/square mile; located contiguously with PA1; land area greater than 1 square mile; and existing or planned infrastructure with capacity to support development.

PA3 – Fringe Planning Area

Fringe Planning Areas are characterized by: densities of less than 1,000 persons/square mile; rural roadways and utilities; a lacking wastewater systems except within centers; land area greater than 1 square mile; and lands not meeting criteria for PA4 or PA5, described below.

PA4 – Rural Planning Area

Rural Planning Areas are characterized by: densities of less than 1,000 persons/square mile; land area greater than 1 square mile; on-site water and wastewater systems; and the presence of agricultural production, woodlands, or other vacant lands.

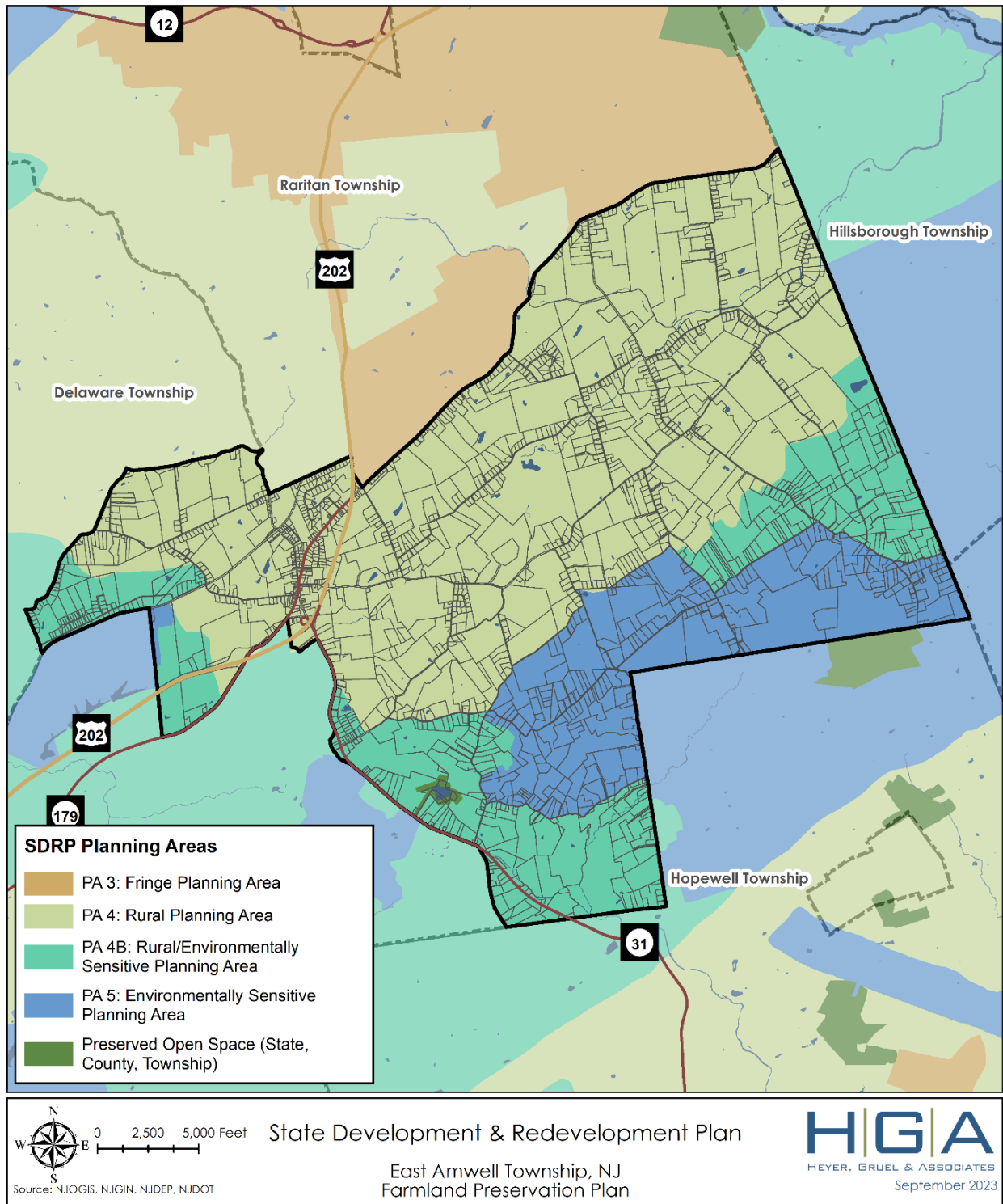
PA4B – Rural /Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area

Rural/Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas are characterized by: densities of less than 1,000 persons/square mile; land area greater than 1 square mile; on-site water and wastewater systems; and the presence of agricultural production, woodlands, or other vacant lands. Land that meets the delineation criteria of both PA4 (Rural Planning Area) and PA5 (Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area) is designated as Rural/Environmentally Sensitive (PA4B).

PA5 – Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area

Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas are characterized by: densities of less than 1,000 persons/square mile outside of centers; land area greater than 1 square mile, exclusive of centers; the presence of environmental features such as trout production and maintenance waters, pristine non-tidal watersheds

feeding Category 1 waters, threatened & endangered species habitat, coastal wetlands, prime forest, and significant features such as slopes, ridgelines, unique ecosystems.



As illustrated on the “State Development & Redevelopment Plan” map and summarized in Table 28, the majority of East Amwell Township falls within PA4, PA4B, and PA5. The land within the Township’s Amwell Valley Agricultural Zoning District is predominantly classified as PA4, or the Rural Planning Area. A portion of the Sourlands is classified as PA4B (Rural/Environmentally Sensitive), while the remainder of the Sourlands is categorized as PA5 (Environmentally Sensitive).

Table 28: East Amwell State Planning Areas		
Planning Area	Area in Township (Acres)	Area in Township (Percentage)
PA3: Fringe	13.69	0.07%
PA4: Rural	11,153.38	61.04%
PA4B: Rural/Environmentally Sensitive	3,148.40	17.23%
PA5: Environmentally Sensitive	45.43	0.25%
Preserved Open Space (State, County, Township)	3,911.29	21.41%
Total	18,272.20	100%

Source: 2001 State Development and Redevelopment Plan, acreages calculated using GIS

Rural Planning Areas and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas (PA4)

As shown in Table 28 and the corresponding “State Development & Redevelopment Plan” map, approximately 11,153 acres (61%) of the Township are classified as PA4 Rural and another 3,148 acres (17%) are classified as PA4B Rural/Environmentally Sensitive. According to the SDRP, the intention within these Planning Area is to:

- Maintain the environs as large contiguous areas of farmland and other lands;
- Revitalize cities and towns;
- Accommodate growth in Centers;
- Promote viable agricultural industry;
- Protect the character of existing, stable communities; and
- Confine programmed sewers and public water services to Centers.

The State Plan recommends “protecting the rural character of the area by encouraging a pattern of development that promotes a stronger rural community in the future while meeting the immediate needs of rural residents, and by identifying and preserving farmland and other open lands. The Plan also promotes policies that can protect and enhance the rural economy and agricultural industry, thereby maintaining a rural environment.” According to the SDRP, the Rural Planning Area includes most of New Jersey’s prime farmland and should be protected for the sake of sustained and successful farming productivity.

Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas (PA4B / PA5)

This planning area is vulnerable to damage of many sorts from new development in the Environs, including fragmentation of landscapes, degradation of aquifers and potable water, habitat destruction, extinction of plant and animal species and destruction of other irreplaceable resources, which are vital for the preservation of the ecological integrity of New Jersey’s natural resources. Perhaps most important, because the environs in the Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area are more sensitive to disturbance than

the Environs in other Planning Areas, new development has the potential to destroy the very characteristics that define the area. According to the SDRP, the intention of the Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area is to:

- Protect environmental resources through the protection of large contiguous areas of land
- Accommodate growth Centers
- Protect the character of existing communities
- Confine programmed sewers and public water services to Centers
- Revitalize cities and towns

The State Plan indicates that large contiguous areas of undisturbed habitat should be maintained to protect sensitive natural resources and systems. Moreover, new development in this area should capitalize on the inherent efficiencies of compact development patterns found in existing Centers. Benefits associated with center focused development include the preservation of open space, farmland and natural resources and to preserve or improve community character, increase opportunities for reasonably priced housing and strengths beneficial economic development opportunities.

The SDRP is very specific in its intention for the Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area; “new development should be guided into Centers to preserve open space, farmland and natural resources and to preserve or improve community character, increase opportunities for reasonably priced housing and strengthen beneficial economic development opportunities.”

The State's Policy Objectives applicable to new development in PA4B are the same as those for PA5, the Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area:

- **Land Use:** Protect natural systems and environmentally sensitive features by guiding development into Centers and establishing Center Boundaries and buffers and greenbelts around these boundaries. Maintain open space networks, critical habitat and large contiguous tracts of land in the Environs by a variety of land use techniques. Development should use creative land use and design techniques to ensure that it does not exceed the capacity of natural and infrastructure systems and protects areas where public investments in open land preservation have been made. Development in the Environs should maintain and enhance the natural resources and character of the area.
- **Housing:** Provide for a full range of housing choices primarily in Centers at appropriate densities to accommodate projected growth. Ensure that housing in general and in particular affordable, senior citizen, special needs and family housing - is developed with access to a range of commercial, cultural, educational, recreational, health and transportation services and facilities. Focus multi-family and higher density single-family housing in Centers. Any housing in the Environs

should be planned and located to maintain or enhance the cultural and scenic qualities and with minimum impacts on environmental resources.

- **Economic Development:** Support appropriate recreational and natural resource based activities in the Environs, and locate economic development opportunities that are responsive to the needs of the surrounding region and the travel and tourism industry in Centers. Any economic development in the Environs should be planned and located to maintain or enhance the cultural and scenic qualities and with minimum impacts on environmental resources.
- **Transportation:** Maintain and enhance a transportation system that protects the Environs from scattered and piecemeal development and links Centers to each other within and between Planning Areas. Encourage alternatives to the single-occupancy vehicle whenever feasible. Accommodate the seasonal demands of travel and tourism that support recreational and natural resource based activities. In Centers emphasize the use of public transportation systems and alternatives to private cars where appropriate and feasible and maximize circulation and mobility options throughout.
- **Natural Resource Conservation:** Protect and preserve large, contiguous tracts and corridors of recreation, forest or other open space land that protects natural systems and sensitive natural resources, including endangered species, ground and surface water resources, wetland systems, natural landscapes of exceptional value, critical slopes areas, and other significant environmentally sensitive features.
- **Agriculture:** Encourage farmland retention and agricultural practices that prevent or minimize conflicts with sensitive environmental resources.
- **Recreation:** Provide maximum active and passive recreational and tourism opportunities at the neighborhood and local levels by targeting the acquisitions and development of neighborhood and municipal parkland within Centers. Provide regional recreation and tourism opportunities by targeting parkland acquisitions and improvements that enhance large contiguous open space systems. Ensure meaningful access to public lands.
- **Redevelopment:** Encourage environmentally appropriate redevelopment in existing Centers and existing development areas that have the potential to become Centers or in ways that support Center-based development to accommodate growth that would otherwise occur in the Environs. Redevelop with intensities sufficient to support transit, a range of uses broad enough to encourage activity beyond the traditional workday, efficient use of infrastructure, and physical design features that enhance public safety, encourage pedestrian activity and reduce dependency on the automobile to attract growth otherwise planned for the Environs.
- **Historic Preservation:** Encourage the preservation and adaptive reuse of historic or significant buildings, Historic and Cultural Sites, neighborhoods and districts in ways that will not compromise either the historic resource or the ability for a Center to develop or redevelop. Outside Centers,

coordinate historic preservation needs with open space preservation efforts. Coordinate historic preservation efforts with tourism efforts.

- **Public Facilities and Services:** Phase and program for construction as part of a dedicated capital improvement budget or as part of a public/private development agreement the extension or establishment of public facilities and services, particularly wastewater systems, to establish adequate levels of capital facilities and services to support Centers; to protect large contiguous areas of environmentally sensitive features and other open spaces; to protect public investments in open space preservation programs; and to minimize conflicts between Centers and the Environs. Encourage private investments and facilitate public/private partnerships to provide adequate facilities and services, particularly wastewater systems, in Centers. Make community wastewater treatment a feasible and cost-effective alternative.
- **Intergovernmental Coordination:** Coordinate efforts of State agencies, county and municipal governments to ensure that State and local policies and programs support environmental protection by examining the effects of financial institution lending practices, government regulation, taxation and other governmental policies and programs.

Centers

Centers are the State Plan's preferred vehicle for accommodating growth. Center-based development patterns are superior to sprawl for a number of reasons. A Center is compact and considerably more efficient than sprawl, providing opportunities for cost savings across a wide range of factors. Compact form also translates into significant land savings which affords a community greater opportunity to preserve lands of importance, such as lands in active agriculture. The SDRP categorizes a hierarchy of Centers as Urban, Regional, Town, Village and Hamlet, and are described as follows:

- **"Urban Centers** are the largest of the SDRP's five types of Centers. Urban Centers offer the most diverse mix of industry, commerce, residences and cultural facilities of any central place. While New Jersey's Urban Centers have suffered decline, they still contain many jobs and households. They are repositories of large infrastructure systems, industrial jobs, corporate headquarters, medical and research services, universities, government offices, convention centers, museums and other valuable built assets [... and] are also home to a large pool of skilled and presently unskilled labor."
- **"Regional Centers** in Metropolitan Areas may include some smaller cities not designated as Urban Centers. In Suburban Planning Areas, they often serve as major employment centers and offer regional services, such as higher education, health and arts/entertainment. In rural areas, they may be population centers and county seats, with small business districts serving residents. New Regional Centers should be located in the state's major corridors and designed to organize growth that otherwise would sprawl throughout the corridor and create unserviceable demands. They

should be compact and contain a mix of residential, commercial and office uses at an intensity that will make a variety of public transportation options feasible as the Centers are built out. New Regional Centers should have a core of commercial activity, and the boundaries of the Centers should be well defined by open space or significant natural features.

- **“Towns”** are the traditional centers of commerce or government throughout the state. They are relatively freestanding in terms of their economic, social and cultural functions. They contain several neighborhoods that together provide a highly diverse housing stock in terms of types and price levels. Towns have a compact form of development with a defined central core containing shopping services, offices and community and governmental facilities. New Towns should emulate to the extent possible the most cherished features of the traditional New Jersey towns, that is, the comfortable, human scale of blocks, streets and open spaces, the easy walking access to civic and community activities, and a collection of neighborhoods offering a remarkable diversity of housing choice.”
- **“Villages”** are compact, primarily residential communities that offer basic consumer services for their residents and nearby residents and may offer more specialized services to a wider area. Villages are not meant to provide major regional shopping or employment for their regions. New Villages will comprise a small core and collection of neighborhoods. In the Suburban Planning Area, new Villages are likely to be distinguished from surrounding development only by a more cohesive and structured development form and by greater proximity between residential and nonresidential uses. In Fringe, Rural and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas, new Villages should be surrounded by natural areas, farmland or open lands in the form of a greenbelt and should contain a commercial component in the core capable of offering neighborhood scale goods and services.”
- **“Hamlets”** are the smallest types of Centers in the State Plan. Existing Hamlets are found primarily in rural areas, often at crossroads. Hamlets are not synonymous with conventional single-use residential subdivisions. Although Hamlets are primarily residential in character, they may have a small, compact core offering limited convenience goods and community activities, such as a multi-purpose community building; a school; a house of worship; a tavern, luncheonette; or a commons or similar land uses. The density of a Hamlet should conform to the carrying capacities of natural and built systems.”

East Amwell Township is in proximity to the SDRP designated centers of Hopewell Borough (Village) and Flemington (Town Center). Furthermore, East Amwell includes the Village of Ringoes and is located near Sergeantsville and Lambertville; although these areas are not designated or proposed centers according to the SDRP, they speak to the practice of centering denser development in central areas of farming communities. Such centers provide additional resources and populations that can bolster agriculture and support local economic markets.

B. Special Resource Areas

East Amwell Township's is located within the Sourland Region and is south of the Highlands Area, placing it in close proximity to areas where significant restrictions on development apply. The restrictions on these Special Resource Areas limit the development potential within parts of the Township, which raises the potential for increased development pressure throughout other areas of the Township. Furthermore, municipalities surrounding East Amwell are at a greater risk for development pressures due to these Special Resource Areas.

C. Township Master Plan and Development Regulations

East Amwell consists of a rich mosaic of land cover types, from the fertile farmland of the Amwell Valley to the historic settlements of Ringoes Village, the rural hamlets that dot the countryside, and the largest remaining contiguous forest in Central New Jersey that covers the Sourland Mountain. The Township's land use planning is designed to retain the best qualities of the community, and address the needs of Township residents.

East Amwell's Master Plan is a product of a continuing planning program, and contains a compilation of Master Plan elements adopted at various points in time. Since the adoption of the 1993 comprehensive Master Plan, the Land Use Plan has been reconsidered and substantially altered. A comprehensive new Land Use Plan for the Amwell Valley Agricultural District (AVAD) was adopted in 1998 as the previous plan was determined to be inadequate to retain farmland and the industry of farming. That plan included a variety of strategies targeted at permitting limited residential development consistent with East Amwell's farmland retention goals.

The Amwell Valley zoning was the subject of a legal challenge that was resolved in the Township's favor at Trial Court level in 2002. In September 2005, the AVAD zoning was upheld by New Jersey's Appellate Division and was subsequently submitted to the New Jersey Supreme Court on appeal. The New Jersey Supreme Court decided not to review the case, which affirmed the Appellate Court's decision as well as the zoning which had been challenged.

Natural resource conservation has also been a guiding principle in planning for the Sourland Mountain, where the fragile ecological balance requires careful attention to the types and intensities of permitted land uses. The Planning Board commissioned a Groundwater Resource Evaluation in August 2002 that analyzed safe, sustainable well yields and aided the update of the Land Use Plan for the Sourland Mountain District.

Land Use Plan

East Amwell's Land Use Plan (adopted November 30, 2005 and reexamined in 2023) was designed to implement the goals, objectives, principles, and assumptions of the Master Plan in a manner that respects and responds to the capabilities and limitations of the natural conditions throughout the Township. These

conditions include groundwater quantity and quality, surface water resources, agricultural use opportunities, soils, steep slopes, woodlands, wetlands and flood prone areas. The Land Use Plan also seeks to carefully manage growth and land use change with the goals of (a) retaining productive farmland and the farming industry within the Amwell Valley Agricultural District, while also (b) protecting the fragile ecology of the Sourland Mountain. The Land Use Plan Element represents East Amwell's vision regarding the future disposition of Township land and the physical form of its community.

Sustainable development—a key objective of smart growth planning efforts—seeks to manage resource utilization in ways that will provide effectively for the needs of future generations, maintain ecological integrity, and conserve limited resources. Land use and management decisions made today will determine whether these riches will be squandered through ill-conceived development and exploitation, or preserved through intentional stewardship of the land and water. The latter would preserve the Township's top assets and critical resources for future generations.

Most of East Amwell is situated within the Amwell Valley Agricultural District and the Sourland Mountain District, which together comprise almost 18,000 acres. These districts have been carefully examined, and amendments to the Land Use Plan have been adopted specific to those districts. These plan amendments provide strategies to address the overriding goals of retention of farmland, support for the industry of agriculture in the Amwell Valley, protection of the large contiguous forest on the Sourland Mountain and preservation, protection, and enhancement of the fragile ecology and important environmental resources that pervade the Sourland Mountain District.

The Township is also endowed with compact historic villages and hamlets that reflect the cultural history of its farming community. Protecting the character of these special places requires careful attention to managing change so that new construction respects the scale and styles that contribute to the character of these areas.

Amwell Valley Agricultural District

The Land Use Plan for the Amwell Valley Agricultural District (AVAD) is primarily intended to retain productive farmland for current and future agricultural use, enhance opportunities for farming and promote the industry of agriculture in East Amwell. Retaining large farm parcels, through both permanent preservation and zoning, is key to East Amwell's farmland preservation strategy. Agriculturally-compatible zoning has been implemented by the Township, which deters suburbanization and provides protection from rapid change and development encroachments on farmland. In concert with East Amwell's aggressive development rights purchase program, the desirable patterns resulting from the zoning ordinances for the AVAD will preserve the permanent mosaic of viable agriculture in the Amwell Valley.

The AVAD is the result of an evolutionary process, which strengthened the Master Plan's long-standing goals to preserve farmland and promote the industry of agriculture. Presently, over 80% of the AVAD

consists of prime farmland or soils of statewide importance, with nearly 66% of the District being actively farmed and under farmland assessment. The goals of the Municipal Land Use Law, which are specifically directed at preserving agricultural lands and discouraging suburban sprawl, are directly advanced by the AVAD.

The 1998 Land Use Plan amendment, "Planning for Farming in the Future of East Amwell," was designed to promote the industry of agriculture, retain farmland, conserve the community character of East Amwell's agricultural countryside, and protect natural resources and environmentally sensitive lands. These are long-standing objectives of East Amwell's Master Plan, which are also recognized goals of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP).

The 1998 land use amendment establishing the AVAD provided performance requirements that serve as the basis for its current zoning. In addition to the conventional development option of ten-acre lots, the new zoning included a bonus density provision for maintaining significant open lands and a lot size averaging provision. Both provisions are discussed in detail below in the "Innovative Planning Techniques" subsection below.

As described earlier in this Plan, the re-zoning of the AVAD was challenged by a group of landowners and in 2003 was upheld by Superior Court Judge Helen Hoens. In September 2005 the Appellate Division upheld the trial court, finding East Amwell to be a "quintessential agricultural community." The New Jersey Supreme Court twice refused to hear a petition to review the Appellate Court decision.

Sourland Mountain District

The natural resources of the Sourland Mountain are of regional and state-wide significance and represent an important part of East Amwell Township's rural and community character. The convergence of critical features, including wetlands, large contiguous forests, limiting geology, characterized by low rates of recharge for bedrock aquifers and low yielding wells, and critical habitat for threatened and endangered species, points to the need for land use policies and regulations that promote sustainability and resource preservation. Critical public health and welfare concerns include protecting an adequate water supply and preventing contamination of drinking water by improperly treated septic effluent.

This zoning district is intended to recognize the general environmental frailty of the Sourland Mountain with its generally rugged terrain, rocky soils and limited access. Encompassing lands with an elevation between 240 feet and 540 feet above mean sea level, the Sourland Mountain District is underlain with hard rock formations having very limited water-bearing potential. Tributary streams originating in the Sourland Mountain District are headwaters to the Stony Brook, Back Brook and the Neshanic River. Wetlands on the ridge and significant areas of Palustrine wetlands on slope areas are watershed feeders. Steep slopes and high erosion potential are additional severe development constraints unique to the slopes adjacent to the ridge. Due to the natural limitations of this district and a desire to promote a sustainable human and wildlife

habitat, minimum design standards and criteria are intended to protect natural and cultural resources and preserve the rural character of the Sourland Mountain.

Residential District

The **Residential District** is the zone established around the Village of Ringoes in which cluster design options and mixed housing types are permitted. It is intended that open space designs be an integral part of new development in this district in order to separate the historic village from the emerging suburban development by establishing a green belt design.

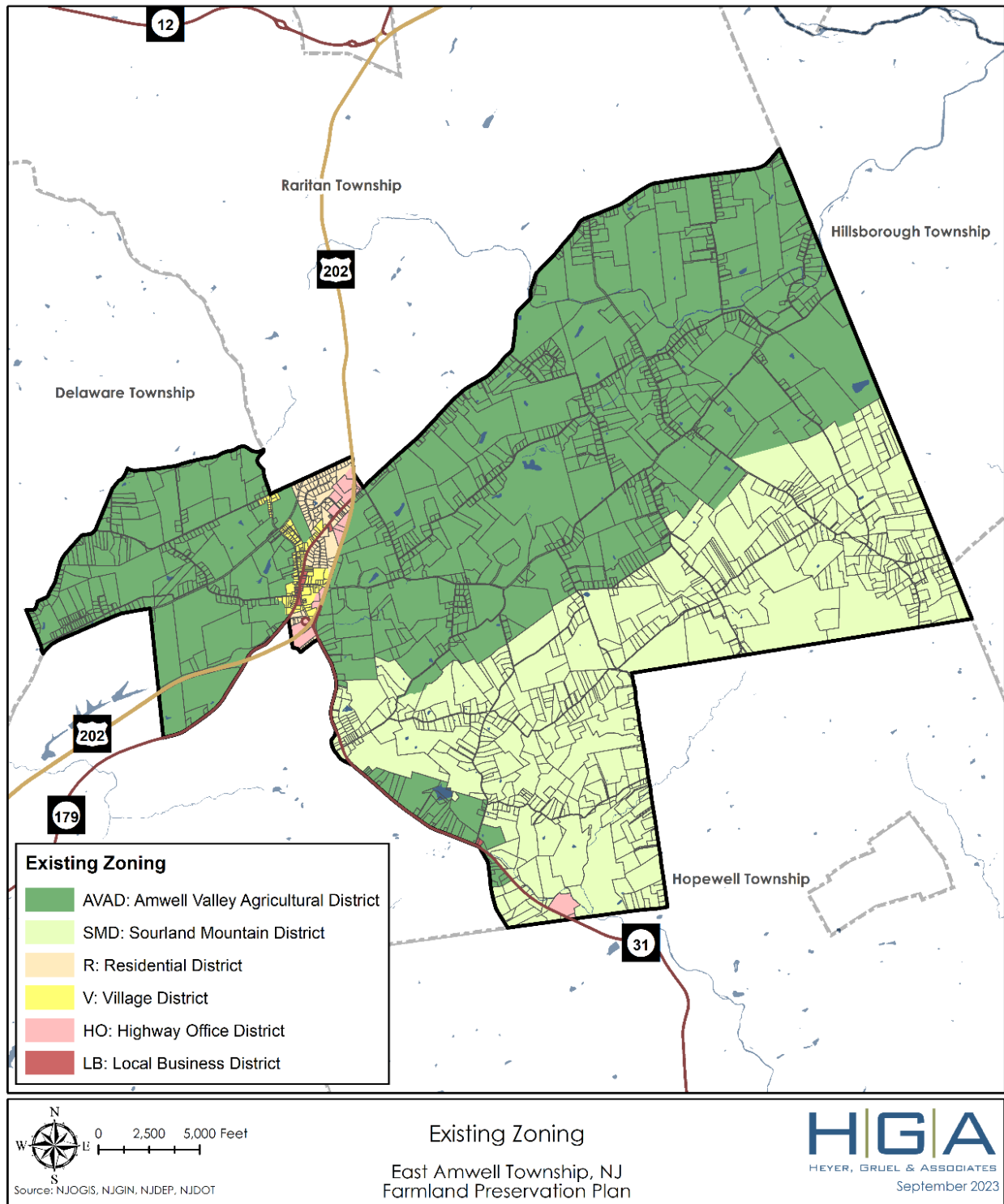
Non-Residential Districts

The **Local Business District** is located in two areas including the Village of Ringoes and at the intersection of Linvale Road and Route 31. This District recognizes existing commercial development patterns.

The **Highway and Office District** is situated in two areas including one which adjoins the Village of Ringoes along southbound Route 202 and another which is found at the intersection of County Route 518 and State Route 31.

The **Village District** was established to set specific standards to protect the character of the designated areas and the historic Village of Ringoes. Major changes in land use relationships are not intended for this zone. These areas are basically developed. As the Township grows, the village is intended to provide local, not regional, needs and services.

The “Existing Zoning” map graphically depicts the location of these districts within the Township.



D. Current Land Use and Trends

The majority of East Amwell Township remains agricultural or forested. Since the early 1980s, however, most of the development that has occurred in East Amwell Township has taken the form of single-family home subdivisions and the construction of individual single-family homes on exiting lots. This can explain in part why the Township's urban land cover increased by 54% between 1986 to 2015. This data reflected in the land use/land cover data shown in Table 29 below.

Table 29: East Amwell Land Use/Land Cover (1986-2015)

Type	1986		1995		2002		2007		2012		2015		Change 1986-2015 (Percentage)	
	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%
Agriculture	9,057	50%	8,467	46%	7,995	44%	7,781	43%	7,392	41%	7,484	41%	-1,574	-17%
Barren Land	34	0%	11	0%	103	1%	6	0%	1	0%	7	0%	-27	-80%
Forest	4,566	25%	4,787	26%	4,914	27%	4,845	27%	5,174	28%	5,053	28%	487	11%
Urban	2,059	11%	2,454	13%	2,698	15%	3,089	17%	3,155	17%	3,183	17%	1,124	55%
Water	68	0%	68	0%	112	1%	130	1%	138	1%	134	1%	66	97%
Wetlands	2,488	14%	2,485	14%	1,450	13%	1,420	13%	2,411	13%	2,411	13%	-77	-3%

During this same time period, land use trends in the Township has largely echoed those of the County and State. Agricultural areas have shown a steady decrease as urban and developed areas have encroached on retiring farm lands. As a result, there has been an almost equal exchange of agricultural lands lost and urban acres gained, as shown in Table 30.

Table 30: Hunterdon County Land Use/Land Cover (1986-2015)

Type	1986		1995		2002		2007		2012		2015		Change 1986-2015 (Percentage)	
	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%
Agriculture	101,474	36%	89,717	32%	81,999	29%	79,746	29%	77,736	28%	77,455	28%	-24,019	-24%
Barren Land	1,402	1%	1,117	0%	1,451	1%	974	0%	691	0%	888	0%	-514	-37%
Forest	99,541	36%	100,585	36%	101,218	36%	99,383	36%	100,455	36%	100,003	36%	462	0%
Urban	45,670	16%	57,051	20%	63,905	23%	68,704	25%	69,985	25%	70,627	25%	24,867	54%
Water	5,986	2%	6,035	2%	6,938	2%	7,026	3%	7,205	3%	7,101	3%	1,115	19%
Wetlands	25,595	9%	25,254	9%	24,256	9%	23,936	9%	23,823	9%	23,811	9%	-1,784	-7%

General Lot Size Categories and Distribution throughout Township

The general development pattern within the Township consists of the scattered development of smaller lots (less than 10 acres) throughout the Township, with a clustering of lots less than an acre in the Village of Ringoes. The current zoning districts allows for 10-acre lots in the Amwell Valley Agricultural District (AVAD) and 15-acre lots in the Sourland Mountain District. Together, both of these Zoning Districts make up the majority of the Township. The AVAD was fashioned in response to East Amwell's formal submission of its 1993 Master Plan to the State Planning Commission (SPC) for a Consistency Review, wherein the SPC recommended that East Amwell "ensure that large contiguous tracts are preserved from development" through techniques such as lot size averaging, lot suitability standards and lower residential density.

Innovate Planning Techniques

In an effort to save farmland, East Amwell Township has employed several planning techniques. At the writing of this Plan, East Amwell Township has provisions in its ordinance regarding lot size averaging, cluster zoning, conservation subdivision, open lands subdivisions, and open space preservation in the AVAD. All of these innovative planning techniques employed in East Amwell are voluntary rather than mandatory, but the low-density zoning regulations in the AVAD tend to afford flexibility.

- **Cluster Development** is defined as a planned development technique based on a density of dwelling unit(s) per acre. The permitted number of dwelling units is clustered on reduced lot sizes onto one or more portions of a larger, overall tract. This results in higher densities on individual segments of the tract, provided that other contiguous portions of the tract are left as open space or common property to ensure that the gross density limitation of the entire tract is not exceeded.

East Amwell's experience with clustering indicates that it may be a tool to preserve limited amounts of open space, but it will not preserve large blocks of contiguous acreage for long term agricultural production. The Township's cluster developments give evidence to the long-term impacts of residential land conversion. Carousel Estates, for example, is a 22-unit subdivision located on Van Lieu's Road. This development utilized 50 acres of the original 75.5-acre tract for residential lots and retained 25 acres for a private ownership farmette under the Township's ordinance provisions for lot-size averaging. The 25-acre parcel provided a limited opportunity for continued agriculture when located next to a 22-lot development and represents the elimination of a block of productive farmland in the Township. The permitted residential density (3 acres) at the time of the development and resulting number of units created this problem. The lesson learned in this scenario is that substantial new residential development is detrimental to agricultural operations, regardless of clustering practices. The residential density has since be amended to 10 acres.

- **Lot-Size Averaging** is a tool that allows the Planning Board to approve varying lot areas, dimensions, yards, and setbacks throughout a subdivision in such a way that produces an average standard across the development which conforms with the regulations set forth in the ordinance. This zoning alternative is provided to promote larger parcels for agricultural uses and to meet the goals stated in the Land Management ordinance to "encourage and promote flexibility, economy and environmental soundness in subdivision layout and design".

With this tool, the minimum residential lot area is 1.5 acres, with a maximum dwelling unit density of 0.1 unit/acre. Each lot created by a subdivision under this tool shall satisfy lot suitability requirements, and shall be deed-restricted against further subdivision. The design of the

development utilizing this option is required to foster the following objectives: retention of large contiguous farmland areas; stream corridor and wetlands preservation; steep slope protection; overall site design; reduction of impervious coverage; traffic circulation; and the site's natural features, topography and relationship to open lands on neighboring parcels.

This option has been in use since the 1999 zoning change and has led to a variety of lot sizes in relatively small subdivisions throughout the Township, which include parcels suitable for many types of agriculture. In some instances, these parcels are suitable for cultivation when in proximity to other cropland. The Planning Board has and will continue to work with developers to maximize the agricultural usefulness of the larger parcels, but there are no specific provisions under lot-size averaging to enforce this objective. Since 1999, there have been only a few instances in which the area of a development has been large enough for a developer to consider clustering around an interior roadway, including the Gordeuk and Fred Rynerson tracts (described in the "Open Land Ratio Zoning" subsection below).

- **Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)** is defined as a procedure under which municipalities, by ordinance, could facilitate the transfer of development potential from areas which require special protection (farmland, woodland, floodplain, aquifer recharge area, natural habitats, recreation or parkland, or land which has unique aesthetic, architectural, or historic value) to areas that can absorb increased development without substantial adverse environmental impact. Two or more municipalities would be permitted to provide for a joint program for development transfers. The development transfer ordinance would designate sending zones and receiving zones, and would allow property owners in the receiving zone to sell any development potential attached to their property to a person who could use it in the receiving zone.

The Township has extensively explored opportunities for transfer of development rights. A grant was awarded by the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC) to study TDR as a technique to improve consistency with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan. In general, the study found that a voluntary TDR program would not likely be effective in preserving farmland in East Amwell due to the extent of permitted development and the limited suitability of the areas studied for receiving districts. In addition, there is no environmentally acceptable waterway within the township to handle the effluent from a treatment plant that would be a necessary service component of a TDR development.

Eventually, the Township moved toward an aggressive farmland preservation program through purchase of development rights and modest clustering options such as lot size averaging, and

open lands ratio zoning both of which have yielded minimal results. This shift was a result of inadequate conditions to support TDR, including: the failure to find a suitable location for wastewater disposal; general reluctance on the part of property owners to be near a receiving district; and the general conservatism of farmers who were suspicious of the transfer concept.

- **Open Lands Ratio Zoning** is a zoning alternative that is available only in the AVAD and is intended to promote the retention of large farm tracts and the aggregation of smaller farm parcels through the granting of density incentives to those who qualify and submit to requirements. Similar to the tools described above, it is also intended to encourage and promote flexibility, economy and environmental soundness in subdivision layout and design. Under this tool, at least 75% of the tract shall be designated as “open lands” and be deed-restricted for agricultural use. At least 65% of such designated open lands shall be unconstrained land area and prime soils (SCS Classes I and II) or soils of statewide importance (SCS Class III). Lots qualifying as open lands shall be permitted a primary residence and other appropriate accessory buildings. In return for meeting the open lands requirements, the developer is entitled to a 50% bonus on the number of residences allowed on the remaining 25% of the tract. For tracts with an area of 100 acres or less, the open lands shall be contained in one deed-restricted contiguous parcel. For tracts with an area larger than 100 acres, the open lands may be composed of noncontiguous parcels, provided that each open lands area shall contain at least 50 contiguous acres.

This option was utilized by the developer of the Gordeuk farm located on Rosemont-Ringoes Road. The lot, which is now identified as Lot 5.10, consists of 11 acres which will be further sub-divided into seven lots. Lot 5 is roughly 45 acres in area and was sold by the developer to a farmer. The development was nominated for New Jersey Future’s Smart Growth award.

- **Incentive for Preservation of Larger Tracts** is a tool that permits a landowner to subdivide from the same tract, provided that at least 50 acres remains in preservation on no more than two lots, each having a minimum lot area of 1.5 to 3 acres and a single-family dwelling as a principal use. The subdivided lots are recognized as severable exceptions, located so as not to impact the agricultural use of the preserved farmland. The agricultural deed-restriction must be substantially in the form utilized in the New Jersey Agricultural Retention and Development Program.

Buffer Requirements

East Amwell’s zoning ordinance requires any residential lot created by a subdivision to have a buffer, which will be located on the residential lot along any lot line adjacent to lands that are deed-restricted for agricultural purposes. These buffer areas are restricted to the installation of a board or split-rail fence and

must be maintained by the lot owner just inside the residential lot line. No new trees can be planted within 25 feet of the lot line.

East Amwell believes that these buffers have given reasonable protection to the Township's farmers. However, the adequacy of buffers depends more on the character of the surrounding neighborhood than on physical barriers or distance requirements. The Township believes that its relatively low population density and the absence of large tract developments within its borders have been critical elements in the maintenance of a farm-friendly environment.

Development Pressure and Land Value Trends

East Amwell is located within commuting distance of major metropolitan areas and suburban corporate headquarters and is bisected by major state highway Route 202/31. Because of these dynamics, the Township faces the growth pressures faced by the larger region.

One method of determining development pressures on East Amwell Township is the use of data that would reflect the pace of development and perhaps help establish the development trends in the future. Two sets of data were used in this determination: housing building permits and population. Table 31 below shows the number of Residential Building Permits (CO's) approved between 1995 and 2018.

Table 31: East Amwell Housing Permits (1995-2018)	
Year	Number of Permits
1995-1999	71
2000-2004	46
2005-2009	15*
2010-2014	31
2015-2018	21

**Data for the years 2006, 2007, and 2008 are missing*

The U.S. Census indicates that the Township had 1,655 housing units in 2010 and 1,636 in 2018, which reflects a decrease of 1% over 8 years. When compared to a 2% increase in Hunterdon County over the same time period, it can be interpolated that although the Township has experienced a change in its population, amount of developed land, and housing units, it has been experiencing change at a lower rate than that of the County.

The population in the Township increased 15% in the decades between 1980 to 2010, which can be correlated with the increase in the conversion of land to developed area that occurred during this same time period. Throughout these three decades, Hunterdon County experienced a much larger population increase of 47%. More recently beginning in 2010, the Township has experienced a decreasing trend in population while the County has experienced an increasing trend. Overall East Amwell's population has grown by a total of 15.7% in the decades between 1950 and 2020, representing a much slower growth rate than that of the County, which grew by a total of 201.7% in the same time period. Table 32 below

summarizes population change in East Amwell and Hunterdon County in the decades between 1950 and 2020.

Table 32: East Amwell & Hunterdon County Population Change (1950-2020)		
Year	East Amwell Population	Hunterdon County Population
1950	1,525	42,736
1960	1,981	54,107
1970	2,568	69,718
1980	3,468	87,361
1990	4,332	107,776
2000	4,455	121,989
2010	4,013	128,349
2020	3,917	128,947
Overall Change (%)	15.7%	201.7%

Source: U.S. Decennial Census Data

Over the last 30 years, most of East Amwell Township's development has taken the form of subdivisions of single-family homes on lots of 1.5 to 6 acres in area. Development interest slowed after the Township implemented changes to its area requirements from 3-acre zoning to 10- and 15-acre zoning. The major factor that is helping to decrease development pressures in East Amwell is the Township's commitment to the active use of Open Space and Farmland Preservation programs as a land use planning tool. As a result of this commitment, 46% of East Amwell Township's land has been successfully preserved.

E. Sewer Service Areas / Public Water Supply Service Areas

There are no sewer services or public water supply service areas within East Amwell.

Section IV: East Amwell Township's Farmland Preservation Program – Overview

A. County Agricultural Development Areas

The Hunterdon County Agricultural Development Area (ADA) designates land that has potential for long-term agricultural viability, where agriculture is the preferred but not the exclusive use. The purpose of the ADAs is to identify where agricultural operations are likely to continue in the future and therefore be eligible for the farmland preservation program.

The boundary of the County ADA is based on both statutory and county criteria:

- The land must be agriculturally productive or have future production potential. Also, zoning for the land must permit agriculture or permit it as a nonconforming use.
- Suburban and/or commercial development must be reasonably non-existent in the proposed ADA.
- The ADA must comprise less than 90% of the County's agricultural land mass.
- Any attributes deemed appropriate by the CADB must also be incorporated.

Hunterdon County's ADA requirements were most recently updated by the CADB in 2018 and include:

- A minimum contiguous area of at least 250 farm-assessed acres;
- The predominance of prime soils or soils of statewide importance;
- Productive farm cluster reasonably free of non-farm development;
- Municipal support of inclusion and long-term farming potential;
- The absence of interstate interchanges within 1-mile (subject to municipal override);
- The absence of public sewers with excess capacity; and
- The absence of an approved development application for non-farm use. ¹

The ADA in East Amwell Township covers most of the Township with the exception of the southern area in the Sourlands and the Village of Ringoes.

B. Farmland Preserved to Date by Program

Statewide Farmland Preservation Formula

Recently adopted on April 7, 2025, the Statewide Farmland Preservation Formula, often called the Statewide Formula Value (SFV), offers landowners another value to choose from when seeking to protect their farm. Because farmland has value beyond what the market can capture, the Statewide Formula enhances payment based on the agricultural and natural resource characteristics of the property.

¹ Hunterdon County. (2023). *Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan Update*

County Easement Purchase and County Planning Incentive Grants

The County Easement Purchase Program in Hunterdon County has been offered to landowners since 1985. Also known as the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) or Traditional program, it was developed in accordance with the enabling legislation - the State Agriculture Retention and Development Act of 1983. To participate in the program, a municipality must have an adopted Farmland Preservation Plan, a dedicated source of funding, and a County Agriculture Development Board (CADB). The program involves the sale of development rights on a farm in exchange for a permanent restriction on the land that requires it to be available for agriculture in perpetuity. The County's minimum eligibility requirements for the PDR program is that the farm: is located in an Agricultural Development Area (ADA) and an agricultural district; is a minimum of 40 acres; and is predominantly tillable farmland. The County's 2023 Farmland Preservation Plan provided an update to the classification of preserved farmlands. Tier I includes farms greater than 40 acres, Tier II includes farms adjacent tot preserved farms that range from 10 to 40 acres, and Other Farms, which includes farms not adjacent to preserved farms that range from 10 to 40 acres.

The goal of County Planning Incentive Grants (PIGs) is to protect and preserve large pieces of contiguous farmland through the purchase of development easements. This program became available in 1999, however, regulation amendments which took effect on July 2, 2007 gave the program greater emphasis replacing the traditional County Easement Purchase program. The County funding emphasis is the assemblage of core areas of farmland for preservation. Already preserved farms are the foundation that laid the base for the general areas as the preservation of large tracts of agricultural land. Added to the preserved farms are farms that have already received final approval from the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) for preservation as an additional emphasis of the program. In addition to preserved farms and farms that have already received SADC approval for preservation, farms that are enrolled into the Term Farmland Preservation program receive emphasis as well. The County's purpose of focusing on areas in which farms were already preserved was to further preserve farms to allow for a more consistent and seamless agricultural land base. The emphasis is to prioritize opportunities with farmable soils and the location of permanent agriculture.

The SADC has updated their rules (N.J.A.C. 2:76- 6.3 through 2:76-17A.17) to promote County PIGs to streamline and expand the farmland preservation program throughout the state. This program is operated in a similar way to the Municipal Planning Incentive Grant Program in that it gives the county more flexibility to preserve those farms that meet the specific preservation needs and goals of the county. This is the most widely used approach to farmland preservation in East Amwell Township. As seen in Table 33 below, 2,850 acres have been preserved using this method.

Table 33: East Amwell Farms Preserved Under County Easement Purchase Program				
Year	Owner	Block	Lot	Acres
1989	Manners, E.	23	12, 12.01	123.19
		35.01	8.01	

1989	Hill, W. & P.	31	5	131.48
		26	3	
1989	Totten, R. & E.	27	39	136.72
1990	Kinderman	24	3	57.73
1991	Thompson (S)	35.01	13	163.65
1991	Thompson (N)	35.01	10	123.59
1993	Gulick, R. & E.	30	5, 41.01, 42	215.42
1995	du Fosse	20	20	130.98
1995	Weeden, M.	33	5, 7.06, 1.03	78.88
1999	Sowsian	40.01	3	148.81
		32	3	
2000	Garrett, R.&D./Mack, J.&L.	34	1.01, 2, 2.09, 4	65.13
2001	Schwab, F.&M.	17	10,9	145.74
2001	Nemeth, E. & R.	21	19.03	59.64
2001	Batlle, M.	18	23	75.54
2001	Amwell Valley Conservancy	8	2, 3, 4, 24	337.03
2002	Martin,T (Originally J. Kanach)	20	22	49.30
2002	Nielsen, K. & Galloway, P.	32	1	87.77
2002	Russell, N. & V.	27	47	95.32
		31	3	
2002	Kanach, G & J	20	23.02	49.65
2002	McLarty	25	9	90.40
2002	Mencheck	30	16.01, 12	51.03
2006	Henssler, S.	25	12	123.39
2006	Kanach	18	22	133.47
2007	Peabody, R. & K./Manners B. & J.	24	11	46.05
2011	Harrison Living Trust	31	4,10	96.31
2020	Martin, Timothy & Katharine	1	1	33.78
Total	26 Farms	--	--	2,850

Municipal Planning Incentive Grants

The SADC established the Planning Incentive Grant Program, in accordance with the Planning Incentive Grant Act of 1999 (N.J.S.A. 4:1C-43.1) to provide grants to eligible municipalities to purchase agricultural easements on targeted farms in ADA's to protect concentrations of farmland in identified project areas. Typically, the local municipality and county cover the remainder of the acquisition costs. The PIG program places an emphasis on planning for farmland preservation and agricultural retention. To qualify for a Planning Incentive Grant, municipalities must adopt a farmland preservation plan element in their municipal master plan pursuant to the Municipal Land Use Law, a right to farm ordinance, a dedicated source of funding for farmland preservation, and establish an Agricultural Advisory Committee that must meet at least twice annually. The municipal Agricultural Advisory Committee is required to delineate project areas and develop a list of target farms. The SADC's rules identifying minimum soil and tillable acreage requirements for municipal PIGs and all SADC programs may mean that some farms on existing municipal target farms lists will no longer be eligible for the program. As shown in Table 44 below, East Amwell Township has preserved 923.05 Acres under this program.

Table 34: East Amwell Farms Preserved Under Municipal PIG Program				
Year	Owner	Block	Lot	Acres
2003	Halstead, R & D	20	17.07, 18	109.58
2003	Furst	20	6	62.23
2003	Harrison	20	24	59
2003	Hill	21	19	48
2003	Kanach J.	18	18	71
2006	Cannelongo, K.	27	33.01	25.27
2007	Wielenta North	25	11	23.10
2007	Wielenta South	32	5	73.37
2007	Torsilieri	21	15	19.00
2008	Isabella	25	3	31.37
2008	Kanach	21	11.01,12	35.90
2009	Hazel, Harrison	27	46, 46.05	28.99
2009	Fisher (DW Vineyards)	17	16.03	25
2009	Staump/Hay	21	16, 16.01	55.98
2011	Zuegner	17	34	78.83
2011	Rynearson (North)	3	3.04	43.25
2011	Rynearson (South)	3	3	36.48
2014	Hay	21	16.03	22.62
2014	Scibilia	11	37	40.10
2021	Thomas, Susan	21	13	33.98
Total	20 Farms	--	--	923.05

State Acquisition

There are two options for State direct purchases to preserve farmland. One State option for farmland preservation is the SADC Direct Easement Program. In this program, the SADC purchases development rights for preservation purposes under its Direct Easement Purchase Program. The second option is the outright acquisition of a farm under the Fee Simple Purchase Program. That said, landowners have the option to either sell the development rights to their land and continue to own and farm the land or sell their land outright to the State under the Fee Simple Easement Purchase Program. In both cases, the land is permanently deed-restricted for agricultural use. Under the Direct Easement Purchase Program, the SADC provides direct cost share funding to purchase development easements from landowners. In most cases, the State will pay up to 100% of the certified appraised easement value in the Direct Easement Purchase Program.

Applications for the SADC Direct Easement Program are accepted year-round. An applicant farm that is strategically located and meets or exceeds the minimum criteria for size and quality score will qualify for immediate consideration for preservation. The SADC and landowner will enter into a 120-day option agreement in which the landowner agrees not to market the property for that time period. This provides time for two independent appraisers to evaluate the value of the development rights on the land. Based on the findings of those appraisers and the recommendations of its own review appraiser, the SADC will certify a fair-market value and make an offer. If the offer is accepted, the landowner and SADC will enter into a sale agreement for the development easement to the State. The SADC will order a survey and title search and work directly with the landowner through closing. The SADC has preserved 724 acres in East Amwell Township using the Direct Easement Purchase Program, as shown below on Table 35.

Table 35: East Amwell Farms Preserved Under SADC Direct Easement Purchase Program				
Year	Owner	Block	Lot	Acres
2002	Crater, S.	17	15	41.44
2004	Rieter	16.01	31.05	19.05
2004	Reiter	16.01	31	52.03
2005	Wee Beginnings Farm, LLC	40.02	6	62.92
2005	Baron (NJCF)	21	2, 2.03	163.23
2007	Colonial Sportsmen Club, Inc.	41	25.01, 25.02	92.37
2011	Holcombe	34	34	90.74
2012	Southwark Farms	11	3	61.38
2018	Van Doren	20	11, 16, 16.01, 30	140.68
Total	9 Farms	--	--	723.84

When the SADC purchases farms outright, it resells them at public auction as permanently preserved farms. This is the SADC Fee Simple Acquisition Program, which involves an entire property being purchased directly by the State. The SADC pays the survey and title costs, and the landowner is exempt from paying rollback taxes for farmland assessment and the transaction can be completed in a matter of months. The SADC negotiates a purchase price subject to recommendations of two independent appraisers and review by a State review appraiser. The land becomes deed-restricted so that it becomes permanently preserved for agriculture. In this type of acquisition, the landowner does not retain any rights. The property is then resold at auction with the agricultural deed restriction. The SADC does not retain ownership of the farm in most cases. To qualify to participate in this program, the farmland must be within an ADA and be eligible for Farmland Assessment. 254 acres have been purchased to date in East Amwell Township using the Fee Simple Purchase Program, as shown on Table 36 below.

Table 36: East Amwell Farms Preserved Under SADC Fee Simple Purchase Program				
Year	Owner	Block	Lot	Acres
1996	Van Marter	17	24	147.99
2002	Cavalier	18	1	105.9
Total	2 Farms	--	--	253.89

Alternate Means

East Amwell Township has had a number of farms preserved through donations or as part of a land use technique for preservation. There has been one property that was preserved with Federal grants, rather than State or County funds. 332 acres of land have been preserved to date through these methods, as shown on Table 37 below.

Table 37: East Amwell Farms Preserved by Alternate Means					
Year	Owner	Block	Lot	Acres	Acquisition Means
1997	Rosenberg	2	10.05	46.78	Donation
1997	Gardner	35.01	11	56.67	Donation
1996	Drake	18	24	25.64	Preserved as part of development
1999	Denton, Inga Estate	23	11	104.22	Donation
2007	Gordeuk	2	5	44.43	preserved through open lands ratio
2012	Drift	27	33	54.11	USDA FRLPP
Total	6 Farms	--	--	331.85	--

Transfer of Development Rights

As of the writing of this Plan East Amwell Township has no TDR program, and such a program has not been used to preserve farmland in the Township although it was researched extensively. The Transfer of Development Rights is a growth management tool that transfers development rights from one location, a preservation or 'sending' area, to another area as an identified growth area known as a 'receiving' area. The development rights are used to allow for development at a higher density than what the previous zoning of the receiving area allowed.

Other Programs and Partnerships

Approximately 46% of East Amwell Township land is preserved. 76% of that preserved land (over 5,000 acres) is protected with agricultural easements. The Township also collaborates with the State of New Jersey and non-profits (New Jersey Conservation Foundation, Hunterdon Land Trust, and D&R Greenway Land Trust) to protect land using the Green Acres Program, much of which is used for agricultural purposes. The township recognizes that, while not all this land is available for agriculture, this helps the agricultural industry by preventing incompatible land uses, such as residential uses adjacent to agricultural uses.

C. Consistency with SADC Strategic Targeting Project

The purpose of the SADC Strategic Targeting Project is to prioritize farmland to be preserved by targeting farms for preservation based on specific criteria, including the prioritization of prime and statewide soils in agricultural production outside sewer service areas. According to the SADC, the Strategic Targeting Project has three primary goals. These are as follows:

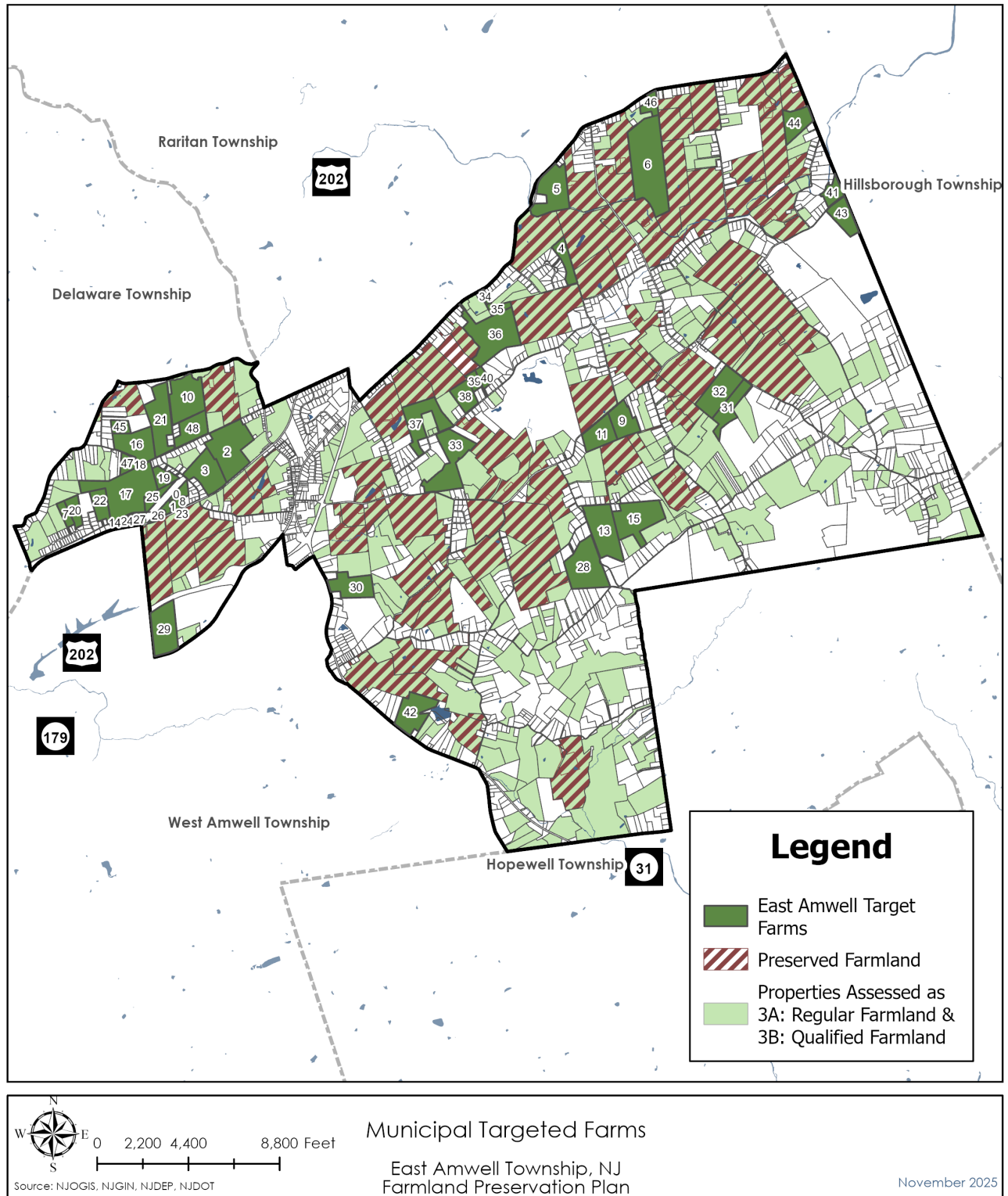
- The coordination of farmland preservation and retention of agricultural practices "with proactive planning initiatives";
- To update and create maps which serve as a tool for more accurate preservation targets;
- To coordinate different preservation efforts, such as open space, with farmland preservation.

Through the use of the Strategic Targeting Program, the SADC hopes to more efficiently target and designate farmland for preservation and, by doing so, boost the State's agricultural industry. East Amwell Township has identified target farms that meet the SADC primary goals, outlined in Table 38 below. In addition, the Township continues to update all available information, through GIS and statistical data in order to maintain a data base of potential target farms for preservation efforts. East Amwell Township, through the Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC), has maintained a strong relationship with the County Agriculture Development Board and SADC through continuous updates of the municipal PIG and efforts to preserve farmland. The Township's successful efforts with both the County and State have led to the preservation of farmland in a coordinated fashion. The Township, through the AAC and Farmland/Open Space Preservation Committee (FOSPC), continues their efforts to preserve as much of the remaining

farmland in the Township as possible. Continued support and outreach to the CADB and SADC is a mainstay of the Township's plan to preserve farmland.

Table 38: East Amwell Target Farms				
ID #	Block	Lot	Owner	Acres
0	6	31	Perehynys Farms #2 LLC	12.13
1	6	31.03	Perehynys Farms #1 LLC	3.07
2	5	2	Serene Tranquility Farm LLC	89.7
3	5	1.06	Serene Tranquility Farm LLC	55.25
4	18	24	Akol, Fatih	24.24
5	18	3	Hockenbury, Irvin & Vilma	64.38
6	20	8	Welisewitz, Nicholas & Robert	149
7	6.01	18	Lahov, John Est & Patricia P	10.95
8	6	31.01	Perehynys Farms #1 LLC	3.09
9	33	15	Malinowski, Anthony	37
10	3	5	Perkovich, Sarah Estate	69.93
11	33	16	Petrolino, Robert & Jane	38.12
12	7	3.04	Perehynys Farms #1 LLC	1.57
13	40.02	1	Collins, Jane & Daniel	75.6
14	7	3.05	Perehynys Farms #2 LLC	1.84
15	40.02	2	Stults, Amos Jr & Marion M Trustees	78.55
16	2	5	Katric Farm LLC	42.43
17	6	25	Perehynys Farms LLC	116.5
18	6	14	Perehynys Farms LLC	0.72
19	6	16	Perehynys Farms #3 LLC	18.45
20	6.01	21	Lahov, John Est & Patricia Perneski	18.34
21	2	2	Wolfe, Richard A & Kathleen	65.72
22	6	26	Perehynys Farms #1 LLC	25.38
23	6	31.02	Perehynys Farms #3 LLC	3.23
24	7	3.06	Perehynys Farms #3 LLC	3.04
25	6	30	Perehynys Farms #2 LLC	15.1
26	7	10	Perehynys Farms #3 LLC	5
27	7	3	Perehynys Farms #2 LLC	3.02
28	40.01	5	Pursell, Charles li & Adele A.	82.63
29	8.02	29	Silvis, Margot M Trustee	60.5
31	27	7	Geils, Bryan D	47
32	34	27.01	Greek, Frank Jr & Cathy	32.4
33	34	27	Visceglia, John	59.34
34	25	2	Thompson Realty Co.	79.54
35	17	16.09	Thompson Realty Co Of Princeton	3.28
36	17	16.11	Thompson Realty Co Of Princeton	10.01
37	17	16	Thompson Realty Co. Of Princeton	100.86
38	17	32	Thompson Realty Co Of Princeton Inc	62.62
39	17	31.01	Cho, Byung W & Gina J	26.67
40	17	35.05	Cho, Byung W & Gina J	10.64
41	17	35.08	Cho, Byung W & Gina J	10.43
42	22	1	601 Corridor LLC	20.53
43	30	33	My Sisters' Bloomin Garden LLC	52.92
44	35	1	Princeton Research Lands Inc	34.01
46	2	9	Wolfe, Richard A & Kathleen	12.99
47	20	9	Welisewitz, Nicholas & Robert	14.7
48	6	13	Perehynys Farms LLC	12.89
49	3	4	Front Forty LLC	39.36
	TOTAL	--	--	1,841.23

The Farmland and Open Space Preservation Committee has recommended continued preservation efforts in these two areas and the AAC works closely but separately from the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Committee to communicate preservation efforts.



D. Term Preservation

The Term Preservation Program is a temporary farmland preservation program that, among many benefits, offers access to cost sharing for soil and water conservation projects. Farmland owners agree to voluntarily restrict nonagricultural development for a period of either eight (8) or sixteen (16) years in exchange for certain benefits. There are two types of eight-year programs: municipally approved programs, which require a formal agreement among the landowner, county and municipality; and non-municipally approved programs, which require an agreement between only the landowner and county.

Landowners apply to their county agriculture development board. Land must be located in an Agricultural Development Area and be eligible for Farmland Assessment and meet local and/or county program criteria. Landowners enrolled in both municipally and non-municipally approved programs receive no direct compensation for participating but are eligible to apply to the SADC for grants that fund up to 50% of the costs of approved soil and water conservation projects. Additionally, those in municipally approved programs enjoy greater protections from nuisance complaints, emergency fuel and water rationing, zoning changes and eminent domain actions. A Term Preservation agreement is recorded with the county clerk in the same manner as a deed. There are currently no Township farms in this program at this time.

E. Coordination with Municipal and County Open space Initiatives

East Amwell Township maintains active open space and farmland preservation initiatives. These efforts are a coordinated effort between local, County and State partners along with a very active non-profit participation from the Hunterdon Land Trust, D&R Greenway Land Trust, and the New Jersey Conservation Foundation. The Farmland and Open Space Preservation Committee frequently consults with these partners to support and assist in specific acquisitions.

East Amwell has always maintained an active map of all preserved properties in order to guide all preservation efforts. The Township policy is to preserve sections, either as open space or farmland, so that there are not isolated parcels of preserved land, but rather actively preserved lands that can benefit from the surroundings being preserved. This map includes the State and County open space properties, so any preservation effort can be coordinated appropriately.

F. Farmland Preservation Program Expended to Date by Source

As of December 2019, a total of more than \$34 million has been expended in the preservation of farmland in East Amwell Township. Of that, nearly \$24 million has been provided by SADC and distributed through various programs including County Easement Purchase, County PIG, Non-Profit partnerships, the Municipal PIG program, and SADC Easement Purchase and Fee Simple purchases. The use of a variety of programs and State and County Cost share has made farmland preservation in the Township a success. Table 39 below summarizes funding from these programs, as well as the corresponding contributions from East Amwell, Hunterdon County, and the State of New Jersey.

Table 39: East Amwell Funding Expended by Program

Program	Total Cost	Township Share		County Share		State Share	
		Value	%	Value	%	Value	%
County Easement Purchase	\$17,851,942.83	\$2,921,554.11	16%	\$3,486,685.64	20%	\$11,443,703.08	64%
MPIG	\$8,371,509.36	\$1,644,276.85	20%	\$1,575,469.85	19%	\$5,102,358.66	61%
SADC Direct Easement Purchase	\$6,535,740.05	\$141,908	2%	\$0	0%	\$6,393,832.50	98%
Alternative Preservation	\$300,000.00	\$0.00	0%	\$0.00	0%	\$0.00	0%
Total	\$34,197,073.24	\$4,707,738.51	14%	\$5,062,155.49	15%	\$23,883,482.60	70%

Monitoring of Preserved Farmland

Farmland preservation easements are monitored on an annual basis by the easement holder. All agricultural easements under the County Easement Purchase Program and the Municipal Planning Incentive Grant Program are monitored by Hunterdon County. All easements under the State Direct Easement Purchase Program and the Fee Simple Program are monitored by the SADC. All easements under the Non-Profit Program are monitored by the non-profit that owns the easement. East Amwell Township and the Agricultural Advisory Committee will forward suspected violations of easements to County and SADC officials if and when they are encountered.

Coordination with TDR Programs

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) may be used in conjunction with the traditional Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program; these two programs are not mutually exclusive. As described earlier in this Plan, The Township has researched the feasibility of implementing a TDR Program but has determined it to not be feasible at the time of the writing of this Plan.

SECTION V: Future Farmland Preservation Program

A. Preservation Goals

Historically, East Amwell Township's goal has been to preserve 500 acres of land a year for each of the next ten years. Per the Targeted Farm List, there are approximately 1,200 acres of prime land to preserve in the Township. The Township would like to preserve approximately one (1) farm per year. Given the average size of the Targeted Farm list farms, this would equate to about 75 acres per year over the course of the next ten years for a total of 750 acres.

The Township's strong agricultural presence has resulted in a substantial amount of farmland preservation over the years. As noted previously, over 5,000 acres have been preserved already as farmland and almost 3,000 acres as open space. The Township would like to continue this trend and preserve as much of the remaining active farmland as possible. The Township will need to consider each application carefully and expend any available funding in a manner that will help to not only preserve the most farmland possible, but also to preserve farmland under threat of development and the highest quality farmland. Balancing these is difficult and each application will need to be reviewed on its merits as landowner interest prevails.

The Township's goal may be ambitious, but in an agricultural area as active and significant as East Amwell, the Township believes these goals are attainable.

B. Project Area Summaries

As described earlier in this Plan, the boundaries for the existing Agriculture Development Area include most of the Amwell Valley Agricultural District. There are two distinct project areas within East Amwell: the larger project area is to the northeast of Route 202/31, above the Sourland Mountain range; and the smaller project area is in the northwest section of the Township.

C. Municipal and County Minimum Eligibility Criteria Coordination

East Amwell developed a list of minimum criteria for eligibility to apply for farmland preservation through the municipal PIG program. Minimum criteria for farmland preservation include:

- an acreage requirement of 25 acres or more,
- current eligibility under Farmland Assessment,
- road frontage of 50 feet or more, and
- 30% or more tillable acres.

These minimum criteria are less onerous than those of the County, which allows the Township to preserve properties that the County may not see as a priority. At the writing of this Plan, there are few properties that meet the criteria of the Township, but not that of the County.

The CADB has historically prioritized farms greater than 40 acres; however, recent *Census of Agriculture* data shows that more than half of all farms are under 50 acres. The CADB has recognized the value of these smaller, highly productive farms and has identified three tiers for preservation as follows:

TIER I. THE MOST PRODUCTIVE FARMS, > 40 ACRES

- >50% Prime or Statewide Soils
- 50% Tillable Land

TIER II. FARMS ADJACENT TO PRESERVED FARMS, 10-40 ACRES

- >50% Prime or Statewide Soils
- >50% Tillable Land

OTHER FARMS. FARMS NOT ADJACENT TO PRESERVED FARMS, 10-40 ACRES

- >50% Prime Soils
- >50% Tillable Land

Furthermore, all targeted farms reside within the ADA on a farm assessed property which has the potential for development.

The SADC has created minimum criteria to designate what qualifications a parcel needs to adhere to in order to be considered for a cost share by the SADC. The SADC has split the qualifications into two general land sizes: farms that are 10 acres and less, and farms that are greater than 10 acres.

Under the SADC programs, farms that are less than or equal to 10 acres are subject to the following criteria:

- Farm must produce \$2,500 worth of agricultural or horticultural products annually;
- At least 75% of the property, or a minimum of 5 acres, tillable, whichever is less;
- That tillable acreage must consist of soils that are capable of supporting agricultural or horticultural production such as Prime and Statewide soils;
- Further, the land must have development potential, which is evaluated by a subset of criteria including: the municipal zoning ordinance for the property as it is appraised must allow additional development (at least one residential site beyond existing extent of development); there must be access to the property that allows further development (if that access is only available through an easement, that easement must specify that further subdivision is possible); if access is through an easement, and it is subject to ordinances governing allowable subdivisions, common driveways and shared access, it must be confirmed in writing by a municipal zoning officer or planner;

If the farm does not meet the previous criteria, but the land is eligible for allocation of development credits from a transfer of development potential program that has been authorized and adopted by law, then it is eligible to enter the preservation process.

Under the SADC programs, farms that are greater than 10 acres are subject to the following criteria:

- At least 50% of the property, or a minimum of 25 acres, is tillable, whichever is less;
- That tillable acreage must consist of soils that are capable of supporting agricultural or horticultural production;
- The land must have development potential, which is evaluated by a subset of criteria including: municipal zoning ordinance for the property as it is appraised must allow additional development (at least one residential site beyond existing extent of development); there must be access to the property that allows further development (in the case that access is only available through an easement, that easement must specify that further subdivision is possible); if access is through an easement, and it is subject to ordinances governing allowable subdivisions, common driveways and shared access, it must be confirmed in writing by a municipal zoning officer;

The land must meet the above criteria or be eligible for allocation of development credits pursuant to a Transfer of Development Credits (TDR) program.

D. Municipal and County Ranking Criteria Used to Prioritize Farms

East Amwell Township's ranking criteria provide for the preservation of land with prime agricultural soils that are actively farmed. This point ranking system rewards size/acreage, tillable acres, prime soils acreage, statewide soils/acreage as well as frontage footage, and linking footage in a contiguous border with preserved property. These criteria provide an indication of agricultural productivity and continued viability. A positive consideration is a Conservation Plan on file with the Soil Conservation District. Points are deducted for a non-severable exception created for a new house, and for each severable exception. These ranking criteria are used to evaluate all applications that meet minimum eligibility requirement. The township uses these rankings to determine the best possible farms for preservation.

In all cases, land that is for sale will be the highest ranked, with the next highest priority assigned to lands owned by someone nearing retirement age who may be in the process of estate planning. The third priority would be land owned by a builder or developer. The fourth priority would be land owned by a bank, lending institution, or an estate. The fifth ranking would be assigned to active farmland owned by someone not near retirement age. Size is also an important ranking factor, and larger parcels will always be favored over smaller ones. The Township will continue to review farmland preservation application based on the State ranking criteria as well as local priorities of soils quality and need, should competing applications be submitted with limited budget.

Hunterdon County's ranking criteria are consistent with the State regulations §2:76-6:16 – Criteria for evaluating development easement applications as implemented through policy P-14-E. The evaluation is based on the merits of the individual application with a weighted factor assigned to each criterion. These include soil quality, tillable acres, boundaries and buffers, local commitment (for SADC and County applications), size of farm and density of lands dedicated to farmland preservation, and local factors encouraging agriculture and threat of development. The East Amwell Township Farmland and Open Space Preservation Committee considers these criteria when reviewing Farmland Preservation applications.

E. Municipal and County Policies Related to Farmland Preservation Applications

Approval of Housing Opportunities

- **Overall Housing opportunities permitted:** East Amwell Township's Land Use Ordinance for the Amwell Valley Agricultural District permits farm worker housing as a conditional use on farm properties greater than 20 acres.

Housing opportunities needed on farms generally relate to the use of agricultural labor. Vegetable farms that require manual harvest or equine farms that rely on caretakers to tend to horses are two areas in which onsite housing may be needed seasonally or permanently. Agricultural labor housing is not currently protected in the State of New Jersey Right to Farm Act but is recognized

as a need by the SADC and permitted on preserved lands, as long as SADC and CADB provides any needed approval. In addition, SADC's intent is that any new housing constructed is not for family members but for the use and enhancement of the agricultural operation. The SADC has a policy that a landowner may refer to in order to construct labor housing. These applications are reviewed by the State Agriculture Development Committee.

Another housing need is for family members so that the farm may be passed on from generation to generation. One difficulty with maintaining agriculture, which is a common family storyline, is that it is too difficult to pass the farm from one generation to the next. If there is insufficient housing on the farm to accommodate a succeeding generation of farmers, the likelihood of continued farming is lessened. The SADC needs to provide flexibility to allow for family farm housing that may be needed to keep the next generation farmer on the land. Appropriate restrictions can be put in place to allow for this type of housing without compromising the integrity of the deed restriction against development.

As identified previously, the primary farming activities in the Township are horse farms and field crops including grain, corn, and hay.

- **House replacement:** East Amwell Township's Land Use Ordinance permits the replacement of an existing dwelling, and provisions exist for the replacement of a nonconforming dwelling that is partially destroyed. These provisions are consistent with applicable law and the AAC has no policies or concerns regarding the existing provisions.
- **Residual Dwelling Site Opportunity Allocation:** Residual Dwelling Site Opportunities (RDSOs) are potential housing sites located within a deed-restricted farm. A designated RDSO allows the landowner to reserve the opportunity for a future residential unit or other structure as referred to in N.J.A.C. 2:76-6.17. Residential units can be allocated to parcels at a density of 1 unit per 100 acres, including existing residences. The site must be for "single-family residential housing and its appurtenant uses." To qualify as an RDSO, the SADC requires that the use of the residential unit be for agricultural purposes and that at least one person residing in the residential unit be regularly engaged in common farm site practices. The allocation of an RDSO must be approved by the CADB.

At the time of closing, the value of the RDSO is deducted from the total purchase price of the easement. After the farm is preserved, the landowner may apply to exercise the RDSO. In order to receive RDSO approval, a farm must meet the CADB and SADC criteria which generally require that the RDSO has a minimal impact on the existing agricultural operation. When farms apply to

programs that are governed by CADB oversight and are eligible for an RDSO, the CADB generally tries to discourage RDSO use. The CADB is, however, accepting of those applications as long as the applicant understands that the location must be approved by the CADB when the applicant chooses to exercise the RDSO option.

The Township's policies with respect to RDSOs, divisions of farmland, and approval of exceptions are consistent with the State's policies. The Township's policy is to facilitate land acquisitions, not to implement roadblocks.

Division of the Premises

The goal of the SADC is to preserve large tracts of farmland and, therefore, a division of the premises is not an encouraged practice. As identified in the Hunterdon County Plan, agricultural trends over recent decades have moved towards smaller, more productive farms. This has created opportunities for landowners to divide a permanently preserved farm, provided the division is for agricultural purposes and both parcels result in agriculturally viable tracts. An agriculturally viable parcel has been defined as a farm that is of sufficient size and soil quality such that it can accommodate a variety of agricultural uses suitable for the County. The CADB follows the State rules when taking into consideration agricultural subdivision applications and adheres to the criteria as it pertains to the purpose of the subdivision and the resulting parcels remaining agriculturally viable.

A landowner wishing to divide permanently preserved farmland must submit a written request. The application must be approved in writing by both the State Agriculture Development Committee and the CADB. Division of the application for farmland preservation is allowed by East Amwell Township before the property is preserved, only if the Township's minimum acreage requirement is maintained. East Amwell Township follows the rules established by the state.

Approval of Exceptions

Exceptions are defined by the SADC as "acres within a farm being preserved" which are "not subject to the terms of the deed of easement." When an exception is made, the landowner does not receive any compensation for the excepted area. Historically, exceptions were a practice that was not encouraged by the SADC and Township. This opinion has changed, however, as the SADC and Township has recognized that there are non-farming businesses that take place on viable farms. When exceptions are granted, it is recommended that they should be as small as possible. There are two types of exceptions that can occur; severable and non-severable.

- **Severable:** A severable exception is defined by the SADC as an "area which is part of an existing Block and Lot owned by the applicant which will be excluded from the restrictions of the Deed of

Easement and may be sold as a separate lot in the future.” A severable exception is made “if a landowner wants to be able to sell the excepted area separate from the deed-restricted farm.”

- **Non-severable:** Non-severable exceptions are defined by the SADC as “area which is part of an existing Block and Lot owned by the applicant that will not be subject to the restrictions of the Deed of Easement but cannot be sold separately from the remaining premises.” Unlike a severable exception, a non-severable exception is “always attached to the protected farm.” Exceptions made to farmland have the potential to impact the value of the property. When an appraisal occurs, both severable and non-severable exceptions are considered in the determination of the restricted/ after value of the property.”

F. Funding Plan

Description of Municipal and County Funding Sources

East Amwell Township will utilize several funding sources to finance the goals of the Farmland Preservation Plan. The Township has proven its intent to preserve farmland by creating an open space tax to help fund the municipal portion of the program. In 2019, this tax was \$0.04 for every \$100 dollars of assessed value and generated \$269,181.19. This tax is earmarked to help fund the preservation of farmland, as well as for the acquisition of other open space for recreation and conservation purposes.

Leveraging available funds to maximize their utility in achieving the objectives of this Plan will be determined by the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Committee, the Agricultural Advisory Committee, and the Township Committee. One method is an installment purchase plan with farmers that allows a maximum number of targeted farms to proceed toward acquisition simultaneously. An Installment Purchase is a contract between the buyer and the property owner in which the buyer promises to pay the purchase price—or portion thereof—for a farmland easement at a future date. Interest is paid semiannually between the time that the easement is given and the date that the purchase price is paid to the owner.

As previously indicated, the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Committee and Agricultural Advisory Committee work closely with other governmental agencies and with non-profits to coordinate and maximize funding. In 1999 with the approval of County residents, Hunterdon County enacted an Open Space, Recreation, Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund. The annual levy is up to \$0.03 per \$100 dollars of the total County equalized real property value. In 2019 the total County Open Space Trust Funds were \$6,486,864.81. Out of that \$1,946,059.44 (or 30%) was spent on Farmland Preservation. The same amount, \$1,946,059.81 (30%) was spent on Open Space Acquisition Grants. A smaller portion of \$648,686.48 (10%), was returned as grants to the municipalities for open space purposes. The remaining 30% of the County Open Space Trust Fund was allocated to Historic Preservation grants and maintenance of County historic and open space properties.

In the past when the State has contributed 60% of the negotiated price of a farmland preservation project, the County has typically contributed 20% and the Township has contributed the remaining 20%. The SADC uses a sliding scale to determine the State's cost-share, as depicted in Table 40 below.

Table 40: SADC Cot Share Formula	
Landowner's Asking Price	Committee Cost Share
From \$ 0.00 to \$ 1,000	80% above \$ 0.00
From > \$ 1,000 to \$ 3,000	\$ 800 + 70% above \$ 1,000
From > \$ 3,000 to \$ 5,000	\$ 2,200 + 60% above \$ 3,000
From > \$ 5,000 to \$ 9,000	\$ 3,400 + 50% above \$ 5,000
From > \$ 9,000 to \$ 50,000	60%
From > \$ 50,000 to \$ 75,000	\$ 30,000 + 55% above \$ 50,000
From > \$ 75,000 to \$ 85,000	\$ 43,750 + 50% above \$ 75,000
From > \$ 85,000 to \$ 95,000	\$ 48,750 + 40% above \$ 85,000
From > \$ 95,000 to \$ 105,000	\$ 52,750 + 30% above \$ 95,000
From > \$ 105,000 to \$ 115,000	\$ 55,750 + 20% above \$ 105,000
From > \$ 115,000	\$ 57,750 + 10% above \$ 115,000

As identified in the Hunterdon County Plan, the County and the municipality previously split the difference, but the County now employs a modified cost share formula based on the appraised value of the farm to determine how the cost share amount is split between the county and the municipality. The formula is shown in Table 41 below:

Table 41: Hunterdon County Modified Cost Share Formula	
Appraisal Value in \$/Acre	Increase in Municipal Cost Share (Percentage)
5,000 or less	0
5,001 to 7,000	1
7,001 to 9,000	2
9,001 to 11,000	3
11,001 and greater	4

The County feels that this allows for a more even distribution of county dollars, such that municipalities garnering a higher per-acre value do not absorb the majority of county money available. The reverse of this is also true; municipalities with lower per-acre prices will not suffer under this sliding scale system.

Cost Projections and Funding Plan Associated with 1, 5, and 10 Year Preservations Goals

It is the goal of the Township to preserve 75 acres of land a year, for each of the next ten years (for a total of 750 acres), using any available program option. At current values, the cost in the first year to preserve 15 acres of land is estimated to be approximately \$570,000-\$787,000. Another 800 acres over the next five years would cost approximately an additional \$2,850,000-3,930,000 and finally the remaining 1,000 acres by the tenth year would cost approximately an additional \$5,700,000-\$7,900,000, for an estimated maximum total of \$12,617,000. These costs have been calculated based on the first year's estimates (2024 dollars). Costs will most likely rise with inflation over the life of the plan.

East Amwell's biggest obstacle, in terms of farmland preservation, is the lack of interest from landowners to preserve farmland. However, the Township will continue to raise awareness on the program and engage the community with its preservation program.

G. Farmland Preservation Program and Administrative Resources

Municipal Staff and/or Consultant Resources

East Amwell Township has a part-time Farmland and Open Space Preservation Committee Administrator who reports to the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Committee. The Township has the necessary administrative resources to continue to acquire any and all available farmland. These include an active Farmland and Open Space Preservation Committee, an active Agricultural Advisory Committee, and a staff member—the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Committee Administrator, who oversees the administrative process of land acquisition. The Township Environmental Commission monitors all Township easements.

Legal Support

The Township has adequate legal counsel to assist with acquisitions.

Database Development

The Township relies on consulting Professional Planners and the services provided by Hunterdon County for database development and GIS information. Volunteers from the Township have also assisted with GIS planning initiatives from time to time.

Geographic Information System Capacity and staff resources

The Township relies on consulting Professional Planners and volunteers from the Township for GIS planning initiatives.

H. Factors Limiting Farmland Preservation Implementation

Funding

The Township has consistently supported farmland preservation acquisitions and has consistently funded its portion of the costs, in conjunction with other cost-share partners.

Projected Costs

In order for the Township to reach its goal of preserving 75 acres per year over the next 10 years, East Amwell anticipates that the cost of acquisition will range from \$7,600/acre (or \$570,000 for 75 acres) to \$10,500/acre (or \$787,000 for 75 acres) annually, to be shared among the various partners. Of course, some of these properties will be priced higher or lower than this estimate; regardless, it is typical for the Township to contribute 20% of the costs.

Table 42: Projected Costs by funding Partners to Purchase 75 Acres per Year				
Year	Cost	State	County	Township
One	\$570,000-\$787,000	\$456,000-629,600	\$114,000-\$157,400	\$114,000-\$157,400
Five	\$2.85-\$3.93 mil	\$2.28-\$3.14 mil	\$570,000-\$786,000	\$570,000-\$786,000
Ten	\$5.7-\$7.9 mil	\$4.56-6.32 mil	\$1.14-\$1.58 mil	\$1.14-\$1.58 mil

Both the Township and County Open Space Trust Funds depend upon local property values since they represent a percentage per \$100 assessed value. Consequently, as the value of easements increase (also a reflection of property value), so will the amount of money deposited in the Trust Funds.

Land Supply/ Landowner Interest

A greater factor limiting preservation will be landowner interest, attitudes toward government sponsored programs, time factors associated with preserving farms, prices paid for easements, and restrictive covenants in the agreements. It is recommended the Agricultural Advisory Committee and Open Space Committee reach out to the local farmers to continue to receive support in the farmland preservation program, rather than selling the land to developers.

Other

As a small community, it is important to note that the majority of the administrative resources upon which the Township relies are volunteers, although the Township may use the Planning Board's consultant planner, Township Attorney, and other Township professionals (for example, the Township Clerk, Tax Collector, Chief Financial Officer and Tax Assessor) to provide assistance in the Farmland Preservation Program as needed. Further, in the past, the Township has relied almost entirely on volunteers and its consultant Planners for mapping and GIS services.

The Township Farmland and Open Space Preservation Committee and Agriculture Advisory Committee were created, as required, by State statute and regulation to enable the Township to apply for both Farmland Preservation and Green Acres funding. To foster communication between the groups, a member of the Agricultural Advisory Committee is also appointed to the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Committee. The Agricultural Advisory Committee, Farmland and Open Space Preservation Committee, and Environmental Commission have participated in outreach efforts with the East Amwell community, usually at an event called Greenfest.

SECTION VI. Economic Development

A. Consistency with NJ Department of Agriculture Economic Strategies and Other Regional Plans/Initiatives

Hunterdon County 2007 Growth Management Plan

The 2007 Growth Management Plan for Hunterdon County evaluates the resources available at the State and regional level to promote economic development of agriculture. The County's plan starts by identifying the following factors needed to make agriculture sustainable over the next 20 years:

- **Enhancing agricultural viability:** This involves a response at all governmental levels to the changing nature of agriculture, specifically its diversification and changing value locally and regionally. The County advocates the adoption of policies and planning tools to ensure continuing viability of agriculture.
- **Non-farm residents' understanding and acceptance of the changing nature of agriculture:** The alternative to an unprofitable farming operation is usually residential development, resulting in a permanent loss of farmland.
- **Conflicts between farmers and non-farmers:** This relates to the complaints regarding noises and odors by new residents as well as crop losses from off-road vehicles trespassing on farmland. The County notes that most municipalities (including East Amwell Township) have adopted Right to Farm ordinances that afford farmers some protection from nuisance complaints, but that local land use policies should reflect the need for contiguous areas of farmland, and that attention should be paid to the location and orientation of new homes in rural areas in order to minimize potential conflicts.
- **Finding common ground between farmer and non-farmer constituents:** This affects issues such as roadside farm stands, impervious coverage, and construction of agriculture-related commercial facilities (i.e. horse show barns and wine tasting venues).
- **Aging farmers:** Farming must be affordable to the next generation. Farmland preservation programs help to provide opportunities for affordable deed-restricted farmland, but more needs to be done to ensure the viability of agriculture as an industry.
- **Available funding and planning techniques:** Given the limited availability of funding in light of all of the farmland that needs to be preserved, communities need to turn to other mechanisms such as density transfer programs and residential clustering options to help achieve the farmland preservation goal.

The County recommends the following strategies as part of its agricultural viability policy:

- **Agricultural Viability Education:** Farmers need ways of being kept up to date regarding state-of-the-art agricultural practices as well as marketing, financing, and other aspects of a successful

business operation. This is something that the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Service and other organizations do well, but such efforts should be expanded. Municipal officials, in turn, should remove regulations from their zoning ordinances that: impose excessive restrictions on farm retail marketing; require excessive improvements to farm properties; or preclude farm activities as permitted uses. New residents need to be educated about farming and the needs of the agricultural industry as a whole, and young farmers need to be drawn into the industry and retained. The County proposes a five-part action plan to accomplish these ends, which involves working with a number of regulatory and local governmental agencies and conducting outreach through means such as pamphlets, farm tours, and educational school visits.

- **Agricultural Products and Tourism:** Municipalities need to recognize the importance of direct marketing for smaller producing farms and make such opportunities available. Permitting farm stands, farmers markets, and other means of direct sales help facilitate profitability for certain types of farms. Examples of agri-tourism programs and business opportunities that can be implemented at the local level include bed and breakfast inns, wine trails, festivals that feature local agricultural products, and cultural events that feature local farms and farmers. The money spent by tourists on such programs has spillover benefits that impact other local businesses as well. The County's three-part action plan calls for the CADB to work with the Hunterdon County Chamber of Commerce to develop a County agricultural theme, host festivals featuring Hunterdon County and the region's agricultural products, and to work with the County's Information Technology Office and the Chamber of Commerce to expand websites to include agricultural events and farm markets.
- **Agricultural Business Opportunities:** Communities should take steps to attract businesses that use local farm products. The New Jersey Department of Agriculture's Division of Marketing and Development hosts the Jersey Fresh campaign and is responsible for other initiatives that promote and support New Jersey agriculture. It offers free materials to farmers to use for direct marketing, and it looks for marketing opportunities for New Jersey farmers. Once such opportunity identified in the County plan is for farmers to sell over-produced or undervalued produce to the New Jersey Department of Corrections, as a means of recouping costs in a poor market situation. Farmers who register with the New Jersey State Treasury are eligible for this program. The County's three-part action plan calls for the CADB to identify more opportunities like this, to work with the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Service and the Hunterdon Economic Partnership to maintain existing agricultural businesses, explore new and profitable agricultural opportunities and products and to disseminate such information to farmers.

- **Reduced Taxes on Farm Buildings:** Despite the Farmland Assessment Act, farmers still pay significant taxes on their homes and on farm buildings. Public support needs to be gauged for reducing taxes on buildings associated with farms and appropriate lobbying pursued. The County's two-part action plan calls for the CADB to research and formulate a position on this issue and, if appropriate, to approach State legislators representing Hunterdon County for a constitutional amendment to facilitate reduced taxation on farm buildings.

NJ Department of Agriculture Economic Development Strategies

The NJ Department of Agriculture Economic Development Strategies highlights several strategies for economic development that the Township supports. The Township has used the support services provided by the State and will continue to look to the State for guidance on ways to retain and promote agricultural production. The primary agricultural activities in the Township center around field crop production, nursery sales, and the equine industry. The following section has been provided by the Economic Development Strategies as it relates to the efforts of East Amwell Township:

Ornamental Horticulture Industry Strategies:

- Ensure Plant Health
- Increase Consumer Awareness
- Improve State and Public Contract Requirements

Field crop and Forage Crop Industry Strategies:

- Ensure Plant Health
- Support Organic Field Crop Production
- Support Plans for a Green Energy Initiative

Organic Industry Strategies:

- Promote Cost-Sharing
- Promote the Marketing of Organic Agricultural Products

Equine Industry Economic Development Strategies:

- Ensure Horse Health
- Promote the Industry

Agri-Tourism Industry Strategies:

- Expand Roadside Programs
- Consumer Promotion

The AAC promotes the continuation of these forms of agricultural development in the Township. These three forms of agriculture are the predominate activities currently practiced in East Amwell and are the most appropriate. The AAC and Township will continue to encourage and support a variety of economic strategies to support a diverse and healthy agricultural industry.

East Amwell Township's Proposed Economic Incentives

East Amwell Township is supportive of all of the County's strategies. Locally, the Township continues to review its Zoning Code and Planning documents to evaluate if barriers to farming and direct marketing of farm produce are present and can be removed.

B. Agricultural Industry Retention, Expansion, and Recruitment

Institutional

There are a number of mechanisms already in place which promote and encourage agricultural land retention in East Amwell Township. The Township is also firm in its commitment to the open space tax and to bonding as needed in order to achieve agricultural land retention.

- **Farmer Support:** In the past, East Amwell Township has invited the agricultural community to information sessions regarding estate planning and worked closely with farmers interested in preserving their land. Persons interested in purchasing farms are referred to the Farm Link Program through the SADC website. The web site lists farming opportunities available such as farms for sale or lease, internships, and relocation and expansion options.

In addition, new farmers or those interested in entering the agricultural industry, seeking educational opportunities related to the farming profession, converting an operation from one type to another, or assuming responsibility for an inherited farm are referred to such sites. The Northeast Organic Farmers Association of New Jersey (NOFA-NJ) periodically offers workshops entitled Exploring the Small Farm Dream, based on information outlined by the New England Small Farm Institute. Rutgers Cooperative Extension also offers a new farmers course using a similar curriculum. Aside from offering courses, Rutgers Cooperative Extension will deploy its agents to work with landowners to select crops and livestock suited to the soils of a particular site.

Farmers seeking information regarding financing can seek information from a range of sources. First Pioneer Farm Credit provides loans and financial services to new and established farmers, while the USDA Farm Service Agency coordinates various conservation and loan programs for which area farmers are eligible. Whole Foods Market has instituted a privately funded loan program, which has set aside \$10,000,000 to be allocated toward low-interest loans for farmers.

- **Marketing/Public Relation Support:** The New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA) instituted the Jersey Fresh promotional campaign over 30 years ago to increase awareness of locally grown produce and food products. Now, numerous farmers and venues use the Jersey Fresh logo. In recent years the program has expanded to include the designations Jersey Bred for horse and lamb production, Jersey Seafood, and Jersey Grown for horticulture. The NJDA also maintains a website

that offers a tool for locating roadside stands, community farmers markets, and pick-your-own facilities.

- **Community Farmers Markets:** East Amwell Township's Right to Farm Ordinance allows farm markets and farm stands, which create an additional source of sales and income for farmers.
- **Community Supported Agriculture:** Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a relationship of mutual support and commitment between local farmers and community members. Shareholders pay the farmer an annual membership fee to cover the production costs of the farm and in turn receive a weekly share of the harvest during the local growing season. The arrangement guarantees the farmer financial support and enables organic family farms of small and moderate sizes to remain in business. Ultimately, CSA creates agriculturally-based communities where members receive a wide variety of foods harvested at their peak of ripeness, flavor, and vitamin and mineral content.

The benefits of belonging to a CSA include a level of trust in the source of food products grown. Having a stake in the farm, members are assured that their produce comes from a local source. A CSA also helps to develop the community character by allowing residents to meet and talk to the farmer who grows their food. Food that is grown locally also improves air quality, as the food does not have to travel long distances to get to customers. This reduces air pollution from trucks that would be carrying the produce. CSAs that are also organic farms provide an added benefit to the community and to the members who have a stake in the farm. Using no pesticides and fertilizers, the community can be sure that fewer chemicals are running off into nearby waterways or seeping into groundwater sources. Members of the farm are also assured that the food they eat from the farm does not contain harmful chemicals.

- **Agricultural Education and Market Research Coordination:** Several farmers within the township make use of educational and marketing programs such as the Rutgers Cooperative Extension. According to the NJAES website Jersey Fresh Information Exchange, Rutgers Cooperative Extension launched an innovative produce distribution and merchandising pilot project in 2004 to help New Jersey farmers get their products into new retail locations, such as white-table restaurants and grocery chains. Less than a month after a kickoff meeting that brought New Jersey growers face-to-face with noted New Jersey chefs, national chain grocers and multi-state distributors, these new relationships had already turned into critically needed new sales.

The New Jersey Department of Agriculture's Division of Marketing and Development hosts the Jersey Fresh campaign and is also responsible for other initiatives that promote and support New Jersey agriculture. The division offers free advertising materials for farmer use and is a resource that can be used to identify opportunities that are helpful to agricultural businesses. For instance, the division has identified an opportunity for New Jersey farmers to sell over-produced or under-valued product to the New Jersey Department of Corrections. Hunterdon County farmers are eligible to take advantage of this safety net if they register with the New Jersey State Treasury. Opportunities like this should be identified and information should be made available to local farmers to help support agricultural businesses in the county and the township.

In addition, the NJAES website offers a wealth of information relating to animal agriculture, farm management and safety, pest management, plant agriculture and other elements of interest to those involved in commercial agriculture. The Hunterdon County RCRE traditionally has been a sponsor of workshops and a helpful resource for local farmers.

- **Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Sciences:** The Rutgers School of Environment and Biological Sciences focuses broadly on the physical and social sciences, but more minutely conducts research on the social and human dimensions of scientific practice in the economics, policy, and behavior of the environmental sector. East Amwell Township farmers, officials, and interested residents may make use their services regarding any opportunities for farm research and testing.

Businesses

- **Input Suppliers and Services:** Farm businesses and farming-related businesses are permitted and encouraged in East Amwell's limited commercial areas. Most of the Township's farms purchase products and supplies from larger agricultural centers or online, however, there are local services available for specialty items. If the farming community begins to provide more specialty products, the Township may be able to help create educational information on where local suppliers and distributors of specialty products can find and exchange items. It has become a goal of the Township to provide this type of information service to expand a growing specialty market.
- **Input Suppliers and Services:** As noted in Hunterdon County's Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan (CFPP), farmers throughout Hunterdon County have voiced a concern regarding the limited number of farm equipment dealers within the County. Because of this gap, many farmers must travel outside of the state or look online to purchase the equipment they need. The flexibility provided by the internet has mediated some of this concern, but it does not replace the

need for more local options. When it comes to equipment repairs, the County's CFPP reports that most farmers will attempt to conduct repairs and maintenance services themselves. For instances when farmers need outside assistance, there are two repair services available in the region.

- **Product Distributors and Processors:** As noted in Hunterdon County's CFPP, there are no major grain processing facilities located in Hunterdon County. Similarly, East Amwell Township has no such product distributors or processors. Because of this gap, farmers tend to either pursue distributors and processors in different regions of the State, or they will grind their own feed and sell it locally.

Explore Hunterdon

The Hunterdon County Economic Development & Tourism office notes that the recent popularity of the farm-to-table movement, Hunterdon County farms are poised to capitalize on the trend for local and organic eating. This movement has contributed to the rise in the number of specialty, niche and small-scale farms in the County. The tourism initiative- Explore Hunterdon provides a resource for these unique businesses, activities and events throughout the County. Explore Hunterdon is a one-stop resource for tourists to find u-pick activities, seasonal activities, and farm animal meet-and-greets. The website provides visitors with lists of the county's farms, markets, and associated businesses such as breweries, wineries, distilleries, and restaurants.

Anticipated Agricultural Trends

It is anticipated that agriculture in East Amwell Township will continue its recent trend of moving toward smaller, more intensive use farms. With this, it is predicted that: farmers will seek innovative marketing techniques to meet production needs; part-time farmers will continue to dominate the industry; and the diversity of farming found throughout East Amwell will continue.

These anticipated trends align with those of Hunterdon County as a whole. There is certainly a continued promise of successful agriculture in Hunterdon County, but the future of farming may very take a different form from the traditional image of wide, open fields of dairy cattle and corn that is typically associated with farming. It is predicted that part-time farmers will continue to play an important role in East Amwell's agricultural industry, and it is important that their presence is nurtured.

Part-time farmers are important for multiple reasons, one being that they minimize potential encroachment from non-farm developments by keeping their land out of the hands of developers. Additionally, they often provide farmland to other farmers through the lease of their land, granting access and opportunities to a wider population; this is particularly important for grain farming, which has a low per-acre value and required a considerable amount of land to be profitable. Furthermore, part-time farmers often do not have

the time or the land to plant enough hay or other feed for their livestock, and thus rely on and support the hay and grain farm markets.

In recent years, the number of small part-time farms within Hunterdon County has stabilized but continues to be a large percentage of the County's agricultural complexion. Assuming that the rural character of the Township is preserved and there are no major regulatory changes, it is anticipated that small farms will continue to be the trend in East Amwell. Profits may increase as agriculture in the Township enters a new phase towards smaller, more intensive types of farming including high value crops. Whereas grains and field crops have the lowest per acre value of products (\$200-\$700 per acre), high value crops such as vegetables and horticulture tend to have a much higher per acre value (\$2,000-\$18,000 per acre). For this reason, large farms are no longer necessary for comfortable profit margins.

Agricultural Support Needs

In general, the Township, with the support of AAC and Hunterdon County initiatives, has encouraged and promoted agricultural activities in the Township. However, there are areas that may be strengthened within the Township to better support the agricultural community. One such area is the Township's permitting and application process; streamlining this process would help farmers take advantage of changing market conditions. Additionally, providing increased AAC involvement to help farmers navigate and understand county and state regulations would also be valuable in supporting the agricultural community.

The Township may be able to support these types of activities by posting information on the Township's website targeted to the farming community to expand awareness locally and regionally. The Township may also be able to supply additional support services through in-house staff that provide administrative support for farmers seeking funding opportunities and grants made available through the County or State. These items should be further explored to identify all the areas where the Township may be able to provide additional support services to the agricultural community.

In the process of preparing its 2021 comprehensive Master Plan, The County of Hunterdon held a public meeting regarding specific topics from the Plan. At this meeting farmers expressed concerns with local support, specifically calling out needs including:

- More specific technical support and environmental constraints
- Increased manpower at the NRCS and local Board of Agriculture
- Expanded Farm Credit
- Increased local financial participation
- Increased accessibility and affordability of farm labor
- Initiatives attracting more farmers to lease land and young farmers
- Increased flexibility regarding housing on preserved farms from the SADC

- Additional opportunities for sales, including a full time market and community kitchen
- Expanded County support

With these needs in mind, this Plan suggests the following planning practices and tools.

- **Agricultural Facilities and Infrastructure:** The infrastructure that farmers most need is on the regulatory and technical assistance side, which includes: convincing municipalities, residents, and consumers to look favorably on agriculture and understand the economic and quality of life advantages it brings to the County; securing municipal support through flexible land use regulations and ordinances that take into consideration the special needs of the agricultural operations; and identifying help with financial and planning matters through workshops and other educational and counseling services. Additional support could come from a concerted effort to promote agritourism through signage, publications, website and media promotion.
- **Flexible Land Use Regulations:** The Land Use Ordinance of East Amwell Township is conducive to flexibility where agricultural soils are present. There is a need to have more flexibility for farming on easements and land preserved by Open Space and other entities. Local development regulations should streamline the review process for new farm buildings and minimize the cost of the reviews.

A positive regulatory climate, such as ordinances and policies supporting agriculture, is essential for the future of farming, particularly for full-time farmers whose income relies largely on the farm operation. Regulations supporting agriculture should include ordinances that give farmers flexibility to pursue agricultural uses and recognize the need for farmers to supplement their operations with on-farm and off-farm activities and businesses. These activities have been supported by the State Agricultural Development Committee and its Rural Micro-Enterprise Activity permit and the Special Occasion Events that are permitted on preserved farms. Flexible land use regulations can help municipalities secure and expand the agricultural industry.

Furthermore, municipal sensitivity to the needs associated with agricultural land use is beneficial when creating ordinances and regulations. Specifically, this sensitivity should be applied when considering issues including: buffer standards for non-farm development adjacent to working farms that reduce the potential for Right to Farm conflicts; code or ordinance provisions requiring developers to notify purchasers of the proximate existence of active agriculture; exemptions for certain farm structures from building height restrictions; permitting additional principal dwellings units on farms to meet the need of farmhand housing; exemptions from setback requirements

when farmers seek to expand an existing nonconforming structure; flexible fencing ordinances; and construction fee reductions for agricultural buildings.

East Amwell Agricultural Support Implementation

As of the writing of this Plan, East Amwell Township is in the beginning stages of discussions regarding the restructuring of Township planning policy and zoning ordinances in order to support the regional agricultural industry. The Township has supported the farming industry in the following ways:

- The Township has enacted a “Right to Farm” ordinance that supports the agricultural industry’s operations within East Amwell Township;
- The Township has formed and maintained linkages with the equine industry through communication with the East Amwell Valley Trail Association; and
- The Township has and continues to be responsive to agricultural interests by giving consideration to requests and recommendations submitted by the Township Agricultural Advisory Committee and working closely with State, County, and regional agricultural agencies.

SECTION VII. Natural Resource Conservation

Preservation of farmland is the cornerstone of the New Jersey Department of Agriculture’s (NJDA) Agricultural Smart Growth Plan and the State and County’s Farmland Preservation Program. However, there is more to farmland preservation than the retirement of development rights or the outright purchase of farms. One of the cornerstones of a successful, long-term Farmland Preservation Program is the conservation of natural resources on farms through the use of best management practices, without which the long-term sustainability and viability of New Jersey’s preserved farmland would be in doubt. East Amwell Township recognizes the conservation of these natural resources as a long-term goal and a necessary part of farmland preservation.

A. Natural Resource Protection Agencies

Natural Resource Conservation Service

The United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is an important partner in support of natural resource conservation for the agricultural community. The NRCS assists landowners and managers with conserving soil, water, and other natural resources. The agency has a field office at the Hunterdon County Soil Conservation District building in Freehold Borough and offers technical and financial assistance and oversees conservation programs such as the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and Agriculture Management Assistance (AMA).

Technical assistance is provided for the preparation of conservation plans. These plans are a written record of management suggestions and conservation practices to be used on a farm and are intended to help protect soil fertility and productivity, improve water quality, and attract desirable wildlife.

Conservation plans are required within one year of the date of the deed of easement for those who wish to sell a development easement via the Farmland Preservation Program or apply for natural resource conservation program grants such as the WHIP and EQIP. The local NRCS office administers these conservation program grants, which offer financial incentives to support conservation projects, including stream riparian buffers and wildlife habitat. Administration of these grant programs includes field visits to prepare the Conservation Plans, preparation of grant program contracts, assistance with installation of contract conservation practices, and inspection of farms to verify that the contract conservation practices are implemented and maintained.

Based on the NRCS mapping of soils within East Amwell Township, approximately 38% of the soils have low runoff rates and high infiltration rates; approximately 49% of the soils have moderate runoff and infiltration rates; approximately 0.3% of the soils have high to very high runoff rates and low to very low infiltration rates; and the remaining 13% of the Township is underlain with unclassified urban soils or are covered with water.

Hydric soils are defined as being saturated, flooded or ponded for usually one week or more during the growing season. These soils often support hydrophilic vegetation. According to the NRCS soil mapping, hydric soils account for approximately 1% of the Township.

Soil Conservation District

An additional partner in the conservation of agricultural resources is the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, Division of Agricultural and Natural Resources. Among its responsibilities, the Division implements the natural resource conservation programs administered by the State Soil Conservation Committee (SSCC). These programs provide engineering services and regulatory guidance to soil conservation districts, homeowners, engineers and planners regarding virtually all development activities, with the goal of reducing the danger from storm water runoff, retarding non-point source pollution from sediment, and conserving and protecting the land, water and other natural resources of the State.

East Amwell Township is served by the Hunterdon County Soil Conservation District. The County Soil Conservation District office mailing address and website is:

Hunterdon County Soil Conservation District
687 Pittstown Road
Frenchtown, NJ 08825

The Hunterdon County Soil Conservation District (SCD) provides support in the areas of animal waste management, erosion control design and construction and Integrated Pest Management. Hunterdon County farmers who are interested in developing farm conservation plans apply to local Soil Conservation Districts, which assist in developing farm conservation plans and ensure projects are necessary and feasible. Applications are forwarded to the N.J. State Soil Conservation Committee, which recommends projects to the SADC for funding approvals. The Hunterdon County Soil Conservation District gives final approval on all Conservation Plans and program contracts.

Within one year of the signing of the Deed of Easement on a Preserved Farm through the County Easement and Municipal PIG programs, the landowner must obtain an approved Farm Conservation Plan from the Hunterdon County SCD. Although an approved Conservation Plan within a year of the preservation of a farm is required, implementation of the plan is not mandatory. According to the Hunterdon County SCD, approximately 25% of these plans are implemented. Although the services of the NRCS for the implementation of the Conservation Plan is cost-free to the farmer, the services of the SCD may be needed to complete the implementation of the plan; this work is billable, as the SCD is a separate entity from the NRCS. Funding for approved soil and water conservation projects are available from the SADC for up to 50% reimbursement.

The farmland preservation program has an ongoing program that ensures annual monitoring of preserved farmland. In Hunterdon County, the Soil Conservation District handles this responsibility for the County on farms where the County holds the easements, providing an annual opportunity to discuss conservation programs and projects with landowners.

B. Natural Resource Protection Programs

There are many state and federal programs available to provide grants and opportunities to protect natural resources. The Township and local farmers are encouraged to use any available grant program to retain agricultural production in the Township. East Amwell is currently updating its Natural Resource Inventory and in that process can provide additional support to local farmers in educating and outreach to ensure that land owners are aware of all the support opportunities available to them. The following is an outline of some of the grant opportunities provided by the State and Federal programs.

SADC Stewardship Grants

The SADC Soil and Water Conservation Grant Program provides grants of up to 50% of a project's costs to owners of permanently preserved farms and Term Preservation program participants. Irrigation, erosion control, and stream corridor enhancement projects are among those that are eligible. Many Hunterdon County farmers have obtained Soil and Water Conservation grant money over the years, including from the programs below:

Soil and Water Conservation Grant Program: The SADC Soil and Water Conservation Grant Program awards grants of up to 50 percent the project cost to owners of permanently preserved farms and term preservation program participants. Irrigation, erosion control, and stream corridor enhancement projects are among those that are eligible.

Deer Fencing Grant Program: The SADC Deer Fencing Grant Program can provide 50 percent matching grants to assist farmers with the materials and installation of fencing to protect permanently preserved farmland from crop losses related to deer. The maximum grant award is \$200 per acre or a total of \$20,000 to eligible farmers. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis, with no deadlines.

Federal Conservation Programs

The NRCS administers a number of Federal Farm Bill programs. The NRCS offers financial assistance programs including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and Agriculture Management Assistance (AMA).

EQIP is a voluntary conservation program open to eligible agricultural producers including livestock, forestry and organic production that offers financial and technical assistance to implement conservation practices on eligible land. Opportunities within EQIP include assistance with aquaculture, beginning farmers, conservation activity plans, high tunnels, on farm energy, organic production, socially disadvantaged producers, soil health, and working lands for wildlife. In Central New Jersey, which encompasses East Amwell Township, the Local Work Group prioritizes applications that address natural resource issues related to soil quality, water quality, pollinator protection, as well as livestock and forestry.

CSP is a voluntary conservation program that encourages producers to address resource concerns in a comprehensive manner by undertaking additional conservation activities and improving, maintaining and managing existing conservation activities. CSP participants will receive an annual land use payment for operation-level environmental benefits produced. Participants are paid for conservation performance, meaning the higher the operational performances, the higher the payment. For example, if a farmer has been practicing prescribed grazing, CSP would give options to enhance that practice with activities such as grazing management to improve plants for wildlife, to reduce soil compaction, or to improve riparian function.

AMA is another voluntary conservation program that targets beginning and limited resource farmers, small farms, and producers who have had limited participation in other USDA financial assistance programs. AMA provides assistance to address issues such as water management, water quality, and erosion control by incorporating conservation into their farming operations. The program has five priority areas which include:

- Reduction in non-point source pollutants

- Irrigation water use efficiency
- Reduction in particulate or ozone precursor emissions
- Reduction in soil erosion and sedimentation
- Promotion of at-risk species habitat conservation

Projects eligible for assistance utilizing the AMA program include constructing efficient irrigation systems and implementing irrigation water management practices, reducing non-point source pollutants via filter strips and nutrient management, and projects to improve habitat conservation through conservation cover and windbreaks.

The USDA and NRCS previously offered a voluntary program that was designed for non-federal landowners who wish to improve or develop fish and wildlife habitats. The program known as WHIP, or Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, was not reauthorized as part of the Federal Agricultural Act in 2014.

Yet another resource is the Grasslands Reserve Program (GRP), which offers landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance grasslands on their property. The national level of this program sets a cap on the acreage per county that can receive such assistance.

NJDEP Landowner Incentive Program

New Jersey's Landowner Incentive Program provides technical and financial assistance to private landowners interested in conserving threatened and endangered plant and animal species on their property. Potential projects include vernal pool restoration, prescribed burns, and stream fencing.

C. Water Resources

East Amwell Township has devoted at least as much attention to conservation of its water resources as to its farmland, open space, and wildlife habitat. The most conspicuous geologic feature of the township is the Sourland Mountain, a diabase ridge originally formed by a volcanic intrusion. The impervious nature of its rock poses problems in water supply and septic management and its altitude and slopes place it at the headwaters of stream systems flowing both north and south. Furthermore, its volcanic origin led to the baking of adjacent rock structures, creating less severe but still important water and septic constraints. These concerns, in combination with the fact that the entire township is dependent upon well water and individual septic systems, have been addressed by an unusually strong and active Board of Health. Furthermore, hydrogeologic studies have been important planning elements in establishing the township's zoning ordinances for the Mountain and Amwell Valley Agricultural Districts.

Supply Characteristics

From a macro standpoint, East Amwell has a substantial supply of water. Because the Township is located at the source of the streams which run through it rather than receiving supply from adjacent areas, the overall availability is determined by the volume of rainfall. This amounts to an annual average of over

1,000,000 gallons of water per acre throughout the Township, which is then reduced to a smaller amount by evaporation, transpiration, stream flow, and migration through the aquifers. In the Mountain District, runoff and the absence of a permeable aquifer are serious considerations. In the Amwell Valley Agricultural District where the great majority of the Township's farmland is located, the characteristics of the aquifer are healthy but not entirely predictable since the underlying rock is not highly permeable like the sedimentary rock strata further south.

Water availability on any specific farm depends on its well productivity and the economics of pumping water for irrigation or livestock purposes. As of the writing of this Plan, there have been no indications of supply constraints on individual farms. There are farms in the Township which grow nursery stock, fruit, vegetables, and other products which may require supplemental watering, but these currently comprise a small portion of the land area and none of them demand the intensive water usage of other agricultural activities such as greenhouses, tomato farms, or racing stables.

The largest single consumer of water in the Township is The Ridge at Back Brook, the single golf course permitted in East Amwell. In theory, it is roughly self-sustaining, since a calculation of the rainfall on its 300 acres which infiltrates into the aquifer approximates the maximum annual usage permitted by the NJDEP. In reality, however, its water usage coincides with periods when rainfall is not replenishing the aquifer.

East Amwell Township has provided water testing kits and resource information to residents in the Sourland Mountain area who have traces of naturally-occurring arsenic in their well water supply. The Township plays an active role in helping residents understand the issue and ensuring that their well water is safe for drinking. East Amwell has not only hosted community meetings to outline the issue, but has also demonstrated various remediation systems and provided water testing kits at a reduced price.

Because East Amwell began road salting in 2006, a group of homeowners have agreed to test their well water annually to determine if the salt run-off has entered their water supply. For these purposes, the Township provides free water kits. The Township Environmental Commission is testing streams adjacent to roads that are salted as well.

As indicated above, water availability and quality are a constant concern of the government and citizenry of East Amwell. In addition, Township characteristics which have been carefully maintained and furthered by the township government—as well as environmentally oriented programs and projects sponsored by both the township government and individual residents—have contributed to both land and water conservation. Among these are the following:

- Land preservation, which provides an open surface for water absorption as well as multiple other benefits;

- The entire township being dependent on individual well and septic systems, which means that all 'waste water' is recycled;
- Very low-density zoning and strict limitations on the clearing of trees in the Mountain District, which slows runoff and minimizes soil erosion; and
- A 75-mile network of marked, mapped, and maintained trails on private property (the largest such network in the Northeast), which has attracted horse owners to East Amwell. This has provided both a primary local market for hay as well as non-developer buyers for substantial tracts of farmland without development when and if original crop farmers wish to cease production and sell their properties.

Many of the above processes feed on each other symbiotically; buyers of large parcels are attracted by the knowledge that land around them is preserved, landowners are more likely to opt for preservation if they have confidence that there will be buyers of their deed-restricted property in the event that they wish to sell, and farmers are more likely to continue farming if they are not hassled by the sorts of problems which neighboring developments frequently create.

Agricultural Demand and Supply Limitations

The majority of East Amwell Township's farming operations are centered on hay and corn production, which typically do not require irrigation. There is a limited number of farms within the Township, however, which focus on nursery stock production, which does require irrigation. As an agricultural community, the Township recognizes the necessity of maintaining its water supply for access by farmers and has therefore decreased residential densities to accomplish this goal.

Conservation and Allocation Strategies

The Sustainable Agriculture Network, an affiliate of the United State Department of Agriculture, published a very useful guide to water conservation entitled "Smart Water Use on Your Farm or Ranch." The guide focuses on three main aspects of conserving water on agricultural lands: managing soil to increase water availability; plant management; and water management.

There are several techniques to better manage soil for water conservation. The goal is to increase the organic content of the soil to improve water holding capacity. This can be done by spreading manure, applying composts, using cover crops between or amid cash crops, and reducing tillage. When managing plants for water conservation, farmers should select species adapted to local conditions. Native and drought tolerant plants, for example, can help reduce water needs. Crop rotation is also often a beneficial practice. Finally, water conservation can be accomplished by adjusting water delivery systems, lining ditches with impermeable materials, and better timing water applications. Terraces and swales can help control drainage flows to give water more time to infiltrate.

The 2007 Hunterdon County Growth Management Plan recommends the County Agriculture Development Board (CADB) to work with agricultural organizations that lend support to the farm community, including the Hunterdon County Board of Agriculture (HCBA) and North Jersey Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Council. These organizations should work to promote funding opportunities for agricultural water conservation practices, such as the federally funded EQIP program and Conservation Reserve Program.

In addition, Hunterdon farmers have worked with various agencies to help improve water quality in the Township's streams. North Jersey RC&D in partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Rutgers Cooperative Extension, County Soil Conservation Districts, and the NJ Department of Agriculture has successfully leveraged federal funding to help farmers employ land management practices that reduce chemical inputs without compromising yields. Local watershed associations also offer River Friendly programs, such as the Watershed Institute. By 1999, some 14,000 acres—including acreage in Hunterdon County—were using best management practices on their lands through such programs. The County Growth Management Plan recommends that these success stories be actively marketed.

D. Waste Management Planning

Management of livestock waste has serious implications for the quality of ground and surface waters. Unchecked, or poorly managed, these wastes can cause serious water quality problems by the introduction of unwanted microorganisms into natural systems. Poor management of animal waste can also cause disease among farm animals. Proper animal waste management is not only required, but also is a sign of good environmental stewardship, as is recycling of farm by-products whenever possible. Increased restrictions on the use of animal manure as an organic fertilizer add to the complexities of farm operations.

In the past, the Township completed a project to dispose thousands of tires which were accumulated over many years by a property owner who operated a junkyard. The Township obtained a grant from the State Department of Environmental Protection to partially fund the clean-up. The property is now free of tires and the Township is continuing efforts to determine if additional remediation is needed because of other junkyard items.

This scenario is not uncommon. Many farms have small dumps, which may contain tires as well as old equipment, although none of them approach the scale or potential environmental hazards presented by the aforementioned junkyard. These dumps are usually located out of sight on back land which is not suitable for production. The Township does not have an active program for clearing these sites, as they are private property, and it is not aware of concern on the part of the landowners.

Most livestock owners are aware of the attention currently being paid to animal waste management. The New Jersey Department of Agriculture developed animal waste management rules effective in March of 2009 to proactively address non-point source pollution that may emanate from agricultural animal

operations. Small animal operations are required to write and implement a voluntary Waste Management Plan for their farm. Many local farmers have applied to attend the presentations sponsored by Rutgers Cooperative Extension to learn these new rules and receive guidance on writing these plans. Farmers must have a written plan on file with the Cooperative Extension to receive the protection and benefit provided from the Right to Farm rules.

East Amwell Township has been participating in the New Jersey Clean Communities Program, which is part of a statewide comprehensive strategy to clean up and prevent litter on public lands such as parks, streets, and recreation areas within municipalities. New Jersey Clean Communities is a litter-abatement program created by the passage of the Clean Communities Act in 1986. The Clean Communities Act provides grants to municipalities and counties for litter pickup and removal programs.

As part of the Clean Communities program, East Amwell Township conducts a monthly recycling depot that provides two large dumpsters for township cleanup. These dumpsters are typically filled to the brim with recyclables, which are collected and sorted by Recycling Committee members and volunteers. Terra Cycle items are collected for and by the school district and "zero waste boxes" are used to collect items such as straws, caps, and candy wrappers for repurposing and reuse. Plastic bags are also collected at the depot and typically 500 pounds of plastic are sent to TREX, where the materials are repurposed or reused. TREX then gives a bench made of reused materials to the community group who conducted the cleanup. Items including corks, crayons, CDs, and clean Styrofoam are also collected and delivered to organizations that repurpose or reuse them. In addition, there are annual Road Side Clean Up and Spring Clean Up events hosted by the Township. These events and activities help mitigate the use of dumps on private property.

County Solid Waste Efforts

Hunterdon County has several programs in place to provide citizens with safe ways to dispose of and/or recycle solid waste, including electronic equipment. These efforts complement the annual Clean-Up Day sponsored by East Amwell Township, which offers road-side pickup of solid waste such as furniture, construction material, refrigerators and stoves.

The County has sponsored successful recycling efforts for the disposal of hazardous waste and electronics. These recycling efforts are held at the County Complex in Flemington. The hazardous collection allows citizens to dispose of oil, paint and other hazardous liquids. Another recycling day is dedicated to collecting and recycling electronic equipment such as computers, television sets, and printers. This effort has been so successful that the collection hours were extended to accommodate more residents. The County sponsors these two solid waste collection efforts annually.

The County encourages the participation of each Township in its solid waste collection efforts through the Solid Waste Advisory Council formed under the provisions of the NJ Solid Waste Management Act. The Council has a member from each municipality who advises the County on matters related to its solid waste.

E. Energy Conservation Planning

The New Jersey Department of Agriculture emphasizes the importance of energy conservation and alternative energy use in its Agricultural Smart Growth Plan. The Plan indicates that it is important to promote the use of innovative technologies, recycling, energy conservation, and renewable energy systems on New Jersey's farms. The Plan also prioritizes the need to provide technical assistance for the agricultural community about new and existing energy conservation and renewable energy programs by promoting the financial and environmental benefits of implementing these programs.

Residents of East Amwell have made use of a variety of projects using alternative energy. Many farms and residences have solar panels for the production of electricity, either free-standing or roof-mounted atop a house or barn. The Township has been cooperative in issuing necessary approvals, but made a policy decision to not allow prime farmland to be turned into large solar farms. An ordinance was approved in 2018 prohibiting this use in order to retain active farmland. SADC has an informal policy with respect to energy generation on preserved farms. Alternative energy is an acceptable use, generally limited to the approximate needs of the agricultural operation. The Agricultural Advisory Committee strongly supports production of alternative energy on preserved and unpreserved farms as a means of saving fossil fuels and reducing farm energy costs.

Solar Energy

Solar energy can be harnessed via the installation of solar panels. This harnessed or stored energy can then be used to create electricity and provide heat. If excess electricity is generated, it can be sold back to the electric grid for a profit.

The State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) developed regulations concerning the development of renewable energy facilities on preserved farmland and land under Farmland Assessment, which was signed into law in January 2010. This act also provided Right-to-Farm protection to conforming renewable energy facilities installed on either preserved farmland or farms under farmland assessment. These regulations were codified as Subchapter 24 under the SADC regulations in the NJ Administrative Code. According to this code, renewable energy facilities may be installed on preserved farmland if:

- The facilities do not interfere with the use of the land for agricultural purposes;
- Are owned by the landowner;
- Are used to provide power or heat to the farm, either directly or indirectly; and

- Are limited either in an annual energy generation capacity of 110% of the farm's energy demands, and occupy no more than 1% of the total farm area (preserved and unpreserved).

According to this code, land used for energy generation may be eligible for Farmland Assessment if:

- The energy generating system is located on the property of an operating farm in the preceding and current year it is taxed;
- The power generated supports the viability of the farm;
- The owner of the property submits a conservation plan with the soil conservation district to account for aesthetics, impervious coverage, and environmental impacts;
- Where practical, shade crops or pasture remain under solar panels;
- The ratio of acre of energy generation facilities/structure to land devoted to agricultural purposes is no more than 1:5;
- The energy generation facility occupies no more than 10 acres of the land under farmland assessment and does not generate more than two megawatts of power; and
- The owner has obtained approval from the Department of Agriculture.

Additional regulations for farmland were created through the aforementioned regulations (N.J.A.C. 2:76-2A.12), which (a) extend the protections of the Right to Farm Act to the generation of solar energy on commercial farms within certain limits and (b) establish an Agricultural Management Practice (AMP) that commercial farms must meet to be eligible for right-to-farm protection for on-site generation of solar energy. The AMP includes the following standards:

- Minimum setback from adjacent residence must be 200 to 500 feet;
- Minimum setback from property line or public roadway right-of-way must be 100 to 400 feet;
- Screening is required for structures higher than 10 feet and structures cannot exceed 20 feet in height;
- Facilities shall be located in a manner to minimize views of the facility from public roadways and existing residences which are not located on the farm;
- Soil disturbance shall be limited;
- Sound levels must not exceed 40 decibels at the property line or cannot exceed the ambient sound levels measured on the property line; and
- The decommissioning of all solar energy facilities shall be subject to local ordinances.

Wind Energy

The power of a strong wind can be captured by turbines or windmills, turning such power into electricity. Expanding and evolving technology is making this option more attractive to farmers as a way to cut energy costs.

Ethanol

Ethanol is a renewable fuel created through the distillation of starches and sugars found within a variety of plants. It can then be blended into gasoline as an oxygenate, which reduces air pollution. Its use may also reduce dependence on foreign oil and the harmful environmental effects of oil drilling. Also, unlike the gasoline additive MTBE, Ethanol will not contaminate groundwater.

Bio-diesel

Petroleum diesel is an emitter of sulfur emissions, which contribute significantly to air pollution. Bio-diesel, which is made from the oils of soybeans, is an alternative to petroleum diesel. This organic fuel can be blended and used in diesel engines without modification. The result is a significant reduction of the harmful fumes produced by pure petroleum diesel.

F. Outreach and Incentives

East Amwell Township provides information and education of natural resources to local residents and farmers, through community meetings and events, as described above. This information is presented to residents both in paper and internet formats, where applicable.

In the November 2007 election, 63% of East Amwell voters supported the Open Space and Farmland Preservation Bond. East Amwell's voter turn-out was 51% in comparison to the state average of about 32%. Following this in November 2009, a public question asking for continued funding for farmland, open space and historic preservation was again on the ballot. The question was approved in the Township by 61% of the voters, compared to 52% across the County.

Farmland preservation and open space conservation resonate well with the voters in East Amwell. An active East Amwell campaign supporting both the 2007 and 2009 questions included 7 large wooden signs strategically located on major roads in the Township. East Amwell voters have overwhelmingly approved local ballot questions dedicating first 2 cents (1995) and then 4 cents (1998) per \$100 of their property tax to the Township's Open Space Trust Fund. Most recently, Open Space funding was on the ballot in 2016 and was supported by 72% of the Township voting population.

Conducting public outreach to inform residents of their responsibilities in an agricultural community is the work of the Amwell Valley Trail Association (AVTA). The AVTA was organized in 1985 by a group of concerned residents desirous of preserving the Township's rural atmosphere. AVTA members maintain and enjoy about 70 miles of trails, most of which are located along field edges and through existing woods where landowners request that they be routed. Members must respect the rights of the property owners who allow use of their land and ensure sure that no damage is done to farmed fields by staying on marked and mowed trails. Members are encouraged to support farmers by buying local hay and grain.

The properties of about 270 East Amwell residents receive farmland assessment. These include large farm parcels as well as smaller acreages that involve equine, livestock, fiber animals, fowl, vegetable crops, and woodlot operations. Individual owners host annual open houses for the purposes of selling their animals or produce as well as educating the public. This assists in providing residential support and contributes to maintaining the culture of an agricultural community.

Sweet Valley Farm is East Amwell's best known and visited local farm market. Located on Route 202-31, it is owned and operated by the multi-generation Perehyns family who own 130 acres in the western section of the township and farm 230 acres. The produce of their farm as well as other local farms are sold here, as well as landscaping materials, nursery stock and seasonal plants. East Amwell residents want to see Sweet Valley Farm continue to be a success story.

Agritourism is one form of public outreach and includes the popular annual 4-H Fair that is held at the County's fairgrounds in the western section of East Amwell. The Fair Association, a county-wide agricultural entity that owns the buildings on the County's land, organizes and manages the annual 4-H Fair as well as numerous agricultural events held at the new fairgrounds. The Fair Association has a full annual schedule of events, including a horse expo, a sheep and fiber show, sheep herding, a poultry show, and an alpaca show. The Fair Association's mission to inform and educate the public on the importance of agriculture is aligned its provision of support and encouragement to 4-H youth, including the provision of space for 4-H leadership programs and livestock projects. In part because of such support, an increasing number of young people have participated in the state-wide 4-H dairy and Holstein shows at the fairgrounds. Attendance is free for the 4-H events, with the Fair Association depending on parking fees from the general public to cover its expenses.

New Jersey State's Travel and Tourism Office features East Amwell's Unionville Vineyards in their Fall 2007 advertising campaign "Great Destinations". Billboards advertising Ringoes as the vineyard site are located along out of state major highways leading to New Jersey. Agritourism in East Amwell ranks second to the Jersey shore in the Tourism Office's advertising efforts.

Furthermore, East Amwell is the site of the Mid-Atlantic Equine Medical Center located in the western part of the township on Frontage Road. This well-regarded equine center is noted for its state-of-the-art diagnostic and therapeutic facilities and equipment, which have been utilized by the University of Pennsylvania Veterinary School at New Bolton.

Section VIII. Agricultural Industry Sustainability, Retention, and Promotion

Farmland is recognized as a major contributor toward the rural character that exists in East Amwell Township. The retention of farmland helps to improve aquifer recharge, provides wildlife habitat and provides scenic open space vistas. A Farmland Preservation Program in East Amwell Township also

reduces the rate of stormwater runoff and eliminates the costs of services that are associated with development, thereby protecting farmland from developing with more intense land uses.

In addition to the Right to Farm ordinance, other agriculture-friendly ordinances and the Open Space Trust Fund, the Township has been proactive in its efforts to preserve farmland and open space.

A. Existing Agricultural Industry Support

Right-to-Farm / Agricultural Mediation Programs

To ensure farmers have the ability to continue agricultural operations, the Right to Farm Act was enacted by the State Legislature in 1983 and amended in 1998. The Act provides protection of commercial farm operations from nuisance action, where recognized methods and techniques of agricultural production are applied, while simultaneously acknowledging the need to provide a balance among the varied and conflicting interests of all lawful activities in New Jersey.

Another critical piece of legislation to support agriculture is the 1983 Agriculture Retention and Development Act. This Act created the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) and the eighteen County Agriculture Development Boards (CADB). Both the SADC and CADBs implement the Right to Farm Act on the State and local levels.

The SADC works to maximize protections for commercial farmers under the Right to Farm Act by developing Agricultural Management Practices (AMPs), tracking right to farm cases, offering a conflict resolution process, and reviewing rules proposed by other state agencies for the impact they may have on agriculture.

In order to qualify for Right to Farm protection, a farm must meet the definition of a "commercial farm" in the Right to Farm Act; be operated in conformance with federal and state law; comply with the AMPs recommended by the SADC, or site specific AMPs developed by the Hunterdon CADB at the request of a commercial farmer; must not be a direct threat to public health and safety; and must be located in an area where agriculture was a permitted use under municipal zoning ordinances as of December 31, 1997, or thereafter; or, must have been an operating farm as of December 31, 1997.

Although East Amwell Township has had a Right to Farm Ordinance in effect since 1987, this Ordinance was significantly expanded in 1999 to: extend enhanced protections to processing and packaging the agricultural output of the farm; allow for farm market operations; allow for educational tours, seasonal festivals, and other special events; and allow for onsite farm labor housing. This language is recorded in the deeds of all newly created lots and on the filed final subdivision plans. East Amwell Township's existing Right to Farm Ordinance protects farmers from the unrealistic expectations and nuisance complaints of new residents by requiring a notice in the deed to new lots warning purchasers that this is an agricultural area and that farmers are protected by the Right to Farm Ordinance, as described below.

East Amwell's Right to Farm ordinance requires that the purchaser of any real estate in the Township be notified of the importance of East Amwell's farming community and be provided with a copy of the ordinance. It further requires that the following language be included in the deed of any newly subdivided lot in the township:

"Grantee is hereby noticed there is, or may in the future be, farm use near the premises described in this deed, from which may emanate noise, odors, dust and fumes associated with agricultural practices permitted under the Right to Farm Ordinance of East Amwell Township."

The Ordinance notes that the Township will take reasonable steps to inform real estate salespersons to provide similar notification to prospective purchasers of land in the Township. The Municipal Clerk is instructed to maintain records of all farm properties within the Township, listing the owners and farm locations which do and do not receive farmland assessment.

The Zoning Ordinance establishing the Amwell Valley Agricultural District included a restatement of the Right to Farm. It alerted owners, residents, and adjoining landowners in the District to be prepared to accept conditions arising from normal and accepted agricultural practices and operations. Furthermore, it provided official notice that the State's Right to Farm Act may bar obtaining a legal judgment against normal agricultural operations.

SADC seeks to resolve conflicts in a timely and beneficial manner through the Agricultural Mediation Program. This voluntary program offers mediation in which a trained, impartial mediator helps disputing parties examine their mutual problems, identify and consider options, and determine if they can agree on a solution. A mediator has no decision-making authority. Successful mediation is based on the voluntary cooperation and participation of all the parties. Mediation can save landowners both time and costly legal fees. It is a free service, is confidential, and generally takes only a few meetings to complete. Mediation can be used to resolve right-to-farm disputes, credit disputes with the Farm Service Agency or private lenders, and other conflicts involving U.S. Department of Agriculture programs.

In addition, the Farm Link Program serves as a resource and referral center for new farmers, farmers seeking access to land and farming opportunities, landowners seeking farmers, and farmers working on estate and farm transfer plans. The program's linking service connects farm owners with farmers seeking access to land and farming opportunities. When matches occur, they often involve leases, partnerships, apprenticeships, standard sales, and other arrangements.

Farmland Assessment

The Farmland Assessment program offers a tax incentive, which reduces property taxes on any active farmed land, thereby assisting farmers with a critical financial aspect in helping to keep land in agricultural

production. This tax incentive is made possible by the Farmland Assessment Act of 1964, N.J.S.A. 54:4-23.1 et seq. Basic eligibility requirements include:

- The applicant must own the land;
- The property owner must apply annually for Farmland Assessment on or before August 1 of the year immediately preceding the tax year;
- Land must be devoted to agricultural and/or horticultural uses for at least two years prior to the tax year;
- Land must consist of at least five contiguous farmed and/or woodland management plan acres. Land under or adjoining a farmhouse is not counted towards the minimum five acres;
- Gross sales of products from the land must average at least \$1,000 per year for the first five acres, plus an average of \$5.00 per acre for each acre over five. In the case of woodland or wetland, the income requirement of \$500 per year for the first five acres, plus \$.50 per acre for any acreage over five. Dependent on the agricultural or horticultural products being produced, the farmer can also offer clear evidence of anticipated yearly gross sales, payments, or fees within a reasonable period of time; and,
- The property owner must represent that the land will continue in agricultural or horticultural use to the end of the tax year.

East Amwell Township assesses farmland according to the 1964 Farmland Assessment Act, subscribing to the Act's eligibility standards. These requirements are detailed in the County Plan. As of the writing of this Plan, the Township has 10,800 acres under farmland assessment.

Farmland assessment is available on land only. In discussions with local farmers, many asked if this preferential tax rate could also be applied to farm buildings, especially those no longer in use. Real estate taxes are a major annual expense for many farmers. The Agriculture Advisory Committee (AAC) recognizes the importance of farmland assessment and acknowledges the role it has played to make agriculture a viable occupation. Members of the AAC note that the reduced taxes help farmers to be good stewards of the land, as the additional funds can be used to spread fertilizer, reseed and generally enhance the soils.

B. Other Strategies to Sustain, Retain, and Promote Agriculture

Over the last 50 years, Hunterdon County and the State of New Jersey have transformed from a largely rural and agricultural landscape, to a more urban and suburban landscape. However, farming remains strong and viable in many regions of the state, including East Amwell Township.

If the Township's remaining agricultural areas are to survive and prosper, the non-farming public needs to be aware of, and be financially supportive of, the continuing economic, cultural, scenic and agricultural contributions made by East Amwell Township farmers. Public education and outreach will increase the

recognition of the farm industry's importance to the non-agriculture resident. Agri-tourism is one form of public outreach that exists in East Amwell Township and should be expanded wherever possible. Other public outreach mechanisms should be explored and instituted when feasible.

Rutgers Cooperative Extension

The Hunterdon County Extension Service office is located in Flemington. The County agents there provide information on agriculture best practices and inform farmers about new methods, research results and innovative practices.

Additionally, the Snyder Experimental Farm is located in Hunterdon County. The farm was donated to Rutgers by Clifford and Melda Snyder and is operated by Rutgers Cooperative Extension. The farm provides a place for experimental plots and trials to test new farming techniques and methods. Included are several plots of apple and peach trees to determine best practices for planting density and arrangements, spraying frequency, pest management and pruning. As another example of the innovative work occurring here, agriculture agents are growing plots of timothy hay and conducting spraying trials to determine how best to control a mite that has infested the crop and devastated the yield historically.

One of the most popular events on the farm is the Tomato Tasting in August. Hundreds of attendees come to taste a wide variety of tomatoes in every shape and size. The Rutgers Cooperative Extension works hard to support new agricultural enterprises, such as the niche markets of organic beef and meat goat production.

Financial Services

Farmers have access to various financial services to help manage their businesses. The Farm Credit Service has an office located in Lebanon and provides a variety of financial services to farmers. They make long-term loans to finance farms and short-term loans for equipment and crops. They also help farmers analyze their financial progress to determine which crops provide the most profit. A new program for young and beginning farmers makes it easier to qualify for a loan to start a farming business. Farm Credit also provides fee services such as estate planning, appraisals, recordkeeping, tax preparation, and business transfer advice. In addition to this financial resource, Rutgers Cooperative Extension also provides assistance with recordkeeping through a computer program called FinPack.

Technical assistance from agricultural experts may significantly improve a farmer's competitive edge in the agricultural industry. Rutgers Cooperative Extension seems to be best positioned to provide this service but other organizations such as Farm Credit, Soil Conservation, and NRCS provide beneficial services.

East Amwell Township is proud of its farming community. The Township's first priority is to secure additional funding in order to continue to aggressively preserve the remaining farmland. The Township must also continue to pursue strategies that will maintain agriculture as a viable industry. Finally, the

Township must maintain communication between farmers, the State, County and residents and businesses of East Amwell Township by providing information and education opportunities in order to help maintain East Amwell's vibrant agricultural community.

Conclusion

East Amwell has a history built on the foundation of its rich agricultural industry, which has persisted even as development within the region has continued to expand and exert growth pressure on the Township. The Township's sustained excellence as an agricultural leader in the state provides testament to East Amwell's unwavering commitment to preserving its farmland and seeking opportunities to sustain its agricultural economy well into the future. This Plan outlines tools and opportunities that the Township should pursue to achieve its goals of protecting and expanding large contiguous areas of active farmland, supporting diverse agricultural activities, and protecting vital agricultural resources. These actions will allow East Amwell to preserve and celebrate its greatest assets and resources for generations to come.