

*INTEGRATING LOCAL AND REGIONAL PLANNING:
SOMERSET COUNTY'S
COLLABORATIVE PLANNING INITIATIVES*

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Economic Development

NJ State Planning Commission Meeting
April 4, 2023



OUR MISSION



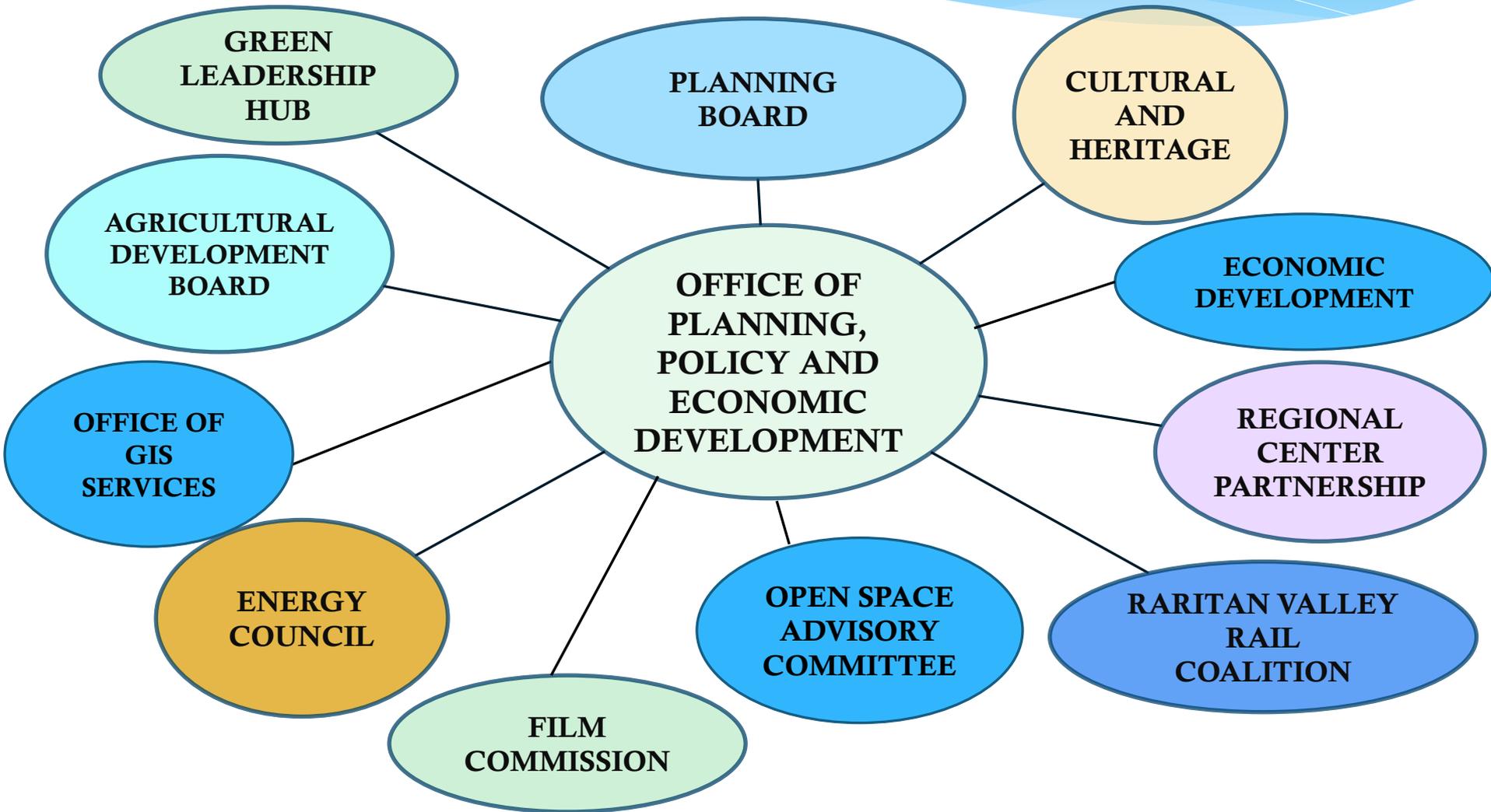
“Positively influence the process of growth and change in the County so that it provides the optimum living and working environment for our residents and employers, build balanced communities, promote regional awareness and cooperation, protect the natural environment and preserve our rich history, farmland and natural beauty.”

Shaping the future of Somerset County

“Make big plans; aim high in the hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will not die.”

Daniel Burnham,
Co-author of the 1909 Plan for Chicago

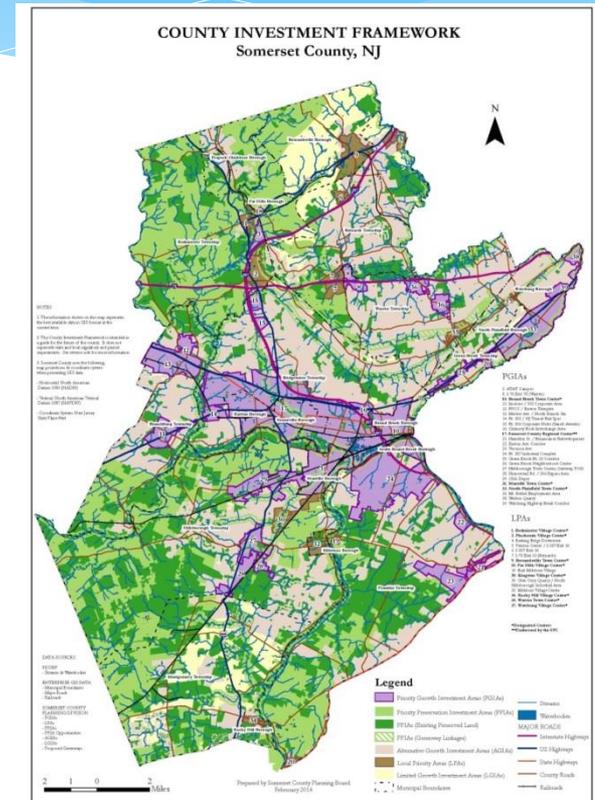
The Teams Supporting the Mission



Somerset County Master Plan

2014 Somerset County Master plan County Investment Framework (CIF) Map

- ❖ Priority Growth Investment Areas
- ❖ Priority Preservation Investment Areas
- ❖ Local Priority Areas
- ❖ Alternative Growth Investment Areas
- ❖ Limited Growth Investment Areas



Somerset County Master Plan

County Investment Framework Goals

- ❖ Support ongoing regional and local smart growth, preservation, economic revitalization, sustainability and resiliency planning initiatives
- ❖ Achieve tactical alignment of land use, infrastructure and preservation plans, resources, programs, policies and investment decisions
- ❖ Convey a clear investment message regarding local and regional land use priorities to both public and private sectors

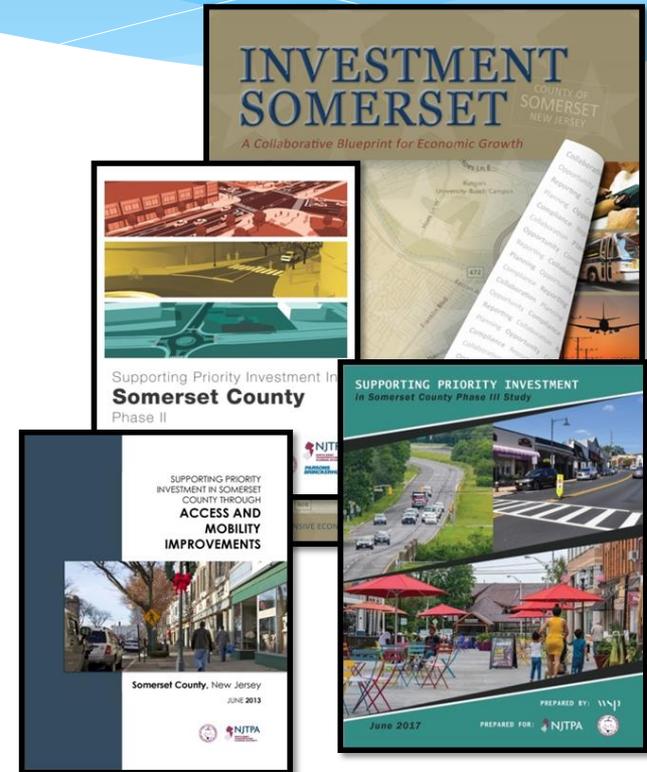
Somerset County Master Plan

County Investment Framework Advantages

- ❖ Fosters and supports collaboration at all levels of government
- ❖ Example of a County-led, collaborative approach for implementing the State Development and Redevelopment Plan at the County and municipal levels
- ❖ Builds upon the history of sound, comprehensive Smart Growth Planning at the state, county and municipal level
- ❖ Grounded by current GIS data on environmental, infrastructure and community conditions and policies

Supporting Priority Investment In Somerset County

- ❖ Somerset County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
- ❖ Supporting Priority Investment In Somerset County through Access and Mobility Improvements
- ❖ Supporting Priority Investment In Somerset County Phases I, II, III



Supporting Priority Investment In Somerset County



Land Use and Planning Scenarios

Raritan Borough, though part of the broader Regional Center PGIA, has its own distinctive small town character. While other planning efforts are already addressing opportunities along the riverfront, near the train station, and in the vicinity of the Washington School, additional opportunities were examined for focus areas along the Somerset Street and Orlando Drive corridors and at the Raritan Mall shopping center.

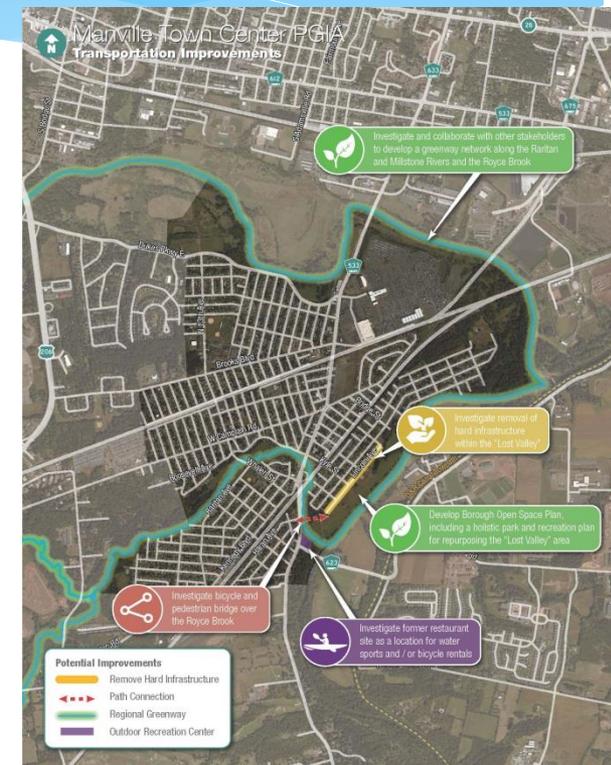
Focus Area 1: Raritan Mall Shopping Center

The Raritan Mall shopping center fronts U.S. Route 206 and is currently developed as a single-story, supermarket-anchored retail center comprising approximately 110,000 square feet, plus a 10,000 square foot pad site. There are vacancies throughout the mall and concerns that a supermarket anchor use may not have long term viability based on strong competition elsewhere in the market. Other existing uses in the strip center are generally quick service food and restaurants, with some retail and personal service.

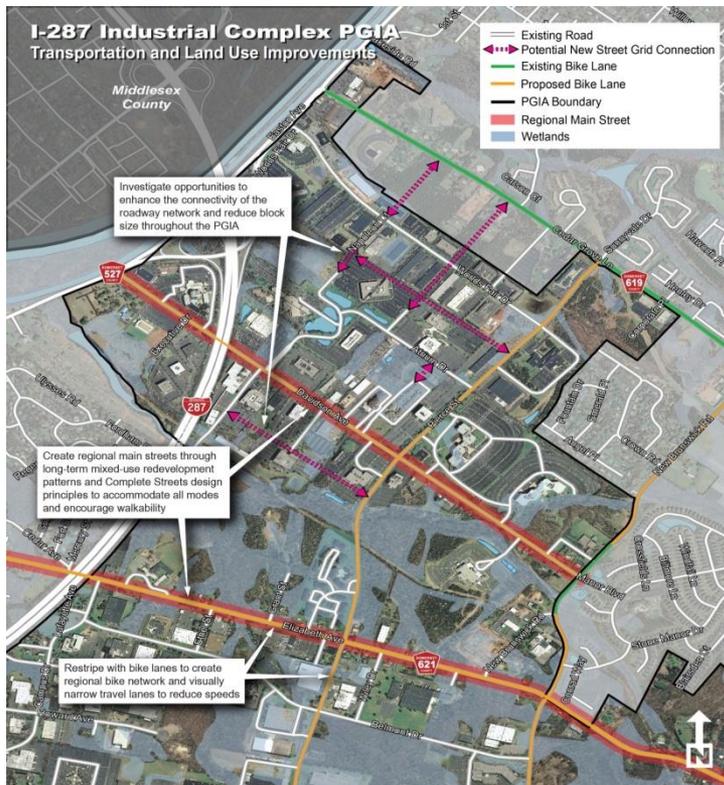


The site is located within the B-2 Shopping Center Business District, which is designated for large-lot, highway oriented commercial areas serving both local residents and the regional market. Permitted retail uses include supermarkets, personal service establishments, and indoor recreation facilities. While the site is located near the Borough's downtown and is adjacent to residential areas, its highway scale and size, orientation towards U.S. Route 206, and parking lot frontage separate it from the surrounding community. Only the rear employee entrances and loading areas face to the neighboring Dusky Lane. Sidewalks connecting to and from the neighboring property and an adjacent children's park lead only to blank walls and service roads.

In each of the following scenarios, site planning, pedestrian, and connectivity improvements can reconnect the site to the eastern end of the Somerset Street corridor and the adjacent Regional Center to the east. Integration with the Raritan River Greenway would enhance local and regional linkages and support opportunities for value-added uses, including both recreation and river and trail front dining. Improvements to north/south linkages, including Newvue Street and Dusky Lane, would better connect the site and the Orlando Drive corridor to the Borough center. This combination of Greenway and local street connections would create potentially extensive off-road systems between the Regional Center towns, Raritan Valley Line rail service, and across the Raritan River to Hillsborough and Duke Farms.



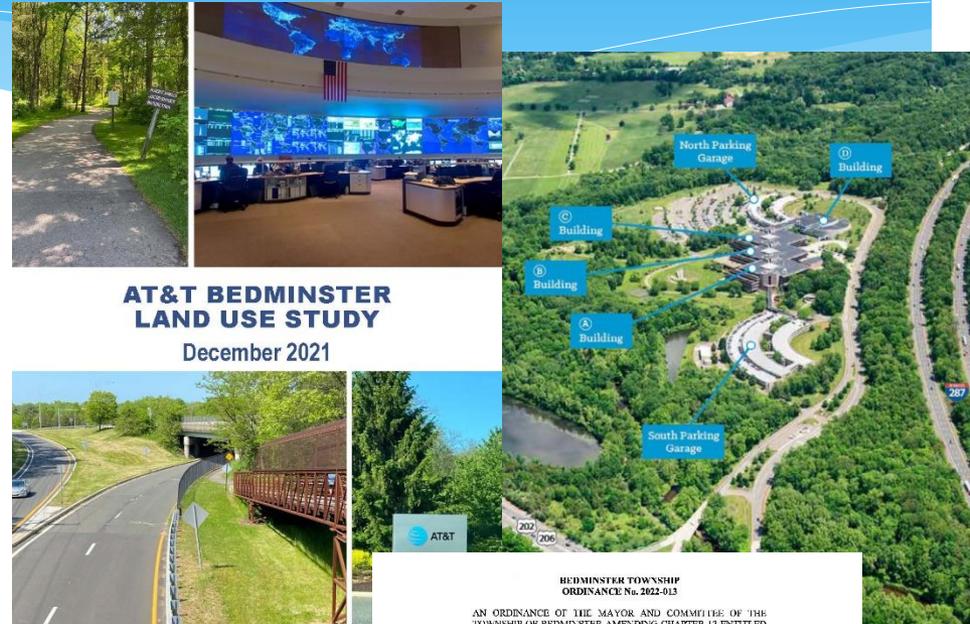
Supporting Priority Investment In Somerset County



Supporting Priority Investment In Somerset County

AT&T Bedminster Land Use Study

- ❖ Builds off the work completed in the Supporting Priority Investment in Somerset County Phase 3 Study.
- ❖ A Highlands Council grant provided the funding to refine the Phase 3 Study recommendations to support a Master Plan Amendment and new zoning for the site.
- ❖ The County's Hazard Mitigation Plan was used for the basis of the hazard assessment as required by the Municipal Land Use Law.
- ❖ The Master Plan Amendment and new zoning call for a Life Science or High Technology Hub.
- ❖ The County continues to work with the Township and the owner to promote the redevelopment of the site.



AT&T BEDMINSTER LAND USE STUDY
December 2021

**BEDMINSTER TOWNSHIP
ORDINANCE No. 2022-013**

AN ORDINANCE OF THE MAYOR AND COMMITTEE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BEDMINSTER AMENDING CHAPTER 13 ENTITLED "LAND MANAGEMENT CODE" TO ADD A NEW SECTION AND NEW ZONING DISTRICT ENTITLED "SECTION 13-413 "RDOL" RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT OFFICE LABORATORY DISTRICT".

PURPOSE STATEMENT: The purpose of this ordinance is to amend the Comprehensive Land Management Code and Zoning Map to add a new zone district entitled the "RDOL" Research Development Office Laboratory Zone District.

SECTION 1 - § 13-413 entitled "District Regulations" is amended to add the following new Zone District as follows:

§ 13-413 "RDOL" RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT OFFICE LABORATORY DISTRICT.

§ 13-413.1 Permitted Principal Uses on the Land and in Buildings.

- a. Laboratory, research, development, engineering and design, aseptic manufacturing (including but not limited to cell and gene therapies and other biologicals), production and assembly and similar activities related to the fields of biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, life sciences, computer software and hardware, telecommunications, robotics, aerospace technology or other emerging high technology industries.
- b. Office buildings, including collaborative workspaces, gathering places, and areas to promote business incubation.
- c. Public play/parks, conservation areas, parks and public purpose uses.
- d. Public utility uses as conditional uses under N.J.S.A. 40:55D-67. (See Section 13-601 for additional standards.)
- e. Uses that provide recreation and lifestyle experiences that are clearly subordinate to the principal permitted use(s), including:
 1. Conference center with hotel (with a maximum of 100 rooms for overnight accommodations),
 2. restaurants,
 3. breweries,
 4. event spaces
 5. art galleries
 6. retail shops
 7. commercial recreation (indoor or outdoor) not including gun ranges
 8. gyms and fitness clubs
 9. theaters for movies and videos
 10. child care centers in accordance with the Municipal Land Use Law Section N.J.S.A. 40:55D-66.6, 66.7 and 66.7a

Supporting Priority Investment In Somerset County

- ❖ Outlined a Consensus Vision for Somerset County's Future
- ❖ Advanced the implementation of the State Plan at the County and Municipal Levels
- ❖ Resources and information to inform Local Decision Makers
- ❖ Strengthened linkages between Master Plan Elements and Planning Initiatives
- ❖ Municipal Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance Reviews and Updates
- ❖ County Master Plan Updates and Additional Planning Studies
- ❖ Leveraged Additional Grant Resources
- ❖ Statewide Awards –NJ Future, NJ Planning Officials, PlanSmart NJ and American Planning Association – NJ Chapter

Walk, Bike, Hike Somerset County

Purpose of the Study

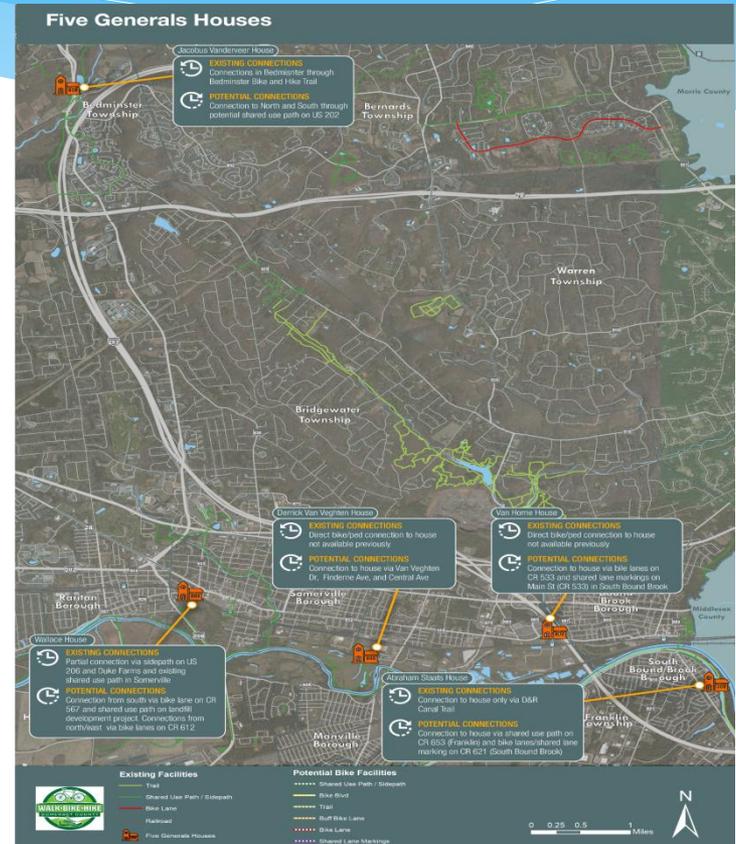
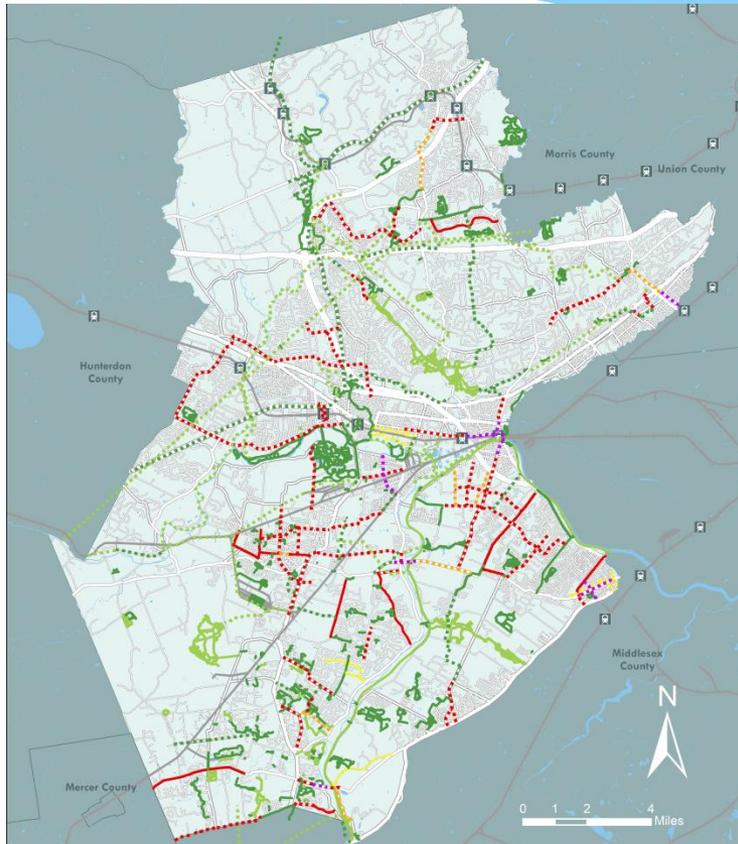
To develop a low-stress, all ages network that:

- ❖ Supports Walk, Bike, Hike, activities
- ❖ Connects people with places and destinations
- ❖ Improves mobility, safety and access
- ❖ Compliant with guidance documents and standards
- ❖ Integrated with the County Preservation Plan



CONNECTING VIBRANT
COMMUNITIES

Walk, Bike, Hike Somerset County



Five Generals Framework Strategy



Discover Revolutionary New Jersey



**Middlebrook
Five Generals Bus Tour**
Sunday, February 17, 2019



Wallace House, Somerville; Gen. George Washington



Staats House, South Bound Brook; Gen. F. von Steuben



Van Horne House, Bridgewater; Gen. Benjamin Lincoln



Jacobus Vanderveer House, Bedminster; Gen. Henry Knox



Van Veghten House, Bridgewater; Gen. Nathaniel Greene



Somerset County Preservation Plan

Somerset County
Planning Board



Somerset County
Preservation Plan



May
2022



Barton Ross & Partners LLC
Architects

HERITAGE strategies
ARCHITECTS



Somerset County Agricultural
Development Board



Somerset County
Farmland
Preservation Plan



HERITAGE strategies
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May
2022

Somerset County
Park Commission



Somerset County
Open Space
Preservation Plan



HERITAGE strategies
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May
2022

Somerset County
Cultural & Heritage Commission



Somerset County
Historic
Preservation Plan



HERITAGE strategies
ARCHITECTS

Barton Ross & Partners LLC
Architects



May
2022

Somerset County Preservation Plan

Plan Overview

Create a single integrated plan for preservation (open space, farmland and historic) in Somerset County, as well advance the County's overall planning and economic development goals.

Objective 1: Desirable Place to Live

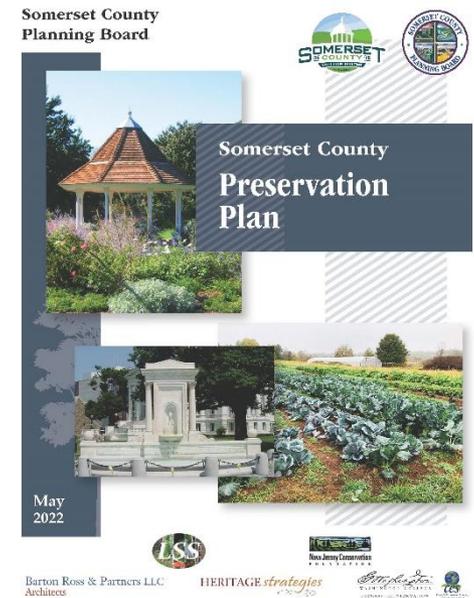
Objective 2: Valuable Open Space

Objective 3: Improving Quality of Life

Objective 4: Ensuring the County remains sustainable and resilient

Objective 5: Encouraging local coordination

Objective 6: Pursue Partnership Opportunities



Somerset County Preservation Plan

Long Range Planning

- ❖ Create a fully developed Cultural Trail
- ❖ Implement strategies to address the impacts of climate change
- ❖ Undertake a long-range cultural heritage tourism plan to support interpretive, recreational and agricultural sites and programs, consisting of strategies for:
 - Branding
 - Marketing
 - Investments
 - Collaboration
 - Monitoring and reporting on progress



Somerset County Preservation Plan

Tourism Opportunities

- ❖ Eco-Tourism, Outdoor Recreation, Gardens: “Ready to Go”
- ❖ Agritourism: “Ready to Go” – But Needs for Experiences
- ❖ Heritage Tourism: Needs more Outdoor Interpretation, Events and Available Hours
- ❖ Arts Tourism: “Ready to Go” – More Experiences Always a Good Thing

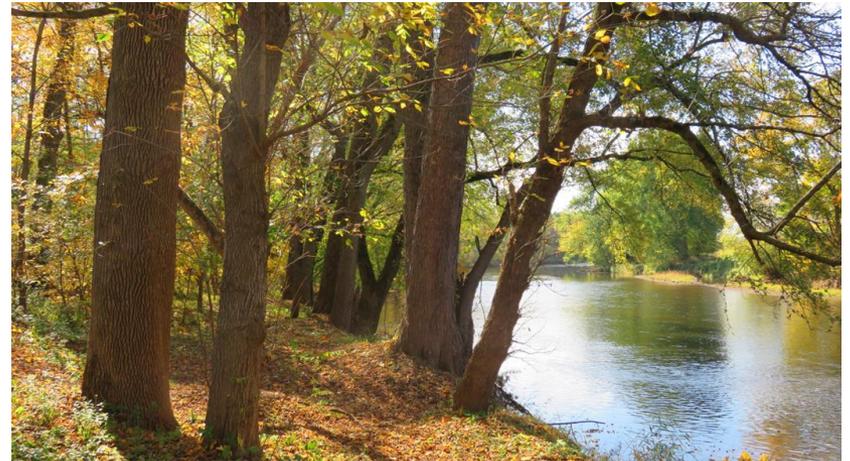


Somerset County Preservation Plan



Open Space Preservation and Recreation Plan Components

- ❖ Introduction
- ❖ Open Space And Recreational Resources
- ❖ Open Space Preservation Funding
- ❖ Somerset County's Park System
- ❖ Open Space Issues and Needs
- ❖ Open Space Preservation Partners
- ❖ Stewardship for County Parks
- ❖ Conclusion: Moving Forward



Somerset County Preservation Plan

Open Space Preservation and Recreation Plan Goals

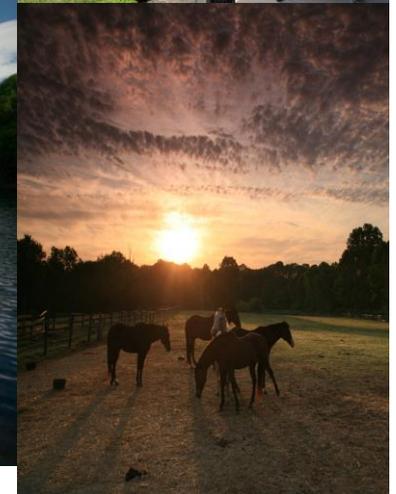
- ❖ Create an open space system preserving lands of county-wide significance.
- ❖ Preserve open space to protect critical environmental resources of Somerset County.
- ❖ Provide open space for a diverse mix of high-quality recreational experiences appropriate for a county park system.
- ❖ Provide County parks where they most easily serve the greatest population concentrations.



Somerset County Preservation Plan

Open Space Preservation and Recreation Plan Goals (continued)

- ❖ Provide open space to enhance the quality of life throughout Somerset County.
- ❖ Leverage the Somerset County Trust Fund.
- ❖ Preserve County owned historic sites.
- ❖ Cultivate partnerships.



Somerset County Preservation Plan

Farmland Preservation Plan Components

- ❖ Introduction
- ❖ Agricultural Land Base & Industry
- ❖ Farmland Preservation Program
- ❖ Stewardship, Post-Preservation Issues, and Right to Farm
- ❖ Agriculture Economic Development; Industry Sustainability, Retention and Promotion
- ❖ Natural Resources Conservation, Sustainability and Resiliency
- ❖ Public Outreach
- ❖ Conclusion: Moving Forward



Somerset County Preservation Plan

Farmland Preservation Plan Goals

- ❖ Build community awareness and support local farming, local foods, and local food security.
- ❖ Build partnerships to preserve farmland.
- ❖ Aggressively pursue efforts to preserve farmland in Somerset County.
- ❖ Increase economic opportunity and food security in Somerset County through farming.



Somerset County Preservation Plan

Farmland Preservation Plan Goals (continued)

- ❖ Increase the number of next-generation farmers available to undertake farming in Somerset County.
- ❖ Direct county resources where possible to increase farmland preservation and encourage agricultural economic development.



Somerset County Preservation Plan

Historic Preservation Plan Components

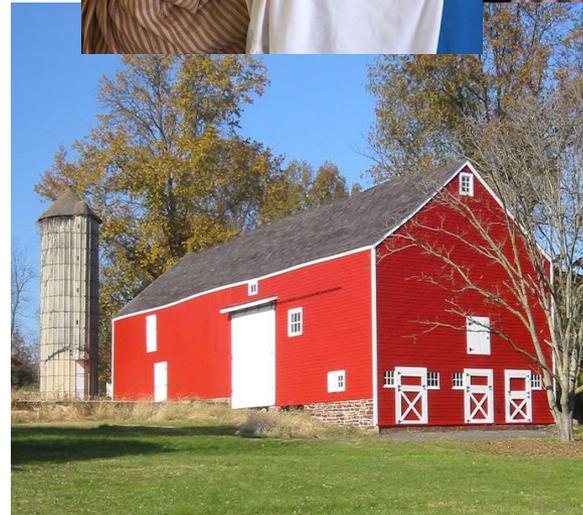
- ❖ Introduction
- ❖ Somerset County History
- ❖ The Benefits of Historic Preservation
- ❖ Historic Preservation Planning and Regulatory Framework
- ❖ Historic Resources in Somerset County
- ❖ Historic Preservation Issues and Funding Opportunities
- ❖ Moving Forward: Historic Preservation Goals and Strategies



Somerset County Preservation Plan

Historic Preservation Plan Goals

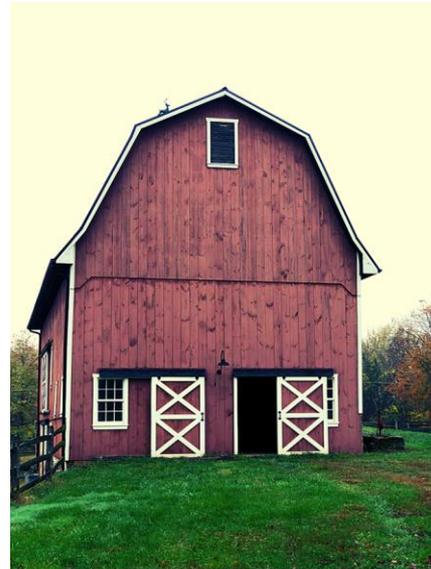
- ❖ Identify , protect, and promote Somerset County's unique historic resources, including communities, landscapes, buildings and traditions.
- ❖ Promote coordination and consensus in the preservation of historic resources among a wide variety of interested parties across the public, private and non-profit sectors.



Somerset County Preservation Plan

Historic Preservation Plan Goals

- ❖ Pursue and coordinate incentive programs and protection measures to preserve Somerset's historic and archeological resources.
- ❖ Position Somerset County to be a prominent part of the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution led by the New Jersey Historical Commission and United States Semiquincentennial Commission.



Somerset County Preservation Plan

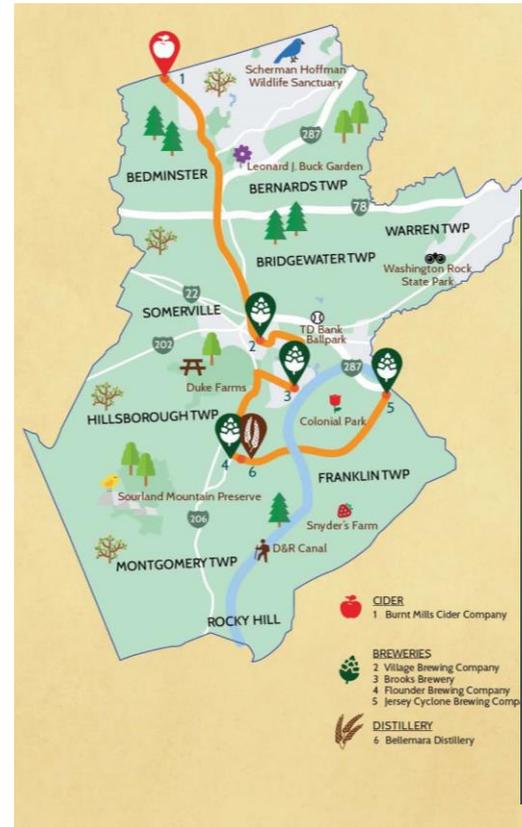
From Plan Adoption Forward

- ❖ County Planning Board Adopted the Preservation Plan on May 17, 2022
- ❖ Held a Plan Adoption Celebration and Showcase on September 19, 2022
- ❖ State Agriculture Development Board Approved the Farmland Preservation Plan on September 22, 2022
- ❖ NJ Planning Officials Achievement in Planning Award September 30, 2022
- ❖ Preservation NJ Preservation Documents Award October 12, 2022
- ❖ Numerous preservation projects (open space, farmland and historic preservation) underway.
- ❖ Farm to Frame Event and Sip and See Somerset

Sip and See Somerset

Partnering to Promote Preservation, Economic Development and Tourism

- ❖ Partnered with the Somerset County Business Partnership to create the Sip and See Somerset
- ❖ Promotes visiting places preserved by Somerset County and our partners.
- ❖ Increase economic activity.
- ❖ Highlights the amenities Somerset County has to offer.



What's Near Me?



Colonial Park (10 min)
Sourland Mountains (7 min - or varies by entrance)
Rockingham Revolutionary Headquarters (18 min)
Millstone Valley Scenic Byway (10 min)
Six Mile Run Mountain Bike Trails (9 min)
What a View Farm (16 min)



Scan here!



Passport

Somerset County NJ's craft beverage and travel experience
sipandseesomerset.com



Farm to Frame

40 Years of Arts, Culture and Farmland Preservation

- ❖ Art exhibit featuring artistic representations of Somerset County preserved farms by over 30 New Jersey artists.
- ❖ A collaborative effort between the Somerset County Cultural & Heritage Commission and the Somerset County Agriculture Development Board in celebration of 40 years of farmland preservation and the 40th anniversary of the Cultural & Heritage Commission.



Farm to Frame

40 Years of Arts, Culture and Farmland Preservation

- ❖ Participating artists were assigned a farm in 2022 and had a year to experience the farm during different seasons, times of day, etc.
- ❖ Showcasing the vital local farms and vibrant arts community of New Jersey.



Current Planning Initiatives Underway

Selected Projects and Initiatives

- ❖ County Investment Framework Update
- ❖ Circulation Plan Update
- ❖ Regional Flooding Roundtables
- ❖ Hazard Mitigation Plan Update
- ❖ Comprehensive Economic Development Plan Update
- ❖ Housing Element Update
- ❖ Cultural and Heritage Long Range Plan
- ❖ 250th Celebration
- ❖ Strategic Needs Assessment for County Owned Historic Sites



Collaboration Equals Results

Somerset County Success Stories

- ❖ Providing leadership
- ❖ County Investment Framework
- ❖ Integration of local, county, regional and state plans via collaborative planning efforts
- ❖ Assisting local planning and implementation efforts with technical assistance and support from Somerset County
- ❖ Partnerships with the Business and Non-profit Communities
- ❖ Somerset County Planning Partners Forums
- ❖ Leveraging grant opportunities



Thank You!

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