

BOROUGH OF SOMERVILLE PLAN ENDORSEMENT CONSISTENCY REVIEW

NJDOT COMMENTS

7/14/11

GENERAL COMMENTS

From a transportation perspective, the Borough of Somerville primarily has developed in the compact, center-based manner most conducive to efficiencies in the transportation system, and therefore, generally consistent with the goals and policies of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP). As a county seat in a largely suburban county with many regional travel arteries, Somerville experiences daily local traffic that patronizes county offices and retail establishments as a destination, as well as through traffic on Routes 28, 202 and 206 that includes truck freight movement. Somerville has appeared proactive in its efforts to entertain opportunities for infill and redevelopment in order to absorb growth into its portion of the Somerset County Regional Center. The Borough received Transit Village designation in 2010 and has committed to adopting zoning for transit-oriented development in the downtown business district and the former municipal landfill area.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

The most recent Circulation Element appears to exist within the 1990 Master Plan, with a Reexamination Report dated 1997. An updated Circulation Element should reflect current conditions and should encompass all relevant modes of transportation, including transit, bicycle, pedestrian, truck and rail freight, parking and access management. The Element should outline opportunities and constraints posed by existing and planned land uses, as well as explore creative ways to increase connectivity within the Borough and to points elsewhere in the Regional Center using the local road network where it makes sense and without compromising the efficiency of the entire system.

An updated Circulation Element should detail how the Code specifically relates to the zoning along Routes 28, 202 and 206. The update should include a demonstration of compliance with Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) provision that zoning along the state highways conform to the State Highway Access Management Code, with the intent to insert language into the zoning ordinance such compliance. This item could be incorporated into the Planning and Implementation Agreement (PIA). They may request technical assistance from the Department in determining whether any non-conforming lots currently exist, and how to assure that anticipated zoning changes will reflect conformance with the Access Code.

The Municipal Self-Assessment indicated land use is being taken out of manufacturing and industrial zones, even though Somerville receives rail freight service provided by Norfolk Southern, a Class I operator. The municipality should consider retention of industrial uses along freight-served rail lines whenever possible.

The Borough should investigate options for shared parking as a follow-up to the 2002 Parking Report, which covered the downtown business area, and discussed parking administration, metering/rates, merchant validation programs and signage.

STATE AGENCY ASSISTANCE AND BENEFITS

The Borough can continue to submit applications on a competitive basis under Local Aid programs for which the Borough is eligible. Benefits depend upon funding availability and are subject to program guidelines.