

**Newton Town, Sussex County  
Petition for Plan Endorsement**





## INTRODUCTION

The Town of Newton is requesting Plan Endorsement from the State Planning Commission. This report contains the findings and conclusions concerning the consistency of the Town's Plans and the Planning and Implementation Agreement (PIA) with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (State Plan.) The review of the petition is based on information submitted by the petitioner and information otherwise available to the Office for Planning Advocacy, (OPA.) The Town has requested the designation of a Town Center.

## BACKGROUND

The Town of Newton came in for a pre-petition meeting on August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2007. The Plan Endorsement Advisory Committee was formed via Resolution 153-2007 on August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2007. The municipal self-assessment was approved via Resolution 2-2008 on January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2008. This meeting was noticed according to the notice requirements of the Plan Endorsement Process. The Opportunities and Constraints report was provided to Newton on March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2008. A visioning waiver was granted as Newton had just completed a visioning process. This process will be described below under the public participation session. A consistency review was provided on August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2008. The Action Plan was adopted and an interim center designated by the SPC on February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2009 via Resolution 2009-02. The entire interim center was extended by the SPC on February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2011 via Resolution 2011-02. This was done because the permit extension act only brought back portions of the center. The Permit Extension Act of 2012 extended the entire interim center for an additional two years, until December 31, 2014.

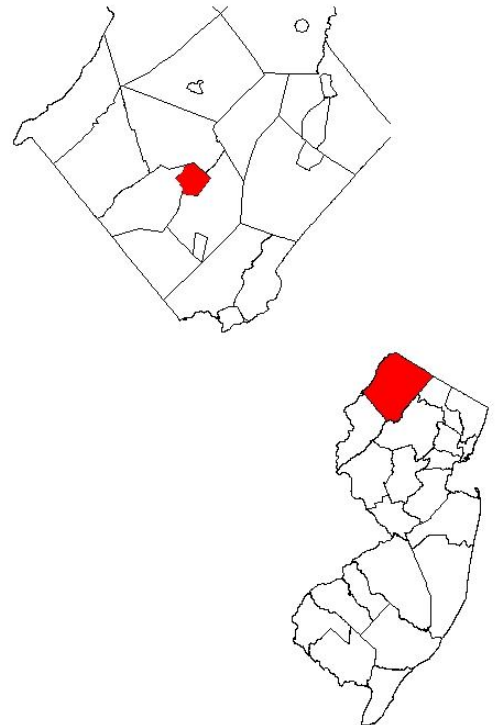
## LOCATION AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

The Town of Newton is located south of the geographic center of the County of Sussex, about nine miles north of the southern end of the County. The Town of Newton is the County Seat and the New Jersey State designated Regional Center for Sussex County. Newton is located in the approximate geographic center of the County and serves as an employment and service hub for the County. Incorporated in 1864, the Town has many assets in its traditional downtown and compact mixed-use neighborhoods. At just 3.1 square miles in size, most of Newton's developable land has been built on.

Early post roads and turnpikes fostered Newton's rise as a regional service center. The construction of Sussex County's first railroad in 1854 brought commercial and residential growth. The Merriam Shoe Factory was constructed in 1873 and introduced the modern factory system to Sussex County. Leather and wood working were the largest industries.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Newton's 8,244 residents make up about 5.3 percent of the County's total population of 153,384 people. The average household size in Newton is 2.39 people, slightly lower than the County average of 2.75 people. Median household income in Newton is \$41,667, nearly half of the County median income of \$78,488. The homeownership rate in Newton is low at just 49 percent, with County homeownership rates at just above 84 percent. Newton's housing vacancy rate is 6.8 percent, slightly lower than the County rate of 8.8 percent. The poverty rate in Newton is 6.9 percent, higher than the County rate of 4.8 percent. Unemployment in the Town is 3.2 percent, lower than the County unemployment rate of 4.6%.



	Muni	County	New Jersey
Land area (sq mi)	3	519	781,622
Population	7,960	147,442	8,834,773
Households	3,439	55,554	3,180,854
Average Household Size	2.20	2.66	2.69

Housing Units	3,479	62,265	<b>3,553,562</b>
Home Ownership Rate	50.8%	85.1%	66.6%
Median Household Income	\$45,829	\$84,860	\$71,180
Per Capita Income	\$24,822	\$36,986	\$35,678
Persons below poverty level, percent, 2007-2011	14%	4.9%	9.4%

In 1860, the Town's population was 1,824. Population has grown steadily over the years to 7,960, in 2010. The County population has, however, grown at a faster pace. Newton's population as a percentage of the County's population has fluctuated over time, but ultimately declined from 23 percent in 1880 to less than 10 percent in 2000.

Household size in Newton was 2.39 people in 2000. The Town has experienced a decrease in household size over time, reflecting a countywide and statewide pattern of decreasing household size. The majority of Newton households are comprised of one and two person households, making up more than 60 percent of the total households. Larger households, such as five person households, account for 9.6 percent of households in Newton, less than the 12.9 percent in Sussex County and the 12.5 percent found in New Jersey as a whole.

#### PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

The Town of Newton conducted a visioning process in the fall of 2005. The vision process involved a series of public workshops where participants identified their vision for the Town's future through a Visual Preference Survey.

The resulting vision for the Town was translated into design preferences for commercial and residential development, streets and streetscapes, the pedestrian realm, open space and public places, parking areas, signage and public transit. These design preferences were synthesized into an Urban Design Plan, which was funded by the Office for Planning Advocacy. The Urban Design Plan was translated into the Town's Form Based Zoning, which recently won an award from the New Jersey Planning Officials.

The Urban Design Plan described the vision for the future of the Town, which can be summarized as ---...*a holistic vision of places where the people of Newton want to live, work and feel connected to; a pedestrian friendly place, which can be translated into feasible development opportunities to provide the opportunity for urban living for a variety of households, with additional services and amenities for the entire community.*

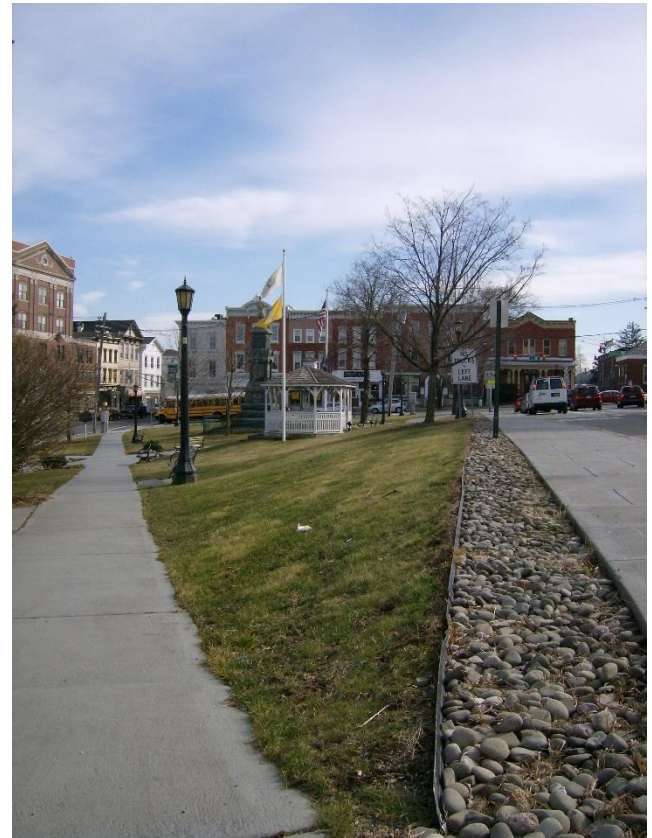
The broader general development goal for Newton as a Regional Center is ---

*To enhance and strengthen Newton's position as a Regional Center in Sussex County in such a way that it will fulfill the social, commercial, governmental, medical, and service needs of a growing County within the constraints of the Town's existing resources.*

## GOAL 1: REVITALIZE THE STATE'S CITIES AND TOWNS

Officials in Newton Town have been working to revitalize and reinvent the Town for over a decade. The New York Times featured an article about quality of life in Newton, stating, "Newton offers a thriving downtown and a lively combination of historic and newer housing, regional institutions that provide significant job opportunities, and proximity to recreation."

The Towns' efforts are captured in the Urban Design Plan and recently updated zoning code. Newton's Urban Design Plan utilizes SmartCode Transects as a method for defining the form and density of development in the Town. Transect Zones establish a graduated level of density from the dense center core of the Town to the preserved and natural areas at the edges of Town. Smaller, pedestrian-friendly neighborhood centers are provided within five minute walking circles of neighborhoods. The pattern mimics traditional community development seen throughout the United States prior to World War II. The Transect Zones establish a basis for utilizing the SmartCode model form-based ordinance within the Town, which regulates development primarily on its form, location and interaction with other buildings in the community. The desired result of Transect Zoning is to promote compact communities that offer vibrant urban places focused toward the pedestrian rather than the automobile.



## GOAL 2: CONSERVE THE STATE'S NATURAL RESOURCES AND SYSTEMS

Approximately 1,210 acres in the Town are developed. The remaining land is classified as agricultural (34 acres), barren land (34 acres), forest (529 acres), water (20 acres) and wetlands (347 acres).

The Town of Newton has two areas that can be characterized primarily by their natural features. The southeast portion of the Town, along the border with Hampton and Andover Townships, is covered in streams, wetlands and flood hazard areas.

To the north and west of the Town, wooded hillsides characterize the area. Development in these areas has also been limited with relatively low densities due to steeper slopes. Approximately 20 percent of the Town, or 391 acres, is covered with wetlands. Likewise, approximately 340 acres of the Town is located within the FEMA mapped 100 year flood zone areas and 10 acres are located in the 500 year flood zone areas. The land in this area has very limited amounts of development due to these environmental constraints.

### Zoning

T-1 – Natural Areas: The T-1 Transect Zone covers all wetlands, water and wetland buffers established by the N.J.D.E.P., these are areas which should be preserved from development. The T-1 also includes lands which are already preserved from development including parks and cemeteries. Uses permitted in the T-1 Transect include parks and recreation uses for active parks, eco-parks and nature preserves for passive recreation including walking trails and bike paths.



T-2 – Rural Reserved Areas: The T-2 Transect Zone covers large tracts of land that are undeveloped, farmlands, former quarries, etc., which are located in the outskirts of Town and should be reserved from intensive development and kept as areas which are open and rural in nature. This area is recommended for use as farmland or other agricultural uses, open space, very large lot development or rural /hamlet cluster development. The recommended density in this transect is one unit per ten acres. Rural cluster/hamlet subdivisions can be created at a density of one unit per two acres on maximum ¼ acre lots. Access should be developed at rural standards and the remaining land not utilized for lots or access must be placed into conservation or farmland easements.

#### Complete or Recently Updated Ordinances

Stormwater Management, water conservation, wellhead protection ordinance, stream corridor protection ordinance, steep slope ordinance, environmental impact statement, flood damage control,

Newton's stormwater management ordinance prescribes non structural methods, including low-maintenance landscaping, indigenous vegetation and vegetated open channel conveyance systems.

The water conservation ordinance allows the Town to reduce or ban the use of water to water lawns or gardens, wash cars, and fill swimming or ornamental pools. Notice of such restrictions is printed in the newspaper.

The steep slope ordinance prohibits any disturbance to steep slopes with a 20% or greater slopes.

Newton also requires an environmental impact statement. There are many considerations that the statement must address, including, negative impacts to critical environmental areas. A discussion of site design and project location alternatives that were considered must be provided as well. The discussion shall indicate why an alternative was rejected if it would have resulted in less of a negative impact than the proposed development.

The Flood Damage Control Ordinance Restricts uses which are dangerous to health, safety, or property due to water erosion or an increase in flood heights or velocities. The ordinance also requires that uses vulnerable to floods be protected from flood damage at the time of initial construction. The ordinance also prohibits the alteration of natural flood plains, stream channels, and natural protective barriers which are involved in the accommodation of flood waters.

#### Goal 3: Promote Beneficial Economic Growth, Development and Renewal for All Residents of New Jersey

Staff at Newton have used several strategies to successfully create jobs in Newton. Newton Town has designated five redevelopment areas and a large rehabilitation area. Several redevelopment plans have been created. A market study has been included in the municipal budget.

The Town of Newton has shown a trend in development toward a demand for light industrial and manufacturing space. Access to utilities, such as water and sewer make Newton very attractive in Sussex County for this purpose. Maintaining light industrial facilities provides much needed middle-income jobs for residents, provides tax revenue for the Town and bolsters the overall economy of the area. Higher density residential developments that are close to amenities and within walking distance to local job centers also appear to have some marketability within the Town.

In February 2012, Thorlabs, Inc., opened its world headquarters in Newton. The facility is a 120,000 square foot manufacturing facility that employs approximately 300 people at 56 Sparta Avenue. Thorlabs has occupied 100 percent of the new facility and begun to purchase surrounding parcels and buildings for satellite offices and manufacturing facilities. These new facilities will be an additional 100,000 square feet and will add another 200 employees.

In 2010, E.J. Brooks, a long-time light industrial/manufacturing company left the Town and vacated its location off of Diller Avenue. The site was filled within a year by Meadowbrook Inventions, a precision cutting company that manufactures glitter. There are 30 employees at Meadowbrook Inventions and the company has indicated that they are likely to expand operations in Newton in the coming years.



One key area that has not been studied as a potential area in need of redevelopment is the downtown. A market study was recently completed for the downtown area. There are about 82 storefronts downtown and about 18 vacancies which represents a 22% vacancy rate. However, all of the vacancies are clustered in one area on Spring Street. Presumably, if this area is improved and efforts to bring in tenants are concentrated, the vacant rate can be reduced to 7-10%, which is normal. Spring Street is a difficult area to address because it contains several historic structures. The marketing study will address this area. There is also a Spring Street Merchant Group that meets monthly to revitalize Spring Street.

### Zoning

**T-5 – Town Core Support Area/ Neighborhood Cores:** The T-5 Transect Zone covers the area surrounding the Town Core that provides the majority of the housing and employment that directly supports the Town Core. The T-5 Transect also provides for Neighborhood Cores to serve some of the neighborhoods which are closer to the Town Core area. The permitted uses in the T-5 Transect include the following single family residential, townhomes, live work units, apartments over retail, hotels, offices, mixed use parking structures and civic and religious uses.

**T-6 – Town Core:** The T-6 Transect is a higher density, mixed and multiple use downtown area. This area provides for the majority of retail and commercial uses within the Town and should be identified as the Central Business District within the Town. This area has residential and office uses over the commercial uses to support day and evening uses in the downtown.



### **GOAL 4: PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT, PREVENT AND CLEAN UP POLLUTION**

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According to DEP's IMap, there are 25 active contaminated sites in Newton. Nine of the 25 sites are auto related uses.

### Brownfields Remediation Efforts

The Newton Armory was constructed sometime after 1956 when the ownership of the land was assumed by the State of New Jersey from the Town of Newton. The US Army utilized the site as a National Guard Training Center until 2008. At the time of abandonment, the Armory included a Veteran Services Center and an Army Recruiting Center. When the use was abandoned by the State, the land reverted back to the Town's ownership. The Armory site has been vacant and abandoned since 2008. The Town is working with the state on a cleanup and redevelopment strategy. The Armory and a nearby Shop-Rite are part of a designated redevelopment area.

### **GOAL 5: PROVIDE ADEQUATE PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICE AT A REASONABLE COST**

#### Hurricane Sandy

Hurricane Sandy did not have a huge impact on Newton. Debris from tree damage was the primary result, and it took about two months for the Town to remove the debris. Road closures were minimal. Power was out for a maximum of three days. The Town does proactive hazard mitigation work. There are three main floodgates that the town maintains. Dams are checked yearly and reinforced if necessary.

### Buildout

The Sussex County Strategic Growth Plan conducted a build-out study for Newton by calculating the potential number of units that could be built under current zoning after removing lands with environmental constraints. The build-out

showed that an additional 500 building units could be built in the Town, which with the current household size would result in a population increase of 1,195 people. This would bring the total population in the Town to 9,439. The Town's Urban Design Plan proposed an additional 1,420 units through additional development and redevelopment within the Town. This would add an additional 3,394 people to the Town's population for a potential total population of between 11,638 and 12,833.

Newton Town has their own water and sewer utility. The Newton Water and Sewer Utility operates on a self-sustaining basis without the use of tax dollars.

### Wastewater

The projected buildout is consistent with the Town's 208 Water Quality Plan, which projected a population build-out of 11,500 to 12,500 people. The Urban Design Plan projected the build-out over the next 15 plus years and the Sussex County Strategic Growth Plan projected the Town's build-out to occur in the 2020's or beyond. The highest population projection of 12,833 would represent a population increase of 36 percent.

The wastewater treatment plant has capacity to treat 1.4 million gallons per day and processes an average of .910 million gallons of wastewater flow daily. Plant personnel are responsible for operating four sewer pump stations and over 20 miles of sewer collection lines.

The Newton Water and Sewer Utility is beginning frequent Infiltration and Inflow Investigations to reduce demand on the system. This investigation uses cameras to determine where leaks from stormwater facilities, gutters, manholes etc. are connected to the sewer system. Reduction of the demand is also being achieved by the nonstructural features permitted by the Town's stormwater ordinance mentioned in under Goal 2 section of this report.

The Sussex County Wastewater Management Plan is anticipated to be approved by the Freeholder Board in May 2013. The County anticipates a Final Approval Letter from DEP July 15, 2013.

### Septic Tanks

There are several septic tanks on Mount View Street. The Town relies on the County Health Department to manage these tanks. If a main is installed on Mount View Street, homeowners would be required for them to connect.

### Water Supply

In order for planned growth to occur, the Town's water allocation will need to be increased. The Town obtains its water from Morris Lake Reservoir, which is located in Sparta Township, within the Highlands Preservation District. The Town is in the process of applying to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and the Highlands Planning Commission to increase the Town's water allocation to handle the future development anticipated within the Town.

A priority of the Newton Water Department along with the Newton Town Council is working to get the Town of Newton's unaccounted for water number below 15%. Efforts continue by the Water Department through leak detection monthly. Leak detection has allowed the Town to stay on top of leaks and open hydrants and get repairs made immediately to the water distribution system. Water Division employees are in the process of changing all meters to the outside reader model. This project will be accomplished over a period of between eight and 10 years.

In early 2013, the Water Department began to notice that water usage was high throughout town. The transmission main that runs under Fox Hollow Lake had broken. After this main was shut off, water usage went down drastically in a 24-hour period. The average daily usage went down from approximately 1,022,000 gal/day to approximately 642,000 gal/day. A diving company was hired to inspect and repair the break.

### Circulation

With much of the Town already built-out, addressing circulation is less about constructing new roads and accesses, and more about making the most of the systems already in place. The 2008 circulation element addresses sidewalks, trails, mass transit, parking, existing land uses, as well as congested areas, accident data, connectivity, complete streets and street typologies. The overarching goal for the Circulation Element is to "reconnect the community" by bringing people,



goods and services, jobs and neighborhoods together with a transportation network that provides the groundwork for a vibrant community. This means creating, supporting and/or improving access to multiple modes of transportation and enhancing the mobility of those modes, which support center-based development and redevelopment and enhance the sense of place in the Town.

**GOAL 6: PROVIDE ADEQUATE HOUSING AT A REASONABLE COST**  
Newton has an adopted housing element. The Town went through mediation and amended the plan per mediation requirements.

Presently, an affordable project called Newton Town Centre is being planned. Approvals are anticipated in May. This project will provide low and moderate income housing for seniors. The developers are also providing a community center in concert with the affordable housing. The center will be available for all citizens to use. This project is being built on an existing parking lot.



**GOAL 7: PRESERVE AND ENHANCE AREAS WITH HISTORIC, CULTURAL, SCENIC, OPEN SPACE AND RECREATIONAL VALUE**

Newton's Master Plan includes an Historic element and a recreation needs assessment. The Historic Preservation Ordinances were recently updated.

#### Recreation

Newton has six parks covering approximately 38 acres of land within the Town. The Town parks include Memory Park, New Hampshire Street Park, Heritage Park, Pine Street Park and Summit Avenue Park. The Town Green is a County Park located in the Central Business District. The Town of Newton owns recreation facilities at Memory Park, which include a senior baseball field, Little League fields, two softball fields, a "T" ball field, a soccer field, a shelter/picnic area, a tot lot, a swimming pool, and a basketball court. A roller hockey rink is located adjacent to the Town's Park and Ride facility as well. Facilities at the Summit Avenue Park include a shelter and a pond, which is lighted at night in the winter for ice skating. Pine Street Park has a utility field, a tot lot, a picnic area and a basketball court.

The Town's three schools, Merriam Avenue Elementary, Halsted Middle School and Newton High School have 13.5 acres of active recreation fields and playgrounds, which are utilized by the schools during the school sessions and can be utilized by the general public when school is not in session. The Town also has 218.50 acres of public and privately owned open space. The Town owns 126.5 acres of open space; the Nature Conservancy owns 60 acres of open space; and there are 32 acres of cemeteries in the Town. The publicly owned open space is concentrated in the southeastern corner of Town.

There are two national standards for park and recreation level of service. By both standards, Newton is deficient in active recreation parkland by at least 40 percent. The Town has incorporated strategies to increase the potential for active recreation parklands. The strategies include:

- Open space ordinances that require developers to provide local small parks in conjunction with the proposed development.
- The Town is inventorying vacant land in neighborhoods that have recreation deficiencies and targeting potential acquisition of land for recreation.
- As the Town continues to redevelop, active recreation facilities in conjunction with new developments are discussed and explored. An example of this policy is the Newton Town Centre Low and Moderate Housing Project for seniors. The project is being constructed on a parking lot, and the developer is including a community center that will be available for all citizens.
- The Town is reviewing its own inventory of vacant land to determine if any land is suitable for development into active recreation.

In addition to these strategies, the Town is working to rehabilitate and extend the abandoned Erie Lackawanna right-of-way and designate a nature preserve. The Circulation Element of this Master Plan includes recommendations to maintain pedestrian and bike access along the Erie Lackawanna right-of-way as it travels through the developed portions of Town and extending the rail trail through the open space in Town. The Town just received a grant from DEP for the rail trail rehab plan and is working with the County on Planning and permitting.

#### NEWTON'S HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE

Newton is a charming downtown with a dynamic mix of historic buildings and structures built to human scale. The architectural styles include 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Victorian, Georgian, Greek revival, Gothic Revival, Italianate, Second Empire, Queen Anne, Vernacular, Richardsonian Romanesque, Craftsman bungalows, Colonial Revival.

Newton has recorded information about the history of the Town in the Historic Element of the Master Plan and established methods of protecting these resources. The Town's ordinances establish procedures and criteria for the Historic Preservation Advisory Commission, Certified Local Government Program and the Designated Local Historic District.

The Town of Newton established a Historic Preservation Advisory Commission via ordinance on November 9, 1987. The Historic Preservation Advisory Commission meets monthly to review applications for a Certificate of Appropriateness and to provide technical information to local property owners contemplating work on their historic homes or buildings. In accordance with the New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law, the Commission has five regular and two alternate members, who serve without compensation. Staff for the Commission is provided from the Town's Community Development Department.

The Town Historic Preservation Advisory Commission participates in the Certified Local Government (CLG) Program administered by the National Park Service (NPS) through the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office (HPO). Participation in the CLG Program has afforded the Town opportunities to review and comment through Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as consulting parties on Federally funded, licensed, permitted, or otherwise assisted projects having potential to affect historic properties in the Town. Over the past two decades participation in the CLG program has enabled the Town to qualify for \$90,000 in grant funds used to compile and update survey information on historic and archaeological properties, and to prepare and print guidelines and other publications, to assist citizens in rehabilitating and maintaining historic buildings in the Town. The Commission recently produced a fifteen minute movie about the history of the Town.

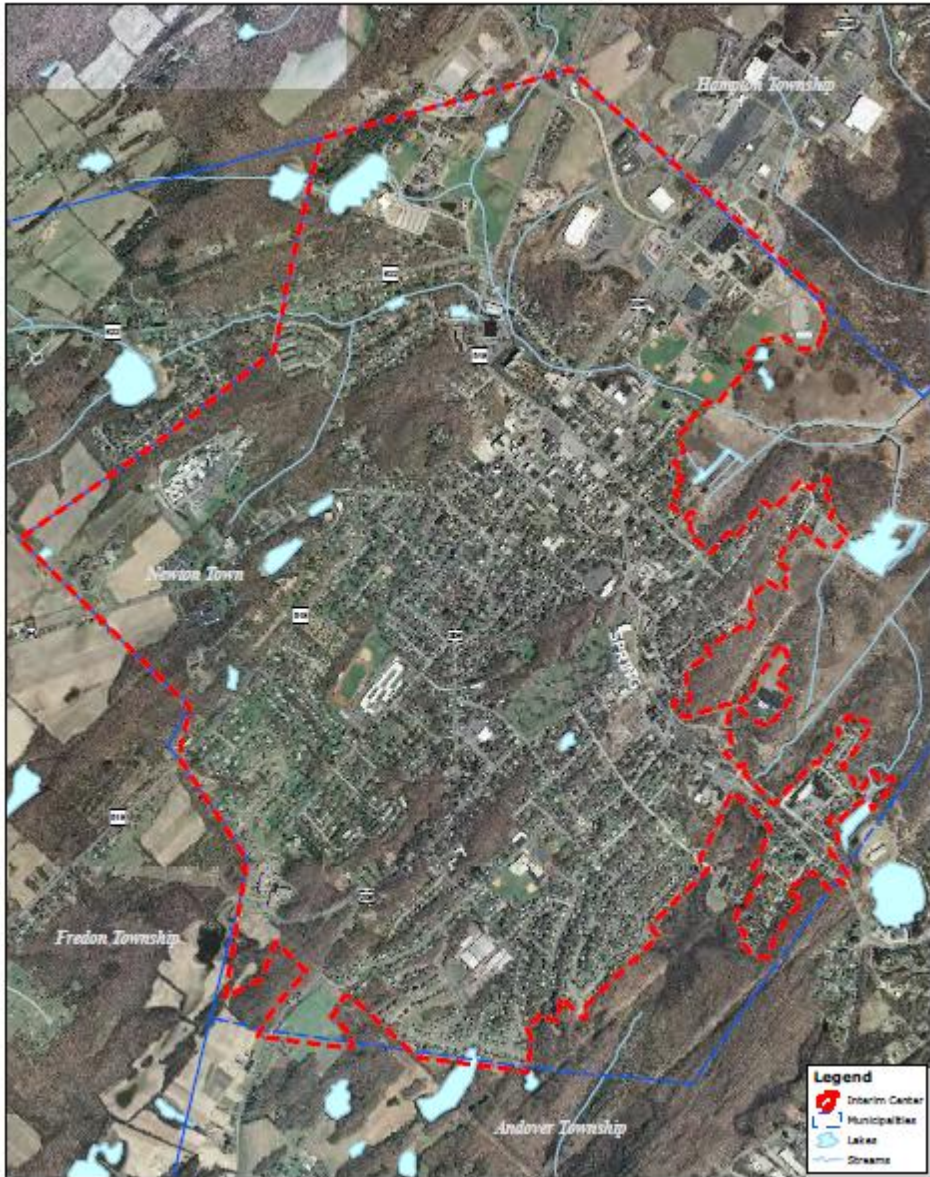


Additionally, with the adoption of the ordinance in 1987, the Council also designated a local Historic District which the Commission would have the responsibility to oversee. Existing Historic Districts, shows the Newton Town Plot Historic District (State and National Register District) and the locally designated Historic District.

#### PROPOSED CENTER

The Town of Newton has requested designation of a Regional Center. The State Plan outlines both the hierarchy of centers and the designation criteria, which establish certain basic thresholds of land area, population, employment and densities for the various center categories. According to the Plan, these thresholds are intended to serve as a flexible guideline for consideration of proposed centers, especially in terms of their projections out 20 years into the future.







Criteria	State Plan Criteria: Regional Center	Proposed Regional Center Baseline	Proposed Regional Center (20 years forward)
<b>Land Use</b>			
Function	Focal point for region's economic, social and cultural activities with a compact mixed-use core.	Yes	Yes
	Located in market area supporting high-intensity development and redevelopment.	Yes	Yes
	Identified as a result of a strategic planning effort conducted on a regional basis.	Yes - identified in County Strategic Growth Plan	Yes
	Located, scaled and designed not to adversely affect economic growth potential of Urban Centers.	Yes – not adjacent urban centers	Yes
Land area	1 to 10 sq mi	3.1 square miles	3.1 square miles
Housing units	4,000 to 15,000 in PA 1 & 2, or 2,000 to 15,000 in PA3, 4 or 5	3,425 units (PA4/5)	5,175 (Vision Plan and Growth Share projections)
Housing Density	> 3 du/acre	2± du/acre	3 ± du/acre
<b>Population</b>			
Number of people	>10,000 in PA 1 & 2, or >5,000 in PA3, 4 or 5	8,244	12,368
Density	> 5,000 per sq mi	2,650 per sq. mil.	3,989 per sq. mi.
<b>Economy</b>			
Employment	> 10,000 in PA 1 & 2, or >5,000 in PA3, 4 or 5	4,339 jobs	5,440 jobs (Vision Plan and Growth Share projections)
Jobs-housing ratio	2:1 to 5:1	1.3:1	1.1:1
<b>Infrastructure</b>			
Capacity (general)	Access to sufficient existing or planned infrastructure.	Yes	Yes (with increased water/sewer allocations)
Transportation	Near major public transportation terminal, arterial or interstate interchange; hub for two or more transportation modes.	N/A (Rural planning area – no major terminals/hubs present)	N/A

#### PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATION AGREEMENT

Intended to help forge a lasting partnership between the Commission and the Town, Plan Endorsement is a two-way commitment, embodied in the PIA. Additional planning and design work will still be required on the part of the Town, and these efforts need to be carefully monitored by the Commission and the state agencies. From the efforts made so far to reach the present consensus, it is evident that the desire of the Town to succeed is real and the Commission should support these planning efforts.

# NEWTON TOWN PIA: DRAFT

Item No.	Subject	Action Item	<u>Due Date</u>
1	Transit	NJ TRANSIT would like to note that Newton qualifies as an urban town center. The town or county should pursue the use of rural transportation funding or other sources (CMAQ) to look at a five day a week local circulator, similar to Hackettstown, which has	
2	Environmental	Newton does not currently have an Open Space and Recreation Element, a requirement of Plan Endorsment. Both Newton's draft Master Plan and the Plan Endorsment Opportunities and Constraints Analysis note a deficiency in open space in Newton.	
3	Environmental	A Natural Resource Inventory (NRI), otherwise referred to as an Environmental Resource Inventory, describes the municipality's natural and cultural resources, and the conditions and activities that impact them. The NRI is a factual document that provides	
4	Environmental	The Town of Newton shall develop and adopt a Conservation Plan Element of the Master Plan.	
5	Environmental	The Newton Water & Sewer Utility is close to its Water Allocation permitted limits. To accommodate projected growth in Newton an increase in water supply is needed. A request for an increase of surface water supply above the limit established in Newton's	
6	Environmental	Septic Management Plan/Ordinance: For areas not included in Sewer Service Area or "existing areas served", Newton shall adopt a septic management plan and/or ordinance. DEP will provide technical assistance.	
7	Housing	Fair Share Plan and Housing Element	

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The Town of Newton's vision is consistent with the State Plan. Therefore, staff recommends Plan Endorsement for the Town, including the designation of the aforementioned Regional Center. This recommendation recognizes the efforts made by the Town, which has demonstrated commitment and leadership towards improving its plans, through the fulfillment of the Action plan phase. We look forward to working with the Town to further its plans via refinement and implementation.