

# Redevelopment Study and Preliminary Investigation Report

Block 58, Lot 36 & Block 58.01, Lot 4

**Prepared:**  
January 4, 2022

**Prepared for:**



Branchburg Township  
1077 US Highway Route 202 North  
Branchburg, NJ 08876

**Prepared by:**



T&M Associates  
11 Tindall Road  
Middletown, NJ 07748

*The original of this document has been signed  
and sealed in accordance with New Jersey Law.*

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "KL", is written over a horizontal line.

**Kendra Lelie, PP, AICP, LLA**  
NJ Professional Planner No.: 5537

# Redevelopment Study and Preliminary Investigation Report

Branchburg Township, Somerset County, New Jersey

Block 58, Lot 36 & Block 58.01, Lot 4

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T&M Associates, Inc.  
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1037 US Highway Route 302 North  
Branchburg, NJ 08876

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and sealed in accordance with New Jersey law.

Kendra Latta, P.E., AICP, LIA  
NJ Professional Planner No. 5537

# Redevelopment Study and Preliminary Investigation Report

Branchburg Township, Somerset County, New Jersey

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## Redevelopment Study and Preliminary Investigation Report

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### Introduction

The purpose of this Redevelopment Study and Preliminary Investigation Report (hereinafter referred to as “Redevelopment Study”) is to determine whether certain properties in Branchburg Township qualify as an area in need of redevelopment as defined in the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, P.L. 1992, Chapter 79 (commonly and hereinafter referred to as the “LRHL”).

The properties that are reviewed in this Redevelopment Study include Block 58, Lot 36 and Block 58.01, Lot 4. These properties are hereinafter referred to as the “Study Area” and shown on the accompanying regional location map (Map 1) and aerial location map (Map 2).

This Redevelopment Study is written pursuant to Section 6 of the LRHL (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-6a), which states the following:

*No area of a municipality shall be determined to be a redevelopment area unless the governing body of the municipality shall, by resolution, authorize the planning board to undertake a preliminary investigation to determine whether the proposed area is a redevelopment area according to the criteria set forth in Section 5 of P.L. 1992. C.79 (C.40A:12A-5). ... The governing body of a municipality shall assign the conduct of the investigation and hearing to the planning board of a municipality.*

This Redevelopment Study is authorized by Resolution No. 2021-237 of the Branchburg Township Committee, which was adopted on November 8, 2021. Said resolution specifically identified the properties listed above and further indicated that the area to be studied include “any and all streets, ‘paper’ streets, private drives and rights-of-ways.

A copy of Resolution No. 2021-237 is provided in Appendix A of this Redevelopment Study.

This report serves as the “statement setting forth the basis for the investigation,” which is required by the LRHL [N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-6b(1)]. In accordance with N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-6b(5):

*After completing its hearing on this matter, the planning board shall recommend that the delineated area, or any part thereof, be determined, or not be determined, by the municipal governing body to be a redevelopment area. After receiving the recommendation of the planning board, the municipal governing body may adopt a resolution determining that the delineated area, or any part thereof, is in need of redevelopment.*



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It is noted that in directing the Planning Board to undertake the preliminary investigation and redevelopment study, Resolution No. 2021-237 specified that the Study Area shall not be subject to a condemnation redevelopment area designation.



Branchburg Township, Somerset County, New Jersey  
Planning Board  
2021-237  
Redevelopment Study and Preliminary Investigation Report  
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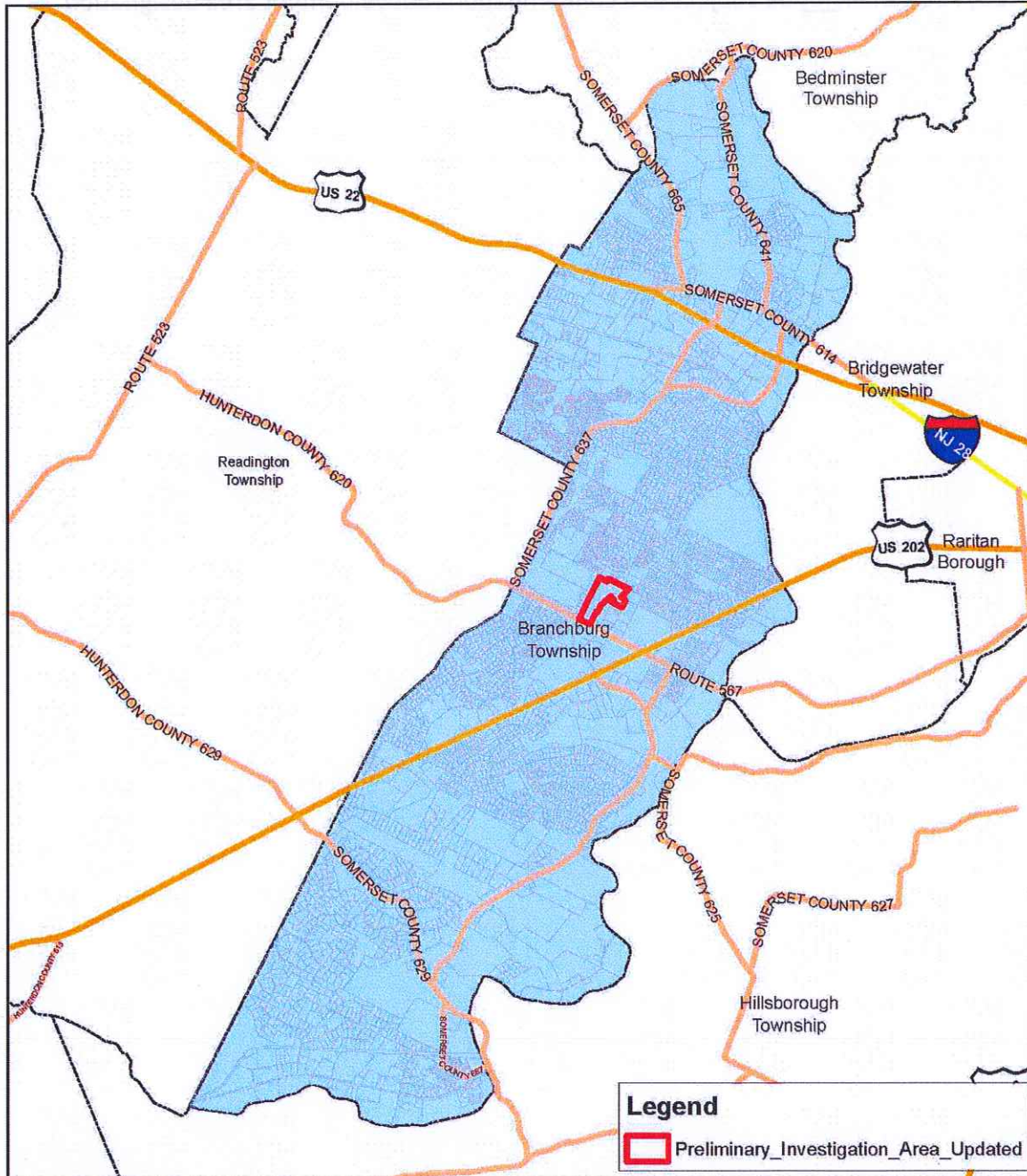
Branchburg Township, Somerset County, New Jersey  
Planning Board  
2021-237  
Redevelopment Study and Preliminary Investigation Report  
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## Redevelopment Study and Preliminary Investigation Report

Branchburg Township, Somerset County, New Jersey

Block 58, Lot 36 & Block 58.01, Lot 4

### Map 1: Regional Location Map



T&M Associates  
11 Tindall Road  
Middletown, NJ 07748  
Phone: 732-671-6400

0 2,150 4,300 8,600 Feet

Prepared by: KB 12/28/2021  
Source: ESRI; NJDEP; NJDOT; NJGIN;  
Somerset County; Branchburg Township; T&M Associates  
C:\Users\kbogen\Projects\Branchburg Redevelopment\Prelim Investigation Area Regional Good.mxd

### PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION AREA: REGIONAL MAP BLOCK 58 LOT 36 / BLOCK 58.01 LOT 4 BRANCHBURG TOWNSHIP, NEW JERSEY


NOTE: This map was developed using New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Geographic Information System digital data, but this secondary product has not been verified by NJDEP and is not State-authorized.



**Redevelopment Study and Preliminary Investigation Report**  
Branchburg Township, Somerset County, New Jersey  
Block 58, Lot 36 & Block 58.01, Lot 4

**Map 2: Aerial Location Map**



 T&M Associates  
11 Tindall Road  
Middletown, NJ 07748  
Phone: 732-671-6400

0 105 210 420  
Feet

Prepared by: KB 12/28/2021  
Source: ESRI; NJDEP; NJDOT; NJGIN;  
Somerset County; Branchburg Township; T&M Associates  
C:\Users\kbogen\Projects\Branchburg Redevelopment\Prelim Investigation Area Aerial.mxd

**PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION AREA: AERIAL PHOTO MAP**  
**BLOCK 58 LOT 36 / BLOCK 58.01 LOT 4**  
**BRANCBURG TOWNSHIP, NEW JERSEY**

*NOTE: This map was developed using New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Geographic Information System digital data, but this secondary product has not been verified by NJDEP and is not State-authorized.*



## **Redevelopment Study and Preliminary Investigation Report**

Branchburg Township, Somerset County, New Jersey

Block 58, Lot 36 & Block 58.01, Lot 4

### **Study Area Description**

The Study Area (see Map 2) is approximately 43 acres and contains a total of 2 properties, which have been individually listed on Page 1. In addition, approximately 1,500 linear feet of the Evans Way right-of-way will be vacated and added to the Study Area. It is centrally located along the western side of Branchburg Township with frontage on Old York Road and Stony Brook Road and is situated along the western side of the unimproved portion of Evans Way.

Block 58, Lot 6 is vacant and contains agricultural land cover over the eastern portion of the lot and forested land cover over the northwestern and central part of the lot. Block 58.01, Lot 4 is vacant and the designated land use/land cover data as mapped by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) is denoted as crop/pasture. As depicted in the Land Use/Land Cover Map (see Map 3), there are two utility easements that traverse both parcels. The PSE&G easement measures 150 feet in width and the Algonquin Gas easement is 75 feet in width. Combined, these easements account for a 225 foot wide swath of land that runs from the northeast to the southeast corners of the Block 58, Lot 36 and consumes the northwest corner of Block 58.01, Lot 4 accounting for approximately 10% of the total Study Area.

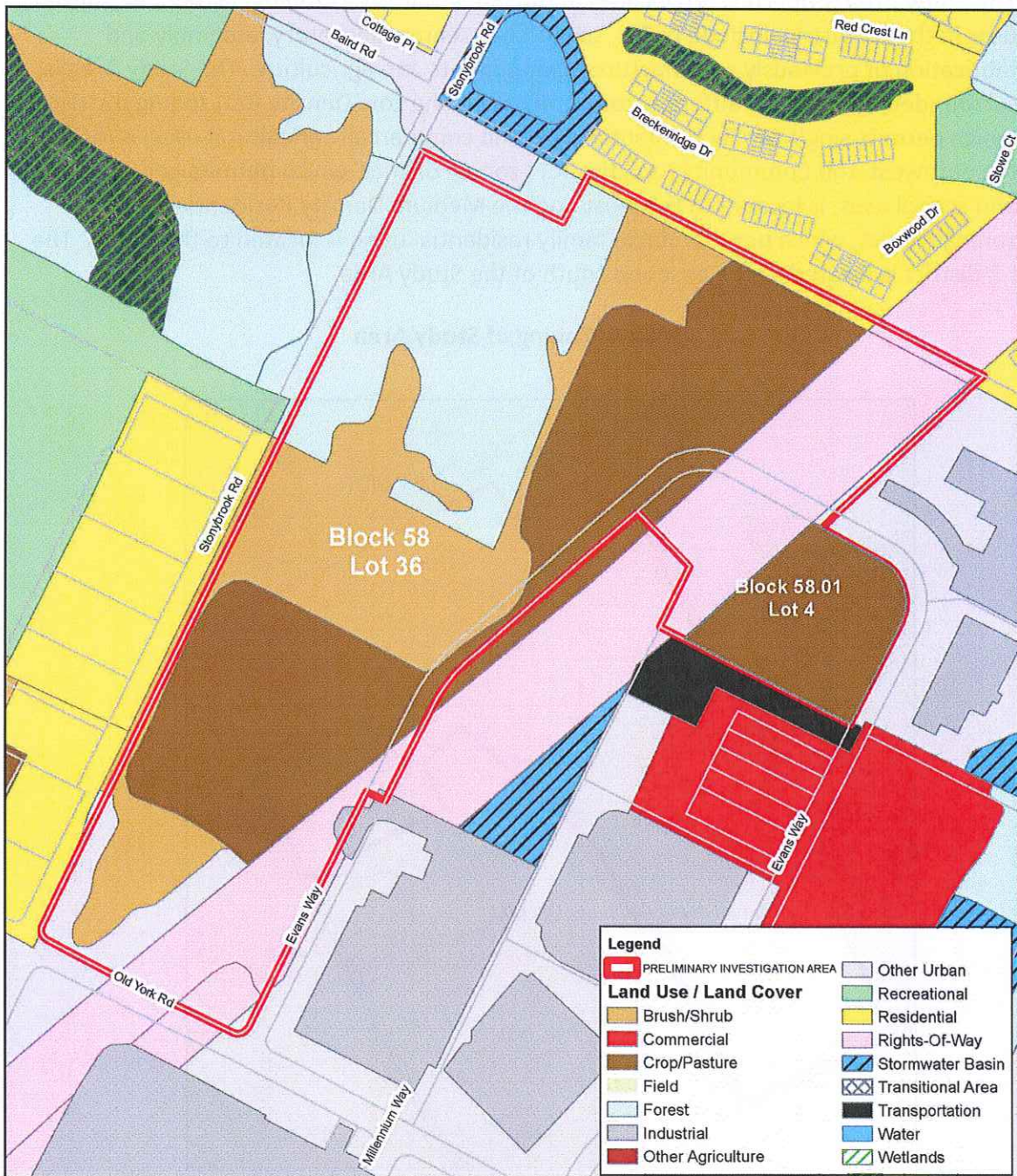
A review of mapping from NJDEP and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) indicates that the Study Area does not contain Category One waterways, flood hazard areas, wetland areas, surface waterbodies, and sites identified on the NJDEP's Known Contaminated Sites List.

Generally speaking, the study area slopes from the northeast to the west toward Stony Brook Road with a fall of approximately 30 feet over 600 horizontal feet.



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 Block 58, Lot 36 & Block 58.01, Lot 4

**Map 3: Land Use Land Cover (2015)**



T&M Associates  
 11 Tindall Road  
 Middletown, NJ 07748  
 Phone: 732-671-6400

0 105 210 420 Feet

Prepared by: KB 12/29/2021  
 Source: ESRI; NJDEP; NJDOT; NJGIN;  
 Somerset County; Branchburg Township; T&M Associates  
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**PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION AREA: LAND USE LAND COVER**  
**BLOCK 58 LOT 36 / BLOCK 58.01 LOT 4**  
**BRANCHBURG TOWNSHIP, NEW JERSEY**

*NOTE: This map was developed using New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Geographic Information System digital data, but this secondary product has not been verified by NJDEP and is not State-authorized.*



## Redevelopment Study and Preliminary Investigation Report

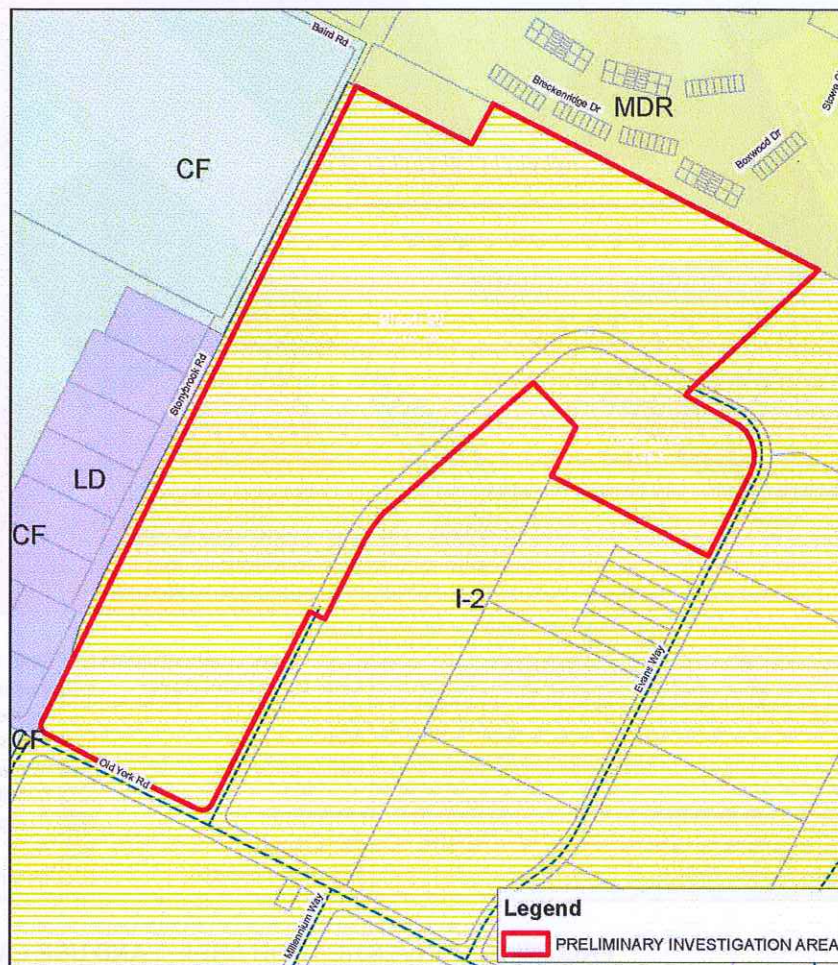
Branchburg Township, Somerset County, New Jersey

Block 58, Lot 36 & Block 58.01, Lot 4

### Current Zoning

The Study Area properties are located in the Industrial 2 (I-2) zoning district. Permitted uses in the I-2 district include office, scientific/research laboratory, assembly and fabrication of previously manufactured components and agriculture. The Study Area is surrounded by three (3) different zoning districts. The Low Density (LD) zoning district, which permits single family residential uses and commercial agricultural uses, is located to southwest, the Community Facilities (CF) zoning district, which permits government and school uses, is located to the west and the Medium Density Residential (MDR) zoning district, which permits single family residential uses, is located to the north. The I-2 district is located to the east and south of the Study Area.

**Map 4: Zoning of Study Area**



T&M Associates  
11 Tindall Road  
Middletown, NJ 07748  
Phone: 732-671-6400

Prepared by: KB 12/28/2021  
Source: ESRI; NJDEP; NJDOT; NJGIN;

Somerset County; Branchburg Township; T&M Associates  
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#### PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION AREA: ZONING MAP BLOCK 58 LOT 36 / BLOCK 58.01 LOT 4 BRANCHBURG TOWNSHIP, NEW JERSEY

NOTE: This map was developed using New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Geographic Information System digital data, but this secondary product has not been verified by NJDEP and is not State-authorized.



## **Redevelopment Study and Preliminary Investigation Report**

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### **Planning Context**

#### **Branchburg Township Master Plan**

The Branchburg Township Master Plan, Land Use Element was adopted in 2011 and subsequently reexamined in 2014. Provided below are discussions of relevant aspects of the land use planning context of the Study Area and the Study Area's relationship to specific master plan goals and objectives.

#### **Land Use Planning Context**

The 2011 Master Plan, Land Use Element included proposed land use plan mapping. As depicted on the Land Use Plan mapping, the Study Area is located within the Industrial 2 land use district. The zoning of the Study Area is generally consistent with the land use designations as depicted in the 2011 Proposed Land Use Map.

#### **Master Plan Goals and Objectives**

As provided in the 2011 Master Plan, Land Use Element, the Branchburg Township Master Plan contains the following goals and objectives that redevelopment of the Study Area would provide an opportunity to support:

- Provide for a variety of industrial uses on lots of five (5) acres or more;
- Protect the health, safety and welfare of the community by managing the location of extraordinarily hazardous substance facilities; and
- Provide for a range of industrial uses is permitted in the zone, with the exception of manufacturing uses.

#### **New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan**

The New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP) contains a series of smart growth goals and policies, and mapping that reflects desired growth patterns within a series of state planning areas.

As provided in the SDRP, the Study Area is located within Planning Area 2, which is also known as the Suburban Planning Area. The intent of the Suburban Planning Area are as follows:

- Provide for much of the state's future development;
- Promote growth in Centers and other compact forms;
- Protect the character of existing stable communities;
- Protect natural resources;
- Redesign areas of sprawl;
- Reverse the current trend toward further sprawl; and
- Revitalize cities and towns.

In addition, we note that the SDRP further provides that:

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*The intent of the State Plan regarding the Suburban Planning Area is to reverse the current trend towards further sprawl and to guide both redevelopment and new development into more efficient and serviceable patterns. (SDRP, Page 196).*

Based on the above, Redevelopment of the Study Area, which is located within Planning Area 2, is compatible with, and will advance, the intent and purpose of the Suburban Planning Area.



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### **Redevelopment Designation Statutory Requirements**

Pursuant to Section 5 of the LRHL (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5), an area may be determined to be in need of redevelopment if it meets one or more of the following statutory criteria:

- A. The generality of buildings is substandard, unsafe, unsanitary, dilapidated, or obsolescent, or possess any of such characteristics, or are so lacking in light, air, or space, as to be conducive to unwholesome living or working conditions. (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5[a]).
- B. The discontinuance of the use of a building or buildings previously used for commercial, retail, shopping malls or plazas, office parks, manufacturing, or industrial purposes; the abandonment of such building or buildings; significant vacancies of such buildings or buildings for at least two consecutive years; or the same being allowed to fall into so great a state of disrepair as to be untenable. (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5[b]).
- C. Land that is owned by the municipality, the county, a local housing authority, redevelopment agency or redevelopment entity, or unimproved vacant land that has remained so for a period of ten years prior to adoption of the resolution, and that by reason of its location, remoteness, lack of means of access to developed sections or portions of the municipality, or topography, or nature of the soil, is not likely to be developed through the instrumentality of private capital. (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5[c]).
- D. Areas with buildings or improvements which, by reason of dilapidation, obsolescence, overcrowding, faulty arrangement or design, lack of ventilation, light and sanitary facilities, excessive land coverage, deleterious land use or obsolete layout, or any combination of these or other factors, are detrimental to the safety, health, morals, or welfare of the community. (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5[d]).
- E. A growing lack or total lack of proper utilization of areas caused by the condition of the title, diverse ownership of the real properties therein or other similar conditions which impede land assemblage or discourage the undertaking of improvements, resulting in a stagnant and unproductive condition of land potentially useful and valuable for contributing to and serving the public health, safety and welfare, which condition is presumed to be having a negative social or economic impact or otherwise being detrimental to the safety, health, morals, or welfare of the surrounding area or the community in general. (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5[e]).
- F. Areas, in excess of five contiguous acres, whereon buildings or improvements have been destroyed, consumed by fire, demolished or altered by the action of storm, fire, cyclone, tornado, earthquake or other casualty in such a way that the

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aggregate assessed value of the area has been materially depreciated. (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5[f]).

- G. In any municipality in which an enterprise zone has been designated pursuant to the "New Jersey Urban Enterprise Zones Act," P.L.1983, c.303 (C.52:27H-60 et seq.) the execution of the actions prescribed in that act for the adoption by the municipality and approval by the New Jersey Urban Enterprise Zone Authority of the zone development plan for the area of the enterprise zone shall be considered sufficient for the determination that the area is in need of redevelopment pursuant to sections 5 and 6 of P.L.1992, c.79 (C.40A:12A-5 and 40A:12A-6) for the purpose of granting tax exemptions within the enterprise zone district pursuant to the provisions of P.L.1991, c.431 (C.40A:20-1 et seq.) or the adoption of a tax abatement and exemption ordinance pursuant to the provisions of P.L.1991, c.441 (C.40A:21-1 et seq.). The municipality shall not utilize any other redevelopment powers within the urban enterprise zone unless the municipal governing body and planning board have also taken the actions and fulfilled the requirements prescribed in P.L.1992, c.79 (C.40A:12A-1 et al.) for determining that the area is in need of redevelopment or an area in need of rehabilitation and the municipal governing body has adopted a redevelopment plan ordinance including the area of the enterprise zone. (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5[g]).
- H. The designation of the delineated area is consistent with smart growth planning principles adopted pursuant to law or regulation. (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5[h]).

Furthermore, the LRHL permits the inclusion of parcels that do not meet the statutory criteria if they are necessary for effective redevelopment of the proposed redevelopment area:

*A redevelopment area may include land, buildings or improvements which of themselves are not detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare, but the inclusion of which is found necessary with or without change in their condition, for the effective redevelopment of the area of which they are a part (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-3.).*



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### Redevelopment Analysis

With the benefit of and digital geographic data of the NJDEP and FEMA, the Study Area has been carefully reviewed to assess its satisfaction of statutory requirements for redevelopment area designation.

This review has indicated that the Study Area meets one or more of the statutory requirements for designation as an area in need of redevelopment that are provided at N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5. Satisfaction of statutory requirements is also summarized below:

#### Block 58, Lot 36

**Location:** Old York Road/Stony Brook Road/Evans Way

**Owner:** SK Stoney Brook Associates, LLC

**Owner Address:** 520 Route 22 East, P.O. Box 6872, Bridgewater, New Jersey 08807

**Assessed Land Use:** 4B (Industrial)

**Zoning District:** I-2

**Area (Acres):** 38.09

#### Condition:

Block 58, Lot 36 is an 'L' shaped lot with frontage on Stony Brook Road, Old York Road and the paper street section of Evans Way. A PSE&G and Algonquin Gas Easement accounts for 10% of the lot and traverses the lot running from the northeast corner to the southeast corner of the property. The site also slopes from the north and south to the western corner with a grade drop of approximately 30 feet.

#### Site Photograph:



Looking east from the corner of Evans Way and Old York Road



## Redevelopment Study and Preliminary Investigation Report

Branchburg Township, Somerset County, New Jersey

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### Block 58, Lot 36(Continued)

#### Redevelopment Criteria Analysis:

☐ **A: Substandard, Unsafe, Unsanitary, Dilapidated, or Obsolete Buildings**

*Not applicable*

☐ **B: Discontinuance/Abandonment of Commercial or Industrial Buildings**

*Not applicable*

**C: Unimproved Privately-Owned Land/Publicly Owned Land**

*The property is a parcel that has remained undeveloped for at least ten years.*

- ☒ *Given that 10% of the parcel is covered by a utility easement and that the utility easement is situated in such a way on the property that access is limited, the property is not likely to develop through the instrumentality of private capital. Thus, the "c" Criterion is met.*

**D: Areas with Dilapidation, Overcrowding, Faulty Arrangement or Design,**

☐ **Obsolete Layout, Deleterious Land Use**

*Not applicable*

**E: Stagnant and Unproductive Condition Due to Title, Ownership, or Similar**

☐ **Conditions**

*Not applicable*

**F: Areas in Excess of Five Contiguous Acres Destroyed or Adversely Impacted**

☐ **by Fire, Flood, or Other Natural Disaster**

*Not applicable*

☐ **G: Urban Enterprise Zone**

*Not applicable*

☐ **H: Smart Growth Consistency**

*Not applicable*

#### Status:

The "c" Criterion is met and the property may be designated as an area in need of redevelopment.

### Block 58.01, Lot 4

**Location:** Evans Way

**Owner:** SK Stoney Brook Associates, LLC

**Owner Address:** 520 Route 22 East, P.O.  
Box 6872, Bridgewater, New Jersey  
08807

**Assessed Land Use:** 3B (QFarm)

**Zoning District:** I-2

**Area (Acres):** 5

#### Condition:

Block 58.01, Lot 4 is a vacant parcel with access on Evans Way. A PSE&G and Algonquin Gas Easement accounts for over 10 % of the lot area and traverses western side of the lot.



**Redevelopment Study and Preliminary Investigation Report**

Branchburg Township, Somerset County, New Jersey

Block 58, Lot 36 & Block 58.01, Lot 4

**Block 58.01, Lot 4(Continued)**

**Redevelopment Criteria Analysis:**

☐ **A: Substandard, Unsafe, Unsanitary, Dilapidated, or Obsolete Buildings**

*Not applicable*

☐ **B: Discontinuance/Abandonment of Commercial or Industrial Buildings**

*Not applicable*

**C: Unimproved Privately-Owned Land/Publicly Owned Land**

*The property is a parcel that has remained undeveloped for at least ten years.*

- ☒ *Given that over 10% of the parcel is covered by a utility easement and that the utility easement is situated in such a way on the property that access is limited, the property is not likely to develop through the instrumentality of private capital. Thus, the "c" Criterion is met.*

**D: Areas with Dilapidation, Overcrowding, Faulty Arrangement or Design,**

☐ **Obsolete Layout, Deleterious Land Use**

*Not applicable*

**E: Stagnant and Unproductive Condition Due to Title, Ownership, or Similar**

☐ **Conditions**

*Not applicable*

**F: Areas in Excess of Five Contiguous Acres Destroyed or Adversely Impacted**

☐ **by Fire, Flood, or Other Natural Disaster**

*Not applicable*

☐ **G: Urban Enterprise Zone**

*Not applicable*

☐ **H: Smart Growth Consistency**

*Not applicable*

**Status:**

The "c" Criterion is met and the property may be designated as an area in need of redevelopment.

## Redevelopment Study and Preliminary Investigation Report

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### Conclusion

Based on the assessment that is provided in this Redevelopment Study, it is concluded that the Study Area parcels meet at least one of the statutory criteria for being designated as a non-condemnation area in need of redevelopment in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5,

In accordance with the above, the Branchburg Township Planning Board may recommend that the Branchburg Township Committee adopt a resolution declaring that the Study Area parcels listed above are in need of non-condemnation redevelopment.

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## Appendix A: Resolution No. 2021-237



**Redevelopment Study and Preliminary Investigation Report**  
Branchburg Township, Somerset County, New Jersey  
Block 58, Lot 36 & Block 58.01, Lot 4

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**RESOLUTION**

**NO. 2021-237**

**ADOPTED: NOVEMBER 8, 2021**

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to the Redevelopment and Housing Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 et seq. ("Redevelopment Law"), the Township Committee may direct the Planning Board to conduct a preliminary investigation and public hearing to determine whether certain areas of the Township constitute areas in need of redevelopment; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township Committee seeks to have the Planning Board undertake a preliminary investigation of the area identified on the Branchburg Township Tax Maps as Block 58, Lot 36 and Block 58.01, Lot 4, as an area in need of redevelopment ("Study Area"); and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to the N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-6, the Township Committee shall state whether the redevelopment area shall be a "non-condemnation redevelopment area" which is defined as a redevelopment area that shall not use the power of eminent domain authorized by the Redevelopment Law, or whether the redevelopment area shall be a "condemnation redevelopment area" which is defined as a redevelopment area that may use the power of eminent domain authorized by the Redevelopment Law; and

**WHEREAS**, upon the completion of the preliminary investigation and public hearing, the Planning Board shall provide recommendations to the Township Committee as to its investigation of the Study Area in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-6 of the Redevelopment Law.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Township Committee of the Township of Branchburg, County of Somerset, State of New Jersey, as follows: (1) the Planning Board is hereby authorized and directed to conduct a preliminary investigation of the Study Area in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40A: 12A-6 of the Redevelopment Law to determine whether the Study Area satisfies the criteria set forth in N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5 of the Redevelopment Law and should be designated as an area in need of redevelopment; (2) any redevelopment area created pursuant to this authorization shall be a "non-condemnation" redevelopment area; (3) as part of its investigation, the Planning Board shall prepare a map showing the boundaries of the Study Area and the location of the various parcels contained therein and there shall be a statement appended to the map setting forth the basis for the investigation; (4) the Planning Board shall conduct a public hearing, after giving due notice, of the proposed boundaries of the Study Area and the date of the hearing to any persons who are interested in or would be affected by a determination that the area delineated in the notice is a redevelopment area in accordance with the requirements of N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-6 of the Redevelopment Law; (5) at the hearing, the Planning Board shall hear from all persons who are interested in or would be affected by a determination that the Study Area is a redevelopment area and all objections to a determination that the Study Area is an area in need of redevelopment and evidence in support of those objections shall be received and considered by the Planning Board and made part of the public record; (6) after preparing a map of the Study Area, conducting its investigation, conducting a public hearing at which all objections to the designation are received and considered, the Planning Board shall make a recommendation to the Township Committee as to whether the Township Committee should designate all or a portion of the Study Area as an area in need of non condemnation redevelopment pursuant to the Redevelopment Law; and (7) the Township Clerk shall forward a copy of this Resolution to the Branchburg Township Planning Board.

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Branchburg Township, Somerset County, New Jersey  
Block 58, Lot 36 & Block 58.01, Lot 4

---

**ATTEST:**

  
Marguerite Schmitt, RMC  
Township Clerk

  
Brendon Beatrice  
Mayor

ROLL CALL VOTE				
COMMITTEE MEMBER	YES	NO	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
YOUNG	✓			
SCHWORN	✓			
COLUMBUS				✓
OWENS	✓			
BEATRICE	✓			





# POLICY MAP of the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan

## DESIGNATED CENTERS

- ★ Urban Centers
- ☆ Regional Centers
- Towns
- Villages
- Hamlets

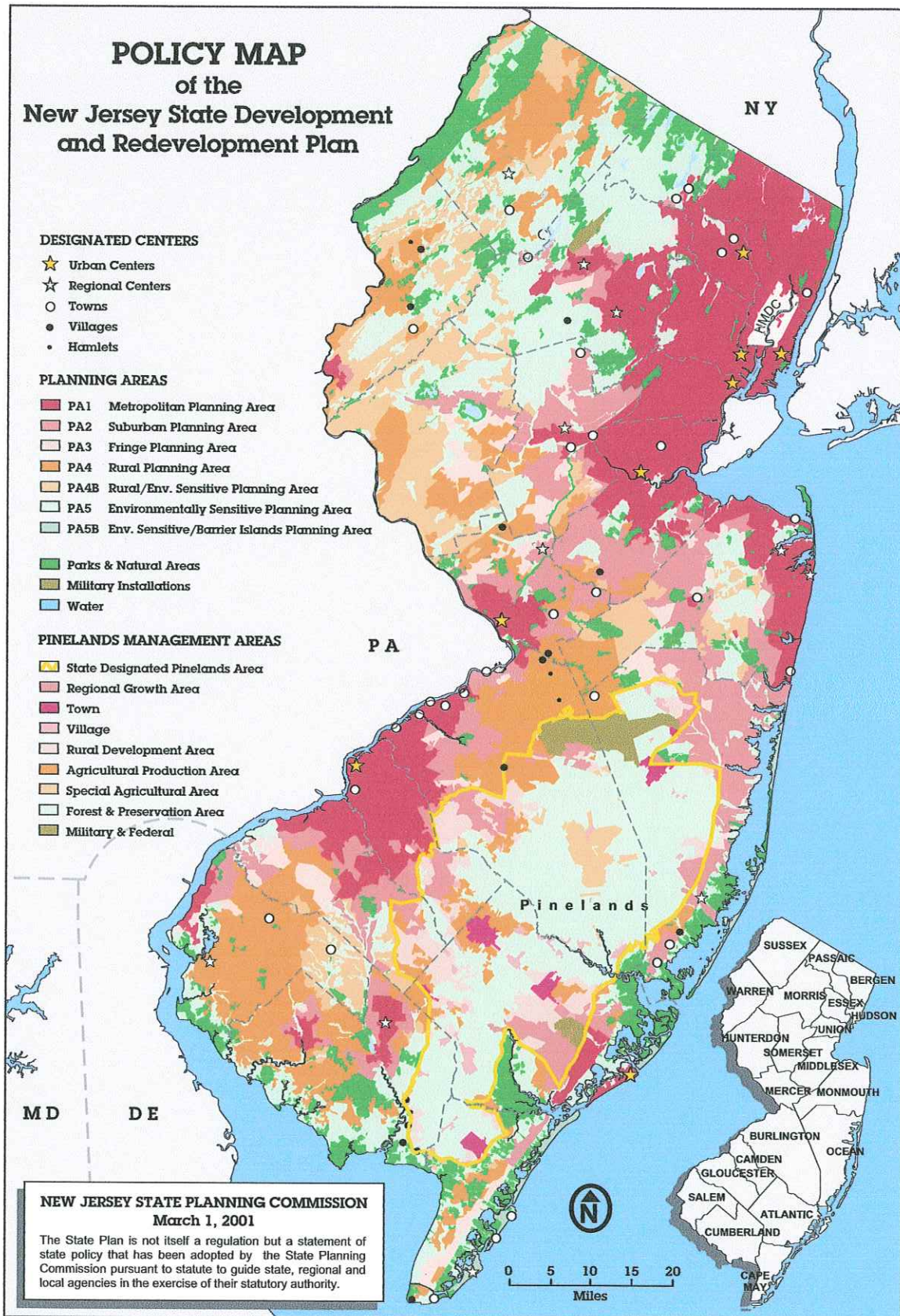
## PLANNING AREAS

- PA1 Metropolitan Planning Area
- PA2 Suburban Planning Area
- PA3 Fringe Planning Area
- PA4 Rural Planning Area
- PA4B Rural/Env. Sensitive Planning Area
- PA5 Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area
- PA5B Env. Sensitive/Barrier Islands Planning Area

- Green Parks & Natural Areas
- Brown Military Installations
- Blue Water

## PINELANDS MANAGEMENT AREAS

- Yellow State Designated Pinelands Area
- Pink Regional Growth Area
- Dark Pink Town
- Light Pink Village
- Light Orange Rural Development Area
- Orange Agricultural Production Area
- Light Green Special Agricultural Area
- White Forest & Preservation Area
- Dark Green Military & Federal

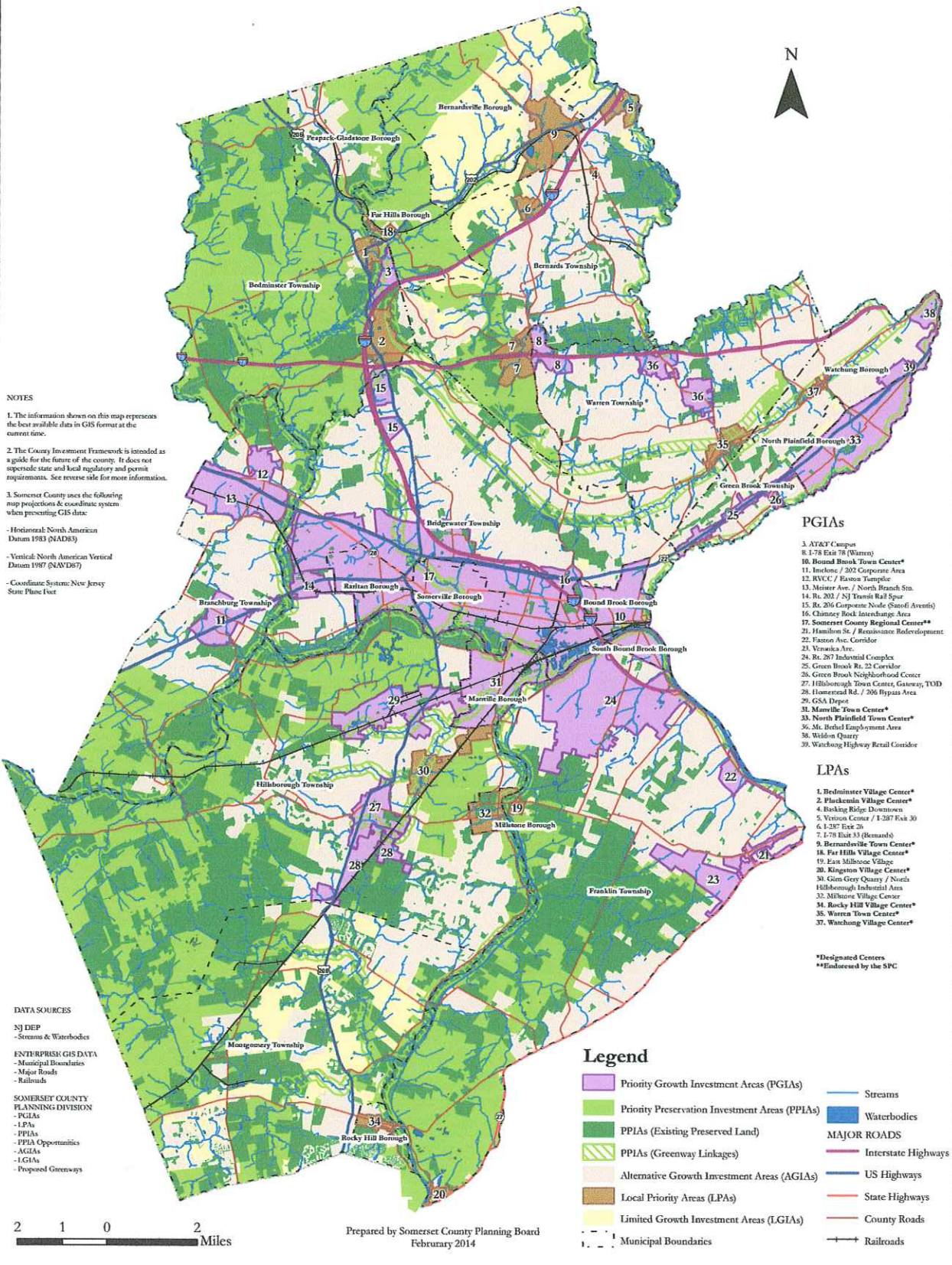






# COUNTY INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK

## Somerset County, NJ







## SOMERSET COUNTY INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK

### WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE COUNTY INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK AND HOW WAS IT DEVELOPED?

The Somerset County Planning Board worked closely with state, county and municipal officials, local and regional planners, the business community and other individuals and stakeholder groups to prepare a series of GIS-based infrastructure, community and environmental asset maps. These maps formed the basis of a "criteria-based approach" for identifying areas most suitable for growth and preservation in the county. The asset maps were used to help identify areas where infrastructure and community facilities necessary to support growth are concentrated, and where growth is supported through state, regional and local planning and land use policies. They also illustrate the location of environmentally sensitive areas and critical natural resources; and were used to identify areas where environmental protection, restoration and agriculture are supported through state, regional and local planning and land use policies. This methodology, the resultant *County Investment Framework* (CIF) map and associated policy recommendations were also reviewed and accepted by these stakeholders. The County Planning Board adopted the CIF on April 15, 2014 to serve as the geographic basis for all County planning projects and initiatives, including the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Somerset County, developed by the Somerset County Business Partnership and also adopted as an element of the County Master Plan in April 2014. It replaces the County's 1987 Master Plan - Land Use Management Map. The CIF is intended to 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; and convey a clear investment message regarding local and regional land use priorities to both public and private sectors. The NJ State Planning Commission adopted a resolution supporting the County Investment Framework and recognizing it as a model for use statewide in October 2013.

### WHAT DO THE DIFFERENT INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK CATEGORIES SHOWN ON THE MAP REPRESENT?

- **Priority Growth Investment Areas (PGIAs)** are areas where primary economic growth and community development strategies that enhance quality of life and economic competitiveness are preferred; and where appropriate, growth-inducing investments are encouraged. PGIAs are areas where development and infrastructure assets are already concentrated. They are prime locations for the vibrant mixed-use, live-work environments within walking distance of transit and green space, and that many employers, workers and households desire.
- **Priority Preservation Investment Areas (PPIAs)** are areas where agriculture and the preservation and restoration of environmentally sensitive natural resources are preferred and where investments aimed at resource restoration and protection, and farmland and open space preservation are preferred. Environmental and agricultural assets are concentrated within the County's PPIAs, as well as the County's highly-prized scenic, rural and historic landscapes. These are the areas where voluntary use of environmental/agricultural stewardship best management practices by both the public and private sectors are encouraged. **PPIA Greenways** are also identified. Greenways traverse all investment area categories and are places where investments that support a regional system of linked open space and conservation areas along stream corridors and ridgelines and the restoration of degraded environmental resources are high priorities. Greenways, parks and open space can be established within any of the investment area categories.
- **Alternative Growth Investment Areas (AGIAs)** are existing substantially developed areas located within adopted sewer service areas that are not PGIAs or PPIAs, and where large-scale, growth-inducing investments are not desired. Most of the County's AGIAs consist of residential neighborhoods and include community oriented business and service establishments. These are quiet, safe, well-maintained residential areas where investments that enhance livability and neighborhood character are preferred. **Local Priority Areas (LPAs)** are a subset of AGIAs. These are distinct small town and village centers, some of which have been designated by the NJ State Planning Commission, and existing/emerging employment nodes, that have limited growth opportunities due to their scale, historic character, environmental and access constraints and municipal preferences. Job retention and community sustainability are high priorities within LPAs.
- **Limited Growth Investment Areas (LGIAs)** are areas that are outside of sewer service areas and that are not shown as PGIAs, AGIAs or PPIAs. LGIAs are places where large-scale investments that may lead to additional development or change in neighborhood character are not desired. LGIAs are comprised primarily of existing low-density, residential areas that are served by on-site septic systems. They are areas that support lifestyles with strong connections to the natural environment. Investments that restore and protect environmental resources, strengthen open space linkages and enhance quality of life are preferred in LGIAs.

### WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BENEFITS DERIVED FROM ADOPTING THE COUNTY INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK?

- Capitalizes on key state, regional and local community, infrastructure and environmental assets
- Provides a geographic framework for guiding regional and local planning
- Aligns investments by the private sector, higher education and all levels of government
- Ensures state, county and local assets and policies are leveraged to successfully implement mutually supported outcomes
- Allows for the efficient allocation of resources and controls the long term cost of public services while reinvigorating existing communities
- Provides certainty regarding the growth and investment priorities that are supported at the regional and local levels

### HOW WAS THE COUNTY INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK PREPARED?

- The criteria-based approach for identifying PGIAs, PPIAs, AGIAs and LGIAs is consistent with the *Final Draft State Strategic Plan*.
- Investment Areas that meet the State Strategic Plan's Core Criteria were added-to, deleted from and/or modified by applying Somerset County-specific Secondary Criteria. (These criteria are comprised of over 30 community, infrastructure and environmental features that represent the County's unique assets.) and information provided by municipal officials and planners.
- The existing local and regional planning framework (including but not limited to designated centers, municipal-specific zoning, adopted agricultural development areas and tax parcel-based preserved lands) was used to define Investment Area Boundaries, which were refined through the Stakeholder review process.
- The *County Strategic Plan's* Draft Guiding Principles as well as the *Draft State Strategic Plan's* Garden State Values were used as the basis for applying the criteria.
- The process and method were documented in order to provide transparency and make them as objective and replicable as possible.
- The County's municipalities, the NJ Office for Planning Advocacy, the Somerset County Business Partnership and many other stakeholders were involved from the outset, and a close and supportive relationship was maintained throughout the process.

### WHAT IS SOMERSET'S PRIORITY GROWTH INVESTMENT AREA RESULTS TO-DATE?

- 24 PGIAs and 15 LPAs have been identified countywide - totaling 22,600 acres or 12% of the County's land area; and each community has at least one PGIA or LPA.
- PGIA "place types" range from mixed-use transit-served centers to commercial corridors to industrial districts.
- LPAs include small village centers, neighborhood-oriented business districts and/or small industrial parks.
- PPIAs comprise 97,600 acres (approximately half of the County's land area), of which 47% is permanently preserved open space and farms.
- GIS parcel-based boundaries have been prepared in collaboration with municipal officials.

### WHAT MAKES THE COUNTY INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK A LIVING DOCUMENT?

- The County Investment Framework will provide the platform for the updated *County Strategic Plan's* Guiding Principles, Objectives and Implementation Agenda.
- Both the County Investment Framework and associated GIS-based Asset maps and datasets will be updated on a regular basis to reflect new land use and preservation goals, priorities and opportunities.
- New criteria for informing land use and preservation investment decisions and that enhance the County Investment Framework will be developed and added when appropriate.
- Municipalities can request site-specific amendments to the County Investment Framework at any time, which will be evaluated using the previously established criteria-based approach.
- Business profiles and infrastructure assessments will be developed and marketing and investment strategies provided for PGIAs; and land stewardship best practice case studies will be compiled as PPIA implementation models for use countywide.





- Capitalize on the opportunities for redevelopment in Centers afforded by redevelopment laws and brownfields redevelopment programs. Provide zoning for a diversity of uses and residential densities consistent with the urban fabric to promote development and redevelopment. Establish and maintain a publicly accessible inventory of sites recommended for redevelopment.
- Develop a strategic acquisition plan for open space and farmland to support appropriate design of development and redevelopment.
- Prepare and maintain Environmental Resource Inventories (ERIs) and incorporate ERI information into master plans.
- Map and protect Critical Environmental Sites and Historic and Cultural Sites.

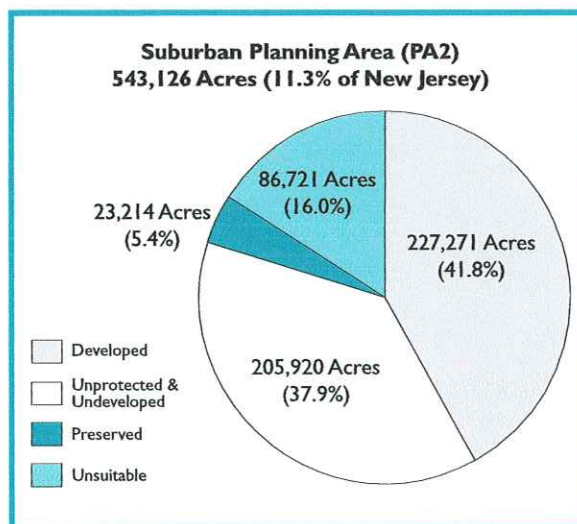
## Suburban Planning Area (PA2)

### General Description

The Suburban Planning Area is generally located adjacent to the more densely developed Metropolitan Planning Area, but can be distinguished from it by a lack of high intensity Centers, by the availability of developable land, and by a more dispersed and fragmented pattern of predominantly low-density development. Suburban Planning Areas are or will be served by regional infrastructure, except that, outside of Centers and major transportation corridors, there is limited, if any, availability of alternative modes of transportation to the automobile.

These areas have generally been designated for growth in municipal master plans. As development expands, these services will become increasingly available if planned properly.

The Suburban Planning Area has about 11 percent of the state's population and employment. Nine active passenger rail stations—of the state's total of 156 active stations—serve it. Current development patterns, outside of Centers, lack the compact settlement pattern of the older suburbs in the Metropolitan Planning Area and are almost entirely dependent on the private automobile for transportation. The pattern of scattered subdivisions and employment centers offers few if any focal points for community interaction—the traditional “Main Streets” and town greens where



The Suburban Planning Area is generally found in suburban growth corridors located along state highways: portions of Route 80 in Morris County, portions of Route 78 in Hunterdon and Somerset, portions of Route 287 in Somerset, suburban Route 1 (the Princeton corridor), the New Jersey Turnpike in Middlesex and Mercer, the Garden State Parkway in Monmouth and Ocean, I-295 in Burlington and Gloucester, and the Atlantic City Expressway in Camden and Gloucester counties.





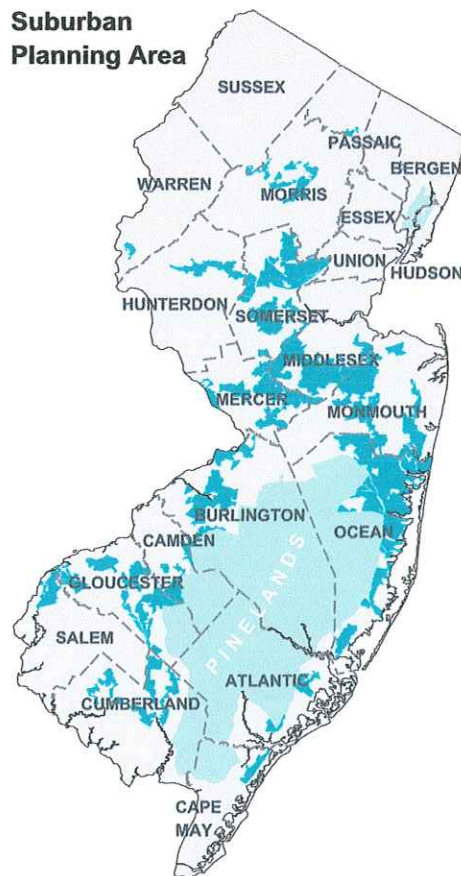
community identity and civic life were fostered through parades, outdoor concerts and the informal social interaction of the Saturday morning errands.

In the low-density, automobile dependent pattern of single-use enclaves prevalent in the Suburban Planning Area, there are few links connecting residential subdivisions, office and industrial parks, distribution centers, big box retail, and multi-family developments. While some of these individual pieces may be attractive in themselves, with pleasant landscaping and interesting architectural features, their lack of integration does not create community.

The effect of local planning efforts has been to isolate land uses from each other. Zoning requirements, such as large setbacks or extensive buffers, the location of stormwater detention facilities and unnecessarily wide roads, create physical barriers between land uses and activities. Current trends continue to extend sprawl, focusing primarily on the same single-use or limited use development products, in response to developer and market demand and local zoning requirements.

Although Suburban Planning Areas may, as they build out, achieve densities characteristic of Metropolitan Planning Areas, if these trends continue they will remain fragmented. Because this pattern of development is inefficient in terms of the cost of facilities and services, it pressures property taxes up to pay for services that are more expensive than they should be. This pattern also results in traffic congestion, since virtually every destination requires a vehicular trip, and in the unavailability of affordable housing, limited open space and absence of community character and sense of place.

### Suburban Planning Area



## Delineation Criteria

The following criteria are intended as a general guide for delineating the Suburban Planning Area. Local conditions may require flexible application of the criteria to achieve the Policy Objectives of this Planning Area.

1. Population density of less than 1,000 people per square mile.
2. Natural systems and infrastructure systems reasonably anticipated to be in place by 2020 that have the capacity to support development that meets the Policy Objectives of this Planning Area. These systems include public water supply, sewage collection and treatment facilities, stormwater, transportation, public schools and parks.
3. A land area contiguous to the Metropolitan Planning Area.
4. Land area greater than one square mile.





## Intent

In the Suburban Planning Area, the State Plan's intention is to:

- provide for much of the state's future development;
- promote growth in Centers and other compact forms;
- protect the character of existing stable communities;
- protect natural resources;
- redesign areas of sprawl;
- reverse the current trend toward further sprawl; and
- revitalize cities and towns.

The existing inventory of undeveloped and underdeveloped land in the Suburban Planning Area provides sufficient land area to absorb much of the market demand for development in the state. While the less developed Fringe, Rural and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas can provide for modest levels of additional development, the Suburban Planning Area is a key area for accommodating market forces and demand for development. In the 1990s, most of these areas have indeed been performing this function, without however adhering to the desired development pattern. The intent of the State Plan regarding the Suburban Planning Area is to reverse the current trend towards further sprawl and to guide both redevelopment and new development into more efficient and serviceable patterns. Many of the developed portions of the Suburban Planning Area resemble Metropolitan Planning Areas developed since World War II, where it is difficult to "get from here to there," whereas the pre-World War II metropolitan areas—the compact, transit-supportive railroad suburbs and small towns—constitute more desirable physical models.

The Suburban Planning Area is unique in that the availability of public infrastructure offers the opportunity to create a development pattern with reasonable densities and physical continuity—with functional transportation linkages throughout and existing and approved planned sewer systems while protecting the integrity of the area's natural systems. While much of the growth pattern may already be influenced by the placement of major transportation facilities, sewer alignments, existing development and preliminary development approvals, this Planning Area offers opportunities to expand infrastructure efficiently from neighboring Metropolitan Planning Areas. Extending public services can, in turn, help create compact Centers that support public transportation systems. Better integration between existing, dispersed single-use activities and both existing and new Centers could vastly improve both the image and the performance of this Planning Area.

"Retrofitting," or redeveloping existing sprawl, admittedly a complex task, nevertheless provides additional long-term opportunities to accommodate growth in more efficient and balanced ways. Municipalities should carefully consider effective long-term strategies and incentives capable of

### ***Centers in the Suburban Planning Area***

The Suburban Planning Area contains a wide variety of viable, traditional settlements which have been identified as Centers: Hamlets, such as Conoverstown, Beasleys Point, Holmansville and North Branch; Villages, such as Englishtown and Rocky Hill; Towns, such as Clayton, Swedesboro, Pine Hill and Clinton; and Regional Centers such as Mount Holly and Lakewood. In addition, the State Planning Commission has designated a Village (Cranbury), a Town (Hightstown), and the Princeton Regional Center, among others.





facilitating the progressive conversion of these low-density, automobile-oriented areas to more pedestrian-oriented and, where possible, mixed-use environments.

New development in the Suburban Planning Area should not promote additional sprawl. It should focus on existing Centers before moving to greenfield sites. Internally oriented, mixed-use Centers will ensure a higher quality of life and heightened community identity, while promoting fiscal responsibility, efficient and effective infrastructure, reasonable-cost housing, reduced congestion and balanced economic development.

Municipalities should work with each other and their counties to delineate specific areas for redevelopment, retrofitting, rehabilitation or revitalization where growth is expected or desired. The relatively unbroken pattern of development in the Suburban Planning Area makes Center Boundaries, as a tool for delineating growth areas or protecting resources or neighborhoods, less useful than creating comprehensive and strategic local, corridor or regional plans. Center Boundaries are encouraged to be drawn where Centers can be delineated with distinct Environs.

Although all Suburban Planning Areas are in, or will be in, sewer service areas, Environs should be established to separate Centers. When possible, Environs provide an edge and identity to communities, either by parkland or farmland, or by being partially developed with appropriate low-density uses. The scale and location of the Environs should not compromise the Planning Area's capacity to absorb projected growth.

Where conditions do not favor new Centers, the physical layout of new single- or limited-use development should nevertheless follow Center-like design principles, such as pedestrian scale, interconnected street systems, and absence of physical barriers between uses and destinations (see Statewide Design Policies). Better designed single- or limited-use areas will not bring to the community the benefits derived from mixed-use areas, but they perform significantly better than the area's current standard and provide a physical framework which will make it easier, in the future, to add complementary uses and activities and move closer to the mixed-use model.

Public policy should also focus on making public transportation a reality in suburban areas. Several proposals have been made to provide new service, or to reactivate passenger rail service in them. If coordinated appropriately with transit-supportive local land-use planning and design policies, cost-effective transit service can provide the foundation necessary to revitalize existing Cores or create new Cores for future Centers.

## Policy Objectives

The following Policy Objectives should be used to guide the application of the State Plan's Statewide Policies in the Suburban Planning Area, the criteria for designation of any existing or new Centers appropriate to this Planning Area, the encouraged delineation of Center Boundaries around Centers, and local and state agency planning.

### ***Passenger Rail Service in the Suburban Planning Area***

Although only nine active passenger rail stations serve the Suburban Planning Area, new passenger rail service is being developed along the Trenton-Camden line and studied on the West Trenton line. If implemented properly, passenger rail could play a major role in bringing coherence and structure to the Suburban Planning Area.





1. **Land Use:** Guide development and redevelopment into more compact forms—Centers and former single-use developments that have been retrofitted or restructured to accommodate mixed-use development, redevelopment, services and cultural amenities. Plan and zone for a wide range of land uses and users, in order to achieve more balanced communities. Seek to better integrate different land uses, and remove or mitigate physical barriers between them. Encourage densities capable of supporting transit. Preserve the Environs as park land, farmland, or partially developed low-density uses without compromising the Planning Area's capacity to accommodate future growth.
2. **Housing:** Provide a full range of housing choices primarily in Centers at appropriate densities to accommodate the area's projected growth. Ensure that housing in general—and in particular affordable, senior citizen, special needs and family housing—is developed with maximum access to a full 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 the existing character.
3. **Economic Development:** Guide opportunities for economic development into Centers or existing pedestrian- and transit-supportive single-use areas and target new jobs to these locations.
4. **Transportation:** Maintain and enhance a transportation system that links Centers and existing large single-use areas to each other, to Metropolitan Planning Areas and to major highway and transit corridors. Emphasize the use of public transportation systems and alternative modes of transportation where appropriate and feasible, and maximize circulation and mobility options (including pedestrian and bicycle connections between developments) throughout. Encourage significant redevelopment and intensification around existing and planned rail stations along transit corridors and ferry stations along waterfronts. Promote flexible (variable route) transit and support employer-operated shuttle services. Preserve and stabilize general aviation airports and, where appropriate, encourage community economic development, transportation intermodal hubs, and complementary uses for airport property such as business centers.
5. **Natural Resource Conservation:** Conserve continuous natural systems, strategically locate open space, and buffer Critical Environmental Sites. Use open space to reinforce neighborhood and community identity, and protect natural linear systems, including regional systems that link into other Planning Areas.
6. **Agriculture:** Guide development to ensure the continued viability of agriculture and the retention of productive farmland in strategically located agricultural areas and in other adjacent Planning Areas. Actively promote more intensive, new-crop agricultural enterprises and meet the needs of agricultural industry for intensive packaging, processing, value-added operations, marketing, exporting and other shipping through development and redevelopment.
7. **Recreation:** Provide maximum active and passive recreational opportunities and facilities at the neighborhood, local and regional levels, by concentrating on the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing parks and open space, while expanding and linking the system through redevelopment and reclamation projects. In the undeveloped portions of this Planning Area, acquire and improve neighborhood and municipal parkland within Centers, and regional park land and open space either in or within easy access of Centers.
8. **Redevelopment:** Encourage redevelopment efforts in existing Centers and single-use areas which can be redeveloped into mixed-use areas, and areas within walking distance of train stations or other major public transit facilities. Redevelop at transit-supportive densities, while creating pedestrian-oriented environments. Take full advantage of the opportunities available under the state's redevelopment statutes to promote new Centers and retrofit existing areas with mixed-uses and higher densities.





9. **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 area's ability to develop or redevelop. Coordinate historic preservation with tourism efforts.
10. **Public Facilities and Services:** Phase and program the extension of public facilities and services to support development in Centers and ensure adequate levels of public and private services. Encourage jurisdictions to locate all public and private community facilities—schools, libraries, municipal buildings, government offices, post offices, civic, cultural and religious facilities, fire stations, etc.—in Centers or in proximity to (within walking distance of) Centers. Central facilities serving a wide population should be located in or near Cores.
11. **Intergovernmental Coordination:** Establish regional approaches to the planning and provision of facilities and services. Create public/public and public/private partnerships to locate, facilitate, coordinate and implement new development and redevelopment in Centers.

## Implementation Strategy

### *The Challenge*

The Suburban Planning Area, as the most rapidly developing part of New Jersey, should be managed actively by its municipalities, counties, regional agencies, community groups and the state to avoid additional haphazard development—and a continuation of the current trend towards sprawl—without deterring growth. Such a proactive approach cannot be implemented without a considerable investment in advance planning, both at the local and regional levels—such as watershed planning or corridor planning—and a working consensus among diverse constituencies.

The Environs—which in Suburban Planning Areas are predominantly protected natural systems and their buffers (such as riparian corridors and wetlands), selected prime farmland and regional recreational areas to be preserved—require planning at the regional or sub-regional level with assistance from the state. This involves coordinated action between various levels of government, nonprofits and the private sector.

New growth should be promoted in Centers. Centers require active planning at the local level, carried out by a variety of partnerships under municipal leadership. A Center-based approach is a complex strategy which requires a full range of planning and design tools, used with consistency and determination. Pro-active local planning, along with an engaged, innovative and entrepreneurial private sector will be crucial to establishing a development pattern that achieves the Intent and Policy Objectives for this Planning Area.

### *The Response*

The first step to be taken at the local level should be a thorough and rigorous reassessment of the municipal master plan and development regulations, to ascertain whether they promote, or even allow, Center-based development, and to make any necessary modifications to these documents.

Another important step is to perform a community build-out analysis, not just to determine how many housing units or how many square feet of commercial uses the community has ultimately zoned for, but rather to take a realistic look at what the community will look like at build out, how it will work, and whether this corresponds to the community's vision. Communities





wishing to implement Center-based growth strategies are encouraged to be pro-active in determining the “look and feel” of future development, through the use of visioning techniques, design guidelines, detailed regulating plans and a host of other tools and techniques.

To achieve consistency with State Plan Goals, municipal, county, regional and state agencies should implement Statewide Policies by undertaking the following activities:

- Identify on a regional basis a number of Centers sufficient to absorb a significant share of the area’s growth.
- Perform a community build-out analysis to determine opportunities for and impacts of future development under existing zoning.
- Zone those Centers for the densities needed to absorb growth.
- Protect the Environs through open space/farmland preservation and sewer service restrictions.
- Use phasing to coordinate supply and demand for infrastructure and services.
- Expedite appropriately designed development in Centers.
- Support needed improvements for downtown business communities by establishing programs such as “Special Improvement Districts” in Centers.
- Capitalize on the opportunities for redevelopment in Centers afforded by redevelopment laws and brownfields redevelopment programs. Establish and maintain a publicly accessible inventory of sites recommended for redevelopment.
- Prepare and maintain Environmental Resource Inventories (ERIs) and incorporate ERI information into master plans.
- Map and protect Critical Environmental Sites and Historic and Cultural Sites.

In addition to standard zoning and capital budgeting approaches, local jurisdictions should consider other planning tools such as capital plans, public land banking, density transfer mechanisms, official maps, the circulation element of the municipal master plan, detailed regulating plans, redevelopment statutes, acquisition of targeted open space and/or farmland and public/private and public/public partnerships.

## Fringe Planning Area (PA3)

### General Description

The Fringe Planning Area is a predominantly rural landscape that is not prime agricultural or environmentally sensitive land, with scattered small communities and free-standing residential, commercial and industrial development. Throughout the Fringe Planning Area are older communities, such as Mullica Hill in Gloucester County and Millstone in Somerset County. Some of these places have become magnets for specialty shops, like Mullica Hill. Other communities such as Flemington serve as the seat of county government.

There are few areas where large blocks of the Fringe Planning Area exist. They are mostly found in Hunterdon County (Clinton, Raritan and Readington townships), Ocean County (Jackson

