



MASTER PLAN  
REEXAMINATION REPORT  
&  
MASTER PLAN AMENDMENTS

Prepared by Borough of Somerville Planning Board

Assisted by:

Cole and Associates, LLC

October 12, 2011

The original of this report was signed and sealed by

---

Michael Cole, P.P.

New Jersey Licensed Planner # 5620



## Table Contents

Introduction	3
MAJOR PROBLEMS AND OBJECTIVES RELATING TO LAND DEVELOPMENT IN THE MUNICIPALITY AT THE TIME OF THE ADOPTION OF THE LAST REEXAMINATION REPORT AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH SUCH PROBLEMS AND OBJECTIVES HAVE BEEN REDUCED OR HAVE INCREASED SUBSEQUENT TO SUCH DATE	6
Local Economy Goal and Policies	6
Open Space Goal and Policies	12
Circulation Goal and Policies	17
Central Business District Goal and Policies	22
Design Goal and Policies	29
County and Medical Center Expansion Goal and Policies	32
Historical Goal and Policies	33
SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN THE ASSUMPTIONS, POLICIES, AND OBJECTIVES FORMING THE BASIS FOR THE MASTER PLAN OR DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS AS LAST REVISED AND SPECIFIC CHANGES RECOMMENDED FOR THE MASTER PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS.	35
Density & Distribution of Population	35
Density & Distribution of Land Use &	35
Housing Conditions	35
Circulation	35
Community facilities	37
Conservation of Energy & Natural Resources	38



Collection, Disposition & Recycling of Designated Materials	40
Changes in State, County & Municipal Policies & Objectives	40
REVIEW OF THE MUNICIPAL STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN	59
RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE INCORPORATION OF REDEVELOPMENT PLANS INTO THE LAND USE ELEMENT OF THE MASTER PLAN	72
Somerville Station Area & Landfill Redevelopment Area	72
West Main Street Area (Landmark Shopping Center)	73
Eastern Central Business District Redevelopment Area	73
Kirby Avenue	74
General Redevelopment Statement	75
SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED MASTER PLAN AMENDMENTS	75
FIGURE 1	83



## **I. Introduction**

The reexamination report is to be prepared by the Planning Board for the governing body. The Municipal Land Use Law (NJSA C.40:55D-1 et seq.) requires the Planning Board, at least every ten years, to provide for a general reexamination of the Borough's master plan and development regulations. The Planning Board shall prepare a report of findings of such reexamination, a copy of which report and resolution shall be sent to the Somerset County Planning Board. A notice that the report and resolution were prepared shall be sent to the municipal clerk of each adjoining municipality. The most recent amendments to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89 now require five elements in the reexamination report, which are as follows:

1. The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of the adoption of the last reexamination report;
2. The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date;
3. The specific changes recommended for the master plan or development regulations, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether a new plan or regulations should be prepared;
4. The extent to which there have been significant changes in the assumptions, policies and objectives forming the basis for the master plan or development regulations as last reviewed with particular regard to density and distribution of population and land uses, housing conditions, circulation, conservation of natural resources, energy conservation, collection, disposition and recycling of designated recyclable materials, and changes in State, county and municipal policies and objectives; and
5. The recommendations of the planning board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans adopted pursuant to the "Local Redevelopment and Housing Law," P.L. 1992, C.79 (C.40A:12A-1 et al.) into the land use plan element of the municipal master plan, and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.



The current Master Plan for the Borough consists of two documents. The primary document, entitled Master Plan, Borough of Somerville, New Jersey, was adopted on July 11, 1990. This plan contains various elements and sub plans, including a statement of goals and policies, a land use plan, a circulation analysis, a community facilities plan, a housing plan and a regional overview. The housing element of the master plan was revised and adopted on January 14, 2009 . A historic element was added to the master plan and was adopted on November 12, 2008. The Somerset County Regional Center Strategic Master Plan was adopted as a sub plan element of the master plan on September 24, 2008. In 2004, the Planning Board amended the Master Plan to include the Somerville Emergency Services facilities analysis plan report.

On October 23, 1991, the Planning Board adopted the 2<sup>nd</sup> master plan document, entitled Downtown Somerville Vision, which provides a more detailed long-term vision of the planned future of the Borough's central business district.

After the Master Plan was adopted, the Borough enacted a comprehensive revision to the Land Use Ordinances. Periodic revisions to the ordinances are ongoing as municipal land use planning is a continuing process. The purpose of this report is to document the Planning Board's reexamination of the Master Plan and development regulations and to identify those changes which are recommended. Since the historic and housing elements including the Somerset County Regional Center Strategic Master Plan sub plan element were adopted within the last ten (10) years they are not discussed herein. The previous master plan reexamination was performed in 1998.

This report also proposes to amend the Master Plan based upon the findings of the master plan reexamination. Therefore, this report is both an amendment and a reexamination of the Master Plan.

The Master Plan contains numerous statements concerning the problems and objectives relating to land development in the Borough. In response to the problems and opportunities facing the Borough, a series of goals and policies were developed and included within the Master Plan. In the following pages, these goals and policies are in italics. The 1998 and current status of same are discussed.

This report is divided into four (4) parts with each section addressing a combination of the five (5) elements stated above. Specifically, these parts as follows:



### **Section A**

1. Major problems & objectives relating to the land development in the municipality at the time of the adoption of the last reexamination report;
2. The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date; and
3. Specific changes recommended (if any).

### **Section B**

1. Significant changes in the assumptions, policies and objectives forming the basis for the Master Plan or development regulations as last revised; and
2. Specific changes recommended for the Master Plan and development regulations (if any).

### **Section C**

Recommendations concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans into the land use plan element of the Master Plan.

### **Section D**

Summary of recommended Master Plan amendments



A. MAJOR PROBLEMS AND OBJECTIVES RELATING TO LAND DEVELOPMENT IN THE MUNICIPALITY AT THE TIME OF THE ADOPTION OF THE LAST REEXAMINATION REPORT AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH SUCH PROBLEMS AND OBJECTIVES HAVE BEEN REDUCED OR HAVE INCREASED SUBSEQUENT TO SUCH DATE

1. Local Economy Goal and Policies

- a. *Goal: Encourage development and improvement of non-residential uses in designated areas. A strong business community is vital to the fiscal health of the Borough.*

1998 Analysis

This goal continues to be appropriate, not only for fiscal reasons, but also for the provision of goods, services and employment to residents of the Borough and the region, for the retention of the historic character of the Borough, and for numerous other benefits to the overall community. The phrase “in designated areas” remains key, since in-development of non-residential uses in inappropriate locations can have a deleterious affect. Issues that this goal responds to include: 1) competition from other business uses in the region, including businesses located on Routes 22, 202 and 206, the Bridgewater Commons shopping center, and future business development on the landfill site and other communities; 2) the need for an appropriate mix of uses and concentration of uses in the central business district; and 3) the on-going need to maintain and/or restore commercial properties and buildings.

It is recognized that competition from existing commercial development in the region has redefined the role of Somerville’s historic downtown area. It is also anticipated that such competition will continue, and is likely to increase, based upon projections. Within the Borough, the proposed Somerville Square shopping center on the landfill site will also compete to a certain extent with existing downtown uses. It is also expected, however, that the shopping center will attract more shoppers to the central business district and that there will be some positive benefits through the creation of additional demand for retail uses in the downtown. In order for this to occur, the shopping center must be strongly linked with the downtown, through street and pedestrian connections and with other design features, and an appropriate mix of uses must be provided in both the downtown and the shopping center.



The Borough has taken steps to encourage appropriate non-residential development, both within the downtown and in other areas. These steps include the creation of a Special Improvement District and District Management Corporation in the central business district, and the construction of streetscape improvements. The Borough Council has also recently adopted a redevelopment plan for the landfill property, and development on the first phase is expected to proceed in the near future. Various revisions to the Land Use Ordinance are also intended to encourage appropriate non-residential development.

### Current Status

This goal continues to be appropriate for the reasons stated in the 1998 analysis. The Borough has adopted three (3) additional redevelopment plans and substantially revamped the landfill redevelopment plan. The redevelopment plans are as follows:

1. Eastern Central Business District (ECBD, adopted, 2008);
2. Kirby Avenue, adopted 2008, last revised 2010;
3. West Main Street Area; adopted 2004, last revised 2007;
4. Station Area and Landfill Redevelopment Plan, adopted, 2007 (original redevelopment plan which only addressed the landfill was adopted in 1998)

All four (4) redevelopment plans, in varying degrees, are mixed use development plans. The Borough recognizes the need to provide non-residential uses in designated areas. Mixed-use development is designed to encourage a variety of community activities, locales and services to co-exist in close proximity, thereby reducing the need for extensive automobile travel. In addition, the mixed use development concept also increases the Borough revenue and provides more amenities and conveniences for the residents and commuters who work within the Borough. The non residential uses are generally “white collar” businesses (medical, professional, advertising offices, etc.) and small retail businesses which primarily cater to the nearby by residences and workers. The redevelopment plans do not compete with existing downtown merchants but augment these businesses by creating more foot traffic on Main Street.





Somerville is surrounded by nearby big box stores, including the Bridgewater Commons Mall. Somerville has responded by offering numerous restaurants, boutiques, specialty furniture stores and other service orientated businesses in a pedestrian friendly human scale environment. Foot and bicycle traffic in the Business zone districts continues to grow and the downtown is becoming more and more of a place of destination.

- b. ***Policy #1: Maintain the economic vitality of the Central Business District by improving its physical appearance and introducing new compatible revenue producing land uses. Support the efforts of the District Management Corporation to upgrade the visual appearance of the CBD (Central Business District).***

#### 1998 Analysis

As noted above, the Borough has designated portions of the CBD as a Special Improvement District (SID), within which the District Management Corporation (DMC) plays an important role in promoting a suitable business environment. Within the district, the Borough has undertaken an active improvement program, and better linkages between Main Street and the public parking areas. Creation of an Architectural Review Board (ARB) and revision of the sign regulations are additional measures designed to promote these policies

#### Current Status

The aesthetics of the SID, including Main Street, was enhanced by the installation of pavers, tree planters and decorative street lighting. All these improvements were performed and financed by the DMC through bonding. The DMC (now called the Downtown Somerville Alliance or DSA) is in the process of reconstructing the municipal parking lots (currently under construction), which are adjacent to Main Street. The redesigned parking lots will have decorative lighting, landscaping, shade trees, defined parking stalls, pedestrian walkways and user friendly signage. The Borough, through associated ordinances and policies continues to support the efforts of the DMC. For example, an ordinance was recently passed which requires vacant stores or businesses under renovation to have a store front glass covered with DSA designed decorative paper.



The DSA sponsors events such as the Jazz Festival and Farmers Market and is constantly exploring ways to help the businesses within the SID. In 2008, downtown Somerville received “Main Street New Jersey” designation by the State. This designation allows the Borough to receive state-sponsored technical consultants and training assistance to enhance the downtown area. The DSA is the point of contact for the state-sponsored technical consultants. On February 25, 2008, the DSA sponsored a Design Day which featured the analysis of the State sponsored technical consultants (Sun Architecture, LLC, W Design, and Westfield Architects & Preservation Consultants).

The technical consultant’s analysis included the following statement about the Borough “The Borough has done well in providing well planned zoning, improving the streetscape, reinforcing the public infrastructure, and providing attractive public areas, especially around the county complex. The scale of the town, attractive gateways, pedestrian areas and the variety of businesses and restaurants creates a rich and inviting place for business and commercial growth. General recommendations for the district include further reinforcing of pedestrian walkways, enhancement of way finding signage, and continued maintenance of the district infrastructure such as curbing, walkways, lighting, and roadways”. We agree with these general recommendations.

- c. ***Policy #2: Reinforce the existing pattern of commercial and office uses along Gaston Avenue to Union Street while discouraging encroachment of these uses into surrounding properties that do not have frontage along Gaston Avenue. Upgrade the visual appearance of frontage properties along Gaston Avenue.***

#### 1998 Analysis

The Planning Board has reviewed the purpose of the B-4 Retail Business District, and has determined that the intent of the district as a neighborhood commercial area designed to be sensitive to existing residential uses in the district and adjacent areas need to be reinforced, not only on Gaston Avenue but in the all the existing B-4 district areas. It is proposed to rename the district as the B-R Business- Residential District, and to revise the zoning regulations to reflect the existing mixed use patterns in this district and to ensure that the needs of residences in this district are given greater consideration.

In the new Land Use Ordinance, properties along Gaston Avenue formerly in the R-2 Zone were rezoned to the PO-R professional office-residential designation. The boundaries of both the PO-R Zone and the B-4 zone to the north continue to limit non-residential use to properties



with frontage on Gaston Avenue. In general, this remains a valid policy. In two locations, however, a deviation from this policy is warranted.

First, the property on the south side of William Street immediately west of North Gaston Avenue (Block 74, Lot 16) has been reviewed and it has been determined that it is more compatible in character with the adjacent non-residential properties on Gaston Avenue. It is proposed to amend the Master Plan to be consistent with the current zoning ordinance, which permits both commercial and residential use on these properties.

Second, the new Zoning Map placed several properties on the south side of Union Avenue (all of Block 40.01 and Block 43, Lots 24 through 31) in the PO-R professional office-residential district. The development pattern of this area is heavily influenced by the adjacent B-4 district to the west and north. However, due to this influence, and the small area of the PO-R zone in this area, the Planning Board is of the opinion that the PO-R zone portion should be changed back to its prior B-4 designation (proposed to be renamed as the B-R zone). The regulations of the new B-R Zone are to be designed to prevent undue impacts upon adjacent residential properties.

#### Current Status

This remains a valid policy. The B-4 zone district was renamed "Neighborhood Business- Residential District" and the zoning regulations were revised to reflect the existing mixed use patterns contained within this district. All the properties fronting on North Gaston Avenue, between East Main and Union Street are either in the PO-R or B-4 zone district. Block 74, Lot 16 was subdivided into three (3) single family residential lots and a FAR and bulk variances were obtained from the Board of Adjustment. These variances allowed the lots to use the FAR and Bulk standards for the adjoining R-2 zone district. Since the single family houses constructed on these lots used the R-2 bulk and FAR standards, the Planning Board recommends that the Zoning map be revised accordingly.

As recommended in the 1998 analysis, the PO-R zone district, located on the south side of Union Avenue (all of Block 40.01 & 43, Lots 24 through 31) was changed to B-4 zone district. The visual appearance of properties fronting along North Gaston Avenue has improved over the last 15 years by site specific development/ Redevelopment. The site plan approvals, which allowed, the development were granted by the Planning Board or Board of Adjustment. These approvals include the Bruce C. Van Arsdale Funeral Home (Block 73, Lot 13.01), Viamare LLC (Block 74, Lot 17), 101 North Gaston Corporation (Block 73, lots 16,



16.01, 17, 18, 17.01 & 12), Providence Medical (Block 74, lot 2), Rite Aide (Block 43, Lot 1.01) and La Scala Restaurant (Block 74, lot 3). It is anticipated that the aesthetic appearance of the buildings located along North Gaston Avenue will continue to improve as the desirability of living and working in a community that is pedestrian and bicycle friendly, non automobile dependant, is becoming more and more desirable.

- d. ***Policy #3: Commercial and office use should be controlled through the enforcement of a site plan review code whenever redevelopment or expansion is contemplated.***

#### 1998 Analysis

This continues to be a valid policy, and in fact current practice, as set forth in the Land Use Ordinance. The Vision Plan proposes that the economic vitality of the CBD be enhanced through the revitalization of the existing commercial uses and structures, and through the development or redevelopment of key sites as commercial anchors. New development and redevelopment should actively encourage employment opportunities for Borough residents. The Vision plan recognizes that this goal can only be accomplished by the combined efforts and cooperation of the Borough of Somerville, the DSA, the Somerville Business and Professional Association, and individual property owners, tenants, and developers, as well as the Somerset Alliance for the future.

All of the foregoing remains valid policies. Development or redevelopment of the key commercial sites designated in the vision plan has not yet occurred, and is best seen as a long-term goal, requiring substantial land assembly and coordinated public private actions.

In the Master Plan, the location of the existing bank at the northwest corner of High and North Bridge Streets is currently planned as a major financial/office center, with a transition between the County offices to the southeast and residential areas to the northwest. After reconsidering this policy, the Planning Board has concluded that a more intense development of this site would be too detrimental to the nearby residential areas, and would create excessive traffic on local streets. The Board proposes to amend the Master Plan and development regulations to limit the scale and types of offices, to prohibit banks altogether, and to ensure that any development is more sensitive to nearby residential areas.



### Current Status

Policy #3 remains valid. The Borough Land Use Ordinance requires all development that is not site plan exempt (one and two family dwellings) to obtain site plan approval. In addition, all the redevelopment plans require the developer to receive site plan approval. Site plan review and approval process is the key component in insuring that the layout, density, architecture, etc. is consistent with the objectives of the Borough's Master Plan and Land Use And Development Ordinance. The development discussed in the 1998 analysis did not occur and the site in question, Block 112, Lot 9 is in the PO-R zone and remains a bank.

## 2. Open Space Goal and Policies

- a. *Goal: Continue the creation of local park and recreation systems designed to provide a variety of passive and active recreational opportunities to all members of the Borough.*

### 1998 & Current Analysis

This is and will continue to be a worthy goal. Although various improvements have been made to the Borough park and recreation systems, there has not been any major changes in the amount or location of parklands and open space systems.

- b. *Policy #1: Encourage the development of the Borough-wide "greenbelt", incorporating the existing park land along Peters Brook and natural areas along the Raritan River to connect various neighborhoods of the Borough;*

### 1998 Analysis

This remains an appropriate policy. As of this writing, some natural areas along the Raritan River need to be acquired or conservation access easements obtained in order for this policy to be fully implemented.



### Current Analysis

This remains an appropriate policy. Peter's Brook Greenway is one of the Borough's major parks, recreation and open space facilities. According to the *Somerville Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment and Master Plan* (2006), the Peter's Brook Greenway portion owned or maintained by Somerville is currently one (1) mile in length and runs from Mountain Avenue to High Street. The Greenway is approximately 8 feet in width. Peter's Brook flows the entire distance. The total park acreage is 5.94 acres. Peter's Brook Greenway serves as the north-south spine of the Regional Center open space system and provides the Borough with much needed additional recreational land.

The Borough has recently designed a bike/walk path that links the open space along the Peters Brook. The project is named the Peters Brook Greenway and consists of several phases. Some of these phases involve building bridges over highways and Peters Brook. In addition, the County is also designing/constructing walk/bike paths on County owned open space. Both bike/walk paths will be linked together. All of the Borough owned active parks (Chambres Park, Clarks Woods, etc.) will be linked together with the goal of connecting all of the open space within the Regional Center with the Raritan River and Duke Farms. The open space planned in the Station Area/Landfill Redevelopment will be connected to the County/Borough bike/walk path network. The natural areas along the Raritan River were acquired by the County. With the exception of one (1) parcel all the land located between Duke Farms and Orlando Drive on the western side of Route 206 is either municipal or county owned. The parcels owned by the Borough that are used for open space, either active or passive are as follows:



## Somerville Borough Owned Open & Recreation Space

Name	Block	Lot	Acres
Elsworth Van Fleet Gardes	77	14	3.26
Peter's Brook Greenway	75	5	5.94
Carol Pager-Exchange Field	108	14	7.79
John P. Long Park/ Brookside Open Space	143	3	7.0
Open Space	154	1.01	0.53
Open Space	154	2	0.33
Claude Walck Park	92	22	13.80
Van derveer Field*	83.01	1	31
Kuglar Park	145	1	0.83
Flockhart Park	144	1	0.50
Ken Cornell Wheel Park & Firehouse Field	58	1	5.18
Ken Cornell Wheel Park & Firehouse Field	58	22	1.58
Open Space	123.01	1	6
Mastogen Drive Open Space	100	9	0.55
Peters Brook Greenway	75	5	5.94
Children's Park	144	9	0.14
Michael Lepp Park	67	20	5.34
Open Space	52	39	0.19
Open Space	68	9.01	0.01
WWI Memorial Site & Skate Park	71	16	3.99

- Note # - 1. Van derveer Park is owned by the Somerville Board of Education and the lot includes the school building and parking lot. The size of the field is estimated.
2. The above table does not include the Borough owned land that is part of the landfill redevelopment area or land that is not located within the Borough (i.e. Clark's Woods & Arthur Chambre Fields).
3. A mini park (0.25 acres) is located at the Baker and Taylor site (block 1, lot 4.01) but since it does not have a separate lot and block it is not stated. The Borough leases the park.



- c. *Policy #2: Improve Borough-owned land where possible and as necessary for recreational purposes. Provide recreational areas which are easily accessible to all segments of the population. Maintain, improve, and expand Borough parks and recreation areas in a comprehensive manner. Development of park facilities should minimize any adverse effects on neighbors.*

#### 1998 Analysis

As noted above, various improvements have been made. This continues to be a valid policy. Although it is not always possible to avoid any adverse effects upon adjacent property owners, especially in a highly developed community, minimization of negative effects from park facilities will always be a desirable policy.

The Master Plan proposes the acquisition and/or development of several parcels for recreation and open space purposes. These recommendations remain valid, with one exception. The property on Prospect Street (Block 141, Lot 1.01), which is proposed for acquisition as a mini-park in the Master Plan has been developed as single family dwelling and such acquisition is no longer recommended. The Planning Board is also now recommending a study of the Mastogen Drive park in order to determine the feasibility and appropriateness of changing its use from passive recreation to active recreation, such as a tennis court or courts.

The Vision Plan recognizes the importance of the existing park and open space system to the development of the CBD and to the Borough. The park system along Peters Brook provides an edge and gateway to downtown from the east, and provides an important amenity for the adjacent residential neighborhoods. Other important existing open spaces in downtown include the Court House Green, and the Borough Hall grounds and Veterans Memorial. The Vision Plan supports the development of the streetscape as a pedestrian amenity and as the site of the Tour of Somerville, street fairs, parades, etc. In addition the Vision Plan proposes the development of public or semi-public open spaces within the major anchor developments developed around the winter garden and quadrangle concepts.

Improvements have been made to the Main Street streetscape, as discussed above. In addition, the County has made improvements to the open space area within the Court House complex. The importance of the other public open space areas also remains unchanged. The development of major anchors in the downtown has not occurred, but the policy concept of public or semi-public open space as part of these developments when they occur, remains appropriate.





### Current Analysis

This remains a valid policy. Somerset County, with grant assistance from the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA), initiated the *Regional Center Pedestrian, Bicycle & Greenways Systems Connection Plan* in December 2007. The intent is to progress recommendations specifically related to pedestrian, bicycle and greenway transportation, that were contained in the Planning and Implementation Agenda (PIA) established during Regional Center designation in May 1996. The study will create a plan that will provide a planning framework with the goal of improving pedestrian, bicycle and greenways connectivity within the Regional Center through the integration of pedestrian safety measures, bicycle-friendly facility design and innovative “green” and sustainable design practices. The Peters Brook Greenway project, as discussed above, has benefitted from the assistance of the County and NJTPA.

Mastogen Park is currently used as passive recreation. Since 1998 the County has constructed the Torpey athletic complex which is located in Bridgewater, bordering Somerville, and the Veterans Memorial Plaza. The athletic field is multi-district athletic complex on property acquired by Somerset County through the Park/Open Space program. The facility includes a baseball, softball field and a synthetic turf multipurpose athletic field. All the fields are illuminated. The facility is located at end of Nimitz Street off Loeser Avenue and is within walking distance to portions of Somerville.

The Veterans Memorial Plaza is located on Grove Street. The 200-foot-long plaza is next to the Somerset County Administration Building. Its circular formation nearest Grove Street features flags from each of the five branches of the armed services, plus a flag for the WWII Merchant Marine veterans. It also has a stage area at the opposite end for presentations and public ceremonies.

In addition to the Torpey Athletic Complex and the Veterans Memorial Plaza, the Somerville Borough Board of Education installed synthetic turf multipurpose fields. The synthetic turf multipurpose fields can be used year-around, therefore, these multipurpose fields are an expansion of the recreational facilities that are easily accessible to all segments of the population.

The Regional Center Partnership of Somerset County, created in 1998, provides the coordinated planning framework to achieve the goal of improving the identity and functionality of the Regional Center, the quality of life for residents, and creating a favorable environment for



business. The County, Regional Center Partnership and three municipalities comprising the Regional Center (Raritan, Somerville & a portion of Bridgewater) are, in an collaborative effort, planning pedestrian paths, bicycle trails, green seems, etc. to link the publically owned open space within the Regional Center together. These linkages include connection with Dukes Farms and the Raritan River. The Regional Center Partnership, in conjunction with the County funded a study entitled "Regional Center Bicycle, Pedestrian & Greenway Systems" report which focused on connecting people and places in the Regional Center.

The Borough has four redevelopment areas and all four redevelopment areas require open space. It is envisioned that the Landfill "green seam" will connect into the County trail/path system and green areas of the Kirby Avenue Redevelopment area will be connected by a bridge to the Torpey Athletic Complex. The ECBD redevelopment area is adjacent to the Peters Brook open space/greenway. The Redevelopment Plan includes expanding the greenway by reducing the travel lane width of Park Avenue to allow for the installation of a multi-use path and by deed restricting lands within the Redevelopment Area for open space. The Borough has reduced the travel lane width of Park Avenue and installed the multi-use path. The West Main Street Area redevelopment plan includes a green space/pocket park which is adjacent to the Davenport Street extension.

### 3. Circulation Goal and Policies

- a. *Goal: Develop a coordinated road system which enables the safe and efficient movement of people and goods.*

#### 1998 Analysis

In the Master Plan, the primary limitation toward achieving this goal is the highly developed character of the Borough. This has not changed. The focus of the Master Plan was on operational improvements to existing streets, and on orienting through traffic toward the perimeter, rather than through, the central business district. This remains the case. Two significant roadway improvements have been completed since the Master Plan as adopted: the extension of Urban Drive (now Veterans Memorial Drive) to East Main Street, and the completion of the grade separation at the Somerville circle. In addition, the State has partially completed widening improvements on Route 202-206. All of these improvements were anticipated by the Master Plan.



### Current Analysis

This remains a proper goal. The widening improvements were completed along Route 202 and on a portion of Route 206. The road system within the Borough is of a grid design which is very efficient for the movement of people and goods. The Borough created a traffic committee to review existing traffic patterns throughout the Borough and, if warranted, recommend traffic calming measures. In some instances the grid road system is too effective as some residential streets are experiencing traffic from commuters that are using the residential to avoid existing traffic congestion on nearby arterial roads.

- b. ***Policy #1: Emphasize short term road improvements, limited road widening and key intersection improvements to increase the capacity of the existing street network and eliminate traffic hazards.***

### 1998 Analysis

This policy continues to be appropriate, given the developed nature of the Borough. Various improvements are proposed in the Master Plan; many remain to be implemented, but no changes are recommended in these proposals at this time.

### Current Analysis

This policy should be expanded to include performing road improvements (i.e. striping, road signage, etc.) for bicycling. This policy should address the needs of bicyclists and motorist.

- c. ***Policy #2: Discourage increased through traffic from blighting the residential character of the community by emphasizing signage and other techniques, and uses of arterial roadways as major intra-community thorough-fares.***

### 1998 & Current Analysis

This is a continuing need, and the policy is still valid. The Borough is installing speed humps and other traffic calming techniques on Borough streets where through traffic has been identified. As iterated above the Borough has created a traffic committee and the traffic committee has been instrumental in the installation of speed humps or tables and other traffic calming techniques to discourage the use of residential streets for thru traffic. The Borough is working closely with the Regional Center Partnership and County in creating a more pedestrian and bicycle friendly road system. Part of the grant received by the NJTPA for the Peters Brook Greenway includes funds for creating



dedicated bike lanes and striping of residential streets to create bike lanes. One of the preliminary plans is to create a dedicated two way bike/multi use path along Veterans Memorial Drive.

- d. *Policy #3: Seek improved access (vehicular and pedestrian) to the CBD, including development of off-street parking facilities.*

#### 1998 Analysis

This remains an appropriate policy. As noted previously, there have been various improvements to the sidewalks in the central business, and some pedestrian connections between parking areas and Main Street have been improved. There has not been any substantial development of additional off-street parking since the Master Plan was adopted. This remains an appropriate policy.

#### Current Analysis

The corner of Warren Street and East Main Street was developed with four (4) commercial buildings. These buildings total over 272,000 square feet and a five (5) story parking deck was constructed to accommodate the parking demand generated from the buildings. The deck has a parking capacity of 700 cars and is located along Veterans Memorial Drive, east of Warren Street. The parking deck is in close proximity to Main Street and can be used by the general public at night and weekends. The SID has slowly been expanded and with this expansion so as the improvements to the sidewalks and streetscape.

The West Main Street Area and Station Area Landfill redevelopment plans includes structured parking (i.e. parking decks). These parking decks will be located in very close proximity to Main Street and will encourage foot traffic along Main Street. Given the current economic downturn/recession, it is not clear when or to what extent the parking garages will be built.

The surface municipal parking lots that are adjacent to Main Street, such as municipal parking lot #1, are being reconstructed and will be completed by October, 2011. The parking lot reconstruction will include decorative light poles, landscaping, pedestrian walkways, way finding signs and pay stations. They will be designed to be pedestrian friendly, well lit, of a human scale, and will encourage parking lot patrons to walk to Main Street by way of clearly defined pedestrian routes.



- e. ***Policy #4: Encourage the extension of Urban Drive to Vanderveer Parkway in order to improve the CBD traffic flow and enable usable redevelopment parcels to be assembled;***

#### 1998 & Current Analysis

This improvement was completed and the completed road is called Veterans Memorial Drive. Currently, sections of the road are equipped with two lanes in each direction. It is planned to reduce the number of travel lanes in each direction from two (2) to one (1) travel lanes (between South Bridge and New Streets). A center turn lane will accompany the lane reduction. These improvements are part of the West Main Street Area redevelopment area site plan approval. It is anticipated that these improvements will be performed by the end of 2011.

- f. ***Policy #5: Minimize conflicts among local, through and pedestrian traffic on Main Street, giving priority to the needs of shoppers and pedestrians.***

#### 1998 Analysis

To the extent feasible, this is a valid policy. The Vision Plan endorses the extension of Urban Drive to Vanderveer Parkway and the extension of South Doughty to Route 206 as the landfill site is developed, as well as other roadway and intersection improvements identified in the Master Plan. The Vision Plan would also encourage major employers to work with the newly formed Somerset Alliance/Transportation Management Association (Ridewise) to implement traffic management programs to reduce peak hour congestion on Borough streets. The Vision Plan also recognizes that the traffic impact of major development projects will require study and review as projects are proposed, and that the mitigation of traffic impacts will be a cooperative effort between developers and the Borough and others.

As stated above, the Urban Drive (Veterans Memorial Drive) extension has been completed. The extension of South Doughty Avenue to Route 206 to link the proposed Somerville Square shopping center with the downtown no longer appears practical, due to the presence of wetlands along the intended route; an alternative link further to east along Veterans Memorial Drive appears to be possible, however. The use of South Bridge Street for this purpose is also important. Any use of South Bridge Street in linking the shopping center with the downtown needs to be carefully studied to avoid adding substantial through traffic to second street and other residential streets in the area. All of the other statements in this policy continue to be appropriate.



### Current Analysis

As iterated in the 1998 analysis, this remains a valid policy. Ridewise is an affiliate of the Somerset County Business Partnership and offers free commuter services such as information on carpooling, vanpooling and public transit in Somerset County, and includes a ridesharing application, a searchable database for potential carpoolers and vanpools, a commute costs calculator, and downloads of bus and train schedules. By performing these services peak hour congestion is being reduced within the Borough.

The Borough embraces the concept of smart growth by creating mixed use redevelopment plans and encouraging compact multi-story buildings that contain apartments/condos in the CBD. The DSA and Borough understand that the economic prosperity of Main Street and of the Borough is directly related to the amount of foot traffic in the CBD. Thus, the surface parking lots adjacent to Main Street are being improved and structured parking is being planned in areas very close to Main Street. These efforts are focused at reducing the amount of congestion on Main Street while providing the needed parking for future development.

The landfill redevelopment plan was dramatically changed from a big box strip mall to a mixed use compact transit orientated development (TOD). The TOD redevelopment, referred as the Station Area & Landfill Redevelopment plan is connected to Main Street through the proposed South Davenport Street extension. The extension will be installed under the railroad tracks and the location of the underpass was chosen to maximize the road height underneath the rail road tracks and minimize impacts to freshwater wetlands. Secondary connections to the downtown area by using 2<sup>nd</sup> and/or 3<sup>rd</sup> Streets (which tie into South Bridge Street) are also planned.

New Jersey Transit (NJT) has reconstructed the train station and the new train station was completed in the summer of 2011. The new train station elevates and doubles the length of the platform and includes indoor HVAC controlled waiting area. NJT is anticipating a substantial increase in ridership when the adjoining TOD redevelopment area is developed. It is anticipated that a tunnel that directly links the Raritan Valley train line to Manhattan will be constructed within the next 10 to 15 years (the ARC tunnel project was terminated in 2010). All the sidewalks, including pedestrian tunnels, linking the train station with the community were reconstructed. A new platform sidewalk access with Veterans Memorial Drive was also constructed. The new station includes covered lockers and bicycle racks. These new amenities will



encourage commuters to walk or bike to the train station which in turn will reduce vehicular traffic and potential pedestrian conflicts in and around Main Street.

#### 4. CBD Goal and Policies

- a. ***Goal: Improve the physical appearance and mix of businesses in the CBD to further create an attractive and diversified business area.***

##### 1998 Analysis & Current Analysis

This goal developed from a continuing concern over the economic performance and physical condition of the downtown. Significant improvement has been made in the viability of the CBD, through the efforts of many entities and individuals. The district, like many older town centers, continues to evolve from its historic function toward developing a new role and identity. This policy is, and will continue to be, extremely important to the Borough.

- b. ***Policy #1: Continue to concentrate businesses in the existing downtown area and avoid dispersion or linear expansion of commercial activities. The CBD should be the commercial and professional center of the Borough in a compact setting.***

##### 1998 Analysis

This policy is still valid. The Land Use Ordinance regulations, which encourage vertical expansion, limit retail use primarily to the B-1 and B-2 zone districts, and which delineate the districts and district boundaries, are intended to implement this policy.

##### Current Analysis

As iterated above, this policy remains valid. A significant factor in determining whether a business will open in the CBD is the amount of foot traffic. Curb appeal including attractive signage is only effective if pedestrians are present. To increase foot traffic within the CBD, schedule "A" of the Borough Land Use and Development Ordinance was recently revised to expand the number of permitted uses in the upper floors of buildings located within the CBD. This encourages vertical expansion of buildings. In addition the revisions also reinforce the concept of (where possible) having only retail businesses on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor as they generate the most foot traffic.



- c. ***Policy #2: Discourage one story structures in the CBD. Encourage development on upper floors spaces to prevent building deterioration while still protecting retail and service oriented business activities on the first floor. Consider limited introduction of residential uses within the CBD.***

#### 1998 Analysis

This is still a valid objective. In the Master Plan and Vision Plan, offices uses are either prohibited or discouraged on the ground floor in the CBD. It is proposed to amend the Master Plan to be consistent with the current zoning policy, which permits offices on the ground floor.

#### Current Analysis

Portions of this policy remain valid. Ideally the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of all buildings in the CBD should be retail. The revisions to Schedule "A" of the Borough's Land Use and Development ordinance require the 1<sup>st</sup> floor to be retail in mixed use buildings. Certain commercial businesses can occupy the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of single use buildings. Currently located within the CBG is a compact development consisting of four (4) multi-story commercial buildings that relies on a five (5) story parking deck. The compact nature of the development and total square footage (over 272,000 square feet) generates significant foot traffic on Main Street and the surrounding CBG. In certain circumstances a four (4) story or higher compact designed commercial building may be appropriate for the CBD. The Planning Board is recommending the that last sentence in policy #2 be amended to state the following: "Consider introduction of residential uses within the CBD in the upper floors". In addition, the revisions to schedule "A" are consistent with the Master Plan.

- d. ***Policy #3: Provide unified landscape parking facilities linked to business activities by attractive walkways.***

#### 1998 Analysis

As stated above, improvements have been made to pedestrian connections between public parking facilities and Main Street, and the walkways within the Main Street have also been upgraded. This policy continues to be appropriate.





### Current Analysis

Improvements are being made to pedestrian connections between the train station, municipal parking lots and Main Street. Reconstruction of the municipal parking lots adjacent to Main Street which include amenities (landscaping, lighting, curbing, etc.) will tie the parking lots with Main Street. With the expansion of the SID, the walkways leading to Main Street continue to improve. All of the redevelopment plans require that the parking facilities be hidden from view (if possible) and landscaped. Division Street, between Main and South Street was recently declared an Arts District. Significant improvements to the Street are proposed. These improvements will change the vehicular circulation from two to one way (north bound) and create a multi-use surface for cultural events and increase the pedestrian walking surface. These improvements will further tie the Main Street with the train station. This policy remains appropriate.

e. ***Policy #4: Encourage architectural compatibility within the CBD.***

### 1998 Analysis

This is an on-going policy. The establishment of the ARB and official design guidelines has helped to promote this policy.

### Current Analysis

The ARB design guidelines are currently being revised. This policy remains valid. The redevelopment plans require the architecture of the buildings to be in keeping with architecture found within the Borough. Specifically the Redevelopment plans state the following:

1. Building facades shall be designed in a manner compatible with the existing historical facades on Main Street, particularly as to building materials, colors and textures, building projections and recesses, fenestration, storefront design and roof design, and as set forth in Special Improvement District design guidelines. Buildings constructed within the B-1 and B-2 zone districts should add character to Somerville and reflect the historic styles found within the Borough and region. High quality materials should be used and these buildings should be designed to achieve a life span of at least 75 years. Acceptable building materials include wood clapboard siding, brick, and decorative concrete, terra cotta, ceramic/glazed tile as well as other natural materials such as marble, granite and cedar shakes. EIFS and other synthetic stucco materials are prohibited. Vinyl siding is discouraged.



2. Buildings shall be built within 15 feet of the public (road) right of way. This “build to line” results in the creation of “street walls”. Street walls are the vertical plane defined by buildings along the street and they reinforce a pedestrian friendly streetscape. The identity of the area shall be shaped by buildings, not parking lots. If the building fronts on a curved street, the building curb cuts are encourage to be on side streets. If this is not possible, the building set back shall accommodate the sight triangle for the curb cuts.

Borough Land Use and Development Ordinance were recently revised to require developments in the B-1 and B-2 zone districts adhere to the above stated requirements. This policy is appropriate.

- f. ***Policy #5: Emphasize development and redevelopment opportunities in the eastern portion of the CBD that reinforces retail and service functions of the downtown.***

#### 1998 Analysis

The eastern portion of the district continues to have problems involving underutilization of various sites, environmental contamination from prior industrial development, a deleterious mix of uses and physical dilapidation of structures. The completion of the Veterans Memorial Drive, the designation of the Meadow Street housing site, and the revised zone regulations and district boundaries are all intended to promote this policy. In certain areas, redevelopment plans and programs pursuant to the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law may be necessary to effect redevelopment. The Borough has recently initiated a redevelopment study for the eastern portion of the CBD with assistance from Somerset County.

In one part of the Master Plan, the East Main Street revitalization is planned as a single mixed- zone, permitting a variety of public, office, retail an residential uses. In the Vision Plan portion of the Master Plan, a somewhat different mixed-use scheme is planned. The current zoning ordinance places this area within four separate zone districts, permitting public, retail, service and residential uses. Until the redevelopment plan is adopted for the area, it is proposed to amend the Master Plan to be generally consistent with separate zoning districts, similar to what now exists. The plan is proposed to acknowledge that at such as time as land assembly and coordinated development is possible, that a single mixed-use scheme such as proposed currently in the plan may be appropriate.



The Planning Board has reviewed the B-3 Central Business District regulations, and recommends changes in the zoning regulations to reflect the policy of encouraging office and service uses. The district is also proposed to be renamed as the B-S Business Services District.

### Current Analysis

To address the issues stated in the 1998 analysis the Eastern Central Business District (ECBD) Redevelopment Plan was adopted in early, 2008. This redevelopment plan is intended, to the greatest extent practicable, to address these problems. The goals and objectives of the plan include the following:

- To reinforce and support the retail base of the central business district through general redevelopment of the area, promoting an appropriate mixture of retail, service, office and residential uses, prohibiting inappropriate uses, providing additional parking for shoppers, employees and residents, and encouraging aesthetic improvements.
- To eliminate conflicts between various existing land uses either by removal or alteration of such uses. When elimination of such conflicts is not possible, the plan seeks to mitigate such conflicts through use, bulk and buffer regulations.
- To provide improved housing conditions through the development of new dwelling units, including both market-rate and affordable housing.
- To improve vehicular traffic flow and safety by reducing the number of driveway openings and inappropriate on-street parking spaces, by planning for various street improvements, and by promoting transit-oriented development within walking distance of the Somerville rail station and local bus routes.
- To encourage the assembly of undersized parcels in order to accommodate improved use, layout and design of buildings and other improvements.
- To provide incentives for fuller utilization of vacant or under-developed properties.
- To reduce overcrowding of buildings and pavement on undersized lots.
- To promote the creation of additional off-street parking to serve existing and new development within the area.



- To enhance the streetscape through pedestrian improvements such as upgraded pavement, lighting, street trees and planters, benches and similar improvements, and through the installation/relocation of electric, telephone and cable television lines underground.
- To increase property values and tax revenues in the area through general redevelopment of the area.
- To improve the aesthetic appearance of the area through general redevelopment, upgraded design, increased landscaping, buffers and screening of unattractive areas.
- To provide incentives for the remediation of existing soil and/or groundwater contamination in the area through redevelopment of contaminated properties.
- To mitigate impacts from flooding by increasing open space along Peter's Brook and through the redesign and redevelopment of flood-prone areas.

The redevelopment plan provides for two layers of development standards. The first, or base, layer is intended to guide the continued use and development of existing properties in the area under current ownership and development conditions. The policies for this layer are intended to permit and encourage minor development changes that are consistent with the overall redevelopment plan, while discouraging and/or prohibiting inconsistent development changes. The standards of the base layer are expected to be the basis for the day-to-day development of most of the properties in the area.

The second, or overlay, layer is intended to guide major redevelopment projects within the area. The overlay standards will apply only if and when a developer acquires larger contiguous blocks of property that provide adequate space for buildings, off-street parking and other improvements in accordance with the plan. A major development is a project that meets the lot, bulk and intensity of development standards as stated in Schedule B-Lot, Bulk & Intensity of Use Standards. The permitted intensity of development for these areas is higher than under the first layer of development standards. In addition, the plan provides for tax abatement for such major redevelopment projects. The specifics of the tax abatement will be described in the redevelopment agreement between the developer and the Somerville Borough. The redevelopment plan requires the developer provide the development's fair share of affordable housing within the development. The number and breakdown of affordable housing is as required by the current COAH



regulations. This policy remains valid as evidenced by the creation of this redevelopment plan.

The Planning Board did review the B-3 Central Business District regulations, and recommended changes in the zoning regulations to reflect the policy of encouraging office and service uses. The B-3 zone district was modified accordingly. The zoning district was not renamed.

- g. *Policy #6: Encourage the redevelopment of under-utilized properties within the CBD according to a unified downtown revitalization plan.*

#### 1998 Analysis

This remains a valid policy. Redevelopment area designation and plans may be necessary and should be studied. As noted above, the Borough has recently initiated a redevelopment study for the eastern portion of the CBD.

This goal is the impetus for the entire Vision Plan. The basis for the Vision Plan is the maintenance and enhancement of key assets including existing uses and activities, and the existing built environment through development of the streetscape program, a façade improvement program, infill development, and the development of key anchor sites. Public, community and cultural uses are also important components of the development program. The ultimate goal of the Vision Plan is to enhance the viability of Somerville as a place to live, work, and shop, and to improve the CBD's position as a regional attraction. As previously stated the Vision Plan recognizes that the accomplishments of this goal will be the result of the combined efforts and cooperation of the Borough of Somerville, the DMC, the Somerville Business and Professional Association, and individual property owners, tenants, and developers, as well as the Somerset Alliance for the Future.

In addition to the above Master Plan Goals, the Master Plan identified four objectives for the development of the CBD. The intent of the Vision Plan is to accomplish these four objectives. These objectives are as follows:

1. *To revitalize and enhance Somerville's downtown commercial district as a shopping area;*
2. *To create high value, high amenity mixed-use developments which provide competitive office space, in-town housing, specialty retail and public amenities;*



3. *To attract and contain professional offices within the CBD (and transitional areas) to prevent further conversion of residential properties within the neighborhood settings; and*
4. *To create a destination place through cultural and entertainment offerings which enhance the quality of life within the Borough and which draw “day tourists” from throughout the County for shopping and leisure activities.*

These goals and objectives remain part of the vision for the CBD.

#### Current Analysis

This remains a valid policy. Within the CBD are two redevelopment areas; ECBD and the West Main Street Area. One of the primary goals of both redevelopment plans is the redevelopment of under-utilized properties. The Borough Land Use and Development ordinance requires the same architectural requirements for the building facades and materials to be used in the B-1 and B-2 zone districts as found in the redevelopment plans. Schedule “A” of the Borough Land Development ordinance encourages under-utilized properties to be redeveloped by allowing many different uses in a building’s upper floors.

The redevelopment plans architectural requirements and land development ordinances are working in concert with the Master & Vision plans to accomplish the above stated goals and objectives.

#### 5. Design Goal and Policies

- a. *Goal: Improve the visual appearance of the business areas while protecting the residential neighborhoods from encroachment and ensure improvements are made which respect the architectural character of the Borough.*

#### 1998 & Current Analysis

This goal continues to be valid.



- b. ***Policy #1: Help prevent and strengthen the built environment by providing landscaping such as street trees and plant screening in public right-of-way and within open spaces and encourage landscaping of major private facilities, such as parking lots.***

1998 Analysis

As discussed above, the Borough has made significant improvements, including landscaping, within the CBD. The land Use Ordinance requires street trees and other improvements within the right-of-way at the time private development occurs

Current Analysis

The Borough Land Use and Development ordinance requires landscaping (street and shade trees, etc.), granite block curbing and other on-site improvements at the time private development occurs. If the required number of street or shade trees cannot be performed, a fee of \$ 350.00 for every tree not provided is usually required of the developer. The fee is used by the Environmental Commission to plant street trees throughout the Borough. The Borough ordinance, in conjunction with the streetscape improvements performed in the SID by the DSA, continue to strengthen the built environment. This policy remains valid.

- c. ***Policy #2: Encourage attractive site appearance, consistency and good design.***

1998 & Current Analysis

As stated previously, the ARB, official design guidelines, and specific regulations in the Land Use Ordinance and requirements in the redevelopment plans are all designed to further this policy.

- d. ***Policy #3: Insure compatibility with surrounding land uses and with prevailing physical features, e.g. setbacks, buffer between dissimilar uses.***

1998 & Current Analysis

Various regulations in the Land Use Ordinance and redevelopment plans are intended to achieve this objective. The Planning Board has also considered the needs of cemetery uses to be buffered from adjacent incompatible uses, and recommended that buffering of cemeteries from non-residential and multi-family residential uses be required for any new development. The Planning Board has also



reviewed all the business zone districts in terms of hours of operation. Based its review, the Planning Board recommended to the Mayor & Council that retail businesses in the B-4 zone district be prohibited from being open from the hours of 12:00 and 6:00 PM. The land use and development regulations were changed accordingly. This policy remains valid.

- e. ***Policy #4: Develop a coordinated policy covering the location and design of public and private parking areas:***

1998 Analysis

The Land Use Ordinance contains specific regulations concerning this policy, which continues to be valid.

Current Analysis

In addition to the Land Use Ordinance (which contains specific regulations concerning this policy) all four (4) redevelopment plans address the location and design of public and private parking areas. This policy continues to be valid.

- f. ***Policy #5: Downtown Somerville contains the most significant collection of 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial architecture in Somerset County. The Vision Plan recognizes the importance of the unique physical characteristics of the CBD and supports the maintenance and enhancement of the existing character through the streetscape program and façade improvement program. New developments, small infill projects and major anchor developments should be designed to be compatible in design and scale to the context of the existing built environment.***

1998 & Current Analysis

This policy repeats many earlier policy statements, as iterated above. Establishment of the SID, DSA, ARB and specific design guidelines are designed with this policy in mind. The ECBD and West Main Street Area redevelopment plans require that the new development be in keeping with the architecture found downtown. This policy remains valid.





## 6. County and Medical Center Expansion Goal and Policies

- a. ***Goal: Encourage County and Medical Center expansion opportunities to certain designated areas to limit any adverse effects of expansion on established residential neighborhoods.***

### 1998 & Current Analysis

This goal was achieved as designated areas for both facilities are established.

- b. ***Policy: Develop Master Plan guidelines to ensure integration of Somerset County and Somerset Medical Center expansion plans without detrimental affect on the Borough's existing neighborhood fabric. Establish appropriate setbacks, buffers along abutting residential edges.***

### 1998 & Current Analysis

As noted above, the new H- Hospital Zone has been created in the Land Use ordinance, designed not only to recognize the existing Somerset Medical Center, but also to limit the medical center's expansion and to better protect the surrounding residential areas from hospital- related activities. Also as stated above, the Board is recommending a minor Master Plan revision to change the boundaries of this district in the plan. The Vision Plan identifies the site bounded by East Main Street, North Bridge Street, East High Street and Mechanic Street as the Somerset County campus. The attached Master Plan Land Use Map depicts the Board recommended boundaries of the Hospital Zone (which is also consistent with the zoning map).

Subsequent to the adoption of the Master Plan, a new CG-County Government district was established and designed to reflect the use and future development plans of the Somerset County administration complex. In reviewing the Master Plan, the Planning Board observed that two properties on the north side of Main Street east of Grove Street are planned for expansion of the County administrative complex, whereas the current zoning ordinance places these properties in the B-2 zone district, which is not designed for the County administrative complex. The Master Plan Land Use map should be amended to be substantially consistent with the current zoning policies for this area. The attached land use map for inclusion in the Master Plan (see Section D) address revises the CG zone district and is consistent with the zoning map.



## 7. Historical Goal and Policies

- a. *Goal: Safeguard the historic, aesthetic, and cultural heritage of Somerville.*
- b. *Policy # 1: Protect architecturally significant buildings that contribute to the character of the community;*
- c. *Policy #2: Establish a historic preservation commission to assess the visual, historical, and cultural characteristics of various neighborhoods in the Borough.*
- d. *Policy #3: Establish a conservation district around the Washington Place neighborhood.*
- e. *Policy #4: Capitalize on the historic beginnings of the Borough, Build on the established growth area of the community that evolved in the early nineteenth century. Consider the preparation of and historic preservation ordinance.*
- f. *Policy #5: Increase the Borough's economic competitive stance in the immediate region by emphasizing the benefits of a unique town center appropriately scaled to the pedestrian as a dramatic alternative to an enclosed mall environment.*
- g. *Policy #6: Reinforce historic gateway into the downtown area as part of an overall visual experience when entering a special place.*

*The above stated goal and policies were superseded by the adoption of the Historic Preservation Plan Element. The role of the Historic Preservation Master Plan element is stated below.*

### 1998 Analysis

Other than the establishment of the ARB and design guidelines, along with a required substantial buffer between the Somerville Square shopping center development and the Washington Place neighborhood, there has been no significant action in this regard. The establishment of a historic preservation commission is felt to be essential to the establishment of not only such a district, but to appropriate regulatory and administrative measures.

Policy statement #5 & #6 remain appropriate policies.



### Current Analysis

A Historic Preservation Master Plan element was adopted by the Planning Board in 2008. The role of the Historic Preservation Master Plan element is as follows:

1. To indicate the location and significance of historic sites and historic districts;
2. To identify the standards used to assess worthiness for historic site and district identification; and
3. To analyze the impact of each component and element of the master plan on the preservation of historic sites and districts.

Since the Historic Preservation Master Plan element was adopted within the last ten (10) years this master reexamination does not perform a in-depth analysis of the element. The recommendations of the Historic Preservation Plan Element are as follows:

1. The Borough should continue to nominate historic sites to the State and National Registers of Historic Places;
2. The Borough Should consider pursuing the nominations of historic districts to the State and National Registers of Historic Places;
3. The Historic Preservation Element adopts the US Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidance for rehabilitating historic buildings to provide advice and guidance to historic property owners and property owners located in historic districts contemplating alternations or additions;
4. The guidelines for infill development stated within the historic Preservation Element will be used to provide advice and guidance to property owners proposing new construction next to historic site or within a historic district; and
5. The Borough should continue the role of the Historic Advisory Committee as an advocate for the preservation of historic sites and districts.

The historic goals and policies of the Master Plan are recommended to be superseded by the goals and policies of the Historic Preservation Master Plan element.



**B. SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN THE ASSUMPTIONS, POLICIES, AND OBJECTIVES FORMING THE BASIS FOR THE MASTER PLAN OR DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS AS LAST REVISED AND SPECIFIC CHANGES RECOMMENDED FOR THE MASTER PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS.**

The current Master Plan and development regulations for the Borough are based upon assumptions, policies and objectives which remain valid. This section presents the statutorily mandated review of assumptions, policies and objectives which form the basis for the Master Plan and Land Use and Development Ordinance. In addition, any recommended changes to the plan and ordinance not discussed above are also included.

**a. Density and Distribution of Population**

The density and distribution of population data is contained in the recently adopted (2009) Housing Master Plan Element. Since the Housing Element was revised within the last ten (10) years it is discussed herein.

**b. Density & Distribution of Land Uses & Housing Conditions**

The density and distribution of land uses including housing conditions is contained in the recently adopted (2009) Housing Master Plan Element. Since the Housing Element was revised within the last ten (10) years it is not discussed herein.

**c. Circulation**

1998 Analysis

Several significant improvements, along with various minor improvements, have been made to the circulation system. The major improvements, as noted previously, include the completion of the grade separation at the Somerville circle, completion of the Urban Drive (Veterans Memorial Drive) extension, and partial widening of Routes 202-206. The regional center designation report calls for various policies and actions concerning roadway, traffic and mass transit. Finally, minor changes are noted above in the review of the Master Plan circulation goals and policies. Except for the foregoing, there are no significant changes in the master plan assumptions, policies and objectives.



## Current Analysis

Improvements to the road system that border the Borough continue to occur. Several miles of Route 206 were widened in the vicinity of Somerville and improvements to Route 22 are currently occurring. The Route 22 improvements consist of several phases and it is anticipated that all of the improvements will not be completed for several more years.

In terms of circulation the Master Plan and the 1998 reexamination were primarily focused with automobiles. The focus now includes providing bike lanes; both dedicated and on existing roads (i.e. share the road). In addition, this focus includes improvements to sidewalks and other pedestrian linkages. A pedestrian bridge crossing Route 22 linking Somerville to Bridgewater Commons Mall was constructed. This bridge was identified in the Master Plan and identified in the Regional Center Pedestrian Safety Study which led to the State funding in the amount of \$2.5 million for construction of the Mountain Avenue Pedestrian Overpass. The overpass provides safe pedestrian access between Somerville and Bridgewater Commons Mall.

A pedestrian overpass, crossing Route 202/206, which will link Clarks woods with the rest of the Borough is currently under construction. The overpass will allow pedestrian access the park/recreational fields located at Clarks Woods without use of a car. The pedestrian bridge is part of Peters Brook Greenway project which will connect all of the open space along the Peters Brook with bike/pedestrian paths/trails.

The County, Regional Center Partnership, Borough and DSA are working in concert to enhance the pedestrian and bicycle linkages throughout the Borough. In addition to the Peters Brook Greenway project, enhancements to the pedestrian linkages between the residential neighborhoods with the schools (Somerville is currently working with the NJ Department of Transportation on a Safe Routes to School plan) were performed. As previously iterated, enhancements linking the downtown with the train station, public parking lots and green space are planned. The Borough wide goal regarding circulation is to encourage residents, shoppers, students, business owners and workers to walk or bike ride throughout the Borough. As iterated above, it is recommended that the Master Plan policies for circulation to be amended to include the following statement: "Encourage bicycling and walking throughout the Borough by enhancing existing sidewalks and roadways, and creation of new pedestrian/bicycle paths and linkages".

The Borough road system is designed in grid format and is efficient for the movement of people and goods. Other than roads associated for the redevelopment areas (Davenport Street extension, etc.) new roads are not planned or needed.



The Somerset County Regional Center Neighborhood Traffic Calming and Implementation Plan (Phase I & II) was prepared on behalf of Somerset County, the Regional Center Partnership and the three municipalities within the Regional Center by The Louis Berger Group, Inc., in 2003 and 2005. The “project seeks to improve the quality of life for residents by eliminating cut-through traffic and reducing speeds, thereby improving safety and pedestrian activities in residential neighborhoods, and along several commercial corridors by implementing traffic calming measures” (quote from the implementation plan).

The project was conducted in two phases: Phase 1 - Inventory, Analyze and Prioritize Potential Traffic Calming Locations, and Phase 2 - Develop and Institutionalize a Regional Center Traffic Calming and Implementation Plan. This project establishes the foundation for a long-term strategy to institutionalize the identification of potential traffic calming locations and the implementation plan for traffic calming measures within the Regional Center area.

The Borough’s traffic committee is using the report as the basis for the traffic calming measures that are being performed throughout the Borough. The traffic calming measures currently implemented in the Borough include speed humps (speed tables) and electronic driver feed back signs, which electronically displays the vehicles speed. Given that the Implementation Plan is the bases for the traffic calming measures performed within the Borough, we recommend that the Implementation Plan be adopted as a sub-plan element of the Master Plan.

Except the foregoing recommendations, there are no significant changes to in the Master Plan assumptions, policies and objectives.

#### **d. Community Facilities**

##### 1998 Analysis

In the regional center designations report, various policies and actions have been set forth concerning recreation and open space issues. In addition, minor changes in policies and assumptions are noted above in the review of the Master Plan goals and policies. Otherwise, there have been no substantial changes in the assumptions, policies and objectives related to community facilities which formed the basis for the current master plan.



### Current Analysis

The Master Plan recommended that the location of some of the fire stations be reexamined due to space constraints. In addition, the Master Plan recommended that the Motor Vehicle Inspection Station be relocated since it is located in a residential area.

The Somerville Emergency Services Facilities Analysis and Master Plan Report was prepared by the SSP Architectural Group, dated 1/20/04. The Report was prepared on behalf of the Borough and included a detailed needs assessment and existing facilities analysis of the Borough's current emergency facilities as well as recommendations and suggestions to improve and upgrade the Borough's emergency services readiness and capabilities while containing to encourage Somerville's 140 plus year tradition of volunteerism. The emergency facilities studied in the Plan were the Somerville Police Department, the Hook and Ladder Company No. 1, the West End Hose Company No. 3, Engine Company No. 1, the Lincoln Hose Company No. 4, and the first Aid and Rescue Squad. The Report addresses the Master Plan concerns regarding the space constraints of some of the firehouses and recommends that a new Emergency Services Complex be built. The guidelines for the size, location, and layout of the emergency services complex is contained within the report. The Planning Board recommends (with augmentation- see Section D), that this master plan report be adopted as the Community Facilities plan Element of the Master Plan.

The Motor vehicle Inspection station was relocated and it is no longer located at the residential area. One and two family dwellings were constructed at the former inspection location.

There have been no substantial changes in the assumptions, policies and objectives related to community facilities which formed the basis for the current master plan.

### **e. Conservation of Energy, Natural Resources & LEED**

#### 1998 Analysis

The only changes in the assumptions, policies and objectives related to conservation of energy and natural resources are the proposals in the planning and implementation agenda in the regional center designation report. Most of these are not changes but repetitions of existing policy. LEED was not included in the 1998 analysis.



### Current Analysis

The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System™ encourages and accelerates global adoption of sustainable green building and development practices through the creation and implementation of universally understood and accepted tools and performance criteria. The redevelopment plans encourage all redevelopment to be LEED certified. Most if not all the redevelopment plans located within the Regional Center require the LEED certification. LEED certification was created by the US Green Building Council (USGBC) and has developed a series of standards for evaluating green building design in several categories including new and existing office construction, homes, neighborhood configuration, commercial interiors, and educational and other institutional buildings.

The LEEDS certification process focuses on using natural renewable products that are available locally. The buildings are energy efficient and designed to promote a healthy environment. Requiring buildings to be designed for LEED certification is a key component in sustainable development.

“Sustainability” or “Sustainable Development” has been defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” – The United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development (The Brundtland Commission, 1987). Statement taken from NJDEP Office of Planning and Sustainable Communities website: [www.nj.gov/dep/opsc/sustcomm.html](http://www.nj.gov/dep/opsc/sustcomm.html). There are numerous examples of Borough policies and actions that support sustainable development. Somerville’s participation as a Regional Center Community is key evidence of the Borough’s commitment to sustainability. The intent of the Regional Center is to encourage development and economic growth in suitable locations with existing infrastructure, to reduce sprawl and to preserve areas of environmental quality, all the cornerstones of sustainable development.

We recommend that the Master Plan Design Goal and Policies include, as goal, that “all development/redevelopment be sustainable, energy efficient and designed to promote a healthy environment” and the policies include “encourage sustainable green building and development practices through the creation and implementation of universally understood and accepted tools and performance criteria or LEED certified”





**f. Collection, Disposition & Recycling of Recyclable Materials**

In response to NJ Solid Waste Management Act and subsequent County ordinances, the Borough has implemented a recycling program. The Borough's Land Use Ordinance requires new development to provide for the recycling of recyclable materials as part of the development approval.

**g. Changes in State, County & Municipal Policies & Objectives**

**1. NJ State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP) Metropolitan Planning Area - PA1**

1998 Analysis

Since the adoption of the 1990 Master Plan, there have been various changes in the policies and objectives of the State, County and municipalities. The significant changes and their affect upon Somerville Borough Master Plan and development regulations are discussed in this section.

The SDRP, adopted on June 12, 1992, placed most of Somerville in the Metropolitan Planning Area, or Planning Area 1 (PA1)., except for a small area along the Raritan River, which is located within the Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area- Planning Area 5 (PA5). Subsequently, in 1996, the Borough, along with Raritan and part of Bridgewater, was designated a Regional Center by the State Planning Commission.

The Somerset County Regional Center Designation Report, dated April 1996, includes a planning and implementation agenda. Many of the items o this agenda reflect existing policy. The Municipal Land Use Law requires a statement indicating the relationship of local planning policies to the State Plan. The Master Plan should be amended to comply with this requirement. The Planning Board also recognizes that the Master Plan should be revised to better reflect the designation of the Borough as part of a regional center in the SDRP and to make the Master Plan and regulations more consistent with such designation.



### Current Analysis:

The *Somerset County Regional Center Strategic Master Plan* (2006), adopted by Somerville as a Sub-Plan Element of the Borough Master Plan, implements the policies of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan. The eight statewide goals included in the State Plan are intended to fulfill the vision of the State Planning Act in which development and economic growth are encouraged in suitable locations with existing infrastructure, sprawl is reduced, and areas of environmental quality are preserved. The *Regional Center Strategic Master Plan* strives to implement the overall goals of the State Plan by setting forth policies which further the revitalization of established neighborhoods in the Borough and identifies a core area in which to focus further growth and development. The *Regional Center Strategic Master Plan* also recommends policies which protect the Borough's environmental assets.

The State Plan adopted in 1992 and readopted in 2001 responds to the principles of the State Planning Act and establishes a vision for the future of New Jersey. It is intended to serve as a guide for how public policy decisions should be made at all levels of government to achieve the goals of the State Planning Act.

The purpose of the State Plan is to coordinate planning activities and establish Statewide planning objectives in the following areas: land use, housing, economic development, transportation, natural resource conservation, agriculture and farmland retention, recreation, urban and suburban redevelopment, historic preservation, public facilities and services, and intergovernmental coordination.

The State Plan organizes the entire State of New Jersey into different planning areas and centers based on the presence of infrastructure (roads and sewer) and environmental constraints (wetlands, flood zones, forested areas, threatened or endangered habitats.) The Borough of Somerville is located within a number of State Plan Policy Map Planning Areas. The vast majority of Somerville is located inside the State Planning Area 1 - the Metropolitan Planning Area. This area consists of existing developed areas with substantial amounts of existing land and infrastructure. In the Metropolitan Planning Area, the State's Plan's intention is to:

- Provide for much of the state's future redevelopment;
- Revitalize cities and towns;
- Promote growth in compact forms;



- Stabilize older suburbs;
- Redesign areas of sprawl; and
- Protect the character of existing stable communities.

A few small areas located adjacent to the Raritan River in the Borough are identified as Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area 5. The State Plan's goals for these areas are to:

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

Lastly, there are a few areas in the Borough located in Planning Area 6 – Local Park and one area located in Planning Area 8 – State Park. The area identified as Planning Area 8 – State Park includes the Wallace House and Old Dutch Parsonage, two (2) State owed historic sites.

The State Plan's goals for these areas are to:

- Provide for the protection of critical natural resources;
- Provide public recreational and educational opportunities;
- Ensure the maintenance of associated facilities; and
- Ensure the connection of these areas into a system of open lands.

The policies and actions of Somerville Borough and the Somerset County Regional Center are both consistent with the State's Plans intention for State Planning Area 1 - the Metropolitan Planning Area. Numerous examples can be provided of plans and initiatives that support the above mentioned goals. Some specific examples include:



#### **a. Provide for the State's Future Redevelopment**

The Borough is aggressively pursuing the redevelopment of four designated Redevelopment Areas: the former municipal Landfill (Station Area and Landfill area), West Main Street, Eastern Central Business District and Kirby Avenue. All have adopted Redevelopment Plans and currently are in various stages of redevelopment. Of these, the largest and most important future redevelopment site is the Somerville Landfill and Station Area, an underutilized and largely vacant tract consisting of 115 acres.

#### **b. Revitalize Cities and Towns**

Two of the priority redevelopment areas in Somerville are located in the Central Business District – the West Main Street area, which contains the former Landmark Shopping Center, and the Eastern Central Business District area. The Redevelopment Plans that were prepared for these areas both call for the revitalization of the central business district by providing new commercial space, increasing downtown housing, creating employment opportunities and contributing to the municipal tax base.

The Borough of Somerville also participates in the Main Street New Jersey program. As part of that program, the businesses on Main Street receive architectural design services from the State of New Jersey. The Borough is currently seeking additional funding assistance to implement the façade/streetscape landscaping improvements to Main Street businesses.

#### **c. Promote Growth in Compact Forms**

The redevelopment of the Somerville Landfill site has significant potential to generate employment, tax ratable, housing opportunities and parks/open space. The *Somerville Station Area & Landfill Redevelopment Plan* adopted in 2007 promotes growth in compact forms. The Plan requires new streets, parks, and other public spaces. A key element of the Plan is that it includes guidelines for pedestrian-friendly, compact development around the existing train station and creates two new residential neighborhoods as well as a regional node of signature office development.



#### d. Stabilize Older Suburbs

Like older suburban towns, the Borough has traffic problems caused by too much volume using local roads and intersections designed to antiquated standards to address out-dated conditions. The Borough is both a destination for out-of-town traffic using the railroad, restaurants and stores and a short-cut for traffic from outlying townships headed to and from major shopping areas and the regional highway system, trying to avoid congested highway areas. The result is congestion on the major road network and the spill-over of traffic looking for “short-cuts” onto local roads. The Borough is working together with the other Regional Center municipalities of Bridgewater and Raritan to find solutions to these problems that are generally regional in scope and require the kind of cooperation fostered by the Regional Center. Two examples are the *Regional Center Neighborhood Traffic Calming and Implementation Plan* (2005) and the *Regional Center Traffic Study* which both strive to stabilize existing residential areas from major concerns caused by traffic.

The Borough has also recently prepared a *Historic Preservation Plan Element* (2008). This Element identifies seven (7) potential Historic District Overlay Zones. The following five (5) potential zones can be characterized as older residential suburbs: West End; Central Avenue, Southside, Washington Place, and the Victory Homes area. The Plan includes a variety of recommendations directed to the long-term stabilization of these areas including the nomination of sites and districts to the State and/or National Historic registers.

#### e. Redesign Areas of Sprawl

Most of the streets in the Borough provide sidewalks or have sufficiently low traffic volumes to allow pedestrians to walk along the edge of the road. However some of the neighborhoods in the Borough have limited, indirect access to desired destination points (the CBD, schools, parks and other community facilities) and there are no separately designated bikeways. A key objective of the Regional Center *Regional Center Pedestrian, Bicycle & Greenways Systems Connection Plan* currently underway is to improve existing linkages and design new greenways that connect key destinations within the Regional Center and neighboring areas of interest. The Borough is also working on a *Safe Routes to School Plan* in conjunction with a grant award from the NJ Department of Transportation.



#### **f. Protect the Character of Existing Stable Communities**

The preservation of key historic sites has long been a priority in Somerville. The Borough's recently completed *Historic Preservation Plan Element* (2008) indicates the location and significance of historic sites and historic districts. Of the over 1,000 properties inventoried, thirty three (33) are identified as key contributing. These properties are located within seven (7) areas identified by the Borough as proposed Historic District Overlay Zone areas.

The *Historic Preservation Plan Element* also includes a number of recommendations to protect the character of existing stable communities including the adoption of design guidelines to provide advice and guidance to historic property owners and property owners located in historic districts contemplating alterations or additions, and guidelines for infill development

The Borough also supports the preparation of neighborhood plans. A major community goal identified in the *Regional Center Strategic Master Plan* (2006) is to retain and enhance the quality of the Regional Center neighborhoods. The Borough supports the preparation of neighborhood plans for each of its neighborhoods to address such issues as home maintenance and rehabilitation, parking, incompatible uses, non-vehicular access, traffic calming, recreation and open space, and "streetscaping".

The State Plan also includes a set of policy objectives that should be used to guide the application of the State Plan's Statewide Policies in the Metropolitan Planning Area; the criteria for designation of any existing or new Centers appropriate in this Planning Area; the optional delineation of Center Boundaries around Centers; and local and state agency planning. The policy objectives which are tangibly advanced by Somerville Borough and Regional Center plans and planning initiatives are listed under items "g" through "p" below.

#### **g. Land Use:**

Somerville Borough promotes redevelopment and development in neighborhoods of the Regional Centers that have been identified through cooperative regional planning efforts. It also promotes diversification of land uses, including housing where appropriate, in single use developments and enhances their linkages to the rest of the community. The Borough also ensures efficient and beneficial utilization of scarce land resources throughout the Planning Area to strengthen its existing diversified and compact nature.



#### **h. Housing:**

Somerville Borough provides a full range of housing choices through redevelopment, new construction, rehabilitation, adaptive reuse of nonresidential buildings, and the introduction of new housing into appropriate nonresidential settings. The Borough also preserves the existing housing stock through maintenance, rehabilitation and flexible regulation.

#### **i. Economic Development:**

Somerville Borough promotes economic development by encouraging strategic land assembly, site preparation and infill development, public/private partnerships and infrastructure improvements that support an identified role for the community within the regional marketplace. The Borough also encourages job training and other incentives to retain and attract businesses. In addition, Somerville

Borough encourages private sector investment through supportive government regulations, policies and programs, including tax policies and expedited review of proposals that support appropriate redevelopment.

#### **j. Transportation:**

Somerville Borough maintains and enhances a transportation system that capitalizes on high density settlement patterns by encouraging the use of public transit systems, walking and alternative modes of transportation to reduce automobile dependency, links Centers, and creates opportunities for transit oriented redevelopment.

#### **k. Natural Resource Conservation:**

Somerville Borough reclaims environmentally damaged sites and mitigates future negative impacts, particularly to riverfronts, scenic vistas, wild life habitats and to Critical Environmental Sites, and Historic and Cultural Sites. The Borough also gives special emphasis to improving air quality, uses open space to reinforce neighborhood and community identity, and protects natural linear systems, including regional systems that link to other Planning Areas.



#### **l. Recreation:**

Somerville Borough provides 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.

#### **m. Redevelopment:**

Somerville Borough encourages redevelopment at intensities sufficient to support transit, a broad range of uses and efficient use of infrastructure. The Borough also promotes designs that enhances public safety, encourages pedestrian activity and reduces dependency on the automobile.

#### **n. Historic Preservation:**

Somerville Borough encourages 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 redevelop. The Borough also coordinates historic preservation with tourism efforts.

#### **o. Public Facilities and Services:**

Somerville Borough completes repairs or replaces existing infrastructure systems to eliminate deficiencies and provide capacity for sustainable development and redevelopment in the region. The Borough also encourages the concentration of public facilities and services in the Regional Center.

#### **p. Intergovernmental Coordination:**

Somerville Borough regionalizes as many public services as feasible and economical to enhance the cost-effective delivery of those services. The Borough also establishes multijurisdictional policy and planning entities, such as the Regional Center Partnership, to guide the efforts of state, county and municipal governments to ensure compatible and coordinated redevelopment.





## **2. Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area 5**

There are a few areas located in Somerville along the Raritan River corridor identified as Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area 5. The State Plan's goals for these areas are to:

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

The policies and actions of Somerville Borough and the Somerset County Regional Center are both consistent with the State's Plans intention for State Planning Area 5 - Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area. Numerous examples can be provided of plans and initiatives that support the abovementioned goals. Some specific examples include:

### **a. Protect Environmental Resources through the Protection of Large Contiguous Areas of Land**

The Borough of Somerville supports the protection of the Raritan River Valley. The Raritan River Greenway has been described as the most significant natural resource and potential recreation amenity in the Borough and Regional Center. According to the Somerset County Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI) dated 1/7/08, approximately 27 acres of the Raritan River Greenway are located in Somerville. The total size of the Raritan Greenway is over 470 acres, of which over 204 acres are located in Bridgewater, over 107 acres in Manville and 1 acre in Raritan Borough.

### **b. Accommodate Growth in Centers**

The *Regional Center Strategic Master Plan* (2006) includes many policies and recommendations directed towards accommodating growth in the Regional Center. One of the focus areas of this Plan is Downtowns and Main Streets. The Plan recognizes that Somerville has a thriving downtown, but that substantial opportunities exist to further increase the vitality of these traditional "Main Street" central places. The Strategic Plan thus includes strategies for bolstering the strength of all of the Regional Center's downtown and Main Street commercial areas.



### **c. Protect the Character of Existing Stable Communities;**

The Regional Center is generally well served by water and sewer infrastructure. The largest key issue is determining the capacity of these systems to handle additional growth from redevelopment in Somerville. Typically, water and sewer systems in older urbanized areas have sufficient capacity for redevelopment because they were originally constructed to serve large industrial users with much higher demands than commercial and residential users typically have. The *Regional Center Strategic Master Plan* (2006) recognizes that there is a need to conduct capacity studies and review the condition of all existing infrastructure systems.

## **3. PLANNING AREA 6 - LOCAL PARK**

Lastly, some small sections of Somerville are located in Planning Area 6 (Local Park) and one area located in Planning Area 8 (State Park). The State's Plan for these areas is to:

- Provide for the protection of critical natural resources;
- Provide public recreational and educational opportunities;
- Ensure the maintenance of associated facilities; and
- Ensure the connection of these areas into a system of open lands.

The policies and actions of Somerville Borough and the Somerset County Regional Center are both consistent with the State's Plans intention for State Planning Area 6 and Area 8. Some specific examples include:

### **a. Provide for the Protection of Critical Natural Resources**

Somerville has environmental regulations in place to protect critical natural resources, including the Raritan River Valley. The Borough's Storm water Control Ordinance establishes minimum storm water requirements and controls for major development. It also recommends flood control and pollutant reduction through nonstructural or low impact development techniques before relying on structural BMPs. These regulations will improve water quality of the Raritan River and its tributaries and will minimize bank erosion. The Borough also has prepared a *Municipal Storm water Management Plan* (2004) that addresses groundwater recharge, storm water quantity and storm water quality impacts.



#### **b. Provide Public Recreational and Educational Opportunities**

The Borough provides a diverse range of recreational and educational opportunities to maintain its character and enhance local quality of life. The establishment of the Peter's Brook Greenway has been a major initiative undertaken by the Borough that provides recreational and environmental educational opportunities. In addition to the Greenway, there are several large parks and recreation sites throughout the Borough. Somerville is also home to a number of key historic sites including the Wallace House that served as Washington's headquarters during winter of 1778-79 and currently is operated as a Museum by the State. (See preceding Historic Site inventory form for 38 Washington Place).

#### **c. Ensure the Maintenance of Associated Facilities**

The *Somerville Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment and Master Plan* (2006) provides an inventory of existing parkland facilities with the intent of developing a long range plan for improvements. The Plan includes numerous recommendations to ensure long-term maintenance. The condition of every facility in all parks and open spaces owned or operated by the Borough are documented, including benches, paths, picnic tables, lighting and the like. Recommendations are also offered for enhancements and improvements to all facilities.

#### **d. Ensure the Connection of these Areas into a System of Open Lands**

The Raritan River runs adjacent to Somerville, and many brooks flow through the Center. Peters Brook has been made into a greenway linking neighborhoods within Somerville and may form the basis for an expanded greenway system to link neighborhoods throughout the Regional Center. The acquisition of additional land for the Raritan River Greenway along both the Raritan and its tributaries is a key issue for the Regional Center and the Borough of Somerville. A number of Borough Plan's recommend enhancing open space connections. One example is the *Somerville Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment and Master Plan* (2006) which discusses the need to connect Somerville pedestrian and cyclists with the proposed 206 south, Riverside Drive, and Clarks Woods.



#### **4. Council on Affordable Housing (COAH)**

##### 1998 Analysis

As mentioned above, the Borough has been given a revised allocation of affordable housing units for which it is obligated to provide a realistic opportunity. The Borough is presently preparing a housing element to address this allocation.

##### Current Analysis

The COAH web site states the following “With Governor Christie's June 29, 2011 issuance of Reorganization Plan, No. 001-2011, the 12-member Council on Affordable Housing has been eliminated effective August 29, 2011. Recognizing that the Department of Community Affairs is responsible for providing assistance to municipalities, is charged with the oversight of the affairs of local governments, operates numerous affordable housing programs and that the performance of these obligations can be significantly improved and streamlined by consolidating the statutory functions, powers, and duties of COAH with those of the Department, the Governor transferred all functions, powers, duties, and personnel of COAH to the Commissioner of DCA.” It is our understanding that the Fair Housing Act and regulations that implement the Act have not been altered as a result of the reorganization.

The Borough has recently revised the Housing Master Plan Element. Given the uncertainty regarding COAH Round III regulations and the numerous lawsuits involving COAH Round III regulations the Planning Board is not preparing a Fair Share Plan (at this time). In addition, it is the opinion of the Planning Board that the Borough meets its constitutional obligation to provide affordable housing under free market conditions and deed restrictions and other institutional controls as stipulated by the COAH Round III requirements are not needed to accomplish the goals of providing affordable housing.



## **5. Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL).**

### 1998 Analysis

The MLUL has undergone numerous revisions since 1990, and there have been a number of court decisions which have clarified or changed interpretation of this statute. Some, but not all, of the revisions are incorporated or reflected in the Borough's Land Use Ordinance, which combines the zoning, subdivisions and site plan ordinances authorized by the MLUL. The Master Plan and/or ordinance should be amended to incorporate or reference such revisions, and to eliminate inconsistencies with the current MLUL. The Planning Board is preparing a comprehensive revision to the Land Use Ordinance which addresses these changes in the Law.

### Current Analysis

The Master Plan and/or Land Use and Development ordinance will be amended based upon revisions to the MLUL.

## **6. Somerset County Master Plan**

Somerville's Master Plan and initiatives are based on recognition of the policies recommended for Somerset County and are consistent with the goals and objectives of the Somerset County Planning Board.

## **7. Other Laws and Regulations.**

### 1998 Analysis

Among the various other laws and regulations which have been adopted or amended since the prior Master Plan reexamination, the provisions of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 should be reflected in amendments to the land use ordinance. This act has established limits upon local regulation of wireless communication facilities, including cellular phone antennas, and has restricted local regulations of dish antennas. The draft comprehensive revision of the Land Use Ordinance being prepared by the Planning Board includes provisions intended to respond to this law.

### Current Analysis

Since the preparation of last master plan reexamination various other laws including changes to the RSIS (Residential Site Improvement Standards), storm water, flood plain and wetland regulations. The Borough Land Use and Development ordinances are amended as necessary to reflect the changes in the law.



## **8. Proposed Draft Comprehensive Revision of the Land Use Ordinance**

### 1998 Analysis

The Planning Board performed a comprehensive review of the Land Use and Development ordinance. The intent of this review was as follows:

1. Make the ordinance more clear and less difficult to use for citizens, applicants and those who administer the ordinance;
2. Improve procedures and to ensure the procedures are consistent with the intent and actual practice of the boards and officials charged with administering the ordinance;
3. Eliminate inconsistencies, omissions and ambiguities;
4. Eliminate inconsistencies between the ordinance and MLUL, other laws and various court decisions and to add certain provisions from such laws and decisions; and
5. Implement certain limited land use and development policy changes. Seventeen (17) policy changes were stated and these changes are not included herein.

### Current Analysis

The Borough has revised the Land Use and Development Ordinance and future revisions to the ordinance will be performed as needed. Specifically, the Planning Board has recommended changes in the permitted uses to address massage therapy, tattoo shops and adult uses. These recommendations included performing revisions in Schedule "A" regarding permitting uses in the B-1 and B-2, B-5 & H zone districts. In addition, the Board has also made recommendations regarding modification of the sign regulations, use of cargo shipping containers & clothes drop off containers that impact all zone districts.

## **9 Other Changes to the Master Plan or Development Regulations.**

### 1998 Analysis

Planning Board recommended the following changes to the Land Use Plan Map or Zoning Map;



- a. In the Master Plan, properties along the east side of the Routes 202/206 north of Arlyne Drive are planned for retail and service uses. The current zoning ordinance places all of these properties in a highway commercial district, except that the rear half of block 153, Lot 17 is placed within a single family residential zone. The zoning map should be amended to place all of these properties in the B-5 highway commercial district, including the rear half of block 153, Lot 17, due to the problem in providing access to residential development to the rear of this lot. Adequate buffering of the residential properties on Arlyne Drive and Prospect Drive should be required as part of this change.

#### Current Analysis

The zoning map was revised accordingly

- b. In the Master Plan, the area near the intersection of 2<sup>nd</sup> and South Bridge Streets is planned for multi-family residential use. The current zoning ordinance places some of these properties in a neighborhood business district and some in a shopping center business district. The Master Plan should be amended to place those properties on the east side of South Bridge Street in the B-4 zone district, and the properties on the west side of South Bridge Street in the B-6 zone district, consistent with current zoning.

#### Current Analysis

Map #2 of the Master Plan identifies areas where current land use policy is recommended to be changed by the Master Plan. The area stated above is identified as area #6 of said map is currently zoned B-4, R-3 or Station Area and Landfill Redevelopment Area. The policy recommendations are that this area should be used for multi-family and that the non-residential uses should be eventually eliminated. The B-4 zone district consists of only a few lots that have frontage on South Bridge Street and are existing businesses. The B-4, R-3 and Redevelopment Plan allow for multi family uses and therefore are consistent with the Master Plan. Therefore, changes to the Master Plan are not proposed.

- c. In the Master Plan, the site of Immaculata High School (Block 151, Lots 1 and 1A) reflects the existing school use. The current zoning ordinance divides this site into a highway commercial zone in the northerly portion and a residential zone in the southerly portion. The zoning map should be amended to place the entire site in the adjacent R-2 residential zone, and to permit schools with special conditions in this zone.



### Current Analysis

The zoning ordinance was amended as suggested.

- d. In the Master Plan, the land on Mountain Avenue occupied by Immaculate Conception Church (Block 136, Lot 12) is planned for residential and professional use. The current zoning ordinance designates most of this site as a residential zone, with a small area as a professional office-residential zone on the south. The zoning map should be revised to place the entire site in a residential zone, with special regulations for houses of worship.

### Current Analysis

Map #2 of the Master Plan identifies areas where current land use policy is recommended to be changed by the Master Plan. The area stated above is identified as area #11 of said map and the Master Plan indicates that the area consists of residential, professional office, service related and public uses. The zoning ordinance was amended as suggested.

- e. In one part of the Master Plan, the East Main Street revitalization area is planned as a single mixed-use zone, permitting a variety of public, office, retail, and residential uses. In the Vision Plan portion of the Master Plan, a somewhat different mixed-use scheme is planned. The current zoning ordinance places this area within four separate zone districts, permitting public retail, service and residential uses. The Master Plan should be amended to be generally consistent with separate zoning districts, similar to which now exists. The plan should acknowledge that at such time as land assembly and coordinated development is possible, that single mixed-use such as proposed currently in the plan may be appropriate. The Borough has recently initiated redevelopment studies for this area, which will eventually lead to a redevelopment plan and revised development regulations.

### Current Analysis

The area is part of the Redevelopment Plan for the Eastern Central Business District (ECBD) Area. The Master Plan will be amended to include the redevelopment areas.





- f. The R-3 Zone is proposed to be extended further west along south side of Veterans Memorial Drive, west of Hamilton Street, to include Lots 14, 15 and 16 in Block 63. This change will balance the properties currently zone R-3 on the north side of Veterans Memorial Drive.

#### Current Analysis

Lots 14, 15 and 16 in Block 63 were to be consolidated as part of the Weiss major site plan approval. The approval was for a medical office building. Therefore, it is not recommended to add these lots to the R-3 zone since the approved site plan is not a residential development. In addition this area is part of the Redevelopment Plan for the Eastern Central Business District (ECBD) Area.

- g. The area along South Bridge Street north of the railroad and along Franklin Street between South Bridge and Warren Streets is proposed to be changed to a PO-R professional office-residential zone. This change is proposed to better reflect development conditions in this area;

#### Current Analysis

The zoning ordinance was amended as suggested. In addition this area is part of the Redevelopment Plan for the Eastern Central Business District (ECBD) Area.

- h. The B-2 zone is proposed to be extended to include the properties containing the Post Office and Post Office Plaza (Block 117, Lots 1.01 and 2; and Block 120, Lot 1). Currently, these properties are located in the B-3 zone district. The zone change along Bridge Street as discussed above results in a small B-3 zone area isolated from the balance of the zone located to the east of Bridge Street. This change would place these properties in the same zone as the contiguous properties to the west, and it consistent with their current development;

#### Current Analysis

The zoning ordinance was amended as suggested.



- i. In the Master Plan, two properties on the north side of Main Street east of Grove Street (Block 69, Lots 1 and 33) are planned for expansion of the County administrative complex. The current zoning ordinance places these properties in the B-2 Central Business District, which is not designed for County uses. Although it is doubtful that the Master Plan ever intended to include these properties as part of the County complex, the Master Plan should be amended to clarify this situation and to be substantially consistent with the current zoning policies for this area;

#### Current Analysis

As previously iterated the Planning Board agrees that Map #1 of the Master Plan should be revised accordingly.

- j. The boundary of the R-2 zone district should be changed to include Block 53, Lots 1 through 5 and Block 55, Lots 4 through 6, which are presently in the I-2 zone district. Most of these properties front on South Bridge Street and are developed for residential use. They are also too small for industrial use. Changing the zone boundary means that additions or alterations to these existing dwellings, or even new dwellings, will not require a use variance.

#### Current Analysis

The zoning ordinance was amended as suggested.

- k. The boundary of the PO-R zone should be changed to include Block 129, Lot 39. This property received approval to expand the parking area for the Somerset Valley Bank on West End Avenue. Continuing the R-2 residential zone designation on this property is therefore no longer appropriate;

#### Current Analysis

The zoning ordinance was amended as suggested.

- l. The Boundary between the R-1 and R-2 zone districts should be relocated to follow the lot line between Lots 30 and 31 in Block 41. A recent lot line relocation resulted in one of the properties being split by the zone boundary;



### Current Analysis

The zoning ordinance was amended as suggested.

- m. The Master Plan and Land Use Ordinance should be revisited to permit a wider range of home office uses, particularly in view of the trends in the telecommunications which enable a greater number of persons to conduct business activity out of their homes, Any change must be careful to ensure that the home business activity does not negatively affect residential properties in the vicinity;

### Current Analysis

The current Land Use and Development Ordinance permits a wide range of uses (see section 102-120B) and ensures that the home business activity does not negatively affect residential properties in the vicinity. Therefore, we conclude that this suggestion was addressed.

- n. The Land Use Ordinance should be reviewed and possibly amended to minimize excessive illumination and sky reflected glare. Also, the ordinance should be revised so as to prevent glare and excessive illumination from one and two family residences;

### Current Analysis

The zoning ordinance was amended as suggested.

- o. The Board of Adjustment, in its 1997 annual report, has recommended several revisions, or studies of such revisions, to the zoning ordinance. These should be incorporated into the master plan and/or zoning ordinance, as appropriate.

### Current Analysis

The recommendations included in the Board of Adjustment annual report are reviewed by the Planning Board and governing body. They are incorporated into the Master Plan and/or zoning ordinance, if deemed appropriate.



- p. The properties within the I-1 Industrial District having frontage on Route 206 should be restudied to determine the most appropriate development policies. In the Master Plan, properties along the west side of Route 206 are planned for a conservation area in the northerly portion, and industrial use in the southerly portion. The current zoning ordinance places all of this area in the I-1 industrial district, and encourages a conservation easement along the Raritan River. The development options on these properties are severely limited due to floodplain and wetlands and other factors. In addition, with the recent adoption of the redevelopment plan for the landfill area across Route 206 to the east and north, industrial development may not be the most appropriate development for this location.

### Current Analysis

All of the properties located on the west side of Route 206, with the exception of Lot 5.01, Block 123.03, are either owned by the County or by Somerville or Raritan Borough. These properties are included in the Station Area and Landfill Redevelopment Plan as open space/conservation area. Therefore, the Board recommends that the zoning map and Master Plan be revised accordingly.

## **C. REVIEW OF THE MUNICIPAL STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN**

### **Introduction**

The municipality shall reexamine the municipal stormwater management plan at each reexamination of the municipality's master plan in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89.

### **Municipal Stormwater Management Plan**

The contents of the municipal stormwater management plan are stated below. The changes to the said plan are in red type with the original text indicated with strike through.

This Municipal Stormwater Management Plan (Plan) describes the Borough of Somerville's requirements for addressing stormwater related impacts of land development and re-development projects, and has been developed to meet obligations detailed in the Borough's Tier A Municipal Stormwater General Permit (NJPDES Permit No. NJ0141852). This permit is required by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) and is described in N.J.A.C. 7:14A - Municipal Stormwater Regulations. Somerville's permit is also included in Appendix A of this plan.



Preparation of the Plan has followed the recommendations detailed in the NJDEP *Tier A Stormwater Guidance Document* and contains all of the required plan elements specified in N.J.A.C. 7:8 – Stormwater Management Rules (See Appendix B for a copy of the rules). The Plan includes design and performance standards to mitigate groundwater recharge, stormwater quality, and stormwater quantity impacts of major land development and re-development projects. (A major land development or re-development project is defined as a residential project that disturbs one or more acres of land or a non-residential project that either disturbs one or more acres of land or adds an additional one-quarter acre or more of impervious cover.) The Plan also describes operation and maintenance requirements for ensuring the long-term performance of the stormwater management facilities that are constructed to achieve the standards.

This plan also addresses the review and update of existing ordinances, the Borough Master Plan, and other planning documents, to allow for project designs that include low impact development techniques. In addition, the plan includes a mitigation strategy for when a variance or exemption of the design and performance standards is sought.

This Plan contains the Municipal Stormwater Management Plan components necessary to meet the April 1, 2005 implementation schedule. It is noted that revisions to the Plan may be necessary over the next several months, as the municipality reviews its ordinances, and prepares to adopt an ordinance implementing this Plan, in accordance with the required implementation schedule noted in the permit conditions. In addition, periodic revisions to the Plan may be necessary to meet specific municipal planning goals.

## **MSWMP Goals**

The goals of this MSWMP are to:

- Reduce flood damage, including damage to life and property;
- Minimize, to the extent practical, any increase in stormwater runoff from any new development;
- Reduce soil erosion from any development or construction project;
- Assure the adequacy of existing and proposed culverts and bridges, and other in-stream structures;
- Maintain groundwater recharge
- Prevent, to the greatest extent feasible, an increase in nonpoint pollution;
- Maintain the integrity of stream channels for their biological functions, as well as for drainage;
- Minimize pollutants in stormwater from new and existing development to restore, enhance, and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the waters of the state, to protect public health, to safeguard fish and aquatic life and scenic and ecological



- values and to enhance the domestic, municipal, recreational, industrial, and other uses of water; and
- Protect public safety through the proper design and operation of stormwater basins.

To achieve these goals, this plan outlines specific stormwater design and performance standards for new development. Additionally, the plan proposes stormwater management controls to address impacts from existing development. Preventive and corrective maintenance strategies are addressed to ensure long-term effectiveness of stormwater management facilities. The plan also outlines safety standards for stormwater infrastructure to be implemented to protect public safety.

### **Stormwater Discussion**

Land development can dramatically alter the hydrologic cycle (see Figure 1) of a site and, ultimately, an entire watershed. Prior to development, native vegetation can either directly intercept precipitation or draw that portion that has infiltrated into the ground and return it to the atmosphere through evapotranspiration. Development can remove this beneficial vegetation and replace it with lawn or impervious cover, reducing the site's evapotranspiration and infiltration rates. Clearing and grading a site can remove depressions that store rainfall. Construction activities may also compact the soil and diminish its infiltration ability, resulting in increased volumes and rates of stormwater runoff from the site. Impervious areas that are connected to each other through gutters, channels, and storm sewers can transport runoff more quickly than natural areas. This shortening of the transport or travel time quickens the rainfall-runoff response of the drainage area, causing flow in downstream waterways to peak faster and higher than natural conditions. These increases can create new and aggravate existing downstream flooding and erosion problems and increase the quantity of sediment in the channel. Filtration of runoff and removal of pollutants by surface and channel vegetation is eliminated by storm sewers that discharge runoff directly into a stream. Increases in impervious area can also decrease opportunities for infiltration which, in turn, reduces stream base flow and groundwater recharge. Reduced base flows and increased peak flows produce greater fluctuations between normal and storm flow rates, which can increase channel erosion. Reduced base flows can also negatively impact the hydrology of adjacent wetlands and the health of biological communities that depend on base flows. Finally, erosion and sedimentation can destroy habitat from which some species cannot adapt.

In addition to increases in runoff peaks, volumes, and loss of groundwater recharge, land development often results in the accumulation of pollutants on the land surface that runoff can mobilize and transport to streams. New



impervious surfaces and cleared areas created by development can accumulate a variety of pollutants from the atmosphere, fertilizers, animal wastes, and leakage and wear from vehicles. Pollutants can include metals, suspended solids, hydrocarbons, pathogens, and nutrients.

In addition to increased pollutant loading, land development can adversely affect water quality and stream biota in more subtle ways. For example, stormwater falling on impervious surfaces or stored in detention or retention basins can become heated and raise the temperature of the downstream waterway, adversely affecting cold water fish species such as trout. Development can remove trees along stream banks that normally provide shading, stabilization, and leaf litter that falls into streams and becomes food for the aquatic community.

## **Background**

The Borough encompasses 2.4 square miles in heart of Somerset County, New Jersey. The Borough “enjoys a mix of commercial, professional and residential development while also enjoying the ambiance of a small town with a main street setting unique in the region.” (Somerville Borough Web Site, 2004). The Borough is an older community and few large areas of undeveloped area remain. The undeveloped areas that do exist are stream corridors along the Raritan River, and Peters Brook. Stream and rivers within the Borough are shown in Figure 2 and the topography of the Borough is shown in Figure 3.

According to the 2000 census, the Borough has 12,423 residents. However, the daytime population expands to over 20,000 with the influx of commuters to County, State and private offices located within the Borough. The population rose approximately 7 percent since the 1990 census. This population increase is significant but less than the overall State and County increases of approximately 9 and 24 percent respectively over the same period.

The Borough is situated along the north side of the main stem of the Raritan River in the Raritan Basin. It is located in Watershed Management Area (WMA) 9 - lower Raritan River. The Borough contains portions of three Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) areas for Peter’s Brook (HUC 02030105080010) and the Raritan River (HUC 02030105080020 and HUC 02030105080030). These HUC14 areas are shown in Figure 4.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) has established an Ambient Biomonitoring Network (AMNET) to document the health of the state’s waterways. There are over 800 AMNET sites throughout New Jersey. These sites are sampled for benthic macroinvertebrates by NJDEP on a five-year cycle. Streams are classified as non-impaired,



moderately impaired, or severely impaired based on the AMNET data. The data is used to generate a New Jersey Impairment Score (NJIS), which is based on a number of biometrics related to benthic macroinvertebrate community dynamics.

Based on the AMNET data, the two water bodies that border the Borough to the east and south, Peter's Brook and the Raritan River, respectively are both moderately impaired. There is an AMNET site (AN0376) on Peter's Brook at Route 28 in Somerville. There are also AMNET sites downstream on the Raritan River at Manville (AN0377) and upstream on both the South and North Branch of the Raritan River (AN0374 & AN0341). The locations of AMNET monitoring sites near the Borough are shown in Figure 5.

In addition to the AMNET data, the NJDEP and other regulatory agencies collect water quality chemical data on the streams in the state. These data show that the instream total phosphorus concentrations and mercury levels (in fish) in the Raritan River frequently exceed the state's criteria. This means that the river is an impaired waterway and the NJDEP is required to develop a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for these pollutants.

A TMDL is the amount of a pollutant that can be accepted by a waterbody without causing an exceedance of water quality standards or interfering with the ability to use a waterbody for one or more of its designated uses. The allowable load is allocated to the various sources of the pollutant, such as stormwater and wastewater discharges, which require an NJPDES permit to discharge, and nonpoint sources, which includes stormwater runoff from agricultural areas and residential areas, along with a margin of safety. Provisions may also be made for future sources in the form of reserve capacity. An implementation plan is developed to identify how the various sources will be reduced to the designated allocations. Implementation strategies may include improved treatment plants, adoption of ordinances, reforestation of stream corridors, retrofitting stormwater systems, and other BMP's.

The New Jersey Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report (305(b) and 303(d)) (Integrated List) is required by the federal Clean Water Act to be prepared biennially and is a valuable source of water quality information. This combined report presents the extent to which New Jersey waters are attaining water quality standards, and identifies waters that are impaired. Sublist 5 of the Integrated List constitutes the list of waters impaired or threatened by pollutants, for which one or more TMDL's are needed. Both Peter's Brook and the Raritan River are listed on the 2004 proposed Sublist 5 (March 1, 2004). Peter's Brook is listed as non-attaining for benthic macroinvertebrates (AN0376) and the Raritan is non-attaining for phosphorous concentrations (01400500), benthic macroinvertebrates (AN0377) and mercury levels in fish.





In addition to water quality problems, the Borough has occasional flooding problems. Flooding occurs on the Raritan River and on Peter's Brook. Flooding on the Raritan river only affects properties on the southern side of the Borough. While flooding along Peter's Brook affects properties along its length. The approximate 100-year floodplain, shown in Figure 6, depicts the Raritan River, Peter's Brook (and Mac's Brook) floodplains.

In conjunction with the USGS, Somerset County operates a flood information system for its 21 municipalities. The Somerset County Flood Information System (SCFIS) includes of a network of stream and precipitation gages throughout the County. Information from these gages is automatically transmitted to a central location via telephone, radio and satellite. The information is then processed and appropriate actions are taken. These actions include notifying municipal police, fire and emergency management personnel with flood potential and water level information.

There are several SCFIS stream and precipitation gages in and near Somerville Borough. The Borough has stream and precipitation gages along Peter's Brook at Mercer Street. There is also a precipitation gage on the roof of the County Administration Building on Grove Street. In addition, there is a stream gage on the Raritan River at Manville on the Finderne Avenue Bridge (Van Vechten Bridge). Information from this latter gage is available on the United States Geological Survey (USGS) web site in real time (<http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nj/nwis>). The locations of these gages are shown in Figure 7.

The Borough is almost fully developed. The existing land use, based on 1995/1997 aerial photography, is shown in Figure 8. The existing zoning is shown in Figure 9. A current aerial photo with parcel lot lines overlain on it is shown in Figure 10. The vast majority of land is urban land with little chance for groundwater recharge. The Borough is entirely within the State Plan Designation PA1 Metropolitan Planning Area where infiltration requirements for redevelopment are not applicable. However, groundwater recharge rates for native soils in this area are generally between 1 and 11 inches annually. The average annual groundwater recharge rates are shown graphically in Figure 11.

According to the NJDEP, "A Well Head Protection Area (WHPA) in New Jersey is a map area calculated around a Public Community Water Supply (PCWS) well in New Jersey that delineates the horizontal extent of ground water captured by a well pumping at a specific rate over a two-, five-, and twelve-year period of time for unconfined wells. ... The confined wells have a fifty foot radius delineated around each well serving as the well head protection area to be controlled by the water purveyor in accordance with Safe Drinking Water Regulations (see NJAC 7:10-11.7(b)1)."



WHPA delineations are conducted in response to the Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments of 1986 and 1996 as part of the Source Water Area Protection Program (SWAP). The delineations are the first step in defining the sources of water to a public supply well. Within these areas, potential contamination will be assessed and appropriate monitoring will be undertaken as subsequent phases of the NJDEP SWAP.

A small portion of the southeastern edge of the Borough is in a tier 3 well head protection area (see Figure 12). The actual well(s) are located further to the southeast outside of Somerville Borough.

Somerville Borough obtains its public water supply from the New Jersey American Water Company (formerly Elizabethtown Water). The water is drawn from an intake near the confluence of the Millstone and the Raritan River, treated and pumped to Borough residents.

It is important that contaminants not be purposely recharged into groundwater supplies. There are 46 sites within the Borough that are listed in the "Known Contaminated Sites in New Jersey Report" last updated in 2001. This report is available on-line at <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/srp/kcs-nj/kcs-nj.htm>. Forty two of these sites have on-site sources of contamination. Two have unknown sources of contamination and two have been closed with restrictions on future uses. It is important to note these sites (shown in Figure 13) since they may impact the selection of best management practices for Stormwater runoff in the immediate vicinity of areas of contaminated soils and groundwater.

In addition to the rivers and streams that run through and along the Borough, there are a number of wetland areas. These wetland areas provide flood storage, nonpoint pollutant removal and habitat for flora and fauna. Major wetland areas in the Borough are shown in Figure 14.

### **Design and Performance Standards**

The Borough will adopt the design and performance standards for stormwater management measures as presented in N.J.A.C. 7:8-5 to minimize the adverse impact of stormwater runoff on water quality and water quantity and loss of groundwater recharge in receiving water bodies. The design and performance standards include the language for maintenance of stormwater management measures consistent with the stormwater management rules at N.J.A.C. 7:8-5-8 Maintenance Requirements, and language for safety standards consistent with N.J.A.C. 7:8-6 Safety Standards for Stormwater Management Basins. Maintenance agreements for stormwater management measures will include an enforcement clause stating that if the responsible party does not perform required maintenance, then the Borough may perform such maintenance and bill the responsible



party. In addition, the borough will require all responsible parties to submit annual statements (via certified mail) every April documenting the operation and maintenance of their facilities. The ordinances (and this Stormwater management plan) will be submitted to the County for formal review and approval within 12 months of adoption of this Stormwater management plan (before April 1, 2006).

### **Plan Consistency**

The Borough is not within a Regional Stormwater Management Planning Area and no TMDL's have been developed for waters within the Borough; therefore this plan does not need to be consistent with any regional stormwater management plans (RSWMPs) nor any TMDL's. If any RSWMPs or TMDLs are developed in the future, this Municipal Stormwater Management Plan will be updated to be consistent.

The borough is within the Raritan Basin and much information on the basin and about its characteristics has been developed as part of the Raritan Plan. Additional information concerning this plan can be found at: <http://www.raritanbasin.org>. The Borough supports the Raritan Plan.

The Municipal Stormwater Management Plan is consistent with the Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS) at N.J.A.C. 5:21. The Borough will utilize the most current update of the RSIS in the stormwater review of residential areas. This Municipal Stormwater Management Plan will be updated to be consistent with any future updates of the RSIS.

The Borough's Stormwater Management Ordinance requires all new development and redevelopment plans to comply with New Jersey's Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Standards. During construction, Borough inspectors will observe on-site soil erosion and sediment control measures and report any inconsistencies to the local Soil Conservation District.

### **Nonstructural Stormwater Management Strategies**

The Borough has reviewed the master plan and ordinances, and has provided a list of the sections in the Borough land use and zoning ordinances that are to be modified to incorporate nonstructural stormwater management strategies. These are the ordinances identified for revision.



## **Chapter 102-Land Use and Development**

### **102-82 Street Improvements**

G. Street Curbs- This section can be amended to allow for the use of curb cuts or flush curbs with curb stops to allow vegetated swales to be used for stormwater conveyance and to allow the disconnection of impervious areas from structural stormwater conveyances.

### **102-85 Off-Street Parking, Loading and On-Site Circulation**

F. Pavement-This section can be amended to allow for the use of pervious pavement or paver blocks in low traffic areas or overflow parking areas.

G. Curbs-Requires the use of curbs for parking areas, loading areas and other paved areas. This section can be amended to allow for the use of curb cuts or flush curbs with curb stops to allow vegetated swales to be used for stormwater conveyance and to allow the disconnection of impervious areas from structural stormwater conveyances.

### **102-86 Storm Water Management and Flood Protection**

This section can be amended to cite NJAC 7:8, the New Jersey Best Management Practice Manual. The section can also encourage nonstructural stormwater management measures before considering structural measures. Finally, this section can encourage the disconnection of runoff including roof leaders.

### **102-87 Grading and Soil Disturbance**

A. General-This section can be amended to reference the NJ Soil and Sediment Control Standards and outline some general design principles, including : whenever possible, retain and protect natural vegetation, minimize and retain water runoff to facilitate groundwater recharge; and, install diversions, sediment basins and similar required structures prior to any on-site grading or disturbance.

### **102-88 Landscaping and Buffers**

This section may be amended to recommend the use of native vegetation which requires less fertilization and watering than non-native species. In addition, language can be included to allow buffer areas to be used for stormwater management.



## **Chapter 171-Weeds and Debris**

This section may be in conflict with the promotion of using native vegetation and may need to be amended.

## **Chapter 190-Weed Control**

This section may be in conflict with the promotion of using native vegetation and may need to be amended.

## **Land Use/Build-Out Analysis**

Because the Borough of Somerville has a combined total of less than one square mile of vacant lands (there are no agricultural lands), the Borough is not required to do a build-out analysis.

## **Mitigation Plans**

New Jersey's stormwater management regulations allow a municipality to grant a variance or exemption from the stormwater management measure design and performance standards if the municipality has a Mitigation Plan in their Municipal Stormwater Management Plan. The purpose of the Mitigation Plan is to enable approval of an otherwise acceptable development that cannot achieve the stormwater management design and performance standards on-site. A variance can be granted allowing the developer to provide equivalent stormwater mitigation in the same drainage area for the same standard (i.e., groundwater recharge, water quality or water quantity).

## **Mitigation Project Criteria**

The criteria for an acceptable mitigation project are **as follows:**

- ~~1. The mitigation project must be implemented in the same drainage area as the proposed development.~~
- ~~2. The mitigation project must provide an equivalent amount of mitigation for the stormwater design and performance standard for which the variance or exemption is being sought. For example, if a variance of the water quality standards is sought, then the mitigation must address water quality.~~
- ~~3. The developer must ensure the long-term maintenance of the project, including the maintenance requirements under Chapters 8 and 9 of the NJDEP Stormwater BMP Manual. Maintenance agreements shall include an enforcement provision.~~



1. The project must be within the same area that would contribute to the receptor impacted by the project. Note, that depending on the specific performance standard waived, the sensitive receptor and/or the contributory area to that receptor may be different. If there are no specific sensitive receptors that would be impacted as the result of the grant of the waiver/exemption, then the location of the mitigation project can be located anywhere within the municipality, and should be selected to provide the most benefit relative to an existing stormwater problem in the same category (quality, quantity or recharge).
2. Legal authorization must be obtained to construct the project at the location selected. This includes the maintenance and any access needs for the project in the future.
3. The project should be close to the location of the original project, and if possible, be located upstream at a similar distance from the identified sensitive receptor. This distance should not be based on actual location, but on a similar hydraulic distance to the sensitive receptor. For example, if the project for which a waiver is obtained discharges to a tributary, but the closest location discharges to the main branch, it may be more beneficial to identify a location discharging to the same tributary.
4. For ease of administration, if sensitive receptors are addressed, it is preferable to have one location that addresses any and all of the performance standards waived, rather than the one location for each performance standard.
5. It must be demonstrated that implementation of the mitigation project will result in no adverse impacts to other properties.
6. Mitigation projects that address stormwater runoff quantity can provide storage for proposed increases in runoff volume, as opposed to direct peak flow reduction.

### **Process for Selecting and Approving Mitigation Projects**

Developers seeking a variance or exemption from the stormwater management design and performance standards are encouraged to discuss potential mitigation projects with the Borough early in the development application process. The developer may propose a specific mitigation project that meets the criteria, or may select an appropriate project that meets the criteria from specific projects identified by the municipality.



If the Borough grants a variance or exemption from the stormwater design and performance standards that will be offset by a mitigation project, the Borough shall submit a written report describing the variance or exemption and the required mitigation to the county review agency (Somerset County Planning Board) and to the NJDEP.

### Administrative Requirements

The Borough is required to file an annual report to demonstrate continuing compliance with the permit requirements. In the annual report, the Borough must indicate whether any variances or exemptions from the stormwater management standards have been given. When submitting the annual report as required by the NJPDES permit, the Borough must provide an annual submission of its variances, exemptions, and related mitigation projects to the county review agency and NJDEP. This annual report must include both projects reviewed by the municipality under the Municipal Land Use Law, as well as the municipalities own projects that are unable to fully comply with the design and performance standards. The following information is required for each waiver granted from the performance standards;

1. Impact from noncompliance. Provide a table quantifying what would be required for the project to achieve the standards, the extent to which this value will be achieved on site and the extent to which the value must be mitigated off site.

2. Narrative & supporting information regarding the need for the waiver including the following:

The waiver cannot be due to a condition created by the applicant. If the applicant can comply with the Stormwater Management rules through reduction in the scope of the project, the applicant has created the condition and a waiver cannot be issued. Demonstrate that the need for the waiver is not created by the applicant.

Provide a discussion and supporting documentation of the site conditions peculiar to the subject property that prevent the construction of a stormwater management facility that would achieve full compliance with the design and performance standards. Site conditions may include soil type, the presence of karst geology, acid soils, a high groundwater table, unique conditions that would create and unsafe design, as well as conditions that may provide a detrimental impact to public health, welfare, and safety.



Demonstration that he grant of the requested waiver/exemption would not result in an adverse impact that would not be compensated for by off-site mitigation.

3. Sensitive Receptor. Identify the sensitive receptor(s) related to the performance standard from which a waiver is sought. Demonstrate that the mitigation site contributes to the same sensitive receptor.

4. Design of the Mitigation Project. Provide the design details of the mitigation project. This includes, but is not limited to, drawings, calculations, and other information needed to evaluate the mitigation project.

5. Responsible Party. List the party or parties responsible for the construction and the maintenance of the mitigation project. Documentation must be provided to demonstrate that the responsible party is aware of, has authority to, and accepts the responsibility for construction and maintenance. Under no circumstances shall the responsible party be an individual single family homeowner. Selection of a project location that is under municipal authority avoids the need to obtain authority from a third party for the construction and future maintenance of the project.

6. Maintenance. Include a maintenance plan that addresses the maintenance criteria at NJAC 7:8-5.8. In addition, if the maintenance responsibility is being transferred to the municipality or another entity, the entity responsible for the cost of the maintenance must be identified. The Borough may provide the option for the applicant to convey the mitigation project to the Borough, if the applicant provides for the cost of maintenance in perpetuity.

7. Permits. Obtain any and all necessary local, State or other applicable permits for the mitigation measure or project must be obtained prior to the municipal approval of the project for which mitigation is being provided.

8. Construction. Demonstrate that the construction of the mitigation project coincides with the construction of the proposed project. A certificate of occupancy or final approval by the municipality for the project requiring mitigation cannot be issued until the mitigation project or measures receives final approval. Any mitigation projects proposed by the Borough to offset the stormwater impacts of the Borough's own projects must be completed within 6 months of the completion of the municipal project, in order to remain in compliance with the NJPDES General Permit.





#### **D. RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE INCORPORATION OF REDEVELOPMENT PLANS INTO THE LAND USE PLAN ELEMENT OF THE MASTER PLAN**

The Borough has four (4) redevelopment areas and it is recommended to amend to the Land Use Plan Element of the Master Plan to include the four (4) redevelopment areas. The location of the redevelopment areas is depicted on the attached map and a description of each redevelopment area is as follows:

##### **1. Somerville Station Area & Landfill Redevelopment Area**

The Somerville Landfill and Station area is the most important future redevelopment site in the Borough of Somerville because of its large size, strategic location, long-term underutilization, impact on local quality of life and economic development potential. There is no other site in the Borough that has such potential to generate employment, tax ratable, housing opportunities and parks/open space. The Somerville Landfill and Station area site is an underutilized and largely vacant tract consisting of 115 acres. The majority of the Landfill site is owed by the Borough, with 37 acres owned by NJ Transit and 19 acres privately owned. The site was used primarily as a municipal landfill from 1965 to 1984 and the major remaining use is the NJ Transit Somerville station and parking lot.

The Landfill site abuts the Main Street central business district and is strategically located between the downtown area and the Raritan River Greenway. It is also bordered by established residential neighborhoods in the South Bridge Street corridor to the east and Washington Place to the west. The site has frontage on South Bridge Street, Route 206 and direct access to the NJ Transit Somerville station.

The Somerville Landfill & Station Area Redevelopment Plan adopted in 2007 requires new streets, parks, and other public spaces. It also includes guidelines for pedestrian-friendly, compact development around the existing train station and creates two new residential neighborhoods as well as a regional node of signature office development. Based on 2006 calculations the project when complete will generate an estimated \$9 million in tax revenues, 460 new jobs, a (post tax) payroll of \$20.6 million, and \$88.7 million in annual personal expenditures. During construction this project can be expected to create directly or indirectly up to 2,500 jobs, \$140 million in payroll, and \$113 million in personal expenditures.



## **2. West Main Street Area (Landmark Shopping Center)**

The West Main Street Area (Landmark Shopping Center) site is a large commercial tract assembled as part of a 1970's era urban renewal project that razed several downtown blocks. The area is centrally located in the heart of the Main Street central business district and is bordered by Main Street to the north, Veteran's Memorial Drive to the south, Division Street to the east and South Doughty Avenue to the west.

The West Main Street area has significant potential to support the continued revitalization of the central business district by providing new commercial space, increasing downtown housing, creating employment opportunities and contributing to the municipal tax base. Perhaps most important, the West Main Street Area is critical to transforming the central business district into a vibrant evening destination for shopping, dining and entertainment after 5 PM when most workers have gone home.

The West Main Street Area Redevelopment Plan was adopted in February 2004, amended in December 2004, September, 2007 and recently amended in May, 2010. Future amendments to the Plan may occur. The Redevelopment Plan includes the creation of new retail stores with apartments above that will create a traditional downtown environment, new commercial space to the rear of the site that will bring new businesses into town and through this more customers for existing and new retail establishments, up to 272 new residential units will also spur economic growth.

## **3. Eastern Central Business District Redevelopment Area**

The Eastern Central Business District Redevelopment Area encompasses the easternmost section of the Borough of Somerville's central business district and was designated a Redevelopment Area during 2000. The Redevelopment Area is bordered by Park Avenue and the Somerset County government complex to the north, NJ Transit Raritan Valley Line to the south, Peter's Brook to the east and South Bridge Street to the west. It functions as a transition from the intensive, commercial core of the central business district west of South Bridge Street to the predominately low-density residential neighborhoods to the east. The Redevelopment Area is characterized by neighborhood commercial uses on East Main Street, larger-scale service and industrial uses on Veteran's Memorial Drive and residential uses on Hamilton Street, Mechanic Street and Franklin Street/South Bridge Street. It also has strategic connections to the Peter's Brook Greenway, Somerset County government complex and NJ Transit train station.



The Redevelopment Area is important because of its strategic location, current underutilization and potential to anchor the continued revitalization of the central business district. The area is also different in character from other redevelopment sites in the Borough because it is an existing mixed-use neighborhood with established residential uses. This contributes to a complex planning environment where there is a need to balance the goal of new mixed-use development with protection of existing residential uses and encourage incremental, in-fill growth in conjunction with targeted, large-scale redevelopment. The Eastern Central Business District Redevelopment Area represents a unique opportunity to strengthen an existing neighborhood while providing for new uses that will generate employment, increased tax revenues, market-rate housing opportunities and activity that will support the central business district.

The Eastern Central Business District Redevelopment Plan dated January 23, 2008, provides for two layers of development standards. The first, or base, layer is intended to guide the continued use and development of existing properties in the area under current ownership and development conditions. The second, or overlay, layer is intended to guide major redevelopment projects within the area. The overlay standards will apply only if and when a developer acquires larger contiguous blocks of property that provide adequate space for buildings, off-street parking and other improvements in accordance with the plan. The permitted intensity of development for these areas is higher than under the first layer of development standards.

#### **4. Kirby Avenue**

The Kirby Avenue area includes the former Baker & Taylor warehouse and a number of privately owned properties bounded by Kirby Avenue, Fairview Avenue, Loeser Avenue, South Adamsville Road and the NJ Transit railway tracks. The Borough Council adopted in May 2008 the Kirby Avenue Vision and Redevelopment Plan. The Redevelopment Plan was amended in 2010 to allow for more flexibility. The vision outlined in this plan capitalizes on a myriad of opportunities to achieve complementary goals of community development, “smart growth” and environmental restoration. If properly planned and designed, the redevelopment area has the potential to accomplish many things. The redevelopment of this site will strengthen, invigorate the economic viability of the area; reinforce the neighborhoods vitality; improve pedestrian and automobile circulation; restore the environment of the area; reinforce the regional significance of Somerville; and provide new recreational and open space opportunities for the residents of Somerville.



## **5. General Redevelopment Statement**

It is hoped that redevelopment will occur in the Somerville Landfill and Station Area as outlined in the Redevelopment Plan in the immediate future, but due to the current economic downturn, it is unknown when redevelopment will occur. If necessary, the Redevelopment Plan will be amended to address the changing economic conditions as the ultimate goal of redevelopment is to create a plan that meets the needs of the stakeholders and is economically viable. To that end, activities associated with spurring redevelopment (request for proposals, meetings and negotiations with developers including revisions to the Redevelopment Plan/Redevelopment Agreement -as warranted) are on-going and will continue until a signed executed redevelopment agreement is obtained and construction commences.

## **E. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED MASTER PLAN AMENDMENTS**

The recommended amendments to the master plan are as follows:

1. Adopt the Somerville Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment and Master Plan (2006), as the Recreation Plan Element of the Master Plan;
2. The Somerville Emergency Services Facilities Analysis and Master Plan Report (2004) contains the findings of detailed needs assessment and existing facilities analysis of the Borough's current emergency services facilities, as well as recommendations and suggestions to improve and upgrade the Borough's emergency services readiness and capabilities while containing to encourage Somerville's 140 plus year tradition of volunteerism. The emergency facilities studied in the Plan were the Somerville Police Department, the Hook and Ladder Company No. 1, the West End Hose Company No. 3, Engine Company No. 1, the Lincoln Hose Company No. 4, and the first Aid and Rescue Squad. The Master Plan Report, adopted by the Planning Board in 2004, offers a set of guidelines for a new Emergency Services Complex. The report, combined with the following information, should be adopted as the Community Facilities Plan Element of the Master Plan. Additional information is as follows:



## Schools

Public elementary and secondary education in the Borough is provided by the Somerville Public Schools. The district operates one elementary school for grades K-5, a middle school for grades 6-8 and a high school for grades 9-12. The high school also serves students from Branchburg Township. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the 2010 enrollment data for Somerville public schools was as follows:

**Figure1: Public Schools Enrollment**

School	Grades	Students
Van Derveer	Pre K - 5	846
Somerville Middle School	Middle School 6 - 8	321
Somerville High School	9-12	1,198

Immaculata High School is a private, coeducational, Roman Catholic high school, founded in 1962, and operated within the Roman Catholic Diocese of Metuchen. The school enrolls approximately 850 students. Immaculate Conception School is a Catholic private coeducational day school, founded in 1957, for students in grades Pre- K through 8.

Somerset County provides vocational and technical education for Somerville residents. The Somerset County Vocational and Technical High School, serving grades 9-12, is located in the Regional Center in Bridgewater. Somerville is served by the Raritan Valley Community College, a regional two year college serving Somerset and Hunterdon Counties. The College offers approximately 70 associate degree programs as well as customized and non-credit courses. The campuses located in Branchburg Township, approximately 6 miles west of the Borough. Two major research universities, Rutgers and Princeton, are also located within 20 miles of Somerville.

## Long Term Care Facilities

Somerville is home to one (1) licensed long-term care facility according to New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services.

**Figure 1: Long-Term Care Facilities**

Facility	Address	Type
Cooperative Housing Corporation	62 East High Street	Assisted Living Program



Assisted Living Residence means a facility that is licensed to provide apartment-style housing and congregate dining and to assure that assisted living services are available when needed, to four or more adult persons unrelated to the proprietor. Apartment units offer, at a minimum, one unfurnished room, a private bathroom, a kitchenette, and a lockable door on the unit entrance.

### **Child Care Centers**

There are four (4) licensed child care centers in Somerville according to the NJ Department of Children and Families (as of 6/2/2011). They are listed as follows:

**Figure 3: Licensed Child Care Centers**

Center Name	Address	Licensed Capacity	Ages Served
First Baptist Church Pre-School	132 W High Street	83	2 ½ to 6
Good Shepherd Christian Day Care	300 Union Ave	30	2 ½ to 13
Somerset Valley YMCA/Kiddie Corner	2 Green Street	126	0 to 13
Van Derveer School Before/After School Program	51 Union Ave	93	6 to 13

### **Government Buildings and Public Services**

The Borough of Somerville provides a full range of community facilities for its residents, including administrative services, police, emergency response, and a library. The municipal administration building is located at 25 West End Avenue in a historic mansion which it shares with the Somerville Library. In addition, Somerville serves as the county seat, with many county services having their offices in the Borough. Somerville operates its own police department with its headquarters, constructed in 1978, located at 24 South Bridge Street. In recent years this building has become overcrowded, and consideration has been given to the construction of a new Public Safety complex that would house the police and fire departments and the rescue squad. Fire protection in Somerville is provided by the Somerville Fire Department, which consists of four volunteer fire companies. Engine Company No. 1



on East Main Street, West End Hose Company No. 3 on West High Street, Lincoln Hose Company No. 4 on Warren Street, and Central Hook and Ladder Company on Division Street. Emergency response services are provided by the Somerville First Aid and Rescue Squad located on Park Avenue.

The Borough prepared a Somerville Emergency Services Facilities Analysis and Master Plan Report in 2004 that contains the findings of detailed needs assessment and existing facilities analysis of the Borough's current emergency services facilities. The Master Plan Report offers a set of guidelines for a new Emergency Services Complex. Somerville has the only full-service hospital within the Somerset Regional Center. The Somerville Medical Center, located at 110 Rehill Avenue in eastern Somerville, is a 365-bed medical center that provides a range of outpatient, inpatient and community services. The hospital has expanded numerous times over the years into the surrounding residential neighborhood and has recently completed a major expansion which includes a new emergency room, additional inpatient beds, a cancer center, and a renovated surgical suite with new rooms for outpatient procedures. Additional specialized hospital services are available at St. Peter's Hospital and Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick.

In order to strengthen the image of Somerville as a major service center, the Borough's Community Facilities Plan is generally oriented towards:

- a. The recognition of the Somerset Medical Center and County Complex as a beneficial facilities to Borough residents and the region;
- b. The provisions of new facilities to serve residents in parts of the Borough where there are deficiencies; and
- c. The relocation of certain existing community facilities into parts of the Borough best suited for those particular facilities.

Map #5 of 1990 Master Plan depicts the generalized Community facilities plan.



3. Adopt the following reports as sub-plan elements of the Circulation Plan Element of the Master Plan:

- a. Borough of Somerville Municipal Parking Lots 1,2,4 & 6 Capacity Analysis report, 2010, prepared by Cole and Associates.

The report details the weekday and weekend parking lots usage and recommends allowing a limited amount of residential parking in municipal lots #1 & #2 for new dwellings located within the CBD at a prescribed distance from the parking lots

- b. Borough of Somerville Operations Report (2006)

The Borough of Somerville Operations Report was prepared by Bier Associates and the purpose of the Report was review current on and off-street parking operations and make recommendations to enhance current operation. The Report addresses parking enforcement, meter collection/repairs, parking revenues, parking expenses, parking meter rates, an analysis of a parking system versus parking services and makes recommendations regarding parking system organization.

- c. Borough of Somerville Parking System Formation Study (2008)

The Parking System Formation Study was prepared by Level G Associates, LLC, and performs a financial analysis of the Borough's parking inventory, revenue, net income, enforcement and collections. It also recommends a operating program to consolidate all parking functions, including a implementation phasing plan and an economic analysis of establishing and operating the parking unit.

- d. Regional Center Neighborhood Traffic Calming and Implementation Plan Phase II (2005) Phase I (2003)

The Somerset County *Regional Center Neighborhood Traffic Calming and Implementation Plan, Phase 1 & II* were prepared by The Louis Berger Group, Inc., and the study seeks to improve the quality of life for residents by eliminating cut-through traffic and reducing speeds, thereby improving safety and pedestrian activities in residential neighborhoods, and along several commercial corridors by implementing traffic calming measures. The project was conducted in two phases: Phase 1 - Inventory, Analyze and Prioritize Potential Traffic Calming Locations, and Phase 2 - Develop and Institutionalize a Regional Center Traffic Calming and Implementation Plan. This project establishes the





foundation for a long-term strategy to institutionalize the identification of potential traffic calming locations and the implementation plan for traffic calming measures within the Regional Center area.

- e. Somerset County Regional Center Pedestrian, Bicycle & Greenways Systems Connection Plan, June 2009 by RBA & Louis Berger Group.

In 2008, Somerset County initiated the development of the Regional Center Pedestrian, Bicycle and Greenways Systems Connection Plan with the goal of creating a more walkable and bicycle-friendly Regional Center while improving environmental quality. The Plan establishes a strategic framework to guide policies, programs and actions of the three municipalities that make up the Regional Center, which includes Somerville, Raritan, and portions of Bridgewater. The Plan builds on the many existing projects and studies of the Regional Center Partnership. The Plan proposes a Conceptual Greenways System of roadways and off-road trails that, with improvements for walking and bicycling, connects key public destinations and neighborhoods in the Regional Center. The Plan also includes nine “linkage improvement concepts” to advance the system, focusing on improving bicycling and walking connections to specific sites such as downtowns, shopping centers, transit stations, schools, parks and recreational sites.

- f. Somerville Parks & Recreation Needs Assessment & Master Plan, September, 2006, Environmental Resolutions, Inc.

The purpose of the Somerville Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment and Master Plan is to conduct a broad survey of Somerville residents to determine their park and recreational needs. From the broad survey, a focus group was selected to provide a more in-depth view of their vision for Somerville Parks. The focus group also mapped areas where additional facilities are needed or where there is a need for improvements. The Needs Assessment and Master Plan provides an inventory of existing parkland facilities with the intent of developing a long range plan for improvements. The Somerville Plan will form the basis of a plan for shared use by regional partners and Somerset County Park Commission. Recommendations of the Plan include issues to improve connections and greenway resources along Peter's Brook, Ross Brook and Raritan River and to expand Peter's Brook bank stabilization programs. The Plan discusses the need to connect Somerville pedestrians and cyclists with proposed 206 south, Riverside Drive, and Clarks Woods. And finally, needs for various



facilities at the landfill site are discussed including the need for a community center.

- g. Somerset County Regional Center Route 22 Sustainable Corridor Plan, July 2001, DMJM + Harris.

Somerset County and its many planning partners developed an 11.5 square mile area in the heart of the county. This district was the first multi-municipal Regional Center in the State. The longterm goal is to transform a diverse suburban area into a center with a greater sense of place and a capacity for sustained growth. Somerset County undertook efforts to develop a Route 22 Sustainable Corridor Plan. A “sustainable corridor” is a safe, comfortable, landscaped highway that connects employment and mixed-use centers, and provides multimodal options, without harming traffic capacity. The focus of this study is to redefine Route 22 from a high-speed arterial, which only accommodates motor vehicle traffic, into a boulevard or parkway design, which can accommodate local and through motor vehicle traffic as well as nonmotorized travel modes. The effort results in an improvement concept, in which Route 22 links the communities that form it, while also serving through travelers.

- 4. Amend the Land Use Element of the Master Plan to include the include the four (4) redevelopment areas, as described in Section IV and as depicted on the following map. The map is also the land use plan of the master plan. This map supersedes all land use maps contained in 1990 master plan.
- 5. Amend the Master Plan Circulation Policy statement to include the following statement: “Encourage bicycling and walking throughout the Borough by enhancing existing sidewalks and roadways, and creation of new pedestrian/bicycle paths and linkages”.
- 6. Amendment of the Master Plan Design Goal and Policies to include, as goal, that “all development/redevelopment be sustainable, energy efficient and designed to promote a healthy environment” and the policies include “encourage sustainable green building and development practices through the creation and implementation of universally understood and accepted tools and performance criteria or LEED certified”
- 7. Amend the zoning map to include the Block 74 Lots 16.01, 16.02 & 16.03 in the R-2 zone district.



8. Modify the boundaries of the H- Hospital and CG-County Government Zone in the Master Plan to reflect the zoning boundaries and as depicted on the attached map.
9. Amend the Master Plan to exclude the properties located on the north side of Main Street, east of Grove Street from the CG- County Government zone. The attached map, which is consistent with the Borough's zoning map depicts the revised CG-County Government zone boundaries.
10. Amend the CBD Policy statement #2 to state the following :  
"Discourage one story structures in the CBD. Encourage development on upper floors spaces to prevent building deterioration while still protecting retail and service oriented business activities on the first floor. Consider introduction of residential uses within the CBD in the upper floors".



Figure 1