

PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER
SOMERSET COUNTY INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK
STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT PROCESS
December 2012

1) BACKGROUND

Somerset County and its municipalities have a long history of support for the State Development and Redevelopment Plan and its many benefits. The County Planning Board was appointed by the Board of Chosen Freeholders to serve as the Cross-acceptance Negotiation Entity responsible for working with the County's communities to strengthen plan consistency for the past three rounds of the state plan update process (dating back to the mid-1980s). Through the County Planning Board's involvement, Somerset County and its municipalities have played a pivotal role in shaping the current State Development and Redevelopment Plan (adopted in 2001), and together have succeeded in building lasting support for the State Plan at the county and local levels. As an indication of this support, center designation was achieved in 12 of Somerset County's municipalities, most notably Somerset Regional Center – the first tri-municipal designated regional center in New Jersey.

Originally, the update of "Sustainable Somerset: the Strategic Plan for Somerset County" was intended to embrace and integrate the new State Plan Policy Map associated with the update of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan as its primary geographic framework. However, when the adoption of the draft updated State Development and Redevelopment Plan failed to move forward in 2009, the County Planning Board reconsidered this aspect of the Sustainable Somerset Strategic Plan. This led to the development of a new approach that involved the preparation of a series of infrastructure, community and environmental asset maps that align with the Plan's "three systems" organizational structure (Infrastructure, Communities and Environment). During the development of the County's asset maps, it became apparent that the associated GIS datasets could be used as "screening" tools for identifying and substantiating areas most suitable for economic growth, neighborhood enhancement and natural resource protection.

Through the County's ongoing dialogue and collaboration with the State Office for Planning Advocacy (OPA) over the past 2+ years, significant parallels emerged between the County's GIS-based asset mapping and their use for identifying and characterizing areas of the county suitable for growth and/or protection and the draft Final State Strategic Plan's "criteria-based approach for identifying priority investment areas". Over the past few years, the Somerset County Planning Board has implemented this new approach in coordination with its municipalities, the OPA and other stakeholders, which resulted in the development of the Draft Final County Investment Framework Map in 2012. This approach offers the following advantages:

- The criteria-based system is logical, objective, transparent and replicable. It can be customized to reflect the uniqueness of different counties.
- It promotes efficiency and cost savings by capitalizing on prior land use decisions and infrastructure investments.

- It is comprehensive, sound and integrated. It utilizes a broad spectrum of valuable, up-to-date GIS-based data and assures a broad range of factors affecting land use and infrastructure decisions are considered.
- By allowing counties to take the lead, the process can:
 - Be open, inclusionary and “bottom-up”;
 - Incorporate the most relevant, accurate local information and data available; and
 - Build upon and strengthen long-established county/municipal and county/state relationships, ongoing planning initiatives and priorities, and knowledge of local and regional conditions.
- The new framework will help state, county and local jurisdictions align their regulations, plans, programs and investment decisions.
- It will serve as a guide to property owners, developers and investors regarding the preferred regional and local land use context and priorities for site-specific land use and investment decisions.

2) PURPOSE

This document is intended to provide a record of the various public involvement initiatives that the Somerset County Planning Board used thus far to engage its municipalities, county and regional stakeholders and New Jersey’s professional planning community in the process of developing the County’s Investment Framework, and its alignment with the criteria-based priority investment area concepts in the Draft Final State Strategic Plan (SSP), which was proposed for adoption and released for public review by the State Planning Commission (SPC) on October 9, 2012. It is also intended to serve as an example of a stakeholder involvement process that can be used as a resource by other regional entities undertaking this work.

Somerset County’s Investment Framework evolved organically, through an inventive and collaborative local and regional dialogue, where ideas and concepts were tested by the Somerset County Planning Board to yield a new geographic framework for coordinating land use and investment decisions at all jurisdictional levels. The County Investment Framework reinforces and builds upon previous County and local planning efforts that were aligned with the principles of smart growth embedded in the 2001 State Development and Redevelopment Plan, and represents a new approach for “identifying areas for growth, agriculture, open space conservation and other appropriate designations” as specified by the State Planning Act. The County Investment Framework does not supersede local land use and zoning controls. Rather, it is intended to complement them by guiding public- and private-sector land use and investment decisions to assure outcomes are maximized in terms of benefitting the region and the State, as well as the local community.

The Somerset County Planning Board has a considerable amount of additional work to do before the Sustainable Somerset Strategic Plan, of which the County Investment Framework is a part, is adopted. However, the County Planning Board’s open, inclusionary process has proven to be successful thus far and will be expanded in the months ahead. The County intends to maintain close ties with its municipalities, stakeholders and the public throughout the balance of the Sustainable Somerset Strategic Plan update process, as well as during other upcoming regional planning initiatives that are linked to the County Investment Framework. Additional outreach activities and opportunities for public involvement will be

planned as the completion of the Sustainable Somerset Strategic Plan and other regional planning initiatives unfold.

3) OVERVIEW OF STATE, COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL COORDINATION

The Somerset County Planning Board recognizes that successful state, county and local land use and infrastructure planning is a very collaborative process. The County Planning Board initiated work on the County's infrastructure, environment and community asset maps associated with the update of the Sustainable Somerset Strategic Plan in 2010, in close coordination with the County's municipalities. The map entitled "Sustainable Economic Growth Opportunity Areas" was one of the first asset maps to be created. This map identified the County's commercial corridors; centers identified through the State Planning Process; planned and adopted redevelopment and other areas targeted for growth; composite commercial, office and industrial zoning; parcels where improvement value is less than half of total assessed value; and vacant potentially developable land. These features represent areas where existing economic growth has occurred and where additional economic growth can be accommodated.

The County's Potential Economic Growth Opportunity Areas were then compared with GIS-datasets and maps representing the County's infrastructure, community and environmental assets in terms of presence or absence of the asset features and/or their geographic proximity. The Planning Board's infrastructure asset datasets and maps include passenger and freight rail systems, highways and interchanges, airports, 69 kV electric substations, updated sanitary sewer service areas, water supply purveyor areas, colleges and universities and broadband/fiber-optic coverage. Potential economic growth areas were also compared with community asset maps to determine their proximity to denser residential areas based on the 2010 Census; the County's Community Facilities and Historic Resource datasets; development patterns based on NJDEP's Land Use/land Cover Dataset and the County Planning Board's Municipal Zoning Dataset. Finally, they were compared with maps illustrating the County's environmental assets, including the County's GIS Preserved Land Dataset and various NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) datasets illustrating regulated environmentally sensitive features such as wetlands, habitat and riparian areas, and water resource features such as wellhead protection areas and prime groundwater recharge areas. The GIS datasets that were developed and are managed by the County Planning Board and that were utilized in the development of the County Investment Framework Map were vetted for accuracy with municipal planners and other stakeholders to ensure the best available information was utilized.

This work resulted in the series of GIS datasets that evolved into the "screening" criteria used by the County for identifying and substantiating areas suitable for economic growth, neighborhood enhancement and natural resource protection at a regional level, and which form the basis of the investment area categories illustrated on the County Investment Framework Map.

During the time the County Planning Board was undertaking the above work in coordination with its municipalities, the direction of State Planning changed significantly. The State Planning Commission (SPC) and its staff were relocated from the Department of Community Affairs to the Department of State under the direction of the Lt. Governor, and are now situated within the newly formed Business Action Center. Shortly thereafter, the new Office for Planning Advocacy (OPA) commenced work on a new "State Strategic Plan".

During this time, OPA expressed interest in the County Planning Board's strategic plan update work, and the information, maps and data that were vetted with the County's municipalities were also shared with the OPA. Somerset County Planning staff participated in OPA's work group meetings and other venues through which input into the new state planning process was provided, leading up to the release of the Final Draft State Strategic Plan in October 2011, re-release in July 2012 and refined version released on October 9, 2012. Staff also reviewed and commented on the Advanced Rule Notice released by the State in early 2012.

The October 2012 version of the SSP was the topic of discussion at the October 13, 2012 Meeting of the State Planning Commission, at which it decided to delay adoption of the SSP in order to add guidance to the Plan on hazard mitigation and recovery. The Somerset County Planning Board continues to support the expeditious adoption of the refined SSP by the State Planning Commission.

The State's criteria-based priority investment area framework that emerged is substantially consistent with the approach Somerset County used to develop its County Investment Framework. The County and State initiatives are very similar and mutually supportive, as well as supported by Somerset County's municipalities, the Somerset County Business Partnership and other stakeholders. A decision was reached by the County Planning Board in the spring of 2012 to fully align its work with the criteria-based priority investment area concepts contained in the SSP, which led to the completion of the *Draft Final County Investment Framework*, which was endorsed via resolution by the Somerset County Planning Board at its October 16, 2012 meeting.

The SSP calls for phasing-out the use of the State Plan Policy Map, and substituting it with the SSP's new criteria-based priority investment area framework system for identifying areas where growth, limited growth and open space and agriculture preservation and protection are preferred. The OPA is developing an on-line mapping tool based on this system for use by the general public.

During the spring and summer of 2012, Somerset County met with many other stakeholders to share information about, and get feedback on the County's draft Investment Framework. These included representatives from New Jersey Future, the NJ County Planners Association, planning officials from Morris, Monmouth and Mercer Counties, the State Agricultural Development Commission, the State Green Acres Program, the Somerset County Business Partnership and its CEDS Governing Committee, the Somerset County Park Commission, the County Agricultural Development Board, the NJ Highlands Council, the NJ Conservation Foundation, and others.

4) SUPPORT FOR OTHER REGIONAL PLANNING INITIATIVES

The development of the County's Investment Framework builds upon and supports several ongoing and new planning initiatives that the County Planning Board oversees or is directly involved in, including its inventory and study of redevelopment in Somerset County, the County Agricultural Development Plan and the County Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan. Additional major county planning initiatives that are directly linked to the County's Priority Investment Area Framework initiative are described below:

- a. Somerset County Economic Development Strategy: The Somerset County Business Partnership was awarded a U.S. EDA Grant in 2011 to undertake the preparation of a Comprehensive Economic

Development Strategy for Somerset County. It became apparent early-on that the County Investment Framework would be of great value to the CEDS process by providing a geographic framework for the identification of projects, programs and initiatives that will generate job growth and public sector investment, which is one of the primary outcomes of the CEDS Process. The identification of projects, programs and initiatives was performed by several CEDS Sub-committees during the fall of 2012. The County Planning Board has a direct role in the CEDS Energy, Infrastructure and Agricultural Development Sub-committees and is represented on the CEDS Governing Committee. The draft CEDS Plan was released for review and comment in October 2012 and will be considered for adoption as an element of the County Strategic Plan by the Somerset County Planning Board in early 2013.

- b. NJTPA-funded “Access and Mobility Improvements to Support Priority Investment in Somerset County”: The study, which commenced in the spring of 2012, builds on the County’s Investment Framework. It utilizes the Priority Growth Investment Areas that were identified through this process as the starting point for selecting the 6 areas that will receive land use and transportation analyses and recommendations that will support economic growth as part of the NJTPA-funded study.
- c. U.S. HUD-funded North Jersey Sustainable Communities Initiative: This initiative applies to the 13 NJTPA Counties of which Somerset is a part, plus the cities of Elizabeth, Newark, New Brunswick, Jersey City and Paterson. A Project Team led by the Bloustein School at Rutgers University, which includes the NJTPA, NJ Transit, NJ OPA, HCDNNJ, the Municipal Land Use Center at TCNJ, NJ Future, NJRC, PlanSmart NJ and Regional Plan Association are carrying out the project. This initiative, which will be fully underway in 2013, is being closely coordinated with the SSP. It supports the identification of Priority Growth Investment Areas and the GIS-based mapping of infrastructure and other “asset” features region-wide. Participation in this collaboration affords the County access to associated “Local Capacity Grants”, through which the County Planning Board will perform more detailed analyses of Somerset County’s Priority Growth Investment Areas, their relationships to the “Regional Innovation Clusters” described in the SSP, and develop implementation strategies.

5) COUNTY STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

The following is an outline of the major outreach activities implemented by the County Planning Board involving municipal officials and planners and other stakeholders to develop the ***Draft Final County Investment Framework***:

November 2011 through January 2012: County Planning staff invited a group of representative planners including municipal staff and consultant planners and planners from regional planning organizations and the Office of Planning Advocacy to participate in a peer review group. The process, method and draft criteria, as well as preliminary results, were submitted to the peer review group at four (4) different intervals early on in the process of developing the County Investment Framework.

November 28, 2012 Municipal Planning Chairs’ Forum: The first in the series, this meeting was held for all municipalities simultaneously, at 7:45 AM in the First Floor Conference Room at the County’s 40 North Bridge

Street office facility. It focused on gaining municipal feedback on the proposed screening criteria for use in identifying Priority Growth Investment Areas (PGIAs). The screening criteria were selected based on consistency with the proposed “Garden State Values” identified in the 2011 Final Draft State Strategic Plan (SSP) and draft Sustainable Somerset Vision, Guiding Principles and Planning Objectives. The use of the SSP’s Core Criteria for identifying initial PGIAs, and two levels of criteria – 1) Essential Criteria (all must be met) and 2) Supplemental Criteria (half must be met) for identifying “additional” PGIAs was discussed. Municipal endorsement as a requirement for PGIA designation was broadly supported at this meeting.

December 2011 Municipal Sub-area Meetings: The criteria-based approach developed by the County Planning Board with input from the Peer Review Group and municipalities was applied by three teams comprised of County Planning Board Staff. The results were compiled, documented and mapped, and presented to municipal planners in small working groups. The 12-4-11 meeting was comprised of planning representatives from Somerset’s northern municipalities, the 12-5-11 meeting involved central- Somerset municipalities, and the 12-6-11 meeting involved southern- Somerset municipalities. These meetings were held in the Engineering Conference Room, Somerset County Administration Building, 20 Grove Street, Somerville. Each municipality was provided with maps illustrating the preliminary Priority Growth Investment Areas (PGIAs) and Local Priority Areas (LPAs) identified by staff, and a series of resource maps illustrating existing residential development patterns, infrastructure assets, environmentally sensitive areas, preserved lands and municipal zoning. In addition, tables in Excel format that summarized each PGIA and LPA in terms of consistency with the draft screening criteria, a FAQ document and document describing the datasets and methodology used were distributed to attendees.

January 2012 Request for Municipal Support: The PGIA maps and documentation provided at the Sub-area meetings were revised based on feedback provided by municipal planners at the meetings. Electronic copies were distributed via e-mail for additional feedback along with requests for written municipal support of the PGIAs and LPAs identified thus far. Eleven (11) municipalities have submitted written support thus far. The results were presented to the Somerset County Planning Board’s (SCPB) Master Plan Committee and the full SCPB at their regularly scheduled February 21, 2012 Meetings.

February 6, 2012 Municipal Planning Chair’s Forum: Staff defined and applied a parcel-based GIS method for delineating boundaries for each of the PGIAs and LPAs to create maps and associated documentation which was vetted at this meeting. As follow-up to this meeting, Municipal Planners were provided electronic copies of the documents distributed at the meeting, which were first refined to reflect the feedback that was provided. Staff met one-on-one with Hillsborough Township planners and officials and worked with Branchburg Township’s planning consultant to make boundary refinements.

February 7, 2012 Morris County Economic Development Authority Meeting: A presentation about the County Investment Framework initiative was given at this meeting, which included representatives from the Morris County Board of Chosen Freeholders.

February 24, February 28, and March 14, 2012 CEDS Visioning Meetings: A countywide map illustrating the draft County Investment Framework and a FAQ document were presented by County Planning Staff at each of the three Visioning Meetings held for members of the business community and local officials by the Somerset

County Business Partnership as part of the development of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for Somerset County.

March 7, 2012 NJCPA Priority Investment Area Special Committee Meeting: Somerset County Planning Staff participated in a special committee of the NJ County Planners Association to share Somerset's experiences piloting the identification of PGIAs and LPAs with its municipalities and discuss recommended refinements to the OPA's Advance Notice of Rules (ANR). As a result of this meeting, NJCPA and Somerset County developed and submitted formal written comments on the ANR to the OPA, which were reviewed by with the SCPB's Master Plan Committee and acted on by the SCPB at its regularly scheduled 3-20-12 Meeting.

March 16, 2012 NJ County Planners Association Meeting: A presentation was given at this meeting comprising an overview of the process, methods and preliminary results of the County's Investment Framework Initiative, with an emphasis on how other counties can accomplish this work as well.

March 19, 2012 Priority Investment Area Framework Meeting with OPA: Planning Staff met in Trenton with the Assistant Director of the Office for Planning Advocacy to share the results of the County's work thus far, and discuss the ANR and how it differs from the County's process.

March 20, 2012 SCPB Meeting: The SCPB endorsed the submission of formal written comments on the Final Draft State Strategic Plan to the OPA. These comments focused on the role of counties in defining priority investment area frameworks using an objective, criteria-based, bottom-up process involving municipalities and stakeholders consistent with the approach taken thus far by the County Planning Board. (County Planning Staff also submitted oral testimony at three public hearings held on the Draft State Strategic Plan held on 2-23-12, 2-27-12 and 3-1-12. It is important to note that routine updates on the status of the County Investment framework initiative are provided to the SCPB at each of its regularly scheduled monthly meetings.

April 9, 2012 NJTPA Regional Transportation Advisory Committee Meeting: A presentation was given at this meeting comprising an overview of the process, methods and preliminary results of the County's Investment Framework Initiative, with an emphasis of the identification of Priority Growth Areas (PGIAs) and the use of the Investment Framework and to coordinate infrastructure investments in PGIAs which are targeted for growth.

April 17, 2012 SCPB- Master Plan Committee Meeting and Planning Board Meeting: The method, criteria and process for identifying PPIAs were discussed at this meeting and the draft PPIA map was presented and discussed. Refinements to these documents were made by staff pursuant to these meetings, and shared via e-mail with officials in the NJ Office for Planning Advocacy for initial feedback.

April 18, 2012 Meeting with County Park Commission: This meeting focused on the process, method and datasets to be used for identifying Priority Preservation Investment Areas (PPIAs) countywide. A map illustrating potential PPIAs was presented. Feedback was provided by the Somerset County Park Commission that was used by SCPB staff to make further refinements to the PPIA criteria and mapping method. A number of policy questions were raised, which were forwarded to the Office of Planning Advocacy.

April 23, 2012 Municipal Planning Chair's Forum: The draft map illustrating the proposed PPIAs, map illustrating the Core PPIA Criteria, Map, PPIA methodology and updated FAQ document were presented to municipal planners at this meeting. As follow-up to the meeting, copies of the maps and associated documents were shared electronically via e-mail with municipal planners, who were also invited to submit additional comments and questions, for use in refining the PPIA delineation process.

April 26, 2012 Rutgers University Symposium on Planning Healthy, Sustainable Communities: Planning professionals from throughout the state attended the session on the State Strategic Plan. The Somerset County Planning Board was represented on this panel. A presentation was given that provided an overview of the process, methods and preliminary results of the County Investment Framework initiative and its consistency with the concepts in the SSP.

May 17, 2012 State Agency PPIA Policy Meeting: As a result of the feedback received from the Park Commission, municipalities and other stakeholders, OPA facilitated a meeting with representatives from the State Agricultural Development Commission and NJDEP Green Acres Program representatives, along with representatives from the County Planning Board, Park Commission, Cultural and Heritage Commission and Agricultural Development Board. Outstanding policy and technical issues associated with identifying PPIAs were addressed at this meeting.

June 12, 2012 Meeting with NJCF: Somerset County Planning Staff met with Michele Beyers, Director of the NJ Conservation Foundation (NJCF) and former State Planning Commission Member regarding the County's Priority Investment Area Framework and to obtain her feedback on the PPIA aspects of this work. The development of a standardized, GIS statewide preserved land dataset that the NJCF is engaging in and issues complicating the development of a comprehensive, standardized GIS inventory of Conservation Easements were also discussed.

June 13, 2012 NJ Future Meeting: A presentation about the County's Investment Framework Initiative was given to a group of NJ Future Members which described the process, method and preliminary results. This was an opportunity for representatives of major non-profit environmental, housing and other major special interest groups throughout the state to learn about the County's work and ask specific questions.

June 18, 2012 Municipal Planning Chair's Forum: This Planning Chair's Forum focused on the results of the County's draft Priority Investment and Policy Framework, which merges the Planning Board's work identifying Priority Growth and Priority Preservation Areas and shows remaining lands as either "Alternate Growth" or "Limited Growth" Investment Areas as defined in the State's Advance Notice of Rules. How this framework is being used to coordinate other regional planning projects was also discussed.

June 25, 26, 28, 2012 Municipal Sub-area Meetings: This round of sub-area working meetings with groups of municipal officials and planners organized by the north, central and south county regions focused on the screening process, method and draft results for identifying Priority Preservation Investment Areas. Tables and maps were distributed to facilitate the identification of "additional" PPIAs. In the weeks following the sub-area meetings, four municipalities submitted documentation substantiating additional PPIAs for inclusion on

the County Investment Framework Map, which was used to enhance the County Planning Board's GIS Preserved Farms and Preserved Open Space Datasets, and integrated into the PPIA mapping.

August 9, 2012 Meeting with Governor Christie's Policy Advisor: Staff met with one of the Governor's Policy Advisors at the State House in Trenton to share information about the County's Investment Framework initiative. At this meeting, the County Planning Board concurred with a request from State officials to include information about Somerset County's Investment Framework initiative in the refined State Strategic Plan.

August 24, 2012 Meeting with NJ Highlands Council Representatives: Several officials and staff from the NJ Highlands Council met with County Planning Staff to learn about the process, GIS datasets and screening criteria, method and draft results of the County Investment Framework Initiative and how it interfaces with the Highlands Regional Master Plan.

September 9, 2012 SCPB Master Plan Committee Meeting and September 18, 2012 SCPB Meeting: Both the Master Plan Committee and full Board authorized the submission of projects, programs and initiatives to the Somerset County Business Partnership for inclusion in Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs). They also authorized the submission of the Draft Final County Investment Framework Map and FAQ document to the Somerset County Business Partnership for use by the project management team in scoring and ranking the recommended projects, programs and initiatives that were submitted by the all of the CEDs Sub-Committees and members of the business community as part of the CEDs process.

September 27, 2012 NJTPA Local Government Capacity Grant Program Workshop: A presentation was given by the County Planning Director at this meeting, which focused on the strategies Somerset County used to engage its municipalities in the development of the County Investment Framework.

October 1, 2012 Municipal Planning Chairs Forum: The draft final documents associated with the County Investment Framework were presented. The use of the draft Final County Investment Framework as the basis for upcoming County Planning initiatives as well as the follow-up work needed to further characterize and assess the repositioning and market potential of the County's PGIAs was also discussed.

October 10, 2012 Somerset County Open Space Advisory Council Meeting: A presentation of the Draft Final County Investment Framework, which emphasized the screening criteria and method used for identifying Priority Preservation Areas (PPIAs), was given by County Planning Staff.

October 15, 2012 Somerset Regional Center 2012 Summit: A presentation describing the benefits of designating the Regional Center as a Priority Growth Investment Area was given by the Director of County Planning.

October 16, 2012 Somerset County Planning Board Meeting: The Board adopted a resolution authorizing the County Planning Board to utilize the Draft Final County Investment Framework as the basis of the Sustainable Somerset Strategic Plan update, as well as other upcoming county planning initiatives.

October 2012 County Investment Framework Documents Posted on County Website: The Draft Final Somerset County Investment Framework Map, various maps illustrating the screening criteria, tables and

documents were posted on the County Planning Board website in early October 2012. County and Municipal officials and planners were informed of the status of the County's Investment Framework Initiative via memorandums distributed in September and October 2012 and invited to review and submit comment on the documents that have been posted on the website.

October 30, 2012 Central Jersey Transportation Forum: An overview of the County's Investment Framework initiative was presented by the Director of County Planning at this event.

December 3, 2012 Meeting with NJ Future Staff: Information about the County Investment Framework was provided to NJ Future for inclusion in an NJ Future electronic newsletter article.

6) NEXT STEPS

- a. The County Planning Board will determine if any refinements to the County Investment Framework and associated documents are warranted pending the adoption of the Final State Strategic Plan and associated state planning rule amendments.
- b. The County Planning Board will continue to work with municipalities and stakeholders to make additional refinements to the County Investment Framework to reflect new information and planning initiatives that emerge between now and the time when the SCPB adopts the County Investment Framework.
- c. Other aspects of the updated Sustainable Somerset Strategic Plan will be completed in the coming months.
- d. The SCPB will identify and implement a strategy for adopting the Priority Investment Framework and other aspects of the County's Strategic Plan in consultation with the Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders.
- e. After the State Strategic Plan is adopted by the State Planning Commission and the County Investment Framework is adopted by the Somerset County Planning Board, the Somerset County Investment Framework will be submitted to the NJ State Planning Commission for designation, thereby making Somerset County and its municipalities eligible for plan implementation funding and support available through the various state agencies.
- f. A process for ongoing site-specific amendments and for routine comprehensive updates of the County Investment Framework will be identified, so that new local planning initiatives that are consistent with the State Strategic Plan and Sustainable Somerset Strategic Plan can be readily integrated and supported.
- g. Ongoing updates of the County Planning Board's GIS datasets used as screening criteria and for creating the County Investment Framework map will continue.
- h. Coordination with adjoining municipalities and counties will be pursued as surrounding counties proceed forward with the process of developing county investment frameworks.
- i. Once the State Agency Strategic Plans are released to the public, they will be reviewed by County Planning Staff for resources and opportunities that are being made available for implementing the County Investment Framework at the regional and local levels.
- j. Additional information will be pursued for the County's Priority Investment areas. Analyses that determine baseline growth potential, as well as future growth based on alternative land use scenarios will be undertaken. Assessments of the existing built and natural environments including facilities,

infrastructure and environmental resources will also be performed, and capacity issues and market conditions will be examined.

- k. The County Planning Board will continue to share information about its County Investment Framework initiative with interested jurisdictions, agencies, individuals and groups through presentations, the Planning Board's website and other venues.

For more information, please visit the Somerset County Planning Board website:

<http://www.co.somerset.nj.us/planweb/sustainable/index.htm>

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