



2017 ANNUAL ACHIEVEMENTS REPORT

MAKING VIBRANT CONNECTIONS



THE
**REGIONAL
CENTER**

BRIDGEWATER • RARITAN • SOMERVILLE

A partnership for a better tomorrow

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

As the Regional Center Partnership embarked on its third decade in 2017, significant focus was placed on planning for the future. With major focus throughout the year on the development of the Regional Center Strategic Master Plan Update, staff worked with Maser Consulting, the Steering Advisory Committee, and subcommittees from the three municipalities to develop the plan, maps, and supporting materials.



Troy Fischer

The many hours of work have resulted in a plan with a new vision that will set the direction of the Regional Center for the next five years.

The remaining initiatives in 2017 will show great progress and great promise. A number of the organization's activities are chronicled in this Annual Report as are many of the accomplishments and projects begun and completed in the three municipalities.

As successful as 2017 was, we are looking forward with anticipation of great things to come in the Regional Center.

A YEAR OF PROGRESS IN 2017



Chimney Rock Crossing East, Bridgewater



Landfill Green Seam, Somerville



Hampton Inn, Bridgewater



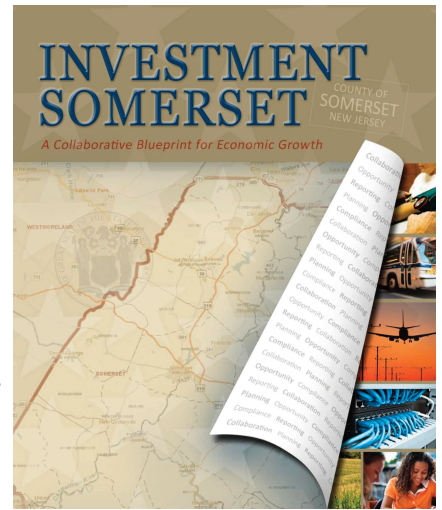
Quick Chek, Raritan



South of Main, Somerville

SUPPORTING PRIORITY INVESTMENT IN SOMERSET COUNTY

The Supporting Priority Investment in Somerset County initiative was a multi-year, multi-phase effort to advance and implement the County Investment Framework (CIF) and the Somerset County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The initiative supports opportunities for local and regional smart growth, preservation, economic revitalization, and resiliency planning initiatives. The Phase I study was funded by a grant from Together New Jersey and Phases II and III were funded by grants from the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA).



Phase I

The Phase I Study, published in April 2015, developed data resources and measures of need and performance to support the analysis and formulation of development and redevelopment scenarios for all of the Priority Growth Investment Areas (PGIAs) identified in the CIF. The Phase I data resources were subsequently utilized to support and inform the planning analysis in both the Phase II and Phase III studies.

Phase II

The Phase II Study was published in July 2015 and was a collaborative process to understand and address local needs, goals, and visions for growth that supports redevelopment opportunities and encourages investment and job creation. The Phase II Study focused on seven PGIAs for detailed analysis and development of the framework plans.

Phase III

The Phase III Study was finalized in June, 2017, and developed recommendations and framework plans for seventeen PGIAs including the Regional Center. A community-based planning process was used to engage each of the County's municipal partners. Regional Center focus areas that were analyzed included the Route 202/NJ Transit Spur area in Bridgewater, the Raritan Mall Shopping Center/downtown Raritan Borough, and downtown Somerville.

To see all the reports visit <https://www.co.somerset.nj.us/government/public-works/planning/master-plan/thriving-communities>.

REGIONAL CENTER ALIGNS WITH HEALTHIER SOMERSET

The Regional Center Partnership agreed to support the efforts of Healthier Somerset, a coalition created to improve the health and well-being of everyone who lives and works in Somerset County. Healthier Somerset members represent public,



private, and non-profit entities and organizations with a common goal to engage residents and employees in Somerset County in active participation in good health habits; increase access to choices that promote healthy lifestyles; and promote policy changes that improve health, including physical, mental and emotional health and economic well-being.

Healthier Somerset has had an integral role in preparing the annual Somerset County Community Health Plan (CHIP) and Somerset County Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA). Additionally they have developed a three-year strategy to combat obesity; mental health and addictions; chronic diseases; and barriers to health and wellness resources.

Healthier Somerset administers two grant programs for municipalities that have adopted a complete streets policy. Somerville has used grants to purchase and locate bike racks at strategic locations. Bridgewater, also a recipient of a grant, will use the grant funding for a bike repair station and bike racks at Chimney Rock Park.

For information visit Healthier Somerset at <http://healthiersomerset.org>.

RAIN BARREL REBATE PROGRAM SUCCESS CONTINUES

The Regional Center Partnership and the New Jersey Water Supply Authority agreed to continue the very successful Rain Barrel Rebate Program for another year. Rebates of up to \$200 are available to residents of Bridgewater, Raritan, and Somerville when rain barrels are installed at residences. There is a limit of two rebates per address and the rain barrels must be operational and maintained in good faith for at least two years.



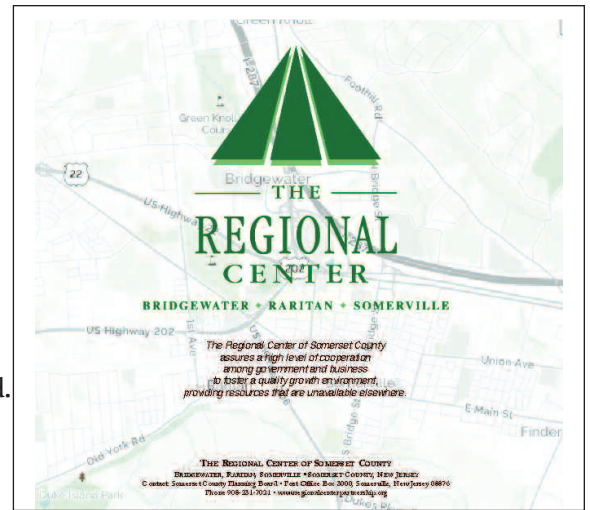
Complete information may be found at www.regionalcenterpartnership.org.

THE REGIONAL CENTER PARTNERSHIP COMPREHENSIVE MARKETING BROCHURE AVAILABLE

The Regional Center Partnership, continuing efforts to communicate the goals, programs, and activities of the organization, commissioned the development of a Comprehensive Marketing Brochure. The brochure captures the best that the Regional Center has to offer in terms of quality of life amenities that are detailed in the previously prepared marketing brochures.

Regional Center brochures including *Shopping, Retail & Service; Business & Employment; Amenities; and Recreation & Fitness Opportunities* have also been updated.

All materials are available online at www.regionalcenterpartnership.org or by calling 908-231-7021.



MAJOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE REGIONAL CENTER IN 2017

A number of development projects in the Regional Center were initiated and/or completed in 2017.

Cobalt Apartments, Veterans Memorial Drive, Somerville
Davenport Street Apartments, Davenport Street, Somerville
The Echelon, Elizabeth Street, Raritan
South of Main, South Bridge Street, Somerville
6 Doughty Avenue, Somerville
Hampton Inn & Suites, Route 22, Bridgewater
Chimney Rock Crossing, Route 22, Bridgewater
Raritan Valley Professional Center, Easton Turnpike (Route 28), Raritan

AC Marriott Hotel, Somerset Corporate Center, Bridgewater
Lifetime Fitness, Somerset Corporate Center, Bridgewater
Hunterdon Healthcare, Route 22, Bridgewater
Third Street Transit Oriented Development, Raritan
QuickChek, Somerville Circle, Raritan
Fortitude Fitness, West End Avenue, Raritan
Green Seam Park, Landfill Site, Route 206, Somerville
Wawa, Union Avenue (Route 28), Bridgewater



Chimney Rock Crossing West

INTER-AGENCY COOPERATION RESULTS IN VETERANS PARK

Veterans Park on West Somerset Street in Raritan Borough was officially dedicated in early September thanks to the effort of the Somerset County Freeholders, Somerset County Park Commission, Raritan Borough, and local veterans organizations including the Basilone Parade Committee.

The park is adjacent to the statue of World War II hero John Basilone and consists of a semi-circle of nine flags representing the United States, New Jersey, Somerset County, and the branches of the service. Three monuments recognize veterans from Raritan Borough and a plaque memorializes borough citizens killed in action.



TOOLKIT SUPPORTS THE RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT OF TALENT

Somerset County agencies including Tourism, the Business Partnership, the Regional Center Partnership, Raritan Valley Community College, the Park Commission, the Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board, and representatives of the private sector combined their efforts to produce the Somerset County Employer Toolkit. The end product serves as a tool to support employee attraction and retention efforts in the County.

The Toolkit is a package of materials supporting efforts to attract and retain a talented workforce and address the universal competitiveness challenge. The content includes information that is important to prospective employees and visitors.



Cobalt Apartments
Somerville

MUNICIPAL UPDATES

BRIDGEWATER

The 85-unit Sunrise Bridgewater assisted living facility on Route 22 west of Country Club Road received approval.

The Delany at Bridgewater senior housing project on Frontier Road received approval and will include independent and assisted living and memory-care units.

RARITAN

The Raritan Borough web site was redesigned to be more informative and easily navigated.

A proposal was submitted to construct a 9,710 square foot retail building on Route 202 north between 2nd Avenue and Anderson Street.

The Borough constructed a commuter parking lot with 20 spaces to help alleviate transit parking issues.

The Washington School building on First Avenue was demolished in preparation for future municipal use of the site.

A cooperative effort among Somerset County, Somerset County Business Partnership, and Raritan Valley Community College satisfied LabCorp's request for workforce training for current and future employees.

Raritan received a North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority grant to enhance pedestrian safety and wayfinding with emphasis on pedestrian access to help link the Raritan Train Station to downtown, the Raritan River, and Duke Farms.

SOMERVILLE

The Somerville Borough web site was redesigned to be more informative and easily navigated.

Somerville approved the site plan to develop the former Litgo tract on the southeastern portion of the Borough with 179 rental units.

The Station House residential project on Veterans Memorial Drive East received municipal approval.

Somerville received a Green Acres grant in the amount of \$143,000 for improvement at Southside (Chambres) Park.

Somerville was honored by the County Planning Board for their resiliency ordinance. The ordinance requires development projects to include an emergency plan demonstrating that the building will provide up to six days of shelter for residents during a disaster.

PUBLIC MURALS & PLACEMAKING

Larissa Danowitz of the Mural Arts Program of Philadelphia presented the concept of public art and creative placemaking to the Regional Center Partnership. Ms. Danowitz expressed her desire to engage businesses, schools, and members of the community on public art projects.

She described a number of her colorful public mural projects in Philadelphia and other locations, noting that she would like to help use public art to bring a community together, help support tourism and the local economy, and help attract people to downtown areas.



Ms. Danowitz explained how using certain cloth materials enable people of all ages and abilities to create a public mural. She emphasized the importance of engaging the community to help determine the type of mural a community would want.

She described opportunities that exist in the Regional Center and how public art could significantly contribute toward helping make the Regional Center and the downtowns an attractive cultural destination in Somerset County.

STEEPLECHASE CANCER CENTER CELEBRATES 10TH ANNIVERSARY

The Steeplechase Cancer Center, located at 30 Rehill Avenue in Somerville, celebrated its 10th anniversary.

An affiliate of RWJ Barnabas Health, the Center provides comprehensive cancer services within a calm, compassionate, patient-focused environment.



SOMERSET COUNTY REGIONAL CENTER 20 Years of Cooperating Communities

Bridgewater Mayor Dan Hayes
Raritan Mayor Chuck McMullen
Somerville Mayor Brian Gallagher

In May of 1996, in accordance with the State Planning Rules, N.J.A.C. 17:32-8.6(a), the New Jersey State Planning Commission designated the Boroughs of Somerville and Raritan and an adjacent portion of Bridgewater Township as an official Regional Center, the first multi-jurisdictional center in the state. The approval defined a then 14.2 square mile district (now 12.6 sq. miles) to serve as the focal point for enhanced planning and expedited public review to benefit a population of 25,000 residents and 40,000 workers. The Center is bisected by U.S. Route 206, U.S. Route 202, U.S. Route 22, NJ State Route 28, and I-287.

The Regional Center designation encourages achievement of policy objectives in areas of growth; enables development and redevelopment by providing priority funding for assistance in existing downtown business districts, and with new residential and non-residential infill opportunities; fosters establishment of more effective mass transportation linkages and provides priority funding for key intersection and corridor improvements; makes available funding for linear open space concepts, planning and design of recreation facilities, passive open space acquisitions, and new and existing historic preservation and revitalization programs.

To implement the plan for the future of the Regional Center, a non-profit public/private partnership was formed. For the past twenty years this group has brought together the vision and planning of three communities, Somerset County, various non-profit agencies, and the private sector, working collaboratively to guide development and investment.

The Regional Center has become the catalyst for cooperation and progress while influencing effective and sustainable development throughout the County. What has been accomplished in twenty years is a testament to the conviction of the principals in the three communities and the guidance of the County.

The Partnership provides leadership to the municipalities to shape planning policies that ensure that the Somerset County Regional Center continues to be a premier location to live, work, learn, and play. Technical support and assistance is provided by Somerset County.

Through broad-based public participation and consensus building, the Regional Center has created an environment where sharing certain common threads is natural to the communities. Coordinated planning saves the municipalities money and facilitates the process of being a good neighbor by minimizing the impact of development on neighbors. The Partnership provides a forum through which interaction, sharing ideas and concerns, and working together to address common issues allows the towns to address common issues.

Over the past two decades the Regional Center Partnership has been successful in securing funding to move forward on important regional initiatives with close to \$500,000 in planning grant money and over \$130,000,000 in construction funds allocated. The Regional Center Partnership has also administered the Challenge Grant program to help advance local projects and initiatives that resolve regional problems.

Among the programs that are the result of regional cooperation are:

Somerset Street Streetscape Linkage Project facilitates safe pedestrian passage between Somerville and Raritan while extending the Somerville Streetscape design to the western border.

The **Regional Center Neighborhood Traffic Calming and Implementation Plan Project** resulting in improvement to the quality of life by eliminating cut-through traffic and reducing speeds in neighborhoods and along commercial corridors.



The Somerset County Investment Framework, a series of GIS-based infrastructure, community, and environmental asset maps that identify areas most suitable for growth and preservation in Somerset County. The Regional Center is one of 24 “Priority Growth Investment Areas.”

The Somerset County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), A Collaborative Blueprint for Economic Success, identifies and prioritizes economic development strategies to further job creation and private-sector investment.

The Pedestrian, Bicycle & Greenways Systems Connection Plan, A North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority grant was utilized to establish a pedestrian, bicycle, and greenway transportation plan within the Regional Center and beyond.

Pedestrian Overpasses – A pedestrian overpass was constructed to provide a safe pedestrian and bicycle link between Somerville and the Bridgewater Commons Mall. The success of this project led to a similar overpass over Route 202/206 connecting the Peter’s Brook Greenway with Clark’s Woods and the Somerset Shopping Center.

The Green Design Toolkit was prepared for municipal engineers and code officials to aid in the review of projects participating in the Somerset County High Performance Public Buildings Program.

NJ Water Supply Authority Open Space & Development Study created a GIS-based approach for identifying undeveloped and underutilized nonresidential sites near water resources to determine appropriateness for economic development, open space preservation, or a combination of both.

Route 202 Corridor Assessment & Multi-Modal Mobility Plan provides a comprehensive analysis of the Route 202 corridor between the Flemington and Somerville Circles.

The Route 22 Sustainable Corridor Plan was developed as a direct result of the Regional Center 1999 “Vision Initiative” that called for a safe, landscaped highway connecting employment and mixed-use centers and providing multi-modal options and connections between neighborhoods, making Route 22 in Somerset County a connector rather than a divide.

The Somerville West End Redevelopment involved the replacement of 81,526 square feet of retail space with new specialty retail and residential development in the central business district that features the recently completed five-story building and a planned L-shaped five-story building.

The Frank “Nap” Torpey Athletic Complex is located along the north side of the Raritan River in Bridgewater and consists of one lighted grass baseball field, one lighted grass softball field, two soccer fields and one lighted state-of-the-art synthetic turf multi-purpose athletic field.

The Chimney Rock Interchange at Route 22 improves safety on the heavily traveled US Highway 22 by moving traffic more efficiently along the Route 22 corridor; the interchange also opens up economic development opportunities in the area.

The Raritan River Greenway extends through the Regional Center and is being developed as a paved bikeway with segments completed in Duke Island Park and along the river in Bridgewater, Somerville and Raritan. The plan will include a series of nodes and linked trails with parking, convenient access, and information stations.

Challenge Grants have been awarded annually to the 3 municipalities and have included funding for:

Wayfinding System	Transit Village Study
Sewer Camera Project	Natural Resource Inventory
Stream Corridor Protection	Neighborhood Plan
Par Course Fitness System	Greenway Plans
Sanitary Sewer Mapping	Various Development/Redevelopment Plans
Pedestrian/Bicycle Safety Plans	Park Improvement Plans

Additionally, the Regional Center has purchased and installed Driver Feedback Signage to enhance pedestrian safety at critical locations in each of the communities and has collaborated with the New Jersey Water Supply Authority to implement the Raritan River Rain Barrel Rebate Program for homeowners in all 3 communities.

In October of 2013, the Regional Center Partnership received notification that all qualifications had been satisfied for the Somerset County Regional Center to be granted Plan Endorsement. The State Planning Commission determined that the Regional Center, the Boroughs of Raritan and Somerville, and the Township of Bridgewater met all the requirements for the Regional Center to be designated an official “Regional Center” for the next ten years.

Achieving Plan Endorsement ensures the coordination of state, county, and municipal planning efforts in achieving the goals and policies of the State Planning Act. With approval from the State, the Regional Center is in a better position to receive financial and technical incentives to assist in accomplishing the goals for the Regional Center Strategic Master Plan.

Information on the activities of the Regional Center may be found at www.regionalcenterpartnership.org, or by calling 908-231-7021.

2017 REGIONAL CENTER OFFICERS & BOARD

Chair: Troy Fischer
Vice-Chair: Jason Dameo
Treasurer: Freeholder Deputy Director Patrick Scaglione
Secretary: James Ruggieri (non-voting position)

At-large Private/Institutional Sector Representatives

Troy Fischer, Chair, Senior General Manager,
Bridgewater Commons*
Jason Dameo, General Manager, Dameo Companies*
James Driscoll, Site Manager, Workplace Solutions,
Johnson & Johnson Company*
Victoria Allen, VP, Strategic Marketing, Southern Region,
RWJBarnabas Health

Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders

Freeholder Deputy Director Patrick Scaglione*
(Patricia Walsh, Freeholder Alternate*)

Somerset County Planning Board

Bernie Navatto, Chair, Somerset County Planning Board
Walter Lane, Director of Planning, Somerset County

Bridgewater Township

Mayor Daniel J. Hayes, Jr.*
Council President Filipe Pedroso
Planner Scarlett Doyle
Henry E. Reynolds, Jr., local private/institutional sector
representative

Raritan Borough

Mayor Chuck McMullin*
Councilman Nicholas Carra
Planner Angela Knowles
-----, local private/institutional sector
representative (vacant)

Somerville Borough

Mayor Brian Gallagher*
Councilman Jason Kraska
Planning Board Vice-Chair Lisa Werner
Rick St. Pierre, local private/institutional sector
representative

Somerset County Business Partnership

Michael Kerwin, President/CEO
(John Maddocks, Alternate)

Somerset County Park Commission

Ray Brown, Secretary/Executive Director
(Cynthia Sullivan, Alternate)

*RCP Executive Committee member

THE REGIONAL CENTER

BRIDGEWATER, RARITAN, SOMERVILLE • SOMERSET COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

Contact: Somerset County Planning Board • Post Office Box 3000, Somerville, New Jersey 08876
Phone 908-231-7021 • www.regionalcenterpartnership.org

