

RARITAN BOROUGH MASTER PLAN UPDATE

SOMERSET COUNTY REGIONAL CENTER STRATEGIC MASTER PLAN

Borough of Raritan Somerset County, New Jersey



June 2003

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Raritan Borough Master Plan Update

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Raritan Borough Mayor and Council

Raritan Borough Planning Board

Regional Center Strategic Master Plan Steering Committee

Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders

Somerset County Planning Board

Regional Center Partnership

Raritan Borough Master Plan Update

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INTRODUCTION

The Borough of Raritan is a small, fully developed municipality measuring approximately 2.0 square miles in area and having a population of 6,338. Raritan is one of the three municipalities that comprise the Somerset County Regional Center, which is the residential, commercial, and governmental core of Somerset County. The Borough is characterized as a mature, suburban community with a varied land use pattern that has evolved from its geography, regional location, and development trends.

Transportation corridors divide Raritan into three sections. The southern section, between the Raritan Valley Rail Line and the Raritan River, was the first to develop and has a strong orientation toward the river, the Central Business District, and the train station. This area also includes many environmentally constrained areas within the floodplain and includes the Woolen Mills redevelopment site. The central section, between the rail line and Route 202, was the second area to develop and is oriented toward both the regional highway system and the historic core. The northern section, north of Route 202, is characterized by low-intensity residential, commercial, and industrial development. Parks and open space are scattered throughout the community, and the Borough has recently completed extensive streetscape improvements in the Downtown area to improve the environment for pedestrians. The rail line provides access from Downtown Raritan to Newark and New York.

The Vision for Raritan is of a prosperous community with a high quality of life, stable residential neighborhoods, a vibrant Central Business District, a diversified economy, extensive parks and open space, modern infrastructure, and a multimodal transportation system. Raritan will serve as a destination of choice within the Regional Center for a small-town atmosphere, family-friendly neighborhoods, and a sense of community. An expanded Raritan River Greenway provides additional recreation opportunities, while further streetscape improvements, bicycle/pedestrian paths, and an upgraded train station provide more transportation options.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Land Use

1. Provide a balanced land use pattern that preserves residential neighborhoods, strengthens the vitality of commercial districts, enhances remaining industrial areas, increases parks and open space, protects environmentally sensitive natural features, accommodates community facilities and facilitates local/regional circulation.
2. Preserve and enhance the residential character of the Borough by protecting established neighborhoods, maintaining a balance of housing choices, providing for compatible infill housing and planning for appropriate residential development in targeted redevelopment areas where land uses are in transition.
3. Encourage appropriate redevelopment in transitional focus areas that will return underutilized land to productive use, improve quality of life, enhance community character, create new employment opportunities and strengthen the municipal tax base.
4. Continue the revitalization of the Central Business District as a mixed-use destination and support other commercial districts through selective redevelopment, compatible infill development, infrastructure improvements, updated zoning, public-private partnerships and increased regional cooperation.
5. Provide increased parks, recreation and open space opportunities that will improve local quality of life, preserve established suburban character, protect existing natural resources and contribute to sustainable development.
6. Encourage the retention of existing industrial uses wherever feasible with an emphasis on industrial clusters found in the region such as pharmaceuticals, bio-medical research and life sciences.
7. Coordinate land use planning and decision-making with adjacent municipalities in the Somerset County Regional Center to improve quality of life, preserve community character, preserve remaining natural resources, promote sustainable development and improve local/regional mobility.

Parks, Recreation and Open Space

1. Monitor the Borough's inventory of recreation facilities to ensure that adequate passive and active recreation areas are available and properly maintained throughout the community.
2. Maintain and preserve the existing parks and recreation facilities within the Borough with a goal of acquiring and preserving additional properties as they become available.
3. Pursue funding through Federal, State and County agencies to help acquire, maintain, and improve recreation and open space facilities. Work with nonprofit organizations and private property owners to acquire direct title, deed restrictions, and conservation easements for open space.





4. Recognize the active recreation recommendations set forth by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Green Acres Program and work to address recreational deficiencies in underserved areas and neighborhoods.
5. Support the efforts of the Regional Center Partnership and the Regional Center Vision Initiative to create open space areas within the designated Regional Center and its member communities.
6. Continue to work with Somerset County to expand the greenways program, which provides for public areas along the Raritan River, North Branch, and Green Brook waterways.
7. Consider the existing redevelopment and/or acquisition of vacant properties for future recreation and open space purposes.

Circulation

1. Ensure that the transportation services are safe and readily accessible to all members of the community.
2. Land use and transportation planning should occur together. Impact assessments and build-out analyses should be utilized to determine the effect of land use plans on the movement of goods and people.
3. Any increases or decreases in land use zones within Raritan should have a build-out analysis performed prior to the adoption of the new standard.
4. Land use densities that are within close proximity to a mass transit stop should be reviewed for possible increases and changes of use to allow for a diversity of uses such as retail, office and residential that could compliment transit.
5. All types of transportation infrastructure and services such as walking, bicycling, and ride sharing are recommended to enhance capacity increasing projects.
6. All transportation infrastructure should be designed and constructed with the minimum improvements necessary to provide safe movement of people and goods.
7. In order to control the appropriate speed limit on Borough streets the three "E's" should always be applied equally: Enforcement, Education and Engineering/design.
8. To the extent possible and appropriate, the roadways designated to handle the largest volumes of traffic (i.e., the arterials and major collectors) should be those under the jurisdiction of the State of New Jersey and Somerset County.
9. Work closely with the transit agencies in order to improve and increase service for the Borough's residents.
10. Encourage the free flow of goods on the appropriate streets and rail corridors.
11. Provide residents with alternative means of transportation, such as multi-use trails and jitneys, which provide linkages to places of interest.

Community Facilities

1. Provide a high level of community facilities to ensure that existing residents and businesses, as well as new development and redevelopment, are served adequately.
2. Pursue shared services with other communities within the Regional Center wherever feasible.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Land Use

1. Raritan Woolen Mills Site: Encourage the adaptive reuse of the existing Woolen Mills building. Require public access and open space on the site.
2. Federal Steel Site: Redevelop the site with a planned mix of commercial, industrial, and public/open space uses that capitalize on the industrial clusters in the Regional Center and Central New Jersey. Utilize the redevelopment process to maximize Borough control over the outcome.
3. Johnson Drive Site: Revitalize and upgrade the site by reorienting permitted uses toward value-added, higher technology activity such as research laboratories, technical and administrative offices, light manufacturing/packaging, and printing/graphic design serving Regional Center industrial clusters. Consider alternative site design approaches that will upgrade existing buildings, provide new development opportunities, improve access, and increase buffering to adjacent residential neighborhoods and schools.
4. Residential Districts: Clarify the alternative residential development provisions in the Zoning Ordinance. Monitor the potential for subdivision activity, scale, and appearance of new housing and intrusion of non-residential uses in Low and Medium Density Residential Districts. In the Inclusionary Residential District, provide low and moderate-income housing as part of the redevelopment of the Woolen Mills site. Carefully consider any projects or amendments to the Borough's Zoning Ordinance that would conflict with the housing/fair share plan.
5. Central Business District: Consider imposing maximum setback standards within the Central Business District to preserve the streetscape. Also, consider an increase in permitted development density to provide incentives for infill development and property improvements. Access improvements to the train station and greenways should be monitored to ensure that Somerset Street is not adversely impacted.
6. Shopping Center/Community Commercial District: Pursue opportunities to upgrade existing aging shopping centers. Take advantage of opportunities to introduce new uses such as professional offices or upscale shopping.
7. Highway Business District: Consider reorienting the district toward professional office, business services, and upgraded highway services. Impacts from the widening of Route 206 should be monitored to determine whether zoning amendments are necessary.

8. Professional Office District: Consider strengthening the requirements for nursing homes in the district. Also, consider including a section of the District located on Route 202 in the Federal Steel redevelopment area.
9. Light Industrial District: Re-evaluate the buffering and screening requirements in this District.
10. Industrial Park District: Re-orient the district toward higher technology and value-added research and development as well as light industrial activity oriented toward the industry clusters in the Regional Center and Central New Jersey. Consider using redevelopment powers if the pace and scale of new development proves inadequate.
11. Limited Industrial District: Consider permitting hotels and conference facilities as permitted uses. Also, consider eliminating food processing as a permitted use. Preserve large-scale campus development while providing mass transit access and pedestrian connections.
12. Prepare neighborhood plans for key residential districts that address quality of life concerns, land use issues, community facilities, and supporting infrastructure.
13. Prepare a critical areas ordinance to further regulate development in environmentally sensitive areas.
14. Permit family day care homes in all residential zones and child care centers in all nonresidential zones.
15. Consider regulating the materials, colors, and appearance of signs within the Borough.
16. Update the Borough's zoning ordinance to permit a full spectrum of senior citizen housing and to include statewide Residential Site Improvement Standards.
17. Identify and improve major gateway locations to enhance the image of its community and strengthen its identity.
18. Regulate the extent of building coverage in order to preserve the Borough's suburban character and sense of open space.

Parks, Recreation and Open Space

1. Preserve and enhance existing parks, recreation, and open space by providing new amenities, creating connections and maximizing use.
2. Work with the County, Regional Center Partnership and the Regional Center municipalities to plan for and locate a regional recreation facility.
3. Implement the Raritan River Greenway to increase parks, recreation and open space and connect the borough to other Regional Center communities.
4. Incorporate parks, recreation, and open space into the redevelopment of the Woolen Mills, Federal Steel and Johnson Drive sites.
5. Pursue interlocal agreements, cost-sharing and pooled funding with Bridgewater and Somerville to increase the availability of parks, recreation and open space.

6. Increase access to funding from the County Open Space Trust Fund and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Green Acres program for park maintenance, improvements and creation of new facilities.
7. Coordinate with the County, the Regional Center Partnership, and the Regional Center municipalities on a Green Plan.
8. Establish a Green Streets program to enhance public spaces and rights of way.
9. Consider a municipal park, recreation and open space trust fund to create new facilities and leverage County and State funding sources.

Circulation

1. Update the functional classifications of the existing and proposed roadways within Raritan Borough to meet today's existing and projected use.
2. Update the required right-of-way and cartway widths for each roadway functional classification to meet the existing and projected use.
3. Update the proposed cross-section for each roadway, including the number and width of traffic lanes and the requirements for shoulders and sidewalks.
4. Designate the location of intersections that need realignments, widening, and/or traffic control signals, the designs of which are to be engineered at the time the intersection is to be improved.
5. Prepare a 5-year road improvement plan. This plan should study areas identified in the Borough's Transportation Circulation Plan Element and prioritize the recommended improvements for all road infrastructure improvements that fall under municipal jurisdiction.
6. Provide short and/or long-term bicycle parking in all commercial districts, in employment centers and multifamily developments, at schools, in industrial developments, at special events, in recreational areas, and transit facilities.
7. Adopt NJDOT's Bicycle Compatible Roadways and Bikeways Planning and Design Guidelines as part of the Borough of Raritan's Ordinances.
8. Seek methods to improve pedestrian access throughout the Borough and increase pedestrian connectivity.
9. Implement pedestrian improvements as part of all transportation improvements, including road construction, reconstruction, traffic calming, and intersection improvements, wherever feasible.
10. Ensure that all projects in Raritan Borough conform to the NJDOT Pedestrian guidelines.
11. Traffic calming techniques should be used as a tool to increase pedestrian safety and access.
12. Coordinate with the county and state to identify major truck routes through and around the Borough.





13. Identify existing or future roadway features that are unsafe or limit the passage of trucks.
14. Increase enforcement of motor vehicle violations by trucks and other large vehicles.
15. Encourage new businesses to submit a trip reduction plan upon submitting an application to the Planning Board.
16. Sponsor walk and bike to work days as an annual event.
17. Extend NJ Transit bus service (Route 114) from Somerville to Raritan.
18. Develop benchmarks – standards or measurements which the community can gauge current and future compliance and noncompliance with overall plan goals. These may include transit-supporting population densities, transit level of service based not only on capacity, but also on headways (time between service), and other service characteristics, walk mode share, pedestrian facility mileage, poor sidewalk condition, pedestrian-friendly areas guidelines, vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per capita, vehicle air pollutant emissions, poor bridge/pavement condition, bicycle mode share, bicycle facility mileage, provision of bicycle facilities/amenities at transit hubs and other activity centers.

Community Facilities

1. Continue to monitor police, fire, and emergency services to ensure adequate coverage. Consider sharing some facilities with neighboring municipalities to hold down costs.
2. Consider alternative locations for the Public Works department.
3. Evaluate public school facilities serving Raritan for their capacity to handle additional growth from redevelopment of the Borough.
4. Continue to pursue additional shared service agreements.



LAND USE PLAN

Introduction

The Borough of Raritan is a small and fully developed municipality with a total area of 2.04 square miles located in central Somerset County as shown on the Regional Location Map. Raritan is also one of the three (3) municipalities that comprise the Somerset County Regional Center, which is the residential, commercial and governmental core of Somerset County. The Borough is characterized as a mature suburban community with a diverse land use pattern that has evolved from its unique geography, regional location and historic development trends. Its land use has been influenced by the presence of the Raritan River which facilitated early trade and industrial development. Raritan has also benefited from its central location in the County that made it a travel and transportation crossroads. Finally, the Borough experienced the type of compact, mixed-use development in the 19th and early 20th centuries that is now known as smart growth. As a result, Raritan has a small town character and desirable quality of life that make it an attractive place to live, work and visit.

Raritan's land use pattern varies depending upon the neighborhood, date of development and transportation infrastructure. The southern section of the Borough between the NJ Transit Raritan Valley Line and the Raritan River was the first part of the municipality to be developed and has a strong orientation towards the Raritan River, central business district and train station. This section is characterized by mixed commercial, residential, industrial and public uses on smaller lots at a relatively high intensity of development. The central section of Raritan between the NJ Transit Raritan Valley Line and Route 202 developed at a later date and is oriented towards the regional highway system and train station. This section is characterized by mixed residential and industrial uses with limited commercial activity on larger lots at a moderate intensity of development. The northern section of the Borough between Route 202 and Bridgewater Township was the last to develop and is oriented towards the regional highway system. It is characterized by mixed residential, commercial and industrial development on large lots at a relatively low intensity of development.

Raritan is a densely developed community with a stable population and little remaining vacant land. The Borough is almost fully developed with only 48 vacant or undeveloped properties, which accounts for approximately 2.3 percent of all properties in the municipality. This is a decrease in vacant parcels from 151 in 1996 and indicates that the community is approaching full build-out. Raritan has a 2000 population of 6,338 and a population density of 3,107 persons per square mile. This represents an increase of 540 residents or 9.4 percent over the 1990 population of 5,798. The Borough is likely to experience limited growth in the future with most new residential and commercial development occurring

in redevelopment areas and on scattered vacant infill parcels. Land use policies should be established to ensure that new development occurs in targeted redevelopment locations and that established neighborhoods are protected and preserved.

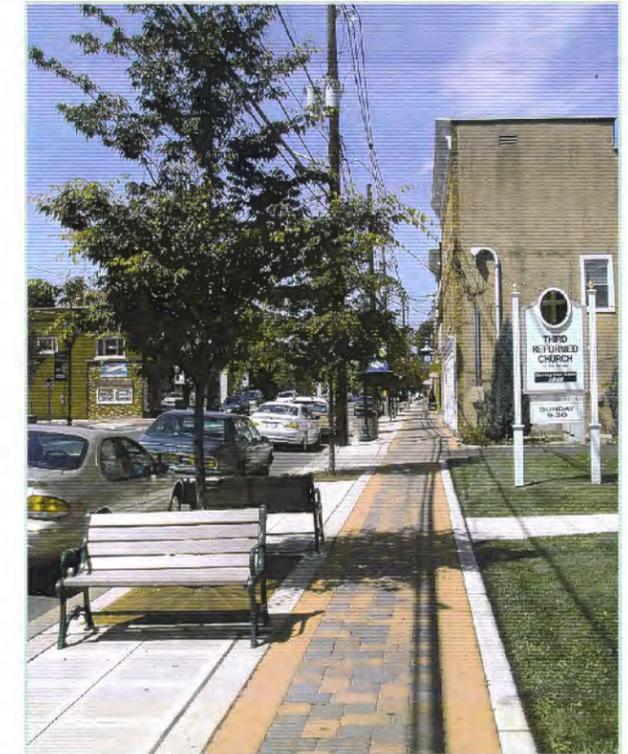
2010 Vision

The Borough of Raritan in 2010 is a prosperous community with a desirable quality of life, stable residential neighborhoods, diversified economy, extensive parks and open space, modern infrastructure and a fully intermodal circulation system. Raritan has emerged as the location of choice in the Somerset County Regional Center for those who desire a small town setting, family-friendly neighborhoods and sense of community. The Borough has also made significant progress in implementing its planning agenda and is known for its lively downtown central business district, expanded Raritan River Greenway, revitalized former industrial areas and upgraded train station. Raritan's success is measured by increased private sector employment, new tax revenues, high occupancy rates in the downtown central business district, new parks and community facilities as well as the construction of several miles of bicycle/pedestrian friendly greenways.

Existing Conditions

Land Use Trends

The Borough of Raritan is a small, mature and almost fully built-out municipality with limited remaining land that is available for future development. As a consequence, it is anticipated that most new development in the Borough will occur through the redevelopment of transitional and underutilized sites that were previously used for industrial, commercial and residential purposes. The properties that are appropriate for this type of redevelopment include the former Woolen Mills and Federal Steel sites. There may also be a limited amount of infill development on the remaining 48 vacant properties shown in Table 1. It is projected that most new development will be residential in nature consistent with the trend found in Raritan from 1996 to 2002.



Raritan Borough Regional Location Map

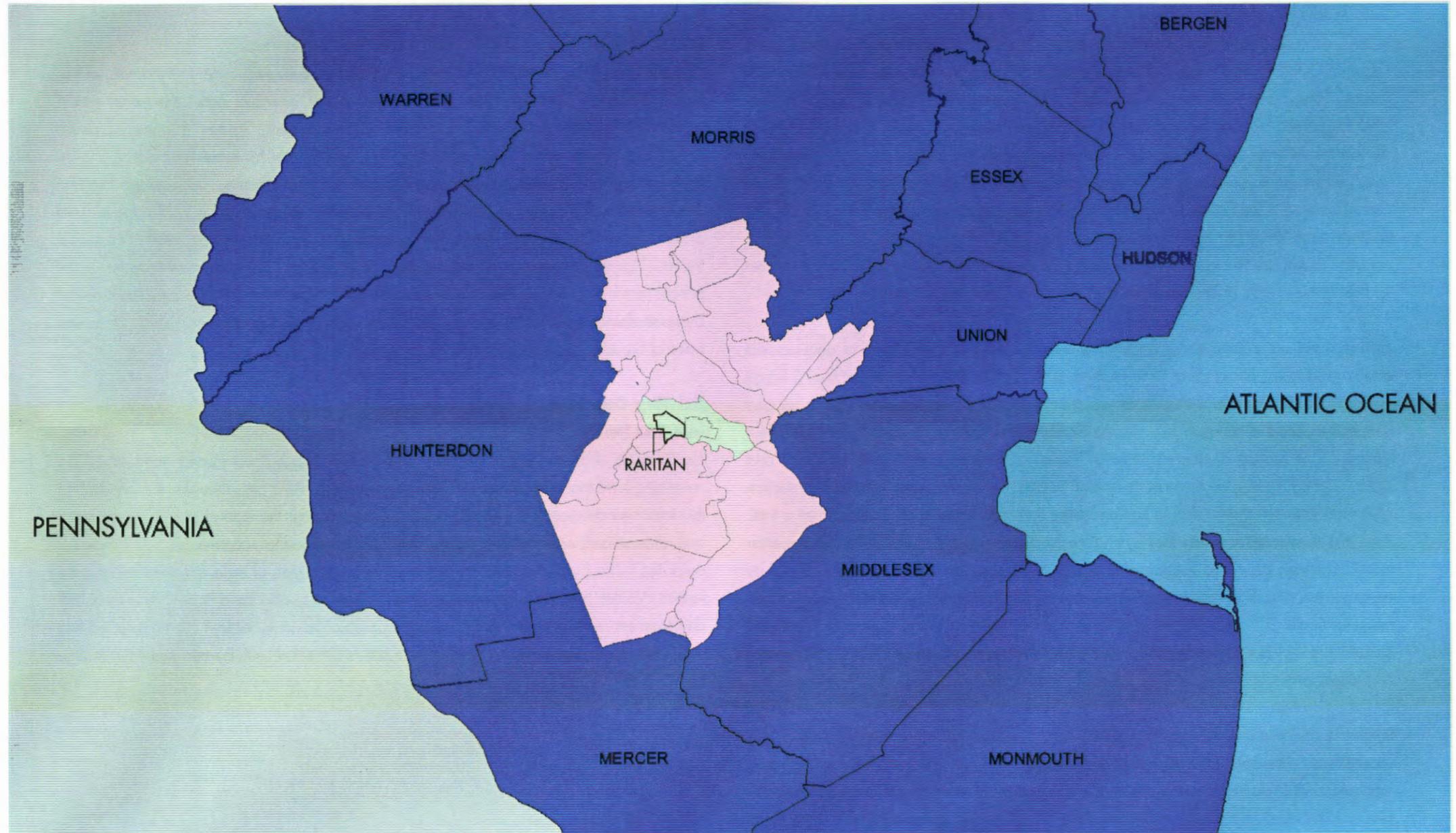


Table 1
LAND USE/PARCEL ANALYSIS, 2002
Borough of Raritan, NJ

Land Use	Total Parcels 1996	Total Parcels 2002	Change
Residential	1,772	1,903	+131
Residential Apartments	1	1	0
Commercial	169	165	-4
Industrial	14	14	0
Farm	0	0	0
Vacant	151	48	-103
Tax Exempt	N/A		N/A
Total Parcels	2,107	2,131	+24

Source: Borough of Raritan; The New Jersey Municipal Data Book, 2002

Raritan has experienced limited development activity and a trend towards residential use during the period 1996 to 2002 as shown in Table 1. During this period, a total of 24 new parcels were created as a result of subdivision activity for an average of 3.4 new parcels per year. This is an indicator of the mature and fully developed character of the Borough as well as the lack of available land. The number of residential properties increased from 1,772 to 1,903 for a gain of 131 parcels or 7.4 percent. This indicates a modest level of subdivision activity associated with the development of vacant land and conversion of formerly commercial properties to residential use. Other trends worth noting are the decrease in vacant properties from 151 to 48 for a reduction of 103 parcels and 68.2 percent. Should this trend continue, Raritan will approach full build-out in the next 6 to 12 year period. This reinforces the importance of planning for redevelopment on underutilized properties and in transitional areas that can support appropriate new development that will generate private sector investment, increased tax revenues, new employment and needed housing.

Plans, Projects and Initiatives

The Borough of Raritan has initiated and/or is a partner in multiple planning, redevelopment and infrastructure projects that will improve local quality of life, generate new economic development and revitalize underutilized properties and areas. These projects include the following:

- Somerset County Regional Center Strategic Master Plan: An innovative and unique regional planning process involving Raritan, Bridgewater Township, Somerville Borough, Somerset County and the Regional Center Partnership.
- Somerset Street Streetscape Initiative: An extensive streetscape improvement project in the Somerset Street central business district that created new sidewalks, pedestrian-scale lights, street trees/landscaping and street furniture.
- Route 206 Improvements: The expansion and widening of Route 206 from the Somerville Circle south to increase capacity, safety and access.
- Raritan River Greenway: A Somerset County initiative to create a linear greenway along the Raritan River in Raritan, Bridgewater and Somerville for passive and active recreation.
- Woolen Mills Redevelopment: The proposed redevelopment of the former Woolen Mills building on Elizabeth Street for market-rate multi-family housing by a private developer.
- Federal Steel Redevelopment: The proposed redevelopment of a former industrial site on Route 202 for commercial and light industrial use.
- Johnson Drive Improvements: The proposed improvement of the existing Johnson Drive industrial area through adaptive reuse, incremental redevelopment and creation of a modern industrial park identity.
- Route 202/1st Avenue Improvements: The proposed improvement of this route to allow left turns.
- Nevius Street Bridge Replacement: The replacement of an older one-lane bridge linking Raritan to Hillsborough over the Raritan River, with a new two-lane bridge at First Avenue.

Opportunities and Challenges

The Borough of Raritan is a mature community with a stable land use pattern, fixed infrastructure and established neighborhoods, business districts and park/open space areas. There has been, however, a change in conditions and trends affecting Raritan during the past decade. These include renewed population growth, revitalization of the Somerset Street central business district, continued underutilization of transitional industrial areas and the Borough's participation in the Somerset County Regional Center process. Raritan's Master Plan dates to 1989 and is in need of updating to address the changed conditions and new trends that have emerged during this period. In particular, the Master Plan should address the following opportunities and challenges:

Opportunities

- Update the land use plan to address areas where land uses are in transition and reinforce established residential neighborhoods, commercial districts and park/open space areas.





- Recommend amendments to the zoning ordinance and map that will implement the land use plan including permitted uses, bulk regulations and site plan/subdivision standards.
- Promote the redevelopment of underutilized industrial areas such as the Woolen Mills, Federal Steel and Johnson Drive sites.
- Develop a transportation plan and a parks, recreation and open space plan that is comprehensive in scope and incorporates land use planning recommendations, including appropriate infill projects.
- Encourage transit-oriented smart growth in appropriate locations including the Somerset Street central business district, NJ Transit train station area, Route 202 corridor and targeted redevelopment sites.
- Increase the range of available planning, zoning and implementation tools available to the Borough including but not limited to redevelopment, zoning incentives, tax increment financing, special improvement districts and public-private partnerships.
- Expanded regional coordination and cooperation through the Somerset County Regional Center Strategic Plan and process.

Challenges

- Providing for a range of land use designations that will promote appropriate infill development and accommodate balanced growth consistent with the pattern of commercial, residential, light industrial, park/open space and other uses found in the Borough.
- Amending the zoning ordinance in such a way as to create adequate incentives to implement the land use recommendations while providing bulk regulations and site plan/subdivision standards that preserve and protect established residential neighborhoods, commercial districts, park/open space areas, etc....
- Coordinating future land use trends with existing and planned Borough infrastructure projects including transportation and parks, recreation and open space and utilities to ensure sustainable, transit-oriented and environmentally friendly growth.
- Establishing a vision, land use plan and action strategy to return underutilized and vacant industrial parcels to productive use including the Woolen Mills, Federal Steel and Johnson Drive sites.
- Promoting transit-oriented development and smart growth in an area underserved by mass transit through connections to the existing NJ Transit train station, site plan/subdivision design and preparing for a Regional Center shuttle system.
- Addressing land use impacts associated with major infrastructure projects such as the widening of Route 206, replacement of the Nevius Street Bridge, Route 202 corridor improvements and proposed increase in service on the Raritan Valley Line.

- Increasing the flexibility of the development process by incorporating new planning, zoning and implementation tools into the Borough's land use regulations.
- Capitalizing on the Somerset County Regional Center Strategic Master Plan and process to increase inter-municipal cooperation, implement regionally significant projects, share resources and pursue joint planning with Bridgewater and Somerville.

Land Use Focus Areas

Raritan Woolen Mills Site

The Raritan Woolen Mills is the most significant potential redevelopment site in the Borough of Raritan because of its relatively large size, strategic location and prominent historical role in the community. The importance of the Woolen Mills site is recognized in the 1999 Somerset County Regional Center Vision Report, which identifies it as one of the three (3) key development sites in the Regional Center. The results of the public participation process conducted as part of this plan confirm the site's importance and indicate strong community support for redevelopment as multi-family residential housing with high-quality site design and public amenities.

Existing Conditions

The Raritan Woolen Mills site is a former industrial parcel with an area of approximately 15 acres. The Woolen Mills site is located in the southeastern section of Raritan Borough and is bordered by Elizabeth Street to the north, Orlando Drive to the south, Busky Lane to the east and John Street extended to the west. The site is strategically located between the central business district along Somerset Street and the Raritan River Greenway planned by Somerset County. It is also bordered by established residential neighborhoods to the northeast and west.

The Raritan Woolen Mills site is a transitional parcel that has been vacant for an extended period of time and is underutilized in its current condition. The Woolen Mills site is further constrained by environmental contamination, wetlands and the 100-year flood hazard zone of the Raritan River. The site is accessible from Somerset Street/John Street and Orlando Drive, although there is no access through the site at present. The existing building is a masonry three-story structure typical of older industrial buildings constructed in the 19th and early 20th centuries. It is obsolete for continued industrial use and the structural condition is unknown, although an interested redeveloper has indicated that the building is structurally unsafe.

Raritan Woolen Mills Focus Area





Master Plan/Zoning

The 1989 Raritan Borough Master Plan addresses the Raritan Woolen Mills site in extensive detail and locates it within the Townhouse Density Residential District. The major recommendations are adaptive reuse of the site with multi-family housing and/or townhouses at a density of 8 units per acre with accessory retail or office uses. The recommended use remains appropriate given the transitional nature of the parcel, its underutilization and proximity to the central business district.

Since the publication of the 1989 Raritan Master Plan, the Raritan Woolen Mills site (Block 116, Lot 12) and the adjacent property (Block 116.02, Lot 12.01) have been identified as the only two sites in the Borough to be placed in the new "Planned Downtown Residential Overlay District" (PDRD). The PDRD serves as an overlay to the IRD-3 and M-1 zones that previously regulated the uses on Block 116, Lot 12 and Block 116.02, Lot 12.01, respectively. The PDRD permits multi-family residential housing and provides for the remediation and/or reclamation of former manufacturing sites. Ten percent or more of the total PDRD's site area must be used for the provision of a public amenity, park or recreation facility.

The requirements of the PDRD zone include a maximum density of 13.5 market rate dwelling units per gross acre, exclusive of the manager's apartment. The number of required affordable units to be constructed within the PDRD shall be determined by the COAH. The bulk requirements include a maximum building height of 4 stories over one level of parking or 60 feet above grade, whichever is greater, and a maximum impervious coverage of 80 percent.

Opportunities/Challenges

The Raritan Woolen Mills site offers the following opportunities:

- Adaptive reuse and/or redevelopment of a vacant and underutilized parcel that is strategically located between the central business district and the planned Raritan River Greenway.
- Establishment of a new residential community in a downtown setting that will provide needed multi-family housing, diversify the Borough's housing stock and support the continued revitalization of the central business district.
- Potential for the development of new affordable housing consistent with the Borough's COAH certified fair share/housing plan.
- Creation of a new gateway to the Borough that will create a sense of arrival in the downtown, reinforce community character/design, increase the visibility of the central business district and enhance the visual environment.

- Provision of public access through the site that will connect the central business district to the planned Raritan River Greenway and link adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- Expansion of recreation and open space opportunities by reserving a portion of the parcel for a Borough park facility.
- Strengthening the Somerset Street central business district by extending streetscape improvements along John Street, Elizabeth Street and Frederick Street and coordinating with the development of the vacant Barbieri tract.
- Promoting economic development and strengthening the Borough tax base by providing for residential and accessory commercial uses as well as an appropriate bedroom mix for planned housing so that redevelopment has a positive fiscal impact.

The Raritan Woolen Mills site has the following challenges:

- The feasibility of adaptive reuse for the existing Woolen Mills building is uncertain given its age, structural condition, past industrial use and location within the 100-year flood hazard zone.
- The redevelopment of the site is constrained by environmentally sensitive features such as wetlands and the 100-year flood hazard zone as well as potential contamination.
- The site has limited visibility because it is oriented towards Orlando Drive and is located in a relatively isolated section of the Borough behind the Somerset Street central business district.
- There are established residential neighborhoods to the northeast and west that are located in close proximity to the site and have the potential to be impacted by redevelopment.
- There is limited access to the site from the Somerset Street central business district and most sections of the Borough because of its relatively isolated location, one-way configuration of John Street and distance to the NJ Transit train station.
- The Borough's COAH certified fair share/housing plan designates the site for inclusionary affordable housing.
- Future redevelopment of the site will be impacted by, and should be coordinated with, the development of the vacant Barbieri tract to the north on Elizabeth Street.

Recommendations

- Consult and coordinate with COAH on the Woolen Mills redevelopment process to the extent that it affects the certified fair share/housing plan.
- Encourage the adaptive reuse of the existing Raritan Woolen Mills building through zoning incentives, creative design techniques and historic preservation tax credits. At a minimum, consider the preservation of the front or northern facade of the building to

protect and enhance the historic Elizabeth Avenue streetscape. The development of architectural standards and retention of an architect is recommended if demolition and new construction is required.

- Require the redevelopment of the site to include the following site plan elements: (1) public access through the site linking the Somerset Street central business district to the planned Raritan River Greenway, (2) pedestrian access to Elizabeth Street/Somerset Street and vehicular as well as pedestrian access to Orlando Drive, (3) minimum landscaped buffer width of 10-feet along all property lines and 20-feet where abutting a residential property or zone, (4) minimum usable open space of 25 percent including a public park, streetscape improvements along Elizabeth Street, John Street, Frederick Street and Orlando Drive consistent with the design of the Borough's Somerset Street program, (5) historic marker and/or kiosk identifying the site, its history and role in the Borough.
- Require a conceptual site plan, area plan showing off-site improvements, fiscal impact analysis, traffic study and environmental impact statement to be submitted for Borough review prior to redevelopment.
- Promote redevelopment of the vacant parcel immediately to the north across Elizabeth Street. Consider redeveloping the parcel with a public park or townhouses that will complement and balance the Woolen Mills project.
- Incorporate gateway treatment into the site with a strong visual presence on Somerset Street and Orlando Drive.

Redevelopment Principles

- See the following aerial photograph for principles to guide redevelopment.

Federal Steel/Johnson Drive Sites

The Federal Steel/Johnson Drive site is a major potential redevelopment site in the Borough of Raritan and is distinguished by its relatively large size, strategic location, transitional nature and dual character. The Federal Steel/Johnson Drive site is not addressed in the 1999 Somerset County Regional Center Vision Report but was identified as a priority during the public participation process by residents, officials and other stakeholders from the Borough. As a consequence, the importance of the site has resulted in its inclusion in the Issues Report for the Somerset County Regional Center Strategic Master Plan. The Issues Report recommends pursuing "the redevelopment of key sites in the Regional Center including... Federal Steel..."

Existing Conditions

The Federal Steel/Johnson Drive site is a transitional industrial area consisting of multiple properties that span both sides of the NJ Transit Raritan Valley Line. The area has a dual character that reflects the location, use, historical development and neighborhood context of each site. The Federal Steel site consists of two (2) properties with a total area of approximately 23-acres. The site is bordered by Route 202 to the north, the NJ Transit Raritan Valley Line and yard to the south, a residential neighborhood on Raritan Avenue to the east and the Ortho-Clinical Diagnostics facility to the west. The Johnson Drive site consists of three (3) properties bordered by the NJ Transit Raritan Valley Line and yard to the north, residential neighborhoods to the south, First Avenue to the east and John F. Kennedy School and Basilone Park to the west.

The Federal Steel site is a former industrial parcel that has been vacant for an extended period of time and is underutilized in its current condition. The site is contaminated as a result of past manufacturing activity and is characterized by its proximity to an established residential neighborhood and relatively isolated location. It is accessible from Tillman Street, however, the street passes through a residential neighborhood. The existing buildings are aging and deteriorated industrial buildings typical of 19th and early 20th factories. They are obsolete for continued industrial use and their structural condition is unknown, although the original Federal Steel building may be worth saving given its historical role in the Borough and industrial architecture.

The Johnson Drive site is an active industrial area that is used for medical research/laboratories, warehousing/distribution and other light industrial activity. The site pre-dates modern industrial parks and is characterized by its uncoordinated linear design and proximity to an established residential neighborhood and school. It is accessible from Johnson Drive, which connects to First Avenue and Route 202. The existing buildings are generally 50,000 square feet in size and range in condition from the modern, updated LabCorp facility to the marginal structures in the Raritan Valley Industrial Park.

Master Plan/Zoning

The Raritan Borough Master Plan contains a limited discussion of the Federal Steel/Johnson Drive site and does not recommend any changes to the land use plan or zoning ordinance for this area. This reflects the date of the Master Plan, pending litigation at that time and relatively stable uses on Johnson Drive. The conditions in the area have changed over



Raritan Federal Steel Focus Area



Land Use

- Mixed commercial and light industrial
- Park/Open space
- Research, offices, hotel/conference, high tech pilot plant

Transportation

- Primary access from Route 202, secondary access from Tillman Street
- Truck access from Route 202 only
- Pedestrian/bicycle access from Tillman Street
- Internal sidewalk network
- Shared access to Route 202 with Ortho Diagnostic
- Connection to Johnson Drive across NJ Transit Raritan Valley Line
- Traffic calming on Tillman Street
- Tillman Street/1st Avenue intersection upgrade

Parks and Open Space

- On-site park/open space
- Maximize tree preservation
- Natural stormwater management
- Wooded, landscaped buffer to residences

Site Design

- Grid, campus or hybrid site layout
- Flex space to address market conditions
- Adaptive reuse of original Federal Steel Building
- Contextual bulk and height addressing diverse edge conditions
- Buffer residential neighborhood and NJ Transit rail yard.
- Strong visual presence on Route 202
- Design for transit access
- Integrate with community

Other

- Utilize redevelopment process
- Coordinate with redevelopment on Johnson Drive
- Maximize open space and green infrastructure

Raritan Johnson Drive Focus Area





the past decade and a reevaluation of both sites is warranted. The recent 2000 Interim Report of New York/Milano Regions Planning Colloquia studied the Federal Steel/Johnson Drive site and addressed current conditions. The Report has been used to supplement our discussion of the Master Plan.

The Master Plan locates the Federal Steel/Johnson Drive site within the Industrial District. The major recommendation for the Federal Steel site is to pursue and complete remediation activities because the parcel was vacant, contaminated and the subject of on-going litigation at the time. The industrial land use designation and industrial zoning were continued pending the outcome of site remediation and associated litigation. Conditions have changed in the past decade, however, and the current land use and zoning designations are no longer appropriate. The primary Master Plan recommendation for the Johnson Drive site is to continue the industrial use. The major issues are identified as truck traffic, providing adequate buffers and addressing site contamination as properties are sold and/or redeveloped.

The Federal Steel/Johnson Drive sites are located in the M-3 Limited Industrial and M-2 Industrial Park Zones respectively. The M-3 Zone accommodates low impact research, office and manufacturing uses in a campus setting with large lot sizes, low coverage and highway access. It permits research laboratories, offices, light manufacturing and limited warehousing/distribution. The bulk requirements of the M-3 Zone include a minimum lot area of 20 acres, front yard setback of 200-feet, maximum building height of 12-stories/150-feet and lot coverage of 50 percent. The M-2 Zone also accommodates office and manufacturing uses in a smaller industrial park setting, however, research laboratories are not permitted. The bulk requirements of the M-2 Zone also differ from the M-3 Zone with a minimum lot area of 80,000 square feet, front yard setback of 50-feet, maximum building height of 2-stories/30-feet and lot coverage of 60 percent.

The Federal Steel/Johnson Drive site is also addressed in the recent Interim Report of New York/Milano Regions Planning Colloquia, which is not an official document but provides an updated planning analysis of both areas. The Report suggests a strategy for sustainable growth at the site based upon low impact economic activity as well as design principals such as maximizing diversity of employment opportunities and alternatives to automobile/heavy truck transportation. It also recommends capitalizing on the presence of nearby industrial clusters in pharmaceuticals, biotechnology and life sciences. The major site design challenges that are identified include access, obsolete buildings, topography and neighborhood context. Recommended concepts for the Federal Steel site include a Garden City, Edge and Core and Campus layout. The Johnson Drive site is envisioned as an updated and integrated industrial park with technology based occupants.

Opportunities/Challenges

The Federal Steel/Johnson Drive site offers the following opportunities:

- Redevelopment of the Borough's largest remaining vacant parcel at the Federal Steel site and modernization of an aging and underutilized industrial park along Johnson Drive generating new employment, tax ratables and associated economic development.
- Creation of a modern, planned commercial/light industrial complex on the Federal Steel site oriented to industrial clusters in the region, capitalizing on highway and rail access and coordinated with development on Johnson Drive and the existing Ortho-Clinical Diagnostics facility.
- Repositioning of the Johnson Drive industrial park towards value added, technology based uses such as the existing LabCorp facility through adaptive reuse of existing buildings, targeted redevelopment, improved site design, enhanced access and incremental upgrades to minimize neighborhood impacts.
- Utilizing redevelopment of the Federal Steel site and infill development of the Johnson Drive site to screen, buffer and protect adjacent residential neighborhoods and schools from nuisance impacts.
- Improving access to the Federal Steel/Johnson Drive site by requiring ingress/egress from Route 202, providing sidewalks and bicycle facilities, creating a connection to the NJ Transit Raritan train station, limiting truck traffic on residential streets and exploring a new crossing of the NJ Transit Raritan Valley Line.
- Capitalizing upon existing open space and natural resources in the vicinity of the Federal Steel/Johnson Drive site to create additional recreational opportunities and green connections to the Raritan River Greenway.
- Encouraging creative architecture and innovative site design to strengthen community character, enhance the Route 202 gateway and buffer adjacent residential neighborhoods.

The Federal Steel/Johnson Drive site has the following challenges:

- The mismatch between the permitted heavy commercial and industrial uses in the M-2 and M-3 Zones and the high technology, information based industrial clusters found in the Regional Center and central New Jersey.
- The presence of contamination on the Federal Steel site and the uncertain status of the remediation process.
- The existence of aging, functionally obsolete and undersized industrial buildings on the Johnson Drive site with an established footprint.
- The relatively isolated location and limited access to the Federal Steel/Johnson Drive sites including the physical barrier of the NJ Transit Raritan Valley Line and yard.
- The close proximity of established residential neighborhoods and a school to the Federal Steel/Johnson Drive site.

- The uncoordinated visual environment and haphazard site design resulting from the limited architectural, streetscape and site design standards in the M-2 and M-3 Zones.
- The limited connections to major destination points in the Borough including the central business district, NJ Transit Raritan station and planned Raritan River Greenway.

Development Potential/Build-Out

- **Current Development:** The Federal Steel site is vacant. The Johnson Drive site contains approximately 400,000 square feet of existing commercial/industrial space.
- **Future Projections:** The Federal Steel site can accommodate a development footprint of approximately 400,000 to 450,000 square feet based upon the bulk standards of the M-3 Zone and after infrastructure is removed (15%). This translates into an estimated development potential starting at a minimum of 400,000 square feet and increasing progressively depending upon the number of stories in the building(s). This projection does not factor in parking, which will have a significant impact upon development potential.

The Johnson Drive site can accommodate greater than 100,000 square feet of new development based upon the bulk standards of the M-2 Zone and assuming adaptive reuse and infill development only.

Recommendations

- Redevelop the Federal Steel site with a planned mix of commercial, industrial and public/open space uses that capitalize on the industrial clusters present in the Regional Center and central New Jersey including research laboratories, offices, limited manufacturing such as pilot plants and hotels with accessory conference space. Consider permitting distribution/warehousing subject to certain conditions regulating location, buffers/screening, access and building design. Utilize the redevelopment process to maximize Borough control, overcome environmental constraints, facilitate redevelopment and provide for a coordinated planning and zoning approach to the site.
- Pursue site design approaches to the Federal Steel site that will be conducive to Regional Center industrial clusters, maximize economic development potential, provide an appropriate and varied edge treatment, protect the adjacent residential neighborhood, buffer nuisance impacts from the NJ Transit Raritan Valley Line and yard, create balanced access including a design that supports mass transit and links the site to the rest of the Borough. Consider the Garden City, Edge and Core and Campus concepts included in the Interim Report of New York/Milano Regions Planning Colloquia.
- Revitalize and upgrade the Johnson Drive site by reorienting permitted uses towards value added, higher technology activity such as research laboratories, technical and administrative offices, light manufacturing/packaging and printing/graphic design

serving Regional Center industrial clusters. Promote adaptive reuse and appropriate infill development similar to the LabCorp facility, which is a model for future uses. Implement incremental improvements through amendments to the existing M-2 Zone to permit new uses and eliminate those with nuisance impacts such as food processing. Monitor the pace of the development process to determine if the redevelopment process is necessary.

- Consider alternative site design approaches for the build-out of the Johnson Drive site that will upgrade existing buildings, provide new development opportunities, improve access and increase buffering to adjacent residential neighborhoods and schools. In particular, consider relocation of all commercial uses to the north side of Johnson Drive and permit flexible bulk standards to provide adequate incentives and preserve the existing amount of commercial and industrial space.
- Require primary access to the Federal Steel site from Route 202 and from First Avenue for the Johnson Drive site. Consider roadway improvements that would physically limit truck access to Tillman Street and residential side streets off of Johnson Drive. Explore the long-term feasibility of a connection across the NJ Transit Raritan Valley Line to integrate and link both sites.
- Provide a network of sidewalks and bicycle amenities through the Federal Steel/Johnson Drive site and connecting to major Borough destinations such as the central business district, NJ Transit Raritan station and Raritan River Greenway.
- Preserve and protect adjacent residential neighborhoods and schools from development impacts by providing comprehensive site design standards for adequate buffering/screening, balanced site access, limited truck traffic, traffic calming, lighting controls and building design requirements.
- Provide safe on-site open space and connections to the Raritan River Greenway including the stream corridor at John F. Kennedy School.
- Reinforce and strengthen building design and community character by providing improved architectural, site plan and streetscape requirements for the Federal Steel/Johnson Drive site. Provide a more attractive and formal gateway entrance to both sites in conjunction with redevelopment. Encourage the adaptive reuse of the original Federal Steel building in recognition of its historic character and remnant of the Borough's industrial heritage.

Redevelopment Principles

- See the following aerial photographs for principles to guide redevelopment.





Land Use Plan

The Borough of Raritan is characterized by a mixed-use development pattern that is shown on the Generalized Land Use Plan Map and discussed in the sections that follow.

Residential Land Use Districts

The Borough of Raritan has a diverse housing stock and a broad range of residential development including detached one- and two-family houses, attached townhouses and multi-family apartments. Raritan's housing is located in multiple residential land use districts throughout the Borough consistent with the historic pattern of development in the community. These include the Low Density, Medium Density and High Density Residential Land Use Districts. The primary purpose of the districts is to accommodate existing residential development and provide the opportunity for limited infill development of housing on suitable vacant or underutilized parcels.

Raritan is projected to experience a moderate amount of residential development during the next several years as a continuation of population and housing trends during the past decade. These trends include population growth of 540 persons or 9.4 percent and housing production of 273 units from 1990 to 2000 according to the U.S Census. Residential development will be limited, however, by the lack of available land and suitable redevelopment sites. Most of the projected residential development will occur on the Woolen Mills redevelopment site. The major issues affecting the residential land use districts are preserving the residential character of existing neighborhoods, preventing the intrusion of commercial and industrial uses, property maintenance and illegal conversion of housing and quality of life concerns related to traffic, parking and parks/open space.

Low Density Residential District

The Low Density Residential District is intended for detached single-family housing on relatively large lots that contribute to Raritan's suburban character. The District corresponds to the R-1 zone and is located in the northern section of the Borough off of Vanderveer Road. It permits single-family houses, places of worship, public parks, schools and home offices. The permitted residential density is 1.7 units per acre with a minimum lot size of 25,000 square and lot coverage of 20 percent. Consideration should be given to permitting community residences as a principal use consistent with the Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL), making home offices a permitted conditional use instead of principal use and clarifying the alternative residential development provisions listed in Section 42-132F of the zoning ordinance. Issues that should be monitored include the potential for subdivision activity, scale and appearance of new housing and intrusion of non-residential uses.

Medium Density Residential District

The Medium Density Residential District is intended for detached one- and two-family housing on mid-size lots that lend Raritan its compact and relatively dense suburban character. The District corresponds to the R-2, R-3 and R-4 zones and is the largest residential district in the Borough. It is located in the north, central and south sections of the community. The District permits single-family houses, places of worship, public parks and schools as well as detached two-family houses within the R-4 zone only. The permitted residential density is 3.6 units per acre in the R-2 zone and 5.8 units per acre in the R-3 and R-4 zones with a minimum lot size of 12,000 square feet and 7,500 square feet respectively. The maximum lot coverage is 20 percent in the R-2 Zone and 30 percent in the R-3 and R-4 Zones.

Mixed Residential/Professional Office District

It is recommended that the portion of the R-4 zone along Somerset Street from Frederick Street to Route 206 be rezoned as a mixed residential/professional office district to acknowledge its transitional character and the on-going conversion of housing to offices. It may also be appropriate to utilize an overlay zone to preserve the existing uses while accommodating professional office development. Consideration should be given to permitting community residences as a principal use consistent with the Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL), making home offices a permitted conditional use and rationalizing the minimum lot size requirements so that corner and interior lots have the same area standard. Issues that should be monitored include the potential for subdivision activity, scale and appearance of new housing and intrusion of non-residential uses.

High Density Residential District

The High Density Residential District is intended for attached and multi-family apartments on relatively large lots that contribute to the diversity of Raritan's housing stock. The District corresponds to the R-5 zone and is located in the northwest section of the Borough off of Vanderveer Road. It permits attached single-family townhouses, multi-family apartments, public parks and utilities. The permitted residential density is 7 units per acre with a maximum lot coverage of 50 percent. Consideration should be given to permitting community residences as a principal use consistent with the Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) and making home offices a permitted conditional use. No other revisions to the existing zoning are recommended at present.

Inclusionary Residential District

The Inclusionary Residential District is intended for high density attached single-family housing and multi-family apartments on relatively large lots to meet the Borough's low and moderate income housing requirement. The District encompasses a portion of the Woolen Mills site and property fronting on Route 28 and Vanderveer Road in the northern section

of the Borough. It corresponds to the IRD-1, IRD-2 and IRD-3 zones established by the Borough's COAH certified housing/fair share plan. The District permits attached single-family townhouses, multi-family apartments, public parks and utilities with a gross residential density of 7 units per acre. Careful consideration should be given to any projects and/or zoning amendments that would conflict with the housing/fair share plan so as to preserve the Borough's COAH certification.

Planned Downtown Residential Development Overlay District

Since the publication of the last Master Plan, the Raritan Woolen Mills site (Block 116, Lot 12) and the adjacent property (Block 116.02, Lot 12.01) have been identified as the only two sites in the Borough of Raritan to be placed in the new "Planned Downtown Residential Development Overlay District" (PDRD). This ordinance was enacted to promote redevelopment of Brownfield and former manufacturing sites through the development of luxury rental apartments in order to return environmentally contaminated and/or deteriorating sites to productive use.

The PDRD must meet several conditions and requirements including; 1) a minimum site area of 2.75 acres; 2) the provision of a public amenity involving an area of 10 percent or more of the total PDRD site area; and 3) contribution or implementation of off-tract streetscape improvements consistent with the Borough's Somerset Street streetscape program. The intention of this requirement is so that adjoining streets to Somerset Street which have a rational nexus to the subject property, would have compatible streetscape improvements with frontages and street trees and extensive landscaping.

The maximum density in the PDRD is 13.5 market rate dwelling units per gross acre, exclusive of the manager's apartment. The number of affordable housing units will be determined by the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH). The maximum building height is 4 stories over one level of parking or 60 feet above grade, whichever is greater; the maximum impervious coverage is 80 percent; the building setback to tract boundaries is required to be no closer than 10 feet; the parking setback to tract boundaries and from any building is required to be no closer than 5 feet; and a minimum off-street parking requirement of 1.8 spaces per one bedroom unit and 2.0 spaces per 2 bedroom units.

Commercial Land Use Districts

The Borough of Raritan has multiple business districts and a broad range of commercial development such as the downtown central business district, big-box community shopping centers and highway-oriented commercial strips. Raritan's commercial development is focused on Somerset Street and along the major State highway corridors that cross the

Borough. This reflects the Borough's early development as a compact, mixed-use center focused on Somerset Street and more recent suburban style development oriented towards highway corridors. The commercial districts consist of the Central Business, Shopping Center/Community Commercial, Highway Business and Professional Office Land Use Districts. The primary purpose of these districts is to accommodate existing commercial development of varying scale, intensity and use; provide a balance of retail, services and offices; and create opportunity for appropriate infill development of vacant or underutilized parcels.

Raritan is likely to experience a moderate amount of commercial growth during the next several years in line with recent development trends. These trends include the decreasing supply of vacant land for development and the reduction in properties used for commercial purposes from 169 in 1996 to 165 in 2002. For example, Raritan authorized 26,933 square feet of office space and no retail space in 2001 according to the New Jersey Construction Reporter. Future commercial development will be constrained by these factors and the lack of suitable redevelopment sites. It is anticipated that most of the projected commercial development will occur on the Federal Steel redevelopment site. The major issues affecting the commercial land use districts are maintaining the economic viability of these areas, providing a balance of uses to serve the Borough and Regional Center, encouraging continued improvement and investment, preserving the boundaries of commercial districts and supporting continued revitalization of the central business district.

Central Business District

The Central Business District is the historic mixed-use downtown for the Borough of Raritan and is intended to function as the business, civic and entertainment center of the community. The District corresponds to the B-1 zone and is focused on Somerset Street from Frederick Street to Old York Road. It permits retail stores, personal services, professional offices and multi-family apartments on the upper floors of mixed-use buildings. Relatively intense development is permitted with lot coverage of 95 percent, building height of 3-stories/39-feet and minimal setbacks. The Borough has made significant progress in revitalizing the Central Business District with extensive streetscape improvements on Somerset Street, low vacancy rates and the proposed redevelopment of the adjacent Woolen Mills site.

There are no major changes proposed for the Central Business District, however, it is recommended that the B-1 zoning be updated to eliminate the prohibited uses section since this is an obsolete zoning approach. Consideration should also be given to retail zoning that would require the ground floor of buildings to be used for retail activity such as stores, personal services and restaurants. The bulk requirements remain appropriate but





consideration should be given to providing maximum setback standards to preserve the Somerset Street streetscape and permitting an increase in development intensity to provide incentives for infill development and property improvements. Improving connections to the NJ Transit train station and Raritan River Greenways is a priority and the Nevius Street bridge replacement project should be monitored to ensure that Somerset Street is not adversely impacted.

Shopping Center/Community Commercial District

The Shopping Center/Community Commercial District is intended to accommodate highway-oriented big box shopping centers that provide the Borough of Raritan with larger scale retail, services and restaurants. The District corresponds to the B-2 zone and encompasses the existing shopping centers on Orlando Drive and Route 206 and at the Somerville Circle. It permits retail stores, personal services, restaurants and professional offices. The District provides for relatively intensive development on large parcels of 40,000 square feet or greater with lot coverage of 70 percent and maximum building height of 2-stories/28-feet. It is fully developed and no additional growth is expected in the foreseeable future. The B-2 zoning remains appropriate but it is recommended that the prohibited uses section be eliminated because this is an obsolete zoning approach.

Potential issues to be monitored in the future include property maintenance, proliferation of low-end commercial uses and pressure to subdivide or haphazardly redevelop existing shopping centers. Opportunities to upgrade the existing shopping centers in the District as they age and become obsolete should be pursued with particular attention to improved site layout, building design, access and landscaping/screening. In the long-term, there may be an opportunity to introduce new uses such as professional offices and/or an upscale retail lifestyle center at the Somerville Circle site through redevelopment if conditions deteriorate in the future.

Highway Business District

The purpose of the Highway Business District is to accommodate individual and free-standing commercial uses along the Borough of Raritan's highway corridors. The District corresponds to the B-3 zone and is located along Route 202, Route 206 and the Somerville Circle. It permits a broad range of commercial uses including auto repair, retail stores, warehousing/distribution, motels/hotels, restaurants and professional offices. The District provides for small-scale development on parcels of 11,000 square feet with lot coverage of 75 percent and maximum building height of 2-stories/28-feet. There are significant portions of Route 202 and Route 206 that are transitional in nature with marginal commercial uses, underutilized properties and increasingly obsolete structures.

Consideration should be given to reorienting the B-3 District along Routes 202 and 206 towards professional office, business services and upgraded highway uses such as motels/hotels, restaurants and limited retail. It is also recommended that auto repair and warehousing/distribution be eliminated as permitted uses to support this reorientation. The section on prohibited uses should be eliminated because of the obsolete nature of this zoning approach. Those uses not listed as permitted in the zone are prohibited under what is known as permissive zoning.

Recent construction improvements in the area has impacted the viability of business and professional uses at this location. Potential use of this area for senior housing should be considered.

Professional Office District

The Professional Office District is intended for intermediate scale professional office and research uses on larger parcels with highway access. The District corresponds to the P-1 and P-2 zones and is located in the north and central sections of the Borough along Route 28 and Route 202 respectively. It also incorporates a small professional office area in the southern section of the Borough on Second Street. The District permits professional offices, research/laboratories and nursing homes on lots of 2 acres in the P-1 zone and 40,000 square feet in the P-2 zone. The bulk requirements promote moderate development intensity with lot coverage of 60 percent and building height of 2-stories/40-feet in the P-1 zone and 3-stories/50-feet in the P-2 zone. It is recommended that the section on prohibited uses be eliminated because of the obsolete nature of this zoning approach.

Consideration should also be given to strengthening the conditional use requirements for nursing homes in the P-1 and P-2 zones because expansion of such uses may not be appropriate. There are also inconsistencies between the text and the schedule of bulk requirements for the P-2 zone that should be corrected including lot size, side yard setback and lot coverage. Further evaluation of the section of the District located on Route 202 between Quick Avenue and Ortho-Diagnostic is warranted because this area has not developed in conformance with the P-2 zoning. It may be appropriate to incorporate a portion of this area into the adjacent Federal Steel redevelopment site for future planning purposes.

Industrial Land Use Districts

The Borough of Raritan has three (3) industrial districts that reflect its industrial heritage and accommodate a broad range of manufacturing, warehousing/distribution and research/laboratory uses. The districts are located in neighborhoods throughout Raritan and are

known as the Light Manufacturing, Industrial Park and Limited Industrial Districts. Consistent with regional trends, the Borough's industrial development has evolved over time from an emphasis on heavy manufacturing clustered along the former Central Railroad of New Jersey rail line to lighter, truck based distribution oriented to Route 202 and ultimately to high technology research and development on suburban campuses. It is projected that the remaining heavy manufacturing activity will continue to decrease because of changing markets, domestic and foreign competition as well as the long-term trend of relocation to lower cost Sunbelt and overseas jurisdictions. There are opportunities, however, to capture higher technology and value added industrial development generated by the bio-medical, health care and pharmaceutical industry clusters found in the Regional Center and central New Jersey. The major issues to be addressed include maintaining the viability of the Districts, upgrading deteriorated parcels, refining permitted uses, redeveloping the vacant Federal Steel site, upgrading the Johnson Drive area and protecting adjacent residential neighborhoods from nuisance impacts.

Light Manufacturing District

The Light Manufacturing District is intended for specialized manufacturing, warehousing/distribution and heavy commercial development in a narrow corridor along the NJ Transit Raritan Valley Line and along the waterfront. The District corresponds to the M-1 zone and contains the NJ Transit Raritan Valley Line rail yard, storage yards, a truck terminal and other small-scale industrial uses as well as a portion of the Raritan Woolen Mills site. It permits limited manufacturing uses such as printing, instrument production and electronic assembly as well as warehouses, storage facilities, lumber yards and garden centers. The required bulk standards promote individual, free-standing and relatively small scale industrial development on lots of 40,000 square feet with maximum lot coverage of 60 percent and building height of 2-stories/28-feet. The Light Manufacturing District also functions as a receiving area for certain uses that generate nuisance impacts such as outdoor storage, trucking terminals and auto repair. This is a potential problem because the District abuts established residential neighborhoods on Tillman Street, Third Street and LaGrange Street.

It is recommended that the entire south side of Tillman Street and the remainder of this light manufacturing district on the east side of First Avenue, currently occupied by a tavern, be reclassified as Medium High Density Residential. In addition, it is recommended that the corner of LaGrange and Elmer Streets and the entire M-1 district bounded by the railroad tracks, Elmer, LaGrange, and Coddington Streets, be reclassified as Medium High Density Residential, in keeping with the character of the adjoining neighborhood.

Industrial Park District

The Industrial Park District is intended for coordinated and larger-scale light industrial uses including offices, warehousing/distribution and limited manufacturing in the Johnson Drive corridor adjacent to the NJ Transit Raritan Valley Line and rail yard. The District corresponds to the M-2 zone and contains the LabCorp research and development complex as well as other older and increasingly obsolete industrial structures. It permits a broad range of clean light industrial uses including office buildings and warehouses for distribution, assembly and packaging. It is recommended that the District be reoriented towards higher technology and value added research and development as well as light industrial activity oriented towards the bio-medical, health care and pharmaceutical industry clusters found in the Regional Center and central New Jersey. Inappropriate uses such as heavy manufacturing, truck terminals and food processing should not be permitted in the M-1 zone. The bulk standards should be revisited to ensure that they facilitate the creation of a modern campus layout with adequate access, site amenities and buffering/screening of the residential neighborhoods to the south of Johnson Drive. An incremental approach to improvement of the District using zoning tools such as an overlay is recommended, however, redevelopment should be considered if the pace and scale of new development proves inadequate. For a more comprehensive discussion, see the Johnson Drive Focus Area section of the land use plan.

Limited Industrial District

The Limited Industrial District is intended for clean, high technology and value added light industrial development on suburban campuses in the Route 202 corridor that capitalize on the significant bio-medical, health care and pharmaceutical industry clusters found in the Regional Center and central New Jersey. The District corresponds to the M-3 zone and is fully developed with the exception of the underutilized and vacant Federal Steel site. It contains world-class companies such as Ortho-McNeil Pharmaceuticals and Ortho-Clinical Diagnostics that make the area the centerpiece of the Borough's economic development program. The District permits research laboratories, corporate offices, limited manufacturing and assembly/packaging. It also permits food processing, which is inappropriate because of the potential for nuisance impacts and should be eliminated as a permitted use. Consideration should also be given to permitting hotel and conference facilities as a permitted use in the M-3 zone to serve existing pharmaceutical companies in the District and Regional Center.

It is also recommended that the Federal Steel site be addressed through the redevelopment process as outlined in the Federal Steel Focus Area discussion of the land use plan. The current bulk standards remain appropriate and no changes are recommended. Long-term issues that warrant further attention are expediting the redevelopment of the Federal Steel





site, preserving the large-scale campus development, providing opportunities to upgrade facilities, improving site design with mass transit access/pedestrian connections and monitoring on-going consolidation in the pharmaceutical industry to anticipate potential land use issues.

Parks, Recreation and Open Space District

The Parks and Open Space District consists of all parks, recreation facilities and open space located in the Borough of Raritan. The purpose of the District is to recognize existing areas devoted to parks, recreation and open space as well as proposed locations for future facilities. It has a total area of approximately 78 acres and comprises an estimated 6 percent of all land in Raritan. The District corresponds to the G-1 zone which permits governmental uses including municipal facilities, parks and schools. The Parks, Recreation and Open Space District is proposed to remain largely unchanged with the exception of the planned Raritan River Greenway because no new facilities have been developed since the 1989 Master Plan. There is a need for additional parks, recreation and open space in the Borough but these issues are addressed in greater detail within the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan.

Public/Semi-Public District

The Public/Semi-Public District encompasses all major public facilities in the Borough of Raritan such as the municipal properties and buildings, School District properties and buildings, County properties and buildings as well as the certain NJ Transit facilities. The District corresponds to the G-1 zone which permits governmental uses including municipal facilities, parks and schools. It includes the municipal building, free public library, public schools, fire houses and NJ Transit Raritan train station. The purpose of the District is to identify and reinforce the location of major public uses. Certain semi-public uses such as places of worship, private schools and fraternal or non-profit organizations are not included because of their relatively small size and dispersed locations. The Public/Semi-Public District is proposed to remain unchanged given the stable and established pattern of such uses. The Washington School recreation site will remain under public usage and within the District as it is expected that the property will continue to be open to Borough residents for outdoor recreation, indoor programs and public events.

Other Land Use Issues

Neighborhood Plans

The Borough of Raritan is a community of attractive, compact and well-established residential neighborhoods. These neighborhoods are often located in close proximity to commercial and industrial districts as well as major transportation corridors because of Raritan's historic mixed-use pattern of development. This creates the potential for adverse impacts from

traffic, parking, noise and the intrusion of non-residential uses that detract from the quality of life in residential neighborhoods. In addition, many neighborhoods have aging housing stock and are in transition as the local population grows, housing turnover occurs and infill development continues. This creates pressure on the residential neighborhoods resulting from increased density, limited parking, property maintenance and the need for additional community facilities including parks and schools. It is therefore recommended that the Borough prepare neighborhood plans for the major residential districts that further address land use issues, quality of life concerns, community facilities and supporting infrastructure. This will promote a community-based approach to planning that recognizes Raritan's residential neighborhoods as the critical building blocks of the community.

Environmentally Sensitive Critical Areas

The Borough of Raritan is a mature and almost fully developed suburban community with limited remaining vacant land, open space and undisturbed natural areas. Raritan contains, however, environmentally sensitive natural features that require protection from encroaching development and additional disturbance. These features include the Raritan River, tributary streams, floodway, 100-year flood hazard zones and wetlands.

Raritan's natural features are often located in close proximity to established residential neighborhoods and commercial districts. During periods of severe inclement weather, the Borough's surface water bodies are susceptible to flooding with the potential for property damage in adjacent developed areas. The preparation of a critical areas ordinance is recommended to further regulate development in environmentally sensitive areas in order to minimize the degradation of existing natural resources and protect established residential neighborhoods as well as commercial districts. Such an ordinance may be incorporated into the Borough's environmental impact requirements in the zoning ordinance.

Child Care Facilities

The Borough of Raritan has experienced renewed population growth and an influx of young couples and families during the past decade. This increase in couples of child-bearing age and families with young children has also generated increased demand for child care services. Raritan's zoning ordinance does not currently permit family day care and child care centers as a principal use in any zone within the Borough. The State Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) requires that such uses be permitted in a municipality in order to meet the growing demand for child care throughout the State. Under the MLUL, family day care homes must be a permitted use in all residential zones and child care centers must be a permitted use in all non-residential zones. It is recommended that the zoning ordinance be amended to permit such uses in compliance with the MLUL.

Signs

The quantity and quality of signs can have a direct influence on the appearance, visual impact and character of new development in the Borough of Raritan. Signs convey an image and message about a particular site and the larger community. They also have the potential to affect how a use and community is perceived, for better or worse. The Borough zoning ordinance regulates signage, however, the requirements are dated and would benefit from revisions to update the standards. The ordinance regulates the location, height, area and illumination of proposed signs for new and existing development. It does not, however, fully regulate sign design including appearance, color, materials and illumination. This can affect the quality of signage installed throughout the Borough, which is increasingly important given the on-going revitalization of the Somerset Street central business district, high visibility Route 202/206 commercial corridors and anticipated redevelopment of the Woolen Mills and Federal Steel sites. In recognition of this, it is recommended that the sign ordinance be further refined to provide new standards for sign design, sign area and sign height.

Senior Housing

The Borough of Raritan has a relatively large population of senior citizen residents who are age 65 and older. Senior citizens often require specialized housing because of limited mobility, fixed income levels, potential health problems and the need for supportive services. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the Borough has 1,026 residents age 65 and over which represents 16.2 percent of the total population of 6,338. The population of senior citizens in Raritan is projected to remain relatively large in the future because of the aging of the large baby boomer population born between 1946 and 1964 and older citizens are living longer and often desire to "age in place" or live in their long-term place of residence. As a result, there is a continuing need to address the housing needs and quality of life concerns of senior citizens. It is recommended that the Borough update its zoning ordinance to permit the full spectrum of senior citizen housing options from independent living to congregate care and assisted living as well as nursing home facilities. It may be appropriate to make such uses permitted conditional uses in zones where they are compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

State Residential Site Improvement Standards

New residential development in the Borough of Raritan is governed by the State Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS). The RSIS were adopted by New Jersey in January, 1997 and govern any site improvements carried out in connection with a residential development application. According to the State, the standards are intended to create uniform residential site improvement guidelines and ensure predictability in the development process. The rules supersede municipal standards for residential development including parking and took effect on June 3, 1997.

It is recommended that the Borough zoning ordinance be amended to ensure that site plan, subdivision and design regulations are consistent with the RSIS. Consideration should be given, however, to requesting a waiver from the State parking standards. The creation of parking standards that reflect the unique conditions in the Borough such as its dense pattern of development, small lot sizes and limited available land should be considered. A process for seeking de minimus exceptions or waivers from the RSIS should also be established.

Gateways

There are numerous areas in the Borough of Raritan that function as gateways into the community. They include Somerset Street at Route 206 and First Avenue, Somerville Circle, Route 202 at Vones Lane, Nevius Street Bridge and the NJ Transit train station. Gateways are principal entry points into a municipality, neighborhood, business district or other section of a municipality. They typically occupy a high visibility location and function as the "front door" to a community. Gateways have the potential to contribute to a unique community identity and convey an image as an attractive place to live, work, visit and invest. It is recommended that the Borough identify and improve major gateway locations to enhance the image of the community and strengthen its identity. Possible improvements include new signage, landscaping, streetscape improvements, public art and upgraded land uses. For example, the NJ Transit train station is a major gateway into Raritan that would be improved through station upgrades, new signage, landscaping and public art.

Building Coverage

The Borough of Raritan is distinguished by its mature suburban character with compact development, relatively high density and limited remaining vacant land. Future development has the potential to influence Raritan's pleasant suburban character depending upon its intensity, bulk coverage and ratio of impervious surface to green space. The Borough zoning ordinance currently regulates and limits total lot coverage on a site, however, it does not regulate building coverage. This creates an incentive to develop parcels of land with oversized buildings and associated parking lots. The impact of this style of development is a loss of green space, increased density of development and greater stormwater run-off that contributes to flooding and erosion. In order to preserve the Borough's suburban character and sense of open space, it is recommended that the zoning ordinance be amended to regulate the extent of building coverage.

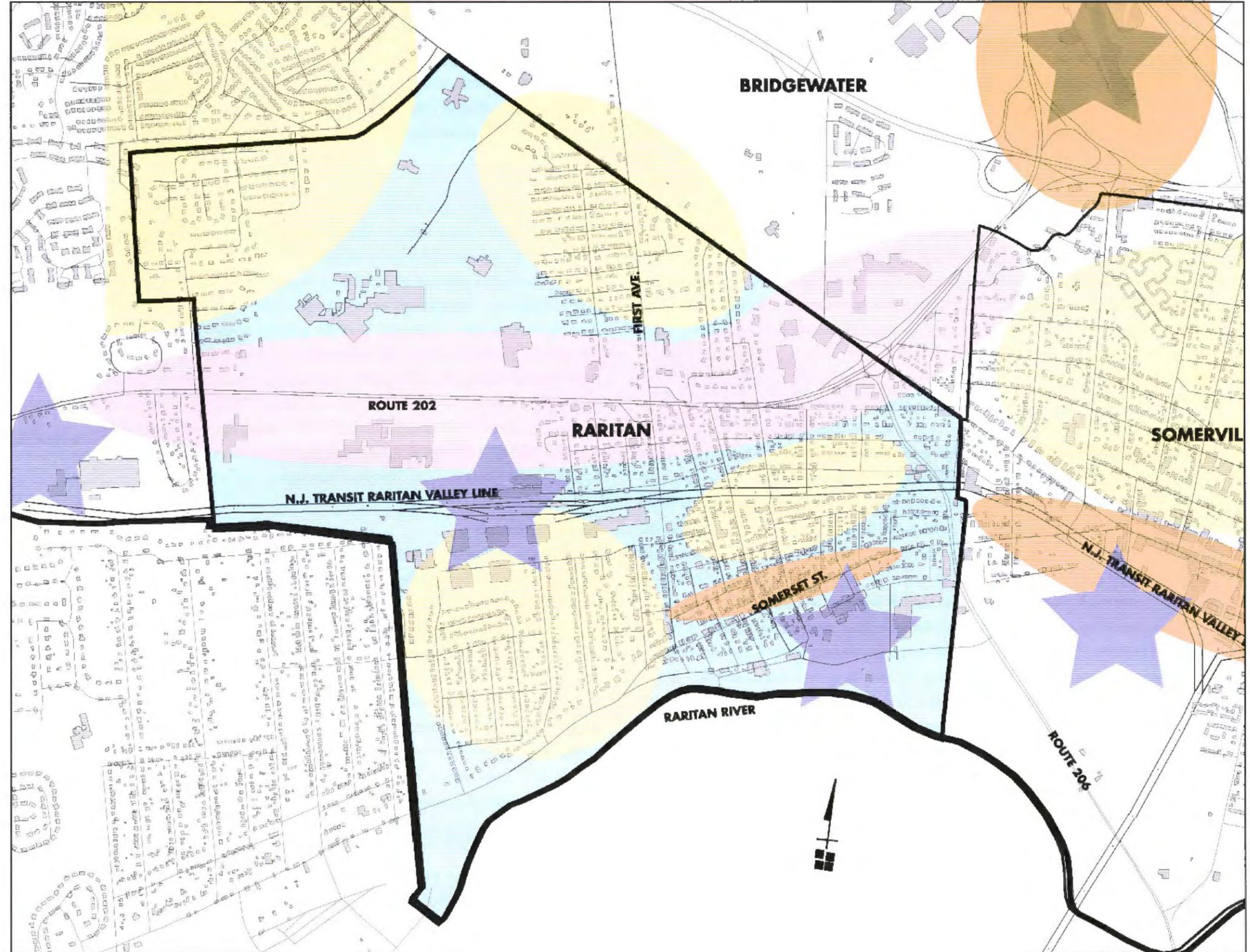
Home Occupation

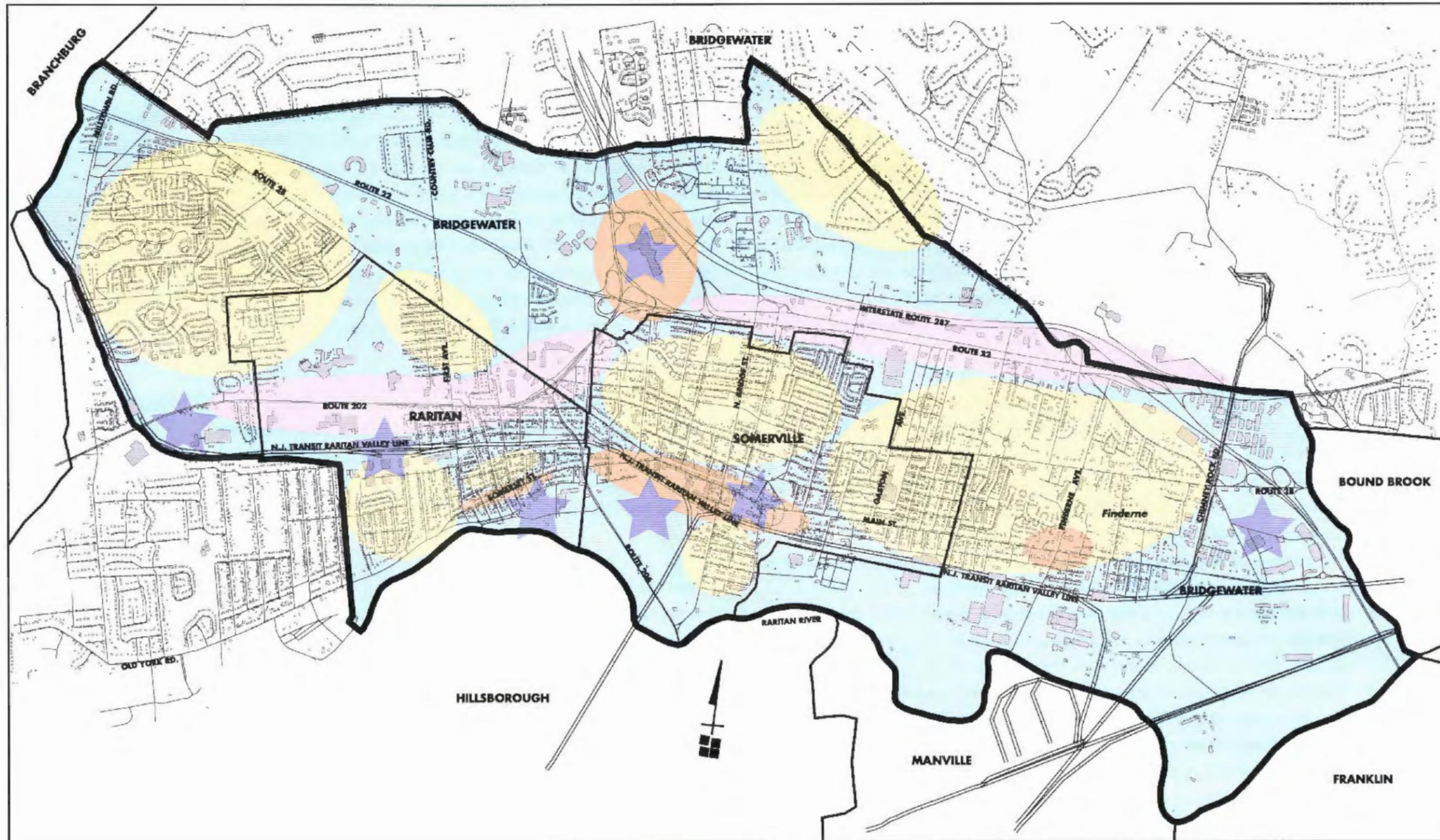
It is recommended that the Borough Zoning Ordinance be amended to permit home occupation as a conditional use in all residential zones.



**Raritan Borough
Generalized Land Use Plan**

-  Raritan
-  Regional Center Boundary
-  Buildings
-  Potential Recreation/
Redevelopment Areas
-  Residential
Neighborhoods
-  Commercial
Corridor
-  Commercial
Core





Regional Center Generalized Land Use Plan

- Regional Center
- Regional Center Boundary
- Buildings
- Potential Recreation/
Redevelopment Areas
- Residential Neighborhoods
- Commercial Corridor
- Commercial Core



CIRCULATION PLAN

Introduction

The Borough of Raritan, consisting of 2.1 square miles, is located in the geographic center of Somerset County adjacent to the County seat of Somerville. This small Borough has a long history and still retains its small town feel. The Borough is served well by many transportation modes. U.S. Highways 202 and 206 bisect the Borough and U.S. Route 22 and Interstate 287 are just to the north and east. The Borough is also served by a NJ Transit rail stop serving Newark, New Jersey and New York City.

It should be understood that the Transportation Circulation Plan is not intended to be a static document that is fixed for any particular time period; instead, it is subject to modification and refinement as additional information becomes available or circumstances change. Further, the Transportation Circulation Plan is a planning document; therefore, the exact engineering design for the proposed improvements to existing and future roadways and intersections are subject to site specific characteristics and restrictions that are beyond the scope of this report and will be determined at the time the particular improvement is to be constructed.

Municipal Goals and Objectives

The Borough's transportation goals and objectives can be summarized as follows:

- Ensure that the transportation services are safe and readily accessible to all members of the community.
- Land use and transportation planning should occur together. Impact assessments and build-out analyses should be utilized to determine the effect of land use plans on the movement of goods and people.
- Any increases or decreases in land use zones within Raritan should have a build-out analysis performed prior to the adoption of the new standard.
- Land use densities that are within close proximity to a mass transit stop should be reviewed for possible increases and changes of use to allow for a diversity of uses such as retail, office and residential that could compliment transit.
- All types of transportation infrastructure and services such as walking, bicycling, and ride sharing are recommended to enhance capacity increasing projects.
- All transportation infrastructure should be designed and constructed with the minimum improvements necessary to provide safe movement of people and goods.
- In order to control the appropriate speed limit on Borough streets the three "E's" should always be applied equally; Enforcement, Education and Engineering/design.
- To the extent possible and appropriate, the roadways designated to handle the largest volumes of traffic (i.e., the arterials and major collectors) should be those under the jurisdiction of the State of New Jersey and Somerset County.

- Work closely with the transit agencies in order to improve and increase service for the Borough's residents.
- Encourage the free flow of goods on the appropriate streets and rail corridors.
- Provide the residents with alternative means of transportation, such as multi-use trails and jitneys, which provide linkages to places of interest.

Regional Center Vision

Through the Regional Center's Vision, the Borough of Raritan will have successfully accommodated new growth and maintained the quality and uniqueness of the Borough. This was accomplished through smart growth and sustainable development principals. Equal space has been allotted in its circulation network to all modes of transportation. Its citizens will feel safe to walk to commercial uses, schools and their neighbor's homes. Bicycling along the Raritan River and along its streets will be safe and common. Trucks will be using the appropriate roadway and not going through residential areas. Speeding of cars through high pedestrian areas will be unusual. Frequent mass transit service will be a common sight, which will allow for better access to the rest of the Regional Center.

Focus Areas

The following three focus areas are discussed in the transportation section to stress the importance of the land use/transportation connection. They include the Raritan Woolen Mills, Federal Steel and Johnson Drive sites. Too many times in the past land use decisions were made without assessing the impacts to the transportation network. The discussion of the focus areas from a transportation perspective is critical to the overall planning for these areas.

Raritan Woolen Mills

The Woolen Mills site is a key redevelopment site for the Borough of Raritan. It is situated just south of the main downtown thoroughfare of Somerset Street and just west of a commercial gathering of stores that fronts an Route 206. This site also sits just north of the Raritan River and Orlando Drive.

Existing Conditions

- This site is bordered to the north by a residential neighborhood with low volumes of traffic.
- The site currently acts as buffer between the Borough's commercial areas.
- The challenge this site poses is how to develop the area with the least amount of negative impacts to the surrounding neighborhood.

Recommendations

The following is a list of recommendations for the Raritan Woolen Mills site:

- Open up a non-motorized connection between the commercial areas on Orlando Drive and Somerset Street. This could be accomplished through a pedestrian/bicycle connection from Elizabeth Street to Busky Lane.
- Encourage a good connection across Orlando Drive to the Raritan River. Ensuring a viable connection across Orlando Drive for bicyclists and pedestrians will encourage the use of the greenway along the river when it is constructed.
- Require on-street parking along all roads adjacent to the site in order to minimize the amount of on-site parking. This will also help to minimize the amount of impervious surface needed at the site.
- The traffic impact to St. John and Frederick should be considered during the planning stages of this site. Traffic calming measures should be used within the residential neighborhoods in order to mitigate any negative impacts from increased traffic on these streets.

Federal Steel/Johnson Drive

These sites are on the western edge of Raritan and the Regional Center. The Raritan Valley Line bisects these two sites. N.J. Transit uses the land between these two sites as a train yard for trains for the morning commute. The Federal Steel site is currently vacant and the Johnson Drive site is primarily industrial uses. Route 202 is to the north of both this sites and First Avenue is to the east.

Existing Conditions

- The sites are surrounded by several residential neighborhoods as well as a public school.
- Any redevelopment of the Federal Steel site should use Route 202 as the primary entrance. Using the existing neighborhood (Tillman Street) would be problematic at best from a strictly transportation impact of cars and trucks.
- Any residential infill considered for these sites would have to contend with the N.J. Transit rail yard that is utilized at early hours.

Recommendations

The following is a list of recommendations for the Federal Steel/Johnson Drive sites:

- Coordination of the Federal Steel site with the existing Ortho site would help to maximize the existing access points on Route 202 without building new ones.
- The northern part of the site could be used to relocate the existing Raritan rail station and serve as a Route 202 western gateway regional rail station. Having a rail station here would be consistent with the underway Route 202 Study and the Milan Planning

Exchange. This could also help to bring biotech businesses that would benefit from a close proximity to a rail station. An added benefit would be to redevelop the existing train station for added ratables for the Borough. Moving the train station would also lessen the impact of traffic on the neighborhood that now surrounds the existing train station.

- Create a transit-oriented development with a combination of residential, commercial and industrial uses. A transit-oriented development should be considered regardless of any rail initiative. This would allow it to be open to any bus rapid transit (BRT) options that could be available in the future.
- Create a greenway along the western edge of the site. Build a pedestrian and bicycle bridge across the Raritan rail line to connect this neighborhood and school facility to the north and this employment base to the south.

General Focus Areas

There are seven general focus areas within the Borough of Raritan which include:

- Downtown Area/Gateways
- Raritan Train Station
- Route 202
- Route 202/First Avenue Intersection
- Route 202/Vones Lane Intersection
- Route 206
- Somerville Circle
- Nevius Street Bridge
- Raritan River Greenway

Downtown Area/Gateways

The downtown area of Raritan has a number of transportation issues that have to be considered in any short or long term planning. The downtown has Somerset Street as its core east/west bisector. This road not only serves as the downtown street but also as a major connector to Bridgewater and Branchburg to the west and Somerville to the east. The sidewalks have been recently upgraded with pavers, benches and tree grates and the crosswalks are clearly marked.

Recommendations

The following is a list of recommendations for the Downtown Area\Gateways:

- The downtown area needs to focus on pedestrian safety. A pedestrian safe environment along Somerset Street would help to keep people coming back to this important neighborhood commercial district and the center of the Borough.





- Curb extensions should be considered at areas along Somerset Street that have a high number of pedestrian crossings.
- The entrance from both the east and west seems to architecturally announce that you have reached a center. Any gateway treatment should be subtle and sensitive to the context of the commercial core. A road narrowing on the east and west with space for plantings, flags and monuments would be sufficient for a gateway "treatment."

Raritan Train Station

The train station in Raritan is in the middle of a primarily residential neighborhood. This station is a part of the Raritan Valley line and has service from High Bridge to the west to Newark to the east. From Raritan, it would take one hour and twenty-three minutes to get to NYC Penn Station, with a connection at Newark Penn Station. The train service or frequency from Raritan is fairly regular. There are 28 trains on weekdays that travel east towards Newark and 26 trains heading west that stop in Raritan. Only five trains heading east on a weekday travel further west than Raritan. The next station west of Raritan, the North Branch station located in Branchburg, has only a total of twelve trains a day (combined east and west). Since Raritan is the best served "last" station there is a large parking demand. This is further exasperated by the location of the station in a primarily residential neighborhood. The cost for a monthly pass to NYC in 2002 is \$270 or about \$13.50 a roundtrip.

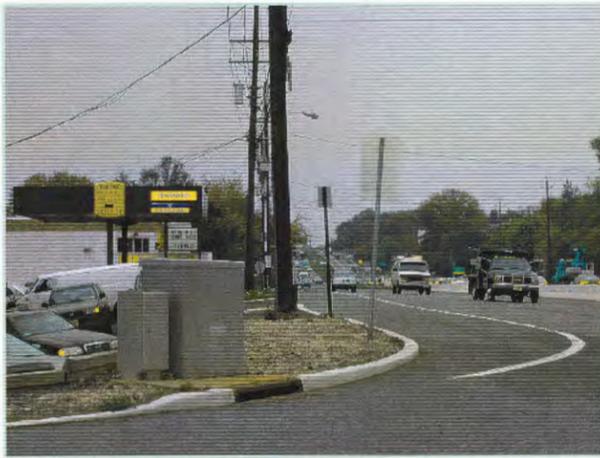
Recommendations

The following is a list of recommendations for the Raritan Train Station:

- Consider relocating the station to the Federal Steel site.
- Improve trail blazing signage to the station.
- Encourage more use of the bicycle lockers at the station.
- Strengthen the connection to downtown along Thompson Street.

Route 202

Route 202 is the primary urban arterial that cuts through the Borough from west to east, even though the highway is a major north to south route for the state. The highway acts as a dividing line of sorts, which makes connections from the north to the south difficult at best. The connections or intersections across Route 202 are the major focus for Raritan's internal circulation for all modes of transportation. Route 202 also has the majority of congestion or traffic volumes through the Borough. It has an Average Daily Traffic (ADT) count of over 35,000.



Recommendations

The following is a list of recommendations for Route 202:

- Improve the pedestrian crossing at Route 202 and First Avenue.
- Implement access management techniques along the Route 202 corridor such as shared driveways and minimizing any new access points.
- Provide sidewalks along Route 202.

Route 202/First Avenue Intersection

The intersection of First Avenue with Route 202 has a capacity issue during and sometimes after normal peak periods. The congestion at this intersection is the cause of accidents and makes it difficult for emergency vehicles to navigate through the "bottleneck". The delays at this location, also cause motor vehicles to use local roads for regional trips and make it difficult for pedestrians to cross the street at this location.

Recommendations

The following is a list of recommendations for the Route 202/First Avenue Intersection:

- Improve the pedestrian crossing at the Route 202/First Avenue Intersection.
- Perform a study to devise short and long-term strategies for the improvement of this intersection.
- Implement traffic calming techniques in the adjacent neighborhoods to minimize "cut through" traffic.
- Initiate a study to determine the feasibility of eliminating the "jughandle" and permitting left turns.
- Eliminate jughandle and permit left turns.

Route 202/Vones Lane Intersection

Vones Lane in the northwestern portion of the Borough should be considered for improvements because of increased traffic growth. Currently, the road has high volumes and narrow widths. The road serves as an important north/south connector for this portion of the Borough.

Recommendations

The following is a list of recommendations for the Route 202/Vones Lane intersection:

- Initiate a study to determine the feasibility of constructing an auxiliary lane at the intersection of Vones Lane and Route 202.
- Determine the feasibility of acquiring right-of-way and widening the roadway to Borough standards.
- Provide a deceleration lane.

Route 206

Route 206 is one of the primary arterials that run from south to north through the eastern edge of the community joining Route 202 and 28 at the “Somerville Circle.” Route 206 has Average Daily Traffic (ADT) of over 32,000. Route 206’s major intersection in Raritan is at Somerset Street. This is currently being widened.

Recommendations

The following is a list of recommendations for Route 206:

- Somerset County has been advocating for a better pedestrian connection for this critical connection to Somerville. This is an issue that is critical to the residents of Raritan that access Somerville by foot.
- Another crossing south of here from Orlando Drive to Somerville, and eventually through the landfill to the downtown is needed in order to have better circulation patterns between Raritan and Somerville.
- Implement access management techniques along the Route 202 corridor such as shared driveways and minimizing any new access points.
- Ensure that there is a continued sidewalk on both sides of Route 206.

Somerville Circle

The Somerville Circle is actually the junction of three highways, Route 202, Route 206 and Route 28. In the early nineties the circle was changed to remove the Route 202 traffic and a new overpass was created. The circle itself is actually split between Raritan and Bridgewater and is outside the boundaries of Somerville. Because of the heavy volumes of traffic currently using this route the circle will continue to be a traffic hot spot for Raritan and the region.

Recommendations

The following is a list of recommendations for the Somerville Circle:

- Encourage NJDOT to continue to work on the configuration of the existing circle in order to minimize the amount of accidents and increase volume.

Nevius Street Bridge

The Nevius Street Bridge is the only connection to Hillsborough south from Raritan. The existing bridge is old and narrow and cannot handle heavy loads. It technically can operate as a two-way bridge but many vehicles must wait if a vehicle is coming from the opposite direction. It is not signed as a one-way bridge and it currently has severe weight restrictions. The County’s future plans for this connection is to build a new bridge just to the west and continue First Avenue directly south into Hillsborough as a new orientation. The old bridge would be kept for a pedestrian/bicycle only crossing. This new improved connection will

have impacts on the overall traffic volumes on Somerset Street and First Avenue. The design of the new bridge should make provisions for connections to the proposed Raritan River Greenway.

Recommendations

The following is a list of recommendations for the Nevius Street Bridge:

- Measures to mitigate the eventual impact of higher traffic volumes using the new structure should be considered. Since First Avenue can only handle so many vehicles an hour any measure that would meter the amount of cars entering that heavily traveled corridor should be considered. Traffic signals metering the traffic on either end could be a solution. The metering of cars across the span would only allow a certain amount of volumes by design. Emergency vehicles when needed to use the bridge for a call could also then control these lights.
- The older structure and road leading up to it should be retrofitted to safely accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists. Bicycle paths and lanes should be installed on both sides of the structure
- The new structure should be designed to accommodate bicyclists safely as well. The lanes have to be wide enough so bicycles can share the lanes with the motor vehicles.

Raritan River Greenway

The Raritan River Greenway is an important long-term project for both Raritan and the Regional Center. This linear park will reconnect the Borough to the river and to the entire region. A coordinated linear park along the river could serve as an important alternative bicycling connection to New Brunswick, if completed that far.

Recommendations

The following is a list of recommendations for the Raritan River Greenway:

- Raritan should start to plan logical trailheads within the Borough limits so access is convenient.
- Connection to the downtown from the greenway should be signed so users of the trail can access stores.

Roadways

Existing System

The system of roadways within a municipality is a significant part of the land use planning process, since it is the roadway network that provides people with their most basic way to get around. Raritan Borough is somewhat dependent upon the automobile and has adequate access via the existing road system, as shown on the Raritan Borough Transportation Facilities Map.



The purpose of this section of the Circulation Plan Element is to document the characteristics of the existing road network throughout the Borough of Raritan. Information has been analyzed in order to determine those situations where the present roadway system appears to be deficient or problematic; thereby, helping to form the basis for the recommendations articulated later in this document.

Jurisdiction of Roads

The "Jurisdiction of Roads Map" indicates the Federal, State, County and Town jurisdiction of roads within Raritan Borough. Generally speaking, the volume and the function that a road performs are revealed by the political jurisdiction that has control of its design and maintenance.

There are over 22 miles of public roads in Raritan Borough. The bulk of these consist of municipal roads (over 72%) followed by county jurisdiction (over 14%) then state and federal roadways (14% or less). The State of New Jersey, through the New Jersey Department of Transportation, is responsible for maintaining all federal and state highways.

State Highway 202 runs east-west through the Borough and is located about ½ mile north of the center of town. State Highway 206 forms part of the eastern border of Raritan Borough and runs south-easterly through the Borough.

Roads under the jurisdiction of the County of Somerset include Somerset Street (CR 626), Old York Road (CR 567), Frelinghuysen Avenue (CR 644), and First Avenue (CR 567).

Functional Classifications of Roadways

Each of the various roads in the Raritan Borough is called upon to perform a different type of function in the overall transportation network. For planning purposes, roads are generally classified into three (3) major types: arterial, collector, or local. Each of these types defines a certain range of function.

Arterial Roads – Vehicular rights-of-way whose primary function is to carry traffic in a continuous route across or through an area. Arterials are typically a principal part of the road network for through traffic flow, taking traffic from collector streets that serve neighborhoods and connecting to freeways, expressways, and/or parkways. Arterial roads also may be broken down into principal and minor arterials. Principal arterials are those interstate and major highways that form an interconnected network of continuous routes serving regional corridors having the highest traffic volumes and the longest trip lengths. Minor arterials interconnect with and augment the principal arterial system.

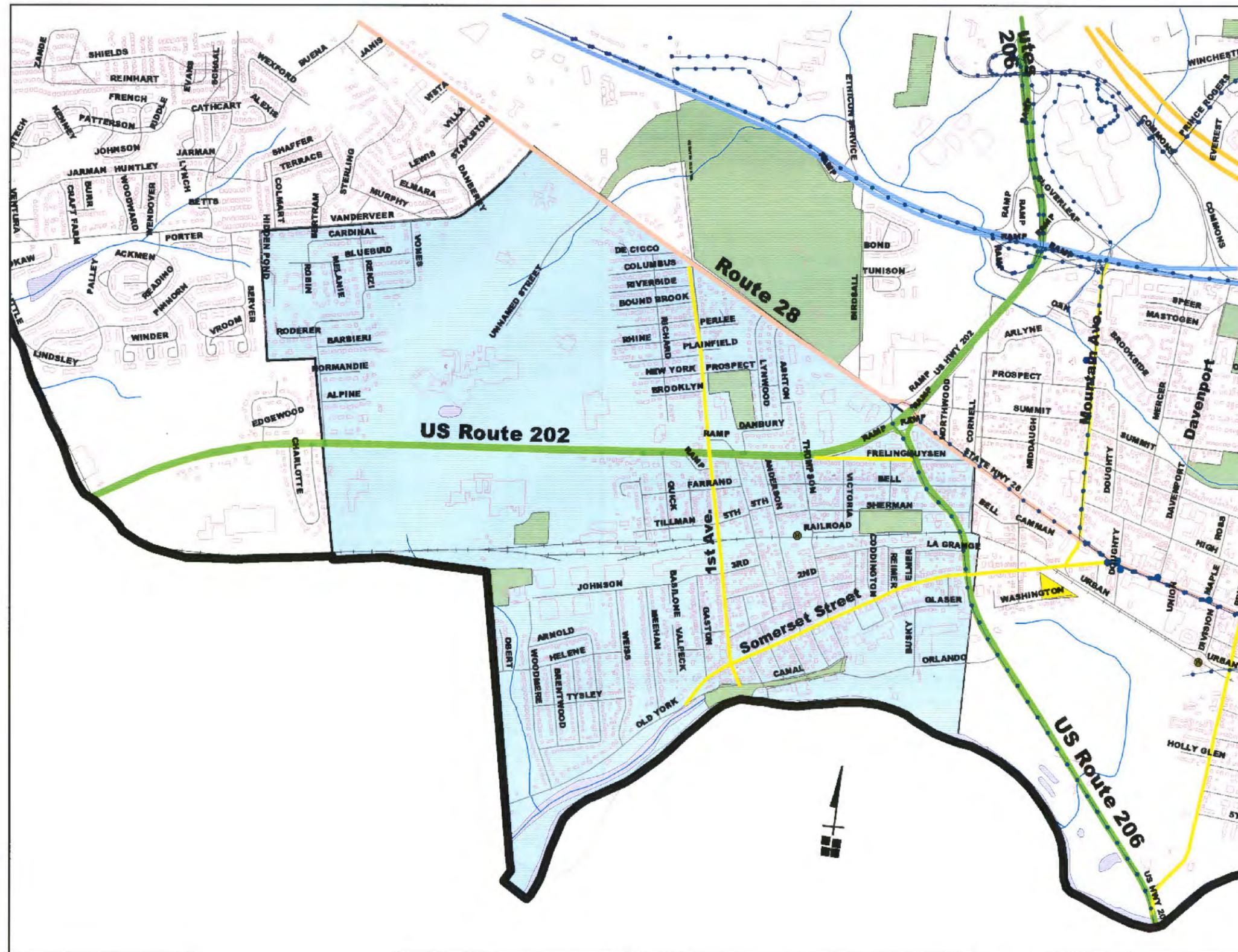
Collector Roads – These are the roads that carry traffic between arterials and local streets and provide access to abutting properties. In Raritan Borough, collectors are subdivided into two functional road systems: primary (major) and secondary (minor). The primary or major road is so classified due to its higher traffic volumes (both present and anticipated), and its importance in the overall circulation system. Essentially, this type of road carries more vehicular traffic than the typical collector, yet it is not an arterial road. The secondary or minor collector is the more typical collector type road connecting local streets with arterials or primary collectors and is herein referred to as a collector.

Local Streets – Streets that primarily provide access to abutting properties, usually single-family homes. These roads typically have low traffic volumes and low speeds. The local road system contains the large majority of all roadway mileage in a state, but only a small percentage of total traffic.

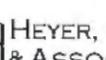
Note: The functional classifications described above are ideal types, since they rarely exist in true form.

Existing roads in Raritan Borough are classified as the following types:

Principal Arterial	U.S. Route 202
Major Arterial	U.S. Route 206, State Route 28
Minor Arterial	Somerset St. (CR 626), Old York Rd. (CR 567), Frelinghuysen Avenue (CR 644), and First Avenue (CR 567)
Residential Collectors	Center Street/Helene Place, Johnson Drive, Weiss Terrace, Anderson Street, Thompson Street, Vones Lane, Bell Avenue
Local Streets	All streets not listed above



Raritan Borough Transportation Facilities Map

-  Raritan
-  Regional Center Boundary
-  Buildings
-  New Jersey Transit Bus Stops
-  New Jersey Transit Bus Routes
-  I-287
-  Route 202/206
-  Route 22
-  Route 28
-  County Routes
-  Stream Corridors
-  Parks and Recreation Areas
-  Lakes and Other Waterbodies
-  Railroads
-  NJ Transit Rail Stations

Classification and Access

Access is characterized as limited, partial, or full depending on the purpose of the roadway.

Limited access occurs on highways especially designed for through traffic. The Borough of Raritan does not have any limited access roads within its boundaries. Abutting lot owners usually have a right to reasonable, but not direct, access. Interstate highways, parkways, and freeways are considered limited access highways.

Partial access occurs on arterial and collector roadways. An arterial transportation route primarily serves through traffic and provides access as a secondary function. An arterial roadway may have signalized intersections and access via driveways, and turn lanes may be restricted through the use of raised medians or barriers.

Collector roads primarily serve intra-county trips and are characterized by moderate volume and speed. They provide for land access, traffic circulation, and access to arterial routes. Access to abutting properties may or may not be restricted.

Full access occurs on local roads whose purpose is to provide direct access to abutting land and roads of higher classification. Mobility is lower than for other classifications and through movements are discouraged, especially in urban areas.

The State Highway Access Management Code

The State Highway Management Act was signed into law on February 23, 1989. Pursuant to this Act, the New Jersey Department of Transportation adopted the State Highway Access Management Code on March 25, 1992. The Municipal Land Use Law requires the contents of municipal ordinances governing subdivision and/or site plan approval to include provisions ensuring conformity with the State Highway Access Management Code regarding any state highway within the municipality and with any County Management Code regarding any county roadway within the municipality.

The State Highway Access Management Code consists of two components. The first is an access classification matrix and the second is a desired typical section for each segment of each state highway. Access levels to each classification and segment of road are established in the Code with the overriding purpose of controlling access to adjacent lands commensurate with the classification, speed and design of the highway. Within Raritan Borough the following roads fall under State jurisdiction: State Route 28 and U.S. Routes 202 and 206 are part of the federal highway system, but are state maintained.

Table 2 State, County and Municipal Road System Service Characteristics Raritan Borough, 2002					
Roadway	Length	Access	Desired Typical Section	Speed Limit	Orientation
State					
US 202	1.57 miles	Right-turn access with provision for left turn access via jughandle	4 lanes divided with shoulders or parking (114' R.O.W.)	55 & 45 mph	east-west
US 206	0.48 miles	Right-turn access with provision for left turn access via jughandle	6 lanes, divided with shoulders or parking (148' existing R.O.W.)	40 mph	north westerly – south easterly
NJ 28	1.48 miles	Driveway with provision for left-turn access via left-turn lane	2 lanes with shoulders or parking (78' R.O.W.)	45 mph	east-west
County					
Somerset St. (CR 626)	.68 miles	Full	As required to meet functional classification.	25-35 mph	south west – north east
Frelinghuysen Ave.(CR4)	.29 miles	Full	As required to meet functional classification.	25 mph	east-west
Old York Rd. (CR 567)	.16 miles	Full	As required to meet functional classification.	25-35 mph	south west – north east
First Ave. (CR 567)	1.1 miles	Full	As required to meet functional classification.	25-35 mph	north-south
Municipal					
All streets not listed above	N/A	Full	As required by local conditions.	25-35 mph	N/A

Existing Right-of-Way Widths

It is recommended that an estimated street right-of-way be produced for Raritan Borough from tax assessment maps and other relevant resources. Right-of-way can provide an indication of the traffic volumes traversing the road and its functional performance.

It should be noted that the right-of-way of a street is not synonymous with the width of the paved portion of the roadway, which is referred to as the cartway width. The right-of-way includes the paved area, or cartway, the shoulders, and most often the sidewalks, if present (see graphic). Somerset County roadways generally range in right-of-way widths between 50 to 80 feet. The municipal roadways in Raritan Borough generally provide a 40 foot right-of-way width.

With proper land use planning and zoning controls, it is possible to limit the right-of-way and cartway widths of roads, while nevertheless providing sufficient room for designs that enable the safe and convenient movement of traffic. As stated earlier in this document, it is a goal of Raritan Borough to have the roads within the municipality improved to the degree necessary to provide safe and convenient traffic movement. Conversely, it is also a goal of Raritan Borough to prevent any road work, which may cause traffic speeds to unnecessarily increase, cut-back existing bicycle and pedestrian areas, and require the removal of existing vegetation along the road's frontage.

Congestion

A safe and efficient roadway system is vital for the continued economic health of Raritan Borough. It is recommended that Raritan Borough identify roadways with congestion problems. Once congestion in areas have been identified, a traffic analysis should be conducted. Recommendations to ameliorate congestion issues can be developed following such a study. Roadways should be analyzed in relation to their functional classification and level of service.

Traffic Volumes

Traffic volumes on roadways within Raritan Borough have been increasing as the Borough and the surrounding areas have become more developed. This growth trend has resulted in increased travel times, capacity problems, diversion of traffic from highways to local roads, increased air pollution, and additional resources having to be diverted to new roadway construction. A traffic volume study should be performed in the Borough to determine where volumes exceed the roadway. Problem roadways should be identified for improvements.

Traffic Accidents

Raritan Borough should conduct an accident analysis to help identify high collision locations. Such an analysis could identify intersections and/or road segments that warrant further study.

Bikeways and Walkways

Existing System: Bicycle

Currently, Raritan Borough does not have a dedicated bicycle network. Raritan has not commissioned a bicycle connectivity study to determine origins, destinations, or proper facility combinations. It is recommended that such a study be commissioned in order to determine what improvements are necessary to improve the efficiency, capacity, and connectivity of the existing road network.

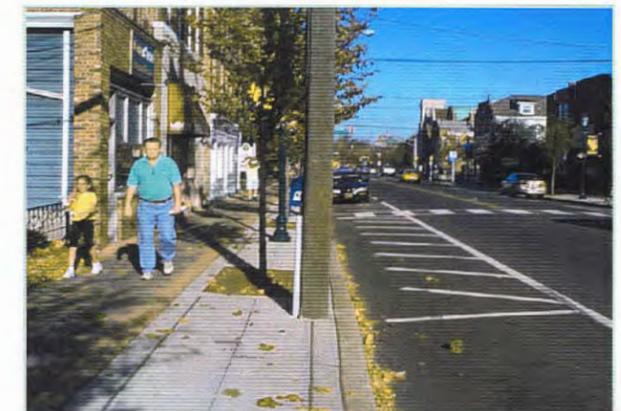
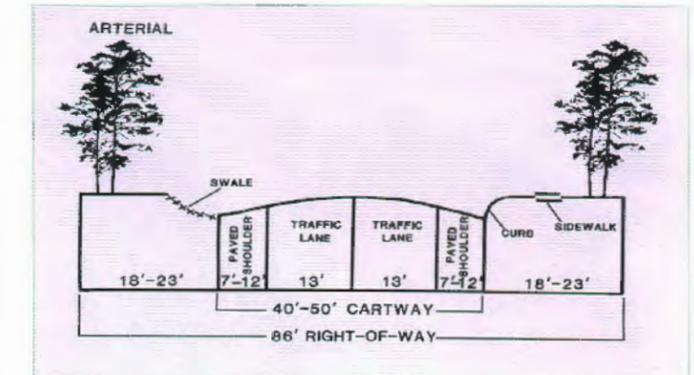
The census has some information relating to bicycle travel. The nature of the information is restricted to commuting patterns to work. As a result, the census information reflects commuting patterns to work, as opposed to recreational or general mobility. Census information alone should not be regarded as the gauge for bicycle and pedestrian need or demand. It is recommended that the Borough conduct a bicycle/pedestrian needs study in order to determine community needs and desires. Please keep these factors in mind as they relate to analysis of Census data.

In the 2000 Census, the Borough of Raritan had a total of only 34 persons commuting to work by "other means". This is comparable to the 29 persons regarded as traveling to work by similar measures from the 1990 Census. In the 1990 Census, 6 people were documented as using the bicycle as their means of transportation to work. The total number of persons using their bicycle for their work trips and associated trends cannot be determined until future data becomes available.

Existing System: Pedestrian

Currently, Raritan Borough does not have studies or inventories that document existing pedestrian facilities and demands. It is recommended that a sidewalk inventory and community pedestrian demand and needs survey be performed to determine pedestrian facility use and need.

In the 2000 Census Raritan Borough had a total of 115 persons walking to work. This is down by 27 people compared to the 1990 Census. This trend is typical of (or different than) this region as a whole.





Improvement Plans, Programs and Studies

Capital Improvement Plans

Currently, Raritan Borough does not have a municipal capital improvement plan. It is recommended that the Town engineer generate a capital improvement plan with a five year forecast. This plan should be updated annually. Such a person will be helpful in programming and budgeting improvements in Raritan Borough.

The County has a 6 year capital improvement plan. The County plan is prepared annually and lists projects for the next 6 years. The County plan is prepared by the Department of County Engineering and is approved by the County Freeholders at a public meeting. The County solicits input from municipal representatives. The County plan has three roadway projects in their program that could impact the community.

In 2004, the intersection of Somerset Street (CR 626) with Thompson Street is scheduled for an upgrade in the existing traffic signal. Engineering design, right-of-way, easements and inspections will be a part of this project.

In 2007, First Avenue (CR 567) is scheduled for the following improvements. Somerset Street (CR 626) to Route 202 (approximately 0.7 miles) is scheduled for construction and inspection. Drainage structures, milling, curb, bituminous concrete pavement, traffic stripes, etc. will be a part of this project.

In 2007, Nevius Street (CR 625) is scheduled for the following improvements along the road segment from Somerset Street (CR 626) to the Hillsborough Township border (approximately 0.2 miles) is scheduled for construction and inspection. Drainage structures, milling, curb, bituminous concrete pavement, traffic stripes, etc. will be a part of this project.

Since the community is in Somerset County the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) is the area's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The current Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) has one road project that will impact this community. Route 206 from Brown Avenue in Hillsborough to Frelinghuysen Avenue in Raritan Borough is currently being widened. This project should be considered in light of bicycle/pedestrian needs.

It is New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) policy that all roadways except limited access highways should be bicycle compatible. The Borough of Raritan will work with NJDOT to retrofit state roadways.

Planned Improvements

The policies stated in the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan relating to transportation have been considered and incorporated into the formulation of this Circulation Plan Element.

Inventory

There are currently no bicycle lanes or off-street shared use paths in the Borough of Raritan. There are no planned bikeways, for which funding has been committed.

Other Bicycle Facilities

The Borough of Raritan provides bicycle facilities such as bicycle racks and bicycle lockers, which can be found at the Raritan Train station and the Elementary School.

Walkways

Pedestrian Circulation

The pedestrian system in Raritan Borough is largely defined by the roadway network and therefore consists primarily of the sidewalks and shoulders along the streets, and the crosswalks, curb ramps, medians and signals provided at intersections. Principal pedestrian streets generally consist of the minor arterial and collector streets in the Borough.

Typical pedestrian distances are shorter than vehicle trip distances, and travel distance poses a greater limit on pedestrian travel compared to vehicle travel. As a result, the pedestrian network in Raritan Borough includes numerous shortcuts and passages, including parking lots, alleys and pedestrian paths. Walkways to off-street parking lots provide a critical portion of the pedestrian network, both to provide access to the parking lot and to allow cut-throughs between blocks.

Since there is a mix of land uses within Raritan Borough and since there is a continuity of the pedestrian network one would conclude that a substantial portion of local trips are made by walking. Even though the current census shows that work trips made by walking has decreased it does not necessarily mean that all trips made by walking have also decreased. Elimination of vehicle trips by walking helps to enhance the quality of life, provides a healthy citizenry and reduces the total amount of traffic on local streets. Improvement of the sidewalks and their landscaping will make walking more appealing and further the goal of making Raritan Borough a truly pedestrian-friendly community.



Sidewalks

A sidewalk is an improved facility intended to provide for pedestrian movement usually, but not always, located in the public right-of-way adjacent to a roadway. Sidewalks are typically constructed of concrete, but can be built with other materials, such as asphalt or even wood. Sidewalks are especially important in densely developed areas, such as Borough centers or residential developments. They are also important around schools, parks, municipal buildings, and senior citizen housing.

Intersections

Generally the most concentrated area of pedestrian activity occurs at street intersections, especially in business districts. Not only do pedestrian flows intersect each other at these locations but also these flows are interrupted by vehicular cross traffic and are exposed to vehicular turning movements. Since these areas have higher concentrations of pedestrians and cross traffic, they are the least desirable places for sidewalk impediments that constrict flow and may result in pedestrian overflow into vehicular spaces.

Pedestrian facilities should be designed to provide for pedestrian flows and the storage of pedestrians waiting to make their desired street crossing. It is desirable not to locate parking spaces, poles, mail boxes, bus stop shelters, planters, trees and similar items near crosswalks where they may obscure pedestrians and the handicapped from the motorists' view and decrease pedestrian storage and queuing areas.

Intersections, particularly signalized intersections, are the most complex part of the road network for pedestrians. There are 32 possible vehicle-to-pedestrian conflicts at the 4-way intersection of two roads. Many occur at high speeds.

Mass Transit

Existing System Inventory

The public transportation in Raritan includes a commuter rail network by NJ Transit called the Raritan Valley Line. This station is a part of the Raritan Valley Line and has service from High Bridge to the west to Newark to the east. From Raritan it would take one hour and twenty-three minutes to get to NYC Penn Station, with a switch in trains in Newark. The train service or frequency from Raritan is fairly regular. There are 28 trains on weekdays that travel east towards Newark and 26 trains heading west that stop in Raritan. Only five trains heading east on a weekday have an origin west of Raritan. Therefore, the Raritan stations serves as the best served western station. The cost for a monthly pass to NYC in 2002 is \$270 or about \$13.50 a roundtrip.

Since times of departure, arrivals and fares change over time it is recommended that the local transit agency be contacted for the most up to date information.

The parking lot at the train station has both daily and permit spaces and is operated by the Borough. Tickets for the train can be purchased at the station or on the train from the conductor. If the station is open, tickets must be purchased at the station prior to boarding or a surcharge is imposed.

Collapsible bicycles are accommodated on all NJ Transit trains at all times. During off-peak travel periods standard frame bicycles may be carried on-board and all day Saturday and Sunday. During peak travel periods standard frame bicycles are only permitted on outbound trains scheduled to depart a cyclist's boarding station during the weekday morning commute. Standard frame bicycles are only permitted on inbound trains scheduled to depart a cyclist's boarding station during the weekday evening commute.

Paratransit

Each of the 21 counties in New Jersey provides County-based Paratransit service for Senior Citizens and People with Disabilities. NJ Transit assists in the provision of accessible services by the counties and non-profit agencies through the administration of the Casino Revenue's Senior Citizens and Disabled Residents Transportation Assistance Program, and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310, 5311, and 5307 Programs. Somerset County provides Paratransit service for the Borough of Raritan, operating a fleet of 106 vehicles, 74 of which are handicapped accessible.

Goods Movement

Moving freight, like raw materials and finished products, is an area of increasing importance to New Jersey. Businesses, jobs, and consumers all rely on it. The key is to devise regional goods movement strategies that will facilitate the flow of freight and minimize adverse impacts on local communities. A freight movement system includes the highway network, a rail freight network, maritime ports, air cargo facilities, and freight transfer facilities.

These elements of the transportation system are connected through numerous intermodal facilities. An intermodal transportation facility is a transportation hub that connects different modes serving intrastate, interstate, or international movement of people and goods. Because of the critical role these facilities play, they are vital components to economic vitality and growth.





The goods movement industry is a major user of the transportation network in Somerset County and throughout the state. Because of the county's extensive transportation network and proximity to markets, this industry is key to its economy. Trucks are the dominant mode of freight transportation in Somerset County. However, rail, air and waterborne freight also play a vital role. Goods movement in Somerset County consists of two types: overhead and originating/terminating. Overhead freight only passes through the county, while originating/terminating traffic either begins or ends its trip within the county.

Truck Freight

The extensive highway system in Somerset County, has been a factor in the amount of truck traffic to and through the area over the last ten years. Trucks have benefited from the technological advances made during the 1970s and 1980s with stronger suspensions, better tires, and lighter materials, allowing them to transport heavier loads more efficiently.

It is necessary to plan for the continued growth of trucking in and through the area. The added truck volumes and the delays caused by congestion and an inadequate transportation network for extensive freight traffic are issues that need to be continually addressed.

General Recommendations

- Update the functional classifications of the existing and proposed roadways within Raritan Borough to meet today's existing and projected use.
- Update the required right-of-way and cartway widths for each roadway functional classification to meet the existing and projected use.
- Update the proposed cross-section for each roadway, including the number and width of traffic lanes and the requirements for shoulders and sidewalks.
- Designate the location of intersections that need realignments, widening, and/or traffic control signals, the designs of which are to be engineered at the time the intersection is to be improved.
- Prepare a 5-year road improvement plan. This plan should study areas identified in the Borough's Transportation Circulation Plan Element and prioritize the recommended improvements for all road infrastructure improvements that fall under municipal jurisdiction.
- Provide short and/or long-term bicycle parking in all commercial districts, in employment centers and multifamily developments, at schools, in industrial developments, at special events, in recreational areas, and transit facilities.
- Adopt NJDOT's Bicycle Compatible Roadways and Bikeways Planning and Design Guidelines as part of the Borough of Raritan's Ordinances.
- Seek methods to improve pedestrian access throughout the Borough of Raritan and increase pedestrian connectivity.

- Implement pedestrian improvements as part of all transportation improvements, including road construction, reconstruction, traffic calming, and intersection improvements, wherever feasible.
- Ensure that all projects in Raritan Borough conform to the NJDOT Pedestrian guidelines.
- Traffic calming techniques should be used as a tool to increase pedestrian safety and access.
- Coordinate with the county and state to identify major truck routes through and around the Borough.
- Identify existing or future roadway features that are unsafe or limit the passage of trucks.
- Increase enforcement of motor vehicle violations by trucks and other large vehicles.
- All new businesses should be encouraged to submit a trip reduction plan upon submitting an application to the Planning Board.
- Borough government should sponsor walk and bike to work days as an annual event.
- The NJ Transit bus service (Route 114) that stops in Somerville should be extended into Raritan.
- Develop benchmarks – standards or measurements which the community can gauge current and future compliance and noncompliance with overall plan goals. These may include transit-supporting population densities, transit level of service based not only on capacity, but also on headways (time between service), and other service characteristics, walk mode share, pedestrian facility mileage, poor sidewalk condition, pedestrian-friendly areas guidelines, vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per capita, vehicle air pollutant emissions, poor bridge/pavement condition, bicycle mode share, bicycle facility mileage, provision of bicycle facilities/amenities at transit hubs and other activity centers.

PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN

Introduction

The Borough of Raritan is located within Somerset County, in the central part of New Jersey as shown on the Regional Location Map. It is one of the three municipalities within the Regional Center of Somerset County, which consists of Raritan, Somerville Borough and portions of Bridgewater Township. It has a suburban character with diverse residential neighborhoods, major highway corridors, several redevelopment sites as well as environmentally sensitive areas with wetlands, floodways and flood plains. The Borough provides a variety of passive and active recreation areas and potential links to adjacent Regional Center municipalities.

Due to Raritan's built-out nature, there are limited opportunities for additional open space preservation and recreation facilities in the Borough. These include the Raritan River Greenway and secondary greenways as well as several redevelopment areas that can accommodate future parks, recreation and open space amenities. The Borough's existing open space network are shown on the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Map.

Municipal Goals and Objectives

The Borough's park, recreation and open space goals and objectives can be summarized as follows:

- Monitor the Borough's inventory of recreation facilities to ensure that adequate passive and active recreation areas are available and properly maintained throughout the community.
- Maintain and preserve the existing parks and recreation facilities within the Borough with a goal of acquiring and preserving additional properties as they become available.
- Pursue funding through Federal, State and County agencies to help acquire, maintain and improve recreation and open space facilities. Work with non-profit organizations and private property owners to acquire, deed restrictions and conservation easements for open space.
- Recognize the active recreation recommendations set forth by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Green Acres program and work to address recreational deficiencies in underserved areas and neighborhoods.
- Support the efforts of the Regional Center Partnership and the Regional Center Vision Initiative to create open space areas within the designated Regional Center and its member communities.
- Continue to work with Somerset County to expand the greenways program, which provides for public areas along the Raritan, North Branch and Green Brook Rivers.
- Consider the existing redevelopment and/or acquisition of vacant properties for future recreation and open space purposes.

Regional Center Vision

The Borough of Raritan is an integral member of the Somerset County Regional Center. The Regional Center was designated by the New Jersey State Planning Commission in 1996 to provide a coordinated planning framework for the Center and its municipalities that help address quality of life issues for the residents, businesses and visitors. The Regional Center Vision Initiative, prepared in 1999, outlined several goals and objectives for open space preservation and recreation facilities. These were confirmed through the public participation process and include:

- Create an open space system preserving lands of regional and local significance.
- Preserve natural resources and open space in order to shape the extent and location of growth and development.
- Increase and match parks, recreational facilities and open space to accommodate the needs of a growing and diverse population.
- Increase the availability of land used for active recreation such as ballfields, courts and biking/walking paths.
- Create and expand a greenway and trail system in the Regional Center including the Peter's Brook and Raritan River Greenway to connect natural resources, parks, neighborhoods and activity centers.
- Preserve and acquire unique sites having environmentally sensitive areas, cultural value or historical significance.
- Redevelop the Raritan Woolen Mills, Johnson Drive and Federal Steel sites in order to strengthen connections, provide active and passive recreational opportunities and create linkages to surrounding residential neighborhoods, the downtown area and the Raritan River Greenway.
- Pursue alternative means of funding for park development and maintenance including greater access to the County Open Trust Fund and State Green Acres program, as well as other non-profit and state programs.
- Establish a Green Plan coordinated with the Regional Center Strategic Plan and the community Master Plans.
- Seek the development of a Regional Center recreation facility to meet the needs of the three (3) member municipalities.
- Establish indoor recreational programs at the Washington School gym.

Existing Inventory

The Borough of Raritan contains a number of recreation and open space properties that are under public ownership. As shown in Table 1, there are approximately 78 acres of parks, recreation and open space in the Borough. The Borough owns a total of 37 acres or almost half of the total parks, recreation and open space in the Borough while 20 acres are passive recreation lands under County ownership. There are also 21 acres of other public or semi-public land used for recreation and open space purposes.





Table 1 Total Parks, Recreation and Open Space Raritan Borough, 2002	
Ownership	Acres
Borough	37
County	20
Public or Semi-Public	21
Total	78

Source: Raritan Master Plan 1989

Borough Owned Land

Within Raritan, there are 37 acres of parks, recreation and open space that is owned by the Borough of Raritan as shown in Table 1. This represents almost 3 percent of total land area within the Borough. Some of these parcels include:

- Washington School Fields at First Avenue and Prospect Place.
- First Avenue tennis courts near Tillman Street.
- Elizabeth Avenue Park.
- Frelinghuysen Park along Sherman Avenue.
- Basilone Park near John F. Kennedy School.
- Twelve acres of passive recreational park land on the border of Bridgewater Township purchased with NJDEP Green Acres funding.
- Cardinal Woods

County Owned Land

Within the Borough of Raritan, there are 20 acres of parks, recreation and open space under County ownership as shown in Table 2. This represents almost 2 percent of the total land area within the Borough. The County property is used for limited recreation and open space. It also will be incorporated into the future Raritan River Greenway.

Table 2 Active and Passive Recreation Sites Raritan Borough, 2002		
Site	Acres	Amenities
Washington School Fields	2	Softball and little league baseball (active)
First Avenue Tennis Courts	.75	Park and tennis courts (active)
Elizabeth Avenue Park	.5	Playground (active)
Frelinghuysen Park	4	Basketball, tennis courts, children's swimming pool, clubhouse, baseball fields, remote control car track and tot climbing equipment (active)
Basilone Park	2	Children's pool, clubhouse, children's playground and basketball court (active)
Somerset County land and Canal Street park	20	Linear riverfront park with playground and picnic tables (active and passive)
Woodmere Street	14	Passive recreational use
Former landfill site	N/A	Driving range
Scattered vacant Borough land, Canal Street Park land adjacent to the Raritan River in flood hazard zone and adjacent to the former sewer disposal plant	13.7	No amenities (passive)
Total	57	

Source: Raritan Master Plan 1989

Public and Semi-Public Land

There are approximately 21 acres in the Borough of Raritan held in public and semi-public ownership as shown in Table 3. This represents approximately 2 percent of total land area within the Borough. These include the Bridgewater-Raritan Board of Education facilities such as the John F. Kennedy School and are used for active recreation including ballfields and playgrounds.

Table 3 Public and Semi-Public Active and Passive Recreation Sites Raritan Borough, 2002		
Site	Acres	Amenities
John F. Kennedy School (Bridgewater-Raritan Board of Education)	21	Playground, ballfields (active)
Total	21	

Source: Raritan Master Plan 1989

Need Analysis

New Jersey Balanced Land Use Standard

The New Jersey Balanced Land Use Standard is a method identified in the New Jersey Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, or SCORP. It states that 3 percent of developed and developable land within a municipality should be preserved for active and passive recreation. The total area of the Borough of Raritan is 1,292 acres. Land that should be dedicated to recreation within the Borough is calculated at 38 acres according to the Balanced Land Use Standard. This total excludes the County, State, Farmland Preservation and deed restricted land and is calculated from the 1,272 acres of total remaining land, as shown in Table 4. According to this measure, Raritan has a moderate need for additional recreation facilities based upon the target of 38 acres and existing inventory of 37 acres.

Table 4 SCORP Balanced Land Use Standard Raritan Borough, 2002	
	Acres
Total Land Area	1,292
County Land	20
Remaining Borough Land Area	1,272
3% of developed and developable land	38

Source: New Jersey Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, Borough of Raritan

New Jersey Green Acres Population Standard

The New Jersey Green Acres Population Standard is the second method identified in the SCORP. It provides a method of analyzing the impact that population growth will have on the demand for recreational facilities within a community. The population method calculates the need for a particular facility based upon a recommended acreage per person. For example, it suggests 1.5 acres per 1,000 people for tot lots and playgrounds, 1.5 acres per 1,000 people for playing fields and 5 acres per 1,000 people for neighborhood or community parks. The Borough of Raritan should have 39 acres of active recreation facilities under the New Jersey Green Acres Population Standard, as shown in Table 5. The Borough has 1.5 acres devoted to tot lots and playgrounds, 6.75 acres of playing fields and 6 acres of neighborhood and community parks. Using the Population Standard and the 2000 Census figures, the Borough is deficient in each of the suggested acreage categories. A 2010 projection is unavailable at present pending the release of future population growth estimates.

Table 5 SCORP Acres per Population Standard Raritan Borough, 2002			
Use	Suggested Acreage	Existing Acres	2000 Census (6,338)
Tot Lots and Playgrounds	1.5 acres per 1,000 people	1.5	9.5
Playing Fields	1.5 acres per 1,000 people	6.75	9.5
Neighborhood Community Parks	5 acres per 1,000 people	6	31.7
Total		14.2	39.2

Source: New Jersey Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, Borough of Raritan

Future Parks and Open Space

The Borough of Raritan's generalized future parks, recreation and open space network is shown on the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Map.





Redevelopment Focus Area

The Borough of Raritan has several redevelopment focus areas that have been identified through the Borough's Master Plan process, the Somerset County Regional Center Vision Initiative and further confirmed in the Somerset County Regional Center Strategic Master Plan Issues Report prepared in March 2002. These are the Raritan Woolen Mills, Johnson Drive and Federal Steel sites. The land use plan recommends incorporating parks, recreation and open space into their redevelopment. This includes small parks, passive open space and greenway connections.

Raritan Woolen Mills Site

The Raritan Woolen Mills site is a 1.5-acre parcel located in the southeastern section of the Borough of Raritan close to the downtown and the Raritan River. It is a remnant of Raritan's industrial past and an asset that can be improved by creating a gateway to the downtown and Raritan River Greenway. The creation of a linear walking/biking trail from Elizabeth Street to the Raritan River Greenway and the development of a new public park off of Orlando Drive is recommended. The preservation of on-site open space in environmentally sensitive areas is also recommended.

Johnson Drive/Federal Steel Site

The Johnson Drive and Federal Steel sites are located in the central section of the Borough of Raritan. Both sites have been identified as areas for redevelopment, however, they also have potential for open space and recreation uses. The Federal Steel site is largely vacant and could serve as a future active recreation site. Alternatively, a small park, passive open space and greenway connections should be included in redevelopment. It is recommended that open space buffers and greenway connections to John F. Kennedy School and Basilone Park be incorporated into adaptive reuse and redevelopment on Johnson Drive.

Raritan River Greenway

The creation of the Raritan River Greenway is a centerpiece of the Regional Center Vision Initiative and is strongly endorsed by the Borough of Raritan. The Greenway has been described as the most significant natural resource and potential recreation amenity in the Borough and Regional Center. Major components of the Greenway include the following:

- Creation of a regional active and passive recreation complex serving the Regional Center and its member municipalities.
- Provision of active recreation facilities including ballfields, courts and walking/biking trails.
- Establishment of open space areas and passive recreation opportunities including seating, viewing areas and wooded land.
- Expansion of riverfront access for fishing, canoeing and other water related activities.

The Raritan River Greenway is the foundation of the Borough's future park, recreation and open space system and its creation will address most of the future demand for new facilities.

Recommendations

- Preserve and enhance existing parks, recreation and open space by providing new amenities, creating connections and maximizing use.
- Work with the County, Regional Center Partnership and the Regional Center municipalities to plan for and locate a regional recreation facility.
- Implement the Raritan River Greenway to increase parks, recreation and open space and connect the Borough to Regional Center communities.
- Incorporate parks, recreation and open space into the redevelopment of the Woolen Mills, Federal Steel and Johnson Drive sites.
- Pursue inter-local agreements, cost-sharing and pooled funding with Bridgewater and Somerville to increase the availability of parks, recreation and open space.
- Increase access to funding from the County Open Space Trust Fund and New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Green Acres program for park maintenance, improvements and creation of new facilities.
- Preserve the Somerset County Administration Annex for recreation use and programs.
- Coordinate with the County, Regional Center Partnership and Regional Center municipalities on a Green Plan.
- Establish a Green Streets program to enhance public spaces and rights-of-way.
- Consider a municipal park, recreation and open space trust fund to create new facilities and leverage County and State funding sources.



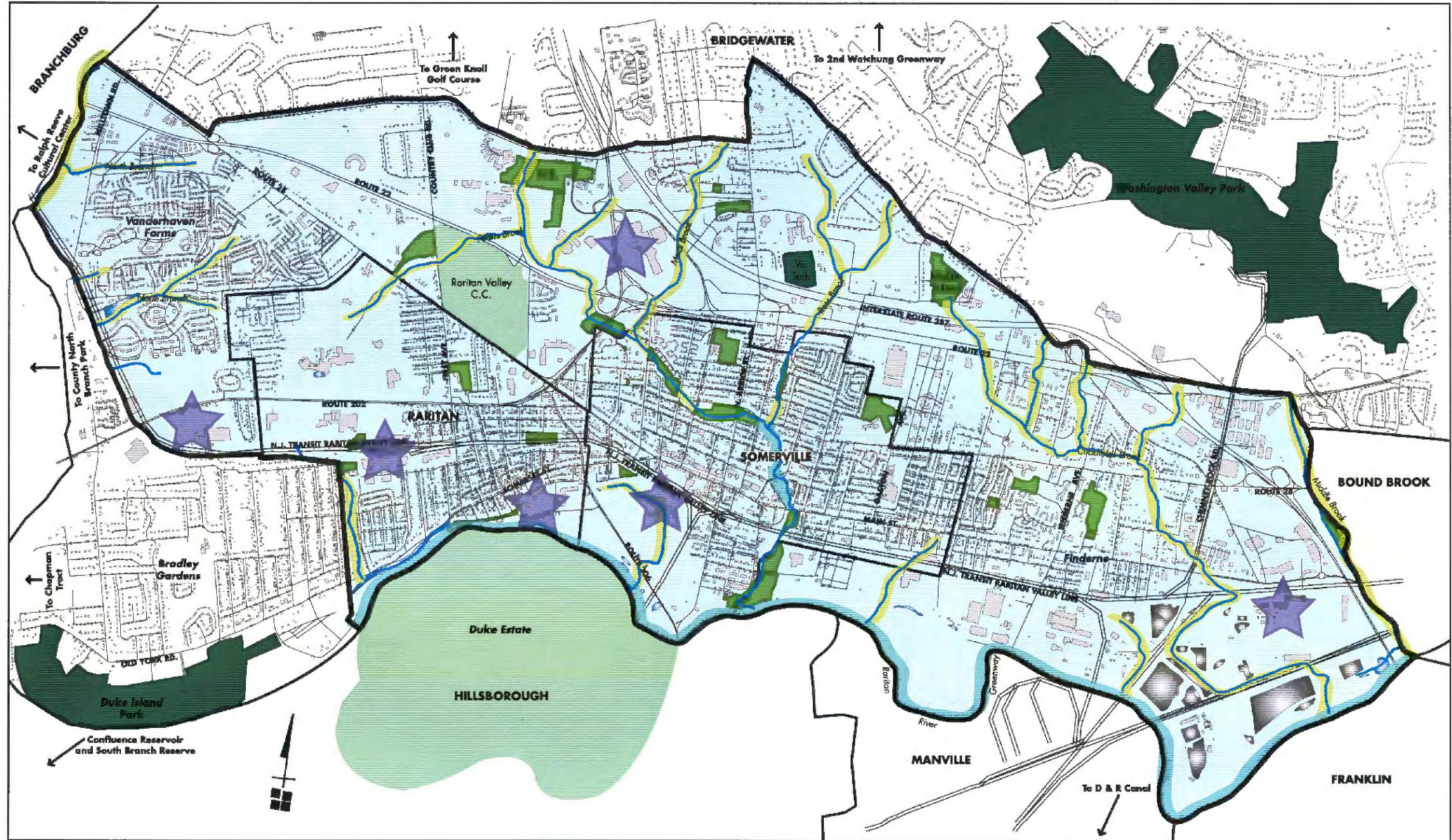


Raritan Parks, Recreation and Open Space Map

-  Raritan
-  Regional Center Boundary
-  Buildings
-  County Recreation/Open Space
-  Municipal Recreation/Open Space
-  Private Recreation/Open Space
-  Potential Recreation/Redevelopment Areas
-  Raritan River/Peter's Brook Greenway
-  Stream Corridors
-  Proposed Greenway Extensions

Regional Center Parks, Recreation and Open Space Map

-  Regional Center
-  Regional Center Boundary
-  Buildings
-  County Recreation/ Open Space
-  Municipal Recreation/ Open Space
-  Private Recreation/ Open Space
-  Potential Recreation/ Redevelopment Areas
-  Raritan River/ Peter's Brook Greenway
-  Stream Corridors
-  Proposed Greenway Extensions



COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN

Introduction

Raritan Borough provides a full range of community facilities for its residents, including administrative services, police, emergency response, and a library. In addition, Somerset County and the Bridgewater-Raritan Regional School District provide educational opportunities for Borough residents. Medical services are available through nearby hospitals. The Borough must maintain a high level of community facilities in order to retain and attract businesses and residents.

Existing Conditions

Municipal Facilities

Administration Building and Public Works

The Municipal Administration Building is located at 22 First Street. This structure houses the Borough Administration, the Police Department, and Municipal Courts. The Public Works Department is located south of the Central Business District in a flood-prone area.

Emergency Services

Police

Raritan operates its own Police Department. Its headquarters is located in the Municipal Building at 22 First Street. The facility is experiencing problems maintaining its operations due to a severe shortage of available space and must use a temporary office trailer for some functions.

Fire Protection/Emergency Response

Fire protection in Raritan is provided by the Relief Hose Company #2, a Volunteer Fire Company located on North Thompson Street. The Raritan First Aid Squad, located on LaGrange Street, provides emergency rescue services.

Schools

Elementary and Secondary Schools

Public elementary and secondary education in the Borough is provided by the Bridgewater-Raritan Regional District. The district, which serves both Raritan and Bridgewater Township, operates six elementary schools for grades K-3, two intermediate schools for grades 4-5, a middle school for grades 6-8, and a high school for grades 9-12. The John F. Kennedy Elementary School is located within Raritan, while all other schools in the district are located in Bridgewater.

Table 1 Bridgewater-Raritan Regional School District Enrollment				
Grades	1996 Enrollment	2001 Enrollment	2006 Enrollment (projected)	Percent Change, 2001-2006 (projected)
K-3	2,204	2,602	2,515	- 3.3 %
4-5	1,006	1,384	1,535	+ 10.9 %
6-8	1,354	1,901	2,335	+ 22.8 %
9-12	1,677	2,114	2,951	+ 39.5 %

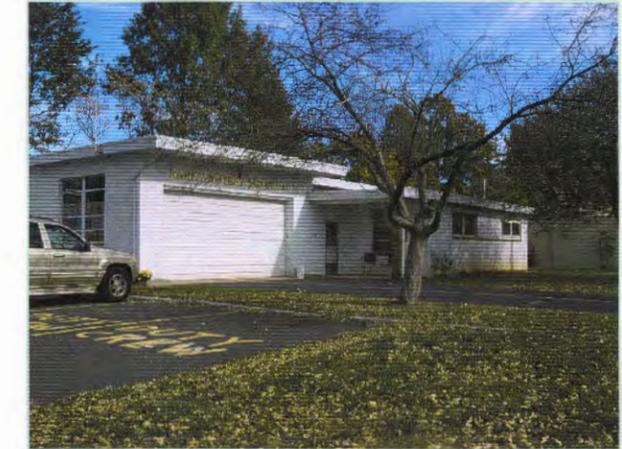
Table 1 shows actual enrollment in 1996 and 2001 and projected enrollment in 2006. As shown in the table, the school district has been experiencing rapid enrollment growth in recent years and expects this high rate of growth to continue in the intermediate, middle, and high school grades. To cope with this increase in the student population, the district is currently completing expansions to Bridgewater-Raritan High School. The district has also developed a five-year Capital Improvement Program, which was accepted by the New Jersey Department of Education in 2001. The Capital Improvement Program proposes classroom additions to Bridgewater-Raritan Middle School and the two intermediate schools. Somerset County provides vocational and technical education for Raritan residents. The Somerset County Vocational and Technical High School, serving grades 9-12, is located within the Regional Center in Bridgewater.

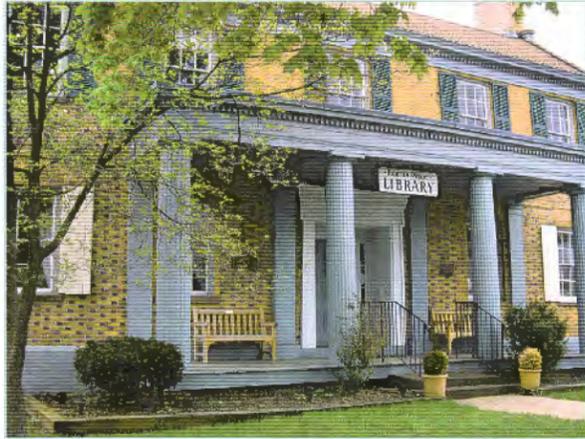
Higher Education

Raritan is served by 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 campus is located in Branchburg Township, approximately 5 miles west of the Regional Center. Two major research universities, Rutgers and Princeton, are also located within 20 miles of Raritan.

Libraries

Raritan Borough operates one library, located in a historic home at 54 East Somerset Street. The library provides books, videos, books on tape, and CDs, and sponsors community events.





Health Care

Hospitals

The closest full-service hospital to Raritan is the Somerville Medical Center, located within the Regional Center in the Borough of Somerville. The 365-bed medical center provides a range of outpatient, inpatient, and community services. Additional specialized hospital services are available at St. Peter's Hospital and Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick, located 14 miles southeast of Raritan.

Mental Health Center

The Somerset County Mental Health Center, located in Bridgewater Township, provides comprehensive services for county residents experiencing mental or emotional illness. Outpatient care, 24-hour acute care, an adult care program, school liaison services, and an adolescent program are among the services provided.

Shared Services

For many years, Raritan Township has pursued shared-services agreements with other municipalities. The Township currently shares some municipal staff with surrounding municipalities including Manville and Somerville.

Recommendations

- Consider opportunities to share various municipal facilities and services with Bridgewater and/or Somerville where this can improve local operational efficiencies and reduce local municipal costs.
- Over the long term, the Borough should consider alternative locations for the Public Works department to move it out of a flood prone area.
- The school population within the Bridgewater-Raritan Regional School District continues to grow rapidly. Public school facilities serving Raritan Borough should be evaluated for their capacity to handle additional growth as the Borough redevelops.
- The pursuit of additional shared services agreements should continue to be a priority. The Borough has experienced success in recent years in sharing staff with other governments. These efforts should be continued and expanded wherever possible.



The Borough currently shares services with the following municipalities: The Health Department is shared with Somerville and Manville; the Sewerage Authority is shared with Bridgewater, Somerville, and other customers; and the Tax Assessor is shared with Manville. The Borough has an agreement for specialized personnel services with Bridgewater. The Municipal Courtroom is shared with Somerville. Construction/housing and Building Sub-code officials are shared with Manville. A daytime weekday ambulance service agreement with Manville, South Bound Brook, and Bridgewater is in place. Also, the Borough has an agreement with Bridgewater Township for Affordable Housing Program administration. The Borough participates in a regional school district with Bridgewater, shares several repair and maintenance services with Somerset County government, and participates in Somerset County's recycling and cooperative purchasing programs.



Raritan Borough Community Facilities Map

- Raritan
- Regional Center Boundary
- Buildings
- County Recreation/
Open Space
- Municipal Recreation/
Open Space
- Private Recreation/
Open Space
- Potential Recreation/
Redevelopment Areas
- Raritan River/
Peter's Brook Greenway
- Stream Corridors

- 1 John F. Kennedy
Primary School
- 2 Raritan Borough
Hall
- 3 Raritan Relief
Hose Co. #2
- 4 Raritan First
Aid Squad
- 5 Raritan Library

HEYER, GRUEL
& ASSOCIATES — THE RBA GROUP

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS

State Development and Redevelopment Plan

The Raritan Borough Master Plan Update was prepared as part of the Regional Center Strategic Plan, an initiative that is intended to implement the policies of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan in Somerset County. The Somerset Regional Center, consisting of Raritan, Somerville, and a portion of Bridgewater Township, was the first Regional Center to be designated by the State Planning Commission. Since that initial designation in 1996, a new State Development and Redevelopment Plan has been adopted, and the process which led to the preparation of this document was launched.

The Regional Center, including the Borough of Raritan, is located inside Planning Area 1, the Metropolitan Planning Area, which consists of existing developed areas with substantial amounts of existing infrastructure and has been designated as the area into which most of the state's redevelopment will take place.

Goals

The State Development and Redevelopment Plan includes eight statewide goals:

- Revitalize the State's Cities and Towns
- Conserve the State's Natural Resources and Systems
- Promote Beneficial Economic Growth, Development and Renewal for All Residents of New Jersey
- Protect the Environment, Prevent and Clean Up Pollution
- Provide Adequate Public Facilities and Services at a Reasonable Cost
- Provide Adequate Housing at a Reasonable Cost
- Preserve and Enhance Areas with Historic, Cultural, Scenic, Open Space and Recreational Value
- Ensure Sound and Integrated Planning and Implementation Statewide

These goals 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. By setting forth policies which further the revitalization of the Borough, which protect the Borough's environmental assets, and which recognize the Borough as a suitable location for appropriate growth and development, this Master Plan Update strives to implement the overall goals of the State Plan.

Policies

The State Development and Redevelopment Plan also includes 19 Policies which provide detailed recommendations on the process and tools to be used to implement the goals. As part of the Regional Center Strategic Plan initiative, this Master Plan Update advances many of these policies in tangible ways. In particular, the policies related to Urban Revitalization, Comprehensive Planning, Water Resources, and Design are addressed by the Plan Update.

This Master Plan Update fulfills many of the objectives of Statewide Policy #6, Urban Revitalization, in that it forms part of a coordinated plan for the further revitalization and redevelopment of Raritan, Somerville, and older residential neighborhoods in Bridgewater. This Update promotes a number of policies related to urban revitalization, including local economic development, adoptive reuse of commercial and industrial properties, transportation improvements, and revitalization for sustainability. The redevelopment of the Woolen Mills and Federal Steel complexes, the proposed streetscape improvements, and the proposed Raritan River Greenway will fulfill these State Planning objectives.

The Master Plan Update also fulfills the goals of Statewide Policy #2, Comprehensive Planning, in being fully integrated with the Master Plan Updates for the adjacent municipalities of Bridgewater and Somerville, and in contributing to the Regional Center Strategic Plan, which creates a single coherent vision for the entire Center.

Additional Statewide Policies which are tangibly advanced by this Plan Update include:

- #3: Public Investment Priorities: This Plan recommends that public resources be used to upgrade infrastructure to maintain and enhance the value and quality of life of an existing developed community within a designated Center.
- #7: Housing: This Plan recommends additional multi-family housing in downtown Raritan within walking distance of employment, shopping, and transit facilities.
- #8: Transportation: This Plan recommends transportation investments that improve access to the regional transit system.
- #11: Water Resources: This Plan seeks to protect the Raritan River and its tributaries through the designation of greenways along stream corridors.
- #12: Open Lands and Natural Systems: By providing connecting corridors throughout the region, the proposed Raritan Greenway will protect environmentally sensitive areas and provide expanded habitat for a variety of species.
- #14: Waste Management, Recycling, and Brownfields: This Plan promotes the cleanup and reuse of Woolen Mills, an existing brownfield site within Raritan Borough.

- #19: Design. This Plan promotes the natural extension of downtown Raritan toward the Raritan River Greenway through the Woolen Mills site, making the site an integrated part of the community. It also proposes additional streetscape investments which will improve the appearance of downtown. Further, the Plan promotes the redevelopment of outlying industrial areas in a way that respects the context of the existing residential neighborhoods that surround them.

Hillsborough Township

In addition to the Regional Center municipalities of Somerville and Bridgewater, Raritan Borough borders Hillsborough Township on the south. The Raritan River separates the Borough from Hillsborough. While this border is relatively lengthy (approximately 1.5 miles), direct impacts from development on either side of the border are limited because there are no river crossings in the area. The area of Hillsborough Township which borders Raritan is zoned Agricultural. A Master Plan Reexamination Report dated 1999 recommends that agricultural uses be preserved in this area of the Township. This area of Hillsborough functions as the environs for the Regional Center. The area on both sides of the river is also subject to serious environmental constraints, i.e., floodplains. This Master Plan Update recommends the establishment of a greenway along the river within Raritan Borough, which will provide an additional buffer between the undeveloped areas of Hillsborough Township and the Raritan Central Business District.

Communities within the Regional Center

This Master Plan Update is consistent with the Regional Center Strategic Plan for Bridgewater, Somerville, and Raritan. The Goals and Recommendations included in this document support the broader Goals and Recommendations of the Strategic Plan.

The Regional Center Strategic Plan, of which this Master Plan Update is an integral part, provides a coordinated framework for planning for its three constituent municipalities. The recommendations in this Master Plan Update are based on three years of meetings and discussions, beginning with the Somerset County Regional Center Vision Initiative in 1999. Though this Update includes recommendations that apply specifically to Raritan, its recommendations transcend a purely local focus in that they reflect not only the existing and future conditions within Raritan, but also those within Somerville and Bridgewater.

As a result of the process leading to its completion, every recommendation in this Update is based on a recognition of the connections between policies recommended for Raritan and those recommended for Bridgewater and Somerville, and vice versa. For example, it proposes a greenway system that traverses the entire Regional Center. It also recommends that redevelopment in downtown Raritan be pursued to ensure that Raritan, along with Somerville, retains and increases its status as the downtown "central place" for the Regional Center. These recommendations are based on a recognition that, from a transportation, community design, and land use perspective, the Raritan and Somerville Central Business Districts are best suited to provide downtown functions for the entire Regional Center. Because each element of this Update recognizes the relationship between existing and future conditions in Raritan and those in Somerville and Bridgewater, there is no need to address separately the relationship between this Plan and those of Somerville and Bridgewater.

**Raritan Borough
Surrounding Municipalities**

-  Raritan
- Regional Center Boundary

