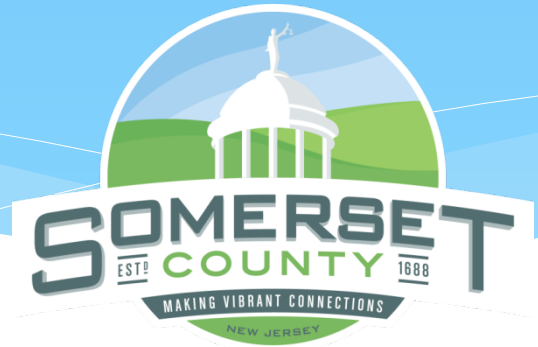


*THE STATE PLAN IN ACTION: SOMERSET COUNTY'S  
COLLABORATIVE PLANNING INITIATIVES*

Walter C. Lane, PP/AICP  
Director of Planning

NJ Association of Counties Webinar  
April 17, 2024



# *OUR MISSION*

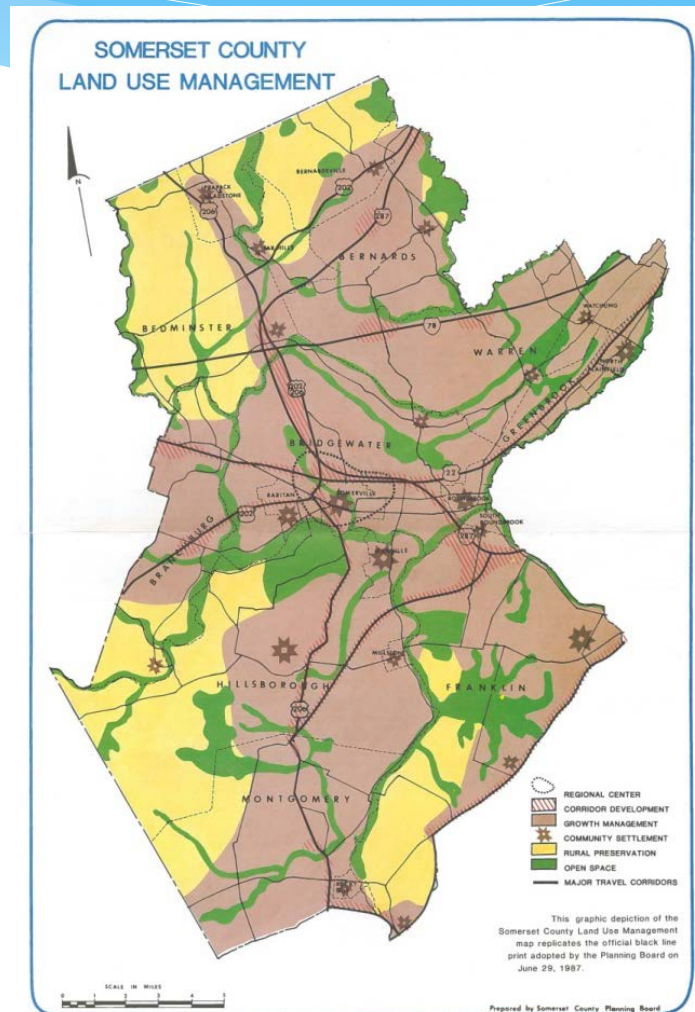


“Positively influence the process of growth and change in the County so that it provides the optimum living and working environment for our residents and employers, build balanced communities, promote regional awareness and cooperation, protect the natural environment and preserve our rich history, farmland and natural beauty.”

# Somerset County Master Plan

## Somerset County Master Plan: Land Use Management Map (1987)

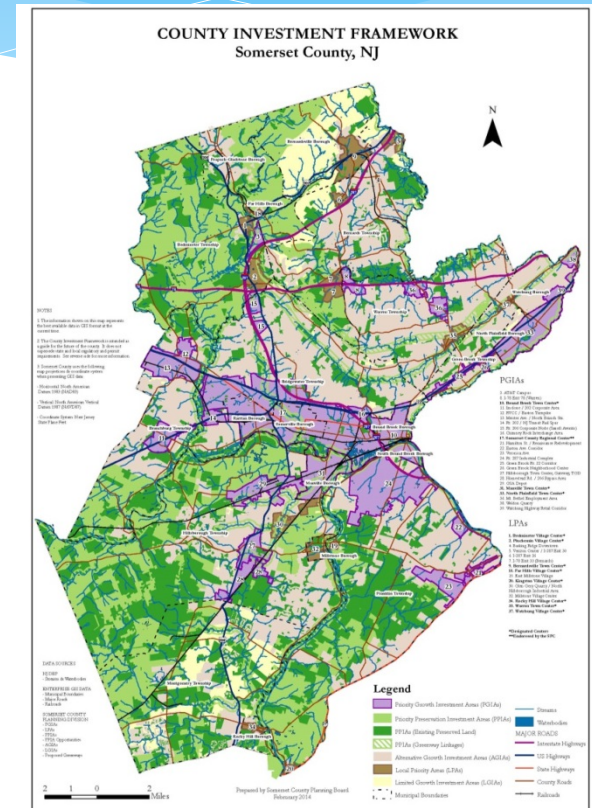
- \* Regional Center
- \* Corridor Development
- \* Growth Management
- \* Community Settlement
- \* Rural Preservation
- \* Open Space



# Somerset County Master Plan

## 2014 Somerset County Master plan County Investment Framework (CIF) Map

- ❖ Priority Growth Investment Areas
- ❖ Priority Preservation Investment Areas
- ❖ Local Priority Areas
- ❖ Alternative Growth Investment Areas
- ❖ Limited Growth Investment Areas



# Somerset County Master Plan

## County Investment Framework Goals

- ❖ Supports ongoing regional and local smart growth, preservation, economic revitalization, sustainability and resiliency planning initiatives
- ❖ Achieves tactical alignment of land use, infrastructure and preservation plans, resources, programs, policies and investment decisions
- ❖ Conveys a clear investment message regarding local and regional land use priorities to both the public and private sectors

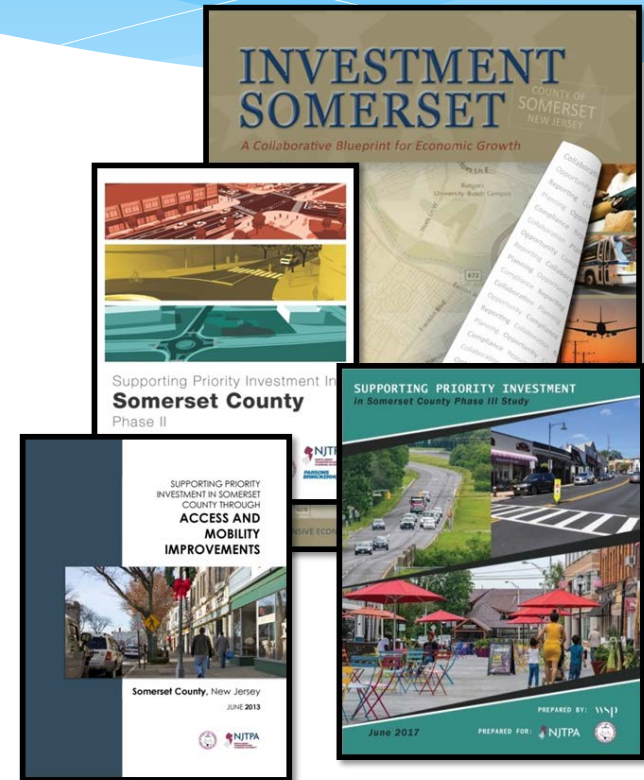
# Somerset County Master Plan

## County Investment Framework Advantages

- ❖ Fosters and supports collaboration at all levels of government
- ❖ Example of a County-led, collaborative approach for implementing the State Development and Redevelopment Plan at the County and municipal levels
- ❖ Builds upon the history of sound, comprehensive Smart Growth Planning at the State, County and municipal levels
- ❖ Grounded by GIS data on environmental, infrastructure and community conditions and policies

# Supporting Priority Investment In Somerset County

- ❖ Somerset County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
- ❖ Supporting Priority Investment In Somerset County through Access and Mobility Improvements
- ❖ Supporting Priority Investment In Somerset County Phases I, II, III



# Supporting Priority Investment In Somerset County



## Land Use and Planning Scenarios

*Raritan Borough, though part of the broader Regional Center PGIA, has its own distinctive small town character. While other planning efforts are already addressing opportunities along the riverfront, near the train station, and in the vicinity of the Washington School, additional opportunities were examined for focus areas along the Somerset Street and Orlando Drive corridors and at the Raritan Mall shopping center.*

### Focus Area 1: Raritan Mall Shopping Center

The Raritan Mall shopping center fronts U.S. Route 206 and is currently developed as a single-story, supermarket-anchored retail center comprising approximately 110,000 square feet, plus a 10,000 square foot pad site. There are vacancies throughout the mall and concerns that a supermarket anchor use may not have long term viability based on strong competition elsewhere in the market. Other existing uses in the strip center are generally quick service food and restaurants, with some retail and personal service.



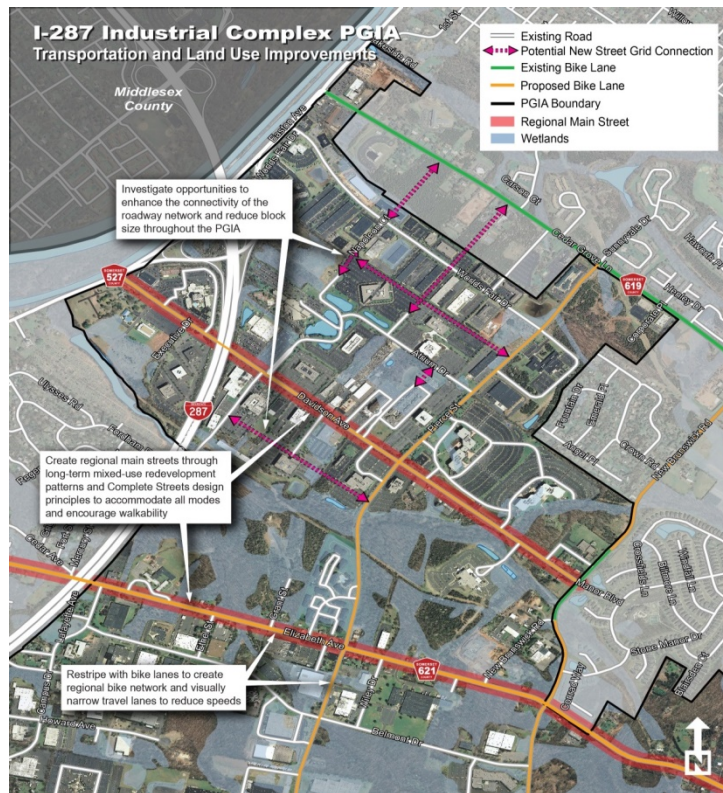
The site is located within the B-2 Shopping Center Business District, which is designated for large-lot, highway oriented commercial areas serving both local residents and the regional market. Permitted retail uses include supermarkets, personal service establishments, and indoor recreation facilities. While the site is located near the Borough's downtown and is adjacent to residential areas, its highway scale and size, orientation towards U.S. Route 206, and parking lot frontage separate it from the surrounding community. Only the rear employee entrances and loading areas face to the neighboring Dusky Lane. Sidewalks connecting to and from the neighboring property and an adjacent children's park lead only to blank walls and service roads.

In each of the following scenarios, site planning, pedestrian, and connectivity improvements can reconnect the site to the eastern end of the Somerset Street corridor and the adjacent Regional Center to the east. Integration with the Raritan River Greenway would enhance local and regional linkages and support opportunities for value-added uses, including both recreation and river and trail front dining. Improvements to north/south linkages, including Newvue Street and Dusky Lane, would better connect the site and the Orlando Drive corridor to the Borough center. This combination of Greenway and local street connections would create potentially extensive off-road systems between the Regional Center towns, Raritan Valley Line rail service, and across the Raritan River to Hillsborough and Duke Farms.





# Supporting Priority Investment In Somerset County



# Supporting Priority Investment In Somerset County

## AT&T Bedminster Land Use Study

- ❖ Built off the work completed in the Supporting Priority Investment in Somerset County Phase 3 Study.
- ❖ Funded by a Highlands Council grant provided the funding.
- ❖ Developed a Master Plan Amendment and new zoning to support the development of a Life Science or a High Technology Hub.
- ❖ The County continues to work with the Township, numerous state agencies and the property owner to promote the redevelopment of the site.



**AT&T BEDMINSTER LAND USE STUDY**  
December 2021

**BEDMINSTER TOWNSHIP  
ORDINANCE No. 2022-013**

AN ORDINANCE OF THE MAYOR AND COMMITTEE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BEDMINSTER AMENDING CHAPTER 13 ENTITLED "LAND MANAGEMENT CODE" TO ADD A NEW SECTION AND NEW ZONING DISTRICT ENTITLED "SECTION 13-413 "RDOL" RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT OFFICE LABORATORY DISTRICT."

**PURPOSE STATEMENT:** The purpose of this ordinance is to amend the Comprehensive Land Management Code and Zoning Map to add a new zone district entitled the "RDOL" Research Development Office Laboratory Zone District.

**SECTION 1:** § 13-413 entitled "District Regulations" is amended to add the following new Zone District as follows:

§ 13-413 "RDOL" RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT OFFICE LABORATORY DISTRICT.

§ 13-413.1 Permitted Principal Uses on the Land and in Buildings.

- a. Laboratory, research, development, engineering and design, aseptic manufacturing (including but not limited to cell and gene therapies and other biologics), production and assembly and similar activities related to the fields of biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, life sciences, computer software and hardware, telecommunications, robotics, aerospace technology or other emerging high technology industries.
- b. Office buildings, including collaborative workspaces, gathering places, and areas to promote business incubation.
- c. Public playgrounds, conservation areas, parks and public purpose uses.
- d. Public utility uses as conditional uses under N.J.S.A. 40:55D-67. (See Section 13-601 for additional standards.)
- e. Uses that provide recreation and lifestyle experiences that are clearly subordinate to the principal permitted use(s), including:
  1. Conference center with hotel (with a maximum of 100 rooms for overnight accommodations),
  2. restaurants,
  3. breweries,
  4. event spaces
  5. art galleries
  6. retail shops
  7. commercial recreation (indoor or outdoor) not including gun ranges
  8. gyms and fitness clubs
  9. theaters for movies and videos
  10. child care centers in accordance with the Municipal Land Use Law Section N.J.S.A. 40:55D-66.6, 66.7 and 66.7a

# Walk, Bike, Hike Somerset County

## Purpose of the Study

To develop a low-stress, all ages network that:

- ❖ Supports Walk, Bike, Hike, activities
- ❖ Connects people with places and destinations
- ❖ Improves mobility, safety and access
- ❖ Compliant with guidance documents and standards
- ❖ Integrated with the County Preservation Plan



CONNECTING VIBRANT  
COMMUNITIES



# Somerset County Preservation Plan

Somerset County  
Planning Board



Somerset County  
Preservation Plan



May  
2022



Barton Ross & Partners LLC  
Architects

HERITAGEstrategies  
PLANNING & DESIGN



Somerset County Agricultural  
Development Board



Somerset County  
Farmland  
Preservation Plan



HERITAGEstrategies  
PLANNING & DESIGN



May  
2022

Somerset County  
Park Commission



Somerset County  
Open Space  
Preservation Plan



HERITAGEstrategies  
PLANNING & DESIGN



May  
2022

Somerset County  
Cultural & Heritage Commission



Somerset County  
Historic  
Preservation Plan



HERITAGEstrategies  
PLANNING & DESIGN

Barton Ross & Partners LLC  
Architects



May  
2022

# Somerset County Preservation Plan

## Plan Overview

Create a single integrated plan for preservation (open space, farmland and historic) in Somerset County, as well advance the County's overall planning and economic development goals.

Objective 1: Desirable Place to Live

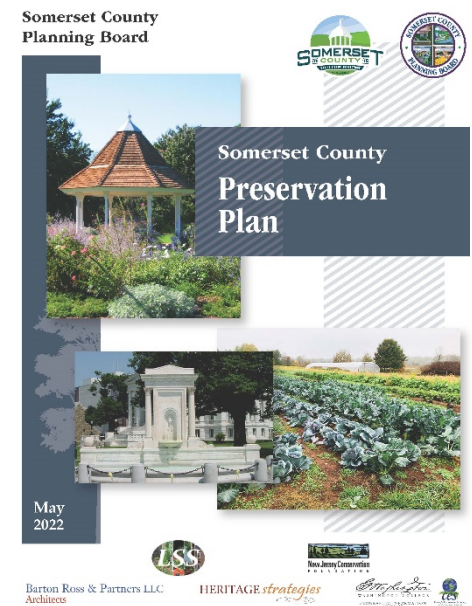
Objective 2: Valuable Open Space

Objective 3: Improving Quality of Life

Objective 4: Ensuring the County remains sustainable and resilient

Objective 5: Encouraging local coordination

Objective 6: Pursue Partnership Opportunities



# Collaboration Equals Results

- ❖ Outlined a Consensus Vision for Somerset County's Future
- ❖ Integration of local, county and regional plans with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan via collaborative planning efforts
- ❖ Resources and information to inform Local Decision Makers
- ❖ Strengthened linkages between the County's Master Plan Elements and Planning Initiatives
- ❖ Municipal Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance Reviews and Updates
- ❖ Leveraged Additional Grant Resources

# Somerset County's Strategy for Cross Acceptance 2024

- ❖ Build off previous planning efforts
- ❖ Developing County Cross Acceptance Work Program
- ❖ County Planning Board will serve as the Negotiating Entity for Somerset County
  - Highlands Council Municipalities
- ❖ Outreach and Coordination Meetings
  - Planning Partners Forums
  - County Planning Board Meetings
  - Regional Meetings
  - Individual Municipal Meetings
- ❖ “Total Office” Approach to Cross Acceptance
- ❖ Provide Technical Assistance to all planning partners



# Thank You!

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Director

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Somerville, NJ 08876



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