

# Taking the Next Step:

Hopewell Township  
Municipal Assessment

March 2002  
Stony Brook-  
Millstone Watershed  
Association



# Executive Summary

The Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association (the Association) realizes that the protection and health of a watershed relies a great deal on the land use laws and policies that govern development. In the past, we have had requests from various municipalities for assistance with drafting ordinances, improving zoning and increasing local environmental quality. In addition to continuing to respond to these requests, the Association wanted to provide a more comprehensive analysis for local municipalities. Thus, we developed the Municipal Assessment Project to assist municipalities in developing additional proactive measures to ensure that natural resources are preserved and the necessary regulatory structure established.

Hopewell Township was the first municipality that accepted our offer of assistance and partnered with us on this project. When beginning the assessment, members of the Hopewell Township Committee, Planning Board, Environmental Commission and Master Plan Committee articulated their goals and vision for the Township by answering our Framework Questions. After evaluating these responses we reviewed Hopewell Township's land use ordinances, policies, best management practices, and the recently drafted Master Plan using a newly designed 15-page protocol. We also interviewed key personnel to complete the assessment.

The results of the assessment protocol were then compared to the goals and vision of the Township, as articulated by its leaders. Gaps between that vision and what was "on the books" - the local zoning and ordinances- were identified in the following twelve areas:

1. Preservation of riparian corridors
2. Protection of surface and ground water
3. Protection of critical recharge areas
4. Maintenance and performance of septic systems
5. Protection of critical areas, including wetlands, open space, woodlands, and wildlife habitats and corridors
6. Preservation of open space and provision of housing opportunities for the aging and those employed in the Township using mixed use development
7. Visual enhancement of current and approved commercial development
8. Preservation of Hopewell Township's rural quality
9. Reduction of traffic congestion
10. Preservation of historic structures, lands and view
11. Resident participation
12. Education of decision makers

This document represents options for filling the gaps and implementing the Township's vision for its future. Now that the Assessment is completed, the Association will work with Township officials to fill the gaps, implement any options the Township identifies and enact ordinances, policies, or best management practices to allow Hopewell Township to move even farther to the forefront of preserving their rural character, planning for their future and protecting the environment.

We wish to thank the William Penn Foundation for their generosity in funding this project, and the members of the Township Committee, Planning Board, Environmental Commission and Master Plan Committee for their enthusiastic responses to our Framework Questions. We would also like to acknowledge the individual input of Marylou Ferrara, Paul Pogorzelski, Mike Bolan and Gary Guarino for generously giving our staff the time and answers to complete the assessment.

# Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	i
Table of Contents.....	ii
How to Use this Report.....	iii
Next Steps.....	iii
Step 1: Protection of Stream Corridors .....	2
Step 2: Protection of Surface and Groundwater.....	4
Step 3: Protection of Recharge Areas.....	6
Step 4: Monitoring and Performance Standards for Septic Systems.....	8
Step 5: Protection of Wetlands, Open Space Woodlands, and Wildlife Habitat.....	10
Step 6: Mixed-Use Development to Preserve Open Space and Provide Housing Opportunities for the Aging and Those Employed in the Township.....	12
Step 7: Visual Enhancement of Current and Approved Commercial Development .....	14
Step 8: Preservation of Hopewell Township's Rural Quality.....	15
Step 9: Reduction in Traffic Congestion .....	17
Step 10: Preservation and Protection of Historic Structures, Lands and Views .....	19
Step 11: Resident Participation.....	21
Step 12: Knowledge Base of Municipal Officials.....	22
Appendix A: Response to Framework Questions	
Appendix B: Memo to Hopewell Township	
Appendix B: Assessment Results	



## How to Use This Report

This report outlines twelve gaps that exist between Hopewell Township's vision for its future and the current zoning, ordinances and policies that govern land use in the Township. These gaps were identified after extensive interviews, questionnaires and research. Each gap was determined by comparing the goals that were identified by the Township's leaders, as well as in the Master Plan, and the current protection that exists. Both the goal and current protection are outlined for each gap. Following each gap analysis are specific options that are designed to provide guidance to the Township and identify specific steps that can be taken to reach the Township's goals. Most options are followed by a "Did You Know?" section that provides further information on the issue and an "Additional Resources" section that identifies other references and organizations that can provide support to the Township in implementing certain options.

### Next Steps



This report is a necessary step, but it is only an early step in a long process as the Township moves towards its goals. We suggest that Hopewell Township prioritize the twelve gaps and determine which options they are interested in implementing. The Association will then work with Township officials to develop more detailed information, models and guidance to help implement the various options. The Township will not be alone in implementing their chosen options.

The Association will work by your side in your efforts to provide the citizens that reside in the Township with a sense of community, a healthy environment and a strong economy, all within a rural setting. We realize that the Township has already begun implementing some of the options listed in this report (such as Stream Corridor Ordinance Protection and reviewing and updating current zoning) and we offer our assistance to the Township in completing those projects. By committing ourselves to follow through on this report and its results, the Association is achieving its mission of protecting and preserving the watershed.



# Next Steps

## STEP

### 1

## Protection of Stream Corridors



**GOAL:** As stated in the objectives for the Master Plan, the Township hopes, “To identify and manage stream corridor buffer areas by maintaining undisturbed vegetation in order to protect and improve water quality...”

Respondents to the Framework Questionnaire specifically stated that they would like to see particular emphasis placed on establishing riparian corridors.

**CURRENT PROTECTION:** Stream corridors in Hopewell Township are protected by conservation easements (§17-82a. 12. Drainage, Detention and Stormwater Management). The stream corridors extend 50 feet from each bank of permanently flowing streams or to the limits of the floodplain, whichever is wider.

Stream corridors also extend to include contiguous wetlands and slopes over 12 percent where the toe of the slope is within 20 feet of wet soils. The ordinance does not allow the natural terrain to be altered within the stream corridor and 20 feet from the corridor’s edge. This includes a prohibition on structures and impervious surfaces. All roads and utilities, including septic systems, shall be at least 100 feet from stream corridors. However, the Flood Plains ordinance (§17-87) permits general farming, grazing, parking areas, loading areas, and golf courses in the flood fringe area.

### **OPTION: Adopt a comprehensive stream corridor ordinance.**

The stream corridor ordinance should include:

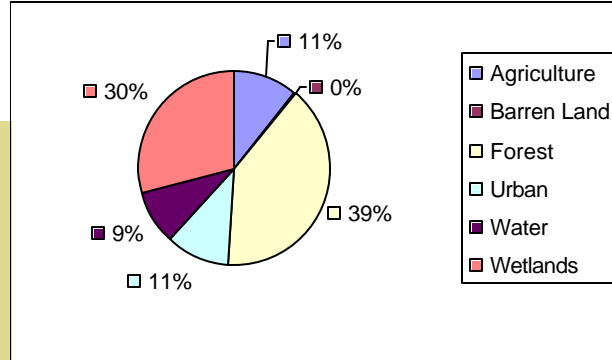
- ⌘ Protection of the stream corridor that includes protection of the flood plain, plus 100 feet.
- ⌘ Clear definitions for “flood plain” and “stream corridor.”
- ⌘ Minimum acreage measurements for the stream’s watershed.
- ⌘ Monitoring and penalty provisions.
- ⌘ Consideration of the prohibition of parking areas, loading areas and golf courses in the stream corridor.
- ⌘ Maintenance of the streambank vegetation with native species trees, shrubs and grasses and a “no-mow” policy.
- ⌘ Extension of the stream corridor if wetlands, flood plains, steep slopes or critical habitats are adjacent.
- ⌘ Best Management Practices for streambank restoration in impaired areas. The ordinance should also define what “impaired” means.

## STREAM CORRIDORS



## Did You Know?

According to 1995 data, the land distribution within the 100-foot stream buffers of Hopewell Township is as follows:



If stream corridors are maintained in their natural condition, with minimum disturbance, then they are instrumental in performing the following functions:

- ⌘ Removing sediment, nutrients, and pollutants by providing opportunities for filtration, absorption, and decomposition;
- ⌘ Reducing stream bank erosion by slowing stormwater velocity, which aids in allowing stormwater to be absorbed in the soil and taken up by vegetation;
- ⌘ Preventing flood related damage to surrounding communities;
- ⌘ Displacing potential sources of nonpoint-source pollution from the water's edge;
- ⌘ Providing shade that maintains cooler water temperatures needed by certain aquatic species during the hot summer months;
- ⌘ Maintaining genetic diversity;
- ⌘ Helping maintain adequate flows of filtered water to underground aquifers; and
- ⌘ Providing greenway corridors for wildlife.

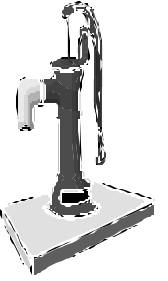
## Additional Resources

- ⌘ Model Stream Corridor Protection Ordinance prepared by the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association (609-737-3735).
- ⌘ Stream Corridor Ordinance Implementation Package prepared by the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association (609-737-3735).
- ⌘ ANJEC, "Protecting Our Streams" (P.O. Box 157, Mendham, NJ, 07945, 973-539-7547).
- ⌘ North Jersey Resource Conservation and Development, Technical Guidelines for Streambank Restorations (908-735-0733).
- ⌘ Society for Ecological Restoration ([www.ser.org](http://www.ser.org)).
- ⌘ Seth Wenger and Lori Fowler, "Guidebook for Developing Local Riparian Buffer Ordinances" (Office of Public Service & Outreach, Institute of Ecology, University of Georgia, 706-542-3948) (1999).
- ⌘ Seth Wenger, "A Review of the Scientific Literature on Riparian Buffer Width, Extent and Vegetation" (Office of Public Service & Outreach, Institute of Ecology, University of Georgia, 706-542-3948) (1999).
- ⌘ United States Department of Agriculture, "Riparian Forest Buffers: Function and Design for Protection and Enhancement of Water Resources" (202-512-2250) (1991).

## STEP

### 2

## Protection of Surface and Groundwater



**GOAL:** The objectives for the Master Plan include, “To protect groundwater supply and quality...” and “to exercise stewardship over the lands and waters...”

Responses to the Framework Questionnaire included:

- ⌘ “No additional degradation especially...water quality and quantity...”
- ⌘ “...preserve our water resources.”
- ⌘ “Stream quality should be restored...”



**CURRENT PROTECTION:** Grading and drainage plans must be submitted via Subdivision Checklist Appendix A. The soil and sediment protection is now handled by Mercer County.

We applaud the Township for realizing that water is a precious resource and conducting the necessary studies, particularly those by M<sup>2</sup> Associates, Inc., to determine the impacts of further development on the watershed. Information such as groundwater recharge and nitrogen dilution provide much needed information for changes in zoning and updating local ordinances.

### **OPTION: Adopt additional ordinances and policies to protect surface and groundwater quality**

Specifically, the Township might consider:

- ⌘ Adopting an ordinance that regulates fertilizer and pesticide application for agriculture, commercial, and residential uses.
- ⌘ Adopting a pooper scooper ordinance.
- ⌘ Ordinance language that deals with updating old catch basins and management of drainage basins.
- ⌘ Implementing Best Management Practices (BMPs) for the Township’s Department of Public Works in the areas of fertilizer and pesticide application, road salt or sand application, use and storage of chemicals and the reduction thereof, and disposal of hazardous materials.
- ⌘ Encouraging the use of naturalized detention basins and infiltration basins.
- ⌘ Adopting an ordinance that encourages the use of grey water systems.
- ⌘ Limiting lawn irrigation.
- ⌘ Revising §17-95(d) to allow a smaller standard size for parking stall dimensions and to require that spillover parking areas be constructed with pervious materials.
- ⌘ Developing a schedule and requirements for maintenance of catch basins and stormwater structures, as well as street sweeping for the entire Township.





## Did You Know?

Water is a finite resource that moves from the clouds to the land through precipitation and then back to the clouds through evapotranspiration. Rain catches airborne pollution and dust, carrying these particles down to the land and its surface waters. Stormwater washes across parking lots, roads and lawns, carrying pollutants into storm drains that eventually dump into streams and lakes. Since most of these pollutants do not evaporate, much remains in the water, a permanent part of the hydrologic cycle. That is why it is critical to ensure that pollutants do not have the opportunity to enter the water cycle.

Hopewell Township contains the headwaters for Stony Brook, Beden Brook, and their tributaries. These tributaries include Honey Branch, Baldwins Creek, and Lewis Brook.

The Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association has five monitoring sites in Hopewell Township as part of its StreamWatch Program. Two are located on Stony Brook, one is on Beden Brook, and two are located on Honey Lake and Honey Brook and are reflective of water quality of the tributaries that drain into the Lake. Data from StreamWatch shows that nitrate-nitrogen levels are elevated at all sites throughout the municipality. The trend in nitrate-nitrogen shows increasing levels from 1992 – 2001. Data from the Stony Brook sites shows many violations of the state's water quality standards from 1992 – 2001 for nitrate-nitrogen. All sites are showing a trend in decreasing dissolved oxygen for the same time period.

Biological monitoring of aquatic insects in Hopewell by both StreamWatch and the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) is performed at eleven sites in the municipality. In general, Beden Brook does not fully support the breadth and diversity of aquatic life representative of a healthy stream ecosystem. All sites are consistently listed as moderately impaired, with some sites showing no impairment to biological health at varying times when tested. Only one testing site, at one sampling event, received a severely impaired rating for biological health.



## Additional Resources

- ⌘ StreamWatch Program, Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association (609-737-3735 or [www.thewatershed.org](http://www.thewatershed.org)).
- ⌘ M<sup>2</sup> Associates, Inc., "Evaluation of Groundwater Resources of Hopewell Township," Mercer County, New Jersey.
- ⌘ Center for Watershed Protection (410-461-8323 or [www.cwp.org](http://www.cwp.org)). Also see their project, The Stormwater Manager's Resource Center, an extensive educational website that contains more than 3,000 pages of technical content ([www.stormwatercenter.net](http://www.stormwatercenter.net)).

## STEP

### 3

## Protection of Recharge Areas

GOAL: The objectives for the Master Plan are very explicit:

“To protect groundwater supply and quality through the adoption of aquifer management programs, including relevant standards for wellhead protection programs, and standards to protect groundwater recharge areas, such as impervious cover limitations.”

Respondents to the Framework Questionnaire felt that the Township should do more to protect critical recharge areas from pollution and ensure adequate supply.

CURRENT PROTECTION: The Township currently does not have ordinances that protect recharge areas. §17-68 does mention that, “Areas of good and excellent groundwater recharge should minimize coverage and maximize opportunities for stormwater percolation.”

As explained previously, once pollutants find their way into the water cycle, they are difficult to remove. This fact is even more salient for people who depend on groundwater as their drinking water supply source as is the case in Hopewell Township. In addition, increased protection of water supplies by minimizing potential sources of pollution reduces the need to develop new and more costly sources of water or to import water from other watersheds.

### **OPTION: Adopt ordinances to protect critical recharge areas and increase map database**

Specifically, the Township might consider:

- ⌘ Adopting wellhead and drinking water aquifer protection ordinances, including provisions for routine testing of private wells.
- ⌘ Preparing map(s) identifying the location of known facilities that handle hazardous materials and/or toxic waste and their proximity to critical recharge areas.
- ⌘ Preparing and adopting a Municipal Drinking Water Aquifer Map, based on the Township’s geology.
- ⌘ Using retention basins to control stormwater.
- ⌘ Limiting impervious cover.



## Critical Recharge Areas



## Did You Know?

- ⌘ The primary source of drinking water in Hopewell Township is groundwater.
- ⌘ Half the water used by New Jersey residents on a daily basis is extracted from the ground.
- ⌘ About 400,000 private wells in New Jersey serve approximately 1 million people. These wells must be tested for microbiological contamination and a limited number of other chemicals when a well is drilled, but subsequent monitoring is the responsibility of the homeowner. Recent legislation now requires testing of all private wells at the time of a real estate transfer.



## Additional Resources

- ⌘ New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Solid and Hazardous Waste ([www.state.nj.us/dep/dshw/](http://www.state.nj.us/dep/dshw/)).
- ⌘ New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Underground Storage Tanks ([www.state.nj.us/dep/srp/bust/bust.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/dep/srp/bust/bust.htm)).
- ⌘ New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Community Right to Know Program ([www.state.nj.us/dep/enforcement/relprev/crtk/index.html](http://www.state.nj.us/dep/enforcement/relprev/crtk/index.html)).
- ⌘ New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Hazardous Waste and Transfer Facilities ([www.state.nj.us/dep/dshw/hwtf/](http://www.state.nj.us/dep/dshw/hwtf/)).
- ⌘ M<sup>2</sup> Associates, Inc., "Evaluation of Groundwater Resources of Hopewell Township," Mercer County, New Jersey.
- ⌘ The GIS Center (609-737-3735).

## STEP

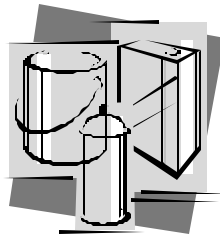
### 4

## Monitoring and Performance Standards for Septic Systems



GOAL: The Master Plan hopes to, “... discourage the extension of growth-inducing infrastructure into rural areas.” To carry this out, septic systems will be encouraged where soils are appropriate.

Respondents to the Framework Questionnaire and interviews with professional staff revealed a concern that there was not an adequate system in place to monitor performance of septic systems and to ensure that they function to improve water quality as much as technically feasible.



CURRENT PROTECTION: The Township currently does not have ordinances that monitor and provide standards for residential septic systems. There is an ordinance in place for aerobic sewage treatment systems, mainly for commercial buildings (Board of Health, Ord. #2000-1).

The Health Department does have educational material that is distributed in the summer, in the welcome package for new residents and in the Township Calendar.

### **OPTION: Adopt additional ordinances and policies to improve performance and monitoring of septic systems**

Specifically, the Township might consider:

- ⌘ Adopting a septic system monitoring policy/ordinance for residential systems to detect failing septic systems. The Township should assess alternatives for failing septic systems.
- ⌘ Continuing to distribute and revise educational information concerning septic system maintenance. Include information on who to contact in the Township if the resident has problems or questions. This is a critical first step in a long-term Township septic system management plan.
- ⌘ Regularly scheduling educational programs on septic system upkeep.
- ⌘ Adopting an ordinance requiring regular pumpouts and upgrades or expansions when a house is expanded or altered.
- ⌘ Applying for a Smart Growth grant for community septic systems, retrofitting the current failing systems.
- ⌘ Providing incentives, and perhaps financial assistance, for septic system maintenance.



## Did You Know?

- ⌘ The majority of Hopewell Township is on septic systems, with the exception of a couple of housing developments.
- ⌘ Improperly maintained septic systems can result in health risks for humans and cause water quality problems.
- ⌘ Incomplete treatment of wastewater can result in the spread of hepatitis, dysentery and other diseases caused by harmful bacteria, viruses and parasites in the wastewater.
- ⌘ High levels of nitrate in surface and groundwater can also result from inadequately maintained septic systems.



## Additional Resources

- ⌘ River Friendly Resident Manual, Stony Brook Millstone Watershed Association (609-737-3735 or [www.thewatershed.org](http://www.thewatershed.org)).
- ⌘ Hopewell Township Board of Health (609-737-0605).
- ⌘ M<sup>2</sup> Associates, Inc., “Evaluation of Groundwater Resources of Hopewell Township,” Mercer County, New Jersey.
- ⌘ NJDEP, Division of Water Quality, Onsite Wastewater Management Program ([www.state.nj.us/dep/dwq/sep\\_site.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/dep/dwq/sep_site.htm)).
- ⌘ Raritan Basin Watershed Management Project, Draft Ground Water Technical Report ([www.raritanbasin.org/ground\\_water.htm](http://www.raritanbasin.org/ground_water.htm)).
- ⌘ New Jersey Smart Growth Grants, Department of Community Affairs and Office of State Planning ([www.state.nj.us/osp/resources/sggrants.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/osp/resources/sggrants.htm)).

## STEP

5

# Protection of Wetlands, Open Space Woodlands, and Wildlife Habitat



**GOAL:** The Master Plan's objectives include:, "To protect environmental resources including wetlands, and other vegetation..." and " To promote the protection of biological diversity..."

Respondents to the Framework Survey cited the need to preserve and protect all of these critical areas.



**CURRENT PROTECTION:** There is no protection in place for woodlands or critical and wildlife habitat. Wetlands are protected only through §17-82a. 12. Drainage, Detention and Stormwater Management. There is some protection for open space through cluster zoning and consolidation of open space (§17-79; §17-159).

## **OPTION: Adopt additional ordinances and land use policies to ensure further preservation and protection of wetlands, open space, woodlands, and wildlife habitats.**

Specifically, the Township might consider:

- ⌘ Adopting ordinances that protect critical habitat, including those areas mentioned specifically by the respondents.
- ⌘ Adopting an ordinance that requires commercial development to include landscaping for wildlife.
- ⌘ Revising current or adopting new Landscaping/Tree Preservation ordinance.
- ⌘ Reinventing the Township's Shade Tree Commission. Activities could include hosting an Arbor Day event, obtaining "Tree City USA" status for the Township or providing technical and labor skills to the Department of Public Works.
- ⌘ Adopting a steep slope protection ordinance, to ensure development does not take place on steep slopes, particularly in riparian areas.
- ⌘ Initiating and promoting cooperation between the Township and adjacent municipalities to advance the consistent development of open space goals, policies and plans.
- ⌘ Preparing and maintaining recreation and open space master plans and maps (great visual aids for articulating your vision and describing potential greenbelts).
- ⌘ Updating the Natural Resources Inventory as needed. For example, the latest version of the NRI was completed in October 1975 and while it is a good document it should be reviewed to determine what updates are needed.

## Habitat Preservation



## Did You Know?

- ⌘ Wetlands are a critical resource that provide important wildlife habitat and play a key role in flood prevention, surface water management, groundwater recharge, and removal of sediment and pollutants.
- ⌘ Hopewell Township has lost 2%, or just over 70 acres of wetlands, from 1986 to 1995.
- ⌘ The State Development and Redevelopment Plan has as a statewide policy the protection of biological diversity, forests, wildlife habitat, critical slope areas, and water resources through preservation and protection of contiguous open spaces, connecting corridors, and public lands and management of the character and nature of development (SDRP, Statewide Policy #12).
- ⌘ According to the most conservative estimates, New Jersey has lost more than 20 percent of our wetlands since 1900 and as much as 50 percent since colonial times.
- ⌘ By reducing the overall area of impervious surfaces and lawns, the total volume of stormwater runoff is reduced.
- ⌘ Of New Jersey's 4,748,000 acres some 1,864,300 are classified as forestland, 75% of which are privately owned. Three of the five major forest regions in the United States are found in New Jersey.



## Additional Resources

Delaware & Raritan Greenway  
1327 Canal Road, Princeton, NJ 08540.  
Tel: (609) 924-4646.  
Fax: (609) 924-5577.  
Email: [info@delrargreenway.org](mailto:info@delrargreenway.org)  
Website: [www.delrargreenway.org/](http://www.delrargreenway.org/)

D&R Greenway, Inc. protects and preserves central New Jersey's treasured open space. We protect land along the Delaware & Raritan Canal and the streams flowing through the surrounding 1,000-square mile region. We protect woodlands, wetlands, stream corridors, scenic vistas, and open fields.

New Jersey Conservation Foundation  
Bamboo Brook, 170 Longview Road  
Far Hills, NJ 07931  
Tel: 908-234-1225  
Fax: 908-234-1189  
Email: [info@njconservation.org](mailto:info@njconservation.org)  
Website: [www.njconservation.org](http://www.njconservation.org)

The Mission of New Jersey Conservation Foundation is to preserve New Jersey's land and natural resources for the benefit of all. As a leading innovator and catalyst for saving land NJCF protects strategic lands through acquisition and stewardship, promotes strong land use policies, and forges strategic partnerships to achieve conservation goals.

Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space  
P.O. Box 395  
Pennington, NJ 08534  
Website: <http://www.princetonol.com/groups/fohvoss/>

The Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space is an organization of citizens whose mission is the preservation of important areas of open space and the conservation of natural resources in Hopewell valley.

## STEP

6

### Mixed-Use Development to Preserve Open Space and Provide Housing Opportunities for the Aging and Those Employed in the Township



GOAL: Many of the objectives of the Master Plan stress the need to provide a future land use pattern that serves the needs of the community for housing, community services and a safe and healthful environment. These objectives also stress the need to work with the neighboring boroughs of Hopewell and Pennington.

Respondents to the Framework Questionnaire suggested that mixed-use development should be encouraged in Pennington and Hopewell Boroughs and perhaps other areas. The need for mixed income, preserving rural character and providing housing for all ages was a driving factor in these suggestions.

CURRENT PROTECTION: The Township currently has no mixed use zoning.

People value the ability to walk to stores, restaurants, banks and the post office from their homes. Most development in the past few years has not accommodated this desire. People must now get in their car for even the most basic errands.

**OPTION: Implement zoning that encourages mixed-use development. Accompanying this with an education campaign to allay residents' worries about compact development.**



Specifically, the Township might consider:

- § Mapping the appropriate areas in the Township to locate mixed-use development.
- § Introducing ordinances that provide for the implementation of increased use of housing over retail development.
- § Posters highlighting the benefit of mixed-use development vs sprawling designs that eat up farmland and open space and provide only expensive housing options.

Mixed-Use Development





## Did You Know?

- ⌘ Hopewell Township lost 11% of its agricultural land from 1986 to 1995. During the same time period, Urban Land Use, which includes residential, commercial, industrial and recreational land, increased 16%. At the same time, barren land in the Township increased 87%.
- ⌘ The State Development and Redevelopment Plan contains the housing policy that age-restricted housing should be physically integrated or connected to Centers or other areas with facilities and services (SDRP, Policy #7).
- ⌘ New Jersey's population reached 8.15 million in 2000 and it will grow by 908,000 during the period 2000 to 2020. Where will these people live?



## Additional Resources

- ⌘ New Jersey Office of State Planning ([www.state.nj.us/osp/osp.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/osp/osp.htm)).
- ⌘ Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (Tel: 973-539-7547, Fax: 973-539-7713, E-mail: [anjec@aol.com](mailto:anjec@aol.com), Website: [www.anjec.org](http://www.anjec.org)).
- ⌘ Center for Watershed Protection ([www.cwp.org/index.html](http://www.cwp.org/index.html)).
- ⌘ Randall Arendt (author of *Growing Greener*) ([www.greenerprospects.com](http://www.greenerprospects.com)).

## STEP

# 7 Visual Enhancement of Current and Approved Commercial Development



GOAL: The objectives for the Master Plan specifically state, “To develop standards to ensure good visual quality and design for all land use categories.”

Respondents to the Framework Questionnaire pointed out that Hopewell Township, with its idea for a town center or village and desire for continuity with Pennington and Hopewell Boroughs, needs to develop a consistent and understandable set of standards for development.

CURRENT PROTECTION: Often, town planners will have a vision of what they would like commercial development in their town to look like. Translating that vision into a workable design standards ordinance is difficult. This often results in varying interpretations of the standards and a discordant look to commercial development in the town.

Currently, Hopewell Township lacks a design standards ordinance that translates this vision.

**OPTION: Develop land use policies and design standards that will enhance views along existing commercial corridors. Develop a transportation corridor plan for the Route 31 corridor.**

Specifically, the Township might consider:

- ⌘ Modifying current design standards or developing simple design standards so they are easy to interpret. As an example, look to Cranbury’s Historic Preservation design standards.
- ⌘ Including drawings and pictures in the design standards of what your commercial development should look like.
- ⌘ Developing a corridor plan for the Route 31 corridor that includes enhanced aesthetics, increased pedestrian mobility, and increased green infrastructure.
- ⌘ Continuing to build from the current Smart-Growth Grant initiative for Route 31 that is in place to increase dialogue between developers, business owners, town leaders, and residents.



Visual Enhancement

## STEP

8

# Preservation of Hopewell Township's Rural Quality



**GOAL:** “To protect and maintain the prevailing rural character and unique sense of place of the Township...” is only one of many objectives of the Master Plan that highlight the desire for preservation.

The general sentiment of the respondents is that they want the Township to retain its rural character through compact and mixed use development; preserving open space, viewsheds and historic areas; and enhancing a feeling of community.

**CURRENT PROTECTION:** The Township has done much to preserve its rural quality through open space acquisition and through its recent efforts to rezone much of the Township. The Township also benefits from an active land trust group, the Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space. Preserving the Township's rural quality will depend on protection and maintenance of open space and appropriate zoning.

## **OPTION: Adopt additional ordinances and policies to ensure further permanent protection of the Township's rural quality**

Specifically, the Township might consider:

- ⌘ Adopting a “Right to Farm” Ordinance that is not in conflict with a newly adopted or revised Stream Corridor Ordinance and requires farmers to comply with local Soil District standards.
- ⌘ Providing financial assistance direction to farmers in their conservation efforts.
- ⌘ Developing and funding a conservation easement monitoring and enforcement program.
- ⌘ Continuing to assist Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space in their acquisition of open space and conservation easements. In addition, help monitor conservation easements throughout the Township.
- ⌘ Adopting a cluster development ordinance for sewer designated areas. Include standards to guide the preparation of management plans for the conservation lands - such plans establish management objectives, outline procedures, and define responsibilities for maintaining the conservation areas.
- ⌘ To the extent feasible, adopting a transferable development rights (TDR) program.
- ⌘ Working with adjacent municipalities, particularly Hopewell Borough and Pennington Borough, to create a comprehensive regional open space plan to help preserve ecosystems across jurisdictional lines.



Rural Character



## Did You Know?

- ⌘ Between 1986 and 1995 Hopewell Township lost 11% or just over 2600 acres of its agricultural land.
- ⌘ As of 1997, only 5 percent of the state's farmland had been preserved from development.
- ⌘ Of New Jersey's 4.8 million acres, 1.9 million remain undeveloped and unprotected, two-thirds of which are forests and one-third of which are agricultural lands.
- ⌘ New Jersey is ranked second in the country in the production of blueberries, spinach, and peaches and ranked third in the production of cranberries.
- ⌘ New Jersey is ranked third overall in the country in farm product sales and farmers produce more than 100 different kinds of fruits and vegetables annually.
- ⌘ From 1950 to 2000, land in farms in New Jersey dropped by about one-half—from 1.8 million to 0.8 million acres and the number of farms dropped by about two-thirds—from 26,900 to 8,600 farms. Between 1970 and 2000, the average New Jersey farm shrank from 123 acres to 86 acres.
- ⌘ In 1998, New Jersey's 9,600 farms, occupying 830,000 acres, generated cash receipts totaling \$828.7 million. Virtually all of the state's farms are family owned and operated. The average per-acre value of New Jersey farmland in 1999, including land and buildings, was \$8,370, the highest average value of farmland anywhere in the nation.
- ⌘ Agriculture is the largest single provider of scenic vistas in the state.



## Additional Resources

- ⌘ Randall Arendt (author of *Growing Greener*) ([www.greenerprospects.com](http://www.greenerprospects.com)).
- ⌘ The Green Acres Program, NJDEP (<http://www.state.nj.us/dep/greenacres>).
- ⌘ Trust for Public Land ([www.tpl.org/index.cfm](http://www.tpl.org/index.cfm)).
- ⌘ The Nature Conservancy, New Jersey Chapter Office (200 Pottersville Road, Chester, NJ 07930, Tel: 908-879-7262, Fax: 908-879-2172, Website: <http://nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/newjersey/>).
- ⌘ Natural Resources Conservation Service, Mercer County Contact (303 West Main Street, Freehold, NJ 07728-2522, Tel: (732) 462-1079 ext. 3, Fax: (732) 462-3499, Website: [www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov/](http://www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov/)).
- ⌘ South Jersey Resource Conservation & Development Council, Inc. (854 South White Horse Pike, Suite 3, Hammonton, NJ 08037, Tel: 609-561-3223, Email: [steve@sjrcd.org](mailto:steve@sjrcd.org), Website: [www.sjrcd.org](http://www.sjrcd.org)).



## STEP

9

# Reduction in Traffic Congestion



**GOAL:** There are a series of objectives for the Master Plan that deal with transportation, including ensuring that the traffic does not exceed the capacity of the existing rural road network, to promote alternative modes of transportation, and to coordinate with other municipalities.

Respondents to the Framework Questionnaire felt that approved commercial development would only exacerbate the problem and suggested that the Township should further limit commercial and office development, and to direct this type of development into the villages and hamlets.

**CURRENT PROTECTION:** Much of Hopewell Township consists of a rural road system trying to accommodate the traffic generated by commuters driving to and from large office complexes in the area. While the Township feels the need to address this situation, it also feels the need to retain its rural quality, something that would be threatened with the introduction of multi-laned highways and roads.

Currently, Hopewell Township does have an off-tract Improvement Ordinance, but it could be revised to reflect respondents' concerns.

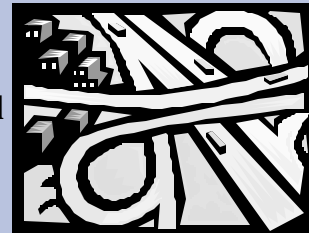


### **OPTION: Revise current “Off-Tract Improvements” ordinance (§ 17-96) to address more off-tract issues and additional impact fees**

Impact fees are fees authorized by an ordinance which allows municipalities to assess developers for a portion of improvement costs to transportation infrastructure related to their development. These fees generate revenue for funding the costs of transportation capital improvements necessitated by and attributed to the new development, not existing traffic concerns related to current development.

Additional measures could include:

- ⌘ Flexible hours for employment
- ⌘ Traffic calming measures
- ⌘ Improve accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists
- ⌘ Improve mass transit opportunities



Traffic Congestion



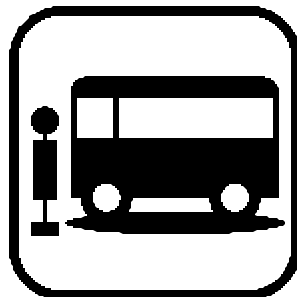
## Did You Know?

- ⌘ The statewide annual vehicle miles of travel (VMT) was 64.61 billion in 1998. More than 80 percent of the statewide daily VMT occurs in urban areas.
- ⌘ New Jersey has 35,600 miles of roads and more highways per square mile than any other state.



## Additional Resources

- ⌘ Central Jersey Transportation Forum ([www.dvrpc.org/transportation/cjtf.htm](http://www.dvrpc.org/transportation/cjtf.htm)).
- ⌘ Tri-State Transportation Campaign ([www.tstc.org](http://www.tstc.org)).



## STEP

### 10

## Preservation and Protection of Historic Structures, Lands, and Views



**GOAL:** Within the Master Plan's objectives, there is a section for historic and cultural resources that outlines the need to safeguard, encourage preservation and develop regulations that permit special treatment for historic landscapes, districts, sites, etc.

All of the respondents believed that historic structures, lands, and views should be protected and preserved.



**CURRENT PROTECTION:** Working with the Historic Preservation Plan and the newly created Historic Preservation Commission, the Township is poised to take substantive steps to further protect its historic structures, lands, and views. Hopewell Township has a wealth of sites with potential local, state, and national significance that require additional regulations and policies for their continued existence and preservation.

However, there is a lack of ordinances that safeguard historic resources and acknowledge and permit special treatment for historic assets.

### **OPTION: Adopt additional ordinances and policies to ensure further preservation and protection of historic structures, lands, and views.**

- ☞ Adopt ordinances that protect sites containing cultural and/or historical resources, perhaps even a historic district overlay zone. The regulations should also encourage the preservation, rehabilitation or adaptive reuse of historic buildings and structures that protects their architectural integrity and preserves their context within the historic landscape.
- ☞ Once an historic preservation plan is in place, the newly created Historic Preservation Commission is required to receive a copy of every application for development or a permit in historic districts or concerning historic sites so that it may provide comments on the application.
- ☞ The Commission should update or create a survey of historic sites in the municipality. The Township should also work with the Commission to present these sites to the public in an appropriate manner (i.e., signage, parking facilities, etc.).
- ☞ The Commission should prioritize historic sites for preservation and inclusion on the New Jersey Register of Historic Places and the National Register of Historic Places.
- ☞ The Township and Commission should establish an education program to heighten awareness of the historic and cultural heritage of Hopewell Township and its environs.
- ☞ The Township should encourage cooperation among local and regional entities involved in similar historic preservation initiatives.
- ☞ Adopt an ordinance to protect viewsheds. Map viewsheds and scenic vistas.

## Historic Preservation



## Did You Know?

Being listed on the New Jersey Register includes the following benefits:

- ⌘ Public recognition of a property's historical, architectural, or archeological significance.
- ⌘ Eligibility for rehabilitation or restoration grants or loans from the New Jersey Historic Trust (if the property is owned by county or local government or by a local non-profit corporation).
- ⌘ Protective review of state, county or municipal projects that might "encroach upon, damage, or destroy" a listed property.



## Additional Resources

NJ Dept. of Env. Protection  
Division of Parks and Forestry  
Historic Preservation Office  
P.O. Box 404  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0404  
Tel: (609) 292-2023  
Fax: (609) 984-0578  
Email: [njhpo@dep.state.nj.us](mailto:njhpo@dep.state.nj.us)  
Web site: [www.state.nj.us/dep/hpo/](http://www.state.nj.us/dep/hpo/)

New Jersey's Historic Preservation Office, located within the Division of Parks and Forestry, Department of Environmental Protection, brings expertise in a variety of fields essential to preserving historic resources. It responds to more than 40,000 calls yearly from people working to preserve, protect and promote New Jersey's historic resources.

New Jersey Historic Trust  
P.O. Box 404  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0404  
Tel: 609.984.6017  
Fax: 609.984.7590  
Email: [njht@dep.state.nj.us](mailto:njht@dep.state.nj.us)  
Web site: [www.njht.org](http://www.njht.org)

The New Jersey Historic Trust is a non-profit historic preservation organization affiliated with the Department of State. It recommends awards from the Garden State Historic Preservation Trust Fund for a variety of planning projects for historic preservation.

Preservation New Jersey  
30 South Warren Street  
Trenton, NJ 08608  
Tel: 609.392.6409  
Fax: 609.392.6418  
Email: [info@preservationnj.org](mailto:info@preservationnj.org)  
Web site: [www.preservationnj.org](http://www.preservationnj.org)

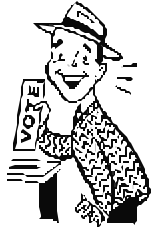
Preservation New Jersey's mission is to protect and promote the state's historic resources, communities and landscapes through education and advocacy.



## STEP

### 11

## Resident Participation



GOAL: Hopewell Township has a core group of active volunteers who regularly participate in Township meetings, but most respondents to the Framework Questionnaire agreed that more could be done to encourage additional residents to come forward and share their expertise.

The polls have shown that Township residents care deeply about their environment and with a little more encouragement they will come out to participate in meetings and take an active role in the community.

CURRENT PROTECTION: In recent years Hopewell Township has taken a whole new approach to development, putting planning before infrastructure and using resource-based planning tools at the forefront of municipal decision making. The Township has created a Citizens' Master Plan Advisory Committee and a Citizens' Wastewater Planning Advisory Committee, tapping into the expertise and energy of the community and inviting public participation. The Township has also improved working relationship with Pennington and Hopewell Boroughs, including creating a Hopewell Valley Open Space Advisory Committee with members from all three municipalities.

The Township has won funding for master plan work and studies. It also coordinated township-wide direct mailings for master plan hearings, Route 31 meetings and environmental questionnaires.

Leaders have written numerous articles, columns and letters to the local newspapers. Key meetings have been repeatedly televised. The Township sponsored the Hopewell Valley Vistas Photo Contest to remind residents of the Township's precious resources and scenic beauty.

**OPTION: Continue to encourage public participation by expanding information available on your Township website, setting up an email user group, or having Committee members, etc., write a regular column in the newspaper to keep residents informed on key programs and issues.**

## Resident Participation

## STEP

12

# Knowledge Base of Municipal Officials



GOAL: Many of the respondents viewed the “large professional population, and intelligent, enthusiastic and competent elected officials and appointed members of commissions...” as a strength within the Township.

CURRENT PROTECTION: From interviews with some decision makers in Hopewell Township and through assessing the current land use policies, we realize that very highly trained and educated people are responsible for making the decisions that govern land use policy in the Township. These officials should be encouraged to expand their expertise and knowledge in order to base decisions on sound facts and ensure that the Township does not become polarized.

### **OPTION: Encourage training and site walks for commission members.**

- ⌘ The Township should encourage members of their Planning Board, Environmental Commission and Historic Preservation Commission to participate in continuing education. This could include hosting training in the Township and inviting neighboring municipalities to attend.
- ⌘ The Planning Board and Environmental Commission should be encouraged to conduct site walks. The Township should continue its policy of organizing group site walks, with professionals present, on large projects.



Educated Municipal Officials