

Taking the Next Step:

Pennington Borough
Municipal Assessment

April 2008



The Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association

Since 1949, our member-supported organization has worked on behalf of local residents to protect, preserve and enhance our local environment. We are dedicated to caring for the integrity of the natural ecosystems of the 265-square miles of central New Jersey drained by the Stony Brook and the Millstone River. We focus on environmental education, watershed stewardship and water resource advocacy – helping present and future generations understand the wonders and workings of the natural world we are helping to preserve on their behalf.

We are headquartered on an 860-acre nature reserve in Hopewell Township (Mercer County) that includes a community supported organic farm, nature center, and a 14-mile trail system that leads visitors through our woodlands, wetlands, and fields.

Many activities within our watershed affect the quality of streams, air, wetlands, groundwater, meadows and forests. By changing how we carry out these activities, we can improve our environment and our quality of life. So whether at home, work or play, we can all make a difference.

If you have questions about this report or want to learn more about membership support, volunteer opportunities, or educational programs please contact us at:
(609) 737-3735



www.thewatershed.org

Table of Contents

Executive Summary ii

Acknowledgements..... vi

How To Use This Report vii

Highlights of Your Town viii

Next Steps 1

Introduction.....2

Step 1: Creation of Greenways/Regional Planning and Collaboration 3

Step 2: Historic Preservation/Contextual Design Standards 5

Step 3: Water Supply/Capacity-Based Planning..... 7

Step 4: Groundwater Recharge /Source Water Protection 9

Step 5: Stream Corridor Protection..... 11

Step 6: Stormwater Management Best Management Practices 13

Step 7: Natural Resource Protection and Awareness 15

Step 8: Traffic Management 17

Step 9: Public Participation..... 19

Appendix A: Summary of Municipal Officials Survey

Executive Summary

A bustling town center filled with historic architecture; residents devoted to their community, with all the cultural, civic and business amenities of a small town; a surrounding belt of walkable, accessible green space that provides opportunities for recreation, local food supply and esthetic and spiritual qualities.

Hole in the doughnut? Far from it. Pennington Borough, in the eyes of the community, is the solid center of a living whole – the nucleus of a dynamic working landscape. The Hopewell Valley is an example of a European-style development pattern, unusual in the US and still rarer in 21st-century central New Jersey: a vibrant town with a viable greenbelt. And the community's clear vision is: we want to keep it this way. We like the feel of the town, we like the clear demarcation between town and working landscape, and we see how other towns have lost this character and disappeared into a sprawling mass with no clear identity. We don't want that to happen to Pennington. And we don't want to exhaust the natural resources on which our community's future depends.

How to implement that vision?

Preservation of Pennington's unique character depends on implementing protection of natural and historical resources within the Borough. It also depends on implementing protection outside the Borough. The latter puts a premium on the Pennington community's ability to continue to cooperate with other communities in the Hopewell Valley, especially Hopewell Township, which surrounds it.

The Project for Municipal Excellence, supported by the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, promotes the creation of partnership efforts between municipalities and the Stony Brook Millstone Watershed Association. It is designed to identify the choices a municipality has made that either hinder or enhance the preservation of natural resources and quality of life in and around the community. Through this Project, the Association supports municipal leaders as they evaluate goals, policies and strategies and determine how to connect these with the community's ultimate vision for itself. The process is not easy or short. Strong community leadership is a necessity to accomplish real actions. Pennington is to be congratulated for embarking on this process and the Association is excited to be working with the community.

After Pennington formally partnered with the Association through a resolution, we began the municipal assessment process with a collection of survey responses from municipal officials and staff to assess the community’s vision for the future. We then reviewed the 2005 Borough Master Plan and Reexamination Report, the 2004 Streetscape Report, its land use ordinances, policies, and best management practices. We toured the Borough to see how the community’s vision is reflected “on the ground”. These steps guided us in identifying ordinances and practices that need to be strengthened so that Pennington can realize its vision. These are the focus of the assessment report and a “step” toward making the connection between the vision and the reality.

Each chapter - or “step” - in the assessment report lists the Borough’s *Goal* according to the Master Plan and survey responses and the *Current Practices* the Borough has implemented in codes, ordinances and actions. The heart of each step focuses on the *Options* for new opportunities. Here we suggest a menu of choices for planning and conservation projects to implement now and in the future. The *Did You Know* section contains supporting information such as initiatives in other communities that may provide models for action. Finally, *Additional Resources* provide additional guidance on the subject.

We intend that this report serve as a guide and inspiration for work: a catalyst to achieve responsible planning and environmental quality. Future boards and committees should refer to this document for ideas and guidance and to make connections with other communities and local organizations. As an interim step in the implementation of these practices, the report offers a variety of recommendations, which the Association is partially funded to help implement.

This report is a general guide to current and future projects for this community that will connect goals with implementation and implementation with vision. The results of this analysis for Pennington are documented in this report, entitled “Taking the Next Step”. Outlined below, and in no particular order, are the nine strategies for achieving Pennington’s goals. (Please refer to the report for more detail).

∅ **Creation of Greenways/Regional Planning and Collaboration**

Borough Goal: To preserve and enhance open space and recreational areas; create a greenbelt around the Borough

Current Practices: Open Space tax is used to preserve land in and around the Borough; and Open Space committee works with regional land preservation organizations.

Recommendation: Adopt plans and policies to further protect open space.

∅ **Historic Preservation/Contextual Design Standards**

Borough Goal: “The visual quality and historic character of the Borough should be protected and enhanced.”

Current Practices: Historic Plan Element of Master Plan not implemented by ordinance in historic district.

Recommendation: Adopt a historic preservation ordinance for the town center and adopt contextual design standards for the entire Borough

⌘ **Water Supply/Capacity-Based Planning**

Borough Goal: Any expansion of the water supply infrastructure should be in the context of historical usage including voluntary and involuntary restrictions.

Current Practices: Development is approved without reference to water infrastructure; water conservation ordinance authorizes conservation measures in drought emergencies.

Recommendation: Align water supply and demand; apply capacity-based limits on development; enact year-round conservation measures;

⌘ **Groundwater Recharge /Source Water Protection**

Borough Goals: work toward a more proactive, regional approach on water quality improvement; educate residents on nonpoint source pollution.

Current Practices: No wellhead protection ordinance; some wells offline due to contamination.

Recommendation: Protect groundwater sources by adopting wellhead protection ordinance, preserving groundwater recharge areas in the region, reducing impervious cover, educating residents.

⌘ **Stream Corridor Protection**

Borough Goal: Preserve and enhance stream corridors.

Current Practices: Some land along stream corridors has been preserved as part of open space. No ordinance protections exist.

Recommendation: Adopt Stream Corridor Ordinance.

⌘ **Stormwater Management Best Management Practices**

Borough Goal: Adopt stormwater management plan and ordinances.

Current Practices: Stormwater management plan and ordinance adopted consonant with minimum NJDEP models.

Recommendation: Strengthen stormwater management practices by adopting plan and ordinance that addresses redevelopment, infill development, and creates retrofitting plans for existing impervious surfaces.

⌘ **Resource Protection and Awareness**

Borough Goal: Promote conservation of open space, energy resources and natural resources.

Current Practices: Topsoil removal restrictions, shade tree planting program.

Recommendation: .Conduct a Natural Resources Inventory, educate residents and adopt or strengthen ordinances protecting natural resources.

∅ **Traffic Management**

Borough Goal: : “Protect and enhance visual quality and historic character of the Borough ;Reduce through traffic; enhance pedestrian safety and access; work toward a more proactive effort on regional issues such as traffic and circulation.”

Current Practices: Speed limits in Borough.

Recommendation: Work with municipal, regional, county and state authorities and regional planning organizations to create regional traffic plans and reduce pollution.

∅ **Public Participation**

Borough Goal: : To include community members in democratic municipal processes, and to educate community members about issues in the Borough and seek input from residents.

Current Practices: Borough residents are invited to attend Council meetings and participate in the public comment portion of the meeting; Borough’s website includes Council and board meeting agendas and the code book.

Recommendation: Encourage residents to participate in public meetings and provide input to community decisions.

Ultimately, Pennington Borough must develop strategies to plan for current and future generations of residents. By committing to follow through on this report, the Association and Pennington are working to preserve and enhance our watershed and the communities within it. This report is the next step in realizing that vision.

Acknowledgements

We commend Pennington Borough's leaders and professionals for participating in this program and for supporting the Association in evaluating current practices. It is difficult for anyone, whether an individual or a municipal body, to have the courage to evaluate current work, determine where and how to improve a current system, and if necessary develop a new strategy. We want the readers of this report to look at not only what can be done, but what has already been accomplished in Pennington Borough.

Our hope is that Pennington will learn from and expand on its own experiences, challenges, and successes, as well as those of surrounding municipalities, keeping in mind that zoning and policy should look regionally to provide comprehensive and sensible growth. We also look forward to partnering with the Borough in embracing new opportunities that protect and enhance the character and natural environment that makes Pennington a special place to live.

We wish to thank the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation and the U.S. EPA for their generosity in funding this project, and the members of the Pennington Borough Council, Planning Board, Environmental Commission and staff for their responses to our survey. We would also like to acknowledge the individual input of Jeanne Donlon, Jim Gaffney, Eileen Heinzl, Bill Reuter, Diane Zompa, Mary Mistretta, and all those who responded to the survey. Your time and dedication to this project is greatly appreciated.



Although the information in this document has been funded wholly or in part by the United States Environmental Protection Agency under assistance agreement WS982909-03-0 to the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association, it has not gone through the Agency's publications review process and, therefore, may not necessarily reflect the views of the Agency and no official endorsement should be inferred.

How To Use This Report



Each “step” in the assessment report lists Pennington’s *Goal* for a specific subject according to the Master Plan and survey responses and the *Current Practices* the Borough has implemented in its codes, ordinances, and actions. We evaluated land planning techniques, land conservation, environmental issues stewardship projects. We also interviewed key personnel.

The heart of each step focuses on the *Options* for new opportunities. In this section, the Association suggests to the municipality a menu of choices for current and future planning and conservation projects. The *Did You Know?* section contains supporting information such as initiatives in other that may serve as models for action. Lastly, the *Additional Resources* lists resources for additional guidance. This report serves as a guide for future boards and committees: to inspire work on new projects and to support current tasks. In addition, it provides an opportunity for municipalities to support other community and local not-for-profit groups and foster a regional approach to any of these issues.

Next Steps



Once the Assessment report is presented and a short list of priorities is decided, the Association will work with Borough officials to implement the recommendations using models and guides. This partnership will enable the Association to support Pennington’s efforts in providing citizens with a sense of community, a healthy environment and a strong economy. By committing ourselves to follow through on this report and its results, the Association is achieving its mission of protecting and preserving the health of the watershed.

Highlights of Your Town



When beginning this assessment, members of the Pennington Borough Council, Planning Board, Environmental Commission, and various staff articulated their goals and vision for the Borough by responding to our survey (see Appendix A). It is important to note the proactive measures that have been taken by the community and that have helped to create the unique place that is Pennington.

Pennington's Vision

The essential character of Pennington Borough is created by the small-scale, walkable nature of its streets. The 1998 Master Plan notes that since its beginnings in the early 1700s Pennington “has maintained its attractive small village character.” The Master Plan goals reiterated in the 2005 Reexamination report “recognize the importance of preserving the Borough’s visual quality and historic character,...the primarily residential character of the community, the desirability of maintaining a mixture of uses in the town center, the distinction between the Route 31 highway business area and the pedestrian oriented town center...” As stated in the Reexamination Report, “The Borough of Pennington is characterized as an historic village.” Moreover, as noted in the Open Space and Recreation Plan (included in the Reexamination Report), a “distinctive characteristic of Pennington Borough is its setting in a rural landscape.”

Preserving the town’s character and setting in the face of development pressure all around and within the Borough itself is the community’s vision.

Good Things...

Examples of Pennington’s ongoing work to implement the community’s vision:

Regional Open Space Planning

Pennington has worked with Hopewell Township, Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space and other regional groups to preserve open space outside the Borough. Pennington benefits from the creation of a greenbelt that helps to preserve the town’s character by delineating the border between built and natural environments. By cooperating, the communities pool their resources to better leverage open space funds . Building regional partnerships fosters a shared sense of place, which is an important balance to the increasingly fragmented nature of both the physical environment and the political system.

Highlights of Your Town (cont'd)

Identifying and Promoting Historical Resources

In 1987, Pennington's Historic Sites Committee identified 126 historic sites in the Borough, and mapped a proposed historic district. There is a walking tour/map on the Web. Some of the historic sites date from the eighteenth century and many are from the early nineteenth century. The historic sites are a crucial part of what makes Pennington a special place and the community is to be commended for documenting these resources.

Office Building Zone Design Standards

In the OB Zone, along Route 31, design standards in the Zoning Code are aimed at creating a pleasing streetscape by, for example, eliminating parking lots between the buildings and street, and promoting pedestrian-friendly village-type complexes. No residences are permitted. These standards blend two of the community's goals as expressed in the Master Plan: to protect and enhance the visual character of the Borough, and to maintain the distinction between highway business uses and town center housing/business uses.





Next Steps

Introduction

The elected and appointed officials in Pennington Borough have a challenging task:

balance natural resource protection with economic prosperity, encourage business, provide residential services, and determine how to protect and enhance the unique character of the Borough. Pennington's leaders strive to ensure that the needs of current residents are met and that there will be high quality of life for residents in the future. To carry out this important task, officials rely on their Master Plan to provide a vision for the future and to use zoning, policies and ordinances as the tools to help carry out that mission.

The Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association recognizes the magnitude of this task. The protection and health of a watershed depends a great deal on land use laws and policies. Thus, we developed the Program for Municipal Excellence. In partnering with municipalities we provide an outside evaluation of current practices and we support planning that protects the natural environment and ensures that the vision in the Master Plan is achieved.

By developing a Master Plan that guides both growth and conservation, clearly states goals and objectives, and highlights a vision for the future, Pennington is planning for quality of life for both current and future residents. Municipal leaders are working to ensure that their community retains its historic character, environmental health, and viable economy.

Pennington is effectively "built-out," with little room for further development. Therefore to have effect on natural resources in the watershed any changes to its land use policies must focus on (a) mitigating or reducing the effects of existing uses and tightening restrictions on future infill development or redevelopment and (b) regional cooperation to leverage Pennington's influence.

The Association was excited to partner with Pennington on this project. The vision to preserve a unique historic village requires particular dedication and tenacity in the face of relentless pressure, literally on all sides of the Borough. Pennington's success in achieving its vision will require creative planning as well. Luckily the community benefits from residents and leaders who are committed to pursuing that vision.



STEP

1

Creation of Greenways/Regional Planning and Collaboration

GOALS: The Master Plan states that “Open space and recreational areas, both public and private, should be preserved and enhanced (e.g. green linkages to nearby preserved areas...).” The Open Space and Recreation Plan states among its goals to “Create and maintain a permanently protected greenbelt of open space around the Borough, to the maximum extent possible,” to “Preserve the historic village character of Pennington, which depends on the maintenance of a rural landscape on the Borough’s boundaries,” to “Increase the range of passive recreational opportunities on permanently protected tracts of contiguous open space adjacent or near the Borough,” and to “Create and enhance linkages which allow pedestrian access to those open space recreation opportunities from multiple points within the Borough.” The Open Space plan identifies an area targeted for acquisition in a ring around the Borough.

Survey respondents said that preserving a greenbelt around the Borough is important to retaining its character as a village with rural surroundings.

CURRENT PRACTICES: The Borough has an open space tax. Funds were used to purchase land in Hopewell Township, a portion of which is being used for a new Department of Public Works facility. The Open Space Committee is working to preserve other properties adjacent to the Borough. But to protect its larger, regional greenbelt, Pennington depends primarily on Hopewell Township, which has its own Open Space and Recreation Plan with its own goals to satisfy the open space and recreation needs of the Township. (A greenbelt around Pennington is not stated as a priority, but there is a stated commitment to work with neighboring municipalities.)



Baldwin’s Creek open space, Hopewell Twp

OPTION: ADOPT PLANS AND POLICIES TO FURTHER PROTECT OPEN SPACE.

Specifically, the Borough should consider:

- ⌚ Continuing to be involved in the Joint Open Space Committee with Hopewell Borough and Hopewell Township to promote consistency among open space plans.
- ⌚ Continuing to work with municipalities and organizations to create a comprehensive regional greenway plan that connects the greenbelt with other greenways.
- ⌚ Ensuring the permanent protection of municipally owned open space as greenbelt by third-party conservation easements, then developing and funding a conservation easement monitoring and enforcement program.
- ⌚ Establishing management objectives, outlining procedures, and defining responsibilities for maintaining designated conservation areas.
- ⌚ Continuing to work with D&R Greenway and Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space in the acquisition of open space and conservation easements.



Did You Know?

The ecological, recreational and spiritual benefits of open space do not end at political boundaries. Connecting open space into greenways, and connecting greenways within a region, multiplies the benefits and enables municipalities to combine their resources. Intermunicipal (regional) greenway plans enable municipalities to identify connected open space and strategies to preserve, protect and enhance these greenways.

Greenways are simply connected pieces of open space. They may contain trails, but need not be synonymous with trail systems. Greenways extend and enhance wildlife habitat both by providing suitable habitat and by providing a protected corridor for moving between habitat locations. Greenways may follow existing geographic contours such as waterways, hedgerows, or rail lines, or they may be created by connecting landscape types.

Fragmentation of habitat is one of the most significant causes of the decline of wildlife in New Jersey. Larger tracts of connected open space generally support increased biodiversity as well as resilience of natural communities. Creating and connecting greenways is a step toward “de-fragmenting” the state’s landscape.

In addition to ecological benefits, greenways have economic benefits: property values often increase in the vicinity of greenways and where greenways have recreational uses they generate revenue. Open space also improves stormwater management and improves water quality.



Additional Resources

Inter-Municipal Greenway Planning, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (January 2001). Information on benefits of greenways, funding sources, and guidance on the planning process including case studies. See also *Closing the Missing Link on the Assunpink Greenway*, DVRPC (Jan. 2000).

American Trails: Greenways & community trails. Resources on greenway projects including case studies on planning and implementation. Emphasis is on trails and recreational opportunities but is relevant to any greenway planning effort. www.americantrails.org/resources/greenways/index.html

How Greenways Work: A handbook on ecology, by Jonathan Labaree (1997). Primer on designing greenways to provide recreational and ecological benefits Originally published by the National Park Service. www.americantrails.org/resources/greenways/NPSintroGrnwy.html

Crosswicks/Doctors Creek Greenways Group. This regional planning partnership among six municipalities was initiated by Allentown Borough (Monmouth County). The planning objectives were to protect water quality, preserve historic and scenic sites and vistas, and develop a system of trails. www.ccdcgreenway.org/.

Garden State Greenways. Provides interactive mapping tools for planning greenways. www.gardenstategreenways.org.



STEP

2

Historic Preservation/Contextual Design Standards

GOALS: A Master Plan goal is that “The visual quality and historic character of the Borough should be protected and enhanced.” Under this goal, further goals are to “Adopt historic district standards and boundaries;” and “Incorporate non-residential building design guidelines into an updated site plan ordinance.” The 1990 Master Plan adopted a Historic Preservation Plan including a draft ordinance, and designated a Crossroads Historic District.

Survey respondents noted that Pennington’s chief strength is its small-town character, reflected in the charming, attractive streetscape. Most respondents supported passage of a historic preservation ordinance to protect the town center, and most stressed the importance of maintaining or enhancing Pennington’s character as a small, community-oriented town surrounded by a rural area. Several suggested design standards. Many said that the community’s social or economic diversity needs

to be supported by ensuring affordable housing and not rebuilding the Borough with expensive homes.

CURRENT PRACTICES: The Borough has no historic district ordinance and no contextual design standards. The 2005 Reexamination report, Streetscape Report, and survey respondents all noted a concern about recent trends for out-of-scale infill development. The Reexamination Report also recommended reviewing and re-evaluating the Historic Plan Element.



OPTION: ADOPT TOWN CENTER HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCE AND BOROUGH-WIDE CONTEXTUAL DESIGN STANDARDS. Specifically, the Borough should consider:

- ⌘ Adopting a historic preservation ordinance to designate the town center as a historic district and provide design criteria and guidelines within the historic district, and appointing a historic preservation commission. (As a preliminary matter the Borough may wish to consider reviewing the existing Historic Plan Element.)
- ⌘ Adopting non-residential design standards for the entire Borough, to ensure that non-residential buildings enhance, rather than detract from, the primarily residential character of the Borough.
- ⌘ Continuing to preserve a greenbelt around the Borough to emphasize its unique character and preserve its context (see Step 1).
- ⌘ Consulting with Hopewell Township’s Historic Preservation Commission to devise approaches for regional historic preservation planning.
- ⌘ Adopting property tax abatements for rehabilitation of historic properties within the historic district.



Did You Know?

For communities desiring to preserve their historic character, a local ordinance can provide protection that national and state historic preservation regimes do not. Municipal historic preservation ordinances typically limit changes to the exterior of a historic structure, in addition to restricting its demolition. Ordinances may set out design standards for new construction in designated districts, in order to promote and enhance the visual character of a neighborhood. A historic preservation commission is established under such an ordinance to review applications and determine appropriateness under design guidelines.

In contrast, the National Register of Historic Places and the New Jersey Register of Historic Places only regulate damage or destruction of registered sites in projects involving federal, state or local funding or where permits are required. However, registration of a site or district under these programs does provides access to tax benefits and funding sources for restoration.

Municipal ordinances also enable a community to identify locally important structures or areas that may not be of national or state significance but may still be of great value to the community in defining its character.

“Tear downs” are a significant historic preservation issue. The continuously rising tide of affluence enables people to spend more and expect bigger homes, while vacant land available for development dwindles, so older homes become valuable more for the land they sit on than the structures themselves. Preservation New Jersey named “tear downs” one of the ten Most Endangered Historic Sites in 2007. Teardowns not only remove affordable housing from a community, they also “tear” at the fabric of historic neighborhoods by disrupting the scale and detail of the streetscape.



Additional Resources

Borough of Hopewell, NJ Historic Preservation Ordinance (available from Hopewell Borough, 609-466-2636). New construction or changes to structures in historic district are subject to review by Historic Preservation Commission, advisory body to the Planning Board.

Lawrence Township (Mercer County), NJ, Ordinance 1920-07 (available from Lawrence Township Planning/Zoning Department, 609-844-7075): restricts out-of-scale development.

Developing Design Guidelines, New Jersey Historic Preservation Office: www.state.nj.us/dep/hpo/3preserve/designguides.pdf.

New Jersey Historic Preservation Office: Certified Local Government Program. Provides grants to local governments participating in historic preservation programs, provided those municipalities have historic preservation ordinances that conform to the MLUL and federal standards. Funding is available for such projects as historic resource surveys and planning tools. Local CLGs include Princeton Borough and Township, Lawrence, South Brunswick, and Hopewell Townships. See www.state.nj.us/dep/hpo/3preserve/local or contact 609.984.6017.

Teardown Resource Guide, National Trust for Historic Preservation. Information and tools to manage the trend toward the demolition of historic structures and replacement with out-of-scale buildings including a visual analysis of what’s wrong with teardowns. www.nationaltrust.org/teardowns/resource_guide.html.



STEP

3

Water Supply/Capacity-Based Planning

GOALS:

The municipal water supply service provides water for most properties in the Borough. The Utility Service Element of the 1998 Master Plan noted that the capacity of the water supply system is less than the historic peak usage, and recommended that “any plans for the expansion of water service ... should consider all information on water usage in the Borough including the history of voluntary and involuntary water restrictions.” The 2005 Reexamination Report noted that “the Borough continues to grow and that the actual water infrastructure has changed little since 1998...”

A capacity and reliability analysis undertaken by the Borough concluded in April 2004 that the infrastructure is not capable of delivering its permitted amounts, and that “at the current customer base the system can become stressed and/or unreliable during drought conditions, especially during summer months.”

One of the Borough’s wells is currently offline, further reducing capacity.

Survey respondents felt that the water supply is vulnerable to contamination and depletion.

CURRENT PRACTICES:

Under current practice, development continues to be approved without reference to water infrastructure. The Borough has a water conservation ordinance (Ch. 209 of General Code) that authorizes conservation measures in drought emergencies, and requires new construction to have water-saving devices.



Borough water tower

OPTION: ALIGN WATER SUPPLY AND DEMAND.

Specifically, the Borough should consider:

- ⌘ Basing development approvals on water supply capacity.
- ⌘ Revising the conservation ordinance to apply year-round (or during periods of stress on the system such as summer months) rather than only applicable during emergency.
- ⌘ Replacing water meters with active metering systems; installing leak-monitoring and detection systems.
- ⌘ Promoting water conservation, using incentives.
- ⌘ Promoting residential water reuse , e.g., rain barrels.



Did You Know?

Water conservation reduces *energy* costs. According to the Electric Power Research Institute, American public water supply and treatment facilities are among the country’s largest energy consumers, using about 50 billion kilowatt-hours per year – 4% of total energy use in the country. That’s enough electricity to power more than 4.5 million homes. Reducing the volume of water pumped, distributed and treated reduces energy used.

From 50-70% of household water usage is for outdoor uses (irrigation of lawns and gardens, primarily), according to American Water Works Association.

Water conservation informational programs are much more effective when combined with incentives. For household outdoor usage this might include subsidies for replacing turfgrass with xeriscaping, free landscape and irrigation consultation; and providing lawn irrigation sensors; and for indoor usage, providing low-flow showerheads.

The Reexamination Report notes that the wastewater treatment system is “for all practical purposes currently at capacity,” and states, “Future development in the Borough will be predicated upon the availability of additional treatment and disposal at the [Stony Brook Regional Sewerage Authority] expanded facility, which possibly could require two to three years to replace.” The facility (which was funded by the Borough) serves the Borough and the Hopewell Township high school. Plant expansion would serve not only additional Pennington development but also non-Borough development permitted to use the plant. While not directly affected by water supply, regional cooperation in wastewater treatment planning and regional coordination is an additional necessary consideration for planning development in the Hopewell Valley.



Additional Resources

Township of Medford, NJ Water Conservation Ordinance, Ch. 121-3 Applies during warmer months: uses an odd-even day schedule for irrigation., limits lawn watering to early morning hours, prohibits irrigation runoff onto impervious surfaces. www.medfordtownship.com/landusecode.php and *Township of Stafford, NJ Water Conservation Ordinance*, Ch. 208., at twp.stafford.nj.us/ . Year-round application, requires automatic rain sensors for irrigation systems; prohibits use of public water for irrigation during peak demand hours.

EPA WaterSense. A new program of the Environmental Protection Agency to identify water-efficient products that will make water conservation easier. www.epa.gov/watersense/

WaterWiser, American Water Works Association. Resources on water conservation programs and educational tools; case studies of municipal conservation programs. www.awwa.org/waterwiser/

Water Efficiency, magazine for water conservation, with practical advice for implementing conservation technology and programs. www.waterefficiency.net.



STEP

4

Groundwater Recharge /Source Water Protection

GOALS: The Master Plan states that the Borough “should work toward a more proactive approach on regional issues such as...water quality improvement.”

Protecting both the quantity and quality of the local water supply was very important to the respondents. They also noted a concern with nonpoint source pollution. Respondents recommended citizen education about source water protection.

CURRENT PRACTICES:

There are 5 municipal wells with total allocation capacity of 777 gpm and a 600,000 gallon storage tank. Well No. 8 is currently offline due to VOC contamination and Air strippers for wells 6 and 7 are in place due to deep aquifer contamination.

The Borough Water Department does not have detailed correlations between which aquifers supply which wells. There is no

Wellhead protection ordinance. The New Jersey DEP-mapped wellhead protection areas extend beyond the Borough boundaries.



Municipal well adjacent to landfill

OPTION: PROTECT GROUNDWATER SOURCES.

Specifically the Borough should consider:

- ⌘ Mapping aquifer recharge areas based on Borough and Hopewell Township geology
- ⌘ Reducing impervious cover in areas of groundwater recharge of water supply
- ⌘ Doing a build-out analysis and a groundwater recharge analysis to assess supply-demand match
- ⌘ Preserving/acquiring recharge areas outside the Borough.
- ⌘ Adopting a Wellhead Protection Ordinance.
- ⌘ Educating residents on nonpoint source pollution.



Did You Know?

The New Jersey Environmental Infrastructure Trust makes available low-interest loans (effective quarter-market rate) to help acquire or preserve land to benefit water quality, including aquifer recharge areas. In addition to the low interest, borrowing costs are reduced due to the economies of scale of a pooled bond issue. This funding source implements the federal Clean Water State Revolving Fund. Acquired land may be used for passive recreation (no bike trails); applications of fertilizers and pesticides are restricted.

(See www.state.nj.us/dep/watersupply/loanprog.htm)

Municipalities can regulate activities in wellhead protection areas under (among other authorities) the New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law, which authorizes each municipality to plan and regulate land use to secure a safe and adequate drinking water supply for its residents, and the New Jersey Local Boards of Health Law, which authorizes Boards of Health to protect public health, safety and welfare.

The area around each public water supply wellhead in the state was mapped by New Jersey Geological Survey to show three tiers of potential contamination, each defined by the time it theoretically takes groundwater to travel to a well: tier 1 is two years, tier 2, five years, and tier 3, 12 years. Since the time it takes a pollutant to migrate to a well is typically correlated with the groundwater travel time, activities may be regulated differently between tiers. The maps can be used to delineate source water protection areas and regulate the activities permitted within those areas – for example, hazardous waste storage, landfills, junkyards, vehicle storage areas, quarrying, or service stations.

The ordinance may apply to changes in land use (in which case it should be adopted as part of the zoning/land use law and the authority with jurisdiction would be the Planning Board or Zoning Board of Adjustment) or existing land uses (in which case the jurisdictional authority would be the municipality's Board of Health). Any such ordinance that regulates underground storage tanks more stringently than NJDEP rules, should be submitted to the NJDEP for review pursuant to NJSA 58:10A.35.



Additional Resources

Model Wellhead Protection Ordinance (part of the Hunterdon County Environmental Toolbox), Hunterdon County Planning Commission. Available at www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/planning/ordinances/toolbox/Environmental_Toolbox-Well_Head.pdf

Ordinance Implementation: Wellhead Protection, Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association. Background document on need for wellhead protection, options, and example ordinances. Available online at www.thewatershed.org/images/uploads/Wellhead_Ordinance_Implementation_Package.pdf.

Borough of Rocky Hill (adopted), and Montgomery Township (draft) Wellhead Protection Ordinances. Available from Stony Brook Millstone Watershed Association. These ordinances protect Wellhead Protection Areas that cross boundaries between the borough and the township.



STEP

5

Stream Corridor Protection

GOALS: One of the general goals and objectives in the 1998 Master Plan and 2005 Reexamination Report is that “Open space ... areas, both public and private, should be preserved and enhanced (e.g. ...stream corridor protection...)” The Utility Service Plan in the 1998 Master Plan states, “The model ordinance for stream corridor protection, prepared by the Stony Brook Millstone Watershed Association, should be reviewed for Borough use.” The 2005 Reexamination Report states that “five (5) water courses flow through or near the Borough, and riparian or stream corridor buffers to these water courses offer ... opportunities for open space protection and passive recreation. Although most of the lands through which the water courses in the Borough flow are developed, it is recommended that for any new development, a buffer along any water course or water body be

required and protected with a conservation deed restriction. ... This buffer will not only serve as a protected open space area but it will also help with water quality in the water course.”

Survey respondents suggested that Pennington’s resources should be better protected, including attention to Baldwin’s Creek and a requirement for stream buffers for new developments.

CURRENT PRACTICES: The Borough does not have a stream corridor ordinance. Section 163.20.4(G)(8) of the Land Use Code, part of stormwater management provisions adopted in 2006 pursuant to state regulation, establishes 300-foot buffer areas around Category One waters. Baldwin’s Creek, which runs adjacent to the Borough and through lands owned by the Borough, is designated Category One.

OPTION: ADOPT BETTER MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR STREAM CORRIDORS TO PRESERVE AND ENHANCE WATER QUALITY.

Specifically, the Borough should consider:

- ∅ Adopting a stream corridor ordinance using the 2007 Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association Model.
- ∅ Encouraging residential, business and institutional riparian buffer practices (such as not mowing to the stream bank and replacing turfgrass with native riparian trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants) by, for example, promoting participation in the Watershed Association’s River-Friendly programs.
—Municipal riparian sites such as the landfill should be used as models for new practices.
- ∅ Protecting stream corridors through acquisition of, or implementation of conservation easements on, riparian open space (see Step 5)
- ∅ Adopting a stormwater mitigation plan and identifying potential retrofit projects such as restoration of eroded streambanks (see Step 6).



Disturbed, narrow stream corridor, Borough landfill



Did You Know?

A stream corridor is a complex and valuable ecosystem that includes the land, plants, animals and network of tributaries within it. Recognition of the value of stream corridors has come with the understanding of what has been lost through poorly planned, uninformed or misguided activities on many streams and the watersheds that nourish them. If stream corridors are maintained in their natural condition, with minimum disturbance, they are instrumental in :

- 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 by storing and releasing floodwaters;
- Displacing potential sources of nonpoint-source pollution from the water's edge;
- Providing shade that maintains cooler water temperatures needed by certain aquatic wildlife;
- Maintaining biological diversity;
- Helping maintain adequate flows of water to underground aquifers; and
- Providing greenway corridors for wildlife.



Lewis Brook riparian area



Additional Resources

Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association. The Association has a model stream Corridor Ordinance and an Implementation Package for municipalities to use and tailor to their own needs. www.thewatershed.org/info/2007_Model_SCO_2007-1dot0.rtf. The Association also has on file stream corridor ordinances from other New Jersey communities.

Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association. The Association has River Friendly Programs for Residents, Businesses and Golf Courses. These programs help participants set goals for water conservation and land management practices on their property. After reaching their goals, participants become certified and are able to share successes with others in the town and throughout the watershed. For more information contact the Association's Environmental Stewardship Specialists at: 609.737.3735 or see www.thewatershed.org/river_friendly_program.php.

Stream Corridor Restoration: Principles, Processes and Practices, by the Federal Interagency Stream Restoration Working Group (10/1998, rev. 8/2001). This benchmarking document is used by agencies and others to restore the function and values of the nation's stream corridors. www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/stream_restoration/.



STEP

6

Stormwater Management Best Management Practices

GOALS: The Reexamination Report notes that new state regulations require that a stormwater management plan and enabling ordinances be adopted. Survey respondents also noted the need to deal with stormwater management.

CURRENT PRACTICES: Stormwater Management Plan dated April/May 2005 has been adopted, and Stormwater Management Ordinance, codified at § 163-20.1 et seq., adopted July 2006, establishes requirements for stormwater management best management practices in all “new major developments,” defined as developments that disturb one or more acres or add one-quarter acre or more of impervious surface and require permission under the Site Plan Review chapter. (Stormwater Management 163-20.1 for site plan review (excludes 1 or 2 family dwellings).) The scope of activities covered by the Ordinance is in some respects broader than the minimum state requirements (including the definition of “major development”) but not as

broad as a municipality’s scope of authority under state law (including Residential Site Improvement Standards, and NJDEP Stormwater Management Rules).



Sedimented streambed and streambank scour , Kunkel Park

OPTION: STRENGTHEN STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PRACTICES.

Specifically, the Borough should consider:

- ⊗ Applying stormwater requirements to residential redevelopment and single-family dwelling lots exempt from site plan review.
- ⊗ Reducing the impervious surface trigger below one-quarter acre so as to apply to smaller infill lots; for example by triggering it for any razing and rebuilding.
- ⊗ Creating a stormwater mitigation plan including retrofit projects that the Borough should undertake
- ⊗ Encourage residents and businesses to become River-Friendly certified through the Association’s program; model behavior by certifying municipal properties.
- ⊗ Improve regulation of land use that affects stormwater across property lines.



Did You Know?

Because much of Pennington is densely constructed, the impervious surface coverage is relatively high. Based on the Watershed Association's analysis of NJDEP 2002 land use/land cover datasets, Pennington has an impervious surface coverage of 29% (a nearly 7% increase from 1995). Impervious cover includes buildings and paved areas as well as gravel. An impervious cover ratio of greater than 10-15% is a threshold level for indicating when impacts to water quality occur (Impervious Surfaces and Water Quality: A Review of Current Literature and its Implications for Watershed Planning, Schulte, Brabec and Richards, p. 499, J. Planning Literature (v. 16. no. 4 2002)).

As noted above, future development is likely to be predominantly infill. Accordingly, to improve stormwater management, infill development should be incorporated into stormwater management; gutters for renovated or reconstructed buildings should be disconnected from stormwater system pipes, and onsite nonstructural best management practices (BMPs) should replace pipe-and-forget-it stormwater management wherever possible.

The Association's River-Friendly program assists residents, businesses and farms to adopt practices that encourage infiltration of stormwater and reduced contamination.

Applying River-Friendly strategies on municipal properties will set a standard of practice for the community and will alleviate the town's own maintenance costs. Some strategies include Integrated Pest Management, utilizing pervious pavement on parking lots, practicing water conservation by timing and positioning sprinkler systems so as not to turn on during rainstorms and to spray only on vegetated areas.



Additional Resources

NJDEP FAQ on Stormwater Management Rules
www.nj.gov/dep/watershedmgt/stormwaterfaqs2.html

Troy Brook Regional Stormwater Plan and Model Stormwater Ordinance – this ordinance was drafted specifically to apply to infill and teardown development such as is beginning to occur in Pennington . www.water.rutgers.edu/Projects/Troy/Part%20A_v6_050307.pdf

Princeton Borough Stormwater Ordinance 2007-27– [PENDING] applies some stormwater management to impervious surface disturbance of 400 square foot, and applies to one and two-family dwellings. www.princetonboro.org/inc/cf/pollImage.cfm?doc_Id=268&size_code=Doc

Stony Brook Millstone Watershed Assn, River-Friendly Program. Certification for land stewardship practices that promote improved water quality. www.thewatershed.org/river_friendly_program.php

Lawrence Twp, NJ Stormwater Ordinance. Example of ordinance that prohibits grading that causes stormwater to flow across property lines. Section 522D of Land Use Ordinance.

Urban Stormwater Retrofit Practices (2007), Center for Watershed Protection. Manual for conducting retrofit inventory, assessing and prioritizing retrofit projects and retrofit design, permitting, construction and maintenance. www.cwp.org/PublicationStore/USRM.htm#usrm3





STEP

7

Natural Resource Protection and Awareness

GOALS: The Reexamination Report states that goals and objectives are coupled with the general purposes of zoning listed in MLUL 40:55D-2, which include “j. To promote the conservation of ...open space, energy resources and valuable natural resources in the State and to prevent urban sprawl and degradation of the environment through improper use of land.” Also the Master Plan states “Open space and recreational areas, both public and private, should be preserved and enhanced (e.g.... environmental protection...”).

In general, survey respondents did not think Pennington is doing much to protect natural resources other than the municipal water supply, nor that there is much to protect within the Borough.

CURRENT PRACTICES:

There is a topsoil removal restriction for subdivisions (183-13(5)). The Borough has a Shade Tree Committee and Shade Tree planting program; and there are requirements for shade tree planting on certain sites. Pennington is a “Tree City.”



**The Stony Brook,
Kunkel Park**

OPTION: CONDUCT A NATURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY AND ADOPT OR STRENGTHEN ORDINANCES PROTECTING NATURAL RESOURCES

Specifically, the Borough should consider:

- ∅ Conducting a Natural Resources Inventory of the public and private areas of the Borough, to identify natural resources including geology of the Borough, streams and water ways, soil types, open space, woodlands, wetlands, stream corridors, steep slopes, wildlife habitat and threatened & endangered wildlife habitat; and also including in the NRI process a resident-education component to promote understanding of the Borough’s natural resources
- ∅ Measuring the tree canopy as a percentage of land area, and creating a tree-planting plan to increase tree canopy.
- ∅ Conducting a habitat inventory (terrestrial and aquatic) and mapping the connections and potential connections between these and other habitat areas outside the Borough.
- ∅ Restoring degraded natural areas and returning some of the borough’s developed areas to natural conditions



Did You Know?

Tree cover is “green infrastructure.” Creating a healthy environment in which trees flourish has ancillary benefits for human inhabitants. Trees need healthy soil, clean air and clean water, and they thrive in healthy ecosystems that provide them with protection from disease and herbivorous pests. Trees and tree cover help humans by, for example, slowing stormwater runoff, removing air pollution and sequestering carbon. These benefits can be quantified, because they reduce the need for building “grey infrastructure.”

Based on this approach, the organization American Forests recommends that communities should establish benchmarks for average tree canopy of minimum 40% (Suburban residential zones 50%; Urban residential zone, 25%; Central business districts 15%).

The conventional wisdom is that development brings economic value to undeveloped land, and the natural resources have only commodity value (e.g. forests have economic value only as timber). But innovative approaches to valuation can establish an economic value for the services provided by natural resources, such as cleaning and storing fresh water, recycling nutrients through the soil, and regulating air temperature. The loss of these “free” services through development is felt in the cost of replacement services (for example, urban areas are generally hotter than suburban areas due in part to loss of tree shade; to replace these services urban dwellers must install, fuel and maintain air conditioning.) A statewide study of New Jersey’s “natural capital” estimated that natural resources have at least as great an economic value as development. The state DEP estimates that urban green space provides about \$283/acre/year of ecosystem services, principally aesthetic and recreational benefits. Statewide, it provides an estimated \$420 million of ecosystem services annually. At an estimated \$11,568/acre/year freshwater wetlands are the most valuable of the state’s natural resources in terms of ecosystem services, including disturbance regulation, water filtration and water supply.



Additional Resources

Urban Ecosystem Analysis: Delaware Valley Region (2003) www.americanforests.org/downloads/rea/AF_DelawareValley.pdf. Report on the 9-county Delaware Valley region (including Mercer County), concludes: “all the communities in the metropolitan area need to incorporate tree cover into their planning and development process.” Recommendations for achieving tree cover goals. See also *Setting Tree Canopy Goals*, www.americanforests.org/resources/urbanforests/treedeficit.php

Valuing New Jersey’s Natural Capital, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (Division of Science, Research & Technology, April 2007). . The results of a study that seeks to quantify the economic value of New Jersey’s natural resources, among these including urban parks, wetlands, and riparian areas. www.state.nj.us/dep/dsr/naturalcap/

Software to help communities assess tree cover and incorporate green infrastructure into planning: iTree, www.itreetools.org/; City Green, www.americanforests.org/productsandpubs/citygreen/

Urban Natural Resources Institute, : science-based information for urban natural resources stewardship www.unri.org/



STEP

8

Improving Traffic Management

GOALS: The Master Plan goals include: “The visual quality and historic character of the Borough should be protected and enhanced.... Reduce through traffic and enhance pedestrian safety and access.” “The Borough should work toward a more proactive effort on regional issues such as traffic and circulation....” The Re-examination Report notes that a “Route 31 Design Study” dated December 2002 for Hopewell Township and Pennington Borough made recommendations for cartway improvements to address traffic calming and safety issues and for pedestrian and bicycle access. It also notes other efforts taken to provide improved pedestrian and bicycle access, that “traffic congestion along State Highway Route 31 and Delaware Avenue has increased,” and “Truck traffic on the highway continues to be a major concern.” While survey respondents did not specifically refer to traffic, they noted a need for long-term planning, big-picture vision and regional cooperation.

CURRENT PRACTICES: Traffic

management by the Borough is focused on limiting speed by posted signs. The Streetscape Report noted older infrastructure and traffic pressures impairs business district walkability. Although congestion on Route 31 is primarily due to non-local traffic, it is exacerbated within the Borough by the traffic light at Delaware Ave and by movement of trucks onto Route 31 from Trap Rock quarry. Based on the Sept. 2007 NJDOT Route 31 and Delaware Avenue Pedestrian Mobility Study, improvements will be made to striping and signals.



Route 31 traffic, Borough gateway at Delaware Avenue.

OPTION: WORK WITH MUNICIPAL, REGIONAL, COUNTY AND STATE AUTHORITIES AND REGIONAL PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS TO CREATE REGIONAL TRAFFIC PLANS AND REDUCE POLLUTION.

Specifically, the Borough should consider:

- ⊗ Participating actively in existing regional planning transportation initiatives such as the Central Jersey Transportation Forum; Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission’s Congestion Management Process; Hopewell Valley Traffic Management Coalition.
- ⊗ Creating a sustainability plan and working with other municipalities in the region to coordinate sustainability efforts, including seeking to reduce use of vehicles in the region by improving local distribution networks, creating disincentives to drive.
- ⊗ Enacting ordinances and conducting campaigns to reduce engine idling and enforce NJDEP’s anti-idling regulations.
- ⊗ Promoting biking and walking by improving access (e.g. bike paths; walkways to trails) and traffic calming measures.
- ⊗ Modeling behavior for residents by promoting use of municipal low-emission vehicles.



Did You Know?

Traffic volume, composition (truck/car) and character (stop-and-go vs. continuous) is a significant source of nonpoint source pollution, a contributor to air pollution and is a main source of greenhouse gases that are leading to climate change and degradation of natural resources.

Mercer County ranks among the worst counties in the US for air quality, particularly carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, volatile organics and sulfur dioxide, for which the county ranks in the bottom 10% and also for hazardous air pollutants. In New Jersey as a whole, on-road mobile sources are the largest sources of toxic air pollutants (36%). Nationwide, vehicles are major detrimentals to air quality. For example, as much as 95 percent of the carbon monoxide in typical U.S. cities comes from mobile sources, according to EPA studies.

Planning at the local level alone (especially where state highways intersect with streets used for local trips) is relatively ineffective to address these larger issues. Municipalities cannot directly restrict traffic on state highways. In central New Jersey, through corridors (such as Route 31) often coincide with roads used for local trips. Regional planning is necessary to reduce traffic volume and improve air quality. Institutions such as the Central Jersey Transportation Forum, organized by the Delaware Regional Planning Commission, seek formulation of regional strategies to address congestion and traffic management.

Sustainability initiatives also address transportation issues. By, for example, seeking to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve energy efficiency, support local food networks and conserve nonrenewable resources, communities can reduce traffic and improve air and water quality. Such efforts are also best addressed regionally, with other communities seeking similar objectives.



Additional Resources

Scorecard.org. Rankings of states and counties as they contribute to pollution, based on EPA data. Air quality rankings, Mercer County. www.scorecard.org/env-releases/cap/county.tcl?fips_county_code=34021#air_rankings and #maps.

Mobile Sources of Air Pollution, EPA. www.epa.gov/otaq/inventory/overview/index.htm.

Engine idling. EPA www.epa.gov/smartway/idle-fund.htm; NJDEP's site: www.stopthesoot.org/

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, Transportation Division. www.dvrpc.org. Resources for transportation planning. In addition to general assistance on transportation planning, this site offers reports and maps from a current congestion management process on Route 31 congestion. www.dvrpc.org/transportation/longrange/cmp.htm

New Jersey Sustainable State Institute, www.njssi.org. Publications on sustainability planning, as well as technical assistance in the creation an implementation of plans.

Sustainable Lawrence, www.sustainablelawrence.org/. Lawrence Township is using "The Natural Step" process to create a sustainable eco-community.

Pennington Streetscape Report 2004 includes traffic calming recommendations to improve walkability.



STEP

9 Public Participation

GOALS: To include community members in democratic municipal processes, to educate community members about issues in the Borough and to seek input from residents.

According to the survey respondents Pennington's strengths include its volunteer boards; while its weaknesses include a lack of openness to ideas and a reluctance to take on controversial issues. In addition, respondents noted that while the Borough has a number of citizen boards and commissions with meetings open to the public, it is difficult to get significant participation. Respondents suggested there is a need to consider and come up with new ideas for improving outreach to the general public and encourage more participation. Building on the success of Pennington Day was one suggestion.

CURRENT PRACTICES: As per the Public Open Meetings Act, Borough residents are invited to attend Council meetings and participate in the public comment portion of the meeting. The Borough's website includes Council and board meeting calendars and agendas (no minutes) and the code book. There is a community news and events calendar but it is not updated. (Note: The annual Pennington Day is organized by an independent nonprofit organization, not the Borough; it has a Website provided by the Pennington Day Association.)

OPTION: ENCOURAGE RESIDENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN PUBLIC MEETINGS AND PROVIDE INPUT TO COMMUNITY DECISIONS.

Specifically, the Borough should consider:

- ⌘ Exploring programs to expand and improve open communications in the public decision-making process.
- ⌘ Encouraging creation of educational programs and walks so the public can learn more about their community's natural and historic resources.
- ⌘ Convening and hosting regional programs to promote community-building across political boundaries.
- ⌘ Building on existing programs like Pennington Day to encourage interaction among residents, government, businesses, arts organizations and educational institutions.
- ⌘ Improving the Borough's Website to create a more attractive virtual gateway to the Borough that highlights its historic character, to provide more information about civic processes by posting meeting minutes, and to provide more timely news updates; include more information on agenda items.
- ⌘ Recognize volunteer participation in the deliberative process.



Did You Know?

Empowering community members to make informed decisions based upon the best available information will result in a commitment to a future that reflects the will of the people and provides a unified focus for all municipal activities. Education programs sponsored by museums, nature centers, and community organizations encourage lifelong learning about issues so that individuals can make well-informed decisions. Raising public awareness of and support for community goals and conveying information on indicators for these goals will encourage residents to apply practices towards these goals into their daily lives.

Partnerships extending throughout communities and levels of government will encourage support for community decisions, processes, and assessments.



Additional Resources

Effective Public Participation and Communication. The Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington provides concrete suggestions improving the open communication process by ensuring that public participation meaningful. www.mrsc.org/Subjects/Governancetegislative/communication.

North Hampton, New Hampshire conducted a pilot project called Sustainable Development in the Little River Watershed. This document gives a glimpse of the participation involved in the visioning process. Please contact the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association for more information.

Public Linkage, Dialogue, and Education: Task Force Report. This document, distributed by the President's Council on Sustainable Development, provides sufficient case studies and results from projects throughout the country. Focuses mostly on sustainable development, but citizen participation efforts are well laid out and assessed. This document is available at the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association.

Appendix A



To: Pennington Point Committee
From: Stony Brook Millstone Watershed Association
Date: November 21, 2006
Re: Municipal Assessment Survey Response Summary

This memo summarizes the eight responses we received to our Municipal Assessment Officials Survey, which was distributed to various Pennington Borough officials, and places those responses in context with the vision of Pennington's Master Plan (1998 Master Plan and 2005 Re-examination).

The first question asked the recipients to tell us their vision for the future of Pennington Borough. In many ways the future looks very much like the present. All but one of the respondents expressed a desire that the Borough maintain its character. Respondents like and want to preserve Pennington as a small, primarily residential, family- and neighborhood-oriented community. Some mentioned a need to define the difference between the Borough and the surrounding area with a greenbelt or open space border. Pennington's historic character was also important to several respondents. A few of the respondents mentioned the need for a business community in addition to residential neighborhoods; opinions varied from a focus on satisfying the needs of Borough residents, to ensuring a viable business atmosphere. Several respondents also expressed the desire for the community in general to have more vitality, energy or community spirit; others, for better communication between residents and Borough officials.

This emphasis on preserving Pennington's essential character is consonant with the goals of the Master Plan. Of the five goals, four refer to maintaining attributes: the Borough's residential, historic character, its community-centered character and the distinction between the town center and the highway business district.

We next asked the recipients to list their goals for the *environment*, for the *social character* and *economic viability* of the Borough, and for its *historic* aspects.

Protecting the quantity and quality of the local water supply was very important to the respondents. This is consistent with the Master Plan, which identifies the potential inadequacy of the water supply to meet existing needs during high-stress periods as being an issue. Some mentioned specific approaches to protect water, such as maintaining or buffering stream corridors and protecting the greenbelt; and building public awareness and education about best practices. In addition to water supply, several respondents noted the need to deal with stormwater

management. The need to protect open space and a greenbelt was cited by half the respondents. Other goals cited by the respondents were to keep the community attractive; and to continue strict controls on pollutants and emissions.

The importance of maintaining or enhancing Pennington's character as a small, community-oriented town surrounded by a rural area was stressed by almost all the respondents in some manner. Many respondents felt that the community's social or economic diversity needs to be maintained or increased, particularly by ensuring affordable housing and not rebuilding the Borough with expensive homes. Also important is the sense of community and neighborliness, which some respondents mentioned could be supported or improved by encouraging volunteerism and improving responsiveness of the Borough council to resident/commission concerns, as well as encouraging community events.

Goals for the economic character of the Borough were in some respects similar to the social goals. Keeping the Borough affordable was important to almost all respondents. More than half of the respondents stressed the need for holding down or even reducing taxes, and many cited the need for maintaining diversity (linked to keeping the Borough affordable for seniors and middle income families). Support for business, especially for ensuring that local shops thrive and for maintaining a vibrant downtown, was mixed with a common concern that business development not overwhelm the Borough's residential character.

Preserving Pennington's historic character was very important to all survey respondents, amidst concerns about the risks posed to the Borough by the trend for rebuilding older communities and by development pressures in Hopewell Township. Most respondents supported passage of a historic preservation ordinance to protect the town center, while the remainder felt that current efforts are sufficient and should be continued. Requiring design standards was also mentioned.

The respondents were asked to discuss how Pennington is protecting *open space, water quality, groundwater, viewsheds, and other natural resources.*

As a "square-mile" nearly-built-out municipality, Pennington has very little open space within its borders except for two small parks, but it benefits from the surrounding greenbelt of open space preserved by Hopewell Township. The Borough does administer an open space fund. Respondents were mainly in agreement that the Borough's significant viewsheds are dependent on the surrounding greenbelt. Several respondents reiterated the need for Pennington to continue to work regionally and cooperate with Hopewell Township to preserve the greenbelt, which would provide recreational and environmental benefits as well as preserving the historic character of the Borough by maintaining the visual distinction with its surroundings.

Pennington has two kinds of viewsheds. One, respondents noted, is focused "out" toward the greenbelt, and so its protection needs to be addressed in the same manner as the surrounding open space, i.e. by cooperating with Hopewell Township. The other is the view "in" toward the Borough from the entrances to it, and respondents did not have a strong sense that this viewshed is being protected.

All of Pennington's municipal water is supplied by groundwater wells. Pennington's current water quality focus is on testing and maintaining municipal wells; the respondents suggested that while the Borough's efforts to protect the wells are adequate, the water supply is vulnerable to contamination and depletion. Several respondents suggested that Pennington needs to go beyond testing and maintenance measures, to address nonpoint source pollution and improve stormwater management (beginning with implementing the State stormwater manage-

ment rules). In addition, respondents recommended citizen education about source water protection. The Master Plan Reexamination Report notes a concern regarding the capacity and reliability of the municipal system to serve the current population and projected future growth. It was suggested that the Borough undertake an assessment of the system's needs and capacity.

In general, respondents did not think Pennington is doing much to protect other natural resources, nor that there is much to protect within the Borough, so that protecting resources outside the Borough (such as open space) is sufficient for the most part. Suggestions for better protection of Pennington's resources included: attention to Baldwin's Creek (C1 waters); a requirement for stream buffers for new developments; a centrally located Borough park; improving public participation in the planning process; and influencing regional development that increases traffic through the Borough.

The respondents were asked to identify what they thought were Pennington's strengths and weaknesses. Pennington's chief strength is its small-town character, reflected not only in the charming, attractive streetscape, but also in the strong sense of community, civic involvement and volunteerism among its residents. The residents' affluence and education were cited as a strength, enabling the Borough to afford amenities it could not otherwise. Additionally, the Borough's public services department was singled out for praise.

Pennington's chief weakness, according to the respondents, is a tendency to focus too much on the here and now at the expense of seeing the big picture. The Borough needs to work with other municipalities within the Hopewell Valley. It also must be more proactive and do more long-term planning. Some residents also suggested a need for the Borough council to be more open and willing to listen to residents; others mentioned a reluctance to take on controversial issues and an overemphasis on cost-cutting.

Next, the respondents were asked to identify strengths and weaknesses in the Borough's efforts to protect the environment in Pennington. The strength most commonly cited was the rural character of the surrounding area, but this was also identified as the principal weakness: Pennington depends on Hopewell Township to maintain the surrounding open space, and respondents stressed that more cooperation with the Township is needed. Other strengths mentioned were Pennington's volunteer boards, and its parks, trees, and water quality monitoring; other weaknesses were its lack of openness to ideas, reluctance to take on controversial issues and inadequate enforcement of resource protection mechanisms.

Finally, the respondents were asked how Pennington encourages public participation. While the Borough has a number of citizen boards and commissions with meetings open to the public, respondents noted it is difficult to get significant participation. Respondents suggested there is a need to consider and come up with new ideas for improving outreach to the general public and encourage more participation. Building on the success of Pennington Day was one suggestion.

The stated goals of the respondents mesh with the objectives of Pennington's revised Master Plan:

1. The Borough should remain primarily a residential community
2. The community-serving role of the Borough center area should be preserved and enhanced
3. The visual quality and historic character of the Borough should be protected and enhanced.
4. The existing distinction between highway business uses and town center housing and business uses should be maintained.
5. The Borough should work toward a more proactive effort on regional issues such as traffic and circulation, open space preservation, community facilities, stream corridor protection, and water quality improvement.

The goals in the Master Plan seek to preserve the small-town, community-focused character of the Borough, its visual and historic character; and the distinction between the Borough and the surrounding area. The Master Plan identifies a need to be more proactive on regional issues. The survey answers add to these goals a sense of urgency: The responses regarding weaknesses, espe-

cially, suggest that residents feel that in order to preserve Pennington's special qualities, its institutions need to be less conservative, more proactive, more open and more encouraging of diversity. Residents are looking for bold strokes from their leaders, suggesting that the threats to Pennington (such as creeping development) are perceived as proportionally stronger than the responses. The respondents emphasized, in answers to several different questions, the importance of the distinction between the small-town character of the Borough and the rural surrounding area, and the dependence of the one on the other. The need to preserve the surrounding area in order to preserve the essential character of the Borough itself is consistent with the Master Plan as well. The Master Plan discussion of the Open Space plan identifies the borough-township interdependence and sets forth a strategy for preserving surrounding open space by cooperating with other entities, not only Hopewell Township, but also other regional institutions such as Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space, D&R Greenway, the County and the State.

As the Watershed Association prepares the next phase of the assessment, we look to the Master Plan, Land Use and supporting ordinances, and these survey responses to provide the areas where we can help Pennington's land use and environmental practices better fit the community's vision. Based on the responses of this survey and on the language of the Master Plan, the Association will focus its assessment of ordinances and Best Management Practices on the following areas:

- Creation of Greenways/Regional Planning and Collaboration
- Historic Preservation
- Contextual Design Standards
- Groundwater Recharge/Capacity-Based Planning
- Source Water Protection
- Stream Corridor Protection
- Natural Resource Protection and Awareness
- Stormwater Management Best Management Practices
- Alleviating Traffic Problems
- Enhancing Cultural/Economic Diversity
- Resident Participation, Outreach and Education
- Municipal Official Knowledge Base

These topics are a work-in-progress and the draft report may reflect some modifications. If you have any questions, comments, or additional information that you would like to offer for the municipal assessment, please contact Susan Charkes, Environmental Planning Specialist, or Jennifer Coffey, Director of Watershed Management, at scharkes@thewatershed.org, or jcoffey@thewatershed.org, respectively, or (609) 737-3735. We will be in touch soon to schedule a tour of the Borough so that we can witness the Master Plan and Land Use Plan on-the-ground. We look forward to continuing to work with Pennington Borough to ensure a high quality of life and natural resources in the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed for all those who live, work, and play here.

