

Taking the Next Step:

Franklin Township
Municipal Assessment

October 2005



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 future generations understand the wonders and workings of the natural world we are preserving on their behalf.

We are headquartered on a 830-acre nature reserve in Pennington that includes a community supported organic farm, nature center, pond, 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, wetlands, ground water 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, and new 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: Establishing Greenways 3
Step 2: Agricultural Viability 5
Step 3: Scenic Corridor Protection..... 7
Step 4: Natural Resources Protection..... 9
Step 5: Groundwater Protection 11
Step 6: Stormwater Management..... 13
Step 7: New Construction Practices 15
Step 8: Developing Vacant Lands 17
Step 9: Downtown Revitalization..... 19
Step 10: Traffic and Transportation Options 21
Step 11: Enforcing Local Ordinances..... 23
Step 12: Public Participation and Education..... 25
Step 13: Municipal Official Education 26

Appendix A: Letter to Mayor - Introduction of Program
Appendix B: Letter to Mayor - Summary of Municipal Officials Survey

Executive Summary

Picture it: **Summer 2025.** School is out and the community parks are buzzing with activity. The downtown is bustling, as well. Visitors are stepping off the trains and busses to take in some window shopping and to run errands in town. Shops and businesses have their doors open and restaurants are seating people as quickly as they can. Along the newly rehabilitated Hamilton St, a festival is in progress, celebrating the diverse cultures in Franklin. Amateurs and professionals alike whip up some of their famous dishes to share the delectables from their native countries. On the other side of town some families are enjoying a quieter afternoon as they walk out of their homes and onto a path leading them to the Canal. A stroll along the water with the historic colonial homes nearby proves to be very relaxing and picturesque. Still, in Franklin Township on this hot summer day, a farmer's hay field needs to be mowed and baled, as son and daughter pitch in to get the job done.

Sound like a Utopia? Maybe. But the circumstances are real and municipal officials have the opportunity to make decisions that will lead to this heightened standard of living. They can enact ordinances and educate the public, but they can't do it alone.

Over the years, municipalities have been contacting the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association (the Association) requesting guidance with various planning and environmental issues. The Association decided that responding to these issues comprehensively would be most effective. Thus, the Association created the Municipal Assessment Program. This program is designed to identify the issues in a municipality that either hinder or enhance the preservation of natural resources and quality of life in and around the community. It takes strong community leadership to step back and evaluate goals, policies and strategies and figure out how to connect them with their ultimate vision. Franklin Township was ready for this challenge and the Association was, in turn, excited to work with such a dedicated and open community.

The Association would first like to commend Franklin Township for their ongoing projects and past accomplishments, which include:

- Maintaining Tree City USA status for the fourth year in a row.
- Dedicating the time and effort to update the Township Master Plan and create a redevelopment plan for a good portion of the more urban areas of the Township.
- Protecting farmland and open space through state, county and local programs.

After Franklin Township formally partnered with the Association through a resolution, we began the municipal assessment process with a collection of survey responses from municipal officials, staff, and consultants to determine the community's vision. The Association then reviewed the Township's Master Plan, land use ordinances, policies, and best management practices. These two steps guided the evaluation, which is divided into four major themes: Land Use Planning Techniques, Land Conservation Techniques, Direct Municipal Responsibility for the Environment, and Watershed Stewardship Projects. Using the Master Plan and survey responses as the Township's overall vision, the evaluation of the Township's ordinances and best management practices led to determining areas that need to be strengthened so that Franklin can realize its vision. These areas became the focus of the assessment report and a "step" toward making the connection.

Each chapter - or "step" - in the assessment report lists the Township's *Goal* according to the Master Plan and survey responses and the *Current Protection* the Township has on the books. The heart of each step focuses on the *Options* for new opportunities, as suggested by the Association. Here the municipality is given a menu of choices for planning and conservation projects to implement now and in the future. In the *Did You Know* section you can read about information such as population change within the Township and what surrounding communities are doing. Finally, *Additional Resources* provide additional information or guidance about that particular subject.

As a catalyst to achieve responsible planning and environmental quality, it is the Association's intention that this report serve as a guide and inspiration for work, such as the aforementioned accomplishments. 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 Franklin Township are documented in this report, entitled "**Taking the Next Step**". Outlined below, and in no particular order, are the 13 strategies for achieving Franklin Township's goals. (Please refer to the report for more detail).

⌘ **Establishing Greenways**

Township Goal: To "maintain open space and link to other open space and community resources".

Current Practices: Township provides parkland through residential development and specifically for recreational uses.

Recommendation: Develop and insert into the Conservation Plan, goals and policies for identifying areas to connect open spaces and parkland.

⌘ **Agricultural Viability**

Township Goal: Encourage the continuation of farming as a viable land use.

Current Practices: Township development ordinance permits farming in all zones and allows for clustering development to protect farmland.

Recommendations: Identify and utilize outdoor experiences to harness the market for farm products and services.

⌘ **Scenic Corridor Protection**

Township Goal: To conserve open space, rural character, scenic vistas, sensitive environmental areas and farmland.

Current Practices: Scenic Corridor District Overlay regulates uses that are visible from scenic roadways and are within 1,000 linear feet in both directions from the centerline of the roadway.

Recommendations: Preserve scenic landscapes with the support of the township, the residents, and the landowners.

⌘ **Natural Resources Protection**

Township Goal: In the Township, natural resources such as woodlands, waterbodies, wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes, scenic corridors, groundwater and habitat are recommended for conservation, as is the continuation of agriculture.

Current Practices: Natural resources are considered in the regulations for a clustering option for development.

Recommendations: Update the Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) to guide development of ordinances in preparation for developing vacant lands.

⌘ **Groundwater Protection**

Township Goal: Conduct a professional assessment to help answer questions about impacts of future development on ground water.

Current Practices: Natural Resources Preservation Cluster Option works to preserve areas containing natural resources including large contiguous parcels.

Recommendations: Adopt additional ordinances to protect critical recharge areas and update mapping database.

⌘ **Stormwater Management**

Township Goal: Understand the balance between runoff and groundwater recharge on Township soils and subsurface, particularly in areas with wells and in flood-prone areas.

Current Practices: Regulating ownership and maintenance of detention/retention basins in the Township.

Recommendations: Create and adopt a stormwater management plan that includes an ordinance, BMPs, implementation and enforcement.

⌘ **New Construction Practices**

Township Goal: Protecting soils and geology through mapping and inclusion in the Open Space Plan.

Current Practices: Any disturbance of more than 5,000 square feet needs to provide language on the plans for controlling or preventing erosion and other provisions for maintaining the safety of the site as well as prevention of degradation.

Recommendations: Emphasize and encourage sensitive construction practices through a municipal checklist, particularly focused on critical areas.

⌘ **Developing Vacant Lands**

Township Goal: Balance of uses throughout the Township, but especially on lands that are not developed and not preserved through open space.

Current Practices: The Township's Housing Element of the Master Plan provides support for ordinances that balance development.

Recommendations: Include language in the township's Master Plan update to provide for a mix of uses where vacant lands are considered for development.

⌘ **Downtown Revitalization**

Township Goal: Maintaining affordability and diversity of housing, encouraging development in redevelopment and developed areas - including senior housing - and allowing for higher density where services exist.

Current Practices: The basic revitalization strategy is to reinforce existing residential, educational, recreational, cultural, employment, transportation and human services systems by adding needed new facilities, jobs and services to create a balanced new community.

Recommendations: Reinforce existing residential, educational, recreational, cultural, employment, transportation and human services systems by adding needed new facilities, jobs and services to create a balanced new community.

⌘ **Traffic and Transportation**

Township Goal: Establishing a circulation system which recognizes the high level of through-Township traffic and minimizes its negative impact on Township residents and promoting safety.

Current Practices: Franklin Township currently has a circulation plan that includes facilities for park-n-ride, train stations, and bus stations.

Recommendations: Implement ordinances and traffic circulation devices that allow for steady movement within and through the township.

⌘ **Enforcing Local Ordinances**

Township Goal: Follow up with conservation easements and ordinances put in place to ensure landowners are complying with the provisions set forth in those regulations.

Current Protection: A governing body in New Jersey has the legislative power to pass ordinances governing issues such as land use and police enforcement.

Recommendations: Enforce ordinances through monitoring and education, especially at the onset of a development project.

⌘ **Public Participation and Education**

Township Goals: Participation within the community needs to come from all residents no matter their ethnicity, neighborhood, or occupation.

Current Practices: All Township Council and Planning Board meeting agendas and minutes are posted on the website.

Recommendations: Continue to encourage public participation

⌘ **Municipal Official Education**

Township Goals: To establish a better working relationship between the Township Council and the various committees within the Township.

Current Practices: Ensuring municipal officials and staff are knowledgeable about environmental issues, as well as other township issues.

Recommendations: Encourage training and site walks for committee members to better understand how decisions made in the municipal building will look on the ground.

Ultimately, Franklin Township must develop strategies that work toward achieving the vision of the community and for current and future generations of residents. By committing to follow through on this report, the Association and Franklin Township are achieving the mission of preserving and enhancing the watershed and the communities within it. This report is the next step in realizing that vision.

Acknowledgements

We commend Franklin Township's leaders and professionals for participating in this program and for allowing the Association to evaluate 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 Franklin Township.

Our hope is that Franklin will learn from and expand on their 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 township in embracing new opportunities that protect and enhance the character and natural environment that makes Franklin 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 Township Committee, Planning Board, Environmental Committee and staff for their responses to our survey. We would also like to acknowledge the individual input of Ted Chase, Ellen Ritchie, Cheryl Bergailo, Khalilah Stewart and all those who responded to the survey. Your time and dedication to this project was 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

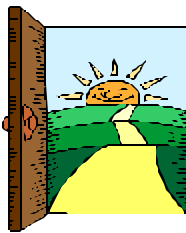


After evaluating the survey responses, we reviewed Franklin Township's Master Plan and its land use ordinances, policies, best management practices using a background study developed by the Association. To guide our evaluation, we developed a checklist that covers areas important to land planning techniques, land conservation, how the municipality addresses environmental issues and what watershed stewardship projects are underway. We also interviewed key personnel to complete the assessment.

Each "step" in the assessment report lists the Township's *Goal* for a specific subject according to the Master Plan and survey responses and the *Current Protection* the Township has on the books. The heart of each step focuses on the *Options* for new opportunities, as suggested by the Association. Here the municipality is given a menu of choices for planning and conservation projects to develop now and in the future. In the *Did You Know* section you can read about information pertaining to Franklin Township and what communities state and nationwide are doing. Finally, *Additional Resources* provide additional information or guidance about that particular subject.

This report serves as a guide for future boards and committees to inspire work on new projects and to support those tasks before them. It also provides an opportunity for those municipal groups to support other community and local non-profit groups to foster a regional approach to a variety of these issues.

Next Steps



As Franklin Township continues its work enhancing quality of life, this document serves as guidance for future projects and provides ideas on where to begin. Once the Assessment report is presented and a short list of priorities is determined, the Association will work with Township officials to develop more detailed information, models and guidance to help implement that list. This partnership will allow for the Association to support Franklin Township and to also learn from your experiences.

The Association will work by your side in your efforts to provide Township citizens with a sense of community, a healthy environment and a strong economy, while maintaining a balance of development and preservation. We realize that the Township has already begun implementing some of the options listed in this report (for example, involving the public in a master plan and visioning process for the Town Center concept). We offer our assistance to the Township in their efforts to achieve comprehensive planning and ensure that the plans relate to the strategies of the surrounding communities. 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 Franklin Township Council, Planning Board, Environmental Commission, and various staff and consultants articulated their goals and vision for the Township by responding to our survey. We feel it is important to note the proactive measures that have been implemented within the community and that have created the unique place that is Franklin Township.

Good Things...

Franklin Township's website states the vision for the township as follows:

“Residents will live and thrive in a community that values community pride and spirit, celebrates diversity and creates an environment that provides opportunities for all people so that they develop as healthy, caring, positive, educated and responsible members of the community.”

Some examples of Franklin's ongoing work to implement this vision includes:

- Franklin Township is home to many large industrial campuses and buildings. In an effort to maintain a natural feel in the community and allow for this large scale development, the Township has put Open Space preservation and Stream Corridor Protection to work.
 - Open Space Protection is high on the list of priorities for Franklin Township. The Open Space Advisory Committee works diligently to protect as much open space as possible.
 - On our tour around Franklin Township, officials pointed out the use of the 300-foot buffer wherever possible. This type of dedication to protecting stream corridors will lead to a heightened level of water quality as well providing a natural buffer to large scale development.
- Historic preservation throughout the Township, especially in small historic hamlets. There are a number of small historic enclaves that are reminders of Franklin's past. While they retain their own identity, they also blend into the fabric of the surrounding community.
- Franklin Township a Tree City USA in recognition of Franklin's program to care for community trees. It is the fourth year Franklin Township has received this national recognition. To become a Tree City USA, a community must meet four standards: a tree board or department, a tree care ordinance, a comprehensive community forestry program, and an Arbor Day observance. For this year's Arbor Day, the Shade Tree Commission will be landscaping detention basins to demonstrate the benefits trees provide for stormwater recharge and filtration. (continued on next page)

Highlights of Your Town

In addition to the many environmental efforts in the Township, Franklin provides opportunities for enhancing the more urban communities. Some of these examples include:

- The Renaissance 2000 project will provide more opportunities in many areas including housing, jobs, cultural enhancement, and transportation. This project has strong support throughout the area to provide affordable amenities to residents and businesses alike. The supporters in this effort consist of a variety of organizations, including Franklin Township, the City of New Brunswick, the First Baptist Community Development Corporation, and New Brunswick Tomorrow.
- Many local officials, along with the residents of the different neighborhoods feel that the cultural diversity is a special attribute of the Township. In developing the Renaissance 2000 Plan and in planning for new development throughout the Township, forethought was given to support and implement co-mingling of not only ethnic differences, but lifestyles as well. Senior citizens live near the young professionals who live next to the families, some of whom are new to the area, and some of whom have been in the Township for generations.

It is evident in these examples that while Franklin Township cherishes its open spaces and important history, it also plans to retain and celebrate its unique, urban atmosphere.





Next Steps

Introduction

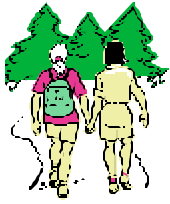
The elected and appointed officials in Franklin Township have a challenging task: balance natural resource protection with economic prosperity, encourage business, provide residential services, and determine where best to site a variety of land uses in the Township. Franklin Township leaders strive to 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 use zoning, policies and ordinances as the tools to help carry out that mission.

The Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association (the Association) recognizes the magnitude of this task, especially in knowing that the protection and health of a watershed relies a great deal on the land use laws and policies that govern development. Thus, we developed the Municipal Assessment Program. In partnering with municipalities we provide an outside evaluation of current practices and we support planning that protects the natural environment and ensures 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, Franklin is planning for quality of life for both current and future residents. The leaders recognize their current position and are actively working to ensure that their community retains its historic character, environmental health, and viable economy.

We were excited to partner with Franklin Township on this project, as it is a community unlike any other in our Watershed Area. We have learned a great deal in working with Franklin Township as we have tackled some issues not common in many of our other rural communities. Franklin has many historic landmarks, including homes and churches; farmland and open space that serve as a relief from the bustle of the urban community; major highway corridors that serve as thruways and byways; an urban area that is undergoing redevelopment to enhance the uniqueness of the communities within; and long-standing, dedicated representatives who have worked to provide all of this for Franklin Township citizens.

This unique combination of elements presents an opportunity for the Township to share experiences with surrounding municipalities and with the Association. Making the bold move to assess their own practices, Franklin Township is advancing efforts to take on the challenge of protecting and enhancing these qualities.



STEP

1

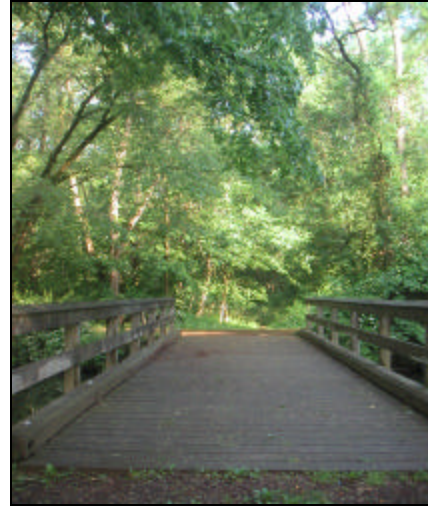
Establishing Greenways

GOAL: The Township's Conservation Plan, within the Master Plan states the desire to "maintain open space and link to other open space and community resources". (p. VII-2, Master Plan)

Respondents of the survey also stated that linking greenways, open space, trails throughout Township, County, and State is of importance to the Township.

CURRENT PROTECTION: The Township does provide language for dedicating parkland through residential development and specifically for recreational uses. This could be applied to create a network of greenways as development happens.

While the Township has language for protecting open space, more in the way of connecting open space and parklands would help in this effort.



Bridge connecting the two banks of the D&R Canal on Canal Rd.

OPTION: DEVELOP AND INSERT INTO THE CONSERVATION PLAN, GOALS AND POLICIES FOR IDENTIFYING AREAS TO CONNECT OPEN SPACES AND PARKLAND.

Specifically, the Township should consider:

- ⊗ Partnering with groups like the Kingston Greenways Association, Garden State Greenways, or the NJ Trails Association to assess potential and appropriate connections between open spaces and/or parkland.
- ⊗ Creating a Greenways Plan through a process that includes:
 - ⊗ Educating the public about greenways, their benefits, and what the town plans to do to protect and connect them.
 - ⊗ Identifying public lands and destination points based on environmental features that make the properties desirable for purchase and based on the public's input about where connections would work best for the community.
 - ⊗ Making a "wish list" of lands to be included in the greenways project.
 - ⊗ Contacting potential landowners who may be interested in participating in a greenways program. (Source: *Planning Commissioner's Journal, Issue #10 May/June 1993, "Greenways: Planning Paths for Your Community" by Anne Lusk*)



Did You Know?

Protecting environmental corridors through establishing and managing greenways represents one method (to be used in conjunction with other approaches) to safeguard vital ecological processes.

Establishing greenways helps increase the physical activity of your community! This can be accomplished through

- Developing more greenways, greenspaces, walking/multi-use trails, sidewalks & bike routes
- Enhancing existing facilities where people can engage in physical activity
- Developing practices/policies which promote physical activity



Additional Resources

Kingston Greenways Association aims to establish a permanent green belt around the village of Kingston and further aims to preserve and create connections of green for walking, jogging, bicycling and horseback riding.

<http://www.kingstongreenways.org/>

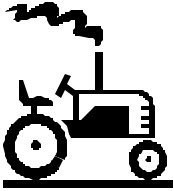
Garden State Greenways provides statewide vision, suggested goals, detailed maps and powerful Geographic Information System (GIS) data and planning tools. Garden State Greenways will help coordinate efforts of both private groups, and government agencies. <http://www.gardenstategreenways.org/>

NJ Trails Association is a cooperative project of several environmental organizations dedicated to making free information conveniently available to the public about places to walk. NJTA assembles information on trails open to the public, and posts the information on this site. We also work with state, county, local, and non-profit land preservation groups and parks agencies to plan more trails.

<http://www.njtrails.org/index.php>

Greenways and Community Trails. How Greenways Work: A Handbook on Ecology. Jonathan M. Labaree. Originally published as a handbook by the National Park Service Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance Program and QLF/Atlantic Center for the Environment, this is a handbook for those private citizens and public officials all over America who are working to create outdoor recreation opportunities and protect wildlife and our environment by establishing corridors of open space called greenways.

<http://www.americantrails.org/resources/greenways/NPSintroGrnwy.html>



STEP

2 Agricultural Viability

GOAL: “Encourage the continuation of farming as a viable land use:

- Protect farmland by purchase of development rights;
- Discourage extension of utilities to large farms;
- Maintain large-lot zoning and open space dedication under clustering options;
- Encourage township officials and farmers to continue dialogue on needs and opportunities.” (Master Plan, p.III-2)

Respondents to the survey also felt that farmland should be protected for historic purposes as well as for economic purposes.

CURRENT PROTECTION: Right to Farm Ordinance in the Township Development Ordinance (§112-9P) permits farming in all zones of the Township.

The Township also employs a clustering option for Natural Resources Preservation (§112-31). Protection efforts include rural character, open space, historic areas, viewsheds, forests, stream corridors, farmland, and rock outcroppings among others.

The Township also has an active Farmer’s Market that is open every Saturday.



OPTION: IDENTIFY AND UTILIZE OUTDOOR EXPERIENCES TO HARNESS THE MARKET FOR FARM PRODUCTS AND SERVICES.

Specifically, the Township should consider:

- ⌘ Identifying areas of viable agriculture in your community and establish a plan to protect those areas. Diversifying products and services to fit the market and the needs of the farmer. See the Did You Know section for more information.
- ⌘ Becoming involved with the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Service to provide educational programs to farmers regarding marketing and opportunities for diversifying and provide programs for with the 4-H for kids interested in farming.
- ⌘ Establishing Agricultural Security Areas – ASA’s are areas of contiguous agricultural land owned by one or more persons and used for the production of crops, livestock and livestock products. Once the agricultural area is designated, land in the area receives special treatment designed to keep the land in agricultural use and prevent unreasonable restrictions on farm operations. In exchange for agreeing not to develop the ASA for a determined number of years the County or the municipality agree not to extend infrastructure (water lines, sewer lines, roads etc.) into the ASA. The exact amount of relief for farmers is determined by the county or municipality.



Did You Know?

- Farmland has many purposes besides providing produce for local communities and beyond. A farm can be an outdoor classroom, a tourist attraction, or a reminder of a community's history. Recognizing the potential of a farm beyond its traditional uses can lead to opportunities for education and appreciation for preserving farms. Some examples include:
 - Corn mazes contribute to agri-tourism opportunities. For sample attractions and how to implement them go to www.cornmazesamerica.com.
 - Farmers Markets continue to be a viable option for farmers. While dealing with urban sprawl, many NJ towns have the benefit of rural farm communities in close proximity to urban and large suburban centers. Farmers have been capitalizing on the demand for fresh, high quality agricultural products and the number of farmers markets has been growing.
 - Marketing to restaurants and food retailers offers a farmer opportunities to garner a greater share of the price that these products usually command. When farmers sell directly to a variety of stores and/or restaurants, there is no middleman in the process adding their costs to the sale. There are non-profit organizations that work to assist farmers in accessing these markets and organizations like the Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA) help farmers make those connections.



Additional Resources

- *Northeast Organic Farming Association/NJ* offers outreach and technical services to organic gardeners and farmers, and to conventional farmers interested in incorporating organic practices into their production systems. NOFA/NJ's educational programs include a general interest quarterly newsletter, a growers-only newsletter on specialized topics, an annual educational conference on the last Saturday in January, twilight meetings on agricultural topics throughout the summer, exhibits at fairs and events throughout the state, and distribution of fact sheets and other publications. Contact them at 609.737.6848 or on the web at www.nofanj.org.
- *NJ Department of Agriculture* The State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) leads in the preservation of New Jersey's farmland and promotes innovative approaches to maintaining the viability of agriculture. The SADC administers the Farmland Preservation Program, providing grants to counties, municipalities and nonprofit groups to fund the purchase of development easements on farmland; directly purchasing farms and development easements from landowners; and offering grants to landowners in the program to fund up to 50 percent of the cost of soil and water conservation projects. For more information contact their office at: 609.984.2504 or on the web at <http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/sadc/sadc.htm>



STEP

3 Scenic Corridor Protection

GOAL: “To conserve open space, rural character, scenic vistas, sensitive environmental areas and farmland” and “Maintain design and siting standards to protect the Township’s historic and rural character, particularly in villages and along scenic corridors.” (pp. VII-1 and 2, Master Plan).

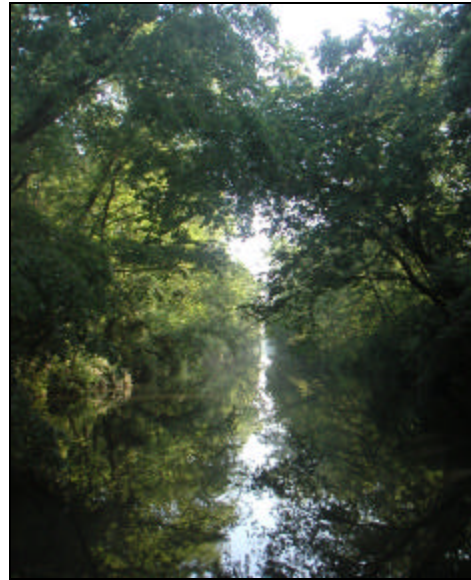
Respondents to the survey said that while the Township has language for protecting scenic corridors, it has not yet been tested.

CURRENT PROTECTION:

The Township’s Open Space Plan recommends identifying and protecting scenic viewsheds and corridors (p.66).

§112-24C Scenic Corridor District Overlay regulates uses that are visible from scenic roadways and are within 1,000 linear feet in

both directions from the centerline of the roadway.

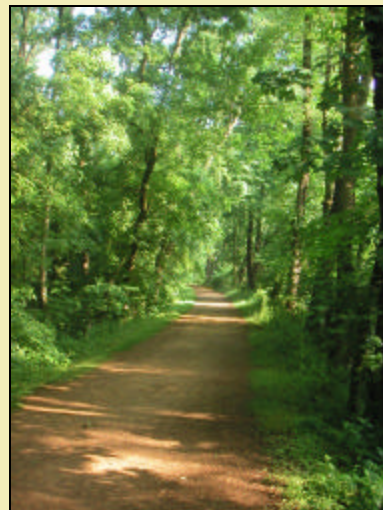


D&R Canal at Griggstown

OPTION: PRESERVE SCENIC LANDSCAPES WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE TOWNSHIP, THE RESIDENTS, AND THE LANDOWNERS.

Specifically, the Township should consider:

- ⊗ Creating a survey for identifying significant views and scenic corridors to determine areas to be included in the overlay district. Utilize the public’s opinion about important views or sites to help guide the ranking of scenic places to protect. Potential criteria could include:
 - ⊗ Visibility from public roads
 - ⊗ Frequency that the view or site is seen
 - ⊗ Integrity (natural and/or historic)
 - ⊗ Presence of wildlife habitat and/or corridors
 - ⊗ Proximity to public lands
 - ⊗ Observation point (to look from)
 - ⊗ Focal point (to look at)
 - ⊗ Uniqueness
 - ⊗ Vulnerability to compromise (I.e development pressure)
- ⊗ Regulating billboards and signage in areas when views are of significance.



Towpath at Rocky Hill



Did You Know?

- Scenic landscapes benefit communities in a variety of ways. For some people, it is a view of a historic landmark or a reminder of the landscape that drew the township's founders to the area. For animals, it may be a home or source of food. In either case, a scenic landscape brings enjoyment to those who take the time to respect it and take care of it.
- There are many towns across the nation who are working to protect their scenic landscapes and significant views. They receive support and guidance from organizations like Scenic America to help in their preservation efforts. See Additional Resources below for more organizations like Scenic America.
- Conducting a visual assessment in your own community is a great way to preserve those special places. To get started:
 - Get organized - involve the public to determine what should be considered for your study area, then develop goals for your study area.
 - Study your area - learn more about your study area by checking the local library or planning office for historical information. Talk to residents who have lived in the area for a long time and talk to those who are new to the area. Why did they move to Franklin Township and what keeps them here?
 - Explore your area - maps are useful tools and so are pictures. Take photos and mark on the map the observation point and the focal point. This will give a good overview of how what is on the map translates to the physical environment.
 - Visualize change - using maps and photos to see how the landscape has changed over recent years, consider how the existing landscape could change in the future. Get residents together to discuss ideas about keeping the landscape in tact, as much as possible. Throughout this process consult with your planning office to ensure that the community's voice is heard.



Additional Resources

- ⌘ **Town of Hanover, NH Planning and Zoning Department.** "Something for Everyone: Scenic Locales Report". September 1998. [http://www.hanovernh.org/stories/storyReader\\$531](http://www.hanovernh.org/stories/storyReader$531). PO Box 483 Hanover, NH 03755
- ⌘ **Scenic America.** "To safeguard America's natural beauty and community character". 1634 I Street, NW Suite 510 Washington, D.C. 20006
PH: (202) 638-0550 FAX: (202) 638-3171 www.scenic.org
- ⌘ **American Farmland Trust.** AFT works to stop the loss of productive farmland nationwide. Farmland protection enhances the visual environment by curbing the conversion of scenic open space into unattractive sprawl development. <http://www.farmland.org/>



STEP

4 Natural Resources Protection

GOALS: “In the Township, natural resources such as woodlands, waterbodies, wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes, scenic corridors, groundwater and habitat are recommended for conservation, as is the continuation of agriculture.” (Master Plan p. VII-1). See Step 1 for Agricultural Viability; See Step 2 for Open Space Protection; See Step 3 for Scenic Corridor Protection, See Step 5 for Groundwater Recharge



Hutcheson Forest

Respondents to the survey stated goals for keeping the Township in its natural state as much as possible. According to respondents, this effort should focus on native flora and fauna, grasslands for bird habitat, forests, streams, and water supply resources.

C U R R E N T

PROTECTION: In the Township’s Development Ordinance, natural resources are considered in the regulations for a clustering option for development. (§ 112-31). A conservation plan explaining in detail the area to be preserved is required with an application.

According to the Criteria for Cluster Development (§ 112-31D), “at least 40% of the tract shall be a Preservation Area.

The Preservation Area shall contain two or more natural resource features.” These include heavily-wooded and forested areas, significant stands of trees or individual trees, wildlife habitats, rock outcroppings, bluffs, frontage on reservoirs, historic places or farmland.

OPTION: UPDATE THE NATURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY (NRI) TO GUIDE DEVELOPING THE FOLLOWING ORDINANCES AND PREPARING FOR DEVELOPMENT ON VACANT LANDS.

Specifically, the Township should consider:

- ⊗ Developing a Woodlands Ordinance that protects forested areas as well as significant individual trees and tree stands.
- ⊗ Developing a Wildlife Habitat Ordinance that sets buffers for areas to be protected during development. For example, wooded corridors, stream corridors, grasslands, etc. Any area known for significant wildlife habitat should be protected in one ordinance. This ordinance should be cross-reference with individual ordinances for natural features.
- ⊗ Developing an ordinance for Open Waters Protection that includes buffers for lakes, ponds and reservoirs. Water supply areas in Franklin Township would come under this regulation.
- ⊗ Conducting public education programs about natural habitats in residents’ backyards. Establishing an understanding of what the township is trying to protect will garner support among the community.
- ⊗ Encouraging residents and businesses to become River Friendly through the Association’s program.



Did You Know?

A Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) is a compilation of text and visual information about the natural resource characteristics and environmental features of an area. Two New Jersey state laws give environmental commissions the authority and responsibility for conducting NRIs.

A NRI includes tools to describe and compare information on the natural and environmental characteristics and features of an area. They can include texts, maps, pictures, photographs, tables, figures, and graphs.

The NRI also focuses on areas that are important to include a characterization of local relationships to regional resources such as watersheds, streams and wetlands. Other important areas can include: Climate, Soils, Geology, Hydrology, Geography, Topography, Vegetation, Wildlife habitat, Critical areas, and Land use.

A more comprehensive NRI might include information on historic and cultural factors, scenic areas, air quality, transportation, noise and contaminated sites. In addition to text and maps, the NRI should include a bibliography of source materials.

There are a variety of uses for a NRI. Some of them include:

- a factual basis for municipal land use planning;
- a basic tool in determining zoning regulations, municipal ordinances and other land use management techniques;
- a basis for a land capability analysis and for determining the intensity and location of development;
- an indicator of sensitive areas and areas suitable to certain kinds of development; and
- a tool to increase understanding of natural systems, and their limitations and opportunities for use.



Additional Resources

- ☞ **The NJ Geological Survey** maps, researches, interprets and provides scientific information regarding the state's geology and ground water resources. For more information about how to obtain maps go to www.state.nj.us/dep/njgs/ or call (609) 777-1038.
- ☞ **Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC)**. ANJEC's Smart Growth Survival Kit brings together information and references to help environmental commissions and citizens incorporate natural resource protection and State Plan consistency into their local plans. Phone: (973) 539-7547 Resource Paper: Environmental Resources Inventory. <http://www.anjec.org/pdfs/EnvironmentalResource.pdf>
- ☞ **NJDEP Landscape Project**. The Landscape Project is a pro-active, ecosystem-level approach for the long-term protection of imperiled species and their important habitats in New Jersey. For more information go to <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/ensp/landscape/>



STEP

5

Groundwater Protection

GOAL: According to the Township's Master Plan, homes in the southern portion of the township are served by well water. The ground water resources here are adequate for current use, but the Township feels a professional assessment would help to answer questions about impacts on ground water, should properties ever be developed. (MP p. VII-3)

Respondents felt that the development in the township is a problem because of the impervious cover it brings. Groundwater recharge and water quality then, are at stake.

CURRENT PROTECTION: In the Township's Development Ordinance, the Natural Resources Preservation Cluster Option works to preserve areas containing natural

resources. While not focused specifically on ground water recharge, the regulation looks at protecting large contiguous parcels. Protecting land in this manner affords ground water recharge because of the pervious nature of the open land. (§112-31).



Farm on Old Georgetown Rd.

OPTION: UPDATE MAPPING DATABASE TO STUDY AND DETERMINE AREAS IN NEED OF PROTECTION.

Specifically, the Township might consider:

- ☞ Utilizing the Association's Water Resources Protection Report to determine aquifer recharge areas within the Township and target them for protection.
- ☞ Applying Best Management Practices (BMPs) to protect ground water, especially in areas where recharge rates are high. Developing ordinance language that will require new developments to install infiltration techniques such as retention basins, wet ponds, and vegetated swales to control stormwater.
- ☞ Implementing BMPs for the municipality'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.
- ☞ Limiting impervious cover and working with neighboring communities to plan for stormwater management on a regional scale.

Consider preparing the following maps:

- *Location of known facilities that handle hazardous materials (include their proximity to critical recharge areas)*
- *Municipal Drinking Water Aquifer Map based on the Township's geology*

Consider adopting the following ordinances:

- *Wellhead and Drinking Water Protection (include provisions for routine testing of private wells to protect areas with higher ground water recharge).*
- *Residential Septic System Monitoring and Maintenance. (provide an educational program to explain the importance of proper septic system maintenance).*
- *Limiting Impervious Cover*



Did You Know?

Half of the residents in New Jersey rely on groundwater for their drinking water supplies. However, these groundwater supplies can become polluted from failing septic systems, commercial or industrial pollution, and naturally occurring contaminants. Once pollutants enter groundwater, it is difficult and expensive to remove or treat them. Preventing groundwater pollution is not only more cost effective, but also more ecologically sound.

In many cases the conditions that favor ground water recharge are also attractive for development. Areas with high ground water recharge often have soils that are suitable for underground wastewater disposal systems such as septic, and are therefore targeted for development. Protection of ground water and the associated recharge areas is a critical first step to ensuring clean and plentiful water for present and future residents in your municipality.

Careful planning and conserving water are important practices to ensure that adequate water supplies can meet the current and future demands. Drilling deeper wells may not always provide enough clean water.



Additional Resources

- ⌘ ***Citizen's Guide on Groundwater.*** The Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association has developed a citizen's guide on Groundwater Protection. This document provides information regarding wellhead protection, as well as what towns can do to protect ground water recharge. For more information or to download this document go to http://www.thewatershed.org/images/uploads/SBMWA_groundwater_guide.pdf or contact the Watershed Association at Phone: 609.737.3735 www.thewatershed.org
- ⌘ ***Model Wellhead Protection Implementation Package.*** The Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association is producing a series of implementation packages to assist municipalities in developing protective ordinances. See contact info above.
- ⌘ ***Low Impact Development Manual.*** The Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association created this manual with materials from the Puget Sound Action Team. This document provides examples from around the country that apply development strategies to increase groundwater recharge. The Watershed Association has this document on file for review. See contact info above.
- ⌘ ***DRAFT Model Well Testing Ordinance.*** Hunterdon County Environmental Toolbox. While this model ordinance is still in draft form it provides language for municipalities to apply to their own well testing needs. The Watershed Association has this DRAFT model ordinance on file for review and use. See contact info above.



STEP

6

Stormwater Management

GOAL: “Understand the balance between runoff and groundwater recharge on Township soils and subsurface, particularly in areas with wells and in flood-prone areas.” (1999 Master Plan p. IX-1)

Respondents to the survey stated that the environmental commission regularly advises against any variances from impervious surface requirements which ensures increased infiltration on a site. The Environmental Commission hopes to reduce required parking at industrial sites to reduce impervious surface. They feel that the new state stormwater management rules will increase infiltration.

CURRENT PROTECTION: Aside from the new Stormwater Rules that every municipality must plan for and implement,

Franklin Township’s Development Ordinance states that all detention/retention basins in multi-family residential development or in non-residential developments shall be owned by the association who owns the property. Any basins located within a single-family development shall be owned and maintained by the township (§112-26D).

§112-26 of the Township’s Development Ordinance contains language for a developer to provide contribution to the town in the form of improvements. These improvements must conform to the Township’s design standards.



OPTION: CREATE AND ADOPT A STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN THAT INCLUDES AN ORDINANCE, BMPs, IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT.

Specifically, the Township should consider:

- ⊗ Utilizing Stony Brook’s Water Resources Protection report in conjunction with the township Master Plan to determine areas for protection and for development.
- ⊗ Requiring the use of Best Available Technologies (BATs) in new construction in order to comply with the Stormwater Rules. These can include retention basins in new development, application of BMPs for monitoring and maintenance that include native vegetation, grassed areas and removal of any concrete structures.
- ⊗ Partnering with surrounding municipalities to create a regional stormwater management plan that will help protect water resources, connect communities, and help move implementation forward. This will also help in preserving longer stream lengths, not just parts of a stream.
- ⊗ Seeking financial assistance to educate the public about stormwater management which should include not disposing of trash in streams, water conservation, and opportunities to be involved in projects like storm drain stenciling. Coordinating this program regionally will take the burden off of one community to fulfill Stormwater Rules requirements and will also spread out costs.
- ⊗ Encourage residents and businesses to become River-Friendly certified through the Association’s program.



Did You Know?

What can municipalities do?

- The clearing, grading, and impervious cover that occurs with development can dramatically alter runoff from the site and impact areas downstream. But these runoff impacts can be reduced by implementing **Low Impact Development (LID) Strategies and Nonstructural Strategies**, which are required in the NJ Stormwater rules (NJAC 7:8-5).
- These LID strategies can be accomplished through 4 basic principles: minimizing site disturbances; effective landscaping and vegetation maintenance; minimizing and managing impervious areas; and modifying designs that affect peak runoff flows.
- To help communities ensure that new site development plans are complying and implementing these LID strategies, the *NJ Stormwater Best Management Practices Manual* (BMP Manual) provides helpful guidance, models and checklists to address the requirements. www.njstormwater.org/bmp_manual2.htm
- 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 overflow 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.

What can residents do?

- Place a rain barrel on the gutters of your home. Rainwater will flow into the barrels where it can be stored for future use on your lawn or in your garden.
- If your yard floods during heavy rains, construct a rain garden on your property, but not in the flooding area, to drain water back into the ground. The rain garden is also a pleasant landscaping feature.
- Be aware of the amount of fertilizers or pesticides you use on your lawn or garden. Decrease your use of these pollutants and replace them with natural solutions.
- Become River-Friendly Certified through the Association's River Friendly Program.



Additional Resources

- ☞ **Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association.** The Watershed Association has a variety of services offered to municipalities in the Watershed. Call for more information about our Project Turtle Kit (a storm drain stenciling program), Assistance with Plan and Ordinance Review, and our GIS Center. (609) 737-3735.
- ☞ **Natural and Low Impact Strategies for Development.** A publication produced by the Stony Brook - Millstone Watershed Association. This, along with many other resources for Low Impact Development strategies, are located on the Association's website at http://www.thewatershed.org/managing_resources.php?id=C0_44_32



STEP

7

New Construction Practices

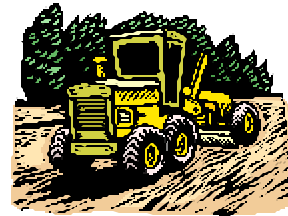
GOAL: The Township's Conservation Plan Element of the Master Plan lists goals for protecting soils and geology. The Township hopes to have these features mapped in the Open Space Plan. Most of the Township soils are suitable for agricultural activity, although due to the underlying geology, the majority of them result in poor infiltration.

While protecting large amounts of woodlands will protect soils and increase infiltration, applying BMPs on a construction site will help to maintain the soil's health and reduce erosion in any nearby waterways.

CURRENT PROTECTION:

Any disturbance of more than 5,000 square feet needs to provide language on the plans for controlling or preventing erosion and other provisions for maintaining the safety of the site as well as prevention of degradation. (Section 4:24-41 of the NJDA Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Act).

Any disturbance of one acre or more or one-quarter acre of impervious cover will trigger regulation by the NJ DEP Phase II Stormwater Rules.



OPTION: EMPHASIZE AND ENCOURAGE SENSITIVE CONSTRUCTION PRACTICES, PARTICULARLY IN CRITICAL AREAS.

Specifically, the Township should consider:

- ∅ Establishing individual Construction Site Soil Erosion Control measures or adopting an ordinance to promote, regulate and monitor these practices.
- ∅ Creating a checklist for developers to use to submit an application. Ensure that the checklist requires the data necessary for the Board or Council to make informed planning decisions (i.e. soils, hydrogeology, water quality, location of environmentally sensitive areas)
- ∅ Ensure accurate mapping of Critical Habitat Areas prior to granting construction permits.
- ∅ Requiring submission of an Environmental Impact Statement for any new large scale development, prior to granting construction permits.
- ∅ Encouraging the use of pervious material, including porous pavement, green parking lots, gravel and other alternatives on all construction sites to ensure minimal soil disturbance.
- ∅ Applying the language of the Municipal Land Use Law to reflect Franklin Township's needs for requiring new construction practices.
- ∅ Ensuring necessary fees for monitoring and enforcement are adopted in current regulations.



Did You Know?

Section C.40:55D-45.2 of the NJ Municipal Land Use Law, General Development Plan Contents, states that an environmental inventory may include, but not be limited to, a general description of the probable impact of the development on the environmental attributes of the site.

Critical Slope areas often serve as habitats for threatened or endangered species of plants and wildlife, and these species may be adversely affected by inappropriate development. The New Jersey Office of Smart Growth suggests that construction standards that minimize soil disturbance during construction in Critical Slope areas should be prepared and implemented by municipalities with the technical support and assistance of State agencies. Critical Slope areas that are cleared during development or forestry activities should be revegetated with native vegetation according to appropriate soil conservation and stormwater management techniques.

Aside from protecting critical habitats, limiting soil erosion on construction sites can prevent runoff and sedimentation in nearby waterways. Some techniques currently used to alleviate this environmental degradation include examples from around the country and can be distributed to developers at pre-application meetings:

- ⌘ **Minnesota Urban Small Sites BMP Manual.** Gives examples of Vehicle Track Pads, Grading and Sequencing of construction. <http://www.metrocouncil.org/environment/Watershed/BMP/manual.htm>.
- ⌘ **Conyers, GA - Construction Practices Brochure.** Gives examples to control erosion and sediment movement at the construction site. http://www.conyersga.com/client_resources/cityhall/construction%20practices.doc



Additional Resources

- ⌘ **Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association.** River-Friendly Golf Course, Business and Resident Certification Programs. River-Friendly materials help businesses, residents, golf courses and municipalities learn about water conservation and land management. By completing goals to conserve water and maintain property in an environmentally conscious manner, residents, businesses and golf courses can. Contact the Watershed Association for more information. Phone: 609.737.3735. www.thewatershed.org.
- ⌘ **Construction Site Erosion Control Ordinance.** Boise, Idaho. Municipal Code Chapter 8-17. This ordinance is a model for construction site erosion control that includes goals for minimizing depositing and tracking sediment, utilizing appropriate materials and equipment for construction, regulating temporary structures and materials, and for inspecting during the construction process. The Watershed Association has this ordinance on file for review. See contact information above.



STEP

8

Developing Vacant Lands

ISSUES: In an effort to advance downtown revitalization (see Step 9), the Township's Master Plan promotes and encourages infill development where possible. During our tour of Franklin Township, town officials expressed the need to decide what should happen with properties that are located in less urban areas, are not developed, and are not protected through open space. While this could be considered infill development, the Township should approach this with great thought in order to provide appropriate development on these properties.

Respondents to the survey felt that more of a balance of uses would be ideal for the Township, as it is stated in the Township's mission.

STRATEGIES: By developing vacant lands and redeveloping underused parcels with a mix of land uses, these communities will become more than just places to live, but places to work, shop, play and be educated.

In order for this to be successful, the Township's Housing Element of the Master Plan should include language to support infill in unconventional locations and should essentially become part of the housing policy. Also, focusing growth on smaller sections of the community can strengthen the individual identities of each neighborhood. This, in turn, can enhance the cultural diversity of the township, creating a variety of opportunities as lands are developed.

OPTION: INCLUDE LANGUAGE IN THE TOWNSHIP'S MASTER PLAN REEXAMINATION TO PROVIDE FOR A MIX OF USES WHERE VACANT LANDS ARE CONSIDERED FOR DEVELOPMENT.

Specifically, the Township should consider:

- ⌘ Creating a "form based" ordinance that can be tailored to the needs of the community and even down to the specific site. This specific code allows for uses that may not be consistent with neighboring uses. This creates diversity in the development and adds a neighborhood feel where it might not have been before.
- ⌘ Utilizing GIS to analyze the statistical information of vacant parcels such as acreage and build out under current zoning.
- ⌘ Determining how infill development will be impacted by certain strategies like density bonuses, transit-oriented development or mixed-use development along commercial strips.
- ⌘ Continuing to work with the County and the local redevelopment agency to accomplish goals for the redevelopment areas in the township.





Did You Know?

- Sites that pose some contamination issues, but are economically viable development projects create better opportunities for investors. Maintaining the attractiveness of these sites for private investment should be the primary objective of financial incentives.
- While Franklin Township may already be employing some of these techniques, some incentives and planning strategies to consider include:
 - Tax Abatements - help cover the cost of redeveloping a vacant site.
 - Tax Increment Financing - mechanisms to provide infrastructure for brownfield and vacant land redevelopment sites.
 - Site Valuation - estimating the cost of clean up on a site and then appraising the property. The cost of clean up must be known.
 - Insurance Policies - offer broad benefits to encourage redevelopment.
 - Community Participation - community-based organization can play an important role in identifying sites and implementing a community-driven remediation and redevelopment proposal.
 - Advocacy Planning - ensuring that sites or areas planned for redevelopment have the backing of the community. Often times, environmental justice is an issue and communities may approach the project with hesitancy.



Additional Resources

- ☞ **Smart Code: A Comprehensive Form-Based Planning Ordinance.** Spring 2005 issue. Duany, Plater-Zyberk and Company. www.dpz.com
- ☞ **Municipal Code Corporation.** Distributes the SmartCode nationwide as an alternative to conventional (sprawl-oriented) ordinances. P.O. Box 2235, Tallahassee, FL 32316-2235; Tel: 800.262.2633 Fax: 850.575.8852
- ☞ **NJ Department of Community Affairs, Brownfields Redevelopment Resource Kit.** Designed to assist a municipality in assessing a site based on legal, planning, environmental, financial, and infrastructure. The Resource Kit can be found at: <http://www.state.nj.us/dca/osg/docs/brownfieldsresourcekit.pdf>
- ☞ **Land Lines: Overcoming Obstacles to Brownfield and Vacant Land Redevelopment.** Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. Wright, Thomas K. and Ann Davlin. September 1998, Volume 10, Number 5.



STEP

9 Downtown Revitalization

GOAL: According to the Township’s Housing Element and Fair Share Plan (1995), goals include maintaining affordability and diversity of housing, encouraging development in redevelopment and developed areas - including senior housing - and allowing for higher density where services exist. Among these goals is greater accessibility to parks and recreational venues and to the business community.

learning opportunities for people of all ages, more facilities for recreational activity and a more business and industry-friendly environment with the transportation options to serve it.

Design standards that maintain the neighborhood feel of the area in appropriate places and allow for commercial/industrial uses where appropriate provide support for the plan.

CURRENT PROTECTION: The Township Hamilton Street Revitalization Plan states...

The Township’s Renaissance 2000 Redevelopment Plan §112.32.04 states that the basic revitalization strategy is to “reinforce existing residential, educational, recreational, cultural, employment, transportation and human services systems by adding needed new facilities, jobs and services to create a balanced new community.”



Rte 27 looking east at the Gateway Corridor.

In general, this will create more job opportunities, more housing choices, more

OPTION: CONTINUE TO DEVELOP AND PROVIDE AFFORDABLE AMENITIES FOR RESIDENTS AND BUSINESS OWNERS OF THE REDEVELOPMENT AREA.

Specifically, the Township should consider:

- ⌘ Investigating the use of Transfer of Development Rights to protect farmland and open space on the outskirts of the Township, while providing incentive for development in the Redevelopment Area.
- ⌘ Providing educational programs to residents who live within the Mile Run Brook sub-watershed to learn more about protecting this natural resource amidst the urban community.
- ⌘ Continuing to work with local organizations to accomplish goals set forth in the Redevelopment Plan.
- ⌘ Utilizing the location of the Redevelopment Area to encourage new businesses and new residents to relocate there. It is accessible for businesses and convenient for residents.



Did You Know?

“Downtown revitalization requires a high degree of cooperation and is best achieved when a unique ‘private/public’ process is used.”
- *Brookings Institution report*

According to the Brookings Institution’s report *Turning Around Downtown: Twelve Steps to Revitalization*.

- The revitalization of a downtown is an “art” that 100 years ago happened by accident. Today this practice is a learned planning skill.
- Housing is two-thirds of the built environment, so it is always a critical part of the strategy.
- A town is essentially creating a regional destination that give the area critical mass, identity and a reason to live there.
- The public image of the downtown in early phases is extremely important as it “puts a human face on the revitalization effort.”
- Utilizing “form-based” codes (see Options in Step 8), the focus is put on the form of buildings and how they fit into the fabric of the city block at a small scale and the redevelopment area as a whole. They do not mandate numbers like parking ratios, for example, because they allow for great flexibility to decide what makes the most sense for that site.

New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) developed a guide to rehabilitation efforts in the state. Entitled, the NJ Rehabilitation Subcode, this document was adopted in 1998 and represents a change in the building code philosophy. Similar to the Brookings Institution’s findings, allowing for flexibility in coding is essential for existing structures, especially for the historic structures that are present in the Township’s Redevelopment Area.



Additional Resources

- ☞ **Brookings Institution.** “Turning Around Downtown: Twelve Steps to Revitalization”, Christopher B. Leinberger. March 2005. For more about the Brookings Institution and other publications go to www.brookings.edu.
- ☞ **New Jersey Department of Community Affairs.** “Rules That Make Sense - New Jersey’s Rehabilitation Subcode”. William M. Connolly. Adopted in the New Jersey Register January 5, 1998.
- ☞ **Fannie Mae Foundation.** “Streamlining Building Rehabilitation Codes to Encourage Revitalization”. Matt Syal, Chris Shay, and Faron Supanich-Goldner. Volume 3 Issue 2. 2005. <http://www.fanniemaefoundation.org/programs/hff/v3i2-streamline.shtml>



STEP

10

Traffic and Transportation

GOAL: Franklin Township's Circulation Plan Element of the Master Plan states that "Establish(ing) a circulation system which recognizes the high level of through-Township traffic and minimizes its negative impact on Township residents and promoting safety" are the two major goals for traffic and transportation.

Respondents to the survey felt that more options for transportation need to be explored. Already the major north-south corridors (Rte. 27 and South Middlebush Rd) are becoming congested and taking on more traffic than they can handle. In these areas and others, truck traffic is a concern on smaller roadways.

CURRENT PROTECTION: Franklin Township currently has a circulation plan that includes facilities for roadway improvements, park-n-ride facilities, and bus stations. However, according to the Master Plan, passengers are transferred through the township, not within.

In Table IV-1 of the Circulation Plan Element (p. IV-2), it is clear that a good number of people who live in Franklin are traveling to their workplace also located in Franklin. While modes of transportation, other than the single occupancy vehicle, are available more needs to be done to promote the use of mass transportation.

OPTION: IMPLEMENT ORDINANCES AND TRAFFIC CIRCULATION DEVICES THAT ALLOW FOR STEADY MOVEMENT WITHIN AND THROUGH THE TOWNSHIP.

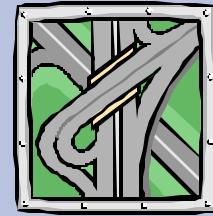
Specifically, the Township should consider:

- ∅ Linking the Redevelopment Area with the large campus-like industrial areas to the west of the redevelopment area through the use of greenways and bike paths.
- ∅ Work with local transportation providers (NJ Transit, Suburban Transit) to provide bus service from transportation hubs to the industrial areas.
- ∅ Conducting studies and surveys (similar to the Rte. 287 online survey) to better understand what residents want and what would work best for the Township's traffic flow.
- ∅ Applying traffic calming measures to the major roadways to move traffic while alleviating congestion.
- ∅ Continuing to apply bicycle and pedestrian-friendly measures to major and connecting roadways to maximize movement where feasible. Also, applying these measures to open space greenways will link the large scale employers located to the immediate center.
- ∅ Initiating carpooling or ride share opportunities for better access to those large scale employers within the Township.
- ∅ Sending a representative to the NJ Regional Traffic Forum to learn about additional opportunities in the region and to see how other communities are addressing traffic issues.



Did You Know?

- Between 1970 and 1999, the U.S. population grew by 33%. During this period, however, the U.S. Department of Transportation found that vehicle miles traveled grew disproportionately by 143%.
- Sharing a ride or car pooling, even if it is done just once or twice a week, will reduce traffic congestion and pollution, and will save you money. The average driver spends about 44 cents per mile including ownership and maintenance.
- Riding a bike is a great way to travel and it can help you and the air get into good condition. Vehicles on the road create more than 25% of all air pollution nationwide.
- It is vital that a community's circulation system includes a variety of transportation alternatives. This has several beneficial effects. It disperses circulation, instead of concentrating it in a few key arterials or collectors. It requires smaller facilities (narrower streets, less dedicated turn lanes, less mechanical traffic control devices). It allows streets to retain a pedestrian-oriented, human scale, as opposed to the over-engineered, auto-oriented collectors and arterials of the suburbs (NJ State Plan).



Additional Resources

- It All Adds Up to Cleaner Air*** is a unique public education and partnership-building initiative developed collaboratively by several federal agencies to help regional, state and community efforts to reduce traffic congestion and air pollution. Visit their website at <http://www.italladdsup.gov/>
- RideWise of Raritan Valley*** is a non-profit agency that offers free services to help reduce traffic, improve air quality, and make getting to and from work less stressful. While they don't provide rides, they do help individuals and employers find healthier, money-saving alternatives to commuting like carpooling, vanpooling public transit, biking and walking. Visit them on the web at www.ridewise.org
- The NJ State Plan*** offers suggestions on Traffic and Transportation. Since New Jersey is the most densely populated and heavily traveled state in the country, it is important to make sure that increasing traffic congestion isn't a way of life.
<http://www.state.nj.us/osp/resources/traffic.htm>
<http://www.njchoices.com/>
- The Tri-State Transportation Campaign*** is an alliance of public interest, transit advocacy, planning and environmental organizations working to reverse deepening automobile dependence and sprawl development. www.tstc.org



STEP

11 Enforcing Local Ordinances

GOAL: The Township's Master Plan Introduction states the plan's legal basis for control over future development and provides the major means of implementation.

Although no specific goals for enforcement are listed, respondents to the survey mentioned the need to follow up with conservation easements and ordinances put in place to ensure landowners are complying with the provisions set forth in those regulations.

CURRENT PROTECTION: A governing body in New Jersey has the legislative power to pass ordinances governing issues such as land use and police enforcement. It can also pass land use ordinances to set standards for development and it has the authority to hire personnel to assure the ordinances are enforced.

Language for enforcement is supported by mandating applicants to obtain the appropriate permits before their plans are approved.

OPTION: ENFORCE ORDINANCES THROUGH MONITORING AND EDUCATION, ESPECIALLY AT THE ONSET OF A DEVELOPMENT PROJECT.

Specifically, the Township might consider:

- ⌘ Providing a checklist for developers to submit to the Environmental Commission and/or the governing body, to avoid repercussions for violations.
- ⌘ Creating a document or table that helps to ensure that all staff and officials understand what is on the books, how it is implemented and who, or what entity, enforces the ordinance.
- ⌘ Hiring or appointing personnel or volunteers to act as an enforcement officer whose main focus is to monitor actions that may be questioned by the township and to increase communication between staff and amongst the community. (See the Additional Resources Section on the next page for more examples).
- ⌘ Making information regarding violations and penalties available to the public in order to ensure a clear understanding of repercussions.
- ⌘ Educating residents on alternative actions to avoid violations which could lead to penalties.
- ⌘ Combining any new ordinances or regulations with an educational component (i.e. a program or letter to residents or to the newspaper) to ensure residents understand the need for the change and their part in upholding that change.
- ⌘ Developing a list of conservation easements for better enforcement. Develop guidelines and educational material for permitted activities and maintenance requirements in the easement.



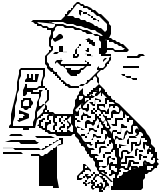
Did You Know?

- ⌘ Ordinances are created to protect citizens' health and well-being and to maintain a certain quality of life. Enforcement of these ordinances relies on the commitment of the municipal officials to uphold the standards that they have established.
- ⌘ Hiring volunteers or students is an inexpensive and efficient way to ensure that ordinances and regulations are being upheld in the Township.
- ⌘ New Jersey is known as a strong "home rule" state. The 1917 Home Rule Act was later supplemented by the Optional Municipal Charter Law, which provides for various forms of self-governance while restating to future interpreters and judges the broad police powers jurisdiction of municipal government.



Additional Resources

- ⌘ **Volunteers and Interns.** As previously mentioned, this is a very inexpensive and efficient way to monitor preserved lands, easements, and open spaces. One example that proves the success of this approach is in the Hunterdon County Farmland Preservation Program. Every summer they hire a college student - usually with an educational focus in an environmentally-related field - to "inspect" the preserved farms in the program. The intern collects information on each property, interviews the landowner/farmer, walks the property, takes pictures, then determines if that property is in compliance with the County's program regulations. This is a great way for a student to gain experience in the field and the municipality/county obtains current information on each of their properties. Contact Hunterdon County FPP for more information on this summer program: (908) 788-1490.
- ⌘ **The Environmental Manual for Municipal Officials.** This document gives overviews on municipal land use and environmental law, case studies and case law, and is available through the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions. www.anjec.org
- ⌘ **Municipal Tools for Environmental Protection.** This document provides options for protecting environmental resources in a municipality. It is available through ANJEC. www.anjec.org
- ⌘ **Zoning Ordinance Enforcement.** Long Hill Township, New Jersey. A Zoning Enforcement Officer inspects properties where non-permitted or prohibited uses are suspected, and will issue an order or a citation as appropriate to enforce the law. Any resident who suspects a non-permitted or prohibited use should contact the Zoning Enforcement Officer, and file a complaint. More information on this type of enforcement can be found at 908-647-8000 or at: <http://www.longhillnj.org/lht/zonenfor.htm>



STEP

12

Public Participation and Education

GOAL: Respondents to the survey felt that participation within the community needs to come from all residents no matter their ethnicity, neighborhood, or occupation. They felt that in some cases participation lacks in certain communities and that more effort needs to be put forth in encouraging more residents to become involved.

One suggestion from the survey responses was to hold ethnic festivals that celebrate the diversity of the Township.

CURRENT EFFORTS: Township is pursuing an update of the Master Plan. Public hearings were held to gain input from township residents.

The Township's website is informative for residents, businesses and local officials. All Township Council and Planning Board meeting agendas and minutes are posted on the website. Franklin also has a public access cable channel (Channel 25) and town wide newsletter to inform the community of news and events.

OPTION: CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Specifically, the Township might consider:

- ⌘ Expanding the information available on Franklin Township's website (<http://www.franklintwpnj.org/>). Include links to discussions of current community issues of concern and various solutions. Also, creating a link to the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association for reports, programs, or other resources that may be helpful to finding answers to questions and issues.
- ⌘ In addition to posting minutes and meeting agendas, encourage Council members to write a regular column in the local newspapers to keep residents informed on key programs and issues, including educational programs.
- ⌘ Creating fun programs for residents to understand the value and importance of the community and their role in it. For example, hold a Community Day and feature local businesses, organizations and services.
- ⌘ Extending a call for volunteers with the annual tax mailing or through kids school announcements.





STEP

13

Knowledge Base of Municipal Officials

GOAL: According to survey responses, one goal is to establish a better working relationship between the Township Council and the various committees within the Township. This may come through educational opportunities for all elected and appointed officials to attend, possibly learning about work different from their own.

CURRENT EFFORTS: In understanding that local decisions are made through township officials and staff, it is imperative to ensure municipal officials and staff are knowledgeable about environmental issues, as well as other township issues.



OPTION: ENCOURAGE TRAINING AND SITE WALKS FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS TO BETTER UNDERSTAND HOW DECISIONS MADE IN THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING WILL LOOK ON THE GROUND.

Specifically, the Township should consider:

- ⊗ Encouraging members of their Township Council, Planning Board, Environmental Commission, Open Space Advisory Committee and Historic Preservation Committee to participate in continuing education. This could include hosting a training workshop in the Township and inviting neighboring municipalities to attend.
- ⊗ Encouraging Planning Board and Environmental Commission members to conduct site walks prior to any application approval.
- ⊗ Ensuring that Township Officials participate in the cross-acceptance process and that Township plans are consistent with the State Plan and surrounding municipal master plans.
- ⊗ Encouraging the Environmental Commission to conduct more public education campaigns to heighten the awareness of environmental issues in the Township and to possibly increase the feeling of ownership and value for the environment amongst residents.
- ⊗ Keeping Township staff members, and elected and appointed officials, aware of documents that are updated and those that need updating. Ensuring that the process to update these materials includes a public process to maintain a cohesive end product, such as a Natural Resources Inventory.