

# SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC PLAN ELEMENT



## HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP Mercer County, NJ

DRAFT

for Planning Board Review

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Prepared by:  
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in consultation with  
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## Introduction

The Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) is the enabling legislation that authorizes municipalities to adopt master plans and zoning ordinances. Among the optional plan elements enabled by the statute is the economic plan element for which N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28b(9) provides the following statutory authorization:

- (9) An economic plan element considering **all aspects of economic development and sustained economic vitality**, including
  - (a) **a comparison of the types of employment expected** to be provided by the economic development to be promoted **with the characteristics of the labor pool resident** in the municipality and nearby areas and
  - (b) **an analysis of the stability and diversity of the economic development** to be promoted;

## Background

Hopewell Township has witnessed significant changes in the developed character of the landscape since the beginning of the 21st century. The following excerpt from the 2002 Land Use Plan seems particularly relevant over 20 years later:

The last decade has seen major, irreversible changes affecting the Township and its land and water resources, as new housing and major employment have been met with new commitments to open space preservation. If not properly managed, this development trend threatens to overwhelm, and forever alter, the special sense of “place” that is Hopewell Township. How change is managed today will forever shape the quality of life in the Township.

In this Master Plan, Hopewell is choosing to deal with the pressures for growth responsibly and conservatively, channeling development to appropriate areas with available infrastructure, and limiting the effects of growth in the “environs”. In this way, the Township’s land and water resources can be conserved, farmland can be retained for agricultural use and the character that attracted past and present residents, and provides Hopewell’s unique identity, can be protected.

Hopewell’s response to this challenge was to determine the resource capabilities of the Township to support development, with an essential focus on water quantity and quality. This led the Planning Board to establish the Resource Conservation Zones, designed to scale permitted development to respect the limited natural carrying capacity of the Sourland Mountain and the Hopewell Valley. These zoning policies redirected development away from the expansive farmland and fragile Mountain environment.

In the meantime, major changes came to two of the large single-user campuses, Merrill Lynch and Bristol Meyers Squibb. During that time, the changing fortunes of these major contributors to the Township tax base posed a threat of major increases in residential taxes if the properties were not reused or redeveloped as multi-user sites to keep up with market demands. Ownership changes of the two corporations resulted in the repositioning of these sites in a multi-user marketplace.

Fortunately, the process of repositioning and repopulating these sites is well underway and future prospects are hopeful.

A second major influence on the Township was Mt. Laurel IV. This 2015 New Jersey Supreme Court decision brought affordable housing obligations back into the court system after the failure of the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) to provide a mechanism for constitutional compliance.

The Township achieved constitutional compliance when it secured an unconditional final judgment of compliance and repose in 2017. The Court-approved Housing Element and Fair Share Plan (HEFSP) calls for construction of 633 affordable units within inclusionary developments to satisfy its third-round obligation. These projects are either approved or in varying stages of the approval process. Since sanitary sewer treatment is necessary for inclusionary development, affordable housing developments are situated in the established sewer service areas within the Township.

## **Goals**

The resource management focus of the 2002 Master Plan examined the wide range of natural resources, with a particular focus on water supply and quality. The densities prescribed for the Mountain and Valley were devised in response to detailed water supply analysis. The intent was to steward these resources at the same time as permitting beneficial economic development of private property.

The planning strategies for managing change are designed to provide careful stewardship of the limited resources on which current and future generations will rely. Enhanced resource protection will offer a future where farmlands maintain a centuries-old land use pattern and activity, wildlife habitat is preserved, and natural systems remain integrated for healthy functioning and the regional public benefits they afford.

To satisfy the requirements of the affordable housing obligations under the third-round compliance period, the township's planning efforts required expansion of municipal/regional water system providers to avoid impacts to the critical water supply within the Mountain and Valley Resource areas.

This Sustainable Economic Plan Element examines the forces shaping economic development today and provides guidance for expanding economic opportunity in a manner consistent with the goals of the Master Plan.

The following Goals from 2002 remain relevant today.

### **Land Use and Management**

- To offer flexibility in development techniques which recognize new approaches and technologies that are responsive to evolving demographic, economic and environmental needs.

### **Economic Development**

- To provide for desirable non-residential development *in appropriate areas* of the Township that will *complement the existing character* of the community and aid in *broadening the local tax base*.
- To promote the redesign of existing commercial sites to provide a more efficient land use pattern through such approaches as reduced curb cuts, interconnecting driveways, improved pedestrian and bicycle linkages and enhanced landscaping.
- *To provide for new commercial areas in compact forms in areas with utilities in order to concentrate businesses and provide a variety of services.*
- To coordinate such items as architectural design, access, landscaping, lighting, signs and similar design features to *produce visually and functionally compatible economic development*.
- To *provide commercial activities* in proximity to populations *where adverse impacts to the community can be minimized*, and to avoid commercial development that is unrelated to the needs of the community.
- *To promote regional cooperation with adjoining municipalities*, with particular reference to the Boroughs of Hopewell and Pennington, in the development of *economic development strategies*.

In describing the non-residential development opportunities in Hopewell Township, the 2002 Land Use Plan noted "...the prevalence of existing and approved research office and office park development throughout the Township, and the influence of Route 31 and the existing development pattern." The changing fortunes of Merrill Lynch and BMS were not foreseen in the 2002 Land Use Plan.

Among the Guiding Principles of the 2002 Plan:

*A long-range policy for Route 31 should be developed to manage community design, circulation and safety considerations.*

This concern led to the Route 31 Design Study, which offered a series of recommendations to limit strip development and manage the character of the corridor.

## Private Sector Employment

Total covered employment refers to all private sector or non-government jobs located in the Township that are held by residents and non-residents. As shown in Table 1 two-thirds of Hopewell's population over 16 was in the civilian labor force in 2021, comparable to Mercer County and the State. Mercer

**Table 1**

EMPLOYMENT STATUS	New Jersey		Mercer County		Hopewell Township	
	Persons	Percent	Persons	Percent	Persons	Percent
Population 16 years and over	7,436,293		312,266		14,005	
In labor force	4,905,036	66.0%	199,037	63.7%	8,793	62.8%
Civilian labor force	4,893,875	65.8%	198,889	63.7%	8,793	62.8%
Employed	4,588,902	61.7%	186,426	59.70%	8,442	60.3%
Unemployed	304,973	4.1%	12,463	4.0%	351	2.5%
Armed Forces	11,161	0.2%	148	0.0%	0	0.0%
Not in labor force	2,531,257	34.0%	113,229	36.3%	5,212	37.2%
Unemployment Rate	(X)	6.2%	(X)	6.3%	(X)	4.0%

*S0201 2021 American Community Survey 5-year estimates*

County and the State each had unemployment rates of just over 6%, while Hopewell's unemployment rate was 4%, substantially below the State and County level.

## Travel to Work (Or Stay Home)

Commuting trends have changed substantially in the recent past. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic brought a new dimension to the work-from-home concept. This emerging relationship with work has seen the number of those who drive alone to work in Hopewell

drop from 80% in 2015 to 68% in 2021.

As seen in Table 2, the share of workers who no longer commute has grown to 11% Statewide and 13% in Mercer County. Notably, Hopewell Township has more than doubled New Jersey's rate of adoption of remote work, with those working from home approaching one quarter of the workforce.

## Occupational Characteristics

The number of employed civilians dropped by 8% from 9,206 in 2015 to 8,442 in 2021 (Table 3). While two-thirds of those employed work in "management, business, science and arts" occupations, this represents a small drop from the 65.3% seen in 2015. "Sales and office" jobs accounted for 15% of total and "service" jobs totaled 9.3%. Both these categories saw a roughly 1% reduction from 2015. The remaining 13% of occupations are evenly split "natural resource, construction and maintenance" and "production, transportation and material moving" occupations.

COMMUTING TO WORK	New Jersey		Mercer County		Hopewell Township	
	Persons	Percent	Persons	Percent	Persons	Percent
Workers 16 years and over	4,489,790		181,448		8,391	
Car, truck, or van -- drove alone	3,021,839	67.3%	118,415	65.3%	5,702	<b>68.0%</b>
Car, truck, or van -- carpooled	341,548	7.6%	19,286	10.6%	427	5.1%
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	438,123	9.8%	10,796	5.9%	315	3.8%
Walked	115,825	2.6%	6,993	3.9%	30	0.4%
Other means	95,227	2.1%	2,762	1.5%	22	0.3%
Worked from home	477,228	10.6%	23,196	12.8%	1,895	<b>22.6%</b>
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	31.5	(X)	27.6	(X)	29.1	(X)

Table 3  
New Jersey      Mercer County      Hopewell Township

OCCUPATION	Persons	Percent	Persons	Percent	Persons	Percent
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	4,588,902		186,426		8,442	
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	2,070,173	45.1%	86,694	46.5%	5,277	<b>62.5%</b>
Service occupations	699,743	15.2%	30,305	16.3%	787	9.3%
Sales and office occupations	970,893	21.2%	36,248	19.4%	1,269	15.0%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	321,846	7.0%	11,263	6.0%	558	6.6%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	526,247	11.5%	21,916	11.8%	551	6.5%

*S201 2021 American Community Survey 5-year estimates*

between

## Resident Employment by Industry

Hopewell residents are employed across the industry spectrum, but three industry categories employ more than half of the Township labor force. These industries include “educational services, health care and social assistance” (28.8%), “professional scientific and management, and administrative and waste services” (17.4%) and “manufacturing” (11.7%).

No other industry groups accrued double digit percentages, but other significant shares were in “finance and insurance, and real estate and rental leasing” (9.1%), and 7% each for “construction” and “retail trade”.

## Household and Family Income

Household and family income in Hopewell Township outpaces the State and County income by a wide margin. In 2021, Hopewell saw a median household income of \$153,281, outpacing the County by roughly \$67,594 or 79% and exceeding the State figure by \$68,000 or 71%. The average household income in 2021 was \$199,003 for the Township, 60% higher than that of the State (\$124,626) and County (\$124,665).

Family incomes, which are higher than household incomes, follow a similar pattern, with the median family income in the Township (\$168,975) substantially outpacing the State (\$110,115) and County (\$112,327) by more than \$50,000. Average family incomes further indicate the relative wealth of Hopewell Township families (\$225,821), compared with the State (\$146,057) and County (\$154,184).

## Education

**Table 4**

INDUSTRY	New Jersey		Mercer County		Hopewell Township	
	Persons	Percent	Persons	Percent	Persons	Percent
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	4,588,902		186,426		8,442	
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	14,956	0.3%	712	0.4%	48	0.6%
Construction	277,402	6.0%	8,736	4.7%	585	6.9%
Manufacturing	372,904	8.1%	14,137	7.6%	984	11.7%
Wholesale trade	144,997	3.2%	5,889	3.2%	218	2.6%
Retail trade	491,633	10.7%	18,120	9.7%	589	7.0%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	295,206	6.4%	10,924	5.9%	276	3.3%
Information	119,673	2.6%	3,946	2.1%	54	0.6%
<b>S0201</b> <b>American Community Survey</b> <b>2021</b> <b>ACSSPP1Y2021</b>						
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	393,362	8.6%	15,144	8.1%	765	9.1%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	633,786	13.8%	27,139	14.6%	1,467	17.4%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	1,105,240	24.1%	49,671	26.6%	2,431	28.8%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	342,886	7.5%	13,003	7.0%	400	4.7%
Other services, except public administration	195,060	4.3%	7,440	4.0%	320	3.8%
Public administration	201,797	4.4%	11,565	6.2%	305	3.6%

*S0201 2021 American Community Survey 5-year estimates*

**Table 5**

INCOME	New Jersey		Mercer County		Hopewell Township	
	Amount	Percent	Amount	Percent	Amount	Percent
<b>Median household income (dollars)</b>	89,703	(X)	85,687	(X)	<b>153,281</b>	(X)
Mean household income (dollars)	124,626	(X)	124,665	(X)	<b>199,003</b>	(X)
<b>Median family income (dollars)</b>	110,115	(X)	112,327	(X)	<b>168,975</b>	(X)
Mean family income (dollars)	146,057	(X)	154,184	(X)	<b>225,821</b>	(X)
<b>All families</b>	(X)	7.0%	(X)	7.3%	(X)	0.5%
<b>All people</b>	(X)	9.8%	(X)	11.4%	(X)	2.5%

*S0201 2021 American Community Survey 5-year estimates*

Hopewell's wealth is related to the education of Township residents. When compared at the highest level of educational attainment, Hopewell has rates of attainment of higher education that are considerably greater than seen at the State and County levels.

Roughly one-third of Hopewell's residents have attained a Bachelor's degree or higher, with an equal share attaining a Bachelors and Graduate degrees. By comparison, 41.5% of State residents and 43.6% of County residents have attained a Bachelor's degree or higher.

The correlation of income and education is obvious here since the level of educational attainment and the income levels exhibit a similar relationship – having roughly 50% more residents with higher education than the State as a whole results in about 50% more income for Hopewell residents. This highly educated workforce is a major attraction to the employers seeking to locate within the region.

### Building Permit Activity

Building permits for new housing units provide an indicator of the rate at which the community is growing. For instance, from 2012 to 2022 there were 240 permits for new housing units in the

Township (21.8 units/year), a rate of growth much slower than seen in the past. The 2019 Housing Element cited the fact that the housing supply grew by roughly 1,000 units between 2000 and 2015 (62.5 units/year).

The relatively slower growth of the past decade is attributable to a variety of factors related to the economy, COVID, and the limitations placed on expansion of residential development with the establishment of the Conservation Zones. However, the affordable housing compliance plan

**Table 6**

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	New Jersey		Mercer County		Hopewell Township	
	Persons	Percent	Persons	Percent	Persons	Percent
<b>Population 25 years and over</b>	6,411,606	(X)	259,446	(X)	11,918	(X)
<b>Less than 9th grade</b>	295,145	4.6%	11,788	4.5%	269	2.3%
<b>9th to 12th grade, no diploma</b>	313,732	4.9%	15,301	5.9%	344	2.9%
<b>High school graduate (includes equivalency)</b>	1,693,560	26.4%	65,735	25.3%	1,930	16.2%
<b>Some college, no degree</b>	1,017,727	15.9%	37,487	14.4%	1,181	9.9%
<b>Associate's degree</b>	430,589	6.7%	16,018	6.2%	799	6.7%
<b>Bachelor's degree</b>	1,611,515	25.1%	60,695	23.4%	3,599	<b>30.2%</b>
<b>Graduate or professional degree</b>	1,049,338	16.4%	52,422	20.2%	3,796	<b>31.9%</b>
<b>High school graduate or higher</b>	5,802,729	90.5%	232,357	89.6%	11,305	94.9%
<b>Bachelor's degree or higher</b>	2,660,853	41.5%	113,117	43.6%	7,395	<b>62.0%</b>

*SI501 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables*

**Table 7**

Housing Units Building Permits	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Hopewell Twp.	68	38	31	24	14	5	10	2	5	10	33
Mercer County	444	964	368	896	711	605	501	423	729	422	646
New Jersey	17,939	24,199	28,174	30,640	26,797	28,926	28,221	30,770	26,680	31,473	38,117

*NJDCA Construction Reporter*

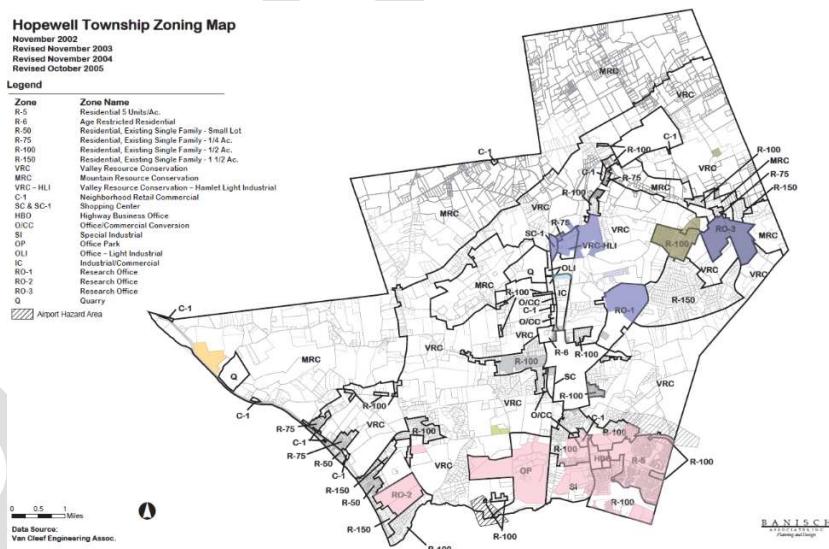
will dramatically change this trend within specific areas of the township. Advancement of the township's approved affordable housing plan since the 2017 judgment of compliance has resulted in local land use approvals for three projects that will satisfy a considerable portion of the township's overall third round obligation.

The approved projects total 1,734 new homes, of which 327 units will be affordable to low- and moderate-income households. New demands for goods and services will be generated by these new residents who will also expand the local talent base, helping to attract economic development to the township.

## Sustainable Economic Development in Hopewell Township

Respecting the carrying capacity of land and water resources to support development and promoting good civic design are principles that continue to guide Hopewell's planning process. As a result, permitted development intensity is lowest in the Resource Conservation Zones, or "environs", where septic systems and private wells are required. Here, protecting the quality and quantity of groundwater and stewarding surface waters retain the importance assigned in 2002. The Resource Conservation Districts are generally north of Washington Crossing-Pennington Road.

**Figure 1**  
**Zoning and Sewer Service Areas**



Because the Township's sewer and water infrastructure is installed in the southern portion of the Township, the most intense existing and proposed development is generally found in the area south of Pennington.

In the interest of preventing commercial highway strip development of the Route 31 corridor, compact commercial zones were arrayed to include existing commercial uses and some areas, albeit limited, for additional commercial development along the corridor. Future development should continue the pattern of compact nodes of commercial development, but it is appropriate to examine opportunities to expand these nodes to better serve the public and to broaden the non-residential tax base.

The Township has also hosted single user campuses from the time they became popular in this area during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Some have disappeared (Westinghouse) while others have been transformed into multi-user campuses (Mobil/BMS, Merrill Lynch). Only Janssen remains a single user campus today and it has taken a combination of rezoning and targeted redevelopment to stabilize the impact of these changes on the ratable base.

The importance of supportive non-residential development in appropriate areas will become apparent as third-round residential development advances.

This Economic Plan provides a snapshot of the current forces affecting economic development in Hopewell, including the ability of the labor force to attract the desired types of economic development and other forces affecting the Township. It also offers recommended steps to expand economic development efforts.

### **Non-residential Land Use**

Economic development zones are those that provide opportunities to establish and/or maintain significant employment and ratable generation. The Land Use Plan includes 12 non-residential districts that provide for retail, office, research and limited industrial development. These districts are located both within and outside proposed sanitary sewer service areas. When on-site sewage disposal is proposed, the intensity of development should be scaled to protect groundwater quantity and quality.

The non-residential districts in the Township fall into two broad categories:

- highway commercial retail and service uses, and
- research office campuses,

### **State Highway Corridors and Other Commercial Zones**

The zones that permit commercial, some light industrial and small office development include:

- Neighborhood Retail Commercial
- SC & SC-1 Shopping Center
- HBO Highway Business Office
- O/CC Office/Commercial Conversion
- SI Special Industrial
- OP Office Park
- OLI Office – Light Industrial
- IC Industrial/Commercial

While several small retail commercial (C-1) zones are found at outlying locations, most commercial zones in the Township are arrayed along Route 31. As a major north-south route serving Mercer, Hunterdon and Warren Counties, Route 31 has an existing land use pattern that reflects the period before zoning and decades of highway-oriented development. As noted in 2002, “(T)he challenge in the Route 31 corridor is to shape the existing development pattern into a cohesive community, reflecting the community’s development expectations, while respecting the corridor’s important transportation function.”

The Route 31 Design Study was intended to provide “...model land use guidelines that integrate the vehicular transportation function of a State highway with community design concepts that enhance the quality and experience of life in a small-town, rural community.” While there were wide ranging recommendations for a variety of actions to improve pedestrian and traffic safety

and the visual character of the corridor. Principal among the recommendations was the prevention of strip development along Route 31 – a guiding principle of the 2002 Land Use Plan.

NJ Route 29, the Delaware River tourist route, is the home of business ventures including several restaurants, a filling station, an antiques flea market, a home and garden shop and an outdoor clothing merchant. As tourism assumes increasing importance in maintaining the attractive character of the community, Route 29 will be a key conduit for tourism development.

While the commercial zones are not typically considered as the target of economic development efforts, they clearly provide opportunities to increase ratable value and employment. Opportunities to expand the existing nodes, where additional commercial development could be enabled without negative environmental impacts, should be examined as a component of an updated Land Use Plan.

### **Research Office (RO) and Office Park (OP) Campuses -**

The RO and OP Districts are the portions of the Township where economic development opportunities are the greatest.

#### *Research Office Districts*

Target industries for these zones include “research/office uses and production and assembly activities related to the principal research uses permitted on the property by single owners with one or more tenant occupants on large parcels within the Township.” In addition to offices, the RO Zones are intended for “research, experimentation, design, education, and development in medicine, pharmacology, chemistry, physics, engineering, and similar fields.”

The Research Office districts (RO-1, RO-2 and RO-3) are widely distributed, a reminder of when the Township permitted major single user corporate campuses in agricultural and residential areas on very large tracts. The Research Office (RO) Districts are situated in three locations:

- RO-1 on Pennington-Rocky Hill Road in the central part of the Township
- RO-3 on Carter Road (Route 569) in the southeast corner of the Township
- RO-2 on Bear Tavern Road (Route 579) in the southwest corner of the Township

The RO-1 and RO-3 Districts are the subject of prior General Development Plan (GDP) approvals. The RO-1 District is the site of the Princeton West Innovation Campus (formerly Bristol-Myers Squib), which occupies a 433-acre campus on Pennington-Rocky Hill Road. Before BMS, this was formerly the Mobil research complex. The GDP approval for this tract permits approximately 2,820,000 square feet of building floor area, of which approximately 990,000 square feet have been developed. A new GDP for PWIC is before the Planning Board at this time.

The RO-2 District is presently occupied by Janssen Pharmaceutica, a research office complex and farm on 242 acres. The tract has preliminary site plan approval for approximately 880,000 square feet of building floor area, approximately half of which has been built. The existing zoning standards provide for an additional 675,000 square feet of potential development. The RO-3 District received GDP approval for approximately 800,000 square feet of development, of which approximately 300,000 square feet have been developed.

All three Research Office Districts lie within wastewater management planning areas that permit on-site or off-site sewage treatment facilities.

### *Office Park District*

The Office Park (OP) District, site of the former Merrill Lynch campus, has received a GDP approval for 3,500,000 square feet of development on this 430-acre tract straddling both sides of Scotch Road just north of I-295. Approximately half of the development envisioned was constructed on the east side of Scotch Road. Now known as Princeton Place at Hopewell, this district is optimally located with direct access to the Interstate highway network from Scotch Road. With Washington Crossing-Pennington Road to the north and the CSX Railroad line to the east, the Office Park District also includes the more recent Capital Health campus adjoining I-295 and Scotch Road.

Through the redevelopment efforts of the township, the balance of the GDP, which envisioned approximately 1,400,000 square feet of office development on the west side of Scotch Road was abandoned in favor of providing land area within established sewer service areas for a portion of the residential development necessary to satisfy the township's third round affordable housing obligations.

### **Three-Part Strategy**

Beneficial economic development should be consistent with the sustainability spirit and theme of the Master Plan. This plan offers a strategy for employment, economic development and ratable generation that can benefit the community without compromising community character and the environmental protection objectives. The three prongs of this strategy include:

- Infill and expansion of existing commercial nodes,
- Optimal use and build-out of the OP and RO Zones
- Cultural tourism, agritourism and ecotourism.

These strategies will build employment and expand ratable generation through:

1. incremental growth of the ratable base through expanded local retail and service offerings,
2. updating of the RO and OP zones, consistent with local goals, to assure their long-term vitality, and
3. tourist visitation to experience Hopewell's history, culture and ecological wonders

# Commercial Infill and Expansion

As new residential development occurs, it will expand local retail demand, some of which will be met by commercial development on Scotch Road. However, infilling areas of existing commercial development should also be examined as this expanding market seeks new or expanded services. The attached mapping depicts the zoning and wetlands conditions along the Route 31 corridor, which is mapped in two parts - north and south.

## Route 31 North

Figures 2 and 3 depict the corridor from just north of Marshall's Corner to Pennington Borough.

**Figure 2**  
**Aerial Photo with Zoning - Route 31 North**

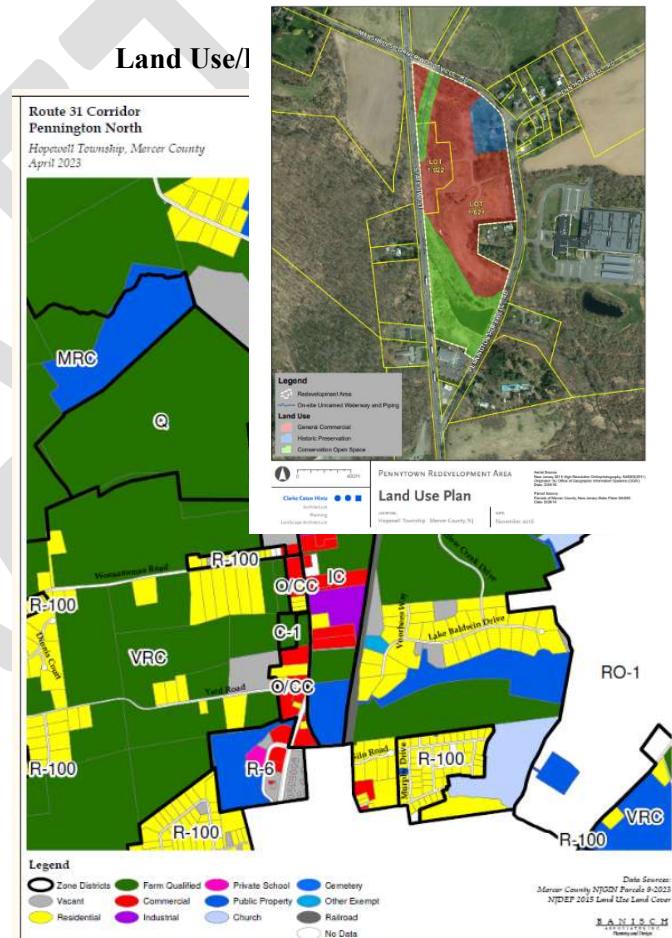
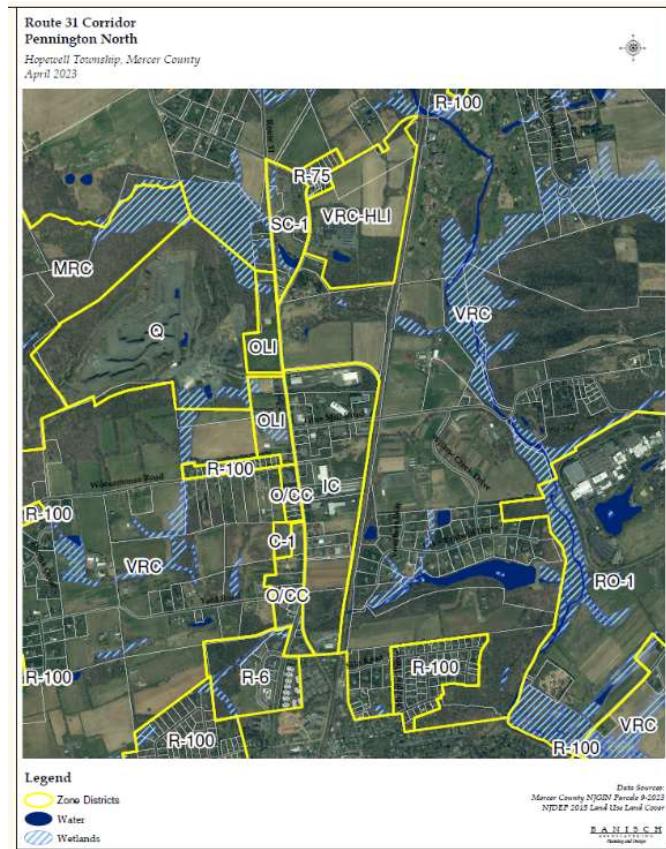


Figure 1 illustrates the variety of commercial zones (O/CC, IC, C-1, OLI, SC-1) that dominate the frontage of Route 31 in this area. Figure 2 illustrates the land use characteristics of this area. If expanded commercial development areas are proposed, further strip commercial zoning should be avoided. Since water and sewer services are not available, proposed development is limited to 2,000 gallons per day of sewage generation, which substantially limits the scale of possible development. Office buildings, for instance, are limited to 16,000 square feet per lot served by a septic system. Most of the upland frontage is already commercially zoned, except for the easterly frontage between the railroad bridge and Pennington-Hopewell Road.

The review of this area suggests little opportunity for infill rezoning. However, Pennytown, in the SC-1 Zone, was the subject of a 2016 Redevelopment Plan that provided for inclusionary housing with support retail (see Land Use Plan at right).

While this plan never came to fruition, in part due to infrastructure limitations, Pennytown offers a unique opportunity for non-residential use on a limited scale and potential uses for this site should be further explored.

### Route 31 South

Figures 4 and 5 depict the Route 31 corridor from just south of Pennington Borough to I-295.

**Figure 4**  
Aerial Photo with Zoning - Route 31 South



**Figure 5**  
Land Use/Land Cover - Route 31 South

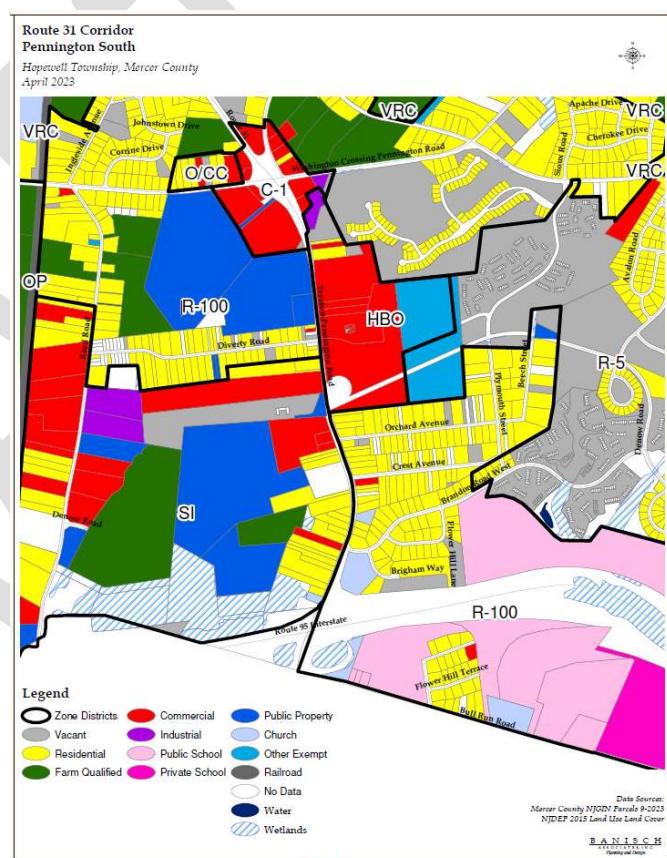


Figure 4 illustrates the landscape character and the commercial zones (C-1, HBO, SI) that occupy portions of the frontage of Route 31 in this area. Figure 5 illustrates the character of land uses, which is varied throughout the corridor, but which has concentrations of commercial uses around the Pennington Circle as well as north of Denow Road.

The frontage of Route 31 is substantially residential between I-295 and Denow Road and the prevailing small lot character results in numerous curb cuts for residential access – a safety hazard in the face of highway speed traffic. The smallest lots are along the northbound frontage and accessing these dwellings is a challenge. The northbound frontage of Route 31 is an unlikely place to promote beneficial ratable generation. While the desirability of these lots as homesites is

substantially compromised by their exposure to the highway, these lots pose less of a potential traffic hazard as homes than they would if converted to commercial uses, particularly high turnover businesses.



The southbound Rt. 31 frontage in this area holds more promise as a potential location for ratable generation, since lots are substantially larger and of varied sizes and Hopewell Township owns a large parcel (Bl. Lot ) in the area. Proximity to the Interstate highway makes this an attractive area for commercial development. However, the traffic safety issues regarding access to lots along this undivided portion of the highway are similar to the concerns cited above.

On advantage here, however, is the signalized intersection at Denow Road. While consolidation of multiple small lots on the east side of Route 31 would be difficult, such consolidation would be much easier on the west side. If an expanded commercial development opportunity were to be proposed here, it would minimally affect residential neighbors, who are mostly located north of the PSEG right of way. Controlled access at Denow Road could be designed to feed a reverse frontage road that could serve multiple commercial uses without repeatedly accessing the State highway. A connecting link back to Route 31 would be created at the south end of the area proposed for development and movements to and from these uses could occur in a safe and orderly manner.

An existing signalized intersection on a state highway provides the essential infrastructure to support commercial development without expansion of the existing roadway network.

## Route 29

Traversing the length of the Township from north to south along the Delaware River, Route 29 is an important traffic-carrying conduit for commutation and regional travel. Businesses in this recreational corridor have been historically oriented to riverfront recreation and of a limited size and scale. Commercial zoning here is limited to a handful of C-1 commercial zones, consisting of slightly more than a dozen commercial lots in total. If the Township intends to advance a tourism agenda that builds on the appeal of the river corridor, it may be appropriate to examine tourism development opportunities related to commercial expansion. Clearly, the intensity of such development will need to be constrained to accord with the myriad conservation goals of the master plan. But a strategy to grow Hopewell's tourism appeal, which revolves around exploration of the Township's unique landscape and cultural assets, may include some targeted commercial development opportunities in the Route 29 corridor.

## Research Office and Office Park Zones

The main economic drivers within the RO zones are:

- the former BMS campus, now Princeton West Innovation Campus (PWIC), and
- Janssen Pharmaceuticals

### **PWIC**

This site was the subject of a redevelopment plan that established controls that both respect historic limitations on development and provide for reuse and redevelopment of portions of the site. Inside the loop road, where the redevelopment plan is operative, a variety of life science and biotech activities are under way.

Managing the rebirth of a single user campus, with its dedicated power supply and other limiting features, as a multi-user/multi-owner facility is particularly challenging these. Fortunately, Lincoln Equity Group purchased the property and began to successfully market the site as a multi-user facility. In 2022, BeiGene purchased a portion of the site for the construction of a world class research and development facility.



Since its founding in 2010, BeiGene has become a rising star in clinical development and medical affairs, committed to discovering and developing new therapies with diverse and novel mechanisms of action that are economically available to a greater population. BeiGene's oncology research team is one of the largest in the industry, with more than 950 scientists. This has permitted an accelerated the rate of delivery of innovative medicines to areas with the highest unmet patient needs

While this site, which successfully managed a makeover from Mobil Oil research to a research campus for BMS, it initially appeared that the Township could face years of increased residential taxes if a new user could not be found. Yet, this is one of the major success stories currently being touted by the officials at the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA). The potentially disastrous loss to Hopewell's economic base that seemed imminent when BMS announced that they would leave and close up shop was successfully averted by the combined efforts of the developer and Hopewell Township.

The Township embraced the concept that expanded the research focus of the site, adopted a redevelopment plan consistent with that vision and is now entertaining a general development plan to provide 20-year vesting for the conceptual development of up to 1,820,000 square feet.

## **Janssen**

Janssen Pharmaceutica, founded in 1953, joined the Johnson & Johnson family of companies in 1961. Headquartered in Titusville, Janssen is a worldwide group of pharmaceutical companies named after Dr. Paul Janssen, a leading pharmaceutical researcher, pharmacologist and general practitioner.

Developer of such commonly used drugs as Tremfya, Concerta, Risperdal, Stelara and Xarelto, Janssen is a leading developer of biologics - produced through biotechnology in a living system, such as a microorganism, plant cell, or animal cell.

Biological products involve complicated systems compared with easily duplicated conventional drugs made from chemical compounds.

Janssen has long been a leader in the biotech sector and is part of the expanding life sciences cluster in Hopewell Township and Mercer County.

## **OP Zone**

The main economic drivers within the OP zones are:

- Bank of America campus (formerly Merrill Lynch)
- Capital Health System

## **Bank of America/Merrill Lynch**

The story of Merrill Lynch in Hopewell is one of transformation of a large section of farmland next to the Interstate into a premier office campus for financial services. Distinctive styling, environmentally sensitive design, structured parking and creative place-making brought a state-of-the-art facility to Hopewell at a premier price. Financial fortunes being what they can be, buildings that Merrill Lynch constructed at a cost of over \$450/square foot, sold in the wake of the Great Recession for one-fifth of that price. This sale was the first to require the township to



“There are still many diseases for which there is no cure, and effective drugs must be found. Although we have contributed to the solutions for some of these problems, we will continue our research efforts, because so much more needs to be done.”

Dr. Paul Janssen

rethink its regulations permitting only single user/owner facilities and allow the adaptation of this suburban office campus.

Managing change at this campus is of particular concern. The ecologically-based site design, much heralded in its day, limited surface parking by constructing a series of parking decks. Subsequent local approvals have sought and received approvals for increased surface parking to meet the changing demands for parking.

While supplemental surface parking has been approved by the Planning Board in the past, there is concern that such requests will undermine the integrity of the design concept in the original approval. This is particularly concerning since there are portions of the structured parking that go unused but are not available to others because of separate ownership.



The increasing trend toward more remote work raises the question of whether the perceived need for parking is as great as currently perceived. However, the desire of the property owners to obtain and retain tenants is of mutual concern to the owners and the Township. Careful attention should be paid to how the delicate balance is altered.

### **Capital Health Medical Center – Hopewell**

Capital Health Medical Center – Hopewell is located on a 165-acre parcel of property situated on the east side of Scotch Road in Hopewell Township and conveniently located right off exit 73 on I-295. Opened in 2011, and designed to optimize patient care, the hospital features all private rooms for greater comfort and improved patient care. Some of the specialized medical services offered at the hospital include:

- [Cancer Center](#)
- [Capital Institute for Neurosciences](#)
- [Center for Digestive Health](#)
- [Orthopaedic Surgery](#)
- [daVinci® Robotic Surgery](#)
- [Heart & Vascular Institute](#)
- [Metabolic & Weight Loss Center](#)
- [Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery](#)
- [Specialized Emergency Pediatric Care](#)
- [Pediatric Inpatient Care](#)
- [Interventional Radiology & Radiology](#)
- [Adult Emergency Services](#)



- [Josephine Plumeri Birthing Center](#) (maternity services including maternal fetal medicine, level III neonatal intensive care, labor & delivery and postpartum)

In 2012, Capital Health Medical Center – Hopewell was awarded LEED Gold certification by the U.S. Green Building Council and verified by the Green Building Certification Institute for its environmentally friendly design including roof gardens that recycle rainwater, technologies that reduce heating and cooling requirements and patient rooms with ample sunlight and scenic views.

## Healthcare Uses

Activities and services that support the needs of patients and the healthcare industry as a whole are often clustered around hospital locations to create a healthcare ecosystem. Hospitals typically attract a range of activities and services that support the healthcare industry and cater to the needs of patients, visitors, and healthcare professionals. Common activities that are often found near hospital locations include:

1. Medical Offices and Clinics: Many medical specialists, such as doctors, surgeons, dentists, and therapists, establish their practices near hospitals to provide convenient access to patients.
2. Pharmacies: Pharmacies are often located near hospitals to provide prescription medications and other healthcare products to patients.
3. Diagnostic and Imaging Centers: Facilities that offer diagnostic services like X-rays, MRI scans, ultrasounds, and laboratory testing are commonly found near hospitals for easy access to medical testing.
4. Rehabilitation Centers: Rehabilitation centers, including physical therapy, occupational therapy, and rehabilitation hospitals, are often located near hospitals to provide specialized care for patients recovering from surgeries or injuries.
5. Ambulatory Care Centers: These centers provide outpatient services, including minor surgeries, preventive care, and specialized treatments, and are commonly located near hospitals for easy referral and coordination of care.
6. Support Services: Hospital locations often attract support services such as medical supply stores, medical equipment rental, home healthcare services, and medical transportation services.
7. Research and Academic Institutions: Hospitals with research and teaching programs often have research facilities, medical schools, and academic institutions nearby to foster collaboration and education.
8. Hospitality and Accommodations: Hotels, motels, and accommodations catering to patients, their families, and healthcare professionals
9. Retail and Food Services: Restaurants, cafes, and convenience stores are commonly found near hospitals to cater to the needs of patients, visitors, and healthcare staff.
10. Supportive Services may include counseling centers, support groups, medical billing and insurance services, and medical waste management facilities.

A Continuing Care Retirement Community is anticipated to be developed in proximity to the hospital in the near term. Additional uses, such as pharmacies, medical offices, imaging centers, rehab facilities and other wellness and fitness uses will be needed to serve the medical and healthcare needs of an expanding population in the vicinity of the hospital.

# Tourism

Rural New Jersey has captivated residents and visitors for generations. However, widespread suburban transformation of the landscape continues to alter its scenic agricultural and natural character.

Hopewell Township's focus on natural and cultural resource management led to Master Plan policies that scaled permitted development to the carrying capacity of natural and man-made infrastructure. These policies required lower density development where septic systems and wells are used and permitted more intense development in the portions of the township served by wastewater treatment systems.

## *Setting*

Generally, the southern portion of the Township, south of CR 564, is where centralized sewers are found and where most dense development has occurred. The inclusionary developments that are part of the Township's affordable housing Constitutional compliance plan will further transform the landscape in this portion of the Township, replacing much of the remaining farmland with dense residential development. North of County Route 546, the Mountain and Valley Conservation Districts were devised to better protect water quality and quantity and natural resources and to retain farmland and promote agriculture.

These efforts have been largely successful, as the vision of the Master Plan has played out. Township land use policies, combined with the land preservation efforts of the Township and its preservation partners, have retained a landscape where high ecological values are being protected, water quality and quantity is being preserved and farmland continues to be farmed.

Apart from these intended benefits of conservation zoning, another benefit is the appeal this landscape has for tourism activities. .

## *Why Tourism?*

Tourism in New Jersey includes a variety of activities related to the landscape and cultural heritage. The tourism attractions in the Township and environs fall generally within three categories:

- Agritourism
- Heritage tourism
- Ecotourism



Hopewell is a treasure trove of opportunities for birding, hiking, nature investigation and other low impact outdoor activities, both in the Sourland Mountain and in the Hopewell Valley. Scores of species of special concern are found throughout this area from the grassland birds of the valley to the South American migrants that frequent the Sourland Mountain.

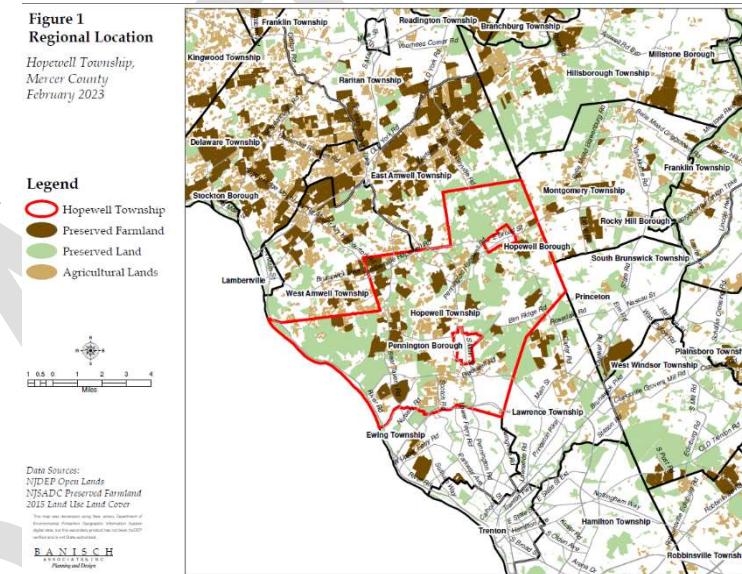
## Agritourism

The agricultural landscape also provides tourist interest, in part fueled by the types of activities farmers engage in and the activities allowed on preserved farmland in the township. Merriam-Webster notes that the term agritourism was first used in 1978 and is defined as “the practice of touring agricultural areas to see farms and often to participate in farm activities.”

Hopewell is blessed with a wealth of high-quality farmland worthy of continued farming and capable of providing significant income from a variety of activities. Not all these activities are agricultural in nature and many are significant draws for tourism.

Hopewell Township, along with neighbors East Amwell and Hillsborough, reshaped their land use policies decades ago to prevent suburban sprawl from consuming the landscape. The effect was to create a cluster of preserved farmlands in the region that assures continuation of the industry into the future. The scope of agritourism activities has been expanding in many areas with a variety of commercial activities increasingly found as part of agritourism. Direct to consumer sales of farm products have made farming more profitable and seasonal and holiday sales periods encourage farm visits. Vineyard tours, for instance, attract wine lovers as well as offering a venue for social events. or other farm visits.

New Jersey's State Agricultural Development Committee,



New Jersey's Right to Farm Act (RTF) protects a “commercial farm” which:

- is a farm operation of five or more acres that produces agricultural products worth at least \$2,500 annually and satisfies the eligibility criteria for farmland assessment. For smaller farms the annual production requirement is \$50,000.
- can also be a beekeeping operation that produces apiary-related products or provides crop pollination services worth at least \$10,000 annually.
- may comprise multiple parcels, whether contiguous or non-contiguous, provided they are operated together as a single enterprise. This is known as the farm's “farm management unit.”
- must be located in a zone that as of December 31, 1997 or thereafter permits agriculture, or the farm has been in operation as of July 2, 1998.

Under the Right to Farm Act, a commercial farm can receive significant protection from nuisance lawsuits and overly restrictive local regulations, provided the farm is operated responsibly and conforms with generally accepted practices and the Act's additional eligibility criteria. Formal Right to Farm determinations are made on a case-by-case basis and must include a consideration of the interests of each party, including relevant local ordinances and must:

- Conform with agricultural management practices that are either generally accepted or formally adopted by the SADC,
- Comply with all relevant federal or state statutes and regulations, and,
- Not pose a direct threat to public health and safety.

These protections also allow a variety of related activities on farms that are attractive to visitation including:

On-Farm direct marketing  
Farm-Based Recreational Activities  
On-Farm Direct Marketing Events  
Ancillary entertainment-based activities

“On-Farm direct marketing” (OFDM) means the on-farm facilities, activities and events that are used to facilitate and provide for direct, farmer-to-consumer sales of the agricultural output of the commercial farmland products that contribute to farm income”. Currently, the RTF Act protects certain activities and events: “Conduct agriculture-related educational and farm-based recreational activities provided that the activities are related to marketing the agricultural or horticultural output of the commercial farm”

### New Jersey Right to Farm Act

#### What activities are protected?

Commercial farms that meet the Act's eligibility criteria may be entitled to receive Right to Farm protection for the following activities, subject to a formal determination by the CADB or SADC:

Producing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Produce agricultural or horticultural crops, trees, forest products, livestock, poultry, and other products.</li><li>• Replenish soil nutrients and improving soil tilth.</li><li>• Control pests, predators, and diseases of plants and animals.</li><li>• Clear woodlands using open burning and other techniques, install and maintain vegetative and terrain alterations and other physical facilities for water and soil conservation and surface water control in wetland areas.</li><li>• Conduct on-site disposal of organic agricultural wastes.</li></ul>
Processing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Process and package the agricultural output of the commercial farm</li></ul>
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide for the operation of a farm market, including the construction of building and parking areas in conformance with municipal standards</li><li>• Conduct agriculture-related educational and farm-based recreational activities provided that the activities are related to marketing the agricultural or horticultural output of the commercial farm.</li></ul>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Engage in solar, wind, and biomass energy generation, in compliance with adopted agricultural management practices.</li><li>• Any other agricultural activity determined by the SADC and adopted by regulation.</li><li>• House any full-time, year-round equine agricultural farm employee in the same building as the horses.</li></ul>

“Farm-Based Recreational Activities” means recreational offerings that are uniquely suited to occurring on a farm and may also include common outdoor recreation activities that are compatible with the agricultural use of the farm. Such activities are accessory to, and serve to increase, the direct-market sales of the ag output of the farm by enhancing the experience of purchasing ag products for the purpose of attracting customers to the farm. Examples include Corn, sunflower mazes, hayrides and wagon rides, animal display areas, horse/pony riding.

Other common outdoor recreation activities: bird watching, hunting & fishing, sleigh rides, Bonfires

“On-Farm Direct Marketing Events” - means agriculture-related functions that are accessory to, and serve to increase, the direct market sales of the agricultural output of the farm. Events are designed to attract customers to the farm by enhancing the experience of purchasing agricultural products. Examples of OFDM events include agricultural product festival at a farm producing that particular product (e.g., apple, pumpkin, wine), seasonal harvest festival at a farm producing such

seasonal products, farm open house events, CSA membership meetings and farm-to-table events that showcase the farm's agricultural output.

“Ancillary entertainment-based activities” means non-agricultural offerings commonly used as incidental components of OFDM activities, that are accessory to, and serve to increase, the direct-market sales of the agricultural output of a commercial farm. Among such activities are background live or recorded music; face painting; story-telling; sandbox area; small swing set or playground equipment; pedal carts for children; picnic tables and if any fee is charged it must be de minimis compared to the farm income from sales.

With the agricultural landscape character of the township and the region, much of which is permanently preserved and where preservation will continue, agritourism will also continue to grow.

### ***Heritage Tourism***

Hopewell is blessed with an unmistakable cultural signature that is expressed each year when General Washington's crossing of the Delaware is reenacted. While the seasonal timing of the reenactment doesn't draw a big crowd, the history of what took place here, then in Trenton and in Princeton, brings cultural tourists to the Township following the trail of the Revolution.



This reminder of the role the Township played in the birth of our Nation is likely to see increased interest as we approach the Sesquicentennial anniversary of the Declaration of Independence on July, 4, 2026. With celebrations planned throughout the region, Hopewell is well situated to grow its tourism industry in the upcoming period – provided the potential advantages and pitfalls of such policies are fully understood and can be properly managed.

The New Jersey Division of Tourism identifies Washington Crossing State Park among the Delaware River Region Attractions. This marketing by the State effectively weaves a tapestry of related historic sites that will be increasingly promoted during the next three years. As a result, Hopewell should examine how the development of tourist accommodations and other visitor services could further the Township's prominence as a cultural tourism destination.



## Crossroads of the Revolution Project Area

Green Acres, along with the National Parks Service, has been undertaking a variety of projects highlighting the rich historical role New Jersey played in the Revolutionary War. A variety of proposed project areas and trail systems to document significant Revolutionary War sites and events have been instituted. One such project is the Crossroads of the Revolution Project Area, which aims to preserve the landscapes and trail corridor system from Morristown National Historic Park, Washington's Crossing State Park, The Trenton Barracks, Princeton Battlefield State Park, and the Monmouth Battlefield State Park.

The screenshot shows a section of the New Jersey tourism website. At the top, there are links for 'GET YOUR FREE GUIDE', 'eNEWSLETTER SIGN UP', 'TRAVEL PLANNING RESOURCES', and social media icons. Below that is a search bar with the placeholder 'SIGN IN APP SEARCH'. The main content area features a grid of six attraction cards, each with a wavy line graphic and a title and address. The attractions are: WALT WHITMAN HOUSE (330 Mickle Blvd., Camden, NJ 08103), WAR MEMORIAL (Nassau St. & Mercer St., Princeton, NJ 08540), WARREN COUNTY CULTURAL AND HERITAGE... (8 Belvidere Ave., Oxford, NJ 07843), WASHINGTON CROSSING STATE PARK (355 Washington Crossing-Pennington Rd., Titusville, NJ 08560), WASHINGTON'S CAMP GROUND (Middlebrook & Cedarcrest Rds., Bridgewater, NJ 08805), and WATERLOO VILLAGE HISTORIC SITE (Waterloo & Waterloo Valley Rds., Stanhope, NJ 07844).

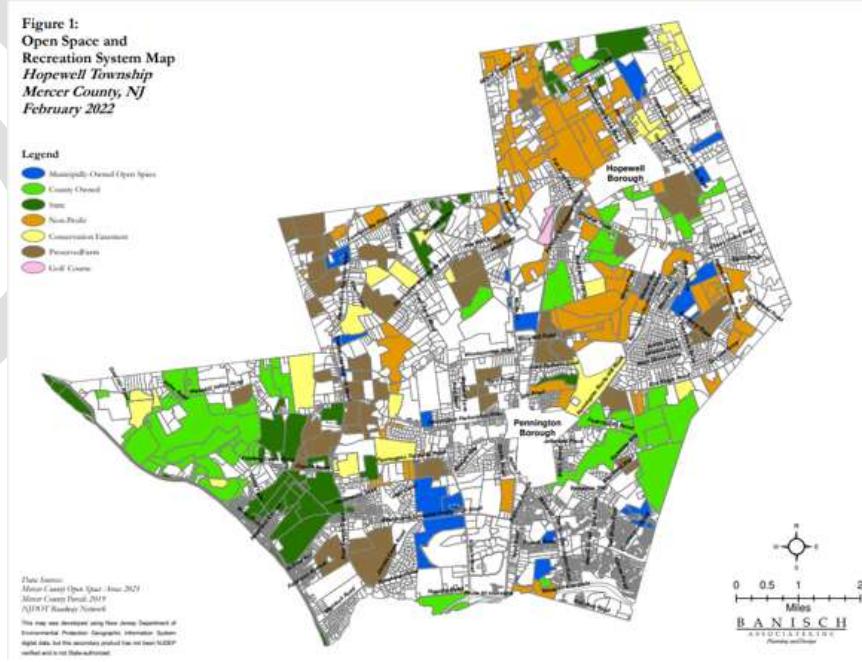
## Ecotourism

According to The International Ecotourism Society (TIES), ecotourism can be defined as “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education”. Hopewell has long been home to such activities, supported by a wealth of sensitive natural resource lands and the plant and animal species they support, in many cases on public lands owned by the State, County and Hopewell Township.

The 2022 Recreation and Open Space Plan included the Open Space and Recreation System Map (Figure 1 in the 2022 Plan), which delineated the areas owned by various governmental and non-governmental organizations.

## Township-Owned Lands

Hopewell Township owns and manages over 1.100 acres of recreation and open space lands that provide an assortment of passive and active recreational opportunities for Township residents. Most of these Township lands are unimproved open space.



Township-owned lands play a significant role in ecotourism as many of these open space parcels attract birders or other nature enthusiasts on a regular basis.

## County-Owned Lands and Facilities

The Mercer County Parks Department and related entities own and manage over 3,800 acres of open space, farmland, and recreational areas in the Township. These parks add to the diverse range of recreational opportunities for Township and County residents, but they also provide tremendous opportunities for ecotourism.

Mercer County facilities are distributed widely around the Township and include the following:

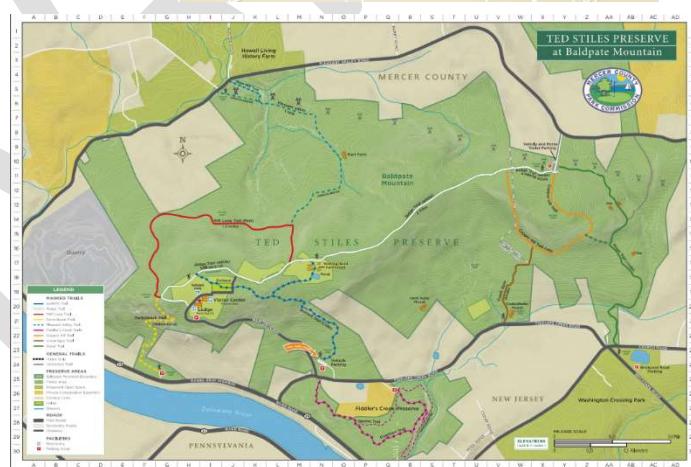
### *Mercer Meadows*

Mercer Meadows, which spans multiple municipalities, is located off Federal City Road near the junction of Blackwell Road. The park contains an equestrian center, historic farmstead, fishing, boating, playgrounds, picnic areas, dog park, multiple trails, natural areas, and restrooms. Hopewell Township's portions of Mercer Meadows Park include the Rosedale Park District, Equestrian District and Curlis Woods.



### *Ted Stiles Preserve at Baldpate Mountain*

The Ted Stiles Preserve is Hopewell Township's largest contiguous forest and home to numerous unique and rare plant and animal species. An Audubon Important Bird Area, the preserve has seven miles of trails and parking areas for access. Areas of interest include a remnant farmstead, historic houses, and a visitor center. The main entrance is found at Fiddlers Creek Road near the intersection of Route 29.



### *Valley Road Picnic Area*

Located  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile east of Route 29, the Valley Road Picnic Area is a 19-acre facility in its natural state with picnic tables and a pavilion available to groups up to 300 people, on a reservation basis, seven days a week.

The pavilion has two stationary cooking grills and one barbecue pit, a beverage bin, electricity and running water. There is a softball field, volleyball court, basketball court, and children's play equipment. Ample parking, permanent restrooms and trash/recycle containers are available.

### *Hopewell Valley Golf Club*

The County purchased the Hopewell Valley Golf Club which provides golf, tennis, paddle board and pool facilities to residents. The golf course is located at 114 Pennington-Hopewell Road and will undergo renovations to provide a variety of recreational opportunities to residents.

### *Howell Living Farm*

Howell Farm provides educational programs that engage families and students in the real, seasonal activities of a working farm, with hands-on learning experiences. The farm's classic, mixed crop and livestock operations accurately portray the era of pre-tractor systems, creating a unique and inspiring learning environment where history, technology, and science converge and where the past and present meet. Howell Farm's calendar reflects the cycles of a fully functioning, working farm in Pleasant Valley, New Jersey during the years 1890 – 1910. Programs enable visitors to see real farming operations up close, speak with farmers and interpreters, and in many instances lend a hand.

Factors such as weather, soil conditions and animal needs can impact operations at any time, resulting in program changes that reflect the realities faced by farmers then and now.

### **State-Owned Lands**

The State owns over 2,500 acres of open space and recreation lands in Hopewell Township, most of which are undeveloped open space. However, there are two parks of regional significance that bring visitors to the Township year after year - Washington Crossing State Park and the Delaware & Raritan Canal State Park.

*Washington Crossing State Park* offers programming and active and passive recreation, as well as nature interpretation opportunities. The park also contains resources of historic and cultural significance that will attract cultural tourists, particularly as the Sesquicentennial of the Revolution approaches on July 4, 2026.



Riverside recreation motivates active seekers of outdoor recreation and inspires visits to the State-owned *Delaware & Raritan Canal State Park*. Hiking, biking, jogging, boating, canoeing, fishing and water sports are among the activities that animate the canal frontage. These activities add to the ecotourism appeal of the river/canal corridor.

## Non-Governmental Preservation Partner Organizations

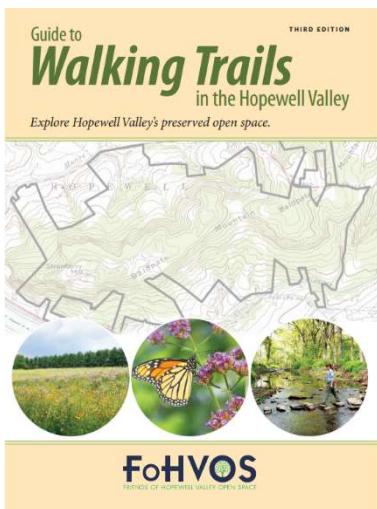
### The Watershed Institute

The Watershed is an important partner in the Township's preservation efforts. The Watershed is dedicated to protecting and restoring natural habitats and preserving the region's water resources. In addition to the preservation efforts, they also host a variety of educational programs for students from kindergarten through high school. The Watershed Institute has been a primary force in the preservation of open space areas in the Township.

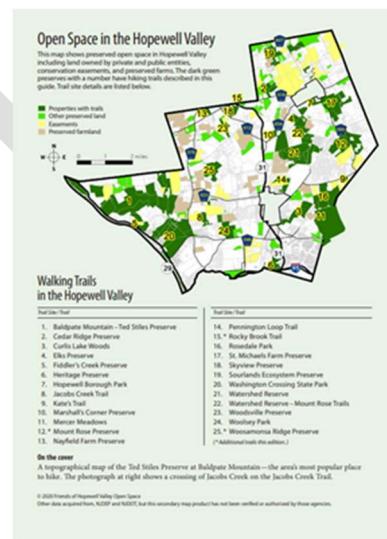


To date the Watershed has preserved over 600 acres in the Township, which includes the nearly 1,000-acre nature reserve. The Township continues to support, not only a preservation partnership with the Watershed, but also seeks to utilize the Watershed's educational initiatives as the Township places more efforts into the stewardship and maintenance of preserved areas.

### Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space



Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space is another important partner in the Township open space preservation efforts. FoHvos is a non-profit land trust that is dedicated to preserving Hopewell Valley's character through land and natural resource protection and preservation. Through this land trust over 542 acres in the Township have been acquired for natural resource protection and open space preservation.



### New Jersey Conservation Foundation

The New Jersey Conservation Foundation is a private, not-for-profit organization seeking to protect strategic lands, promote strong land use policies and partnerships in the effort to protect natural resources and open space areas. Since 1960, New Jersey Conservation Foundation has protected over 125,000 acres of natural areas and farmland in New Jersey.

### D&R Greenway Land Trust

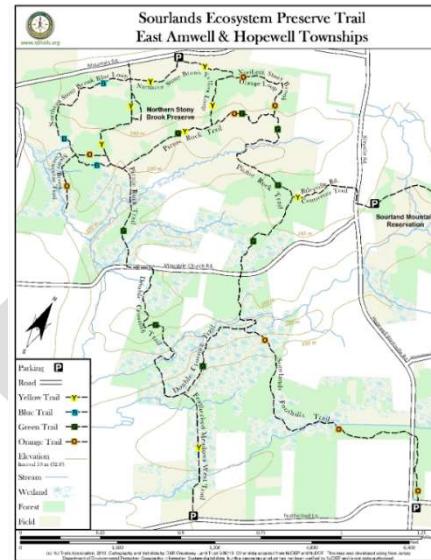
In response to the wave of development moving at a rapid pace across central New Jersey, at a time when signs announcing the demise of local farms and open space were ubiquitous, a group of four concerned citizens came together with a vision to save these lands for a different kind of stakeholder. Starting with just \$10,000 of seed money, D&R Greenway Land Trust came into

being in 1989 and by 2017, D&R Greenway Land Trust had preserved over 20,000 acres. Among the lands preserved were the following sites in Hopewell Township:

### *Sourlands Ecosystem Preserve*

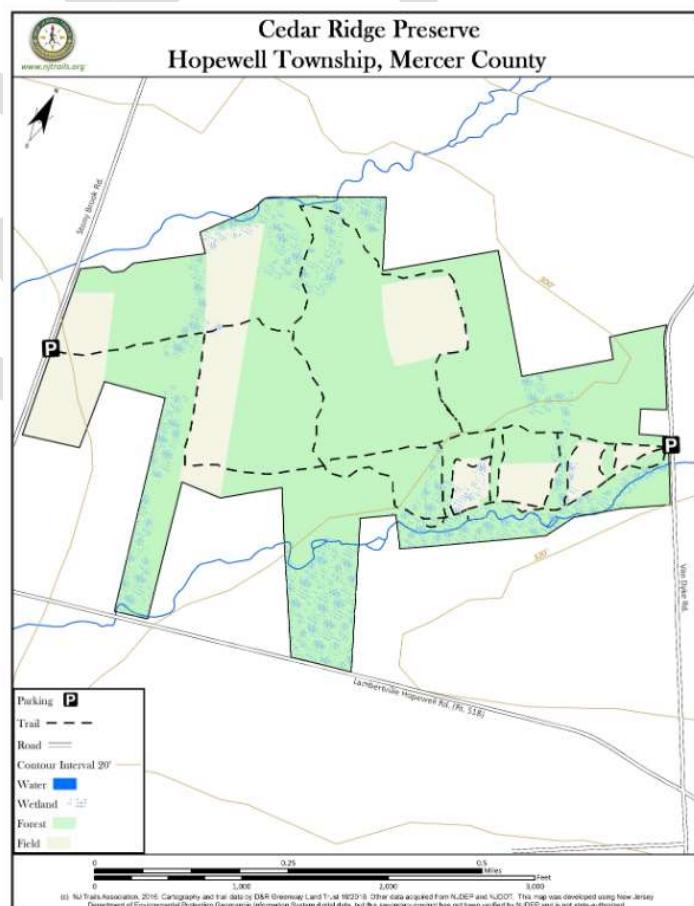
Spanning 60,000 acres, the Sourlands region is a reservoir of biodiversity in central New Jersey. D&R Greenway has facilitated the preservation of more than 3,400 acres in the Sourlands. D&R Greenway is a leading partner with state, county and municipal officials and private landowners, to continue preservation of this region.

- More than 150 bird species have been recorded in the Sourland forests.
- In order to breed successfully, numerous species require the large, unfragmented tracts of closed-canopy forest
- These unfragmented forests make the Sourlands a unique regional ecosystem



### *Cedar Ridge Preserve*

- wildflower-filled meadows,
- flowering trees and shrubs in hedgerows,
- a corridor along the Stony Brook,
- small pools that fill in spring where salamanders and frogs lay eggs,
- groves of red cedars that house owls,
- a remnant patch of ancient forest with one of the best and biggest white oak trees around, and
- an extensive maze of early 19th century stone walls.
- A trail network offers access to all these features.



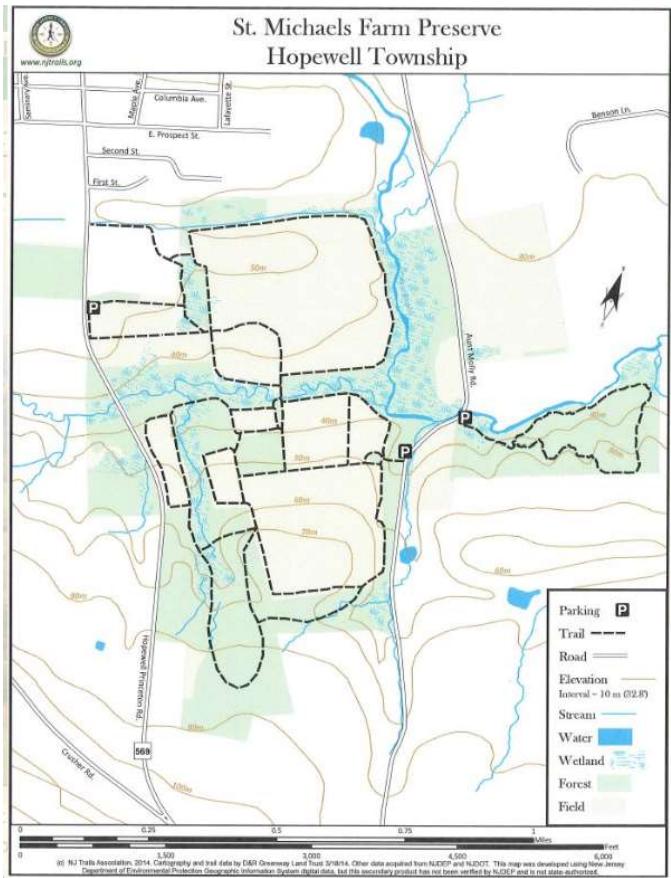
## Kate's Trail

Located on a 60-acre conservation easement held by D&R Greenway Land Trust, there is trail and public access over 20 acres.

The remaining 40 acres, which does not allow public access, is permanent open space.

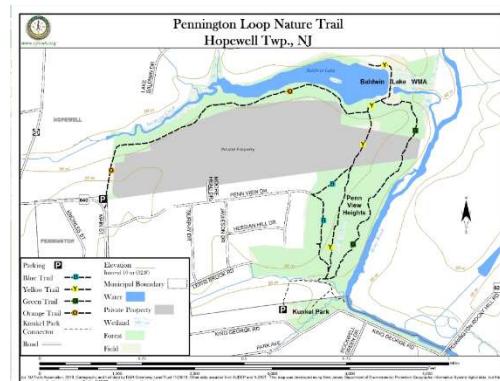


## St. Michaels Farm Preserve



The 400+ acre St. Michaels property is an expanse of farm fields and forests on the edge of Hopewell Borough offering long views from many parts of this preserve. From 1896 until 1973 this was the home of St. Michael's Orphanage and Industrial School which was operated by the Catholic Diocese of Trenton.

There are four types of plant communities on this preserve: agricultural fields, shrub/scrub, hedgerows and forest. Almost a hundred avian species have been identified, including eleven species of warbler, Indigo bunting, Rose-breasted grosbeak and Scarlet tanager. Hawks cruise the fields looking for voles and mice, kestrels live in the vicinity of the barn, a great blue and a little green heron have all been seen along the creek and sparrows and finches frequent the fields. Purple martin houses grace the stunning view from the Charles Evans Overlook off Aunt Molly Road



## Pennington Loop Nature Trail

This trail arcs around the northeastern edge of Pennington Borough.

This is not a loop trail, but by walking the Borough streets, walkers can connect the two ends of the trail route.

## Tourism Summary

Tourism has long been occurring throughout portions of the Township, as visitors seek out the natural and cultural experiences available in the upland and lowland woodlands, fields and meadows as well as the Delaware River corridor. The growth of tourism will help to fortify the businesses that are frequented by these visitors and partnerships with the County and State, as well as non-governmental organizations, can aid the growth of desirable tourism .

The vision for tourism is not for unbridled growth, however. Quite the contrary, the carrying capacity concerns that guided the limits on development in the master plan remain concerns about the scale of tourism activities. The intention is not to overrun sensitive natural areas with visitors that do not respect the landscape.

Hopewell Township and an array of public and private partners, including Mercer County and the State of New Jersey, have collaborated to preserve, protect and enhance a landscape of historic sites, farmlands, woodlands stream systems and a variety of sensitive natural areas. In this setting, a broad array of outdoor activities and interpretive opportunities are available with public access to public lands and through a network of trails that connect the landscape in the mountain forests, valley grasslands and meadows and the river corridor and D&R Canal. These areas provide the playing field for sustainable tourism.

Recreational activities like boating on the Delaware River or kayaking the Canal, hiking on the trails through the Sourland Mountain and seasonal hayrides and corn mazes showcase myriad areas of visitor interest. While visiting Hopewell scenic and historic sites, visitors spend money at local businesses, which helps them succeed.

Seasonal farm marketing and other on-farm activities bring attention to the Township's rich agricultural past and illustrate the growing future. These agritourism activities bring revenue that helps sustain the farming operations.

Ecotourism has been actively pursued in Hopewell since well before the phrase was coined. Visitors have long shown a respect for the natural wonders of the Sourland Mountain and Hopewell Valley that will remain a key factor in allowing tourism expansion. The Sourlands, long prized for the diverse range of species, has attracted visitors to this unique ecosystem for generations. The stunning character of the Mountain ecosystem brings visitors to the area year-round, with its boulder fields, vernal ponds, habitats of threatened and endangered plants and animals, including numerous avian and terrestrial wildlife. Seasonal changes in the Mountain environment bring a never-ending series of nature-based experiences that call out to visitors all year long and build strong individual and institutional partnerships around environmental protection.

The limited availability of groundwater resources was a key factor that prompted municipalities to significantly reduce the intensity of permitted development in the Sourlands and the surrounding Hopewell Valley and Amwell Valley. As Hopewell evaluates the types and scale of tourism development appropriate in this environment, respect for these environmental values and limitations should remain paramount.

At the same time, competing interests will need to be reconciled. For instance, tourism demands on natural resources and groundwater will have to be balanced with other master plan goals, like adaptively reusing historic structures. Conversions of historic dwellings into bed and breakfast inns or other types of overnight accommodations can inspire reinvestment that preserves and enhances historic structures while retaining their scale and character in the local landscape.

As the Township examines strategies to develop sustainable tourism, adaptive reuse of historic buildings can accommodate overnight visitation with minimal impact on neighborhood scale and appearance under the right circumstances, and such facilities can play an important role in building sustainable tourism in Hopewell Township. Hopewell should consider whether such uses should be permitted as a conditional use, allowing the conversion of historic or other residential buildings, provided the carrying capacity of the natural and built environment is respected. Conditional use treatment of overnight accommodations could effectively regulate where, how and at what scale overnight accommodations could best be deployed. Appropriate conditions, such as the size and location of a parcel and the age of a building or its inclusion on a historic registry, should be considered for inclusion in the master plan and zoning.

Tourism in Hopewell can be managed in a manner that respects and reinforces the goals and conservation objectives of the master plan, when careful attention is paid to maintaining the quality of neighborhood life and the carrying capacity limitations.

**(Note:** Additional recommendations may be formulated after Planning Board discussion)