



"Crossroads of the
American Revolution"

The Town Crier

2024- Q4

Hopewell Township Newsletter

PILOT Agreements and Affordable Housing in Hopewell Township: The Facts



As a part of Hopewell Township's state-mandated plan to meet its affordable housing obligation, and to ensure that these new neighborhoods are financially feasible, the Township entered into a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) agreement with Lennar, the builder of the new inclusionary neighborhood at Hopewell Parc. This allows us to meet our affordable housing obligation while keeping the cost down for Township taxpayers.

PILOTS are common in New Jersey affordable housing projects; they are used to incentivize developers to build projects that the community needs by offering a small reduction on the property taxes that would otherwise be owed. For example, in the PILOT on the Hopewell Parc neighborhood, over the 30-year term of the agreement, the payments made will equal 93 cents on the dollar of what conventional taxes would have been.

These agreements are necessary because Hopewell Township is required by state law to provide its "fair share" of affordable housing, which in the last round of requirements was 653 affordable units. To do this without putting the cost of the building on taxpayers (which would be \$150-\$200 million), the Township works with home builders, who subsidize the affordable units by also building market-rate units. Thus, the statement that "those new neighborhoods are not affordable" is inaccurate and misleading. While some of the development will be sold at whatever the current market will support, each development also contains a minimum of 20% regulated affordable homes. The cost to residents of these affordable units is controlled by state law, and there are long waiting lists for families to be able to move into one.

Hopewell Township also has the added challenge of extremely high infrastructure costs, as many areas of the Township are served by wells and septic systems. Neighborhoods with an affordable housing component, on the other hand, must be on public water and sewer systems. It is the developer's responsibility to bring this infrastructure to the neighborhood by negotiating with neighboring towns, and doing so is very expensive and usually results in litigation. At the Hopewell Parc development, for example, the cost to bring water and sewer was more than \$27 million. In fact, there was a builder interested in the project before Lennar, but they pulled out for financial reasons. Thus, a PILOT agreement was a critical part of the negotiations with Lennar to incentivize them to work with the Township on bringing our state-mandated affordable housing plan to fruition.

Residents have raised questions about how the PILOT may impact the Hopewell Valley Regional School District (HVRSD). Much has been said and written about the HVRSD Referendum that failed to pass in September, but the Township Committee has been clear from the start that we are open to using a significant portion of the funds from the PILOT to offset costs of improvements at Bear Tavern Elementary School that were included in the referendum. This remains true

even after the referendum failed. In fact, the PILOT agreement with Lennar itself specifically mentions using PILOT funds to support the HVRSD and the new Senior and Community Center.

The proposed improvements at Bear Tavern include the construction of a new wing to replace the trailers at Bear Tavern Elementary, which have been housing students since 1994. This new construction would allow for expanded pre-K programs, in addition to accommodating additional students from our new inclusionary neighborhoods that are a part of the Township's court-approved affordable housing plan. The estimated cost of construction of the new Bear Tavern wing is \$17.1 million, which represented approximately 19.6% of the total amount of the Referendum.

The roadblock in putting specific numbers to this commitment is the current pending litigation initiated by Hopewell Borough and Pennington Borough against Hopewell Township that seeks to invalidate the PILOT agreement. The Township has already won the case in the lower court, but the case is currently on appeal. If the appeal is decided in Hopewell Township's favor, the Township can have substantive conversations with the HVRSD about a specific dollar amount for a contribution towards improvements at Bear Tavern.

Finally, outside of these capital improvements, it is important to note that the HVRSD sets their annual operating budget and the amount to be raised by taxes each year. The tax collector raises these funds from taxpayers, both residential and commercial, and sends them to the HVRSD. The PILOT has no impact on this process, and the District receives 100% of the amount requested every year, no matter what.

The Hopewell Township Committee, the HVRSD, and the Board of Education collectively have a productive working relationship, including our recent partnership on a joint demographic study. The study showed that the HVRSD has seen an enrollment decrease of over 7% during the past 10 years, and current enrollment is more than 500 students below the peak enrollment during the 2006-07 school year. Further, in looking at the demographic study's "Medium Projections" for growth, the HVRSD would see growth of 431 students through the 2032-33 school year, which is still below 2006-07 enrollment. Moreover, the study shows that 40% of the coming 10-year growth comes from typical, organic factors like births and home sales. This means that only about 250 new students will be from new neighborhoods associated with the Township's affordable housing mandate.

Affordable housing and how it is funded is a hugely complicated issue in New Jersey. The short story is that the Hopewell Township Committee is committed to working with the HVRSD. The Township will contribute PILOT funds to the District as we continue to implement our court-approved plan to meet our state-mandated affordable housing obligation and welcome our new neighbors to the Township.

Finally, as all New Jersey municipalities now enter the next round of state-mandated affordable housing, we once again are committed to ensuring that our obligation is truly reflective of our "fair share." Further, we will work towards meeting this obligation in a way that minimizes the impact on existing residents as much as possible, financially and otherwise, while also welcoming new residents and neighbors with open arms.

Courtney Peters-Manning, Mayor, cpeters-manning@hopewelltwp.org, cell 609-577-3312



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www.linkedin.com/company/hopewelltwp/

Hopewell Township Economic Development Committee to Host Business Listening Session



The Tourism and Economic Development Advisory Committee (TEDAC) of Hopewell Township is committed to promoting the local economy by supporting agriculture, historical and recreational tourism, dining, and businesses across the Hopewell Valley. With a focus on fostering a thriving community, TEDAC works to support existing businesses, attract new ventures, and boost tourism to drive sustainable economic growth.

Since its official establishment in 2023, TEDAC has actively engaged with local business leaders and stakeholders. The committee has welcomed business representatives to share insights and ideas at its meetings, participated in ribbon-cutting ceremonies to celebrate new ventures, provided advice on the economic element of our Township's Master Plan, and begun planning to maximize opportunities in 2025, when the region commemorates the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution. This milestone in particular presents a unique chance to highlight Hopewell Township's rich history and its pivotal role in the Revolutionary War.

In line with its mission to serve as a bridge between businesses and the community, TEDAC, in partnership with the Pennington Business and Professional Association, will host a Business Listening Session on Thursday, January 30, 2025, at 7:00 PM.. The session will take place at the Hopewell Township Municipal Building and will serve as the centerpiece of TEDAC's first meeting of the year.

This listening session aims to provide a platform for local business owners and representatives to share their perspectives, challenges, and priorities. By gathering direct input from the business community, TEDAC seeks to better understand and address the needs of local enterprises while exploring new opportunities to foster their success.

The meeting is open to the public, and no RSVP is required. All local business owners, managers, and representatives are encouraged to attend - in addition to any interested resident - and participate in this important conversation about the future of Hopewell Valley's business environment.

For more information, contact the Hopewell Township Municipal Building or visit the township's website.

David Chait, Committee Member and TEDAC Liaison, dchait@hopewelltwp.org



MCLS
Mercer County Library System

YOUR MVC IS COMING TO YOU!



Questions? Please contact your local hosting group.

Host: Hopewell Branch Library, MCLS

Location: 245 Pennington Titusville Rd, Pennington, NJ 08534

Date: Monday, January 6 - Friday, January 10, 2025

Time: 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Notes: Additional REAL ID information available at <https://www.nj.gov/mvc/realid/>
* Cancellations may occur due to weather conditions or at the discretion of the MVC over unforeseen circumstances.

Make your appointment today!
Go to <https://telegov.njportal.com/njmvcmobileunit> to sign up for:

- REALID
- Registration Renewal
- Initial Permit ***Tests are NOT given at Mobile Unit
- Non-Driver ID
- Duplicate/Replacement Title or Registration

NO APPOINTMENT NECESSARY FOR THESE SERVICES. JUST WALK UP AND SEE US:

- Submitting license plates
- Handicapped, Veterans, or Purple Heart placards

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE
NJMVC Mobile Units are wheelchair accessible and easy for all to use.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/NewJerseyMVC/

X: [X.com/NJ_MVC](https://www.x.com/NJ_MVC)

Instagram: www.instagram.com/njmvc/

NJMVC
New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission

Paving the Way for a Sustainable Future



Hopewell Township has long been a participant in the Sustainable Jersey certification program, which empowers municipalities across New Jersey to reach sustainability goals through community-driven initiatives. Since earning our first certification in 2014 and most recently securing a Bronze Award

in 2023, we've demonstrated our commitment to environmental stewardship, social equity, and economic vitality.

But our work is far from over. As we look to the future, Hopewell Township remains dedicated to advancing sustainability across all sectors. Sustainable Jersey provides framework to tackle pressing challenges in areas like energy, waste management, transportation, land use, and community health. Our continued involvement in this program reflects our vision of preserving the natural beauty of our region while enhancing the quality of life for all residents.

The next phase of our sustainability journey focuses on scaling up the initiatives that have already proven successful. We will continue with efforts like expanding the use of renewable energy, increasing community recycling programs, and supporting green building practices. We are looking into starting a Styrofoam recycling program to reduce waste and further improve our recycling systems. This year, in partnership with the Hopewell Valley Green Team, we saw the success of our metal recycling efforts, demonstrating the community's commitment to reducing environmental impact, which will continue in 2025.

In addition to these initiatives, the Township has been awarded a Community Energy Plan Grant

from the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities. This grant will help us create an energy plan for the Township to further sustainable energy solutions and to advance our goals of reducing energy consumption and supporting clean energy alternatives.

Our Environmental Commission is partnering with the Boroughs, working towards obtaining certification for Community Wildlife Habitat from the National Wildlife Federation for the entire Valley. This certification will help bolster our efforts to protect local ecosystems, promote biodiversity, and create a more resilient community environment.

Beyond these, we are setting ambitious goals for the future—such as advancing climate action initiatives, boosting clean transportation options, and further enhancing our community health programs. We recognize that true progress comes from the collective actions of everyone in our community. Hopewell Township's sustainability efforts will also deepen community engagement, encouraging local residents, businesses, and schools to be more active in adopting sustainable practices. To that end, we are working to provide even more resources, workshops, and tools for residents to take meaningful action towards a greener future.

With all these planned activities, the Township aspires to obtain higher-level recognition in the next certification cycle. The challenges of climate change, resource depletion, and social inequality require immediate attention, and local actions have never been more crucial. Hopewell Township's ongoing commitment to sustainability leads the way towards building a resilient, sustainable future—one that safeguards our natural resources, fosters inclusive economic growth, and improves quality of life for all.

Scrap Metal Collection on Feb. 8, 2025											
	The Hopewell Valley Green Team will host a scrap metal collection on Saturday, February 8, 2025. Please bring your assorted scrap metal (nothing extremely heavy) to the Hopewell Township Public Works Building between 12:00 and 3:00 p.m. and we will make sure it is recycled for you.										
	Volunteers are needed to staff the event—please contact us if you're interested: hvgreenteam@gmail.com .										
	Acceptable materials are listed here: https://hopewellvalleygreenteam.org/recycling/recycling-events/										

Uma Purandare, Deputy Mayor, upurandare@hopewelltwp.org

Promoting Awareness of New Jersey's Safe Passing Law

NJ DRIVER ALERT: NEW SAFE PASSING LAW

**SLOW DOWN.
MOVE OVER.
PASS WITH CARE.**
4 FEET. IT'S THE LAW.



Hopewell Township is well known in the cycling community for its many rural roads that provide excellent opportunities for cyclists. In recognition of a growing need for cyclist and pedestrian protections on our roads, the Township is actively promoting New Jersey's Safe Passing Law to increase awareness among drivers of their responsibilities when encountering cyclists on the roads.

The key elements of the law are:

* Drivers in New Jersey are required to approach and pass

Michael Ruger, Committee Member, mruger@hopewelltwp.org, 609-577-1247

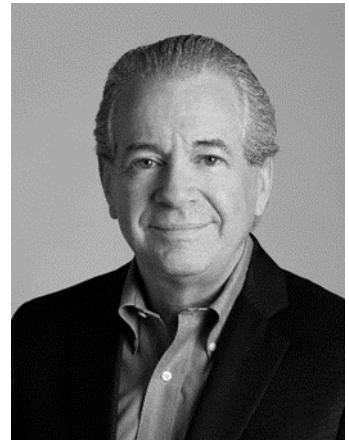
vulnerable road users with "due caution." This means both slowing down and giving the other user plenty of space when passing.

* Drivers must follow all current no-passing, no speeding laws AND move over a lane IF there's one to move into.

* On a single-lane road,

drivers must allow at least a 4-foot safety zone when they pass.

* If 4 feet is not possible on a section of road, drivers must slow to 25mph and be prepared to stop until they can pass safely without endangering those sharing the road.



1775-76: Hopewell Township and The Road to Victory

On a cold December night, George Washington and his troops crossed the Delaware River, landing in Hopewell Township and subsequently defeating the Hessian garrison in the first battle of Trenton.

Over the ensuing 10 days, the American revolutionaries held their ground at Assunpink Creek and after a night-time march, surprised the British troops in Princeton and won a decisive third battle. Those 10 crucial days reinvigorated the American cause and served as a turning point in the Revolution.

In the year ahead, we will celebrate the 250th anniversary of those battles and Hopewell's special place in history. And America will be watching.



I recently attended a PBS film shoot memorializing these events, which is expected to air next year. This is an important opportunity for Hopewell Township and our efforts to promote tourism in the "Turning Point Triangle.". Our Congresswoman, Bonnie Watson-Coleman, serves on the 250th Committee and I am looking forward to working with her.

My colleague David Chait is working with local businesses on how we can leverage the 250th to bring more visitors to Hopewell Valley. We will be holding a listening session in January, and I encourage you to contribute your ideas. Hopewell Valley is a special place and I look forward to sharing it with America.



**Kevin D. Kuchinski, Committee Member,
dkhhopewelltwp@gmail.com**



**— Paw —
Free!
RABIES CLINIC**

All are welcome!

January 4th, 2025 ~ 9am - Noon
Hopewell Township
Department of Public Works
203 Washington Crossing Pennington Rd
Titusville, NJ 08560

Questions?
Call 609-737-0605 x6780
or go to
www.hopewelltwp.org/AnimalControl

Permit #9
Deposit, NY 13754
201 Washington Crossing-Pennington Road
Titusville, NJ 08560-1410
TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL
PAID
PRST STD
US Postage

TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL
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Titusville, NJ 08560-1410