
Community Facilities Plan Element

Township of Hopewell
Mercer County, New Jersey

April 2007

*Prepared by the Hopewell Township Planning Board
in consultation with Banisch Associates, Inc*

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The original of this report was signed and sealed
in accordance with N.J.A.C. 13:41-1.3

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COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN ELEMENT

BACKGROUND ANALYSIS

Introduction

The Community Facilities Plan Element of the Master Plan is prepared in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28b.

The object of a community facilities plan is to identify the existing and proposed location and type of a wide range of public and quasi-public facilities and services, including educational and cultural facilities, libraries, fire houses, police stations, municipal buildings and other related facilities. In order to assess the status of these services in a community it is necessary to establish the baseline condition relative to the location of facilities and the provision of services. The following inventory provides the background information on community facilities that provide the basis for subsequent recommendations concerning the adequacy of these facilities and their location.

Hopewell Township Municipal Complex

Municipal Services Building

The Hopewell Township Municipal Complex is located at 201 Washington Crossing-Pennington Road, Titusville. The administration building and The Farmhouse are situated on an 18 acre tract that is shared with the Municipal Athletic Fields; the public works building occupies a separate, contiguous 54 acre lot. The departments/functions housed at the administration building include the following: administration, finance, municipal clerk, tax collector, fire commission, zoning officer, planning, construction, health, animal control and municipal alliance, police and the courts. The public works department and the tax assessor currently occupy the public work building on the 54 acre tract.

The administration building has a gross floor area of approximately 32,700 square feet on two levels, with 18,000 square feet on the upper level and 14,700 square feet on the lower level. The building is served by three stairways and an elevator. Approximately one-half of the lower level is devoted to storage, supplies and mechanical equipment. The Farmhouse is currently vacant.

Public Works

The Department of Public Works provides maintenance services to all Township roads, storm sewers, and sanitary sewer distribution lines. Traffic and street sign posting, sight distance and road shoulder clearing, bulky waste, brush, leaf and white goods collection, street sweeping, road striping, pot hole patching, chip seal, snow and ice removal are among the services provided by the department. Public Works is

also responsible for the maintenance of the buildings owned by the Township and the lands surrounding them. Certain public works employees are shared with the regional recreation department to maintain Township parks and playing fields and assist with recreation activities.

The public works building is approximately 31,600 square feet, with 16 double bays and six mechanic bays. Approximately 24,800 square feet is devoted to storage (bays, shops, storage cages, indoor parking spaces), and 6,800 square feet devoted to office. The offices are occupied by the public works department and the tax assessor's office. The public works site also includes outdoor storage of materials and equipment and the Township's composting operation. The department maintains 88 vehicles or motorized pieces of equipment.

The Public Works Building, located at 203 Washington Crossing-Pennington Road, includes a vehicle maintenance facility where Township mechanics maintain the Township fleet and many pieces of public works' equipment. The department also has a sign making facility.

Fire Protection and Emergency Services

Hopewell Township Fire District

The Hopewell Township Fire District No. 1 (HTFD), Board of Commissioners was established in 1989 by voter referendum, and authorized to levy a tax and provide adequate and responsible fire protection to the Township. Over time the HTFD has added the responsibility to provide emergency medical services (EMS) and fire code enforcement for the Township.

Fire protection and emergency services are provided to the Township through the utilization of career and volunteer personnel. Large areas of the Township are protected under inter-local agreements with the fire districts of Hopewell Borough and Pennington Borough.

Currently, the HTFD occupies space at the Union Fire Company and at the Township Municipal Services Building. The current administrative offices located in the basement of the Municipal Services Building are on loan to the Fire District by the Township. The Township Police Department has expressed an interest in the office space.

The Township is divided into three geographic districts: the Titusville Fire District #53 with primary service over the area west of Route 579; the Pennington Fire District #51 with primary service from Route 579 east to the Watershed property and Bayberry Road and south of Harbourton-Woodsville Road; and, Hopewell Fire District #52, serving the northeast quadrant of the Township. Each of these districts

includes a fire station, with only the Union Fire Company and Rescue Squad located in the Township.

The Fire District and Boroughs operate through a complicated set of inter-local agreements. The HTFD provides EMS and code enforcement to Hopewell and Pennington Boroughs with career employees. The Hopewell Borough Fire District provides fire and EMS response to area 52 identified above, while the Pennington Borough Fire District provides fire response to area 51. The HTFD utilizes the services of the Pennington First Aid Squad, a non-profit organization that receives funding from the HTFD, to provide EMS services to area 51. The Union Fire Company is not owned by the Fire District, but the firefighting equipment housed within the building is the property of the Fire District, and the HTFD leases portions of the building. Lastly, career employees of the HTFD are also placed at Station 52 (Hopewell Borough) and Squad 151 (Pennington First Aid) to assist in emergency response.

Union Fire Company and Rescue Squad

The Union Fire Company and Rescue Squad is located at 1396 River Road, Titusville-Washington Crossing on the corner of River Road (Route 29) and Park Lake Avenue. The tract on which the Squad is located is approximately 1.3 acres and includes the equipment bays on the first floor accessing River Road and meeting rooms and a banquet hall on the second floor, accessed via Park Lake Avenue. The Fire Company's relationship to the HTFD is explained above.

Police Protection

The Hopewell Township Police Department is located at the Hopewell Township Municipal Complex at 201 Washington Crossing-Pennington Road, Titusville. The Township Police Department mission statement is:

“...to work in partnership with the community to provide service and in accordance with constitutional rights, enforce the law, preserve the peace, reduce fear and enhance the quality of life within our community.”

The Police Department is housed primarily on the main floor of the Municipal Service Building and operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The department also utilizes areas of the basement of the municipal services building for an office, a work-out room, a back-up radio console, all primary radio equipment and a storage room. The Department utilizes garage storage space in the public works building, the “old” public works building, and a trailer behind the public works complex. The Department has a satellite office located in the Hopewell Borough Municipal Building. The police department firing range is located between the skate park, the football field, a baseball field and public works storage.

The department currently consists of 32 sworn officers, six civilian dispatchers and two clerical employees. The police department contains several departments geared toward public safety and community outreach. The following is a brief description of some of the programs the police department manages.

Administration

The Hopewell Township Police Department Administration is comprised of the Chief of Police, two Lieutenants and the Chief's Secretary. One of the Lieutenants is the department's administrative officer overseeing the detective bureau, while the other Lieutenant is the department's operations officer in charge of the patrol division.

Patrol Division

The Patrol Division is the main component of any police department. This department handles the day-to-day operations but also is called on to support the specialty units to achieve their particular goals. While specialty unit officers focus on a specific segment of law enforcement, the patrol officers need to know a lot about all segments of police work. The patrol officer is the first responders to all medical calls, motor vehicle accidents, burglar alarms, fires, domestic disputes, assaults and a myriad of other calls. Additionally, these are the officers that first come in contact with crime scenes, recognize potential evidence and secure the crime scene for evidence collection officers and crime scene teams.

Currently, the Patrol Division has twenty-three patrol officers organized in four squads with a patrol sergeant leading each. A lieutenant oversees the entire Patrol Division as well as the Community Action Response Team (a specialized unit).

Communications

Communications, also known as dispatch, is contact central for the Hopewell Township Police Department. The communications department is staffed by six full time civilians who work rotating shifts, 24 hours a day, including weekends and holidays. All phone calls to the police department come through dispatch.

Once a call is taken it is entered into CAD (computer assisted dispatch) and must be handled. Calls that come in on 9-1-1 that require fire or ambulance response are usually transferred to the proper agency to be dispatched, however the police department dispatchers are fully trained and have the capability to dispatch those calls from the Township's communications center. Communication with the various units and agencies is made via multiple radio channels, MDT's (mobile display terminals in the vehicles) and cell phones. On complicated calls or major incidents, many officers and agencies may be involved, and these calls can take hours to complete.

Record keeping is also an important facet of the communications office. Calls must be updated in a timely manner as officers relay information. Dispatchers research and

retrieve information to assist officers on calls and detectives conducting investigations. Each member of the dispatch staff also has other duties, including alarm and business registrations, correcting 9-1-1 information, keeping track of summonses and domestic violence orders, and updating phone and geographic information in our CAD system.

Community Action Response Team

The Hopewell Township Police Department Community Action Response Team (C.A.R.T.) encompasses several distinct responsibilities. These are community policing, traffic safety, special needs and services, and administrative duties. The Community Policing facet of the unit addresses specific ongoing non-criminal issues in the community. These issues could be related to neighbor disputes, traffic issues or requests from civic or educational organizations. The goal is to address any potential problem while it is still in the nuisance stage in an attempt to prevent it from escalating into a more serious or even a criminal problem. This may be accomplished by direct intervention by an officer to open a productive dialog between the people involved. It may also include a referral to the Hopewell Township Community Dispute Resolution Committee or to another appropriate agency.

The Traffic Safety responsibility of the unit is aimed toward targeted enforcement of known problem areas, heavy truck enforcement, investigation of serious injury and fatal crashes as well as working with the state, county and municipal traffic engineers to improve the design of local problem roadways. The unit also conducts traffic surveys to obtain statistics for traffic engineering and oversees the school crossing guards. Child safety seat inspection and installation services are provided to Township residents by the four (4) certified child safety seat technicians in the unit.

The special needs and services component involves several pieces of equipment: two variable message/radar trailers, one radar trailer, a portable radar board, the department incident command unit/mobile communication & management facility, quad all terrain vehicle and an emergency generator trailer. The portable radar board, radar trailer and both variable message / radar trailers are deployed by the unit to various locations throughout the township and Hopewell Borough to help educate and alert drivers to their speeds and driving habits. The Variable message trailers are also utilized for emergencies and special events to advise motorists of special conditions and traffic patterns.

The Hopewell Township Police Bicycle Patrol Unit is part of the Community Action Response Team. The officers involved in the bicycle patrol unit utilize mountain bikes equipped for Police use and are outfitted with lighting and storage for police forms as well as basic first aid supplies. The bike patrol is utilized primarily in the South and East portion of the township, Titusville and Hopewell Borough and is meant to increase officer contact with people and also give the officers better access to wooded areas and parks, as well as crowded areas like community events and parades.

Emergency Notification System

The Hopewell Township Police Department has the ability to make a phone notification to all residents of Hopewell Valley in the event of an emergency in the area. This system utilizes a number of computers connected to multiple phone lines which access a database of listed phone numbers. The listed numbers are very rapidly called and a recording detailing the specific emergency message is played when the phone is answered. If the alerting system computer receives no answer or a busy signal, the number is automatically called a second time after 10 minutes. The system is updated monthly with all phone numbers in Hopewell Valley.

This system is for emergency use only and all phone numbers are kept confidential. The system involves GIS mapping technology that enables the police department to contact the entire Valley or selected areas. Officers have the capability of instantly mapping out a particular area to be called specific to an emergency.

In the event of a large-scale emergency affecting the area, an approaching severe weather system for example, the department may wish to activate the system for the entire Valley with a warning message. However if there were a smaller scale incident, perhaps a lost child, officers can actually draw, on a computerized mapping system, a selected area to be called with emergency instructions. Key police personnel are the only people able to activate this system.

Office of Emergency Management (OEM)

The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) is responsible for planning for, responding to and coordinating efforts during major emergency events in the Valley. The office has developed and constantly updates a comprehensive emergency operations plan. Periodically the office conducts drills involving the police departments, fire departments, emergency medical units, communications centers and other government agencies such as the public works and health departments.

The OEM utilizes an emergency operations center located in the Hopewell Township police headquarters. This center is activated several times a year for incidents such major snowstorms, floods and other large scale events. The center was activated for several days in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, ready to send assistance to New York City and the surrounding area.

Hopewell Valley Regional School District

The Hopewell Valley Regional School District (HVRSD) has six schools that serve pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. The HVRSD receives children and young adults from Hopewell Borough, Hopewell Township and Pennington Borough, serving an estimated 2005 population of 22,300. There are four elementary schools containing grades K-5 (Bear Tavern, Hopewell, Stony Brook and Toll Gate), Timberlane Middle

School containing grades 6-8, and Central High School, which contains grades 9-12. Pre-kindergarten classes for children with special needs exist at both Hopewell and Bear Tavern Elementary Schools. A new tuition-based pre-kindergarten program (PEECH) for grade-level four-year olds has been established. The district provides a variety of in-house programs for students with educational disabilities for grades pre-K through twelve. These programs range from self-contained classes to full inclusion.

Enrollment

The current enrollment (October 2006 for 2006-2007 enrollment) in the school district is 4,018 students, an increase of approximately 30 percent from the enrollment of 3,070 students in 1996-1997. According to the demographic study provided by the School Board, the projected enrollment for 2010-2011 is 4,083 to 4,126 students (Grip, March 2006)

Elementary Schools

Bear Tavern Elementary

Bear Tavern School is located at 1162 Bear Tavern Road, Titusville. The school is situated on a 28 acre campus that includes the main building, temporary manufactured buildings, playgrounds and athletic fields used by the school and the Township's sports associations. The school classrooms range from kindergarten to fifth grade and the current enrollment, for 2006-2007, is 568 students. Along with the students there are 84 staff members.

Hopewell Elementary

Hopewell Elementary School is located at 35 Princeton Avenue, Hopewell. The school, playgrounds and athletic fields are located in Hopewell Borough, but the complex includes some back fields and wooded areas on the 17.8 acre tract in the Township. Hopewell Elementary holds classrooms for kindergarten to fifth grade with an enrollment of 498 in 2006-2007 and a staff of 64.

Stony Brook Elementary

Stony Brook Elementary is located at 20 Stephenson Road in the Township. The school is situated on a 12.7 acre tract that adjoins the 15 acre Independence Park, which provides athletic fields for the school use. The Stony Brook school conducts classes for those in kindergarten through fifth grade with a 2006-2007 enrollment of 518 students and 76 staff members.

Toll Gate Grammar

Toll Gate Grammar school is located at 475 South Main Street in Pennington Borough. This elementary school also conducts classes for kindergarten through fifth grade and has an enrollment of 321 students in 2006-2007 with 50 staff members. The school grounds include a playground and combination baseball/soccer field, and the school is located on a 9.5 acre tract.

Secondary Schools

Timberlane Middle School

Timberlane Middle school is located at 51 South Timberlane Drive in the Township. The Middle School is located on a 43.1 acre tract across South Timberlane Drive from the High School, and includes the school and athletic fields for the Middle and High Schools. The school holds classes for grades sixth through eighth and has an enrollment of 929 students and 130 staff members.

Hopewell Valley Central High School

Hopewell Valley Central High School is located on Pennington-Titusville Road in the central portion of the Township. The School is located on a 39.9 acre tract across South Timberlane Drive from the Timberlane Middle School and adjacent to the Mercer County/Hopewell Branch library and Pennington Borough. The 2006-2007 enrollment is 1,184 students with 142 staff members.

Library

The Hopewell Branch is one of nine library branches supported through the Mercer County Library System. The Mercer County Library System offers a wide variety of services and opportunities to the residents of the County including children and adult programming, internet access, audiovisual materials, ESL classes, and reference services. The Hopewell Branch in particular offers access to agendas, meeting minutes and video of the Hopewell Township Committee meetings as well as offers a community room to the Board of Health every month for a monthly blood pressure screening service. The Hopewell Branch also houses the collection of the Hopewell Valley Historic Society. The library system hosts an informative website at www.mcl.org. The following section inventories the size, location and services offered at the Hopewell Branch.

Location

The Hopewell Branch Library is located at 245 Pennington-Titusville Road, Pennington, NJ. The Library is in close proximity to the Hopewell Valley Central High School and Timberlane Middle School and has a sidewalk connection to downtown Pennington.

Size of Facility

The Hopewell Branch is currently 14,800 square feet following a recent addition that expanded the facility from 9,000 square feet.

Hours of Operation

The Hopewell Branch is open six days a week, closed on Sunday, for a total of 61 hours per week. Library hours are:

- Monday to Thursday: 9:30am to 9:00pm
- Friday and Saturday: 9:30am to 5:00pm

The online library catalog is available remotely before, during, and after library hours from the Library's website.

Number of Employees

The Hopewell Branch employs a total of 16 employees, 8 full-time, 5 part-time and 3 student-assistants (shelvers). Approximately 14 student volunteers also contribute throughout the year.

Services Offered

In addition to access to the library's collections the Branch offers a wide-variety of services to the community. These include:

- Reference service
- Adult and children's programming
- Meeting space
- Readers' advisory
- Wireless Internet access
- Free computer classes in many of the Microsoft Office programs and Library databases
- Income-tax assistance through the VITA program
- Free Notary service
- Outreach programming
- Staffing Q and A NJ, an online reference service
- Reference service through Instant Messenger
- Copy machine

Service Area/Number of Patrons

The immediate service area for the Hopewell Branch encompasses Hopewell Township, Pennington Borough and Hopewell Borough with a total population of

approximately 23,000 and an area of approximately 62 square miles. The Hopewell Branch currently has 10,567 registered patrons.

The Library offers an invaluable service to the community and is always interested in expanding its communication and connection with the Township on community matters.

Senior Citizens

The current Hopewell Valley Senior Advisory Board resulted from proposals by the Hopewell Valley Senior Center Planning Committee. The original proposal by the Planning Committee consisted of three parts. Part one was the appointment of a nine-member Senior Advisory Board, which has been accomplished. The Board consists of two members from Hopewell Borough, two members from Pennington Borough and five members from Hopewell Township. The functions of the Board include advisory assistance to the three municipalities in the hiring of a Senior Services Coordinator, assist the Senior Services Coordinator in developing programs, and play a leadership role in the creation of a Senior Center for Hopewell Valley.

Part two of the proposal was a recommendation for the three municipalities to promptly hire a part-time Senior Services Coordinator to consolidate and expand existing wellness and recreational programs, and to plan, develop and supervise a comprehensive program of activities and services to promote the dignity and independence of the older adult. The coordinator would also tap into the experience, talent and desire to serve that the Valley's older adults have demonstrated. Prior to the opening of a Senior Center, the position of Senior Services Coordinator may evolve into a full-time position. The position of the Senior Services Coordinator has been filled and the Coordinator is located at the Municipal Services Building.

The third part of the proposal is the construction of a Hopewell Valley Senior Center with a full time director. This proposal is further discussed in the recommendations section of this Plan Element. Currently there is a senior citizen facility located in Pennington Borough.

Youth Activities

In 2005 the Hopewell Township Committee established the Youth Advisory Committee, comprised of Township officials, educators, Township youth and the interested public. As part of its work the Youth Advisory Committee initiated the Youth Development and Teen Center Research Project, with the purpose of researching other communities that currently have teen/youth development initiatives, programs and/or centers. The goal of this project is to better understand the type of programs and facilities which are being provided to youth in other communities.

Another aspect of the Youth Advisory Committee's work included a Teen Center Survey of students in grades 8 through 12. This survey was conducted in May 2006. Among the results of the survey are the following:

- When asked what they usually do after school, 36% of the students responded sports and 28% responded stay home. 6% to 8% of the students responded take care of siblings, school activities or clubs.
- When asked how likely it is that they would attend a teen center, 8% responded very likely and 43% responded somewhat likely.
- When asked how likely they would attend a teen center if it was within walking distance to school, 17% responded very likely and 42% responded somewhat likely.
- Students were more likely to attend a teen center in Pennington Borough (45% very or somewhat likely) than in Hopewell Borough (26% very or somewhat likely)
- The activities students would like to see in a teen center are (rated highest to lowest) hang out with friends, café/snack bar, pool table, ping pong, TV, music, movie night, air hockey, sports activities, video games, dances, computer lab, karaoke night, homework lab, board games and poetry readings.
- When asked how often the student would use a teen center, 3% responded every day, 21% responded 2-3 times per week, and 31% responded a couple of times per month.
- When asked whether the student would use the teen center during school vacation, 6% responded very likely and 35% responded somewhat likely.
- When asked whether the student would use the teen center during the summer, 11% responded very likely and 37% responded somewhat likely.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN ELEMENT **DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

General

The following includes a summary and recommendations concerning existing and future municipal operations and the school district.

As a basis for the analysis, the Township Municipal Services building was opened in the early 1980's, when the Township population was 10,893 persons (1980 Census). The year 2004 estimated population was 17,500 persons, and by 2006 the Township population probably exceeds 18,000 persons. The estimated build-out for the Township is 23,000 to 24,000 persons. The current population of Hopewell Valley (the Township and the Boroughs of Hopewell and Pennington) is approximately 23,000 persons.

Municipal Operations

In 2002 and 2003 the Township completed a study of municipal operations and the municipal complex, including the Municipal Services Building, Public Works and The Farmhouse. The study, prepared by the Vaughn Collaborative, included three options for the reorganization of physical space at the municipal complex. These options were never adopted or endorsed by the Township Committee.

Over the ensuing years the assumptions and conditions upon which the study was based have changed. The Township has reorganized its internal operations, and increasing regionalization, and State initiatives, has changed the context under which the prior analysis was performed. For example, the Township has entered into an agreement with Mercer County for a shared pistol range facility at a County property. It also is likely that more shared services will occur given the fiscal status of the State and the current emphasis on these arrangements.

The addition of more bays at the public works building is recommended, because the bays are undersized for some of the existing equipment and some equipment is stored outside. Given the size of the tract and its location, the public works site also presents further opportunities for expansion.

Township Fire District

The Fire District is developing a plan for the construction of a building to be located in the area of the Township Municipal Services Complex to house Fire District administrative offices, equipment storage, rescue vehicles and emergency response. Previous attempts to fund the project have been unsuccessful, but the project remains a major focus of the Fire District.

The Township also is likely to be impacted by a growing need for facilities to support emergency services. In general, the pool of volunteer emergency services responders has been shrinking. Additionally, the Township relies on a series of inter-local agreements, as identified in the Background Analysis. These relationships can change at any time. As residential and nonresidential development proceeds towards build-out, the Fire District may also need to reevaluate its operations and the need for additional facilities.

School District

Most of the Township schools are at or over the Facility Efficiency Standard Capacity (FES Capacity), a standard established by the N. J. Department of Education to direct school funding decisions, based on 2006-2007 enrollments. With continued growth in the District the deficit in capacity can only increase. The current Township population is estimated at 18,000, with a build-out population of 23,000 to 24,000. The Pennington Borough population of approximately 2,700 and the Hopewell Borough population of approximately 2,000 are expected to remain relatively static or grow slowly, based on changing demographics. The estimated build-out for the Valley communities is 28,400 persons.

The enrollments in the elementary schools, other than Toll Gate, exceed 500 students, which is considered a desirable maximum level for elementary schools. Toll Gate School has little area for expansion, and Stony Brook School has no area for building expansion. The Hopewell School has been expanded several times since its original construction in the 1920's, and has essentially optimized its expansion. The Bear Tavern School has the most undeveloped area, but includes numerous modular buildings that are reaching their useful life, and the sewage system may be a limiting factor to expansion.

In order to assess the possible enrollment in the school district as related to the projected population growth in the Valley, the following tabular analysis was prepared. This Table compares the Valley's population to the school district enrollment, dating to 1970, and identifies the school district enrollment as a percentage of the Valley population. The Table also includes the population projections established by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) from 2010 to 2025, and utilizes the DVRPC and school enrollment projections for 2010 to establish a baseline standard for future enrollment, as well as a baseline established by the estimated 2004 Valley population and actual 2004 school enrollment.

There are some interesting facts that can be deduced from these data. From 1970 to 1990 there was a startling change in the relationship of population to school enrollment, with the Valley population increasing by approximately 1,600 persons while the school enrollment was decreasing by approximately 1,300 students. In 2000 the trend had changed, with the Valley adding approximately 4,700 residents

with the school population increased by over 1,300 students, resulting in an enrollment/population ratio of nearly 28% for the 1990-2000 period. Based on the 2000 actual population and school enrollment, the 2004 estimated population and actual school enrollment, and the projected 2010 population and school enrollment, the trends seem to have stabilized.

The consistency among the 2000 actual population and enrollment percentages, the 2004 estimated population and actual enrollment percentages, and the 2010 projections for both population and enrollment is striking.

Comparison of Valley Population, School Enrollment and Projections

| Year | Valley Population | HVRSD Enrollment | Enrollment/ Population |
|--------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1970 | 14,452 | 3,636 (1972) | 25.1% |
| 1980 | 15,003 | 2,823 | 18.8% |
| 1990 | 16,095 | 2,329 | 14.5% |
| 2000 | 20,836 | 3,644 | 17.5% |
| 2004 | 22,346 (e) | 3,895 | 17.43% |
| Projections | | | |
| 2010 | 22,858 | 4,105 | 17.96% |
| | | <u>17.43%*</u> | <u>17.96%*</u> |
| 2015 | 23,641 | 4,121 | 4,246 |
| 2020 | 25,206 | 4,393 | 4,527 |
| 2025 | 26,782 | 4,668 | 4,810 |
| Build-out | 28,400 (e) | 4,950 | 5,101 |

(e) = Estimate

* Using 2004 estimated Valley population and actual enrollment, and projected 2010 population and enrollment percentages

The current High School population includes children born between 1989 and 1991, which was a period referred to by demographers as the “Baby Boom Echo”, during which births in the United States exceeded 4 million per year for the first time since 1957. How the aging of this population spike affects future enrollments, and how the turnover of existing dwellings from “empty nesters” to households with school-age children, will largely determine the adequacy of the school facilities.

To conclude this analysis, it appears that future school enrollments, combined with programmatic requirements established by the N. J. Department of Education (DOE), will create a need for a new school site or substantial reconfiguration of existing school sites. In the HVRSD planning process an early childhood center also is being considered.

The HVRSD envisions the need for the expansion of some schools and the acquisition of a site for a new elementary school. Ideally a new school site would have access to public sewer and water and be located near the Valley's population centroid. Growth in enrollment and programmatic changes indicate that some accommodation for future needs is required. It is not clear what these needs may entail, but the HVRSD is required to look to the future, albeit constrained by a five-year time frame, in order to provide the desirable educational opportunities for its students.

The Planning Board suggests an evaluation of the existing school sites before committing to the acquisition of a new school site. Timberlane Middle School and Hopewell Central High School are one-story structures, which currently consume substantial land areas and which require substantial land area for expansion on one-story, but the current location is ideal. The development of a two-story school would consume less land, and may be accommodated on existing campuses. The closing of South Timberlane Road, with the ceding of the land area to the School District, is recommended to provide additional land area and capacity to the District, subject to regional traffic considerations. The adaptive reuse of buildings on existing sites is encouraged, and additional opportunities might be presented through collocation, such as combining some Board of Education and municipal facilities.

The Council of Educational Facilities Planners International (CEFPI) establishes school construction guidelines which often are utilized as a general indication of the land consumption need for different types of schools. These guidelines are referenced in both Planning and Urban Design Standards (APA, 2006) and Urban Land Use Planning (Berke, Godschalk, Kaiser and Rodriguez, 2006), and establish the following for different grade configurations:

Guidelines for School Sites

| Grades | Developable Acreage |
|---------------|---------------------------------|
| K-6 | 10 plus 1 acre per 100 students |
| 5-8 | 15 plus 1 acre per 100 students |
| 7-9 | 20 plus 1 acre per 100 students |
| 9-12 | 30 plus 1 acre per 100 students |

A high school may need an additional area of 10 acres or more if a stadium and spectator parking are anticipated. If on site water or sewer is required, substantial additional acreage may be needed.

The above guidelines assume a rural or suburban area with a one story building, room for expansion, desirable outdoor play areas and all parking, queuing and buses located on site. Urban sites and areas that follow the tenets of smart growth may find creative solutions on substantially smaller sites. This may involve off-site parking, bus loading only (no bus parking), limited play areas, multi-story construction and

sharing of certain facilities with other adjacent entities. ([Facilities Guidelines](#), North Carolina Board of Education, 2003.)

A site of 25-100 acres in proximity to other school facilities and the population centroid is most desirable to the HVRSD. In addition, a site which links a new school facility to biking/pedestrian trails and other community activities (library, municipal facilities, athletic fields, open space) would promote the maximum use of community facilities.

Hopewell Valley Senior Advisory Board

The third part of the proposal by the Hopewell Valley Senior Center Planning Committee (later constituted as the Senior Advisory Board) recommended the construction of a Hopewell Valley Senior Center with a full-time director. The characteristics identified for the senior center include the following:

- A site of at least 3 acres with the ability to park at least 100 cars;
- A building of at least 10,000 square feet with the potential for expansion; and,
- A layout with a display area at the entranceway; a kitchen; a dining area; an exercise and dance area adjacent to the dining area that could be combined for larger events; a conference room; a computer lab; an arts and crafts area; a sitting room/library; a fitness room; a physical examination room; and, offices for the director and staff.

The Senior Center Planning Committee indicated that it was anticipated that all, or almost all, of the construction cost of a Center would be paid for through federal and state legislation, a small cities grant, a matching grant from Mercer County, and corporate sponsorship.

The proposal did not go so far as to identify a location or criteria for the location of a senior center. However, it appears that a central location, in or to the east of Pennington, and accessible to public transportation, would provide the greatest benefit. Currently there are concentrations of senior citizens in Four Seasons and Hopewell Crossing. The American Legion Post 339 building on Van Dyke Road has been suggested as a site, but the location is less than central, and the building would need extensive retrofitting and expansion.

Youth Activities and Youth Advisory Committee

It is recommended that the Youth Advisory Committee meet with interested parents, community leaders, government officials, health professionals and youth to determine the feasibility of a teen/youth center in Hopewell Valley. In addition, the Youth Advisory Committee and Hopewell Valley Senior Advisory Board should coordinate their activities, as the most effective and cost-efficient approach may be a shared

facility to serve the needs of seniors and youth. Under any circumstances the Boroughs and the Township should work on a regional location for any new facilities.

Among the topics to be discussed concerning a Teen Center or a joint Teen and Senior Center are the following:

- Location
- Funding
- Hours of operation
- Age group
- Budget
- Activities/programs
- Supervision/advisor
- Mission statement/purpose
- Web site
- Ownership (Private/501c3, municipal or county government)

Sustainability

The concept of sustainability, or sustainable development, is an underpinning of the 2002 Master Plan. The 2002 Master Plan indicates that “Sustainable development policies provide a land use framework that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”; this definition of sustainable development is the most commonly accepted, originally appearing in a 1987 report by the U.N. World Commission on Environment and Development (UNCED). This approach, combined with the concept of capacity-based planning, is the basis upon which the Township’s master planning efforts have evolved.

Over the past 20 years the concept of sustainability has broadened and taken on new meaning. Simply put, sustainability includes environmental, economic and social components that contribute to a community’s well being. While the Township’s land use framework has endorsed and implemented the concept from an environmental, infrastructure and economic standpoint, sustainability has additional implications that affect energy use, building practices and, most importantly relative to this plan element, the social environment. A community facilities’ plan should not be viewed as a static document, but rather as an outline for the future.

The creation of a sustainable community has many facets. The Township’s Environmental Commission, building on interests expressed by other Township agencies, has identified as a goal to help generate ideas and develop a plan for guidelines for “green building” in new developments, and to develop options for energy sustainability for the Township facilities and for residents. This notion also has been articulated by the Planning Board, and should be an ongoing objective for the community.

The preceding discussion and recommendations concerning a combined Senior and Teen Center is another example of sustainable development. The advantages of a combined center, environmentally, fiscally and socially, are compelling. In addition, the senior population could benefit the youth population as mentors with their experience and knowledge, while the youth population could benefit the seniors through assistance in homes and on grounds. Another example that is particularly apropos to the community facilities' plan is the conjunctive use of Township areas for social, environmental and economic reasons. The recently dedicated Veterans Memorial on the Alliger tract could also be used as a community garden and community arboretum, with the resulting products made available to public or private entities that could use them to nurture the community and the environment.

Community Facilities Plan

Hopewell Township, Mercer County

April 2007

Legend

- ✚ Fire Station
- ➲ Library
- ☰ Municipal Complex
- 🚂 Public Works
- 🚩 School



Data Sources:
Mercer County Dept of GIS
Hopewell Township Engineer

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ASSOCIATES, INC.
Planning and Design