

COMPREHENSIVE FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN



HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP Mercer County, NJ

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Introduction

This Plan presents a description and assessment of the present agricultural situation in the Township, what it means to the Township, and a vision for the future of what agriculture can be in terms of the policies and programs that are suggested.

Hopewell Township is situated in Mercer County at the fringe of a rapidly developing area. Although the Township has been subject to large scale non-residential and residential development, it nonetheless maintains a rural character that is evident throughout the community. With almost half of the land in the Township under farmland assessment, agriculture is the most visible manifestation of the Township's character.

What is also evident in Hopewell Township is the decline of conventional crop production. According to the New Jersey Office of the US Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), overall production shows a declining trend. With the exception of corn and hay, most every other category reported to NASS showed considerable and sometimes significant decline with respect to acreage harvested or dedicated to agricultural endeavors.

In order to combat the decline of agriculture and protect its rural character and agricultural heritage, the Township formed an Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC), and is proposing large scale farmland preservation efforts to support the work of the AAC. These efforts will utilize a variety of means to preserve as much land as possible over the coming five years. The primary focus of Hopewell's efforts will be a Planning Incentive Grant application to the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC), as well as continuation of the traditional preservation programs of the Mercer County Agriculture Development Board and the SADC. This funding application seeks to preserve large contiguous masses of agriculturally productive land in the central and northwestern portions of the Township.

In addition to the PIG application, the Township will utilize a number of other means to preserve as much productive farmland as possible. These include the SADC Direct Easement Purchase program, use of option agreements, installment purchase of development rights, solicitation of easement donations and utilization of limited development approaches in order to preserve farmland. With this menu of preservation options, the Township can insure that land is available for the continuation of agriculture within the community.

Hopewell Township's regional location, prime soils and access to densely populated markets combine to assure an agricultural future, if the farmland base can be preserved and agricultural viability maintained ([Figure 1](#)). To this end, the Township has set a high priority on retaining its agricultural land base. At present, almost half of Hopewell's land area is in farmland assessment and agricultural production. The objective of this Farmland Preservation Plan is to preserve as much viable farmland as possible in order to retain farming as an enduring legacy.

Farmland preservation pays dividends for all involved. While limiting the municipal service costs associated with new development, it can provide high-quality, locally grown produce. Additionally, farmland preservation allows farm families to continue a tradition of local agricultural production, and expand and diversify for the future. Recommended agricultural management practices play an increasingly important role in balancing the priorities of agricultural retention and environmental protection.

This Farmland Preservation Plan Element should serve as a guidance document for local action, and should be updated periodically to reflect continuing progress and evolving objectives.

This farmland preservation plan is prepared pursuant to Paragraph (13) of section 19 of P.L. 1975, c.291, the Municipal Land Use Law (C.40:55D-28). This section provides that a farmland preservation plan element shall include:

1. an inventory of farm properties in the entire municipality and a map illustrating significant areas of agricultural lands;
2. a detailed statement showing that municipal plans and ordinances support and promote agriculture as a business; and,
3. a plan for preserving as much farmland as possible in the short-term by leveraging monies made available by the Garden State Preservation Trust Act, N.J.S.A. 13:8-1 et seq., P.L. 1999, c. 152 through a variety of mechanisms including but not limited to utilizing:
 - i. Option agreements;
 - ii. Installment purchases; and
 - iii. Encouraging donations for permanent development easements.

This farmland preservation plan was also prepared pursuant to the adopted guidelines and regulations of the State Agriculture Development Committee at N.J.A.C. 2:76-17A.

I. Hopewell Township's Agricultural Land Base

A. *Location and Size of Agricultural Land Base*

Hopewell Township has an active agricultural community and includes large contiguous agricultural lands. The Township is ranked 1st in Mercer County and 9th in New Jersey for active agricultural land, including cropland and pastureland, based on the 2007 Farmland Assessment data. Hopewell Township retains a major portion of its land area in agriculture. According to tax data from February of 2009, 16,417 of Hopewell Township's 37,699 acres (44%) are currently under farmland assessment (Classes 3A and 3B). The farm properties in Hopewell Township include lots as large as 289 acres, with six lots exceeding 200 acres and 30 lots exceeding 100 acres ([Figure 2](#)).

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The nature of the Township is further highlighted by the 2007 Land Use/Land Cover data (Figure 3). Table 1 identifies the Land Use/Land Cover for the entire Township. There are 9,805 acres (26%) of the Township that are classified as Agricultural.

Table 1: 2007 Land use/Land Cover for Hopewell Township

Land Use/Land Cover	Total	%
Agriculture	9,805	26
Barren Land	357	1
Forest	14,069	37
Urban	9,630	26
Water	700	2
Wetlands	3,148	8
TOTAL	37,709	100

The Township has identified a proposed Central Project Area, which encompasses much of the central farmland in the Township. When the 2007 Land Use/Land Cover is focused on the Township's proposed project area, the agricultural land totals 42% (4,494 acres) of the area.

Table 2: 2007 Land Use/Land Cover for Hopewell Proposed Project Area

Type	Total	%
Agriculture	4,494	42
Forest	4,060	38
Urban	1,380	13
Wetlands	694	6
Barren Land	61	1
Water	73	1
TOTAL	10,762	101*

**due to rounding*

There are also 9,022 acres (24%) of the Township classified as Cropland and Pastureland in the 2007 Land Use/Land Cover data (Figure 4). The Proposed Project Area contains 4,076 of these acres.

Figure 5 depicts the location of Proposed Central Project Area; preserved farms, as listed in Table 3; and, preserved open space. There are over 2,720 acres of preserved farmland in the Township.

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Table 3 – Preserved Farmland

Block	Lot	Property Location	Owner Name	Type of Acquisition	GIS Acreage
4	00019 01	182 VAN DYKE RD	Faille	SADC EP	40.29
4	20		Widman	SADC EP	12.6
16	4.011		D&R Greenway/St. Michaels	NPG	211.63
20	12		Huebner	Cty EP	55.3
21	5	195 PENN HOPEWELL RD	Bluestone Farms	Cty EP	61.68
26	1	HARBOURTON MT AIRY RD	Princeton Research	Cty EP	50.04
26	2	HARBOURTON MT AIRY RD	Lanwin	Cty EP	108.44
26	6		Hollendonner/Krutz	SADC EP	29.57
26	16	LAMBERTVL HOPEWELL RD	Princeton Research	Cty EP	83.81
27	2	35 HARBOURTON MT AIRY RD	Martindell	Cty EP	43.0
28	00002 01	46 HARBOURTON MT AIRY RD	Weidel (Jr.)	Cty EP	45.60
28	00002 03	42 HARBOURTON MT AIRY RD	Benioff	Cty EP	109.6
29	5		Mokros	SADC EP	94.32
31	00006 03	HARB WOODSVILLE RD	County of Mercer	Cty EP	94.4
31	13.03	MARSH CORNER WOODSVILLE ROAD	County of Mercer	Cty EP	139.5
37	23	91 TITUS MILL RD	Hart	Cty EP	15.2
37	00023 01	91 TITUS MILL RD	Hart	Cty EP	58.0
37	00025 01	TITUS MILL RD	Niederer	PIG	14.5
37	00025 03	TITUS MILL RD	Niederer	PIG	6.4
39	16	333 CARTER RD	Martin	SADC EP	95.15
39	17	333 CARTER RD	Martin	SADC EP	32.15
39	30	37 BAYBERRY RD	Martin	SADC EP	19.56
40	5	42 BAYBERRY RD	Martin	SADC EP	21.34
44	5		DiDonato	Cty EP	.15
44	00011 03	OLD MILL RD	Chowdbury	SADC FS	92.7
46	1.04	TITUS MILL RD	Niederer	Cty EP	63.8
46	00005 01	TITUS MILL RD	Niederer	Cty EP	60.7
50	4	257 PENN HARBOURTON RD	Hollinger	Green Acres	28.22
50	13	1412 TRENTON HARB RD	Gallo	Cty EP	54.44
50	00015 02	321 PENN HARBOURTON RD	Ferrette	Cty EP	42.51

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51	23		Foster	PIG	48.29
52	5	121 PLEASANT VAL HARB RD	Newhouse	Donation	213.6
52	54	1429 TRENTON HARB RD	Weidel	Cty EP	36.7
61	3.01		Niederer	PIG	23.95
61	3.02		Niederer	PIG	88.19
61	5.01		Niederer	PIG	103.92
62	1.01	1310 BEAR TAVERN RD	Fedor	Cty EP	60.9
62	2.011		Patricelli	Cty EP	25.69
62	4.03	1258 BEAR TAVERN RD.	Smith	Green Acres	78.43
62	24	349 PENN.-TITUSVILLE RD	Batcha	Green Acres	143.76
62	26.041		Lovero	NPG	69.89
72	00006 20	163 BLACKWELL ROAD	Radvany	Cty EP	26.4
75	00001 01	164 BLACKWELL RD	HART	Cty EP	16.3
					2,720.62

The project area includes 1,109 acres of preserved farmland and 2,911 acres of dedicated open space for a total of 4,020 acres (37%).

B. Distribution of soil types and their characteristics

Hopewell Township is characterized largely by productive agricultural soils (see [Figure 6](#)) as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA – NRCS). Prime farmland comprises approximately 44% of the Township’s land area, soils of statewide importance 34%, and farmland of local importance 5%. In addition 93% of active agricultural areas practices take place on Prime, Statewide or locally important soils.

Table 4: Farm Capability Township Wide

Soils	Acres	%	Acres in Cropland and Pastureland	% in Cropland and Pastureland
Prime Farmland	16,950	44	4,968	55
Soils of Statewide Importance	13,008	34	3,238	36
Soils of Local Importance	1,782	5	144	2
Other	7,038	18	665	7
Total	38,778	100	9,015	100

The proposed Project Area also has a high percentage of farm capable soils. High quality farm soils consist of 89% of the total project area (Table 5).

Table 5: Farm Capable Soils in Proposed Central Project Area

Soils	Acres	%	Acres in Cropland and Pastureland	% in Cropland and Pastureland
Prime Farmland	4,418	42	2,156	53
Soils of Statewide Importance	4,398	42	1,614	39
Soils of Local Importance	498	5	73	2
Other	1,268	12	233	6
Total	10,582	100	4,076	100

The following descriptions of prime farmland, soils of statewide importance and farmland of local importance are taken from the “New Jersey Important Farmlands Inventory”, prepared by the SADC in 1990.

Prime Farmlands-Prime Farmlands include all those soils in Land Capability Class I and selected soils from Land Capability Class II. Prime Farmland is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber and oilseed crops and is also available for these uses. It has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to economically produce sustained high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods.

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Prime Farmlands are not excessively erodible or saturated with water for a long period of time, and they either do not flood frequently or are protected from flooding.

Soils of Statewide Importance-Farmlands of statewide importance include those soils in Land Capability Classes II and III that do not meet the criteria as Prime Farmland. These soils are nearly Prime Farmland and economically produce high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. Some may produce yields as high as Prime Farmland if conditions are favorable.

Farmland of Local Importance-Farmland of local importance includes those soils that are not prime or statewide importance and are used for the production of high value food, fiber or horticultural crops.

C. *Number of Irrigated Acres and Available Water Resources*

Farms in Hopewell were not typically irrigated but over the past 15 years the acreage has increased. Only 11 acres are identified as irrigated in 1983 according to the New Jersey Farmland Assessment but increased to 201 acres in 2007 (Table 6). The major crops being irrigated are field crops. Section VII.C. contains expanded discussion on the Township's water supply.

Almost all of the land irrigated is dedicated to field crops and vegetables (197 acres). The main source of water for irrigated crops in the Township comes from wells.

Table 6: Irrigated Acres

Crop	1983	1990	2000	2004	2007	Change 1983-2007 (Acres)	% Change 1983-2007*
Irrigated acres	11	NA	NA	NA			NA
Field crops	NA	1	116	132	116	115	11,500
Fruit	NA	3	1	0	2	-1	-33
Ornamental	NA	2	3	2	2	0	0
Vegetables	NA	16	55	76	81	65	406
Total	11	22	175	210	201	190	1,727

**based on most recent available year reported*

D. *Farmland Assessment and Census of Agriculture Statistics and Trends*

1. and 2. Number of Farms and Farms by Size (Average and Median Farm Size)

According to the 2004 MOD IV tax data and using the Township's GIS data, farms were categorized by owner name and the average and median sizes determined. There were 17,339 acres of farmland in the Township, when calculated by owner name the average farm in the Township is 43 acres with a median of 24 acres.

The Township's average and median size farm correlates to Mercer County's farm size. According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, the County's average

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farm size is 70 acres with a median of 22 acres. However, the Township's median is almost equal to that of the County's.

3. Cropland Harvested, Pasture, Woodland, Equine and total for Agricultural Use

According to the 2007 New Jersey Farmland Assessment, the Township's primary agriculture is located on harvest cropland (Table 7). This is typical of the type of farming currently underway in the Township where silage crops are the primary source of income.

Table 7: Agricultural Land Use

Use	1983	1990	2000	2004	2007 (Acres)	Change 1983- 2007 (Acres)	%
Cropland Harvested	7,657	8,612	7,073	6,203	5,739	-1,918	-25
Permanent Pasture	2,451	2,871	3,413	2,591	2,781	330	13
Attached Woodland	N/A	3,766	3,459	3,206	2,787	-979	-30
Cropland Pastured	994	1,447	1,454	1,510	1,546	552	-44
Unattached Woodland	N/A	3,586	3,519	2,627	2,888	-698	-19
Equine Acres	N/A	N/A	42	106	66	24	57
Woodland/wetland	5,902	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total for Ag Use	16,999	20,568	18,960	16,243	15,807	-1,192	-7

**based on most recent available year reported*

The larger percentage of land devoted to cropland in the Township correlates to the amount of cropland in the County. According to the Mercer County Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan, 45% of the County's farmland is devoted to cropland.

II. Hopewell Agricultural Industry

A. *Trends in Market Value of Agricultural Products*

According to the Mercer County Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan, agriculture accounted for more than \$13.9 million in sales during 1987 and increased to \$18.6 million in 2007. The total amounts of revenue generated by farms in Hopewell Township are hard to identify. The New Jersey office of the United States Department of Agriculture's National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS) is tabulated annually with certain crop yields recorded in recent years that were not previously recorded. Additionally, trends in the market value are not compiled annually at the County level, but rather reported every five years as part of the National Census of Agriculture. The Department of Agriculture Census identified Mercer County had a average per farm market value for agricultural products sold of \$45,164 in 1987, \$53,647 in 1992, \$46,510 in 1997, \$40,286 in 2002 and in 2007 the average per farm value increased to \$59,956. While these statistics are available at the County level, they are not typically available at the municipal level. However, since Hopewell Township has about 45% of the County's agricultural land base it is possible to interpolate the County Census of agricultural data

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to say that the market value of agricultural crops in the Township is approximately \$8.37 million as of 2007.

B. Crop/Production Trends over the last 25 years

According to the 2007 New Jersey Farmland Assessment data in Table 7 of the previous section, land use in agricultural production have been decreasing throughout the Township over the past 25 years. Mercer County and Hopewell Township has also witnessed this decline. As evidenced in Tables 8 through 13, production acreage trends (with the exception of hay and nursery products and equine) have largely decreased consistent with the overall loss of agricultural acreage in Hopewell Township. Mercer County has identified a similar decrease over the same period of time. The County attributed this decline to the conversion of larger farms to housing and commercial land uses. Table 8 identifies the 25 year trend of acres devoted to field crops such as barley, grains, grasses and soybeans.

Table 8: Hopewell Township Land devoted to field crops (Acres)

	1983	1990	2000	2004	2006	2007	Change 1983- 2007 (acres)	% Change 1983- 2007
Barley	47	0	13	25	19	13	-34	-72
Grain Corn	1980	596	1069	744	858	443	-1,537	-78
Silage Corn	196	73	71	38	31	18	-178	-91
Grass Silage	1	0	0	0	0	0	-1	-100
Alfalfa Hay	723	688	733	378	367	389	-334	-46
Other Hay	1638	2263	2345	2342	2139	2,258	620	38
Oats	77	59	2	64	11	25	-52	-68
Rye Grain	76	305	83	10	41	18	-58	-76
Sorghum	15	0	17	310	32	0	-15	-100
Soybeans	1195	1504	837	809	646	668	-527	-44
Wheat	995	1249	698	494	538	463	-532	-53
Cover cop	80	41	26	50	13	19	-61	-76
Other field crops	5	81	6	25	64	29	24	480

**Source: New Jersey Farmland Assessment*

Table 9 identifies acres devoted to fruit productions. This category has seen somewhat stable production acreage trends with a marked increase in grape production and steady decrease in apple production in the past 25 years. Mercer County has also seen this increase and may reflect an increase in local pick-your-own operations, wineries and oriental products.

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Table 9: Hopewell Township Fruit Production (Acres)

	1983	1990	2000	2004	2006	2007	Change 1983-2007 (acres)	% Change 1983- 2007
Apples	42	16	19	12	2	5	-37	-88
Grapes	.2	0	7	18	19	29	28	100
Pear	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	100
Peaches	.2	2	0	0	1	0	-.2	-100
Strawberries	.1	0	0	0	0	0	-.1	-100
Blackberries/Raspberries	1	0	0	0	6	0	-1	-100
Blueberry	0	0	8	8	1	1	1	100
Other Fruit	1	6	2	1	4	2	1	100

**Source: New Jersey Farmland Assessment*

Table 10 depicts the amount of farm acres devoted to vegetable production. The vegetable production in the Township is primarily a mixed vegetable crop with some focus on sweet corn and pumpkins.

Table 10: Hopewell Township Vegetable Production (Acres)

	1983	1990	2000	2004	2006	2007	Change 1983-2007 (acres)	% Change 1983-2007
Asparagus	.3	0	0	0	0	0	-.3	-100
Lima beans	1	1	1	0	0	0	-1	-100
Snap Peas	1	1	4	0	1	0	-1	-100
Cabbage	.1	1	1	0	6	0	-.1	-100
Carrots	.1	0	0	0	0	0	-.1	-100
Sweet Corn	35	91	73	56	65	47	12	34
Cucumbers	1	0	1	2	0	1	0	0
Eggplant	1	1	2	1	1	1	0	0
Lettuce	.1	4	0	0	0	1	1	100
Melons	4	9	3	7	0	2	-2	-50
Onions	1	0	0	0	12	1	0	0
Peas	.1	0	0	0	0	0	-.1	-100
Peppers	5	2	2	1	0	2	-3	-60
White Potatoes	.1	0	1	0	0	0	-.1	-100
Sweet Potatoes	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	100
Pumpkins	16	27	54	40	20	8	-8	-50
Spinach	0	0	0	9	1	0	0	0
Squash	2	4	3	1	1	2	0	0
Tomatoes	6	6	5	4	6	6	0	0
Mixed veg crops	8	44	71	133	105	102	94	1,175

**Source: New Jersey Farmland Assessment*

Table 11 identifies nursery and tree stock acres produced in the Township. This category has seen the most increase, particularly in plants, flowers, trees and shrubs. Mercer

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County also has seen an increase in nursery acres (trees, sod, ornamentals) and attributes this increase to increased demand for landscaping needs of suburban office and housing development.

Table 11: Hopewell Township Nursery and Tree Production (Acres)

	1983	1990	2000	2004	2006	2007	Change 1983-2007 (acres)	% Change 1983-2007
Bedding Plants	1	3	4	8	6	5	4	300
Cut Flowers	0	3	11	5	10	9	9	100
Trees & Shrubs	127	170	86	228	243	251	124	98
Sod	1	0	0	0	8	0	-1	-100
Christmas Trees	224	196	165	129	109	96	-128	-57
Other Nursery	104	21	1	3	13	1	-103	-99
Pond Fish	3	2	2	2	2	3	0	0

**Source: New Jersey Farmland Assessment*

Table 12 identifies timber and woodland production and areas in the Township. This category has seen a relative decrease over the 25 year period.

Table 12: Timber and Woodland Product and Areas

	1983	1990	2000	2004	2006	2007	Change 1983-2007 (acres)	% Change 7
Fuelwood (Cords)	920	693	425	477	401	388	-532	-59
Pulpwood (Cords)	0	72	0	0	2	0	0	100
Timber (Board Feet)	135,905	86,171	76,033	70,275	40,046	32,926	-102,979	-76
Other wood (Board Feet)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Woodland State Plan (acres)	1,293	0	0	0	0	0	-1,293	-100
Woodlands Private Plan (Acres)	708	0	0	0	0	0	-708	-100
Woodland No Plan (Acres)	284	0	0	0	0	0	-284	-100
Land in Federal or Government Program (Acres)	701	1,288	808	822	577	774	73	10

**Source: New Jersey Farmland Assessment*

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The last trend analyzed is livestock and poultry product (Table 13). Chickens, equine and bee hives had the largest increase in this category. Equine, especially, has been increasing in the Township and the County and State. Boarding and lesson facilities have been on the rise and the number of farms, especially in Hopewell Valley provide such services. In addition, there are also equine trainers and breeders in Mercer County, three in Hopewell Township.

Table 13: Hopewell Township Livestock and Poultry Products (head)

	1983	1990	2000	2004	2006	2007	Change 1983-2007 (acres)	% Change 1983-2006
Beef Cattle	611	368	316	296	310	253	-358	-59
Bee Hives	39	84	52	44	62	62	23	59
Mature Dairy	145	97	0	0	0	0	-145	-100
Young Dairy	150	81	8	0	1	1	-149	-99
Ducks	170	50	28	51	95	80	-90	-53
Fur Animals	0	13	7	0	2	2	2	100
Geese	54	0	0	0	0	N/A	-54	-100
Goats	58	11	82	42	39	82	24	41
Ponies & Horses	333	429	518	550	537	706	373	1,120
Meat Chickens	195	88	134	2,209	2,153	169	-26	-13
Laying Chickens	843	556	455	562	766	803	-40	-5
Rabbits	6	0	0	0	0	N/A	-6	-100
Sheep	486	470	484	493	473	473	-439	-90
Swine	192	190	8	26	66	9	-182	-95
Turkeys	16	30	0	2	0	1	-15	-94
Other Livestock	737	18	44	13	34	47	-690	-94

**Source: New Jersey Farmland Assessment*

C and D. Support Services within Market Region and Other Agriculturally Related Industry

The Mercer County Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan identified local support services in the Region. Overall, large production farmers in the County generally rely on mail order for special items and will travel to Pennsylvania or other large agricultural areas to purchase large scale items such as tractors and other heavy equipment. This has lead to a decrease in retail stores specializing in farm supplies in the County.

However, there are still regional retailers that tailor to farm supplies. Table 14 identifies some of the local retailers.

Table 14: Local Farm Supply Retailers

Supplier	Address	Town	Phone	Webpage
Hights Farm Equipment Company		Hightstown, NJ	609-448-1370	http://www.hightsfarmequip.com
Lesco Service Center	12 S Gold Dr.	Trenton, NJ	609-689-0672	
Scudder Tractor Company	215 N Main St	Pennington, NJ	609-737-0432	
Trenton Tractor and Equipment	2836 US Highway 1	Trenton, NJ	609-883-7360	

The Tri County Auction operates out of Hightstown and hosts a produce auction three nights a week.

There is an agricultural resource guide that has been developed to assist the farming community by the NJ Agriculture Extension Service entitled the Salem “Green Pages, An Agricultural Resource Guide”. The guide is maintained by the Cooperative Extension of Salem County. The guide includes statewide and national resources including listings of “Agricultural Associations,” “Contacts and Programs,” “Information and Resources,” and “Service Providers.” The website address is: <http://salem.rutgers.edu/greenpages/index.html> and is perhaps the most comprehensive directory of services and resources available to the farming community.

The 2010 Mercer County Farmland Preservation Plan provides additional details on local support services for farmers:

“When asked where they get agricultural inputs (seed, fertilizer, etc) local farmers say they go to Grow Mark in Burlington County, Farmers Brokerage and Supply in Monmouth County, and the Plant Food Company in Middlesex County.

For equipment purchases, local farmers will go to Pole Tavern Equipment and Sales in Salem County, Farm-Rite in Cumberland County, and Hooper in Intercourse, PA. However, Mercer County’s farmers have become very adept at minimizing the need for many repair services by fixing many mechanical problems themselves. In doing so, they rely heavily upon mail order and out-of-state retailers for their equipment parts.

When asked where they bring their agricultural products, growers of the vastly predominant field crops (see Table 9) like corn for grain, soybeans, and wheat go to Purdue and Grow Mark in Burlington County and also into Pennsylvania. Vegetable farmers, of which sweet corn and pumpkins are the dominant products, sell direct to the consumer from their farms and also to supermarkets and roadside stands.

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The two preserved farm Asian specialty crop farmers in Mercer indicated that northern New Jersey and New York City are their markets for wholesale and direct sales.

In addition, the Trenton Farmers Market provides a daily year round direct marketing outlet for farmers – as it has been doing since the 1930’s. However, the number of participating farmers is limited by the Market’s member’s rules.”

Farmers markets are valuable tools to the retention and promotion of agriculture. Local resident’s who frequent farmer’s markets appreciate locally grown products and can be the largest advocates for the retention of agriculture in an area. The following Table 15 identifies local farmers markets.

Table 15: Regional Farmer’s Markets

Market:	Pennington Farmers Market	Capital City	Greening Princeton	Lawrenceville	Trenton	West Windsor
Address:	101 Rt. 31 South, Pennington	East State Street – The Commons, Trenton	Firestone Library/Chapel Plaza, Princeton	16 Gordon Avenue, Lawrenceville	690 Spruce Street, Trenton	Princeton Junction Train Station
Phone:	(609) 647-8240	(609) 393-8998	(609) 258-5144	(609) 206-0344	(609) 695-2998	(609) 577-5513
Contact:	Jenn Spencer	Kim Aubry		Mike Azzara		Beth Feehan
Open:	June 4th-Oct. 29th, 2011, Saturdays, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.	July 12 to September 27 11am – 2pm	September 25 to October 23. Tuesdays 11 am to 3 pm	June 10 to October 23, Sunday's 9am to 3pm	Year Round, call for times	May 19 to October 27, Saturdays 9am to 1pm
Products:	Organic and Conventional Produce, Orchard Fruit, Berries, Herbs, honey products, Grass Fed Beef, Eggs, Cut Flowers, Fresh Baked Goods, alpaca products.	Fruits and Vegetables	Fruits, Vegetables, honey, beef, Lamb, pork, eggs, cheeses, breads, coffee	Fruits, vegetables, flowers, herbs, poultry, meats	Apples, baked goods, meats, seafood, jewelry, flowers, crafts	Fruits and vegetables, meats, breads, Flowers
Other:	WIC & Senior FMNP vouchers accepted by some farmers	WIC and Senior FMNP Checks accepted	www.princeton.edu/greening/market	WIC and Senior Vouchers accepted by some farmers	WIC and Senior Vouchers accepted by some farmers	WIC and Senior Vouchers accepted by some farmers

There are also a variety of pick your own and roadside markets throughout the county. Visit the Jersey Fresh website for more detailed information at: www.state.nj.us/agriculture/jerseyfresh.

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The 2010 Mercer County Farmland Preservation Plan states that “there are there are no other industries directly related to agriculture in Mercer County; however, many small business’ in Mercer County such as landscapers, restaurants, liquor stores, supermarkets, and schools buy locally produced agricultural products directly.

One school in particular, The Lawrenceville School, a private four-year boarding school, has made significant strides towards providing student and staff meals with food purchased locally – such as fruits from Terhune Orchards in Lawrence and vegetables from Sandy Acres in East Windsor.

Many people now prefer buying locally grown produce and such patronage is a staple to many farmers’ stands and markets. Increased awareness of food supply and the cost of buying from distant places have become increasingly important to customers interested in food safety and wellness. The Township’s proximity to Pennington and Hopewell Borough’s provides for a greater access to markets, restaurants and general population to take advantage of the buy local movement. Encouraging residents to purchase locally grown foods, and encourage local supermarkets, restaurants and other businesses to do the same would help to bolster the agricultural base of the Township, region and State.

III. Land Use Planning Context

A. *State Development and Redevelopment Planning Areas, Designated Centers and Endorsed Plans*

Under the SDRP's Resource Planning and Management Structure (RPMS) that divides the State into five Planning Areas (PA-1 to PA-5), ranging from urban to rural and environmentally sensitive, and provides policy objectives for each Planning Area, Hopewell Township includes five Planning Area designations. These are PA-2, the Suburban Planning Area; PA-3, the Fringe Planning Area; PA-4, the Rural Planning Area; PA-4B, the Rural/Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area; PA-5, the Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area; and, an area of approximately 4,600 acres designated as Park. Policy objectives for Planning Areas 3, 4, 4B and 5 seek to enhance agricultural viability and rural character, and to protect large contiguous areas of critical environmental resources.

Significantly, under the adopted SDRP approximately 71% of the Township's land area is classified as either PA-4, PA-4B, PA-5 or Park. The acreage figures by Planning Area are as follows (Table 16), and the Planning Areas are depicted on [Figure 7](#):

Table 16: State Planning Areas

Planning Area	Acreage
2 (Suburban)	4,138
3 (Fringe)	6,808
4 (Rural)	12,520
4B (Rural Env. Sensitive)	4,879
5 (Env. Sensitive)	5,406
Park	4,558

The Township does not have any designated centers, but has three locally identified centers, Titusville, Marshall's Corner and I-95, and the Township's surrounds Hopewell and Pennington Boroughs, which provides additional access to center type services. The Township has initiated the plan endorsement process with the State Planning Commission/Office of Smart Growth, and had a pre-application meeting scheduled for January 2008. However, given the delay in the SDRP process and other state-initiatives taking precedent, the Township has not proceeded with the process at this time.

SDRP guidance for management of the Rural Planning Area has been provided, as follows:

"Prudent land development practices are required to protect these resources and retain large contiguous areas of agricultural land. If a viable agricultural industry is to be sustained in the future, the conversion of some of the lands to non-farm uses must be sensitive to the areas predominant rural character and agricultural land

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base. Throughout New Jersey, some Rural Planning Areas are subject to greater development pressure than other areas. Without greater attention to maintaining and enhancing our rural areas, these economic activities are at risk. Tools and techniques need to be tailored to address the distinctive situation. In particular, new development may require additional attention in areas with environmentally sensitive features.”

For the Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area, the State Plan offers the following:

“The Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area contains large contiguous land areas with valuable ecosystems, geological features and wildlife habitats particularly in the . . . Highlands region, . . . The future environmental and economic integrity of the state rests in the protection of these irreplaceable resources. . . Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas are characterized by watersheds of pristine waters, trout streams and drinking water supply reservoirs; recharge areas for potable water aquifers; habitats of endangered and threatened plant and animal species; coastal and freshwater wetlands; prime forested areas; scenic vistas; and other significant topographical, geological or ecological features, . . . These resources are critically important not only for the residents of these areas, but for all New Jersey citizens.

The Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area is highly vulnerable to damage of many sorts from new development in the Environs, including fragmentation of landscapes, degradation of aquifers and potable water, habitat destruction, extinction of plant and animal species and destruction of other irreplaceable resources which are vital for the preservation of the ecological integrity of New Jersey’s natural resources. . . New development in these Environs has the potential to destroy the very characteristics” (environmental sensitivities) “that define the area”.

The SDRP promotes the retention of large open land areas in PA4B & 5, and the Plan defines “large contiguous area”.

“When applied to habitat, (large contiguous area) means the area of undisturbed land required to maintain a desired community of plants and animals”, and “when applied to farmland, large contiguous area means the amount of contiguous farmland usually considered necessary to permit normal farm operations to take place on a sustained basis.”

The Township is endowed with large contiguous land areas with valuable ecosystems, geological features and wildlife habitats that support critical habitat. Whether it is the maintenance of large contiguous areas for farmland or to protect environmentally-sensitive areas, Hopewell’s stewardship of these lands requires policies and management techniques to sustain the landscape in such a way that the long-term viability and function of these lands and natural systems may be assured. Hopewell seeks to manage these resources consistent with the SDRP policy orientation for the Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area.

SDRP Policies seek to maintain the viability of agricultural areas and the function of natural systems through strategies aimed at the protection of these resources and coordinated growth policies that orient new development adjacent to either Centers, or existing developed areas with infrastructure capable of supporting development. Development should be compact and innovative development approaches, such as clustering or open lands zoning will be needed to discourage sprawl-type patterns of development that would fragment and destroy the very resources that the Rural and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area designations seek to protect.

Centers are recognized in a range of scales, from major Urban Centers to small Hamlets, depending on the amount of employment and housing growth they will accommodate, as well as other characteristics. The State Plan Policy Map applies different criteria and policies to each type of Center:

Urban Centers

Urban Centers are the largest of the Plan's five types of Centers. ...Urban Centers offer the most diverse mix of industry, commerce, residences and cultural facilities of any central place. While New Jersey's Urban Centers have suffered decline, they still contain many jobs and households. They are repositories of large infrastructure systems, industrial jobs, corporate headquarters, medical and research services, universities, government offices, convention centers, museums and other valuable built assets...[and] are also home to a large pool of skilled and presently unskilled labor....

Regional Centers

In Metropolitan Planning Areas, Regional Centers may include some smaller cities not designated as Urban Centers. In Suburban Planning Areas, they often serve as major employment centers and offer regional services, such as higher education, health and arts/entertainment. In rural areas, they may be population centers and county seats, with small business districts serving residents. New Regional Centers should be located in the state's major corridors and designed to organize growth that otherwise would sprawl throughout the corridor and create unserviceable demands. They should be compact and contain a mix of residential, commercial and office uses at an intensity that will make a variety of public transportation options feasible as the Centers are built out. New Regional Centers should have a core of commercial activity, and the boundaries of the Centers should be well defined by open space or significant natural features.

Towns

Towns are the traditional centers of commerce or government throughout the state. They are relatively freestanding in terms of their economic, social and cultural functions. They contain several neighborhoods that together provide a highly diverse housing stock in terms of types and price levels. Towns have a compact form of development with a defined central core containing shopping services, offices and community and governmental facilities. New Towns should emulate to the extent possible the most cherished features of the traditional New Jersey towns, that is, the comfortable, human scale of blocks, streets and open spaces, the easy walking access to civic and community activities, and a collection of neighborhoods offering a remarkable diversity of housing choice.

Villages

Villages are compact, primarily residential communities that offer basic consumer services for their residents and nearby residents and may offer more specialized services to a wider area. Villages are not meant to provide major regional shopping or employment for their regions. New Villages will comprise a small core and collection of neighborhoods. In the Suburban Planning Area, new Villages are likely to be distinguished from surrounding development only by a more cohesive and structured development form and by greater proximity between residential and nonresidential uses. In Fringe, Rural and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas, new Villages should be surrounded by natural areas, farmland or open lands in the form of a greenbelt and should contain a commercial component in the core capable of offering neighborhood-scale goods and services.

Hamlets

Hamlets are the smallest types of Centers in the State Plan. Existing Hamlets are found primarily in rural areas, often at crossroads. Hamlets are not synonymous with conventional single-use residential subdivisions. Although Hamlets are primarily residential in character, they may have a small, compact core offering limited convenience goods and community activities, such as a multi-purpose community building; a school; a house of worship; a tavern, luncheonette; or a commons or similar land uses. The density of a Hamlet should conform to the carrying capacities of natural and built systems.

The SDRP supports municipalities in their efforts to provide for sound long term planning processes. Plan Endorsement encourages municipalities to engage in cooperative regional planning. It ensures that municipal, county, regional and State Agency plans are consistent with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan and

with each other. An endorsed plan entitles municipalities and counties to a higher priority for available funding, streamlined permit reviews, and coordinated state agency services. Priority is given to county and regional strategic plans. The creation and adoption of Master Plan Elements, such as the Farmland Preservation Plan, is one task required to enter Plan Endorsement.

B. Special Resource Areas

Hopewell Township is located within the Sourlands Regional Planning Area ([See Figure 8](#)), designated by the Office of Smart Growth and incorporated into the State Development and Redevelopment Plan. The Sourlands span Hunterdon, Somerset and Mercer Counties and includes portions of Hopewell, West Amwell, East Amwell, Hillsborough and Montgomery Township's. In Hopewell, this area is located in the northern portion of the Township, most aligned with the MRC (Mountain Resource Conservation) zoning district.

The Sourland Mountain region contains a rich biodiversity and has severely limited water. Human development has fragmented the forest core and creates an imbalance in the ecosystem. Agricultural activities have traditionally created the grasslands that support endangered and threatened species on the flanks of the mountain.

The Sourlands Planning Council has prepared a Comprehensive Management Plan that considered municipal master plans, long term planning initiatives and local regulations to carefully manage the fragile environmental resources of the mountain. The CMP does mandate policy action but provides best management practices and guidance for municipalities in the Sourlands region. Many of the participating municipalities have already taken policy and regulatory initiatives to protect the extremely limited water supply and unique natural systems located on the Mountain independently.

A newly created Sourland Municipal Alliance (SMA) will be a support network for each of the municipalities with a purpose to advance the following goals:

- Expand and regenerate forests, and protect wetlands, wildlife habitats, and scenic vistas;
- Maintain the rural character of the communities including the preservation of farmland and shifting farmland practices to those more harmonious with the environment;
- Identify environmentally sensitive natural areas and protect them from development;
- Protect, defend and manage the region's scarce water resources;
- Develop a series of model environmental ordinances;
- Become leaders and educators in the effort to build awareness of the biodiversity of the Sourlands as a "living classroom";
- Work to identify and preserve scenic corridors, byways and vistas, recognizing their importance in helping to create the special quality of the Sourlands;

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- Strengthen our commitment to identify and preserve historic resources;
- Seek agreement among stakeholders on matters such as road widths, allowable speed limits, and clearing and removal of brush along roads;
- Strengthen commitment to “dark skies”; and
- Develop rational consensus on treatment of undersized lots in light of water and other resource limits.

Hopewell is a continued partner in the Sourlands Municipal Alliance and recognizes the balance of farmland preservation in the MRC district. Historically, farming the Sourlands Mountain has occurred at higher rates than witnessed recently. Farming operations continue in the MRC and Sourlands Region in the Township and Hopewell supports these operations and continues to support the inclusion of farms in the Sourlands to enter the Farmland Preservation Program and continue agricultural activities vital to the Township and the region.

C. Municipal Master Plan and Development Regulations

Over the past nine years the Planning Board has completed the following Master Plan Elements and Reexamination Reports:

- Goals and Objectives (adopted May 23, 2002)
- Land Use Plan Element (adopted May 23, 2002)
- Conservation Plan Element (adopted May 23, 2002)
- 2002 Reexamination Report (adopted September 30, 2002)
- Farmland Preservation Plan Element (adopted May 27, 2003)
- Open Space and Recreation Plan Element (adopted December 9, 2004)
- Historic Preservation Plan Element (adopted December 9, 2004)
- Stormwater Management Plan Element (adopted March 22, 2005)
- Housing Plan Element and Fair Share Plan (adopted November 29, 2005)
- Circulation Plan Element (adopted March 9, 2006)
- Community Facilities Plan Element (adopted April 12, 2007)
- 2007 Reexamination Report (adopted October 18, 2007)
- 2009 Reexamination Report (Adopted March 12, 2009)
- 2009 Land Use Plan Element (Adopted October 22, 2009)

The Township’s 2009 Land Use Plan reiterates the Township’s commitment to a balance of land use policy, environmental protection, agricultural resource protection and the needs of the land owner. The 2009 Land Use Plan specifically discusses the role of the Valley Resource District and the Mountain Resource District as it pertains to the protection of valuable natural resources and development and agriculture. As stated in the Plan, the Valley Resource Conservation (VRC) and Mountain Resource Conservation (MRC) Districts comprise of approximately 78% of the land area of Hopewell Township. A lack of infrastructure limits the overall development potential in the districts. Capacity-based planning is key to the Township’s ability to accommodate growth and

development within limits defined by natural resource capabilities and existing infrastructure.

The Land Use Plan also notes the conflict that can occur with the encroachment of suburban style development in agricultural areas. One of the goals of the VRC and MRC Districts is to reduce such conflicts by reducing the amount of residential development so that agriculture is affected by fewer residences and more lands can be retained for agricultural use. A reduction in residential density also results in a reduced demand on water, thus retaining more water capacity for agricultural needs.

The Township recognizes the value of the agricultural soils found in most of the Township. The Plan specifically states, “The long-term utility and viability of this resource is enhanced if critical masses of agricultural lands and soils are maintained wherever they currently exist. The combination of prime soils, access to densely populated markets and the Township’s regional location all combine to assure an agricultural future, so long as the farmland base can be preserved.”

To this end the Plan recognizes the need for innovative planning techniques aimed at viable means to preserve agricultural resources.

The 2009 Land Use Plan encourages the concept of hamlet development. Hamlet development would provide for more compact neighborhoods in areas suitable for development and provide for permanent preservation of the lands in the RC Districts through a noncontiguous cluster option. This would be achieved through an off-tract cluster option for land in the RC Districts.

The Plan also proposes three development options for properties in the RC Districts. The first, the open lands zoning option, permits an appropriate scale of residential development, while also retaining prime agricultural lands and protecting sensitive environmental features. Open lands zoning would permit property owners in the VRC a density of approximately one unit per 6 acres provided that 60 to 70 percent of the parcel is permanently deed restricted against future residential use and remains available for agricultural or other resource conservation uses. In the MRC District, the open lands zoning permits a density of approximately one unit per 13 to 14 acres provided that 75 to 80 percent of the parcel is permanently deed restricted. In order to assure that the open lands are not remnant unusable properties, minimum standards for soil quality and usable land should be established.

Clustering and lot averaging are also recommended for the VRC and MRC Districts at the same densities as with the open lands zoning option. Clustering is designed to leave useful tracts of open space as a byproduct of residential development and permits a reduction in the minimum lot size in return for permanent commitments of open space areas, with the open space dedicated to either a public body or homeowners’ association. Clustering is permitted where at least 60 percent of the tract in the VRC District, and at least 75 percent of the tract in the MRC District, can be retained in open space. The final technique is lot averaging, which requires a majority of lots meet a specified range of lot

sizes smaller than the required minimum lot size to permit other larger lots designed to meet specific conservation objectives. The goal of lot averaging, as with the other techniques, is that critical resources be preserved. The Land Use Plan recommends that conventional subdivisions be permitted as a conditional use in the VRC and MRC districts. Also, the siting of buildings and structures can be regulated to limit the negative impacts of new construction on the resources prioritized for protection.

In general, the overarching principal in the 2009 Land Use Plan is to ensure that the preferred development alternatives for the Valley and Mountain Resource Conservation Districts will “maintain large contiguous tracts of farmland and other open lands, promote continued agricultural use of prime agricultural lands and maintain the delicate balance among the various components of the natural systems.”

D. Current Land Use

On a Township-wide basis the land use by property class (according to the year 2009 tax list), is as follows:

Table 17: Property Classification for Hopewell Township

Property Class	Acres	Percent
Vacant	1,707	4.7
Residential	7,851	21.8
Farm	16,417	45.5
Commercial	812	2.3
Industrial	961	2.7
Railroad	110	0.3
Public/quasi-public	8,318	23.1

According to these data, the predominant property class in the Township is farmland at 45 percent of the Township’s land area. The second most common property class is residential, representing 22 percent of the land area, followed by public and quasi-public, with approximately 23 percent of the land area. The public land category involves a diverse assortment of ownership, including State and County lands, municipal lands and school property. The quasi-public category comprises cemeteries and graveyards, churches and other charitable property, including such uses as the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association and the American Legion. Industrial land, which includes the Research Office Districts and the two quarries, accounts for approximately 3 percent of the land area, while commercial lands, which involves retail uses, small offices, the airport and private golf courses, occupies approximately 2 percent of the land area.

A more detailed and accurate depiction of land use can be taken from the Land Use/Land Cover classification, completed by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. These data were derived from the 2002 Digital Ortho Quarter-Quads, flown for the entire State. As a comparison to the Land Use by Property Class, the Land Use/Land Cover data shows what is actually on the ground. The Property Class

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information may show an entire property as farm assessed, giving the impression that all of its acreage is farmed. In actuality, 50 percent of the tract may be wooded and not farmed at all. The Land Use/Land Cover is more accurate in that it will show the true land use of the property, where, for example, 5 percent may be residential, 50 percent wooded and 45 percent cultivated.

On a Township-wide basis the land use/land cover identifies the following distribution of land use in the Township:

Table 18: NJDEP 2007 Land Use/Land Cover

	1986		1995		2002		2007		% Change 1986-2007
Land Use/Land Cover	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%	%
Agriculture	14,041	36	11,620	30	10,237	27	9,805	26	-30
Barren Land	236	.6	438	1	596	2	357	1	51
Forest	13,682	35	14,619	38	14,334	38	14,069	37	3
Urban	6,800	18	8,143	21	8,653	23	9,630	26	42
Water	575	1	585	2	658	2	700	2	22
Wetlands	3,454	9	3,384	9	3,232	9	3,148	8	-9
TOTAL	38,789*	100**	38,789*	100	37,709	100	37,709	100	

**spatial adjustments between 1995 and 2007 NJDEP LU/LC accounts for acreage differences.*

*** Due to rounding*

The most expansive land use type in Hopewell Township is forest, accounting for approximately 37 percent of the land area. Forested areas occur over much of the Township, but are concentrated in the higher elevations and marshy lowlands. Much of the forested area represents high priority habitat for wildlife. Agricultural land covers approximately 26 percent of the Township's total acreage, and represents the second most prevalent land use type in the municipality. Agricultural lands are concentrated in the Township's valleys, although much of the Township's higher elevations are devoted to agricultural lands. Comparing the land use by property tax to the land use/land cover, approximately 64 percent of the land classified as agricultural by tax class is agricultural by land use type.

Land Use/Land Cover designated as urban on the mapping covers land uses that range from individual rural residential units to commercial and major office uses. The general classification of urban describes areas that are developed in one fashion or another, and includes power lines, roads and athletic fields or golf courses. The urban land covers approximately 26 percent of the Township. The urban land is concentrated around Pennington, Titusville and Washington's Crossing, in suburban developments between Pennington and Hopewell Boroughs, and in the Township's research and office developments.

The other land use types include barren land, wetlands and water. The barren lands category includes the two quarries in the Township and sites under construction at the time of the aerial photography. Wetlands account for approximately 8 percent of the Township's land area, while water represents approximately 2 percent. The distribution of wetlands is discussed below in the Wetlands section, while the category of water includes the Delaware River, Rosedale Lake, Baldwin Lake, Honey Lake and scattered small ponds.

E. Sewer Service Areas/Public Water Supply Service Area

The Township has limited sewer and water supply service areas. The Ewing Lawrence Sewerage Authority (ELSA) services an area of approximately 5 square miles between I-95 on the south, Scotch Road on the west, Route 546 on the north, and Federal City Road on the east, as well as the Bear Tavern School, Timberlane Middle School, Hopewell Valley Central High School, Pennington Shopping Center and Janssen Pharmaceutica (see [Figure 9](#)). The Stony Brook Regional Sewerage Authority (SBRSA) services two subdivisions, Princeton Farms and Hopewell Hunt, in the eastern part of the Township. Individual treatment plants service the Pennytown Shopping Center, Hopewell Valley Golf Club, Bristol Myers Squibb research/office facility, and the Hopewell Research Park.

Public water supply largely is provided by the City of Trenton Water Works. The service area is similar but not identical to the ELSA sewer service area, extending across the southern part of the Township bounded by I-95 to the south, Route 29 on the west, Route 546 on the north and Federal City Road on the east. The General Development Plan approval for the Hopewell Research Park requires the developer to provide public water from the American Water Company to the site on Carter Road by an extension of the existing water system from Province Line Road along Cherry Valley Road to Carter Road.

F. Municipal Master Plan and Zoning Overview

1. General Lot Size Categories and Distribution throughout the Township

Hopewell Township's 37,349.13 acres are divided into twenty different zoning districts, including six residential zones with varying densities and minimum lot sizes, one special hamlet resource conservation district and two resource conservation districts that permit residential development in several different manners (Figure 10). Table 19 depicts the eight zoning district which allow residential development and its percentage of Hopewell Township:

Table 19: Residential Zoning Districts by Area

Zoning District	Acres of Zoning	% of Township
R-150	1,194.25	3.2%
R-100	2,373.36	6.4%
R-75	158.78	0.4%
R-50	208.79	0.6%
R-5	624.81	1.7%
R-6	58.80	0.2%
VRC	16,714.5	44.8%
MRC	13,007.29	34.8
VRC-HLI	120	.3
TOTAL	34,460.58	92.4%

Twelve non-residential districts comprise the remaining acres of the Township. The acreage in each district and the percentage of the Township are presented in Table 20.

Table 20: Nonresidential Zoning Districts by Area

Zone	Acres	Percentage
C-1 Neighborhood Retail Commercial	86.24	0.2%
SC: Shopping Center	46.51	0.1%
SC-1 Shopping Center 1	34.56	0.1%
HBO Highway Business and Office	80.47	0.2%
O/CC Office and Commercial Conversion	63.21	0.2%
SI Special Industrial	389.25	1.0%
OP Office Park	634.98	1.7%
IC Industrial Commercial	148.67	0.4%
RO-1 Research/Office	441.46	1.2%
RO-2 Research/Office	251.85	0.7%
RO-3 Research/Office	361.56	1.0%
Q Quarry	349.79	0.9%
	2,888.55	7.7%

The minimum lot sizes and densities for the residential development opportunities provided within Hopewell’s residential districts are provided in Table 21:

Table 21: Residential Zones and Permitted Densities

Zoning District	Units Per Acre
R-150 Non cluster Cluster	0.6 dwelling unit per acre 1 dwelling unit per acre.
R-100 Cluster with sewer & water Non Cluster with sewer & water Well & Septic	5.7 dwelling unit per acre. 2 dwelling unit per acre 1 dwelling unit per acre
R-75	3 dwelling unit per acre.
R-50	5.5 dwelling unit per acre.
R-5	5 dwelling unit per acre.
R-6	6 dwelling units per acre.
VRC Conventional Open lands, Cluster, Lot Averaging	1 dwelling unit per 6 acres 1 dwelling unit per 2 acres with 0.17 unit/acre density
MRC Conventional Open lands, Cluster, Lot Averaging	1 dwelling units per 14 acres 1 dwelling unit per 2 acres with .075 unit/acre density

This wide range of densities, from 6 units per acre to 14 acres per unit, is a reflection of the balance found in Hopewell’s land use planning goals and policies, and the regulations adopted to implement them.

The twelve different non-residential zones include a mixture of commercial, manufacturing and office districts. Table 22 provides a description of the districts by minimum lot area, maximum lot coverage and FAR.

Table 22: Non-Residential Zones by Lot Area, Lot Coverage and Floor Area Ratio

District	Lot Area	Lot Coverage	FAR
C-1	2 acres	65%	0.20
HBO	5 to 1 acres ¹	65-40%	0.10 to 0.20
O/CC	1 acre	60-50%	0.15
SI	3 acres	50%	0.20
IC	5 to 1 acre	65-40%	0.10-0.20
OP	5 acres	50%	0.20
RO-1	100 acres	25%	0.15
RO-2	100 acres	25%	0.13
RO-3	100 acres	25%	0.05
Q	50 acres	50%	0.20
SC	5 acres	60%	0.20
SC 1	5 acres	60%	0.20

The multiplicity of residential and non-residential development opportunities provided in Hopewell's zone plan, offers an inclusive balance of land use types for a broad range of development opportunities.

2. Innovative Planning Techniques

a. Cluster Zoning

The Township's two large lot zoning districts, the Valley Resource Conservation (VRC) with six acre minimum lot sizes and the Mountain Resource Conservation (MRC) with 14 acre minimum lot sizes, permit clustering for lots greater than 18 acres in the VRC and 40 acres or more in the MRC to minimum lot sizes of approximately two acres provided that 65% and 75%, respectively, of the land is maintained as open space. Additionally, the open space set asides must include at least 5 acres of, be greater than 50 feet in width with at least 50% unconstrained land. These same districts provide a variation on clustering, termed open lands' subdivisions, where the remaining open space, be it agricultural or forested lands, is retained in private hands with a deed restriction on the property. Maintaining the open lands in private hands promotes stewardship and long-term management of the property. When viewed together, and compared to conventional subdivisions, the preferred development alternatives for the Valley and Mountain Resource Conservation Districts will maintain large contiguous tracts of farmland and other open lands, promote continued agricultural use of prime agricultural lands and maintain the delicate balance among the various components of the natural systems.

¹ Depends on the type of use.

The Township's Master Plan and Reexamination Report suggest that:

"The Planning Board should review whether cluster and open lands subdivisions in the VRC and MRC districts should be designated the principal permitted use, and conventional subdivisions only permitted as conditional uses when the other options are not practical."

However, the development regulations have not implemented this concept. There is some concern that the implementation of this concept might restrict what otherwise would be reasonable subdivisions.

b. Non-contiguous cluster zoning

Non-contiguous cluster zoning also was recommended in the Master Plan and implemented in the development regulations. Property owners in the VRC and MRC districts may realize the developmental potential of their property by transferring the development to a Township-designated Hamlet, and are provided with a density bonus of 7 acres per unit in the MRC and 3 acres per unit in the VRC.

c. Lot Averaging

For tracts of land in the VRC and MRC Districts under the minimum cluster provisions of 18 or 40 acres respectively, lot size averaging is permitted. This innovative planning technique permits lot sizes to be reduced to 2 to 3 acres with the conservation of 60 to 75 percent of agricultural or forested land. Lots created under this scenario must result in at least 60% of the lots created being between 80,000 and 120,000 square feet with development shifted towards land that can support the instillation of a dwelling and associated well and septic systems. On agricultural lands, development should retain prime soils and agricultural resources.

Since enacting these provisions in 2004, and with the recent decline in the housing market, developers have not yet taken advantage of these development options.

3. Buffer Requirements for Agricultural Uses

The Township does not have buffer requirements for agricultural uses. However, the Township has a strong Right to Farm ordinance that originally was adopted in 1993. In addition, the innovative planning techniques referenced in subsection F.2 above provide a preference for the maintenance of agricultural uses.

4. Development Pressures and Land Value Trends

During the 1990's the Township saw vast and irreversible changes in land use and the concomitant effects. Among the salient points are the following:

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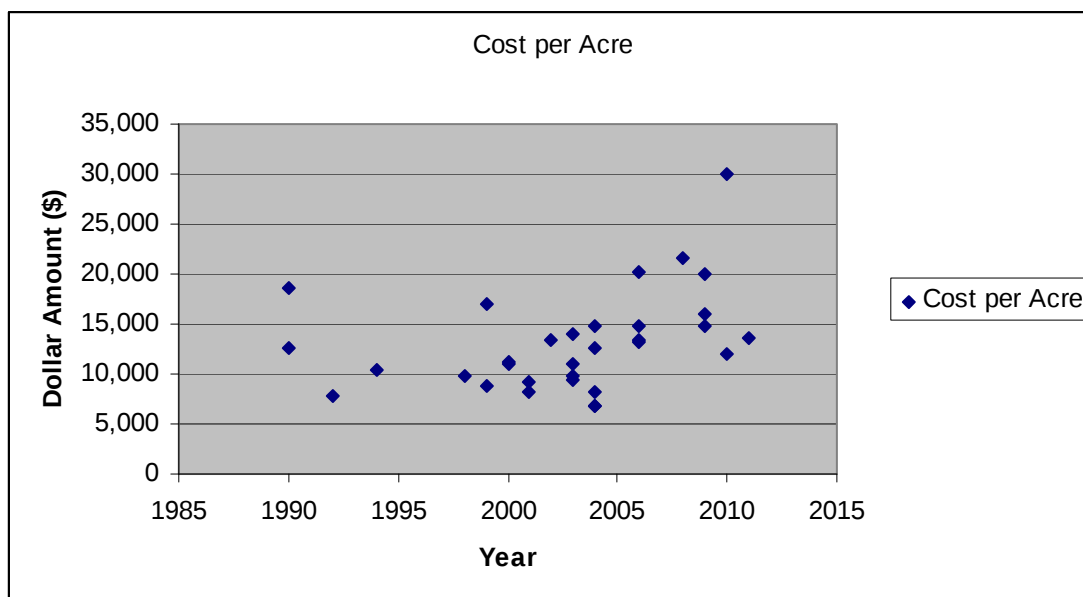
- During the 1990's over 1,800 building permits were issued for new residential development, and approximately 1,800 new housing units were created.
- During the 1990's the Township added 4,515 residents, which is equivalent to the total combined population of the Boroughs of Hopewell and Pennington.
- The new housing stock included approximately 570 townhouses and 100 apartments.
- From 1988 to 1998 the Township approved approximately 650 dwelling units in the lower density zoning districts (formerly R-200 and R-250), which consumed approximately 2,400 acres of land, an area roughly equivalent to the total land area of Hopewell Borough, Pennington Borough, Flemington Borough and the City of Lambertville.
- In addition to the development referenced above, the Township has approved 240 townhouses, 150 age-restricted rental apartments and 115 age-restricted single-family dwellings, and has zoned for a 288 unit development of age-restricted and lower income apartments.
- During the 1990's the Township approved over 8,000,000 square feet of nonresidential development, of which approximately 3,000,000 square feet currently exists.
- As of the year 2009, the Township's zoning permitted a total of 20,706,387 square feet of non-residential development, including existing and approved development.

These figures highlight the dramatic changes that have occurred in the Township, and support the responsible approach to land use management that the Township pursued in following the revised Master Plan and development regulations adopted in 2002.

Since the explosive growth of the 1990's and the early twenty-first century, development pressure in the Township has waned somewhat, although its proximity to Trenton and Princeton and its natural beauty continue to draw attention. The Township's four major corporations have all sought some form of expansion, so the Township anticipates that most of its future growth will be nonresidential. As noted above, the Township added just over two million square feet of non-residential development since 2000 and has issued 712 Certificates of Occupancy during the same time. In 2007 through 2009, residential CO's drastically fell to a total of 22 for that three year period, as the housing market plummeted around the Country.

Land values in the Township have consistently remained high, although it is difficult to say at this time what the effect of the mortgage crisis might be. The Township is acquiring (for affordable housing construction) a tract in the southern part of the Township for \$72,000 per acre, and has seen appraisals for a sewerred, infill tract of

approximately \$180,000 per acre. The following chart shows the per acre values according to the SADC Preserved Farmland data which depicts a slow increase over the last 20 years:



G. Municipal and Regional TDR Opportunities

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) is a planning tool that allows the movement of development rights from an area where development is not suitable (sending area) to an area where development is more compatible (receiving area). TDR programs allow land owners to profit from the sale of their land while moving that development to more suitable areas. The goal of a TDR program is to channel development away from valuable resource areas to areas where development is more suitable.

At the time that the Township prepared its last Master Plan only Burlington County municipalities were authorized to adopt a TDR ordinance. Now the option has been extended to all municipalities in the State. The opportunity to implement TDR on a local or regional basis depends on a number of factors. The cost of the process as established in the MLUL serves as a deterrent to a municipality to pursue the opportunity. The availability of sewerage and other infrastructure capacity to support higher densities is limited, and expansions of sewerage facilities are becoming increasingly difficult to implement. The public's reluctance to accept higher density development can also be a deterrent.

Regional TDR opportunities suffer from the same institutional problems, and others. The State's tax structure serves as a strong disincentive for a regional program because of the differential between the impacts on a sending or receiving municipality. The receiving municipality will have to accept the impact of the increased development, while the sending municipality will see a reduction in costs, but also a reduction in revenues.

Without some major incentives, including tax revenue sharing, the opportunity for regional TDR is limited.

The Township has created the VRC-HLI district to support the Township's objective to provide housing that is affordable, the property which currently includes the Pennytown retail/residential/office uses is proposed for designation as a hamlet. The Township is in the process of acquiring this property in order to provide housing that is affordable. This designation as a hamlet seeks to provide a compatible development option with the VRC-HLI District, and supports the Township's vision for future redevelopment. However, this site's acquisition by the Township is not intended, and will not, utilize a Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) or TDR program. Redevelopment areas in other parts of the Township have not been identified, and given the burdens of the TDR program mentioned above, are not likely to support a TDR program.

IV. Hopewell Township's Plan to Preserve Farmland

A. *Mercer County Agricultural Development Areas*

Mercer County revised the County Agricultural Development Area map in November 2007. The revised map (Figure 11) includes all of the Township's Project Areas within the County Agricultural Development Area. According to the 2010 Mercer County Farmland Preservation Plan, the County ADA map was prepared according to the statutory guidelines as described below:

"In 2007, as part of its first Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan, the Mercer CADB completely revised the 1985 map and developed a new map that accurately reflected the current agricultural conditions within the County and the areas with potential for agricultural development.

The 2007 ADA map excluded:

- SDRGP Planning Areas 1 and 2;
- Most Sewer Service Areas
- Developed Areas;
- Significant woodlands;
- Significant Green Acres Open Spaces; and
- Areas not zoned for farming (except where allowed as a non-conforming use)

In addition, in keeping with the regulations governing ADA's, no more than 90% of the agricultural land mass of the county was included within the ADA. Using Farmland Assessment (FA-1 Form) Acreage as that indicator, the 2007 ADA encompassed 30,259 acres – or 87% of the Total FA-1 Form acres."

B. *Hopewell Township Preserved Farmland*

The Mercer County Farmland Preservation Program is funded through the Open Space Trust Fund. The County and Municipal PIG programs were created by Statute on August 12, 1999 with updates to the program requirements made effective July 2, 2007. The County's minimum eligibility requirements for all programs in which the County participates, is that the farm is located in an Agricultural Development Area (ADA), is a minimum of 40 acres and is predominantly tillable farmland - farms with more than 50% woodlands are ineligible.

There are several methods available to finance the purchase of farmland in the Farmland Preservation Program, including easement purchase, easement purchase on an installment basis, and fee simple purchase. In addition, two types of Eight-year programs provide for short-term preservation without great expense.

Table 23: Total Acquisition to Date

Type of Acquisition	Acres	Total Cost
County PIG	1,325	13,920,640
Non-Profit Purchase	281	7,303,008
Municipal PIG	264	4,498,980
SADC Easement Purchase	340	4,282,321
SADC Fee Simple	92	968,152

The following sections will identify the various types of farmland preservation programs and those utilized by the Township.

1. County Easement Purchase

The program involves the sale of development rights on a farm in exchange for a permanent restriction on the land that requires it to be available for agriculture in perpetuity. The cost to purchase the easement is shared by the State and County and can include the municipality, and non-profit groups. In order to enter into the program a landowner must submit an application to the County Agriculture Development Board where it is reviewed and submitted to SADC. Two independent appraisals of the property are conducted to determine the land's fair market value. The SADC Cost Share generally ranges from 60% to 80% (based on a "sliding scale" that decreases SADC cost share as easement prices increase (N.J.A.C. 2:76-6.11(d)1) based on a before and after appraisal process. Once the SADC certifies the development easement values, landowners have 30 days to submit their offers.

There are over 1,300 acres of preserved farmland in the Township funding through the County Program.

2. County Planning Incentive Grants

The goal of County Planning Incentive Grants (PIGs) is to protect and preserve large pieces of contiguous farmland through the purchase of development easements. This newly created program took effect on July 2, 2007 in an effort to revamp the process of preserving farms at the county level through PIG activities that dates back to 1999. However, this process now replaces the traditional County Easement Purchase program. The County funding emphasis is the assemblage of core areas of farmland for preservation. Already preserved farms are the foundation that laid the base for the general areas as the preservation of large tracts of agricultural land. Added to the preserved farms are farms that have already received final approval from the SADC for preservation as an additional emphasis of the program. In addition to preserved farms and farms that have already received SADC approval for preservation, farms that are enrolled into the 8-year program receive emphasis as well. The County purpose of focusing on areas in which farms were already preserved is to preserve farms to allow for a more consistent and

seamless agriculture land base. This emphasis is to prioritize on opportunities with farmable soils and the location of permanent agriculture.

The State Agricultural Development Committee (SADC) has updated their rules (N.J.A.C. 2:76-6.3 through 2:76-17A.17) to promote County PIGs to streamline and expand the farmland preservation program throughout the state. This program is operated in a similar way to the Municipal Planning Incentive Grant Program in that it gives the county more flexibility to preserve those farms that meet the specific preservation needs and goals of the county. The County now submits an annual application for funding including a target farm list and any funding can be applied to any farm on that list based on the County ranking criteria at any time throughout the year, rather than the previous once per year in the CEP program.

3. Municipal Planning Incentive Grants

The SADC established the Planning Incentive Grant Program, in accordance with the Planning Incentive Grant Act of 1999 (N.J.S.A. 4:1C-43.1) to provide grants to eligible municipalities to purchase agricultural easements on targeted farms in ADA's to protect concentrations of farmland in identified project areas. The local municipality and usually the county cover the remainder of the acquisition costs, however, Mercer County does not participate in this program, making the Township responsible for all of the local match which is typically 40% of the total easement value. The PIG program places an emphasis on planning for farmland preservation. To qualify for a Planning Incentive Grant, municipalities must adopt a farmland preservation plan element in their municipal master plan pursuant to the Municipal Land Use Law, a right to farm ordinance, and establish an Agricultural Advisory Committee, and a dedicated source of funding for farmland preservation. The municipal Agricultural Advisory Committee has to delineate project areas and develop a list of target farms which require annual applications for funding of up to \$1.5 million annually. The SADC's new rules identifying minimum soils requirements for all SADC programs, including municipal PIGs, may mean that some farms on existing municipal target farms lists will no longer be eligible for the program.

4. SADC State Acquisition

SADC Direct Easement Purchase

There are two options for State direct purchases to preserve farmland. One State option for farmland preservation is the SADC Direct Easement Program. The SADC purchases development rights for preservation purposes under its Direct Easement Purchase Program. Another option is the outright acquisition of a farm under the Fee Simple Purchase Program. Landowners can either sell the development rights to their land and continue to own and farm the land; or sell their land outright to the State under the Fee Simple Easement Purchase Program. In both cases, the land is permanently deed-restricted for agricultural use. Under the Direct Easement Purchase Program, the SADC provides funding to purchase development easements from landowners. The State will

pay 100% of the certified appraised easement value in the Direct Easement Purchase Program.

Applications will be accepted year-round. An applicant farm that is strategically located and meets or exceeds the minimum criteria for size and quality score will qualify for immediate consideration for preservation. The SADC and landowner will enter into a 120-day option agreement in which the landowner agrees not to market the property for that time period. This provides time for two independent appraisers to evaluate the land. Based on the findings of those appraisers and the recommendations of its own review appraiser, the SADC will certify a fair-market value and make an offer. If the offer is accepted, the landowner and SADC will enter into a sale agreement of the development easement to the State. The SADC will order a survey and title search and work directly with the landowner through closing.

Five farms have been preserved using this method: Faille, Widman, Hopewell/Martin, Mokros and Kurtz.

SADC Fee Simple

The SADC fee simple acquisition program involves an entire property being purchased directly by the state. The SADC pays the survey and title costs, the landowner is exempt from paying rollback taxes for farmland assessment and the transaction can be completed in a matter of months. The SADC negotiates a purchase price subject to recommendations of two independent appraisers and review by a state review appraiser. The land becomes restricted so that it becomes permanently preserved for agriculture. In this type of acquisition, the landowner does not retain any rights. The property is then resold at auction; the SADC does not retain ownership. To qualify to participate in this program, the farmland must be within an ADA and be eligible for Farmland Assessment.

The Mill Road/Chowdbury farm, 92 acres, was purchased using this program.

5. Nonprofit Grant Program

Nonprofit organizations have also been able to help achieve farmland preservation goals. Grants can be leveraged from SADC to fund up to 50% of the fee simple or development easement values on farms. These grants help to preserve farmland throughout the county, generally these transactions involve properties with both agricultural and environmental significance. As with other programs, grants are obtained through an application process, in which the land is valued by independent appraisers. The St. Michaels and Powner Farms, totaling 259 acres, were purchased through partnerships with the D&R Greenway

6. Transfer of Development Rights

The transfer of development rights is a growth management tool that transfers development rights from one location, a preservation area, to another, an identified growth/receiving area. The transferred development rights allow for development at a

higher density than what the previous zoning of the receiving area allowed. To date, this program has not been used to preserve farmland in the Township.

C. Consistency with the SADC Strategic Targeting Project

The purpose of the SADC Strategic Targeting Project is to prioritize farmland to be preserved by targeting farms for preservation based on specific criteria, including the prioritization of prime and statewide soils in agricultural production outside sewer service areas. According to the SADC, the Strategic Targeting Project has three primary goals. These are as follows:

- The coordination of farmland preservation and retention of agricultural practices “with proactive planning initiatives.”
- To update and create maps which serve as a tool for more accurate preservation targets.
- To coordinate different preservation efforts, such as open space, with farmland preservation.

Through the use of the Strategic Targeting Program, the SADC hopes to more efficiently target and designate farmland for preservation and, by doing so, boost the State’s agricultural industry. Hopewell Township has identified target farms that meet the SADC primary goals ([Figure 5](#)). In addition, the Township continues to update all available information, through GIS, statistical data and the like, in order to maintain a data base of potential target farms for preservation efforts.

D. Eight Year Programs

There are two types of Eight-Year farmland preservation programs available, both of which involve an agreement with the landowner to keep the farm in active agriculture for a period of at least eight years. In return, the landowner is eligible to receive 50% cost-sharing on soil and water conservation projects approved by the State Soil Conservation Committee. The second program is termed the municipally approved Eight-Year program, which requires a municipal ordinance endorsing the landowners’ enrollment in the program, and provides greater protection from eminent domain takings as well as additional right-to-farm protection.

The Stony Brook Millstone Watershed Association and the Ruggieri were two participants in this program and were permanently preserved with Green Acres funding.

E. Coordination with Open Space Preservation Initiatives

Hopewell Township has partnered with Green Acres and Mercer County to preserve key properties in the Township. Partnering with a variety of agencies allows the Township to leverage funds from various sources to help achieve open space preservation. As seen on [Figure 5](#), Mercer County and the State own or hold the rights to large parcels in the Township. These areas help to promote agriculture by preserving large areas next to

actively farmed lands and creating a larger buffer between farms and more developed regions. The Township will continue to support the preservation of open space, especially if it is able to complement farmland preservation efforts.

The Township continues to support the establishment of the Lawrence Hopewell Trail (LHT) which consists of 20 miles of bicycle and pedestrian trails through public and private lands in Lawrence and Hopewell Townships. The LHT was originally conceived by employees of the Bristol-Myers Squibb Lawrenceville campus in 2001 and was officially incorporated in 2002. As of 2008, public access to over 50% of the LHT was achieved with a goal for completion by 2012. The Township would like to establish a trails plan to develop connections between Borough and Township neighborhoods and intervening open spaces. While these trails are not specific to agricultural activities, trails often raise awareness and community support for retaining the rural agricultural setting. Therefore the AAC supports trail networks and will consider issues such as impacts on agricultural areas and landowner rights.

F. Farmland Preservation Program Funding Expended to Date

Table 24 highlights the total cost of all preserved farmland in the Township and the sources of funding.

Table 24: Total Cost of Preserved Farmland to Date

	Total
Preserved Acres	2,303
Total Cost	\$30,973,104
SADC Share	\$19,163,792

G. Monitoring of Farmland Preservation

The holder of the deed of easement is responsible for the annual monitoring of preserved farms (i.e. the SADC must monitor farms preserved through the Fee Simple and Direct Easement Purchase Programs). The Mercer County Soils Conservation District is in charge of performing annual inspections of County preserved property. During inspections the inspector notes:

- change in ownership since the previous inspection
- evidence of non-agricultural development (approved or otherwise)
- use of the premises for agricultural activities
- presence of expansion of non-agricultural activity since the previous inspection
- if the non-agricultural practice has been abandoned
- evidence of mining or removing of materials such as sand, gravel, rock, etc.
- evidence of dumping
- whether or not the farm has an approved conservation plan
- any improvements to farm buildings and residences
- any new agricultural buildings erected

Mercer County and the Mercer County CADB are responsible for monitoring most of the preserved farms in the Township. The SADC may also conduct inspections if necessary. If the Township and AAC suspect any violations they will notify the responsible agency.

H. Coordination with Transfer of Development Rights Programs

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) may be used in conjunction with the traditional Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program; these two programs are not mutually exclusive. Currently, the Township has not developed a Transfer of Development Rights program.

V. Future Farmland Preservation Program

A. *Preservation Goals (1, 5 and 10 year acreage targets)*

The Township has determined a 10 year preservation goal for use of the PIG based on the Agricultural Advisory Committee's recommendations, previous preservation efforts and current farmer interest. The target farms (Figure 5) total 958 acres. These goals can be broken down by 1, 5 and 10 year options. Table 25 highlights these acreage goals.

Table 25: Preservation Goals by Year

Year	Acres
1	96
5	479
10	958
TOTAL	958

From 1990 to 2002 the farmland preserved in the Township totaled 1,431 acres, or approximately 110 acres per year. From 2003 to 2007 the farmland preserved in the Township totaled 745 acres, or 149 acres per year. Thus, the preservation goals that the Township has outlined above are modest, and are likely to be adjusted upward in five years.

B. *Hopewell Project Area Summary*

The Hopewell Project Area seeks to expand the Township's current preservation efforts. The project area includes existing preserved farmland and dedicated open space and is adjacent to other preserved farmland and open space (Figure 5). The Township's project area will expand on Hopewell's goal of creating a viable agricultural base by increasing preserved farmland in the heart of Hopewell Township. The Project area is located near many farming communities including East Amwell, West Amwell, Hillsborough and Montgomery. In addition, the Township proximity to larger urban areas such as Princeton, Trenton, Ewing, Lawrence provide both a strong regional agricultural base and support services and available markets to sell product.

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The property class highlights the amount of active farming being conducted in the proposed project area. As seen on Tables 27 and 28, 67% of the project area is classified as farm assessed or farm qualified and 42% of the project area is classified as agricultural by the 2007 Land Use/Land Cover data, and 38% is classified as forest.

Table 26: 2009 Property Class for Hopewell Township Proposed Project Area

Class	Acres	Percent
Farm Assessed	5,235	51
Residential	2,081	20
Farm Qualified	1,689	16
Public Property	515	5
Vacant	377	4
No Data	277	3
Commercial	86	1
Railroad	26	0
Other Exempt	16	0
Apartment	10	0
Church	9	0
Cemetery	8	0
Public School	3	0
Private School	3	0
Total	10,334	100

Table 27: 2007 NJDEP Land Use/Land Cover for Hopewell Proposed Project Area

Type	Total	%
Agriculture	4,494	42
Forest	4,060	38
Urban	1,380	13
Wetlands	694	6
Barren Land	61	1
Water	73	1
TOTAL	10,762	101*

In addition, the project area contains 35% cropland and pastureland.

Soils located in the project area are very conducive to agricultural activity. The project area is comprised of 89% farm capable soils (Table 28).

Table 28: Farm Capable Soils for Hopewell Proposed Project Area

Soil	Acres	%
Prime Soils	4,418	42
Statewide Important	4,398	42
Locally Important Soils	498	5
Other	1,268	12
Total	10,582	100

There are also 1,109 acres of preserved farmland located in the Project area and 2,911 acres of public property, totally 4,020 acres (37%) of preserved lands. The combination of these factors results in the Township's focus on the Central Project Area for future farmland preservation efforts.

C. Municipal and County Minimum Eligibility Criteria Coordination

Mercer County and Hopewell Township utilize the County ranking criteria as outlined below, which are consistent with the state regulations § 2:76-6.20 – Criteria for evaluating development easement applications as implemented through policy P-14-E. Additionally, the County requires properties have a minimum of 25 acres, unless they are adjacent to preserved farmland within the ADA and are farmland assessed. The evaluation is based on the merits of the individual application with a weighted factor assigned to each criterion. These include soil quality, tillable acres, boundaries and buffers, local commitment, size of farm and density of lands dedicated to farmland preservation, local factors encouraging agriculture and threat of development.

SADC Minimum Criteria

The SADC has created minimum criteria to designate what qualifications a parcel needs to adhere to in order to be considered for a cost share by the SADC (NJAC 2:76-6.20). The SADC has split the qualifications up into two general land sizes: farms that are 10 acres and less and farms that are greater than 10 acres.

For farms that are Less than or equal to 10 Acres

- Farm must produce \$2,500 worth of agricultural or horticultural products annually
- At least 75% of the property, or a minimum of 5 acres tillable, which ever is less
- That tillable acreage must consist of soils that are capable of supporting agricultural or horticultural production such as Prime and Statewide soils
- Further, the land must have development potential. To determine development potential:
 - The municipal zoning ordinance for the property as it is appraised must allow additional development (at least one residential site beyond existing extent of development)
 - There must be access to the property that allows further development. If that access is only available through an easement, that easement must specify that further subdivision is possible.
 - If access is through an easement, and it is subject to ordinances governing allowable subdivisions, common driveways and shared access, it must be confirmed in writing by a municipal zoning officer or planner.
- 80% or more of the soils cannot be classified as freshwater or modified agricultural wetlands according to the DEP.
- 80% or more of the land cannot have slopes greater than 15% as identified by the NRCS soils map 2.2

OR

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- If the farm does not meet the previous criteria, BUT the land is eligible for allocation of development credits from a transfer of development potential program that has been authorized and adopted by law, then it is eligible to enter the preservation process.

For Farms that are Greater than 10 acres

- At least 50% of the property or a minimum of 25 acres tillable, which ever is less
 - That tillable acreage must consist of soils that are capable of supporting agricultural or horticultural production
 - The land must have development potential. To determine development potential:
 - Municipal zoning ordinance for the property as it is appraised must allow additional development (at least one residential site beyond existing extent of development)
 - There must be access to the property that allows further development. In the case that access is only available through an easement, that easement must specify that further subdivision is possible.
 - If access is through an easement, and it is subject to ordinances governing allowable subdivisions, common driveways and shared access, it must be confirmed in writing by a municipal zoning officer
 - Land that is less than 25 acres must not contain more than 80% soils that are classified as freshwater or modified agriculture wetlands according to the DEP
 - Land that is less than 25 acres, 80% or more of the land cannot have slopes greater than 15% as identified by the NRCS soils map 2.2
- OR**
- The land is eligible for allocation of development credits from a transfer of development potential program that has been authorized and adopted by law
- Lands that do not meet the minimum requirements are not eligible for a State cost share grant for farmland preservation purposes.

The Township may consider alternative criteria, on top of the County and SADC criteria, in the selection process, however, none are specified. Given the move to smaller, more high end crops, such as organic and specialty crops, the Township may consider looking at the value of the crop production as opposed to strict soil and acreage calculations. The AAC and Township may review these policies in the future to determine if any alternative or waiver requirement should be formalized. In all cases, farms must meet the SADC minimum eligibility criteria to be eligible for State cost share.

D. Municipal and County Ranking Criteria Used to Prioritize Farms

Hopewell bases preservation efforts on the State regulations § 2:76-6.16 and Policy P-14E (Appendix A). The Township is currently working on creating a ranking system in the event that several farms become available for preservation at the same time and funding decisions need to be made. This ranking system will follow the State and County criteria and local factors. However, until the ranking system is complete, the Township will continue to base decisions on the State regulations.

E. Municipal and County Policies Related to Farmland Preservation Applications

The Mercer CADB follows the SADC's policies regarding housing opportunities, division of premises and exception areas, but has County policies that either supplement SADC policy or implement additional policies. The Township supports the revised policies articulated by the Mercer CADB and the SADC. The following outlines those policies.

1. Approval of Housing Opportunities

Housing opportunities needed on farms generally relate to the use of agricultural labor. Farms that raise vegetable crops that rely on manual harvest or equine farms where caretakers tend to horses are two areas where the need to have onsite housing maybe be needed on a seasonal or permanent basis. Agricultural labor housing is not currently protected in the State of New Jersey under the Right to Farm Act, but is recognized as a need by SADC. The SADC does have a policy that a landowner may refer to in order to construct labor housing. These applications are reviewed by the State Agriculture Development Committee and the County Agriculture Development Board.

a. Agricultural Labor Housing.

The Township does not have a policy on agricultural labor housing, however the Township does currently have provisions to permit a secondary principal use on farms greater than 25 acres provided that the property can thereafter be subdivided in accordance with both the subdivision and zoning ordinances in the event of the transfer or sale of the property of either principal use.

The Mercer CADB adopted a revised policy for agricultural labor housing in 2002, as follows:

- The landowner may construct any new buildings for housing of agricultural labor employed by the agricultural operation, but only with the approval of the Mercer CADB and the SADC (if SADC funding was used to purchase the development easement).
- The agricultural labor housing shall be subject to municipal and other governmental approvals as applicable.
- All agricultural labor housing units shall be utilized for laborers employed by the agricultural operation. The agricultural labor housing unit shall not be used as a rental property.
- Pursuant to NJAC 2:76-6.15(a)14i, agricultural labor housing "shall not be used as a residence for Grantor, the Grantor's spouse, the Grantor's parents,

the Grantor's lineal descendants, adopted or natural, the Grantor's spouse's parents, the Grantor's spouse's lineal descendants, adopted or natural".

b. House replacement. The policy of the State Agricultural Development Committee on house replacement is that requests for replacement of a residence on permanently preserved land must be reviewed and approved on an individual basis by the CADB and the SADC. The location of the new residence should minimize impact to agricultural operations.

c. Residential Development Site Opportunity (RDSO) allocation. Residual Dwelling Site Opportunities (RDSOs) are lingering potential housing prospects located within a deed-restricted farm and are allocated prior to preservation. By designating an area as an RDSO, the landowner is implying that the land will be used for a residential unit or other structure as referred to in N.J.A.C. 2:76-6.17. These prospective residential units can be allocated to parcels at a density not to exceed one unit per 100 acres. The purpose of the building in question must be for "single-family residential housing and its appurtenant uses." To qualify as an RDSO, the SADC requires that the use of the residential unit be for agricultural purposes and "at least one person residing in the residential unit shall be regularly engaged in common farm site practices."

d. House size. On May 7, 2001, the MCADB adopted a policy to restrict new houses built on Exceptions to 4,000 square feet of livable space. In the case of an existing house that exceeded 4,000 square feet and needed reconstruction due to fire or other disaster, the MCADB would review the request and approve or deny it. This policy only affected farms preserved from the 2002 Round forward, and the policy would be reviewed every three years. It was not made retroactive. "Livable Space" was defined as all areas of the house commonly lived in. This would not include an unfinished attic, porch, basement, garage or other ancillary structures (sheds, pool, tennis court, etc.).

2. Division of the Premises

The goal of the State Agriculture Development Committee is to preserve large tracts of farmland and, therefore, a division of the premises is not an encouraged practice. A landowner wishing to divide permanently preserved farmland must submit a written request. The application must be approved, in writing, by both the State Agricultural Development Committee and the CADB. The division must be for an agricultural purpose and result in an agriculturally viable parcel.

3. Approval of Exception

Exceptions are defined by the SADC as "acres within a farm being preserved" which are "not subject to the terms of the deed of easement." When an exception is made, the landowner does not receive any compensation in the excepted area. Exceptions are not a practice that is encouraged by the SADC and, when they

occur, it is recommended that they should be as small as possible. There are two types of exceptions that can occur; severable and non-severable.

Severable: A severable exception is defined by the SADC as an “area which is part of an existing Block and Lot owned by the applicant which will be excluded from the restrictions of the Deed of Easement and may be sold as a separate lot in the future.” A severable exception is made “if a landowner wants to be able to sell the excepted area separate from the deed-restricted farm.”

Non-severable: Non-severable exceptions are defined by the SADC as “area which is part of an existing Block and Lot owned by the application that will not be subject to the restrictions of the Deed of Easement but cannot be sold separately from the remaining premises.” Unlike a severable exception, a nonseverable exception is “always attached to the protected farm.” Exceptions made to farmland have the potential to impact the value of the property. When an appraisal occurs, both severable and non-severable exceptions are considered in the determination of the restricted/ after value of the property.”

F. Funding Plan

1. Description of Municipal and County Funding Sources

Hopewell Township has a healthy tax ratable base that is able to leverage approximately \$900,000 annually through the Open Space Tax, which is currently \$0.02 per \$100 assessed value. This fund has often been used to preserve both farmland and open space parcels and will continue to fund preservation efforts. The Township has also used creative methods in the past to purchase farmland and open space, working with the State SADC and Green Acres, Mercer County Parks and the MCADB, and non-profit groups like the Delaware and Raritan Greenway and the Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space. The County in particular has been creative in its funding approaches and has participated when necessary. The County is no longer participating in the Municipal PIG program and will not fund Municipal PIG applications. However, the Township is no longer asked to contribute to the County acquisitions. These types of practice will continue in order to meet the Township’s preservation goals.

2. Financial Policies

Hopewell Township's plan for farmland preservation for the Central Project Area will combine a variety of techniques to encourage as many landowners as possible to preserve their farms. These efforts will include encouraging farmers to enter their farms into Municipally Approved Farmland Preservation Programs, entering into option agreements for easement purchase with landowners, installment purchase agreements and direct development easement purchase.

Preservation of the farms in the target area is the goal of this application. Assuming inclusion in the PIG budget, including local, county and state contributions, it is anticipated that the parcels identified can be preserved through a variety of local, County

and State funding sources. Where any overlap occurs between the County target farms and the Townships, the Township will first attempt to use the County program for those farms, and if not available will leverage Township funds. Hopewell will encourage property owners to consider the financial and other advantages of participation in the Farmland Preservation Plan, and outline the per acre maximum easement value to be offered. Additionally, owners will be encouraged to assist in leveraging available funding through donations of easements, partial donations of easements and/or bargain sales of development rights.

3. Cost Projections and Funding Plan

The Township of Hopewell estimates that the per acre value in the Central Project area will be roughly \$36,000. This per acre value is based on a recent Township fee simple purchases. The cost of purchasing development easements is considerably less, but the uncertainties of the current market and land preservation activities in general, plus the shrinking availability of land, warrants a conservative approach. The Township has identified an average baseline easement value of \$30,000 per acre for the remaining targeted farmland in the Central Project Area, considering the recent economic recession and a historic per acre easement value.

Table 29: Funding Needed for Target Farm Acquisition

Year	Acres	Value
1	96	2,070,000
5	383	11,490,000
10	479	14,370,000
TOTAL	958	27,930,000

Assuming an SADC cost-share of 60%, a County cost-share of 20% and a 20% Municipal cost-share, the Township is in need of \$16,758,000 from the State, \$5,586,000 from the County CADB and the Township will have to provide \$5,586,000 over the course of 10 years. However, the County does not participate in the Township's Municipal PIG program and any application utilizing the Municipal PIG will not be able to take advantage of County funding. However, the County will still fund landowners applying to the County programs. The Township's cost share of \$5.5 million over 10 years could be achieved through the use of one-half of its open space funds.

G. *Farmland Preservation Program and AAC Resources*

1. Municipal Staff and Consultant Resources

The Hopewell Township Planning Board and Governing Body participate and authorize the Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC). The AAC meets as the need arises and is organized through the Hopewell Township Administrator. The Director of Planning and Development attends the AAC's meetings, and the Mayor is an ex-officio member. The Agricultural Advisory Committee also receives consulting services, when necessary.

2. Legal support

Legal support for the Township's farmland preservation program is provided by the Township Attorney.

3. Database Development and Geographic Information System Resources

The Township's planning and engineering consultants currently provide database management, mapping and GIS resources for the Township. The Township also has GIS capability through the administrator's office.

H. Factors Limiting Farmland Preservation Implementation

1. Funding

Funding for farmland preservation within the Township is dependent on the amount and timing of funding sources on the State and County level. The Township has successfully been able to preserve farmland through a variety of sources in the past, but mainly through County Easement Purchase. The Township would like to continue this relationship with the County to preserve additional properties. The Township is able to produce enough funding through the collection of the Open Space Tax to meet their require 20% match (or 40% if using the municipal PIG program), but these funds are a shared resource with open space preservation efforts and can not fund entire projects on their own and require the assistance of County and State matching funds. It is anticipated that much of the future preservation efforts will utilize the County programs. Therefore the limiting factor for funding is dependant on matching funds for the County and State.

2. Projected Costs

The Township has been able to identify a reasonable per acre value that can be projected out through the 10 year funding cycle. Giving the approximate \$30,000 to \$36,000 per acre value and the amount of income generated in the Township for preservation efforts, the Township should be able to meet its preservation goals.

3. Land Supply

Hopewell has been at the forefront of development pressure over the last 20 years. This increased pressure has resulted in a net loss of actively farmed land which has been converted to residential and non-residential development. However a strong agricultural base still exists in the Township with and active community of farmers and supportive land owners. This has resulted in a continued land supply of agricultural areas that can still be brought under the farmland preservation program.

4. Landowner Interest

Hopewell is fortunate to still have actively farmed areas with land owners dedicated to the promotion of farmland preservation and agricultural retention. This constant interest in local farmers has resulted in a large amount of lands being entered into the preservation program. There has been a great deal of interest by land owners to enter farmland preservation.

5. Administrative Resources

The Agricultural Advisory Committee and Township Administrator have been extremely helpful in the promotion and execution of the farmland preservation program. Land owners have been able to contact the AAC and Township Administrator for assistance in preparing applications for farmland preservation. Administrative resources are not a limiting factor to the Township's preservation efforts.

VI. Economic Development

A. Consistency with N.J. Department of Agriculture Economic Development Strategies

The Mercer County Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan highlights the economic development strategies offered by the NJ Department of Agriculture. The Township has used the support services provided by the State and will continue to look to the State for guidance on ways to retain and promote agricultural production. The primary agricultural activities in the Township center around vegetables, field crop production, nursery sales, and livestock. Some strategies to consider are:

Nursery, Greenhouses, Floriculture, and Sod

Some strategies to follow are:

- Explore the feasibility of more Mercer County farmers diversifying a portion of their output into this sector, including ways to deal with the challenges of wildlife management and increased labor demand;
- Support efforts by NJDA to ensure plant health and disease-free material;
- Increase consumer awareness of the *Jersey Grown* brand;
- Promote “drive up” operations where consumers can buy directly from the nursery or greenhouse; and Encourage a) municipal support for irrigation (often necessary for sod and other crop cultivation in this area) and b) research into alternative water management strategies, such as drip tape.
- Promote the State sponsored deer fencing program to help protect product in the field.

Field and Forage Crops

Strategies to consider include:

- Educate farmers about any improved management practices and ways to improve yield per acre;
- Encourage diversification to row crops that meet newly emerging markets or markets with increasing demand or lend themselves to value-added marketing opportunities;
- Encourage transition to certified organic or naturally grown bean and grain crops to increase their value;

- Publicize to farmers the availability of state-sponsored grain marketing sessions, when scheduled;
- Inform producers about the role of crop insurance in mitigating marketing risk; and
- Investigate availability of free deer fencing programs, as well as other measures for deterrence of wildlife, and promote to County farmers.

Produce

Strategies to promote produce include:

- Promote existing community/farmers' markets, farm/roadside stands and pick-your-own operations and seek to introduce new outlets. For example, improve and expand the Trenton Farmer's Market and other local Markets;
- Explore expansion/diversification into value-added produce products, in concert with the NJDA and Rutgers and provide information to farmers through workshops and direct communications;
- Encourage farmers to explore diversifying into produce crops that serve the diverse needs of growing ethnic populations in the county and the region;

Livestock

To strengthen and expand its place in the County economy, some non-dairy cattle, sheep, hogs, and poultry strategies may include:

- Ensure animal health, including investigating incentives for bringing large animal veterinarians back to the area;
- Explore various additional products and markets, including local hospitals and assisted living operations, restaurants and grocery markets, and increased outlets for meat sales at community markets and special events;
- Seek more opportunities for production contracts with poultry and livestock processors;
- Investigate outlets for dairy products for goats, and educate farmers about the benefits of diversifying into this sector, especially considering the development of value-added dairy products for goats;
- Explore increased marketing opportunities for goat meat to meet the

preferences of growing ethnic populations in the county and the region;

- Assist farmers with farming techniques, regulatory requirements and the latest research for livestock and poultry, including continued and additional cooperation with the RCRE, NJDA and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); and
- Promote the agritourism portion of livestock, including exotic animals and poultry, such as “looking” zoos and educational school tours.

Wine

Strategies for strengthening the wine sector include:

- Encourage additional operators to diversify into grape growing to provide product to existing wineries;
- Encourage the use of winery facilities for hosting small events through the County Economic Opportunity Office; and,
- Explore expansion of re-sale market

Organic

Strategies for encouraging organic farms include:

- Educate growers about organic and natural regulatory and certification requirements and about the availability of federal funds to help offset certification costs; and,
- Support membership growth and expansion of community supported agriculture.

Equine Industry

- Work with horse owners to assure awareness of disease threats and animal safety. Continue working to protect the health of horses from the immediate threat of devastating and economically damaging diseases.
- Work with Rutgers University’s Cook College to continue development of a state- of-the-art research facility for its Equine Science Center. As an example the Center is developing cost-effective techniques for nutrient and waste management to ensure the compatible co-existence of horse farms in urban and suburban environments.
- Work to implement the recommendations of the Department’s “Focus on New Jersey’s Horse Racing Industry” report and seek to augment purse

values, increase track attendance, and improve the industry's supportive infrastructure.

- Continue to host Olympic caliber events and to promote the state's many quality venues and prestige events.
- In 2007, in addition to training clinics, horse shows, festivals and industry meetings the Horse Park of New Jersey will continue to host auction sales.
- Continue to improve the New Jersey equine website highlighting the sectors of New Jersey's Equine Industry activities. The website will improve coordination of all equine activities in the state and feature schedules of events, horseback riding trails and other industry related activities.
- Bolster promotion and education of the pleasure horse and racing industries to increase interest and work to stimulate new owners and create career opportunities.
- Continue working with 4-H to establish new clubs that will expand the interest in standard bred racing.
- Work on developing and strengthening the promotion of the *Jersey Bred* brand and logo.
- Develop, propose and adopt the Equine AMP (Agricultural Management Practices) to allow for increased right-to-farm protection for New Jersey's equine industry.

The AAC promotes the continuation of these forms of agricultural development in the Township. These forms of agriculture are the predominate activities currently practiced in the Township and are the most appropriate. The AAC and Township will continue to encourage and support a variety of economic strategies to support a diverse and healthy agricultural industry.

B. Agricultural Industry Retention, Expansion and Recruitment Strategies

1. Institutional

Farmer Support

The Hopewell Township Planning Department is always available to assist farmers in their efforts to promote and expand agricultural activities in the Township. The agricultural Advisory Committee is available to assist farmers in obtain useful information and also to help support and promote preservation and retention efforts.

The Township also encourages farmers to seek the valuable information resources offered through the Rutgers Cooperative Extension office and other support services through SADC.

Persons interested in purchasing farms are referred to the Farm Link Program through the SADC website (www.state.nj.us/agriculture/sadc/farmlink.htm). The Farm Link Program

is “a resource and referral center for new farmers seeking access to land and farming opportunities, landowners seeking farmers, and farmers working on estate and farm transfer plans.” The web site lists farming opportunities available and sought such as farms for sale or lease, internships, and relocation and expansion options.

Marketing / Advertising / Public Relation Support

Marketing and advertising are critical to profitability. Farmer’s are encouraged to participate in local and regional farmer’s markets, auctions and wholesale markets to expand their business opportunities. Farmers can also contact the SADC and Jersey Fresh sites to find additional ways to promote their business and find additional support markets to tap in to.

Advertising. Few farmers take the route of individually advertising their product in print, although many of those involved in on-site direct marketing do maintain websites.

Direct Marketing. For those direct marketers who want to consider paid advertising and garner media coverage, Web resources can help with the planning.

Community Farmers Markets. There are several farmer’s markets in the County. See Table 15 in Section II for full details. In addition, the following actions are recommended:

- Explore with municipalities and farmers the feasibility of starting markets in towns that don’t have them (contacts: New Jersey Council of Farmers and Communities, a nonprofit organization serving as a liaison between New Jersey Farm families and 35 market members, probably can help with logistics of startups, ongoing management).
- Explore organizing a pool of farmers who would be interested in cooperative stands at regular and special County events, such as the Raritan Cruise Nights on summer Wednesdays or at annual street or craft fairs in various towns or parks or other organizations.

Community Supported Agriculture

Hopewell Township contains one of the States most successful CSA programs. Honey Brook Organic Farm is one of the oldest operating organic farms in New Jersey, and the oldest certified organic Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program in the Garden State. Honey Brook Farm was established in 1991 and is certified organic. Honey Brook Farms CSA program is one of the largest in the nation with over 2,700 memberships providing seasonal, locally grown organic produce to over 3,500 individuals. Members receive a variety of seasonal, fresh vegetables, small fruits, herbs and flowers once a week during the harvest season in exchange for their membership fee.

You can visit their website at: <http://www.honeybrookorganicfarm.com> for more information.

Agricultural Education and Market Research Coordination

New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station (NJAES) and Rutgers Cooperative Research and Extension

According to the NJAES website *Jersey Fresh* Information Exchange, Rutgers Cooperative Extension launched an innovative produce distribution and merchandising pilot project in 2004 to help New Jersey farmers get their products into new retail locations, such as white-table restaurants and grocery chains. Less than a month after a kickoff meeting that brought New Jersey growers face-to-face with noted New Jersey chefs, national chain grocers and multi-state distributors, these new relationships had already turned into critically needed new sales.

In addition, the NJAES website offers a wealth of information relating to animal agriculture, farm management and safety, pest management, plant agriculture and other elements of interest to those involved in commercial agriculture.

The Mercer County RCRE traditionally has been a sponsor of workshops and a helpful resource for local farmers.

Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Sciences

The municipality can touch base periodically with Rutgers regarding any opportunities for farm research, test/experimental projects that might be appropriate for local farms. The RCRE in Mercer County can keep farmers abreast, through the *Green and Growing* newsletter and the RCRE website, of any upcoming special workshops or information or appropriate continuing education curriculum.

2. Businesses

Most of the Township farms purchase products and supplies from larger agricultural centers or online. However there are some local services available for specialty items.

New trends to support local agriculture and specialty products may result in the farming community producing more specialty products, the Township may be able to help create educational information on where local suppliers and distributors of specialty products can find and exchange items. This could be a goal of the AAC to provide this type of information service to expand and a growing specialty market. Cooperation with Rutgers Cooperative Extension may also be able to help provide additional support.

Input Suppliers and Services (from Mercer County Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan)

Mercer County farmers obtain farm supplies from a number of sources in and near the County, such as those listed in Table 14 in Section II.

For new machinery, local farmers generally look to New Holland dealers in Lawrenceville or to a dealer over the state border in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, who will deliver and pick up. Some farmers have bought “remotely,” ordering equipment and parts either over the phone or by Internet and getting delivery by UPS or FedEx.

For equipment repairs, most farmers often do it themselves, a few offer repair services to other farmers, and there is a dealer in Ringoes (Hunterdon County), D&R Equipment, that does repairs and sells used machinery, short line machinery, mowers, balers, sheep wranglers and the like.

When it comes to needing the services of a veterinarian, both livestock and equine operations find that large-animal veterinarians are few and far between. There is a large animal vet in the Township, Hopewell (Mercer).

Product Distributors and Processors

The TriCounty Auction in Hightstown is the main distributor for the County. It hosts an auction for produce 3 days a week.

There are several farmers in the County that process their own product. DiPaola and the Lee Farms process Turkey’s while the Terhune Orchard manufactures cider and baked goods from their own crops. In Hopewell Township itself, the Hopewell Valley Vineyard sells wine and related items from the grapes grown on the farm and the winery located on site.

Visit <http://www.hopewellvalleyvineyards.com> for more information.

3. Anticipated Agricultural Trends

Market Location

Mercer County is in a prime location to take advantage of newly created niche markets. The County is centrally located with easy access to New York City Philadelphia and the locally growing population attracted to the region by universities and job opportunities. The average and median household income levels are high in the County and Township, which lends itself to a population with the means to support and purchase specialty produce and organic products. This is evident in the recent increase in organic farming and agritourism business in the area. As mentioned previously, the Township’s agricultural community may be able to expand these specialty markets and provide

specific educational and marketing programs to expand these types of agricultural products and businesses. Utilizing local and state resources to promote such activities could increase the overall economic viability of niche and specialty market farming that offers high value products.

Product Demand

Equine farms, organic produce and free range animals continue to increase in the region as the market begins to appreciate wholesome foods with little pesticide and preservatives used. As the population in the region increases, the demand for these types of products also increases. Hopewell should encourage these new niche markets as they tend to retain a higher per acre production value and promote agriculture as a whole.

Increased demand for organic products may encourage farmers to adopt more natural farming methods. Since federal certification requires a three-year commitment, many farmers may lean toward “natural” rather than strictly organic processes, such as grass-fed beef raised without hormones or antibiotics and food crops that use natural farming methods. Already there are at least two farms with produce crops that use natural or organic methods but are not certified.

4. Agricultural Support Needs (excerpted from the Mercer County Draft Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan)

Agricultural Facilities, and Infrastructure and Flexible Land Use Regulations

The infrastructure the farmers most need is on the regulatory and technical assistance side: getting municipalities, residents and consumers to look favorably on agriculture and understand the economic and quality of life advantages it brings to the County, getting municipal support through flexible land use regulations and ordinances that take into consideration the special needs of the agricultural operations, and getting help with financial and planning matters through workshops and other educational and counseling services provided by the state, RCRE, the CADB and the federal government. Also, at this time there are no local or regional economic development organizations that focus on agricultural operations.

The Township’s 2003 Farmland Preservation Plan identified the need to review any permit and regulatory processes that may discourage growth in the agricultural areas and find ways to minimize deterrents.

Agricultural Support Implementation

Suggestions for future agricultural support include workshops and other educational opportunities at the state and county level that may require funding through the many grant opportunities available from state and federal programs. In addition, support for the implementation and monitoring of farmland preservation, one of the chief ways to protect and ensure the continued presence of agriculture in the County, comes from the County’s

open space trust fund, local contributions from municipalities, SADC dollars through programs such as Planning Incentive Grants and soil and water conservation grants and federal dollars from federal programs such as the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program.

In general the Township, with the support of the AAC and County initiatives, have encouraged and promoted agricultural activities in the Township. However, there are areas that may be strengthened within the Township that may better support the agricultural community. Providing for streamline permitting and applications which would help farmers take advantage of changing market conditions could be useful. Additionally, providing increased ACC involvement to help farmers navigate and understand county and state regulations would also be valuable in the supporting the agricultural community. The AAC may look into outlining some of these issues for future support services.

The Township may be able to support these types of producing informational flyers or postings on the Township's website on the farming community, not only locally but regionally, to expand awareness. The Township may also be able to supply additional support services through using in-house staff to provide administrative support for farmers seeking funding opportunities and grants made available through the County or State. These items should be further explored to identify all the areas the Township may be able to provide additional support services to the agricultural community.

In addition, the County maximizes the amount of land it preserves by encouraging applicants to donate a portion of the land preserved through the traditional easement program and to accept a lower amount for the land than the certified market value. This benefits the preservation program by enabling the acquisition of property it might not otherwise have been able to acquire, while at the same time providing the landowner with tax benefits.

VII. Natural Resource Conservation

A. *Natural Resource Protection Coordination*

The Mercer County Plan provided information on various services involved in farmland preservation and natural resources protection. The following section has been provided by the County Plan. The Township seeks to increase its communication with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Mercer County Soils District to encourage agricultural retention and best management practices by local farmers. Please refer to the full County Draft Plan for additional information.

1. Natural Resource Conservation Service and Farm Service Agency

These two agencies of the federal government may be the most important organizations serving the local agricultural community. With offices in neighboring Monmouth County, staffs from these agencies provide invaluable assistance and funding to Mercer's agricultural community towards protecting and conserving agricultural resources. There are numerous programs supported by these agencies and they are both promoted and well received throughout the agricultural community.

The United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) assists landowners and managers with conserving soil, water and other natural resources. The agency has a field office at the county's agricultural building in Monmouth County Agricultural Building and offers technical and financial assistance. NRCS staff prepares conservation plans for preserved and non-preserved farm owners and then helps landowners secure funds through Farm Bill programs to implement the plans. Preserved farm owners are required by their Deeds of Easement to prepare a conservation plan. The Mercer County Agriculture Development Board staff refer these landowners to the USDA-NRCS who customize a conservation plan for each preserved farm. Conservation plans are a written record of management decisions and conservation practices to be used on a farm. The plans are intended to help protect soil fertility and productivity, improve water quality, and attract desirable wildlife.

2. Mercer County Soil Conservation District

The Soil Conservation District reviews and approves natural resource conservation and assistance program grants. It also assists in agricultural conservation planning, agricultural conservation cost-sharing program grants, application of organic materials on agricultural land, agricultural water supply and management, soil erosion and sediment control, storm water discharge authorization, and soil surveys. Some of the technical services that the SCD provides farmers include animal waste management, erosion control design and construction and Integrated Pest Management. Farmers interested in developing

farm conservation plans should apply to local Soil Conservation Districts which assist in developing farm conservation plans and ensure projects are necessary and feasible. Applications are forwarded to the N.J. State Soil Conservation Committee, which recommends projects to the SADC for funding approvals. The County Soil Conservation District gives final approval on all Conservation Plans and program contracts.

Within one year of the signing of the Deed of Easement on a Preserved Farm through the County Easement and Municipal PIG programs, the landowner must obtain an approved Farm Conservation Plan from the Mercer County SCD. Although an approved Conservation Plan within a year of the preservation of a farm is required, implementation of the plan is not mandatory. Although the services of the NRCS for the implementation of the Conservation Plan is cost free to the farmer, the services of the SCD may be needed to complete the implementation of the plan and this work is billable as the SCD is a separate entity from the NRCS. Funding for approved soil and water conservation projects are available from the SADC for up to 50% reimbursement. However, State funding has been limited in recent years.

The farmland preservation program has an ongoing program that ensures annual monitoring of preserved farmland. In Mercer County, the Soil Conservation District handles this responsibility for the County on farms where the County holds the easements.

B. Natural Resource Protection Programs

The following section is taken from the Mercer County Draft Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan. The Township and local farmers are encouraged to use any available grant program to retain agricultural production in the Township. The Township will seek to provide additional support to local farmers in educating and outreach to ensure that land owners are aware of all the support opportunities available to them. The follow is an outline of some of the grant opportunities provided by the State and Federal programs.

NJDA Soil and Water Conservation Grants

This program provides grants, up to 50% of a project's costs, to owners of permanently preserved farms and 8-year Program participants. Irrigation, erosion control, and stream corridor enhancement projects are among those that are eligible. Many of the County's eligible farms have availed themselves of this program. More information can be found at:
<http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/sadc/farmpreserve/grants/soil&watergrants.pdf>

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

Through CREP and CRP, agricultural producers voluntarily retire land to protect environmentally sensitive areas, decrease soil erosion, provide and restore wildlife habitat, and protect ground and surface water. Examples of conservation practices include riparian buffers and filter strips for water quality, and contour buffer strips to reduce soil erosion. With incentive payments for farmers to fully implement a CREP contract, payment for this program can be fully funded by NRCS and NJDA. Within Mercer County, CREP has been “slow getting started” due to strict eligibility requirements. This includes requirements that the land must have been cropped for 4 of the 6 years between 1998 and 2002, and detailed paperwork documentation is required when applying.

Conservation Innovation Grant program (CIG)

The aim of the CIG program is to stimulate the development and adoption of conservation approaches and technologies which are innovative, in conjunction with agricultural production. Funds are awarded as competitive 50-50 match grants to non-governmental organizations, tribes, or individuals.

Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)

EQIP is a conservation program in which farmers receive financial and technical assistance with structural and management conservation practices that address soil, water, and grazing land concerns. EQIP is the most popular and widely used conservation program in Mercer County, and is the most well funded of all the programs. Nationally, the proposed 2007 Farm Bill would raise authorized EQIP funding to \$1 Billion.

Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program (FRPP)

FRPP provides up to 50% matching funds to purchase development rights and conservation easements to keep farm and ranchland in agricultural use. The USDA partners with state, tribal, or local governments, and non-governmental organizations. Farmers accepting funds through this program must adhere to strict impervious surface limitations. In New Jersey, this program receives approximately \$500,000 to \$1 million annually. The local NRCS office prepares the Conservation Plans used in the Program, which is then administered by the NJDA.

Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)

GRP offered landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance grasslands on their property, which play a vital role in protecting water quality and providing wildlife habitat. This program was coordinated through several federal agencies.

Wetlands Reserve program (WRP)

WRP offers farmers payments for restoring and protecting wetlands on their property that had been previously drained for agricultural use. Wetlands help reduce flooding, filter pollutants from water, provide critical wildlife habitat, and protect open space. Payment by NRCS is based upon appraised agricultural land value.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

WHIP provides technical and financial assistance for creating, enhancing, and maintaining wildlife habitat. The State Technical Committee for WHIP in New Jersey awards project contracts for designated wildlife habitat categories. Since its inception in 1998, WHIP has been a popular program for non-federal landowners interested in wildlife habitat management in New Jersey.

Landowner Incentive Program (LIP)

New Jersey's Landowner Incentive Program provides technical and financial assistance to private landowners interested in conserving threatened and endangered plant and animal species on their property. Potential projects include vernal pool restoration, prescribed burns, and stream fencing. The State is particularly focused on grassland within regional priority areas and lands adjacent to Wildlife Management Areas and other permanently protected areas.

C. Water Resources and Supply Characteristics

The Township is underlain by two distinct aquifers, or groundwater systems: the Stockton/Passaic formations, consisting of sandstones and shales; and, the Lockatong/Diabase formations, mudstones, sandstones, siltstones and volcanic rock. The Stockton/Passaic formations generally coincide with the VRC District, while the Lockatong/Diabase formations generally coincide with the MRC District. Available groundwater in the Stockton/Passaic formations permits higher development densities than in the Lockatong/Diabase formations due to the differing characteristics of the aquifer systems. The storage potential of the Stockton/Passaic formation is enhanced by some fracturing which provides void spaces for groundwater storage, while the Lockatong/Diabase formations are less porous with limited fracturing and limited available groundwater. One of the unique features of the Township's geology is the Hopewell Fault, a major regional fault separating the Stockton Formation and Passaic Formation. This fault is a valuable recharge zone, not only to Hopewell Township and Hopewell Borough, but also to downstream portions of the Bedens Brook basin in Somerset County.

Water Conservation Strategies

An adequate water supply is important to successful agriculture operations in Mercer County. Droughts in recent years have highlighted the precarious nature of the agriculture (and general) water supply, and the need for water conservation systems and regimens.

The State Agriculture Development Committee, through its Agricultural Smart Growth Plan, encourages farmers to "... work to accelerate the use of efficient water conservation technologies, such as drip irrigation. Identify and promote new and efficient methods to conduct water distribution on farms, utilizing farm ponds and water reuse options."

The dominant field crops in Mercer County are corn, soybean and hay. These crops rely on rain and some groundwater for water needs, and as such water conservation strategies per se are difficult to implement. With nursery and greenhouse, sod, and vegetable farming, it is possible to implement conservation strategies such as drip irrigation, or watering crops in the cooler parts of the day so as to minimize evaporation. Water re-use is another possible option. For livestock, floats and timers in watering troughs can conserve water by negating the need for constantly running water to keep troughs full.

The increase of specialty markets, such as vegetable and fruit production, could result in a larger demand for water resources. However, as stated previously, the use of conservation techniques could reduce the overall demand on future water resources. Staying at the forefront of water conservation techniques and issues is key in maintaining a healthy water supply for all agricultural production. Acquiring permits and water allocation has not been an issue yet, the County and Township should monitor any water demands to ensure adequate water supply to agricultural area. Mercer County farmers should implement water conservation strategies whenever feasible, and include such in Conservation Plans whenever practicable.

D. Waste Management and Recycling

According to the Mercer County Draft Farmland Preservation Plan "some of Mercer's equine and livestock owners already work with the NRCS to develop manure management plans while others have put in place their own reasonably effective means of waste management. During its annual monitoring visits to preserved farms with equine operations, the CADB inquires about and observes the way waste is handled.

The NJDA has adopted an animal waste Agricultural Management Practice (AMP) under the Right-to-Farm Act and provides guidance for managing livestock waste. Information on the Manure Management Rule can be found at:

<http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/divisions/anr/agriassist/animalwaste.html>

E and F. Energy Conservation and Incentives

Energy conservation has wide ranging implications, not only on the local environment but on a global scale. Climate change has been on the forefront of the world stage and

strategies to combat the resulting issues have been promoted and encouraged. One such strategy is to conserve energy and find alternative energy production that does not further degrade the environment.

There are three legislative amendments important in the consideration and development of regulations affecting solar facilities [*emphasis added*]:

- C. 146, L 2009, adopted November 20, 2009, made a wind, solar or photovoltaic energy facility or structure an *inherently beneficial use*.
- C. 35, L 2009, adopted March 31, 2009 (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-66.11), provides that “1. A renewable energy facility on a parcel or parcels of land comprising 20 or more contiguous acres owned by the same person or entity *shall be a permitted use within every industrial district of a municipality*.
- C. 4, L 2010, adopted April 22, 2010, provides that solar panels *may not be included in any calculation of impervious surface or impervious coverage*, for purposes of planning board approval of a subdivision or site plan.

SADC/Farmland Assessment Regulations and Proposed Policies

P.L. 2009 c.213

Also known as the “renewable energy farming law”, this bill provides Right-to-Farm protection to conforming renewable energy facilities installed on either preserved farmland or farms under farmland assessment. .

Preserved Farmland

Preserved farmland must conform to specific regulations which include, but are not limited to:

- Renewable energy facilities may be installed on preserved farmland so long as:
 - o *The facilities do not interfere with the use of the land for agricultural purposes*
 - o Are owned by the landowner
 - o *Are used to provide power or heat to the farm*, either directly or indirectly
 - o Are limited either in an annual energy generation capacity of *110% of the farm’s energy demands*, and occupy no more than 1% of the total farm area (preserved and unpreserved)

Commercial Farm/Farmland Assessment

Farmland under Farmland Assessment is restricted by the following regulations:

- No land used for energy generation shall be considered land in agricultural use for the purpose of farmland assessment
- No generated energy shall be considered an agricultural product

- Land used for energy generation may be eligible for farmland assessment provided that:
 - The energy generating system is located on the property of an operating farm in the preceding and current year it is taxed and
 - The power generated must support the viability of the farm
 - The owner of the property submits a conservation plan with the soil conservation district to account for aesthetics, impervious coverage and environmental impacts
 - Where practical, shade crops or pasture should remain under solar panels
 - 1 acre of energy generation facilities/structures to 5 acres of land devoted to agricultural purposes (1:5 ratio)
 - Energy generation facilities are limited to 10 acres of the farmland under farmland assessment and can not generate more than two megawatts of power.
 - Owner must obtain approval from Department of Agriculture

Proposed New Rule for AMP for Solar Energy Generation

Additional regulations for farmland are currently proposed and up for public review and comment. The public comment period expires April 8, 2011. *The proposed rule (N.J.A.C. 2:76-2A.12) proposes to implement legislation that extends the protections of the Right to Farm Act to the generation of solar energy on commercial farm within certain limits and establishes an agricultural management practice (AMP),* or standards, which commercial farms must meet to be eligible for right-to-farm protection for the on-farm generation of solar energy. These rules must be adopted before right-to-farm protection is available.

The proposed rule includes the following provisions:

- Minimum setback from *adjacent residence*, not located on commercial farm, from 200 to 500 feet
- Minimum setback to *property line or public roadway right-of-way* 100 to 400 feet.
- Required screening for structures higher than 10 feet.
- Structures cannot exceed 20 feet in height
- Facilities shall be located in a manner to minimize views of facility from public roadways and existing residences (not located on farm). Screening shall comply with conservation plan approved by soil conservation district and address the following:
 - Use existing visual barriers where practical
 - Identify the need for vegetative screens and identification of species and year-round screening, including species height and caliper.
 - 75% of facility should be screened from existing residences and public roadways within 5 years.
- Soil disturbance is to be limited
 - Use of existing roadways for access is encouraged

- o Roadways should be grassed to minimize soil disturbance and soil compaction
- o Use of geotextile fabrics during construction
- o Concrete and asphalt prohibited except for mounting systems or if deemed necessary by licensed professional
- o Vegetative cover to reduce or prevent soil erosion. Cover should be mowed on a regular basis to prevent weeds and invasive species.
- Sound levels cannot exceed 40 dBA at property line or cannot exceed the ambient sound levels measured on the property line.
- Decommissioning of all solar energy facilities shall be subject to local ordinances.

To date the Township has not amended or created new policies directly related to energy conservation.

Solar Energy

Solar energy can be harnessed via the installation of solar panels. This harnessed or stored energy can then be used to create electricity and provide heat. If excess electricity is generated, it can be sold back to the electric grid for a profit.

Wind Energy

The power of a strong wind can be captured by turbines or windmills, turning such power into electricity. Expanding and evolving technology is making this option more attractive to farmers as a way to cut energy costs.

Ethanol

Ethanol is a renewable fuel “made by distilling the starch and sugar in a variety of plants.” It can then be blended into gasoline as an “oxygenate”, reducing air pollution. Its use may also reduce dependence on foreign oil, and the harmful environmental effects of oil drilling. Also, unlike the gasoline additive MTBE, Ethanol will not contaminate groundwater.

Bio-diesel

Petroleum diesel is an emitter of sulfur emissions, a major air pollutant. Bio-diesel, made from the oils of soybeans, is an alternative to petroleum diesel. This organic fuel can be blended and used in diesel engines without modification. The result is a significant reduction of the harmful fumes produced by pure petroleum diesel.

Renewable Energy Grant Programs

The NJDA provides the following information on renewable energy grant programs, which can help encourage the use of these energy sources:

New Jersey's Clean Energy Program: Administered by the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities, this program provides financial incentives to install clean energy systems, including fuel cells, solar energy, small wind and sustainable biomass equipment. Financial incentives are in the form of rebates, grants and loans. Additional information is at www.njcep.com/.

Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvements Program: As part of the 2002 Federal Farm Bill, this program "funds grants and loan guarantees to agricultural producers for assistance with purchasing renewable energy systems and making energy efficiency improvements". Final rules for loans and grants were adopted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in July 2005. The proposed 2007 Farm Bill would reportedly continue this funding. Additional information can be found at the following website: www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/farmbill/index.html.

Biomass Research and Development Initiative Grants: The United States Departments of Agriculture and Energy support development of biomass energy. Grants are available for research, development and demonstrations on bio-based products, bio-energy, bio-fuels, bio-power and additional related processes. In the recent past, grants have focused on development and demonstration projects that lead to greater commercialization. Additional information is available at the following website: <http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/news/hottopics/topics060222.html>.

Hopewell has been active in promoting and assisting the agricultural community while preserving the valuable natural resources that have made agriculture a viable option in the Township and the region. The Township has often reached out to farmers to promote sustainable practices as identified by the SADC and the CADB, as well as supporting practices that are consistent with local objectives to preserve agricultural and the environment. The conservation and preservation of resources is invaluable to the Township and the region. For these reasons the Township encourages the use of best management practices and sustainable agriculture. In addition, the County is active in promoting sustainable practices. The Township's Environmental Commission works closely with the AAC through the Planning Board, working toward common goals of preservation of open space, agricultural activities and natural resource protection. This collaboration will continue in order to achieve common goals.

VIII. Agricultural Industry Sustainability, Retention and Promotion

A. Existing Agricultural Industry Support

1. Right to Farm

New Jersey has enacted a strong right-to-farm statute, which applies statewide. New Jersey's Right-to-Farm Act provides commercial farm owners or operators with certain protections from restrictive municipal ordinances and public and private nuisance actions. Protected agricultural activities include production, processing and packaging of agricultural products, farm market sales and agriculture-related educational and farm-based recreational activities. Commercial farms are also protected from unduly restrictive municipal regulations and public and private nuisance lawsuits. In the event of a dispute, the aggrieved party is to file a formal complaint with the County Agriculture Development Board prior to filing action in court.

These protections are available to commercial farms which:

- are operated in conformance with federal and state laws, agricultural management practices recommended by the New Jersey State Agricultural Development Committee (SADC) or site specific agricultural management practices;
- are not a direct threat to public health and safety; and
- are located in an area where agriculture was a permitted use under municipal zoning ordinance; or
- were operating as of December 13, 1997

Hopewell Township adopted the local Right-to-Farm ordinance in 1993. The Right-to-Farm Ordinance puts the public on notice that agricultural activities are a land use priority within the Township, and permits wholesale and retail marketing of the agricultural output from a commercial farm, among other protections. The Township's Right-to-Farm Ordinance was prepared in accordance to the SADC guidelines, however, the Township may want to review the ordinance and compare it to the SADC model for more up to date policies and objectives.

Hopewell's Right to farm ordinance, like that of SADC, strives to encourage and promote farming activities and minimize conflicts between residential neighborhoods and farming practices. In addition the Township has adopted a Notice of Farm Use located in section 22-2 which states:

“For the purpose of giving due notice of nearby farming uses to proposed new residential areas adjacent to unimproved land then being commercially farmed or suitable therefore, the planning board shall require an applicant for an adjacent major or minor subdivision, as a condition of approval of such application, to

include a provision in each and every contract for and deed conveying all or any portion of the lands thereby subdivided, as well as on filed final subdivision maps, the following record notice to and waiver by grantees of such present or future proximate farming uses, which such provision shall be made to run with the land:

Grantee hereby acknowledges notice that there are presently or may in the future be farm uses in close proximity to the above described premises from which may emanate noise, odors, dust and fumes associated with lawful agricultural practices permitted under applicable Right to Farm laws, regulations and ordinances, and, by acceptance of this conveyance, Grantee does hereby waive objection to such activities, grantee does also hereby acknowledge N.J.S.A. 4:17-2 prohibiting trespassing on agricultural lands.

SADC seeks to resolve conflicts in a timely and beneficial manner through the Agricultural Mediation Program. This voluntary program offers mediation in which a trained, impartial mediator helps disputing parties examine their mutual problems, identify and consider options, and determine if they can agree on a solution. A mediator has no decision-making authority. Successful mediation is based on the voluntary cooperation and participation of all the parties. Mediation can save landowners both time and costly legal fees. It is a free service, is confidential and generally takes only a few meetings to complete. Mediation can be used to resolve right-to-farm disputes, credit disputes with the Farm Service Agency or private lenders, and other conflicts involving U.S. Department of Agriculture programs. More information can be found at: <http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/sadc/rtfprogram/conflictres/agmediation/>

2. Farmland Assessment

The Farmland Assessment Act of 1964 states:

“The Farmland Assessment program is a tax incentive which reduces property taxes on active commercial farmed land, thereby assisting farmers with a critical financial aspect in helping to keep land in farms. This tax incentive is made possible by the Farmland Assessment Act of 1964, N.J.S.A. 54:4-23.1 et seq.”

The eligibility requirements are:

- The applicant must own the land;
- The property owner must apply annually for Farmland Assessment on or before August 1 of the year immediately preceding the tax year;
- Land must be devoted to agricultural and/or horticultural uses for at least two years prior to the tax year;
- Land must consist of at least five contiguous farmed and/or woodland management plan acres. Land under or adjoining a farmhouse is not counted

towards the minimum five acres;

- Gross sales of products from the land must average at least \$500 per year for the first five acres, plus an average of \$5.00 per acre for each acre over five. In the case of woodland or wetland, the income requirement is \$.50 per acre for any acreage over five. Dependent on the agricultural or horticultural products being produced, the farmer can also offer clear evidence of anticipated yearly gross sales, payments, or fees within a reasonable period of time; and,
- The property owner must represent that the land will continue in agricultural or horticultural use to the end of the tax year.

According to the Farmland Assessment Act Information Guide:

“The Farmland Assessment Act provides special treatment for land which is continued in active, agricultural or horticultural use by permitting reduced assessments and reduced tax on such qualifying lands. To recapture some of the taxes which would have been paid had the land been taxed on the same basis as all other non-farm property, the Farmland Assessment Act provides for levy of rollback tax if the use of the land changes. Change includes the abandonment of agricultural activity.

The liability for rollback taxes attaches to the land when a change in use of the land occurs, but not when a change in ownership takes place, if the new owner continues to devote the land to qualified agricultural or horticultural uses. Any land which changes from an eligible agricultural or horticultural use under the Farmland Assessment Act to a non-farm use is subject to rollback taxes for the year in which the change takes place, and for the two tax years immediately prior, in which the land was valued, assessed and taxed under the Act.”

The Township uses the 1964 Farmland Assessment Act and subscribes to the eligibility standards it uses. The Township considers the rollback provisions as a deterrent to the conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural uses.

B. Additional Strategies

1. Permit Streamlining

The Township has identified one goal in the 2003 Farmland Preservation Plan related to regulatory flexibility and streamlining:

- Land use regulations should be reviewed and updated to minimize deterrents to agricultural activity, and provide increased opportunities for agricultural expansion. This may include expanded opportunities for direct marketing of locally grown produce, which eliminates the middleman and makes agricultural activities more rewarding to the farmer

The Township will continue to pursue methods to provide streamlining and flexibility to promote agricultural retention and does not discourage or exclude agricultural operations in conformance with the Township's regulations.

2. Agriculture vehicle movement

The Township protects slow moving vehicles under their adopted Right to Farm ordinance. Under §22-1.j, "Activities Considered Agricultural Uses" include "Transport large, slow-moving equipment over roads within the Township"

3. Farm Labor Housing/Training

The Township currently does not have a policy on farm labor housing. However, the County has established a policy for agricultural labor housing. The County includes 4 policies on approval of agricultural labor housing on preserved farmland. These include:

1. The Landowner may construct any new building for housing of agricultural labor employed by the agricultural operation, but only with the approval of the Mercer CADB, and the SADC (if SADC funding was used to purchase the development easement).
2. The agricultural labor housing shall be subject to municipal and other governmental approvals as applicable.
3. All agricultural labor housing units shall be utilized for laborers employed by the agricultural operation. The agricultural labor housing unit shall not be used as a rental property.
4. Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 2:76-6.15(a)14i, Agricultural labor housing "shall not be used as a residence for Grantor, the Grantor's spouse, the Grantor's parents, the Grantor's lineal descendants, adopted or natural, the Grantor's spouses parents, the Grantor's souses lineal descendants, adopted or natural."

The CADB has acted on several labor housing requests and has been guided during its review by the Deed of Easement and its own policy for agricultural labor housing. As with a replacement housing request on the farm Premises, the CADB considers, among other things, the size, number and type of laborers to be housed, and impact on the agricultural operation. After the CADB acts, the request is forwarded to the SADC whose staff then reviews the request using their criteria.

4. Wildlife Management Strategies

The Township supports wildlife management strategies and will look to partner with the County and State in the future. The County states that netting, fencing, hunting, air cannons and other techniques are currently used by many Mercer County farmers to deter crop depredation. Deer exclusion fencing may be effective for protecting produce, since produce is grown on relatively small plots of land. However, it is not cost effective to erect deer fencing on very large tracts of land where, for example, corn may be grown.

One key way for farmers to control damage from deer is through hunting of crop damaging animals. This hunting is allowed on private lands through depredation permits, issued by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's (NJDEP) Fish and Wildlife Program. In many instances, this is the only short term solution to control damage of crops by what is widely considered an excessive deer population in the County. Farmers continue to work with the NJDEP and NJDA, as well as counties and municipalities, to implement wildlife control strategies on privately and publicly owned land. One example of this cooperation is coordinated hunting of nuisance animals on county owned lands.

5. Agriculture Education and Training

The Township does not currently offer any agricultural education but does support and refer farmers to the efforts of the Rutgers Cooperative Research and Extension. The following is an outline provided by the county on the RCRE efforts:

“One educational link for Mercer County agricultural land owners and operators is to collaborate with the Rutgers Cooperative Research and Extension (RCRE) of Mercer County (associated with Cook College, Rutgers University). There is not a minimum or maximum size farm to which the RCRE will lend assistance, so long as it is farmland assessed.

RCRE also provides practical assistance to farmers. Examples include:

- Assistance in obtaining water certification and registration permits from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, for groundwater and/or surface water allocations;
- Soil testing for fields and pastures;
- Assistance with obtaining farmer certificates for N.J. Division of Motor Vehicle registrations;
- Assistance with applications for “Outstanding Young Farmer” (OYF) nominations. OYF is a state award given annually by the NJDA which “recognizes the outstanding achievements of a young person engaged in farming in New Jersey” (*Outstanding Young Farmer’s Award*)¹⁴ ;
- Assistance with grant applications to the NJDA for various types of economic assistance. Examples include “Jersey Fresh” grants to advertise;
- Distribution of “Jersey Fresh” and “Jersey Grown” promotional material such as bumper stickers, banners and t-shirts;
- Assistance to connect owners of farmland with tenant farmers, so that land

may stay in farmland assessment; and,

- Assist new farmers with various regulatory requirements, and acquaintance with various farmer organizations.

Vision Statement

Hopewell Township's commitment to farmland preservation and preserving the Township's historic agricultural base is witnessed in the Township's rank as 10th in the State and 1st in Mercer County in active agricultural acres and over half of the Township is in farmland assessment, all despite the development pressures the Township has experienced. Virtually all except the mountainous portions of Hopewell Township consist of important farmlands prime soils, soils of statewide importance and soils of local significance. In addition, the vast majority of the land area in Hopewell Township is designated an Agricultural Development Area (ADA), and Hopewell Township represents a majority of all the ADAs in Mercer County.

The long-term utility and viability of this resource is enhanced if critical masses of agricultural lands and soils are maintained wherever they currently exist. The combination of prime soils, access to densely populated markets and the Township's regional location all combine to assure an agricultural future, so long as the farmland base can be preserved. The significant amount of farmland, which still accounts for approximately half of the Township's land area, can make farming a permanent part of the local landscape and economy.

Hopewell Township, in conjunction with the Township Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC), endeavors to preserve as much land as possible over the coming years and partner preservation with active education and promotion of agricultural resources to retain current farm operations and encourage new markets. Farmland preservation pays dividends for all involved, providing high-quality, locally grown produce. Farmland preservation allows farm families to continue a tradition of local agricultural production, and expand and diversify for the future. The objective of this Farmland Preservation Plan is to preserve as much viable farmland as possible in order to retain farming as an enduring legacy.

APPENDIX A

Policy P-14-E
Effective: 9/25/97

STATE AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

POLICY

PRIORITIZATION OF PROJECT AREAS AND INDIVIDUAL APPLICATIONS

I. Purpose

To establish a priority ranking of individual applications to direct the expenditure of farmland preservation bond funds dedicated for the purchase of development easements.

II. Authority

N.J.A.C. 2:76-6
N.J.S.A. 4:1C-31

III. Supersedes

Policy:	P-14-A dated 12/15/88
Policy:	P-14-A dated 9/21/89
Policy:	P-14-A dated 1/18/90
Policy:	P-14-B dated 3/25/93
Policy:	P-14-C dated 9/28/95
Policy:	P-14-D dated 12/19/96

IV. Definition

As used in this Policy, the following words and terms shall have the following meanings.

“Agricultural Development Area, hereafter referred to as ADA, means an area identified by a board pursuant to the provisions of N.J.S.A. 4:1C-18 and certified by the State Agriculture Development Committee.

“Exceptions”, means portions of the applicant’s land holdings which are not to be encumbered by the deed restriction contained in N.J.A.C. 2:76-6.15.

“Project area” means an area identified by a board or the Committee which is located within an ADA and is comprised of one or more development easement purchase applications approved by the board and received by the Committee, lands where development easements have already been purchased, other permanently deed restricted farmlands, farmland preservation programs and municipally approved farmland preservation programs.

“The degree to which the purchase would encourage the survivability of the municipally approved program in productive agriculture” means the degree to which the purchase of a development easement on the farm would encourage the survivability of the project area in productive agriculture.

V. Summary Policy for Ranking Individual applications and Project Areas

Utilizing the criteria in N.J.A.C. 2:76-6.16 individual applications will be ranked in order of highest to lowest statewide by the State Agriculture Development Committee. This ranking will be based on a numeric score, hereafter referred to as the “**quality score**” which evaluates the degree to which the purchase would encourage the survivability of the municipally approved program in productive agriculture and the degree of imminence of change of the land from productive agriculture to a nonagricultural use. The Relative Best Buy criterion will also be used as a factor to determine which applications will receive a higher funding priority. Although this policy contains the procedure for ranking project areas, the Committee will only utilize the criteria that pertains to ranking “individual” applications to determine the applicant’s quality score.

The factors used to determine the degree to which the purchase would encourage the “survivability of the municipally approved program, in productive agriculture” and “degree of imminence of change of the land from productive agriculture to a nonagricultural use,” will be evaluated at least 30 days prior to the Committee’s certification of a development easement value.

The “relative best buy formula” to determine the applicant’s formula index will be calculated at the time of the Committee’s final review. The formula index will be factored with the applicant’s quality score to establish the applicant’s final score. The application will be ranked by the Committee from the highest to lowest to determine a funding priority subject to available funds.

The general philosophy will be to acquire development easements on “key” farms which result in a stabilization of agriculture in that project area or act as a catalyst to encourage future program participation in the project area.

The Prioritization Policy is organized in accordance with statutory requirements identified in the Agricultural Retention and Development Act N.J.S.A. 41C-11 et seq. and criteria described in N.J.A.C. 2:76-6.16. Listed below is a summary of the major criteria with their relative weights.

A. FACTORS WHICH DETERMINE THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE PURCHASE WOULD ENCOURAGE THE SURVIVABILITY OF THE MUNICIPALLY APPROVED PROGRAM IN PRODUCTIVE AGRICULTURE (N.J.S.A. 4:1C-31b. (2))

1.0	SOILS	Weight15
1.1	TILLABLE ACRES	Weight15
2.0	BOUNDARIES AND BUFFERS	Weight20
3.0	LOCAL COMMITMENT	Weight20
4.0	SIZE AND DENSITY	Weight20
5.0	CADB PRIORITIZATION (HIGHEST RANKED APPLICATION)	Weight10

B. DEGREE OF IMMINENCE OF CHANGE OF THE LAND FROM PRODUCTIVE AGRICULTURE TO NONAGRICULTURAL USE (N.J.S.A. 4:1C-31b. (3)) Weight10

C. RELATIVE BEST BUY (N.J.S.A. 4:1c-31b. (1))

VI. Specific Methodology for Ranking Project Areas and Individual Applications.

A. FACTORS WHICH DETERMINE THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE PURCHASE WOULD ENCOURAGE THE SURVIVABILITY OF THE MUNICIPALLY APPROVED PROGRAM IN PRODUCTIVE AGRICULTURE.

1.0 SOILS Weight 15

The New Jersey Important Farmlands Inventory prepared in 1990, by the U.S.D.A., Natural Resource Conservation Service is used as the reference to identify soil quality -Prime, Statewide, Unique or Locally Important. A percentage figure for each of these four soil categories is calculated for both the individual application and the project area.

The acreage of each Important Farmland Classification shall be to the rounded to the nearest whole number.

Formula:

% Prime soils x 15= _____
% Statewide soils x 10= _____
% Unique soils x (0 or 12.5*) = _____
% Local soils x 5 = _____

Total weight = the sum of the categories.

* If a designated “unique” soil is not being used for its unique purpose, no points will be assigned. If points are to be awarded for unique soils, the county must provide justification.

1.1 TILLABLE ACRES Weight 15

The Committee shall evaluate tillable acres which emphasize the importance of land use and productivity. Priority will be given to the proportion of land deemed tillable. Factor to consider will be lands devoted to cropland, harvested, cropland pasture and permanent pasture. The following weights have been allocated in the land use classifications below.

Formula:

% Cropland Harvested x 15 = _____
% Cropland Pastured x 15 = _____
% Permanent Pasture x 2 = _____

The following definitions shall be used for evaluating tillable acres.

“Cropland harvested” means land from which a crop was harvested in the current year. Cropland harvested shall include the land under structures utilized for agricultural or horticultural production.

“Cropland pastured” means land which can be and often is used to produce crops, but its maximum income may not be realized in a particular year. This includes land that is fallow or in cover crops as part of a rotational program.

“Permanent pasture” means land that is not cultivated because its maximum

economic potential is realized from grazing or as part of erosion control programs. Animals may or may not be part of the farm operation.

2.0 BOUNDARIES AND BUFFERS: Weight 20

The weights reflect differences in both permanence and the buffers' effectiveness in reducing the negative impacts of nonagricultural development.

The following weights have been assigned:

Deed restricted farmland (permanent)	20
Deed restricted wildlife areas, municipal county or state owned parcels	18
Eight year programs and EP applications	13
Farmland (unrestricted)	6
Streams (perennial) and wetlands	18
Parks (limited public access)	14
Parks (high use)	5
Cemeteries	16
Golf course (public)	14
Military installations	14
Highways (limited access), Railroads	10
Residential Development	0
Other: (landfills, private golf courses)	*

* Value to be determined on a case by case basis at the time of review.

Formula:

$$\text{Weight of buffer} \times \frac{\% \text{ perimeter of project area affected by buffer}}{100} = \text{Total Weight per buffer}$$

Total of all the individual buffer scores = Total boundary and buffers score.

2.1 Negative Consideration:

EXCEPTIONS Weight (Up to -10)

The Committee shall evaluate all exceptions. Factors for determining if there is an adverse effect to the applicant's agricultural operation are as follows:

- * Severability potential from the Premises
- * Number requested
- * Size
- * Percent of Premises
- * Right to Farm language
- * Location and use (negative impact)

NOTE: Each county is responsible for future monitoring of each exception for ensuring compliance with restrictions placed upon the exception.

No negative points are assessed if one or both of the following pertain to the application.

1. The exception is for county and/or municipal farmland preservation and/or open space purposes.
2. The exception cannot be severed from the restricted premises unless associated with an agriculturally viable parcel pursuant to the terms of the Deed of Easement.

If one (1) or two (2) above do not apply, proceed with the following:

A. Number Requested:

For each exception requested: **(-2 points)**

B. Size:

The size of the individual exception exceeds local zoning requirements to construct one single family residential dwelling.

For each building lot, or portion thereof, in excess of the local zoning requirements: **(-1 point)**

Note: **If the exception exceeds the local zoning requirement but the landowner agrees to restrict the exception to permit only one residential dwelling, then no negative points shall be assigned.**

C. Percent of Premises:

The total acreage of the exception(s) exceeds 10% of the total acreage. **(-1 point)**

D. Right to Farm Provisions:

Approved Right to Farm language will be incorporated in the deed of the exception. **(1 point)**

E. Location and Use:

The location and/or use of the exception has a significant negative impact on the premises. **(Max. - 10 points)**

NOTE: Each county is responsible for ensuring compliance with restrictions placed upon exceptions.

3.0 LOCAL COMMITMENT: Weight 20 Max.

Priority will be given where municipal, county, regional, and state policies support the long term viability of the agricultural industry. Factors indicating support:

- 3.1** Zoning requiring an average minimum lot of at least three acres with clustering and/or mandatory buffering to provide separation between development and existing agricultural operations and/or use of other measures such as transfer of development credits, sliding scale, very low density zoning and/or any other equivalent measures which discourage conflicting nonagricultural development.

5 points

- 3.2** There is sewer or other growth leading infrastructure serving the premises or within hook-up distance.

Yes ____ 0 points

No ____ 3 points

- 3.3** The purchase of a development easement is consistent with municipal, county, and state plans.

Yes ____ 2 points

No ____ 0 points

3.4 Municipal commitment to actively participate in the Agriculture Retention and Development Program;

- A. Active Municipal Liaison with CADB
- B. Planning board actions regarding nonagricultural development support farmland preservation. (Ex. Planning board requests CADB review of applications for subdivision approval within ADAs.)
- C. Municipal governing body actions regarding nonagricultural development support farmland preservation.
- D. Municipality has previously approved eight year programs.
- E. Development easements have already been purchased in the community.

1 point each

3.5 Right to Farm ordinances

- A. A township that has a “Right to Farm” ordinance.

4 points

- B. The Right to Farm ordinance requires a developer and/or landowner who plans to build or sell a dwelling in an agricultural area to inform through their agent, prospective purchasers of the existence of the Right to Farm ordinance and the protection it grants to agricultural operations. This notification is included in the deed and recorded.

1 point

3.6 Community financial support for the project area/individual application.

Financial support is construed as strong local commitment. Generally, if municipal/private dollars are invested in a project, there is greater care taken by the community to protect the area from the negative effects resulting from the nonagricultural development. The method to compare the many diverse municipalities with respect to their direct financial support for farmland preservation is to measure their total dollar contribution per thousand dollars of current equalized (100%) assessed value for the municipality.

The local contributions include the total of all passed municipal bond referenda and/or allocations from the budget, private or corporate contributions, and funding from any other sources since January 1, 1980 with the exception of landowner donations, county, state, and federal contributions. Landowner donations will be considered under the Relative

Best Buy criterion.

The current Equalized Assessed Value for the municipality will be the one in effect on January 1 of the current year expressed in thousands of dollars.

The assessment of points will be based on an index derived from the following ratio:

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Total locally committed dollars since Jan. 1980}}{(\text{State Equalized valuation}/\$1,000)} = \text{Index}$$

* for the specific municipality

This Equalized valuation figure is listed in the most recent Annual Report of the Division of Local Government Services, prepared by the Department of Community Affairs or may be obtained by contacting the local tax office.

Example 1.

Benefit Township has committed \$1.8 million toward Farmland within the past five years. The State equalized valuation figure divided by 1,000 is 80,120.

The index is calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\$1,800,00}{\$80,120} = 22.47$$

Based on the scale, listed below an index of 22.4 is awarded 5 points.

Example 2.

In Harrow Township \$150,000 has been set aside for Farmland Preservation. The state equalized valuation figure divided by 1,000 is \$1,290,839.

The index is calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\$150,000}{\$1,290,839} = .12$$

Based on the scale listed below, an index of .12 is awarded 1 point.

Points will be allocated based on the following scale:

Index of greater than 10	5 points
Index between 7 and 10	4 points
Index between 5 and 7	3 points
Index between 2 and 5	2 points
Index greater than 0 but less than 2	1 point

Discretion may be used in the assignment of points, based on whether or not actual funds have been expended for farmland preservation.

4.0 SIZE AND DENSITY Weight 20 Max.

4.1 Individual Applications:

Individual applications will be scored on both size and density with a maximum of 10 points awarded for density for a maximum total combined score of 20.

4.1(2) Size (Max. 10 points)

Points are based on the size of each individual application relative to average farm size in the respective county according to the latest U.S. Census of Agriculture. Points will be awarded for size up to a maximum of 10 as follows:

$$\text{Points Awarded} = \frac{\text{Size of Individual application}}{10 \times (2 \times \text{county average farm size})}$$

The factor 2 encourages counties to enroll farms above average in size.

4.1 (3) Density (Max. 10 points)

The density score will be awarded based on the following:

An application which is not reasonably contiguous (within one-half mile linear distance) with another development easement purchase application approved by the board and received by the Committee, lands where development easements have already been purchased, other permanently deed restricted farmlands, farmland preservation programs and municipally approved farmland preservation programs in the project area will receive (0) points. One (1) point will be allocated for each reasonably contiguous (within one-half mile linear distance) farmland preservation program or municipally approved farmland preservation program. Two (2) points will be allocated for each of the other above noted lands in the project area which are determined to be reasonably contiguous (within one-half mile linear distance)

with the subject application and each other not to exceed a maximum score of (10 points).

Example 1:	Receives (0) points
Example 2:	Receives (5) points
Example 3:	Receives (10) points

SP = Subject Property
8YR = 8-Year Program
Blank Space = Easement Purchase Application or
Previously Deed Restricted

5.0 **CADB PRIORITIZATION**

Consideration will be given to the board's highest ranked application to recognize local factors which encourage the survivability of the municipally approved program in productive agriculture and degree of imminence of change of the land from productive agriculture to a nonagricultural use. The CADB's highest ranked application will receive 10 points.

B. **DEGREE OF IMMINENCE OF CHANGE OF THE LAND FROM PRODUCTIVE AGRICULTURE TO NONAGRICULTURAL USE**

Weight (Max of 10)

use An application can receive up to (10) points where the Committee determines that the imminent conversion of the farm (application) from an agricultural to a nonagricultural use would negatively impact the survivability of the project area in productive agriculture.

There are two aspects which shall be considered when evaluating the imminence of change: 1) factors which measure the degree of imminence of change of farmland to a nonagricultural use and 2) factors that evaluate the impact of the farmland conversion.

I. Factors considered for evaluating the Degree of Imminence of Farmland Conversion

County Comparisons (relative indices):

1. Avg. certified county easement value for previous round:
(1 point max.)
2. County Single Family Unit Permits (3 years): (1 pt. max)
3. County Farmland Assessed cropland acre loss for 10 years:
(1 point max.)
4. County Farmland Assessed cropland percent loss for 10 years:
(1 point max.)

Township Comparisons (relative indices):

1. Township Single Family Unit Permits for 3 years:
(1 pt. max.)
2. Township Farmland Assessed cropland acre loss for 10 years:
(1 pt. max.)
3. Township Farmland Assessed cropland percent loss for 10 years:
(1 pt. max.)

Farm-specific indicators:

1. Subdivision approval (final): 2 pts.
2. Estate situation: 2 pts.
3. Bankruptcy/Foreclosure: 2 pts.

II. Factors considered for evaluation the impact of the farmland Conversion

State Comparisons (relative indice):

1. Combined SADC Quality Scores for size, boundaries, and buffers and density: (0.5 pt. max.)

County Comparisons (relative indice):

1. Combined SADC Quality Scores for size, boundaries and buffers and density: (0.5 pt. max.)

MAXIMUM FOR CATEGORY: (10 POINTS)

The above indices will be updated annually and provided to CADB Staff.

C. **RELATIVE BEST BUY (STATUTORY FORMULA)**

This criterion will only be evaluated at the time of final Committee review.

$$\frac{\text{Nonagricultural development value}}{\text{nonagricultural development value}} - \frac{\text{agricultural landowner value}}{\text{agricultural value}} - \frac{\text{landowner asking price}}{\text{asking price}} = \text{formula index}$$

“Landowner Asking Price” means the applicant’s per acre confidential offer for the sale of a development easement.

D. FUNDING PRIORITY

1. The Committee's funding priority will be given to those applications which have a higher numeric values obtained by the application of the following formula:

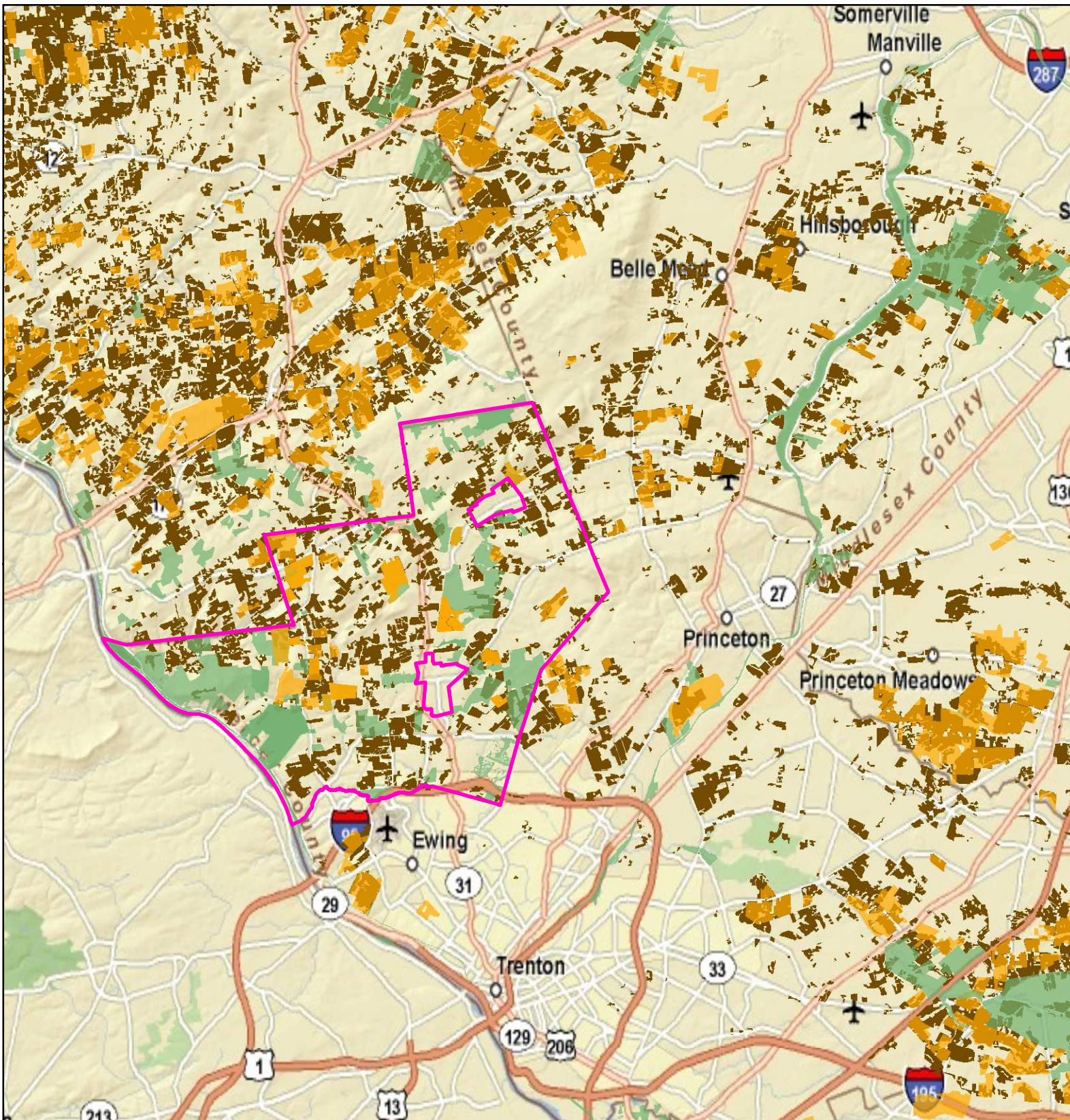
applicant's
quality score + (formula index x 200) = final score

S:\POLICIES\P14e

Figure 1
Regional Location

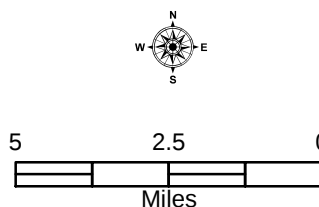
Hopewell Township, Mercer County
November 2011

This map was developed using New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Geographic Information System digital data, but this secondary product has not been NJDEP verified and is not State authorized.



Legend

- Hopewell Township
- Preserved Farmland
- Agriculture
- Preserved Lands



Data Sources:
2007 NJDEP LU/LC
ESRI Street Atlas
NJDEP Preserved Lands

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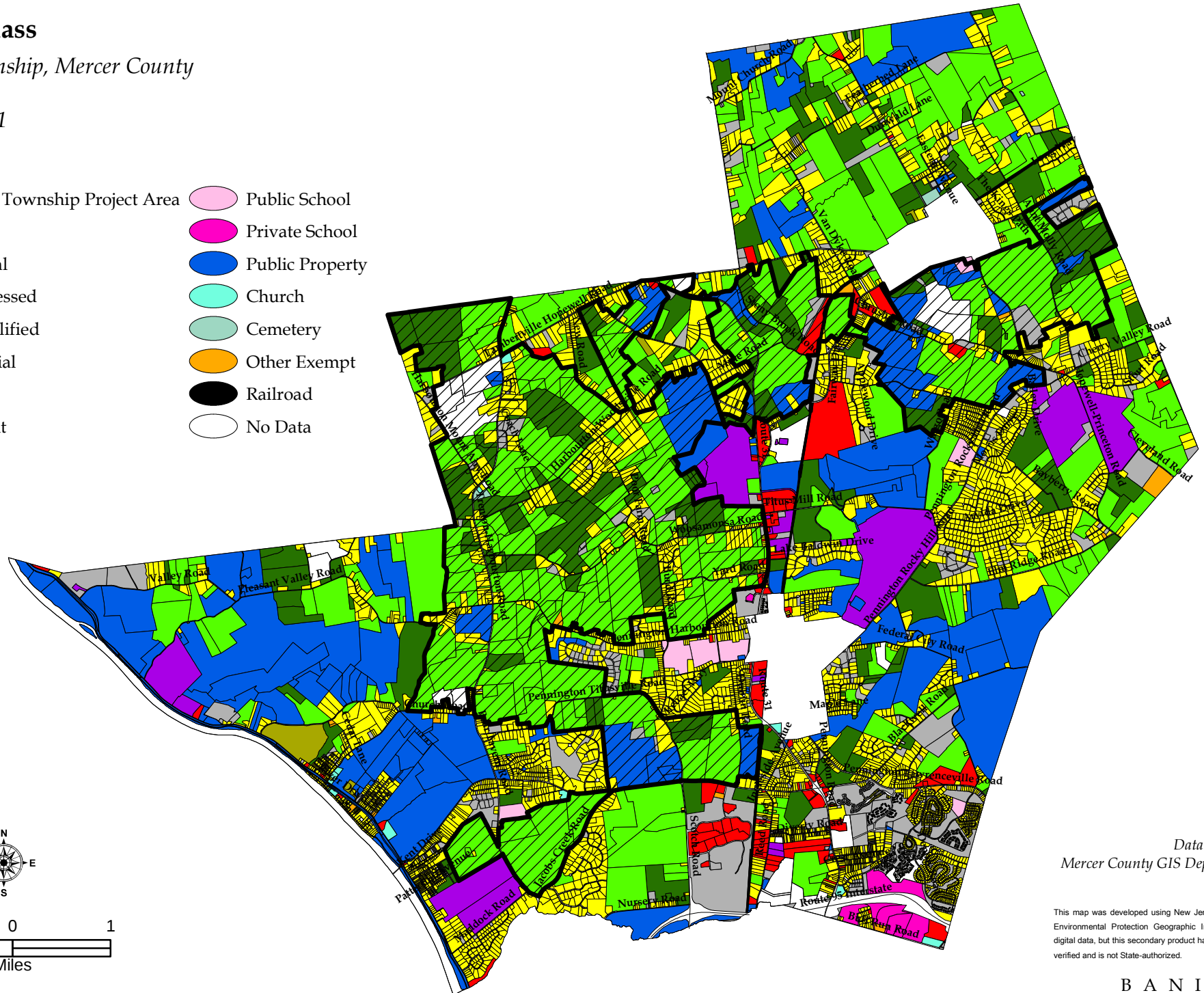
Figure 2 Property Class

Hopewell Township, Mercer County

November 2011

Legend

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------|---|-----------------|
|  | Hopewell Township Project Area |  | Public School |
|  | Vacant |  | Private School |
|  | Residential |  | Public Property |
|  | Farm Assessed |  | Church |
|  | Farm Qualified |  | Cemetery |
|  | Commercial |  | Other Exempt |
|  | Industrial |  | Railroad |
|  | Apartment |  | No Data |



Data Sources:
Mercer County GIS Department
NJDEP

This map was developed using New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Geographic Information System digital data, but this secondary product has not been NJDEP verified and is not State-authorized.

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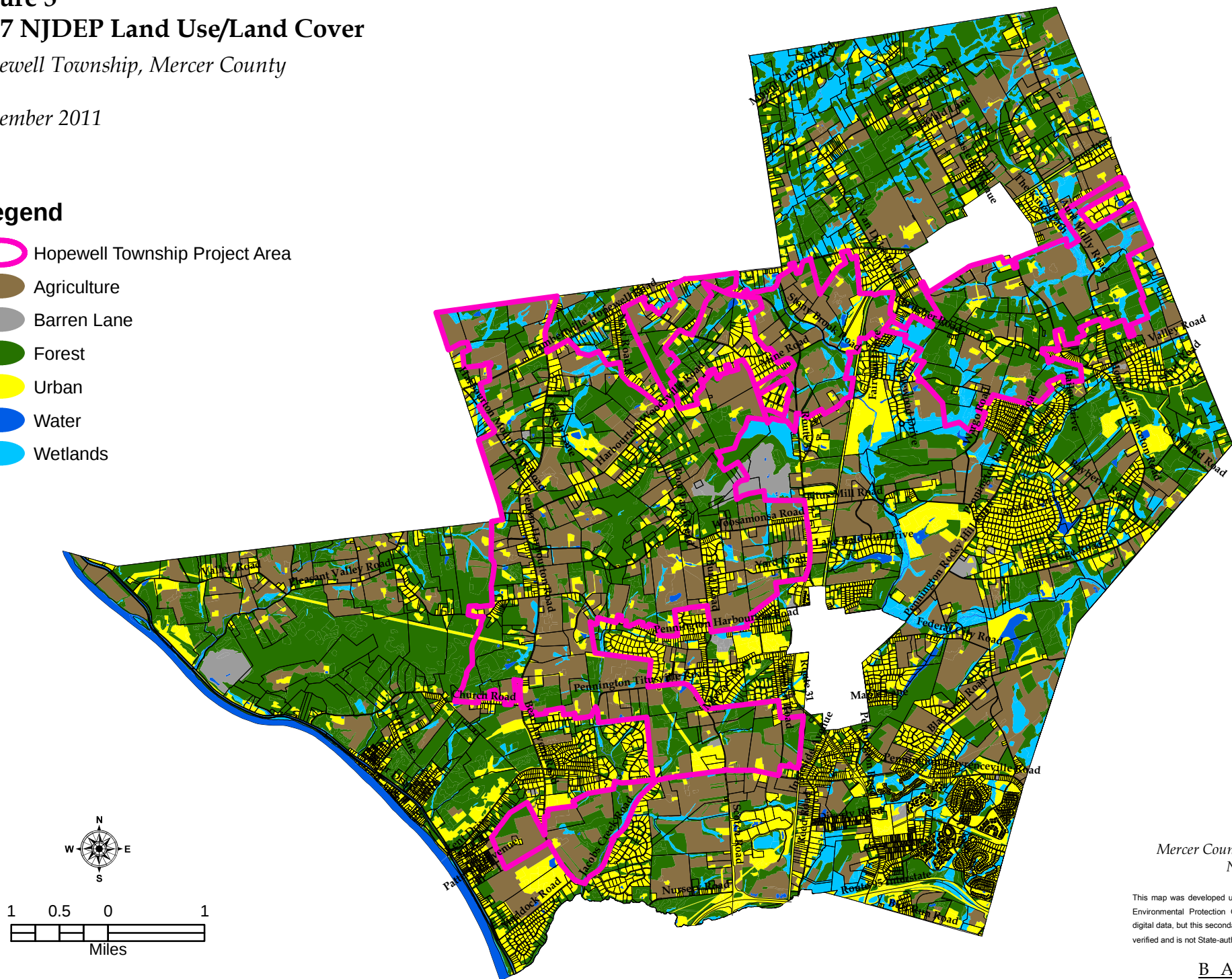
Figure 3 2007 NJDEP Land Use/Land Cover

Hopewell Township, Mercer County

November 2011

Legend

-  Hopewell Township Project Area
-  Agriculture
-  Barren Lane
-  Forest
-  Urban
-  Water
-  Wetlands



Data Sources:
Mercer County GIS Department
NJDEP 2007 LU/LC

This map was developed using New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Geographic Information System digital data, but this secondary product has not been NJDEP verified and is not State-authorized.

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Figure 4
Cropland and Pastureland
Hopewell Township, Mercer County

November 2011

Legend

-  Hopewell Target Farms
-  Hopewell Project Area
-  2007 NJDEP Land use Land Cover: Cropland and Pastureland



Data Sources:
 Mercer County, GIA Department
 NJDEP 2007 Land Use/Land Cover

This map was developed using New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Geographic Information System digital data, but this secondary product has not been NJDEP verified and is not State-authorized.

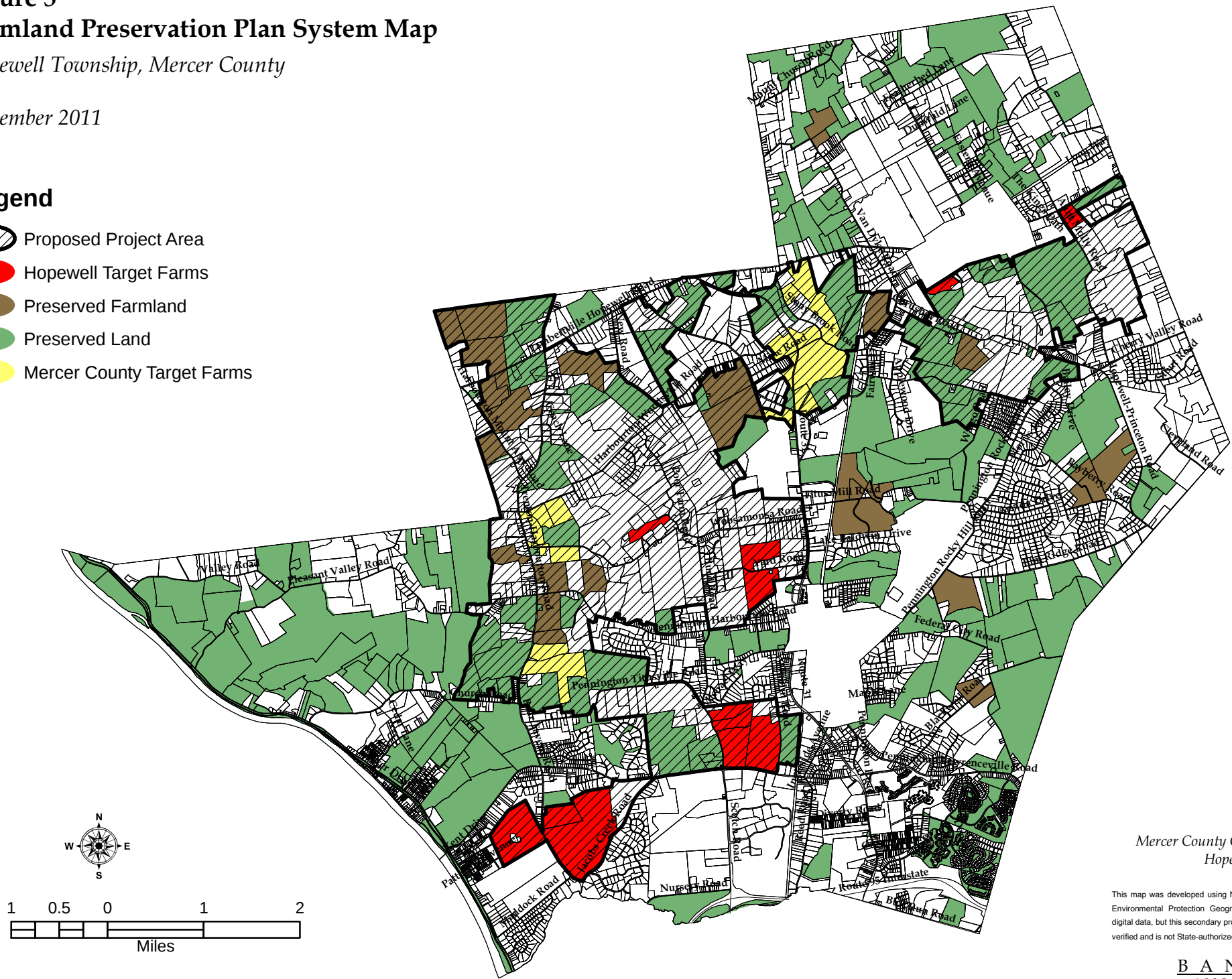
Figure 5
Farmland Preservation Plan System Map

Hopewell Township, Mercer County

November 2011

Legend

-  Proposed Project Area
-  Hopewell Target Farms
-  Preserved Farmland
-  Preserved Land
-  Mercer County Target Farms



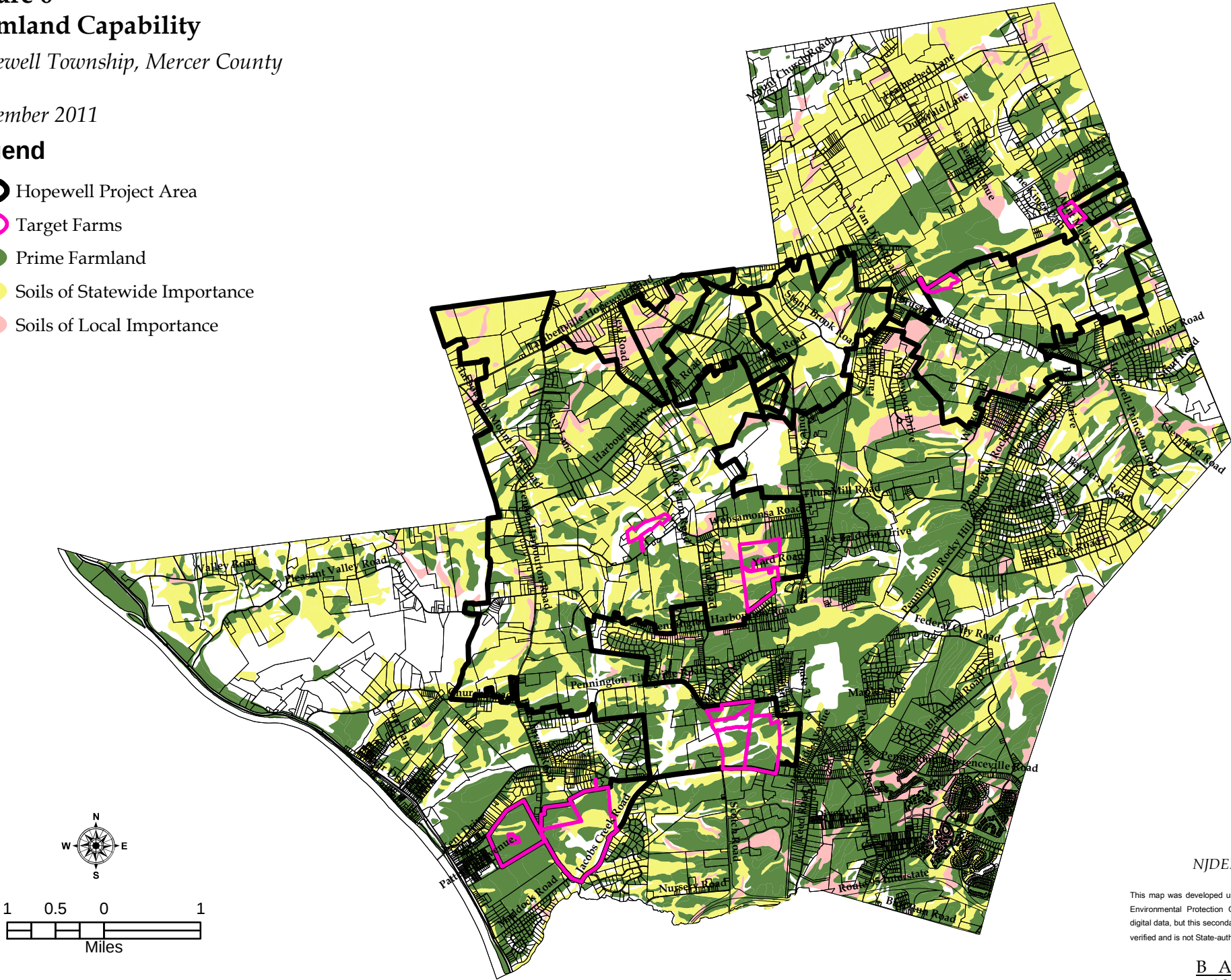
Data Sources:
Mercer County GIS Department
Hopewell Township,
NJDEP

This map was developed using New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Geographic Information System digital data, but this secondary product has not been NJDEP verified and is not State-authorized.

Figure 6
Farmland Capability
Hopewell Township, Mercer County

November 2011

- Legend**
-  Hopewell Project Area
 -  Target Farms
 -  Prime Farmland
 -  Soils of Statewide Importance
 -  Soils of Local Importance



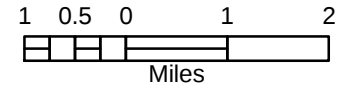
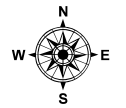
Data Sources:
Mercer County
NJDEP, NRCS SSURGO

This map was developed using New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Geographic Information System digital data, but this secondary product has not been NJDEP verified and is not State-authorized.

Figure 7 State Planning Areas

Hopewell Township, Mercer County

November 2011



Legend

- Hopewell Project Area
- PA 1: Metropolitan
- PA 2: Suburban
- PA 3: Fringe
- PA 4: Rural
- PA 4B: Rural Environmentally Sensitive
- PA: 5: Environmentally Sensitive
- Park

Data Sources:
Mercer County
NJDEP, NJ OSG SDRP

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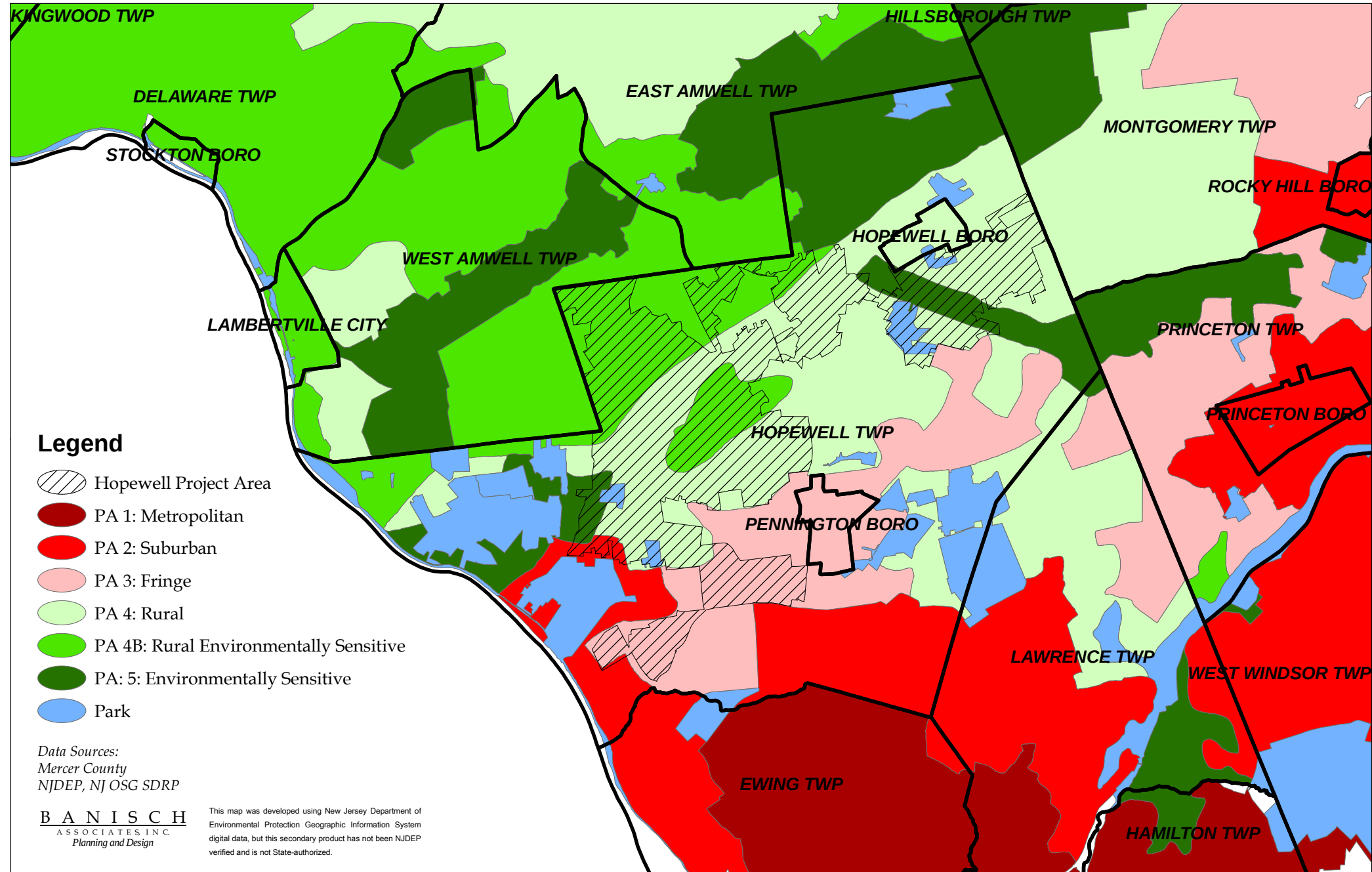


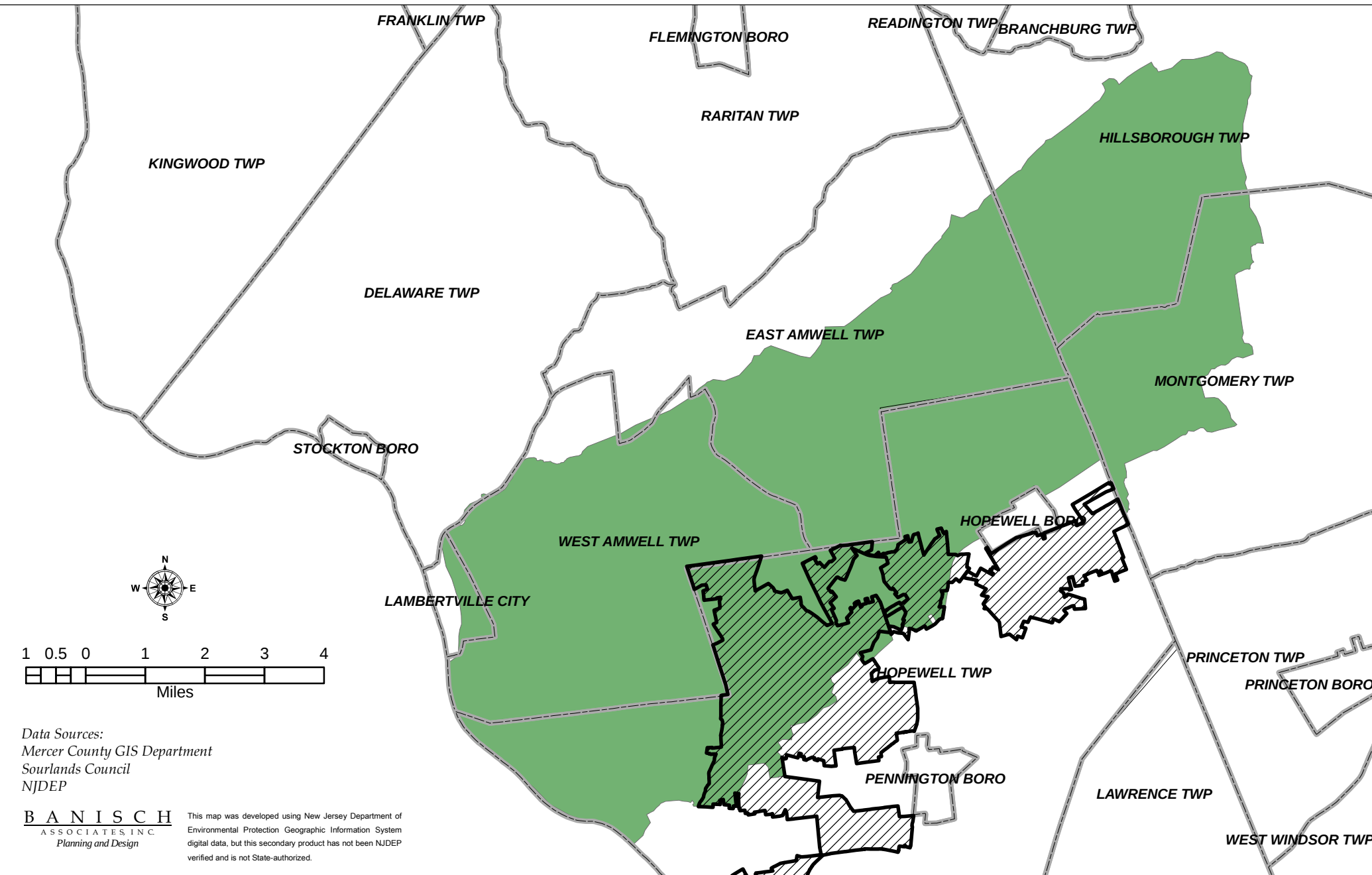
Figure 8 Sourlands Mountain SPeial Resource Area Regional Boundary

Hopewell Township, Mercer County

November 2011

Legend

-  Hopewell Project Area
-  Sourland Mountain Special Resource Area Boundary



Data Sources:
Mercer County GIS Department
Sourlands Council
NJDEP

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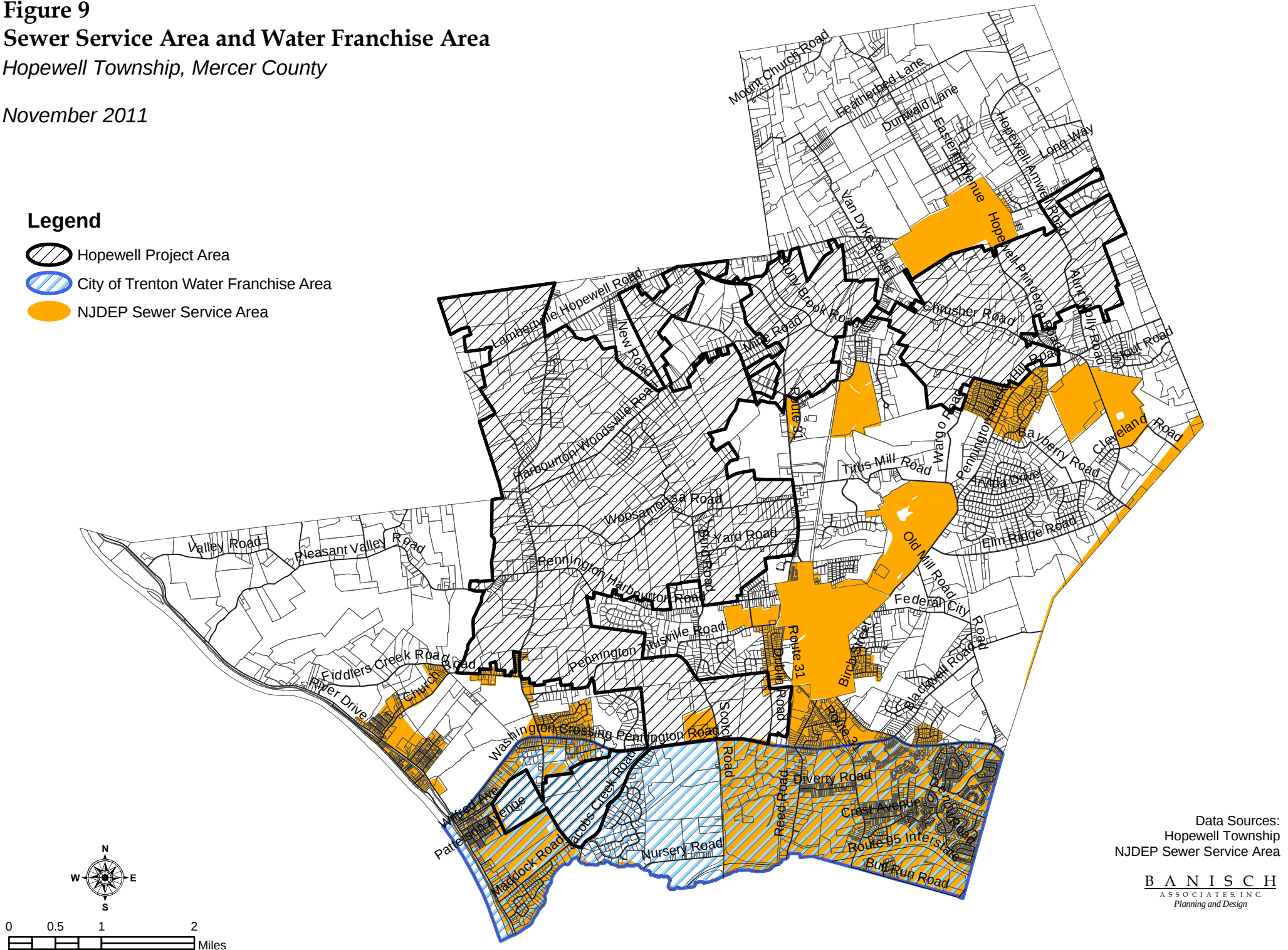
This map was developed using New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Geographic Information System digital data, but this secondary product has not been NJDEP verified and is not State-authorized.

Figure 9
Sewer Service Area and Water Franchise Area
Hopewell Township, Mercer County

November 2011

Legend

-  Hopewell Project Area
-  City of Trenton Water Franchise Area
-  NJDEP Sewer Service Area



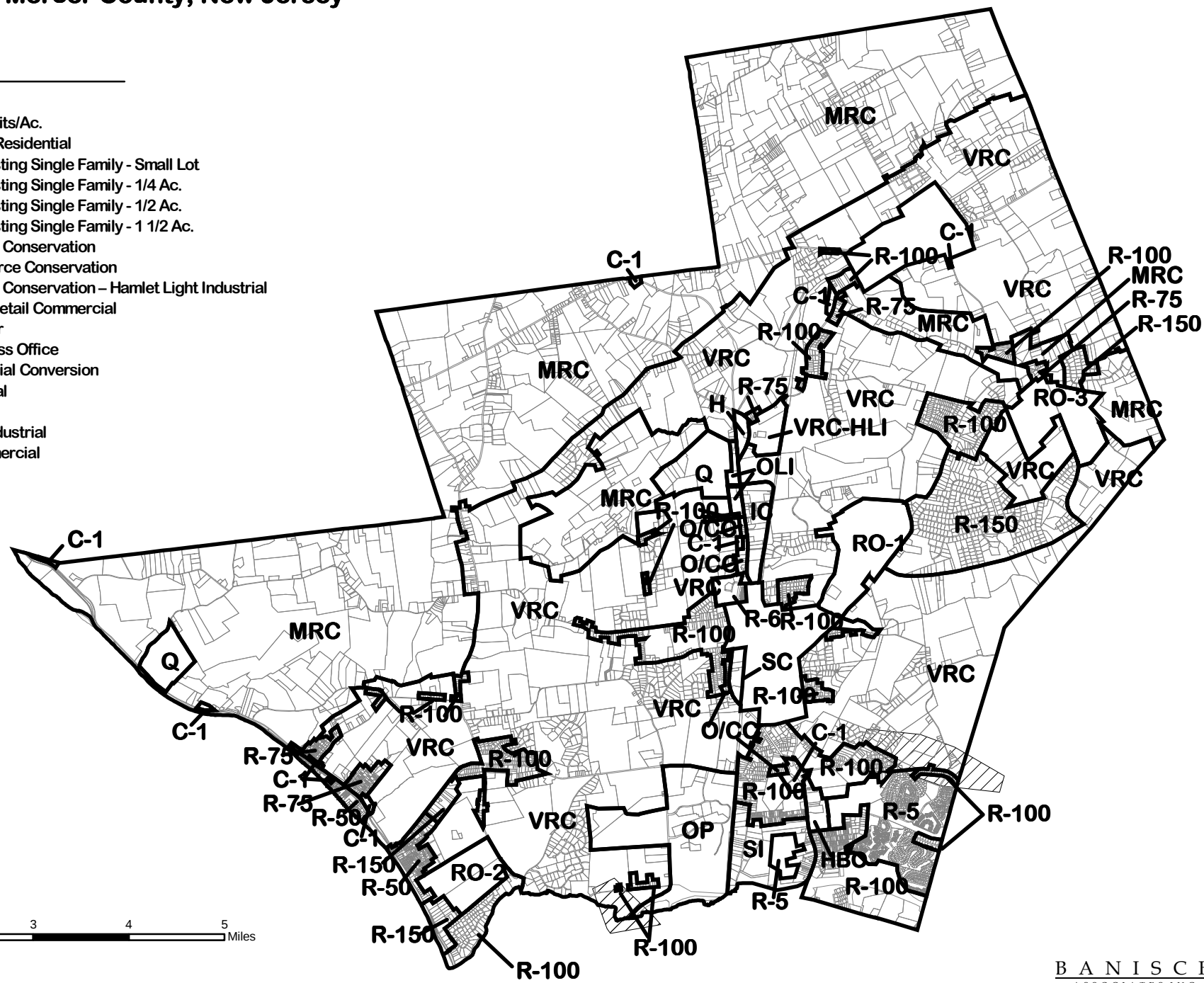
Data Sources:
 Hopewell Township
 NJDEP Sewer Service Area

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Figure 10
Land Use Plan
Hopewell Township, Mercer County, New Jersey
October 2009
Legend

Zone	Zone Name
R-5	Residential 5 Units/Ac.
R-6	Age Restricted Residential
R-50	Residential, Existing Single Family - Small Lot
R-75	Residential, Existing Single Family - 1/4 Ac.
R-100	Residential, Existing Single Family - 1/2 Ac.
R-150	Residential, Existing Single Family - 1 1/2 Ac.
VRC	Valley Resource Conservation
MRC	Mountain Resource Conservation
VRC - HLI	Valley Resource Conservation - Hamlet Light Industrial
C-1	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
RO-1	Research Office
RO-2	Research Office
RO-3	Research Office
Q	Quarry
H	Hamlet

 Airport Hazard Area



Data Source:
Van Cleef Engineering Assoc.

