



ANNIVERSARY

THE
REGIONAL
CENTER

**20 Years Serving Citizens &
Businesses in the Regional Center**



2016
ANNUAL
ACHIEVEMENTS REPORT

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

TROY FISCHER

It has been a remarkably short and successful 20 years for the Somerset County Regional Center.

It all began in 1996, when the Boroughs of Raritan, Somerville, and the adjacent portion of Bridgewater jointly received designation from the New Jersey State Planning Commission establishing the state's first tri-municipal Regional Center.



The Regional Center is the focal point of the regional economy and government, including the Somerset County seat, county library, the regional medical center, and the county's only regional mall. The area incorporates a myriad of commercial uses with diverse residential neighborhoods offering a full range of housing options.

Over the past 20 years the Regional Center Partnership has cooperated with the municipalities to guide development and redevelopment efforts, accessed funding for land use studies, and fostered cooperative planning for the benefit of the citizens and the businesses in the Center and beyond. Through participation with the State Planning Commission and cooperation among the governing bodies and the business community, the Regional Center Partnership has expedited the achievement of policy objectives in critical areas of growth.

The Regional Center Partnership owes its two decades of progress and success to many people and organizations. First and foremost is the staff of the Somerset County Planning Division. Retired Director Bob Bzik, current Director Walter Lane, Principal Community Planner Jim Ruggieri, and the staff have been our primary resource for support. The numerous volunteers who have served over the years representing the three municipalities, the elected officials, and the members of the private and institutional sector have all left their mark on the Regional Center and the constituencies that they serve. My thanks goes out to them as I look forward to the next equally successful twenty years.

REGIONAL CENTER CELEBRATES 20TH ANNIVERSARY

In May of 1996, the New Jersey State Planning Commission designated the Boroughs of Somerville, Raritan, and an adjacent portion of Bridgewater Township as an official Regional Center, the first multi-jurisdictional center in the state. The approval defined a then 14.2 square mile district (now 12.6 sq. mi.) to serve as the focal point for enhanced planning and expedited public review.

Over the past two decades the Regional Center Partnership of Somerset County, Inc., a non-profit public/private partnership, has brought together the vision and planning of three communities, the County, various non-profit agencies, and the private sector, collaboratively working to guide development and investment.



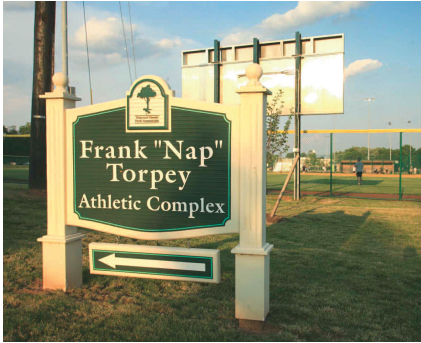
Pedestrian Overpass

The Partnership is comprised of elected and appointed officials working with private sector volunteers from the Bridgewater Commons Regional Mall, Johnson & Johnson, Dameo Companies, RWJUH Somerset, the Somerset County Business Partnership, and the Somerset County Park Commission.

Meeting bi-monthly, the Partnership provides leadership, technical support, and assistance to the county and the municipalities to shape planning policies that ensure that the Regional Center continues to be the premier location in Somerset County to live, work, play and learn.

20TH ANNIVERSARY (CONT.)

“The Regional Center has become the catalyst for cooperation and progress in Bridgewater, Raritan, and Somerville while influencing effective and sustainable development throughout the County,” commented Regional Center chairman Troy Fischer, General Manager of the Bridgewater Commons.



Torpey Athletic Complex

The Regional Center designation expedites the achievement of municipal and regional planning objectives in critical areas of growth, guiding development and redevelopment efforts by providing funding priorities for land use studies and initiatives. Through broad-based public participation and consensus building, the Somerset County Regional Center has created an environment where sharing is as natural to communities as is home rule. This coordinated planning saves governments money and facilitates the process of being a good neighbor by minimizing the impact of development on neighboring communities.

The Regional Center Partnership provides a forum through which interaction, sharing ideas and concerns, and working together to address common issues allows three communities to address common issues. One of the most significant benefits is the improved standing that the three communities receive in terms of county and state funding.

Over the past two decades, the Regional Center Partnership has been successful in securing funding including nearly \$500,000 in planning money and over \$130 million in construction funds. Additionally, the Regional Center Partnership’s annual Challenge Grant program has awarded \$1,014,500 to the three communities to advance local projects that resolve regional problems.

Among the programs and accomplishments that are the result of regional cooperation among the county, the Somerset County Business Partnership (SCBP), and the 3 communities are:

- Somerset Street Streetscape Linkage Project
- Traffic Calming Study
- Somerset County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)
- Somerset County Investment Framework
- Pedestrian, Bicycle & Greenways Systems Connection Plan
- Pedestrian Overpasses
- Green Design Toolkit
- NJ Water Supply Authority Open Space & Development Study
- Route 202 Corridor Assessment & Multi-Modal Mobility Plan
- Route 22 Sustainable Corridor Plan
- Somerville West End Redevelopment
- Frank “Nap” Torpey Athletic Complex
- Chimney Rock Interchange
- Municipal Challenge Grants
- Driver Feedback Signage
- Rain Barrel Rebate Program



Driver Feedback Signage



Greenway System

In October of 2013 the Regional Center Partnership received notification from the State Planning Commission that all qualifications had been satisfied to be granted Plan Endorsement, assuring that the region will continue to be designated as an official “Regional Center” for the next ten years.



Chimney Rock Interchange
Ribbon Cutting

COUNTY & RARITAN PLAN VETERAN'S PARK

In September, 2016, the Somerset County Freeholders, state, county, and local officials announced the beginning of a project to honor all veterans with focus on WWII hero John Basilone.



Veteran's Park, on Old York Road at the western end of the Raritan central business district, will be constructed on county-owned land near the John Basilone statue.

A cooperative project of the Freeholders, the Borough of Raritan, County Engineering and the Park Commission, the plaza will honor Gunnery Sergeant 'Manila John' Basilone, the only World War II enlisted Marine to receive the Navy Cross and the Medal of Honor. The Raritan native died in February 1945 during the Battle of Iwo Jima.

The ceremonial space will feature a landscaped plaza with monuments, seating, and parking for visitors and residents to visit and reflect on those who gave the ultimate sacrifice.

The park is expected to be completed for the 2017 John Basilone Parade in September.

MUNICIPAL BOARDS REFINE COMMUNICATION AGREEMENT

To help enhance inter-municipal cooperation and address procedural issues, the Boroughs of Raritan and Somerville and the Township of Bridgewater amended implementation procedures regarding the process by which the communities agree to share information about projects of regional significance.

According to the agreement, when a municipality has an application for more than 50 dwelling units or 50,000 square feet of non-residential space within 500 feet of a border, they will submit a complete set of plans to the adjacent municipality for review with a deadline of fifteen days to submit comment. Proposed zoning changes involving land within 500 feet of an adjacent municipality shall be submitted at first reading. The Regional Center Partnership can be used as a venue for early discussion on concept plans to facilitate approval.

KAVANAUGH SOCIAL SERVICES BUILDING

On July 21, 2016, Somerset County officials dedicated the Senator Walter J. Kavanaugh Social Services Building in the heart of the Somerset County Regional Center. Senator Kavanaugh served in the New Jersey Senate from 1998 to 2008 and the General Assembly from 1976 to 1997, representing the 16th Legislative District, covering Somerset County. With his 32 years in the New Jersey Legislature, Senator Kavanaugh's tenure was among the longest in state history.



The 42,440 square-foot structure houses the Somerset County Board of Social Services that administers public assistance programs including SNAP benefits (food stamps), general assistance, and Medicaid. The agency also provides housing assistance, case management, employment training, adult protective services, and homemaking services.

REGIONAL CENTER ATTRACTING WORLD-CLASS INTERNATIONAL NEIGHBORS

The combined efforts of the Somerset County Freeholders, Bridgewater Mayor Dan Hayes and Council, and County and Bridgewater economic development professionals resulted in the announcements of relocation by two international corporations to the area.

Switzerland-based Nestlé announced that it was locating its Nestlé Health Science business in the Center for Excellence on Route 202/206 in Bridgewater just north of the Regional Center. The decision was made following a three year world wide search by Nestlé and resulted in the opening of a 180,000-square-foot research and development facility focusing on the connection between nutrition and health management. The facility serves as a product technology center for the development of nutritional health management therapies.

In addition, the world's largest gases and engineering company, Linde North America, a member of The Linde Group based in Munich, Germany, announced that it was moving its North American headquarters to Bridgewater. The company will be consolidating operations in the Somerset Corporate Campus at the intersection of Routes 22 and 202-206 across from the Bridgewater Commons. The company will be moving about 450 employees from the Murray Hill section of New Providence to meet current and future needs. According to Linde corporate communications, the new location was chosen based on the amenities, proximity to where the majority of Linde employees live, and attractiveness to prospective employees.

Linde North America manufactures and supplies industrial, specialty and medical gases as well as related equipment. Linde supplies its customers through on-site production, pipeline, tankers and cylinders.

CREATING AN ACTIVE & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES STRATEGY: A PRESENTATION BY DR. KAREN LEE

Responding to the recommendation made at the September, 2015 Regional Center Visioning Session to pursue a “health and wellness strategy,” in March, 2016 the Regional Center Partnership welcomed Dr. Karen Lee, a “healthy built environment” and health policy advisor to discuss the topic at a public meeting.

Dr. Lee specializes in helping communities and organizations use the built environment, including buildings, streets, neighborhoods, and work and school environments, to address the epidemics of obesity and non-communicable diseases including heart disease, stroke, cancer, and diabetes.

Dr. Lee explained why healthy communities are important to both personal wellbeing and the economy. She documented how the nationwide problem of obesity and diabetes since 1990 has grown to epidemic proportions, contributing to over a hundred billion dollars in health care costs. She presented a host of examples demonstrating innovative and cost-effective ways in which communities are utilizing the built environment and building design strategies to encourage physical activity for all ages. Implementing these strategies has been shown to contribute to healthier adults and children, improved academic performance, lower energy costs, reduced infrastructure maintenance costs, and improved economic results.

Dr. Lee’s entire presentation is available online at <http://www.regionalcenterpartnership.org/PDF-2016/Dr-Karen-Lee-Creating-an-Active-Healthy-Communities-Strategy-for-the-Regional-Center-2016.pdf>.

FREEHOLDER PALMER ELECTED NJTPA CHAIR

In 2016, Somerset County Freeholder Deputy Director and long-time Regional Center liaison Peter Palmer was recently elected chair of the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA).



He previously served as chair from 2004 to 2006.

Among the key issues addressed during his tenure is the Gateway Trans-Hudson project that will have a major impact on people commuting

to Manhattan from the Regional Center communities. With the economy rebounding, support is necessary to address growing infrastructure needs in the Regional Center communities and beyond.

The NJTPA oversees regional transportation planning and annually authorizes more than \$1 billion in federal surface-transportation funding for 13 counties in northern and central NJ, including Somerset County.

SOMERVILLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ANNUAL REPORT INVENTORIES RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Somerville's Economic Development Annual Report indicated that in 2016, 12 active redevelopment projects have the potential to bring \$36.5 million into the Borough by 2022 and will generate \$31 million in disposable income.

Estimates from 2016 indicate that approximately 1,600 residential units will be constructed in addition to commercial and mixed use developments. The expected redevelopment of the Landfill site was not included in the estimates.



RESOLUTION THANKS MAYOR LIPTAK FOR YEARS OF SERVICE

At the January, 2016 meeting of the Regional Center Partnership, Chair Troy Fischer presented former Raritan Mayor Jo-Ann Liptak with a resolution acknowledging her contribution to the Regional Center and to the citizens of Raritan during her years on Borough Council and as Mayor.



The resolution outlined her contributions to the Regional Center and her years of cooperation with surrounding communities and the County. The resolution was presented to former Mayor Liptak who concluded her term of service as Mayor in 2015.

RAIN BARREL REBATE PROGRAM EXTENDED THROUGH OCTOBER 2017

In September, 2016, the Regional Center Partnership and the New Jersey Water Supply Authority agreed to continue the very successful Rain Barrel Rebate Program through October of 2017.

Rebates of up to \$200 are available to residents of Bridgewater, Raritan, and Somerville when rain barrels are installed at residences in these communities. There is a limit of two rebates per address and the rain barrels must be operational and maintained in good faith for at least two years.



Rain barrels purchased after January 1, 2014 are eligible to receive rebates. Rebates of \$50 are given for barrels holding 40 to 70 gallons and \$100 for those exceeding 100 gallons. Complete information may be found at www.regionalcenterpartnership.org.

STRATEGIC MASTER PLAN TO BE UPDATED

In spring, 2016, the Regional Center Partnership began the process of updating the Regional Center Strategic Master Plan by engaging Maser Consulting P.A. to assist in updating the Plan.

The Strategic Master Plan outlines and prioritizes quality-of-life issues, problems, and projects that are multi-municipal in nature and will facilitate the advancement of the goals and objectives for the Somerset County Regional Center.

The current Master Plan was completed in November of 2006. Key planning initiatives to be considered in the updated Plan include Somerset County Investment Framework, the Somerset County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), Supporting Priority Investment in Somerset County, Phases I and II, Plan Endorsement, and the Regional Center Visioning Session of September 2015.

REGIONAL CENTER PARTNERSHIP CHAIR HONORED BY *NJBIZ*

Regional Center Partnership Chair Troy Fischer, Senior General Manager of the Bridgewater Commons, was honored as one the finalists for the *NJBIZ* Corporate Citizen of the Year. The award honors business people for their “outstanding contributions to the New Jersey business community.”



In addition to serving as chair of the Regional Center Partnership, he served as Chairman of the Board of the Somerset County Business Partnership working “to bring new and emerging businesses to the area; working to accelerate the reemployment of displaced workers, and targeting resources and personnel in high-demand positions; and in partnership with Somerville to redevelop the downtown area.”

PROJECT PROGRESS IN THE REGIONAL CENTER

BRIDGEWATER

In 2016, **Chimney Rock Crossing** Stavola East and Stavola West began construction at Route 22 and Chimney Rock Road. Stavola East will consist of over 115,000 sq. ft. of retail space and over 17,000 sq. ft. for restaurant space. Stavola West will consist of over 84,000 sq. ft. of commercial space including a 50,000 sq. ft. Whole Foods. Regency Centers, developers of Chimney Rock Crossing Stavola East and Stavola West, announced that Saks Off 5th, Nordstrom Rack, and Chipotle are expected to join Whole Foods at the retail center. Additionally, Habit Burger and Blaze Pizza are expected to open stores.

The former Fudrucker location on Route 22 west received approval to convert to a **Hunterdon Healthcare** drop-in medical center.

The Township approved zoning changes to move forward on an executive hotel on the **SJP property at the Somerset Corporate Center** fronting on Route 202/206 across from the Bridgewater Commons and for a lifetime wellness center on the same property fronting on Commons Way.

RARITAN

The Borough approved a **redevelopment plan** for a transit oriented development on Third Street and First Avenue that will include 276 rental units. In addition, an area on LaGrange Street was approved for redevelopment for a possible senior housing facility.

Tim Horton’s Café and Bakery opened on West End Avenue in Raritan.

SOMERVILLE

The Borough launched a new and more easily navigated web site at www.somervillenj.org.

Somerville initiated a **new municipal parking program** with extended hours and the installation of consumer friendly parking meters.

In 2016, the Borough began updating the downtown redevelopment plans to allow the owner of the Post Office Plaza parking garage to sell the 130 parking spaces for use during the evening/nighttime at a rate no less than what the Borough charges.

2016 REGIONAL CENTER OFFICERS & BOARD

Chair: Troy Fischer
Vice-Chair: Jason Dameo
Treasurer: Freeholder Patrick Scaglione
Secretary: James Ruggieri (non-voting position)

At-large Private/Institutional Sector Representatives

Troy Fischer, Chair, Senior General Manager,
Bridgewater Commons*
James Driscoll, Site Manager, Workplace Solutions,
Johnson & Johnson Company*
Jason Dameo, General Manager, Dameo Companies*
Victoria Allen, Executive Director-Marketing &
Public Relations, RWJUH Somerset

Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders

Freeholder Patrick Scaglione*
(Brian Levine, Freeholder Alternate*)

Somerset County Planning Board

Bernie Navatto, Chair, Somerset County Planning Board
Walter Lane, Director of Planning, Somerset County

Bridgewater Township

Mayor Daniel J. Hayes, Jr.*
Council President Filipe Pedroso
Planner Scarlett Doyle
Henry E. Reynolds, Jr., local private/institutional sector
representative

Raritan Borough

Mayor Chuck McMullin*
Councilman Andrew Sibilgia
Engineer Stanley Schrek
Nicole Patente, local private/institutional sector
representative

Somerville Borough

Mayor Brian Gallagher*
Councilman Ken Utter
Planning Board Vice-Chair Lisa Werner
Rick St. Pierre, local private/institutional sector
representative

Somerset County Business Partnership

Michael Kerwin, President/CEO
(John Maddocks, Alternate)

Somerset County Park Commission

Ray Brown, Secretary/Executive Director
(Cynthia Sullivan, Alternate)

*RCP Executive Committee member

THE REGIONAL CENTER

BRIDGEWATER, RARITAN, SOMERVILLE • SOMERSET COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

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