



BRIDGEWATER • RARITAN • SOMERVILLE

*A partnership for a better tomorrow*

IN SOMERSET COUNTY, NJ

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Township of Bridgewater • Borough of Raritan • Borough of Somerville \* Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders  
Somerset County Planning Board • Somerset County Business Partnership • Somerset County Park Commission  
Private Sector Businesses in the Regional Center

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MONDAY, MARCH 3, 2014**

### **SOMERSET COUNTY REGIONAL CENTER EARNS EXCELLENCE IN PLANNING AWARD**

SOMERVILLE, NJ – The Regional Center Partnership of Somerset County has earned a 2013 Excellence in Planning Award from the Somerset County Planning Board to honor the organization’s attainment of Plan Endorsement from the New Jersey State Planning Commission. The award was presented at the celebration of the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Planning Board in February of 2014.

On October 16, 2013, the Regional Center Partnership achieved a major milestone to preserve its prominent standing in the state by attaining Regional Center Plan Endorsement, a comprehensive review process that ensures the coordination of state, county, and municipal planning efforts in achieving the goals and policies of the State Planning Act.

Through Plan Endorsement, all levels of the three municipal governments, Bridgewater, Raritan, and Somerville, contribute to coordinated capital investment and planning implementation mechanisms that are consistent with the State Plan and with each other. With approval from the State, the Regional Center is now in a better position to receive competitive state and federal resources, grant applications, technical assistance, and incentives to assist in accomplishing the goals for the organization’s master plan.

To achieve Plan Endorsement, the Regional Center and the three municipal governments have entered into a Plan Implementation Agreement (PIA) with the State Planning Commission that is intended to facilitate the achievement of certain planning objectives over the next ten years that are consistent with the goals of the State Plan.

The Regional Center was the first multi-jurisdictional center in New Jersey. The State Planning Commission has recognized the Somerset County Regional Center as a model for other municipalities, illustrating how inter-jurisdictional planning coordination can be achieved without compromising local identity to address common quality of life issues that transcend municipal boundaries.

“Plan Endorsement was a major accomplishment in the 20-year history of the Regional Center,” commented Chair Troy Fischer. “It shows that our efforts over the past two decades have been on target and in line with state planning efforts. To now be recognized by the County Planning Board reinforces our commitment to continue to provide benefit to our three communities and the County.”

Among the Regional Center initiatives that led to successful Plan Endorsement are the development and implementation of the 1999 Vision Plan, the 2002 Strategic Issues Report, the 2005 Charting and Action Agenda, and the Regional Center Strategic Master Plan. Projects identified in these documents that have been completed or are in progress are the 2 pedestrian overpasses, Orlando Drive/Raritan Greenway Implementation Plan, Traffic Calming Study & Implementation, Rain barrel Rebate Program, Grove Street Overpass Sidewalks, Route 22 Sustainable Corridor Plan, Route 28 corridor improvements and more.

For information on the Regional Center and a complete listing of projects and accomplishments, log on to [www.regionalcenterpartnership.org](http://www.regionalcenterpartnership.org) or call 908-231-7021.

#### BACKGROUND

The Somerset County Regional Center is the strategic center of the County consisting of 14.2 square miles encompassing Raritan Borough, Somerville Borough, and a portion of Bridgewater Township. The Center is bisected by U.S. Route 206, U.S. Route 202, U.S. Route 22, NJ State Route 28, and I-287 with public transit options and serves as the focal point of County government and the regional economy.

The Regional Center designation illustrates the State Planning Commission's support for:

- achievement of policy objectives in priority areas for economic growth and investment
- encourages development and redevelopment by reclaiming brownfields, and a broad range of planning and implementation initiatives
- makes available priority funding for economic and community programs that provide for assistance with redevelopment in existing downtown business districts, new infill development opportunities, and residential and non-residential development along major highway and mass transit corridors
- will foster more effective mass transportation linkages and may provide priority funding for key intersections, corridor improvements and improved pedestrian accessibility
- makes available priority support for open space concepts by planning and designing new and existing active recreation facilities, for passive open space acquisitions, and for new and existing historic preservation and revitalization programs.

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