



BRIDGEWATER • RARITAN • SOMERVILLE

A partnership for a better tomorrow

IN SOMERSET COUNTY, NJ

c/o Somerset County Planning Board • P.O. Box 3000, Somerville, New Jersey 08876-1262

Phone: 908-231-7021 • Fax 908-707-1749 • www.regionalcenterpartnership.org

A partnership for a better tomorrow

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

PHOTO ATTACHED

FRIDAY, JUNE 8, 2018

REGIONAL CENTER PARTNERSHIP ANNOUNCES NEW COMMUNITY GRANTS

SOMERVILLE, NJ – The Regional Center Partnership of Somerset County has approved Challenge Grants to benefit the participating municipalities of Bridgewater, Raritan and Somerville.

The goal of the **Challenge Grant Pilot Program for Pedestrian Safety Enhancement** is to help make the Regional Center more pedestrian-friendly and to help advance the goals and recommendations identified in the draft Regional Center Strategic Plan. The effort will reinforce the work of RideWise Transportation Management Agency (RideWise) in working with towns to advance pedestrian and bicycle mobility through the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority StreetSmart campaign.

The Pedestrian Safety Enhancement Pilot Program Challenge Grants were made available to each of the communities in amounts up to \$15,000.

Raritan applied for and will receive funds to support the local police department partnership with RideWise to design and implement an eight-week pedestrian safety education and enforcement campaign along West Somerset Street. Raritan will also utilize part of the grant funding for a separate project to improve traffic striping at various pedestrian crossing locations.

Somerville will utilize funds for signage improvements to increase visibility at crosswalks near the middle and high schools. Additionally, local police will partner with RideWise to provide in-school pedestrian and bike safety education.

Bridgewater proposes upgrade Township-owned traffic signals along Commons Way at Garretson Road, Fifth Street, Prince Rodgers Avenue, and Crossings Boulevard. The improvements will include pedestrian crossing signals and countdown times.

On March 29, 2018 the Regional Center Partnership approved the release of **Creative Placemaking Pilot Program Challenge Grants** for the Regional Center municipalities. The goal of the Pilot Program is to help advance the goals of the Regional Center by helping to strengthen the economic vitality of downtown and Man Street districts.

Creative Placemaking leverages the power of the arts, culture, and creativity to help bring a community together, support tourism and the local economy, and help attract people to downtown and Man Street areas. Grants of up to \$15,000 per community are being made available for projects or activities that meet the programs guidelines and criteria.

For information on Regional Center programs and activities visit www.regionalcenterpartnership.org, emailing ruggieri@somerset.co.nj.us or call Somerset County Planning Division at 908-231-7021.

PHOTO CAPTION: The Challenge Grant Pilot Program for Pedestrian Safety Enhancement will support the efforts of Bridgewater, Raritan, and Somerville to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety.

BACKGROUNDER

The Somerset County Regional Center is the strategic center of the County consisting of 12.6 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.

PRESS CONTACT: Rich Reitman 908-526-1390 or 908-400-6061