



Somerset County Regional Center Partnership Granted Plan Endorsement

In October, 2013 the Somerset County Regional Center Partnership achieved a major milestone, satisfying all qualifications to be granted Plan Endorsement by the New Jersey State Planning Commission. The Commission determined that the Somerset Regional Center, the Boroughs of Raritan and Somerville, and the Township of Bridgewater satisfactorily met all requirements for the region to be designated an official “Regional Center” for the next ten years. At a hearing held in Trenton on October 16, 2013, members of the Commission unanimously approved the application that involved a six-year effort by the Partnership and the three communities to complete.

Plan Endorsement is a 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 governments 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 an enhanced position to receive financial and technical incentives that will assist in accomplishing the goals of the Regional Center Strategic Master Plan. To attain these goals, the Regional Center and the municipal governing bodies entered into a Plan Implementation Agreement (PIA) with the State Planning Commission to facilitate the achievement of designated planning objectives.

“This represents a major accomplishment in the 20-year history of the Regional Center,” commented Chair Troy Fischer. “In the eyes of the state we have successfully addressed and completed our mission of the first two decades and now have been given another ten years in a priority position for access to state and federal financial and technical support that will make the vision for the three communities and the Regional Center a reality.”

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 an 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.

The Regional Center Partnership was recognized by the Somerset County Planning Board with a Somerset County Land Development Award in the Excellence in Planning category as a special recognition for achieving Plan Endorsement.