



Regional Center Partnership of Somerset County, NJ



November 2021

Regional Center Begins Plan Endorsement Renewal Process

Every 10 years, New Jersey's designated Regional Center communities must apply to renew Plan Endorsement to retain their "center" designation and enjoy the benefits that come with Plan Endorsement. If no action is taken, Somerset County's Regional Center designation will expire in October, 2023. Under a proposed state rule, Somerset County is expected to become a state model for Plan Endorsement Renewal.

Somerset County's expected renewal will position the Regional Center when competing for additional state funding for major Regional Center projects.

Small Business Saturday in Somerville

The Downtown Somerville Alliance has announced that **Small Business Saturday** is scheduled for all day on November 27, 2021. The family event opens up shopping and dining opportunities to gather all the gifts needed for holiday giving. Activities include the Holiday Jubilee and Division Street tree lighting.

Somerville Receives Preservation Grant

The Borough of Somerville was awarded a Somerset County Cultural & Heritage Historic Preservation Grant in the amount of \$124,031. The grant will be applied to ongoing preservation efforts to the Daniel Robert House which serves as Somerville Borough Hall. The grant was one of 11 provided county-wide to address centuries of County history.

Raritan to Address Master Plan Amendment

The Raritan Planning Board will address an amendment to the Master Plan on November 17, 2021 to adopt portions of the Raritan Downtown Economic Development Plan. Specific portions of the Plan are the Downtown Raritan Vision Plan, the Public Involvement Summary, and the Implementation Tool Box.

The intent of the Plan is to promote investment in the downtown area of the Borough.

Christmas at the Commons

The Bridgewater Commons will begin the 2021 celebration of the Holiday Season beginning Saturday, November 13, 2021 with the arrival of Santa to Center Court at 11:00 A.M. Photos with Santa will be available daily through December 24.

"Santa Cares Day" on Friday, December 3, 2021 from 9:00 A.M. to 11:00 A.M., in conjunction with International Day of Persons with Disabilities is designed for individuals with special needs.

Somerville Approves Public Safety Complex

Borough Council approved plans to build a new Public Safety complex for fire and police on the corner of North Gaston Avenue and East Cliff Street. A lease-purchase agreement with the developer, Stonewater, will allow the project to be built quickly and without adding long term debt by utilizing proceeds from various PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) projects. The two-story building is expected to be completed by 2024.

County Roadway Study Focuses on Somerset Street

The Somerset County Roadway Safety Study, using environmental justice and crash data, identified a number of recommendations for Somerset Street in Raritan including removal of tree branches blocking signage; striping upgrade to enhance recognition of crosswalks; ponding and drainage issues; and relocating the stop bar on Route 206 south closer to the intersection.

The study also identified safety recommendations for Finderne Avenue and Main Street in Bridgewater. The key recommendation is to evaluate the feasibility of a road "diet" to reduce the number of travel lanes and allow for the construction of pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements. The complete study can be viewed at <https://www.co.somerset.nj.us/government/public-works/planning/somerset-county-roadway-safety-study>.

Raritan to Decorate for Christmas in a New Way

Raritan will place new battery powered lights that will wrap around trees and poles on Somerset Street in downtown.

Join us for an evening of merriment

Christmas in Raritan

1:00PM TILL 6:00PM
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2021
DOWNTOWN RARITAN

food, beverages, crafts, activities, carolers,
lots of fun for all ages
...and Santa Claus is coming to town!

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE RARITAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT WWW.MAKERARITANYOURS.COM

Lobster Rolls Come to Bridgewater

Mystic Lobster Roll Company has opened its first Somerset County location at 555 Union Avenue in the township. Mystic serves fresh shelled lobster rolls, lobster tacos, lobster bisque, lobster mac and cheese, dessert and a kid's menu.

Somerset County Creates New Department

Somerset County announced that it has merged the Planning Division and the Office of Economic Development into the new Office of Planning, Policy, and Economic Development. The Office will be "the central hub working with the Board of Commissioners, County divisions and departments, local governments, non-profits, and the business community to build a strong economic environment, develop high-wage employment growth, and protect open space and historic resources..."

Raritan Releases Custom App

Raritan has released an app that will allow residents to easily communicate with town employees. "MyRaritan" is available for iPhone and Android and may be used to alert the town of the need for minor repairs and allow employees to make residents aware of the status of requests.

Somerville Turkey Trot to Support Rec Programs

The sixth annual Somerville 5K Turkey Trot is scheduled for Thanksgiving morning, November 25, 2021 beginning at 9:00 A.M. The USA Track and Field Certified race will stage at Engine Company No. 1 at East Main Street and Veterans Memorial Drive with parking available at the 59 Veterans Memorial Drive parking deck. Registration fees will be used to support Recreation Department programs.

Raritan Swearing Ordinance No Longer in Effect

The Raritan Borough Council confirmed that the ordinance that prohibited public swearing, passed in 1994, is no longer in force.

There is no evidence that anyone has ever been prosecuted or fined. Records show that the ordinance was rescinded in 2011 with the current Council confirming that it is no longer in effect.

Cultural & Heritage Commission Announces Awards

The Somerset County Cultural & Heritage Commission announced that Somerville Arts on Division is a recipient of a 2021 Arts Award. The recognition honors individuals and organizations that "show exemplary leadership and dedication to the fine and performing arts in Somerset County."

Also, Matali Bhawmik of Bridgewater was awarded the Excellence in Arts Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Arts in Somerset County.

Somerville to Get Pedestrian Bridge

The Somerville Planning Board approved a pedestrian overpass over South Davenport Street connecting the east and west portions of the Edgewood Properties residential and retail development.

The eastern portion is occupied by the Edge apartments, Wolfgang's, ShopRite, and retail stores. The western portion will contain a 521 space parking garage, 153 apartments, retail and restaurant space, and a fitness center.

Somerset County Launches the Community Police Alliance

Somerset County and Bridgewater Township are piloting an innovative Community Police Alliance project to provide aid and support to at-risk residents before their situation escalates to one involving police intervention or arrests. The County Human Services Department has hired a Licensed Social Worker to coordinate and refine the pilot project with the goal of expanding it to other communities.

Community Calendar

REGIONAL CENTER MEETING DATES

The Regional Center Partnership meetings are held virtually utilizing the Zoom application. To participate in the November 10, 2021 meeting beginning at 5:00 P.M.

Zoom Meeting

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/94940563953?pwd=eC9rbU5Pa3I2YlZhZU5XVnNCT0tCdz09>

Meeting ID: 949 4056 3953

Passcode: 349851

Phone 1 929 205 6099 Passcode: 349851

Upcoming Meetings:

Wednesday, November 10, 2021 @ 5:00 P.M.

Wednesday, January 19, 2022 @ 5:00 P.M.

LINKS TO REGIONAL CENTER

COMMUNITY EVENTS & PROGRAMS

Bridgewater:

<https://www.bridgewaternj.gov>

Raritan:

<https://www.raritanboro.org>

Somerville:

<http://www.somervillenj.org>

<http://www.downtownsomerville.com/>

Somerset County

<https://www.co.somerset.nj.us/about/calendar>

Regional Center Partnership of Somerset County, NJ

Bridgewater Township, Raritan Borough, Somerville Borough

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