



THE REGIONAL CENTER

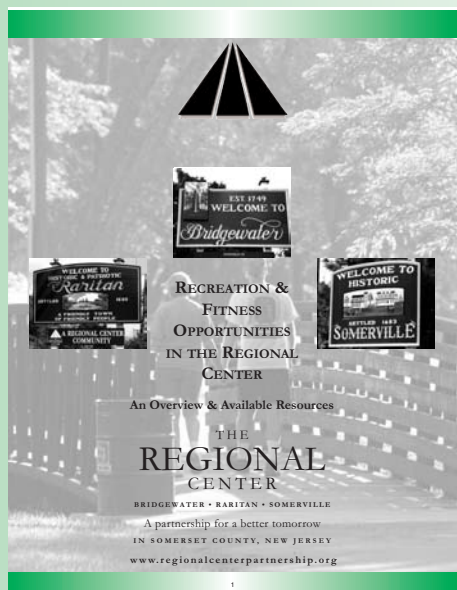
BRIDGEWATER • RARITAN • SOMERVILLE

A partnership for a better tomorrow
IN SOMERSET COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

www.regionalcenterpartnership.org

RECREATION & FITNESS OPPORTUNITIES IN THE REGIONAL CENTER

The Somerset County Regional Center has recently produced the second in a series of brochures highlighting the various advantages found within the Regional Center Communities. "Recreation & Fitness Opportunities in the Regional Center" follows the distribution of "Business & Employment Opportunities in the Regional Center" brochure that was completed earlier in 2010. Both publications are available at libraries and municipal offices in the three Regional Center communities, in the County Administration Building, and online at www.regionalcenterpartnership.org.



ship.org.
The informative brochure describes recreation and fitness resources available

Cont. page 4

3RD ANNUAL REGIONAL CENTER SUMMIT FOCUSES ON TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENTS

The Somerset County Regional Center recently presented the 3rd Annual Summit, "On the Move - The Impact of Transportation Investment in the Regional Center," at the Bridgewater Marriott, 700 Commons Way in Bridgewater, New Jersey.

More than 50 people attended the morning-long session that included reports from key transportation experts who offered their perspective concerning transportation enhancements in New Jersey and in the Regional Center. Reports focused on the impact of these improvements on Bridgewater, Raritan, and Somerville.



Presentations included:

- "Progress Report – Regional Center Mobility Issues" by Somerset County Freeholder Peter Palmer
- "Transportation Investment as an Economic Generator" by Jon Carnegie, Director, Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center
- "Municipal Transportation Investment Initiatives in the Somerset Regional Center" Reports from Bridgewater, Raritan, and Somerville
- "The Regional Perspective" by Cliff Sobel, Executive Director for Planning & Programming, North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority

The session addressed all aspects of transportation in the Center, from sidewalk installation and improvement to mass transit enhancements, all of which serve as economic drivers.

"The transportation improvements that are being implemented and planned in the Regional Center

Cont. page 4

In this Issue

- 3rd Annual Regional Center Summit
- Recreation & Fitness Opportunities
- Somerville Landfill Update
- Route 22 Long Term Improvement Update
- Challenge Grants Awarded
- Pedestrian & Bicycle Access to Torpey Complex
- 2011 Regional Center Meeting Dates
- Strategic Master Plan Implementation
- Traffic Control Box Art Project
- Regional Center Leadership
- Regional Center 2011 Meeting Dates

SOMERVILLE STATION & LANDFILL AREA UPDATE

The Borough of Somerville held a public meeting of stakeholders in late fall to review the Vision and Development Plans and report on the status of the environmental activities.

Current estimates indicate that of the 116 acres that comprise the site between the Somerville Train Station and Route 206, 75 acres are buildable with the remaining acreage designated as wetlands. It was reported that the existing wetlands are unattractive and in need of clean-up and restoration. It is projected that roads will be built that will cross the wetlands and trails and a boardwalk will provide pedestrian access to the passive areas.

The environmental update showed that there continue to be moderate levels of contaminants in the soil and the ground water that are consistent with discharge from a municipal landfill. It was also noted that the waste from the landfill extends further than the original estimates. These issues are addressed in the Remedial Action Workplan that is underway.

It was also reported that the current road plan on the site includes the Station Road from Route 206; the Wetlands Parkway from Orlando Drive; and the Davenport Street extension.

The necessary steps for remediation will continue into 2011 with expected completion in 2014.

TRAFFIC CONTROL BOXES DECORATED WITH WINNING ART DESIGNS

There is added beauty found at various intersections in and around the Regional Center as a result of an art competition that has resulted in the decorating of traffic control boxes.

Forty artists from 10 New Jersey counties submitted original works of art to be applied to the County's Traffic Control Boxes. The artwork was judged by 4 professional artists who selected the top ten as finalists. These winning designs were then digitally converted to decals that were applied to 10 boxes throughout Somerset County. The materials used for the decals are both graffiti and UV resistant.



Designs located within the Regional Center include the northeast corner of East Main Street and Finderne Avenue in Bridgewater; Somerset Street and First Avenue in Raritan; and

Cont. page 3

COMMITTEE PRESENTS ROUTE 22 LONG TERM CONCEPT & FEASIBILITY ASSESSMENT

The Route 22 Sustainable Corridor Committee (SAC) presented the Concept Development and Feasibility Study at its first public meeting in the fall. A cooperative effort of the NJ Department of Transportation, Somerset County, and the Louis Berger Group, in association with Parsons Brinckerhoff offered the public an overview of the study area, the information collected to date, and a status report on the concept development.

The study area includes the Route 22 corridor from mile marker 33.8, just west of the Route 202/206 interchange, to mile marker 36.9, just east of the Interstate 287 interchange and west of Chimney Rock Road.

It was determined that the average traffic counts in this area are:
52,000 vehicles per day west of Route 202/206
68,000 vehicles per day east of I-287 interchange
88,000 vehicles per day between I-287 and Route 202/206

It was noted that Route 22 carries 11,000 more vehicles per day, more than I-287 between Route 22 and Routes 202/206.

Crash data in the corridor showed an average of 270 accidents per year between 2005 and 2009, with a high of 294 in 2007. Of these crashes, 52% were same direction rear end collisions; 24% were same direction side swipes; 15% were fixed object accidents; 4% were right angle; and 5% fell into the category of "other." The number of accidents amount to 272% of the state average on comparable roadways.

The Committee noted that the goals of the project are to improve overall safety for all modes of transportation; enhance mobility along the corridor for all modes of travel; conduct extensive public outreach to engage all stakeholders; and enhance the livability and economic vitality of the Regional Center.

An official website providing details on the project is available at www.route22corridor.info. The site provides information to facilitate public input into the study process. In addition to providing updates and progress reports, the site will serve to allow comment and suggestions as the study progresses.

Following the initial data collection, the consultant team will develop a number of Concept Plans and conduct a Feasibility Assessment that will evaluate alternatives, assess impacts and costs, identify fatal flaws in the various plans, gain community consensus, and identify the initially preferred alternative plan.

Extensive public involvement will include local office briefings, focus groups, interviews, 4 public meetings, project specific newsletters, surveys, and public outreach through the media.

Up to date information on the project may be found at www.route22corridor.info.

PARTNERSHIP APPROVES CHALLENGE GRANTS

The Somerset County Regional Center Partnership approved the 2010 Municipal Challenge Grants.

Bridgewater Township

Finderne Sidewalk

Grant: \$20,000

In-kind Match: \$24,000

Funding will be used to construct a missing sidewalk connection on the north side of Union Avenue between Jamestown Road and Pearl Street.

Raritan Borough

Environmental Sustainability Master Plan Element

Grant: \$20,000

In-kind Match: Borough services

Funding will be used to prepare an Environmental Sustainability Master Plan Element to facilitate the Borough's efforts and policy making to improve the efficient use of natural resources and promotion of renewable energy resources.

Somerville Borough

Par Course Fitness System

Grant: \$20,000

In-kind Match: Borough services

Funding will be used to install a series of fitness exercise stations at intervals along the Peters Brook Greenway. The project will help to satisfy the objectives of the Regional Center Bicycle, Pedestrian, & Greenways Systems Connection Plan.

TRAFFIC CONTROL BOXES (CONT.)

in proximity to Somerset Medical Center in Somerville.

The objective of this public art project is to provide attractions that will enhance the local economy, replace otherwise defaced public infrastructure and bring greater exposure of the artists' art work. The County plans to expand the project to cover a total of 30 TCB's with decorative art over the next 3 years.

STRATEGIC MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION INITIATIVES

Three major initiatives are being addressed that are focused on implementation of the Regional Center Strategic Master Plan.

- #1 - A "Working Group" has been convened to help coordinate and prioritize economic development initiatives within the Regional Center. The "Working Group" is made up of the economic development directors from Bridgewater, Raritan, and Somerville; representatives from the Somerset County Business Partnership, the Somerset County Planning Board, and the Regional Center Partnership. The initial focus of the Group is to review and provide feedback on the county's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The Somerset County Business Partnership is leading the effort to obtain a \$210,000 grant from the US Economic Development Authority for implementation of the CEDS.
- #2 - The NJ Water Supply Authority Green Infrastructure Project is designed to advance environmental and natural resource protection of the Strategic Plan and Greenways Systems Connection Plan. The Peters Brook elements of this project includes demonstration projects to better manage stormwater runoff. The Regional Center will support the effort by utilizing its non-profit status to apply for non-traditional funding.
- #3 - The success of the Torpey Athletic Complex in the Finderne section of Bridgewater has accelerated the need to create additional accessibility to the site. The Regional Center Partnership has approved funding for planning and engineering for pedestrian and bicycle access improvements to the complex. Staff determined that a multi-phase approach for improvements is the best strategy for completing the project. Phase I will focus on pedestrian and bicycle improvements along Loeser Avenue from Fairview Avenue in Somerville to Nimitz Street in Bridgewater and then along Nimitz to the Torpey Complex parking area. The second phase of the project will focus on pedestrian and bicycle improvements along the north side of Southside Avenue from the Peters Brook bridge to Loeser Avenue and then along Loeser to Nimitz.

TORPEY ATHLETIC COMPLEX PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLE ACCESS IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Regional Center partnership staff, working with the Somerset County Park Commission and County Engineering are addressing the need for improved bicycle and pedestrian access to the Torpey Athletic Complex. The proposed initiative will help meet the objectives and recommendations of the Regional Center Strategic Master Plan and Regional Center Bicycle, Pedestrian & Greenways Systems Connection Plan for improving pedestrian and bicycle connections in this area of the Regional Center.

Improvements will be accomplished in three phases focusing on the Peters Brook Greenway access; Loeser and Southside Avenues, Nimitz Street access; and an extension of an existing access road from South Adamsville Road across the Raritan Valley railroad line.

Significant cost savings will be realized through the use of County Engineering staff to conduct the engineering analysis and to develop construction plans. The municipal engineers for Bridgewater and Somerville will be part of the project team.

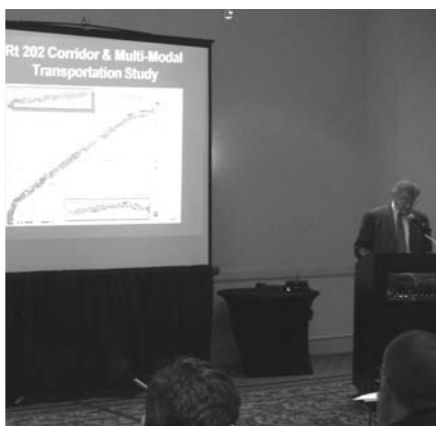
REGIONAL CENTER SUMMIT (CONT.)

will have a major impact on all businesses and residents,” commented Rose Evans, Chair of the Regional Center Partnership. “From the Route 22 improvements to mass transit enhancements, the projects that were discussed will have a significant influence on how people and products move around and through the Regional Center now and in the future.”

Somerville Mayor Brian Gallagher discussed the recent installation of wayfinding signage in the Borough intended to direct shoppers and diners to municipal parking lots. This effort, combined with planned improvements to the largest municipal parking lots in the Borough will help to persuade property owners to improve the rear building facades to create a more welcoming atmosphere in the business district.

Cliff Sobel addressed the \$90 billion in state infrastructure funding that is available to municipalities for repair of the existing transportation systems including bridges in disrepair and century-old rail lines. He suggested that the three Regional Center municipalities consider projects that will restructure routes and roadways to effectively accommodate new businesses locating to the area, noting that the existing infrastructure in many cases is inadequate in design, having been built without consideration for future needs.

Bob Bogart, Bridgewater Engineer, discussed the need for increased freight train service to support municipal businesses and safety improvements including solar powered signage designating crosswalks at various locations in the Township. He further noted that the recent changes to the Township’s master plan address the Route 22 corridor, encouraging development that will include health facilities and indoor recreation.



Freeholder Peter Palmer addresses the Regional Center Summit

Raritan’s Engineer, Stan Shreck, noted that the Borough is seeking grants to create a greenway along the Raritan River at Orlando Drive to serve as a municipal park in addition to an area of shops and restaurants.

The annual Summit serves as an educational forum addressing the advantages of the Regional Center designation to businesses and residents of Raritan, Somerville, and the portion of Bridgewater included in the Center. Everyone working, living, and serving as an elected or appointed municipal official within the Regional Center is encouraged to attend the annual event held late in the fall each year.

RECREATION & FITNESS (CONT.)

in the three communities. “A healthy community is an important contributor to economic growth,” stated Rose Evans, Chair of the Regional Center Partnership. “Living and working in the Regional Center, it is easy to overlook the recreation assets available to us. By summarizing these opportunities that are available to everyone we hope to enhance the overall health of our community.”

The four-page brochure offers a concise overview of the parks, paths, and fitness opportunities available to the public. Included is a description of the Pedestrian & Bicycle Greenways System; the recently opened Torpey Athletic Complex; golf and tennis availability, parks, TD Bank Ballpark, YMCA facilities; and a listing of all county and municipal parks within the three Regional Center communities.

REGIONAL CENTER LEADERSHIP FOR 2011

In January, 2011, the Regional Center Partnership unanimously approved the recommendation of the Nominating Committee, selecting the following members to serve in 2011:

Chairperson Rose Evans,
Levin Management Corp.
Vice-Chairperson Troy Fischer,
Bridgewater Commons
Treasurer Peter Palmer,
Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders
Secretary James Ruggieri,
Somerset County Planning Board
At-Large Private Sector - Glenn McCreesh,
Somerset Medical Center

REGIONAL CENTER 2011 MEETING DATES

Wednesday, January 19 @ 5:00 P.M.
Wednesday, March 16 @ 5:00 P.M.
Wednesday, May 18 @ 5:00 P.M.
Wednesday, July 20 @ 5:00 P.M.
Wednesday, September 21 @ 5:00 P.M.
Wednesday, November 9 @ 5:00 P.M.

All meetings take place in the County Administration Building Engineering Conference Room, Second Floor, 20 Grove Street, Somerville, New Jersey.

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