



# THE REGIONAL CENTER

Spring  
2017

BRIDGEWATER • RARITAN • SOMERVILLE

A partnership for a better tomorrow

IN SOMERSET COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

## COUNTY & RARITAN PLAN VETERAN'S PARK

The Somerset County Freeholders, state, county, and local officials met in Raritan to announce the initiation of a long planned project to honor all veterans with focus on WWII hero John Basilone.

Veteran's Park will be constructed on county-owned land east of the John Basilone statue at the intersection of Old York Road and Canal Street.

A cooperative project of the Freeholders, the Borough of Raritan, County Engineering and the Park Commission, the plaza will honor Gunnery Sergeant 'Manila John' Basilone, the only enlisted Marine during World War II to receive the Navy Cross and the Medal of Honor. The Raritan native died in February 1945 during the Battle of Iwo Jima.

The ceremonial space will feature a landscaped plaza with monuments, seating, and parking for visitors and residents to visit and reflect on those who gave the ultimate sacrifice.

The park is expected to be completed in time for the 2017 John Basilone Parade in September.

## REGIONAL CENTER CELEBRATES 20TH ANNIVERSARY

In May of 1996, in accordance with the State Planning Rules, N.J.A.C. 17:32-8.6(a), the New Jersey State Planning Commission designated the Boroughs of Somerville and Raritan and an adjacent portion of Bridgewater Township as an official Regional Center, the first multi-jurisdictional center in the state. The approval defined a then 14.2 square mile district (now 12.6 sq. mi.) to serve as the focal point for enhanced planning and expedited public review.

To plan the future and implement initiatives, the Regional Center Partnership of Somerset County, Inc., a non-profit public/private partnership was formed. For the past twenty years this group has brought together the vision and planning of three communities, the County, various non-profit agencies, and the private sector, collaboratively working to guide development and investment.

"The Regional Center has become the catalyst for cooperation and progress in Bridgewater, Raritan, and Somerville while influencing effective and sustainable development throughout the County," commented Regional Center chairman Troy Fischer. "What has been accomplished in twenty years is a true testament to the conviction of the leaders of the communities and the work of the County."

The Partnership provides leadership, technical support, and assistance to the county and the municipalities to shape planning policies that ensure that the Regional Center continues to be the premier location in Somerset County to live, work, play and learn.

The Regional Center designation expedites the achievement of municipal and regional policy and planning objectives in critical areas of growth, guiding development and redevelopment efforts in the three municipalities by

### *In this Issue*

- 20th Anniversary
- Veteran's Park
- Kavanaugh Social Services Building Opens
- Enhanced Municipal Cooperation
- Rain barrel Rebates to Continue
- Municipal Updates
- 2017 Meeting Dates
- Board Members

Continued page 2

## CELEBRATING 20 YEARS (CONT.)

providing funding priorities for land use studies and initiatives.

Through broad-based public participation and consensus building, the Somerset County Regional Center has created an environment where sharing certain common threads is as natural to communities as is home rule. Coordinated planning saves governments money and facilitates the process of being a good neighbor and minimizing the impact of development on neighboring communities.

Over the past 2 decades, the Regional Center Partnership has been successful in securing funding to move forward on important regional initiatives. To date, close to \$500,000 in planning money and over \$130 million in construction funds have been allocated. The Regional Center Partnership's annual Challenge Grant program has awarded \$1,014,500 to help each community advance local projects that resolve regional problems.

The Regional Center Partnership provides a forum through which interaction, sharing ideas and concerns, and working together to address common issues allows three communities to address common issues. One of the most significant benefits is the improved standing that the three communities receive in terms of county and state funding.

Among the programs that are the result of regional cooperation among the county, the Somerset County Business Partnership (SCBP), and the 3 communities are:

- Somerset Street Streetscape Linkage Project
- Traffic Calming Study
- Somerset County Investment Framework
- Somerset County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)
- Pedestrian, Bicycle & Greenways Systems Connection Plan
- Pedestrian Overpasses
- Green Design Toolkit
- NJ Water Supply Authority Open Space & Development Study
- Route 202 Corridor Assessment & Multi-Modal Mobility Plan
- Route 22 Sustainable Corridor Plan
- Somerville West End Redevelopment
- Frank "Nap" Torpey Athletic Complex
- Chimney Rock Interchange
- Municipal Challenge Grants
- Driver Feedback Signage
- Rain Barrel Rebate Program



In October of 2013 the Regional Center Partnership received notification that all qualifications had been satisfied to be granted Plan Endorsement. The State Planning Commission determined that the Regional Center, the Boroughs of Raritan and Somerville, and the Township of Bridgewater satisfactorily met all requirements to maintain "Regional Center" designation for the next ten years. Plan Endorsement helps to ensure the coordination of state, county, and municipal planning efforts in achieving the goals and policies of the State Planning Act. With approval from the State, the Regional Center is in a better position to receive financial and technical incentives to assist in accomplishing the goals for the organization's master plan.

## **KAVANAUGH SOCIAL SERVICES BUILDING OPENS**



Somerset County officials dedicated the Senator Walter J. Kavanaugh Social Services Building in the heart of the Somerset County Regional Center. Senator Kavanaugh served in the New Jersey Senate from 1998 to 2008 and the General Assembly from 1976 to 1997, representing the 16th Legislative District. With his 32 years in the New Jersey Legislature, Senator Kavanaugh's tenure was among the longest in state history.

The 42,440 square-foot structure houses the Somerset County Board of Social Services that administers public assistance programs including SNAP benefits (food stamps), general assistance, and Medicaid. The agency also provides housing assistance, case management, employment training, adult protective services, and homemaking services.

### **MUNICIPAL BOARDS REFINE COMMUNICATION AGREEMENT**

To help address procedural issues, the Boroughs of Raritan and Somerville, and the Township of Bridgewater amended the implementation procedures regarding the process by which the communities agree to share information about projects of regional significance.

When any municipality has an application for more than 50 dwelling units or 50,000 square feet of non-residential space within 500 feet of a border they will submit a complete set of plans to the adjacent municipality for review with a deadline of fifteen days to submit comment. Proposed zoning changes involving land within 500 feet of an adjacent municipality shall be submitted at first reading. The Regional Center Partnership can be used as a venue for early discussion on concept plans to facilitate approval.

### **RAIN BARREL REBATE PROGRAM EXTENDED THROUGH OCTOBER 2017**

The Regional Center Partnership and the New Jersey Water Supply Authority have agreed to continue the very successful Rain Barrel Rebate Program through October of 2017.

Rebates of up to \$200 are available to residents of Bridgewater, Raritan, and Somerville when rain barrels are installed at residences in these communities. There is a limit of two rebates per address and the rain barrels must be operational and maintained in good faith for at least two years.

Rain barrels purchased after January 1, 2014 are eligible to receive rebates. Rebates of \$50 will be given for barrels holding 40 to 70 gallons and \$100 for those exceeding 100 gallons. Complete information may be found at [www.regionalcenterpartnership.org](http://www.regionalcenterpartnership.org).



## MUNICIPAL UPDATES

### BRIDGEWATER

Regency Centers, developers of Chimney Rock Crossing Stavola East and Stavola West, has announced that Saks Off 5th, Nordstrom Rack, and Chipotle are expected to join Whole Foods at the retail center. Additionally, Habit Burger and Blaze Pizza are expected to open stores in the center. Whole Foods is expected to open by the end of 2017.

### RARITAN

The Borough approved a redevelopment plan for a transit oriented development on Third Street and First Avenue consisting of 276 rental units including six COAH units and a parking garage. In addition, an area on LaGrange Street has been approved for redevelopment for a proposed senior housing facility.

### SOMERVILLE

The Borough government launched a new and more easily navigated web site at [www.somervillenj.org](http://www.somervillenj.org). The site provides a comprehensive portal to Borough departments, services, attractions, and history.

In January, the Borough received a Land Development Award in the Resiliency and Sustainability Category from the Somerset County Planning Board. Recognition was for the Borough's numerous efforts aimed at increasing community resilience, sustainability, quality of life and economic prosperity. Examples include the Planning Board's Severe Weather Policy supplementing the Emergency Operations Plan, part of the long-term goal to prepare the community to operate for a minimum of six days without assistance under catastrophic conditions.

### 2017 REGIONAL CENTER MEETING DATES

Wednesday, March 22, 2017 at 5:00 P.M.

Wednesday, May 17, 2017 at 5:00 P.M.

Wednesday, July 19, 2017 at 5:00 P.M.

Thursday, September 14, 2017 at 5:30 P.M.

Thursday, November 9, 2017 at 5:00 P.M.

Wednesday, January 17, 2018 at 5:00 P.M.

Unless otherwise noted all meetings take place in the County Administration Building Engineering Conference Room, 2nd Floor, 20 Grove Street, Somerville, New Jersey.

## 2017 REGIONAL CENTER PARTNERSHIP

Chair: Troy Fischer  
Vice-Chair: Jason Dameo  
Treasurer: Freeholder Deputy Director Patrick Scaglione  
Secretary: James Ruggieri (non-voting position)

### At-large Private/Institutional Sector Representatives

Troy Fischer, Chair, Senior General Manager, Bridgewater Commons\*  
Jason Dameo, General Manager, Dameo Companies\*  
James Driscoll, Director, WHQ Facilities Management, Johnson & Johnson\*  
Victoria Allen, Vice-president, Strategic Marketing, Southern Region, RWJ Barnabas Health

### Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders

Freeholder Deputy Director Patrick Scaglione\*  
(Patricia Walsh, Freeholder Alt.\*)

### Somerset County Planning Board

Bernie Navatto, Chair, Somerset County Planning Board  
Walter Lane, Director of Planning, Somerset County

### Bridgewater Township

Mayor Daniel J. Hayes, Jr.\*  
Councilman Filipe Pedroso  
Scarlett Doyle, Township Planner  
Henry E. Reynolds, Jr., local private/institutional representative

### Raritan Borough

Mayor Charles McMullen\*  
Councilman Nicholas Carra  
Angela Knowles, Borough Planner  
Local private/institutional representative - vacant

### Somerville Borough

Mayor Brian Gallagher\*  
Councilman Jason Kraska  
Lisa Werner, Planning Board Vice-Chair  
Rick St. Pierre, local private/institutional representative

### Somerset County Business Partnership

Michael Kerwin, President/CEO  
(John Maddocks, Alternate)

### Somerset County Park Commission

Ray Brown, Secretary/Executive Director  
(Cynthia Sullivan, Alternate)

\*RCP Executive Committee member

## THE REGIONAL CENTER

BRIDGEWATER, RARITAN, SOMERVILLE • SOMERSET COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

Contact: Somerset County Planning Board • Post Office Box 3000, Somerville, New Jersey 08876

Phone 908-231-7021 • [www.regionalcenterpartnership.org](http://www.regionalcenterpartnership.org)