
THE REGIONAL CENTER

BRIDGEWATER • RARITAN • SOMERVILLE

A PARTNERSHIP FOR A BETTER TOMORROW IN
SOMERSET COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

July 2018



REGIONAL CENTER PARTNERSHIP CREATIVE PLACEMAKING CHALLENGE GRANT PROGRAM

The Regional Center Partnership introduced the Creative Placemaking Challenge Grant program at the March, 2018 meeting.

The goal of the program is to strengthen the economic vitality of the downtown districts in the Regional Center communities. Creative placemaking animates public and private spaces and leverages the power of the arts, culture, and creativity to bring a community together.

Grants of up to \$15,000 per community will be awarded following approval of submitted projects.

SOMERSET COUNTY TOURISM NUMBERS INCREASE

The economic impact of tourism in Somerset County has again increased in 2017, totalling \$1.2 billion. Presenting to the Board of Freeholders, Business Partnership and Tourism leadership showed that overall tourism increased 3.4% over 2016.

The largest portion of visitor spending, 31%, was in the area of food and beverage (\$367m) with 21% (\$252m) spent on retail sales and 20% (\$229m) on lodging. The balance of the spending was distributed to recreation (17% - \$197m), and local transportation (11% - \$134m).

The report showed that 70% of the travelers coming to Somerset County were on business-related trips.

NEW ACCESS TO DUKE FARMS

The north entrance to Dukes Farms near the Nevius Street Bridge now has a pedestrian gate that provides access to the grounds. This route provides for a leisurely walking experience for Raritan residents and visitors. Plans are to construct a paved path connecting the Nevius Street Bridge to the north entrance. Duke Farms has miles of paved trails and a visitor center with a cafe.

COUNTY HEALTH CENTER OPENS IN REGIONAL CENTER

Freeholders and officials from Integrity Health LLC celebrated the opening of the Somerset County Partnership Health Center (SCPHC).

SCPHC is an on-site health, wellness, and care coordination center for employees of Somerset County, the County Park Commission, the County Library System, and the County Vo-Tech Schools, their dependents, and retirees covered by the county.

SOMERVILLE'S "CENTRAL PARK" NEARING COMPLETION

With funding from NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), NJ Economic Development Authority, and NJ Environmental Infrastructure Trust, Somerville rehabilitated the stream bisecting the former landfill and incorporated it into the "Green Seam" restoration project which will become a major public space on a significant portion of this site.

The 20 plus acres public open space will be opened later this year when the vegetation has stabilized.

RARITAN BREAKS GROUND ON RESIDENTIAL BUILDING

Raritan Borough and Somerset County officials joined representatives from Accurate Builders and Developers to break ground for a 276-unit apartment building on First Avenue across from LabCorp.

A 30-second walk to the Raritan Valley Line train station, Crossings at Raritan will feature studios, one, and two-bedroom apartments, a community room, a business center, a fitness center, a virtual center, a yoga room, and an outdoor barbecue area.

RARITAN TO IMPROVE TRAIN STATION PARKING

Raritan Borough has applied to NJ Department of Transportation for Discretionary Aid to resurface and reconstruct portions of the parking lots that serve the Raritan Train Station.



The improvements will accommodate ADA parking and address the general condition of the lots. The improvements will complement the Borough's proposed wayfinding improvements linking the train station to downtown, the Raritan River, and Duke Farms.

TWO SOMERVILLE GRAND OPENINGS

Two new options to please the palette are opening in Somerville as summer begins.

Meadows Original Frozen Custard is opening at 92 West Main Street offering premium, high-end custard. This is the 27th location for Meadows.

King Tut - Somerville specializes in Middle Eastern and Mediterranean cuisine, will be opening at 6 West Main Street near North Bridge Street. The menu features authentic selections including falafel, babaganoush and tabouleh salad, a variety of kebobs, lamb shank, couscous and Cleopatra Chicken.

DID YOU KNOW?

During the American Revolutionary War, Gen. George Washington used the area north of what is now Route 22 in Bridgewater (in the Regional Center), as the site for two encampments during the winters of 1777 and 1778-79. The Washington Campgrounds at Middlebrook is also famous as the first site where the original 13-star flag was officially flown with the Continental Army after its adoption by Congress in 1777.



DIVISION STREET COMEDY
Wednesdays August 8, and
September 15 from 8:00 P.M. to
10:00 P.M. in Somerville

RARITAN WILD SUMMER NIGHTS
The Raritan Events Committee has partnered with DJ Bruce Doorly of Moonlight Memories for "Summer Nights at Frelinghuysen Park" on Sherman Avenue. Enjoy dancing, prizes, and good friends from 4:30 P.M. to 7:30 P.M. on:
Wednesday, July 25
Monday, August 6 & Tuesday, August 14

RARITAN TO EMBARK ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STUDY

Raritan Borough has applied for a grant from the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority for funds to support preparation of a Sustainable Economic Development Planning Study.

By outlining a vision and priority project recommendations, the Plan will improve the economic vitality of Raritan by incorporating current assets including proximity to the Raritan River and Duke Farms and the recently completed bicycle and pedestrian greenway connections between Raritan and Somerville.

BRIDGEWATER RESIDENT TO OPEN SOMERVILLE COFFEE HOUSE

Cheech's Own will open mid-summer on West Main and Division, owned and operated by Bridgewater native Steven Chiocchi.

Using organic, sustainably, and responsibly-sourced ingredients, Cheech's Own will sell cold brewed coffee by the growler, provide natural sweeteners instead of sugar, and make their own nut milk. An organic menu will offer gluten-free and vegan options..

COMMUNITY CALENDARS

SOMERVILLE CRUISE NIGHTS
Every Friday evening from 6:00 P.M.
to 9:00 P.M. on Main Street

SOMERVILLE STARLIGHT CINEMA
Thursday nights from 8:30 P.M. to
10:30 P.M. on Division Street

RARITAN CHRISTMAS IN JULY
Wednesday, July 25
Frelinghuysen Park Pool 1:00 P.M.
Basilone Pool 3:00 P.M.
Pictures with Santa, candy, & fun
(Rain date Thursday, July 26)

SOMERVILLE EARNS 2018 SMART GROWTH AWARD

Somerville has earned a 2018 New Jersey Future Smart Growth Award for three redevelopment areas around the downtown core. The award honors "adopted plans and built developments that exemplify sound land-use practice..."

Based on a comprehensive three-step redevelopment plan adopted more than a decade ago, awarded projects cited include:

17 acres on West Main Street - The Transit Village including ShopRite and a five-story mixed use building;



East Central Business District - The three elements include two residential developments (one completed in 2017) and one mixed-use development;

Division Street - Conversion of a pass-through street for cars into a wide, welcoming pedestrian mall closed to vehicles.

BRIDGEWATER FARM MARKET
Every Sunday at 11:00 A.M., Library
Parking Lot on North Bridge Street

SOMERVILLE SUMMER STAGE
Entertainment every Saturday night
from 6:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. on
Division Street

SOMERSET COUNTY SENIOR WELLNESS CENTER
876 East Main Street, Bridgewater
(908) 203-6101
Open Monday - Friday
9:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.

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