



PREPARED FOR THE

| *Mercer County Planning Board*

BY THE

| *Mercer County Planning Department*
with the Regional Planning Partnership

September 8, 2010
Amended May 2016





COUNTY OF MERCER

MASTER PLAN FRAMEWORK

September 8, 2010
Amended May 2016

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Mercer County Planning Department

Leslie R. Floyd, PP/AICP, Planning Director
Lisa K. Fritzinger, PP/AICP, Supervising Planner
Matthew Lawson, PhD, PP/AICP, GISP Principal Planner
Marisa Mulé Van Horn, PP/AICP, Principal Planner
Daniel Pace, PP, Principal Planner
Richard Smith, PP/AICP, Principal Planner
Kevin Kraft, AICP, Assistant Planner
Kathleen Sar, Principal Drafting Technician/GIS Specialist
Hunter Butler, Planning Aide
Jill Benner, Senior Clerk Typist



MERCER COUNTY MASTER PLAN

FRAMEWORK



Mercer County Planning Board
Mercer County Planning Department
County Administration Building, Room 411
640 South Broad Street
Post Office Box 8068
Trenton, New Jersey 08618-0068

www.nj.gov/counties/mercer

The original of this plan has been signed and sealed in accordance with the New Jersey Professional Planners Licensing Act.

Adopted by the Mercer County Planning Board, September 8, 2010.

Amended by the Mercer County Planning Board, May 2016

Leslie R. Floyd, AICP, PP # 5681
Planning Director

Richard J. Smith
Secretary





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The national and international economies are much different in 2010 than they were when the Master Plan update began in late 2003. The theme of this plan is balance which seems even more relevant today. No longer can one component of our physical environment drive the others. This is not only an impractical approach, it is also an unsustainable approach. This plan seeks to balance the challenges and opportunities presented by our transportation system, our economy, and our environment through an interrelated set of policies and strategies. Together these policies and strategies will ensure that Mercer County is positioned to succeed in the new economy to guarantee on-going improvements to places where residents live and work.

Donna M. Lewis, Director
Mercer County Planning Division

March 2010

Since the Master Plan's adoption in March 2010, there have been changes to open space and transportation funding. The Open Space Board in consultation with the County Administration will review funding through the Local Municipal/Nonprofit Assistance Program on an annual basis. This will allow more flexibility in funding open space projects with urban and regional significance. The Transportation Development District (TDD) was established 24 years ago, and over that time as land was developed or preserved, transportation improvements changed to meet the needs of new land uses. Upon approval by the Commissioner of the NJ Department of Transportation to dissolve the district, the Mobility element of the Master Plan, and all other references to the TDD throughout the Plan, including on several maps, will reflect the TDD no longer exists. The Mercer County Wastewater Management Plan (WMP) was adopted in October 2013. Lastly, to meet the recommendations of the Master Plan, the WMP will be incorporated by reference into the Mercer County Master Plan.

Leslie R. Floyd, Director
Mercer County Planning Department

May 2016



The Mercer County Planning Board is authorized under the New Jersey County Planning Act (NJSA 40:27-1 et seq) to make and adopt a master plan to guide the physical development of the county. The master plan specifies the Planning Board's recommendations for growth based on certain fundamental elements of the county's infrastructure. These elements are described within the Act:

The master plan of a county, with the accompanying maps, plats, charts, and descriptive and explanatory matter, shall show the county planning board's recommendations for the development of the territory covered by the plan, and may include, among other things, the general location, character, and extent of streets or roads, viaducts, bridges, waterway and waterfront developments, parkways, playgrounds, forests, reservations, parks, airports, and other public ways, grounds, places and spaces; the general location and extent of forests, agricultural areas, and open-development areas for purposes of conservation, food and water supply, sanitary and drainage facilities, or the protection of urban development, and such other features as may be important to the development of the county. (NJSA 40:27-2)

The County Planning Act also authorizes the Planning Board to encourage municipal cooperation in matters that directly affect the integrity of the county master plan. The State Planning Act authorizes counties to coordinate municipal development goals with those of the State Plan through Cross-Acceptance. The Act, in addition to the Municipal Land Use Law, limits the county's role and jurisdiction in municipal land development, especially in matters directly related to zoning. While broad policies regarding the economy, transportation, and the environment are made to be consistent among local and state agencies, in New Jersey specific land use and design decisions are carried out through site specific zoning standards at the municipal level.

The Mercer County Master Plan goals are developed to protect and enhance the quality of life for those who live and work within the county and to guide county transportation and preservation investments. It is expected that the Plan's goals and policies will evolve in response to change within the region and the Plan's indicators will provide an assessment of that change. The Plan identifies the region's development and redevelopment goals needed for balanced growth in order to achieve a desired quality of life. These goals were used to test growth scenarios during a public forum known as the Regional Action Plan (RAP).

Section I of this document provides information on the purpose of the Mercer County Master Plan and the process used to develop it. Section II describes existing conditions and trends for future development of the county and the Plan's goals and measures of progress. Section III outlines policies and strategies for achieving sustainable, balanced growth. Appendices provide detailed background information on the economy, transportation and the environment as well as the Phase 1 RAP process used to produce the final Plan. Section IV contains a comparison of the Master Plan goals and policies to other regional plans and to those of the State Plan.

This document is the parent document of the Mercer County Master Plan. In addition to the parent document, the Mercer County Master Plan consists of five elements which are independently updated on a periodic basis. The Master Plan elements include the Historic Preservation Plan, adopted June 2002, the Open Space and Recreation Plan, adopted October 1992 and last revised April 2003, the Highways Plan, adopted July 1989 and last revised January 2000, and the Farmland Preservation Plan, adopted 2009. The parent document was last adopted January 1986. These elements will be updated to bring the greatest consistency possible.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The Mercer County Master Plan proposes a regional planning framework for guiding growth and conservation opportunities in the county over the next twenty years. The Master Plan framework relies on three innovations:

- ⇒ a **3-Systems** approach to regional factors affecting quality of life in the county,
- ⇒ a Regional Action Planning process, and
- ⇒ a focus on types and locations for development and redevelopment and conservation that will achieve the goals of the plan.

The Master Plan considers the county through three interrelated regional systems: Economy, Transportation and Environment. The interdependencies of these systems must be balanced to achieve development which is sustainable. In the late 1980s, within a global context, the term sustainable development was defined by a Commission of the United Nations as, “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” The current New Jersey State Plan uses the term as a unifying theme for addressing development and redevelopment in New Jersey. The Mercer County Master Plan is also using this fundamental concept to implement policies that will move the County toward growth that balances the three critical systems and guarantees on-going improvements to places where residents live and work.

The Master Plan establishes policies for each of these areas.

ECONOMY

- ⇒ Promote the appropriate location and design of new development with opportunities for transit, regional equity, and preservation
- ⇒ Provide infrastructure and other incentives that promote growth
- ⇒ Promote housing choice to meet the region’s needs

TRANSPORTATION

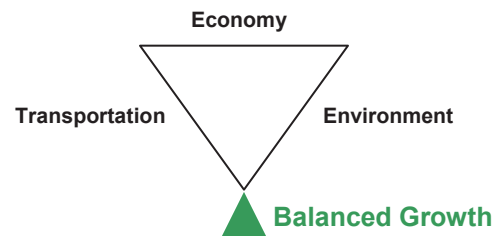
- ⇒ Direct growth to transit corridors and centers
- ⇒ Promote access management to enhance safety and capacity
- ⇒ Promote compact design, walkable, mixed use centers

3-Systems Planning

Long-term comprehensive approach to regional and local planning

Considers land use impacts and examines interrelationship of impacts

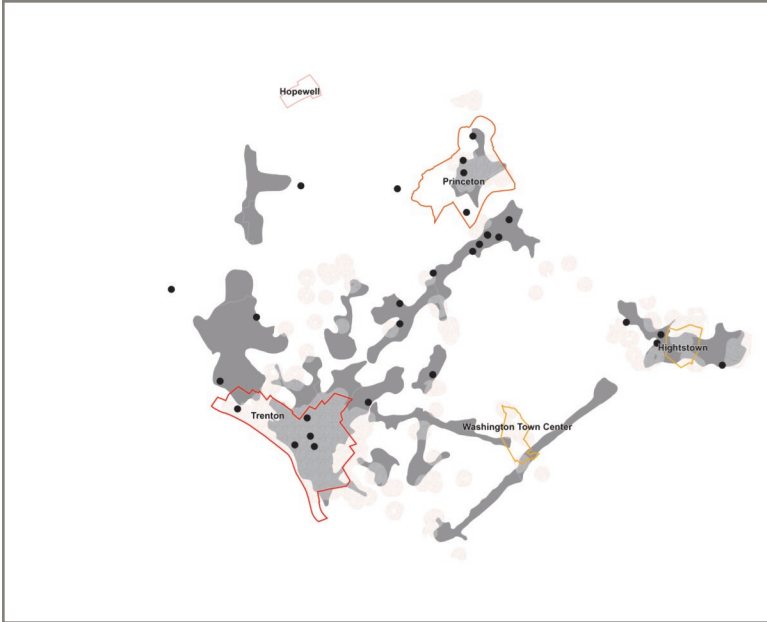
With data and mapping, provides a sound basis for evaluating growth options and opportunities



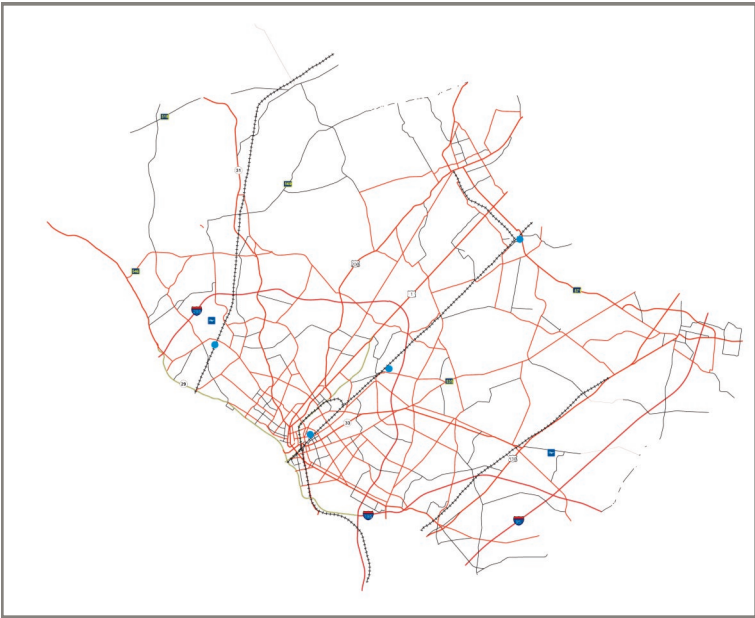
Economy targets for the location, type, and amount of new development, providing a balance of jobs and housing, available labor force, and affordable housing

Transportation multi-modal circulation emphasizing corridors for enhanced public transit service

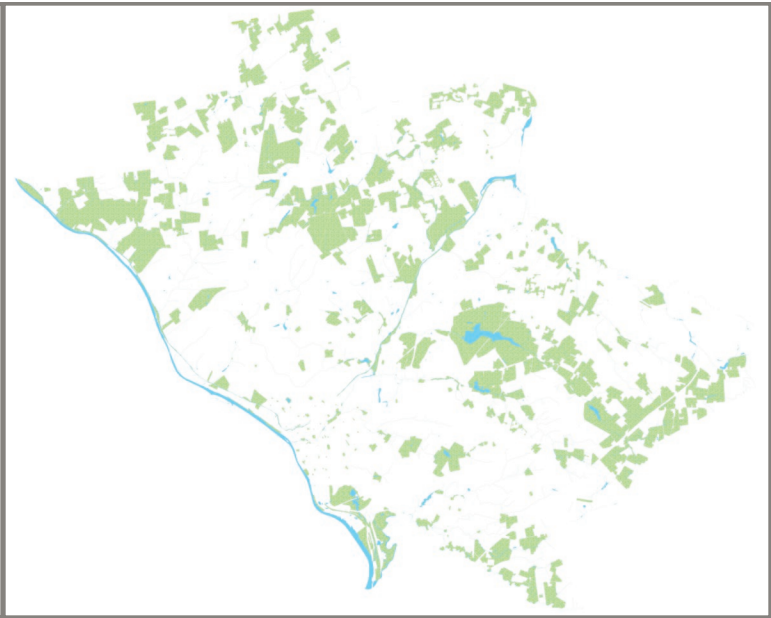
Environment natural resources conservation including priorities for protecting the most valuable natural and cultural resources



ECONOMY



TRANSPORTATION



ENVIRONMENT

See Map Appendix for full size maps.
Reference. Map 1. Mercer County. Economy, Map 2. Mercer County. Transportation, Map 3. Mercer County. Environment



⇒ Match jobs to housing to reduce long auto commutes to work

ENVIRONMENT

⇒ Promote land use patterns that limit stormwater runoff and increase green infrastructure

⇒ Promote redevelopment of brownfields and grayfields

⇒ Prioritize open space acquisition to complete greenway networks, support compact development, and provide recreation opportunities to underserved populations

Progress in achieving the Plan’s goals will be measured using readily available data. These measures demonstrate existing and potential future conditions. The measures discussed in Section II of the Plan include:

Jobs to Housing Ratio—the availability of housing for employees; an indicator of the number of residents in an area that must travel outside their commute shed for work

Housing Affordability Index—measures affordability of housing taking transportation costs into consideration based on proximity of housing to employment

Transit Score—relative measure of how successful a fixed route transit system is expected to be in a particular region; used to evaluate existing service and areas of potential demand

Impervious Cover—the amount of land cover in roads, buildings, and parking lots, and turf grass cover in a watershed; can impact stream quality

With the fundamental concept of sustainable development, base maps representing existing economic, transportation, and environmental conditions in the county were used to identify future potential growth areas that meet the goals and policies of the Plan. These maps were used by participants in a series of public meetings that were part of the Regional Action Planning process.

Three stakeholder meetings, which guided participants through a planning sequence, were held during the Regional Action Plan phase from September 2006 through January 2007.

Regional Action Planning (RAP)

Promotes public dialogue

Coordinates implementation of local, county, and state plans

Leads to discussion on broad planning actions

Guides political choice in public participation

Relies on factual analysis

Phase I

Meeting 1

Introduction to Planning Process

Identify county’s assets/Master Plan Goals

Introduce Trends and Measures of Progress

Identify coordinated growth opportunities

Meeting 2

Quantify growth, identify preservation and transportation areas

Identify housing and job growth centers, roadway capacity and transit areas, preservation areas/greenway links

Evaluate group visions against assets and goals

Meeting 3

Focus on transportation, greenway connections

Confirm commitment to goals, measures of progress

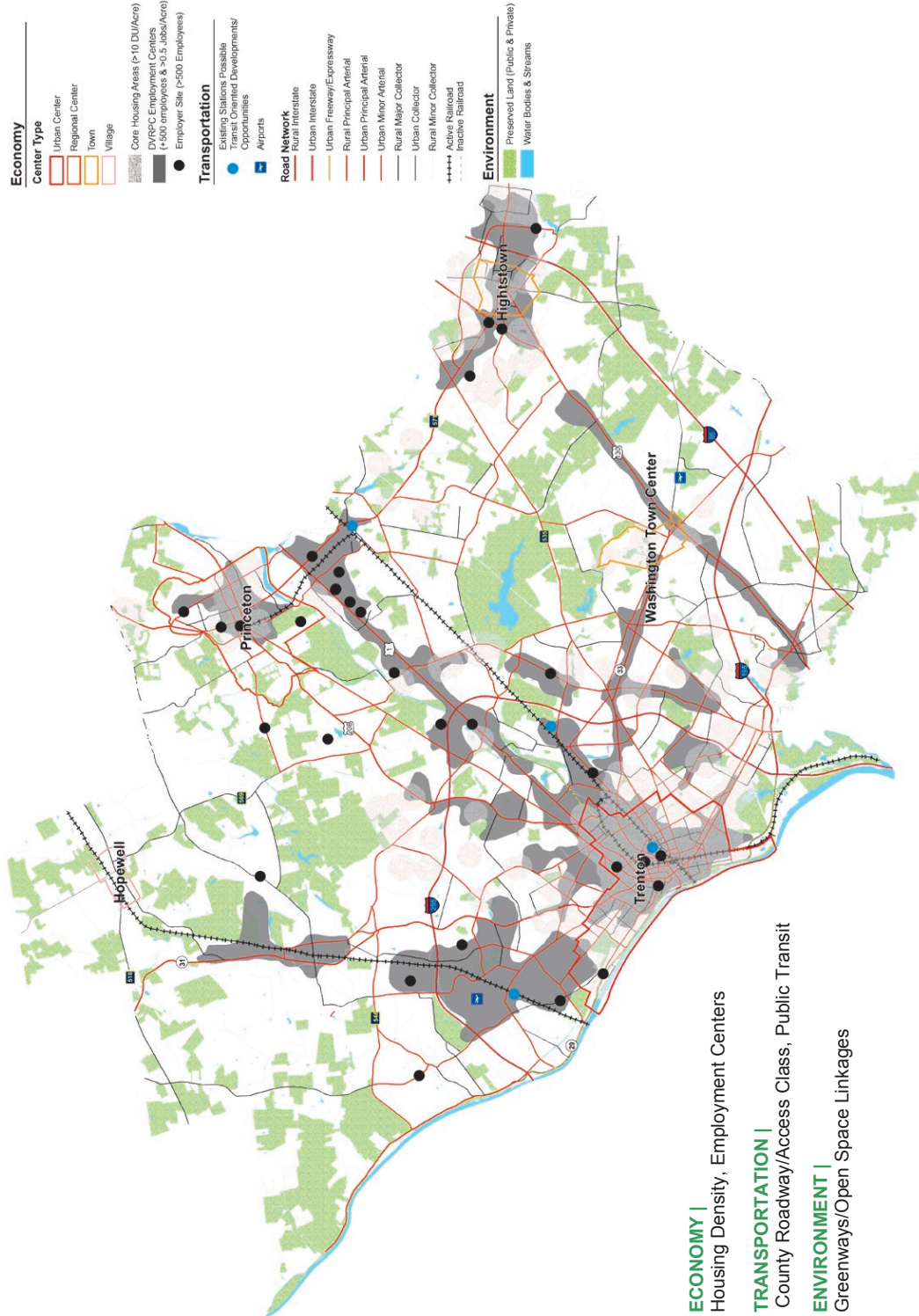
Identify implications of center choices



MERCER COUNTY MASTER PLAN

FRAMEWORK

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



RAP PROCESS: **FACTUAL ANALYSIS** → **POLICIES** → **EVALUATE OUTCOMES**

See Map Appendix for full size maps.
 Reference: Map 4. Three Systems Map for Regional Action Plan



I. PLAN PURPOSE AND PROCESS

| ***Purpose***

| ***3—Systems Planning***

| ***Measures of Progress***

| ***Regional Action Planning***



I. PLAN PURPOSE AND PROCESS

Purpose

In 2003 Mercer County began a comprehensive examination of its Master Plan. The Master Plan has been continuously revised and updated since its last adoption in 1986, through the addition of sub-elements and amendments. Since 2003, the county has been involved in the third round of State Plan Cross-Acceptance, which has provided a greater opportunity to tie local planning goals to county and state plans.

Both the Master Plan and the State Plan attempt to bring together local planning goals into a more comprehensive and regional framework. Three planning systems—the economy, transportation, and the environment—form the basis for the Master Plan’s policies and goals. The Master Plan acknowledges that land use policies must be tied to these three systems to achieve comprehensive planning and that there must be a synergistic balance between the three systems to achieve sustainability. The Plan’s policies are flexible enough to allow for trade-offs between the systems in order to achieve quality of life goals.

3—Systems/Regional Action Planning

The county worked toward building consensus for the Master Plan through its public participation process known as the Regional Action Plan (RAP). The RAP began in Fall 2006 with three public stakeholder meetings held in November, December and January of 2007. The RAP meetings were open to the public in addition to those invited to participate. Stakeholder invitees included Cross-Acceptance municipal liaisons, mayors, planning board chairs, municipal planners and administrators, RAP Advisory Group members, and others.

The first stakeholder meeting identified county assets, measures of progress, and centers where growth could reasonably take place. The second meeting detailed housing and employment types and discussed implications for roadway, transit, and environment choices. The third meeting focused on opportunities and constraints for linkages among centers, transportation, and environment.

Participants in the stakeholder meetings identified assets that define Mercer County and contribute to the quality of life. They agreed that increased housing choice, an improved balance between housing and employment opportunities, along with transportation choices, are needed to sustain quality of life in the county. The participants chose four measures of progress to represent and measure change over time in quality of life throughout the county.

The RAP process began with participants identifying locations for new housing and/or employment centers. At the second meeting, using these centers, participants identified the amount of growth for economic opportunity and began to discuss how transit and greenway connections between these new and existing assets could be improved. Finally, participants focused on strategies for transportation and open space connections within the County.

The RAP process allowed participants to explore regional growth options beyond municipal boundaries. All new growth areas were identified on or within close proximity to the existing major transportation corridors, Route 31, Route 1, Route 130, the Northeast Corridor and Septa rail lines. All the growth centers identified by the stakeholders have some level of existing housing and/or employment. The stakeholder-identified centers were classified into those 1) that need minimal change to meet the identified housing/employment design, 2) that need an increase in density or mixed land use, or 3) where the opportunity for housing/employment design needs to be defined.



As the RAP progressed, it became evident that the housing and employment densities identified to achieve future growth goals exist today in locations throughout the county. These locations are part of the existing or new centers identified by the stakeholders during the RAP. The stakeholders began to share and explore ideas about how to improve these existing housing areas and the transportation/pedestrian connections between housing and employment. Participants first identified where immediate improvements need to be made to existing roads and intersections. Then, they began to identify the character of the road classifying it into one where mobility should be preserved, where the character of the road should be preserved, and/or where missing roadway is needed to make better transportation connections. In addition, participants identified where transit opportunities are needed. Stakeholders also recognized that greenway connections, in addition to linking preserved open space, can be used to link employment, commercial, educational, and cultural resources. Participants identified potential preservation opportunities and new greenway connections.

The RAP planning process was designed to provide a way for local stakeholders to contribute to a meaningfully updated Mercer County Master Plan, as a foundation from which to move forward together. It generated a concept plan (or growth scenario) that articulates choices for achieving balanced growth, including:

- Confirms previously agreed upon general balanced growth goals
- Identifies locations for new development and redevelopment, including types and amount of residential and commercial development
- Identifies transportation corridors where investments should be made, including transit
- Identifies areas for preserving open land, including links among natural areas
- Recognizes that areas of density already exist throughout the county

The results of the Regional Action Plan are captured in the maps and discussion in the Appendices of this Plan.

In addition to the RAP process, Mercer County continues to build consensus on its regional planning goals and policies with its constituent municipalities. As a negotiating entity for Cross Acceptance, Mercer County has fulfilled its responsibilities, both through written reports and documented dialogue with municipal and state governments during the State Plan public participation process. The county has coordinated meetings with municipal governments and the public at-large during the comparison phase, summarized the results of the comparison phase through the Comparison Report, and, in negotiation sessions, engaged in a dialogue about issues of consistency with State Planning Commission staff.

Measures of Progress

The Master Plan is based on data representing the three systems in both tabular and map formats. Municipal governments involved in the process and working with information developed from the data may refine new growth or redevelopment opportunities identified during the RAP. The goal is to integrate to the greatest extent possible economic, fiscal and social justice goals, transit opportunities, and environmental constraints.



The Master Plan establishes goals for the county and measures of progress to assess how well the region is achieving balanced growth. Improvement in the balance between employment and housing, housing affordability, the expansion of transportation choices, and improvement in watershed quality through containment of impervious cover are the selected measures of regional quality of life.

The following key outcomes of the RAP and Master Plan process related to the three systems reflect the Plan goals:

Economic/Fiscal/Social Justice

- A balance between jobs and housing for economic growth
- Housing choice
- Social equity

Transportation Opportunities

- Enhanced multi-modal transportation corridors
- Transportation-oriented development
- Improved access and mobility
 - ⇒ Reduction in the growth of traffic congestion
 - ⇒ Increase pedestrian and cyclist opportunities

Environmental Opportunities

- Natural resource preservation especially where mitigation plans are appropriate for jobs and support sustainable employment centers
- Recreation infrastructure in urban and suburban areas
 - ⇒ Green infrastructure to control flooding and improve water quality
 - ⇒ Linking existing preserved spaces for habitat and trail networks

RAP OUTCOME FOR THE ECONOMY:

Locations for existing and new growth:

- ⇒ Along Route 31, Route 1, and Route 130, and Northeast Corridor and Septa rail lines
- ⇒ Within existing designated centers

Character of growth identified:

- ⇒ Urban, Regional, Town, Village
- ⇒ All Mixed Land Use
- ⇒ Urban, Transit-Oriented, Main Street, Neighborhood

Intensity of growth identified:

- ⇒ Existing or minimal change
- ⇒ Increase density or mixed use
- ⇒ Opportunity for growth needs to be defined

RAP OUTCOME FOR TRANSPORTATION:

Existing roadway improvements identified:

- ⇒ Intersections
- ⇒ Linear segments

Character of roadway identified:

- ⇒ Preserve mobility
- ⇒ Preserve character
- ⇒ New roadway segment needed

Transit need identified:

- ⇒ New bus routes
- ⇒ Bus rapid transit corridors and service areas
- ⇒ New rail connections

RAP OUTCOME FOR THE ENVIRONMENT:

Additional areas of preserved land identified.

New green connections identified:

- ⇒ To preserved land
- ⇒ To existing designated centers
- ⇒ To existing park facilities
- ⇒ To universities
- ⇒ To transit facilities
- ⇒ To regional shopping

Along existing transportation corridors



I. PLAN PURPOSE AND PROCESS

It is important that the Master Plan result from a process that is based on the economy, transportation, and the environment, and that the Plan reflect as much as possible the identified key outcomes. These outcomes reflect the state and regional planning issues identified and confirmed by municipalities during the Cross-Acceptance process. These issues are consistent with the Master Plan goals and policies and are related, in varying degrees, to land use and design. Cross-Acceptance municipal participants identified that current patterns of development and design create auto dependent developments resulting in traffic congestion, higher infrastructure costs for sewer and water, and negative impacts on natural resources including increased water pollution. They also identified that imbalances in employment and labor force affect other planning issues including housing, transportation, and community services. The trend toward more expensive, single-family units facilitates traffic congestion, because the automobile becomes the primary transportation mode causing public transit and other alternative modes of transportation to be underutilized and difficult to attain. This land development pattern also impacts natural resources including drinking water supply and loss of natural lands that serve as areas for groundwater recharge, flood protection, and erosion and sedimentation control.

This document shares related goals and supports other elements of the Master Plan including, Open Space, Transportation, Farmland, and Historic Preservation. The County also participated in a Multi-jurisdictional Flood Mitigation Plan that considered land use and shared some of the Master Plan goals. The Flood Mitigation Plan was approved by FEMA in 2008 and will become part of the county-wide All Hazards Mitigation Plan in the near future. The county-wide Wastewater Management Plan was adopted in October 2013 and is incorporated into the Mercer County Master Plan by reference.



II. TRENDS AND INDICATORS

| *Economy*

| *Transportation*

| *Environment*

| *Build-Out/Land Use*



II. TRENDS AND INDICATORS

A balanced growth alternative to current land use patterns can be achieved when comprehensive plans, land use, environmental regulations and infrastructure, and conservation investment decisions are integrated at all levels of government—local, county, and state. This approach will result in fewer unintended consequences and lower public costs. Mercer County can be pivotal in this process through the county Master Plan.

In order to build consensus with Mercer County communities on a final county Master Plan, a Regional Action Plan process was initiated. This process included the circulation of a briefing document and discussions in a series of workshops to achieve regional goals.

STATE PLAN		MERCER COUNTY
	ECONOMY	
Revitalize NJ’s Cities and Towns Promote Economic Growth and Development Provide Housing at Reasonable Cost		Balance Jobs and Housing Increase employment opportunities Social Equity/Housing Choice
	TRANSPORTATION	
Provide Public Services at Reasonable Cost		Enhance Travel Options Land Uses to Support Transit Improve Social Equity in Access & Mobility Manage Congestion
	ENVIRONMENT	
Conserve Natural Resources and Systems Protect the Environment Preserve Historic and Cultural Areas		Set Priorities for Natural Resource Preservation Improve Recreation Infrastructure Enhance Green Infrastructure to Reduce Flooding & Improve Water Quality Provide Equitable Access to Open Space
Ensure Sound & Integrated Planning		

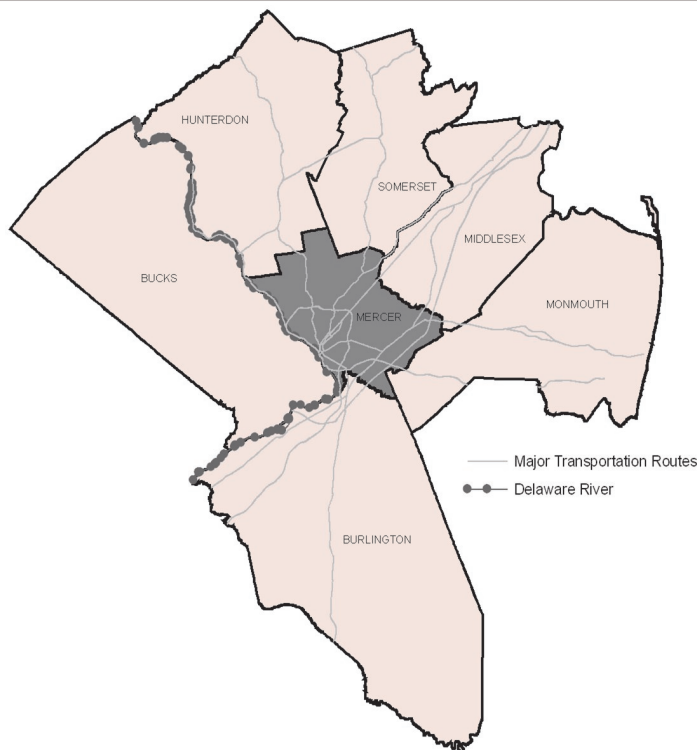
2001 New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan Goals and proposed Master Plan Goals. January 2007 Stakeholder Meeting Presentation. Prepared by the Regional Planning Partnership and the Mercer County Planning Division.

The State Plan goals correspond to those proposed in the Mercer County Master Plan according to the 3-Systems planning approach. The primary indicators that will be used to measure implementation strategies in accordance with the goals are 1) jobs and housing, 2) housing affordability, 3) transit score, and 4) impervious surface. Additional indicators will also be used.



Mercer County is located in the central part of New Jersey, between New York and Philadelphia, and within the greater urbanized region that extends from Boston to Washington, D.C. The county is served by major transportation facilities including the New Jersey Turnpike, Interstate highways, several local and regional rail systems, and the Trenton-Mercer Airport. Interstate 95, which runs through the center of the county, plays a critical role in megapolitan mobility from Maine to Florida. Because of the large population centers in the Northeast and Peninsula megas, the number of people living within 50 miles of this interstate exceeds all others in the nation. The Northeast megapolitan area is comprised of 17% of the total U.S. population or just over 50 million people. By standard land travel routes, Mercer County is located 45 minutes from Philadelphia, 1 hour from New York City, 4 hours from Washington, D.C. and 6 hours from Boston.

The county is also linked, both physically and thematically, to other eastern states via regional park systems, national heritage landmarks, and natural resource systems such as the Washington Crossing Park National Heritage Landmark, the Crossroads of the American Revolution National Heritage Area, and the Delaware



River. The county is integral to New Jersey and other states within the Northeast megapolitan area through goods movement, business linkages, cultural commonality, and physical environment.

Mercer County is centrally located within the Northeast megapolitan area and is very much part of a functional trans-metropolitan geography and broad regional economy.

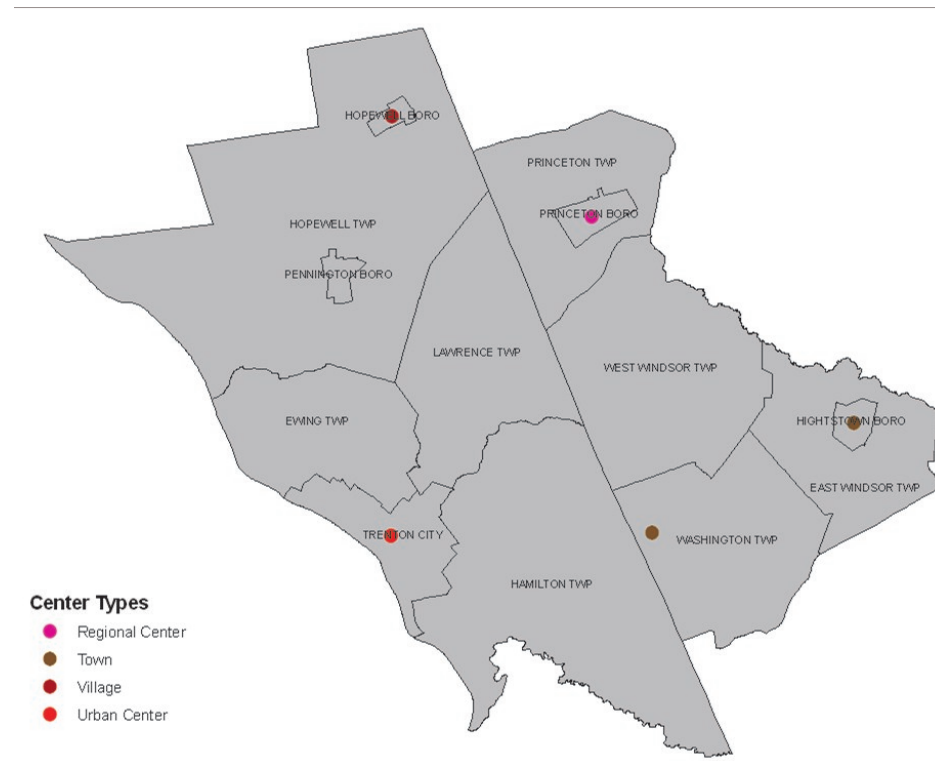
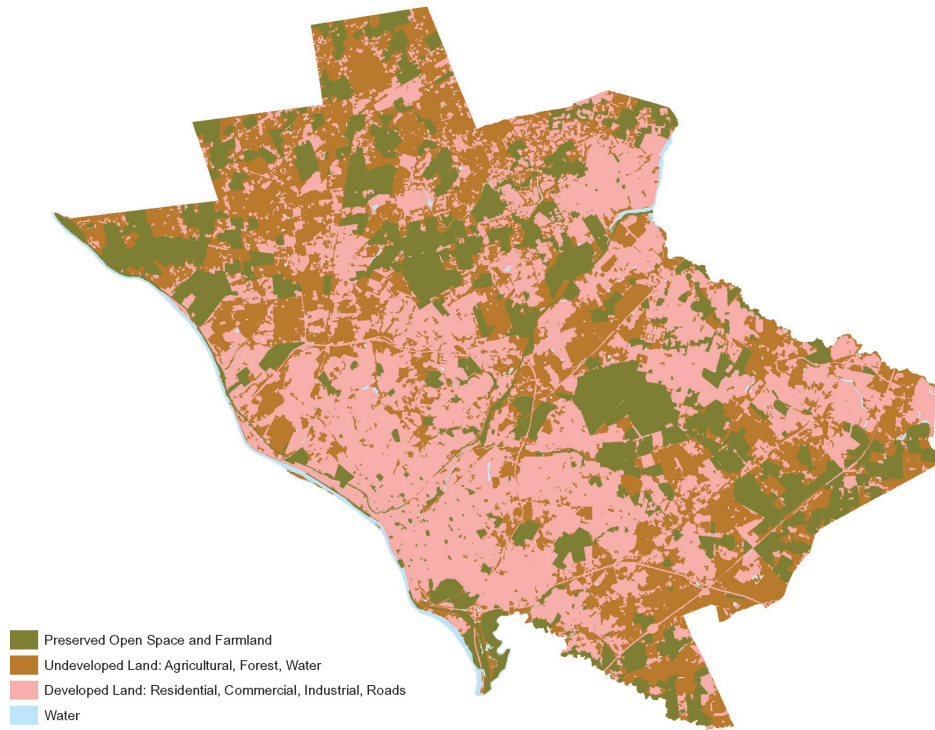
Mercer County is bounded on the north by Hunterdon and Somerset Counties, to the east by Middlesex and Monmouth Counties, to the south by Burlington County, and to the west by the Delaware River and Bucks County, Pennsylvania. Mercer's development pressure is shared among these adjacent counties primarily through shared major transportation routes—New Jersey Turnpike, Interstate 95, Interstate 295, State Routes 1, 29, 31, and 130.

Diverse land types including large areas of contiguous farmland in the northern and southern portions of the county, post-war and newer suburbs, an urban and regional center, towns, villages, and

hamlets characterize Mercer County. With an area of 226 square miles, it is sixteenth in land size among New Jersey's twenty-one counties. Mercer County is fully incorporated into thirteen self-governing municipalities.



II. TRENDS AND INDICATORS





The policies and goals of the Master Plan relate to three broad areas or systems—economy, transportation, and the environment. These systems are related through physical form. Therefore, the outcome or success of the Master Plan goals and policies and their practical implementation depends on suitable physical design.

The Master Plan identifies specific indicators or measures that will be used to represent the condition of the county at a specific point in time. The indicators together, not individually, are an assessment of change throughout the region. The indicators assess the effective implementation of the Master Plan goals and policies and the degree to which the three systems interact in reality.

Today, these indicators are used in the Plan to establish existing conditions in the county and forecast future conditions or trends that are likely to continue. In the future, these indicators will measure the movement toward the Plan goals and be used to report on the Plan’s effectiveness.

The data sources used to develop the indicators and the indicators themselves were selected because they are accessible and understandable. They are publicly available, provide historical data, and are likely to be available in the future.

The indicators demonstrate existing conditions and future trends in the county as follows:

Economy

The economic indicators demonstrate existing imbalances in housing, employment, and transportation opportunities across Mercer County. Existing places of employment, concentrated within a few municipalities but needed throughout the county, are isolated from housing. Concurrently, the existing transportation network limits employment and affordable housing opportunities. These indicators reflect development patterns of the past decade that have created auto-dependent residential developments, increasingly of single-family homes, physically separated from employment and commercial centers.

The jobs-to-housing ratio indicator, along with the percentage of multi-family housing units, demonstrate the extent to which zoning and planning practices effectively respond to market-driven development. These indicators measure the effectiveness of planning goals and policies developed to balance employment and housing opportunities among geographic areas, provide affordable housing choices, and reduce auto-dependency.

The poverty rate reflects the extent and distribution of low-income and indicates how well planning goals provide employment and housing opportunities.

TRENDS—ECONOMY

Jobs-to-Housing Ratio

Increased from 1.54 (1990) to 1.6 (2000)

Percentage of Multi-Family Housing Units

New single-family units (1990-2000) – 9% growth rate

New multi-family units (1990-2000) – 6% growth rate

Poverty Rate

Increased from 7.4% (1990) to 8.6% (2000)

Municipal Tax Base per Capita

Average net taxable valuation for the county (2000) is \$57,723

Range of net taxable valuation per capita (2000) is \$21,771 to \$139,354

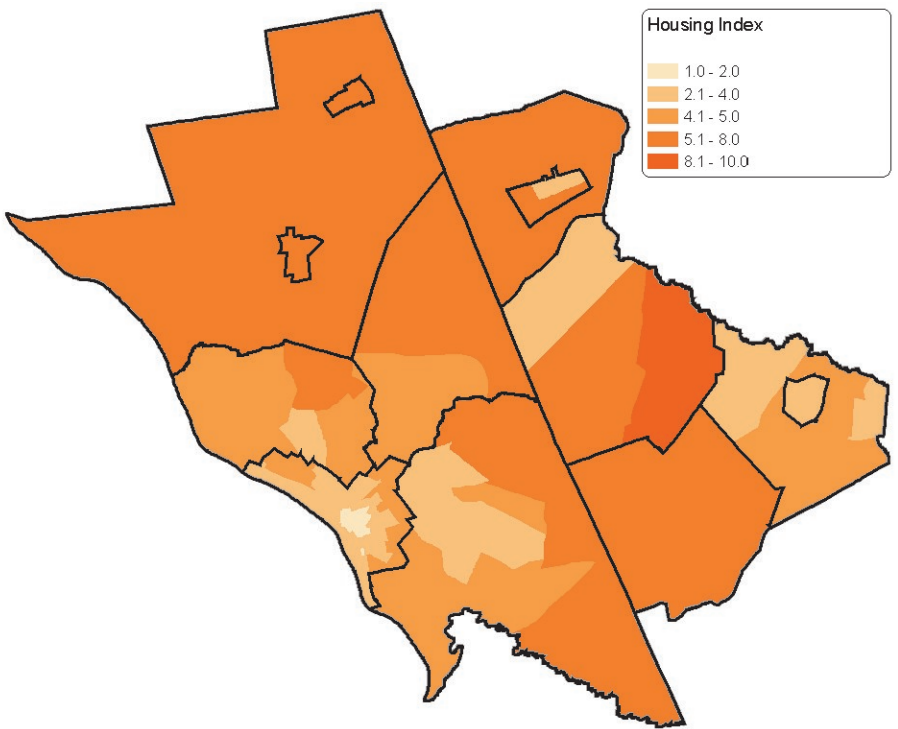
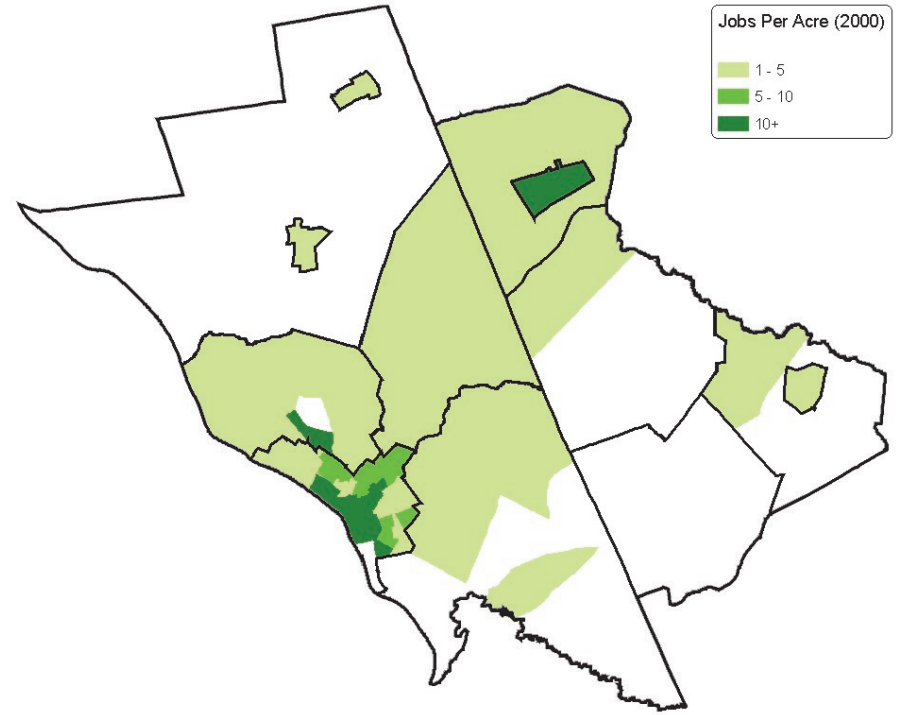
Affordability Index

Will be used for future forecasts

Factors include housing costs, modeled transportation costs (specifically costs associated with automobile ownership, auto use, and transit use), and income



II. TRENDS AND INDICATORS



The maps show where jobs are concentrated (10+ jobs/acre) and where housing diversity and affordability is lacking (8.1—10.0). The higher score on the Housing Index indicates areas with fewer affordable housing units. These are the areas in greatest need of more housing supply diversity. Other factors related to cost of living, in addition to employment density and housing index, define housing affordability.

See Map Appendix for full size maps.

Reference.
Map 6. Employment Density
Map 7. Housing Index



Planning for a better balance between housing and employment is expected to contribute to a lower poverty rate. This indicator is a measure of effectiveness of transit-oriented development, which makes employment opportunities and other basic services more accessible through available public transportation options. A balance and increase in the municipal tax base per capita across the county will demonstrate a better balance in fiscal capacity among municipalities, eliminating the need for municipalities to rely on market forces to enhance the tax base and meet affordable housing quotas. The affordability index¹ is a measure of the impact of transportation costs on the affordability of housing choices. This index prices the trade-offs that households make between housing and transportation costs and the savings that derive from living in communities that are near shopping, schools, and work within a transit-rich environment.

¹Urban Markets Initiative, The Brookings Institution.

Transportation

Commuters and residents within the county continue to rely on the automobile to get to work. The number of Mercer County residents who work in the county is decreasing and the number of persons who work in the county but live outside its boundaries is increasing. This phenomenon is contributing to increased roadway congestion and the changing demand on various roadways throughout the county. Despite the potential for greater transportation diversity within the county, only a few areas currently have the development density and infrastructure to support diverse transportation options.

Modal split along with vehicle trips/vehicle miles traveled indicate the percentage of various types of transportation modes used to get to work and the extent to which commuters use the automobile. The volume to capacity ratio² is a measure of operational performance and indicates how well a given roadway segment is able to accommodate demand. The v/c ratio shows that regardless of commute distances, commuters by automobile spend an increasing amount of their commute time waiting in traffic.

²The roadway data used to calculate the volume to capacity ratio include State Routes, 500 Routes, all 600 Routes, and all Surface Transportation Program Routes in Mercer County as identified by SRI number in the NJDOT 2005 Straight Line Diagrams.

TRENDS—TRANSPORTATION

Modal Split

- 76% of commuters drive alone*
- 11% of commuters carpool*
- 7% of commuters use public transit*
- 4.6% of commuters walk*

Vehicle Trips/Vehicle Miles Traveled

- 70% of county residents who work, work in the county*
- Number of county residents who work in the county is decreasing*
- Number of non-residents who work in the county is increasing*

Volume to Capacity Ratio

- 16% or 80 miles of roadways within the county are seriously congested (classified with a v/c ratio of 1.00 – 2.00)*

Public Transit Ridership

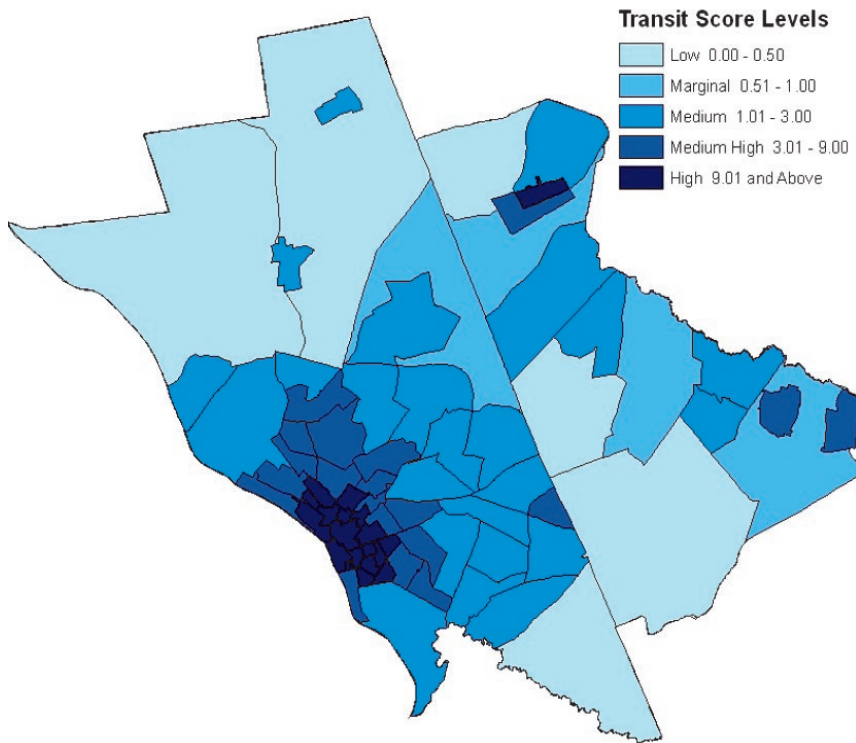
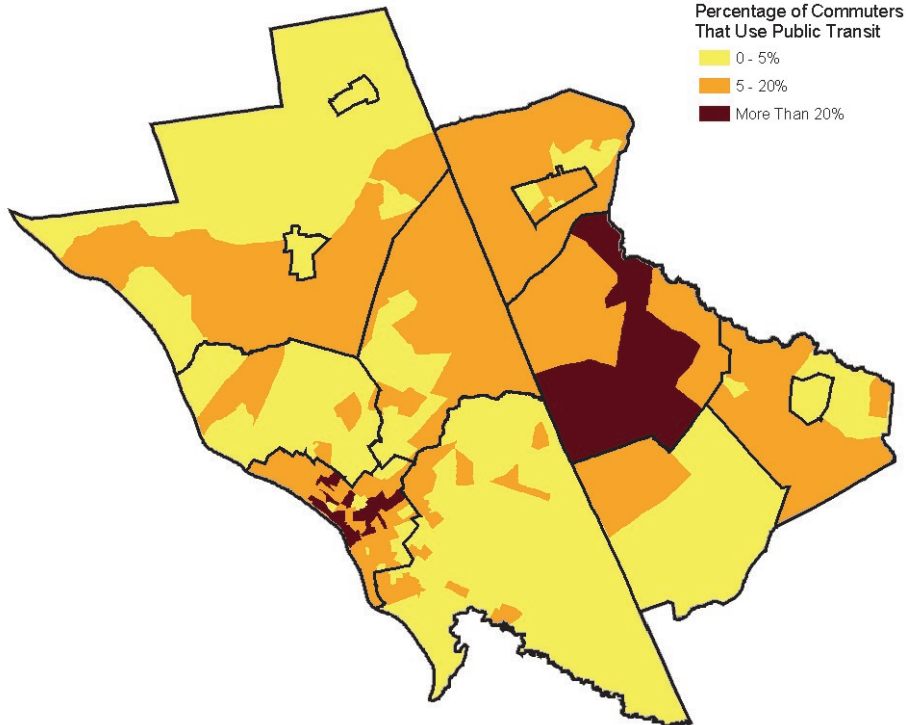
- Average daily passenger trips on the 600 series bus line increased 3% (1995 – 2003)*
- Weekday commuter rail boardings at county stations increased 33% (1990 – 2003)*

Transit Score Index

- Greatest potential for diverse transit service – Trenton and the inner suburbs, Princeton, Hopewell and Pennington Boroughs, Princeton Township, Hightstown, and areas along the US 1 and CR571*



II. TRENDS AND INDICATORS



The maps show that in areas with the highest percentage of commuters who choose public transit (more than 20%) infrastructure and other factors to support transit currently exist (high/medium high transit score) in only a few areas. In areas with a high concentration of transit users, transit connections to existing public transit facilities are needed. There are also commuters in need of transit services, or at least connections to existing services, in areas where factors are lacking to support public transit.

See Map Appendix for full size maps.

Reference.
Map 8. Public Transit Commuters
Map 9. Transit Score



The Transit Score Index is based upon factors of development density and is used to determine development conditions that can support new or enhanced public transit service. The county’s population, particularly in existing urban, regional, town, and village centers support and rely on a variety of public transit services. This indicator is useful in the identification of potentially new public transit services especially within the county’s remaining auto-dependent environs.

Environment

Acquisition programs have been the primary land preservation method over the past decade in meeting the environmental and recreational goals for the region. In more recent years policies on physical design and modern planning practices, such as TDR, conservation subdivisions, and integrated corridor and center design, have the potential to limit impervious coverage and stormwater runoff, enhance redevelopment options, and provide greater recreational opportunities. Existing environmental regulations hinder innovative development design and opportunities for dense development and redevelopment in critical transit corridors.

The impervious surface and water pollutant levels indicators provide a measure of development and the impact of development on the condition of surface and ground water quality, specifically the levels of non-point source water pollutants. It is expected that as the rate of new impervious coverage decreases due to a decrease in the rate of development, watershed impairment will also be reduced.

Greenways, in addition to maintaining intact ecosystems and offering protection of environmentally sensitive areas, can function as alternate transportation spaces for pedestrian and bicycle use while providing passive recreational opportunities. The greenway accessibility and recreational opportunities indicators measure ease of access at various points along a greenway and identify populations that may benefit from access points or are underserved by this resource. The indicator will identify those populations within census tracts with five or more degrees of disadvantage within a 1/4 mile of a park or recreation area. The DVRPC environmental justice analysis and Mercer County open space will be the data sources.

The air pollutant levels indicator is a measure of the success of public and alternative transportation initiatives in the region. This indicator can also be used with environmental justice to demonstrate the effectiveness of transportation policies to meet the Master Plan’s economic and transportation goals specifically those related to balanced employment and housing opportunities across the region.

TRENDS—ENVIRONMENT

Impervious Surface

43% of the total county land contains some degree of impervious cover as follows:

5.8% of the total county land is highly developed (>75% impervious)

20% of the total county land is moderately developed (50-75% impervious surface)

17% of the total county land is lightly developed (25-50% impervious surface)

45% of moderately and lightly developed land intersects streams indicating these areas can benefit from best management practices for stormwater

Water Pollutant Levels

To be developed.

Air Pollutant Levels

To be developed.

Greenway Accessibility

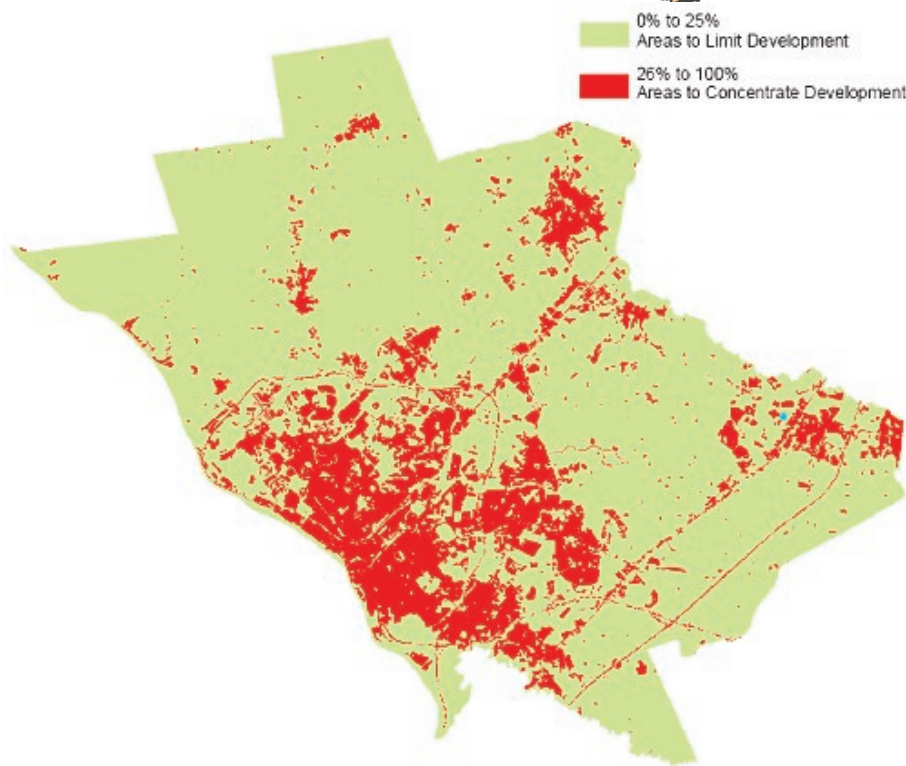
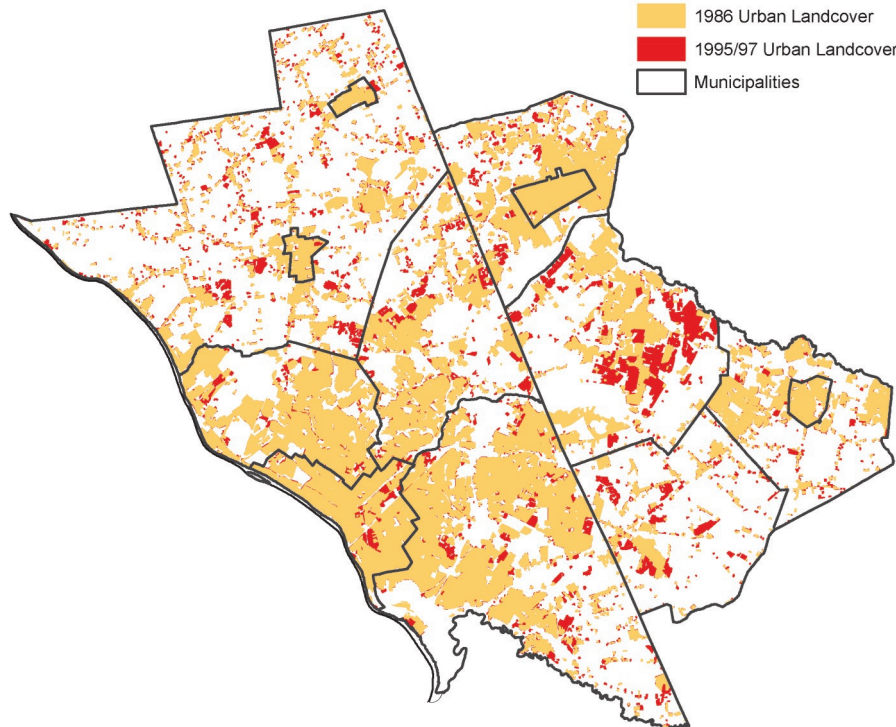
To be developed.

Recreational Opportunities

To be developed.



II. TRENDS AND INDICATORS



The maps show the change in developed land over one decade, the geographic relationship of impervious cover to developed land, and the extent of impervious cover in developed areas. It is appropriate to limit or control cover in areas containing less than 25 percent impervious surface (areas shown in green) and allow development in areas currently containing the greatest amount of impervious cover. Where other environmental indicators demonstrate the need to improve the quality of urban streams in these areas, controls on stormwater runoff should be implemented.

See Map Appendix for full size maps.

Reference.
 Map 10. Change in Developed Land
 Map 11. Percent Impervious Cover



Build-Out/Land Use

The build out scenario demonstrates how the region will develop under current zoning practices. A build-out analysis was prepared as part of the Master Plan Update. In order to determine the type and amount of development that could potentially occur on available developable land the zoning classifications for each town were analyzed with the total amount of land available for development. Zoning data such as permitted use and maximum density for residential and non-residential development were used in the model for each zoning classification.

As expected, the basic key indicators will exceed those under existing conditions but more importantly the imbalance between the indicators will continue to grow forecasting a greater distortion in employment and housing and a greater imbalance across the region in services such as public transit and roadway improvements.

Using this model—under current zoning—development will continue to creep away from areas that currently have the potential to redevelop into centers or from areas that have the existing infrastructure, social services, and places of employment to support new center development. Low density residential development will continue to increase in areas that are separated from existing and new business, commercial, and office development. According to the model, while single family housing units increase in the county by 22,926, only 4,623 multi-family units will result under current zoning practices. The Hopewell Valley and Route 130 sub-areas will continue to see most of this type of conventional development.

This predicted pattern of residential development provides fewer affordable housing units for recent college graduates, new professionals and small business owners; the population that will contribute to the region's economic and social vitality in the future. The price of new, conventional residential development will come with new sewer and road infrastructure costs, and costs associated with a large carbon footprint, inflating the price of single family homes in the fringe and rural planning areas.

The jobs-to-housing ratio indicator will increase resulting in an overall ratio for the region, under build out, of 3.5. The transit score will also increase throughout the county, especially in the Route 130 sub-area. This demonstrates the need for public transit service due to the expected type of development patterns. In addition, under build out, the number of vehicle trips will increase, reinforcing the need for public transit services. An increase in the volume to capacity (v/c) ratio is an indication that infrastructure investments are being made for new roadways but not necessarily for existing roads in order to support compact center development and linear development along major transportation corridors.

The amount of preserved land under the build-out scenario will continue to increase but an increase is no indication of the quality of the land itself, whether it provides a beneficial relationship with residential and commercial development, or other natural resources. The environmental indicators together raise the need for capacity analysis to determine if the amount of future preserved land is enough to conserve water resources based on predicted increases of impervious surface and water and sewer demand for the region.



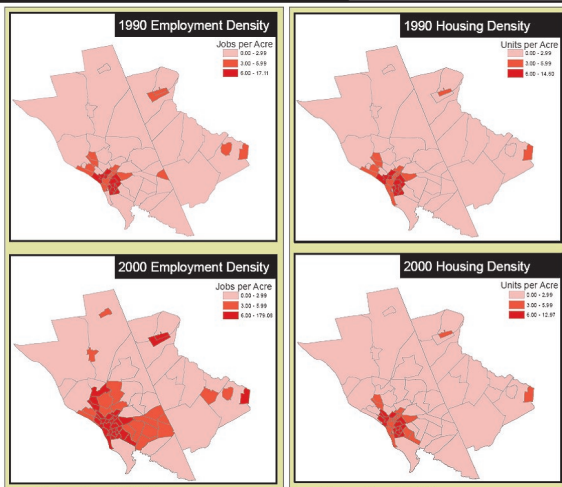
II. TRENDS AND INDICATORS

Recent trends in economic and transportation systems demonstrate a continuing trend in the unequal distribution and variety of housing and transit services.

Implications of the Jobs-to-Housing Trend

- Decrease in labor supply and economic productivity
- Decrease in housing availability and affordability
- Decrease in attainment of social equity objectives
- Increase in commute distances, traffic congestion, and air pollution

Job-to-Housing Ratio, 1990-2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 & 2000

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 & 2000

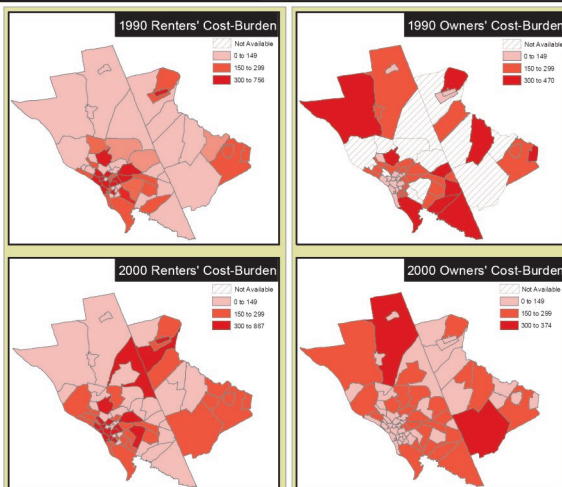
In 1990 the jobs-to-housing ratio was almost even across the county. In 2000 employment increased in Hopewell, Ewing, and Hamilton while housing stayed about the same.

All municipalities contain some number of households that are cost-burdened (spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing). In 1990, the concentration of the cost-burden is around Trenton for renters and dispersed throughout the county for owners. In 2000, the number of burdened renters increased.

Implications of the Transportation Trend

- Increase in commute distance and duration
- Increase in traffic volumes and roadway congestion
- Limitations in availability and use of public transit
- Limited diversity of travel modes

Cost-Burden, 1990-2000

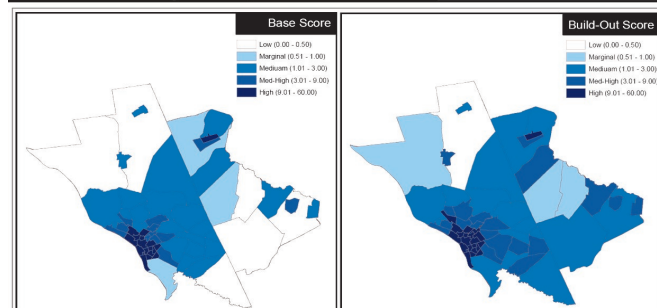


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 & 2000

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 & 2000

Under build-out conditions, the need for public transportation infrastructure increases across the county and factors favorable to support public transit increase.

Transit Suitability Score, Base & Build-Out



Source: RPP, GOE Model



III. REGIONAL VISION. GOALS, POLICIES, AND STRATEGIES

| ***Regional Vision***

| ***County Assets, Strengths, Challenges***

| ***Goals, Policies, Strategies***



III. REGIONAL VISION. GOALS, POLICIES, STRATEGIES

Regional Vision

In its legislative authority, the county will continue to guide physical development, encourage municipal cooperation, and recognize, maintain, and enhance those characteristics valued by residents that define the county as a place. The county will support future growth initiatives that integrate the valued aspects of existing development patterns and that contribute to an increasing balance across the region in the location and accessibility of the basic necessities of a healthy community—places of employment, housing, transportation, food, recreation, and natural and cultural resources.

A balanced growth alternative favors redevelopment of existing built areas and relies on the preservation of open and agricultural land for the success of both new compact, mixed-use centers and linear growth corridors developed with context-rich designs.

The following broad policies guide the balanced growth concept:

- Promote appropriate location and design of new development with opportunities for transit, regional equity and preservation
- Promote redevelopment
- Promote desirable compact design that supports transit and promotes walking
- Promote land use patterns that limit stormwater runoff and increase green infrastructure
- Direct growth to transit corridors and centers
- Mix uses to promote walkable communities

Mercer County's vision for balanced growth throughout the county relies on the following key outcomes:

- Adequate level of housing choice and affordability that makes it possible for residents to live in the county throughout their lives
- Adequate transportation and housing choice to maintain an educated workforce and a stable economy
- Enhanced core transportation corridors through the implementation of access management, connectivity, and wise land use decisions
- Continued strategic investment in open space and recreational facilities so that residents and employees enjoy enhanced quality of life in the county

Improvements in current patterns of development and design are possible. The existing physical, natural and cultural resources, and patterns of development in the region can contribute to new compact and mixed use communities (with opportunities for transit, equitable housing, and green infrastructure) by directing growth to transit corridors and centers. Many of the county's assets are in existing older cities and suburban neighborhoods where opportunities for both preservation and redevelopment exist today.



County Assets, Strengths, and Challenges

Mercer County is comprised of thirteen self-governing municipalities. They range in form from open, rolling natural and agricultural landscapes to urban cities. Every municipality contains precious resources from the past and present that together provide Mercer's residents and visitors with a rich quality of life and opportunities from which to build.

As New Jersey's capital county, Mercer is a center for commerce and culture. Located midway between New York City and Philadelphia, Mercer County is home to more than 350,000 people who live in one of the most densely populated regions of the country.

The transportation infrastructure in Mercer County is valued by its residents. Key corridors along the New Jersey Turnpike in Mercer County are considered the most lucrative commerce centers in New Jersey. In addition, Interstates 95, 195 and 295, as well as the state highway Routes 1, 29, 31 and 130 are key to Mercer's economic growth. Mercer County also offers access to commuter rail services, a light rail system, and the Trenton-Mercer Airport.

With a highly skilled and educated labor pool the county is home to Mercer County Community College, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton University, Rider University, The College of New Jersey, The Institute for Advanced Study, and Thomas Edison State College. The county holds some of New Jersey's greatest cultural and historic sites with Revolutionary War battle sites in Trenton and Princeton.

Recreation and entertainment are abundant with first-class parks, four public golf courses, the Trenton Devils professional hockey team and the New York Yankees AA-affiliate, Trenton Thunder at Waterfront Park. The Sun National Bank Center is ranked among the best performing venues of its size in the world.

With a strong economic base and a record of job creation, Forbes recently ranked Mercer County as 21st on the list for businesses to locate.

Mercer County's excellent schools, tourist destinations, and diverse, well educated workforce make the county a great place to live, work and play.

These are the key assets to be preserved and enhanced:

- Nationally and internationally recognized institutions of higher education and research
- Diverse labor force
- State Capital
- Easy accessibility to New York City and Philadelphia and other major cities from Boston to Washington, D.C.
- Entertainment and tourism (sports arenas, world renowned concerts, and theaters)
- Trenton, an evolving urban center, rich in history, culture, and innovation, from the American pre-colonial to post-industrial period
- All major transportation corridors connecting the eastern seaboard
- Regional airport
- Diverse geography from the coastal plain to the Piedmont
- Rich historical resources, from Native American culture to Post-modern architecture
- Aggressive agriculture and open space preservation
- Diverse recreational opportunities



III. REGIONAL VISION. GOALS, POLICIES, STRATEGIES

At the first of the three RAP public meetings stakeholders identified what they valued about living and working in Mercer County. This approach helped stakeholders come to consensus and directed the dialogue early in the process on specific issues related to improving quality of life in the county. This process started to generate a regional rather than local perspective and resulted in a variety of suggested options and choices for growth. These assets were used throughout the RAP process to identify locations for growth and redevelopment, enhancements to existing transportation routes and transit service, and to suggest new and improved connections between existing valued resources.

A variety of suggested regional growth options are outlined in the Master Plan. They provide decision-makers with a greater opportunity to be flexible and balance approaches to development across municipal boundaries. Working with options results in real, achievable strategies through the use of practical project schedules to guide incremental development across the county.

Regional planning in New Jersey comes with a host of challenges. Municipal planning guides growth in New Jersey and legal mechanisms legitimize this planning approach. Regional planning on the other hand requires municipal decision-makers to leave their comfort zone, to take a county-wide perspective and to imagine beyond today's reality to long-term growth opportunities.

Growth in Mercer County is a complex reality. The Master Plan update process provided an opportunity to validate local and regional perspectives, build respect for the complexity of shared interests, and develop a living plan that synthesizes and balances a multiplicity of factors. The Master Plan process was designed with a regional perspective on growth that acknowledges and values local perspectives, the need to integrate the three systems, and the necessity to imagine growth while recognizing the very real predictions for the future. The vision for sustainable, balanced growth builds on the assets to overcome these challenges.

The locations in Mercer where population, housing, transportation, and employment coexist today in a capacity suitable for future development and redevelopment are in and around existing or proposed public transit service areas and along major transportation corridors—Route 1, Route 130, and Route 31—in metropolitan (PA1) and suburban (PA2) planning areas, within and adjacent to urban and regional centers.

With a balanced growth approach, the successful development and redevelopment of existing areas suitable for new growth depends on Master Plan goals and policies that allow choices to be made during the decision making process. Implementation of a regional balanced growth scenario requires that compromises be made about where growth is needed outside the metropolitan and suburban planning areas and what form or design the growth should take.

The RAP was designed to present choices to decision makers while guiding them through a complex planning process. Success depends on the ability of decision makers to make trade-offs. The trade-offs are based on policies and goals established at the start of the process. This allows for a transparent planning process. Trade-offs, for example, may result in the development of regional transportation infrastructure across jurisdictions that serves employment and housing in another location within the county. In accordance with the Master Plan goals, the trade-off should result in a regional benefit.



Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Economy—Background

Mercer County residents have experienced both the positive and negative impacts of population and employment expansion. Over the last twenty years growth has been accompanied by the loss of open land, an increase in traffic congestion, a decrease in affordable places to live, and cities and downtowns with a poor economic base, poor schools, and abandoned and vacant buildings. On the other hand, many of Mercer’s existing places have the potential to redevelop into new or revitalized growth centers through local and county planning policies that address these negative trends.

Employment in the county has been increasing at a greater rate than housing. The potential implications of this trend include 1) a decrease in labor supply and economic productivity, 2) a decrease in housing availability and affordability, 3) an increase in commute distances and traffic congestion, and 4) an overall decrease in the attainment of social equity objectives.

KEY FINDINGS AND GOALS	
Key Finding #1:	Job growth is outpacing residential development In most areas, there is an increasing imbalance between employment and housing and labor force
Key Finding #2:	Current zoning supports continued imbalances between job growth and residential development
Goal #1:	Increase employment opportunities
Goal #2:	Balance jobs and housing
Goal #3:	Social equity/housing choice

The county has been experiencing a general trend of larger, more expensive, single-family, owner-occupied suburban housing. Occupations vital to Mercer’s communities, such as nurses, engineers, teachers, and emergency responders are finding it more difficult to afford housing in the county. The municipal tax base and tax rates vary among Mercer’s municipalities due in large part to development that conforms to existing zoning. Broader, diverse land uses across the region can create a better balance in municipal finance among the townships.

Economy—Policies and Strategies

Quality of life, along with workforce, location, and innovative business, is identified in the 2007 Economic Growth Strategy for New Jersey as a strategic advantage in strengthening New Jersey’s economy. There are many ways to define this term and it means different things to different people. Here, it is used in conjunction with the 2007 Economic Growth Strategy for New Jersey because the growth strategies, like the County Master Plan, are tied to land use. The factors that define quality of life in the Economic Growth Strategy include, financial wealth and access to it, quality healthcare and access to it, quality education, variety of recreational and cultural opportunities, aggressive open space and farmland preservation, availability of affordably priced housing and policies state-wide that promote mixed-income housing developments close to jobs, and access to jobs through investments in transportation and in placing housing close to jobs. Improving these factors for those who live and work in Mercer County means providing the basic necessities for Mercer’s workforce. Affordable, accessible vocational education and job preservation is essential in a changing technology-based economy. The labor force must gain the skills required to fill vacant jobs and compete in the marketplace. These strategies will give individuals more time at home and at work to be secure, creative, and innovative in their personal as well as their professional lives.



III. REGIONAL VISION. GOALS, POLICIES, STRATEGIES

Policy #1: Promote appropriate location and design of new development with opportunities for transit, regional equity and preservation

- Strategy #1:* Examine existing municipal planning and zoning policies for limitations that would otherwise allow for diverse housing types; especially where townships must meet mandatory COAH Third Round obligations. More involvement and coordination between the county and municipalities in COAH regulations and programs as needed
- Strategy #2:* The county can assist municipalities in analyzing the relationship between municipal master plans and land use zoning and provide technical assistance for municipalities updating their master plans
- Strategy #3:* Continue to develop and further define Mercer County as a “Place” to live and work
- Strategy #4:* Identify mixed use design standards for opportunities for denser development with high quality of life

Policy #2: Provide infrastructure and other incentives that promote growth where appropriate

- Strategy #1:* Explore shared service agreements to improve the financial and operational efficiency of public services
- Strategy #2:* Continue to participate in the State Plan Endorsement process. In the future, depending on the role of Plan Endorsement in local planning and real implementation of regional growth strategies, tie the county role in land use planning to provisions of the Municipal Land Use Law
- Strategy #3:* Continue to use and update the adopted Mercer County Wastewater Management Plan in planning for growth and infrastructure
- Strategy #4:* Support property tax and school funding reforms in the New Jersey
- Strategy #5:* Investigate ways to use the Open Space Preservation Trust Fund to promote centralized growth patterns
- Strategy #6:* Continue to support brownfields redevelopment and play a more active role in identifying re-use opportunities

Policy #3: Promote housing choices that meet the region’s needs

- Strategy #1:* Focus on housing needs of the workforce. Determine workforce characterization to improve workforce development. Focus on educational and training programs
- Strategy #2:* New studies to determine where housing needs are generated by new business development
- Strategy #3:* Address the housing needs of both lower-income and moderate-income households
- Strategy #4:* Develop outreach programs on planning and smart growth principles that reach municipalities, the general public, and the county’s school-age population
- Strategy #5:* Develop outreach programs to help the county understand workforce needs and capacities, public private partnerships that link housing to jobs, and future economic development and housing appropriate to support it



Transportation—Background

The automobile continues to be the predominant form of personal transportation. The pattern of low-density development contributes to this phenomenon. In addition, this type of development consumes land and leads to patterns that physically separate housing from employment centers. The imbalance between economic development and transportation in land development will result in longer commute distances, increased roadway congestion, a shrinking labor force and fewer affordable places for young adults and Mercer’s aging population to live.

The availability and use of public transit is limited. Areas with existing transit service and with the greatest transit choices are primarily in Trenton and its inner suburbs, Princeton Borough and Princeton Township. Some areas in the county are either not well suited for service or have a need but are not well served. Increases in commuter rail use may be constrained by train and parking capacity. Walking and bicycling continue to remain insignificant in the realm of alternative travel modes. As trail and greenway initiatives continue, however, the feasibility of walking and bicycling to work and public transit may increase.

KEY FINDINGS AND GOALS

- Key Finding #1: Commute times continue to increase
- Key Finding #2: People live further from their jobs or are commuting on congested roads
- Key Finding #3: The automobile continues to dominate personal transportation while public transit usage remains limited
- Key Finding #4: Land use patterns contribute to roadway congestion, auto dependency, and demand for public transit
- Goal #1: Enhance travel options
- Goal #2: Encourage land uses to support transit
- Goal #3: Improve social equity in access and mobility
- Goal #4: Manage congestion

Transportation—Policies and Strategies

Mercer County is closely linked to a growing global economy through its transportation network. The variety of existing transportation options in the county contribute to residents’ quality of life. The county will continue to invest and maintain investments in existing roads, bridges, and airports, and strategically invest in future public transportation projects in order to move people efficiently to and from destinations within the county and beyond to support regional economies. With aging infrastructure and the increasing costs associated with construction of new roads and bridges, there is an increasing opportunity to improve roadway capacity on existing roads especially where they service redevelopment and new development resulting in centralized land use patterns. The availability and accessibility of a variety of transportation options for residents and workers in the county, including site conditions that encourage pedestrian activity, is a critical element to successful, sustainable mixed-income housing development. Planning for denser housing near transit service not only reduces roadway congestion, but also addresses social equity objectives by providing mobility and access for population segments with no access or limited access to automobiles and for those populations who have no desire for an auto-dependent lifestyle. Recognizing that not all workers will live where they work, transportation policy encourages expansion of existing public transportation capacity and roadway improvements that support commuters and appropriately direct freight movement through the county to surrounding metropolitan areas. County input on the affect of state and federal road improvements, especially those directly connecting the surrounding metropolitan areas of Philadelphia and New York City, on county travel patterns will continue to be needed as capital investments are made in the future to support economic growth statewide.



III. REGIONAL VISION. GOALS, POLICIES, STRATEGIES

Policy #1: Direct growth to transit corridors and centers

Strategy #1: Under the county's existing authority, develop policy that integrates future transit planning with land use planning and design to achieve mixed-use, high-density development nearby to transit service

Strategy #2: Align already planned transportation infrastructure improvements with additional ones that support growth in locations where more intensive development is appropriate

Policy #2: Promote compact design, walkable and mixed use centers, that support transit

Strategy #1: Promote and encourage higher density development needed to support new public transportation alternatives including Bus Rapid Transit along the Route 1 corridor

Strategy #2: Develop a guide specific to growth in nodes, centers, and corridors that includes design elements such as transit, walkability, trails, complete streets, access management, bike-ped, connected cul-de-sacs, local street networks, etc

Strategy #3: Incorporate principles of context sensitive design into roadway and bridge improvements which balance transportation efficiency with other objectives related to surrounding land uses

Policy #3: Match jobs to housing to reduce long auto commutes to work

Strategy #1: Where possible, continue to support the business community in travel demand management, vehicle trip reduction, and employee commute options to reduce roadway congestion

Strategy #2: Fund planning studies to identify positive locations for more intense development, multi-municipal corridors for more intense development, and mixed use design standards for denser development

Policy #4: Promote strategic capacity expansion to support compact development and multi-modal options

Strategy #1: Public agencies should seek to coordinate and encourage, with municipalities, land use and transportation planning efforts especially in corridor planning and developing new visions for arterial roadways and preparing plans to revitalize old commercial strips

Strategy #2: Plan to meet social equity objectives including mobility and access for population segments with no access or limited access to automobiles. Consider flexible and innovative services, such as local circulators and shuttles, and shared-ride services.

Strategy #3: Update county land development standards that require changes in roadway design to accommodate multi-modal uses, in addition to cartway and sidewalks, where appropriate

Strategy #4: When preserving open space, ensure appropriate road right-of-way exists for planned future development

Policy #5: Promote access management to enhance safety and capacity

Strategy #1: Through planning efforts, continue to make efficient use of existing road infrastructure including the implementation of access management concepts to maximize the efficiency of the existing roadway system

Strategy #2: Educate municipalities and the public on policy changes needed to implement key design elements that support access management



Environment—Background

The county continues to evolve as urban land increases and more agricultural and natural lands are preserved. This is evident in land use/land cover analyses that show regional increases in urban land and infer the decline in agricultural lands as they are transformed for other uses. In Mercer County, growth has occurred along transportation corridors and in State Plan designated growth areas. It has also occurred in a scattered fashion throughout the controlled fringe planning and limited growth rural planning areas that lack existing infrastructure. The loss of agricultural lands has potential negative impacts on local food production, on cultural, historic, and natural resources, and on our local heritage. Strategic investments in key properties, however, have contributed significantly to preserving broad natural resource areas and in creating natural resource connections in the region.

Mercer County has aggressive open space and farmland preservation programs. In a small county with a large urban center, Mercer’s residents are not without quality recreational and open space options. However, cities and suburbs often lack available, accessible recreation and green spaces and the appropriate physical connections to allow access to these areas.

Development continues to exert pressure on water resources. Increasing impervious coverage leads to increased non-point source water pollution and to a decrease in groundwater recharge levels. On a regional scale, it is unclear how recent preservation efforts have balanced these negative trends. In an even broader sense, it is unclear how changes in the environment at the regional and national levels have affected conditions in the county. Regional baseline environmental data and updates to capacity analyses are lacking. During recent drought conditions areas of the county experienced dry wells while infrastructure damage occurred due to three, recent major flood events in the Delaware River. Water quality concerns and water supply limitations may increase the public costs for ensuring safe, dependable water supplies and could possibly limit new development.

Environment—Policies and Strategies

Strategic infrastructure investments and new approaches to land development can encourage growth in designated areas and preserve undeveloped lands. The county invests in both green infrastructure through its open space and farmland preservation programs, in transportation infrastructure, and with its municipalities and sewerage authorities, in planning for public sewer infrastructure. These investments together secure critical natural resource and recreation areas.

Creative planning initiatives at a regional scale, that rely on economic and transportation policies for practical implementation and flexibility in the decision-making process can provide alternative methods for preserving natural land other than outright acquisition.

In the realization that natural resource preservation is not possible without strategic economic growth policy, the county looks to build the economy conducive to environmental constraints and include natural resource planning in economic plans. Aggressive preservation programs alone cannot change land use patterns in a sustainable way. Land use goals that promote the appropriate location and design of new development with opportunities for transit, regional equity, and preservation are key elements of sustainable economic growth.

KEY FINDINGS AND GOALS	
Key Finding #1:	Low density development contributes to land consumption
Key Finding #2:	Current zoning promotes low density housing (one unit or less per acre) and does not include mixed-use zones
Key Finding #3:	Development is on agricultural lands
Key Finding #4:	Build-out locations may contribute to stream degradation
Goal #1:	Set priorities for natural resource preservation
Goal #2:	Improve recreation infrastructure
Goal #3:	Enhance green infrastructure to reduce flooding and improve water quality
Goal #4:	Provide equitable access to open space



**III. REGIONAL VISION. GOALS,
POLICIES, STRATEGIES**

Policy #1: Promote land use patterns that limit stormwater runoff and increase green infrastructure

- Strategy #1:* Develop a “green design” guide for municipalities that provides examples for incorporating infrastructure improvements related to stormwater management, greenways, bike/ped facilities, transit, into redevelopment or new development projects
- Strategy #2:* Explore the use of regional detention basins, the use of preserved lands, and the creation of wetlands to manage stormwater
- Strategy #3:* Reexamine the use of watershed-based planning in water quality management
- Strategy #4:* With municipal and utility authorities, continue to update the adopted Wastewater Management Plan to coordinate land use planning with wastewater management planning
- Strategy #5:* Support the development and maintenance of baseline environmental data, including data used in capacity studies and natural resource inventories, to routinely analyze changing environmental conditions in the region

Policy #2: Promote redevelopment

- Strategy #1:* Strategically purchase open space to support redevelopment and continue to maintain existing preserved farmland and continue to preserve remaining viable agricultural lands
- Strategy #2:* Identify re-use opportunities
- Strategy #3:* Promote LEED, green and sustainable development through implementation of policies and practices on county-owned facilities

Policy #3: Protect stream corridors

- Strategy #1:* Identify stream corridors for protection and recreational facility development
- Strategy #2:* Continue to invest in land acquisition along stream corridors for the creation of greenways to protect and maintain surface water quality and natural habitats

Policy #4: Prioritize open space acquisition to protect environmentally sensitive areas, complete greenway networks, support compact development, and provide recreation opportunities to underserved populations

- Strategy #1:* Incorporate and develop recreation facilities where people live to make housing more desirable
- Strategy #2:* Investigate ways to incorporate open/recreational spaces at the core of new development rather than as a buffer
- Strategy #3:* At the county level, integrate the work of Economic Development and the Park Commission with preservation planning to include active recreation as a component of strategic plans
- Strategy #4:* Identify populations in need of recreational opportunities and the barriers that prevent residents access to existing facilities



IV. CONSISTENCY WITH OTHER PLANS

| *NJ State Development and Redevelopment Plan*

| *Regional Transportation Plans*

| *Regional Preservation Plans*



NJ State Development and Redevelopment Plan

In April 2004 Mercer County accepted its role of Negotiating Entity and became the direct link between the county's municipalities and the State Planning Commission during the third round of the Cross-Acceptance process. The responsibilities of the Negotiating Entity were to review and comment on the adopted State Plan, Preliminary Plan, and Preliminary Map. Mercer County was also responsible for public outreach sessions with municipalities and the general public, which resulted in recommended changes to the State Plan policies and map. Minor changes were made to the state designated planning areas within Mercer County. The result of that public outreach or Cross-Acceptance process was a Cross-Acceptance Report, which was submitted to the Office of Smart Growth in December 2005. Mercer County completed the required negotiation sessions and Cross-Acceptance public hearing in July 2007, which involved discussion between the county, the Office of Smart Growth, and other state agencies, on discrepant map and policy issues, and provided an opportunity for public comment.

Many of the state and regional planning issues identified during Cross-Acceptance and specified in the Mercer County Cross-Acceptance Report, are consistent with and are addressed by the Mercer County Master Plan goals and policies. Some of these issues presented to the Office of Smart Growth and the State Planning Commission through the Cross-Acceptance Report include:

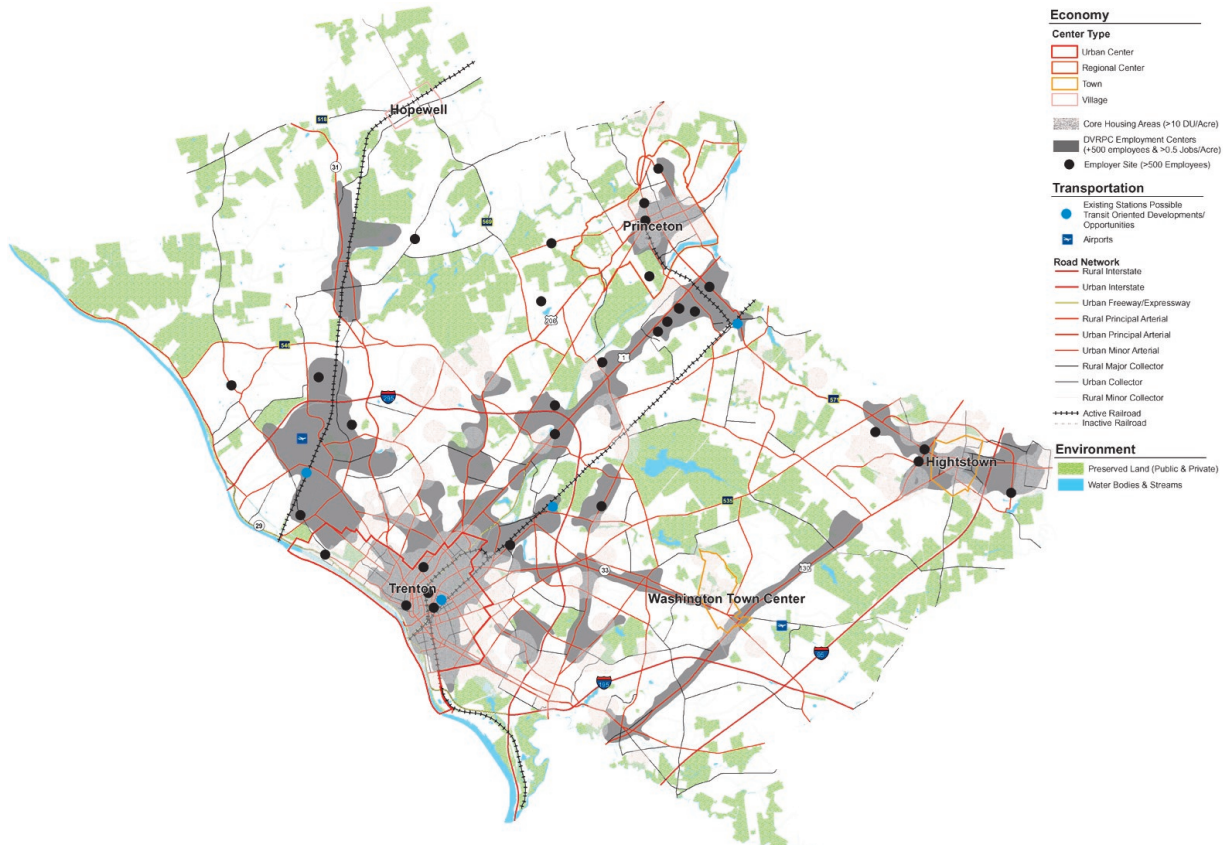
- **Current patterns of development and design** create auto dependent developments resulting in traffic congestion, higher infrastructure costs for sewer and water, and negative impacts on natural resources including increased water pollution.
- **Employment and labor force imbalance**, where the total labor demand is exceeding labor supply in the high-tech and low-wage employment sectors, affects other planning issues including housing, transportation, and community services.
- **Projected population growth** will result in greater demand for a variety of housing types but the recent increase in housing units has been in larger, more expensive, single-family units, which has created a lack of affordable entry-level homes.
- **Traffic congestion** is increasing and is partially the result of new development patterns that create auto dependency and cause public transit and other alternative modes of transportation to be underutilized and difficult to attain.
- **Loss of natural lands** that results from current development patterns facilitates loss of park and recreation space, historic areas, critical wildlife habitat, groundwater recharge, flood protection, and erosion and sedimentation control.
- **Impacts of new development on utilities**, where public water and sewer systems do not exist in some instances, create drinking water supply and potential public health impacts.



The Mercer County Master Plan is consistent with the State Plan's policies and goals for balanced growth in the region. The Mercer County Master Plan supports the following eight State Plan goals:

- Goal #1:** Revitalize State's Cities and Towns
- Goal #2:** Conserve Natural Resources and Systems
- Goal #3:** Promote Economic Growth and Development
- Goal #4:** Protect the Environment
- Goal #5:** Provide Public Services at Reasonable Cost
- Goal #6:** Provide Housing at Reasonable Cost
- Goal #7:** Preserve Historic and Cultural Areas
- Goal #8:** Ensure Integrated Planning Statewide

The Master Plan goals can affect physical development in the county through policies on transportation infrastructure. The physical development that is expected to result from the Mercer County Master Plan goals is tied directly to the county's existing transportation infrastructure. It is along these transportation corridors that development and redevelopment opportunities can be tied to economic growth and housing choice to preserve critical natural and cultural resources elsewhere in the county.

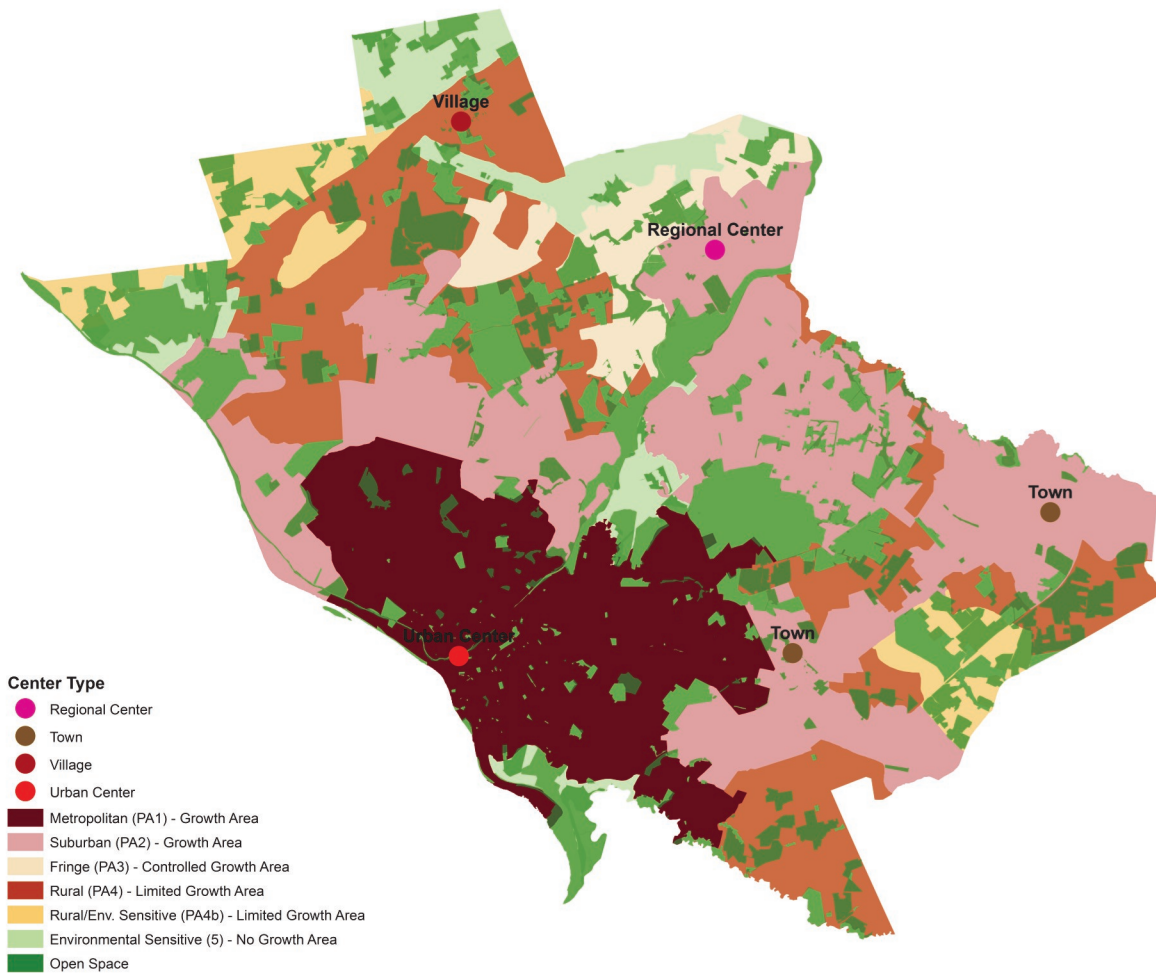




IV. CONSISTENCY WITH OTHER PLANS

Mercer County is comprised of the following state designated planning areas:

- Planning Area 1** – Metropolitan
- Planning Area 2** – Suburban
- Planning Area 3** – Fringe
- Planning Area 4** – Rural
- Planning Area 4B** – Rural/Environmentally Sensitive
- Planning Area 5** – Environmentally Sensitive



Of the 21 counties in New Jersey, only five others are smaller in size than Mercer County. Despite Mercer’s size, its land diversity can be demonstrated in the number, distribution, and variety of Centers located within its borders. Mercer County contains urban, regional, town, and village Centers. The county’s town and village Centers have been addressing the development pressures in surrounding fringe, planning areas primarily through the establishment of greenbelts through the county and state open space and farmland acquisition programs. The Master Plan goals in preserving natural as well as some of the nation’s most important cultural resources are consistent with the **State Plan goals 2, 4 and 7**. See *Map Appendix for full size maps. Reference. Map 12. Mercer Planning Areas. 2001 SDRP.*

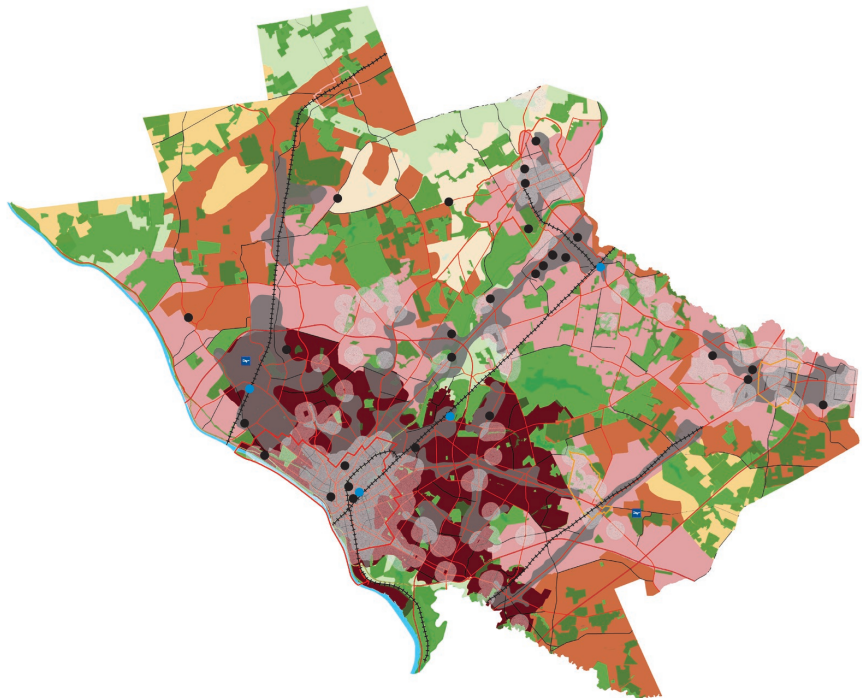


Metropolitan and suburban planning areas in the county are contiguous with primary transportation corridors including existing regional rail systems and interstate and arterial roadways. These transportation corridors also intersect with the fringe planning areas. This connection is primarily where development pressure is strong but the lack of other infrastructure and recent zoning changes have slowed development. These areas include the north central areas of Hopewell and the southeastern section of Hamilton Townships.

The existing transportation analysis zones (TAZs), employment centers, and the county's most populated areas coexist along these transportation corridors. This present condition provides future opportunities for redevelopment and new development. The opportunity for appropriate housing and employment densities necessary to support future transportation hubs such as the West Trenton, Trenton, Hamilton, and Princeton Junction rail stations are consistent with the County's existing physical infrastructure and built environment, the economic and transportation related Master Plan goals, and the **State Plan Goals 1, 3, 5 and 6**.

A Transportation Development District was adopted in 1992 to improve regional planning and cooperative implementation of infrastructure improvements but was administratively dissolved in accordance with regulatory requirements in May 2016. The District was a contiguous area that spanned three Mercer County municipalities and encompassed approximately 5 square miles of varied land uses and roadway profiles. The Transportation Development District Plan determined the appropriate intensity of development and implementation of required infrastructure improvements when there was significant development pressure in a relatively undeveloped area. The Transportation Development District was a means for equitably assessing transportation impact fees and ensuring timely provision of infrastructure improvements consistent with **State Plan Goal 5**.

The county's remaining planning areas—fringe, rural, and environmentally sensitive—are accessible primarily via major and minor collectors. In situations where the county's major and minor collectors intersect with these planning areas the Master Plan policies and goals call for solutions that allow limited growth while providing infill or redevelopment opportunities in others. These goals are consistent with the **State Plan Goals 1 and 2**. The major and minor collectors also intersect the metropolitan and suburban planning areas. The Master Plan and Access Management Code recommend careful consideration to existing zoning and future development design in these areas.





Regional Transportation Plans

The Central Jersey Transportation Forum has been meeting since 1999 to address concerns of municipalities in Mercer, Middlesex, Somerset, and Hunterdon counties focused on the US 1 corridor. The key issues are east-west access; improving coordination of transportation and land use in this high growth, congested area; and transit. The goal of the Forum is to achieve improved and more integrated regional land use and transportation planning that will result in better quality of community life.

Central Jersey Forum/Route 1 Corridor Study

The Route 1 Regional Growth Strategy is an alternative regional land use scenario for the Route 1 Corridor. The Study includes fifteen municipalities and four counties in central New Jersey, including Mercer. The Study breaks the region into four subareas. The Princeton and Trenton subareas are comprised of Mercer County municipalities—Princeton Borough, Princeton, West Windsor, Ewing, Hamilton, and Lawrence Townships and Trenton.

The land development scenarios are developed during work sessions that are based on fundamental concepts of the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan. Participants focus on economic opportunity zones that are characterized by market orientation, labor force characteristics and the relationship of the selected geographic area to the transportation network. Participants also develop scenarios based on existing development patterns, infrastructure capacity and economic opportunity potential or areas where the potential for growth is strong. The intensity or degree of growth within these potential growth locations are identified and range from compact, mixed-use centers to single-use, non-residential nodes or special purpose districts. The intensity of development within these centers and nodes range from urban center to hamlet.

The proposed land development scenarios are tested using the GOZ Build-Out Analysis Model, a computer model that determines the amount of new development that is possible under different zoning schemes. The smart growth schemes developed as part of the Study range from a dense, mix of uses to low-density, single-use zones. The respective range is core areas, center neighborhoods, nodes, and areas outside of centers and nodes. Redevelopment factors were assigned to core and center neighborhoods where appropriate. The areas outside of centers and nodes were “rezoned” based on State Plan planning area boundaries.

The smart growth zoning categories close the gap between jobs and housing, demonstrating a better balance between the two, in almost every subarea and in every municipality within each subarea.

Planned future roadway improvements within the Study area were mapped for each municipality.

Central Jersey Forum/US 1 Bus Rapid Transit Alternatives Analysis Study

The alternatives analysis was managed by NJ TRANSIT and advanced in close collaboration with its funding partners: NJDOT, DVRPC and NJTPA. The study is an outgrowth of the work of the Central Jersey Transportation Forum and the Greater Mercer Transportation Management Association. The study evaluated route alternatives, including use of existing roads with improvements and new alignments, station locations, ridership, potential for coordination with private sector development, municipal plans and cost effectiveness.



Central Jersey Forum/US 1 Bus Rapid Transit Alternatives Analysis Study

The work of the Central Jersey Transportation Forum (CJTF) identified and evaluated alternatives for new public transit service, including a Bus Transit System (BRT) for the central US 1 corridor. Based upon the work on these projects and others, an enhanced public transit system for Mercer County could include the following corridors and links:

Improved feeder/shuttle service for the Northeast Corridor (NEC): This service could make the NEC more attractive for intra-regional trips (e.g., Trenton-Princeton).

Re-structured Dinky Line: Previous studies have considered alternative improvements, as will the new BRT study (see below). These studies have considered multi-modal expansion options for this line. New service could relate to the feeder service noted above.

Light rail extension to State House: New Jersey Transit has completed a DEIS for this service, and it is currently under study.

Light rail extension to West Trenton / Trenton-Mercer Airport: If service to the State House occurs, then the next step may be to extend the line to serve the commuter rail station and the airport. This service could help to enhance the airport's role as a regional transportation hub.

Central US 1 BRT: The CJTF suggested the possibility of a BRT, and the Greater Mercer TMA has completed an initial feasibility study for a system in the US 1 corridor between I-95/I-295 and South Brunswick in Middlesex County. New Jersey Transit is currently conducting a more detailed BRT Alternatives Analysis. The TMA study proposed a system serving the US 1 corridor primarily in West Windsor, with park-ride intercept lots located in South Brunswick and Lawrence (near the I-95/I-295 interchange).

West Trenton line: New Jersey Transit is currently studying this service, which would provide a connection with the R-3 service at West Trenton and link with the Raritan Valley Line in Somerset County. Proposed stations in Mercer County would be at West Trenton, in Hopewell Township near the Merrill-Lynch site, and possibly in Hopewell Borough. This service could be supplemented by vanpool/shuttle service to the stations.

Commuter rail extension to Bucks County, PA: New Jersey Transit has considered possibly extending service to Falls Township, Pennsylvania, in conjunction with a recent project to provide train storage at the Morrisville yard. This project provides expanded overnight storage and light maintenance facilities for NEC trains. Phase I will provide the capacity for 120 cars, and a possible Phase II expansion would increase capacity to 240 cars. This project would provide additional capacity for increased service along the NEC, and it would likely help to reduce bridge traffic and increase parking availability in Trenton.

Express bus service between Quaker Bridge Mall and Oxford Valley Mall, Bucks County: The DRJTBC Southerly Crossings Study found that such service could reduce bridge traffic and thus merits further consideration.

Transit service along I-95 between Scudders Falls Bridge and US 1 (to the BRT): DRJTBC had considered concepts as part of its Southerly Crossings Study.

Express bus service from Trenton along US 1 to I-95/I-295 (to the BRT): This service would improve the existing 600 local bus service, providing a realistic commute alternative both for jobs in the city and jobs along US 1.

Enhanced bus service along Alternate US 1: This service would run between Trenton, Lawrence, and I-95/I-295 (to the BRT). RPP proposed this corridor in VISION 2050, and the CJTF considered this idea.

Bus service along Olden Avenue: This service would be the first transit service along the busy commercial corridor between Princeton Avenue and Parkway Avenue. RPP also proposed this corridor in VISION 2050.

Enhanced bus service along Princeton-Hightstown Rd (CR 571): As previously indicated, the Transit Score Index suggests the potential for this service, which would build upon the limited regional commuter and shuttle service that currently operates in this area.



Other possible services include the following:

- Trenton downtown shuttle
- Extension of NJT 602 service to Hopewell
- Local service for Princeton, Plainsboro, and the Exit 8A area

Regional Preservation Plans

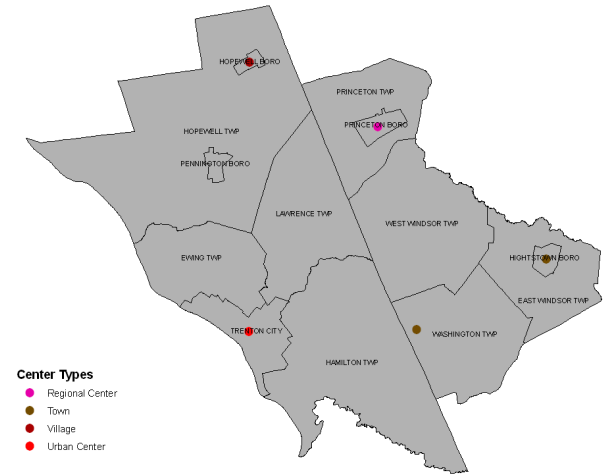
Sourland Mountain Region—Smart Growth Planning

The Sourland Mountain Region is located in Mercer, Hunterdon, and Somerset counties. The boundary of the Region extends into the northern part of Hopewell Township in Mercer County. Mercer County has been a member of the Steering Committee and has been involved in planning efforts over the past several years. Both cultural and natural resources, including the Howell Living History Farm and Baldpate Mountain, are located within the Sourland Mountain Region. Mercer's cultural and natural preservation goals are consistent with those of the Sourland Mountain regional planning goals.

A conservation and open space plan for the Sourland Mountain Region was completed in November 2005. Continued planning strategies in the Region will ensure that preservation activities protect natural resources there and protect existing groundwater recharge areas. One recommended strategy of the Plan is to secure a special resource area identification for the region in the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan. Mercer County supports this designation as stated in the Mercer County Comparison Phase Report for Cross Acceptance III.



MAPS



Center Types

- Regional Center
- Town
- Village
- Urban Center

Center Type

- Urban Center
- Regional Center
- Town
- Village
- Core Housing Areas (>10 DU/Acre)
- DVRPC Employment Centers (+500 employees & >0.5 Jobs/Acre)
- Employer Site (>500 Employees)

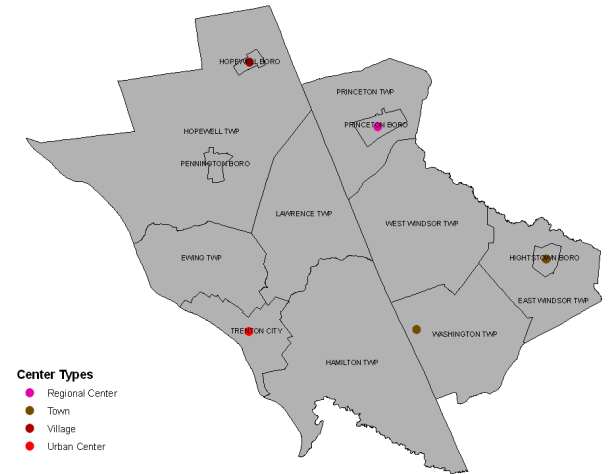
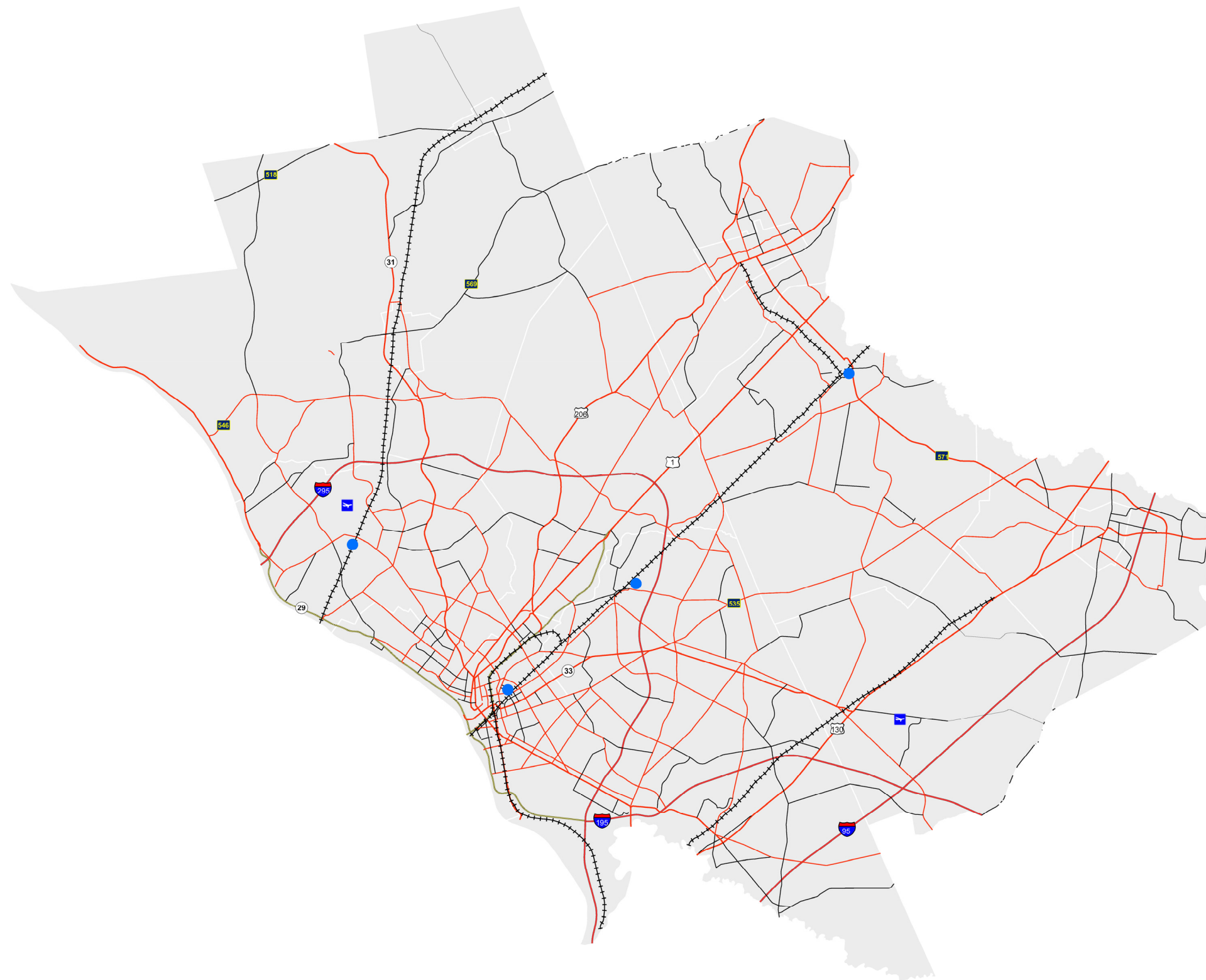
Map Summary

This map illustrates the existing concentration or density of employment centers (+500 employees and greater than 0.5 jobs per acre), employer sites with greater than 500 employees, and existing housing density (dwelling units/acre) in Mercer County.

Data Source(s): 2000 Census and Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (TAZ/CTPP data).

Map prepared by The Regional Planning Partnership with the Mercer County Planning Division. Winter/Spring 2007.

Map 1. Mercer County. Economy



Center Types

- Regional Center
- Town
- Village
- Urban Center

- Existing Stations Possible
Transit Oriented Developments/
Opportunities
- ✈ Airports

Road Network

- Rural Interstate
- Urban Interstate
- Urban Freeway/Expressway
- Rural Principal Arterial
- Urban Principal Arterial
- Urban Minor Arterial
- Rural Major Collector
- Urban Collector
- Rural Minor Collector
- ++++ Active Railroad
- - - - Inactive Railroad

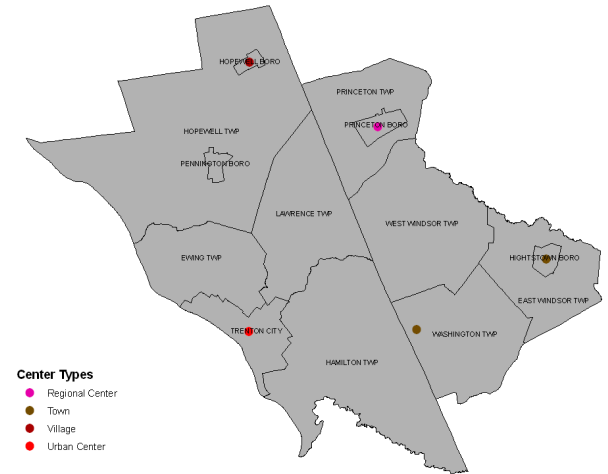
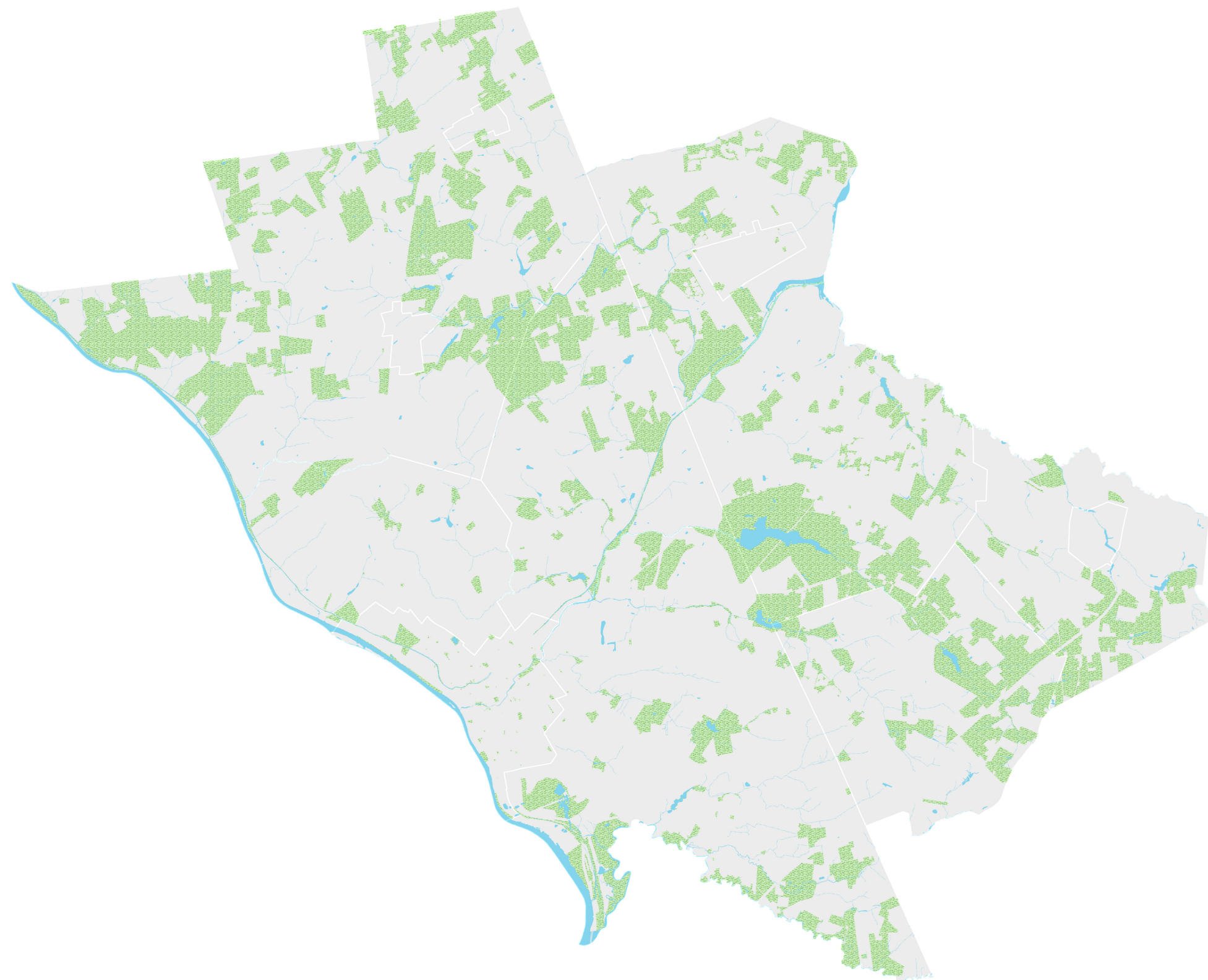
Map Summary

This map shows the location of existing transportation infrastructure in the county including the county road network, active and inactive rail lines, rail stations, and airports.

Data Source(s): 2005 NJDOT Centerlines, Mercer County Centerlines by Civil Solutions, NJDOT 2006 Straight Line Diagrams.

Map prepared by The Regional Planning Partnership with the Mercer County Planning Division. Winter/ Spring 2007.



Map 2. Mercer County. Transportation



Center Types

- Regional Center
- Town
- Village
- Urban Center

Environment

-  Preserved Land (Public & Private)
-  Water Bodies & Streams

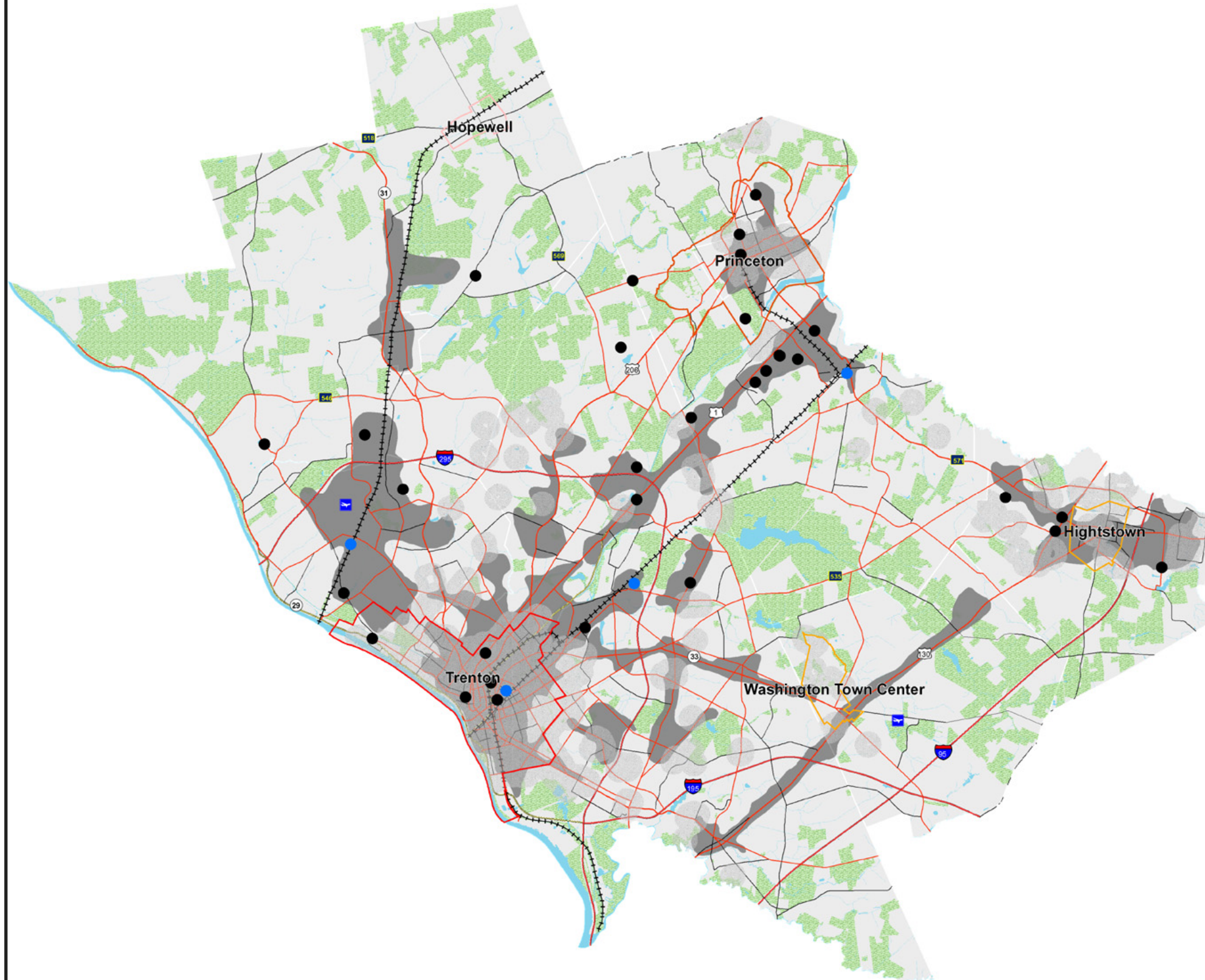
Map Summary

This map shows existing streams, water bodies, and preserved (public and private) open space, including preserved farmland, in Mercer County.

Data Source(s): NJDEP streams, NJDEP lakes, 2006 Mercer County open space data (based on Mercer County digital parcel data)

Map prepared by The Regional Planning Partnership with the Mercer County Planning Division. Winter/ Spring 2007.

Map 3. Mercer County. Environment



- Economy**
- Center Type**
- Urban Center
 - Regional Center
 - Town
 - Village
- Core Housing Areas (>10 DU/Acre)
 - DVRPC Employment Centers (+500 employees & >0.5 Jobs/Acre)
 - Employer Site (>500 Employees)
- Transportation**
- Existing Stations Possible
 - Transit Oriented Developments/ Opportunities
 - Airports
- Road Network**
- Rural Interstate
 - Urban Interstate
 - Urban Freeway/Expressway
 - Rural Principal Arterial
 - Urban Principal Arterial
 - Urban Minor Arterial
 - Rural Major Collector
 - Urban Collector
 - Rural Minor Collector
 - Active Railroad
 - Inactive Railroad
- Environment**
- Preserved Land (Public & Private)
 - Water Bodies & Streams

Map Summary

This map shows the interrelationship of the three systems—Economy, Transportation, Environment—existing today in the County. The map illustrates a strong connection between employment and housing. Economic growth has historically evolved along the three primary transportation routes—Route 31, Route 1, and Route 130—and along the existing rail lines from the Trenton urban center. Notice the large contiguous areas of environmental resources between the primary transportation routes and the location of preserved land along stream corridors.

Data Source(s): 2000 Census and Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (TAZ/CTPP data), 2005 NJDOT Centerlines, Mercer County Centerlines by Civil Solutions, NJDOT 2006 Straight Line Diagrams, NJDEP streams, NJDEP lakes, 2006 Mercer County open space data (based on Mercer County digital parcel data).

Map prepared by The Regional Planning Partnership with the Mercer County Planning Division. Winter/Spring 2007.

Map 4. Three Systems Map for the Regional Action Plan



Economy

State Plan Designated Center Type

- Urban Center
- Regional Center
- Town
- Village

- Existing Core Housing Areas (>10 DU/Acre)
- Stakeholder Identified Housing Areas (>10 DU/Acre)
- Stakeholder Identified Housing

- Existing Employer Site (>500 Employees)
- Existing DVRPC Employment Centers (+500 employees & >0.5 Jobs/Acre)
- Stakeholder Identified Employment Centers (+500 employees & >0.5 Jobs/Acre)
- Stakeholder Identified Employment Centers
- Potential Development Centers

Stakeholder Identified Centers

- Existing / Minimal Change
- Increase Density or Mixed Land Use
- Opportunity Needs To Be Defined

Transportation

- ✈ Airports
- Transit Oriented Developments/Opportunities
- 0- to 1/4-mile
- 1/4-mile to 1/2-mile
- 1/2-mile to 3/4-mile
- 3/4-mile to 1-mile

- BRT Service Area
- Buffer of Primary Corridors
- Primary Corridor of Focus
- Super Primary Corridor
- Secondary Corridor
- Collector Road
- Active Railroad
- Inactive Railroad
- Missing Roads
- Stakeholder Identified Transit Need

Environment

- Water Bodies & Streams
- Preserved Land (Public & Private)
- Deed Restricted Farmland
- Generalized Areas for Long Term Open Space
- Proposed Open Space
- Sourland Planning Area
- Stakeholder Identified Open Space
- Stakeholder Identified Greenlinks

Map Summary

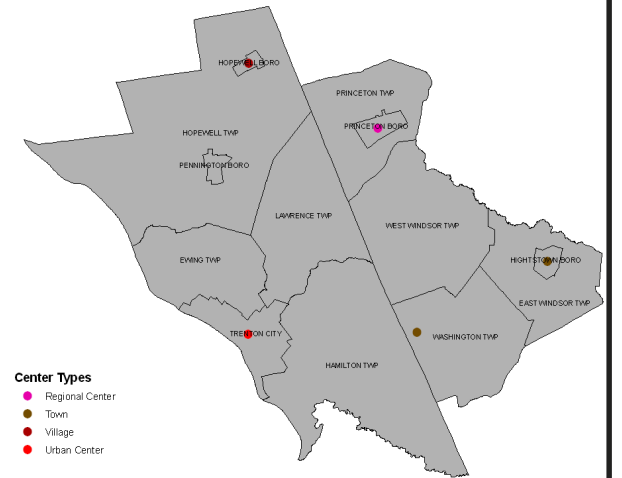
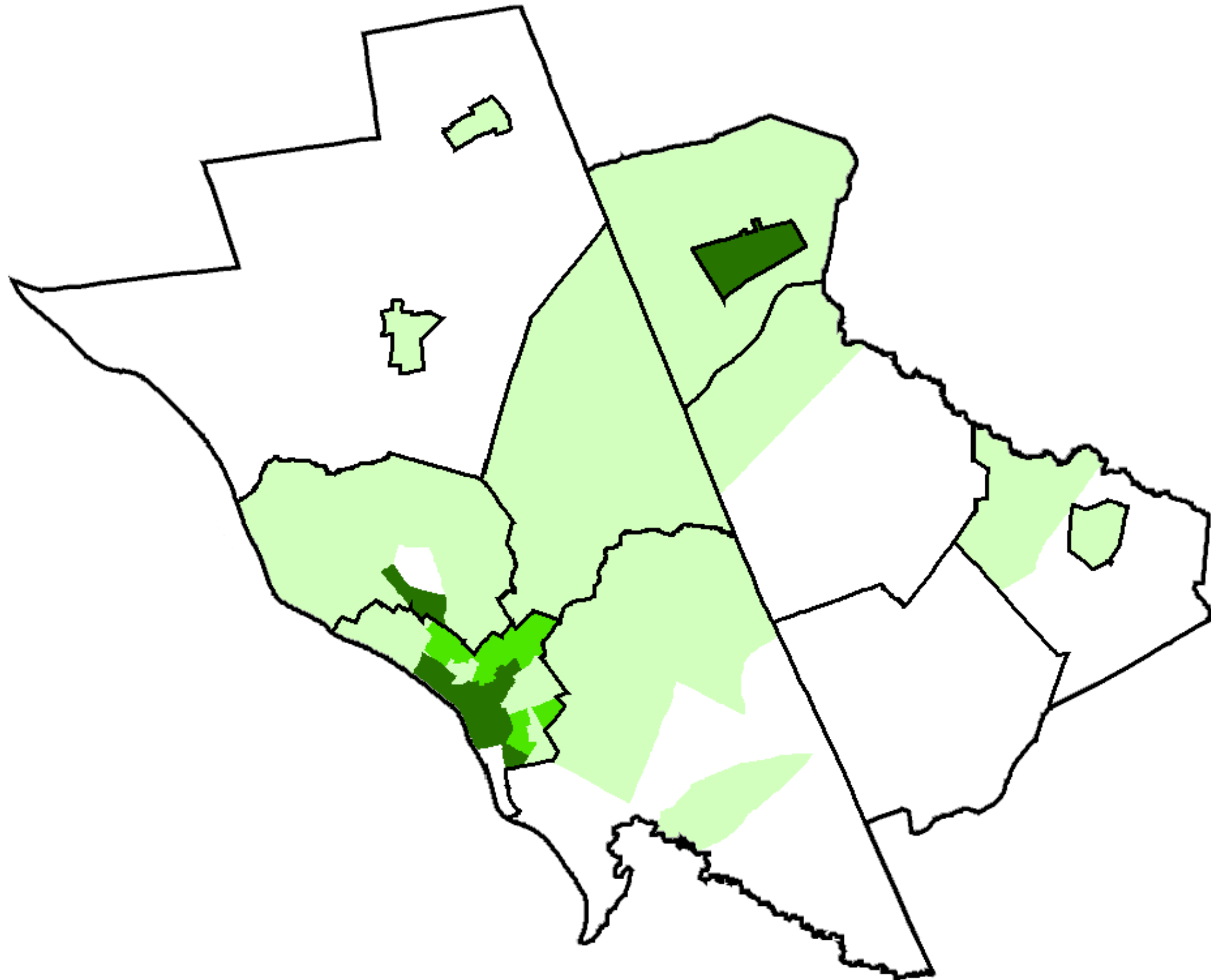
This map illustrates the outcome of the three stakeholder meetings during the Regional Action Plan planning process. Improvements to existing and identification of new transportation and greenway connections were suggested. The exercise began with the identification of new growth areas and an assessment of possible connections.

Data Source(s): 2000 Census and Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (TAZ/CTPP data), 2005 NJDOT Centerlines, Mercer County Centerlines by Civil Solutions, NJDOT 2006 Straight Line Diagrams, NJDEP streams, NJDEP lakes, 2006 Mercer County open space data (based on Mercer County digital parcel data).

Map prepared by The Regional Planning Partnership with the Mercer County Planning Division. Winter/Spring 2007.

Map revised May 2016 by the Mercer County Planning Department to remove the Transportation Development District as amended in the Mercer County Master Plan Mobility element.

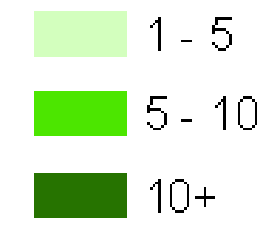
Map 5. Draft Concept Plan. Synthesis of Stakeholder Meeting #3



Center Types

- Regional Center
- Town
- Village
- Urban Center

Jobs Per Acre (2000)

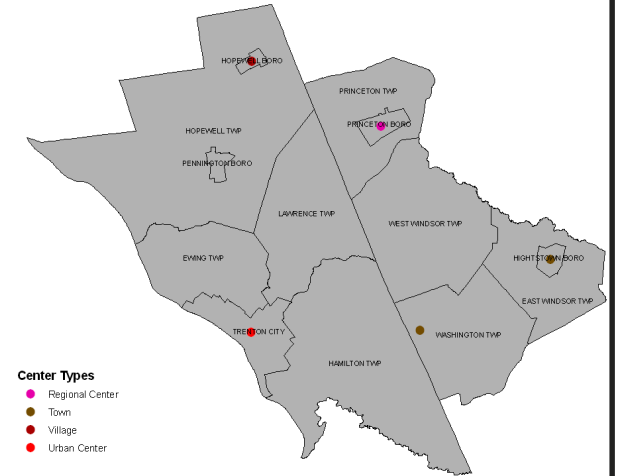
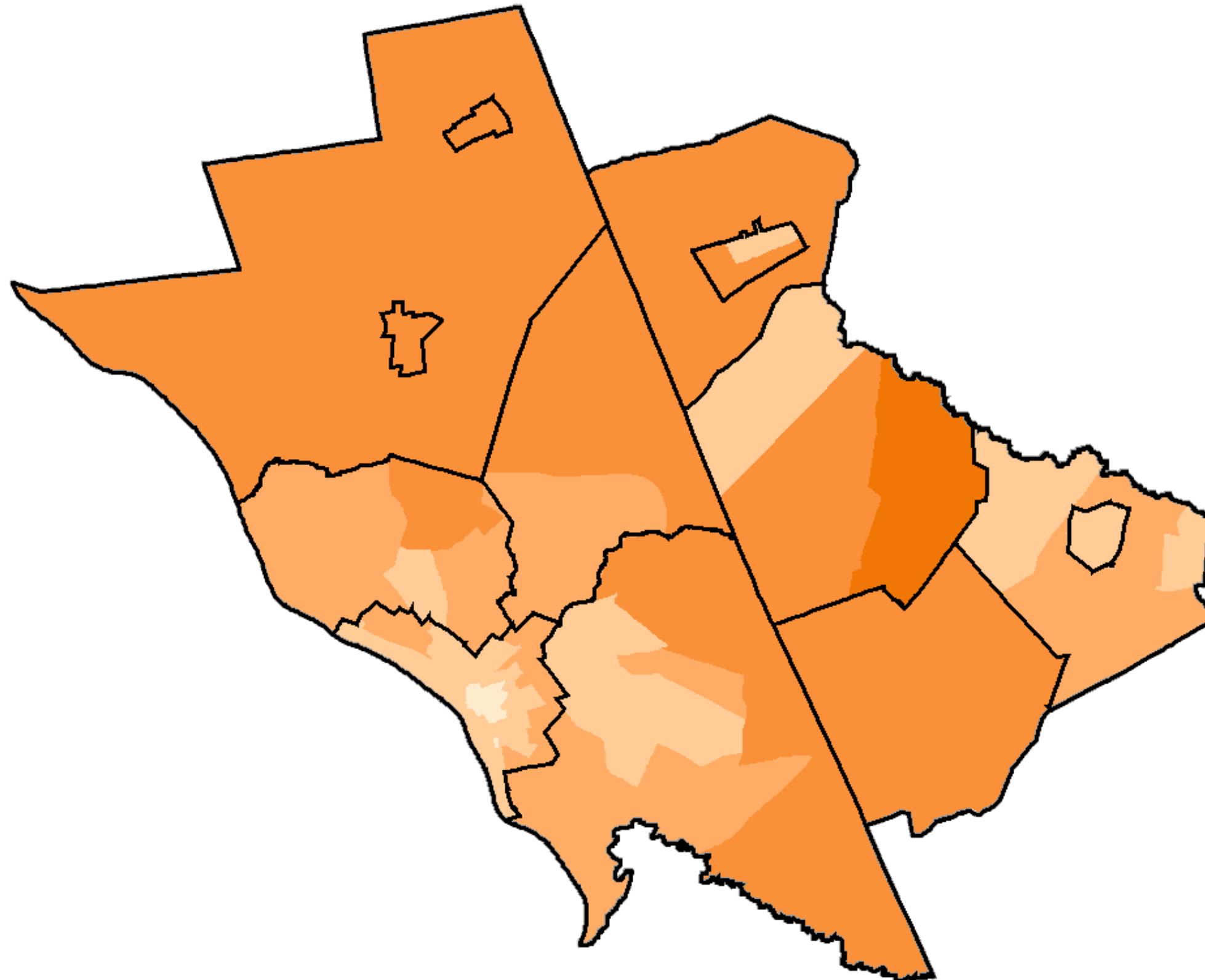


Map Summary
 This map shows employment density throughout the County. The density is based on 2000 Census data. The areas of the map with no color contain an employment density of less than 1 job per acre. More information about this map and the data displayed can be found in the Appendix. Economy Background Document , page 3.

Data Source(s): 2000 Census

Map prepared by The Regional Planning Partnership. April 2004.

Map 6. Employment Density



Center Types

- Regional Center
- Town
- Village
- Urban Center

Housing Index

- 1.0 - 2.0
- 2.1 - 4.0
- 4.1 - 5.0
- 5.1 - 8.0
- 8.1 - 10.0

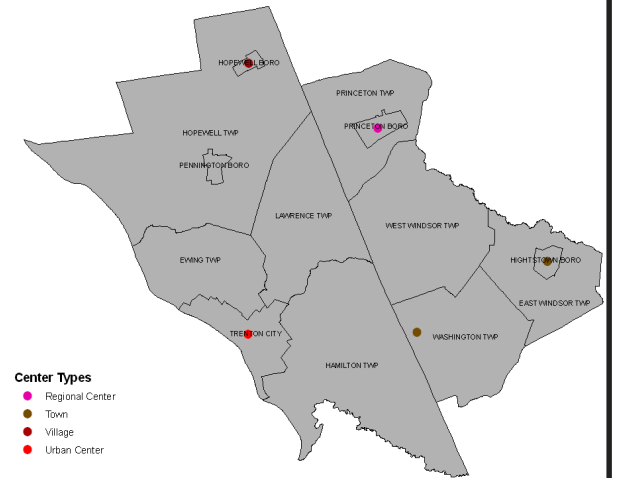
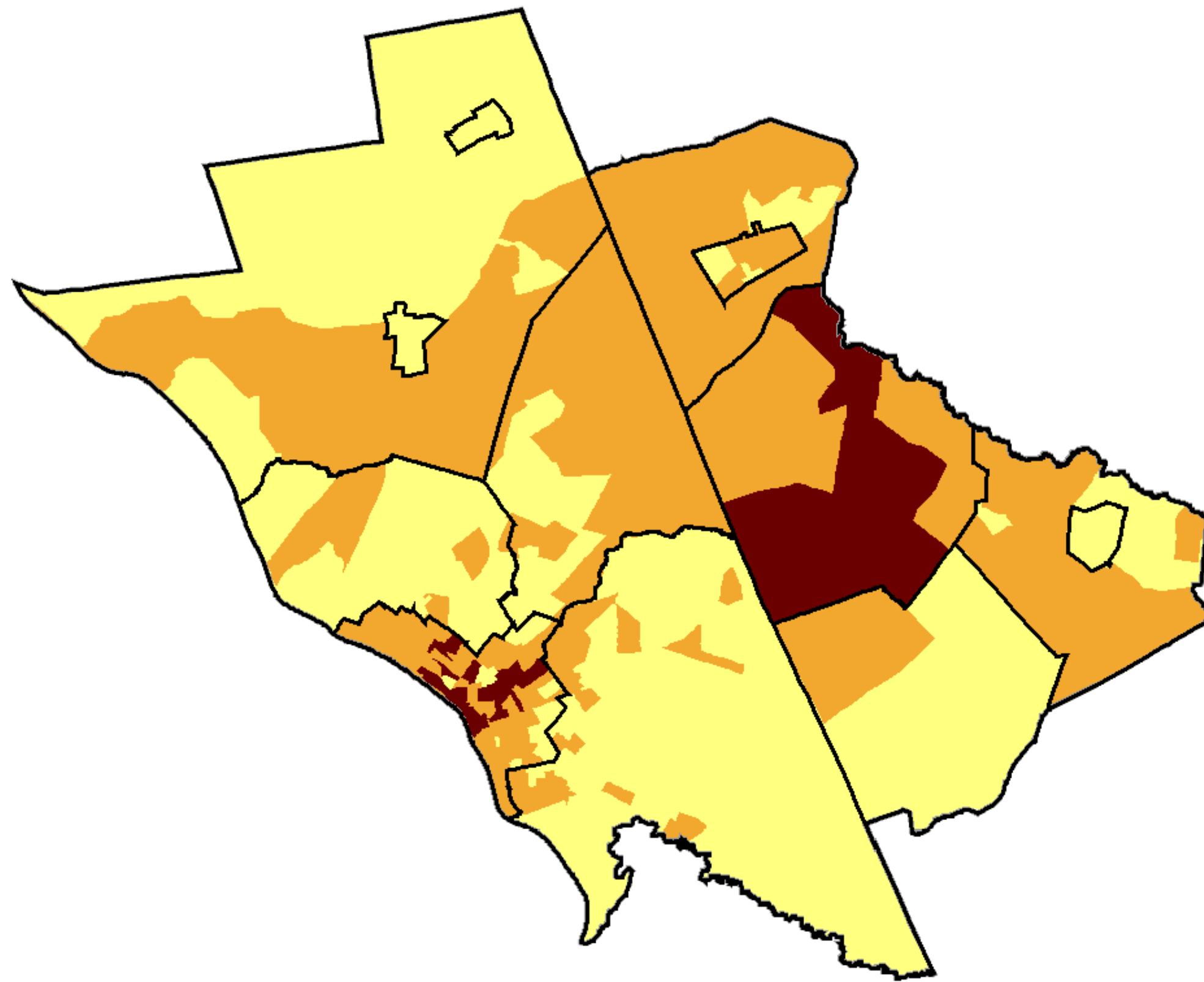
Map Summary

This map illustrates the diversity of Mercer County's housing under different future development scenarios. This measure incorporates two indicators: housing type and costs. The index ranges from 1 to 10. A score of "1" indicates a high proportion of multi-family housing and an average housing cost that is at or below the average cost for the county. A score of "10" indicates a high proportion of single-family housing and an average housing cost that is significantly above the average cost for the county. The higher scores indicate areas with fewer affordable housing units. These are the areas in greatest need of more housing supply diversity. More information about this map and the data displayed can be found in the Appendix. Economy Background Document , page 10.

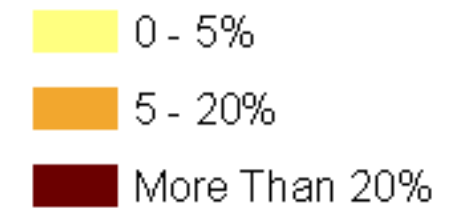
Data Source(s): Regional Planning Partnership, 2000 Census, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission.

Map prepared by The Regional Planning Partnership. April 2004.

Map 7. Housing Index



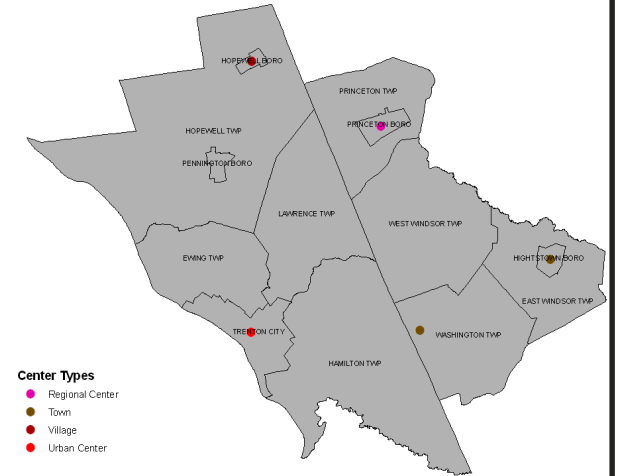
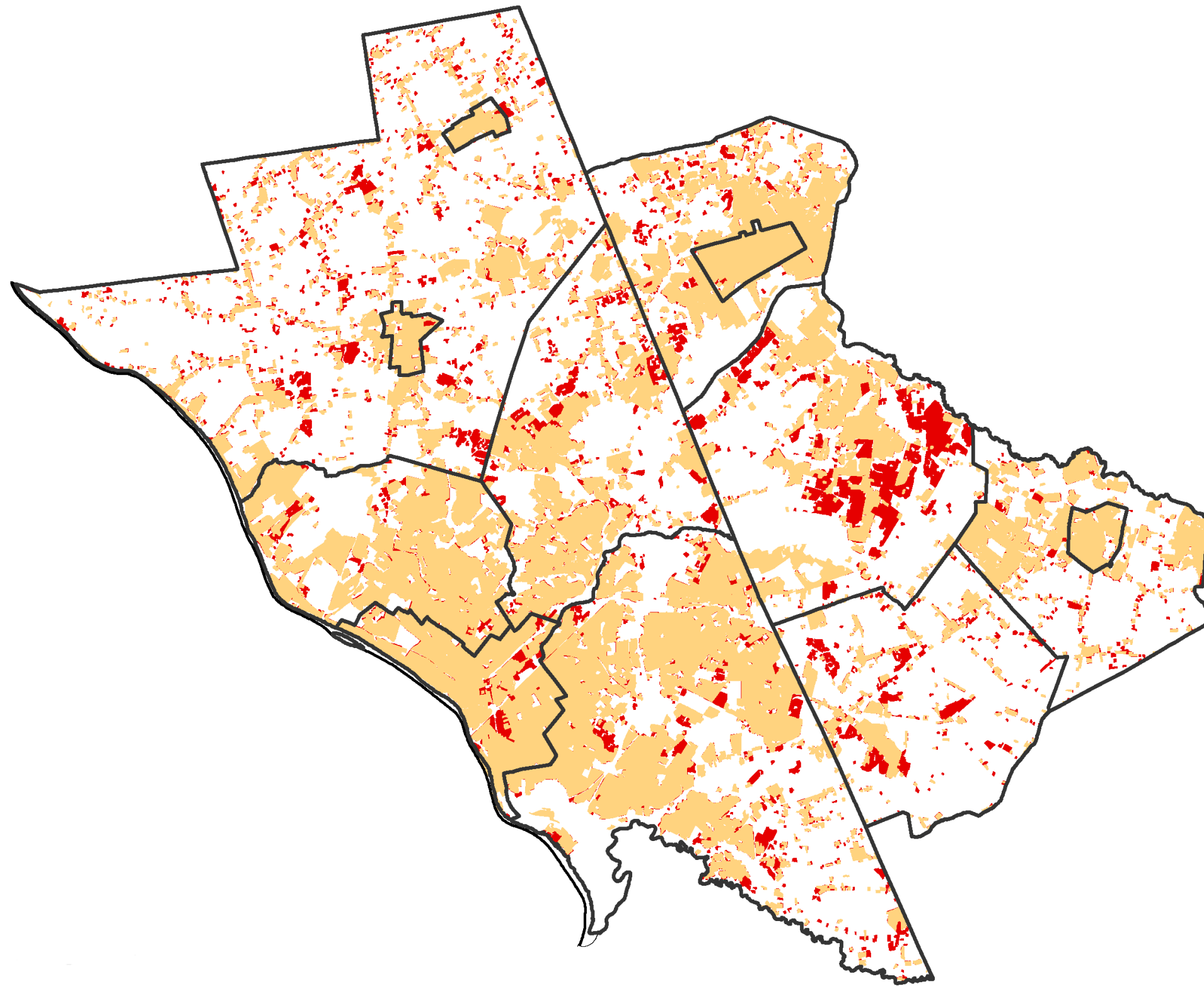
Percentage of Commuters That Use Public Transit



Map Summary
 This map shows where public transit is a popular transportation choice; primarily in Trenton and West Windsor. West Windsor Township has the largest percentage of public transit commuting of any Mercer County municipality. About 22 percent of the town's working residents use transit to get to work, probably through the Princeton Junction train station which links workers to Trenton, Philadelphia and New York City. More information about this map and the data displayed can be found in the Appendix. Economy Background Document, page 6.

Data Source(s): 2000 Census
 Map prepared by The Regional Planning Partnership. April 2004.

Map 8. Public Transit Commuters



Center Types

- Regional Center
- Town
- Village
- Urban Center

- 1986 Urban Landcover
- 1995/97 Urban Landcover
- Municipalities

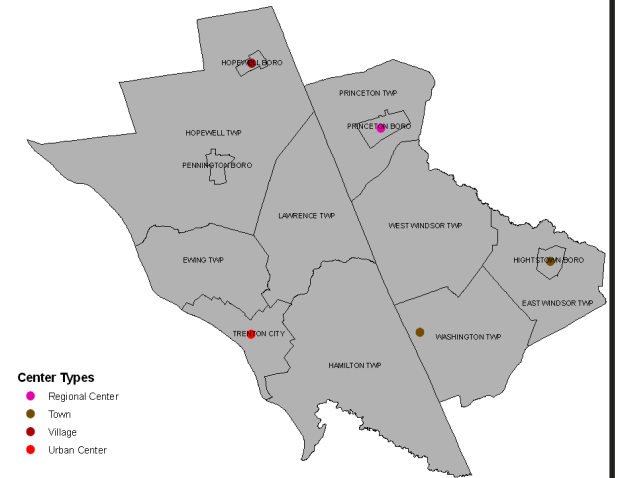
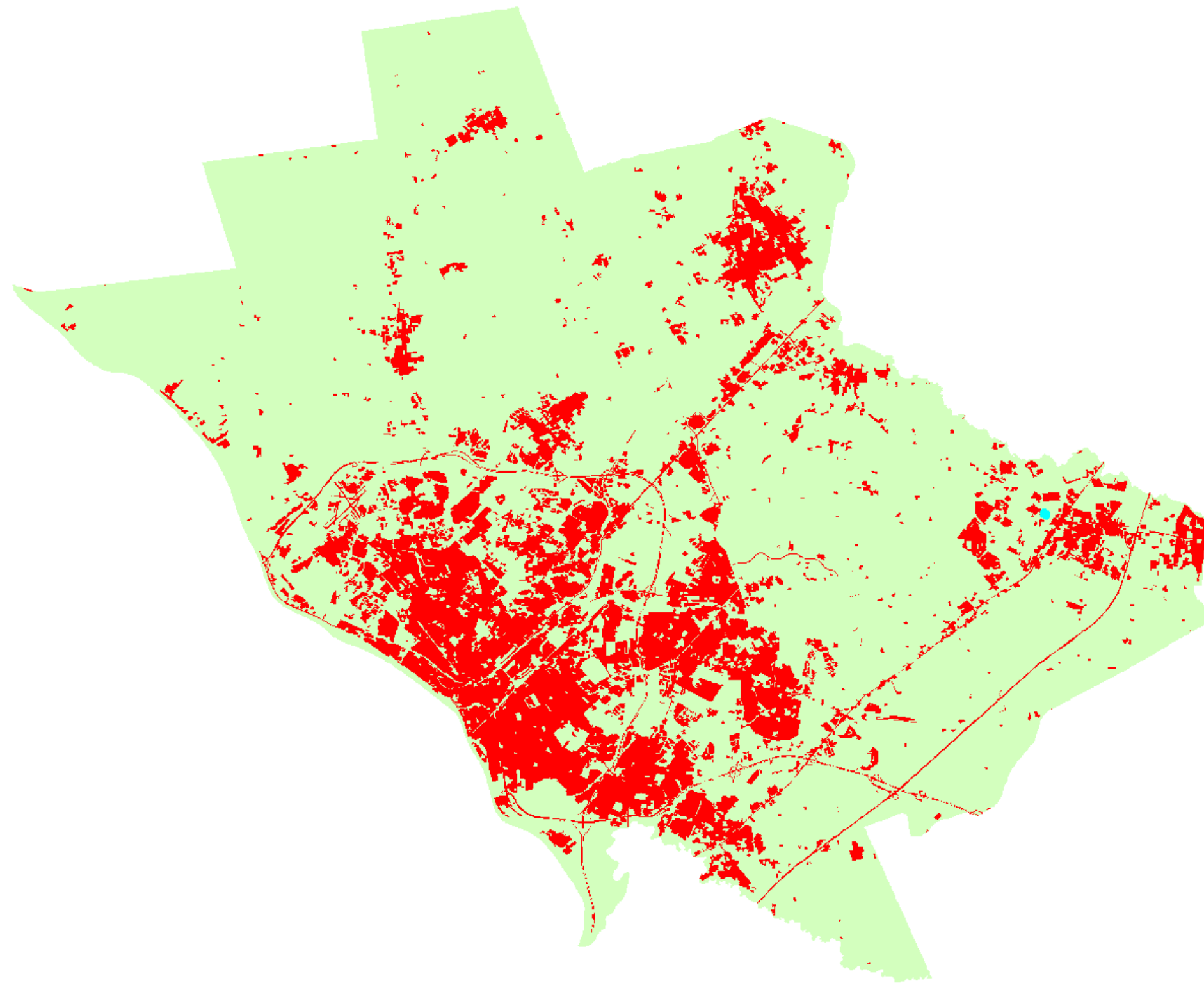
Map Summary

This map illustrates the change in urban land cover over a period of approximately 10 years (1986 to 1996). Urban land is land that cannot be classified as undeveloped and land that is not classified as agricultural land, barren land, forest, water, or wetlands. More information about this map and the data displayed can be found in the Appendix. Environment Background Document , page 9.

Data Source(s): Regional Planning Partnership, NJDEP Land Use/Land Cover

Map prepared by The Regional Planning Partnership. December 2004.

Map 10. Change in Developed Land



Percent of Impervious Surface Cover

- 0% to 25%
Areas to Limit Development
- 26% to 100%
Areas to Concentrate Development

Map Summary

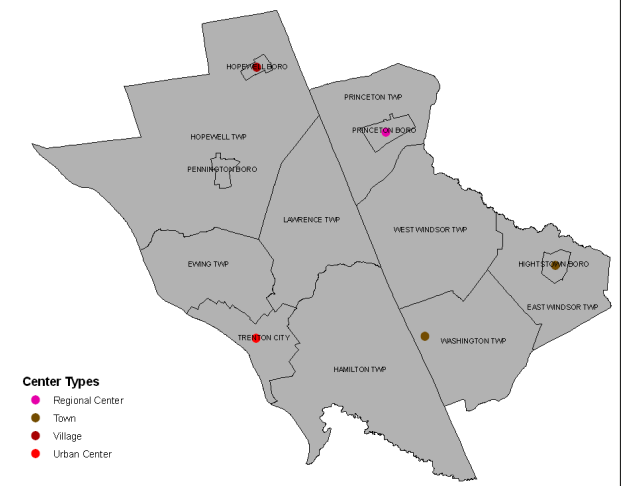
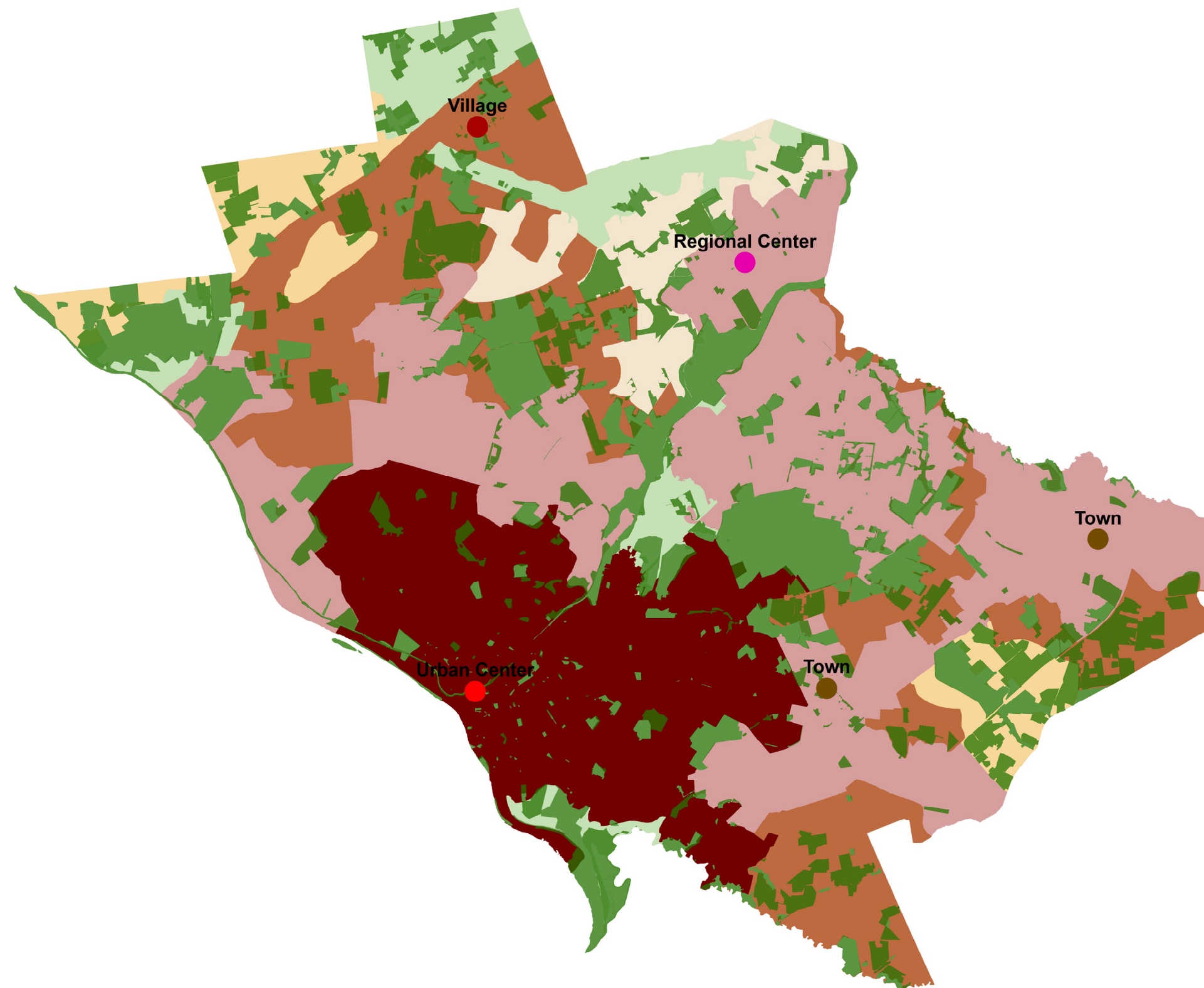
This map shows the amount of impervious cover throughout the county and is based on watershed boundaries. According to the Center for Watershed Protection, watersheds with impervious surface over 25 percent are preferable locations for development.

More information about impervious cover can be found in the Appendix. Environment Background Document, Sections 7.1 and 7.2.

Data Source(s): Regional Planning Partnership, NJDEP Land Use/Land Cover

Map prepared by The Regional Planning Partnership. October 2006.

Map 11. Percent Impervious Cover



Center Types

- Regional Center
- Town
- Village
- Urban Center

- Metropolitan (PA1) - Growth Area
- Suburban (PA2) - Growth Area
- Fringe (PA3) - Controlled Growth Area
- Rural (PA4) - Limited Growth Area
- Rural/Env. Sensitive (PA4b) - Limited Growth Area
- Environmental Sensitive (5) - No Growth Area
- Open Space

Map Summary

This map shows the 2001 State Plan planning areas within the County and the location of designated centers. The County allows for a variety of development intensity ranging from growth to no growth. The Transportation Development District (TDD) is established as part of the County's TDD Plan and Ordinance. The TDD boundary was last updated in 2001. It requires new development within the District to contribute to roadway improvements within the District.

More information about this map can be found in the Mercer County Cross Acceptance Comparison Phase Report, December 2004.

Data Source(s): Mercer County Planning Division.

Map prepared by Mercer County Planning Division.

Map revised May 2016 by the Mercer County Planning Department to remove the Transportation Development District as amended in the Mercer County Master Plan Mobility element.

Map 12. Mercer Planning Areas. 2001 State Development and Redevelopment Plan