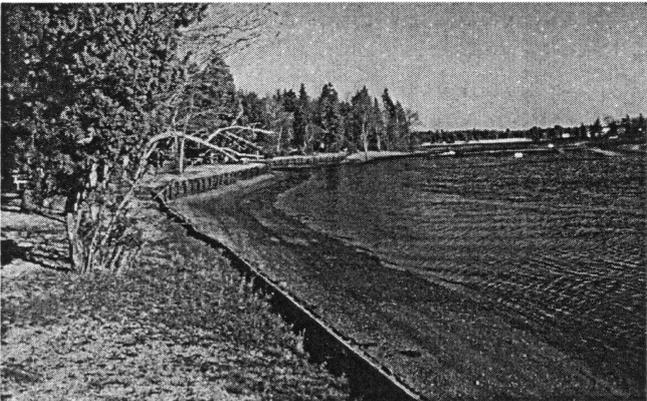
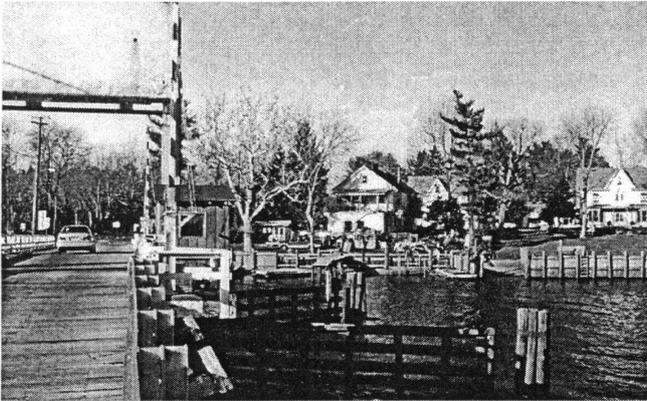


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# Pinelands Rural Economic Development Pilot Program



## MULLICA RIVER PRESERVATION CORRIDOR IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

Final Report

Whiteman & Taintor  
January 2000

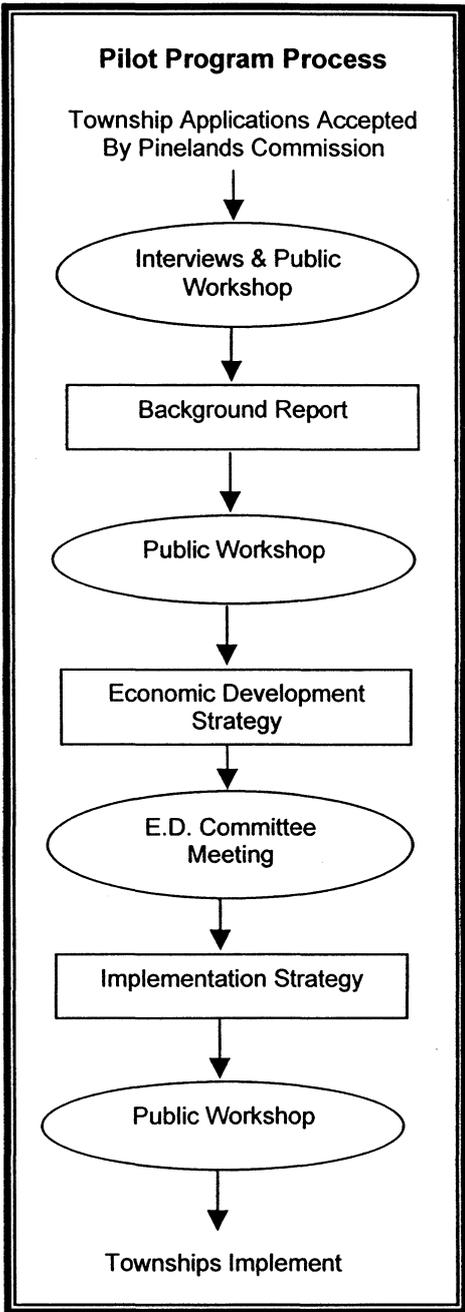
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## Table of Contents

<b>1. Overview of Strategy .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. A Vision for the Mullica River Heritage Corridor.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3. Implementation Strategy .....</b>	<b>4</b>
A. Staff/Organization .....	6
B. Planning and Zoning.....	10
C. Infrastructure .....	14
D. Marketing .....	24
E. Site-Specific Development .....	28
F. Education and Outreach .....	30
<b>4. Summary .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Appendix A. Establishing a Monitoring Program .....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Appendix B. Additional Resources .....</b>	<b>35</b>
A. Publications .....	35
B. Web Sites .....	36
C. Other .....	37
<b>Appendix C. Resource Guides .....</b>	<b>38</b>

# 1. Overview of Strategy

This strategy is a companion piece to the Tourism Analysis that was prepared earlier this year (March 1999) for the Mullica River Heritage Corridor.<sup>1</sup> Both documents, as well as a Background Report, were prepared by Whiteman & Taintor as part of the Pinelands Rural Economic Development Pilot Program. The Pilot Program was authorized and funded by the New Jersey State Legislature in August 1997. The goal of the Pilot Program is to help rural Pinelands municipalities identify and plan for types of economic development that are compatible with requirements for land use throughout the Pinelands. The initial Background Report laid the foundation for the analyses that followed by presenting data on key indicators of regional and local socio-economic health such as tax rates, population, educational attainment, home prices, household income, occupational mix, and unemployment. Findings from the data were then used in conjunction with information gathered during community interviews and public meetings to establish directions for economic development strategies. The March 1999 Strategy provided a detailed examination of local conditions, including area attractions and tourism data, to generate strategic recommendations for facility and business development, and marketing. These recommendations were then presented to the community for comment. This implementation strategy provides detailed plans for the final recommendations, including necessary steps, responsibilities, timeframes, and resources. The strategy begins with an overall vision for the Mullica River Heritage Corridor, followed by discussion of specific action items. A separate appendix contains suggestions for monitoring progress, tips on organization and community involvement, and resources for additional information.



The Economic Development Strategy defined the Mullica River Heritage Corridor as stretching from Tuckerton Seaport to Batsto. Based on a review of the tourism product offered by competing destinations (e.g., Cape May, NJ and Bucks County, PA), the Strategy recommended that the Corridor position itself as uncommercialized, untouristy, undeveloped, and uncrowded. Key themes to draw on include the area's maritime history and outstanding natural resources. The villages of New Gretna, Lower Bank, Green Bank, and Sweetwater can serve as centers for visitor services.

<sup>1</sup> Note: The strategies for Route 30 in Mullica Township are discussed in separate documents.

The following vision statement captures the potential future for the Mullica River Heritage Corridor that might result from full implementation of this strategy. The vision statement reflects community priorities as expressed during the course of the Pilot Program, and is followed by plans for specific actions.

## **2. A Vision for the Mullica River Heritage Corridor**



The Mullica River Corridor will become one of the premier sustainably managed eco-tourism destinations in the State of New Jersey and among the top eco-travel destinations along the East Coast. In the future, travelers along the Atlantic Coast will seek to experience the Mullica River along with other notable eco-destinations such as the less developed portions of the Everglades, the Outer Banks of North Carolina, the Eastern Shore of Maryland, the Delaware Bay, outer Cape Cod, and the Kennebeck River and the Blue Hills in Maine. Each of these areas offers an unspoiled and different perspective on the heritage of the Atlantic Coast. Each offers a view of what the seaboard was like before the megalopolis began. Each is part of the shore route for small boats traveling up and down the coast. The Mullica River - from Batsto to the Bay - offers an equally compelling and interesting story, and an equally tranquil alternative from the urbanization of the coast.

The challenge, however, is to both protect the resource and to use it in an intelligent and sustainable way to benefit the economies of the communities along its banks. In many places in the United States, this strategy would be the starting point for creation of a quality environmental travel experience, which would then quickly escalate into a tourism free-for-all as businesses and communities sought to maximize revenues and development potential. The Pinelands stands out as one of the few places in the nation where an environmentally-oriented tourism strategy can be put in motion and controlled. While revenues and profits may not reach the same levels as would occur under more intensive development schemes, the character of the place will be protected, and economic and environmental sustainability ensured over the long term.

The Mullica River Heritage Corridor will offer a high-quality, one-of-a-kind experience that establishes an educational and physical gateway to the serenity of the Pinelands. The implementation effort will be led by a long-term, public-private partnership that will develop and differentiate the Corridor's travel product, ensure long-term environmental health, and build support for state and regional efforts to manage the river and its resources. Among the area's distinguishing features will be:

- Creation of a scenic byway linking roads within the Corridor to the Coastal Heritage Trail. The scenic byway will make visitors aware that they are in a special place and allow them to explore the region at their own pace. The installation of boundary signage will be a key first step in delineating and unifying the Corridor.

- Related to the byway effort will be the design and implementation of a comprehensive interpretive program involving points of interest from the Great Bay to Batsto. Through attractive and informative wayside exhibits, signs, kiosks, new and revitalized visitor centers, and a Corridor map, visitors will be able to develop an appreciation and understanding of the region's historical and ecological significance. Visitors will also be encouraged to participate in a variety of stewardship activities during their visits or after they return to their homes. These activities will both work to improve the health of the ecosystem and build a long-term constituency of supporters.
- Modest levels of infrastructure development and conversion of outmoded or vacant buildings in existing villages will allow for expansion and development of eco-tourism related businesses including restaurants, bed-and-breakfasts, and guide/outfitting services. In addition to complying with existing requirements for wastewater management, businesses will be encouraged to operate within a comprehensive framework for environmental sustainability, including for example, installation of efficient heating and cooling systems; recycling of cooking, cleaning, and bath water; development of non-auto-dependent trails; and inclusion of regionally grown food and food products in local restaurant menus. This framework not only serves to protect the environment, but also differentiates businesses in the Corridor from surrounding communities. Where possible, sustainable practices should be visibly demonstrated to the public. A concise brochure will be developed for visitors and others to explain the guiding principles and highlight participating businesses.
- New public-private partnerships will coordinate and guide overall development and marketing of the Corridor. They will also provide direct support and advocacy for the enhancement of state park facilities and other regional resources (e.g., Tuckerton Seaport and the Jacques Cousteau Estuary Center). In addition to serving as destination points, each of these facilities will provide visitors with additional information on attractions throughout the Corridor.
- A coordinated marketing effort will lead to a greater awareness of the region and make it easy for visitors to locate food, lodging, and other services within and outside of the Corridor. The message will be conveyed that the Mullica River Heritage Corridor is a perfect complement to a stay at the Shore and is worthy of a separate trip. Special attention will be devoted to attracting visitors from around the region during off-season months.

### **3. Implementation Strategy**

So what now? The implementation strategy detailed below is meant to move the core Mullica River Corridor communities – Bass River, Mullica, and Washington Townships - from the recommendations in the economic development strategy to the long-term vision described above. Specific action items are grouped

according to the following categories: staff/organization, planning and zoning, infrastructure, marketing, site-specific development, and education/outreach. The discussion of each action item includes a description of necessary steps, identification of key people/organizations to be involved, an estimate of the time required for completion, and suggested resources to assist in the effort. Priorities are not assigned because all action items should be undertaken as resources permit. Instead, the suggested schedule provides an indication of immediacy and which items should be completed first. A matrix is provided at the end of the strategy that summarizes all of the action items by geographic area.

Before rushing to start implementation, however, all participants – from Township officials to interested residents – should be aware of the factors that can thwart even the best of strategies. Perhaps the most critical factor for successful implementation is community involvement. While many of the action items detailed below are aimed at addressing certain aspects of community involvement, the overall strategy will not be successful unless each Township makes a firm commitment at the outset to involve all members of the community in a productive, long-term process. This means going beyond the usual communication methods of public notices and announcements, and finding creative ways to reach out to residents, business owners, and other segments of the community such as senior citizens and students. Widespread community involvement not only promotes buy-in, which is essential for any actions that require expenditure of public funds and resources, but it also guarantees a flow of new ideas and energy that is needed to guard against the burn-out that results when too few people take on too much work. For these reasons, expanding and strengthening community involvement should be an ongoing, top priority for all three Townships.

**Other challenges include:**

- Insufficient time – Economic development typically occurs in numerous small, incremental events; large changes are the exception.
- Lack of community leadership – Leaders must have the appropriate knowledge, skills, and time.
- Conflicts among local groups – The community must be able to deal with differences of opinion and recognize factions that exist.
- Lack of local government capacity – A potentially significant problem if local government representatives are not actively involved in implementation, are unsure of how to move forward, or fear political repercussions.
- Exhaustion – Participants are tired or bored with efforts to date or commitments to other projects; lack of delegation adds to the problem.
- Lack of funding – Even if all other elements come together, at some point, additional funds will be needed.
- Fear – Most often cited is fear of failure, but fear of success can also occur when leaders do not want to address the new problems and issues that may result.

This list was compiled from the following sources: 1) *Community Visioning/Strategic Planning Programs: State of the Art*, Illinois Institute of Rural Affairs; 2) Flora, Cornelia Butler, *Rural EZ/EC Champion Communities: What Happened After Application?*, North Central Regional Center for Rural Development, 1998; 3) Phillips, Phillip D., *Economic Development for Small Communities and Rural Areas*, Office of Continuing Education and Public Service, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1990.

Simply being aware of these problems does not guarantee that they will not occur. Leaders of the implementation effort should periodically revisit this list

to see if any corrective actions or reassurances are needed (and not consider the strategy a failure if and when problems do arise). The need to monitor and revise the strategy is discussed in more detail later in a separate appendix; the implementation strategy begins below.



## A. Staff/Organization

### Action Item A.1 – Form Mullica River Heritage Corridor Committee

*Rationale:* From a practical perspective, some form of multi-municipal organization is needed to coordinate activities throughout the Mullica River Heritage Corridor. From a conceptual standpoint, the organization can initially form around the goal of pursuing scenic byway status, a critical first step in defining the Corridor. The byways program is a state and federal initiative that fits well with the goals of the Heritage Corridor. Once the organization is functioning, it can then begin to address other needs and issues along the Corridor.

With regard to coordination, a core group of individuals is needed to manage overall activity, designate leads for each action item, and monitor progress. The committee must be large enough to ensure community representation and share responsibility, but not so large that reaching consensus and taking action is problematic. Once the strategy is underway and funded, the communities may want hire a part-time or full-time coordinator to serve as a single point of contact and accountability. Other considerations in designating committee members include tapping individuals with positive reputations, an ability to “get things done”, and knowledge of useful networks and resources (especially to identify opportunities to spin off projects to existing organizations).<sup>2</sup> Designating a committee is purely a management tool and in no way diminishes the need for widespread community involvement as noted above.

#### **Plan for Extra Help**

Whether one leader is selected or a steering committee is established, make sure progress will continue despite other commitments, changes in staff, etc. Effective leaders actively seek help when needed to move forward, are able to delegate work, and rely on “backup” leaders if necessary to share knowledge and effort.

From: *Community Visioning/ Strategic Planning Programs: State of the Art*, Illinois Institute of Rural Affairs.

The Mullica River Heritage Corridor Committee should seek State scenic byway designation for Route 542 from Pleasant Mills to New Gretna on the north side of the river, portions of Route 563, Weekstown Road, and other county roads on the south side of the river. The timing for designating byways is particularly good in New Jersey because the State has a newly launched program with a

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<sup>2</sup> From Wade, Jerry, *Building Communities from the Grassroots – Community Development Academy*, University of Missouri Extension Service, 1998.

Governor's directive to have at least five roads designated within the next year. If the Mullica River communities act quickly, they can be in this first round of five. The Mullica River Corridor should then partner with the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail and a similar effort underway in Dennis and Maurice River Townships to pursue national scenic byway designation, which would benefit the entire region.

#### **Byway Strategy**

The nation's scenic byway system consists of roads at two basic levels: state and national. While both classes of roads are eligible for federal funding, the National Scenic Byways will tend to receive funds before the state byways. Therefore, it is in the best interest of the Mullica River Corridor to work with the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail to see if that road system, guided by the National Park Service, will participate in applying for National Scenic Byway status (Dennis and Maurice River Townships are also being encouraged to join the partnership). This will open funding for the Coastal Heritage Trail as well as for the Mullica River Corridor. In addition, the more closely the Mullica Corridor can align itself with the Coastal Heritage Trail System, the greater the benefit for marketing and interpretive efforts. Including the Mullica Corridor would be similar to the inclusion of Great Egg Harbor within the existing Coastal Heritage Trail system.

Other issues that the Committee may want to address include wastewater treatment, dredging, and regional promotion. To more fully investigate these and other topics, the Committee may want to create separate task forces to better define the need, examine options, and prepare recommendations. Work can proceed on several issues simultaneously; however, investigation of any one issue should not slow progress on other unrelated issues to the extent possible.

#### *Summary of Necessary Steps:*

1. Hold a meeting of the Mullica River Corridor communities. Decide on an appropriate number (e.g., 12) and mix of individuals (e.g., two representatives from each of the three core Townships, one representative each from other communities along the River (e.g., Galloway Township, Egg Harbor City, Little Egg Harbor Township, and Port Republic City), and two at-large positions). Ensure balanced representation from the public and private sectors, and from the environmental and economic development communities. See Appendix C for tips on creating an effective committee.
2. Designate committee members; select chair and other officers.
3. Incorporate committee as a nonprofit to pursue grants and other sources of funding.
4. Invite State scenic byway coordinator to tour the area.
5. Meet with the State byway coordinator, representatives of the Coastal Heritage Trail, and Dennis and Maurice River Townships to discuss the feasibility of submitting joint applications for state and national scenic byway designation.

6. Submit state scenic byway application for funds to assist in the preparation of a corridor management plan and application for national byway designation.
7. Assemble a corridor management plan from materials produced by the Pilot Program and other sources, and in conjunction with other partners, submit an application for national scenic byway designation.
8. Identify and prioritize other issues to be examined along the Corridor. Create separate task forces if necessary.

*Who Needs to be Involved:* Township Committees; other Mullica River communities; New Jersey's scenic byway program; New Jersey's Coastal Heritage Trail program; Dennis and Maurice River Townships.

*Resources to Support Action Item:*

1. The New Jersey Scenic Byway Program has recently begun to seek applications. The basic application to the state is straightforward and no fee is required. The corridor management plan requirement can largely be fulfilled with material developed under the Pinelands Pilot Economic Development Project. Grant fundable projects include acquisition of sensitive resources, preparation of marketing strategies and materials, and development of interpretive plans, materials, and signage. Preference for funding is given to National Scenic Byways, so the Mullica River Heritage Corridor should partner with the NJ Coastal Heritage Trail and Dennis and Maurice River Townships and submit an application for one combined heritage byway system. There is a 20% match for the byway grants which is often paid for or shared with the state. Contact: David Byers, NJ DOT, State Scenic Byway Coordinator, P.O. Box 600, 1035 Parkway Avenue, Trenton, NJ 08625 ph (609) 530-5673, fax (609) 530-5526. Visit their website at [www.state.nj.us/transportation](http://www.state.nj.us/transportation).
2. The National Scenic Byway Resource Center in Duluth, MN offers assistance to communities seeking information on byways and/or seeking national designation. Contact: Barb Koth, Resource Center, 227 West 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Suite 610, Duluth, MN 55802; ph (218) 529-7551 or 1-800-429-9297, ext. 5. Visit their website at [www.byways.org](http://www.byways.org).
3. The National Scenic Byway Program at the Federal Highway Administration can assist communities in developing grant applications and marketing byways. In addition to planning grants, National Byways will soon be eligible for \$25,000 annual grants to support management and staffing. Contact: MaryAnn McNamara at (800) 429-9297 (extension 3) for grant assistance, and Sharon Hurt Davidson (same phone number, extension 4) for marketing assistance.
4. The National Park Service's River and Trails Conservation Program provides technical assistance to communities for

planning, conservation, interpretation, and other river-management-related activities. Contact: Assistant Director, National Center for Recreation and Conservation, PO Box 37127, Washington, DC, 20013, ph (202) 343-3780. Or call the National Park Service's Regional Office in Philadelphia, ph (215) 597-7013.

*Schedule:* Designate Mullica River Heritage Corridor Committee by March 2000; submit application for State designation by September 2000; submit application for grant funding by January 2001; submit application for national designation by June 2001.

### Action Item A.2 – Form Task Force to Reinvigorate Recreational Facilities

*Rationale:* As the major landholders in the region and key suppliers of recreational experiences, Batsto and the State Forests are critical ingredients to the interpretation and promotion of the Mullica River. State funding for these facilities, however, has declined in recent years. Batsto is an exceptional resource with an interesting story to tell, but lacks sufficient resources to convey that story in a compelling way. Insufficient funding for Wharton State Forest has resulted in the closing of some facilities and basic maintenance of roads and trails has lagged. A task force that is either part of the Heritage Corridor Committee or a separate organization can help convince the Legislature that investments in these State-owned facilities can produce major economic benefits to the communities along the Mullica River. In an era of declining State funds, however, the task force should also be prepared to explore the availability of other resources, from grant funds to donated labor for needed maintenance and upkeep. In addition, the task force should serve as an advocacy group for related initiatives, such as obtaining funding for wastewater treatment systems in small Pinelands communities.

#### *Summary of Necessary Steps:*

1. Decide on form of organization (i.e., subgroup of Corridor Committee or separate organization). Be sure to include representatives of local businesses that provide tourist-related services.
2. Hold meeting with managers of State facilities to discuss needs and opportunities.
3. Develop a capital and programming investment strategy that combines State funds with other resources. Present strategy to Pinelands Municipal Council for endorsement.
4. Prepare a packet for State Legislators to educate them about existing needs, the proposed investment strategy, and the importance of adequately funded facilities to the success of the Pilot Program.

5. Present findings to Legislators at a breakfast or reception, and explain how the small towns of the Pinelands can act as stewards for statewide and national resources, given sufficient funding. Invite the Pinelands Municipal Council, managers of State facilities, and local business owners.
6. Continue public relations and advocacy efforts on an ongoing basis to ensure adequate, long-term funding. Priority topics include:
  - Re-establishing funding for the Pinelands Infrastructure Trust Fund and expanding the program to villages and towns
  - Increasing funding for State Parks and Forests
  - Considering legislation to allow the creation of *stewardship communities* to levy local preference sales taxes to fund local government operations. The legislation would designate specific communities whose presence enhances and serves major natural resource areas of the State and whose character is best served by not encouraging high levels of development.

*Who Needs to be Involved:* Mullica River Heritage Corridor Committee, managers of State facilities, local business owners and economic development committees, the Pinelands Municipal Council.

*Resources to Support Action Item:* No special resources are required to implement this action item, although staff from the Pinelands Commission are available to facilitate discussions, provide technical support, and identify alternative resources. Also, each Township should consider contributing a nominal amount (e.g., \$500) to fund development of the legislative package and other related costs.

*Schedule:* Form Task Force by June 2000; meet with State managers by September 2000; prepare strategy by January 2000; present to legislators by March 2001 (in time for consideration of FY 2003 appropriations in April 2001).



## **B. Planning and Zoning**

### Action Item B.1 – Develop Interpretation Plan for the Heritage Corridor

*Rationale:* The preparation of an interpretive plan will assess the various resources that the Mullica River Corridor has to offer, find the most compelling stories to tell, and lay out a sequential strategy for telling those stories. The Corridor is fortunate in that the River provides a common, highly visible thread from which to link its many interesting stories, including: a unique ecosystem; Native American history; colonial settlement and the Revolutionary War; iron mining and Batsto; maritime history from colonial shipbuilding to present-day yacht construction; bird watching; and the creation of the Pinelands National Reserve. Developing a comprehensive

interpretive plan will not only better serve existing residents and visitors, but it will lay the foundation for an effective marketing strategy and the increased visitation that will follow. Good design, ensuring minimal impacts on the landscape, and telling stories with heart will be the guiding principles for development of the plan. To the extent possible, the plan should complement and build on the long-term initiatives specified in the Pinelands-wide Interpretation Plan developed by the National Park Service, Pinelands Commission, and New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

*Summary of Necessary Steps:*

1. In conjunction with regional organizations (e.g., river and estuary centers), local historians, State Forest managers, Township officials, environmentalists, and business owners, identify the main stories to interpret.
2. With assistance from the Pinelands Commission, the New Jersey Division of Travel and Tourism, and the State Scenic Byway Program, identify appropriate methods (e.g., wayside exhibits, kiosks, brochures, and audio tapes) for telling each story and potential sources of funding. Ask the National Park Service to provide examples of methods and products used by other heritage corridors throughout the nation.
3. Prepare a comprehensive plan and present it to the public for comment.
4. Finalize plan and begin implementation. Initial milestones should include:
  - Creation of a distinct logo to distinguish the Corridor from other areas, and to use in signage and interpretive and promotional materials
  - Development of a Corridor map to define the boundaries of the region and to identify key attractions and resources
  - Development of a signage program in cooperation with the Pinelands Commission using funds from an existing grant (note: this activity is already underway).

*Who Needs to be Involved:* Local residents, historians, business owners, environmentalists, Planning Boards, and Township Committees; State Forest managers; the Pinelands Commission; the New Jersey Division of Travel and Tourism; the New Jersey Scenic Byways Program; the National Park Service.

*Resources to Support Action Item:*

1. Seek funding for development of the interpretive plan from the National Scenic Byways Program (See Action Item A.1 above).
2. Access funding for signage from an ongoing grant program administered by the Pinelands Commission.
3. Contact the New Jersey Division of Travel and Tourism to explore options for funding development and printing of the Corridor map. Contact: Lee Purcell, New Jersey Department of

Commerce and Economic Development, Division of Travel and Tourism, CN 826, Trenton, NJ, 08625; ph (609) 292-2470.

4. Explore availability of private-sector funding/production in return for acknowledgement of services in map (e.g., document design, photography, printing). Also solicit funds from relevant organizations (e.g., the local Chamber of Commerce) and tourism-related businesses.
5. Seek funding for facilities and other large capital investments from the New Jersey Transportation Enhancement Program (see Action Item C.3 below).
6. Consider a joint application for funding to the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation. This foundation focuses its funding strategies on issues of sustainability with a particular interest in New Jersey and the Northeast. Two areas that may provide an interesting match are the foundation's interest in ecosystem preservation, and education and communication efforts that lead to enlightened environmental policy. If the Heritage Corridor Committee, the Pinelands Commission, or other regional entity were to seek funding for an overall interpretive project, the Dodge Foundation might be an appropriate source of funding. Contact: David Grant, Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, 163 Madison Ave, PO Box 1239, Morristown, NJ 07962-1239.

*Schedule:* Identify stories to interpret by June 2000; prepare interpretive plan by December 2000; present plan to public by March 2001; begin implementation by June 2001 (earlier for the Pinelands Commission's signage program).

#### Action Item B.2 – Support Watershed Planning Effort

*Rationale:* As the key to the ecotourism strategy, the long-term health of the Mullica River must be assured. A new approach to water quality management being implemented by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection will allow for significant input and action at the local level. The effort for the Mullica River is just getting underway and will be coordinated by the Pinelands Commission. This effort will permit the communities to have a greater voice in the overall management of the River, and recognize the important, delicate relationship between ecosystem health and tourism development.

*Summary of Necessary Steps:*

1. Formalize involvement in the watershed planning effort through the Mullica River Heritage Corridor Committee. Designate one Committee member to serve as a liaison with the Pinelands Commission.
2. Use the forum provided by the watershed planning effort to initiate discussion/action relevant to the ecotourism strategy including:

- Dredging the River to its former depth to enable boats that historically navigated its waters to return. Consideration should be given to innovative and environmentally sensitive means of disposing of dredged materials.
- Consideration of the number and types of different users of the River and any need to better manage the impacts of these users. For example, some management plans have adopted “districting or zoning” strategies to keep users within prescribed reaches of a river in order to minimize shoreline damage, ensure safety for all users, and protect the rights of shoreline residents.
- Holding a symposium open to the public to consider how the river is being used today and methods to improve overall management.
- Developing a set of river and ecosystem health indicators to measure baseline conditions today and change over time.
- Working with the wildlife refuges at the mouth of the river and other organizations in a Corridor-wide effort to find balances between eco-tourism and sound environmental management.
- Identifying and promoting sustainable practices for Corridor businesses
- Exploring ways to involve visitors in efforts to enhance overall ecosystem health in meaningful and productive ways.

*Who Needs to be Involved:* Local environmental committees, Planning and Zoning Boards, Pinelands Commission, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, wildlife refuges and other bay organizations, general public

*Resources to Support Action Item:* No special funds are required to initiate involvement; depending on priorities, funds for specific actions may be available from watershed grants administered by the Pinelands Commission or other sources noted throughout this strategy.

*Schedule:* Designate liaison to Pinelands Commission by May 2000; maintain involvement thereafter.

### Action Item B.3 – Consider Historic Designation

*Rationale:* The historic villages along the Mullica River are a key asset that unite and distinguish the region. Preserving the character of these villages is important to local residents and will help foster new investment while generally enhancing the experience of tourists. Although Pinelands’ requirements provide substantial protection against overdevelopment, designating historic districts or nominating specific buildings for listing on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places further assures that specific resources will be preserved and allows for local input during the process. An

additional incentive to pursuing nomination to the National Register is that income-producing properties are eligible for substantial tax breaks. To undertake the research needed for Pinelands Designation or a successful Register nomination, the Townships should request assistance from local historic societies and/or consider hiring a consultant with expertise in historic preservation.

*Summary of Necessary Steps:*

1. Contact Pinelands Commission for baseline inventory of historic properties and general guidance on the historic designation/nomination processes.
2. Meet with local residents, historians, civic groups, and planning boards to identify potential districts and/or sites.
3. Formalize proposal and present to affected property owners and other interested residents at a public meeting.
4. Modify proposal if necessary, based on public comment.
5. Ask local historical society for help in compiling required information or consider hiring historic preservation consultant.
6. Submit a National Register of Historic Places registration form to the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office.

*Who Needs to be Involved:* Local residents, Township Planning Boards, Township Committees, Pinelands Commission, local historic and other civic groups, New Jersey Historic Preservation Office (in the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Parks and Forestry).

*Resources to Support Action Item:* No special resources are required to initiate work on this action item although the Townships may want to consider hiring a consultant to help with the application process. Contact the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office for more information on the planning process and the tax benefits that follow nomination (contact Terry Karschner, ph 609/984-0545).

*Schedule:* Contact Pinelands Commission by September 2000; hold initial public meeting by December 2000; schedule additional meetings as needed.



## **C. Infrastructure**

### Action Item C.1 – Perform Feasibility Studies for Wastewater Treatment in Each Village

*Rationale:* The provision of wastewater treatment to the villages along the Mullica River is a critical step to a strengthened economy that ensures protection of water resources. While no village seeks large-scale change, the current reliance on standard septic systems restricts the expansion of existing businesses to historical levels and

prohibits the development of new businesses (e.g., a bed-and-breakfast) on the smaller lots typically found in the villages. Recent advances in technology have lowered the costs of alternative systems and require less space to site. Depending on the needs and plans of the village, systems may be designed to serve a single large business, several businesses, or a combination of businesses, residences, and/or other uses (e.g., a school). Due to this variability, it is likely that different systems will be appropriate for different locations (e.g., New Gretna, Lower Bank, Green Bank, and Sweetwater), and therefore separate studies will be required. Each study will scope out alternatives, provide a conceptual design for the most promising alternative(s), and supply a preliminary cost estimate. Because few grant programs fund this type of work, the Townships and affected property owners may be required to contribute financially to the effort.

*Summary of Necessary Steps:*

1. Coordinate preparation of the feasibility studies through either the Township Committees or a separate task force created for this purpose in each village. Municipal engineers should also be involved throughout the process.
2. Consider establishing a regional utilities authority for all four villages to coordinate the studies, financing, and ultimately, construction. Explore cooperative arrangements with the Atlantic County Utilities Authority and an appropriate counterpart within Burlington County.
3. Contact the Pinelands Commission for information on potential alternatives and resources.
4. Hold a public meeting to explain the purpose and scope of the study. Be sure to invite all affected property owners.
5. If necessary, make arrangements to collect funds from the Townships and/or property owners for the study and place them in a separate account. Be sure to explain to property owners the benefits of funding the study – namely increased land values and business development potential.
6. Develop an RFP for engineering assistance and select a consultant with expertise in small-scale treatment systems.
7. Hold public meeting to present study findings.
8. Apply for construction funding (see Action Item C.2, below).

*Who Needs to be Involved:* Township Committees/task forces, municipal engineers, Atlantic County Utilities Authority, Burlington County, Pinelands Commission, property owners, local residents

*Resources to Support Action Item:* Financial resources to be provided primarily by property owners. The Townships should also consult with the Pinelands Commission, the Atlantic County Utilities Authority, and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection for overall guidance and information on any other

potential sources of funding. Other resources to approach for assistance and advice are:

1. The National Small Flows Clearinghouse and the National Environmental Training Center for Small Communities have programs designed to help foster understanding of treatment technologies, design and monitoring information, planning strategies, regulations, and education regarding wastewater "small flows" systems of one million gallons or less per day. Contact: National Small Flows Clearinghouse, P.O. Box 6064, Morgantown, WV, 26506-6064; ph (800) 624-8301; web site – [www.nsfrc.wvu.edu](http://www.nsfrc.wvu.edu).
2. The Rural Community Assistance Program (RCAP) is a private, community-based, nonprofit organization that helps low-income, rural communities with wastewater, water supply, and solid waste management issues with a residential component. RCAP could provide assistance in identifying funding sources, appropriate technologies, and general networking as the feasibility study progresses. Contact: Candace Balmer, Northeast RCAP, 2 Malden Avenue, Saugerties, NY, 12477; ph (914) 246-0743.
3. The New Jersey Rural Water Association is a statewide nonprofit association of small water and wastewater utilities generally serving 10,000 or fewer customers. The Association could provide helpful technical assistance and training before, during, and after completion of the feasibility study. Contact: Rick Howlett, NJ Rural Water Association, 110 W. Main Street, First Floor, Tuckerton, NJ 08087-1000; ph (609) 294-1000.
4. The EPA, NSF and USDA Water and Watersheds Research Program seeks to develop an improved understanding of the processes that govern the quantity, quality, and availability of water resources in natural and human-dominated systems. In conjunction with other municipalities, the Pinelands Commission, and a regional/state university, the Townships may want to pursue funding/sponsor a research project focusing on appropriate technologies for the development and management of sensitive water resources in this region. Contact: Robert Menzer, ph (202) 564-6849.
5. Convince State Legislators to allocate additional funding for the Pinelands Infrastructure Trust Fund and expand the program to include villages (see Action Item A.2).

*Schedule:* Designate coordinating entity(s) by June 2000; hold public meeting by December 2000; select consultant by June 2001; complete feasibility studies by December 2001.

## Action Item C.2 – Obtain Funding for Construction of Wastewater Treatment Systems

*Rationale:* Presumably the villages and/or individual businesses will want to move forward with construction of small-scale treatment systems following completion of the feasibility study.

### *Summary of Necessary Steps:*

1. Township Committees/task forces and municipal engineers work with the engineering firm that performed the feasibility studies to finalize selection of systems and funding estimates. Individual businesses that decide to proceed with construction of an on-site facility will contract independently for final design and construction.
2. Townships apply for funding.
3. Townships submit amendments to the State Water Quality Management Plan to NJ DEP.

*Who Needs to be Involved:* Township Committees/task forces, municipal engineers, engineering consultant, NJ DEP

### *Resources to Support Action Item:*

1. The New Jersey Clean Water State Revolving Fund Program of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), Division of Water Quality, provides loans to local government units for the construction of wastewater treatment facilities. Municipalities, counties, and sewer and utility authorities building new or improving existing wastewater treatment or storm water management facilities are eligible. Projects are certified for funding based on ranking criteria of the Federal Priority System developed each year by the DEP. The financing program provides zero percent interest rate loans for approximately 20 years for up to half of the allowable project costs, and the rate that the State pays for the remaining allowable costs. Allowances for planning and design are also available. Approximately \$100-200 million is available per year and limited grant funds are available to small municipalities that are economically distressed. Contact: Nicholas Binder, Assistant Director, NJDEP-Municipal Finance and Construction Element, PO Box 425, Trenton, NJ 08625-0425, ph (609) 292-8961, email: nbinder1@dep.state.nj.us.
2. The Water and Waste Disposal Loan and Grant Programs of the Rural Development Program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Several different loan and grant opportunities are available including projects to develop water and waste disposal systems in rural areas and towns with a population of less than 10,000 (interest rates and grant amounts vary with median household income), technical assistance, and training. Public entities such as municipalities, counties, special purpose

districts and corporations not operated for profit are eligible. The applicant must: (1) be unable to finance the proposed project from its own resources or through commercial credit at reasonable rates; and (2) have the legal authority necessary for constructing, operating and maintaining the proposed facility or service; and for obtaining, giving security for, and repaying, the proposed loan. The average award for direct loans is \$835,188 and the average grant amount is \$601,214. There are no matching requirements in this program. Contact: Michael Kelsey, Director, Community and Business Programs, Rural Development, USDA, Mount Holly, NJ 08060; ph (609) 265-3600.

3. The New Jersey Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program to determine the eligibility of these actions and the funds available under this program as a non-entitlement community (1996 eligibility list included Mullica Township). Contact: Roger Hoeh, Program Administrator, Small Cities Non-Entitlement Programs, Department of Community Affairs, Division of Housing and Community Resources, 101 South Broad Street, CN 806 (5th Floor), Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0806, ph (609) 633-6278.
4. The South Jersey Economic Development District coordinates funding from the federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) and other sources. Priorities for federal EDA funds include projects that diversify the area, are ecologically sensitive, support entrepreneurial spirit and innovative approaches to economic development, and create local partnerships that focus on regional solutions for economic development. Projects can include industrial parks, tourism facilities, business incubators, and infrastructure improvements needed for business expansion. Contact: Gordon Dahl, Executive Director, South Jersey Economic Development District, 18 North East Avenue, Vineland, NJ 08360; ph (609) 794-8497.

*Schedule:* Finalize selection of system and cost estimate by April 2002; apply for funding and submit amendment to State Water Quality Management Plan by September 2002.

#### Action Item C.3 – Develop Interpretation Infrastructure

*Rationale:* The interpretation plan developed under Action Item B.1 above will undoubtedly contain a number of recommendations for the development of specific facilities and resources such as interpretive trails, information kiosks, signs, wayside exhibits, and visitors centers. The Corridor could also be an appropriate forum for the demonstration of cutting-edge interpretive methods including audio tours for walking or driving, and digital photography to capture remote nesting and wildlife sites. Development of these facilities should be coordinated throughout the Corridor to ensure relevance to the interpretive and signage plans, appropriate phasing

of construction, sufficient financing, and linkage to overall marketing efforts.

*Summary of Necessary Steps:*

1. Following completion of the interpretation plan, hold meetings in each village to discuss recommendations for infrastructure development. Be sure to discuss proposed facilities that are near by, but not within, the village (e.g., wayside exhibits, point of interest along audio tour route).
2. Work with the Pinelands Commission to develop a signage program for the three Townships using existing grant funds.
3. Ensure that designated sites are included within the pre-approval process under Action Item E.1 below.
4. Obtain funding and construct facilities. Recommended actions include:
  - New Gretna - Install an interpretive kiosk or visitors center (while a visitors center can be designed to be self-service, consider using volunteers on weekends and throughout the summer); explore the possibility of hosting tours and/or developing an interpretive exhibit on the Viking Yacht facility
  - Lower Bank - Construct a visitors center at the boatyard and create a riverside trail
  - Green Bank - Install an interpretive kiosk, create a walking path along the River and bridge, improve docking facilities
  - Sweetwater - Install wayside exhibit
  - Nesco - Construct farmstand and wayside exhibit to showcase Pinelands agriculture.

*Who Needs to be Involved:* Township officials, Corridor residents and business owners

*Resources to Support Action Item:*

1. Signage will initially be funded under a cooperative grant program with the Pinelands Commission. The need for additional signage will be addressed as necessary.
2. Scenic Byway grants provide funding for development of interpretive materials and signage, and road-edge improvements such as automobile pull-outs. Preference is given to National Byways. See contact information under Action Item A.1.
3. The National Recreational Trails Funding Program of the Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, provides funds to states for the purpose of developing and maintaining recreational trails. The average award in FY 1997 was \$288,000. Contact: Kevin E. Heanue, Director, Office of Environment and Planning, Federal Highway Administration, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590, ph (202) 366-2951.
4. The Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program of the National Park Service System provides funds for projects that

have clear, measurable objectives; are designed to have a significant, cost-effective impact on an issue; and lead to a tangible conservation of significant resources. Contact: Assistant Director, National Center for Recreation and Conservation, PO Box 37127, Washington, DC, 20013, ph (202) 343-3780, or the National Park Service's Regional Office in Philadelphia, ph (215)597-7013.

5. The Transportation Enhancement Program of the New Jersey Department of Transportation, Bureau of Local Aid funds non-traditional projects that enhance transportation and quality of life (e.g. streetscape improvements). The average award is about \$350,000 for each project funded, but can range from \$10,000 to \$1 million. Matching funds are not required, but they help. Activities eligible for funding include streetscape projects, linear highway landscaping, historic sidewalk paving, landscaping at interchanges, bike path development, and urban design appropriate for the community such as street-side plantings. Contact: Jim Snyder, District Engineer (Mount Laurel office), ph (609) 866-4974.
6. Private sector contributions may be an appropriate source of funds for certain activities in return for acknowledgement of support (e.g., development of a farmstand).

*Schedule:* Hold village meetings by June 2001 (following completion of the interpretation plan); submit funding applications by December 2001.

#### Action Item C.4 – Improve Streetscape in New Gretna

*Rationale:* New Gretna is the largest population center along the River Corridor among the Pilot Program communities, has the largest business district, and is well-located to serve as an eastern gateway to River-related activities. Consequently, New Gretna has good potential to develop a more prosperous business environment. The existing downtown, however, needs physical improvements to create a more appealing environment for visitors and businesses (in addition to a wastewater treatment system as discussed under Action Items C.1 and C.2). Township-owned land in the village could also be developed for public use. The basic layout of the village offers a strong foundation for physical enhancements such as the installation of sidewalks and streetlights in some areas, appropriate landscaping, and façade improvements. These improvements should be designed to maintain the character of New Gretna as a waterfront village, with a history of being connected to the river, bay, and ocean. In addition to enhancing the aesthetic appeal of the village, these improvements will make it easier for visitors and residents to park their cars and walk to village businesses and interpretive facilities. The result of encouraging and facilitating such exploration will be increased business volume, higher property values, and ultimately, more taxes flowing to the Township.

*Summary of Necessary Steps:*

1. Hold a public meeting for New Gretna residents and businesses to explain the potential scope of the project and obtain initial feedback.
2. In consultation with the Planning Board, hire an engineering firm to develop plans and a cost estimate for sidewalks, landscaping, streetlights, façade improvements, and Township-owned land. Integrate with plans for site-specific redevelopment (e.g., the New Gretna House).
3. Present plans to Village residents; revise if needed.
4. Apply for funding to cover construction costs.
5. Erect signage to direct people to parking, information, and shops.

*Who Needs to be Involved:* Village residents and businesses, Planning Board, engineering firm

*Resources to Support Action Item:*

1. Participate in the effort to achieve state scenic byway status for Route 542 and other connecting roads around the River. This designation will then open the door for funding from the National Scenic Byway Program to prepare a corridor management plan. A part of that planning could be a detailed streetscape plan for the village. The costs for preparing the village plan will range from \$5000 to \$15,000 depending on the level of detail desired by the community.
2. Apply for funds from the Transportation Enhancement Program of the New Jersey Department of Transportation, Bureau of Local Aid (see resource information under Action Item C.4 above). The application should be submitted under the categories *Facilities for Pedestrians and Bicycles*, or *Landscaping or Other Scenic Beautification*. The overall strategy should be to demonstrate how project improvements will link activity centers and increase connectivity among various transportation modes (e.g., walking and bicycling).
3. Contact Main Street New Jersey for technical assistance and overall guidance. Main Street staff are experts in downtown revitalization, can identify potential funding sources, and have training in community and public involvement strategies that will ensure local participation and support. Contact: Main Street New Jersey Program, New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, PO Box 806, Fifth Floor, Trenton, NJ, 08625-0806; ph (609) 633-9769.
4. Contact the Economic Development Administration (EDA) for information on federal funding opportunities. Priorities for funding include projects that diversify the area, are ecologically

sensitive, support entrepreneurial spirit and innovative approaches to economic development, and create local partnerships that focus on regional solutions for economic development. Projects can include tourism facilities, business incubators, and infrastructure improvements needed for business expansion. Contact: Ed Hummel, Philadelphia Regional Office, Economic Development Administration, The Curtis Center, Suite 104 South, Independence Square West, Philadelphia, PA; ph (215) 597-6767.

5. Contact the Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program as a potential funding source for façade improvements in the form of a revolving loan fund under the oversight of the County or Township. Contact: Roger Hoeh, Program Administrator, Small Cities Non-Entitlement Programs, Department of Community Affairs, Division of Housing and Community Resources, 101 South Broad Street, CN 806 (5th Floor), Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0806, ph (609) 633-6278.
6. Contact the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority for information on accessing funds reserved for projects outside of Atlantic City. Eligible activities include recreation and entertainment facilities, public transportation, buildings and other capital for businesses, community facilities, and improvement of blighted areas. The minimum project funding is \$350,000. Contact: Yvonne Bonnitto-Doggett, Deputy Director, Casino Reinvestment Development Authority, P.O. Box 749, Atlantic City, NJ, 08404; ph (609) 347-0500.

*Schedule:* Hold initial public meeting by June 2000; apply for funding by June 2001.

#### Action Item C.5 – Support Off-Site Dilution

*Rationale:* Protection of the high quality of water resources in the Pinelands is achieved by limiting the intensity of development in the absence of wastewater treatment systems. In certain instances, however, it might be appropriate to allow more intensive development in an area if equivalent protection is provided elsewhere through deed restrictions. The concept of off-site dilution has been explored previously by the Pinelands Commission but not pursued due to lack of interest on the part of potentially affected municipalities and the effort required to work out logistical details. Off-site dilution, however, should only be considered as a potential alternative for those sites outside of the planned service area for centralized wastewater treatment or which cannot be served by on-site treatment for reasons other than environmental constraints (e.g., wetlands or high water table).

*Summary of Necessary Steps:*

1. Township Committees adopt resolution in support of off-site dilution that identifies associated benefits.
2. Mayors petition Pinelands Municipal Council to adopt similar resolution and encourage other municipalities to do the same.
3. The Pinelands Municipal Council and interested municipalities present resolutions to the Pinelands Commission.

*Who Needs to be Involved:* Mayors, Township Committees, Pinelands Municipal Council, Pinelands Commission

*Resources to Support Action Item:* No special resources are required to support this action item.

*Schedule:* Adopt municipal resolution by June 2000; petition Pinelands Municipal Council by September 2000.

Action Item C.6 – Examine Need for Dredging

*Rationale:* While the Mullica River has never experienced the heavy traffic characteristic of the nation's more industrialized waterways, it has been in constant use since prior to the American Revolution, and continues as a location of recreational shipbuilding and boating today. According to local business owners, boats that could once travel the river without problem are currently unable to reach Sweetwater and points further north during low tide. NJ DEP completed a limited investigation in 1995 in response to concerns over silting from nearby dam activity, but no comprehensive hydrographic survey has been performed. Additional information is required in order to assess the need for and extent of any potential dredging. Because resources for survey work are limited, the communities along the River may have to finance the work themselves (although NJ DEP may be able to provide some assistance, depending on the extent of the project). Since funds for dredging require a separate appropriation from the State Legislature, the Townships should keep area elected officials informed of the survey's progress and results.

*Summary of Necessary Steps:*

1. Hold meeting with owners of waterfront businesses and local residents to define the extent of the survey.
2. Obtain quotes from marine engineering firms for a hydrographic survey; also contact Pinelands Commission to explore possibility of assistance from NJ DEP.
3. Perform survey; if dredging is indicated, hold public meeting for local residents and officials to explain potential scope, needed funding and approvals (including disposal of dredged materials), and estimated timeframe.

4. Brief area legislators on the need for the project and estimated costs; assess likelihood of obtaining appropriation.
5. Contact NJ DEP for information on next steps in the permitting process.

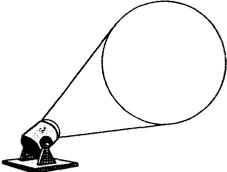
*Who Needs to be Involved:* Local officials and residents; Pinelands Commission; NJ DEP's Site Remediation Program, Office of Dredging and Sediment Technology (contact: Richard DeWan, 609/984-4426); area Legislators

*Resources to Support Action Item:* No special resources are required to initially support this action item, although the survey may require local funding. Depending on the extent of the survey, NJ DEP may be able to undertake all or a portion of the investigation. If dredging is indicated, the Townships should approach area legislators for funding.

*Schedule:* Hold meeting with local residents and officials by June 2000; obtain quotes for survey by December 2000; complete survey by June 2001; pursue additional activities as indicated by survey results.

## **D. Marketing**

### Action Item D.1 – Develop Corridor Marketing Strategy



*Rationale:* This ecotourism strategy is based on the premise that communities along the Mullica River will benefit from promoting essentially the same resources that have been present for decades. The key to success lies in telling a more compelling story, encouraging modest investments to make the visitor's experience more appealing, and ensuring that community and ecosystem integrity is preserved. A clear and coordinated marketing strategy is needed to guide promotional efforts.

*Summary of Necessary Steps:* Overall implementation of the marketing strategy should be coordinated by the Mullica River Heritage Corridor Committee, working in close cooperation with owners of tourism-related businesses and the New Jersey Division of Travel and Tourism. The following target markets and methods are suggested based on the analyses performed as part of developing the economic development strategy:

1. **The Marine Market** - This market consists of boat owners and crews all along the Eastern Seaboard. The messages to this market should include: a) Use the acid waters of the Mullica to save boat maintenance expenses.; b) Benefit from the exceptional skills of Mullica River boatyards; c) Enjoy a 2-3 day exploration of colonial maritime history; and d) Put together a boating, biking, canoeing and hiking experience on the Mullica. People in this market already own a boat, are already using the

boat to travel near the mouth of the Mullica, and have sufficient time to enjoy a 1-3 day excursion/boat maintenance stop. The economic benefits from reaching this market will primarily be enjoyed by boatyards and those businesses with docks or located in a pedestrian environment near a dock. Benefits will be more widespread if a few nice inns or bed-and-breakfasts can be established along the river. This market can be reached through nautical publications, consumer trade shows, and a web site.

2. **The New Jersey Family Market** - The family market consists of regional residents with children who are interested in an alternative to the Jersey Shore that includes natural, educational, recreational and boating experiences. These families should be encouraged to come and explore the interpretive facilities, take a ride on a boat, explore the Pinelands rivers and streams in a canoe, visit Batsto and other historic sites, view wildlife, and go crabbing, fishing and camping. This market could also include school programs and other similar institutions. The economic benefits from this market will be derived from general shopping, purchases of experiences (e.g., fishing, canoe and boat rental), and meals. Again, greater benefits will come to the Corridor if a broader range of lodging options become available. Currently, even the one-night camping market is limited due to the predominance of seasonal rentals. This market can be reached through State and regional tourism promotion channels; affiliation marketing to environmental organizations, outdoors sporting groups, and trade shows; and articles in Sunday travel sections. Working with the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail program will also help reach this market.
3. **The New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail Market:** The New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail is a natural route for out-of-state visitors to take through New Jersey. Those travelers who are following the Trail will have overlapping interests in the Mullica River Heritage Corridor's products: history, nature, recreation, and local culture. Economic benefits will be similar to those generated by the family market, with the exception that these travelers will gladly stay for more than one night if the accommodations, food and experiences are top notch. This market can be reached through State tourism brochures, web sites, and other inbound traveler marketing. Affiliations with national organizations such as the Audubon Society, colonial groups (e.g., Daughters of the American Revolution), history publications, regional attractions (e.g., Tuckerton Seaport), and nautical organizations are all natural promotional vehicles. The establishment of bed-and-breakfasts or inns opens another market through regional and national guidebooks. Familiarization tours for travel writers should also be arranged with the State Tourism office once more facilities in place.

4. **The Jersey Coast/Atlantic City Market** - The final market consists of families and other groups visiting the New Jersey Shore who are looking for a respite from the crowds, the beach, and gambling. While the percentage of total visitors to the Shore and Atlantic City who will break away from their core pursuits is small, the total numbers of visitors to these destinations makes even a small percentage a decent market. The message to be conveyed to these travelers includes: a) Get away from the crowds, spend a quiet day with your family or just with yourself; b) See another side to South Jersey; c) Take a break from the present and go back in time 300 years. These visitors will be primarily daytrippers. Boat excursions and water taxis (e.g., from Tuckerton to Sweetwater) may be appealing to this market, along with short (2-4 hour) packages of canoeing, hiking, fishing, crabbing and similar 'easy-in-easy-out' experiences (with more rentals made available if needed as visitation increases). Group tours might also be appropriate. A reinvigorated Batsto will be an important draw. This market can be reached through the materials distributed by the local chambers of commerce and tourism bureaus to newly arrived visitors, and placement of cable ads in shore towns and Atlantic City. An organized effort to work with the group market is also advised.

*Who Needs to be Involved:* Local business owners, economic development and environmental committees; the New Jersey Division of Travel and Tourism; the Atlantic City Convention and Visitors Authority; local and coastal chambers of commerce; various national and regional organizations

*Resources to Support Action Item:*

1. Contact the State Division of Travel and Tourism for technical assistance and marketing funds. Information on the Corridor should be placed in marketing materials produced by the Division. The Division can also help in developing promotional materials and ads, identifying ways to distribute information to travel writers, coordinating with regional and local visitors bureaus, and making connections with the group tour market. Contact: Lee Purcell, New Jersey Department of Commerce and Economic Development, Division of Travel and Tourism, CN 826, Trenton, NJ, 08625; ph (609) 292-2470.
2. Obtain State and National Scenic Byway status per Action Item A.1 and apply for marketing funds through that program. Use these funds to develop the driving market of out-of-state travelers and to create a program to be directed toward children and their families. Contact: David Byers, Scenic Byway Coordinator, New Jersey Department of Transportation, P.O. Box 600, 1035 Parkway Avenue, Trenton, NJ, 08625; ph (609) 530-5673, fax 609-530-5526.

*Schedule:* In order to be most effective, full implementation of the marketing strategy should take place after initial interpretive and other infrastructure investments have been made. Contacts with regional agencies, however, should be initiated much earlier in the process, once more detailed plans have been developed (e.g., March 2001).

#### Action Item D.2 – Develop Corridor Web Site

*Rationale:* Use of the internet to search for all types of information has exploded in the past few years and become a primary research tool. A web site can provide potential tourists with an overview of the Corridor, specific attractions, visitor services, and special events. A web site is also helps create a sense of place and provides a means of communicating with residents across municipal boundaries. Once the web site is operating, it can be linked to a number of other sites that will help direct inquiries; for example, the State of New Jersey's home page and regional tourism sites. The types of topics that should be included are a map of the Corridor, historical and ecological highlights, and sites of interest. A local business directory, including hours of operation and contact information would also be helpful.

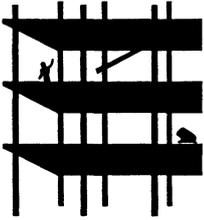
#### *Summary of Necessary Steps:*

1. Visit web sites of other New Jersey municipalities for ideas. A good place to start is part of the State's home page, [www.state.nj.us/localgov.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/localgov.htm).
2. Contact municipalities with informative and attractive web sites to find out how they were developed and financed.
3. Determine who will host the web site (e.g., a municipality or the Corridor Committee) and if there are any limitations on site design imposed by the type or availability of equipment.
4. Explore availability of private-sector funding/technical assistance in return for acknowledgement of services on web site. As a starting point, talk to local residents with computer expertise and contact local internet service providers and web page designers.

*Who Needs to be Involved:* Township Committees, local business owners and residents, chambers of commerce.

*Resources to Support Action Item:* A basic web site can be constructed for under \$1,000 and maintained for a similar amount per year. Many web sites for nonprofit and public organizations are developed free of charge in exchange for acknowledgement of services and/or other support. Contributions can also be solicited by those businesses most likely to benefit from the site. The Townships should plan to cover any shortfall.

*Schedule:* Develop prototype by December 2000; finalize by June 2001.



## **E. Site-Specific Development**

### Action Item E.1 – Develop Pre-Approval Process for Selected Sites

*Rationale:* Business owners and developers seek as much certainty as possible in the regulatory review process. This is particularly true in areas where development may be restricted due to the presence of wetlands or other ecologically sensitive attributes. As part of the Pilot Program, the Pinelands Commission has offered to take an up-front, in-depth look at development sites that will be serviced by centralized wastewater treatment systems in order to develop a “pre-approval” process for development applications. This streamlined approach would involve compiling information on key parameters affecting development such as the presence of wetlands, threatened and endangered species, and historic resources, in order to pre-approve sites for certain intensities of development (requirements for storm water retention, however, cannot be addressed until a specific use is proposed). Applicants will then be able to depend on streamlined project review, while local and regional permitting agencies will be able to work within an overall plan that defines the scope of aggregated impacts. A pre-approval process will also provide the community more information and confidence in how development will proceed. Once the feasibility studies for wastewater treatment have been completed, each Township should work with the Pinelands Commission to develop a plan for sites in each of the villages.

#### *Summary of Necessary Steps:*

1. In conjunction with the Planning and Zoning Boards and local property owners, identify parcels of interest to be examined.
2. Meet with Pinelands Commission to review boundaries of pre-approved sites and discuss pre-approval process.
3. Supply information to Pinelands Commission during compilation of site-specific data.

*Who Needs to be Involved:* Planning and Zoning Boards, local property owners, the Pinelands Commission

*Resources to Support Action Item:* No special resources are required to implement this action item, although the Corridor Committee and/or the Pinelands Commission may wish to pursue funds from the following sources to cover a comprehensive planning effort involving all four villages:

1. Apply for a \$50,000 grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Sustainable Development Challenge Grant Program to support the creation of village plans. The conceptual

approach should focus on the concepts of finding streamlined, but effective, regulatory processes for environmentally and economically sustainable development along rivers with the overall theme being the linking of natural resources and economic development. Contact: Marcia Seidner, ph (212)637-3590.

2. Contact the Rural Business Opportunity Grants Program, which provides funding to nonprofits and public bodies for community planning, technical assistance, and training for business development and improving economic conditions in rural areas. The program is designed to promote sustainable economic development in rural communities with exceptional needs and will pay for professional services for planning functions. Contact: Rural Business-Cooperative Services, Specialty Lenders Division, 1400 Independence Ave, SW, Stop 1521, Washington, DC 20250-1521, ph (202) 720-1400.

*Schedule:* Identify parcels by December 2001 (coinciding with completion of the wastewater feasibility studies); finalize boundaries and process by June 2002.

#### Action Item E.2 – Facilitate Re-Development of Lower Bank Boatyard

*Rationale:* While most of the development that will occur along the Corridor is necessarily small-scale, the former boatyard in Lower Bank presents a unique opportunity due to the size and location of the parcel. The current facility, however, faces several immediate challenges in order to comply with safety and environmental requirements. Although the site is under private ownership, local government, the Pinelands Commission, and other appropriate agencies should work with the owner to facilitate cleanup, explore wastewater treatment options (including possible connection of neighboring properties), and ultimately, develop a site plan. As part of this process, funding and other resources for “brownfields” remediation should be leveraged to the extent possible.

#### *Summary of Necessary Steps:*

1. Meet with owner to assess status of site cleanup.
2. Pursue funding to complete cleanup and construct wastewater treatment facility (be sure to incorporate site requirements into wastewater treatment feasibility study under Action Item C.1).
3. Develop site plan; incorporate recommendations from the interpretive plan developed under Action Item B.1 to the extent possible.

*Who Needs to be Involved:* Site owner, Washington Township, Pinelands Commission

*Resources to Support Action Item:*

1. Following meeting with owner, contact the New Jersey Office of Sustainability regarding the availability of brownfields funding. Contact: Robert Young, Executive Director, Office of Sustainability, New Jersey Department of Commerce and Economic Development, P.O. Box 819, Trenton, NJ, 08625-0819; ph (609)292-3669.
2. See Action Items C.1 and C.2 for potential sources of funding for the design and construction of a wastewater treatment system.
3. See Action Item C.3 for funding sources for interpretive facilities.

*Schedule:* Meet with facility owner by June 2000; pursue funding as needed.



## **F. Education and Outreach**

### Action Item F.1 – Promote Citizen Awareness and Involvement

*Rationale:* As noted previously, an active and informed public is critical to the success of this implementation strategy.

Placing public notices and waiting for people to show up at a meeting will not be sufficient to ensure public support and supply the effort needed to cover all of the actions called for by this strategy. All three townships must take proactive and creative approaches to involving their residents. Appendix C contains recommendations on involving the community from the University of Missouri’s Extension Service. Additional suggestions include setting limited objectives in terms of scope or time for volunteers to minimize burnout, recognizing and learning to address “problem” volunteers (e.g., naysayers, worst-case specialists, and turf protectors)<sup>3</sup>, and providing transportation for poor and elderly citizens to attend meetings<sup>4</sup>.

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assume that only those who come to meetings are willing to work for the community. Also, avoid the tendency to shift implementation work to paid staff, in this case the Townships. This approach undermines attempts to build a dynamic community in charge of its future.  
From Wade, Jerry, *Building Communities from the Grassroots – Community Development Academy* (training course), University of Missouri Extension Service, 1998.

#### *Summary of Necessary Steps:*

1. All Township Committees and the Mullica River Heritage Corridor Committee should hold a joint meeting to brainstorm ideas for strengthening and sustaining public involvement.
2. Corridor Committee members should present information or provide inserts for bulletins on the ecotourism strategy to places

<sup>3</sup> From Phillips, Phillip D., *Economic Development for Small Communities and Rural Areas*, Office of Continuing Education and Public Service, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1990.

<sup>4</sup> From *Measuring Community Success and Sustainability: An Interactive Workbook*; North Central Regional Center for Rural Development, Iowa State University, 1999.

- of worship, the elementary school, and other civic organizations. Periodically follow up with each organization regarding progress and opportunities for involvement in upcoming activities.
3. Press releases should be issued to local newspapers following each major meeting, milestone, or other accomplishment, including the kick-off of the implementation strategy; actively promote opportunities for interviews and updates.
  4. Place notices of all public workshops and meetings on bulletin boards in the Townships' offices, local convenience stores, and any other appropriate locations.
  5. Updates should be placed on the web site to be developed under Action Item D.2.

**Ensure Productive  
Storm Sessions**

Make sure that participants are aware of the "rules" of brainstorming; e.g., everyone has an upfront understanding of the question or problem, all ideas get written down, no judgments are made during the session, and the focus is on quantity of ideas, not quality.

From Flora, Cornelia Butler, *Rural EZ/EC Champion Communities: What Happened After Application?*, North Central Regional Center for Rural Development, 1998.

*Who Needs to be Involved:* Township committees, Mullica River Heritage Corridor Committee, local civic and religious organizations

*Resources to Support Action Item:* No special resources are required to implement this action item.

*Schedule:* Hold joint meeting in March 2000; implement ideas immediately.

#### **4. Summary**

The implementation strategy detailed in this document outlines realistic, achievable steps that communities along the Mullica River can take to enhance their economic base without compromising local character. This strategy is based on the economic development plan that was prepared for the Mullica River Heritage Corridor under the Pinelands Rural Economic Development Pilot Program, which in turn, was based on extensive research and public input. Successful implementation of the strategy is ultimately in the hands of Bass River, Mullica, and Washington Townships; their residents; and local business owners. The creation and execution of a monitoring plan as discussed in Appendix A will help ensure that the implementation strategy is a living document, subject to ongoing assessment and improvement.

Table 1 on the following page is a summary matrix that lists all action items with suggested timeframes and participants.

**Table 1. Summary of Mullica River Corridor Implementation Strategy**

Action Item	Timeframe			Involvement*							
	2000	2001	2002	MC	TC	EcC	EnC	PB	ZB	PC	Other
A.1 - Form Mullica River Heritage Corridor Committee	X				X						X
A.2 - Form Task Force to Reinvigorate Facilities	X	X		X		X					X
B.1 - Develop Interpret. Plan	X	X		X	X			X		X	X
B.2 - Support Watershed Planning Effort	X			X			X	X	X	X	X
B.3 - Consider Historic Designation	X			X	X			X		X	X
C.1 - Perform Wastewater Feasibility Study	X	X		X	X					X	X
C.2 - Obtain Funding for Wastewater Systems			X	X	X						X
C.3 - Develop Interpretation Infrastructure		X	X	X				X	X	X	X
C.4 - Improve New Gretna Streetscape	X	X		X				X	X		X
C.5 - Support Off-Site Dilution	X			X	X						X
C.6 - Examine Need for Dredging	X			X	X	X	X			X	X
D.1 - Develop Corridor Marketing Strategy		X		X	X	X	X				X
D.2 - Develop Web Site		X	X	X	X	X	X				X
E.1 - Develop Pre-Approval Process			X	X				X	X	X	X
E.2 - Facilitate Boatyard Re-Development	X			X	X	X				X	X
F.1 - Promote Citizen Awareness & Involvement	X			X	X	X	X				X

\* MC – Mullica River Heritage Corridor Committee; TC – Township Committees; EcC- Economic Development Committees; EnC – Environmental Committees; PB - Planning Boards; ZB – Zoning Boards; PC – Pinelands Commission

## Appendix A. Establishing a Monitoring Program

Communities implement monitoring programs to learn how implementation is progressing (and whether revisions are needed) and to demonstrate accountability of actions and resources. On a broader level, the measuring process leads to a better understanding of the link between actions and overall goals.<sup>5</sup> Since most sources of grants and loans now require plans for measuring success as part of the overall application, having a monitoring program in place also gives communities a head start in pursuing future funding opportunities.

As a starting point, the Mullica River Heritage Corridor should consider organizing its monitoring plan around the broad goals set forth in the economic development strategy; i.e., strengthen local businesses, draw sufficient number of visitors without compromising local character, increase tax rates, address wastewater treatment needs, encourage other forms of economic development, and assist with community renewal. A comprehensive framework for a monitoring plan relates each goal to one or more indicators, which in turn, are evaluated by one or more measures. For example:

*Goal* – Increase tax rates

*Indicators* – Increased number and diversity of businesses; improved business health/efficiency

*Measures* – Taxes billed and taxes paid; total number of employers (this measurement serves as a proxy for the number of types of employers, which is more difficult to track); number of new business openings reported in local paper.

Organizing the action items under specific goals can help to suggest types of indicators and measures, which in turn, can be used to assess progress in completing specific activities as well as reaching overall goals.

In identifying appropriate measures, the Mullica River Corridor should refer to the following guidelines:

- When possible, measure “goods” (e.g., employment levels) as opposed to “bads” (unemployment levels) to foster more positive efforts
- Only measure things that provide needed information
- Use indicators that have the most potential to focus and redirect activities, if needed
- Use proxy measures when direct measurement is not feasible
- Balance the need to know with the ability to find out
- Be sure to specify a baseline, who will be responsible for collecting the information, and when measurements will be taken.

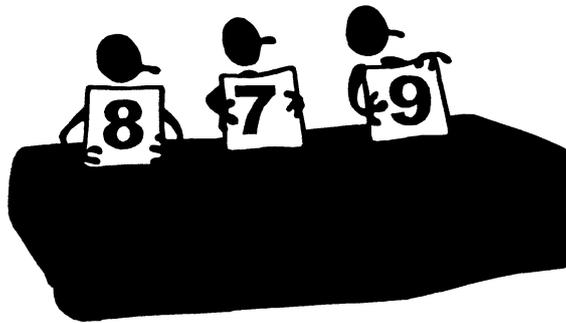
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<sup>5</sup> Much of the information used to develop this section is based on *Measuring Community Success and Sustainability: An Interactive Workbook*, North Central Regional Center for Rural Development, Iowa State University, 1999. Other sources are noted where appropriate.

Other helpful suggestions include:

- Seek assistance from a regional or state economic development agency or university in developing appropriate measures, particularly for difficult-to-measure indicators, such as the local impact of travel and tourism.
- Celebrate successes and recognize those involved in the effort.
- Establish and participate in “peer community sessions” with other Pilot Program municipalities to exchange information on goals and strategies with each other.<sup>6</sup>
- Consider using different measures for different audiences to address different needs (e.g., program administrators, taxpayers, and outside funders).<sup>6</sup>
- Recognize that measurements can be made of either processes or products.<sup>7</sup>
- Avoid using measures that are outside of the Township’s controls (e.g., creating a certain number of jobs per year versus creating a new industrial site).<sup>7</sup>
- Institute a once-a-year formal review of progress in implementing the strategy.<sup>7</sup>

Finally, if a particular measurement is not working well once the monitoring plan is up and running, try to replace it with another, more suitable method. Ideally, the measurements should be made over the long-term, but like the implementation strategy, the monitoring plan should be improved as needed.



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<sup>6</sup> From Walzer, Norman, *Community Visioning/Strategic Planning Programs: State of the Art*, Illinois Institute of Rural Affairs, 1995 (available at <http://cait.wiu.edu/iira/main.html>).

<sup>7</sup> From Phillips, Phillip D., *Economic Development for Small Communities and Rural Areas*, Office of Continuing Education and Public Service, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1990.

## **Appendix B. Additional Resources**

One of the key approaches used in the Pilot Program was supplying communities with professional expertise in the area of rural development planning to minimize the learning curve for participants. The increasing abundance of easy-to-use resources targeted to rural communities, however, allows Townships such as Mullica to continue learning throughout implementation of their development strategies. Informed and educated leaders and participants are much more likely to realize successful outcomes. In addition, due to time and other resource limitations, the Pilot Program may not have been able to adequately cover issues that are both important to the community and have the potential to affect implementation of the development strategy (e.g., education and child care). Many of these topics are covered by the resources noted below.

This list is by no means exhaustive and is primarily limited to publications (many of which have been cited in footnotes throughout this document) and web sites. All of the publications and other materials are available for loan by calling the planning staff at the Pinelands Commission (609/894-7300). The web sites that are listed tend to offer more general information or assistance; most, in turn, contain links to many other sites with more specific areas of focus.

### **A. Publications**

Dane, Suzanne G., *Main Street Success Stories*, National Main Street Center, National Trust for Historic Preservation, Washington, DC, 1997

*Federal Funding Sources for Rural Areas*, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC, 1997 (available from the internet at <http://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/ricpubs/funding/federalfund/ffintro.htm>)

Flora, Cornelia Butler, *Rural EZ/EC Champion Communities: What Happened After Application?*, North Central Regional Center for Rural Development, Iowa State University, Ames, IA, 1998 (available from the internet at <http://www.ag.iastate.edu/centers/rdev/EZECCC4.html>)

Forman, Maury and James Mooney, *Learning to Lead, A Primer on Economic Development Strategies*, Washington State Community, Trade and Economic Development, Olympia, WA, 199 (available from the internet at <http://edd.cted.wa.gov/cac/whatsnew.htm>)

*Funding Sources for Community and Economic Development 1997, A Guide to Current Sources for Local Programs and Projects*, The Oryx Press, Phoenix, AZ, 1997

*Guiding Principles of Sustainable Design*, United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Denver Service Center, Denver, CO, 1993

*Harvesting Hometown Jobs, The New Small Town Guide to Local Economic Development*, National Center for Small Communities, Washington, DC, 1997

*Measuring Community Success and Sustainability: An Interactive Workbook*, North Central Regional Center for Rural Development, Iowa State University, Ames, IA, 1999

Phillips, Phillip D., *Economic Development for Small Communities and Rural Areas*, Office of Continuing Education and Public Service, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1990

*Pinelands Interpretation Plan*, U.S. Department of the Interior (in cooperation with the Pinelands Commission and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection), Philadelphia, PA, 1998

*Rural Tourism Handbook, Selected Case Studies and Development Guide*, United States Travel and Tourism Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce, Washington, DC

Vysatova, Romana and Laurie S.Z. Greenberg, eds., *A Guide to USDA and Other Federal Resources for Sustainable Agriculture and Forestry Enterprises*, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC, 1998

Walzer, Norman, *Community Visioning/ Strategic Planning Programs: State of the Art*, Illinois Institute of Rural Affairs, 1995 (available from the internet at <http://cait.wiu.edu/iira/main.html>)

## **B. Web Sites**

[www.livablecommunities.gov](http://www.livablecommunities.gov) – Contains links to sustainable development programs and related initiatives in applicable federal agencies (e.g., USDA, DOE, HUD, DOT, EPA).

[www.rurdev.usda.gov](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov) – Information on the USDA's Rural Development Program, including financial and technical assistance for business and cooperative programs, housing and community facilities, utility programs, and community development and empowerment programs.

[www.rurdev.usda.gov/nrdp](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/nrdp) – The National Rural Development Partnership is comprised of 36 state councils. Although New Jersey is not one of the Partners, the site details information on current projects and resources that applies nationwide.

[www.nal.usda.gov/ric](http://www.nal.usda.gov/ric) – The Rural Information Center provides information and referral services to rural communities, officials, organizations, and citizens. Topics of inquiry include successful development strategies, small business growth, and tourism promotion.

[www.rcap.org](http://www.rcap.org) – The Rural Community Assistance Program is a nationwide organization that provides on-site and technical assistance and training for water supply, wastewater, solid waste, and other community development issues.

[www.cas.psu.edu/docs/casconf/nercrd/nercrd.html](http://www.cas.psu.edu/docs/casconf/nercrd/nercrd.html) – The Northeast Center for Rural Development is one of four such centers nationwide and focuses on rural problems in the northeast. The Center initiates, facilitates, funds, and evaluates research and educational programs that improve economic and social well-being.

[www.unl.edu:80/kellog](http://www.unl.edu:80/kellog) – The W.K. Kellogg collection is an on-line compilation of rural community development resources, including guidebooks, manuals, workshop materials, reports, books, and videos.

[www.4w.com/heartland](http://www.4w.com/heartland) – The Heartland Center for Leadership Development is an independent, nonprofit organization that provides programs and publications focusing on the critical role played by local leadership.

[www.attra.org](http://www.attra.org) – The Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas Program functions as a national sustainable farming information center. Primary topics are sustainable practices, alternative enterprises, and marketing.

[www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org) – The American Planning Association sponsors research, publications, and conferences on a broad spectrum of planning topics, including small town and rural planning.

[www.ecotourism.org](http://www.ecotourism.org) – The Ecotourism Society provides information on research, conservation, and business issues related to ecotourism.

[www.nbia.org](http://www.nbia.org) – The National Business Incubator Association has a resource center that serves as a clearinghouse for publications, conferences, and other information pertaining to business incubators.

### **C. Other**

Bruce, Willa and Christine M. Reed, *S.T.A.R.T. Economic Development Local Leaders Guide* (Handbook and Video), Board of Regents, University of Nebraska, Omaha, NE, 1989

Wade, Jerry, *Building Communities from the Grassroots – Community Development Academy* (training course materials), University of Missouri Extension Service, 1998

## **Appendix C. Resource Guides**

Getting Started: Forming a Steering Committee  
Building a Broad Basis of Support and Involvement