# Plan Endorsement Recommendation Report for Millstone Borough



**Hillsborough Reformed Church - 1826**

New Jersey Department of State

Business Action Center

Office for Planning Advocacy

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This document is a recommendation report prepared by the Office for Planning Advocacy (OPA) as staff to the State Planning Commission (SPC or Commission), based on input of our partner agencies, Millstone Borough, Somerset County and members of the public. OPA will post this report and other material related to the Millstone Borough Plan Endorsement petition on our website. You can contact our office by email regarding petitions for Plan Endorsement by providing contact information, including name, organization, address, and e-mail address to [osgmail@sos.state.nj.us](mailto:osgmail@sos.state.nj.us).

Documents submitted by the Borough of Millstone for Plan Endorsement can be found here: <https://nj.gov/state/planning/plan-endorsement.shtml> and include the Borough’s Master Plan, Amendments, Individual Development Ordinances updates 2002 – 2015: Area in Need of Rehabilitation, etc.

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# **INTRODUCTION**

The Borough of Millstone in Somerset County first approached the Office of Smart Growth (NKA the Office of Planning Advocacy) in 2005 seeking Plan Endorsement. Working with the State Planning Commission (SPC), they sought to create a Hamlet Center in a Fringe Planning Area (PA3) that would enable the Borough to extend the Sewer Service to the Borough and support an inclusionary housing project. On January 16, 2013, the New Jersey State Planning Commission adopted a resolution establishing an Interim Hamlet Center for all of the Borough of Millstone.

Subsequently they received three extensions to complete the work outlined in the Action Plan to complete Plan Endorsement and have the Commission remove the “Interim” qualification. This report contains findings and conclusions concerning consistency of the Borough’s plans with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (State Plan). The review of the Petition is based on information submitted by the petitioner and information otherwise available to the Office for Planning Advocacy (OPA). Since the creation of the Hamlet and the extension of the Sewer Service Area, Millstone negotiated with the Hillsborough Township Sewer Authority and the Somerset Raritan Valley Sewerage Authority to provide sewer service to support the inclusionary housing project.

Adopting a resolution in support of Plan Endorsement demonstrates that the Borough of Millstone seeks a sustainable future by addressing infrastructure, economic development, housing, open space, historic preservation, environmental and resiliency and are aligned with the State Plan.

# BACKGROUND

The Borough of Millstone (hereafter Millstone or Borough) initiated the Plan Endorsement (PE) process with a prepetition meeting on September 18, 2005, so they could establish a Hamlet Center which would allow the Borough to be included in the Sewer Service Area (SSA). They followed the PE guidelines, established a Plan Endorsement Advisory Committee, and submitted their Municipal Self-Assessment on May 11, 2009. Our office and our State agency partners responded with an Opportunity and Constraint Reports and an Action Plan to complete PE on November 15, 2011. Twice, the SPC maintained the Center boundary and extended the deadline for Millstone to complete their Action Plan. In the past ten years, Millstone amended their master plan in 2017, adopted the Main Street Redevelopment Plan, extended the Sewer Service Area, and settled an affordable housing lawsuit. During the same period, they worked with FEMA, the State of New Jersey and Somerset County to preserve more open space and purchase properties in the floodplain. In addition to purchasing the properties, they are relocating and raising buildings, especially those of historic note. Together they are working to keep the Borough sustainable by looking back at its historical place during the War of Independence to market the Borough as an historic destination. Their plans go beyond addressing past flooding by working with private developers, Somerset County and the NJDEP’s Historic Preservation Office to realize the vision of their Redevelopment and Master Plans to create to a heritage park, develop age restricted housing and economic opportunities within the Borough.

At the same time, the Borough remains mindful to the problems of flooding. In the 2019 Somerset County Hazard Mitigation Plan, it was noted that the Borough experienced flooding in residential and commercial areas adjacent to the Millstone River during large storm events, like Hurricane Irene in 2012.

# CHRONOLOGY

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Event(s)** | **Date** | **Notes** |
| Prepetition Meeting | September 18, 2005 |  |
| Formally Submitted PE Petition | December6, 2007 |  |
| Fair Share Plan | May 26. 2009 | Includes Van Cleef Site |
| Main Street Rehabilitation Plan | 2010 |  |
| Consistency Review | November15, 2011 |  |
| SPC Adopts Interim Village Center | January 16, 2013 | 2 years to complete |
| Master Plan Reexamination | November 11, 2015 |  |
| SPC Extends Village Center | May 18, 2015 | 2 years more years |
| Negotiated sewer service agreement with Hillsborough Sewer Authority and Somerset Raritan Valley Sewerage Authority | 2016 | To connect Van Cleef inclusionary housing |
| Adopted a Flood Damage Prevention ordinance | October 17, 2016 |  |
| Master Plan Reexamination | March 7, 2017 |  |
| Somerset County Hazard Mitigation Plan | July 2019 | With Millstone Chapter |
| SPC Extends Village Center | August 5, 2019 | Until June 30, 2020 |
| Action Plan Completed | 2020 |  |
| PIC APPROVAL | March 17, 2021 | With Mapping & PIA |
| SPC ADOPTION | Presented to the SPC April 7, 2021 |  |

# **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Borough received a waiver from further public input based on public input received during the Master Plan examination and designation of their Area in Need of Rehabilitation.

# **LOCATION & REGIONAL CONTEXT**

The historic borough of 0.66 square miles along the Millstone River was settled by Quakers around 1690 on land that was occupied by Lenape Indians. It was an important crossroad during the Revolutionary War where General Washington’s camped after their victory in Princeton. The Borough is located in Somerset County South of Manville Borough, between Hillsborough and Franklin Townships.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Millstone Borough** | **Somerset County** |  |
| Land area (sq mi) | **0.66** | **302** |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| Population | **418** | **331,164** |  |
| Households | **162** | **118,729** |  |
| Average Household Size | **2.58** | **2.8** |  |
| Average Family Size | **3.03** | **3.22** |  |
| Population Density  (Persons/Sq. Mile) | **633.3** | **1,097.1** |  |
| Housing Units | **167** | **127,016** |  |
| Home Ownership Rate | **89.7%** | **75.8%** |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| Median Household Income | **$97,500** | **$121,378** |  |
| Per Capita Income | **$37,678** | **$86,468** |  |
| Persons Below in Poverty | **26.1%** | **4.7%** |  |
| Unemployment Rate (NJDOL 2018 NJ Annual Average Labor Force Estimates) | **2.5%** | **3.4%** |  |
| Sources: US Census Bureau, NJDOL; Data from Decennial Census and ACS unless otherwise noted |  |  |  |

Map

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DEMOGRAPHICS AND BOROUGH OF MILLSTONE’S FUTURE

The population began to fall in the 1980 Census from the previous decade high of 630 people. From 1990 until today, the population remains above 400. The NJTPA 2045 Population Forecast states that 438 is the expected number. It is likely to be much higher with the new sewer service and development of the Van Cleef site which calls for 92 age restricted units.

# INFRASTRUCTURE

# Water

The Borough is served by New Jersey American Water Company – Raritan and individual, private wells.

# Sewer Service Area



# Water Quality Management Plan Amendments

Somerset County Planning Board is in the final stages of preparation to submit the countywide Wastewater management Plan (WMP) Component to the NJDEP for adoption. It contains the results of the Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) and Nitrate Dilution-based Septic Capacity Analyses prepared by Maser Consulting for the County. They hope to submit this to NJDEP by early April.

# TRANSPORTATION

**Circulation**

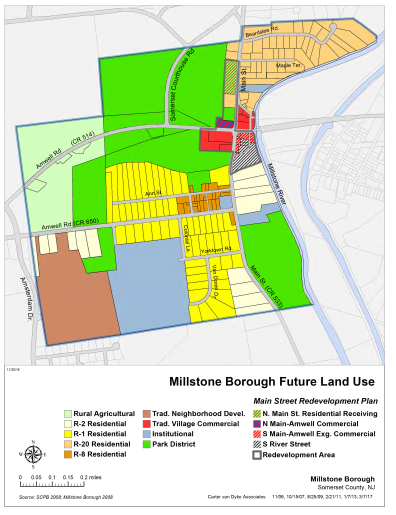
There are only two categories of roadways located in the Borough -- minor arterial and local streets. County Route 514 in Millstone, since the completion of the Bypass, and Main Street (County Road 533) are minor arterials with a designated County right-of-way of 66 feet. County Route 514 extends east/west from New Brunswick to Hillsborough where it intersects Route 206. Route 533 extends north/south from New Jersey Route 22 in Bridgewater Township through the Borough to Route 206 near Rocky Hill. The Millstone Bypass, which is called Somerset Court House Road, is also classified as a minor arterial, and has a right-of-way of 60 feet. All other roadways, including Amwell Road (also known as County Route 650), in the Borough are local streets.

Millstone is part of the Millstone Valley Scenic Byway with a corridor Management Plan.

The Borough, because of its small size is a walkable community. Despite the Bypass, there remains heavy truck traffic on Main Street. Diagram

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**FUTURE LAND USE MAP**

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**PROPOSED MAP AMENDMENTS**

In 2013, the Commission designated the entireborough a Hamlet Center. Due to Executive Order 89 and the history of flooding in portions of the Borough close to the Millstone River, the Borough of Millstone agrees to the following map that follows the current sewer service area and includes all the Parkland. Previously, the non-Park Planning Area was designated as Fringe Planning Area (PA3). Now, the non-Park area is either classified as Suburban (PA2) or Environmentally Sensitive (PA5). Also portions within the Hamlet Center and sewer service area are depicted as Critical Environmentally Sensitive (CES), where appropriate, to illustrate potential future flooding.

Diagram

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It is noted here that the NJ Department of Environmental Protection has indicated a concern with one lot that is proposed to be within the Center boundaries as it is in a floodway of the Millstone River. While noted, it is the recommendation to include this lot within the Center due to its value within Millstone’s historic district. Additionally, other NJDEP regulations are in place that will protect this lot from development that is outside of the character of what is already in place.

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| **Summary of Proposed Map Amendments**   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Planning Area** | **Label** | **Acres** | **Acreage ∆ from the 2013 Map** | | PA 2 | Suburban | 187 | 187 | | PA 5 | Environmentally Sensitive | 121 | 121 | | Park | Park | 135 | -15 | |  | **Total - >>** | **443** |  | |  |  |  |  | | | | | |  | |  |
|  |  |
| **Type of Map Amendment** | | | **Label** | **Acres** | |
| Hamlet Center | | | Millstone Borough Center | 314 | |
| New CES | | | Critical Environmental Sites | 20 | |
|  | | |  |  | |
|  | | |  |  | |
| Hamlet Center | | | Changed by | -130 | |
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STATE PLAN GOALS REVIEW

## GOAL 1: REVITALIZE THE STATE’S CITIES AND TOWNS

In 2010, the Borough created, Main Street Redevelopment Plan

* Established an Area in Need of Rehabilitation in 2019 to facilitate Age Restricted housing, relocate properties out of flood prone areas.
* Entered into agreement with neighboring Hillsborough Township MUA to connect to sewer system that foster redevelopment.

## GOAL 2: CONSERVE THE STATE’S NATURAL RESOURCES AND SYSTEMS

* 2009 parks acquisition County Improvement Authority
* 135 acres open space and parks, approximately 30% of the Borough

## GOAL 3: PROMOTE BENEFICIAL ECONOMIC GROWTH, DEVELOPMENT AND RENEWAL FOR ALL RESIDENTS OF NEW JERSEY

* Rehabilitation Plan
* Plan to create heritage Park (Revolutionary War tourist district)
* 2016 - Flood Damage Prevention, Ordinance

## GOAL 4: PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT, PREVENT AND CLEAN UP POLLUTION

* Addressing flooding by relocation of properties out of flood zone
* Remediation and rehabilitation of gas and service station

## GOAL 5: PROVIDE ADEQUATE PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES AT A REASONABLE COST

* Schools, municipal building, Parks, Sewer Service agreement
* Working to facilitate goals of the Millstone Valley Scenic Byway and management plan.

## GOAL 6: PROVIDE ADEQUATE HOUSING AT A REASONABLE COST

* Van Cleef Family Partnership to create 92 age restricted units
* Affordable housing plan encourages addition affordable units through rehabilitation of existing housing

## GOAL 7: PRESERVE AND ENHANCE AREAS WITH HISTORIC, CULTURAL, SCENIC, OPEN SPACE AND RECREATIONAL VALUE

* Created the Millstone Historic District
  + Van Doren House – Washington HQ after battle of Princeton
  + Hillsborough Reformed Church – 1826, original was burned 1777
  + Site of Somerset County Court House & aJail – burned 1777
  + Pier from railroad trestle – built 1872 & abandoned 1879
  + Van Buren House
  + Wheelwright Shop
  + Blacksmith Shop
  + Borough Hall – 1850
* Working with Somerset and SHPO to develop Revolutionary War tourist district
* Will relocate historic buildings out of foodway into historic tourist district

## 

## GOAL 8: ENSURE SOUND, INTEGRATED PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION STATEWIDE GOALS:

* Keeping up to date on Master Plan, including affordable housing element.
* Working with Somerset County on County Wastewater Quality Management Plan, Hazardous Mitigation Plan and the County Priority Investment framework.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

After working with the Borough of Millstone for more than 15 years, they continue to plan to ensure that the small borough remains sustainable in spite of their size and available resources. Based on the work, they have demonstrated that their actions and plans are aligned with the State Plan. It is my recommendation that the Commission adopt the Resolution for Plan Endorsement. Please see the attached Plan Implementation Agreement for details of their implementation agenda.