

April 29, 2004

MEMORANDUM TO: Members, Plan Implementation Committee

FROM: Adam Zellner, Executive Director
Joseph I. Donald, PP; Area Planner

RE: Center Petition Report for – Gouldtown and Fairton Village Centers
Township of Fairfield, Cumberland County

Pursuant to Subchapter 8 of the State Planning Rules (N.J.A.C. 17:32 et seq.) in effect prior to January 7, 2002, the Township of Fairfield, Cumberland County has submitted a petition to amend the State Plan Policy Map (SPPM) through designating two portions of the Township, Gouldtown and Fairton, as two separate Village Centers.

General Information: The Township of Fairfield's original petition for a Center was originally filed with the Cumberland County Cross-acceptance Report in 1998. This petition was part of a joint municipal request for a Regional Center. The participating municipalities were the City of Bridgeton, the Township of Upper Deerfield, the Township of Hopewell, and the Township of Fairfield. The petition was funded by a grant from NOAA for municipalities in the CAFRA area. However, in September 2001 the City of Bridgeton filed a revised petition requesting a Regional Center designation for only the City of Bridgeton. The City took this action because the petitions from the adjoining Townships were still incomplete, and also due to its expressed socially and economically distressed condition, which warranted additional State assistance.

The Township of Fairfield is currently proposing two Village Centers: Gouldtown and Fairton. The proposed Gouldtown Village Center overlays Planning Areas 1 and, 2. The proposed Fairton Village Center is within Planning Area 4. The Gouldtown Center is located outside of the area regulated by the CAFRA. However, the entire Fairton Center is located within the area regulated by the CAFRA. This petition seeks to expand the existing Fairton Coastal Center. Fairfield's Master Reexamination Report is dated September 02, 2002 and was adopted on September 3, 2002. The Township of Fairfield does not have a COAH certified Housing Element or Fair Share Plan.

The Township is seeking this Center designation in order to preserve the historic character of its agricultural community, and in order to channel future growth to the Gouldtown and Fairton Centers through infill development and the encouragement of mixed residential, commercial and agricultural based service/industrial uses. Due to environmental constraints and the lack of sewer and water infrastructure limited growth is anticipated to occur in both the centers and their respective Environs. Within the context of the Town of Fairfield and County of Cumberland, this petition seeks specifically to promote the conservation of the natural resources and systems, and additionally promote beneficial growth development and renewal, thereby promoting the goals of the State Plan.

Staff Recommendations: The staff recommends the designation of the proposed Gouldtown Village Center and the Fairton Village Center as shown on the attached map, conditioned upon the Township of Fairfield submitting an application for Plan Endorsement to the State Planning Commission within one year of the memorializing resolution. This recommendation includes all amendments to the attached proposed Planning and Implementation Agenda (PIA).

Public Participation: The regional center petition was presented, discussed, and approved by the City of Bridgeton, the Township of Fairfield and the Township of Hopewell in February 2000. Similar public participation and approval was held at the Cumberland County Planning Board in March 2000 during the cross-acceptance process. Additionally, the Township's growth projections have been further discussed and developed throughout the past two years within the context of the steering committee meetings and public meetings of the Western Southern Cumberland Strategic Planning initiative.

Major Issues:

- The Township has not petitioned COAH for certification, and lacks a COAH certified Housing Element and Fair Share Plan.
- Expansion of the Fairton Coastal Center – NJDEP has reviewed and approved of the amended boundary proposed herein.
- The Township has large expanses of undeveloped and unimproved residentially zoned land surrounding both of the proposed village centers, and there exists the need to continue to plan in order to ensure that any future growth is targeted to each of the centers.
- We are still considering the inclusion of a forty-four acre tract of municipally owned land that has been proposed as part of an expansion of the Bridgetown Regional Center - the area is zoned partially commercial and partially residential.

Regional Profile: As shown on Map 1, the Township of Fairfield, one of Cumberland County's 14 municipalities, is situated between the Bridgeton Regional Center located to the northwest of the County and the Millville-Vineland Regional Center located to the northeast of the County. The southerly extent of the Township extends as far south as the Delaware Bay. The villages of Fairton and Gouldtown are links, along with Cedarville, Dividing Creek, Newport and Port Norris on the necklace of Centers that follow County Route 553 through the southwestern part of Cumberland County. The CAFRA boundary follows the old Winchester and Western Railroad right-of-way, in a northwest – southeast direction, from Fairton in Fairfield Township through Lawrence to the border of Downe Township.

There are four State highways that traverse the County in a north-south direction; Routes 55, 47, 77 and 347. There are two State highways that traverse the County in an east-west direction; Routes 44 and 77. Routes 49 and 77 intersect with each other in the western part of the county in the City of Bridgeton. Routes 49, 55 and 47 intersect with each other in the eastern part of the county in the City of Millville.

The southwesterly boundary of the Pinelands National Reserve extends into the eastern section of Cumberland County. Two municipalities within the County have land area within the National Reserve. Specifically, the Township of Maurice River is almost entirely within the National Reserve. Additionally, an easterly section of the City of Vineland, located within the environs of the Millville-Vineland Regional Center is also situated within the National Reserve.

A large percentage of the County's upland areas surrounding the two Regional Centers are in Planning Area 4 and are either in agricultural production or are wooded lots. The Bayshore wetlands, streams and

river corridors, such as the Cohansey River, located in the southerly and westerly areas of the County are predominantly Planning Area 5.

Agriculture has long been the backbone of Cumberland County’s economy, generating over \$2 billion per year and employing over 5,000 people. In 1994, Cumberland County voters passed a trust fund referendum to set aside one (1) cent per \$100 of assessed valuation to preserve agricultural lands or open space. The primary purpose of the *Cumberland County Farmland Preservation, Open Space, Parks and Recreation Trust Fund Plan (1996)* is to continue providing County matching funds for the Easement Purchase Farmland Preservation Program. The Plan also marks the beginning of a comprehensive effort to coordinate local, state and federal government, and non-profit and private investments. The County has 609 farms covering approximately 68,000 acres, or 20 percent of the County’s area. Easement Purchase Target areas encompassing more than 64,000 acres of prime farmland are concentrated almost completely in the western half of the County, with one exception being in an area of eastern Vineland. As of 2000, over 7,000 acres were permanently preserved. The Plan projects that the use of the Trust Fund Revenues will enable the County to preserve 800 to 1,000 acres of farmland per year.

The Township of Fairfield is located along the Delaware Bayshore, which stretches along the southwestern coast of New Jersey. Comprising tidal rivers, salt marshes, woodlands, farms and historic towns and cities, the Bayshore is rich in natural and cultural resources. Though it encompasses dozens of municipalities and four counties, the Bayshore functions as one interdependent ecosystem of water, soil, plants, animals, and people. Water is the unifying feature of the Delaware Bayshore region. Over the centuries it has defined boundaries, attracted people and wildlife, and shaped history and industry. Today however, with the exception of the petroleum and industrial centers of Gloucester County, much of the Delaware Bay Watershed is isolated, economically static and dependent on agriculture, ecotourism, and remnants of once prosperous industries.

In March 2001, the NJDCA awarded the County of Cumberland a Smart Growth Planning Grant to prepare a Strategic Plan for the Western/Southern Cumberland Region. The Township of Fairfield, along with the City of Bridgeton, is one of twelve participating municipalities. It is fully anticipated that the final plan will be ready by the summer 2004. Once complete, it will be submitted to the SPC as part of the Cumberland Development Corporation’s plan endorsement application.

The following two tables provide a review of the respective Village Center data in comparison with the Township of Fairfield data and Cumberland County data in the area of geographic area of coverage, population and jobs:

Table 1a: Comparison of the Fairton Village Center, Municipality and County

	Fairton Village Center				Fairfield Township				Cumberland County			
	2000	2020	#Δ	%Δ	2000	2020	#Δ	%Δ	2000	2020	#Δ	%Δ
(Gross) Area (Sq. Miles)	0.44	0.44	n/a	n/a	44	44	n/a	n/a	677	677	n/a	n/a
Pop.	781	1,233	452	58.0%	6,283	7,441	1,158	18%	146,438	174,479	28,041	19%
Pop/Sq. Mi.	1,775	2,802	1,027	58.0%	143	169	26	18%	216	258	42	19%
Jobs	40	75	35	88.0%	802	905	103	13%	60,400	81,258	20,858	35%

Source: Fairfield Center Petition; US Census; CUPR 2001 State Plan Impact Assessment; Population excludes prison inmates; SJTPO - Cumberland County Forecasts-five year intervals, endorsed by TAC (12/16/03).

Table 1b: Comparison of the Gouldtown Village Center, Municipality and County

	Gouldtown Village Center				Fairfield Township				Cumberland County			
(Gross)	2000	2020	#Δ	%Δ	2000	2020	#Δ	%Δ	2000	2020	#Δ	%Δ
Area (Sq. Miles)	0.74	0.74	n/a	n/a	44	44	n/a	n/a	677	677	n/a	n/a
Pop.	1,555	2,739	1,184	76.0%	6,283	7,441	1,158	18%	146,438	174,479	28,041	19%
Pop/Sq. Mi.	2,101	3,701	1,600	76.0%	143	169	26	18%	216	258	42	19%
Jobs	135	175	40	30.0%	802	905	103	13%	60,400	81,258	20,858	35%

Source: Fairfield Center Petition; US Census; CUPR 2001 State Plan Impact Assessment; Population excludes prison inmates; SJTPO - Cumberland County Forecasts-five year intervals, endorsed by TAC (12/16/03).

Township Profile: The Township of Fairfield, comprising an area of forty-four square miles, is located in the southern part of Cumberland County bordered by the Delaware Bay. It is approximately 42 miles southeast of Philadelphia and 48 miles west of Atlantic City and encompasses approximately 42 square miles. The Township is a rural agricultural community with residential/commercial concentrations in two areas referred to as Fairton and Gouldtown. Historic development with the Township has been largely compact within the two aforementioned areas. However, more recent development appears to be taking place in the large woodland areas to the northeast of the Township. Several large nurseries are located in the Township. The western half of the Township is a tidal marsh with little developmental potential and is under the jurisdiction of New Jersey’s Coastal Area Facilities Review Act (CAFRA).

As with most rural agricultural areas in New Jersey, the residents and local officials of Fairfield are cognizant of the increasing pressures to develop the land. The Master Plan Reexamination Report has recurring references to concern over retaining the rural attributes of the Township and protecting the forests for the environmental (especially aquifer recharge) benefits they provide. The Township has an excellent Environmental Resource Inventory, dated January 1994. The primary drainage and major hydrological feature is the Cohansy River. The majority of the soils are excellent for tree growth. The entire northeastern portion of the Township consists of prime agricultural soils, excepting the drainages. Wetlands, State and public lands, agriculture and woodlands occupy approximately 90% of the Township’s land area. Currently the Township does not have an open-space acquisition plan.

The lack of recreational facilities is noted and highlighted in the Master Plan Reexamination Report, dated June 2002. The recent basketball/tot lot construction adjacent to Longview Drive in Gouldtown, has been a welcome addition to recreational opportunities in the Township. The Township Committee is now studying areas within Gouldtown for additional park areas that could benefit from grants for curbs and sidewalks, etc.

The former Central Railroad of New Jersey Right of Way defines the boundary between the two major topographic regions of the Township. The eastern section has gently rolling hills with a high elevation of over 20 feet occurring north of Route 49 near the Millville boundary. The western half is characterized by low, flat plains and tidal marshes, much of which is inundated twice daily by tides. The many creeks and rivers that crisscross the Township are some of the most pristine bodies of water in the State and provide the habitat for a wide variety of wildlife.

The Southwoods Federal Prison is located within the Township. The number of prisoners is not reflected within the Township population totals. However, the Prison provides for approximately 340 jobs within the Township. The Township is experiencing social and economic distress. The Township’s unemployment rate is currently 12 percent, representing four times the State average and twice the County average.

Fairton Center Profile: The Fairton Village Center covers a geographic area of 0.44 square miles

(281.60 acres)¹ and is situated adjacent to the eastern bank of the Cohanse River. The village is centrally located within the Township of Fairfield and the underlying Planning Area is Rural (PA4). Three County roads intersect within the village. The primary land use within the village is residential, with 1.5-acre and 1-acre minimum lot sizes predominating. Additionally, there are two sections within the village that are zoned for 35,000 square foot minimum lot sizes: one section is located in the northern area, east of Route 609 and north of Route 553; and a second area is located south of the Mill Pond. Contained within this zone are several non-conforming improved residential lots. This heterogeneous development pattern is consistent with the historic development patterns that have occurred throughout the village since its earliest establishment. An area of undeveloped agricultural land has been zoned as R2, and is included within the southern area of the village boundary to accommodate future residential growth. Retail/commercial land uses are relatively small in scale and the existing zone plan does not provide accommodation for their growth or expansion. An Elementary School is located within the village on County Route 698, south of the Mill Pond. Additionally the Fairton Marina is located on a tributary to the Cohanse River proximate to Route 553.

Table 2A: Village Center Guidelines for Fairton:

Fairton Village Center	Guidelines	2000	2020	#Δ	%Δ
Area (Sq. Miles)	< 1	0.44	0.44	n/a	n/a
Population	< 4,500	781	1,233	452	58.0%
Gross Pop. Density (pop./sq mile)	>5,000	1,775	2,802	1,027	58.0%
Housing	100 to 2,000	238	343	105	44.0%
Gross Housing Density (DU/Acre)	>3	0.85	1.22	0.37	44.0%
Employment	50 to 1,000	40	75	135	88.0%
Jobs: Dwelling Unit Ratio	.5:1 to 2:1	.17:1	.22:1	.05:1	29.0%

Gouldtown Village Center Profile: The Gouldtown Village Center covers an area of 0.74 square miles (471.76 acres), this area is located in the northerly section of the Township of Fairfield. The easterly border of the proposed center runs in a north-south direction and is coterminous with the boundary of the Bridgeton Regional Center. The westerly extent of the proposed center is bounded by County Route 553. The northerly and southerly borders generally follow an area of the Metropolitan Planning Area that is an outcrop of the Bridgeton Regional Center, with a small area of the Suburban Planning Area included to the northeast. The northerly line is primarily bounded by County Route 720. County Route 670 forms the southerly border for a short distance extending from the City of Bridgeton. State Route 49 traverses the southerly section of the proposed center running in an east-west direction.

The primary land use within the Gouldtown area is residential. There exists no distinct “downtown area”, however, there are distinct neighborhoods located both to the north and south of Route 49. One neighborhood located north of Route 49 and south of County Route 720 has recently undergone stabilization and revitalization (new curbing and sidewalks and development of a recreational area) by the Township. The same neighborhood has additionally experienced septic failures in the past. 1.5 acre and 1 acre minimum lot sizes predominate throughout the Gouldtown area. A small area of land zoned for 35,000 square foot minimum lot sizes (R3 District) is located south of Route 49 adjacent to the Bridgeton municipal line. This area comprises a mix of residential and commercial uses, along with the County Public Works Facility. Commercial land uses are typically concentrated on both sides of the Route 49 corridor within a Planned Business Light Industry zone.

Table 2B: Village Center Guidelines for Gouldtown:

Gouldtown Village Center	Guidelines	2000	2020	#Δ	%Δ
Area (Sq. Miles)	< 1	0.74	0.74	n/a	n/a

¹ Approximately sixty six (66) acres are located north of the Mill Pond bridge and an additional two hundred and fifteen (215) acres are located south of the Mill Pond bridge

Population	< 4,500	1,555	2,739	1,184	76.0%
Gross Pop. Density (pop./sq mile)	>5,000	2,101	3,701	1,600	76.0%
Housing	100 to 2,000	474	761	287	61.0%
Gross Housing Density (DU/Acre)	>3	1	1.61	0.61	61.0%
Employment	50 to 1,000	135	175	40	30.0%
Jobs: Dwelling Unit Ratio	.5:1 to 2:1	.28:1	.23:1	-.05:1	-18.0%

Environs Profile:

The greater expanse of agricultural land areas within the Township of Fairfield that surround Fairton and Gouldtown are zoned as Agricultural with minimum five-acre lot sizes and are designated as Planning Ares 4. Within this area, the environs are mostly in agricultural production or low-density housing. The County Agricultural Development Board has identified several areas for preservation through easement purchase/donation, and is actively encouraging other farmland retention efforts. Commercial and residential sprawl, however, continues on NJ 49, NJ 56 and NJ 77 emanating from Bridgeton. Lands within the Township located west of Route 657 (Rockville Flat Top Road) are primarily Flood Plains and State owned. A small 19 home community known as Sea Breeze is the only settlement located along the Township’s Delaware coastline.

The *Village of Fairton* is bounded to the northwest by a golf course. This eighteen-hole golf course is sandwiched between the Cohansy River and Route 609. East of Route 609 and north of the Village are expansive areas of undeveloped land zoned for residential uses, along with pockets improved residential lots. Further north and concentrated along the Township’s northerly border with the City of Bridgeton is an area zoned for Planned Business and Light Industrial uses. However, this area is currently undeveloped and treed over. The former Central Railroad Right of Way traverses in a north-south direction, along the easterly border of the Village, south of the Mill Pond. Additionally, the Clark’s Pond Wildlife Management Area is bordered to the east of the Village and extends in an easterly direction along the northern bank of the Mill Pond and Clark’s Pond. A zone of transition exists in the southerly tip of the Village wherein anticipated residential expansion within the Village is being directed to previously zoned agricultural lands. This area has been zoned for minimum 1-acre lot sizes between Route 601 and Rockville Road. Additionally, the area was established in an effort to direct new home construction away from the predominantly agricultural districts.

Immediately to the north of *Gouldtown Village* is a general Industrial zone, which currently only supports quarrying activities. There are four quarries located within this area of the Township, one of which is an abandoned gravel pit and the other three (asphalt, mining and recycling operations) are still active. Potential reuse of the abandoned quarry is for recreation and open space considerations. All of the quarries are located within the Township’s single industrial district. The Township has a quarry closure and remediation ordinance in place. An active gravel pit is located to the south of the Gouldtown Village, proximate to the northerly side of the intersection of County Routes 553 and 670. The northeast section of the Township supports primarily residential uses, and the headwaters of a Cohansy River tributary. Immediately to the west of the Gouldtown Village lies the City of Bridgeton, which supports a mix of land uses including residential, industrial and commercial uses, along with the Bridgeton Prison.

Fairfield Township Capacity Analyses Profiles:

Existing and Potential Development and Redevelopment: Future development potential within the Gouldtown and Fairton is primarily focused on infill opportunities. Redevelopment opportunities exist within Fairton between Route 553 and Route 609 where there exists a predominance of small, non-conforming improved residential dwellings representing various levels of maintenance. Future development opportunities also exist within Fairton on undeveloped previously zoned agricultural lands that are now included within the Village center and zoned for residential use. According to municipal records, there are an average of 15 homes constructed annually within the Township. As a consequence, existing growth trends have been extremely modest. All future development activity in the proximity of the Golf Course, the Cohansey River, and the Ponds have been limited so as to protect the environmental integrity of those areas. With regard to the Mill Pond and Clark's Pond area, homes can be built near, but not on the water's edge. Township officials have indicated that the Township is in a position to be able to encourage new development without having to construct new roads as much of the infrastructure is already in place. Lastly, the Township currently owns a 44-acre tract of land (Block 21, Lot 28.06) that is located along the southerly border of Shoemaker Road and bounded to the east by the Bridgeton Fairton Road (Route 609) and to the west by Clark's Pond Road. Approximately one third of this tract lies within a Business zone along Route 609 while of the balance of the tract is situated within a residential zoned district. The Township anticipates the inclusion of this tract within the Bridgeton Regional Center and additionally would like to utilize the site to support of future business development opportunities.

Transportation and Circulation: The principal roads within the eastern section of the Township are State Route 49, and County Routes 553, 620, 692 and 698. Routes 553, 49, 692, and 698 help connect Fairfield Township with the City of Bridgeton to the north, and the Cities of Millville and Vineland to the east. Route 620 traverses the Township in a northeastern direction. County Route 601 connects the Township's western boundary between both the Cohansey River and Back Creek until terminating as the shore of the Delaware Bay. The repaving of several County Roads to date, were paid for by funds from the NJDOT. NJ Transit Bus Route 553 is the only public transit that serves Fairfield. This service provides access to and from Atlantic City, which functions as a major regional employment center for many South Jersey residents.

Water and Wastewater Supply: The Township wells feed from the Cohansey Aquifer, which has sufficient capacity to support the Township's future growth projections. The Cumberland County Utilities Authority, which services the City of Bridgeton and some portions of the adjacent Townships, along with the Fairton federal prison, is operating at only 50% of capacity. The regional sewer infrastructure is in relatively good condition. The predominant land area within Fairton is within a sewer service area as is the case with Gouldtown. Neighborhoods within the north of Gouldtown have experienced some septic failures over the past few years. Plans are being discussed for a new sewer line in the next two years. Both Gouldtown and Fairton were included within Cumberland County's 208 Water Quality Management plan. However, the Township is not in a position to afford the installation of sewer lines at this time.

Affordable Housing: The Township does not have a Housing plan or Fair Share Plan that is certified by COAH, and has a 40-unit rehabilitation obligation and an obligation for 79 units of newly constructed affordable housing.

Community Facilities: Within the Township of Fairfield, there are currently two public schools (Middle and Elementary). The Town is currently planning to construct a new elementary school on Route 49 immediately east of the Gouldtown Village boundary, and adjacent to the existing elementary school. The new school will replace the existing elementary school that will be demolished and the site use for recreational purposes. This school will additionally accommodate all of the district's Kindergarten to 8th grade students. The existing school in the Fairton district will be sold and converted to a Performing Arts Center. Four Little League Baseball Fields are situated behind the Municipal Complex on Route 553. A Senior Center is planned for construction on municipally owned land adjacent to the municipal building. The County's public works yard, which straddles the City of Bridgeton and Fairfield, is located along Route 49.

Historic and Cultural Resources: The Township of Fairfield does not have a Historical Society. Both the Old Stone Church, situated in the south-central area of the Township, and the Spindrift Sailing Yacht site, situated within Fairton are located on the National Register of Historic Places. A Grist Mill, dating back to the eighteenth century, is possibly the oldest manmade extant structure in Cumberland County. The Mill is located on County 553 where it intersects with County Route 609 (Bridgeton Millville Road). The Mill is set on Clark's Pond in the Fairton section of the Township. The Township has applied for an ISTEPA grant for the restoration of the Grist Mill. Once restored it has the potential to inject the stimulus necessary to boost the local tourism economy. Creation of the Fairfield Heritage Trail and inclusion on the Coastal Heritage Trail Route under the Historic Settlements Theme would only deepen the potential for economic benefit to area businesses generated by tourist interest. The Fairfield Heritage Trail is located in the Clark's Pond Wildlife Management Area, which borders the north shore of the Pond.

Environmental Resources: The environmental resources in the Township of Fairfield are extensive, including wetlands, threatened and endangered species, the Sea Breeze (Dix) Wildlife Management Area and the Clark's Pond Wildlife Management Area. The Township has an Environmental Commission that was appointed in 1991. Fairfield Township includes slightly over 6 linear miles of shoreline along the Delaware Bay. Additionally, the Township is bordered on the west by the Cohansey River which includes 11 acres of tidal marsh; this area is a major center of biodiversity. Its surrounding forest, tidal wetlands, farmlands and other habitats are home to more threatened and endangered species than almost anywhere in eastern North American wetlands. Fairton is bordered to the west by the Cohansey River and to the east by Clark's Pond, which is a manmade facility created by the damming of the Cohansey River. The Township's 18 hole golf course provides a natural buffer between Cohansey River and the adjoining built up areas. No new construction is permissible proximate to the river or ponds. The entirety of the lands within Fairton is in the CAFRA. Natural resources outside CAFRA are found primarily along the river and in public ownership. The Township of Fairfield completed an Environmental Resource Inventory in January 1994 with the assistance of its Environmental Commission and the County of Cumberland. There have been minor reports of saltwater intrusion along the Cohansey River.

Agriculture: Farming and natural open spaces occupy the largest area of land use within the Township of Fairfield. The Township boasts having prime agricultural lands for Truck Farming, and additionally lays claim to having the largest lettuce farms in the State. The Township has prime agricultural soils occupying the northeast to north central quadrants of the Township. Farming applications in this area of Fairfield are made up of vegetable farming, hay, corn, soybeans and more recently, nursery farms. Within the southern portion of the Township prime agricultural soils are contained within the central most southern portions of the Township.

Growth Management Mechanisms: In order to preserve lands in the Environs, and limit the tendency for sprawl, the Township will consider creating a voluntary mechanism to transfer density between non-contiguous parcels as permitted by the Municipal Land Use Law (NJSA 40:55D – 1 et. seq.) and through the new Transfer of Development Rights legislation (P.L. 2004. c2(C.))

Intergovernmental Coordination: Fairfield Township is a participating partner in the Western Southern Cumberland Regional Strategic Planning effort that was underwritten by funding from the NJDCA. Additionally the Township has partnered in regional planning efforts for Watershed Area 17 for the Salem and Cumberland counties in the Delaware River bayshore. The Township worked with Hopewell, Greenwich Townships and the City Bridgeton in 1997 to develop the Lower Cohansey River Management Plan. The Township of Fairfield is committed to continue working cooperatively with the City of Bridgeton and reviewing opportunities to become part of the Bridgeton Regional Center.

Comments/Recommendations: With limited economic and community redevelopment resources, the Township of Fairfield cannot pull itself out of economic stagnation. The designation of the Fairton and Gouldtown Centers, coupled with the State agency’s programmatic, technical and financial assistance, and prioritization are necessary elements in the Township’s future revitalization efforts. Although there does not exist a comprehensive or strategic revitalization plan at this time, Fairfield anticipates that the designation of the two centers, along with ongoing regional planning efforts will assist in coordinating public sector actions as well as the encouragement of private sector reinvestment.

Planning and Implementation Agenda: The proposed PIA contains the main issues the Township hopes to address within the next ten years. The Township recognizes that the PIA will be modified to incorporate additional regional redevelopment and suburban community development efforts when the Western Cumberland regional planning process is completed.

Recommendations for PIA: Staff recommends a number of additions to the Township’s PIA, as follows:

Land Use:

- Update Master Plan to incorporate the Fairton Village Center and the Gouldtown Village Center (2 Years)
 - Amend maps, land use plan and zone plan where applicable
- Create design guidelines to preserve the character of both of the Village Centers and promote their sustainability (2 Years)
 - Complete visual assessment of Center(s)
 - Adopt design guidelines for commercial areas
 - Incorporate into the land use ordinances
- Develop a growth management plan for the expansive areas of residentially zoned undeveloped parcels of land surrounding both of the Village Centers. (Year 1)
- Create a voluntary mechanism to transfer density between non-contiguous parcels, as permitted by the MLUL, to deter residential and non-residential patterns of sprawl development within the environs. (Year 1)
 - Review the applicability of TDR
- Review the opportunities to map environmental sensitive sites with CES overlays. (1 Year).

Economic Development:

- Encourage the development and enhancement of defined commercial areas and programs supportive of the needs of both the business community and their patrons (4 Years)
 - Support sidewalk, streetscape, lighting and façade improvements designed to unify and identify commercial areas;
 - Develop a coordinated parking and circulation plan supportive of the needs of both the business community and their patrons.
 - Development of a “downtown improvement plan” for the Fairton Village Center.

Transportation:

- Consider the preparation of a bikeway plan that will link the Township’s open spaces with a non-vehicular path (3 Years)
- Provide for improved pedestrian & bicycle safety. Prepare a Circulation Element for inclusion to the Master Plan to (3 Years):
 - investigate the possibility of freestanding pedestrian “yield” signs at intersections and crosswalks as appropriate;
 - provide painted crosswalks in conjunction with bus stops located along State Highway Route 49 and in the proximity of the Township’s Schools; and
 - identify key bicycle routes and placement of bicycle accommodations (parking and racks).
- Prepare a Route 49 Streetscape Plan (3 Years)
 - Include traffic calming features

Agriculture:

- A Farmland Preservation Plan Element should be prepared and incorporated into the Master Plan to serve as the foundation for preserving farmland and reviewing the viability of the agribusiness within the municipality. (2 Years)
- Establish an Agricultural Advisory Committee as a precursor to qualifying for participation within the SADC farmland preservation planning incentive grant program. (1 Year)

Historic Preservation:

- To protect the historic buildings within the Township of Fairfield, a Historic Preservation Element should be prepared for inclusion into the Master Plan and protection for those historic buildings incorporated into the land use ordinances. (2 Years)

Recreation and Open Space:

- Prepare an Open Space Plan (4 Years)
 - Develop plan and adopt ordinances