

## MEMORANDUM

**MEMORANDUM TO:** Members, State Planning Commission

**FROM:** Adam Zellner, Executive Director  
Paul Drake, Planning Director

**RE:** Recommendation for Center Designation of the  
Branchville Village Center

**DATE:** June 16, 2004

Pursuant to the State Planning Rules (N.J.A.C. 17:32 et seq.) in effect prior to January 7, 2002, the Borough of Branchville, Sussex County, submitted a petition during Cross-acceptance II as part of Sussex County's Cross-acceptance Report, to amend the State Plan Policy Map (SPPM) to designate the Borough of Branchville as a Village Center.

Branchville and Frankford jointly filed a center petition back in 1998. Through the discussion we have had with Frankford Township and Branchville Borough, it became apparent that these centers should be separated into distinct centers. Frankford has agreed to move into Plan Endorsement for to advance their Town Center. We are recommending center designation at this time for Branchville.

Branchville is a traditional historic village. It is currently serviced entirely by septic systems, however the density of existing homes on small lots creates potential health concerns. As shown on the attached map, a portion of the Branchville center will also extend into Frankford Township for the purposes of abandoning nearby existing substandard septic systems that now service an elementary school, and two nursing homes. A new wastewater treatment plant and groundwater discharge location is also planned to be located within the center in Frankford Township. This action will improve water quality from the current conditions.

The petition was reviewed by this office and found to be generally consistent with the goals and policies of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP), generally satisfying the SDRP's criteria for an existing Village Center as shown in the chart below:

	<b>Village Center Guidelines</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>#Δ</b>	<b>%Δ</b>
<b>Branchville Village Center</b>					
<b>Area (Sq. Miles)</b>	< 1	0.6	0.6	--	--
<b>Population</b>	< 4,500	851	1050	199	19
<b>Gross Pop. Density (pop./sq mile)</b>	>5,000	1,418	1750	332	19
<b>Housing</b>	100 to 2,000	370	415	45	11
<b>Gross Housing Density (DU/Acre)</b>	>3	1.24	1.45	--	--
<b>Employment</b>	50 to 1,000	1,824	2,424	600	25
<b>Jobs: Dwelling Unit Ratio</b>	.5:1 to 2:1	4.9:1	5.8:1	--	--

The staff review of the petition dated was forwarded to the Plan Implementation Committee for consideration at the Plan Implementation Committee (PIC) on May 26, 2004 recommending approval of the proposed Village center. After a presentation and discussion with representatives of the Borough, the PIC members agreed to forward the petition to the SPC with the recommendation that the Borough of Branchville be designated a Village Center, subject to amendment of the Center Boundary and Planning and Implementation Agenda.

The Borough has agreed to the revised Center Boundary and revised Planning and Implementation Agenda, attached, which incorporate the PIC recommendations.

I am therefore recommending that the Commission approve this petition as amended.

**BRANCHVILLE VILLAGE CENTER  
BRANCHVILLE BOROUGH, SUSSEX COUNTY, NJ  
PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION AGENDA – JUNE 16, 2004**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Local Effort</b>	<b>State/County Assistance</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
<p>Review land development ordinances to make them and the development review process flexible and more user friendly to stimulate improvement of existing commercial areas and attract desirable business to vacant and redeveloped store spaces.</p> <p>Identify areas for potential residential/retail /mixed –use redevelopment near or within the village core. Focus on small sites (to keep scale of development small) of vacant land or underutilized property.</p> <p>Evaluate land use zoning ordinances along Route 206 to encourage the appropriate scale, design and intensity of development that would support mixed-use development that is keeping with the rural character of the area and the corridor throughout Sussex County.</p> <p>Establish clear zoning ordinances that specifically discourage the creation of strip malls and other generic branded building types that do not add to the sense of a rural environment along Route 206 located along the periphery of the village.</p> <p>Create design guidelines to preserve the character of the Borough and promote its economic growth in accordance with the vision for the village.</p> <p>Develop targets and indicators to measure planning progress</p>	<p>Planning Board to initiate review of these items listed</p>	<p>Smart Future Grant from DCA for comprehensive amended Branchville Village plan.</p>	<p>Spring 2005</p>

**BRANCHVILLE VILLAGE CENTER  
BRANCHVILLE BOROUGH, SUSSEX COUNTY, NJ  
PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION AGENDA – JUNE 16, 2004**

<p><b>Housing</b></p> <p>Provide additional opportunities for housing rehabilitation to maintain the quality of the existing housing stock.</p> <p>Raise residential density for low and moderate income households, if infrastructure becomes available.</p> <p>Allow for creation of apartments in all appropriate residential districts.</p> <p>Apply for COAH certification</p>	<p>Continue existing rehab program.</p> <p>Planning Board to evaluate appropriate zoning standards</p>	<p>CDBG funds for rehab.</p>	<p>Underway</p>
<p><b>Economic Development</b></p> <p>Identify marketability of space in Village center for various types of small-scale commercial uses, and promote opportunities for such uses where appropriate.</p> <p>Increase nonresidential tax base. Continue to support employment base of Sussex County.</p>		<p>OSG technical Assistance, Main Street NJ program</p>	<p>1-5 years</p>
<p><b>Transportation</b></p> <p>Evaluate NJDOT access requirements to support appropriate scaled and well-designed strategic development along Route 206.</p> <p>Evaluate the feasibility of preparing an Access Management Plan for the 206 corridor.</p> <p>Continue with sidewalk planning and installation efforts to improve pedestrian accessibility throughout the village.</p> <p>Improve mass transit opportunities, such as improved bus and paratransit service.</p> <p>Evaluate parking concerns within the village core</p>	<p>Upgrade signalization at key intersections along Main Street.</p> <p>Evaluate bus routes for better service to Village; include bus shelters at key locations in planning for Main Street Improvements.</p>	<p>Coordinate with Sussex County, NJDOT, NJ Transit; financial assistance from NJDOT and Smart Growth funds.</p>	<p>Current – 5 years</p>

**BRANCHVILLE VILLAGE CENTER  
BRANCHVILLE BOROUGH, SUSSEX COUNTY, NJ  
PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION AGENDA – JUNE 16, 2004**

<b>Natural Resources Conservation</b>			
Plant street trees.  Prepare and update an Open space, recreation and conservation plan for the village and incorporate into the master plan.	Develop a "Memorial Tree" program and incorporate a street tree planting plan into the Master Plan.		Underway/1-5 years
<b>Recreation</b>			
Improve and maintain neighborhood parks.  Promote efficient use of parks through recreational programming.	Replace and repair older recreational equipment  Maintain/support currently active public recreational program run by Recreation Commission and coordinate with Youth Athletic League programs.	Green Acres funding;  Coordinate with County re riverside park system.	Underway
<b>Historic Preservation</b>			
Encourage, promote preservation of historic properties.  Continue to develop and refine historic district development and restoration guidelines.	Work with County and state to identify eligible properties.	SHPO, Sussex County	Ongoing
<b>Public Facilities and Services</b>			
Create "civic spaces" in each business area.  Identify, replace/improve water lines as needed, especially if they are known to have problems with inflow or infiltration.  Plan for a comprehensive sewer collection, treatment and disposal system to address public health concerns of small lots on septic system and to enable the village center to accommodate some additional growth that is well planned and in keeping with the State Plan and smart growth principles.	Identify appropriate "civic spaces" and prepare plans for each.  Identify potential water line problems and seek outside funding for evaluation/correction.	Green Acres funding for civic spaces and civic center? Smart Growth funding?  Business Association contributions for localized civic spaces.  Environmental Infrastructure Trust for pipeline repairs.  NJDEP and OSG will assist the borough to obtain the Wastewater management plan approval and Treatment works approval in timely fashion.	2-5 years  Fall 2004

**BRANCHVILLE VILLAGE CENTER  
BRANCHVILLE BOROUGH, SUSSEX COUNTY, NJ  
PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION AGENDA – JUNE 16, 2004**

<b>Intergovernmental Coordination</b>			
<p>Coordinate with surrounding municipalities, County, and State regional planning efforts re housing, transportation, park system.</p> <p>Develop and carry out wastewater management plan along with Frankford Township and Sussex County.</p> <p>Coordinate land use development proposals with Frankford to encourage a buffer around the Branchville Village center.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Participate in PE Process with Sussex County strategic plan submission.</li> <li>2. Continue coordination with Sussex County in its efforts to revitalize towns.</li> <li>3. Attend County meetings addressing regional and local planning issues.</li> </ol>	<p>All State of New Jersey Departments, OSP, COAH, County Planning Board.</p>	
<b>Wastewater Capacity Assessment</b>			
<b>Determine</b> buildout of municipality based upon current zoning.	Branchville Borough Planner	OSG	3 months from date of Center creation or designation by SPC
<b>Assess</b> wastewater needs based upon buildout of current zoning.	Branchville Borough Planner, Wastewater Collection and Treatment Agency	OSG, DEP, Sussex County Planning Department	Overlap with previous task by one month. 3 Months for this task.
<b>Hold</b> public hearings on proposed wastewater treatment options.	Branchville Borough Planner, Planning Board, Governing Body, Public Water Purveyor, Wastewater Collection and Treatment Agency, interested property owners, general public	OSG, DEP, Sussex County Planning Department	10 months from date of Center creation or designation by SPC
<b>Adopt</b> changes or revisions to the current zoning to ensure the proposed wastewater treatment capacities are not exceeded by the maximum buildout of the permitted uses.	Branchville Borough Planner, Planning Board, Governing Body, Public Water Purveyor, Wastewater Collection and Treatment Agency, interested property owners, general public	OSG, DEP, Sussex County Planning Department	12 months from date of Center creation or designation by SPC

**BRANCHVILLE VILLAGE CENTER  
BRANCHVILLE BOROUGH, SUSSEX COUNTY, NJ  
PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION AGENDA – JUNE 16, 2004**

<b>Habitat Protection Assessment</b>			
<b>Review</b> NJDEP Landscape and Natural Heritage data specific to Branchville Borough and <b>identify</b> locations and habitats within the Borough of State and or Federally listed Endangered or Threatened species and identify potential land use impacts to habitats and species.	Branchville Borough Planner, Planning Board,	DEP Non Game and Endangered Species, DEP Natural Heritage Program, USFWS	3 months from date of Center creation or designation by SPC.
<b>Determine</b> municipal strategies to preserve, protect, and enhance areas and habitats types within the Borough known to be utilized by State and or Federally listed Endangered or Threatened species.	Branchville Borough Planner, Planning Board, Governing Body, interested property owners, general public	DEP Non Game and Endangered Species, DEP Natural Heritage Program, USFWS	4 months from date of Center creation or designation by SPC.
<b>Organize</b> these strategies into a Conservation Plan and determine whether the strategies will require zoning changes	Branchville Borough Planner, Planning Board, Governing Body, interested property owners, general public		6 months from date of Center creation or designation by SPC.
<b>Hold</b> public hearings concerning any need to revise or make changes to the master plan or zoning and land development ordinances to ensure the preservation, protection, and enhancement of areas and habitats types within the Borough known to be utilized by State and or Federally listed Endangered or Threatened species	Branchville Borough Planner, Planning Board, Governing Body, interested property owners, general public	OSG, DEP	10 months from date of Center creation or designation by SPC
<b>Adopt</b> any necessary changes or revisions to the current master plan or zoning and land development ordinances to ensure the preservation, protection, and enhancement of areas and habitats types within the Borough known to be utilized by State and or Federally listed Endangered or Threatened species	Branchville Borough Planner, Planning Board, Governing Body, interested property owners, general public	OSG, DEP, Sussex County Planning Department	12 months from date of Center creation or designation by SPC

**BRANCHVILLE VILLAGE CENTER  
BRANCHVILLE BOROUGH, SUSSEX COUNTY, NJ  
PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION AGENDA – JUNE 16, 2004**

<b>Stream Corridor Protection</b>			
<b>Review</b> surface water quality resource classification (i.e. C1, FW2-TP) of all streams within Borough.	Branchville Borough Planner, Planning Board	OSG, DEP	4 months from date of Center designation by SPC
<b>Assess</b> stream conditions and habitat concerns.	Branchville Borough Planner, Planning Board	DEP	4 months from date of Center designation by SPC
<b>Determine</b> protection strategy and appropriate tools.	Branchville Borough Planner, Planning Board, public	OSG, DEP, Sussex County Planning Department	8 months from date of Center designation by SPC
<b>Adopt</b> ordinance that establishes & maintains appropriately vegetated buffers along streams, rivers, and wetlands, to protect the natural functions & quality of surface water resources:	Branchville Borough Planner, Planning Board, Municipal Governing Body	OSG, DEP, Sussex County Planning Department	12 months from date of Center designation by SPC
<b>Wellhead Protection</b>			
Map existing wellhead protection areas in Borough	Branchville Borough Planner, Branchville MUA Planning Board	DEP, Sussex County Planning Department	4 months from date of Center designation by SPC
<b>Inventory</b> contaminated sites, potential pollutant sources, etc. within wellhead protection areas	Branchville Borough Planner, Branchville MUA Planning Board	DEP, Sussex County Planning Department, Health Department	6 months from date of Center designation by SPC
<b>Determine</b> appropriate zoning and development for wellhead protection tiers	Branchville Borough Planner, Planning Board, public	OSG, DEP, Sussex County Planning Department	12 months from date of Center designation by SPC
<b>Adopt</b> wellhead protection ordinance to insure a safe and adequate supply of potable water.	Branchville Borough Planner, Planning Board, Municipal Governing Body	OSG, DEP, Sussex County Planning Department	18 months from date of Center designation by SPC



**BRANCHVILLE VILLAGE CENTER  
BRANCHVILLE BOROUGH, SUSSEX COUNTY, NJ  
PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION AGENDA – JUNE 16, 2004**

<b>Historic Preservation</b>			
<b>Review</b> Branchville Historic Resources Survey (completed circa 1980) The survey, on file with the State Historic Preservation Office, identifies several individually eligible structures including the railroad station, blacksmith shop and mill.	Branchville Borough Planner, Planning Board	DEP HPO	6 months from date of Center designation by SPC
<b>Update</b> Branchville Historic Resources Survey, include in master plan.	Branchville Borough Planner, Planning Board	DEP HPO	12 months from date of Center designation by SPC
<b>Determine</b> merits and feasibility of designating individual sites or an historic district and appropriate tools/measures for historic structures	Branchville Borough Planner, Planning Board, Governing Body	DEP HPO	18 months from date of Center designation by SPC
<b>Stormwater Management</b>			
<b>Develop</b> and Adopt revised DEP-approved Stormwater Management Plan	Branchville Borough Planner, Planning Board, Municipal Governing Body	OSG, DEP, Sussex County Planning	Summer 2005
<b>Develop</b> and Adopt revised DEP-approved Stormwater Control Ordinance	Branchville Borough Planner, Planning Board, Municipal Governing Body	OSG, DEP, Sussex County Planning	Summer 2006

**Note:** Development projects that are located within the floodplain or the NJ Flood Hazard Area will require a stream encroachment permit from the NJDEP. Development plans should identify the elevation of the NJ Flood Hazard Area so as to determine if any properties fall within the NJ FHA. Prior to the site planning of any parcel within the Village Center it is recommended that the extent of wetlands be verified on these parcels by obtaining a Letter of Interpretation from NJDEP. This requires the identification of the limits of wetlands on these properties, if any, using the three-parameter approach in accordance with the FWPA Rules.

The expansion of the center boundary into Frankford Township is primarily the result of the need to construct a sewerage treatment plant and groundwater disposal fields and to service existing uses including an elementary school, and nursing homes. Should the land use needs in the Frankford portion of the center change and for example the sewerage treatment plant was not constructed, the State Planning Commission reserves the right to reevaluate the center designation in this location.