

# *Plan Endorsement Recommendation Report*

## *Borough of Riverton*



New Jersey Department of State  
Office of 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, Borough of Riverton, Burlington County Bridge Commission and members of the public. OPA will post this report and other material related to the Borough of Riverton 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 Riverton for Plan Endorsement can be found here: <https://nj.gov/state/planning/plan-endorsement.shtml> and include the Borough's Master Plan, Amendments, Redevelopment Plans, etc.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Borough of Riverton (hereafter Riverton or Borough) first had its centers designated April 28<sup>th</sup> of 1999 as part of the regional Burlington County Route 130/Delaware River Corridor Strategic Plan, developed under the leadership of the Burlington County Bridge Commission, prior to when the formal Plan Endorsement process was in place. It received various extensions over the ensuing years that are scheduled to expire on March 31, 2023.

The Borough's interest in pursuing formal Plan Endorsement was discussed on March 10, 2020 at a series of 3 back-to-back joint prepetition meeting with representatives from all twelve Corridor Strategic Plan towns, (Palmyra, Riverton, Cinnaminson, Delran, Riverside, Delanco, Beverly, Edgewater Park, Willingboro, Burlington Borough, Burlington City and Florence), the state agencies and the Burlington County Bridge Commission. (BCBC had, once again, shepherded the communities to this point.) Riverton's primary objective in seeking Plan Endorsement was to plan and grow in a manner consistent with the State Plan; to update the map with resiliency and equity considerations; and to gain assistance from the State as the community strives to redevelop sustainably, revitalize the local economy, increase pedestrian safety, improve circulation, stormwater management and quality of life.

The local goals, objectives and vision for the Borough remain consistent with the State Plan, though some of the Center, Node and Planning Area boundaries are being amended to reflect current habitat data and resiliency considerations. The Borough has a 2019 Fair Share Settlement Agreement, completed a Master Plan Reexamination in 2018, has made great strides in its redevelopment efforts and is diligent at implementing its vision for future quality of life, economic viability, and land use stewardship.

## **BACKGROUND/ CHRONOLOGY**

The Burlington County Bridge Commission forwarded the Borough of Riverton's petition for continuation of its Plan Endorsement in October 2019 along with the eleven other Route 130/Delaware River Corridor municipalities. Early in the process, OPA decided to split the twelve municipalities into two groups, North of the Rancocas and South of the Rancocas to make it more manageable for OPA, the agencies and the SPC to manage the review. For mapping and visioning purposes, OPA further spit the twelve communities into four groups of three, and is grouping the first three southernmost communities, Riverton, Palmyra and Cinnaminson, often referred to as the Triboro region, for the first Endorsement presentations. Since the Regional Plan Endorsement process requires that each municipality must individually meet all the requirements for Plan Endorsement, we still need to demonstrate individual consistency and meet the intent and standards of the process for each municipality at each PE Step.

In March, 2020, Prepetition meetings were held for all twelve municipalities; Riverton authorized a Plan Endorsement Advisory Committee in April 2021; BCBC submitted a regional Municipal Self-Assessment Report in October, 2021 – with a municipal questionnaire from Riverton; Riverton, BCBC and OPA hosted a local visioning session via Zoom on February 3, 2022; participated in an in-person regional mapping meeting on March 23; supported a regional visioning session via Zoom on May 6, 2022 and received their opportunities and constraints report on June 12<sup>th</sup> 2022.

Riverton has been steadily building on its planning foundation, with efforts toward sustainability and smart growth as follows:

<b>Event(s)</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Master Plan (Elements include: Historic, Housing, Economic, Circulation, Municipal Services, Recreation, Land Use)	1998 (1983)	
Centers Designated	April 1999	With the Strategic Corridor Plan
Pompeston Creek Environmental Resource Inventory	2004	By the Riverton EC with 4 total communities collaborating
BOE Long Range Facilities Plan	2005	
Redevelopment Plan Nuway/Sitzler	2006	
Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	2007	
Open Space and Recreation Element	2008	
Environmental Resource Inventory	2008	
Guidelines to preserve waterfront	2008	
Stream Corridor Protection Ordinance	2008	Ecode360 Chapter 128 -67.1
Downtown Revitalization Study Rpt	2009	
Comprehensive Recycling ordinance	2010	
Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI)	2012 (at least)	2 parks listed
Burlington County Wastewater Management Plan	2017	With Build out analysis
Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance	2017 (1989, 1991)	
Submitted PE Petition	September 27, 2019	
Community Planning Study	2018	Multiple public engagement activities
Master Plan Reexamination (discussed amendments to these elements: Historic, Housing, Economic, Circulation, Municipal Services, Recreation, Land Use)	2018 (2007)	
Burlington Co Hazard Mitigation Plan	2019	
Fair Share Settlement Agreement	2019 (2005, 2008)	
Zoning Map	2020 (2011, 2007)	
Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan	2021 (2006)	Recently updated
Prepetition Meeting	March, 2020	
Appointed PE Advisory Committee	April 2021	
Submitted MSA	October 2021	
Visioning Sessions (Local + Regional)	December 2021 & May 2022	With BCBC & OPA support
PIC Recommendation	June 15, 2022	
SPC ADOPTION (scheduled)	July 6, 2022	

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

As part of the Plan Endorsement process the Borough appointed a PE Advisory Committee in April, 2021 and hosted a local visioning session (via Zoom) in December, 2021 and a regional visioning session in May, 2022. A vision statement and goals were reaffirmed at these meetings:

### Riverton Borough Vision and Goals – 2018

Vision – “To preserve and enhance Riverton’s existing historic and residential character through implementation of varied housing types and preservation of natural and cultural features, while strengthening the economy.”

#### Goals

1. Preserve and enhance Riverton’s small-town character and strong sense of community and place as evidenced in its pride, concern, and support for community institutions, programs and services.
2. Provide the opportunity for a multigenerational, age and income diverse population to live, work and prosper in the Borough of Riverton.
3. Preserve and enhance the key distinguishing man-made and natural features that define Riverton’s character as a historic, Victorian, riverfront community.
4. Strengthen the Borough’s economic vitality.

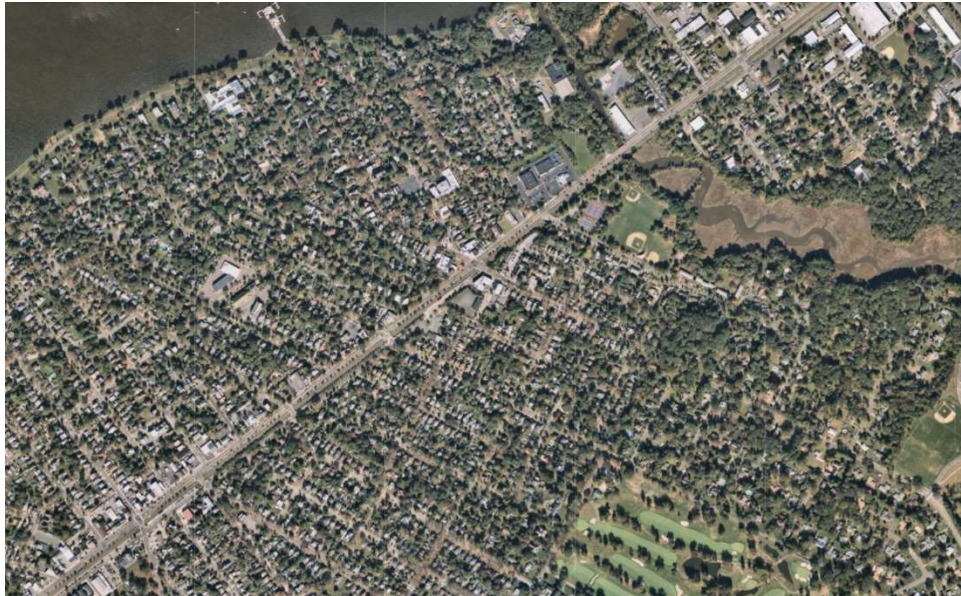
## LOCATION & REGIONAL CONTEXT

The Borough of Riverton is located on the northwestern tip of Burlington County along the Delaware River. The Borough is framed by the Delaware River and the Pompeston Creek to the north, northeast; Cinnaminson Township to the north, east, and south; and Palmyra to the southwest. The town is bisected into quadrants at the intersection of the rail line and Broad Street with Main Street. The town is one part of a series of communities dotting the Delaware waterfront within Burlington County with views of Pennsylvania beyond the river. The Borough of Riverton was formed after 1851 by Philadelphians eager to escape the summer city heat via ferry initially and later by train. A notable Philadelphia architect, Samuel Sloan, generated a master plan and designed quite a few homes in the community, as well as the ferryboat landing and train station. The plan included a Delaware River waterfront park to provide physical access to the river; and deed restrictions regulating porches and fences to enhance residents visual access to the waterfront.

The Borough encompasses just under one square mile, including 0.665 square miles of land and 0.301 square miles of water. According to the 2020 Census, the community's population was 2,691. Riverton is a fully developed suburban town notable for a rich heritage of Victorian architecture (much of the Borough is listed in both the National and State registers of historic places).



The Palmyra-Riverton-East Riverton Town Center is in the southwestern portion of the Corridor along the Delaware River. It is an existing Town Center that comprises the developed portions of Palmyra Borough, all of the Borough of Riverton and a portion of Cinnaminson Township identified as East Riverton. The Riverton portion of the Town Center is situated between the Palmyra (west) and East Riverton (east) portions and the Delaware River (north) and Cinnaminson Township (south). To the east, the Pompeston Creek forms the physical boundary between East Riverton and Riverton and is also the municipal boundary separating Riverton Borough and Cinnaminson Township.



## **LAND USE, DEMOGRAPHICS AND RIVERTON'S FUTURE**

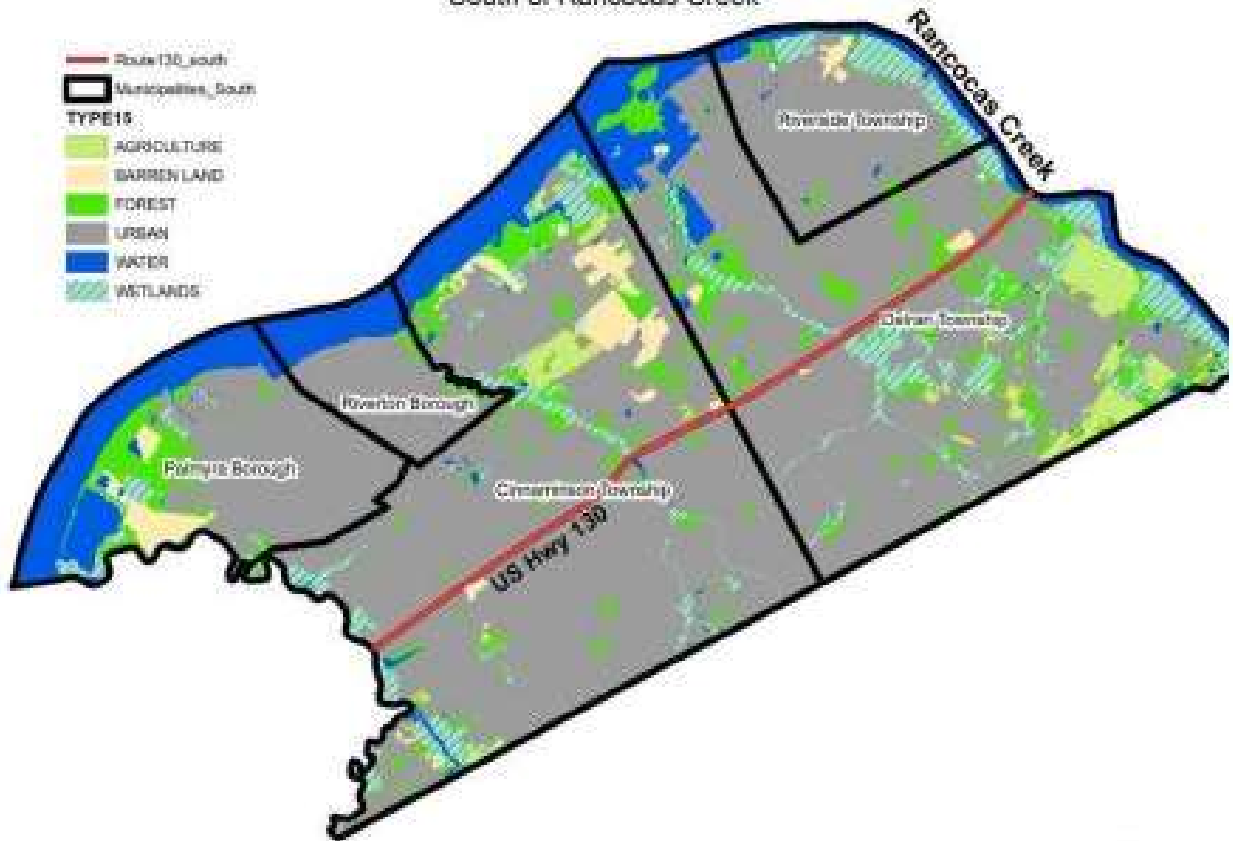
Riverton Borough is a moderately sized, middle to upper middle class, relatively homogenous community. Population growth in Riverton Borough is recovering after a period of decline. The Borough's population is slightly older than the county's and, appears to be aging. Riverton Borough residents are, on average, wealthier than those in either the county or the state, the housing prices do not reflect this yet, as the median home price is well below that of the state.

**Housing** Riverton has only 1,101 housing units and a fairly old, historic housing stock. In fact, more than half of Riverton's units (66.82%) were built prior to 1940 making the median year for structure construction 1939. The Borough has not kept pace with construction of new units. Only 119 new units were added to its housing stock since 1960. Housing construction has been declining since the 50's and there has been no new housing construction since 2010, further demonstrating a lack of capacity within the Borough for new housing.

**Third Round Fair Share Housing Obligations** Riverton has a 2019 approved affordable housing settlement agreement with the following obligations:

- Rehabilitation share: 0
- Prior round obligation: 15 (Met through inclusionary, overlay and affordable housing zoning.)
- Third round (1999 to 2025) obligation: 76 (including a vacant land adjustment and redevelopment sites; affordable housing trust fund; Habitat for Humanity market to affordable conversion; and several group homes will meet part of the obligation.

Route 130 Corridor Regional Plan - Land Use Land Cover 2015  
South of Rancocas Creek



## Land Use

### Property Class

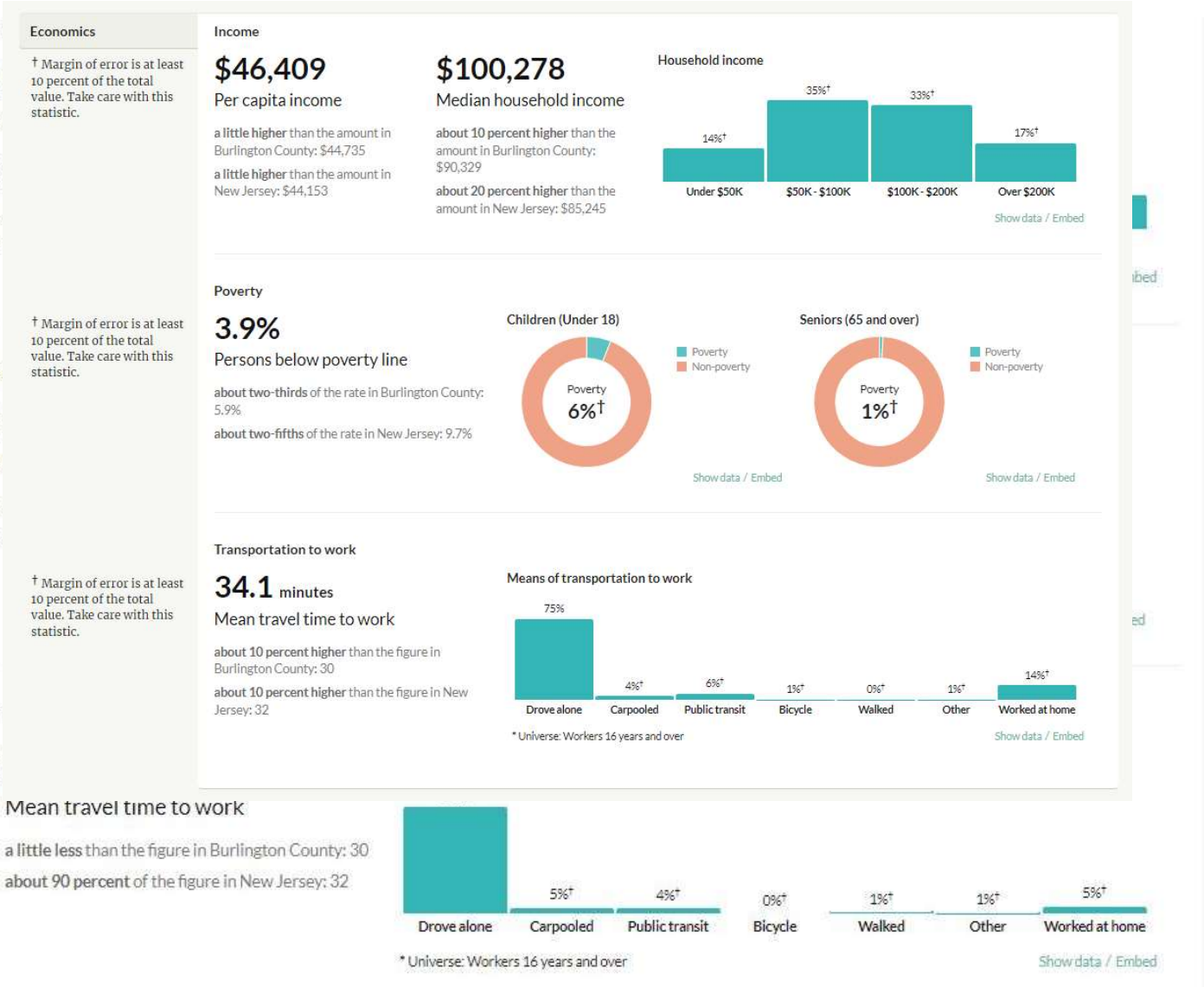
- Vacant – 2%
- Residential – 73%
- Farm – 0%
- Commercial – 8%
- Industrial – 3%
- Apartment – 5%
- Railroad – 1%
- School – 1%
- Public – 6% (4% Open Space)
- Other Exempt – 3%







**Riverton Census Data 2020:**



## Demographics

Population Projection for 2050 – 2,722  
Employment Projections for 2050 – +4 Jobs

### 2010 Census

- Population – 2,764
- Households – 1,040
- Household Size – 2.53
- Residential Units – 1,109
- Vacancy Rates – 6.2%

### 2020 Census

- Population – 2,779
- Households – 1,057
- Household Size – 2.52
- Residential Units – 1,112
- Vacancy Rates – 4.9%

## INFRASTRUCTURE

Riverton is fully served by public water and sewer. There is adequate capacity in the Borough for in-fill type development. There are no areas available for new, large-scale development.

**Water** - The Borough is served by New Jersey American Water Company. Western Division. The underlying aquifer is the Potomac-Raritan-Magothy (PRM) aquifer. It is one of the most important water resources in the State and it is also in danger of becoming contaminated by saltwater intrusions because so many communities draw from it. In 1993 New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection identified the PRM as a Water Supply Critical Area and mandated water resource reductions in an effort to stabilize the aquifer's compromised state. As critical as the aquifer is, it is not the supply source for Riverton's drinking water. In response to the State's concern over the PRM, a pipeline was built to collect, treat and deliver Delaware River water as potable water. Riverton gets its drinking water from this Delaware River intake. Riverton is dependent on the prudent policies of upstream communities whose stormwater runoff feeds the Delaware River.

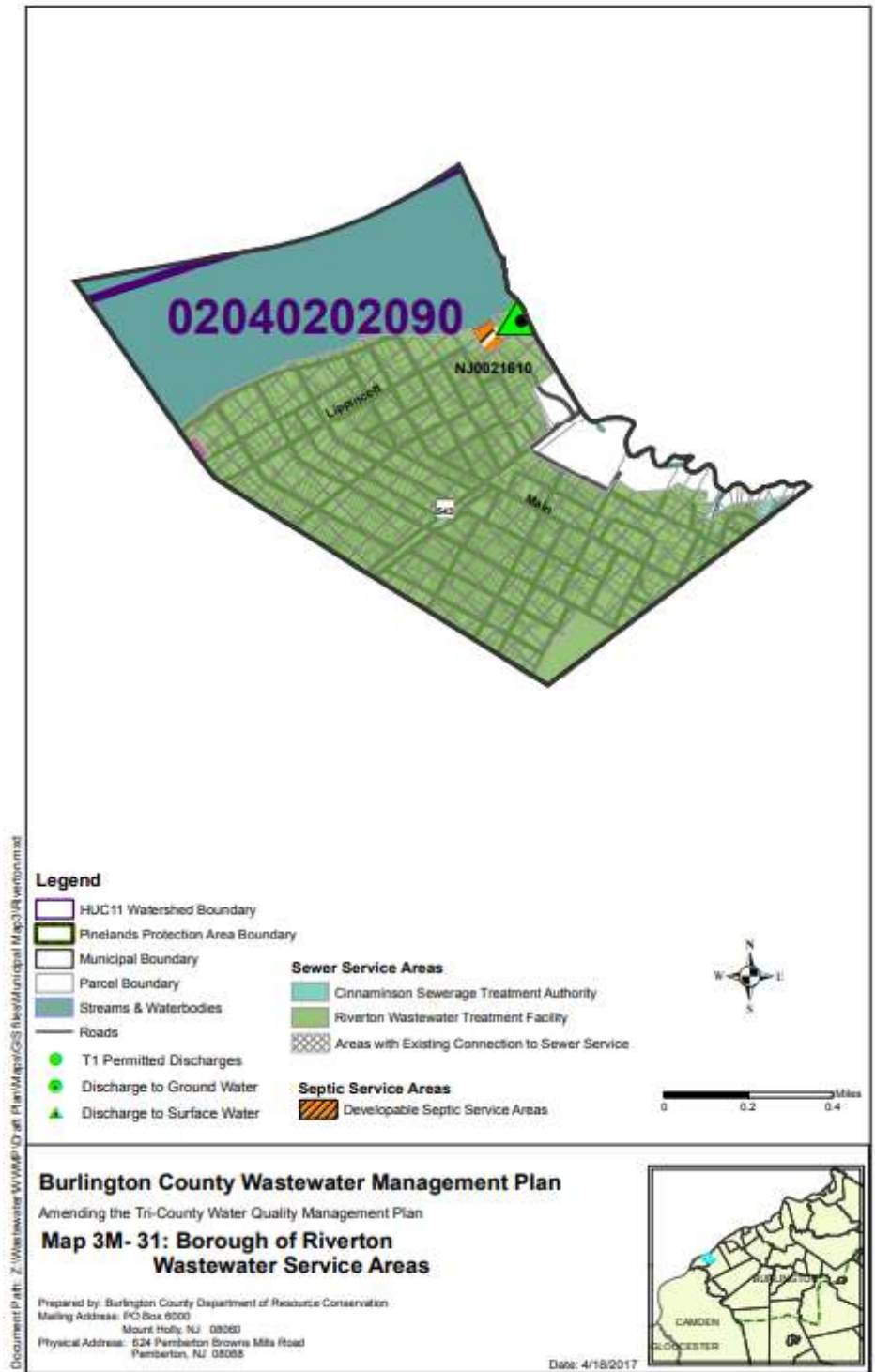
**Sewer Service Area** - Riverton has its own wastewater treatment plant run by the Riverton Wastewater Plant but Burlington County is responsible for its wastewater management planning. Burlington County's countywide Wastewater Management Plan (WMP) was approved in 2013.

**Future Sewer Service Map** On July 11, 2012 by Resolution No. 2012-00369, the Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholders approved a Future Wastewater Service Area map as the first phase of development of the county-wide wastewater management. Following public review and comment,

DEP adopted the Future Wastewater Service Area map as an amendment to the Tri-County Water Quality Management Plan on May 7, 2013.

**County Wastewater Management Plan** On May 24, 2017 by Resolution No. 2017-00240, the Freeholders authorized submission of the Burlington County Wastewater Management Plan to DEP for adoption into the Tri-County Water Quality Management Plan. The build -out analysis prepared by Burlington County in 2017 as part of their Wastewater Management Plan is below:

### Riverton SSA Map



## Riverton Build-out Analysis

Zone		Municipal Area	Developable Area	Acres per Dwelling	# of Units Residential	# of Units Residential		# of Units Non-Residential - SSA (Square	#Units of Non-residential - ISSDS
AH	Amateur Home	1.5	1.0	N/A	5	0	0.9	0	0
GB	General Business	19.2	0.7	N/A	0	0	0.9	0	0
NB	Neighborhood Business	23.5	0.0	N/A	0	0	1.125	0	0
P	Parks	31.1	0.0	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	0
R-15	Residence 15	79.9	0.0	0.34	0	0	N/A	0	0
R-4	Residence 4	82.2	0.0	0.092	0	0	N/A	0	0
R-8	Residence 8	185.5	0.7	0.184	2	0	N/A	0	0
<b>Totals</b>		<b>614</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

\*\*\* This is an urbanized municipality. However, this table presents the non-urbanized methodology build-out results. Urbanized methodology was used to estimate future flow to the wastewater treatment plant. It includes a population increase of 11 people and a job increase of 3.

## TRANSPORTATION/CIRCULATION

The Circulation Element in the 2005 Master Plan has timeless goals that remain relevant today though it is recommended to be updated with emergent issues as a PIA action item. Future transportation/transit planning initiatives and projects may need partnerships with NJTA, NJDOT, DVRPC and BCBC to achieve key objectives.

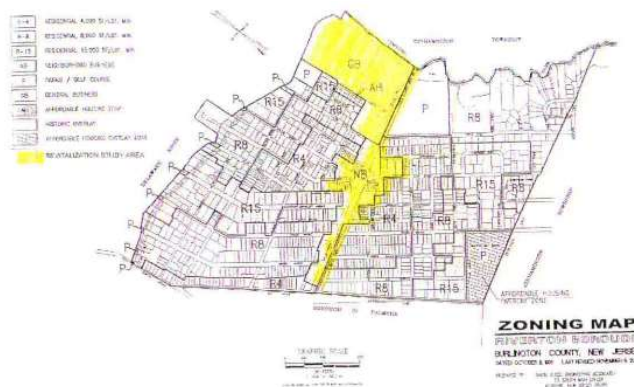
In 2004, the light rail system the RiverLine opened with a stop in Riverton. The municipality has adapted its zoning, development, redevelopment, economic development activities and planning around this access to mass transit. The BurLINK cross-county bus system also provides services

In the recent visioning sessions, walkways/bikeways and bicycle and pedestrian safety especially in providing connectivity between east and west Riverton across Route 130 arose as the priority for residents. The PIA identifies this as an important issue/project to be tackled with the help and involvement of county, state and regional agencies.

## FUTURE LAND USE /ZONING MAP (Below)

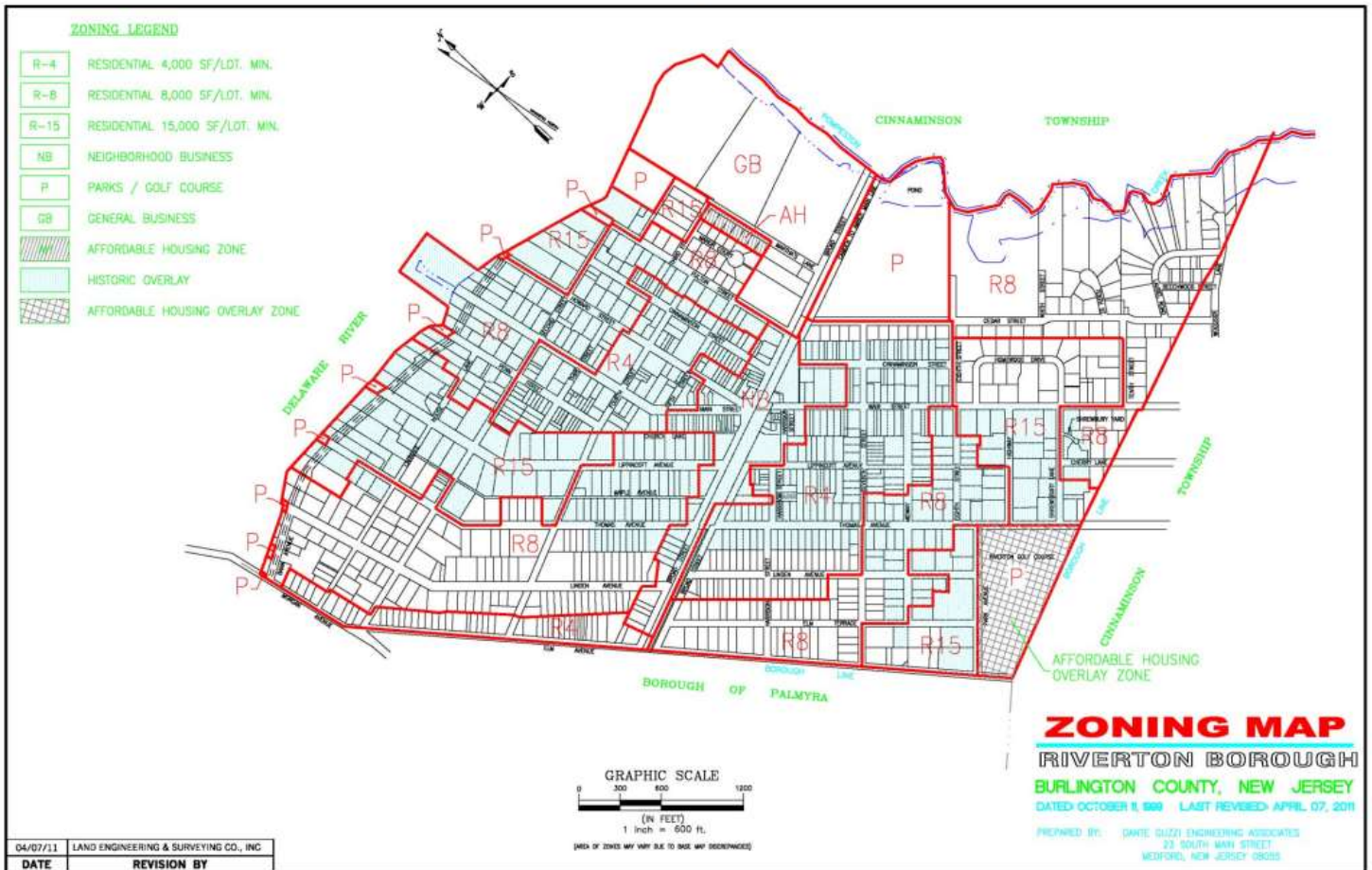
### Redevelopment & Rehabilitation

According to Riverton's "Revitalizing Riverton" report, "Riverton will implement and achieve sustainable development by using Smart Growth planning approaches for the benefit of not only the Borough, but the entire region as well." Redevelopment has been successfully implemented at several sites resulting in commercial and residential development. The National Casein site is a brownfield with additional potential for redevelopment. The identified commercial corridor to the right is where redevelopment is to be focused.





## Borough of Riverton Zoning Map



### PROPOSED MAP AMENDMENTS

Riverton has reached consensus on their map's Planning Areas and Center/Node boundaries with the exception of the treatment of one parcel that is expected to reach a consensus very soon. Maps of the proposed boundaries will be forwarded under separate cover prior to the Plan Implementation Committee meeting. Existing SDRP mapping is below:



Existing Planning Areas show as all PA1, Metropolitan.





*Existing Centers are shown with a dashed yellow boundary (in some instances they follow municipal boundaries and are hidden under the white lines.); Nodes have a solid yellow boundary with black hatching.*

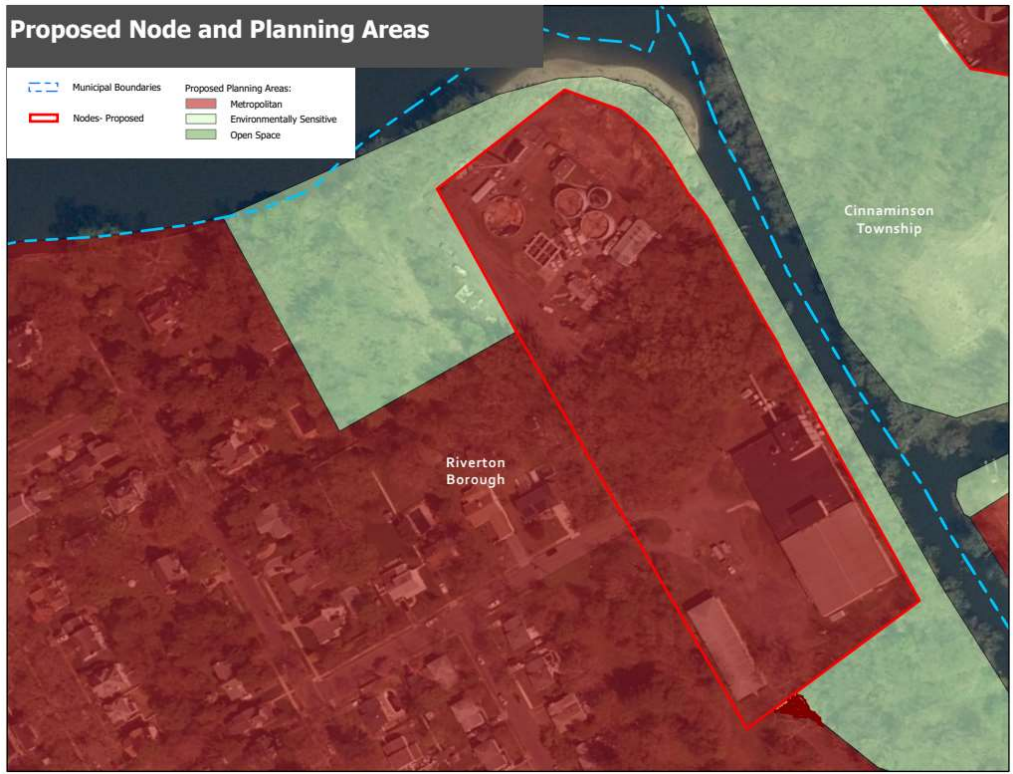


*Centers/Cores/Nodes without municipal boundaries hiding the Center boundary.*





*Proposed Center, Node and Planning Area changes.*



*Proposed Node with detail of minor edit to Center boundary below Node.*

## **STATE PLAN GOALS REVIEW**

### **Goal #1 Revitalize the State's Cities and Towns**

The Borough maintains its community character, utilizes all forms of transportation to maintain quality of life, and encourages development, where practical. Riverton is a developed community mostly built-out in its neighborhoods and along its highway corridors – primarily Broad Street and US Route 130. To revitalize its existing developed communities, the Borough has sought redevelopment and infill development in its aging commercial areas. Through these redevelopment areas, and metropolitan planning areas, the Borough is advancing these strategies from the state plan:

- *Link the resources and opportunities of cities and towns to their larger regions* – The center and development areas are located along the transportation corridors of the Borough, giving them the greatest connectivity to the rest of the Burlington County Route 130/Delaware River Corridor.
- *Continue to find ways to deliver public services and facilities at lower cost and higher quality* – Additional development, in particular commercial development, along existing developed corridors, will help to spread the cost of public services among more users, without requiring a significant expansion of those services. Riverton is not proposing expansion of development into undeveloped areas, only redevelopment of existing developed areas with more potentially more intensive infill development.
- *Change the way that land is developed and redeveloped in our cities and towns* – Riverton is focused on reusing existing facilities, vacant sites, and brownfields rather than on seeking out green fields to expand development opportunities.

### **Goal #2 Conserve the State's Natural Resources and Systems**

Water quality, air quality, habitats, vegetation, and wildlife are priorities for Riverton, consistent with the Waterfront Guidelines and Environmental Resources Inventory. Riverton's plans, and its proposed center and node are designed to avoid additional disturbance to the ecosystems of the Delaware River, the Pompeston Creek and other tributaries. The Borough requires an EIS for any site plans and intends to update its ERI as part of its PIA. It values its C1 Stream corridor and environmentally sensitive areas and is looking to add many of these lands to its ROSI.

### **Goal #3 Promote Beneficial Economic Growth, Development and Renewal for all Residents of New Jersey**

The Borough has embraced the RiverLine and economic growth, through its plans, ordinances, and development, providing a full-service community. One of the primary goals of the Borough's planning efforts has been to promote economic growth and revitalization through small scale retail in its center and compatible home-based businesses.

#### **Goal #4 Protect the Environment, Prevent, and Clean Up Pollution**

The Borough maintains its clean community status through social media, education, and community participation. Riverton invests in efforts to protect, promote, and maintain the town in an environmentally conscious manner. Through the leadership of the Environmental Commission, the Borough has expanded awareness of safeguarding our environment through educational programs, such as the rain garden at Riverton School, information regarding recycling, and participation in the environmental inventory of the Pompeston Creek. Riverton enrolled in the Sustainable Jersey program in 2012 and recently formed a Green Team consistent with membership in the program. Development of various areas of Riverton, such as Riverton Park, the lands adjacent to Pompeston Creek, and the properties where the Borough maintains public rights of way along Bank Avenue (at the end of Thomas, Lippincott, Penn and Howard Streets), if undertaken, would be done in a manner preserving the environmental integrity of those areas, while also permitting peaceful and safe enjoyment to the public.

Riverton's existing and proposed land uses, growth areas, and nodes are prepared with the intent of protecting the environmentally sensitive regions of the Borough. With the proposed growth in the Borough anticipated to occur in the redevelopment and infill areas, the Borough can be proactive in forming public private partnerships with redevelopers and give the Borough more leverage to require new buildings and developments to be more environmentally sustainable, as well as the opportunity to assist in any environmental clean-up if any of the former commercial properties are found to have any contamination.

#### **Goal #5 Provide Adequate Public Facilities and Services at a Reasonable Cost**

Community buildings, parks, open space, sidewalks, street trees, infrastructure, and amenities are maintained with a continuous program.

Limiting public services and utilities to the center of the Borough reduces the per capita expenditures on any utility improvements. New infill development and redevelopment along Broad Street will provide efficiencies and the perfect location for services. The Borough is hoping to invest in improvements to existing infrastructure and discourage any investment into development in areas that are not appropriate for new construction, including those in the environmentally sensitive areas. Concentrating development and infrastructure improvements leads to a more efficient use of public funds.

#### **Goal #6 Provide Adequate Housing at a Reasonable Cost**

Riverton provides a variety of housing types and a current Housing Element and Fair Share Plan and implementing ordinances.

The Borough already provides a range of housing options, and the proposed housing developments in these areas will only add to the stock of housing options, potentially bringing more rental units in these growth areas. This potential connection, along with what could become a mixed use, transit-oriented development near the rail station, would place needed affordable housing in a location with great accessibility to the broader economic region, while reducing transportation costs and commuting times for families. The Borough is committed to satisfying its affordable housing obligations, and as has removed regulatory barriers to the construction of inclusionary developments in proposed growth areas. This will provide options for new residents to live in the community, while helping to address the needs of existing or future residents who may be cost burdened, to find suitable housing in Riverton.

### **Goal #7 Preserve and Enhance Areas with Historic, Cultural, Scenic, Open Space, and Recreational Value**

From its Historic District and shoreline extending along its border to interior parks and open space, Riverton consistently preserves and enhances cultural and natural resources for future generations.

### **Goal #8 Ensure Sound and Integrated Planning and Implementation Statewide**

Riverton is pro-active, with a Master Plan and Elements which are implemented in a thoughtful and comprehensive way to preserve quality of life.

Through this Plan Endorsement process, the Borough is seeking integrated planning with state agencies. The proposed center and node and the proposed PA-1 and PA-5 areas are consistent with the goals of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan. The proposed lands to be preserved are also consistent with the SDRP. Proposed development growth areas within Riverton are centrally located, and should have minimal impacts on surrounding communities, reducing regional conflicts, and increasing development capacity in appropriate areas of existing infrastructure. With the Borough's anticipated growth in population, there will need to be a coordinated effort to meet the demand for new housing and jobs in the region. The Borough's master plan, housing plan, and related documents are built around meeting this demand while preserving sensitive areas and directing growth to centers and nodes.

### ***RESILIENCY***

The Borough has undertaken several efforts to support a more sustainable and resilient municipality and is preparing to undertake more:

- The Borough is working to update and amend its Flood Hazard Ordinance.
- Riverton recently passed a resolution authorizing participation in the Sustainable Jersey Program and has a Green Team that will likely help the municipality work on sustainability and resiliency issues.



- The 2019 Burlington County All Hazard Mitigation Plan, including the Riverton Annex, takes the first step in identifying vulnerable assets and actions to mitigate defined vulnerabilities.
- Riverton is aware of the Climate Change Related Vulnerability Assessment requirement of the Plan Endorsement process and of NJ Adapt suite of tools as well as NJDEP potential for technical assistance.

***STAFF RECOMMENDATION:***

From Riverton’s regional MSA, “Over the last 20 years, Burlington County, the municipalities, and State agencies have worked together to implement sound planning principles and the common goals set forth in the State Development and Redevelopment Plan and Route 130/Delaware River Corridor Strategic Plan. The vision set forth in the 1999 Plan remains relevant and the goals are still valid. The municipalities have invested in the success of the Plan and have implemented, many, if not most of the recommendations and strategies. In order to continue this successful partnership, the County, on behalf of the 12 municipalities is again seeking plan endorsement, in order to further advance the transportation, economic and land use goals of the Corridor and extend the existing Town Center designations for another ten years. The regional approach undertaken in the Strategic Plan is unique as compared to other Endorsed Plans. It could be a model for other areas of the State, where several municipalities must cooperate to achieve common goals.”

Riverton has followed and implemented the Endorsed 1998 Route 130/Delaware River Corridor Strategic Plan as the regional and local manifestation of the State Plan. They have completed all of the activities under Land Use, Housing, Economic Development, Transportation, Recreation and Open Space, Historic Preservation, Public Facilities and Services and Intergovernmental Coordination. (Please see the table on Page 4.) This plan was the approximation of a Plan Implementation Agreement (PIA) for Riverton since the municipality was endorsed before PIAs existed.

The Borough of Riverton has diligently and regularly planned and implemented measures to ensure that their centers, and environs remain sustainable and grow using smart-growth principles. Based on this work, they have demonstrated that their actions and plans, including with the items identified in the PIA, are aligned with the State Plan. It is staff’s recommendation that the Commission adopt the Resolution for Plan Endorsement. Please see the attached PIA for details of their implementation agenda.