

CENTERS

Urban

Generally the largest Centers, offering the most diverse mix of industry, commerce, services, residences and cultural facilities.

Regional

A compact mix of residential, commercial and public uses, serving a large surrounding area and developed at an intensity that makes public transportation feasible.

Town

Traditional Centers of commerce or government throughout New Jersey, with diverse residential neighborhoods served by a mixed-use Core offering locally oriented goods and services.

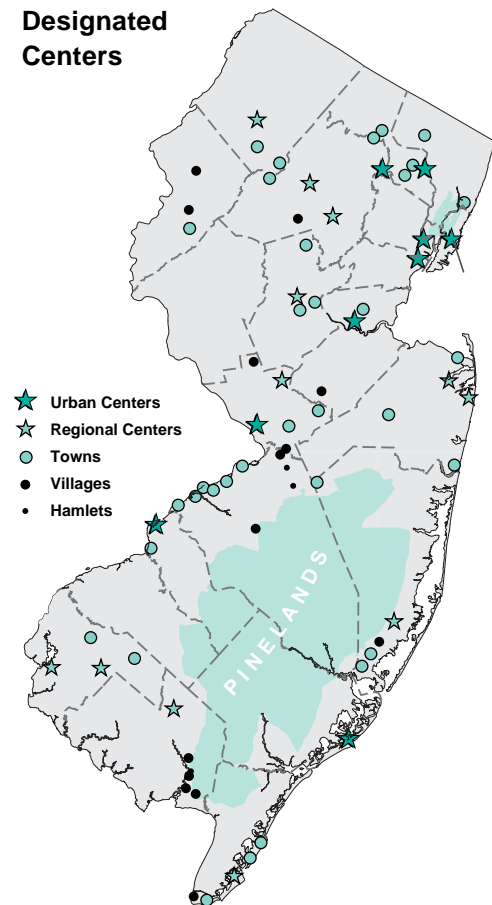
Village

Primarily residential places that offer a small Core with limited public facilities, consumer services and community activities.

Hamlet

Small-scale, compact residential settlements organized around a community focal point, such as a house of worship, luncheonette, small park or a civic building.

Designated Centers



Centers are the State Plan's preferred vehicle for accommodating growth. Center-based development patterns are superior to sprawl for a number of reasons (see sidebar on page 231). A Center's compact form is considerably more efficient than sprawl, providing opportunities for cost savings across a wide range of factors. Compact form also translates into significant land savings. A Center's development form and structure, designed to accommodate diversity, is also more flexible than single-use, single-purpose sprawl, allowing Centers to evolve and adapt over time, in response to changing conditions and markets. Centers promote community, protect the environment, provide enhanced cultural and aesthetic experiences, and offer residents a superior quality of life.

As Centers are planned to be the location for much of the growth in New Jersey, it is critical that they be located and designed with the capacity to accommodate desired growth. While specific Centers may not be appropriate for additional growth, in a regional context, Centers should be planned to accommodate growth projections. Centers that are targeted for growth should contain a sufficient amount of land to support this growth, including new or expanded capital facilities and affordable housing, without constraining the market or allowing monopoly land pricing.

Each Center has specific designation criteria (see Table, Criteria for Center Designation/Planning for the Year 2020), which establish certain basic thresholds of land area, population, employment and densities. These criteria are intended to be applied flexibly. For example, population fluctuations in seasonal communities should be taken into account, as should disparities between daytime and nighttime populations. Density criteria are relevant primarily to new Centers and to the growth areas of existing Centers, and are less relevant to the built-up portions of existing Centers, except when conditions influencing development change significantly (for example, central sewer is provided for the first time) and infill and redevelopment opportunities are viable and locally sought. Designation criteria refer to conditions in the Center's planning horizon year (for example, 2020 rather than current population), and while the State Plan's horizon year forms the primary basis for long range planning, municipalities and counties should be aware of the consequences of these planning decisions in the years beyond 2020.

Although Centers are the preferred growth vehicle, some existing Centers, namely Hamlets, Villages and some

Why Centers Instead of Sprawl?

- Save land
- Reduce number of vehicular trips
- Reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT)
- Reduce commute times
- Reduce commuting costs
- Reduce postal distribution costs
- Reduce energy consumption
- Reduce water and gas consumption
- Support transit
- Support pedestrians and bicycles
- Improve air quality
- Improve water quality
- Reduce infrastructure costs
- Enhance sense of place
- Enhance civic engagement
- Enhance community

CRITERIA FOR CENTER DESIGNATION/PLANNING FOR THE YEAR 2020

	URBAN	REGIONAL CENTER PA1, 2	REGIONAL CENTER PA3, 4, 5	TOWN	VILLAGE	HAMLET
Area (in square miles)		1 to 10	1 to 10	<2	<1	10 to 50 acres without community wastewater; <100 acres with community wastewater
Population	>40,000	>10,000	>5,000	1,000 to 10,000	<4,500	25 to 250
Gross Population Density (people/square mile)	>7,500	>5,000	>5,000	>5,000	>5,000	3,000
Housing		4,000 to 15,000	2,000 to 15,000	500 to 4,000	100 to 2,000	10 to 100
Gross Housing Density (dwelling units/acre)	>4	>3	>3	>3	>3	>2
Employment	>40,000	>10,000	>5,000	>500 to 10,000	50 to 1,000	
Jobs: Housing Ratio	>1:1	2:1 to 5:1	2:1 to 5:1	1:1 to 4:1	.5:1 to 2:1	

Note: Criteria are intended to be applied flexibly. Density criteria are relevant primarily to new Centers and to the growth areas of existing Centers, and are less relevant to the built-up portions of existing Centers. Designation criteria refer to the Center's planning horizon year (for example, 2020 population rather than current population).

Towns, are currently unsewered. In order to grow, these Centers will need to find cost-effective and appropriately scaled solutions to the provision of wastewater treatment capacity.

While the State Plan establishes a hierarchy of five Center types, each with specific designation criteria and growth management strategies, these places are not expected to remain static, and areas are not precluded from growing—a Village may become a Town, or a Town may turn into a Regional Center. Both existing and new Centers may change over time and therefore should be carefully planned. New Centers should emerge from regional or subregional strategic planning initiatives developed cooperatively between the private sector and municipal and county government. State agencies, including the Office of State Planning, can provide technical assistance in carrying out strategic planning efforts.

The designation of Centers is part of the Plan Endorsement process.

The purpose of Plan Endorsement is to increase the degree of consistency among municipal, county, regional and state agency plans and the State Plan and to facilitate the implementation of these plans. The State Plan outlines six objectives that derive from this purpose:

1. To encourage municipal, county, regional and state agency plans to be coordinated and support each other to achieve the Goals of the State Plan;
2. To encourage counties and municipalities to plan on a regional basis while recognizing the fundamental role of the municipal master plan and development regulations;
3. To consider the entire municipality, including Centers, Cores, Nodes and Environs, within the context of regional systems;
4. To provide an opportunity for all government entities and the public to discuss and resolve common planning issues;
5. To provide a framework to guide and support state investment programs and permitting assistance in the implementation of municipal, county and regional plans that meet statewide objectives; and
6. To learn new planning approaches and techniques from municipal, county and regional governments for dissemination throughout the state and possible incorporation into the State Plan.

A municipal master plan, county plan or regional plan and accompanying development regulations will be reviewed for consistency with the guidelines for Plan Endorsement adopted by the State Planning Commission. If the Commission finds the plan consistent, it will be endorsed and therefore eligible for priority assistance and incentives that flow from such endorsement.

Planning for Centers

Centers are complex, richly textured living communities, where a physical framework of buildings, infrastructure and open spaces actively supports the economy and civil society. Traditional compact communities have evolved (and continue to evolve) over long periods of time, demonstrating a frequently overlooked capacity for adapting to changing—and sometimes adverse—circumstances. A community's ability to respond positively to changing conditions is in part attributable to the basic soundness of its physical framework, which—unlike the one-dimensional, single-purpose developments typical of suburban sprawl—is designed to support a wide diversity of uses and activities for a wide diversity of users. Such a flexible physical framework accommodates change with much greater ease than the automobile dependent, single-use and single-purpose products of sprawl development. A compact community's diversity and flexibility are in turn reinforced and reflected by the ingenuity of

Healthy, Active Communities

A century ago, the fields of public health and urban planning emerged from common concerns about the social and public health dangers associated with America's overcrowded, unsanitary and unsafe cities. At the time, infectious diseases resulting from poor sanitation and unhealthy living conditions threatened the well being of society. Since then, these conditions have been largely eliminated.

Today, New Jersey and the nation face a new set of urgent public health concerns. Chronic diseases have replaced infectious disease as the number one cause of death. The fastest-growing public health concern for New Jersey is obesity and its causes. It is becoming increasingly evident that these "lifestyle" diseases are a result of communities designed around automobiles. These places discourage an active lifestyle that includes walking or bicycling for recreation or transportation.

These trends have enormous social and economic costs. In the United States, inadequate physical activity has been linked to more than 250,000 deaths per year. It has been estimated that an annual savings of more than \$4.3 billion could be achieved if 10 percent of sedentary adults began a walking program. A recent study of actual health-care expenditures found that inactive people had 31 percent higher health-care costs than those who were active.

Inadequate physical activity has been linked to the alarming increase in obesity and diabetes.

In New Jersey, more than 50 percent of adults are overweight and diabetes has increased by more than 28 percent since 1995.

But how are these public health concerns related to the State Plan? We now know that the leading cause of obesity is lowered activity levels. Increasing evidence from public health and urban design researchers is confirming that poor community design is contributing to this problem. Sprawl and automobile dominated design has resulted in communities that are not conducive to walking, bicycling or other activities, as a form of recreation or transportation. The result is that we have too few opportunities for exercise and activity in our daily lives. The solution is to design and redesign communities to promote walking, bicycling and active recreation near home, school and work. Today, only 11 percent of children walk or ride their bike to school, and less than one-third who live within a mile of school walk to get there. Fifty-five percent go to school in a private car. In 1980, Americans made 9.3 percent of all trips by walking, in 1995 only 5.5 percent were walking trips.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Regional Plan Association



The challenge in developing Center guidelines is to achieve a balance between the diverse and often competing interests of a Center's many users and stakeholders. Centers—and Center design—should strive to promote the interest of the community as a whole and optimize State Plan Goals, rather than seeking to maximize any of them. If any single interest (whether affordable housing, or wetlands protection or economic development), no matter how deserving on its own, achieves primacy at the expense of all the others, this most delicate balance is lost and the community as a whole stands to lose.

its leaders, the resourcefulness of its community groups, the skills of its businesses and the inventiveness of its school children.

The challenge in planning for new Centers is to create the physical frameworks which foster these qualities of flexibility and diversity in an increasingly specialized development environment geared to delivering single-purpose products. The task of managing existing compact communities—of coping with existing market realities and changing consumer demand—without damaging the physical framework and slowly losing these unique qualities, poses the same challenges.

The State Plan's concept of Centers is not the nostalgic, horse-and-buggy view of our traditional 18th and 19th century rural communities. Although some smaller New Jersey Centers still maintain a

picturesque Norman Rockwell atmosphere that harkens back to simpler times, the State Plan does not, in any way, promote this image throughout the state. On the contrary, the State Plan views Centers as dynamic, market-driven communities which embrace the challenges and are competitively poised for the 21st century. Center-like forms are being developed in New Jersey and across the nation with considerable market response and, in fact, have been recognized by the development industry as an important recent trend. The State Plan's growth management framework and its concept of Centers accommodate—although they do not promote—the automobile, as well as other late 20th century trends, such as large format retail; the trend towards larger homes; the desire for privacy and security; and others. These aspirations can be accommodated in Centers without compromising their fundamental principles of mixed-use and compactness, but only through careful design.

Planning and designing new Centers is not an easy task. Nevertheless, the potential rewards are considerable, while the downside of not developing in Centers is also significant. Yet, new Centers are unlikely to happen if municipalities take no proactive steps in that direction. This means involving the private sector (developers, land owners, residents) in visioning, in adopting detailed regulating plans that establish basic street alignments, reserve choice locations for major public uses and establish neighborhood character, and in implementing these plans consistently. Proactive municipal planning with the active participation of interested parties offers a much higher level of predictability to developers and other stakeholders than the current norm.

A list of Centers and endorsed plans is included in Appendix B on page 287. As of March 1, 2001 the State Planning Commission had designated 64 Centers—eight Urban, 11 Regional, 27 Town, 14 Villages and four Hamlets. Over 200 additional Centers were either proposed (includes a Center Boundary) or submitted as full petitions in the 1998 county and municipal Cross-acceptance reports and are presented as Proposed Centers. The State Planning Commission has also recognized Hudson County and its 12 municipalities as an Urban Complex and the 12 Route 130 municipalities in the Burlington County/Delaware River Corridor Strategic Plan. Designated Centers and plans endorsed by the State Planning Commission are eligible for priority assistance. Until designated and endorsed by the State Planning Commission, proposed and identified Centers are not eligible for priority assistance.

Components of Centers

Centers have three fundamental components: Center Boundaries, Cores, and Neighborhoods.

Center Boundaries

All Centers outside of Metropolitan, Suburban and Environmentally Sensitive/Barrier Islands Planning Areas must delineate Center Boundaries. Delineating Center Boundaries is critical for three reasons. First, these boundaries protect the Environs of these Centers—for instance, in Fringe, Rural and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas they protect the natural resources and rural landscape. Second, the extent of the Center's development area informs the private sector about public investment intentions, thereby creating positive expectations for development opportunities and growth. Third, these boundaries provide advance knowledge to agencies at all levels of government about where development is expected in the future so they can plan for the provision of adequate infrastructure to support that development without a reduction in levels of service.

Center Boundaries are delineated to reflect, where possible, physical features such as streets, streams or critical slope areas, or changes in the character of development. Center Boundaries can be marked by greenbelts—large tracts of undeveloped or developed open space, including areas under cultivation, areas maintained in a natural state, parks or school playgrounds, and areas with low intensity, land intensive uses such as golf courses or cemeteries. In Suburban and Fringe Planning Areas, greenbelts control community expansion and serve as buffers between communities—a system encircling and separating communities. In Fringe, Rural and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas, greenbelts also contribute to the sense of rural landscape. Center Boundaries can also be marked by bluebelts, such as rivers, lakes or the ocean.

As a result of limited system capacity, locational limits or other factors, not all Centers have to plan for growth. In these cases, the Center Boundaries should be delineated tightly around these existing places, making them Centers with limited future growth potential.

Benefits of the Centers Strategy

Rutgers University's Center for Urban Policy Research found the potential for the following benefits by the Year 2020 if New Jersey followed a Centers strategy:

- 144,000 more residents would locate in urban communities
- \$160 million in annual savings to municipalities, counties and school districts
- 122,000 acres of land will not be converted to development, including 68,000 acres of prime farmland and 45,000 acres of environmentally fragile land
- savings of \$870 million in road costs
- savings of \$1.45 billion in water supply and sewer infrastructure costs
- a 27,000 increase in work trip transit users
- reversal of a projected \$340 million loss in household income in urban communities, to a gain of \$3 billion
- improvements in the quantity and quality of intergovernmental contacts and relationships

Source: *The Costs and Benefits of Alternative Growth Patterns: Impact Assessment of the New Jersey State Plan*, Rutgers University Center for Urban Policy Research, September 2000

Still other places might benefit from additional growth, and the magnitude of growth of these places should be reflected either in larger Centers or in higher densities in a more limited service area. These determinations are made by municipalities and counties working with the State Planning Commission.

Cores

Cores are the downtowns and major neighborhood commercial concentrations of our traditional communities. They are generally characterized by their greater intensity and complexity. In most cases:

- buildings are multi-story and mixed-use;
- internal trips are on foot or by transit;
- parking is shared;
- surfaces are impervious;
- open space is public; and
- housing is multi-family.

The Core is the commercial, cultural and civic heart of the Center. It should be a bustling place which provides a dynamic setting for human interaction. Activities which generate the most pedestrian traffic, such as restaurants, retail and services, should be focused in the Core.

Cores can take a variety of physical forms, but two are most important. The traditional Core is linear—the “Main Street” model. It is organized along one or both sides of a commercial street, and may extend into sections of one or more cross streets. In smaller Centers, the Main Street should be limited in length to 1,500 feet, a comfortable walking distance. A second model is the concentrated core, comprising one or more square blocks. It is more compact and less linear, for example, organized around a green or public square. A pedestrian-oriented neighborhood or community shopping center can constitute a contemporary manifestation of this type of core. There are no fixed rules for Core design, and many hybrid forms exist, including combinations of linear and concentrated Cores. Village Cores are considerably smaller, and may be constituted by no more than a handful of civic and commercial buildings around a public space, and supported by higher density housing. Hamlet Cores are more in the nature of a community focal point, and are more likely to contain civic uses than commercial uses.

Center Cores: Typical Uses

Hotel, Single-room Occupancy/dormitory, high-density multi-family housing, office, retail, personal and professional services, restaurant and cafe, transit station, government building, library, post-office, place of worship, park, cultural facility, theater, cinema, concert hall, dance hall, club, hospital, health club, light industry, structured parking.

CENTER CORE PLANNING GUIDELINES

	REGIONAL CENTER PA1, 2	REGIONAL CENTER PA3, 4, 5	TOWN	VILLAGE
Area (in sq. miles)	.2 to 1	.2 to .5	.2 to .5	.1
Population	400 to 5,000	200 to 2,500	>100	>50
Housing	200 to 2,500	100 to 1,200	>50	>25
Housing Density (gross)	3 du/ac	3 du/ac	3 du/ac	3 du/ac
Employment	>2,500	1,000 to 5,000	>250	>25

Note: du/ac = dwelling units per acre

Neighborhoods

Distinct Neighborhoods are the fundamental building blocks of Centers. Neighborhoods are defined by walking distances, and contain a balanced mix of uses and activities or contribute towards such a balance within the overall Center. Neighborhoods exhibit a clear identity and personality, and this is most commonly achieved through the manipulation of the physical design features (dimensions of streets, building scale, building style, streetscape, palette); by capitalizing on the presence of dramatic natural features; by offering a unique facility or range of uses; or by displaying the uniqueness of the neighborhood residents or users. A neighborhood's identity may be defined by the presence of an important local institution, such as a hospital or a high school; by the period in which it was built and the character of its building stock; by a defining natural feature, such as a lake; or by a concentration of certain uses, for example, bookstores or restaurants; or by other means.

Distinct Neighborhoods have neighborhood centers and edges. The neighborhood center is the central place or focus for that neighborhood, reflecting its character and density. The neighborhood center provides a focus for transit service and may offer neighborhood-oriented retail and services, along with employment, civic uses and a neighborhood green. Neighborhood centers are within a 10-minute walking distance from the neighborhood edge. In general, there is a higher density at the neighborhood center, and there may be lower densities at the neighborhood edges. Schools and day-care located at or near neighborhood centers can reduce transportation costs and increase safety.

The neighborhood edge marks the transition between neighborhoods. Neighborhood edges are often defined by natural systems, such as stream corridors or wetlands; elements of the transportation infrastructure, such as major roads or rail lines; preserved open space, such as cemeteries or parks; or large uses, such as schools and associated playgrounds. Edges may also reflect changes in character or in uses. Larger lot single-family housing and other lower-density uses are often located at the edges of neighborhoods.

Neighborhoods may be predominantly residential, predominantly nonresidential or predominantly mixed-use. There are no clear rules on what uses can be combined and what uses should not be combined. In general, clear performance standards provide the best approach to combining uses.

Types of Centers

The State Plan provides for five types of Centers: Urban Centers, Regional Centers, Towns, Villages and Hamlets.



Trenton

Criteria for Designating Urban Centers

Eight Urban Centers have been identified by the State Planning Commission. They all meet the following criteria:

1. It is fully developed, with an infrastructure network serving its region; and
2. It has a population of more than 40,000; and
3. It has a population density exceeding 7,500 persons per square mile; and
4. It has an employment base of more than 40,000 jobs; and
5. It has a job-to-dwelling ratio of 1:1 or higher; and
6. It serves as the primary focus for commercial, industrial, office and residential uses in the Metropolitan Area, providing the widest range of jobs, housing, governmental, educational and cultural facilities in the region and providing the most intense level of transportation infrastructure in the state; or
7. In lieu of all the above, a history of population and employment levels that are consistent with the above six criteria; and
8. In conjunction with either of the above two options (criteria 1-6 or 7), the municipal boundary of the Urban Center is used in the application of the criteria and serves as the boundary of the Urban Center.



Urban Centers

Urban Centers are generally the largest of the Plan's five types of Centers. These Urban Centers offer the most diverse mix of industry, commerce, residences and cultural facilities of any central place. While all Urban Centers have suffered decline in some neighborhoods, many are growing overall and all still contain many jobs and households. They are repositories of large infrastructure systems, industrial jobs, corporate headquarters, medical and research services, universities, government offices, convention centers, museums and other valuable built assets. They are also home to a large pool of skilled and presently unskilled labor that could, with appropriate investment, become among the state's most valuable human resource assets. Historically, public

POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT OF URBAN CENTERS

URBAN CENTER	LAND AREA (SQUARE MILES)	1980	2000	1980-2000 CHANGE
Atlantic City	11.3			
Population		40,199	40,517	318
Population Density		3,557	3,585	28
Employment		44,513	73,041	28,528
Employment Density		3,938	6,463	2,524
Camden	9.2			
Population		84,910	79,904	(5,006)
Population Density		9,253	8,707	(546)
Employment		38,093	35,644	(2,449)
Employment Density		4,151	3,884	(267)
Elizabeth	12.4			
Population		106,201	120,568	14,367
Population Density		8,537	9,692	1,155
Employment		54,301	47,380	(6,921)
Employment Density		4,365	3,809	(556)
Jersey City	14.8			
Population		223,532	240,055	16,523
Population Density		15,104	16,220	1,116
Employment		77,331	97,742	20,411
Employment Density		5,225	6,604	1,379
Newark	24.3			
Population		329,248	273,546	(55,702)
Population Density		13,559	11,265	(2,294)
Employment		162,705	149,184	(13,521)
Employment Density		6,700	6,144	(557)
New Brunswick	5.4			
Population		41,442	48,573	7,131
Population Density		7,703	9,029	1,325
Employment		28,856	31,650	2,794
Employment Density		5,364	5,883	519
Paterson	8.7			
Population		137,970	149,222	11,252
Population Density		15,917	17,215	1,298
Employment		51,277	44,889	(6,388)
Employment Density		5,916	5,179	(737)
Trenton	7.5			
Population		92,124	85,403	(6,721)
Population Density		12,249	11,355	(894)
Employment		35,574	29,929	(5,645)
Employment Density		4,730	3,979	(751)
TOTAL (Urban Centers)	93.6			
Population		1,055,626	1,037,788	(17,838)
Population Density		11,282	11,091	(191)
Employment		492,650	509,459	16,809
Employment Density		5,265	5,445	180
TOTAL (All New Jersey)	7,508.0			
Population		7,364,823	8,414,350	1,049,527
Population Density		981	1,121	140
Employment		2,875,073	3,857,253	982,180
Employment Density		383	514	131

Source: U.S. Census; N.J. Department of Labor; N.J. Department of Personnel; N.J. Department of Community Affairs, Office of State Planning.

Notes: Densities are per square mile of land area.

2000 employment is estimated based on 1999 employment data.

agencies at all levels have invested heavily in these Centers, building an intense service fabric that, with repair that must occur anyway, offers a solid foundation for new growth in the future. Given these attributes of New Jersey's Urban Centers, new employment that takes advantage of the workforce potential of the Urban Centers should be encouraged.

Urban Centers anchor growth in their metropolitan areas, and their influence extends throughout New Jersey, often across state lines and even internationally. They have a distinct central business district and many neighborhoods, many of which may have Cores of shopping and community services. They are compact compared to surrounding suburban communities and serve as the hub for communication and transportation networks in their regions.

Where an Urban Center shares a network of public services and facilities with surrounding municipalities, a county or other regional entity may, at the discretion of the county and municipalities, coordinate physical development and social services as an Urban Complex according to a strategic revitalization plan prepared and implemented by the county or regional entity in cooperation with participating municipalities and the private sector.



Regional Centers

Regional Centers may be either existing or new. Existing Regional Centers vary in character and size, depending on the unique economics of the regions they serve. In Metropolitan Planning Areas, they may include some smaller cities not designated as Urban Centers. In Suburban Planning Areas, they often serve as major employment centers. In rural areas, they may be population centers and county seats, with small business districts serving residents.



New Regional Centers should be located in the state's major corridors and designed to organize growth that otherwise would sprawl throughout the corridor. They should be compact and contain a mix of residential, commercial and office uses at an intensity that will make a variety of public transportation options feasible as the Centers are built out. New Regional Centers should have a core of commercial activity, and the boundaries of the Centers should be well defined by open space or significant natural features. Regional Centers in the Metropolitan Planning Area should be carefully located, scaled and designed/redeveloped/retrofitted so as not to drain the economic growth potential of Urban Centers.

Criteria for Designating Regional Centers

The following criteria are intended as a general guide for identifying Regional Centers. Local conditions may require flexible application of the criteria to achieve the Policy Objectives of the Planning Area:

1. It functions (or is planned to function) as the focal point for the economic, social and cultural activities of its region, with a compact, mixed-use (for example, commercial, office, industrial, public) Core and neighborhoods offering a wide variety of housing types; and
2. It has access to existing or planned infrastructure sufficient to serve projected growth; and
3. It has, within the Center Boundary, an existing (or planned) population of more than 10,000 people in Metropolitan and Suburban Planning Areas and more than 5,000 people in Fringe, Rural and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas; and
4. It has (or is planned to have) a gross population density of approximately 5,000 persons per square mile excluding water bodies (or approximately three dwelling units per acre) or more within the Center Boundary; and
5. It has (or is planned to have) within the Center Boundary, an employment base of more than 10,000 jobs in Metropolitan and Suburban Planning Areas and more than 5,000 jobs in Fringe, Rural and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas; and
6. It is near a major public transportation terminal, arterial intersection or interstate interchange capable of serving as the hub for two or more modes of transportation; and
7. It has a land area of one to 10 square miles.

In addition, the following criteria apply specifically to new Regional Centers

- a. It is in a market area supporting high-intensity development and redevelopment and reflects characteristics similar to existing Regional Centers regarding employment and residential uses; or
- b. It is a single- or limited-purpose employment complex that can be retrofitted to form the Core of a full service, mixed-use community, as described above; and
- c. It has a jobs-to-housing ratio of 2:1 to 5:1; and
- It is identified as a result of a strategic planning effort conducted on a regional basis, which includes participation by the private sector, municipalities, counties and state agencies that represent the major actors in the development of the region and is identified in county and municipal master plans, and
- It is located, scaled and designed so as not to adversely affect the economic growth potential of Urban Centers.

Examples of Designated Regional Centers

Metropolitan Planning Area

Red Bank, Bridgewater-
Raritan-Somerville

Suburban Planning Area

Princeton

Rural Planning Area

Newton

New Regional Centers will be primarily employment concentrations of regional significance surrounded by or in proximity to a critical mass of housing and supported by institutional, civic, recreational and other such uses. New Regional Centers should offer a variety of goods and services for a regional market: large scale retail, sports, and entertainment facilities, along with specialized or niche retail; large-scale

commercial (corporate offices, industrial parks); mid-size educational facilities (community colleges), cultural facilities (regional theaters, music halls, etc.). The range of housing types available should be fairly broad, with an important multi-family component, a wide variety of attached and detached single-family configurations, a sizable rental component, and a significant special needs housing component. Given their size, cost and complexity, new Regional Centers in New Jersey are unlikely to be conceived as a single development proposal on raw land. Rather, new Regional Centers are likely to involve considerable redevelopment and retrofitting. Their planning is encouraged to recognize and build upon those uses and activities—existing residential subdivisions, office and industrial parks, schools, recreational facilities—which may already be in place, on the ground. The challenge for new Regional Centers is likely to involve primarily three aspects: the provision of one or more Cores which will focus the surrounding activities; the retrofitting of the transportation infrastructure in ways that increase connectivity between uses and activities; and a variety of infill/redevelopment/reuse interventions, including the dedication of new public open spaces, in ways that strengthen the Center's structure and cohesiveness.

New Regional Centers should have circulation systems that are comprehensive and functional; address the mobility needs of vehicular and non-vehicular modes; facilitate future transit and para-transit options; and effectively connect residential and nonresidential uses for all modes of transportation. They should be effectively linked to other Centers, by highway, rail, express bus, regional bikeway or other modes, and organized around (one or more) higher-intensity, mixed-use Cores which are the focus of public investments, the preferred location for transit investments and the heart of public life.



Newton



Towns

Towns are the traditional centers of commerce or government throughout the state. They are relatively freestanding in terms of their economic, social and cultural functions. Towns reflect a higher level of investment in public facilities and services than their surrounding Environs. They provide a core of commercial services to adjacent residents and provide employment in their regions.

Towns contain several neighborhoods that together provide a highly diverse housing stock in terms of types and price levels. Towns have a compact form of development with a defined central core containing shopping services, offices and community and governmental facilities.

New Towns should emulate, to the extent possible, the most cherished features of the traditional New Jersey towns, that is, the comfortable, human scale of blocks, streets and open spaces; the easy walking access to civic and community activities; and a collection of neighborhoods offering a remarkable diversity of housing choice.



Criteria for Designating Towns

The following criteria are intended as a general guide for designating Towns. Local conditions may require flexible application of the criteria to achieve the Policy Objectives of the Planning Area:

1. While smaller than an Urban or Regional Center, it has a traditional, compact, mixed-use Core of development providing most of the commercial, industrial, office, cultural and governmental functions commonly needed on a daily basis by the residents of the Town and its economic region; it has neighborhoods providing a mix of residential housing types, with infrastructure serving both the Core and the neighborhoods; and
2. It has (or is planned to have) a population of more than 1,000 persons and less than 10,000 within the Center Boundary; and
3. It has (or is planned for) a gross population density of more than 5,000 persons per square mile excluding water bodies; and
4. It has (or is planned to have) a minimum gross housing density of three dwelling units per acre excluding water bodies; and
5. It has a land area of less than two square miles; and
6. It has (or is planned to have) a jobs-to-housing ratio of 1:1 to 4:1; and
7. It is served by an arterial highway and/or public transit.

In addition, new Towns should meet the following criteria:

- It has access to existing or planned infrastructure sufficient to serve projected growth throughout the Center; and
- It is identified through a strategic planning effort involving the private sector, municipalities, the county and relevant state agencies; and is identified in local master plans.

Examples of Designated Towns

Metropolitan Planning Area

Metuchen

Suburban Planning Area

Hightstown

Rural Planning Area

Woodstown

Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area

Hopatcong



Woodstown

Villages

Villages are compact, primarily residential communities that offer basic consumer services for their residents and nearby residents. Villages are not meant to be Centers providing major regional shopping or employment for their regions. This larger economic function belongs to Towns and Regional Centers.

New Villages will comprise a small Core and collection of neighborhoods. In the Suburban Planning Area, new Villages are likely to be distinguished from surrounding development only by a more cohesive and structured development form and by greater proximity between residential and nonresidential uses. In Fringe, Rural and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas, new Villages should, wherever possible, be surrounded by natural areas, farmland or open lands in the form of a greenbelt. New Villages should contain a commercial component in the Core capable of offering neighborhood-scale goods and services, such as are provided by a typical supermarket/shopping center. In addition, new Villages should offer certain public facilities (schools, branch library, post office), and small-scale commercial facilities (branch bank, professional offices). New Villages may offer a limited range of housing types,



Examples of Designated Villages

Suburban Planning Area

Cranbury

Rural Planning Area

Hopewell Borough

Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area

Cape May Point



Cranbury

Criteria for Designating Villages

The following criteria are intended as a general guide for designating Villages. Local conditions may require flexible application of the criteria to achieve the Policy Objectives of the Planning Area:

1. It is (or is planned to be) primarily a mixed-residential community with a compact Core of mixed-uses (for example, commercial, resource-based industrial, office, cultural) offering employment, basic personal and shopping services and community activities for residents of the Village and its Environs; and
2. It has a land area of less than one square mile; and
3. It has (or is planned for) a minimum gross population density of 5,000 people per square mile (excluding water bodies) and a minimum gross housing density of three dwelling units per acre; and
4. The existing and 2020 population should not exceed 4,500 people; and
5. It has reasonable proximity to an arterial highway.

In addition, new Villages should meet the following criteria:

- It is identified in municipal and county master plans; and
- It is an area capable of being served by a wastewater treatment system to meet applicable standards; and
- It is identified as a result of a strategic planning effort with participation by the private sector, municipalities, the county and relevant state agencies and is identified in local master plans.

with an emphasis on a variety of small and medium lot single-family configurations, a small multi-family component, and an appropriate rental component. Accessory apartments are also desirable and appropriate.

While new Villages are likely to continue to be designed largely in response to the requirements of automobile access, they can be distinguished from the surrounding Environs in several important ways. They represent more closely integrated units from a circulation perspective—movements are not systematically restricted through cul-de-sacs or other devices or funneled through a regimented functional hierarchy of local and through streets. Complete, safe, attractive and functional circulation networks for pedestrians and bicycles are provided, as well as for cars. This means that nonresidential uses are truly accessible to non-motorized modes of transportation, as well as to transit or para-transit services.

Second, there is a community focal point, which is likely to be an important intersection, around which the commercial and civic components are organized, and which constitutes an appropriate pick-up/drop-off location for flexible- or fixed-route transit, and car/van pooling. This is the Village Core, the focus of public activities and investments.

Third, new Villages should be effectively linked to nearby Centers by way of regional bikeways, corridor transit or para-transit.

Hamlets

Hamlets are the smallest places eligible for Center designation in the State Plan. Existing Hamlets are found primarily in rural areas, often at crossroads. Hamlets are not synonymous with conventional single-use residential subdivisions. Although Hamlets are primarily residential in character, they may have a small, compact Core offering limited convenience goods and community activities, such as a multi-purpose community building, a school, a house of worship, a tavern or luncheonette, a commons or similar land uses. The density of a Hamlet should conform to the carrying capacities of natural and built systems.

While existing Hamlets presently have no public water or sewer system, if they are planned to accommodate new development, small-scale systems or potable water systems may be required and are encouraged. New development in existing and new Hamlets should absorb the development that otherwise would occur in the Environs. The amount or level of new development should conform to the capacities of natural resource and infrastructure systems that would exist in the absence of the water and sewer systems.

New Hamlets are expected to continue primarily as residential development forms, offering a limited range of housing choices, predominantly geared to various single-family configurations, and perhaps with some very small lot and some accessory units. New Hamlets are distinct from conventional subdivisions in a number of ways. They are designed with an integrated and interconnected circulation system, which facilitates internal movement, including pedestrians and bicycles, and does not preclude future transit service. They are structured around a community focal point, such as a small green or simply an important intersection, which may contain a convenience store, a local business or a church, and which constitutes an appropriate pick-up/drop-off for flexible- or fixed-route transit, car/van pooling, etc. This is the Core of the Hamlet, the center of the community. New Hamlets should be effectively linked to other Centers in the region by way of regional bikeways, corridor transit or para-transit.

New Hamlets in the Suburban Planning Area may not resemble the more self-contained Hamlets of Fringe, Rural and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas in that they are not likely to be surrounded by farmland or pristine open space but rather by Environs containing limited development.



Criteria for Designating Hamlets

The following criteria are intended as a general guide for designating Hamlets. Local conditions may require flexible application of the criteria to achieve the Policy Objectives of the Planning Area:

1. It functions (or is planned to function) primarily as a small-scale, compact residential settlement with community functions (including, for example, a commons or community-activity building or place) that clearly distinguishes it from the standard, single-use, residential subdivision; and
2. It has (or is planned to have) a population of at least 25 people and not more than 250 people; and
3. It has (or is planned to have) a minimum gross housing density of two dwelling units per acre;
4. It has an area that encompasses, generally, 10 to 50 acres, unless wastewater systems are not reasonably feasible, in which case the boundary may encompass as much as 100 acres (wastewater systems are preferred and should be installed to assure compact development, unless there are mitigating environmental factors that make septic systems, and the resulting larger lot sizes, preferable);
5. It has (or is planned to have) up to 100 dwelling units and a range of housing types within the Center.

In addition, a new Hamlet should meet the following criteria:

- It is identified as a result of a municipal planning effort conducted with the participation of the county and reflected in municipal and county master plans; and
- It is a small, compact, primarily residential settlement. It should be planned to absorb the development that would otherwise occur on tracts of land in the Environs. A new Hamlet may require a small-scale public water, wastewater treatment, or potable water system. The total amount or level of development within both the Hamlet and the Environs should conform to the Policy Objectives of the Planning Area and to the capacities of natural resource and infrastructure systems that would exist in the Planning Area in the absence of the water and wastewater facilities; and
- It is planned to be integrated into a regional network of communities with appropriate transportation linkages; and
- It is planned and designed to preserve farmlands or environmentally sensitive areas.

Policies for Centers

Policy 1 Designation of Centers and Endorsed Plans

Centers are delineated in municipal, county or regional plans and receive designation status through State Planning Commission endorsement of those plans.

Policy 2 Priority Assistance for Designated Centers and Endorsed Plans

Designated Centers and plans endorsed by the State Planning Commission are eligible for priority assistance.

Policy 3 Using Capacity Information to Plan Centers

The identification and designation of Centers should be based upon capacity information and existing and desirable future development patterns. Counties and regional agencies should analyze the capacities of infrastructure, natural resources, social and economic/fiscal systems and use this information in working with their municipalities to identify the proper locations, number and sizes of Centers necessary to accommodate projected population and employment growth to the Year 2020.

Policy 4 Center Boundaries

Centers in the Fringe, Rural and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas have Center Boundaries delineating the geographic focus of development and redevelopment activities, infrastructure and other investments. The delineation of a Center Boundary is optional for Centers in the Metropolitan and Environmentally Sensitive/Barrier Islands Planning Areas. The delineation of a Center Boundary is encouraged for Centers in the Suburban Planning Area.

Policy 5 Delineating Center Boundaries

Center Boundaries should be defined by roads; waterways; parks, greenways and greenbelts; or changes in housing patterns, densities or types. They need not be coterminous with county or municipal boundaries.

Policy 6 Providing Land for Growth in Centers

Centers should contain a sufficient amount of land to support their projected growth both in the short run and to the Year 2020. This should include an appropriate multiple of land area to serve growth projections, new or expanded capital facilities, and affordable housing allocations, without constraining the market or allowing monopoly land pricing.

Policy 7 Balancing Growth Between Centers and Regions

In the aggregate, Centers should be planned to accommodate regional growth projections, providing a reasonable multiple of land. However, within the region specific Centers may not necessarily require growth. Municipalities or counties with these places should identify sufficient amounts of available and developable land within other Centers to serve the market area while accommodating projected levels of growth.

Policy 8 Interjurisdictional Cooperation and Centers

Coordinated planning for Centers should be established through interlocal agreements between counties or other regional entities, especially for purposes of water quality, water supply, air quality and transportation.

Policy 9 Affordable Housing in Centers

Locate affordable housing within Center Boundaries in Fringe, Rural and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas. An absence of Centers identified to receive growth in a municipality will not absolve a municipality of its fair-share housing responsibility. Where Centers are not identified, the Council on Affordable Housing, working with the State Planning Commission and the municipality, may identify Centers or other appropriate ways for a municipality to accommodate its fair-share housing allocation and still meet the intent and purposes of the State Plan.

Policy 10 Identifying and Delineating Cores

Communities are encouraged to identify and delineate Cores as part of their plans submitted to the State Planning Commission for Plan Endorsement.

Policy 11 Land Banking for Future Growth

Consider land banking to ensure that growth within a Center beyond the planning horizon is not unnecessarily constrained. This land may be within or just outside of the Center Boundary.

Policy 12 Reconsideration of Center Boundaries

Reconsideration of Center Boundaries should occur as part of master plan reexaminations, based on regional and local planning considerations and the capacities of infrastructure, natural resource and other systems to sustain development.

Center Design Policies

Policy 13 Cores

Design Cores to be the commercial, cultural, and civic heart of a Center, with multi-story and mixed-use buildings, shared parking, higher intensities and a high proportion of internal trips on foot or by transit. Focus in Cores activities, such as restaurants, retail and services, which generate pedestrian traffic.

Policy 14 Neighborhoods

Design neighborhoods with a distinct identity as the fundamental building block of Centers, with a central focus (shopping, transit service, school or green) and an edge marking transitions. Neighborhoods are characterized by short walking distances from edge to center.

Policy 15 Streets and Blocks

Design streets and blocks to:

- maximize connectivity;
- establish a comfortable pedestrian environment;

- function as high-quality public spaces as well as means of circulation;
- balance the needs of different transportation modes, with an emphasis on pedestrian and bicycles;
- serve the needs of everyday users (pedestrians, cars), rather than of occasional users (fire trucks, snow plows);
- minimize cartway width and impervious coverage, while maximizing energy-efficient building sites;
- maximize the use of traffic calming and traditional traffic control devices (roundabouts, T-intersections);
- maximize the sense of enclosure, using continuity of building walls and appropriate building height-to-street-width ratios to reinforce street space in ways appropriate to the block and the neighborhood; and
- reflect adjacent land-use conditions as well as the volume of traffic which the street is expected to carry.

Policy 16 Public Spaces

Provide within each Center for at least one centrally located, easily accessible and well-designed public space that creates a focal point for the community, along with an appropriate variety of other, smaller public and semi-public spaces to address more limited or neighborhood needs.

Policy 17 Streetscapes

Encourage quality streetscape treatments that adequately reflect public commitment to the community and its built environment, with trees and other appropriate plant material, statuary, fountains and other features that animate the public and semi-public realm, along with appropriate street furniture.

Policy 18 Integrating Large and Small Buildings and Facilities

Encourage neighborhoods that integrate both large and small buildings and facilities. To achieve a seamless integration of larger facilities into the surrounding neighborhood:

- consider complementary uses to soften transitions from residential to nonresidential;
- design large facilities to resemble a series of smaller buildings;
- calm vehicular access and egress to avoid disruption to pedestrian circulation and to neighborhood activities;
- develop and enforce performance standards to maintain desirable quality of life features;
- provide incentives, where appropriate, for multi-story buildings with smaller footprints, instead of single-story buildings with vast floorplates;
- schedule activities to minimize disruptions to the surrounding neighborhood; and
- maintain a constant dialogue between the neighborhood and the large user and require public involvement in every step of decision making.

Policy 19 Building Orientation

Orient buildings and main building entrances to face streets or other important public spaces, and clearly mark and frame these entrances architecturally with columns, lintels, pediments, canopies or other architectural features. Avoid orienting buildings toward parking lots.

Policy 20 Building Height

Encourage taller buildings to acknowledge the height of neighboring buildings and to echo important horizontal lines by way of setbacks, recesses or other design devices.

Policy 21 Building Elevations

Create visual interest in facade design with rhythms, patterns and decorative elements and by using a variety of modular components. Avoid blank walls, particularly if visible from the public realm.

ENVIRONS

The State Plan defines the Environs as areas outside Center Boundaries. This generally includes the lands between designated Centers in the Fringe, Rural and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas. Unlike Centers and Planning Areas, Environs are not designated in the State Plan, but they are included in Endorsed Plans. They are described to provide policy guidance for decisions regarding potential conservation or development.

The Environs encompass a diversity of conditions, and throughout New Jersey, it varies in form and function. Existing conditions in the Environs also vary among Planning Areas. The Environs may include greenbelts: predominantly open areas that mark the outer edge of Centers. The Environs may also include some existing Nodes, which are encouraged to be retrofitted over time to reduce automobile dependency, diversify land uses, and enhance linkages to communities, wherever possible.

In Fringe, Rural and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas, the Environs are predominantly forested, agricultural or other undeveloped land. Active farmland and woodlands—whether deed restricted or not—provide both residents and visitors with productive economic activity, beneficial ratables and visually pleasing environments. Natural features, such as rivers, lakes, ridgelines and forests, may form a desired community of plants and animals, as well as a limit to the extension of infrastructure.

In other parts of New Jersey, the Environs may have limited development, such as scattered housing, retail, office space or warehousing. In some counties, the Environs are already considerably developed with a variety of low-intensity uses, such as larger-lot housing and educational facilities. In

Environs: Typical Uses

In general, land-intensive, low-intensity uses are most appropriate in the Environs. Farmland and associated buildings and structures, agricultural processing plants, animal husbandry, forestry, mining and quarrying, fisheries, uses and activities associated with natural resources such as equipment rentals (canoes, bicycles, mountain climbing gear), campgrounds, lodges, sporting and recreational camps, bed and breakfast inns, cemeteries, golf courses, and botanical and zoological gardens are illustrative of the types of uses generally considered appropriate in the Environs.

Other uses currently found in the Environs, such as larger lot housing, vacation homes, airports, power plants, highway rest stops, and warehousing and distribution centers, should be considered on a limited basis only.

All uses seeking to locate in the Environs should meet the Policy Objectives of the relevant Planning Area and should be consistent with the appropriate Statewide Design policies.

highway corridors, the Environs include large warehousing and distribution centers. Military bases may also occur in the Environs.

The Environs are the preferred areas for the protection of large contiguous areas, including the preservation of farmland, open space and large forest tracts. The Policy Objectives for the Fringe, Rural and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas specifically call for protection of the Environs from development. Strategies for preserving the Environs include density transfers into Centers, purchasing or donating easements, restricting the extension of capital facilities and adopting ordinances that limit development.

Linkages Within the Environs

Greenways—regionwide linear corridors of permanently preserved public or private land linking New Jersey’s urban, suburban and rural areas—can be an important part of the Environs. Some municipalities and counties in New Jersey have already planned for greenways, such as the Delaware and Raritan Canal Greenway and Patriots Path.

The Environs can also serve as infrastructure linkages to Centers and to Metropolitan and Suburban Planning Areas. Transportation, water, wastewater, or other linkages (for example, rails and roads, bicycle paths, water and sewer lines) may traverse the Environs to connect Centers and Metropolitan and Suburban Planning Areas. Strategies for capital facilities and services in the Environs should follow the Planning Area Policy Objectives to ensure beneficial growth in Centers and the protection of the Environs. Infrastructure investments should not induce or promote development in the Environs that would be more appropriate in Centers.

The State Plan encourages growth that would otherwise occur in the Environs to locate in Centers. Existing development in the Environs, if sufficiently concentrated, may offer opportunities for redesign into Centers. New development that cannot be transferred to Centers should be sensitive to the prevailing local conditions and should not compromise local character.

Design and planning techniques should be used to ensure that any new development enhances the character of the area by preserving open space, retaining scenic vistas, and maintaining natural systems. Techniques and tools identified in the Implementation Strategy for each Planning Area



should be used to realize the State Plan's vision in the Environs. These techniques may include clustering residential units; retaining natural buffers; and reducing automobile use by providing pedestrian connections and traffic-calming features.

Tools to Protect the Environs

A variety of tools are available to protect the Environs, including capacity and build-out analyses; planning for development in Centers and protection of greenbelts surrounding Centers and greenways connecting Centers; sliding-scale zoning; clustering and other density transfers; phasing of infrastructure; and purchases of development rights and easements, as well as resale of deed-restricted farms to farmers. In the Office of State Planning publication *Farmland Subdivision: A Catalogue of Land Use Techniques to Preserve and Enhance Agricultural Uses of Land*, a number of techniques are listed, including agricultural zoning, agricultural districts, and tax incentives. Other tools currently in use or under consideration throughout New Jersey can be found in *Local Planning Techniques that Implement Provisions of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan* and *Plan for the Environs of a Center*, also available from the Office of State Planning.

Policies for Environs

Policy 1 Planning and Implementation of the Environs

Protect the Environs of Centers through comprehensive planning and consistent capital investment and regulation.

Policy 2 Large Contiguous Areas

Ensure that large contiguous areas of farmland and open lands are preserved and maintained in the Environs.

Policy 3 Greenbelts

Surround Centers with greenbelts, where appropriate.

Policy 4 Development in the Environs

Development in the Environs should meet the Policy Objectives of the relevant Planning Area.

Policy 5 Transfer Density

Equitably transfer density from the Environs to existing or planned Centers.