

# Master Plan

Branchville Borough, New Jersey

May 9, 2018



Prepared By:  
Harold E. Pellow & Associates, Inc.  
17 Plains Rd. Augusta, NJ 07822





# Acknowledgement

## Planning Board

Michael Clune, Chairman  
Anthony Frato Sr., Mayor  
Brian Bansemer  
William Bathgate  
Vicki Card  
Phil Horjus  
Heather Klimas  
Ruth Philpot  
Wesley Powers  
Frank Sutton  
Mary Whitesell

## Professional Staff

Harold E. Pellow, Borough Engineer  
Cory L. Stoner, P.E., C.M.E., Planning Board Engineer  
Matthew J. Morris, L.L.A., P.P., Planner  
Robert Morgenstern Esq., Planning Board Attorney

## Thank You

David R. Troast, LLC. for compiling the 2006 master plan re-examination and the 2008 Housing Element used in this report.  
The Nelson Consulting Group for compiling the 2016 Housing Element addendum used in this report.

The original of this report was signed and sealed in accordance with N.J.S.A. 45:14A-12.

---

Matthew J. Morris, New Jersey Professional Planner #6118

# Table of Contents

Acknowledgement.....	3
Introduction .....	5
Master Plan Goals and Objectives .....	7
Existing Community Characteristics .....	9
Land Use Plan Element.....	16
Conservation Plan Element .....	30
Housing and Fair Share Plan Element.....	32
Historic Preservation Plan Element .....	38
Recreational Plan Element .....	40
Utility Service Plan Element.....	43
Recycling Plan Element.....	46
Relationship to Other Plans.....	47
References.....	48
Master Plan Summary .....	49
Appendices.....	52

## Appendices

- Appendix A - Branchville Zoning Map
- Appendix B – NJDEP Land Cover (2012)
- Appendix C – Land Use
- Appendix D – State Plan Policy Map
- Appendix E – Threatened and Endangered Species
- Appendix F – Wetlands and Vernal Habitat
- Appendix G – Surface Water Resources and Flood Plains
- Appendix H – Slopes
- Appendix I – Soils
- Appendix J – Groundwater Recharge
- Appendix K - Bedrock Geology
- Appendix L – Watersheds and Subwatersheds
- Appendix M – Wellhead Protection Areas and Known Contaminated Sites
- Appendix N – Branchville Sewer System and Sewer Service Area
- Appendix O – Water Distribution System
- Appendix P – Non-Conforming Lots
- Appendix Q – Buildout Study
- Appendix R - Branchville Borough Structures Built Prior to 1940

# Introduction

The New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) establishes the legislative authority for municipalities to prepare, adopt and amend a master plan to guide the use of lands within the municipality in a manner which protects public health and safety, and promotes the general welfare.

Per the requirements of the MLUL, municipalities are required to update their master plan every 10 years through the process of re-examination. A re-examination report is the Planning Board's assessment of whether the municipality's master plan and/or the development regulations need to be updated. The re-examination report is an opportunity for the Planning Board to recommend changes to the master plan to better meet the needs and future vision of the community.

A re-examination report shall state the following:

1. The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of the adoption of the last re-examination report.
2. The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date.
3. The extent to which there have been significant changes in the assumptions, policies, and objectives forming the basis for the master plan or development regulations as last revised, with particular regard to the density and distribution of population and land uses, housing conditions, circulation, conservation of natural resources, energy conservation, collection, disposition, and recycling of designated recyclable materials, and changes in state, county and municipal policies and objectives.
4. The specific changes recommended for the master plan or development regulations, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether a new plan or regulations should be prepared.
5. The recommendations of the planning board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans adopted pursuant to the "Local Redevelopment and Housing Law," P.L.1992, c.79 (C.40A:12A-1 et al.) into the land use plan element of the municipal master plan, and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.

The last comprehensive master plan, here referenced as the 1994 Master Plan, was adopted by Branchville Borough in 1995 and prepared by Harold E. Pellow & Associates. This plan established a number of goals which will be discussed in depth in the following section.

A Master Plan Re-Examination Report was compiled by David R. Troast, LLC. in 2006. In this report the following specific changes were recommended:

1. The Branchville Borough Master Plan, specifically the Housing and Fair Share Plan, should be amended to comply with the COAH Growth Share Rules. The Governing Body should prepare the appropriate ordinances and apply to COAH for Certification.
2. The policies of the State Plan and Sussex County Strategic Growth Plan should be incorporated into the Branchville Borough Master Plan and zoning ordinances consistent with the approved center designation. This may include residential density reductions and eliminating or modifying

the commercial uses along State Highway 206 consistent with the Center Plan Implementation Agenda. Branchville Borough should pursue Plan Endorsement from the State Planning Commission.

3. Branchville Borough should evaluate the latest environmental information from the NJDEP to evaluate the current land use districts and densities. The Master Plan and zoning ordinances should be amended recommending the appropriate changes to protect the rural character, critical environmental features and habitats consistent with the Municipal Land Use Law, New Jersey State Plan and Sussex County Strategic Growth Plan.
4. The Planning Board should prepare and adopt a historic element of the Master Plan. The Historic Element will establish the policies to preserve and enhance the important historic features and character of Branchville Borough.
5. Branchville Borough should adopt storm water ordinances consistent with the new rules.

This plan seeks to build on these recommendations and address each of these proposed changes individually.

The Branchville Master Plan was most recently re-examined in 2017. During this re-examination, the Planning Board found that many of the objectives and assumptions of the previous Master Plan have changed over the last twenty years. With major shifts in economic development, housing needs and infrastructure in the Borough over that time, the Planning Board recommended the Master Plan be updated to reestablish the municipal land use policies in the Borough.

The following document is the product of a comprehensive review of the existing Master Plan and Borough development regulations. A majority of the document is a re-examination of the Borough's goals and vision for the future, and discusses possible action plans to bring these goals to fruition.

# Master Plan Goals and Objectives

The Municipal Land Use Law (40:55D-28) requires that every municipal Master Plan contain a statement of Goals, Objectives, Principles, Assumptions, Policies and Standards upon which the community's plans for physical, economic, and social development is based. This goal setting is the foundation on which the Master Plan is based. A vision statement has been established by the Planning Board which encompasses what they believe Branchville is and should be. The next step is to establish goals and objectives which must be met for this vision to be realized. A clear set of goals and objectives will help plan for future development within the Borough as well as guide current land use practices.

---

***Branchville Borough Vision Statement:** Preserve the historical, environmental and cultural quality of the Borough while promoting economic growth, adequate housing and future development in appropriate locations.*

---

For this updated Master Plan, the planning process began with a number of meetings conducted with the Borough Planning Board to develop and discuss goals and objectives which were pertinent to the Borough now as well as in the future. With input from the Planning Board, Borough Council and community stake holders, goals and objectives were developed according to each Master Plan element while incorporating the existing Master Plan goals. The goals stated in the 1995 Master Plan include:

1. To provide for safe and convenient traffic circulation and parking within the Borough Business Center.
2. To purchase additional land within the Branchville Reservoir drainage basin to ensure the conservation of this land and the continued good quality of the Borough's potable water.
3. To continue the effort to obtain a grant for the construction of a sanitary sewer system.

A review of the goals listed in the 1995 Master Plan show progress being made toward these goals over the last twenty years, most notably the completion of the installation of the Borough wide sanitary sewer system.

The 1995 Master Plan goals, while being a good starting point, do not encompass the entire vision of the Borough. For this Master Plan update it was decided that new goals and objectives should be established to better represent the vision Branchville has for itself in the future.

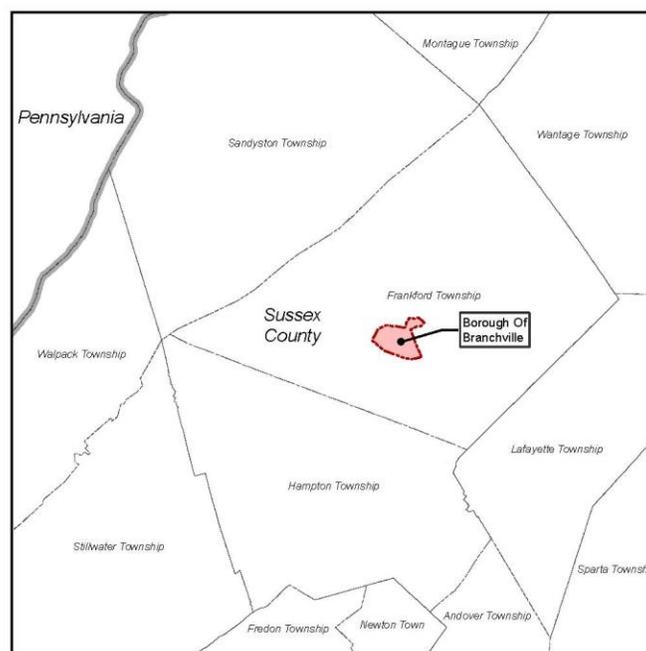
This document will list the goals and objectives established by the Borough as they pertain to each Master Plan element and will evaluate each specific objective and, when applicable, will present possible strategies for achieving the stated goals. These recommendations can then be implemented in the future to carry out the objectives of the Master Plan.

The intent of the Master Plan is to be a source of information and a reference for all future development within the Borough. A summary of the Master Plan goals, objectives and strategies is located at the end of this document.

## Existing Community Characteristics

Branchville Borough is located in the central to northwestern portion of Sussex County. It is surrounded by Frankford Township, which is bordered by Wantage, Lafayette, Sandyston and Hampton Townships. Named “Branchville” in 1821 by Schoolmaster Samuel Bishop, Branchville Borough has served as a population and economic hub in the County since the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Branchville began as a center for manufacturing with the first mill being built in 1690 by William H. Beemer. As Branchville grew, it became a center for mercantile establishments within the village, including a hotel, three blacksmith shops, a wheelwright, three general stores, two gristmills, a tin shop, a post office, a jewelry store, two churches, a doctor’s office, a lawyer’s office, a school and approximately 35 houses by the Civil War.



In 1869 the Sussex Railroad was completed by prominent Branchville resident William H. Bell, ending in Branchville Borough. The first passenger train arrived on July 3, 1869 and opened the area to greater access by Urbanites looking to enjoy Culver’s Lake and the surrounding countryside. The rail line also provided a means for farmers to transport their products to more urbanized areas. Among railroad facilities located in the Borough were the Branchville station, engine house, livestock chute, water tower and a 57-foot diameter turntable. As eastern railroad use declined, the Erie-Lackawanna abandoned the line from Branchville to Andover, with the last passenger train leaving Branchville on July 10, 1966.

Incorporated in 1898, Branchville Borough is the smallest municipality in Sussex County by land area, encompassing 0.6 square miles. The Borough is made up of relatively small lots with a commercial core located around Broad Street surrounded by residential properties.

## Demographics

As of the 2010 census, Branchville has 841 residents, making up about a half a percent of the county's total population of 149,265 people. The average household size in Branchville is 2.30 people, which is lower than both the county average of 2.69 people and the state average of 2.68 people. Median household income in Branchville is \$45,855, about 30 percent less than the county median income of \$65,266 and about 17 percent lower than the state median income of \$55,146. The homeownership rate in Branchville is 66.2 percent, which is lower than the county homeownership rates of just above 84 percent and on par with the state homeownership rate of 65.4 percent. Branchville's housing vacancy rate is low at 5.7 percent, when compared to the county and state rates of 11.8 percent and 10.47 percent, respectively. The poverty rate in Branchville is 4.4 percent, higher than the county rate of 4 percent and lower than the state rate of 8.5 percent.

### Demographic Comparison (2010 Census unless noted)

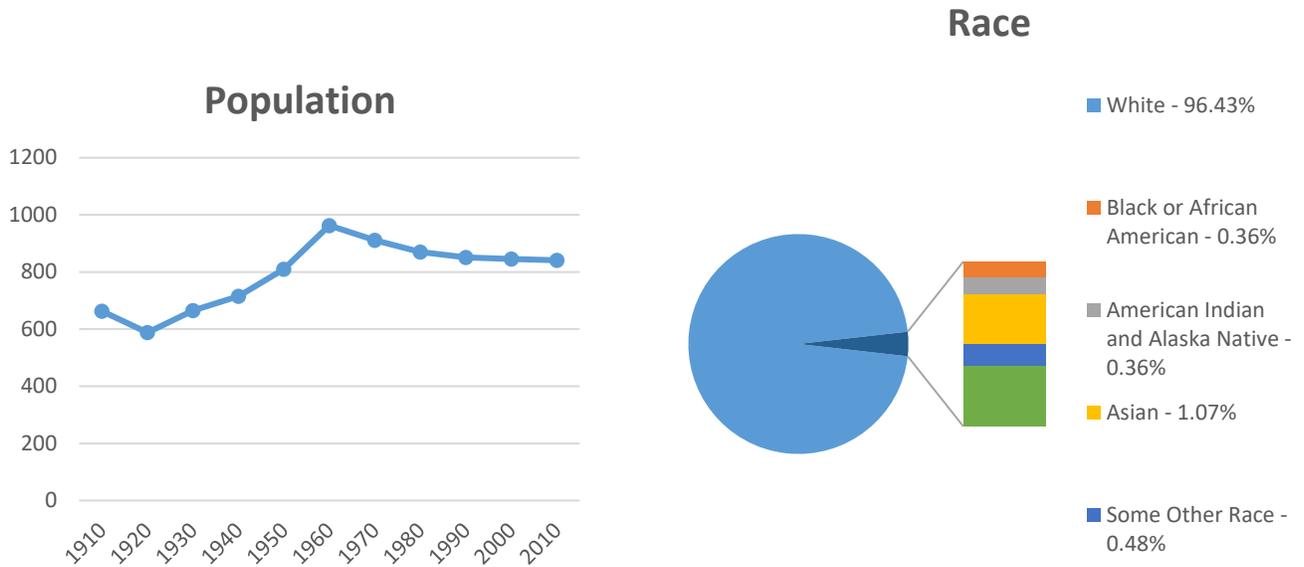
Demographic Criteria	Branchville Borough	Sussex County	New Jersey
Land Area	0.6 sq. mi.	536 sq. mi.	7,417 sq. mi.
Population	841	149,265	8,791,894
Households	364	54,752	3,214,360
Average household Size	2.30	2.69	2.68
Housing Units	386	62,057	3,553,562
Home Ownership Rate	66.2%	84.3%	65.4%
Vacancy Rate	5.7%	11.8%	10.47%
Median Household Income (2000)	\$45,855	\$65,266	\$55,146
Median Age	42.8	41.8	39.0
Per Capita Income	\$22,748	\$26,992	\$27,006
Poverty Rate (2000)	4.4%	4.0%	8.5%
Unemployment Rate (Sept. 2017)		4.4%	4.7%

Sussex County as a whole has been dealing with a trend of population decrease over the past ten years. According to data released by the US Census Bureau on September 14, 2017, the American Community Survey estimated the 2016 population for Branchville Borough, Sussex County and New Jersey to be 846,144,694 (down 3% from 2010) and 8,915,456 (up 1.4% from 2010), respectively. According to this estimate it appears that the population has actually increased in Branchville Borough. This could be due to the margin of error found in the US census estimate criteria. Until the official 2020 census is conducted, the actual percentage of population decline cannot be reliably documented.

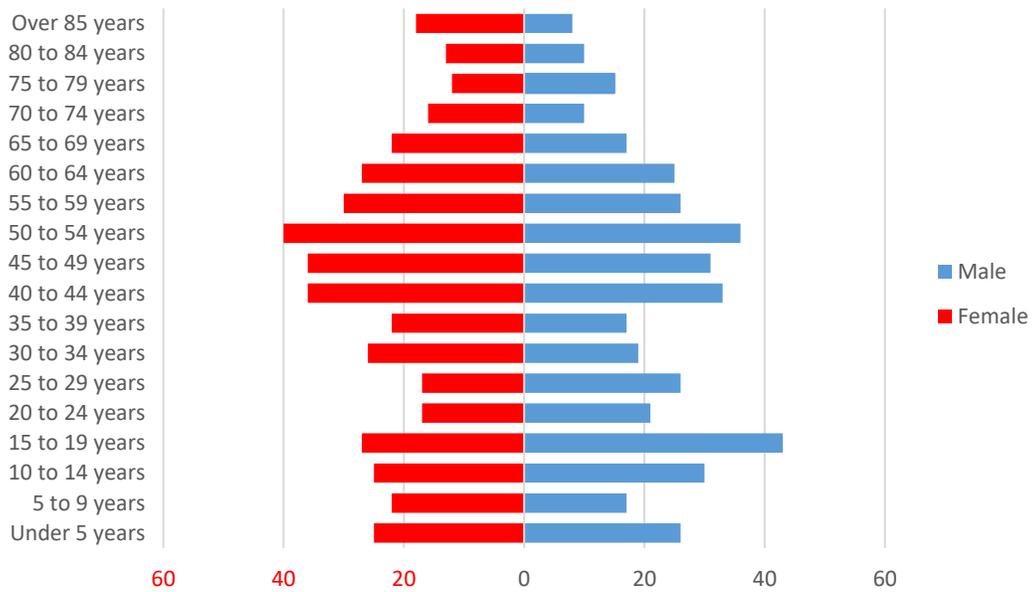
### Population Characteristics

As of the 2010 census, Branchville Borough's population consisted primarily of men, women and children between the ages of 0-19 and 40-59 years. Historical data shows that from 1920 to 1960, Branchville witnessed a steady increase in population, at which point, the population has steadily decreased ever since. Almost 97 percent of the population of Branchville is white while the next largest ethnic group is Asian at 1.07 percent. In 2010 approximately 50 percent of the population was employed which is a decrease of 11 percent from 2000 when 61 percent of the population was employed.

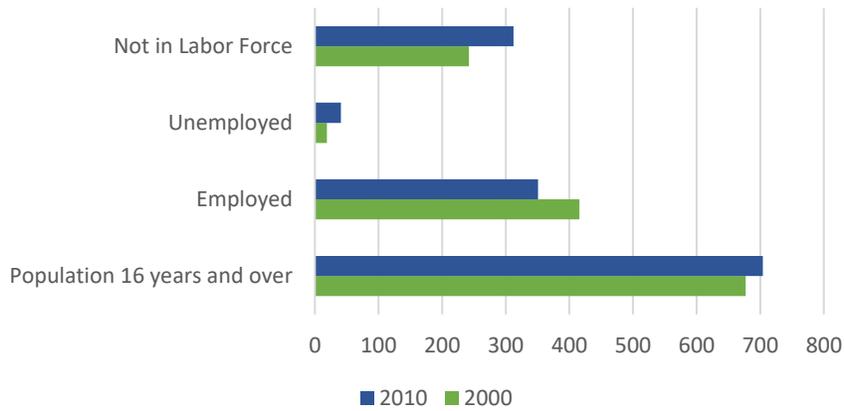
## Snap Shot of Branchville Borough



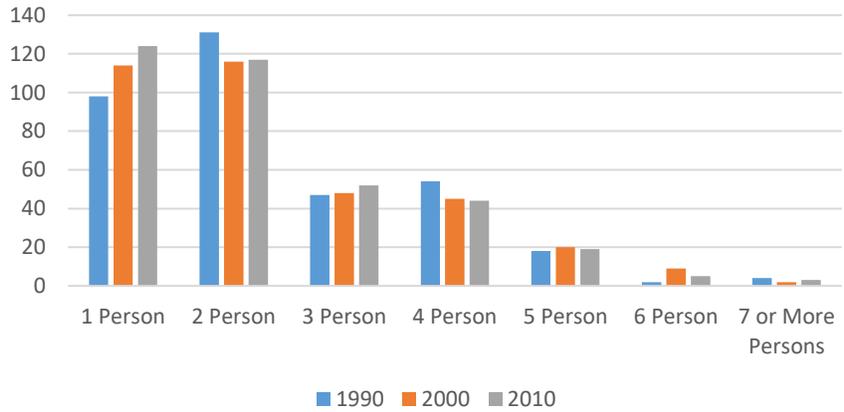
### 2010 Population By Gender



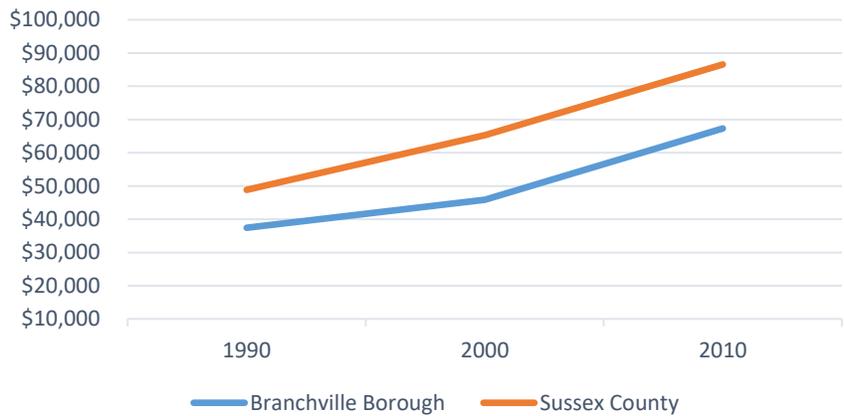
### Population in Labor Force



### Household Size



### Median Household Income



## Traffic and Circulation

Before the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, all traffic running from Culver’s Gap south would travel through the middle of the Borough along Broad and Main Streets. With the construction of New Jersey State Highway Route 206 (Route 206), along the western edge of town, all of the through traffic was subsequently diverted. Branchville Borough is bisected by two county roads; County Route 519 (Newton Ave./Mill St./Wantage Ave.) which runs in a general east-west direction and County Route 630 (Broad St./Main St.). A small portion of County Route 633 (Kemah Lake Rd.) is also in the Borough. The following are major roadways within the Borough and their associated NJDOT designations:

Street Name	Classification	Length Within the Borough
NJSH Route 206	Rural Principal Arterial	1.15 Miles
County Route 519	Rural Major Collector	1.07 Miles
County Route 630	Rural Minor Collector	1.55 Miles
County Route 633	Rural Minor Collector	0.1 Miles

The Borough has approximately 3.5 miles of municipal roads which are maintained by the Borough. All of these roads are used primarily by local businesses and residents, while people traveling through Branchville to other destinations, utilize mainly Route 206 and/or the county routes. Sidewalks are located along Broad Street from the Route 206 intersection until Kemah Lake Road in the middle of town. Sidewalks are also located along Railroad Ave, Maple Ave and Wantage Ave. Sidewalks are most often utilized in and around the center of town as this is also the main business core. All municipal roads possess curbing except for Prospect St., Milk St., Division St., Roslyn Rd. and Rossmore Ave. As of the summer of 2017, County Route 519, County Route 630 and all municipal roads in the Borough were repaved following the completion of the Branchville Sewer Project.

## Land Use

Due to the near build-out of the Borough, land use has remained the same for the past few decades with minimal changes. The existing land use is shown on the Land Use Map (Appendix C). A majority of the Borough is developed as urban land consisting of a mix of residential and commercial uses. There are small areas of forested areas primarily along the Culvers Creek and in the northern region of the Borough. The Borough does not currently have any redevelopment areas within its boundaries. The Borough was designated as a Village Center through the Center Designation Process. There are very few vacant lots located within the Borough. More detailed information is discussed later in the Land Use Plan Element.

## Environmental Conditions

Branchville Borough is located within the ridge and valley region of the Appalachian Mountains. There are two streams running through the Borough: Culvers Creek and Dry Brook. According to NJDEP Surface Water Classifications, Culvers Creek is designated as a FW2–Trout Maintenance Water and Dry Brook is designated as a FW2-Non-Trout Water. There are minimal wetlands and floodplains in the Borough. These are limited to the areas around Culvers Creek and Dry Brook. There are two HUC 14 watersheds in the Borough as well, which are Culvers Creek and Dry Brook. Soil series in the Borough include the Fredon-Halsey complex, which is very stony with 0 to 3 percent slopes; the Hazen-Paulins kill complex which is also very stony with slopes of 0 to 8 percent, the Nassau-Manilus complex which is very rocky with slopes of 0 to 35 percent; the Nassau-Rock outcrop complex with slopes of 35 to 60 percent;

Venango silt loam which is extremely stony and contains slopes of 8 to 15 percent; and the Wurtsboro-Swartswood complex which is also extremely stony with slopes of 8 to 15 percent.

Groundwater recharge is very limited in many parts of the Borough where hydric soils or soils with a groundwater recharge of 1 to 7 inches per year are present. There are two municipal wells in the Borough that have associated wellhead protection areas and four potential areas of contamination within those wellhead protection areas. More detailed information is discussed later in the Conservation Plan Element.

## **Community Facilities**

### Public and Private Schools

The Branchville Borough is part of the Frankford Public School District which has kindergarten through 8th grade. This district includes Frankford Elementary School (grades K-5) and Frankford Middle School (grades 6-8). Frankford School District is a sending district for High Point Regional High School located in Wantage Township.

### Government Buildings and Public Services

Branchville Borough Municipal Building is located at 34 Wantage Ave. (CR 519) in the former Branchville Elementary School Building. The Borough is responsible for its own Building Inspection Department, Road Department, Water Department and Sewer Department

The Branchville Borough Department of Public Works (DPW) is located along New Street. It is run by two full time employees. The DPW is charged with everyday maintenance around the Borough including lawn mowing, snow plowing and minor water line repairs.

Fire service is provided by Branchville Hose Company No. 1, a privately-run volunteer fire department located on Railroad Ave. The surrounding townships, including Frankford, Lafayette and Hampton, also have volunteer fire stations within 5 miles of Branchville. There is no local police department in Branchville or the surrounding townships. The Borough is serviced by the New Jersey State Police who have barracks located in Augusta NJ, approximately 3.5 miles from the Borough. The Sussex County Sherriff's Office also provides contracted support as necessary.

The United States Post Office is located at the corner of Broad St. and Wantage Ave.

### Parks and Recreation Facilities

Branchville Borough has two Borough owned parks: Struck Park, located along Wantage Avenue and New Street, and Roe Park located off of Railroad and Maple Avenues. Struck Park, formally known as Hopkins Park, is used for passive recreation and includes a gazebo, benches, memorials and planters. It is the location of the Miss Branchville Pageant and provides a gathering place for other events. Roe Park houses two tennis courts, a softball field and a parking lot. The Dry Brook is also stocked with rainbow trout in this area during the spring trout season. Adjacent to Roe Park is a loop road on Selective Insurance property which is utilized by employees and residents alike for walking and jogging. The municipal building property also has a number of swing sets on it and a foot bridge which leads to the Selective property.

## Churches

Branchville Borough has been the longtime home of both a United Methodist Church and Presbyterian Church. The United Methodist Church, located at 8 Broad Street was constructed in 1879. The First Presbyterian Church of Branchville, was established in 1848. The current building, located at 3 Wantage Ave., was constructed in 1856 and dedicated in 1857.

## **Utilities**

In 2017, the Branchville Sewer Project was finished which allows for sewer service for a majority of the properties in Branchville and a number of properties in Frankford Township. The complete sewer project included the installation of approximately 29,000 linear feet of sewer main, 364 laterals and 131 manholes. There are two pump stations within the system. The Borough owned pump station is located along Mill Street and collects the sewer flow east of the Dry Brook. A second pump station is located close to the Mill Street/Route 519 intersection and is owned and operated by the Sussex County Municipal Utility Authority (SCMUA). Both pump stations convey wastewater by force main to the Branchville /SCMUA Paulins Kill Facility, southeast of the Borough along Route 206 in Frankford Township. This wastewater treatment facility (NJPDES Permit NJ0146676) was designed for a wastewater flow of 170,000 GPD. The treated wastewater is discharged to ground water in disposal beds. The treatment plant is owned and operated by the SCMUA. With the plant's completion in November 2016, all other sewage disposal systems in the Borough were abandoned.

The Borough operates its own water company which provides potable water for the Borough. The water system has two wells located within the Borough, one is located on the Branchville Fire Department property (Block 202, Lot 37) and the other is located in Roe Park (Block 201, Lot 2). There is a 1,000,000-gallon water tank located at Block 101, Lot 4 in the northern portion of the Borough, and the Borough reservoir located along Mattison Reservoir Road approximately 3.5 miles north of the Borough which is used for emergency use only.

During the same time the Branchville Borough Sewer Project was being completed, Elizabethtown Gas installed natural gas service to a majority of the Borough using directional drilling methods to install the gas mains.

Other Borough utilities include electricity by Jersey Central Power & Light, telephone by CenturyLink and cable by Service Electric Broadband Cable.

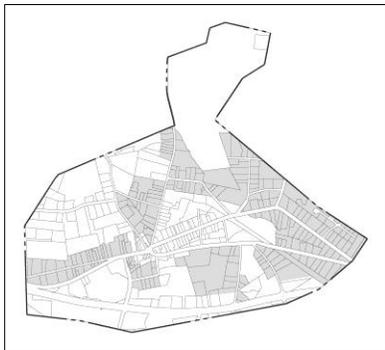
# Land Use Plan Element

Branchville Borough, as a center of development in Sussex County for over 200 years, has experienced land development in a way that many other areas in the County have not. Where other Municipalities have seen drastic changes in land use over the past 50 years, with changes from agricultural uses to residential, Branchville Borough and other centers like Andover Borough and the Town of Newton, have remained relatively unchanged due to their level of existing development during that same time. As with other, more urbanized areas of New Jersey, Branchville was developed many years ago with very little of the Borough now remaining in a natural state.

The Land Use Plan Element of the Master Plan is important in order to establish the future goals of planning in the Borough. Existing land use patterns need be reviewed and compared to the Zoning Map to determine if changes to the Zoning Map are warranted if patterns of existing development vary greatly from the intended zoning. To make an informed decision, the existing land use must first be specifically defined.

## Existing Zoning

The existing Borough Zoning Map, created by Harold E. Pellow & Associates, Inc. and amended through April, 2018 (Appendix A), illustrates seven different zones within the Borough. The following is a summary of the existing bulk requirements for each zoning district as found in Section 123-9 through 123-14 of the Borough Code:



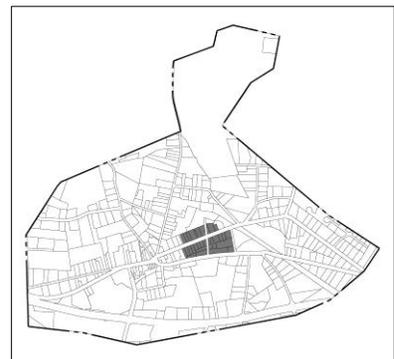
**Residential 1 District** – Permitted uses include One-Family Dwellings, Municipal Buildings and uses, Public Schools, Parks and Playgrounds. Permitted accessory uses include customary home occupations, professional office or studio, accessory structures incidental to the residential use and private housing of equine animals. The majority of the Borough is within the Residential 1 district.

- |                          |                                       |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Min. Lot Area: 15,000 sf | Min. Lot Width: 100 ft.               |
| Min. Lot Depth: 150 ft.  | Min. Side Yard: 15 ft.                |
| Min. Front Yard: 35 ft.  | Min. Rear Yard: 35 ft.                |
| Max. Height: 35 ft.      | Min. Livable First Floor Area: 960 sf |

ranch/750 sf two-story house

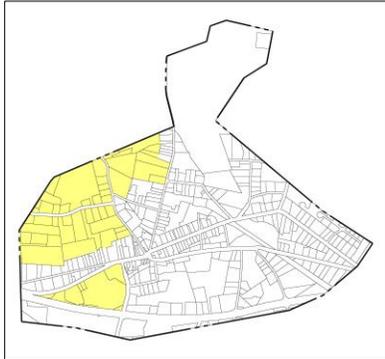
**Residential 2 District** – Permitted uses include any uses permitted in the Residential District 1 and the conversion of dwellings into apartments as long as there is no enlargement of the existing dwelling. The Residential 2 district is located along both sides of Broad Street, between Milk Street and Wantage Ave. (C.R. 519).

- |                          |                         |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Min. Lot Area: 15,000 sf | Min. Lot Width: 100 ft. |
| Min. Lot Depth: 150 ft.  | Min. Side Yard: 15 ft.  |
| Min. Front Yard: 35 ft.  | Min. Rear Yard: 35 ft.  |



Max. Height: 35 ft.

Min. Livable First Floor Area: 960 sf ranch/750 sf two-story house



Residential 3 District – Permitted uses include all items from Residential District 1. The majority of the Residential 3 district is located along Decker Hill Road and Madison Avenue.

Min. Lot Area: 20,000 sf

Min. Lot Width: 100 ft.

Min. Lot Depth: 150 ft.

Min. Side Yard: 30 ft.

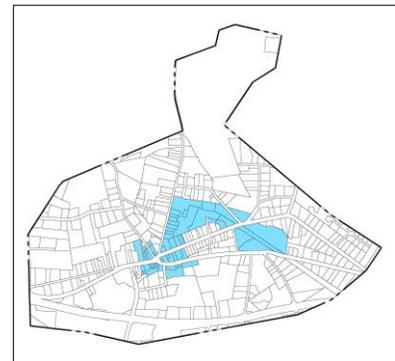
Min. Front Yard: 35 ft.

Min. Rear Yard: 35 ft.

Max. Height: 35 ft.

Min. Livable First Floor Area: 1,200 sf ranch/800 sf two-story

Commercial District – Permitted uses include retail stores, eating places, taverns, service establishments, banks, business and professional offices, research, houses of worship, food stores, barbershops, beauty shops, post office; general commercial uses such as, but not limited to, building supply, lumberyards, plumbing supply, contractors' yards and shops, wholesaling, sale of farm equipment and garden equipment, sale of feed and grain, storage and warehousing facilities, sheet metal fabrication, cabinetmaking and wood-working; municipal buildings and uses, public schools, parks and playgrounds, mixed-use with retail on the ground floor and residential above. Permitted accessory uses include parking facilities, indoor and outdoor sales and other uses normally accessory to the permitted uses. The Commercial district surrounds the Residential 2 district and is located in the center of the Borough.



Min. Lot Area: 15,000 sf

Min. Lot Width: 100 ft.

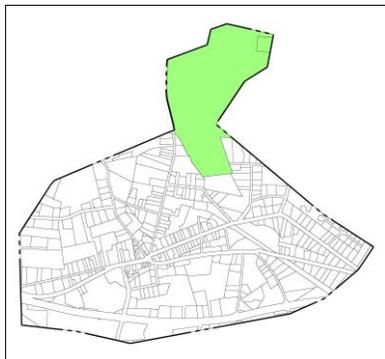
Min. Lot Depth: 100 ft.

Min. Side Yard: 15 ft.

Min. Front Yard: 35 ft.

Min. Rear Yard: 35 ft.

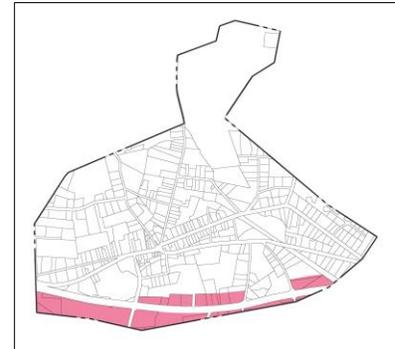
Max. Height: 35 ft.



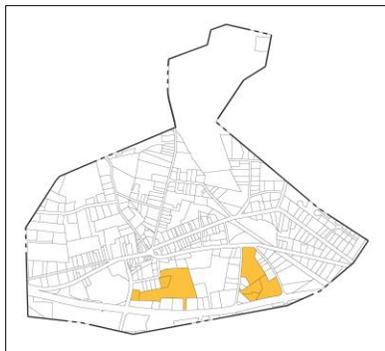
Professional and Office District – Permitted uses include general business and professional offices, any other use that is determined by the Zoning Board of Adjustment to be of the same general character as the above permitted use, municipal buildings and uses. Permitted accessory uses include any use or structure found by the Zoning Board of Adjustment to be customarily incident and subordinate to the principal use of the land or building and located on the same lot with the principal use or building; private garages and parking areas shall be permitted for all vehicles used in the course of the business operated on the premises. The Professional and Office District encompasses the Selective Insurance Campus.

Min. Lot Area: 40,000 sf      Min. Lot Width: 200 ft.      Min. Lot Depth: 200 ft.  
 Min. Side Yard: 15 ft.      Min. Front Yard: 35 ft.      Min. Rear Yard: 35 ft.  
 Max. Height: 60 ft.

Highway Commercial District – Permitted uses include any use permitted in the Professional and Office District, retail stores and restaurants, light industrial uses; scientific or research laboratories devoted to research, design or experimentation and processing and fabrication incidental thereto; the wholesaling of goods and services, including the warehousing or storage of goods, mixed-use with retail on the ground floor and residential above. Permitted accessory uses include parking facilities, other uses normally accessory to the permitted use and signs. The Highway Commercial district is located along the Route 206 corridor.



Min. Lot Area: 40,000 sf      Min. Lot Width: 200 ft.      Min. Lot Depth: 200 ft.  
 Min. Side Yard: 15 ft.      Min. Front Yard: 35 ft.      Min. Rear Yard: 35 ft.  
 Max. Height: 60 ft.



Planned Residential District – Permitted uses include single family detached residences (Route 519 parcels only), attached single family townhouses, multi-family housing and multi-family affordable housing. Permitted accessory uses include signs, recreational uses and activities, clubhouse buildings, private and shared garages, fences and walls and administration or management offices, gatehouses, maintenance, storage and utility buildings. The Planned Residential District is located in two locations: between Route 206 and Price Ave. and Morris Ave. and County Route 519. The code establishes separate standards for single family detached housing and townhouses as well as separate

standards for each site location.

**Single Family Detached**

Min. Lot Area: 5,000 sf      Min. Lot Width: 50 ft.      Min. Lot Depth: 100 ft.  
 Min. Side Yard: 6 ft.      Min. Front Yard: 25 ft.      Min. Rear Yard: 30 ft.

**Townhouse**

Min. Lot Area: 2,000 sf      Min. Lot Width: 25 ft.      Min. Lot Depth: 70 ft.  
 Min. Side Yard: 0 ft.      Min. Front Yard: 15 ft.      Min. Rear Yard: 15 ft.

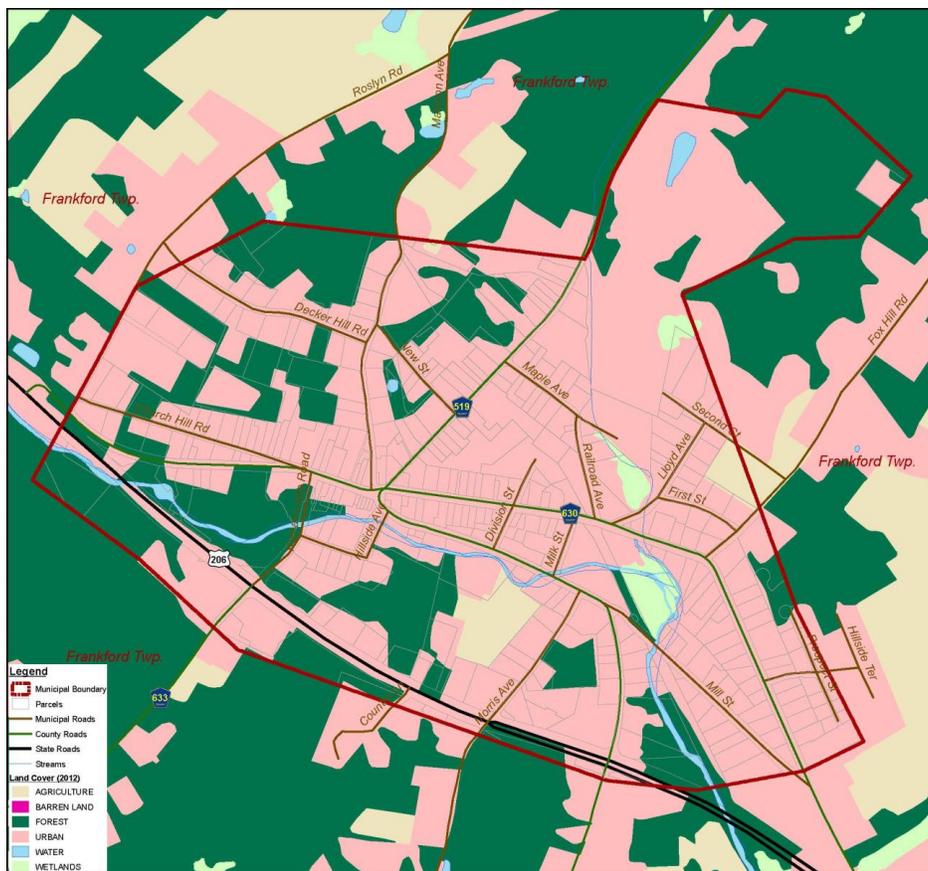
**Land Use**

The Land Cover Map (Appendix B) created by the NJDEP, shows broad land cover types within the state. Consisting of categories such as agriculture, forest and urban land, this map give a general overview of development in the state. The following is a summary of the land cover types found in Branchville:

1. Approximately 2 percent of the Borough is considered agricultural use, primarily in hay production. Areas of agriculture have dwindled greatly in the surrounding area over the past fifty years due to a boom in residential development which began in the 1970’s. Being an urban

center, many of the historical agricultural lands were on the outskirts of the Borough and extended into Frankford Township.

2. Approximately 5 percent of the Borough is wetlands or open water. At such a small percentage of the overall land area, wetlands and streams have not been a serious hindrance to development in the Borough.
3. Approximately 21 percent of the Borough consists of forested land. A majority of the forested area of the Borough exists in areas of steep slopes around Madison Avenue and Decker Hill Road.
4. The remaining nearly 72 percent of land area in the Borough is considered urban land. This includes area of lawns, impervious surfaces, buildings and recreational fields. A majority of the existing land use in the Borough consists of Single-Family homes.



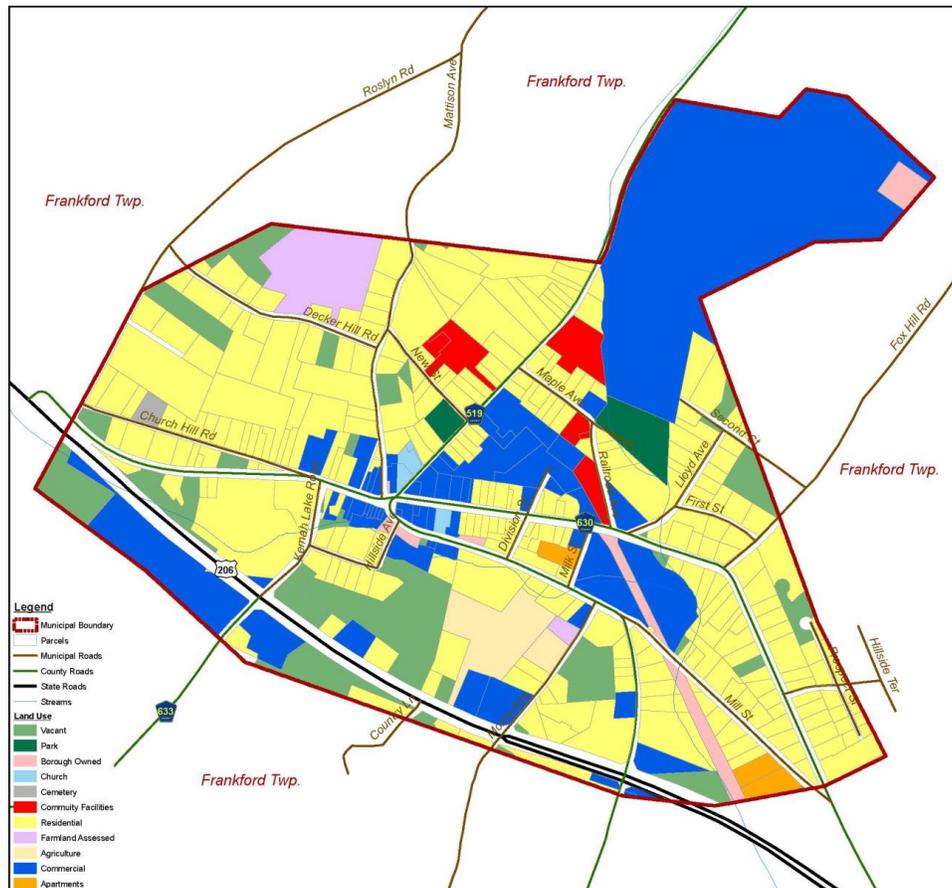
Appendix B – Land Cover Map

This Land Cover Map makes broad differentiations between “urban”, forested or agricultural areas. The map does not show specific land uses and is a basic view of development within the Borough.

To understand all of the existing development types in the Borough, a Land Use Map (Appendix C) has been created, which takes into account a number of more specific land uses than the NJDEP map. Using parcel data information, the Land Use Map breaks down land use in the following manner: vacant land, park, Borough owned property, churches, cemetery, community facilities (Borough Hall, S.C.A.R.C.,

D.P.W. and fire department), residential, farmland assessed properties, agriculture, commercial and apartments. This data will give a snap shot of the Borough as it exists today.

When comparing this Land Use Map to the Zoning Map you will see that the two are very similar. For the most part, development trends have been following the prescribed zoning and as a result, the Land Use map is substantially consistent with the Zoning Map. There are a number of commercial uses scattered throughout residential zones which are incidental uses which have developed over the years. They are not home occupation but rather past homes turned into commercial uses. As Branchville looks to the future of development in the Borough, it is important to review the existing zoning periodically to understand how it can be changed or adjust for future development opportunities.



Appendix C – Land Use Map

### Village Center Designation

In June of 2004, Branchville received Village Center designation from the New Jersey State Planning Commission through the process of Plan Endorsement. The designation is set to expire on December 31, 2018. Plan Endorsement is a voluntary process which allows municipalities, counties and regional agencies to have their plan reviewed by the State Planning Commission for consistency with The New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan (The State Plan). The Borough most recently conducted a Municipal Self-Assessment Report in 2009, which was completed by Harold E. Pellow & Associates, Inc. which assesses The Center Designations consistency with The State Plan.

Historically, having Plan Endorsement provides the municipality with the opportunity to qualify for priority to state discretionary funds, as well as expedited permitting and enhanced planning assistance. Also, creating a plan which is consistent with other agencies on the State and regional levels helps achieve the goals of the State Planning Act. The Borough is a small traditional main street town that is largely built out. Much of the vision for the center is to promote limited development and redevelopment that enhances the existing character of the Borough and preserves the surrounding rural area.

### **The New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan**

The State Plan, most recently adopted in 2001, is the vision of New Jersey's future development. The plan is the culmination of a statewide planning process that involves the active participation of state agencies, municipalities, county and regional government. The plan is a comprehensive growth management framework that sets goals and recommends patterns for development. The State Plan establishes the following eight goals for the future development of New Jersey:

1. Revitalize the State's Cities and Towns
2. Conserve the State's Natural Resources and Systems
3. Promote Beneficial Economic Growth, Development and Renewal for All Residents of New Jersey
4. Protect the Environment, Prevent and Clean Up Pollution
5. Provide Adequate Public Facilities and Services at a Reasonable Cost
6. Provide Adequate Housing at a Reasonable Cost
7. Preserve and Enhance Areas with Historic, Cultural, Scenic Open Space and Recreational Value
8. Ensure Sound and Integrated Planning and Implementation Statewide

As part of The State Plan, a Policy Map was created establishing planning areas which are intended to encompass varying degrees of development and constraints found throughout the state of New Jersey. The Policy Map has two major components: Planning areas, which identify the unique natural and built environment in specific areas within New Jersey; and Designated centers which identify the scale and nature of development in a specific community. The following reference from The State Plan is made regarding Branchville's Village Center designation:

*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.*

According to the State Plan Policy Map, Branchville Borough is included in three planning areas; the Rural Planning Area (PA4), the Rural/Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area (PA42B) and the Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area (PA5). The State Plan policy statement for the PA4 and PA4B planning areas are to "Maintain the Environs as large contiguous areas of farmland and other lands; revitalize cities and towns; accommodate growth in Centers; promote a viable agricultural industry; protect the character of existing stable communities; and confine programmed sewers and public water services to Centers." The purpose of PA5 planning area is to "Protect environmental resources through the protection of large contiguous areas of land; accommodate growth in Centers; protect the character of existing stable communities; confine programmed sewers and public water services to Centers; and revitalize cities and towns."

## The Sussex County Strategic Growth Plan

In addition to the State Plan, the County of Sussex has developed a Strategic Growth Plan which is essentially the County's Master Plan. Adopted in 2005 and updated in 2014, The Strategic Growth Plan discusses the unique planning obstacles that Sussex County faces going forward. The plan establishes "Landscapes" to describe the various land use types in the county. The Strategic Growth Plan reiterates the Goals of The State Plan and identifies Centers as a landscape where there is opportunity for a higher density of development and economic growth while preserving the areas surrounding them. The Plan states that Center Designation is a major step in the effort to redefine development in Sussex County.

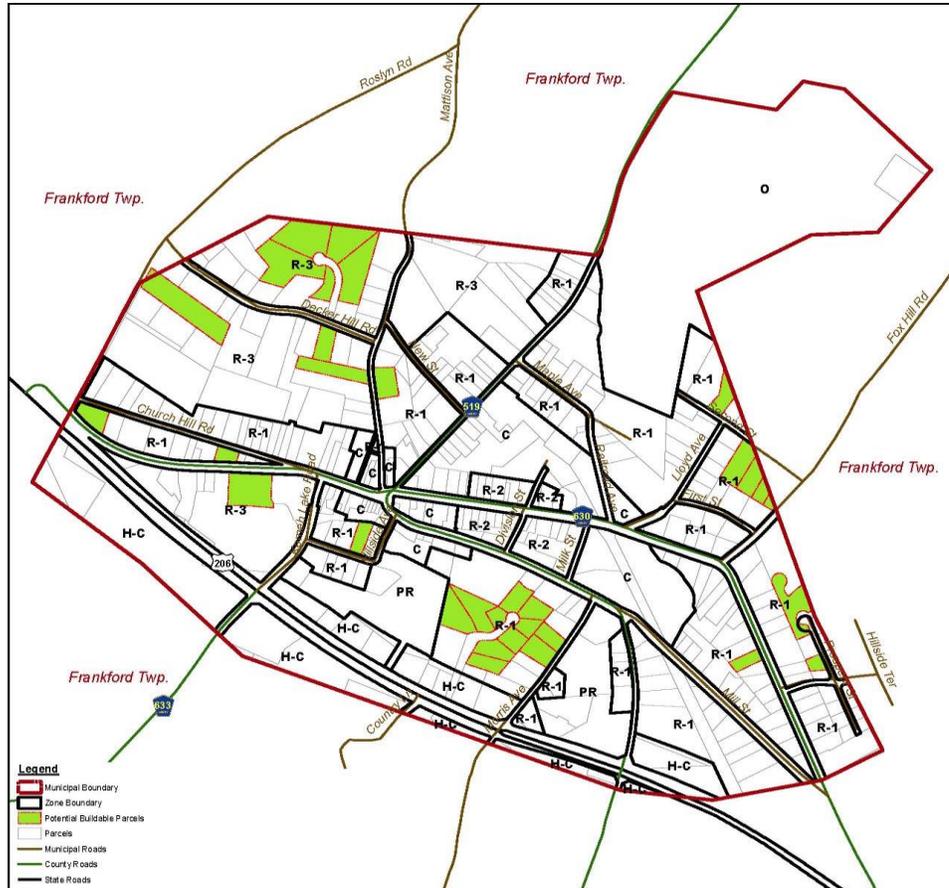
As we look to the future of development in Branchville and in Sussex County as a whole, it is important to understand the changing climate of development in the state and especially Sussex County and attempt to plan for development that is flexible and keeps in mind the goals of The State Plan. With The State Plan and Strategic Growth plan focusing on growth within Centers, Branchville will be a focus of future development. With central sewer, public water and natural gas utilities available, Branchville is ideally suited for more intense development. When the population grows, areas designated as Centers will be explored as possible locations of more intensive development. Existing towns with infrastructure, such as Branchville, will be the location of this future development. With this in mind, Branchville must be proactive in its planning activities to ensure development is well designed, is placed in a suitable location and compliments the existing character of the Borough.

## Goal No. 1: Well Designed, Well Placed Development

As stated earlier in this report, Branchville Borough is nearing maximum build-out. There are few areas of vacant land within the Borough left for new development. With so few vacant properties, future development will be focused on the redevelopment and repurposing of existing properties. Planning for future development positions the Borough to make informed decisions on future development.

In 2005, Harold E. Pellow & Associates, Inc. prepared a Build-out study using the existing zoning regulations to explore possible future development in the Borough. This 2005 map was used as a starting point and updated with the most recent parcel data to create Appendix Q, Build-Out Study.

This study made a number of assumptions including the creation of new roads, variances being available for undersized lots, the possibility for subdivisions and no environmental constraints. This map shows a possibility of 31 additional lots within the Borough. All of these lots are located within residential zones and it is assumed that single-family residential is ideally suited for these locations. This number does not represent to possible build-out within the newly established Planned Residential zone which could create many more additional lots depending on the type of development proposed. Development of private lots for residential use is market driven and there is no guarantee that these lots will be developed in this manner; however, a review of possible development options is a first step in promoting well designed well placed development.



Appendix Q – Build-Out Study Map

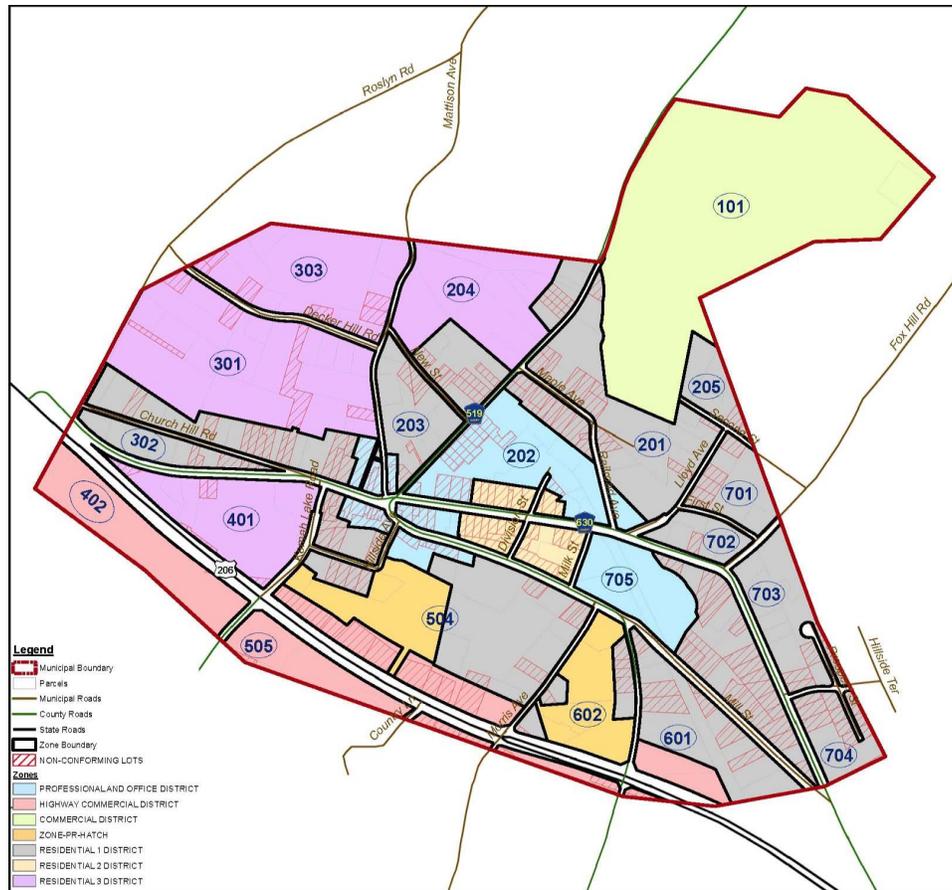
## Objective No. 1: Provide Opportunities for Future Development within the Borough.

Besides development of vacant lots, redevelopment of existing lots will be the primary focus of future growth in the Borough. The Branchville Code is the framework for development in the Borough. Zoning designates specific uses and bulk requirements for each district in the Borough. To date, Branchville has developed organically with much of the construction of the Borough taking place prior to zoning ordinances being established. As more intensive development may be on the horizon, it is of critical importance to promote development that enhances the existing character of the community while providing adequate opportunities for development. Reviewing the existing Zoning Code and suggesting possible changes which can balance both opportunity and preservation is important for the future economic viability of the Borough.

### Strategy No. 1: Base bulk area requirements on existing neighborhood characteristics.

According to the Borough Code, zoning district dimension regulations were most recently updated in 2004, prior to work being started on the Branchville Sewer project. Before the installation of the sewer system, every lot was required to have its own subsurface disposal system onsite. Depending on the size and water usage of the structure, an individual subsurface disposal system may require 1,000 square feet or more of yard area for the septic tank and disposal field. This is reflected in the minimum lot width and depth required in all zoning districts. Looking specifically at the Residential districts, each lot is required to have a minimum width of 100 feet and minimum depth of 150 feet. With both public sewer and water

access to a majority of the properties within the Borough, bulk requirements can now be based on neighborhood characteristics rather than minimum land requirements. Permitting development on smaller lots will permit greater development opportunities while keeping the scale of potential development small.



Appendix P – Non-Conforming Lots

As shown in Appendix P, there are over 100 lots which do not meet the bulk requirements of their zone. Any proposed development or redevelopment of these lots would require a variance even though they may fit into the fabric of the existing neighborhood. By possibly reducing minimum lot width and/or depth to the average of a zone or neighborhood, development can more closely reflect the character of the neighborhood it is located in.

**Strategy No. 2: Compare existing land use to existing zoning and proposed adjustments to the Zoning Map as desired.**

As mentioned earlier, overall the Land Use Map and the Zoning Map are very similar. Existing commercial uses are centralized around Broad Street, the areas around the commercial core are primarily residential, and there is commercial located along the Route 206 corridor.

When considering the possibility of making adjustments to the Zoning Map, the Borough must take into account multiple factors before making a change including future development in an area, economic viability, owner equity and neighborhood context. The zoning map defines areas of permitted future development while land use defines how the development already exists. If in the process of reviewing

the two, an existing condition is considered desirable but is not shown on the zoning map, the Borough should consider updates to the zoning map.

Looking at the two maps closer, there are a number of observations that should be considered for future development. The Commercial District could be extended along Main Street to Kemah Lake Road to include historically commercial buildings. There are a number of residential lots along Wantage Ave. across from New Street which will most likely remain residential for the long term even though they are located in the Commercial District. Located along both sides of Broad St. and encircled by commercial uses, The R-2 District's conversion to Commercial would allow for centralized expansion of commercial in the center of the Borough. Block 202 Lot 30 and Block 501 Lot 4 are both commercial buildings located in the R-2 District. These sites are ideally suited for commercial use and should be considered for addition to the Commercial district.

**Strategy No. 3: Currently there are two designated Commercial districts. Propose additional commercial districts with varying design and bulk requirements based on the location in the Borough.**

The Borough Code has established two commercial districts; the Highway Commercial District and Commercial District. As listed earlier in the report, both of these districts have a large range of permitted uses.

With such a broad list of uses permitted throughout the entire Commercial district, the discretion is left to the Planning Board regarding how specific proposed uses fit in with the existing fabric or an area. In an area of the Borough, there may be a number of proposed uses that would complement existing uses (i.e. brew pub located next to a restaurant). Establishing additional commercial districts with more specific uses could establish things like a shopping district or restaurant district with the borough adding to the character of and defining neighborhoods for years to come.

**Strategy No. 4: Allow for a wide range of development types and allowable uses throughout the Borough.**

Flexibility is key. Today's economy is very different from what it was just twenty years ago. In the past, many municipality zoning ordinances sought to regulate manufacturing and industrial use due to nuisance noise, odor, smoke etc. Today, manufacturing and industry have declined as technology and service based businesses have taken the forefront. Businesses no longer require a physical store front to operate. Many businesses provide services with online marketplaces or do their business without needing a physical location for customers to visit.

This is just one example of a modern development in business which changes the traditional thought of zoning districts. With this in mind, the Planning Board must have the discretion to consider how a nontraditional commercial use may impact the surrounding zone. For example, a small technology firm may be permitted to operate in a residential zone. This use may not require any exterior changes to the building but will affect parking needs or require daily deliveries which may be detrimental to the zone.

## Objective No. 2: Transfer and Acquisition of Property which will be Beneficial to Future Development in the Borough.

With a limited number of available lots in the Borough, the transfer and acquisition of just a few properties owned by the Borough can decrease the burden on the borough and open these lands to possible private development.

### Strategy No. 1: Divest Borough property acquired through foreclosure.

Foreclosures due to abandonment of vacant land is the primary way properties fall into the hands of a Municipality. Many times these properties are too small to develop per the Municipal standards. However, they may allow an adjacent property owner enough additional acreage to build an addition or expand an outdoor space. When a Municipality takes ownership of a property, not only is there a loss of tax revenue, but most often the property falls into disrepair. The process of auctioning off the property is the primary way that the Borough can divest its interest in the property.

### Strategy No. 2: Transfer of property at the corner of Fox Hill Road and Second Street from Frankford to Branchville.

The property known as Block 701 Lot 1 is located at the intersection of Second Street and Fox Hill Road. This parcel is currently located in the Sewer Service Area and is not hindered by environmental constraints. A majority of the frontage of this lot is located in Frankford Township. As shown in Appendix Q, this lot has the potential to become four individual residential lots per the current zoning. The Borough could coordinate a transfer from Frankford Township to create one lot which will increase the potential for development.

### Strategy No. 3: Divest Borough property at Reservoir.

The Branchville Borough Reservoir, located approximately 3.5 miles north of the Borough, was once the primary source of water for the Borough. As NJDEP regulations have changed and open bodies of water are not the preferred means of water supply anymore, the reservoir has instead become an emergency source for water. Along with the water body itself, the Borough owns approximately 284 acres surrounding the reservoir. The Borough could explore selling some or all of the property surrounding the reservoir. If the proper improvements are made to well #2, the reservoir may not be needed anymore as an emergency source of water and could be sold with any subdivision of the property.

## Goal No. 2: Improve the Existing Landscape

Much of the focus of planning is on future development patterns and densities. An important aspect of future development that should not be overlooked is the public realm that links all of these places together. Street, sidewalks and alleyways are all important to the character and economic development of a Town. An attractive public realm should be an asset to be maintained. The small town, “Old Main Street” charm of Branchville is an attractive pull for businesses and residents alike. Investing in the public domain can be an economic driver in any Town. As a designated center it is important to make sure that the pedestrian realm is attractively kept and well designed.

## Objective No. 1: Create Attractive Streetscapes which Support all Modes of Transportation.

Improvement to streetscapes can stimulate business and employment by adding to the value of a community. As new businesses make investments in their property, the Borough should look to upgrade public realm amenities as well. Benches, planters, lighting and street trees are all valuable commodities for residents and business employees.

Currently, the center of the Borough around the commercial district, is improved with sidewalks. Broad Street, Wantage Ave., Main Street, Railroad Ave. and Maple Ave. all have sidewalks. Improvements should be made outside of commercial zones for the health, safety and enjoyment of the residents throughout the Borough. The majority of sidewalks are located along Broad Street with no connection outside of the center of the Borough. The Borough should consider expanding sidewalks from the inside out to connect all areas of the Borough to the commercial center. As of today, there are no sidewalks extending towards the Route 206 corridor. As development increases along the Route 206 corridor, connection to commercial in this area may be desirable.

### Possible Strategies:

- Replace streetlights in the downtown area.
- Sidewalk and tree replacement throughout the Borough.
- Expand sidewalks throughout the Borough.

## Objective No. 2: Pursue Capital Improvements that will Encourage Future Development and Add to the Borough Character.

Capital improvements add to the value of real property, or appreciably prolongs the useful life of a property. With the completion of the Branchville sewer project and the subsequent repaving of every road in the Borough, streets will not require repaving for a number of years. As the Borough looks at other capital improvements, it must first consider safety, followed by functionality or aging of infrastructure and Borough Property. As the sewer system has added value and development potential to the Borough, additional projects should be prioritized that can improve the quality of life for residents and business, and promote economic development in the Borough.

### Possible Strategies:

- Improvements to Borough Hall to make it more functional as a municipal building.
- Reconstruction of Rossmore and Prospect Streets to bring them up to the standard of the rest of the Borough.
- Improvements to Borough Parks (discussed later in the Recreational Plan Element).

## Goal No. 3: An Involved Community.

As the population grows within the State, County and Borough, it is important for all residents to be involved in their community. Residential development throughout Sussex County is based on large lots along country roads where residents may not see their neighbors on a regular basis. Branchville is a traditional small town where neighbors are in close proximity. The Borough is well known for various yearly events including their Memorial Day parade and Halloween activities. Such a tightly knit

community should have ways to communicate with all of its residents and potential visitors. The Borough should be able to communicate events, public notices and emergencies as quickly and directly as possible.

### **Objective No. 1: Public Outreach.**

Public outreach is important for all municipalities. Whether for emergency management, social events or general information, a municipality should make every effort to provide information to the public as easily and accessible as possible. In our modern age, there are many different avenues to provide information. A municipality should enact a well thought out strategy for conveyance of information to as many people as possible in a cohesive manner.

#### **Strategy No. 1: Create a Branchville Borough website.**

As of the writing of this plan, Branchville Borough is the only municipality in Sussex County which does not have a website. A Municipal website would be a valuable way for the Borough to provide information to its residents, prospective visitors and businesses. A website would allow the Borough to effectively communicate with residents 24 hours a day. A useful website should include, but is not limited to, the following items:

1. Municipal Contacts
2. Online Forms
3. Emergency Information
4. Info on Local Events and Things to Do
5. Information Regarding Local Businesses
6. Links to Recreational Groups, Community Groups and Emergency Services
7. Tax Information
8. Resources for Residents

A website does not have to be ornate or expensive but it should be attractively designed by a professional and provide information the Borough considers important for its residents, visitors and businesses. It is important to establish a fully functional website first before social media outlets are pursued due to the fact that social media is limited to those who follow the Borough on that specific platform. A website is accessible to more people and thus makes a bigger impact.

#### **Strategy No. 2: Explore social media options.**

A Municipal website should be the first place that residents look for information regarding what is going on in the Borough. A website must be kept current at all times so as not to misguide or create confusion. This may be an inconvenience and a financial burden on a small town like Branchville where the budget for a full time webmaster is not available. Luckily in the day of social media, up-to-date information can be sent directly to residents. Borough activities, emergency information and news can be posted for free on social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Implementation can be facilitated by a paid Borough employee or a volunteer. Whomever is charged with this task must be consistent in providing information.

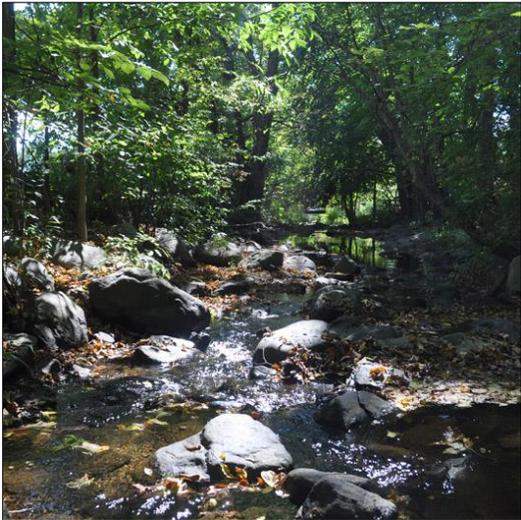
Twitter and Instagram are ideal for information bulletins. The facilitator can communicate instantly with all those following them. Facebook can be utilized as a pseudo-website which can have up to the minute information posted as well as interaction with residents. Links to local groups, schools and emergency

services can also be established through Facebook. Social media should be complimentary to a Borough website and should not be the sole form of communication with the community.

# Conservation Plan Element

## Goal No. 1: Preserve Natural Landscapes.

Preservation and conservation are important components of life in Sussex County. The rural aspect of the Borough is what gives it its charm. In a State with nearly 1,200 persons per square mile, Sussex County is unique in its abundance of forests, agricultural lands and open space. This rural environment is also a major economic component for the County as well. The Sussex County Strategic Growth Plan emphasizes the importance of tourism for the local economy and places a high priority on the development of tourism.



*Dry Brook Near the Municipal Building*

Protection of our natural resources is important for the economy, residents and future generations. Energy, open space, water supply, watersheds, forests, soil, wetlands, vernal pools, rivers, fishery resources, threatened and endangered species are all processes which should be protected. Even with Branchville nearing a build-out status there are still areas of the Borough which exist in a natural state.

Branchville, unlike much of the rest of the County, is extensively developed. However, future and existing development can infringe on environmentally sensitive areas. Understanding the need for conservation of natural resources on a State level, The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) established rules for the conservation and protection of Natural resources. Some of these rules include:

1. Stormwater Management Rules (N.J.A.C. 7:8)
2. Freshwater Wetlands Protection Act Rules (N.J.A.C. 7:7A)
3. Flood Hazard Control Act Rules (N.J.A.C. 7:13)
4. NJ Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Act (N.J.S.C. 2:90)
5. Safe Drinking Water Act Rules (N.J.A.C. 7:10)
6. Water Quality Management Planning (N.J.A.C. 7:15)

These regulations have been established to put the burden of conservation of these resources on State Agencies. On a local level, the Borough has an opportunity, through the Planning Board review process, to review each proposed development in the Borough and voice concerns over how a proposed improvement will affect natural resources. Borough officials and residents alike can also be responsible for policing the local environment, being stewards of the natural resources and reporting any issues they see to the proper jurisdiction.

## Objective No. 1: Protect Natural Resources and Environmentally Sensitive Areas in the Borough.

With the completion of the Branchville Sewer System, the Borough has taken a great step in preserving and conserving water resources in and around the Borough. The sewer system, along with the existing water distribution system, allows for continued development in the Borough without negatively effecting the water resources in the area.

When presented with proposed development, the Borough should look at the protection of natural resources to the greatest extent possible. Appendices E through M present a number of environmental resources to consider when looking at future development. This Environmental Resource Inventory (ERI), provides residents and officials with comprehensive information about local conditions of natural resources.

Comprehensive ERI's are a necessary, sound and defensible foundation for capacity analyses and planning decisions. All of the information in the appendix maps are taken from NJDEP's Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping. The appendices at the end of this report can be used as a reference; however, the most up-to-date information can be accessed and reviewed on the NJDEP website through the NJ-GEOWEB Application. <http://www.nj.gov/dep/gis/geoweb splash.htm>

To the greatest extent possible, Borough Officials should use this mapping as a reference to help make planning decisions in the Borough. Paying critical attention to how development may impact the natural environment and how that impact can be mitigated. Through Planning Board and Zoning Board approvals, the governing body has the opportunity to review each proposed development on a case by case basis and assess its impact on the natural environment. If the Borough sees fit, it can also explore options that add more stringent regulations on future development to preserve specific natural resources that NJDEP rules do not regulate, such as steep slopes or forested areas. These would be accomplished through revisions to the Borough Code to establish such requirements.

### Possible Strategies:

- Protect established forest areas while permitting new development.
- Establish a steep slopes ordinance.
- Establish an ordinance which requires a minimum non-constrained development area.
- Allow options to developers to mitigate for disturbance of constrained areas.
- Protect/enhance the Dry Brook and Culvers Creek corridors through the Planning Board Review process.
- Promote tree planting along the Dry Brook and Culvers Creek.

# Housing and Fair Share Plan Element

## Goal No. 1: Provide Adequate Housing Opportunities for People of Varying Income Levels.

The New Jersey Fair Housing Act (N.J.S.A. 52:27D-301) sets forth the components of a municipalities housing element by setting the standards for access to affordable housing to meet the present and future housing needs. In the past, the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) was responsible for determining the affordable housing obligation of each municipality. This process has now been delegated to the courts.

### 1995 Master Plan

The 1995 master plan stated that the second round COAH obligation for the Borough was 23 units, with 10 units being indigenous units and the remaining units requiring new housing. The 1995 master plan concluded that the obligation to meet the 23 affordable units could not be met because land in the Borough could not support higher density development. It stated that if sewers were available the Borough should take steps to rezone land to provide for low and moderate income housing.

### 2008 Master Plan Housing Element

In 2008, the Borough updated its Housing Plan element to address present and future housing needs. This document is entitled “Housing Element Fair Share and Growth Share Plan,” was prepared by David R. Troast LLC, dated April 20, 2007 and last revised December 3, 2008. The full 2008 Housing Element document is on file in the Borough Hall and is referenced below. Regarding the COAH obligation at the time, the document stated the following:

*COAH has assigned Branchville Borough an adjusted prior obligation of 13 units and 0 rehabilitation units. This cumulative obligation represents the Borough’s total affordable housing obligation through the year 1999. The use of COAH methodology to determine each municipality’s fair share obligation has been encouraged in order to provide uniformity throughout the State in addressing the State’s low and moderate income housing need.*

*Branchville Borough is required to document or zone for 13 new housing units with a maximum of 25% of the affordable housing units as Age Restricted or Senior Units for a total of 3.25 or say, 3 units. The rental requirement is a minimum of 25% of the new affordable units constructed for a total of 3.25 or say, 3 units.*

### **Third Round Obligation**

*COAH released the methodology for the third round rules in August of 2003 with an effective date of January 1, 2004. The new proposed rules, amendments and court decisions covered the period from 1999 to 2018. The assigned obligation for rounds one and two remain and must be accomplished to receive certification. The third round obligation for each municipality is determined with two components.*

1. *Growth Share – the number of units that must be built based on a town’s actual growth, allowing municipalities a much greater level of self-determination;*
2. *Rehabilitation Share – The number of substandard units a town must rehabilitate as identified by COAH*

*The Growth Share calculation is based on the following formula:*

1. *For every 4 residential units receiving a certificate of occupancy in a municipality from 2004 to 2018, one affordable unit must be provided.*
2. *For every 16 jobs created in the municipality, the municipality incurs an obligation of one affordable housing unit.*

The report then went on to calculate the projected and actual affordable housing obligations for Branchville Borough as seen in the tables below:

### Branchville Borough Projected Affordable Housing Obligation

COAH Criteria	Projected Calculation	Affordable Housing Unit
Round #1 and #2 Obligation	Previously Established	13.00 Units
Rehabilitation Obligation	N/A	0 Units
Adjusted Residential Growth Share Obligation	22 units divided by 5	4.40 Units
Non-Residential Growth Share Obligation	130 jobs divided by 16	8.18 Units
	<b>Projected Total Obligation</b>	<b>25.58 Units</b>

### Branchville Borough Actual Current Affordable Housing Obligation

COAH Criteria	Calculation	Affordable Housing Unit
Round #1 and #2 Obligation	Previously Established	13.00 Units
Actual Residential Obligation (January 2004 – June 2008)	3 unites divided by 4	0.75 Units
Actual Non-Residential Growth (January 2004 – June2008)	3.3 jobs divided by 16	0.21 Units
	<b>Actual Current Obligation</b>	<b>13.96 Units</b>

The report concluded, “Branchville Borough is an established existing rural village with extremely limited growth potential. The affordable housing obligation for Round One and Round Two can be accomplished within the context of the existing Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance. The Round Three Projected Growth Obligation can be accomplished through zoning modifications and the Developer Fee Ordinance.”

### 2016 Housing Plan Addendum

After adoption of the 2008 Housing Plan, the Borough attempted to obtain substantive certification from COAH for its affordable housing obligation. Due to litigation surrounding the COAH process, the Borough could not gain certification from COAH. Since that time, a new process established by the New Jersey Supreme Court, has been instated to address affordable housing obligations. This process requires each

Superior Court in New Jersey to determine the affordable housing obligation in their jurisdiction. Municipalities are to apply to the court for “judicial” substantive certification of its housing obligation. This certification is intended to protect Municipalities from challenges to their municipal housing plan and fair share plan.

A Document entitled, “The Branchville Borough Housing Plan and Fair Share Plan “Addendum””, prepared by The Nelson Consulting Group, dated July 14, 2016 was generated to update the 2008 Housing Plan. The full 2016 addendum document is on file in the Borough Hall and is referenced below.

Under the new court supervised certification, the 2008 Housing Plan must be amended to reflect calculations and criteria changes to the Third Round Obligation. Under the new criteria, Round One and Two obligations are known as Prior Round Obligations and the rehabilitation obligation is now known as the Present Need Obligation. A new Third Round obligation process has been instated which covers the timeframe from 2015 to 2025 and is known as the Prospective Need.

The 2016 addendum addressed the newly calculated Branchville affordable housing obligation thus:

*In response to the NJ Supreme Court decision in March 2015 (“Mount Laurel IV”) the Borough filed a Declaratory Judgement action in 2015 and simultaneously filed a motion for a period of temporary immunity, which the Court has granted. The Borough chose not to join the consortium that retained Econsult Solutions to determine the affordable housing obligation of the participating municipalities. The Borough instead is relying on the numbers calculated by the Fair Share Housing Center (FSHC) consultant, David Kinsey, regarding its fair share affordable housing obligation. Specifically, the Borough is relying on the May 2016 Kinsey report, as adjusted by FSHC in connection with a series of negotiations that have occurred with other Sussex County municipalities.*

*The Kinsey report provides three separate obligation numbers for each municipality. Those categories can be summarized as follows:*

*Prior Round Obligation – This figure represents the obligation of the municipality prior to the Third Round*

*Present Need – This figure theoretically represents the units that exist in Branchville that are occupied by low and moderate residents, which need to be rehabilitated.*

*The Prospective Need – This figure represents the portion of the regional need, in the future, for low and moderate income housing and the portion or share of that need allocated to Branchville.*

*However, unlike in 2008, the numbers for Branchville this time are somewhat on the high side and meeting that obligation by providing a realistic opportunity for new affordable housing units to be constructed in the Borough may be difficult.*

*Specifically, the Kinsey affordable housing obligation numbers for Branchville are presented in Table 2 below.*

**Table 2**

Prior Round Obligation .....	13 units
Present Need .....	1 unit
Prospective Need.....	73 units (unadjusted) Total 87 units

*There have been a series of negotiations during June of 2016 with other Sussex County municipalities and FSHC, which have result in the Kinsey Prospective Need numbers being adjusted downward by 30%. Although Branchville has not participated in any negotiations with FSHC, it is assumed that, in fairness, FSHC will honor that standard reduction in connection with the Prospective Need, which has been offered to other municipalities. Consequently, this document will rely on a Prospective Need obligation number of 51, rather than 73, as listed above, thereby reducing the Borough's total obligation from 87 to 65.*

### **Objective No. 1: Meet COAH Obligation and Provide Affordable Housing Opportunities Throughout the Borough.**

The following was taken directly for the 2016 Housing Plan Addendum:

*Branchville is one of several small "older suburban/urban" type municipalities in Sussex County- the others being Hamburg, Sussex, Ogdensburg, Andover and to a certain extent, Franklin, Stanhope and Newton - that were formed and developed many years ago under a very different set of circumstances than exist today. For the most part, they are significantly different than their larger, more rural neighbors but they are still constrained by many of the environmental and infrastructure problems afflicting the rest of Sussex County ..... and they are also experiencing population declines, as already noted.*

*Nevertheless, these communities, including Branchville, have an affordable housing obligation that must be addressed. The question that the following pages will answer is how that obligation can realistically be met in Branchville specifically.*

*The specific Fair Share Plan as to how this affordable housing goal will be accomplished, between now and 2025, is presented as follows:*

**Present Need** - 1 unit- Local officials, with knowledge of the Borough's housing stock, obviously considers this number to be reasonable. Branchville will make funds available for rehabilitation purposes, based on the Second Round Rules, and publicize the purpose of the program. The initial amount needed for the program will be less than \$20,000. The funds will be derived from the Borough's Development Fee Ordinance.

**Prior Need** - 13 units/credits - This part of the Borough's obligation is partially addressed, simply by applying the credits available from the existing SCARCC group home in the Borough (5 bedrooms plus the 4 bonus credits = 9 units/credits). As required, 25% (4) of the units related to the Prior Round obligation must be rentals and no more than 25% can be age restricted. In addition, the bonus credits related to rentals are limited to four in this instance. Other limitations and requirements, such as the minimum number of very low income and low income units are also met by the group home. It is

further the recommendation of this Addendum that the remainder of the Prior Round obligation also be met by an additional group home to be located in the in the Borough. A four bedroom group home would not be eligible for any bonus credits but when combined with the existing group home, the Prior Round obligation will be fully met. The Borough will need to work with a provider of group homes - SCARCC, Advanced Housing, Willowglen etc. Although the Borough is not obligated to provide any direct funding for such a facility, there are two things that the municipality can do to help facilitate such a project. First, the Borough can help fast track the approval process. Secondly, the Borough, as an incentive, could offer municipality owned property, at no cost, as a possible site for a group home. There are several properties that could meet the criteria for a group home but further study is needed before one is selected.

**Prospective Need - 51 units/credits** - The Prospective Need number is somewhat high and doesn't fully consider the constraints that exist within the Borough, such as the limited amount of developable land remaining. However, there are some future opportunities for affordable housing in the Borough, which will address the Prospective Need obligation, subject to the requirements of the Second Round Rules.

As required, 25% (13) of the units must be rentals and no more than 25% can be age restricted. In addition, the bonus credits related to rentals are limited to 13. Other limitations and requirements, such as the minimum number of very low income and low income units will also be met. The components of the Borough's affordable housing strategy are presented as follows:

#### 1. Inclusionary Zoning Projects

Currently, within the Borough there are several locations that are undeveloped and/or underdeveloped that could accommodate inclusionary projects. They are generally located within the vicinity of Route 206. A brief description of each site follows:

- **Site A** - Block 505 Lot 3  
South side of Route 206, east of Kemah Lake Rd.  
Approximately 4.50 acres
- **Site B** - Block 504 Lot 10  
North side of Route 206, with frontage on Hillside Ave., as well.  
Approximately - 9.25 acres
- **Site C** - Block 602 Lots 1, 7, 9 10  
North side of Route 206, with frontage on Morris Ave and Route 519, as well.  
Approximately 13.75 acres

These three sites total approximately 27.50 acres. However, the properties are somewhat irregular in shape and include some environmental constraints, so a more detailed review will be needed to determine how many multi-family housing units can actually fit on each site. But in terms of some general numbers, using a proposed density of 6 units per acre, these sites could accommodate a total of approximately 165 units, with the affordable

*component being in the range of 25 to 41 housing units. In order to make this happen, modifications to the Borough's zoning will be required.*

*2. 100% Affordable Project*

*If the Borough wants to pursue the construction of a small senior project - 10 to 15 units or less - all of the units would count toward the Borough's obligation. However, the Borough would have to show that it has property where the housing units could be located or a site would be acquired. The Borough would also have to indicate how the project would be funded.*

*3. Apartments Over Commercial Uses*

*In the C and HC Zones residential units are allowed over commercial uses. A change in the zoning could require that a specific percentage of such units be affordable. However, the question that will be asked is how realistic is the possibility of any affordable units being created via this mechanism. Nevertheless, an argument could be made that 5 to 8 affordable units could result from this zoning change.*

*In summary then, these three components - or some variation - could result in the construction of approximately 50 to 80 affordable units. It is anticipated, then, that the aforementioned components will produce the 51 affordable housing units/credits that the number in the Kinsey report, as adjusted, has determined is Branchville's obligation. Meeting this obligation will reverse the slow but steady population decline that the Borough has experienced in the past. However, it is essential that this new housing be phased in gradually, so as not to overwhelm the Borough's support services. It is estimated that these 51 units/credits will require the construction of at least 125 to 165 new market rate units.*

*The Borough is taking this approach of establishing a plan that is capable of exceeding its obligation, because of the uncertainties associated with some of the components. In addition, the Borough prefers to use a phased approach in this regard. Consequently, the Borough's priority will be to first pursue the implementation requirements associated with components 1 and 3 and evaluate the success of those efforts before pursuing the implementation requirements associated with component 2.*

# Historic Preservation Plan Element

## Goal No. 1: Protect the Past.

First settled in the late 1600's by William H. Beemer, Branchville Borough has been an economic and transportation hub for the better part of three centuries. According to the 2016 American Community Survey, there are 207 structures in Branchville Borough which were built in 1939 or earlier, or 58% of the total 356 housing units. Even with this large number of historic buildings there are currently no Branchville Properties listed on the New Jersey or national Register of Historic Places. With such a large number of historical buildings located within a small geographic area, Branchville Borough understands the importance of historical preservation in maintaining the character, economic and social history of the Borough.

### Objective No. 1: Protect and Promote the Historic Character of the Borough.

The 2006 Master Plan Reexamination Report, recommended the inclusion of a Historical Preservation Plan Element to, "Establish the policies to preserve and enhance the important historic features and Character of the Borough." One of the goals of the State Plan is to preserve and enhance areas with historic, cultural, scenic, open space and recreational value. It states that in order to better protect and preserve our historic resources, it is important to catalog and inventory what resources exist.

The 2005 Sussex County Strategic Growth Plan establishes a policy statement to, "Protect, enhance, and where appropriate, rehabilitate historic, cultural and scenic resources by identifying, evaluating and registering significant historic, cultural, and scenic landscapes, districts, structures, buildings, objects, and sites and ensuring that new growth and development is compatible with historic, cultural and scenic values.

In 2005, the Borough explored the possibility of multiple historic preservation projects. A historic preservation specialist was contacted and a proposal was received for a number of activities. The specialist suggested a number of actions including a borough-wide inventory of historical properties, the creation of a Historic Preservation Commission and the Borough becoming a Certified Local Government.



*Main Street Post Card (Sparta Public Library):*

After an extensive review of the information, the Planning Board and Council came to these conclusions:

1. The entire Borough of Branchville can be considered a historic area and designation of specific historical districts is not necessary.

2. Due to Branchville’s unique characteristics as a village center which is nearly built-out, combined with small lot size, development in a large scale is extremely limited while preserving the existing character of Borough.
3. Through the existing zoning ordinances, a large amount of control has been placed over development by the Planning Board
4. The development of a Historic Commission is not desirable as The Borough would not want to infringe on a property owner with increased regulatory burden.

**Strategy No. 1: Through the planning board approval process encourage architectural design which compliments historical buildings in the Borough.**

The Planning Board approval process is critical to the review of proposed development and its influence on historical properties and structures. In reference to historical elements, the Planning Board’s task is twofold; to review and comment on proposed redevelopment of existing historical structures and to encourage architectural design which compliments the historical character of Branchville in new construction. In the absence of a Historical Commission, the Planning Board must take on this role and use its discretion for the review of historical structures.

As the Borough continues to develop and refine the way it regulates historic properties, a first step in preserving significant historical sites and districts is the identification of these resources. A historical survey can simply be done by a walking survey by Borough volunteers documenting general characterizations of the Borough’s historic resources or it can be more intensive, with input by professionals such as archeologist and historians noting items such as building materials and reference to historical events.

In lieu of a formal preparation of a more intensive historical inventory study, Borough Parcel data was used to create a list of structures in the Borough built in 1939 or earlier (Appendix R). This list can be the foundation of a more intensive inventory in the future; in the meantime, it is a reference for decision making within the Borough. As mentioned earlier in this section, the 2010 Census established 207 structures built prior to 1940, while the parcel data lists 171 structures.

# Recreational Plan Element

## Goal No. 1: Utilized, Connected Public Places.

Parks and recreational opportunities are an intricate part of the development of a community. Looking at the future of development in the Borough, it is important to identify recreational needs of the community, types of facilities needed and locations for development of these facilities. Due to the near build-out of the Borough, there are few locations where parks can be created or expanded. With the creation or expansion of parks in the Borough not a viable option, creating connections to recreational opportunities outside of the Borough should be made a priority.

### Objective No. 1: Promote Existing Recreational Opportunities in the Borough.



*Struck Park*

The Borough has two existing parks which are open to Borough residents and visitors alike. Struck Park is located at the intersection of Wantage Ave (County Route 519) and New Street. The park is a neatly maintained lawn area with benches and a gazebo. The park is suitable for picnicking, resting and relaxation. The gazebo serves as a focal point for a variety of gatherings including outdoor weddings and the annual Miss Branchville Contest. It is located within a block of the center of the central business district, making it readily accessible for use by workers in nearby businesses for lunch and other break times.

Roe Park is located to the east of the intersection of Railroad and Maple Avenues. It can be accessed by either Railroad Ave. or the Selective “loop” road. The park has two fenced in tennis courts, a small parking lot and a softball field. This park is also within a few blocks of the center of the Borough and is readily accessible to Borough residents. Both Struck Park and Roe Park are accessible from 6 am to 10 pm by Borough Ordinance.



*Roe Park*

The Borough also has a number of other parks and facilities in the Borough which provide recreation opportunities. These include: the playground behind the Municipal Building, the Selective Insurance “loop” road and the Sussex Branch Trail.

Needs Analysis: As stated earlier in the report, as of the 2010 Census, Branchville Borough’s population consisted primarily of men, women and children between the ages of 0-19 and 40-59 years. Now almost

ten years later, it can be assumed that the 40-59 cohort has continued to live in the Borough while some of the 0-19 cohort has now graduated from high school and college and has moved away. With the aging community in the Borough, options should be explored which provide recreational needs to that age group. As Branchville looks to the future and a potential increase in population, families with young children will be the expanding demographic in the Borough. This new group will look to utilize playgrounds, programmed sports and planned activities.

In assessing the existing recreational resources in the Borough, it is important to review the opportunity of existing parks to meet the public's needs. Both Roe Park and Struck Park provide passive and active recreational opportunities to the public. Both cannot be expanded beyond their existing borders and appear to meet the passive and active needs of the public. However, the playgrounds and small field on the municipal building property are currently underutilized and may provide additional recreational opportunities. With an existing footbridge extending over the Dry Brook to the Selective Insurance "loop" road, this park space is already directly connected to other recreation areas. The addition of signage or the addition of play equipment could create a space that is suited for small children which the Borough lacks today.

Signage is an excellent way to invite both Borough residents and those looking for recreational opportunities into Borough parks. Signs can either be informational or part of a larger wayfinding sign system throughout the Borough. Proposed signage marking out the existing terminus of the Sussex Branch Trail on Mill Street would help guide users to the middle of the Borough where they could patron local shops and businesses.

Recreational programs are also vital to a growing community. Providing opportunities for coordinated activities for residents of various ages is a valuable resource. As Branchville looks to the future, it will be key to utilize the existing park spaces for coordinated activities.

#### **Possible Strategies:**

- Add signage to invite users to the parks/Sussex Branch Trail.
- Post activities on Borough website/social media.
- Upgrade and/or add new amenities.
- Promote efficient use of parks through recreational programming.

### **Objective No. 2: Expand Recreational Opportunities in the Borough.**

The Sussex Branch Trail is a multi-use pathway that runs for 18 miles from Waterloo Road in Byram Township to Mill Street in Branchville. Today the path ends inconspicuously at the Mill Street bridge with no existing signage and minimum visibility. For those looking to access the trail by bicycle or horse, there is also a lack of available parking at this location as well.

The Borough is currently in the process of conveying Block 60 Lot 7 and Block 705 Lot 19 to the State to be part of the Sussex Branch Trail. Once this transfer is complete, the construction of the trail extension will require new bridges over Culvers Creek and Dry Brook. Upon completion, the Sussex Branch Trail would terminate at Broad Street. This will create a trail access closer to the center of the Borough and in a more visible location. There is also an existing gravel area at this location which would provide parking for residents and non-residents alike to park and utilize the trail. The addition of this recreational

opportunity could provide an economic boost and improve recreational opportunities within the Borough.

Sussex County is best known for its outdoor recreational opportunities, such as hiking and biking trails. As a terminus point of one of the major bike paths in the County, Branchville should make every effort to provide visible access to this trail and promote Branchville as a recreational destination.

**Possible Strategies:**

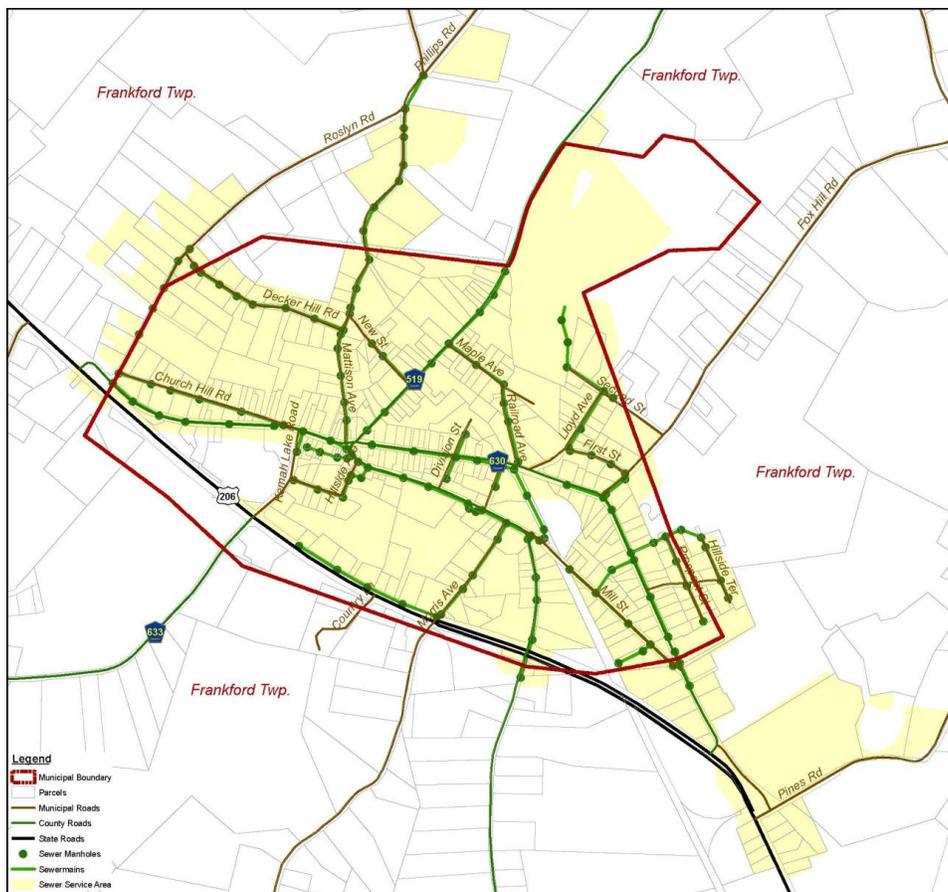
- Establish trail head for Sussex Branch Trail.
- Connect Sussex Branch Trail to Broad Street and the Borough Center.
- Encourage improvements to the portion of the Sussex Branch Trail coming into the Borough.
- Establish new playground equipment.

# Utility Service Plan Element

## Goal No. 1: Full Utilization of Infrastructure.

In 2017, Branchville Borough completed its town wide sewer treatment system. Both the 1995 Master Plan and the 2006 Master Plan Re-examination mention Borough sewer as a major step in protecting the environment and providing greater opportunities for development in the Borough.

Appendix N in this report shows the extent of the sewer system within the Borough and all areas currently located within the Sewer Service Area. A Sewer Service Area (SSA) is land in which an area wide Water Quality Management plan has established that wastewater can be generated from and conveyed to a treatment works facility. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) has established rules for water quality Management planning; however, the County is responsible for creating the area wide Water Quality Management plan for all municipalities in the county. It should be noted that inclusion in a sewer service area does not guarantee that capacity exists or will exist to provide treatment for all flow from that area. However, a property cannot be connected to a treatment works facility without being located within a SSA.



Appendix N – Branchville Sewer System and Sewer Service Area

For a property to be added to a SSA, an amendment to the Sussex County Water Quality Management Plan must be made. In 2017, Sussex County made amendments to their wastewater management plan and presented it to the NJDEP for approval. These latest changes have been shown in Appendix N.

The Sussex County Municipal Authority (SCMUA) is the entity responsible for wastewater treatment in the Borough. The Branchville/SCMUA Paulins Kill Facility is the receiving entity for all wastewater generated in Branchville. The following is taken from The Sussex County Wastewater Management Plan describing the Branchville/ SCMUA Paulins Kill Facility:

*This wastewater treatment facility (NJPDES Permit NJ0146676) is designed to serve Branchville Borough and some sites in Frankford Township. The Frankford Twp. Elementary School remains in the future sewer service area, but will not be connecting to SCMUA facility at this time. The future wastewater flow is projected at 144,000 GPD for Branchville and 26,000 GPD for the sites in Frankford, for a total of 170,000 GPD for the SCMUA facility. The treated wastewater will be discharged to ground water in disposal beds located on Route 206 in Frankford Twp. The treatment plant is owned and operated by the Sussex County Municipal Utilities Authority. With its construction and operation since November 2016, the following NJPDES Permits and facilities will be closed:*

Selective Insurance Company of America

*This wastewater treatment facility (NJPDES Permit No. NJ0073873) served the Selective Insurance Company of America with permitted flow of 50,000 GPD discharge to ground water. This treatment facility is abandoned and the NJPDES Permit will be revoked.*

Franklin Mutual Insurance Company

*Two existing septic systems (NJPDES Permit No. NJ0078743) served the company with a permitted flow of 2,650 GPD discharge to ground water. The facility is being abandoned since the sewers were constructed in Branchville, and the NJPDES permit will be revoked.*

*The following sites had NJPDES T-1 Permits, typically for sites constructed in years prior to State regulations, which is a “General Permit for Sanitary Subsurface Disposal” for discharges greater than 2,000 gallons per day. These sites are now served by the new sewers in Branchville.*

Former T-1 Permit Facilities:

NJG0130362	Third Base Tavern	Restaurant with 106 seats	3 Hillside Ave.
NJG0157473	Savage Restaurant	Two comm. Buildings	Main St.

The Branchville Potable Water System map, attached in Appendix O, illustrates many details of the system including water main sizes, hydrant locations and wells. Sources of water in the Borough are two wells within the Borough and the Branchville reservoir located 3.5 miles north of the Borough. Well #1 is located on Block 201 Lot 21 and well #2 is located on Block 202 Lot 37. They provide water for the 1,000,000 gallon tank located at Block 101 Lot 4 in the northern portion of the Borough.

As mentioned earlier in the report, the Borough is serviced by Elizabethtown Gas, Jersey Central Power & Light and Service Electric Broadband Cable. The infrastructure for all of these utilities is currently in place and expansion would be subject to needs as assessed by the individual utility company.

### **Objective No. 1: Utilize Borough Utilities to Expand Development Opportunities Inside and Outside of the Borough.**

Through the Wastewater Management Plan amendment process, additional lots inside and outside of the Borough can be added to the Sewer Service Area. The NJDEP reviews each application to make sure it meets specific criteria described in the Water Quality Management Planning Rules; however, this process can be lengthy and costly and there is no guarantee that it will be approved.

Without expansion of the SSA, there are a number of vacant lots located in Branchville already in the SSA that can be developed and connected directly to the system with the addition of a lateral. Development of lots with access to the Branchville sewer system should take priority over lots without access.

#### **Possible Strategies:**

- Provide opportunities for development outside of the Borough to connect to the Branchville Sewer System.
- Connection of vacant lots within the Borough to sewer collection system.
- Expand sewer infrastructure to the southbound side of Route 206.

### **Goal No. 2: Effective Reliable Infrastructure.**

#### **Objective No. 1: Protection and Maintenance of Existing Infrastructure.**

As the Borough water system and sewer system age, maintenance and periodic upgrades are required. The cost of this maintenance can be expensive. The NJDEP permits a specific amount of unaccounted for water in every water system. Being under the allotted threshold is desirable but the lower the amount of unaccounted for water, the more cost effective it is for the Borough and its residents. The same can be said of the sewer system; infiltration into the system is cost prohibitive and any effort to minimize such infiltration should be made. Even though the system is newly installed, provisions should be made for maintenance and future upgrades.

Currently plans are going out to bid for arsenic treatment measures for well #2. Installing these measures will assure multiple reliable sources of potable water in the Borough. At the moment, water for the Borough is only being provided by well #1 with the reservoir as an emergency resource.

As more stringent regulations are promulgated by the NJDEP for both potable water and wastewater management, the Borough must be prepared for costs associated with these requirements whether it be through capital budget or the pursuit of grants.

#### **Possible Strategies:**

- Completion of Arsenic Treatment measures for well #2.
- Establish emergency response/maintenance contract for system.
- Identify, replace and improve water lines as needed, especially if they are known to have leaks.
- Install back-up generators at the Firehouse, Borough Hall and Well House.

## Recycling Plan Element

On August 10, 1988, Branchville Borough Planning Board adopted a Recycling Element to their Master Plan. Chapter 94 of the Branchville Borough Code addresses the Municipal responsibilities under the New Jersey Statewide Mandatory Source Separation and Recycling Act. These responsibilities include:

1. Designate one or more persons as the municipal recycling coordinator.
2. Provide a collection system for designated recyclable materials.
3. Adopt a mandatory source separation and recycling ordinance.
4. Periodic review and update of municipal land use master plan and development regulations.
5. Allow certain generators to be exempt from source separation requirements in certain circumstances.
6. Submit an annual municipal recycling tonnage report to NJDEP.
7. Notify all generators of their source separation responsibilities.
8. Prohibit, by ordinance, the placement of leaves for disposal as solid waste.

Chapter 94 of the Borough Ordinance has been made in accordance with the Sussex County District Solid Waste Management Plan and State Recycling Plan.

## Relationship to Other Plans

The Municipal Land Use Law requires each municipal Master Plan to include a specific policy statement indicating the relationship of the municipal’s Master Plan to the Master Plan of the neighboring municipalities, the Master Plan of the County, The State Development and Redevelopment Plan and the District Solid Waste Management Plan (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28d).

### **Frankford Master Plan**

Branchville Borough is surrounded on all sides by Frankford Township. All of the area immediately adjacent to Branchville Borough is located in the A/R – Agricultural/Residential District. The A/R district permits single-family residential, outdoor recreation and agricultural development. The A/R district requires a gross density of one housing unit per 5 acres which can be accomplished through three development options: Traditional Development Option, Environmental Conservation Option and an Open Space/Agricultural Preservation Option (Cluster/Lot Averaging). As stated in the Frankford Township Code, “The purpose of the Agricultural Residential District is to protect the rural character and conserve environmentally sensitive land or critical wildlife habitat, while permitting harmoniously integrated residential development.”

### **Sussex County Strategic Growth Plan**

The Sussex County Strategic Growth Plan (SGP) was adopted in 2005 and informally updated in 2014. The plan seeks to review critical development issues within the County. The SGP contains extensive baseline data on population, housing economic development, transportation, historic sites, open space and recreation, and a build out analysis. The plan then outlines critical landscape issues relating to development patterns, housing, transportation, agriculture, resource conservation and landowner equity. General strategic goals are set forth for each of these subject areas.

The Sussex County Strategic Growth Plan references the Branchville Borough Village Center designation of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan. It also has established a built out analysis for each municipality in the County. The SGP recommends development in designated growth areas, the protection of natural resources and agriculture and municipalities to provide a range of housing opportunities, all of which are in line with the goals and objective of this plan. The Sussex County Strategic Growth Plan has been referenced throughout the Branchville Master Plan.

### **New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan**

The State Development and Redevelopment Plan or State Plan, last adopted March 2001, designates the Borough by three planning areas – Rural Planning Area (PA4) Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area (PA5) and Rural Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area (PA4B).

Branchville received Center Designation from the State Planning Commission on June 16, 2004. The designation is set to expire on December 31, 2018. One notable goal of Plan Endorsement is for the Borough to receive an extension of its Center Designation. The Borough is a small traditional main street town that is largely built out. Much of the vision for the center is to promote limited development and redevelopment that enhances the existing character of the Borough. The Branchville Master Plan references and models its goals after the goals of the State Plan. As a result, this plan is consistent with the State Plan.

# References

Ecosult Solutions, Inc. (2014). “Sussex County Strategic Growth Plan Update.” Philadelphia, PA: Ecosult Solutions, Inc.

Harold E. Pellow & Associates. (July 2010). “Branchville Borough Sussex County Municipal Self Assessment Report.” Augusta, NJ: Harold E. Pellow & Associates, LLC.

Nelson, Ken. (July 14, 2016). “The Branchville Borough Housing Plan and Fair Share Plan Addendum.” Wantage, NJ: The Nelson Consulting Group.

New Jersey Planning Officials. (2014). “New Jersey Municipal Master Plan Manual, 2014 Edition.” Watchung, NJ: New Jersey Planning Officials.

New Jersey State Planning Commission. (2001). “The New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan.” Trenton, NJ: The State of New Jersey.

Sussex County Planning Division. (2005). “Sussex County Strategic Growth Plan.” Newton, NJ: Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Sussex.

Sussex County Planning Division. (2017). “Sussex County Water Quality Management Plan.” Newton, NJ: Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Sussex.

Sussex County Planning Division. (2005).

Troast, David R. (April 20, 2007). “Housing Element Fair Share and Growth Share Plan.” Hawthorne; NJ: David R. Troast, LLC.

# Master Plan Summary

**Vision Statement:** *Preserve the historical, environmental and cultural quality of the Borough while promoting economic growth, adequate housing and future development in appropriate locations.*

## GOAL NO. 1: WELL DESIGNED, WELL PLACED DEVELOPMENT (Land Use Plan Element)

### **Objective No. 1: Provide Opportunities for Future Development Within the Borough.**

- Strategy No. 1: Base bulk area requirements on existing neighborhood characteristics.
- Strategy No. 2: Compare existing land use to existing zoning and proposed adjustments to the zoning areas as needed.
- Strategy No. 3: Currently there are two designated commercial districts. Propose additional commercial districts with varying design and bulk requirements based on the location in the Borough.
- Strategy No. 4: Allow for a wide range of development types and allowable uses throughout the Borough.

### **Objective No. 2: Transfer and Acquisition of Property which will be Beneficial to Future Development in the Borough.**

- Strategy No. 1: Divest Borough property acquired through foreclosure.
- Strategy No. 2: Transfer of property at the corner of Fox Hill Road and Second Street from Frankford to Branchville.
- Strategy No. 3: Divest Borough property at Reservoir.

## GOAL NO. 2: IMPROVE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE (Land Use Plan Element)

### **Objective No. 1: Create Attractive Streetscapes which Support all Modes of Transportation.**

- Strategy No. 1: Replace streetlights in the downtown area.
- Strategy No. 2: Sidewalk and tree replacement throughout the Borough.
- Strategy No. 3: Expand sidewalks throughout the Borough.

### **Objective No. 2: Pursue Infrastructure Improvements that will encourage future development and add to the Borough Character.**

- Strategy No. 1: Improvements to Borough Hall to make it more functional as a municipal building.
- Strategy No. 2: Reconstruction of Rossmore and Prospect Streets to bring them up to the standard of the rest of the Borough.
- Strategy No. 3: Improvements to Borough Parks.

## GOAL NO. 3: AN INVOLVED COMMUNITY (Land Use Plan Element)

### **Objective No. 1: Public Outreach.**

- Strategy No. 1: Create a Branchville Borough website.
- Strategy No. 2: Explore social media options.

GOAL NO. 4: PRESERVE NATURAL LANDSCAPES (Conservation Plan Element)

**Objective No. 1: Preserve Natural Resources and Environmentally Sensitive Areas in the Borough.**

- Strategy No. 1: Protect established forest areas while permitting new development.
- Strategy No. 2: Establish a steep slopes ordinance.
- Strategy No. 3: Establish an ordinance which requires a minimum non-constrained development area.
- Strategy No. 4: Allow options to developers to mitigate for disturbance of constrained areas.
- Strategy No. 5: Protect/enhance the Dry Brook and Culvers Creek corridors through the Planning Board Review process.
- Strategy No. 6: Promote tree planting along the Dry Brook and Culvers Creek.

GOAL NO. 5: PROVIDE ADEQUATE HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE OF VARYING INCOME LEVELS (Housing and Fair Share Plan Element)

**Objective No. 1: Meet COAH Obligation and Provide Affordable Housing Opportunities.**

- Strategy No. 1: Inclusionary zoning projects.
- Strategy No. 2: 100% affordable projects.
- Strategy No. 3: Apartments over commercial uses.

GOAL NO. 6: PROTECT THE PAST (Historic Preservation Plan Element)

**Objective No. 1: Protect and Promote the Historic Character of the Borough.**

- Strategy No. 1: Through the planning board approval process encourage architectural design which compliments historical buildings in the Borough.

GOAL NO. 7: UTILIZED, CONNECTED PUBLIC PLACES (Recreation Plan Element)

**Objective No. 1: Promote Existing Recreational Opportunities in the Borough.**

- Strategy No. 1: Add signage to invite users to the parks/Sussex Branch Trail.
- Strategy No. 2: Post activities on Borough website/social media.
- Strategy No. 3: Upgrade and/or add new amenities.
- Strategy No. 4: Promote efficient use of parks through recreational programming.

**Objective No. 2: Expand Recreational Opportunities in the Borough.**

- Strategy No. 1: Establish trail head for Sussex Branch Trail.
- Strategy No. 2: Connect Sussex Branch Trail to Broad Street and the Borough Center.
- Strategy No. 3: Encourage improvements to the portion of the Sussex Branch Trail coming into the Borough.
- Strategy No. 4: Establish new playground equipment.

GOAL NO. 8: FULL UTILIZATION OF INFRASTRUCTURE (Utility Service Plan Element)

**Objective No. 1: Utilize Borough Utilities to Expand Development Opportunities Inside and Outside of the Borough.**

- Strategy No. 1: Provide opportunity for developments outside of the Borough to connect to the Branchville Sewer System.
- Strategy No. 2: Connection of vacant lots within the Borough to sewer collection system.
- Strategy No. 3: Expand sewer infrastructure to the southbound side of Route 206.

GOAL NO. 9: EFFECTIVE, RELIABLE INFRASTRUCTURE (Utility Service Plan Element)

**Objective No. 2: Protection and Maintenance of Existing Infrastructure.**

- Strategy No. 1: Completion of Arsenic Treatment measures for well #2.
- Strategy No. 2: Establish emergency response/maintenance contract for system.
- Strategy No. 3: Identify, replace and improve water lines as needed, especially if they leak.
- Strategy No. 4: Install back-up generators at the Firehouse, Borough Hall and Well House.

# Appendices

**Appendix A - Branchville Zoning Map**

**Appendix B – NJDEP Land Cover (2012)**

**Appendix C – Land Use**

**Appendix D – State Plan Policy Map**

**Appendix E – Threatened and Endangered Species**

**Appendix F – Wetlands and Vernal Habitat**

**Appendix G – Surface Water Resources and Flood Plains**

**Appendix H – Slopes**

**Appendix I – Soils**

**Appendix J – Groundwater Recharge**

**Appendix K – Bedrock Geology**

**Appendix L – Watersheds and Subwatersheds**

**Appendix M – Wellhead Protection Areas and Known Contaminated Sites**

**Appendix N – Branchville Sewer System and Sewer Service Area**

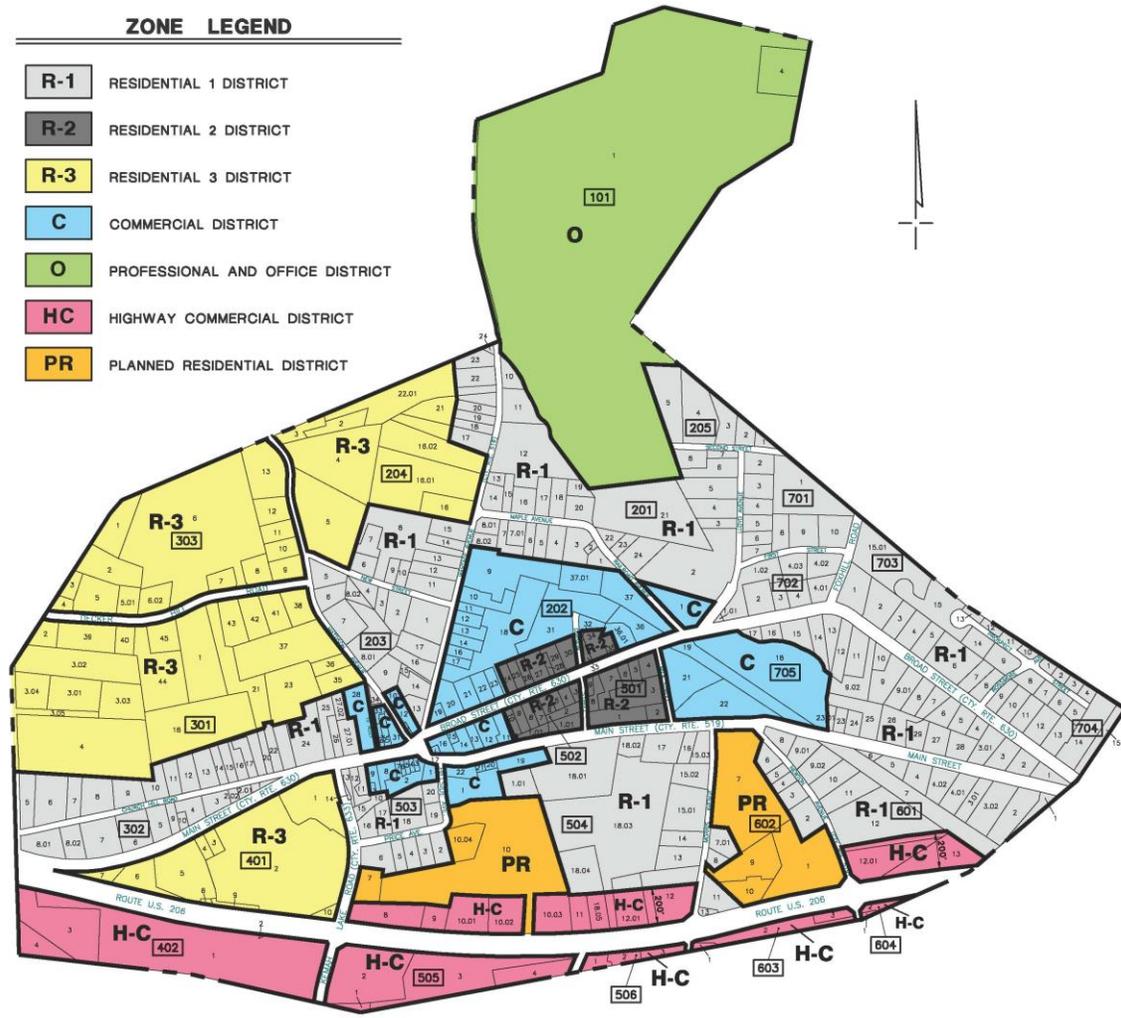
**Appendix O – Water Distribution System**

**Appendix P – Non-Conforming Lots**

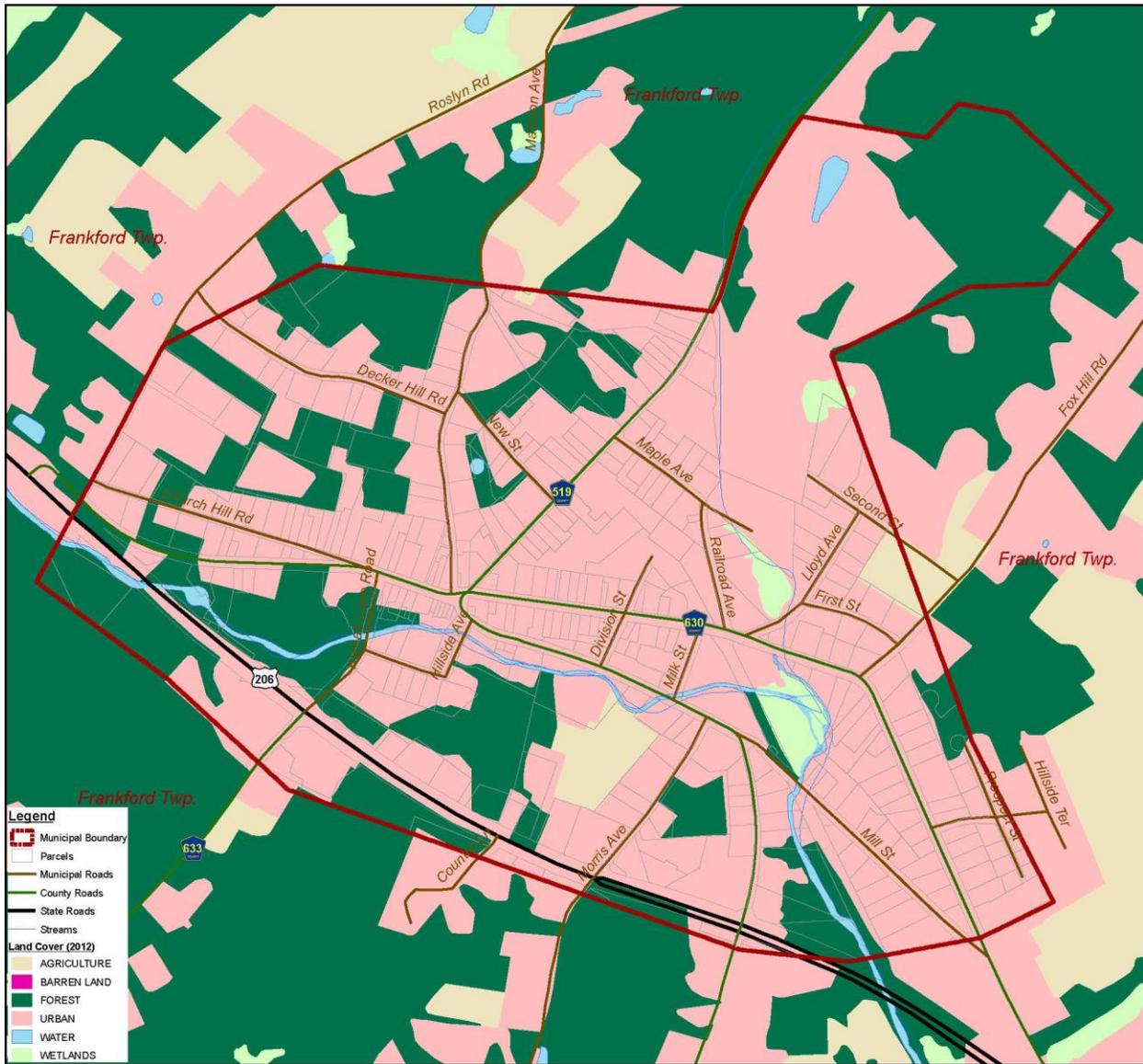
**Appendix Q – Buildout Study**

**Appendix R – Branchville Borough Structures Built Prior to 1940**

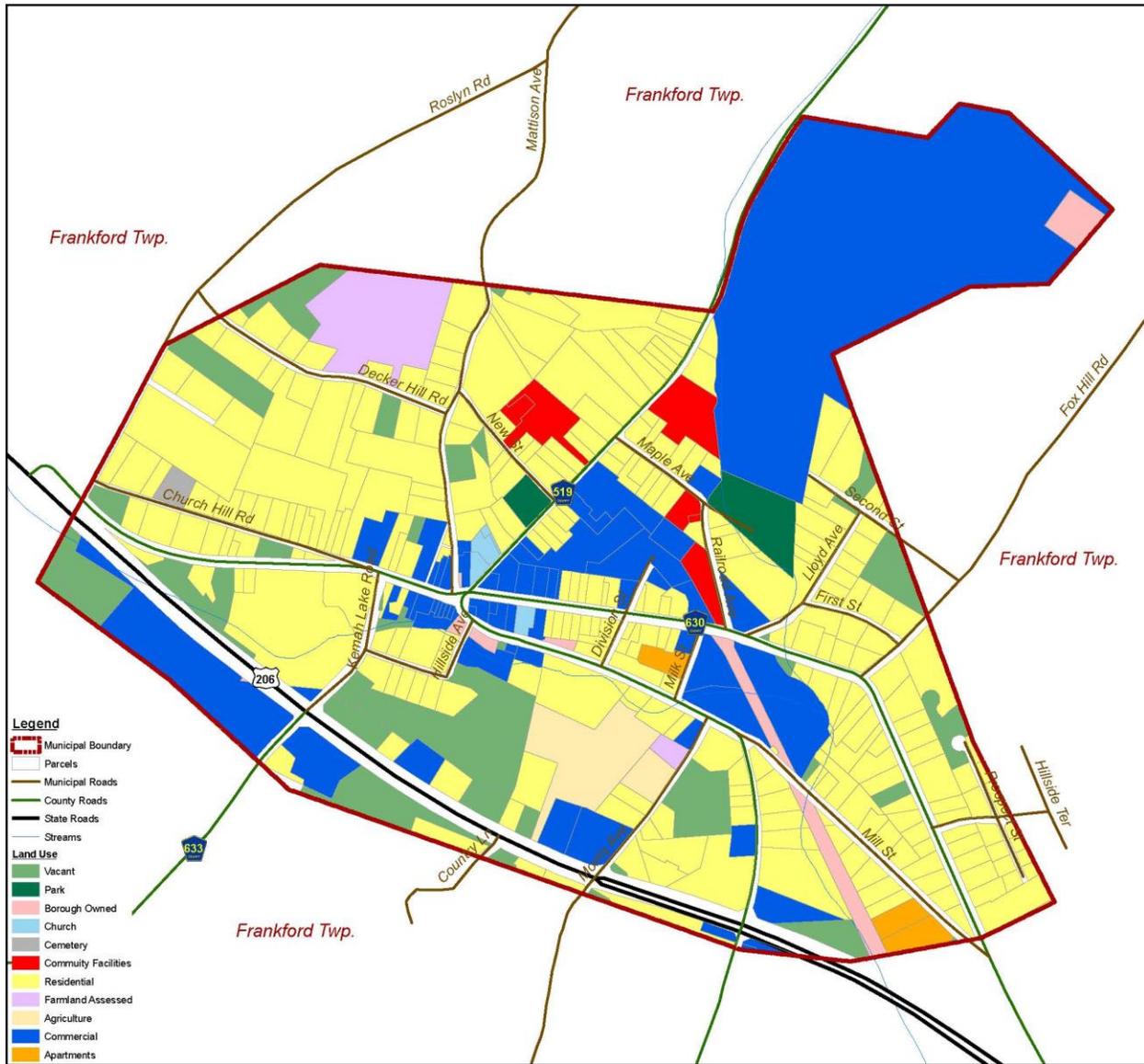
# Appendix A - Branchville Zoning Map



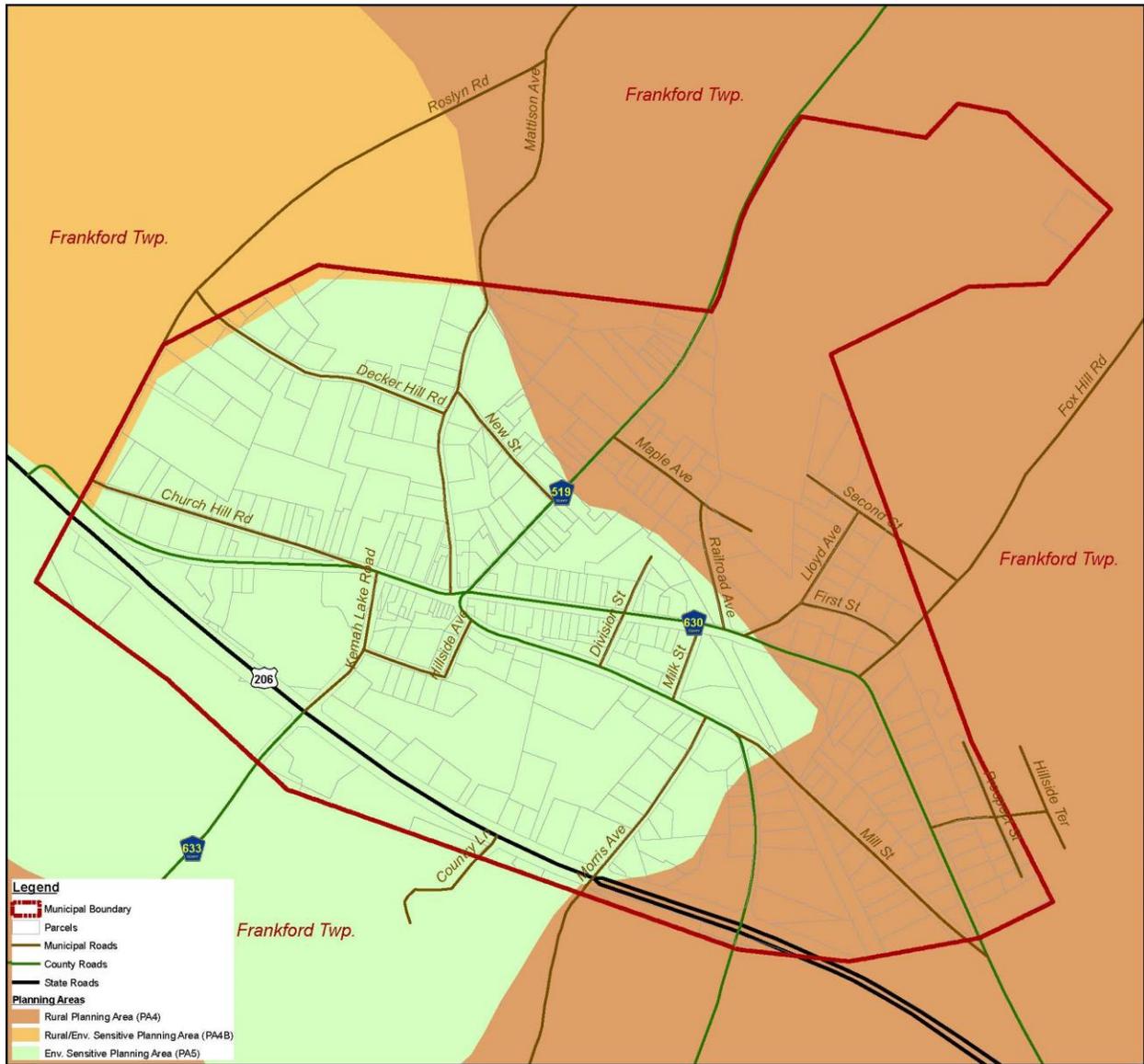
## Appendix B – NJDEP Land Cover (2012)



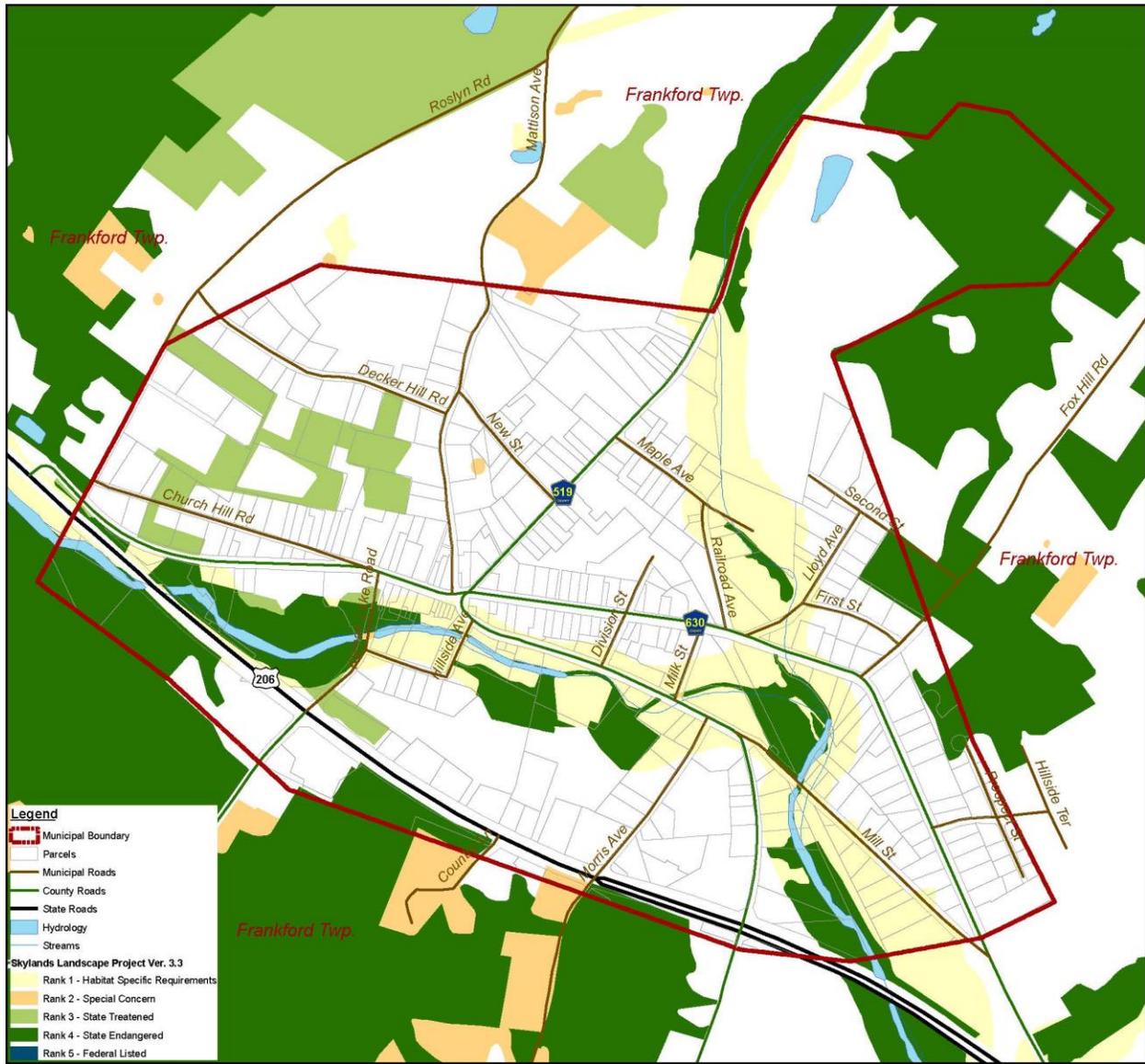
## Appendix C – Land Use



## Appendix D – State Plan Policy Map



## Appendix E – Threatened and Endangered Species



## Appendix F – Wetlands and Vernal Habitat





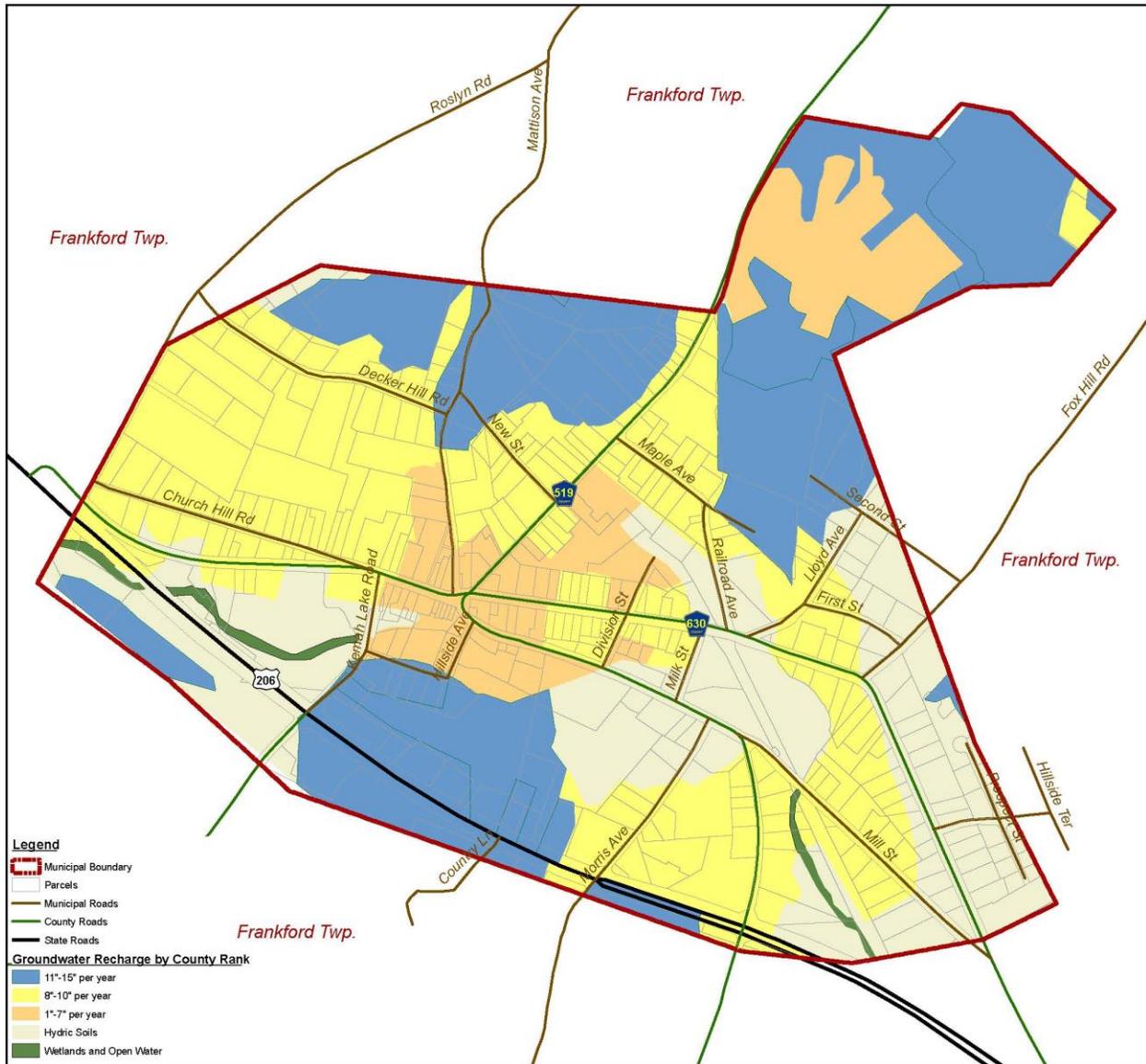
## Appendix H – Slopes



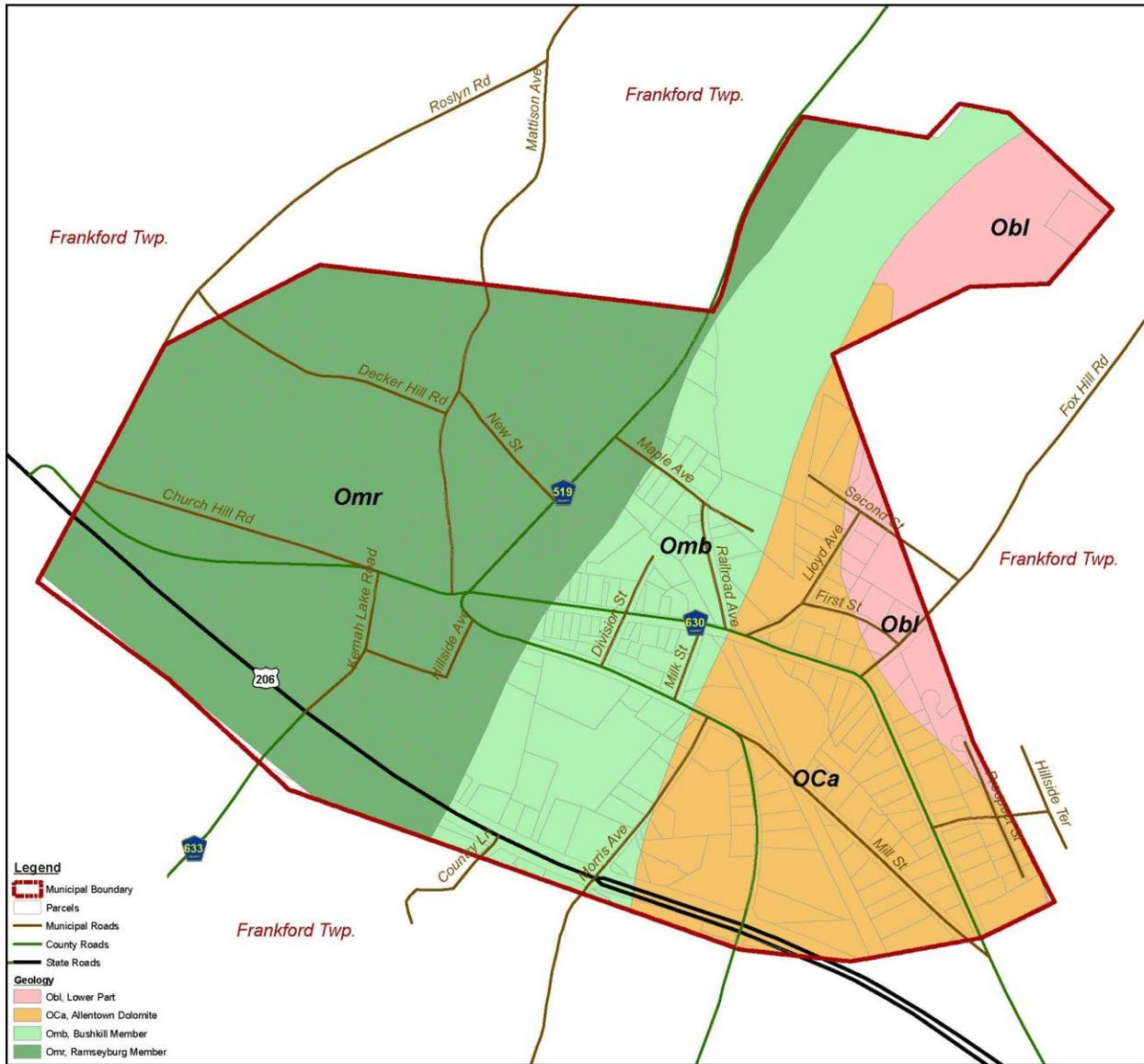
## Appendix I – Soils



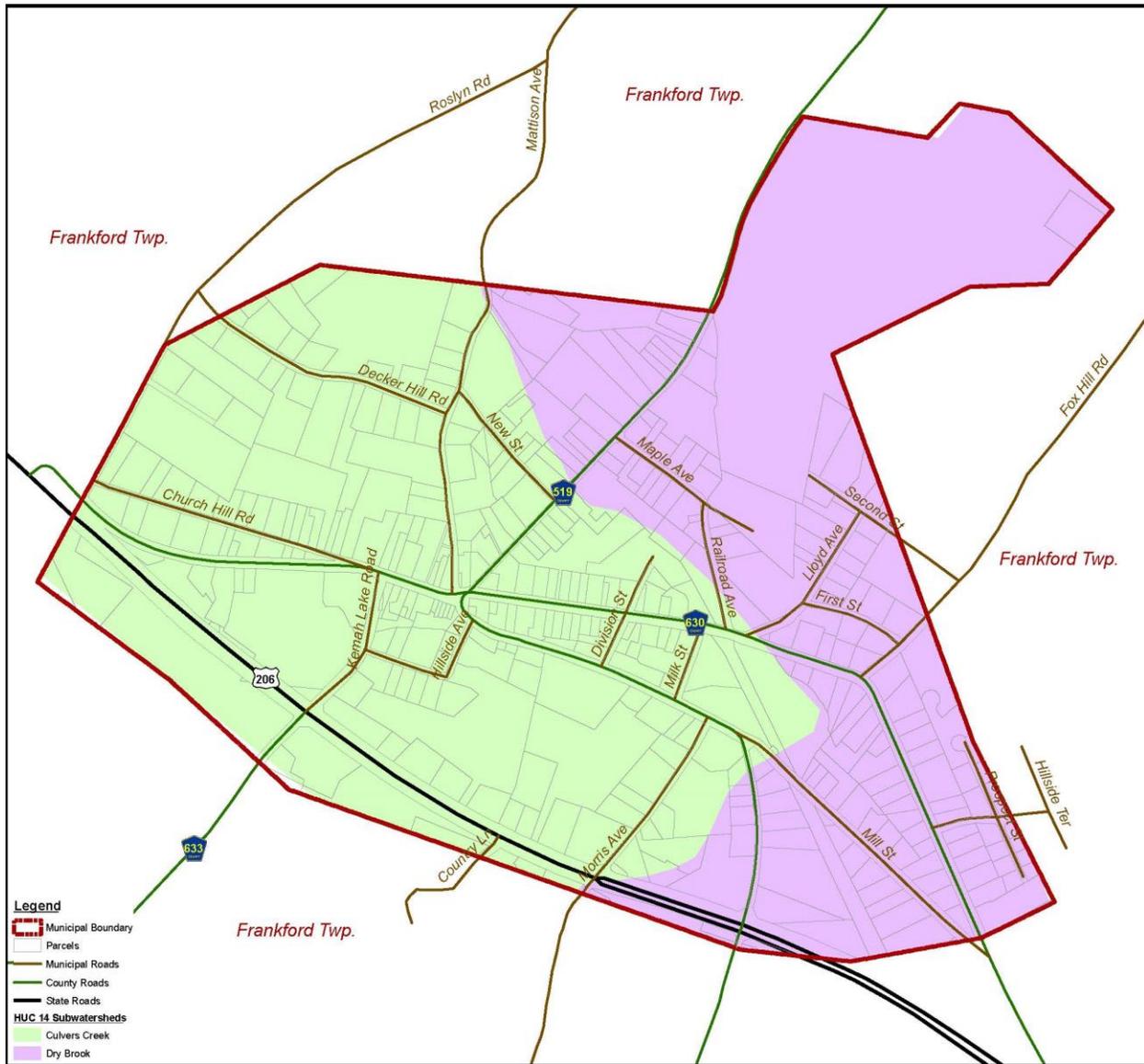
## Appendix J – Groundwater Recharge



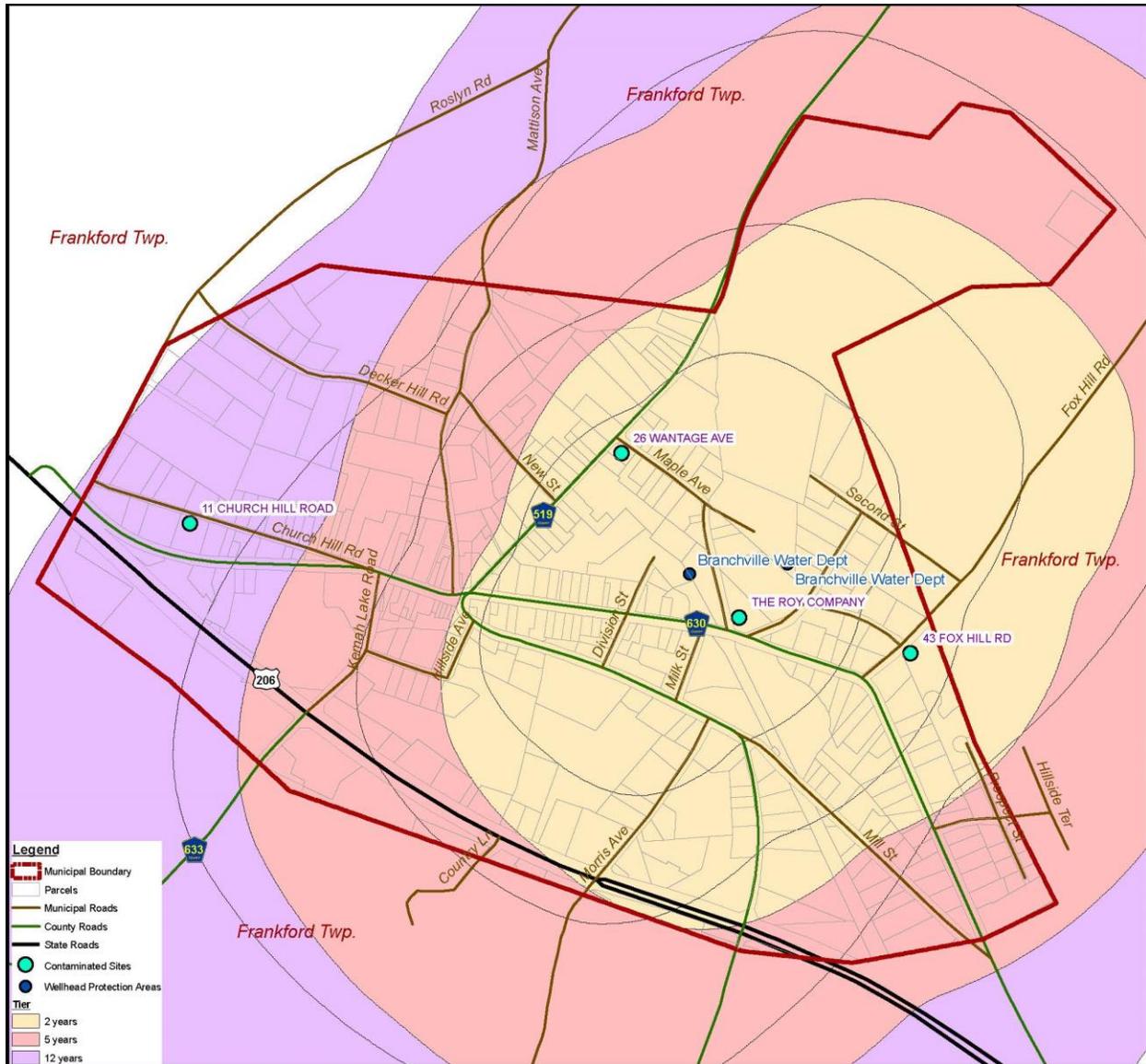
## Appendix K – Bedrock Geology



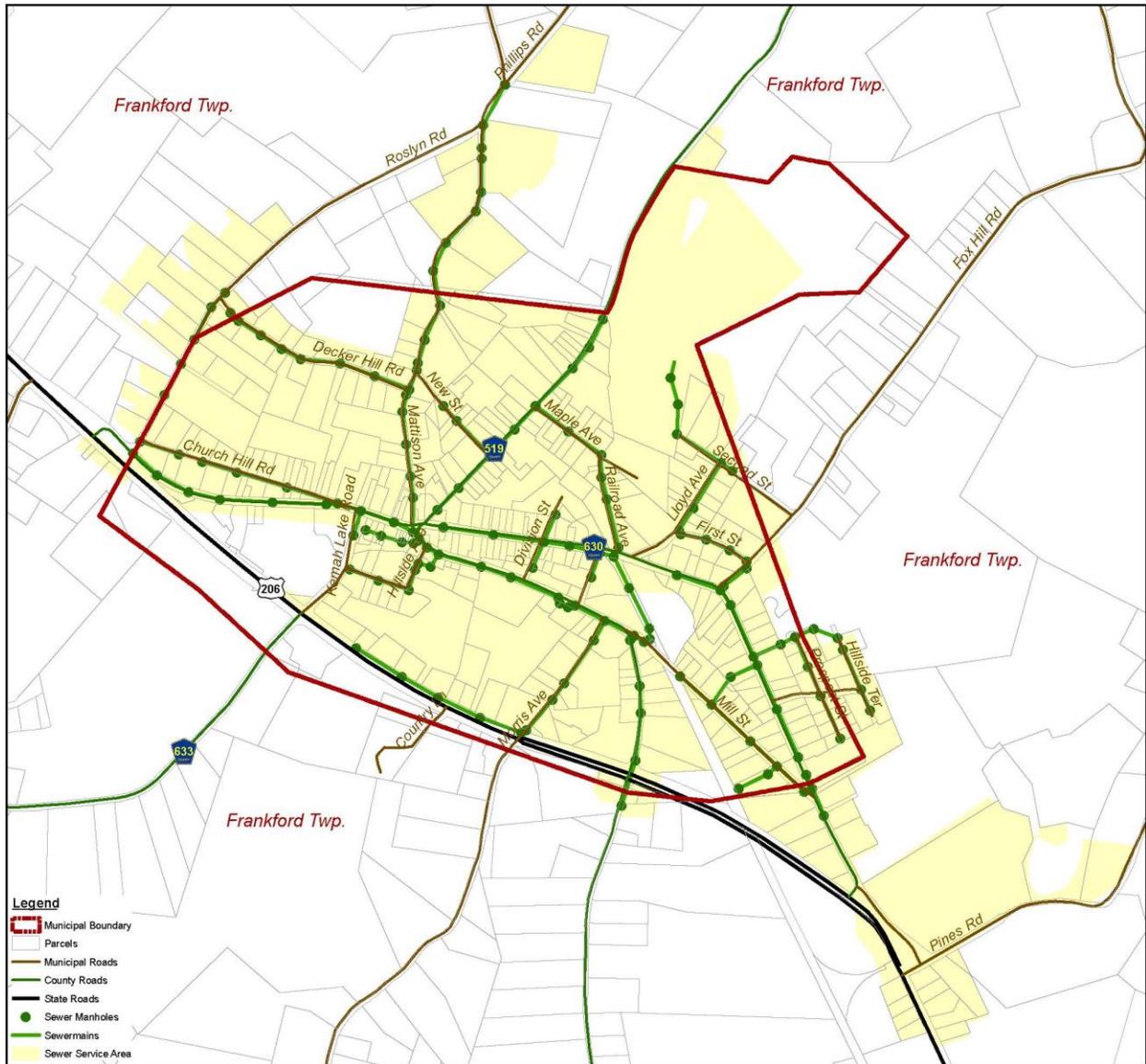
## Appendix L – Watersheds and Subwatersheds



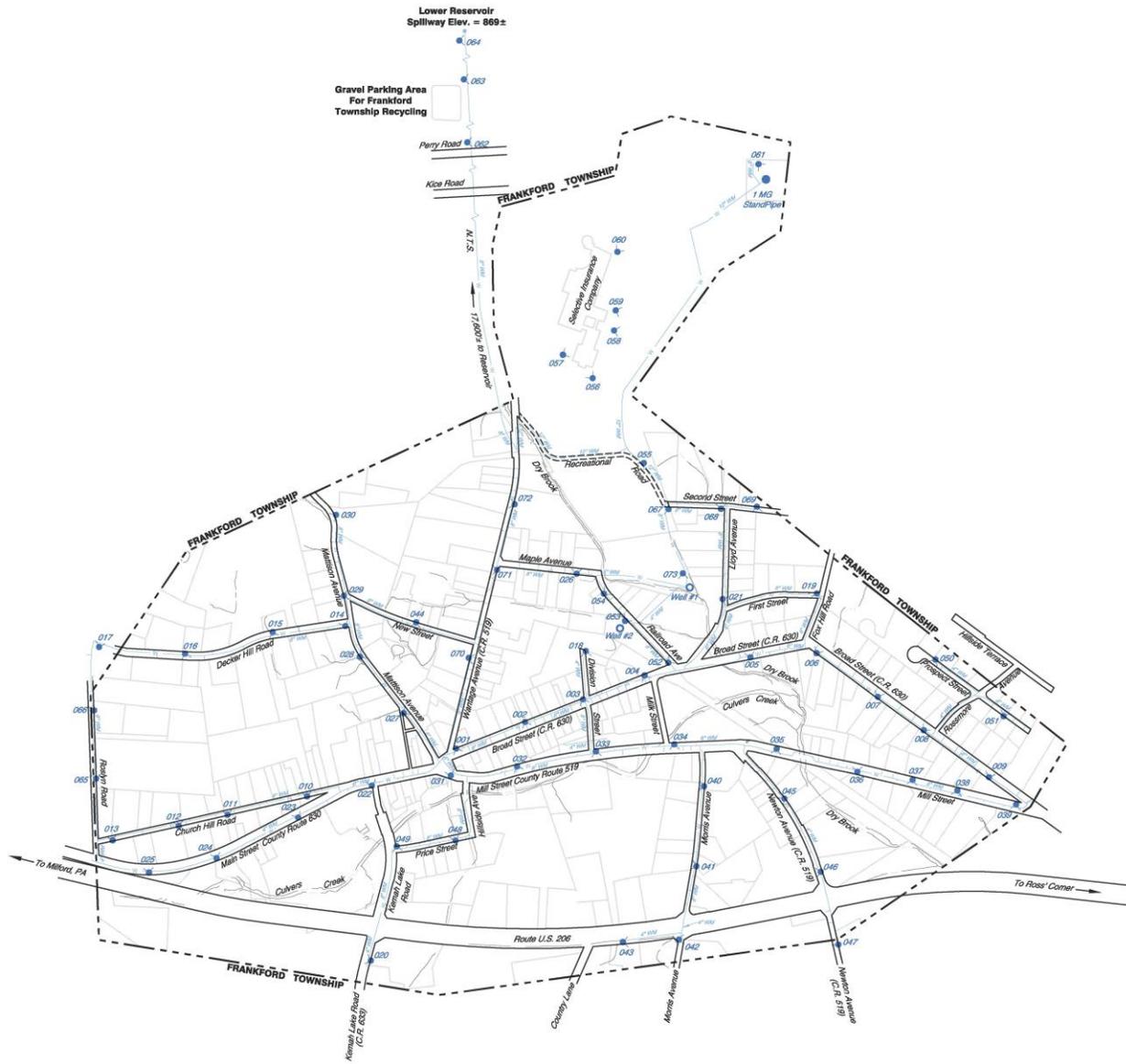
## Appendix M – Wellhead Protection Areas and Known Contaminated Sites



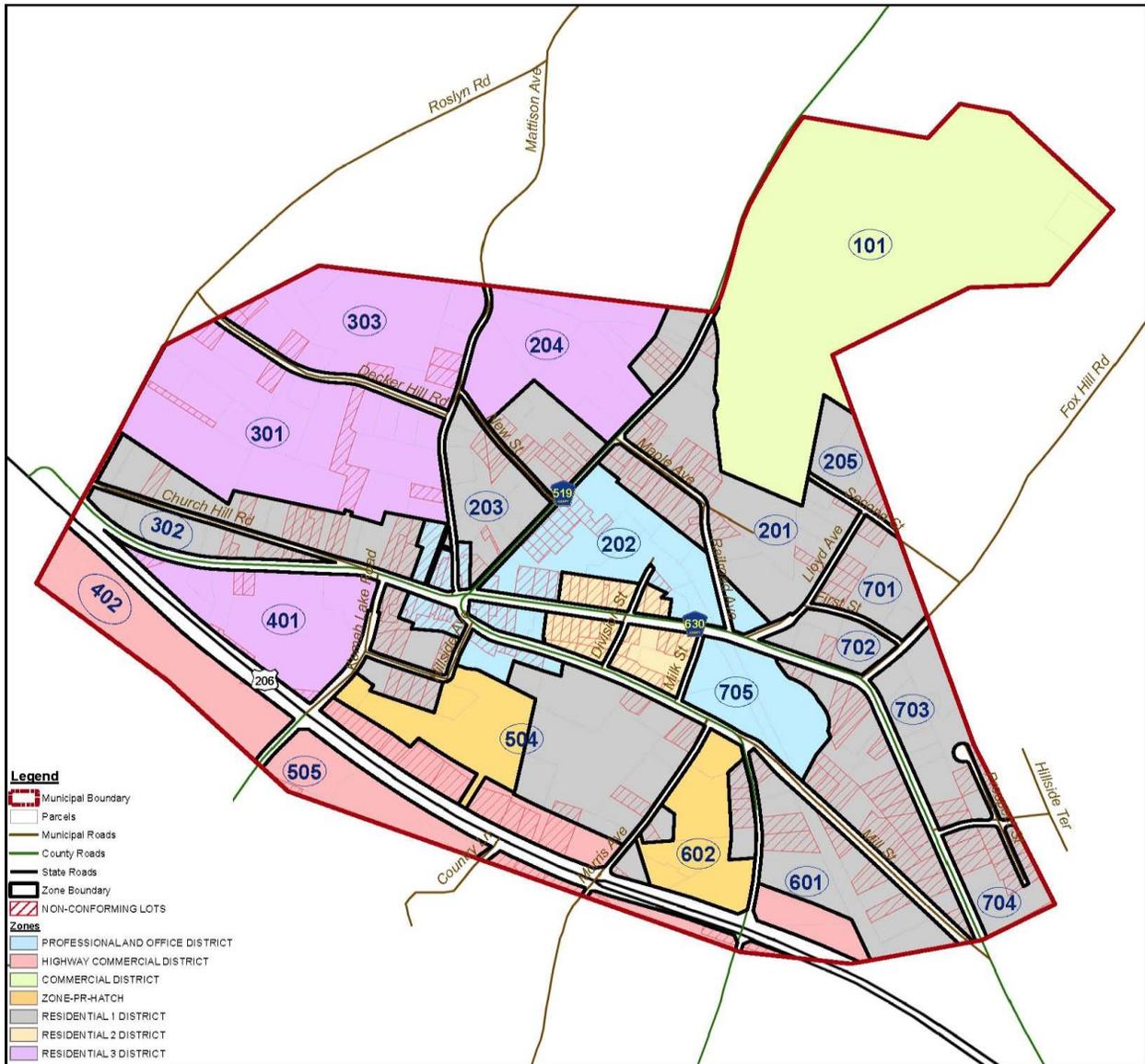
## Appendix N – Branchville Sewer System and Sewer Service Area



# Appendix O – Water Distribution System



## Appendix P – Non-Conforming Lots



## Appendix Q – Buildout Study



## Appendix R – Branchville Borough Structures Built Prior to 1940

Yr. Built	Block	Lot	Property Location	Yr. Built	Block	Lot	Property Location
1775	401	1	27 MAIN ST	1880	202	31	5 DIVISION ST
1792	301	34	3 MATTISON RD	1880	202	34	27 BROAD ST
1815	501	1	7 MILL ST	1880	204	4.01	20 MATTISON AVE
1828	301	25	14 MAIN ST	1880	204	5	18 MATTISON AVE
1830	301	27.01	10 MAIN ST	1880	204	19	37 WANTAGE AVE
1835	301	37	11 MATTISON RD	1880	204	21	41 WANTAGE AVE
1840	202	27	17 BROAD ST	1880	502	6	20 BROAD ST
1840	301	21	7 DECKER HILL RD	1880	601	6	28 MILL ST
1840	501	6	34 BROAD ST	1883	601	8	26 MILL ST
1840	703	1	49 BROAD ST	1885	204	20	39 WANTAGE AVE
1840	705	15	52 BROAD ST	1885	301	35	7 MATTISON RD
1843	301	36	9 MATTISON RD	1885	504	3	8 PRICE ST
1845	301	16	12 CHURCH HILL RD	1888	504	17	18 MILL ST
1846	204	18	35 WANTAGE AVE	1890	201	2	3 LLOYD AVE
1848	301	20	6 CHURCH HILL	1890	202	35	29 BROAD ST
1850	201	22	8 RAILROAD AVE	1890	301	6	32 CHURCH HILL
1850	301	11	22 CHURCH HILL RD	1890	301	14	16 CHURCH HILL
1850	301	17	10 CHURCH HILL	1890	401	7	39 MAIN ST
1850	503	13	25 MAIN ST	1890	501	9	28 BROAD ST
1850	701	7	8 LLOYD AVE	1890	502	4	24 BROAD ST
1855	302	1	1 CHURCH HILL	1896	205	2	11 SECOND ST
1856	301	23	2 CHURCH HILL	1900	202	1	1 MAPLE AVE
1860	204	22	43 WANTAGE AVE	1900	202	4	9 MAPLE AVE
1860	503	12	23 MAIN ST	1900	202	8.01	COR WANTAGE & MAPLE AVE
1860	705	9	66 BROAD ST	1900	202	10	18 WANTAGE AVE
1865	204	17	33 WANTAGE AVE	1900	202	13	12 WANTAGE AVE
1865	301	13	18 CHURCH HILL RD	1900	202	14	10 WANTAGE AVE
1865	601	5	30 MILL ST	1900	202	29	21 BROAD ST
1865	602	7	24 MILL ST	1900	202	33	25 BROAD ST
1870	301	22	4 CHURCH HILL	1900	202	36.01	31 BROAD ST
1870	502	10	12 BROAD ST	1900	204	4	22 MATTISON AVE
1870	601	12	9 NEWTON AVE	1900	205	5	17 SECOND ST
1875	301	5	34 CHURCH HILL	1900	301	15	14 CHURCH HILL
1875	301	24	16 MAIN ST	1900	302	2.01	3 CHURCH HILL
1875	504	18.01	12 MILL ST	1900	302	4	9 CHURCH HILL RD
1875	702	2	41 BROAD ST	1900	401	4	35 MAIN ST
1880	202	7	15 1/2 MAPLE AVE	1900	501	5	36 BROAD ST
1880	202	7.01	15 MAPLE AVE	1900	502	2	2 DIVISION ST

Yr. Built	Block	Lot	Property Location	Yr. Built	Block	Lot	Property Location
1900	502	8	16 BROAD ST	1918	205	4	15 SECOND ST
1900	502	9	14 BROAD ST	1920	201	3	5 LLOYD AVE
1900	502	13	6 BROAD ST	1920	201	4	7 LLOYD AVE
1900	503	2	1 MAIN ST	1920	203	2	1 NEW ST
1900	503	7	11 MAIN ST	1920	203	4	NEW ST
1900	504	1	3 HILLSIDE AVE	1920	203	6	14 MATTISON RD
1900	504	10	246 RTE 206	1920	503	11	21 MAIN ST
1900	504	10.04	12 PRICE ST	1920	503	19	9 PRICE ST
1900	504	15.03	22 MILL ST	1920	504	6	2 PRICE ST
1900	504	16	20 MILL ST	1920	601	2	42 MILL ST
1900	505	2.01	5 KEMAH LAKE RD	1920	601	11	7 NEWTON AVE
1900	601	4	32 MILL ST	1920	602	1	12 NEWTON AVE
1900	603	2	18 NEWTON AVE	1920	602	3	8 NEWTON AVE
1900	705	23	27 MILL ST	1920	704	15	77 BROAD ST
1900	705	24	29 MILL ST	1921	204	6	8 NEW ST
1903	201	14	28 WANTAGE AVE	1923	504	4	6 PRICE ST
1903	501	7	32 BROAD ST	1925	201	15	20 MAPLE AVE
1904	203	16	7 WANTAGE AVE	1925	202	24	11 BROAD ST
1905	201	16	18 MAPLE AVE	1925	204	9	4 NEW ST
1905	202	11	16 WANTAGE AVE	1925	703	4	55 BROAD ST
1905	202	12	14 WANTAGE AVE	1925	703	5	57 BROAD ST
1905	202	16	8 WANTAGE AVE	1926	601	3.01	38 MILL ST
1905	204	11	15 WANTAGE AVE	1927	201	5	9 LLOYD AVE
1905	705	14	54 BROAD ST	1927	201	11	36 WANTAGE AVE
1905	705	25	31 MILL ST	1927	204	10	2 NEW ST
1910	202	25	13 BROAD ST	1928	703	3	53 BROAD ST
1910	202	26	15 BROAD ST	1930	201	23	6 RAILROAD AVE
1910	203	17	9 WANTAGE AVE	1930	202	2	5 MAPLE AVE
1910	205	1	9 SECOND ST	1930	204	12	17 WANTAGE AVE
1910	301	31	2 MAIN ST	1930	204	13	19 WANTAGE AVE
1910	501	3	2 MILK ST	1930	204	14	21 WANTAGE AVE
1910	502	3	26 BROAD ST	1930	204	15	23 WANTAGE AVE
1910	603	3	227 RT 206	1930	301	30	4 MAIN ST
1910	705	12	58 BROAD ST	1930	401	3	33 MAIN ST
1910	705	13	56 BROAD ST	1930	401	5	37 MAIN ST
1910	705	26	33 MILL ST	1930	501	2	4 MILK ST
1915	203	3	3 NEW ST	1930	501	8	30 BROAD ST
1915	702	4	45 BROAD ST	1930	503	17	3 PRICE ST
1917	703	2	51 BROAD ST	1930	504	2	10 PRICE ST

Yr. Built	Block	Lot	Property Location
1930	703	7	61 BROAD ST
1930	704	13	73 BROAD ST
1930	704	14	75 BROAD ST
1931	201	6	11 LLOYD AVE
1931	602	9	9 MORRIS AVE
1935	201	17	16 MAPLE AVE
1935	202	28	19 BROAD ST
1935	401	2	31 MAIN ST
1935	504	9	252 RT 206
1935	704	9	65 BROAD ST
1936	502	5	22 BROAD ST
1938	204	2	26 MATTISON AVE
1938	502	7	18 BROAD ST
1938	503	4	5 MAIN ST
1938	705	1	86 BROAD ST
1939	201	24	4 RAILROAD AVE
1939	302	6	15 CHURCH HILL