

**BRANCHVILLE BOROUGH**  
*Sussex County*  
**MUNICIPAL SELF ASSESSMENT REPORT**



**JULY 2010**

**Prepared by  
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**MUNICIPAL SELF ASSESSMENT REPORT  
BRANCHVILLE BOROUGH, SUSSEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**

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

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## **INTRODUCTION**

With continued growth and increasingly complex State regulations, Branchville Borough recognizes the many benefits of working with the State Planning Commission and creating planning documents which are consistent with the State Plan. Through the Plan Endorsement process, Branchville is also seeking to extend its Center Designation. For these and a variety of other positive benefits, the Borough is seeking Plan Endorsement from the State Planning Commission. The Office of Smart Growth has updated their guidelines for Plan Endorsement which requires municipalities to follow a ten step process. Branchville fulfilled Step 1 by completing a pre-petition meeting with the Office of Smart Growth and other state agencies on December 8, 2009. The Borough Council fulfilled Step 2 by appointing a Plan Endorsement Advisory Committee by resolution on February 24, 2010. This document represents, Step 3, the completion of a Municipal Self Assessment Report. This Self Assessment Report will review Branchville's plans for consistency with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan and will act as the Borough's petition for Plan Endorsement.

### **Purpose of Plan Endorsement**

The purpose of the Plan Endorsement process is to reach consistency among municipal, county, regional and state agency plans with the State Plan, and to facilitate the implementation of these plans. Plan Endorsement seeks to:

1. Encourage municipal, county, regional and state agency plans to be coordinated and support each other to achieve the goals of the State Plan;
2. Encourage municipalities and counties to plan on a regional basis while recognizing the fundamental role of the municipal master plan and development regulations;
3. Consider the entire municipality, including Centers, Cores, Nodes and Environs, within the context of regional systems;

4. Provide an opportunity for all government entities and the public to discuss and resolve common planning issues;
5. Provide a framework to guide and support State investment programs and permitting assistance in the implementation of municipal, county and regional plans that meet Statewide objectives;
6. Learn new planning approaches and techniques from municipal, county and regional governments for dissemination throughout the State and possible incorporation into the State Plan. (The New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan, 2001, page 14); and
7. Ensure that petitions for Plan Endorsement are consistent with applicable State land use statutes and regulations.

#### **Benefits of Plan Endorsement**

Following State Planning Commission endorsement of a municipality's plan as consistent with the State Plan, state agencies will provide benefits to the municipality that will assist in implementing the endorsed plan. This assistance will include technical assistance, direct state capital investment, priority for state grants and low-interest loans, preferential interest rates, and a coordinated regulatory review for projects consistent with endorsed plans. In addition, Center Designation is only approved through Plan Endorsement. Center Designation offers many benefits such as lower utility connection fees for new development, the ability to establish and maintain sewer service areas, and the ability to receive funding for special planning activities and infrastructure projects. Branchville Borough is seeking Plan Endorsement in order to have access to the benefits provided by state agencies for endorsed municipalities.

**Consistency with Goals of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan**

The New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan seeks to “achieve all the State Planning Goals by coordinating public and private actions to guide future growth into compact, ecologically designed forms of development and redevelopment and to protect the Environs, consistent with the Statewide Policies and the State Plan Policy Map.” (The State Development and Redevelopment Plan General Plan Strategy).

The New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan (State Plan) divides the Borough into three Planning Areas. The classifications are; Rural Planning Area PA4, Rural Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area PA4B and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area PA5. The bulk of the Borough is either PA4 or PA5, only a small slice of land along the western boundary of the Borough is PA4B. The State Plan policies for the Planning Areas limit development and encourage protection of the “Environs”. Development and economic growth are recommended in “Planned Centers”, which are served by sewer, water and transportation corridors.

Branchville received Center Designation from the State Planning Commission on June 16, 2004. The designation is set to expire on June 16, 2010. 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 Borough is in the process of establishing a sewer treatment plant and system. The project is in the engineering phase and construction is expected to begin in 2012.

**Branchville's Goals in Seeking Plan Endorsement**

Branchville Borough is the smallest municipality by size in the county. Despite its small size, the Borough has an established main street that includes mixed-use buildings which provide for local goods and services for the community. The Selective Insurance campus is located within the Borough and provides jobs and tax stabilization for the Borough.

Branchville is seeking Plan Endorsement to maintain its Village Center Designation which will accommodate limited development and redevelopment in the Borough. The entire Borough is part of the Center and careful planning will be necessary for any vacant or underdeveloped lots within the Borough.

The Branchville Borough Council promotes the following goals for Plan Endorsement:

- Maintain the small town character of Branchville Borough.
- Enhance recreational opportunities.
- Provide housing diversity for low income families and senior citizens.
- Encourage rehabilitation of existing buildings where appropriate.
- Promote preservation of historic and cultural resources.

## **LOCATION AND REGIONAL CONTEXT**

Branchville Borough is located in the central to northwestern portion of Sussex County and encompasses 0.6 square miles. It is surrounded by Frankford Township, which is bordered by Wantage, Lafayette, Sandyston and Hampton Townships. The Borough is a rural Sussex County Village Center with a traditional historic main street in the center of the Borough and housing surrounding it.

Branchville Borough is the smallest municipality in the County by land area and its 845 residents occupy 377 housing units, according to the US Census. The Borough is made up of relatively small lots with the homes and businesses all currently served by septic systems. Branchville is in the design phase of sewer service development. Construction of the sewer is expected to begin in 2012. The regional planning entity for Branchville is the Sussex County Planning Board. The Sussex County Strategic Growth Plan received Plan Endorsement from the State Planning Commission in February 2007. The Branchville Village Center was listed in the Strategic Growth Plan as a traditional historic village that generally meets the State Development and Redevelopment Plan criteria for a village center. The Borough works closely with Sussex County to ensure that Borough plans are consistent with the County's Strategic Growth Plan.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

### **Background**

Branchville Borough encompasses 0.6 square miles, and is the smallest municipality in Sussex County by land area. The Borough makes up about one percent of the 536 square miles that comprise Sussex County, the fourth largest County in the State by land area. Branchville has 845 residents, making up about a half a percent of the County's total population of 153,384 people. The average household size in Branchville is 2.37 people, which is lower than both the County average of 2.75 people and the State average of 2.68 people. Median household income in Branchville is \$45,855, about 40 percent less than the County median income of \$78,488 and about 17 percent lower than the State median income of \$55,146. The homeownership rate in Branchville is 65%, which lower than County homeownership rates of just above 84 percent and on par with the State homeownership rate of 66 percent. Branchville's housing vacancy rate is low at 6 percent, when compared to the County and State rates of 8.8 percent and 7.4 percent, respectively. The poverty rate in Branchville is less than one percent, lower than the County rate of 4.8 percent and the State rate of 8.5 percent.

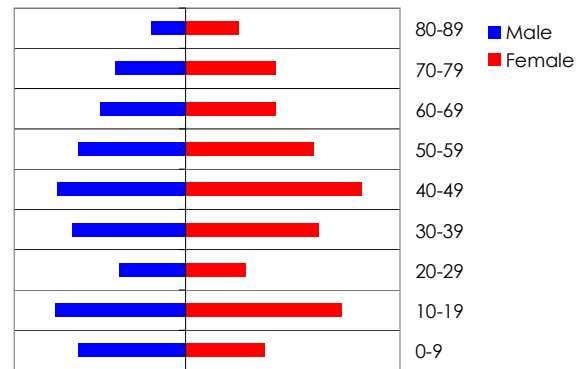
The data on the following pages is primarily from the US 2000 Census, with the exception of land area and State Department of Labor Statistics, which is from 2004.

<b>Demographics Table</b>			
	Branchville Borough	Sussex County	New Jersey
Land area (sq mi)	0.6 square miles	536 square miles	7,417 sq. miles
Population	845	153,384	8,414,350
Households	354	54,811	3,064,645
Average Household Size	2.37	2.75	2.68
Housing Units	377	60,086	3,310,275
Home Ownership Rate	65%	84.1%	66%
Vacancy Rate	6%	8.8%	7.4%
Median Household Income	\$45,855	\$78,488	\$55,146
Per Capita Income	\$22,748	\$32,997	\$27,006
Poverty Rate	0.6%	4.0%	8.5%
Unemployment Rate (NJDOL 2004)	4.8%	4.1%	4.8%

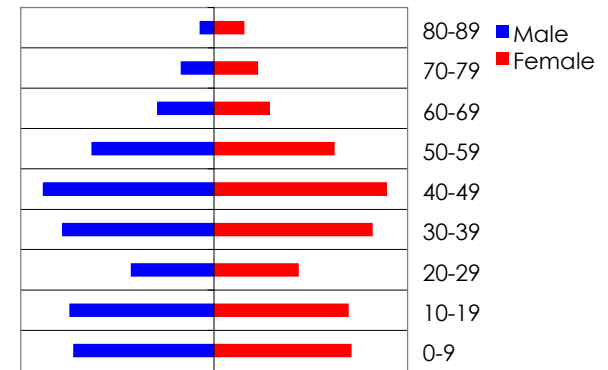
**Demographic Comparison Charts – Branchville Borough – Sussex County – State of New Jersey**

Branchville Borough has a larger elderly population in general than Sussex County; and a generally larger female population compared to males. Branchville is less racially diverse than the County and New Jersey as a whole. Branchville has more construction and retail trade jobs than is typical for the State and the County. Branchville has farming and manufacturing jobs than is typical for the State and County.

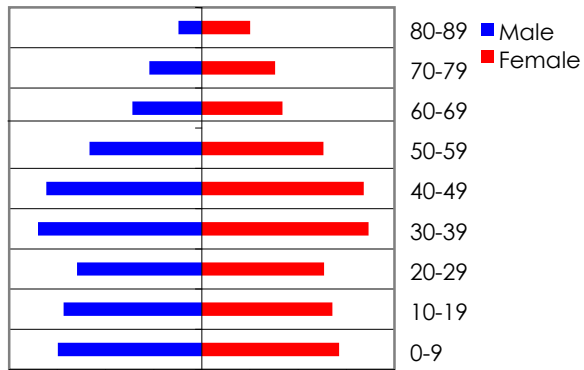
**Branchville Borough Age Distribution**



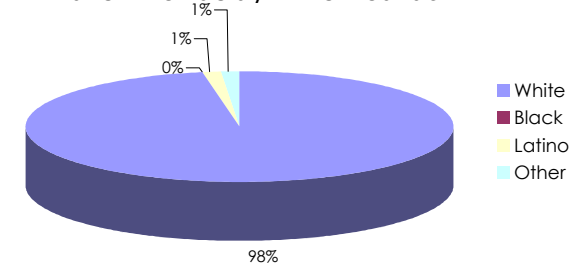
**Sussex County Age Distribution**



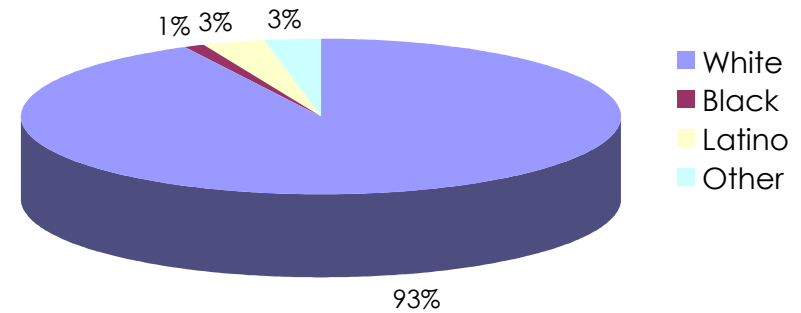
**New Jersey Age Distribution**



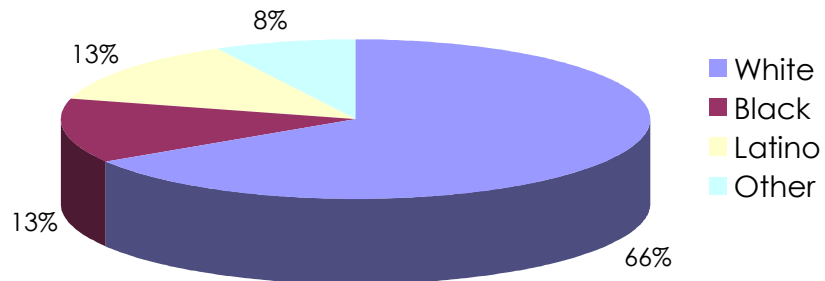
**Branchville Racial/Ethnic Breakdown**



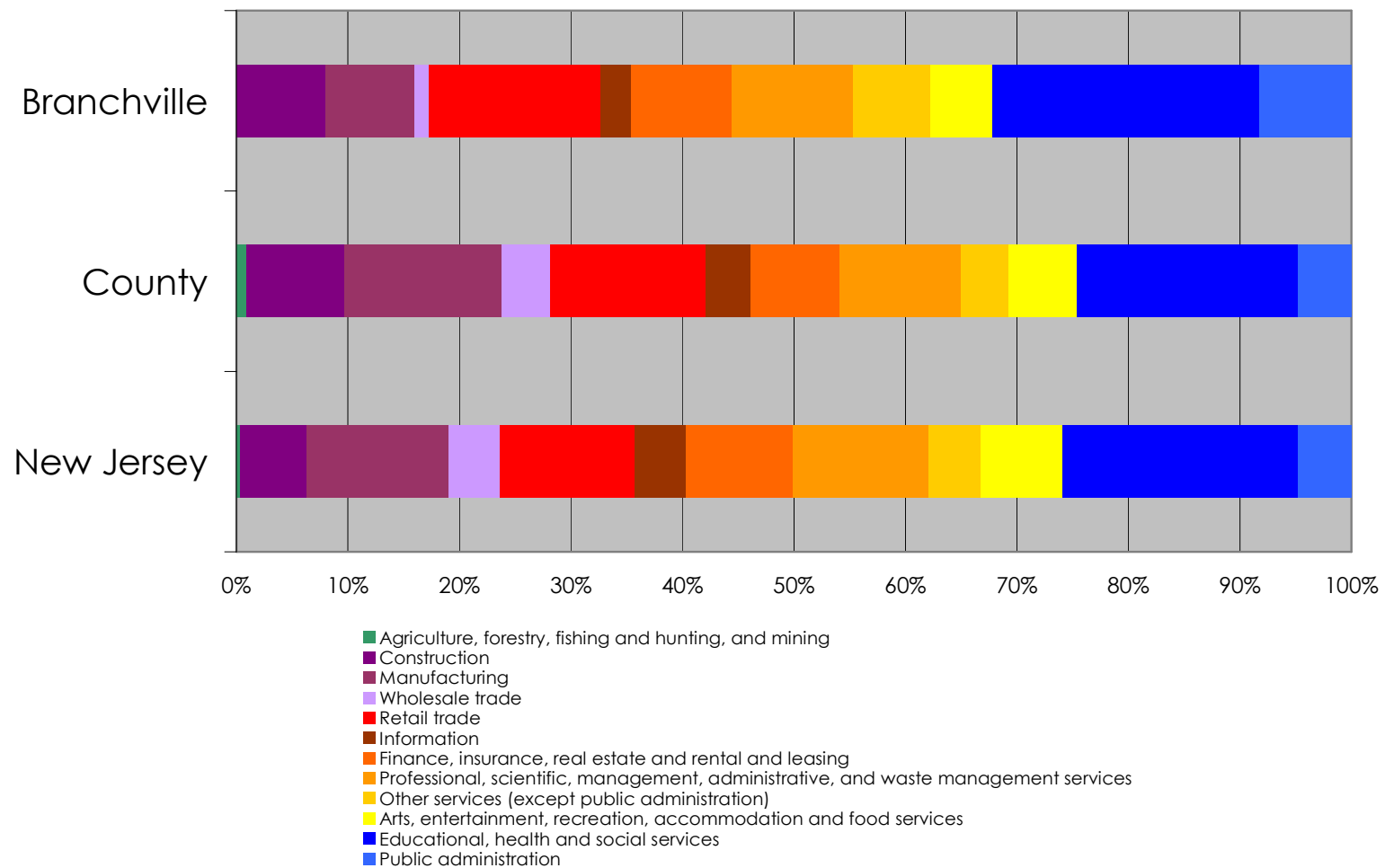
**Sussex County Racial/Ethnic Breakdown**



**New Jersey Racial/Ethnic Breakdown**



## Workers by Industry



**Housing and Population Projections**

Branchville Borough's Housing Element and Fair Share Plan was adopted on June 13, 2007 and revised and re-adopted on December 10, 2008. The plan was submitted to the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) prior to the December 31, 2008 deadline. Under COAH's current projections for Branchville, the Borough has a prior round obligation of 13 units, a rehabilitation share of 0 units and a projected growth share of 13 units. The Borough's growth projections are for 22 housing units and 130 jobs for the period from 2004 to 2018. The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) population projections for Branchville Borough predict that the Borough will grow by about 11 percent from the year 2000 to the year 2030. The MPO projections remain stagnant after 2020, indicating that the Borough may have reached full build-out. The MPO population projections are provided in the table below:

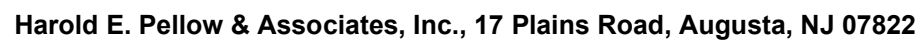
Metropolitan Planning Organization Population Projections	
Year	Branchville Borough Population
2000	850
2005	870
2010	900
2015	930
2020	960
2025	960
2030	960

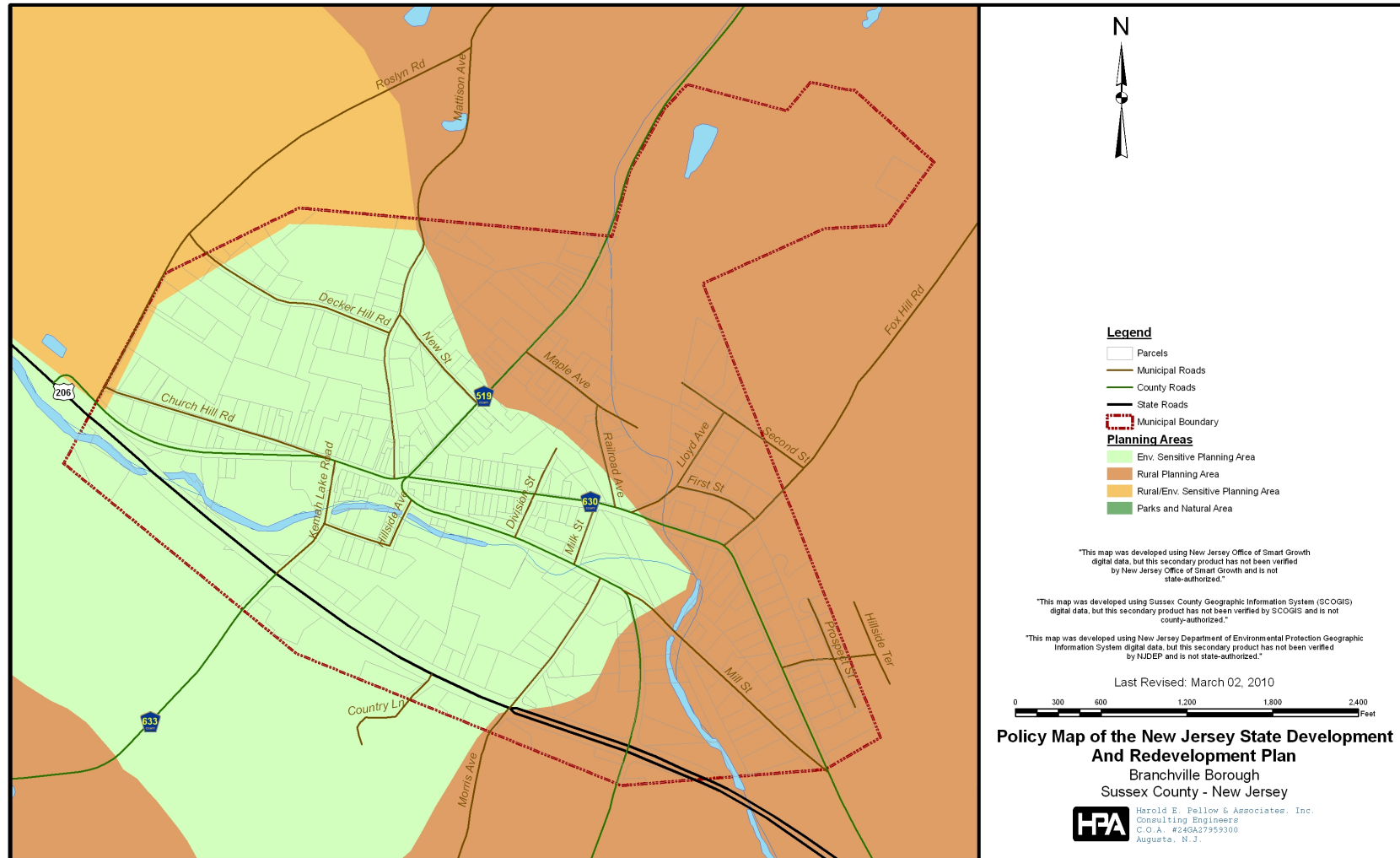
## COMMUNITY INVENTORY

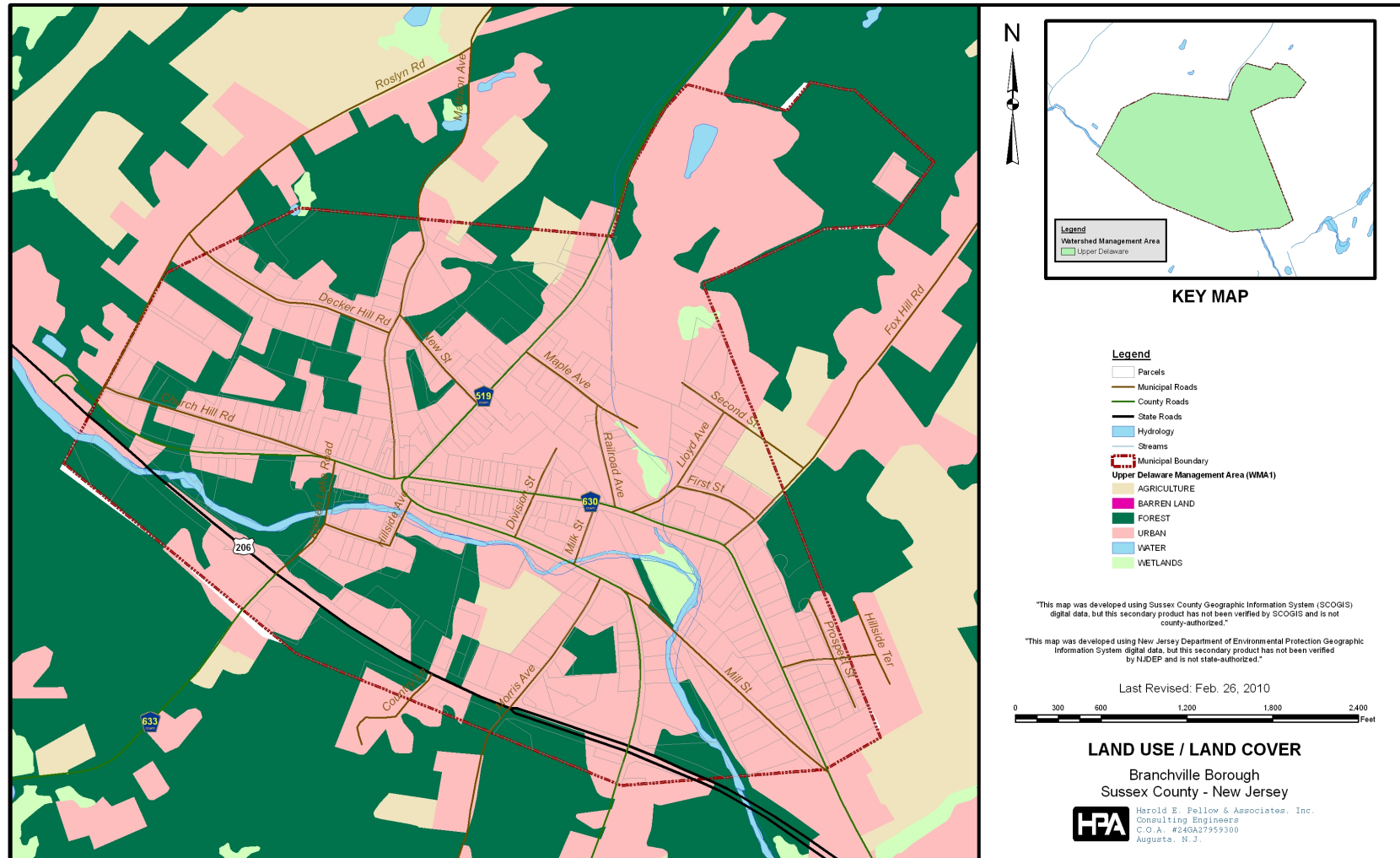
### **General Information**

Branchville Borough covers 0.6 squares miles in central northwestern Sussex County. Sussex County is bordered by Pennsylvania to the northwest, New York State to the northeast, Passaic County to the east, Morris County to the southeast and Warren County to the southwest. Branchville is completely surrounded by Frankford Township, which shares borders with Wantage, Lafayette, Sandyston and Hampton Townships. The State Plan designates the Borough as primarily Rural Planning Area (PA4) and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area (PA5). A small section of land along the western border of the Borough is Rural Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area (PA4B). The Borough's tax assessor is not able to obtain information related to the total square footage of residential and commercial development in the Borough at this time. The total vacant land according to tax assessment records covers 43.7 acres.

The maps on the following pages provide the municipal boundaries and location; State Planning Area Designations; and Land Use / Land Cover for the Borough. Maps on the following pages use Sussex County GIS Data as well as NJDEP statewide data. This data was assembled on a statewide basis and is for representative purposes only. The data is not deemed reliable at the parcel level.







**Natural & Cultural Features**

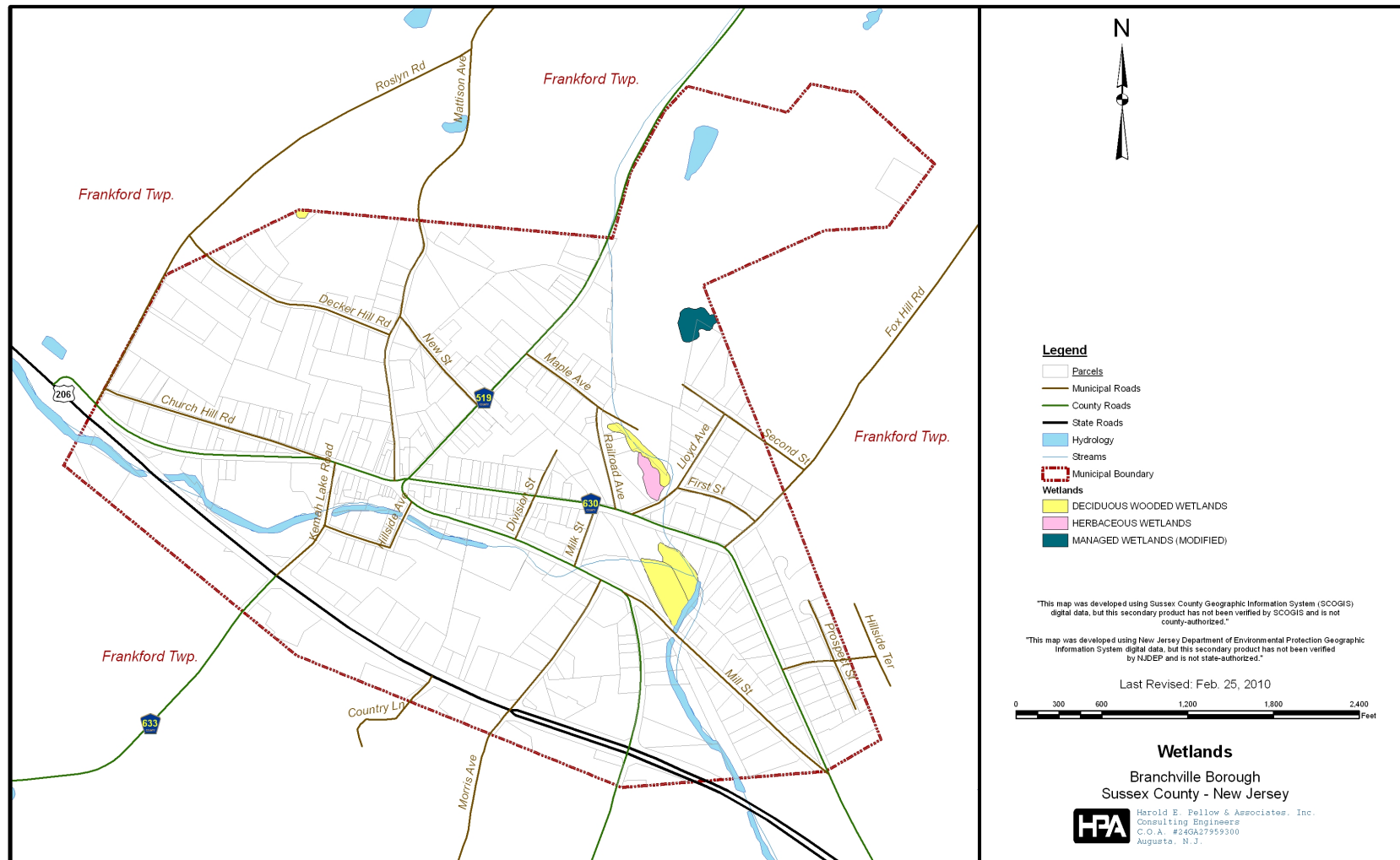
Natural Features

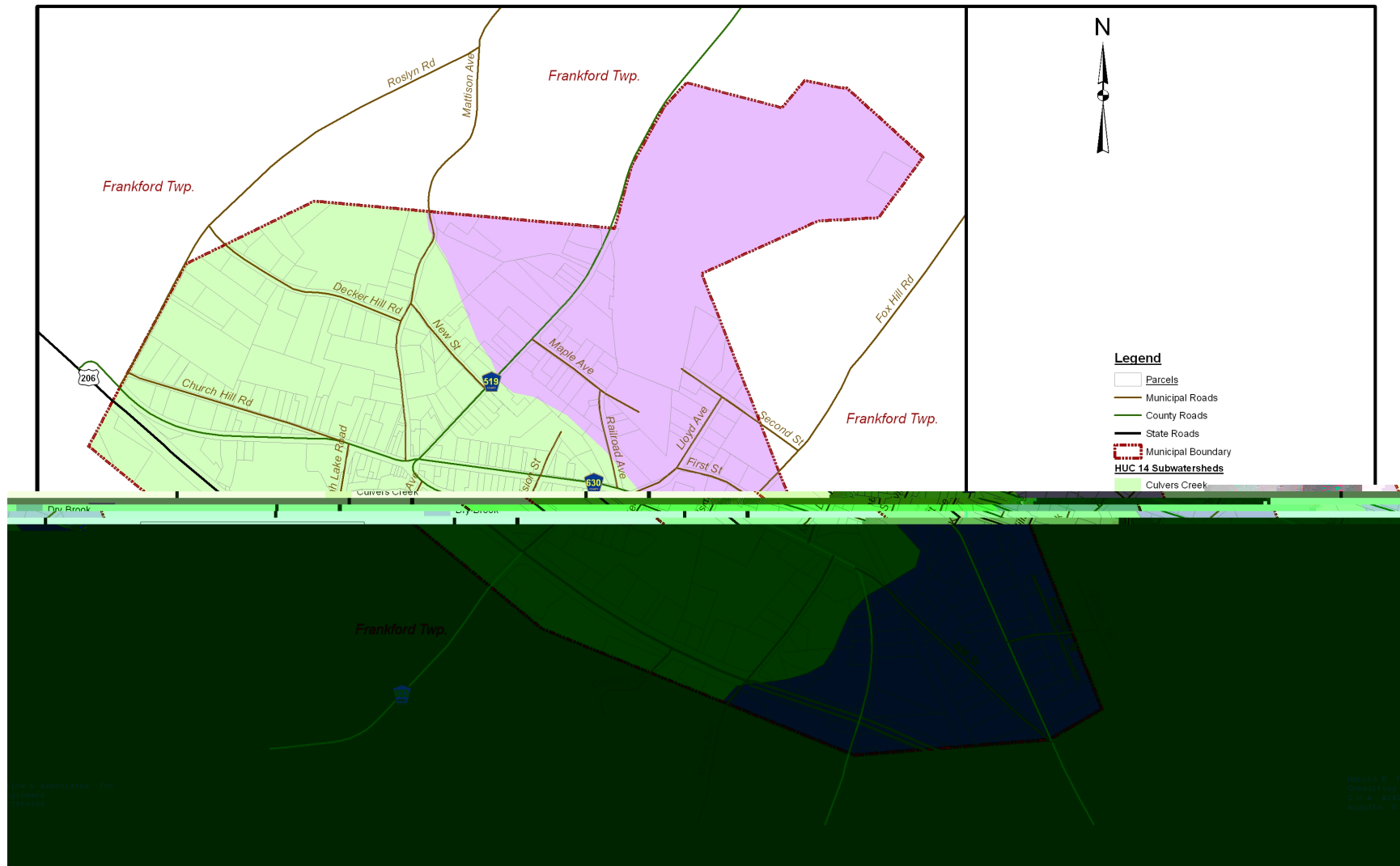
Branchville Borough is located within the ridge and valley province and has two brooks running through it: Culvers Brook and Dry Brook (as well associated branches of Dry Brook). There are minimal wetlands and floodplains in the Borough, limited to the areas around Culvers Brook and Dry Brook. There are two HUC 14 watersheds in the Borough as well, 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-Hoosic 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 8 inches per year are present. There are two municipal wells in the Borough that have associated wellhead protection areas and two potential areas of contamination with those wellhead protection areas.

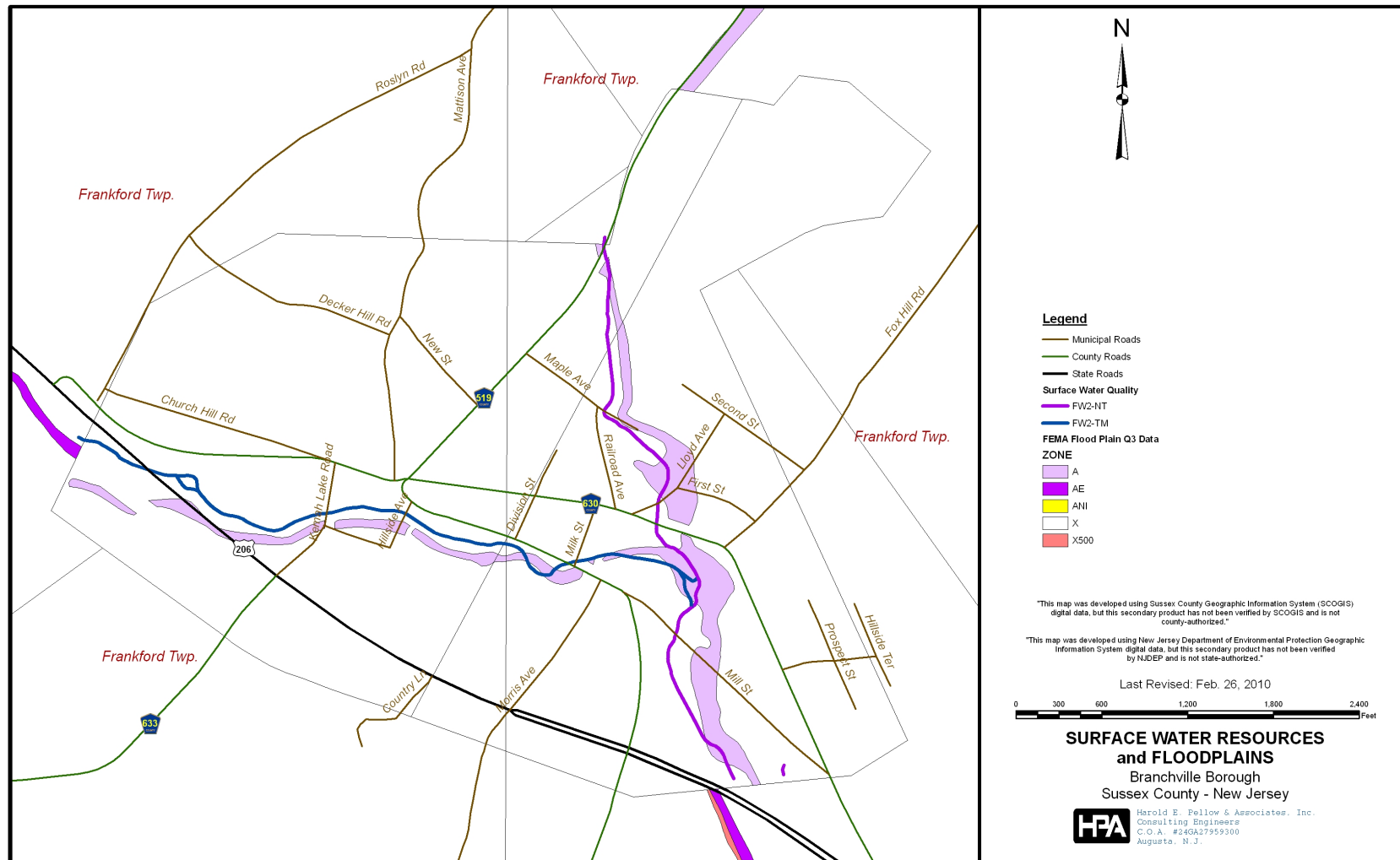
Historic and Cultural Features

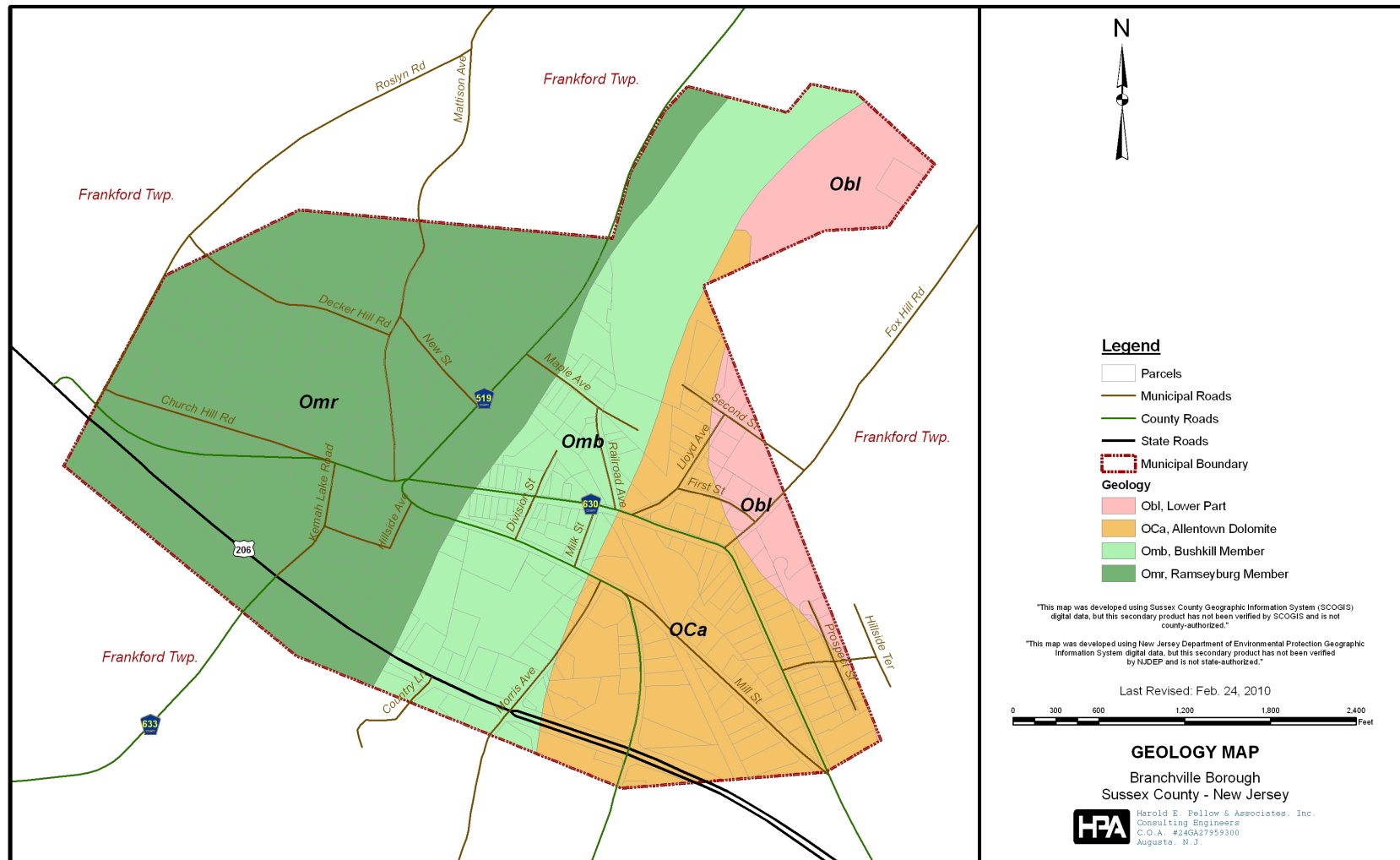
Branchville Borough was settled in the 1700s and originally part of Frankford Township. The Borough incorporated in 1898 and was originally a village with grist mills and stores for local farmers. Later it became a railroad hub for local business and farmers sending their goods to market. It also served vacationers on their way to local lake resorts such as Culver Lake and Lake Owassa in Frankford Township. Branchville is now a community of private residences and businesses which continue to utilize many of the historic buildings to this date. The 2006 Master Plan Reexamination for the Borough recommended a Historic Element be added to the Master Plan. This has not yet been completed due to a lack of funding; however the Borough is interested in documenting its historic and cultural resources as part of that effort.

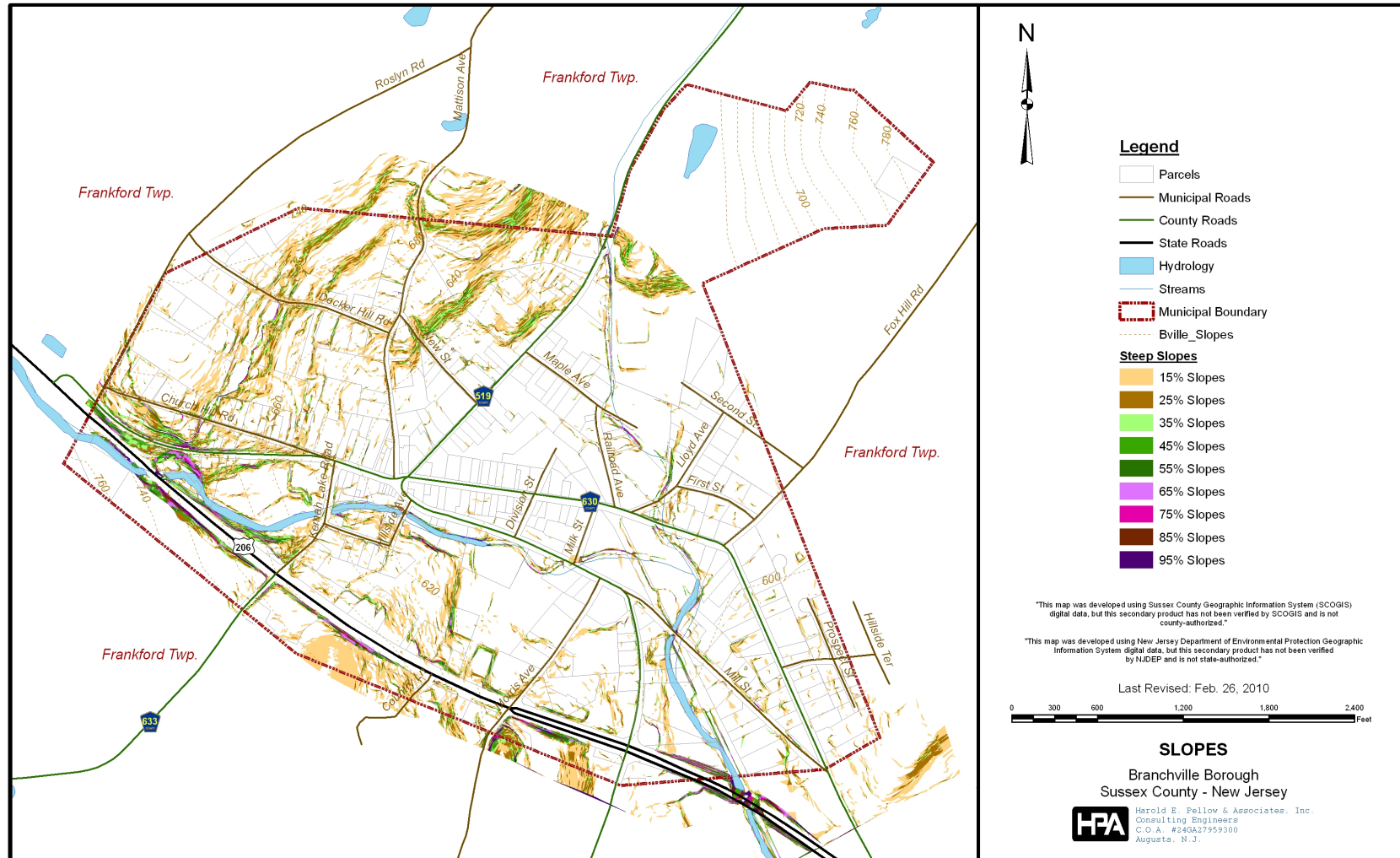
The maps on the following pages include: Wetlands Map, HUC14 Watersheds Map, Surface Water Resources and Flood Plains, Geology Map, Critical Slopes, NJDEP's Landscapes Map, Groundwater Recharge Map and a Soil Series Map.

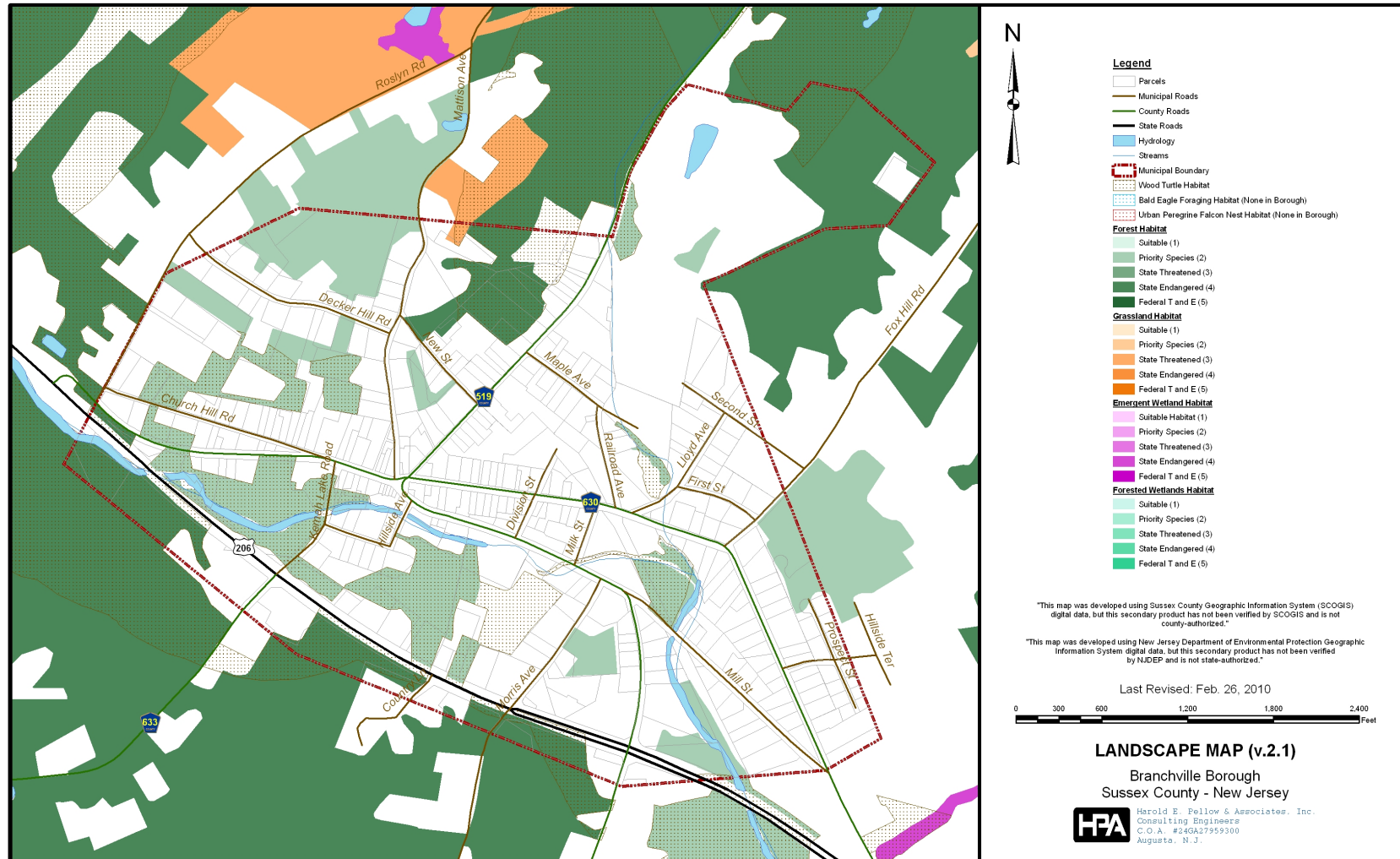


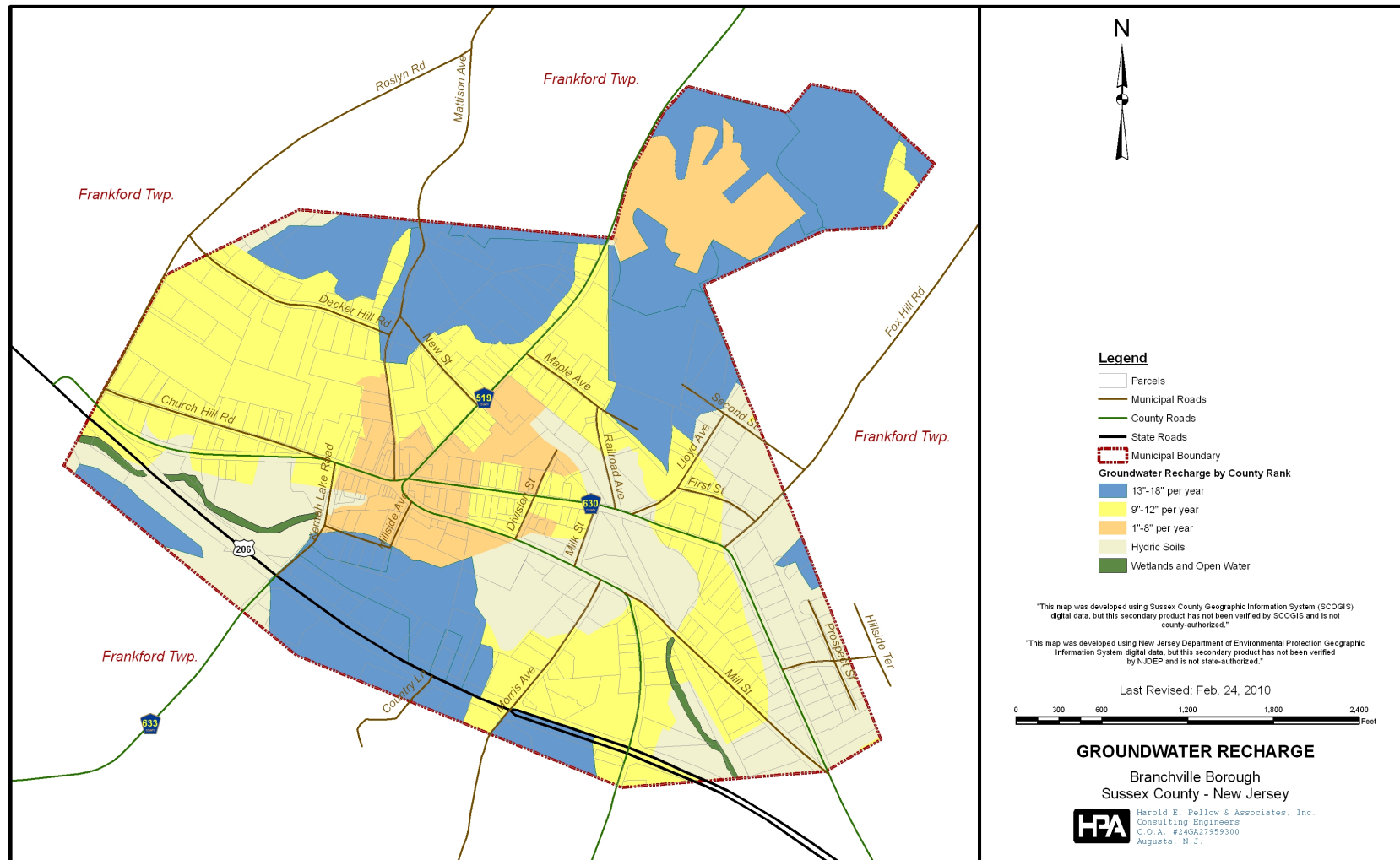


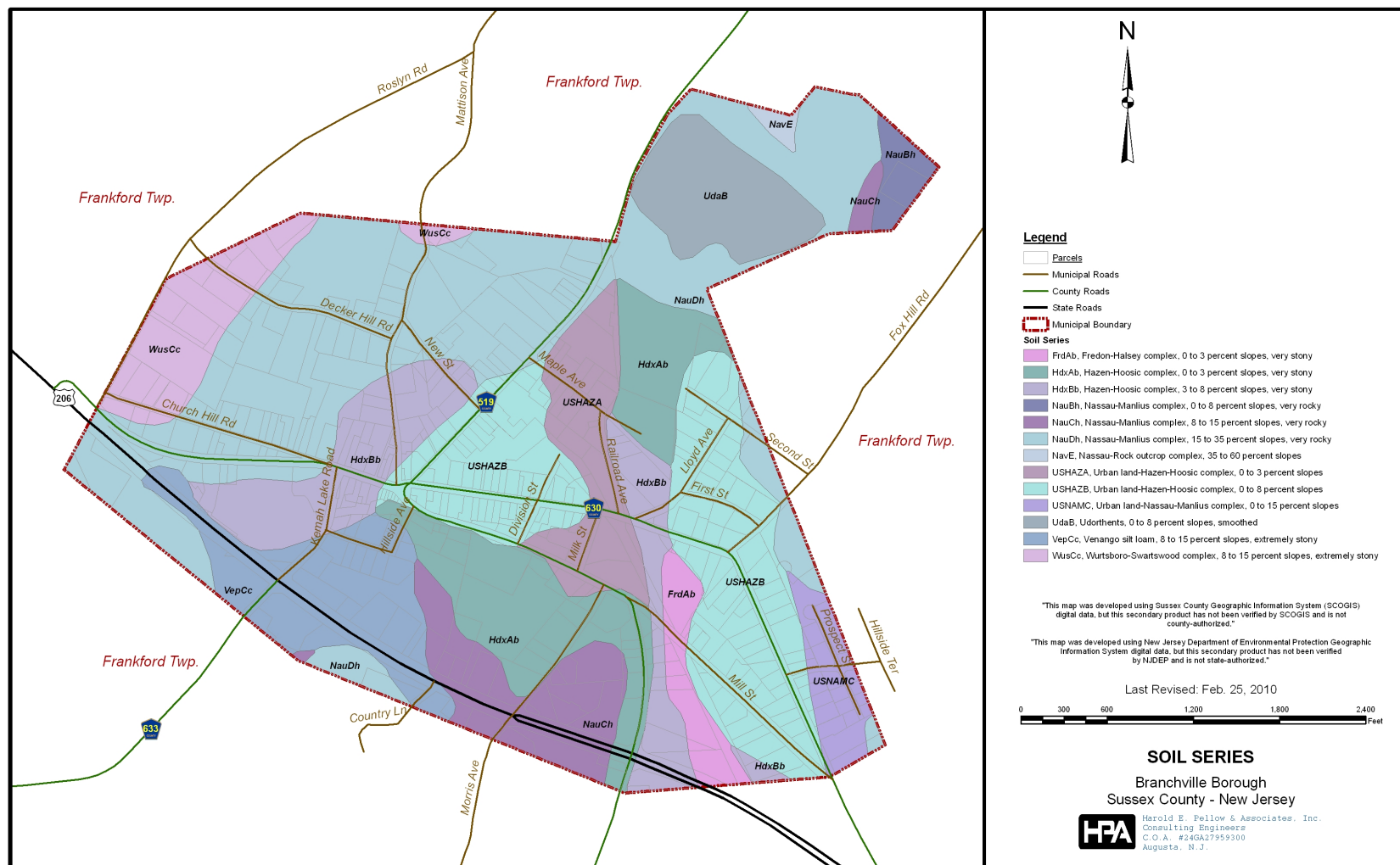












**Community Facilities**

Public and Private Schools

The Branchville Borough is part of the Frankford Public School District which has kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade district that includes Frankford Elementary School (grades k-6) and Frankford Middle School (grades 7-8). Frankford School District is a sending district for High Point Regional High School located in Wantage Township.

Pre-Schools

The Frankford School District offers half-day pre-school for 4 year olds at the Branchville School located on Wantage Avenue. The Frankford Recreation Program also offers pre-school for two hours, twice a week at Branchville Methodist Church.

Social Service Providers

Branchville Presbyterian and Branchville Methodist Churches participate in a shelter program for the homeless and provides meals and a place to stay for local homeless families once a month. They also coordinate a soup kitchen that provides meals and a food pantry that provides food donations to those in need.

Government Buildings and Public Services

Branchville Borough owns and operates its Municipal Building, Building Inspection Department and Road Department. The Fire Departments is a privately run volunteer organization.

There is one post offices located in Branchville Borough on Broad Street.

Parks and Recreation Facilities

Branchville Borough has three parks: Struck Park, Roe Park and a park donated by Selective Insurance.

Branchville's Community Facilities

The Branchville Borough Master Plan lists the following community facilities:

1. United Methodist Church
2. Presbyterian Church
3. Municipal Garage
4. Selective Insurance Corporation
5. Branchville Hose Co. No. 1
6. Branchville Elementary School (Now the pre-school and kindergarten for Frankford School District)
7. Struck Park
8. Roe Park
9. Branchville Cemetery
10. Branchville Municipal Building
11. Water Tank

**Infrastructure**

Roadways

New Jersey State Highway (NJSH) Route 206 is the only state road in Branchville. Other County Routes that run through the Borough include: CR 519 (Newton Ave./Mill St./Wantage Ave.); CR 630 (Broad St./Main St.); and CR 633 (Kemah Lake Road). Following are major roadways within the Borough and their NJDOT designations:

<b>Street Name</b>	<b>Classification</b>
NJSH Route 206	Rural Principal Arterial
County Route 519	Rural Major Collector
County Route 630	Rural Minor Collector
County Route 633	Rural Minor Collector

Sewer Service Areas

As noted previously, the Borough is located within a sewer service area which covers the entire Borough as well as a few parcels outside of the Borough, including Frankford Township School. The sewer is currently in the engineering design phase and is expected to begin construction in 2012.

Water Supply Franchises,

The Borough operates a public water facility that utilizes wells to provide water to Borough residents.

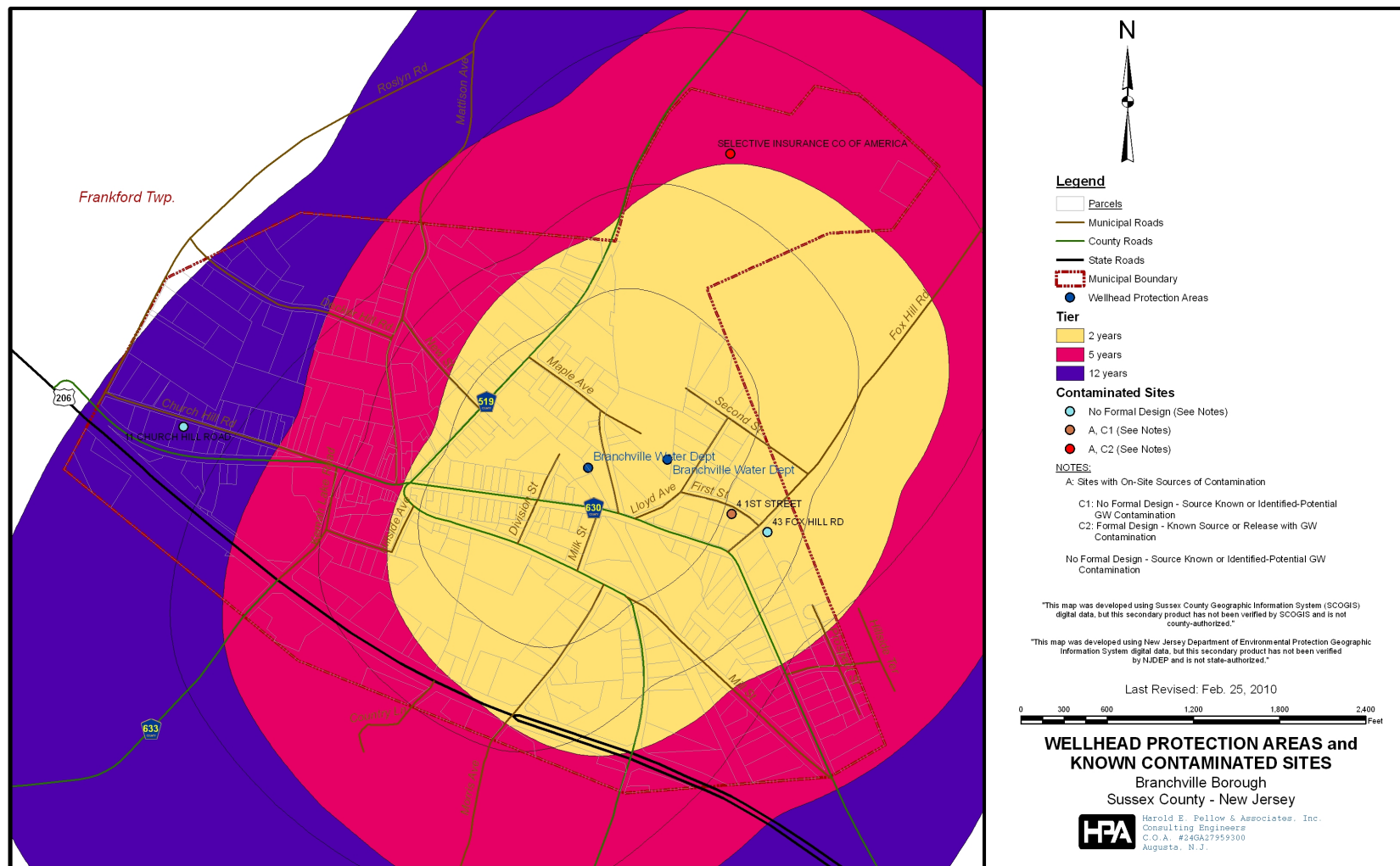
The maps on the following pages show Proposed Sewer Service Areas and Existing Open Spaces in the Borough:

**Underutilized Land**

The Borough does not currently have any redevelopment areas within its boundaries.

The Borough has some known hazardous sites as identified by the NJDEP. There are no known superfund sites in the Borough. Wellhead protection areas are identified by the NJDEP for the Borough. The Borough is interested in working with the State to clean up sites that are privately-owned but may contain contaminants and/or waste.

The maps on the following pages identify the Wellhead Protection Areas and Known Contaminated Sites.



## **COMMUNITY VISION & PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Branchville Borough is a very small village center with only 845 residents living within the 0.6 mile boundary. While many residents are involved in the local municipal government and planning processes, official visioning has not taken place in the Borough. The Borough plans to conduct visioning as part of the Plan Endorsement process; however the Borough requests a reduction in the number of visioning sessions. Current Plan Endorsement guidelines call for three sessions, with such a small population, the Plan Endorsement Advisory Committee feels that one visioning session will be more than adequate for the Borough. This allows for a more focused effort to bring people to the meeting and a lesser chance of dispersion of the residents that may be interested in visioning.

## **STATUS OF MASTER PLAN AND OTHER RELEVANT PLANNING ACTIVITIES**

Branchville's current Master Plan was originally adopted in 1995 and the most recent Master Plan Reexamination Report was adopted in June 2006. Branchville Borough filed its Housing Element and Fair Share Plan with COAH prior to the Round 3 deadline of December 31, 2008. Branchville Borough adopted a Stormwater Management Plan pursuant to NJDEP rules in September 2005.

## RECENT AND UPCOMING DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Following are major site plan and subdivision applications, which have been approved in the Borough over the last five years:

BLOCK	LOT	APP/YEAR#	HPA #	NAME	STREET	TYPE
101	1	2009		Selective Ins. – gym	Wantage Avenue	Site
101	4	2005	05-130	New Cingular Wireless PCS	Fox Hill Road	Site
201	23	2002	02-162	Stark, Susan	Railroad Avenue	Site
202	12	2008	08-220	Galvao, Agostinno	Wantage Avenue (14)	Site
202	18	2008	08-081	Franklin Mutual	Broad Street	Site
202	20	2008	08-	Lakeland Bank	Broad Street (3)	Site
202	21-23	2008	08-081	Franklin Mutual	Broad Street	Site
202	29	2005	05-366	Jager, Edwina & Milton	Broad Street	Site
202	35	2007	07-207	Carter, John & Debra	Broad Street (73)	Site
203	11-12	2005	-	Whitesell, Mary	Broad Street	Site
204	22 (ll w/23; 22, 22.01)	2005	05-033	Rost, Robert, Estate of	Wantage Avenue	Sub
204	22.01	2006	06-062	Sutaris, Charles	Wantage Avenue	Site
301	7	2005	04-352	Hoesle, Darlene	Church Hill Road	Site
301	28	2005	05-108	Keystone Properties, LLC	Main Street	Site
401	5 (5, 5.01)	2007	07-013	Hemshot, Diane	Main Street	Sub
502	4	2005	05-106	Rizzo, Agnes, L.	Broad Street	Site
503	18	2008	08-068	Conklin, Lewis	Price Avenue	Site
602	7 (7, 7.02)	2007	07-029	Urban, Joseph	Mill Street	Sub
604	2	2005	05-015	13 Newton, LLC - Citgo	NJSH 206	Site
705	6	2006	06-150	Earl, John & Catherine	Broad Street	Site

## STATEMENT OF PLANNING COORDINATION

Branchville Borough has been coordinating with Sussex County on planning for the Borough Center and Wastewater Management Planning for decades. The Borough has a shared services agreement with the County for Health Department services.

Branchville is completely surrounded by Frankford Township and its zoning and master plan are compatible with Frankford's. The Borough shares services with the Township on several items including:

Branchville works with surrounding municipalities to provide the following shared services:

- Municipal Court with Frankford, Lafayette, Montague and Sandyston Townships;
- Construction Code enforcement with Hampton and Montague Townships;
- Electrical and Plumbing Inspectors with Montague Township;
- Health Department with the County of Sussex;
- Recreation Leagues with Frankford Township;
- Schools with Frankford Township (K-8) and Frankford, Lafayette, Wantage and Sussex Borough (High School);
- Police coverage by the Sussex County Sheriff's Department and State Police;
- Emergency Dispatching (911) with the Town of Newton;
- Fuel, truck washing and other DPW needs with the County of Sussex;
- Fire Subcode Official with the Township of Hampton; and
- Animal Control with Sandyston and Lafayette Townships.

## **STATE, FEDERAL & NON-PROFIT PROGRAMS, GRANTS AND CAPITAL PROJECTS**

Branchville Borough has not undertaken any large capital projects in the last five years with the exception of the current sewer project that is underway. The Borough is utilizing a USDA loan to finance the design and construction of a sewer treatment plant and installation of sewer lines throughout the entire Borough. The design is being completed this spring and the project is expected to go out to bid in fall 2010. The sewer project is expected to be completed in 2012.

## **INTERNAL CONSISTENCY IN LOCAL PLANNING**

Branchville's plans are predominantly consistent with each other and zoning and other regulations are consistent with the Master Plan. The last Master Plan Re-examination Report recommended that Branchville create a Historic Element to its Master Plan. This has not yet been completed due to a lack of funding.

## **SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT**

"Sustainability" or "Sustainable Development" has been defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" - The United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development (The Brundtland Commission, 1987).

Branchville has consistently conducted planning processes with the intent of preserving environmentally sensitive lands while providing for growth that resulted in economic development of the Borough. The Borough's last complete Master Plan, which was adopted in 1995, had a conservation element that recommended methods for protecting environmentally sensitive lands. Likewise, the Borough has an adopted Urban Forestry Plan and has been recognized as a TreeCity USA since 1989.

## CONSISTENCY WITH STATE PLAN - GOALS, POLICIES & INDICATORS

The State Plan is made up of 8 Goals and Strategies and 19 Statewide Policies that are complemented by a State Plan Policy Map. This section discusses consistency with regard to goals relevant to the Borough's Petition, along with related policies and indicators.

GOAL	POLICIES	INDICATORS
<p><b>Goal 1: Revitalize the State's Cities and Towns</b></p> <p>STRATEGY: Protect, preserve and develop the valuable human and economic assets in cities, towns and other urban areas. Plan to improve their livability and sustainability by investing public resources in accordance with current plans which are consistent with the provisions of the State Plan. Leverage private investments in jobs and housing; provide comprehensive public services at lower costs and higher quality; and improve the natural and built environment. Incorporate ecological design through mechanisms such as solar access for heating and power generation. Level the playing field in such areas as financing services, infrastructure and regulation. Reduce the barriers which limit mobility and access of city residents, particularly the poor and minorities, to jobs, housing, services and open space within the region. Build on the assets of cities and towns such as their labor force, available land and buildings, strategic location and diverse populations.</p>	<p><b>Policy on Urban Revitalization</b> - Prepare strategic revitalization plans, neighborhood empowerment plans and urban complex strategic revitalization plans that promote revitalization, economic development and infrastructure investments, coordinate revitalization planning among organizations and governments, support housing programs and adaptive reuse, improve access to waterfront areas, public open space and parks, and develop human resources with investments in public health, education, work force readiness and public safety in cities and towns.</p>	<p><b>Key Indicator 5.</b> Progress in socioeconomic revitalization for the 68 municipalities eligible for Urban Coordinating Council assistance</p> <p><b>Indicator 6.</b> Percent of jobs located in Urban Coordinating Council municipalities</p> <p><b>Indicator 22.</b> Percent of building permits issued in Urban Coordinating Council municipalities</p> <p><b>Indicator 27.</b> Number of Neighborhood Empowerment Plans approved by the Urban Coordinating Council</p>

### Goal 1 Analysis

Goal 1 does not apply to Branchville Borough as it is not an urban area as defined for the purposes of Goal 1.

GOAL	POLICIES	INDICATORS
<p><b>Goal 2: Conserve the State's Natural Resources and Systems</b></p> <p>STRATEGY: Conserve the State's natural resources and systems as capital assets of the public by promoting ecologically sound development and redevelopment in the Metropolitan and Suburban Planning Areas, accommodating environmentally designed development and redevelopment in Centers in the Fringe, Rural and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas, and by restoring the integrity of natural systems in areas where they have been degraded or damaged. Plan, design, invest in and manage the development and redevelopment of Centers and the use of land, water, soil, plant and animal resources to maintain biodiversity and the viability of ecological systems. Maximize the ability of natural systems to control runoff and flooding, and to improve air and water quality and supply.</p>	<p><b>Policy on Water Resources</b> - Protect and enhance water resources through coordinated planning efforts aimed at reducing sources of pollution and other adverse effects of development, encouraging designs in hazard-free areas that will protect the natural function of stream and wetland systems, and optimizing sustainable resource use.</p> <p><b>Policy on Open Lands and Natural Systems</b> - Protect biological diversity through preservation and restoration of contiguous open spaces and connecting corridors; manage public land and provide incentives for private land management to protect scenic qualities, forests and water resources; and manage the character and nature of development for the protection of wildlife habitat, critical slope areas, water resources, and for the provision of adequate public access to a variety of recreational opportunities.</p> <p><b>Policy on Coastal Resources</b> - Acknowledge the statutory treatment of the coastal area under federal and State legislation, coordinate efforts to establish a comprehensive coastal management program with local planning efforts, undertake a regional capacity analysis, protect vital ecological areas and promote recreational opportunities.</p> <p><b>Policy on Special Resource Areas</b> - Recognize an area or region with unique characteristics or resources of Statewide importance and establish a receptive environment for regional planning efforts. The Highlands region has been recognized as the first Special Resource Area in New Jersey.</p>	<p><b>Key Indicator 2.</b> The amount of land permanently dedicated to open space and farmland preservation</p> <p><b>Key Indicator 3.</b> Percent of New Jersey's streams that support aquatic life</p> <p><b>Indicator 11.</b> Conversion of wetlands for development</p> <p><b>Indicator 26.</b> Percent of land in New Jersey covered by adopted watershed management plans</p>

**Goal 2 Analysis**

Branchville Borough is a small municipality, but none the less, works to preserve natural resources within the Borough. The Borough's Master Plan includes a conservation element which promotes preservation of wetlands and streams, soil conservation and development practices that minimize environmental impacts. The Borough became a TreeCity USA in 1989 and has continued its designation since then. The Borough's Urban Forestry Plan outlines methods for maintaining and improving the forest cover in the Borough. The Borough's Shade Tree Commission works actively on tree preservation and planting each year. A Stormwater Management Plan was adopted by the Borough in fall of 2005 to address NJDEP's stormwater management rules.

GOAL	POLICIES	INDICATORS
<p><b>Goal 3: Promote Beneficial Economic Growth, Development and Renewal for All Residents of New Jersey</b></p> <p>STRATEGY: Promote socially and ecologically beneficial economic growth, development and renewal and improve both the quality of life and the standard of living of New Jersey residents, particularly the poor and minorities, through partnerships and collaborative planning with the private sector. Capitalize on the State's strengths—its entrepreneurship, skilled labor, cultural diversity, diversified economy and environment, strategic location and logistical excellence—and make the State more competitive through infrastructure and public services cost savings and regulatory streamlining resulting from comprehensive and coordinated planning. Retain and expand businesses, and encourage new, environmentally sustainable businesses in Centers and areas with infrastructure. Encourage economic growth in locations and ways that are both fiscally and environmentally sound. Promote the food and agricultural industry throughout New Jersey through coordinated planning, regulations, investments and incentive programs—both in Centers to retain and encourage new businesses and in the Environs to preserve large contiguous areas of farmland.</p>	<p><b>Policy on Economic Development</b> - Promote beneficial economic growth and improve the quality of life and standard of living for New Jersey residents by building upon strategic economic and geographic positions, targeting areas of critical capital spending to retain and expand existing businesses, fostering modern techniques to enhance the existing economic base, encouraging the development of new enterprises, advancing the growth of green businesses, elevating work force skills, and encouraging sustainable economic growth in locations and ways that are fiscally and ecologically sound.</p> <p><b>Policy on Agriculture</b> - Promote and preserve the agricultural industry and retain farmland by coordinating planning and innovative land conservation techniques to protect agricultural viability while accommodating beneficial development and economic growth necessary to enhance agricultural vitality and by educating residents on the benefits and the special needs of agriculture.</p> <p><b>Policy on Equity</b> - It is the position of the State Planning Commission that the State Plan should neither be used in a manner that places an inequitable burden on any one group of citizens nor should it be used as a justification for public actions that have the effect of diminishing equity. It is also the position of the Commission that the achievement, protection and maintenance of equity be a major objective in public policy decisions as public and private sector agencies at all levels adopt plans and policies aimed at becoming consistent with the State Plan.</p>	<p><b>Key Indicator 1.</b> New development, population and employment located in the Metropolitan and Suburban Planning Areas or within Centers in the Fringe, Rural and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas</p> <p><b>Indicator 1.</b> Average annual disposable income among New Jerseyans</p> <p><b>Indicator 2.</b> Unemployment</p> <p><b>Indicator 3.</b> Conversion of farmland for development</p> <p><b>Indicator 5.</b> Agricultural output</p> <p><b>Indicator 7.</b> Economic output per unit of energy consumed</p> <p><b>Indicator 21.</b> Municipalities with median household incomes of less than \$30,000 per year (in 1990 dollars)</p> <p><b>Indicator 22.</b> Number of census tracts with more than 40% of the population living under the poverty level</p>

**Goal 3 Analysis**

Branchville is a small historic village that is also home to a very large employer in Sussex County, Selective Insurance. Economic Growth in Branchville is twofold: maintaining the jobs and status of Selective Insurance and promoting improvement and maintenance of locally-owned businesses in the center's commercial area. Small businesses, primarily locally owned, are the heart of Branchville and need support in order to survive. The Branchville Businessmen's Association is very active in promoting maintaining the businesses within the Borough. With the development of the sewer system in the Borough, additional businesses may be feasible for buildings that currently do not have septic capacity for a restaurant, for example. The Borough's traditional role as a marketplace for local farm goods could be revived with the development of a farmer's market and additional businesses that provide value added farm products.

GOAL	POLICIES	INDICATORS
<p><b>Goal 4: Protect the Environment, Prevent and Clean Up Pollution</b></p> <p>STRATEGY: Develop standards of performance and create incentives to prevent and reduce pollution and toxic emissions at the source, in order to conserve resources and protect public health. Promote the development of businesses that provide goods and services that eliminate pollution and toxic emissions or reduce resource depletion. Actively pursue public/private partnerships, the latest technology and strict enforcement to prevent toxic emissions and clean up polluted air, land and water without shifting pollutants from one medium to another; from one geographic location to another; or from one generation to another. Promote ecologically designed development and redevelopment in the Metropolitan and Suburban Planning Areas and accommodate ecologically designed development in Centers in the Fringe, Rural and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas, to reduce automobile usage; land, water and energy consumption; and to minimize impacts on public health and biological systems, water and air quality. Plant and maintain trees and native vegetation. Reduce waste and reuse and recycle materials through demanufacturing and remanufacturing</p>	<p><b>Policy on Air Resources</b> - Reduce air pollution by promoting development patterns that reduce both mobile and stationary sources of pollution, promoting the use of alternative modes of transportation, and supporting clean, renewable fuels and efficient transportation systems.</p> <p><b>Policy on Energy Resources</b> - Ensure adequate energy resources through conservation, facility modernization, renewable energy and cogeneration; to continue economic growth while protecting the environment; and to modify energy consumption patterns to capitalize on renewable, domestic energy supplies rather than virgin extraction and imports.</p> <p><b>Policy Waste Management, Recycling and Brownfields-</b> Promote recycling and source reduction through product design and materials management and by coordinating and supporting legislative, planning and facility development efforts regarding solid and hazardous waste treatment, storage and disposal. Capitalize on opportunities provided by brownfield sites through coordinated planning, strategic marketing and priority redevelopment of these sites.</p>	<p><b>Indicator 4.</b> Percent of brownfield sites redeveloped</p> <p><b>Indicator 7.</b> Economic output per unit of energy consumed</p> <p><b>Indicator 8.</b> The generation of solid waste on a per capita and per job basis</p> <p><b>Indicator 9.</b> Number of unhealthful days annually caused by ground-level ozone, particulate matter and carbon monoxide</p> <p><b>Indicator 10.</b> Greenhouse gas emissions</p> <p><b>Indicator 13.</b> Changes in toxic chemical use and waste generation (non-product output or NPO) by New Jersey's manufacturing sector</p> <p><b>Indicator 15.</b> Vehicle miles traveled per capita</p>

**Goal 4 Analysis**

Pollution and environmental clean up is not a big issue in Branchville. Manufacturing and industrial facilities are very limited in the Borough and generally do not pose any threat of environmental pollution. Branchville's compact development form and high level of pedestrian accessibility provides the opportunity limit air pollution for personal vehicle use. Likewise, Branchville's Urban Forestry Plan promotes carbon sequestration through the planting and maintenance of the Borough's forest canopy.

GOAL	POLICIES	INDICATORS
<p><b>Goal 5: Provide Adequate Public Facilities and Services at a Reasonable Cost</b></p> <p>STRATEGY: Provide infrastructure and related services more efficiently by supporting investments based on comprehensive planning and by providing financial incentives for jurisdictions that cooperate in supplying public infrastructure and shared services. Encourage the use of infrastructure needs assessments and life-cycle costing. Reduce demands for infrastructure investment by using public and private markets to manage peak demands, applying alternative management and financing approaches, using resource conserving technologies and information systems to provide and manage public facilities and services, and purchasing land and easements to prevent development, protect flood plains and sustain agriculture where appropriate.</p>	<p><b>Policy on Infrastructure Investments</b> - Provide infrastructure and related services more efficiently by investing in infrastructure to guide growth, managing demand and supply, restoring systems in distressed areas, maintaining existing infrastructure investments, designing multi-use school facilities to serve as centers of community, creating more compact settlement patterns in appropriate locations in suburban and rural areas, and timing and sequencing the maintenance of capital facilities service levels with development throughout the State.</p> <p><b>Policy on Transportation</b> - Improve transportation systems by coordinating transportation and land-use planning; integrating transportation systems; developing and enhancing alternative modes of transportation; improving management structures and techniques; and utilizing transportation as an economic development tool.</p>	<p><b>Key Indicator 4.</b> Meet present and prospective needs for public infrastructure systems</p> <p><b>Indicator 14.</b> The percent of all trips to work made by carpool, public transportation, bicycle, walking or working at home</p> <p><b>Indicator 16.</b> Number of pedestrian fatalities in vehicular accidents on State roads</p> <p><b>Indicator 17.</b> Increase in transit ridership</p> <p><b>Indicator 18.</b> Percent of potable water supplies that meet all standards</p> <p><b>Indicator 19.</b> Percent of development on individual septic systems</p>

### **Goal 5 Analysis**

Branchville Borough is currently designing a sewer system to serve the entire center area. The development of this sewer will provide much needed facilities to residents with failing or inadequate septic systems. The Borough currently operates a municipal water system that provides potable water to the residents of the Borough. In maintaining and improving infrastructure for roadways and utilities, the Borough seeks to provide the best infrastructure possible at reasonable cost.

GOAL	POLICIES	INDICATORS
<p><b>GOAL 6: Provide Adequate Housing at a Reasonable Cost</b></p> <p>STRATEGY: Provide adequate housing at a reasonable cost through public/private partnerships that create and maintain a broad choice of attractive, affordable, ecologically designed housing, particularly for those most in need. Create and maintain housing in the Metropolitan and Suburban Planning Areas and in Centers in the Fringe, Rural and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas, at densities which support transit and reduce commuting time and costs, and at locations easily accessible, preferably on foot, to employment, retail, services, cultural, civic and recreational opportunities. Support regional and community-based housing initiatives and remove unnecessary regulatory and financial barriers to the delivery of housing at appropriate locations.</p>	<p><b>Policy on Housing</b> - Preserve and expand the supply of safe, decent and reasonably priced housing by balancing land uses, housing types and housing costs and by improving access between jobs and housing. Promote low- and moderate-income and affordable housing through code enforcement, housing subsidies, community-wide housing approaches and coordinated efforts with the New Jersey Council on Affordable Housing.</p> <p><b>Policy on Design</b> - Mix uses and activities as closely and as thoroughly as possible; develop, adopt and implement design guidelines; create spatially defined, visually appealing and functionally efficient places in ways that establish an identity; design circulation systems to promote connectivity; maintain an appropriate scale in the built environment; and redesign areas of sprawl.</p>	<p><b>Indicator 20.</b> Percent of New Jersey households paying more than 30% of their pre-tax household income towards housing</p> <p><b>Indicator 24.</b> Annual production of affordable housing units</p>

#### **Goal 6 Analysis**

The Borough's Housing Element & Fair Share Plan was submitted to COAH prior to the December 31, 2008 deadline and the Borough is working with COAH to meet its affordable housing obligations under the Fair Housing Act.

GOAL	POLICIES	INDICATORS
<p><b>Goal 7: Preserve and Enhance Areas with Historic, Cultural, Scenic, Open Space and Recreational Value</b></p> <p>STRATEGY: Enhance, preserve and use historic, cultural, scenic, open space and recreational assets by collaborative planning, design, investment and management techniques. Locate and design development and redevelopment and supporting infrastructure to improve access to and protect these sites. Support the important role of the arts in contributing to community life and civic beauty.</p>	<p><b>Policy on Historic, Cultural and Scenic Resources -</b> 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</p>	<p><b>Key Indicator 2.</b> The amount of land permanently dedicated to open space and farmland preservation</p> <p><b>Indicator 12.</b> Conversion of land per person</p>

#### **Goal 7 Analysis**

The Borough has three open space parks which it maintains for use by the residents. Additionally, the Borough's most recent Master Plan Reexamination called for the development of a Historic Element to the Borough's Master Plan. The Borough is interested in completing the Historic Element when funding becomes available.

GOAL	POLICIES	INDICATORS
<p><b>Goal 8: Ensure Sound, Integrated Planning and Implementation Statewide</b></p> <p>STRATEGY: Use the State Plan and the Plan Endorsement process as a guide to achieve comprehensive, coordinated, long-term planning based on capacity analysis and citizen participation; and to integrate planning with investment, program and regulatory land-use decisions at all levels of government and the private sector, in an efficient, effective and equitable manner. Ensure that all development, redevelopment, revitalization or conservation efforts support State Planning Goals and are consistent with the Statewide Policies and State Plan Policy Map of the State Plan.</p>	<p><b>Policy on Comprehensive Planning</b> - Promote planning for the public's benefit, and with strong public participation, by enhancing planning capacity at all levels of government, using capacity-based planning and Plan Endorsement to guide the location and pattern of growth and promoting cooperation and coordination among counties, municipalities, State, interState and federal agencies.</p> <p><b>Policy on Planning Regions Established by Statute</b> - The State Plan acknowledges the special statutory treatment accorded the New Jersey Pinelands under the Pinelands Protection Act, and the Hackensack Meadowlands under the Hackensack Meadowlands Reclamation and Development Act. The State Planning Commission is explicitly directed to "rely on the adopted plans and regulations of these entities in developing the State Plan." In the State Plan, these areas are considered Planning Regions Established by Statute.</p> <p><b>Policy on Public Investment Priorities</b> - It is the intent of the State Plan that the full amount of growth projected for the State should be accommodated. Plan Strategies recommend guiding this growth to Centers and other areas identified within Endorsed Plans where infrastructure exists or is planned and where it can be provided efficiently, either with private or public dollars. (Designated Centers are included in the category of communities with Endorsed Plans.) Public investment priorities guide the investment of public dollars to support and carry out these Plan Strategies.</p>	<p><b>Key Indicator 6.</b> The degree to which local plans and State agency plans are consistent with the State Plan</p> <p><b>Indicator 25.</b> Municipalities participating in comprehensive, multijurisdictional regional planning processes consistent with the State Plan</p>

### **Goal 8 Analysis**

The purpose of this Self Assessment Report is to show that Branchville's plans are consistent with the State Plan and that they represent comprehensive, long range documents, which are focused on capacity planning, and developed with considerable citizen participation. Branchville is aware of the importance of planned development to prevent sprawl and protect natural resources. With the extension of the Branchville Village Center Designation, Branchville hopes to maintain its small historic village character.

## **CONSISTENCY WITH STATE PLAN - CENTER CRITERIA & POLICIES**

Branchville's Village Center was approved by the State Planning Commission on June 16, 2004 and since that approval the Borough has fulfilled the intent of the PIA in maintaining a compact village center that is consistent with the State Plan. Branchville is a traditional historic center with a main street core that includes a small commercial area that provides local services. The center includes the Selective Insurance Campus, which is a major employer in Sussex County and provides for a favorable tax rate to the residents. The Branchville Center includes some areas outside of the Borough boundary line in Frankford Township for the purposes of providing sewer service to the Frankford School District buildings and two nursing homes. The table on the following page shows how the Branchville Center generally satisfies the Village Center Guidelines from the State Development and Redevelopment Plan.

Criteria	State Plan Criteria: Village	Proposed Village Baseline	Proposed Village (20 years forward)
<i>Land Use</i>			
Function	Mixed-residential community	Yes	Yes
	Integrated into regional network of communities with transportation links.	Yes	Yes
	Planned to preserve farmland or environmentally sensitive areas.	Yes (as applicable)	Yes
	Identified in master plans and as part of municipal planning effort.	Yes (County Strategic Growth Plan and State Plan)	Yes
Land area	< 1 sq mi	0.6	0.6
Housing units	100 to 2,000	377	415
Housing Density	> 3 du/acre	1.24	1.45
<b><u>Population</u></b>			
Number of people	< 4,500	845	960
Density	> 5,000 per sq mi	1408	1600
<i>Infrastructure</i>			
Capacity (general)	Sufficient existing or planned infrastructure	Yes	Yes
Transportation	Reasonable proximity to arterial.	Yes (NJSH Route 206)	Yes

## **CONSISTENCY WITH STATE PLAN – PLANNING AREA POLICY OBJECTIVES**

### **Policy Objectives –Rural Planning Area 4, Rural Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area 4B, and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area 5**

The State Plan provides the following Policy Objectives to guide the application of the State Plan's Statewide Policies in the Rural Planning Area 4, Rural/ Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area 4B and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area 5, the criteria for designation of existing or new Centers, the policies for delineating Center Boundaries, and local and State agency planning. *An explanation of Branchville's consistency follows each policy objective in italics.*

1. **Land Use:** Enhance economic and agricultural viability and rural character by guiding development and redevelopment into Centers. In the Environs, maintain and enhance agricultural uses, and preserve agricultural and other lands to form large contiguous areas and greenbelts around Centers. Development and redevelopment should use creative land use and design techniques to ensure that it does not conflict with agricultural operations, does not exceed the capacity of natural and built systems and protects areas where public investments in farmland preservation have been made. Development and redevelopment in the Environs should maintain or enhance the character of the area.

*Due to Branchville's small size and relatively built out nature, the Land Use Policies stated above do not necessarily apply to Branchville. Environmental preservation within the Borough is implemented through NJDEP rules on wetlands and stream buffers. Large areas of open space and agricultural areas are not present in Branchville.*

2. **Housing:** Provide for a full range of housing choices primarily in Centers at appropriate densities to accommodate projected growth, recognizing the special locational needs of agricultural employees and minimizing conflicts with agricultural operations. Ensure that housing in general—and in particular affordable, senior citizen, special needs and family housing—is developed with maximum access to a full range of commercial, educational, recreational, health and transportation services and facilities in Centers. Focus multi-family and higher-density, single-family housing in Centers. Any housing in the Environs should be planned and located to maintain or enhance the cultural and scenic qualities and with minimum impacts on agricultural resources.

*Branchville submitted a Housing Element and Fair Share Plan to the Council on Affordable Housing prior to the December 31, 2008 deadline for Round 3 rules and has been working cooperatively with COAH to fulfill its affordable housing obligations.*

3. **Economic Development:** Promote economic activities within Centers that complement and support the rural and agricultural communities and that provide diversity in the rural economy and opportunities for off-farm income and employment. Encourage tourism related to agriculture and the environment, as well as the historic and rural character of the area. Support appropriate recreational and natural resource-based activities in the Environs. Any economic development in the Environs should be planned and located to maintain or enhance the cultural and scenic qualities and with minimum impacts on agricultural resources.

*Branchville's economic development is centered more on development of small local business opportunities on its main street in conjunction with maintaining the viability of the Selective Insurance in the Borough. In that respect it varies from*

*typical rural/agricultural based communities in Sussex County. Opportunities to provide a farmer's market, value-added businesses and eco-tourism locations are possible within the Borough and should be fostered.*

**4. Transportation:** Maintain and enhance a rural transportation system that links Centers to each other and to the Metropolitan and Suburban Planning Areas. Provide appropriate access of agricultural products to markets, accommodating the size and weight of modern agricultural equipment. In Centers, emphasize the use of public transportation systems and alternatives to private cars where appropriate and feasible, and maximize circulation and mobility options throughout. Support the preservation of general aviation airports as integral parts of the State's transportation system.

*Branchville seeks to maintain efficient use of its system of state, county and local roads to link the Borough with other areas in the tri-state area. The Borough has worked to improve pedestrian access in its center to promote and encourage less use of the personal automobile.*

**5. Natural Resource Conservation:** Minimize potential conflicts between development, agricultural practices and sensitive environmental resources. Promote agricultural management practices and other agricultural conservation techniques to protect soil and water resources. Protect and preserve large, contiguous tracts and corridors of recreation, forest or other open space land that protect natural systems and natural resources.

*Branchville's size and relatively built-out nature leaves few open space tracts or farmland within the Borough.*

**6. Agriculture and Farmland Preservation:** Guide development to ensure the viability of agriculture and the retention of farmland in agricultural areas. Encourage farmland retention and minimize conflicts between agricultural practices and the location of Centers. Ensure the availability of adequate water resources and large, contiguous tracts of land with minimal land-use conflicts. Actively promote more intensive, new-crop agricultural enterprises and meet the needs of the agricultural industry for intensive packaging, processing, value-added operations, marketing, exporting and other shipping through development and redevelopment.

*Branchville guides development through its zoning and center designation and encourages the protection and preservation of open space as appropriate.*

**7. Recreation:** Provide maximum active and passive recreational and tourism opportunities at the neighborhood and local levels by targeting the acquisition and development of neighborhood and municipal parkland within Centers. Provide regional recreation and tourism opportunities by targeting parkland acquisitions and improvements that enhance large contiguous open space systems and by facilitating alternative recreational and tourism uses of farmland.

*Branchville actively seeks to expand recreational facilities and access to recreation wherever possible, consistent with this policy.*

**8. Redevelopment:** Encourage appropriate redevelopment in existing Centers and existing developed areas that have the potential to become Centers, or in ways that support Center-based development to accommodate growth that would otherwise occur in the Environs. Redevelop with intensities sufficient to support transit, a broad range of uses,

efficient use of infrastructure, and design that enhance public safety, encourage pedestrian activity, reduce dependency on the automobile and maintain the rural character of Centers.

*Branchville has not declared areas in need of redevelopment but has worked with property owners within the Borough to rehabilitate or refurbish existing buildings that fall into disrepair or underutilization. The installation of sewers will assist in this effort by providing sewers to multi-unit buildings with failing or inadequate septic systems.*

**9. Historic Preservation:** Encourage the preservation and adaptive reuse of historic or significant buildings, Historic and Cultural Sites, neighborhoods and districts in ways that will not compromise either the historic resource or the ability for a Center to develop or redevelop. Outside Centers, coordinate historic preservation needs with farmland preservation efforts. Coordinate historic preservation with tourism efforts.

*Branchville has a Historic Commission that actively works to preserve and encourage adaptive re-use of historically significant sites where appropriate.*

**10. Public Facilities and Services:** Phase and program for construction as part of a dedicated capital improvement budget or as part of a public/private development agreement the extension or establishment of public facilities and services, particularly wastewater systems, to establish adequate levels of capital facilities and services to support Centers; to protect large contiguous areas of productive farmlands and other open spaces; to protect public investments in farmland preservation programs; and to minimize conflicts between Centers and surrounding farms. Encourage private

investments and facilitate public/private partnerships to provide adequate facilities and services, particularly wastewater systems, in Centers. Make community wastewater treatment a feasible and cost-effective alternative.

*Branchville has made a significant financial commitment to providing wastewater facilities for its center and to create public/private partnerships in doing so.*

**11. Intergovernmental Coordination:** Coordinate efforts of various State agencies, County and municipal governments to ensure that State and local policies and programs support rural economic development, agriculture, and the rural character of the area by examining the effects of financial institution lending, government regulation, taxation and other governmental policies and programs.

*Branchville works closely with both the County and the State to promote economic development within its Center and to take advantage of all available taxation and other governmental policies and programs to promote positive economic development within Branchville in order to better serve the larger region of Sussex County. Branchville has evaluated its zoning plan with those of adjacent municipalities and found it to be compatible. Branchville has coordinated with Sussex County to share services such as utilizing the County for Health Department purposes.*

**State Plan Recommended Activities**

To achieve consistency with State Plan Goals, the State Plan recommends municipalities undertake several planning activities related to the State Planning Area Policy Objectives. Branchville has undertaken or plans to undertake the following recommended policy objectives:

- Map and protect Critical Environmental Sites and Historic and Cultural Sites.
- Identify strategies for linking Centers with the region and accommodating seasonal travel and tourism demands.
- Coordinate permitting and land-use approval requirements that encourage development and investment in Centers.
- Identify strategies to protect natural systems and their functions.
- Identify strategies to enhance tourism and recreation-based activities.
- Identify opportunities to assemble and connect open space networks and large contiguous areas of undisturbed habitat.
- Ensure that areas critical to water supply and quality are protected.
- Identify opportunities to accommodate growth and development in Centers through provision of infrastructure, particularly wastewater systems in Centers.
- Recognize and facilitate the participation of the private sector in achieving the objectives of the State Plan in the Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area.
- Capitalize on the opportunities for redevelopment in Centers afforded by redevelopment laws and brownfields redevelopment programs. Establish and maintain a publicly accessible inventory of sites recommended for redevelopment.

## **STATE AGENCY ASSISTANCE**

Branchville Borough is interested in State financial and/or technical assistance for the following planning initiatives and projects:

### **Transportation, Streetscape, Pedestrian and Alternative Transportation Improvements**

- Public transportation which ties into existing county and state mass transit systems.
- Provide funding to complete streetscape projects in the Village Center, i.e. street furniture, lighting, sidewalks, etc.
- Provide funding to increase pedestrian connections throughout the Village Center.

### **Water & Sewer Improvements**

- Provide assistance in maintaining sewer service areas in the Branchville Center.
- Provide grant or low interest loan assistance for homeowner's hooking up to the sewer.

### **Economic Development**

- Provide funding and program assistance for creating a façade, signage and landscaping improvement program.
- Provide assistance in obtaining a Main Street designation (possibly a joint program with other Main Streets in the County).

### **Grants and Planning Assistance**

- Provide Smart Growth Grants to Assist with Plan Endorsement Action Plan Items.
- Provide funding and/or technical assistance for the visioning process.

- Provide funding to develop a Historic Element.
- Provide funding for capital improvements and roadway improvements.
- Provide funding and assistance to clean up privately owned potentially contaminated sights in the Borough.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Borough of Branchville is an existing historic village center with Village Center Designation from the State Planning Commission that is set to expire in June 2010. The Borough is just over a half mile in size and is primarily built out. One of the main environmental problems facing the Borough has been failing septic systems, which will be alleviated with the installation of sewers in 2012. With sewer development, the Borough will need to closely study its zoning to ensure that additional development is desirable and fits with the character of the community. Branchville coordinates with Sussex County and surrounding communities to share services and promote the efficient use of government resources and create plans which are consistent with each other. Branchville is committed to working with the State Planning Commission and the Office of Smart Growth to achieve Plan Endorsement and extend its Center Designation.