Burlington County
Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan
(2009-2018)

Adopted by the Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholders
By Resolution No. 1014 - December 30, 2008
BURLINGTON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE FARM LAND PRESERVATION PLAN (2009-2018)

Compiled by the:

Burlington County Agriculture Development Board

For the:

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List of Acronyms and Commonly Used Words

ADA - Agriculture Development Area
AFO - Animal Feeding Operations, as defined by the Clean Water Act of 1972
AFT - American Farmland Trust
AMA - Agricultural Management Assistance
AMP - Agriculture Management Practices
ATL - Acquisition Targeting List
BCCAC - Burlington County Community Agriculture Center
CADB - Burlington County Agriculture Development Board
CAFOs - concentrated animal feeding operations
CAFRA - Coastal Area Facility Review Act
CMP - Comprehensive Management Plan
COAH - Council on Affordable Housing
CREP - Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
CSA - Community-Supported Agriculture
CWA - Federal Clean Water Act of 1972
DOD - Department of Defense
DOE - Deed of Easement
DRC - Department of Resource Conservation (Burlington County)
DEDRC - Department of Economic Development and Regional Planning (Burlington County)
DSHWT - Depth to Seasonal High Water Table
EQIP - Environmental Quality Incentive Program
FPP - Farmland Preservation Program
FRPP - Federal Farm and Ranchland Protection Program of the USDA
FSA - Farm Services Agency
GIS - Geographic Information Systems
GSPT - Garden State Preservation Trust
IPA - Installment Purchase Agreement
JLUP - Joint Land Use Program
LCCS - land capability classification system
LIP - Landowner Incentive Program
MLUL - Municipal Land Use Law
MOA - Memorandum of Understanding
NJAES - New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station
NJDA - New Jersey Department of Agriculture
NJDEP - New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
NJPC - New Jersey Pinelands Commission
NJSPC - New Jersey State Planning Commission
NOFA - Northeast Organic Farming Association
NRCS - Natural Resources Conservation Service
PDC - Pinelands Development Credit
PIG - Planning Incentive Grant Program of the SADC
RTF - Right to Farm, referencing the Right to Farm Act as amended by P.L. 1998, c. 48
RDSO - Residual Dwelling Site Opportunities
SADC - State Agriculture Development Committee
SCD - Soil Conservation District
SDRP - State Development and Redevelopment Plan
SSAMP - Site-Specific Agriculture Management Practices
TDR - Transfer of Development Rights
The Act - New Jersey Agriculture Retention and Development Act, P.L. 1983, c. 32
The Freeholder Board - Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholders
The Strategic Plan - the 1998 Burlington County Farmland Preservation Strategic Plan
Trust Fund - Open Space, Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund
USDA - United States Department of Agriculture
USEPA - United States Environmental Protection Agency
WHIP - Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program
WRP - Wetlands Reserve Program
Executive Summary

The Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholders is committed to sustaining its farmers as well as preserving its farmland. The Burlington County Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan (the “Plan”) was prepared for the purpose of creating one document that will guide Burlington County’s Farmland Preservation Program through the next ten (10) years (2009-2018). This Plan is a new requirement of new State Agriculture Development Committee Regulations (N.J.A.C. 4:76-17.3) for funding through the Garden State Preservation Trust in 2009 and beyond. In addition, this Plan evaluates implementation of Burlington County’s 1996 Strategic Farmland Preservation Plan and puts into action county-wide agriculture viability strategies that were recommended by the Strategies for Farm Viability (December 2004) report prepared in conjunction with the Northern Burlington County Strategic Plan.

111,000 acres of farmland remain in Burlington County, as of the date of adoption of this Plan. Over 26,500 acres have been permanently protected from conversion to non-agricultural uses through permanent deed-restrictions. In addition, roughly 23,000 acres of land in agricultural planning areas of the state-regulated New Jersey Pinelands have been deed-restricted through the Pinelands Development Credit Program. In total, nearly 50,000 acres (roughly 45 percent of the existing agricultural land base) have been protected from conversion to non-agricultural uses.

Chapter II of this chronicles the history of Burlington County’s Farmland Preservation efforts. Chapter IV documents the County’s existing agricultural land base while Chapter V provides information on the County’s agricultural industry (past, current and the trends anticipated for the future). Previously prepared studies were used extensively and serve as the informational back bone of this document and are discussed in Chapter III. Equally important are Chapters on Agricultural Economic Development, Industry Sustainability, Retention and Promotion (VI), Land Use Planning (VII), and Stewardship (VIII). The Plan culminates with Chapter IX, which provides clear goals and strategies for the County to work towards during the next 10 years.

This Plan adopts a Mission Statement that shall guide the Freeholder Board and County Agriculture Development Board in all future decisions related to public investment in farmland and agricultural economic development.
Burlington County Farmland Preservation Program Mission Statement

The Burlington County Farmland Preservation Program exists to advance the quality of life in Burlington County by preserving a permanent agricultural land base and by maintaining a regulatory environment that supports a viable agricultural industry.

In addition to defined mission, this Plan includes a Vision Statement regarding the future conditions it aspires to attain.

Burlington County Farmland Preservation Program Vision Statement

The Burlington County Farmland Preservation Program envisions a future in which a strong and dynamic agricultural industry persists and contributes to a vigorous local economy and an enhanced quality of life for all Burlington County residents.

This mission and vision will be fully realized by embracing six (6) specific goals. These goals are:

- Goal #1: Preservation of an Additional 20,000 Acres
- Goal #2: Stewardship of Protected Land and Natural Resources
- Goal #3: Promotion & Protection of the Right to Farm
- Goal #4: Coordination of Land Use Planning Activities
- Goal #5: Implementation of Agricultural Economic Development Strategies
- Goal #6: Coordination of Public Sector Agricultural Services

This Plan acknowledges that county and municipal investment in farmland preservation must be complimented with investment by other preservation partners and innovative planning / zoning techniques in order to meet the County’s goal of preserving an additional 20,000 acres. With this in mind, this Plan calls for 10,000 acres to be preserved through the County’s Farmland Preservation Program with the additional 10,000 acres to be preserved via measures that include State Agriculture Development Committee acquisitions, local Transfer of Development Rights Programs and the Pinelands Development Credit Program. The County’s Farmland Preservation efforts will be focused on four (4) project areas in which future acquisition efforts will be concentrated. These project areas build on existing contiguous blocks of preserved farmland and are consistent with all known local and regional economic development and planning objectives.
Chapter I  
Introduction

In much of Burlington County, agricultural land and agribusiness remain the defining characteristics of the landscape. It is not by accident or chance that, in the most densely populated state in the nation, Burlington County has retained over 111,000 acres\(^1\) (approximately 22 percent of the total county land mass) of farmland. The continued existence of farmland and farmers in Burlington County is a result of sustained public and private efforts. Agriculture is recognized as an essential variable in any equation related to the quality of life of all County residents. Studies report that this privately owned and managed land produces fresh produce and other farm products, generates positive tax revenues, and maintains an array of amenities ranging from open space and scenic views to ecological and environmental functions, to recreational opportunities for an ever-growing urban and suburban population.\(^2\)

The effort to preserve farmland and thus, the agricultural industry, is a partnership between the public sector, tax payers, and the farming community. The public sector (Federal, County, State and Municipal entities) has invested over $110 million in farmland preservation programs in Burlington County and has adopted regulations that both promote the continuation of farming activities and discourage non-agricultural development in the rural and environmentally sensitive regions of the County. Over the past three decades, the taxpayers of the County have approved various funding referenda which have voluntarily increased the local property tax levy to support the public sectors farmland acquisition programs. In addition, voters have chosen to continue to support elected officials that understand that farmland preservation programs must be complemented with local protections primarily in the form of nuisance protection ordinances for the agricultural industry. Residents continue to support local farmers with their food dollars by purchasing agricultural products directly at road-side stands and community farmers markets. The most important and frequently overlooked partners are the local farmers, who have chosen to preserve their farms, and continue to innovate, invest and believe that there is a future in farming in Burlington County and New Jersey.

Burlington County is recognized by many as the pioneer of New Jersey’s on-going efforts to preserve agricultural land. In 1985, the Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholders (Freeholder Board) chose to purchase five (5) farms, totally +/- 600 acres in Chesterfield Township for the purpose of preserving them for continued agricultural use. The State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC), under the authority of the

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\(^1\) 2002 US Census of Agriculture
\(^2\) Heinrich-Shilling Joint Venture (2004), Agriculture in Burlington County’s Farmbelt: Current Industry Status and Trends
NJ Agriculture Retention and Development Act (the Act), provided the County with a cost-share towards the cost of the development easements. These farms represent the start of not only Burlington County’s Farmland Preservation Program (FPP), but the State’s FPP. The County and the State programs have a common goal, preserving Burlington County and New Jersey’s agricultural land base in order to establish agriculture as a permanent component of the landscape, economy and culture.

The County’s FPP was not only the first but continues to be the state-leader in both the number of acres and number of farms preserved. The County adopted at the onset of its efforts a strategy to ensure that public dollars were invested wisely by focusing its acquisition efforts on “1,000-acre blocks” of unpreserved farmland. This early focus on “contiguity” of preserved farms has lead to significant blocks of agricultural land being deed-restricted largely without being operationally restricted by non-agricultural uses at their property line.

The County’s FPP is currently ranked as the sixth best county-based farmland preservation program in the nation by The Farmland Preservation Report and was recently awarded the 2007 Governor’s Award for Excellence by Governor Jon S. Corzine. Instead of allowing this notoriety to breed complacency, the Freeholder Board, as implored by the Burlington County Agriculture Development Board (CADB), has chosen to consider the success of its land preservation strategies as only the beginning of its efforts to assist the agricultural industry remains viable.

In order for the upfront public investment in farmland preservation to be fully realized, it is imperative that the goals, strategies and indicators of the County’s FPP be reanalyzed. This Plan strives to avoid duplicating the extensive research and planning work already completed. The supporting studies considered in Chapter III are incorporated by reference and have played a large role in guiding the development of this Plan.

This Plan strives to facilitate coordination between Federal, State and County-based public sector agricultural service providers. These agencies play important and distinct roles in assisting farm operators remain viable in the face of the many challenges of the contemporary agricultural economy. Each agency has specific goals, budgets, authorities, and expected deliverables. The Freeholder Board and the CADB recognize the autonomy of these institutions and does not seek to replicate their efforts. The Freeholder Board and the CADB seek to assist these agencies by working together to properly serve the agricultural community and the public at large.

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4 These agencies are described and referenced in Chapter VI, VIII, and IX
Farmers, like many other small family businesses, are being faced with risky and expensive operational decisions in order to adapt to the changing regional and global economy. These private decisions will largely determine if a viable agricultural economy will persist into the future. The act of preserving the land, in of itself, will not secure a bright economic future for farmers. It will however ensure that the land will be available for production, a fundamental economic input for the agricultural industry.

The Freeholder Board and the CADB strive to have Burlington County and New Jersey be a permanent home for all types of farmers, whether they are traditional crop farmers, diversified direct-marketers, or somewhere in between.
Chapter II
Agriculture Retention in Burlington County to Date

This section of the Plan provides historical context related to the establishment of the County’s FPP and its efforts to implement the 1996 Strategic Plan. In addition to this analysis, this section includes a description of the development of the County’s Agriculture Development Area (ADA) and its strategic targeting methodology (the Acquisition Targeting List [ATL]).

Further in this section descriptions of the programs that are active in Burlington County for permanent farmland preservation are described along with detailed statistics related to acreage preserved by program. The relationship between the County’s FPP and the Municipal Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Programs, the Eight-Year Programs, the Pinelands Development Credit (PDC) Program, County Open Space and Park System Initiatives are fully explored. FPP funding sources and past expenditures are also documented in this section.

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The Origins of Agriculture in Burlington County 5

Covering 827 square miles of land and water, Burlington County is the largest county in New Jersey and stretches from the Delaware River to the Atlantic Ocean. Like most of New Jersey, Burlington County rose from agrarian roots. The patterns of agricultural land in Burlington County today have been shaped and formed over the past several hundred years. Today, agricultural land use patterns continue to evolve in Burlington County. Changes in global markets, transitions in commodity production, growing development pressure, and state and local policies all converge to shape and influence the use of agricultural land in Burlington County and the Farm Belt.

Agriculture in the area predates the arrival of European settlers. Native Americans farmed in the region, originally named Matinicunk, at the time British Quakers arrived in the New World in the early 1600s. Native Americans cultivated a number of crops and, understanding the limitations of soils, rotated fields in order to prevent the depletion of soils. As early European settlers arrived, they were able to begin cultivation on small fields utilized by Native Americans immediately rather than having to clear forested lands. An abundance of good agricultural soils and proximity to major urban centers contributed significantly to the development of the county’s early agricultural industry.

5 Parts excerpted from Heinrich-Shilling Joint Venture (2004), Agriculture in Burlington County’s Farmbelt: Current Industry Status and Trends
As the 1800s ended, more than 2,500 farms operated over 343,000 acres of land in the county, about two-thirds of the total county land base and more than 12 percent of all New Jersey farmland. However, during the twentieth century, as the urban population increased, the demand for food drove the rise of large commercial farms. Burlington County followed this trend. After World-War II, upper and middle-class populations sought refuge from the poor conditions of inner cities and moved to the suburbs. Subsidized by public policy and private investment, residents of cities fled in masses to new developments outside of the urban core constructed mostly on land previously in agricultural use. One unintended consequence of this new residential pattern was to drive the source of food production and tradition food outlets even further from the urban centers.

By 1950, the county had about 1,900 farms remaining and farmland area had declined to 211,588 acres, 40 percent of the county’s area. According to the most recent Census of Agriculture (2002), Burlington County has 906 farms remaining today, operating on 111,237 acres of farmland [Table 1]. Farmland now accounts for only one-fifth of the county’s land base. In the past 100 years, the county has lost two-thirds of its farms and 70 percent of its farmland. Since 1950, Burlington County has lost approximately half of its farms and farmland.

Table 1

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<th>Avg. Farm Size (Acres)</th>
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<td>123</td>
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<td>1997</td>
<td>857</td>
<td>121</td>
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<tr>
<td>1900</td>
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<td>135</td>
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</table>

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture, various years.
The continued loss of agricultural land in Burlington County started to way heavy on the minds of public officials, farmers and residents. Unfortunately, it took this significant conversion of agricultural land for the public to recognize the array of public amenities that agriculture brings to the table. These non-production public benefits including, but are not limited to:

- Tax paying, privately-managed green space
- Air and water recharge and purification
- Aesthetic viewsheds
- Conservation of Wildlife habitat
- Recreational opportunities
- Preservation of Rural character
- Links to an agricultural heritage

The first farmland preservation tool created by the State of New Jersey came by a public referendum, approved by the voters in November of 1963 by a 2 to 1 margin. The result of this public question was the adoption of the Farmland Assessment Act in 1964. This legislation required tax assessors to assess farmland according to this agricultural productivity, rather than its highest in best use (for example, residential or commercial development). This was viewed as a “tourniquet that helped stanch the gush of farmland acres into acres of housing and strip malls that began post World War II." Without further action and investment, the loss of agricultural land was sure to continue.

After years of deliberation on how to slow the loss of agricultural land, the Freeholder Board and the State of New Jersey began to take. In January of 1983, the state legislature adopted the Agriculture Retention and Development Act. This set the stage for purchasing easements from farmers to preserve farmland in perpetuity. This idea was hatched earlier in Burlington County by then Freeholder Robert C. Shinn. In 1977, Shinn initiated what appears to be the first public investment in New Jersey for the purpose of preserving farmland for the sake of protecting agriculture. He lead the Freeholder Board to the decision to preserve a 530-acre cranberry farm in Southampton Township (within the NJ Pinelands) with proceeds from a $1-million bond issue approved by the voters of Burlington County. This acquisition and the events preceding it have been chronicled in Chapter 4 of a recently published book entitled, Tending the Garden State – Preserving Agriculture in New Jersey.

After the passage of the Act, in 1985 Freeholder Board preserved five (5) farms in Chesterfield Township totaling just over 600 with the assistance of the State of New Jersey through the SADC. This acquisition represents what is recognized as the first formal acquisition of the State Farmland Preservation Program.

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6 Harrison, George H. Tending the Garden State – Preserving Agriculture in New Jersey Pg. 75
Early Stages of the County’s FPP (1985-1997)

After the preservation of the “Chesterfield Commons” farms, the CADB and its staff did its best to keep an aggressive acquisition pace but funding and landowner interest was hard to come by. The status of agriculture in Burlington County, despite these efforts, continued to lose ground.

According to the 1998 Burlington County Farmland Preservation Strategic Plan (Strategic Plan), “the impacts of increased development pressure on the viability of farming are pervasive and constitute a serious threat to the future presence of agriculture in the County.” The Strategic Plan recognized that friction is created by new development that can result in a compromised business environment for farmers. This situation is commonly known as the “impermanence syndrome,” the inability of farmers to conduct their business and seemingly unavoidable sale of their farm for development. If this condition takes hold, farmers in a region tend to avoid investment in their farming equipment, maintenance of farm buildings and reduced efforts towards soil and water conservation practices.

As referenced in the Strategic Plan, between 1954 and 1992, total farmland in Burlington County dropped from 207,618 acres to 97,186 acres, a reduction of 110,434 acres, or 53 percent. It was projected that this rate of loss, if continued, would result in the loss all its remaining farmland resources in 44 years (2032). According to New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) Land Use/Land Cover data, between 1986 and 1997, a total of 85,365 acres of agricultural land were lost statewide to other uses. More than 12 percent (about 10,500 acres) of the agricultural land converted during this period was located in Burlington County. This rate of agricultural land conversion was second only to Hunterdon County.

Burlington County Farmland Preservation Program Strategic Plan (1998-2008)

In 1996, the Freeholder Board and the CADB acknowledged that even though the program was recognized as a state leader and had been achieving a modest level of success, the County was “essentially, and literally, losing ground in the fight against farmland loss.” The CADB estimated that it was losing “twice the amount of land it is able to preserve.” Development pressure was forcing farmers to sell out, causing increased RTF conflicts, a “compromised business environment” and attacks on farmland equity through zoning.

In addition to the continued rapid loss of agricultural land to non-agricultural uses, the CADB was finding it difficult to solicit applications from the farms that could add to those existing blocks of preserved farmland or to create new “1,000 acres blocks” as was the CADB’s initial goal. Areas where preservation was desirable, such as in the flight
path of McGuire Air Force Base, were low on the state ranking list for funding because they were new areas or were not contiguous with other preserved lands. Low appraisal values also discouraged landowners from applying.

To reinvigorate the County’s preservation efforts, the Strategic Plan had one primary goal; to “preserve the greatest amount of productive agricultural land in the shortest period of time possible.” To achieve that end, the following program initiatives were recommended:

A. Strategic Acquisition Targeting
B. Creation of Acquisition Categories
C. Increase Program Funding
D. Increase SADC Program Effectiveness
E. Support Municipal Agricultural Preservation Measures (primarily Transfer of Development Rights [TDR])
F. Increase Program Education

The Strategic Plan concluded with three primary actions to be taken by the Freeholder Board and the CADB related to the above six (6) initiatives. No actual preservation goal was articulated, though consultation with a financial advisor was recommended to set annual, five and ten year preservation targets.

**Implementation of the 1998 Strategic Plan**

To implement the primary goal of the 1998 Strategic Plan, the County pursued policy and administrative changes to ensure that rate of farmland loss was slowed and owners of unpreserved farmland took the option to preserve seriously.

**Initiative A: Strategic Acquisition Targeting**

*Burlington County’s Agriculture Development Area (ADA)*

The foundation of the County’s efforts to strategically target potential applicants is the County’s ADA, which was established in consultation with the County’s municipal partners and relies heavily on municipal decisions related to planning, zoning, and public infrastructure decisions. The County’s ADA is designated according to N.J.A.C. 2:76-1.

As required by statute, the CADB established new criteria for delineating its ADAs, areas where “agriculture shall be the preferred, but not necessarily the exclusive, use of land” (NJSA 4:1C-18). The SADC has established minimum requirements for this area where land would be eligible for various farmland preservation programs:
- Encompasses productive agricultural lands which are currently in production or have a strong potential for future production in agriculture and in which agriculture is a permitted use under the current municipal zoning ordinance or in which agriculture is permitted as a nonconforming use.
- Is reasonably free of suburban and conflicting commercial development.
- Comprises not greater than 90 percent of the agricultural land mass of the county.
- Incorporates any other characteristics deemed appropriate by the CADB.

As allowed by statute, the CADB established its own ADA requirements:

- Agriculture is the preferred but not necessarily the exclusive, use.
- The land is currently in agricultural production or has a strong potential for future production in agriculture.
- Agriculture is a permitted use by the current municipal zoning ordinance or is allowed as a non-conforming use.
- The land is reasonably free of suburban and conflicting commercial development.
- The land is designated as a “Sending Area” in a TDR/Credits program.
- The land is at least 20 acres in size.
- It must be in State Planning Areas 4, 5, or 10.
- The land cannot be held or used by a public body for nonagricultural purposes.
- It cannot be in a TDR Receiving Area, State Plan center or Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) overlay zone.
- It cannot be within existing or projected road, drainage, or bridge rights of way or land needed for specific roadway improvements.

These ADA requirements were added to ensure that strategic targeting and future easement acquisitions were consistent with local land use goals and did not interfere with innovative zoning techniques such as TDR. It also established a **20 acre minimum standard for qualifying for application to the County’s FPP**. This standard remains in effect to this date. Municipalities with objectives to preserve farmland smaller than 20 acres are encouraged to apply for Municipal Planning Incentive Grant (PIG) funding through the SADC and with the support of Freeholder Board and the CADB.

In addition, the County’s ADA policies reflect that the County would not target farms intended for inclusionary housing projects required to meet affordable housing requirements set forth by adopted COAH policies. In May 2004, the CADB revised its criteria for the ADA based on the amendments to the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan and to build in more flexibility for inclusion in the program.
CADB resolution dated May 13, 2004 revised the requirements for inclusion in the County's ADA as follows:

1. Subject to the exceptions described in section 2, all land within Burlington County that satisfies all of the following conditions is hereby designated as within Burlington County's ADA:

   - Agriculture is the preferred, but not necessarily the exclusive, use.
   - The land is currently in agricultural production or has a strong potential for future production in agriculture;
   - Agriculture is a use permitted by the current municipal zoning ordinance or is allowed as a non-conforming use;
   - The area is reasonably free of suburban and conflicting commercial development.

2. Land which otherwise satisfies the criteria described in section 1 shall be excluded from the ADA if any of the following apply:

   - The land is less than 20 acres in size.
   - The land is not located in whole or in part within Planning Areas 4, 5, or 10 as adopted by the New Jersey State Planning Commission (NJSPC).
   - The parcel does not meet the eligibility requirements for farmland assessment.
   - The land is designated as "Receiving Area" in an adopted Transfer of Development Rights program.
   - The land is located in a "Center" as designated or endorsed by the NJSPC.
   - The land is required for accommodation of low and moderate income housing within the Municipal Master Plan as determined by the New Jersey COAH.
   - The land is preserved for outdoor recreation and non-agricultural open space purposes, including, but not limited to, municipal, county, state or federally owned parks and forests.
   - The land is within existing road rights of way and the area projected for expanded road right-of-way in accordance with the Burlington County Highway Master Plan or municipal transportation improvement plans.
   - The land is on which roadway drainage facilities are located and the area needed for expansion or improvement of the facilities.
   - The land on which bridges are located, along with the area needed for expansion or improvement.
The land is needed for improvements to existing roadways (e.g., expanded intersections, correcting unsafe conditions).

B. Addition of land to ADA: Land that satisfies the criteria set forth in section 1 but which is excluded from the ADA for one or more of the exceptions described in Section 2 may, nevertheless, be eligible for inclusion in the ADA. Such additions must meet conditions a), b) and c) below:

a) The land is in agricultural use or its owner has a definite proposal for agricultural use;
b) The additional land does not cause the ADA area to exceed 90 percent of the County’s agricultural land;
c) The township supports the additions

If conditions a), b) and c) above are met, the land may be added if the Freeholder Board and the CADB agree that at least one of the following apply:

- The addition furthers the goals of the Burlington County FPP;
- The addition will serve to improve the viability of Burlington County agriculture by actions that include, but are not limited to:
  - substantially improving and expanding public access to agricultural products grown within Burlington County; or
  - providing the opportunity for the demonstration of innovative agricultural practices; or
  - providing agricultural education opportunities for Burlington County farmers; or
  - providing a significant opportunity to educate the public on issues of agricultural significance;
  - Preservation of the land is consistent with the comprehensive land preservation plan(s) of the municipality.

Condition B of the County’s revised ADA policy opened the door for the County to explore farms in suburban and urban areas of the County that are locally important and meet very specific requirements. There are several important “urban farms” in Burlington County that are located in urban or periurban areas that may be viable farmland preservation opportunities. This is a relatively new policy of the CADB and will guide future decision on non-traditional applications to the County’s Program. These farms still must be eligible as a targeted farm under the County’s ATL Policy, as discussed in this section.

In 2007 the Freeholder Board, at the recommendation of the CADB, agreed to assist Cinnaminson Township negotiate the preservation of a locally important farm, the
Hunter Family Farm. This is a high-quality farm that offers the local residents a direct to market farmstand, has been farmed continuously by the family of the existing owners for the past 300 years and has three (3) generations working on the farm and a solid plan for the future. The CADB found that this farm, along with the former Winner Farm in Moorestown (now the Burlington County Community Agriculture Center [BCCAC]) are urban farms worth preserving, though they do not meet the County’s traditional standards.

The following map represents the extent Burlington County’s ADA. The map is intended to be a representation of the County’s ADA and when inconsistencies between the map and its ADA policy arise, the ADA policy shall control the formal designation of farmland in Burlington County. As shown in Table 2, recent mapping changes requested by Burlington County though the 3rd Round of SDRP Cross-Acceptance and a change in policy to include all of the land of a parcel in the ADA, the acreage in Burlington County ADA has been revised to an estimated 110,464 acres.
Note: This map is based on the County’s Third Round State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP) mapping changes that have yet to be approved by the State Planning Commission.

Source: Burlington County DRC, 2007
## Table 2

**Burlington County**

*Agriculture Development Area By Municipality - 5/15/2008*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tax Code</th>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Acreage</th>
<th>Previous ADA Acreage*</th>
<th>% in ADA</th>
<th>Revised ADA Acreage**</th>
<th>% in ADA</th>
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<td>Wrightstown Boro</td>
<td>1,162</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Totals    | 524,591 | 71,831 | 14% | 110,464 | 21% |

* Based on 2001 SDRP

** Based on proposed mapping changes - 3rd round SDRP Cross-Acceptance
**Acquisition Targeting**

Criteria were developed to identify farms within the ADA that were to be deemed eligible to apply the County’s FPP. The ATL criteria were developed for this purpose. The emphasis was (and still is) to target farms based upon soil quality and degree of development threat as measured by the capacity of the soils of a property to be designable for individual septic systems to support in most cases, single-family residential development.

Targeting criteria included:

- **Depth to Seasonal High Water Table (DSHWT)** - Must have less than 75 percent soils with DSHWT of 0-2 feet
- **Soil Quality**. Good agricultural soils - 60 percent prime soils or 80 percent prime and statewide important soils combined
- **Adaptability of soils for development** - Reasonable threat of development equated to 30 percent or less of the property has DSHWT of 0-2 feet or 40 percent or more of the property’s soil DSHWT is greater than or equal to 5 feet

Between 2002 and 2005, the CADB amended these criteria to use a more precise determination of soil capability classes for prospective preserved farms. This process entails actual soil borings on candidate properties for easement purchase show many cases where the Soil Survey is too imprecise to adequately describe the actual soil conditions. This process divided soils into three categories:

1. Soils that will always support individual on-site septic systems.
2. Soils that will never support individual on-site septic systems.
3. Soils that require site-specific investigation (i.e., soils are “undetermined”).
The following map depicts the County’s Septic Suitability classifications:

For Non-Pinelands Farms, the ATL criteria were amended to include three primary criteria considered when evaluating farms for inclusion on the ATL:

1. **Septic Suitability.** Properties that have 75 percent or more septic incompatible soils are considered to be under minimal development threat. Therefore, farms must have less than 75 percent septic incompatible soils.

2. **The quality of the soil for agricultural use.** Farms are considered to have good agricultural soils if either (a) they have at least 60 percent prime soils; or (b) they have at least 80 percent prime and state wide important soils combined.
3. **The adaptability of the soils for development use.** Farms are considered to be under a reasonable degree of development threat if (a) 30 percent or less of the property is septic incompatible; or (b) 40 percent or more of the property is septic compatible.

In general, farms that met Criteria #1 and Criteria #2 or met Criteria #1 and Criteria #3 were eligible for inclusion on the ATL, while those that (a) did not meet Criteria #1; and/or (b) did not meet either Criteria #2 or Criteria #3 were not eligible.

The CADB began the practice of conducting *Septic Compatibility Studies* for properties with over 50 percent of soils that were classified as *undetermined*. The purpose of these studies is to better understand the actual development potential of the property being studied. The site analysis is limited to the soil series that are considered “questionable” for development potential. The final product, a Septic Compatibility Plan, is provided to the appraiser to provide them with better guidance regarding the application of the on-site septic regulations (NJAC 7:9A-1.1 et seq) to the subject property.

In addition, the CADB began the practice of developing conceptual plan layouts of the highest and best use in accordance with the applicable municipal ordinance. The County’s consultants utilize either County or vendor supplied septic compatibility and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data for the development of the conceptual plan. Conceptual plans were developed utilizing current, 2004 and/or 1998 municipal ordinances and NJDEP regulations as directed by Burlington County.

During this time a Pinelands ATL was created to include specific to the types of farms being evaluated. Special criteria was added for the Pinelands because on-site septic suitability is a lesser issue since the properties are valued for preservation primarily on their number of PDCs allocated to the individual property. These criteria include:

- **A. Traditional Agriculture Farms**

  The criterion considered when evaluating farms for inclusion on the ATL is the quality of the soil for agricultural use. Farms are considered to have good agricultural soils if either (a) they have at least 60 percent prime soils; or (b) they have at least 80 percent prime and state wide important soils combined.

- **B. Berry Agriculture Farms**

  The criterion considered when evaluating berry farms for inclusion on the ATL is that farms must have 20 acres or more in active berry production.
Exceptions to this policy for both Pinelands and non-Pinelands farms may be made based on one or more of the following additional considerations:

- **Planning Considerations** – Does preservation of a particular property promote or conflict with County and/or municipal planning goals?

- **Proximity to Existing Project Areas** – Is the property next to or isolated from an existing preservation project area?

- **Nearby Conflicting Land Uses** – Do adjacent properties represent conflicting land use patterns? Is there a significant potential for right-to-farm conflicts?

- **Barriers to Development** – Are there other factors, besides septic suitability, that significantly reduce the likelihood of the property being developed?

- **Size** – Is the property of significant size (generally greater than 200 acres)?

- **Unique Soils** – If the farm has a large percentage of unique soils, have drainage improvements been made to those areas of the farm? Is productivity on the unique soils relative to that on the portions with prime or state wide important soils?

A copy of the County’s current ATL Policy is under Appendix H.

**Initiative B: Creation of Acquisition Categories**

**Priority Farms**

A criterion for selecting **Priority Farms** was created to include consideration of Prime soil classification (an indicator of the best agricultural land), septic compatibility of soils (an indicator of development potential), size, and location. Under the Priority Farm selection process, farms on the ATL **must meet one of the following standards** for Priority Farm designation:

A. High Quality Soils:

   I. Farms between 75 and 100 acres: at least 80 percent Prime Farmland Soils and < 20 percent septic incompatible soils.
   
   II. Farms from 100 to 150 acres: at least 70 percent Prime Farmland Soils and < 30 percent septic incompatible soils.
   
   III. Farms from 150 to 200 acres: at least 60 percent Prime Farmland Soils and < 40 percent septic incompatible soils.
IV. Farms over 200 acres: at least 50 percent Prime Farmland Soils and < 50 percent septic incompatible soils.

B. High Risk of Being Developed:

I. Farms under imminent threat of development (e.g. farms with municipal development approvals or significant developer interest).
II. Farms at least 75 acres in size with 10 percent or less septic incompatible soils.

C. Significant Size or Key Location:

I. Farms larger than 250 acres.
II. Farms whose development would greatly compromise existing project areas.

D. Exceptional Value:

The CADB may choose to include farms not meeting the above criteria on a discretionary basis if they are in some way deemed exceptional.

Prime soils and septic compatibility thresholds are more stringent on smaller farms to reflect the fact that, as property size decreases; higher thresholds are needed to ensure that significant amounts of prime and developable soils exist on the property. Farms meeting the ATL criteria but not the priority farm policy are considered “Alternate Farms.”

A copy of the County’s current Priority Farm Policy is under Appendix H.

A list of farms (by Municipality) that currently qualify for the County’s FPP are included in Appendix F and mapping is contained in Appendix G, by project area. This list of farms represents the County’s 2008 ATL. As of the date of this Plan, the CADB is targeting over 23,000 acres, of which 16,375 acres are considered “Priority Farms.”

Special Project Areas

The County created two “special” project areas, as recommended by the 1998 Strategic Plan. These delineated areas are the “Resource Recovery Project Area” and the “Military Buffer Zone.” The Freeholder Board decided to waive local cost share in the Resource Recovery Project Area and has sought funding through the USDA Federal Farm and Ranchland Protection Program to offset local cost share for farms in Military Buffer Zone. The County’s current special project areas are shown in the following map in the context of the County’s new project areas, described in more detail further on in this Plan.
To avoid confusion, this Plan recommends standardize and clarifying the terminology used to classify these “special project areas.” This Plan and future efforts will classify these areas as “overlays” with special rules for preservation within the newly envisioned “NORTH PROJECT AREA.” In addition, these overlays or new ones created in the future for specific purposes can be the foundations for unique grant funding partnerships and inter-governmental cooperation.

**Emergency Acquisitions (Fee-Simple)**

The CADB’s response to this initiative was to be prepared to acquire farms in fee-simple when properties are in estate ownership, being marketed for sale for non-agricultural use, or owned by developers looking to unload their holdings in times when the real estate market has a real or perceived lull. Fee-Simple acquisitions, although more expensive and more difficult to process, have proven to be an effective technique to preserve strategic farms in these emergency situations.
As of the date of this Plan, the Freeholder Board has acquired 16 farms in fee-simple in emergency situations. These farms have either been resold at public auction with deed restrictions in place or are in the process of being resold in early 2009. All farms that the Freeholder Board purchases in fee-simple for the County’s FPP will continue in farming through private agricultural leases until they are ready to be resold at public auction.

As of the date of this Plan, the Freeholder Board owns the following ten (10) farms, which it intends to eventually deed-restrict and resell at public auction:

- Former Armstrong Farm (Mansfield Twp) *
- Former Ashmore Farm (Florence Twp)
- Former BF&W Farm – Tract A (Springfield Twp) *
- Former Bell Farm (North Hanover Twp)
- Former Blaetz Farm (Pemberton Twp)
- Former Conover Farm (Pemberton Twp) *
- Former Orchard Acres LLC Farm (Chesterfield Twp)
- Former Chris Pettit Farm (Pemberton) *
- Former William & Dorothy Pettit Farm (Pemberton / Springfield)
- Former Ziegler / Walder Farm (Springfield) *

* Several of the above mentioned farms are joint FPP and County Open Space Acquisition. As such, small portions of these farms will be either subdivided off or the County will retain rights for passive recreation uses. More discussion on the relationship between the County’s FPP and Open Space / Parks System is included further in this section.

**Initiative C: Increase Program Funding**

**Funding Sources**

Burlington County residents have clearly expressed their commitment to preserving the region’s agricultural landscape and their rural character by authorizing funding to stabilize the farmland base and preserve open space. This commitment has been reflected through a long history of supporting bond referenda for land preservation, including the establishment of the Garden State Preservation Trust (GSPT). In the past forty years, no statewide public referenda for farmland or open space preservation have been defeated. Support in Burlington County for such initiatives has, in fact, typically surpassed statewide approval ratings.

Burlington residents consistently supported, overwhelmingly, the nine (9) Green Acres funding referenda dating back to the early 1960s [Table 3]. Voters in the county similarly supported, by a 3-to-1 margin, the constitutional amendment enabling
farmland assessment in 1963. Most recently, more than two-thirds of Burlington County voters authorized the creation and funding of the GSPT.

Table 3
Voter Approval for Statewide Agricultural and Land Preservation Initiatives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Referendum</th>
<th>Burlington County</th>
<th>New Jersey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1961 Green Acres</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963 Farmland Assessment Act</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971 Green Acres</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974 Green Acres</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978 Green Acres</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983 Green Acres</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987 Green Acres</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989 Green Acres</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992 Green Acres</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995 Green Acres</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998 GSPT Act</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In 1996 and 1998, Burlington County voters approved two separate $.02 / mil, creating a $.04 / mil County Farmland, Open Space, and Historic Preservation Trust Fund (Trust Fund). Burlington County's dedicated tax has a variety of allowable uses in addition to farmland preservation including open space, historic preservation and park development. In November 2006, the two previously approved referenda authorizing the County to raise money for these purposes (1996 ($.02/mil) and 1998 ($.02/mil) were extended to sunset in 2036. Based on the terms of the 1996 referenda, the first one-cent of the two-cent tax must be spent on farmland preservation.

Every year the Freeholder Board allocates funds to the programs based on program activity. As the total annual revenue generated increases yearly based on the rate of growth, it is impossible to accurately assess the total annual revenue dedicated to farmland preservation by the County. The Freeholder Board does not make its yearly funding decisions until yearly adjustments are made in equalized property valuation (typically available from the Board of Taxation in March). Based on current figures, in 2008 the range of Burlington County funds that will be available for farmland preservation will be $5 - $20 million.
Table 4 represents the actual allocation to farmland preservation from the Trust Fund by the Freeholder Board. The discretionary fund can be and often is used for funding farmland preservation projects:

Table 4
Farmland Preservation - Trust Fund Allocations
1997 - 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Farmland Preservation</th>
<th>Discretionary Account</th>
<th>Total Fund</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>$2,057,220</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$4,144,440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>$2,125,448</td>
<td>$1,062,739</td>
<td>$4,250,926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>$3,361,725</td>
<td>$1,120,575</td>
<td>$8,964,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>$3,375,750</td>
<td>$1,125,250</td>
<td>$9,002,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>$3,375,750</td>
<td>$1,186,750</td>
<td>$9,494,090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>$2,550,750</td>
<td>$2,550,750</td>
<td>$10,230,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>$2,797,752</td>
<td>$2,797,752</td>
<td>$11,191,008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>$4,791,000</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$12,776,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>$5,438,395</td>
<td>$5,438,395</td>
<td>$14,502,388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>$8,254,288</td>
<td>$6,190,716</td>
<td>$16,508,576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>$4,690,500</td>
<td>$14,071,500</td>
<td>$18,762,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$43,003,078</td>
<td>$35,544,427</td>
<td>$119,769,028</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Burlington County DRC (2007)

In total, over $78 million (65 percent) of the roughly $120 million generated by the County’s Trust Fund to date has been allocated for farmland preservation purposes. These figures strongly support the County’s desire and ability to fund the County’s FPP.

Based on projections from the County’s Financial Advisor, Evergreen Financial, Table 5 presents revenue projections for the County’s Trust Fund between the periods of 2008 and 2018. This growth is based on a conservative rate of growth for the County’s equalized value (3% per year). The table presents revenue projections between 2019 and 2036 to show that additional funds for preservation purposes will be available for preservation after 2018 and to support the issuance of long-term obligations for immediate preservation funding needs.
Table 5
Burlington County Trust Fund Revenue Projections (2008-2036)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>First $0.01</th>
<th>$0.03</th>
<th>$0.04</th>
<th>Total Revenue Generated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>$5,095,376</td>
<td>$15,286,128</td>
<td>$20,381,504</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>5,095,376</td>
<td>15,286,128</td>
<td>20,381,504</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>5,248,237</td>
<td>15,744,712</td>
<td>20,992,949</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>5,405,684</td>
<td>16,217,053</td>
<td>21,622,738</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>5,567,855</td>
<td>16,703,565</td>
<td>22,271,420</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>5,734,891</td>
<td>17,204,672</td>
<td>22,939,562</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>5,906,937</td>
<td>17,720,812</td>
<td>23,627,749</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>6,084,145</td>
<td>18,252,436</td>
<td>24,336,582</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>6,266,670</td>
<td>18,800,009</td>
<td>25,066,679</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>6,454,670</td>
<td>19,364,010</td>
<td>25,818,679</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>6,648,310</td>
<td>19,944,930</td>
<td>26,593,240</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total 2008-2018</strong></td>
<td><strong>$63,508,152</strong></td>
<td><strong>$190,524,455</strong></td>
<td><strong>$254,032,606</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>First $0.01</th>
<th>$0.03</th>
<th>$0.04</th>
<th>Total Revenue Generated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>$6,847,759</td>
<td>$20,543,278</td>
<td>$27,391,037</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>7,053,192</td>
<td>21,159,576</td>
<td>28,212,768</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>7,264,788</td>
<td>21,794,363</td>
<td>29,059,151</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>7,482,731</td>
<td>22,448,194</td>
<td>29,930,926</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>7,707,213</td>
<td>23,121,640</td>
<td>30,828,854</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2024</td>
<td>7,938,430</td>
<td>23,815,289</td>
<td>31,753,719</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2025</td>
<td>8,176,583</td>
<td>24,529,748</td>
<td>32,706,331</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2026</td>
<td>8,421,880</td>
<td>25,265,640</td>
<td>33,687,521</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2027</td>
<td>8,674,537</td>
<td>26,023,610</td>
<td>34,698,146</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2028</td>
<td>8,934,773</td>
<td>26,804,318</td>
<td>35,739,091</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2029</td>
<td>9,202,816</td>
<td>27,608,448</td>
<td>36,811,263</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2030</td>
<td>9,478,900</td>
<td>28,436,701</td>
<td>37,915,601</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above table represents the results of voter approval in 2006 to extend the County’s $.04 tax ($.02 tax would have ended 2012 with the remaining $.02 set to sunset in 2018) to the year 2036. The public question passed by a 3-to-1 margin.

As a result of the Freeholder Board’s decision and the voters’ approval, the County is able to:

- Generate an additional 18 years of revenue for approved purposes;
- Allow for Installment Purchase Agreement (IPA) agreements to up to 2036, further reducing the County’s up-front costs for acquisition;
- Further ability to issue debt against additional revenue for approved purposes.

The recent extension is expected to allow the Freeholder Board and the CADB to continue its aggressive farmland preservation acquisition strategies in the face of anticipated shortfalls at the State-level. Since 1985, the County has received over $55 million of funding from the SADC in support of the County’s FPP. Unfortunately, the last funding from the GSPT will be expended and a new source of dedicated funding is needed. The figures represented in Table 5 demonstrates the County’s ability to continue to operate, although likely at a lesser degree, without SADC funding for the foreseeable future.

For FY 2009, the SADC has authorized a total of $48 million for the County PIG Program with each County set to receive between $2 and $5 million based on program activity. **SADC funding past FY 2009 is unresolved.** There is no known source of SADC funding available until the State reauthorize funding through the GSPT or another funding stream. As of the date of this Plan, State funding remains the biggest variable in the County’s ability to reach its farmland acquisition goals.
In addition to County and State funding, based on current figures, Burlington County’s partners at the local level raise roughly $2 million in related to farmland, open space, and historic preservation that are able to be used for the local cost-share obligations under the County’s FPP. Further description on the municipal funding obligations is provided further on in this section.

**Maximizing Financial Assets**

Burlington County’s Financial Policies provide for payment of part or the entire purchase price of farmland preservation easements through an IPA. An IPA is a contract between the County and the property owner in which the County promises to pay the purchase price (or portion thereof) for a farmland easement on a future date. The IPA provides for the payment of interest semi-annually between the times that the easement is given to the County and the date that the purchase price is paid to the owner (between 2018 and 2036).

In order to complete as many transactions as possible, the County will offer sellers any combination of cash and IPAs that they request, as long as a seller’s IPAs total $100,000 or more. More information related to the use of IPAs can be found in Appendix I.

Though the issuance of debt will be a last resort, the Freeholder Board has and if necessary will again leverage future revenues of the trust fund for all approved uses of the County’s Trust fund.

As of the date of this Plan, Burlington County has funded 69 of the County’s 170 closings through IPAs or promissory notes.

**Retain Municipal Financial Participation**

According to the County’s current Financial Policies, municipalities are required to share acquisition costs on a sliding scale ranging from five (5) percent to 20 percent, based on money spent on farmland preservation as a percentage of equalized valuation, in accordance with the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Municipal Cost Share</th>
<th>Previous Spending/Equalized Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5%</td>
<td>&gt;0.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>&gt;0.50%, &lt;0.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15%</td>
<td>&gt;0.25%, &lt;0.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>&lt;0.25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Current Municipal Cost Share Percentages for the County’s municipal partners are shown in Table 7.

### Table 7
**Municipal Cost Share Percentages (as of 12/07)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Cost-Share Percentage (%) for Individual Farms</th>
<th>Total Contribution to Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bordentown</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>$79,440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chesterfield</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$1,790,809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastampton</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>$253,704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evesham</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>$67,081</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florence</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lumberton</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>$92,375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mansfield</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>$2,284,283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medford</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>$604,960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moorestown</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>$791,581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Hanover</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>$1,757,913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pemberton</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southampton</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>$1,591,495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Springfield</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$1,867,679</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Burlington County Trust Fund Statistics (2008)

Burlington County Trust Fund Financial Policies (revised 4/25/07) are included in Appendix H.

**Capitalize on Outside Funding Sources**

The Food Security Act of 2002 allocated funding for states to use in preserving their most productive farmland. In May 2003, the CADB made application through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for funding to acquire development rights on 1,150 acres of farmland located in the military installation buffer zone around Fort Dix and Maguire Air Force Base. Farm Belt communities such as Pemberton, New Hanover and North Hanover had a difficult time producing their municipal cost share monies for easement purchase because of the presence of these tax exempt federal properties.

The application requested $1,000,000 to cover the 15 percent municipal cost share to preserve a portion of the 11,890 acres of farmland located in the 2-mile wide buffer zone in six Farm Belt municipalities including Chesterfield, New Hanover, North Hanover,

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7 Parts excerpted from Heinrich-Shilling Joint Venture (2004), Agriculture in Burlington County’s Farmbelt: Current Industry Status and Trends
Wrightstown, Pemberton, and Springfield. The average cost for development rights per acre in this region was estimated to be around $4,000 an acre.

To date, the County has received only $218,465 in financial support through the USDA Federal Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP), or 0.19 percent of the over $114 million public investment in Burlington County for farmland preservation. These funds supported to preserved two (2) farms within the County’s Military Base Overlay, as described in an earlier section of this Plan.

Future participation in the FRPP is predicated on revisions to the program that would make utilization of funds more realistic for farmers in Burlington County. As it stands now, utilization of FRPP funds includes increased administrative burdens and additional deed restrictions that are inconsistent with the mission of the County’s FPP. As such, the Freeholder Board, at the recommendation of the CADB has discontinued use of this funding source. Staff is monitoring the situation closely as this matter is a focus of the on-going federal Farm Bill negotiations.

Initiative D: Increase SADC Program Effectiveness

In order to capitalize on existing funding, the County adopted internal administrative procedures to acquire easements as quickly as possible, and concentrate on obtaining reimbursement from the SADC as soon as possible after acquisition. The County has established a policy of pre-acquiring easements and through the SADC’s County Easement Purchase Program; application is made for funding reimbursement. The County, as the applicant, would “bid-down” to a price per acre it believed necessary to achieve funding for a particular farm. Taking the landowner out of this process proved to be particularly effective, as Burlington County’s applications in the 1997-2008 rounds of funding were virtually always funded. The County assumes the difference between what the state cost-share percentage would have been based on the actual purchase price and what the actual SADC grant as a result of the bid down process.

In the event that SADC funding is limited or not available from FY 2010 and on, the CADB should consider the following options, or others, to recommend to the Freeholder Board so that the acquisition goals of the County FPP are able to be met:

- Increase Current Minimum Acreage
- Process only “Priority” Farms
- When TDR / PDC Programs exist, rely on them as the primary preservation tool
- Prioritize Non-Pinelands Farms over Pinelands Farms
- Revise Financial Policies to Require More Landowners to Accept IPAs instead of Cash
Initiative E: Support of Municipal Agricultural Preservation Measures

Municipal Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Programs

The SADC describes the Municipal TDR Program as a municipal planning and preservation tool “used to protect agricultural, historic or environmental resources while accommodating the needs of development. TDR is a realty transfer mechanism permitting owners of preservation area land to separate the development rights of their property from the property itself and sell them for use elsewhere. Developers who purchase these “development credits” may then develop areas deemed appropriate for growth at densities higher than otherwise permitted. Once the development rights of a property are enrolled the land becomes permanently restricted from further development. TDR is an equity protection mechanism that, unlike traditional zoning, enables preservation area landowners to be compensated for reductions in development potential. When well-designed, TDR can provide benefits to landowners, developers and municipalities.”8

In October of 1994, the Lumberton Township Planning Board adopted a comprehensive Master Plan which called for the establishment of a voluntary TDR program. The primary receiving area was established just west of the village of Lumberton, in the vicinity of Creek Road and Crispin Road. This receiving area was swiftly designed, approved and constructed. As a result, approximately 700 acres of farmland were preserved. Another receiving area along C.R. 612 is envisioned but approvals for the necessary sewer line extension have yet to be granted by the NJDEP. The sending area was established outside the village of Lumberton and a system for creating transferable development rights at “certain rates depending on the physical characteristics of the land involved.”9 TDR is currently inactive in Lumberton Township, pending approvals related to the proposed additional receiving area.

In October of 1997, the Chesterfield Township Planning Board adopted a comprehensive Master Plan which called for land use in the Township to be reformed according to the principles of a voluntary TDR Program. The Master Plan identified a primary receiving area southwest of the village of Crosswicks with the sending area comprising of the majority of the remaining agricultural land of the Township. The 2002 Amendment of the Master Plan of the Township of Chesterfield chronicles the development of TDR including the village plan, design principles, circulation, the village center, school and open space components and profiles of residential and community scale development. The Village Plan illustrates the utilization of approximately 1,161 credits in creating a community of 1,269 dwelling units (including 76 affordable housing units) and 90,000 sq. ft. of retail/office space. When the Village

8 SADC Website – Accessed 4/20/08
9 Lumberton Township Master Plan, Adopted October 26, 1994
Plan is completely implemented, over 7,000 acres of farmland will have been preserved. TDR activity in the receiving and sending areas is ongoing. Over 75% of the receiving area has been constructed or has some level of approvals from the Planning Board and over 3,000 acres in the receiving area are preserved or in the process of enrolling their credits. Farms are preserved with a permanent agriculture easement when the assigned credits have been enrolled prior to them being sold and eventually retired by the builders.

The Freeholder Board provided a substantial amount of planning support to Chesterfield and Lumberton Townships to develop and implement their TDR Programs, as described later in this Chapter and in Chapter VIII. In addition, the Freeholder Board, through the Dept. of Regional Planning and Economic Development is currently assisting Mansfield and North Hanover Township to implement TDR Programs.

**Municipal Planning Incentive Grants (PIGs)**

According to the SADC, the Municipal PIG “enables the SADC to provide grants to municipalities to purchase development easements for permanent preservation of farmland in designated project areas.”

The County has supported Municipal PIG applications to the SADC from two municipalities, North Hanover and Lumberton. These two municipalities received approval and funding from the SADC through the Municipal PIG Program. The goals of both grants were to preserve farms that were smaller and did not meet the County’s minimum standards but were adjacent to the larger targeted or previously preserved farms.

To date, only one farm has been preserved utilizing this funding source. North Hanover Township closed on this one farm (Laird) in early 2008 and Lumberton Township has yet to process a single application. Though each municipality has put forth great efforts to outreach to eligible targeted farms, many landowners have chosen not to pursue the option. In addition, there are significant challenges with this program since the local expertise related to processing applications is insufficient. Eligibility requirements for this program can be found at N.J.A.C. 2:76-17A.3.

The requirements for eligibility include:

1. The establishment of a properly constituted agricultural advisory committee;
2. A dedicated source of funding for farmland preservation pursuant to P.L.1997, C.24;

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10 SADC Website – Accessed 4/20/08
3. Prepare and adopt a farmland preservation plan element pursuant to paragraph 13 of section 19 of P.L. 1975, c. 291 in consultation with that agricultural advisory committee;

4. Prepare and adopt a RTF ordinance that is consistent with, or provides greater protections to commercial farm operators and owners than, the Right to Farm Act, N.J.S.A. 4:1C-1 et seq., as determined by the SADC.

In Appendix H, there is a copy of the County’s Municipal PIG Policy. This was adopted by the CADB to provide clear directions to the municipalities in Burlington County interested in pursuing this option.

In Section IX of this Plan, there are strategies related to improve the success of existing and/or future Municipal PIG applications.

**Initiative F: Program Education**

Program education is essential to the long-term success of any publicly funded program. The County’s FPP is no different. It takes time and careful attention to ensure that program partners and funders (i.e., the taxpayers) understand and appreciate the investment of public funds being made to preserve farmland and farming in Burlington County.

From the early inception of the program, efforts were made to ensure that all residents in all 40 Municipalities in Burlington County understood the process and results related to the County’s FPP. In addition, the primary participating municipalities were directly engaged so that they understood their role in the targeting, processing, and funding of applications for farmland preservation. As a result, there is a tremendous amount of sharing of information with local partners and specific point-people at the local level who serve as on-the-ground advocates.

The County has developed educational materials and held forums for eligible applicants to the farmland preservation program. With the assistance of the CADB, the County was able to articulate to the potential applicants how the process works and why (or why not) they are able to apply to the FPP.
Current FPP Status

Permanent Farmland Preservation Programs

The following graphs are intended to represent the progress of the County’s FPP over the previously referenced periods of program development. These figures only include acreage preserved by Burlington County’s FPP.

Figure A
Preserved Acres by Program Periods
Burlington County FPP

- Up to 1985: 608 Acres (3 %)
- 1986-1997: 8,218 Acres (37 %)
- 1998-2007: 12,776 acres (60 %)

Figures A & B show the progress of the County’s FPP since 1985. This graph only represents acreage preserved by the County’s FPP (Easement / Fee Simple Purchases). As represented, the County’s FPP has experienced its best years between 1998 and 2007, the “Strategic Plan Years.”
Appendix B includes a list of all farms preserved directly through Burlington County’s FPP. As of 12/31/07, Burlington County’s FPP has preserved over 22,199 acres through easement and fee simple purchases with a vast majority of the acreage coming through easement purchases.

Burlington County has been an active participant in the SADC Traditional County Easement Purchase Program. As discussed in the previous section, this SADC program has been the primary source of SADC funding for Burlington County.

The County PIG is a new program that encourages a comprehensive planning process for farmland preservation at the county level. It offers several other advantages over the traditional easement purchase program, including enabling counties to accept and process farmland preservation applications year-round, rather than once a year; reducing the timeframe from landowner application to closing; and rewarding counties that complete transactions in a timely manner with the potential for additional funding.\textsuperscript{11}

Burlington County plans to transition from the County Easement Purchase Program into the County PIG program as its primary source of SADC funding. The preparation of this Plan is one of the primary requirements to facilitate this transition. Prerequisite requirements for this program can be found at N.J.A.C 2:76-17.3.

\textsuperscript{11} SADC Website – Accessed 4/20/08
The requirements for eligibility include:

5. A CADB that shall serve as the agricultural advisory committee;
6. A Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan; and

As described in the Table 8, the public has invested more than $110 million in the preservation of these farms. Burlington County has successfully leveraged over $58 million of State funding to offset the original costs of these farms. Burlington County has received over $10 million in matching funds from its partner municipalities (10).

Table 8
Cost-Share Contribution Levels – Burlington County Farmland Preservation Investment (+$110 Million) – As of 12/31/07

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>County</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Municipal</th>
<th>Non-Profit/Donation</th>
<th>Federal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Cost ($)</td>
<td>$41,407,614</td>
<td>$58,668,131</td>
<td>$10,094,209</td>
<td>$403,677</td>
<td>$218,464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Total Investment</td>
<td>36.25%</td>
<td>51.36%</td>
<td>9.55%</td>
<td>0.35%</td>
<td>0.19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Burlington County Department of Resource Conservation

Figure C below represents the number of acres preserved by calendar year by the County’s FPP since 1985.
As a result of the County’s policy to assist municipalities implement TDR programs, an additional **2,788 acres** of farmland are protected from non-agricultural uses in Chesterfield and Lumberton Townships (See Appendix C and the following maps).
State Programs (Direct Easement Purchase and Fee Simple)

These programs are administered directly by the SADC. The SADC directly purchases development easements or farmland outright (in fee simple) from landowners under its State Acquisition Program. Funds for these purchases come from the GSPT.

Descriptions of these SADC facilitated programs can be found on the SADC’s website at: [http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/sadc/farmpreserve/programs](http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/sadc/farmpreserve/programs).

Acreage preserved by the SADC is equally distributed between the Direct Easement and Fee-Simple Programs, totaling 2,478 acres (See Appendix C). The SADC is responsible for monitoring state-held easements.

SADC staff have represented that Burlington County is not currently a priority for new Direct Easement and Fee Simple applications acquisitions because the SADC has met its statutory minimum funding responsibility under the Highlands Act. The County is hopeful that the SADC’s position on taking applications under these programs changes in Burlington County in the near future given the consistency between the County’s preservation targets and the SADC’s high priority preservation targets agriculture in its Strategic Targeting Project.
Non-Profit Farmland Preservation Efforts

The County’s FPP does not have an active partnership with any non-profit group for farmland preservation purposes. The County does maintain very strong relationships with several non-profit groups related to open space preservation. Non-profits are actively involved in land preservation within Burlington County but mostly for conservation and public recreation purposes.

The SADC provides grants to nonprofit organizations to fund up to 50 percent of the fee simple or development easement values on farms to ensure their permanent preservation. A description of this SADC facilitated program can be at:

http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/sadc/farmpreserve/programs/nonprofit.html

The County is very interested in the development of a new farmland preservation focused non-profit entity, the NJ Agricultural Land Trust, as is being proposed by the NJ Farm Bureau. The development of such an entity will ensure that use of SADC funds will used to implement the intent of the Act.

The above referenced preservation categories (County, TDR, SADC, Non-Profit) represent 27,465 acres preserved in Burlington County under permanent agricultural easement.

Pinelands Development Credit (PDC) Program12

PDC program was developed after the adoption of the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan, which covers more than 1 million acres in southern New Jersey. Very large lot zoning (1 unit per 39 acres) was created for the Agricultural Preservation and Special Agricultural Preservation areas. Farmland owners subsequently faced significant restrictions on the use of their land and an ensuing drop in farmland value.

The TDR program was designed to provide a way for those landowners in the highly restricted parts of the region to share in the development value to be achieved in the areas designated for growth. PDCs were allocated to farmland in the Agricultural Production and Special Agricultural Production Areas. Each PDC was worth four (4) development rights (4.9 acres per right). Landowners had to file an application with the New Jersey Pinelands Commission (NJPC) to determine how many rights their property warranted.

12 Parts excerpted from Heinrich-Shilling Joint Venture (2004), Agriculture in Burlington County’s Farmbelt: Current Industry Status and Trends
By 1985, very few PDCs had been put up for sale or traded. One reason for this was that residential and commercial development could proceed in the growth areas at the base densities already in place without requiring purchase of PDCs. Because there was little or no market for the credits, the PDC Bank was created to “step in and purchase credits from Pinelands landowners when a quick sale is needed and the private market is not responding (Ross, 2000).” A minimum purchase price of $2,500 per right, or $10,000 per credit was set at that time. The PDC Bank, however, could only buy credits if there was “extreme hardship.” There have been few such applications approved and no such purchases by the Bank in the past 7 years (Bushnell, 2004).

In 1996, the Bank analyzed PDC sales again and raised the values to $3,150 per right, or $12,600 per credit. Again in 2000 it raised them to $6,000 per right, or $24,000 per credit. Even with these adjustments, the price per acre for productive farmland remained below the development value landowners outside the Pinelands were receiving for their development rights.

Table 9 below intends to show the relationship between PDC values and average easement values in the County, on a per acre basis, over time.

Table 9
Pinelands Development Credit Prices
Compared with Easement Purchase Values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1985 Per Acre</th>
<th>1996 Per Acre</th>
<th>2000 Per Acre</th>
<th>2004 Per Acre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PDC Value per Right</td>
<td>$510</td>
<td>$643</td>
<td>$1,224</td>
<td>$46,122^</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDC Value per Credit</td>
<td>$2,041</td>
<td>$2,571</td>
<td>$4,898</td>
<td>$24,490^</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Easement Value, Burlington County</td>
<td>$1,360</td>
<td>$3,998</td>
<td>$3,588</td>
<td>$5,655^</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: SADC and Burlington CADB (easement prices); Ross and Bushnell (PDC values).

^ 2004 sales were private sales.

^ Average County easement value based on 2003 data.

Appendix C provides a current summary, by each Pinelands municipality, of the acreage preserved through the PDC Program.

The following table is excerpted from the NJ PDC Bank 2007 Annual report to show a region-wide perspective on preservation through the PDC Program.
The above chart and information contained in Appendix C shows another **23,026 acres** have been preserved through the PDC Program in the Agricultural Production and Special Agricultural Production Areas of the New Jersey Pinelands. (See Appendix C.) There are clear limitations in the PDC data, as it is difficult at this time to understand exactly how much of the farmland in this area is still in agricultural production. It is assumed that a majority of this land will remain in agricultural production into the
future, especially if the industry of agriculture remains viable and the property tax incentives for agricultural production remain in place.

Since the PDC Program is market driven (I.E., linked to real estate, housing, and economic market’s trends) there has been a recent decline in activity and in the sales value of the PDCs. Beginning in 2003, a trend upward in the value of PDCs began, peaking at steady per quarter credit prices over $30,000 through 2004 until mid-2006. Prior to 2003, quarter credits were selling for under $10,000. Credit prices began to fall with the rate of development slowing in the Pinelands and statewide, leading to a per quarter credit PDC value under $20,000 by the end of 2008.

**Current Status – All Farmland Preservation Programs**

The current status of farmland preservation efforts in Burlington County is included in Appendix C. This table summarizes all of the farmland preservation programs active in Burlington County. The table is separated by Township and in the columns, by specific program. This table shows that roughly **50,000 acres** of farmland has been preserved in Burlington County. The farms preserved directly by Burlington County through easement purchase or fee-simple acquisition are summarized in the table in the appendix entitled “Preserved Farms Listing.” 50,000 acres represents nearly **50 percent** of the farmland acres reported by the 2002 Census of Agriculture (110,000 acres).

Appendix C provides a breakdown, by program of each Burlington County’s partner municipalities.

Figure D represents the distribution of these roughly 50,000 acres throughout the County.
According to the Farmland Preservation Report, Burlington County has the largest County-run FPP in New Jersey and ranked **sixth in the nation**, with a total of **50,491** preserved acres or about **77 square miles**.

Equally important, is the success of the County’s FPP in achieving preservation of contiguous blocks of preserved farmland. In the University of Nebraska’s Case Study of Burlington County, the author considered the “Degree of Contiguity Achieved” as an indicator of the County’s ability to create and build on 1,000 acre blocks of preserved farmland. This case study stated that “besides preserving a large quantity of farmland, Burlington’s program is notable for another, related achievement. Most of the protected parcels are contiguous with other protected land rather than being isolated tracts. Stand-alone parcels may be more expensive to farm (e.g., farther for farm equipment to travel) and/or more vulnerable to the constraints resulting from non-farmer neighbors’ complaints.”

The author of the case study reviewed mapping prepared by the DRC and concluded that:

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13 Figure from report in Appendix C
14 Esscxs, p. 29
“a total of 279 tax parcels preserved through PDR (purchase of development rights), another 29 protected through Chesterfield Township’s transfer of development rights program (TDR -- to be discussed just below) and over 850 more acres preserved through Lumberton Township’s TDR program. More than two-thirds (68.8 percent) of the 279 PDR parcels were adjacent to other PDR parcels that did not have the same owners.”

The author also credited the County with another “laudable” achievement related to the extent to which the map shows large clusters of contiguous protected parcels stating that:

“Chesterfield Township in the north of the county had a cluster totaling 79 parcels, if included in that count are the PDR parcels next to one or more of its 29 TDR tracts. Only eight of the overall 87 parcels protected by the two programs in Chesterfield were stand-alones. Mansfield Township had a cluster of 15 tracts; and Springfield, 13.”

Burlington County’s FPP remains extremely active. The list provided in Appendix F and the Project Area Summaries provided in Appendix G show over 20 farms that are “IN APPLICATION” or “PENDING CLOSING.” Assuming that these farms close as planned, by the end of 2008 an additional 1,500 acres will be added to the preserved list.

Burlington County is actively soliciting applications for farmland preservation from owners of the qualified farmland described in Appendix F. Although there is a looming deficit in state funding, the County’s program is in the financial position to keep up a steady acquisition pace. This is primarily due to the voter’s recent approval of extending the County’s trust fund (enabling the County to bond for additional funds), IPA financing tool and the tremendous amount of public support for the FPP.

8-Year Preservation Programs

The 8-Year FPP and the Municipally Approved 8-Year FPP are both cost sharing programs for soil and water conservation projects, in which the farmer receives 50 percent cost sharing for these projects as well as protection against emergency energy and water restrictions and eminent domain. In return, the farmer signs an agreement that restricts the land to agricultural use for eight years. For entrance into these programs and to qualify for benefits, a farm must be located within an ADA. Technical assistance for the soil and water practices comes through the NRCS.

In recent years, enrollment in the 8-Year program has not guarantee project funding. With recent deficits in program funding, the SADC has created a priority system to prioritize funding for projects on permanently preserved farms. As the primary incentive to enter these programs is the project funding, landowners in Burlington County have been reluctant to enroll or continue participating.
In Burlington County, there are 26 farms enrolled in the eight-year program totaling 3,628 acres. Most of these farms are in the Pinelands. The non-municipally approved 8-year program has been used as a tool in the Pinelands for owners of lands with PDC restrictions to qualify for cost share grants for approved soil and water projects.

**County Policies – Consistency with other Policies / Plans**

The following County FPP-related policies are included in Appendix F:

- ADA Criteria
- ATL Criteria
- Priority Farm Criteria
- Approval of Exceptions Areas from Farmland Preservation Applications
- Approval of Municipal PIG Applications
- Financial Policies

Only farms that are in the County’s ADA and meet the County’s ATL criteria (Priority or Alternate) will be solicited and processed, subject to the availability of funding. If funding is limited in the future, priority farms will be solicited and processed ahead of alternate farms. The ATL is not intended to be a tool to determine which farmland preservation program best suits an individual farm. Determinations of priority between easement and fee-simple (emergency) acquisitions will be made on a case-by-case and year-by-year basis by the Freeholder Board based on the recommendation of the CADB.

The ATL represents the list of farms that the County’s FPP wishes to see preserved using the programs available that best meet the needs and situations of each individual landowner. As discussed in a later chapter of this Plan, the Freeholder Board and CADB reserves the right to not process an application from a landowner on the County’s ATL if the municipality the farm is in does not have a Right to Farm (RTF) ordinance that is not substantially consistent with the SADC’s model RTF ordinance.

**New SADC Minimum Eligibility Requirements**

The County recognizes that the SADC has adopted new minimum eligibility criteria for farms proposed for farmland preservation grants. These new requirements can be found at N.J.A.C. 2:76-6.20. These new minimum eligibility criteria relate to all farms proposed for funding through the SADC, no matter the program. The minimum criteria relevant to the Burlington County FPP can be found at N.J.A.C. 2:76-6.20(a) 2 (lands greater than 10 acres). The criteria is based on the following:

1. At least 50 percent of the land, or a minimum of 25 acres, whichever is less, is tillable;
ii. At least 50 percent of the land, or a minimum of 25 acres, whichever is less, consists of soils that are capable of supporting agricultural or horticultural production; and
iii. The land must exhibit development potential based on the standards that appear in the SADC regulations.

Burlington County will continue to utilize its ATL list as the primary targeting list for interest in farmland preservation. At the time of application, the County will review each farm critically and work with the SADC staff to confirm that each farm meets the SADC’s new minimum standards. An initial review of the County’s ATL farms indicated that there are no farms on the County’s ATL that do not meet the SADC new minimum standards EXCEPT certain Pinelands farms that may have difficulty meeting the minimum score requirements, established yearly by the SADC based on the scores of the previous three years of County applications.

Only farms that are in the County’s ADA and meet the County’s ATL criteria (Priority or Alternate) will be solicited and processed, subject to available funding. If funding is limited in the future, priority farms will be solicited and processed ahead of Alternate farms. Determinations of priority between easement and fee-simple (emergency) acquisitions will be made on a case-by-case and year-by-year basis.

The County’s FPP retains the ability to proceed with farms it deems worthy no matter if the farm meets the SADC’s minimum requirement or not. The CADB will advise the Freeholder Board when farms do not meet these new minimum standards and will jointly make the final decision as to whether to proceed without SADC funding.

**New SADC Minimum Score Requirements**

The County recognizes that the SADC has adopted new minimum ranking score requirements for new farms proposed for farmland preservation grant. These new minimum score requirements are within the context of the new County PIG Program and can be found at N.J.A.C. 2:76-17.

Eligible farms under this new program are defined as “a targeted farm that qualified for grant funding under this subchapter by receiving an individual rank score pursuant N.J.A.C. 2:76-6.16 that is equal to or greater than 70 percent of the county’s average quality score of all farms granted preliminary approval by the Committee through the county easement purchase program and/or the county planning incentive grant program within the previous three fiscal years, as determined by the Committee.”

Policy P-13 E establishes the SADC’s ranking criteria and will be the evaluation tool relevant to establishing farms meeting the above definition of an “eligible” farm.
This policy can be found at:

http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/sadc/rules/P14eprioritizationofprojectareaspdf.pdf

Minimum ranking scores will be established by the SADC for each county annually. The minimum score for FY 2009 funding has been established as 44.00. The annual minimum score is related to the average score for applications in the past three (3) funding rounds. Limited exceptions will be issued by the SADC on a case by case basis.

To avoid duplicative efforts, this Plan recommends that the CADB rescind its current ranking policy and adopt the SADC’s ranking policy (Policy P-14 E). The County’s established ranking criteria were substantially similar to the SADC’s ranking with some very minor adjustments.

The County’s FPP retains the ability to proceed with farms it deems worthy no matter if the farm meets the SADC’s minimum ranking score requirement or not. The CADB will advise the Freeholder Board when farms do not meet these new minimum standards and will jointly make the final decision as to whether to proceed without SADC funding.

A copy of SADC Policy P-13 E is included in Appendix H. Prior to adoption of this Plan, the CADB will adopt this as its official ranking policy.

**SADC Strategic Targeting Project**

The SADC’s 2003 Strategic Targeting Project was intended to help prioritize farmland preservation investments and secure a “bright future” for the agricultural industry.

The primary goals of the SADC’s strategic targeting project are:

- To coordinate farmland preservation/agricultural retention efforts with proactive planning initiatives.
- To update and create maps to target preservation efforts
- To coordinate with open space, recreation and historic preservation efforts.

In keeping with the project’s goal of focusing on prime and statewide agricultural soils outside of sewer service areas, Burlington County began the practice of strategically targeting farms based on criteria such as soils, growth leading infrastructure, municipal zoning/ State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP) Planning Areas and contiguity. The development of the County’s ADA and ATL criteria were discussed in the previous section of this chapter.
In the development of the County’s ATL and the project areas proposed by this Plan (described further in this Plan) care was taken to consider not only the County’s established ADA/ATL criteria but also the SADC’s Strategic Targeting Plan, established TDR sending / receiving area zones and proximity to the Ft. Dix / McGuire Military Installation and the Burlington County Resource Recovery Facility.

As such, the County’s ATL is *substantially consistent* with the SADC’s Strategic Targeting Project. Implementation of the County’s existing strategic targeting policies has been and will be consistent with the SADC’s stated preservation standards and objectives.

**Post-Closing Policies Related to Preserved Farms**

The County defaults to SADC policies for the following post-closing actions on preserved farms:

**Construction of Agricultural Labor Units**

Description: Owners of preserved farms are entitled to construct agricultural labor housing units on the preserved farm, subject to the conditions of each individual deed restriction and the approval the CADB, Freeholder Board and when relevant, the SADC.

**Replacement of Pre-Existing Residential Structures**

Description: Owners of preserved farms are entitled to replace pre-existing residential structures on a preserved farm, subject to the conditions of each individual deed restriction and the approval of the CADB, Freeholder Board and when relevant, the SADC.

**Exercising Residual Dwelling Site Opportunities (RDSOs)**

Description: Owners of certain preserved farms are entitled to construct a limited number of new residential structures on the preserved farm, subject to the conditions of each individual deed restriction and the approval the CADB, Freeholder Board and when relevant, the SADC. Allocation of RDSOs takes place during the application process. RDSOs have been allocated to applicants at a density not to exceed one unit per 100 acres, including existing dwellings.

SADC Policy P-31 (Exercising a RDSO) can be found at:

[http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/sadc/rules/](http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/sadc/rules/)
Division of Preserved Farm

Description: Owners of preserved farms are entitled to legally subdivide a preserved farm, subject to the conditions of each individual deed restriction and the approval the CADB, Freeholder Board and when relevant, the SADC. Though the specific terms of the deed restrictions have evolved, typically farmers can only divide preserved farms if there is an agricultural purpose and only if the subdivision results in agriculturally parcels.

SADC Policy P-30-A (Division of Permanently Preserved Farmland) can be found at:

http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/sadc/rules/

Approval of Septic Systems on Preserved Farm Areas

Description: The SADC has adopted a policy regarding the location of septic systems that service residential and agricultural uses located within exception areas.

SADC Policy P-49 (Placement of Septic Systems to Service Residential and Agricultural Uses Located on Exception Areas) can be found at:

http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/sadc/rules/

Commercial Opportunities Permits / Wireless Communication Permits

Description: This is a new opportunity that proposes to allow certain owners of preserved Farm to have new small scale non-agricultural uses developed on preserved farms. These opportunities are likely to be very limited in scope and scale as the language contained in the authorizing legislation provides is very narrow. The SADC has adopted rules to implement the legislation that created this opportunity. The SADC has primary jurisdiction for issuing these permits.

SADC Regulations (Subchapter 22 and 23) govern the approval of these permits. The SADC regulations governing these permits can be found at:

http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/sadc/rules/

The County has developed several of its own policies. The CADB policies can be found in Appendix H. In general, the CADB will accept requests to except and/or subdivide acreage from an applicant property up to a maximum total acreage of five (5) percent or ten (10) acres, whichever is less. This policy includes restrictions to be added to the
standard provisions of the Deed of Easement (DOE) in the event that an applicant wishes to provide for one of these areas on their preserved farm.

The CADB encourages applicants to consider excepting out pre-existing non-agricultural uses and agricultural services that may be now or into the future monitoring issues if the farm is preserved.

**Current Administrative Capacity**

Administratively, Burlington County’s FPP is housed within the Burlington County Department of Resource Conservation (DRC). The DRC’s other functions includes open space acquisition, park development and management, water resource coordination and solid waste management. The FPP is currently staffed by four (4) full-time employees dedicated solely to the farmland preservation program. Complementing the full time staff, the FPP has a full time attorney, administrative assistant, and is augmented by GIS support staff. The County has retained the services of a Financial Consultant (Evergreen Financial Services), a County Review Appraiser (Todd & Black) and a County Review Surveyor (Gordon Lenher, PLS).

FPP Staff works closely with the Department of Regional Planning and Economic Development on various Regional, County, and Municipal land-use and economic development projects. FPP Staff, current and former, worked closely in the development of the Rt. 206 Farm Belt Studies, referenced in Chapter III.

**Cooperation with County’s Open Space Preservation Program**  

As mentioned in the previous section, the Burlington County DRC also oversees the County’s Open Space Acquisition and Park Development Program, as well as the County Parks Division. As a result there is a significant amount of coordination between these programs. In addition, in recent years the County’s FPP has worked with the Division of Cultural Affairs and Tourism to plan and implement programs related to agriculture, most notably at the BCCAC.

The County’s plan for parks and open space, completed in 2002, aims to preserve 14,791 acres. It has four key goals:

1. Create a County parks system that expands public access to diverse, passive recreational activities.
2. Aggressively protect the County’s significant natural resources.
3. Preserve and enhance the culture and heritage of Burlington County.

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15 Parts excerpted from Heinrich-Shilling Joint Venture (2004), Agriculture in Burlington County’s Farmbelt: Current Industry Status and Trends
4. Coordinate park system development and open space preservation with compatible growth, preservation and recreation initiatives.

(Source: Burlington County Department of Resource Conservation, 2002).

The Plan discusses five (5) project areas for immediate attention:

1. The Rancocas Creek Greenway
2. The Delaware River Greenway
3. The Barkers Brook Project Area
4. The Masons Creek/SW Rancocas Creek Project Area
5. The Pinelands Project Area

Through surveys and extensive outreach, the public has indicated to the Freeholder Board that it would like to see the development of the following:

- Nature trails and biking paths
- Programs for the whole family
- Conservation and preservation of open spaces
- More opportunities for aquatic recreation
- Preservation of County-owned historic resources

The FPP and Open Space Programs have worked together on several joint-acquisition projects, which were targeted for both farmland and open space preservation. In these cases, trail corridors have been established through or at the peripheries of farms in order to minimize impact on the current or future owners. Properties acquired for open space purposes are leased for agricultural production until they are developed into recreational or parkland, or trails are developed.

In 2004, a 630-acre farm in Springfield Township was acquired by the County to be the site of a new County Fairgrounds. The FPP staff has provided technical assistance in the development of this new County park facility, set to open in the summer of 2009. Despite this farm’s size, it had limited agricultural potential due to the amount of hydric soils on the property. The areas of this farm with agricultural potential will remain in use until such a time when they are required for the development of the new County fairgrounds. Various agricultural stakeholders have been engaged to assist the County develop the plans for this site.

According to the County’s open space plan, the preservation of open space can be coordinated with farmland preservation efforts to “buffer agricultural areas and preserve agricultural landscapes” (Burlington County Department of Resource Conservation, 2002, p. 14). The staffs of both programs are sensitive to the need for careful planning for public access to reduce potential conflicts between recreation and
agriculture. In an effort to reduce the impacts of the County’s Open Space Program, specifically the development of linear trails, the County instituted a “Rural Trail Committee” that has members from the agricultural and open space communities. This Committee and its staff are working on trail designs, management plans, and access policies to ensure that at the very least, the public trails adjacent to farms will not impact their operations.

One of the first rural trails project will be in the Barkers Brook Project Area, in the vicinity of Arney’s Mt. in Springfield and Pemberton Townships. As depicted in the following map, a passive recreation trail is proposed to be designed throughout this agricultural and environmentally significant area. The western route of this trail is being proposed for design and construction within the next few years. Interest groups, including the farming community have been and will continue to be engaged in the design process through the CADB and the Rural Trails Committee.
Future Direction

In 2004, the CADB formed a subcommittee to assist staff in revising the Strategic Plan. As it became evident that the SADC was planning to overhaul its programs and plan requirements, the CADB Subcommittee finished its work and decided not to proceed with amending the 1998 Strategic Plan until the SADC new requirements were established.
Between 2004 and 2007, as referenced in Section III, a great deal of consideration by the agricultural community and the public sector took place, resulting in a set of recommendations that greatly influenced the direction the CADB subcommittee chose. Staff has worked to meld the CADB Subcommittee Recommendations with the vast amount of information now available related to Burlington County’s Agricultural Industry. The future direction of the County’s program is contained in Chapter IX of this Plan.

In general, it is believed that the preservation strategies envisioned in the 1998 Strategic Plan have been effective in stemming the loss of agricultural land in the county. As such, this Plan recommends that those strategies be continued and adapted as necessary as conditions dictate.

In this Plan, unlike the Strategic Plan, the County is setting preservation goals for the next ten years (2009-2018), as described in Chapter IX. This Plan establishes a 20,000 acre goal with 10,000 acres set to be preserved with public funding and the additional 10,000 acres through innovative zoning and planning measures. If this goal is attained, by 2018 the County will have almost 40,000 acres of farmland preserved through the various acquisition programs and including PDC easements, will have roughly 70,000 acres under easement (+/- 70 percent of the active agricultural land that currently remains in Burlington County). Further, the CADB Subcommittee recommended creating “project areas” that could assist the County with better focus for its preservation efforts.

FPP staff spent significant time in the last year analyzing the existing ATL and developed a revised list of farms that appear to be suitable for preservation under the new Countywide PIG Program. To determine project area boundaries, staff created a GIS data layer of all of the target farms and brought up other layers of interest such as existing preserved farms, open space, and active projects. Staff modified the draft project areas to coordinate with new mapping changes, as recommended in the County’s recent SDRP Cross-Acceptance Report.

As a result of this analysis, the Hedding area of Mansfield Township surrounding the recently acquired open space parcel known as Crystal Lake and several farms in Westampton and Medford Townships were added. In conjunction with the development of these new project areas, every municipality with targeted farms was sent the proposed list of targeted farms and invited to submit comments. Though not all the farms recommended in response to this outreach were added, a dialogue was established related to the Municipal PIG Program and the County’s desire to assist several local governments establish funding through the SADC directly.

Established “centers” as defined by the SDRP were eliminated from project areas. There are a few eligible, scattered farms that are essentially orphaned from the project areas;
the county is unlikely to pursue these in the near future. The FPP has established four new project areas:

- North Project Area
- West Project Area
- East Project Area
- South Project Area

The North Project Area covers significant portions of Chesterfield, North Hanover, Mansfield, Springfield, the remaining agricultural areas of Florence, New Hanover and strategic areas of Westampton and Eastampton Townships. The North Project Area contains the most preserved farmland and target farms (see Appendix G). This project area, in fact, forms the western boundary of a four-county regional project area which the SADC refers to as the Central Jersey Project Area. Upper Freehold and western Millstone Township’s project area is surrounded by preserved farmland in Burlington, Mercer and Ocean counties. This project area includes three of the top twenty agricultural municipalities in the state [Table 11], including the leading (along with the adjacent Upper Freehold Township in Monmouth County) municipality for preserved farmland in the state, Chesterfield Township. This project area consolidates the Northern and Central Project Areas, as approved in the 2005 County PIG Round.

Table 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Pct. of Land Under Farmland Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper Pittsgrove Township</td>
<td>Salem</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stow Creek Township</td>
<td>Cumberland</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marmaraton Township</td>
<td>Salem</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloucester City</td>
<td>Camden</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilesgrove Township</td>
<td>Salem</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin Township</td>
<td>Warren</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shiloh Borough</td>
<td>Cumberland</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chesterfield Township</strong></td>
<td><strong>Burlington</strong></td>
<td><strong>75%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hopewell Township</td>
<td>Cumberland</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Harrison Township</td>
<td>Gloucester</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Springfield Township</strong></td>
<td><strong>Burlington</strong></td>
<td><strong>72%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaware Township</td>
<td>Hunterdon</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Deerfield Township</td>
<td>Cumberland</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woolwich Township</td>
<td>Gloucester</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freeleighsuessen Township</td>
<td>Warren</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingwood Township</td>
<td>Hunterdon</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin Township</td>
<td>Hunterdon</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Freehold Township</td>
<td>Monmouth</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cranbury Township</td>
<td>Middlesex</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>North Hanover Township</strong></td>
<td><strong>Burlington</strong></td>
<td><strong>64%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Jersey</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2001 farmland assessment records.

* Municipality lies within the Route 206 Farm Belt.
The **West Project Area** covers the southern portion of Lumberton Township, the non-Pinelands agricultural areas west of Rt. 206 in Southampton Township, northern Medford Township (with portions in the Pinelands Regional Growth Area) and a small section of Hainesport Township. A description of this project area is contained in Appendix G.

The **East Project Area** contains portions of Southampton and Pemberton Township that are within the jurisdiction of the NJPC. A description of this project area is contained in Appendix G. This project area is roughly the extent of the Pinelands Fringe Project Area, previously approved in the old County PIG Program.

The **South Project Area** contains portions of Medford, Shamong, Tabernacle, Southampton and Pemberton Township that are within the jurisdiction of the NJPC. A description of this project area is contained in Appendix G. This project area consolidates portions of the Pinelands Fringe and Rancocas Project Areas, previously approved in the old County PIG Program.
Detailed maps of each new Project Area including farms already preserved and farms targeted for future preservation are contained in Appendix E.

In addition, the CADB Subcommittee recommended creating a new category of targeted farm, an “Urban Farm.” The CADB recognizes that there are farms in urban areas of the County that serve unique and important functions to the local residents. There is one urban farm preserved, the former Winner Farm (Moorestown / Mt. Laurel Twps, now preserved) and the Hunter Family Farm (Cinnaminson Township, currently in application). Additional farms of this nature will be considered by the CADB on a case-by-case basis. Farms not in an approved SADC project area will not be eligible for state
funding under the County PIG Program unless the SADC approved a new or amended project area.

**Factors Limiting Farmland Preservation Implementation**

The below represents the perceived factors limiting farmland preservation implementation:

- Funding
- Projected Costs
- Land Supply
- Landowner Interest
- Administrative Resources

In general, funding availability from the SADC through the GSPT (or any state funding mechanism) represents the biggest factor limiting implementation. As previously stated, funding past FY 2009 through the SADC is unknown. The SADC is expected to be depleted of new financial resources for the foreseeable future. County and Township funding are not factors that at this time will limit implementation. If SADC funding is not available the County’s FPP will likely have to make difficult choices related to processing new applications. Costs are rising but not to levels seen in other parts of the state. The supply of available quality farmland for preservation is not currently an issue nor is landowner interest.

Administrative resources will always be a challenge. Currently the County’s FPP is properly staffed in terms of numbers and quality. Existing staff are implementing internal efficiency-based measures so that in the future, more can be accomplished with existing resources.

One could argue that all of these factors have been faced by the County’s FPP in the past. The key will be to monitor the status of these factors and respond accordingly, all while informing potential applicants of changes in policy in light of potentially difficult realities.

**Chapter IX** includes specific strategies related to reaching established goals related to the preservation of farmland in Burlington County. These strategies are related to **Goal #1** of this Plan, the preservation of an **additional 20,000 acres** of farmland in Burlington County over the next 10 years using various farmland preservation tools.
Chapter III
Supporting Studies

This section of the Plan is intended to provide a description of previous and on-going studies that greatly impacted the development of this Plan and guided the recommendations contained in Section IX.

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Related Burlington County Planning & Technical Studies

Building on the County’s national reputation as a leader and innovator in supporting the farm sector, County and local leaders have agreed that economic development initiatives for agriculture must explicitly: (1) stabilize the farmland base to make farmland and other necessary resources available and accessible to future farmers, and (2) promote agricultural economic development and other policies that keep farmers on the land. This consensus was reached in the process of preparing and completing the Northern Burlington County Regional Strategic Plan Technical Report – Economic Development and Agriculture (2004) (the “Technical Report.”)

In developing the Technical Report, the County incorporated the thoughts and ideas of thirteen (13) participating municipalities, County leaders, expert consultants, and other partners including the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, the NJDEP, the New Jersey Department of Transportation, the NJDA, and the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission. The Route 206 Farm Belt is defined to include the following 13 municipalities located in the northern part of the Burlington County:

- Bordentown City
- Bordentown Township
- Chesterfield Township
- Eastampton Township
- Fieldsboro Borough
- Mansfield Township
- New Hanover Township
- North Hanover Township
- Pemberton Borough
- Pemberton Township
- Southampton Township
- Springfield Township
- Wrightstown Borough
Though the Northern Burlington County Strategic Plan is scoped to one region of the County, much of the data and analysis was done on the County-level. As such, the recommendations related to economic development and the agriculture sector can be reasonably applied to the entire county. In addition, a vast majority of the remaining undeveloped and unpreserved agricultural lands outside of the Pinelands is within this study region.

The Technical Report drew primarily from a comprehensive, two-year study of agricultural viability prepared for Burlington County by the Heinrich-Schilling Joint Venture. This study, funded by a Smart Growth Planning Grant from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, Office of Smart Growth resulted in a series of three technical reports.

The first two reports provide a foundation of information about Farm Belt farmers, agricultural practices, the challenges farmers face, and the opportunities to shape a viable future for farming in the region:

- A Review of Farm Industry Economics (February 2004) provides a snapshot of the economic aspects of the farm industry in the region.
- Current Industry Status and Trends (December 2004) provides a detailed examination of the agricultural sector in the study area as an industry, a way of life and a land use.

The third report, Strategies for Farm Viability (December 2004) recommends to officials at the municipal, County, and state levels, and to members of the farm community, 268 actions to promote the viability of agriculture in northern Burlington County.

The Burlington County Department of Economic and Regional Planning, in collaboration with the DRC, selected 59 priority actions from the Strategies report to begin to implement the twelve-point strategy based on their relatively low cost, high understandability, likely political viability, short implementation timeframe, and favorable response from the local farm community. A 60th priority action regarding an agricultural education opportunity was derived from discussions by this study’s Agricultural Viability Task Group. Feedback from the Steering Committee for the Northern Burlington County Regional Strategic Plan resulted in four additional recommended actions.

This Technical Report recommends advancing a twelve-point strategy for keeping agriculture economically viable:

**Preserve the Farmland Base.** Evaluate the demand for leasable land and preferred lease terms; align farmland preservation funding and local right-to-farm provisions to support established goals; use transfer of development rights
and other density transfer provisions to preserve farmland while managing growth; assess opportunities for farm owner succession within agriculture.

**Retain and Recruit Farmers.** Promote and market a positive image of farming in the region; inform college students in farm management of opportunities in Burlington County; match existing farmers with land opportunities; favor active farming in auctions of farm land; sponsor an educational and policy summit for young and beginning farmers with proceedings published on the Internet; promote cross-enrollment of high school students from throughout the county in the Northern Burlington County High School agriculture program, or in satellite programs; provide more opportunities under farmland preservation programs for long-term leasing and custom farming; develop college agriculture-related programs and services at Burlington County College that meet the needs of the agricultural community in Burlington County.

**Plan for Agriculture.** Collect and adapt model ordinances that support agriculture; include agriculture and agribusiness in County economic development assistance programs; investigate potential use of Urban Enterprise Zones and Special Improvement Districts for agriculture; adopt municipal master plan elements for agricultural preservation and retention; maintain local agricultural advisory committees; envision the short, medium and long-range future of agriculture in the region; water allocation budgeting taking into account the needs of the agricultural community.

**Reform Farm Taxation.** Reduce property tax assessments for farm employee housing; use estate planning to preserve farms and farming operations; lower the property tax assessment on land under the farmhouse on deed restricted farms; provide New Jersey farmers with a credit against their annual New Jersey gross income tax determined by using income averaging from their farming business.

**Address Regulatory Compliance.** Add field technical assistance staff to the Soil Conservation District (SCD) to help farmers meet environmental regulations; create and fund a county Agricultural Industry Development Specialist position to advance economic development of production agriculture and support businesses through regulatory compliance assistance.

**Encourage Environmental Stewardship.** Inform owners of preserved farms and all farm operators of annual conservation funding programs; provide free access to computer software packages that help farmers analyze, compare and evaluate potential business, production and operational impacts of using different sets of farming practices.
Advance Public Education and Awareness about Agriculture. Organize farm tours; develop a regular local newspaper column on agriculture; convene periodic meetings between farmers and county economic development staff to address agriculture industry needs and issues; increase participation of farmers on local and county boards and committees; increase opportunities for the public to learn about New Jersey’s farm products and family farms.

Provide Technical and Business Assistance. Organize training seminars for farmers regarding emerging business issues, trends and available resources; maintain a directory of agricultural service providers and suppliers; develop emerging markets for ethnic and organic foods; encourage participation in risk management training.

Provide Financial Assistance. Coordinate with, support and enhance traditional sources of farm capital; incorporate agricultural industries into state economic development and recovery programs; provide incentives such as loan guarantees to private lenders to finance new operations and technologies that have long payback periods.

Promote Agritourism. Organize workshops for farmers and municipal officials to reduce resistance to agri-tourism; increase coordination with tourism programs to support agri-tourism; promote on-farm educational opportunities in local schools; analyze municipal ordinances for impediments to agri-tourism; include farmer representation in planning for recreation facilities and events to protect farm operations from damage.

Develop Value Added and New Markets. Promote complementary agribusinesses that can retain more of the food-marketing dollar within the region’s economy; respond to opportunities provided by changing ethnic compositions and consumer preferences in and around New Jersey; pursue federal funding opportunities for market development; pursue farmer educational opportunities with the Food Innovation Center; leverage New Jersey Fresh resources to promote local farm products.

Establish a County Agriculture Industry Development Program. Enhance the visibility and awareness of the region’s agriculture sector; promote new market development; integrate agriculture into county and local land use and economic development planning; ombudsman for agriculture industry on issues related to current and pending regulation and policy; promote locally grown farm products; organize farm tours and other educational programs for residents, local officials, and farmers; maintain a full-time Agriculture Industry Development Specialist and a broadly based board of directors for the program.
In association with the Northern Burlington County Smart Growth Program, the following studies were conducted:

- Integrated Water Resources Management Project for the Rt. 206 Corridor (July 2005)
- Rt. 206 Farm Belt Build-out Existing and Infrastructure Analysis (July 2004)

**Other Plans / Studies**

- U. of Nebraska of Lincoln: Case Study Report – Burlington County, NJ “Farm Viability in Urbanizing Areas”
- July 2006 Staff Report and Recommendations of the Burlington County Community Agricultural Center Working Group
- SADC Strategic Targeting Project
- NJDA– Smart Growth Plan for Agriculture
- 2007 Annual Report – NJPC Long-Term Monitoring Program
- Pinelands Development Credit Bank – Annual Report FY 2007
Chapter IV
Agricultural Land Base

This section of the Plan is intended to provide a clear description of the agricultural characteristics and trends within Burlington County, specifically over the last 20 years. This information was generated primarily from the reports entitled “Agriculture in Burlington County’s Route 206 Farm Belt: Current Industry Status and Trends (2004)” and “A Review of Farm Industry Economics (2004).” Burlington County’s well-defined “farm belt” spans a thirteen-municipality region traversed by U.S. Route 206 in the northeastern portion of the county.

Although these reports focused on this agriculturally significant thirteen-municipality region, a majority of the analysis contained in the report was conducted at the County-level. As such, these reports are incorporated by reference and portions of this section have been duplicated directly from these reports.

Location and Size of Burlington County’s Agricultural Land Base

As reported in the Review of Farm Industry Economics, Burlington County is among the most agricultural counties in the state based upon number of farms, farmland acreage, and sales of farm products. Farmland assessment records confirm that a substantial portion of this agricultural activity outside the Pinelands is concentrated in the northern part of the county, within the 13 Farm Belt communities. It is important to note that Burlington County has 63.8 percent (334,287 acres) of its total area (524,166 acres) within the Pinelands.

As reported in A Review of Farm Industry Economics, the County’s Farm Belt comprises roughly 152,000 acres of land, of which more than 68,000 acres is devoted to agricultural use. This is roughly 60 percent of the County’s entire agricultural land base but contains almost the County’s entire agricultural land base outside of the designated Pinelands Area.
According to 2002 Census of Agriculture Data, since 1982, the profile of agriculture in Burlington County has changed significantly (Table 12).

The location of the County’s agricultural land base is illustrated in the following map of all the farmland qualified properties in Burlington County. Project area descriptions (further described in this Plan) have been added to represent the County’s geographic foci on farmland preservation.

Based on the 2007 MOD-IV tax data and digital parcel mapping, roughly 46 percent (53,794 acres) of the County’s 117,910 acres of farmland qualified properties in Burlington County are within the Pinelands.
To further illustrate the location of the County’s agricultural land base the following map is provided depicting land cover classifications based on NJDEP Land Use / Land Cover data (2002). Project area descriptions (further described in this Plan) have been added to represent the County’s geographic foci on farmland preservation. The data shows that of the County’s total area (523,899 acres) 93,324 acres are classified as “Cultivated / Grassland” while 101,983 acres are classified as “developed.” Areas
classified as “upland forest” and “inland wetland represent” 160,264 acres and 145,743 acres respectively.

For further information on Burlington County’s Agricultural Land Base, see Part 2.7 and Part 3.2 of the Current Industry Status and Trends Report (December 2004)
Distribution of Soil Types and their Characteristics

The NRCS conducts soil surveys in each state to inventory existing soil resources. Information compiled includes maps characterizing and showing the locations of key soil types, as well as data on the physical and chemical properties of such soils. From this information it is possible to determine potential problems and limitations associated with alternative land uses. Soil surveys are a useful tool for gathering information necessary to guide efforts to protect water quality, wetlands, and wildlife habitat. They are also the basis for predicting erosion problems, potential for ground water contamination, and suitability for cultivation. Soil surveys, while a valuable resource, are generally not precise enough to be used for making site-specific land use or regulatory decisions. Information on soils contained in this Plan is based on the Burlington County, New Jersey Soil Survey performed by the USDA Soil Conservation Service (the predecessor of NRCS) and the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station.

Soil Capability

The NRCS land capability classification system (LCCS) can be used to understand the production potential and erodibility of farmland. Capability classes are the broadest groupings of land and are designated by Roman numerals I through VIII. Limitations on land use increase with higher numbers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 13</th>
<th>Definitions of LCCS classes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LCCS Class</td>
<td>Definition of LCCS Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Few limitations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Moderate limitations that require limited conservation practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Severe limitations that require special conservation practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Very severe limitations that require careful management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Soils are not likely to erode, but have other limitations, impractical to remove</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>Severe limitations that make soils</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The concentration of agricultural activity in the Farm Belt, as noted earlier, is tied to the quality of the region’s soils. While the Farm Belt represents only 29 percent of Burlington County’s total area, it has 44 percent of the County’s soils classified under Capability Classes I and II, soils considered generally well suited for agricultural production [Table 13]. When urban lands are excluded, the Farm Belt accounts for an even higher proportion, 49 percent, of the county’s remaining available Class I and II soils. The distribution of Class I and II soils within the Farm Belt is shown in Table 14. The County’s past and future farmland preservation efforts consider Class I and II soils the greatest priority for permanent protection.

The location of the County’s Land Capability Class I and II soils is illustrated in the following map of Burlington County. Project area descriptions (further described in this Plan) have been added to represent the County’s geographic foci on farmland preservation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>generally unsuitable for cultivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>Very severe limitations that make soils unsuitable for cultivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>Soils with limitations that nearly preclude their use for commercial crop production</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Soil Productivity

The NRCS\(^\text{16}\) classifies certain soils as *prime*, *statewide important* or *unique* based on their agricultural productivity. **Prime farmland** soils rest on land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber and oilseed crops. They have the quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. Prime soils are not excessively erodible or saturated with water for a long period of time, and they either flood infrequently or are protected from flooding.

Farmland soils of statewide importance produce high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods, but have yields that are not as high as **prime soils**. **Unique soils** exhibit specific qualities that may be favorable to the production of specialized crops. Soils of **local importance** are not mapped or designated by NRCS as agricultural soils, but exhibit viability for the production of field crops, hay, livestock pasturing, and some fruits and vegetables. **The County’s past and future farmland preservation efforts consider soils of prime and statewide importance the greatest priority for permanent protection.**

Only 20 percent of Burlington County’s soils (106,258 acres) are considered prime agricultural land. In contrast, 37 percent of soils in the Farm Belt region (56,768 acres) is classified as prime [Table 14]. Therefore, 53 percent of all prime farmland soils in the

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\(^{16}\) For more information on the classification of soils for agricultural use, see the Natural Resources Conservation Service (New Jersey office) website at:
county are found within this region, a region comprising only 29 percent of total County acreage.

The location of the County’s Prime, Statewide, Local, and Unique soils is illustrated in the following map of Burlington County. Project area descriptions (further described in this Plan) have been added to represent the County’s geographic foci on farmland preservation.
The *Current Industry Status and Trends* Report shows that more than 12,400 acres of prime farmland soils in the Farm Belt are now under urban development. Countywide, nearly 34,000 acres of prime soils have been converted to urban uses. This means that more than one-fifth of the Farm Belt’s prime farmland soils have already been lost to urbanization. Countywide, approaching one-third of prime agricultural soils have been converted to urban use. As of 1997, 44,333 acres of prime soils remained in non-urban areas in the Farm Belt. This translates into 61 percent of the prime soils remaining in the County. There has been no substantial change in these statistics when analyzing the 2002 Land Use / Land Cover data available from the NJDEP.

**Table 15**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Farm Belt</th>
<th>Burlington County</th>
<th>Farm Belt as % of County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prime agricultural soils</td>
<td>56,768 acres</td>
<td>106,258 acres</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All soils (total area)</td>
<td>152,004 acres</td>
<td>519,783 acres</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prime as Pct. of all soils</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Soil Survey Geographic database, NRCS, USDA.

**Table 16**

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Farm Belt (acres)</th>
<th>Burlington County (acres)</th>
<th>Farm Belt as % of County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prime agricultural soils - All Land Uses</td>
<td>56,768</td>
<td>106,258</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prime agricultural soils - Non-Urban Land Uses</td>
<td>44,333</td>
<td>72,570</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prime agricultural soils converted to Urban Use</td>
<td>12,435</td>
<td>33,685</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pct. of prime agricultural soils lost</strong></td>
<td><strong>22%</strong></td>
<td><strong>32%</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Soil Survey Geographic database, NRCS, USDA.

For further information on Burlington County’s Soil Resources, reference Part 2.4 of the *Current Industry Status and Trends* Report (December 2004)
Irrigated Acreage and Available Water Resources

Agricultural viability and production are tied into and dependent upon not only an adequate farmland base, but also the water cycle. Without water there would be no crops. Farmland acres absorb water and recharge underground aquifers, and hold water to allow the movement of nutrients into crops and woodlands through evapotranspiration. Without farmland and open space, water is more likely to run off over the surface of the land with the potential to carry soil particles and nutrients with it down to surface water bodies and streams.

248 farms irrigated 13,548 acres during 2002, representing roughly 10 percent of the County’s farms and just 12 percent of its farmland. (Table 17) However, every background report reviewed to develop this Plan indicates that many more farmers are considering or are currently changing to agricultural production regimes that require irrigated water. This is due, in part, to shifting market conditions that favor water intensive agriculture, such as nursery and sod crops. In the Pinelands, the water needs of cranberry farmers engaging in wet and dry harvest production can not be understated along with the needs of the County’s blueberry farmers. These indigenous Pinelands industries rely as much on the availability of water for production as they do on the availability of land.

Farming is totally dependent upon an adequate water supply for the crops being grown or livestock and other commodities being produced. Recent periods of drought have taught New Jersey farmers that irrigation is a necessary investment for production of fruits, vegetables, and some grains. Table 17 shows the increase in irrigated farms over the recent past.

| Table 17 |
| Change in Number of Irrigated Farms in Burlington County, 1987-1997. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of farms</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irrigated land (acres)</td>
<td>9,194</td>
<td>8,699</td>
<td>11,437</td>
<td>13,548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvested Cropland (acres)</td>
<td>9,025</td>
<td>8,650</td>
<td>11,154</td>
<td>13,360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasture land &amp; other land (acres)</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture, various years.

Recognizing the industry’s absolute need for water, the regulations do not limit the amount to be withdrawn. But annual registration is supposed to give the NJDEP the information it needs to determine whether total withdrawals exceed the sustainable yield of available ground and surface waters. According to Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Burlington County, 198 farm operators are currently registered.
Since June 1999, 20 Burlington County farm operators with either preserved farms or 8-year program agreements have received $302,359 in state soil and water conservation grants in order to design and install irrigation systems, according to the minutes of the State Soil Conservation Committee. Requiring a 50 percent match, these farmers invested a total of $604,718 to provide water for a wide variety of crops. Many of these systems use the latest technology in drip irrigation or in flow control devices. Other farmers have constructed irrigation ponds, withdrawal from which is also regulated by the Water Allocation Act and registration or certification.

It has been increasingly difficult for farmers to acquire the permits to drill new wells or make other withdrawals over 100,000 gallons per day. This is especially true over most of the study area that falls under Water Supply Critical Area II (see below). The inability to develop a new water supply through the Agricultural Diversion program will limit future farmers to crops dependent upon natural rainfall such as grains and field crops, including hay. Only the latter crop could, if marketed directly, increase profitability. The other commodities that could grow with only natural rainfall are priced by market systems out of the control of the farm operator.

**Burlington County Water Allocation Credit Exchange**

In 1993, the NJDEP established Water Supply Critical Area II (CWA2) including most of Burlington, Camden and Gloucester Counties. According to the Department, there has been overuse of the Potomac-Raritan-Magothy aquifer, the main source of potable water for the area. Ground water levels were reduced, causing intrusion of salt water and increased risk of contamination of the aquifer. Users of this water, other than agricultural users, were required to reduce withdrawals to 1991 levels.

State legislation established a Water Allocation Credit Transfer Program that would allow additional withdrawals from the aquifer from within a designated area in Burlington County. In 1988, the Freeholder Board established itself as the Burlington County Water Exchange allowing it to manage a water allocation program.

In 2004, the County adopted a Water Allocation Credit Exchange that would enable new withdrawals of *groundwater* in accordance with a plan designating where this water could be used. Categories of water allocation were defined. Category A was to supply the immediate need of water suppliers who have exceeded their base allocation and suppliers of any interconnected systems. These would take precedence over allocation of credits for any other category. Category B contains 50 percent of the water allocation credits remaining after satisfying Category A. These would be reserved for activities “which enhance Burlington County’s FPP and employ currently acceptable water conservation measures.” **Farmers are entitled to 50 percent of the total water**
available after the immediate needs of Category A are satisfied, and can increase allocations.

The NJDEP Bureau of Water Allocation regulates the diversion of Water in New Jersey. An Agricultural Water Usage Certification or Agricultural Water Use Registration must be obtained from the County agricultural agent if an agricultural operator seeks to withdraw ground and/or surface water in excess of 100,000 gallons per day, or has a combined pump capacity of 70 gallons per minute or greater is regulated by the Bureau of Water Allocation for agricultural, aquacultural or horticultural purposes.

The Bureau of Water Allocation regulates water diversion through permitting, certification, and registration programs. According to their website, agricultural facilities diverting more than 100,000 gallons per day are regulated with Agricultural Water Use Certifications. Agricultural facilities diverting less than 100,000 gallons per day but with a capability to divert over 100,000 gallons per day (70 gpm) are regulated by Agricultural Water Use Registrations. Non-agricultural facilities diverting less than 100,000 gallons per day but with a capability to divert over 100,000 gallons per day (70 gpm) are regulated by Water Use Registrations.

For further information on water demand and available water resources, reference Part 2.5 of the Current Industry Status and Trends Report (December 2004) and the Rt. 206 Water Resources Study.

**Farmland Assessment and Census of Agriculture Statistics and Trends**

**Farmland Assessment Statistics**

In New Jersey the Farmland Assessment Act of 1963 helps reduce the real estate tax burden for land “actively devoted to agriculture.” Table 18 represents the most recent and historical farmland assessment data for Burlington County related to the use of the assessed farmland.
Table 18
Burlington County – Historical Farmland Assessment Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cropland Harvested (acres)</td>
<td>60,324</td>
<td>63,082</td>
<td>63,557</td>
<td>65,104</td>
<td>66,381</td>
<td>73,200</td>
<td>73,723</td>
<td>83,719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cropland Pastured (acres)</td>
<td>4,717</td>
<td>5,107</td>
<td>4,396</td>
<td>4,365</td>
<td>4,352</td>
<td>5,390</td>
<td>5,134</td>
<td>5,457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent Pasture (acres)</td>
<td>7,921</td>
<td>8,043</td>
<td>8,233</td>
<td>8,283</td>
<td>8,246</td>
<td>8,801</td>
<td>10,173</td>
<td>11,297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Ag Subtotal (acres)</td>
<td>72,962</td>
<td>76,232</td>
<td>76,186</td>
<td>77,752</td>
<td>78,979</td>
<td>87,391</td>
<td>89,030</td>
<td>100,473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unattached Woodland (acres)</td>
<td>27,384</td>
<td>27,165</td>
<td>25,547</td>
<td>29,150</td>
<td>27,583</td>
<td>23,838</td>
<td>12,031</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attached Woodland (acres)</td>
<td>37,149</td>
<td>40,069</td>
<td>40,660</td>
<td>41,386</td>
<td>41,027</td>
<td>48,778</td>
<td>47,859</td>
<td>49,476*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equine Acres</td>
<td>826</td>
<td>786</td>
<td>857</td>
<td>760</td>
<td>775</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total for Ag Use (acres)</td>
<td>138,321</td>
<td>144,252</td>
<td>143,250</td>
<td>149,048</td>
<td>148,364</td>
<td>160,008</td>
<td>148,919</td>
<td>154,119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total County Land Area</td>
<td>514,927</td>
<td>514,927</td>
<td>514,927</td>
<td>514,927</td>
<td>514,927</td>
<td>514,927</td>
<td>514,927</td>
<td>514,927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage Farmland Assessed</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
<td>28.0%</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
<td>29.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NJ Department of Labor
* Total Woodland / Wetland

In 2004, the municipalities in Burlington County with the most “active agriculture” in terms of farmland assessment were:

1. Springfield (10,491 acres)
2. Southampton (8,783 acres)
3. Chesterfield (7,452 acres)
4. Mansfield (6,441 acres)
5. Pemberton (6,172 acres)

According to 2004 Farmland Assessment statistics, in Burlington County, there are 41,455 acres in field crops, 2,032 acres in cover crops, 7,219 acres in fruit and berries, 43 acres in grape production, 8,398 acres in nursery production, and 5,233 acres in vegetable production. Table 19 represents the most recent and historical farmland assessment data for Burlington County related to agricultural production.
Table 19
Burlington County – Historical Farmland Assessment Data
Agricultural Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Farms</td>
<td>2,593</td>
<td>2,610</td>
<td>2,607</td>
<td>2,663</td>
<td>2,672</td>
<td>2,806</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Field Crops (acres)</td>
<td>41,455</td>
<td>42,125</td>
<td>43,917</td>
<td>44,352</td>
<td>47,129</td>
<td>53,091</td>
<td>51,911</td>
<td>63,096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Cover Crops (acres)</td>
<td>2,032</td>
<td>1,696</td>
<td>2,093</td>
<td>1,355</td>
<td>962</td>
<td>1,693</td>
<td>1,162</td>
<td>2,692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Fruit (acres)</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>701</td>
<td>619</td>
<td>574</td>
<td>696</td>
<td>1,112</td>
<td>1,036</td>
<td>1,611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Berries (acres)</td>
<td>6,679</td>
<td>6,870</td>
<td>6,504</td>
<td>6,567</td>
<td>6,734</td>
<td>7,516</td>
<td>7,704</td>
<td>6,258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grapes (acres)</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Nursery (acres)</td>
<td>8,398</td>
<td>8,878</td>
<td>8,374</td>
<td>8,139</td>
<td>7,625</td>
<td>7,008</td>
<td>7,199</td>
<td>5,840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Vegetable (acres)</td>
<td>5,233</td>
<td>5,453</td>
<td>5,171</td>
<td>5,622</td>
<td>5,382</td>
<td>5,602</td>
<td>5,766</td>
<td>6,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Irrigated Acres</td>
<td>4,459</td>
<td>3,884</td>
<td>2,626</td>
<td>2,765</td>
<td>2,793</td>
<td>2,631</td>
<td>2,195</td>
<td>9,175</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NJ Department of Labor

Census of Agriculture Statistics

According to the most recent Census of Agriculture (2002), Burlington County has 906 farms remaining today, operating on 111,237 acres of farmland [Table 20]. Farmland now accounts for only one-fifth of the county’s land base. In the past 100 years, the county has lost two-thirds of its farms and 70 percent of its farmland. Since 1950, Burlington County has lost approximately half of its farms and farmland.

In 2002, the average farm size in the county was 123 acres, not substantially smaller than the average farm back in 1900 [Table 20]. In 2002, the median farm size was 21 acres. More than one-quarter of all farms in the County were less than 10 acres in size. More than two-thirds of farms in the County operated on 50 acres or less. Twenty years ago, fewer than 13 percent of farms were less than 10 acres, and only about 44 percent comprised less than 50 acres. Overall, very small farms (less than 10 acres) only operate about one (1) percent of the agricultural land base in Burlington County.

The emergence of the green industry, for example, has resulted in a large number of small farms that are under 50 acres, and often under 10 acres, in size. Many successful nursery and greenhouse operations are operated on relatively little land due to the high
value of the products grown and sold. The proliferation of small farms is also partially attributable to a growing interest in so-called “hobby farming,” large residential landowners that engage in small-scale agricultural production.

Interviews with prominent farmers, as well as agents from Rutgers Cooperative Extension and personnel from farm support agencies, substantiate a divergence in the structure of Burlington County’s farm industry. While the number of small farms is increasing, some farms are getting larger; but for different reasons. Particularly in sectors such as grains and dairy, the ability to farm large tracts of land is necessary to achieve the economies of scale needed to earn a sufficient living in farming.

Understanding the size structure of agricultural operations in the county has important implications for farmland preservation efforts. For example, decisions regarding the future disposition of more than half of Burlington farmland rest in the hands of a very few farmers. Approaching two-thirds of Burlington County’s land in farms, nearly 72,000 acres, is operated by only 62 large farms (500 acres or more in size) [Table 20]. Nearly one-half (47 percent), or about 52,000 acres, of farmland is controlled by the 32 largest farms in the county.

Table 20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Farms</th>
<th>Pct.</th>
<th>Land in Farms</th>
<th>Pct.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 to 9</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>1,443</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 to 49</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>7,831</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 to 69</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3,104</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 to 99</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4,839</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 to 139</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3,869</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140 to 179</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2,723</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>180 to 219</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3,101</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>220 to 259</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1,937</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>260 to 499</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>10,429</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 to 999</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>19,640</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000 to 1999</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>36,761</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000+</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>15,560</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Farms</td>
<td>906</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>111,237</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At first glance, the 2002 Census of Agriculture reports that farm numbers increased in the ensuing five years to 906. According to the revised 1997 Census data on farm numbers released by the National Agricultural Statistics Service, Burlington County had 935 farms in 1997. Therefore, the 2002 Census count of 906 farms represents a relative decline from 1997 when the same coverage methodology is used.

While one may look with despair at the loss of agricultural activity experienced in the county in the past several decades, the fact is that Burlington County still maintains a vibrant farming industry today. According to the 1997 U.S. Census of Agriculture, Burlington County’s 857 farms sold agricultural products worth more than $87.5 million. According to the most recent Census of Agriculture, farm product sales in the County appear to have only fallen slightly in recent years to a level of $83.3 million in 2002.

Burlington County farmers operate more than 111,000 acres of farmland. However, what is often not well understood is the ownership of such lands. According to the 2002 Census of Agriculture, about 65 percent of farmland operated in the county is owned by the farmers farming the land (up from 58 percent in 1997).

The availability and affordability of quality rental property is critical for Burlington County farmers. Rental land enables expansion of existing businesses (i.e., land-intensive grain operations) as well as provides beginning farmers access to property without making large capital investments in land. These patterns of farmland ownership are not dissimilar from those seen elsewhere. Indeed, in New Jersey and nationally, 64 and 62 percent, respectively, of farmland is owned by farm operators.

Chapter V
Agricultural Industry – Trends and Overview

This section of the Plan is intended to provide a thorough overview of the County’s existing agricultural industry, including historical crop trends and the market value of agricultural products over the last 20 years. In addition, this section discusses the status of private sector agricultural related industries and public sector agricultural support agencies.

Similar to other sections of this Plan, this section relies heavily on the report entitled “Agriculture in Burlington County’s Route 206 Farm Belt: Current Industry Status and Trends (2004).” This report is incorporated by reference and information on the following can be found in Burlington County’s Agricultural Industry, see Part 3 (Agriculture as an Industry) and Part 4 (Farm Belt Agriculture – A Way of Life).

------------------------

Production agriculture is a historically important industry in Burlington County. Like most of New Jersey, Burlington County rose from agrarian roots. As noted in the Review of Farm Industry Economics, production agriculture maintains important linkages to a wide range of support industries, ranging from large animal veterinarians and feed suppliers to equipment and packaging manufacturers. In 1997, these linkages to other industries created an additional $47.6 million in economic activity, bringing the total economic impact of production agriculture in Burlington County to $135.2 million.

While farms continue to contribute significantly to the economy of the county, they are also increasingly being recognized for the important contributions to the quality of life enjoyed by Burlington County residents. County visioning exercises have demonstrated the visual preferences for agrarian scenes held by municipal leaders and citizens in Burlington County. Farms across the state are often the stewards of dwindling open space resources and associated aesthetic, ecological, recreational, and historic amenities.

Agriculture also remains an important part of the culture of Burlington County. Farmers, despite the fact they account for an ever-decreasing fraction of the region’s population, are still active local leaders in many municipalities in which agriculture remains a significant industry, serving on town governing bodies, planning and zoning boards, and other local committees. And in many instances, the farming industry has shaped the local fabric of communities throughout Burlington County. It is not uncommon to see third, fourth, or even older generations of farm families operating on the same land as their forefathers. The question remains at to whether children and
grandchildren of today’s farm families will be willing and able to maintain the farming tradition in northern Burlington County.

Included in *Review of Farm Industry Economics* is the following list of strengths and challenges in the Burlington County Farm Sector.

**Strengths and Challenges in the Burlington County Farm Sector**

**Strengths**

1. Very large agricultural base
   - 857 farms (3rd in state)
   - 103,667 acres of farmland (2nd in state)
   - Farms tend to be large as compared to other parts of state (average farm size is 121 acres)
   - Large farm product sales volume ($87.5 million is 2nd in state)
   - Overall economic impact in county of $135 million

2. Many very large farms
   - 48% of farms have sales of more than $10,000 (1st in state)
   - 15 farms are over 1000 acres (1st in state)

3. Higher level of farm profitability (as compared to other counties)
   - Net cash return from farming is more than $23 million (2nd in state)
   - More than half of farms generate net gains (4th in state)
   - Average profit per farm is 30% higher than state average

4. High concentration of state’s fruit production

5. High concentration of nursery production

6. High capital investment in farm machinery and equipment (3rd in state)

7. Average age of farmer is lower than statewide average

8. Diversity of farm operations (in terms of size and production)

**Challenges**

1. Property taxes are 5 times the national average (and rising)

2. Many small farms (may require different policy support)

3. Average net farm income per farm (for all farms in the county) is only $27,651
   - Median household income in Burlington County was $58,608 in 1999

4. Majority of farm machinery and equipment predates 1993

5. High demand for hired farm labor
   - Availability of farm labor is tightening across the state
   - Costs of labor (i.e., insurances)
   - Increased need for farm labor housing

6. Rising input costs

7. Intergenerational transfer of farms
   - The average Burlington County farmer is 54.5 years old (and rising)
   - Creating an environment conducive to new farmer entry
   - Encouraging transfer of farm businesses to younger family members

**Trends in Market Value of Agricultural Products Sold**

The Burlington County agriculture of today is quite diverse, producing a large number of crops and livestock products. Total farm products sales in 2002 totaled $83.3 million, down roughly five (5) percent from the 1997 sales volume of $87.5 million. Leading commodity areas in Burlington County (by sales volume) in 2002, are shown in Table 21. While direct comparison between 2002 and 1997 data is not possible, the sales information does suggest several notable changes over the time period. Since 1997 there was a substantial rise in nursery, greenhouse, floriculture & sod revenues (up from $26.9 million and a 31 percent sales share in 1997) and a large decline in fruits and berries (down from $26.9 million and a 33 percent sales share). A more moderate gain in
revenues was experienced in the vegetable sector (up from $9.1 million in 1997) while grain sales fell (from $9.4 million and an 11 percent sales share). Sales from dairy also fell from the 1997 level ($5.1 million).

Table 21
Leading Agricultural Commodities in Burlington County (2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture &amp; sod crops</td>
<td>$38.3</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruits, nuts and berries</td>
<td>$16.9</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables, sweet corn, melons &amp; potatoes</td>
<td>$10.6</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grains</td>
<td>$5.6</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy</td>
<td>$4.5</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equine</td>
<td>$4.4</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other crops &amp; hay</td>
<td>$1.1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattle and calves</td>
<td>$0.8</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christmas trees</td>
<td>$0.4</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poultry and related products</td>
<td>$0.3</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other livestock (incl. sheep and aquaculture)</td>
<td>$0.3</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hogs and pigs</td>
<td>$0.09</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$83.3</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2002 U.S. Census of Agriculture.

There are two major agricultural products produced in Burlington County whose operations are based in the Pinelands. These products, cranberries and blueberries are critical components of Burlington County’s agricultural industry. According to the NJPC Long-Term Economic Monitoring Program (2007 Annual Report), the cranberry and blueberry industries in New Jersey are “currently experiencing productive years and favorable market conditions. The value in utilized production of cranberries increased for the fifth time in six years in 2005, rising 45 percent to $18.5 million. A 35 percent increase in production is cited as the key variable to that increase. Cranberry prices also increased by seven (7) percent for the year to finish at over $35 per 100 lbs. The blueberry industry also experienced health growth in 2005, with the value of utilized production increasing by 17.6 percent for the year. A 15.4 percent increase in production to 45 million pounds is cited as the key variable to that increase. Blueberry prices remained relatively flat for the fourth consecutive year, posting a price of $1.27 for an increase of 1.7 percent.”

**Direct Marketing Agriculture Products**

The direct marketing of farm products to consumers is emerging as an important strategy for promoting farm viability in many states, particularly those where farmers have ready access to urban and suburban consumer bases. New Jersey, and more

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notably Burlington County, is ahead of the curve in this respect. By selling products directly to consumers, farmers are able to capture a greater percentage of the consumer food dollar.

In 1997, New Jersey ranked only 30th in agricultural product sales. However, the state ranked 8th in terms of the sales of farm products direct for human consumption (direct marketing sales). With sales topping $4.1 million, Burlington County ranked fifth among all U.S. counties in direct marketing sales of food-based agricultural products alone [Table 22]. Seven of the top 10 leading counties, including top ranked San Diego County, were in California. Lancaster County in neighboring Pennsylvania and Worcester County, Massachusetts were also among the leaders in farm direct marketing. As Table 3-3 shows, growth in Burlington County’s direct marketing sales since 1992 has been substantial (120 percent increase over the five-year period).

According to the 2002 Census of Agriculture, fewer Burlington County farms reported direct marketing sales in 2002 vis-à-vis 1997 (151 versus a revised 1997 figure of 164 farms). Direct marketing sales, too, were lower. In 2002, direct-to-consumer sales of farm products in the County also appeared to be lower ($3.1 million).18

18 Statewide, the number of farms reporting direct marketing sales similarly dropped, although direct marketing sales were up by about 4 percent. Whether these data reflect an underlying change in the level of direct marketing activity in the County or are more attributable to changes in Census methodology and data collection is unclear.
Table 22

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>San Diego, CA</td>
<td>$6,205</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$2,021</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Joaquin, CA</td>
<td>$5,868</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$1,800</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lancaster, PA</td>
<td>$5,589</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$4,656</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worcester, MA</td>
<td>$4,725</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>$4,072</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burlington, NJ</td>
<td>$4,078</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$1,851</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tulare, CA</td>
<td>$4,028</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>$1,363</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverside, CA</td>
<td>$3,947</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>$2,345</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresno, CA</td>
<td>$3,817</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>$1,392</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ventura, CA</td>
<td>$3,478</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>$2,299</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanislaus, CA</td>
<td>$3,343</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>$2,131</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


According to the NJDA’s Jersey Fresh Program, there are 51 farms in Burlington County with active roadside markets and 16 with “Pick Your Own” components to their farms. Only 2 farms are certified organic farms. Table 23 is a summary of the information on the Jersey Fresh web site:

Table 23
Burlington County Farms – Direct Market Producers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Farm</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Roadside Market</th>
<th>PYO</th>
<th>Organic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1895 Organic Farm</td>
<td>Lumberton</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abrams Farms</td>
<td>Medford / Southampton</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Cranberry Company</td>
<td>Pemberton</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berry Best Farm</td>
<td>Southampton</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birches Cranberry</td>
<td>Vincentown</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Browning Hess Farm Market</td>
<td>Moorestown</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budd’s K-n-P Farms Country Market</td>
<td>Pemberton</td>
<td>X X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C S Heal Farm Market, Inc.</td>
<td>Burlington</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conte Farm</td>
<td>Tabernacle</td>
<td>X X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conte Farm</td>
<td>Vincentown</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coverly’s Roadside Market</td>
<td>Mount Laurel</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crescent Farms, Inc</td>
<td>Columbus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eckert’s Corn</td>
<td>Vincentown</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emmons Dairy</td>
<td>Pemberton</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fernwood Springs Farm</td>
<td>Westampton</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred + III</td>
<td>Pemberton</td>
<td>X X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grossman Farms</td>
<td>Chesterfield</td>
<td>X X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haines Berry Farm</td>
<td>Pemberton</td>
<td>X X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hasselhan Farm</td>
<td>Marlton</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidden View Nursery &amp; Farm Market</td>
<td>Bordentown /</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

95
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hull's Produce</td>
<td>Yardville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter's Farm Market &amp; Greenhouse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Acres Tree Farm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Hill Farm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J &amp; J Farm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson's Corner Farm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katona Farms, Inc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lew's Farm Market</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lew's Farm Market II</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewis Farm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lone Wolf Farm Market</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lone Wolf Farm Market II</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mabel Abrams Farm / KLM Greenhouse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mill Creek Organic Farm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needmor Farm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Branch Blueberries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul's Tree Farm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perez Farms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piper Blueberry Farm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainbow Meadow Farms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Top Farm Market</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reeves Berries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River side Homestead Farm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robson Farm Market</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russo's Fruit &amp; Vegetable Farm, Inc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russo's Orchard Lane Farm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sager / Reeves Blueberries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Springville Orchard &amp; Herbary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stoney Lane Farm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sundown Farm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winner's Farm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worrell Blueberries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NJDA, Jersey Fresh Website

**Crop & Production Trends**

The composition of agriculture all across New Jersey has changed significantly over time. As recently as 1969, agricultural sales in New Jersey were split evenly between crops and livestock [Figure E]. Today, crops account for 88 percent of the state’s total farm cash receipts, with livestock and related farm products accounting for the remaining 12 percent of agricultural product sales.
The pattern in Burlington County is largely the same. Burlington County’s, like New Jersey’s, farm economy has shifted markedly away from livestock to crops in the last several decades. Once a dominant livestock county, today crop production accounts for 88 percent of overall farm product sales, with livestock and related products contributing only 12 percent of agricultural sales volume. Historical records, however, demonstrate the importance of livestock agriculture in the county through the middle of the 1900s.

For example, in the 1800s, Burlington County was well regarded for the number and quality of its workhorses. With the advance of the Industrial Revolution, however, the need for horses for farm work declined, as did the workhorse production industry. By the mid-1900s, horse production increased again, although not for on-farm work purposes. This time, breeding horses for show and racing (coupled with the passage of farmland assessment provisions) provided opportunity for equine producers.

Swine production was also a historically important industry; in 1832 a Mansfield Township farmer was credited with fattening the largest hog of the day (1,611 pounds). Cattle production and dairying were also major agricultural industries in the county. But with the advent of refrigerated boxcars and transportation advancements, many livestock producers in the region were quickly displaced by competition from the Corn Belt where corn-fed animals could be raised more inexpensively. While macroeconomic conditions (i.e., World War II) at times supported Burlington livestock producers, the trend in these industries was downward. Thus began a transition to vegetables, poultry and other products that could be more competitively introduced into local markets.

In the first quarter of the twentieth century, Burlington County chicken and egg production expanded dramatically as demand in eastern markets increased. In the
1920s, Burlington was the largest capon-producing region in the U.S., due in large part to the success of breeding the Jersey Black Giant – the largest chicken breed of the day. As was true for many livestock producers, over time competition from outside the region tolled heavily on grain producers as well. Lower cost producers from the Midwest eventually began lowering market prices to levels that New Jersey grain producers could not profitably meet.

As highlighted in following pages, nearly two-thirds of Burlington County farm cash receipts today are generated from fruit and nursery production. Historically important livestock activities such as cattle and swine production, poultry, and dairying have largely declined. Equine production has remained significant since the mid-1900s. Vegetables and grains are also important contributors to the county’s agricultural economy (accounting for about 20 percent of total farm sales).

Based on 2002 Census of Agriculture data, statewide there are only 340 farms selling more than $500,000 in farm products (35 are in Burlington County). Of these:

- 158 are nursery, greenhouse or floriculture operations;
- 109 are vegetable farms;
- 41 are fruit farms;
- 14 are dairy farms;
- 9 equine and “other livestock” operations;
- 4 are poultry and egg producers;
- 3 are grain or oilseed farms;
- 1 is a farm producing unspecified crops; and,
- 1 is a hog and pig farm.

According to the New Jersey Agricultural Statistics Service’s 2002 crop and livestock estimates, Burlington County is among the state’s leading counties across many commodity areas, including:

- 1st in soybeans
- 1st in cranberries
- 2nd in sweet corn
- 2nd in blueberries
- 3rd in corn for grain
- 3rd acreage in nursery stock
- 4th in number of certified nurseries
- 4th in wheat for grain
- 4th in apples
- 4th in tomatoes
- 4th in asparagus acreage
- 4th in cabbage
- 4th in fluid milk production
• 4th in number of milk cows
• 5th in number of cattle and calves
• 5th in peaches.

Profiles of Major Agricultural Commodities

The characteristics of farm operations vary considerably in Burlington County, in terms of not only size but also commodities produced. The statewide characteristics of each of the following major commodity sectors are examined in detail in the Part 3.5 of the Agriculture in Burlington County’s Route 206 Farm Belt: Current Industry Status and Trends Report:

- Nursery, Greenhouse and Sod
- Fruit and Berry Production (including blueberries & cranberries)
- Grain Production
- Vegetable Production
- Dairy Production
- Equine Production

In the appendix of that report is a comparative data for the 11 major farm classifications in Burlington County.

Availability of Farm Supplies and Services

Part 3.8.8 of the Agriculture in Burlington County’s Route 206 Farm Belt: Current Industry Status and Trends Report provides detail on the availability of farm supplies services within the market region of Burlington County.

More in-depth research would be required to determine what suppliers and services Farm Belt farmers presently lack. A useful complement to such an analysis would be an examination of the factors that have driven out such businesses (aside from purely market based decisions related to client bases) and the impediments to establishing or recruiting businesses.

The results of the University of Nebraska study conducted in Burlington County did not show that surveyed farmland owners or the interviewed local experts indicated significant problems with the supply of farm chemicals, seeds, implements or other manufactured inputs. Costs and access to supplies and services has changed for the Burlington County farmer but it appears that change is not different that the challenges faced by other local businesses or consumers in this new global and technologically based economy.
Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Salem County has produced a comprehensive inventory of available farm supply and service providers. This could prove to be an idea model for the CADB and other County-based public sector agricultural service providers could put together for farmers in Burlington County.

http://salem.rutgers.edu/greenpages/service.pdf

Other Agricultural Related Industries

Farmers in Burlington County are interested in additional direct to market opportunities. Survey research conducted by the University of Nebraska supports this. Burlington County was chosen to participate in a study of fifteen urbanizing counties in the United States in 2007. One of the major findings was that relatively few Burlington County farmers were satisfied with marketing outlets for the products raised on their land. Though direct marketing to local residents through road side stands or participating in a Community Farmers Market may aid farmers increase their market share, it is not the only way.

Farmers can and should seek out other outlets for the product. These outlets could be landscapers, restaurants, supermarkets and institutions such as schools and governments. Government can play a role in increasing outlets and minimizing barriers for entrance into the market place for farmers.

It is unclear the extent of interaction between local farmers is with non-traditional buyers. This relationship should be explored further.

Part 3.3 of the Agriculture in Burlington County’s Route 206 Farm Belt: Current Industry Status and Trends Report (December 2004) provides more in depth detail on the trends in industry concentration, agricultural production mix, and direct marketing of farm products.
Chapter VI
Agricultural Economic Development, Industry Sustainability, Retention and Promotion

This section of the Plan expands on the County’s vision for farming and the agricultural industry beyond preservation of the agricultural land base. This includes existing agricultural industry support (RTF /Agricultural Mediation Programs and Farmland Assessment) and other potential support mechanisms.

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Economic Development

Even with farmland preservation, farm businesses in Burlington County, like those elsewhere, are finding it increasingly difficult to remain economically viable. Farm profits are subject to the unpredictability of commodity price markets, weather, pests and other factors beyond the control of farmers. While the farm community is innovative, with a long history of adapting to such challenges, increasing pressures from encroaching residential and commercial development is creating new challenges.

New non-agricultural development in agricultural areas creates both opportunities and conflicts for agriculture. Such development consumes productive farmland and increases pressures on remaining farmers to “sell out.” It often fragments the resource base and reduces the efficiencies with which farm properties can be operated. The industrial nature of agricultural operations, which includes early morning noise, odors, chemical application, and slow moving farm equipment on roads, leads to tensions, if not outright conflict, between farmers and non-farmers. From the farmers’ perspective, an influx of new suburban neighbors may not only create pressure to alter normal farm practices, but it also may result in theft, vandalism, and trespass issues.

The encouraging news is that farm decline and conflict are not the inevitable outcomes of suburban development. They are commonly the outcomes because proactive measures to increase the compatibility of farm and non-farm uses are not taken. New market opportunities can be realized, appropriate policies can be put into place, and actions can be taken to bridge the gap between the farm and non-farm communities.

Whether agriculture remains economically viable in Burlington County will be determined in large part by the actions - or inaction - of local leaders to engage in planning and policy making that recognizes the needs of agriculture.
Complicating matters is that, unlike farmland preservation techniques, indicators of economic development success will be more difficult to track. The public sector must be able to track and represent progress of these new programs if it expects to achieve public support of these new efforts. A stable source of funding for new agriculture economic development programs will need to be explored further. Grant opportunities from relevant public and private grant funding programs will likely be the initial source of funding for these programs.

Survey of Owners / Operators of Farmland in Burlington County

In addition to the Farm Belt Studies, the Freeholder Board agreed to take part in a study funded by a National Research Initiative Grant from the Cooperative State Research, Education, & Extension Service of the USDA. This study was conducted by Mr. Dick Esseks of the Center for Great Plains Studies at the University of Nebraska and Mr. Brian Schilling of the Food Policy Institute of Rutgers University. Burlington County was one of fifteen counties nationwide selected due to its efforts to preserve land in an urbanizing area. The researchers were specifically interested in “how Burlington County’s agricultural sector has responded to urbanization.”

In the winter of 2006, the researchers surveyed by mail to 140 owners of agricultural land in Burlington County. In addition to this survey, in 2005 and 2006 the researchers interview in phone or in-person a total of 30 members of the agribusiness community including.

Ninety-six of the respondents to the survey were farm operators rather than non-operator owners. As previously mentioned, relatively few of the respondents were satisfied with the marketing outlets for the products raised on their land.

Both the survey and the interviews showed the labor supply, adequacy of water supplies for irrigation, and the supply of future farmers to be a serious concern.

The study yielded some interesting negative and positive results. The study indicated that only 17 percent of the respondents had developed succession plans for the transfer of ownership and management of their farmland to a relative or other person. In addition, over a quarter of the sample reported some change for the worse in farming of their land “because non-farmers lived by.”

On a positive note, the survey results indicated that farm operators have not been crippled by the “impermanence syndrome”, citing that 39 percent believed that agriculture in Burlington County had a “bright” or at least “modest future.” Not

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19 Essex, pg 6
20 Defined by the study as a condition where operators are so pessimistic about their future they ceased to invest in their land’s agricultural capabilities.
surprisingly, regression analysis showed that operators were more likely to be optimistic about the future of farming if they found that the markets for their farm products were competitive. They were less likely to be optimistic if they were having difficulties with non-farm neighbors.

The results of this study are not taken by Burlington County to be matters of fact. They are taken as reinforcement to support many of the findings and recommendations of the County’s Farm Belt Reports.

**Anticipated Agricultural Trends**

As farmers face increasing pressures to stay profitable, the ability to adapt and capitalize upon new market opportunities is critical. For Burlington County farmers, direct-to-consumer marketing has emerged as an important strategy to remain profitable and successfully co-exist with a growing population of non-farm neighbors. Among the emerging opportunities that County farmers are considering are:

- Value added;
- Changing consumer preferences (i.e., organic production and community supported agriculture);
- Ethnic markets for farm products;
- Aquaculture; and
- Agritourism

These trends can maintain the viability of Burlington County agriculture by increasing the opportunities to capture more of the profits from the products they grow. Capturing more of the profits from the food system is one of the fundamental ways farmers can remain viable. According to an article in the New Planner (Spring, 2008) entitled “The Planner’s Role in the Urban Food System” a food systems is comprised of the following components:

- Production (the growing and raising of food)
- Distribution (the moving of food)
- Acquisition (the getting of food)
- Consumption (the eating of food)
- Waste (the disposal of food and food products)

The County’s FPP should explore opportunities to provide farmers with access to information related to the above trends so they are able to ascertain whether or not changes to their operations to capitalize on these trends are realistic for them. The consumer trend of “buying local” and “buying green” is important for the farmers in Burlington County to appreciate and understand. The County’s FPP is likely in a
position to increase the number of community farmers markets by sponsoring or assisting local communities organize their own.

The trend towards direct marketing should not be viewed as a panacea for the agricultural community. Direct marketing is predicated on the ability or farmers to produce high-quality agricultural products as well as their ability to sell and market them in the face of increased competition. Accesses to off-farm markets are on the upswing including the County’s new community farmers market in Moorestown and many others in the region. Several local farmers participate in inner city farmers markets in Philadelphia and New York City. Local farmers still are very active in the wholesale business including sales at the Philadelphia Terminal, sales to other farmers seeking niche products, and a burgeoning market to supermarket chains and local privately owned restaurants.

The County is planning on assisting to maintain the viability of Burlington County agriculture by setting a goal of implementing strategies contained in Goals 5 (Implementation of Agricultural Economic Development Strategies) and 6 (Coordination of Public Sector Agricultural Services) contained in Chapter IX of this Plan.

**Part 3.9** of the *Agriculture in Burlington County’s Route 206 Farm Belt: Current Industry Status and Trends Report* explores these trends further.

The NJDA produces a document annually that highlights the strategies to strengthen the various agricultural industries in New Jersey. The most recent set of strategies can be found at:


The strategies proposed are commodity specific including the following key agricultural commodities:

- Produce Industry
- Ornamental / Horticulture Industry
- Seafood Industry
- Dairy Industry
- Field and Forage Crop Industry
- Equine Industry
- Wine Industry
In addition, there are three general categories that apply to various commodity categories:

- Organic Industry
- Agri-Tourism Industry
- General Strategies

As Burlington County gets more involved with agricultural industry retention, expansion and promotion it will be essential for the CADB and staff to understand the opportunities and existing programs available through the NJDA and other relevant agencies. Opportunities for partnerships and grant funding should be explored. Though County’s FPP is not in a position to advocate for one commodity group over another, it should understand what opportunities are available for producers and put them in contact with resources that can be of assistance.

Public Sector Institutional Support – Burlington County

Part 6 of the Agriculture in Burlington County’s Route 206 Farm Belt: Current Industry Status and Trends Report (December 2004) includes an in-depth discussion on viability of the agricultural industry.

In addition to the extensive research, the report includes a list of 21 guiding principles offered to provide a foundation from which to develop and implement a plan of action for sustaining a profitable agricultural industry. These principles, though originally contained within the regional plan for the Northern Burlington County region, are related to all agricultural interests within Burlington County.

1. Agriculture is an industry, a way of life, and a land use of special historic, current, and future importance in the Farm Belt. It is an integral part of the region’s heritage and identity.

2. The time for action is now. The profitability of farming is becoming increasingly challenged and farmland resources are dwindling. Planning for the future is critical, but action today is necessary.

3. Actions taken today – as well as actions not taken - will determine to a large extent the future viability of the agriculture industry in the County.

4. Farming is first and foremost a business.

5. Farmland is not simply open space; it is part of a working landscape and the primary resource of an important land-based industry.
6. The retention of agriculture has long stood as a well-supported goal for Burlington County residents. In addition to direct and indirect economic contributions, agriculture provides myriad ecological, environmental, cultural, and recreational benefits.

7. Farming is not a dead or dying industry. With the proper support and elimination of barriers, agriculture can remain a vibrant industry in the region today and in the future.

8. Farming is a dynamic and ever-changing industry. The agricultural sector of 50 years ago is different from the industry of today. What will the industry of tomorrow look like? What will its needs be? Care should be exercised not to limit the adaptability and innovation of the farm community.

9. While critically important, preserving farmland is not enough. Stabilizing a declining farmland base is certainly a necessary condition for future agricultural viability, but it is not a sufficient condition. Economic and policy development for the farming industry, as well as sound and equitable land use planning, is also needed.

10. A comprehensive Burlington County agricultural industry development program will require coordinated efforts to preserve farmland, promote economic development, and encourage innovative planning.

11. There cannot be a “one size fits all” approach to farm policy in the County. The County must recognize that agricultural operations in the region are diverse, ranging from large dairy and grain farms to small nursery operations.

12. Viable agriculture depends upon reliable and stable access to all necessary resources and factors of production, including land, water, and agricultural labor, as well as the ability to develop farming infrastructure such as farm buildings and labor housing.

13. Burlington County farms offer residents the opportunity to purchase fresh farm products that are grown and sold locally and share in the agricultural experience. Increasingly suburban and urban residents are capitalizing on the recreational and educational tourism opportunities offered by farms; ranging from autumn harvest festivals and corn mazes, to pick your own operations. Such interaction between farmers and non-farmers not only contributes to farm incomes and local economies, but also fosters positive experiences and understanding between communities sometimes at odds.
14. Burlington County is blessed with an abundance of prime agricultural soils – an irreplaceable and valuable resource that underlies the success and productivity of farming in the region. Preserving this resource is essential for ensuring the maximum range of agricultural production opportunities for the future.

15. Farmers are stewards of a vast land resource (nearly half of the land area in the Farm Belt). Farming, like any other industry, has unwanted by-products from production. Strategically pursuing federal and state technical and financial assistance can further enhance farm stewardship and, in so doing, protect soil and water resources in the County.

16. The motivations for farming may differ substantially across farms. For some, 100 percent of household income may be derived from farming. For others, off-farm income may be required to keep the farm household economically viable. And for yet others, farming may simply be a lifestyle choice or hobby pursuit.

17. Municipal governments have extensive experience (and the authority) to plan for development, and they may plan for agriculture. Farmland is neither an undeveloped land use nor a residual land use (i.e., the absence of development). Agriculture has its own special needs as a land use and as an industry.

18. Consistent with the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan’s Statewide Policy on Equity, efforts to retain farmland (and farming) in the Farm Belt and promote smart growth need to be undertaken in a manner in which farmers nor any other group disproportionately benefit or bear the burdens or implementation.

19. New residents in rural areas are often viewed as “part of the problem” facing farmers. But they can also be part of the solution to farm decline in urbanizing areas.

20. Farming in Burlington County provides for aquifer recharge and stormwater management when long-established drainage systems are maintained and updated.

21. Farming sets the landscape character of the Route 206 corridor valued by all County residents

Chapter III of this Plan provided an overview of the Agriculture in Burlington County’s Route 206 Farm Belt: Current Industry Status and Trends Report’s twelve point-strategy for keeping agriculture economically viable with many of the points and strategies related
to economic development. Many of those strategies and points are reflected in Chapter IX of this Plan (Goals, Strategies and Indicators: 2009-2018).

**Burlington County Community Agriculture Center (BCCAC)**

An early example of Burlington County’s efforts to sustain and promote the agriculture industry is the development of the BCCAC. When the County acquired a former dairy farm in Moorestown Township, NJ it did so with the idea of creating a public place where the residents of the more urban communities of the County could visit and engage directly with the agricultural industry. The purpose of this project was to focus on the future of agriculture and to ensure that the public remained aware of the substantial agricultural resources that remain in Burlington County. One of the goals of this project is to provide an example of current and up and coming business opportunities to farmers in the County as well as to provide direct marketing and advertising opportunities.

At the BCCAC, the Freeholder Board agreed to do the following:

- Hold a weekly, producer-driven community farmers market for local farmers;
- Solicit bids for a Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm to operate at the Center;
- Design and manage a small portion of the farm as community garden plots;
- Utilize the site for various agriculture education programs through the County or other partner agencies.

The report entitled “Staff Report and Recommendations of the Working Group” can be found online at:

http://www.co.burlington.nj.us/departments/resource_conservation/parks/sites/agricultural/media/working_group.pdf

This report contains background information on the purchase and development of the site along with the specific recommendations made to the Freeholder Board.

In June of 2007, the BCCAC opened its barn doors to the public for its weekly farmers market and arranged for the start of the community gardens. In 2008, the Freeholder Board selected a CSA operator to start on site in the spring of 2008 through 2012. It is anticipated that in 2008, the County and its partners will sponsor events at the BCCAC targeted towards local farmers, consumers, supermarket managers, educators, chefs and others with the intention of assisting the farm community have more outlets to sell their products locally.
The County has partnered with American Farmland Trust (AFT) and the Dodge Foundation to explore options to make the County’s Farmers Market more accessible to families of varying economic levels. With funding from the Dodge Foundation and AFT, the County will be working in 2008–2009 to research the barriers that customers of lower incomes may have to purchasing from local farmers. Based on that research, the County is interested in seeing how it can both expand the direct-marketing base for local farmers and provide better access to County residents for fresh, healthy and local farm products.

In addition to the events that will take place at the BCCAC, the County’s FPP will continue to partner with the Division of Cultural Affairs and Tourism to plan and implement family-friendly programming with a bent towards agriculture. Examples of events that the County has sponsored or co-sponsored include an art exhibit focused on local farms and a bike-tour through the farm belt with stops at farms with direct marketing opportunities.

Public Sector Institutional Support – NJDA

Farmer Support -

As a program of the New Jersey State Agriculture Development Committee, the Farm Link Program is a resource and referral center for new farmers, farmers seeking access to land and farming opportunities, landowners seeking farmers and farmers working on estate and farm transfer plans. It also works to connect farmland owners with farmers seeking access to land and farming opportunities.

(http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/sadc/farmlink.htm)

Marketing / Public Relation Support -

Direct Marketing and agritourism promotes the use of agricultural amenities and resources, such as open fields farm houses, live stock and other scenic components of the farm for the purpose of offering fee-based recreational opportunities. Agritourism can benefit local communities by attracting tourists to the area who not only spend time at participating farms, but spend money in other local businesses.

Farmers benefit by supplementing their income from those added activities. Agritourism may be a valuable means of supplementing farm income and may increase the sale of products produced on-site. People residing in suburban and city environments are attracted to rural areas with active farm operations. Given Burlington County’s close proximity to Philadelphia, Atlantic City, and New York metropolitan areas, farmers have a large urban population to market an agritourism program uniquely tailored to their farm operations.
The New Jersey Department of Agriculture, Division of Marketing and Development, is host of the **Jersey Fresh campaign** and is also responsible for other initiatives that promote and support New Jersey agriculture. The division offers free advertising materials to farmers to use for direct marketing. The division is a resource that can be used to identify opportunities that are helpful to agricultural businesses. For instance, the division has identified an opportunity for New Jersey farmers to sell over-produced or under-valued product to the New Jersey Department of Corrections. This opportunity would be beneficial to farmers when market conditions are very poor and regaining only production costs is an appealing alternative to suffering a financial loss.

This idea of identifying New Jersey agriculture products has been expended to include one of the biggest parts of New Jersey agriculture: ornamental horticulture. In 2005, NJDA introduced the *Jersey Grown* brand to allow consumers to identify horticulture products grown locally. *Jersey Seafood* as well as the proposed *Jersey Organic* labels further expand this idea to allow better marketing and exposure for New Jersey Agriculture. Milk and wine produced in New Jersey also enjoy the same benefits as they are labeled *Jersey Fresh Milk* and *Jersey Fresh Wine*. A large drive by the NJDA to promote the brand and entice local restaurants to use New Jersey products has allowed for the proliferation of the *Jersey* brand. Burlington County farmers reap the benefits of this as local products are marketed more directly and therefore earn more interest from buyers looking for *Jersey Fresh* products.

[www.state.nj.us/agriculture/jerseyfresh](http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/jerseyfresh)

**Community Farmers Markets –**

There is only one community farmers market in Burlington County. This is located at the BCCAC in Moorestown. This community farmers market is held weekly and is sponsored by the Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholders. This outlet for fresh, locally grown farm products is held mid-June through early November on Saturdays from 8:30 am to 1:00 pm. Several of Burlington County’s large scale producers participate in this tailgate-style producer driven market and are complimented by smaller scale niche agriculture and artisan food / craft vendors from the region.

**Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) –**

Currently there are three (3) Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farms operating within Burlington County. This includes two with production in Burlington County (Fernbrook, Chesterfield and Growing Home, Moorestown at the BCCAC) and another offering box shares in Burlington County (Honey Brook CSA, Pennington - Mercer County, NJ). Fernbrook (+/- 175 shares sold in 2008) and Growing Home CSAs (+/- 85
shares sold in 2008) are located on preserved farms. They are all diversified farms offering unique varieties of vegetables, herbs, and flowers.

A CSA as a business model is generally a method for small scale farmers and gardeners to market their goods. This type of business commonly attracts ecological or organic farmers. This type of farming and marketing operates with consumers as shareholders taking an active role in the success of the market in general. A core consumer group is developed that provides the funds for the production of goods to be shared by the shareholders. This ensures a quality product for all those that contribute. Each shareholder receives a portion of what products are generated as the season progresses. This approach eliminates the marketing risk to the producers as well as provides seasonally ripe produce for the stakeholders.

These three CSA represent a growing trend in Burlington County and what is believed to be a viable model for some farmers in Burlington County to consider. Each of these CSAs have experienced growth in production and number of shares and continue to be supported by an active and growing base of local residents who support their operations.

**Public Sector Institutional Support – Agricultural Education and Market Research Coordination**

In large part, the role of economic development from the production side is the responsibility of the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Service, Rutgers University – Cook College, and the NJ Agricultural Extension Station.

Information on obtaining the interest in farming along with the necessary skills and knowledge to farm is in Part 4.4 of the *Agriculture in Burlington County’s Route 206 Farm Belt: Current Industry Status and Trends Report.*

**Private Sector Business Support**

The significance of the loss of nearby farm equipment dealers and suppliers of seed, chemicals and machine parts as a cost factor that weakens farm viability is a question that needs more detailed research – in the Farm Belt and the County as a whole. On the one hand, farmers often cite the inconvenience of having to travel to obtain equipment and supplies, or to sell their products, as one of the changes in agriculture to which they must adapt. The older farmers remember when there were dealers and suppliers in the county; younger farmers do not know a situation any different than the present one. Undoubtedly, valuable time and other resources such as labor and income are wasted if one has to suspend farm operations to wait even 24 hours for a necessary part.
Information on input suppliers, product distributors and lending agencies is contained in Part 3.8.8 of the *Agriculture in Burlington County’s Route 206 Farm Belt: Current Industry Status and Trends Report*. The availability of farm supplies and services is identified as a key issue affecting farming in Burlington County.

The report provided analysis of selected types of suppliers in local telephone books (Trenton and Burlington County) that showed the following services and suppliers now available and where:

- Feed dealers, 9 (4 in Burlington County, 2 nearby)
- Fertilizers, 3 (1 in Burlington County)
- Greenhouse equipment & supplies, 2 (both in Burlington County)
- Horse dealers, 3 (all in Burlington County)
- Irrigation Systems, 7 (6 in Burlington County)
- Nursery stock dealers, 7 (all in Burlington County)
- Tractor dealers, 8 (3 in Burlington County)
- Tractor equipment and parts, 1 (in Burlington County)
- Veterinarians (excludes animal hospitals, most of which do not treat large animals), 72 (62 in Burlington County)

A review of the New Jersey Farmer newspaper for contained advertisements for the following kinds of suppliers and equipment:

- Binkley Hurst Brothers – Lititz, PA
- Cherry Valley Tractor – Marlton, NJ
- Conestoga Buildings - New Holland, PA
- Fertrell Poultry – Bainbridge, PA (has web page)
- Frank Rymon & Sons - Washington, NJ
- Farmers Brokerage & Supply - Allentown, NJ
- FarmRite Inc. - Shiloh, NJ
- Ferguson Mfg Co. (aerators) - Suffolk, VA
- Jersey Asparagus Farms Inc. - Pittsgrove, NJ (has web page)
- Kubota Tractor: 1 dealer in Burlington County
- LeeRain (cultivation and irrigation equipment) – Vineland, NJ: (has web page)
- Leslie Fogg (cultivation equipment) - Bridgeton and Woodstown, NJ
- Peach Country Tractor - Richwood, NJ.
- Pole Tavern Equipment Sales Corp. - Elmer, NJ
- Seedway - Elizabethtown, PA. (has web page).
- Sheese Farm Equipment – Elmer, NJ
- South Jersey Farmers Exchange - Woodstown, NJ
- Stokes Seeds – Buffalo, NY (800 number)
The report concluded that some farmers would greatly benefit from having their supplies and services nearer to their operation. Some would benefit from regulatory encouragement to develop nonagriculture but farm-based supply, equipment, or service businesses on the farm that would increase farm income and provide a buffer against fluctuations of weather and prices. Others are comfortable with the technology of providers online or through catalogs.

**Agricultural Support Needs**

Information on key issues affecting farming in Burlington County in **Part 3.8** of the *Agriculture in Burlington County’s Route 206 Farm Belt: Current Industry Status and Trends Report*. The needs of Burlington County producers are well described in this report. Information related to the following issues, among others include:

- Farm Labor and Related Issues
- Access to Capital
- Farmland Value / Equity Protection
- Taxes
- Costs of Regulation
- Wildlife Damage
- Conflicts with Non-Farm public
- Availability of Farm Supplies / Services

The Rutgers Food Innovation Center was established in 2001 as a component of the NJ Agricultural Experiment Station’s network of outlying research stations. The new 23,000 sq. ft. facility in Bridgeton, NJ will assist farmers in, among other things, developing and implementing value-added strategies. The center’s business and marketing assistance programs include:

- Business plan development
- Marketing plan development
- Product and process development
- Quality assurance and food safety
- Regulatory compliance
- Workforce development and training
- Nutraceutical R&D and commercialization

More information on the Rutgers Food Innovation Center is in **Part 3.10.3** of the *Agriculture in Burlington County’s Route 206 Farm Belt: Current Industry Status and Trends Report*. Burlington County farmers will benefit from these programs if they are
considering implementing value-added strategies. The County’s FPP should work towards linking Burlington County farmers with this new center and making them aware of all of the opportunities that are available.

Agriculture is considered as an issue and concern in local and regional economic development strategies of local and regional Master Plans. Yet, agricultural leaders and the business interests of farmers are largely underrepresented in all levels of local and regional economic development organizations. That is a condition that should be remedied.

**Agricultural Support Implementation**

Chapter IX of this Plan contains recommendations for implementing various Agricultural Industry Retention, Expansion and Recruitment Strategies. This Chapter contains information related to implementation. Specific costs, funding opportunities and timelines for each are not available at this time. The County will address details in addition to staffing needs for each recommendation prior to implementation over the next ten years. The pace of implementation for economic development strategies will depending largely on the pace of farmland preservation efforts, which remains the County’s highest priority. The County will seek stable long-term funding source(s) for these efforts, outside the scope of the County’s general budget when possible.

**Agricultural Industry Retention, Expansion, and Promotion Strategies**

**Goals 3, 5, and 6 and related strategies**, as outlined in Chapter IX of this Plan represent the County’s Agricultural Industry Retention, Expansion and Recruitment Strategies. These reflect only the County’s decision to select the recommendations that is able to realistically implement with existing staff, laws, regulations and program funding over the next ten years.

The County believes that a key variable in a conducive business environment is a local Right to Farm (RTF) ordinance that allows operators of preserved and yet to be preserved farms operate under generally accepted agricultural standards and not be subject to nuisance complaints from non-farm neighbors or over zealous local zoning ordinances. The County feels so strongly about the existence of local RTF ordinances that it is recommended that **no farms be preserved in municipalities that have not adopted RTF ordinances that, at a minimum, are substantially consistent with the SADC model ordinance.**
Existing Agricultural Industry Support – The Right to Farm Act

This state law protects farmers from nearby residents who complain about normal farming operations such as noise, odors, and dust. It also protects farmers from unnecessary ordinances or regulations that may restrict farming operations. The State of New Jersey adopted the Right-to-Farm Act in 1983 and amended it in 1998. The Act declares that the “protection of commercial farm operations from nuisance action, where recognized methods and techniques of agricultural production are applied, while, at the same time, acknowledging the need to provide a proper balance among the varied and sometimes conflicting interests of all lawful activities in New Jersey.” The Act stipulates the types of activities a farm may engage in as well as the steps for various agencies to follow in reviewing disputes regarding any farm activity.

The SADC works to maximize protections for commercial farmers under the Right to Farm Act by developing Agricultural Management Practices (AMPs), tracking right to farm cases, offering a conflict resolution process, and reviewing rules proposed by other state agencies for the impact they may have on agriculture.

In order to qualify for Right to Farm protection a farm must meet the definition of a “commercial farm” in the Right to Farm Act; be operated in conformance with federal and state law; comply with AMPs recommended by the SADC, or site specific AMPs developed by the CADB at the request of a commercial farmer; must not be a direct threat to public health and safety; and, must be located in an area where agriculture was a permitted use under municipal zoning ordinances as of December 31, 1997, or thereafter; or, must have been an operating farm as of December 31, 1997.

All Right to Farm complaints or issues that can be brought before the CADB are first handled with fact finding, and efforts to resolve differences between the parties. The mediation can be informal or, if the parties agree, the SADC will provide mediation or conflict resolution at no cost to the participants through its Agricultural Mediation Program. If a formal complaint is filed with the CADB, it is sent to the SADC for a determination as to whether the farm falls within the parameters established by the Act for Right to Farm protection. Once the complaint is returned to the CADB from the SADC, additional fact finding and technical review occurs and the issue is given a public, quasi-judicial hearing at the county level. After all information has been considered, the CADB will make a determination as to whether the agricultural activity is protected by the Right to Farm Act or whether changes to the operation will be required. If the issue is not resolved by the CADB determination, either party in the dispute may take the matter for a subsequent appeal and determination to the New Jersey Office of Administrative Law.
The CADBs are given statutory authority in the Agriculture Retention and Development Act to:

“Monitor and make appropriate recommendations to the SADC and to county and municipal governing bodies and boards with respect to resolutions, ordinances, regulations and development approvals which would threaten the continued viability of agricultural activities and farmland preservation programs within agricultural areas (ADA).” (N.J.S.A. 4:1C-15 (f).

By having strong local pro-agricultural ordinances and development regulations can increase the likelihood of mediating conflicts between farmers and non-farmers and/or municipal officials without formal actions such as issuance of citations and/or nuisance lawsuits. Good communication and when necessary, compromise by the farm and/or the complaining parties will also be essential in promoting a positive business environment for farming to continue in Burlington County.

Jerome Frecon, Agricultural Agent, with the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station (NJAES), Rutgers Cooperative Extension issued a report entitled “Resolving Common Farm Management Practices,” which cited some of the most common questions posed to NJ Extension Agents related to the following management practices:

a) Spraying or pesticide application;
  b) Irrigation – water issues and noise from pumps;
  c) Direct marketing – signs, hours of operation, products sold;
  d) Slow moving and dust making vehicles like tractors;
  e) Burning hedgerows and pruning;
  f) Wildlife depredation trapping and hunting;
  g) Animal odors and other animal practices;
  h) Trucks and other large equipment;
  i) Noisemaking cannons and other devices to repel birds;
  j) Farm labor and labor housing;
  k) Dumping and spreading deteriorating fruits and vegetables;
  l) Noise, dust and odors form specialized equipment.

Frecon states that he has observed that “frequently I can deflect further problems for farmers by being honest and giving the questioner accurate and science-based information. If I can’t, I direct them to someone who might be able to help them in another department or at the state level. If they do not accept what I tell them then I explain the RTF Law that may exist in their municipality and the state law. This avenue is available to them to vent and resolve their frustration and dissatisfaction with agricultural management practices.”
The County’s FPP has established formal policies to deal with requests for SSAMP determinations and formal conflict resolution. This policy is consistent with the SADC policies governing these matters. This process was established to provide farmers, neighbors and municipalities a better understanding of how these issues are dealt with and the limits of the RTF Act.

A copy of the CADB policies governing SSAMP determinations and Conflict Resolution decisions is provided in Appendix H.

These local land use ordinances and regulations are deemed to be a very effective tool in retaining the agricultural industry since it impacts all farms (not just those preserved or targeted for preservation) and costs little to no public funds to implement.

An examination of the land use and general ordinances within the 13-township region of the County’s Farm Belt shows that, first, the more urban municipalities have no RTF ordinance or even language similar to it. Secondly, many municipalities scatter the RTF language in different places throughout their land use ordinance, their definitions for “farm” or “agriculture”, and in even general ordinances for nuisance, or other issues.
Table 24 shows how the Farm Belt municipalities rank in their inclusion of the 28 elements recommended by the SADC.

Table 24

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RIGHT TO FARM ELEMENTS</th>
<th>Number of Municipalities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Element</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Commercial Farm&quot;</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Farm Management Unit&quot;</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Farm Market&quot;</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Pick-Your-Own&quot;</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permissible Activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Produce agricultural or horticultural crops, trees, forest products, livestock, poultry, other commodities described in the ZC.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House and employ necessary farm laborers</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erect essential buildings, including those dedicated to processing and packaging of the output of the commercial farm and ancillary to agricultural and horticultural production</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graze animals; use range for fuel</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct fences</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operate and transport large, slow-moving equipment over roads within the municipality</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use any and all equipment, including (but not limited to) irrigation pumps and equipment, aerial and ground seeding and spraying, tractors, harvest aids, and bird control devices</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process and package output of the commercial farm</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide for operation of farm market with attendant signage, including the construction of building and parking in conformance with municipal standards</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operate and pick-your-own operation with attendant signage</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulate soil nutrients; improve soil fertility</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control pests including (but not limited to) insects and weeds, predators, and diseases of plants and animals</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear woodlands using open burning and other techniques</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Install and maintain vegetation and terrain alterations, other physical facilities for water and soil conservancy, surface water control in wetlands areas.</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct on-site disposal of organic agricultural wastes</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply manure and chemical fertilizers, insecticides and herbicides</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Install wells, ponds and other water resources for agricultural purposes such as irrigation, sanitation, marketing preparation</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct agriculture-related education and farm-based recreational activities related to marketing the agricultural or horticultural output of the commercial farm and permitted by the farm owner and lessee</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage in any other agricultural activity as determined by the SADC, adopted by rule</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need to meet the tests: follow AMPs, farm conservation plan, or NDAES recommendations, conform to applicable federal and state law</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities may take place on holidays, weekends, weekends by day or night, shall include attendant or incidental noise, odors, dust and fumes associated with these practices</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Resolution Measures</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irrefutable presumption: agricultural activity meeting all tests is not a public or private nuisance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How and where to file a complaint (the SADC, or if none specified, the SADC)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory notice to purchasers of property adjacent to or near commercial farms of accused activities or practices associated with those neighboring farms; file with deed</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Heinrich-Schilling report found that “in many cases, the RTF language does not conform to the statute as revised in 1998. It seems that most municipal attorneys may not be familiar with these changes that alter the relationship between municipal regulation and farm activities.” Springfield and North Hanover have the most elements in their planning and regulatory documents that include RTF provisions or
even language. New Hanover and Pemberton Township, in contrast, have only three (3) out of the 28 elements.

Seven municipalities have somewhat formalized RTF provisions: Bordentown Township, Chesterfield Township, Mansfield Township, New Hanover Township, North Hanover Township, Southampton Township, and Springfield Township. Since this evaluation, Mansfield Township has adopted a RTF ordinance consistent with the SADC model ordinance. Two other municipalities, not in the County’s Farm Belt study region, Moorestown and Cinnaminson Townships have also adopted pro-agricultural ordinances to support the few remaining farms in within their jurisdiction. This progress is encouraging but not nearly enough.

It is critical that the language of the master plan, land use and general ordinances should, at the least include the definitions and measures from the state RTF Act. Municipalities can be more permissive and should be encouraged to be so.

The Burlington CADB is in a unique position to determine which municipalities have supportive ordinances and encourage municipalities to provide more substantial support for farming businesses by educating them about how to use their powers to enhance agricultural viability. For this purpose, Burlington County is partnering with AFT to evaluate several local municipal ordinances and development regulations in place in several key agricultural municipalities in Burlington County. This partnership with AFT through a grant provided by the Dodge Foundation will result in recommendations to subject municipalities for improvements and most importantly, an evaluation of the SADC model RTF ordinance to see in what ways it can be improved to better suit Burlington County farmers.

As referenced above, Burlington County plans to adopt policies to discontinue seeking and processing preservation applications from landowners in municipalities with deficient RTF ordinances. The County’s FPP plans to utilize calendar year 2009, with the assistance of AFT to evaluate the condition of all municipalities with preserved and / or targeted farmland to ascertain a better understanding of the baseline conditions that exist. The evaluation contained in the Farm Belt Reports is useful but it does not contain every municipality that is relevant under this Plan and is getting outdated.

With this superior information in hand, the County will be in a position to prepare and advocate for a more comprehensive model RTF regulatory package to be adopted by the local jurisdictions and offer, in return, a reduced local cost-share obligation as discussed in Chapter II.

Goal 3 in Chapter IX provides strategies to promote and protect the RTF in Burlington County. It is by no mistake the promotion of the RTF is placed ahead of protection. Promoting and establishing effective RTF and pro-agribusiness ordinances at the local
level is the clear priority. This will create a better business environment for farmers, instill a better understanding of their operational needs and minimize the situations where the Burlington CADB has to go through the cumbersome process of making SSAMP / conflict resolution decisions.

Existing Agricultural Industry Support – Farmland Assessment

Differential property tax assessment allows land actively devoted to an agricultural or horticultural use to be taxed on its farm value instead of its development value. All land qualifying for farmland assessment must meet a minimum income threshold from the sale of the agricultural output of the farm. The threshold begins at $500 for the first five acres. Farmers are not exempt from property taxes. Farmers pay the same property taxes as all other households on their homes, driveways, garages, swimming pools, etc. They also pay market value taxes on the structures (barns, sheds, fences, etc.) on the farm.

Farmland Assessment is the prerogative of the local municipal tax assessor. That being said, the County’s FPP should be knowledgeable regarding farmland assessment eligibility criteria and provide established documents such as what was prepared by the NJDA. This can be found at:


This document provides in simple terms the criteria and process by which farms in New Jersey establish and maintain differential tax assessment.

Existing Agricultural Industry Support – Other Strategies

Permit Streamlining

Progress on permit streamlining assumes the cooperation and coordination between agencies / departments of local, county and state jurisdictions. Burlington County’s role in this is minor, except for road and drainage issues. In its role, Burlington County will seek to balance the needs of farmers with the obligation to protect the safety of those traveling on County roads. The County will work to insert the needs of the agricultural industry into the discussions with state and federal agencies related to new plans, grants opportunities and projects.
Agricultural Vehicle Movement / Routes

Burlington County farmers need to move heavy, slow moving agricultural equipment over local, county and sometimes state roads to access unconnected fields and barns. It is their usual practice to do this very early in the morning to avoid as much as possible conflicts with other vehicles. Farmers must put their opinions on that table when road and bridge improvements are being considered at the local, county and state level. Public officials should be considerate of these concerns as not to create unintended consequences for the farm community by creating barriers and inconveniences for them as they try and conduct their business. Short of cooperation between the farmers and those responsible for oversight of public roads, avoidance seems to be the best strategy for farmers to deal with conflicts with other vehicles.

Agricultural Labor Housing

As discussed earlier, sectors of the agricultural industry are expanding in Burlington County (e.g., equine, nursery, fruit / vegetable production) in which an adequate and/or specialized labor supply is integral to the operation. The CADB has acted on several labor housing requests for these sectors and has been guided during its review by the Deed of Easement and SADC policies for agricultural labor housing. The CADB considers, among other things, the size, number and type of laborers to be housed, and impact on the agricultural operation. After the CADB and Freeholder Board approve the request, the request is forwarded to the SADC whose staff then reviews and provides a staff recommendation for SADC consideration.

Part 3.8.1 of the Agriculture in Burlington County’s Route 206 Farm Belt: Current Industry Status and Trends Report contains information related to farm labor, farm worker regulation and agricultural labor housing.

Wildlife Management Strategies

Wildlife management is very important for the retention of agriculture. Crop losses to birds, deer and other animals can be significant. Netting, fencing, hunting, air cannons and other techniques are all employed by Burlington County farmers to deter crop depredation. Burlington County is also considering a yearly organized deer hunt within certain lands of the County’s Park System.

Part 3.8.6 of the Agriculture in Burlington County’s Route 206 Farm Belt: Current Industry Status and Trends Report contains information related to wildlife damage.
Agricultural Education / Promotion

Part 4.4 of the Agriculture in Burlington County’s Route 206 Farm Belt: Current Industry Status and Trends Report contains information related to agricultural education at the elementary, secondary, adult and college level, and the agriculture leadership training program of the NJDA.

Farmland preservation must go beyond the purchase of development easements and make the effort to ensure that the agricultural industry remains not only a viable component of the county’s economy, but a major part of the county’s character and lifestyle. Education and training for farmers promotes a more efficient and productive business environment. Rutgers Cooperative Extension Offices in Burlington County is doing just that. Burlington County supports the NJDA’s commitment to promoting agritourism through the New Jersey Office of Travel and Tourism, the Jersey Fresh website, the distribution of printed materials, and other forms of advertisement. The CADB supports the efforts of the SADC to advance an agritourism AMP. Several Burlington County farmers open their farms to elementary and middle school student groups to educate them about agriculture. The Burlington County 4H has a growing group of young people interested in agricultural activities.

The County’s efforts for educating the public at the BCCAC were chronicled earlier in this chapter.

Chapter IX includes specific strategies related to achieving a sustainable agricultural industry in Burlington County.
Chapter VII
Land Use Planning Context

This section of the Plan explores the land use planning context for farmland preservation and agricultural retention in Burlington County.

********

Burlington County is centrally located in the Boston-New York-Philadelphia-Washington Corridor. Located in the south-central portion of New Jersey, Burlington County, at approximately 820 square miles in size, is the largest county in land area in the state.

The 2000 Census reported that Burlington County was home to 423,394 residents, making it the 10th most populous of the 21 counties in New Jersey. Burlington is the only county in New Jersey to extend the full width of the state from its western boundary on the Delaware River to the Great Bay on the Atlantic Ocean. Consisting of 40 municipalities, the county is a suburb to Philadelphia, 10 miles to the southwest, and to New York City, which is 90 miles to the northeast. Burlington County is bounded on the north by Mercer County, on the northeast by Monmouth County, on the east by Ocean County, on the southeast by Atlantic County on the southwest by Camden County, and on the west by City of Philadelphia and Bucks County, Pennsylvania.
Burlington County's landscape is diverse, consisting of rural, suburban and urban settings. The New Jersey Pinelands, which is the country's first national reserve managed by the NJPC, covers the central and eastern two-thirds of Burlington County. Approximately 64 percent of Burlington County's land area is under the jurisdiction of NJPC. Approximately 23 percent of the county's population and 21 percent of its housing units are located within the Pinelands.

Agriculture remains an important industry in the northern, central and eastern portions of the county. The majority of suburban and urban communities occupy the remaining one-third of Burlington County. In many instances, the established communities have retained their small town character.

Burlington County is served by the following highways: Interstate 295, the New Jersey Turnpike with a Pennsylvania Turnpike connection, the Garden State Parkway, U.S. Routes 130 and 206, State Routes 38, 68, 70, 72 and 73, and County Route 537. Three bridges link the county to Pennsylvania: the Tacony-Palmyra Bridge, the Burlington-Bristol Bridge, and the Pennsylvania Turnpike Extension Bridge, which connects into the New Jersey Turnpike. Light rail passenger service is provided along the riverfront communities by New Jersey Transit’s RiverLINE, which connects the cities of Camden and Trenton, with several intermediate stops in Burlington County. Freight rail service is provided along the riverfront communities and to some of the interior communities, serving various industrial facilities. The county has deepwater port capabilities—the Delaware River channel is 40 feet deep and has ocean-going vessel traffic as far north as the Burlington-Bristol area. The county has numerous marinas along the Delaware River, Rancocas Creek and Great Harbor, including the largest recreational marina on the Delaware River.

**NJ State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP)**

The New Jersey State Planning Act authorized the NJ State Planning Commission (NJSPC) to establish rules governing its administrative procedures. The State Planning Rules are in Chapter 5:85 of the New Jersey Administrative Code (N.J.A.C.). The State Planning Act (N.J.S.A. 52:18-196 et. seq.) defined a process, entitled cross-acceptance. Cross-acceptance on a statewide level involves extensive public participation and corporation with our local partners, municipalities and counties. In addition, the Act allows the NJSPC to collect, analyze, and synthesize policies and implementation mechanisms into the creation of the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan (State Plan). The Act specifies that the Commission will create rules and regulations to define the process of cross-acceptance and procedures for solicitation and receipt of comments for the State Plan. The NJSPC consists of 17 members representing State government, local government and the public. Local government and public
members are appointed by the Governor and approved by the Legislature for three year terms.

The purpose of New Jersey’s State Plan is to:

“Coordinate planning activities and establish Statewide planning objectives in the following areas: land use, housing, economic development, transportation, natural resource conservation, agriculture and farmland retention, recreation, urban and suburban redevelopment, historic preservation, public facilities and services, and intergovernmental coordination (N.J.S.A. 52:18A-200(f)).”

The State Plan Policy Map is intended to serve as the underlying land use-planning and management framework that directs funding, infrastructure improvements, and preservation for programs throughout New Jersey.
As discussed in Chapter II of this plan, the focus of the County’s farmland preservation efforts is its designated ADA’s. Burlington County’s Current ADA Policy relies heavily on the SDRP Cross-Acceptance Process since land must be in the Rural Planning Areas (PA 4 / PA 4B), Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area (PA 5) or the NJ Pinelands (PA 10). In addition, land in TDR Receiving Areas, Regional Planning Centers or land designated for affordable housing obligations as certified by the COAH are not in the County ADA unless certain very specific criteria are met.

The State Plan provides a balance between growth and conservation by designating planning areas that share common conditions with regard to development and environmental features:

- **Areas for Growth**: Metropolitan Planning areas (Planning Area 1), Suburban Planning Areas (Planning Area 2) and Designated Centers in any planning area.
- **Areas for Limited Growth**: Fringe Planning Areas (Planning Area 3), Rural Planning Areas (Planning Area 4), and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas (Planning Area 5). In these planning areas, planning should promote a balance of conservation and limited growth—environmental constraints affect development and preservation is encouraged in large contiguous tracts.
- **Areas for Conservation**: Fringe Planning Area (Planning Area 3), Rural Planning Areas (Planning Area 4), and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas (Planning Area 5).

As the State Plan Cross-Acceptance process involves involvement at every level of government and various State agencies, preservation of farmland in the County’s ADA is likely to be consistent with local and State policies and objective related to economic development and land use planning. Burlington County believes that coordination between future investment in farmland preservation and public land-use planning is essential to ensure continued public support of the farmland preservation program. This consistency, in theory, will also result in public entities making strategic decisions while investing in future public infrastructure (e.g. sewer, public water and roads) projects.

The County believes that the preservation of farmland in PA 4, PA 4B, PA 5 and PA 10 is wholly consistent with the goals of the State Plan and is one of the best and most fundamental methods implement the State Plan. The State Plan recommends that growth in these Planning Areas be limited and conservation practices be promoted.

*According to the State Plan;*

**Rural Planning Areas** are intended to “maintain the Environ 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 open lands of the Rural Planning Areas include most of New Jersey’s prime farmland, which has the greatest potential of sustaining continued agricultural activities in the future, and wooded tracts. These areas, along with the Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area, serve as the greensward for the larger region and are not currently nor are they intended to be urban or suburban in nature.”

The Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area designation intends 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 State Plan encourages new growth and redevelopment in designated centers of the State. Centers are designated based on their size, population density and existing infrastructure. The most urban center designation is an Urban Center, followed in order by Regional Centers, Towns, Villages and Hamlets. The designated centers in Burlington County are as follows:

- Chesterfield Township -- Crosswicks (Village); TDC Receiving Area (Village); Chesterfield (Village); and Sykesville (Village)
- Southampton Township -- Vincentown (Village)
- Florence Township -- Florence-Roebling (Town)
- Burlington City -- Burlington (Town)
- Beverly City, Delanco Township and Edgewater Park -- Beverly-Delanco-Edgewater (Town)
- Riverside Township and Delran Township -- Riverside-Cambridge (Town)
- Willingboro and Edgewater Park Townships -- Willingboro-Edgewater Park (Town)
- Palmyra Borough, Riverton Borough and Cinnaminson Township -- Palmyra-Riverton-East Riverton (Town)

In 1999, the NJSPC and the NJPC entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOA) that served to define the roles of each entity. In general, the MOA affirms that,
in the Pinelands Areas, the NJSPC shall rely on the adopted plan and regulations of the NJPC in developing the SDRP. In addition, it promotes consistency between the policies, standards and practices of each entity and in particular, establishes equivalency between NJPC Management Areas and NJSPC Planning Areas.

As such, the following centers in Burlington County within the Pinelands were established under Appendix C of the MOA:

- Bass River Township – New Gretna (Village)
- Woodland – Chatsworth (Village)
- Washington Township – Green Bank (Hamlet), Jenkins (Hamlet), Lower Bank (Hamlet)
- Shamong Township – Indian Mills (Hamlet)
- Pemberton Township – New Lisbon (Hamlet)
- Tabernacle Township – Tabernacle (Hamlet)
- Southampton Township – Vincentown (Village)*

* Established in conjunction with non-Pinelands section of Vincentown

Appendix B designated Medford Lakes Borough a “town” center. Medford Lakes Borough is in a Pinelands Regional Growth Area.

In addition, the following equivalency between the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) and the NJSPC Planning Areas was established:
Further discussion regarding the Pinelands Region is provided in the next section of this Chapter.

The SDRP outlines many agricultural policies and specific land use techniques that should be implemented in the agricultural regions of the state. These are areas with most of New Jersey’s prime farmland, which has the greatest potential of sustaining the agricultural industry in the future. In these planning areas, growth should be focused in existing and new rural centers where development is mixed in use and compact. Ideally, the areas outside of these centers are maintained for agriculture by using planning techniques that address landowner equity and support farming.

Recognizing the importance of equity, the NJSPC made it the number-one statewide policy of the State Plan, adopted first in 1992 and again in 2001. The NJDA’s Agricultural Smart Growth Plan reflects the NJSPC’s position that “the achievement, protection and maintenance of equity be a major objective in public policy decisions...” From the inception of Burlington County’s Farmland Preservation Program, the Freeholder Board and the CADB have viewed the maintenance of equity as an underlying principle of its efforts. This Plan seeks to continue that tradition.
SDRP Third-Round Cross-Acceptance

The Burlington County 2005 Cross-acceptance Final Report constitutes the response of the County of Burlington, its municipalities and its citizens to the April 2004 Preliminary SDRP issued by the NJSPC. It was submitted in fulfillment of the requirements of the State Planning Rules for the comparison phase of cross-acceptance. This report and associated mapping is available on the County’s web site at:


The NJSPC has yet to formally endorse mapping changes to the SDRP. Burlington County’s ADA and project areas were developed using a SDRP coverage assuming that the recommended mapping changes would eventually be adopted in the next official version of the SDRP.

Assuming the County’s mapping changes are accepted by the NJSPC, the changes in total area of the County are summarized in Table 25.

**Table 25**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SDRP Planning Area Designation</th>
<th>2001 SDRP (Acres)</th>
<th>2001 SDRP (% of County)</th>
<th>Proposed 3rd Round Amendments (Acres)</th>
<th>Proposed 3rd Round Amendments (% of County)</th>
<th>CHANGE (Acres)</th>
<th>CHANGE (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan Planning Area (1)</td>
<td>45,914</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>44,447</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>-1,466</td>
<td>-0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban Planning Area (2)</td>
<td>43,842</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>48,494</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>4,652</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fringe Planning Area (3)</td>
<td>6,332</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>-6,332</td>
<td>-1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Planning Area (4)</td>
<td>81,463</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>43,291</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>-38,172</td>
<td>-7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural/Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area (4B)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>35,940</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>35,940</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area (5)</td>
<td>2,726</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>6,559</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>3,833</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks and Natural Areas (6,7,8)</td>
<td>5,554</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>7,099</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>1,545</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinelands (10)</td>
<td>332,804</td>
<td>64.2%</td>
<td>332,804</td>
<td>64.2%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Burlington County Dept. of Economic Development and Regional Planning
Cross Acceptance III maps are included with the Municipal Master Plan and Zoning profiles in Appendix D.

**Special Resource Areas**

As discussed in Chapter IV, **63.8 percent** (334,287 acres) of Burlington County is within the jurisdiction of the NJPC containing roughly 46 percent of the County’s Agricultural Land Base.

*The following is excerpted from the NJPC website:*2

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In 1978 Congress created the Pinelands National Reserve, the country's first. The Reserve was to be a place where governments at every level -- from Washington down to local planning boards -- could help shape the Pinelands' future in keeping with some basic guidelines. The State of New Jersey was to take the lead in evaluating the Pinelands' resources and planning how best to balance their protection with new development. As provided in the federal law, Governor Brendan T. Byrne established the NJPC by executive order on February 8, 1979 and gave it responsibility for these tasks. The NJPC consists of fifteen members. Seven are appointed by the Governor, and one is appointed by each of the seven counties within the Pinelands. One member is appointed by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior.

The New Jersey Legislature, at Governor Byrne's request, supplemented the federal law by passing the Pinelands Protection Act in June, 1979. The Act affirmed the temporary limitations on development which the Governor had put into effect while a plan to protect the Pinelands was being created. It also established a requirement that county and municipal master plans and land use ordinances be brought into conformance with the CMP which the Commission was developing.

The boundaries of the Pinelands National Reserve and the Pinelands Area, as defined by the state legislation, differ somewhat. The Reserve, totaling 1.1 million acres, includes land east of the Garden State Parkway and to the south bordering Delaware Bay, which is omitted from the 927,000 acre state Pinelands Area. The two jurisdictions together cover all or parts of 56 municipalities spread across seven counties -- Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, and Ocean.

The state law makes another important distinction between the remote interior of the Pines and the surrounding portions. Development is to be highly regulated in the Preservation Area, which comprises approximately 32 percent of the Pinelands Area and encompasses the largest tracts of relatively unbroken forest and most of the

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21 [www.state.nj.us/pinelands](http://www.state.nj.us/pinelands)
The smaller surrounding area, known as the Protection Area, contains a mix of valuable environmental features, farmland, hamlets, subdivisions, and towns, making the NJPC’s task more complex.

The NJPC was originally given until August 8, 1980 to adopt the Plan, but the Legislature extended the time allowed to finish the Protection Area portion by four months. The CMP was thus adopted in two phases. The Preservation Area part was approved by the Commission on August 8, 1980 and took effect on September 23, 1980, following Governor Byrne's approval. The Protection Area Plan was adopted on November 21, 1980 and became effective under state law on January 14, 1981. This final version also constituted the CMP for the entire Pinelands National Reserve. It was approved by Secretary of the Interior Cecil D. Andrus on January 16, 1981 and was sent to Congress for the required 90 day review.

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The CMP is administered by the NJPC in cooperation with units of local, state and federal governments. Essentially, though the NJPC, through the CMP sets the standards for land use in the Pinelands, all municipalities have had their ordinances certified by the NJPC so essentially they remain primary jurisdiction for most local decisions. According to the CMP, municipalities that have land within the Pinelands Area must conform their master plan and land use ordinances to the minimum standards set forth in the CMP.

Agriculture, including blueberries and cranberries, as well as row and field crops, is extremely important to the region's economy. New Jersey is among the top states in the nation in the production of blueberries and cranberries, and virtually all of these are grown in the Pinelands. Other major industries are recreation, resource related industries, construction (on the periphery), and shell fishing.

The CMP designates, much like the State Plan all of the land within the NJ Pinelands into distinct management areas. Table 26 describes each management area and the residential / non-residential permitted uses.
**Table 26**

Pinelands Management Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management Areas</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>% in Burlington County</th>
<th>Permitted Uses – Residential</th>
<th>Permitted Uses – Non-Residential</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preservation Area District</td>
<td>Core of the pinelands environment and the most critical ecological region; a large, contiguous wilderness area of forest which supports diverse plant and animal communities, many of which are threatened and endangered species.</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>None except 1 acre lots in designated infill areas</td>
<td>Limited commercial uses in designated infill areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Agriculture Production District</td>
<td>Discrete areas within the Preservation Area primarily used for berry agriculture and horticulture of native Pinelands plants.</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>Farm-related housing on 40 acres</td>
<td>Expansion of existing uses only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Area</td>
<td>Similar to the Preservation Area District in terms of ecological value; a largely undeveloped area which is an essential element of the pinelands environment, contains high quality water resources and wetlands and provides suitable habitat for many threatened and endangered species.</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5 acre minimum. Historical development average has been 1 unit per 28 acres</td>
<td>Roadside retail within 300 feet of pre-existing use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture Production Area District</td>
<td>Areas of active agricultural use, generally upland field agriculture and row crops, together with adjacent areas with soils suitable for expansion of agricultural operations.</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>Farm-related housing on 10 acres, non-farm housing on 40 acres</td>
<td>Agricultural commercial; roadside retail within 300 feet of pre-existing use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Development Area District</td>
<td>Areas which are slightly modified and suitable for limited future development; represents a balance of environmental and development values that is intermediate between Forest Areas and existing growth areas.</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>Historical development average has been 1 unit per 5 acres.</td>
<td>Small scale community commercial and light industrial uses on septic systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinelands Village</td>
<td>Small, existing, spatially discrete settlements which are appropriate for infill residential, commercial, and industrial development compatible with their existing character.</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1 to 5 acre lots if not sewered</td>
<td>Commercial and industrial uses compatible with existing character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Growth Area</td>
<td>Areas of existing growth and adjacent lands capable of accommodating regional growth influences while protecting the essential character and environment of the Pinelands.</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>2 to 4 homes per acre with sewers</td>
<td>Commercial and industrial uses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military and Federal Installation Area</td>
<td>Federal enclaves within the Pinelands.</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
<td>Uses associated with function of the installation or other public purpose uses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The County’s Farmland Preservation efforts in the Pinelands are focused on the following Management Areas:

- **Agricultural Production Area:** Areas of active agricultural use, generally upland field agriculture and row crops, including adjacent areas with soils suitable for expansion of agricultural operations.

- **Special Agriculture Production Area:** Primarily used for berry agriculture and horticulture of native Pinelands plants.

- **Rural Development Area:** Primarily a transitional area that balances environmental and development values between conservation and growth areas.

Further information regarding the NJPC or the CMP can be found at:

www.state.nj.us/pinelands

Within the Pinelands there are areas of Burlington County impacted by the Coastal Area Facility Review Act (CAFRA) (N.J.S.A. 13:19). These areas do not include any agricultural resources and as such, no more discussion is provided in this Plan.

**County Master Plan and Development Regulations**

The Freeholder Board has been at the vanguard of "smart growth" for many years by maintaining a balance between development and natural resource preservation efforts. Burlington County strives to enhance development and preservation by promoting sustainable growth in areas best suited for it, curbing sprawl by encouraging well designed development in areas with sufficient existing or planned infrastructure, promoting a viable agricultural industry and preserving a land base of farm land and open space for future agriculture and recreation.

Burlington County seeks to sustain moderate, steady growth through 2025 by maintaining a diversified and agile economy of business, industry and services; a wide range of housing opportunities; modern and well-integrated infrastructure systems; and cultural and recreational opportunities that contribute to, sustain and enhance the County’s high quality of life.

Planning in Burlington County government is closely connected to the Freeholder Board who oversee individual staff Departments through the County Administrator and Clerk of the Board. The Department of Economic Development and Regional Planning (DEDRP) hosts the County's long-range, strategic "smart growth" planning activities, such as those for the Route 130 Corridor and Route 206 Corridor, as well as the county's economic development, community development, workforce development
and tourism functions. This department is the lead staff agency for State Plan cross-acceptance, and also provides planning services to local communities seeking assistance in updating land use elements, preparing redevelopment plans and completing special studies that enable these communities to achieve Plan Endorsement and generally enhance their ability to independently access and effectively use outside funding and technical resources.

The Burlington County DRC plans and manages critical water resources, solid waste, parks, farmland preservation and historic preservation programs and staffs the county's TDR Bank Board. The Department of Engineering is responsible for planning and designing the county's highway system, the largest in New Jersey, and bridges, and staffs the Burlington County Planning Board in its statutory authority to review land development projects affecting county roads and draining facilities. The Department of Health is active in implementing the Protocol for Assessing Community Excellence in Environmental Health in coordination with the National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for responding to factors, including land use, affecting environmental quality and human health. The Department of Information Technology includes a GIS section providing data management, special studies, technical assistance, software support and overall coordination for the county's extensive collection of spatial data and increasing number of GIS users.

As contrast to many other counties in New Jersey, Burlington County does not have an adopted County Master Plan. Burlington County has approached planning from a regional perspective instead. The County’s planning regions areas as follows:

- Route 130 Corridor Planning Region
- Route 206 Corridor Planning Region (the “Farm Belt”)
- Suburban Corridor Planning Region
- Pinelands / CAFRA Planning Region
The Freeholder Board authorized the preparation of the regional strategic plan for Northern Burlington County (the Route 206 Corridor - Farm Belt) in 2002. As part of the Northern Burlington County Strategic Plan a technical report (the “Technical Report”) was produced to understand that regional context of the planning area and to lay “important groundwork for assisting municipalities in planning for smart, sustainable growth and development balanced with farmland preservation.”

The Northern Burlington County planning region, the subject of this study, generally straddles U.S. Route 206 and extends south approximately 21 miles from the Mercer
County border at the Crosswicks Creek to the northwestern border of the New Jersey Pinelands. It is comprised of all or parts of the following thirteen municipalities in Northern Burlington County.

The Technical Report provides a thorough review of the regional context for this regional planning area. The full document can be found at:

http://www.co.burlington.nj.us/departments/economic/regional_planning/announcements/NBC%20Regional%20Context%20Final%2020100MB%201-31-2008.pdf
In the Technical Report, it was found that “pressures for residential development from both within and outside Burlington County are more substantial and immediate than at any time in the region’s history, threatening to undermine this public investment (in farmland preservation).” The report asserts that municipalities in the Northern Burlington County planning region need to coordinate their response with each other and with County and State agencies through regional planning strategies to ensure that future development patterns will protect the region’s rural character, quality of life, and agricultural industry.

The key findings of the report were:

1. The zoned development potential of the Northern Burlington County planning region will not allow it to maintain its predominantly rural character and will likely harm the viability of agriculture. There is a build-out potential of an additional 22,000 residents, 8,000 dwelling units, and 200,000 jobs.

2. The Northern Burlington County planning region reaches residential build-out by 2025.

3. Current zoned residential development densities in the rural communities do not seem supportive of the development of centers. Eighty-eight percent (88%) of all developable lands (94% of residential) in the Northern Burlington County planning region are zoned for lots of 3 acres or more in area. Additionally, residential neighborhoods in rural communities are built at fairly low densities, usually at 1 – 2 dwelling units per acre. The existing residential zoning appears to promote sprawl.

4. Higher development densities and community-scale wastewater management systems are necessary if centers are to become a realistic growth organizing principle for the rural communities of Northern Burlington County.

5. The Northern Burlington County planning region appears to be over-zoned for nonresidential uses. The non-residential build-out potential is not likely to occur anytime within the next 50 years, nor is it likely to be desirable from a quality of life standpoint.

6. As the Northern Burlington County region reaches residential build-out, there will be an increasing demand to rezone nonresidential lands to residential uses.

7. Planning for agriculture needs to occur at the municipal, county and state levels. Municipal master plans and zoning ordinances need to recognize agriculture as an “industrial” use, just like they recognize other industrial uses.
8. Development corridors exist throughout the Northern Burlington County planning region and cannot be ignored. Properly planned, and in appropriate locations, development corridors can be an appropriate way to organize growth.

9. Development nodes exist throughout the Northern Burlington County planning region. Almost always, they are located at the intersections of major roads. Properly planned, and in appropriate locations, development nodes can be an appropriate way to organize growth.

10. Alternate planning and zoning approaches promoting “Smart Growth” are needed to avoid sprawl and the loss of rural character resulting from development standards that are embedded in current municipal zoning ordinances.

Based on these findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Adopt a new development strategy with a system of centers and corridors as its basis instead of sprawl, or spread out, development.

2. Replace existing zoning with provisions and mechanisms that inevitably establish growth patterns that are consistent with regional and local plans, with quality of life goals and objectives, and with landowner equity.

3. Advance mechanisms such as cluster development, non-contiguous parcel density transfer and transfer of development rights to support more concentrated development jointly with increased preservation of farmland and protection of environmentally sensitive lands through private market activities.

4. Establish higher development densities and wastewater management systems where centers and nodes become the growth organizing principle for rural communities.

5. Prepare new, or update existing, municipal environmental resource inventories to determine what important environmental resources need to be protected from development and to guide development to areas where adverse environmental impacts are minimal.

6. Coordinate municipal land development and infrastructure activities with Burlington County’s open space initiative in developing a regional greenway system through the regional strategic plan.

7. Recognize agriculture as an “industrial” use in municipal master plans and zoning ordinances based on the similarities between agricultural and industrial
operations with regard to noise, odors, traffic and other impacts, and support county and state economic development initiatives aimed toward maintaining the economic (business) viability of agriculture.

8. Establish farmland preservation elements in the master plans of municipalities in the Northern Farm Belt and the Southern Farm Belt sub-regions that both target parcels of land for preservation and address the land use issues that impacts the economic viability of agriculture.

9. Diversify local economies in municipalities surrounding Fort Dix and McGuire Air Force Base to avoid depending on the military for their economic futures, despite the proposed $300 million 'Megabase' investment.

10. Identify areas in need of redevelopment and prepare municipal redevelopment plans in accordance with the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law.

11. Provide technical and financial resources to support municipal efforts to update and refine municipal master plans, capital improvement plans and development ordinances that are consistent with their long-term vision.

12. Prepare and update municipal wastewater management plans that promote development in centers at appropriate densities.

13. Prepare corridor development plans for existing and potential growth corridors that incorporate and manage growth corridors within the network of towns, villages, hamlets and nodes, and

14. Develop standards for creating development nodes to ensure they are mixed-use, minimize land consumption and automobile use, and managed within the network of towns, villages, hamlets and growth corridors.

Public Infrastructure Decisions
Another goal of the County’s related to land use planning is to ensure that the decisions made related to the future expansion of sewer and public water service areas sufficiently consider the impact on the County’s agricultural resources. The following map represents, to the best of the County’s understanding, the extent of sewer service areas within the County.
The County is endeavoring to coordinate with municipalities to amend their sewer service areas to be consistent with their local land use objectives, zoning ordinances and sewer treatment facility capacity. For example, in Medford Township overlaps exist between the County’s FPP Project Areas and established sewer service areas. In Medford Township, there is no addition capacity at the local sewer plant and all available sewer credits are assigned to existing / proposed development outside of the
FPP Project Areas. In Mansfield Township, as a result of a COAH settlement, a sewer service area was created along Rt. 206 so that the Township’s legislatively mandated fair-share housing obligation could be met. In several townships there are inconsistencies between SDRP designations and the availability of sewer service.

Available mapping related to the location of public water in Burlington County is too unreliable to be published in association with this Plan. The errors are being remedied and will be available to the County as a resource at a later date.

The NJDEP has adopted water quality management planning rules that are intended to address the impacts of septic systems on groundwater, and establish new standards for wastewater management planning, removing environmentally sensitive lands from sewer service areas. Under these rules, waste water management plans would be organized and managed at the County-level. Counties would then work with municipal planning authorities to update their wastewater management plans.

Under the current rule, Counties will have at least nine (9) months to submit an application to prepare the County-wide wastewater management plan or municipalities would face withdrawal of their sewer service area designation. This would mean that developers would not be able to obtain sewer hookups for new development. Once the new wastewater management plans are approved by the NJDEP, the sewer-service area designations will be reestablished. Though these rules have yet to be formally adopted by the NJDEP, it is likely that the version that is adopted will be substantially consistent with the draft rules. The Freeholder Board has charged the DRC to work with other relevant Department of the County to create an implementation plan for the work that lies ahead.

**Bi-County / Inter-Governmental Regional Planning Effort - Joint Land Use Program (JLUS)**

In 1985, Congress authorized the Department of Defense (DOD) to make community planning assistance grants *Title 10 U.S.C. Section 2391* to state and local government to help better understand and incorporate the military based technical data into local planning programs. In 2005 the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission (BRAC) decided to merge the McGuire-Lakehurst-Fort Dix installation into the first joint base in New Jersey. BRAC cited the lack of conflicting land uses adjacent to the base for its current and future mission as a critical factor in its final decision.

To better coordinate the new mission of the “mega-base” with its neighbors, the DOD awarded Ocean County a grant to coordinate a process known as the **Joint Land Use Program (JLUS)**. The Office of Economic Adjustment manages the JLUS program.
The JLUS is a cooperative land use planning effort between affected local government and the military installation. The recommendations present a rationale and justification, and provide a policy framework to support adoption and implementation of compatible development measures designed to prevent urban encroachment; safeguard the military mission; and protect the public health, safety, and welfare. This process is currently underway and will likely result in amendments to the County’s (Ocean / Burlington) and the local governmental units’ comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances and/or, subdivision regulations. It is anticipated that the JLUS process will result in a coordinated plan between the military and Ocean / Burlington Counties related to priorities for farmland and open space preservation adjacent and/or contiguous to the joint-base and land under existing/future flight paths.

The County places a high priority on preserving lands within two (2) miles of the Ft. Dix / McGuire Air Force Base boundary. The County fully appreciates and agrees that continuing the land use trends adjacent to the base is important to the DOD and the success of the mission of the new Joint Base. Land preservation and future growth must carefully consider the needs of the base and likewise, the base must be sensitive to the needs of the communities it impacts. Chapter II includes a map shows the extent of Burlington County’s “Military Base Buffer Overlay.”

**Current Land Use and Development Trends**

Table 27 demonstrates how Burlington County’s landscape has changed between 1984 and 2001. Between 1984 and 2001, the amount of developed land has increased 42 percent (from +/- 71,000 acres to +/- 102,000 acres). In 1984, developed land accounted for roughly 14 percent of the County’s total land area. This increased five (5) percent to roughly 19 percent by 2001.

In the same time period, the amount of cultivated / grassland (farmable land) in the County has decreased 23 percent (from +/- 116,000 acres to +/- 93,000 acres). In 1984, farmable land accounted for roughly 22 percent of the County’s total land area. This decreased five (5) percent to roughly 17 percent by 2001. **This percentage decrease of farmable land coincides with the percentage increase of developed land since 1984.** It is likely that these new developed areas of the County were acres of farmable land converted to residential or commercial uses.
Table 27
Burlington County’s Landscape Change in Acres
1984-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BURLINGTON</th>
<th>1984</th>
<th>1995</th>
<th>2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>total area</td>
<td>523,899</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEVELOPED</td>
<td>71,645</td>
<td>96,788</td>
<td>101,983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CULTIVATED / GRASSLAND</td>
<td>116,442</td>
<td>97,838</td>
<td>93,324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPLAND FOREST</td>
<td>165,364</td>
<td>162,171</td>
<td>160,264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BARE LAND</td>
<td>3,394</td>
<td>4,579</td>
<td>6,090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNCONSOLIDATED SHORE</td>
<td>1,772</td>
<td>1,834</td>
<td>1,831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COASTAL WETLAND</td>
<td>8,285</td>
<td>8,598</td>
<td>8,592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INLAND WETLAND</td>
<td>149,157</td>
<td>146,055</td>
<td>145,743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WATER</td>
<td>7,839</td>
<td>6,044</td>
<td>6,032</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2001 CRSAA – Land Use / Land Cover

In the past four years, Burlington County has had the lowest number of new housing units authorized since the early 1990’s. This occurred while statewide housing units authorized were at the highest point in the last fifteen (15) years. Information contained in Table 28 was provided by the Burlington County Planning Board.
### Table 28

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Burlington County</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Statewide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>850*</td>
<td>12th</td>
<td>26,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1157</td>
<td>13th</td>
<td>31,709</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>1471</td>
<td>12th</td>
<td>39,395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>1658</td>
<td>10th</td>
<td>39,254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>1906</td>
<td>8th</td>
<td>35,171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>2418</td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>34,589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>2553</td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>35,680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>3188</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>38,065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>2995</td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>37,535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>2862</td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>35,676</td>
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<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>2400</td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>30,017</td>
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<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>2293</td>
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<td>27,577</td>
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<td>1995</td>
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<td>5th</td>
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<td>1600</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>17,524</td>
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<td>1988</td>
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<td>5th</td>
<td>40,909</td>
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<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>3944</td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>51,462</td>
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<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>4254</td>
<td>6th</td>
<td>57,353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>2854</td>
<td>9th</td>
<td>55,027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>2806</td>
<td>6th</td>
<td>43,787</td>
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<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>7th</td>
<td>35,897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>1288</td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>21,297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>775</td>
<td>11th</td>
<td>20,676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>946</td>
<td>12th</td>
<td>22,270</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As of 4/1/2008
* Projected

There has been a general shift in construction of housing units from “green” areas of the County towards Rt. 130 Corridor communities. These communities have existing infrastructure, have access to the NJ Transit River Line system and have opportunities for redevelopment. In addition, growth has been directed to the TDR Receiving Area in Chesterfield Township.
At the same time when our housing units authorized in the County were at its lowest point, office and retail space authorized was at the highest point in the last ten years. Burlington County had almost a million square feet of office space and over 750 thousand square feet of retail space authorized in 2004. In those categories, Burlington County ranked second in office and first in retail space on a statewide basis for a county.

Burlington County presumes that these trends are in large part due to the County’s aggressive and strategic Farmland and Open Space Preservation Programs. As discussed in this section, since preservation decisions are coordinated with economic development and regional planning decisions at the County level, the County’s preservation programs will not stand in the way of development that is judged to be consistent with established local planning principles.

**Municipal Master Plan and Zoning – Overview**

Municipalities in Burlington County outside the jurisdiction of the NJPC have primary jurisdiction on land use decisions within their boundaries. They have several land use tools available to them that are “agriculture-friendly”, as discussed in the NJDA Smart Growth Plan.

*The following descriptions of agriculture-friendly planning techniques have been excerpted from the NJDA Smart Growth Plan:*

**Clustering:** Clustering is a development design technique that concentrates buildings on a portion of land to allow the remainder to be preserved for agriculture, recreation, or environmental purposes. Clustering is most effective when applied regionally as a component of a larger, overarching land use planning strategy, but the technique can be effectively applied on a single parcel of land. When administered correctly, as an application of consistent land-use policy, clustering conserves land, cuts infrastructure costs, maintains landowner equity, and reduces the cost of government services. It is also important for a municipality to require a developer to include state RTF Act language in the deeds to the developed portion of a cluster project and ensure that the homeowners’ association regulations specifically do not prohibit farming activities on the remaining parcel when the remainder is specifically set aside for agricultural preservation.

Clustering can be implemented on a voluntary or mandatory basis. Typically, in voluntary situations, strong incentives are provided to encourage the use of clustering as opposed to existing conventional zoning. Clustering in agricultural areas should be accompanied by land use policy that ensures that the most productive farmland is preserved while accommodating development on marginal land.
Most successful clustering schemes involving lots smaller than ½ acre use alternative wastewater treatment systems. Towns in New Jersey and across the country are using a variety of wastewater technologies that provide treatment for small-scale communities ranging from 10 units to several hundred. These systems can be utilized to enable compact growth patterns and can improve water quality in areas where septic systems are failing. These systems produce clean water at the point of discharge that can replenish critical groundwater resources or can provide effluent for irrigation, municipal street cleaning and other suitable uses.

When these systems are used to cluster development on marginal lands, with the majority of the remaining land set aside with an easement restricting development, hundreds of acres of farmland can be preserved at no cost to the public. Having pre-approved designs for these “stand-alone” wastewater treatment systems can reduce the cost and limit the number of hookups. The use of innovative infrastructure systems gives municipalities and counties the ability to plan for the future development of their community according to their own vision. More than 30 of these systems have been serving several New Jersey communities for a number of years and are functioning well.

**Density Transfer:** New Jersey amended its Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) in 1996 to encourage flexibility regarding density, intensity of land use and design. Density transfer techniques can be used to engage landowners in a specific region of a municipality to change traditional land use patterns. For example, the development potential from four farms can be transferred to one farm, allowing for the accommodation of growth and the permanent protection of four out of five farms.

**Lot Size Averaging:** Lot size averaging is a simple method to permit flexibility in lot size on a parcel of land. This is an effective technique for smaller parcels (10-20 acres) that are proposed for subdivision where flexibility in lot size may help to preserve resources. The overall density remains the same. Only the lot sizes vary.

**TDR:** TDR programs can protect farmland by shifting development from agricultural areas to areas targeted for growth. TDR is the clustering of development, a tool that can be implemented in a portion of a township, township-wide or regionally. TDR allows landowners to transfer the right to develop from one parcel of land – called a sending area, the area to be preserved – to a different parcel of land – called a receiving area, the area to accommodate growth.

Burlington County’s experience to date with TDR has been limited to Chesterfield and Lumberton Townships. An overview of these programs was detailed in Chapter II.

The County assisted these municipalities by providing the planning support for TDR planning and implementation. For example, former County FPP Coordinator Susan
Craft, and other staff assisted the Chesterfield Township Planning Board envision a new master plan and strategy for implementing a TDR Program. To overcome a major hurdle in the sending area, the County assisted by playing a role in negotiating a tie into the sewerage treatment plant at that Albert C. Wagner Correctional Institution, operated by the State of New Jersey. To offset the cost for expansion of the institution’s treatment plant to accommodate the planned development, the State and the County assisted by arranging for a low-interest loan from the State to cover that cost. The plan called for a 560-acre receiving area called Old York Village. The receiving area calls for over twelve hundred attached and detached housing options including a mixed use village center.

Recently, North Hanover and Mansfield Townships have decided to pursue implementation of TDR programs under the State TDR Act. The County has and will continue to provide planning support primarily through the County’s Department of Economic Development and Regional Planning. In addition to direct technical support, County Staff has assisted both municipalities secure funding from the State TDR Bank through the planning assistance grants offered by the state. Staff from the County’s FPP coordinate frequently to ensure that public investment preservation programs work in concert with TDR visioning and implementation.

The use of all of the above planning techniques should be carefully considered by municipalities in Burlington County based on their individual situations. Planning techniques should **compliment** public investment in farmland preservation, not replace it. If used in conjunction with the County’s Farmland Preservation Program, these planning techniques are likely to assist reaching the preservation goals stated further in this Plan without a great amount of public financial resources.

The CADB should monitor local zoning and SDRP mapping changes and review their impact on the County’s ADA and the ATL and adjust both accordingly over time. If farmland is to be preserved by any of the above zoning techniques, the CADB is open to discussing the merits of holding and monitoring the resulting easements. The CADB recommends that the terms of the resulting easements be substantially similar to the template SADC approved DOE.

Strict large lot zoning techniques may reduce the number of homes that can be built, but it also spreads out those homes in such a way that consumes more land, with none of the remaining land useable for farming, forestry or recreation. Burlington County does not view large lot zoning, in of itself, as a zoning technique that is effective in preserving agriculture while respecting the equity of the landowner. As stated earlier in this Chapter, **Burlington County views the maintenance of equity as an underlying tenet of this Plan and a guiding principle of its farmland preservation program.**
Individual Municipal Master Plan and Zoning profiles are provided in Appendix D for local jurisdictions relevant to this Plan. Included in these profiles are general lot size categories and distribution by municipality. In addition, copies of the County’s 3rd Round SDRP Cross-Acceptance maps related to the individual municipality have been provided.

**Existing and Future Municipal TDR**

The first and only townships in the State of NJ to plan and implement local TDR programs are in Burlington County. In addition, in the Pinelands, the PDC program is a regional development credit transfer programs that has preserved thousands of acres in Burlington County. These programs were described in Chapter II.

As of the date of this Plan, there are two municipalities in Burlington County known to be heading towards implementing municipal TDR programs. These include Mansfield Township, North Hanover. The DEDRP has been leading these efforts, which are in their infancy. Planning documents and mapping related to these projects are not yet available. Staff of the FPP will continue to be involved with the development of these programs and will strive for consistency with the acquisition and programmatic strategies recommended in Chapter IX of this Plan.

Though the existing state law governing TDR implementation allows for regional TDR it is deficient in resolving legal and policy challenges for intra-municipal / regional transfer of development. In addition, the COAH rules generate fair-share obligations that must be met within each municipality.

If the existing statewide TDR legislation and COAH regulations were amended to minimize the existing barriers, there would be great potential for coordinating efforts between the Rt. 130 Communities seeking to redevelop and the Rt. 206 communities seeking to preserve their agricultural land base. The market conditions (demand for housing, retail, and employment in “Main Street” communities along the NJ Transit River Line) seem to be in place to drive regional TDR. Additionally, large lot residential “estate” housing units (like the new housing opportunities available in much of the Farm Belt) appear to be the most-impacted by the recent downturn in the national housing market.

**For further information, please reference Part 5.3 of the Current Industry Status and Trends Report (December 2004).** This section provides in depth detail on land use plans that impact agricultural practices and viability in Burlington County, with a specific focus on the County’s Farm Belt.
Chapter IX of this Plan includes specific strategies related to the relationship between a sustainable agricultural industry and land use decisions in Burlington County. These strategies are related to Goal #3 (Promotion and Protection of the Right to Farm) and Goal #4 (Coordination of Land Use Planning Activities).
Chapter VIII
Stewardship

This section of the Plan has two primary features. First, this section contains discussion on the County’s efforts to ensure that the investment made in farmland preservation is maintained by proper monitoring and if necessary, enforcement of the deed-restrictions. This includes County policies on post-preservation requests allowed for through the language contained in the deed restrictions. Second, this section discusses the relationship between the agricultural industry and the stewardship of natural resources.

Stewardship of Public Investment in Preserved Farmland

Monitoring of Preserved Farms

To ensure ongoing and future support for the County’s FPP it is essential that the public investment is taken seriously by the owners of preserved farmland. The monitoring process is a vital tool that will help ensure the integrity, support and effectiveness of the FPP itself.

The County is obligated to monitor all preserved farms annually. The SADC is responsible for monitoring state held easements. The process for monitoring involves a notice sent to the preserved farm landowners informing them of the County’s need to visit the farm to verify compliance with the terms of the DOE. More importantly, the monitoring notification letter is intended to set the tone for cooperation between the County and the landowner. The County requests, but does not require, the presence of the landowner during this site visit. The ability to meet with the landowners in a relatively informal setting allows for honest discussions regarding the FPP and allows County staff to hear constructive criticisms and recommendations.

The County recently established the practice of conducting these monitoring visits between the months of January and April. This change was directed at those directly involved in farming, since they are more likely to have free time at this time of the year to meet with County staff. In addition, the lack of standing crops in the fields and brush in forested areas allows for a more thorough evaluation of the land.

This simple change in monitoring has allowed for greater time spent with the landowners and undoubtedly serves a positive role in fostering beneficial relationships between the County and the landowners.
Another benefit, as the result of increased time spent with landowners, is the ability to annually review the terms of the DOE and ensure that some of the uncertainties and misconceptions are discussed. For example many landowners questions whether or not the DOE requires that the land actually be farmed. At this time, County staff is able to explain that the DOE requires that the land be available for farming, and that in the case of agricultural lands going fallow, we require that landowners have the fields mowed at least once per year. This will prevent the loss of tillable lands to woody vegetation and/or conversion back to a natural wetlands state.

A major misconception of the program deals with the physical appearance of farms and their respective buildings. In the past, the County has received numerous inquiries over the years from the public and agricultural community related to abandoned or otherwise unsightly buildings on preserved farms. The monitoring process allows staff to clearly explain to the landowners and public alike, that the terms of the DOE does not mention and therefore does not require the landowner to maintain the buildings in any particular state or condition.

From time to time there have been instances in which County staff has identified issues on preserved farms that are not in compliance with the DOE. A vast majority of the issues on non-compliant farms are related to fallow fields. The County views fallow fields as lands available for agricultural production that no cropping or, at a minimum, mowing has occurred within the past year. These farms are therefore subject to successional growth in the form of woody vegetation that once established, is difficult to remove. Most of these situations are resolved by bringing the issue to the attention of the landowner. Those issues that are not resolved within a reasonable time frame are presented to the CADB for a recommendation on how to proceed. Other monitoring issues encountered include erosion issues, trash/debris issues and on a few occasions non-agricultural use issues.

Most preserved farms have a requirement that farms have a farm conservation plan prepared for their farms. This plan usually helps alleviate common issues on farms, especially erosion issues. The farming industry itself realizes the long-term economic benefits of retaining as much topsoil as possible on all farms. Therefore, erosion problems identified during the monitoring process usually do not reflect ongoing negligence on behalf of the farmer. County staff is able to inform the landowner, or tenant farmer, of assistance that can be provided free of charge by the local SCD and the USDA NRCS. These recommendations can be put together in the form of a farm conservation plan which can then be implemented by the farmer or landowner to address the erosions issues. In some instances, County staff has been able to educate landowners that have no involvement of the farming operation as to the benefits of a farm conservation plan. The landowner is then able to develop a farm conservation plan for their land and make those recommendations contained within a requirement for the lease of their land.
In situations where there is an unapproved, non-agricultural use identified on a preserved farm, FPP staff will typically discuss the matter with the landowner and try to solve the issue in a non-confrontational, informal manner. If this issue is not able to be resolved in this manner, FPP staff would present the issue to the CADB, which will provide a recommendation to the Freeholder Board. The County often seeks the guidance from the SADC as a significant portion of preserved farms in Burlington County are subject not only to the rights of the County, but also the SADC.

The monitoring process is intended to promote cooperation, exchange of ideas and mutual respect between the easement holder (the County and/or the SADC) and the landowner. This approach is vital to strengthening the relationship between the landowners and the County while protecting the public investment in the program. This in turn leads toward promotion of the program within the agricultural community itself and the subsequent preservation of additional farms.

**Farmland Preservation Signs**

Perhaps one of the most successful ways to advertise the public investment made in the FPP is to visually indicate which farms have been preserved through the program. The SADC and Burlington County have offered to preserved farm landowners, the opportunity to display farmland preservation signs on their property. Though the State and County signs differ in appearance, the message conveys the same concept. A cooperative public investment has been made to keep these lands in agricultural use.

Burlington County offers these signs to the landowners at no fee and the County even offers to install the signs at the locations chosen by the landowner. In most instances landowners have chosen to have the signs placed in a highly visible location along a road with a generally broad view of the entire farm. In a number of instances, those farmers that have farm markets have chosen to display their preservation signs on, or immediately adjacent to their farm market.

Currently, owners of 75 farms have chosen to display the Burlington County FPP sign that indicates the total acreage of the farm and the order in which it was preserved. 17 preserved farms in Burlington County have chosen the larger, wooden sided sign provided by the SADC.

The willingness of so many Burlington County preserved farm owners to display these signs seems to indicate a sense of pride on behalf of the owners to have enrolled their farm in the program. The presence of the signs also seems to indicate a sense of support for the continuation of the program on behalf of these owners as an advertisement to other farm owners.
In the eyes of the public, there are undoubtedly untold benefits of the presence of these signs. There has definitely been a strong push on behalf of the citizens of NJ to fund open space programs such as farmland preservation in an effort to retain green, open spaces and help stop the spread of urban sprawl. As one drives past anyone of these 92 farms that have agreed to have farmland preservation signs installed, they can rest assured that these lands will remain in agriculture in perpetuity.

Burlington County continues to receive requests from preserved farm owners to have more of these signs installed. Though there are some who specifically choose not to advertise their lands as preserved, for a number of reasons, we believe that there will be a day when the vast majority of preserved farms in Burlington County will have these signs on display.

Burlington County Farm Stewardship Award

The CADB decided in 2006 to create a yearly award to recognize a farmer that owns and/or operates a preserved Burlington County farm with a specific commitment to proper stewardship and management. FPP staff, through the yearly monitoring process, will nominate farmers that demonstrate a commitment to properly maintaining fields, ditches and agricultural buildings. The farmer must be implementing an adopted farm conservation plan. The CADB makes the final decision on the award recipient. The farmer receiving the award will receive a plaque recognizing their efforts at a CADB and/or Freeholder public meeting. In 2007, the CADB recognized the Robson Farm, North Hanover Twp. with the first Burlington County Farm Stewardship Award.

Post-Closing Decisions

Post-closing decisions are those actions taken on a preserved farm that require the approval and/or guidance of the CADB and easement holders. These actions were discussed in Section II.

In many instances, the preserved farms have certain vested rights built into the conditions of the deed restrictions. The process by which these actions are taken usually starts with a request made by the landowner. The landowner can consult with staff in order to understand what his options may or may not be and review his needs for the action. All of the actions have a standard request form to be filled out by the landowner. To reduce the paperwork and effort to exercise these rights, Burlington County defers to the standard application as provided by the SADC. FPP staff members spend considerable time with landowners of preserved farmland in order to better understand the request being made in order to efficiently prepare a staff recommendation to the CADB.
Another benefit of the yearly monitoring process, is that County staff is afforded the opportunity to meet with landowners and listen to their thoughts on the current status of agriculture in NJ. Burlington County preserved farmland owners are comprised of both owner/operators and those that own the land and simply lease it to other local farmers.

A significant portion of farmland in the County is leased to other farm operations. According to the University Of Lincoln Case Study report of Burlington County (Esseks, 2002) approximately 35 percent of the farmland in Burlington County is under an agricultural lease. Many of the largest farm operations in the County rely on the ability to lease additional lands to supplement the land they own. According to many of these farmers leasing land, offers a more feasible economic alternative in relation to owning all of the land they would choose to farm. In most cases, land values are so high as to render their purchase simply for agricultural production economically prohibitive. For this very reason, County farmers are able to obtain an increased level in security for their long-term goals of farming. Farmers that lease land currently enrolled in the FPP do not have to worry about losing that land to non-agricultural development. They still have to compete with current agricultural economic market forces that drive up lease values, but the land will ultimately remain in some form of agricultural production.

Leasing of Preserved Farmland / County-owned Open-Space Property

The Freeholder Board owns a significant amount of acreage that can be used for agricultural production. These lands have been acquired by the County for a number of reasons including resale at public auction as a preserved farm, development for the County park system or indefinite ownership for agricultural use. The CADB and Freeholder Board have decided that whenever possible these farms shall be available for farm leases until such time that the County either develops these into a park or resells them at auction. By leasing these lands the County benefits in two major ways: The lands help support the agricultural industry by allowing farmers to lease the land and gain economic returns. These lands should be managed and maintained by the tenant farmer, thus reducing the time and cost to the County.

Commercial Opportunity Permit Policy

As explained in Chapter II, this permit is a new opportunity that proposes to allow certain owners of preserved farms to have new small scale non-agricultural uses developed on preserved farms. These opportunities are likely to be very limited in scope and scale as the language contained in the authorizing legislation provides is very narrow. The SADC is currently developing rules to implement this legislation. The SADC will retain the primary jurisdiction or issuing these permits.
Though the regulation for the administration of this new legislation has yet to be promulgated there has been some established procedures outlined in the legislation for the application, subsequent review, and approval or denial by the SADC. Initially the applicant who wishes to take advantage of this new legislation shall apply to the local CADB. The application will likely be a detailed description of the proposed business activity and descriptions of how this proposed activity complies with the adopted legislation. The CADB shall review the application and any other presentation or materials provided by the applicant in an attempt to ensure compliance with the legislation. If the CADB deems the application complete and appropriate, the application will then be forwarded to the SADC for their review and subsequent denial or approval.

As this bill and the subsequent proposed regulations were proposed, the Burlington CADB offered a number of comments to the SADC detailing concerns with the legislation and regulations as proposed and ultimately questioned whether the limitations contained within would render this Commercial opportunity permit overly restrictive and therefore unusable. The comments were acknowledged by the SADC, though at this time it remains undetermined whether or not any adjustments were made. The Burlington CADB does feel that the goal of the legislation has merit, but it remains to be seen whether or not the opportunities will be exercised after the regulations have been promulgated.

**Stewardship of Natural Resources on Farmland**

*Agricultural and Natural Resources Agencies Available to Landowners*

Key to the success of stewardship of farmland relies on the commitment of the landowner to ensure the conservation and enhancement of the natural resources of the farm. This commitment is best achieved when the landowners are well educated and informed of the natural resources of the farm and how to best manage them. It is important to note that many landowners have achieved this knowledge through their own experiences and research and are very often more aware of the issues affecting their parcel of land than any outside agency “expert.” However, there are still others that through voluntary cooperative efforts with these outside agencies can achieve an even better understanding of the resources of their farm and the options of how to best manage them.

Burlington County farmland owners have been best served by three primary governmental agencies for the wise use and management of the natural resources of their farm.
Burlington County Soil Conservation District (SCD)

SCDs were created as a result of the Dust Bowl in the 1930’s when President Franklin D. Roosevelt, signed the Soil Conservation Act of 1935. From that time on, Soil Conservation Districts have been led by locally elected Boards of officials and farmers who have been charged with assisting farmers and the public, in the wise use of the natural resources of their lands. Originally, SCDs focused on soil erosion prevention assistance to farmers, but have since added water conservation and other natural resource issues to their overall mission.

Farmers and other landowners may make a request to the Burlington County SCD through a Request for Assistance form in which the landowner is requesting that the SCD with the cooperation of the USDA NRCS, provide education and technical assistance for the continued management of the natural resources on the landowners property. Once this request is approved the farmer is then considered to be a “cooperator” with the SCD and the SCD will then pass the request onto the NRCS for further action.

The Burlington CADB maintains an ex-officio position for one of the SCD Board of Directors members in order to facilitate increased communication with the agricultural agencies of the County.

The Burlington County SCD is located at:

1971 Jacksonville-Jobstown Road
Columbus, NJ 08022

Tel. 609-267-7410 • Fax 609-267-3347

District Director - Donald Yarus

USDA - NRCS

The NRCS is a federal government agency that provides technical assistance to landowners via requests made through the local SCDs. NRCS representatives will meet with landowners in an effort to identify natural resource concerns on the property and then work with the landowner to establish a plan directed to address the concern or even enhance the natural resource in question. Most often this is achieved through the creation of a farm conservation plan.

As stated in the USDA NRCS Conservation Planning Brochure (April, 2006) a “Conservation Plan is the starting point for managing the natural resources of your farm or ranch while maintaining productive capacity and meeting individual objectives/goals.” Conservation plans may focus on five natural resource areas:
• Soil
• Water
• Air
• Plants
• Animals

The brochure further states that “A conservation plan combines your farming or ranching skills with the science-based knowledge and tools of the conservation planner. With NRCS advice, landowners select the best combination of conservation practices to meet natural resource needs and individual management goals.” This cooperative approach as highlighted in the above two statements is the key to conservation planning and resource stewardship goals.

The Burlington County NRCS office can be reached at the Burlington County SCD office building:

1971 Jacksonville-Jobstown Road
Columbus, NJ 08022

Tel. 609-267-0811 • Fax 609-261-3007

District Conservationist – Nicole Ciccaglione

Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Burlington County

As stated on the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Website the Mission of the Rutgers Cooperative Extension is:

“Helping the diverse population of New Jersey adapt to a rapidly changing society and improve their lives through an educational process that uses science-based knowledge, Rutgers Cooperative Extension focuses on issues and needs relating to agriculture and the environment; management of natural resources; food safety, quality, and health; family stability; economic security; and youth development.”

Rutgers Extension Agents of Burlington County are often the first line of communication for farmers that are looking for assistance in a wide range of areas or if the general public has concern relating to an agricultural issue. The broad based knowledge of the Rutgers Extension Agents allows them to deal with the issue directly or to put those making the request in contact with the appropriate agency.
The Burlington CADB maintains an ex-officio positions for one local Rutgers Extension Agent in order to facilitate increased communication with the agricultural agencies of the County.

The Burlington County Rutgers Cooperative Extension Office can be reached at the following:

#2 Academy Drive  
Westampton, NJ 08060  
Tel. 609-265-5050 • Fax 609-265-5163  
County Agent / CADB representative – Ray Samulis

Natural Resource Conservation and Protection Programs

No equation for agricultural industry viability is complete without proper attention to natural resource conservation. Environmental sustainability is a two-way street. Farmers will require continued access to adequate natural resources (i.e., land, quality soils and water) in order to engage in successful farming. Continued population growth and ensuing development demand will continue to create significant competition for limited resources. However, farmers also need to remain good stewards, protecting and using environmental and natural resources responsibly through adoption of sound soil and water conservation practices, as well as energy conservation, pollution abatement, and mitigation strategies.

Perhaps one of the biggest challenges facing the County’s FPP is the role the easement holder plays in assuring the conservation of the natural resources on the preserved farmland and to what extent the easement holder can assure this conservation. As Burlington County prepares to shift focus in the next ten years from acquisitions to a monitoring and agricultural support and development role, there is a need to ensure that these lands remain active and productive. The program has faced criticism in the past regarding the way some people perceive the way that certain preserved farms have been “taken care of.” As discussed earlier Burlington County and any easement holder for that matter, has no role in enforcing the physical appearance, i.e. barns, homes, scenic venues, in their aesthetic characteristics. However, provision #7 of the DOE clearly states that...

“No activity shall be permitted on the Premises that would be detrimental to drainage, flood control, water conservation, erosion control, or soil conservation, nor shall any other activity be permitted which would be detrimental to the continued agricultural use of the Premises…”
It is this provision specifically that gives the easement holder the discretion to consider and evaluate the current status of these natural resources (water & soil) during the annual monitoring events. As discussed previously, FPP staff has several issues relating to erosion during the monitoring process. In most cases where erosion concerns have been identified, the landowner or tenant farmer has been put in contact with the local SCD so that this issue may be addressed through a farm conservation plan.

**SADC Soil and Water Conservation Cost-Share Program**

A significant post-closing benefit of enrolling a farm into a FPP (traditional compensated easement, TDR preservation, or 8-year programs) is qualifying for NJ Soil and Water Conservation Cost-Share funding. This funding allows farmland owners / operators to apply for cost-share funding for projects on their lands that would lead to the ultimate conservation of water and or soil resources on their farm. Eligible projects can include surface and subsurface drainage improvements, installation of high efficiency irrigation systems, construction of irrigation ponds, and installation of a variety of erosion control practices, among others. Funding for this program is based on the amount of acreage that the landowner has preserved whether permanently or for the 8-year period. Ultimately, if approved by the local SCD, State Soil Conservation Committee and the SADC, landowners will be reimbursed up to 50 percent of the estimated cost of the project. This reimbursement includes material and labor costs and allows farmers who choose to perform the work themselves contribute their time as part of their 50 percent cost-share requirement.

Burlington County farmers have been very successful in qualifying for this funding. This is just one of many indicators that the County plans to use for tracking progress in these matters as these projects make for more efficient and productive farms while properly managing the natural resources on-site.

**Federal and Non-Profit Conservation Programs**

Farmers and farmland owners alike have opportunities to enroll their lands or portions of their land into various Natural Resource Protection Programs. These programs typically target specific natural resources on lands, farms in the case, in order to obtain specific Natural Resource goals. For example, a non profit organization such as Ducks Unlimited, offers a number of programs and or assistance to landowners with water resources on their farm. The goal of these programs or assistance focuses on the ultimate goal of rehabilitating or protecting habitat for waterfowl. The USDA, though the Farm Bill, offers a host of Programs such as the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP), the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) and the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP). The USDA also offers free technical
assistance for general conservation goals such as field drainage and grading. In most cases these programs operate independently of the FPP and function without the oversight of the easement holder. In most cases the agricultural programs do not interfere with the terms of the DOE or in fact, help enhance those items addressed in provision #7 of the DOE.

As outlined in the USDA Brochure entitled “Farm Bill 2002 What’s In It for You” the following programs are administered and funded by the USDA and are incorporated into Farm Conservation Plans ultimately approved by the local SCD.

**Wetland Reserve Program (WRP)** – Program created for the restoration and maintenance of wetlands formerly in agricultural production requiring a 10 or 30 year contract.

**Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Program (WHIP)** – privately owned land enrolled in an NRCS developed habitat development plan requiring a 5-15 year contract.

**Environmental Quality Improvement Program (EQIP)** – all privately owned cropland, pastureland, grassland and privately owned non-industrial forestland is eligible for the development and execution of a plan developed by the NRCS that details certain conservation and environmental purposes to be achieved.

**Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)** – all environmentally sensitive privately owned land that meets the required cropping history is eligible to be removed from agricultural production requiring a 10-15 year contract.

**Agriculture Management Assistance Program (AMA)** – provides cost share assistance to agricultural producers to voluntarily address issues such as water management, water quality, and erosion control by incorporating conservation into their farming operations.

There has been significant discussion among CADB and SADC staff regarding the goals and practices contained within some of these previously mentioned programs. For example the WRP program aims at restoring or enhancing wetlands on farms. This in itself is a worthy goal, however, the WRP program does convert productive agricultural lands back to natural wetlands. Similar instances can be found in the CREP and WHIP programs. These apparent contradictions in USDA programs and the FPP deed-restrictions need to be identified and outreach needs to be made to landowners to explain this conflict. It is believed by many that any program endorsed by the USDA must be acceptable to the farmland preservation program, but this may not be the case. Undoubtedly, the CADBs and the SADC need to evaluate these programs further and form some consistent policies in dealing with other governmental programs.
According to NRCS and Farm Services Agency (FSA) representatives the following table summarizes those USDA program contracts approved and acreages enrolled in Burlington County under the US Farm Bill 2002.

Table 29
USDA Programs
Approved Contracts / Acreage Enrolled

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Contracts</th>
<th>Contracted Acres</th>
<th>Obligation Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td>AMA</td>
<td>Total 2</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>$31733.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EQIP</td>
<td>Total 62</td>
<td>5,907.50</td>
<td>$2,535,719.42</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Completed 3</td>
<td>498.70</td>
<td>$301,369.16</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Active 1</td>
<td>67.00</td>
<td>$26,299.06</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Completed 8</td>
<td>843.80</td>
<td>$170,832.88</td>
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<td>2004</td>
<td>Active 1</td>
<td>32.80</td>
<td>$5,081.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Completed 1</td>
<td>17.90</td>
<td>$49,712.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Completed 7</td>
<td>302.90</td>
<td>$121,518.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Active 13</td>
<td>1,099.90</td>
<td>$602,506.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Active 10</td>
<td>769.70</td>
<td>$554,447.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Completed 5</td>
<td>430.60</td>
<td>$81,952.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Active 13</td>
<td>1,844.20</td>
<td>$622,000.00</td>
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<td>WHIP</td>
<td>Total 17</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Active 2</td>
<td>29.80</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Active 3</td>
<td>123.00</td>
<td>$35,982.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Active 9</td>
<td>373.50</td>
<td>$93,311.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CREP</td>
<td>Total 3</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>Unavailable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NJDEP Landowner Incentive Program (LIP)

The NJDEP offers yet another option for landowners in the management of the natural resources of their farm. The Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) as administered by the NJDEP uses federal funds for rental payments of land that will help support federally listed threatened and endangered species. These lands are allowed to revert or may be converted back with specific plantings to a natural grassland habitat. Lands are available for mowing and removal of hay crops after July 15 of very year.
The LIP has been more successful in NJ in relation to the USDA WHIP program because the rental payments are higher. The two programs function in much the same way with the same goals and objectives.

Currently Burlington County has one LIP contract for approximately 20 acres of land.

**Waste Management Planning**

Farm-generated waste poses a concern for farming in Burlington County especially as one notes the increase in nursery operations on County farms. Nursery operations, especially those with a significant portion dedicated to greenhouse production generate significant amounts of solid waste in the form of temporary polypropylene hoop-house covers. These hoop-houses are typically covered in the fall and the plastic is typically removed the following April.

Currently there is a private market demand for this plastic solid waste and farmers are able to generate some income through the sale of this old plastic. This plastic is eventually recycled and thus prevents its immediate disposal in a landfill.

Other typical local farm operations such as grain, hay, or equine tend to generate only minimal amounts of solid waste in relation to the size of the operation. During preserved farm monitoring inspections it has been observed that many farm operations use either typical residential curb-side pick up or small on-site dumpsters for solid waste removal.

Many farms throughout the State contain old farm dumps which generally consist of old farm equipment and tires piled along some wood-line of the property. Burlington County farms are no different. Due to the recent significant rise in scrap metal prices, County staff have observed a significant number of landowners who have now chosen to remove the old metal debris and sell this waste at local scrap yards. It has been represented to County staff by a number of landowners that this increase in revenue has now made the process of cleaning up these old junk piles worth the effort.

Tires have been historically identified as a problem due to their inability to degrade over time and their ability to retain pools of water which harbor mosquitoes. For these reasons Burlington County has offered an annual Tire Amnesty Program for Burlington County farmers. This Amnesty Program allows anyone that can verify their status as a Burlington County farmer the ability to dispose of old tires at the County Resource Recovery Complex in Mansfield Township. The County has chosen to offer this amnesty period during the months of March and April, prior to the busy spring season for most of our farmers. This program has been a true success for the County the farmers and the environment and results in thousands of tires each year being disposed of in a proper manner.
At the Burlington County Resource Recovery Facility in Mansfield Twp, Non-refillable, high-density polyethylene #2 (HDPE #2) containers used by agricultural, professional and commercial applicators, as well as HDPE #2 nursery pots, are accepted. Containers must be no larger than 55 gallons and properly rinsed. Nursery pots also must be properly rinsed. The program is open to anyone who holds a N.J. Department of Environmental Protection pesticide license and to state, county and municipal government agencies.

The pesticide container and nursery pot recycling program is a collaborative effort among the N.J. Departments of Agriculture and Environmental Protection, Burlington County Solid Waste, Cumberland County Improvement Authority, Pollution Control Financing Authority of Warren County, Ag Container Recycling Council and USAg Recycling, Inc.

For more information on recycling programs accepting products related to agriculture, please refer to:

http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/news/recyclingpr.htm and
http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/recyclingpestcons.htm

**Animal Waste Management**

The Federal Clean Water Act of 1972 (CWA) identifies concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) as a “point source” of pollution, which are prohibited from being discharged in the nation’s waterways without a permit. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) has vested implementation of the CWA with the State of NJ, both within the DEP (related to CAFOs) and the NJDA in relation to animal feeding operations (AFOs) as a strategy to prevent “non-point” pollution. In 2003, the DEP adopted ruled to issue CAFO permits through the New Jersey Pollution Elimination System regulation program. The NJDA is currently developing rules governing AFOs that will be managed by the NJDA, with assistance from the State Soil Conservation Committee and the individual district offices.

It is unclear at this time what the impact of the new NJDA rules will be on livestock operators. The NJDA has been developing this rule for several years and it is unclear when the final rule will be proposed.
Water Resources and Management

Chapter IV (Agricultural Land Base) provides an overview of water resources and Burlington County’s Water Allocation Credit Transfer Program.

Energy Conservation Planning

The CADB supports a farmer’s ability to generate energy from renewable sources to meet the needs of their own commercial farming unit along with the on-farm residential uses whether a farm is preserved or not. Such environmentally-sound management practices should be encouraged. The CADB finds it reasonable for farmers to generate a limited amount of energy in excess of their operational demands and sell it to on the private market. This should be allowed so that farmers can recoup the upfront capital investment and offset the on-going maintenance and upkeep of structures and equipment required to facilitate their transition to renewable energy.

The SADC and the Dept. of Agriculture should consider adding renewable energy projects (designed to an appropriate scale to meet the farmer’s energy needs) to the list of eligible projects under the Soil & Water Conservation Grant Program.

The CADB feels that existing rules and regulations governing the farmland preservation program currently permit farmers to generate solar and wind energy on preserved farms to support their commercial farming operations. Owners of preserved farmland should be provided with clear direction on these matters before they invest and install these systems. The CADB has directed its staff to begin working with owners of preserved farms, the SADC and other relevant parties to draft said County policy for consideration and adoption as soon as possible. The CADB supports a liberal interpretation by the SADC of defining the total energy needs for the agricultural uses on the farm so that farmers are able to offset all of the energy demands from their commercial farm unit and ancillary on-farm activities. The development of renewable energy technology will likely continue at a fast pace and any policy on this issue needs to account for improvements in efficiencies and energy generation capabilities as time goes on.

The CADB believes that the RTF Act currently protects a farmer’s right to erect solar/wind facilities to meet the energy needs of their farming operation. Since no formal test case to date has been heard by any CADB or the SADC, it is appropriate for the SADC to support amendments to the RTF Act that would provide clarity to avoid putting this issue in the hands of the judicial system.

Chapter IX includes specific strategies related to the stewardship of preserved farmland and the natural resources contained in and around said land. These strategies are related to Goal #2, Stewardship of Protected Land and Natural Resources.
Chapter IX
Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Program (2009-2018): Goals, Strategies and Indicators

This section of the Plan is intended to provide clear goals and objectives for the County’s FPP over the next 10 years. For each of the goals contained in this section, strategies and indicators are provided in an effort to effectively attain the articulated goals and provide measurable documentation of anticipated attainment.

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Strategies are specific means of achieving the goal. Indicators are measurements that enable monitoring of progress made toward achievement of the goal. Potential indicators or data that could be recorded and monitored are offered for consideration. It should be expected that some of these strategies will serve to further more than one goal, but such strategies are listed only once under the goal that will be most advanced by its implementation.

The absence of a specific strategy recommended by the Technical Report should not be construed as a lack of desire for the County to implement said strategy.

The goals described in this chapter are reflective of the County’s desire to continue its focus on achievement of preservation goals while beginning to develop formal agricultural viability programming. As with the onset of the acquisition program, the County has chosen to start small and will prioritize its efforts in critical areas where it can realize the greatest benefits to the agricultural community and the public at large.

In the early 1980’s, in the formative stages of the State’s farmland preservation programs there was much dialogue in regard to the amount of land needed to sustain the agricultural industry in New Jersey. The leaders of the farmland preservation movement recognized that action could not be delayed pending consensus on this issue and the “critical mass” was never defined. In like manner, the final picture of “agricultural viability” will continue to be elusive until strategies begin to be implemented. Once again, it is imperative that steps be taken now to ensure that we do not lose the next generation of farmers while we work towards a clearer definition of agricultural viability. It is this next generation of farmers who will be the stewards of the preserved farmland resource and who will shape the definition of agricultural viability into the 21st century.
The strategies listed below are believed to be implementable with the resources available to the County at this time. If County, State, Federal, or Non-Profit resources for implementation of strategies not listed in this Plan are made available after the adoption of this Plan, the CADB will advise the Freeholder Board of the same. If determined to be viable, the strategy will be implemented.

Goals, Strategies, and Indicators

The Mission Statement of the Burlington County FPP shall be:

*The Burlington County Farmland Preservation Program exists to advance the quality of life in Burlington County by preserving a permanent agricultural land base and by maintaining a regulatory environment that supports a viable agricultural industry.*

This Mission Statement shall guide the Freeholder Board and the CADB in all future decisions related to public investment in farmland and agricultural economic development.

In conjunction with a mission, the FPP must have a clear a vision of the future conditions it aspires to attain. As such, the “Vision Statement” of the Burlington County Farmland Preservation Program is:

*The Burlington County Farmland Preservation Program envisions a future in which a strong and dynamic agricultural industry persists and contributes to a vigorous local economy and an enhanced quality of life for all Burlington County residents.*

The mission and vision of the Burlington County FPP will be fully realized by embracing six (6) specific goals. These goals are:

**Goal #1: Preservation of an Additional 20,000 Acres**

Burlington County continues to view the maintenance of landowner equity as a fundamental principle that must be foremost in consideration while implementing the following strategies.

1.1 Acquisition Strategies

A. Preserve an additional **10,000 acres** utilizing the six (6) acquisition initiatives referenced in Chapter II from the 1998 Strategic Plan.

B. Employ the revised County PIG Program, as the primary source of State funding, and create four “Project Areas” where preservation tools can be used most effectively as discussed in detail further in this Chapter.
C. Adopt policies for the limited approval of “urban farms.”

D. Continue to offer the Fee-Simple option to acquire farmland in limited, emergency situations.

E. Deny County preservation funds to any applicant (municipal or nonprofit) that does not uphold the rights in, and requirements of, the New Jersey RTF Act

F. Continue to provide waiver of local cost-share requirements for Pinelands Municipalities and the Resource Recovery Overlay, and when fiscally possible, the Military Buffer Overlay.

G. Support municipalities in applying for Municipal PIG for locally important projects that may not meet the County’s minimum standards. Assist with applications and negotiations for individual applications, according to SADC and County policies.

H. Increase participation in SADC Direct and Fee Simple Programs by maintaining a clear understanding of SADC minimum standards and the County farms that are of specific interest to the SADC.

I. Increase administrative effectiveness by maintaining staff levels commensurate to program activity, implementing technological improvements such as a program database and website, and providing clear and concise policies related to processing applications.

J. Seek out additional funding sources if, and only if, the process and deed-restrictions are consistent with the mission, vision, and goals of this Plan.

K. Continue to promote the IPA Program, specifically longer term IPAs, and educate program applicants of potential benefits related to state and federal tax incentives.

L. Advocate for a long-term dedicated source of State funding for farmland preservation that funds SADC programs at levels equal to or greater than current levels.
Description of Proposed Project Areas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Area Name</th>
<th>Project Area Aggregate Size (Acres)</th>
<th>Project Area Density (%)</th>
<th>Total # of Targeted Farms</th>
<th>Total Acreage of Targeted Farms</th>
<th>Targeted Farm Soil Productivity (%)</th>
<th>Total Estimated Cost of Targeted Farm Easement Purchase</th>
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<td>North</td>
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<td>46</td>
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Project Area Totals

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<th>Total # of Targeted Farms</th>
<th>Total Acreage of Targeted Farms</th>
<th>Total Estimated Cost</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>101,397.73</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>22,885.01</td>
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Appendix E includes mapping related to these proposed project areas. Appendix F includes the farms by block and lot, further delineated by townships that are targeted in these project areas.

Cumulative Farmland Preservation Targets (Public Investment):

One Year Target (by the end of 2009): 1,000 acres; Number of Farms: 10
Five Year Target (by the end of 2013): 5,000 acres; Number of Farms: 50
Ten Year Target (by the end of 2018): 10,000 acres; Number of Farms: 100

Estimated Costs

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Project Area Name</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Average Easement Price per Acre</th>
<th>Total Est. Project Cost</th>
<th>Total Est. Mun Funding*</th>
<th>Total Estimated County Funding</th>
<th>Total Estimated State Funding</th>
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<td>North</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>$11,428</td>
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<tr>
<td>East</td>
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<tr>
<td>South</td>
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<td>$5,000,000</td>
<td>$0</td>
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Targeted Farm Totals

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Total Acreage</th>
<th>Total Est. Cost of Targeted Farm Easement Purchase</th>
<th>Total Est. Municipal Funding</th>
<th>Total Estimated County Funding</th>
<th>Total Estimated State Funding</th>
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<td>10,000</td>
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<td>$10,000,000</td>
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* Municipal Funding Projections based on 10 percent Local Cost-Share in the North PA, 20 percent in the West, and zero (0) percent in the East and South

**INDICATORS:** Acres Preserved, Acres Targeted, Public Funds Expended, Partner Funds Received, Farms owned by County, Number of IPA Transactions

To meet the 20,000 acre goal, an **additional 10,000 acres** should be preserved through innovative zoning programs such as Municipal TDR / Ag-Friendly Zoning Techniques and the PDC Program. As such, the following strategies are recommended:

1.2 Strategies Specific to SADC Direct and Fee Simple Programs, Municipal TDR & Other Ag-Friendly Zoning Techniques:

A. Coordinate with the SADC Direct and Fee Simple Programs to make them aware of high-quality farms in Burlington County that are eligible for their program.

B. During the visioning, planning and development of TDR and/or other zoning ordinances are adopted that facilitate growth and preservation, work closely with local leaders to ensure that County acquisition efforts complement local initiatives.

C. Work with local programs to ensure that resulting easements are properly monitored and enforced.

D. Investigate opportunities to facilitate and stimulate private-market transaction with the Burlington County TDR Bank Board.

E. When a viable local TDR program is established, consider the TDR Program as the primary preservation tool if SADC funds for preservation are limited.

F. Assist municipalities to ensure that TDR Deed Restrictions maintain land in agriculture.
1.3 Strategies Specific to the Pinelands Development Credit (PDC) Program:

A. Promote 8-Year Program participation on qualified lands with PDCs severed to ensure that the use of the land continues in agricultural production.

B. Investigate opportunities to facilitate private market PDC sales by working with interested buyers and sellers of PDCs.

C. Consider the PDC Program as the primary preservation tool if SADC funds for preservation are limited.

D. Petition the NJPC / PDC Bank to allow additional permanent deed restrictions that mandate active agricultural lands be available for agricultural production in the Agricultural Production and Special Agricultural Production Areas of the Pinelands.

Cumulative Preservation Targets (SADC / TDR / PDC):

One Year Target (by the end of 2009): 1,000 acres; Number of Farms: 10
Five Year Target: (by the end of 2013) 5,000 acres; Number of Farms: 50
Ten Year Target: (by the end of 2018) 10,000 acres; Number of Farms: 100

Cumulative Preservation Targets (ALL PROGRAMS, 2009-2018)

One Year Target (by the end of 2009): 2,000 acres; Number of Farms: 20
Five Year Target (by the end of 2013): 10,000 acres; Number of Farms: 100
Ten Year Target (by the end of 2018): 20,000 acres; Number of Farms: 200

SAMPLE INDICATORS: County, SADC, TDR, PDC Acres Preserved, Public Funding Investment, Private Funding Invested, Number of Municipalities with Preserved Farms, Number of Municipalities with TDR Ordinances, Farms Preserved by IPAs, Number of Municipalities with approved Planning Incentive Grants, PDC acres in 8-Year Program, Yearly PDC Transactions
Goal #2: Stewardship of Protected Land and Natural Resources

2.1 Strategies Related to Stewardship of Protected Farmland Land:

A. Ensure compliance with terms of deed-restrictions by yearly monitoring of all farms preserved by the County.

B. Ensure that farms preserved in fee-simple are properly managed while in County ownership and are sold at public auction as soon as possible with conditions consistent with the mission, vision, and goals contained in this Plan. Long-term public ownership of agricultural land should only be considered if such an arrangement would facilitate implementation of strategies contained in this Plan.

C. Establish strong lines of communication between County staff and owners of preserved farms. Prepare yearly or bi-annual newsletters for owners of preserved farms.

D. Offer landowners of preserved farms a “Farmland Preservation Sign” that will signify to the public the landowners decision to preserve the farm. Install signs on all farms purchased by the County in fee-simple.

E. Create a “welcome-package” for new owners of preserved farmland and successful bidders at public auctions that provides necessary information related to the restrictions attached to the ownership of preserved farmland.

F. Stress with all applicants for farmland preservation the need for estate planning; not only to save on ultimate federal and state taxes but also to ensure that the land preservation investments by the State, County and municipality are going to advance the future of agriculture.

G. When requested, provide TDR townships with guidance on monitoring preserved farmland.

H. Establish procedures and documents to facilitate timely responses to landowners request for exercising RDSOs, replacement of residential structures, construction of agricultural labor units, division of premises, commercial opportunity permits, and general deed interpretation requests.

I. Develop a “model lease” for owners of preserved farmland to voluntarily use when renting land to an agricultural operator.
J. Investigate possibility of accepting improvements to farm infrastructure and increased maintenance requirements in lieu of rental payments for agricultural use of County owned property.

2.2 Strategies Related to Stewardship of Natural Resources:

A. Ensure that all preserved farms have farmland conservation plans approved by the NRCS.

B. Provide information to farm operators about funding programs to enhance water quality protection, wildlife habitat, and soil and water conservation, and when called upon, provide technical assistance to farm operators regarding stormwater management, watershed protection, environmental restoration, and sustainable agriculture.

C. Develop CADB policy that supports on-site renewable energy technologies for meeting energy demands for operating preserved farms.

D. Promote regional solutions to drainage and other water resource issues.

E. Work with the New Jersey chapter of the Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA) to promote opportunities for organic production.

F. Ensure that water allocation budgeting supports the needs of the agricultural community.

G. Consider additional “impervious coverage” restrictions in areas of the County where impact on agricultural viability would be minimized (for example, in the Pinelands Project Areas, in the Military Buffer, or in Airport Hazard Zones).

H. Continue to educate and update awareness of new and revised NJDEP environmental regulations as they pertain to agriculture. The CADB should engage and comment during the rule-making process, when appropriate.

SAMPLE INDICATORS: Number of farms with compliant easements, Number of farms with current Farm Conservation Plans, Number of FPP Signs Requested / Installed, Number of Farms receiving SADC Soil & Water Cost Share Grants, Number of Post-Closing Requests / Approvals, Number of renewable energy projects installed.
Goal #3: Promotion & Protection of the Right to Farm (RTF)

3.1 Strategies Related to RTF Promotion:

A. Work with municipalities, NJDA, and other partners to develop RTF and other ordinances to support agricultural activities now and into the future.

B. Analyze municipal ordinances and zoning for potential impediments to direct marketing and agri-tourism.

C. Develop alternative solutions for municipalities to consider (e.g. model ordinances for pressing local agricultural issues for example, farm markets and ag labor housing).

D. Hold regular workshops for farmers and municipal officials regarding needs and benefits of agri-tourism to prevent expensive and time-consuming controversy when farms engage in such activities.

E. Create a “welcome-package” for newly elected public officials in participating municipalities in the County to ensure that they understand and appreciate their role in implementing the goals contained in this Plan.

3.2 Strategies Related to RTF Protection:

A. Participate in the development of SADC Agriculture Management Practices (AMPs) and communicate County priorities for AMP development

B. Advocate for mediation as the first step in conflict resolution.

C. Ensure that CADB decisions related to the development of SSAMP and Conflict Resolution decisions properly balance the interests of the public health and safety with the private interests of the private operator seeking the protection. SSAMP decision must be made efficiently, fairly, and with the opinion of the aggrieved party thoroughly considered.

SAMPLE INDICATORS: Number of municipalities with effective RTF ordinances, Number of Model Ag-Viability Ordinances Approved by the CADB, Number of Model Ag-Viability Ordinances Adopted by Municipalities, SSAMP Requests / Approvals, Conflict Resolution Requests / Approvals, Mediation Requests, Number of SADC AMPs developed
Goal #4: Coordination of Land Use Planning Activities

Strategies:

A. Continue to employ carefully designed TDR plans or density transfers to increase the acres of preserved farmland (at little to no cost to the public) while managing growth.

B. Assist in the development of local agricultural preservation and retention master plan elements pursuant to the MLUL that can support zoning and land development ordinances more favorable to the economic viability of agriculture.

C. Work with partners to collect or develop model ordinances for municipalities to use in amending their local ordinances to give greater support to agriculture. Guide municipalities in using and applying these model ordinances.

D. Assist the DEDRP in the multi-county planning process related to the Ft. Dix – McGuire – Lakehurst Military Installation consolidation by expressing goals of this Plan at every stage of that planning process.

E. Include farmer representation in the decision-making and design of County recreation trails, and include provisions for parking, blocking unauthorized entry into farms, enforcement and fines including paying for site and crop damage.

F. Recommend that representative local Agricultural Advisory Committees are established to advise the municipal planning board and governing body on how to further preservation and agricultural economic development goals.

G. Continue to work with the DEDRP within the cross-acceptance process of the NJ State Plan.

H. Ensure that future design and capacity improvements to local, County and State roads do not negatively impact drainage on farms

SAMPLE INDICATORS: Number of local TDR ordinances, Number of Farmland Preservation Elements of Local Master Plans, Number of AACs established
Goal #5: Implementation of Agricultural Economic Development Strategies

Strategies:

A. Implement the recommendations contained in the Burlington County Working Group Recommendations Report for the management of the BCCAC.

B. Increase public awareness of the importance of the FPP and the agricultural industry by making connections, through various programs and events such as the SJRC&D Tour des Farms and its “Farming for the Future” grant program, that connects residents and tourists to the agricultural industry.

C. Organize farm tours in Burlington County for County and municipal officials and the general public that increase awareness of the roles and importance of agriculture in the region, as well as the issues faced by farm families, owners and operators.

D. Increase public appreciation of farms (preserved or not) and farm operations by promoting direct-market farms, farms with agri-tourism components, and producer-driven community farmers markets.

E. Create model Community Farmers Market By-Laws and Program Guidelines and assist interested parties organize and implement plans for producer-driven community farmers markets in urban areas, centers, and potentially around the NJ Transit RiverLine System.

F. Examine appropriate County economic development loan programs and other financial incentives to design ways that they could be more useful to farm operators. Coordinate County financial assistance programs with those offered by the USDA, FSA and with private and cooperative lenders such as First Pioneer Farm Credit to find ways that the County could expand upon and coordinate with sources of capital traditionally offered by these agencies.

G. Hold regular interagency update meetings to increase connections among County programs that could benefit agriculture.

H. Send letters to Burlington County school districts outlining on-farm educational opportunities within Burlington County.

I. Sponsor a County (or co-sponsor a statewide) summit for young and beginning farmers that will (1) document the young/beginning farmers’ outlook and long-term perspective of farming as an occupation in Burlington County (New Jersey),
(2) identify young/beginning farmers’ perceptions of opportunities and challenges in farming, and (3) present summit attendees with a compiled set of resources, materials, and expertise available to help promote the success of their operations. Publish summit proceedings on the Internet to form the basis of a legislative agenda to aid and recruit young and beginning farmers into the region and state.

J. Promote educational opportunities for high school students from throughout Burlington County that are interested in pursuing an agricultural career by facilitating their cross-enrollment in the agriculture program located at the Northern Burlington County Regional High School in Mansfield Township.

K. Support a “positive business environment” and promote a positive image of farming in the region. Actively market this message to farmers statewide and from other areas.

L. Convene periodic round table meetings with farmers and County economic development staff to brainstorm about industry economic development needs and issues and to integrate agriculture into other economic development efforts.

M. Include agriculture in programs that deliver assistance in marketing, dealing with labor issues, regulatory relief, business management assistance, and enhanced infrastructure support.

N. Investigate the benefits of Urban Enterprise Zones and Special Improvement Districts to include businesses specializing in agricultural marketing, farm suppliers, farm service providers, and firms engaged in value-added agriculture and agribusiness.

O. Pursue federal grant opportunities for support to develop new markets, including value added.

P. Evaluate specific needs for complementary agricultural businesses (packagers, primary processors, suppliers, agricultural service providers, etc.) and the prospect of retaining more of the food-marketing dollar within Burlington County.

Q. Promote awareness of the technical, business development, and marketing programs and expertise of the Rutgers Food Innovation Center (a part of the NJAES located in Bridgeton, New Jersey). To further awareness, the County could sponsor a farmer seminar on the services provided by the Food Innovation Center.
R. Facilitate farmer awareness of opportunities to develop ethnic-based markets for existing produce and/or grow new produce items consistent with emerging ethnic markets based on the Cook College / NJDA study on potential ethnic market opportunities.

S. Promote “sustainable food” by leveraging existing resources, such as those available under the NJDA’s Jersey Fresh program and by partnering with the NOFA, to encourage promotion and purchases of locally grown agricultural products. Explore opportunities to increase institutional wholesale purchases by County-based institutions (e.g. Burlington County Community College, primary and secondary schools, hospitals and correctional facilities).

The Burlington County Dept. of Economic Development and Regional Planning and the DRC – Division of Cultural Affairs and Tourism will be instrumental in implementing several of these strategies.

SAMPLE INDICATORS: Number of Community Farmers Markets, Number of Pro-Ag Programs, Events and Tours, Number of Farmer Educational Programs, Trends in next US Census of Agriculture, Number of Conventional Outlets (Supermarkets, Schools, etc) that purchase locally grown products

Goal #6: Coordination of Public Sector Agricultural Services

Strategies:

Work with existing public sector agricultural service providers to:

A. Compile an online directory of available agricultural service providers and suppliers servicing, or potentially capable of servicing, farms in Burlington County.

B. Evaluate existing agriculture-related programs in the surrounding region. Develop college agriculture-related programs and services to meet the needs of the agricultural community in Burlington County.

C. Provide guidance to farmers so that they better understand environmental regulations and the regulatory agencies that govern them.

D. Make available to farm operators deciding to intensify or change their farming practices (or participate in various soil or water conservation practices) the computer software that helps farmers evaluate the potential business, production and operational impacts of their choices. Available programs include FinPac or
the Rutgers Agriculture Re-Engineering Program. Set up a site in Burlington County where this assistance can be provided free of charge to the farm operator.

E. Organize and publicize training sessions or seminars for farmers including, but not limited to, existing training programs by Rutgers Cooperative Extension and the Rutgers Food Innovation Center that focus on emerging business issues, trends, and resources available to farmers.

**SAMPLE INDICATORS:** Partners involved in new online directory, Depth of information in new online directory, Number of coordinated farmer training sessions or seminars

The Technical Report’s primary recommendation is to create a Burlington County Agricultural Industry Development Program (or “BC-AID”). This new program would be staffed by an agricultural industry development specialist(s) that would be established and maintained primarily to create a point-person or program for agricultural industry development issues, fill in existing gaps in the need and desired services and programs available to agriculture, provide a voice for agriculture in local and regional venues, and to serve as an “ombudsman” on land use, environmental, labor, and other regulatory requirements.

In addition to the new program, an “Agricultural Industry Development Steering Committee” was envisioned to “provide direction, advice and oversight to the specialist/program.” This Steering Committee would include representatives from the major commodity groups and scales of agricultural operations in Burlington County, the CADB, the Burlington County Board of Agriculture, municipal planning boards, environmental committees, Burlington County College, the Rutgers Eco-Complex, the Burlington County Enterprise Center and the Freeholder Board.

After considering this recommendation, the Freeholder Board believes that the establishment of a new program, a new staff, and a new board is unnecessary. The Freeholder Board will charge the CADB with the duties envisioned by the authors of the Technical Report. The CADB will be, over time, transformed to function as the **County’s Agricultural Industry Development Program.** In order for this transformation to begin, the Freeholder Board will review and amend, as necessary, the **CADB’s bylaws and membership (Farmer, Public, and Ex-Officio) and review the technical abilities of existing CADB staff.** It is recommended that a member of the Burlington County Department of Economic Development and Regional Development be appointed as an official non-voting member of the CADB or formally acknowledged as staff to the re-tooled CADB.
Factors Limiting Implementation

The following are factors that are perceived to have the potential to limit implementation of this Plan:

- Funding for Preservation
- Rising Acquisition Costs
- On-going Discussions Regarding the Elimination of the NJDA
- State Agency / Federal Government Rules
- Public Support for Farmers
- Public Support from the Public
- Land Supply
- Landowner Interest
- Administrative Resources

The above should be monitored carefully by the CADB and recommendations should be made to the appropriate agency advising them if and when decisions are being made that may impact the County’s ability to implement this plan.

Long-Term Monitoring of Plan Implementation

In order for the CADB to communicate progress to the Freeholder Board in implementing the strategies contained in this Plan, the CADB will prepare an annual report for the Freeholder Board. This annual report will track indicators as a method of judging progress towards attainment of the stated goals. This annual report should be made available to the public as well. A comprehensive review of progress should be conducted 5 years after the adoption of this Plan. Unless required by State regulations or for other reasonable purposes determined by the Freeholder Board, this Plan should be revised and readopted ten years after adoption.