

BERGEN COUNTY MASTER PLAN



Northwestern Visioning Workshop

January 20, 2010

Bergen County Law and Public Safety Institute—Mahwah, NJ

Summary

Table 1 — Economic Vitality

- Parking is always an issue. More transit opportunities -- giving patrons other options and freeing up parking spaces – are needed.
- Industry is leaving Bergen County because of high taxes. The County should investigate ways to assist municipalities decrease property tax and business tax burdens to stimulate economic growth.
- The health care industry is still growing in North Jersey. Areas of interest to the growing health care industry are not located near adequate transportation. For example, Franklin Lakes has no mass transit to industrial areas making it increasingly difficult to attract and transport employees to work sites.
- Mahwah and Franklin Lakes both have existing industrial and commercial areas but they are disconnected from the rest of the county. Route 287 provides some access but also constitutes an impediment to other regional road networks by cutting them off from surface streets.
- The International Crossroads Area has no transit service yet has high employment. The County should investigate potential transit service to the site.

- There is little intra-county transit — most transit services are New York centric. The County should investigate how to create a more comprehensive and efficient intra-county transportation system.
- The County should encourage more industrial and commercial growth particularly along the Route 17 corridor, via infill of existing areas as opposed to new business parks.
- The County should focus on improving the local economies by identifying each sub-area’s strengths and capitalizing on them with a goal towards building more sustainable economies. For example, Paramus for retail, Mahwah for recreation, Ramapo and Bergen community colleges for locating data centers, and so forth.
- Taxes, home rule (fragmented government) and inadequate transportation services are discouraging new business from locating in Bergen County.
- The County and municipalities should encourage more mixed-use. Residential development above retail keeps downtowns alive, especially at night.
- The County should lobby the State to keep the sales tax low so as to remain competitive with New York.
- The County should encourage temporary uses for areas not in use at certain times; for example, large parking lots for office buildings and train stations can become farmer’s markets on weekends when there is no demand for parking.
- The County should better advertise its services -- many businesses are not aware of what the county has to offer. The County should develop informational materials (e-mails, flyers, etc) touting its excellent business environment. We have to get the word out!

Table 2 – Open Space, Parks and Recreation, and Natural Systems

- There is a fundamental lack of open space in Bergen County; in particular passive open space is at a crisis point. The County should take an active role in preventing passive open space from being converted to active uses.
- There are too many artificial turf fields in Bergen County.
- River banks should be returned to their natural state. The County should enact a 500-foot buffer rule to prevent over development of sensitive areas and provide assistance to municipalities to implement ordinances requiring buffer zones around all water ways.

- The County should work to implement a larger buffer zone around the Passaic River between the Dundee Dam and Great Falls.
- The County should also encourage buffer ordinances for parks. Teaneck has a 50-foot buffer zone around parks.
- The County should work to ensure flood hazard areas are protected and returned to their natural state to provide flood control benefits.
- The County should place a strong emphasis on “green” in the Master Plan.
- Additional open space that should be available to the public — including pocket parks — would comprise parts of the Upper Hackensack Watershed, Lake Tappan and Cedar Farms.
- Providing boat access to many of the County’s major rivers and lakes is a desired feature, but access should be provided only in already developed areas and sensitive areas should be avoided.
- The County should continue to encourage and assist landowners in placing conservation easements on their property.
- The County should make provisions to protect the view sheds of parks.
- The County should take a larger role in brokering open space deals between towns and private landowners (proactive versus reactive).
- Given the current lack of State funding for the NJ Green Acres program, the County should maximize the use of County Open Space Trust Funds with municipal Trust Funds to acquire lands. Vacant lands adjacent to parks should be the County’s first priority for acquisition. Open space trust fund monies should only be used for acquisition of passive use open space.
- Projects such as basketball courts, field lighting and turf fields -- which involve impervious surfaces -- should not be eligible for county open space funding.
- The County should encourage and provide assistance to towns that do not currently have a municipal open space tax program. Local officials need to be educated on the benefits of open space trust funds, because there is concern about the ratable loss from open space.
- The County should investigate establishing a Parks Foundation that would raise funds to help improve the Bergen County Park System and provide a way for park advocates to donate funds to improve the quality of life in Bergen County via parks and recreational opportunities.

- The master plan should be followed by educational sessions for local officials focusing on environmental issues such as climate change, non-invasive species and discouraging manicured landscaping.
- The County should implement a better public relations/ education effort to explain the benefits of open space (cleaner water, air quality, etc).
- The Hudson River is an air quality buffer between Bergen County and New York City. The County should focus on improving this buffer by providing more forested areas along the river corridor.
- There should be a “no net loss of trees policy” in Bergen County.
- The County should provide increased access to trail heads at parks. Where needed, additional parking should only be provided in environmentally responsible manners, and not in the riparian areas of the Upper Hackensack Watershed.
- The County should not encourage the construction of additional trails, but rather work to improve trails that are already in a state of disrepair. Trails through passive recreation areas should not be paved. The County should work to interconnect trails from multiple parks and organize a volunteer organization to provide trail maintenance.
- Bike racks should be provided at parks where appropriate, along with better public transportation options.

Table 3 – Transportation

General

- There are too many layers of regulation affecting right-of-way projects; even simple projects become too challenging.
- We are an automobile society. The objective should be to get people off the highways; but transit needs to better address the factors that make people choose to drive.
- Rail and bus service are primarily focused on commuters into Manhattan.
- Better intermodal connections are needed as is more frequent transit service is needed. Infrequent service is a major deterrent to taking transit instead of driving.
- More feeders are needed to Secaucus Station – from there, there are frequent trains to Manhattan.

- Municipalities need more guidance from the County and State regarding funding for transportation projects and how to apply for it; they need technical assistance, workshops, and the latest manuals, rules and regulations.

Bicycle and Pedestrian

- Improving walkability is a big need in the County. Sidewalks are lacking around transit stations. A sidewalk inventory is needed, to show existing sidewalks and more importantly, missing sidewalks. Sidewalks are needed to and from bus stops in the County; "cow paths" to many of them show that demand exists where there are no sidewalks.
- Municipalities need help in planning sidewalks.
- There is interest in a bike path or shared lane on Darlington Avenue from Ramapo College to the Bergen County Law and Public Safety Institute.
- The owners of Garden State Plaza are interested in making it more bike and pedestrian friendly.

Ramsey

- Traffic calming is needed for a new road between a ball field and industrial area in Ramsey, but the Borough Attorney and Engineer denied it on liability grounds. Technical help is needed from higher levels of government because there is no local expertise in the design or review of transportation projects.
- There is traffic congestion during the middle of the day on the main streets in town. It can take twenty minutes to go around downtown.
- Ramsey is a crossroads for the surrounding municipalities of Mahwah and Upper Saddle River. All three have experienced strong growth.
- There is busing to schools from two miles away or more which generates a tremendous amount of school traffic.
- NJ Transit cut rail service to Ramsey. It used to connect to Secaucus every half hour, now trains leave once every two hours. Reduced frequency in service is a major reason for not taking the train from Ramsey; residents are better off driving, because, if they have to stay late in New York, they do not want to wait two hours for a train.
- It was a fight to get NJ Transit to install sidewalks and bike racks at the Ramsey Station. It is not very accessible by locals because it is cut off from the entire community by a sound wall. There was little to no community involvement in the planning for Ramsey Station. NJ DOT refused to provide bus stops for Coach USA at Ramsey Station.

Garden State Plaza

- The Plaza is underserved by transit. Currently, they have 3,000 bus passengers, about half of whom are employees. Bus riders come from Manhattan and include tourists. But most patrons still arrive by cars.
- The Plaza has considered embracing mixed use development, such as adding office or medical to the retail uses, but is severely constrained by parking. Right now all land is needed for parking.
- Rail service would be ideal. With a rail station, less parking would be needed, which would free up land for mixed-use development.

Rail

- A station in Saddle Brook on the proposed Cross-County Line is needed. There should also be transfer stations to the Pascack Valley Line.
- NJ Transit needs to do a much better job of marketing itself and of selling the option of taking the train. Overall there is local resistance to transit improvements because people do not understand their benefits. The MTA in New York does a much better job of encouraging people to take the train. New York City actively discourages driving.
- The ARC Tunnel opening will increase residential real estate values by up to 25% in station areas where a one-seat ride to Manhattan becomes possible.
- Some sort of overhead transit system should be considered on Route 4.

Bus

- Visible improvement and a comprehensive approach is needed to bus service. Better branding and marketing is also needed.
- Train service is better because riders know where to find the stations – many bus stops are barely identifiable and hard to access.
- There are problems with infrequent bus service. Riders never know when the next bus will arrive. They need to know the waiting time to the next bus. Real-time displays like those at some NJ Transit rail stations could solve this problem.
- Riders need to be sheltered from the weather while they wait.

Transit Oriented Development (TOD)

- There are opportunities in the County. But there is sometimes resistance to increasing density – some people moved to Bergen County to be part of “a

little community". And others still don't know what TOD is and do not understand the concept. They have mixed concerns and fear it will be imposed by the State.

- The State does not understand the mindset of everyday people. TODs need to be better branded and marketed, by explaining the benefits to public health and the environment.
- Rail station areas are often not pleasant or walkable, and frequently lack sidewalks. Bike paths to surrounding neighborhoods would also be helpful.
- Saddle Brook, Garden State Plaza, Paramus and the Mahwah Sheraton/Ford site are all good locations for TODs. Ramsey Lumber on Route 17 may also be a large property available in the future for redevelopment into a TOD.
- The Ford property in Mahwah could have been a large TOD. A mixed-use community was proposed and turned down because the local officials feared it would contribute more kids into the school system. A TOD could have created a whole new village where the Sheraton Hotel is now and could have been served by rail, since there was a spur from the NJ Transit Main Line to the old Ford Plant, although trains would have had to back into the spur.
- Where can we build up density and have people willing to live there, in a 50-unit complex? In Manhattan, Hoboken, Jersey City, but also in Hackensack along Prospect Avenue and in downtown Englewood.

East-West Mobility

- There is virtually no way to go east or west in the most northern part of the County. It is a mobility challenge. It is far easier to go south from northern Bergen than to go east or west. Most drivers will take the NY Thruway as it is quicker and more convenient.

Aviation

- The Port Authority has taken steps to improve Stewart Airport, but it is very expensive and difficult to improve the runways because of the airport's topography. It is rarely utilized.

Senior Transportation

- An aging population is cause for concern. Seniors cannot easily get around. Shuttle loops or circulators can help address this problem.
- The changing demographics will affect town finances; as populations age low-density land use patterns will become even more financially

unsustainable; in 30 to 50 years towns may feel differently about increasing density as a matter of finance.

- Bergen County does not have in place the type of infrastructure for seniors found in Florida.

Table 4 – Land Use, Housing and Neighborhoods

- The group was strongly against continuing retail sprawl.
- The county should be a leader / partner in helping promote viable downtowns that provide a local retail need that would not compete with regional retail (Paramus, Hackensack and Rutherford). How can the county help in encouraging greater mixed use density around rail stations?
- NJ Transit should re-establish commuter rail use on the Susquehanna line through Wyckoff, Franklin Lakes and Oakland. This line would tie into the proposed hub station in Hawthorne (Passaic County).
- The county must take the lead in effectuating improvements to county road 502 so as to allow for better east – west traffic flow.
- The county must work with the municipalities to improve the Route 17 corridor north of Paramus, encourage a better balance between the types of commercial uses – the mix of office and retail space and allow for some green space as well.
- The county should work with the municipalities and the New Jersey Department of Transportation to evaluate the viability of service roads along the State Highway 17 corridor.
- The county should work with the municipalities and NJ Transit to get increased bus service through our downtowns / commercial centers.
- Mahwah is the driving force for industry clusters in NW Bergen. The county should work with the township to perform an inventory of industry uses to evaluate the existence / need for support businesses.
- The County should engage in the development of business retention / attraction strategies. How can the county master plan facilitate this?
- How can Saddle River County Park be integrated into other county or municipal parks via utility rights of way, stream beds, dedicated easements and Route 17 right-of-way?

Table 5 – Property Taxes and Shared Services

- Bergen County has little taxing authority. What can the County really do to encourage the more efficient use of tax dollars?
- The County has limited authority over site plan /subdivision issues, but it does have the ability to take a *regional* approach to planning issues.
- Services don't have to stop at municipal boundaries. Are there ways to save?
- At least 70% of the average property tax bill goes to local school districts. Schools are the "800 lb gorilla" -- superintendent, administrators and curriculum coordinators. Do we need all this in each district, even though it was acknowledged that the topic of school districts and education is a very sensitive and emotionally charged one? No one wants to see the quality of education suffer in their schools.
- We have towns with regional school districts, but the State sets the curriculum for all NJ schools.
- How can we better deal with property taxes?
- Should the County encourage towns to merge? At a minimum, the County should provide data and technical assistance to municipalities. The Master Plan should not be constrained in its proposals just because this is a difficult issue.
- Lots of little towns have their own Police Departments – are they all necessary? Schools require police work in terms of parking enforcement, drug-sniffing dogs, etc.
- Bergen Community College is a possible model for high schools. It has 3 campuses and provides excellent education.
- Perhaps special needs education should be addressed on a County-wide basis and managed by the County. Kids are sometimes sent out-of-state, sometimes to the age of 23. The annual cost to educate special needs children often exceeds \$100,000 per child. For a small town one or two such cases would over-stress the school budget. If the County were to handle this, the costs could be equalized across the entire county.
- Perhaps special needs should be treated similarly to the technical schools, with satellite locations. Otherwise, it is not economical.
- Can we really achieve smart growth without property tax reform?

- People want good public education and good services, but do not want to pay the taxes that these services require.
- An example in some Bergen County towns is side yard vs. curbside trash pickup. Side yard pick-up is more costly.
- Perhaps schools should charge service fees for clubs and other extra-curricular activities. Even when school budgets are defeated, the reduction is usually minimal.
- “Mosquitoes don’t look at boundaries” (reference to Mosquito commission created during the 1940’s).
- Another problem is State – imposed mandates for certain personnel, e.g., recycling coordinators for each town.
- Economies of scale can be found, but sometimes wealthier towns are reluctant to “pair up” with less affluent towns.
- Maybe there should be a separate county tax (e.g. sales tax).
- Bergen County has 78 school districts. We should consolidate from the very top on down to the school principals. In Pennsylvania, counties run the schools and there is a single superintendent for the entire county. They also have centralized procurement and bulk purchases.
- Should the county impose a new charge of \$1.00 per person at Giants Stadium to generate extra county revenues?
- Should school districts provide early retirement incentives to teachers and government workers over age 55? In the medical profession, a lot of doctors are fed up, new reformed system, get doctors to retire early. Over age 55 are the “dinosaurs” .
- What should the County do? What is the County’s role? The County could better educate municipalities with respect to the benefits (and savings) of consolidation and the actual costs and potential savings of sharing services. The County School Superintendents should be brought into this conversation (each County already has one). It is critical to show municipalities where they can reduce costs.
- Some have suggested that County government could be eliminated. But why do that? The County accounts for only 3% of the average property tax bill – that is not where significant savings can be found.
- Should the County be responsible for all tax assessments and property valuation?

- The County should educate towns with respect to how these issues are handled in states such as California, Maryland and Florida. Perhaps it is time to rethink the New Jersey way of doing things. One of the County's biggest contributions could be to explain the property tax situation in an unbiased way. Present the FACTS.
- Bergen County has more police and fire trucks than New York City! We should use a "precinct" concept. Only cut the highest level. Consolidation of police staff, not eliminating the police force, makes them more efficient.
- What about merging the Sheriff's office and the Bergen County police? Westchester County in NY did something similar – it combined to form a Department of Public Safety.
- Police officers are too expensive to have them working on construction. The County pays municipal police officers \$80.00 to \$120.00/hour to direct traffic in construction zones. NJDOT pays flaggers \$45.00/hour. Two police officers from each town are required by NJDOT to be present when test borings are conducted. Why not only pay NJDOT flagger rate? In the end, the tax payer pays for that. We should only use police for police work – non-law enforcement staff should handle other tasks, such as flagging. Municipal traffic control reforms are needed.
- Maybe not everyone on the scene needs to be a police officer. Patrol cars have cameras and computers. However, certain assignments, such as DWI stops, can be dangerous and would not be appropriate for non-law enforcement workers.
- Towns have separate police contracts and fire contracts. Labor unions are part of the cost discrepancies.
- It was noted that the Ridgewood Police made over \$1M in fees from construction projects last year.
- The County should demonstrate its commitment by raising the possibility of combining police and sheriff's departments.
- We should carefully examine the rules we have in place for emergencies, overtime costs for crossing guards and other possible savings. School crossing guards earn \$10.00 or \$11.00 / hour, but collect unemployment during the summer. The County could help by training crossing guards for all municipalities.
- There is a pervasive mentality of entitlement. How can that be changed?
- The County rate for garbage disposal is \$78/ton. It is cheaper to send it to Rockland County.

- Governor Christie's message seems to be – unless you “buddy up” with neighboring towns, the State will cut funding. Municipalities and counties have to band together –Trenton should not be driving this.
- What is different now? We are out of money – there really is no money this time. People will say “enough!” if municipalities try to further raise local taxes.

Table 6 – Water, Sewer, Utilities and Energy Infrastructure

- United Water Services (a subsidiary of Suez environmental) provides -- either directly or indirectly through municipal Water Departments -- drinking water to roughly 85% of Bergen County. Nationally, United Water serves 26 states. United Water is a French-owned stockholder corporation, which has spent \$120 million on water research.
- The Ridgewood Water Department serves Ridgewood from municipal wells. Jersey City Water serves several municipalities in southwestern Bergen County.
- Potable drinking water, while only available thru the tap for roughly 100 years, is taken for granted as a readily afforded resource.
- An agreement between New York and New Jersey requires New York to pass 8 million gallons of water a day down the Ramapo River into New Jersey. There is a gauge near the state line to monitor this flow. However, Rockland County returns roughly 1.5 million gallons of tertiary treated sanitary sewer water into the Ramapo River north of the state line. In addition Monroe Township's wastewater treatment plants contribute roughly 5 million gallons a day to tributaries to the Ramapo River. The current technology of wastewater treatment plants is unable to remove from the water drugs, pesticides, etc. that may be flushed into the sanitary sewers.
- The Mahwah River (which flows into the Ramapo River) feeds wells serving Orangeburg and Tuxedo Reservoirs.
- Orange County has the right to tap into the New York City aqueduct that runs thru Orange County, but to date has not exercised that right.
- At one time the Ramapo River had much more water flowing to it, but it has been diminished by wells drawing ground water in New York State.
- There are wells along Route 202 in New York that draw down the water table along the Mahwah River.
- Will the Highlands Commission be able to encourage effective ground water recharge?

- In retrospect we should have developed better septic systems to recharge ground water rather than extending sanitary sewers systems to lower density areas. Improved septic systems also diminish the need for sanitary water treatment plants. Water flushed into the sanitary sewer systems is for the most part lost to the ground water table and placed in systems which expedite its flow to the ocean.
- Stormwater management should be focused on returning water to the ground rather than piping it away.
- New Jersey is much more advanced than New York State with respect to its stormwater management practices.
- The Sterling Forest Partnership to Preserve the Highlands has saved 20,000 acres from development and the related stormwater and sanitary runoff that development would have generated.
- Agricultural lands are being compromised by sewers (stormwater and sanitary) that direct water and the nutrients it carries with it to the ocean. There are "dead zones" in the world's oceans -- some the size of the larger states -- that have been created by sanitary sewer discharges and runoff containing fertilizers.
- In addition to the water diversion, bio-solids are also being removed from the land. These bio-solids should be composted and returned to the soil.
- The County should promote the use of waterless (or lower water consumption) toilets. The Bronx Zoo has toilets which only use 3 ounces of water per flush, versus the 1.5 gallons typical of commonly used toilets. Nordstrom uses waterless toilets.
- Universealive.org & Clean Water Rockland were both mentioned as sources of information on dead zones, waterless toilets and water quality issues in general.
- A concern was raised about the use of permeable pavement in this weather climate. It is feared that the freeze thaw cycle might rapidly break down the permeable pavement structure, especially since pavement surfaces are generally plowed of snow exposing the pavement surface to a freeze thaw cycle every sunny day. Alternatively an impervious surface could have its stormwater run off to a swale to then percolate into the ground. Draining an impervious pavement surface to a buried recharge basin might accomplish the same ground water recharge objective.
- Green Roofs also reduce stormwater run off. Cisterns can be used to capture excess stormwater and later used to irrigate the green roof and other

vegetation. It was reported that the City of Philadelphia is embarking on an effort to map 10,000 green roofs in the city.

- The current stormwater management regulations need to encourage existing development to retrofit their stormwater drainage systems to retain more stormwater and return it to the ground even in highly urbanized areas. However, some flexibility is needed since some areas of Bergen County can not rapidly absorb stormwater. The Palisades ridge along the east side of the County is an example, and there stormwater can quickly drain to the Hudson. In other older developed areas with older rock or shale basement walls recharging ground water may create basement flooding problems where they don't exist now.
- Current DEP regulations for redevelopment sites only require retention / detention for the additional impervious surfaces created as a result of the redevelopment. Some towns require additional actions to reduce the predevelopment stormwater run-off as well.
- It would have been difficult and not cost-effective for individual towns to develop and enact their own stormwater management regulations. NJDEP having done so addressed the need to do something, leveled the playing field so that developers would not be able to game the system and play one town against another by threatening to take their development (*and its ratable*) to a neighboring town with a more favorable regulatory environment. Some towns have chosen to add their own requirements beyond those required by NJDEP.
- The responsibility for maintaining new stormwater management systems -- while usually spelled out in a developer's agreement -- can be expected in the future to impose some enforcement costs on municipalities.
- Domestic water consumption in Bergen County has continued to grow despite its stable population. Per capita water consumption increased dramatically in the 1990's with lifestyle changes.
- The use of domestic water for lawn watering was cited as an area where conservation measures could be effective. It was reported that Franklin Lakes with its large lots and large lawns has the highest water consumption per capita in Bergen County. Northwest Bergen County has experienced the highest increases in per capita water consumption. Since water is priced so inexpensively, the cost of excessive lawn watering is not onerous enough to cause someone to rethink its use. Water bills don't seem to be a concern for some customers. But increasing the cost of water to prevent excess watering of lawns and other mis-uses may have other undesirable impacts. A tiered cost structure also has problems.

- We should discourage the use of domestic water for lawn irrigation and encourage the use of non-domestic water (stored rain water or possibly treated water from septic systems) for such use. Since ground water is used in many municipalities for domestic purposes, the use of well water to irrigate lawns is counterproductive and should be discouraged.
- Lawn irrigation during dry spells need only be every third or fourth day. This encourages deeper root growth to access ground water and also holds the soil better.
- Workshops should be held for lawn care professionals to encourage them to install and maintain smarter lawn irrigation control systems to conserve water. Smarter systems do not irrigate during rain events and monitor ground moisture to determine when there is a need to irrigate the lawns. Towns might consider requiring annual inspections and certifications by trained professionals that the irrigation systems are functioning to conserve water and are not leaking.
- All Hackensack (United) Water Company lands are now under a water conservatory.
- United Water has water lines to some municipal water departments to supplement their water supplies in the case of drought or other cause. Currently United Water Company does not have the resources to increase its water supplies. United Water is exploring the possibility of purifying Hudson River water for domestic use in Rockland County. But there is a need to more aggressively promote water conservation. There are concerns that we could run out of water for domestic consumption.
- Legislators (State, County and Municipal elected officials) are reluctant to dictate to homeowners, ie voters. It will be politically difficult for legislators to impose restrictions on water consumption; and there is a cost (most likely unreimbursed local cost) associated with enforcing restrictions as well.
- Uniform regulations by county or state agencies reduce the differences between towns and create a more level playing field for development. State or County government can help promote conservation by providing model ordinances for municipal consideration. A state mandate may be needed.
- Mahwah has a fertilizer ordinance that limits the amount and frequency of lawn fertilization. But Mahwah has limited personnel for enforcement. Over fertilization of lawns is a non-point source pollution. We should encourage homeowners to do away with lawns and let natural growth return.
- The County should take the lead in encouraging homeowners and other property owners to allow lawns to return to a natural state. This would save lawn maintenance costs as well as conserve water.

- Artificial turf should not be used. Natural fields work just as well. The public's expectations about the quality of our playing fields are often over blown. There are increased demands for bigger and better playing fields. The existing fields are over used. The lighting of playing fields for use at night further exacerbates their over use. Grass playing field absorb solar energy while artificial turfs radiate heat back up to the players on the field and into the atmosphere.
- The Highlands Act (which affects parts of Mahwah and Oakland) does have powers affecting water supply. Hopefully they will not be reduced or eliminated. The Highlands Act, which restricts development in the watersheds in the Highlands area, is critical to protecting our water quality.
- Rain gardens, consistent with established regulations will help conserve storm water. An education outreach on rain gardens is needed where it will have the largest impact. Should seek demonstration projects.
- Identifying and repairing broken and leaky pipes should also be part of water conservation efforts. United Water loses about 20% of its flow to leaks, but replacement and repairs are very expensive.
- It was reported that it would cost roughly \$500 million to complete the separation of sanitary and storm sewers in the city of Hackensack, which currently has a combined system. Hackensack is not the only older urban area with combined sewers in Bergen County. The problem with combined sewer systems is that during unusual storm events the surge of stormwater can be expected to exceed the combined system's treatment capacity with the result that untreated sewage overflows into natural waterways. Growth in older urban areas is mostly re-development of already fairly impervious sites. NJDEP regulations require that only the additional run-off from new impervious surfaces (over and above what previously existed) be retained or detained. Some thought should be given to requiring that stormwater run-off -- in areas with combined sewer systems -- be retained or detained to reduce the stormwater surge and the resultant untreated sewage from overflowing into the natural waterways. An alternative might be to allow developers to extend sanitary sewers into redevelopment sites.
- There is a need for regional approaches to stormwater management. It was reported that the USEPA is considering imposing a Total Maximum Daily Discharge Load (TMDL) into the Hudson River.
- The County needs to better address non-point sources in the stormwater management system.
- Sewer and water pipes have a useful life ranging from 40 to 100 years. Some of our pipes have exceeded their anticipated useful life and their replacement will be a major infrastructure expense.

- The cost of improving water quality is a burden for water providers. When the standard for arsenic in drinking water was changed from 10 parts per million (PPM) to 5 ppm, it cost Ramsey \$2 million (un-reimbursed) to install the necessary facilities to reduce the arsenic content in its water from 7 ppm to the required 5 ppm.

Energy

- What can the County do to better promote energy efficient buildings? It could set municipal goals for building standards, since building code enforcement powers are vested in municipal building code officials. Building codes should be modified to promote more energy efficient buildings.
- Energy consumption per household is continuing to grow at a significant rate.
- A suggestion was voiced that nuclear should be promoted as a non-polluting energy source. Others disagreed and dismissed nuclear in densely developed areas for safety reasons.
- The County should do more to promote solar panels on municipal buildings. Upper Saddle River is reported to have done so on its middle and high school.
- Mandate a certain amount of power be generated from renewable sources: solar and wind. (Water power was not mentioned.) Consider placing solar panels and possible wind turbines in parking lots.
- PSE&G has a Solar Loan Program.
- Sharp, a Bergen County industry, is a major producer of solar panels. They should be asked to make local presentations to municipal officials.
- Government should set an example with respect to renewables, but it is more difficult during hard economic and fiscal times.
- Better information is needed regarding how long it takes to recover one's investment in installing solar in single-family homes.

Table 7 – Arts, Culture, and Historic Resources

- The County should identify and promote case studies of successful, multi-purpose projects, that for example combine office and commercial space with the performing arts. Mixed use projects can perform better financially and create opportunities to expand the arts which otherwise will be missed. There might also be some role for the county in serving as a broker or facilitator to help match arts and culture groups looking for those types of spaces with developers/landlords looking to recruit them.

- There are opportunities in downtowns and Main Street environments to create new performing arts facilities associated with new public spaces by more efficiently using land. Shared parking arrangements can free up space in large surface parking lots.
- There are also opportunities to create synergies between natural spaces and the arts. The famous San Antonio Riverwalk contains fabulous spaces for arts performances directly overlooking the river. The wildly successful “fire on the water” program pioneered by the City of Providence, RI is another example of these types of synergies. Westerly, RI is another case study of a come-back town that has benefitted tremendously from the arts. Are there opportunities to do something similar or comparable along the Hackensack River? This could benefit both river restoration and arts and culture activities.
- Arts and cultural facilities can benefit tremendously from being located in high visibility reclaimed locations, such as newly created public spaces, waterfront locations or in new parks. The arts can also be very effective and powerful in attracting people to places where they might not otherwise think of going. The experience of the NJ Performance Arts Center in Newark is very persuasive in that respect.
- It is often hard to engage elected officials from neighboring towns to work collaboratively on projects of common interest. The Open Space Institute in Charlotte, NC and the National Endowment for the Arts’ Mayors Institute on City Design provide wonderfully productive models of how planning and design professionals can interact with elected officials to creatively solve planning problems. Should we seek to convene the mayors of Hackensack River towns to discuss potential interventions with -- an arts and culture incidence -- along the river?
- Might the Blue Raritan initiative spearheaded by Rutgers University’s Bloustein School provide a model for Bergen County institutions of higher education to collaborate on an initiative involving the Hackensack River that might also create opportunities for arts, culture and historic preservation projects? Might it be possible to engage Fairleigh Dickinson University in Teaneck, for example?
- There are also potentially very exciting but mostly untapped synergies between the visual arts programs in institutions of higher education, public spaces in need of animation and arts and cultural special events. Some towns have negotiated to host long term, large public art exhibits from foundries that do not have the capacity to store large sculptures. The area around the New Jersey Transit train station in Hamilton, Mercer county is a prime example, showcasing the work of the Johnson atelier. Kingston, NY also has a program that exhibits public art and sculpture in streets and public buildings. Perhaps the county can take the initiative to showcase these types of case studies to municipal officials and others and identify towns or locations that might be interested in pursuing something like this.

- In Bergen County, there appears to be greater interest in the arts than in historic preservation. There are over 200 independent arts groups, but only about 30 historic preservation organizations. Perhaps more work needs to be done to bring these groups closer together.
- How can we better engage children, in particular high school kids, in the arts? What types of projects might capture their imaginations and possibly their parents' as well? There is a national network of Children's Museums, which are facilities in the 25,000 to 30,000 square feet range that are immensely popular. The closest one is in Cherry Hill. Should Bergen County seek to locate a Children's Museum?
- The County should make an effort to better promote the many arts and culture institutions and their activities and to link this with tourism. The County desperately needs a tourism office to better capitalize on visitors.