



BERGEN COUNTY



MASTER PLAN



DRAFT

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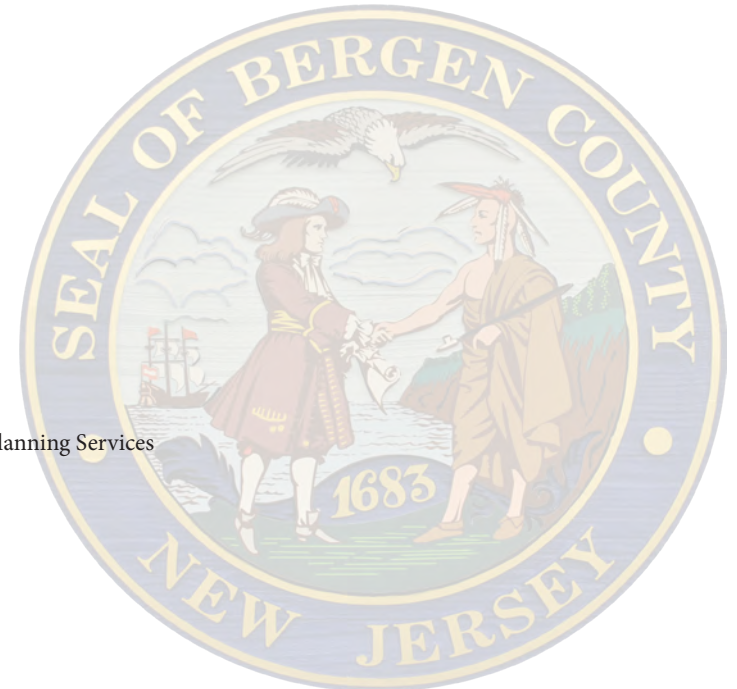
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Bergen County Courthouse
Source: Donna Brennan, Bergen County

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Notes:

1. Cover photos, beginning from left top: Art gallery (Source: Bergen County Division of Economic Development), George Washington Bridge (Source: Donna Brennan, Bergen County), Summer concert at Overpeck Park (Source: Bergen County Division of Economic Development), Overpeck Park Bridge (Source: Bergen County Division of Economic Development), Bergen County Courthouse (Source: Bergen County Division of Economic Development), September 11 Memorial (Source: Bergen County Planning Division): Kayaks (Source: Bergen County Division of Economic Development); Atlantic Park (Source: Bergen County Division of Economic Development); Overpeck Ball Field (Source: Bergen County Planning Division)
2. A note about GIS data: Mapping in this report was developed using New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection data, but this secondary product has not been verified by NJDEP and is not state authorized.

INTRODUCTION

Communities have authority to shape their design and character through zoning, subdivision and land development regulations. Master plans provide a long-range vision of the recommended actions necessary to guide the physical development of a geographic area to achieve their goals. Master plans often operate under a set of assumptions based on a “snapshot” of the community at the time; this evaluation of exiting conditions, trends, and challenges, both internal and external, subsequently informs recommendations for future action.

By the nature of their size and more regional scale, counties play a slightly different role in the planning process. In New Jersey, municipalities, not counties, have the authority to zone land for different uses; nor do counties typically provide the services often provided by municipalities including affordable housing, fire protection, and an array of other public amenities or protections. In lieu of this authority to zone, county master plans take a big picture look at the natural and built environment and identify goals and objectives to achieve a long-range vision by providing key regional services and infrastructure, as well as support and guidance to municipalities and facilitating inter-municipal programs. County master plans can provide a wealth of resources and best practices for residents, municipalities, and developers, as well as a framework within which to evaluate future successes by assessing goals and objectives that have been achieved over time. County master plans also justify future budgeting decisions for capital and operational expenditures.

The New Jersey County and Regional Planning Act, N.J.S.A. 40:27-1 et seq. grants counties the authority to prepare a master plan, a required action for counties that establish a planning board:

“The county planning board shall make and adopt a master plan for the physical development of the county. The master plan of a county, with the accompanying maps, plats, charts, and descriptive and explanatory matter, ***shall show the county planning board’s recommendations for the development of the territory*** covered by the plan, and may include, among other things, the general location, character, and extent of streets or roads, viaducts, bridges, waterway and waterfront developments, parkways, playgrounds, forests, reservations, parks, airports and other public ways, grounds, places and spaces; the general location and extent of forests, agricultural areas, and open-development areas for purposes of conservation, food and water supply, sanitary and drainage facilities, or the protection of urban development, and such other features as may be important to the development of the county” (40:27-2, emphasis added).

County Planning Act vs. Municipal Land Use Law

The County Planning Act (40:27-1 et seq.) permits county review for subdivisions and site plans that may affect county roads or drainage facilities, as well as the regulation of county-owned facilities. Municipal regulation of planning is governed largely by the Municipal Land Use Law (“MLUL”, N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1 et. seq.). Under the MLUL, however, municipalities have considerably more authority to regulate land use and development through zoning. Municipalities that adopt a Master Plan are granted the authority to zone. Zoning ordinances can regulate development that relates “to the nature and extent of the uses of land and of buildings and structures thereon.” (N.J.S.A. 40:55d-62) This includes permitting (or prohibiting) specific uses in specified areas of the community, the size and layout of lots, and other controls on design.



Source: Colliers Engineering & Design

Bergen County last adopted a master plan in 1962, with amendments in 1966, after a five-year effort to establish the county’s goals and direction for the coming decades.¹ The process was systematic and progressive, building from existing conditions and observations to a set of goals and objectives for the future, as well as individual subject-based elements (including Transportation, Water Quality and Open Space) that extended beyond individual municipal boundaries.

Over a half century has passed since the adoption of the Master Plan of Bergen County.² During this period, Bergen County has undergone significant physical and economic changes. The county faces numerous opportunities and challenges, including the emergence of eCommerce challenging the longstanding predominance of traditional brick and mortar retail and services; a renewed interest in compact development containing a mix of amenities; and the need to remain cost-competitive while not sacrificing quality of life. Extreme weather events exacerbated by climate change create new challenges in managing and protecting residents, businesses, utilities, and infrastructure to ensure preparedness so that disasters and disruptions are minimized. In the midst of the preparation of this Master Plan, the COVID-19 pandemic, which began to impact Bergen County in early 2020, has significantly impacted daily life for people and businesses everywhere. The pandemic also exposed and exacerbated issues related to social and economic equity. But the county also contains many strengths that provide it with the ability to address these challenges. Its natural assets provide aesthetic, recreation, and resiliency benefits. Its transportation infrastructure, including its highways and proximity

to regional bus, rail, and air transit can provide a portfolio of options to meet the needs of residents, visitors and businesses. Its growing diversity offers access to different forms of human capital and culture.

County master plans provide direction and a big picture view to guide municipalities to achieve common goals. The Municipal Land Use Law (N.J.S.A. 40:55-D-1 et. seq.) requires municipal master plans to include a specific policy statement that evaluates the relationship of the municipal master plans to the county master plan. As a result, municipalities rely on the county master plan as a guide to ensure consistency with broader goals and objectives; municipalities can then use this framework to address these regional concerns on a local level through municipal plans and subsequent land use regulations. County master plans also provide a regional perspective related to inter-jurisdictional matters—such as shared services and school districts that cross municipal boundaries—or infrastructure and natural features, which often cross municipal boundaries—such as roads, highways, rivers, or streams. They can promote cooperation and collaborative thinking between municipalities on issues of common interest, including issues or facilities too large, costly or complex for individual municipalities. County master plans can also publicize best practices and planning tools that municipalities can pursue locally in search of solutions to common problems. To ensure that Bergen County can continue to promote a regional vision and coordinate development priorities across its 70 municipalities, the county authorized the preparation of a new master plan that reflects the changes that have occurred since the 1960s.

THE PROCESS

This document represents a comprehensive process that began in 2009 when the County of Bergen initiated a review of existing conditions and public outreach. Data was collected to establish a baseline “snapshot” of the county, including demographics, economics, natural conditions, transportation infrastructure, and existing land uses, which was then used to start a conversation that would provide additional context and identify priorities. To facilitate these conversations, the county convened different segments of the community through a series of visioning workshops and presentations, which were then used to guide the framework of the master plan.

These events provoked active participation from residents, business owners, and community leaders. Despite the unique perspectives and different ideas from participants, these discussions revealed intrinsic linkages between different countywide key quality of life issues, such as how land use decisions affect transportation, which thereby affect business, trade, and economic viability, which thereby impact revenue generation and taxes, which in turn affect future land use decisions, and so on. The interplay of these different issues are at the heart of what affects quality of life for residents, businesses, visitors, and investors. The feedback and recommendations generated from these discussions was used to identify potential strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (“SWOT”), which then guided the next steps of the process.



Source: Donna Brennan, Bergen County

What is SWOT?

	<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
Internal Factors	Bergen County characteristics that serve as advantages over other areas	Bergen County characteristics that function as disadvantages compared to other areas
	<i>Opportunities</i>	<i>Threats</i>
External Factors	Outside elements that Bergen County may be able to utilize to its benefit	Outside elements that could be detrimental to Bergen County

As stated previously, the initial data collection and visioning provided a preliminary guide to focus the development of this Master Plan, which was recorded in Vision Bergen: The Visioning Component of the Bergen County Master Plan, which was released in 2011. Vision Bergen included a description of existing conditions (including natural systems, development, services), demographics, and an overview of the public outreach and visioning process. The visioning process solicited input on different topics, including: Economic Vitality; Open Space, Parks and Recreation, and Natural Systems; Transportation; Land Use, Housing, and Neighborhoods; Property Taxes and Shared Services; Water, Sewer, Utilities, Energy Infrastructure; and, Arts, Culture, and Historic Resources.

The next step was to evaluate data and statistics, trends, and patterns on population, development, and economics in the context of the feedback received during visioning to understand existing conditions and anticipated future conditions. This, in turn, informed the preparation of goals, objectives, and recommended actions.

June 2011



Vision Bergen

The Visioning Component
of the Bergen County Master Plan

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BERGEN COUNTY BACKGROUND

Like New Jersey, Bergen County contains a diverse set of landscapes, from highly urbanized, high-density places capable of supporting sophisticated transit services to low-density, quasi-rural places where automobile use is a necessary component of daily life. The county's population is extremely diverse, with a wide variety of racial and ethnic groups, and an equally wide diversity of religious beliefs and worldviews. One of the most affluent counties in the nation,³ it nevertheless hosts residents of all socioeconomic and income levels, including some pockets of populations that face challenges and struggles and need to avail themselves of critical social services such as those provided by the county. Overall, its workforce is highly skilled and educated and its employment base boasts leading technology, medical and health care facilities, and continues to retain a large manufacturing presence and associated employment. Bergen County contains a world class park system that includes large nature preserves, and through its Department of Parks and Open Space Trust Fund strives to increase opportunities to expand countywide green space for its residents, an ever-challenging endeavor in an increasingly built-out landscape. The county has historically served as a regional retail destination, with a major concentration of malls and the healthy demographics to support them, along with smaller concentrations of active retail and businesses in historic downtowns and community central business districts. As the retail market continues to evolve and change, including the challenges that eCommerce presents for traditional brick and mortar retail and services, the county seeks to evolve with changing trends and continue to meet public needs. The county is also known as host and destination for world-class sports and entertainment facilities, most notably at the Meadowlands Sports Complex, as well as providing numerous other cultural and historic features. Further, Bergen County is uniquely positioned across the Hudson from New York City, and as such has historically served as a crossroads and conduit for transporting both people and goods. Limited access highways offer convenient north/south linkages, but challenges remain for east/west mobility— especially north of State Route 4 (NJ-4) – where no highway corridors provide for this movement, and a network of mostly local roads that are circuitous and experience frequent congestion serve as the default alternative. Other modes of transportation play a sizable role in our built-out landscape – given the county's location, population, and commerce – with NJ Transit currently providing commuter service along 3 rail lines, numerous bus services (local, regional, and interstate), ferry services, as well as Teterboro Airport.

LOCATION

Bergen County is located at the northeast corner of New Jersey, bordered on the east by the Hudson River, across which lies the New York City Boroughs of Manhattan and the Bronx, as well as Westchester County, New York. Bergen's northern boundary is shared with Rockland County, New York. To the west, Bergen County is bordered by Passaic and Essex Counties, and to the south by Hudson County. Major thoroughfares traversing the county include the New Jersey Turnpike/Interstate Route 95 (I-95), Interstate Route 80 (I-80), Interstate Route 287 (I-287), Palisades Interstate Parkway, Garden State Parkway, State Route 4 (NJ-4), State Route 17 (NJ-17), and U.S. Route 9W (US-9W).

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

The 5 traditional forms of local government in New Jersey include the Borough, City, Town, Township, and Village. Originally, each of these had its own form of government, but more modern forms are available to any municipality and now differ mostly in name. The vast majority of Bergen County municipalities are Boroughs (56), followed by Townships (9), Cities (3), and Villages (2). The following table lists each municipality, its geographic sector, size, and population from the 2020 Census.



Above Map: Bergen County and surrounding area.

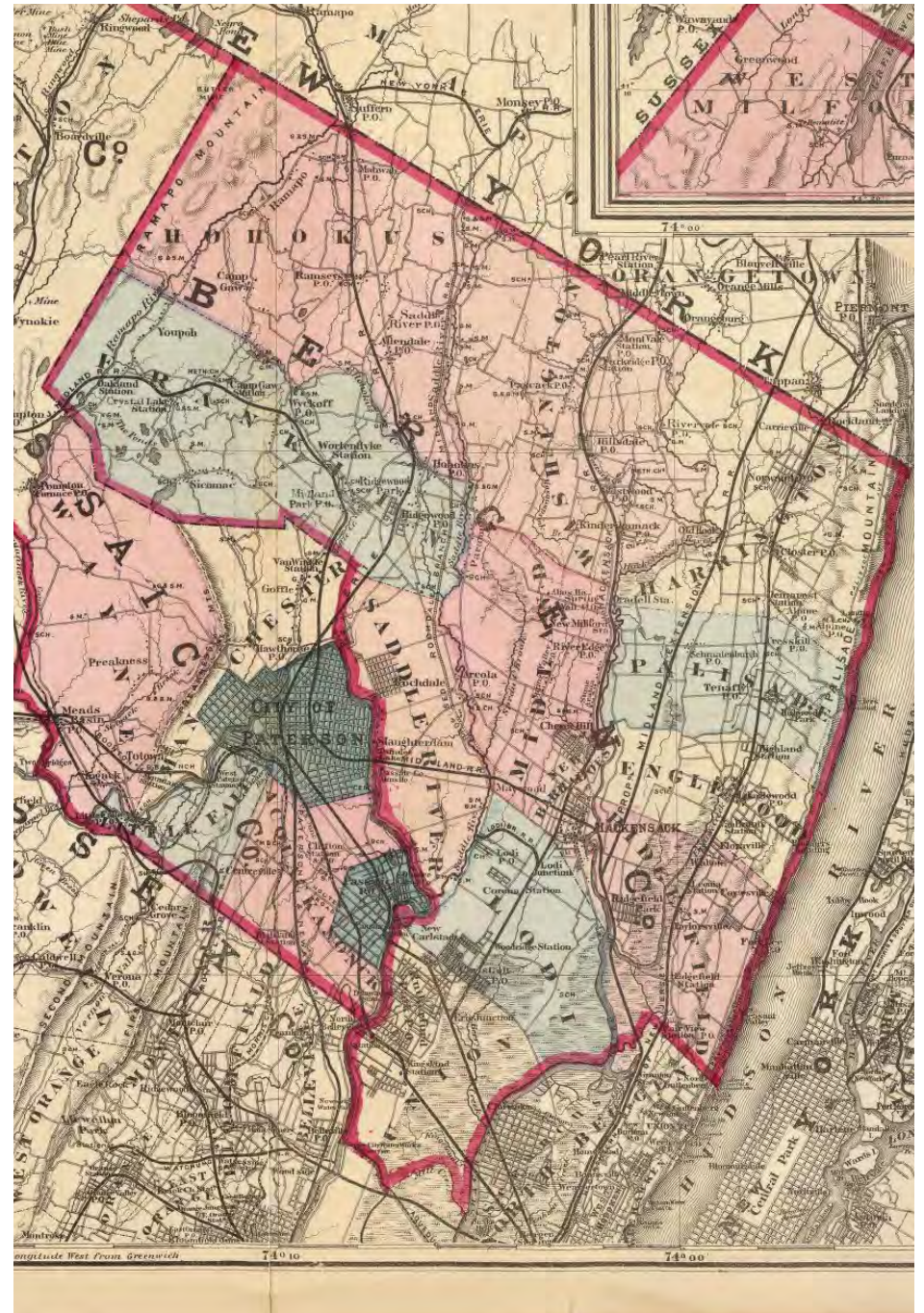
A note about geography: with the exception of the above map, and the historic atlas image on the following pages, the maps in this Master Plan are rotated approximately 30 degrees to maximize their visibility within this document. In addition, larger size maps containing additional detail are included as part of a separate map volume.

POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS AND GEOGRAPHIC SUB-REGIONS

Bergen County is the most populous county in New Jersey (955,732 residents as of the 2020 Census) and contains the most local governments of any New Jersey county—a total of 70 municipalities across 246 square miles, at an average of only 3.5 square miles per municipality. At just over 4,105 persons per square mile of land area, Bergen County’s population density ranks fourth in the state, behind Hudson County (approx. 15,692 persons/sq. mile), Essex County (approx. 6,850 persons/sq. mile), and Union County (approx. 5,599 persons/sq. mile). In addition to the 70 different municipalities, there are numerous unique neighborhoods, communities, and “places” within, or even across, municipal lines.

Bergen County did not always contain such a large number of municipalities within its boundaries. Throughout New Jersey, municipal incorporation has resulted from a variety of different factors over time, however, no county in the state has seen such a dramatic multiplication of municipalities as Bergen County. To understand how Bergen County came to include 70 different municipalities, it is important to understand a brief history of the area. Originally home to native Lenni-Lenape inhabitants, Bergen County was subsequently settled by the Dutch. From 1676 to 1702, New Jersey was divided into two distinct and separately governed provinces, known as East Jersey and West Jersey. In 1679, what was to become Bergen County was included in a judicial district with Essex, Monmouth, and Middlesex Counties. In 1683, the Provincial Assembly recognized Bergen as one of the four original counties of “East Jersey.” In 1693, the counties began to divide land into townships. At that time, Bergen County contained only two townships: Bergen and Hackensack (New Barbadoes), with Hackensack designated as the County Seat in 1710. These original boundaries included the present-day Hudson County and parts of Passaic County. These Counties were separated from Bergen in 1837 (Passaic) and 1840 (Hudson).

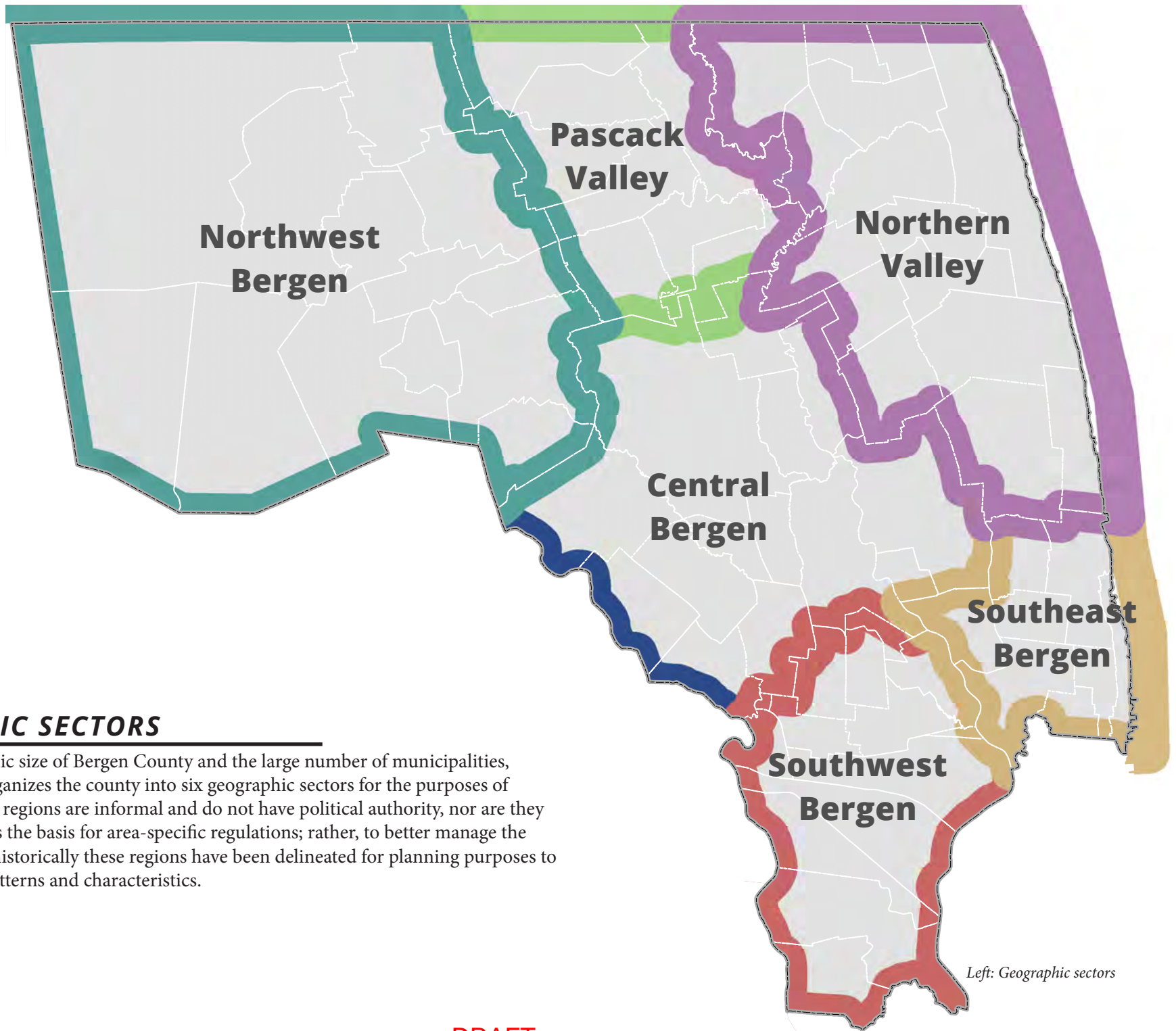
In 1846, the Legislature passed an act to establish additional townships including Hackensack, Saddle River, Franklin, Harrington, New Barbados, Lodi, and Washington. Additional Bergen County townships were created thereafter, including Hohokus (1849), Union (1852), and Midland (1871). The townships of Englewood, Ridgely, and Palisades, originally a part of Hackensack Township, were created by act of the Legislature in 1871. Ridgewood was formed in 1876 and Orvil in 1886. By 1885, Bergen County was divided into 15 Townships with a total population of 36,786 inhabitants.



Above: 1872 FW Beers Atlas for Bergen and Passaic Counties. Source: David Rumsey Map Collection, David Rumsey Map Center, Stanford Libraries

The rapid growth in the number of municipalities throughout Bergen County began in 1894, when the New Jersey State Legislature passed the Local Public Schools Law, consolidating schools in each township into a single district. This required each consolidated township district to assume the debts of the old districts. However, the municipalities found a way around the new law, which exempted boroughs, towns, villages, and cities from assuming the debts of the township school districts. New Jersey adopted another law, easing constrictions for municipal separation (de-annexation) from a parent municipality, resulting in the establishment of 26 new boroughs in Bergen county in 1894 alone. An additional 7 boroughs were established before 1900, with even more through 1924, when Bergen County reached a total of 70 municipalities.

Population Summary - 2020 Census											
Southwest Bergen				Northern Valley				Northwest Bergen			
Municipality	Population	Area (sq. miles)	Form of Govt.	Municipality	Population	Area (sq. miles)	Form of Govt.	Municipality	Population	Area (sq. miles)	Form of Govt.
Carlstadt	6,372	4.2	Borough	Alpine	1,762	9.3	Borough	Allendale	6,848	3.1	Borough
East Rutherford	10,022	4.0	Borough	Bergenfield	28,321	2.9	Borough	Franklin Lakes	11,079	9.9	Borough
Hasbrouck Heights	12,125	1.5	Borough	Closter	8,594	3.3	Borough	Glen Rock	12,133	2.7	Borough
Little Ferry	10,987	1.7	Borough	Cresskill	9,155	2.0	Borough	Ho-Ho-Kus	4,258	1.8	Borough
Lyndhurst	22,519	5.0	Borough	Demarest	4,981	2.1	Borough	Mahwah	25,487	25.9	Township
Moonachie	3,133	1.7	Borough	Dumont	17,863	2.0	Borough	Midland Park	7,014	1.6	Borough
North Arlington	16,457	2.5	Borough	Englewood	29,308	4.9	City	Oakland	12,748	8.8	Borough
Rutherford	18,834	2.9	Borough	Englewood Cliffs	5,342	3.4	Borough	Ramsey	14,798	5.6	Borough
South Hackensack	2,701	0.7	Borough	Harrington Park	4,741	2.1	Borough	Ridgewood	25,979	5.8	Village
Teterboro	61	1.1	Borough	Haworth	3,343	2.3	Borough	Saddle River	3,372	5.0	Borough
Wallington	11,868	1.0	Borough	Northvale	4,761	1.3	Borough	Upper Saddle River	8,353	5.3	Borough
Wood-Ridge	10,137	1.1	Borough	Norwood	5,641	2.8	Borough	Waldwick	10,058	2.1	Borough
				Old Tappan	5,888	4.2	Borough	Wyckoff	16,585	6.7	Township
				Rockleigh	407	1.0	Borough				
				Tenafly	15,409	5.2	Borough				
Total	125,216	27.4		Total	145,516	48.8		Total	158,712	84.3	
Central Bergen				Pascack Valley				Southeast Bergen			
Municipality	Population	Area (sq. miles)	Form of Govt.	Municipality	Population	Area (sq. miles)	Form of Govt.	Municipality	Population	Area (sq. miles)	Form of Govt.
Bogota	8,778	0.8	Borough	Emerson	7,290	2.4	Borough	Cliffside Park	25,693	1.0	Borough
Elmwood Park	21,422	2.7	Borough	Hillsdale	10,143	2.9	Borough	Edgewater	14,336	2.5	Borough
Fair Lawn	34,927	5.2	Borough	Montvale	8,436	4.0	Borough	Fairview	15,025	0.8	Borough
Garfield	32,655	2.2	City	Park Ridge	8,883	2.6	Borough	Fort Lee	40,191	2.9	Borough
Hackensack	46,030	4.3	City	River Vale	9,909	4.3	Township	Leonia	9,304	1.6	Borough
Lodi	26,206	2.3	Borough	Washington	9,285	3.0	Township	Palisades Park	20,292	1.3	Borough
Maywood	10,080	1.3	Borough	Westwood	11,282	2.3	Borough	Ridgefield	11,501	2.9	Borough
New Milford	16,923	2.3	Borough	Woodcliff Lake	6,128	3.5	Borough	Ridgefield Park	13,224	1.9	Village
Oradell	8,244	2.6	Borough	Total	71,356	25.0		Total	149,566	14.9	
Paramus	26,698	10.5	Borough	County Totals				Population		County Area	
River Edge	12,049	1.9	Borough								
Rochelle Park	5,814	1.0	Township					955,732		246.5	
Saddle Brook	14,294	2.8	Township								
Teaneck	41,246	6.2	Township								
Total	305,366	46.1		Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census P.L. 94-171 Redistricting Data							



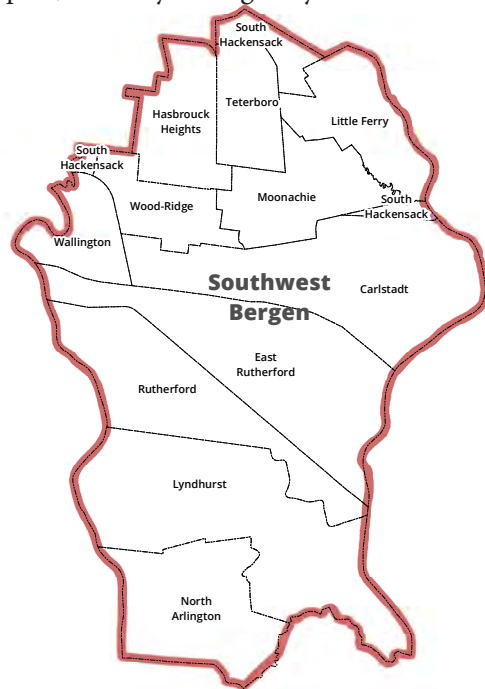
GEOGRAPHIC SECTORS

Given the geographic size of Bergen County and the large number of municipalities, this master plan organizes the county into six geographic sectors for the purposes of presentation. These regions are informal and do not have political authority, nor are they intended to serve as the basis for area-specific regulations; rather, to better manage the size of the county, historically these regions have been delineated for planning purposes to identify regional patterns and characteristics.

Left: Geographic sectors

SOUTHWEST BERGEN

Southwest Bergen includes 12 municipalities: **Carlstadt, East Rutherford, Hasbrouck Heights, Little Ferry, Lyndhurst, Moonachie, North Arlington, Rutherford, South Hackensack, Teterboro, Wallington, and Wood-Ridge**. This region is bounded by the Hackensack River on the east, and the Passaic River on the west. Nine of these municipalities are part of the Meadowlands District (**Carlstadt, East Rutherford, Little Ferry, Lyndhurst, Moonachie, North Arlington, Rutherford, South Hackensack, and Teterboro**). The area contains the Meadowlands Sports Complex, composed of MetLife Stadium (formerly known as New Meadowlands Stadium, and successor to Giants Stadium), Meadowlands Racetrack, the Quest Diagnostics Training Center (the training facility utilized by the National Football League’s New York Giants), and the Meadowlands Arena (formerly known as the Brendan Byrne Arena, Continental Airlines Arena, and Izod Center). The complex also includes the retail and entertainment complex known as American Dream Meadowlands (formerly known as Xanadu). This area is accessible by major roadways including I-95/New Jersey Turnpike, NJ-17, NJ-3, NJ-120, US-46, and I-80. NJ Transit services this sector through the Bergen County Line (Rutherford and Wesmont stations), Pascack Valley Line (Wood-Ridge and Teterboro-Williams Avenue stations), Main Line (Lyndhurst and Kingsland stations), and the Meadowlands Complex spur from Secaucus Junction. The area also contains Teterboro Airport, a facility managed by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.



SOUTHEAST BERGEN

The 8 municipalities in Southeast Bergen include **Cliffside Park, Edgewater, Fairview, Fort Lee, Leonia, Palisades Park, Ridgefield, and Ridgefield Park**. Southeast Bergen is characterized by a high-density land use pattern, containing the highest population densities in Bergen County. In this area, the cliffs of the Palisades run north-south along the banks of the Hudson River. Heavy concentrations of residential development exist, particularly in Cliffside Park, Edgewater, and Fort Lee, an area informally known as the “Gold Coast” due to the area’s new and expensive high-density developments where direct access to New York City exists, via the George Washington Bridge, ferry service, and nearby connections to the Lincoln Tunnel. Palisades Interstate Park and Overpeck County Park represent two of the major public spaces in this area. Moving west from the Hudson River waterfront, development densities gradually diminish, but are still higher than in other parts of the county. Southeast Bergen has access to County Routes 501 (CR-501) and CR-505, NJ-5, NJ-63, NJ-67, and NJ-93, US-1&9, and I-95/New Jersey Turnpike. Despite the high-density development patterns, Southeast Bergen is currently not serviced by passenger rail, although a proposed extension of NJ Transit’s Hudson-Bergen Light Rail would expand rail service to proposed stations in **Leonia, Palisades Park, and Ridgefield**.

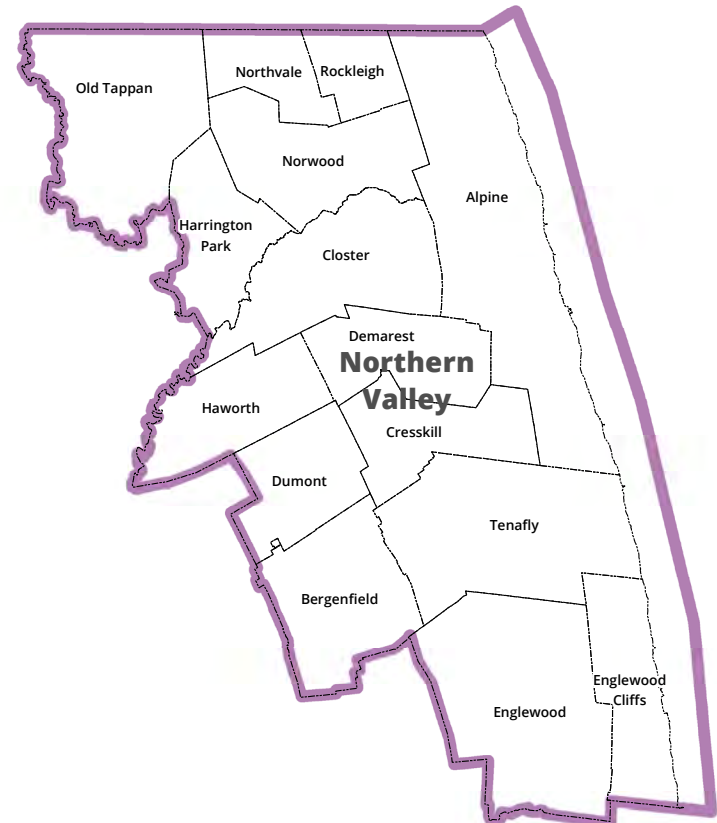


CENTRAL BERGEN

Central Bergen comprises 14 municipalities: **Bogota, Elmwood Park, Fair Lawn, Garfield, Hackensack, Lodi, Maywood, New Milford, Oradell, Paramus, River Edge, Rochelle Park, Saddle Brook, and Teaneck** and contains the largest proportion of Bergen County’s residential population. The area is serviced by major roads such as NJ-4, NJ-208, NJ-17, CR-503, I-80, and the Garden State Parkway. NJ Transit services this sector with rail through its Bergen County Line (Garfield, Plauderville, Broadway-Fair Lawn, and Radburn-Fair Lawn stations) and Pascack Valley Line (Essex Street-Hackensack, Anderson Street-Hackensack, New Bridge Landing (formerly North Hackensack), River Edge, and Oradell stations). This region is characterized by older suburban land use patterns that includes residential development on smaller lots. **Paramus** is the regional shopping hub of Bergen County with several million square feet of commercial floor area. **Hackensack** is historically the center of the county’s development and operations and serves as the county seat. Public lands in Central Bergen include the Hackensack River County Park, Saddle River County Park, and Van Saun County Park.

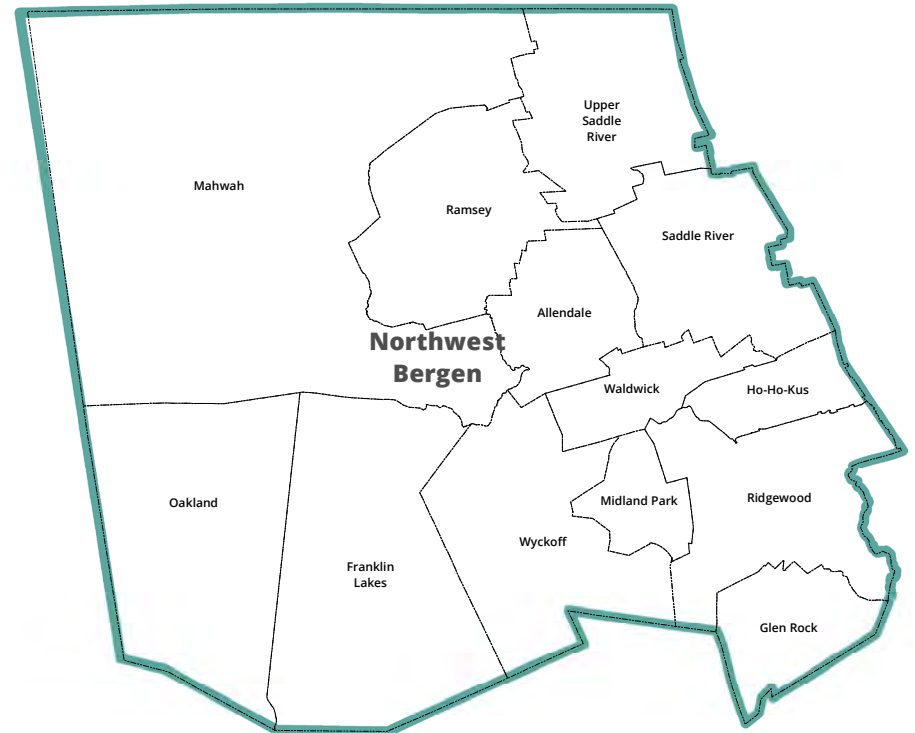
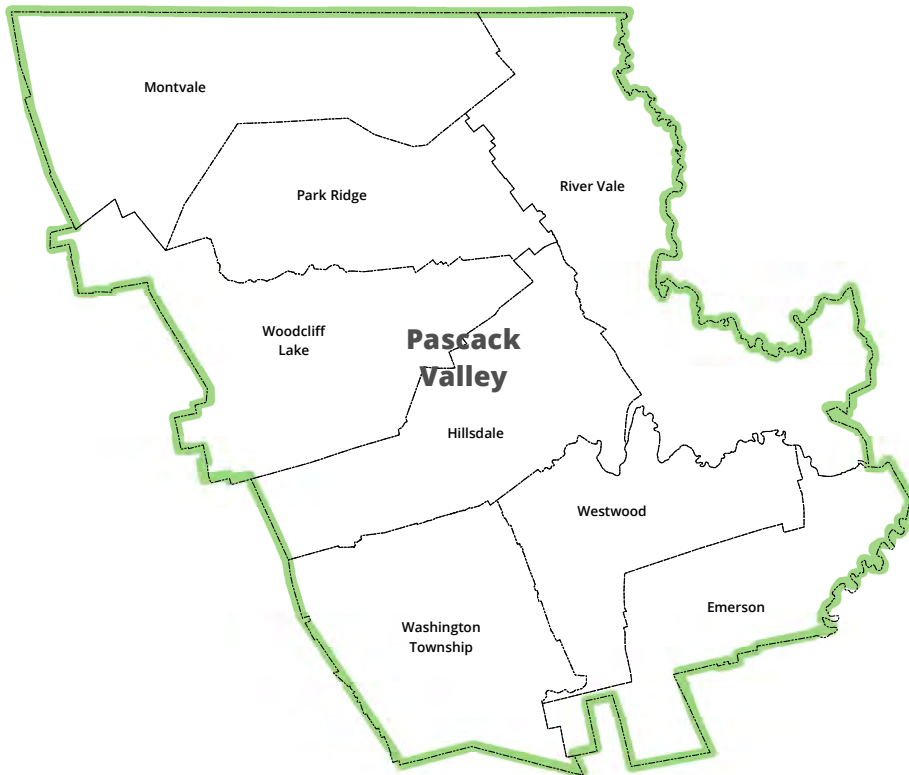
NORTHERN VALLEY

The Northern Valley comprises 15 municipalities: **Alpine, Bergenfield, Closter, Cresskill, Demarest, Dumont, Englewood, Englewood Cliffs, Harrington Park, Haworth, Northvale, Norwood, Old Tappan, Rockleigh, and Tenafly**. This area is generally characterized by suburban land use patterns consisting of residential development on large lots, with lower population densities than in other areas of the county, as well as a significant presence of corporate office campuses, particularly along the Route 9W corridor. The area is serviced by the Palisades Interstate Parkway and CR-501. Similar to Southeast Bergen, the Northern Valley does not contain passenger rail service; however, the proposed extension of the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail would include three stations in **Englewood**.



PASCACK VALLEY

The Pascack Valley comprises 8 municipalities: **Emerson, Hillsdale, Montvale, Park Ridge, River Vale, Washington Township, Westwood, and Woodcliff Lake**. The area is similar to the Northern Valley in that it is characterized by a suburban land use pattern that includes residential development on large lots and lower population density than other areas of the county. The Pascack Valley has also traditionally been home to many corporate office campuses, which are predominantly located near the county's northern edge, centered in **Montvale**. The Pascack Valley has traditionally been home to many corporations, who have their headquarters in New Jersey. As a result, the Pascack Valley has a large reverse commuter population, where the population increases during the daytime due to the influx of office workers. The area is serviced by the Garden State Parkway and CR-503, as well as other county roads, including Chestnut Ridge Road, Broadway, and Grand Avenue. The area contains passenger rail service through NJ Transit's Pascack Valley Line, with stations in **Emerson, Westwood, Hillsdale, Woodcliff Lake, Park Ridge, and Montvale**.



NORTHWEST BERGEN

Northwest Bergen comprises 13 municipalities: **Allendale, Franklin Lakes, Glen Rock, Ho-Ho-Kus, Mahwah, Midland Park, Oakland, Ramsey, Ridgewood, Saddle River, Upper Saddle River, Waldwick, and Wyckoff**. This region is characterized by low-density, suburban land use patterns geared toward the automobile, while the westernmost portion of Northwest Bergen is protected as public lands, largely part of the Ramapo Valley County Reservation. Northwest Bergen contains such notable natural features as Campgaw Mountain and the Ramapo Mountains. The municipalities of **Mahwah** and **Oakland** fall within the New Jersey Highlands, where development is regulated under the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act, and administered by the New Jersey Highlands Council. As a result, Northwest Bergen is the least densely populated region in Bergen County.

Northwest Bergen is serviced by I-287 and NJ-17. NJ Transit's Main Line and Bergen County Line converge in Northwest Bergen, with individual stations in Glen Rock (Glen Rock-Main Line as part of the Main Line, and Glen-Rock-Boro Hall as part of the Bergen County Line), before the lines combine to provide service to Ridgewood, Ho-Ho-Kus, Waldwick, Allendale, Ramsey, Ramsey-Route 17, and Mahwah, before continuing into New York.



Ramsey-Route 17 NJ Transit Station
Source: Donna Brennan, Bergen County

REGIONAL ENTITIES AND AUTHORITIES

In addition to its 70 municipalities, several entities have inter-municipal coordination or serve a regional purpose in Bergen County. The following list, while not exhaustive (for example, regional school systems or shared public safety arrangements are not included), identifies some of the major entities which are also described in further detail throughout this master plan:

Housing Authority of Bergen County (HABC):

The HABC is an independent agency from the county which provides housing opportunities for low income families and older adults. Most of HABC's funding comes from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Public and Indian Housing Division.

Bergen County Improvement Authority (BCIA):

The BCIA's stated mission is to serve the needs of the county by providing creative solutions and access to favorable financing for community and county projects, and to continuously seek to improve the quality of health care services rendered to patients and residents by the not-for-profit manager of the New Bridge Medical Center, consistent with its historic responsibility to maintain a safety net for the health care needs of county residents.

Bergen County Utilities Authority (BCUA):

The BCUA is responsible for the wastewater treatment for 47 Bergen County municipalities and solid waste management for all 70 municipalities.

New Jersey Highlands Commission:

The New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act established the New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council (Highlands Council) in 2004 to protect a significant portion of the state's drinking water supply by providing the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJ DEP) and the Highlands Council with some authority over land use for the region, which includes over 850,000 acres in northern New Jersey. The act split the region into two (2) regions: Planning areas and Preservation areas. The Preservation Area is required to remain in conformance with the Master Plan for the Highlands Region (adopted in 2008) and DEP regulations, while conformance is voluntary in the Planning Area. As a result, while existing uses are permitted to remain in the Preservation Area, including redevelopment and agriculture, expansion of water and sewer in the Preservation Area is prohibited. Currently in Bergen County, **Mahwah** and **Oakland** fall within the Highlands Region. The Planning Area accounts for 7,082 acres in **Mahwah** and 3,007 acres in **Oakland**, while the Preservation Area accounts for 9,687 acres in **Mahwah** and 2,622 acres in **Oakland**

North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA):

The NJTPA serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the 13-county northern New Jersey region, including Bergen County. The MPO is responsible for overseeing transportation improvement projects throughout the region, planning and prioritizing transportation projects, and providing resources for transportation planning activities in each of its constituent counties.

New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority (NJSEA):

The NJSEA was originally established in 1971 to hold the land lease and operate the MetLife (Meadowlands) Sports Complex, which includes MetLife Stadium, Meadowlands Racetrack, Meadowlands Arena, and the future American Dream Entertainment and Shopping Center, as well as several holdings outside of Bergen County. The New Jersey Meadowlands Commission was established in 1969 to address pollution issues in the Meadowlands area through regional planning and land use regulation. In 2015, the State of New Jersey subsumed the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission into the NJSEA, permitting municipalities the ability to leave the commission. This legislation also removed the tax sharing provisions of the commission.

Northwest Bergen County Utilities Authority (NBCUA):

The NBCUA provides wastewater treatment to 11 Bergen County municipalities, largely in the northwestern portion of the county.

Palisades Interstate Park Commission:

The Palisades Interstate Park Commission is an interstate body comprised of representatives from New York and New Jersey, responsible for the planning, management, and development of Palisades Interstate Park in New Jersey, as well as several State Parks and historic sites in New York.

Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission (PVSC):

The PVSC provides wastewater treatment services to 14 Bergen County municipalities (**East Rutherford, Elmwood Park, Fair Lawn, Garfield, Glen Rock, Hackensack, Hasbrouck Heights, Lodi, Lyndhurst, North Arlington, Rutherford, Saddle Brook, Wallington, and Wood-Ridge**).

Port Authority of New York & New Jersey (PANYNJ):

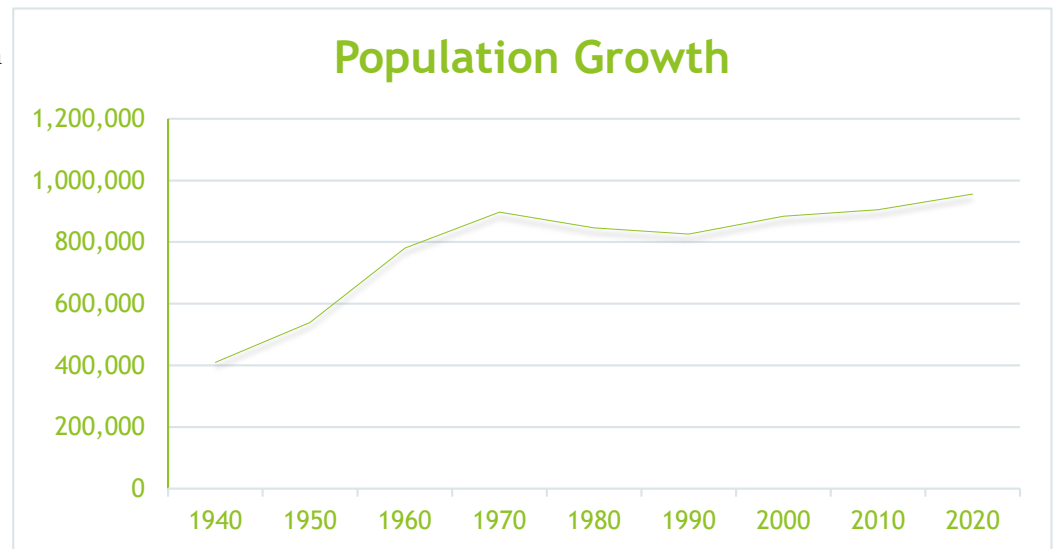
The Port Authority is an interstate compact originally established in 1921 to promote and protect the Port District, a region around the harbors of New York City and adjacent New Jersey, and to undertake port and regional improvements. The Port Authority is authorized to plan, develop and operate terminals and other facilities of transportation, economic development, and world trade that contribute to protecting and promoting commerce in the Port District. In Bergen County, the Port Authority is responsible for the George Washington Bridge and Teterboro Airport.



*Hackensack Bus Terminal
Source: Donna Brennan, Bergen County*

DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

Data from the US Census Bureau provides precise population data, such as a total count of people residing in a municipality, every 10 years. The American Community Survey (ACS) is another program of the US Census Bureau that is designed to estimate characteristics of different geographies, such as age, school attainment, journey to work, and type of housing, on an annual basis. The ACS then releases these estimates as “1-year estimates” and “5-year estimates,” based on the period of time used for data collection. According to the US Census Bureau, 1-year estimates provide the most current data but have a larger margin of error due to a smaller number of people surveyed (“sample size”). In addition, 1-year estimates are only prepared for geographic areas with populations of 65,000 and over, with limited data available to communities with populations of at least 20,000 people. On the other hand, 5-year estimates utilize a larger sample size and thus provide greater precision; however, data may not be as current as the 1-year estimate.⁴ In addition, 5-year estimates are conducted for all geographic areas. For the purposes of this master plan, data from the 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates will be used unless indicated otherwise, such as when specialty data is utilized (i.e. 2020 Decennial Census, or Economic Census); references to 2019 data (unless indicated otherwise) or 2015-2019 ACS data, or ACS (unless indicated otherwise) are used interchangeably throughout the document to refer to the 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates for 2015-2019. The 5-year estimate was selected to provide greater precision, while also ensuring that data could be evaluated on county and municipal levels without switching between different datasets.

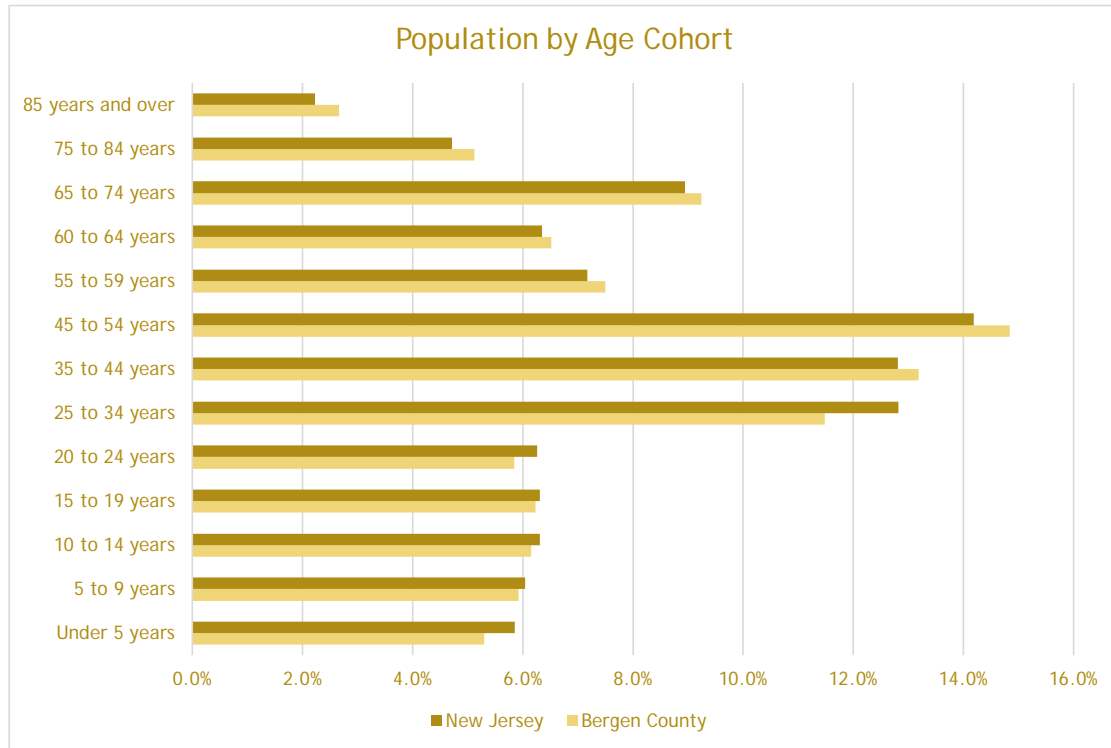


Over the last one hundred years, Bergen County has shown consistent growth, despite experiencing losses in the 1980s and 1990s. Current Census 2020 population data indicates that the county continues to grow, with a population of 955,732; moreover, future projections from the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) estimate this growth to continue through 2050, to 1,083,869 residents.

Permanent Population Projection			
Year	Population	Change	Percent
2000	884,118	-----	-----
2010	905,116	20,998	2.4%
2015	926,330	21,214	2.3%
2020	955,732	29,402	3.2%
2050	1,083,869	128,137	13.4%

Source: NJTPA Plan 2050, Appendix E and 2000, 2010, & 2020 (Redistricting Data) Census Table P1

The 2015-2019 ACS estimates that 24.5 percent of the population was under the age of 20. Ages 25 through 64 (approximately working age through retirement) totaled 53.3 percent of the population. Residents ages 75 or older comprised 6.9 percent of the population. The median age in the county was 41.9 years (down from 42.5 in 2010). A complete table of age cohorts follows.



ACS data from the 2015-2019 period indicates that 71.6 percent of Bergen County’s population is white (compared to 71.9 percent in 2010), followed by Asian, at 16.3 percent (compared to 14.5 percent in 2010). Separately, 19.9 percent of the population is of Hispanic or Latino ethnic background. Approximately 30.8 percent of the population was foreign-born, primarily from Asia (compared to 25 percent in 2010).⁵

According to the 2015-2019 ACS, most households (57.1 percent) within the county are considered by the Census to be “married-couple family” households,⁶ with an additional 4.4 percent of households identified as “cohabitating couple households.” The remainder, 38.5 percent, includes individuals living alone, or individual householders with children under 18 years of age. The average household size in Bergen County is estimated at 2.71 people, which is slightly larger than the statewide average (2.69), however, the average family size in Bergen County (3.24) is slightly less than the statewide average (3.27).

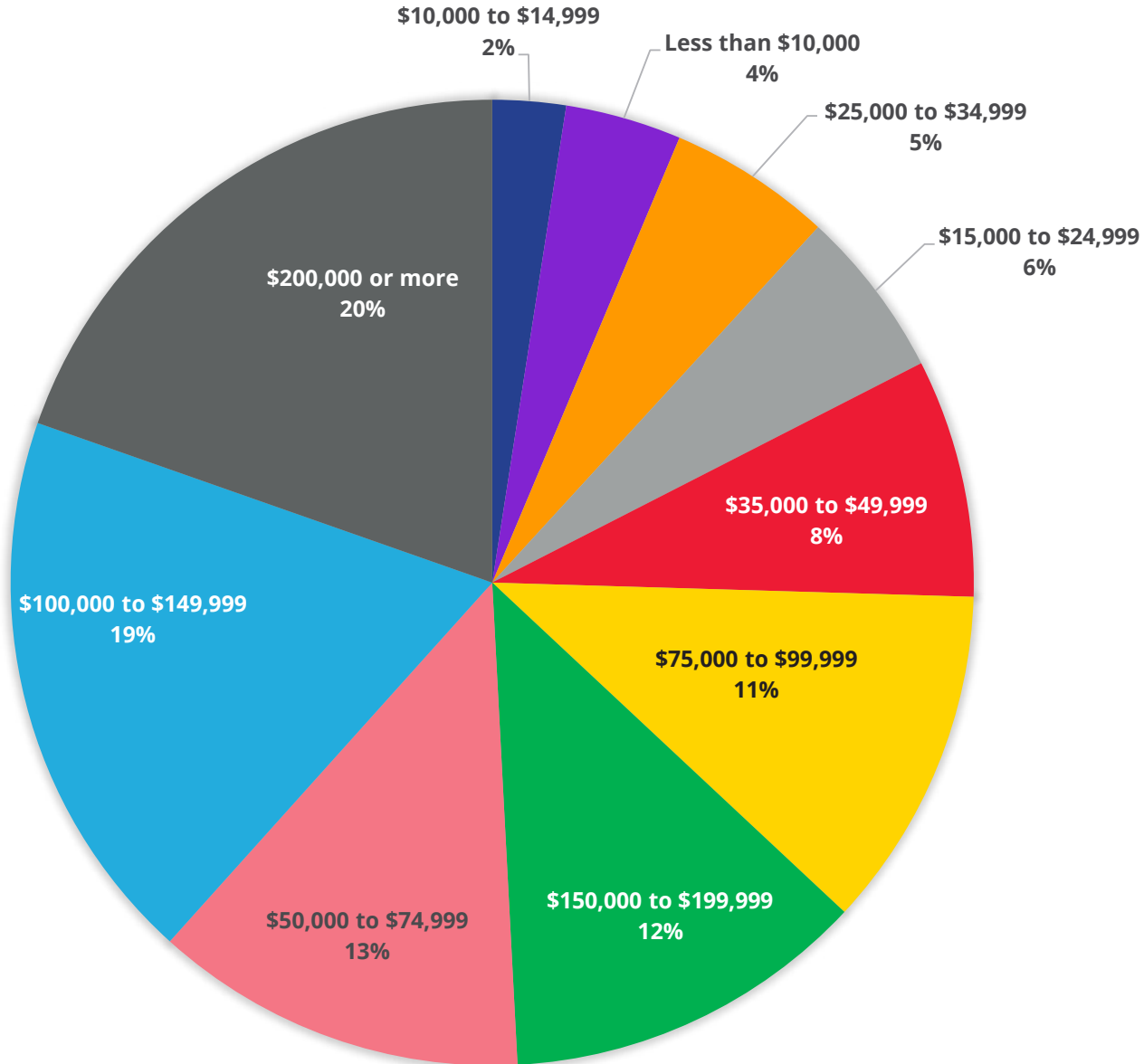
In terms of housing units, Bergen County’s housing inventory has increased from 339,820 units in 2000 to an estimated 357,828, according to the 2015-2019 ACS.⁷ Of these 357,828 housing units, the ACS estimates that 339,856 are occupied (95 percent). Occupied housing units include owner-occupied units (64.8 percent) and renter occupied units (35.2 percent).

Over half of housing units in Bergen County (53.5 percent) were constructed prior to 1960, and just under 80 percent (77.4 percent) of housing was constructed prior to 1980. The median year a housing structure was built in Bergen County was 1960, while the median year for the state was 1968.⁸

ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

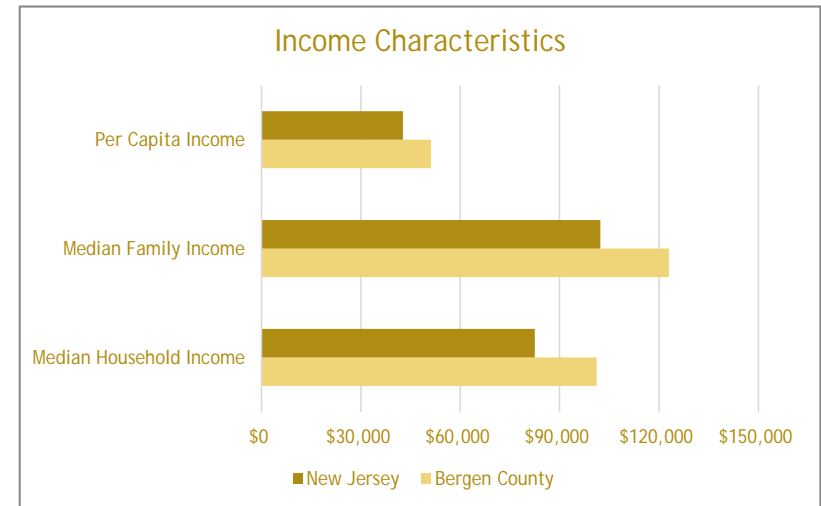
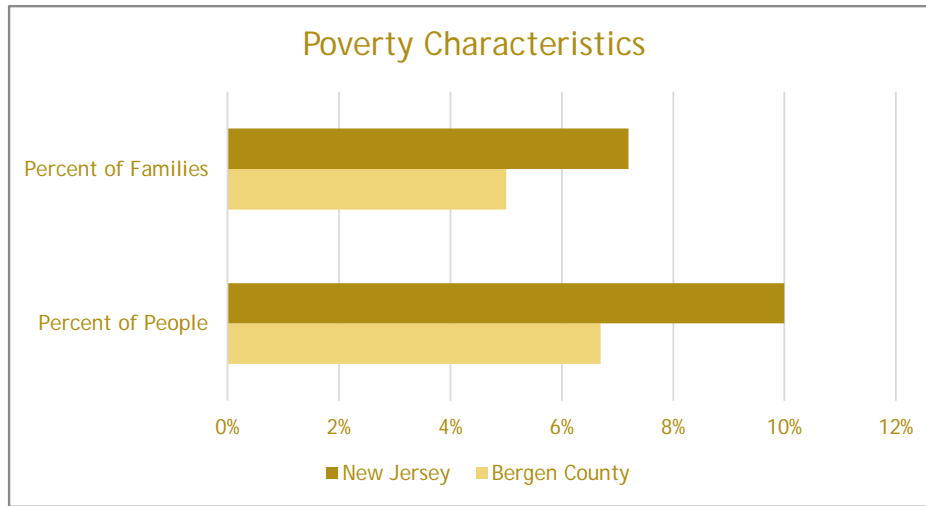
Bergen County has a median household income of \$101,144, higher than the state median. Bergen County also has lower numbers of people and families living in poverty than the state average, as illustrated in the table below.

BERGEN COUNTY HOUSEHOLD INCOME



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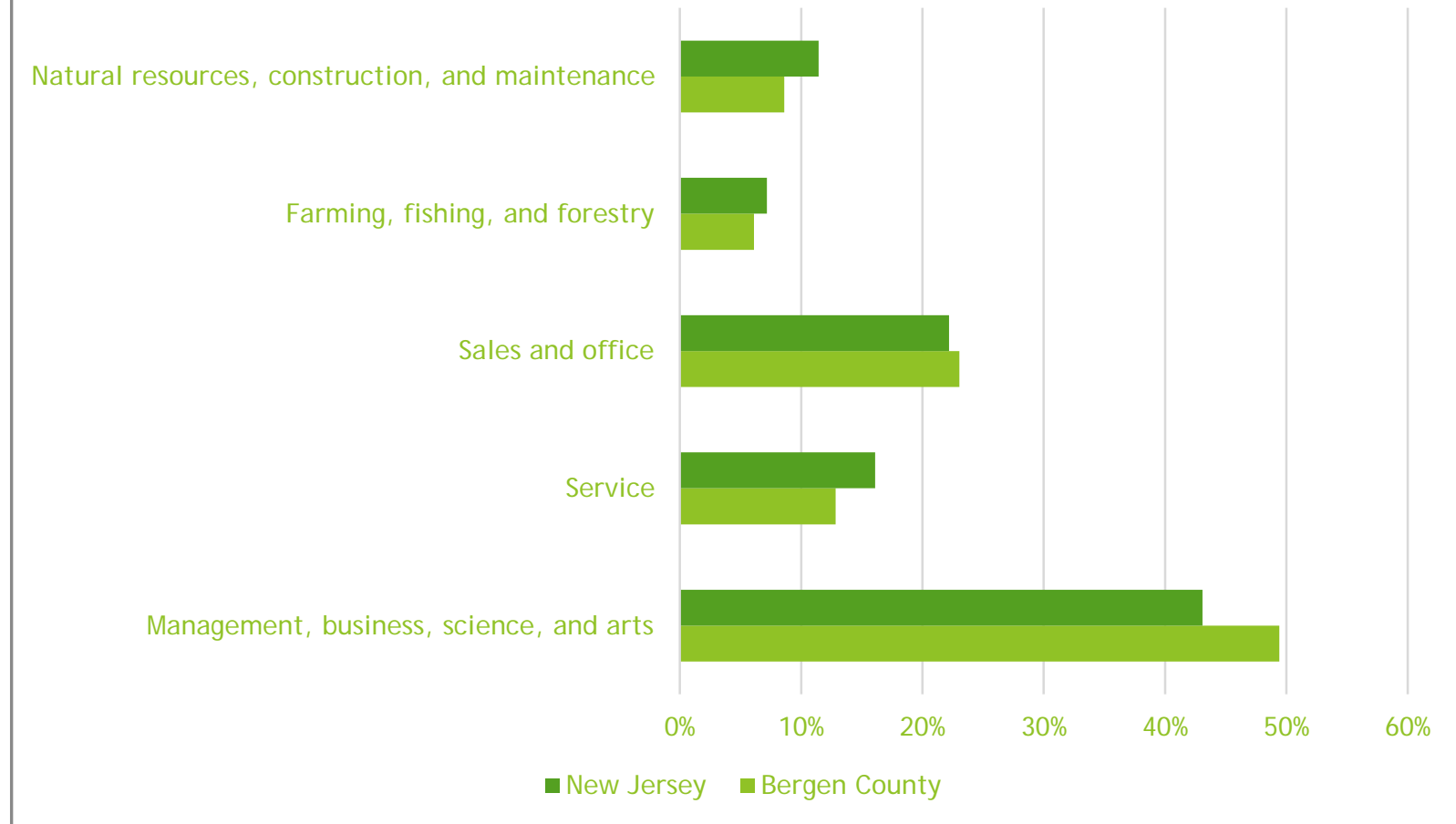
Residents of Bergen County are predominantly employed in management, business, science, and arts professions (49.4 percent), with the second most common occupation category being sales and office (23 percent). The 2015-2019 ACS indicates that Bergen County has 480,028 employed persons living in the county. In addition, as shown in the table below, 490,481 people work in Bergen County.



Top 5 Employment Sectors by Geographic Sector by NAICS Industry Sector (2021)														
Rank	Central Bergen		Northern Valley		Northwest Bergen		Pascack Valley		Southeast Bergen		Southwest Bergen		County Wide	
	Sector	Employees	Sector	Employees	Sector	Employees	Sector	Employees	Sector	Employees	Sector	Employees	Sector	Employees
1	Health Care and Social Assistance	31,499	Health Care and Social Assistance	11,203	Retail Trade	13,870	Professional, Scientific & Tech Services	5,867	Retail Trade	16,131	Retail Trade	9,944	Retail Trade	79,110
2	Professional, Scientific & Tech Services	27,827	Educational Services	8,009	Health Care and Social Assistance	12,436	Retail Trade	5,222	Accommodation & Food Services	3,979	Manufacturing	9,886	Health Care and Social Assistance	65,582
3	Retail Trade	26,159	Retail Trade	7,784	Professional, Scientific & Tech Services	9,598	Health Care and Social Assistance	4,219	Educational Services	3,548	Wholesale Trade	6,756	Professional, Scientific & Tech Services	55,790
4	Educational Services	13,432	Manufacturing	6,025	Educational Services	7,382	Educational Services	3,503	Professional, Scientific & Tech Services	3,294	Accommodation & Food Services	6,324	Educational Services	39,098
5	Accommodation and Food Services	11,185	Professional, Scientific & Tech Services	4,207	Manufacturing	7,192	Accommodation & Food Services	2,949	Manufacturing	3,039	Other Services (Except Public Administration)	5,504	Manufacturing	38,477
Total Employees in Sector		178,711		65,021		86,860		38,322		51,027		70,540		490,481

source: ESRI

EMPLOYED CIVILIAN POPULATION BY OCCUPATION



In terms of employment within Bergen County, the largest employment sector in Bergen County is retail trade, with 79,110 employees estimated for 2021, according to ESRI.⁹ This is followed by health care and social assistance, with 65,582 employees. Professional, Scientific & Tech Services makes up the third largest employment sector, at 55,790 employees. This is followed by educational services at approximately 39,098 employees, and manufacturing at 38,477 employees. Evaluating employment data at the geographic sector and municipal levels reveals certain concentrations of different industries in different areas of the county. As part of their long-range planning forecasts, NJTPA has made employment projections through 2050, with a modest increase from 2015 to 2050 of 0.4 percent.¹⁰

Although there is no one single center of commercial or industrial activity, there are several areas and corridors where certain types of firms and jobs are located. The two biggest employment centers are in **Hackensack** and **Paramus**. **Hackensack**, the county seat, is home to approximately 38,274 jobs. The city contains large numbers of health services jobs and a substantial amount of retail, professional services and public administration employment. **Paramus**, with an estimated 38,837 jobs, is characterized by its large concentration of regional malls, retail strip development along the highways, office parks, and related employment. The northwest section has a diverse mix of commercial industrial activity, including a concentration of health services in **Ridgewood** and a mixture of manufacturing, wholesale and retail employment near **Mahwah** and **Ramsey**.

RELATIONSHIPS TO STATE & REGIONAL PLANS

While in New Jersey municipalities have wide discretion for land use on the local level, policies and plans on the state, regional and county levels each influence these land use decisions. In addition to state level planning, the regional New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority and the New Jersey Highlands Council each have jurisdiction over parts of Bergen County.

Palisades Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan (2011)

The Corridor Management Plan (CMP) for the New Jersey segment of Palisades Interstate Parkway and Henry Hudson Drive fulfills a requirement of the New Jersey Scenic Byways Program, and the plan establishes a vision for the byway, recommending strategies that preserve, protect, interpret and enhance the byway's intrinsic qualities, balancing protection with roadway functionality. The CMP serves as the framework for an inclusive partnership, harmonizing management practices by the Commission with the interests of host communities, adjacent landowners, land managers, visitor service providers, and tourists.

The plan was prepared with an understanding of the close cooperation between the New York and New Jersey for the management of the Palisades Interstate Park and Parkway; the park is located entirely in Bergen County, and the Palisades Interstate Parkway is located predominantly in both Bergen County and Rockland County, New York. The following goals, all of which apply to the Bergen County portion of the park and parkway, are listed as such:

- Recognize that two significant roadways, the Palisades Interstate Parkway and Henry Hudson Drive, comprise the route identified as the New Jersey segment of the Palisades Interstate Parkway, a New Jersey Scenic Byway.
- Distinguish the Parkway as a road within a park and a member of a network of regional park ways that are distinct and different from the metropolitan highway system.
- Acknowledge the New York segment of the Palisades Interstate Parkway that, together with the New Jersey segment, completes the historic and scenic transportation corridor connecting New York City with Bear Mountain that provides visitors with outstanding views of the Hudson River along the Palisades Cliffs; and, coordinate and cooperate with New York State to ensure a seamless visitor experience.
- Enhance the scenic setting and natural environment of the Parkway and Henry Hudson Drive.
- Maintain and enhance the safety of the Palisades Interstate Parkway and Henry Hudson Drive in a manner that respects and complements their historic design and natural settings.
- Restore the historic design elements of the Parkway and Henry Hudson Drive as near to the original and as safe, practical and feasible as possible.
- Promote the Palisades Interstate Parkway as a gateway to the Palisades Park system that includes 24 parks and 8 historic sites, covering over 100,000 acres along more than 20 miles of Hudson River shoreline and beyond.
- Expand historic restoration, enhancement and interpretation to the Park's many historic destinations, trails and historic structures accessible from the Parkway and Henry Hudson Drive.
- Educate the traveling public about the history of the Parkway and Henry Hudson Drive in relation to the Park and the Hudson River; the history of scenic driving and access to sites of natural beauty; and, the people, ideas and movements leading to the Parkway.
- Connect the adjacent municipalities to the Palisades Interstate Parkway and the Hudson River shoreline.



Route 208/287 Split in Franklin Lakes
Source: Colliers Engineering & Design

Plan 2050: Transportation. People. Opportunity. NJTPA Regional Transportation Plan (2021)

The North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the 13-county northern New Jersey region, including Bergen County. The MPO is responsible for overseeing transportation improvement projects throughout the region, planning and prioritizing transportation projects, and providing resources for transportation planning activities in each of its constituent counties. The NJTPA serves as the regional NJTPA Board consists of one elected official from each of the region’s 13 counties; Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, Union, and Warren, and its two largest cities, Newark and Jersey City. Federal law requires MPOs to update their long range plans every 4 years as a condition of receiving federal transportation funding. The most recent plan from NJTPA, *Plan 2050: Transportation. People. Opportunity.*, was approved by the NJTPA Board on September 13, 2021. This plan draws insights and guidance to shape the transportation system in ways that will support communities, families and individuals across an array of issues, beyond just mobility. These efforts often involve work to encourage approaches to land use, including promoting development around rail stations or creating improved access to areas targeted for redevelopment. The plan identifies a series of challenges in how the transportation system is planned, managed, and financed, citing issues relating to public health, remote work arrangements, addressing the needs of essential workers, impacts of inequality and racial discrimination, increases in e-commerce, and the growing impacts of climate change. The plan notes that it is intended to “chart a course through uncertain and challenging times to continue progress towards a more efficient and sustainable transportation future. It seeks to help the region recover from and respond to the tumultuous and life-altering events of 2020-2021--the pandemic, social isolation, racial reckoning and environmental threats.”¹¹ Furthermore, increased adoption of electric vehicles and remote work environments will disrupt traditional revenue sources, such as gasoline taxes, tolls, and ridership fees, necessitating a reexamination of how transportation is funded.

While the plan looks at the entire 13-county region, it highlights numerous examples from the Bergen County area to illustrate trends and changes, including:

- Anticipated growth in retail, notably the American Dream project, as well as hospitals/health care.
- Repurposing malls and shopping centers, notably the Garden State Plaza to add residential, office, and entertainment.
- Anticipated road improvement projects, including Route 80 in Bergen and Passaic Counties in 2025.
- Anticipated bridge improvement projects, including the Route 4 Hackensack River Bridge in 2025, the Route 17 Bridges over NYS&W Railroad and RR Spur and Central Avenue in 2031 (all three of these bridges fall within the Route 17 Bottleneck Study), Kingsland Avenue Bridge in 2027, and the East Anderson Street Bridge in 2026.
- Exploring the development and possible funding of the Northern Valley Greenway in **Tenafly, Cresskill, Demarest, Closter, Norwood, and Northvale.**

The plan also includes a number of priorities to successfully achieve the themes of transportation, people, and opportunity, including:

- Safety – Reducing crashes and ensuring the safety of all travelers must continue to be a primary focus across all policies, programs, and investment.
- Accessibility – The region’s planning must continue to shift its focus away from moving vehicles to using a variety of modes to give people convenient and affordable access to jobs, education, and other opportunities.
- Equity – The transportation system must more fully address the needs of low-income and minority communities, which have been traditionally underserved.
- Roads & Bridges – Fix it first is the priority to reduce the backlog of needed road and bridge improvements and upgrade facilities while also preparing infrastructure for climate change impacts.
- Transit – Improving transit is a key to solving some of the most difficult challenges but increased funding and more stable funding mechanisms are needed.
- Active Transportation – Improve connectivity between neighborhoods and key destinations, especially in places with schools, high transit use, and lower incomes.
- Climate Change – Support climate change policies and initiatives of the State of New Jersey.
- Transportation Technologies – Support transportation technology applications and guide the region in their use.
- Freight – Address existing freight infrastructure needs and prepare for growth in overall freight volume by 2050 as well as the challenges of e-commerce.
- Environment – Highlight the importance of efforts in the areas of air quality, climate change and environmental mitigation.
- Financial Element – The plan offers a fiscally constrained financial plan based on realistic projects along with scenarios addressing more limited or additional funding.

The plan addresses several problems and goals relevant to Bergen County, and relative to ongoing efforts with partner agencies including:

Port Authority of New York & New Jersey

- The FTA released its intent to begin an Environmental Assessment to replace the Port Authority Bus Terminal in June 2021, which would provide for a nearly 40 percent increase in transit rider capacity.
- Exclusive Bus Lane along New Jersey Route 495 from the New Jersey Turnpike to the Lincoln Tunnel. In addition, the Port Authority is looking at connected vehicle technologies to coordinate the movement of buses to improve efficiency.
- Several planning initiatives are underway to increase rail access across the Hudson River. The Hudson Tunnel Project, a partnership among NJ TRANSIT, Amtrak and the Port Authority, would add a new rail tunnel and rehabilitate the existing North River Tunnel.
- The PATH system, operated by the Port Authority of NY & NJ, has seen more riders in recent years. This growing ridership is expected to continue in coming decades. In response, the Port Authority is replacing the PATH signal system, allowing trains to safely run closer together, improving stations, upgrading power substations and considering a possible extension to Newark Liberty International Airport.
- Both NJ TRANSIT and the Port Authority have committed to improving the resiliency of their systems to prevent future damage and to prepare for possible future extreme weather events and security threats. This includes significant new investments in a series of hardening projects such as new rail vehicle storage, upgraded power systems, maintenance facilities, emergency control centers, security improvements and signal and communications systems resilience upgrades.
- Improving air quality through Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funded initiatives.

NJ TRANSIT

- NJ TRANSIT saw a significant drop in system wide ridership during the COVID-19 pandemic, dropping 90 percent in early 2020, and growing to about 40 percent of pre-pandemic levels by summer 2020 and remaining steady through early 2021. Rail ridership was more depressed than bus ridership, which NJTPA suggests might have been due to different abilities of riders to work remotely or utilize other transportation options. An increase in transit demand into New York City may occur after 2023, when



congestion pricing in Manhattan south of 61st Street is expected to occur. NJTPA notes that a rebound in ridership will be affected by the health concerns of riders and changes in work environments.

- Enhancing the reliability of the bus system is an equity concern, considering that a larger percentage of lower income people travel by bus.
- Identification of a potential Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) network in Bergen County.
- Renovations to concourses at New York Penn Station, part of the larger planned Gateway Program, which includes construction of a “Penn Station South” to serve an additional 40 percent more trains and 175,000 additional passengers.
- Adding main track capacity to portions of the Bergen County, Main, and Pascack Valley Lines. The Plan notes that these proposals depend on resolving the capacity bottleneck at the Hudson River, funding, and detailed environmental and feasibility assessments.
- The new tunnel supports the larger Gateway Program being led by Amtrak, a long-term plan to improve rail service along the Northeast Corridor. In addition to the tunnel, Gateway calls for expanding New York Penn Station for passengers and trains, new rail storage capacity in New Jersey, replacing the Portal Bridge over the Hackensack River and installation of the Bergen Loop, additional track that would allow for one-seat rides to Manhattan on NJ TRANSIT’s Pascack Valley and Main Bergen lines.
- The region has two light rail systems: the Hudson Bergen Light Rail (HBLR) and the Newark Light Rail. Each system requires ongoing maintenance, and two proposed extensions to the HBLR line (including a critical extension to Bergen County) will require a major capital investment.
- Improving air quality through Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funded initiatives.



Westwood NJ Transit Station. Source: Donna Brennan, Bergen County

NJ Transit Strategic Plan (2021)

In June of 2021, NJ Transit adopted their first 10-year Strategic Plan and five-year Capital Plan. The Strategic Plan is structured on five values, Teamwork, Stewardship, Transparency and Accountability, Inclusion, and Innovation. Additionally, the Strategic Plan identifies five Goals, which are as follows:

- Goal 1: Ensure the reliability and continued safety of our transit system.
- Goal 2: Deliver a high-quality experience for all our customers, with their entire journey in mind.
- Goal 3: Power a stronger and fairer economy for all communities in the region.
- Goal 4: Promote a more sustainable future for our planet.
- Goal 5: Build an accountable, innovative and inclusive organization that delivers for New Jersey.

Each Goal of the Strategic Plan has a variety of strategies to meet those Goals. A majority of the Goals and Strategies are general and all-encompassing, not specific to a certain municipality or County. However, a couple Strategies include transit improvements that would affect the existing system in Bergen County. Strategy 1.6, Rehabilitate and expand the network of bus garages to support fleet expansion and upgrades, anticipates constructing a new northern bus garage to “replace the obsolete, undersized and flood-prone Oradell Garage with a state-of-the-art storage and maintenance facility that can accommodate current and future ridership.” The construction of a modern bus garage would assist in expanding bus service throughout the County. Additionally, Strategy 3.2, Support economic growth by introducing new and more-frequent service in underserved areas, calls for the expansion of the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail system by constructing a nine-mile extension to Englewood Hospital and Medical Center. The construction of this extension would add seven new stations between the current terminus at Tonnelle Avenue in Hudson County and the Englewood Hospital. The new bus garage and Hudson-Bergen Light Rail expansion are noted to be 6 to 10-year goals.

Ramapo River Watershed Intermunicipal Council (2005)

The 2005 Ramapo River Watershed Intermunicipal Council (RRWIC) agreement was created as a commitment between municipalities to develop a Ramapo River Watershed Management Plan and establish a common and comprehensive watershed model, regulations, and operating practices to prevent or minimize adverse impacts on water quality, wildlife and human well-being, provide stormwater management and flood control, and enhance recreation, historic preservation and overall quality of life within the watershed. The participating units of government include municipalities in New York and New Jersey, counties (Bergen County and Passaic County in New Jersey, as well as Orange County and Rockland County in New York), and the Palisades Interstate Park Commission.

The stated objectives of the RRWIC include:

- Develop better communication across state lines and municipal boundaries, to share information and technology;
- Empower local governments within the watershed to work together to acquire grants and funds for research, data collection, studies and analysis;
- Protect the well fields, groundwater, surface water, ecosystems, wildlife habitats and open spaces of the Ramapo River Watershed Area;
- Raise public awareness and commitment to a shared vision of clean water and a sustainable future for all;
- Prevent point and non-point source pollution of both surface and ground waters in the watershed;
- Preserve open space and natural resources;
- Create land use guidelines consistent with watershed protections;
- Encourage sustainable economic activities that are consistent with watershed protections;
- Develop programs for educating the public and public officials;
- Explore mutually beneficial ways of securing and sharing federal, state and county-agency funding for the programs that accomplish their objectives in the above areas;
- Share the costs of monitoring compliance and enforcement of regulations;
- Resolve disputes regarding development projects that may have inter-municipal impacts;
- Work with federal, state and county agencies and authorities to assure that their activities in the watershed are compatible with the plans and programs of the cooperating municipalities; and,
- Provide stormwater management and flood control.

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New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan (2001)

The 2001 State Development and Redevelopment Plan is intended to serve as a guide for public and private sector investment in New Jersey's future. The Plan divides the state into several Planning Areas, identified through a numbering system of 1 through 5, with each number representing an increasingly intense level of development (with 1 being the highest) and with recommendations and expectations to match those conditions in terms of both existing and desired future development patterns. Additionally, place types including Urban and Regional Centers, Towns, Villages, and Hamlets are identified as places recommended for concentrated development. It should be noted that the terms "Town" and "Village" here do not necessarily conform to the municipal definitions and designations of the same name.

While Bergen County's development patterns vary across its 70 municipalities, the overall concentration of development means that over 75 percent of the county is designated as a Planning Area 1 (PA 1) – Metropolitan Planning Area. PA 1 refers to communities that are fully developed, or almost fully developed, with little vacant land available for new development. The PA 1 constitutes two-thirds of New Jersey's population and jobs, and will continue to accommodate growth. Communities within this Planning Area supply a range of housing opportunities and everyday commercial needs. Good design can accommodate high density development with amenities that include parking, shopping, parks and schools within close proximity and with access to employment centers.

The SDRP notes that communities within the PA 1 share certain common characteristics :¹²

- Mature settlement patterns resulting in diminished supply of vacant land;
- Infrastructure systems that generally are beyond or approaching their reasonable life expectancy;
- The need to rehabilitate housing to meet ever changing market standards; and,
- The recognition that redevelopment is, or will become the predominant form of growth.

The intent of the Metropolitan Planning Area is to:

- Provide for much of the state's future redevelopment;
- Revitalize cities and towns;
- Promote growth in compact forms;
- Stabilize older suburbs;
- Redesign areas of sprawl; and,
- Protect the character of existing stable communities.¹³

Fort Lee, Looking Toward Manhattan
Source: Donna Brennan, Bergen County

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The following Policy Objectives are applicable to areas within the PA 1 Areas.

1. Land Use: Promote redevelopment and development in Cores and neighborhoods of Centers and in Nodes that have been identified through cooperative regional planning efforts. Promote diversification of land uses, including housing where appropriate, in single use developments and enhance their linkages to the rest of the community. Ensure efficient and beneficial utilization of scarce land resources throughout the Planning Area to strengthen its existing diversified and compact nature.
2. Housing: Provide a full range of housing choices through redevelopment, new construction, rehabilitation, adaptive reuse of nonresidential buildings, and the introduction of new housing into appropriate nonresidential settings. Preserve the existing housing stock through maintenance, rehabilitation and flexible regulation.
3. Economic Development: Promote economic development by encouraging strategic land assembly, site preparation and infill development, public/private partnerships and infrastructure improvements that support an identified role for the community within the regional marketplace. Encourage job training and other incentives to retain and attract businesses. Encourage private sector investment through supportive government regulations, policies and programs, including tax policies and expedited review of proposals that support appropriate redevelopment.
4. Transportation: Maintain and enhance a transportation system that capitalizes on high density settlement patterns by encouraging the use of public transit systems, walking and alternative modes of transportation to reduce automobile dependency, link Centers and Nodes, and create opportunities for transit-oriented redevelopment. Facilitate efficient goods movement through strategic investments and intermodal linkages. Preserve and abilitze general aviation airports and, where appropriate, encourage community economic development and promote complementary uses for airport property such as business centers.
5. Natural Resource Conservation: Reclaim environmentally damaged sites and mitigate future negative impacts, particularly to waterfronts, scenic vistas, wildlife habitats and to Critical Environmental Sites, and Historic and Cultural Sites. Give special emphasis to improving air quality. Use open space to reinforce neighborhood and community identity, and protect natural linear systems, including regional systems that link to other Planning Areas.
6. Agriculture: Use development and redevelopment opportunities wherever appropriate and economically feasible, to meet the needs of the agricultural industry for intensive agricultural production, packaging and processing, value-added operations, marketing, exporting and other shipping. Provide opportunities for farms, greenhouses, farmers markets and community gardens.
7. Recreation: Provide maximum active and passive recreational opportunities and facilities at the neighborhood, local and regional levels by concentrating on the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing parks and open space while expanding and linking the system through redevelopment and reclamation projects.
8. Redevelopment: Encourage redevelopment at intensities sufficient to support transit, a broad range of uses and efficient use of infrastructure. Promote design that enhances public safety, encourages pedestrian activity and reduces dependency on the automobile.
9. Historic Preservation: Encourage the preservation and adaptive reuse of historic or significant buildings, Historic and Cultural Sites, neighborhoods and districts in ways that will not compromise either the historic resource or the area's ability to redevelop. Coordinate historic preservation with tourism efforts.
10. Public Facilities and Services: Complete, repair or replace existing infrastructure systems to eliminate deficiencies and provide capacity for sustainable development and redevelopment in the region. Encourage the concentration of public facilities and services in Centers and Cores.
11. Intergovernmental Coordination: Regionalize as many public services as feasible and economical to enhance the cost-effective delivery of those services. Establish multijurisdictional policy and planning entities to guide the efforts of state, county and municipal governments to ensure compatible and coordinated redevelopment.

Less than 3 percent of the county is in the PA 5—Environmentally Sensitive—Planning Area. Lands with this classification can be found within the northeast corner of the county surrounding waterbodies – especially our potable water sources – and in the northwest corner adjacent to the New Jersey Highlands, corresponding to open space and recreational resources. These water sources coincide with Category One (C1) Waters, which are protected from any measurable change in water quality because of their exceptional ecological significance, exceptional recreational significance, exceptional water supply significance, or exceptional fisheries resources. PA 5 refers to areas with large contiguous valuable ecosystems, geological features and wildlife habitats. The PA 5 areas are by definition more sensitive to disturbance, and new development or intensive uses in these areas have the potential to destroy the very characteristics that define the area. As such, the State Plan provides for the protection of critical natural resources and the maintenance of the balance between ecological systems and beneficial growth.

The State Plan also provides similar protection for other, smaller pockets of environmental significance within other Planning Areas. These are known as Critical Environmental Sites (CES), which help organize planning for new development or redevelopment by singling out the elements of natural systems, small areas of habitat, historic sites, and other features that should continue to be expressed in the future landscape through protection and restoration.

The State Plan identifies just over 4 percent of the county as state, local and federal parks. Jurisdiction for the remainder of Bergen County’s land area not identified as PA-1 and PA-5, is split between the New Jersey Highlands (Planning and Preservation Areas), and the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority’s Meadowlands District.

It should be noted that a revised plan, the State Strategic Plan, was scheduled for adoption in November 2012, however, Hurricane Sandy postponed this effort indefinitely.



*Crew team member at Overpeck Park.
Source: Donna Brennan, Bergen County*



Meadowlands District Master Plan Update (2020)

The 2020 Hackensack Meadowlands District Master Plan Update, prepared by the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority and adopted on February 6, 2020, updates and supersedes the 2004 Master Plan that had been prepared by the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission. Despite the consolidation of the Meadowlands Commission into the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority by the state in 2015, the Authority is still responsible for the development of the Meadowlands District, charged with environmental protection and stewardship, promoting orderly development, and providing for the solid waste needs of the region. The 2004 Meadowlands District Master Plan, prepared by the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission, established an overall vision for the Meadowlands District through the delineation of cohesive goals, principles, standards, and strategies. The 30.3 square-mile District is located approximately five miles west of New York City in northern New Jersey. The District encompasses portions of fourteen municipalities in two counties. The 10 municipalities in Bergen County that have some land within the Meadowlands District are: **Carlstadt, East Rutherford, Little Ferry, Lyndhurst, Moonachie, North Arlington, Ridgefield, Rutherford, South Hackensack, and Teterboro.**

The Meadowlands District Master Plan Update outlines a series of 11 goals and objectives for the Hackensack Meadowlands District:

- To safeguard and restore the Hackensack Meadowlands' irreplaceable heritage of natural and historical resources.
- To promote a suitable array of land uses that encourages economic vitality with job creation and supports the public health, safety, and general welfare.
- To foster the Meadowlands economy in a manner that stimulates job growth and prosperity.
- To create a sense of place that captures the character and identity of the Meadowlands.
- To facilitate the creation of housing opportunities in suitable locations to accommodate the needs of the region's population.
- To promote a regional transportation network that improves the mobility of people and freight, fuels economic development, and minimizes negative impacts upon the environment.
- To increase the security and resiliency of the District and its neighboring areas by mitigating hazards and risks.
- To encourage the development and use of reliable, responsible, low-carbon and alternative energy sources while reducing energy consumption.
- To direct the NJSEA's policies and practices toward a sustainable Meadowlands.
- To provide excellence in public service.
- To deliver the vision of this Master Plan in solidarity with other District stakeholders.

Above Photo: Hackensack Meadowlands. Source: Colliers Engineering & Design



Highlands Regional Master Plan (2008)

The Highlands Region includes 88 municipalities, including two in Bergen County—**Oakland** and **Mahwah**—totaling over 22,000 acres. Its natural lands offer aesthetic and recreational benefits, while also serving as a vital source of drinking water for over half of New Jersey residents; the region is a significant green belt along the East Coast’s metropolitan areas. The Highlands Regional Master Plan seeks to evaluate how best to protect the natural and cultural resources of the Highlands Region while striving to accommodate a sustainable economy. It establishes capacity limitations for future growth within the Highlands Region related to both natural systems, such as protection of drinking water supplies, and the built environment, such as wastewater and transportation infrastructure.

The Highlands Regional Master Plan identifies two distinct areas within the region, both pertaining to Bergen County. The first, the Highlands Preservation Area, designates approximately 398,000 acres of exceptional natural resource value. Second, the Highlands Planning Area contains all the land in the Highlands Region that is not in the Highlands Preservation Area.

The Goals set forth in the Highlands Regional Master Plan that have relevance to this county master plan, relative to conforming municipalities and counties is that they include and incorporate:

- Forest protection programs in their master plans and development regulations.
- Critical habitat area management programs in the master plans and development regulations of conforming municipalities and counties.
- Open space preservation and land stewardship programs in their master plans and development regulations.
- Improvement of ground water recharge through regional management efforts.
- Agriculture retention/farmland preservation elements in their master plans and development regulations.
- Minimum standards for historic, cultural, archaeological, and scenic protection in municipal and county master plans and land development regulations.
- Transportation improvements within the Highlands Region that are consistent with the Highlands Regional Master Plan.
- Regional and local land and water resource planning and management programs in their master plans and development regulations.
- Considerations of development, redevelopment, and brownfields opportunities in their master plans.

THE MASTER PLAN

This master plan seeks to recognize and meet the present day challenges and address the jurisdictional fragmentation that constitutes the county's landscape. It identifies ways to reinforce the county's strengths and mitigate its weaknesses through a critical examination and evaluation of current conditions, and develops a common vision that transcends municipal boundaries and empowers small local governments to collaborate on shared initiatives, key to a smarter, more efficient future.

Going forward, Bergen County and each municipality will face different opportunities and challenges. To evaluate and respond to these challenges and opportunities, this plan examines the following factors:

- Land availability for new development and redevelopment;
- Challenges and opportunities inherent in redevelopment and shifting economies;
- Population growth and demographic change, including necessary services to address growth and change, trends in housing, settlement patterns, etc.;
- Mobility and accessibility, including matching transportation to shifting land use patterns, provision of public transit services, state of good repair, traffic congestion, and the like;
- Provision of open space and recreation;
- Fostering arts, culture, and historic resources;
- Preserving water quality and natural resources;
- Ensuring availability of public services; and
- Preparedness through resilient and sustainable practices.

These findings have been organized into individual topical chapters, or elements, as they are referred to in this document. These elements seek to provide a comprehensive snapshot of the present-day landscape in Bergen County, and identify a series of goals, objectives, and specific actions that seek to ensure that Bergen County continues to remain an attractive place to live, work, play, and invest. The elements that compose this master plan include the following:

- Environment and Natural Resources;
- Open Space, Agriculture, Parks and Recreation;
- Arts, History, and Historic Preservation;
- Public Facilities and Services;
- Transportation and Mobility;
- Economic Vitality;
- Land Use and Housing; and,
- Sustainability.



Above Figure: Graphical icons

For ease of reference, this master plan utilizes a set of graphical icons (Above Figure) to represent each element. As noted throughout the document, many issues do not neatly “fit” into one category, but rather are inextricably linked. One overarching intention of this master plan is to highlight how many of the goals and objectives in each topical element are shared across elements. For example, bicycle pathways might be a goal of the Transportation and Mobility Element to reduce automobile congestion and improve transportation access to a greater segment of the population, but it can also be a goal of the Open Space, Agriculture, Parks and Recreation Element to provide recreational amenities to residents, as well as a goal of the Economic Vitality Element in designing spaces that are attractive to potential employers and prospective employees. As a result, these icons are also used to highlight specific connections and commonalities between the goals and objectives of other elements. Showing these connections is important to promote cross-cooperation between county departments, and with different partners in other levels of government to increase communication and achieve common goals with greater efficiency and a diversity of expertise.