

REGIONAL APPROACH: BERGEN COUNTY'S PLANNING REGIONS

The 6 Planning Regions

So as to best facilitate Cross-Acceptance throughout Bergen County, the County has been divided into 6 planning “regions”, each consisting of a comparable number of municipalities and sharing many common planning issues, concerns, and opportunities. These planning regions include:

- Northwest Bergen
- Pascack Valley
- Northern Valley
- Central Bergen
- Southeast Bergen
- Southwest Bergen

The Regional Outreach Meetings were held to discuss broader-reaching issues related to the State Plan – and any other planning and development related concerns our constituent municipalities may have. These meetings were conducted for each of our 6 planning areas throughout the County, and provided an important forum to discuss issues both common to the overall area (thereby promoting the concept of region-wide issues and solutions to key planning concerns), and particular to individual communities. In addition, in order to capture more localized and specific issues of concern to the municipalities, the Department reached out individually to each of our 70 municipalities, to guide them on specific policy and mapping issues, and help them to voice items of concern and draft changes to the overall State Plan Map.

The following section breaks down these planning regions and summarizes substantive issues and information collected through both individual municipal and regional meetings. This information is complemented by the copious documentation provided in the report appendices.

Included here for each region are a synopsis of constituent municipalities, geography, demographics and economic indicators (detailed in the accompanying tables of information), and summaries of mapping changes, policy changes, overarching planning issues, and potential resources around which to centralize Plan Endorsement efforts. Also included are the municipal questionnaires collecting information on municipal planning resources, policy issues, localized issues of concern, and potential mapping conflicts and changes. First, a countywide overview and discussion of projections are included for clarity's sake upon review of the following section.

COUNTY SUMMARY

Countywide Overview

Despite the dwindling supply of developable land, Bergen County continued to grow in the inter-Census period from 1990 to 2000, from 825,380 residents to 884,118. This constitutes an increase of 7.1 percent. Workforce, the number of employed residents aged 16 years or older, increased at a more significant rate – 13.1 percent, from 436,439 to 493,563.

The growth in households countywide followed the same pattern as population, increasing from 308,880 to 330,817 – an increase of 7.1 percent as well. Countywide, Bergen averaged 2.7 persons per household.

The housing supply necessary to accommodate this growth increased at a more modest rate, perhaps due to the limited supply of land for new development. The number of housing units increased from 324,817 to 339,820, an increase of 4.6 percent by 2000.

Employment reported under Equifax in 1996 totalled 393,168. Other aggregated figures estimate this total as well over 400,000. This figure brings Bergen's stake in the employment arena to approximately one job per every two residents, hardly the bedroom community it was back in the 1950s.

Projections

As part of the Bergen County Cross-Acceptance process, projections of population and employment were discussed with the municipal representatives. Regional modeling initiatives, including those of the New Jersey Department of Labor and the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority, assisted in our outreach efforts for constituent municipalities to determine projections of growth in population and employment through the horizon year 2025. Information generated by Census 2000 and various regional agencies were presented, coupled with a review of anticipated development patterns and growth potential. Where Regional Agency-generated projections were in line with all of these contributing factors, these projections stood. Where there was a disconnect between these numbers and the anticipated development of a municipality, the projections were adjusted based upon municipal expertise.

Overall, population is projected to remain relatively on-track as we move forward, increasing by a factor of 9 percent by 2025 in Bergen County, to a total of 964,000. Bergen County is expected to flex its muscles as an economic power to contend with, strengthening its hold on the employment side, with an increase of 35.3 percent by 2025. Given that developable land is at a premium here in this densely-developed landscape, much of this growth would be accommodated via redevelopment. As such, our municipalities should consider making strides to accommodate future growth and heightened densities, where appropriate, through mixed-use development and clustering, while also preserving the resources, open space, and community character that serve as the very lifeblood of their quality-of-life.

There are a number of caveats that accompany the development of any projection. Noting this, one particular area of concern is the discrepancy between population and employment projections and what is reality, is where a municipality is host to major educational and public institutions. Census data and, hence, projections do not account for student populations residing on campus as well as commuter student populations. This particular concern raises a red flag with regards to identifying transportation issues, infrastructure needs, and can have an impact on conformity determination. The presence of such institutions generate significant traffic volumes, which do not appear as a variable anywhere in the population or employment equation. This is of particular concern in Mahwah (Ramapo College), Teaneck (Farleigh Dickinson University), Rutherford and Lodi (Felician College), and Paramus (Bergen Community College). This also poses a concern in locations featuring other indigent or transient populations, including hospitals and public institutions.

Varied types of employment also generate a spectrum of tripmaking, of different intensity. Mall locations generate a different number of trips per employee than, say, a warehouse location. Straight employment figures do not account for these variables. As such, these intricacies should be worked into any modeling initiative that identifies tripmaking and intensity. The differential between “covered employment” and actual number of employees should also be noted.

Another issue regarding employment data from various sources (including Equifax, which forms our 1996 employment base data) is the allocation of employees to “headquarters” locations. In many cases, large numbers of employees are assigned to a particular centralized corporate locale but are actually employed elsewhere (satellite offices, branches, warehouses, mobile employment), and generating trips elsewhere.

Also, the usage of Census Tracts as the basis of Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZs) presents a problem for municipal projections where more than one municipality is included in a tract. This presents a problem for the logical aggregation/disaggregation of data, and as such, more refinement would be needed in such areas as Teterboro and South Hackensack (which share a census tract), as well as Rockleigh and Northvale (which also share in this phenomenon).

The projections for population and employment are presented in the Tables accompanying the following section. In addition, source projections issued by the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority are included in the Appendix.