



Clarke Caton Hintz

Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan



Dobozyński Farm, Readington, NJ

Township of Readington
Hunterdon County, New Jersey

December 14, 2009



Clarke Caton Hintz

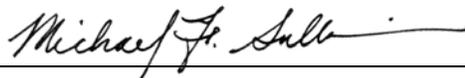
Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan

Readington Township
Hunterdon County, New Jersey

December 14, 2009

Prepared for the Township of Readington by

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NJ PP # 5319



Clarke Caton Hintz

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INTRODUCTION

In the State of New Jersey, farmland continues to disappear rapidly. The effect of the loss of the farmland to the citizens of New Jersey is serious. It is well documented that when we lose farmland, we lose the benefits farmland provides as privately owned open space. Farmlands contribute to our scenic and cultural landscape, provide important wildlife habitat, and provide vital groundwater recharge areas.

These reasons, however, are secondary to the benefit of protecting New Jersey's agricultural industry, a vitally important economic asset. While preserving farmland does not, in and of itself, preserve the industry, it is apparent that such preservation is essential to providing the opportunity for agriculture to exist. In order for New Jersey to sustain a healthy agricultural industry, a critical mass of farmland has to be maintained in appropriate areas. 500,000 acres has been set as the goal to be preserved if the State is to maintain its agricultural base.

Hunterdon County is one of New Jersey's leading agricultural counties. The county has the State's second highest amount of farmland-assessed property, with approximately 46% of its landmass devoted to agriculture. Hunterdon now ranks a close second statewide in preservation efforts. As of June 2009, Hunterdon County reported 25,547 acres of preserved farmland. As of November 2009, there were 4,812 acres of preserved farmland in Readington Township, including 181 acres under contract for preservation. This figure includes farmland that has obtained final approval for preservation and easements acquired via Green Acres, cluster development, and donation. This equates to approximately 19% of the farmland currently preserved within in Hunterdon County.

The importance of farmland preservation has been embodied in policy and law at many different levels of government. The State Farmland Preservation Planning Incentive Grant program is the most recent initiative and perhaps the most comprehensive aimed at furthering agriculture and retaining its future viability in the state as urbanization continues to steadily erode the farming base. Coupled with the funding attached to the Garden State Preservation Trust Act, the program seeks to preserve a significant area of reasonably contiguous farmland that will promote the long term viability of agriculture. The Act provides a steady annual funding allocation specifically earmarked for farmland preservation. Previously, funding was obtained only from periodic bond referendums and at lower levels. In November of 2007 state-wide voters approved a referendum authorizing an additional \$200 million in bond financing for the Garden State Preservation Trust.



Readington Township's first application for a Planning Incentive Grant (PIG) was filed in 1999. The following ten years have seen more progress toward protecting both the State's and the Township's precious remaining farmland acres than in any similar period of time in the Township's history. Readington Township's success in this time period has been dramatic, and participation in the State's PIG Program has factored highly in this success.

This element is intended to meet the criteria for the Planning Incentive Grant program and follows the guidelines for developing a Municipal Comprehensive Farmland Plan, adopted May 24, 2007. In addition, Farmland Preservations Plans have been specifically authorized as an element of municipal master plans (*N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28.b(13)*) since 1999 when the Municipal Land Use Law was amended. A Farmland Preservation Plan is required to include:

- *An inventory of farm properties and a map illustrating significant areas of agricultural land;*
- *A statement showing that municipal ordinances support and promote agriculture as a business; and*
- *A plan for preserving as much farmland as possible in the short term by leveraging monies made available through the Farmland Preservation Planning Incentive Grant program which may include option agreements, installment purchases, and donations of permanent development easements, among other techniques*

This document will address both the SADC guidelines for a Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan and MLUL requirements for a Farmland Preservation Plan element.

This document was originally adopted by the Township in December, 2007; however it has been extensively revised and amended in response to review comments by the SADC. The current document is intended to be newly adopted and will replace the previously adopted Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan.



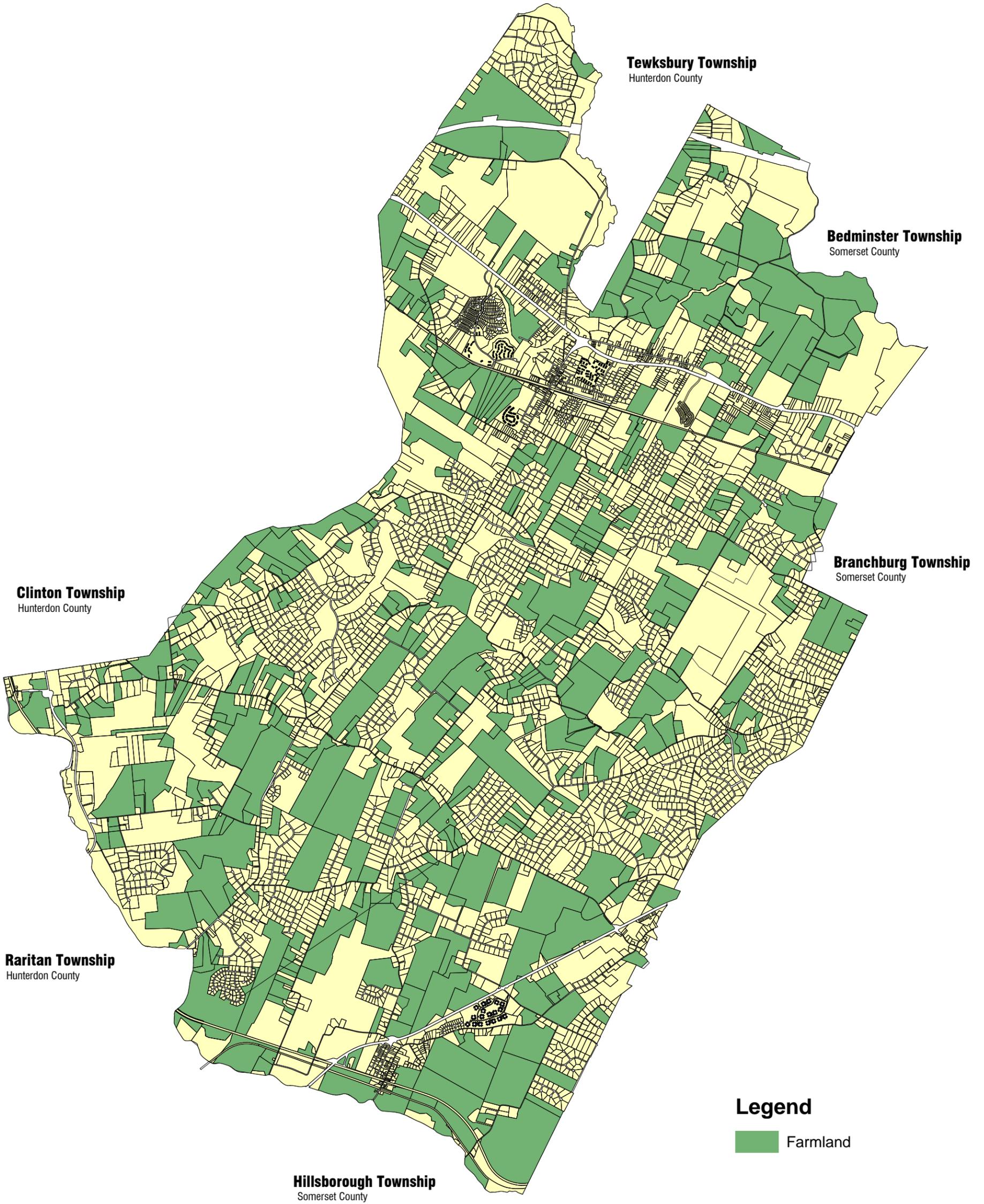
I. READINGTON'S AGRICULTURAL LAND BASE

A. LOCATION AND SIZE OF AGRICULTURAL LAND BASE

As of November 2009, Readington Township contained 11,698 acres of farm assessed land, and four preserved farms owned by the Township that total 197 acres. Altogether, the farm assessed properties and Township owned farms constitute 11,895 acres of farmland within Readington Township. This represents approximately 39% of the Township's land mass. An inventory of all farm assessed properties within the Township is attached as Appendix A to this document, and the accompanying map shows the location of farm assessed properties within Readington.

Farmland assessment data is compiled by the State Agricultural Development Committee (SADC) in an annual Farmland Assessment Survey. The most recent survey, for the 2008 tax year, indicates a total of 12,110 acres in agricultural use within the Township. The majority of agriculturally assessed lands (8,055 acres, or 67%) are classified as "active agricultural" lands, which includes cropland harvested, cropland pastured and permanent pasture acreage. Woodlands comprise 3,982 acres, or approximately one third (33%) of the Township's agriculturally assessed land. The remaining 73 acres (0.6%) of Readington's agriculturally assessed land is classified as equine acreage. The Township ranks third in the total number of acres of land devoted to agricultural use among the 26 municipalities in Hunterdon County. Readington is the 15th highest in this respect among all municipalities in the State.

The accompanying Land Use/Land Cover map shows the approximate location of active agricultural lands in Readington and surrounding communities. The current total of active agricultural land (8,055 acres) in the Township is approximately 6.5% less than the 8,576 acres of agricultural land use indicated under the 2002 NJDEP Land Use/Land Cover mapping, which is primarily due to conversion of farmland to residential development. However, as shown on the Land Use/Land Cover map, significant areas of farmland and open space have been preserved to date throughout the Township. As of November, 2009, there were 4,812 acres of preserved farmland (including 401 acres with final approvals and 181 acres under contract) and 3,518 acres of preserved open space (including 2,693.5 open space acres compatible with agriculture. Altogether, these 8,324 acres of preserved land represent approximately 27% of the Township's land area.



Source: Readington Twp. Tax Assessor - 2009 MOD IV

Clarke Caton Hintz Field Survey 2006

Parcel Map Source: Hatch Mott MacDonald., February, 2008.

2009 FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN
Assessed Farmland
 Readington Township, Hunterdon County, NJ

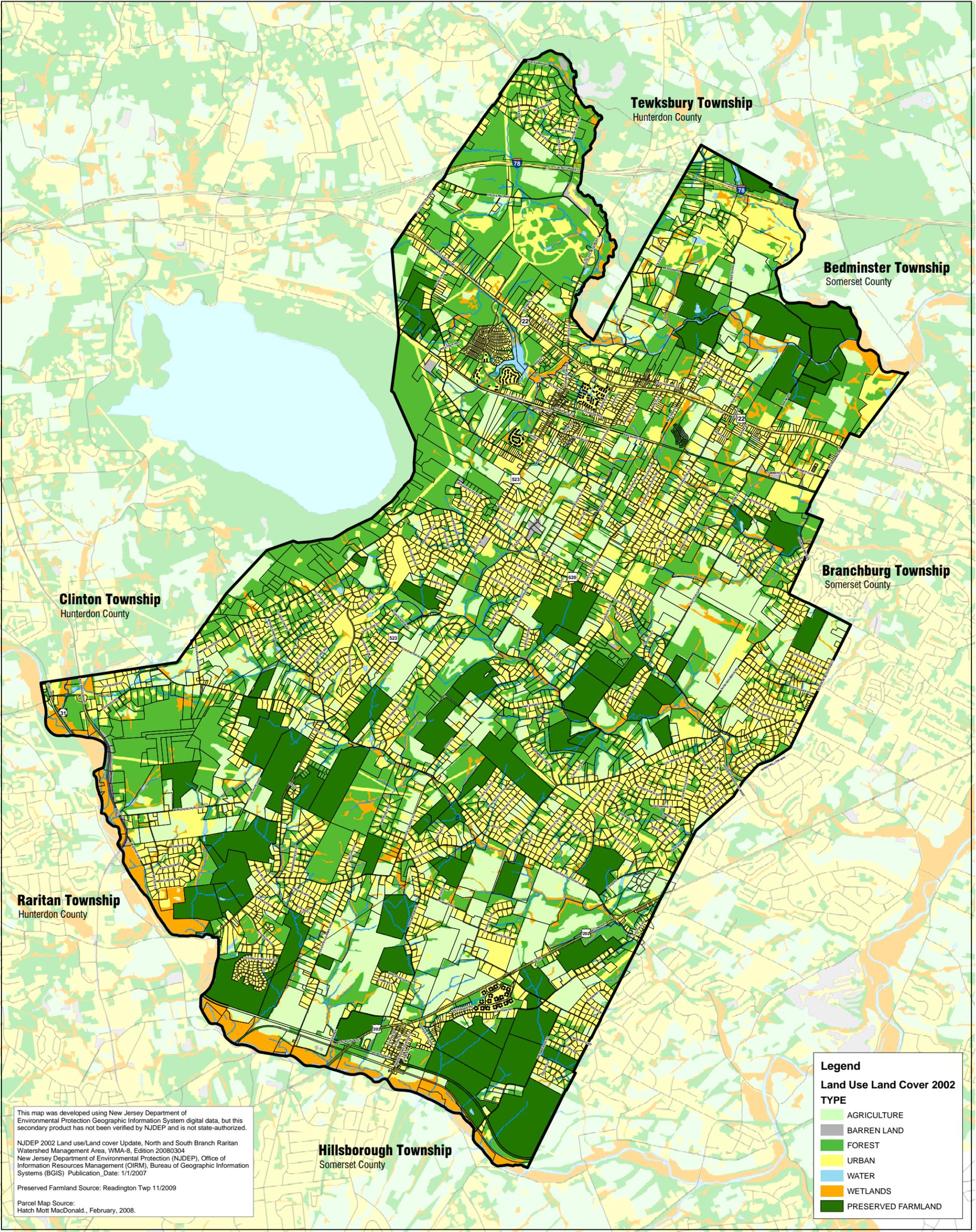


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Architecture

Planning

Landscape Architecture



This map was developed using New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Geographic Information System digital data, but this secondary product has not been verified by NJDEP and is not state-authorized.

NJDEP 2002 Land use/Land cover Update, North and South Branch Raritan Watershed Management Area, WMA-8, Edition 20080304
 New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), Office of Information Resources Management (OIRM), Bureau of Geographic Information Systems (BGIS) Publication Date: 1/1/2007

Preserved Farmland Source: Readington Twp 11/2009

Parcel Map Source:
 Hatch Mott MacDonald, February, 2008.

Legend
Land Use Land Cover 2002
TYPE

- AGRICULTURE
- BARREN LAND
- FOREST
- URBAN
- WATER
- WETLANDS
- PRESERVED FARMLAND



2009 FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN

2002 Land Use/ Land Cover

Readington Township, Hunterdon County, NJ

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Architecture

Planning

Landscape Architecture



B. DISTRIBUTION OF SOIL TYPES AND SOIL CHARACTERISTICS

The Soils Map of Readington Township presents the 36 types of soils found in Readington as identified by the Soil Conservation Service. Prime Agricultural Soils and Soils of Statewide Importance are shown on the map of Agricultural Soils. Several soils occur more frequently in Readington Township than others. Below is a listing of these soils and brief descriptions of their properties.

Annandale and Edneyville Series (ApB, ApC)

This series consists of deep gently sloping to strongly sloping, well drained, loamy soils. Permeability is moderate in the surface layer and substratum and moderately slow to slow in the subsoil. The available water capacity is high, and natural fertility is moderate. The gently sloping soils are suited to corn, small grain, soybeans, orchard crops, hay, or pasture. Steeper soils are suited to hay, pasture or trees. Control of erosion is needed in cultivated areas. The agricultural suitability of the soils in this series appears in Class I & Class II.

Bucks Series (Bub, BuC2)

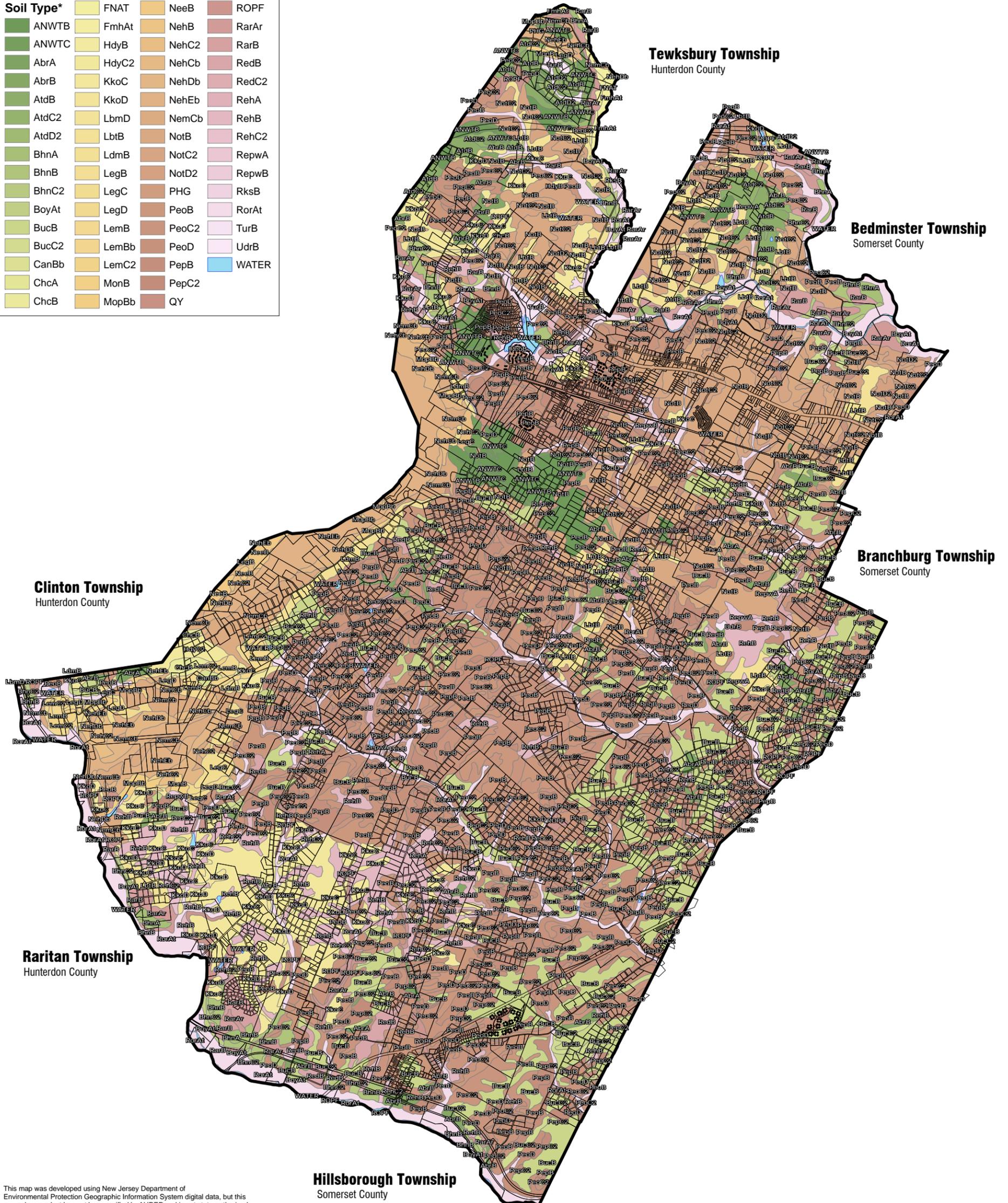
This series consists of deep gently sloping to strongly sloping, well-drained soils that are underlain by Red Shale. These soils are on uplands. Red Shale bedrock is at a depth of about 44 inches. Permeability is moderate to moderately slow to moderately rapid in the underlying material. These soils have a high available water capacity. Natural fertility is moderate. Crops on Bucks soils respond well to lime and fertilizer. Most areas of Bucks soils have been cleared and are farmed. Control of erosion is needed in cultivated areas. The soils are well suited to corn, small grain, soybeans, nursery crops, pasture and hay. The subsoils of this series are in Class II or III.

Klinesville Series (KIC, KID)

This series consists of shallow, gently sloping to moderately steep, well-drained soils on uplands. Permeability is moderately rapid. Available water capacity and natural fertility are low. The shallow depth of these soils causes low crop production. Many areas of the soils are wooded, especially the steeper slopes. Cleared areas of these soils are used for small grain, hay, and pasture. Areas of sloping to moderately steep soils which have been cleared need careful control of erosion. Many areas are idle or reverting to trees. During periods of prolonged rainfall, the soil becomes saturated and water flows along the surface of the hard bedrock. Water seeps into cellars during these periods. Klinesville soils fall into Class II and III.

Legend

Soil Type*	FNAT	NeeB	ROPF
ANWTB	FmhAt	NehB	RarAr
ANWTC	HdyB	NehC2	RarB
AbrA	HdyC2	NehCb	RedB
AbrB	KkoC	NehDb	RedC2
AtdB	KkoD	NehEb	RehA
AtdC2	LbmD	NemCb	RehB
AtdD2	LbtB	NotB	RehC2
BhnA	LdmB	NotC2	RepwA
BhnB	LegB	NotD2	RepwB
BhnC2	LegC	PHG	RksB
BoyAt	LegD	PeoB	RorAt
BucB	LemB	PeoC2	TurB
BucC2	LemBb	PeoD	UdrB
CanBb	LemC2	PepB	WATER
ChcA	MonB	PepC2	
ChcB	MopBb	QY	



This map was developed using New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Geographic Information System digital data, but this secondary product has not been verified by NJDEP and is not state-authorized.

Soil Survey Geographic 2008 (SSURGO) Database for Hunterdon County, New Jersey 8/18/2008

Parcel Map Source:
Hatch Mott MacDonald, February, 2008.

1,800 900 0 1,800 3,600 5,400 Feet



2009 FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN

Soils

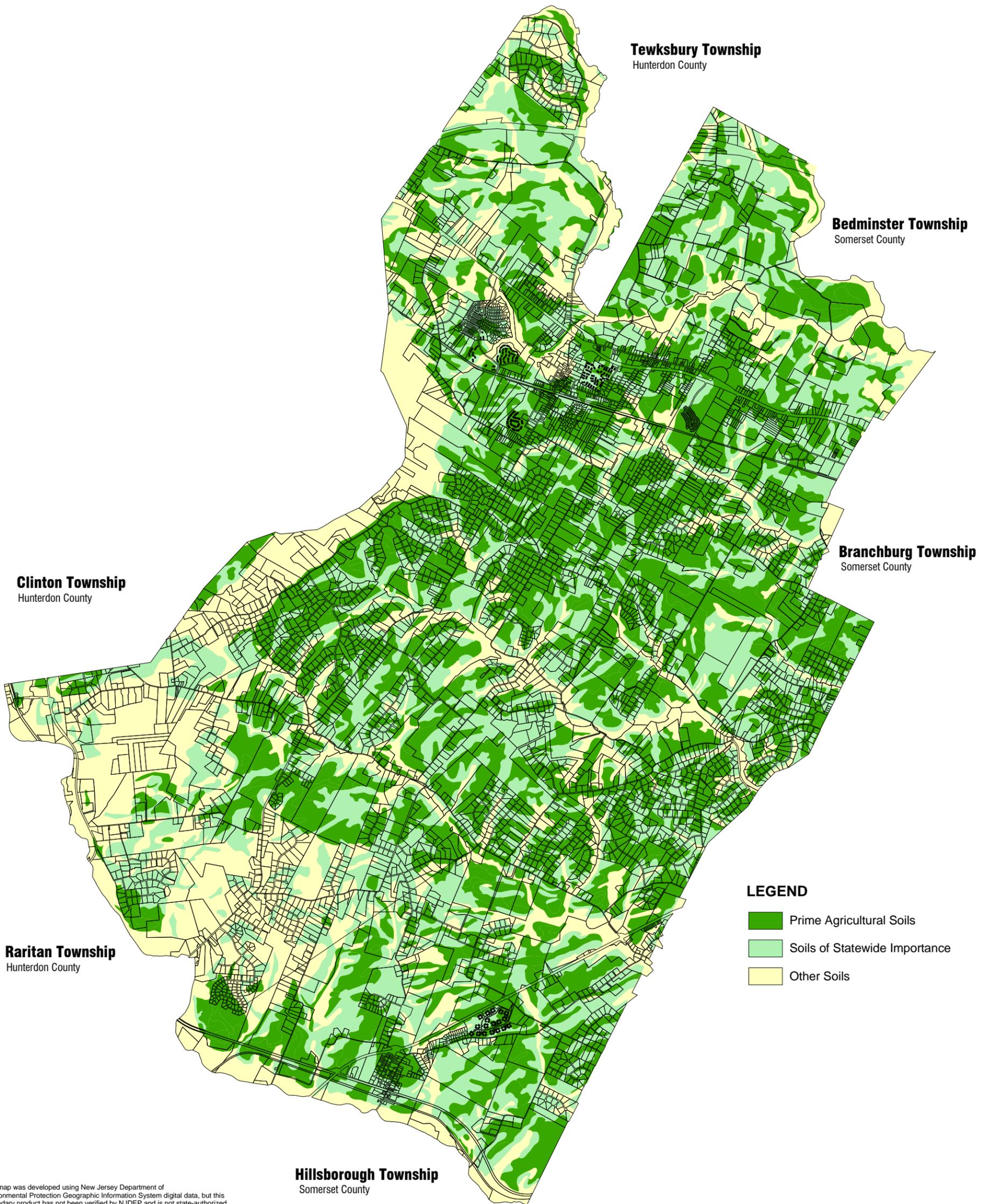
Readington Township, Hunterdon County, NJ

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Architecture

Planning

Landscape Architecture



Clinton Township
Hunterdon County

Raritan Township
Hunterdon County

Tewksbury Township
Hunterdon County

Bedminster Township
Somerset County

Branchburg Township
Somerset County

Hillsborough Township
Somerset County

LEGEND

- Prime Agricultural Soils
- Soils of Statewide Importance
- Other Soils

This map was developed using New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Geographic Information System digital data, but this secondary product has not been verified by NJDEP and is not state-authorized.

Soil Survey Geographic 2008 (SSURGO) Database for Hunterdon County, New Jersey 8/18/2008

Parcel Map Source:
Hatch Mott MacDonald, February, 2008.



2009 FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN

Farmland Soils

Readington Township, Hunterdon County, NJ

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Architecture

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Landscape Architecture



Norton Series (NoB, NoC2, NoD2)

This series consists of deep, gently sloping to moderately steep soils that formed on rounded slopes and divides in material weathered from old red shale glacial till. Permeability is slow. Available water capacity is high, natural fertility is moderate. Extensive, formerly cleared areas are now idle and reverting to trees. Small areas are used for corn, small grain, hay and pasture. Tillage is delayed in places by excess water above the firm subsoil, but water does not stay in the profile for long periods. Control of erosion is needed. Norton soils are in Classes II and III.

Penn Series (PeB, PeC, PeD)

This series consists of moderately deep, gently sloping to moderately steep, well-drained, loamy soil that formed over red shale or siltstone on uplands. Permeability is moderate to moderately rapid in the surface layer and subsoil. Available water capacity is moderate to high depending on the depth to bedrock and the content of shale. Natural fertility is moderate. Most areas of Penn soils have been cleared for farming. Many areas of the more sloping soils are wooded. Cleared areas require erosion control. In places, late in winter and early in spring, the lowest part of the subsoil is saturated, and water flows laterally over the surface of the bedrock. Water seeps into cellars during these periods. Classes II and III are represented in this series.

The Soil Conservation Service divides the agricultural capabilities of soils into the following classes:

Class I soils have few limitations that restrict their use.

Class II soils have moderate limitations that reduce the choice of plants or that require moderate conservation practices.

Class III soils have severe limitations that reduce the choice of plants, require special conservation practices, or both.

Class IV soils have very severe limitations that reduce the choice of plants, require very careful management, or both.

Class V soils are not likely to erode but have other limitations, impractical to remove, that limit their use largely to pasture, woodland, or wildlife habitat.

Class VI soils have severe limitations that make them generally unsuited to cultivation and limit their use largely to pasture, woodland, or wildlife habitat.

Class VII soils have very severe limitations that make them unsuited to cultivation and that restrict their use largely to pasture, woodland, or wildlife habitat.

Class VIII soils and landforms have limitations that preclude their use for commercial plants and restrict their use to recreation, wildlife, water supply, or to aesthetic purposes. (No class VIII soils exist in Hunterdon County.)



Only the first four classes are well suited for receiving agricultural crops. All soils series found in Readington have at least one sub-group which can be used for crop production of some type.

C. NUMBER OF IRRIGATED ACRES AND AVAILABLE WATER RESOURCES

Based on Farmland Assessment data, Readington Township has very little irrigated acreage. As indicated in the table below, the irrigated acreage represented less than 1% of agricultural acreage for selected years between 1983 and 2006.

Table 1: Irrigated Acres in Readington Township, 1983 – 2006					
	1983	1990	2000	2004	2006
Irrigated Acres	48	0	52	40	25
Active Agriculture	11,908	10,945	9,385	8,378	8,123
<i>Source: SADC Farmland Assessment Summaries, 1983 - 2006</i>					

The fluctuations in the number of irrigated acres reported between 1983 and 2006 are most likely based on a number of factors, including variations in rainfall and temperature, variations in the type and location of crops on individual farms, and inconsistencies in the way data is reported by farmers. Examples of the limited number of farms currently relying on irrigation include:

- Hidden Meadows Nursery, which is a 50 acre preserved farm owned and operated by the Jones family. (Block 75 Lot 40)
- Schaeffer Farms, two preserved farms that grow pick your own vegetables, flowers and pumpkins. (Block 72, Lots 11 and 23)
- Nicholson Farm, a 132 acre preserved farm that grows a large inventory of nursery stock. (Block 53 Lot 22)
- Hionis Greenhouses, an indoor greenhouse operation located outside Readington’s ADA on 15 acres. (Block 36 Lot 45)
- The former Vizzoni Farm, a 133 acre preserved farm that grows mushrooms uses irrigation. (Block 73 Lot 17)

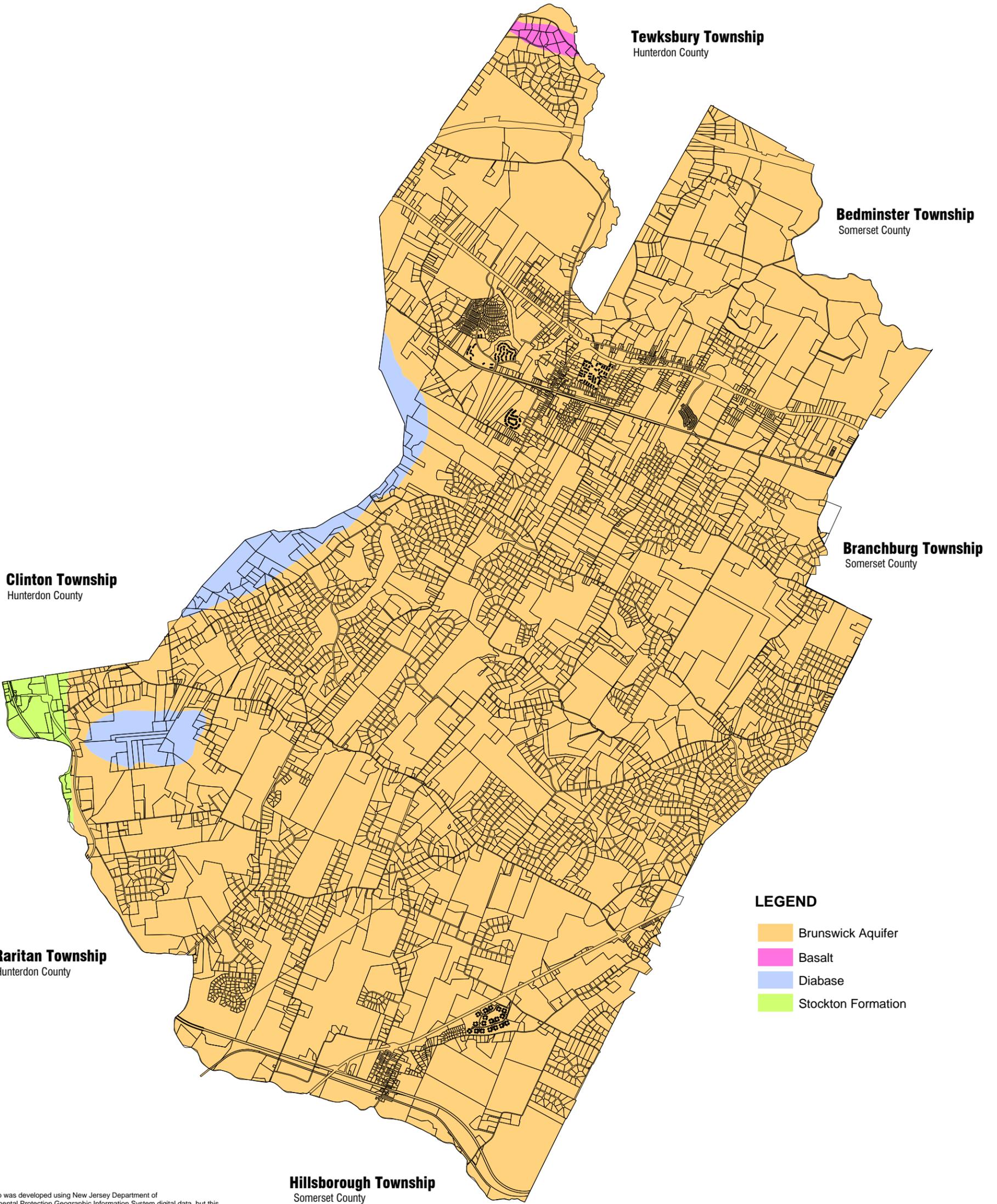
The overwhelming majority of farms and agricultural areas within Readington Township are, and likely will continue to be, dependant on groundwater. As discussed in the Township’s Natural Resource Inventory, geologic formations play an important role in the physical location and yield of groundwater aquifers. Readington Township is



located within the Triassic Basin, and is underlain primarily by shales of the Brunswick Formation. The Brunswick Formation is the primary aquifer in the Township, providing approximately 97% of the Township's water supply. The Diabase, Stockton, and Basalt aquifers provide the remainder of the Township's water supply. The table below provides total estimated yield and the average domestic well yield for each aquifer, and a map of the aquifers is provided on the following page.

Table 2: Aquifer Yields in Readington Township		
Aquifer/Formation	Total Estimated Yield (mgd)	Average Domestic Well Yields (gpm)
Brunswick	22.6	19
Diabase	0.36	8
Stockton	0.18	20
Basalt	0.03	5

Source: Readington Township Natural Resource Inventory, 2001



LEGEND

- Brunswick Aquifer
- Basalt
- Diabase
- Stockton Formation

This map was developed using New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Geographic Information System digital data, but this secondary product has not been verified by NJDEP and is not state-authorized.

Aquifers of New Jersey, New Jersey Geological Survey
May 21, 1998 Revised April 22, 1999

Parcel Map Source:
Hatch Mott MacDonald, February, 2008.

Source: Clarke Caton Hintz, NJDEP





D. FARMLAND ASSESSMENT AND CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE STATISTICS AND TRENDS

D.1 Number of Farms and Farms by Size

As of November 2009, Readington Township had 317 farm-assessed properties, with a total of 11,698 acres devoted to agriculture. By grouping these properties according to common ownership, the number of farms within the Township is estimated at 304. As shown in the chart below, the majority of these farms are 10 – 49 acres (42%) or 1 – 9 acres (40%) in size. Similarly, data from the 2007 Census of Agriculture, indicates that the majority of farms within Hunterdon County are between 10 and 49 acres (52%) or 1 – 9 acres (24%) in size.

Farm Size	Readington Twp.		Hunterdon Co.	
	# farms	%	# farms	%
1 - 9 acres	121	40%	389	24%
10 - 49 acres	128	42%	842	52%
50 - 179 acres	44	14%	289	18%
180 - 499 acres	9	3%	73	4%
500	2	1%	30	2%
Total	304	100%	1623	100%

Source: Readington Township Tax Assessment data, November 2007, adjusted to combine adjacent properties under common ownership; 2007 Census of Agriculture (Hunterdon County)

The size of all farm assessed properties is provided in the inventory of all farm assessed properties, attached at the end of this document.

D.2 Average and Median Farm Size

The average size of November 2009 farm assessed properties is 36.9 acres. The median size of November 2009 farm assessed properties is 13.4 acres. As indicated in the chart below, the average and median farm size in Hunterdon County and in New Jersey has been steadily decreasing over the past several decades. Although similar historical data is not available for Readington Township, it is likely that the average farm size has similarly decreased over the same time period.



Table 4: Average and Median Farm Size, Hunterdon Co. and New Jersey, 1987 - 2007

	1987 (acres)	1992 (acres)	1997 (acres)	2002 (acres)	2007 (acres)
Avg. Farm Size, Hunterdon Co.	88	82	80	72	62
Median Farm Size, Hunterdon Co.	n/a	n/a	27	24	19
Avg. Farm Size, New Jersey	99	93	91	81	71
Median Farm Size, New Jersey	n/a	n/a	23	22	17

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1987 - 2007

D.3 Cropland Harvested, Pasture, Woodland, Equine, Agricultural Use

As indicated in tables below, cropland harvested acreage represents the largest category of agricultural land use in Readington, totaling 5,317 acres, and representing 44% of total agricultural use in 2007. Active agricultural use (cropland harvested, cropland pastured, and permanent pasture) in 2007 was 8,055 acres, representing 67% of total agricultural use. Woodland acreage represents nearly a third of the Township's agricultural land, and equine acres account for less than 1% of agricultural land. As also shown in the table, the distribution of agricultural land use within Readington is very similar to that of Hunterdon County.

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Table 5: 2007 Farmland Assessment Data, Readington and Hunterdon Co.

	Readington Township		Hunterdon County	
	Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent
Cropland Harvested	5,317	44%	58,030	46%
Cropland Pastured	786	6%	7,935	6%
Permanent Pasture	1,952	16%	16,639	13%
<i>(Active Agriculture Subtotal)</i>	<i>(8,055)</i>	<i>(67%)</i>	<i>(82,604)</i>	<i>(65%)</i>
Woodland	3,982	33%	43,833	34%
Equine	73	1%	774	1%
Total Agriculture Use	12,110	100%	127,211	100%

Source: SADC Farmland Assessment Summary, 2007

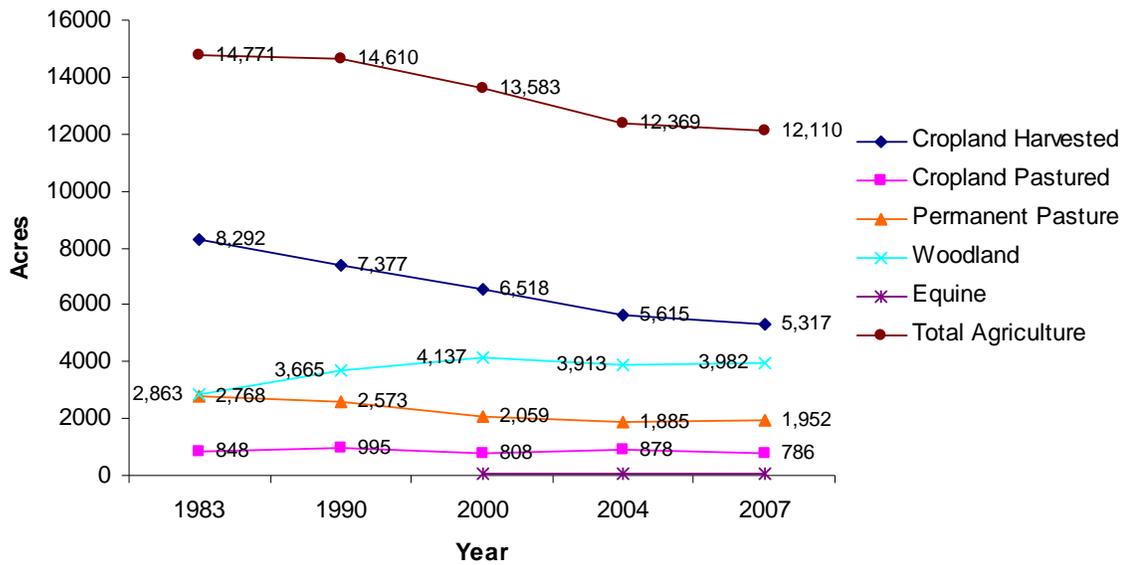
As illustrated in the line graph chart below, examination farmland assessment data over the past 25 years shows a decrease in the proportion of cropland harvested and cropland



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pastured acreages within Readington. In contrast, there has been a slight increase in the proportion of woodland acreage in the Township during this time period.

Chart 1: Farmland Acreage in Readington Township: 1983 - 2007



Source: SADC Farmland Assessment Summaries, 1983 - 2007

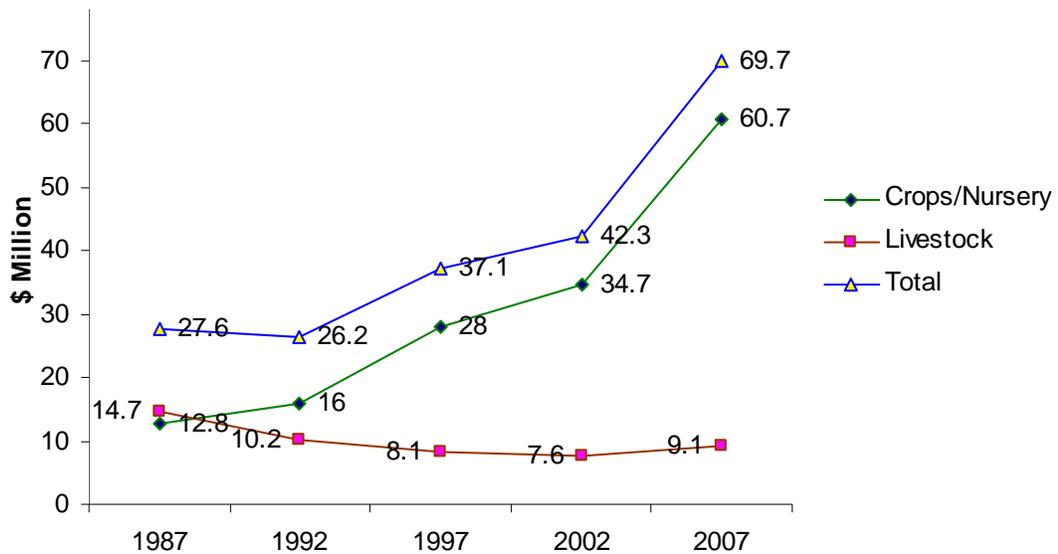


II. READINGTON'S AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY

A. TRENDS IN MARKET VALUE OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS SOLD

Agricultural sales data is compiled at the County level every five years as part of the National Census of Agriculture. As shown in the chart below, total agricultural sales in the County have increased by approximately 250% over the past two decades, with the most rapid increase (65%) taking place over the past five years. Sales of crops, including nursery stock, represent the great majority of agricultural sales in the County and have increased in line with total agricultural sales. Livestock sales have been gradually decreasing over the last 20 years, although there was a small increase between 2002 and 2007.

Chart 2: Hunterdon County Agricultural Sales, 1987 - 2007

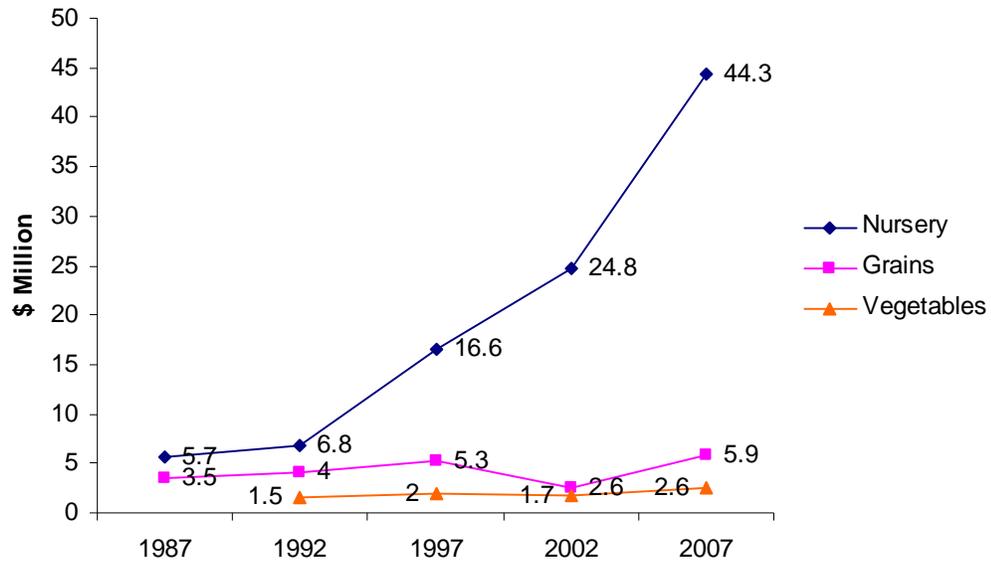


Source: U.S Census of Agriculture, 1987 - 2007

According to the 2008 Hunterdon County Farmland Preservation Plan, the top commodity in the County is nursery stock, followed by hay and similar crops. The third commodity is horses, followed by grains and vegetables. As indicated in the chart below, nursery sales, which represent the majority of all crop sales, have increased significantly in recent years. In contrast, sales of grains and vegetables have remained steady.



Chart 3: Hunterdon County Crop Sales, 1987 - 2007



Source: U.S Census of Agriculture

Although agricultural sales data is not available at the municipal level, observations of recent sales trends for selected crops in Readington are generally consistent with the County crop sales trends between 2002 and 2007. For example:

- Hay: Thousands of acres in Readington are devoted to hay production. The price of hay has increased about 40% over the last 5 years and the market continues to be very strong. Increases in fuel and fertilizer costs have likely offset this gain, however.
- Grain: Several farmers from Readington still plant large acreages of corn and soybeans and market prices and profits for both have increased substantially in the last several years.
- Pumpkins: There is a strong market for locally grown pumpkins and an upward trend in price. About six farms in Readington benefit from continuing price increases.

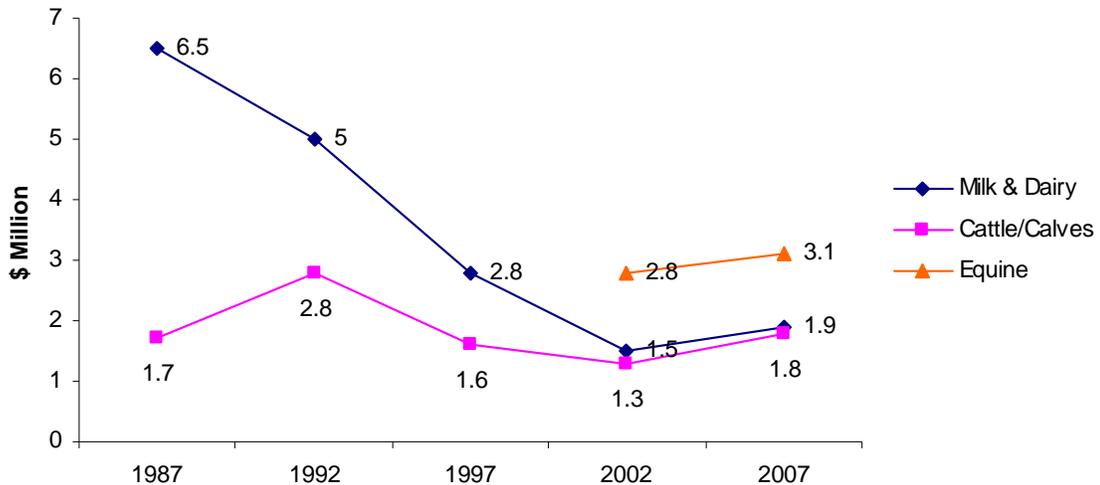


- Vegetables prices at local farm stands have increased only slightly in recent years. The local farms in Readington generally use family labor.

As previously noted, livestock sales have gradually declined in the County. Sales of milk and dairy products have seen the greatest decline since 1987, as illustrated in the chart below. However, there has been a small increase in livestock sales over the last five years, which may be in part due to the development of more specialized markets. For example, sales of bison meat, beef, and pork in Readington have benefited from local direct marketing:

- **Bison Meat:** The market remains strong for the direct marketing of bison meat. The Readington River Buffalo Farm has maintained high prices over the last five years, and increased slightly.
- **Beef and Pork Prices:** Hackettstown Auction prices have shown an increase in pig and cattle prices over the last five years, and local direct marketing prices are up over 20%. However, it is doubtful whether these increases have kept ahead of feed prices.

Chart 4: Hunterdon County Livestock Sales, 1987 - 2007



Source: U.S Census of Agriculture, 1987 - 2007



B. CROP/PRODUCTION TRENDS OVER THE LAST 20 YEARS

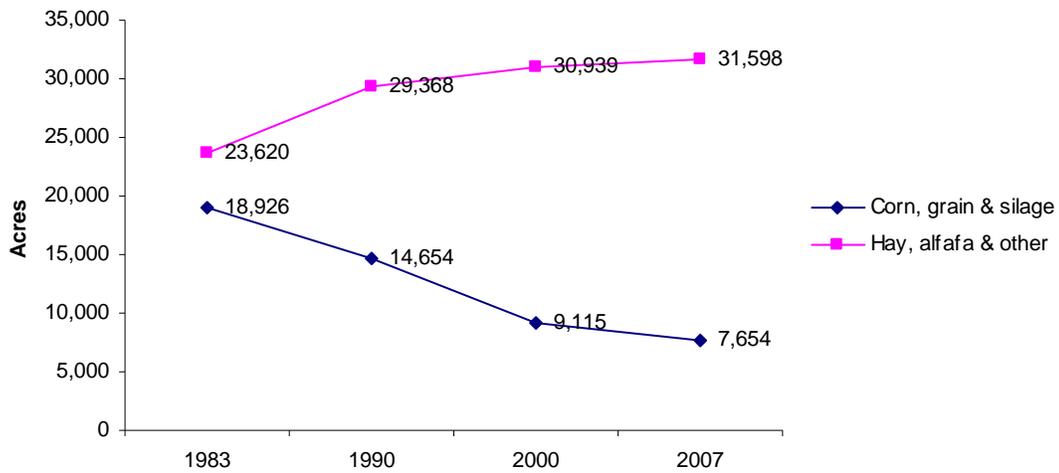
The table below illustrates production trends for selected crops and livestock within Readington over the last 20+ years.

Table 6: Agricultural Production Trends in Readington Township					
Commodity	1983	1990	2000	2007	% Change, 1983 - 2007
Crops (acres)					
Apples	12	14	6	14	+17%
Corn (grain & silage)	1,646	856	367	527	-68%
Grain (oats, wheat, barley, rye, sorghum)	1,034	727	1,227	238	-77%
Hay	2,518	3,505	3,037	3,202	+27%
Peaches	11	18	5	7	-36%
Soybeans	919	351	127	109	-88%
Berries	2.2	18	6	5	+227%
Trees, Christmas	144	126	122	139	-3.5%
Trees & Shrubs, nursery	165	268	210	215	+30%
Livestock (Number)					
Cattle, beef	714	472	434	548	-23%
Cattle, dairy	1,292	167	22	39	-97%
Chickens, layers	985	1,133	620	1,086	+10%
Chickens, meat	1,003	1,547	643	433	-57%
Horses	468	359	426	478	+2%
Pigs	352	349	308	279	-21%
Sheep	1,309	1,435	667	672	-49%
Turkeys	201	456	220	189	-6%
<i>Source: SADC Farmland Assessment Summaries, 1983 - 2007</i>					

As indicated in the table above, hay has consistently been the largest crop in terms of acres produced within the Township over the past 25 years. The acreage of hay has also steadily increased, whereas corn and grain acreage has generally decreased over the years. A comparison of hay and corn production in Hunterdon County over the same time period shows a similar trend, as illustrated in the line graph chart below.



Chart 5: Hunterdon County Crop Production, 1983 - 2007



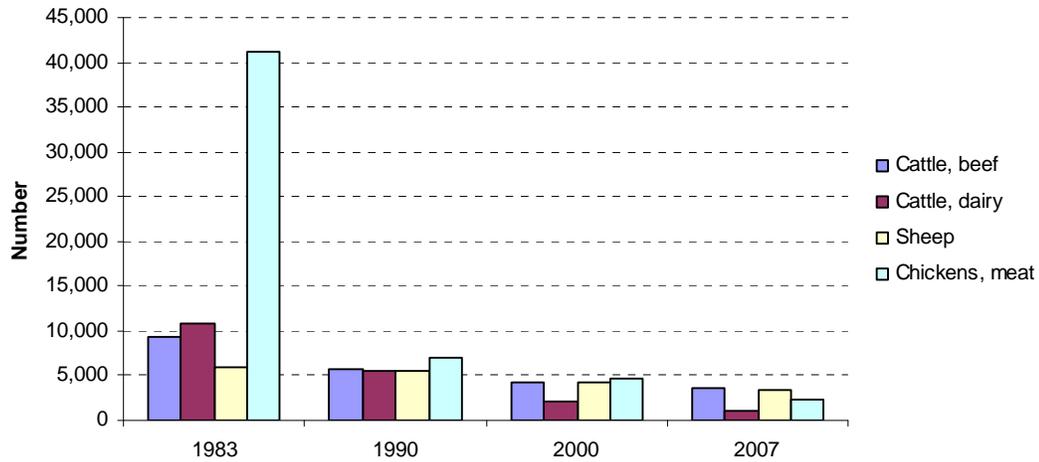
Source: SADC Farmland Assessment Summaries, 1983 - 2007

According to the 2008 Hunterdon County Farmland Preservation Plan, field crops represent the great majority of acreage for farming, with nursery operations second in acreage and vegetables ranked third. The same pattern prevailed in Readington in 2007, with field crops (in particular, hay) representing the majority of Township's active agricultural acreage, and nursery operations and vegetables ranked second and third, respectively.

Livestock production is measured in the number of animals, and thus can not be directly compared with the acreage of crop production. However, in general, livestock production in the Township has declined over the past 25 years, as shown in the table above. This trend is also true in the County, as illustrated in the bar graph below depicting selected livestock production numbers between 1983 - 2007.



Chart 6: Hunterdon County Livestock Production, 1983 - 2007



Source: SADC Farmland Assessment Summaries, 1983 - 2007

C. SUPPORT SERVICES WITHIN MARKET REGION

Farm Equipment

- Barnes Farm Repairs, Ringoes, NJ
- Champion Tires, Ringoes, NJ
- Deer Country Farm and Lawn, Allentown, NJ
- D & R Equipment, Ringoes, NJ
- Haver's, Whitehouse Station, NJ
- Kuhl Corporation, Flemington, NJ
- Mid-state Equipment, Titusville, PA
- Pennington Sales & Service, Pennington, NJ
- Pole Tavern Equipment, Elmer, NJ
- Powerco, Inc., Clinton, NJ
- Smith Tractor, Washington, NJ
- Trenton Tractor and Equipment, Trenton, NJ
- Zimmerman Equipment, Ephrata, PA
- Tractor Supply Store, Ringoes, NJ

Farmers' Markets

- Flemington Farmers' Market, Dvoor Farm, Flemington, NJ
- High Bridge Farmers' Market, High Bridge, NJ
- Summit Farmers' Market, Summit, NJ



Farm Management Systems

- Cooperative Extension of Hunterdon County, Flemington, NJ
- Farmers Insurance, Flemington, NJ
- Farm Family Insurance, Washington, NJ
- First Pioneer Farm Credit, Lebanon, NJ
- Natural Resource Conservation Service, Pittstown, NJ
- Rutgers University Snyder Research Farm, Pittstown, NJ

Farm Supplies (fertilizer, pesticide, feed, seed, equipment, parts, etc.)

- Agway Feed and Farm Supply, Flemington, NJ
- Horsemen's Outlet, Lebanon, NJ
- Neshanic Farm, Home and Garden Supply, Neshanic Station, NJ
- Stephan Farm & Horse Supply, Long Valley, NJ
- Tractor Supply, Washington, NJ

Feed

- Somerset Grain & Feed, Bernardsville, NJ
- Sergeantsville Grain & Feed, Sergeantsville, NJ
- The Tack Room, Pittstown, NJ

Fencing

- Amwell Fence, Ringoes, NJ
- Eagle Fence and Supply, Branchburg, NJ
- The Fence Company, Ringoes, NJ
- New Holland Fence, New Holland, PA
- Rudl Fencing, Glen Gardner, NJ
- Superior Fencing and Hole Drilling, Lebanon, NJ
- Town and Country Fencing, Lebanon, NJ
- York Fence, Hillsboro, NJ

Fertilizer

- Crop Production Services, Hampton, NJ
- Growmark FS Inc., Bloomsbury, NJ

Livestock Auctions

- Livestock Cooperative Auction, Hackettstown, NJ
- New Holland Livestock Auction, New Holland, PA

Pond Construction

- Country Acres Landscaping, Stockton, NJ
- Landcraft, Inc., Clinton, NJ



Processing Facilities

- Dealaman Enterprises, Warren, NJ
- Frigit Freeze, Milford, NJ
- V. Roche & Son, Whitehouse Station, NJ
- Springtown Meats, Springtown, PA

Well Drilling

- Samuel Stothoff Company, Flemington, NJ

D. OTHER AGRICULTURAL RELATED INDUSTRIES

Fertilizers, Lime, Chemicals

- Crop Production Services, Pittstown, NJ

Financial Services

- First Pioneer Farm Credit, ACA, Lebanon, NJ
- Pennington Sales and Service, Pennington, NJ

Hoof Trimmers and Farriers

- Dan Bias, High Bridge, NJ
- Bedminster Forge, Bedminster, NJ

Livestock Artificial Insemination

- Select Sire Power, Inc.

Agricultural Testing Labs

- Rutgers Soil Testing Laboratory, Milltown, NJ

Livestock Supplies

- Premier Supplies, Washington, IA



Manure Removal

- Pine View Trucking, Nottingham, PA

Poultry

- Clearview Stock Farm & Hatchery, Gratz, PA
- Kuhl Corporation, Flemington, NJ

Seed Suppliers

- Belle Meade Co-Op, Belle Meade, NJ
- Johnny's Selected Seeds, Albion, ME

Sheep Shearers

- Christian Bench, Annandale, NJ
- Rebecca Gunther, Hillsborough, NJ

Custom Slaughter Houses

- V. Roche & Son, Whitehouse Station, NJ
- Dealaman Enterprises, Inc., Warren, NJ

Large Animal Veterinarians

- Dr. Reynolds, Pittstown, NJ
- Elbert & Stultz, Hopewell, NJ

Organic Service Providers

- Johnny's Selected Seeds, Winslow, ME



III. LAND USE PLANNING CONTEXT

A. STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

In 1986, the New Jersey Legislature passed the New Jersey State Planning Act, which created the State Planning Commission and required the preparation and adoption of the State Plan. The first State Plan, adopted in 1992, was the product of a statewide planning process, which involved counties and municipalities and formulated a series of policies intended on shaping growth within New Jersey. The first major update and revision of the 1992 State Plan was initiated in 1997 and culminated in the adoption of the second State Plan on March 1, 2001. The policies and objectives set forth in the State Plan include a number of recommendations for promoting and preserving the agricultural industry and farmland. As illustrated below, Readington's support of agriculture and farmland preservation planning efforts are consistent with the vision, goals, policies and strategies of the 1986 State Planning Act and the 2001 State Plan. Readington has, and will continue to implement local agricultural land use policies that are consistent with the State Plan, as appropriate to the existing local character of Readington, and in the context of its overall land use policies.

Statewide Policies

The State Plan contains a series of statewide goals, strategies and policies that are supportive of the Township's effort to preserve rural character and agriculture. The following Statewide policies directly address the need for preservation of agriculture and farmland:

15. Agriculture¹

Promote and preserve the agricultural industry and retain farmland by coordinating planning and innovative land conservation techniques to protect agricultural viability while accommodating beneficial development and economic growth necessary to enhance agricultural vitality and by educating residents on the benefits and the special needs of agriculture.

¹ 2001 State Plan, 147 – 160.



Sustainable Agriculture and Comprehensive Planning:

Policy 1 Agricultural Land Retention Program Priorities

Funds for farmland retention should be given priority in the following order, unless a county or municipal farmland preservation plan has been prepared and approved by the State Agriculture Development Committee (in which case, priority shall be based on said plan):

- (1) Rural Planning Area;*
- (2) Fringe and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas;*
- (3) Metropolitan and Suburban Planning Areas.*

Policy 2 Preservation of the Agricultural Land Base

Consider the expenditure of public funds for preservation of farmland as an investment in public infrastructure and thereby emphasize the public's interest in maintaining long-term agricultural viability.

Policy 3 Coordinated Planning

Coordinate planning efforts of all levels of government to ensure that policies and programs promote agriculture.

Policy 4 New Development

Plan and locate new development to avoid negative impacts on agriculture.

Policy 5 Creative Planning and Design Techniques

Encourage creative land planning and design through tools such as clustering, phasing and density transfers, purchase and donation of development rights, agricultural enterprise zones and districts and the provision of self-contained community wastewater treatment systems to serve Centers, to accommodate future growth in ways that maintain the viability of agriculture as an industry, while avoiding conflict with agricultural uses.

Policy 6 Agricultural Water Needs

Include consideration of the water needs of the agricultural industry in water supply planning at all levels of government.



Agriculture and Economic Development:

Policy 7 Provision of Capital Facilities

Provide adequate capital facilities including grain storage and food processing facilities to enhance agriculture in rural areas.

Policy 8 Access to Capital

Improve access to capital funds, including rural revolving loan funds and rural venture capital networks, operating funds and portfolios that reduce the reliance on land as an asset for collateral or retirement.

Policy 9 Enhancing the Agricultural Industry

Promote economic development that supports the agricultural industry on local, county and statewide levels.

Policy 10 Diversify the Rural Economy

Promote beneficial economic growth that recognizes the need to provide the essential facilities and infrastructure to diversify the rural economy. Provide opportunities for business expansion, off-farm employment, on-farm income generating enterprises such as agricultural-related educational or recreational activities and environmental activities such as leaf composting.

Policy 11 Enhance Agricultural Marketing

Enhance marketing programs to promote the sale of New Jersey agricultural products.

Policy 12 Simplify the Regulatory Process

Adapt the permitting, licensing and land use planning and regulation processes to be sensitive to agricultural needs to enhance the industry and to facilitate new agricultural development.

Policy 13 Local Ordinances and Building Codes Sensitive to Agricultural Use

Promulgate local ordinances and state building code and fee criteria which are sensitive to the special purposes of agricultural construction and seasonal use.

Policy 14 Right to Farm

Coordinate actions of state and local government to encourage the maintenance of agricultural production by protecting farm operations from



interference and nuisance actions when recognized methods or practices are applied and to ensure that the numerous social, economic and environmental benefits of agriculture serves the best interests of all citizens in the state.

Policy 15 Aquaculture

Recognize aquaculture as an agricultural activity. (Aquaculture means the propagation, rearing and subsequent harvesting of aquatic organisms with the need for an approximate source of water in controlled or selected environments and the subsequent processing, packing and marketing.)

Agriculture and Environmental Protection:

Policy 16 Promote Agricultural Management Practices

Encourage the use of agricultural management practices to ensure sustainable and profitable farming while protecting natural resources.

Policy 17 Incorporate Agricultural Land in Recycling of Organic Materials

Use appropriate agricultural lands for the recycling of non-farm generated biodegradable and organic materials.

Human Resources:

Policy 18 Housing Supply and Financing

Use federal and State funding to expand the supply of decent, safe and reasonably priced housing that will benefit those employed in agriculture.

Policy 19 Vocational and Technical Training

Create and expand access to training and technical assistance for agriculture and agriculture related businesses.

Policy 20 Agricultural Education

Create and expand agricultural education and leadership opportunities through basic skills training, and vocational and entrepreneurial training on the secondary, county college and university levels.

Policy 21 Encourage Young and First Time Farmers

Coordinate federal, state and local financial incentives and tax and regulatory policies to encourage more individuals to enter the agricultural industry.



Policy 22 Promote the Value of Agriculture

Educate New Jersey residents on the economic and environmental value of sustainable agriculture in New Jersey and its important contribution to the State's quality of life.

Policy 23 Agro-tourism and Eco-tourism

Expand opportunities for agro-tourism and eco-tourism.

State Planning Areas

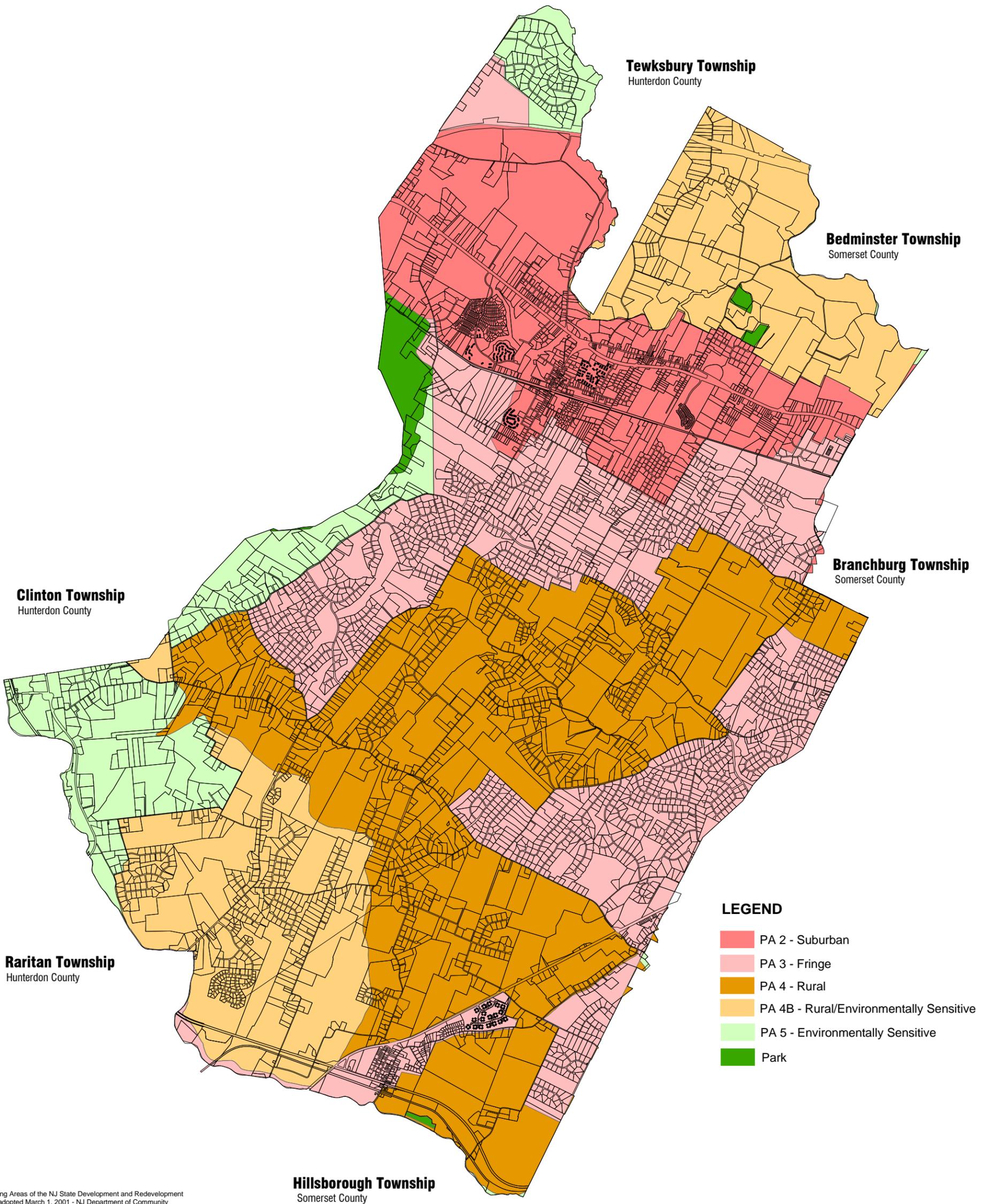
The State Plan delineates a series of *planning areas* that are based on the natural and built characteristics of sub-areas within New Jersey. The planning areas are:

- PA1 Metropolitan Planning Area
- PA2 Suburban Planning Area
- PA3 Fringe Planning Area
- PA4 Rural Planning Area
- PA4B Rural/Environmentally Sensitive
- PA5 Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area

The designations are listed in descending order from the most developed condition to the least developed conditions. They also reflect the State's vision for the future development of those areas.

State Plan Cross Acceptance Process

From 2004 through 2007, the Township participated with Hunterdon County in the State Plan Cross Acceptance process. Readington Township was part of county planning region 5 that also included Clinton Town, Clinton Township, Lebanon Borough, High Bridge Borough, Franklin Township, and Union Township. Several significant planning area changes are recommended for Readington including completely removing the PA 4 and PA 2 designations from the Township. The PA 2 designation would be replaced with a combination of PA 3, PA 4B, and PA 5, the goal being to better protect environmentally sensitive areas, limit additional growth outside of the identified Whitehouse Station Community Development boundary, and provide a buffer from more intensely developed areas to the east in Branchburg Township. In addition, the Township has proposed the villages of Whitehouse Station and Three Bridges as centers.



LEGEND

- PA 2 - Suburban
- PA 3 - Fringe
- PA 4 - Rural
- PA 4B - Rural/Environmentally Sensitive
- PA 5 - Environmentally Sensitive
- Park

Planning Areas of the NJ State Development and Redevelopment Plan, adopted March 1, 2001 - NJ Department of Community Affairs, Office of Smart Growth (formerly the Office of State Planning) 6/20/2007

Parcel Map Source: Hatch Mott MacDonald, February, 2008.



2009 FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN
State Planning Areas (2001 SDRP)

Readington Township, Hunterdon County, NJ

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Plan Endorsement

The State Planning Commission updated the Guidelines for Plan Endorsement in 2007. Achieving Plan Endorsement status is a comprehensive process that results in an official determination that a municipal plan is consistent with the State Plan. The process seeks to coordinate the planning initiatives of the state with local plans. The Office of Smart Growth (OSG) explains that the benefits of obtaining plan endorsement are financial and technical assistance from the State to help implement an endorsed plan. The Township will need to reevaluate its planning priorities to determine when Plan Endorsement should be undertaken and what planning activities are in the best interest of the Township.

B. SPECIAL RESOURCE AREAS

Readington is contiguous to, but not in the Highlands Region. Readington is not affected by any Special Resource Area designation.

C. MUNICIPAL MASTER PLAN AND ZONING REGULATIONS

Readington's Master Plan and related zoning regulations provide strong support for farmland preservation and the continuation of agriculture as an industry in the Township. The Township's goals and policies supporting farmland preservation and agriculture in recent Master Plan documents are summarized below:

1990 Master Plan²

This plan included specific policies regarding farmland and open space preservation that were used in the development of the Land Development Ordinance. The following policy specifically encourages retention of farmland as an agricultural business:

Farmland Preservation

Encourage retention of farmland as an agricultural business, to the extent practical, adding diversity to the Township's economic and local job base. Investigate creation of "farmettes", agricultural districting or other techniques to accomplish this policy. p.7

² Readington Township Planning Board. *Master Plan and Reexamination Report*. Adopted January 22, 1990



1998 Master Plan Amendments³

The 1998 Master Plan amendments reflected the policies of the Township that were evolving in response to the threats to open space and farmland preservation posed by increased development pressures. This update strengthened Readington's preservation and conservation agenda by increasing minimum lot sizes and open space set-asides in the majority of the Township lands. The policy basis for the changes in the land use plan and strategies for implementation, are illustrated in the following excerpts:

Goals & Policies

Agricultural Preservation

Goal: Preserve farmlands and encourage their continued use recognizing that farming is an important component of the economy of the township, the region, and the state, and that agricultural lands are an irreplaceable natural resource and a key element of the Township's rural character.

Policies: Coordinate local agricultural land use preservation efforts with those of the state and the county and with those of adjoining municipalities.

Preserve large agricultural areas free from the intrusion of residential and other uses by zoning for appropriate intensity of use, requiring that new residential units in agricultural areas be clustered and by acquiring development rights and open space in agricultural areas. p. II-1

Opportunities to preserve diminishing farmland should continue to be actively pursued. Hunterdon County is the second fastest growing county in the state, with a population growth rate of 23.4% between 1980 and 1990, which has been continuing through the 1990's. Readington's population increased at a comparable rate over the same ten years, to a population of 13,400 in 1990. Moreover, Readington has seen it's population growth through the latter part of the decade exceed projections made as recently as 1990. It is estimated that the population today is greater than 17,000. Building permits issued in the four-year period from 1990 through 1993, inclusive, total 282. Building permits for the four-year period from 1994-

³ Readington Township Planning Board. *Amendment to the Master Plan*. Adopted on November 23, 1998.



1997, inclusive, totaled 808. With this accelerated growth comes the accelerated loss of valuable farmland. P. V-26

Consequently, over the past 16 years Readington Township has been losing farmland at a rate 40% higher than that of Hunterdon County. This is not surprising considering Readington's location at the eastern edge of the County and its convenient accessibility to the metropolitan areas to the east via I-78, NJ Route 22 and I-202. Residential Development pressure has been more pronounced in Readington than in most other Hunterdon County Municipalities. P.V-27

Parks, Recreation & Open Space

This plan element of the master plan identifies several strategies for preserving open space and farmland. These include:

Farmland Preservation Program

Where appropriate, farmland preservation is an excellent method of contributing to open space preservation by preserving natural vistas and providing a buffer for other preserved areas. Farmland preservation results in larger parcels of appropriate size, location, and soil quality being dedicated to agricultural use. P. VIII-15

Purchase of Land in Fee

When land comes up for sale at a reasonable price, fee simple acquisition by the Township should be considered. A larger portion of the parcel can be deed restricted for agriculture and resold into private ownership. The farmland preservation easement on a larger farm parcel would be held by the Township for resale to the Hunterdon County Agricultural Development Board, the farm which has been deed restricted to agriculture could be sold back into private ownership, and the smaller portion of the parcel in appropriate locations, for instance along a stream corridor, could be retained by the Township for conservation purposes or passive recreation purposes. P. VIII-15



2001 Amendment to the Master Plan

The 2001 Amendment to the Master Plan, adopted on July 9, 2001, included a Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan Element, replacing the 1998 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan Element. This element continues to endorse farmland preservation efforts within the Township as follows:

Where appropriate, farmland preservation is an excellent method of contributing to open space preservation by preserving natural vistas and providing a buffer for other preserved areas. Farmland preservation results in larger parcels of appropriate size, location and soil quality being dedicated to agricultural use. Readington should continue to participate with the Hunterdon County Agricultural Development Board and the NJ State Agriculture Development Committee to plan and seek means to preserve agricultural lands. P.VIII-42

2002 Master Plan Amendment

In May of 2002, the Planning Board adopted an amendment to the Master Plan to expand the AR land use category and recommending a zone change to the Township Committee. The 2002 Master Plan Amendment noted that the proposed expansion of the AR land use category would increase consistency with the State Plan by helping to retain open space and farmland within the PA4 Rural and PA4B Rural/Environmentally Sensitive planning areas.

2009 Master Plan Amendment

In June, 2009, the Planning Board adopted a comprehensive update of the Master Plan, including a Statement of Objectives, Principles, Assumptions, Policies, and Standards, Land Use Plan, Conservation Plan, and Utility Service Plan. The 2009 Land Use Plan recommended an expansion of the Agricultural Residential zoning district and a decrease in permitted residential densities in order to comply with NJDEP standards for nitrate dilution in unsewered areas. The 2009 Land Use Plan also recommended the creation of two new residential zoning districts – the Special Resource Residential (SRR) district and the Hamlet Residential (HR) District.

A copy of the Township's current zoning map, which reflects the 2009 Master Plan amendment, is attached. As indicated below, minimum lot sizes for conventional single family development under current zoning range from 10 acres in the SRR zone to

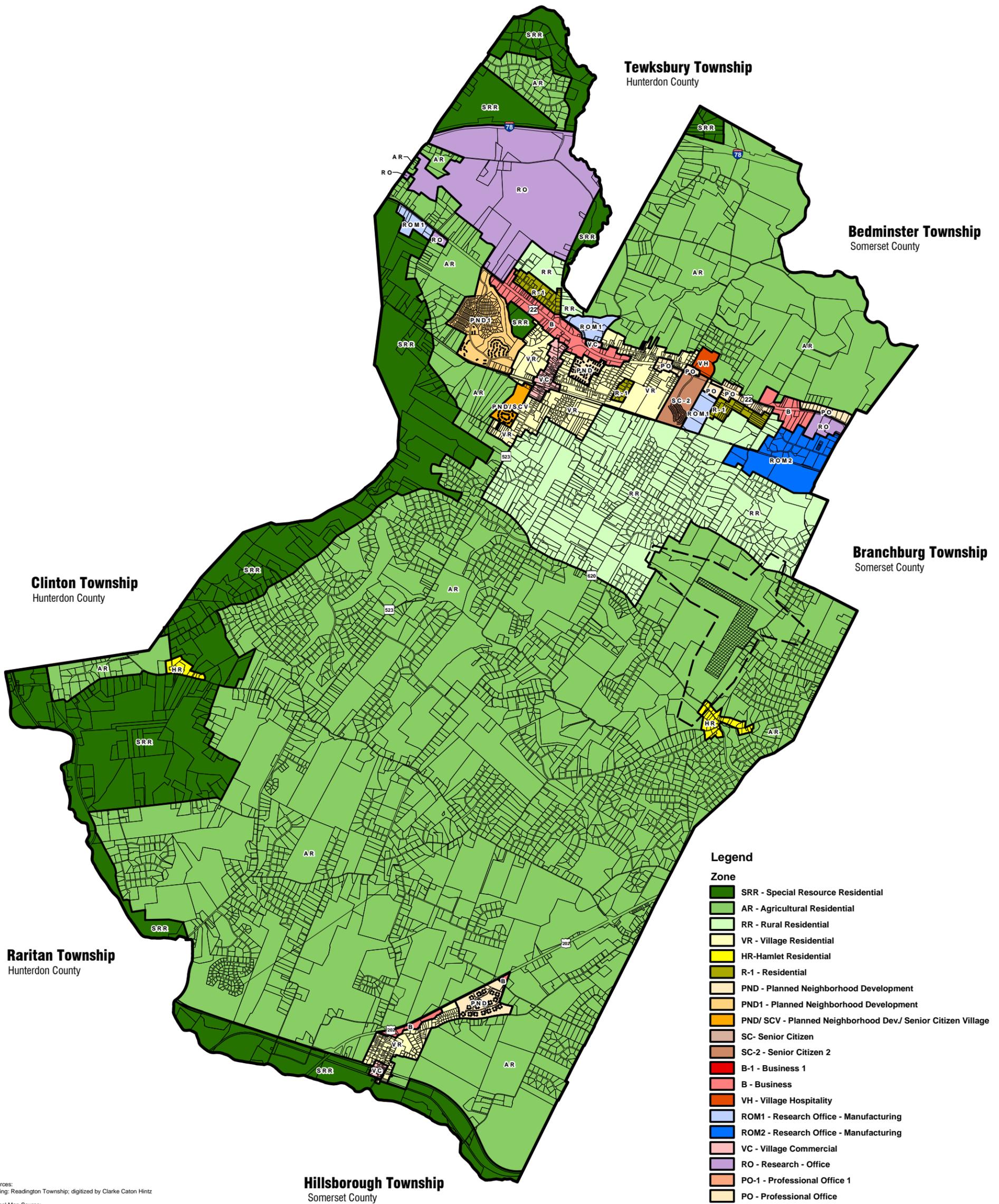


20,000 sf. in the VR zone. However, a key strategy employed by the Township to preserve land has been to permit “cluster” subdivisions in the RR, former SSR, and AR land use categories. This zoning technique allows for smaller lot sizes (1.5-2 acres), but requires set-asides of preserved land. (See Section III.F.2, below for additional detail regarding the Township’s clustering provisions.) Through this technique and the targeted use of State, County, and local funds, Readington has had great success in preserving land for farmland and open space. Readington will continue using clustering for land preservation.

Table 7: Minimum Lot Sizes for Conventional Single Family Development (SFD)	
Residential Zone*	Minimum Lot Size (Conventional SFD)
Special Resource Residential (SRR)	10 acres
Agricultural Residential (AR)	8 acres
Rural Residential (RR)	5 acres
Hamlet Residential (HR)	2 acres
R-1 Residential (R-1)	40,000 sf.
Village Residential (VR)	20,000 sf.
<i>*PND and SCR residential zones not included due to minimal development potential</i>	
<i>Source: Readington Township Land Development Ordinance</i>	

Consistency with Hunterdon County Growth Management Plan and Farmland Preservation Plan

Hunterdon County’s Growth Management Plan (GMP), adopted in December 2007, includes a number of policies and strategies that are intended to help achieve the County’s vision of greater land preservation and protection of rural character and natural resources. With regard to land preservation, strategies recommended in the GMP include adopting Right to Farm ordinances, and utilizing zoning strategies that incorporate Transfer of Development Rights (TDR), noncontiguous clustering and agricultural zoning provisions, and concentrating development into growth areas. Similarly, the County’s Farmland Preservation Plan (FPP), adopted in 2008, discusses the use of innovative planning techniques to preserve land, including lot size averaging, cluster zoning, and municipal and regional TDR programs. As discussed above, Readington has emphasized agricultural zoning that includes a mandatory cluster provision. More generally, the Township’s zoning concentrates development into existing centers and growth areas, consistent with both the County GMP and State Plan.



Legend

Zone

- SRR - Special Resource Residential
- AR - Agricultural Residential
- RR - Rural Residential
- VR - Village Residential
- HR - Hamlet Residential
- R-1 - Residential
- PND - Planned Neighborhood Development
- PND1 - Planned Neighborhood Development
- PND/ SCV - Planned Neighborhood Dev/ Senior Citizen Village
- SC - Senior Citizen
- SC-2 - Senior Citizen 2
- B-1 - Business 1
- B - Business
- VH - Village Hospitality
- ROM1 - Research Office - Manufacturing
- ROM2 - Research Office - Manufacturing
- VC - Village Commercial
- RO - Research - Office
- PO-1 - Professional Office 1
- PO - Professional Office
- Air Safety and Historic Airport District
- Historic Airport Sub-Area

Sources:
 Zoning: Readington Township; digitized by Clarke Caton Hintz
 Parcel Map Source:
 Hatch Mott MacDonald, February, 2008.
 Air Safety and Historic Airport District boundaries: digitized by
 Clarke Caton Hintz from Studer and McEldowney AutoCAD drawing
 "Map for Chambers Brook & Holland Brook Greenway"
 March 3, 2005 Drawing No 5761_F signed by H. Clay McEldowney



2009 FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN
Zoning
 Readington Township, Hunterdon County, NJ

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D. CURRENT LAND USE TRENDS

Readington Township is the largest municipality in Hunterdon County, making up 10% of the County’s landmass. It is a sprawling Township with large, open, agricultural areas dominating the northeastern and southern regions, with suburban residential developments dominating areas in between. The pace of development during the last decade has slowed considerably, thanks to successful rural zoning and preservation efforts, but development pressure remains strong. All types of development are continuing, albeit at a slower rate than in the 90’s. The following table summarizes existing land use by tax class within the Township:

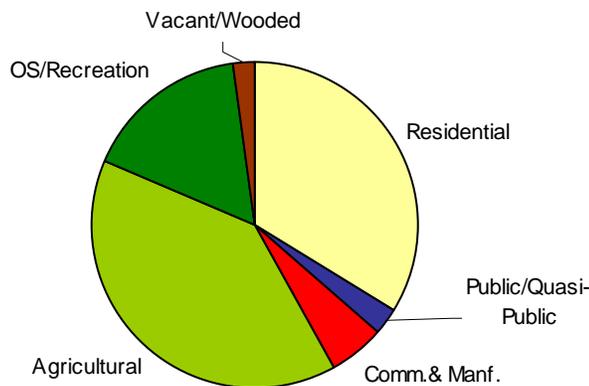
Table 8: Existing Land Use by Tax Class		
Existing Land Use by Tax Class	Acreage	% of Total Acreage
Single Family Detached Residential	9,721.9	33.0
Two Family and Greater Residential	268.3	1.0
Public/Utility	512.0	1.7
Church/Cemetery	86.9	0.3
Commercial/Office	1,450.6	4.9
Manufacturing/Industrial	172.3	0.6
Agricultural	11,641.9	39.6
Open Space/Recreation	4,848.3	16.5
Railroad	92.9	0.3
Vacant/Wooded (does not include agriculture)	633.3	2.2
Total	29,427.8*	100.0%
*Approximately 2.0 square miles of land not included in the table is comprised of roadways and public rights-of-way. Sources: 2008 Readington MOD IV Tax Assessment Records, 2007 aerial photography and field investigation.		

As indicated in the table, agriculture is the largest land use in the Township. Single family detached residences, however, are a close second; indicating that, without the preservation efforts that the Township has undertaken, it could quickly overtake agriculture for the top position. Open space/Recreation represents the third largest land use followed by commercial/office uses, vacant land, public uses, and two family and greater residential. This pattern represents Readington’s strong heritage as a rural and agricultural community as well as the rapid increases in residential development that



have occurred over the last thirty years. The most notable aspect of the existing land use is the large amount of land that is devoted to agricultural uses. Almost 40% of the land in the Township falls into this category. The chart below illustrates existing land use in the Township, using somewhat broader categories of land use.

Chart 7: Existing Land Use in Readington Township

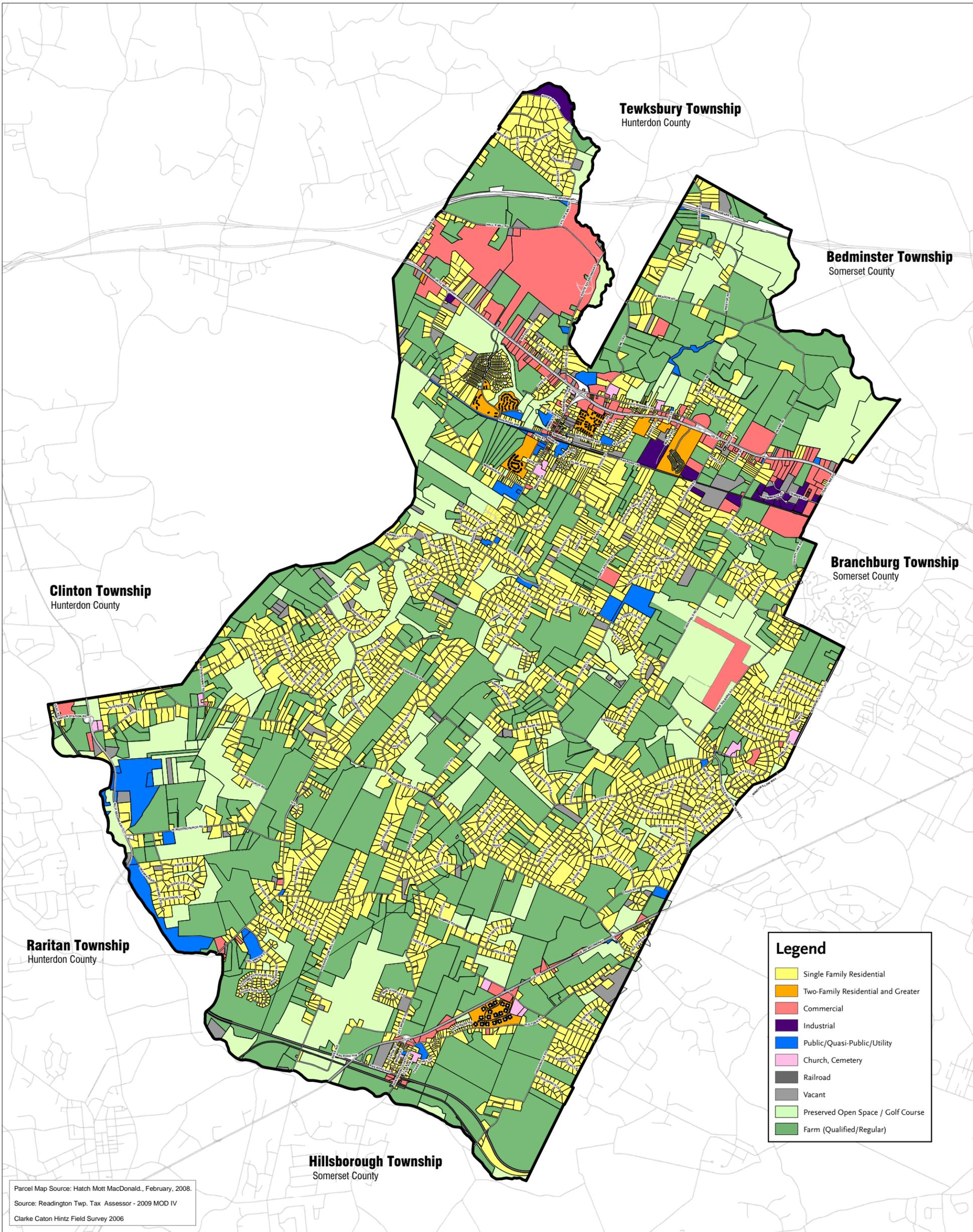


Sources: 2008 Readington MOD IV Tax Assessment Records, 2007 aerial photography and field investigation.

Land Use/Land Cover (LU/LC) data from NJDEP provides additional information regarding existing land use in the Township that is based on interpretation of aerial photography. As shown in the chart below, agricultural land cover in Readington based on the LU/LC data has decreased by approximately 24% over the past several decades.

Table 9: Land Use/Land Cover Data Trends, 1986 - 2002					
LU/LC Category	1986 (acres)	1995/97 (acres)	2002 (acres)	Change 1986 - 2002	
				Acres	%
Agricultural	10,731	8,929	8,138	-2,593	-24%
Barren Land	209	163	104	-105	-50%
Forest	9,615	9,324	9,821	207	2%
Urban	7,573	9,726	10,138	2,565	34%
Water	176	191	234	59	33%
Wetlands	2,356	2,326	2,224	-133	-6%
TOTAL	30,660	30,660	30,660		

Source: NJDEP Land Use/Land Cover Data, 1986, 1995/97, 2002



Parcel Map Source: Hatch Mott MacDonald., February, 2008.
 Source: Readington Twp. Tax Assessor - 2009 MOD IV
 Clarke Caton Hintz Field Survey 2006



2009 FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN
Existing Land Use by Property Class

Readington Township, Hunterdon County, NJ

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E. SEWER SERVICE AREAS/ PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY SERVICE AREAS

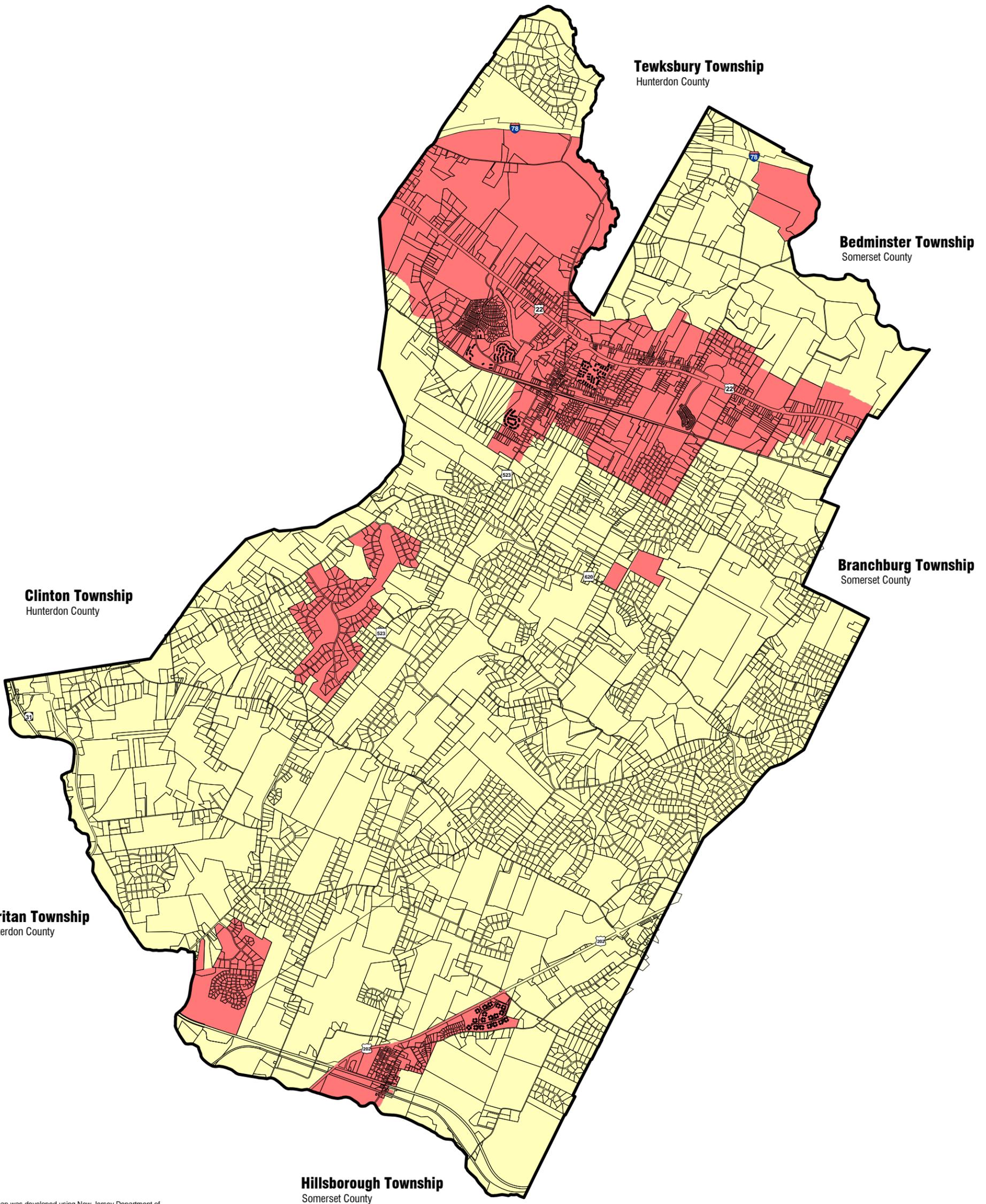
Readington Township contains two primary utility service areas. The main service area is located along the Route 22 Corridor, centered around the villages of Whitehouse and Whitehouse Station. The other is in the village of Three Bridges in the southeastern corner of the Township. In addition, the Hedgerow Estates subdivision on Route 523 near Darts Mill, receives sewer service, and there are also several smaller, private treatment facilities that serve one site or a small contained area. The Township's existing sewer service areas are depicted in the map on the following page.

As discussed in the Township's June 2009 Utility Services Element, a disparity exists between the amount of available wastewater capacity and the development potential within the Sewer Service Areas. In addition projected densities in septic areas exceed DEP standards for nitrate dilution. Therefore, the element recommended that the Readington-Whitehouse Sewer Service area boundary be revised to remove parcels generally east of Coddington Road and west of Van Horne Drive that are not existing customers. Similarly, the element recommended that parcels be removed at the edge the Three Bridges Sewer Service Area that are not serving existing customers. Subsequently, NJDEP proposed further reductions in the sewer service boundaries. The proposed Township and NJDEP sewer service areas are depicted on the map following the map of existing sewer service areas.

The total area of the existing sewer service area is approximately 6,157 acres, whereas the NJDEP proposed sewer service areas contain approximately 2,267 acres. Active agricultural land (based on the 2002 LU/LC data) represents 9.5% (585 acres) of the existing sewer service area and 6.5% (148 acres) of the NJDEP proposed sewer service areas.

Readington has provided the Utility Service Element and other required information to the County for consideration in developing the County WMP. As the County WMP is completed, Readington's wastewater management plan will be treated as a specific chapter of the overall County WMP.

In terms of water supply, Readington contains two water franchise areas: the Route 22 Corridor area in the northern portion of the Township, and the Three Bridges area in the southeast area of the Township. Both areas are served by New Jersey American Water (formerly Elizabethtown Water Company.) A map showing the location of water franchise areas within Readington follows after the sewer service maps, below.



This map was developed using New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Geographic Information System digital data, but this secondary product has not been verified by NJDEP and is not state-authorized.

Parcel Map Source:
Hatch Mott MacDonald, February, 2008.

Legend

Existing Sewer Service Areas



2009 FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN

Existing Sewer Service Areas

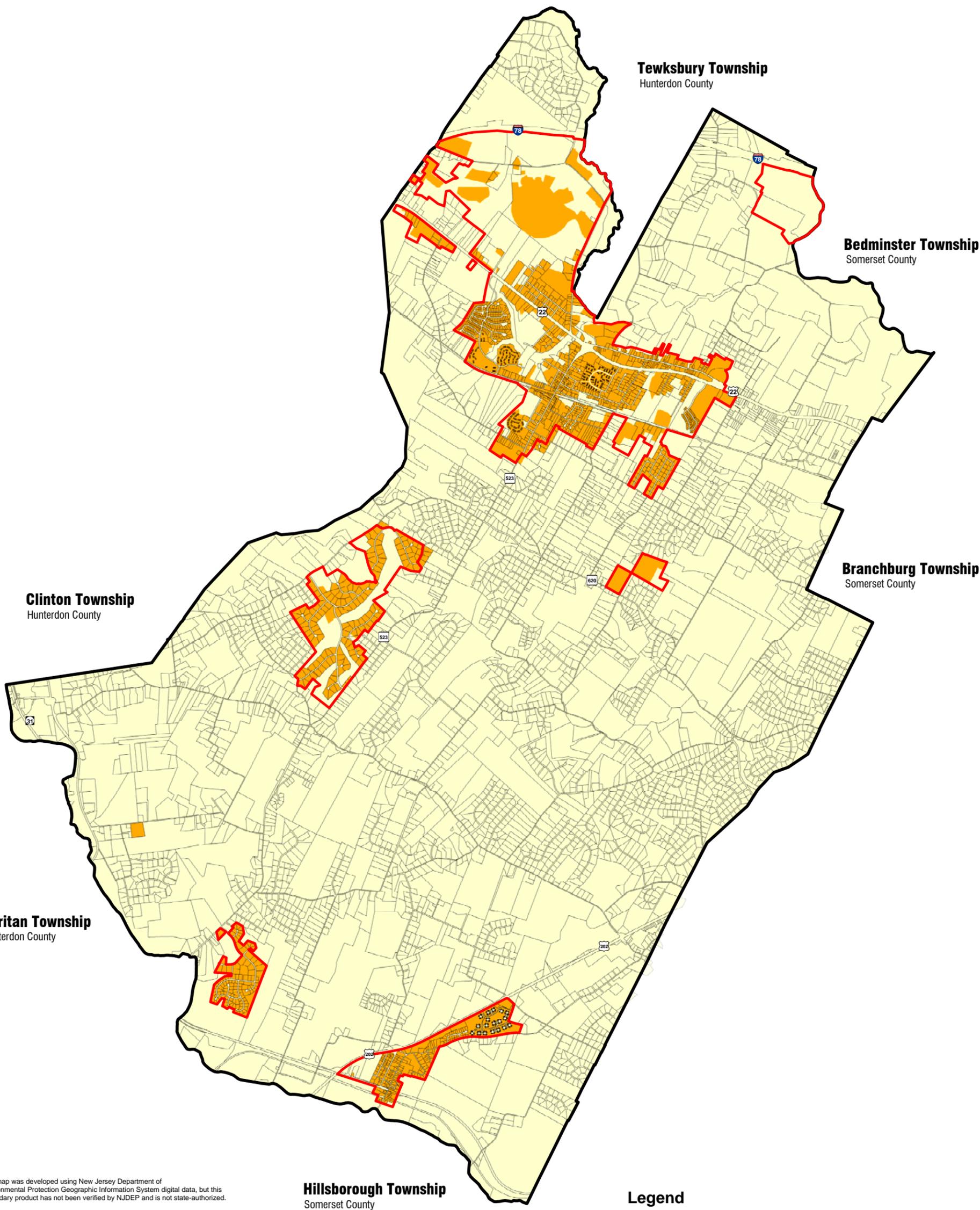
Readington Township, Hunterdon County, NJ

Clarke Caton Hintz ● ● ■

Architecture

Planning

Landscape Architecture



This map was developed using New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Geographic Information System digital data, but this secondary product has not been verified by NJDEP and is not state-authorized.

Parcel Map Source:
Hatch Mott MacDonald, February, 2008.

NJDEP Proposed Sewer Service Area Source: Hunterdon County GIS 10/26/2009

Readington Proposed Sewer Service Area Source: Readington Township 2009

Legend

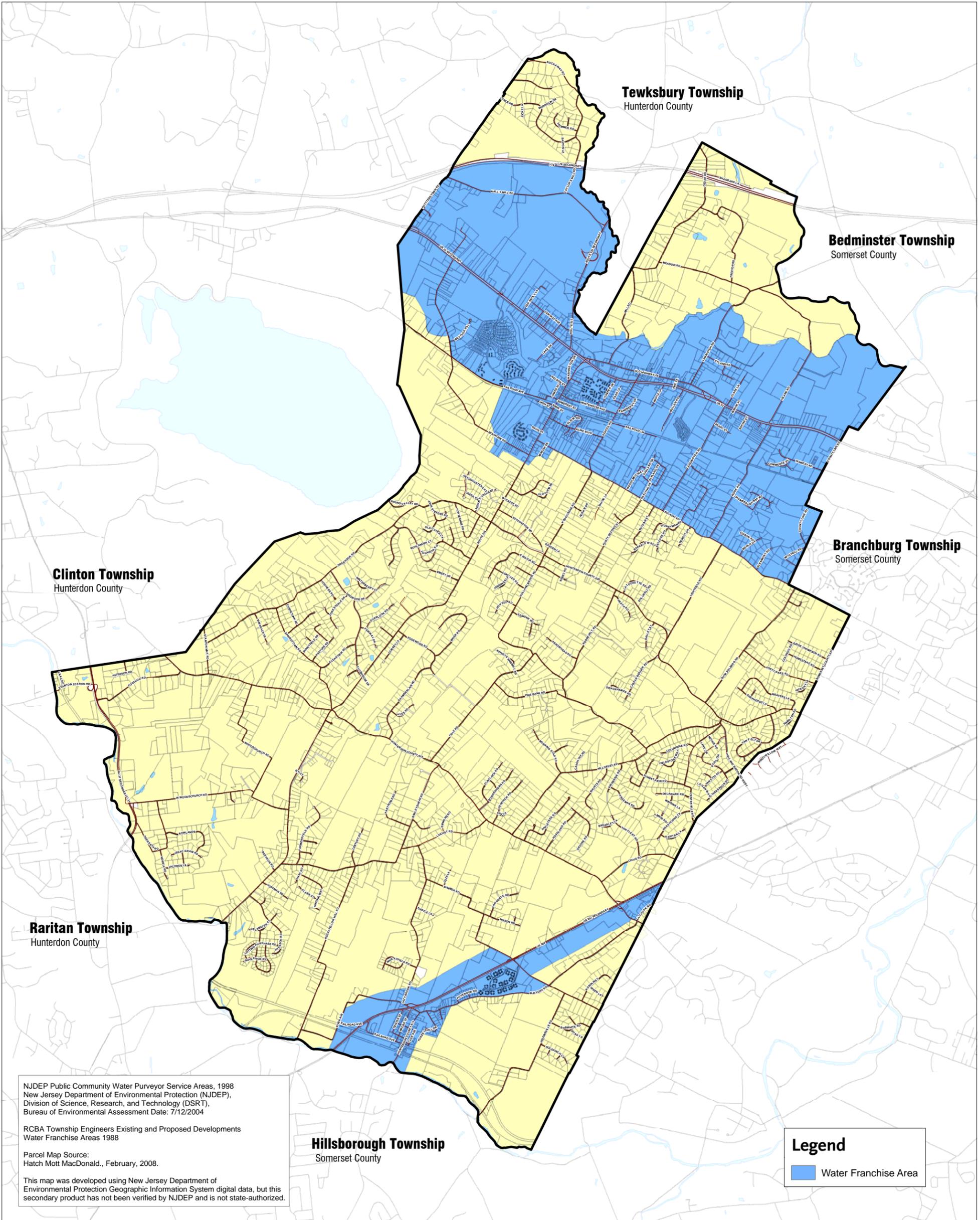
- Readington Proposed SSA 2009
- NJDEP/ HCPB Draft Sewer Service Area 10.26.2009



2009 FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN
Proposed Sewer Service Areas

Readington Township, Hunterdon County, NJ

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NJDEP Public Community Water Purveyor Service Areas, 1998
 New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP),
 Division of Science, Research, and Technology (DSRT),
 Bureau of Environmental Assessment Date: 7/12/2004

RCBA Township Engineers Existing and Proposed Developments
 Water Franchise Areas 1988

Parcel Map Source:
 Hatch Mott MacDonald, February, 2008.

This map was developed using New Jersey Department of
 Environmental Protection Geographic Information System digital data, but this
 secondary product has not been verified by NJDEP and is not state-authorized.

Legend

Water Franchise Area



2009 FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN
Water Franchise Areas

Readington Township, Hunterdon County, NJ

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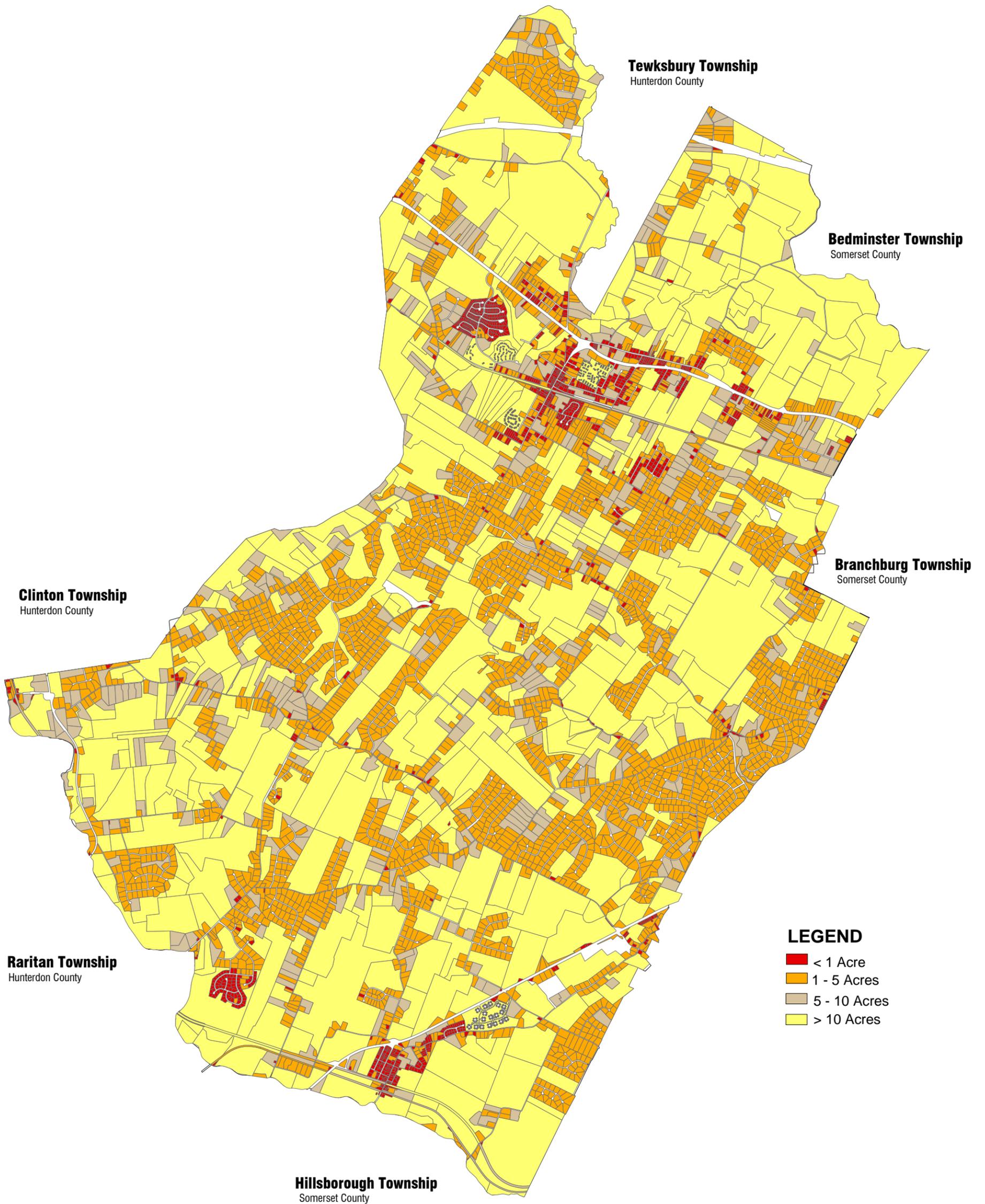
F. READINGTON'S MASTER PLAN AND ZONING

F.1 Lot Size Categories and Distribution

An analysis of the distribution of lot sizes in the Township revealed that a majority of the 6,749 lots in the Township or 51.1% are between one and five acres in size. Over one third or 34.7% are less than one acre in size. A total of 488 lots, or 7.2%, are between five and ten acres in total area. Lastly, 468 lots or 6.9% are over 10 acres in size. Among those, 32 lots are over 100 acres in size. The following chart summarizes this information:

Table 10: Lot Size Categories and Distribution		
Lot Size Category	Number of lots	Percentage of Total
< 1 acre	2,342	34.7%
1 acre – 5 acres	3,451	51.1%
5 acres – 10 acres	488	7.2%
10 acres - 100 acres	436	6.5%
>100 acres	32	0.47%
Total:	6,749	100.0%

Source: Clarke Caton Hintz analysis, 2007



Parcel Map Source: Hatch Mott MacDonald, March 15, 2006.
 Analysis Source: Clarke Caton Hintz 2007

2009 FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN
Lot Sizes
 Readington Township, Hunterdon County, NJ



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F.2 Innovative Planning Techniques

Readington Township was one of the first Townships in the State to use a Mandatory Cluster Ordinance for the purpose of protecting agricultural land. From approximately 1984 through 1991, Readington first allowed, then required a mandatory 80% set aside of land for agriculture and open space in the designated ADA. Reluctance of developers to build package treatment plants for sewage treatment resulted in a variation of the cluster that set aside 67% of the land, and still relied on individual septic systems.

In 1998, the Township modified its Mandatory Cluster by creating the Agricultural Residential Zone, with a six acre minimum lot size for subdivision of lots less than 30 acres, but which requires a 70% set aside for lots 30 acres and greater with a one and one half acre minimum lot size. In 2009, Mandatory Cluster zoning provisions were added to the Steep Slope Residential (SSR) and Rural Residential (RR) zones, and within the AR zone, the Mandatory Cluster provisions were revised to require an 80% set aside for lots 24 acres or greater. Under the Mandatory Cluster provisions, the resulting open space parcel is set aside entirely for agriculture and conservation (no housing is allowed). An open space parcel that is created by the cluster and which includes tillable land, donated to the Township, is leased to area farmers. This zoning technique has assured that large agricultural parcels that do develop are not entirely lost to agriculture.

Readington's ordinances do not allow lot size averaging, or TDR. The Township continues to investigate a limited non-contiguous cluster ordinance as a part of its smart growth planning; however, the Township is not interested in creating high density development.

F.3 Buffer Requirements

Under §148-15.E(2)(l), Readington's Land Development Ordinance requires that "(a) minimum 50 foot-wide buffer shall be provided between residential uses and any land utilized for agricultural purposes. This buffer shall be deed restricted from development and shall contain at a minimum a staggered double row of evergreen plantings, five feet in height or equivalent as approved by the Planning Board."

F.4 Discussion of Development Pressures and Farmland Value Trends

Readington Township is the most eastern Township in Hunterdon County and shares a long border with rapidly developing Somerset County. The Township continues to experience strong development pressure, although the pace of growth has slowed from



the previous decade. As indicated below, a total of 328 residential building permits have been issued in the Township since 2000, representing an increase of approximately 5.7% over the 5,794 existing housing units in Readington as of the 2000 Census. This equates to an average increase of 41 new housing units per year, or a 0.7% annual increase over the existing housing stock. Between 1990 and 2000, the number of housing units in the Township increased from 4,789 to 5,794 units, representing a 21% increase, or a growth rate of 2.1% per year. In Hunterdon County, the 4,707 residential units added since 2000 represents an increase of 10.5% over the 45,032 existing units as of the 2000 Census, or a 1.3% annual growth rate. This rate is approximately the same as the 1.3% annual growth rate for housing experienced in the County between 1990 – 2000.

Table 11: Residential Building Permits, 2000 - 2008		
Year	Residential Building Permits	
	Readington Twp.	Hunterdon Co.
2000	58	626
2001	99	837
2002	28	597
2003	13	797
2004	29	650
2005	26	472
2006	17	427
2007	41	182
2008	17	119
Total	328	4,707

Source: NJ Dept. of Community Affairs

In terms of non-residential growth, certificate of occupancy data compiled by the NJ Department of Community Affairs indicates that a total of 663,092 sf. of nonresidential development has been constructed in Readington from 2000 – 2008. Approximately 55% of the nonresidential growth has been office space, and another 28.5% has been storage uses.



Table 12: Non-Residential Development in Readington Township, 2000 - 2008			
Year	Certificates of Occupancy Issued (s.f.)		
	Office	Warehouse	Other*
2000	220,001	20,477	0
2001	60,226	14,390	0
2002	11,074	9,641	0
2003	0	28,728	0
2004	0	22,000	7,088
2005	0	10,318	0
2006	20,253	22,955	39,129
2007	29,677	19,357	25,807
2008	26,187	40,987	34,977
Total	367,418	188,673	107,001

** Includes assembly, educational, and retail uses. Source: The New Jersey Construction Reporter, Division of Codes and Standards, NJ Department of Community Affairs*

The development pressure in Readington has been slowed by the Township’s own aggressive open space and farmland preservation efforts. These efforts have reduced the supply of developable land and made that land that still is available for development more valuable. As indicated below, the average per acre cost of farmland preservation has almost tripled since 1987, when the first farm was preserved in the Township. This increase is expected to level off because of the recession in the national housing market, but it is expected that the demand and the price for open land in Readington will continue to increase, regardless, as supply is limited, and as the region emerges from the recession.



Table 13: Average Cost Per Acre for Preserved Farmland in Readington Township

Year of Purchase	No. of Farms Purchased	Average Cost Per Acre
1987	1	\$7,813
1994	1	\$5,742
1995	2	\$8,191
1996	1	\$9,760
1998	1*	\$6,808
1999	2	\$6,951
2001	3	\$7,400
2002	2	\$11,251
2003	12	\$9,633
2004	5	\$9,070
2005	1	\$9,797
2006	4	\$15,013
2007	9	\$16,703
2009	2	\$21,425

* Does not include one farm donated in 1998. Source: SADC, Summary of Preserved Farmland, as of January 31, 2009. Does not include farms preserved through Green Acres, clustering or Township deed restrictions.

G. DISCUSSION OF MUNICIPAL AND REGIONAL TDR OPPORTUNITIES

Readington Township is considering Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) possibilities. Some sort of limited non-contiguous density transfer proposal may also be considered. Opportunities to use TDR are somewhat limited. Readington presently has no unallocated gallorage in its sewer systems in the two sewer service areas, so receiving areas may have to rely on package treatment plants. With respect to regional opportunities, it is unlikely Readington would need to look to the region for TDR, since it is such a large and diverse municipality, it does have some land suitable and available for a very limited amount of development and also has more than sufficient open land that could be used as sending areas.



IV. READINGTON'S FARMLAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM

For almost three decades, Readington Township has worked to protect its farmland and agriculture. Readington is proud of its historic role in the development of New Jersey's Farmland Preservation Program. Readington was the first Township in New Jersey to hold a referendum to ask voters to bond for open space and farmland preservation. It adopted an Open Space Master Plan with a detailed agricultural element and which spoke to the need to preserve farmland as early as 1979. Since that time, the Township has continued to be at the forefront of the efforts to preserve farmland, using a variety of municipal initiatives including mandatory clustering, a municipal farmland easement option program, and most importantly, an aggressive municipal "pre-purchasing" program for both easements and land in fee for resale using municipal bonding. The result is 69 farms totaling 4,631 acres of farmland presently subject to a permanent farmland preservation deed restriction, and two farms under contract for preservation, bringing Readington's total of preserved farms to 71 and with 4,812 acres of farmland preserved.

A. COUNTY AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AREAS

As discussed in the 2008 Hunterdon County Farmland Preservation Plan, the County Agriculture Development Board adopted Agriculture Development Areas (ADAs) in 1983 to satisfy minimum eligibility requirements for the statewide farmland preservation program, pursuant to the State Agriculture Retention and Development Act. The purpose of the ADAs is to identify where agricultural operations are likely to continue in the future and therefore be eligible for the farmland preservation program. The ADA is also used to identify areas in which agriculture is the preferred land use.

The state statutory criteria and purpose for designating an Agriculture Development Area are to encompass productive agricultural land which are currently in production or have a strong potential for future production in agriculture and in which agriculture is a permitted use under the current municipal zoning ordinance or in which agriculture is permitted as a non-conforming use, identify an area that is reasonably free of suburban conflicting development and comprises not greater than 90 percent of the agricultural land mass of the county as well as incorporate any other characteristics deems appropriate by the County Agriculture Development Board (CADB.) (§2:76-1.3)

§2:76-1.4 of the statute indicates factors that shall be considered by the Board in developing individual county ADA criteria. These factors include soils, current and anticipated local and use plans and regulations, farmland assessment status, anticipated



approvals for non-agricultural development, accessibility to publicly funded water and sewer systems, compatibility with comprehensive and special purpose county and state plans, proximity and accessibility to major highways and interchanges, minimum size of and ADA, landowner sign-up, land within boroughs, towns or cities, inclusion of entire or partial lots and blocks, land ownership, natural and special features, as well as type and distribution of agriculture. In Hunterdon County, the county's ADA criteria and map were based on a study of agriculture in the County prepared by the Middlesex-Somerset-Mercer Regional Study Council. Key components of the study were the mapping of productive agricultural operations and the location of prime and statewide important soils. Based upon the study, the CADB adopted criteria for the designation of ADAs and mapped them along physical boundaries or property lines.

In 1988, the basic building block of the County ADA criteria was changed from property lines and physical boundaries to tax blocks, making it easier to evaluate and maintain the database with the computer software available at that time. The 1988 ADA changes also reflected the new construction throughout the County; consequently, the land area in the ADA was reduced.

The county ADA criteria have changed little over the years and therefore the boundary has remained relatively unchanged. The county requirements are a minimum contiguous area of at least 250 acres; the predominance of prime or statewide important soils; land use that is reasonably free of non-farm development; and the absence of public sewers. Landowner consent, a relatively new criteria, is also required for a parcel to be included within the Hunterdon County ADA. This is a county requirement for all amendments to the ADA as well. A municipality first has to solicit landowner consent for an ADA amendment and bring that request before the County Agriculture Development Board.

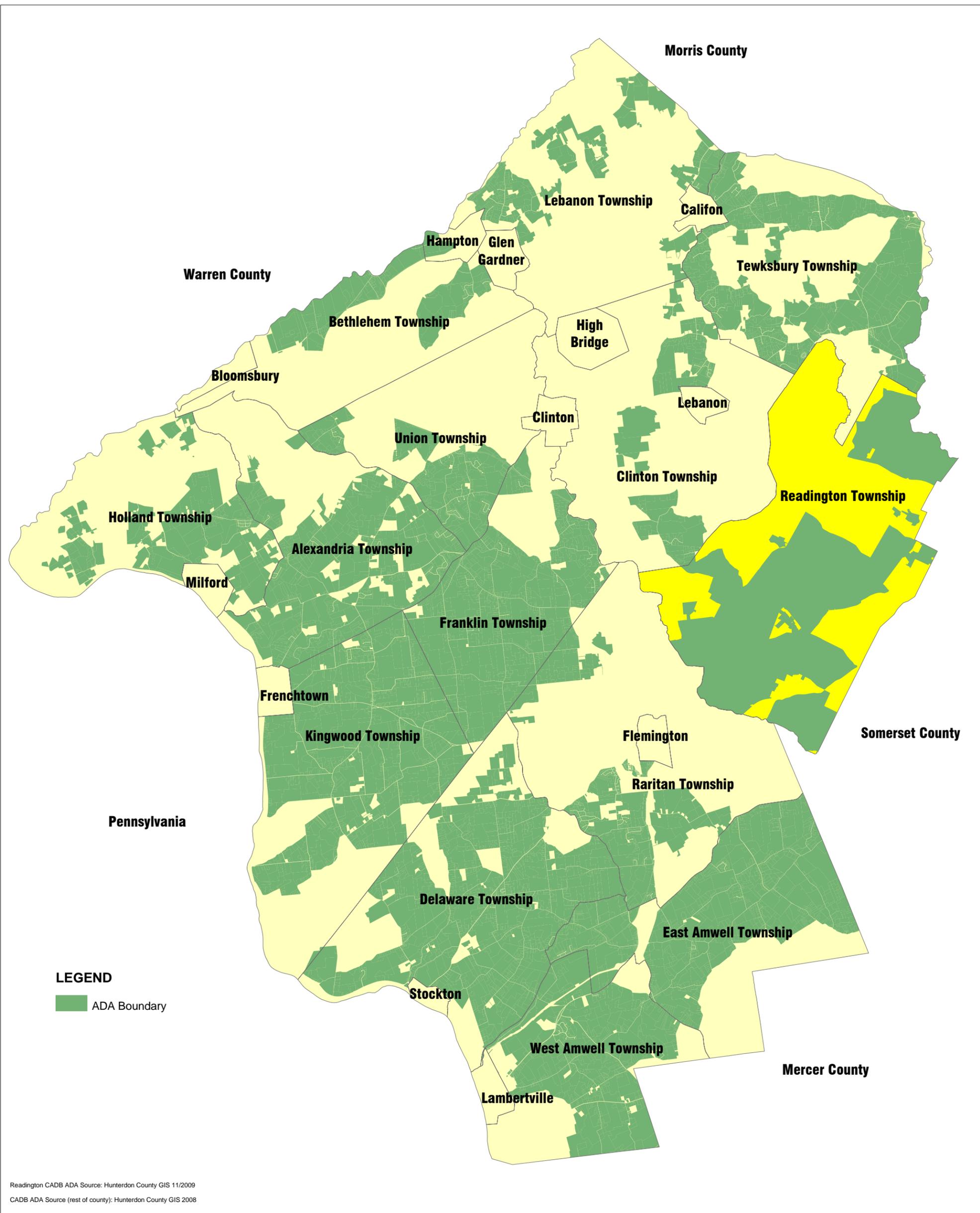
The Hunterdon County ADA map has recently been amended at the request of several municipalities. The CADB has approved most of the ADA requests; the changes are pending certification from the State Agriculture Development Committee. Most of these changes are from municipalities that are experiencing intense development pressure. Consequently, the contiguity of farmland in these new areas is sometimes less than in other ADAs. In some cases, the CADB has waived certain ADA criteria in these suburbanizing areas because the farmland preservation program is critically important to the farmers, landowners and local officials who want to retain what little farmland remains.



The location of Hunterdon County's currently designated Agriculture Development Areas within Readington Township is shown on the following map exhibit. As shown in the exhibit, the majority of active agricultural land as classified under 2002 LU/LC data (6,186 acres, or approximately 76% of all active agricultural land in Readington) is located within the ADA boundary. A total of 1,952 acres of active agricultural lands are located outside of the ADA.

An exhibit of all ADAs within Hunterdon County is also provided to show the relationship of the ADA boundary within Readington to the ADA boundary of surrounding municipalities. However, it should be noted that this mapping does not reflect the most recent ADA amendments in Readington.

The Township's Farmland Preservation Plan, included in the 1999 PIG application, noted that there are farms which otherwise meet the Township and County criteria but are not in the ADA. If these farms are in close proximity or contiguous to the Townships ADA they should also be included in the Project Area. Several farms that met this description were in fact preserved under Readington's earlier PIG Grants. The Township plans to work with the County Agriculture Development Board (CADB) to amend the ADA boundary to better align it with existing farms in the Township.



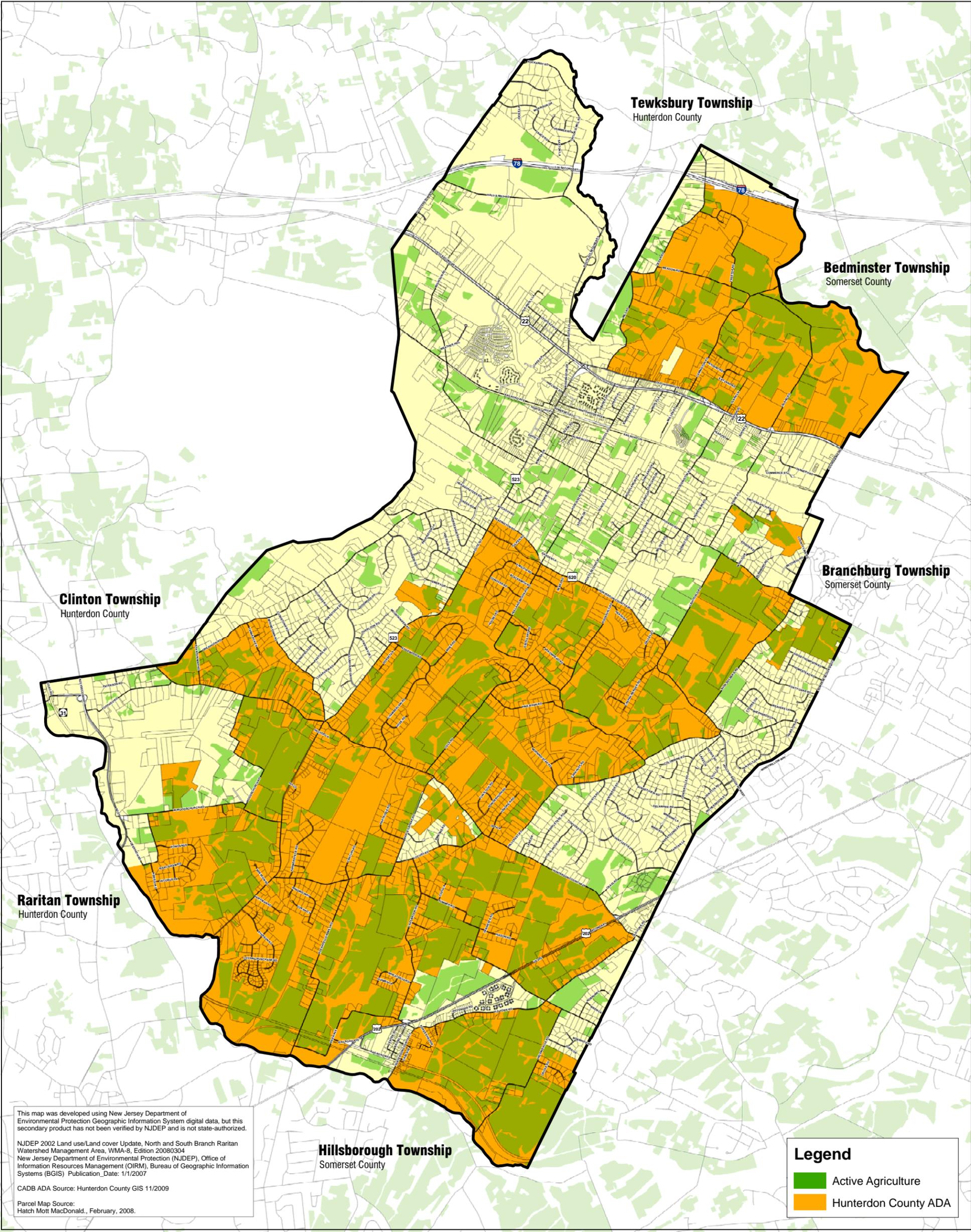
2009 FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN

Hunterdon County Agriculture Development Areas (ADA)

Readington Township, Hunterdon County, NJ



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This map was developed using New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Geographic Information System digital data, but this secondary product has not been verified by NJDEP and is not state-authorized.

NJDEP 2002 Land use/Land cover Update, North and South Branch Raritan Watershed Management Area, WMA-8, Edition 20080304
 New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), Office of Information Resources Management (OIRM), Bureau of Geographic Information Systems (BGIS) Publication Date: 1/1/2007

CADB ADA Source: Hunterdon County GIS 11/2009

Parcel Map Source: Hatch Mott MacDonald, February, 2008.

Legend

- Active Agriculture
- Hunterdon County ADA



2009 FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN

ADA and Active Agriculture

Readington Township, Hunterdon County, NJ

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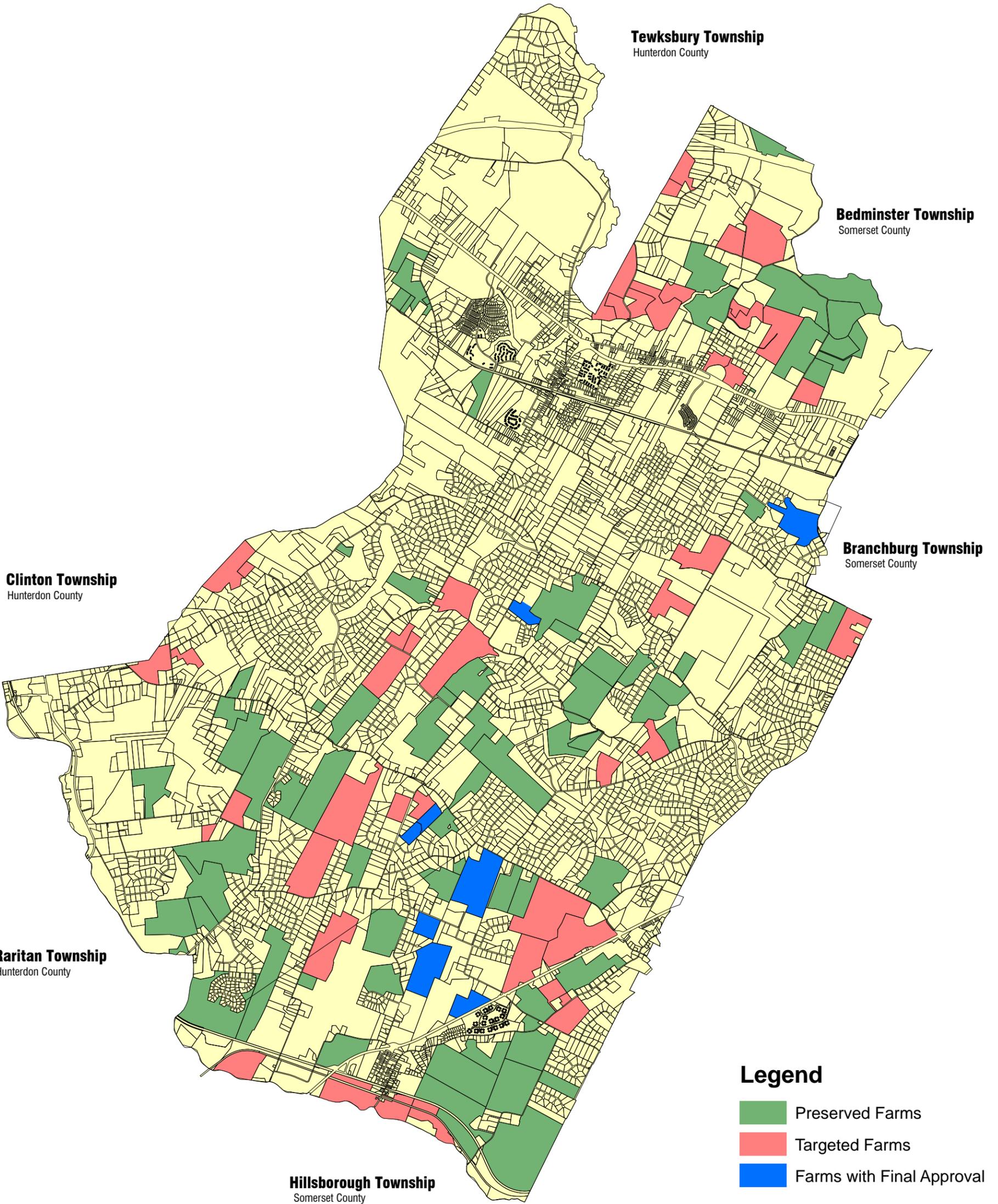
B. FARMLAND PRESERVED TO DATE BY PROGRAM

The tables below summarize farmland preserved to date within Readington by program type. The location of all preserved farmland is illustrated on the accompanying map exhibit. The Preserved Farmland map also includes farms that have received municipal, County or SADC final approval, but are not yet technically designated as preserved. These final approval properties are listed under Section B.9, below.

B.1. County Easement Purchase (23 Farms, 2064 acres)

Table 14: County Easement Purchases					
Block	Lot	Original Name	Acres	Program	Ownership Of Easement
12.01	15	Emmet	34	FP 2006	County
14	1	E.Schley/John Schley	104	Donation	County
14	50	J. Schley	87	FP 2001A	County
15	1	Reeve Schley	100	FP 2000	County
15	1.02	Reeve Schley	60	FP 2000	County
45	10	Silver Bit & Spur LLC	41	FP 2003	County
52	10	Hruebesh	79	FP 1999	County
53	22	Wade/Nicholson	131	FP 1998	County
55	8	Kappus	51	FP 2004	County
64	29	Chesla	41	FP 2008	County
64	44	Bauer-Cole	126	FP 1994	County
66	2	Ann Reno	52	FP 2001A	County
66	45, 45.01	Moore	68	FP 1995	County
70	38.02	Estate of Stewart Keane	88	FP 2005	County
72	11	Schaefer C&C	90	FP 1999	County
72	23	Schaefer, William & Chris	128	FP 1999	County
72	5, 5.02	Bartles	95	FP 2001A	County
93	13	Burjan	105	FP 1995	County
93	28	Burjan	137	FP 2001A	County
52.01, 46	14, 21	Romano/Jon Kowal	110	FP 2000	County
55, 66	12 & 9, 48	Wallendjack	93	FP 1987	County
93, 95	19, 13	Bill Mason (1)	85	FP 1998	County
93	18 & 20	Bill Mason (2)	158	FP 1998	County
		Total:	2,064		

Source: J. Allen, Readington Township, Nov., 2009



Preserved Targeted Farms Source: Readington Township 11/2009
Parcel Map Source: Hatch Mott MacDonald., February, 2008.



2009 FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN
Preserved Farms
Readington Township, Hunterdon County, NJ

Clarke Caton Hintz ● ● ■
Architecture
Planning
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B.2. COUNTY PLANNING INCENTIVE GRANT

None to date

B.3. MUNICIPAL PLANNING INCENTIVE GRANTS (22 FARMS, 963 ACRES)

Table 15: Municipal Planning Incentive Grants						
Block	Lot	Name	Acres	Round	Program	Ownership
13	62	Hamewith Farm	82	2005	FP PIG VIII	County
15	4	Arnaudy	26	2005	FP PIGVIII	County
39	14	Cuchiaro	25	2005	FP PIGVIII	County
46	22.01	P. Reno	70	2000A	FP PIG I	County
53	9	Dolan	21	2000B	PIG II	County
55	17	Scanlon	41	2000A	FP PIG I	County
55	17.02	Scanlon	44	2000A	FP PIG I	County
57	2, 2.05	Pompliano/Schultz	48	2000A	FP PIG I	County
57	13.01	Staats	53	2005	FP PIG VIII	County
62	1	Jackson	33	2000B	FP PIG II	County
63	13	Accettola	64	2000B	FP PIG II	County
65	23	Hanna	24	2000B	FP PIG II	County
66	17	Dabrowski	36	2000B	FP PIG II	County
72	10.01	Pagano	33	2000A	FP PIG I	County
75	19.01	Rica II	39	2000A	FP PIG I	County
75	35 & 40	Jones	52	2000A	FP PIG I	County
80	1 & 2	Illva Sarronno	58	2005	FP PIG VIII	County
93	12	Miller	41	2000A	FP PIG I	County
96	2	Triple D LLC	45	2005	FP PIG VIII	County
96	18	D'Urso	79	2000A	PIG I	County
98	2	Padavanni	30	2005	PIG VIII	County
		Total	963			

Source: J. Allen, Readington Township, Nov. 2009



Clarke Caton Hintz

B.4. SADC DIRECT EASEMENT PURCHASE (ONE FARM, 125 ACRES)

Table 16: SADC Direct Easement Purchase					
Block	Lot	Name	Acres	Program	Ownership
66	24	Allen	125	Direct EP	State

Source: J. Allen, Readington Township, Nov. 2009

B.5. SADC FEE SIMPLE (TWO FARMS, 450 ACRES)

Table 17: SADC Fee Simple					
Block	Lot	Name	Acres	Round	Program
62	4 & 7	Dobozynski/Doyle	231	State, Fee	State
98	3	Van Doren/Pat Hilton	219	State, Fee	State

Source: J. Allen, Readington Township, Nov. 2009

B.6. NON-PROFIT.

None.

B.7. TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS:

None.



B.8. OTHER PROGRAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS (16 FARMS, 809 ACRES)

Table 18: Other Programs and Partnerships						
Block	Lot	Name	Acres	Easement	Program	Ownership
13	57	Renda	69	Green Acres	Green Acres	State GA
15	3, 3.01, 3.02	Reeve Schley	50	Farmland	Township	Township
20	11	Csepi	27	Green Acres	Green Acres	Township
20	16, 22, 23	DeGeronimo	65	Green Acres	Green Acres	Twp/Co.
22	6	Jensen	25	Green Acres	Green Acres	Township
45	26.07	Bertrand	7	Green Acres	Green Acres	Twp. GA
50	14	Burgher/Garfield	21	Green Acres	Green Acres	Twp. GA
55	21	Knocke	22	Green Acres	Green Acres	Twp. GA
55	13	Lachenmayr	32	Green Acres	Green Acres	Twp. GA
64	8	Rte 523	53	Farmland	Cluster	Township
73	17	Vizzoni	124	Farmland	Cluster	Township
73	26.01	Hrynyk	121	Farmland	Cluster	Township
74	5	Illva Saronno	12	Farmland	Township	Township
74	26.01	Lazy Brook Estates/	50	Farmland	Cluster	Township
74	27	Kanach/Illva Saronno	82	Green Acres	Green Acres	State GA
75	32	Lane/Zweerink Farm	49	Green Acres	Green Acres	Twp. GA
		Total	809			

Source: J. Allen, Readington Township, Nov. 2009



**B.9. FARMS WITH MUNICIPAL, COUNTY AND/OR SADC FINAL APPROVAL
(7 FARMS, 401 ACRES)**

Table 19: Farms with Municipal, County and/or SADC Final Approval						
Block	Lot	Name	Acres	Easement	Program	Ownership
39	49	Peters	65	Farmland	Muni. PIG 2010	Peters
53	5 (or 5.02)	Holland Brook Realty	23	Farmland	FP PIG 2008	Township
65	12, 12.01	Little	32	Farmland	FP 2008	Township*
75	33	Hanna Saga	116	Farmland	FP PIG VIII	Contract**
94	11	Daniel Brothers	52	Farmland	Co. PIG 2010	Township
94	17	Toll I	29	Farmland	Muni. PIG 2010	Township
94	19	Toll II	84	Farmland	Co. PIG 2010	Township
		Total	401			

* Under contract with Hunterdon County
 ** Under contract with Township
 Source: J. Allen, Readington Township, Nov. 2009

C. CONSISTENCY WITH SADC STRATEGIC TARGETING PROJECT

The SADC’s Strategic Targeting Project is intended to help prioritize farmland preservation investments. The preservation of Prime Soils and Soils of Statewide Importance is the priority of the Strategic Targeting Project. Overall, 3,760 acres of the 4,891 total acres⁴, or 76%, of preserved farm properties (including farms with final approvals) in Readington are comprised of Prime Soils and Soils of Statewide Importance.

The Strategic Targeting Project calls for careful evaluation of information gathered through an extensive outreach commitment as part of a planning process that will result in a coordinated landowner contact effort. In the entire 27 years since the Farmland Preservation Program has been up and running in Hunterdon County, Readington Township has been an active participant. In the early 80’s the Township sent a letter to all farms that met the eligibility criteria, and Helen Wallendjack, a farmer who owned 100 acres on Pinebank Road, became Readington’s first, and Hunterdon’s second applicant to the program. Over the years, the Township has periodically sent letters

⁴ Acreage of preserved farms calculated by GIS is somewhat higher than acreage based on tax maps.



inviting farmers to informational meetings. Interested landowners were invited to apply and Readington's liaison to the CADB played an important role in shepherding applications through the County's lengthy and sometimes very competitive process

With regard to the coordination of farmland preservation with conservation and habitat planning, Readington has purchased at least three large tracts of land in bulk and divided the tracts into land suitable for conservation and habitat protection, and lands suitable for agriculture. The Township then made application to the Farmland Preservation Program for the agricultural lands, received funding for the easement on the land, and then arranged to auction the land as a preserved farm. The Township then applied for Green Acres funding for the conservation lands. The result was land preservation that served multiple goals and furthered the Township's Master Plan, which calls for the protection of a variety of natural resources. This approach is also consistent with the SADC's Strategic Targeting Project.

D. EIGHT-YEAR PROGRAMS

Under eight-year programs, farmland owners agree to voluntarily restrict nonagricultural development for a period of eight years. Although there is no direct compensation for participating in an eight-year program, landowners are eligible to apply to the SADC for grants that fund up to 50 percent of the costs of approved soil and water conservation projects. Additionally, those in municipally approved program receive greater protection from nuisance complaints, emergency fuel and water restrictions and eminent domain actions. These programs require land to be actively farmed for a period of eight years. After the eight year term expires, the landowner may renew the program for another eight years.

In Readington, there have been at least three farms enrolled in eight-year programs during the 20-year history of the Farmland Preservation Program. The permanent easements were subsequently purchased on these farms and the farms were eventually released from the eight-year deed restriction. No farms are currently under this program.

E. COORDINATION WITH MUNICIPAL AND COUNTY OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION INITIATIVES.

Readington Township has also worked at preserving open space for conservation purposes. There are presently 1,959 acres of municipal open space, 686 acres of County open space and 873 acres of State open space, for a total of 3,518 acres of preserved open



space within the Township. Of this open space, 2693.5 acres is considered to be compatible with agriculture, as noted in the PIG Project Area Summary form. Readington coordinates its open space preservation with its farmland preservation in appropriate ways.

As an example of coordination through acquisition, Readington purchased the 183 acre Romano Farm in 1999 and divided the farm into a 73 acre parcel and a 110 acre tract. The Township preserved the 73 acre parcel with Green Acres funds because it contained wooded and riparian areas. The 110 acre tract became a farmland preservation application to the CADB. Readington auctioned the 110-acre farm with one Residential Development Site Opportunity (RDSO). The County purchased the Farmland Preservation easement in 2002. There are a number of similar examples of accomplishing both conservation of open space and the preservation of farmland in one project over the last decade.

There are also many examples of municipal open space acquisitions that have provided a buffer to agricultural land, where open space preservation prevents encroachment of residential development next to farms. With regard to coordination with hunting leases, Readington rents its open space to hunters for deer predation wherever possible. Readington also rents many parcels of open space land that have tillable fields to local farmers.

Hunterdon County owns 686 acres of conservation land in Readington. It consists of mature woodland on Round and Cushetunk Mountains and riparian land along the South Branch of the Raritan River. The County's large conservation tracts are not suitable for agriculture but it does issue annual permits for deer hunting on these tracts.

The State owns 873 acres of open space in Readington. It leases a large portion of its Raritan River Wildlife Management Area to local farmers, and also allows deer hunting on all of its WMA's.

F. FARMLAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM FUNDING EXPENDED TO DATE

Readington uses municipal bonding as a revolving fund to pre-purchase easements and land for Farmland Preservation purposes. The Township borrows money for farmland preservation projects as needed. Purchases make use of short-term notes to carry the debt while the Township is waiting for reimbursements from the County and the State. The reimbursements are used to pay off the short-term debt. Long-term municipal bonds are used to pay the final municipal balance. The exact amount of debt that the



Township is carrying for farmland preservation changes monthly because of constant activity with new purchases and County and State reimbursements.

As indicated in the table below, the total cost of farmland preserved in Readington through County easement purchases, Planning Incentive Grants, and SADC purchase as of July 31, 2009 is estimated at \$34,567,192. The Township’s share of this total is estimated at \$5,920,523, representing approximately 17% of the total cost.

Table 20: Farmland Preservation Funding Cost Share			
State	Hunterdon Co.	Readington Twp.	TOTAL
\$23,127,781	\$5,518,888	\$5,920,523	\$34,567,192
67%	16%	17%	100%
<i>Source: Hunterdon County Farmland Preservation Program website, last updated July 31, 2009, revised per data from J. Allen, Readington Township, Nov. 2009.</i>			

The table above does not include the “other deed restricted farmland”, including those purchased with Green Acres funds and through clustering provisions. The Township estimates that its cost share for these “other deed restricted properties” is \$1,537,000. In addition, Readington’s cost for pre-purchase of two farms that are not yet funded (Little and Holland Brook), plus the cost for three properties to be directly purchased by the Township (Daniel, and Toll I & II) are estimated to total \$5,150,000. Adding these estimates to the \$5,920,523 municipal cost share indicated above results in a total cost share of approximately \$12,731,203 funded to date by Readington Township for farmland preservation.

G. MONITORING OF PRESERVED FARMLAND

The holder of the deed of easement is responsible for annual monitoring of preserved farms. The SADC is responsible for the monitoring of farms preserved through the Direct Easement and Fee Simple Programs, as well as any Municipal PIG preserved farms if the County is not a funding partner. Readington and, in some cases, Green Acres monitors those easements owned by Readington and the State Green Acres Program. The Township and the AAC would notify the appropriate agency if violations were suspected.

H. COORDINATION WITH TDR PROGRAMS

Readington does not presently have a TDR Program.



V. FUTURE FARMLAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM

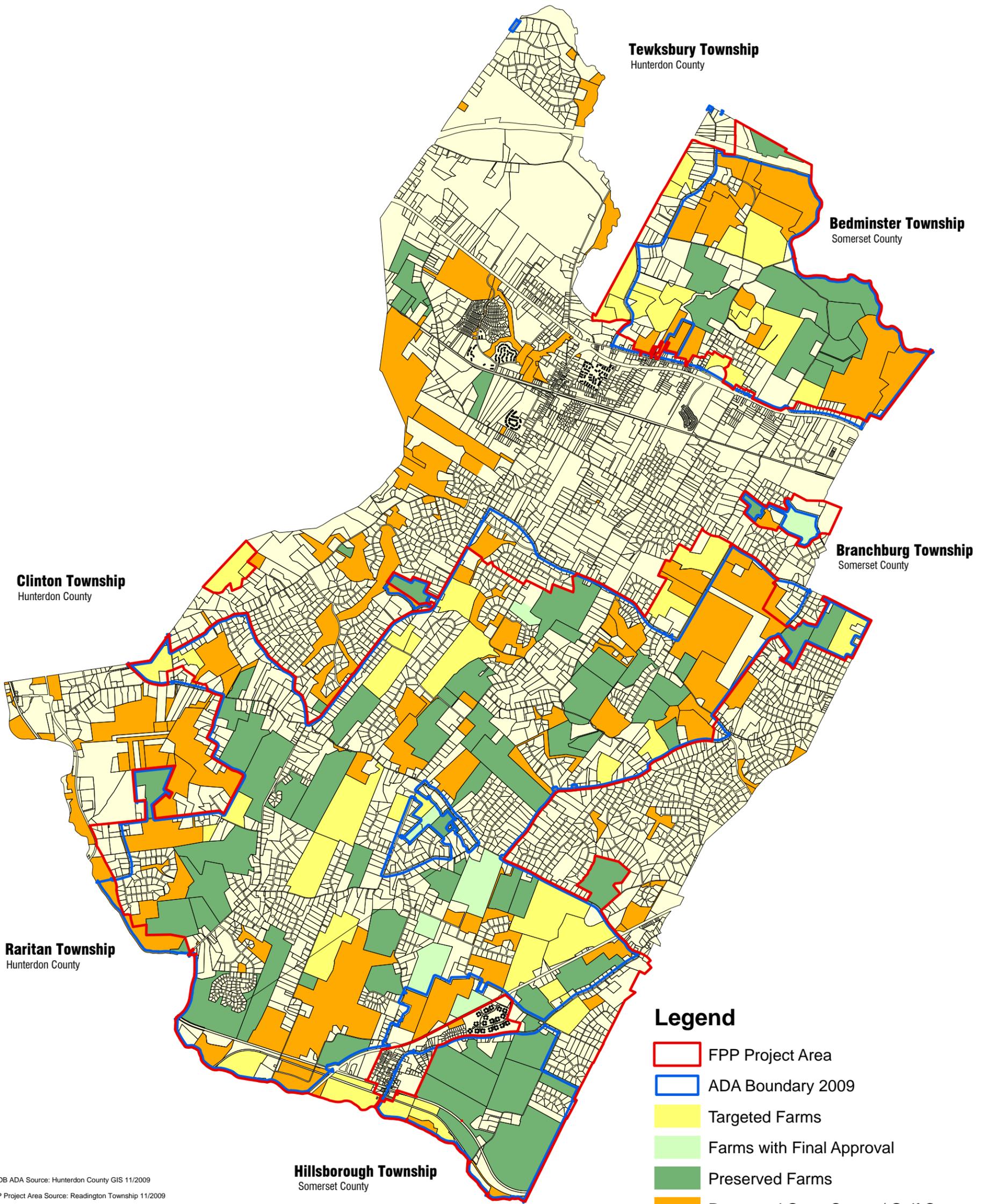
A. PRESERVATION GOALS

As previously discussed in Section III, Land Use Planning Context, Readington's 1990 Master Plan and Master Plan Amendments through 2009 include specific goals and policies that promote the preservation of farmland and retention of agriculture in the Township.

As outlined in the attached Project Area Summary Form, there are currently seven farms that total 401 acres with final approval that are "in the pipeline" to be added to the Township's inventory of preserved farmland. These include the Hanna Saga farm, to be preserved under the prior PIG VIII/2005 Round, three farms to be preserved under the new 2010 Municipal PIG application (Holland Brook Realty, Toll I and Peters Farm), two farms to be preserved under the new 2010 County PIG application (Toll II and Daniels), and one property recently purchased by the Township that is under contract to the County (Little). These final approval farms are listed in Table B.9, under Section IV.

To further implement the Township's farmland preservation goals and policies, the Readington Open Space and Agricultural Advisory Committee has identified 39 farms and farmland tracts in the Township's Project Area which currently meet its criteria for farmland preservation. The total area of these 39 targeted farms is 2,313 acres. A reasonable goal for the Township is to preserve approximately 50% of the targeted farms over the next 10 years, or approximately 1,100 acres. Readington plans to meet this goal by preserving 100 acres in the first year, 600 acres over the first five years and preserving the remaining 400 acres over the second five years.

The accompanying map shows the Township's FPP Project Area in relationship to the ADA, targeted farms, active agricultural lands and preserved and pending (final approval) farms and open space.



CADB ADA Source: Hunterdon County GIS 11/2009
 FPP Project Area Source: Readington Township 11/2009
 Preserved Targeted Farms Source: Readington Township 11/2009
 Open Space Source: Readington Township 6/2009
 Parcel Map Source: Hatch Mott MacDonald, February, 2008.



2009 FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN
Project Area / Agriculture Development Area
 Readington Township, Hunterdon County, NJ

Clarke Caton Hintz ● ● ●
 Architecture
 Planning
 Landscape Architecture



B. PROJECT AREA SUMMARIES

The Project Area totals 16,774 acres. As indicated in the accompanying Project Area Summary sheet, there are 39 targeted farm properties totaling 2,313 acres within the Project Area. In addition, the Project Area contains 401 acres of Final Approval farmland, 3,602 acres of Preserved Farmland, 809 acres of Other Deed Restricted Farmland, and 2,693.5 acres Other Preserved Open Space Compatible with Agriculture. Excluding the targeted farms, the above preserved farmland and open space totals 7,505.5 acres. The density of the Project Area is calculated as this total (7,505.5) divided by the total area of the Project Area (16,774 acres), or 45%. Soil productivity for the Targeted Farms is calculated by dividing the total area of important farmland soils for the Targeted Farms by the total area of the Targeted Farms. Altogether, the targeted farms include 926 acres of prime soils and 765 acres of statewide important soils. Dividing the total area of these important farmland soils (926+765 = 1691 acres) by the total area of the targeted farms (2,313 acres) results in a 73% soil productivity.

Readington has historically used the County designated ADA within Readington Township as its Project Area. The Township's Farmland Preservation Plan, included in the 1999 PIG application, noted that there are farms which otherwise meet the Township and County criteria but are not in the ADA. Readington included these farms in its project area in its 1999 Farmland Preservation Plan and is including them again in this Plan. These areas include farms that fall just outside the County's mapped ADA but that otherwise met the ADA's criteria. This situation exists because the CADB, in its 1988 ADA revision, chose criteria, not of farmland tracts, but specifically of tax block criteria in delineating the ADA. Whole tax blocks were either in or out, so that often farms met the ADA criteria and were contiguous across a road to the ADA were excluded. Readington's project area has not changed significantly in the 25 years that it has been participating in the Farmland Preservation Program, but the ADA delineation has changed.

When preservation opportunities have arisen in areas that otherwise meet the criteria, Readington has requested a revision to the ADA to make farms eligible, and the CADB has obliged. Over the years, about six farms that had fallen just outside the ADA have been preserved, and several others have been approved for funding. These have been successfully amended into the ADA.

As to the Township's efforts to work with the HCADB to better align the ADA boundary with existing farms and preservation objectives, these efforts have not been successful since the CADB will not add an area to the ADA without written consent of the each



property owner in an area, and generally farmland owners are only interested in signing such a document if they are applicants.

C. MUNICIPAL AND COUNTY MINIMUM ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA COORDINATION

Readington Township has aligned its eligibility criteria with the County “Prerequisites”, discussed on page 112 of the *Hunterdon County Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan*.

The County prerequisites are as follows:

- The farm must be located in an ADA
Readington has, however, preserved farms that were not initially in an ADA, but were amended into the ADA during the application process. Readington’s criteria require that this amendment be successful.
- The County reserves the right to only consider parcels are 40 acres or greater.
In actual practice, the County routinely accepts farms for consideration that are less than 40 acres, so long as they are reasonably contiguous to other preserved farms.
- The farms must meet the State’s minimum eligibility criteria.
- The Municipality must agree to share the local contribution

The Township criteria are as follows:

- The farm needs to be accepted for consideration for County funding, that is the farm must meet the County prerequisites and the State criteria. Both are listed in the appendix.

In the past, in special circumstances, Readington Township has preserved two farms totaling 62 acres with 100% Township funds. For financial reasons it is unlikely to do this again in the immediate future. In 2009, municipal revenues and State Aid have dropped, causing the municipal budget to be much tighter than in past years. This highlights the need for greater appropriations for funding at the State level.

There have been otherwise worthy farms, over the years, that have fallen short of County and State criteria for Farmland Preservation, that Readington has preserved by easement



restricting them for “agriculture and conservation” using Green Acres Funds, and these farms remain in private ownership and remain in Farmland Assessment. The list entitled “Other Deed Restricted Farmland” shows 10 farms totaling 399 acres that were preserved with Green Acres Funds. At the time of preservation, these farms did not meet the criteria either because of their size or the fact that they were located in an area some distance from the Township’s designated ADA. Three such farms are located in close proximity to each other on Mountain Road in the Township’s northwestern quadrant. One of the farms did not meet the County’s criteria only because the property was more than 50% wooded.

D. MUNICIPAL AND COUNTY RANKING CRITERIA TO PRIORITIZE FARMS

Readington Township, in 2009 and beyond, in anticipation of reduced local funding, will be utilizing the same ranking criteria as the Hunterdon County CADB to rank its Municipal PIG applications. This ranking system has become necessary to better assure the allowed 20% County funding of Municipal PIG applications. The County uses its County PIG criteria to rank Municipal PIG applications to determine whether the farm makes the cut for the County cost share. Using the county criteria, Readington would be able to prioritize its Municipal PIG applications according to those farms most likely to get County funding. The County ranking criteria is found in the Appendix of this report. The HCADB criteria and the SADC criteria are similar, in that they both consider Soils, Boundaries and Buffers, Local Commitment, and Size and Density, and Imminence of Change. The Hunterdon CADB adds additional ranking criteria entitled Soil Conservation and Farm Practices Management.

E. MUNICIPAL POLICY RELATED TO FARMLAND PRESERVATION APPLICATIONS

E.1. Approval of Housing Opportunities

Readington Township’s policies regarding housing opportunities on preserved farms has been, and will continue to be, somewhat conservative, generally following the lead of the SADC and the CADB.



- a. Size of Farmhouse: When at all possible, the Township has put a cap on the size of the farmhouse on the farm being preserved. Farms that were purchased fee simple and resold were capped at 4,500 square feet for a single-family house and 5,500 for a two-family house. On a number of farms Readington has been able to put a cap on the size of a farmhouse as part of the negotiations. The Township's impetus for limiting the size of the farmhouses is an attempt to keep the farms affordable to professional farmers.
- b. Overall housing opportunities permitted:
 - i. Number of houses: On a number of occasions, Readington has made an exception to this normal practice of allowing one farmhouse per preserved farm, usually to accommodate a family consideration. A recent approval allowed a two-family house within the exception area and another allowed a several exception as well as a non-severable exception. It is Readington Township's intent to continue a generally conservative approach to housing on preserved farms but to allow for flexibility on occasion, for good reason.
 - ii. Residual Dwelling Site Opportunity Allocation: SADC regulations permit up to one dwelling unit per 100 acres vacant farmland, including existing dwellings, referred to as a Residual Dwelling Site Opportunity (RDSO). There are few requests for RDSOs on Readington Farms at this stage of its program, since only farms greater than 100 acres with no existing farmhouse on them would be eligible for an RDSO. This situation is not likely to come up in the future due to the size of the remaining targeted farms.
 - iii. Agricultural Labor Housing: There are very few preserved farms in Readington Township that require agricultural housing, and to date there have been no requests to add Ag Labor Housing where none existed at the time of preservation. Readington Township would be generally very conservative in reviewing a request for Ag Labor Housing, because it would be very tempting for the housing unit to be converted to a rental if the type of agriculture changed and the unit was no longer needed for agriculture. It is recognized that this may present enforcement challenges.



- iv. Housing Replacement: According to the deed of easement, a house can be built to replace a house in existence at the time of conveyance of the deed of easement, but only with the approval of the CADB and the SADC. Readington Township would generally like to discourage the demolition of historic houses on preserved farms. Readington would like to discourage the replacement of a modestly sized farmhouse with a house of excessive size because it could make the farm financially out of reach for professional farmers. Readington Township would also like to discourage a change in location of an existing house that negatively affects the viability of the farm. It would be Readington's policy to weigh in on such a request to the deciding board.

E.2. Division of the Premises

- a. The deed of easement in preserved farms allows for a division of the premises in limited circumstances. A landowner must first obtain approval from the CADB and the SADC, both of which must make a determination that the division will serve an agricultural purpose and that the resulting parcels would be agriculturally viable.
- b. Readington policy on divisions would mirror the policies of the State and County, and that would be to approach this issue in a conservative fashion, knowing that there are, in fact, circumstances where a division does make sense for the farmer and for his family while at the same time, it is clear that the division does not diminish the long term viability of the farm.

E.3. Approval of Exceptions

- a. Non-severable exceptions: The Hunterdon County Agricultural Development Board generally encourages non-severable exception areas around the residence and structures on preserved farms, because they feel that giving landowners the flexibility that such an exception affords prevents problems of enforcement later, without measurably detracting from the farms agricultural viability. For this reason, Readington in recent years has encouraged applicants to request such an exception area. In addition, for farms that Readington buys in fee simple and resells, the Township generally creates a non-severable exception surrounding the farm residence.



- b. Non-severable exceptions: While severable exceptions are discouraged, it is recognized that there are instances where such exceptions are necessary, or desirable. The County ranking criteria does subtract 5 points for severable exceptions, and this tends to discourage the requests in competitive rounds. Readington's policies mirror the County, in that severable exceptions are discouraged, but are allowed when a good case has been made for them.

F. FUNDING PLAN

F.1. Description of Municipal Funding Sources

Readington Township is proud of the fact that it was the first local government in New Jersey to successfully hold a referendum asking voters if they favored bonding for Open Space and Farmland Preservation. In 1978, Readington Township voters supported a one million dollar bond for this purpose. In 1995, Readington initiated an Open Space Trust Fund that has been replenished each year by a \$.02/\$100 dedicated tax. In 2009, Readington voters were asked if they would approve a \$.02/\$100 dedicated tax increase, which would have raised the tax from 2 cents to four cents, but the measure failed by a 10% margin. In 1997, both Readington Township and Hunterdon County supported a County referendum to continue indefinitely, a \$.03/\$100 dedicated tax to annually replenish the Hunterdon County Open Space, Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund. Approximately 30% or between \$2 million and \$2.5 million is utilized for the County match on preserved farms approved for County cost share each year. The Township's original 2-cent tax continues, and in 2009 this dedicated tax generates \$569,148. Approximately \$100,000 of this fund is reserved for the 5% down payment necessary when a bond or note is purchased to cover the cost of an open space acquisition, and the balance is used for debt service on various bonds issued for prior projects.

Readington Township has historically relied on short term notes and bonding to pay for Farmland Preservation projects, and is currently carrying approximately \$6 million in notes and bonds for the municipal cost share on past preservation easement purchases, as well as approximately \$6 million in short term notes on pre-acquired easements and fee simple purchases. In 2009, it is estimated that 4% of a Readington Township taxpayer's dollar is utilized to pay for the Open Space Preservation purposes. That includes the County and Township dedicated Open Space and Farmland Preservation taxes, as well as all municipal debt service covering land purchases. The cost of debt service will decrease as State and County grants are received and debt is retired.



Readington Township has pre-acquired the majority of easements on farms within the Township that have been preserved over the last 22 years. Of the 48 farms listed as preserved under the State Farmland Preservation Program in Readington Township, Readington has pre-acquired the easements on 31 of these farms. The pre-acquisition process, that is selling short-term notes to cover the entire cost of the easement, then repaying these notes as the County purchased the easement from Readington, proved to be cost effective over time. Often the Township carried the entire cost of these easements for several years waiting for County and State re-imbursement, but the Township has clearly demonstrated that the easements that were purchased immediately upon municipal approval were less expensive than those purchased years later, since prices often climbed sharply, particularly between the years 1998-2008.

Readington has been reimbursed more quickly for pre-acquired easements in recent years and the Township currently owns the easements on only two farms, Little and Holland Brook Realty, which combined cost Readington just under one million dollars. Both have been approved for County and State funding, so within the next several months, Readington will be reimbursed 80% of the cost and be able to pay off most of the notes used to purchase them. The balance, which makes up the 20% municipal cost share will then, be included in a long-term bond and paid off over 15-20 years. .

In addition to purchasing easements, Readington has purchased eight farms in fee over the last ten years. Several of these farms are scheduled for resale at auction early in 2010. Easements on five of these farms have been sold to the County and reimbursement has been received. For three of these farms, the Township bonded \$4,207,500 in October of 2009. These farms, known as the Toll and Daniels farms, are applicants in the 2010 County and Municipal PIG rounds. Short-term notes used to finance fee simple purchases serve, in effect, like a revolving fund. The notes are paid down as properties are sold and the County and State fund easements, and new notes are issued when new opportunities arise.

Although payments on municipal bonds do consume most of the dedicated tax revenues, the Township's long standing policy of pre-acquiring easements and bonding for the municipal cost has contributed immeasurably to the success of Readington's farmland preservation efforts. Between 1999 and 2009, Readington preserved 22 farms under the State's PIG program, and all of 22 easements were either pre-acquired or the Township purchased the farms in fee simple. This success and the ability to complete so much preservation in a relatively short period of time was the direct result of Readington's willingness to pre-acquire and to close relatively quickly after going to



contract. This process not only increased the rate of success, but it also lowered the total cost as more farms were closed at much lower prices than if the preservation had been put off to the later years, when land prices had escalated dramatically.

F.2. Financial Policies Related to Cost Share Requirements

On all PIG applications closed between 2000 and 2009, Hunterdon County has cost shared at 20% of certified value. Hunterdon County has paid out their 20% cost share to municipalities participating in the PIG program during these years in ten annual installments, beginning with the year of final approval. From 1999 to 2009, all of the PIG applications and the majority of county applications in Readington Township have had certified values in excess of the values mentioned in the “sliding scale,” so that the State share has with only two exceptions (the Kappus and the Bartles farms), been calculated at a flat rate of 60%. The SADC can pay up to 80% for low cost easements, but it is unlikely that that 60% SADC contribution will change in the future transactions because of the value of easements in Readington generally exceeds the minimum in the formula. The local contribution is split evenly between the Municipality and the County, with both paying 20%.

With regard to installment purchases, Readington Township has not used installment purchase agreements to date to pay landowners for easement purchase. As municipal finances have gotten tighter due to dropping revenues, this is a financial policy that Readington should seriously explore in 2010 and beyond. On all PIG farms that have been preserved to date, Readington Township has signed an Installment Purchase Agreement with the County and the County has paid their 20% cost share to the Township over 10 years.

In the first 10 years of the PIG program, Hunterdon County has cost share at 20% on all PIG projects funded by the State. This is likely to change, however, in 2010 and beyond, as cost share funding from the County will become competitive. The County has put a cap on Farmland Preservation funding, requiring that the County funding will not exceed the amount allocated under the dedicated trust. That amount is approximately 30% of the dedicated tax revenues that are collected annually, and the County’s PIG projects will be funded first. Readington will not know if its new PIG applications are likely to receive County cost share until all 2010 applicants are ranked in December. Since Readington has purchased 3 of its 2010 PIG farm applicants in fee, these Readington farms are already preserved and Readington will be looking for as much county funding as possible to help the Township retire this debt. All of Readington’s



present PIG applications meet the SADC criteria, although one is only 29 acres and has to be deemed acceptable by the County CADB

F.3 Cost Projections and Funding Plan; 1, 5, and 10-year Goals

It is difficult to project land and easement purchases 5 to 10 years into the future. The history of the cost of easements in Readington over the past 10 to 15 years illustrates this difficulty. The first easement purchased on a farm in Readington in 1987 sold for \$7,804 per acre. Eight to twelve years later between 1995 and 1999 easements on half dozen or more farms sold for between \$6,800 per acre and \$7,400 per acre. Prices gradually but steadily rose between 2000 and 2004 to approximately \$10,000 per acre. By 2005, prices had jumped sharply to \$14,000 per acre and by 2007 had jumped again to approximately \$17,000 per acre. By the end of 2008, the range of certified values was coming in at between \$17,500 per acre to upwards of \$20,000 per acre. By the end of 2009, however, real estate prices have now dropped by an estimated 15%. Given this information, and the present state of the economy, it seems reasonable to estimate that the price of the easements over the next ten years will likely remain relatively flat and average out to approximately \$18,000 per acre.

It is anticipated that Readington will be able to preserve approximately half of the 2,313 targeted farm acres or approximately 1,100 acres over the next 10 years. Based on the estimate of \$18,000/acre, the total annual cost of Readington's plan would be:

Total Annual Cost for 100 acres per year: \$1,800,000
(for years 1-4 and years 6-10)

- 20% Municipal: \$360,000
- 20% County: \$360,000
- 60% State: \$1,080,000

Total Annual cost for year 5 for 200 acres for this single year: \$3,600,000

- 20% municipal: \$720,000
- 20% county: \$720,000
- 60% State: \$2,160,000



Early in the past decade, Readington aggressively and effectively used pre-acquisition to lock in more preservation at the lower easement values available before 2006. Moving forward from 2009, Readington Township's finances will likely preclude the municipal pre-acquisition of easements beyond what is presently under contract. This new financial reality at the municipal level, and the prospect that the county cost share will now be more competitive, means that the use of installment purchase agreements should be seriously pursued, if Readington is going to continue its aggressive approach and succeed in preserving the targeted farms in its project area. It is anticipated that approximately three to four years from now, development will begin to pick up and Readington could lose some of its targeted farms without such action.

Readington did have its own unique, and very successful, option program in the late 80's and early 90's. This option program, over the course of 4 or five years helped to preserve seven farms. Readington should revisit this option program over the next decade, so as not to lose opportunities for lack of funds.

F.4. Any Other Financial Information as Appropriate

Readington's debt ratio is currently at 1.93% and its debt ceiling is 3.5%. The Township's current debt as of the end of 2009 is \$72.7 million dollars.

With regard to trends in the County and Municipal trust funds, it is likely that the both of these trust funds will remain static for the foreseeable future. Tax rateables are flat and revenues are decreasing. It is likely, however, that land values will also remain flat for the foreseeable future (for the next four years), and possibly even drop slightly during that time.

G. FARMLAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCES

G.1. Municipal Staff /Consulting Resources

Readington has an administrative staff with a good understanding of farmland preservation and its procedures. They can be counted on to process applications in an efficient manner. Readington uses the professional planning services of Clark Caton Hintz, P.C. for developing its Farmland Preservation and Agricultural elements to its Master Plan.

Readington Township staff, which administers its farmland preservation program, has benefited tremendously from monthly meetings with the County Farmland Preservation



staff to go over the status of various farms being processed for funding. These meetings are very much responsible for speeding up the Farmland Preservation process in Hunterdon County.

G.2. Legal Support

Readington's municipal attorney has many years of experience handling farmland preservation contracts and closings.

G.3. Database Development

This is being addressed by administrative staff and volunteers.

G.4. GIS Capacity and Staff Resources

Readington's Planning Consultant, Clark Caton Hintz, maintains the Township's GIS data base including multiple layers and coverages of farmland and agricultural data.

H. FACTORS LIMITING FARMLAND PRESERVATION IMPLEMENTATION

Over a ten-year period, between 1999 and 2009, there were very few factors limiting farmland preservation. Readington, the County and State were able to preserve all of the eligible farms located in Readington that applied for the program during that time frame.

Moving forward, County cost share funding will be a limiting factor. Without the ability to offer landowners a quick cash sale as Readington has done in the past will make negotiations with landowners more challenging. On the other hand, if for a number of years the development pressure is so low, a landowner that is anxious to sell would likely find a reduced offer still somewhat interesting, so this will balance the factors created by limited local funding.

At the end of ten years, if Readington's ten-year plan is successfully implemented, the Township will still have approximately 1,200 acres of farmland left unprotected. Readington's project area will, however, by the year 2019, include approximately 5,900 acres of preserved farmland. If Readington were to attain this goal, approximately 73% of its current active agricultural lands would be preserved farmland, which is more than twice the percentage of active agricultural lands (31%) to be preserved as farmland by 2010 within Hunterdon County. Readington Township makes up 10% of Hunterdon's land base. By 2010, with approximately 4,800 acres preserved, Readington will have over 18% of Hunterdon's 2010 projection of 26,000 acres of preserved farmland.



Clarke Caton Hintz

With Readington's farmland goals met and only a modest increase in open space preservation in the coming decade the density of the preserved land in Readington's project area will increase to over 53%.

If the price of easements and land does drop further, it will allow Readington to accelerate its rate of preservation beyond its current ten-year plan.

A very credible argument can be made that the preservation of farmland, particularly with the help of County and State cost share, is a less expensive alternative for a rural Townships like Readington, than letting farmland develop into housing. The cost of support services, particularly for a growing school population, exceeds revenue generated from development and this drives property taxes upward.



VI. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A. CONSISTENCY, DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Readington farmers directly benefit from the following NJ Department of Agriculture's Economic Development Strategies:

- a. NJ Fresh: The State's promotion of Jersey grown, Jersey Fresh and Jersey Organic Products program is extremely helpful for the growing number of farms in Readington that rely on direct marketing of vegetables and locally grown eggs and meat. Consumers have become very aware of the benefits of buying local and this has translated into a faithful customer base for Readington farmers that sell locally.
- b. Support of Equine Industry: Equine facilities are numerous in Readington and are an important component of Readington's agricultural base. These facilities also benefit from the Economic Development Strategies promoted by the NJ Department of Agriculture. One obvious example is a sign frequently seen as one drives around Readington Township reminding drivers that the speed limit is 25 miles per hour when a horse and rider are sharing the roadway.
- c. Hay Production: Support of the equine industry translates into support for the many farmers in Readington who specialize in hay production.

B. AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY RETENTION/ EXPANSION/RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

B.1. Institutional

- a. Fee Simple Farmland Preservation Efforts: Readington Township has reacted quickly on many occasions in the past when a local farm has become available for sale. The Township has immediately moved to buy the farm in fee and then proceeded to use the Farmland Preservation Program to preserve the farm. The farm has then been auctioned deed restricted. This program has helped to retain and develop an active agricultural community here in Readington.



- b. Agritourism: Readington has created and sustained a regulatory climate where agri-tourism is thriving. There are numerous examples of farms that benefit from this policy. Three large preserved family farms have been particularly successful:
- The Schaeffer Farms on County Route 523 which run a farm stand, have haunted hayrides and pick-your-own pumpkins, hold an Easter egg hunt, pick your own strawberries, and vegetables, and flowers, grow and direct market sell greenhouse stock, sell Christmas trees, and more recently have added a Holiday Lights show.
 - The Burjan Farm with a fall festival and pick your own pumpkins. They advertise widely with many large signs along major highways..
 - Readington River Buffalo Farm holds a number of successful annual public events to bring potential customers to the farm. This farm markets bison meat directly from a farm store and have hayrides to pick-your own pumpkins in the fall.
- c. Horse Farms: Readington has created a regulatory climate where its horse farms are thriving. Horse farms have generally been expanding their operations. A number of larger horse farms in Readington are important facilities for the larger region, including Briarwood Farms and Lightfield Farms.
- d. Horse Trails: Readington Township works cooperatively with the Readington Trail Association to create and maintain horse trails, and to provide open land to conduct the Association's annual trail pace. More recently, the Township accepted a donation of "Horse riders – caution 25 mph" road signs from the Association and installed them on many of the Townships connector roads.
- e. Trail Network Development Grants: Readington Recreation and the Readington Trail Association have recently completed a trail network from the village of Stanton, over Round Mountain through Deer Path Park, ending at the County's South Branch Preserve along the Raritan River. This was accomplished after several years of development with the help of a National Trails Grant that the Township received for \$17,000. The two organizations are currently working together again to utilize two new trail



grants, for a total of \$32,500, to create a seven-mile horse and hiking trail through Readington Open Spaces in the central portion of the Township. These efforts are very important to enhancing the viability of the Township's equine industry.

- f. Farm Stands and Community Farm Markets: There are a number of successful farm stands in Readington. Readington Farmers and Readington residents have recently taken advantage of the new Farm Market that opened at the Dvoor Farm on the Route 12 circle just outside Flemington. Residents in the northern end of the Township frequent the Melick Farm Market south of Oldwick. Readington has requested funding to create a municipal farm stand, where farms from the interior of the Township would have a more visible location to market products directly to the public.
- g. New Educational Opportunities:
 - Readington Township successfully launched a very successful Community Garden at its Dobozyński Farm Park. Over 50 families participated and the group learned a great deal about growing food organically. Participants of all ages gained a new appreciation for hands – on agriculture by growing and harvesting over 30 varieties of fruits and vegetables.
 - In 2009, Readington Township continued its tradition of offering a bus tour of preserved farms. Held in October 2009, the tour attracted a full busload of participants who stopped at and learned about four very different agricultural operations.
- h. Community Supported Agriculture (CSA):
 - Readington residents do take advantage of the Stony Brook-Millstone CSA that drops produce shares at the Basil Bandwagon in Flemington, but there is no CSA in the Township. The Agricultural Advisory and Open Space Committees have envisioned and written grants in the hopes of funding a CSA on publicly owned open space in the Township. This is an ambitious, but potentially very worthwhile project where the Township would need to work with area farmers to succeed.



- Christmas Tree Farms- There are about six farms that direct market Christmas trees and that advertise in town and sell almost all the trees they can produce.
- Livestock Operations - There are a number of farms in Readington that raise sheep, beef cattle, turkeys, and pigs for direct market locally.
- Specialty Crops:
 - The Burjan Farm raises pheasants for sale to hunt clubs
 - The Readington River Buffalo Farm sells bison meat for direct marketing.
 - The Hidden Meadows Nursery sells all manner of nursery plants to area Landscapers.
 - Ramesh Kania produces mushrooms.
- i. Agricultural Education Coordination: Readington Farmers make good use of Central New Jersey’s agricultural education resources.
- j. Farmer Support: Readington Township, which sits on the western boundary of heavily populated Somerset County, has a perfect location for Agricultural Tourism activities. This fact has not been lost on Readington’s farmers. Each fall visitors can choose any of three large preserved farms that offer pick your own pumpkins, mazes, and haunted hay rides. Readington Township plays an important part in their success by providing a regulatory climate that allows them to attract customers with signage and to handle large numbers of participants safely without over-regulation. The Township’s representatives have been supportive and helpful when issues have arisen.

B.2. Business Suppliers and Services, Processors

Farm Supplies (fertilizer, pesticide, feed, seed, equipment, parts, etc .)

- Global Ag, Flemington, NJ
- Horsemen’s Outlet, Lebanon, NJ
- Neshanic Farm, Home and Garden Supply, Neshanic Station, NJ
- Stephan Farm & Horse Supply, Long Valley, NJ
- Tractor Supply Store, Ringoes, NJ



Feed

- Somerset Grain & Feed, Bernardsville, N
- Sergeantsville Grain & Feed, Sergeantsville, NJ
- The Tack Room, Pittstown, NJ

Fencing

- Amwell Fence, Ringoes, NJ
- Eagle Fence and Supply, Branchburg, NJ
- The Fence Company, Ringoes, NJ
- New Holland Fence, New Holland, PA
- Rudl Fencing, Glen Gardner, NJ
- Superior Fencing and Hole Drilling, Lebanon, NJ
- Town and Country Fencing, Lebanon, NJ

B.3. Anticipated Agricultural Trends

a. Market Location:

- Farmers in Readington have the good fortune of being one of the eastern most agricultural Townships in central New Jersey. Three Bridges and Whitehouse Station are about 6-7 miles from Somerville, a major population center.

b. Product Demand:

- There will be a higher economic return on locally grown food in the near future, as the era of inexpensive oil draws to a close, globally.
- There is an increasing demand for locally grown organically produced food that is keeping Readington's local market strong.

c. Emerging Opportunities:

- A very large 360-acre farm is in the planning stages of developing a large organic produce operation. The Farm will make use of frontage on State Highway 202, which is the well-traveled roadway between Somerville and Flemington. Work on fencing and planting the fields has begun and the owner is planning to build a farm market building in the spring. The, owner, Paul Profeta, has elicited the help of both the



Township and the agricultural experts from the Rutgers University in developing his plans.

- In part because of the impressive success of Readington’s Community Garden, and the interest in organic gardening, the establishment of a Community CSA would be a natural extension of the effort discussed above. There are several Township owned properties that would be suitable locations that are presently being developed.

B.4. Agricultural Support Needs

a. Agricultural Facilities and Infrastructure:

Farmers’ Markets

- Flemington Farmers’ Market, Dvoor Farm, Flemington, NJ
- High Bridge Farmers’ Market, High Bridge, NJ
- Summit Farmers’ Market, Summit, NJ

Food Processors, Processing Facilities:

- Dealaman Enterprises, Warren, NJ
- Frigit Freeze, Milford, NJ
- V. Roche & Son, Whitehouse Station, NJ
- Springtown Meats, Springtown, PA

b. Flexible Land Use Regulations: Readington has a municipal Right to Farm Law and the Township has a long history of allowing and encouraging agriculture. The right-to-farm ordinance is attached to this document.

c. Agricultural Representation: A Readington farmer, Pat Hilton, is active in a number of agricultural institutions and most recently represented Readington on the County Agricultural Development Board. There are a number of other agricultural leaders from Readington that participate County wide like John Hargrave, former Board of Agriculture President. Local farmer Julia Allen served six years on the SADC.

B.5. Agricultural Support Implementation

a. New Farm Market: In 2009, Readington Township passed legislation making farm markets an allowed use, then worked with the Stanton Reformed Church Nursery School staff to start a new farm market. The new



Farmers Market in the village of Stanton has just completed its first year, and it was very appreciated both by the community and the local farmers.

- b. Prospective Township owned and operated Farmers Market: Readington owns an appropriate piece of land on State Highway Route 202, and just applied for a grant to create a local Farm Market on this site that the Township would then make available to local Farmers to sell their produce. If successful, this could be a very important marketing option for local farmers.
- c. Rental Land: Readington makes many hundreds of acres of Open Space lands available to local farmers to lease for additional acreage to farm. Having additional acreage nearby and available has been key to the success of a number of local farmers. This arrangement is a real win-win, as the Township gets the farmers help in maintaining these lands.



VII. NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION

A. NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION COORDINATION

A.1. Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)

Since 1935, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (originally called the Soil Conservation Service) has provided leadership in a partnership effort to help private land owners and managers conserve their soil, water, and other natural resources. NRCS employees provide technical assistance and financial assistance for many conservation programs. NRCS science and technology activities provide technical expertise in areas such as animal husbandry and clean water, ecological sciences, engineering, resource economics, and social sciences. The NRCS also provide expertise in soil science and leadership for soil surveys and for the National Resources Inventory, which assesses natural resource conditions and trends in the United States.

The local NRCS office serving Hunterdon County is located in Franklin Township. Hunterdon County farmers may utilize this local NRCS office for technical assistance with conservation issues. NRCS will also reach out directly to landowners if they know of a farmer who is in need of assistance, or can use the guidance of the NRCS staff. The local NRCS office also helps to prepare Conservation Plans for Hunterdon County farmers. An approved Conservation Plan is required to be in place within one year of signing the deed of easement for those farmers who sell a development easement via any state farmland preservation program, or apply for natural resource conservation program grants such as the WHIP and EQIP. The local NRCS office administers these conservation program grants, which offer financial incentives to support Conservation projects, including stream riparian buffers and wildlife habitat.

Most Readington farmers with sizeable farms have approved Conservation Plans on file and have done work to implement them. Many are enrolled in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) program and benefit from annual payments.

A.2. Soil Conservation Districts

The Hunterdon County Soil Conservation District (SCD) provides technical services, including animal waste management, design and construction of erosion control structures and Intergrated Pest Management. The SDC also assists in developing farm conservation plans and ensure projects are necessary and feasible. Applications are



forwarded to the NJ State Soil Conservation Committee, which recommends projects to the SADC for funding approvals. The Hunterdon County SCD gives final approval on all Conservation Plans and program contracts. Although the services of the NRCS for the implementation of the Conservation Plan are cost free to the farmer, the services of the SCD may be needed to complete the implementation of the plan and this work is billable as the SCD is a separate entity from the NRCS.

In Hunterdon County, the Soil Conservation District also routinely monitors preserved farms once a year to ensure compliance with the deed of easement due to the manpower involved. The SCD then reports back annually to the CADB with the status of all property.

Readington Township works closely with the Soil Conservation District as well as its own Environmental Commission and consultants during development reviews at the Planning Board and Board of Adjustment reviews to assure that negative impacts of non agricultural developments on natural resources is minimized.

Most farmers that own the larger farms in Readington Township have applied for and received grants from the Natural Resource Conservation Service funded by the federal government. It is less common for Readington farmers to make use of the State's Soil and Water Conservation Grant Program, first because the program only pays 50% of cost, and in recent years has been under funded by the State.

B. NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION PROGRAM

B.1. SADC Soil and Water Conservation Programs

The SADC provides grants to eligible landowners to fund up to 50 percent of approved soil and water conservation projects. Farms must be permanently preserved or enrolled in an eight-year program to be eligible for the grants. Examples of eligible projects include: terrace systems, diversions, stream protection, water impoundment reservoirs, irrigation systems, sediment retention, erosion or water control systems, drainage systems, animal waste control facilities, agri-chemical handling facilities and land shaping or grading. Readington Township needs to make its farmers more aware of these programs; however there has been a recent lack of available funding for this program.



B.2. Federal Conservation Programs

Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP): This program provides technical, financial, and educational assistance to farmers/producers for conservation practices that address natural resource concerns, such as water quality. Practices under this program include integrated crop management, grazing land management, well sealing, erosion control systems, vegetative filter strips/riparian buffers, animal waste management facilities and irrigation systems.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP): Under CREP, farmers voluntarily remove cropland along streams, lakes and wetlands from agricultural production and convert the land to native grasses, trees and other vegetation to provide buffers. These conservation buffers slow and absorb runoff, sediment, nutrients, and chemicals from cropland while also creating beneficial wildlife habitat for many species in need.

Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP): The Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program provides matching funds to help purchase development rights to keep productive farmland in agricultural uses. Working through existing programs, USDA partners with State, or local governments and non-governmental organizations to acquire conservation easements or other interests in land from landowners. USDA provides up to 50 percent of the fair market easement value of the conservation easement. At least one Readington Township Farm has been partially funded through this program.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) Grants: Readington is the most active Township in Hunterdon County in applying for Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) Grants and implementing conservation measures through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) on Township-owned land. Readington Township has been approved for over \$60,000 in grants over the last three years for such measures as wetland enhancement, riparian restoration, invasive species control, and native warm season grass plantings. The Township has implemented conservation measures on 6 Township-owned properties as of November 2007.

B.3. NJDEP Landowner Incentive Program

Readington Farmers need additional information on this and other similar programs and the Agricultural Advisory Committee is planning to host an information meeting on the subject for Township farmers.



B.4. Other Programs

Rutgers Cooperative Extension Service: Rutgers continues to assist local farmers, enhancing their market potential and assists them in using best management practices.

C. WATER RESOURCES

C.1. Supply Characteristics

The majority of Readington Township depends on individual wells and ground water resources for most of its water needs. Only certain areas of Whitehouse Station and Three Bridges (specifically the sewer service areas) are serviced by New Jersey American Water. Most agricultural irrigation uses streams and ponds.

The Township's major concern regarding future water supply relates to the quality of ground water resources. This is true for both future uses which continue to rely on individual wells and those for whom New Jersey American Water or other water supply companies provide services using deep production wells or surface water. Proper steps must be taken to insure that residential or commercial development does not jeopardize the aquifer's ability to recharge and supply the Township with the necessary potable water.

Groundwater drawn from wells continues to be the primary source of potable water for residents of Readington. The principal threat to Readington's groundwater quality is the contamination that can occur from nitrates contained in effluent from septic disposal fields. High concentration of nitrates may lead to eutrophication of lakes and estuaries. Extremely high concentrations can cause health problems, especially in infants. Future development should ensure that groundwater supplies are not subject to degradation by nitrate contamination.

Protection of the potable water supply is of critical importance in land use planning, particularly in rural areas, which rely on groundwater from relatively shallow wells. State and County policies strongly support planning for water quality purposes.

C.2. Agricultural Demand and Supply limitations

Readington Township does not anticipate future water availability problems for agriculture for several reasons. One is water availability. Readington sits atop soils designated as Brunswick Shale, a highly productive aquifer. The second reason is that Readington's zoning strong protection for this groundwater aquifer. The zoning only



allows very low-density residential development. The zoning also requires mandatory clustering of housing in the large residential and agricultural sections of the Township, meaning that land disturbance that negatively impacts ground and surface water resources will be kept to a minimum.

C.3. Conservation and Allocation Strategies

Readington's rural and environmental planning policies, its open space preservation strategies and its recently updated Storm Water Control ordinance are all designed to help conserve and protect water resources, both surface water and ground water.

D. WASTE MANAGEMENT PLANNING

The March 2008 Amendment of the Hunterdon County Solid Waste Plan, initially certified by the NJDEP in December 2008 sets forth the range of materials to be recycled and details the responsibilities of residents, commercial and industrial entities, schools, and local governments in achieving the goal of diverting at least 50% of the County's solid waste from the municipal solid waste stream. This plan will put a heavy burden on municipalities to recycle more of their solid waste stream. Readington will be reviewing their programs in 2010 to look for ways to improve its recycling policies.

Readington Township is home to a fairly large number of sizable equine operations that generate sizeable amounts of manure. Readington needs to step up a dialogue with the farm managers to assure adherence to best management practices.

E./F. ENERGY CONSERVATION PLANNING, OUTREACH AND INCENTIVES

Readington intends to be more proactive in educating farmers and landowners of grant opportunities for energy alternatives. A fair number of Readington Township Farmers have been taking advantage of subsidies available for the installation of solar arrays on their farms in recent years. In July of 2009, Readington Township held a "Solar Seminar" to better inform Readington residents and farmers about the State and Federal subsidies currently available, and it is planning a "Green Fair" for February or March of 2010. The Township currently has no ordinance that specifically addresses alternate forms of energy generation, but the Planning Board has talked about developing one in the near future. The Township is generally very supportive of alternate forms of energy generation as an ancillary use on farms.



VIII. AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY SUSTAINABILITY, RETENTION AND PROMOTION

A. EXITING AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY SUPPORT

A.1. Right to Farm

To ensure farmers have the ability to continue accepted agricultural operations, the Right to Farm Act was enacted by the State Legislature in 1983 and amended in 1998. The Act provides “protection of commercial farm operations from nuisance action, where recognized methods and techniques of agricultural production are applied, while, at the same time, acknowledging the need to provide a proper balance among the varied and conflicting interests of all lawful activities in New Jersey.”⁵

Readington Township’s Right to Farm Ordinance was modeled directly after the State’s model ordinance, with the exception that Readington Township’s ordinance did not repeat lists of examples. Although it is slightly briefer, it is essentially the same ordinance as the State recommended. The Township’s Right to Farm ordinance is attached at the end of this document as Appendix C.

Farmers in Readington Township have occasionally needed formal mediation to resolve problems between farmers and their neighbors. Several years ago, the CADB heard the neighbor’s complaints regarding Hionis Greenhouses, which had opened a retail market on their Coddington Road site. Generally, however, when an issue has come up, the Township Committee and members of the Agricultural Advisory Committee have been able to resolve the problem. The key to resolving difficulties, or not having them arise in the first place, has been to make sure that the Township’s Planning Board, and the Township’s zoning officials have a good understanding of the Right to Farm Act.

A.2. Farmland Assessment

Farmland Assessment is critical to the future of agriculture in the State of New Jersey, and in Readington Township as well. At the present time, possibly because of current economic conditions, farmland assessment is again coming under fire and needs to be defended. For this reason, the Readington Agricultural Advisory Committee is not suggesting any changes to the Farmland Assessment law. When the law does come up for revision, it will be most important to explain to the State lawmakers how the Act works for agriculture and why it is vital to agricultural viability.

⁵ NJ Right to Farm Program



A List of all of Township farms in farmland assessment is attached at the end of this document as Appendix A.

A.3. Community Farm Stand

The Township has applied for a State grant to fund the development of a Community Farm Stand for Township Farmers. The Township has identified, and currently owns, a suitable location. It is a highly visible site on State Highway Route 202, on the northbound side, just north of Three Bridges. The site has an existing parking area and improved ingress and egress as it was the site of a former motor vehicle facility that was dismantled many years ago. There is presently no structure on the site. What the Agricultural Advisory Committee, with the input of the Township Planner, is envisioning is a small structure suitable for seasonal sales that would be made available to Township farmers for the sale of their products. The site is an excellent location, since Route 202 is one of several heavily traveled routes in and out of Hunterdon County, between Flemington and Somerville.

B. OTHER STRATEGIES

B.1. Permit Streamlining

Costs of building permits on agricultural buildings are calculated at a reduced rate.

B.2. Agricultural Vehicle Movement

Agricultural vehicle movement is generally adequate throughout the Township. Few, if any, conflict have been reported.

B.3. Agricultural Labor Housing

Agricultural housing exists on some farms in Readington and historically they have been approved when a need is demonstrated. It is not proven to be necessary for most Readington farms, however.

B.4. Wildlife Management Strategies

- a. Deer control: A serious concern for Readington farmers is the problem of the excessive deer population. Readington hosts one of the highest densities



of deer in the State. Readington farmers have adapted. Most rent their farm to hunt clubs, and have installed deer fencing where absolutely necessary, and to a predominant crop of grass hay rather than grains. Nevertheless, it is not uncommon for grains such as corn, soybeans, and rye to be included in a rotation, and deer damage does take a heavy toll on these crops. Readington Township has responded by leasing as open space tracts as possible to insured hunt clubs where it is considered safe and feasible. The Township advertises for bids once per year and hunting contracts are signed with the club that is the highest bidder on each parcel. Approximately eight large tracts in diverse locations throughout the Township were leased in 2009.

- b. State and County Lands: The State of NJ owns two large Wildlife Management Areas in Readington, one of approximately 500 acres along the Raritan River to the South and another of approximately 230 acres along the Lamington River on the Townships northern boundary. Both of these areas are actively hunted for deer. Hunterdon County owns hundreds of conservation land in Readington as well, and they allow hunting on suitable large tracts by a lottery and permitting process.

B.5. Agricultural Education and Promotion

- a. Farm Tours: Readington Township's Agricultural Advisory Committee and its Open Space Committee sponsor an annual bus tour of preserved farms. This tour has been very successful in showing off Readington's preserved farms and the Township's viable agricultural to citizens who otherwise would not be aware. Highlighted on this tour are exactly how many farms we have, where the farms are, and the incredible variety of products produced by Township farmers. It provides a pleasant way to introduce residential neighbors to farm neighbors.
- b. Open Space Walks: Another popular program that serves as an educational tool for teaching citizens about the farms and the farmland preservation program in Readington Township is the Open Space Walks. For almost three years now, the Readington Open Space Committee has organized an "Open Space Hike" on different trails each month on the third Sunday afternoon of the month, and the hikes are very popular. It is become the norm to have 30 to 40 persons participating and often times these hikes are in close proximity to private farms and over open space that is being farmed.



The walks provide an opportunity for members of the Township Open Space and Agricultural Advisory Committees to explain the Townships Farmland Preservation Program and to talk to residents about the agriculture on neighboring farms.

- c. Newsletter Articles: In the past, Readington has used its quarterly Newsletter to introduce farmers and their operations to the non-farm residents of the Township. Starting in 2009, for economic reasons, only one Newsletter per year is sent out. The monthly “Readington News”, a free newspaper sent out to all households monthly, has replaced the function of the Township Newsletter. The Agricultural Advisory Committee must now make a better effort to continue submitting articles about local farms to the Readington News so as to keep Readington residents aware of their farm neighbors and also to know what the farms are selling. The larger farms that rely on agri-tourism advertise routinely in the Readington News.

B.6. Land Maintenance

One of the most pressing needs for full time farmers in Readington Township is the need to rent additional farmland. Increasingly, as more land is preserved for open space, as well as for agriculture, the township and the farmers have a common need, the Township for land maintenance and the farmer for farmland that available for years at a time, without fear of loosing access. The solution is for the farmer and the Township to enter into a long-term maintenance agreement whereby the farmers farm appropriate portions of the township’s open space lands, in exchange for keeping it mowed and accessible. This arrangement is mutably beneficial, as it keeps the property open for the Township’s citizens, helping to control invasive plants that would otherwise take over the land.



CONCLUSION: READINGTON'S SUPPORT OF AGRICULTURE

The aforementioned Right to Farm Ordinance is an active example of Readington Township's support of agriculture. In addition, Readington has instituted within in its zoning ordinance valuable provisions that serve to protect, preserve and support agriculture, including a provision that new residential developments approved next to an agricultural use must be buffered, and that the deeds of the new residential properties must acknowledge the adjoining agricultural use. In 1998, Readington created the Agricultural Residential (AR) Zone which includes Readington's ADA, which allows only low-density residential development and requires a mandatory cluster. In the AR zone, residential development is required to be clustered on 20% of the land and 80% must be set aside for agriculture and open space purposes. This accomplishes two purposes. It protects valuable farmland, which in Readington is largely comprised prime soils and soils of Statewide Importance, and it protects other natural resources such as the ground water supply of the Township. It also reduces the interface between residential boundaries and agricultural land, where problems can occur. Keeping overall population density low in agricultural areas helps to minimize the conflicts between farmers and other residents, and keeps rural roads safer for farmers driving farm equipment.

Without the pro-active efforts dating back 30 years and the very successful farmland preservation program administered by Readington Township, as well as the support of the Hunterdon County Farmland Preservation Program and the incredible funding made available by the Garden State Preservation Trust, the agricultural land base and the agricultural industry it supports would have certainly disappeared in Readington Township by the year 2009. The fact that this is not the case and that so much of Readington's valuable farmland has been preserved is important to both the agricultural industry in Hunterdon and the agricultural industry in the State. Readington makes up 10% of Hunterdon's land mass and Hunterdon is one on the most important agricultural counties in New Jersey. In addition, the soil quality and the quality of the farms throughout Readington are exceptional, when compared to others, not just at a County level, but also on a State level.

The fact that Readington now has over 70 preserved farms, resulting in the protection of approximately 4,800 acres of the Township's land base, has without a doubt been the single most important reason that the future of agriculture in Readington Township is secure.



Clarke Caton Hintz

Readington has the best of the attributes of what has made New Jersey the “Garden State.” That is, a critical mass of high quality farmland close to population centers, and land blessed with ample rain and groundwater resources. Many preserved farms are still owned by experienced farm families that were able to retain their farms in the family because of the Farmland Preservation Program. Other farmers that have bought their farms more recently were only able to buy farms because of the farmland preservation program. The importance of the past successes and the need to continue with farmland preservation cannot be overstated.