

Design Brief

Part A, Performance Objectives

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This brief constitutes your instructions.

The following qualitative and quantitative performance objectives constitute your instructions for this charrette. Background information that inform these objectives can be found in other parts of this brief and in the myriad resource books and reports that are available in the charrette library.

These instructions are based entirely on public policy.

It is important to point out that in every case these performance objectives have been drawn from publicly sanctioned policy documents. These policy documents have originated at the local, county, and state level. These policy documents have in turn been influenced by national and in some instances global problems and the concerted efforts of the higher levels of government to coordinate practical solutions to them.

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The charrette organizers have boiled these policies down to one goal and seven objectives. This goal and these objectives frame the policies so that you can translate them into physical design proposals for the Somerset County Center area.

Your Goal is:

If the New Jersey State Plan and the "Centers" initiative are successful, the number of jobs and homes in this valley will eventually (increase by X %). Somerset County has asked us to help identify an equitable, economic and ecological vision of what this valley may look like when that day comes.

Your instructions are:

Your instructions are in the table below. The left column contains the seven design objectives and, below them, sub-objectives that contribute to the main objective.

Use indicators to guide and describe your design.

The New Jersey State Plan depends on indicators of sustainability to measure progress. In conformance with this spirit we ask you to describe the consequences of your design through measures of economic, social, and environmental sustainability. The middle column below provides a lengthy but still partial list of possible sustainability indicators. As anticipated in the State Plan, these indicators are both quantitative and qualitative.

Design Objective	Possible Indicator	Reference (more to come)
Objective 1. Create a Single Place From this Disparate Location.		
Regional Center Designed and planned to foster a sense of community.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Amount of new or revived public squares and community parks. 2. Number of new or rehabilitated feature buildings 3. Percentage of population that lives within walking distance to commercial and transit services. 4. Miles of new pedestrian or bikeways. 	RCDR
Create opportunities for community interaction and safety	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Walking distance to commercial and transit services. 2. Percent of new and in-fill buildings that connect to and observe public spaces. 	RCDR
Enhance the quality of open spaces, streetscapes, and historic structures and features	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Percent of roadway devoted to pedestrians and bikes. 2. Degree of importance and foregrounding of public open space. 3. Degree of public utility, foregrounding and visibility of important historic structures. 	RCDR
Use stream and river system to make place	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Percentage of streams incorporated into open space and greenway system. 2. Percentage of the population within a two minute walk of riparian stream area. 	RCDR
Use infill development in a variety of sizes, uses, and styles within centers and on corridors as a means to complete and enhance the community.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ratio of square footage of new uses in infill sites to new uses overall. 2. Number of other listed performance indices affected by in-fill projects. 	RCDR
Objective 2. Create Connections Between the Three Major Urban Points		

Design Objective	Possible Indicator	Reference (more to come)
Facilitate walking for recreation and as a transportation element or mode	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Degree of interconnectivity in the circulation network. 2. Percent reduction in sprawl and separation of functions when compared with present trends. 3. Degree of integration between walking as recreation and walking as access to transit or public/commercial buildings. 	RCDR
Co ordinate the urban design between Raritan, Somerville, and Bridgewater Commons area.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Miles of enhanced and/or new community connections between the three nodes. 2. Success in determining and implementing an urban design strategy for road and greenway connections between points. 3. Degree to which infill projects fill the gaps between the three points. 4. Degree to which infill and new projects provide continuous mixed use opportunities to create neighborhood nodes in the larger constellation of other related neighborhood nodes. 	RCDR
Accommodate but don't promote the automobile.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Percentage of trip share migrating to short hop car trip, transit, bike, or walking if all mixed use and infill objectives are achieved. 2. Capital theoretically available for land use and alternative transportation mode investments as a ratio of presumed success in shifting modes¹ 3. Assess the positive and negative implications of the proposed hundred million dollar roadway improvement plan. 	SP
Objective 3. Integrate and Exploit the Transportation Corridors That Dissect the Center		
Plan for the transportation corridors while integrating them with lower order streets and pedestrian and bike ways.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of new and improved means for moving from one node to the other. 2. Number of areas where transportation corridors are no longer a barrier, both practically and in urban design terms, between key centers. 3. Number of areas where pedestrian and bike access has been established where presently denied. 	RCDR 55

¹ The *Somerset Regional Center Traffic Study; Recommended Improvement Program* was submitted to the Somerset County Planning Board on February 9, 1998. It outlines 90 million dollars worth of road and intersection improvements that, in the opinion of the consultants, will be needed in the short to medium term[10-15 years]. This amount was generated using standard methodologies to determine future mode share, trip number, and trip length. A very large proportion of these improvements were suggested as means by which to improve access to the Chimney Rock Road area with 29 million suggested for one grade separation at Chimney Rock Road and Route 22.

Design Objective	Possible Indicator	Reference (more to come)
Make highways corridors conform to community preferences and long term economic and social health of the center.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Measured improvement in citizen satisfaction with the appearance and utility of the corridors. 2. Measured ease in moving from one part of the center to the other in terms of trip duration, reduced congestion, availability and ease of transit use, biking and walking. 	RCDR 55
Objective 4.		
Exploit Redevelopment Opportunities		
Encourage residential infill projects where appropriate.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Percentage of designated areas redeveloped. 2. Floor Surface Ratio (FSR) of redeveloped parcels (set target, such as 1). 3. Residential density of parcels converted for housing (set target, such as 8 d.u./acre). 	RCDR
The Center should encourage Infill development and adaptive reuse of existing structures.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Degree to which new development attaches to and completes surrounding urban context. 2. Percentage of existing buildings retained and re-used. 	RCDR
Maximize the utility and efficiency of existing road and utility infrastructure.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parcels developed without requiring all new road and utility infrastructure. 2. Jobs created as a proportion of new paved areas in the valley (strive to minimize new pavement/infrastructure). 3. Percentage of private sector contributions used to finance re-construction vs. for new roads. 	SP
Objective 5.		
Integrate Land Uses		
Maintain a neighbourhood focus with mixed land uses within districts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Population located within a five-minute walk of public, commercial, employment nodes. 2. Percent population located within five-minute walk of frequent transit to major regional employment and commercial nodes. 	RCDR 55
Mix land uses in co-ordination with housing mix and diversity of job types	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Percentage of new housing affordable by low to moderate-income households. 2. Percentage of new housing affordable by average worker. 3. Affordability of home ownership for average worker. 4. Percentage of streets with wide range of different housing types and cost. 5. Percent increase in integration of new commercial, office and light industrial facilities into existing and new mixed use communities. 	RCDR 55
Objective 6.		
Enhance the Green Infrastructure		

Design Objective	Possible Indicator	Reference (more to come)
The regional Center must respect and ultimately enhance its green infrastructure.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Degree of change of storm drain performance toward emulation of pre-development function. 2. Degree of mitigation of flooding and non point source pollution discharged to the Raritan River. 3. Number of sizable natural areas protected/number of plant and animal species protected. 4. Miles of continuous public greenway established. 	RCDR 55 SP
Use the drainage systems as a framework for re-development and as a recreational resource.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Miles or acres of land where drainage system has been foregrounded. 2. Acres of forests restored near streams and rivers. 3. Number of new points where public access from surrounding neighborhoods has been enhanced. 4. Number of neighborhoods defined by drainage system. 	RCDR 55
Objective 7. Create a Landscape of Equity		
Create an environment where people help people and the focus is on families.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New urban squares, sidewalks, playgrounds, walking paths. 2. New communities knitted into fabric of existing community and environment. 3. Schools as social, physical, and visual focus for neighborhoods. 	RCDR 55
Increase opportunity for senior and affordable housing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improvement in measures of access to housing. 2. Appropriate housing for seniors with access to transit, shops, and public amenity spaces. 	