

2025 MASTER PLAN
BOROUGH OF PENNINGTON
NEW JERSEY

12. Relation to Other Plans, Draft 3

Released by Andy Jackson, Chair of the Master Plan Committee on xx/xx/2025.

Conditionally adopted by the Planning Board on xx/xx/2025. Final adoption will occur later in 2025 when all elements of the Master Plan 2025 are presented.

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Members of the Master Plan Committee

Andy Jackson (Chair), Nadine Stern, Amy Kastler-Taub, Kate O'Neill, and Board Planner Jim Kyle of KMA.

1. Introduction

The Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28(4)d states that the master plan shall include a specific policy statement indicating the relationship of the proposed development of the municipality, as developed in the master plan to (1) the master plans of contiguous municipalities, (2) the master plan of the county in which the municipality is located, (3) the State Development and Redevelopment Plan adopted pursuant to the State Planning Act, sections 1 through 12 of P.L.1985, c.398 (C.52:18A-196 et seq.) and (4) the district solid waste management plan required pursuant to the provisions of the Solid Waste Management Act: P.L.1970, c.39 (C.13:1E-1 et seq.) of the county in which the municipality is located.

Pennington Borough has chosen to include this topic as a separate element in the Master Plan.

Four plans directly impact Pennington Borough.

- Hopewell Township surrounds the Borough, so its Master Plan and actions have a direct impact on the Borough and its residents. The Township and Borough also have several shared services and cooperate in a number of areas.
- The Borough is one of 12 municipalities in Mercer County and the County's Master Plan elements relating to land use and infrastructure are relevant to the Borough. All County Government departments play a role in the lives of Borough residents. The County Planning Department is responsible for the County Master Plan and has approval authority over the master plans of County municipalities. The County's Engineering and Highway divisions are responsible for County roads and bridges and other infrastructure. The County is the Borough's point of contact with the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Greater Philadelphia region.
- The State of New Jersey Office of Planning Advocacy (OPA) and the State Planning Commission (SPC) are responsible for the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP). The 2001 SDRP is being updated, and a preliminary draft was approved by the SPC in December 2024. The Mercer County Planning Department acts as the conduit between its municipalities and the State for SDRP development and implementation.
- The Mercer County Improvement Authority (MCIA) is an independent agency set up to provide services and programs for the County and its municipalities. It is responsible for developing, amending, and administering the District Solid Waste Management Plan. It manages the recycling or disposal of all waste in the County, including the municipal solid waste (MSW) collected by the Borough and delivered to the MCIA transfer station, and the recyclable materials collected by an independent contractor.

Borough Vision on External Plans – Be Proactive not Reactive

The vision for Pennington Borough's interactions with the planning departments of government entities having an influence on the life and well-being of Borough residents is to be proactive rather than reactive. The borough should ensure that its interests are heard during the development of relevant external plans and that it makes use of all resources, financial or services, available to it from adopted plans and amendments.

Goals for Interaction with External Plans

1. The Pennington Borough Planning Board should play an active role in monitoring and influencing the development, amendment and implementation of relevant external plans. Whenever a change in an external plan is deemed to impact Pennington, the then-current Master Plan elements and ordinances affected should be reviewed by the Planning Board to determine if they remain consistent or need updating.
2. The Chair of the Planning Board will summarize the relevant activities related to the external plans during periodic reports to the Borough Council. Urgent matters can be brought to the Council immediately by the Council representative to the Planning Board.
3. Strong connections should be established between the Borough Planning Board and the Hopewell Township Planning Board. Important areas of interaction include:
 - a. The Pennington Borough Economic Development Commission should work with the Township's Tourism and Economic Development Advisory Committee on commercial development areas of interest to both parties. Of particular interest to the Borough is development on Route 31. Properties south of West Delaware Avenue are largely in the Township, whereas those to the north are in the Borough. It would make sense that development in both locations follows a consistent and optimized plan.
 - b. Mobility issues on Route 31 and its intersections are of great concern to the Borough. The Borough and the Township should provide a uniform face to Mercer County and the State of New Jersey on requests for improvements to address common concerns.
 - c. Open space parcels available for acquisition of most interest to the Borough are in Hopewell Township, so it is important that the Borough and Township work together on acquisition and preservation.
4. The Planning Board should develop closer ties with the Mercer County Planning Department. The Department welcomes and encourages input from municipalities as they develop, update or amend the elements of the County Plan. They also are the approval body for updates or amendments to the Borough Master Plan and its elements. The County also offers to help the Planning Board on master plan development. The County is the Borough's link to the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) and the NJ Department of Transportation. These relationships are key to projects on State Route 31 in Pennington Borough and Hopewell Township.
5. On the State Development and Redevelopment plan, Pennington Borough should actively participate in County meetings that seek input for the plan, and in the County-organized cross-acceptance process.

The external plans outlined above are discussed in detail in the following sections.

2. Hopewell Township Master Plan

The Hopewell Township Planning Board adopted its latest periodic reexamination of its Master Plan and Development Regulations on December 13, 2021. Its previous reexamination was adopted on December 15, 2011.

The current list of Township Master Plan elements, with adoption dates, is as follows:

- Round 4 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan (adopted June 26, 2025)
- Open Space and Recreation Plan Element (adopted February 24, 2022)
- Master Plan Amendment: Creation of the OP1 Zone (adopted December 8, 2016)
- Farmland Preservation Plan Element (adopted January 26, 2012)
- Land Use Plan Element (adopted November 19, 2009)
- Utility Services Plan Element (adopted November 19, 2009)
- Community Facilities Plan Element (adopted April 12, 2007)
- Circulation Plan Element (adopted March 9, 2006)
- Stormwater Management Plan Element (adopted March 22, 2005)
- Historic Preservation Plan Element (adopted December 9, 2004)

<https://www.hopewelltpw.org/DocumentCenter/View/8410/2021-Periodic-Reexamination-of-the-Master-Plan-and-Development-Regulations-PDF>

A Township Planning Board recommendation in the 2021 reexamination report was that an Economic Development Plan element should be prepared. This was in response to the economic impact on the Township of the economic downturns that took place across the country during the Great Recession of 2008 and the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020-21. According to the report, *“The Economic Development Plan will provide an opportunity to review existing economic contributors, land development patterns, workforce and employment characteristics of the Township. An analysis of these factors will provide a means to develop strategies to diversify the local economy, promote workforce initiative, develop economic partnerships, increase economic and natural resiliency, and foster meaningful redevelopment opportunities that will take into consideration the location and types of development that will benefit not only new residents and employees but also provide additional development and services for existing residents.”*

The Tourism and Economic Development Advisory Committee was established by Hopewell Township Resolution 22-334 on September 19, 2022. Its goal is to promote agriculture, historical and recreational tourism, local restaurants, and other businesses. The Committee works to support existing businesses, attract new businesses, and promote tourism in the Township and the entire Hopewell Valley. In January 2025, representatives of the Pennington Borough Economic Development Commission were invited to participate in a “business-listening session” held by the Advisory Committee. An outcome was that the Township Committee and Borough Commission would work together on development areas of interest to both parties. Of particular interest to the Borough is commercial development on Route 31. Properties to the south of West Delaware Avenue are largely in the Township, whereas those to the north are in the Borough. It would make sense that development in both locations follows a consistent and optimized plan.

The Township adopted an Open Space and Recreation Plan on June 18, 2018, to allow it to continue to participate in the Green Acres program and use the Planning Incentive Grants for the preservation of open space and recreational lands. This plan was targeted at technical and site-specific updates rather than a comprehensive update. A more comprehensive Open Space and Recreation Plan was adopted by the Township Planning Board on February 24, 2022. It included a review of and revisions to the goals and objectives of the original 2004 plan, updates to the open space and recreation inventory, amendments to the action plan based on a needs analysis and updates to the Open Space and Recreation System Map.

Pennington Borough works with partners on open space selection, acquisition and development. In addition to Hopewell Township, the partners are the Friends of Hopewell Valley Open space, D&R Greenway Land Trust, Mercer County, the New Jersey Conservation Foundation, and the State of New Jersey. These partners are actively identifying emerging land preservation opportunities. Most of the parcels close enough to be of interest to the Borough are in Hopewell Township, so it is important that the Borough and Township work together on acquisition and preservation.

Hopewell Township Land Use issues addressed in the 2021 reexamination report were focused on how the Township would satisfy its Round 3 Fair Share Housing obligations. The large housing developments on Scotch Road and Pennington-Washington Crossing Road near Pennington Circle are the outcome of these recommendations. On June 26, 2025, The Township adopted its Round 4 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan. The 2021 reexamination report said that the Township had directed the Planning Board to prepare a Preliminary Investigation Report and Redevelopment Plan for the BMS site, located at Titus Mill Road and Pennington Rocky Hill Road. The Plan was completed and has resulted in developments on the site, including the BeOne Medicines (BeiGene) facility and the Princeton West Innovation Campus. Pennington Borough was not consulted on these developments, even though they surround Pennington and have an impact on traffic, housing, services and local businesses.

Since all traffic entering and leaving Pennington Borough does so through Hopewell Township, the Circulation Plan element of the Township's Master Plan and the Borough's Mobility element should be largely in agreement on traffic management issues. In addition, since a much larger stretch of Route 31 is in Hopewell Township, any Township proposals for Route 31 will impact Pennington. The Route 31 aspects of the 2006 Circulation Plan build off the recommendations in the 2002 Route 31 Design Study. There was a positive discussion on the merits of reestablishing passenger trains on the West Trenton line. At the time it was shown as an NJ Transit candidate project. The only additions to circulation in the 2021 reexamination report were related to the Lawrence Hopewell Trail. Circulation issues on Route 31 and its intersections are of great concern to the Borough. The Borough and the Township should provide a uniform face to Mercer County and the State of New Jersey on requests for improvements to address common concerns.

In addition to partnering with Hopewell Township and Hopewell Borough in the Hopewell Valley Regional School District, the Borough has shared services agreements with the Township for Emergency Management, Fire Services, Public Health, Senior Services, and Animal Control. The Green Team and Municipal Alliance operate across Hopewell Valley.

3. Mercer County Master Plan

The Mercer County Master Plan was adopted by the Mercer County Planning Board on September 8, 2010. It consists of a Framework document and six elements:

- Farmland Preservation (2020)
- Historic Preservation (2010)
- Mobility (2010, amended 2016)
- Open Space (2021)
- Mercer County Bicycle Plan (2020)
- Mercer County Corridor Enhancement Program (2025)

<https://www.mercercounty.org/departments/planning/plans-and-reports/mercer-county-master-plan>

The Borough's Mobility Plan element discusses links to the County Mobility Plan and the Mercer County Bicycle Plan. Section 4 of the County Mobility Plan details policies and associated strategies. The policies are

1. Preserve existing transportation facilities.
2. Improve safety for all travelers.
3. Promote choice of travel mode.
4. Promote land uses that reduce reliance on automobiles.
5. Link transportation improvements to economic and environmental goals.

Strategies associated with these policies may be found in the online County Mobility Plan.

Mercer County has been aggressively acquiring open space since the County open space preservation trust fund tax ballot question was overwhelmingly approved by the voters in 1989. It has been continually supported since. Pennington is a beneficiary of the extensive efforts by the County to preserve open space and develop it for active or passive recreation or as wildlife preserves. Within easy reach of Pennington are Mercer Meadows (consists of Rosedale Park, the Mercer County Equestrian Center, the Pole Farm, and Curlis Woods), the Ted Stiles Reserve at Baldpate Mountain, Howell Living History Farm, and the Hopewell Valley and Mountain View County Golf Courses. The County is also a principal supporter of the Lawrence-Hopewell Trail (LHT). The Mercer County Open Space Plan gives the history of its preservation efforts with its partners, resulting in 27% of County Land being preserved, up from 9% in 1990. The map on page 5 of the Plan shows Pennington and its surroundings as a County "action area" for acquisitions. The Borough Master Plan discusses its purchasing partners, including the County.

Mercer County does not have an Economic Development element in its Master Plan. However, the Mercer County Office of Economic Development provides a variety of business development programs and workshops to help small and large businesses in the County build growing, successful companies, such as:

- Business Workshops; e.g. Business Fundamentals, Financing, and Procurement
- Individual Business Mentoring
- Financial Assistance for Mercer County Businesses
- Foreign Trade Zone Program
- Site Selection Services
- Employee Recruitment and Training Assistance

The County offers financial assistance through a variety of grant programs. A 2025 example is the Revitalize & Grow Grant program, which provides grants to businesses for signage and façade improvements to improve traffic for businesses and support increased tourism. Another is the Business Builder Rebate Grant program for items to help business startup or refreshing, such as accountant fees, office supplies, software and some website development. The Mercer County Purchasing Department offers a streamlined process for local businesses to navigate the County procurement process, a comprehensive system of specifications and competitive solicitations.

4. New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan

The State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP), also known as the State Plan, provides a vision for the future that will preserve and enhance the quality of life for all residents of New Jersey. The purpose of the State Plan is to coordinate planning activities and establish Statewide planning objectives in the following areas: land use, housing, economic development, transportation, natural resource conservation, agriculture and farmland retention, recreation, urban and suburban redevelopment, historic preservation, public facilities and services, and intergovernmental coordination (N.J.S.A. 52:18A-200(f)).

The current SDRP was adopted in 2001 and is in the process of being updated by the Office of Planning Advocacy (OPA) and the State Planning Commission (SPC). The SPC approved the Preliminary SDRP update on December 4, 2024. It can be found at [https://nj.gov/state/bac/planning/documents/update-to-state-plan/Draft%20Preliminary%20SDRP%20\(SPC%20Approved%2012.4.2024\).pdf](https://nj.gov/state/bac/planning/documents/update-to-state-plan/Draft%20Preliminary%20SDRP%20(SPC%20Approved%2012.4.2024).pdf)

The Goals of the updated SDRP are to:

1. Promote economic growth that benefits all residents of New Jersey.
2. Provide an adequate supply of housing for residents of all ages and incomes in communities of their choosing that meet their needs and offer ready access to the full range of supportive goods and services.
3. Create economic opportunity through nation-leading infrastructure.
4. Revitalize and recenter the state's underutilized developed areas.
5. Effectively address the adverse impacts of global climate change.
6. Protect, maintain, and restore the state's natural and water resources and ecosystems.
7. Protect the environment; prevent and clean up pollution.
8. Protect, enhance, and improve access to areas with exceptional archeological, historic, cultural, scenic, open space, and recreational value.
9. Implement equitable planning practices to promote thriving communities for all New Jerseyans.
10. Foster sound and integrated planning and implementation at all levels statewide.

The OPC has completed the presentation of the SDRP at meetings in all the counties of New Jersey and the feedback has been incorporated into the Plan. A series of cross-acceptance meetings are scheduled for the second half of 2025 and it is anticipated that the final plan will be

released at the end of 2025. Pennington Borough participated in a meeting on the SDRP update in Mercer County and will participate in a cross-acceptance session.

Pages 69-71 of the Preliminary SDRP give Policy Objectives in the following areas:

- Land Use
- Housing
- Economic Development
- Transportation
- Natural Resource Conservation
- Agriculture and Farmland Preservation
- Recreation
- Redevelopment
- Historic Preservation
- Public Facilities and Services
- Intergovernmental Coordination

Two policy objectives of particular interest to Pennington are Economic Development, and Redevelopment. Both recommend zoning changes in line with recommendations in Master Plan 2025:

“Economic Development: Encourage new businesses, private sector investment, and tourism where appropriate and based on smart growth principles. Revise outdated zoning restrictions to promote flexible workplaces that recognize the changing needs of the contemporary workplace. Any economic development occurring outside the center should be planned and designed to maintain or enhance the area’s qualities with minimum impact on agricultural or environmentally sensitive resources. Development should aim to diversify the local economy and achieve more sustainable year-round models.”

“Redevelopment: Encourage environmentally appropriate redevelopment in existing Centers and in developed areas that are or have the potential to become Centers. This can accommodate growth that would otherwise occur in the Environs and in ways that support Center-based development. Redevelop with a broad range of uses, efficient use of infrastructure, and at sufficient densities to support transit with physical design features that enhance public safety, facilitate pedestrian and bicycle activity, and reduce auto-dependency. Redevelop or repurpose obsolete commercial buildings. Amend zoning provisions to eliminate barriers that diversify existing building stock. For existing structures located in flood prone areas, elevate buildings and critical infrastructure to reduce the impacts of natural hazards.”

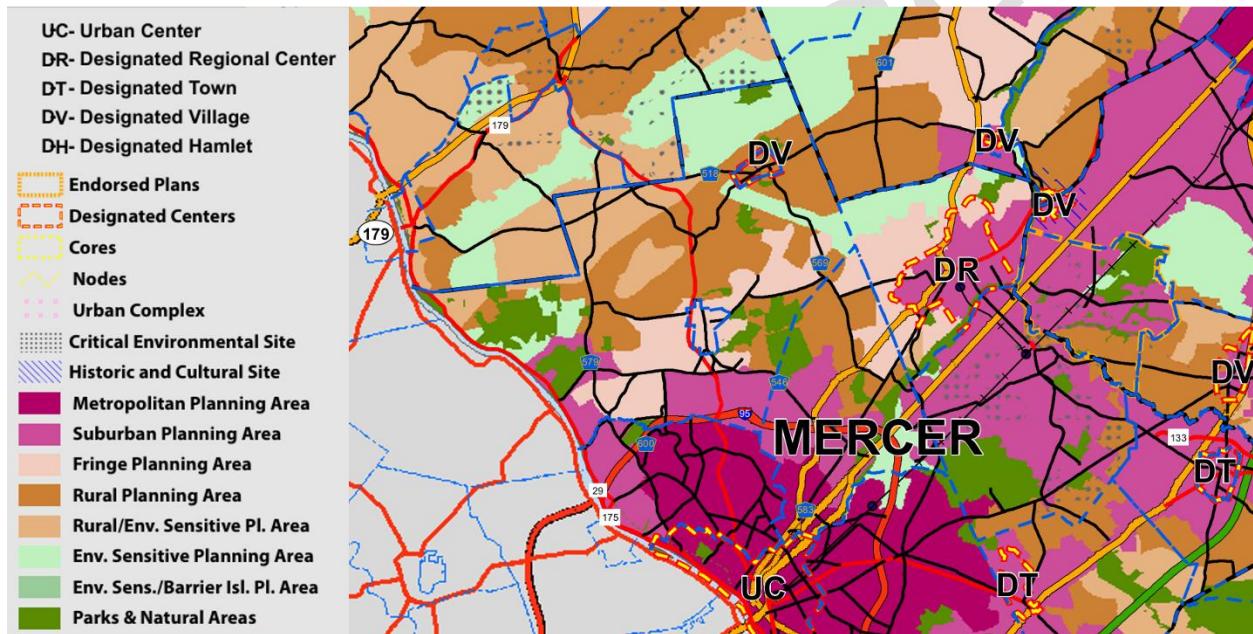
The SDRP provides a balance between growth and conservation by designating planning areas that share common conditions regarding development and environmental features. The 2025 update revised the planning areas slightly from the 2001 Plan and the criteria can be found in the preliminary SDRP, from page 72 on:

- Metropolitan Planning Area (PA1), where much of the state’s future growth will occur in compact development or redevelopment.
- Suburban Planning Area (PA2) including Designated Centers in any planning area.
- Fringe Planning Area (PA3), where the goal is to accommodate growth in Centers.

- Rural Planning Area (PA4)
- Rural/Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas (PA4B), which will maintain the Environs as large contiguous areas of farmland, open space and forested areas.
- Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area (PA5) and Barrier Islands (PA5B).
- Critical Environmental Sites (CES) & Historical and Cultural Sites (HCS)

Figure 1. 2021 SDRP Policy Map. Pennington Borough can be seen within the pink area.

Policy Map of the 2001 State Development and Redevelopment Plan



Link to 2001 Policy Map: <https://nj.gov/state/bac/planning/documents/stateplanmap.pdf>

Link to 2024 Policy Map:

<https://njogis-newjersey.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/dosopa::planning-area-boundaries-of-the-nj-state-development-and-redevelopment-plan-new-jersey-1/explore>

As with the 2001 SDRP, the 2024 Preliminary SDRP places Pennington Borough within a 10 square mile Fringe Planning Area (PA3) that runs about 8 miles WNW from Washington Crossing to Mount Rose. In a PA3 area, the intention of the State Plan is to:

- Accommodate growth in Centers.
- Protect and enhance natural resources.
- Protect the Environs primarily as open space or forested areas.
- Provide a transition between more developed Metropolitan and Suburban Planning Areas and less developed Rural and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas.
- Confine programmed sewers and public water services to Centers, except where public health is at stake.
- Revitalize towns and older traditional communities.
- Protect and diversify the character of existing stable communities.

The following criteria are intended as a general guide for delineating the Fringe Planning Area PA3. Local conditions may require flexible application of the criteria to achieve the Policy Objectives of this Planning Area.

- Population density of less than 1,000 people per square mile.
- Generally lacking in major infrastructure investments. The circulation system is mainly provided by state and county roadways with major emphasis on moving traffic through the area. Some Centers are served by public water and sewer.
- Land area is greater than one (1) square mile.

5. MCIA District Solid Waste Management Plan

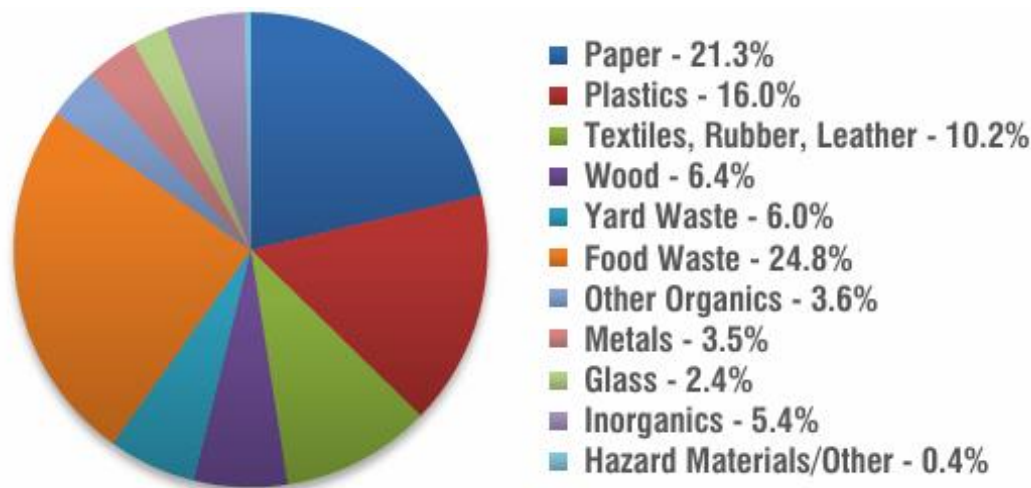
In 2002, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) was required to update and re-adopt the Statewide Solid Waste Management Plan because of significant changes to the regulatory and legal environment since the last plan update in 1993. The Department issued a revised plan on January 3, 2006. As a requirement of the State Plan update, each county was required to amend its District Solid Waste Management Plan to reflect the findings and recommendations of the State Plan. In particular, the State Plan calls for the maximization of Source Reduction techniques to reduce or eliminate the disposal of certain waste from the solid waste stream. Equally important, the State Plan called for the continued aggressive approach to recycle 60% of the state's total solid waste stream and 50% of the state's municipal solid waste (MSW) stream. As the designated planning and implementation agency, the independent Mercer County Improvement Authority (MCIA), prepared the District Plan update in December 2006. It can be found at www.mcianj.org/filestorage/133/154/SWMP.pdf

The State Plan mandated that the District Plan include the following:

- Designation of the department, unit or committee of county government to supervise the implementation of the District Plan.
- An inventory of the quantity of solid waste generated within the district for the ten-year period commencing with the adoption of the District Plan.
- An inventory of all solid waste facilities and recycling facilities including approved waste types and amounts, hours of operation and approved truck routes.
- An outline of the solid waste disposal strategy to be utilized by the district for the ten-year planning period.
- A procedure for processing applications for inclusion of solid waste and recycling facilities into the District Plan.
- A strategy for attainment of the recycling goals as outlined in the State Plan.
- An analysis of the existing solid waste collection systems and transportation routes within the solid waste management district.
- The methods of financing solid waste management within the district.

The District Plan includes a draft ordinance for Municipalities on Recycling. Pennington Borough adopted its current recycling plan on December 29, 2008 by Ordinance 2008-08. It can be found in Chapter 172 of the Borough Code.

In September 2015, T&M Associates prepared a report for the MCIA on the quantification and characterization of solid waste and recycling, following a yearlong study of waste delivered to the MCIA waste transfer station in Ewing Township in 2013. The composition of the MSW can be found in the pie chart below.



The study also found that the County's waste stream met the State's goal of an overall recycling rate of 60% but at 42% fell short of the 50% target for municipal solid waste. As a result of the study, targets have been set to increase the recycling levels of certain components of the MSW and these have been communicated to the municipalities. The 25% of food waste was noted and programs for composting were recommended.

6. Other Regional Plans

a. Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC)

DVRPC is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Greater Philadelphia region, established by an Interstate Compact between the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the State of New Jersey. Pennsylvania members are Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia counties, plus the City of Chester. New Jersey members are Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, and Mercer counties, plus the cities of Camden and Trenton. DVRPC serves strictly as an advisory agency. Any planning or design concepts as prepared by DVRPC are conceptual and will require engineering design and feasibility analysis. Actual authority for carrying out any planning proposals rests solely with the governing bodies of the states, local governments or authorities that have the primary responsibility to own, manage or maintain any transportation facility.

DVRPC provides services to member governments and others through planning analysis, data collection, and mapping services. Aerial photographs, maps and a variety of DVRPC publications are available to the public. The DVRPC traffic count data was used in the analysis in Appendix A of the Mobility Plan in the Borough's Master Plan 2025. DVRPC's current strategic plan, Connections 2050, was approved in 2021 and is currently being updated. Details

of the process can be found on <https://www.dvrpc.org/plan/>. Public input is being sought to update the strategic plan, and proposed projects will be considered under their weighted Benefits Criteria process for inclusion in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

b. New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) Long Range Transportation Plan

The current New Jersey mobility plan is the State Long-Range Transportation Plan (SLRTP), published in October 2008 with the title “Transportation Choices 2030”. It can be found at <https://www.nj.gov/transportation/works/njchoices/pdf/2030plan.pdf>. The ten goals of the plan can be found in its Section 5. The State is currently working on an updated plan “Keep It Moving NJ!” aimed at 2050. No release date for the plan has been given. NJDOT describes the plan as “*a forward-thinking initiative to consider current challenges and anticipate future needs, ensuring that our transportation infrastructure remains robust and resilient*”. NJDOT is currently obtaining input from the public.

In its Mobility Plan, Mercer County describes its relationship with NJDOT as follows: “*NJDOT is a primary partner with Mercer County for local project implementation through its local aid formula funding (state funds) for bridge and highway maintenance. NJDOT is also a very active participant in developing DVRPC's TIP, since most federal funding goes to projects on state-maintained interstates and federal highways. County participation and support for these projects is vital because federal and state highways are the primary links in the county's transportation network.*” This relationship is key to projects on State Route 31 in Pennington Borough and Hopewell Township.

7. Influence of External Plans on Other Elements of Master Plan 2025

The wide range of topics addressed by the external plans described above can influence any of the elements of the Pennington Borough Master Plan. The monitoring process recommended in the goals may trigger amendments to Master Plan elements and the Borough Code to meet mandated sections of County, State and MCIA plans. In some cases, this may trigger an update and readoption of an element. The monitoring process will allow a proactive response by the Planning Board and Council, rather than a reactive one.