

2026 MASTER PLAN REEXAMINATION REPORT

Township of Stow Creek
Cumberland County, New Jersey



TOWNSHIP OF STOW CREEK PLANNING BOARD

Class IV Member, Chairman – Barbara Stratton
Class IV Member, Vice-Chairman – Garry Homan
Class I Member - Mayor Dale F. Cruzan, Jr.
Class II Member – Neal Sheppard
Class III Member, Council Member – Thomas Burton
Class IV Member - Steve Ayars
Class IV Member - Jeremy Gray
Class IV Member – Chris Cianfarini
Class IV Member – Kenny Kernan
Alternate I – Rodney Cruzan
Alternate II – Allen Davis

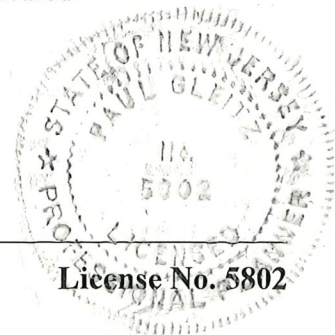
Attorney – William L. Horner, Esq.
Engineer – Stephen Nardelli, PE PP CME CPWM
Planner - Paul Gleitz, PP, AICP
Planning Board Secretary – Scott Lang

ADOTPED JULY 21, 2026

The original of this document was signed and sealed
in accordance with N.J.S.A. 45:14A-12.

Prepared by:

Paul Gleitz, P.P. AICP



License No. 5802

STOW CREEK TOWNSHIP

2026 MASTER PLAN REEXAMINATION REPORT

Introduction

This report constitutes the Master Plan Reexamination Report for Stow Creek Township as defined by the New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89). The purpose of the Reexamination Report is to review and evaluate the local Master Plan and Development Regulations on a periodic basis to determine the need for update and revisions. The Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) requires that this review be conducted at least every ten years and requires that it be conducted by the Planning Board.

Stow Creek Township adopted its last Comprehensive Master Plan in March 2007. The 2007 Master Plan included:

- Vision
- Land Use Element
- Housing Element
- Transportation Element
- Community Facilities Element
- Economic Development and Employment Element
- Historic Preservation Element
- Farmland Preservation Element
- Future Land Use Element
- Relation to Zoning

The Township undertook a comprehensive revision of the Land Development Ordinance in 2017 and adopted an updated Zoning Map in 2016.

It has been 19 years since the 2007 Master Plan. It is the intent of this report to consider and provide recommendations concerning land use and zoning issues in the Township which have arisen in the past nineteen years since the adoption of the 2007 Master Plan.

This report has been prepared in order to satisfy the 10-year review requirement of N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89. Section A of this Report identifies the goals and objectives which were established in the 2007 Master Plan. Sections B and C describe what changes have occurred in the Township, County, Region, and the State since the adoption of this plan. Finally, Sections D and E discuss recommended actions to be addressed by the Township in the future.

PERIODIC REEXAMINATION

The MLUL requires that reexamination reports address the following five components, as set forth in N.J.S.A 40:55D-89:

- a. The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of the adoption of the last reexamination report.
- b. The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date.
- c. The extent to which there have been significant changes in the assumptions, policies, and objectives forming the basis for the master plan or development regulations as last revised, with particular regard to the density and distribution of population and land uses, housing conditions, circulation, conservation of natural resources, energy conservation, collection, disposition, and recycling of designated recyclable materials, and changes in State, county and municipal policies and objectives.
- d. The specific changes recommended for the master plan or development regulations, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether a new plan or regulations should be prepared.
- e. The recommendations of the planning board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans adopted pursuant to the "Local Redevelopment and Housing Law," P.L.1992, c.79 (C.40A:12A-1 et al.) into the land use plan element of the municipal master plan, and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.

MUNICIPAL SUMMARY

Stow Creek dates to January 19, 1748, when it was formed as one of six precincts in the newly created County of Cumberland. It was formally incorporated as a township on February 21, 1798. Columbia Township was formed on March 12, 1844, from portions of both Hopewell Township and Stow Creek Township, and dissolved on March 11, 1845. On April 9, 1929, portions of the township were taken to create Shiloh. On October 1, 1924, the New Jersey Legislature officially changed the name of the township from “Stoe Creek” to “Stow Creek”.

From the 2007 Master Plan:

Stow Creek Township is a productive agricultural community where its residents live in very low density rural and low density rural suburban settings amid a landscape of farm fields, woods and streams. Residents travel to surrounding areas for employment and shopping while outdoor recreation such as fishing, biking and hiking is locally available. Opportunities for small scale retail shops, local services and home occupations occur throughout the Township with concentrations in the hamlet center of Roadstown and the potential future Route 49 - Arrowhead Lake village center.

Soil may be the Township's most valuable natural resource as it supports farming that has such a dominate role on the landscape, the economy and the daily lifestyles of the Township. The two most important soil characteristics of concern in the Township are the high agricultural productivity and good drainage, and they explain why a rural township like Stow Creek is such a strong agricultural area while an equally rural township like neighboring Quinton is heavily wooded. Additionally, soil determines what areas of the Township have the natural capabilities to support septic systems, and therefore where development can occur and where people live within the Township.

Agricultural productivity of a soil can be rated as prime, statewide importance and unique. Prime soils, having few to moderate limitations on their use for agriculture, cover over 50% of the Township. Prime soils typically occur on the highest and driest areas of the Township. Soils of statewide importance have limitations that restrict the choice of crops or require special farm practices. In the Township those restrictions are mostly related to wet soil conditions, typically in the low-lying areas along streams. Statewide importance soils cover almost 40% of the Township.

Water is supplied by individual on-site wells, and there is no centralized water service in the Township. Water supply in Stow Creek Township is pumped from groundwater sources known as aquifers and is used for residential and agricultural purposes.

The existing land uses in Stow Creek Township are rural and low density in nature and can be described in four primary categories.

- Agriculture dominates the uplands with sparsely scattered individual single-family houses and woodlands along the streams and edges.
- Wetlands form an extensive fringe along the water bodies of the Delaware Bayshore and Stow Creek with much narrower fringes along the smaller creeks.
- Residential development in small pockets in Roadstown and the Marlboro – Lake Arrowhead area.

- Commercial retail activities sparsely developed along the state highway Route 49 road frontage.

Without a doubt the most prevalent land use, covering over half of the Township, is agriculture with about 6,900 acres and 527 parcels. The average farm parcel is 25 acres. Farmland occurs as large contiguous areas, in many cases only stopping at roads, property lines and wood lines along streams and creeks. Less than 100 acres in the Township, according to aerial photographs, are actually covered by houses and yards. According to tax records, over 350 lots covering over 600 acres including accessory woodlands and wetlands, are assessed as residential parcels. The commercial base in the Township is extremely limited with only 14 commercial properties covering 30 acres, including a gravel pit operation on five acres. There are no industrial properties within the Township. About 1,400 acres are devoted to open space and outdoor recreation.

Stow Creek Township can be considered to host a mature, well-established agricultural industry that dominates the landscape and local economy. Almost 80% of its land based is farmland assessed, and it has one of the few farm equipment dealers in the State.

The 2007 Master Plan was precipitated by the concerns of Stow Creek Township that its existing plan and ordinances might not effectively protect and support the sustainability of active agricultural operations and were in fact encouraging the development of its most agriculturally productive lands. The 2016 update of the Zoning Map and the comprehensive revision of the Land Development Ordinance in 2017 were the affirmative measures taken by the Township to ensure the protection and sustainability of active agricultural lands and operations for decades to come.

The Township is strongly committed to the sustainability and advancement of its historically rural and predominantly agricultural atmosphere, and to agricultural production as the leading industry in Stow Creek Township. It is the intention of Stow Creek to restrict the nonagricultural development of agricultural lands while at the same time protecting land equity for all areas of the municipality. Additionally, it intends to protect the rights of agricultural operations to exist and flourish without hindering agricultural production or impairing the ongoing development, innovation and the evolution of Stow Creek Township's agriculture industry.

A. Major Land Development Problems & Objectives

What follows are the major problems and objectives relating to land development in the Township at the time of the adoption of the last Comprehensive Master Plan. The 2007 Master Plan had a Community Vision statement, Assumptions, and Objectives that outline the land use vision for the Township.

Community Vision

Stow Creek Township will continue as a productive agricultural community where its residents live in very low density rural and low density rural suburban settings amid a landscape of farm fields, woods and streams. Residents will continue to travel to surrounding areas for employment and shopping while outdoor recreation such as fishing, biking and hiking remain locally available. Opportunities for small scale retail shops, local services and home occupations may occur throughout the Township with concentrations in the hamlet center of Roadstown and the potential future Route 49 - Arrowhead Lake village center.

Assumptions

The following assumptions for trends and conditions are expected for the next several years and are used as a basis in preparing the Master Plan. No major changes from current conditions are envisioned.

- The Township population will continue to experience minor population fluctuations for the foreseeable future similar to the past 25 years.
- No centralized water or sewer infrastructure will be constructed within the foreseeable future.
- State water quality standards and other development controls will play an increasing role with local development.
- The Township's percentage of the County's total population will stay the same or slightly decrease.
- Agriculture will remain viable as the primary local industry.
- There will be no major new highways or other transportation facilities accessing the region.
- The majority of the Township's working residents will continue to commute to jobs outside of the Township.
- There will be no major public expenditures by the State and Federal agencies to encourage development within the Township since the entire Township is designated as either a rural or environmentally sensitive planning area by the NJ State Development & Redevelopment Plan.
- There will be greater local appreciation for the rural lifestyle and quality of life which will lead to an increase in the public's call for local protections such as a right to farm ordinance.

Objectives

The following Master Plan objectives serve as guidelines for the Township Committee and Planning Board when making land use decisions about the future development of the Township.

- To maintain Stow Creek as a rural, agricultural community.
- To support a stable property tax base.
- To encourage continued agriculture production.
- To maintain transportation access to employment opportunities outside of the Township.
- To increase employment opportunities within the Township compatible with its rural style.
- To maintain the neighborhood scale of the existing residential communities at Roadstown and near Lake Arrowhead.
- To allow for small scale commercial development opportunities along Route 49 and in Roadstown.
- To allow for housing opportunities that are compatible with natural conditions and that do not cause a loss of the agricultural base.
- To protect and maintain the environment and natural resource base.
- To limit the need for municipal services and infrastructure to a level consistent with a rural township.
- To generate public awareness and appreciation for the culture and history of the Township.

B. Extent of Reduction/Increase in Problems & Objectives

This Section shall address the extent to which each of the problems and objectives listed in item A above, has been reduced or has increased after the date of the last Master Plan.

Community Vision

Stow Creek Township will continue as a productive agricultural community where its residents live in very low density rural and low density rural suburban settings amid a landscape of farm fields, woods and streams. Residents will continue to travel to surrounding areas for employment and shopping while outdoor recreation such as fishing, biking and hiking remain locally available. Opportunities for small scale retail shops, local services and home occupations may occur throughout the Township with concentrations in the hamlet center of Roadstown and the potential future Route 49 - Arrowhead Lake village center.

This Community Vision is still valid in 2026 and represents the overall vision for the Township for the next 20 years.

Assumptions

The following assumptions for trends and conditions are expected for the next several years and are used as a basis in preparing the Master Plan. No major changes from current conditions are envisioned.

- The Township population will continue to experience minor population fluctuations for the foreseeable future similar to the past 25 years. **Census data confirms that this is still the case. Small scale housing construction is occurring and may result in a slight increase in the local population, but within historic population fluctuations.**
- No centralized water or sewer infrastructure will be constructed within the foreseeable future. **This assumption is still valid; no new utility infrastructure is anticipated. There are reports of plans to bring sewer service from the east into the Borough of Shiloh, but that seems unlikely to impact Stow Creek in the 10–20-year planning horizon.**
- State water quality standards and other development controls will play an increasing role with local development. **This assumption is still valid.**
- The Township's percentage of the County's total population will stay the same or slightly decrease. **This assumption is still valid. Population growth in the County is occurring in the urban centers, while the population in the Township is static; decreasing the percentage of the County's total population.**
- Agriculture will remain viable as the primary local industry. **This assumption is still valid. Agriculture is the primary local industry and many of the Township's land use policies are designed to ensure the viability of local agriculture industry. Agricultural production is the most appropriate use of land, and the most desirable industry, in Stow Creek Township. Agricultural production, and the use of land in a manner that sustains and enhances the viability of land for agricultural production, are "inherently beneficial" under the definition set forth in *N.J.S.A. 40:55D-4*, as amply evidenced by the New Jersey Right to Farm Act (*N.J.S.A. 4:1C-1, et seq.*); the New Jersey Agriculture Retention and Development Act (*N.J.S.A. 4:1C-11, et seq.*); the New Jersey Farmland Assessment Act of 1964 (*N.J.S.A. 54:4-23.1, et seq.*); the Cumberland County Farmland**

Preservation Plan; the Stow Creek Township Master Plan; and the Stow Creek Township Land Development Ordinance (by which agriculture is permitted-by-right in all of Stow Creek Township's five zoning districts). Accordingly, because so much of the land in Stow Creek Township is particularly well-suited for agricultural production, and because Stow Creek Township's agriculture industry is strong, Stow Creek Township's land use regulations should continue to promote the ongoing use of land and sustainability of soils for agricultural production for the benefit of all persons within and beyond Stow Creek Township as the world's population and resulting demand for food and other agricultural products continues to increase. Stow Creek Township should continue to take all appropriate measures through its land use regulations to encourage land uses that protect and enhance the viability of soils for agricultural production. To this end, Stow Creek Township should continue to implement and enforce land use regulations that prevent land use or development that could impede the sorts of open-field agricultural activities and practices that are prevalent, and which have proven to be historically successful in Stow Creek Township, or that could otherwise impair agricultural production in contravention of Stow Creek Township's goals.

- There will be no major new highways or other transportation facilities accessing the region. **This assumption is still valid.**
- The majority of the Township's working residents will continue to commute to jobs outside of the Township. **This assumption is still valid.**
- There will be no major public expenditures by the State and Federal agencies to encourage development within the Township since the entire Township is designated as either a rural or environmentally sensitive planning area by the NJ State Development & Redevelopment Plan. **This assumption is still valid, with the understanding that such major public expenditures (other than for publicly funded farmland preservation programs and farmland-assessment-based tax incentives) tend to favor *nonagricultural* development over agricultural development and use of land, and with one small caveat. Through the State Plan Cross Acceptance process and after careful consideration, the Township accepted a recommendation to change a portion of the PA4 Rural to PA3 Fringe along Route 49 near the Township's border with Hopewell and Shiloh.**
- There will be greater local appreciation for the rural lifestyle and quality of life which will lead to an increase in the public's call for local protections such as a right to farm ordinance. **This assumption is still valid, although as worldwide population growth and consequent nonagricultural development and use of land increases, and as the need for food and other agricultural products becomes more acute, the public's call for protections, local and otherwise, that promote the agriculture industry will also increase. In this regard Stow Creek Township's land use policies do not reflect a simple, naive, backward-looking, or nostalgic reverence for an imagined bucolic rural past, or a pastoral "quiet" and isolated way of life. Rather, Stow Creek Township's land use policies are socially progressive, globally engaged, and forward-looking, in anticipation of the world's long-term, fundamental, and perhaps even survival-dependent needs. The Right to Farm Ordinance and the Country Code Ordinance were a result of the 2007 Master Plan recommendations and should be continued for the above reasons as well.**

Objectives

The following Master Plan objectives serve as guidelines for the Township Committee and Planning Board when making land use decisions about the future development of the Township.

- To maintain Stow Creek as a rural, agricultural community. **This objective is still valid. This objective is expanded to include “by ensuring ordinances are agriculture friendly, supporting those interested in the Farmland Preservation Program, acknowledging the significant economic impact of our agricultural land base, promoting agricultural rather than nonagricultural development and use of land, and raising awareness of local food security.”**
- To support a stable property tax base. **This objective is still valid.**
- To encourage continued agriculture production **This objective is still valid. This objective is expanded to include “and expansion consistent with modern approaches to agricultural production and agritourism, to broaden revenue and sustainability for local farms through additional support for agriculture and agritourism in the Land Development Ordinance by broadening the types of activities that are permitted on farms, and periodic review and updates to the Right to Farm ordinance to protect new farming practices that occur to keep pace with new technologies in agriculture.”**
- To maintain transportation access to employment opportunities outside of the Township. **This objective is still valid.**
- To increase employment opportunities within the Township compatible with its rural style. **This objective is still valid.**
- To maintain the neighborhood scale of the existing residential communities at Roadstown and near Lake Arrowhead. **This objective is still valid.**
- To allow for small scale commercial development opportunities along Route 49 and in Roadstown. **This objective is still valid.**
- To allow for housing opportunities that are compatible with natural conditions and that do not cause a loss of the agricultural base. **This objective is still valid.**
- To protect and maintain the environment and natural resource base. **This objective is still valid.**
- To limit the need for municipal services and infrastructure to a level consistent with a rural township. **This objective is still valid.**
- To generate public awareness and appreciation for the culture and history of the Township. **This objective is still valid.**

This Master Plan Re-Examination Report includes the additional land use goal:

- **To prevent nonagricultural land use and development that could reduce agricultural production or otherwise impair Stow Creek Township’s agriculture industry, either directly, by diminishing a particular land parcel’s capacity for agricultural production, or indirectly, by incentivizing or catalyzing *further***

local and regional nonagricultural development through the creation of nonagricultural factors and circumstances – essentially, a nonagricultural “environment” – that will become ever more conducive to, and thus ever more likely to encourage and invite, *further* nonagricultural development and use of land as an attractive alternative to agricultural production.

C. Significant Changes in Assumptions, Policies, Objectives

CHANGES IN STATE POLICY

Non-contiguous Cluster Development

In 2013 legislation was passed to permit communities to offer alternatives to traditional subdivisions, using planning tools including clustering, transferring development rights, and lot-size averaging to concentrate development in areas where growth can best be accommodated and maximized, while preserving agricultural lands, open space, and historic sites. Definitions for contiguous and non-contiguous clustering which allows development on one tract and preservation of another tract elsewhere in the community.

Local Redevelopment and Housing Law Changes

In 2013 legislation was passed to amend Criterion E of the LRHL regarding productivity and adding language to the criterion. The law also requires the resolution authorizing the Planning Board to undertake the preliminary investigation to state whether the redevelopment area determination authorizes the use of eminent domain or not. This created a non-condemnation redevelopment and a condemnation redevelopment area and outlined certain noticing requirements.

In 2019 legislation was passed to amend and expand criterion B of the LRHL. The amendment expanded the criteria within letter b by including a statement that it may apply to a single building or buildings, including retail buildings, office parks, and shopping malls expressly as commercial facilities may meet criterion B if the building has experienced significant vacancies for at least two consecutive years.

Climate Change-Related Hazard Vulnerability Assessment.

In 2018, legislation was passed to require any land use element adopted after the effective date to include a climate change-related hazard vulnerability assessment. The content of these vulnerability assessments shall include the following provisions:

- Consider environmental effects and extreme weather-related events associated with climate change, including, but not limited to, temperature, drought, and sea-level rise. Additionally, contain measures to mitigate reasonably anticipated natural hazards, including, but not limited to, coastal storms, shoreline erosion, flooding, storm surge, and wind, following best management practices recommended by the Federal Emergency Management Agency;
- Analyze current and future threats to the municipality associated with climate change-related natural hazards;
- Include a build-out analysis of future residential, commercial, industrial, and other development in the municipality, and an assessment of the threats and vulnerabilities associated with a build-out;
- Identify critical facilities, utilities, roadways, and other infrastructure that is necessary for evacuation purposes and for sustaining quality of life during a natural disaster, to be maintained at all times in an operational state;

- Analyze the potential impact of natural hazards on relevant components and elements of the master plan;
- Provide strategies and design standards that may be implemented to reduce or avoid risks associated with natural hazards;
- Include a specific policy statement on the consistency, coordination, and integration of the climate-change related hazard vulnerability assessment with any existing or proposed natural hazard mitigation plan, floodplain management plan, comprehensive emergency management plan, emergency response plan, post-disaster recovery plan, or capital improvement plan; and
- Rely on the most recent natural hazard projections and best available science provided by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

FCC Orders Regarding 5G Wireless Network Implementation

In 2019, the Federal Communications Commission issued orders that constrained the way in which towns can regulate wireless facilities within the Township's rights-of-ways as telecommunication companies brought 5G wireless service to more areas. Many municipalities adopted ordinances to regulate these facilities in compliance with these orders.

State Cannabis Regulation

In 2020, New Jersey voters approved a constitutional amendment to legalize the adult recreational use of cannabis. The NJ Cannabis Regulatory Commission (CRC) was created to establish rules and regulations regarding the recreational cannabis industry and issuing licenses to cannabis providers. Municipalities had 180 days to act to either prohibit or limit the number of cannabis establishments, distributors, or delivery services and amend their local land use development regulations. Stow Creek Township voted to prohibit all classes of cannabis business in the Township with Ordinance 21-01-03 adopted May 11, 2021.

2020 Stormwater Regulations

In 2020, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) proposed and adopted amendments to the Stormwater Management Rules. The proposed amended Stormwater Management Rules required all New Jersey municipalities to revise their Stormwater Control Ordinance by March 2, 2021. In 2020 and 2024, Stow Creek Township passed amendments to the Township Code to meet the new rules. The rule change included various amendments that were needed to align Stormwater Management rules with other NJDEP regulations.

State Requirement for EV Charging Stations

In 2021, a model Statewide Municipal Electric Vehicle Ordinance was published by NJDCA that requires that electric vehicle charging equipment and make-ready parking spaces be defined as a permitted accessory uses in all zoning districts and establishes installation requirements. The model statewide ordinance is mandatory and became effective upon DCA publication. Although not codified by the Township Committee, the Planning Board recognizes the model ordinance as a "legislative

ordinance amendment” and has enforced it as such on qualifying development applications since publication.

Warehouse Guidance

In 2022, the State Office of Planning Advocacy (OPA) published a policy paper entitled “Distribution Warehousing and Goods Movement Guidelines” intended to provide guidance to planning boards as they reviewed applications for warehouses and for municipalities interested in new zoning regulations for warehouses and distribution facilities. The guidance provided an overview of the many types of warehouses being developed and the potential for negative impacts on communities. The state recommends that warehouses be in proximity to highways to limit the impacts of truck traffic through communities, especially residential areas, schools, and community facilities.

Affordable Housing Fourth Round Regulations

In 2024, legislation was passed that adopted new “fourth round” affordable housing regulations. These regulations disbanded the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH), shifted oversight to the NJ Department of Community Affairs (NJDOCA), and outlined new procedures for establishing municipal fair share obligations for low- and moderate-income housing, and the mechanisms available to satisfy those obligations. The legislation created a new process and timeline for compliance with the Fair Housing Act for the Fourth-Round period between July 2025 and June of 2035.

NJ State Agriculture Development Commission (SADC) Statewide Formula Valuation

In 2025, the SADC adopted new rules to implement the “Statewide Farmland Preservation Formula” per amendments to the “Preserve New Jersey Act”. The rules set forth a new methodology for the valuation of farmland preservation development easements with the objective of increasing participation in the farmland preservation program.

The Statewide Formula Valuation is an alternative method for valuing the development easement and is offered to landowners in addition to the traditional development easement valuation. The landowner has the option to take the highest value offered for which they qualify. Based on two appraisals, this formula uses the SADC certified Before value as the base value, then adds other factors, including agricultural and natural resources, as well as making deductions for residential building opportunities under certain conditions.

State Plan Consistency

In 2025, the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP or State Plan) was adopted by the State Planning Commission. In 2024, the Cumberland County Board of County Commissioners approved participation of Cumberland County as the Designated Negotiating Entity in the State Development and Redevelopment Plan Cross-Acceptance Process. As part of the Cross Acceptance process, County staff, in coordination with the Office of Planning Advocacy (OPA), prepared draft Cross-Acceptance Response Templates (CARTs) for each municipality.

County staff also reviewed the Draft State Plan mapping to create a baseline of potential changes to the Planning Areas. The Draft CARTs were reviewed and discussed with the municipal subcommittees

and/or municipal Planning Boards. The Stow Creek Township Draft CART document was reviewed by members of the Stow Creek Township Cross-Acceptance Subcommittee on May 13, 2025, and presented to the Stow Creek Township Planning Board on May 20, 2025. Changes were made to this document to reflect those reviews, and the final response was approved by the Cumberland County Planning Board on June 4, 2025.

This process was the latest comprehensive review of the land use policies in the Township and is a useful analysis for this Reexamination Report. What follows is the findings of that analysis, summarizing those areas where the Township aligns with the goals and objectives of the State Plan and those areas where they do not.

From the 2025 Stow Creek Township Cross-Acceptance Response Template:

Stow Creek Township CART - Climate Change

Stow Creek Township's 2007 Master Plan does not include specific goals and objectives pertaining to the climate change, hazard mitigation & extreme heat, as well as coastal areas & riverine corridors. However, the Township feels it is consistent with this goal. Stow Creek is an agricultural community, where the farmers are the stewards of the land, and adapt to modern challenges which include climate change. Further, in accordance with Township policies, development has been prevented around environmentally sensitive areas, such as the Township's floodplains and wetlands.

The Township will work towards becoming more aligned with this goal by incorporating information from existing studies into their Master Planning initiatives. These efforts include:

- SJTPO Hazard Vulnerability Framework, May 2024
- Cumberland County Hazard Mitigation Plan, August 2022
- State of New Jersey Climate Change Resilience Strategy, 2021

The Township will also become consistent with the Statewide Electric Vehicle Law (P.L. 2021, c. 171). DCA, in coordination with NJDEP and BPU, prepared a Model Municipal EV Ordinance which the Township will review and incorporate into their local Land Development Ordinances.

The Township should review the Draft NJDEP Floodplain Management Ordinance and work with NJDEP to adopt the ordinance to establish minimum standards consistent with State and Federal Law.

Stow Creek Township CART - Natural and Water Resources

The 2007 Master Plan and local policies are aligned with the goals and objectives related to the State's Natural and Water Resources, including habitat preservation, agriculture and food production, air quality, and water quality.

Habitat Preservation- the majority of the Township's municipal border along the Stow Creek consists of floodplains and wetlands, with the majority of the coastline preserved by the NJDEP as the Gum Tree Corner Wildlife Management Area and

Stow Creek State Park. The Township's Land Development Ordinance also discourages the removal of trees.

Agricultural Lands - Stow Creek Township is located within several of Cumberland County's Project Areas, which are designated areas of the County that are targeted for farmland preservation. The Township also has clear objectives to support and protect agricultural activities.

Air quality - Considering the amount of forested land and associated preserved open space mass, Stow Creek Township captures far more carbon than it produces. The Township's ordinance includes performance standards for air pollution.

Water quality- The entirety of the Township utilizes individual wells for their water supply. As noted in the 2007 Master Plan, the surficial aquifer, the Kirkwood Cohansey, is susceptible to saltwater intrusion in Stow Creek due to its proximity to the Delaware Bay. Therefore, wells are drilled into the deeper Piney Point aquifer. The Township also has performance standards regulated water pollution.

Stow Creek Township CART - Pollution and Environmental Clean Up

The 2007 Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance is consistent with the Pollution and Environmental Clean Up Goal of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan.

Brownfields- The 2007 Master Plan does not include information or recommendations concerning Brownfields in the Township, as there are no brownfields in the Township.

Waste Management & Recycling- The 2007 Master Plan lacks information related to waste management and recycling. However, The Cumberland County Authority provides waste management and recycling services to the County's municipalities. It should be noted that the municipalities are responsible for collecting trash and recycling and transporting it to The Authority. Stow Creek's 2007 Master Plan indicates that the Township has a waste collection center, which it shares with Shiloh.

Stow Creek Township CART - Public Facilities/Infrastructure

The 2007 Master Plan and implementing ordinances are consistent with goals and objectives related to Public Facilities and Infrastructure.

Infrastructure Investment Priorities- The 2007 Master Plan includes an objective to limit the need for municipal services and infrastructure to maintain its rural characteristics and to maintain its agriculture industry. The Township has high-speed FIOS internet for all its residents.

Mobility and Equal Access- This sub-goal of the State Plan requires additional partnerships with adjacent municipalities, Cumberland County, SJTPO, and State Agencies. Given the rural nature of Stow Creek Township, Mobility and Equal Access is not a priority for the Township. While the Township does not have any NJ Transit services, the Cumberland Area Transit System (CATS) provides transportation for vulnerable populations. The Township also has a sidewalk ordinance and maintains a park with trails near one of its densest neighborhoods.

Clean Energy- The 2007 Master Plan does not include specific goals or objectives related to clean energy. The Township allows solar energy and wind energy systems in the Township, subject to terms and conditions. Solar systems are permitted throughout the Township, while wind systems are permitted in all zoning districts with the exception of the Residential and Historic Residential Zones. The Township does not permit utility scale solar fields as a means to protect the agricultural landscape. EV Charging stations are discussed above in the Climate Change section of this report.

- State to provide education and outreach on existing incentives and funding related to clean energy (i.e.. EV charging stations, solar arrays, wind turbines, energy efficiency)
- State to work with Board of Public Utilities and Atlantic City Electric to modernize the grid without increasing consumer rates.
- State to work with utility providers to provide incentives to reduce costs.

Public Health- The 2007 Master Plan does not include recommendations for Public Health. Given the Township's rural nature, there is no sanitary sewer or public drinking water. The Township does have a recreation area with amenities for active and passive recreation.

- The State should act as a catalyst to assist local government entities to partner with State colleges and universities to examine and create Health System Master Plan Elements for communities, such as Stow Creek Township.

Stow Creek Township CART - Housing

The 2007 Master Plan and implementing ordinances are somewhat inconsistent with the Housing Goal of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan.

Stow Creek Township has reviewed and evaluated the New Jersey Supreme Court's "Mount Laurel" doctrine and the recently amended Fair Housing Act, and will continue to do so, to determine whether, when, and by what methods the Township might appropriately seek the FHA's optional protections from "builder's remedy" lawsuits.

Given the rural nature of the Township and the lack of infrastructure (ie. public water and sewer service), single-family residential development is the primary housing type permitted in the Township. New housing, including multi-family housing and higher-density housing, is difficult to create on septic and requires sewer system expansion.

However, the 2007 Master Plan includes discussions related to concentrating development away from environmentally sensitive lands and agricultural lands, as a means to protect the agriculture industry.

- State to provide incentives for Housing Rehabilitation Program to fix critical systems in existing dwellings.

Stow Creek Township CART - Economic Growth

The 2007 Master Plan is consistent with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan's goals for Economic Growth.

Many of the State Plan's sub-goals for Economic Development are focused on funding opportunities that are available through the State. It is difficult for a municipality, such as Stow Creek, to attract appropriately scaled economic development when the municipality lacks the infrastructure that provides residential and commercial stability.

The lack of infrastructure (i.e., water and sewer) make it difficult to attract desirable and appropriate economic land uses.

The Township is supportive of the agriculture industry and believes that new development should not threaten the integrity and viability of this industry. Rather, the Township seeks to attract agriculture-related businesses that are supportive of the ag industry.

- Any future Economic Development Plan for Stow Creek Township should include an assessment that targets economic sectors with the greatest growth potential and public benefit.
- An educational component regarding State funding opportunities would be helpful for residents and local business owners.

The Stow Creek Township CART for Economic Growth is where the broad goals and objectives of the State Plan do not align well with the economic development plans of the Township. The State Plan assumes that all municipalities desire *non-agricultural* economic development dependent on infrastructure. This is not the case in Stow Creek Township.

The 2007 Master Plan is consistent with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan's goals for Economic Growth insofar as it promotes the growth and development of agriculture as Stow Creek Township's leading industry as the industry for which most of the land in Stow Creek Township is particularly well-suited.

Many of the State Plan's sub-goals for Economic Development are focused on funding opportunities that are available through the State, but such opportunities are not needed in Stow Creek Township. Rather, Stow Creek Township's prospects for ongoing agricultural economic development are independent and strong. It is anticipated that Stow Creek will continue to attract appropriate large- and small-scale agricultural economic development throughout the Township due to the Township's numerous parcels of agricultural land, high-quality soils, uncongested roadways that are well-suited for the movement of agricultural equipment, supplies and products, ample water supply and irrigation infrastructure, the availability of nearby agricultural equipment and supply services, and a stable residential/commercial balance that is conducive to the Township's agriculture industry.

The Township is supportive of the agriculture industry and believes that new nonagricultural development should not be allowed to threaten the integrity and viability of this industry. Rather, the Township seeks to attract agriculture-related businesses that are supportive of agricultural production and the agriculture industry.

Stow Creek Township CART - Archeological, Historic, Cultural, Scenic, Open Space and Recreation

The 2007 Master Plan is generally consistent with the State Plan's goal for Archeological, Historic, Cultural, Open Space and Recreational Value.

Scenic, Recreational & Open Space Resources- The Master Plan seeks to protect and maintain the environment and natural resource base, to maintain Stow Creek as a rural, agricultural community, and to encourage continued agriculture production.

The Township is home to several State-Owned facilities, including the Stow Creek State Park and the Gum Tree Corner Wildlife Management Area.

The County and the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) has preserved 2,300 acres of farmland in Stow Creek Township.

The Township Park, behind Arrowhead Lake, has amenities for both active and passive recreation. In Stow Creek, hunting, fishing, birding, walking, and hiking are prominent activities. The Township is also supportive of agritourism and ecotourism initiatives.

Historic & Cultural Resources: The 2007 Master Plan includes a Historic Preservation Element, which notes that the Township's historic resources dates to the early 1700's. However, none of these resources are listed on the New Jersey Register or the National Register of Historic Places, but several of these resources are listed on the County Register of Historic Structures and Sites. Stow Creek has limited ordinances that protect its historic resources, such as a Historic Residential zoning district. As noted in the 2007 Master Plan the Township has not experienced significant growth when compared to other areas of the County or other southern New Jersey communities.

At present, Stow Creek Township's historic resources are protected by the care and custodianship of private landowners and other non-municipal persons and entities. The Township will review and consider for implementation various alternate forms of regulation that are being utilized by other similarly situated Cumberland County municipalities to protect historic properties without establishing historic districts and historic preservation commissions.

- State to provide education/assistance related to preserving and conserving natural resources and historic structures.
- State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) resources and assistance needed to conduct a study to document historic structures and potential districts for small communities, such as Stow Creek.

Stow Creek Township CART - Revitalization

The 2007 Master Plan is consistent with the State Plan's goal of Revitalization. While the Township is a primarily rural municipality, the Township encourages center-like qualities within the Roadstown area and along Route 49, which is also zoned for commercial and residential development.

It is important to note that, as explained above, Stow Creek Township's agriculture industry is vital and strong.

Stow Creek Township CART - Sound and Integrated Planning

The 2007 Master Plan is consistent with the State Plan's goal of Sound and Integrated Planning. The Township makes efforts to balance its agriculture industry, conserve and protect environmentally sensitive lands, and balance its development.

Stow Creek Township CART - Three Most Important Local and Regional Land Use Planning Goals and Priorities

- To maintain Stow Creek as a rural agricultural community by encouraging continued agriculture production:
 - Ensure ordinances are agriculture friendly;
 - Support those interested in the Farmland Preservation Program;
 - Acknowledge the significant economic impact of our agricultural land base;
 - Raise awareness of local food security.
- To increase utilization of the agriculture/commercial and commercial zones along Route 49.
- To ensure recreational activities, especially in government-owned areas, are compatible with the production activities and private land rights of the surrounding farms.

Stow Creek Township CART - Additional Comments by Stow Creek Township

- Insufficient priority is given to the retention of farmland beyond the Farmland Preservation Program. The state must recognize that there are many other factors affecting the viability of the agriculture industry, not the least of which is overregulation.
- Nowhere amongst the goals and subgoals is there mention of supporting a stable property tax base. This is a glaring omission in any strategic plan related to land use.

Stow Creek Township CART – State Planning Areas Analysis

The Township of Stow Creek is located in PA 4: Rural, PA 5: Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas and State Park Planning Areas. The majority of Stow Creek Township is appropriate to be categorized as PA4: Rural, given the agronomic industry in the County. The PA4 encompasses the majority of the Township's upland areas, with PA5 occupying the lower lying riverine area of the Township along the Stow Creek. Stow

Creek is classified by NJDEP as an SE1 waterway (Saline Estuary 1) and FW2-NT (Freshwater 2- Non-Trout).

After careful consideration, the Township seeks to change a portion of the PA4 Rural to PA3 Fringe along Route 49 near the Township's border with Hopewell and Shiloh.

In addition, it is also recommended that large tracts of permanently preserved open space, such as the expansions of State Parks and Wildlife Management Areas, be categorized as PA8. There are areas of NJDEP-owned land that are leased to local farmers, which present unique challenges to the balance of private industry on public land. Therefore, it is recommended that the PA8 State Park category be broadened to state PA8 State-Owned Lands and Open Space, as not all NJDEP-owned land is publicly accessible.

CHANGES IN COUNTY POLICY AND REGULATIONS

2022 Farmland Preservation Plan

In 2023, the Cumberland County Agriculture Development Board and the Cumberland County Planning Board adopted the 2022 Farmland Preservation Plan. The plan recognizes that agriculture is a leading industry and way of life for Cumberland County and of the region's character. Preservation of the lands essential to that industry is a major purpose of the Plan, along with strengthening efforts to support farmers, farming, and the agricultural industry of Cumberland County whenever possible

Portions of the 2022 Farmland Preservation Plan relevant to the Farmland Preservation objectives of the Stow Creek Township Master Plan:

While New Jersey faced rapid decline of agricultural lands in the latter half of the 20th century due largely to suburban sprawl, Cumberland's agricultural land base remained relatively stable. This trend has remained consistent into the 21st century, with agricultural lands comprising about 71,000 acres in 2002, a change of only 7%.

The Farmland Preservation Program in Cumberland County has been in existence for the past 30 years. During that time a full 22,000 acres have been preserved through the program. Due to the high amount of acreage dedicated to agriculture in the county, previous preservation plans have set iterative goals of approximately 1,000 acres per year, recognizing that the projected 10-year windows of the plan would not begin to reach the culmination of the effort. However, in analyzing those farms yet to be preserved, this plan projects a substantive culmination to preservation of farmland within Cumberland County.

It can be projected that if the farms targeted within this plan are able to be preserved, the Farmland Preservation Program will have achieved its overarching goal of protecting enough active agricultural lands to ensure the future viability of farmland within Cumberland County. While sporadic preservation may occur after this goal is met, the fundamental goal will have been achieved and a redistribution of funding at that time will be in order.

In the 2005 Farmland Preservation Plan, the main goal of the preservation program was "to preserve, to the greatest extent possible, lands that make up the core areas of the Cumberland County agricultural industry." The plan proposed a one-year goal of 600 acres, a five-year goal of 5,000 acres, and a ten-year goal of 10,000 acres.

In 2009, when the plan was updated, these goals were increased to a one-year goal of 1,050 acres, a five-year goal of 5,250 acres, and a ten-year goal of 10,500 acres. Also, the objective statement was modified to read: “Agriculture is a leading industry and way of life for Cumberland County and of the region’s character. Preservation of the lands essential to that industry is a major purpose of this Plan, along with strengthening efforts to support farmers, farming, and the agricultural industry of Cumberland County whenever possible”. The objective statement from 2009 remains applicable to the work of the Cumberland CADB and the goals and objectives of the county as a whole and this plan does not recommend any variation to the objective statement.

Cumberland County contains excellent soils for crop growing. The vast majority of all soils in the county (86%) are considered important agricultural soils. Over 131,000 acres in the county (41%) are classed as prime farmlands. Prime farmlands are lands that have the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops. They can sustain high yields of crops when managed with correct farming methods. Prime farmlands are not excessively erodible or saturated with water for long periods of time and do not flood frequently.

Observing non-income statistical data alone provides a fascinating story of what is happening in agriculture in Cumberland County. To summarize:

There has been cropland loss in New Jersey for the last 15 years, including in

- Cumberland County; however, the rate of loss in Cumberland County and South Jersey has been less resulting in increasing concentration of statewide cropland in South Jersey. Cumberland County currently contains 9% of the state’s total farmland.
- In general, farms in Cumberland County are either getting smaller (< than 10 acres) or consolidating into larger operations (> than 180 acres). The middle-sized farms (10 to 179 acres) in the county are declining with an average 16.7% loss of this size farm since 2002.

Cumberland County stands out in the amount of support services headquartered within the county. Cumberland County farms are served by many businesses on both the input and output side of the agricultural and food industry. On the input side, there are numerous businesses in the Cumberland County region that offer agricultural supplies and services such as farming equipment and supplies, seeds, fertilizer, animal feed, and irrigation systems. Many of these agricultural support businesses are quite large in scale, such as Lee Rain, the largest irrigation supplier on the East Coast and Nutrien, the world’s largest crop inputs company, with a facility located in Bridgeton – the only location south of North Brunswick, New Jersey.

On the output side, local farms are well-served by food processors and distributors, produce and livestock auctions, produce wholesalers, and cold storage warehouses in addition to local roadside and farmers markets. For example, the Vineland Produce Auction is one of the largest fruit and vegetable auctions in the country. Additionally, South Jersey has one of the greatest concentrations of cold storage warehouses on the East Coast due to its strategic location within the metropolitan Northeast corridor. Cumberland County’s vast agricultural base, rail and highway accessibility, and proximity to major cities are major factors for attracting and maintaining agricultural

and food businesses. Highway accessibility in particular is extremely important since goods trucked out of Cumberland County can easily reach cities across the country through the interstate network. The agricultural land base is also a key factor in attracting food and value-added agricultural businesses, many of which use produce or meat from local farmers.

Stow Creek Township has an Agricultural District (A) that permits farms and agricultural activities including nurseries, small animals, and the raising of livestock. This district also allows for the sale of farm or dairy produce which has been raised on the farm from which it is to be sold. This condition has recently been amended to identify at least 51% of the produce must be raised on the farm, bringing it into alignment with general AMP standards. Single family detached dwellings for those not employed in agricultural production shall be permitted as a conditional use. In Stow Creek Township's Residential District (R) and Historic Residential District (HR), all agricultural uses allowed in the Agricultural District are permitted except the commercial raising of livestock and fowl. Stow Creek is the only municipality in Cumberland County to have adopted lot size averaging.

According to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, Cumberland County contains 560 farms on 66,256 acres of active farmland. Of this, over 230 farms covering 22,160 acres (33% of all farmland) has been preserved as of November 2022. The Farmland Preservation Program, since it is based largely on soil quality and existing locations of active agricultural, has been concentrated in municipalities where agriculture primarily exists. These municipalities are Hopewell and Upper Deerfield Townships, although all municipalities are encouraged to have their farmers apply for preservation. The cities of Bridgeton and Millville are currently the only two municipalities in Cumberland County without preserved farmland within their boundaries. The table below shows the amount of preserved farmland in the top four towns for farmland preservation in Cumberland County.

Rank	Municipality	# of Parcels Preserved	Acreage Preserved	% of County Total
1	Hopewell	69	5,636	25.4%
2	Upper Deerfield	61	5,023	22.7%
2	Greenwich	26	2,938	13.3%
4	Stow Creek	33	2,110	9.5%

Cumberland County 2022 Farmland Preservation Project Areas - Stow Creek

Stow Creek is a rural municipality with massive amounts of agricultural acreage. Interestingly, it is relatively sparsely preserved and therefore includes over 3,000 acres of targeted acreage. Between this project area and Stow Creek North, nearly the entirety of this township is located within a project area. There is currently 1,563 acres preserved in this project area (19%) with 3,123 acres targeted (38%), giving a density ratio of 57%. Stow Creek North captures a small northern point that is separate from the larger Stow Creek project area. There is about 382 acres preserved in this project area (36%) with another 284 acres targeted (27%) giving a density of 63%.

Stow Creek Township recognizes its unique location as to agricultural inputs and outputs within the larger region. Just as described in the County plan, there are local farmer supply and services and markets for farm products nearby that further support the findings that agriculture is the primary local industry and many of the Township's land use policies are designed to ensure the viability of local agriculture industry. Agricultural production is the most appropriate use of land, and the most desirable industry, in Stow Creek Township. Purdue and Growmark in Upper Deerfield, Seabrook Farms, and local farm markets and restaurants from New York City to Philadelphia support the agriculture industry in Stow Creek.

Special Occasion Events on Preserved Farms

In 2023, legislation was passed allowing special occasion events (SOEs) on preserved commercial farms. SOEs are defined as a wedding, lifetime milestone event, or other cultural or social event, conducted on preserved farmland on a commercial farm. Qualifying preserved farms are permitted to host a maximum of 26 SOEs annually, provided an application is submitted to the easement holder. In Cumberland County, the easement holder is either the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners or the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC).

CHANGES IN TOWNSHIP POLICY AND REGULATIONS

2017 Land Development Ordinance Update

The Stow Creek Township Planning Board undertook a comprehensive review and revision of the Land Development Ordinance (LDO) in 2017. The entire LDO was reviewed section by section and final recommendations for amendments were sent to the Township Committee for final review and adoption. The purposes of the zoning districts include the preservation and protection of prime agricultural lands from incompatible encroaching non-agricultural land development, and to encourage the continuation of agricultural production as the primary economic base of Stow Creek Township.

The most significant changes implemented include:

- Update and modernization of Board policies and procedures
- Complete review of permitted uses, conditional uses, prohibited uses, and agricultural uses permitted in the Agricultural District.
- Prohibition on Utility Sized Solar & Wind Facilities – 6.3.G. Facilities intended for the commercial production or storage of renewable energy.

The 2017 LDO update also included inclusion of a Right to Farm ordinance and a Right to Country Life Code. These two amendments are essentially policy statements to inform current and future residents of the importance of agriculture to the local economy and to set expectations for the dominance of agricultural development and use of land in the Township. They also demonstrate the importance of the agriculture industry to the Township. Agriculture is the cultural underpinning of the local economy, and it represents a way of life chosen by the residents of the Township. Agriculture is the best and most appropriate use of most of the land in the Township, and the Township's leading industry.

Right to Farm Ordinance

Section 1. Recognition of Right

The Township of Stow Creek recognizes that farming is a natural right and ordained to be a permitted use throughout the Township of Stow Creek, subject only to the restrictions and regulations for intensive fowl or livestock farms, and subject to State and Township health and sanitary codes.

Section 2. Equipment and Methods

The right-to-farm recognizes the use of all manner of mechanical equipment, irrigation pumps and applicators, aerial and ground spraying and seeding, large tractors, etc., and also numerous laborers and the application chemical and/or natural fertilizers, and pesticides; all for the purpose of producing, handling and marketing agricultural products such as vegetables, grains, hay, fruit, fibers, wood, trees, plants, shrubs, flowers, seeds, etc., or aquaculture with regard to fish, shellfish, or aquatic plants. This right-to-farm shall also include the right to use land for grazing by animals, subject to the restrictions of intensive fowl or livestock farms.

Section 3. Acceptable Practices and Times

The right-to-farm includes the uses, methods and activities that have been proven effective in the past, that are acceptable in the present and that are considered reasonable and necessary in the industry throughout the country as a whole, and which are conducted in accordance with generally accepted agricultural practices. Such uses and activities may occur at anytime day or night, on weekends, weekdays or holidays. The noise, odors, dust and fumes that are caused by any of these practices are specifically permitted as part of the exercise of this right-to-farm.

Section 4. Inconveniences to Public

It is expressly recognized that any nuisance or inconvenience to the public that may be caused to others by such uses and activities so conducted is more than offset by the benefits from farming to the neighborhood, community and to society in general, by the preservation of and continuance of farming in Stow Creek Township as a source of agricultural products, a source of legitimate income and employment, and the keeping of the rural life for this and future generations.

Right to Country Life Code

Section 1. Stow Creek Township recognizes the agricultural and rural nature of this community and its many longtime residents, and those who have moved into our community because of its “rural atmosphere”. The Township Committee believes that in the best interest of the Township as a public entity and its citizens, including people who are considering moving here, to give notice of a Policy Statement to express the ideology of a rural code or a “country code” as part of the philosophy of the Township.

Section 2. The Policy Statement of Stow Creek Township with respect to its rural environment and country living is herein set forth:

This document expresses the philosophy of Stow Creek Township residents. The residents of this Township have been raised here and have chosen to stay or have moved here because they enjoy the “rural life”. This community has shown a strong commitment to remaining rural by foregoing services taken for granted in suburban and city areas and traveling the extra distance for the necessities.

Many residents have moved to this area because the “rural atmosphere” of their former hometown has been lost to development. Others may be rural newcomers escaping the suburbs and cities. These residents must remember not to expect perfectly paved roads, water and sewer service, a local police department, municipal trash pick-up, public transportation and other “luxuries”. Residents in a rural community will endure the slow-moving farm machinery on the roads, night and early morning tractor and irrigation pump noise, perhaps unpleasant odors and dust of neighboring farm activity.

If you are considering this area as your home, please remember that the snowplow may not come as often as you may feel necessary, you will have to travel to the market and other stores. The New Jersey State Police have been providing us with excellent coverage, and we will continue with that relationship as long as possible.

As a member of this community, you will have to take your trash to our local convenience center or contract for trash removal yourself. There may be certain items that will not be accepted at all or at specified times only – for example, tires, hazardous, bulky, demolition waste, etc. In exchange for your participation in providing these services to you, we, the Township Committee will ensure a tax rate without high costs associated with maintaining the extra equipment and personnel otherwise required.

You will sometimes have to pay a price to remain a rural community; residential development and farmland assessed properties do not provide the ratables of commercial development. Farmland-assessed property provides a community with open space; owners enjoy a reduced property assessment; however, the entire municipality benefits from this acreage that will have little, if any, impact on the local and regional school districts. The residential development must be controlled in consideration of the services it demands. The increased traffic that is a result of developing more houses, especially in the more open areas of Stow Creek, will compel us to improve and add roads for the sake of the safety of all our citizens.

It is with this ideology that the Township Committee of Stow Creek does hereby adopt this Code as a notice to all present citizens and future citizens of this community that Stow Creek officials will continue the philosophy in their policy and procedure to provide its citizens with a country lifestyle.

Section 3. According to the Constitution of the State of New Jersey and applicable law, the Stow Creek Township Committee as the governing body will carry out its responsibilities. However, the Township Committee believes it is appropriate to recognize the rural policies set forth above and will consider same, as well as applicable legal criteria in making decisions to expend taxpayers’ dollars when being asked to

provide services to certain persons and/or entities and when complaints of certain inconveniences are being considered. Expenditures of public funds that may not produce results that are cost-effective to Stow Creek, and its rural life will always be thoroughly reviewed by the Township Committee in its legislative and executive capacity.

Section 4. The Township Committee will establish procedures to provide a copy of this Ordinance, as well as the Right-to-Farm Ordinance, to each registered voter, each person or entity who seeks a building permit, pays taxes, applies to or seeks information from the Stow Creek Planning Board, or seeks to become a citizen or entity in Stow Creek Township. This Ordinance, besides stating a philosophy, sets for the policy of Stow Creek's residents, intended to give notice to those who may wish to become part of this rural community as to the way of life that we have and have had and want to continue on into the future, while at the same time helping each other as neighbors and seeking to be responsible citizens.

2026 Prohibition of Data Centers

In May of 2026, the Township Committee, after referring the ordinance to the Planning Board for review and a determination of consistency with the Master Plan, adopted an ordinance amending the Stow Creek Township Land Development Ordinance to confirm that Data Centers are prohibited uses/structures in all zoning districts.

- Prohibition on Data Centers – 6.3.H. “Data centers,” as commonly known, and as sometimes referred to as “internet data centers” or “cloud data centers” (and any and all functionally-equivalent but differently-named uses, structures and facilities) that house computer systems and include associated components such as telecommunication and data storage systems; redundant or “backup” power and data storage components; electrical transformers, substations, and other power supply infrastructure; data communication connections; environmental and safety controls for building climate, equipment cooling, and fire suppression; and security devices, systems, and installations, to serve as off-site or remote accessory facilities available and accessible to users via telecommunication or internet utilities for the purpose of aggregating collective computing demands for cloud services, video streaming, blockchain and crypto mining, artificial intelligence and machine learning, virtual reality, and other internet, telecommunication, computing, and data storage, maintenance, processing, and transmission purposes.

Additional Open Space Protected since 2007

There is a total of 2,908.4 acres of open space in the Township, mostly under State ownership. Since the 2007 Master Plan, 13.3 acres have been added to Gum Tree Corner Road WMA and 8.5 acres have been added to Stow Creek State Park. The Planning Board has noted that land acquired by the State as additions to Stow Creek State Park and Gum Tree Corner Road WMA are not being maintained. Former fields and forest areas are overrun with invasive species, hanging vines, and areas for mosquito breeding. The Township should request more frequent maintenance of the State lands by the NJDEP State Park Service. The NJDEP should also consider leasing these acquired farmlands

back to area farmers for better field management, providing the State with lease revenue and the local farmers with additional lands available for agricultural production.

Additional Farmland Preserved since 2007

The period since the 2007 Master Plan has seen a significant increase in preserved farmland in the Township. 2,219.5 acres of farmland have been preserved since 2007, bringing the total number of farmland acres preserved to 2,908.4 according to the NJADC Preserved Farmland Inventory.

Stormwater Management Ordinance Updates

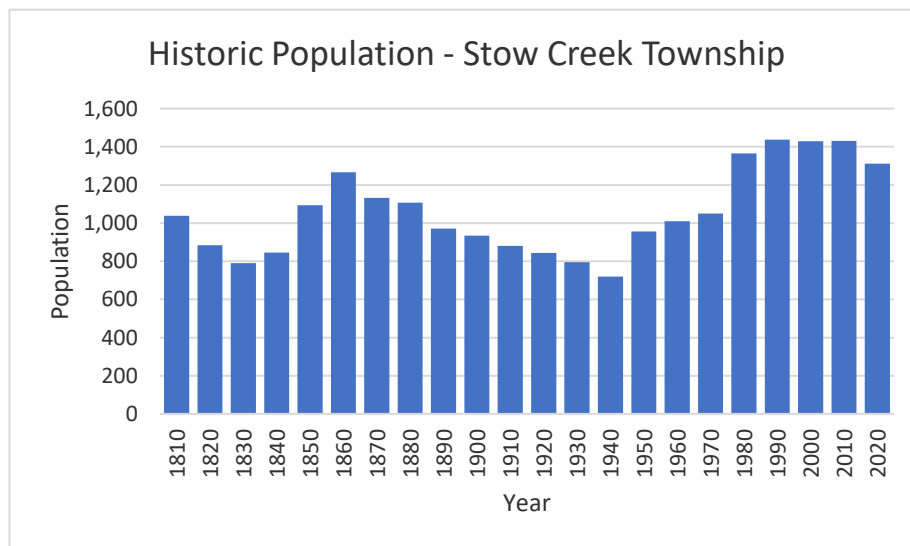
In 2020 and 2024, Stow Creek Township passed amendments to the Township Code to meet the new Stormwater Management rules.

Floodplain Management Ordinance Updates

The current, active Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance for Stow Creek Township was officially adopted in 2016

Demographics Update

As predicted by the 2007 Master Plan, the Township population has continued to experience minor population fluctuations for the foreseeable future like the past 25 years.



D. Specific Recommended Changes to the Master Plan and Development Regulations

1. The Township should consider revisions to the Right to Farm Ordinance to align more with the State and County Right to Farm ordinances. The current Land Use Ordinance has additional definitions and standards for farms from a land use perspective, but further study for current ag industry practices would improve the current Right to Farm Ordinance.
2. The Township should consider broader definitions of Agritourism in the Land Use Ordinance to align with County and State regulations. Broadening the definitions of the types of uses considered to be accessory to farm uses will allow for a diversified income stream for farmers, to alleviate pressures of commodity price fluctuations and allow for more farmers to keep their farms economically viable.
3. The Township should continue to review and reference State definitions as they relate to agriculture and agricultural uses in both the Land Use and Right to Farm Ordinances, as well as updates in farming techniques and agricultural developments.
4. The Township should create a definition of “Inherently Beneficial Use” in the LDO to incorporate agriculture, prime farmland and prime agricultural soils as inherently beneficial. The Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) NJ Rev Stat § 40:55D-4 (2025) defines “Inherently beneficial use” as a use which is universally considered of value to the community because it fundamentally serves the public good and promotes the general welfare. Such a use includes, but is not limited to, a hospital, school, childcare center, group home, or a wind, solar or photovoltaic energy facility or structure. The definition can rely on the importance of agriculture to the local, regional, and state economy, the need for local food security, and the needs of all NJ citizens for healthy foods, all as amply evidenced by the New Jersey Right to Farm Act (*N.J.S.A. 4:1C-1, et seq.*); the New Jersey Agriculture Retention and Development Act (*N.J.S.A. 4:1C-11, et seq.*); the New Jersey Farmland Assessment Act of 1964 (*N.J.S.A. 54:4-23.1, et seq.*); the Cumberland County Farmland Preservation Plan; the Stow Creek Township Master Plan; and the Stow Creek Township Land Development Ordinance (by which agriculture is permitted-by-right in all of Stow Creek Township’s five zoning districts).
5. The Township should continue to review and evaluate the New Jersey Supreme Court’s “Mount Laurel” doctrine and the recently amended Fair Housing Act to determine whether, when, and by what methods the Township might appropriately seek the FHA’s optional protections from “builder’s remedy” lawsuits.
6. The Township should work towards becoming more aligned with the State Plan goals for Climate Change by incorporating information from existing studies into future Master Planning initiatives. These efforts include:
 - SJTPO Hazard Vulnerability Framework, May 2024
 - Cumberland County Hazard Mitigation Plan, August 2022
 - State of New Jersey Climate Change Resilience Strategy, 2021
7. The Township should review and consider for implementation various alternate forms of regulation that are being utilized by other similarly situated Cumberland County municipalities to protect historic properties without establishing historic districts and historic preservation commissions.

8. The 2022 Cumberland County Farmland Preservation Plan found that in general, farms in Cumberland County are either getting smaller (< than 10 acres) or consolidating into larger operations (> than 180 acres). The middle-sized farms (10 to 179 acres) in the county are declining with an average 16.7% loss of this size farm since 2002. The Planning Board has noted that same trend in Stow Creek. In order to address the issue, the Board is proposing additional study with input from the community to recommend ordinance amendments to the minimum permitted lot size in the Agricultural A zone, which is currently 1.5 acres. The Board is considering minimum lot sizes of up to 6 acres or more in the Agricultural A zone subject to further analysis, including possible amendments to lot coverage, both building coverage and impervious coverage allowances to accommodate larger minimum lot sizes.
9. The Township should consider, in order to further address the issue of the loss of mid-sized farms, updating the definition of Minor Subdivision in the Land Development Ordinance. The current definition is:

“A subdivision of land that does not involve (1) the creation of more than three lots in addition to a single reserved parcel (the division of lots shall be deemed to be cumulative); (2) planned development; (3) any new street; or (4) an extension of any off-tract improvement.”

The requirement does not specify the date on which the reserved parcel began to subdivide new parcels from the original parcel. The definition should be updated to include a date certain from which to begin the accumulation of less than four subdivided lots from the original parcel.

E. Changes Recommended for Incorporation of Redevelopment Plans

At this time the Planning Board makes no findings or recommendations regarding the incorporation of redevelopment plans pursuant to the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, P.L. 11992, c.79 (C.40A:12A-1 et al.) as there are currently no designated Areas in need of Redevelopment or Rehabilitation within the Township.

Appendices

Map 1 - Existing Land Use - Township of Stow Creek, Cumberland County, May 2025 – Cumberland County GIS

Map 2 - 2020 Land Use Land Cover - Township of Stow Creek, Cumberland County, May 2025 – Cumberland County GIS

Map 3 - Environmental Features - Township of Stow Creek, Cumberland County, May 2025 – Cumberland County GIS

Map 4 – Utilities - Township of Stow Creek, Cumberland County, May 2025 – Cumberland County GIS

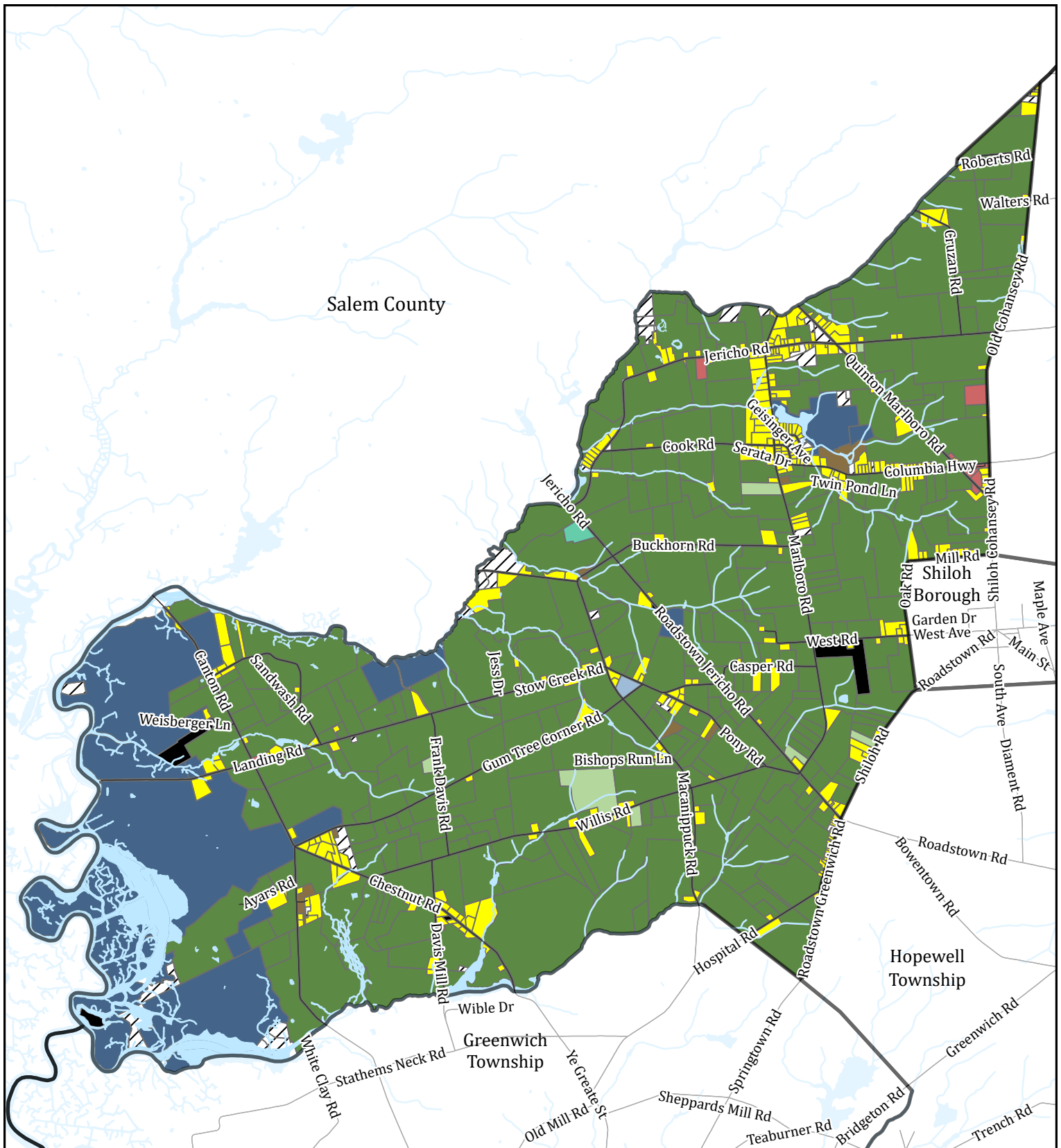
Map 5 – Zoning - Township of Stow Creek, Cumberland County, May 2025 – Cumberland County GIS

Map 6 – State Planning Areas - Township of Stow Creek, Cumberland County, May 2025 – Cumberland County GIS

Map 7 – Assessment and Inconsistency - Township of Stow Creek, Cumberland County, May 2025 – Cumberland County GIS

Map 8 – Cumberland County 2022 Farmland Preservation Plan – Map 20n Shiloh-Hopewell North, Stone Creek North Project Areas, December 2021 – Cumberland County GIS

Map 9 – Cumberland County 2022 Farmland Preservation Plan – Map 20o Stow Creek Project Area, December 2021 – Cumberland County GIS



Existing Land Use

Township of Stow Creek, Cumberland County



0 2,500 5,000 Feet

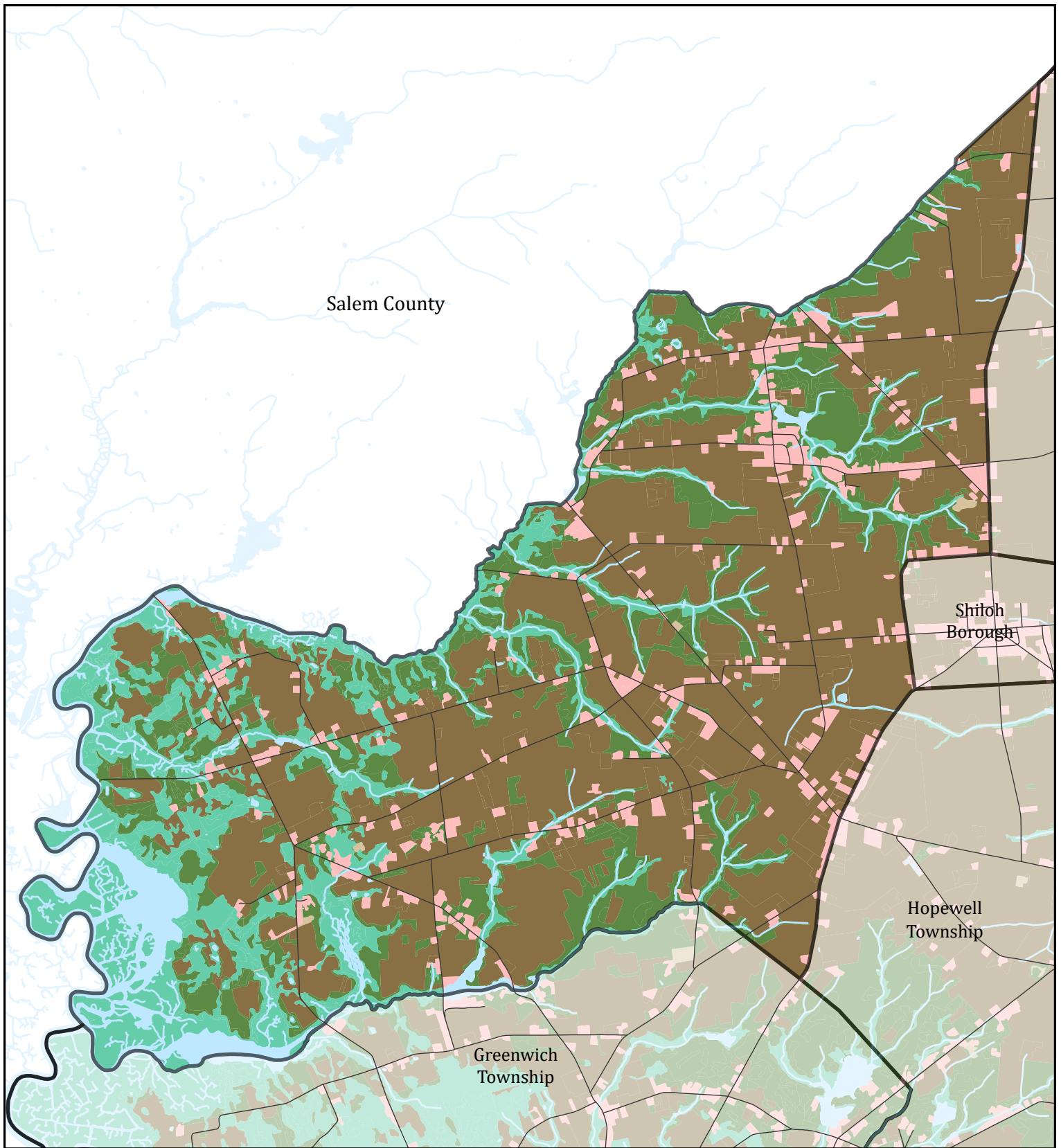
Source: Cumberland County GIS, County Tax Assessment Records, NJDEP, NJOGIS, NJOIT
May 2025

Existing Land Use (2025)

- Vacant
- Residential
- Farmland (Regular)
- Farmland (Qualified)

- Commercial
- Industrial
- Apartment
- Railroad
- Public School
- Private School

- Public Property
- Church & Charitable
- Cemeteries & Graveyards
- Other Exempt
- Unknown



2020 Land Use Land Cover

Township of Stow Creek, Cumberland County

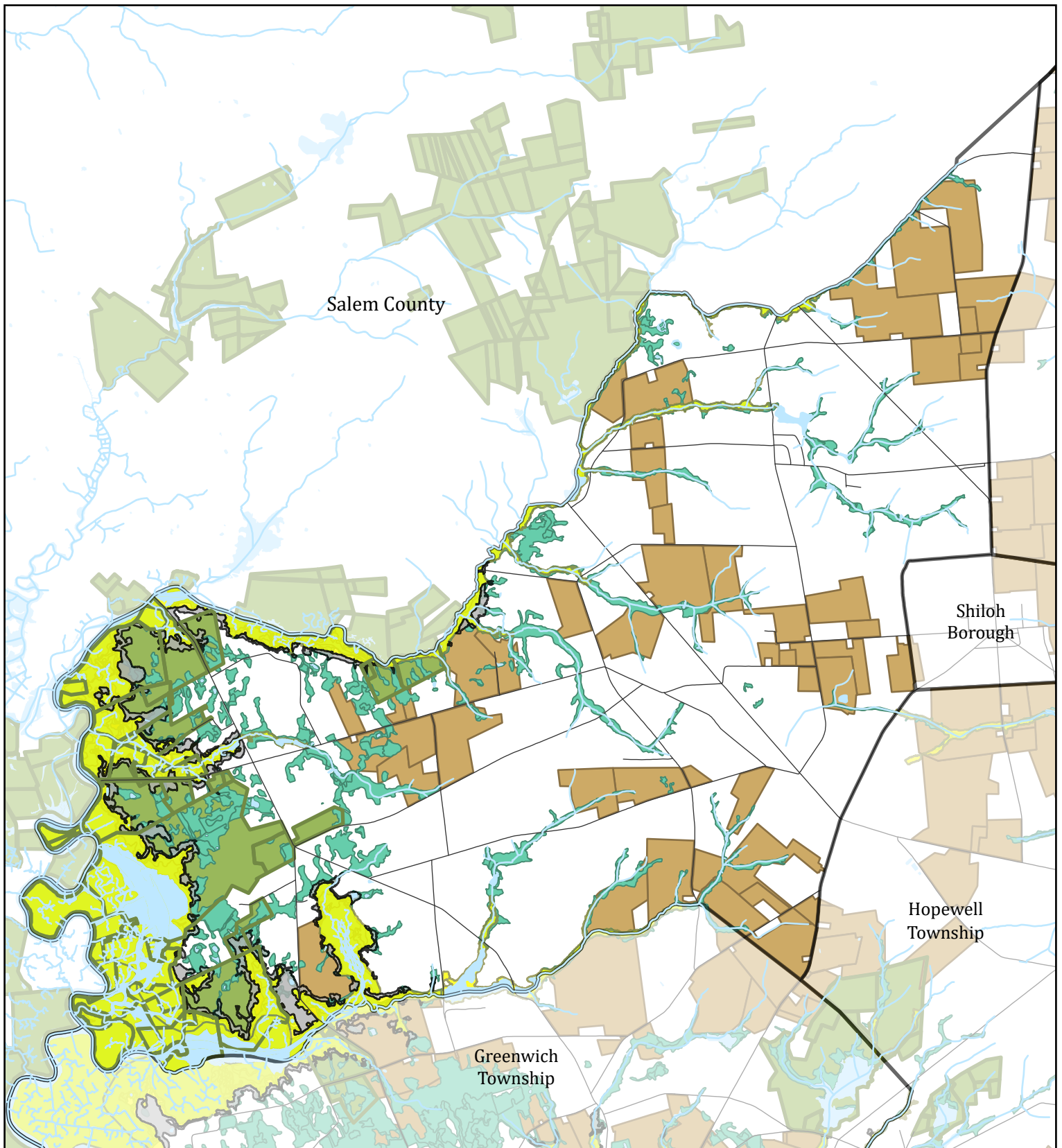


0 2,500 5,000 Feet

Source: Cumberland County GIS, 2020
LULC, NJDEP, NJOGIS, NJOIT
May 2025

Land Use Land Cover (2020)

- Agriculture
- Barren Land
- Forest
- Urban
- Water
- Wetlands



Environmental Features

Township of Stow Creek, Cumberland County



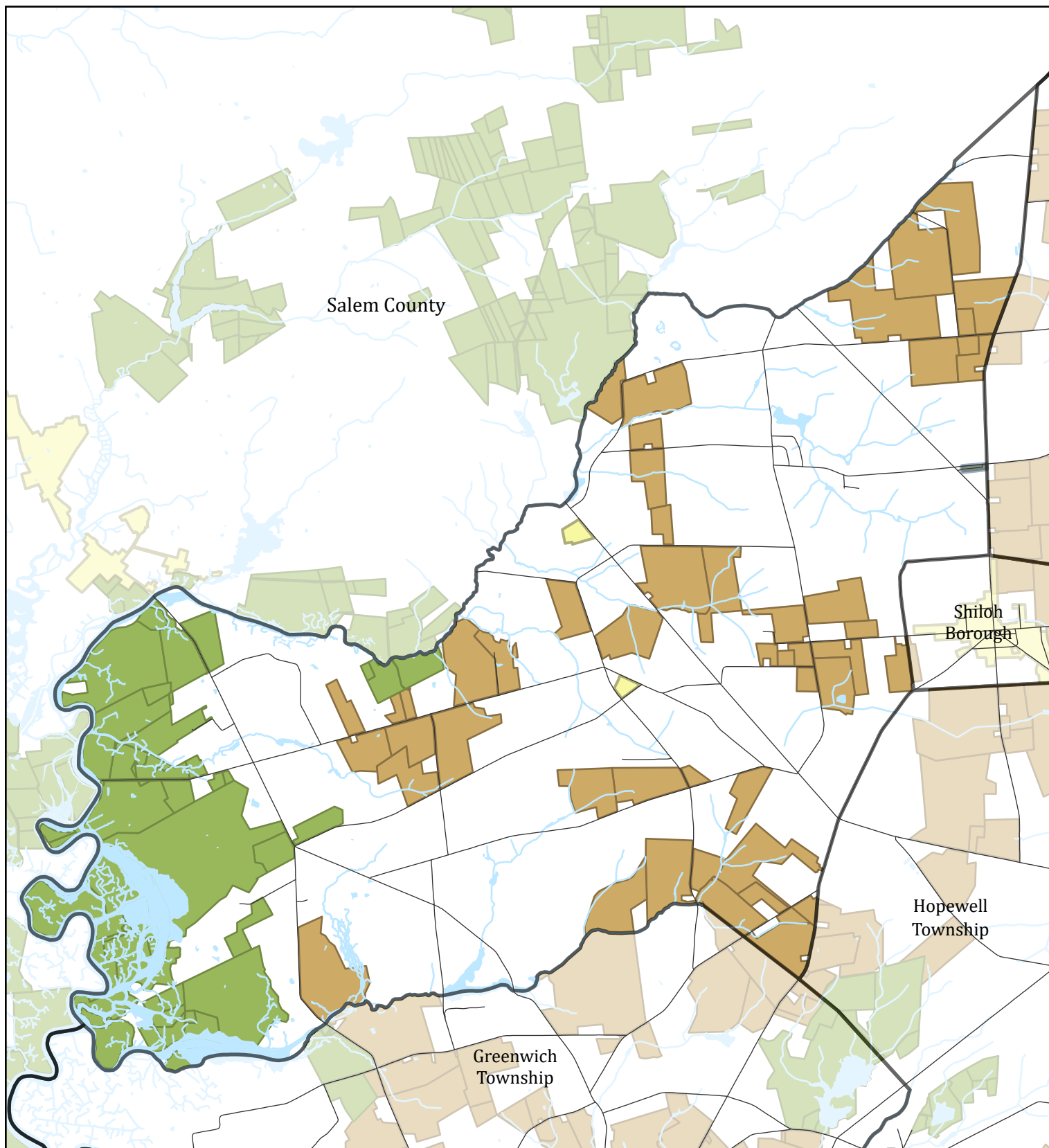
0 2,500 5,000 Feet

Source: Cumberland County GIS,
NJDEP, NJOGIS, NJOIT
May 2025

FEMA Floodplains

- Zone A, AE, AO: 100-Year Floodplain
- Zone VE: 100-Year Floodplain with Wave Action
- 0.2% Chance Annual Floodplain (500-Year Flood)
- Floodway

- Preserved Farmland
- Preserved Open Space
- Wetlands



Utilities

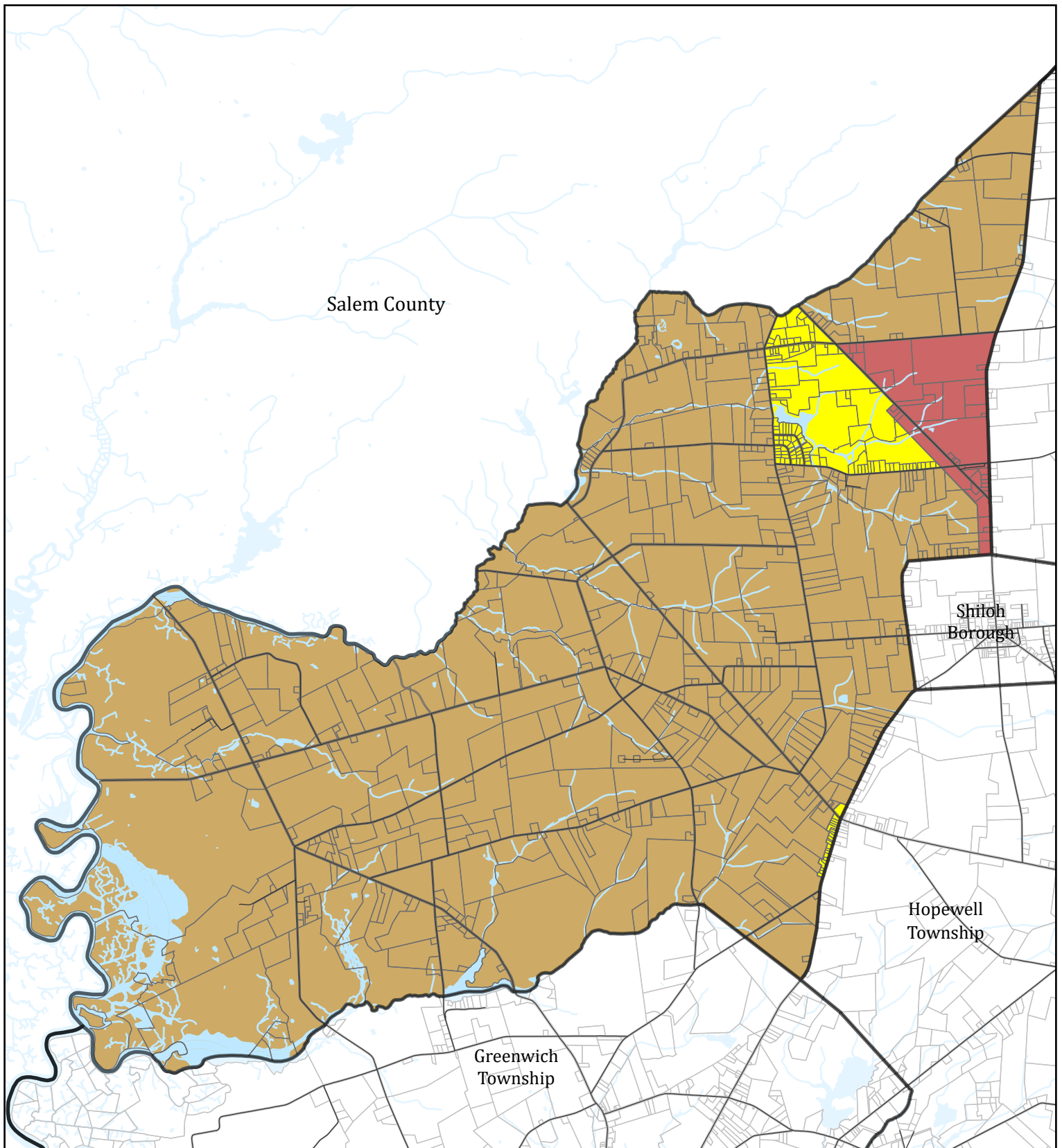
Township of Stow Creek, Cumberland County



0 2,500 5,000 Feet

Source: Cumberland County GIS,
NJDEP, NJOGIS, NJOIT
May 2025

-  Water Purveyor Service Area
-  Sewer Service Areas
-  Preserved Open Space
-  Preserved Farmland



Zoning

Township of Stow Creek, Cumberland County

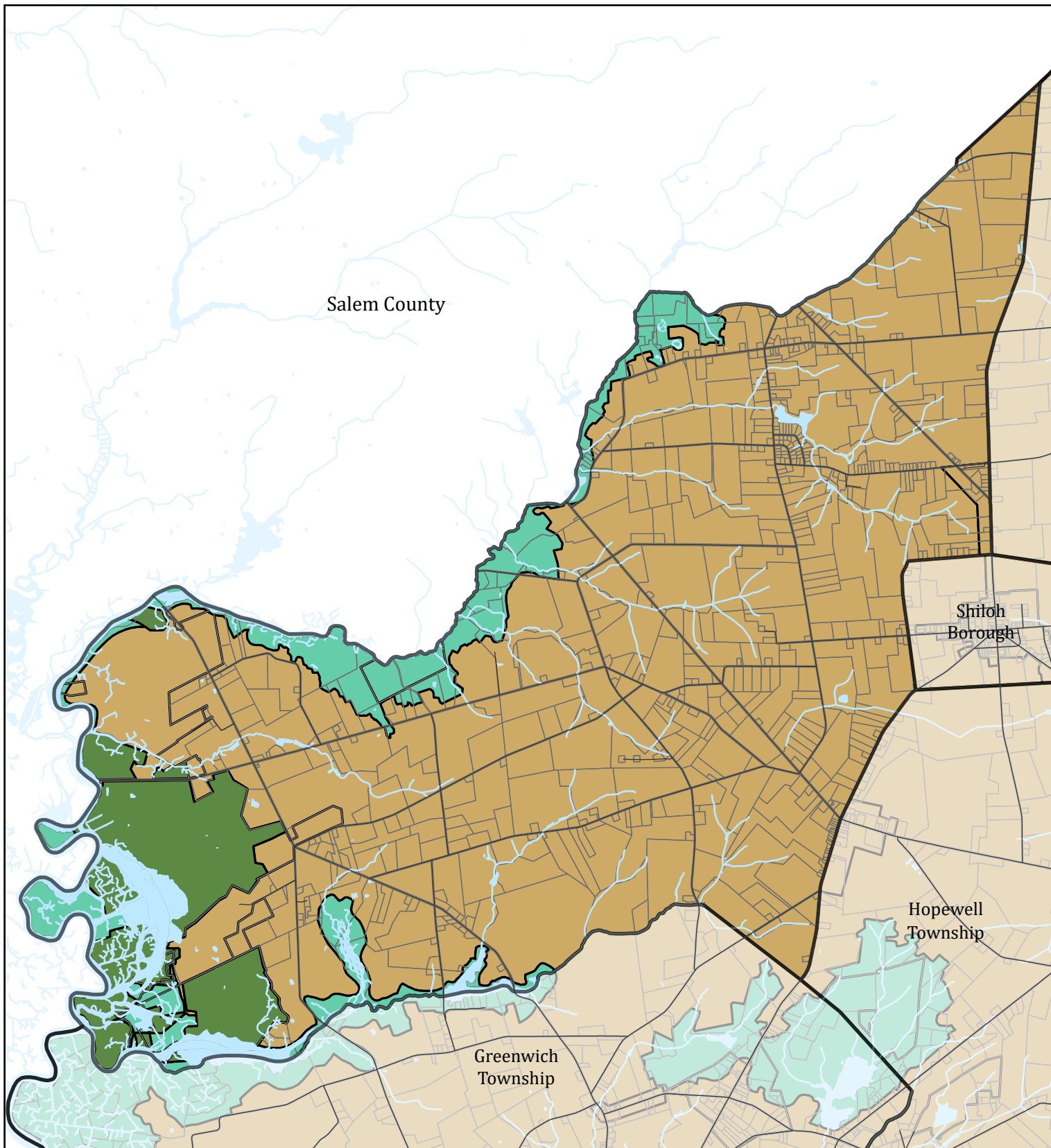


0 2,500 5,000 Feet

Source: Cumberland County GIS,
NJDEP, NJOGIS, NJOIT
May 2025

Zoning Districts

-  Agriculture
-  Commercial
-  Residential



State Planning Areas

Township of Stow Creek, Cumberland County



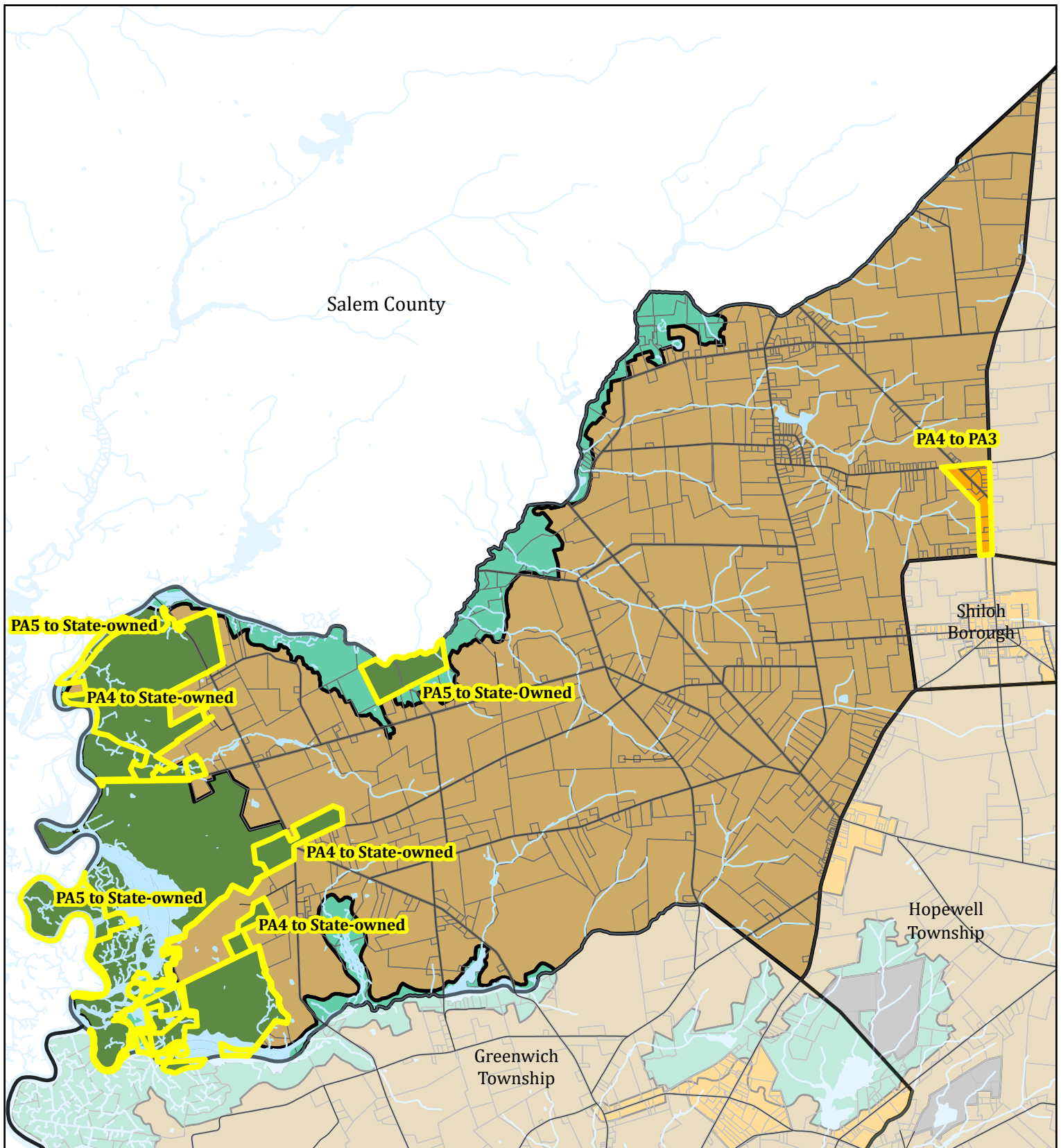
0 2,500 5,000 Feet

Source: Cumberland County GIS,
NJDEP, NJOGIS, NJOIT
May 2025

State Planning Areas

- PA1: Metropolitan
- PA2: Suburban
- PA3: Fringe
- PA4: Rural

- PA4B: Rural Environmentally Sensitive
- PA5: Environmentally Sensitive
- State Parks/Open Space
- Pinelands



Assessment and Inconsistency

Township of Stow Creek, Cumberland County



0 2,500 5,000 Feet

Source: Cumberland County GIS,
NJDEP, NJOGIS, NJOIT
May 2025

Planning Area Changes

Revised Planning Area

PA3: Fringe

PA4: Rural

PA5: Environ. Sens.

State-Owned Land and Open Space*

* NJDEP owns land in Stow Creek that is leased to local farmers and actively farmed

Cumberland County

Map 20n: Shiloh-Hopewell North Stow Creek North

Shiloh-Hopewell North
Total Acreage: 6154
Preserved Acreage: 2766
Target Acreage: 1783
Assessed Acreage: 1029
Leftover Acreage: 576

Stow Creek North
Total Acreage: 1065
Preserved Acreage: 514
Target Acreage: 152
Assessed Acreage: 383
Leftover Acreage: 16

2021 Project Areas

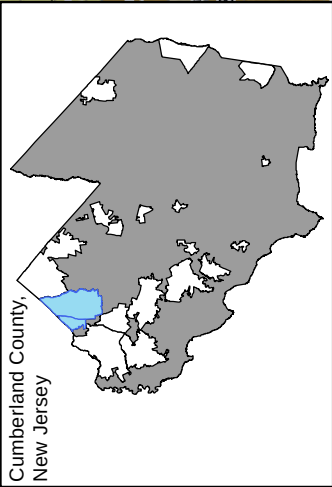
Preserved Farmland

Target Farms

Farm Assessed

Preserved Open Space

Municipal Boundary



Sources : NJDEP, NJDOT, NJ Pinelands Commission, Cumberland County GIS. 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.

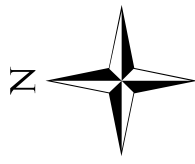
Produced By:
Cumberland County Department of Planning,
Tourism, & Community Affairs
164 West Broad Street
Bridgeton, NJ 08302
Tel. 856-453-2175
December 2021

0 0.4 0.8
Miles

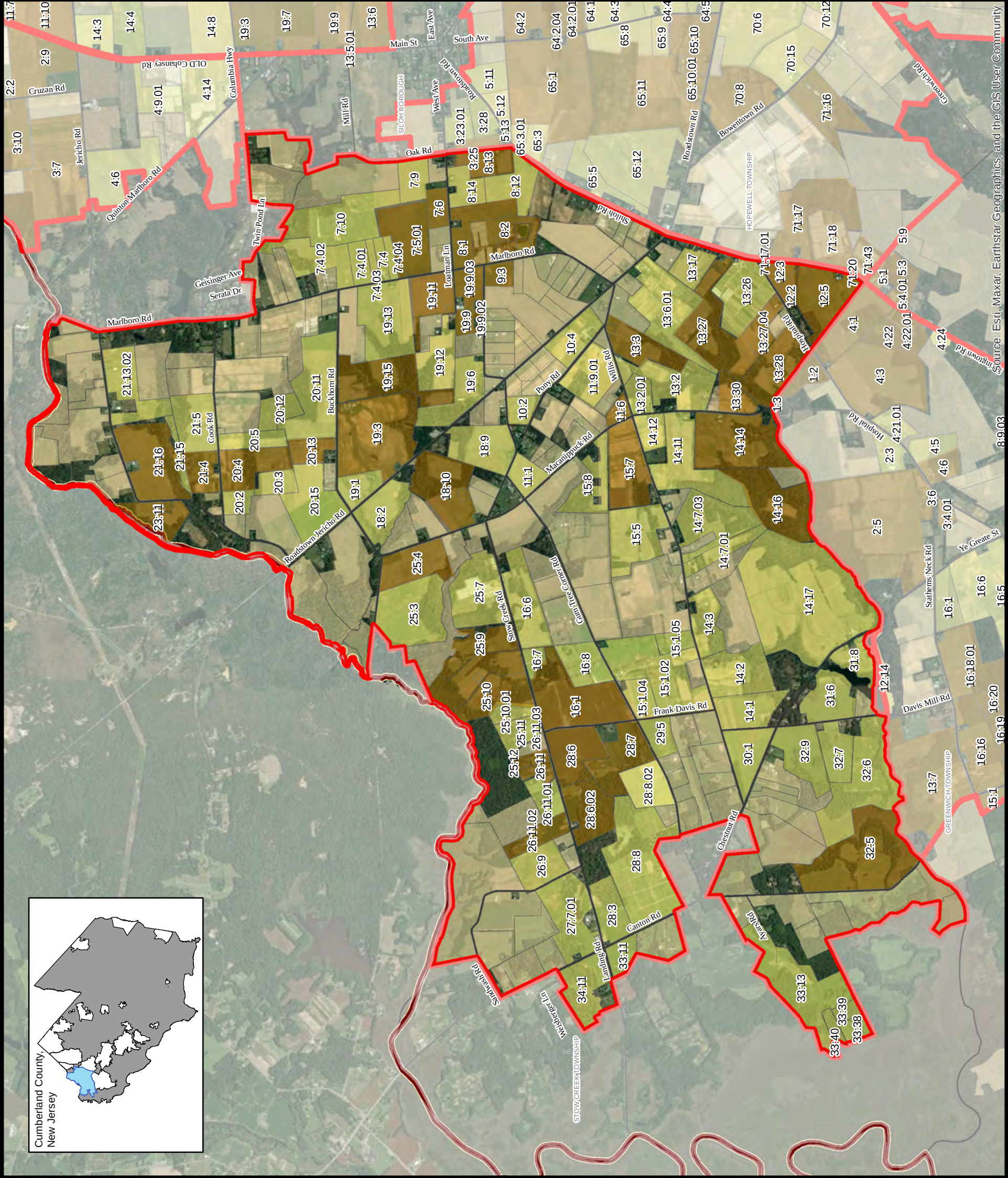
Cumberland County
New Jersey

	2021 Project Areas
	Preserved Farmland
	Target Farms
	Farm Assessed
	Preserved Open Space
	Municipal Boundary

Sources : NJDEP, NJDOT,
NJ Pinelands Commission,
Cumberland County GIS.
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.



Produced By:
Cumberland County Department of Planning,
Tourism, & Community Affairs
164 West Broad Street
Bridgeton, NJ 08302
Tel. 856-453-2175
December 2021



STOW CREEK TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD

RESOLUTION NO.: 2026-07

**RESOLUTION MEMORIALIZING ADOPTION OF MASTER PLAN
REEXAMINATION REPORT PURSUANT TO N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89**

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89 of the New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1, *et seq.*) requires every municipal planning board to conduct a periodic general reexamination of the municipality's master plan and development regulations at least every ten years; and

WHEREAS, Stow Creek Township's current master plan was adopted by the Planning Board in March 2007 and has not been reexamined by the Planning Board since that date; and

WHEREAS, the Stow Creek Township Committee has provided for the Board's current master plan reexamination to be conducted with advice and guidance by the Board's Professional Planner, Paul Gleitz, PP, AICP, of Latini & Gleitz Planning, 223 Broad Street, Manasquan, New Jersey 08736; and

WHEREAS, on June 16, 2026, the Board tentatively approved the master plan reexamination report entitled "2026 Master Plan Reexamination Report, Township of Stow Creek, Cumberland County, New Jersey" which was prepared by Mr. Gleitz, and which is referred to hereafter as the "Master Plan Reexamination Report"; and

WHEREAS, the Board scheduled the Master Plan Reexamination Report for final review and adoption at its regularly scheduled July 21, 2026 meeting; and

WHEREAS, at the Board's July 21, 2026 meeting the Board conducted a further review of the Master Plan Reexamination Report in consultation with Mr. Gleitz, and provided opportunity for any interested persons to ask questions and make statements about the Master Plan Reexamination Report; and

WHEREAS, having carefully reviewed and considered the Master Plan Reexamination Report, and having found and concluded that the Master Plan Reexamination Report contains accurate and appropriate statements, proposals and recommendations for the Stow Creek Township Master Plan and development regulations as required by N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89, the Board determined that the Master Plan Reexamination Report should be adopted as the Board's periodic master plan reexamination report; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Stow Creek Township Planning Board, that the Board hereby adopts the report entitled "2026 Master Plan Reexamination Report, Township of Stow Creek, Cumberland County, New Jersey" prepared by Paul Gleitz, PP, AICP, as the Board's periodic master plan reexamination report; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Planning Board Solicitor is hereby directed to issue notice of the Board's aforesaid adoption of the Master Plan Reexamination Report by:

- (a) publication in the *South Jersey Times* online newspaper; and
- (b) certified mail, return receipt requested, to the New Jersey Office of Planning Advocacy and the Cumberland County Planning Board, each with a copy of this resolution and a copy of the Master Plan Reexamination Report; and

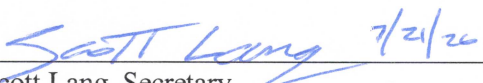
- (c) certified mail, return receipt requested, to the Clerks of all six (6) municipalities that adjoin Stow Creek Township (i.e., Greenwich Township, Hopewell Township and Shiloh Borough in Cumberland County, and Alloway Township, Lower Alloways Creek Township, and Quinton Township in Salem County), informing the Clerks that they may request and obtain copies of this resolution and the Master Plan Reexamination Report; and
- (d) email to the Stow Creek Township Clerk with a request that the Clerk post the notice, together with a copy of this resolution, and a copy of the Master Plan Reexamination Report, on Township's official Internet website in the manner provided by *N.J.S.A. 35:3-2.a*.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Planning Board Solicitor is hereby directed to submit to the Planning Board Secretary a certification of mailing with copies of all mailing receipts, and an affidavit of publication from the *South Jersey Times* online newspaper, to confirm that the aforesaid notice has been accomplished; and

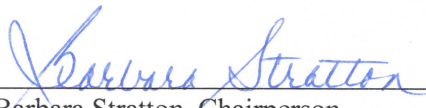
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Planning Board Secretary is hereby directed to obtain written confirmation from the Stow Creek Township Clerk that the aforesaid notice and copies of this resolution and the Master Plan Reexamination Report were posted on the Township's official website as requested by the Planning Board Solicitor.

The undersigned Chairperson of the Stow Creek Township Planning Board hereby certifies that the above is a true copy of a resolution as adopted by said Board on July 21, 2026 to memorialize its action taken on that date.

Attest:



Scott Lang, Secretary
Stow Creek Township Planning Board



Barbara Stratton, Chairperson
Stow Creek Township Planning Board