

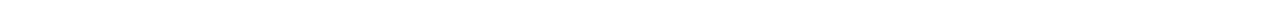


Monmouth County **EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT** 2026



Monmouth County Division of Planning

Cover Photo: Tinton Falls, Leah Emmerich





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Introduction

The Monmouth County Division of Planning has taken the first steps into developing a brand-new County Comprehensive Plan. The previous master plan, approved by the Planning Board and published in 2016, set over 90 goals and 62 recommendations that informed the work and actions of the Planning Division and its partners for 10 years. As our communities grow and evolve it is crucial to take a step back and reevaluate the division's responsibilities and projects to ensure their relevance and importance to the wellbeing of the County's population. The first task of the Planning Division's comprehensive planning development was to create a Transition Report (see Appendix I) in order to evaluate each of the 2016 Master Plan's goals. The report creates a discussion surrounding the merits of continuing to strive to achieve those stated goals, has been satisfied, or to determine that a goal no longer serves the best interest of the County. The next step is to draft an Existing Conditions Report that will take into account the assertions of the Transition Report and present the data relevant to inform the upcoming Comprehensive Plan.

This report is meant to be a snapshot of the current conditions of the County. As the drafting of a new Master Plan will take place over the next several months, some of the information presented may be updated. The Master Plan will reflect the most up to date information available to the Division of Planning.

Why create an Existing Conditions Report?

The Existing Conditions Report aims to create a foundational understanding of community conditions using empirical data, public input, and urban planning principles. Compiling these resources allows planners to more accurately identify the challenges a community is facing, relevant trends, and realistic opportunities. Each of these aspects leads to a well-informed, relevant, and helpful plan.

Disclaimer

Throughout the document, a multitude of statistics are expressed as average or median. Understanding the inherent difference of these central tendencies is crucial to understanding what these numbers mean for the County and the upcoming Master Plan.

The average is calculated by adding up all the numbers and dividing by how many numbers there are. For example, if five people earn \$30,000, \$35,000, \$40,000, \$45,000, and \$250,000, you would add those salaries together and divide by five to get the average (\$80,000). The median, on the other hand, is simply the middle number when all the values are arranged from smallest to largest. In this case, the median would be \$40,000 because it sits in the center of the ordered list. The key difference is that the average can be heavily affected by extremely high or low values (like the \$250,000 salary), while the median is not. Because of this, the median often gives a better sense of what is "typical" when the numbers are spread out unevenly.

Studies, Reports, and Products Since the 2016 Master Plan

Division of Planning staff works on various studies, reports, and other products each year. Each of these documents provides crucial insight into the multitude of different assets that make up Monmouth County. This section details each of these documents and discusses their relevance and connection to the upcoming master plan.

Demographic Studies

At-A-Glance

The Monmouth County At-A-Glance is a collection of snapshots of the 53 unique municipalities that comprise Monmouth County. It explores demographic, housing, economic, and employment data, in addition to topical planning issues for each municipality.

The annual At-A-Glance report is an important aspect of what the Planning Division does and is therefore used as a foundational document of the Comprehensive Plan.

County Profile Report

Through its annual Profile Report, the Division of Planning provides decision-makers and the public with meaningful information and insights into the complex planning issues facing Monmouth County. This document highlights the county's demographic trends and economic initiatives involving both the public and private sectors. Preparation of this report involves collection and analysis of data from various sources, including the U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, and others.

The prior Monmouth County Master Plan (2016) recognizes the Monmouth County Profile Report as one of numerous consultative and supportive documents that should be referred to alongside the Master Plan during policy formation and program development.



Downtown Freehold Borough

Monmouth County Aging Population Study

The purpose of this study is to help decision makers understand ongoing demographic changes, frame the issues that arise due to an increasing aging population, and identify opportunities to improve the livability of Monmouth County. The 65 and older population of 2034 will certainly be different than the 65 and older population of today, so it is important that future decisions are made with this in mind.

The study focuses heavily on housing and transportation. In terms of housing, age-restricted communities are an increasingly popular housing choice. In 2017 there were total of 12,464 units located in active adult age-restricted communities, and another 6,559 housing units located in age-restricted affordable housing. The vast majority (84%) of active adult age-restricted communities are located in car dependent areas.

Affordable housing units fared better, with only 40% located in car-dependent areas. Additionally, many active adult age-restricted houses lack age in place amenities. In terms of transportation, the majority (60%) of the 65 and older population live in a municipality that provides a municipal shuttle service. These shuttle services provide trips to and from senior center as well as pre-planned shopping and recreation trips.

The findings of the Aging Population study will be incorporated into the new plan as it will provide a framework for policies and programs that are congruous with aging in place.

Environmental, Resilience, and Sustainability Studies

Monmouth County Farmland Preservation Plan

The main objective of the 2022 Monmouth County Farmland Preservation Plan is to guide Monmouth County's efforts in preserving its remaining farmland and maintaining a viable agricultural industry. Farming is a significant component of the county's economy, and farmland is an irreplaceable natural resource. The plan sets preservation targets as well as lays out project areas that will be the focus of easement acquisition efforts.

The Farmland Preservation Plan will guide the new plan as it outlines goals for agricultural preservation and compliance efforts.

Raritan/Sandy Hook Bay Coastal Resilience Study

The purpose of the Coastal Resilience Planning Study is to identify select coastal resilience projects that could improve the sustainability and resiliency of Naval Weapons Station Earle facilities and navigational channels, the US Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) projects, and the Bayshore municipalities from current and future coastal hazards.

As a result of the data collected and the site suitability analysis, a concept plan design, photo simulations, environmental constraints maps, and materials and quantities lists were created for the final 11 proposed coastal resilience projects.

The new County Master Plan will take into account the projects suggested in the study and expand upon the core goal of coastal resilience.

Joint Land Use Study for Naval Weapons Station Earle

The County of Monmouth, in cooperation with Naval Weapons Station (NWS) Earle and the 13 municipalities that surround this military installation, initiated a Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) in the fall of 2016. The recommendations present a rationale and justification and provide a policy framework to support adoption and implementation of compatible development measures. The U.S. Department of Defense (USDOD), Office of Economic Adjustment (USOEA) provides funding for local governments to undertake a JLUS in partnership with their military installation, aimed at minimizing operational effects on neighboring jurisdictions and the encroachment of the civilian community within a military influence area in ways that could impair the continued operational utility of the military installation or could impact public health, safety and welfare.

The JLUS has been a positive tool to engage the communities that surround the base and in particular those that comprise the NWS Earle property; Colts Neck, Howell, Wall, Tinton Falls and Middletown. The dialogue that has begun between the municipalities, the County and the Base has expanded the lines of communication and allowed all parties to openly express their interests and concerns. While the mission of the NWS Earle is defending the national interests of the United States through the safest manner possible, the ability of local municipalities to enter conversations about their particular concerns proved invaluable. As the process moves forward, and the JLUS itself reaches completion, this opening of communication channels between various governmental agencies and stakeholders with an interest in this region should remain active.

Naval Weapons Station Earle will be playing a bigger role in the new Comprehensive Plan, and this study lays the groundwork for how the plan should structure the County's goals pertaining to open space, preservation, and land use.



Sheep in Upper Freehold

Transportation Studies

Safe Streets for All

The Monmouth County Division of Planning is currently drafting a Safety Action Plan for Monmouth County. To learn more about these efforts, visit the Safe Streets Monmouth HubSite.



Cooper's Bridge in Red Bank

Monmouth County PATHS: Access for All

Monmouth County is a place where people want to live, work, and play: with vibrant downtowns, theaters, entertainment venues, excellent agricultural resources, a multitude of recreational opportunities, proximity to major urban centers, ample shopping, and dining options. However, accessing all that Monmouth County and the region has to offer is not so easy for many of the County's low-income, minority, elderly, young, or disabled residents. For these residents, trips like going to work, visiting the doctor's office, buying fresh food at a grocery store, or enjoying the shore on a hot summer day can be challenging because they are often confronted by barriers to their mobility. The purpose of the Monmouth County Barriers to Mobility Study, referred to as Monmouth PATHS: Access for All, was to identify mobility and accessibility barriers that County residents face, and develop strategies and tools for infrastructure, services, and policies that would help to reduce or eliminate them.

This report summarizes the analysis that was conducted to identify and quantify barriers to mobility within Monmouth County for each mode (active, public transit, and vehicle/driving). The results of the analysis indicate that there are several critical barriers for each mode of transportation, some of which are experienced to the same degree consistently across the County, while others are concentrated in certain areas of the County.

The Comprehensive Plan will consider the findings and incorporate the suggested tools into the goals of the plan. This study will serve as a foundation to ensure accessibility is taken into account when creating a transportation element.

Moving Mindfully: Monmouth/Mercer

The Moving Mindfully: Monmouth/Mercer study area, comprised of the municipalities of Upper Freehold and Allentown in Monmouth County and Robbinsville in Mercer County, has experienced particularly high growth in warehousing and distribution and is primarily adjacent to interchanges 7 and 8 along Interstate 195. This includes a large online retail fulfillment center and several distribution centers at the Matrix Business Park that generate a significant amount of freight related travel. In addition, sand and gravel facilities in the region generate a significant amount of truck trips through the study area. The communities within the study area have a desire to improve quality of life for residents by minimizing conflicts between various modes of travel and minimizing the perceived negative impacts of trucks.

The inevitable growth of the overall region will create increased travel demand and traffic regardless of development in the study area. The application of the study's posited mitigation measures is projected to improve congestion and mitigate the negative effects of freight traffic. Measures laid out in this study can be implemented not just in the study area, but in all localities facing the same issues.

This study incorporates a handful of mitigation measures that can be seamlessly incorporated into the transportation element of a new Comprehensive Plan.

Monmouth Within Reach

The purpose of Monmouth Within Reach, the Monmouth County Tourism and Events Travel Demand Management Study, was to develop strategies and best practices for managing travel demand in order to help people get where they need and want to go.

The data summarized in this report indicates that many areas that experience higher impacts due to tourism and event-related traffic, including Asbury Park, Keyport, Union Beach, Red Bank, Long Branch, and Freehold Borough, also have relatively high concentrations of Environmental Justice populations compared to the rest of Monmouth County. Therefore, the selection of locations for further study and the resulting recommendations must consider the needs of these populations.

This study will guide the new plan to focus on localities that are overburdened not only in regard to transportation, but in climate considerations, housing, and community health.



New Roundabout on County Route 8A/8B in Middletown

Demographic Analysis

Understanding the demographic composition of the County is crucial to creating a just and equitable comprehensive plan. The metrics showcased below serve as a baseline for understanding past and future trends, as well as community needs.

Population Trends

Prior to World War II over 50% of the land in Monmouth County was devoted to agriculture. After the war the population surged with 64,000 new residents moving to Monmouth County between 1940 and 1950, for a total of 161,238 people. The trend continued into the 1960s bolstered by the 1954 opening of the Garden State Parkway that brought expanded residential and economic development opportunities along with improved access to regional employment centers. The post-war baby boom, suburban migration, and the in-migration of major employers drove population growth for the next two decades, adding over 236,000 residents by 1970, more than doubling the County's population. Almost 50% of Monmouth County's population growth during the post-war suburbanization period (1945-1974) occurred in municipalities adjacent to the Garden State Parkway (Economic Profile of Monmouth County, 1980).

Between 2010 and 2020 the population grew by roughly 13,000 to a new high total of 643,615 residents (See Figure 1). The 2020 Decennial Census ranked Monmouth County as the 5th most populous in New Jersey, containing 6.9% of the State's residents.

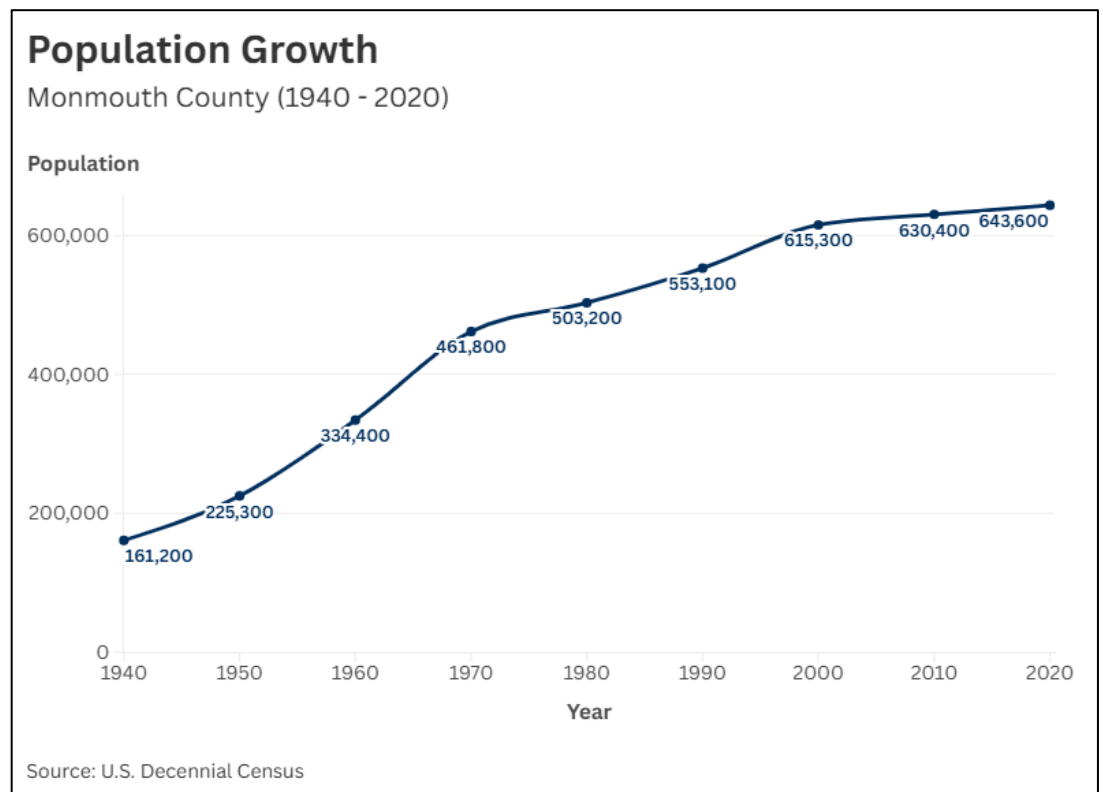


Figure 1: Population Growth

Age/Sex of Population

The number of males and females in each age bracket is relatively equal from birth to 70 years of age, after which the number of males decreases compared to females. This trend is in line with the disparities in life expectancy for females versus males (See Figure 2).

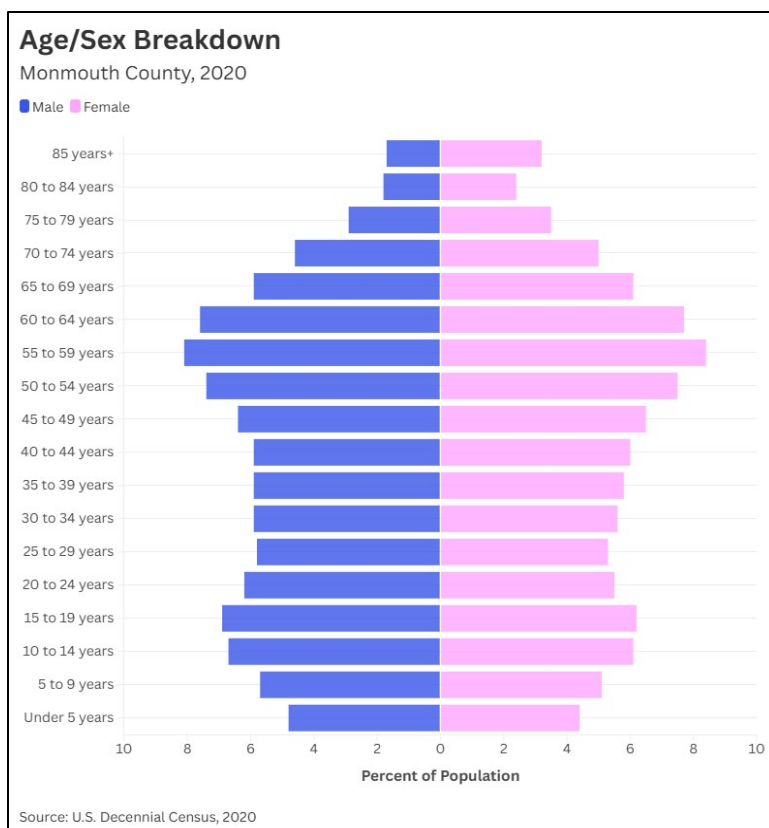


Figure 2: Age/Sex Breakdown

Race and Hispanic Origin

Compared to the country as a whole, Monmouth County has a higher proportion of residents self-identifying as “White,” or “Not Hispanic or Latino,” which reflects a more homogenous population (See Figures 3 and 4).

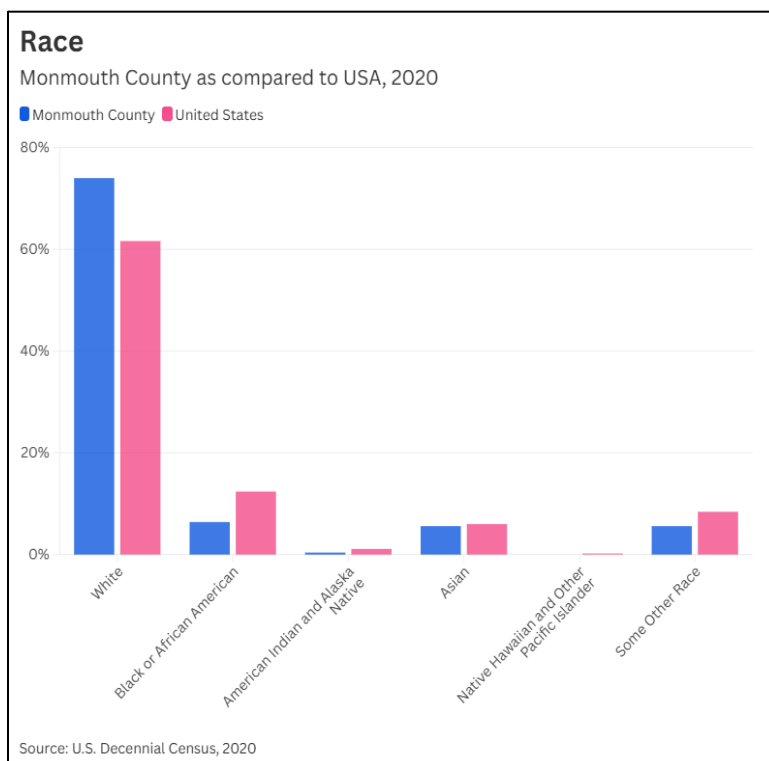


Figure 3: Race Breakdown

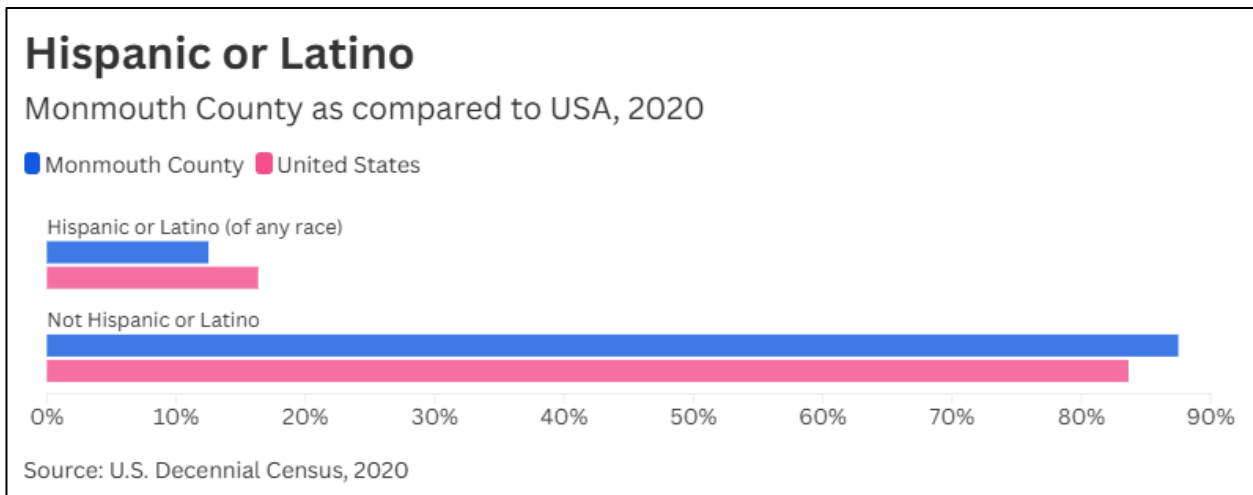


Figure 4: Hispanic or Latino

Income, Poverty, and Hardship

Poverty Status

The poverty line is everchanging and determined by several different factors. 48 states, including New Jersey, utilize the same standard to determine an individual or family's poverty status, unlike the low-income threshold, which is unique to specific regions.

Based on the national factors of determination, it is estimated that 6.5% of the county's population - about 42,000 individuals - are living below the poverty line, which is lower than New Jersey (9.7%) and the U.S. as whole (12.5%). Nearly 40% of those living below the poverty line in the County are ages 35 to 64 (See Figure 5).

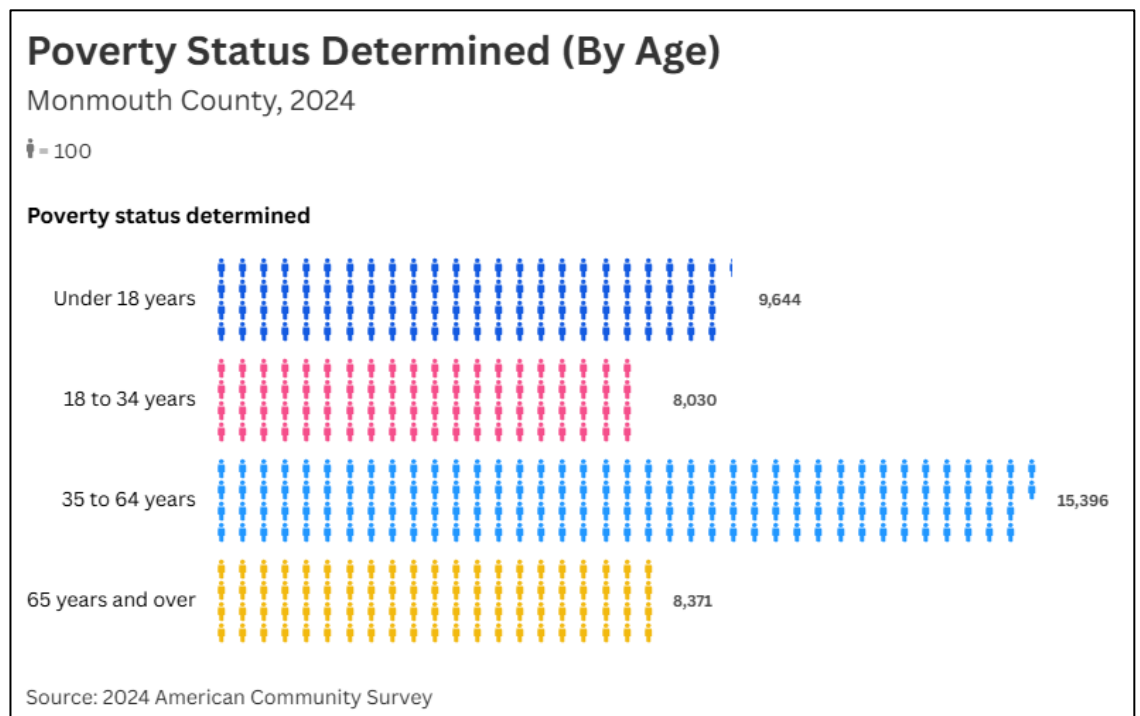


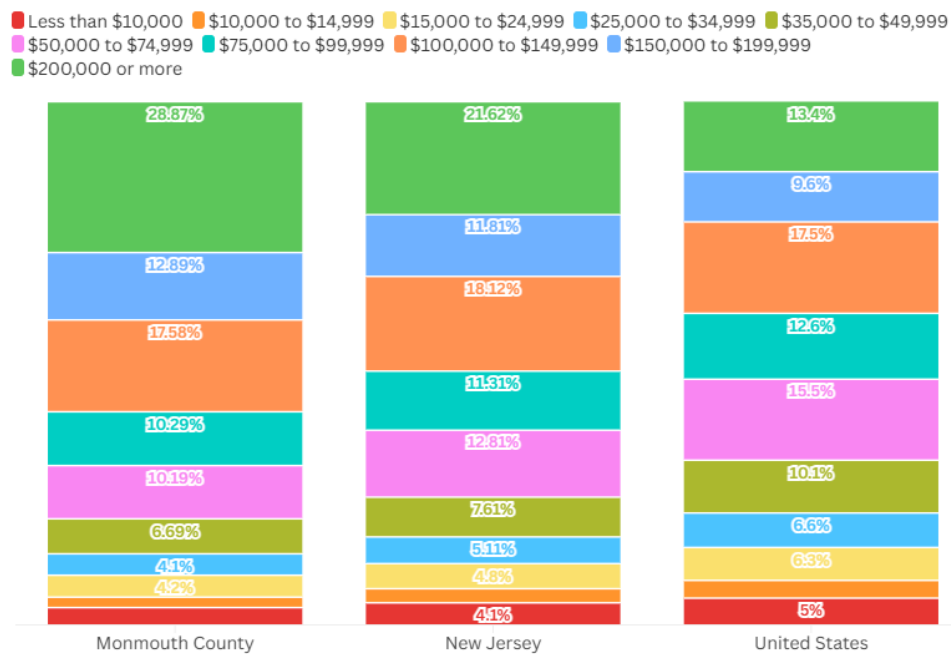
Figure 5: Poverty Status by Age

Income Breakdown

The 2024 American Community Survey reported that the median household income in Monmouth County was \$124,845, which is above both New Jersey (\$103,556) and the U.S. (\$80,734). Close to 30% of county residents reported making more than \$200,000 a year, which is markedly higher than the U.S. at 13% (See Figure 6).

Household Income in the Past 12 Months

Monmouth County, New Jersey, and United States, 2024



Source: 2024 American Community Survey

Figure 6: Income Breakdown

Education

School Enrollment

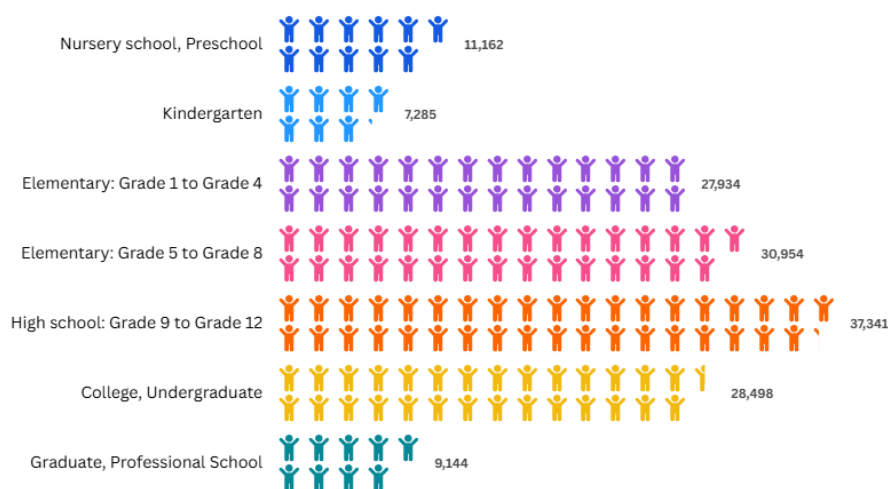
Nearly 153,000 residents over the age of 3 are enrolled in grade schools (Pre-School through 12th grade). Of these students, close to 12,000 children are enrolled in pre-school (See Figure 7). This is about on par with what the county has seen in the past, with about 12,000 children enrolled in pre-school in 2016.

School Enrollment

Monmouth County, 2024

1 icon = 1,000

Grade



Source: 2024 American Community Survey

Figure 7: School Enrollment

Educational Attainment

Relative to the United States as a whole, Monmouth County residents have reported higher levels of education, with 51.3% of residents 18 years or older holding a Bachelor's degree or higher, compared to the national rate of 36.1% (See Figure 8).

Local Colleges and Universities

Brookdale Community College offers Associate Degrees and certificates in over 50 programs. Brookdale Community College has been repeatedly ranked the #1 Community College in New Jersey by Niche for several consecutive years (including 2024, 2025, and 2026), a distinction based on U.S.

Dept. of Education data, student/alumni reviews, and factors like academics, campus life, and safety. The college's main campus is located in Lincroft (Middletown) and has 5 additional locations in Asbury Park, Freehold Township, Long Branch, Neptune, and Wall. Brookdale continues to expand, currently serving over 14,000 full and part-time students. In-state tuition for Brookdale students costs an average of \$8,604 annually, according to the U.S. Department of Education. The college has partnered with Georgian Court University, Kean University, and Rutgers University to offer degree programs, dual admission, guaranteed admission, application fee waivers, and other benefits to Brookdale graduates. In addition, Brookdale offers an array of programs in various disciplines which include Business and Social Services, Humanities, Health Sciences, and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math).

Monmouth University, situated on a historic 156-acre campus in West Long Branch, offers undergraduate and graduate degrees in over fifty majors and concentrations. The university houses the Urban Coast Institute which "maintains a principal focus on the interactions between humans and the coastal and ocean environment, and sustainable coastal development along New Jersey's coasts and watersheds" (UCI, 2026).

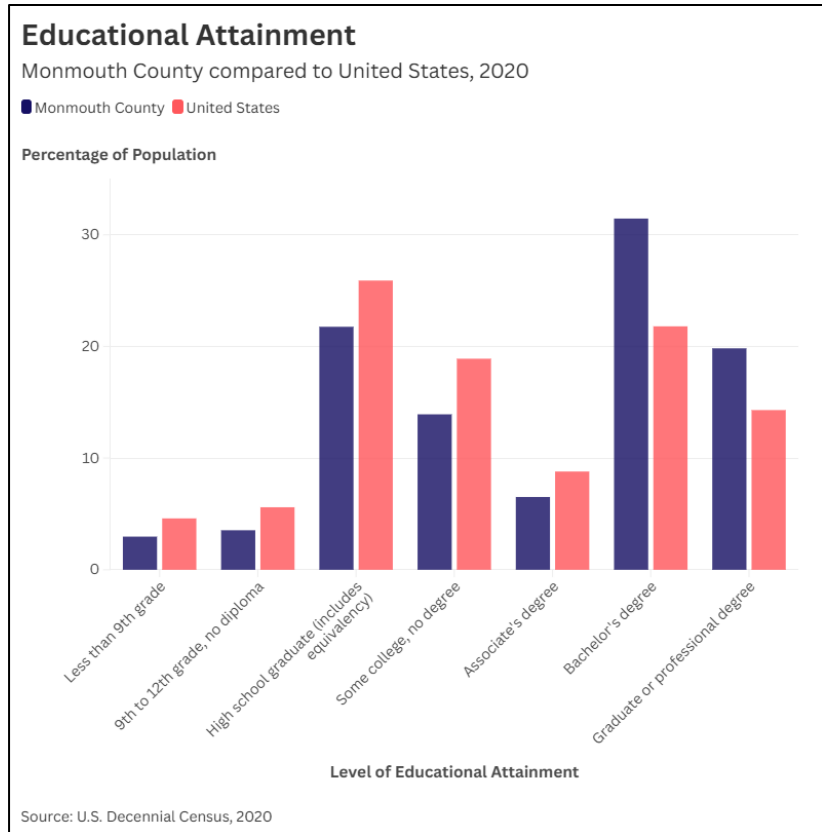
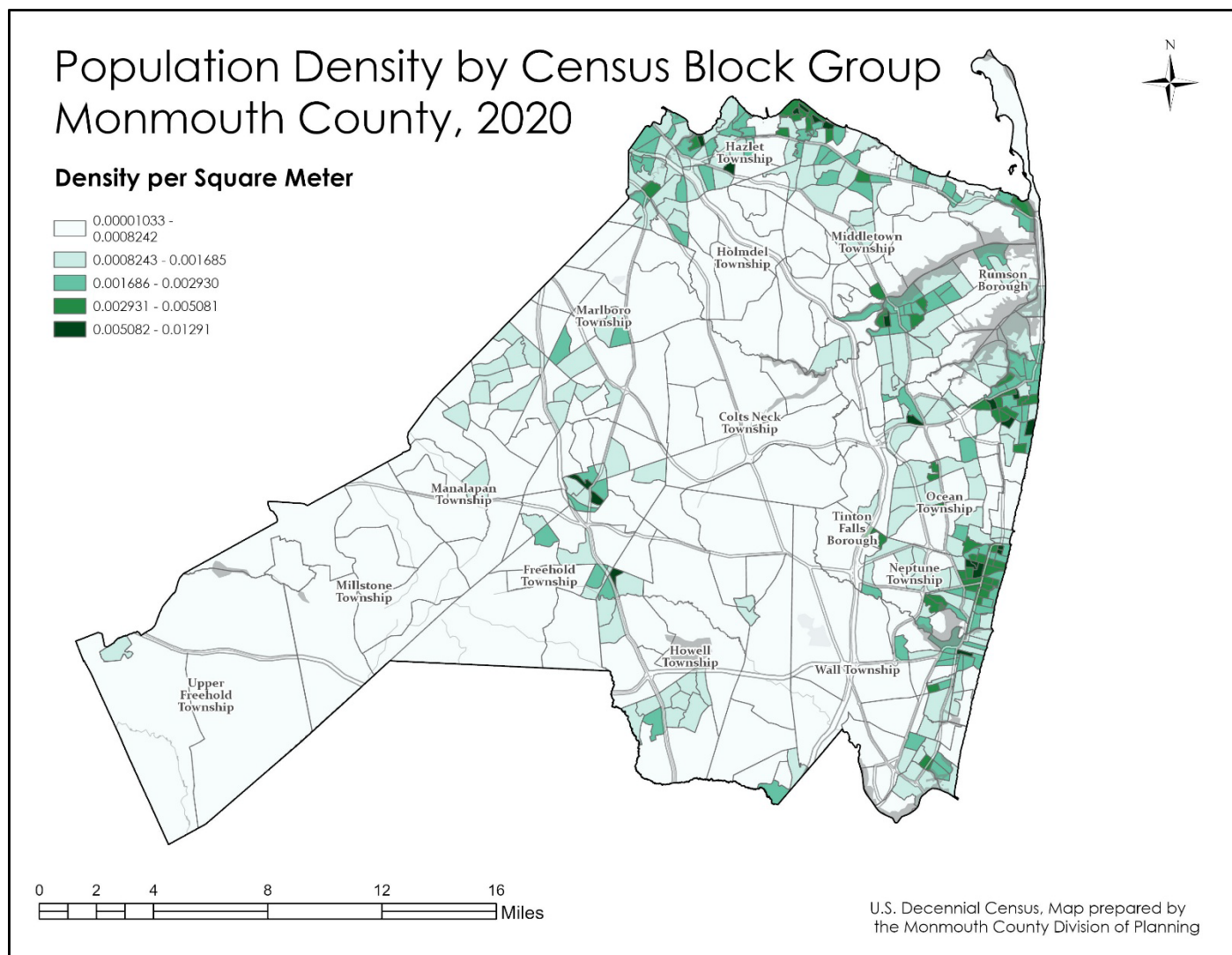


Figure 8: Educational Attainment

Population Density

The County's population is mostly concentrated along the shore and in more urban areas. Map 1 below displays the density of the county by Census block group. The land area of the block group was divided by the population in 2020 to calculate the approximate number of persons per square meter.



Map 1: Population Density

Housing

Housing type, variety, and price play a key role in shaping the character and need of a community. Monmouth County is historically suburban with an abundance of low-density housing, but over the past few years with rising demand by residents and affordable housing requirements by the state, higher density options - like townhomes and mixed-use developments – are becoming more prevalent. Below is a snapshot of the housing conditions in the County.

Housing Occupancy

The average household size in Monmouth County is 2.55 persons per household, which is closely aligned with the state at 2.61, and the nation as a whole at 2.54.

Source: U.S. Decennial Census, 2020

Housing Tenure

Own vs. Rent

Of the 251,712 occupied households within the county, 75.6% are owner occupied, while 24.4% are renter occupied. This reflects a higher rate of ownership within the county, as 63.8% of occupied units in New Jersey are owner occupied, and 36.2% are renter occupied. The U.S. as a whole is closely aligned with the state, with 65.2% of units being owner occupied, and 34.8% being renter occupied.

Source: 2024 American Community Survey

Corporate Ownership

Following the 2008 Foreclosure Crisis, there was a large spike of corporations buying housing outright nationwide. Monmouth County has seen corporate ownership boom over the past several years, with 4,457 one-to-four-unit properties converting to corporate ownership between 2012 and 2022. While other regions may see an increase in this type of investment due to prior disinvestment and low property costs, the County is unique in its seasonal appeal and housing market. Within the county, 45% of corporate investors own a single property, which in this instance may be a seasonal rental in a shore town. In this case, there is less concern for price gouging and dwindling affordability. On the other hand, Asbury Park had a large jump in corporate ownership, from 7.9% in 2012, to 18.1% in 2022. Although Asbury Park is a well-known tourist destination, it also has a large percentage of low- and moderate-income population who have been priced out of their neighborhoods over time. Corporate ownership in these types of towns can lead to more displacement and gentrification.

Comparing the list of municipalities with a map of the State's opportunity zones reveals that there is a large amount of overlap. This connection signifies that corporations are capitalizing on these programs to buy housing and receive the consequential tax benefits. Although this is not problematic in and of itself, it is important to understand how this affects the fabric of a community and its affordability.

Source: [Trends in Investor Acquisition of Residential Properties in New Jersey](#)

Housing Type

65.7% of housing units in the county are classified as 1-unit, detached, commonly referred to as low-density single family. In the state overall, 52.6% of housing structures are single-family homes (See Figure 9). This difference contributes to the overall suburban, and sometimes rural feel of the county.

Housing Values

Median Home Listing Price

As seen in Figure 10, Monmouth County’s median home listing price tends to follow the trends of the state, although \$100k to 200k higher in price. Due to the speculation surrounding Netflix, housing prices in the County are expected to continue rising rapidly.

Median Rent

Although housing prices are significantly higher in the county than they are in the state, median rent is only slightly higher at \$1,827, with the state’s median rent at \$1,720.

Source: 2024 American Community Survey

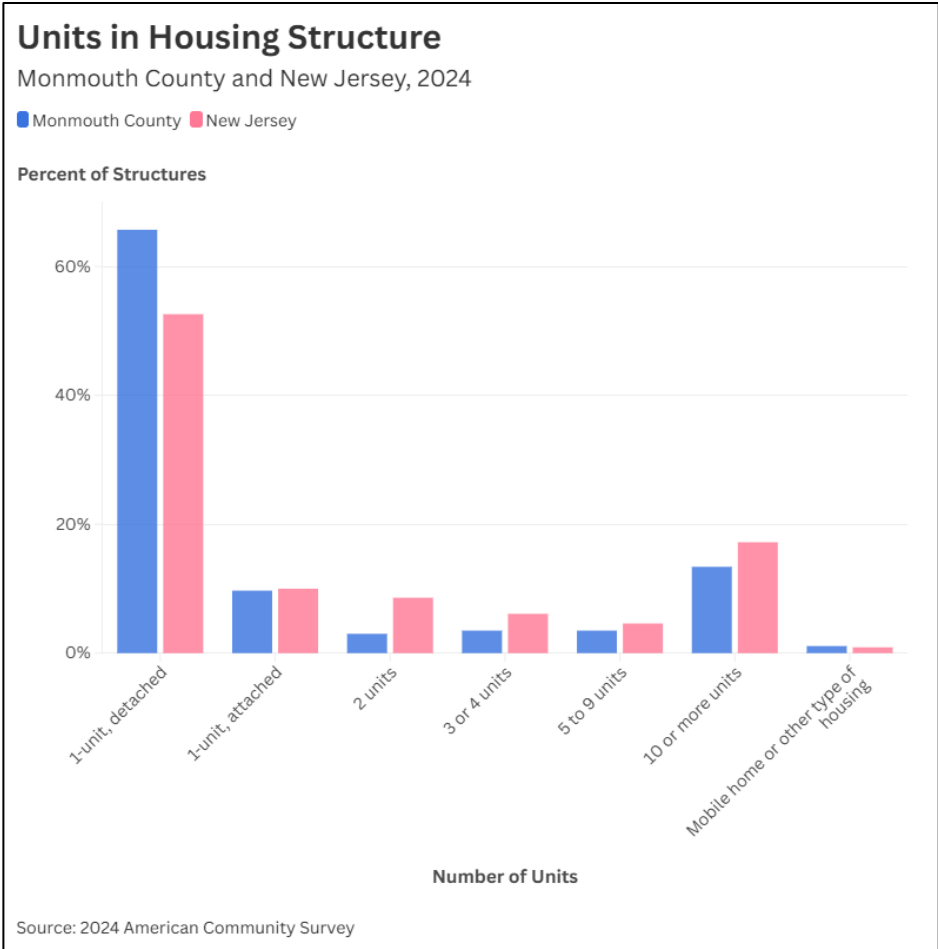


Figure 9: Units in Housing Structure

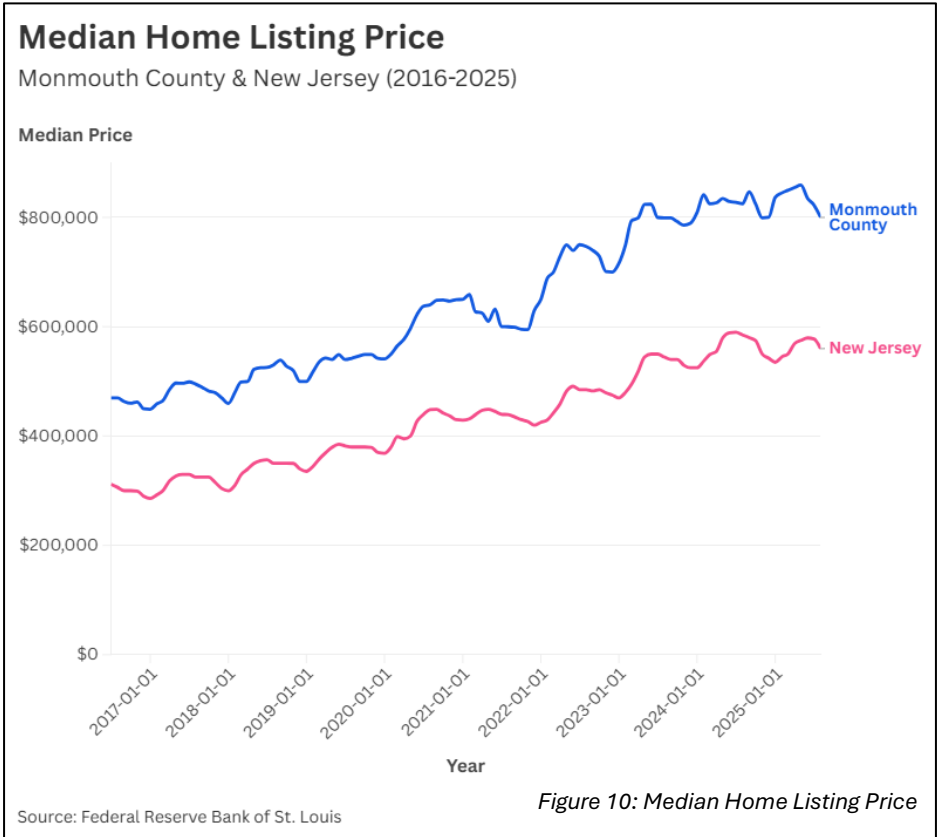


Figure 10: Median Home Listing Price

Housing Cost Burden

Although the rate has steadily decreased over the past 10 years, it is estimated that 33% of households in Monmouth County are spending more than 30% of their annual income on housing costs (See Figure 11). While housing costs are higher than average in the County, the rate of housing cost burden in the nation as a whole is nearly equal.

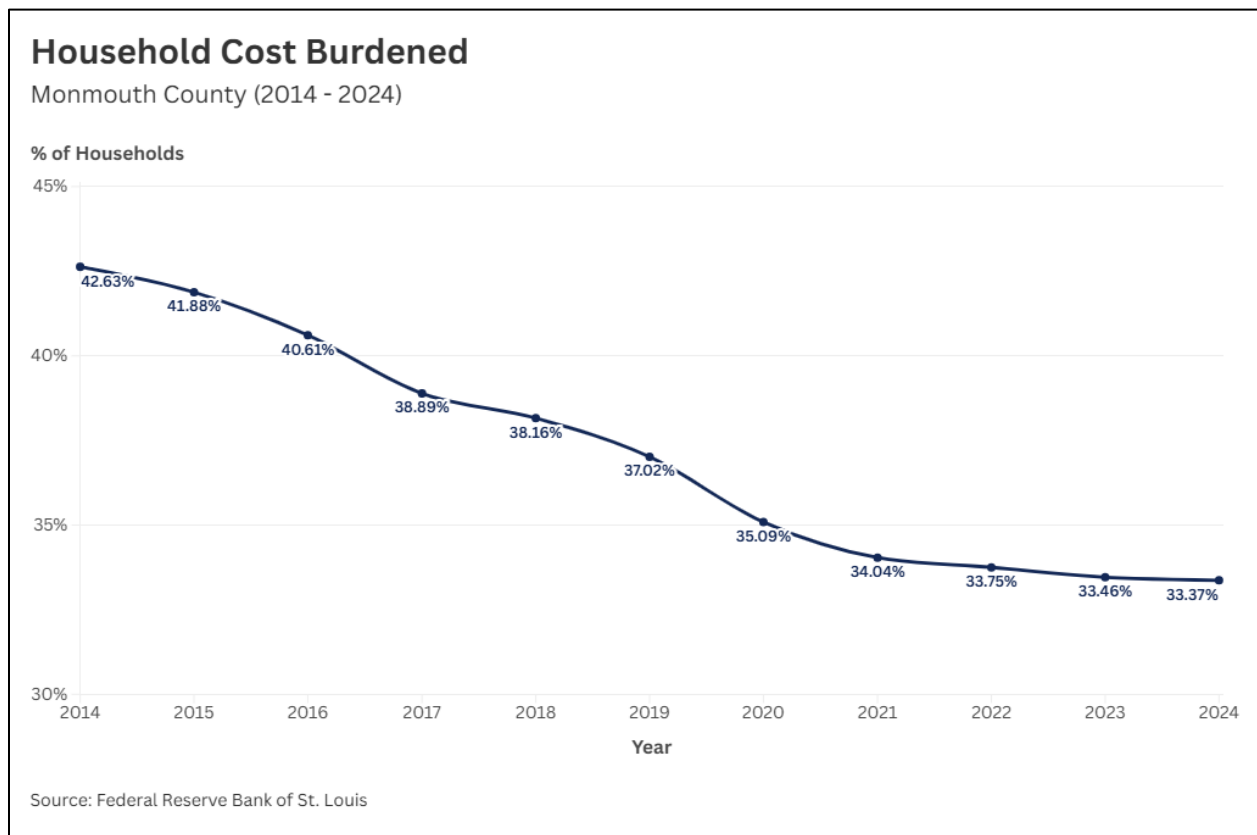


Figure 11: Housing Cost Burden

Real Estate Boom

After COVID-19, the real estate market began to evolve. Interest rates began to rise, and house prices were competitive, leading to an unprecedented period of real estate in Monmouth County and the Jersey Shore. Realtors described the Jersey Shore as one of the most sought-after markets in recent years. Heavily influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic, New Jersey residents' housing choices changed between 2020 and 2021. Fears of catching the virus in crowded apartment complexes and mass transit routes drove people to the suburbs (Ocean & Monmouth Counties). Other changes were also underway, independent of the pandemic. Working from home caused many New Jersey families to reassess their living situation, which became a factor that led people to Monmouth County communities. The number

of buyers looking to move to the Shore year-round began to rise noticeably after the COVID-19 lockdown of 2020. This trend is steadily gaining traction year after year and hasn't seemed to return to pre-COVID-19 markets. This trend was precipitated by two main factors: people's newfound ability to work remotely, and a desire to flee major cities (Greater Philadelphia & Greater New York). Ultimately, the move to year-round Shore living further advanced the ongoing gentrification of once-working-class communities.

Areas such as Sea Girt and Spring Lake have seen an uptick in the sale of second homes and a shift in seasonal homeowners spending more time in those homes. For much of the 2020s so far, the real estate market has been a "seller's market" with very low, limited supply, and incredibly high demand throughout Monmouth County's shore communities. Yet, this market did not halt buyers, leading Monmouth to sell at a record pace. Even miles away from beaches, families from New York City's boroughs migrated to the suburbs of Monmouth County, such as Marlboro and Manalapan, in search of highly reputable school systems.

At the Shore, what used to be many residents' secondary dwellings have seen a prolific jump in New Jersey since the coronavirus pandemic. Many beach house owners-to-be had long planned to buy a house at the Shore, and the pandemic, accompanied by a drop in the 30-year fixed mortgage rate to about 3%, accelerated their plans to do so. Reports claimed that sales were up 25% in 2020 compared with the same period in 2019. This increase was attributed partially to historically low mortgage rates at the time. In 2019, the average Shore community had about 45 to 55 home sales. He explained that, in 2020, sales increased about 50% to 60% in most of those markets, with 75 to 85 sales. Examined sales and price data from the New Jersey Division of Treasury, found the average home price in Monmouth County jumped 62.3% from 2019 to 2025 (the year before the pandemic). This is noted as the biggest increase statewide. The result: Monmouth County, which had the fifth-highest average price before the pandemic, now has the second-highest, according to the data. The new data is another sign that Monmouth County homes are increasingly unaffordable for middle-class residents.

According to New Jersey statistics, Monmouth County's housing market became the second-most expensive county in the state in 2024. With the demand for waterfront homes and a lack of inventory, this combination of variables lifted average home sale prices there above \$800,000 for the first time, according to state data. Monmouth County's average price of \$831,577 rose 14% from 2023. This didn't prevent buyers from purchasing dwellings. High mortgage rates and minimum inventory have become more common in the post-pandemic real estate market. Monmouth trailed only Cape May County, where the selling price of a home sold averaged \$935,545.

Economic Profile

Monmouth County is uniquely positioned due to its close proximity to two major employment centers (New York Metro Area and Philadelphia/Delaware Valley) while also generating jobs and revenue through agritourism and shore destinations. The industries that flourish in the County and the jobs they provide can help us navigate the creation of an all-encompassing economic profile that will translate well in the upcoming Master Plan.

Employment

Unemployment

Monmouth County tends to follow the U.S. trend of unemployment and tends to perform better than New Jersey (See Figure 12). There are a few reasons why the county’s unemployment rate follows the trends but is not as affected by employment swings as the state as a whole. There tends to be more job stability in the area as the county is sandwiched between two major employment markets – the New York Metro Area and the Delaware Valley (Philadelphia Metro Area). The array of opportunities, paired with the high rate of higher education in the region, lends less drastic fluctuation in the unemployment rate. There are also a multitude of industries that foster long-term employment in the county, including health care, finance, and utilities.

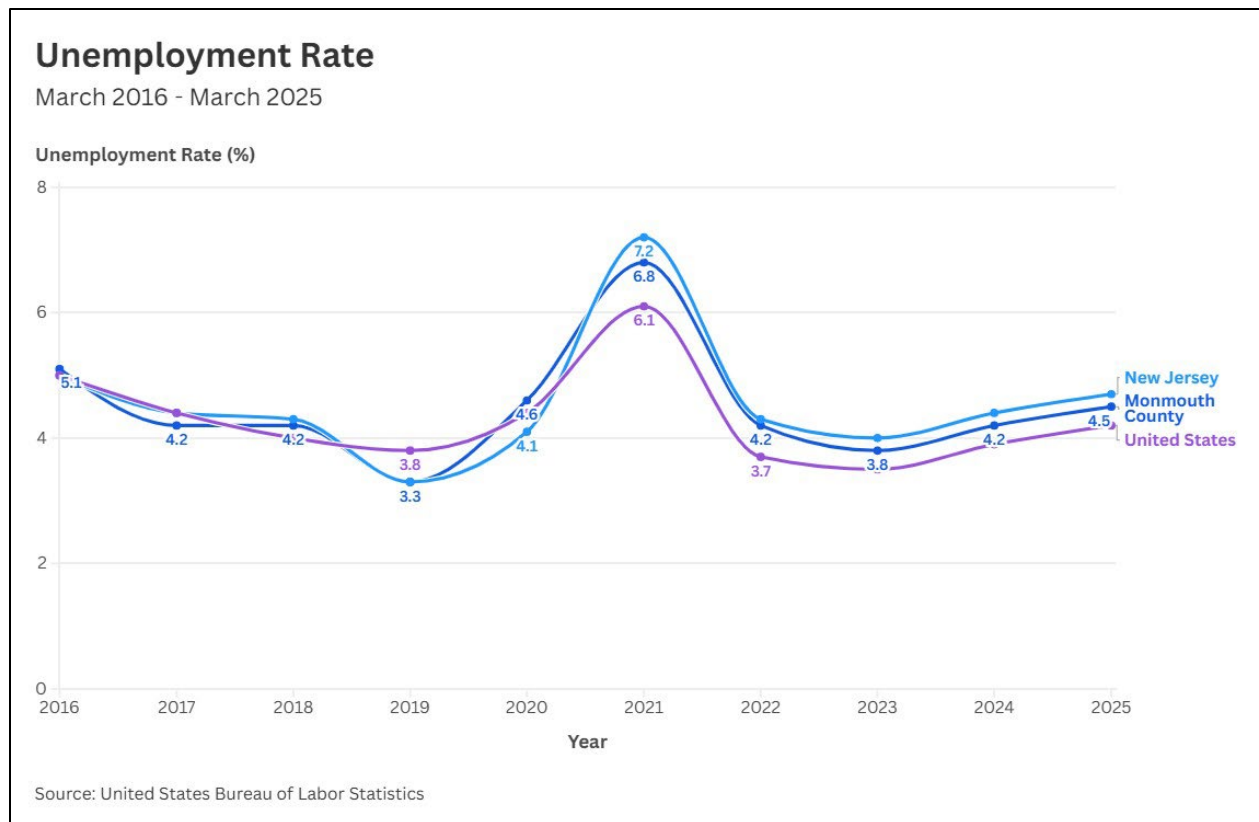


Figure 12: Unemployment Rate

Industries in Monmouth County

Gross Domestic Product

Monmouth County’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) totaled \$52,693,317,000 in 2024. Of the goods produced and services provided, the Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, rental and leasing industry (NAICS 50) accounted for nearly 25%, totaling \$12,728,322,000.

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

Average Income for Each Industry

Construction, healthcare and social assistance, and retail trade are the three leading industry sectors in terms of employment, whereas information services, finance and insurance, and utilities provide the highest average annual wage per employee (See Figure 13).

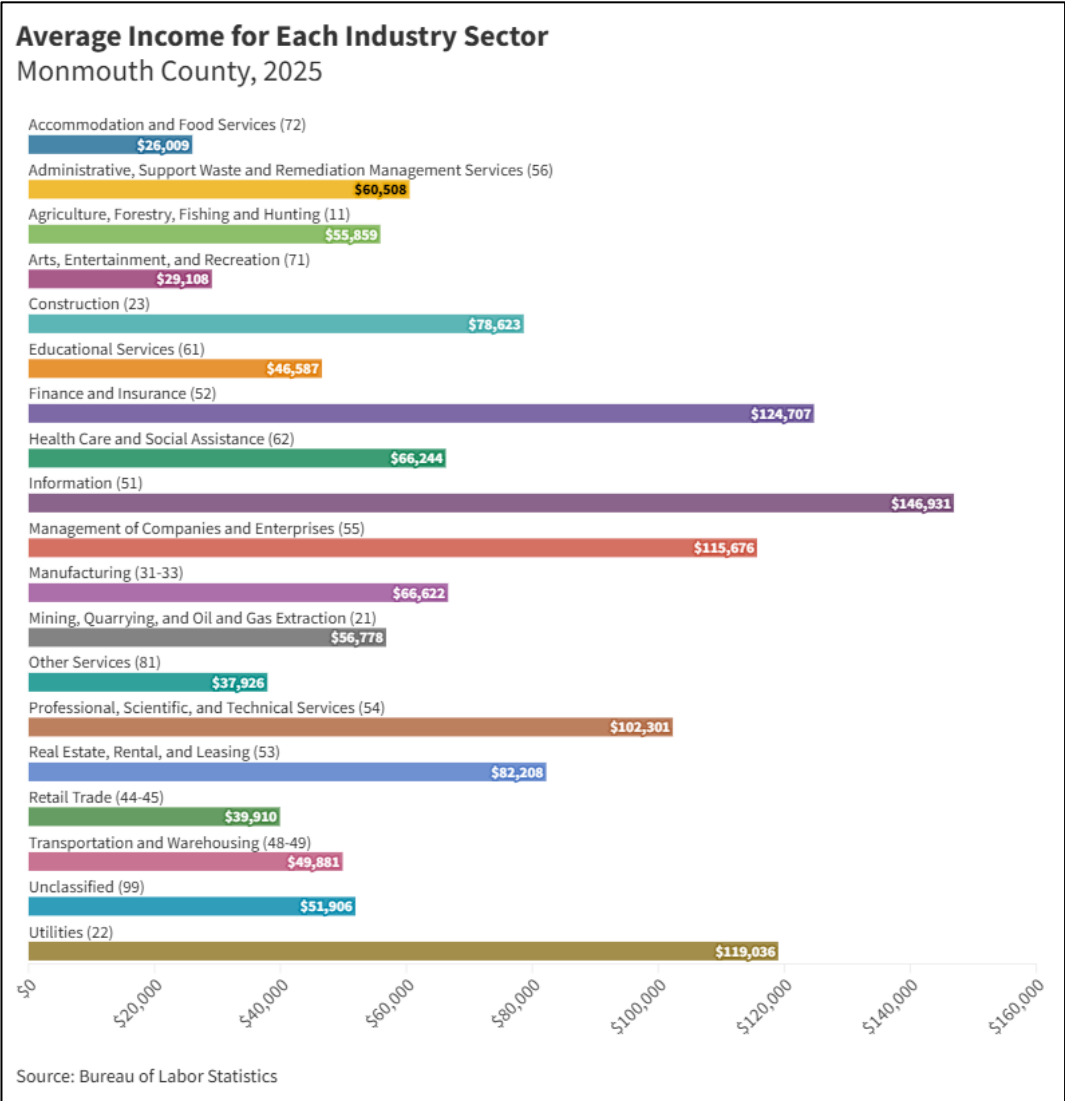


Figure 13: Average Income by Sector

Industry Clusters and Trends

Figure 14 is a bubble chart displaying industry sectors in Monmouth County, identified by their North American Industry Classification (NAICS) code. The size of the bubble is determined by the number of employees in the industry in the County. The location of the industry's bubble on the y-axis is determined by the concentration of the industry versus the nation as a whole, with higher bubbles having a higher concentration. This is called the location quotient (LQ). The LQ of an industry in a place shows whether it is more or less common in that area than the rest of the country. For example, the LQ for the finance industry is high in New York City, oil drilling is high in Texas, logging is high in Washington State and low in Iowa. Industries that are more common in an area are known as being basic to that area. In Monmouth County the arts, entertainment, and recreation; utilities; and retail trade industries are all basic to the local economy. The x-axis of the chart represents the percent point change in employment share from 2021 to 2025. Bubbles on the far right represent industries that have increased employment over the years, while bubbles on the left are those who have had a decrease in employment.

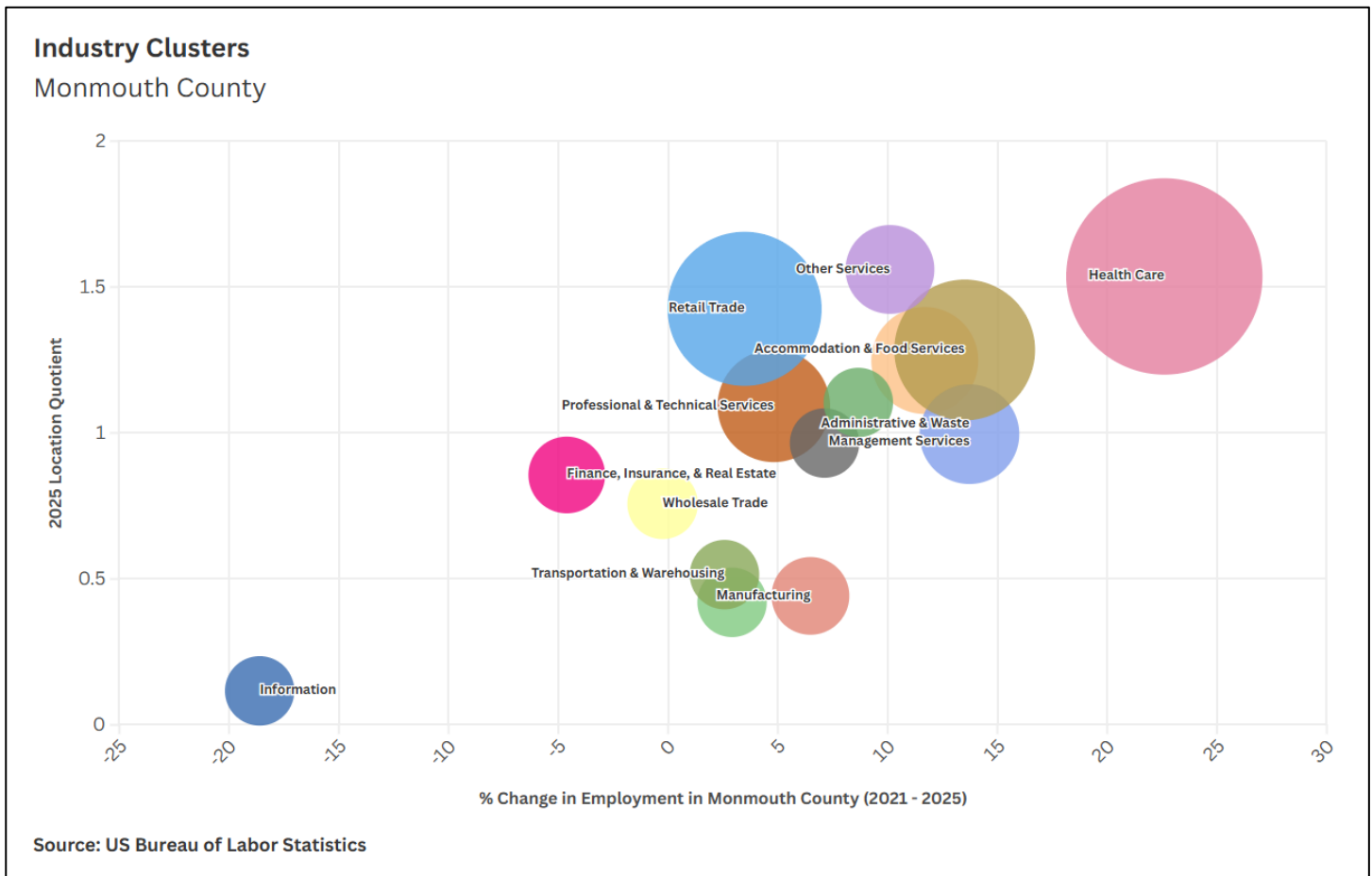


Figure 14: Industry Clusters

Focus Industries

These following four industry clusters are crucial to Monmouth County's economy and are projected to grow in size and influence over the next few years.

Health Care

Monmouth County is home to an expansive network of medical facilities and hospitals, ensuring access to medical care County-wide. Monmouth County is home to five major hospitals: Bayshore Community Hospital in Holmdel, CentraState Medical Center (Atlantic Healthcare System) in Freehold Township, Jersey Shore University Medical Center in Neptune Township, RWJ Barnabas Monmouth Medical Center in Long Branch, Riverview Medical Center in Red Bank and the newly constructed RWJ Barnabas Vogel Medical Campus in Tinton Falls.

Data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that employment within the healthcare and social assistance field accounts for approximately 21.2% of all private sector jobs within Monmouth County. In 2021, these industries accounted for 49,618 private sector jobs which broke down as follows: 22,862 (10.3%) jobs in Ambulatory Health Care Services; 10,972 (4.9%) jobs in Hospitals; 7,858 (3.5%) jobs in Nursing and Residential Care Facilities; and 5,911 (2.6%) jobs in Social Assistance.

Health care and social assistance accounts for 12.6%, about \$6,378,095,000, to the county's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), making it one of the highest grossing industries in the county.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Film Industry (Film in Monmouth)

The film industry has seen great success in New Jersey. The 53 tax credit projects that shot in the state in 2023 spent \$623,193,043 in local cities and towns, accounted for 1,277 shooting days and created an estimated 15,411 jobs, almost triple the 2021 job creation figure. Monmouth County is involved in the NJMPTVC initiative, Film Ready New Jersey, a 5-step certification and marketing program that educates municipalities on the basics of motion picture and television production and enables cities and towns to effectively accommodate on location filming and market their communities as filming destinations. The program sets basic standards for attracting filmmaking and positions the state as a top production destination. The "film-ready" designation provides an elevated platform for certified communities to promote themselves as filming destinations and connects film and TV professionals with skilled and knowledgeable liaisons across the state, who can provide local expertise and support to create easier, faster and better access to nearby resources and location information. With the designations, as well as Netflix building various offices and soundstages on the old Fort Monmouth site, it is expected that the film industry's influence on the county's economy will only continue to grow.

Source: New Jersey Motion Picture and Television Commission

Tourism

According to the New Jersey Division of Travel & Tourism’s “2024 Economic Impact of Visitors to New Jersey” study, tourism was a \$3 billion dollar industry in Monmouth County. The study analyzes dollars spent on tourism-related expenditures, including lodging, food and beverage, recreation, retail, and transport. In Monmouth County, the largest share of tourism dollars went to food and beverage (29.7%), then lodging (22.2%), recreation (20.34%), retail (15.9%), and transport (11.7%). Beach tags, badges, and parking are also significant contributors to tourism spending in the county, revenues totaling \$30,526,984 in 2024, the largest contributor being Belmar Beach, selling \$4,715,765 in beach badges during the summer season. Note that beach tag sales are not included in the aforementioned study’s total.

According to the New Jersey Division of Travel & Tourism’s study, 24,242 people in Monmouth County were employed by a “visitor industry” in 2024, up 2.4% from 2023.

Agriculture

Agriculture is an important aspect of the county’s cultural legacy and economy. In 2022, the United States Department of Agriculture published the Census of Agriculture, which

found that there are 931 farms within the county, totaling 44,226 acres of farmland, accounting for approximately 15% of the county’s land cover. 93% of these farms are family owned. The approximate market value of all products sold by farms was \$119,532,000, up 48% from 2017. A large percentage of that value came from nursery, greenhouse, floriculture, and sod sales, contributing \$84,732,000. The next largest contributor was the market value of horses, ponies, mules, burros, and donkeys sold, totaling \$17,807,000. Monmouth County is the #1 county in the state for market value of horses and the like and ranked #11 in the nation.

Note: The Census of Agriculture is published every 5 years, the county will be able to see updated data for farms in 2027.



Sea Girt Beach

Commuting

Job Location

Monmouth County is not only home to an array of job sectors and industries but also a commutable distance by train, bus and car to employment centers in North Jersey and New York City. According to the 2024 American Community Survey, 91.9% of county residents worked in the state of New Jersey, and 8.1% of residents worked outside the state. Of those county residents that work in-state, 68.3% worked in Monmouth County and 23.6% worked outside the county.

A majority of County residents remaining within the County for work is indicative of an area with a good balance of land uses and a fair amount of job opportunities.

Journey to Work

72.1% of Monmouth County residents utilize their personal vehicle (car, truck, or van) to commute to work, with 64.6% of commuters driving alone and 7.5% carpooling. The use of public transportation is low at 5.2%. Other forms of commuting to work include walking (1.7%), bicycle (0.5%), and taxi or ride-hailing service, or motorcycle (1.6%).

11.4% of working residents take less than 10 minutes to travel to work, 43.1% of commuters travel 10-29 minutes, 28.6% travel for 30-59 minutes, and 16.8% travel 60 or more minutes to work.

18.9% of working residents in Monmouth County work from home. This is a large jump from 2016, where the rate was 5.1%. In 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic began, the work from home rate rose to 8.3%, and again in 2021 to 12%. The rate has only risen since, pointing to an impact of the pandemic we will continue to see moving forward.

Source: 2024 American Community Survey



Allentown

Market Analysis

Non-Residential Lease Rates

From 2019 to 2025 average rent per square foot per year has increased for all non-residential development types (industrial, office, and shopping centers). Pricing for shopping centers experienced the largest increase within this timeframe, which increased by slightly over \$14 per square foot for the New York metro region. Rent for industrial and office space experienced a similar increase, with rent for industrial space increasing by just over \$4 per square foot. Office space pricing within the county had the smallest increase of just under \$3 per square foot.

*Note: Shopping centers (sq. ft.) uses the New York Metro region metric. This region includes Monmouth County, while Industrial and Office rates are reflective of Monmouth County.

Source: [Cushman and Wakefield MarketBeat Report](#)

Inventory of Non-Residential Space

Industrial and office space in Monmouth increased from 2019 to 2025, with industrial space increasing by roughly 3.2 million sq. ft., and office space increasing by 983,994 sq. ft. In stark contrast, shopping centers in the New York Metro Region experienced a dramatic decrease in inventory in the six-year period (-64,607,250). The largest decrease from year to year occurred from 2019-2020, where shopping center inventory dropped by over 66 million sq. ft., likely due to the market conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Source: [Cushman and Wakefield MarketBeat Report](#)

Vacancy Rates of Non-Residential Space

Industrial vacancy rates in Monmouth County were the highest in 2024 (9.3%) and 2025 (8.9%) in comparison to the six-year timeframe reported by Cushman and Wakefield (2019-2025). Vacancy rates for office space in the county have remained relatively steady from 2019 to 2025. While there were some fluctuations in the rate throughout the six-year period they can be attributed to the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Bell Works in Holmdel

Source: [Cushman and Wakefield MarketBeat Report](#)

Development and Redevelopment

Over the last 10 years, there have been a variety of factors that contribute to the development and redevelopment trends shaping the landscape of the County. Each of the following factors are not just hyper-local – they can be seen throughout the state and many parts of the country.

COVID-19 Pandemic

As discussed in the upcoming “Enduring Effects of the Pandemic” section, COVID-19 significantly changed many aspects of our world. For several months development was stalled, and development applications to the Monmouth County Development Review Committee dropped significantly. In 2020, 172 development applications were received. As the world began to adapt to a new way of work, applications for development that had been paused began to make progress again, leading to an increase in applications in 2021 and 2022. 2022 saw 230 total applications, a volume that had not been seen since 2016.

The types of applications shifted along with the volume. As remote work became more prominent, the demand for office space, and in turn the development of it, declined. From 2016 to 2024, the County saw an average of almost 100,000 sq. ft. of office space proposed each year, while in 2025 only 8,794 sq. ft. was proposed. This reflects a significant shift seen in the rate of County residents working from home as referenced in the “Journey to Work” section above.

Warehouses

Over the past 10 years, the development of warehousing has become a more prominent and acknowledged issue. With the increased use of online shopping and the desire for quick shipping, the demand for warehousing and distribution facilities increased. From 2016 to 2024, the Development Review Committee reviewed an average of 16 warehouse



Warehouse in Millstone (Nearmap Imagery, 2026)

projects per year, with a peak of 26 proposed warehouses in 2022. While a majority of these applications do not receive widespread attention, due to the expansive nature of warehouses, several proposals were met with opposition by County residents. Concerns about increased truck traffic, environmental impacts, and impacts to the character of the area where the buildings were cited in several communities.

Concurrently, newly built warehouses stood empty, the demand for large amounts of square-footage waning. As a result, the DRC reviewed only 8 warehouse applications in 2025. Although the number of warehouse applications seems to be trending down, this trend is still in its infancy, and the Division of Planning will continue to monitor the impacts of warehouse development.

Data Centers

While warehouse development has been a recurring theme since 2016 in Monmouth County municipalities (like many other areas of NJ), data center development is on the horizon. On December 9, 2025, the introduction of a proposed AI data hall was proposed by New Jersey Fiber Exchange (NJFX). Land acquired in 2015 located in Wall, Manasquan, and Avon-by-the-Sea was purchased to support additional subsea landings in New Jersey. The data hall (Project Cool Water) is proposed by NJFX to be “the first purpose-built cable landing station campus in North America to support “liquid-to-the-chip” AI-ready infrastructure. The proposed data center is said to host “four subsea cables linking North America to Europe and South America”. The developer mentions that geographically, this center will be located within 7 milliseconds of more than 100 million U.S. residents. With over thirty-five active network operators on-site, NJFX is preparing for inference-ready interconnection for the next generation of AI.

Although there is a lot of discussion surrounding data centers, it is not yet clear what effects they will have on communities and surrounding land uses. Due to the nature of the work that is done within these centers, traffic patterns, proximity to utilities and water, and other potential impacts are not as well known as uses such as a warehouse or manufacturing plant. It will be important, moving forward, to monitor existing centers and their impacts.

Offshore Wind Development

Offshore Wind development has evolved since 2016. Off the coast of Monmouth County, development has had its set of challenges and obstacles over the past ten years (2016–2026). In the planning stages of offshore wind (2016–2019), Federal lease approvals and developer acquisitions took place. As the administrative development took place (2020–2023), surveys were conducted, environmental reviews were drafted, and proposed cable routes to Monmouth County were developed. For residents in and around the Jersey Shore area, controversy began developing around this subject (2023–2025). Whale strandings became a debate and concern among residents throughout the Jersey Shore. This led to a decline in public support and increased municipal opposition toward offshore wind developers. Heading into 2026 and beyond, there is a level of uncertainty about whether these projects will ever come to fruition. Most of these challenges include project cancellations, funding withdrawals, and systematic shifts affecting offshore wind development. There are two key Offshore Wind Projects directly impacting Monmouth County. This includes the Atlantic Shores Offshore Wind Project and the Empire Wind 1 Offshore Wind Project.

The Atlantic Shores Offshore Wind Project is planned to be located originally ten to twenty miles offshore. The export cable landfall is planned to be located in Sea Girt, Monmouth County. The project is estimated to generate up to 2.8 GW of capacity. The Empire Wind 1 Offshore Wind Project is also located in Monmouth County. The precise location is east of Long Branch, where power is set to be exported Northwest to New York. On October 15, 2024, a coalition of more than 40 municipalities and organizations across New Jersey was formed to oppose the state's large-scale offshore wind energy projects, citing concerns over rising costs for ratepayers and potential environmental impacts. The newly established Jersey Strong Coastal Coalition (JSCC) is calling on the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities to reject new contracts for two major wind energy projects being developed by Atlantic Shores Offshore Wind LLC, a joint venture between Shell Oil and Électricité de France.

Mixed-Use Development

Mixed and Multi-Use development has become increasingly popular in the County, especially in redevelopment areas and projects. In 2025, the DRC reviewed 21 mixed-use proposals, totaling nearly 870,000 sq. ft. proposed. This is nearly double the average from the 10 years prior, with each year totaling an average of 12 applications with about 450,000 sq. ft. proposed.

Redevelopment plans have also contributed to the rise in mixed-use development. The Borough of Highlands Central Business District Redevelopment Plan suggests a change in the area's zoning that requires residential uses to be developed in tandem with ground-floor commercial uses. The plan also outlines floodplain standards and the required mitigation strategies to protect the built environment. These requirements boost the development of mixed-use, flood-proof developments in the area and lay the groundwork for a denser, more sustainable, central business district.

Affordable Housing

In New Jersey, the obligations for every municipality are recalculated every 10 years in cycles known as rounds stemming from the Mount Laurel doctrine. This 1970s state Supreme Court ruling aims to provide housing opportunities for all. Obligations are calculated based on factors in various regions of the state, such as job growth, existing affordability, and the growth of low- and moderate-income households, which determine an individualized



New Beginnings in Manalapan

requirement for affordable housing. In 2025, all municipalities were required to adopt a Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, explaining where new affordable housing will be built and how the town plans to meet their obligation.

The most recent iteration of the affordable housing requirements is referred to as the “4th round.” Each municipality in the County has a present need (number of housing units that are currently required to meet a municipality’s obligation) and a prospective need (future affordable housing demands during the planning period). The planning period for the 4th round is 2025 – 2035. See below for the highest present and prospective needs in the county.

- Present Need***

 - Tinton Falls – 413
 - Long Branch – 317
 - Freehold Borough – 270
 - Wall – 224
 - Asbury Park – 214
 - Middletown – 186
 - Holmdel – 129

- Prospective Need***

 - Wall - 744
 - Marlboro – 579
 - Freehold Township – 568
 - Middletown – 346
 - Howell – 338
 - Manalapan – 282
 - Tinton Falls – 219
 - Eatontown – 193
 - Neptune Township - 170

Infrastructure

Infrastructure plays a crucial role in how we move through our built environment. Cataloging our current roads, bridges, and wastewater facilities, along with currently plans to improve these structures, helps inform the Master Plan by showcasing present and future need.

Monmouth County in NJTPA's TIP

The North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority's (NJTPA) Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a document that contains the plans for projects set to be funded by federal and state funds for infrastructure undertakings such as preliminary engineering, final design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction.

For 2025, there are four projects in the TIP that are located in Monmouth County:

Old Bridge-Matawan Road Bridge (Matawan) – Bridge Improvement, currently in local preliminary engineering phase

Oceanic Bridge S-31 (Rumson & Middletown) – Bridge Replacement, currently in local preliminary engineering phase.

Corlies Avenue Bridge O-12 (Allenhurst & Ocean) – Bridge Improvement, currently in preliminary engineering phase.

Bridges W7, W8, W9 over Glimmer Glass and Debbie's Creek (Brielle & Manasquan) – Bridge Replacement, currently in scoping phase.

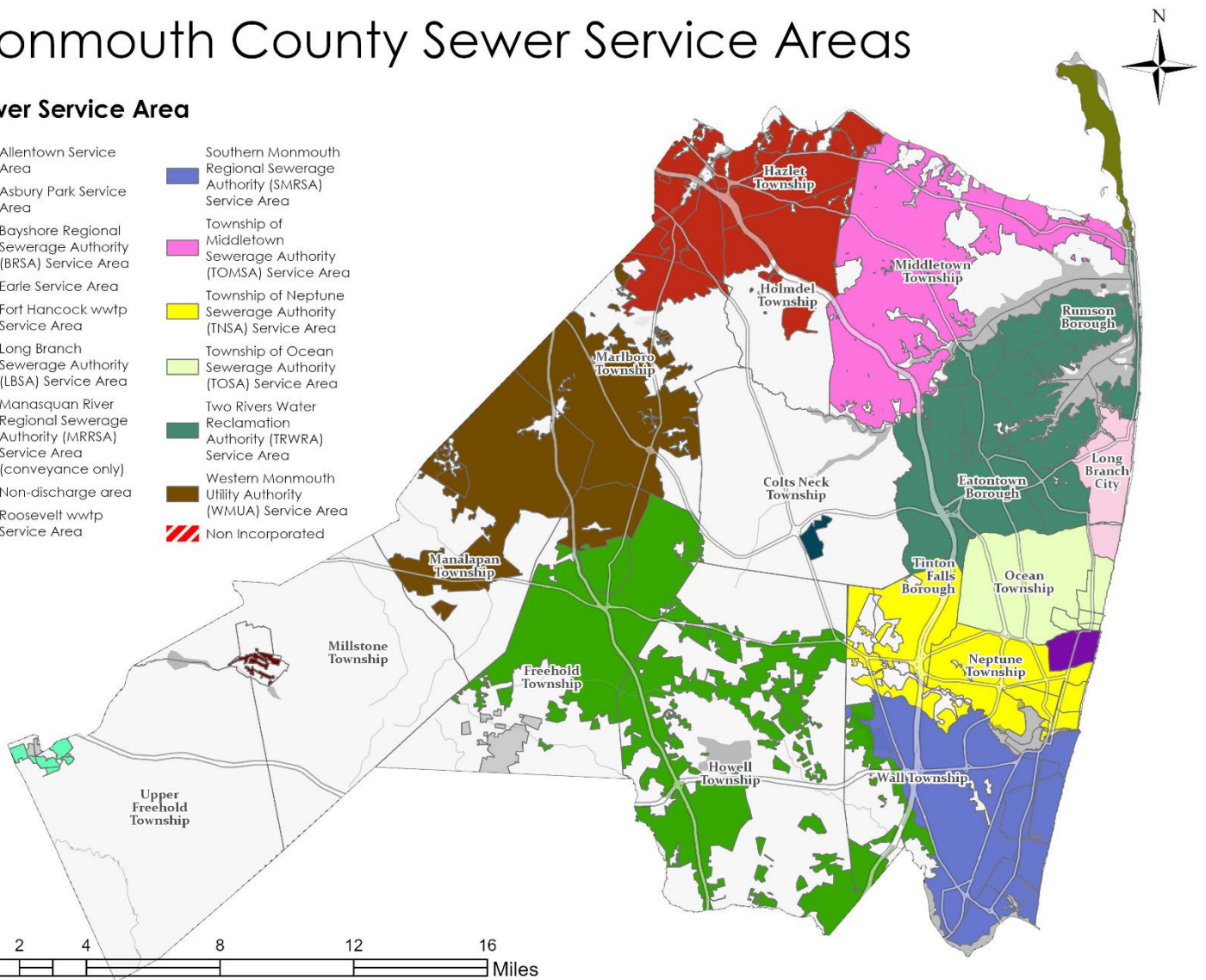
Wastewater

The Water Quality Planning Act authorizes the designation of areawide planning agencies for the purpose of developing, adopting, updating and amending Areawide Water Quality Management Plans (AWQMPs). The Monmouth County Board of County Commissioners is the Designated Planning Agency for Monmouth County. The Board delegates operational responsibilities to the Monmouth County Planning Board, which in turn relies on the Amendment Review Committee (ARC) to process and review proposed changes to the Monmouth County AWQMP. The Wastewater Management Plan (WMP) for Monmouth County was last adopted on April 11, 2013. It includes the Monmouth County Future Wastewater Service Area (FWSA) Map that accounts for existing and future development of the county. The county drafted a new WMP in accordance with the NJDEP's November 7, 2016 rules, but the agency has yet to adopt it. Accordingly, site specific amendments to the WMP are necessary to expand the boundaries of the FWSA Map.

Monmouth County Sewer Service Areas

Sewer Service Area

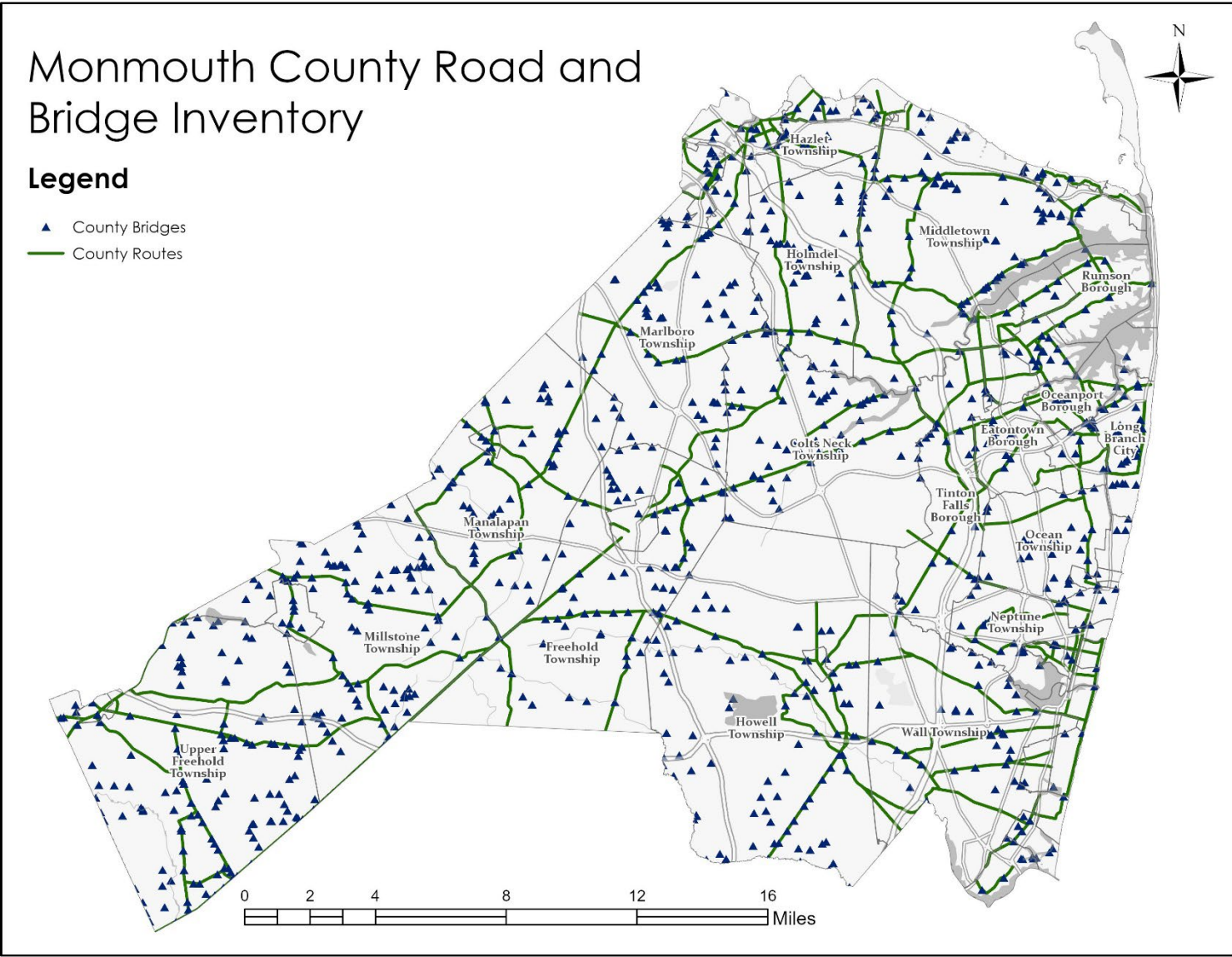
- | | |
|--|--|
|  Allentown Service Area |  Southern Monmouth Regional Sewerage Authority (SMRSA) Service Area |
|  Asbury Park Service Area |  Township of Middletown Sewerage Authority (TOMSA) Service Area |
|  Bayshore Regional Sewerage Authority (BRSA) Service Area |  Township of Neptune Sewerage Authority (TNSA) Service Area |
|  Earle Service Area |  Township of Ocean Sewerage Authority (TOSA) Service Area |
|  Fort Hancock wwtp Service Area |  Two Rivers Water Reclamation Authority (TRWRA) Service Area |
|  Long Branch Sewerage Authority (LBSA) Service Area |  Western Monmouth Utility Authority (WMUA) Service Area |
|  Manasquan River Regional Sewerage Authority (MRRSA) Service Area (conveyance only) |  Non Incorporated |
|  Non-discharge area | |
|  Roosevelt wwtp Service Area | |



Map 2: Sewer Service Areas

Road and Bridge Inventory

The Monmouth County Division of Engineering maintains and operates over 360 miles of roadway and 1000+ bridge structures within (and outside of) the County.



Map 3: Road and Bridge Inventory

Transportation

Like infrastructure, the transportation options within the county shape how we move through our environment. The three largest public transportation options within the county are the bus, train, and ferry. Understanding how riders use public transit will inform the Master Plan of gaps in service, commuting patterns, and potential infrastructure improvements.

County Transportation

Monmouth County Transportation Resource Guide

In early 2026, EZ Ride published the [Monmouth County Transportation Resource Guide](#) which aims to be a “comprehensive, user-friendly tool designed to help residents, older adults, caregivers, and community organizations find safe, dependable, and convenient transportation options”. The guide can be found on EZ Ride’s website and in print.

Ride in Monmouth

Monmouth County Division of Transportation provides a variety of demand responsive transportation services including the Shared Ride, medical, dialysis and veterans. Service is provided through MCDOT staff drivers and vehicles.

County/Shared Ride

This service requires that clients make a 4-day advance reservation for shared ride multiple-destination service.

Senior citizens (60 and over) or permanently or temporarily disabled residents of Monmouth County are able to request service to a destination within the services area, with priority given to medical trips and food shopping. Service is available Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

FTA Section 5311

This service is provided through a federal grant and is open to the general public and can include seniors and persons with disabilities. The service area includes anyone going to or coming from: Allentown, Colts Neck, Freehold Twp, Holmdel, Howell, Manalapan, Millstone, Roosevelt, Tinton Falls, Upper Freehold and Wall. The service is available Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Veteran's Services

Servicing veteran’s trips to and from Lyons, Toms River, Tinton Falls and East Orange (Veteran's Hospitals). Pickup starts at 7 a.m. This service is available on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, twice a month.



Ride in Monmouth Van

Bus Ridership

NJ TRANSIT Bus Ridership

One of the most utilized forms of public transportation in Monmouth County is the NJ TRANSIT buses, with 21 bus routes as of 2025. While each bus route experiences different levels of ridership each year, the overarching trend for all lines was stable average weekly ridership until 2020, where all routes experienced a sharp decrease due to the COVID-19 pandemic. From 2020-2024, a few routes have experienced a steep increase in average ridership, while the remaining routes have experienced a moderate increase in the annual ridership average.



NJ TRANSIT Bus to New York at Freehold Center

Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) Grant Program

The New Jersey Job Access Reverse Commute Grant Program is designed to supply funding to counties providing off-hours transportation in order to connect residents to employment. Currently, the grant is administered by NJ TRANSIT and matched by Monmouth County. The funding is being used to extend service hours of the NJ TRANSIT 836 bus line from Freehold to Asbury Park. Both of these municipalities are major employment centers, with two major hospitals along the route. The route is an important cross-county connection.

NJ TRANSIT VIA Pilot Program

NJ TRANSIT and Via launched the "MicroLink" microtransit pilot program, providing free, on-demand shuttle services to connect riders to major bus stops and Park & Rides. Operating on weekdays from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m., the program is designed to solve first- and last-mile commuting challenges for both Monmouth and Bergen County residents.

Rail Ridership

The NJ TRANSIT North Jersey Coast Line (NJCL) provides year-round rail service for Monmouth County residents to employment and transportation centers in Newark, Hoboken, and New York City. There are 13 rail stations served year-round in Monmouth County, and a seasonal station located at Monmouth Park Racetrack in Oceanport that operates during the yearly horse racing season (May - October). From 2010-2024 each rail station experienced a similar trend in average weekday rail ridership with a stable range in the number of riders annually from 2010-2019, followed by a steep decrease from 2019-2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and either a steep or gradual increase from 2021-2024.

Ferry Ridership

Monmouth County has three year-round ferry terminals and one seasonal terminal, all located on the Raritan Bayshore. These include the Belford Ferry Terminal, Atlantic Highlands Terminal, and Highlands Terminal, as well as the seasonal terminal in the Sandy Hook Gateway National Recreation Area. Ferry Ridership in Monmouth County saw a steady annual increase in ridership from 2013 to 2019 for all three year-round routes until the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, where ridership decreased drastically. Following the decrease in 2020, the year-round routes (excluding Belford – Pier 11) experienced an increase in average weekday ferry ridership as people returned to travelling and commuting. The Belford – Pier 11 route experienced a much different trend than the other two routes in this time frame, as recorded ridership numbers in 2021 were slightly lower from the previous year and have only slightly increased since.

Source: NJ TRANSIT



View of the Seastreak Ferry from Atlantic Highlands

Agriculture

As discussed in the Economic Profile, Agriculture plays a large role in the County's economy. The historic legacy of farming has fundamentally shaped the landscape and culture of Monmouth County, and as a result, will play a large role in the upcoming Master Plan.

Farmland Usage

The 2022 US Census of Agriculture reports there were 931 farms in the County encompassing 44,226 acres. According to the 2017 USDA Census of Agriculture, Monmouth County had 838 farms operating on approximately 39,198 acres of farmland. This represents an 11% increase in number of farms and 13% increase in land in farms since 2017. Monmouth County ranks fifth in the state for the number of farms per County.

Approximately 27,235 acres of farmland are cropland, 6,684 acres are pastureland, and 5,757 acres are woodland. 4,500 of the remaining acreage is used for other agricultural purposes.

4,837 acres of farmland are irrigated, which represents roughly 11% of total farmland.

The top crops by acres include soybeans (8,287 acres), hay and haylage (4,176 acres), nursery stock (3,417 acres), corn for grain (2,539 acres), and sod (2,008 acres).

As of December 31, 2022, the county had approximately 65,226 layer chickens, making poultry the largest livestock category. The county also supported 4,108 horses and ponies, reflecting the continued presence of equine-related agriculture. Additional livestock included approximately 1,420 goats, 1,038 sheep and lambs, and smaller numbers of other poultry and livestock operations.

Farm Coverage

According to the 2025 farmland assessment data, agricultural lands account for approximately 15% of the County's land area. There are 46,908 acres of agricultural lands which includes farmhouses and other non-agricultural lands.

The 2025 farmland assessment data further notes that cropland harvested accounts for 47% of the land, non-appurtenant woodland accounts for 20% of the land, permanent pasture is 15%, appurtenant woodland at 12% and cropland pastured is 5%. Equine is at 1%.



Horse in Upper Freehold

The average size of a farm in Monmouth County is 48 acres. In comparison, the average size of a farm in New Jersey is 71 Acres. 86% of Monmouth County’s farms are under 50 acres in size. Approximately 39 % of farms are between 1 and 9 acres, and 47% of farms are between 10 and 49 acres. Monmouth County is largely characterized by small to mid-size scale operations with only a small percentage of farms exceeding 180 acres.

Agriculture Sales

Monmouth County represents 8% of the State’s agriculture sales.

The market value of total agricultural products sold in Monmouth County totaled approximately \$119.5 million in 2022 according to the US Census of Agriculture. Crop production accounted for 82% of total agricultural sales, while livestock, poultry, and related products represented 18%.

Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture, and sod remained the dominant commodity group, with

approximately \$84.7 million in sales, continuing its position as the leading contributor to the county’s agricultural economy.

Vegetables, melons, potatoes, and sweet potatoes accounted for about \$4.1 million of sales.

Livestock, poultry, and products contributed approximately \$21 million.

Poultry and eggs and horses, ponies, mules, burros, and donkeys were categories that contributed heavily to livestock sales.

Demographics

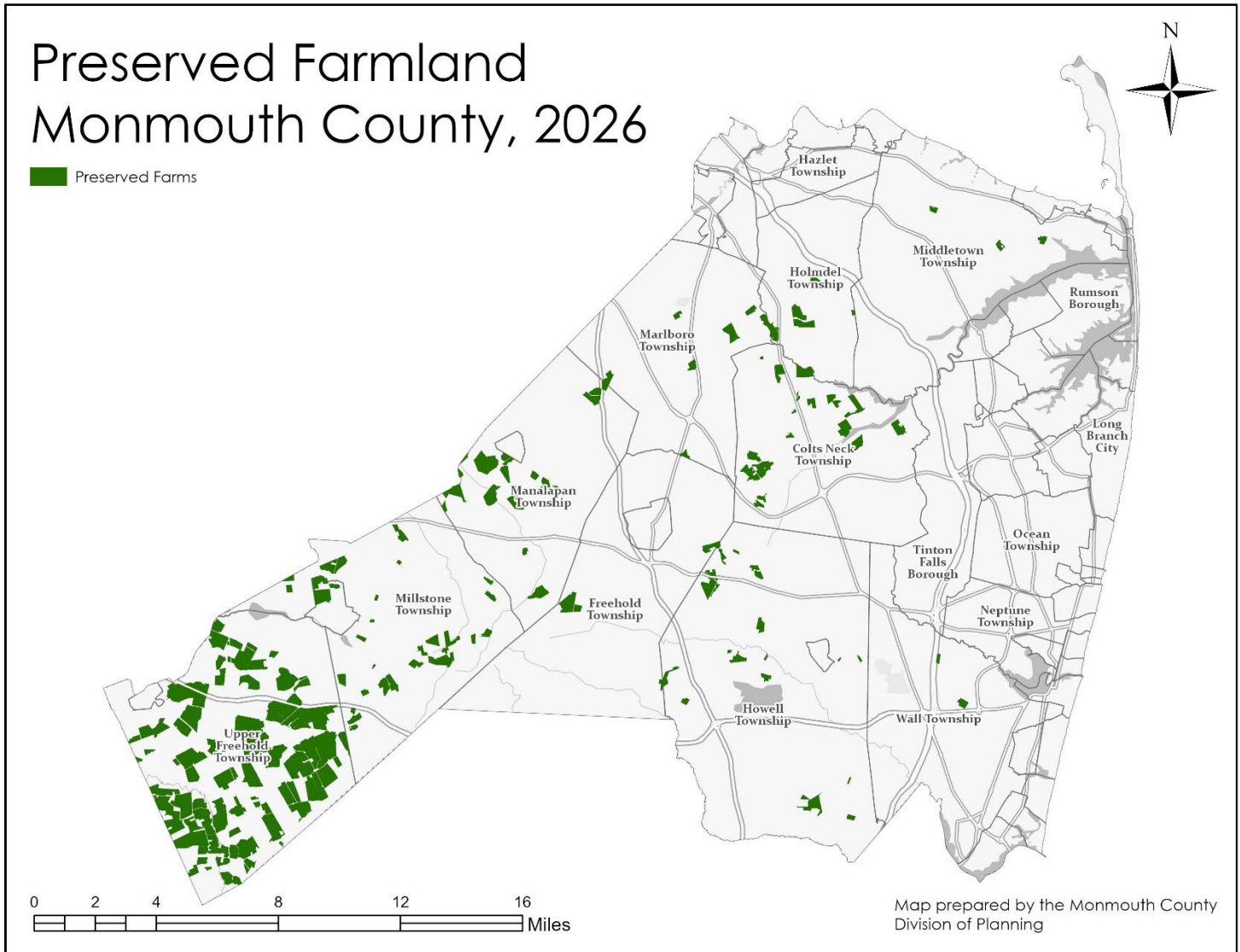
According to the US Census of Agriculture, there were 1,796 farm producers in Monmouth County. Most farm producers are male, with 721 aged 65 or older. Only 103 producers were under age 35. This means a significant portion of the county’s farmers are nearing or past typical retirement age. This could create challenges for maintaining farm continuity and sustaining agricultural operations over time. However, it was noted that 93% of all farms in the county are family farms.



Aeroponics at Beyond Organic Growers in Freehold Township

Preserved Farmland

As of February 2026, Monmouth County has preserved 15,743 acres of farmland. There are 224 agricultural easements held through SADC format Deed of Easements.

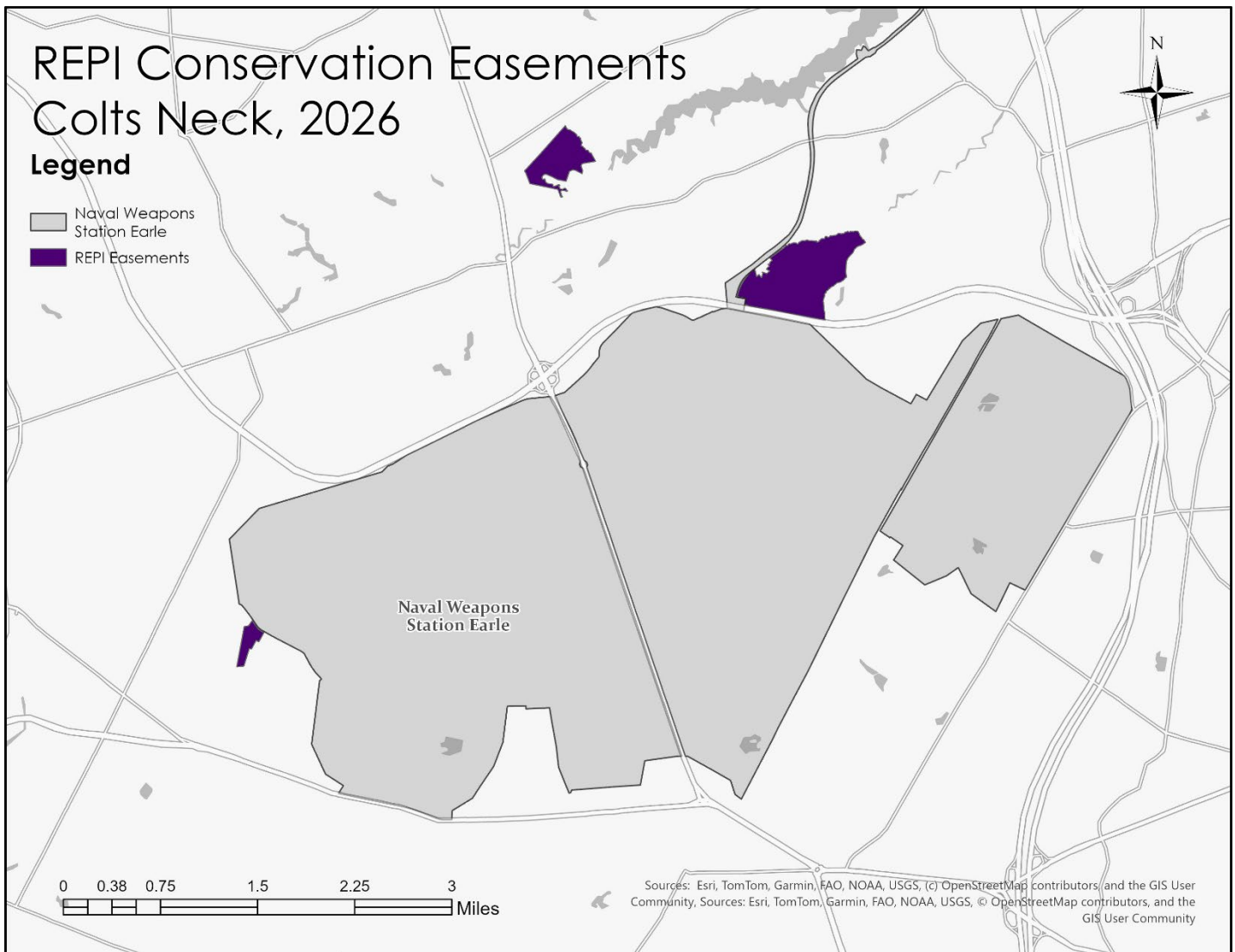


Map 4: Preserved Farmland

REPI Conservation Easements

The Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) program is a Department of Defense (DoD) partnership with Naval Weapons Station (NWS) Earle, Monmouth County, and Monmouth Conservation Foundation (MCF) to protect land, reduce wildfire risk, and prevent encroachment around the naval base.

Monmouth County also holds 3 REPI Conservation/Agricultural Easements and has preserved 339 acres under this easement program.



Map 5: REPI Easements

Open Space and Recreation

Open Space and Recreation is integral to the character of the County. In November of 2025, Monmouth County voters approved an increase in the county open space tax, to 3.75 cents on each \$100 of assessed property value, an increase of 36%. These tax dollars will be placed into the county's Open Space, Recreation, Floodplain Protection, and Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund, which funds the purchase of land, improving existing parks, and helping Monmouth municipalities do the same.

The vote signals that residents of the county value open space and the upcoming plan will reflect this endorsement.

County Parklands and Open Space

A total of 248 acres were added to park properties in 2024. As of December 2024, there were 18,506 acres throughout 44 park areas and golf courses across the County. This represents approximately 6% of Monmouth County's total acreage. The parkland consists of 58% forest, 23% fields, 6% water, 3% wetland, 10% developed or impervious surface.

There are 112 recreation facilities including 31 ball courts, 16 visitor or activity centers, 15 picnic pavilions, 15 athletic fields, 14 playgrounds. Other facilities include 8 historic sites, 5 pools, and 2 campgrounds.

There are 157.8 total miles of trails on the park properties. This consisted of 32 miles of paved trails, 31.9 miles of trails ranked as easy, 83.4 miles of trails ranked as moderate, and 10.5 miles of trails ranked as challenging.

In 2024, there were 9,225,775 total county park visits and 2,076,482 visits to the Park System website. Highly attended events included 89,500 people to the Monmouth County Fair, 12,800 to Thompson Park Day, 7,100 people to the Creative Arts Festival and 6,000 to the Wind & Sea Festival.

In 2024, a total of 356,517 rounds of golf were played with the most played at Charleston Springs Golf Course, followed by the courses at Bel-Aire and Shark River.



Dorbrook Park in Colts Neck

Municipal Open Space Grant Programs

The Monmouth County Open Space Grant Program is comprised of two different grant programs: The Monmouth County Municipal Park Improvement Grant Program and the Monmouth County Municipal Land Preservation Incentive Program.

The Monmouth County Municipal Park Improvement Grant Program provides additional funding to municipalities making local park and open space improvements. The program allots \$6 million a year, apportioning up to \$500,000 per project, up from \$250,000 allotted in years prior.

According to an article published in the Fall 2024 edition of the County Park System's Green Heritage, since the program began in 2002, 51 of Monmouth County's 53 municipalities have received a total of \$60.4 million in funding for park development and land acquisition projects under the Municipal Open Space Grant program. As of the 2024 grant round, 343 grants have been awarded with \$32 million paid in reimbursement to the municipalities for successfully completed projects.

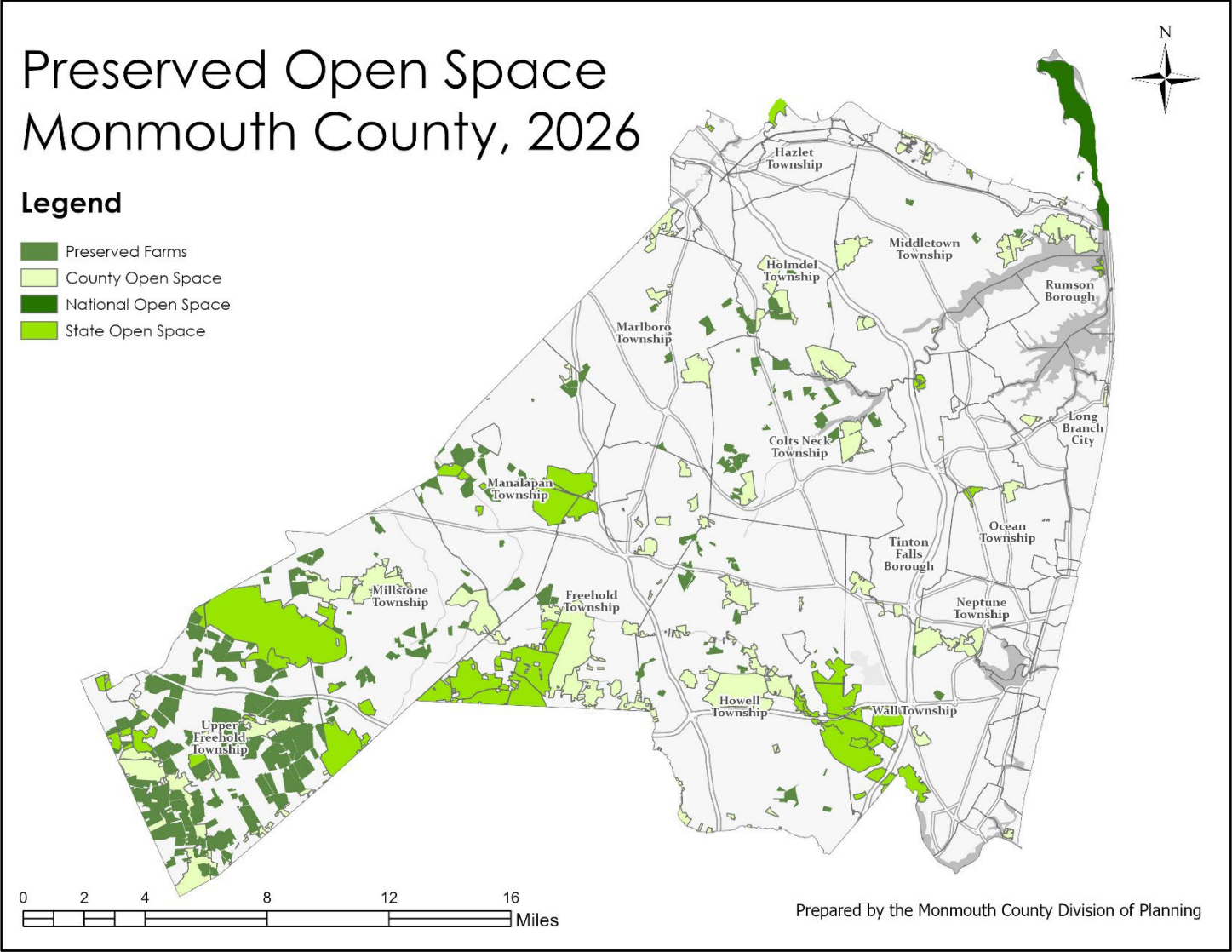
The Monmouth County Municipal Land Preservation Incentive Program provides additional funding for municipalities looking to preserve lands for local parks and open space. For projects up to \$5 million, the county will match up to 75% of acquisition costs not funded by the State Green Acres program; for projects over \$5 million, the county will fund 75% of the first \$5 million and 50% of the amount over \$5 million of acquisition costs not funded by the State Green Acres program.

According to an article published in the Fall 2025 edition of the County Park System's Green Heritage newsletter, over the past year, the new Incentive Program preserved seven significant properties in communities throughout the County. The seven successful projects have preserved 231 acres of land with a total value of more than \$26 million. The County provided \$16 million toward the acquisition projects, funding more than 60% of the purchase price. The supplemental County funding allows for the municipalities to leverage NJDEP Green Acres funding to reduce the impact on municipal budget while committing to the preservation of locally important open space.

These projects included preserving 15.8 acres of forested hills in Marlboro to protect an important natural landscape. 28.8 acres of farmland in Colts Neck which will offer expanded recreational amenities of Five Point Park. 125.3 acres of farmland and woodland in Millstone were preserved to support hiking and equestrian trails. In Fair Haven, 0.75 acres of waterfront was protected to provide shoreline access. In Holmdel, the Horn Antenna, a National Historic Landmark associated with the discovery of cosmic microwave background radiation which provided evidence of the Big Bang, was protected. In Monmouth Beach, a memorial park is being created to honor veterans and first responders and provide a public gathering space. In Middletown, the preservation of the Mater Dei Campus secured 25 acres of existing recreational facilities for the most populated Township in the County. There are long term plans to construct indoor recreational facilities on this site.

Preserved Open Space

22% of all land in the County is preserved or protected. Preservation efforts are intended to ensure that land of agricultural, environmental, and cultural significance are safeguarded.



Map 6: Preserved Open Space

Environment

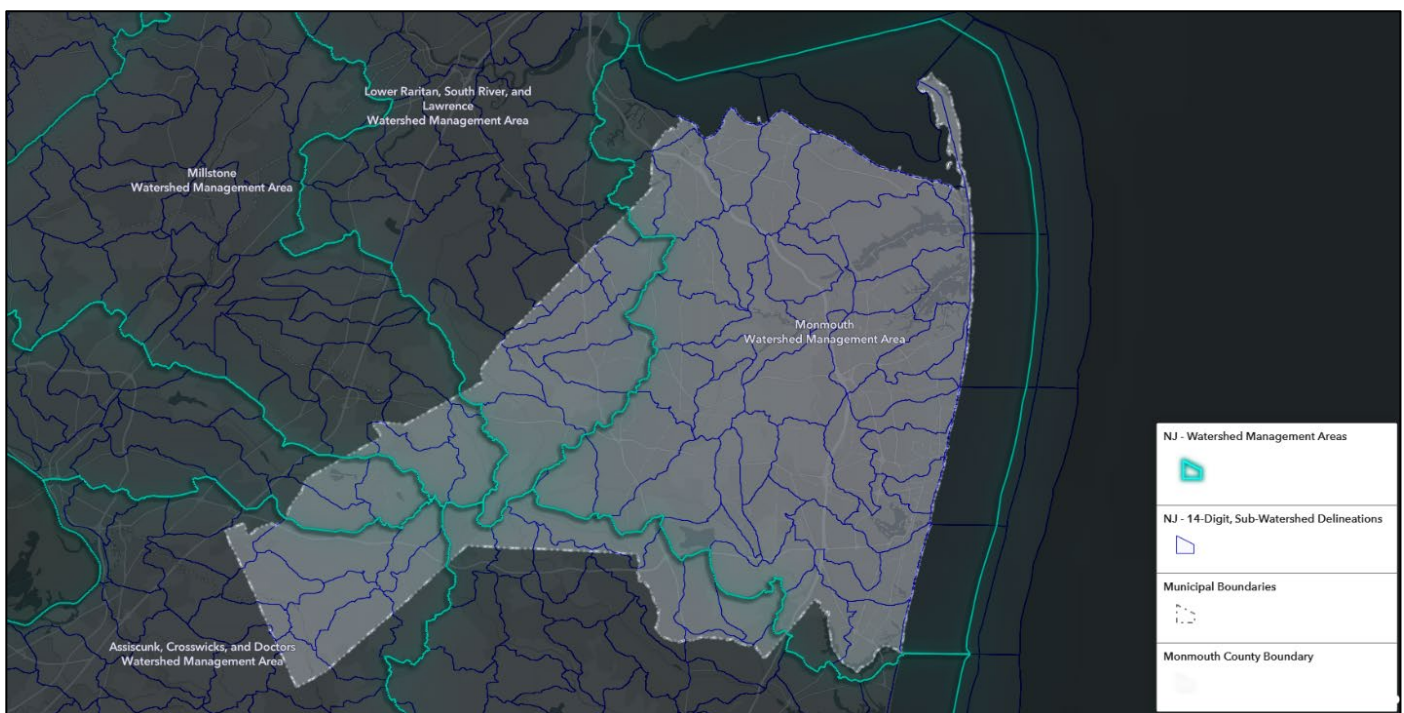
As climate change continues to shape our world, it is important to take inventory of our environmental features and understand what hazard mitigation or resilience efforts must be made moving forward. This section of the Existing Conditions Report attempts to do just this, cataloging our current environment and resilience efforts.

Water

Watersheds

A majority of the County is within the Monmouth Watershed Management Area, but there are 6 total watersheds that cross the County's boundaries. Millstone Township in Western Monmouth is unique in that it spans four of the State's Watershed Management Areas and contains the headwaters of several significant rivers (Millstone River, Toms River, Metedeconk River, and Crosswicks Creek) that are a source of water for many New Jersey residents (Monmouth County GIS StoryMap).

Monmouth County's Geographic Information Systems Division created an interactive map to showcase the different watersheds and help residents identify which area they live in. The "[What's My Watershed?](#)" interactive tool is available online and a static version is featured below.



Map 7: Watersheds

Water Health

There are approximately 59 square miles of fresh surface water and 109 square miles of saline/brackish surface water in Monmouth County. NJDEP, the Monmouth County Health Department (MCHD), and local health departments all monitor surface, ground, and potable water quality regularly. The MCHD's Water Pollution Control Team works with other department environmental units and provides assistance to local health departments with water-related complaints ([Monmouth County's Air & Noise Control Program](#)) MCHD monitors and responds to water quality issues such as fish kills, harmful algal blooms (HABs), enterococcus bacteria, and dangerous discharges to waterbodies. Exceedances of water quality standards can result in advisories and beach closings.

In addition to the MCHD, several organizations and commissions work in Monmouth County to further goals of water quality protection through monitoring, preservation, restoration, and education. The [NJDEP AmeriCorps Watershed Ambassador](#) is housed within the Division of Planning's Environmental and Sustainability Planning section and assesses the quality of the local streams. These include [Save Coastal Wildlife](#), [Barnegat Bay Partnership](#), [Deal Lake Commission](#), [Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership](#), [NYNJ Baykeeper](#), [Shark River Cleanup Coalition](#), [Whale Pond Brook Watershed Association](#), and Wreck Pond Watershed Preservation Association, among others. Monmouth University's Coastal Lakes Observing Network (CLONet) staff and students work with and train members of several of these and other community groups to monitor physical, water quality, and biological parameters in their waters ([About CLONet](#)).

Several communities in the County have passed ordinances restricting single-use plastics and balloon releases. In 2022, the state passed legislation restricting certain businesses from providing consumers with single-use plastic carryout bags, polystyrene containers, or plastic straws. These laws are intended to prevent plastic litter, which often ends up in waterways.

Stormwater

Most stormwater is redirected from roads to wetlands, lakes, streams, and ponds. In many coastal towns, stormwater is discharged into coastal lakes or estuarine inlets before discharging directly to the ocean. With an increase in major storm events, stress on stormwater systems and the likelihood of flooding in low-lying areas throughout the county will increase.

The County's Stormwater Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) reviews Municipal Stormwater Management Plans and stormwater control ordinances in accordance with the Stormwater



Stormwater Culvert

Management Rules, County Review Process (N.J.A.C. 7:8-4.4) for consistency with rules set forth by the NJDEP. The STAC then makes approval recommendations to the Planning Board. In recent years, there have been several amendments to the Stormwater Management Rules which have required municipalities to update their ordinances and, in some cases, their plans. Recent changes to the Stormwater Management Rules have included the requirement to include green infrastructure and future climate conditions in design standards.

In 2023, a new Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Tier A Permit became effective with updated requirements. New requirements include mapping of all stormwater infrastructure; development of Watershed Improvement Plans; various municipal ordinance updates or additions; and modified maintenance, training, and management requirements. All municipalities in the county fall under the Tier A permit ([NJ DEP Tier Permit Fact Sheet](#)).

Air

Pollution and Air Quality

The [NJDEP Division of Air Quality](#) is the state agency tasked with ensuring compliance. Air quality data from New Jersey's various ambient air monitoring sites can be accessed at [The NJ DEP's Air Monitoring Homepage](#). The Monmouth County monitoring station is located at Monmouth University.

The Monmouth County Health Department Air and Noise Control Program is responsible for investigation, enforcement, and regulation of air and noise pollution in the county. The MCHD's underground storage tank (UST) enforcement unit enforces Clean Air Act regulations for stage two vapor recovery equipment as part of their regular UST program responsibilities. The MCHD also performs site visits and investigations for potential sources of air pollution, such as gas stations and dry cleaners, to ensure compliance with NJDEP regulations as well as answering public complaints concerning indoor air quality, radon, and suspicious odors ([MCHD 2015](#)).

The MCHD is also in charge of the Monmouth County Reclamation Center in Tinton Falls and works towards sustaining air quality at and around the site. In 2019 the county replaced significant parts of the Reclamation Center's landfill gas collection system, which collects gas and liquid from wells across the facility. Collecting the gas from decomposing materials prevents it from polluting the surrounding air. Collecting the leachate dewateres the landfill and reduces odors. In 2020 a new vacuum system was installed replacing the older failing system and an immediate and significant reduction in odors was realized ([MCHD](#)). The construction of a temporary cap to further reduce odors was completed in 2024.

Since the inception of the Clean Air Act, air quality in New Jersey has significantly improved, especially for airborne sulfur dioxide, lead, and nitrogen dioxide, which are all safely under national standards across Monmouth County and almost all of New Jersey. However, due largely to the use of automobiles, New Jersey regularly exceeds national standards for ozone, and many urban centers within the state also exceed the standards for fine particles (ERMP).

Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States ([Environmental Protection Agency](#)). Different areas of the State have different radon exposure potentials, depending upon their geologic formations. According to the [NJDEP](#), areas of central and western Monmouth County have the highest potential for radon exposure, however NJDEP recommends every home in the state be tested (ERMP).

Land

Brown and Gray-fields

For several years, the Borough of Red Bank has been making efforts to identify, investigate, remediate, and revitalize its Brownfield sites. In partnership with the Borough, Monmouth Conservation Foundation (MCF) has been furthering these efforts through fundraising and securing grants. In 2021 MCF received an anonymous \$2 million restricted donation, and in 2024 was



Brownfield in Red Bank (Photo courtesy of Monmouth Conservation Foundation)

awarded an EPA grant to assess and develop remediation strategies for Brownfield sites in Red Bank, with the goal of transforming them into green space accessible to the community ([MCF 2024](#)).

Climate Resilience

Temperature Changes

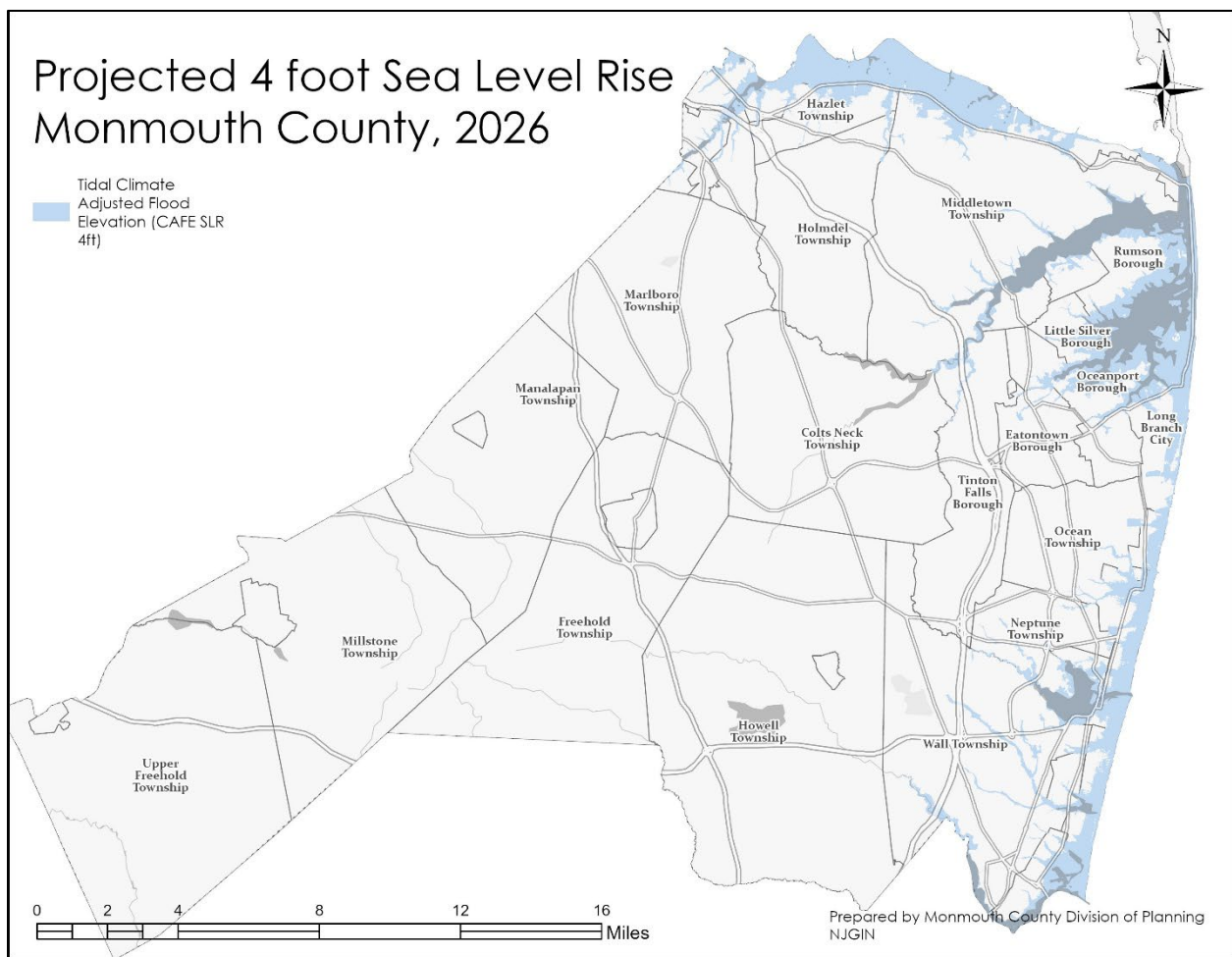
In New Jersey, annual average temperatures have risen approximately 3.5°F since the beginning of the 20th century, with six of the ten hottest years on record occurring since 2010. Temperatures in the eastern part of the state near the coast are typically warmer. Future climate projections are modeled on various emission scenarios. Under a higher emissions scenario, the hottest temperature projection is about 9°F warmer than the hottest year in the historical record by the end of this century. Under a lower emissions scenario, the coldest temperature projection is about 2°F warmer than the historical average by the end of this century. Heat waves and storms are projected to be more intense, while cold waves are projected to be less intense.

Source: NOAA State Climate Summaries 2022 – NJ ([New Jersey State Climate Summary](#))

Sea Level Change

Sea level along the New Jersey coast has risen by more than 16 inches since the early 1900s. Global average sea level is projected to rise another 1 to 4 feet by 2100. Primarily due to land subsidence, sea level has risen in New Jersey at approximately three times the global average. *New Jersey's Rising Seas and Changing Coastal Storms: Report of the 2025 New Jersey Science and Technical Advisory Panel*, projects future sea level rise based on various emissions scenarios (low, intermediate, or high). In the near term (2050) New Jersey is likely to experience between 11 and 20 inches of sea level rise. Long term (2100) projections vary depending on the emissions scenario but range from a likely sea level rise of 22 to 40 inches for the low end and 31 to 52 inches for the high end. Although certain portions of the coastal plain are subsiding more rapidly than others, particularly in southern New Jersey, the difference of projected sea level rise between these locations is only four inches per century. Rapid ice sheet loss in polar regions could further exacerbate sea level rise.

Sources: [NJ Sea Level Rise Reports – New Jersey Climate Change Resource Center](#), NOAA State Climate Summaries 2022 – NJ ([New Jersey State Climate Summary](#))



Map 8: Sea Level Rise

Coastal and Inland Flooding

Monmouth County is subject to both coastal and riverine flooding. Approximately 10% of land within Monmouth County is in the 100-year floodplain (2025 Hazard Mitigation Plan).

Coastal flooding occurs when tidal waters rise to inundate areas along the coast such as oceans, bays, estuaries, and coastal rivers and lakes. Storm surge and rainfall from severe weather, such as Nor'easters and hurricanes, cause most of the coastal flooding in New Jersey. Nuisance flooding, also known as sunny day flooding, occurs in low lying coastal areas during the highest high tide cycles during full and new moons. According to *New Jersey's Rising Seas and Changing Coastal Storms: Report of the 2025 New Jersey Science and Technical Advisory Panel*, the number of coastal flood days in New Jersey has increased in frequency and magnitude due to sea level rise.

Rising sea levels will cause more frequent coastal flooding. New Jersey coastal flood days, defined by NOAA as days where coastal waters reach a level exceeding the national flood



Inland Flooding at the Jersey Shore

threshold for a minor flood, have increased over time as a result of sea-level rise. This steady increase has gone from an average of less than one coastal flood day per year to a high of 23 coastal flood days in 2024. By 2050, under an intermediate emissions scenario New Jersey will likely experience between 29 and 148 coastal flood days per year (NJSTAP, 2025). Rapid ice sheet loss could further exacerbate flooding. Within the last 10 years, there have been 58 coastal flood events in Monmouth County, and an estimated \$10 billion in property damage as a result (2025 HMP).

Inland flooding occurs as a result of heavy rainfall events. Climate change is intensifying rainfall, which can overwhelm drainage systems and inland channels such as rivers, creeks, and streams. When a channel receives too much water the excess water flows over its banks and inundates low-lying areas. When there is debris in the channel, such as fallen trees or trash and the stream cannot fully infiltrate excess stormwater, flooding may occur. Even away from waterbodies or channels, ponding may occur in low lying areas.

Dense development and impervious surface worsen flooding by reducing ground infiltration resulting in increased stormwater runoff. Approximately 95% of parcels in Monmouth County are considered

developed (2025 HMP). The Monmouth County Community Rating System (CRS) Assistance Program (discussed in the section below), housed in the Division of Planning, provides technical assistance to municipalities that may not have the technical, financial, or administrative capacity to successfully participate in the CRS program. The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) CRS program scores participating towns on their effectiveness in the mitigation of flood hazards, with higher scores corresponding to higher discounts flood insurance premiums for homeowners and businesses located within that municipality. Since 2020, through grant funding and matches, the County has offered a shared service to all CRS participating municipalities providing CRS/floodplain management software.

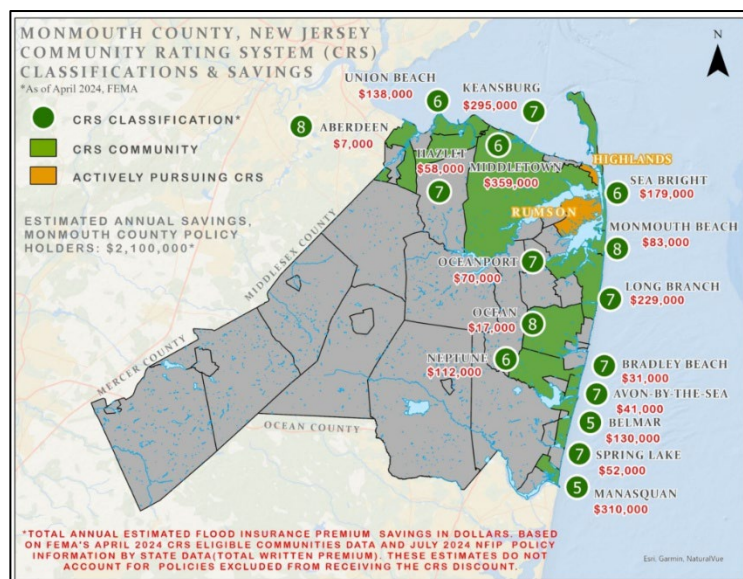
The Monmouth County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) coordinates emergency planning, response, recovery, prevention, and mitigation efforts. The OEM is responsible for the development, maintenance and implementation of the County's *All Hazard Emergency Operations Plan*, the *Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan*, and a variety of other pre-and post-disaster plans to assist in emergency response operations. The Monmouth County OEM coordinated intra-county Mutual Aid and Assistance Agreements (MAAs) for municipalities which allow those who have signed agreements to share department services in an emergency.

Community Ratings System (CRS)

The CRS program, run by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through its National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), scores communities on their effectiveness in flood plain management and development in floodplains. Municipalities that take steps to increase their resiliency to future storm events are eligible for policy holder discounts.

The Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders passed Resolution #2014-0201 in March 2014 establishing the Monmouth County Community Rating System (CRS)

Assistance program. The county's program, launched by the Monmouth County Division of Planning and the Monmouth County Office of Emergency Management, and which was the first in the State, established specific guidelines municipalities must follow to receive professional and technical assistance from the county. The overall goal of this initiative is to maintain or improve the ranking of those towns already in the CRS program, as well as bring more municipalities into the program that might not have the resources to do so alone. Municipalities in the CRS program should see increased investment as actions taken to mitigate flood risk against future storm events combined with lower flood insurance



Map 9: CRS

premiums are often viewed positively by potential homebuyers and business investors, particularly in special flood hazard areas. The Monmouth County CRS Assistance Program especially benefits municipalities that may not necessarily have the technical, financial, or administrative capacity to successfully participate or advance in the NFIP CRS program.

This program includes quarterly Monmouth County CRS Users Group meetings facilitated by the Monmouth County Division of Planning. User group meetings provide a peer-to-peer learning forum for municipal representatives seeking knowledge about the CRS program and topical floodplain management issues. It also allows for the exchange of ideas and strategies that may advance a community's efforts to protect properties from flood damage. These quarterly meetings also provide an opportunity to ask the county for professional assistance at no cost to the municipality.

Source: [*Monmouth County CRS Program*](#)

Sustainable Jersey

The Sustainable Jersey certification program is a free, voluntary, and well-recognized sustainability certification specifically for municipalities in New Jersey. It provides a structured framework and resources to help local governments plan and implement actions that strengthen environmental quality, community well-being, and economic prosperity. The program hosts a Monmouth County Hub where municipalities can gather to share their insights and get ideas from other participating teams. The Planning Division participates in these hub meetings in order to support local community efforts.



As of early 2026, 20 Monmouth County municipalities are either Bronze or Silver certified.

Source: [*Sustainable Jersey*](#)

NJPACT REAL Rules

In 2026, the NJPACT REAL rules have been adopted and are now in effect. In January 2020, Gov. Phil Murphy signed Executive Order No. 100, launching the New Jersey Protecting Against Climate Threats (NJ PACT) initiative. This statewide regulatory reform effort directed the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) to update and strengthen environmental regulations to both reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase the state's resilience to the impacts of climate change. On August 5, 2024, the NJDEP published its long-anticipated Resilient Environments and Landscapes (REAL) rule proposal, representing a key regulatory update under NJ PACT. The sweeping 1,044-page REAL proposal sought to update New Jersey's land use and environmental regulations to account for future climate change impacts like sea-level rise and flooding. Key features of the original REAL proposal included imposing an additional 5 feet of Climate Adjusted Flood Elevation (CAFE) above FEMA flood

levels in areas subject to tidal flooding, creating new Inundation Risk Zones (IRZ) in coastal areas projected to face tidal inundation by 2100, and changing stormwater, wetlands, and coastal development standards statewide.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (“NJDEP”) published a Notice of Substantial Change on July 21, 2025 to significantly revise its proposed Resilient Environments and Landscapes (“REAL”) rules that will impose new development restrictions to mitigate coastal flooding. This opened a second 60-day comment period before final adoption, which closed on September 19, 2025. Throughout this process, the NJ PACT REAL proposal included nuanced revisions and exceptions. This included some key additions and changes to the rule, such as (but not limited to):

- The revised proposal reduces the added coastal flood elevation requirement from 5 feet down to 4 feet above FEMA’s 100-year base flood level, reflecting updated sea-level rise forecasts.
- NJDEP removed a controversial 3% impervious cover limit for projects in new Inundation Risk Zones (“IRZ”), easing what many feared would be a de facto building ban in coastal flood-prone areas.
- Affordable housing developments are explicitly recognized as serving a “compelling public need,” making them eligible for hardship exceptions.
- A 180-day grandfathering period will allow projects with complete applications filed within six months of the REAL rules’ effective date to be reviewed under current regulations, rather than being immediately subject to the new rules on the effective date.

On January 20, 2026, NJDEP adopted the REAL rule amendments, incorporating the August 2024 proposal and the July 2025 Notice of Substantial Change. In doing so, it was anticipated that NJ municipalities would adopt local ordinances allowing higher buildings so homeowners could meet the new flood-elevation requirements. Due to local zoning regulations, some towns allowed extra building height, so houses elevated above flood levels would not lose living space. Many professionals and officials argue that the rules could require homes and infrastructure to be rebuilt about 5 feet higher than FEMA flood standards. Throughout New Jersey, county leaders expect these rules to create major costs for homeowners, towns, and infrastructure projects. The immediate reaction from those who have reviewed the NJ PACT Real Rules emphasized how the rules would significantly impact homeowners, municipalities, and local businesses. On a local level, ongoing skepticism from public officials claims that the impact of these rules could make rebuilding after storms unaffordable. From more restrictive house elevation requirements to additional coastal development permits, development in flood-prone areas. Stormwater infrastructure will be interpreted by my county and local officials, as well as the future of flood risk planning.



Community Development

The Office of Community Development in the Division of Planning works to ensure that all residents of Monmouth County have a safe, affordable place to live. The programs and plans created by this office help us understand the current need of vulnerable residents and what can be done to assist marginalized communities.

Community Partners

Fair Housing Board/Fair Housing Officer

The Fair Housing Board was established by the Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders as an advisory body on matters regarding fair housing policy and housing discrimination. The Monmouth County Fair Housing Officer handles discrimination complaints and directs them to programs or official offices that can address their complaint. Additionally, the Fair Housing Officer makes referrals to other agencies as appropriate to help eliminate discrimination in housing, working closely with local legal services to further fair housing throughout the County.

The Homeless Systems Collaborative

The Homeless Systems Collaborative has 54 affiliated organizations and is comprised of public, private, faith based, nonprofit, and government representatives. Composed of key community stakeholders, the Collaborative maintains a flexible board, capable of responding to the changing needs of the community. Formerly known as the Comprehensive Emergency Assistance System, the Monmouth County Homeless System Collaborative (HSC) was created for the management and oversight of homeless planning activities in Monmouth County. Monmouth County CD staff serve on the executive committee of this Collaborative.

Monmouth ACTS

Monmouth ACTS (Assisting Community Through Services) is a partnership between County government and local nonprofit organizations, the first of its kind in New Jersey. By listening to the voices of residents to understand their everyday needs and long-term goals, County staff and community leaders can respond to those needs and support people's hopes for a better future. See the Monmouth ACTS website for more information.



The Monmouth County CDBG Consortium

The Monmouth County CDBG Consortium includes 49 of the 53 county municipalities. Three municipalities (Asbury Park, Long Branch, and Middletown) are qualified (due to population and/or poverty thresholds) to receive grants directly from HUD. Howell meets the population threshold to receive CDBG funding directly from HUD. Monmouth County is classified as an urban county since the

combined population within consortium participating municipalities, amounts to greater than 200,000 residents. Furthermore, the county's CDBG consortium municipalities meet the regulatory requirements to be classified as an Exception Criteria County, meaning less than ¼ of the populated Census Block Groups within the county's CDBG consortium municipalities contain 51% or more low-to-moderate income persons. Due to this classification, all area benefit projects (excluding ADA accessibility improvements) must be in block groups whose low and moderate-income population is above the HUD established criteria of 40.13%.

Community Development Block Grant Committee

Comprised of representatives from participating Urban County municipalities, the committee reviews and ranks nonprofit and municipal CDBG application submissions.

5 Year Plan

The Five-year Consolidated Plan for the Monmouth County Consortium outlines the vision, goals, and intentions for allocating federal housing and community development block grants provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The 2025-2029 Consolidated Plan serves as a five-year strategic plan that assesses local priority needs in the areas of affordable housing and non-housing community development and establishes local goals to guide investment of CDBG, HOME, and ESG allocations.

The following goals and outcomes were identified for the five-year period of FY 2025 through FY 2029:

- Maintain and improve housing stock through rehabilitation and new construction for low/moderate-income households.
- Rehabilitation of existing low/moderate-income owner-occupied housing stock through the Housing Repair Program
- Increase rental housing affordability thorough continuation of the Tenant Based Assistance Program (TBRA), Rapid Rehousing, and homeless prevention programs
- Improve County low-moderate income neighborhoods through infrastructure and public facility improvements
- Assist local commercial areas by providing eligible small businesses grants towards facade improvements
- Address the housing and service needs of the at-risk and special needs population of the County

Annual Action Plan

The Annual Action Plan establishes the County's goals for a twelve (12) month period and outlines the specific initiatives the County will undertake to address identified needs and objectives by promoting the following: improving municipal infrastructure, the rehabilitation and construction of decent, safe, and

sanitary housing; creating suitable living environments; promoting fair housing; improving public services; expanding economic opportunities; and principally benefitting low- and moderate income persons. This Annual Action Plan includes various levels of strategic planning for the implementation of HUD entitlement grant funds during the program year. Identified within this Action Plan are specific agencies, projects, and activities requesting HUD entitlement funding to successfully carry out proposed programs and projects.

Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER)

This CAPER encompasses a summary of accomplishments, and an accounting of the expenditure of funds outlined within the corresponding Consolidated Plan. This report references specific accomplishments and activities completed during the associated fiscal year.

Community Development Block Grant

This formula grant administered by the U.S. Office of Housing and Urban Development provides annual funds to support infrastructure improvement, affordable housing, public facilities, public services, and economic development programs. Per HUD regulations at least 70% of the CDBG entitlement expenditures must benefit low/mod income persons. This may occur through directly assisting LMI households (e.g., public service activities) or area benefits

Home Repair Program

Funded through the Community Development Block Grant Provides financial assistance to income qualified homeowners to make needed improvements to owner occupied units. On average this program assists approximately 50 income-qualified homeowners with roofing, HVAC, septic, wells, electrical, plumbing, and accessibility improvements. The County has entered into a Shared Services Agreement with a local nonprofit to expand applicant assistance. This program has assisted 269 clients over the past five years.

Façade Improvement Program

A grant initiative designed to help small business owners in specific areas of Monmouth County upgrade their exterior storefronts. This program aims to revitalize local streetscapes by replacing deteriorated signs, awnings, and other facade elements

Municipal Infrastructure Improvement Assistance

Monmouth County contracts with municipalities to assist (HUD designated) low- and moderate-income concentrated neighborhoods with improvements to public infrastructure e.g., sewerage system improvements, ADA accessibility, sidewalk improvements, road repair, etc.

Municipal Public Facility Improvements

Monmouth County contracts with municipalities to assist (HUD designated) low-and moderate-income areas with improvements, construction, or acquisition of public facilities (e.g. historic preservation, parks/public spaces, health facilities, senior centers, etc. Accessibility improvements for public facilities are allowed in all areas of the Urban County.

Nonprofit Assistance

Funding is granted to nonprofit organizations that provide services to various Monmouth County populations: the homeless, domestic abuse victims, homeless youth, health services, addiction services, disabled residents, seniors, etc.

HOME Investment Partnerships Program

Exclusively towards the creation of affordable housing for low-income households. This program provides formula grants to fund the building, purchase, or rehabilitation of affordable housing for rent or homeownership opportunities as well as providing tenant-based rental assistance. Often serving as “gap financing” HOME grant awards are often paired alongside low-income tax credits. Participating jurisdictions are required to match 25% of HOME fund expenditures with non-federal sources. HOME applicants are required to identify the matching funds for each project submission. Sources of project match include donated land, reduced taxes in the form of PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes), required infrastructure improvements, low-income tax credits, volunteer labor, donated materials, etc.

Expanding Homeownership Opportunities

Increasing homeownership opportunities for income qualified low to moderate income households within Monmouth County through construction of units made available to income qualified homebuyers.

First Time Homebuyer Program

This program provides downpayment and/or closing cost assistance to income qualified homebuyers.



Affordable Housing Development in Long Branch

Rental Housing Affordability

Increase rental unit availability for income-qualified low-moderate income households. The county provides grants for the construction and/or rehabilitation of affordable rental units. Depending on the number of subsidized units, rental units must serve households with incomes at or below 80% of the area median income.

Tenant Based Rental Assistance

Supplements rental housing costs for low-income rental households for one year with an option to renew assistance for one additional year. The goal of rental assistance is to help households access stable housing that they can afford while they work toward their long-term housing security.

HOME American Rescue Act (HOME ARA)

Monmouth County received \$5,532,165 in HOME ARA funds. These funds have been awarded to affordable housing developers actively developing affordable housing units for households earning 0-30% median county income. These funds are allocated for projects that expand housing opportunities for the qualifying populations:

- Homeless
- At risk of homelessness
- Fleeing domestic violence
- Experiencing severe housing instability

Currently grant funds have been allocated to 10 projects which will provide at least 40 additional units for qualified populations.

Emergency Solutions Grant

This grant was designed to assist individuals and families regain stability in permanent housing after experiencing a housing crisis or homelessness. Monmouth County awards this grant allocation to nonprofits who provide the following services:

- Street outreach engaging unsheltered homeless people, providing essential services.
- Emergency Shelter: Shelter operation services including essential services
- Rapid Rehousing: Rental assistance, security deposits and services to move homeless individuals into permanent housing.
- Homeless Prevention housing relocation and/or stabilization through rental assistance.

Planning at the Edge

Although the County can only make plans for areas inside its borders, what happens outside of the jurisdiction can still have a significant impact on Monmouth County. Understanding the land use patterns, goals, and plans of adjacent counties can aid us in understanding what future impacts might be, and how to work across county lines to ensure equitable outcomes for all.

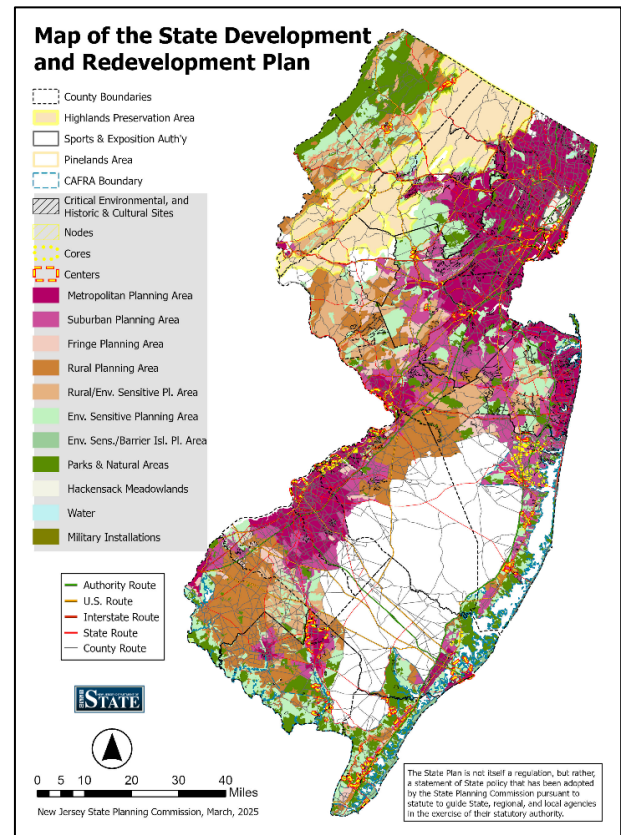
NJ State Plan

In March of 2024, the Monmouth County Board of County Commissioners adopted a resolution officially accepting the role of “negotiating entity” for Cross Acceptance in Monmouth County. As the negotiating entity, the County agreed to work in partnership with all 53 municipalities in seeking consensus on the State Plan polices, and to negotiate with the Office of Planning Advocacy (OPA) on these matters.

Working closely with the Division of Planning, the County’s GIS team created a Hub Site that would serve as an interactive project website and house all of the information necessary for those who opted to participate in the process. This includes relevant resolutions, important dates and timelines, breakdowns of important concepts, and the preliminary plan itself.

As per the Cross Acceptance rules, Monmouth County conducted two technical assistance workshops and utilized that time to instruct municipal contacts on their role in the process, as well as how to effectively use the new Hub Site. The planning team knew that individuals may still have questions on how to use the website, so all municipalities were invited to request an additional one-on-one meeting where the team would take an individualized approach to laying out the process. Two municipalities had in-depth meetings with the planning team focused on how to utilize the site for their particular needs.

The continuous outreach as well as the innovative design of the Hub Site led to an extremely effective Cross Acceptance process in Monmouth County. 21 municipalities submitted Cross Acceptance Response Template (CART) I, and 9 submitted CART II. The team was also able to collect over 40 map change recommendations left directly on one map, which was synthesized and delivered to the OPA. The documents, along with the CARTs drafted by County Planning staff are available to view on the [Cross Acceptance Hub Site](#).



Map 10: State Plan Map

Edge Issues

Monmouth County works closely with all levels of government within the State in order to ensure cohesive land use patterns and maintenance of regional features. Although there is effort that goes into halting conflict before it begins, due to the limited jurisdictional power of any government, opposing views and subsequent decision making can lead to issues. This section of the report will discuss existing and potential conflicting land uses identified along Monmouth County's borders. In order to illustrate these land use conflicts, the text will refer to the [New Jersey State Plan Map](#). The Map has 5 main composite "Planning Areas" that describe on the ground conditions, as well as potential build out. The Planning Areas are defined as:

- Planning Area 1 (PA-1): Metro. PA-1 is comprised of high-density urban areas with plans for future growth
- Planning Area 2 (PA-2): Suburban. PA-2 is comprised of less dense cores and some plans for future growth.
- Planning Area 3 (PA-3): Fringe. PA-3 is comprised mostly of older, less dense cores with surrounding agriculture and other protected natural resources.
- Planning Area 4/4B (PA-4/4B): PA-4 is comprised of large contiguous open space and farmland. If the area is environmentally sensitive, it is denoted as PA-4B.
- Planning Area 5/5B (PA-5/5B): PA-5 is comprised of very confined town centers surrounded by natural resources.

These Planning Areas help to define areas of current and future conflict, as comparing local zoning can be confusing and misleading.

One of these land use conflict areas appears along the Monmouth County/Ocean County border, specifically at the border of Freehold Township and Howell with Jackson and Lakewood.

The border of Freehold Township and Jackson Township is cause for concern due to the environmentally sensitive nature of the lands at the border. As denoted on the NJ State Plan Map Viewer, the southern border of Freehold Township is entirely designated as Environmentally Sensitive and Park lands. This is in stark contrast with Jackson, whose northern border is primarily denoted as Suburban, implying a denser development pattern. These two conflicting land use patterns are also seen in the border between Howell and Lakewood, where Environmentally Sensitive lands abut Suburban land uses. If these development patterns persist, and these Ocean County municipalities continue to become increasingly dense, there is potential for high levels of conflict. Although the abutting lands within Monmouth County are denoted as Environmentally Sensitive and tend to be treated as such, as neighborhoods and suburban pockets expand, there will be demand for development within these areas. In the past, environmentally sensitive lands were much more difficult to develop, but that is no longer the case. Non-traditional wastewater treatment and building techniques make most development possible, even if it is damaging to the

environment. Although Monmouth County does not have jurisdiction in these denser areas, it is imperative to pay close attention to development at the borders to evaluate potential, or existing impacts.

Another area of conflicts concerning land use is in and around Upper Freehold and Allentown at the border of Robbinsville in Mercer County. Upper Freehold and Allentown both maintain rural and small town characteristics and are denoted as such on the NJ State Plan Map Viewer. The land is entirely Planning Areas 4 (Rural) and 4B (Rural Environmentally Sensitive). Directly adjacent in Robbinsville, the land is identified as Planning Area 1 (Metro) and has a high concentration of warehouses. These warehouses are located in an area directly adjacent to Interstate 195 and the New Jersey Turnpike, which both carry heavy truck traffic. But, their impact on the neighboring Rural areas in Monmouth County is cause for concern. Recently, in order to combat the encroachment of industry on fringe land area, the Board of County Commissioners made the decision to purchase a farm in Upper Freehold that was previously cited for a large warehouse. The purchase is in the process of being finalized as of May 2026.



“Stein Property” in Upper Freehold purchased by Monmouth County for preservation (NearMap Imagery, 2026)

Summary of Emerging Issues and Trends

The purpose of this report is to outline and understand the current conditions of the County as they compare to years past or a larger geography. The next step in the process will be to utilize what we learned throughout the process of creating this document and extrapolate trends to better plan for the future of the County. Below is a list of emerging issues identified through the existing conditions data collection process that will be explored further in the upcoming trend analysis, and eventually the Master Plan.

Housing

- Housing has become increasingly expensive, placing homeownership out of reach for many younger buyers and retirees hoping to age in place. Escalating housing prices are disproportionately affecting younger generations and retirees, effectively excluding many households outside the highest income brackets. Monmouth County now ranks second in the state for highest median single family home price, only behind Bergen County in 2026. Although the County's population skews higher income, those with less resources have less options. Statewide affordable housing and fair share efforts attempt to ameliorate this issue, but the rate of change is not fast enough to keep up with the demand for housing.
- Monmouth County, like a majority of the nation, is facing a housing crisis exasperated by the missing middle. The "missing middle" refers to diverse housing options that have a large range of affordability, rather than choosing between large, single-family homes, and high-density apartments. Communities that offer diverse housing options are more affordable, sustainable, and inclusive.

Economic Profile

- Although Education and Health Services continues to be the largest industry in the County, we are expecting to see a shift in employment and GDP as Netflix moves in to Fort Monmouth. This shift will have a multiplier effect that also brings a rise in employment in complementary sectors. How the County adapts to this change will determine the long-term success of the Arts and Entertainment industry.

Infrastructure

- Many of the newly built or proposed affordable housing developments are located outside of the designated sewer service area and in environmentally sensitive areas. While it is technically possible to engineer large-scale developments through wastewater infrastructure expansion or on-site treatment, doing so can lead to long-term ecological damage and costly maintenance of infrastructure systems which is counter to achieving long-term affordable housing goals. Allowing approval without evaluating environmental capacity often leads to conflicts at both the municipal and County levels.
- Warehouses bring in a large influx of workers and infrastructure may need to be improved for transportation networks, or public services. Similarly, data centers bring their own demands on electrical infrastructure and water supply which have not yet been closely studied or quantified.

Transportation

- Traffic safety is the highest priority for the County's transportation professionals. As the County's population grows and more people occupy the roads, ensuring that an increase in volume does not equal an increase in crashes will be an ongoing task for both County Planning and Engineering.

Agriculture

- According to the USDA Census of Agriculture, 40% of farmers in Monmouth County are above the age of 65, while only 5% of farmers are under the age of 35. This reflects a dwindling interest in farming that will directly impact the number of farms in the County. Aiding aging farm owners in succession planning will be crucial to the sustainability of the industry.
- A growing number of Right to Farm cases have been seen by the Agriculture Development Board in the past ten years. Although the County does not have a direct hand in zoning matters, working with farmers and municipalities to resolve conflict will be increasingly important as the number of cases surge.
- The growing popularity of Agri-Tourism has created both conflict and confusion in the Agriculture industry. Farmers who may want to capitalize on the rising interest in farm activities may be unaware of the permitted uses on their property or can become overwhelmed with the amount of vehicle traffic that events can bring.

Open Space and Recreation

- Increased funding through the County's Open Space Tax will provide new opportunities to preserve open space and expand recreation. Carefully scoping new expansion opportunities will benefit both the County's residents and the environment.

Environment

- Although high impact and conflict development has always been a concern of planners, as build-out progresses and warehouses and data centers become increasingly popular, the effect is becoming increasingly problematic. The County's air, water, and land quality will continue to deteriorate if mitigation strategies are not planned and implemented.

Community Development

- Due to fiscal changes at the federal level, many Community Development programs are experiencing both dwindling resources and lapsing in funding. Finding creative ways to sustain these programs will be an ongoing issue.
- High rents, low vacancy rates, continued growth in the high-valued owner-occupied market. Rising real estate prices and increasing interest rates have contributed to a continued decline in the number of eligible applicants for the County's First-Time Homebuyer Program. In response, Community Development staff continues outreach efforts to local mortgage lenders and nonprofit partners to raise awareness and improve participation.

- Housing Choice Vouchers like Section 8 have long waitlists and inflexible operating policies. Being familiar with the process in order to guide the public is crucial to ensuring a wide range of individuals can benefit from these programs.

Planning at the Edge

- The New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan adopted in 2025 aligns closely with many values that the County holds but does not address several issues that require broad-picture guidance. The County must continue an open conversation with the State Office of Planning Advocacy in order to ensure the County has the resources it needs to succeed.
- Several municipalities bordering the County have conflicting land use patterns. Imposing mitigation factors within the county while considering the impacts of uses outside of the jurisdiction is critical to both sustainable growth and preservation.



Monmouth County **EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT** Appendix



Monmouth County Division of Planning

Appendix I: Transition Report

Division of Planning Staff discussed each of the recommendations made in the 2016 Master Plan and discussed their validity and relevance moving forward. These goals and the subsequent discussion will help inform the new goals of the upcoming Master Plan.

2016 Recommendation	Analysis
Natural Resources	
3.1: Maintain and update inventories of the county's natural features and systems and promote the protection of natural resources in conjunction with the Monmouth County Park System (MCPS).	Although the countywide Natural Features study was not updated, MCDP continued efforts to identify the county's natural features and systems. Looking at natural resources that are strictly within the jurisdiction of Monmouth County while disregarding features outside county lines, can be counterproductive and potentially harmful in the long term. As it stands, Recommendation 3.1 should not be included in the new county comprehensive plan. In its stead, MCDP should commit to supporting organizations that perform comprehensive natural features studies. MCDP should also commit to analyzing the county's natural features at a watershed level, ensuring interjurisdictional cooperation and effective conservation.
3.2: Participate in initiatives that identify, target, and protect important resources, critical habitats, species of concern, and Areas of Significant Environmental Quality (ASEQ).	The current list of ASEQ is outdated. There has been development on several areas listed and mapped, rendering them unfit for this identification. It is not clear if any significant action taken to identify, target, and protect special areas of concern outside of Farmland Preservation and Open Space efforts by the Monmouth County Park System. . Recommendation 3.2, as well as the process to identify ASEQ should be reevaluated and its purpose, intent, and status should be made clear. While preserving areas of unique quality is an important planning goal, it may now prove to be outside Planning's sphere of influence.
3.3: Encourage and support new and continuing partnerships for resource protection.	The MCDP has continued to create new partnerships with outside organizations over the past several years, including NJ Coastal Resource Collaboration, New Jersey Coastal Coalition, Sustainable Jersey, and the Monmouth Conservation Foundation. These partnerships are vitally important for the county as they are great information resources and create an avenue for the county to be involved in meaningful environmental stewardship. This goal should be updated and kept for the new County Plan. MCDP does not have the capacity to partner with every organization seeking a partnership, so the new recommendation should mention a generally accepted list of partners, as well as a strict criterion for those seeking the county's cooperation. This allows for MCDP

	to focus efforts on long standing relationships and consider capacity when vetting new organizations.
3.4: Continue to educate the public on the county's valuable natural resources, environmental impact assessment procedures, and other important environmental issues.	Educating the public on important environmental issues is a continuous and relevant goal. In order to put forward this recommendation in good faith, it must be updated to include relevant communication streams like social media and user-friendly websites rather than media of the past like brochures and print media. MCPD is also the host agency for AmeriCorp's Watershed Management Area 12 Ambassador.
3.5: Assist municipalities with floodplain management and planning initiatives that improve community resiliency and/or advance their standing in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS) program.	MCDP's involvement in the CRS program is continuous and vital. In order to cement its vitality within the county, the recommendation must be updated and source the authority given to the county in to participate in the program alongside the municipalities.
Open Space	
4.1: Assist the Monmouth County Park System (MCPS) in its preparation of updates to the Monmouth County Open Space Plan (2006) and other similar or related studies, and incorporate the Monmouth County Open Space Plan by reference as a component of the Monmouth County Master Plan.	The Monmouth County Open Space Plan was updated in 2019. Recommendation 4.1 should be updated to reflect the goals of the new Open Space Plan and included in the new County Plan, as it is still a relevant aspect of the work done by the MCDP.
4.2: Work with all levels of government and nonprofit organizations to promote the preservation of sensitive environmental systems and significant natural features through acquisition, deed restrictions, conservation easements, redevelopment projects, zoning, and other innovative land use techniques.	Recommendation 4.2 is continuous and relevant and therefore should be included in the new County Plan. Intergovernmental cooperation is vital to successful open space acquisition, policy, and maintenance.
4.3: Provide technical and professional assistance to our municipal partners in support of their local open space acquisition efforts	Recommendation 4.3 is continuous and relevant and therefore should be included in the new County Plan. Providing technical and professional assistance to municipal partners is crucial to ensure the acquisition and maintenance of open space within the county, as

and recreational facility improvements.	many municipalities may not have the time or resources to complete the necessary processes. In these cases, MCDP can step in to ensure open space is acquired and preserved.
<i>Farmland Preservation</i>	Potentially: <i>Farmland Stewardship</i>
5.1: Maintain and update, as needed, the Monmouth County Farmland Preservation Plan (2008) as a component of the Monmouth County Master Plan.	The Monmouth County Farmland Preservation Plan was updated in 2022. This recommendation should be updated to reflect the goals of the new Farmland Preservation Plan and included in the new County Plan, as it is still a significant aspect of the work done by the Environmental Section of the MCDP.
5.2: Manage and coordinate the purchase of agricultural easements, as guided by the Monmouth County Farmland Preservation Plan (2008).	Recommendation 5.2 should be updated to reflect the goals of the new MC Farmland Preservation Plan (2022). This consists of including themes of Farmland Stewardship, farming best practices, Right to Farm, and on-site events. The update to the plan is more technical than the 2008 version, and the update to the county plan should reflect that.
5.3: Continue to provide professional and technical assistance to the Monmouth County Agriculture Development Board (MCADB), municipal partners, and other agricultural community stakeholders.	The Environmental Sustainability section continues to provide professional and technical assistance as it is related to farmland interests. Recommendation 5.3 should be updated to reflect the current goals of ESP's work, while still positing that MCPD is a resource to the MCADB, as well as those who are in need of support.
5.4: Continue annual monitoring of preserved farms to ensure deed compliance and respond to post-closing requests.	Preserved farm monitoring is a mandated function of the MCDP, making this recommendation continuous and relevant.
5.5: Continue to hear right-to-farm complaints, review requests for Site-Specific Agricultural Management Practice (SSAMP) recommendations, and provide program resources to support the Right to Farm Act.	Recommendation 5.5 is continuous and relevant but must be updated to include a few caveats.
5.6: Proceed with planning efforts to understand, evaluate, and support our agricultural industry in a regional context to improve long-term agricultural sustainability.	While long-term agricultural sustainability continues to be a core goal of the MCDP, Recommendation 5.6 must be more reflective of the county's role in farmland stewardship. In the ongoing comprehensive planning process, this role must be analyzed and redefined in

	order to streamline and strengthen the work of the Environmental Sustainability section.
Arts, Historic, & Cultural Resources	
6.1: Work with municipal, transit, and state agency partners to develop a county-based scenic byway system that provides interconnectivity of our arts, cultural, and historic assets through the use of a multi-modal transportation network.	After the 2016 Master Plan was published, MCDP developed a series of virtual cultural and heritage tours. There are 8 guided byway tours available for viewing through an ArcGIS hub site where the routes, as well as description and pictures can be found. Recommendation 6.1 was accomplished and therefore must evolve in order to stay relevant to the work of the MCDP. The ongoing maintenance and updating of the website must be discussed, as well as the promotion of the byways going forward.
6.2: Develop a geographic information system (GIS)-based, online mapping resource for the Monmouth County Park System's (MCPS) existing Monmouth County Historic Sites Inventory (HSI).	Recommendation 6.2 is no longer relevant to the MCDP's scope of work, as the Park Department has taken over this job.
6.3: Continue to provide technical and professional support as a member of the MoCo (Monmouth County) Partnership and expand the concept of the MoCo Arts Corridor to areas of western Monmouth County.	MCDP intends to foster the relationship with the nonprofit and provide technical and professional support as needed. As for the Arts Corridor, MCDP will be taking a step back to allow Monmouth Arts to take the initiative and utilize their arts expertise to decide where their efforts are needed. Moving forward, Recommendation 6.3 should be updated to reflect the division's partnership with Monmouth Arts, but also to make clear our role within the alliance.
6.4: Incorporate the Monmouth Arts' cultural arts plan Imagine, Envision, Create (2012) as a component of the Monmouth County Master Plan.	The adoption process of another organization's plan is a long and arduous one and has proved to have very minimal pay off. As an alternative, MCDP can adopt the <i>Imagine, Envision, Create</i> (2012) plan's goals through references where appropriate in the new plan. This will smooth out the approval process and allow MCDP to move forward on supporting and implementing applicable shared goals.
6.5: Respond to requests from our municipal partners for professional and technical assistance in creating cultural asset inventories and in the	This recommendation came about as a way to help municipalities fulfill Sustainable Jersey's Arts and Culture Actions requirement to be a part of the SJ certification program. MCDP intends to continue to assist municipalities looking to join the SJ certification

development of cultural and creative placemaking plans.	program, so this recommendation must be updated to reflect the new requirements SJ puts forward in order to be effective.
<i>Utilities</i>	Outside MCDP scope of work, all recommendations to be rehomed.
7.1: Plan for areawide water quality management, including implementation of the Wastewater Management Plan (WMP) for Monmouth County as part of the Monmouth County Water Quality Management (WQM) Plan, to serve the needs of residents and businesses in a way that supports economic development, particularly in Priority Growth Investment Areas (PGIAs), and conserves environmental resources that protect water quality and quantity.	Recommendation 7.1 is a continuous and relevant goal but must be reworked and reflect its position as a goal within the Environmental Sustainability section, rather than a Utilities goal.
7.2: Encourage adoption of municipal and regional stormwater management plans that support sound stormwater management initiatives and green Best Management Practices (BMPs).	Like Recommendation 7.1, 7.2 is continuous and relevant but must be reworked to reflect its place within Environmental Sustainability.
7.3: Review the New Jersey Statewide Water Supply Plan (1996) for accuracy, monitor water supply issues, and provide recommendations to address discrepancies.	Recommendation 7.3 is outside of MCDP's scope of work and is therefore no longer relevant to include in a comprehensive plan.
7.4: Work with other county departments and agencies to create and implement a comprehensive energy plan that promotes a culture of responsible energy use that optimizes efficiency, hardens infrastructure, and reduces both energy use and costs.	Recommendation 7.4 is currently outside of MCDP's scope of work and is therefore no longer relevant to include in a comprehensive plan, unless reworked to reflect the goals of Environmental Sustainability.
<i>Transportation & Mobility</i>	
8.1: Maintain and update, as needed, The Monmouth County Scenic Roadway Plan (2001) and the Monmouth County Road Plan (2012)	There has been no significant action undertaken on either of these projects. The Monmouth County Scenic Roadway Plan (2001) is not heavily referenced by the Development Review

as adopted by reference as components of the Transportation & Mobility Element of the Monmouth County Master Plan.	section, whose purview includes the development taking place on parcels abutting county routes. If this goal is retained in the next general plan, the Scenic Roadway Plan would need to be updated the application of its objectives enforced. The Monmouth County Road Plan (2012) is a document heavily referenced and utilized by MC Engineering. As MCDP continues to study roadway safety, it may become apparent that updates and amendments must be made to improve safe mobility within the county. This includes discussing sidewalk requirements, road diets, and Right-of-Way improvements. There are many different elements that may affect if a new road plan is drafted, including the priorities of the next Master Plan. A discussion of priorities and sphere of influence will have to be had before it is decided whether Recommendation 8.1 will be updated and reinstated, or if it will be left unincorporated.
8.2: Continue to develop and implement regional corridor studies through New Jersey Transportation Planning Authority's (NJTPA) Sub-Regional Studies Program (SSP) and work with other county departments and agencies in identifying viable SSP and pilot projects with NJ TRANSIT and NJTPA that further the Goals, Principles, and Objectives (GPOs) of the Monmouth County Master Plan, the Monmouth County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) (2014), and the county's capital improvement needs.	Recommendation 8.2 narrows the scope of what MCDP is able to study in regard to transportation. Referencing NJTPA directly within the recommendation ties MCDP to the goals and objectives NJTPA sets, rather than having the autonomy to choose what is most imperative. This goal should be updated to broaden planning's scope. If the goal is more general about what kind of studies should take place, and what partnerships MCDP is seeking, there is a more independent topic selection process.
8.3: Finalize, disseminate, and maintain the Monmouth County Transit Map and create a Monmouth County Multi-Modal Transportation Guide.	Due to the many advancements in technology and the power to way find from a smartphone, Recommendation 8.3 is no longer relevant to the work of MCDP. Recently, a comprehensive transit guide was developed and will be published by the Monmouth County TMA (EZ Ride).
8.4: Work on implementing recommendations found in the Monmouth County Bus Rapid Transit Opportunities Study (2015) to improve bus service along critical corridors in Monmouth County, and eventually	After completing the study and working on its implementation, it was decided that the development of a complete Bus Rapid Transit Approach is outside of MCDP's sphere of influence.

expand upon these efforts toward the development of a complete Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) approach.	
8.5: Proceed with efforts to develop a Travel Demand Model (TDM) to assist the county and the New Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) in coordinating regional and subregional transportation planning studies and projects.	The Travel Demand Model (TDM) for Monmouth County was completed and is disseminated to consultants when applicable data is needed.
8.6: Review and amend the Monmouth County Transportation Council's (MCTC) purpose and mission to align its programming with the Goals, Principles, and Objectives (GPOs) of the Monmouth County Master Plan.	The future of Recommendation 8.6 will be determined by the status of the MCTC going forward.
8.7: Provide an online "one stop transportation resource shop" for all transit information in the county including a geographic information system (GIS)-based, online mapping resource for the existing Monmouth County Bicycle Map, transit infrastructure and routes, and recreational resources.	Recommendation 8.7 should be reworked in order to transition from a one stop transportation resource shop to a more exploratory webpage. As referenced in Recommendation 8.3, wayfinding has become much simpler thanks to smart phones, eliminating the need for a public facing transportation hub site. Rather, time should be dedicated to a page where transportation maps of the county can be found and explored, either for data or leisure. This site could also house interesting maps of Monmouth Country, provoking public interest and response.
8.8: Coordinate planning activities with the Monmouth County Department of Public Works and Engineering to help identify and prioritize transportation-related projects and assist with developing and implementing the county's capital improvement program.	Recommendation 8.8 is continuous and relevant to the work MCDP does.
<i>Agricultural & Economic Development</i>	
9.1: Continue to support the viability of the local agricultural industry through the development and implementation of an Agricultural Sustainability Plan (ASP) for Monmouth County.	This recommendation is out of place. Grouping agricultural development and economic development does a disservice to both elements, which should be grouped with more aligning recommendations. With this being said, creating and implementing an Agricultural Sustainability Plan is not a required function

	of the MCDP and is therefore no longer relevant. Recommendation 9.1 should not be included in the new county plan.
9.2: Incorporate the Monmouth County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) (2014) as a component of the Agricultural & Economic Development Element of the Monmouth County Master Plan; recognizing the CEDS as the county's economic development plan.	At the time of the creation of the 2016 plan, the MC Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) was a relevant reflection of the goals and priorities of the county. Also, the Economic Development Department of MC was housed in the Planning and Community Services Department, but has since been removed. In 2025, there is no longer a relevant or locally focused CEDS, which renders Recommendation 9.2 irrelevant.
9.3: Provide professional and technical support for the efforts performed by the Monmouth County Division of Economic Development that promote the long-term economic and agricultural viability of the county such as assisting with the implementation of the Monmouth County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) (2014) and Grow Monmouth programs.	Recommendation 9.3 is redundant of Recommendation 9.2 and is therefore irrelevant.
9.4: Develop model ordinances for municipalities that will help expand and develop agricultural businesses while decreasing the number of Right to Farm cases brought before the Monmouth County Agriculture Development Board (MCADB).	As mentioned in the assessment of Recommendation 5.5, in years past, the MCADB has heard Right-to-Farm complaints before any municipal or legal action had taken place. In order to improve the flow, as well as the outcomes of these cases, it needs to be made clear that all municipal action must be exhausted before the county is involved. Developing model ordinances would blur the lines between municipal and county actions and should therefore be avoided. Therefore, Recommendation 9.4 is no longer relevant.
9.5: Through coordination between the Monmouth County Agriculture Development Board (MCADB) and the Development Review Section of the Division of Planning, draft and implement a required statement of acknowledgement for site plans and subdivision plats proposed in an Agricultural Development Area (ADA) to help raise awareness of potential neighboring agricultural activities and	This recommendation is still continuous and relevant, but the new development regulations, authored in 2024, includes a provision that if Agricultural Development Areas appear on site or subdivision plats, they must be identified. Depending on the status of implementation of the new regulations, Recommendation 9.5 may no longer need to be included in the master plan because it may have been accomplished.

potentially reduce right-to-farm complaints.	
Community Development & Housing	
10.1: Form a Consolidated Plan Implementation Committee (CPIC) to help guide the Office of Community Development (CD) and HOME Consortium's Five-Year Strategy Submission for Housing and Community Development Programs (Five-Year Consolidated Plan) and Annual Action Plan: One Year Use of Funds (Annual Action Plan) in a manner consistent with achieving the Goals, Principles, and Objectives (GPOs) of the Monmouth County Master Plan.	Recommendation 10.1 was not accomplished due to the undue difficulty of organizing and executing a Consolidated Plan Implementation Committee, therefore no longer has to exist in the county's master plan. A CPIC is better housed in the CD Five Year Action Plan.
10.2: Incorporate the Goals, Principles, and Objectives (GPOs) of the Monmouth County Master Plan into the Office of Community Development's (CD) Five-Year Strategy Submission for Housing and Community Development Programs (Five-Year Consolidated Plan) to better align community development projects and programs with intended outcomes through the appropriation of funds from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME), and Emergency Solutions Grants Program (ESG).	Recommendation 10.2 is continuous and relevant to the work that MCDP and Community Development does as it outlines how both divisions interact.
10.3: Evaluate and recommend changes to the Office of Community Development's (CD) existing standing committees' structure to align current community development programming with the overall Division of Planning program.	Recommendation 10.2 is continuous and relevant as it outlines MCDP's role within Community Development.
10.4: Work with other county departments and agencies in	Recommendation 10.4 is continuous and relevant to the work both MCDP and Community Development does.

identifying potential county projects eligible for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding.	
10.5: Initiate a new housing study for Monmouth County that examines existing market conditions and identifies recent housing development trends, including new construction and redevelopment of existing housing stock, that have evolved in response to new cultural and economic realities, housing affordability concerns, and shifting household demographics.	Examining market conditions is no longer a relevant aspect of MCPD's scope of influence. The state has an affordable housing navigator (NJDCA) and technology platforms provide relevant information on programs.
<i>Healthy Communities</i>	
11.1: Work with local communities and stakeholders to promote agricultural sustainability through healthy food choice initiatives such as access to affordable, healthy foods and the creation of community gardens, urban agriculture programs, mobile food stands/food truck courts, and farmers markets.	The link between agricultural sustainability is not strong enough for this goal to be successful. The promotion of agriculture sustainability can be outlined in different elements of a new master plan, while food choice initiatives can still be prioritized. Recommendation 11.1 should be reworked to commit MCDP to supporting organizations that do healthy food programming, like the Rutgers Department of Family & Community Health Sciences, which "promotes health and wellness through education, research and collaboration with outreach in food, nutrition, and healthy lifestyles".
11.2: Continue to protect human health by assisting with the identification and removal of environmental hazards from the community and raising awareness about public health issues.	Recommendation 11.2 should be updated to remove the goal of assisting with the identification and removal of environmental hazards from the community as it is no longer in MCDP's scope of work.
11.3: Provide planning support and services to the Monmouth County Sheriff's Office and the Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office for public safety, law enforcement, crime prevention, and emergency response.	While it is imperative for the many departments of the Monmouth County government to share knowledge, this recommendation is no longer relevant enough to warrant directives in the Master Plan. At the inception of Recommendation 11.3, the GIS Division was a part of Planning and provided mapping tools and assistance to both the Sheriff's and Prosecutor's Office. GIS is now its own independent division, and therefore other departments do not have to interact with Planning in order to obtain mapping services. As it stands, MCDP may still share information with other departments, but

	it does not have to be a stated directive, rendering this recommendation irrelevant.
11.4: Incorporate the Monmouth County Solid Waste Management Plan (2009) as a component of the Monmouth County Master Plan's Healthy Communities Element.	Recommendation 11.4 is no longer relevant as Solid Waste is no longer part of MCDP.
11.5: Incorporate by reference the Monmouth County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) (2012) as a component of the Healthy Communities Element and include studies, reports, and findings from the Monmouth County Health Department (MCHD) and other local health departments as consultative and supportive documents to the Master Plan.	Understanding the actionable Planning items within the CHIP allows for interdepartmental cooperation and efficiency. MCDP will continue to support the undertakings of the health department. Monmouth County's free wellness trip program was initiated within the MCDP before it was moved under the jurisdiction of the health department, which showcases how closely related the goals and actions of both departments can be. This recommendation should be kept, but updated to emphasize support of the health department, rather than the intertwining of plans.
<i>Community Resiliency</i>	Potentially: <i>Community Resilience</i>
12.1: Incorporate the approved Multi-Jurisdictional Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) for Monmouth County (2015) update into the Monmouth County Master Plan by reference; recognizing that the HMP is the broadest approach to implementing community resiliency activities at both the local and county level.	The Monmouth County Hazard Mitigation Plan most recently updated and approved in 2026. As in 2021 there are actions in the HMP that can be carried out by MCDP, including the promotion of hazard resilient development and the enhancement of the Community Rating System. As the effects of climate change continually strengthen the size and power of natural disasters, understanding and acting on proven natural and man-made disaster mitigation practices becomes increasingly imperative. With this in mind, Recommendation 12.1 should be updated to reflect the goals of the most up to date hazard mitigation planning and community resilience practices.
12.2: In partnership with the Monmouth County Office of Emergency Management (OEM), continue to encourage and advance municipal participation in the National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP) Community Ratings System (CRS) program.	Assisting municipalities applying for and maintaining their Community Rating System (CRS) rating is an important aspect of the work of the Environmental Sustainability section of MCDP. Recommendation 12.2 is continuous and relevant and will remain intact as long as the National Flood Insurance Program is funded and functional.
12.3: Partner with jurisdictions outside of the county to expand	Monmouth County has and will continue to expand participation in the Monmouth County Community

participation in the Monmouth County Community Rating System (CRS) Users Group, eventually resulting in a more influential regional forum.	Rating System (CRS) Users Group. MCDP has hosted and participated in statewide meetings involving other NJ counties regarding CRS. Recommendation 12.3 will remain continuous and relevant as long as the National Flood Insurance Program is funded and functional.
12.4: Support the Monmouth County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) in providing a network of shared emergency response services across the county.	Recommendation 12.4 is no longer relevant to the scope of work of the MCDP as all relevant information is available online or through the Division of GIS.
12.5: Maintain a collection of Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) and historic flood information for use in countywide resiliency and municipal CRS program advancement.	Recommendation 12.5 was achieved; a collection of Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) and historic flood information is available online for public and intergovernmental viewing.
Sustainable Places	
13.1: Review proposed environmental and sustainability related legislation and regulations to determine their potential impacts to Monmouth County and our municipalities, and prepare appropriate responses to promulgating authorities.	Recommendation 13.1 is continuous and relevant to the work of the MCDP as reviewing proposed environmental and sustainability related legislation and regulations is done regularly by staff.
13.2: Develop internal sustainability indicators, such as those used by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and other federal and state agencies, to be used as a guideline in the evaluation of local and county Master Plan sustainability goals and policies.	Developing sustainability indicators is helpful if there is a constant stream of accessible data that can be gauged in order to determine the status of each indicator. Within Planning, it would be difficult to assign the whole of indicators to one section, as each section works with different streams of data. If Recommendation 13.2 is to be kept, it must be updated to reflect that each section will be responsible for developing indicators and staying up to date on relevant data.
13.3: With assistance from the Monmouth County Environmental Council (MCEC), and through the Monmouth County Green Team Hub, offer support to our municipalities in their efforts to improve local sustainability.	Recommendation 13.3 is continuous and relevant to the scope of work of the MCDP.
13.4: Educate local decision makers and the public about the importance	Recommendation 13.4 is continuous and relevant to the scope of work of the MCDP.

of issues related to maintaining a sustainable county with educational programs, roundtable events, municipal presentations, and the development of informative documents.	
13.5: Build interdepartmental knowledge about the potential benefits and applications of green approaches, incorporating these actions into county plans, programs, and projects when it is financially feasible to do so.	As the culture surrounding sustainability changes, it has become woven into the practices of many different Monmouth County departments. Recommendation 13.5 should be amended to reflect MCDP's willingness to support other departments efforts in sustainability, as well as continuing to share knowledge.
13.6: Consult with municipalities to create strategy toolkits tailored to their community's specific needs utilizing form-based codes, living streets principles, green design, case studies, policy recommendations, and sample ordinances that result in safer and healthier places to live, work, play, and stay.	Recommendation 13.6 is continuous and relevant to the work of the MCPD. Planning should continue to evaluate the relevancy of support documents and studies, as these are the most influential and helpful.
<i>Planning Services, Outreach, & Coordination</i>	
14.1: Develop an online geographic information system (GIS) platform that allows for the creation of interactive web-based maps and retrieve publicly available data accessed through a user-friendly GIS interface.	Recommendation 14.1 is no longer relevant to the scope of work of the MCDP as GIS staff is no longer integrated with Planning staff.
14.2: Act as a clearinghouse for demographic, school enrollment, housing, and economic data that assists county departments and other government agencies in the development of their own facility and service plans.	Recommendation 14.2 is continuous and relevant but must be updated to reflect the importance of publishing the County At-A-Glance, as well as the County Profile as means for information sharing.
14.3: Be an "insight engine" that provides decision makers and the public with meaningful knowledge and understanding about the complex	Recommendation 14.3 is continuous and relevant to the scope of work of the MCDP.

planning issues facing Monmouth County and the resources available to address them.	
14.4: Expand the use of innovative and emerging technologies (e.g. social media, crowdsourcing, and web-based collaboration tools) to improve public outreach efforts and communication, resulting in increased accessibility and stronger community engagement in our planning process.	Recommendation 14.4 is continuous and relevant to the scope of work of the MCDP but should be updated to broaden the scope of emerging technologies. This will allow MCDP to discover and explore new useful planning tools.
14.5: Continue to make Monmouth County planning reports, studies, information, and Master Plan materials easily accessible online, in addition to updating reports in a timely manner as new data becomes available.	Recommendation 14.5 is continuous and more relevant than when it was created. Most, if not all, of Planning's documents have been made publicly available. This recommendation should be updated to reflect that even though a document may be available to view, that is not enough. The public needs to be acutely aware of what information is housed in Planning, and where exactly to find it. It is also the responsibility of the MCDP to ensure that the information presented is accessible to all, as well as exciting.

Appendix II: Staff and Technological Status

Staff Qualifications

American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP): Joseph Barris, Leah Emmerich, Victor Furmanec, Harriet Honigfeld, Laura Kirby, Bridget Neary, David Schmetterer

Professional Planners (PP): Joseph Barris, Victor Furmanec, Harriet Honigfeld, David Schmetterer

Certified Floodplain Managers (CFM): Joe Barris, Bridget Neary

Certified Public Managers (CPM): Harriet Honigfeld, Marissa Cortese, Tracy Winrow, Ashley Brittain

Certified Creative Placemaker: Kyle DeGroot

Zoning Official: Vincent Palmieri

Licensed Residential Home Inspector: Elise Menendez

Master's Degrees in Planning – Master of City and Regional Planning (MCRP) or Master of Urban and Regional Planning (MURP): Joseph Barris, Leah Emmerich, Victor Furmanec, Harriet Honigfeld, Laura Kirby, Vincent Palmieri, David Schmetterer

Technological Capabilities

Staff utilize these technological tools to intake, organize, and display data:

- Microsoft Suite
- ArcPro; ArcOnline, including StoryMaps, Experience Builder, Survey123, Business Analyst, Hub, and Dashboard
- Census Data, including Census OnTheMap
- Flourish, Canva
- Adobe Creative Suite
- AutoCAD, RHINO, SketchUp
- Forerunner

Appendix III: Monmouth County Groups & Adjacent Counties

Counties adjacent to Monmouth and their current Master Plans:

Middlesex

[Destination 2040](#): County's strategic vision

Mercer

[2010 County Master Plan](#)

Burlington

No master plan. [County Planning Site](#).

Ocean

[2011 Comprehensive Master Plan](#)

Regional groups Monmouth County is a part of:

North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority

NJTPA is the federally authorized Metropolitan Planning Organization for the 13 counties in northern New Jersey.

New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA Metropolitan Statistical Area

As delineated by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.

Greater Raritan Workforce Development Area

While the group is mainly focused on serving Somerset and Hunterdon Counties, Monmouth County is sometimes considered as part of this organization, depending on the specific program.

New Jersey's Coastal Management Program (Northern Jersey Shore)

New Jersey's Coastal Management Program is administered under the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and classifies Monmouth as part of the Northern Jersey Shore Region.

Shore Region

The NJ Division of Travel and Tourism designates the county as part of the "shore region".

Watersheds

Atlantic Coast Water Region – covers most of the County, all of the shoreline

Monmouth Watershed Management Area (WMA 12)

Barnegat Bay Watershed Management Region (WMA 3)

Lower Delaware Water Region – covers southern west portion of Monmouth

Assiscunk, Crosswicks, and Doctors Watershed Management Area (WMA 5)

Northwest Water Region - covers northern west portion of Monmouth

Central Delaware Watershed Management Area (WMA 11)

Raritan Water Region – covers some northern portions of central Monmouth.

Millstone Watershed Management Area (WMA 10)

Lower Raritan, South River, and Lawrence Watershed Management Area (WMA 9)

Sustainable Jersey Green Hub

See page 51 for more information on Sustainable Jersey.

New Jersey Superior Court: Monmouth Vicinage (Vicinage 9)

