

Join NJPO at the League of Municipalities Conference

	Time	AICP / CEUs
Tues. Nov 17		
Planning Gremlins	9:00 am–10:15 am	1.25 CM/1.25 Rutgers
Accessory Dwelling Units	10:45 am–12:00 pm	1.25 CM/1.25 Rutgers
Adaptive Reuse Warehouses / Office / Malls	2:00 pm–3:15 pm	1.25 CM/1.25 Rutgers
Variances: Proofs and Case Law	3:45 pm–5:00 pm	1.25 CM/1.25 Rutgers
Wed. Nov 18		
New Board Member Certification Course (5 Hours)	9:30 am–12:00 pm 1:00 pm–3:30 pm	5 CM
Historic Preservation	9:00 am–10:15 am	1.25 CM/1.25 Rutgers
Sober Living Facilities	10:45 am–12:00 pm	1.25 CM/1.25 Rutgers
AI Data Centers	2:00 pm–3:15 pm	1.25 CM/1.25 Rutgers
Resolutions, Decisions & Compliance	3:45 pm–5:00 pm	1.25 CM/1.25 Rutgers
Thurs. Nov 19		
William M. Cox Symposium Keynote Speaker : Frederick Steiner Dean- University of Pennsylvania Stuart Weitzman School of Design	9:00 am – 12:00 pm	3 CM / 3 Rutgers

New Jersey Planning Officials



Friday, October 2, 2026
Pines Manor, Edison, NJ

The New Jersey Planning Officials
The Association of Planning Boards
& Zoning Boards of Adjustment

The New Jersey Planning Officials (NJPO) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to educating and supporting the members of municipal planning boards, zoning boards of adjustment, land use administrations, and elected officials throughout New Jersey.

Founded in 1938 by citizen planners seeking to strengthen land use education, NJPO has grown into the state's leading organization for planning and zoning officials. In 1939, NJPO became an affiliate of the New Jersey State League of Municipalities, a partnership that continues today. NJPO is proud to be the League's largest affiliate and the only one representing volunteer citizen officials.

Today, NJPO serves more than 9,000 planning officials and professionals through a network of municipal and county boards, governing bodies, and affiliated organizations. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, NJPO provides education, training, professional development, and resources that help local officials make informed land use decisions and strengthen their communities.

In 2005, NJPO was designated by the New Jersey Legislature to assist the Department of Community Affairs in developing mandatory education standards for planning and zoning board members. Since 2006, more than 9,000 officials have completed NJPO certification training programs.

Led by volunteers and supported by planners, attorneys, engineers, architects, and other land use professionals, NJPO remains committed to advancing excellence in community planning throughout New Jersey.

For nearly 90 years, NJPO has been the trusted voice of citizen planners, promoting education, leadership, and responsible land use across the Garden State.

Past Presidents

Harry Hosking	1939-1941
Marcel Villanueva	1941-1942
Benjamin M. Taub	1942-1945
John E. Sloane	1945-1947
Samuel Rabkin	1947-1949
John R. Burnett	1949-1952
Mariano J. Ridaldi	1952-1954
William A. Southerland	1954-1956
Henry R. Williams	1956-1958
Leo J. Carling	1958-1960
Thomas A. Hyde	1960-1962
William F. Gillette	1962-1964
Harry A. Maslow	1964-1966
Donald E. Kanuse	1966-1967
Samuel P. Owen	1967-1969
Jules W. Marron	1969-1971
Abraham A. Janz	1971-1972
James B. Ashwell	1972*
Earle P. Finkbinder	1972-1974
Edna Horn	1974-1975*
Bud Schwartz	1975-1976
Henry J. Tomkinson	1976-1977
Elwood Bray	1977-1979
John M. Reuter	1979-1981
James G. Gilbert	1981-1983
K. Brian McFadden	1983-1984
Patricia A. McKiernan	1984-1986
Alois E. Schmitt	1986-1988
Judith Schleicher	1989-1990
Joseph E. Doyle	1991-1992
Frank H. Doyle	1993-1996
David Stivers	1997-1998
Warren Goode	1999-2000
James Robinson	2001-2002
Thomas Kenyon	2002-2005
Joseph Cooney	2006-2007
Terence Maguire	2007-2010
William Neville	2010-2011
Michael Bell	2011-2012
John Burke	2012-2014
G. Winn Thompson	2014-2018
Gail Glashoff	2019-2020
Katherine “Kippy” Piedici	2020-2023

Executive Directors

Horace A. Vanderbeek	5/1960	to	1961
Thomas A Hyde	1962	to	1980
Patricia A. McKiernan	6/1980	to	1/1981
H. Lyn Beer	1/1981	to	3/1986
Barbara A. Walsh	3/1986	to	4/1986
James P. Grassi	5/1986	to	12/1987
Steven Changaris	1/1988	to	8/1988
James P. Grassi	9/1988	to	1991
Joseph E. Doyle	1992	to	3/2011
Jason L. Kasler, AICP, PP	3/2011	to	Present

Who we are ...			
1938	Founded in West Orange as The New Jersey Federation of Official Planning Boards.		
1939	Welcomed as an affiliate of the NJ State League of Municipalities.		
1964	Changed name to New Jersey Federation of Planning Officials.		
1992	Changed name again: The New Jersey Planning Officials, Inc.		
Among NJPO firsts:			
1939	Published first Statewide Planning Newsletter: <u>New Jersey Planner.</u>		
1939	Held first State Planning Conference in New Jersey.		
1985	Initiated the State Planning Act which resulted in the State Planning Commission, Office of State Planning (now Office of Planning Advocacy) & State Redevelopment Plan.		
1986	Created Structured Educational Programs for Planning Boards & Zoning Boards.		
1986	Introduced structured training for boards statewide, beginning in Totowa.		
1989	Welcomed NJ Association of Zoning & Planning Administrators as an Affiliate.		
2006	Trained more than 9,000 planning officials following mandatory training act.		
2012	Held the first webinar designed specifically for new board members		

**Died in office*



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NJPO
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AND ZONING BOARDS OF ADJUSTMENT

 **NOVEMBER 17-19, 2026**

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2026 Achievement in Planning Awards

The New Jersey Planning Officials (NJPO) annually celebrates the people, projects, and publications that are making a lasting impact on New Jersey's communities through outstanding planning and land use leadership.

From innovative redevelopment efforts and visionary community initiatives to dedicated volunteers and public officials, these honorees represent the highest standards of excellence in planning. Their work strengthens neighborhoods, promotes sustainable growth, enhances quality of life, and helps shape a brighter future for residents throughout the state.

This awards program recognizes achievement, leadership, and service while highlighting the important role that planning plays in creating thriving communities.

NJPO proudly congratulates the following recipients for their exemplary contributions and accomplishments.

Publications:

Victor Crowell Park Master Plan
Newton : Strategic Plan to End Homelessness
Montvale Open Space Plan

Projects:

Frenchtown for All Ages
Dover: Meridia
Rutgers: Advancing Climate Resilience
through Municipal Land Use Law

People:

Michele Alonso, AICP, PP
Thomas "TJ" Ricci, AICP, PP
Jack Plackter, Esq.
Honorable Mayor Thomas Fritts

Publications

Victor Crowell Park Master Plan



The Middlesex Borough Park Master Plan presents a forward-looking vision for preserving and enhancing one of the community's most treasured public spaces. The plan combines environmental restoration, recreational improvements, and community-focused design to create a more resilient, accessible, and enjoyable park for future generations.

Key recommendations include flood mitigation measures, stream restoration, native meadow plantings, expanded trail connections, boardwalks, scenic overlooks, and improved pedestrian access. These improvements strengthen ecological health while enhancing recreation and user experience.

A notable feature of the plan is the integration of the adjacent annex property, creating new opportunities for recreation, programming, and community gathering while maintaining the site's historic character. Extensive public engagement also helped shape the final recommendations, ensuring the plan reflects community priorities.

By uniting environmental stewardship, technical expertise, and community collaboration, the Middlesex Borough Park Master Plan provides a practical roadmap for long-term sustainability, accessibility, and preservation of a valued community asset.

Congratulations to Allentown Mayor Thomas Fritts
and to the deserving and hardworking
award recipients for
their valuable participation
in community planning

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PAST PRESIDENT, NEW JERSEY INSTITUTE OF
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ATTORNEYS

The Honorable Mayor Thomas Fritts



Mayor Fritts has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to preserving Allentown's historic character while guiding the Borough's future through thoughtful planning and responsible growth. A longtime public servant, he has served in multiple local leadership roles, including Borough Council, before his election as Mayor.

A strong advocate for planning, Mayor Fritts has supported initiatives that strengthen greenbelt protections, advance historic preservation, and safeguard community resources. His leadership was especially evident in efforts to address the impacts of a proposed warehouse development near the Borough. Working closely with planning, environmental, and engineering professionals, he championed measures to protect local infrastructure, natural resources, and community character.

When the development site was identified as a Revolutionary War Hessian encampment, Mayor Fritts led a successful campaign to preserve the property, ultimately helping secure its acquisition by Monmouth County. He also united residents, local officials, organizations, and neighboring communities in a broad coalition that advocated for historic preservation and responsible land use.

Through persistence, collaboration, and a deep commitment to public service, Mayor Fritts has protected irreplaceable historic and environmental resources while exemplifying the highest standards of community leadership.



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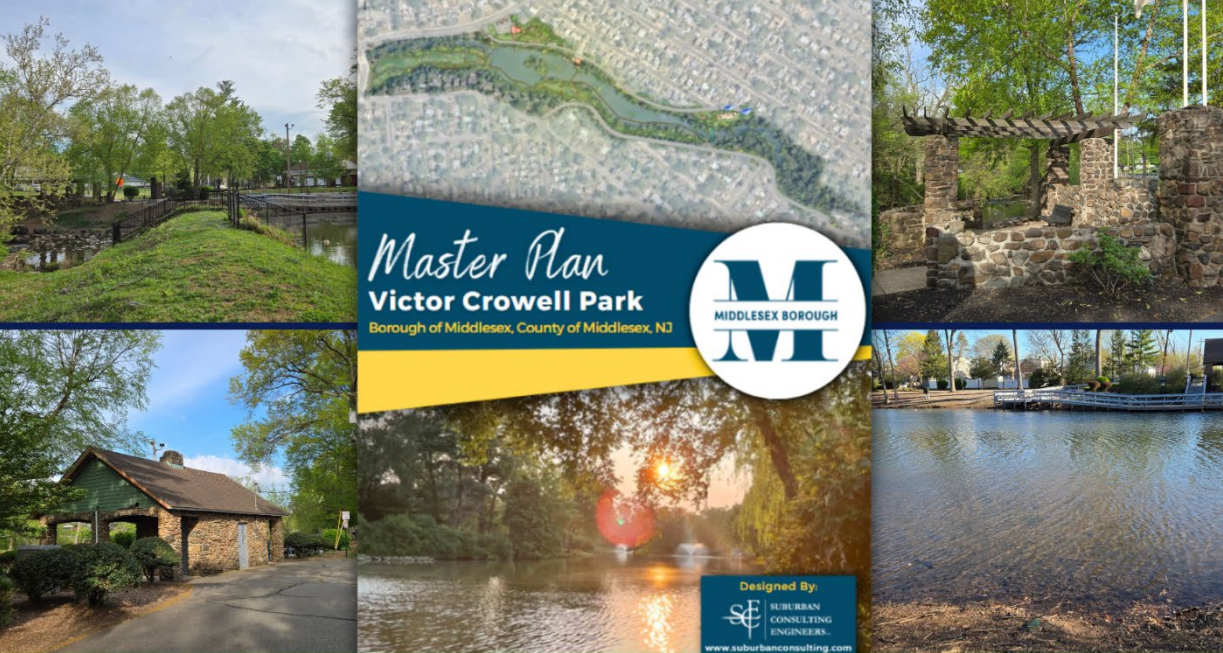


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Congratulations Borough of Middlesex!



Master Plan

Victor Crowell Park

Borough of Middlesex, County of Middlesex, NJ



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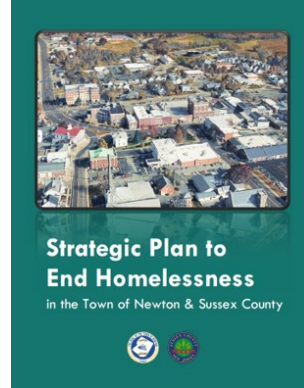
VICTOR CROWELL PARK MASTER PLAN

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Newton : Strategic Plan to End Homelessness



The Strategic Plan to End Homelessness is a collaborative effort between the Town of Newton and Sussex County that establishes a comprehensive roadmap for preventing, reducing, and ultimately ending homelessness. Guided by stakeholder engagement, lived experience, and proven best practices, the plan promotes a coordinated approach that supports housing stability, public safety, and community well-being.

Centered on the evidence-based Housing First model, the plan brings together public agencies, nonprofit organizations, service providers, community leaders, and residents to create a shared vision for lasting solutions. Six strategic goals provide a framework for expanding housing opportunities, strengthening service coordination, and improving homelessness prevention efforts.

A key strength of the initiative is its emphasis on partnership, accountability, and data-driven decision-making. Through collaboration and a practical implementation strategy, the plan delivers both near-term actions and long-range solutions to support vulnerable populations and strengthen the community.

By combining innovation, leadership, and regional cooperation, the Newton and Sussex County Strategic Plan to End Homelessness serves as a model for communities seeking effective, compassionate, and sustainable solutions to homelessness.

Celebrating

Jack Plackter

and this well-earned recognition
from the team he helped build.

Michael Malinsky

Bridget Sykes

Amanda Moscillo

Fox
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Attorney Advertising

Jack Plackter, Esq.



Jack Plackter, Esq. has built an exceptional career spanning more than 40 years as one of New Jersey's leading land use, redevelopment, and real estate attorneys. Through his work on major development and redevelopment projects across the state, he has helped shape communities by guiding complex land use approvals, environmental permitting, financing, and litigation matters.

A retired partner of Fox Rothschild LLP, Jack served as Co-Chair of the firm's Zoning & Land Use Group, Managing Partner of its Atlantic City office, and a member of its Executive Committee. His professional achievements have earned widespread recognition, including honors from Best Lawyers in America, Chambers USA, and Super Lawyers.

Beyond his legal practice, Jack has made a lasting impact on New Jersey's planning profession through his longstanding service to New Jersey Planning Officials (NJPO), including as Assistant Legal Counsel. Through his mentorship, educational programs, and guidance, he has helped planners, board members, attorneys, and municipal officials navigate complex land use issues and promote sound planning practices statewide.

Jack's career reflects the highest standards of professionalism, leadership, and dedication to the responsible growth and development of New Jersey's communities.



Montvale Open Space Plan



Montvale’s Open Space & Recreation Plan is a forward-looking strategy that positions the Borough to preserve open space, enhance recreational opportunities, and accommodate future growth. The plan evaluates existing parks and recreation facilities, identifies current and future needs, and establishes clear priorities for investment and preservation.

Through a comprehensive assessment of Montvale’s seven parks and open space areas, the plan identified parkland deficiencies and projected additional needs as the community grows. Extensive public outreach, including surveys and stakeholder input, ensured that resident priorities helped shape recommendations and future improvements.

The plan also identifies opportunities for open space acquisition, preservation, and conservation, supported by more than 40 actionable implementation strategies. By combining data-driven analysis with strong community engagement, the plan provides a practical roadmap for expanding recreational opportunities, protecting natural resources, and maintaining a high quality of life.

Montvale’s commitment to long-term planning and community stewardship makes this Open Space & Recreation Plan a model for municipalities seeking to balance growth, conservation, and recreation.

CONGRATULATIONS, TJ!

Congratulations on being named a 2026 NJPO Achievements in Planning Award Recipient.

There are professionals who practice planning, and then there are those who truly embody it... You are the latter.

Your passion for the planning profession is unmistakable. From the command and credibility, you bring to land use testimony, to your volunteerism and professional service, you operate at an exceptionally high level. Calling TJ means calling one of the best. That reputation has been earned one project, one hearing, and one professional interaction at a time.

What you have already accomplished reflects a level of professional distinction that few achieve. More impressive still is the promise of what lies ahead. You are helping set the standard for the next generation of New Jersey planners, while building a legacy entirely your own.

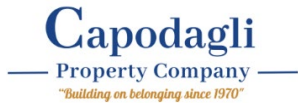
This award is a fitting recognition of that excellence and of a professional whose impact on New Jersey planning will be felt for years to come.

We are proud to call you our colleague and friend. Congratulations, TJ.

Alexander Dougherty, PP, AICP

Jennifer Berardo, Esq.

Dennis Liloia, Esq.



Thomas “TJ” Ricci, AICP, PP



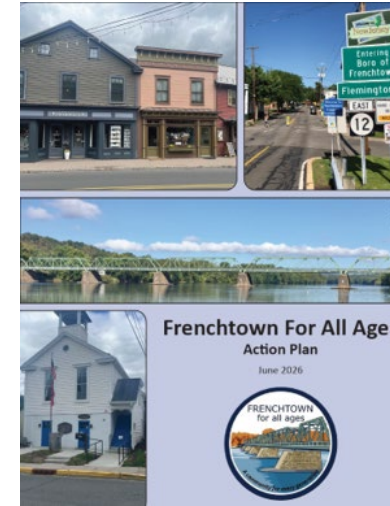
TJ exemplifies the qualities of an outstanding young planner, combining technical expertise, professionalism, and a strong commitment to public service. In a short time, he has developed an impressive command of planning principles, zoning regulations, redevelopment planning, and municipal land use processes.

Beyond his project responsibilities, TJ serves as a mentor and resource within his firm, helping colleagues navigate complex ordinances, master plans, redevelopment plans, and approval procedures. His guidance contributes to well-designed projects that align with municipal goals and regulatory requirements.

A skilled communicator, TJ effectively presents complex planning concepts to staff, board members, public officials, and community stakeholders. Known for his thorough preparation and attention to detail, he consistently delivers thoughtful analyses and credible testimony.

Through his technical knowledge, leadership, and dedication to planning excellence, TJ has emerged as a respected professional and a promising future leader of New Jersey’s planning community.

Frenchtown for All Ages



Frenchtown’s Age-Friendly Planning Initiative demonstrates how proactive planning and community engagement can help municipalities respond to the needs of an aging population while enhancing quality of life for residents of all ages.

Supported by a New Jersey Department of Human Services grant, the Borough conducted a comprehensive needs assessment that included surveys, listening sessions, and public meetings, ensuring broad community participation. The process not only informed the plan’s recommendations but also generated early-action initiatives that built momentum and community support.

The resulting Age-Friendly Action Plan outlines practical strategies to improve accessibility, mobility, housing options, social engagement, and community services. By translating public input into clear policy and implementation measures, the plan creates a sustainable framework for future decision-making and investment.

Through innovation, collaboration, and a strong commitment to inclusive planning, Frenchtown has developed a model that can guide communities across New Jersey in preparing for changing demographic needs while preserving community character and vitality.

Projects

Rutgers: Advancing Climate Resilience through Municipal Land Use Planning



The Climate Resilience Planning Studio showcases the value of collaboration between academia, government, and local communities in addressing the growing challenges of climate change. During the Spring 2026 semester, graduate planning students at the Bloustein School partnered with municipalities to develop practical strategies for incorporating climate resilience into local master planning.

Supporting New Jersey's requirement for Climate Change Related Hazard Vulnerability Assessments, students worked with Rutgers' Center for Urban Policy Research to evaluate climate risks in three communities. Their efforts examined impacts on housing, transportation, open space, public health, infrastructure, and hazard mitigation, translating technical data into actionable planning recommendations.

Through research, site visits, stakeholder engagement, and collaboration with municipal officials, students gained hands-on experience while providing communities with valuable resilience planning tools. Findings were also shared with New Jersey's Chief Resilience Officer, contributing to broader statewide preparedness efforts.

By combining technical expertise, community engagement, and real-world application, the Climate Resilience Planning Studio advances climate resilience planning while preparing the next generation of planning professionals to address complex environmental challenges.

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People

Michele Alonso, AICP, PP



Michele has dedicated nearly three decades to municipal planning in some of New Jersey's most vibrant urban communities, including Jersey City, Newark, and Asbury Park. As Director of Planning and Redevelopment for Asbury Park, she leads initiatives that advance redevelopment, affordable housing, sustainability, and community engagement.

Her accomplishments include managing Sustainable Jersey grant projects, establishing innovative food recovery and composting programs, and securing funding for a pocket park that transformed underutilized land into a valuable public space. She also oversees the City's mural program and Green Team, demonstrating a commitment to both environmental stewardship and community enrichment.

A respected planning professional, Michele is currently working on the fourth municipal master plan of her career. Known for her collaborative leadership, technical expertise, and dedication to public service, she remains a trusted resource for residents, elected officials, and fellow professionals. Her career exemplifies the planning profession's highest ideals: improving communities through thoughtful, people-centered leadership.

Pennoni congratulates

Jeanne Herb, Senior Policy Fellow, and the graduate planning students in the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University

for receiving an Achievement in Planning Award for their Advancing Climate Resilience Through Municipal Land Use Planning Project

Their efforts will provide an important guide for municipalities throughout New Jersey to successfully complete Climate Change-Related Hazard Vulnerability Assessments

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Matt Wanamaker, AICP, PP
Planning Department Director
mwanamaker@pennoni.com

New Jersey Planning Officials Staff

Congratulates all 2026 recipients

Lynette Asea

Tania Burton

Eugene Dunworth

Jason L. Kasler, AICP, PP

Executive Director

Dover Meridia



The Bassett Highway Redevelopment Plan and Meridia Dover Project exemplify how thoughtful redevelopment can transform an underutilized property into a vibrant mixed-use destination that advances housing, economic development, and community revitalization.

Located within walking distance of the Dover Train Station, the project promotes transit-oriented development while reinforcing the Borough's walkable downtown character. The plan includes approximately 640 residential units, including affordable housing, more than 12,000 square feet of commercial space, and significant public amenities.

Key improvements include a civic plaza, public riverwalk, enhanced pedestrian connections, expanded landscaping, and green infrastructure enhancements that improve both accessibility and quality of life. By directing growth to an area already served by transit and existing infrastructure, the project advances New Jersey's smart growth objectives and supports sustainable development.

A major strength of the initiative is its performance-based redevelopment framework, which establishes clear milestones and accountability measures to ensure successful implementation. Through its combination of housing, economic investment, public amenities, and connectivity, the project serves as a model for redevelopment and planning excellence throughout New Jersey.



TOWN of DOVER

Office of the Mayor

37 North Sussex Street • Dover, New Jersey 07801

Phone: (973) 366-2200 • Fax: (973) 328-6524

www.dover.nj.us

September 15, 2026

Dear Members of the New Jersey Planning Officials:

On behalf of the Town of Dover, I extend my sincere gratitude to the New Jersey Planning Officials for selecting Dover's **Bassett Highway Redevelopment Project** to receive an **Achievement in Planning Award**. It is a tremendous honor to have this important project and the work taking place in our community recognized by such a respected organization.

This recognition reflects the vision, collaboration, and dedication of the many individuals who helped move this transformative project forward. I would especially like to recognize **Town Planner Alex Dougherty, Redevelopment Attorney Dean Donatelli, Redevelopment Planner and Plan Author John McDonough, and the Meridia development team** for their expertise, commitment, and invaluable contributions throughout the redevelopment process.

Thank you again to the New Jersey Planning Officials for this distinguished honor and for recognizing Dover's continued commitment to thoughtful and responsible redevelopment. We are truly grateful for this recognition and proud to have Dover acknowledged for excellence in planning throughout New Jersey.

With sincere appreciation,

James P. Dodd

Mayor

Town of Dover, New Jersey