



## Salem County TDR Task Force

Meeting Highlights: March 10, 2010

Salem County Agricultural Complex (Ware Building), Mannington, NJ

### Present:

Karl Hartkopf – Office of Smart Growth, Department of Community Affairs

Francis Rapa – New Jersey Conservation Foundation

Matt Blake – Littoral Society

Herb Wegner – Pittsgrove Agriculture Advisory Committee

Don Asay – Mannington Township

Ernest Tark – Mannington Township

Jessica Daher – Littoral Society

Jaime Corbet – NJDEP, Bureau of Watershed Regulation

Larry Baier – NJDEP, Bureau of Watershed Regulation

Lawrence J. Baier – NJDEP, Division of Watershed Management

Harry A. Moore – Oldmans Township Deputy Mayor

John Hasse – Rowan University

Ben Laury – Salem County Freeholder

Louis Joyce – Salem County Planning Department

Bob Melvin – Group Melvin Design

Joe Scarpa – Green Paradigm Realty

Joy Farber – Office of Smart Growth, Department of Community Affairs

Bill Banks – Papparone Corporation

Tim Brill – State Agriculture Development Committee

Diane Strauss – New Jersey Future

Rick Brown – NJDEP, Division of Watershed Management

Suzanne McCarthy gave a presentation on the TDR project, which is available at <http://www.dvrpc.org/tdr/taskforce/salemcounty.htm> .

Diane Strauss from NJ Future reported on the status of the State Task Force, which has completed its first round of committee meetings and has held a full Task Force meeting. The six committees have developed preliminary recommendations, which are described in full at <http://www.dvrpc.org/tdr/taskforce/newjersey.htm> . One commonality from the committees was that in order to be effective, TDR has to be implemented in a phased, step-by-step way, and that there needs to be increased coordination at the state level. One suggestion was the



establishment of a “TDR Czar” to help eliminate the obstacles on the policy level. Some of the preliminary recommendations need more detail, and final recommendations will be developed at the next phase of meetings to be held in mid-April. There will be another full Task Force meeting held in May. Then, a report will be written and delivered to state officials and legislators. So far, the Task Force has mostly looked at intra-municipal TDR, but it will also look into inter-municipal and regional TDR as well.

The purpose of the Salem County TDR Task Force is to focus on what is needed in Salem County and what regional issues must be addressed. Policy questions will inevitably arise, and it will also be important to review statewide policies that require change so that municipalities are better able to undertake local TDR programs. As to regional policy issues, the Salem Task Force can focus on impediments to regional TDR and then feed that information to the State Task Force.

The final report coming out of the Salem County Task Force will have to address many different audiences and stakeholders, including farmers, residents, business owners, municipal officials, etc. Effectively communicating about TDR is essential because it is a foreign concept to many. It was suggested that the Salem County TDR Task Force should contribute a section to the final report issued by the State TDR Task Force addressing the issues raised by multi-municipal TDR.

It was suggested that the Salem Task Force look into the methods of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, and that similar financial incentives could be incorporated into TDR strategies.

It was suggested that counties be empowered to conduct a regional plan endorsement process, so that municipalities could more easily achieve plan endorsement requirements if they wish to be part of a regional TDR program.

The group discussed some of the general issues of managing development. One result of establishing sending and receiving areas for TDR is that it eliminates the “wipeout windfall” problem, in which landowners in sending areas lose property value and those in receiving areas receive a property value “windfall.” In an effort to manage its growth, Pittsgrove Township adopted three-acre zoning and mandatory contiguous clustering. However, this can be a scenario for sprawl. There may be a middle ground for a regional TDR program in which development is spread to appropriate areas but each town gets some growth.

Perhaps it would make sense to look at logical receiving areas for some Salem towns. For example, because of its location, Pittsgrove Township could be a sending area for Vineland and Bridgeton. There are definite obstacles to cross-county TDR, but sewer service does not necessarily have to be an obstacle. Cross-county sewer has been done in other areas. Although the focus for this Task Force is on TDR in Salem County alone, any TDR program that is developed may be used in the future as a model for TDR in Cumberland County.



TDR may not be the only solution to managing growth. Professor John Hasse discussed impervious surface trading and a grant proposal he is working on to do build-out modeling of different scenarios. Lake Tahoe is a model for an impervious surfaces trading strategy, for example.

Establishing appropriate receiving areas in each municipality would be extremely difficult. In Mannington, the township thought a reasonable receiving area would be the area between the hospital and Salem City, where sewer service would be easy to expand. However, that area is environmentally sensitive and is associated with the ecologically critical Mannington Meadows. The issue of how big a receiving area has to be was also discussed. Salem County has many small hamlet areas that could possibly accommodate a small amount of infill development.

Sending areas must also be sized correctly. Should they be limited to Salem's Agricultural Development Area (ADA)? There was a suggestion to amend the Salem ADA to include farmland in Oldmans Township and Carneys Point Township. Although those areas do not have large amounts of designated prime farmland, they do have highly productive farms. There are other areas left out of the ADA, such as in Pennsville around the Meadows. The ADA is able to be changed, although it prioritizes large clusters of contiguous farmland. The ADA boundary has been changed from the one shown in the presentation and now includes all of Mannington Township.

Potential receiving areas for development were discussed in more detail. The State Plan identified some areas in Salem County as PA2 (Suburban Planning Area), which have now changed to PA4 (Rural Planning Area). Potential receiving areas in Salem County could include PA3 and 4 (Fringe and Rural Planning Areas). Salem County is probably not going to have one large receiving area, and there is potential for hamlet-style infill. A very rough calculation of buildable land within PA1 and PA2 planning areas that is not environmentally constrained but is within existing sewer service areas is 1,700 acres. This could accommodate a sending area of only about 10,000 acres.

Approved projects and subdivisions should be mapped along with existing development, although there are not many of these in Salem County. Identifying potential receiving areas for each municipality could be too controversial. Having a charette to generate local ground-up ideas for receiving areas is better for gaining support. One solution for new development in Salem County could be the establishment of an entirely new town center, like the one developed in Chesterfield. There have been examples where development around existing towns has drained the investment from the older town.

Upland forest should be considered as sending areas as well as farmland. This is typically not done and there are questions about how the land would be valued. The Salem County Open Space Plan delineated greenways and blueways, which could be used as the basis for non-agricultural sending areas. TDR does not necessarily have to be just about saving farms, but could protect natural areas as well.



There are tens of thousands of acres that may deserve protection, but the sending area for a Salem TDR plan may have to be very limited at the start. An alternative to TDR could be a transfer of development credits system like the one used in the Pinelands. In the Pineland system, credits are assigned for a certain number of units and are traded between individual landowners.

One problem with receiving areas in Salem County may be that land in sewer service areas may already be zoned high enough that adding additional density would not make these areas more attractive for developers.

Creating different visuals and maps would be important to be able to show build-out potential under different scenarios. Seeing those visuals could inspire the municipalities to change their zoning. On the fourth Thursday of the month, there is a Mayors meeting with representation from each municipality. This would be a good forum to communicate to these municipal representatives, using good visuals. There are other collective meetings with members from Agriculture Advisory Committees, Environmental Commissions, business groups, and others that the Task Force could address as well. An important part of the work of the Salem Task Force should be educating the public and officials about TDR and how it could affect future growth in the county.