

SOMERSET COUNTY PLANNING BOARD



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March 11, 2005

Patrick A Miller, PhD FASLA President
ASLA 636 Eye Street NW
Washington, DC 2001-3736

RE: ASLA Honor Metal Regional Plan Association

Dear Mr. Miller:

We are pleased to provide a letter of support for an ASLA Honor Metal nomination for the Regional Plan Association (RPA).

Somerset County and the Somerset County Regional Center Partnership has been working with the Regional Plan Association since early 1999 when RPA brought into the County a team of planners, architects and urban designers to develop an award winning Regional Center Vision document and a strategic implementation plan.

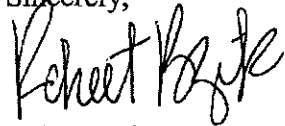
A central theme of this Vision Plan was using natural systems to shape the development and redevelopment patterns in the Center and using green infrastructure to protect and enhance the natural systems. We have been incorporating these concepts in a number of ongoing projects including redesigning the Route 22 highway corridor from a typical high-speed, strip-oriented corridor into a Sustainable Highway Boulevard and developing a Green plan for the Center incorporating a comprehensive strategy around Greenways, stormwater management and resource protection.

In addition, the Vision Plan identified key redevelopment sites including the 120 acre former landfill in Somerville and recommended a concept plan which embraces bio-remediation and transit oriented development principles as key organizing concepts. The County is carrying forth those ideas by developing a detailed end-use plan as part of a Countywide TOD Plan.

A central component of all these efforts is RPA's visioning and community outreach efforts, which involves educating the public and elected officials about local resources and bringing creative and innovative planning approaches to help reshape communities.

We are pleased to support RPA's nomination for a Landscape Architecture Medal of Excellence, not only for their work with Somerset County Regional Center, but also the New Jersey Mayor's Institute where at least three towns in Somerset County have gone through the Institute and worked directly with RPA to solve complex design issues balancing development and resource protection.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Bzik". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "R".

Robert Bzik, AICP/PP
Director of Planning