

# MASTER PLAN

**BOROUGH OF ATLANTIC HIGHLANDS**  
Monmouth County, New Jersey



# MASTER PLAN

## BOROUGH OF ATLANTIC HIGHLANDS Monmouth County, New Jersey



**Adopted: May 9, 2019**  
**Atlantic Highlands Planning Board**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "T. Andrew Thomas".

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T. Andrew Thomas, P.P., A.I.C.P.

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

**BOROUGH OF ATLANTIC HIGHLANDS PLANNING BOARD  
RESOLUTION OF MEMORIALIZATION  
ADOPTING MASTER PLAN (DATED MAY 3, 2019)**

**WHEREAS**, the New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law, N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28, grants authority to municipal planning boards to adopt and amend Master Plans based on planning studies and analyses following public hearings; and

**WHEREAS**, the Borough of Atlantic Highlands Planning Board adopted its prior Master Plan in May 2006 and amended in August 2007 as prepared by Thomas Scangrello Associates; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2016 the firm of Thomas Planning Associates, L.L.C. was retained to update and revise the 2006 Master Plan as amended in 2007 to include updated 2010 and 2015 Census data, updated Geographic Information Systems (G.I.S.) mapping, recommended sustainability options, updated land use goals and objectives, and updates to each of the plan elements that considers recommendations from State, County and Borough sources; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Board created a Master Plan Subcommittee of three members to review and assist in the preparation of the revised Master Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, a Master Plan dated October 1, 2018 was prepared and reviewed by the Planning Board; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Board conducted a Public Hearing on February 14, 2019 for public review and comment of the October 1, 2018 Master Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the Borough of Atlantic Highlands duly advertised for a public hearing and noticed the adjacent municipalities and the Monmouth County Planning Board in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40:55D-13, and provided a copy of the Master Plan on its website 10 days prior to the public hearing; and

**WHEREAS**, several residents and interested parties provided either oral comments and/or written comments on or prior to February 14, 2019 regarding the Master Plan document; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Board considered these comments and further directed Thomas Planning Associates and the Subcommittee on February 14, 2019 to incorporate the relevant comments that were presented and considered into a revised Master Plan document; and

**WHEREAS**, a revised Master Plan document dated April 15, 2019 was prepared per the Board's request; and

**WHEREAS**, the revised Master Plan document dated April 15, 2019 was considered for adoption at a second Public Hearing conducted on May 9, 2019; and

**WHEREAS**, the Borough of Atlantic Highlands duly advertised for a public hearing and noticed the adjacent municipalities and the Monmouth County Planning Board in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40:55D-13, and provided a copy of the Master Plan on its website 10 days prior to the public hearing; and

**WHEREAS**, the revised Master Plan document dated April 15, 2019 contained minor corrections that were not substantive in nature which were presented by T. Andrew Thomas, P.P., A.I.C.P. of Thomas Planning Associates at the public hearing for consideration by the Planning Board; and


**WHEREAS**, the aforementioned corrections were contained in a "Correction Sheet" dated May 3, 2019 consisting of two pages and 12 items and are attached to this Resolution hereto;

**WHEREAS**, the Borough of Atlantic Highlands conducted a public hearing on the Master Plan on May 9, 2019 at which time interested persons attended and additional comments were reviewed and considered;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28, the Atlantic Highlands Planning Board hereby adopts the revised Master Plan dated April 15, 2019 as amended by the correction sheet dated May 3, 2019 described above and presented and discussed at the public hearing on May 9, 2019; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a copy of the adopted Master Plan as revised and a copy of this Resolution, as adopted, be forwarded within thirty (30) days to the Monmouth County Planning Board in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40:55D-13; to the Borough of Atlantic Highlands Mayor, Council, Clerk, Administrator, Engineer, Planner, Tax Assessor and to such other boards and agencies and their attorneys that may be affected by or may utilize the revised Borough of Atlantic Highlands Master Plan and to the Clerk of the surrounding municipalities.

**I HEREBY CERTIFY** that the foregoing is a true copy of a Resolution which was passed by the Atlantic Highlands Planning Board at its meeting of May 9, 2019.



**Michelle Clark**  
**Planning Board Secretary**  
**Borough of Atlantic Highlands**

**CORRECTION SHEET**  
**ATLANTIC HIGHLANDS MASTER PLAN**  
**May 3, 2019**

The following items are revised as described in the Atlantic Highlands Master Plan. Deleted items are shown in ~~crossouts~~ and added items are shown in underlines:

**Item 1.** - Cover Page – Revise date to read “May 3, 2019” in place of April 15, 2019 as follows:

~~April 15,~~ May 3, 2019

**Item 2.** - Page IV-5. – Revise paragraph as follows for clarity:

**OBJECTIVES:**

- Implement the concept plan for Many Mind Creek and its greenway trail as the missing link between the Henry Hudson Trail ~~coming~~ from the west and greenway Trail to the east, ~~which~~ This will ~~also~~ provide a walking and biking connection from west side residential areas to recreation at Firemen’s Field, ~~to~~ the business district and ~~to the~~ Marina.

**Item 3** – Page IV-9 – add word “stability” in paragraph f. as follows:

- f. Preserve and enhance the environment by maintaining existing buffers against highway noise and air pollution, saving natural habitat needed by birds and wildlife, and preserving tree mass that moderates temperature and wind effects and to provide stability to the steep slope and slump block areas of the Borough.

**Item 4** – Page V-3 – add “on First Avenue” to item 5 as follows:

- 1. Atlantic Highlands Elementary School and playground located between East Washington and East Lincoln Avenues on First Avenue.

**Item 5** – Page VIII-7 – add “home” to occupation in first sentence under Commercial District as follows:

**COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS**

Commercial districts account for approximately 52 acres or 4.8 percent of land area within Atlantic Highlands. Incorporated within the commercial district are such uses as retail/service, mixed use (commercial/residential), office/professional and home/professional or home occupation

**Item 6** – Page X-2 – revise date from 1847 to 1887 as follows:

**1887** - The Borough of Atlantic Highlands was created from the Township of Middletown by an Act of the State Legislature on February 28, ~~1847~~ 1887. The Borough was named for its location on the Atlantic Ocean and for steep hills or highlands for which was known. The first street lights were installed.

**Item 7** – Page XI-3 – Add “foot” to number 50 in item 3 under “Objectives” as follows:

- 3. A 50-foot wide sand beach at the end of Avenue A.

**Item 8** – Page XIII-14 – Remove “swimming” from Wagner Creek/Center Avenue Park Extensions section as follows:

**Wagner Creek/Center Avenue Park Extensions**

Wagner Creek, the only other stream in Atlantic Highlands, forms the western border with Leonardo, a section of Middletown Township. It requires protection by natural buffers for the same reasons as Many Mind Creek. On one bank or its northern portion next to the bay are several acres of mixed woodland/wetland protected by the Borough-owned Center Avenue Park. The wetland is scheduled for restoration and enhancement under an approved plan. The park includes an upland area used for a recreational field, a tot lot and parking, and a beach area, which is shared between ~~swimming~~, sight-seeing and walking by the general public and boat launchings by the Sandy Hook Bay Catamaran Club which leases some park land for boat storage.

**Item 9** – Page XIV-1 – change “for” to “or” in the first paragraph under the “Roadways” heading as follows:

**ROADWAYS**

Atlantic Highlands commuters travel primarily by car. Based on U.S. Census 2010 statistics, 77 percent or 1,646 of the total 2,142 commuters drive to work alone; 8 percent ~~for~~or 172 workers carpoled and 15 percent or 324 commuters take public transportation.

**Item 10** – Page XIV-2 – add closed parenthesis to New Jersey Route 36 in first row of the table

NJDOT	Memorial Parkway (New Jersey Route 36)
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**Item 11** – Page XIV-6 – add “social networks to provide” to the first paragraph under “Livery and Ridesharing Services”

**Livery and Ridesourcing Services**

The Borough is served by private taxi services and ride sourcing services such as Uber and Lyft. These emerging companies utilize smartphones, global positioning systems (GPS), and social networks to provide transportation in a timely manner.

**Item 12** – Page XIV-7 – add “study” to parking study in first sentence of first paragraph as follows:

The long term goal is to perform a targeted parking study to analyze current parking supply and demands, and provide options for the Borough to adequately meet future parking demands.

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# Mayor and Council (2018)

Honorable Mayor Rhonda C. LeGrice

Council President Roy Dellosso  
Stephen Boracchia, Councilman  
Jon Crowley, Councilman  
Lou Fligor, Councilman  
Tom Hayden, Councilman (resigned)  
Lori Hohenleitner, Councilwomen – (interim appointee)  
Charles R. Lero, Councilman

## Planning Board Members (2018)

James Neff, Chairman\*  
Louis Fligor, Councilman\*  
Joseph Caccamo  
Dr. Edward Cetron\*  
Richard Colangelo  
Martin Hawley  
Sandra Hoffmann  
Louis Illiano  
Deborah Murray

Douglas Pepe, Alt.#1  
Kevin Ilarraza, Alt #2  
John McGoldrick, Alt #3  
Brian Dougherty, Alt. #4

*\* Denotes Master Plan Sub-Committee*

Adam Hubeny, CPM, CRP, CPWM, CCCC – Borough Administrator  
Michelle Clark, RMC, CMR - Borough Clerk  
Michael B. Steib, Esq. – Board Attorney  
Douglas Rohmeyer, P.E. – Board Engineer, CME Associates  
T. Andrew Thomas, P.P., Planning Consultant, Thomas Planning Associates  
Erin Uriarte - Planning Board Secretary

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This 2018 Master Plan is an updating of the 2006 Master Plan and is divided into two parts: Planning Background and Master Plan. It presents a direction and a clear course of action to realize the future vision for Atlantic Highlands. It represents a tool for the people of Atlantic Highlands to use to guide the future of their unique community.

The vision involves retaining its character as a small town and at the same time continuing to thrive as an active, livable waterfront community with diverse housing, ample recreation, a healthy environment, adequate infrastructure, quality education, and a positive economic climate.

The Planning Background section includes information on the planning history of Atlantic Highlands, existing land use, historical population data, and Census data for population characteristics, income and occupation.

The Master Plan establishes principles, objectives, assumptions, policies and standards of the Borough and establishes guidelines for land use, housing, historical preservation, coastal waterfront design, open space and recreation, conservation, circulation, recycling/utilities, community facilities, and policy statements of plan relationships. The Master Plan incorporates the goals and objectives of earlier Master Plans and also takes into consideration the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan, the 2016 Monmouth County Master Plan and the master plans and zoning ordinances of both adjoining communities, Highlands Borough and Middletown Township.

The following is a brief description of the Planning Background sections and Master Plan Elements:

### **PLANNING BACKGROUND**

The Planning Background section is the starting point of the Master Plan and is the foundation of the Master Plan Elements that follow. The Planning Background section includes six separate sections and includes the introduction, planning history, master plan update (which includes a listing of the major updates made in this document), vision, goals and objectives, existing land use and population sections.

The major revisions to the Planning Background section were the population and existing land use sections. They were updated to include the latest Census data for population including age, gender, race, income level, and occupation. The existing land use was compiled using a revised Geographic Information Systems (GIS) map from the tax assessment data and NJDEP base map to compile land use types and acreages.

The planning history and goals and objectives of the Borough were updated.

It is anticipated the planning background section will be updated when the 2020 Census data becomes available.

## **MASTER PLAN ELEMENTS**

### **Principles, Objectives, Assumptions, Policies and Standards**

This is one of the required Master Plan elements per the Municipal Land Use Law. There are bullet points for each item which are updated from the last Master Plan. This element represents the overall goals of the Borough and the assumptions that those goals are based upon. It serves as a guide to land use and development within the community.

### **Land Use Plan Element**

The Land Use Plan Element is one of the required elements of the Master Plan per the Municipal Land Use Law. The Land Use Plan Element is vital to the entire planning process of the municipality and is the foundation and basis for the zoning ordinance.

There are several new recommendations within the Land Use Plan Element:

- Developable Area Standards
- Signage
- Short Term Rentals
- The addition of the two affordable housing sites that had been provided for in the Borough Ordinance.
- LI – light industrial zone district was eliminated and renamed as C - Commercial district. The number of permitted uses within the prior LI district were expanded to include showrooms, professional offices, personal services, and others.

### **Housing Element**

The Housing Element, prepared by Hyer and Gruel Associates, was adopted separately on September 13, 2018 and made a part of this Master Plan. The Housing Element describes the specific methods used to meet its very low, low and moderate income housing needs. It also contains a number of statutorily required items with regard to housing inventory, projection of housing stock, demographic analysis, employment analysis and lands that are most appropriate for construction of affordable housing.

### **Historic Preservation Element**

The purpose of the Historic Preservation Element is to establish a comprehensive set of policies to identify and preserve historic resources in the Borough. This is an optional element of the Master Plan under the Municipal Land Use Law and was chosen to be incorporated into the Master Plan because historic preservation is an important part of the Borough character and is vital to its economic future prosperity.

The Historic Preservation Element contains a background section, policy and objectives for encouraging and guiding a range of actions needed to preserve the rich heritage of Atlantic Highlands.

There have been no major updates to the Historic Preservation Element.

### **Coastal Waterfront Design Element**

The coast is an important factor in the environment and life of the Borough. The Coastal Waterfront Design Element is designed to guide development and redevelopment along the waterfront and to coordinate local plans and ordinances as well as County and State Plans. The element provides a brief history, current uses and policy and objectives for coastal waterfront design.

### **Open Space and Recreation Element**

The Open Space and Recreation Element has had a long history of providing recreation opportunities and preserving open space for public purposes. This Element provides a vision of the Borough's open space and recreation objectives. In addition to a comprehensive set of goals and objectives for short term and long term needs of the Borough population there are six specific areas of focus including Lenape Woods Greenway, Waterfront at Town Center, Many Mind Creek Greenway, Wagner Creek/Center Avenue Park Extensions, Bayside Drive Bluffs, and Lenape Woods South.

### **Conservation Plan Element**

The Conservation Plan Element establishes the framework for the Borough to protect, conserve, restore or enhance the Borough's water resources, wetlands, stream corridors, floodplains, greenways, slump blocks, steep slope areas, woodlands, and wildlife habitat. Goals and objectives for each of these items are found within this Element.

Several revisions, recommendations and additions to the Element include:

- 2006 Bayshore Region Strategic Plan
- January 2008 Many Mind Creek Watershed Restoration and Protection Plan
- January 2015 Getting to Resilience Report
- Impacts of Superstorm Sandy
- Homeowners Flood Insurance Affordability Act of 2014.
- Sea level rise
- Floodplain management objectives

### **Circulation Plan Element**

The Circulation Plan Element coordinates circulation recommendations for waterfront, business district, residential district and open space areas to identify intersections and streets in need of improvement.

Several new items were included in this Element including:

- Recommendation that the Borough review the criteria and application process to become

a “Transit Village”.

- Short term and long term goals for public parking within the Business District.
- Ridesharing services such as Uber and Lyft.
- Henry Hudson Trail reconstruction completed in 2017

### **Recycling / Utilities Plan Element**

The intent of the Utilities Plan Element is to guide utility service (sewer and water) in a way that ensures adequate utilities will be available for the needs of all Borough residents and businesses. It describes and evaluates the existing system that serves the Borough and recommends future considerations or improvements of service where applicable.

One of the major items described in the Utility Plan was the 2014 agreement of Atlantic Highlands/Highlands regional sewerage authority to be dissolved and that each municipality create its own utility. Additional updates included:

- Water and sewer rates
- Well information

The Recycling Plan Element describes the recycling program within the Borough. It was updated to reflect all the latest information and programs in place within the Borough and Monmouth County.

### **Community Facilities Element**

The Community Facilities Plan Element identifies existing public and quasi public facilities within the Borough. This Element was revised and updated with all the latest information for administration and government, fire protection, police department, public works, emergency services, public library and schools.

### **Policy Statement of Plan Relationships**

This is a required element of the Master Plan pursuant to the Municipal Land Use Law. This is a review and statement of the relationship of the Borough Master Plan to contiguous municipalities, the Monmouth County Plan, the State Development and Redevelopment Plan and the County Solid Waste Management Plan.

Two new plans that were included in this Element were the 2016 Monmouth County Comprehensive Master Plan, and 2009 County Solid Waste Management Plan. The Atlantic Highlands Master Plan is consistent with each of those plans and is further described in this Element.

# **PLANNING BACKGROUND**



# I. INTRODUCTION

---

The Borough of Atlantic Highlands is a small, fully developed community located on Sandy Hook Bay in northeastern Monmouth County. The Borough's size, includes 1.12 square miles in land area and another 0.5 sq. miles of riparian water (1.72 square miles total)<sup>1</sup>, places it 35th in the total land area among Monmouth County's 53 municipalities.

Atlantic Highlands has a long history dating back hundreds of years, when the Lenape inhabitants lived along its cliffs and creeks. Significant changes have occurred to the area from the time of Henry Hudson's 1609 visit and the 1664 purchase of the whole peninsula by English settlers. Now Atlantic Highlands has a reputation as an attractive, small-town residential community beside a long waterfront and large harbor.

This Master Plan represents a direction and a clear course of action to realize the future vision for Atlantic Highlands. That vision involves retaining its character as a small town and at the same time continuing to thrive as an active, livable waterfront community with diverse housing, ample recreation, a healthy environment, adequate infrastructure, and quality education, while maintaining a positive economic climate.

The Master Plan represents the collection of data produced from the efforts of diverse groups of individuals within the Borough who have produced an extensive amount of valuable research and documents. It represents a tool for the people of Atlantic Highlands to use to guide the future of their unique community.

This 2018 Master Plan represents an updating of the 2006 Master Plan. This Master Plan is divided into two parts: Planning Background and Master Plan.

The Planning Background information includes the planning history of Atlantic Highlands, historical and existing population data, projected population growth, and existing land use data.

The Master Plan establishes goals and objectives of the Borough and establishes guidelines for land use, housing, utility services, economic development, recreation, recycling, circulation, natural and cultural resources, and community facilities. The Master Plan incorporates the goals and objectives of earlier Master Plans and also takes into consideration the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan, the 2016 Monmouth County Master Plan and the master plans and zoning ordinances of both adjoining communities, Highlands Borough and Middletown Township.

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<sup>1</sup> Land and water area based upon NJDEP GIS area calculations for Atlantic Highlands

## II. PLANNING HISTORY

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Prior to being incorporated into the 1975 Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL), New Jersey statutes provided for the adoption of a Master Plan by municipal planning boards. The MLUL required that adopted zoning ordinances reflect the goals and objectives stipulated in the Master Plan. Subsequently, N.J.S.A. 40-55D-62 provided that after August 1, 1988 master plans must be re-examined at least every six years and a report issued. N.J.S.A. 40-55D-62 was amended in 2011 extending the reexamination period to every ten years. If specific changes are recommended, then the master plan should be amended following established procedures.

In 1964, in accordance with New Jersey statutes, the Borough of Atlantic Highlands prepared its first Master Plan that was subsequently amended in 1966. In December, 1988, under Borough direction, Townplan Associates undertook a detailed study of the existing land uses in Atlantic Highlands. Tax maps, assessment data, aerial photography, and field surveys of the Borough were utilized as part of the effort to update and confirm the nature and location of land uses within the Borough. As a result of a Reexamination Report that also was adopted in 1988, the Borough's Zoning Ordinance was updated and completely revised in June, 1993.

A second Reexamination Report was completed in 1990, which recommended a new Master Plan. The new Master Plan was adopted on August 2, 1990. That plan was revised on October 4, 1990 and again on January 3, 1991 to reflect additional data and policy changes. In 1996 the Borough's third Reexamination Report was prepared and adopted.

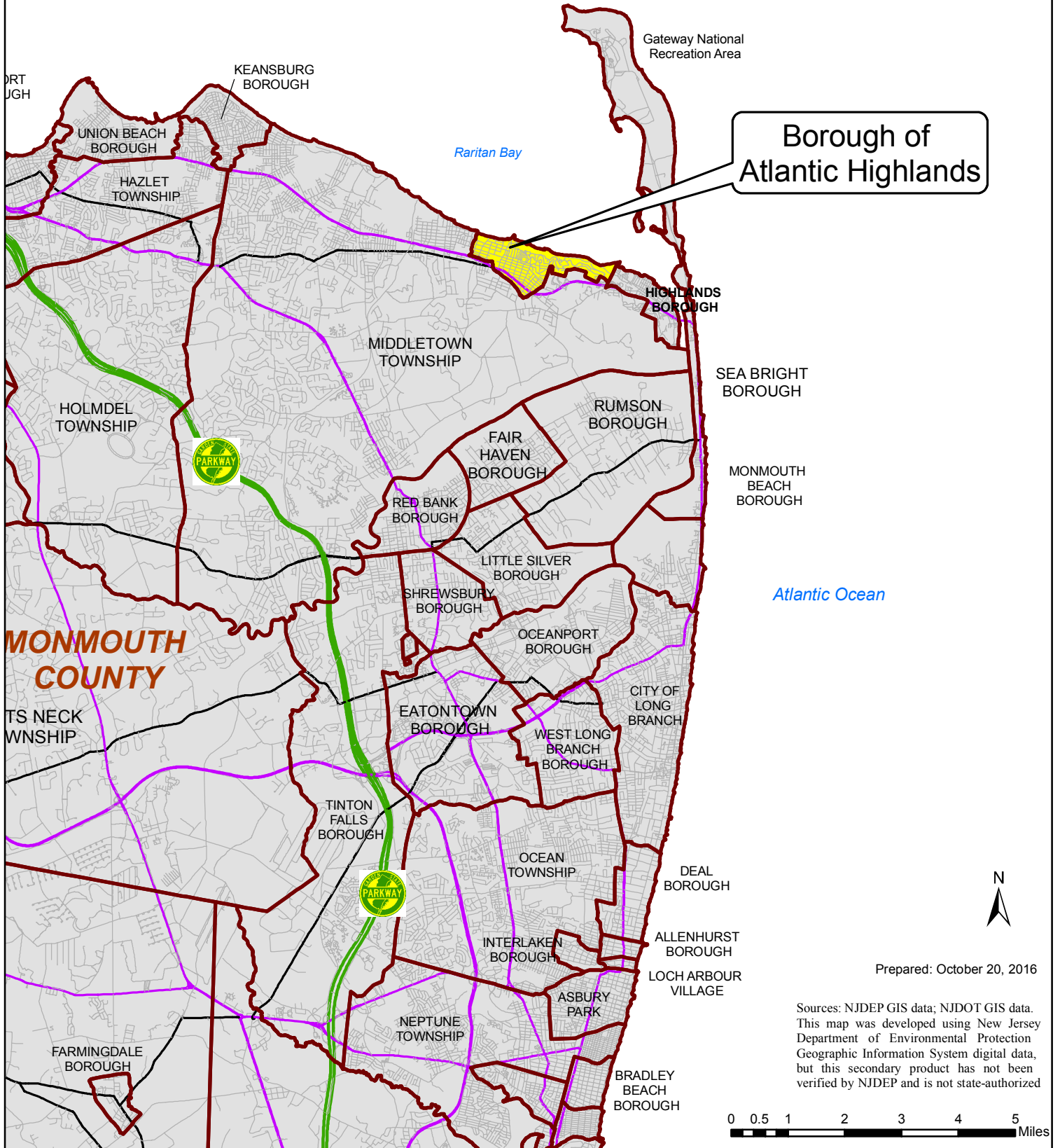
By ordinance, in 1995 the Atlantic Highlands Planning Board assumed the functions of the Zoning Board, which was abolished pursuant to a 1994 amendment to the New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law, P.L. 1994, C. 186, sec. 1.

A fourth Reexamination Report of the Master Plan and Development Regulations was prepared and adopted in 2002 by the Borough of Atlantic Highlands Planning Board. Although the next Reexamination Report was not due until August 2, 2008, updating of the Master Plan was recommended following receipt of the 2000 Federal Census data on housing and population. The professional planning firm, Thos. J. Scangarello & Associates, P.A., was retained in 2005 to prepare an updated Master Plan. The Master Plan was adopted in May 2006 as amended in 2007. The 2006 Master Plan consolidated the 1990 Master Plan with the 2002 Reexamination Report and identified areas that needed further clarification.

In 2016 the firm of Thomas Planning Associates, L.L.C. was retained to update the 2006 Master Plan as amended in 2007 to include updated 2010 and 2015 Census data, updated Geographic Information Systems (G.I.S.) mapping, recommended sustainability options, updated land use goals and objectives, and updates to each of the plan elements that considers recommendations from State, County and Borough sources.

On February 8, 2018 the Planning Board adopted a Reexamination Report. The next Reexamination Report is required to be adopted on or before February 8, 2028.

# FIGURE II-1 REGIONAL LOCATION MAP BOROUGH OF ATLANTIC HIGHLANDS Monmouth County, New Jersey



### III. MASTER PLAN UPDATE

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This Master Plan serves to replace the May 2006 (revised August 2007) Master Plan with the exception of the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan which was adopted on September 13, 2018 and is part of this Master Plan document.

This Master Plan fully complies with the requirements provided for in N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28, Master Plan preparation; contents; modifications. This Master Plan will:

- Focus on preserving the Borough’s unique historic and bayside community character, while providing a vision for the future.
- Include recommendations and data of the Recommendations Report entitled “Getting to Resilience” prepared by the Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Center – January 2015
- Propose directions influenced by new concepts in planning, coupled with previous planning concerns established in the 1990, and 1996 Master Plans.
- Reflect the recently prepared and adopted September 19, 2016 Monmouth County Master Plan.
- Update the population and housing data of prior Master Plans using the latest 2010 Census data and 2015 American Fact Finder database which distributes census and survey data collected by the Census Bureau.
- Include revised language for natural resource categories already identified in the prior Master Plans.
- Revise the Land Use Element and provide districts and proposed future objectives that support the policies of this plan and are consistent with the Borough’s Zoning Map.
- Include a revised Housing Plan Element that meets the statutory requirements of the Fair Housing Act (N.J.S.A. 52:27D-310, et seq.), the Municipal Land Use Law (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28), and Fair Share Housing Center (FSHC) Settlement Agreement approved by Court Order on May 24, 2018.
- Provide GIS mapping to designate existing circulation networks and proposed circulation networks. Scenic roadways will be identified based on Monmouth County Scenic Roadway Plan standards.
- Respond to several standards and policies pertaining to environmental issues and to fair share housing issues, which have been adopted by major State agencies that directly affect the development capabilities of the remaining vacant lands within the Borough of Atlantic Highlands.

## IV. VISION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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The vision of the Atlantic Highlands planning program is to retain the character of the Borough as a small town, while continuing to maintain it as an active, livable waterfront community with diverse housing, ample recreation, a healthy environment, adequate infrastructure, quality education, and a positive economic climate.

The goals and objectives set forth in this Master Plan evolved to accomplish that vision for Atlantic Highlands. They represent the collective efforts of all those Borough groups listed below to provide a cohesive plan to realize that vision. The Borough has relied on many different commissions/committees for assistance in developing a variety of plans for future planning of the Borough. These commissions/committees include the Environmental Commission, Shade Tree Commission, Historical Society (nonprofit), Chamber of Commerce, Harbor Commission, and a subcommittee comprised of municipal officials specifically designated for Reexamination of the Master Plan. Through these means, the planning process takes into account the predominate geographic, economic, demographic and other realities and needs of the Borough.

Commissions and committees made up of citizen volunteers are used extensively in the planning process. Proposals, debates and decisions in the Master Plan and Reexamination process were conducted in public meetings and garnered constructive feedback prior to adopting the final document.

Nine municipalities comprise the Monmouth County Bayshore Region. These municipalities include Atlantic Highlands, Highlands, Keansburg, Hazlet, Union Beach, Keyport, Aberdeen, Matawan and the northern portion of Middletown Township. Having formed the Regional Collaborative, these nine municipalities have developed a plan to improve, enhance and revitalize all of their communities. The Collaborative's overall plan entitled "Bayshore Region Strategic Plan" was adopted by the Monmouth County Planning Board on September 18, 2006 and focuses on enhancing the waterfront and preserving the maritime character of the region. These concerns are not only important from an environmental perspective, but also for economic development in the region. Relevant suggestions found in the Regional Strategic Plan have been incorporated into the goals and objectives set forth in this Master Plan.

### **A. HERITAGE**

#### **GOAL:**

**Maintain and enhance the Borough architectural, historic and scenic heritage as an asset for the future.**

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- Seek to promote well-conceived and more widespread preservation by providing practical guidance and economic incentives sought by homeowners for the restoration of historic

structures.

- Encourage the continuing exchange of information on restoration experiences, materials, sources and services through the Historical Society and the Older Homes Group its sponsors.
- Provide a set of principles, objectives, and policies that would provide guidance for protecting and enhancing the town's historic heritage.
- Revise the Borough Development Regulations to incorporate stronger policies, ordinances, guidelines, incentives and other action aimed at historic preservation and restoration, as noted above.
- Create a Historic Preservation Commission in accordance with the Municipal Land Use Law, N.J.S.A. 40:55D-107.
- Complete and update a historical building inventory and extend the inventory to include the Central Business district and the west side of the Borough.
- Update existing landmarks provisions in the Land Development Ordinance for Municipal Land Use Law conformance.
- Aid the Historical Society to collect and house reference information, historic documents and exhibits, and maintaining the Strauss Mansion Museum as a public resource on the history of the Borough and its environs.
- Focus on the preservation and physical enhancement of the historic district on Victorian Hill by means of better documentation and public interpretation. Similar efforts will be made for the Victorian architectural heritage and streetscapes on the west side of town.
- Develop preservation, restoration and re-development initiatives on a town-wide basis.

## **B. HOUSING**

### **GOAL:**

**Limit future development and population density.**

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- Update existing land use and housing data to determine remaining available vacant land.
- Develop town-wide policies to restrain additional housing development so as to maintain the small-town character of the Borough.
- Develop ways to discourage overdevelopment of infill lots as much as possible.

- Continue to improve the balance between housing development and open space preservation, with the aim of providing residents increased opportunities for active and passive recreation (including bay front activities, trails and greenways), maintaining natural buffers and wildlife habitat, and sustaining property values and residents' enjoyment that depend in part on these assets.
- Include housing data from future Censuses to determine future needs.
- Examine possible ordinance changes regarding existing housing and new construction to encourage single-family housing compatible with the existing historic structures within historic districts.
- Review the requirements of the "Local Redevelopment and Housing Law," P.L. 1992 C. 79 (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 et seq.) as amended by P.L.2013, c.159 to determine the most efficient manner to prepare and implement any redevelopment plans the Borough may establish.
- Revise Borough's Housing Plan Element to address affordable housing obligation based upon applicable Court rulings and State requirements including the statutory requirements of the Fair Housing Act (N.J.S.A. 52:27D-310, et seq.), the Municipal Land Use Law (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28), and Fair Share Housing Center (FSHC) Settlement Agreement approved by Court Order on May 24, 2018.
- Promote zoning that provides for the protection and enhancement of existing housing units that can serve as affordable housing.
- Promote construction codes that are in conformance with FEMA and State Emergency Management Guidelines and are consistent with sound loss mitigation practices with the goal of preserving life and property.
- Promote environmental sustainability in the development and renovation of residential property in accordance with the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED system (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) that sets standards for site development, water and energy efficiency, material selection, indoor environmental quality and other environmental design factors.

## **C. COMMERCE**

### **GOAL:**

**Encourage structural and aesthetic improvements in the business and entertainment and light industry districts to strengthen their commercial attraction, promote a viable economic base, and expand the choice of goods, services and employment available within the Borough.**

## **OBJECTIVES:**

- Continue to promote, protect and foster interaction of the Borough's four main geographic elements (historic district; business and entertainment district; the bay shore and harbor; and scenic, natural and recreational lands). Work to continue these elements as the mainstay of the Borough's tax base, real estate appeal, employment opportunities and community life.
- Continue Borough efforts to upgrade and revitalize the business and entertainment district to attract businesses and customers, while maintaining and strengthening its characteristics - human scale and pedestrian friendliness, small-town/small-shops nature, inviting and restful traditional streetscape treatment, historic-style storefronts, low-key signage, convenient parking, litter-free environment, etc.
- Continue plans to link the business and entertainment district with the Many Mind Creek greenway, the waterfront and the harbor.

Study redevelopment possibilities in the West Avenue corridor south of Highland Avenue and the light industry district that would improve business prospects, the mix of uses and services provided, the aesthetics of structures and streetscapes, vehicular and pedestrian access, traffic and circulation patterns, etc., while also creating the greenway along the district's "back yard" of Many Mind Creek and enhancing its streambed and bank conditions, vegetated buffer, wetland functionality, flood control, and aesthetic appearance.

- Study redevelopment opportunities in the Municipal Harbor including additional commercial space and aesthetic and structural enhancement of existing commercial structures including piers, dock space and parking as required. Consider alternatives to the current Municipal Harbor launch ramp operation with an eye toward increased pedestrian safety, optimal use of available parking and enhanced boater safety.
- Improve traffic circulation and parking provisions to more adequately address the needs of commercial and residential uses and balance the vision of being a transit village.
- Improve pedestrian and cyclist safety through repair, restoration, installation of sidewalks and bike lanes throughout the Borough.
- Continue to support the restoration and renovation of existing business properties for commercial use along First Avenue.
- Review the eligibility requirements and benefits of having the Borough designated a Transit Hub by NJDOT.
- Promote environmental sustainability in the development and renovation of commercial property in accordance with the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED system (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) that sets standards for site development, water and energy efficiency, material selection, indoor environmental quality and other



environmental design factors.

- Redraw the boundaries for the town center designation to emphasize the downtown business and entertainment district. Encourage restoration and revitalization rather than new development in these areas.
- Participate with other communities in the Region to develop an overall development strategy for New Jersey Route 36, focusing within Atlantic Highlands on the area at and west of First Avenue.
- Join with other municipalities in the Region and other levels of government, as well as business, environmental, and cultural organizations to promote the area as a tourist destination and also implement plans relating to economic development, waterfront and open space resources, and transportation.

## **D. LINKAGES and EDGES**

### **GOAL:**

**Seek appropriate linkage and balance of waterfront open space and recreational activities with waterfront commercial and commuter activities to enhance the character and amenities available along the Bayshore. Improve the quality of the Borough's network of roadways, trails and gateways.**

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- Implement the concept plan for Many Mind Creek and its greenway trail as the missing link between the Henry Hudson Trail from the west and greenway Trail to the east. This will provide a walking and biking connection from west side residential areas to recreation at Firemen's Field, the business district and Marina.
- Pursue needed trail linkages and extensions in the Lenape Woods Nature Preserve to connect the existing east and west sections, create a trail eastward to Mount Mitchell Scenic Overlook, complete links downhill to the future Trail, and cooperate with Middletown Township on the proposed pedestrian bridge from the Preserve to the Campo Trails south of New Jersey Route 36.
- Support the maintenance and upgrading of transit connections to nearby towns and Manhattan.
- Assure continuation of the commuter ferry service by providing additional parking, working to construct a ferry terminal and ticket office, and improving passenger access, and by continuing to explore possible grants for these purposes.
- Strengthen links among the ferry system, the business and entertainment district, the local bus stop at Center Avenue, and New York commuter buses at New Jersey Route 36 including improving gateway, destination and parking signage; establishing shuttle bus service if feasible; and installing route maps at key points.

- Improve sidewalks and bike lanes to facilitate pedestrian and bike travel in modes similar to that of a transit village.
- Improve community preparedness in case of storms, flooding, or other disasters that have impact on the Borough.
- Improve traffic circulation and parking provisions downtown and in the Marina area. This would include performing a targeted study of parking demand and need for the downtown area with the potential of expanding the public parking options.
- Continue to strengthen off-street parking requirements for principal uses in the commercial zones.
- Support ridesharing services and new technologies that reduce demand on existing parking facilities.
- Consider applying for Transit Village designation.
- Continue participation in the Regional Collaborative to support the initiatives established in the Regional Strategic Plan.

## **E. INFRASTRUCTURE and SUSTAINABILITY**

### **GOAL:**

**Maintain and improve municipal service systems where deemed necessary. Ensure that investment in infrastructure supports a sustainable pattern of land uses that builds on past public investment in roads, schools, utilities and public open space.**

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- Continue to try to identify and correct infiltration and inflow problems within the sanitary sewer system.
- Assess the existing zone with septic systems to determine the feasibility of municipal sewer based on complex issues such as topography, geological stability, technological alternatives, system layout, costs and financing methods. Alternatively, adopt a septic maintenance program with municipal and county oversight.
- Implement adopted stormwater management measures in order to reduce nonpoint pollution, control erosion and sedimentation, reduce flooding and gain the full benefit from wetlands and stream buffers.
- Continue to update and improve the water supply system, which has parts that are over 100 years old.

- Continue the Borough street improvement program to maintain and improve the local road systems.
- Work with state and county road highway departments to replace several outdated bridges.
- Identify scenic roadways for designation on updated mapping and develop construction guidelines to preserve the roadways and their public viewsapes.
- Take the necessary steps for grant-seeking, planning, remediation of contaminants, other environmental studies, public consultation and negotiations with landowners, to achieve Borough acquisition of the remaining tracts of Bayshore property, or any tracts that may become available in the future.
- Seek an appropriate linkage and balance along the Bayfront between open space, recreation, environmental conservation and public access needs, and activities related to commuting, parking, ferry operations, private-boat docking, charter boats, restaurants and other commercial activities.
- Ensure compliance with all Federal and State regulations and guidelines for coastal management.

**OBJECTIVES RELATED TO THE MARINA:**

- Maintain and improve the facilities and services in the municipal marina for support of boat launching, operation, docking, and storage. The aims are to enhance the quality of harbor activities, reduce environmental impacts, ensure customer loyalty, and increase overall revenues to the Borough and the resulting town-wide economic benefits, while meeting State objectives relating to boating, tourism, fishing, coastal management and water quality.
- Help to develop, and to implement where possible, emerging plans for Bayshore regional cooperation in dredging, remediation of dredge spoils when needed, and beneficial use of dredged materials as part of a long-term dredge management program for the Marina.
- Encourage and enforce the practices mandated in the State-wide “Clean Marina” program of which the Atlantic Highlands Marina has been certified. This includes the related Borough ordinance that prevent pollution in the marina on land and in the bay
- Enhance non-boating related activities in the Marina area to attract residents and visitors to the marina.
- Encourage commuters to spend additional time in the Borough by creating a more “gateway like” atmosphere at the Municipal Marina to encourage patrons and commuters to “discover” Atlantic Highlands.

## **F. COMMUNITY**

### **GOALS:**

**Retain the small-town residential character while continuing to thrive as an active, livable waterfront community.**

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- Maintain the delicate balance between natural, recreational, residential and commercial uses along the entire waterfront.
- Continue the Borough's commitment to open space preservation.
- Maintain pedestrian and bike friendly streetscapes where they currently exist and create additional areas where feasible to address needs.
- Obtain specific grants to support Borough objectives of community preservation and enhancement.
- Formally adopt measures for existing tree maintenance and protection, in addition to existing measures in the steep slope zone, and add language to Borough ordinances regarding planting requirements for new development to strengthen the steep slope stability in the Borough.
- Preserve as much as possible of the Borough's natural landscape.
- Continue to participate with other Bayshore towns in "shared interest" of ecological and economic resources in order to promote a regional effect.
- Continue to support and participate in County, State and Federal endeavors for coastal protection including the recommendations and data of the Recommendations Report entitled "Getting to Resilience" prepared by the Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Center – January 2015
- Continue with plans to acquire available vacant land to support the proposed Open Space and Recreation Plan and the goals proposed in the 5-year Action Plan listed below:
  - a. Provide increased active and passive recreation for children and adults, including active recreation programs such as ball games and swimming, and passive pursuits such as hiking and nature observation.
  - b. Offer trail access and other open space amenities to additional neighborhoods.
  - c. Help restrain development in environmentally sensitive areas in the Borough, thus maintaining both quality of life and property values.
  - d. Reduce the danger of over-intensive development along our borders.

- e. Protect natural resources such as streams and stream banks, beaches, steep slopes and slump block zones, forests and wetlands.
- f. Preserve and enhance the environment by maintaining existing buffers against highway noise and air pollution, saving natural habitat needed by birds and wildlife, and preserving tree mass that moderates temperature and wind effects and to provide stability to the steep slope and slump block areas of the Borough.
- g. Add to natural/environmental education opportunities available to children and adults.
- h. Provide increased protection from flooding by maintaining and improving existing wetland areas that absorb storm surge and run-off.

## **G. NATURAL RESOURCES**

### **GOALS:**

**Identify all of the natural resources within the Borough and develop comprehensive plans for the conservation of those resources.**

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- Protect natural resources such as streams and stream banks, bay coast and beaches, steep slopes and slump block zones, forests and wetlands.
- Preserve and enhance the environment by maintaining existing buffers and establishing new buffers where necessary.
- Protection of woodlands and tree cover for the stability of both slopes and soil; the control of erosion; the reduction of sediment reaching the streams, the harbor, the bay; the retention of rain and groundwater (the source of the Borough's drinking water); the supply of nutrients needed for other kinds of vegetation; the provision of shelter and habitat needed by birds and other wildlife; the counteracting of car fumes and other air pollution; the maintenance of buffers against traffic noise, for shade relief and cooling effects in summer; for the moderation of wind effects; for privacy buffers between residences; and screening between different land uses (residential, commercial, industrial, etc.).
- Educate Borough residents about the positive and valuable functions of freshwater and saline wetlands in flood abatement, water quality, and habitat provision.
- Strengthen monitoring and enforcement of unauthorized tree removal, slope disturbance, wetland infill and other abuses of natural resources.

- Continue the measures required under the State-mandated Borough stormwater management plan and ordinance; undertake follow-up projects recommended in the regional stormwater management program for the Many Mind Creek watershed; and develop further ordinances as necessary for the implementation of the above objectives.
- Follow the recommendations and data of the Recommendations Report entitled “Getting to Resilience” prepared by the Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Center – January 2015.

## V. EXISTING LAND USE

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At the time the first Atlantic Highlands Master Plan was prepared in 1964, the Borough had already developed as a suburban residential community. The first survey revealed that the principal land use within the Borough was single-family residential with very few multi-family units.

The majority of commercial activity was located primarily along First Avenue, between New Jersey Route 36 and the waterfront with only a few stores and taverns scattered throughout the rest of the Borough. The 1964 report observed that retail sales in the Borough were declining and that local consumer spending was increasingly being lost to highway shopping centers. The report also noted that eight stores located along First Avenue were vacant at the time of the survey.

All other land use categories comprised a significantly small percentage of the total developed land area within the Borough, with the exception of vacant land. Although the 1964 report indicated vacant land comprised over 15 percent of the Borough's total land area, it also noted that the majority of the vacant land was unsuitable for development.

Compared to 1964, the existing land uses in the Borough in 2006 continued to be comprised predominately of single family residential uses. In 2016 single-family residences accounted for 53.9 percent of the total land area. Commercial uses, including retail, restaurants and personal services particularly along the First Avenue corridor, consist of 5.8 percent of the total land area. The other major category of land use is "public property" which consisted of 6.7 percent of the total land area. The major categories of existing land uses are described below:

### **RESIDENTIAL**

Single-family housing, houses occupied by two to four families, and apartment buildings and other large structures for multiple family uses comprised 57.7 percent of the total land area. Residential uses are located throughout the Borough with the exception of the frontage along First Avenue which is the commercial district.

- The dominant dwelling type in the Borough is detached single-family housing
- A small number of buildings contain two to four families, most of which were created by converting single-family dwellings.
- Larger multi-family structures, including apartment complexes, condominiums and townhouses, accounted for 3.8 percent of the total land area. This also includes Portland Pointe, an apartment building devoted to senior affordable housing (62 years and older) and contains 57 one bedroom units.

## **COMMERCIAL**

Commercial land uses include retail and personal service businesses, mixed commercial/residential uses, and professional businesses, which operate in offices or houses.

The main commercial uses, which account for 5.8 percent of the land uses or approximately 43 acres is primarily centered along First Avenue. This includes the eight block area between the shopping center at the New Jersey Route 36 intersection and Bay Avenue/Ocean Boulevard.

A wide variety of business, entertainment and professional service activities are based in this area. Uses include banks; stores for gifts, novelties, clothing, liquor and other retail items; gas stations, auto services and parts; boating supplies and services; bicycles; printers and publishers; office supplies and services; spas; electronics; laundry; upholstery; framing; hair dressers; dance studio; used books; tanning; movie theater; playhouse; restaurants and food services; pharmacy; and professional services in legal, dental, real estate, architectural and other fields.

In addition, several businesses are on land bordering the harbor, including three restaurants, a fishing supply store, the commuter ferry, and charter fishing and pleasure boats which dock at and operate from the waterfront.

## **LIGHT INDUSTRIAL**

Light industrial uses account for approximately 3.8 acres or 0.5 percent of the land uses in the Borough. These uses are mainly between West Avenue and Many Mind Creek.

## **PUBLIC FACILITIES**

Public facilities include those provided by and/or used by Borough government departments and operating services, as well as public schools and postal facilities.

Public uses occupied approximately 50.4 acres or approximately 6.7 percent of the Borough land area.

Borough government departments, services and facilities include the following:

1. Borough Hall: contains municipal offices, police headquarters, public library, and auditorium/courtroom.
2. Emergency Services Building: houses the Fire Department and First Aid Services and the office of Emergency Management. The building fronts on both East Mount Avenue and East Highland Avenue east of First Avenue.
3. Borough Department of Public Works: includes water department, the



recycling center and public works garage and yard off West Lincoln Avenue.

4. Sewerage pumping station located on First Avenue north of Bay Avenue.
5. Atlantic Highlands Elementary School and playground located between East Washington and East Lincoln Avenues on First Avenue.
6. United States Post Office located on the corner of West Mount Avenue and Railroad Avenue.
7. Municipal Marina: includes pier areas and facilities leased from the Borough, the Shore Casino Restaurant and banquet facility, two smaller restaurants, and a bait and tackle shop, Sea Streak Ferry Office, Hair Salon, the Atlantic Highlands Yacht Club, and the skateboard park.

## **HOUSES OF WORSHIP AND QUASI-PUBLIC FACILITIES**

The quasi-public land uses include places of worship, private school facilities and community and fraternal organizations. These uses occupied approximately 9.5 acres or approximately one percent of the Borough land area.

- Houses of worship located in Atlantic Highlands include the following:
  1. Central Baptist Church
  2. First Presbyterian Church
  3. Kings Highway Fellowship
  4. Living Word Christian Church
  5. St. Paul Baptist Church
  6. Methodist Church
  7. Saint Agnes Church
- Other quasi-public facilities include:
  1. Strauss Mansion and Museum of the Atlantic Highlands Historical Society
  2. Masonic Hall on Garfield Avenue
  3. Firemen's Field House at Washington Avenue and Avenue C
  4. Charles J. Hesse III Parish Center at 55 South Avenue. It should be noted that the attached Mother Theresa School (K-8) closed at the end of June 2016 due to declining enrollment.

## **PARKS AND RECREATION**

Park and recreational facilities include land areas owned by the Borough and the County that are preserved as open space land and devoted to active or passive recreation.

- All existing open space which is dedicated to park and recreation uses is detailed in Section XI of this Master Plan.
- The Borough owns the following parcels that account for 50.4 acres or approximately 6.7 percent of the total land area:
  1. Seven small parks or tot lots of a half-acre or less (2.85 acres total),
  2. One multi-use park with a beach on the bay (7.5 acres),
  3. Old railroad right-of-way between the harbor and the Highlands Borough border was completed as a Trail for hiking and biking (12 acres)
  4. In addition, the Borough owns the 51-acre Lenape Woods Nature Preserve, of which 3 acres are inside the Borough borders and 48 acres are in neighboring Middletown Township.

*Note: The playing fields of Fireman's Fields (6.8 acres) are privately owned by the Atlantic Highlands Fire Department, Inc., not by the Borough.*

Other open space and recreation areas:

The Monmouth County Park System owns the following land areas in the Borough:

1. Mount Mitchell Scenic Overlook Park (12 acres)
2. Beach, trail and wetlands along the Highlands border, which is called Popamora Point (13 acres).
3. Portion of the Henry Hudson Trail

*Note: The marina and boat basin, covering 20.8 acres including water areas around the piers, is counted under "public facilities" water area.*

Fireman's Memorial Field is owned by the Atlantic Highlands Fire Department, Inc. and is located between West Highland and Leonard Avenue just east of Avenue C and adjacent to Many Mind Creek. The facility contains a total of 7.3 acres. This facility is comprised of a 17 space parking lot, 3 baseball fields (converted to football in fall), bleachers, dugouts, electric scoreboards, PA system, night lights and a cinder track. A field house with restrooms and

concession stand is located along the western portion of the field. A tot lot located adjacent to the field at Leonard Avenue includes a chute, slide, monkey bars, climbing, other devices.

## **VACANT PRIVATE LAND**

Vacant land in the Borough is very limited and infill development occurring in recent years has reduced it further.

- In 1964 vacant land accounted for more than 15 percent of the Borough total land area, the majority of which was "unsuitable for development" (Borough Master Plan 1996, 5-1).
- By 1988, vacant land had been reduced to 11.5 percent and was lower still by 2000.
- As of 2017, the remaining vacant land consists of small scattered lots an acre or less in size, except for one lot (The Harmon Tract – Block 5.02, Lot 1) which is approximately 6 acres in size. Vacant land accounts for approximately 37.4 acres or 5.0 percent of the Borough land area.

**Table V-1  
Existing Land Use-2017  
Acreage and Percent of Total**

<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percent of Total Land</b>
Residential (1 to 4 family)	404.9	53.9%
Apartment, Condominium, Townhouse	25.4	3.4%
Senior Housing	3.2	0.4%
Commercial	43.4	5.8%
Light Industrial	3.8	0.5%
House of Worship / Quasi-Public	9.5	1.3%
Public Property	50.4	6.7%
Park/Recreation and Open Space	25.3	3.4%
Public School Property	2.1	0.3%
Vacant	37.4	5.0%
Roadways (Right-of-way) approx.	145.3	19.4%
<b>Subtotal Land Acres</b>	<b>750.6</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Riparian and/or Water Area</b>		
<i>Riparian (water) (Vacant &amp; Public class.)</i>	<i>185.4</i>	
<i>Water area (Classified as Public)</i>	<i>140.0</i>	
<b>Subtotal Water Acres</b>	<b>325.4</b>	
<b>Total Land and Water Area</b>	<b>1,076.0</b>	

## **STREETS AND ROADWAY RIGHTS-OF-WAY**

- Streets and roadway rights-of-way account for approximately 145 acres or approximately 19.4 percent of the total land area within the Borough.

## **DEVELOPMENT GUIDANCE**

Guidance for the development and redevelopment of the Borough is provided in two key documents, the Borough Master Plan and the Borough Development Regulations:

- The Borough Master Plan provides a long term vision; discusses broad goals, available options, and desirable patterns to be weighed and pursued in the future; and is reviewed and revised as necessary at least once every ten years as mandated by the New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89).
- The Borough Development Regulations establish specific zones for particular types of land uses so that neighboring uses will be as compatible and harmonious as possible, and provide development specifications for land development. The regulations contain locations where land can be developed; what uses are permitted and prohibited in each zone; how intensive development may be in terms of building bulk, height, lot coverage and other measurable factors; and how to plan for drainage, off-street parking, landscaping, lighting, signage and other similar amenities and appurtenances. Also, specific requirements are shown regarding maximum building sizes, land disturbance, preservation of vegetation and other factors which are especially important in the steep slope areas comprising the eastern third of the Borough. A list and brief description of the Borough Zoning Districts is provided in Table V-2.

**Table V-2  
Zoning Districts  
Borough of Atlantic Highlands**

District	Description /
<b>RESIDENTIAL</b>	
R-1	Detached single family residential
R-2	Detached single family residential
R-3	Detached single family residential
O-R	Detached single family residential, professional and business offices scaled to be compatible with residential design, home occupations, and conversions of dwellings to office use.
SC	Senior citizen residential
RTH	Residential townhouse and attached single family

MF-1	Multi-family garden residential
MF-2	Multi-family mid-rise

**BUSINESS DISTRICTS**

HBD	Historic Business District on First Avenue oriented to pedestrians with off street parking consolidated in public parking areas with architectural controls coordinated with streetscape improvements. New development must demonstrate adequate capacity in off-street parking facilities.
CBD	Central Business District oriented to First Avenue with on-site parking required.
HB	Highway Business district oriented to automobile access from New Jersey Route 36.
WB	Waterfront Business district encouraging new retail and water oriented uses to link the HBD with the marina area. Pedestrian orientation, architectural, and streetscape controls required. Off-site parking to be consolidated in shared lots. Visual and physical access to the waterfront required.

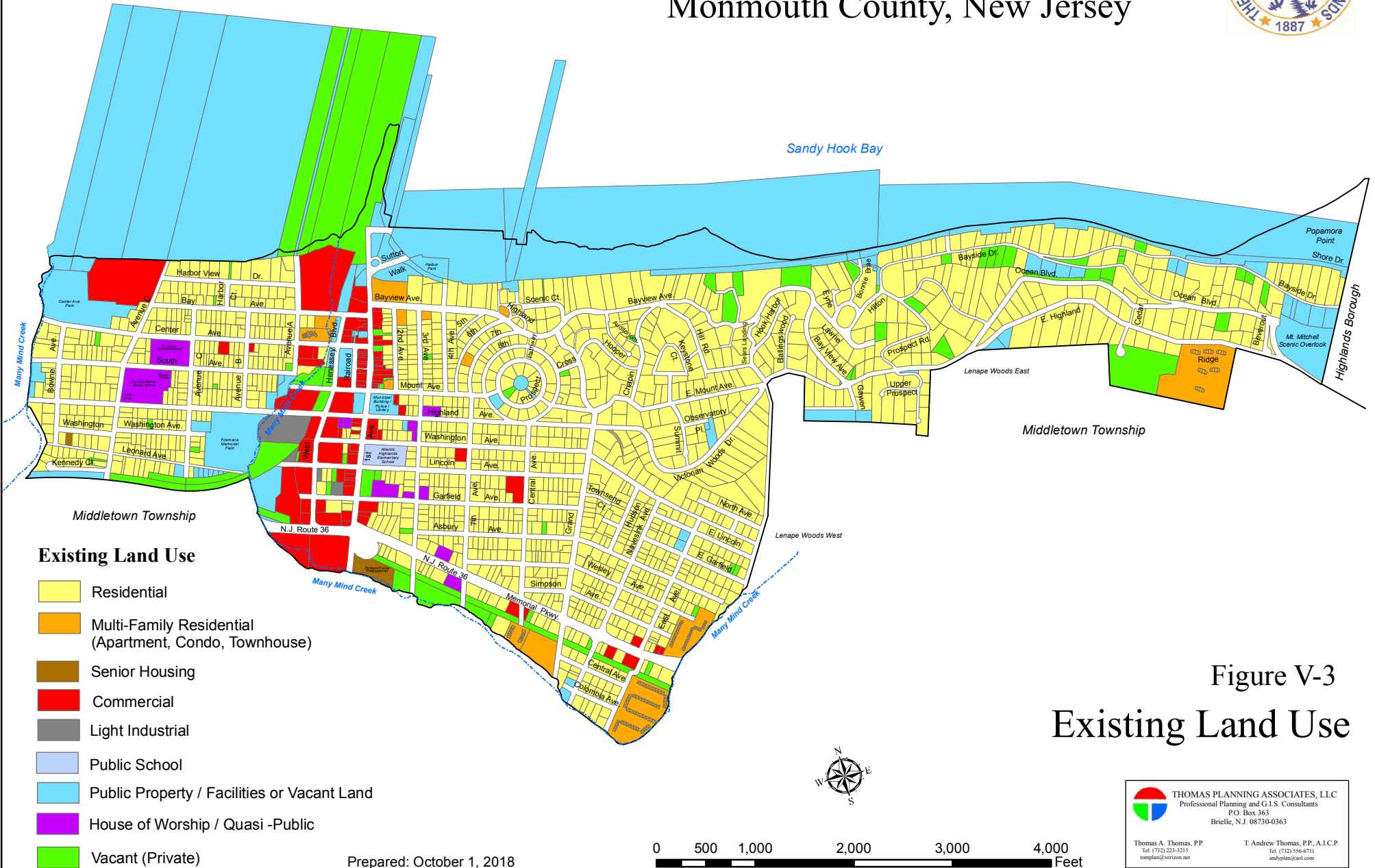
**OTHER DISTRICTS**

LI	Light Industrial district west of West Avenue.
MR	Marine Recreation district for water dependent and water oriented uses supporting marina and recreation activity. Visual and physical access to the waterfront required.
MC	Marine Conservation Zone apply to those area that are waterward of the mean high water line. Typically these are riparian area properties
AH	The AH Zone is intended to provide the opportunity to construct affordable housing within the Borough of Atlantic Highlands

*Source: "Our Town's Environment" prepared by the Environmental Commission.  
Updated by: Thomas Planning Associates*

# Borough of Atlantic Highlands

Monmouth County, New Jersey



## Existing Land Use

- Residential
- Multi-Family Residential (Apartment, Condo, Townhouse)
- Senior Housing
- Commercial
- Light Industrial
- Public School
- Public Property / Facilities or Vacant Land
- House of Worship / Quasi -Public
- Vacant (Private)

Prepared: October 1, 2018

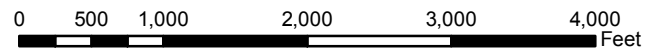


Figure V-3  
Existing Land Use

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## **VI. POPULATION**

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During the period 1890 to 1970 the Borough of Atlantic Highlands experienced a steady increase in population from 945 to 5,102 with the exception of 1910 to 1920 when the Borough experienced a slight decrease. Since 1970, however, the Borough population has steadily declined from 5,102 to 4,385 in 2010. It is estimated that the Borough population peaked in about 1972.

The decline in population from 1970 through 2010 occurred from a declining birthrate, a declining household size and an increasingly elderly population with fewer children living at home. In 2010 it is estimated that 40.7 percent of the Atlantic Highlands population was aged 50 and older while 15.5 percent of the population was aged 65 and over. The Borough has experienced an increasingly aging population for the past 40 years and it is expected that this trend will continue for some time.

Population trends are influenced by a variety of factors, including national, state, and regional economic conditions, social changes and government policies. Changing birth rates, employment trends, consumer preferences, and numerous other factors can affect future development within the Borough. Atlantic Highlands, however, can guide future development and can manage growth within the Borough by establishing appropriate standards for residential types and development densities as part of its land planning effort.

### **DEMOGRAPHIC DATA SOURCES**

The demographic data used in this section are derived from a variety of sources. The U.S. Census Bureau provides data on general population characteristics including the number of persons, households and families, and housing units within the State, Monmouth County and the Borough. Historical and geographical comparisons are possible through the use of Census data. In addition, the New Jersey Department of Labor and Industry, Office of Demographic and Economic Analysis compiles demographic data and provides estimates on population characteristics of the State, metropolitan regions, counties and municipalities.

Table VI-1, Historic Population: 1890 – 2010 compares population changes numerically and by percentage on a decennial basis for Atlantic Highlands, Monmouth County and the State. While Atlantic Highlands experienced a 6.8 percent loss in population during the last decade between 2000 and 2010, Monmouth County experienced its lowest population increase since 1880 with an increase of only 2.5 percent. The State of New Jersey also experienced a modest increase of only 4.5% which is the third lowest decennial increase since 1880. The post-World War II population growth in Monmouth County reached a peak between 1940 and 1970 and in Atlantic Highlands reached a peak between 1940 and 1960. The lack of easily developable land coupled with the environmental restrictions on development in the New Jersey Coastal Area beginning in the early 1970s will restrict major increases in population growth in the County and the Borough in the future.

**Table VI-1**  
**Historic Population: 1890-2010**  
**Atlantic Highlands, Monmouth County and New Jersey**

YEAR	ATLANTIC HIGHLANDS		MONMOUTH COUNTY		NEW JERSEY	
	CENSUS	PERCENT CHANGE	CENSUS	PERCENT CHANGE	CENSUS	PERCENT CHANGE
1880	945		69,128		1,444,933	
1900	1,383	46.3	82,057	18.7	1,883,669	30.4
1910	1,645	18.9	94,734	15.4	2,537,167	34.7
1920	1,629	-1.0	104,925	10.8	3,155,900	24.4
1930	2,000	22.8	147,209	40.3	4,041,334	28.1
1940	2,335	16.8	161,238	9.5	4,160,165	2.9
1950	3,083	32.0	225,327	39.7	4,835,329	16.3
1960	4,119	33.6	334,401	48.4	6,066,782	25.5
1970	5,102	2.4	461,849	38.1	7,364,158	2.7
1980	4,950	-3.0	503,173	8.9	7,168,164	18.2
1990	4,629	-6.5	553,124	10.0	7,730,188	5.0
2000	4,707	1.6	615,303	11.2	8,414,378	8.9
2010	4,385	-6.8	630,380	2.5	8,791,894	4.5

Source: U.S. Census: 1890-2010  
 Compiled by: Townplan Associates, 1989  
 Thos. J. Scangarello & Associates, P.A. 2006  
 Thomas Planning Associates, L.L.C. 2016

**COMPONENTS OF POPULATION CHANGE: 1960-2010**

Population changes occur from two basic factors:

- Natural increase or decrease (births versus deaths)
- In and out migration (the movement of residents into or out of a municipality).

During the period 1960 to 1970, population growth in Atlantic Highlands resulted from both a high birth rate and an in-migration of population. In the decade that followed, 1970 to 1980, population decreased as a result of a reduction in the birth rate, a slight increase in the number of deaths and a fairly large out-migration of population. A net out-migration of population continued during the period 1980-2010 as evidenced by declining household sizes.

*Note: Since the New Jersey Department of Health has changed its method of recording births and deaths in the 1990s, it is not currently possible to calculate natural increases or decreases based on birth and deaths within the Borough.*



## **AGE, GENDER AND RACE CHARACTERISTICS**

The U.S. Census provides population data on racial, age and gender characteristics on a municipal basis. Table VI-2 provides the data pertaining to the Borough population by race. The 2010 Census also includes a breakdown of Hispanic and non-Hispanic individual.

Table VI-3 provides age and gender characteristics for the 2010 population of Atlantic Highlands. The Borough population of 4,385 in 2010 consisted of 2,246 females representing 51.2 percent of the population while males totaled 2,139 or 48.8 percent of the population. The median age of the Borough population was 45 years in 2010. The median age of Atlantic Highlands is higher than Monmouth County at 43.9 years, the State at 45.0 years and the United States at 37.2 years.

**Table VI-2  
Population By Race  
Borough of Atlantic Highlands**

	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>NON- HISPANIC</b>	<b>HISPANIC</b>
White Alone	4,086	3,937	149
Black or African American alone	63	62	1
American Indian & Alaska Native alone	11	5	6
Asian alone	95	91	4
Some Other Race alone	55	49	6
Two or More Races	75	16	59
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,385</b>	<b>4,160</b>	<b>225</b>

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010*

**Table VI-3  
Population By Sex and Age: 2010  
Borough of Atlantic Highlands**

<b>Total Population</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Male Population</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Female Population</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Under 5	234	5.3%	Under 5	110	2.5%	Under 5	124	2.8%
5 to 9	231	5.3%	5 to 9	117	2.7%	5 to 9	114	2.6%
10 to 14	239	5.5%	10 to 14	118	2.7%	10 to 14	121	2.8%
15 to 19	222	5.1%	15 to 19	124	2.8%	15 to 19	98	2.2%
20 to 24	176	4.0%	20 to 24	91	2.1%	20 to 24	85	1.9%
25 to 29	224	5.1%	25 to 29	111	2.5%	25 to 29	113	2.6%
30 to 34	242	5.5%	30 to 34	113	2.6%	30 to 34	129	2.9%
35 to 39	299	6.8%	35 to 39	149	3.4%	35 to 39	150	3.4%
40 to 44	326	7.4%	40 to 44	168	3.8%	40 to 44	158	3.6%
45 to 49	406	9.3%	45 to 49	188	4.3%	45 to 49	218	5.0%
50 to 54	450	10.3%	50 to 54	244	5.6%	50 to 54	206	4.7%
55 to 59	354	8.1%	55 to 59	183	4.2%	55 to 59	171	3.9%
60 to 64	300	6.8%	60 to 64	136	3.1%	60 to 64	164	3.7%
65 to 69	229	5.2%	65 to 69	116	2.6%	65 to 69	113	2.6%
70 to 74	154	3.5%	70 to 74	69	1.6%	70 to 74	85	1.9%
75 to 79	128	2.9%	75 to 79	48	1.1%	75 to 79	80	1.8%
80 to 84	89	2.0%	80 to 84	26	0.6%	80 to 84	63	1.4%
85 & over	82	1.9%	85 & over	28	0.6%	85 & over	54	1.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,385</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>		<b>2,139</b>	<b>48.8%</b>		<b>2,246</b>	<b>51.2%</b>
<b>Median Age</b>	<b>45.0</b>		<b>Median Age</b>	<b>43.9</b>		<b>Median Age</b>	<b>45.8</b>	

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010*

### **INCOME LEVEL**

Table VI-4 outlines household income by income category as of 2014. The 2014 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates reported the median household income in 2014 inflation-adjusted dollars for Atlantic Highlands as \$82,596 and Monmouth County as \$88,413. The New Jersey's median income was \$71,919 while the United States' median income was \$53,657.

Per the 2010 Census, Monmouth County residents have the fifth highest per capita income in New Jersey at \$40,976. Hunterdon County has the highest per capita income county at \$48,489.

**Table VI-4**  
**Household Income Distribution 2014**  
**American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates**

	<b>Atlantic Highlands</b>	<b>Monmouth County</b>	<b>New Jersey</b>	<b>United States</b>
Less than \$10,000	4.5%	4.4%	5.7%	7.3%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	3.0%	2.9%	3.7%	5.3%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	3.4%	7.4%	8.1%	10.55
\$25,000 to \$34,999	5.8%	6.4%	7.6%	10.0%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	11.9%	8.0%	10.6%	13.5%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	20.3%	14.3%	16.0%	17.8%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	9.8%	12.2%	12.3%	12.0%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	21.9%	18.7%	17.1%	13.1%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	12.2%	10.4%	8.6%	5.2%
\$200,000 or more	7.3%	15.3%	10.4%	5.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Median Household Income	\$82,596	\$88,413	\$71,919	\$53,657

The 2010 U.S. Census reported that 46.7 percent of the residents 16 year of age and older that were employed in 2010 had positions in finance, real estate, professional, scientific, management, administrative, educational, health care and social assistance occupations. Other major occupations included construction, manufacturing, retail trade and the arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services sectors of the economy. The distribution of occupations is summarized in Table VI-5, Civilian Occupations-2010 Borough of Atlantic Highlands.

**Table VI-5  
Civilian Occupations - 2010  
Borough of Atlantic Highlands**

<b>INDUSTRY CLASSIFICATION</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	18	0.8%
Construction	165	7.2%
Manufacturing	138	6.0%
Wholesale trade	50	2.2%
Retail trade	221	9.6%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	103	4.5%
Information	89	3.9%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	230	10.0%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	426	18.5%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	418	18.2%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	289	12.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,147</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

# **MASTER PLAN**

## **VII. PRINCIPLES, OBJECTIVES, ASSUMPTIONS, POLICIES AND STANDARDS**

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### **PRINCIPLES**

In order to promote the conservation of desirable community features, restrain future development on scarce un-built land, and guide preservation, restoration and redevelopment efforts, this Master Plan is based on the following principles:

1. Maintenance and enhancement of the Borough's traditional community form, characterized by its central business district, historic districts, streetscapes and buildings, waterfront orientation, residential areas, pedestrian scale, and open space and recreation areas.
2. Maintenance of the present intensity of land use, density of population, and existing lot sizes and configurations in view of environmental and other constraints, and in line with the capacity of existing infrastructure, the need to maintain satisfactory levels of municipal services, and the goal of preserving the community's traditional character and economic viability.
3. Maintenance and preservation of existing single-family neighborhoods.
4. Restricting multi-family residential use to the existing units in specifically defined locations, which have already been constructed.
5. Provide for affordable housing opportunities within the Borough in identified locations in accordance with applicable regulations and agreements.
6. Encouragement of a viable economic base.
7. Identification and conservation of environmentally critical natural features.
8. Appropriate linkage and balance of waterfront open space and recreation activities with waterfront commercial and commuter activities to enhance the character and improve the amenities centrally available along the bay.
9. Recognition and preservation of historic sites and districts and encouragement of their restoration, rehabilitation and adaptive use.

### **OBJECTIVES**

1. To secure safety from fire, flood, panic and other natural and manmade disasters including the development of disaster mitigation plans in advance of need.

2. To limit future land development and population density to ensure neighborhood, community and regional well-being and protection of the environment.
3. To prevent the degradation of the environment through the improper use of land, streams and stream corridors, freshwater and saline wetlands, the bay front, and woodlands, and through reduction of tree cover and vegetation on the land.
4. To encourage bay front open space and recreational activities, adequate public services for beach use, hiking, and boating, as well as improved commercial facilities.
5. To establish new and upgrade existing municipal recreational facilities, including ball fields, trails for biking and hiking, beaches, and the Lenape Woods Nature Preserve.
6. To preserve historic sites and districts and to restore, rehabilitate and set adaptive uses for historic buildings.
7. To protect areas with scenic, cultural and recreational value, particularly along the waterfront, stream corridors, the Ocean Boulevard “scenic route” and other scenic roadways, streetscapes in historic districts, and hilly woodlands.
8. To promote a desirable visual environment in terms of open space and recreation lands, stream corridors, the bay front, the Marina, scenic roadways, landscaping, buildings and infrastructure.
9. To encourage restoration as well as redevelopment of substandard sites, buildings and streetscapes which contribute to the improvement and enhancement of the community.
10. To provide sufficient space in appropriate locations for commercial, residential, light industrial, and open space and recreational uses.
11. To maintain and attract beneficial commercial and light industrial uses in their existing zones.
12. To promote the recovery of recyclable materials from the municipal solid waste stream and encourage the conservation of energy.
13. To encourage the appropriate and efficient expenditure of public funds by coordinating public and private development within the framework of existing land use patterns and densities, redevelopment needs and conservation principles.

## **ASSUMPTIONS**

The Atlantic Highlands Master Plan is based upon the following assumptions:

1. There will be no catastrophic disruption of the existing natural and/or man-made features

of the Borough.

2. There will be continued long-term economic expansion within the region. While little or no population growth is expected in Atlantic Highlands and land use and population density are effectively at the limits of capacity, there will be opportunities to enhance the economic base of the community by virtue of its recreational waterfront and favorable access within a developing region, and by pursuing redevelopment initiatives that build on the existing appeal and advantages enjoyed by the Borough.

## **POLICIES**

The Atlantic Highlands Master Plan is based upon the following policies:

1. Provision of a variety of residential and non-residential uses which will maintain the Borough of Atlantic Highlands as an attractive community on Sandy Hook Bay.
2. Protection of the environmental quality of the Borough through measures that maintain sensitive features, especially steep slopes, landmarks, historic sites, areas containing scenic or recreational resources, woodlands, stream corridors, wetlands and natural areas on the bay shore.
3. Management of waterfront development in accordance with an overall plan to protect the amenity of a waterfront location and boat harbor, and to assure the community of physical and visual access to the bay, including access for swimming, boating, off-pier and wade-in fishing, and walking on tidelands.
4. Enhancement of the central business district and light industrial areas to strengthen their commercial attraction and to expand the choice of beneficial goods, services, and employment opportunities available within the Borough.
5. Maintenance of the livability and value of residential neighborhoods.
6. Management of architectural elements that are seen from the bay to maintain and enhance our Victorian architectural heritage.

## **STANDARDS**

This Master Plan provides general standards for development of the Borough, including type, density and location of development, and delineation of areas that are environmentally sensitive. This Master Plan also provides recommendations for historic preservation, coastal waterfront design, park and open space, facilities, roadways. The Development Regulations of the Borough of Atlantic Highlands (Chapter 150 of the Borough Code) includes zoning, site plan, land subdivision and design regulations and provides specific standards for design, construction and development of individual land uses and development sites within the Borough. In addition, Borough, County, State and Federal regulations affecting development, the environment, and



public health and safety all have an effect on the planning and regulatory processes in implementation of this Master Plan.

## **VIII. LAND USE PLAN ELEMENT**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The Land Use Plan Element guides the extent and intensity of development within Atlantic Highlands. The land use recommendations are coordinated with the other Master Plan elements, the basic planning studies and the statement of principles, objectives and assumptions.

The Land Use Plan Element has been based largely upon the historic development patterns, existing land use, and the need to preserve the Borough's traditional form and neighborhoods. It seeks to maintain the current intensity of land use and density of population, which are almost at the limits of capacity, so as to ensure neighborhood, community and regional wellbeing and the protection of the environment. It also continues the Borough's emphasis on preserving open space and improving recreation opportunities.

Sixteen land use districts are planned to provide a balance of residential, commercial, light industrial and marine uses. The districts listed on Table VIII-1 are overlain by designations to protect landmarks, historic areas, flood hazard areas, steep slopes, wetlands and stream corridors. It is intended to establish 50-foot stream buffers along the banks of Many Mind Creek and Wagner Creek in cooperation with Middletown Township for the banks on its side of the border. In the stream buffers, no form of construction is to be allowed, trees and vegetation are to be preserved and public access trails are to be established where feasible within the greenways.

In summary, the Land Use Plan makes recommendations based on the following planning actions:

- The small town residential character should be maintained through coordinated efforts related to revitalization of the Borough, preservation of open space and maintaining a viable coastal resource. Actions will be based on updated ordinances and zoning regulations that will allow the Borough to control the pace and direction of new projects. All proposals will be viewed in a more global perspective as the Borough continues to participate with other municipalities in strategies and plans for economic and ecological resources.
- Residential growth and development should be limited based on several factors: preservation of open space, ordinance changes that support incentives to adapt the existing inventory of historic multi-family structures into units for single family use, and policies that discourage future infill on substandard lots.
- Provide for affordable housing opportunities within the Borough to meet present and future populations and effectuate the Settlement Agreement as further described in the Housing Plan Element.

- The historic aspect of the Borough should be viewed as an asset for the future, one that should be enhanced through legal measures as well as Borough-wide initiatives. Practical guidance and incentives could be made available to homeowners for the restoration of their historical structures. The creation of a Historic Preservation Commission and the adoption of a comprehensive ordinance dealing with historic preservation would allow a framework for protecting and enhancing the Borough's historic heritage.
- Commercial development and redevelopment should be encouraged to establish a viable economic base. Projects designed to upgrade the central business district and commercial areas should be encouraged to support the existing businesses and attract new businesses, which can provide new opportunities for goods, services, employment and customers. The plans to link the waterfront and town center should be continued in order to support the Borough's efforts for commercial development revitalization. Improving the ferry facilities, as well as the road and parking network will support the efforts for economic stability.
- Balance between waterfront commercial and commuter activities with waterfront open space and recreational activities is an important step for the long-term success of the Borough as a viable tourist community. Improving the existing road networks, and the upgrading of transit connections to urban areas will support and enhance the quality of life of Borough residents. Additionally, the plans for development of a network of pedestrian and bicycle links for work and pleasure should go forward to further enable Borough residents to experience the pleasures associated with life. Guidelines will need to be established to protect the intent and future plans for linkages contained within the Borough and those connecting to other Bayshore regional communities.
- Commitment to an upgraded sanitary sewer system is critical for the success of all of the goals put forth in the Master Plan. An in-depth study of existing service and thorough assessment of the areas of the Borough currently with septic systems is imperative to understand the future demands the Borough will experience and to provide realistic guidance to residents using septic systems, many of which are aging. Coupled with these findings, is the need to continue efforts to improve the Borough water supply system. Both systems must be examined and developed in support of an overall plan for the Borough and not reduced to spot examination based on limited individual service.
- The enhancement and preservation of natural resources should occur in a way that is supported and maintained by current and future residents and visitors. In the long run, it will be an educated public armed with the understanding of the importance for policies and projects that will guarantee the Borough's conservation success. They must understand such issues as:
  - a. What natural vegetation and development resources stabilize soil and why it is important;
  - b. What soil resources retain groundwater and why it is important;

- c. What vegetation attracts wildlife and/or will counteract pollution and how that impacts the everyday life of present and future Borough residents and;
  - d. How natural buffers and stream greenways can provide separation between land uses but also minimize the impact of micro-climate conditions.
- Address the need to limit development and construction in two environmentally sensitive areas – flood zone and steep slope area

This Land Use Plan reflects united efforts of the Planning Board in conjunction with numerous other Borough agencies and organizations to guide future land uses and development within the Borough and to coordinate this development with adjacent municipalities. Each goal and objective must be met to maximize the overall development goal of the Master Plan.

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The goals of the Land Use Plan have changed somewhat from previous plans due to changes not only on a municipal level, but also on the county, state and federal levels as well. The lack of available land for new development and an ever increasing awareness of the need for preservation of what is unique to the community and conservation of its natural resources have influenced the direction of the goals of this Plan. Some are directions that were not previously encouraged. The recommendations of this Land Use Element are specifically established to support all of the objectives of the nine basic Master Plan Goals.

- (1) **Heritage**  
Maintain and enhance the Borough's architectural, historic and scenic heritage as an asset for the future.
- (2) **Housing**  
To limit future residential development and maintain population density.
- (3) **Affordable Housing**  
To provide affordable housing opportunities to meet present and future populations.
- (4) **Commerce**  
Enhancement of the central business district and commercial (formerly light industrial) areas to strengthen commercial attraction and to expand the choice of beneficial goods, services, and employment opportunities available within the Borough in order to maintain a viable economic base.
- (5) **Linkages and Edges**  
Appropriate linkage and balance of waterfront open space and recreational activities with waterfront commercial and commuter activities to enhance the character and improve the

amenities centrally available along the Bay Shore. Improve the quality of the Borough's network of roadways, trails and gateways.

**(6) Infrastructure and Sustainability**

Maintain and improve infrastructure systems where deemed necessary. Ensure that investment in infrastructure supports a sustainable pattern of land uses that builds on past public investment in roads, schools, utilities and public open space.

**(7) Community**

Retaining the historic small town residential character while continuing to maintain an active, livable waterfront community.

**(8) Natural Resources**

Identify all of the natural resources within the Borough and develop comprehensive plans for the conservation of those resources that will enhance the quality of life in the Borough.

**(9) Conservation**

Manage development and construction to protect our natural resources.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

In addition to the goals and objectives the following are recommended:

1. Short Term Residential Rentals - There has been an increasing number of single family homes and other residential uses within the Borough being advertised for short term rentals. These advertisements are typically offered on a variety of different national websites such as “AirBnb”, “Homeaway” and “Vacation Rental by Owner” (VRBO). The result of this practice effectively converts a single family home into a boarding house, bed and breakfast, rooming or guest house. Short-term vacation rentals can bring a positive economic impact to the Borough as a whole in terms of economic benefit because guests will spend their money in visitor related amenities such as restaurants, bars and retail stores. They can also increase the Borough’s exposure as a more attractive tourism destination.

While Atlantic Highlands is supportive of increasing tourism, visitors and patrons to local business there is also an understanding that this type of use can cause concern. It is therefore necessary to balance the quality of life between businesses, residential uses and short term rental properties. It is therefore recommended that the rental or leasing of residential properties be 30 days or greater. The purpose is to protect the quality of life in single family residential neighborhoods and promote the public health, safety and general welfare. A Short Term Residential Rental Ordinance should be adopted to reflect this recommendation.

2. Signage. Signage in the commercial district should be regulated as follows:

- a. Permit “murals” in commercial districts as long as specific criteria are met including appropriateness of the design to the purpose of the site, compatibility within the zone and character of the downtown. It is recommended that a new “Atlantic Highlands Borough Mural Approval Committee” be created to review any new mural sign applications. The members on the Committee should include: one member of the Borough Arts Council, one member of the Planning Board, and a Mayor’s designee.
  - b. “Portable signs” in commercial districts which include A-framed signs commonly referred to as “sandwich boards”, banners and feather signs should be regulated subject to receiving a sign permit from the Borough.
  - c. LED lighting should be a permitted sign option in the commercial districts subject to specific qualifying criteria.
  - d. Outdoor seating within sidewalks should be regulated to promote and facilitate the free-flow of pedestrian circulation.
3. Developable area standards should be applied to assure that each parcel has sufficient land area outside of steep slopes and wetlands. Steep slopes and wetlands are defined in Atlantic Highlands Chapter 150 – Development Regulations – Article II Definitions:

***Steep Slopes***

*Areas where the average slope exceeds 15 percent which, because of this slope, are subject to high rates of stormwater runoff and erosion.*

***Wetlands (Nontidal or Freshwater)***

*An area regulated by the New Jersey Freshwater Wetlands Act (N.J.S.A. 13:9B-1 et seq.) that is inundated or saturated by surface water or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances does support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions, commonly known as "hydrophytic vegetation."*

***Wetlands (Tidal)***

*Areas known as marshes, swamps or other lowland subject to tidal action or any area now or formerly connected to tidal waters, whose surface is at or below an elevation of one foot above local extreme high water and of which vegetation unique to tidal marshes, swamps or lowlands has become adapted. This definition shall include, but is not limited to, all the mapped New Jersey State wetlands.*

4. Lenape Woods Nature Preserve: While the Preserve includes land acquisitions that neighbor Atlantic Highlands and fall within Middletown Township borders, it is recommended that all Borough maps include the full area of the Preserve.
5. The creation of First Avenue Building Design Standards should be reviewed

## **RESIDENTIAL**

Approximately 654.0 acres or 60.8 percent of the total land area of the Borough is utilized for residential use.

Although single-family structures are the dominant dwelling type within the Borough, two and four family residential development occupies just over 5.5 acres<sup>2</sup>. The majority of two and four family units have been created from the conversion of single family dwellings, although some recently constructed units also are found. This type of development is most common in areas east of Grand Avenue.

The multi-family category includes apartments, condominiums, townhouses and other attached housing of two or more dwellings. These multi-family uses combine to total approximately 12 acres or 1.1 percent of the total Borough land area. Although multi-family development is scattered throughout the Borough, the larger complexes include: 10 Ocean Apartments, Navesink Cove Condominiums, located on East Avenue south of New Jersey Route 36; King James Court Condominiums, located off New Jersey Route 36 west of Sears Avenue; Brookwood Estates off Grand Avenue; Belvior Condominiums on Center Avenue; Scenic Ridge townhouses on East Highland Avenue; and Portland Pointe.

There are nine residential land use districts that are based upon established land use patterns. The established residential districts are to be maintained in their present form. Existing lot layouts are to be kept at their present dimensions and configurations. Subdivisions that result in non-conforming lots are to be discouraged

### **R-1 – Single Family Residential**

- The land use in this district is predominantly single family.
- Two-family conversions have been eliminated in this district.
- Conversion of houses containing 2 or more units to single family use is encouraged.
- Minimum lot size of 7,500 sq. ft.

### **R-2 – Single Family Residential**

- The land use in this district is predominantly single family.
- Two-family conversions have been eliminated in this district.
- Conversion of houses containing 2 or more units to single family use is encouraged.
- Minimum lot size of 15,000 sq. ft.

### **R-3 – Single Family Residential**

- The land use in this district is predominantly single family on large lots and steep slopes.
- Two-family conversions have been eliminated in this district.
- Conversion of houses containing 2 or more units to single family use is encouraged.
- Minimum lot size of 30,000 sq. ft.

---

<sup>2</sup> Two to four family residential development acreage is based upon calculation from the August 2007 Borough Master Plan

### **MF-1 - Multi-Family Garden Units**

- This type of multi-family attached housing is restricted to this district. The number of existing units is recommended to be maintained.

### **MF-2 - Multi-Family Mid-Rise Units**

- Multi-Family Mid-Rise attached housing is restricted to this district. The number of existing units is recommended to be maintained.

### **AH – Affordable Housing**

Two sites are specifically designated for affordable housing within the Borough and include:

- Block 62, Lot 4 (Simpson Avenue)
- Block 136, Lot 1 (21 Leonard Avenue)

These two sites are intended to provide the opportunity to construct and help fulfill the mandates of affordable housing. Two-family attached housing is permitted within this district and is required to meet additional affordable housing requirements.

### **RTH - Townhouse residential units**

- This type of multi-family attached housing is restricted to this district. The number of existing units is recommended to be maintained.

### **SC - Senior citizen housing development**

- Portland Pointe provides for senior citizen development within the Borough. This apartment building is devoted to senior affordable housing (62 years and older) and contains 57 one bedroom units located at 202 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue. Ten (10) of the units are being counted toward fulfilling the Borough's affordable housing obligation. This development has had a positive impact in providing housing for seniors in the Borough in furtherance of the objectives of the Master Plan.

### **OR - Office-residential**

- Located and maintained along the southern frontage of Memorial Parkway and accounts for 22 acres. This district permits single family residential uses and professional offices and banks. This district also permits mixed-use commercial/residential development as a conditional use.

## **COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS**

Commercial districts account for approximately 52 acres or 4.8 percent of land area within Atlantic Highlands. Incorporated within the commercial district are such uses as retail/service, mixed use (commercial/residential), office/professional and home/professional or home occupation. Commercial development within Atlantic Highlands is primarily centered on First Avenue extending from Bayshore Plaza, located at the intersection of New Jersey Route 36 and



First Avenue, to the waterfront. These uses include a variety of commercial activities including banks, restaurants/bars, offices, retail outlets, auto service stations, and other similar uses.

A second but lesser concentration of business activities can be found along West Avenue between New Jersey Route 36 and Bay Avenue. This area represents a relatively large percentage of the commercial acreage, but accounts for only a small number of the actual commercial uses. These uses include printers, auto service stations, foodservices, and building contractors.

There are five districts that have been defined for commercial, retail and service uses that make up the commercial districts.

### **HBD - Historic Business District**

- Based upon historic quality of the streetscape and the buildings.
- Streetscape improvements coordinated with building facade improvements are encouraged.
- Off-street parking is confined to the Holly Tree Lot, the Municipal Parking Lot between Center and Mount Avenues and along Hennessey Boulevard between Center and Highland Avenues, all outside the HBD boundaries.
- Overnight parking is allowed by permit only in the Holly Tree and Municipal Parking Lots. Permits are purchased at the Atlantic Highlands Police Department.
- Development applications must demonstrate that adequate parking capabilities are available to accommodate new uses in outside districts.
- Mixed-use commercial/residential is a conditionally permitted use in the zone. A mixed-use building containing commercial and residential uses may be permitted in the HBD (Historic Business District), provided that such use adheres to minimum standards including but not limited to:
  - a. Units are confined to upper stories of mixed-use buildings with ground floor space restricted to commercial activities.
  - b. Smaller residential units, designed for occupancy by one or two-person households only are to be permitted.
- Specific sites within the CBD have been designated as affordable housing sites and are further described in the Housing Plan Element.

### **WB - Waterfront Business District**

- The intent of this district is to encourage development that is based on unified plans coordinated with the marina area.
- This district represents an expansion of the business district into the waterfront area to permit additional retail and entertainment/restaurant uses on underdeveloped property.
- Office space is a conditional use.
- The percentage of floor area in office use is limited to encourage a mix that stimulates pedestrian activity during the day and the evening.
- Open space and pedestrian areas are integrated.

### **CBD - Central Business District**

- This district provides for an expanded range of general commercial uses.
- On-site parking is required.
- Less emphasis on pedestrian orientation.
- Mixed-use commercial/residential is a conditionally permitted use in the zone. A mixed-use building containing commercial and residential uses may be permitted in the CBD (Central Business District), provided that such use adheres to minimum standards including but not limited to:
  - a. Units are confined to upper stories of mixed-use buildings with ground floor space restricted to commercial activities.
  - b. Smaller residential units, designed for occupancy by one or two person households only are to be permitted.
- Specific sites within the CBD have been designated as affordable housing sites and are further described in the Housing Plan Element.

### **HB - Highway Business District**

The highway business district is comprised of commercial uses and shopping centers oriented toward New Jersey Route 36.

### **C – Commercial (Previously the “LI – Light Industrial District”)**

The Commercial District is found along Lincoln Avenue between First Avenue and West Avenue. This district was previously the LI-Light Industrial District, however, historically

industrial activity has not been a major component of the developed land area within Atlantic Highlands.

It is recommended that the Light Industrial District be renamed C- Commercial and expand the list of permitted uses to include those uses permitted in the O-R and CBD zones and also include some selected commercial uses. Current permitted uses under the previous LI zone include:

- Professional offices
- Printing
- Personal Services
- Contracting Office
- Assembly, Processing or Repair
- Warehousing
- Municipal Recreation Facility
- Child Care
- Public Facilities

Expanded uses should include:

- Those uses permitted in the O-R and CBD Zones
- Showrooms
- Commercial Indoor Athletic or Exercise Facilities or Health Clubs
- Professional and business offices
- Personal Services
- Auto repair and Sales
- Marine Repair and Sales

## **MARINE RECREATION AND CONSERVATION DISTRICTS**

There are two districts that comprise Marine Recreation and Conservation.

### **MR - Marine Recreation District**

- This district incorporates the marina and public open space uses oriented to the waterfront.
- Uses are restricted to the following:
  - a. Water dependent or water oriented facilities.
  - b. Support uses.
  - c. Recreational uses.
  - d. Public open space.

## **MC - Marine Conservation District**

- This designation is applied to areas waterward of the mean high water line.
- Development in this area is limited.
- This area is intended to maintain the open bay.
- Atlantic Highlands residents are encouraged to enjoy the Borough's coastline resources. Based upon the Resiliency Study that was prepared for the Borough, scientists indicate that residents may experience the effects of higher sea level changes.

## **PUBLIC LANDS AND FACILITIES**

The Land Use Plan includes property under Borough ownership including municipal buildings and land, Board of Education property, Municipal Utilities Authority property, Monmouth County and State lands. Public lands and facilities (including riparian lands and other water area owned by public entities) total 325.4 acres.

Borough owned property that is both vacant and active recreation account for 75.7 acres. This includes the Municipal Marina, the Shore Casino Restaurant, totals approximately 15.4 acres or slightly over two percent of the Borough land area.

The Atlantic Highlands Elementary School accounts for 2.0 acres.

The two most prominent recreation areas within the Borough are the Firemen's Memorial Field (6.7 acres) and the Mount Mitchill Scenic Overlook Park (8.1 acres) that includes a 9/11 Memorial. In addition, several small parks and lots have been developed throughout the Borough. Existing municipal recreation facilities are small in area, serve primarily the residential neighborhoods, and provide limited active recreation.

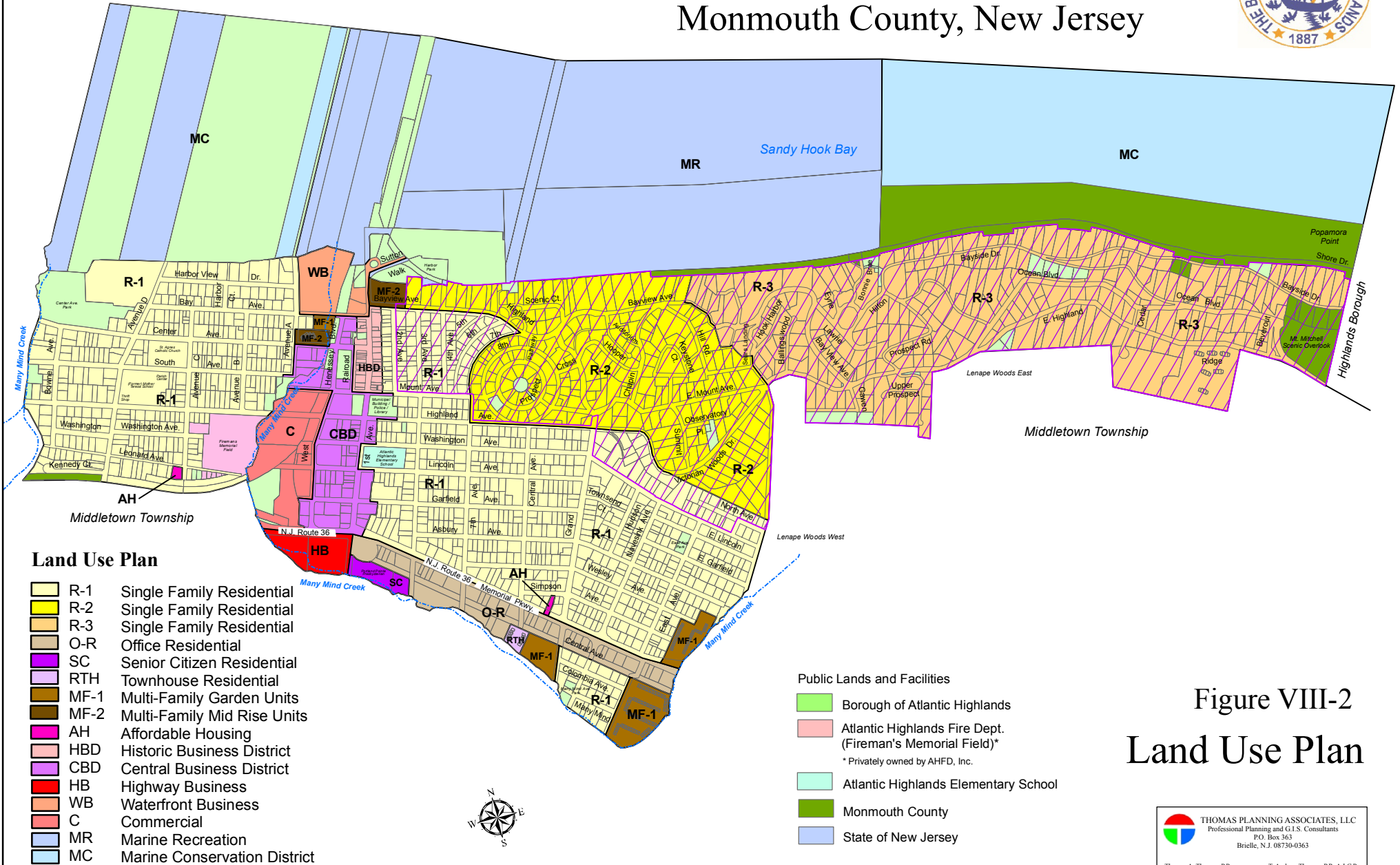
The Borough, State of New Jersey, and Monmouth County also have riparian lands that have been identified and are included on the Land Use Plan. Riparian lands under public classification account for 185.4 acres. Other water area that is shown under public ownership accounts for 140.0 acres. In total both riparian lands and other water area under public ownership accounts for a total of 325.4 acres.

**Table VIII-1  
Land Use Plan Element Acreage  
Borough of Atlantic Highlands**

<b>District</b>	<b>Designation</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Residential</b>			
R-1	Single Family Residential	310	28.8%
R-2	Single Family Residential	112	10.4%
R-3	Single Family Residential	190	17.7%
O-R	Office Residential	22	3.0%
SC	Senior Citizen Residential	3	0.4%
RTH	Townhouse Residential	1	0.1%
MF-1	Multi Family Garden Units	12	1.7%
AH	Affordable Housing	1	0.1%
MF-2	Multi-Family Mid Rise Units	3	0.4%
<i>Subtotal</i>		<b>654</b>	<b>60.8%</b>
<b>Business Districts</b>			
HBD	Historic Business District	5	0.7%
CBD	Central Business District	29	2.7%
HB	Highway Business	6	0.6%
WB	Waterfront Business	12	1.1%
<i>Subtotal</i>		<b>52</b>	<b>4.8%</b>
<b>Other Districts</b>			
C	Commercial	18	1.7%
MR	Marine Recreation	153	14.2%
MC	Marine Conservation District	199	18.5%
<i>Subtotal</i>		<b>370</b>	<b>34.4%</b>
<b>Total Acreage</b>		<b>1,076</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

# Borough of Atlantic Highlands

Monmouth County, New Jersey



## Land Use Plan

- R-1 Single Family Residential
- R-2 Single Family Residential
- R-3 Single Family Residential
- O-R Office Residential
- SC Senior Citizen Residential
- RTH Townhouse Residential
- MF-1 Multi-Family Garden Units
- MF-2 Multi-Family Mid Rise Units
- AH Affordable Housing
- HBD Historic Business District
- CBD Central Business District
- HB Highway Business
- WB Waterfront Business
- C Commercial
- MR Marine Recreation
- MC Marine Conservation District

## Public Lands and Facilities

- Borough of Atlantic Highlands
- Atlantic Highlands Fire Dept. (Fireman's Memorial Field)\*  
\* Privately owned by AHFD, Inc.
- Atlantic Highlands Elementary School
- Monmouth County
- State of New Jersey

Figure VIII-2  
Land Use Plan

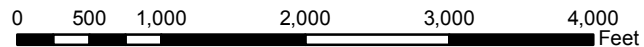
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Steep Slope Area

Prepared: October 1, 2018



## **IX. HOUSING ELEMENT AND FAIR SHARE PLAN**

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The following Housing Element and Fair Share Plan is a separate Master Plan document that was prepared by Heyer, Gruel & Associates August 2018. It was adopted by the Planning Board on September 13, 2018 and is incorporated into this Master Plan herein.

# HOUSING ELEMENT AND FAIR SHARE PLAN

Borough of Atlantic Highlands  
Monmouth County, New Jersey

August 2018

Prepared By:



**Heyer, Gruel & Associates**  
Community Planning Consultants  
236 Broad Street, Red Bank, NJ 07701  
(732) 741-2900



# HOUSING ELEMENT AND FAIR SHARE PLAN


Borough of Atlantic Highlands  
Monmouth County, New Jersey

August 2018

Prepared By:

**Heyer, Gruel & Associates**  
Community Planning Consultants  
236 Broad Street, Red Bank, NJ 07701  
(732) 741-2900


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



Fred Heyer, AICP, CUD, LEED-AP ND, CNUd, P.P. #3581



Susan S. Gruel P.P. #1955



Elena Gable, AICP, P.P., #6356

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## Appendix

**Appendix A: Executed Settlement Agreement between The Borough of Atlantic Highlands and Fair Share Housing Center, dated January 26, 2018.**

**Appendix B: Court Order Approving Fair Share Housing Center Settlement Agreement, entered by the Court on May 24, 2018.**

**Appendix C: Vacant Land Analysis.**

**Appendix D: Planning Board Resolutions for Identified Sites with Proposed Projects.**

**Appendix E: Habitat For Humanity Concept Plan and photos for 21 Leonard Avenue Site.**

## **PART 1: HOUSING ELEMENT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The need to protect and promote affordable housing in New Jersey, the country's densest state, has been recognized for decades. In the case of Southern Burlington County NAACP v. the Township of Mount Laurel, (commonly known as Mount Laurel I), the New Jersey Supreme Court established the doctrine that developing municipalities in New Jersey have a constitutional obligation to provide a realistic opportunity for the construction of low and moderate income housing in their communities. In its Mount Laurel decision, decided on January 20, 1983 (Mount Laurel II), the Supreme Court expanded the Mount Laurel doctrine by determining that this constitutional responsibility extended to all municipalities in New Jersey.

In response to the Mount Laurel II decision, the New Jersey Legislature adopted the Fair Housing Act in 1985 (Chapter 222, Laws Of New Jersey, 1985). The Fair Housing Act established the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) as an administrative alternative to the courts. COAH was given the responsibility of dividing the state into housing regions, determining regional and municipal fair share affordable housing obligations, and adopting regulations that would establish the guidelines and approaches that municipalities may use in addressing their affordable housing need.

Very-low-income households are those in which the gross household income is 30% or less than the region's median household income. Low-income households are those with incomes no greater than 50 percent of the region's median household income. Moderate-income households are those with incomes no greater than 80 percent and no less than 50 percent of the region's median household income. Each is adjusted for household size and is in relation to the median gross income of the housing region in which the municipality is located.

This Housing Element and Fair Share Plan for the Borough of Atlantic Highlands has been prepared in accordance with applicable law. Moreover, on July 2, 2015, the Borough filed a declaratory relief action in response to In re Adoption of N.J.A.C. 5:96 & 5:97 by the N.J. Council on Affordable Housing, 221 N.J. 1 (2015) ("Mount Laurel IV"). In this decision, the Supreme Court held that since COAH was no longer functioning, trial courts were to resume their role as the forum of first instance for evaluating municipal compliance with Mount Laurel obligations, and also established a transitional process for municipalities to seek a Judgment of Compliance and Repose ("JOR") in lieu of Substantive Certification from COAH.

## **ATLANTIC HIGHLANDS'S HISTORY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

The Borough of Atlantic Highlands adopted its first Third Round Housing Element and Fair Share Plan in 2005, at which time the Borough petitioned COAH to have the plan approved via Substantive Certification. The Borough amended the Plan in December 2006, and re-petitioned COAH for Substantive Certification. Before the Plan could be approved, COAH's 2004 Round 3 regulations were invalidated.

COAH adopted new Round 3 rules in September 2008, at which time the Borough Planning Board adopted, and the Borough Council endorsed, an Amended Housing Element and Fair Share Plan in the fall of 2008. Before the amended Plan could be approved, the 2008 COAH regulations were invalidated once again.

COAH unsuccessfully attempted to adopt a third iteration of Round 3 regulations in the fall of 2014, leading to the Supreme Court issuing its Mount Laurel IV decision.

In response to Mount Laurel IV, Atlantic Highlands filed a Declaratory Judgement Action on July 2, 2015, to have a Housing Element and Fair Share Plan approved by the Court, and simultaneously filed a motion of temporary immunity. On September 4, 2015, the Court entered an order affirming the Borough's immunity, and has since entered additional orders extending the Borough's immunity, which is still in full force and effect.

On January 26, 2018, the Borough executed a Settlement Agreement with Fair Share Housing Center ("FSHC") (hereinafter the "FSHC Settlement Agreement"). See Appendix A. The Court then entered an Order to set the date for a Fairness Hearing on May 8, 2018 to approve the FSHC Settlement Agreement. At the Fairness Hearing, the Settlement Agreement was approved, which was memorialized via an Order entered by the Court on May 24, 2018. See Appendix B. This Housing Element and Fair Share effectuates the provisions of the approved FSHC Settlement Agreement.

## **PLANNING FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Pursuant to both the Fair Housing Act ("FHA") (N.J.S.A. 52:27D-310, et seq.) and the Municipal Land Use Law ("MLUL") N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28, et seq., municipalities in New Jersey are required to include a housing element in their master plans. The principal purpose of the housing element is to describe the specific, intended methods that a municipality plans to use in order to meet its very low, low and moderate income housing needs. Further, the housing element is meant to demonstrate the existing zoning or planned zoning changes that will allow for the provision of adequate capacity to accommodate household and employment growth projections, to achieve the goal of access to affordable housing for present and future populations. The statutorily required contents of the housing element are:

- a. An inventory of the municipality's housing stock by age, condition, purchase or rental value, occupancy characteristics, and type, including the number of units affordable to low and moderate income households and substandard housing capable of being rehabilitated;
- b. A projection of the municipality's housing stock, including the probable future construction of low and moderate income housing, for ten years, taking into account, but not necessarily limited to, construction permits issued, approvals of applications for development and probable residential development of lands;
- c. An analysis of the municipality's demographic characteristics, including but not necessarily limited to, household size, income level and age;
- d. An analysis of the existing and probable future employment characteristics of the municipality;
- e. A determination of the municipality's present and prospective fair share for low and moderate income housing and its capacity to accommodate its present and prospective housing needs, including its fair share for low and moderate income housing; and
- f. A consideration of the lands that are most appropriate for construction of low and moderate income housing and of the existing structures most appropriate for conversion to, or rehabilitation for low and moderate income housing, including a consideration of lands of developers who have expressed a commitment to provide low and moderate income housing.

## **MUNICIPAL SUMMARY**

The Borough of Atlantic Highlands is a 4.5 square mile developed coastal community located in the east central part of New Jersey in the County of Monmouth. The Borough is surrounded by Middletown to the west and south, Highlands Borough to the east, and the Sandy Hook Bay to the North.

According to the 2010 Census, Atlantic Highlands' population was 4,442, which represents a decrease of over 5 percent from 2000. The US Census Bureau 2012-2016 American Community Survey estimates a total population of 4,318. The median age in 2010 was 45 years, and the average household size decreased slightly from the 2000 level of 2.39 persons to 2.34 persons in 2010.

The housing stock of the Borough is predominantly single-family detached dwelling units. A majority of the housing structures were built in the 1930s or earlier. According to the guidelines established by COAH, the Borough is located in Housing Region 4, a region that consists of Mercer, Monmouth, and Ocean counties. Based on the 2018 Regional Income Limits as prepared by the Affordable Housing Professionals of New Jersey, the median income in Region 4 for a four-person household is \$99,209, the moderate-income is \$79,368, the low-income is \$49,605, and the very-low-income level is \$29,763.

According to the Court approved FSHC Settlement Agreement, Atlantic Highlands has a Rehabilitation Obligation of 51 units, a Prior Round (1987-1999) Obligation of 86, and a Gap (1999-2015) + Prospective Need or Third Round (2015-2025) Obligation of 207. The Borough conducted a Vacant Land Analysis ("VLA") pursuant to N.J.A.C. 5:93-4.2. As detailed in the FSHC Settlement Agreement, the Borough has a combined Prior Round, Gap + Prospective Need (1987-2025) Realistic Development Potential ("RDP") of 42 units and a remaining "Unmet Need" of 251.

The Borough proposes to address its obligations through the following mechanisms:

- Rehabilitation Program.
- Existing Units/Credits.
- Proposed Inclusionary Developments.
- Proposed 100% Affordable Developments.
- Overlay Zoning.
- Borough-wide Mandatory Set-Aside Ordinance.

**DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS**

**Population**

The population trends experienced in Atlantic Highlands, Monmouth County, and the State of New Jersey from 1930 through 2010 are shown below as well as the 2016 population estimate from the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey. There were 4,442 residents in Atlantic Highlands in 2010, which was a decrease of 263 people, or 5.6 percent, from 2000. Atlantic Highlands experienced steady growth until the 1970s, when the Borough's population began to decrease. Since 1980, Atlantic Highlands' population has decreased in every decade, with the exception of the 1990s, which experienced minimal growth of 1.6 percent. Monmouth County and the State have experienced continued growth since 1930. Both the County and State experienced significant population increases during the 1990s. Since 2010, the Borough and the County experienced a slight decreases in population.

Population Trends									
Year	Atlantic Highlands			Monmouth County			New Jersey		
	Population	Change		Population	Change		Population	Change	
		Number	%		Number	%		Number	%
1930	2,000	-	-	147,209	-	-	4,041,334	-	-
1940	2,335	335	16.8%	161,238	14,029	9.5%	4,160,165	118,831	2.9%
1950	3,083	748	32.0%	225,327	64,089	39.7%	4,835,329	675,164	16.2%
1960	4,119	1,036	33.6%	334,401	109,074	48.4%	6,066,782	1,231,453	25.5%
1970	5,102	983	23.9%	461,849	127,448	38.1%	7,171,112	1,104,330	18.2%
1980	4,950	-152	-3.0%	503,173	41,324	8.9%	7,365,011	193,899	2.7%
1990	4,629	-321	-6.5%	553,124	49,951	9.9%	7,730,188	365,177	5.0%
2000	4,705	76	1.6%	615,301	62,177	11.2%	8,414,350	684,162	8.9%
2010	4,442	-263	-5.6%	630,380	15,079	2.5%	8,791,894	377,544	4.5%
2016 Estimates	4,318	-124	-2.8%	627,532	-2,848	-0.5%	8,915,456	123,562	1.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates

**Population Composition by Age**

The median age of the residents in Atlantic Highlands in 2010 was 45 years. Analysis of age group characteristics provides insight into the actual changes in population. This comparison is helpful in determining impacts these changes have on housing needs, community facilities, and services for the municipality. As detailed in the following table, the entire composition of Atlantic Highlands experienced notable shifts since 2000. The most significant change was in the 35 to 44 age cohort, which decreased by 30.2 percent. The 55 to 64 age cohort increased significantly by 22.5 percent. The 45 to 54 age cohort experienced the second largest growth by 20.4 percent. However, the 25 to 34 (-22.6%), 5 to 14(-19.1%), and under 5 years (-17.9%) age cohorts declined significantly from 2000 to 2010.



<b>Population by Age 2000 and 2010, Atlantic Highlands</b>						
<b>Population</b>	<b>2000</b>		<b>2010</b>		<b>Change, 2000 to 2010</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Total population	4,705	100.0%	4,385	100.0%	-320	-6.8%
Under 5 years	285	6.1%	234	5.3%	-51	-17.9%
5 to 14	581	12.3%	470	10.7%	-111	-19.1%
15 to 24	431	9.2%	398	9.1%	-33	-7.7%
25 to 34	602	12.8%	466	10.6%	-136	-22.6%
35 to 44	896	19.0%	625	14.3%	-271	-30.2%
45 to 54	711	15.1%	856	19.5%	145	20.4%
55 to 64	534	11.3%	654	14.9%	120	22.5%
65 and over	665	14.1%	682	15.6%	17	2.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Monmouth County experienced population fluctuation as well, but not as significantly as the Borough. The most significant increase was in the 55 to 64 age cohort, which grew by 45.3 percent. Significant increases were also seen in the 45 to 54 age cohort (20.3%) and 15 to 24 age cohort (16.1%). Similar to Atlantic Highlands, decreases were experienced in the under 5 cohort (-17.7%) and the 35 to 44 age cohort (-22.5%).

<b>Population by Age 2000 and 2010, Monmouth County</b>						
<b>Population</b>	<b>2000</b>		<b>2010</b>		<b>Change, 2000 to 2010</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Total population	615,301	100.0%	630,380	100.0%	15,079	2.5%
Under 5 years	42,231	6.9%	34,755	5.5%	-7,476	-17.7%
5 to 14	93,278	15.2%	86,679	13.8%	-6,599	-7.1%
15 to 24	67,406	11.0%	78,229	12.4%	10,823	16.1%
25 to 34	75,308	12.2%	64,860	10.3%	-10,448	-13.9%
35 to 44	111,681	18.2%	86,499	13.7%	-25,182	-22.5%
45 to 54	92,239	15.0%	110,979	17.6%	18,740	20.3%
55 to 64	56,235	9.1%	81,688	13.0%	25,453	45.3%
65 and over	76,843	12.5%	86,690	13.8%	9,847	12.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**Households**

A household is defined as one or more persons, either related or not, living together in a housing unit. In 2010 there was a total of 1,870 households in Atlantic Highlands. Roughly 64 percent of the households were occupied by two persons or less. The average household size of the Borough in 2010 was 2.34, slightly less than that of the County's average of 2.66. Both the Borough's and the County's largest percentage of households was a two-person household, 33.4% and 30.0% respectively. The Borough's and County's second most common household size was one-person households, 30.4% and 25% respectively.

<b>Household Size- Occupied Housing Units, 2010                      Borough of Atlantic Highlands and Monmouth County</b>				
	<b>Borough</b>		<b>County</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Total Households</b>	<b>1,870</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>233,983</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
1-person household	569	30.4%	58,515	25.0%
2-person household	625	33.4%	70,212	30.0%
3-person household	301	16.1%	39,342	16.8%
4-person household	251	13.4%	39,138	16.7%
5-person household	96	5.1%	17,701	7.6%
6-person household	21	1.1%	5,777	2.5%
7-or-more-person household	7	0.4%	3,298	1.4%
<b>Average Household Size</b>	<b>2.34</b>		<b>2.66</b>	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Family households are defined as two or more persons living in the same household, related by blood, marriage or adoption. They do not include same-sex married couples. Most households in the Borough in 2010 were family households, comprising 63.4 percent of all households. The average family size was 3.1 persons. The majority of family households (81.9%) were married-couple families, of which over half (59.1%) had no children under the age of 18. Over 30 percent of the households were one-person households, with 42.7 percent male householders and 57.3 percent female householders.

In providing more detail of American households, the 2010 Census includes the sub-groups of non-traditional households: Other family and Non-family households. "Other" family households made up 11.5 percent of all households, of which 160 (74.4%) were female households with no husband present. "Non-family" households are defined as households that consist of a householder living alone or sharing the home exclusively with people whom he/she is not related. Non-family households comprised approximately 3.1 percent of all households in the Borough.

<b>Household Size and Type, 2010                      Borough of Atlantic Highlands</b>		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Total Households</b>	<b>1,870</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>1 person household</b>	<b>569</b>	<b>30.4%</b>
Male householder	243	42.7%
Female householder	326	57.3%
<b>2 or more person household</b>	<b>1,301</b>	<b>69.6%</b>
<b>Family households</b>	<b>1,186</b>	<b>63.4%</b>
Married Couple Family	971	81.9%
With own children under 18 years	397	40.9%
No children under 18 years	574	59.1%
<b>Other Family</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>11.5%</b>
Male householder, no wife present	55	25.6%
With own children under 18 years	23	41.8%
No own children under 18 year	32	58.2%
Female householder, no husband present	160	74.4%
With own children under 18 years	57	35.6%
No own children under 18 year	103	64.4%
<b>Nonfamily Households</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>6.1%</b>
Male householder	69	60.0%
Female householder	46	40.0%
<b>Average Family Size</b>	<b>3.10*</b>	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, \*2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

### Income

As measured in 2016, Atlantic Highlands had a higher median household income compared to Monmouth County and the State of New Jersey. In 2016, the median income in Atlantic Highlands was \$91,579, roughly \$4,282 more than the County and \$17,877 more than the State's median income.

<b>Per Capita and Household Income</b>		
	<b>2016 Per Capita Income</b>	<b>2016 Medium Household Income</b>
Atlantic Highlands	\$45,626	\$91,579
Monmouth County	\$44,504	\$87,297
New Jersey	\$37,538	\$73,702

Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

In 2016, over 71 percent of all households in the Borough earned \$50,000 or more with the largest percentage (21.8%) earning between \$100,000 and \$149,999. This percentage was followed by those households that earned \$50,000 to \$74,999 (16.3%) and finally those who earned \$150,000 to \$199,999 (12.8%). About 28 percent of households earned less than \$35,000. In Monmouth County, the most common income bracket was the \$100,000 to \$149,999 range with roughly 18.6 percent of households earning that much. Roughly 21 percent of households in the County earned less than \$35,000.

<b>Household Income Atlantic Highlands and Monmouth County, 2016 Estimates</b>				
	<b>Atlantic Highlands</b>		<b>Monmouth County</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Total Households</b>	<b>1,786</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>232,868</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Less than \$10,000	51	2.9%	9,466	4.1%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	75	4.2%	7,400	3.2%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	56	3.1%	15,848	6.8%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	113	6.3%	16,030	6.9%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	208	11.6%	19,799	8.5%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	292	16.3%	32,802	14.1%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	178	10.0%	28,457	12.2%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	390	21.8%	43,288	18.6%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	229	12.8%	25,657	11.0%
\$200,000 or more	194	10.9%	34,121	14.7%
<b>Median Household Income</b>	<b>\$91,579</b>		<b>\$87,297</b>	

Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

### Poverty Status

Of the 4,307 persons of Atlantic Highlands's population for which poverty status is determined, 234 individuals, or 5.4 percent, lived in poverty in 2016. Of those in poverty, a majority (52.6%) were in the age range of 18 to 64 years old. About 22.2 percent were children (under the age of 18) and roughly 25.2 percent were seniors (over 65). The County had a slightly higher poverty rate of 7.6 percent.

<b>Poverty Status Atlantic Highlands and Monmouth County, 2016 Estimates</b>				
	<b>Atlantic Highlands</b>		<b>Monmouth County</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Total persons	4,307	-	621,159	-
Total persons below poverty level	234	5.4%	47,318	7.6%
Under 18	52	22.2%	14,034	29.7%
18 to 64	123	52.6%	27,379	57.9%
65 and over	59	25.2%	5,905	12.5%

Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

**Household Costs**

The following tables show the expenditures for housing for those who own and rent housing in Atlantic Highlands and Monmouth County. Most people in the Borough lived in homes they owned, and according to the 2012-2016 5-year estimates by the ACS, roughly 14.1 percent of all owner-occupied households spent 30 percent or more of their household income on housing. About 40.5 percent of renter-occupied households spent 30 percent or more of their household income on housing. General affordability standards set a limit at 30 percent of gross income to be allocated for owner-occupied housing costs and 28 percent of gross income to be allocated for renter-occupied housing costs.

<b>Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income 2016 Estimates</b>				
	<b>Atlantic Highlands</b>		<b>Monmouth County</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Total Owner-Occupied Housing Units	3,344	100.0%	171,673	100.0%
Less than 15%	308	9.2%	19,535	11.4%
15 to 19%	181	5.4%	25,792	15.0%
20 to 24%	207	6.2%	23,879	13.9%
25 to 29%	218	6.5%	18,577	10.8%
30 to 34%	83	2.5%	12,995	7.6%
35% or more	387	11.6%	46,743	27.2%
Not computed	0	0.0%	911	0.5%

Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

<b>Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income 2016 Estimates</b>				
	<b>Atlantic Highlands</b>		<b>Monmouth County</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Total Renter-Occupied Housing Units	385	100.0%	61,195	100.0%
Less than 15%	50	13.0%	5,873	9.6%
15 to 19%	18	4.7%	5,595	9.1%
20 to 24%	68	17.7%	6,867	11.2%
25 to 29%	93	24.2%	6,208	10.1%
30 to 34%	69	17.9%	5,222	8.5%
35% or more	87	22.6%	27,776	45.4%
Not computed	17	4.4%	3,654	6.0%

Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Similar to Atlantic Highlands, a large majority of Monmouth County residents own their home. Roughly 35 percent of all County owner-occupied homes spent 30 percent or more of their household income on housing, and approximately 54 percent of renter-occupied households spend 30 percent or more of their household income on housing.

## EXISTING HOUSING CONDITIONS

### Housing Unit Data

Atlantic Highlands' housing stock consists of primarily older structures. In 2010, Atlantic Highlands had a total of 2,002 occupied housing units. A majority of these units (1,341 or 71.7%) were owner-occupied while 529 units (28.3%) were renter-occupied. A majority of the structures (55.6%) were built before 1960. The Borough experienced a significant housing boom in the 1960s (an increase of 68 percent from the previous year's construction number, representing 14 percent of the entire housing stock). Construction continued strongly through the 1990s with a slowdown beginning in 2000. Only 23 units, 1.2 percent of the entire housing stock, have been constructed since 2010. The median year of construction for the housing stock in Atlantic Highlands is 1954.

<b>Housing Data Atlantic Highlands, 2010</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Total Housing Units	2,002	100.0%
Occupied Housing Units	1,870	93.4%
Owner Occupied	1,341	71.7%
Renter Occupied	529	28.3%

Source: 2010 Census

<b>Year Structure Built</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Built 1939 or earlier	793	40.6%
Built 1940 to 1949	106	5.4%
Built 1950 to 1959	186	9.5%
Built 1960 to 1969	274	14.0%
Built 1970 to 1979	138	7.1%
Built 1980 to 1989	208	10.7%
Built 1990 to 1999	177	9.1%
Built 2000 to 2009	47	2.4%
Built 2010 to 2013	23	1.2%
Built 2014 or Later	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,952</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Median Year Structure Built</b>	<b>1954</b>	

Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

### Housing Type and Size

The majority of the housing stock in Atlantic Highlands is single-family detached housing. In 2016, there were 1,454 single-family detached homes representing 74.5 percent of the housing stock. Housing structures containing 50 or more units were the next most common housing type with 126 units or 6.5 percent of the Borough's housing stock.

The median number of rooms within housing structures in the Borough was 6.1 with the largest percentage of structures (18.4%) having 9 rooms or more.

<b>Housing Type and Size Atlantic Highlands Borough, 2016 Estimates</b>		
<b>Units in Structure</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Total	1,952	100.0%
1, detached	1,454	74.5%
1, attached	39	2.0%
2	89	4.6%
3 or 4	86	4.4%
5 to 9	8	0.4%
10 to 19	46	2.4%
20 to 49	104	5.3%
50 or more	126	6.5%
Mobile home	0	0.0%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0	0.0%
<b>Rooms</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1 room	43	2.2%
2 rooms	17	0.9%
3 rooms	194	9.9%
4 rooms	255	13.1%
5 rooms	255	13.1%
6 rooms	356	18.2%
7 rooms	234	12.0%
8 rooms	238	12.2%
9 or more rooms	360	18.4%
<b>Median number of rooms</b>	<b>6.1</b>	

Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

In terms of residential growth, for the period January 2000 through December 2016, the Borough issued building permits authorizing the development of only 66 units, which averages to 4.1 units per year. The majority of the Borough's building permits were authorized in 2016, where 20 permits were authorized during this period.

<b>Housing Units Authorized by Building Permits: 2000-2016*</b> <b>Borough of Atlantic Highlands</b>				
<b>Year</b>	<b>1 &amp; 2 Family</b>	<b>Multi Family</b>	<b>Mixed-Use</b>	<b>Total</b>
2000-2003	-	-	-	7
2004	1	0	0	1
2005	0	0	0	0
2006	0	0	0	0
2007	2	1	1	4
2008	0	0	2	2
2009	3	0	0	3
2010	3	0	0	3
2011	4	0	0	4
2012	3	0	0	3
2013	5	0	0	5
2014	5	0	0	5
2015	9	0	0	9
2016	20	0	0	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>66</b>

Source: State of New Jersey Department of Community Affairs Building Permits: Yearly Summary Data

\*The DCA Construction Reporter did not begin to report housing permits by type until 2004.

## Occupancy

According to the 2010 Census, of the 2,002 units in Atlantic Highlands, 1,870 (93.4%) were occupied while only 132 (6.6%) were vacant. Of those units that were vacant, about 22 percent were for rent, another 30.3 percent were for sale, and 25.8 percent were for seasonal, recreational or occasional use.

<b>Occupancy Status</b> <b>Borough of Atlantic Highlands, 2010</b>		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Total Housing Units	2,002	100%
Occupied	1,870	93.4%
Vacant Housing Units	132	6.6%
For Rent	29	22.0%
Rented, not occupied	3	0.0%
For Sale Only	40	30.3%
Sold, not occupied	4	3.0%
For Seasonal, Recreational or Occasional Use	34	25.8%
Other Vacant	22	16.7%

Source: 2010 Census



**Housing Values and Contract Rents**

According to the 2012-2016 ACS Survey, the majority of the entire owner-occupied housing stock in Atlantic Highlands (89.6%) were valued at over \$200,000, and approximately 71.2 percent of all units were financed by a mortgage. Housing values for owner-occupied housings units are listed in the table below along with mortgage status data. The most common housing-value range was between \$300,000 and \$399,000 with 28.9 percent of all owner-occupied units falling within this range. The second most common value range was between \$500,000 or greater comprising 25.9 percent of all owner-occupied units. The median value of an owner-occupied housing unit in Atlantic Highlands was \$366,300. Though most units were covered by a mortgage (71.2%), roughly 28.8 percent had no mortgage at all. The County's trends mirror that of the Borough with nearly 89 percent of homes valued at over \$200,000 and 69.8 percent of housing units functioning with a mortgage, contract to purchase, or similar debt.

<b>Value for Owner-Occupied Housing Units Borough of Atlantic Highlands and Monmouth County, 2016 Estimates</b>				
	<b>Atlantic Highlands</b>		<b>Monmouth County</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,384</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>171,673</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Less than \$50,000	31	2.2%	4,393	2.6%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	17	1.2%	2,451	1.4%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	15	1.1%	4,522	2.6%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	81	5.9%	8,457	4.9%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	283	20.4%	32,406	18.9%
\$300,000 to \$399,999	400	28.9%	38,407	22.4%
\$400,000 to \$499,999	199	14.4%	27,447	16.0%
\$500,000 and greater	358	25.9%	53,590	31.2%
<b>Median Value</b>	<b>\$366,300</b>		<b>\$387,500</b>	

Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

<b>Mortgage Status Atlantic Highlands Borough and Monmouth County, 2016 Estimates</b>				
	<b>Atlantic Highlands</b>		<b>Monmouth County</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Housing units with a mortgage, contract to purchase, or similar debt:	985	71.2%	119,911	69.8%
With either a second mortgage or home equity loan, but not both:	296	30.1%	26,108	21.8%
Second mortgage only	23	7.8%	3,317	12.7%
Home equity loan only	273	92.2%	22,791	87.3%
Both second mortgage and home equity loan	0	0.0%	935	0.8%
No second mortgage and no home equity loan	689	69.9%	92,868	77.4%
Housing units without a mortgage	399	28.8%	51,762	30.2%

Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

According to the 2012-2016 5-year estimates produced by the ACS, the median contract rent in Atlantic Highlands was \$1,183. The highest percentage of renters (49.5%) paid between \$1,000 and \$1,499 for rent, followed by 16.7 percent paying \$1,500 to \$1,999 for rent. The County's median contract rent was slightly lower at \$1,160.

<b>Contract Rent                      Borough of Atlantic Highlands and Monmouth County, 2016 Estimates</b>				
	<b>Atlantic Highlands</b>		<b>Monmouth County</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Total Renter Occupied Units	402	100.0%	61,195	100.0%
Less than \$200	0	0.0%	1,535	2.5%
\$200 to \$499	28	7.0%	3,696	6.0%
\$500 to \$699	10	2.5%	2,915	4.8%
\$700 to \$899	56	13.9%	6,504	10.6%
\$900 to \$999	15	3.7%	6,558	10.7%
\$1,000 to \$1,499	199	49.5%	21,552	35.2%
\$1,500 to \$1,999	67	16.7%	9,766	16.0%
\$2,000 or more	10	2.5%	6,146	10.0%
No cash rent	17	4.2%	2,523	4.1%
<b>Median Contract Rent</b>	<b>\$1,183</b>		<b>\$1,160</b>	

Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

According to the 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, the median contract rent in Atlantic Highlands is \$1,183 per month (\$14,196 annually). A minimum annual income of \$47,320 (\$14,196/0.30) would be necessary to afford the median contract rent. Therefore, an estimated minimum 16.5 percent of all households within the Borough could not afford to live in a dwelling unit at or above the median contract rent. Countywide, an estimated 20.9 percent of all countywide households could not afford to live within a residence whose rent is at or above the median contract rent.

**Housing Conditions**

The following table details the conditions of the housing within Atlantic Highlands. Overcrowding and age, plumbing, and kitchen facilities are used to determine housing deficiency. In 2016, there were no owner-occupied or renter-occupied units in Atlantic Highlands that experienced overcrowding (more than one person per room). Throughout the Borough, no units lacked complete plumbing facilities or complete kitchen facilities.

<b>Housing Conditions                      Borough of Atlantic Highlands, 2012 - 2016 Estimates</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>House Heating Fuel-Occupied Housing Units</b>		
Total	1,786	100.0%
Utility gas	1,439	80.6%
Bottled, tank, or LP gas	23	1.3%
Electricity	146	8.2%
Fuel oil, kerosene, etc.	178	10.0%
Coal or coke	0	0.0%
Wood	0	0.0%
Solar energy	0	0.0%
Other fuel	0	0.0%
No fuel used	0	0.0%
<b>Occupants per Room- Occupied Housing Units</b>		
Total	1,786	100.0%
Owner-Occupied (Over 1.0)	0	0.0%
Renter-Occupied (Over 1.0)	0	0.0%
<b>Facilities-Total Units</b>		
Total	1,786	100.0%
Lacking complete plumbing facilities	0	0.0%
Lacking complete kitchen facilities	0	0.0%
<b>Telephone Service- Occupied Housing Units</b>		
Total	1,786	100.0%
No Service	8	0.4%

Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

**EMPLOYMENT DATA**

The following tables detail changes in employment from 2003 to 2016 for Atlantic Highlands, Monmouth County, and New Jersey. Employment in Atlantic Highlands remained steady from 2003 to 2010 as the labor force continued to increase gradually each year. The unemployment rate in Atlantic Highlands saw minimal fluctuation between 2003 and 2008 with its lowest rate occurring in 2007 at 5 percent. In 2009, the unemployment rate reached a decade high of 10.9 percent. Since this peak, the unemployment rate has decreased and in 2016 was at 4.3 percent, the lowest since 2003. The unemployment trends over the past thirteen years of the Borough has remained relatively similar to that of the County and State as a whole.

<b>Atlantic Highlands Employment and Residential Labor Force -- 2003 - 2016</b>				
<b>Year</b>	<b>Labor Force</b>	<b>Employment</b>	<b>Unemployment</b>	<b>Unemployment Rate</b>
2003	2,726	2,524	202	7.4%
2004	2,705	2,540	165	6.1%
2005	2,696	2,538	158	5.9%
2006	2,726	2,564	162	5.9%
2007	2,735	2,597	138	5.0%
2008	2,775	2,599	176	6.3%
2009	2,826	2,517	309	10.9%
2010	2,668	2,462	206	7.7%
2011	2,682	2,463	219	8.2%
2012	2,580	2,363	217	8.4%
2013	2,550	2,361	189	7.4%
2014	2,547	2,392	155	6.1%
2015	2,537	2,413	124	4.9%
2016	2,557	2,446	111	4.3%

<b>Monmouth County Employment and Residential Labor Force -- 2003 - 2016</b>				
<b>Year</b>	<b>Labor Force</b>	<b>Employment</b>	<b>Unemployment</b>	<b>Unemployment Rate</b>
2003	322,600	305,100	17,500	5.4%
2004	321,300	307,000	14,300	4.4%
2005	323,200	309,900	13,200	4.1%
2006	327,700	314,000	13,600	4.2%
2007	331,100	318,700	12,400	3.7%
2008	335,100	319,100	16,000	4.8%
2009	336,900	308,800	28,100	8.3%
2010	330,300	301,400	28,900	8.7%
2011	330,000	307,900	28,200	8.5%
2012	331,500	302,700	28,800	8.7%
2013	327,800	303,400	24,400	7.4%
2014	328,700	307,100	19,600	6.0%
2015	331,623	315,165	16,458	5.0%
2016	331,125	316,454	14,671	4.4%

<b>New Jersey Employment and Resident Labor Force -- 2003 - 2016</b>				
<b>Year</b>	<b>Labor Force</b>	<b>Employment</b>	<b>Unemployment</b>	<b>Unemployment Rate</b>
2003	4,347,200	4,093,700	253,500	5.8%
2004	4,349,200	4,138,800	210,300	4.8%
2005	4,391,600	4,194,900	196,700	4.5%
2006	4,445,900	4,236,500	209,400	4.7%
2007	4,441,800	4,251,800	190,000	4.3%
2008	4,504,400	4,264,000	240,500	5.3%
2009	4,550,600	4,138,600	412,100	9.1%
2010	4,555,300	4,121,500	433,900	9.5%
2011	4,565,300	4,138,500	426,800	9.3%
2012	4,588,000	4,160,000	428,000	9.3%
2013	4,548,600	4,173,800	374,700	8.2%
2014	4,527,200	4,221,300	305,900	6.8%
2015	4,537,200	4,274,700	262,500	5.8%
2016	4,530,800	4,305,500	225,300	5.0%

Source: NJ Dept. of Labor & workforce Development Labor Force Estimate

### Employment Status

The 2012-2016 5-year American Community Survey estimates reveal that 71.6 percent of Atlantic Highlands' 16 and over population is in the labor force. The County's employment status is similar to that of Atlantic Highlands. About one third of both the Borough's and the County's over 16 population is not in the labor force (28.4% and 34.3%, respectively).

<b>Employment                      Borough of Atlantic Highlands and Monmouth County, 2016 Estimates</b>				
	<b>Atlantic Highlands</b>		<b>Monmouth County</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Population 16 years and over	3,601	100.0%	506,199	100.0%
In labor force	2,577	71.6%	332,595	65.7%
Civilian Labor Force	2,577	71.6%	332,241	65.6%
Employed	2,312	64.2%	309,640	61.2%
Unemployed	265	7.4%	22,601	4.5%
Armed Forces	0	0.0%	354	0.1%
Not in labor force	1,024	28.4%	173,604	34.3%

Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

**Class of Worker and Occupation**

According to the 2012-2016 ACS Estimates, the majority of workers (81%) living in Atlantic Highlands were a part of the private wage and salary worker group. This group includes people who work for wages, salary, commission, and tips for a private for-profit employer or a private not-for-profit, tax-exempt or charitable organization. The second largest category was government worker (9.9%), followed by those who were self-employed (8.5%).

<b>Class of Worker Borough of Atlantic Highlands, 2016 Estimates</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Employed Civilian population 16 years and over	2,312	100.0%
Private Wage and Salary Worker	1,873	81.0%
Government Worker	229	9.9%
Self-Employed Worker	196	8.5%
Unpaid Family Worker	14	0.6%

Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

The occupational breakdown shown in the table below includes only private wage and salary workers. Those that worked within the private wage field were concentrated heavily in management and professional positions and sales and office occupations. Together the two fields account for roughly 71 percent of the entire resident workforce. Service occupations were also a significant employer of Borough residents, employing 11 percent followed by natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations employing 10.9 percent of the residents.

<b>Resident Employment by Occupation Borough of Atlantic Highlands, 2016 Estimates</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Employed Civilian population 16 years and over	2,312	100.0%
Management, business, science and arts occupations	1,075	46.5%
Service occupations	255	11.0%
Sales and office occupations	571	24.7%
Natural resources, construction and maintenance occupations	253	10.9%
Production Transportation and material moving occupations	158	6.8%

Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

The most common industry for Atlantic Highlands residents is the educational services, and health care and social assistance sector, employing approximately 20.6 percent of the Borough's resident workforce. The second most common industry is professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services, which employs 13.1 percent of the Borough's resident workforce.

<b>Employment by Industry                      Borough of Atlantic Highlands, 2016 Estimates</b>		
<b>Industry</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	2,312	100.0%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, mining	23	1.0%
Construction	143	6.2%
Manufacturing	111	4.8%
Wholesale Trade	37	1.6%
Retail Trade	265	11.5%
Transportation and Warehousing, and Utilities	156	6.7%
Information	102	4.4%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	292	12.6%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	304	13.1%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	477	20.6%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	258	11.2%
Other Services, except public administration	106	4.6%
Public administration	38	1.6%

Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

### Commuting to Work

According to the 2012-2016 ACS Estimates, the mean travel time to work for those who lived in the Borough was 34.6 minutes. The vast majority of commuters, roughly 75 percent, traveled less than an hour to work, and roughly 56 percent have less than a half-hour commute.

<b>Travel Time to Work                      Borough of Atlantic Highlands, 2016 Estimates</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Workers who did not work at home	2,066	100.0%
Less than 10 minutes	305	14.8%
10 to 14 minutes	302	14.6%
15 to 19 minutes	316	15.3%
20 to 24 minutes	172	8.3%
25 to 29 minutes	66	3.2%
30 to 34 minutes	166	8.0%
35 to 44 minutes	106	5.1%
45 to 59 minutes	112	5.4%
60 to 89 minutes	305	14.8%
90 or more minutes	216	10.5%
<b>Mean travel time to work (minutes)</b>	<b>34.6</b>	

Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

The largest portion of workers drove to work alone (70.8%), while approximately 2.1 percent carpooled. Approximately 10.4 percent of workers commuted via public transportation and another 8.4 percent worked from home.

<b>Means of Commute Borough of Atlantic Highlands, 2016 Estimates</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Workers 16 years and over	2,255	100.0%
Car, truck, van- Drove Alone	1,597	70.8%
Car, truck, van- Carpooled	48	2.1%
Public Transportation	235	10.4%
Walked	141	6.3%
Other Means	45	2.0%
Worked at home	189	8.4%

Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

### Covered Employment

There is currently very limited information available on actual job opportunities within municipalities. The Department of Labor collects information on covered employment, which is employment and wage data for private employees covered by unemployment insurance. The tables below provide a snapshot of private employers located within Atlantic Highlands. The first table reflects the number of jobs covered by private employment insurance from 2003 through 2016. The second table reflects the disbursement of jobs by industry in 2016.

According to data from the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the highest number of covered jobs in Atlantic Highlands in the last thirteen years was in 2006 when 2,075 jobs were covered by unemployment insurance. Private employment has fluctuated in Atlantic Highlands since 2006, with its largest loss occurring between 2006 and 2007 (-22.4%), and largest gain occurring between 2014 and 2015 (10.2%)

<b>Private Wage Covered Employment 2003 - 2016 Atlantic Highlands</b>			
Year	Number of Jobs	# Change	% Change
2006	2,075	-63	-2.9%
2007	1,611	-464	-22.4%
2008	1,641	30	1.9%
2009	1,548	-93	-5.7%
2010	1,454	-94	-6.1%
2011	1,257	-197	-13.5%
2012	1,305	48	3.8%
2013	1,394	89	6.8%
2014	1,364	-30	-2.2%
2015	1,503	139	10.2%
2016	1,513	10	0.7%

Source: NJ Dept. of Labor & workforce Development Labor Force Estimate



**In-Borough Establishments and Employees by Industry: 2016**

The following table depicts the average annual number of establishments and employees by industry sector that exist within the Borough, as grouped by North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). In 2016, the Borough had an annual average of 238 establishments employing on average 1,513 persons. Retail Trade was the predominant sector, accounting for 11.8 percent of the establishments in Atlantic Highlands and 19.4 percent of the Borough's in-place employment.

<b>Average Number of Establishments and Employees by Industry: 2016</b>		
<b>Industry</b>	<b>2016 Average</b>	
	<b>Units</b>	<b>Employment</b>
Agriculture	.	.
Utilities	.	.
Construction	27	215
Manufacturing	7	60
Wholesale Trade	7	39
Retail Trade	28	294
Transp/Warehousing	.	.
Information	5	17
Finance/Insurance	14	44
Real Estate	7	23
Professional/Technical	22	46
Admin/Waste Remediation	16	52
Education	.	.
Health/Social	17	120
Arts/Entertainment	.	.
Accommodations/Food	25	191
Other Services	33	128
<b>Private Sector Totals</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>1,513</b>
Local Government Totals	3	203

Source: NJ Dept. of Labor & workforce Development Labor Force Estimate

### **Probable Future Employment Opportunities**

The North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) completes regional forecasts for the New York/New Jersey metropolitan area every four years for populations, households, and employment. The most recent report was released in 2017. Due to the size and location of the Borough, there is minimal opportunity for new job growth. The 2017 NJTPA report predicts Atlantic Highland's total (private and public sector) employment will increase by 160 jobs by the year 2045, only a 0.4% annual increase. In addition, the New Jersey Department of Labor releases a Regional Community Fact Book for each county in New Jersey. Between 2010 and 2020, the County is projected to increase its job holding by 23,350 jobs. The healthcare and social services industry is projected to create the most jobs in Monmouth County, adding a predicted total of 4,500 jobs.

## **PART 2: FAIR SHARE PLAN**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The following Fair Share Plan (the Plan) details Atlantic Highlands's Rehabilitation Obligation, Prior Round Obligation (1987-1999), and Gap + Prospective Need or Third Round Obligation (1999-2025). For each obligation, this Plan proposes mechanisms for which the Borough can realistically provide opportunities for affordable housing for moderate-, low-, and very low- income households.

The need for affordable housing in New Jersey is divided into three components:

- *Rehabilitation Obligation* – The Rehabilitation Obligation represents the number of existing housing units that are both deficient and occupied by low and moderate income households. This number is derived from review and analysis of housing conditions reported in the U.S. Census and American Community Survey.
- *Prior Round Obligation* – The Prior Round obligation is the cumulative 1987-1999 fair share obligation as was determined by COAH. The First Round and Second Round are mutually referred to as the "Prior Round".
- *Gap + Prospective Need or Third Round Obligation* - July 1, 1999 – July 2, 2025 (which includes what is commonly referred to as the "gap period", which ran from 1999-2015, and the Prospective Need period, which runs from 2015 to 2025). On January 18, 2017, the Supreme Court decided In Re Declaratory Judgment Actions Filed by Various Municipalities, County of Ocean, Pursuant To The Supreme Court's Decision In In re Adoption of N.J.A.C. 5:96, 221 N.J. 1 (2015) ("Mount Laurel V"), which held that need having accrued during the Gap Period (1999-2015) was part of the Present Need, not Prospective Need. The Supreme Court held that there is an obligation with respect to that period for households that came into existence during that gap that are eligible for affordable housing, that are presently (as of 2015) in need of affordable housing, and that are not already counted in the traditional present need. As the methodology and obligations from the Gap + Prospective Need have not been fully adjudicated at this time, the Borough and FSHC agreed upon the magnitude of these obligations in the FSHC Settlement Agreement.

Per the FSHC Settlement Agreement, Atlantic Highlands' affordable housing obligations are as follows:

<b>Borough of Atlantic Highlands Obligation</b>	
Rehabilitation Obligation	51
Prior Round Obligation	86
Gap + Prospective Need or Third Round Obligation	207
<b>Total Obligation</b>	<b>344</b>

**VACANT LAND ASSESSMENT**

Municipalities can request an adjustment to their obligation based on the determination that there is not sufficient vacant or developable land within the municipality. As permitted by N.J.A.C. 5:93-4.2 a municipality can prepare a Vacant Land Analysis ("VLA") that examines parcels available for development. After such an analysis is performed, a Realistic Development Potential (or "RDP") is determined based on the amount of actual developable land.

Under the guidance of the Court Master, and in accordance with the FSHC Settlement Agreement, this Plan includes a Vacant Land Analysis, which was prepared in accordance with N.J.A.C. 5:93-4.2. See Appendix C. Due to a lack of developable land, the Borough's Vacant Land Analysis established an initial RDP of 16 for the Borough's Prior Round, Gap and Prospective Need Obligations (1999-2025). Ibid. The RDP was subsequently increased to 42 as part of the FSHC Settlement Agreement to allow the Borough to obtain additional rental bonus credits and to decrease the Borough's "unmet need". See Appendix A. See also Appendix B at Paragraph 4.

This Plan therefore states that, as per the Court approved FSHC Settlement Agreement, the Borough's Rehabilitation, Prior Round, Gap + Prospective Need Obligations have been adjusted as follows:

<b>Adjusted Rehabilitation, Prior Round, Gap + Prospective Need Obligations Borough of Atlantic Highlands</b>	
Rehabilitation Obligation.	51
Realistic Development Potential	42
Unmet Need	251
<b>Total Obligation</b>	<b>344</b>

## **REHABILITATION OBLIGATION**

The Rehabilitation Obligation, which is part of a municipality's Present Need, was determined in N.J.A.C. 5:93-1.3 to be the sum of a municipality's indigenous need, the deficient housing units occupied by low- and moderate-income households, and the reallocated present need, which is the portion of a housing region's present need that is redistributed throughout the housing region. Under COAH's Second Round rules, evidence for deficient housing included: year structure was built, persons per room, plumbing facilities, kitchen facilities, heating fuel, sewer service, and water supply.

The Third Round rules reduced the amount of criteria of evidence of deficient housing to three: pre-1960 crowded units, which are units that have more than 1.0 persons per room; incomplete plumbing, and incomplete kitchen facilities. This reduction in the amount of criteria was determined by the Appellate Division to be within the Council's discretion and was upheld in the Supreme Court's decision In re N.J.A.C. 5:96 & 97.

In Mount Laurel IV, the Supreme Court held that the reallocated need is no longer a component in the determination of Present Need. Therefore, a municipality's Rehabilitation Obligation now equates to indigenous need, which means the obligation is based on deficient housing as determined by pre-1960 over-crowded units, incomplete plumbing, and incomplete kitchen facilities.

Pursuant to the FSHC Settlement Agreement, the Borough has a Rehabilitation Obligation of 51 units. Atlantic Highlands intends to address its 51-unit rehabilitation obligation through participation in Monmouth County rehabilitation programs, operated by the County's Home Improvement Program. These programs are funded by the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and the HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME). In the event the partnership with the County does not complete the units by the mid-point review of this plan, the Borough will hire a qualified entity to develop a local rehabilitation program.

## **SUITABILITY ANALYSIS**

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 5:93-1.3, sites that are designated to produce affordable housing shall be available, approvable, developable, and suitable according to the following criteria:

- “Available site” means a site with clear title, free of encumbrances which preclude development for low and moderate income housing. N.J.A.C. 5:93-1.3.
- “Approvable site” means a site that may be developed for low and moderate income housing in a manner consistent with the rules or regulations of agencies with jurisdiction over the site. A site may be approvable although not currently zoned for low and moderate income housing. Ibid.
- “Development site” means a site that has access to appropriate water and sewer infrastructure, and is consistent with the applicable area wide water quality management plan (including the wastewater plan) or is included in an amendment to the area wide water quality management plan submitted to and under review by the DEP. Ibid.
- “Suitable site” means a site that is adjacent to compatible land uses, has access to appropriate streets and is consistent with the environmental policies delineated in N.J.A.C. 5:93-4. Ibid.

In addition to the above qualifications, it is also sound planning for sites to be consistent with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan. Sites that are located in Planning Area 1: Metropolitan or Planning Area 2: Suburban of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan, or are located in an existing sewer service area, are the preferred location for municipalities to address their fair share obligation. All sites identified in this Plan are located within the Planning Area 1: Metropolitan, which encourages growth.

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## **SATISFACTION OF THE BOROUGH'S REALISTIC DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL (RDP)**

The Borough has a combined Prior Round (1987-1999) and Gap + Prospective Need (1999-2025) Realistic Development Potential (RDP) of 42, which it will satisfy with the following affordable housing projects (see Affordable Housing Map at the end of this section):

- **Springpoint Living Project (Block 103, Lot 1.01) (Ten (10) Age-Restricted Affordable Units):**

Springpoint Living Project is a **constructed and occupied** age-restricted project located at 202 First Avenue, near the intersection of First Avenue and Route 36. The development is also referred to as Portland Pointe. The 2.6-acre site is developed with a total of fifty-seven (57) age-restricted affordable units which were built in 1996. Ten (10) age restricted affordable rental units are being counted towards the satisfaction of the Borough's RDP.

The site is appropriate for multi-family housing:

- The site was available, approvable, developable and suitable when the project was constructed.
  - There were no known encumbrances that would have prohibited or otherwise impacted the development of the property in general.
  - In accordance with the 2012 New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Land Use Land Cover (LULC), the property has wooded wetlands along its southerly and eastern lot lines. However, the property is already developed, and there are no planned expansions proposed at this time that would require NJDEP or US Army Corp approval. It should be noted that the 2012 LULC is the most up-to-date data set available for determining wetland location without a NJDEP approved Letter of Interpretation.
  - The site is not located within a FEMA 100-year floodplain, and the site does not have any steep slopes.
  - The property is surrounded by compatible uses including residential uses and has access to an appropriate right-of-way (First Avenue).
  - The site is served by both public water and public sewer.
  - The site is zoned SC: Senior Citizen, which permits Senior Citizen housing as a conditional use.
- **95 First Avenue (Block 114, Lot 2) (One (1) affordable family rental unit):** This project is a **constructed and occupied** inclusionary development consisting of four (4) residential units, one (1) of which is an affordable family rental unit. The building is located at 95 First

Avenue, near the intersection of West Mount Avenue and First Avenue. The site is located within the Historic Business District, which is part of the Borough's commercial district. The front of the building fronts on First Avenue and the rear of the site borders on Railroad Avenue. The one (1) affordable family rental unit is being counted towards the satisfaction of the Borough's RDP.

The site is appropriate for multi-family housing:

- The site was available, approvable, developable and suitable when the project was constructed.
  - There were no known encumbrances that would have prohibited or otherwise impacted the development of the property in general.
  - In accordance with the 2012 New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Land Use Land Cover (LULC), there are no wetlands or surface water resources on the subject property or within 50 feet of the subject property.
  - The site is not located within a FEMA 100-year flood plain, and the site does not have any steep slopes.
  - The site is surrounded by compatible uses including mixed-use buildings and has access to an appropriate public right-of-way (First Avenue and Railroad Avenue).
  - The site is served by both public water and public sewer.
  - The site is zoned HB: Historic Business, which is part of the Borough's business district, and requires all new residential development or mixed commercial and residential development producing five or more residential units provide a minimum of twenty percent (20%) of all dwelling units to be affordable for low and moderate-income households.
- **Memorial Parkway Habitat for Humanity Project (Block 62, Lot 4) (One (1) affordable family rental unit and one (1) affordable family for-sale unit)**: This project, which was recently **constructed** by Habitat for Humanity, is located at 82-84 Memorial Parkway in the southern portion of the Borough. Habitat for Humanity purchased the property in 2012 from the Borough and constructed a duplex building consisting of a one (1) family for-sale affordable unit and one (1) family rental affordable unit. The two affordable units will be counted towards the satisfaction of the Borough's RDP. The lot fronts on Memorial Parkway (NJ-36) and the rear on Simpson Avenue. A bus stop is located in front of the property on NJ-36. The project received its Certificate of Occupancy from the Borough in March of 2018.



The site is appropriate for duplex housing:

- The site was available, approvable, developable and suitable when the project was constructed.
  - There were no known encumbrances that would have prohibited or otherwise impacted the development of the property in general.
  - In accordance with the 2012 New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Land Use Land Cover (LULC), there are no wetlands or surface water resources on the subject property or within 50 feet of the subject property.
  - The site is not located within a FEMA 100-year flood plain, and the site does not have any steep slopes.
  - The site is surrounded by compatible uses including residential dwellings and has access to appropriate public rights-of-way (Route 36 and Simpson Avenue).
  - The site is served by both public water and public sewer.
  - The site is zoned AH: Affordable Housing, which has the intent to provide the opportunity to construct affordable housing within the Borough. The AH zone permits two-family attached housing on 6,000 sq. ft. lots.
- **35 First Avenue/2 Hennessey Blvd. Project (Block 117, Lots 8.01 and 8.02) (Five (5) affordable family rental units)**: This project received Planning Board approval in 2013 for the development of twenty-two (22) units, of which five (5) units will be family rental affordable units. The five (5) affordable units will be counted towards the satisfaction of Borough's RDP. The project, which was just recently **constructed** in 2017 and is currently **occupied**, consists of two structures. The first structure fronts on First Avenue and consists of 6 residential units and 2,500 sq. ft. of retail space on the ground floor. The second structure is located at the intersection of Hennessy Boulevard and Bay Avenue and consists of 16 units.

The site is appropriate for multi-family housing:

- The site was available, approvable, developable and suitable when the project was constructed.
- There are no known encumbrances that would have prohibited or otherwise impacted the development of the property in general.
- In accordance with the 2012 New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Land Use Land Cover (LULC), there are no wetlands or surface water resources on the subject property or within 50 feet of the subject property.

- The site is located within a FEMA 100-year flood plain and has been developed in accordance with FEMA rules and regulations.
  - The site does not have any steep slopes.
  - The site is surrounded by compatible uses including mixed use buildings, and has access to appropriate public rights-of-way (First Avenue, Bay Avenue, and West Avenue).
  - The site is served by both public water and public sewer.
  - The entirety of the site is split between two zones: Lot 8.01 is located in the Historic Business District and Lot 8.02 is located within the Central Business District. Both zones require all new residential development or mixed commercial and residential development producing five or more residential units provide a minimum of twenty percent (20%) of all dwelling units to be affordable for low and moderate-income households.
- **21 Leonard Avenue Habitat for Humanity (Block 136, Lot 1) (Two (2) affordable family for-sale units and two (2) affordable family rental units):**

**Current Proposed Project:** The Borough's proposed Leonard Avenue Habitat for Humanity project, will be located at 21 Leonard Avenue on an approximately 0.3-acre site. The site will be subdivided and developed with two duplex houses (one on each new lot). See Appendix E. Each duplex house will contain an affordable family for-sale unit and an affordable family rental unit. Ibid. The four (4) total affordable units produced by this project will be counted towards the satisfaction of the Borough's RDP.

**Prior Affordable Housing History Of The Site:** The 21 Leonard Avenue site has been part of a series of Borough Affordable Housing Plans since 2005. In the Borough's 2005 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan (hereinafter "2005 Plan"), which was submitted to COAH for approval, the 21 Leonard Avenue site was included with two other Leonard Avenue parcels: 13 Leonard Avenue (Block 124, Lot 1) and 25 Leonard Avenue (Block 136, Lot 2). In the 2005 Plan, the three sites were intended to produce ten (10) affordable units, with two family dwellings on one lot and two four-family dwellings on the remaining two lots. In accordance with the 2005 Plan, the Borough rezoned all three Leonard Avenue sites and created an "Affordable Housing Zone" for the three sites in an Ordinance that was adopted by the Borough on September 20, 2006.

After giving the residents who lived in the Leonard Avenue area a meaningful opportunity to be heard by listening to their issues and concerns regarding the three proposed Leonard

Avenue projects, the Borough amended its Housing Element and Fair Share Plan in 2006 (hereinafter the "2006 Plan") to eliminate the proposed projects on 13 and 25 Leonard Avenue. This reduced the proposed project sites in the Leonard Avenue area from three (3) to one (1), and the number of affordable units from ten (10) to four (4). In accordance with the 2006 Plan, the Borough established site control by purchasing the 21 Leonard Avenue site from New Jersey Natural Gas in 2008, and adopted an Ordinance on August 13, 2008 that moved the 13 and 25 Leonard Avenue sites from the "Affordable Housing Zone" back to the R-1 zone.

After COAH adopted new regulations in September of 2008, the Borough adopted a third Housing Element and Fair Share Plan in December of 2008 (hereinafter the "2008 Plan"), which included the 21 Leonard Avenue site with a project that was to produce four affordable family rental units. The 2008 plan was submitted to COAH for review and approval. During the review process, the Borough submitted a letter from the NJDEP from COAH, which indicated that no further action needed to be taken on the 21 Leonard Avenue site regarding any type of environmental remediation.

After the Supreme Court declared COAH to no longer be functioning in its March 2015 Mount Laurel IV decision, the Borough filed a Declaratory Judgment action on July 2, 2015 to get its 2008 Plan, or an amended plan, approved by the Court. The Borough's July 2, 2015 Declaratory Judgment Compliant describes the 21 Leonard Avenue project, and the 2008 Plan was attached to the Complaint as an exhibit. In addition, the FSHC Settlement Agreement approved during a Fairness Hearing on May 8, 2018, which was memorialized by an order entered by the Court on May 24, 2018, also includes the 21 Leonard Avenue Project. See Appendix A and B. Indeed, the Order approving the FSHC Settlement Agreement contains the following provision regarding the 21 Leonard Avenue project:

9. Based on the testimony and evidence presented during the Fairness Hearing on May 8, 2018, Borough Ordinance 16-2006 (Exhibit P-8), which was adopted by the Borough on September 20, 2006 to rezone 21 Leonard Avenue (Block 136, Lot 1) and other sites in the Borough for affordable housing purposes in accordance with the Borough's 2005 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan (Exhibit P-5), remains valid and the proposed four (4) unit affordable housing project on the 21 Leonard Avenue site is preliminarily declared suitable.

See May 24, 2018 Order Of Fairness And Preliminary Compliance, which is attached hereto as Appendix B.

After considering additional objections raised by the Leonard Avenue residents in written comments submitted to the Court prior to the Fairness Hearing regarding an initial version

of the 21 Leonard Avenue Project that would have consisted of one building with four family rental units and multiple parking spaces, the Borough has once again altered the 21 Leonard Avenue project in this current Housing Element and Fair Share Plan to partner with Habitat for Humanity to build two duplex houses with driveways and no additional parking spaces, and has also made the decision to make two of the affordable units for-sale, instead of for-rent. In this way, the new proposed project is even more suitable, and is fully compatible with surrounding land uses. Indeed, there are other two-family dwellings located in the area, specifically at 29 Leonard Avenue (duplex), 32 Leonard Avenue (detached garage apartment), and 43 Leonard Avenue (apartment in rear of property).

***The site is appropriate for duplex housing:***

- The site is available, approvable, developable, and suitable.
- There are no known encumbrances that would prohibit or otherwise impact the development of the property in general.
- In accordance with the 2012 New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Land Use Land Cover (LULC), there are no wetlands or surface water resources on the subject property or within 50 feet of the subject property.
- The site is located within the 100-year FEMA floodplain and will need to be built in accordance with all FEMA regulations.
- There are no steep slopes on the site.
- As per the NJDEP Letter submitted to COAH during the 2008 plan approval process, no further action needs to be taken on the site regarding any type of environmental remediation.
- The site is within the sewer service area, and specifically, will be served by water and sewer from Leonard Avenue.
- The site has access to an appropriate public right-of-way. Leonard Avenue is a one-way street heading west toward Avenue D. Avenue C is shown on the Borough's tax maps as extending south beyond Leonard Avenue, however, it currently terminates at Leonard Avenue.
- The proposed project is compatible with the surrounding land uses. The site is surrounded by a mix of one-, two-, and three-family properties, which includes a nearby duplex. See existing Land Use Map for Leonard Avenue, which is located below.
- The site is zoned AH: Affordable Housing Zone, which has the intent to provide the opportunity to construct affordable housing within the Borough. The AH zone permits two-family attached housing on 6,000 sq. ft. lots.

- The Borough has site control.
  - Habitat for Humanity is interested in developing the site. See Appendix E.
  - The site is located in Planning Area 1 (metropolitan) of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan.
- 
- **60-64 First Avenue Project (Block 97, Lot 14) (Two (2) affordable family rental units)**: This proposed project was approved by the Planning Board on May 11, 2017. See Appendix D. Grading and civil engineering work are currently under way. The project will be located at 60-64 First Avenue, which is an approximately 0.1-acre site located within the Historic Business District. The property is surrounded by mixed-use development. The site is serviced by both public water and public sewer. The site fronts on First Avenue, an improved public right-of-way. The site, which is currently vacant, received Planning Board approval in May 2017 to develop a mixed-use building which includes 10-units, of which two (2) are proposed to be affordable family rental units. The two affordable units will be counted towards the satisfaction of the Borough's RDP.

The site is appropriate for multi-family housing:

- The site is available, approvable, developable and suitable.
  - There are no known encumbrances that would prohibit or otherwise impact the development of the property in general.
  - In accordance with the 2012 New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Land Use Land Cover (LULC), there are no wetlands or surface water resources on the subject property or within 50 feet of the subject property.
  - The site is located within a FEMA 100-year flood plain and will need to be developed in accordance with FEMA rules and regulations.
  - The site does not have any steep slopes.
  - The site is surrounded by compatible uses, including mixed use buildings, and has access to appropriate public rights-of-way (First Avenue and Central Avenue).
  - The site is served by both public water and public sewer.
  - The site is within in the Historic Business District, which requires all new residential development or mixed commercial and residential development producing five or more residential units provide a minimum of twenty percent (20%) of all dwelling units to be affordable for low and moderate-income households.
- 
- **44-48 First Avenue Project (Block 97, Lot 17) (Three (3) affordable family rental units)**: This site is a through-lot located at 44-48 First Avenue and has frontage along both First Avenue

and Second Avenue. It is split-zoned between the Historic Business District and the R-1 Single-Family Residential Zone. The HBD: Historic Business District requires all residential development to provide a minimum twenty percent (20%) affordable set-aside. The site, which is a vacant parcel, received Planning Board approval in 2016 for the development of thirteen (13) units, of which three (3) of these units are proposed to be affordable family rental units. See Appendix D. Grading and civil engineering work are currently under way. The three (3) affordable family rental units will be counted towards the satisfaction of the Borough's RDP.

The site is appropriate for multi-family housing:

- The site is available, approvable, developable and suitable.
  - There are no known encumbrances that would prohibit or otherwise impact the development of the property in general.
  - In accordance with the 2012 New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Land Use Land Cover (LULC), there are no wetlands or surface water resources on the subject property or within 50 feet of the subject property.
  - The site is located within a FEMA 100-year flood plain and will need to be developed in accordance with FEMA rules and regulations.
  - The site does not have any steep slopes.
  - The site is surrounded by compatible uses, including mixed use buildings, and has access to appropriate public rights-of-way (First Avenue and Second Avenue).
  - The site is served by both public water and public sewer.
  - The site is consistent with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan. It is within Planning Area 1: Metropolitan, which encourages development.
  - The entirety of the site is split between two zones: the western portion of the site is located in the Historic Business District and the eastern portion is located within the R-1 Single-Family Residential Zone. The Historic Business District requires all new residential development or mixed commercial and residential development producing five or more residential units provide a minimum of twenty percent (20%) of all dwelling units to be affordable for low and moderate-income households.
- **158 First Avenue Project (Block 101 Lots 4.02 & 5) (Four (4) affordable family rental units):** - This site is approximately 0.5 acres and is located at the intersection of First Avenue and East Lincoln Avenue, a one-way street. The site received Planning Board approval to develop the site with an eighteen (18) unit development, of which four (4) will be

affordable family rental units, which will be counted towards the satisfaction of the Borough's RDP. See Appendix D.

The site is appropriate for multi-family housing:

- The site is available, approvable, developable and suitable.
  - There are no known encumbrances that would prohibit or otherwise impact the development of the property in general.
  - In accordance with the 2012 New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Land Use Land Cover (LULC), there are no wetlands or surface water resources on the subject property or within 50 feet of the subject property.
  - The site is not located within a FEMA 100-year flood plain and does not have any steep slopes.
  - The site is surrounded by compatible uses including a residential neighborhood to the rear of the property, an elementary school across East Lincoln Avenue, and commercial uses along First Avenue.
  - The site has access to appropriate public rights-of-way (First Avenue and East Lincoln Avenue).
  - The site is served by both public water and public sewer.
  - The overall site is split zoned- Lot 5 is zoned R-1: Single Family Residential and Lot 4.02 is zoned Central Business District, which requires all new residential development or mixed commercial and residential development producing five or more residential units provide a minimum of twenty percent (20%) of all dwelling units to be affordable for low and moderate-income households.
- **11 Rental bonus credits:** With an RDP of 42, the Borough is entitled to claim eleven (11) bonus credits.  $42 \times 0.25 = 10.5 = 11$  credits. The Borough proposes to apply the entirety of its eleven (11) rental bonus credits towards its RDP.

In summary, the Borough will address its 42-unit RDP as follows:

<b>Mechanisms to Address 42-Unit RDP</b>			
<b>Project Name</b>	<b># of Units</b>	<b>Development Type</b>	<b>Status</b>
Springpoint Living Project	10	Age-Restricted Rentals	Constructed & Occupied
95 First Avenue	1	Family Rental	Constructed & Occupied
Memorial Parkway Habitat for Humanity Project	2	Family Rental/ Family For Sale	Constructed
35 First Avenue/2 Hennessey Blvd. Project	5	Family Rental	Constructed & Occupied
60-64 First Avenue Project	2	Family Rental	Planning Board Approval
44-48 First Avenue Project	3	Family Rental	Planning Board Approval
158 First Avenue Project	4	Family Rental	Planning Board Approval
21 Leonard Avenue Habitat for Humanity Project	4	Family Rental/ Family For Sale	Proposed
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>31</b>	-	-
<b>Rental Bonus</b>	<b>11</b>	-	-
<b>Total Units &amp; Credits</b>	<b>42</b>	-	-

**ADDRESSING UNMET NEED**

According to the FSHC Settlement Agreement, the Borough has an unmet need of 251 units. The unmet need combines the Prior Round (1987-1999) and Gap + Prospective Need (1999-2025), exclusive of the RDP. The Borough proposes to meet its unmet need by utilizing the following mechanisms:

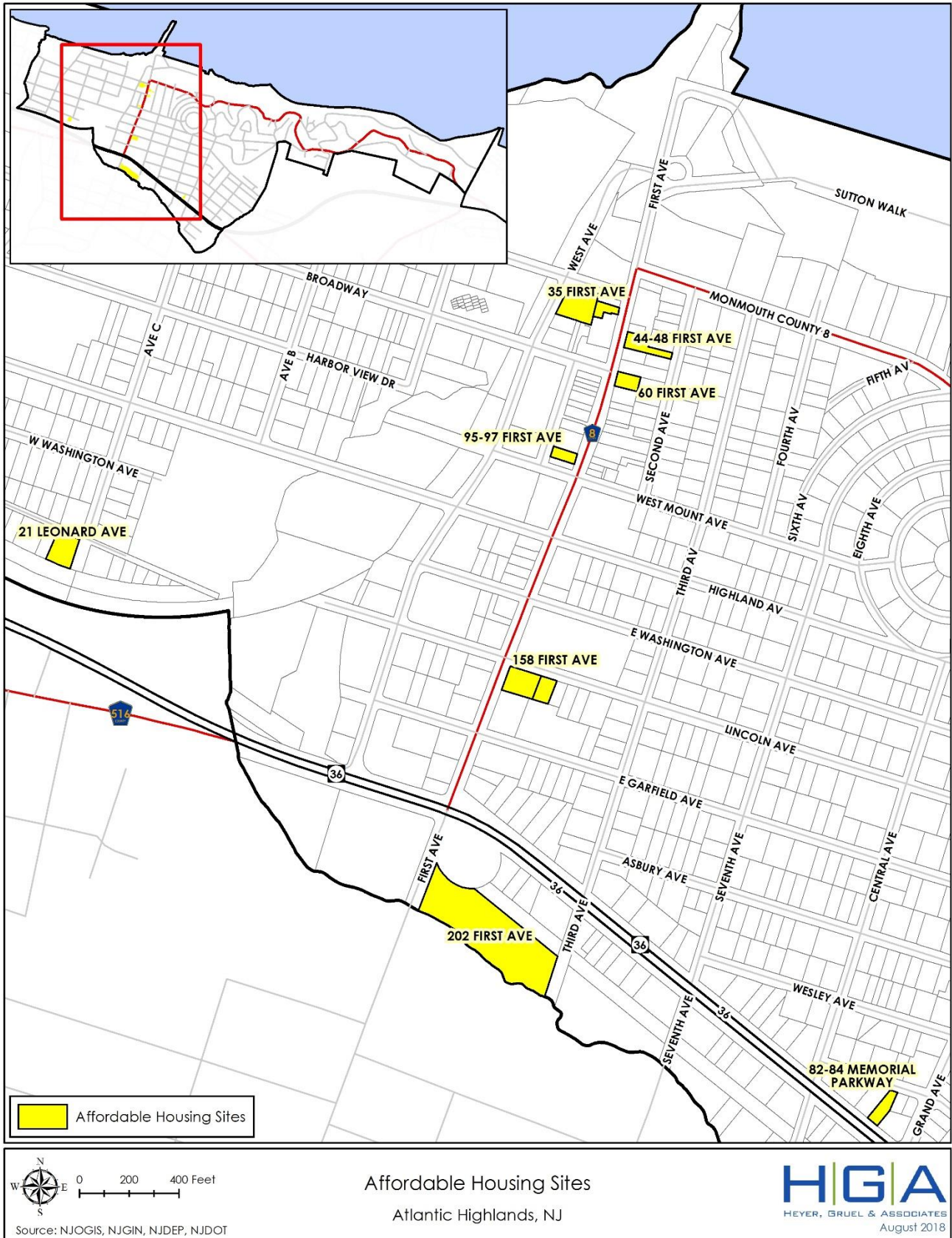
- **Springpoint Living Project (Block 103 Lot 1.01)**: As previously discussed, Springpoint Living Project is a constructed and occupied age-restricted project located at 202 First Avenue. The remaining forty-seven (47) age restricted affordable rental units located in this project will be applied to help address the Borough’s unmet need.
- **Modification to the Borough’s OR: Office-Residential Zone**: The Borough is amending its Schedule of Uses to permit mixed-use commercial/residential development as a conditional use in the OR: Office-Residential Zone.
- **Modification of the Borough’s existing Set-Aside Ordinance for the CBD, HBD, LI and R-TH zones**: The Borough currently permits multi-family and/or mixed-use development within the CBD: Central Business District, HBD: Historic Business District, LI: Light Industrial District,

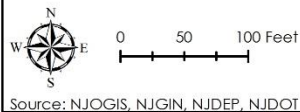
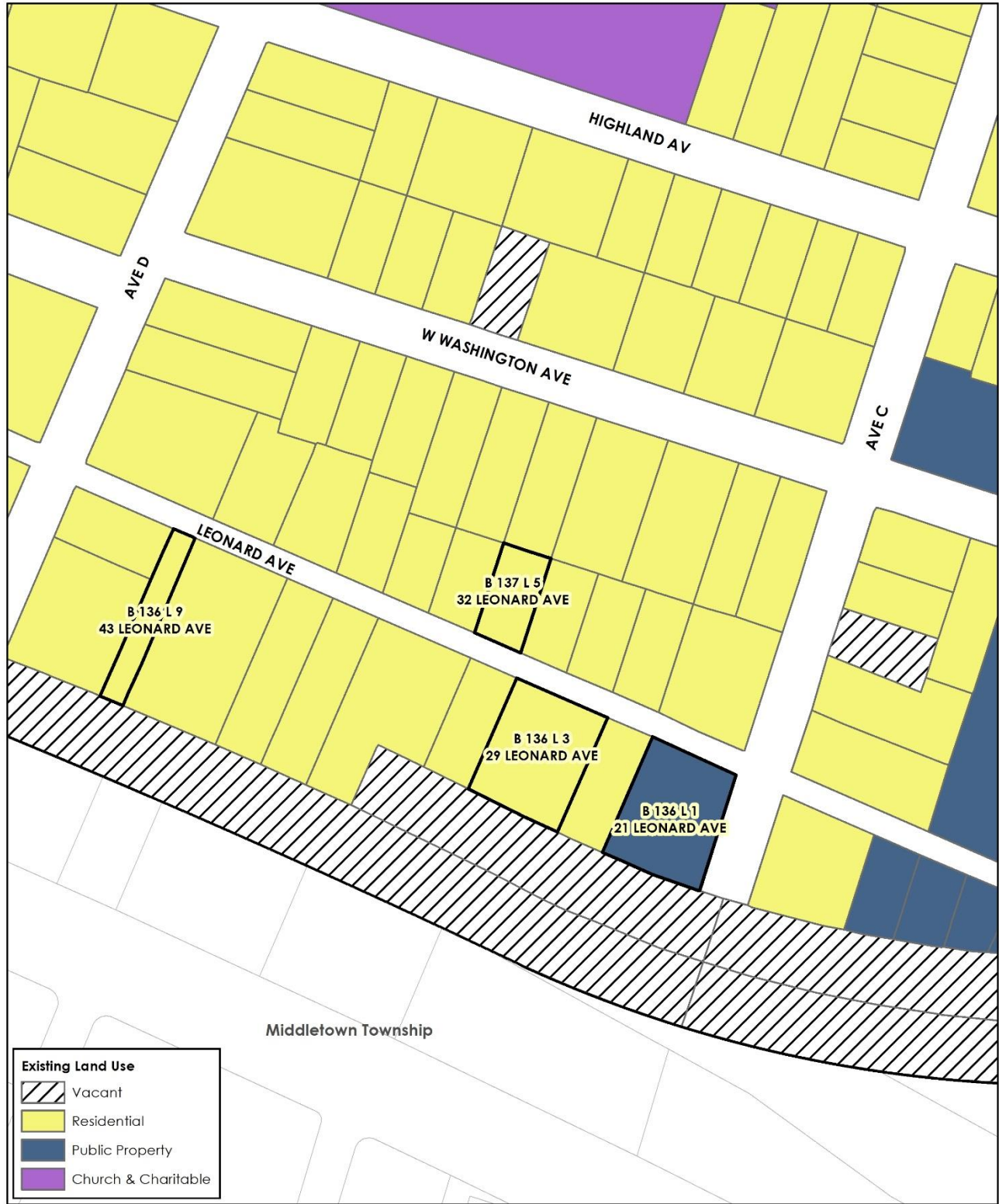


and R-TH: Townhouse Residential District. Within these zones, a twenty percent (20%) affordable housing set-aside is already required. The Borough is amending this existing set-aside Ordinance to include the OR: Office-Residential District.

The existing set-aside ordinance is also being amended to require the proper bedroom mixes and income distribution as per the Uniform Housing Affordable Controls (UHAC), with the exception that in lieu of ten percent (10%) of affordable units in rental projects being required to be affordable to households earning at or below thirty-five (35%) of the regional median household income by households size, thirteen (13%) of affordable units in such projects shall be required to be affordable to households earning at or below thirty percent (30%) of the regional median household income by household size.

- **Borough-Wide Mandatory Set-Aside Ordinance (“MSO”)**: The Borough is adopting a Borough-wide Mandatory Set-Aside Ordinance (MSO), which will require that any site that benefits from a rezoning, variance or redevelopment plan approved by the Borough that results in multi-family residential development of five (5) dwelling units or more shall require an affordable housing set-aside of twenty percent (20%). The adoption of the MSO does not give any developer the right to any such rezoning, variance, redevelopment designation or other relief, or establish any obligation on the part of Atlantic Highlands to grant such rezoning, variance, redevelopment designation or other relief. The MSO will not apply to the CBD, HBD, LI, R-TH or OR zones.





Source: NJOGIS, NJGIN, NJDEP, NJDOT

Existing Land Use  
Leonard Avenue  
Atlantic Highlands, NJ

**SUMMARY OF FAIR SHARE COMPLIANCE**

<b>Rehabilitation Obligation</b>	<b>51</b>
Monmouth County Rehabilitation Programs	51
<b>Realistic Development Potential</b>	<b>42</b>
Springpoint Living Project	10
95 First Avenue	1
Memorial Parkway Habitat for Humanity Project	2
35 First Avenue/2 Hennessey Blvd. Project	5
60-64 First Avenue Project	2
44-48 First Avenue Project	3
158 First Avenue Project	4
21 Leonard Avenue Habitat for Humanity	4
Rental Bonus Credits	11
<b>Unmet Need</b>	<b>251</b>
Springpoint Living Project	47
Modification to OR Zone	
Modification to Existing Set-Aside Ordinance for CBD, HBD, LI & R-TH Zone	
Borough-Wide Mandatory Set-Aside Ordinance	
<b>Total Obligation</b>	<b>344</b>

## **ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

**Very Low-Income Requirement:** The Borough will ensure that 13% of all of the affordable units, with the exception of units constructed as of July 1, 2008 and units subject to preliminary or final site plan approval, will be affordable to very low-income households. Half of the very low-income units will be made available to families.

**Rental Bonus Credits:** All rental bonus credits claimed in this plan have been applied in accordance with N.J.A.C. 5:93-5.15(d).

**Low/Moderate Income Split:** At least fifty percent (50%) of the units addressing the Borough's RDP shall be affordable to very-low income and low-income households, and the remaining will be affordable to moderate-income households.

**Rental Requirement:** At least twenty-five percent (25%) of the Borough's RDP will be met through rental units, and at least half of these units will be available to families.

**RDP Family Requirement:** At least half of the units addressing the Borough's RDP will be available to families.

**Age Restricted Cap:** The Borough agrees to comply with COAH's Second Round age-restricted cap of twenty-five percent (25%) for its RDP. The Borough is not requesting a waiver to exceed the age-restricted cap.

**Spending Plan:** The Borough has prepared a Spending Plan. The Borough will ask the Court to approve the Spending Plan so that the Borough's Affordable Housing Trust Fund monies can be expended.

**Affirmative Marketing:** The individual developers will be responsible to ensure that proper affirmative marketing of all of the affordable units is properly implemented.

## **X. HISTORIC PRESERVATION / RESTORATION ELEMENT**

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The purpose of this Historic Plan Element is to establish a comprehensive set of policies to identify and preserve historic resources in Atlantic Highlands. The Historic Plan Element is optional under the Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL). Atlantic Highlands has chosen to incorporate this element into the Plan because historic preservation is not only an important part of Atlantic Highlands character, it is vital to the Borough's future economic prosperity as well.

### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

For thousands of years members of the Native American Lenape tribes, the original inhabitants, lived along the cliffs and creeks, fished in the bay and hunted in the woods in and around the Atlantic Highlands area. Evidence of their presence consists of projectile points, pottery shards, and piles of discarded clam shells, as well as documents from early European explorers and Dutch and English colonists.

**1609** - The first European to visit the area was Henry Hudson in his ship "Half Moon". His ship's log tells of obtaining fresh water from natural springs in the area, now commemorated as Henry Hudson Springs.

**1664** - Popamora, the Lenape chief of the area, agreed to a deed selling the entire peninsula between the Ocean and Keyport to English settlers. William Bowne, with sons John and James, and seven other Europeans came from Gravesend, Long Island and from Rhode Island and soon settled along Many Mind Creek in the area that became Atlantic Highlands, then known as Portland Poynt.

**1667** - New Jersey's first Legislature met in Portland Poynt and under authority of the Nicholls Patent granted three separate townships: Middletown, Shrewsbury and Freehold.

**1776-1783** - Troops from the Colonial and British armies were present in the area. Standing today along the old roads are markers noting the routes and camp sites used by the British enroute to from the Battle of Monmouth in Freehold and Manalapan Township to Sandy Hook.

**1830** - The area began developing. Louis Despreaux, owner of the house near Henry Hudson Springs, known as the "Spout House", sold fresh water from the springs for 5 cents a barrel to fishing vessels, especially the New England Fishing Fleet. The Spout House still stands today at the corner of Hilton Road and Belvidere Road.

**1834** - William Brown built the first dock at the end of what is now First Avenue. It is believed he built the house on First Avenue known as "The Homestead", which sold in 1867 to Thomas Leonard; in turn, Leonard gave it to his son, Thomas Henry Leonard, later to be known as "the father of Atlantic Highlands." The house was later moved from First Avenue to the corner of Mount and Second Avenues, where it remains today.

**1840** – By 1840, the area of comprising Atlantic Highlands was divided basically into four farms. On the west side, from the area of Washington Avenue to the Bay, was the Brown farm, later the Leonard's. From Washington Avenue to the hills was the Roberts farm. On the east side, the Hooper farm was on the water, and inland were the Patterson-Woodward farms.

**1879** - Thomas Henry Leonard began residential development of the Borough by selling land on the east side of First Avenue to about Fourth Avenue as “town lots”. He used the money from the sales to extend the original Brown's Dock farther into the Bay to accommodate the new steamships connecting to Manhattan.

**1881** - The Atlantic Highlands Association, a group wishing to establish a Methodist camp meeting grounds, similar to Ocean Grove, purchased the Hooper farm and other properties, and laid out portions of the properties on the east side of the Borough.

**1882** - The first church (Methodist) in Atlantic Highlands was built on First and Mount Avenues (later moved). The first Post Office was established on March 22, 1882. Fire Company formed.

**1883** - First drug store. First public school opening.

**1887** - The Borough of Atlantic Highlands was created from the Township of Middletown by an Act of the State Legislature on February 28, 1887. The Borough was named for its location on the Atlantic Ocean and for steep hills or highlands for which was known. The first street lights were installed.

**1889** - Atlantic Highlands National Bank opened. The Atlantic Highlands Association sold their pier to the Central Railroad.

**1891** - The Borough government was reincorporated into the Mayor-Council form.

**1892** - The Central Railroad pier became the terminus for railroads and steamships, further adding to growth of the area as a popular summer community.

**1895** - First Casino Club organized. The Stone Bridge was built over Grand Avenue and dedicated in 1896. First introduction of electric lighting. Application for a trolley line along First and West Avenues was submitted. A second public school was constructed.

**1905** - The steamboat Mandalay began running three round trips to New York City daily, enabling the Borough's work force to commute to their jobs in the City while still enjoying the pleasures of living on the shore.

**1908** - On August 13, the “Journal” recorded the long-anticipated extension of the electric trolley line into Atlantic Highlands from the Stone Church branch of the Jersey Central Traction Company. The single track was laid on First Avenue, made a loop down Center Avenue, passed the Railroad Station, on what is now West Avenue, and traveled up Mount Avenue to rejoin First

Avenue. Connections could be made to Highlands, Red Bank and Keyport Boroughs. The First Avenue trolley was in operation until the early 1920s.

## **HISTORIC STRUCTURES**

Atlantic Highlands has a variety of residential and commercial structures remaining from the Borough's early history and development. Two areas which serve as historic focal points in Atlantic Highlands are the **Victorian Hill District**, covering an area of approximately 60 acres on a steep hill which rises up from Sandy Hook Bay to an elevation of 120 feet above mean sea level, and the **First Avenue** streetscape of the **Historic Business District**, which comprises the two blocks of First Avenue between Mount Avenue and Ocean Boulevard.

The majority of houses in the Victorian Hill District date back to the late 1800's and represent a number of late Victorian styles. Included in the district is the Stone Bridge constructed in 1896. The First Avenue streetscape serves as part of the Borough commercial center and was largely constructed during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These two districts contain over half of the currently inventoried notable historic structures in Atlantic Highlands.

These historic structures are identified in the **Monmouth County Historic Sites Inventory**, which was undertaken in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and identifies and recognizes historic properties through the United States. The Monmouth County Inventory is updated periodically with the last update in 2014. The Monmouth County Inventory also assessed the eligibility of sites in Atlantic Highlands for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

Fortunately, a number of private owners have worked hard to maintain and enhance their historic houses, including extensive restoration in some cases. Also, some homeowners have recently formed an Older Homes Group under the Atlantic Highlands Historical Society auspices to share information on ways of achieving better house preservation. Unfortunately, however, some houses have been remodeled without historical sensitivity or are inadequately maintained, and are losing their architectural quality and historic property value. Also, current market conditions have led to demolition of historic houses in some nearby towns (a phenomenon known as "scrape-downs") and are often replaced with construction of inappropriate and oversized houses in their place.

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

The policy expressed in the Historic Preservation/Restoration Element is to encourage and guide a range of actions needed to preserve the rich heritage of Atlantic Highlands. The Element promotes the preservation and enhancement of those buildings, structures and areas of historic and aesthetic value that reflect the cultural, social, economic and architectural history of Atlantic Highlands.



## **OBJECTIVES**

In order to implement the policy, five preservation/restoration objectives are presented in the following section:

1. Ordinance changes to facilitate preservation/restoration efforts;
2. Creation of a Historic Preservation Commission;
3. Development of tools to encourage property owners to preserve, restore and adapt their historic structures;
4. Completion and updating of the historic building inventory to coincide with or add to the Monmouth County Historic Sites Inventory and also the State List for Historic Buildings, as well as examining the possibility for the inclusion of additional historic districts; and
5. Development of a Community Education Program.

### **Ordinance Changes to Facilitate Historic Preservation/Restoration Efforts**

The objective of historic preservation and restoration efforts is to develop positive regulations, ordinances, and action mechanisms that support and encourage preservation, restoration and adaptive use of historic structures and help maintain the wider heritage of historic streetscapes and districts. These rules “should protect historic districts, through a combination of zoning and architectural review, from intrusions, demolitions, incompatible alterations and new construction, and other negative visual impacts,” as recommended in the **Monmouth County Historic Preservation Guide (1989)** (page 28). Zoning would be the strongest tool, especially for historic districts where it is important to “protect the exterior appearance of buildings, historically appropriate siting and street configurations, as well as to encourage adaptive use, rehabilitation and harmonious new construction” (page 40 of the Guide).

The Middletown Township zoning ordinances relating to historic preservation could well serve as a model for Atlantic Highlands to adapt and adopt. One section provides clear and comprehensive “standards of consideration for historic landmarks and historic districts” (listed below under Standards of Consideration). A second section provides a broad policy framework for historic preservation (listed below under Visual Compatibility Factors). It also sets out procedures for review by a Landmarks Commission of building permits for historic buildings, except in cases of immediate emergency repairs. The Commission carries out architectural-historical reviews of plans for restoration, rehabilitation and additional construction at landmark sites.

### **Visual Compatibility Factors**

Visual compatibility factors should be adopted to preserve the integrity and authenticity of historic buildings and districts and to insure the compatibility of new structures. Visual compatibility factors should be considered by the Historic Preservation Commission when

performing a review. If past architectural styles are to be used, a copy of a specific structure is preferable to an amalgam of building types and styles.

The following visual compatibility factors should be listed in the historic preservation ordinance:

**1. Height.**

The height of the proposed building shall be visually compatible with adjacent buildings.

**2. Proportion of building's front facade.**

The relationship of the width of the building to the height of the front elevation shall be visually compatible with buildings and places to which it is visually related.

**3. Proportion of openings within the facility.**

The relationship of the width of windows to the height of windows in a building shall be visually compatible with the buildings and places to which it is visually related.

**4. Rhythm of solids to voids in front facades.**

The relationship of solids to voids in the front facade of a building shall be visually compatible with the buildings and places to which it is visually related.

**5. Rhythm of spacing of buildings and streets.**

The relationship of the building to the open space between it and adjoining buildings shall be visually compatible with the buildings and places to which it is visually related.

**6. Rhythm of entrance and/or porch projections.**

The relationship of entrance and porch projections to the street shall be visually compatible with the buildings and places to which it is visually related.

**7. Relationship of materials, texture and color.**

The relationship of materials, texture and color of the facade and roof of a building shall be visually compatible with the predominant materials used in the buildings to which it is visually related.

**8. Roof shapes.**

The roof shape of a building shall be visually compatible with buildings to which it is visually related.

## **9. Walls of continuity.**

Appurtenances of a building such as walls, open-type fencing and evergreen landscape masses shall form cohesive walls of enclosure along a street, to the extent necessary to maintain compatibility with the buildings and places to which it is visually related.

## **10. Scale of building.**

The size of a building, the mass of a building in relation to open spaces, the windows, door openings, porches and balconies shall be visually compatible with the buildings and places to which it is visually related.

## **11. Directional expression of front elevation.**

A building shall be visually compatible with buildings and places to which it is visually related in its directional character, whether this be vertical character, horizontal character or non-directional character.

## **12. Exterior features.**

A structure's related exterior features such as lighting, fences, signs, sidewalks, driveways, and parking areas shall be compatible with the features of those structures to which it is visually related and shall be appropriate for the historic period for which the structure is significant.

Other potential resources to draw upon in preparing Atlantic Highlands historic preservation guidelines and regulations include:

1. The Secretary of the Interior's standards and guidelines on preservation and rehabilitation. The basic philosophy is to identify, retain, and preserve the form and details of historic properties. The emphasis is on maintaining and protecting such properties first, repairing and rehabilitating second, and replacing only when maintenance or repairs of certain components are not feasible or cost-effective. The standards serve as a yardstick for assessing Federal endorsement, funding or tax-incentives (where applicable) for preservation work on historic properties. They are fundamental and foundational for, and should be built into, municipal regulations as well.
2. The Monmouth County Historic Preservation Guide.
3. The experience and guidelines of other New Jersey municipalities that have made major improvements in their historic districts and sites and are models for successful, municipal promotion of preservation and related heritage tourism.

## **Creation of a Historic Preservation Commission**

A Historic Preservation Commission should be established in the Borough to provide consultative assistance to historic property owners. It would have responsibility under the Municipal Land Use Law (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-107) to compile a survey of historic sites, give advice on the Preservation Plan Element of the Master Plan, and review and provide recommendations on applications for development, and also carry out educational programs. If the zoning ordinance of the Borough also designates and regulates landmark sites and districts, then the Commission would have powers to grant or deny permits for the development or alteration of the designated sites.

Its first responsibility should be the drafting of guidelines and regulations to incorporate into new ordinances for adoption by the Borough.

## **Standards of Consideration**

In carrying out all of its duties and responsibilities, including but not limited to the nomination of landmarks and districts for historic designation and the review of regulated activities, the Commission shall be guided by the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings, which may hereafter be amended and which are given as follows:

1. Every reasonable effort shall be made to provide a compatible use for an historic property which requires minimal alteration of the building, structure, or site and its environment, or to use a property for its originally intended purpose.
2. The distinguishing original qualities or character of an historic building, structure, or site and its environment shall not be destroyed. The removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive architectural features should be avoided when possible.
3. All buildings, structures, and sites shall be recognized as products of their own time. Alterations that have no historical basis and seek to create an earlier appearance shall be discouraged.
4. Changes which may have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history and development of a building, structure, or site and its environment. These changes may have acquired significance in their own right, and this significance shall be recognized and respected.
5. Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship, which characterize a building, structure, or site shall be treated with sensitivity.
6. Deteriorated architectural features shall be repaired rather than replaced, wherever possible. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should match the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture, and other visual qualities. Repair or replacement of missing architectural features should be based on

accurate or pictorial evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different architectural elements from other buildings or structures.

7. The surface cleaning of structures shall be undertaken with the gentlest means possible. Sandblasting and other cleaning methods that will damage the historic building materials shall not be undertaken.
8. Every possible effort shall be made to protect and preserve archaeological resources affected by, or adjacent to any project.
9. Contemporary design for alterations and additions to existing properties shall not be discouraged when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant historical, architectural or cultural material, when such design is compatible with the size, scale, color, material, and character of the property, neighborhood or environment, and when such design is not visible from the street.
9. Wherever possible, new additions or alteration to structures shall be done in such a manner that if such additions or alterations were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the structure would be unimpaired.

### **Tools to Encourage Property Owners to Preserve, Restore and Adapt Their Historic Structures**

Possible tools to support this effort may be the following:

1. Property tax incentives.

The existing ordinance (§323-7 – Tax exemption for improvements) offers property tax abatement incentives for improvements on existing dwellings and on multiple dwellings and commercial or industrial structures more than twenty years old. “Improvements” can mean work done for purposes of historic preservation, restoration and rehabilitation of residential or business district structures. Building improvements typically increase the assessed value of a property and also the property tax that is levied on it. However, the ordinance provides that, when an abatement is granted for a dwelling, up to \$25,000 in new assessed value is phased in over a period so that the tax levy on that amount only goes up 20 per cent per year during five years. The same phasing applies to income-producing buildings (multiple dwellings and commercial or industrial structures), but the ceiling of assessed value on which taxes can be abated is \$25,000.

The Borough Council should increase the ceiling for the available tax abatement on all landmarked structures 100 years of age or older that undergo appropriate historic preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, or adaptive use. Such an increase is warranted because structures of that age are under greater threat of deterioration, disuse, and even demolition, and need more improvement work of greater complexity, difficulty and cost, than those of younger buildings. Also, these 100 year-plus structures usually represent historical architectural styles and construction methods that are scarcer and

thus more valuable historically as a community heritage resource.

The ceiling of assessed value to be abated for 100-year-plus structures of any type could be set at \$50,000. This would replace the \$25,000 level being set for dwellings over 20 years old and match the new top level enacted for income-producing buildings. If owners of the 100-year category want to qualify for an abatement higher than \$25,000, the planned improvements would be required to be certified by the Historical Preservation Commission as appropriate forms of historical preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, or adaptive use, according to agreed standards to be incorporated into the ordinances. Through the certification process, if sought by owners, they would receive sound advice relating to their structure and its streetscape, as necessary. The process also would help ensure that the community benefits from a well-conceived and harmonious restoration in exchange for the postponement of additional Borough tax revenue.

In addition, the Monmouth County Historic Preservation Guide lists other possible tax incentives which would require closer study:

- a. Property tax credit based on a percentage of restoration or rehabilitation expenditures.
- b. Assessment at “current use value” rather than “highest and best use” valuation.
- c. Recognition of decreased assessed value after donation of a preservation easement or landmark designation.

## 2. Conservation Easements.

Conservation easements covering exteriors/facades and historic/scenic views. Under certain conditions, Federal and State tax laws can treat easements as tax-deductible charitable contributions. The owner/donor continues to own and use the property, the municipality still receives property taxes, adjacent property values may increase because historic and scenic value is protected, and the community gains the benefit of a protected historic property.

## 3. Deed restrictions and covenants.

Deed restrictions and covenants can be used to maintain the historic integrity of buildings as well as surrounding land, to rule out facade alteration or obstruction of a particular view. The strongest method is restrictive covenants that run with the land. If these agreements are enforced by a qualified organization, they may be eligible for treatment as tax deductible charitable contributions.

#### 4. Transfer of Development Rights.

Where an historic property, particularly in a more compacted “downtown” area, has additional development potential under zoning and land use regulations, those unutilized development rights can sometimes be transferred by sale to another site where they can be translated into new construction. The seller is thus compensated for the restriction of development on the historic site, and the buyer can construct the equivalent amount of development on a second site.

### **Completion and Updating of the Historic Building Inventory**

Historical architecture is an essential element of Atlantic Highlands physical image today. The historic architectural styles, building scale, and streetscapes prevailing in much of Atlantic Highlands are an integral part of the town’s basic fabric and help define its unique character. These sites, which are part of the heritage from the past, are also important to the town’s sense of community, real estate appeal, property values and economic survival, both now and for the future. The Borough should update and fully document historic sites and structures within the Borough to coincide with or add to the Monmouth County Historic Sites Inventory and also the State List for Historical Buildings, as well as examining the possibility for the inclusion of additional historic structures and sites.

### **Landmark Designation Standards**

To guide the identification and designation process, the following standards should be used for evaluating the significance of properties and their eligibility for landmark status in Atlantic Highlands:

1. The landmark is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local, state or national history; or
2. The landmark is associated with the lives of persons significant in the past; or
3. The landmark embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that it represents the work of a master, or that it possesses high artistic values, or that it represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
4. The landmark has yielded, or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history; or
5. The landmark exhibits scenic, historic, architectural, archaeological, or cultural features which make a unique contribution to the townscape of the Borough.

### **Development of a Community Education Program.**

The Borough should sponsor a program, which educates community residents and makes them aware of the location and significance of landmark features. Such a program might include recognition through the award of landmark certificates to owners of landmark properties, historic markers on landmark sites, information distributed through the Borough or special publications newsletter, and sponsoring programs and events. This would complement the award of plaques to historic houses over 100 years of age, which is done by the Atlantic Highlands Historical Society.

### **LANDMARKS INVENTORY**

Many structures in Atlantic Highlands are 100 years old or more. The present inventory designates 46 sites as landmarks, including residences, three churches, the Stone Bridge, two special scenic views, and some First Avenue buildings. (In contrast, State property records show that 240 structures in the Borough are 100 years of age or older; though not all of these are in original condition, a number of them are worthy as historic sites and should be designated.)

Most of the 46 existing sites are in two historic districts. As named in the 1990 Master Plan, these are the:

1. "Atlantic Highlands District", now renamed the "Victorian Hill Historic District". This district is located on land from Second to Hooper/Chapin Avenues, and from Ocean Boulevard to East Highland/East Mount Avenue.
2. "Historic Business District". This district is located on First Avenue between Mount Avenue and Bay Avenue Ocean Boulevard.

These are overlay districts, meaning that historic designation is "in addition to such designation and regulation as the zoning ordinance may otherwise require" in those locations (N.J.S.A. 40:65.1 of the Municipal Land Use Law). The existence of these overlay districts only represents a pleasant form of recognition; it does not, in itself, provide any protection of historic structures in those districts, nor any incentive for their preservation and restoration.



**Table X-1  
Historic Landmark Sites  
Borough of Atlantic Highlands**

NO.	ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION	NRHP ELIGIBLE	SOURCE**
<b>Residential</b>				
1	District as a whole	Second to Hooper/Chapin Avenues; Ocean Boulevard to Mount; north side of East Highland Avenue from 8th Avenue to Grand Avenue	Yes	MCHA
2	38 Ocean Boulevard	"Barre Harbor Cottage" - Queen Anne residence	—	AH
3	44 Ocean Boulevard	"Peck House" - Queen Anne style residence	—	AH
4	48 Ocean Boulevard	"How Kola" - Colonial Revival residence	—	MCHA
5	54 Ocean Boulevard/Fifth Avenue	Colonial Revival/neo-Classical residence	—	MCHA
6	Ocean Boulevard/east of Seventh Avenue	Peanut stone steps/Victorian house	—	AH
7	Second and Mount Avenues	"Old Red Homestead" - Leonard House	—	MCHA
8	Third Avenue (Ocean/Mount)	First wooden house in Borough	—	AH
9	Third and Highland Avenues, NE corner style	Central Baptist Church - Romanesque Revival	Yes	MCHA
10	Third and Highland Avenues, SW corner	Presbyterian Church - Gothic revival style	No	MCHA
11	Third and Mount Avenues, SW corner	Site of First Methodist Church	—	AH
12	33 Fourth Avenue	Stick Style residence	Yes	MCHA
13	12 Seventh Avenue	Queen Anne /Stick Style residence	—	MCHA
14	28 Seventh Avenue	Queen Anne style residence	—	MCHA
15	16 Eighth Avenue	Victorian style residence	District	MCHA
16	60 Eighth Avenue	Carpenter Gothic residence	Yes	MCHA
17	78 Eighth Avenue	Queen Anne style residence	Yes	MCHA
18	Eighth Avenue next to #78	Peanut stone steps	—	AH
19	Mount &Seventh Avenues	"Woodmanse House" - Queen Anne residence with Colonial elements	—	AH
20	12 Prospect Avenue	Carpenter/Queen Anne style residence	District	MCHA
21	22 Prospect Avenue	Colonial Revival on Shingle/Queen Anne	Yes	MCHA
22	27 Prospect Avenue	"The Towers" (Strauss Mansion) - Queen Anne style residence	Possible	MCHA
23	46 Prospect Avenue	"Forest Cottage" - Shingle Style residence	District	MCHA

24	95 Mount Avenue	Queen Anne style residence	District	MCHA
25	Mount Avenue Bridge	Stone bridge over Grand Ave	District	MCHA
26	102 Mount Avenue	"The Stable House"	—	AH

27	Mount & Summit Avenues	"Crawford Cottage" - Victorian style residence	—	AH
28	43 Hooper Avenue	Queen Anne style residence	District	MCHA
29	27 Hooper Avenue	Craftsman Style residence	—	AH

**East Side:**

30	58 East Lincoln Avenue	Queen Anne style residence	Yes	MCHA
31	27 East Washington Avenue	Late Queen Anne residence	No	MCHA
32	37 East Washington Avenue	Late Queen Anne residence	No	MCHA
33	170 Ocean Boulevard	"Point Lookout" residence - portion predates Revolutionary War	—	MCHA
34	26 Belvidere Road	"Sprout House - Colonia style residence	—	AH
35	Hilton at Bayside Drive	Henry Hudson Springs	—	AH
36	Observatory Place	Water tower and observatory	—	AH

**West Side:**

37	Center Avenue and Avenue C	St. Agnes Church	—	AH
38	Avenue D between West Highland & South Avenues	"Brucewod" - Dutch Colonial revival house	—	AH

**HISTORIC BUSINESS ZONE**

39	First Avenue streetscape	First Avenue between Mount Avenue/Ocean Boulevard.	No	MCHA
40	33 First Avenue/Bay Avenue	Atlantic Highlands National Bank	Possible	MCHA
41	42 First Avenue	Commercial building	No	MCHA
42	85 First Avenue	Commercial building	No	MCHA

**SCENIC VIEWS**

43	Mount Mitchill Park, Point Lookout Bridge	Cliff-top view of bay, Sandy Hook, ocean, NYC skyline	—	AH
44	Center Avenue Park & creek, bay beach & dunes at many Mind Creek, Popamora Point	Natural scenic views to bay and beyond	—	AH

45	Promenade in the Marina	View of bay, Sandy Hook, ocean, NYC skyline	—	AH
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**COMMERCIAL ZONE**

46	South side of West Lincoln, west of West Avenue	Industrial buildings (now NJ Natural Gas)	No	MCHA
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**WEST SIDE AREA OF TOWN**

Over 70 structures on the west side were built 100 or more years ago, and a number of these are vernacular Victorian residences whose exteriors are still close to original. These sites deserve individual landmark status and should be so designated.

**SEARS HOUSES**

At least a dozen houses in the Borough are kit houses marketed by Sears, Roebuck and Co. during the period 1908- 1940. If the exteriors are still close to the original, they should be designated as historic sites.

**Notes:**

\* NRHP = National Register of Historical Places. The entry "district" in this column means the site is eligible for inclusion in the Register as a contributing element in an historic district, not by itself. NRHP eligibility was determined in the 1984 sites inventory by Monmouth County Historical Association (MCHA), with some updating in 2006.

\*\* The sources for designation of the historic sites and districts listed were either designated by Monmouth County Historical Association (marked as "MCHA"), or selected by the Atlantic Highlands Planning Board in consultation with the Atlantic Highlands Historical Society (marked as "AH").

## **XI. COASTAL WATERFRONT DESIGN**

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The largest, most visible and most appreciated feature of Atlantic Highlands is its coastline along Sandy Hook Bay. The waterfront stretches 2.5 miles from west to east along the southern edge of the bay. Behind this shore, the territory of the Borough is a relatively narrow strip ranging in width from only a half mile to one mile maximum. Seen from many vantage points, whether above on the highland ridge or down at the tidal flats, the coast is an important defining factor in the environment and life of the Borough.

### **HISTORY**

- During the late 1800s, individuals and groups came from New York City and the surrounding vicinity to camp along the water in tent colonies.
- From the late 1800s through the 1940s, steamship service was a major source of transportation. Steamers such as the “Sandy Hook” and “Monmouth” navigated the waters, bringing commuting businessmen and vacationers to Atlantic Highlands. In 1892, the Central Railroad of New Jersey built a major substantial pier at the foot of First Avenue. Several trains at a time could continue to the end of the pier to off load steamboat passengers. In 1966, the existing Central Railroad pier was destroyed by fire.
- The creation of the municipal marina took place from 1938 through 1940. It was built with municipal, state and federal funds; the Atlantic Highlands Lions Club supplied the vision and determination. Today, the municipal marina is the second largest on the East Coast, home to 715 craft.
- In 1992, high-speed commuter ferry service was introduced into the Borough. Now, multiple trips to/from Atlantic Highlands for New York City occur each day.

### **CURRENT USES**

Looking at the entire waterfront segment-by-segment reveals three main types of uses: natural, recreational, and residential, with a few commercial uses mixed in.

- **Sandy beaches.** Nature and nature-based recreation are combined at two sandy beaches at opposite ends of the coastline. Both beaches are available for swimming and other public uses, contain some grassy sand dunes, wetlands and woodlands, and are permanently dedicated as open space. One beach, next to Wagner Creek at the western border with Leonardo, covers about 400 feet of the Bayfront. And forms part of the Center Avenue Park owned by the Borough.

The other beach, next to the eastern border with neighboring Highlands, is about 1,600 feet long. It is part of Popamora Point, a County-owned park. Inland from its dunes was built the eastern segment of the bike-and hike trail, which runs there from the marina.

- **Coastal bluffs section.** Natural elements currently prevail below the high coastal bluffs between the eastern end of the harbor and Henry Hudson Springs. While residential structures top bluffs as high as 100 and 200 feet above sea level, below them is a narrow strip about 1,800 feet along the waterside, which contains a small beach area and fringe wetlands. At water's edge is the rocky coastal embankment of a railroad line, which used to parallel the shoreline. The area was developed recreationally as part of bike-and-hike trail, while retaining its natural character as much as possible.
- **Below Bayside Drive.** Natural vegetation also prevails on the slopes rising from the water below Bayside Drive east of Henry Hudson Springs. This segment, which covers about 3,200 feet of shore length, also contains a few wetland pockets and the rocky fringe of the former railroad's embankment. Here, too, the bike-and-hike trail is an active recreational use running through the preserved natural setting.
- **Marina and boat storage areas.** The main recreational use of the coastal zone is boating. The total water frontage devoted to boating uses is about 4,800 feet, with the bulkheaded part of the marina accounting for 1,180 feet of this. In addition, under a Borough lease, the Sandy Hook Bay Catamaran Club (also called the "Hobie Cat Club") based at the Center Avenue Park, uses the bay-edge of the beach for launching boats and the back beach for summer boat parking.

The total footage includes not only the active docks and rented boat slips of the Atlantic Highlands Marina, but also boat storage on the eastern end of the marina, and east of the beach at Center Avenue Park (Blackfoot Mobile Marine boatyard). On the Bayfront of the same private property there is also a curved sandy beach between Avenue A and First Avenue; only a 50-foot-wide portion of this beach on the Avenue A end is Borough owned and has public access. Commercial facilities at the Marina are three restaurants, a bait and fishing supply shop, day-tripper fishing boats and party boats, and the commuter ferry to Manhattan.

- **Residential uses** line most of the northern edges of the slopes, hills, cliffs and bluffs which rise from the Bay Shore. Public access to coastal lands is permitted below most of these residential areas. However, except at low tides, there is no public access along one 1,250-foot waterfront segment between Avenue A and Avenue D which is lined with private residences relatively close to the water.

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

The goal of this element is to guide development and redevelopment along the waterfront and to coordinate local plans and ordinances with the Monmouth County's Waterfront Access Plan, the

Regional Strategic Plan, as well as changes expressed on a State level. Future development must respect the public interest in maintaining and enhancing this area as a community resource.

## **OBJECTIVES**

In order to comply with the 2007 policy the following coastal/waterfront design objectives are presented:

### **The need to maintain and enhance public access to the waterfront.**

Several public access areas exist today, although some sections are difficult to negotiate due to natural conditions. On the publicly owned segments, such access is a guaranteed right. The access points are listed below:

1. The sandy beach at the east end of town.
2. The sandy beach at the west end of town.
3. A 50-foot wide sand beach at the end of Avenue A.
4. Along the foot of the coastal bluffs and below Bayside Drive on the path of the former bay front railroad.
5. In the municipal marina, the waterfront promenade behind the bulkhead line is fully open for public use.

With the completion of the bike-and-hike trail, some of the access difficulty was erased. The four main access points to the trail are:

1. From the east end of the marina.
2. Downhill from Henry Hudson Springs.
3. At the former Hilton Station of the railroad off Bayside Drive.
4. From Shore Drive in the Highlands.

Four other areas of the waterfront are bordered by private property, therefore public access is not guaranteed above the high water line. From east to west, these are:

1. The peninsula of the old railroad-steamboat pier at the western end of the marina.
2. The sandy beach running west of the peninsula, to Avenue A
3. The waterfront downslope from private residences on Harbor View Drive, where physical blockages prevent access from both ends (at

Avenue A and Avenue D).

4. West of Avenue D at the bulkheaded waterfront bordering the boat storage facility of Blackfoot Mobile Marine.

Municipal policies and ordinances should be adopted based on regulations issued by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) under the Coastal Areas Facilities Review Act (CAFRA) section 7:7E-8.11 Public Access to the Waterfront.

Atlantic Highlands should incorporate Public Trust Doctrine language into ordinances for the assurance of municipal support for public access both existing and in the future. The Doctrine requires that tidal waterbodies be accessible to the public for navigation, fishing and recreation and that the public must have access to and use of privately owned “dry sand” areas as reasonably necessary to use the tidal waterbodies. The State recommended access zone of ten (10) feet above high-tide mark for “dry sand” should be used.

The Bayfront area where public access still needs to be provided and assured and any blockages removed is between the eastern border of the Center Avenue Park and First Avenue. There are three issues of physical access in this area:

1. An upland fence barrier preventing access from Avenue D (as required by insurance provider); and
2. The obstacle of a man-made jutting pier made of large stones which extends into the bay past the high water mark west of Avenue A.

The third issue involves the privately owned beach areas between Avenue A and First Avenue. Beach access for this area should be examined from a legal basis as it relates to the Public Trust Doctrine mentioned above.

- **The need to develop and maintain the waterfront’s potential for recreation and open space uses.**

As stated in the Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) adopted by the Planning Board and Borough Council and approved by NJDEP/Green Acres in early 2001, appropriate lands should be designated and reserved for open space and recreation, in the same way as other land uses. Open space should be looked on as an element of public infrastructure and services that must be provided and maintained to sustain the community.

Portions of the lands identified as “waterfront at town center” in the Plan would be desirable as “public open space/recreation areas (PB)” for such uses as Borough beach, bicycle trail, pedestrian promenade and Many Mind Creek Greenway. Inclusion of a portion of the peninsula and related neighboring mainland (the former railroad pier and its approach) would enable that point of land to be reshaped and replanted as a pedestrian walkway and fishing site. Coexisting uses include: Borough and ferry parking, potential retail, and other marine and recreation uses.

Maintenance of the pedestrian trail system stretching from the Marina to Popamora Point along Sandy Hook Bay will continue. The trail connects a series of waterfront activity areas that includes the following features:

1. **Harbor Park and Marina.** The trail has been constructed behind the municipal marina and park, which offer active recreation and boating.
2. **Trail and Linear Park.** The right-of-way of the former railroad was converted to use as the Trail and is designed for pedestrian and bike access. Linkages to the trail are provided from residential neighborhoods. Points of interest along the linear park will include Henry Hudson Springs and Hilton Station.
3. **Popamora Point.** This park terminates the Trail at the eastern end of Atlantic Highlands and provides beach access and passive recreation.
4. **Bikeway.** A bike route should be marked along Bayside Drive and Ocean Boulevard providing scenic over-water views and access to the Mount Mitchill Scenic Overlook.

Additionally, the existence of the Trail as publicly protected and permanently dedicated open space will ensure that the coastal base areas of the bluffs are not excavated or otherwise undermined.

There is debate regarding uses for several existing undeveloped areas found along the waterfront. Further studies should be conducted and a plan of action adopted to ensure that those remaining properties will be developed over time in a manner that supports and enhances the community as a whole.

1. **The west.** The largest remaining open space in the Borough is the largely unbuilt land west of First Avenue and North of Bay Avenue on both sides of Many Mind Creek. (See “Bayfront at Town Center” above.) The area consists of five lots, of which the Borough owns only two unconnected lots totaling about 1 1/3 acre. The remaining acreage is the private ownership of the Seastreak and Hesse properties and the separate McConnell tract adjacent to Avenue D. Therefore, any proposals to reconfigure these lands for public purposes depend on these owners becoming willing sellers, the Borough alone, or partnering with other entities willing to finance the purchase costs, and a plan and layout being agreed upon as to how to use this space. So far it has not been possible to achieve sale of these lands to the Borough.
2. **The peninsula.** The undeveloped peninsula of land that used to be part of the old railroad and steamboat pier juts far out into the bay. It is privately owned.
3. **The east.** New piers for boats and for fishing have recently been installed here along the water, near an existing ramp for boat launching. Some natural enhancements on the land accompany the bike-and-hike trail where it turns toward and runs along the bay. Other development possibilities for this area need further investigation.



- **The need to maintain and enhance the contribution made by the waterfront to the Borough by linking it to the First Avenue business district and encouraging appropriate water-oriented uses.**

The Marina operation on the central part of the Atlantic Highlands coast is, in effect, the town's largest business and a sizeable source of annual Borough revenue. It is the second largest municipal harbor on the east coast and is run as a municipal utility by Borough employees under the guidance of the Harbor Commission and the Mayor and Borough Council. A feasible link between the town's central business district and waterfront activities could enhance the economic base of the community. Improvements should be focused on transportation first. A study detailing the order and projected time frame for the creation of new transportation systems or the upgrading of existing systems should be undertaken.

The Waterfront Business District (WB) was created to encourage development based on unified plans coordinated with the marina area. This extends the area permitted for retail and entertainment while also integrating open space, recreation, beach access, and pedestrian areas. However, in order for this link to remain viable and its purpose realized, the Borough must address improvements to the links from the downtown to the ferry system.

Two areas for consideration would be:

1. Improve the existing roadway system; and
2. Implement a regular shuttle bus service.

- **The need to coordinate with the State and County Plans for Coastal Zone Management and waterfront development.**

The Borough will continue, wherever possible, to work closely with the State of New Jersey through its Green Acres program, with the Monmouth County Freeholders and Monmouth County Park System, and with neighboring municipal governments in efforts to preserve open space and provide recreational opportunities in the coastal zone.

Among New Jersey State organizations, the Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) has developed substantive guidelines and legal regulations, as well as education and public information programs, for many environment-related issues (including coastal conservation and access) and provides matching funds for certain priority areas, including "Green Acres."

The NJDEP administers the Coastal Area Facility Review Act (CAFRA), originally enacted by the legislature in 1977 and amended in 1994, which provides for the NJDEP to assess and decide on plans for the use and development of coastal resources. The primary purpose of CAFRA is to provide added protection to sensitive coastal areas located along the edge of the Atlantic Ocean, Raritan Bay/Sandy Hook Bay, and Delaware Bay.

The New Jersey Coastal Management Program (NJCMP) sets a number of goals, policies and standards to protect the values of coastal resources. Among the eight goals of the NJCMP are to

“protect and enhance the coastal ecosystem,” “encourage the preservation of open space,” and “promote public access to the waterfront through the protection and creation of meaningful access points and linear walkways” (from “New Jersey Coastal Management Program fact sheet,” March 2002). The NJCMP’s legal framework includes CAFRA, the Wetlands Act, the Waterfront Development Law, and the Public Trust Doctrine for access to and use of tidelands. Its administrative arms include regulatory authority given in state coastal management and permit rules (Nj.A.C.7:7E and 7:7) and planning activities by the NJDEP office of Coastal planning. NJCMP is an approved part of the federal Coastal Zone Management Program.

Additionally, the Borough should continue to participate in and support the efforts of the towns involved in developing the Regional Strategic Plan. The issues and strategies expressed in that document encompass many of the concerns and subsequent planning objectives expressed above. Waterfront and open space preservation issues can no longer be viewed with blinders. Future overall economic growth for the region is dependent on decisions and directions being made by the united effort of municipalities.

## **XII. OPEN SPACE / RECREATION**

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The Municipal Land Use Law, specifically N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28(b)7 calls for the creation of a Recreation Plan Element.

Atlantic Highlands waterfront has beaches, dunes, wetlands and a thriving harbor for fishing and boating. Its steep slopes are forested and even flatter areas have substantial tree cover. The town's small area of 1.2 square miles is almost fully built out - about 95 per cent of the land is developed - and densely populated.

The movement to protect remaining open space in and surrounding Atlantic Highlands derives from this basic geography and demography. Beyond these figures, it also springs from the increased demand for active recreation by children, youth and adults, which outstrips available facilities. There is also growing public concern for the preservation of woodlands, waterfront, stream corridors and wetlands for purposes of both passive recreation and conservation of natural resources and habitat.

### **HISTORY**

Atlantic Highlands has a strong commitment and a long history of providing recreation opportunities and preserving open space resources for public purposes. For many years, Atlantic Highlands has acquired open space for public access and use as a deliberate policy.

- 1997-98, the Borough made five land purchases that created a 39-acre Lenape Woods Nature Preserve, consisting of an eastern section of almost 26 acres and a western section of 13 acres.
- November 1999 - The election ballot included an open space referendum which the voters approved by a margin of 2.5 to 1 (1,106 yes and 435 no).
- December of 1999 - The Borough Council adopted an Ordinance establishing a dedicated open space tax of 1 cent per \$100 of assessed valuation.
- April 2000 - Twenty five per cent of households in Atlantic Highlands responded to a survey mailed out by the Environmental Commission. Asked what they find attractive about living in the town, respondents cited the "small town atmosphere" (90 per cent), water front and views (89 per cent), natural beauty (79 per cent), boat harbor (79 per cent), commuter ferry to New York City (51 per cent), and Lenape Woods Nature Preserve (48 per cent). Asked how they would like to see the Borough develop in the future, the highest percentage of respondents chose more public open space (48 per cent).
- July 2000 - A public meeting was held to introduce and discuss the proposal to submit a Planning Incentive application and a draft Open Space Recreation Plan (OSRP) to Green

Acres.

- July 2000 - The Open Space Tax came into effect with property tax bills.
- July 2000 - The 2000 Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI) is completed and certified by Borough Council with which they agree to permanently hold all lands currently dedicated to recreation and conservation purposes.
- August 2000 - The Environmental Commission submitted the OSRP and the Planning Incentive application to Green Acres.
- February 2001 - OSRP adopted by Borough Council.

With Green Acres funding, the Borough acquired 9.24 acres to add to the eastern section of Lenape Woods Nature Preserve; it also bought one acre on upper Hillside Road, and dedicated almost 2 acres of Borough-owned land on the lower Hillside Road paper street to open space, creating the Cliffside section of the Preserve and enabling a link from the future Trail uphill to Ocean Boulevard and the Preserve's eastern section. All sections then totaled about 51 acres.

In addition, the Borough obtained shared use rights for ballfields (Clear Water Fields) that Middletown Township built adjacent to the new acreage of Lenape Woods East.

- Following its December 2002 session, the Habitat Workgroup of the NY/NJ Harbor Estuary Program (HEP) designated the estuary of Many Mind Creek, its saltmarsh and the surrounding Bayfront land of the Giuliani tract as a priority for acquisition and restoration. (Project RB17).
- May 2003 - the Harbor Commission recommended and Borough Council approved a bond ordinance for \$2.5 million to be used for acquisition of Bayfront land.
- October 2003 - the Borough obtained a 1.38 acre corridor of land that connects the Campo Overlook section to the main eastern section of Lenape Woods Nature Preserve, bringing its total size to 52.39 acres.
- November 2003 - a community survey questionnaire was mailed to residents, seeking opinions about the future of Bayfront lands west of the harbor. With a return rate of 19 per cent, 83 per cent of respondents favored acquiring the Giuliani tract for public ownership. Among other questions they answered, respondents wanted increased access to the Bayfront for biking, walking, fishing, sunset viewing, kayak/canoe launching, etc., as well as protection of natural habitat, wetlands, and beach (93 per cent).
- September 2004 - the Mayor's Waterfront Advisory Committee recommended to the Borough Council that 1) "all available means should be used" to acquire "expeditiously" the Giuliani tract for public ownership and use; 2) its western portion should be preserved for open space, recreation, and habitat/wetland/beach protection; and 3) its eastern portion

should allow for wetland, vegetated buffer and the Many Mind Creek Greenway, as well as some parking for ferry commuters.

- In 2004-2005 - Borough officials identified potential funding sources for acquisition of Bayfront lands, in addition to the Borough bond ordinance and open space tax fund. These include Green Acres matching funds, Port Authority open space acquisition funds, grants from the Monmouth County Park System and the NY-NJ Baykeeper.
- April 2006 - residents presented to Borough Council a petition with almost 1,400 signatures, urging acquisition of the unbuilt 6.5 acre Giuliani tract. West bank land would be devoted to open space, recreation and habitat (including beach, dunes and saltmarsh), while the east bank would have a stream buffer, Greenway trail, and expanded ferry parking. In August came the withdrawal of a developer who had proposed building a very dense condo development with 80 units on the tract.
- August 2006 - agreement was reached on open space preservation of a 27.3 acre portion of the lands south of Lenape Woods Nature Preserve and Highway, to be known as the Campo Trails. The agreement involved Middletown Township, the Friends of the Navesink Highlands, Green Acres, Atlantic Highlands, and the developer of a neighboring housing project.
- April 2007 - the Campo Overlook section of the Preserve was officially opened following an Eagle Scout project that created trails and installed fencing and signage.
- May 2007 - a contract was approved to survey the Atlantic Highlands-Middletown Township boundary in the area where a trail corridor needs to be established to connect the east and west sections of the Preserve.
- 2010 - Popamora Point opens as the terminal section of the Henry Hudson Trail.
- August 2010 - in an effort to improve water quality the borough earned a “Blue Star” certification from a joint program run by Clean Ocean Action and Sustainable Jersey. Atlantic Highlands was recognized for its program to recycle boat shrink-wrap, create fish-cleaning stations at the harbor, limit boat and motor vehicle idling, collect unwanted prescription drugs for proper disposal and the promote open space at the harbor.
- December 2013 - a \$113,000 Monmouth County Grant was received for Superstorm Sandy Repairs to three popular tennis courts and basketball court at Harbor Park.
- November 2017 - Reopened portion of Henry Hudson Trail totaling 1 ¼ miles damaged during Superstorm Sandy in October 2012.

## **OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN (OSRP)**

The OSRP of Atlantic Highlands was a five-year program of land acquisition. It was prepared in 2000 by the Environmental Commission, reviewed by the Planning Board for consistency with the Borough's Master Plan in January 2001, and adopted by the Borough Council on February 21, 2001. It was accepted by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection under its Green Acres Planning Incentive Program. It is recommended that the Borough continue to review and update the OSRP as needed, with particular emphasis on the six projects listed below.

The purpose of the OSRP is to provide a vision of the Borough's open space and recreation aspirations and a blueprint for their realization as far as possible. It also identifies logical and feasible ways of creating a comprehensive open space system to serve the unmet needs and growing interests of the population. It foresees acquisition of most vacant properties with substantial conservation and recreation value. The decision-making process for selecting properties for acquisition is based on numerous factors including site availability, owner willingness, development pressure, funding availability, recreation needs, and critical environmental issues.

The philosophy that motivates the OSRP has two components. First, the view has clearly emerged that Atlantic Highlands is a small town that wants to keep its character. With population density quite high and close to the carrying capacity of the land, the philosophy endorsed by the community is to restrain development, preserve as much unbuilt land as possible in its small territory, and also acquire and preserve neighboring lands as necessary.

The second motivation is to widen opportunities for recreation and outdoor enjoyment - in terms of geographic access, types of activities, and the population segments being served. This calls for land acquisition, which in addition to providing open space and natural conservation, seeks properties especially suited for active sports such as swimming, various ball games, and hiking. The range of interests to be served goes from bird watching to boating, from environmental education to soccer, from steep slope protection to slides and swings for tots. The Borough is committed to keeping all its recreation facilities open and accessible to the public and to serving the needs of all residents, including children, youth, adults, senior citizens and those with special needs.

Four types of needed recreation were singled out as having the least adequate capacity and the strongest unmet demand in the existing system and facilities available to Atlantic Highlands:

1. Playing fields for Little League, soccer, and field hockey;
2. Hiking;
3. Biking; and
4. Swimming

A number of desirable land acquisitions were identified and grouped into six projects according to location, resources, topography and possible uses. As a whole, these projects have features, new capacities and potential uses, which would satisfy a significant portion of identified unmet

needs. The plan envisages that the recommended conservation of public open space must go hand-in-hand with efforts to sustain, preserve and improve the Borough's two key centers of economic activity - the business district and the harbor - and to help enhance the Victorian historic district as an attractive and economically supporting asset; those efforts have their own appropriate planning and financing channels.

Six projects were originally proposed in the Action Plan. The six projects in their present state are summarized below. Attached to the full OSRP is a map titled "Atlantic Highlands Open Space and Recreation Plan" showing the location and configuration of all existing public and private sites for open space and recreation, as well as a general depiction of additional lands, which the Borough would like to acquire.

### **Lenape Woods Greenway**

The next stage of land acquisition with Green Acres matching funds would create a trail corridor to join the existing east and west sections, and extend the area to the east and south by incorporating neighboring forested slopes that are unbuilt. This expansion would protect the corridor of sensitive slopes, woodlands, and natural habitat along the highland ridge; provide access for additional neighborhoods; connect to the County park at Mt Mitchill Scenic Outlook; extend the system of hiking trails; stop further encroachment from development along our borders; maintain the existing buffer against noise, traffic and pollution from the New Jersey Route 36 area; add to the nature/environmental education opportunity available to children and adults; preserve the tree mass which moderates temperature and wind effects; and preserve habitat sufficient to sustain birds and other wildlife living in the zone.

### **Waterfront at Town Center**

The Borough has long wanted to obtain the privately owned lands in the waterfront zone west of the municipal harbor between the bay and Bay Avenue. These unbuilt lands consist of about nine acres (not counting surrounding waters) and include:

- The peninsula extending into the bay and related neighboring mainland. Fishing and pedestrian strolling take place on the peninsula, where there was a railroad/steam boat pier beginning in the 1890s. Mainland portions are currently used largely for ferry and marina parking.
- The curve of Bayfront beach running from the foot of First Avenue westward to Avenue A. The beach and bay waters here are suitable for recreational use. Also, low-water sand flats form a "delta" by the mouth of Many Mind Creek and water birds frequently feed there. The western portion of the beach is backed by a dune grass border.
- On the western portion behind the beach, about half a square block extending back to Bay Avenue. This large lot is bisected by Many Mind Creek and contains about an acre of wetlands. Mature pine trees line its borders along Bay Avenue.

## **Many Mind Creek Greenway**

A comprehensive plan to enhance and protect the Many Mind estuary should be implemented.

## **Wagner Creek/Center Avenue Park Extensions**

Wagner Creek, the only other stream in Atlantic Highlands, forms the western border with Leonardo, a section of Middletown Township. It requires protection by natural buffers for the same reasons as Many Mind Creek. On one bank on its northern portion next to the bay are several acres of mixed woodland/wetland protected by the Borough-owned Center Avenue Park. The park includes an upland area used for a recreational field and parking, and a beach area, which is shared between sight-seeing and walking by the general public and boat launchings by the Sandy Hook Bay Catamaran Club which leases some park land for boat storage.

## **Bayside Drive Bluffs**

Bayside Drive on the eastern end of Atlantic Highlands is bordered on its north side by the bay coast and on its south side by steep slopes and bluffs which rise to 260+ feet above sea level - the highest point on the Atlantic seaboard of the United States below Maine. Some coastal land in this corridor has experienced and continues to be at risk of “slump blocking” and landslides. Because of this geological phenomenon, it is critical to protect the slopes from several dangers. These include excessive water permeation and water back-up (e.g. from walls) which increase the weight and the slip and slump tendencies of soil blocks; disturbance of the slope toe which serves as a “foundation” and support for sharp bluffs above; deforestation and heavy drainage which destroy soil stability; etc.

Several conservation areas have been established on the water edge, slope sides and bluff top to offer such protection. These include the County beach park at Popamora Point next to the Highlands Borough border, Mount Mitchill Scenic Overlook Park and its downslope sides, the Henry Hudson Springs downslope conservation corridor, four Borough-owned lots along Bayside Drive and the “paper street” of lower Hillside Avenue. In 2002, the Borough acquired an acre of unbuilt land high on the slope off Ocean Boulevard at Hillside Avenue. The Bayshore Trail for hiking and biking along the coast runs parallel to Bayside Drive; as publicly protected and permanently dedicated open space ensures that the coastal base areas of the bluffs are not excavated or otherwise undermined.

A number of additional very steep areas remain unprotected against development that could seriously undermine their stability and that of lower elevations. In addition, there are important opportunities along this corridor for public access to stunning scenic water views, beautiful forested slopes, and passive recreation opportunities such as hiking

## **Lenape Woods South**

Along New Jersey Highway Route 36 double jug handle is a housing development. On its northern edge, the proposed housing footprint was reduced, conserving a corridor of wooded land that Atlantic Highlands acquired in order to connect parts of Lenape Woods East. On the



southern side of the highway, a partnership agreement saved 27 acres of land east and south of the development for an open space corridor known as the Campo Trails. South of the Highway, the Campo Trails connect to Hartshorne Woods. The partnership arrangements for conserving the 27 acres involved funding from Middletown Township (which now owns the land), Atlantic Highlands, the Friends of the Navesink Highlands, and Green Acres, as well as a contribution by the developer.

## **OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION POLICY STATEMENTS**

The policy statements expressed in the Open Space and Recreation Element (OSRP) are intended to preserve the existing open space and to explore the possibility of acquiring additional lands, both within and outside of the Borough, in order to provide the open space necessary to expand the opportunities and enrich the experiences available for recreation and outdoor enjoyment by the residents of Atlantic Highlands.

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The OSRP provides a comprehensive set of goals and objectives designed to identify and address both the short and long term needs of present and future residents of the Borough. The proposed acquisition projects would serve the following specific recreation and conservation goals of the Borough:

- Provide increased active and passive recreation for children and adults, including active recreation such as ball games and swimming, and passive pursuits such as hiking and nature observation.
- Offer trail access and other open space amenities to additional neighborhoods.
- Help restrain growth in housing and population density in environmentally sensitive areas of the Borough, thus maintaining both quality of life and property values.
- Reduce the danger of over-intensive development along the environmentally sensitive areas along the Borough borders.
- Protect natural resources such as streams and stream banks, bay coast beaches, steep slopes, slump block zones, forests and wetlands.
- Preserve and enhance the environment by maintaining existing buffers against highway noise and air pollution, saving natural habitat needed by birds and wildlife, and preserving tree mass, which moderates temperature and wind effects.
- Add to natural/environmental education opportunities available to children and adults.

### **Objectives**

- **To support acquisition of the types of land which can provide open space for:**

- Natural resource protection - including plant and animal life; fish and wildlife habitats; streams, marshes, estuaries and bay areas which are important for water quality, filtering pollutants, and reproduction and survival of fish and other water life; and stream banks, bay beaches, dunes, wetlands and other areas of environmental importance or sensitivity.
  - Outdoor recreation - including areas that are particularly suited for parks and active recreation, to provide access ways to beaches and streams, trail systems, scenic corridors and utility easements, and serve as links with other recreation and open space lands.
  - Protection of public health and safety - including areas needing special management or regulation because of hazards or special conditions such as steep slopes and the protection of invasive plant species in these areas, flood plains, watersheds, erosion and siltation.
  - Community character - including woodlands, open water, scenic resources, historic sites, and townscapes which have visual impact, contribute to the Borough's image and add aesthetic value to the surrounding built environment.
- **Research and obtain all sources of funding available to finance land acquisition.**

First priority in funding will be to obtain grants, such as the 50-50 matching grants available under the Planning Incentive Program of Green Acres. Other sources and formulae will come into play as required, sometimes in combination. Green Acres also offers 30-year loans at 2 per cent interest, which could be advantageous in certain circumstances. The Open Space Tax which the Borough voters endorsed, can be used to create access to larger sources of funding, and to repay any debt entered for land preservation, and to improve parklands already preserved. Through the years, heavy development pressures on unbuilt lands with high value as open space have led the Borough to pass bond ordinances meant for land purchase; several purchase actions were completed and have generated reimbursement of half the cost by Green Acres.

- **Change the way that open space and the preservation of open space is dealt with at the municipal level.**

Appropriate lands should be designated and reserved for open space and recreation in the same way as for housing, business and other categories of land use. Open space should be looked on as an element of public infrastructure and services that must be provided and maintained to sustain the community.

- **To continue to cooperate with other entities in an effort to preserve open space and provide recreational opportunities.**

At the government level, the Borough will continue, wherever possible, to work closely with the State of New Jersey through its Green Acres program, with the Monmouth County Freeholders and Monmouth County Park System, and with neighboring municipal governments in efforts to preserve open space and provide recreational opportunities within the Borough and along its borders.

## **XIII. CONSERVATION**

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The Conservation Element is an essential component of the Master Plan as identified in N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28(b)8. The Conservation Element establishes the framework for the Borough of Atlantic Highlands to protect, conserve, responsibly manage and, where appropriate, restore or enhance the Borough's water resources; wetlands; stream corridors and floodplains; greenways; slump block and steep slope areas; woodlands and tree cover; and wildlife and wildlife habitat. Each of these areas is appropriate for special land use regulations.

### **HISTORY**

As was common in many parts of the world, especially during the 1900s, Atlantic Highlands viewed saline and freshwater wetlands as unproductive swamps that should be drained, filled in and used for building purposes. Both saltwater and freshwater wetlands surrounding long stretches of Many Mind Creek were eliminated, especially between New Jersey Route 36 and the bay, but also along parts of the creek paralleling New Jersey Route 36. Nevertheless, hydric soils, high water tables, wetland types of vegetation and other characteristic wetland features are still present, together with some flooding since wetlands and their absorptive role have been reduced or eliminated.

Development in Atlantic Highlands and other coastal municipalities in New Jersey is subject to numerous statutory environmental regulations adopted through the years including:

- 1914 – Waterfront Development Act (N.J.S.A. 12:5-1 et seq.)
- 1954 - Air Pollution Control Act (N.J.S.A. 26:2C-1 et seq.)
- 1954 - Realty Improvement Sewerage and Facilities Act (N.J.S.A. 58:11-23 et seq.),
- 1962 - Flood Hazard Area Control Act (N.J.S.A. 58:16A-50 et seq.)
- 1970 - (Coastal) Wetlands Act (N.J.S.A. 13:9A-1 et seq.)
- 1973- Coastal Areas Facilities Act (CAFRA) (N.J.S.A. 7:7-1 et seq.)
- 1977 - Water Quality Planning Act (N.J.S.A. 58:11A-1 et seq.)
- 1977 - Water Pollution Control Act (N.J.S.A. 58:10A-1 et seq.)
- 1983 - Stormwater Management Rules (N.J.A.C. 7:8-1 et seq.)
- 1987 - Freshwater Wetlands Act (N.J.S.A. 13:9B-1 et seq.);
- 1993- Surface Water Quality Standards (N.J.A.C. 7:9B)
- 2016 - Coastal Permit Program rules and Coastal Zone Management rules were consolidated into one chapter (N.J.A.C. 7:7)

In addition to the New Jersey environmental regulations, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Coast Guard regulate major development activities within the navigable waters of coastal area.

- The Freshwater Wetlands Protection Act was adopted in recognition of the importance of such wetlands and the need to preserve them and their natural buffers. Formal determination of wetland areas are based on three main factors: the presence of “hydrophytic” vegetation which prefers or can tolerate saturated soil conditions; the presence of wetland or “hydric” soils; and an evaluation of the soil’s ability to support wetlands vegetation.
- Beginning in 1998, volunteers working with the Atlantic Highlands Environmental Commission did monthly water sampling and testing in Many Mind Creek and Wagner Creek. Between 2005 and 2007, this was replaced by professional testing at six sites on Many Mind Creek to detect problems of non-point source pollution. Along the Bayshore between Aberdeen and Atlantic Highlands, similar data collection activities are being carried out on a number of creeks, brooks and lakes.

In addition, at six of these water bodies the Monmouth County Health Department also collects data on fecal coliform counts quarterly and nutrient levels twice a year. The data collected are shared at the county level to assemble a picture of non-point source pollution and contribute to watershed planning efforts.

- In 1996, an agreement was reached to end the dumping in the ocean of contaminated materials dredged up when deepening shipping channels in the bay. It was agreed to close the “Mud Dump Site” where these materials had been deposited in the ocean, approximately six miles off Sandy Hook. Instead, the contaminated area, which is 15 square miles, was to be capped with clean sediments as protection against the pollutants already there.

Since then 3 million tons of new material have been deposited at the site under the name of capping and “remediation” of the existing dump. However, nearly one million tons of this exceeds the latest definition of limits for toxic contaminant PCBs, and other pollutants were also present.

This prompted a new campaign against ocean dumping led by Clean Ocean Action with a coalition of ocean advocacy groups. Over 200,000 people signed petitions and 100 local governments passed resolutions opposing continued dumping and pressing for promised new definitions of permissible material to use in capping the site.

During the summer of 2000, an eight-day, 150 mile protest march was held from one end of the Jersey Shore to the other, and other events and supporting actions were held by groups ranging from surfers to business owners.

- During the latter decades of the 1900s, despite predictable problems for environment and for construction stability, areas with steep slopes in the Borough were increasingly used as development sites. This trend was fed as population growth stimulated housing demand, suburban living became increasingly popular, coastal zones attracted high-end land prices, and economic prosperity made it all affordable.

In the second half of the 1980s and during the 1990s, in reaction to the more compacted neighborhoods and the loss of open space and recreation lands, which resulted from the real-estate boom, public counter-moves aimed at public land conservation began to gather steam. In 1989, the Atlantic Highlands Borough Council passed a steep slope ordinance, which set limits on the development of slopes greater than 10 per cent and specifies the detailed studies to be made when applying for permission to build on such slopes. (“slope” is measured as the change in elevation (vertical distance) over horizontal distance and is expressed as a percentage. Slopes greater than 12 to 15 percent are potentially critical environmental impact areas and efforts should be made to keep them in their natural state. The ordinance takes into account such factors as the extent of erosion and the potential for more; soil stability; maximum preservation of trees and other vegetation on site and in the surrounding area; the need to limit the extent of impervious surface to be constructed and the lot area to be disturbed; etc.

- In November of 2000 the Borough’s Forestry Master Plan was approved by the NJDEP Division of Parks and Forestry. This plan was prepared and is administered by the Shade Tree Commission. The Forestry Master Plan was prepared as a result from the New Jersey Shade Tree and Community Forestry Assistance Act passed in 1996. The Atlantic Highlands approval certificate is No. 42, statewide.
- The 2006 Bayshore Region Strategic Plan focuses on nine municipalities in the Raritan Bay and Atlantic Highlands region. The plan provides a strategy for communities in this region to recognize economic growth through revitalization efforts to create an attractive destination for tourism and to preserve and enhance the area’s unique and sensitive natural resources.

The 2008 report by Weston Solutions entitled “Many Mind Creek Watershed Restoration And Protection Plan” was developed under a USEPA 319(h) storm water management grant giving recommendations for Best Management Practices (BMP) for reducing polluted runoff into the creek and Sandy Hook Bay. The suggested best management practices included more street sweeping, better pet waste control, increasing stream buffers, and encouraging the use of rain barrels.

The study was done for a committee that included the grantee, Atlantic Highlands, and committee members Middletown Township, Monmouth University, Monmouth County Planning Board, Brookdale College, NJDEP, Friends of Many Mind Creek, and the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and others.

- In October 2012 Superstorm Sandy struck New Jersey. In response to that storm “ Getting to Resilience” Recommendations Report was prepared in January 2015 by the Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve.
- In August 2017 the “Many Mind Creek Planning Assistance to States” (PAS) study was adopted by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), New York District in partnership with the Borough of Atlantic Highlands. The goal of the study was to develop risk reduction alternatives for Many Mind Creek and also identify areas along the creek that are prone to flooding, stream bank erosion, sedimentation or flow constrictions.

Recommendations were provided for each of the identified problems.

- The United States US Geological Survey (USGS, NJ) has conducted over the past several years a study of landslides in Atlantic Highlands and surrounding areas. On-going as of 2018, they have set-up and monitored instruments at 13 locations where their Water Science Center has documented landslides. According to their findings, landslides in our steep-slope areas occur when soil layers with two different hydro geologic characteristics lose friction when heavily saturated by rain or snow, allowing sliding of the top soil layer. Additional factors include saturation from seepage from springs, the depth of root growth of vegetation, and the weight of structures and pavement on the slope. This important study documents the possibility of landslides in the Borough's steep slopes, especially relevant to future building of new structures or significant additions to existing properties.
- Clean-ups are conducted along the Sandy Hook beach by the NJDEP Clean Shores Unit with assistance from the NJ Department of Corrections inmates, when requested by the Borough.
- Litter, debris and other pollutants enter the bay and ocean both from boats and from wash-downs off the land. In Atlantic Highlands there are ordinances and fines aimed at preventing boaters and pedestrians from despoiling the harbor, with enforcement by harbor security officers
- Every spring and fall, the Atlantic Highlands Environmental Commission organizes a beach clean-up by community volunteers in the area west of the harbor. In so doing, they join many other bayside and oceanside towns which take part in these region wide "sweeps" organized by Clean Ocean Action.

## **IMPACTS OF SUPERSTORM SANDY**

Since the 2006 Master Plan, the Borough has an increased awareness of flooding from severe storms and hurricanes including Superstorm Sandy. There is also a heightened awareness from rising sea levels. Revised flood maps by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and new data on the impacts of sea - level rise have become available.

The Borough did not experience as much damage to residential properties as other nearby communities due to a more elevated geography. This allowed Atlantic Highlands to assist other neighboring communities during and after the storm. There was extensive damage to the marina estimated in the tens of millions. The harbor docks were destroyed and the public buildings on the shoreline were heavily damaged by Sandy but have since been rebuilt to standards that should be able to withstand a Category 3 hurricane.

Many lessons were realized as a result of Superstorm Sandy. Several of the implementation strategies that were identified post-Sandy are discussed below.

## **Homeowners Flood Insurance Affordability Act of 2014**

The Homeowners Flood Insurance Affordability Act of 2014 provides for the gradual increase of flood insurance rates until the premiums reaches full-risk rates. With limited exceptions flood insurance premiums cannot increase more than 18 percent annually. These exception areas may see annual increases of up to a 25 percent until they reach the full-risk rate. The exception areas include:

- Older non-primary residences insured with subsidized rates;
- Severe Repetitive Loss Properties insured with subsidized rates; and
- Buildings that have been substantially damaged or improved built before the local adoption of a Flood Insurance Rate Map (known as Pre-FIRM properties).

## **Sea Level Rise and Infrastructure Impacts**

The historical rate of sea level rise along the New Jersey coast over the past half-century was 0.14 inches/year, while predicted future rates are expected to increase to 0.5 inches/year. This means that by 2050 sea level is expected to rise by approximately 1.3 foot and by 2100 sea level is projected to rise about 3.1 feet along the Jersey Shore .

It is important to take sea level rise into account when developing land use regulations and designing infrastructure. For this reason, it is recommended that the Borough maintain a requirement of two (2) feet above base flood elevation for future development.

## **“Getting to Resilience” Report**

The “Getting to Resilience” Recommendations Report prepared in January 2015 by the Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve recommends both short-term and long-term resiliency planning strategies. The majority of the short-term strategies revolve around public education on the dangers of flooding and providing information to the public on flooding and sea-level rise.

Long-term strategies include land acquisition through the N.J.D.E.P. Blue Acres or other buyout programs of land in floodplains and revising the Borough Master Plan and land development regulations to reduce flood vulnerabilities.

The Resiliency Recommendations Report provides resource recommendation goals and floodplain management objectives to guard against the potential impacts of sea-level rise and surge vulnerabilities. These goals and recommendations are incorporated into the Master Plan below:

## **Resource Protection Goals**

Air, water, and land can be overused and despoiled. The Conservation Element of the Master Plan is geared toward resource protection. If damage to air, land or water occurred, local residents’ quality of life and tourism could potentially be negatively affected. Preserving the Borough’s natural resources and character will therefore continue to be a major goal:



## **Floodplain Management**

Floodplains, lands along waterways subject to flooding, locally have low relief and sedimentary soils. Floodplains are defined by how often they flood. A 100-year floodplain has a 1% probability of flooding in a given year and is not tidally influenced. Local flooding can occur in major storm events. Most of the 100-year floodplain areas in the Borough of Atlantic Highland's are highly developed. Both residential and commercial uses exist within this floodplain. Most of the time a floodplain is available for use. However, during floods they can be dangerous. Superstorm Sandy reinforced this fact. Floods injure people physically and emotionally and cause economic damage. Beyond this, emergency personnel are put at risk when called upon to rescue flood victims. In Atlantic Highlands, flooding must be taken very seriously. To protect public safety and property, limiting future building in floodplains and stringent construction standards will help reduce injuries and property damage. Federal, state and local policies should be consistent to implement this approach.

## **Floodplain Management Objectives**

The Borough's objectives for floodplain protection are as follows:

- Limit development in floodplains
- Reduce imperviousness of existing and future floodplain development where possible
- Preserve and protect the biological values and environmental quality of tidal and non-tidal floodplains, where reasonable and possible to do so.

Developed floodplains have a reduced capacity to absorb stormwater, resulting in increased flooding. For example, development results in new impervious surfaces (roads, sidewalks, roofs, etc.), which limit the effectiveness of the floodplain by reducing the land's absorption capacity. This increases the potential for flooding. It is therefore important that the natural floodplain character be maintained, wherever reasonable, to promote public safety, to reduce economic losses, and to protect water quality and wildlife habitat.

Atlantic Highlands faces additional flooding issues. Several areas of the Borough commonly flood during storms. Sea level rise will increase flooding hazards. New Jersey is particularly vulnerable to sea level rise. During this century, as sea level rises, shorelines could retreat significantly in parts of the Borough. Narrow bay beaches and wetlands at low elevations, both important habitats, would be lost to even a modest rise in sea level and erosion of the oceanfront would increase. Currently, the State recognizes a right to protect shores with hard structures (e.g. riprap). As sea level rises, these hard structures will prevent "migration" of beaches and wetlands, and these natural features will be lost.

## **Programs and Policies**

Flooding from coastal storms is a serious threat to life and property with the potential for extensive damage and disruptions. To reduce potential damage, Monmouth County is developing

a hazard mitigation plan. This first step will provide guidance for pre-disaster activities. The second phase of addressing disasters is to develop a post-disaster plan. Confusion and rapid decision making typically follow a disaster. Advanced pre-planning can position the Borough to reduce its exposure to future disasters and reduce the need for ad hoc decision-making. Superstorm Sandy has provided a valuable lesson, that planning is necessary for an effective post-disaster recovery process.

### **Recommendations**

1. Work with federal and state agencies to regularly update the Borough floodplain maps.
2. Limit new development and subdivisions in floodplain areas.
3. Promote uses, such as open space easements, natural areas, and recreational open space to reduce impervious surfaces in floodplains.
4. Work to acquire properties in the lowest lying portions of the 100-year floodplain, and return them to a natural state.
5. Reevaluate the effectiveness of the current floodplain protection regulations.
6. Discourage the location of new homes and roadways in the “V” or wave velocity zone and the 100-year floodplain.
7. Work with Monmouth County to complete a hazard mitigation plan for flooding, wildfire, and other natural hazards.
8. Develop and implement a post-disaster recovery and reconstruction plan to facilitate recovery and to reduce exposure to future disasters.
9. Consider participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS) to receive flood insurance premium credits.
10. Consider code changes that will limit impervious surfaces.
11. Develop a sea level rise response strategy (including a two foot freeboard requirement for properties exposed to flooding and discourage further shoreline hardening).

### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR WATER RESOURCES**

**GOAL: The Borough’s overall objective for water resources is to achieve “fishable and swimmable waters”**

## **Watersheds**

Sound conservation, protection and management of the water resources on land within Atlantic Highlands begins with awareness of the watershed, its behavior and effects. It requires understanding of rainfall and natural water drainage from the hills and in the flatlands; underground water buried in aquifers; surface water flows in creeks, springs, wetlands and flood zones; and tide-water influences on stream mouths, shorelines and salt marshes. This hydrological system has positive and life-sustaining value, but also entails some risks and negative effects if engineering and development actions are not carefully planned.

Many Mind Creek and Wagner Creek are the main drainage channels within Atlantic Highlands. They carry almost all the surface water runoff from the Borough northward toward the Bay. Some runoff enters these streams directly over the land, some is retained in creekside wetlands, and some runs in stormwater drainage pipes, which are embedded under the streets and empty into the creeks. At their mouths, the two creeks are partially mixed estuaries, with a mix of seawater beneath a surface layer of freshwater moving seaward. Both creeks deposit sediments in a fan-shaped delta beneath the shallow bay-edge waters.

A smaller amount of runoff from the Borough is carried by a number of gullies and ravines in the steep slope areas between the eastern end of the harbor and near the border with Highlands Borough. Between storms some of these water courses are dry. As these waters enter the low-lying shore lands, some cross directly into the Bay and some are retained for a period in isolated wetlands.

The slope below East Highland Avenue between upper Prospect Avenue and Scenic Ridge drains southward to the Navesink River. Runoff from there starts downhill by feeding an intermittent stream which goes through Middletown Township lands parallel to and then crossing New Jersey Route 36. It becomes a perennial tributary of Clay Pit Creek in the Navesink Estates townhouse development, passes through a culvert under Navesink Avenue, and heads to the estuary of Clay Pit Creek.

The total watershed territory, which drains into Raritan Bay/Sandy Hook Bay extends 18 miles east-west along the Bayshore, between Highlands Borough and South Amboy Borough. A total of 13 streams, including Many Mind Creek and Wagner Creeks, carry water northward from sources one to four miles inland and empty into the bay. For that reason, an integral part of the policy environment for Borough pursuit of its water resource goal is the essential linkage with neighboring towns that share the same watershed with Atlantic Highlands.

### **Objectives:**

- The Borough should continue its partnership in Watershed Management Area 12 as mandated by NJDEP, and incorporate the goals and objectives addressed in the WMA 12 plan into the Borough Stormwater Management Plan.
- The implementation of non-structural Best Management Practices should be added to the Borough's existing development regulations and applied to all new site design proposals. Whenever possible, the following nine strategies should be incorporated into site design:

- a) Protect areas that provide water quality benefits and areas particularly susceptible to erosion and sediment loss;
  - b) Minimize impervious surfaces and break up or disconnect the flow of runoff over impervious surfaces;
  - c) Maximize the protection of natural drainage features and vegetation;
  - d) Minimize the decrease in the “time of concentration” from pre-construction to post construction. “Time of Concentration” is defined as the time it takes for runoff to travel from the hydraulically most distant point of the drainage area to the point of interest within a watershed;
  - e) Minimize land disturbance, including clearing and grading;
  - f) Minimize soil compaction;
  - g) Provide low-maintenance landscaping that encourages retention and planting of native vegetation and minimizes the use of lawns, fertilizers and pesticides;
  - h) Provide vegetated open-channel conveyance systems discharging into and through stable vegetated areas; and
  - i) Provide other source controls to prevent or minimize the use or exposure of pollutants at the site in order to prevent or minimize the release of those pollutants into stormwater runoff. These source controls include, but are not limited to;
    - I. Site design features that help to prevent accumulation of trash and debris in drainage systems;
    - II. Site design features that help to prevent discharge of trash and debris from drainage systems;
    - III. Site design features that help to prevent and/or contain spills or other harmful accumulations of pollutants at industrial or commercial developments; and
    - IV. When establishing vegetation after land disturbance, applying fertilizer only in accordance with the requirements established under the Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Act N.J.S.A 4:24-39 et seq., and implementing rules.
- The Borough prepared a complete inventory and instituted a close control of its stormwater outfalls into the creeks and the bay. This will be done for two reasons: 1) NJDEP requirements under the “fishable and swimmable water” policy and state-wide watershed management initiatives. 2) Impervious cover in the Borough has expanded and is slated to continue expanding with approved development projects. This raises concerns related to creek-flooding, an existing problem, and issues of non- point pollution.

- The following measures reduce the volume of stormwater run-off and the non-point source pollution<sup>1</sup> it carries; the Borough has already adopted some of them, as previously indicated:
  - 1) At construction sites, control soil erosion and trap sediment by covering exposed soil with straw mulch or sowing grass seed, erecting a black cloth silt fence along the edge of sites (adopted). Studies show that mud pollution from construction sites must be reduced by 90 per cent or more to protect sensitive aquatic resources.
  - 2) Limit the percentage of lot area, which can be disturbed by construction and the area which is allowed to have impervious cover (adopted).
  - 3) Pass municipal regulations and educate homeowners to preserve trees and retain natural land cover that will absorb water into the soil, hold soil in place instead of eroding, and reduce the amount of sediment entering streams (this “tree preservation” regulation is included in steep slope ordinance, but should also be included in the rest of the Borough).
  - 4) Provide for tree canopy over streams and other bank vegetation to reduce water temperature, act as a soil stabilizer and keep erosion in check.
  - 5) Reduce or eliminate the use of fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides on lawns and gardens because these degrade water quality.
  - 6) Create ponds that can keep 40 to 60 per cent of the nutrients and toxic metals out of nearby waterways (several ponds created).
  - 7) Install signage on storm drain covers to indicate what bodies of water they flow into and discourage people from discarding pollutants in gutters and drains (completed Borough-wide).
- The Borough should institute regulatory measures to ensure that future major drainage projects are designed with “stormceptors” (devices that intercept trash and some types of pollutants from passing through outfall pipelines), and should progressively retrofit storm drain covers that block trash.
- Monthly water sampling and testing in Many Mind Creek and Wagner Creek should continue with the help of volunteers. The Borough of Atlantic Highlands should continue to share data at the county level in order to assemble an area-wide picture of non-point source pollution, which will in turn contribute to future watershed planning efforts.
- The Borough in cooperation with Middletown Township should utilize the NPS Grant to develop a regional plan for watershed restoration and stormwater management for Many

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<sup>1</sup> *Non-point source (NPS) pollution is caused when rainfall or snowmelt, moving over and through the ground, picks up and carries natural and human-made pollutants, depositing them into lakes, rivers, wetlands, coastal waters and ground waters.”*  
 Source: USEPA. NPS often contains oils, pet waste, fertilizers, and drainage from non-permeable surfaces, where tracing pollution back to a single source is difficult.

Mind Creek that will address the stormwater problems throughout the watershed and provide regional Best Management Plan solutions that are needed to reduce water quality impairments.

- The Borough should determine what sites can achieve stormwater control with vegetative swales and buffers, as well as landscaping to control non-point source pollution, or what sites may require the building of a stormwater basin, to comply with the State standard that requires sufficient stormwater detention capacity to hold and slowly release the runoff from storms that have a likelihood of recurring once every two, 10 and 100 years.
- The Borough should continue to extend the street drains and piping systems into the eastern hills section to control erosion and slope instability.

## **Wetlands**

Wetlands are areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater often and long enough to support vegetation adapted to survive in saturated soil, according to the definition used by the NJDEP. Wetlands generally occur in relatively flat areas between deep water and uplands, such as along Sandy Hook Bay, Many Mind Creek and Wagner Creek. They are variously referred to as salt marshes, tidal marshes, salt meadows, wet meadows, shrub swamps, swamps or bogs, depending on their locations and characteristics. Development patterns can change wetlands or even unintentionally create wetlands if the capacity of a land area to drain or infiltrate water becomes overburdened.

Wetland areas are essential to maintaining a healthy ecosystem. They provide important plant, fish and wildlife habitat, flood protection, erosion control, water quality maintenance, and recreation. Wetlands act as natural detention basins, temporarily store floodwaters, lower downstream flood crests, and slow the velocity of destructive water flow. They help maintain stream flow, reduce silt loads, filter chemical and organic pollutants, and serve as buffers to protect upland areas.

The two main types of wetlands, estuarine (tidal, saline) and palustrine (inland, freshwater), are both found in Atlantic Highlands:

**Estuarine wetlands** are formed in coastal areas along Sandy Hook Bay where the tide ebbs and flows, and at the mouths of Many Mind Creek and Wagner Creeks where bay tides meet the stream current. These salt and brackish marshes are home to myriad life forms, provide an integral link in the ecological food chain, and serve as a nursery and feeding habitat for food fish. However, increases of stormwater runoff can change the salinity of the creeks and their estuaries and add unwanted fertilizers and pollutants. Aquatic life, which relies on an estuarine habitat, is very sensitive to these human induced changes. As the quality of the habitat is reduced, so will the variety and number of resident species decrease.

**Palustrine forested wetlands** are areas of freshwater marshes, bogs or swamps, which are scattered along streams. Freshwater marshes also have great ecological value, support basic

elements of the food chain, and are home to many fish, turtles, amphibians and mammals, as well as a refuge for various birds and waterfowl.

In April of 2000, engineers at Maser Consulting prepared a survey that identified isolated freshwater wetlands existing in several sections of the waterfront land - areas inundated or saturated by such freshwater sources as rainfall and surface water runoff. Some of these wetlands were caused naturally, and others resulted from the retention of water in the soil behind such structures as shoreline bulkheads and berms containing the dredge spoil site east of the harbor.

The majority of these wetland areas are classified as having intermediate resource value. They are characterized by their hydric (wet) soils and the prevalence of hydrophytic vegetation which is typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. According to the survey, the plant communities in these wetlands “are generally successional, consisting of a number of alien species and native species adapted to human disturbance.” The inventory was completed as part of the Borough’s application to NJDEP for a CAFRA (Coastal Area Facility Review Act) permit to construct the Atlantic Highlands section of the Bicycle and Walking Trail, a continuation of the Henry Hudson Trail that begins in Keyport.

The longest stretches of freshwater wetlands in the Borough are found next to Many Mind Creek between South Avenue and New Jersey Route 36, along the southern borders of town, and beside its two tributaries near West Avenue and Leonard Avenue respectively. Including tidal wetlands from Sandy Hook Bay to approximately South Avenue, the wetlands total 3.8 acres in this area.

### **Objectives:**

- The Borough should continue the Many Mind Creek remediation started in 1998 by the New Jersey Natural Gas Company (NJNG). The replanting of vegetation will follow the recommendations found in the Atlantic Highlands Environmental Commission’s 1999 report, which were based on an analysis performed by a stream restoration specialist, Steven Barnes.
- The Borough should continue to coordinate municipal regulations with state regulations by recognizing the restrictions placed on wetland development under Coastal Areas Facilities Review Act (CAFRA) jurisdiction and the NJDEP permitting process requirements.

### **Stream Corridors, Floodplains and Greenways**

Although Many Mind and Wagner Creeks are the most visible carriers of surface water, there are less visible, less voluminous flows in the Borough, mostly in the eastern hills section. These include:

- Small spring fed streams that have been channeled into underground pipes, such as from Ocean Boulevard at Grand Avenue, to the bay.
- Intermittent streams which flow only when it rains or at times of the year when soils are heavily saturated.

- Open springs that maintain steady output, such as the Henry Hudson Springs off Bayside Drive.
- Saturated wetlands where water is visible all year round, or nearly so.

Floodplains provide wide areas where water can lie without causing downstream flooding, siltation and erosion. In addition, they retard excess runoff and provide natural detention areas. Greenways preserve or improve the integrity of the landscape, not only by stemming the loss of natural features, but also by engendering new natural and social functions. The Borough currently has three high priority projects underway as part of the Open Space Plan:

### **Lenape Woods Greenway**

The next stage of land acquisition with Green Acres matching funds would create a trail corridor to join the existing east and west sections, and extend the area to the east and south by incorporating neighboring forested slopes that are unbuilt. This expansion would protect the corridor of sensitive slopes, woodlands, and natural habitat along the highland ridge; provide access for additional neighborhoods; connect to the County park at Mt Mitchill Scenic Overlook; extend the system of hiking trails; stop further encroachment from development along our borders; maintain the existing buffer against noise, traffic and pollution from the New Jersey Route 36 area; add to the Nature/environmental education opportunity available to children and adults; preserve the tree mass which moderates temperature and wind effects; and preserve habitat sufficient to sustain birds and other wildlife living in the zone.

### **Many Mind Creek Greenway**

A comprehensive plan to enhance and protect the Many Mind estuary should be implemented.

### **Many Mind Creek Flooding**

The “Many Mind Creek Planning Assistance to States” (PAS) study was adopted by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), New York District in partnership with the Borough of Atlantic Highlands in August 2017. The focus of the study was to identify areas along the Many Mind Creek that are prone to flooding, stream bank erosion, sedimentation or flow constrictions. Based on the existing data, field inspection and analysis the two general causes of problems within Many Mind Creek are:

- (1) Coastal flooding within Sandy Hook Bay; and
- (2) Riverine flooding resulting from routine precipitation events and lack of maintenance.

Based on the findings, potential solutions were identified to address the cause of each type of flooding:

- (1) Coastal Flooding: Dunes with floodwalls and floodgates



- (2) Riverine Flooding: Implementation of watershed management practices.

**GOAL:** To minimize the impact of Many Mind Creek flooding.

**OBJECTIVES:**

- The potential solutions and costs associated with each solution as presented in the PAS Study should be evaluated by the Borough to help correct the identified problems.
- An implementation Plan should be adopted.

**Wagner Creek/Center Avenue Park Extensions**

Wagner Creek, the only other stream in Atlantic Highlands, forms the western border with Leonardo, a section of Middletown Township. It requires protection by natural buffers for the same reasons as Many Mind Creek. On one bank on its northern portion next to the bay are several acres of mixed woodland/wetland protected by the Borough-owned Center Avenue Park. The wetland is scheduled for restoration and enhancement under an approved plan. The park includes an upland area used for a recreational field, a tot lot and parking, and a beach area, which is shared between sight-seeing and walking by the general public and boat launchings by the Sandy Hook Bay Catamaran Club which leases some park land for boat storage.

**GOAL:** To minimize the impact of stormwater to property and possessions due to flooding.

**OBJECTIVES:**

- The Borough should continue with the existing public outreach initiatives and develop new initiatives to continually inform the public of the importance and functionality of the springs and streams and other environmental issues that are crucial to the vitality of Atlantic Highlands.
  - 1) Periodic water sampling and testing in Many Mind Creek and Wagner Creek coordinated by the AH Environmental Commission with results being trended to measure any changes to the quality of the water, and pollutants found in those creeks.
- The Borough should ensure undisturbed buffer zones along stream corridors and protection of associated floodplains.
- The Borough should consider the adoption of the following stream protection measures:
  - 1) Rule out the construction or paving in stream buffers;
  - 2) Establish wider buffer areas;
  - 3) Control and limit additional direct channeling of surface water runoff into streams;

- 4) Create protective stream conservation districts and greenways as overlays to be enforced by regulation which needs to be formulated and adopted;
  - 5) Require some type of permanent vegetative cover beside the Borough's two creeks;
  - 6) Require a permit to remove any riparian trees;
- In developing the greenways initiatives, the Borough will seek all applicable federal, state and local funding sources in order to facilitate land acquisition to incorporate the greenway plans.

### **Steep Slopes / Slump Blocks / Tree Removal**

Slope is measured as the change in elevation (vertical distance) over horizontal distance and it is expressed as a percentage. Slopes greater than 12 to 15 per cent are potentially critical environmental impact areas, and experts agree that efforts should be made to keep them in their natural state. Slopes increase stormwater runoff rates and, when disturbed, are subject to erosion. They can be difficult to stabilize with vegetative cover. Slopes denuded of vegetation can result in nearby water bodies being subject to considerable sediment loads during rainstorms with an attendant loss of wildlife, water quality and aesthetic landscape.

Slump can result in major and rapid drop of steep slopes, cliffs and bluffs. Slump is identified as the downward movement of a block of earth material along some curved surface of failure. Although some slump movement is a natural phenomenon, man can inadvertently accelerate the process of slump development by 1) the placement of a load on top or along the slope; 2) disturbance of the toe of a slope, or 3) increasing soil moisture content by lawn watering, installation of drain fields within prone regions, or construction of ill-drained retaining walls.

### **USGS Seminar Landslide Monitoring Preliminary Report - 2016**

“Spring and late summer are historically when these slides occur. Deep slides are hundreds of feet and small slides are between one and ten feet. As our hills are sandy soil not bedrock, plantings of certain types of trees will not help. A combination of short in height, deep rooting, native NJ trees and shade loving ground cover will help best. Terracing or creation of any flat surface exacerbates the landslide probability. Re-forestation and re-vegetating is key as most slides happen where no trees or other vegetation is present.

- Block A (Ocean Boulevard Bridge above the Henry Hudson Trail) deep landslide was in 1782.
- Block B (Mt. Mitchell Scenic Overlook) deep slide was in 1970. Current geologist suggests there is a higher danger of slides in the future. There have been multiple small slides from 2000-2014. When we have a significant continuous rainfall even resulting in over 4 inches of rain, landslides are more probable.

QPF (Quantitative Prediction Forecast) products were installed at Blocks at A (1) and B (2). Approximately 8 mm of movement was recorded by a cable extension transducer (CET) at the Ocean Boulevard Bridge (OBB) site between September 10, 2015 (when it was installed and programmed), and July 31, 2016.

The total station survey targets were installed on June 12, 2015 on the Mount Mitchell Scenic Overlook slope and on September 11, 2015 at the OBB site. Our survey hub (the location the total station is set up on) was disturbed by activities along the Henry Hudson trail at the OBB site, so surveying data there are only reliable between May 24, 2016 and present.

Formation of a Geological Hazard Abatement District was encouraged.”<sup>1</sup>

**GOAL:** Restrict disturbance of sensitive slopes and protect mature vegetation.

**OBJECTIVES:**

- The Borough should re-examine the existing Steep Slope Ordinance to determine if existing requirements are adequate or if additional language or evaluation is required regarding tree removal, invasive plant removal in those areas, retaining walls, and slope buffers.
- The Borough should continue the efforts to acquire steep slope open space for preservation.
- The Borough should continue to evaluate and update all ordinances and zoning regulations related to tree preservation, tree replacement, invasive plant removal, and tree removal.
- Due to their expertise and experience in tree specification, planting and preservation, the Shade Tree Commission should be formally recognized and utilized as a part of the planning function involving public property and lands.
- For properties located in the Slump Block area, there should be a requirement of full disclosure to prospective property purchasers of those potential slump block issues. This should prevent future lawsuits against the Borough, current property owners and realtors.

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<sup>1</sup> *USGS Seminar, Landslide Monitoring Preliminary Program, Atlantic Highlands Borough Hall, December 6, 2016*

## **XIV. CIRCULATION PLAN ELEMENT**

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The Circulation Element is closely linked to all other general plan elements. This plan has been prepared to coordinate circulation recommendations for waterfront, business district, and residential zones and open space development, to identify intersections and streets in need of improvement.

The Circulation Element addresses the concerns (with related policy and action proposals to be developed) for the scenic roadways, presentation of public viewscales from roadways, and related construction guidelines.

The Circulation Element is not limited to automobile-related transportation, but addresses the development of a balanced, multi-modal circulation system for Atlantic Highlands. It addresses such topics as public transportation, ridesharing, bicycle and pedestrian circulation, public recreation trails, linkages and coordination with other municipalities, and investments for the future as they relate to circulation.

### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

#### **Policy Statement:**

- Create and maintain an efficient, safe and coordinated multi-modal circulation system, serving the needs of a variety of users.

#### **Objectives:**

- Maintain a network of roads that is consistent with the land use patterns of Atlantic Highlands.
- The preservation of public viewscales from County and Borough roadways and the development of related construction guidelines.

### **ROADWAYS**

Atlantic Highlands commuters travel primarily by car. Based on U.S. Census 2010 statistics, 77 percent or 1,646 of the total 2,142 commuters drive to work alone; 8 percent or 172 workers carpooled and 15 percent or 324 commuters take public transportation.

The roadways located in Atlantic Highlands are under the following jurisdiction:

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Roadway</b>
NJDOT	Memorial Parkway (New Jersey Route 36)
Monmouth County	Route 8 including First Avenue, Bayview Avenue, and Ocean Boulevard (Scenic Route)
Atlantic Highlands	All other roads in the Borough are either under Borough jurisdiction or are private streets

The Borough Engineer each year identifies the street locations in need of attention. Improvements may include curbs, sidewalks, aprons, road pavement, overlay, storm drains, etc.

### **New Jersey Route 36**

New Jersey Route 36 is a busy and relatively fast moving roadway with lots of intersections, traffic lights, residences and driveways along its roughly 14 mile length in the Bayshore. Although traffic normally flows at acceptable levels of service, summer and weekend traffic congestion can create a problem for many travelers who use the road to reach destinations east and south of Atlantic Highlands, including Sandy Hook and the Jersey Shore. New Jersey Route 36 is served by local and express buses; however, these modes of transportation are not easy to use. There are few park-and-ride locations and poor bus stop access. The need to cross New Jersey Route 36 in one direction or the other detracts from using these public transit options.

The Monmouth County Bayshore Regional Strategic Plan which was adopted on September 18, 2006 has set forth management strategies and implementation strategies in order to deal with the problems related to summer congestion. The plan recommends changes to New Jersey Route 36, and included creating a parkway feel and awareness of character and the environment along Route 36 corridor. One of the proposed major efforts was the replacement of the New Jersey Route 36 drawbridge connecting Sea Bright with the Highlands which was constructed in 1932 with a new fixed span bridge. The drawbridge was demolished and between 2008 and 2011 a new 75 foot tall fixed-span bridge was constructed consisting of two individual 1,610 foot long spans. Also proposed in the Strategic Plan was a summer traffic management plan that details roles and responsibility for a myriad of public agencies involved in traffic mitigation and planning in the region, including the NJ Highway Authority, NJ Department of Transportation, the National Park Service, the Transportation Operations Coordinating Committee (TRANSCOM) and staff from several local police departments.

## **Scenic Roadways**

Natural views from scenic road and hillsides in Atlantic Highlands are one of its most valuable and noteworthy environmental resources. The views of the bay, Sandy Hook, the Raritan Bay and New York City are a key feature of the Borough's northern-facing slopes. The outlook ridge facing the bay and Manhattan was named "Bayview" in the 1880s. Then it became "Ocean Boulevard". It is signposted and widely known as "Scenic Route" and "Scenic Drive." Other roads named for their water views are Prospect Avenue, Prospect Road, and Scenic Court.

In addition, there are beautiful landside views from roads and lands on the southern side of the ridge, looking toward the Navesink and Buttermilk Valleys and the Navesink River. On these slopes, road names again proclaim the heights and the views from them: Summit Avenue, Observatory Place, Highland Avenue, and Mount Avenue.

One of the objectives of the Circulation Plan is the preservation of public views from roadways and the development of related construction guidelines. The scenic outlooks to water and valley from County and Borough roads deserve public protection because they are a public amenity.

On September 17, 2001 the Monmouth County Planning Board adopted the Monmouth County Scenic Roadway Plan (MCSR). It identifies county roadways that possess such a high degree of visual quality that driving, biking or walking along these roadways is a pleasurable and enjoyable experience. It provides design guidelines to be followed in preserving and enhancing county scenic roadways. Atlantic Highlands will consider adopting these design guidelines into current zoning and development regulations. Subject to these standards the Borough will create a list of designated roadways. The following roadways are possible candidates for qualification:

- Bayview Avenue and Ocean Boulevard (CR 8) designated by Monmouth County
- East Highland Avenue (from Grand Avenue to Ocean Blvd)
- Mount Avenue (from East Highland Avenue over the Stone Bridge to Eighth Ave)
- Bayside Drive - the entire loop at its western border going up Hilton/Prospect/Belvidere Road to Ocean Blvd.
- Center Avenue between Avenue D and Wagner Creek

### **Implementing Goals:**

- In addition to state and local rules and initiatives to preserve scenic views, the Borough should consider the adoption of an adapted version of the scenic roadway

guidelines found in Chapter III – Guidelines for Monmouth County Roadways as found in the Monmouth County Scenic Roadway Plan.

The guidelines can be found at the following link:

<https://co.monmouth.nj.us/documents/24/Monmouth%20County%20Scenic%20Roadway%20Plan.pdf>

## **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

**Objective:** To improve the existing systems both in terms of function and safety in order to enhance the Borough's economic potential and capitalize on its maritime heritage and natural resources.

### **Ferry Services**

Since the passage of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) in 1991, federal funds have been available for investments in ferry facilities (not vessels or operations). New Jersey succeeded in receiving some of the competitive funds available, which the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) will utilize to support private sector ferry services within the NJDOT. The Office of Maritime Resources provides overall direction, oversight and coordination among various NJDOT units. Atlantic Highlands was one of nine initial ferry projects to benefit from this program.

The SeaStreak Ferry Line serves the region between Atlantic Highlands and New York City. It provides year-round ferry services to Pier 11 in lower Manhattan, to 34th Street in Midtown. The ferry trips to Manhattan take approximately forty minutes. Although the ferries are usually packed with commuters on a daily basis, ferry service fares are prohibitive to many commuters. In 2010, ridership from Atlantic Highlands averaged about 972 persons per day to New York City. Additional tours and events are available throughout the year.

### **Implementing Goals:**

Possible opportunities for expanding ferry service and improving connections with other transit modes include:

- Provide for dredging along Raritan Bay that supports the continuation of existing ferry service
- Improving traffic circulation in the marina area;
- Implementing shuttle bus service from ferries; and
- Expanding ferry service to accommodate weekend tourism, and other special events trips to and from New York City not associated with weekend commuting operations.

## **Bus Service:**

New Jersey Transit and Academy Bus Lines offers bus service throughout the region with direct and connecting service to New York City and other major regional destinations. County Route 534 (m24) currently services the Atlantic Highlands area.

### **Implementing Goals:**

- Atlantic Highlands currently has park-and-ride lots to serve the ferry service, however, none connect with the New Jersey Transit bus lines.
- Improve existing bus stops for convenience and safety.

## **Henry Hudson Trail**

The Henry Hudson Trail is a rail trail named for Henry Hudson, who explored the harbor at Atlantic Highlands and the Raritan coastline in the early 1600s. The 24-mile-long paved multi-use trail is part of the Monmouth County Park System and the National Rail to Trails network that transforms former railroad lines into community recreation trails. The rail trail extends through the Bayshore and connects Atlantic Highlands to Highlands to the east, as well as to the contiguous towns westward to Keyport, then inland to Freehold Borough and Marlboro using the former rights-of-way of several rail lines.

In Atlantic Highlands a small portion of the trail (+/- 760 feet) extends from the western border with Middletown at the southwest corner of the Borough parallel to Kennedy Ct. to Avenue D. The trail then follows Avenue D and winds through the southern portion of the Atlantic Highlands Marina.

The 1.4 miles Atlantic Highlands extension opened in April 2009 and extends the Henry Hudson Trail eastward from the Atlantic Highlands marina below the bluffs of Atlantic Highlands, ending at Popamora Point Park at the western end of Highlands. This section of the trail had been open under primitive conditions since being destroyed by Superstorm Sandy in October of 2012.

The extension was reconstructed and the project included installation of subsurface drains to convey water across the trail; new surfacing, new concrete boardwalks at various trail sections; and additional storm water protection along the bayside of the trail. The reconstruction project was a joint effort between the Monmouth County Park System and the Borough of Atlantic Highlands. The new design created a more sustainable trail that can withstand the flooding and storm events that occasionally occurs along this trail section.

The work began in early 2017 and was completed by the fall of that year.



### **Implementing Goals:**

- Completing the Henry Hudson Trail
- Incorporating the Henry Hudson Trail on local maps

### **Bicycle and Pedestrian Links**

Bicycle and pedestrian links to the waterfront and transit hubs such as park-and-rides should be created and enhanced. The pedestrian path system should incorporate the Henry Hudson Trail, pedestrian extensions linking the Henry Hudson Trail to Firemen's Field, and linking existing pedestrian paths to future pedestrian paths. Bike racks should be installed near the ferry dock and the New Jersey Route 36 bus stop.

### **Implementing Goals:**

- Follow the lead of Middletown Township-by requiring zoning changes to require sidewalks in new developments along New Jersey Route 36 to facilitate pedestrian traffic.

### **Livery and Ridesourcing Services**

The Borough is served by private taxi services and ride sourcing services such as Uber and Lyft. These emerging companies utilize smartphones, global positioning systems (GPS), and social networks to provide transportation in a timely manner.

### **Implementing Goals:**

- To encourage the use of ridesharing and ride sourcing services within and to and from the Borough, to decrease demand on existing Municipal parking facilities.

### **Public Parking**

The availability of public parking for businesses within the central business district is becoming an increasing issue. Current parking demand has risen over the past 10 years and within the past three years the increased popularity of the downtown and approval of several new sites, including residential units on First Avenue has increased the demand for overnight parking. The parking issues are primarily limited to those uses clustered along First Avenue.

The goal is to provide sufficient parking to meet the demand of those uses, particularly at peak times and in anticipation of future growth in the Business District. In order to begin to alleviate the demand, there are short term and long term goals.

- The short term goal is utilizing Ordinance provisions such as fee in-lieu of parking for any proposed development in the Business District.

- The long term goal is to perform a targeted parking study to analyze current parking supply and demands, and provide options for the Borough to adequately meet future parking demands. One of the options to consider would be a parking structure at the municipal parking lot and to explore a funding source for its construction.

### **Implementing Goals:**

- A long term recommendation is to prepare a parking study and provide options to meet long term parking demand. This may include the construction of a parking garage within the municipal parking lot. Funding sources would also be explored as part of the parking study.

### **Transit Village**

The New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) and New Jersey Transit have developed a Smart-Growth partnership known as the Transit Village Initiative. The Transit Village Initiative creates incentives for municipalities to redevelop or revitalize the areas around transit stations using design standards of transit-oriented development (TOD). This type of development helps to create attractive, vibrant, pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods where people can live, shop, work and play without relying on automobile transportation. There are 32 municipalities that have been designated transit villages since the program began in 1999.

Municipalities that are committed to TOD may be eligible for NJDOT Transit Village designation upon meeting the Transit Village Criteria and completing an application. Being designated a Transit Village provides a municipality with several benefits including:

- State of New Jersey commitment to the municipality's vision for redevelopment.
- Coordination among the State agencies that make up the Transit Village task force.
- Priority funding from some State agencies.
- Technical assistance from some State agencies.
- Eligibility for grants from NJDOT's dedicated Transit Village funding.

*“The Division of Local Aid and Economic Development’s Transit Village Grant program will award grants for non-traditional transportation-related projects to New Jersey municipalities designated as Transit Villages. These are municipalities which have made a commitment to grow in the area surrounding a transit facility. The facility can service commuter rail, bus, ferry, or light rail. Growth in areas where infrastructure is already in place and where multi-modal transportation options are readily available helps to advance vital goals of the State of New Jersey such as reduced auto-dependency and cleaner air and water.”<sup>1</sup>*

Additional information regarding Transit Villages can be found at the following link:  
<https://www.state.nj.us/transportation/business/localaid/transitvillagef.shtm>

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<sup>1</sup> Source: New Jersey Department of Transportation – Local Aid and Development – Transit Village

**Implementing Goals:**

- Due to the Borough's characteristics which include a transit ferry terminal and commuter parking lot and adjacent downtown it appears the Borough may be uniquely suited for Transit Village consideration by the NJDOT. It is recommended the Borough review the criteria and application process and determine if being designated as a Transit Village would be appropriate for the Borough.

## **XV. RECYCLING PLAN / UTILITIES PLAN**

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The intent of the Utilities Element is to guide utility service in a way that ensures adequate utilities will be available for all needs and it also provides a basis for determining the location of appropriate land uses. The Utilities Element will describe and evaluate the existing systems that currently serve Atlantic Highlands and it will also recommend future considerations or improvements of service where appropriate or feasible.

### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

#### **Policy Statement:**

Develop new systems or improve and maintain existing utility systems at the appropriate level of service to support the needs of Atlantic Highlands now and in the future.

### **SEWER**

The Borough of Atlantic Highlands is serviced by the Atlantic Highlands Water and Sewer Department. Previously the Borough was serviced by the Atlantic Highlands/Highlands Regional Sewerage Authority (AHHSA). In 2014 it was agreed through a joint Resolution between Highlands and Atlantic Highlands that the AHHSA be dissolved and that each municipality create a separate utility within its own borders. Wastewater collected by Atlantic Highlands is pumped from a pumping station located on First Avenue to treatment facilities owned and operated by the Township of Middletown Sewerage Authority (TOMSA) in the Belford section of Middletown. The treated effluent is then transferred to the Monmouth County Outfall Authority for disposal in the Atlantic Ocean. Atlantic Highlands is assessed through an end user charge by the TOMSA.

The wastewater treatment plants in the region have adequate capacity to handle current and projected residential and non-residential development and redevelopment. Maintenance, repairs and replacement of aging sewer infrastructure is a concern. To allow for growth and development, sewer repair and maintenance to reduce inflow and infiltration are necessary.

Approximately 81 percent of the units in Atlantic Highlands are serviced by the Borough's sanitary sewer system. The Borough installs and manages the entire sewer system. A unit is defined as the following:

- Single family residence
- Apartment
- Rented room with private bath
- School
- Separate building connected to the sanitary sewer system

- Business with separate sanitary facilities.

Property owners connected to sewers are responsible to maintain their pipe until it reaches the sewer line. Sewer charges are based on the amount of water a property owner uses. Average output per home in Atlantic Highlands is about 260 gallons of wastewater per day.

## **QUARTERLY WATER AND SEWER RATES**

Residents receive a quarterly bill for sewer and water. The current rates as of 2016 are:

<i>Gallons of water used per unit</i>	<i>Sewer rate per unit</i>	<i>Water rate per unit</i>
<i>0 – 3,470</i>	<i>\$110.00</i>	<i>\$60.50</i>
<i>3,741 – 7,481</i>	<i>\$135.30</i>	<i>\$77.55</i>
<i>7,482 to 14,961</i>	<i>\$155.10</i>	<i>*\$77.55 + \$3.79 per 748 gallons over</i>
<i>14,962 to 26,182</i>	<i>\$174.90</i>	
<i>Over 26,182</i>	<i>156% of Water Charge</i>	<i>** \$194.70 + \$4.55 per gallon 748 gallons over</i>

Some residents use water that does not return to the Borough sewer system (example for landscape sprinkler systems), is metered separately and is not assessed the quarterly sewer charge. Water that ultimately returns to the sewer system, such as from home bathrooms, washing machines, etc., is subject to the quarterly sewer assessment.

## **SEWER COLLECTION**

Management and operation of the pipelines and pumping system are the responsibility of the Atlantic Highlands Water and Sewer Department. Beyond the boundary lines of individual property owners, the sanitary sewer system operates primarily by gravity through pipelines running mostly under the streets. The age and condition of the pipes in the system vary greatly. Many pipes are from the original system, dating back to the mid1890s. As funding becomes available older pipes are being repaired or replaced.

### **System**

- All pipelines feed into the main pumping station on the west side of First Avenue next to the Hesse building. A bypass pipe was recently installed at the pumping station to handle

any obstruction in the flow.

- From the pumping station, sewerage is then pumped through pipes running north-northwest for about three miles to a secondary treatment plant in Belford on Center Avenue.
- Maximum TOMSA plant capacity is 10.8 million gallons per day (mgd), as authorized by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. It currently treats 9 mgd leaving a reserve capacity of 1.8 mgd. The largest share, 6.9 mgd, comes from Middletown Township.
- Average Atlantic Highlands' flow in 2017 was 449,000 gallons per day. In 2018 the sewer flow averaged 519,000 gallons per day. The maximum flow is 624,000 gallons per day.

### **Treatment**

- Treatment starts by separating wastewater from solids through a series of large concrete tanks.
- The solids or sludge generated by the treatment process is trucked to a landfill in Pennsylvania where it is composted.
- The wastewater is chemically treated to kill any remaining pathogens.
- Treated wastewater is then discharged into an outfall pipe which is 48 inches in diameter.
- The pipe goes underground back through Atlantic Highlands and Highlands along the Bayfront, crosses Sandy Hook, and then discharges into the Atlantic Ocean approximately 4,000 feet off Sandy Hook.
- This pipeline is maintained by the Monmouth County Outfall Authority.

### **Stormwater inflow and infiltration of sewer system**

Heavy rain or snowmelt that infiltrates the sewer system and flows into the First Avenue pumping station is the most difficult situation for the Borough's sewer system. This stormwater can increase flows up to 1/3 above normal. Basement sump pumps often discharge directly into sewer lines. The Borough has worked to reduce this inflow and infiltration over the years. When the reductions are completed, it is expected that enough capacity will be freed up for the Borough to include the remaining 400 residential units if the sewage collection system can be extended.

### **Recommended locations for new sewer lines and replacement/relining of existing systems**

- Memorial Parkway (part of Highway)

- Garfield Avenue
- New Jersey Route 36 and First Avenue

## **SEPTIC SYSTEMS AND SEWER EXTENSION POSSIBILITIES**

There were 250 housing units in Atlantic Highlands not connected to sanitary sewers are all in the eastern section and mostly in steep slope areas. These homes have septic systems, whose efficient operation requires avoiding disposal of certain materials, regular maintenance and periodic pumping. Older or poorly managed systems can experience decay, blockage and breakdown, causing household problems and environmental risks and impacts. The steep slopes already face major water infiltration by drainage from natural surfaces; the addition of septic systems at new houses and the malfunction of aging systems further strains the absorptive capacity of the soils. Waterlogged slopes are more likely to slump or slide because of the added weight and lubrication. These risks are additional reasons why it was especially important in the eastern hills area to increase existing lot sizes and configurations and rule out further subdivisions, and was mandated in the creation of a new R-3 zone.

In recent years, gravity-fed sanitary sewers have been extended through a shared arrangement with homes located on Victorian Woods Drive which is located below East Highland Avenue so as to reach homes south of there between Sears Avenue and Grand Avenue. Some limited additional sewer hook-ups can be achieved by activating a shared arrangement with an approved senior housing project (Conifer Village), directly south of the Atlantic Highlands' eastern ridge along New Jersey Route 36 on Middletown Township lands.

However, for many or all of the remaining properties with septic systems, whether or not they can be sewerred depends on complex issues of topography, geological stability, technological alternatives, system layout, costs and financing methods. These issues need to be closely assessed to determine in which groups of houses it is deemed impossible. Absent such a study, homeowners with older septic systems cannot plan ahead because of two expensive questions:

- Is sanitary sewer coverage, with its initial and quarterly costs, feasible?
- Will septic systems 30 to 50 years of age need to be replaced, with the major costs that are entailed?

### **Recommendation**

- To design and seek financing in the future for a technical and economic feasibility study. For any areas where sewers are found feasible, there would still be the difficult, major and time- consuming task of trying to marshal construction funding. If septic systems eventually could be eliminated in some areas, benefits would include:
  - Reduced environmental risks and environment repair costs
  - Elimination of operation-and-repair responsibilities
  - Maintenance of property values for those homeowners

- Possibly a reduction of Atlantic Highlands sewer rates as more users share the fixed costs incurred when the treatment plant shared by Middletown Township, Atlantic Highlands and Highlands was expanded some years ago.
- Strengthen oversight of septic systems.

## **WATER**

The Atlantic Highlands Water Department is an independent, self-sustaining utility within the Borough government. It has approximately 1,800 customers, revenues in 2018 of approximately \$2.3 million a year, and 5 full time employees, one office assistant and one part time person on call. Its budget comes entirely from user fees.

The water supply for Atlantic Highlands is provided by the Atlantic Highlands Water Department Plant located on West Lincoln Avenue. All drinkable water in Atlantic Highlands comes from natural water-bearing layers deep underground, known as aquifers. This groundwater is drawn from four active wells that tap into the Potomac-Raritan-Magothy Aquifer that is 600 feet deep and the Englishtown aquifers that is 200 feet below the surface. Natural layers of clay protect the wells from contamination, which may be in the ground.

The Borough is within a water supply critical area designated by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection; therefore it is not possible to increase water withdrawals from the Potomac-Raritan-Magothy Aquifer. To expand the water supply, the Borough will rely upon the Englishtown Aquifer. The Borough expects that this approach will meet its projected needs.

The Borough of Atlantic Highlands has four working production wells called well #7, well #4, well #5 which draw water from the Potomac-Raritan-Magothy Aquifer and well#6 draws from the Englishtown Aquifer. All of these well are described below:

- Well No. 4 - Located on the site of the plant on West Lincoln Avenue
- Well No. 5 - Located on Leonard Avenue
- Well No. 6 - Located on East Avenue
- Well No. 7 – Located in the Borough Yard off West Lincoln Avenue

Atlantic Highlands is allowed to draw about 198 million gallons of water per year (mgy) from these aquifers, but actual usage was 141 (mgy) in 2015; 145 (mgy) in 2016; and 123 (mgy) in 2017. These aquifers serve wide areas of the state so the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) monitors the balance between extraction and natural replenishment, telling towns how much they can draw.

The NJDEP is concerned about depletion of aquifers underlying Monmouth County, which is classified as a “critical area.” Aquifers are recharged by water infiltrating from surface outcrops, wetlands, stream corridors, and soils, which allow deep penetration of water. If natural recharge areas are developed or covered by impervious surfaces, infiltration can be adversely affected. All



Raritan formation outcrops are in Middlesex County. The Englishtown Aquifer is recharged along a band of land extending from Belford, Port Monmouth and Ideal Beach along the Bayshore, southwest 20 miles into Monroe Township in Middlesex County. In Atlantic Highlands it is regularly monitored at a well off East Highland Avenue operated by the U.S. Geological Survey (New Jersey District).

## **Treatment**

The importance of the treatment process is emphasized by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which warns, “Inadequately treated water may contain disease-causing organisms. These organisms include bacteria, viruses, and parasites, which can cause symptoms such as nausea, cramps, diarrhea, and associated headaches.”

- Water pumped from the wells is piped into the central treatment and distribution plant on West Lincoln Avenue.
- There, raw well water goes through several steps:
  1. **Aeration** to remove any odor-causing hydrogen sulfide;
  2. **Clarification** by adding lime and alum which coagulates iron and settles it into decant tanks to be process offsite; and
  3. **Filtering** to “polish” the water and remove any residual color.
- Chlorine is added as mandated by NJDEP at the rate of one to 2.5 pounds in the 500,000 gallons of water used per day (average) in order to maintain satisfactory chlorine residual in the entire distribution system, leaving a minuscule residual (0.3 parts per million).

## **Distribution**

After treatment, water is pumped to two storage tanks at high elevations in the Borough so as to maintain water pressure and use gravity feed for distribution downhill. The tank at Observatory Place holds one million gallons, and 200,000 gallons can go in the tank above East Highland Avenue and the Eastpoint Shopping Center. This is about a two-day supply in summer and a three-day supply in the winter. If an emergency ever cut off the main supply, service could be provided by a cross-connection with the New Jersey American Water Company water system in neighboring Leondardo in Middletown Township.

The distribution system needs constant maintenance and is regularly upgraded; perhaps a fourth of the system is over 100 years old. Eight-inch pipes have replaced all two-inch and many four-inch original pipes to expand flow volume. The mandated annual flushing scours dirt, rust, scale and other debris from the underground pipes. Over 200 hydrants provide fire protection throughout the Borough.

Such improvements have reduced residents' complaints. There is still occasionally low water pressure in some locations. Dirty water can occur temporarily when sediments, which collect in pipelines, are disturbed by flushing, firefighting use or illegal opening of hydrants. Some problems are caused by sediment gathering in water main dead-ends, but these will all eventually be eliminated.

## **Testing**

Water samples from around the Borough are regularly tested by independent water-quality laboratories, and results go to the Borough and NJDEP. Federal and State governments have established test procedures and limits called maximum contaminant levels (MCLs) for over 80 substances found in water. Under Federal law, all Borough water users receive an annual report on drinking water quality, listing only those contaminants that were detected in the water. The results from the "Annual Drinking Water Quality Report" for the year 2016 show that any levels of contaminants present sometimes occur in miniscule amounts and are far below the enforced MCL Limits. Test results showed no violations.<sup>6</sup>

The required water tests cover:

- Regulated Disinfectants (Chlorine)
- Inorganic contaminants
- Disinfectant Residuals
- Radioactive contaminants (that occur naturally or from oil, gas or mining activities)
- Secondary contaminants (that have no health impact but may affect water's odor, taste or appearance or have cosmetic effects on skin and teeth)

## **SOLID WASTE**

Waste management is handled in Atlantic Highlands in three ways:

- Collection and disposal of solid wastes from residences;
- Special handling of restricted and hazardous wastes at the County level; and
- Recycling and waste avoidance measures.

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<sup>6</sup> Borough of Atlantic Highlands Water Department – 2016 Annual Drinking Water Quality Report

## **Residential solid waste**

The Atlantic Highlands Sanitation Department makes curbside pick-ups of household solid waste twice weekly. Solid waste is disposed of at the landfill of the Monmouth County Reclamation Center on 6000 Asbury Avenue in Tinton Falls Borough.

Atlantic Highlands alone generated 2,455 tons of solid waste in 2017. In 1987, before recycling, Atlantic Highlands generated 5,400 tons of solid waste per year. Since 1987, the Atlantic Highlands landfill contribution has remained relatively stable, but has risen slightly each year.

## **Restricted and hazardous waste**

There are special requirements for disposing of four categories of restricted waste:

- **Asbestos** - Asbestos (including shingles and siding) is classified as a restricted waste. Asbestos can be disposed of at a private Bulk Waste Facility. Proper handling and transport procedures should be followed. The Monmouth County Health Department Solid Waste Enforcement Team (SWET) should be contacted for handling instructions (732) 683-8686 ext. 5650. Large fines (up to \$50,000) can be assessed for improper asbestos disposal.
- **Construction debris** - The Borough will not collect construction debris, so residents must make arrangements for disposal with a private hauler or take debris to the landfill themselves.
- **Grass** - Grass cannot be mixed with waste, but is accepted at a special grass site located at the Monmouth County Reclamation landfill during normal business hours. Ultimately grass clippings are transported to a compost site. Fees for grass clippings are \$3.00 per carload or \$36.50 per ton truckload. It is suggested to return grass clippings and its nutrients in-situ to the lawn being mowed.
- **Pollution hazards** - Many types of waste involve pollution hazards and require special handling by the County Household Hazardous Waste Facility, located on Shafto Road in Tinton Falls. It accepts household hazardous wastes such as pesticides, lawn and garden chemicals (fertilizers, herbicides), household cleaners, paints, solvents, thinners, varnishes, pool chemicals, propane BBB tanks, gasoline, motor oil, antifreeze, batteries and other toxins. Materials must be in marked containers with original labels. A maximum 220 pounds of dry material and 20 gallons of liquid material per visit (liquid containers limited to 5 gallon size maximum and solid packages 50 pound maximum). The facility requires advance notice to schedule an appointment (732) 683-8686 or visit its website (<https://njhazwaste.com/counties/monmouth-county-nj/>).
- **E Waste (electronics)** - Since January 1, 2011, Computers and Televisions are no longer accepted for disposal, pursuant to the NJ Electronic Waste Management Act. In 2017 32,039 pounds of e-waste was recycled.

## **RECYCLING**

Recycling became compulsory in New Jersey in 1987 with the passage of the Statewide Mandatory Source Separation Act, which incorporates State and County recycling goals for solid waste. It requires that municipal development regulations controlling site plan and subdivision approval include provisions that ensure conformity with a municipal recycling ordinance. The goals of the legislation are to extend the life span of existing landfills, recover natural resources, and reduce pollution by encouraging re-purposing of recycled materials.

## **RECYCLING PROGRAM**

Chapter 300 Article V – “Recycling” of the Borough of Atlantic Highlands Code provides for the source separation of recycling materials. The article states “It shall be mandatory for all persons who are owners, lessees and occupants of residential property, of business and industrial properties, and of private or public and government institutions and buildings, to separate the following from all other solid waste produced by such residences and establishments, for the collection and ultimate recycling of such materials:”

- Newspaper
- Corrugated cardboard
- Clean mixed paper
- Aluminum cans
- Tin and bimetal cans
- Glass bottles and jars, and pourable plastic bottles ("designated recyclables")

The Borough collects recyclable materials from the curbside of each property and/or from a drop-off center as designated by the Mayor and Council. The Borough is separated into four zones with curbside recycling pick-up occurring twice per month on designated days.

A Recycling Coordinator is appointed by the Mayor and Council. The Coordinator is responsible for establishing the Rules and Regulations governing the days and times for the collection, sorting, transportation, sale and/or marketing of the recyclable materials

When recycling became mandatory, a market existed for recycled items such as glass, metal, and newspapers, and municipalities could sell these items to offset the costs of pickup. As more and more municipalities began recycling, the supply of recyclables outpaced the demand, and now the Borough of Atlantic Highlands must pay to dispose of these items. The cost to dispose of recyclables in this way remains cheaper than to have them disposed of at the Monmouth County Reclamation Center Landfill. For example, it may cost \$5.00 per ton to have one ton of newspapers hauled away by a recycler, but disposing of the same ton of newspapers at the landfill would cost over \$55.00. This is known as “cost avoidance.”

Atlantic Highlands recycled 9,171 tons in 2017<sup>7</sup>, in 2006 3,407 tons were recycled. Because recycling saves on dumping fees, as demonstrated above, it makes the recycling program self-financing. Recycling is the law in Atlantic Highlands as provided in Chapter 300 Article V. Violators are subject to penalties under the law including fines and community service. It is a punishable violation to put recyclables in with regular garbage. If the County finds recyclables mixed when garbage goes to the landfill, the Borough is subject to fines. The recycling program in Atlantic Highlands is overseen by the Atlantic Highlands Sanitation Department.

### **Recycling Collection:**

- Zone 1 and 4: second and fourth Wednesday of each month
- Zone 2 and 3: first and third Wednesday of each month

### **Materials picked up curbside:**

- Newspapers - tied in bundles, 8 to 10 inches high
- Corrugated cardboard - flattened and tied in bundles or in a large box
- Office paper, mixed paper
- The following items placed in rigid containers only, commingled, not separated:
  1. Aluminum cans
  2. Tin, steel and bi-metal cans
  3. Glass bottles and jars
  4. Plastic #1 and #2 only, but not margarine/butter tubs or baby wipe containers

### **Bulk items:**

- Bulk items are picked up once (Zone 2 & 3 first Saturday of every month; Zones 1 and 4 second Saturday of every month) Trucks automatically go to all streets and pick up bulky trash such as furniture (upholstered, glass), carpeting, and mattresses. Only a reasonable amount of items are picked up.

### **Metals:**

- Metals are picked up every Friday but must be arranged with Borough Hall for a special pick-up. Items include lawnmowers, tubs, sinks, exercise equipment and empty propane tanks.

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<sup>7</sup> Atlantic Highlands Recycling Coordinator

- White Metal - Borough Hall must be notified to arrange for special pick-up. The cost is \$15.00 and a sticker is required from the Borough. Items include washers, dryers, stoves, refrigerators, microwaves, air conditioners, computers and televisions.

The Borough trucks do not pick-up construction or demolition debris.

The Borough notifies residents about the seasonal schedule for pick-up of brush, yard waste (no grass), and leaves.

The Borough Recycling Center is located at the end of West Lincoln Avenue, to the west of West Avenue. The Center accepts the same items as the curbside pickup plus:

- mixed paper (junk mail, magazines, catalogs)
- high grade paper (letterhead, computer paper)
- phone books
- brush and yard waste (no grass)
- used motor oil and anti-freeze
- car batteries

Paint cans, which are empty and dry with lids removed, can be placed with regular trash and recyclables

Household batteries including button batteries and rechargeable batteries are accepted at Borough Hall during business hours.

## **XVI. COMMUNITY FACILITIES ELEMENT**

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The Community Facilities Element identifies existing public and quasi-public facilities within the Borough. They are a significant component of the Borough land use pattern. Community facilities are necessary to provide for the safety, health, educational and general welfare of present and future Borough residents. Each of the specific facilities located within the Borough are described below. It should be noted that parks and recreation and open space facilities are described in a separate plan element.

### **OBJECTIVES**

Encourage a sense of one community throughout the Borough so that all the separate areas feel connected. The Borough public schools, governmental facilities, fire stations, police, library, harbor and community centers should communicate a sense of a single community.

### **Administration and Government**

Atlantic Highlands Borough Hall is located at 100 First Avenue. Atlantic Highlands was incorporated as a Borough by an act of the New Jersey Legislature on February 28, 1887, from portions of Middletown Township, based on the results of a referendum. The Borough was reincorporated on September 1, 1891. The governing body consists of a Mayor and a Borough Council comprising six council members. All positions are elected at-large on a partisan basis as part of the November general election. A Mayor is elected directly by the voters to a four-year term of office. The Borough Council consists of six members elected to serve three-year terms on a staggered basis, with two seats coming up for election each year in a three-year cycle. The Borough form of government used by Atlantic Highlands is the most common system used in the state. It is considered a "weak mayor / strong council" government in which council members act as the legislative body with the mayor presiding at meetings and voting only in the event of a tie. The mayor can veto ordinances subject to an override by a two-thirds majority vote of the council. The mayor makes committee and liaison assignments for council members with the advice and consent of the council.

### **Fire Protection**

The Atlantic Highlands Fire Department (AHFD) Station (85-1) is located at 10 East Highland Avenue and is part of the Emergency Service Complex which also contains the Atlantic Highlands Fire Aid and Safety Squad. The Department operates from a four bay building that directly accesses East Mount Avenue and averaged 145 calls in 2017.

The Atlantic Highlands Fire Department has operated since 1882 to service the community. It is an all-volunteer organization with more than 100 active, auxiliary and life members who volunteer their time to protect the citizens of Atlantic Highlands.

In 1889 the first firehouse was built on Center Avenue. That firehouse was later closed and in 1917 construction was completed on another firehouse that was built on East Mount Avenue. In 1997 the Emergency Services Building was dedicated to all past and present members.

From its original 1883 truck, the AHFD has steadily progressed to state of the art equipment. The department currently maintains the following:

- 1985 Grumman 100 foot ladder truck
- 1991 Spartan E-One 1500 gpm pumper
- 1991 Mack/Saulsbury Rescue/Air/Light Water Rescue Unit
- 2002 S&S Pumper
- 2005 International pumper
- 2008 Fire Chief Command Vehicle
- 2018 UTV / ATV (for off road brush fires)
- fire police van
- utility truck
- 23' fire boat and two emergency use jet-skis.

The Atlantic Highlands Fire Department also provides mutual aid to surrounding areas including membership of Mid-Monmouth Mutual Aid, Bayshore Active Chief's Association, Monmouth County Wildfire Taskforce, Bayshore Water Tender taskforce, and the Monmouth County Marine Taskforce.

### **Police Department.**

The Atlantic Highlands Police Department (AHPD) is located with Borough Hall on First Avenue. The stated mission of the Department is *“to enhance the quality of life in our Borough by working in partnership with the community and in accordance with constitutional rights to enforce the laws, preserve the peace and provide for a safe environment.”* The Atlantic Highlands Police Department typically consists of the following personnel:

- 1 - Chief of Police
- 1 - Captain
- 1 - Detective Sergeant
- 4 - Sergeants
- 7 - Police Officers
- 4 - Dispatchers

### **Public Works**

Construction projects for roads, streets, sidewalks, gutters and storm drains are overseen by the Borough Engineer, Borough Administrator, and Superintendent of Public Works, based on plans that are developed, approved and funded annually. Public works staff and equipment are deployed for routine repair of roads and streets, periodic cleaning of streets and storm drains,



installation of signage, and collection of trash, recycling and brush. The Borough Yard is located at the end of West Lincoln Avenue and is open for recycling six days a week.

### **Emergency Services**

The Atlantic Highlands First Aid and Safety Squad, founded in 1929, is an all-volunteer organization that has been providing around-the-clock free emergency medical services to the residents and visitors. It is located at 10 East Highland Avenue and is part of the Emergency Service Complex which also contains the Atlantic Highlands Fire Department. The Squad responds to approximately six hundred calls a year and operates from a three bay building. The Squad has emergency water rescue vessels for use in Sandy Hook Bay. Other vehicles include two ambulances, a patient transport bus, a 4x4 vehicle and a mass casualty truck. The organization relies on donations from residents, businesses and the Borough. The First Aid Squad received a grant from the Department of Homeland Security to equip every member of the squad with personal protection equipment.

### **Public Library**

The Atlantic Highlands Public Library is located at 100 First Avenue and is within the Borough Municipal Building. The Library is also part of the Monmouth County Library System which contains 12 branches including the Atlantic Highlands Branch. The Monmouth County Library headquarters is located at 125 Symmes Dr. in Manalapan. The mission of the Library is to provide convenient and equal access to information in useful formats; create environments which foster life-long learning, personal enrichment, and a literate society; strengthen information partnerships through resource sharing; and actively promote library services, programs and materials to the community. In order to accomplish this purpose, the library will support the principles of intellectual freedom as set forth in the Freedom to Read Statement and the Bill of Rights of the American Library Association.

### **Schools**

Two schools serve Atlantic Highlands.

**Atlantic Highlands Elementary School** is located at 140 First Avenue, in Atlantic Highlands. It educates pre-kindergarten through 6th grade students. Enrollment for the 2016-2017 school year was 335 students. Enrollment has remained relatively steady at the school since 2010-2011 when there were 312 students enrolled.

**Henry Hudson Regional School** is located on the hill adjacent to the Twin Lights lighthouse/museum in the neighboring Borough of Highlands overlooking the Atlantic Ocean and Gateway National Area at Sandy Hook. The school district educates students in grades 7 through 12 from the Boroughs of Atlantic Highlands and Highlands. The enrollment at Henry Hudson Regional School has dropped dramatically in recent years. Between 2010 and 2017 the enrollment has decreased by 27 percent from 403 students to 307 students.

School Year	Enrollment
2010-2011	403
2011-2012	360
2012-2013	356
2013-2014	314
2014-2015	307
2015-2016	294
2016-2017	307

According to the Henry Hudson Regional School its mission is to offer a curriculum that fosters high academic achievement and prepares individuals to succeed in a changing technological society.

### **Facility Environmental standards**

Public and quasi-public community facilities should be developed, renovated or retrofitted for environmental stability in accordance with the best building practices according to the Uniform Construction Code (UCC).

## **XVII. POLICY STATEMENT OF PLAN RELATIONSHIPS**

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The Municipal Land Use Law requires that all municipal master plans include a specific policy statement indicating the relationship of the plan to the master plans of contiguous communities; the Monmouth County Master Plan; the State Development and Redevelopment Plan; and to the Monmouth County Solid Waste Management Plan. The policy of the Borough of Atlantic Highlands is to ensure that the development within the Borough does not conflict with the development and welfare of neighboring municipalities, the County, and the State as a whole. An analysis of this Borough Plan shows that it is compatible with the plans of adjoining municipalities.

### **CONTIGUOUS MUNICIPALITIES**

The Borough of Atlantic Highlands adjoins the Borough of Highlands to the east and the Township of Middletown, specifically the towns of Leonardo to the west, and Navesink to the south.

**Highlands Borough:** The area in Highlands Borough, which abuts Atlantic Highlands, is zoned for residential, multifamily, mobile home, and neighborhood commercial uses. These more intensive uses in Highlands Borough adjoin park space and single-family development in Atlantic Highlands. There is a need for both communities to coordinate planning efforts for the Henry Hudson Trail, waterfront access, slope protection, and the Henry Hudson Regional School.

**Middletown Township:** The abutting area of Middletown Township is planned and zoned as single-family residential, R-22 and R-15 Zones, and commercial, B-3 Zone. The municipal border, where undeveloped, is characterized by sensitive undeveloped wooded slopes and by hydric soils along Many Mind Creek. These features are not suitable for conventional development and should be conserved. Highland Avenue traverses property belonging to both Atlantic Highlands and in Middletown Township. While the Atlantic Highlands frontage is designated residential, a portion of Middletown Township is designated commercial. The Borough disfavors the use of Highland Avenue for commercial access. Moreover, any nonresidential use should be separated by planted screens and fencing. The Borough also urges that the vicinity of the landmark Bowne House, at the end of Leonard Avenue, be conserved.

### **MONMOUTH COUNTY**

The Monmouth County Planning Board was established in 1954. Since its inception the County has adopted three comprehensive plans. The first plan was the *Monmouth County General Development Plan* adopted in 1969. The second plan, the *Monmouth County Growth Management Guide*, was adopted in 1982.

An amendment to the 1982 Plan included the Waterfront Access Plan, also now called the Henry Hudson Trail. This plan promotes the implementation of Waterfront Park, a linear park

interconnecting recreational and open space areas from Aberdeen along the coast to Highlands using former Central Jersey Railroad right-of-way property and managed by the Monmouth County Parks System through most areas.

On September 19, 2016 Monmouth County produced its third plan, the *Monmouth County Comprehensive Master Plan*. The 2016 Plan is a two volume set and as the Plan states it:

*“was initiated in response to a fundamental change in our approach to regional planning; from one that had emphasized growth management in an era of mass suburbanization to one that is more focused on the redevelopment, revitalization, and rediscovery of communities throughout the county. The new Plan recognizes that most of our municipalities have successfully planned for and have already established their desired physical form and character. As such, many of them now seek to maintain and/or enhance their distinct identities through more sustainable approaches in a time characterized by limited growth and constrained public finance.”*

Atlantic Highlands has been categorized as an environmentally sensitive area within the Coastal Growth Corridor due to its unstable slopes and slump features. A strong transportation network has developed within the Corridor attracting higher density housing, commercial and office facilities.

The Atlantic Highlands Master Plan is supportive of the Monmouth County Plan goals for the Waterfront Area and has considered its recommendations in the preparation of the Municipal Conservation, Circulation and Land Use Elements. Atlantic Highlands is proposing connecting municipal park sites to the Henry Hudson Trail.

## **MONMOUTH COUNTY DISTRICT**

### **SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Monmouth County Reclamation Center in Tinton Falls Borough serves as the landfill for solid waste generated by Monmouth County municipalities. It is also the site of the County recycling transfer station. The Monmouth County Solid Waste Management Plan was amended in 1987 to mandate certified municipal recycling programs as a condition for municipal solid waste dumping privileges at the Monmouth County Landfill. Atlantic Highlands received certification from the County in September 1987 for having a recycling ordinance consistent with the County Plan. Annual recertification is contingent on meeting the goals set forth by the recycling law of the State.

These goals include an acceptable Recycling Plan Element adopted as part of the municipal Master Plan and a recycling ordinance. The County approved the Recycling Plan Element of Atlantic Highlands Master Plan adopted on June 30, 1988. Atlantic Highlands adopted an amended Recycling Plan Element in 2006.

Monmouth County amended the Solid Waste Management Plan on March 12, 2009. The updated Statewide Solid Waste Management Plan reaffirmed the State’s goal of recycling 50%

of the municipal solid waste (MSW) stream. The amendment also increased the types and quantities of materials being recycled by:

- Mandating the separation and recovery of additional materials;
- Increasing the visibility and convenience of appropriate recycling containers, with specific requirements for labeled containers and recycling provisions at all businesses, institutions, and at special events;
- Providing more convenient recycling outlets for residents and small business;
- More effective enforcement of recycling requirements by municipal and county inspectors; and
- More visible educational and promotional programs

Since 2009, the Plan has had several administrative actions the latest occurring on May 25, 2016.

## **STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT**

The State Planning Commission released the State Development and Redevelopment Plan in 1992. Since Atlantic Highlands is within the land area under the jurisdiction of the Coastal Area Facilities Review Act (CAFRA), the State Plan relies upon the policies, regulations and implementation mechanisms that have been developed by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection to regulate coastal areas.

The Borough has participated in the cross-acceptance process of the State Plan. As a result, that portion of the Borough characterized by unstable and steep slopes is proposed as Planning Area 5 (PA-5), Environmentally Sensitive. The remainder of the community is designated Planning Area 1 (PA-1), Redeveloping Suburb, with a portion delineated as a “Center”.

### **Contemplated Changes**

Working with the Monmouth County Planning Board and neighboring municipalities as part of the Regional Strategic Development and Redevelopment Plan (RSDRP), the Borough hopes that this process will identify ways to achieve revitalization, redevelopment, or at least aesthetic improvements along the New Jersey Route 36 corridor between Keyport and Atlantic Highlands. Previous area-wide plans described the Atlantic Highlands portion of the corridor as well planned, attractive and integrated with its locality (known as “Memorial Parkway” within Atlantic Highlands). The Borough would like to see such a positive image extended westward from the Borough.

The Borough faces very practical, down-to-earth difficulties in approaching a vision of faster, concentrated, and higher-density growth that arises from the Planning Area 1 designation. That RSDRP vision is, in fact, contrary to the Borough’s own vision. The difficulties are:

- Scarce undeveloped land
- Existing high density
- Unsuitability of the historic district for other than restoration initiatives

- The critical environmental constraints of the Borough
  - Steep slope zone
  - Many Mind Creek and Wagner Creek stream corridors
  - Preserving the natural beauty of the shoreline areas all along the north border of the Borough

### **2012 Strategic Plan Proposal**

In 2012 a State Strategic Plan (SSP) was drafted. The Plan was a revision to the State Development and Redevelopment Plan and was designed to meet the statutory charges of the State Planning Act. The overall goal of the State Strategic Plan was to guide future growth by balancing development and conservation objectives to meet the needs of New Jersey.

The State Planning Commission was scheduled to take action to adopt the Final Plan at its November 13, 2012 meeting. However, Superstorm Sandy, which hit New Jersey on October 27, 2012, put a hold on the adoption of the Plan. Since that time there has been no action or discussion to adopt the new Plan.