

2023 MASTER PLAN

REEXAMINATION REPORT

Township of Lawrence
Mercer County, New Jersey

ADOPTED BY THE PLANNING BOARD ON DECEMBER 18, 2023

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

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INTRODUCTION

The municipal Master Plan, adopted by the Planning Board, sets forth the Township's land use policies and is the principal document that addresses the manner in which development, redevelopment, conservation and/or preservation should occur within a municipality. It is intended to guide the decisions made by public officials and those of private interests involving the use of land. Through its various elements, the Master Plan sets forth a vision for the community in the coming years.

The Master Plan forms the legal foundation for zoning and New Jersey specifically ties the planning of a community as embodied in the Master Plan to the zoning ordinance and zoning map adopted by the Township Committee. Under New Jersey's Municipal Land Use Law N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1 et seq., (hereinafter "MLUL") a zoning ordinance must be substantially consistent with the land use plan.

A Reexamination Report is a review of previously adopted Master Plans, amendments, reexamination reports and local development regulations to determine whether the ideas and policy guidelines set forth therein are still applicable. Under the Municipal Land Use Law, the Planning Board must conduct a general reexamination of its Master Plan and development regulations at least every ten years.

The following Reexamination Report reviews the Township's body of master plan documents and development regulations consistent with statutory requirements; however, comprehensive assessment of potential new or amended policies will be completed as part of the Township's upcoming 2024 Master Plan.

As per the requirements of the MLUL (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89) as well as supplementary rules, a reexamination report must address the following:

- a) The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of the adoption of the last reexamination report.
- b) The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date.
- c) The extent to which there have been significant changes in the assumptions, policies, and objectives forming the basis for the master plan or development regulations as last revised, with particular regard to the density and distribution of population and planning, housing conditions, circulation, conservation of natural resources, energy conservation, collection, disposition, and recycling of designated recyclable materials, and changes in State, county and municipal policies and objectives.
- d) The specific changes recommended for the master plan or development regulations, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether a new plan or regulations should be prepared.
- e) The recommendations of the Planning Board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans adopted pursuant to the "Local Redevelopment and Housing Law," into the Planning plan element of the municipal master plan, and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.
- f) The recommendations of the Planning Board concerning locations appropriate for the development of public electric vehicle infrastructure, including but not limited to, commercial districts and, areas proximate to public transportation and transit facilities

and transportation corridors, and public rest stops; and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary or appropriate for the development of public electric vehicle infrastructure.

This Reexamination Report includes all required components pursuant to the Municipal Land Use Law and is based upon review of the 1995 Master Plan and subsequent reexamination reports prepared by the Board.

PAST PLANNING EFFORTS

The Township of Lawrence has undertaken several planning efforts over time and adopted various planning studies, including:

- 1995 Master Plan
- 1998 Re-Examination Report
- 1999 Housing Plan Amendment
- 2000 Housing Plan Amendment
- 2003 Housing Plan Amendment
- 2005 Land Use Plan Amendment
- 2005 Housing Plan Amendment
- 2006 Re-Examination Report
- 2006 Land Use Plan Element and Conservation Plan Element Amendments
- 2007 Brunswick Pike South Vision Plan
- 2008 Housing Element & Fair Share Plan
- 2009 Amended Housing Element & Fair Share Plan
- 2010 Green Buildings & Environmental Sustainability Element of the Master Plan
- 2012 Brunswick Pike Redevelopment and Form-Based Code Study
- 2012 Amendment to the Land Use & Housing Elements
- 2013 Re-Examination Report
- 2017 Environmental Resources Inventory
- 2018 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan
- 2020 The Boulevard at Brunswick Pike A unified Streetscape Design Concept
- 2020 Circulation Plan Amendment – Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan
- 2020 Historic Preservation Plan Amendment
- 2020 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan First Amendment
- 2020 Housing Element and Fair Share Second Amendment
- 2021 Enterprise Avenue Redevelopment Plan
- 2021 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan Third Amendment

A. The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of the adoption of the last reexamination report & the extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date.

The Township's last Reexamination Report was adopted in 2013. Many of the concerns related to the problems and objectives identified in the 2006 and 2013 reexamination reports have been greatly reduced, primarily through the Township's progress on adoption of additional regulations and Master Plan elements. The extent to which the problems have been reduced is noted in **red and bold**.

1. Master Plan Consistency with Land Use Ordinance

The 2006 Reexamination Report included a list of 11 locations where the zoning designation under the 1997 Land Use Ordinance was inconsistent with the Master Plan land use designation, based on the Township Council's December 16, 1997 resolution setting forth reasons for zoning deviations from the Master Plan. In addition to the 11 locations noted in the Council's Resolution, the Reexamination Report identified three other locations where corrections and/or adjustments to the Land Use Plan appeared to be warranted to achieve greater consistency with the Land Use Ordinance zoning map.

The 2006 Reexamination Report recommended that these inconsistencies be resolved through revisions to the Land Use Plan Map and/or through minor amendments of the Land Use Element and Community Facilities and Recreation Element of the Master Plan. As noted above, many of these inconsistencies have been resolved; however, some remain to be addressed. As indicated in the section below, it is recommended that the unresolved mapping and text inconsistencies identified in the 2006 Reexamination report be examined and if necessary addressed in a forthcoming amendment to the Master Plan.

2. 1998 Reexamination Report Recommendations

The 1998 Reexamination Report included 14 recommendations. Some of these have been addressed, some are no longer relevant and some remain as potential action items. The extent to which the problems have been reduced is noted in **red and bold**.

- (1) Amend Land Use Plan map to designate the western corner of the intersection of Province Line Road and Route 206 as EP-1 instead of RD-1. **Addressed. This area is zoned as EP-1.**
- (2) Amend Land Use Plan map to designate North Lawrenceville, on the north side of Route 206 as EP-1 instead of R-2A or R-2B. **Addressed or No Longer Relevant. The majority of the area is zoned as EP-1.**
- (3) Amend Land Use Plan map to designate area northwest of Lawrenceville- Pennington Road and Santana Court as AT instead of Residential 2. **Addressed. The area is zoned AT.**
- (4) Amend Land Use Plan map to designate areas in the vicinity of Gordon and Phillips Avenues as R-2B in place of AT. **No Longer Relevant.**

- (5) Amend Land Use Plan map to designate the area between George Street and the old trolley as R-2B in place of NC-1. **Addressed with a modified zone designation. The area is zoned AT.**
- (6) Designate Cranstoun Farm as EP-2 and the Dyson Trust (DKM) Tract as OS on the Land Use Plan map; amend Land Use Element discussion of EP-2 designation to include Cranstoun Farm, amend Open Space Inventory within the Community Facilities and Recreation Element to include the Dyson Trust (DKM) tract. **Addressed. The 2018 Open Space and Recreation Plan does not reference Cranstoun Farm; however, the Dyson Tract (DKM) has been preserved.**
- (7) Designate Saturn Chemical property and former DPW garage as OS on the Land Use Plan map; amend Table 9 (inventory of municipal open space) to include these sites. **Addressed. The site is in the OS District and is identified for potential open space acquisition in the 2018 Open Space and Recreation Plan Element.**
- (8) Amend Land Use Plan map to designate areas along Lewisville Road as R- 2B instead of EGI and RD. **Addressed. The area is zoned R-2B.**
- (9) Amend Land Use Plan map to replace OS designation of former State land adjacent to Motor Vehicle Inspection Station on Route I with HC designation inside the curve of Grovers Mill Road and I-I designation outside of the curve. **Addressed with modified zone designations. The area within the curve is zoned HC w/ AT-3, in order to address the Township's affordable housing obligation, and outside the curve is MX-2.**
- (10) Amend Land Use Element discussion regarding land use along Whitehead Road and Alternate Route I. **Not addressed. No redevelopment plan for the Brunswick Pike Redevelopment Area has been adopted.**
- (11) Amend Land Use Plan map to designate the east side of Princeton Avenue south of the former State lottery building as NC-I instead of Residential-5. **Addressed. The area is zoned NC-1.**

The 1998 Reexamination Report also proposed three additional amendments not specifically addressed in the 1997 Council Resolution as follows:

- (12) Amend Land Use Plan map to designate southwest corner of Trenton Princeton Road (Route 206) and Lawn Park Avenue as Neighborhood Shops instead of R-2B. **Addressed with a modified zone designation. The area is zoned NC-1.**
- (13) Retain SCR designation for Trenton Diocese Property. (No amendment required.) **Addressed.**
- (14) Amend Land Use Plan map to designate industrial Properties along Route I/Trenton Border as Office Industrial instead of R-4. **Addressed with a modified zone designation. These lands are zone Light Industrial, or Open Space in the case of Hamnet Park.**

Many of these recommended changes to the Master Plan have been implemented; the balance of the items should be assessed for relevance and potential implementation.

3. 2006 Reexamination Report Recommendations

The 2006 Reexamination Report included 17 recommendations. Some of these have been addressed, some are no longer relevant and some remain as potential action items. In large measure, these recommendations- in addition to the issue of redevelopment along the Brunswick Pike - frame the major problems and objectives at the time of the 2006 Reexamination Report. The extent to which the problems have been reduced is noted in **red and bold**.

(1) 1998 Master Plan Reexamination Recommendations

As set forth above, those few recommendations from the 1998 Reexamination Report which have not yet been addressed should be evaluated by the Planning Board and implemented if warranted. **See the assessment above.**

(2) State Development and Redevelopment Plan

In 2006 the State Planning Commission had recently revised its rules and embarked on a process of municipal engagement known as "cross- acceptance." The goal of cross-acceptance from the municipal perspective was to have the local Master Plan and land use regulations "endorsed" by the State Planning Commission as consistent with the policies and objectives of the State Plan. As described below the State Plan has been totally restructured but not yet adopted by the State Planning Commission. Consequently, the implications of the draft State Plan on municipal planning at this moment are unknown. **An updated State Plan has not been adopted.**

(3) Proposed Renovation and Expansion of the Quakerbridge Mall.

In 2006 the prospect of a significant expansion of the Quakerbridge Mall loomed as a major land development issue. In 2006-7 the Planning Board amended the Master Plan and the Township Council amended the LUO to facilitate the Mall's expansion. In the intervening years the Simon Group, the controlling ownership interest of the Mall applied for and was granted approval for an expansion comprising two additional department stores along with small "concourse shops" and parking garages. The recession prevented the expansion from occurring, although the approvals remain in place. In 2012 the Mall undertook an extensive interior and gateway renovation project as well as adding two restaurants to the northwest facade. Whether the Simon Group proceeds with the major expansion will depend, in all likelihood, on economic and financing issues which are beyond the Township's control. **The original expansion and renovation of the Mall has not occurred. In 2017 the Township adopted inclusionary zoning as a conditional use to the Quaker Bridge Mall that permits up to 350 units with an affordable housing set-aside of 20%. A site plan application has not been submitted for the inclusionary development.**

(4) Capital Health Systems Hospital Proposal

After a search process which included a site in Lawrence Township, Capital Health Systems selected a site in Hopewell Township and has since completed construction and occupancy of that facility. **This recommendation is no longer relevant.**

(5) 2000 Draft Open Space and Recreation Plan

The Open Space and Recreation Plan Element from the 1995 Master Plan has been redrafted and updated with current information on open space acquisitions, recreation

facility improvements, off road trails and active and passive recreation goals and objectives. It should be finalized and adopted as an amendment to the Master Plan. The current Open Space System Map can be found in the Exhibits to this Reexamination Report. **Addressed. An Open Space and Recreation Plan Element was adopted in 2018.**

(6) Northwest County Park

The 50 acres at the eastern corner of Northwest County Park designated as Educational Government Institution - EGI on the Land Use Plan should be revised to Open Space - OS since the Board of Education no longer needs that site for a school. The zoning designation should follow suit. The Township's prior plans for active recreation in the County Park have been satisfied with the two new multi-purpose fields at the former Twin Pines airport. With the airport's closure, the LUO map should be revised to remove the Airport Safety Zone which was previously required due to the Twin Pines airport operation. **Addressed.**

(7) Lawrence Hopewell Trail

Construction of the 20+ mile Lawrence Hopewell Trail (the "LHT") has continued as recommended in the 2006 Reexamination Report. The majority of the LHT within Lawrence Township has been completed. Recently completed sections include Carson Road Woods, Bristol Myers Squibb, the Dyson Tract, Lewisville Road and the Lawrenceville School. The Province Line Road section (funded through a grant from the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission) is planned for the fall of 2013. Thereafter the last remaining section will be along Princeton Pike between the Dyson Tract and Lawrenceville Road. The "Trails Map of Lawrence Township" is included in the Exhibits to this Report. **The 2019 Circulation Plan Element Amendment – Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan identifies Princeton Pike as a proposed bike route / bike lane.**

(8) Infill Housing: Scale and Design Issues

The issues identified in the infill housing recommendation in the 2006 Reexamination Report were the subject of an amendment to the Land Use Element of the Master Plan adopted by the Planning Board by Resolution 13- 07 on March 19, 2007. This Master Plan amendment was followed by an amendment to the LUO via Ordinance 1920-07 which established an innovative approach to preserving neighborhood architectural context by regulating the floor areas of new houses on infill lots within established neighborhoods. **Addressed.**

(9) Route 206 Commercial Node

In furtherance of improving this local commercial node on Route 206 the Township sponsored a series of "visioning" sessions with neighboring stakeholders, including residents, business owners/employees, and representatives of the firehouse and St. Ann's Church. The issues which were of most interest to the stakeholders were improving pedestrian safety- particularly crossing Route 206, improving access to and the appearance of the municipal parking lot south of the firehouse and expediting the redevelopment of the former service station on Route 206. The Township, with funding from NJ DOT and local funds installed an automated, state-of- the-art pedestrian crossing, constructed a brick wall/fence around the municipal parking lot fronted by planting beds and prepared illustrative plans to depict how the former service station property could be redeveloped as mixed use with the building set up on Route 206 and parking in the rear. **Partially addressed. Improvement of the municipal parking lot**

enhanced the aesthetics of the corridor and improved the pedestrian experience along its frontage, additionally improved crosswalks have been installed. The former gas station building has been removed and the Township plans to install a small park for the local residents.

(10) Mercer Crossings Study Area

The Township has cooperated with the County Planning office in examining the land use constraints and opportunities in the area where Lawrence, Ewing and Trenton intersect. One off-shoot of the Mercer Crossings engagement has been renewed interest in the Trenton Farmer's Market, spurred by a 2006 report entitled "Revitalizing the Trenton Farmer's Market" and prepared by the Project for Public Spaces. **Not Addressed. This item remains relevant as no advancement of this Study Area has occurred.**

(11) Eggerts Crossing Neighborhood Improvement Strategy

As indicated in the 2006 Reexamination Report, the Township has undertaken various open space, greenway and infrastructure improvements in the Eggerts Crossing Neighborhood. There has been active interest in infill housing in this neighborhood, with single family detached houses being constructed on vacant lots. **Partially Addressed. Several infill development homes have been constructed.**

(12) Sustainable Development

As indicated in the "Prior Planning Efforts" section of this Reexamination Report, in 2010 the Planning Board adopted a Green Buildings Environmental Suitability Element of the Master Plan. That Element contains a variety of initiatives which can be undertaken at the local level to reduce the carbon "footprint" of new and existing development and increase energy efficiency. **An updated Green Buildings & Sustainability Element is proposed as part of the 2024 Master Plan.**

(13) Lawrence Township Board of Education Long-Range Facilities Plan

The school expansion referenced in the 2006 Reexamination Report has occurred. The Board of Education and the Township routinely collaborate to the extent necessary on enrollment issues which have land use implications. **Addressed, however, the Township should continue collaborating with the Board of Education as needed.**

(14) Bus-Rapid Transit System Planning for the Route One Corridor/Circulation Plan Element

The Township has been an active participant in the stakeholder meetings organized by NJDOT and NJ Transit to plan for traffic congestion mitigation in the southern portion of the Route One corridor. As evidence of the seriousness with which the Township views this issue the Planning Board required the Simon Group (developer/owner of the Quakerbridge Mall) to accommodate the NJDOT's bus-rapid transit right-of-way through the Mall Property in its General Development Plan approval. The NJDOT's strategy at this time is to reserve easements through properties within the corridor and eventually implement the bus-rapid transit system. **This recommendation remains relevant.**

(15) Kings Highway Historic District and Israel Stevens House

The amendment of the Historic Preservation Element of the Master Plan to include both the Kings Highway Historic District and the Israel Stevens House remains a worthwhile endeavor and will be carried forward as a recommendation in this Reexamination Report. **Addressed. Both sites are addressed in the 2020 Historic Preservation Plan.**

(16) Environmental Resources Inventory

As forecasted in the 2006 Reexamination Report, the Lawrence Township Environmental Resources Committee succeeded in securing the assistance of the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) to prepare an Environmental Resource Inventory of Lawrence Township. DVRPC was funded by a combination of grants from the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC), the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation and Lawrence Township. The ERI is very thorough and warrants being adopted as a supplement to the Conservation Element of the Master Plan. **Addressed. An Environmental Resource Inventory was prepared in 2017.**

(17) Mixed-Use Convenience/ Gas Sales Facilities

This recommendation to permit uses which combine gasoline sales and convenience good sales is addressed in Section IV of the 2013 Reexamination Report and is ready for adoption as a Master Plan amendment. **Addressed. Ordinance No. 2159-13 was adopted.**

4. 2013 Master Plan Reexamination Recommendations

Along with the recommendations outlined in the 2006 Master Plan Reexamination Report, several recommendations were outlined in the 2013 Master Plan Reexamination Report. Some of these have been addressed, some are no longer relevant, and some remain as potential action items. In general, the issues addressed in the 2013 recommendations include updates to the Land Use Ordinance regarding office uses and the Highway Commercial District. Additionally, the 2013 Reexamination report recommends the County Wastewater Management Plan be incorporated into the Township's utility Plan Element of the Master Plan.

(1) Office and Medical Facilities

Recent zoning permit and Board applications have pointed out some differences in how the Township's Land Use Ordinance (LUO) permits various types of office space. Further, there has been confusion over the meaning of certain medical uses (e.g., medical clinic as distinct from medical office) in an area of rapid technological change and new business models. Systematically reviewing the LUO reveals the following specific categories of land use that include office space as permitted or defined uses:

- Office
- Office buildings
- Professional offices (including "offices of a recognized profession")
- Medical office
- Office parks
- Business parks
- Research and engineering offices
- General business offices
- Administrative offices

Offices of various types are permitted in the NC-1, NC-2, MX, PVD-2, PO, O, RD-2, HC, RC, I-1, I-2 and EGI zoning districts as well as in those R-2B districts that have a professional office overlay. Offices are also considered ancillary uses in most other non-residential districts and in home occupations. For example, retail stores typically have an office for the administrative functions of the business.

The key issue with these various types of offices is whether they differ sufficiently in their land use characteristics that they should be assigned to specific zoning districts.

Lawrence Township's Land Use Ordinance, however, includes only two definitions which relate to offices and these terms apply only to uses which are permitted in the Office and Research and Development 2 zoning districts. These are as follows:

- **BUSINESS PARK:** A non-residential land use developed as a single entity combining office, research and development, and laboratory uses which may contain ancillary personal services, overnight accommodation, and eating establishments primarily for use by employees and visitors to the complex. **This definition remains in the definition section in the LUO and in permitted uses in the RD-2 District.**
- **OFFICE PARK:** A non-residential land use developed as a single entity combining general, business, professional, and medical offices which may contain ancillary personal services primarily for employees. **This definition remains in the definition section in the LUO and in permitted uses in the O, RD-2 Districts.**

The terminology for offices which have meaningful land use distinctions should be clarified both in Section 201- Definitions of the LUO and in the respective nonresidential zoning districts in which they are permitted. The expansion of medical services in an era of rapid technological change has also altered how medical buildings are used and categorized in the LUO. For example, "urgent care", which is common in other parts of the country, has rapidly expanded in New Jersey in the past decade. Financial incentives have also spurred more innovative means of providing medical care that used to be undertaken only in a general hospital setting, such as outpatient surgical services. The federal Affordable Care Act will shortly provide for a transformation in health care delivery that may require new facilities.

The LUO would benefit by incorporating clearer updated definitions for medical uses and use of those defined terms as permitted and conditional uses in the respective zoning districts. As with office uses, supplemental definitions of medical uses should be incorporated into the LUO as well as more clearly indicating where such uses are appropriate or not. Following are some new definitions to consider as well as some commentary.

- **OFFICE -** A building or portion of a building principally engaged in conducting the affairs of a business, profession, service industry, or government. Examples include real estate agencies, business services firms, accounting firms, design firms, financial advising firms and insurance companies.

Comments: Banks shall not be included since they more typically have the characteristics of retail sale of goods and services. Offices could include accessory uses serving office workers and visitors such as a cafeteria, cafe or limited convenience, which is present in the Research and Development Districts today. **This definition is not included in the definition section in the LUO.**

- **MEDICAL CLINIC** - A public health facility, blood donor center, kidney dialysis center, or walk-in medical office. Comment: This definition provides a distinguishing element from a general medical office. **This definition is included in the definition section in the LUO.**
- **MEDICAL OFFICE** - A building or portion of a building principally engaged in providing services for health maintenance, diagnosis (including testing) and treatment of human diseases, pain or other physical or mental condition of patients solely on an outpatient basis. No overnight patients shall be kept on the premises. Examples of medical offices shall include but not be limited to general physicians, dentists, chiropractors, psychologists, cardiologists and other various specialties. Comments: If the Township wanted to exclude outpatient and residential treatment facilities, it would provide the exclusion here. Urgent care centers and hospitals should not be included because of their higher levels of vehicular and pedestrian activity. **This definition is included in the definition section in the LUO.**
- **URGENT CARE CENTERS** - A medical clinic in a building or portion of a building, whether private or institution, principally engaged in providing walk-in, extended hour access for acute illness and injury care that is either beyond the scope or availability of the typical primary care practice or medical clinic. Patients shall be served solely on an outpatient basis and no overnight patients shall be kept on the premises. *Comment:* Hospitals should not be included. **This definition is included in the definition section in the LUO and as a permitted use in the EGI District. It is not listed as an example in the permitted uses however it should fall under health care uses.**
- **HEALTH CARE FACILITY** - A building or portion of a building, whether private or institution, principally engaged in providing services for inpatient and outpatient services for physical health maintenance, diagnosis (including testing) and treatment of human diseases, pain or other physical condition of patients. Care may be provided on a short term or long term basis. Outpatient services may also be provided as a secondary service. Such facilities may include laundries, cafeterias, gift shops, laboratories, and medical offices as accessory uses. **This definition is included in the definition section in the LUO and as a permitted use in the EGI District.**
- **RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICES** - A building or portion of a building principally engaged in developing new products or procedures, or to improvement of existing products or procedures. Research and engineering offices may include laboratory space, pilot manufacturing and production

space and/or office space. **This definition is included in the definition section in the LUO and as a permitted use in the MX-2 District.**

The definition for "business parks" could probably be eliminated since it is very similar to "office parks". The business park land use only arises in the RD-2 district. The primary distinction is that a business park allows overnight accommodation and specifically includes research and development. But research and development can be handled with adding "Research and Development Offices" as a specific land use in appropriate districts. Both terms are also used in §417.E. in describing commercial garage standards in the Office district and in §430.A. in describing parking requirements for child care centers in office parks. A revised set of definitions for office and medical uses should be aligned with the respective zoning districts and considered for recommendation to the Township Council. **The definition for Business Park remains in the Land Use Ordinance.**

(2) Highway Commercial District

On September 10, 2012 the Planning Board adopted Resolution of Memorialization 21-12 which removed the Planned Village Residential -3 land use designation from a 37 acre tract fronting on Quakerbridge Road at Lawrence Station Road (Block 4202, Lot 1) and substituted instead the Highway Commercial land use designation. This change in use involved changes to both the Land Use and the Housing Plan Elements of the Master Plan.

The LUO has yet to be revised to be consistent with this Master Plan revision. This zoning map modification should be adopted along with various changes to the Highway Commercial zoning standards themselves to improve their functionality.

The 2006 Reexamination Report recommended that the Planning Board assess the efficacy of allowing a commercial use which combined the sale of gasoline with convenience goods and, if so, how the LUO should regulate the location and development character of such facilities (2006 Reexamination Report, Recommendation# 17, p. 19). Since the adoption of that Report combined gasoline and convenience goods retail uses in commercial corridors throughout the state have become increasingly prevalent.

To the extent that these combined retail services reduce the need for another vehicular trip to a second destination, these combined uses reduce traffic congestion and save energy. Experience has proven that the site circulation challenges of the combined use can be managed provided the lot area is adequate.

Consequently, the 2013 Reexamination Report proposes that this combined use be permitted in those zoning districts which currently permit service stations but subject to an increase in minimum lot area from 20,000 sf for service stations to 1.5 acres, which area is necessary to reasonably accommodate both uses. Service stations should also be permitted on the same lot with membership club "bulk retail" outlets as is customary with those facilities.

In addition, there are a variety of technical changes to the regulations for service stations, convenience stores and the Highway Commercial district which will

modernize the LUO and reduce the need for applicants to seek unnecessary variance relief. These include the following:

1. Update the definition of convenience store by eliminating the references to size and hours of operation; the Planning Board considers the hours of operation for every application for development of a convenience store in the routine course of application review. **Addressed. The definition has been updated.**
2. Clarify that convenience and membership club bulk retail outlets are permitted uses in, the Highway Commercial-HC zoning district. **Addressed. Both uses are included in the district's permitted uses.**
3. Specify service station attendant booths-both on the motor fuel pump islands and elsewhere on site (which may contain rest rooms) as permitted accessory structures; **Addressed. The use is included in the district's permitted accessory uses.**
4. Specify canopy structures for motor fuel pump and passenger protection as permitted accessory structures; **Addressed. The use is included in the district's permitted accessory uses.**
5. Update the LUO by removing the separation requirement between service stations since the primary concern with proximity of stations-traffic circulation-can be addressed by the Board with jurisdiction through the traffic analysis typically required as part of the site plan application process. **Addressed. The separation requirement has been removed.**
6. The LUO currently prohibits more than one principal building on a lot for all residential uses except multi-family dwellings and limits to-either two or three (depending on the zoning district) the number of principal buildings on a lot for all non-residential uses except for the Regional Commercial- RC district, which has no limit. These limitations on non- residential uses, which are found in Section 110B of the LUO have impeded development and redevelopment initiatives and serve no compelling planning purpose, thus they should be eliminated. **Addressed. The prohibition has been removed.**
7. Due to the large lot area of the Princeton Research Lands property (which is designated as Highway Commercial land use in the Master Plan) and the announced redevelopment plans for the property which involve a large anchor store with pad sites along Quakerbridge Road a definition of pad site should be incorporated in the LUO along with a requirement that construction of the anchor store precede that on any of the adjacent pad sites. In addition, the announced anchor store, a "membership club bulk retail" store may display a new car for sale as a promotion. Since new car sales are a permitted use within the Highway Commercial-HC district, this limited retail activity should be permitted provided it is associated with a franchised new car dealer. **Addressed. A definition for a pad site is included in the LUO and the definition establishes retail establishment ratio. Additionally, §420F.1 states "No pad site**

shall be built and occupied in advance of the construction and occupancy of the larger retail building to which it is related.”

8. In concert with recommendations #5 and# 6 above, the classification of shopping centers established after January 1, 1989 with the Highway Commercial-HC district as a conditional use should be removed, as should the condition that they be limited to properties with a minimum tract size of 20 acres and at least 800 feet of frontage on U.S. Route One. Shopping centers should be permitted uses within the Highway Commercial-HC district. **Addressed. The condition has been removed.**
9. Outdoor seating which is currently permitted only in shopping centers, should be a permitted accessory use to a restaurant in any zoning district provided that standards providing for accessibility, buffering, pedestrian circulation, parking and the like are maintained. **Addressed. Outdoor seating is permitted in the NC-1, NC-2, and HC Districts.**
10. The 2011 Annual Report from the Lawrence Township Zoning Board of Adjustment recommended that the number of uses within an existing building in the Highway Commercial-HC district be increased if warranted by the floor area of the building. The LUO currently limits the number of uses in a principal building to three provided that each activity occupies a minimum of 750 square feet. In deference to the Zoning Board's experience in handling these variance requests the LUO should be amended to permit up to five uses meeting the minimum floor area requirement. **Addressed in §420F.3.**

(3) Wastewater Management Plan

Once approved by NJDEP, the portion of the County WMP which pertains to Lawrence Township should be incorporated into the Township's Utility Plan Element of the Master Plan. **Not Addressed. An updated Utility Plan Element has not been prepared.**

As reviewed above, a majority of the recommendations from the 1998, 2006, and 2013 Master Plan Reexamination Report have been addressed. Some recommendations are no longer relevant, and some remain as potential action items.

5. Affordable Housing

Another major problem that faces the Township, and all municipalities in New Jersey, is affordable housing. Since the 1975 New Jersey Supreme Court decision known as “Mount Laurel I”, New Jersey municipalities have had a constitutional obligation to provide opportunities for creation of low and moderate housing units. This 1975 decision led to a body of case law, legislative changes and rulemaking by a state agency that, collectively, is now referred to as the “Mount Laurel doctrine”. Through these actions, New Jersey municipalities have been assigned a specific number of affordable housing units that must be created or planned for creation in order to have “satisfied” their constitutional obligation, commonly referred to as their affordable housing obligation.

In 2015, the Township filed a Declaratory Judgment Action with the Court, seeking a Judgment of Repose and Compliance, affirming that its affordable housing plan complies with the Mount Laurel Doctrine and Fair Housing Act in accordance with Mount Laurel IV. In 2017, the Township

entered into a Settlement Agreement with Fair Share Housing Center (FSHC) which set forth the Township's affordable housing obligations as follows:

- Present Need/Rehabilitation Share - 73
- Prior Round Obligation - 891
- Third Round Prospective Need - 1,110

The Township executed a *Settlement Agreement* with Fair Share Housing Center (hereinafter "FSHC") on April 28, 2017. The Planning Board then adopted a *Housing Element and Fair Share Plan* that was consistent with that 2017 Settlement Agreement on June 15, 2018. That Settlement Agreement and Housing Plan established the Township's affordable housing obligation and mechanisms to satisfy the obligation, which notably included a vacant land adjustment. The Township executed a *First Amendment to the Settlement Agreement* with FSHC on April 20, 2021. This Settlement Agreement reflected the *First Amendment to the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan* adopted on July 20, 2020 and the *Second Amendment to the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan* adopted on November 2, 2020. These amendments to the Settlement Agreement and Housing Plan adjusted the Township's vacant land adjustment and affordable housing sites.

The Township adopted a third amendment to the Housing Plan in 2021. The *Third Amendment to the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan* amends the *Second Amendment to the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan*.

The Township executed a *Second Amendment to the Settlement Agreement* with FSHC on June 15, 2021. This Settlement Agreement adjusts the Lawrence Shopping Center (Block 2001, Lots 3, 60-66, 68) unmet need site to reflect the Zoning Board's April 28, 2021 site plan approval for a 53 unit affordable housing development (54 total units, including one on-site manager unit). The 2021 Third Amendment to the Housing Plan is to create consistency with the *Second Amendment to the Settlement Agreement* with FSHC, specifically that the Lawrence Shopping Center site will produce 53 affordable units.

C. Relevant changes in assumptions, policies and objectives at the local, county and state levels

Since adoption of the 2006 and 2013 reexamination report, the US Census was conducted in both 2010 and 2020. The most recently available data is presented and discussed on the following pages, with the data source cited within each table. It should be noted that much of the data cited is from the 2021 American Community Survey, which provides greater detail than the Census Data although much of it is statistically derived and not based on responses from the full population. Some data from the 2021 ACS is out of sync with actual counts taken in the 2020 Census due to differences in methodology, but the statistical information from the ACS remains useful.

As depicted in the following table there are 12,720 total housing units in the Township. The total number of housing units has slightly decreased over the past decade. In 2011 there were 12,766 total housing units.

TABLE 01: TOTAL HOUSING UNITS						
2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates; Table DP04						
Type	Lawrence Township		Mercer County		New Jersey	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Occupied Housing Units	11,849	93.2%	137,114	92%	3,397,156	91%
Vacant Housing Units	871	6.8%	12,459	8%	341,186	9%
TOTAL HOUSING UNITS	12,720		149,573		3,738,342	
Homeowner Vacancy Rate	0.5		1.1		1.6	
Rental Vacancy Rate	0.4		2.9		4.8	

TABLE 02: TOTAL HOUSING UNITS BY NUMBER OF UNITS IN STRUCTURE		
2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates; Table DP04		
Units in Structure	Total Housing Units	Percent
1, detached	6,707	53%
1, attached	2086	16%
2	233	2%
3 or 4	187	2%
5 to 9	958	8%
10 to 19 units	1550	12%
20 or more units	999	8%
Mobile Home	0	0%
Boat, RV, Van, etc.	0	0%
TOTAL HOUSING UNITS	12,720	

Over the past decade, the trend that a majority of units are owner-occupied has not changed. In 2011 about 71% of units in the Township were owner-occupied, which indicates that over the past decade the owner and renter distribution has remained relatively the same.

TABLE 03: OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS BY NUMBER OF UNITS IN STRUCTURE

2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates; Table S2504

Units in Structure	Owner-Occupied	Percent of Owner-Occupied	Renter-Occupied	Percent of Renter-Occupied	Total Occupied	Percent of Total Occupied
1, detached	5958	72%	369	10%	6,327	53%
1, attached	1583	19%	440	12%	2023	17%
2	46	1%	169	5%	215	2%
3 or 4	111	1%	76	2%	187	2%
5 to 9	213	3%	614	17%	827	7%
10 or more	357	4%	1913	53%	2270	19%
Mobile home or other	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS	8,268	70%	3,581	30%	11,849	-

TABLE 04: TOTAL HOUSING UNITS BY YEAR STRUCTURE BUILT

2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates; Table DP04

Year Structure Built	Units	Percent
Built 2020 or later	17	0%
Built 2010 to 2019	132	1%
Built 2000 to 2009	1276	10%
Built 1990 to 1999	1428	11%
Built 1980 to 1989	3160	25%
Built 1970 to 1979	1799	14%
Built 1960 to 1969	1722	14%
Built 1950 to 1959	1655	13%
Built 1940 to 1949	276	2%
Built 1939 or earlier	1255	10%
TOTAL HOUSING UNITS	12,720	

TABLE 05: TOTAL HOUSING UNITS BY NUMBER OF ROOMS

2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates; Table DP04

Number of Rooms	Units	Percent
1 room	248	2%
2 rooms	171	1%
3 rooms	945	7%
4 rooms	2144	17%
5 rooms	1641	13%
6 rooms	2040	16%
7 rooms	1522	12%
8 rooms	1577	12%
9 rooms or more	2432	19%
TOTAL HOUSING UNITS	12,720	

TABLE 06: TOTAL HOUSING UNITS BY NUMBER OF BEDROOMS

2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates; Table DP04

Number of Rooms	Units	Percent
No bedroom	272	2%
1 bedroom	1254	10%
2 bedrooms	3505	28%
3 bedrooms	3459	27%
4 bedrooms	3166	25%
5 or more bedrooms	1064	8%
TOTAL HOUSING UNITS	12,720	

TABLE 07: OWNER OCCUPIED HOUSING VALUES

2020 & 2011 ACS 5-Year Estimates; Table DP04

Housing Values	2011 Units	Percent	2021 Units	Percent
Less than \$50,000	63	1%	51	1%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	177	2%	192	2%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	338	4%	269	3%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	540	6%	468	6%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	2402	28%	2090	25%
\$300,000 to \$499,999	3459	41%	3549	43%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	1333	16%	1503	18%
\$1,000,000 or more	226	3%	146	2%
Lawrence Township Median	\$335,500.00	(X)	\$349,600.00	(X)
Mercer County Median	\$302,100.00	(X)	\$295,400.00	(X)

TABLE 08: OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS BY GROSS RENT

2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates; Table DP04

Gross Rent	Lawrence Township	Percent	Mercer County	Percent
Less than \$500	127	4%	5016	10%
\$500 to \$999	157	5%	7497	15%
\$1,000 to \$1,499	802	23%	18001	37%
\$1,500 to \$1,999	1185	34%	10664	22%
\$2,000 to \$2,499	845	25%	4500	9%
\$2,500 to \$2,999	233	7%	1897	4%
\$3,000 or more	93	3%	1801	4%
Median (dollars)	\$1,768	(X)	\$1,361	(X)
No rent paid	139	(X)	1334	(X)
TOTAL OCCUPIED UNITS PAYING RENT	3,442	-	49,376	-

TABLE 09: MONTHLY HOUSING COSTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME

2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates; Table B25074

Income	Lawrence Township Households	Percentage of Household Income					
		0-19.9%	20-24.9%	25-29.9%	30-34.9%	35% +	Not computed
< \$10,000	187	0	0	0	4	124	59
\$10,000 - 19,999	144	0	20	7	33	84	0
\$20,000 - 34,999	342	15	0	0	0	315	12
\$35,000 - 49,999	237	12	0	0	19	109	97
\$50,000 - 74,999	545	11	134	116	87	186	11
\$75,000 - 99,999	728	134	252	243	83	16	0
\$100,000 or more	1398	1025	287	18	49	0	19
Total	3581	1197	693	384	275	834	198
Percent Total		33%	19%	11%	8%	23%	6%
Income	Mercer County Households	Percentage of Household Income (Mercer County)					
		0-19.9%	20-24.9%	25-29.9%	30-34.9%	35% +	Not computed
< \$10,000	5904	78	70	218	227	3973	1338
\$10,000 - 19,999	6671	243	283	975	535	4503	132
\$20,000 - 34,999	6965	531	283	177	276	5556	142
\$35,000 - 49,999	5846	148	208	763	1227	3234	266
\$50,000 - 74,999	545	11	134	116	87	186	11
\$75,000 - 99,999	5934	1923	1722	1102	652	477	58
\$100,000 or more	10929	8140	1599	463	262	150	315
Total	42794	11074	4299	3814	3266	18079	2262
Percent Total		26%	10%	9%	8%	42%	5%

TABLE 10: INDICATORS OF HOUSING DEFICIENCY

2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates; Table DP04

Total Number of Occupied Units	Lack of Plumbing	Lack of Kitchen	No Telephone Service
11849	42	91	161

Based on the data related to housing presented in Tables 1 through 10, the Township can be characterized as a community primarily comprised of 2 and 3 bedroom single-family detached dwellings that are largely owner-occupied. Much of the housing stock was built after 1980, with 47% of dwellings built after 1980. In 2021, the median value of owner-occupied dwellings was \$349,600, which increased from 2011, when the median value was \$335,500. Median rents were \$1,768 per month, higher than the County which was \$1,361. When reviewing measures of housing affordability presented in Table 9, about 30% of the Township households are paying more than 35% of their monthly income for housing costs, which points to a need for more affordable options. Note also that high housing costs can be mitigated through lower transportation costs through the provision of public transportation options.

Review of data on population characteristics reveals the Township's population declined by almost 400 residents in 2020 after growth in 2000 and 2010. Almost every age group saw a decline in population from 2011 to 2021 according to ACS data, with slight growth in residents over 50 years of age. Almost 30% of the Township's population is 50 or older.

TABLE 11: POPULATION OVER TIME

1990 & 2000 & 2010 & 2020 Census Data; Table P2

Geography	1990	2000	2010	2020
Lawrence Township	25,787	29,159	33,472	33,077
Mercer County	307,863	325,824	366,513	387,340
New Jersey	7,730,188	8,414,350	8,791,894	9,288,994

TABLE 12: AGE DISTRIBUTION OVER TIME

2011 & 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates; Table S0101

Age Group	2011	Percent	2021	Percent	Percent Change
Under 5 years	1881	5.70%	1424	4.30%	-0.32%
5 to 9 years	2145	6.50%	1540	4.60%	-0.39%
10 to 14 years	1617	4.90%	2240	6.80%	0.28%
15 to 19 years	2706	8.20%	2797	8.40%	0.03%
20 to 24 years	2771	8.40%	3379	10.20%	0.18%
25 to 29 years	2046	6.20%	1888	5.70%	-0.08%
30 to 34 years	1848	5.60%	1675	5.00%	-0.10%
35 to 39 years	2343	7.10%	1727	5.20%	-0.36%
40 to 44 years	2409	7.30%	2405	7.20%	0.00%
45 to 49 years	2574	7.80%	2184	6.60%	-0.18%
50 to 54 years	2442	7.40%	2748	8.30%	0.11%
55 to 59 years	1980	6.00%	2020	6.10%	0.02%
60 to 64 years	1716	5.20%	2055	6.20%	0.17%
65 to 69 years	1518	4.60%	1513	4.60%	0.00%
70 to 74 years	957	2.90%	1449	4.40%	0.34%
75 to 79 years	759	2.30%	677	2.00%	-0.12%
80 to 84 years	627	1.90%	552	1.70%	-0.14%
85 years and over	594	1.80%	905	2.70%	0.34%
TOTAL POPULATION	32,994		33,178		0.01%
Median Age (years)	38.1		39.8		

TABLE 13: AGE DISTRIBUTION

2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates; Table S0101

Age Group	Lawrence Township		Mercer County		New Jersey	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 5 years	1424	4.30%	21,331	5.50%	530,376	5.70%
5 to 9 years	1540	4.60%	22,063	5.70%	557,847	6.00%
10 to 14 years	2240	6.80%	24,453	6.40%	590,073	6.40%
15 to 19 years	2797	8.40%	28,563	7.40%	584,965	6.30%
20 to 24 years	3379	10.20%	29,095	7.60%	559,157	6.10%
25 to 29 years	1888	5.70%	23,996	6.20%	584,584	6.30%
30 to 34 years	1675	5.00%	23,242	6.00%	595,252	6.40%
35 to 39 years	1727	5.20%	24,699	6.40%	611,665	6.60%
40 to 44 years	2405	7.20%	24,462	6.40%	585,341	6.30%
45 to 49 years	2184	6.60%	26,288	6.80%	613,106	6.60%
50 to 54 years	2748	8.30%	26,777	7.00%	652,065	7.10%
55 to 59 years	2020	6.10%	26,154	6.80%	667,696	7.20%
60 to 64 years	2055	6.20%	24,906	6.50%	607,381	6.60%
65 to 69 years	1513	4.60%	19,734	5.10%	484,088	5.20%
70 to 74 years	1449	4.40%	14,333	3.70%	382,830	4.10%
75 to 79 years	677	2.00%	9,173	2.40%	255,790	2.80%
80 to 84 years	552	1.70%	7,937	2.10%	172,852	1.90%
85 years and over	905	2.70%	7,745	2.00%	198,956	2.20%
TOTAL POPULATION	12,642		384,951		9,234,024	
Median Age (years)	39.8		38.9		40	

Over the past decade the Township has become slightly more diverse in terms of race and ethnicity. In 2011, 62.3% of people were White, 11.6% were Black or African American, and 8% were Hispanic or Latino. As one can depict in the following table, the number of Hispanic or Latino's has almost doubled in the Township.

TABLE 14: RACIAL & ETHNIC BREAKDOWN

2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates; Table DP05

Races & Ethnicities	Lawrence Township		Mercer County		New Jersey	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
White alone	19,153	57.70%	184,711	48.00%	4,966,842	53.80%
Black or African American alone	3,431	10.30%	74,456	19.30%	1,158,820	12.50%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	4	0.00%	295	0.10%	8,873	0.10%
Asian alone	5,079	15.30%	45,257	11.80%	894,646	9.70%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	12	0.00%	91	0.00%	2,196	0.00%
Other	34	0.10%	434	0.10%	52,524	0.60%
Multi-racial	644	1.90%	8,663	2.30%	225,620	2.40%
NOT HISPANIC OR LATINO TOTAL	28,357	85.50%	313,907	81.50%	7,309,521	0.79%
Hispanic or Latino	4,821	14.50%	71,044	18.50%	1,924,503	20.80%
2021 POPULATION TOTAL	33,178		384,951		9,234,024	

In 2011, the median income in the Township was \$86,715. The median income has increased significantly over the past decade. The 2021 the median income in the Township is \$114,043. Income data shows that the Township's median income is higher than that of the County and substantially higher than that of the State. More than half of residents have incomes greater than \$100,000. Consistent with these figures, Lawrence has a poverty rate significantly less than that of the County and State.

TABLE 15: HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS

2021-ACS 5 YEAR ESTIMATES; Table S1901

Incomes (In 2021 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars)	Lawrence Township	Mercer County	New Jersey
	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
Less than \$10,000	3.1%	5.7%	4.3%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	1.0%	3.8%	3.2%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	5.0%	6.4%	6.1%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	6.6%	6.1%	6.2%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	4.8%	8.5%	8.7%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	10.8%	13.4%	13.9%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	12.6%	12.5%	12.1%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	22.9%	17.1%	17.9%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	12.4%	10.3%	10.9%
\$200,000 or more	20.7%	16.1%	16.6%
Median income (dollars)	\$114,043.00	\$85,687.00	\$89,703.00

TABLE 16: POVERTY STATUS

2021-ACS 5 YEAR ESTIMATES; Table S1701

Populations	Lawrence Township	Mercer County	New Jersey
	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
Population (for whom status was determined)	30,873	368,123	9,058,493
Population below poverty level	1,383	41,942	883,896
Percent below poverty level	4.5%	11.4%	9.8%

Generally speaking educational attainment in the Township matches rates in the County, and outpaces State rates in most cases with the exception of high school diploma attainment and some college.

TABLE 17: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

2021-ACS 5 YEAR ESTIMATES; Table S1501; *Percentages do not add up 100%

Population 25 years and over	Lawrence Township	Mercer County	New Jersey
	Percent	Percent	Percent
Highschool or equivalent	17.5%	25.3%	26.4%
Some college, no degree	12.4%	14.4%	15.9%
Associate's degree	5.3%	6.2%	6.7%
Bachelors degree	27.3%	23.4%	25.1%
Graduate or professional degree	30.6%	20.2%	16.4%

Not surprisingly, the majority of Township residents commute to work alone, with about 20% working from home. The average commute time is about 30 minutes which is similar to the County and State.

TABLE 18: SELECTED TRANSPORTATION CHARACTERISTICS

2021-ACS 5 YEAR ESTIMATES; Table DP03

Method of Transportation	Lawrence Township		Mercer County		New Jersey	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Drove Alone (car, truck, or van)	10,516	62.0%	118,415	65.3%	3,021,839	67.3%
Carpooled (car, truck, or van)	1,430	8.4%	19,286	10.6%	341,548	7.6%
Public Transportation	1,040	6.1%	10,796	5.9%	438,123	9.8%
Walked	446	2.6%	6,993	3.9%	115,825	2.6%
Other	105	0.6%	2,762	1.5%	95,227	2.1%
Worked from Home	3,423	20.2%	23,196	12.8%	477,228	10.6%
Total Workers (16 years and over)	16,960		181,448		4,489,790	
Mean travel to work (minutes)	28.1		27.6		31.5	

Consistent with recent trends in the State and County, the Township's unemployment rate is relatively low at less than 6%. This is lower than the County and the State. Over the past decade, the number of unemployed people has decreased, given the percent unemployed in 2011 was 6.8%.

TABLE 19: SELECTED ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

2021-ACS 5 YEAR ESTIMATES; Table DP03

Employment Status	Lawrence Township		Mercer County		New Jersey	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Employed	17,319	62.8%	186,426	59.7%	4,588,902	61.7%
Unemployed	1,019	3.7%	12,463	4.0%	304,973	4.1%
Armed forces	55	0.2%	148	0.0%	11,161	0.2%
Not in labor force	9,184	33.3%	113,229	36.3%	2,531,257	34.0%
Population 16 years and older	27,577		312,266		7,436,293	
Unemployment Rate	5.6%		6.3%		6.2%	

1. Existing Land Use and Zoning

The Existing Land Use and Zoning will be comprehensively evaluated as part of the 2024 Master Plan.

Several legislative and planning changes have occurred subsequent to the 2013 Master Plan Reexamination Report. The following section identifies the relevant changes in assumptions, policies and objectives that have occurred and the impact on land use and planning policies in Lawrence Township.

2. Climate Change Related Hazard Vulnerability Assessment

In 2021, the Municipal Land Use Law, N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28 was amended to include a provision requiring a hazard vulnerability assessment related to climate change be included in any adopted land use plan elements of the Master Plan. N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28.h was added and states that a climate change-related hazard vulnerability assessment shall (i) analyze current and future threats and vulnerabilities to the municipality from climate change-related natural hazards (ii) include a build-out analysis of future development and an assessment of the threats and vulnerabilities associated with the future development (iii) identify critical facilities, utilities, roadways, and other infrastructure necessary for evacuation and sustaining quality of life during a natural disaster (iv) analyze the potential impact of natural hazards on relevant components and elements of the master plan (v) provide strategies and design standards that may reduce or avoid natural hazard risks (vi) include a specific policy statement on the consistency, coordination, and integration of the climate change-related hazard vulnerability assessment with any existing or proposed plan (vii) rely on the most recent natural hazard projections and best available science provided by the New Jersey department of Environmental Protection. In (i), the statute defines climate change-related natural hazards as including but not limited to

increased temperatures, drought, flooding, hurricanes and sea-level rise. In (vi), the statute details the plans which include natural hazard mitigation plan, floodplain management plan, comprehensive emergency management plan, emergency response plan, post-disaster recovery plan, or capital improvement plan. This item will be addressed in the Township's 2024 Master Plan.

3. Master Plan Sustainability Element

In 2008 the Municipal Land Use Law was amended to include the option to prepare a "Green Buildings and Environment Sustainability Element" of the municipal master plan. As noted in the amendment to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-29b(16), this element "shall provide for, encourage, and promote the efficient use of natural resources and the installation and usage of renewable energy systems; consider, encourage and promote the development of public electric vehicle charging infrastructure in locations appropriate for their development, including but not limited to, commercial districts, areas proximate to public transportation and transit facilities and transportation corridors, and public rest stops; consider the impact of buildings on the local, regional and global environment; allow ecosystems to function naturally; conserve and reuse water; treat storm water on-site; and optimize climatic conditions through site orientation and design".

The Township has adopted a Green Buildings and Environment Sustainability Element in 2010 and intends to update the element in the 2024 Master Plan.

4. State Development and Redevelopment Plan

In March 2001 a new State Development and Redevelopment Plan was adopted by the State Planning Commission. As with the first State Plan (adopted in 1992), the 2001 State Plan delineated a series of Planning Areas based on natural and built characteristics and set forth the State's vision for the future development of those areas. The five Planning Areas (listed in descending order from the most developed to the least developed condition) include the Metropolitan Planning Area (PA1), Suburban Planning Area (PA2), Fringe Planning Area (PA3), Rural Planning Area (PA4) and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area (PA5.). This State Plan places the Township in the Metropolitan Planning Area (PA1).

In April 2004, the State Planning Commission released a Preliminary Plan proposing amendment to the 2001 State Plan, triggering a third round of the State Plan Cross-Acceptance process. While significant input was gathered from municipalities and Counties during the Cross-Acceptance process, this Plan was never adopted.

Rather a new State Plan, the "State Strategic Plan: New Jersey's State Development & Redevelopment Plan", was drafted and released in 2012. This draft State Plan takes a significantly different approach than the 2001 State Plan with the elimination of Planning Areas in favor of "Investment Areas". After a series of public hearings at various locations throughout the State, the 2012 Plan was scheduled for adoption by the State Planning Commission on November 13, 2012. However, adoption was delayed to further refine the Plan and to better account for the impact of Superstorm Sandy, which occurred on October 30, 2012. No Plan revisions have been released to date. However, that State is in the midst of crafting a new State Plan with a draft expected for release in late 2024 and adoption expected in late 2025. Until such time as a new State Plan is adopted, the 2001 State Plan remains in effect. The Township should monitor the State's efforts toward adopting a new State Plan and respond accordingly.

Current mapping provided by the New Jersey Department of State Office of Planning Advocacy depicts several planning area boundaries including the Metropolitan Planning Area (PA 1), Suburban Planning Area (PA 2), Fringe Planning Area (PA 3), Rural Planning Area (PA 4), Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area (PA 5), and Parks/Natural Areas (PA 6, 7, 8). Generally, PA 1 is located in the southern portion of the municipality close to Trenton, Ewing, and Hamilton. The central portion of the municipality is PA 2 and PA 4. The northern portion of the Township is PA 3.

5. Wireless Telecommunications Facilities

There have been two changes to regulation of wireless telecommunication facilities since the last reexamination report was adopted. The first, a federal law, prohibits municipalities from denying a request by an “eligible facility” to modify an existing wireless tower or base station if it does not “substantially change” the physical dimensions of the tower or base station. The term “substantial change” is not defined by the law. Until regulation or case law is issued on this topic, the Township will need to carefully interpret this on a case-by-case basis.

The second regulatory change was an amendment to the Municipal Land Use Law, N.J.S.A. 40:55D- 46.2. This new section states applications for collocated equipment on a wireless communications support structure shall not be subject to site plan review provided three requirements are met: 1) the structure must have been previously approved; 2) the collocation shall not increase the overall height of the support structure by more than 10 percent, will not increase the width of the support structure, and shall not increase the existing equipment compound to more than 2,500 square feet; and 3) the collocation shall comply with all of the terms and conditions of the original approval and must not trigger the need for variance relief. Township ordinances should be revised to reflect federal law.

In the coming years, it is anticipated that providers of fifth-generation wireless technology (“5G”) will seek to install additional wireless facilities to support their networks. While 5G offers subscribers much faster data speeds and new and enhanced technological capabilities, the frequency of the signal means it does not travel as far as 4G technology and more facilities will be required to ensure reliable coverage. Given most people’s reliance on mobile phones as a primary means of communication, the provision of reliable coverage is important in the modern world. Many first responders also rely on mobile devices for data and voice communication. Yet the need for reliable coverage must be balanced with the Township’s rural character and sensitive Highlands resources to ensure the least intrusive means is utilized to site new support structures and facilities. While towers have been the traditional support structure for antenna installations in the past, the way 5G technology functions within the wireless network provides the option for smaller, lower installations on utility poles, light poles and rooftops.

6. Affordable Housing

On December 20, 2004, COAH’s first version of the Third Round rules became effective some five years after the end of the Second Round in 1999. At that time, the Third Round was defined as the time period from 1999 to 2014 but condensed into an affordable housing delivery period from January 1, 2004 through January 1, 2014. The Third Round rules marked a significant departure from the methods utilized in COAH’s Prior Round. Previously, COAH assigned an affordable housing obligation as an absolute number to each municipality. These Third Round rules implemented a “growth share” approach that linked the production of affordable housing to residential and non-residential development within a municipality.

On January 25, 2007, a New Jersey Appellate Court decision, *In re Adoption of N.J.A.C. 5:94 and 5:95*, 390 N.J. Super. 1, invalidated key elements of the first version of the Third Round rules, including the growth share approach. The Court ordered COAH to propose and adopt amendments to its rules within six months to address the deficiencies identified by the Court. COAH missed this deadline but did issue revised rules effective on June 2, 2008 (as well as a further rule revision effective on October 20, 2008). COAH largely retained the growth share approach, but implemented several changes intended to create compliance with the 2007 Appellate Court decision. Additionally, the Third Round was expanded from 2014 to 2018.

Just as various parties challenged COAH's initial Third Round regulations, parties challenged COAH's 2008 revised Third Round rules. On October 8, 2010, the Appellate Division issued its decision, *In re Adoption of N.J.A.C. 5:96 and 5:97*, 416 N.J. Super. 462, with respect to the challenge to the second iteration of COAH's third round regulations. The Appellate Division upheld the COAH Prior Round regulations that assigned rehabilitation and Prior Round numbers to each municipality but invalidated the regulations by which the agency assigned housing obligations in the Third Round. Specifically, the Appellate Division ruled that COAH could not allocate obligations through a "growth share" formula. Instead, COAH was directed to use similar methods that had been previously used in the First and Second rounds. The Court gave COAH five months to address its ruling and provide guidance on some aspects of municipal compliance.

COAH sought a stay from the NJ Supreme Court of the March 8, 2011 deadline that the Appellate Division imposed in its October 2010 decision for the agency to issue new Third Round housing rules. The NJ Supreme Court granted COAH's application for a stay and granted petitions and cross-petitions to all the various challenges to the Appellate Division's 2010 decision. On September 26, 2013, the NJ Supreme Court upheld the Appellate Court decision in *In re Adoption of N.J.A.C. 5:96 and 5:97 by New Jersey Council On Affordable Housing*, 215 N.J. 578 (2013), and ordered COAH to prepare the necessary rules.

Although ordered by the NJ Supreme Court to adopt revised new rules on or before October 22, 2014, COAH deadlocked 3-3 at its October 20th meeting and failed to adopt the draft rules it had issued on April 30, 2014. In response, FSHC filed a motion in aid of litigant's rights with the NJ Supreme Court, and oral argument on that motion was heard on January 6, 2015.

On March 10, 2015, the NJ Supreme Court issued a ruling on the Motion In Aid of Litigant's Rights (*In re Adoption of N.J.A.C. 5:96 & 5:97*, 221 NJ 1, aka "Mount Laurel IV"). This long-awaited decision provided a new direction for how New Jersey municipalities are to comply with the constitutional requirement to provide their fair share of affordable housing. The Court transferred responsibility to review and approve housing elements and fair share plans from COAH to designated Mount Laurel trial judges. The implication of this was that municipalities may no longer wait for COAH to adopt Third Round rules before preparing new Third Round housing elements and fair share plans and municipalities must now apply to the Courts, instead of COAH, if they wish to be protected from exclusionary zoning lawsuits. These trial judges, with the assistance of an appointed Special Master to the Court, reviewed municipal plans much in the same manner as COAH previously did.

While the NJ Supreme Court's decision set a process in motion for towns to address their Third Round obligations, it did not assign those obligations. Instead, that was to be addressed by the trial courts. However, the NJ Supreme Court did direct that the method of determining municipal affordable housing obligations were to be "similar to" the methodologies used in the First and Second Round rules. Additionally, the Court stated that municipalities should rely on COAH's Second Round rules (N.J.A.C. 5:93) and certain components of COAH's 2008 regulations that were specifically upheld (including but not limited to Redevelopment Bonuses), as well as the

Fair Housing Act (N.J.S.A. 52:27D – 301 et seq.), in their preparation of Third Round housing elements and fair share plans.

On January 17, 2017, the NJ Supreme Court rendered a decision, In Re Declaratory Judgment Actions Filed By Various Municipalities, 227 N.J. 508 (2017), that found that the “gap period,” defined as 1999-2015, generates an affordable housing obligation. This obligation requires an expanded definition of the municipal Present Need obligation to include low- and moderate-income households formed during the gap period; however, this component of the obligation is a new-construction obligation rather than a rehabilitation obligation.

Accordingly, the municipal affordable housing obligation is now composed of the following 4 parts:

- Present Need (rehabilitation),
- Prior Round (1987-1999, new construction),
- Gap Present Need (Third Round, 1999-2015, new construction), and
- Prospective Need (Third Round, 2015 to 2025, new construction).

In addition to the State agency activity and judicial decisions, the New Jersey Legislature has amended the Fair Housing Act in recent years. On July 17, 2008, Governor Corzine signed P.L. 2008, c. 46 (referred to as the “Roberts Bill”, or “A500”), which amended the Fair Housing Act. Key provisions of the legislation included the following:

- It established a statewide 2.5% nonresidential development fee instead of requiring nonresidential developers to provide affordable housing;
- It eliminated new regional contribution agreements (hereinafter “RCAs”) as a compliance technique available to municipalities whereby a municipality could transfer up to 50% of its fair share to a so called “receiving” municipality;
- It added a requirement that 13% of all affordable housing units and 13% of all similar units funded by the state’s Balanced Housing Program and its Affordable Housing Trust Fund be restricted to very low-income households (30% or less of median income); and
- It added a requirement that municipalities had to commit to spend development fees within four (4) years of the date of collection after its enactment, which commenced on the four-year anniversary of the law (July 17, 2012).

These amendments to the Fair Housing Act are not promulgated in any valid COAH regulations. However, the requirement to expend development fees within four-years of their collection was determined in a Middlesex County Superior Court case to instead have the first four-year period to begin upon a Judgment of Repose, or upon a finding by the Court that the municipality is determined to be non-compliant (IMO of the Adoption of the Monroe Township Housing Element and Fair Share Plan and Implementing Ordinances). Superior Courts around the State have been guided by this decision.

As noted previously, the Township adopted its Housing Plan in 2018 and several amendments with the most recent being in 2021. Township’s affordable housing obligations as follows:

- Present Need/Rehabilitation Share - 73
- Prior Round Obligation - 891

- Third Round Prospective Need – 1,110

Based on data presented in Table 9, it is clear a percentage of the Township's households (about 30%) are cost burdened, as they spend more than 35% of their monthly income on housing costs. With the lack of infrastructure, creative, small-scale solutions to provide affordable housing options must be sought.

The Township should continue to monitor affordable housing legislation and case law in an effort to be prepared for the fourth round which begins in July 2025.

7. COVID-19 Pandemic

While the COVID-19 pandemic has waned in 2023, it is clear it will have a lasting impact on the State's economy and how its residents and business operate and interact with one another well into the future. The impact of the pandemic on the Township will likely not be fully understood, however this Reexamination Report offers opportunity to consider potential changes to land use policies that may facilitate businesses and residents enjoying success and quality of life during and after the pandemic.

Since the Governor declared a State of Emergency on March 9, 2020, Township business and residents have suffered the health and economic consequences. Through these challenging times, a few trends have appeared, and it seems likely they may continue beyond the pandemic or resurface as variants emerge.

- Economic Repercussions. While the impact remains unknown, it is clear that temporary business closures and reduced business activity may result in permanent business closures that could lead to vacant commercial and office spaces. The Township may need to contend with vacancies and will need to monitor this trend and potentially consider if additional permitted uses are appropriate to widen the scope of potential tenants.
- Work from home. Employees across the state have been forced to work from home during the pandemic. For some people and businesses, this has been very successful and is desired to continue beyond the pandemic. This will increase the demand for home offices – perhaps a den, spare bedroom, or finished basement or attic space. It may also increase the desire for a home office as small business owners realize convenience and reduced costs of working from home.
- Multigenerational Housing. The Township may see increased instances where adult children and/or parents of homeowners are living together. This is a trend that predates the pandemic but is likely to be exacerbated by economic repercussions. This may increase the demand for larger homes, in-home and accessory suites, and accessory apartments. Even before the pandemic, this trend was emerging.
- Outdoor dining. With the rates of virus transmission significantly lower in outdoor spaces employing social distancing, the desire for restaurants to have outdoor dining has dramatically increased. As such, demand for outdoor dining along sidewalks and in areas of parking lots may increase. It is possible this demand for outdoor dining may extend beyond the COVID-19 Pandemic. This change in demand should be supported in the Township beyond the pandemic since it has the potential to enhance the attractiveness of commercial areas and can contribute toward these areas serving as Township gathering spaces.

- Pedestrian and bicycle facilities. With the temporary closure of businesses and residents working from home, the desire to walk and bike around the community for recreation increased. It is likely this will create new habits among residents and increase the demand for safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle facilities. The Township should explore how these facilities can be provided between destinations where they do not exist and where enhancements are necessary.
- Drop-off / Pick-up. Temporary closure of businesses and concern about safety of indoor spaces have increased demand for take-out food and deliveries of online purchases and restaurant food. The Township may be faced with increased demand for customer pick up locations and home delivery. Such accommodations may require a reconfiguration of parking lots and drive aisles for convenient pick-up. Additionally, these accommodations will not only address safety concerns during the pandemic but will also enhance convenience of local businesses.

8. Electric Vehicles

The popularity of electric personal vehicles has grown substantially. In lieu of purchasing fuel at a gas station, these vehicles charge their batteries between trips. While many owners will conduct charging at their home and will do so in accordance with the applicable building code, many will also need and/or desire to charge while at work, shopping or otherwise out of their homes. This requires electric vehicle charging stations. In fact, support for charging stations is consistent with the Strategy 1 of the *2020 New Jersey Energy Master Plan* which states, “Reducing Energy Consumption and Emissions from the Transportation Sector, including encouraging electric vehicle adoption, electrifying transportation systems, and leveraging technology to reduce emissions and miles traveled.”

Amendments to the Municipal Land Use Law adopted in August of 2021 included many provisions specific to the installation of electric vehicle supply equipment, including:

- New definitions for “make-ready” and “electric vehicle supply equipment”.
- Applications proposing the installation of electric vehicle supply equipment in any zoning district within the Township must be treated as a permitted accessory use or structure.
- Applications proposing the installation of electric vehicle supply equipment or make-ready parking spaces at an existing gasoline service station, existing retail establishment or any other existing building shall not require site plan or other land use board review nor variance relief and shall be approved by the issuance of a zoning permit by the administrative officer, provided the following requirements are met:
 - The proposed installation does not violate bulk requirements applicable to the property or the conditions of the original final approval of the site plan or subsequent approvals for the existing gasoline service station, retail establishment, or other existing building;
 - All other conditions of prior approvals for the gasoline service station, the existing retail establishment, or any other existing building continue to be met; and
 - The proposed installation complies with the construction codes adopted in or promulgated pursuant to the “State Uniform Construction Code Act,” P.L. 1975, c.217 (C.52:27D-119 et seq.), any safety standards concerning the installation, and any State rule or regulation concerning electric vehicle charge stations.
- An application shall be deemed complete if:

- The application, including the permit fee and all necessary documentation, is determined to be complete;
- A notice of incompleteness is not provided within 20 days after the filing of the application; or
- A one-time written correction notice is not issued by the jurisdiction within 20 days after filing of the application detailing all deficiencies in the application and identifying any additional information explicitly necessary to complete a review of the permit application.
- Installations are subject to applicable local and Department of Community Affairs inspection requirements.
- Each application involving multiple dwellings with 5 or more units, as a condition of preliminary site plan approval shall:
 - Prepare as make-ready parking spaces at least 15 percent of the required off-street parking spaces, and install electric vehicle supply equipment in at least one-third of the 15 percent of make-ready parking spaces
 - Within three years following the date of the issuance of a certificate of occupancy, install electric vehicle supply equipment in an additional one-third of the original 15 percent of make-ready parking spaces; and
 - Within 6 years following the date of issuance of a certificate of occupancy, install electric vehicle supply equipment in the final one-third of the original 15 percent of make-ready parking spaces.
- Throughout the installation of electric vehicle supply equipment in make-ready parking spaces, at least 5 percent of the electric vehicle supply equipment shall be accessible for people with disabilities.
- As a condition of preliminary site plan approval, each application involving a parking lot or parking garage shall:
 - Install at least 1 make-ready parking space if there are 50 or fewer off-street parking spaces
 - Install at least 2 make-ready parking spaces if there will be 50 to 75 off-street parking spaces
 - Install at least 3 make-ready parking spaces if there will be 76 to 100 off-street parking spaces
 - Install at least 4 make-ready parking spaces, at least one of which shall be accessible for people with disabilities, if there will be 101 to 150 off-street parking spaces
 - Install at least 4 percent of the total parking spaces as make-ready parking spaces, at least 5 percent of which shall be accessible for people with disabilities, if there will be more than 150 off-street parking spaces
- Parking spaces with electric vehicle supply equipment or make-ready equipment shall count as at least 2 parking spaces for the purposes of complying with a minimum parking requirement, but may not reduce total required parking by more than 10 percent.
- Requiring the adoption of a model land use ordinance by the Commissioner of Community Affairs, which shall be effective in each municipality.
- Permitting municipalities to adopt reasonable standards to address installation, sightline and setback requirements or other health and safety-related specifications for electric vehicle supply equipment or make-ready spaces.

9. Time of Application Law

The Municipal Law Use Law “time of decision” rule was altered by adoption of the “time of application” rule in May of 2010. This amendment changed the long-standing practice that permitted municipalities to change zoning requirements and standards up until the time a decision was rendered by an approving board on a particular application. Provided an applicant submits an “application for development”, which is defined as “the application form and all accompanying documents required by ordinance for approval of a subdivision plat, site plan, planned development, cluster development, conditional use, zoning variance or direction of the issuance of a permit pursuant to section 25 or section 27 of P.L. 1975, c.291 (C.40:55D-1 et seq.)”, the zoning requirements in place at the time of submission shall govern the application. The only exception is for those ordinance requirements relating to health and public safety. Recent case law on this issue has determined that an applicant is required to submit all information required by submission checklists contained in the ordinance to receive protection under the time of application rule.

10. Stormwater Management Requirements

All municipalities in the State were required to adopt new comprehensive stormwater management regulations by March 2, 2021, regulations that were required to be consistent with for stormwater control and promote the use of nonstructural stormwater management techniques. The Township adopted its new Stormwater Control ordinance to address these requirements in April of 2021, although additional amendments to State requirements are anticipated in 2023.

In 2023, several new stormwater regulations were passed at the State level. A major one being a rule change to the New Jersey Protection Against Climate Threats (NJ PACT), which requires the NJDEP to incorporate climate change data into its regulatory and permitting programs. The Inland Flood Protection, which was proposed in December 2022 and effective in July 2023, amends Stormwater Management Rules, N.J.A.C. 7.8 and the Flood Hazard Area Control Act Rules, N.J.A.C. 7:13, to require the use of updated precipitation data to analyze flood potential and design stormwater infrastructure.

11. Flood Hazard Rules and Floodplain Management

As climate change has manifested in the form of more frequent and more intense storm events, the NJDEP, FEMA and other federal agencies have focused efforts on regulatory changes to protect life and property. The Legislature has also amended the MLUL to require land use plans to consider the effects of climate change on future land development by assessing vulnerability.

In July of 2023, the NJDEP adopted amendments to the Flood Hazard Area Control Act Rules (N.J.A.C. 7:13) to better address climate change-related development issues. One key element of the amendment was expansion of regulated flood hazard areas. The prior regulations required one foot of elevation be added to established base flood elevations where those recently adopted require three feet be added. While this has no impact on local regulations, applications requiring flood hazard permits will be effected.

12. Renewable Energy

Since the 2013 Reexamination Report, there have been a number of amendments to the Municipal Land Use Law relative to renewable energy facilities. These include:

- A new definition for “inherently beneficial use”, which includes solar, wind and photovoltaic energy generating facilities
- Solar panels not counting as impervious surface, therefore exempting them from impervious coverage requirements
- Classifying solar, photovoltaic and wind electrical generating facilities as being permitted on sites over 20 acres within any industrial zone district in the State

13. New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory, Enforcement Assistance and Marketplace Modernization Act

On the heels of a 2020 referendum where the voters of New Jersey approved the legalization of personal cannabis use by adults, the legislature adopted the New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory, Enforcement Assistance and Marketplace Modernization Act. The Act established different classes of licensing applicable to the cultivation, processing, wholesaling, sale and delivery of cannabis products and required municipalities to either opt out of permitted cannabis businesses or establish local land use controls related to any of the classes established in the Act. Inaction by a municipality by the August 21, 2021 deadline established in the Act required a waiting period of 5 years to enact land use controls and made cultivation, manufacturing, selling and reselling of cannabis permitted uses within all industrial zones and the selling of cannabis permitted uses within all retail zones within a municipality. Even upon opting out of permitting cannabis businesses, a municipality may not restrict the delivery of cannabis within its borders.

In 2021, The Township adopted Ordinance No. 2400-21, a comprehensive Cannabis Ordinance. Class 1 Cannabis Cultivator, Class 2 Cannabis Manufacturer, Class 3 Cannabis Wholesaler, and Class 4 Cannabis Distributor are permitted in the MX-2, MX-3, and LI-1 Districts. Class 5 Cannabis Retailer and Class 6 Cannabis Delivery are permitted in the RC and HC District. Additionally, the Ordinance states two cannabis retailers are the maximum number of permitted in the Township at any given time.

14. Accessory Dwelling Units

While accessory dwelling units have always been part of conversation related to affordable housing, it has been in the context of deed-restricted units that provide credit towards a community's fair share obligation. As housing costs have increased post-pandemic and interest rates have risen to fight inflation, the need for housing diversity has brought this option to the forefront. The desire for multi-generational housing has also driven discussion, as homeowners seek to create separate space for parents or grandparents on the same property.

Communities like Princeton and South Orange have somewhat recently adopted accessory dwelling unit ordinances that permit smaller secondary units to be created, whether as part of an existing structure or in a new or existing second structure. Although deed-restricted affordable accessory dwelling units still exist, it has become clear that non-restricted options must also be provided in cost-burdened places. As shown in Table 9, almost 30% of households in Lawrence Township are paying more than 35% of their monthly income for housing costs, which indicates an issue of affordability.

D. The specific changes recommended for the master plan or development regulations, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether a new plan or regulations should be prepared.

The Township's current goals and objectives were developed as part of the 1995 Master Plan. Additional goals and objectives were developed in the 2010 Sustainability Element, the 2018 Open Space and Recreation Element, the 2019 Circulation Plan Amendment, and the 2020 Historic Plan Element. In reviewing these goals and objectives, the Planning Board finds they adequately support the policy framework that should continue to guide planning and land use in the Township in the future. Notwithstanding, these goals and objectives should be comprehensively evaluated in the 2024 Master Plan.

1995 Master Plan Goals & Objectives

The 1995 Master Plan states the plan is designed to do the following:

- Guide the physical and economic development of the Township toward the goals in the Master Plan, thereby benefitting the public health, safety, and welfare.
- Provide harmonious and efficient allocation and arrangements of land uses and protect property values both in Lawrence and surrounding municipalities.
- Preserve environmentally sensitive lands from development or other potentially damaging influences.
- Preserve and enhance the character of the built environment through the promotion of good design.
- Promote the preservation of historically significant structures and districts that represent the diversity of architectural styles in the Township.
- Encourage and promote the social interaction of groups and individuals to maintain the strength of the community.
- Provide for efficiency and economy in governmental administration.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Provide for continuation of high-quality development and the retention of the remaining rural character in Lawrence by using the Master Plan as a guide and resource. Maintain the predominately residential nature of the municipality.

OBJECTIVES

- Encourage new development to be compatible with the style and scale of existing buildings.
- Limit highway oriented commercial land uses in the Township and confine them to existing commercial area. Preserve the diversity and quality of the neighborhood-oriented commercial uses which principally serve the surrounding residential development.
- Improve the Alternate Route 1 corridor in Lawrence through changes in roadway, urban design and façade improvements, streetscaping and landscaping.
- Promote the attractiveness of Lawrence and its existing neighborhoods with an active street tree planting and maintenance program.

LAND USE

Foster a well-balanced, diverse community with a mix of residential housing types, institutional, commercial and limited industrial uses along with ample open space and public facilities. The land use plan and development regulations are designed to minimize the land use conflicts and to reduce adverse impacts on other activities in the Township.

OBJECTIVES

- Improve the quality of life for Lawrence Township residents, those persons who work in the municipality and visitors by following the principles of the Master Plan and its implementation through the land development ordinance.
- Preserve undeveloped open space, maintain agricultural activities and the rural landscape in appropriate locations, and promote visual enjoyment of the land.
- Direct new development and redevelopment to places in relation to their transportation and environmental capacities.
- Provide continuity with previous planning documents.
- Encourage a balance mixture of residential and non-residential uses through planned development.
- Reduce blighting influences through improved standards for development.
- Reduce the expenditure of energy through compact and efficient design and subdivision layout, well-located to transportation center and incorporating proper solar orientation for buildings.
- Discourage the introduction of incompatible land uses.

OPEN SPACE

Open space for conservation and recreational purposes should be enhanced through public and private efforts. Adequate active recreation facilities should be maintained through governmental action and citizen participation; new trends in sports and the evolving needs for recreation should be periodically reviewed.

OBJECTIVES

- Establish a Greenway Network to connect existing and planned open space parcels.
- Actively pursue the protection of privately-owned environmentally sensitive land through fee simple acquisition, land trust dedication, conservation easement or other means during the development review process.
- Actively engage with Mercer County officials in planning for the Northwest County Park proposed at Keefe and Cold Soil Roads to ensure that the Township's goals for open space and rural character are met.

CONSERVATION OF NATURAL FEATURES

Critical natural features and resources of Lawrence such as woodlands, steep slopes, wetlands, floodplains and bodies of water are worthy of protection to provide a natural ecological balance and as a counterpoint to the built environment.

OBJECTIVES

- Utilize natural features to distinguish the permitted intensity of land development.
- Preserve and enhance stream corridors through the development of a Greenways Network incorporating pedestrian and bicycle linkages in appropriate locations and integrating existing or proposed open space land.
- Study the feasibility of improving the water quality of storm water runoff within the Township.
- Establish controls on the permitted disturbance of natural features, including tree clearance, during land development.
- Restrict development on steep slopes so as to reduce any negative effects from the clearing of the vegetation on stream bank stability and the control of erosion.
- Explore the creation of a regional storm water management plan with regional agencies and adjoining municipalities. Such a plan should be designed to promote the cooperative institution of watershed drainage programs to minimize the need for total reliance upon site-specific water detention and storage.
- Develop a comprehensive solution to the Colonial Lake siltation problem.

VISUAL CHARACTER OF LAWRENCE

Establish policies governing the development or redevelopment of land which will promote the retention of rural character and historic streetscapes in the community. Establish design guidelines for the preservation of significant views from public rights-of-way.

OBJECTIVES

- Promote the development and redevelopment of commercial areas that are attractive to public view through the use of building and site design standards reflective of the established character of development in Lawrence.
- Establish realistic signage standards which will be appropriate for both new development and redevelopment and which will foster a cohesive, clear image in the commercial corridors of the Township.
- Promote the concept of a commercial boulevard for Alternative Route One (Brunswick Pike) by reducing the cartway width, increasing the median area and improving paving, landscaping, signage and lighting.
- Use transfer of development credits for targeted areas to promote the retention of farmland and rural character.
- Use rural development design techniques and standards to promote and encourage appropriate low intensity development in identified areas.

- Add signage and landscaping to indicate the entrances to Lawrence from other municipalities through a cooperative program with landowners. Protect existing mature street trees from excessive pruning or removal related to land development and/or road widening to the greatest extent possible consistent with reasonable traffic safety.
- Prevent unsightliness by eliminating wherever possible existing utility poles and lines and by continuing to require that all new development provide underground utilities.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Protect the integrity of the historic centers of Lawrenceville, Port Mercer, and the Delaware and Raritan Canal as well as local landmarks outside of these districts which contribute to the heritage and positive image of the municipality.

OBJECTIVES

- Identify additional individual sites and districts in Lawrence of historical importance.
- Promote the redevelopment of the commercial core of the village of Lawrenceville through coordinated parking, streetscape, signage, lighting, etc. in a manner that promotes its historic character.
- Establish design standards to encourage new development in Lawrence to be compatible to the style and scale of existing buildings.
- Refine the standards for development to retain the integrity of historic districts and individual landmarks.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Establish and maintain a level of community facilities and public services sufficient to satisfy the needs of present residents and to allow for the well-planned expansion of facilities to meet future needs.

OBJECTIVES

- Provide for streets, utilities, parks, police and fire protection, and other services sufficient to meet the needs of Lawrence residents and business owners.
- Based upon the Master Plan and development trends, periodically assess the need for municipal services beyond existing capacity.
- Identify additional school sites in close cooperation with the Lawrence Township Board of Education.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Continue to provide the opportunity for residents, business owners and employees in Lawrence to participate in making decisions that will shape the environment and the community in which they live and/or work.

OBJECTIVES

- Provide an atmosphere and opportunity within the master planning and development approval processes through which the citizens of Lawrence may participate in making decisions about the future of land use within the Township.
- Provide, where appropriate, incentive programs for civic organizations to continue and expand their programs.

HOUSING

Preserve the existing housing stock and provide the opportunity for the development of a wide variety of housing types to meet the needs of varied income and age levels, family compositions, and lifestyles.

OBJECTIVES

- Provide through the Township's land development regulations, for a wide variety of housing types including adequate living space for all persons and sufficient land for each dwelling unit to meet the needs of current and future residents of Lawrence.
- Adopt a fair share housing plan and associated development regulations which meet the municipality's fair share requirements for affordable housing.
- Encourage planned unit developments providing for an integrated residential and non-residential neighborhood to incorporate the best features of design, layout and materials in relationship to the natural environment.
- Promote the clustering of housing on sites with environmentally sensitive areas and on sites lacking public infrastructure to retain open space, farmland, and the natural environment to the greatest extent feasible.
- Advance the development of senior citizen housing through an expansion of residential opportunities for the elderly including independent living and facilities providing varying levels of assistance.
- Promote individual ownership of housing in all areas of the Township.

CIRCULATION

Provide for the efficient movement of people and goods within and through the Township in a manner compatible with the objectives of the land use element and retention of rural, suburban, and urban character in their respective places.

OBJECTIVES

- Implement the recommendations of the Township-Wide Traffic Study to the extent noted in the Circulation Element.

- Recognize and preserve the scenic characteristics of local roadways in order to promote a positive community identity.
- Discourage the widening of existing two lane arterial roads in rural areas.
- Designate bikeways in the Master Plan for development and construction.
- Encourage the design of local street patterns and pedestrian/bicyclist connections to support the eventual provision of mass transit.
- Conform the Township's land development regulations with the New Jersey Highway Access Management Code.
- Encourage the creation of Transportation Management Associations and other non-traditional methods of controlling traffic congestion.
- Pursue the reclassification of Brunswick Pike (Alternate Route 1) with the New Jersey Department of Transportation.
- Restrict vehicular access through residential neighborhoods for non-residential purposes.

RECYCLING

Recycling increases the efficiency of use of natural and man-made resources, reduces solid waste disposal costs for the municipal government and is the adopted policy of the state and county governments.

OBJECTIVES

- Recycle a minimum of 25% of the solid waste collected by the Township, thus reducing the amount of solid waste that is placed in sanitary landfills.
- Maintain a Township policy on recycling in the review of land development proposals.
- Continue and expand, as appropriate, inter-municipal cooperation in leaf composting and other recycling activities.
- Encourage on-site composting and recycling of organic material.
- Adopt any goals of the New Jersey Recycling Act not specifically noted herein.
- Adopt any goals of the Mercer County Recycling Plan not specifically noted herein.
- In accordance with State policy, conserve energy in manufacturing processes, increase the supply of reusable raw materials for industry and reduce the amount of poorly combustible materials that are directed to resource recovery facilities.

2010 GREEN BUILDINGS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY ELEMENT GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & STRATEGIES

SUSTAINABLE LAND USE PATTERNS

Goal A. Promote compact development in area well served by transportation infrastructure.

Objective 1. Encourage density around existing and potential transit infrastructure. Such infrastructure includes, but is not limited to, items such as existing bus stops throughout the Township and potential bus and bus rapid transit (BRT) stops along State Highway Route 1.

Strategy a. Evaluate the Land Use Ordinance for opportunities to increase permitted residential density or introduce residential land uses around existing and potential transit infrastructure, such as bus stops.

Strategy b. Evaluate the Land Use Ordinance for opportunities to increase permitted non-residential floor area ratios for non-residential projects or introduce nonresidential uses around existing and potential transit infrastructure, such as bus stops.

Strategy c. Evaluate the Land Use Ordinance for opportunities to permit mixed use development around existing and potential transit infrastructure, such as bus stops.

Objective 2. Encourage residential density in proximity to mixed-use neighborhood centers.

Strategy a. Evaluate the Land Use Ordinance for opportunities to increase permitted residential density in areas that are within ¼ mile of a diverse number of uses, such as a mixed-use neighborhood center.

Objective 3. Promote the development of mixed-use neighborhood centers in order to encourage residents to shop locally and reduce vehicle miles travelled.

Strategy a. Strengthen the viability of existing mixed-use neighborhood centers by removing regulatory barriers to success, provided there is no negative impact to health and welfare. Examples include, but are not limited to, permitting a variety of complementary and supporting uses and encouraging shared parking.

Strategy b. Identify opportunities for new mixed use neighborhood centers within walking and biking distance of existing or planned residential neighborhoods. The Township should consider revising the Land Use Ordinance to permit a mixed use neighborhood center as a conditional use in residential zones that have adequate residential density within walking distance to support the development.

- Goal B. Promote a diverse housing stock in order to accommodate a mix of incomes and household sizes and to allow for a modest increase in density in areas well served by transportation, services and employment.**
- Objective 1. Provide opportunities for affordable housing near transit, service centers and employment centers.**
- Strategy a. Include affordable housing in the development and redevelopment of mixed use neighborhood centers.**
- Strategy b. Provide inclusionary housing within walking and biking distance of transit, service centers and employment centers.**
- Goal C. Locate community amenities in areas in or near existing and planned neighborhoods.**
- Objective 1. Concentrate community facilities, such as schools and community centers, within a five- minute walk (1/4 mile) of residential neighborhoods.**
- Objective 2. Locate parks and recreational amenities within a five- minute walk (1/4 mile) of all residential neighborhoods.**
- Goal D. Reduce vehicle miles traveled by employees of and visitors to new and existing non-residential developments.**
- Objective 1. Encourage a mix of uses in typically single- use employment centers, such as office parks. Additional uses that should be considered include, but are not limited to restaurants, banks, drycleaners and childcare centers. Such a mix will provide convenient services in proximity to employment centers and eliminate the need for separate trips.**
- Strategy a. Revise the Land Use Ordinance as necessary to permit a wider range of complementary uses in employment centers.**
- Strategy b. Revise the Land Use Ordinance to encourage property owners to provide a civic or passive use space, such as a square, park or plaza near non-residential building entrances.**
- Goal E. Reduce vehicle miles traveled by reducing the need for transported goods and travel for services.**
- Objective 1. Encourage local food production through community gardens and permitting urban agriculture on residential and commercial lots.**
- Strategy a. Provide assistance to the Township's farmers by supporting right-to-farm policies.**
- Strategy b. Revise the Land Use Ordinance to allow a community garden to qualify as open space for planned unit developments.**
- Strategy c. Revise the Land Use Ordinance to permit food gardens in front and side yards.**
- Strategy d. Revise the Land Use Ordinance to permit small farm animals in back yards; however the permitted number and type of small farm animals should utilize a sliding scale based on lot size.**

Strategy e. Permit farmers' markets on Township owned parks and as a conditional use in the Township's nonresidential districts.

Strategy f. Incorporate fruit trees into neighborhood landscapes.

Strategy g. Encourage the establishment of farm stands on residential and agricultural properties. Farm stands on residential properties should be of modest size.

Objective 2. Provide support for and encourage the establishment of local owned and operated businesses.

Strategy a. The Township should support locally owned and operated businesses through promotion of new and existing businesses via a buy local campaign, or similarly styled campaign.

Strategy b. The Township should consider expanding the standard for home occupations to permit more than one nonresident employee. The maximum permitted size of a home occupation should utilize a sliding scaled based on the lot size and parking area.

Goal F. Focus the Township's remaining development potential on lands that can support compact development, are well served by transportation infrastructure, and are in proximity to employment and service centers. Direct the Township's remaining development potential away from productive agricultural lands, environmentally sensitive lands, stream corridors, and wildlife corridors.

Objective 1. Adopt the Environmental Resource Inventory as part of the Master Plan.

Objective 2. Encourage infill development throughout the Township's previously developed areas.

Objective 3. Actively pursue the preservation of productive agricultural lands and environmentally sensitive lands via fee simple acquisition, land trust dedication, conservation easement or other means during the development review process.

Objective 4. Actively pursue the preservation of wildlife corridors via fee simple acquisition, land trust dedication, conservation easement or other means during the development review process.

SUSTAINABLE CIRCULATION PATTERNS

Goal A. Promote connectivity through an integrated circulation plan that addresses the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers

Objective 1. Adopt the Lawrence Township Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Assistance Study as a technical appendix to the Master Plan.

Objective 2. Ensure new streets are interconnected with the existing circulation system, and retrofit the Township, as needed, to provide additional connections throughout the circulation system.

Strategy a. Prohibit the creation of cul-de-sacs.

- Strategy b. Retro-fit existing cul-de-sacs to provide vehicular, pedestrian and/or bicycle access to nearby streets and pedestrian/bicycle facilities where the connection will reduce vehicle miles traveled and/or enhance pedestrian/bicycle access.
- Objective 3. Retrofit the Township, as needed, and require new development to ensure safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle travel throughout the Township. This requires revisions to the Land Use Ordinance to further promote connectivity within new developments and redevelopment projects, as permitted by the Residential Site Improvement Standards.
- Strategy a. Proceed with implementation of the Lawrence Township Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Assistance Study.
- Strategy b. Explore opportunities to connect existing and planned residential neighborhoods with commercial areas via pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.
- Strategy c. Provide bicycle lanes and continuous sidewalks on both sides of streets and internal drives of new developments and redeveloped projects.
- Strategy d. Retrofit existing streets to provide bicycle lanes and continuous sidewalks on both sides of the street. (Retrofitting streets to accommodate pedestrians and bicycles should consider right-of-way width, cartway width, street character, interconnection to other pedestrian and bicycle facilities and traffic intensity to determine what type of bicycle facility, bike lanes, bike path (multi- or single use) or street sharing, is appropriate.)
- Strategy e. Seek retrofits of existing developments and require new developments to provide cross access to adjacent properties. Cross access between properties should be provided for pedestrians, bicycles and vehicles.
- Strategy f. Require new developments and redevelopment projects to utilize a gridded street system or a street system that requires multiple intersections.
- Strategy g. Invest in bicycle infrastructure, such as bicycle storage systems on public right of ways and on Township owned amenities.
- Strategy h. Work with Mercer County, New Jersey Department of Transportation and local advocacy groups to install appropriate pedestrian and bicycle facilities along County and State Streets.
- Strategy i. Prohibit the introduction of gated communities.
- Strategy j. Utilize traffic calming measures to slow the speed of vehicles in order to increase pedestrian safety and comfort.

Strategy k. Provide pedestrian crosswalks and crossing signals at busy intersections.

Strategy l. Limit the number of curb-cuts permitted in new developments in order to increase pedestrian safety and comfort.

Objective 4. Require pedestrian- friendly street design.

Strategy a. Require functional street entries of commercial buildings to be primarily accessed directly from a public street with secondary access oriented towards parking lots.

Strategy b. Require parking to be located to the rear or side of buildings. Buildings should not be separated from the street by parking areas.

Strategy c. Ensure that appropriate street furniture is provided, such as but not limited to, benches, bicycle parking and trash receptacles.

Strategy d. Provide barriers between pedestrians and moving vehicles, such as through the placement of street trees between sidewalks and curbs, to enhance pedestrian safety and comfort.

Strategy e. Incorporate public art into streetscape design as another means to enriching the pedestrian experience of streets and other public places.

Strategy f. Township parking requirements should be reviewed for opportunities to reduce minimum required parking standards for nonresidential uses in order to reduce impervious cover, improve the appearance of nonresidential sites and encourage walking and bicycling.

Goal B. Reduce vehicle miles traveled and enhance recreation opportunities with the use of multi-use paths along and between greenways.

Objective 1. Encourage the installation of multi-use paths along public and private greenways.

Objective 2. Encourage private property owners to provide a public easement that would allow for public travel along a multi-use path. Such paths are best located, but should not only be located, along scenic features, areas that can connect to other pedestrian and/or bicycle facilities, areas lacking in recreation amenities, and land uses with significant traffic demand.

Goal C. Reduce vehicle miles traveled by employees of and visitors to new and existing non-residential developments.

Objective 1. Encourage inter-connectivity between nonresidential developments.

Strategy a. Provide for sidewalks along commercial establishments, such as retail and office uses.

Strategy b. Provide street furniture and shade trees along sidewalks in front of commercial establishments.

Strategy c. Utilize traffic calming measures to slow the speed of vehicles in order to increase pedestrian safety and comfort.

Goal D. Provide mass transit access to all employment and service centers and other areas that can demonstrate need or desire for mass transit.

Objective 1. Encourage increased use of regional bus lines.

Strategy a. Work with New Jersey Transit to determine if there are opportunities for additional bus lines and stops as well as opportunities for additional connections between neighborhoods and employment and service centers.

Strategy b. Work with New Jersey Transit to provide conveniently located bus stops which are safe and comfortable. Concerns include, but are not limited to lighting, comfortable waiting areas and location in proximity to goods, services, parks and institutions.

Strategy c. Provide convenient and safe waiting areas and bike storage areas at mass transit stops.

Objective 2. Encourage the development of bus rapid transit (BRT).

Strategy a. Continue working with area municipalities and New Jersey Department of Transportation on developing BRT service along State Highway Route 1 corridor.

Strategy b. Discuss with New Jersey Transit replacing the highest ridership bus routes with BRT.

Objective 3. Discuss with New Jersey Transit replacing the highest ridership bus routes with BRT.

ENERGY CONSERVATION AND RENEWABLE ENERGY PRODUCTION

Goal A. Conserve energy through building and site design. New construction and building rehabilitation in Lawrence Township should be designed to conserve energy through passive solar strategies and utilizing renewable energy sources.

Objective 1. New residential and nonresidential developments should be designed such that buildings are able to utilize passive solar strategies.

Strategy a. It remains important that buildings be oriented toward the street to promote community and create walkable neighborhoods. Notwithstanding, buildings should be elongated on an east/west axis in order to best utilize passive solar strategies.

Strategy b. To the extent possible, a building's south face should receive sunlight between the hours of 9:00 A.M. and 3:00 P.M. (sun time) during the heating season. To do so, a building should be oriented within 30 degrees of due south.

Strategy c. To the extent possible, interior spaces requiring the most light and heating and cooling should be along the south face

of the building. Less used spaces should be located on the north.

Objective 2. As upgrades and renovations become necessary, municipal facilities and infrastructure should incorporate energy conservation measures.

Strategy a. It remains important that buildings be oriented toward the street to promote community and create walkable neighborhoods. Notwithstanding, buildings should be elongated on an east/west axis in order to best utilize passive solar strategies.

Strategy b. The Township should consider infrastructure upgrades and changes to facility operations that will conserve energy. Infrastructure upgrade examples include but are not limited to solar-powered streetlights. Changes to facility operations include but are not limited to installation of energy efficient lighting, heating, and cooling systems.

Objective 3. Planting plans should be carefully designed to permit solar access on the subject property and adjacent properties, to the extent feasible.

Strategy a. Trees should not shade areas appropriate for solar power, such as south-facing rooftops appropriate for solar power.

Strategy b. Planting plans should be designed to support passive solar strategies, such as providing shade during the summer month.

Strategy c. Planting plans should consider how shadows fall not only on the subject property but also how neighboring properties will affect solar access. Solar access is one of the significant determinants of the effectiveness of solar/photovoltaic power.

Objective 4. Review the land use ordinance to ensure that required lighting levels are set at the minimum levels necessary for public safety and convenience in order to reduce energy consumption and light pollution.

Strategy a. Evaluate illumination standards for opportunities to reduce the minimum required lighting levels.

Strategy b. Establish maximum illumination standards.

Goal B. Promote local production of renewable energy.

Objective 1. Revise the Land Use Ordinance to make it easy for property owners in all zone districts to produce renewable energy on their property as accessory uses.

Strategy a. Accessory solar/photovoltaic shall not be subject to particular design standards intended to screen them from public view.

Strategy b. Within historic districts, solar/photovoltaic shall be permitted; however, their placement and design should be compatible with the historic character of the building/district

or screened to the extent practical. Specifically, renewable energy structures, such as solar panels, should be placed such that they are not visible on the front of an historic building, or a building located in a historic district.

- Strategy c. Encourage property owners to cover roof tops and surface parking lots with solar/photovoltaic structures.
 - Strategy d. Creation of solar power facilities on undeveloped land is strongly discouraged because of potential loss of carbon sequestration, natural eco-systems and habitats, and potential stormwater impact from ground mounted systems. However, an exception is the installation of renewable energy facilities on agricultural lands and managed open spaces, such as meadows, in such a way that the agriculture or managed open space use may be conducted and is viable under the renewable energy facility.
 - Strategy e. The Township should encourage property owners who have existing solar facilities or are proposing to install them to enter into solar easements with neighboring property owners in order to ensure continuing access to sunlight for a solar facility.
 - Strategy f. Permit wind energy facilities where appropriate based on neighborhood character and surrounding land uses.
 - Strategy g. Encourage the use of other renewable energy technologies such as, but not limited to, geothermal heating.
- Objective 2. As upgrades and renovations become necessary, municipal facilities and infrastructure should incorporate renewable energy production.
- Strategy a. The Township should consider incorporating new renewable energy production, such as solar power, into existing and any future facilities.
 - Strategy b. The Township should consider infrastructure upgrades and changes to facility operations that utilize renewable energy. Infrastructure upgrade examples include but are not limited to solar powered streetlights. Changes to facility operations include but are not limited to installation of energy efficient lighting.
- Objective 3. Revise the Land Use Ordinance to encourage new developments to harness solar/photovoltaic power either at the time of development or in the future.
- Strategy a. In new developments with multiple blocks, a minimum percentage of blocks should have one axis within plus or minus 15 degrees of geographical east/west, and the east/west lengths of those blocks are at least as long, or longer, as the north/south lengths of the block, the extent possible.

Strategy b. In multi-building developments, a minimum percentage of buildings should be designed and oriented such the longer axis is within 15 degrees of geographical east/west axis, to the extent possible.

Objective 4. Promote renewable energy production as principal uses, including both promotion of renewable energy structures but also nonresidential uses which support the renewable energy industry.

Strategy a. Revise the Land Use Ordinance to conform to the 2008 amendment of the Municipal Land Use Law stating the renewable energy production shall be a principal permitted use where the tract is a minimum of 20 acres and it is located in an industrial zone. This change would apply to the Limited Industrial 1 and Limited Industrial 2 districts.

Strategy b. Revise the Land Use Ordinance to include wind and solar/photovoltaic energy facilities as permitted principal or conditional uses in the Environmental Protection 1 district, Environmental Protection 2 district, Education, Government and Institutions district, Research and Development 1 district and the Research and Development 2 district.

Strategy c. Revise the Land Use Ordinance to mitigate impacts of renewable energy facilities by requiring that they be screened from public rights-of-way and residential uses.

Strategy d. The Township should consider a marketing campaign to attract businesses that specialize in renewable energy.

GREEN BUILDING DESIGN

Goal A. Encourage new and rehabilitated buildings to employ green building design techniques.

Objective 1. Evaluate the land use ordinance for opportunities to allow for increased development intensity or other compensatory zoning measures where green building design techniques are utilized.

Strategy a. Target development and/or redevelopment areas where green building techniques will be visible to the community and where land can support increased building intensity.

Objective 2. As upgrades and renovations become necessary, municipal facilities and infrastructure should utilize green building design techniques.

Strategy a. New buildings and building renovations should be completed using green building technologies. The Township should consider requiring new buildings and building renovations to achieve green building certification, such as, but not limited to, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design.

Objective 3. Consider applying the sustainable design assessment in the Land Use Ordinance to a larger range of projects and providing additional guidance to developers on information to be included.

SUSTAINABLE WATER RESOURCE PRACTICES

Goal A. Encourage residents and business owners, through educational programs and incentives, to utilize water conservation practices.

Objective 1. Promote the use of high-efficiency appliances, such as water heaters, toilets, dishwashers, low-flow shower heads, and washing machines in the Township.

Objective 2. Encourage recycling of rainwater and reuse of “grey” water for landscape watering and irrigation.

Objective 3. Evaluate the Land Use Ordinance for opportunities to require landscaping vegetation that requires little to no irrigation, such as native plants and xeriscaping (landscaping or gardening that reduces or eliminate the need for supplemental watering or irrigation).

Goal B. Improve how runoff is managed and treated throughout the Township in order to improve water quality, increase groundwater recharge, and improve runoff management and treatment throughout the Township.

Objective 1. Encourage use of innovative stormwater management technologies that not only protect against flooding, but also address nonpoint source pollution, recharge groundwater, and mimic natural hydrology.

Objective 2. Retrofit existing stormwater management infrastructure that is failing or not providing groundwater recharge and/or water quality treatment.

Objective 3. Modify land use ordinances as necessary to encourage vegetated conveyance, rain gardens, bioretention islands, and other low-impact development strategies. (i.e. allow for depressed/slotted curbs along roadways, vegetated islands in cul-de-sacs, etc.).

Objective 4. Encourage homeowners and business owners to use rain barrels, rain gardens, and porous pavement on their property.

Objective 5. Promote the disconnection of impervious surfaces throughout the Township.

Goal C. Increase vegetated riparian buffers around surface waters in the Township to reduce nonpoint source pollution.

Objective 1. Direct the Township’s remaining development potential away from riparian buffers, flood hazard areas, wetlands, and wetland buffers.

Objective 2. Encourage compact development that preserves riparian buffers, wetlands, steep slopes, wooded areas and other environmentally sensitive areas.

Goal D. Encourage the use of sustainable landscaping in the Township.

Objective 1. Promote native plant and native ecosystem landscaping in development applications.

Objective 2. Revise the Land Use Ordinance to prohibit the use of invasive plant species.

Objective 3. Promote functional landscaping that provides runoff treatment, such as vegetated islands, rain gardens, bioretention areas, vegetative filters, constructed wetlands, etc.

Goal E. Reduce impervious coverage surfaces in the Township.

Objective 1. Evaluate the Land Use Ordinance for opportunities to reduce required impervious cover. Areas for consideration should include parking ratios, shared parking and/or pervious pavement.

Objective 2. Promote use of porous pavement as an alternative to impervious surfaces where appropriate. Areas for consideration should include, but not be limited to, parking areas, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and/ or emergency access areas.

Objective 3. Provide incentives to reduce unnecessary impervious coverage on existing sites and development projects.

Goal F. Develop and implement an education and outreach program for the reduction of nonpoint source pollution in the Township's watersheds.

WASTE REDUCTION & RECYCLING

Goal A. Increase recycling rates of Lawrence Township households, businesses and institutions.

Objective 1. Raise public awareness of recycling opportunities available to Township residents, businesses, and institutions, including but not limited to, what materials are recyclable and what agencies/organization will accept recyclable materials.

Strategy a. Ensure that all municipal facilities make full use of the Township's recycling program so that they model leadership in the community. Provide prominent and convenient recycling facilities at all municipal facilities, such as buildings, playing fields, and parks.

Objective 2. Explore partnerships that can lead to increased Township recycling rates of currently recycled materials and expand the list of recyclable materials.

Strategy a. Explore partnerships with area government and/or nonprofit organizations to create new or expanded recycling programs.

Strategy b. Explore partnerships with for-profit organizations to create new or expanded recycling programs.

Objective 3. Evaluate the Land Use Ordinance to ensure all new nonresidential and multi-family developments have adequate recycling space in order to facilitate recycling to the fullest extent possible.

Objective 4. Reduce construction and demolition waste in the Township through education and encouragement and/or requirements in the Land Use Ordinance.

Goal B. Reduce waste through increased composting throughout the Township.

- Objective 1. Explore partnerships that can lead to increased Township recycling rates of currently recycled materials and expand the list of recyclable materials.
- Objective 2. Encourage composting, wherever appropriate, to reduce waste from households, commercial uses and institutions.

2018 OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Provide for the continuation of high-quality development and the retention of the remaining rural character in Lawrence by using the Master Plan as a guide and resource. Maintain the predominantly residential nature of the municipality.

LAND USE

Foster a well-balanced, diverse community with a mix of residential housing types, institutional, commercial, and limited industrial uses along with ample open space and public facilities.

OBJECTIVES

- Preserve undeveloped open space, maintain agricultural activities and the rural landscape in appropriate locations, and promote the visual enjoyment of the land.
- Direct new development and redevelopment to places in relation to their transportation and environmental capacities.

OPEN SPACE

Open space for conservation and recreational purposes should be enhanced through public and private efforts. Adequate active recreation facilities should be maintained through governmental action and citizen participation; new trends in sports and the evolving needs for recreation should be periodically reviewed.

OBJECTIVES

- Establish a Greenway Network to connect existing and planned open space parcels, including development of trails along stream corridors.
- Actively pursue the protection of privately-owned environmentally sensitive land through fee simple acquisition, land trust dedication, conservation easement or other means during the development review process.

CONSERVATION OF NATURAL FEATURES

Critical natural features and resources of Lawrence such as woodlands, steep slopes, wetlands, floodplains and bodies of water are worthy of protection to provide natural ecological balance and as a counterpoint to the built environment.

OBJECTIVES

- Utilize natural features to distinguish the permitted intensity of land development.
- Preserve and enhance stream corridors through the development of a Greenways Network incorporating pedestrian and bicycle linkages in appropriate locations and integrating existing or proposed open space land.
- Improve water quality of storm water runoff within the Township through application of stormwater management regulations.
- Establish controls on the permitted disturbance of natural features, including tree clearance, during land development.
- Restrict development on steep slopes so as to reduce any negative effects from the clearing of the vegetation on stream bank stability and the control of erosion.

VISUAL CHARACTER OF LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP

Establish policies governing the development or redevelopment of land which will promote the retention of rural character and historic streetscapes in the community. Establish design guidelines for the preservation of significant views from public rights-of-way.

OBJECTIVES

- Use transfer of development credits for targeted areas to promote the retention of farmland and rural character.
- Use rural development design techniques and standards to promote and encourage appropriate low intensity development in identified areas.
- Identify and preserve scenic resources and enhance the visual attractiveness of all areas of the municipality, according to their individual characteristics.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Protect the integrity of the historic centers of Lawrenceville, Port Mercer, and the Delaware and Raritan Canal as well as local landmarks outside of these districts which contribute to the heritage and positive image of the municipality.

OBJECTIVES

- Encourage tourism at the Township's historic parks and open space sites.
- Recognize and preserve historic places and events in conjunction with open space preservation.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES & MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Establish and maintain a level of community facilities and public services sufficient to satisfy the needs of present residents and to allow for the well-planned expansion of facilities to meet future needs.

HOUSING

Preserve the existing housing stock and provide the opportunity for the development of a wide variety of housing types to meet the needs of varied income and age levels, family compositions, and life styles.

OBJECTIVES

- Encourage planned unit developments providing for an integrated residential and non-residential neighborhood to incorporate the best features of design, layout and materials in relationship to the natural environment.
- Promote the clustering of housing on sites with environmentally sensitive areas and on sites lacking public infrastructure to retain open space, farmland, and the natural environment to the greatest extent feasible.

CIRCULATION

Provide for the efficient movement of people and goods within and through the Township in a manner compatible with the objectives of the land use element and retention of rural, suburban, and urban character in their respective places.

OBJECTIVES

- Recognize and preserve the scenic characteristics of local roadways in order to promote a positive community identity.
- Discourage the widening of existing two lane arterial roads in rural areas.
- Designate bikeways in the Master Plan for development and construction.
- Implement the Township's Complete Streets Policy, which is intended to provide safe access for all users through design and operation of a comprehensive, integrated, connected multi-modal network of transportation options.

2019 CIRCULATION PLAN AMENDMENT – BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN PLAN

GOAL: IMPROVE BICYCLIST AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

OBJECTIVES

- Improve data collection and data management systems to identify high-risk locations and populations needing targeted improvements.

GOAL: ENHANCE ACCESSIBILITY, MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY

OBJECTIVES

- Continue to implement the Township's Complete Streets policy
- Improve and expand transportation infrastructure for bicyclists and pedestrians including sidewalks, trails, bikeways, and bicycle parking, and providing linkages between road, sidewalk, trail and transit systems.

GOAL: PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE TO BECOME MORE HEALTHY AND ACTIVE THROUGH

WALKING AND BICYCLING.

OBJECTIVES:

- Increase public awareness of the benefits of bicycling and walking.
- Encourage the use of trails for access to open space, natural and historic resources.
- Improve bicyclist, pedestrian and driver behavior.
- Address emerging technologies, such as electric bikes and scooters, motorized skateboards, and bike share programs.

GOAL: FACILITATE COORDINATION AND INTEGRATION.

OBJECTIVES:

- Collaborate with the State of New Jersey, Mercer County, surrounding municipalities, and the school board on land use and transportation decisions.
- Partner with the public, private and non-profit organizations to support integrated bicycle and pedestrian policies, planning, facilities, activities, and events.

2020 HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN

GOAL

1. Protect the integrity of the historic districts in the Township, including the Lawrenceville Historic District, the Delaware and Raritan Canal District, the King's Highway Historic District, and if approved by the governing body, the Brearley - Princessville Historic District as well as local landmarks outside of these districts which contribute to the heritage and positive image of the municipality.

OBJECTIVES

1. Continue to identify additional individual sites and districts in Lawrence of historical importance.
2. Promote on-going maintenance of the commercial core of the village of Lawrenceville through coordinated parking, streetscape, signage, lighting, etc. in a manner that promotes its historic character.
3. Refine the standards for development to retain the integrity of historic districts and individual landmarks, including standards for landscape and streetscape design.
4. Encourage adaptive reuse of historic buildings, where appropriate.
5. Encourage tourism at the Township's historic parks and open space sites.
6. Recognize and preserve historic places and events in conjunction with open space preservation.
7. Expand understanding and appreciation of history and historic preservation among citizens, elected officials, students, and organizations in the Township.

8. Build a stronger, more cohesive and diverse preservation community.
9. Identify the authentic places that tell the stories of Lawrence's historically diverse populations.
10. Increase stewardship and support to protect the places that tell the stories of Lawrence people, groups and the built environment.

E. The recommendations of the Planning Board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans adopted pursuant to the “Local Redevelopment and Housing Law,” into the land use plan element of the municipal master plan, and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.

The Township has several areas designated as “Area in Need of Redevelopment” with associated Redevelopment Plans. These include Brunswick Pike South, Enterprise Avenue, and 3131 Princeton Pike. Redevelopment Plans have been adopted for Enterprise Avenue. A Redevelopment Plan for the 3131 Princeton Pike Area is anticipated to be adopted in the end of the 2023. There are no other redevelopment areas being contemplated at this time.

F. The recommendations of the Planning Board concerning locations appropriate for the development of public electric vehicle infrastructure, including but not limited to, commercial districts and, areas proximate to public transportation and transit facilities and transportation corridors, and public rest stops; and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary or appropriate for the development of public electric vehicle infrastructure.

Lawrence Township has robust commercial corridors on Princeton Pike, Route 1, and Route 206 that include retail, commercial and industrial establishments located within nonresidential zoning districts. The nonresidential areas within the Township are most appropriate for development of public electric vehicle infrastructure as they contain parking areas that are generally accessible to the public and present opportunities for activities that can be undertaken while vehicles are charging. Multifamily districts, such as the AT District, are also appropriate for public electric vehicle infrastructure.

With the implementation of the State law, several EV charging stations have been incorporated into recent developments including the RPM development on Brunswick Pike.

The Township is also home to a number of publicly owned facilities, as well as many municipal, State and County parks. EV charging facilities are available at the municipal building. To the

extent that adequate electric infrastructure exists, other municipal facilities and parks are also appropriate for charging facilities.

G. Evaluate the extent to which the municipality's entire master plan (including the land use plan element), official map and development regulations (including the zoning ordinance) implement green infrastructure and the principles expressed in the nonstructural stormwater management strategies at N.J.A.C. 7:8-2.4.

All municipalities in the State were required to adopt new comprehensive stormwater management regulations incorporating changes that occurred at the State level in 2021 and 2023. The Township's stormwater regulations are in compliance with current NJDEP requirements. Ordinances have been adopted in accordance with the updated requirements. This ordinance addresses green infrastructure as well as nonstructural stormwater management. The impact of stormwater and pollutants on the environment is regulated through the Township's Tier A permit.