

Plans, Master Plans and Amendments

Report to the Board June 14, 2024, through July 15, 2024

Municipality	Township of Boonton
Document	Open Space and Recreation Plan Update (Plan)
Public Hearing	7/15/24
Summary	Update of the Township’s 2005 Open Space and Recreation Plan

- Open Space goals defined in the Plan include preserving the community character, protecting sensitive environmental features, providing recreational facilities for residents of all ages and abilities, supporting the preservation of farms in the community, stewarding history and cultural landmarks, and sustaining natural resources to ensure resiliency.
- The Plan includes a land use inventory and notes that 27% of Boonton Township is permanently protected land (including preserved farmland) and nearly half of all preserved land is Morris County Park Commission property, including Pyramid Mountain Natural Historic Area, the Tourn, and the Hog Pen section of Jonathan’s Woods. Of other preserved land, municipal parkland accounts for 30.4%, nonprofit land accounts for 11.4% and property owned by the *Town* of Boonton accounts for 2.5%. Preserved farms make up 9.5% of preserved land. The Plan identifies the municipality’s various parks, natural areas and historic resources.
- The Plan notes contributions from the Morris County Preservation Trust, including \$9,903,000 preserving 480 acres of open space, \$1,574,575 preserving three farms with a total of 141 acres and \$658,539 for historic preservation assessment and restoration projects.
- Recommendations focus on a connected system of preserved lands to provide: “recreational greenbelts, trails and parks for healthy lifestyles and corridors of protected habitat for wildlife – advancing sustainability of the landscape and protecting environmental resources.” The Plan seeks to 1) connect trails, parks and natural areas to allow access to existing open space, 2) preserve and manage land to protect water resources and critical wildlife habitat and 3) provide opportunities for recreation and community, including land for open space and playing fields.”
- As concerns continued preservation, the Plan notes the following action items:
 - Reach out to owners of property next to municipal parks and/or trails. Meet with local owners to discuss preservation opportunities.
 - Work with Morris County to preserve potentially eligible farmland through the state and county programs.
 - Pursue trail easements or land acquisitions to improve connectivity between schools, recreation facilities and residential areas.
 - Discuss preservation priorities with local nonprofit organizations including the New Jersey Conservation Foundation and The Land Conservancy of New Jersey.

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Report to the Board June 14, 2024, through July 15, 2024

Municipality	Mine Hill Township
Document	2024 Master Plan Reexamination
Public Hearing	8/5/2024
Summary	Reexamination in accordance with MLUL 40:55D-89

- The last Mine Hill Master Plan was adopted on August 11, 1988. Subsequent Reexamination Reports were adopted in 1994, 2001 and most recently in July of 2015. In addition, a Land Use Element was adopted in 2010 and Housing Element and Fair Share Plan was adopted in 2019. The current Reexamination Report examines the problems and objectives related to the 2015 Report, the extent to which they have changed, changes in policies and proposed master plan and zoning amendments.
- The Report discusses the extent to which problems and/or objectives identified in the 2015 Reexamination Report have been addressed, reduced or increased. Various zoning amendments and amendments to the zoning map have been accomplished, including the preservation of certain open space parcels, changes in affordable and age restricted housing, commercial zoning and the adoption of RSIS amendments. All recommendations not carried out since 2015 are maintained in the new document.
- Changes in policies and objectives since 2015 are outlined. Population and land use changes are noted. Changes to State laws concerning land use are listed, as are updates to the Morris County Master Plan. A list of all local ordinance amendments addressing land use is provided.
- Recommended changes include but are not limited to:
 - Update the Land Use Element, include newly required sections on EV charging, storm resilience, environmental sustainability; include a climate change-related hazard vulnerability statement.
 - Amend Development Regulations to address EV make-ready spaces and hospital related homeless housing.
 - Create a new Open Space Zone for all public properties not within a sewer service area.
 - Eliminate the PARC, MLO and AOZ overlay districts.
 - Amend zoning to permit community residences and shelters, family day care homes and child care centers pursuant to MLUL 40:55D-66.1, 40:55D-66.5b, and 40:55D-66.6.
 - Consider the investigation of the Route 46 corridor to determine whether it qualifies as an Area in Need of Rehabilitation pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:12A.
 - Examine two residential areas north of Route 46 where sewers were recently constructed to determine if current zoning / required minimum lot sizes align with existing conditions.
 - Permit medical uses such as medical and dental clinics in the C District.
- The Township Council designated a 5.9-acre Redevelopment Area between Route 46, Randolph Ave. and Rynolds St., i.e., the 168 Route 46 Redevelopment Plan. This Plan is currently being updated. Once finalized, zoning and bulk requirements of the Redevelopment Plan need to be incorporated into the Township’s zoning code and the zoning map boundaries need to be amended accordingly.

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Report to the Board June 14, 2024, through July 15, 2024

Municipality	Harding Township
Document	Water Use and Conservation Management Plan
Public Hearing	7/22/24
Summary	Master Plan Element prepared for Highlands Regional Master Plan Conformance re: water use, conservation and low impact development best management practices.

- Harding has prepared a Water Use and Conservation Management Plan in accordance with its conditions of Plan Conformance with the Highlands Regional Master Plan, which has as one of its highest priorities the restoration and protection of water resources within the Highlands Region. The purpose of the Water Use and Conservation Management Plan (WUCMP) is to set priorities for the use of available water, i.e., where net water availability is positive, and to establish methods to reduce and, where feasible, eliminate deficits where they exist.
- Components included in a WUCMP include: area characteristics, identification of water sources and use, identification of stakeholders, evaluation of net water availability, anticipated impacts of climate change on net water availability, water deficit mitigation strategies, funding opportunities, a monitoring plan and a deficit mitigation implementation plan. Net water availability (NWA) is defined as ground water availability minus any consumptive and depletive uses within the subwatersheds. When the NWA is positive, groundwater supply is available for human use; when negative, insufficient groundwater is available to support human use.
- The WUCMP updates net water availability originally calculated in 2003 to incorporate data from the years 2000 to 2018. Only one of the six HUC14 watersheds in the study area for Harding Township was found to remain in deficit. This HUC14 extends into Morris Township and Morristown and is split about equally geographically between Harding and these combined neighboring municipalities. Most of the deficit is due to the Southeast Morris MUA public supply well withdrawals and golf course irrigation from Spring Brook County Club.
- The Plan recommends that conservation efforts target the deficit HUC14 to minimize any further declines in net water availability. The report includes numerous water conservation and deficit mitigation strategies to guard against increasing deficits and mitigate existing deficits within the subwatersheds.

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Municipality	Harding Township
Document	2024 Master Plan Reexamination
Public Hearing	7/22/2024
Summary	Reexamination in accordance with MLUL 40:55D-89

- The last Harding Reexamination Report was adopted on October 26, 2020. The Municipal Land Use Law requires municipalities to perform a reexamination at least once every 10 years, but a reexamination can occur as often as a municipality determines one is warranted. Since the time of the 2020 Reexamination, the assumptions, policies and objectives upon which the master plan is based have changed by virtue of the affirmative decision of the Township Committee to conform to the Highlands Regional Master Plan for lands located in the Planning Area, which encompasses the entire Township.
- The Report finds that the recommended changes to the Master Plan identified in the 2020 Reexamination Report remain valid. The current Reexamination Report recommends that additional changes be adopted as detailed in the Highlands “Consistency Review and Recommendations Report,” which was prepared by the Highlands Council as part of the Township’s Petition for Plan Conformance (which is included as an appendix to the Reexamination Report.)
- Recommended Master Plan updates are as follows:
 - Adoption of the Master Plan Reexamination Report
 - Adoption of the Highlands Master Plan Element
 - Adoption of an amended Land Use Element
 - Adoption of a revised Environmental Resource Inventory
 - Adoption of a Stormwater Management Plan
 - Adoption of an amended Conservation Plan Element
 - Adoption of the Water Use and Conservation Management Plan.
 - Update the Master Plan Objectives, Goals, Policies, Assumptions and Standards to add a new objective “Strive to achieve plan conformance and consistency with the Highlands Regional Master Plan across all planning documents and initiatives.”
- Recommended changes to the development regulations include:
 - Adoption of the Highlands Conformance Ordinance, implementing the Highlands Land Use Capability Zones with other Highlands Resource protections, including adoption of Highlands Resource Maps.
- The Township has two designated redevelopment areas: New Vernon Village and Glen Alpin/Hurstmont. The Reexamination Report anticipates some coordination between the Township and the Highlands Council regarding the implementation of the planned redevelopment in the Glen Alpin/Hurstmont Redevelopment Area.