

Borough of

Middlesex

MASTER PLAN REEXAMINATION
AND
AMENDED LAND USE PLAN

Borough of Middlesex
Master Plan Reexamination and
Land Use Plan Amendment

Middlesex County, New Jersey
June 2012

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

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul Ricci". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Paul Ricci, A.I.C.P., P.P., #LI005570

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INTRODUCTION

The New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) requires that each municipality in New Jersey undertake a periodic review and reexamination of its local Master Plan. The purpose of the Reexamination Report is to review and evaluate the master plan and municipal development regulations on a regular basis in order to determine the need for update and revisions. This report constitutes the Master Plan Reexamination Report for the Borough of Middlesex as required by the MLUL NJSA (40:55D-89) as well as an amendment to the Borough's Land Use Plan.

The Borough of Middlesex adopted its last Master Plan in April 2000. This report serves as a Reexamination of the 2000 Master Plan and an update of the goals and objectives contained in that Plan.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE PERIODIC REEXAMINATION REPORT

The MLUL requires that the Reexamination Report describe the following:

- 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 extent to which there have been significant changes in 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 land uses, 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.
- 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 recommendations of the planning board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans adopted pursuant to the "Local Redevelopment and Housing Law," P.L.1992, c. 79 (C.40A:12A-1 et seq.) into the land use plan element of the municipal master plan, and recommended changes, if any, in

Figure 1 - Locational Context



the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.

The report that follows addresses each of these statutory requirements.

MAJOR PROBLEMS AND OBJECTIVES IN 2000 AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH PROBLEMS AND OBJECTIVES HAVE BEEN REDUCED OR HAVE INCREASED

MASTER PLAN

The Middlesex Borough Master Plan consists of the following documents:

1. The April 2000 Borough of Middlesex Master Plan;
2. The 2006 Stormwater Plan Element; and
3. The 2006 Housing and Fair Share Plan Element.

The 2000 Master Plan identified the following Borough assumptions and objectives that formed the basis of the Master Plan.

2000 Master Plan Assumptions

1. The Greenbrook Flood Control Plan, prepared by the Army Corps of Engineers will be implemented in the foreseeable future.
2. Flooding will continue to be a recurring but manageable problem in the Borough.
3. Total population will stabilize in the lower to mid 13,000-person level.
4. Public utilities will not constrain the development and redevelopment of the Borough's remaining vacant lands.
5. The demand for non-residential development sites within the Borough will continue to be strong due to the adequacy of public utilities, regional traffic patterns, availability of rail services and proximity to Route 22, I-287 and I-78.
6. Public school enrollment, although increased over the 1995-1999 period, will stabilize in the future due to limited remaining land developable for residential use.
7. Cost and/or supply of fossil fuels will lead to an increase in demand for use of renewable energy resources.
8. Current family composition characteristics will reflect cycles of aging. No substantial demographic changes are forecast.
9. Continued regional development will impact the Borough and will result in increased automobile and truck traffic on the main arteries: Lincoln Boulevard, South Lincoln Avenue, and Route 28.
10. Route 28 traffic capacity is constrained by existing development and on-street parking east of South Lincoln. No feasible alternative to the existing condition exists.
11. The extension of William Street would provide an alternative route and increase the roadway network's over-all carrying capacity. Because of significant regulatory and fiscal constraints no certainty for Williams Street extension can be offered.

2000 Plan Objectives

1. Preserve existing residential neighborhoods by promoting infill development within the framework of existing development patterns.
2. Maintain land use designations which reflect existing development character.
3. Maintain and enforce the logical transition of uses between residential and nonresidential areas of the Borough.
4. Maintain a variety and choice of housing resources.
5. Continue property maintenance procedures and programs for both residential and non-residential areas.
6. Maintain policy and program preventing development in designated flood areas of the Borough.
7. Support flood prevention programs throughout the Borough.
8. Promote energy conservation, encourage energy-efficient building siting and passive solar design and maintain and ensure proper light and air to occupied properties.
9. Continue implementation of community facilities plan element by expanding community facilities.
10. Maintain a functionally coordinated system of roads with the objective of maintaining functional capacity.



THE EXTENT TO WHICH SUCH PROBLEMS AND OBJECTIVES HAVE BEEN REDUCED OR HAVE INCREASED

There were 11 assumptions and 10 objectives set forth in the 2000 Master Plan. The majority of these assumptions and goals continue to remain valid. The following indicates instances where the assumptions and objectives of the Master Plan have changed.

Assumptions Status 2010

Public utilities will not constrain the development and redevelopment of the Borough's remaining vacant lands. As of 2012, the Borough continues to have no limitations on its ability to treat additional sanitary sewer flows. According to the Borough's Wastewater Engineer, some of the Borough's pipes are receiving flow that is at or near the capacity of the pipes and that local infrastructure may have to be upsized to take on additional flow associated with new development projects.

Furthermore, a small section of the Borough discharges its sanitary sewer flow to the Borough of Piscataway, which could restrict the amount of flow that can be discharged from that area of the Borough.

Objectives Status 2012

- *Preserve existing residential neighborhoods by promoting infill development within the framework of existing development patterns.*

While the 2000 objective remains valid, this objective should be expanded to recognize the appropriateness of permitting reasonable increases in density in specific situations. The revised objective shall read: "Preserve and protect the character of existing residential neighborhoods of the Borough by recognizing the existing residential density and building structural style, while allowing for reasonable increases in select areas to encourage the redevelopment of deteriorated, vacant or appreciably underutilized properties."

- *Maintain a variety and choice of housing resources.*

While two-family homes have historically been located within several areas of the Borough, this Plan recognizes changing development patterns of constructing larger homes than in years past. For this reason, the conversion of existing single-family homes into new two-family homes should be discouraged. The intent is to maintain the character and density within existing developed areas of the Borough. However, this reexamination

Report and Land Use Plan Amendment recognizes that in certain circumstances it may be appropriate to encourage more intensive development patterns, particularly to redevelop existing vacant, contaminated or other underutilized structures. This Plan also recognizes the need to adequately create buffer or transition areas between uses with different levels of intensity.

- *Promote energy conservation, encourage energy-efficient building siting and passive solar design and maintain and ensure proper light and air to occupied properties.*

While this objective remains valid, it should be expanded as follows: Wind and solar energy are abundant, renewable, and nonpolluting energy resources. "When converted to electricity, wind and solar energy reduce our dependence on nonrenewable energy resources, reduce air and water pollution and do not pose a security threat. The continued anticipated rise in energy costs will likely continue to create demand for small-scale renewable energy generation devices especially solar (photovoltaic) and wind. These uses should be encouraged and permitted, subject to bulk and conditional use regulations, in all appropriate zoning districts within the Borough."

EXTENT TO WHICH THERE HAVE BEEN SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN ASSUMPTIONS, POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

As discussed in the prior chapter, many of the policies and objectives which formed the basis for the Borough's Master Plan as last revised remain valid at the present time. Nonetheless, some changes have occurred in Middlesex that were not envisioned at the time of the 2000 Master Plan. Such changes have taken place not only at the municipal level, but at other levels of government as well and in the broader economy.

During the evaluation of Borough policies during this planning process, the Borough has determined that the following additional assumptions and objectives are appropriate for Middlesex. They include:

Assumptions

New Assumption for Economic Growth

The Middlesex Master Plan recognizes that the region's economic growth has slowed in recent years due to various issues, which, in turn, have had impacts at the local level. However, Middlesex benefits from its location and quality of life, as well as increased interest in promoting growth in areas already served by the infra-

structure. It is assumed that there will continue to be development activity in the Borough. Such growth and development will result in pressures to intensify existing land uses and develop remaining available parcels. But it also provides an opportunity for increased sustainability measures. The Borough has aging infrastructure. Within the foreseeable future, many of the Borough's existing roads, sanitary sewers, drainage facilities and public buildings and facilities will require repair or replacement. New development will place increased pressure on the infrastructure system; however, it also provides an opportunity to fund infrastructure improvements or expansions. Infill development and new development should be balanced with the need to maintain open space. In addition, redevelopment and rehabilitation of existing structures should be encouraged and be consistent with smart growth principles.

New Assumption for Lincoln Boulevard

The corridor has been rezoned to permit significant development as provided within the Lincoln Boulevard Redevelopment Plan (See the Land Use Plan Amendment.) A major element of the Redevelopment Plan specifies streetscape improvements that include a major redesign of Lincoln Boulevard. Middlesex County has advised that they will not implement the streetscape improvements shown in the Redevelopment Plan.

Objectives

New Land Use Objectives

1. Lincoln Boulevard. Promote the rehabilitation of Lincoln Boulevard in accordance with the Lincoln Boulevard Redevelopment Plan as it may be amended from time to time.
2. Protect Natural Features and Environmental Resources. Land Use Planning in Middlesex encourages a need to protect natural features and environmental resources which include but are not limited to floodplains, wetlands, woodlands, steep slopes, ridgelines, and areas valuable as scenic, historical, cultural, or recreational resources.
3. Encourage Continued Reinvestment into Residential Properties. Implement utilization of the redevelopment and rehabilitation laws of the State of New Jersey to provide tax incentives for the improvement of housing stock in the Borough. Under the New Jersey redevelopment and rehabilitation laws, the Borough can provide homeowners and corporations with tax incentives for undertaking substantial

improvements and/or redevelopment of existing structures. These incentives are either in the form of tax abatement (where additional property taxes on the added value of the improvement are phased in over a number of years) or payment in lieu of taxes. Consideration should be given to investigating the use of redevelopment/rehabilitation powers in specific target areas of the Borough.

The authority to grant five-year tax exemptions and abatements is provided in the Five-Year Exemption and Abatement Law, which combined three prior statutes that authorized the granting of tax abatements and exemptions. Abatements and exemptions may be granted by municipalities for the following purposes:

- Improvements to existing dwellings;
 - The construction of new dwellings;
 - The conversion of nonresidential buildings (including hotels and motels) to multiple dwellings; and
 - The improvement or expansion of commercial or industrial structures.
4. Commercial Development. Strengthen commercial districts by encouraging a mix of nonresidential and residential uses that provide employment, retail opportunities, services and entertainment.
 5. Corridor Improvements. Improve the appearance of the Borough by revitalizing properties in disrepair, designing and installing streetscape improvements and strengthening sign regulations and their enforcement.
 6. Density. Discourage increases in density in existing one and two-family neighborhoods.
 7. Senior Housing. Promote the development of senior citizen housing that enables older residents to "age in place" including independent living, assisted living and congregate care housing.
 8. Redevelopment. Recognize the potential of selected vacant, underutilized or deteriorated properties for infill residential development.
 9. Green Building. Work with the development community to incorporate LEED® (Leadership in Energy Environmental Design) building standards into all public buildings and in new development.

LAND USE PLAN ELEMENT PROGRESS REPORT (2000 - 2012)

Introduction

Middlesex's prior land use planning and regulations have produced stable residential neighborhoods and commercial/retail districts. The need to maintain established residential and commercial/retail land use patterns through appropriate regulations remains valid. While the Borough's zoning regulations are generally adequate, some changes are recommended to address various concerns in residential, commercial and industrial areas. Future development, redevelopment and expansion should occur at reasonable levels of intensity in accordance with the character of existing development.

Existing Zoning

Middlesex's zone plan has changed over the years to meet changing market conditions for land in the Borough. The Borough is divided into eighteen (18) districts. These districts can be divided into five broad categories:

- Single and Two-Family Residential (R-50, R-60A, R-60B, R-75, R-100, RC-1 and RC-2)
- Multi-Family Residential (AR-1, AR-2, AR-3, R-4 and SCR)
- Commercial and Mixed-Use Districts (G-B and R-T)
- Manufacturing and Industrial (CLW, HI, IND)
- Public (M)

The Borough maintains a well-balanced mix of residential, industrial, public and commercial lands. As depicted in Table 1, single and two-family districts encompass close to 53 percent of the Borough; they are located throughout Middlesex. Manufacturing and industrial districts are generally located adjacent to the freight rail right-of-way in the southern portion of the Borough and comprise 26.4 percent of the Borough's land area. Municipal uses occupy over 10% of the Borough's land area, followed by commercial and mixed-use districts (6%) that are located predominantly along Bound Brook Road and Union Avenue. Multi-family residential districts encompass 4.4 percent of the Borough.

Table 1 - Existing Zoning

Zone	2012	
	Acres	Percent
R-100	100	4.5
R-75	714	32.3
R-60A	191	8.6
R-60B	77	3.5
R-50	76	3.4
RC-1	10	0.5
RC-2	2	0.1
R-4	42	1.9
R-T	32	1.5
AR-1	28	1.3
AR-2	16	0.7
AR-3	4	0.2
SCR	5	0.2
G-B	95	4.3
CLW	111	5.0
IND	390	17.7
HI	82	3.7
M	232	10.5
Total	2,207	100.0

Existing Land Use – Nonresidential

As part of the development of this Plan, existing land use information was collected along Bound Brook Road, Union Avenue and Lincoln Boulevard. Mapping of this information is located in Attachment A.

Land Use Plan Amendment

Lincoln Boulevard Redevelopment

In 2005, the Borough undertook a visioning process for the area along Lincoln Boulevard and Mountain Avenue as the basis for developing the Lincoln Boulevard and Lincoln Boulevard East Redevelopment Plans. The Lincoln Boulevard Rehabilitation Area has a gross area, including streets, of 191.7 acres and contains three (3) Focus Areas. The first Focus Area is located where Lincoln Boulevard and Mountain Avenue intersect and is referred to as the "Town

Center”. The Town Center is approximately 21.5 acres in area. The second Focus Area includes the Pathmark supermarket and surrounding properties, and is referred to as the “West Market”. The West Market is approximately 16.7 acres in area. The third Focus Area is the gateway to Middlesex from Bound Brook and is referred to as the “Gateway”. The Gateway is approximately 17.4 acres in area. Each of these three areas contains a Redevelopment Plan with specific standards which must be adhered to. Remaining plan areas are referred to as “Transitional Zones” and may be redeveloped in accordance with the underlying zoning or limited standards within the Redevelopment Plan.

Discussion

Since the Plan’s adoption in 2007, minimal interest to construct projects in the Plan have occurred. In 2011, the Redevelopment Plan was amended to permit 146 residential apartment-style units within the Gateway Focus Area. While the economic downturn is likely partially responsible for the lack of non-residential redevelopment interest, the property owners of existing viable commercial and industrial properties also have had limited interest in redeveloping their properties into new mixed-use developments. Limited market forces exist to encourage “Main Street” style mixed-use development adjacent to a passenger and freight rail line where no stop exists in Middlesex. New Jersey Transit’s refusal to permit a rail stop between Bound Brook and Dunellen Stations, coupled with Middlesex County’s refusal to construct streetscape improvements proposed in the Plan, greatly threaten the ability to implement the Redevelopment Plan. Furthermore, steel construction rather than wood “stick” construction is required to build the focal point six-story building in the Plan with structured parking, which is likely cost prohibitive.

Given these constraints to redevelopment along the corridor, the Borough should consider either amending the Redevelopment Plan or evaluating select areas for redevelopment. Potential properties and areas for consideration include: 1) the 1.5 Acre Property on Lincoln Boulevard adjacent to 288 Lincoln Boulevard, 2) the former Burger Tubing building adjacent to 275 Lincoln Boulevard and 3) properties to the west of Pathmark.

The Borough also has to evaluate the impacts that successful redevelopment may have on commercial development on Bound Brook Road and Union Avenue. No analysis to date has investigated the amount of commercial and mixed-use space that Lincoln Boulevard, Bound Brook Road and Union Avenue

could sustain. Such information is needed to determine whether the Borough has the ability to accommodate a second “Main Street” without negatively impacting the nonresidential uses on Bound Brook Road, not to mention the fiscal implications of replacing or encouraging existing industrial uses to relocate.

Bound Brook Road/Union Avenue

Planning for Bound Brook Road and Union Avenue (“the corridor”) should remain a priority for the Borough. The nonresidential portion of the corridor currently contains a mix of retail stores, many restaurants, office space and banks. Few vacancies exist along the corridor. Previous streetscape improvements, including crosswalk improvements are currently in a state of disrepair. The close proximity to Route 22 and larger commercial stores requires planning for a base of niche businesses that are able to compete with larger super stores that provide retail goods and services at a lower comparable cost.

A niche market or business is a focused, targetable portion of the market. A business that focuses on a niche market is addressing a need for a product or service that is not being addressed by mainstream providers. For instance, instead of offering cleaning services, a business might establish a niche market by specializing in blind cleaning services. The key is to find or develop a market niche that has customers who are accessible, that is growing fast enough, and is not owned by one established vendor already. Additional market research should be considered to develop a market niche, not to mention the already entrepreneurial nature of businesses today that have been ever adapting to survive in an extremely competitive marketplace.

The future success of businesses along the corridor will partially depend upon residents and the desire of pass-through traffic to shop and dine. While convenience and good customer service are attributes typically provided by small businesses, minimal activities have been completed to help the business climate along the corridor.

Aesthetically, the corridor lacks consistency of architecture or coordination of signs between uses. Furthermore, the corridor can be categorized as having three distinct districts that are distinguishable by the number of travel lanes and types of uses found along the corridor. From the Dunellen Border to South Lincoln Avenue, Bound Brook Road (SH 28) contains one travel lane in each direction. For this reason, ample room is provided to allow on-street parking. The narrower cartway and availability of on-street parking make this area more appropriate for traditional “Main

Street” style development with buildings located close to the street edge and parking within the side and rear yards. Current ordinance requirements permit buildings to be a minimum of 15 feet from the front property line, except that no front yard setback shall be required on any structure in existence at the time of the adoption of the zoning chapter. On specific pieces of property, the extension of existing adjoining front yard setbacks ranging from 0 to 5 feet may be appropriate from the Dunellen Border to South Lincoln Avenue.

The establishment of a new vision and design theme for the area should encourage development at a similar scale to which exists today, while recognizing that the inclusion of additional two and three story buildings—where sufficient parking can be provided—will result in creating a more special or unique place. In the long term, greater strategies of “place making” should be considered, however, initial planning efforts should focus on consolidating properties along the corridor to provide commercial redevelopment opportunities and to encourage the redevelopment of “soft” or underutilized properties.

Off-street parking is a critical component in creating a vibrant business environment. However, just enough parking should be provided to encourage the retention of traditional development patterns with buildings located close to the street with parking and other services located at the rear or side of properties. The planning rationale for this continued development pattern is to discourage the replacement of existing buildings with new strip commercial style development where parking is located in front of one-story buildings. This Plan recognizes a desire to enhance the Borough’s relatively dense commercial and non-residential development to make this area more unique than traditional strip mall style development.

Development that generates employment opportunities and beneficial commercial/retail activity should continue to be encouraged where it is compatible with adjacent land uses, and sensitive natural and environmental features. It should be balanced by the need to maintain adequate public infrastructure and facilities, services and pedestrian and vehicular circulation patterns.

From South Lincoln Avenue to approximately Valentine Street, a similar mix of commercial uses exist as described above; however, the roadway configuration changes to consist of two travel lanes in each direction and where no on-street parking exists. This section of the district also contains a shopping center and is in close proximity to the Borough Middle School and Watchung Elementary School. Given the con-



figuration of the roadway, this area is less appropriate to encourage additional pedestrian activity and traditional “Main Street” development having outside dining, unless a safer more comfortable environment can be created through the redevelopment of sites. Previous streetscape improvements along Bound Brook Road are in a state of disrepair and project a poor image for the Borough. While monies in the state coffers for streetscape improvements are limited, the inclusion of pavers, textured street crossings is not necessary to achieve the desired result.

The third district includes the area from Valentine Street to Harris Avenue and the R-T district adjacent to Beachwood Road. This area is largely comprised of office, home occupations and banks and provides space for a large number of professional uses. No changes are proposed for this area.

Industrial Districts

Middlesex has a rich industrial history. Many of these industries were developed as part of New Jersey’s industrial renaissance years ago. Consistent with regional trends, many heavy industrial companies have been relocating out of New Jersey and the region for decades. From 2004 to 2009 alone, close to 26% of the manufacturing jobs in Middlesex County were lost. This is largely attributed to cheaper production costs and less stringent environmental regulations overseas.

However, despite what many believe, the United States

is still the largest producer of industrial products in the world. While industries of years past may be dwindling in New Jersey, many new industries are emerging. For this reason, the Borough should continue to monitor the vitality of its industrial districts and plan to change to follow with industry trends. While this is more easily stated than achieved, a strategy to identify and target emerging industrial clusters is needed. In other words, there is a need to target industries that fit well within Middlesex Borough. Some of the Borough's competitive advantages include its proximity to Interstate 287 and its proximity to the Rutgers Busch Campus, which includes leading departments associated with high-tech science, math, engineering, pharmacy, as well as High Point Solutions Stadium (Rutgers football stadium.)

The Borough already contains the office and manufacturing buildings of Corepharma, an expanding U.S. based developer and manufacturer of pharmaceutical products. The continued growth of pharmaceutical-related industries should be supported by the Borough. Overtime, the Borough should work to improve the appearance of its industrial nodes to create an environment that could attract new emerging industries.

Furthermore, an opportunity may exist to target commercial-service related uses that provide specialized equipment and supplies used in universities, offices, stores, hotels, restaurants, schools, health and medical facilities, photographic facilities and specialized equipment used in transportation and construction activities. Accordingly, this Plan recommends expanding the range of permitted uses in the Borough's industrial districts to allow for the above-mentioned service related uses.

Residential Districts

As indicated in the Existing Zoning section of this Plan, the Borough maintains a mix of housing choices within 12 distinct zone districts. These districts are essentially built-out with minimal remaining development potential. The land use goal is to preserve the existing character of each residential district and to prevent the intrusion of incompatible land uses except where it can be demonstrated that transitional uses and buffers can be established to prevent impacts to the public good and established intent and purpose of the zone plan. For this reason, minimal changes are recommended to the existing residential zone districts in the Borough.

This Plan, in the Future Land Use Plan, identifies the proposed zone line adjustments to recognize existing land uses and conditions in Middlesex. This Plan also discourages the conversion of existing single-family

homes to duplexes and encourages elevating existing residential buildings outside of the flood hazard area.

Within and adjacent to the Beachwood section of the Borough, a number of properties lack public water and sewer infrastructure and accordingly rely upon individual wells for drinking water and a septic system to handle sewage treatment.

As a policy objective, this Plan recommends that public water and sewer infrastructure be extended to this area so that all Borough properties may connect to the Borough's public water and sewer system.

Consistency of Existing Uses with Current Zoning

There is a very substantial degree of consistency between those uses, which exist within Middlesex, and the zoning districts within which they fall. However, despite this large degree of consistency, several areas of the Borough contain zoning inconsistencies. These areas include:

- RT District near Green Brook Road;
- The General Business District Boundary near Osterman Avenue;
- The General Business District (south side) near Jill Court; and
- The R-60B district adjacent to Jill Court.

There are also some residential areas located in Middlesex where the prevailing sizes of single-family lots are substantially less than the zone district in which they are located requires. This creates the need for a variety of variance applications, because the bulk and area regulations that are applied to homes within such areas are already non-conforming. Upon receiving digital parcel mapping that is currently being created by Middlesex County, a more detailed comparison of existing lot sizes to zoning district standards should be undertaken to identify where large clusters of such areas may exist in the Borough.

A revised Future Land Use Map is attached in Attachment C. The Future Land Use Map was updated to incorporate the Lincoln Boulevard Redevelopment Plans and to create a zone plan that is more consistent with existing land use conditions.

Bulk Regulations

As part of the development of this Master Plan Reexamination Report, the Schedule of Area, Yard and Building Requirements of the Borough were reviewed and the majority of the existing bulk regulations continue

to remain appropriate with the following exceptions.

The R-60B zone allows single-family detached dwellings on 6,000 square foot lots and two-family dwellings on 6,000 square foot lots. Given the recent trend of constructing larger homes on lots, this plan recommends increasing the minimum lot size for duplexes to 9,000 square feet with the minimum frontage requirement from 60 to 90 feet respectively. This is necessary to provide sufficient space for off-street parking, while maintaining the green appearance of properties.

A maximum permitted building height of 35 feet is permitted within Borough zone districts with the exception of districts located within the Redevelopment Plans. As part of the development of the master plan, the issue associated with the development of “McMansion” homes or the construction of new homes in established neighborhoods that are significantly larger and often taller than existing homes was not raised. If the construction of such oversized homes becomes a planning issue in the future, the Borough should evaluate the need to lower the maximum height of residential buildings, to regulate side yard setbacks as a percentage of lot width with a minimum requirement and consider placing controls on the mass of buildings.

As the height of a pitched-roof building is measured to the midpoint of the roof, the actual permitted height to the apex of the roof could approximately reach 42 feet. To the contrary, a non-residential or mixed-use building with a flat roof is limited to 35 feet. Given that retail buildings and restaurants that are constructed to modern design standards often have taller first stories, there is a need to permit a few additional feet of building height to encourage a more desirable building. For this reason, the building height in the proposed GB-1 and GB-2 should be increased from 38 to 40 feet.

Recommendations

1. Split the GB district into a GB-1 (Warrenville Road to South Lincoln Avenue) and GB-2 (South Lincoln Avenue to Valentine Street) district to recognize the unique features of each area as discussed in the Land Use Plan Amendment. Create standards for the New GB-1 district. Permit residential apartments on upper floors subject to conditions.
2. Bound Brook Road and Lincoln Boulevard contain multiple potential infill and redevelopment opportunities. Some sites include a greater potential for immediate redevelopment than do others. These parcels, generally described as “soft sites” (underutilized sites), are typically not as complicated or expensive as on “hard sites” (fully developed and / or with significant tenants), to redevelop and therefore should be seen as the top priority for redevelopment efforts. Successful redevelopment of soft sites can often serve as a catalyst to changes on hard sites. Planning efforts should initially prioritize the revitalization of the vacant properties identified on page 10.
3. In order to encourage redevelopment on specific sites, the Borough can provide incentives (e.g., density incentives, or relaxed parking requirements). The Borough and the business community can also reach out to property owners to better understand the short- and long-term plans for their properties. The current regulations restrict the maximum building height to three stories/35 feet, which is largely appropriate to the predominantly low-scale character of the surrounding area. However, on strategic sites, there may be opportunities to allow a greater maximum building height of perhaps one additional story with setbacks. Furthermore, as discussed in the Bulk Regulations section, the building height in the proposed GB-1 and GB-2 districts should be increased from 38 to 40 feet.
4. There is a need to improve the conditions of the roadway and streetscape along the corridor. At a minimum, the existing partially painted crosswalks should be repainted, sections of the roadway require re-paving, as well as re-painting areas where off-street parking is permitted and other general maintenance work. The Borough should work to have these improvements allocated within upcoming state transportation improvement funding projects. Furthermore, given the lack of funding at the state level, the Borough may need to consider ways to generate monies for streetscape improvements.
5. Treat Bound Brook Road/Union Avenue as the Borough’s Main Street. Create additional activities such as a farmer’s market and events to encourage individuals to use the local area businesses.
6. Make ambient lighting along Bound Brook Road and Union Avenue commercial areas a priority. If there is going to be a deliberate effort to upgrade the appearance of the Borough’s commercial corridors, then lighting is a key “finishing” touch. Ambient lighting includes night lighting of prominent buildings as well as lighting from stores. Ide-

ally, a more intimate setting, especially during the holiday season would be created over-time.

7. Revise the R-60B district to permit duplexes on 9,000 square foot lots in accordance with the Amended Land Use Plan.
8. Revise the range of permitted uses within the Borough's industrial districts to be consistent with the previously mentioned industrial sector progress report.
9. Encourage the Borough Redevelopment Entity to evaluate to need to update the Lincoln Boulevard Redevelopment Plan based upon the discussion section of the Land Use Plan Amendment.
10. Encourage the Borough Redevelopment Entity to evaluate the draft Lincoln Boulevard East Redevelopment Plan consistent with the discussion section of the Land Use Plan Amendment and determine whether the draft plan should be amended and formally adopted.
11. As part of capital improvement planning, consideration should be given to the installation of public water and sewer infrastructure to areas of the Borough that are not connected to the public water and sanitary sewer system, e.g., Beachwood Avenue area, so that properties that are currently without public water and/or sewer, may connect to public systems.

a. Vacant building adjacent to 4th Street and Bound Brook Road



b. Vacant building adjacent to 7th Street and Bound Brook Road



c. Vacant property adjacent to the Acme Supermarket near Warrenville Road



d. The vacant 1.5 Acre Property on Lincoln Boulevard adjacent to 288 Lincoln Boulevard



e. The former Burger Tubing building adjacent to 275 Lincoln Boulevard



f. Properties to the west of Pathmark



HOUSING PROGRESS REPORT (2000-2012)

At the state level, in December 2004, the New Jersey Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) adopted its “Third Round” rules covering the period from 2004 to 2018. Middlesex prepared a Housing Element and Fair Share Plan that complied with these rules in 2006 but never received substantive certification. A successful legal challenge was mounted to these rules, which were invalidated by a New Jersey Appellate Court decision in January 2007. This decision upheld some sections of COAH’s Third Round rules, invalidated other aspects of them and remanded certain issues to COAH. In December 2007, COAH released revised rules that went into effect on June 2, 2008. In contrast to COAH’s prior rules, the Third Round rules utilize a “growth share” approach, by which municipal affordable housing obligations are determined by the amount of new market-rate residential and non-residential growth. On October 8, 2010, again, the courts invalidated a portion of COAH’s Third Round rules. Most notably, the “growth share” approach was held to be unconstitutional. The courts gave COAH five months to create new rules.

On June 30, 2011, Governor Christie issued Reorganization Plan No. 001-2011 that abolished COAH 60 days after its issue and transferred all responsibilities and duties to the Department of Community Affairs (DCA).

On March 8, 2012, the Appellate Division reversed Reorganization Plan 001-2011 indicating that the Governor lacked authority to eliminate a state agency without legislative approval.

As of April 2012, COAH/DCA has not revised its affordable housing rules. Accordingly, the future of affordable housing requirements in New Jersey remains uncertain. All of these factors point towards major potential changes to affordable housing requirements, and it is unclear what their exact form will be. However, it is clear that municipalities will continue to have a constitutional obligation to provide a realistic opportunity for affordable housing. This obligation will remain unless there is an amendment to the state constitution. The Borough should continue to monitor affordable housing rules in the future.

OPEN SPACE / RECREATION AND ENVIRONMENT PROGRESS REPORT (2000 - 2012)

The Borough should continue to support efforts to maintain the large open space areas and protection of remaining undeveloped lands that contain environmentally constrained areas. Buffers along streams slow down storm runoff and decrease the chance of

flooding. Allowing adjacent wetlands and floodplains to store water without obstructions during storm events helps to minimize homes and businesses from flooding. Open space and greenways typically increase the value of nearby land. In Middlesex, retaining and creating stream corridor buffers is necessary to reduce flooding in the Borough. Furthermore, open space and recreational opportunities are an important aspect for the quality of life of the Borough’s residents.

Substantial portions of the floodplain in the Borough have been developed with residential and nonresidential structures. Accordingly, the creation of zoning provisions to prohibit development in all flood prone areas could be counter productive as this may discourage homeowners and businesses from improving their properties over time to limit damage from flood events, i.e., raising structures outside of the floodplain as part of redevelopment. However, the creation of a conservation zone should be considered for existing undeveloped public property within the floodplain with the goal of preventing further residential development in flood hazard areas.

In 2011, with the use of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) records, the Borough identified the 14 most severely flooded properties in the Borough and sought grant funding to purchase these properties. (See Attachment E)

To date, sufficient grant monies obtained through FEMA and the Green/Blue Acres open space and recreational funding through the State of New Jersey, is in place to purchase 7 out of the 14 properties. This Plan recommends that the Borough continue its efforts with FEMA, the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), Green Acres and the county open space trust fund to acquire the remaining 7 properties as well as additional properties most valuable for preservation due to sensitive environmental features or other factors.

Furthermore, with the use of soon to be completed digital tax parcel mapping from Middlesex County, the Borough should evaluate with the use of a geographic information system, the location of remaining unimproved properties that are located within the 100-year floodplain. Attachment B indicates locations of existing wetlands and floodplains in the Borough.

Recreation and Open Space Inventory

Middlesex Borough is an established community with limited land not already utilized as residential, commercial, industrial, open space and recreation uses. Accordingly, in “built-out” communities, the preserva-

tion of existing open space is a primary goal. Approximately 117 acres of land, is dedicated for recreation purposes in the Borough which is 5.3% of the Borough. Based upon the methodology used by the State of New Jersey to evaluate the amount of open space in communities, there is ample recreation space in the Borough. However, a number of facilities require maintenance, refurbishing or upgrading. The Borough should evaluate the existing conditions of the parks, handicapped accessibility and potential recreation and open space needs of Borough residents. This could be achieved through surveys by the Recreation Department to identify if any age group, sex or other factors are lacking in recreational opportunities.

Energy Efficiency and Sustainability Planning

This Plan acknowledges the challenges associated with developing and implementing policies designed to improve energy efficiency in Middlesex. The developed nature of the Borough poses greater challenges to implement sustainability efforts than in a developing community. However, opportunities exist in all communities to lower energy costs and demand within government buildings as well as non-residential and residential structures. Beginning at the municipal level through the assessment of the municipal fleet and conducting an energy audit at government buildings, Middlesex can make common sense decisions to reduce its energy use and likely save money overtime. The following indicates some measures for consideration by the Borough.

Recommendations

1. Maintain an active presence on the Greenbrook Flood Control Commission to ensure that Middlesex's flood control interests are addressed.
2. Consider creating a recreation and open space plan element that meets NJ Green Acres requirements. The approval by Green Acres of a local open space plan combined with a local open space tax would qualify the Borough to receive a 50% matching grant from Green Acres for eligible open space and recreation projects. Such funding would be available until a community's plan is completed. Without an open space plan and local tax, the Borough would remain eligible for a 25% matching grant from Green Acres.
3. Utilize existing green purchasing manuals to help purchase green materials to provide environmental benefits and to create a healthier environment for employees through the reduced exposure to solvents, paints and other hazardous substances.
4. Work with the Governing Body and Environmental Commission to create a Green Team to make recommendations to the Governing Body as how to begin implementing additional green policies into municipal operations.
5. Consider participating in the Sustainable New Jersey Program, a certification program for municipalities that want to go green, save money and take steps to sustain their quality of life over the long-term. To date, 351 out of the 566 municipalities in New Jersey participate in the program.
6. Evaluate New Jersey's Clean Energy Program's financial incentives for governmental customers to integrate energy efficient and renewable technologies into new construction, upgrades, and new cooling & heating equipment installations.¹

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND UTILITIES PROGRESS REPORT 2000 - 2012

Sanitary Sewer

The Borough maintains a public sanitary sewer system that is well over fifty years old. Similar to older systems in many New Jersey communities, improvements to the system are necessary. According to the Borough Engineer, many existing collector lines are nearing capacity. It is anticipated that sanitary sewer improvements may be necessary to accommodate the proposed redevelopment of Lincoln Boulevard. Improvements to other areas of the Borough associated with any redevelopment may also require sanitary sewer line improvements. However, sufficient sanitary sewer capacity is available to meet the anticipated future development in the Borough.

Stormwater Management

Stormwater runoff is the water that "runs off" the land when it rains or snows. This water may go into the street, a nearby stream or a sewer. Stormwater runoff is referred to as a nonpoint source of pollution because it has the potential to pick up material from many different sources as it runs across land and reaches a waterway. According to the NJDEP, stormwater/nonpoint pollution contributes to up to 60% of the existing water pollution problems. In an effort to reduce stormwater pollution, the State created a Municipal Stormwater Regulation Program. Under the new Municipal Stormwater

¹ <http://www.njcleanenergy.com>

Regulation Program, Middlesex is required to implement a Stormwater Program. This includes various statewide requirements to address stormwater runoff such as public education, outfall mapping and ordinances, floatable and solids control, and good house-keeping of municipal maintenance yard operations. To meet New Jersey of Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) requirements, the Borough adopted a Stormwater Management Plan Element of the Master Plan, a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SPP) and ordinance in 2006.



Table 2 - Middlesex School Enrollment

Year	Students	Net School Cost
1999-2000	2,184	\$8,426
2000-2001	2,137	\$8,994
2001-2002	2,122	\$9,669
2002-2003	2,136	\$10,198
2003-2004	2,163	\$10,384
2004-2005	2,125	\$11,095
2005-2006	2,073	\$12,013
2006-2007	2,072	\$12,715
2007-2008	2,072	\$13,244
2008-2009	2,138	\$13,356
2009-2010	2,183	\$13,648
2010-2011	2,158	\$13,183
2011-2012	2,158	\$13,033

Source: Rutgers University, Bureau of Government Research and Department of Government Service, New Jersey Legislative District Data Book (1975-2008); School District Budget Statements (2008-2011) and Middlesex Borough School District website.

Middlesex School District

Middlesex has three Elementary Schools, one Middle School and a High School. The school provides education for children from pre-kindergarten to Grade 12. The 2011-2012 operating budget for the school equals \$29,319,271 and an anticipated per pupil cost of \$13,033. The school system has a current enrollment of 2,158 students as of October 2011, which is the same total as 2010. Historical school enrollment data for the Borough and school cost per pupil are shown in Table 2. Table 2 indicates that the Borough has maintained a stable school population for the last 12 school years in which the number of school children varied by 112 students or roughly 5% over the 12-year span. While the current school enrollment is stable, the Borough should continue to monitor the impacts of future development along Lincoln Boulevard and the closing of the Our Lady of Mount Virgin School.

CIRCULATION SYSTEM PROGRESS REPORT 2000 - 2012

The circulation system progress report documents existing conditions and provides recommendations to improve traffic circulation in the Borough. It identifies circulation areas of concern, and makes recommendations to improve circulation patterns within Middlesex.

Traffic Crash Data¹

The following data indicates areas of the Borough with the highest incidents of traffic crashes between 2007 and 2011. These data includes crashes which involved injuries and crashes in which no injuries were reported. No fatal crashes occurred at any of the locations during the specified period. They are as follows :

¹ Source: Middlesex Police Department 2011

Location	Number of Crashes
Lincoln Boulevard @ Mountain Avenue	54
Lincoln Boulevard @ Cedar Avenue	53
Union Avenue @ Hazelwood Avenue	42
Bound Brook Road @ Warrenville Road	36
Union Avenue @ Greenbrook Road	27
Bound Brook Road @ Mountain Avenue	26
Lincoln Boulevard @ River Road	26
Union Avenue @ Harris Avenue	25
Bound Brook Road @ Marlborough Avenue	18
Bound Brook Road @ South Lincoln Avenue	18
Lincoln Boulevard @ Raritan Avenue	18
Marlborough Avenue @ Hawthorne Avenue	15
Bound Brook Road @ Vaness Drive	14
Marlborough Avenue @ Wellington Street	12
Bound Brook Road @ Second Street	10

Circulation Areas of Concern

Critical circulation areas in Middlesex are listed below as a means of identifying areas in the Borough where potential future projects should be investigated. These areas are characterized as having a high rate of accidents, poor roadway configuration, or general circulation concerns. Realizing that many of these projects may not be under local jurisdiction, the Borough will need to identify county and state agencies/organizations and stakeholders and work with them to solve particular problems. The Circulation Concerns Map, identifies these areas of concern, most of which were identified by the Borough Police Department and the Borough Engineer. Further study of these areas is needed to evaluate the following areas of concern.

1. Lincoln Boulevard at Mountain Avenue – This area was identified as a result of the high number of traffic accidents. One potential issue is the timing of the traffic signal. The signal is connected to the train preemption device that causes the traffic signal to quickly change from amber to red.
2. Lincoln Boulevard at Cedar Avenue - This area was identified as a result of the high number of traffic accidents. Collisions occur often when vehicles attempting to turn north on Cedar Avenue from Lincoln Boulevard eastbound do not see the westbound vehicle and collide with the westbound vehicle.
3. Union Avenue at Hazelwood Avenue - This area was identified as a result of the high number of traffic accidents. Further investigation is needed

to identify the cause of crashes in this area.

4. Union Avenue at Green Brood Road - This area was identified as a result of the high number of traffic accidents. The control signal regulates traffic on Union Avenue, Greenbrook Road and the ingress/egress to Middlesex Shopping Center (700 Union Avenue). Numerous accidents occur associated with the left turn movement into the shopping center.
5. Borough Schools – Identified as poor circulation occurs during dropoff and pick up times.
 - Von E. Mauger Middle School – High traffic volume causes vehicles to come to a halt on Fisher Avenue unless a patrol car regulates traffic flow. Lack of public parking and the close proximity to Watchung School may be exacerbating this condition.
 - Watchung School – Heavy congestion occurs along Fisher Avenue and Howard Avenue during drop off and pickup times. Vehicles have a tendency to park illegally which often causes other vehicles to pass the stopped car and travel in the oncoming lane. Lack of public parking and the close proximity to Von E. Mauger Middle School are contributing factors to this circulation problem.
 - Hazelwood School – Ambrose Avenue south of Hazelwood Avenue is congested during drop off and pickup times.
 - Parker School – Located on South Lincoln Avenue, a heavily traveled roadway. Again, the area around the schools is congested during drop off and pick up times.
 - Middlesex High School – Milton Place, Pearl Place and Second Street are the main access streets for vehicles entering and exiting the High School parking lot. Congestion during these hours, coupled with new drivers navigating the traffic, is a circulation concern.

RECOMMENDED CIRCULATION IMPROVEMENTS

A. Department of Public Works

Work completed by the Department of Public Works (DPW) is critical for Middlesex to maintain a safe network of local roads and sidewalks. The DPW, in conjunction with the Borough Engineer’s office for design, bidding and inspection, on a yearly basis, is responsible for reconstruction projects, milling and resurfacing

of roadways and routine maintenance. The continuation of a successful road program is vital to promoting the free flow of traffic necessary to encourage commerce, retain a high quality of life and to maintain the visual appearance of Middlesex Borough. The Borough's Road Program operates on a budget which typically ranges from \$25,000 TO \$50,000 per year. To supplement local revenues, the Borough typically receives local aid from NJDOT and monies from federal programs. On average Middlesex receives approximately \$300,000 in grant monies from the NJDOT local aid program each year. The Borough should continue to support roadway maintenance and improvement projects undertaken by the DPW.

B. Assistance Available

Due to the varied and expansive transportation needs of the State and region, organizations have been formed which aid local municipalities with data collection, research, carpool and vanpool services, transit information, funding, etc. A list of such organizations is provided in the next paragraph. While it is only a limited list, the organizations listed in it can provide additional information to member municipalities, should a specific need arise.

Transportation funding is available at the Federal, Regional, State and County divisions of government. However, the major sources of funding come from the Federal government's Surface and Air Transportation Programs Extension Act of 2011. The New Jersey Planning Transportation Authority (NJPTA) is the federally sanctioned Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the six million people in the thirteen county Northern New Jersey Region. The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is the program coordinated by the NJPTA that lists the projects in each of the Counties in the planning area that are to receive federal funding. The TIP process gains consensus between state and local officials as to the regional transportation improvements that are to be made.

Moreover, as discussed in Section A above, the Borough applies to the NJDOT Local Aid program on a yearly basis to subsidize the Borough's local road maintenance program. Specifics are provided in Section A.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDED CIRCULATION IMPROVEMENTS

The following listed items are recommendations (not in any specific order) intended to

improve circulation throughout the Borough.

1. Continue to investigate the need for traffic calming techniques on local streets with high traffic volumes. Investigate creating horizontal traffic calming improvements prior to installing vertical improvements, e.g., speed bumps. Seek input from the Borough Engineer, Borough's emergency service departments and surrounding business and residential communities prior to installing any such improvements. Areas for consideration include: Harris Avenue, Marlborough Avenue, Vogel Place, Shepherd Avenue, Hazelwood Avenue, Beechwood Avenue, Ashland Road, Milton Place, Pearl Place and Second Street. Each of these roads are either a primary or secondary road that connect to either a state or county road, i.e., cut through. All the listed streets have a posted 25 miles per hour speed limit and have weight limits to reduce the volume of truck traffic.
2. Undertake a circulation study to determine ways to improve circulation and safety flow adjacent to Borough schools.
3. Evaluate where gaps in sidewalks exist in the Borough. Possibly with the assistance of the school system and other local groups, determine and map where sidewalks do not exist in the Borough. Create a formal policy regarding areas where sidewalks should be installed as part of new development and redevelopment. Evaluate missing sidewalks near Borough schools and apply for NJDOT monies to improve sidewalks.

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IMPACTING THE MASTER PLAN

Since the Borough of Middlesex adopted its 2000 Master Plan, there have been significant changes at the local, state and county level that have had an impact on the Borough's planning efforts. At the state and county level, a number of new laws, programs and planning initiatives have been adopted that provide new technical and financial resources for the revitalization of New Jersey's communities. These programs and legislative initiatives have had a significant positive impact on the Borough and support the Borough's own redevelopment efforts. This section analyzes the effect that these changes have had on the assumptions, policies and objectives that form the basis of the Borough's Master Plan.

Table 3: Borough of Middlesex Age Distribution

	2000		2010	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Preschool (0-4)	914	6.7%	754	5.5%
School Age (5-17)	2,392	17.4%	2,313	17.0%
Working Age (18-64)	8,469	61.7%	8,685	63.7%
Seniors (65+)	1,942	14.2%	1,883	13.8%
Total	13,717		13,635	

Source: 2000 and 2010 US Census

CHANGES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

At the local level, investigations were undertaken to determine whether two areas of the Borough meet the criteria for designation as an “area in need of rehabilitation” as defined by the New Jersey Local Redevelopment and Housing Law. The first of these is along the west portion of Lincoln Boulevard and the south portion of Mountain Avenue. The second is the eastern area of Lincoln Boulevard. Additional information regarding the rehabilitation plans is discussed in the Land Use Plan Progress Report and the section of this Plan pertaining to Redevelopment.

Table 4: Residential Building and Demolition Permits Issued, Borough of Middlesex, 2000-2011

Year	Building Permits	Demolition Permits
2000	1	1
2001	5	10
2002	7	11
2003	11	11
2004	9	9
2005	6	5
2006	17	2
2007	8	3
2008	9	3
2009	5	1
2010	7	3
Total	85	59

Source: State of New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, Division of Codes and Standards

Demographic Changes

A number of demographic changes have been reported since the posting of year 2010 Census figures. Demographic changes can affect the outcome of planning efforts. Below is an examination of population, age, and housing characteristics that affect the current state of planning in Middlesex as of the year 2010.

The Borough has remained generally stable in terms of population and development. Table 1 shows the population of Middlesex from 2000 to 2010. According to Census figures, the Borough’s population has decreased by 82 persons since 2000 (-0.6%). Table 2 indicates that 85 building permits were issued for new construction from 2000 to 2010. After subtracting the 59 demolitions which occurred over the same period, a net increase of 26 residential units occurred over the 11-year period.

Table 3, Borough of Middlesex Age Distribution shows trends in the Borough’s age distribution over the past decade. The age of the population has remained constant between 2000 and 2010; the most significant change in the Borough’s population distribution was a slight decrease in preschool aged children from 6.7% in 2000 to 5.5% in 2010. The representation of senior-aged residents in Middlesex decreased slightly from 14.2% in 2000 to 13.8% in 2010, while the number of school aged children remained essentially unchanged (14.2% in 2000 and 13.8% in 2010).

There have been some shifts in the racial distribution of Middlesex over the past decade. The white population decreased by 6% between 2000 and 2010, and represented 81.2% of the Borough’s population in 2010.

Concurrently, the number of African American residents increased somewhat during the same time period (3.4%

Table 5: Borough of Middlesex Racial Distribution

	2000		2010	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
White	11,970	87.3%	11,077	81.2
Black	461	3.4%	699	5.1
American Indian and Alaska Native	18	0.1%	24	0.2
Asian or Pacific Islander	573	4.2%	828	6.1
Other	695	5.1%	1,007	7.4
Total	13,717		13,635	
	Number	Percent of Total Pop.	Number	Percent of Total Pop.
Hispanic Origin (of any race)	1,235	9.0	2,246	16.5

Source: 2000 and 2010 US Census

housing units in the Borough, 75% were owner and 25% renter-occupied housing in both 2000 (75.1% owner occupied v. 24.9% renter-occupied) and 2010 (74.8% owner occupied v. 25.2% renter-occupied). The number of vacant housing units increased slightly between 2000 and 2010, from 82 vacant units in 2000 to 164 vacant units in 2010.

Table 6: Housing Units by Occupancy Status

	2000		2010	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Occupied Units	5,048	98.4	4,984	96.8
Owner Occupied	3,789	75.1	3,730	74.8
Renter Occupied	1,259	24.9	1,254	25.2
Vacant	82	1.6	164	3.2
Total	5,130		5,148	

Source: 2000 and 2010 US Census

in 2000 to 5.1% in 2010). The rise in those identifying their race as 'Other' in 2010 is likely because more respondents selected the category of 'Two or More Races'. This change to the Census race categories likely partially accounts for the decrease of the Borough's white population over the past decade. Additionally, there has been a large increase in residents of Hispanic origin in Middlesex, with 16.5% of the population identifying as Hispanic in 2010. See Table 5, Borough of Middlesex Racial Distribution for more detailed information.

As seen in Table 6, Housing Units by Occupancy Status, there has been an increase of 18 housing units in Middlesex over the last decade. Of the occupied

Table 7: Units in Structure for Occupied Housing Units

	2000	
	Number	Percent
1, detached	3,764	73.4
1, attached	234	4.6
2	356	6.9
3 or 4	113	2.2
5 to 9	60	1.2
10 to 19	213	4.2
20 to 49	143	2.8
50 or more	247	4.8
Mobile Home	0	0.0
Other	0	0.0
Total	5,130	
Source: 2000 and 2010 US Census		

A majority of Middlesex's housing consists of single-family units in 2000 (78%). While 2010 Census figures for units in structure were not available at the time of writing this Plan, only minor changes are expected given that the Borough's housing stock increased by only 18 units since 2000. While the majority of housing units are single-family, 6.9% of the housing stock is two-family; 2.2% are multi-family buildings with 3 to 4 units; 1.2% are multi-family buildings with 5 to 9 units; 4.2% are multi-family buildings with 10 to 19 units; 2.8% are multi-family buildings with 20 to 49 units; and 4.8% are multi-family buildings with 50 or more units.

Household Characteristics

As defined by the Census Bureau, a household includes all persons who occupy a single housing unit, regardless of blood relation. Thus, a household may also include a group of unrelated individuals sharing group quarters. A family is identified as a group of persons including a householder and one or more persons related by blood, marriage or adoption, all living in the same household. In 2000, there were 5,048 households in the Borough with an average of 2.71 persons per household and 3,739 families with an average of 3.17 persons per family. Approximately 74% of the population resided within families in 2000.

Housing Conditions

In 2000, there were no housing units in Middlesex that lack kitchen facilities and 13 units lacked complete plumbing facilities. The high level of habitable dwelling units suggests a well maintained housing stock. Concurrently, while the Census Bureau has no actual definition for overcrowding (i.e. occupants per room), it is generally accepted that housing units with more than one occupant per room constitute an overcrowded dwelling unit. In 2000, it appears that approximately 2.5% of all owner and renter occupied housing units in Middlesex contain more than one occupant per room.

CHANGES AT THE COUNTY LEVEL

County Master Plan

The County Master Plan (Growth Management Guide) is a regional document that creates policy recommendations for the Middlesex County as a whole. The County has not updated the Growth Management Guide since the original State Plan was prepared in 1993. However, since 2000, the County has adopted new elements of the County Master Plan. These include the 2002 Bicycle Pedestrian Plan Element and the 2008 Farmland Preservation Plan Element.

CHANGES AT THE STATE LEVEL

Affordable Housing

See discussion in the Housing Progress Report.

State Energy Master Plan

In October of 2008, the State of New Jersey adopted an Energy Master Plan to guide the state toward a responsible energy future with adequate, reliable energy supplies that are both environmentally responsible and competitively priced. The Plan stresses that its implementation will place New Jersey at the forefront of a growing clean energy economy, and the development of a 21st century energy infrastructure. It will also result in less volatility of energy prices and a reduction in overall energy expenditures for all consumer classes.

The State Energy Plan continues to describe the consequences of a continued unsustainable energy path, one which would be less reliable, environmentally irresponsible, and which would threaten to undermine economic growth in the State. As a result of state initiatives, New Jersey continues to be one of the largest producers of renewable energy in the nation. In 2011, a revised energy master plan was prepared by the State. The Borough should moni-

tor potential revisions to the State Energy Master Plan and potential clean energy funding opportunities.

Sustainability

Increased interest in sustainability in recent years has made its way into State law, as the Municipal Land Use Law was amended in 2008 to permit a “green buildings and environmental sustainability plan element” as part of a municipal master plan. The Municipal Land Use Law was further amended in 2009 to allow wind and solar facilities as permitted uses on parcels of land comprising 20 or more contiguous acres in industrial zones and to make renewable energy facilities an “inherently beneficial use” (i.e., one that serves the public interest by its very existence), and in 2010 to prevent municipalities from unreasonably limiting “small wind energy systems” (i.e., turbines that generate power primarily for on-site consumption) and to exempt solar panels from impervious surface or impervious cover designation. It is recommended that renewable energy and energy efficiency measures be encouraged in new development.

Economic Downturn

Another change affecting land use and development that has occurred since 2000 is a downturn in the economy. Due to a variety of factors, the results have included reduced housing values, increased retail vacancies, higher unemployment and tightened lending standards. This last item in particular has not only had negative impacts on the ability of prospective homebuyers to obtain mortgages, but also made it much more difficult for developers to obtain financing for commercial, office and multi-family residential development. The fallout from the economic crisis will also have future impacts on real estate as loans expire, particularly for commercial properties that have declined in value and are facing declining rental income. It is uncertain as to what the long-term impacts of the downturn will be on Middlesex. But the Borough is poised to benefit from its location and other assets, which will help attract new investment as the economy recovers.

Time of Decision

The New Jersey Senate and Assembly recently passed a bill (S-58: A-437) that overrides the “time of decision rule,” which has governed decision making under the Municipal Land Use Law for decades. The bill, commonly referred to as the “Time of Application” bill, was signed by Governor Christie on May 5, 2010, and took effect on May 5, 2011. This change in law locks in the zoning (and other land development regulations)

that are in effect at the time the development application is filed. Under previous law, a municipal governing body could amend its zoning ordinance after an application for development has been filed with a land use board, even in direct response to the application. This law has taken this option away from municipalities.

Telecommunication Facilities

The siting of telecommunications facilities has become a significant land use issue. It is recommended that the Borough create an ordinance that regulates the location and design of such facilities.

ADDITIONAL ORDINANCE AND PLANNING RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Permit Borough uses in all zone districts with design standards.
2. Rezone districts in accordance with the recommendations in the Future Land Use Plan. (See Attachment D)
3. Increase the building height from 35 to 38 feet in the proposed GB-1 and GB-2 districts.
4. Create a new Conservation Zone in accordance with the Open Space/Recreation and Environment Progress Report.
5. Increase the minimum lot size for two-family homes in the R-60B district in accordance with the Land Use Plan.
6. Update the definitions in the Borough’s Zoning and Land Development ordinances to include definitions for new uses and to better define several existing uses. New definitions should be included for, but not limited to: medical offices; massage therapist; building contractor, sign area, storage yard, massage parlor; and differentiate between auto repair and auto body.
7. Require a maximum percentage of the front yard that can be impervious to retain the green suburban character of the Borough.
8. Create a new zoning map using digital parcel map information currently being prepared by the County. The zoning map should include redevelopment district Focus Area districts and overlay districts identified within the Borough Redevelopment Plan.
9. Create a wireless telecommunications ordinance to properly regulate the placement and aesthetic impacts of monopoles, lattice towers and associated wireless development structures.
10. Change the definition of building height to allow buildings to be raised outside of the floodplain without requiring variance relief and to more

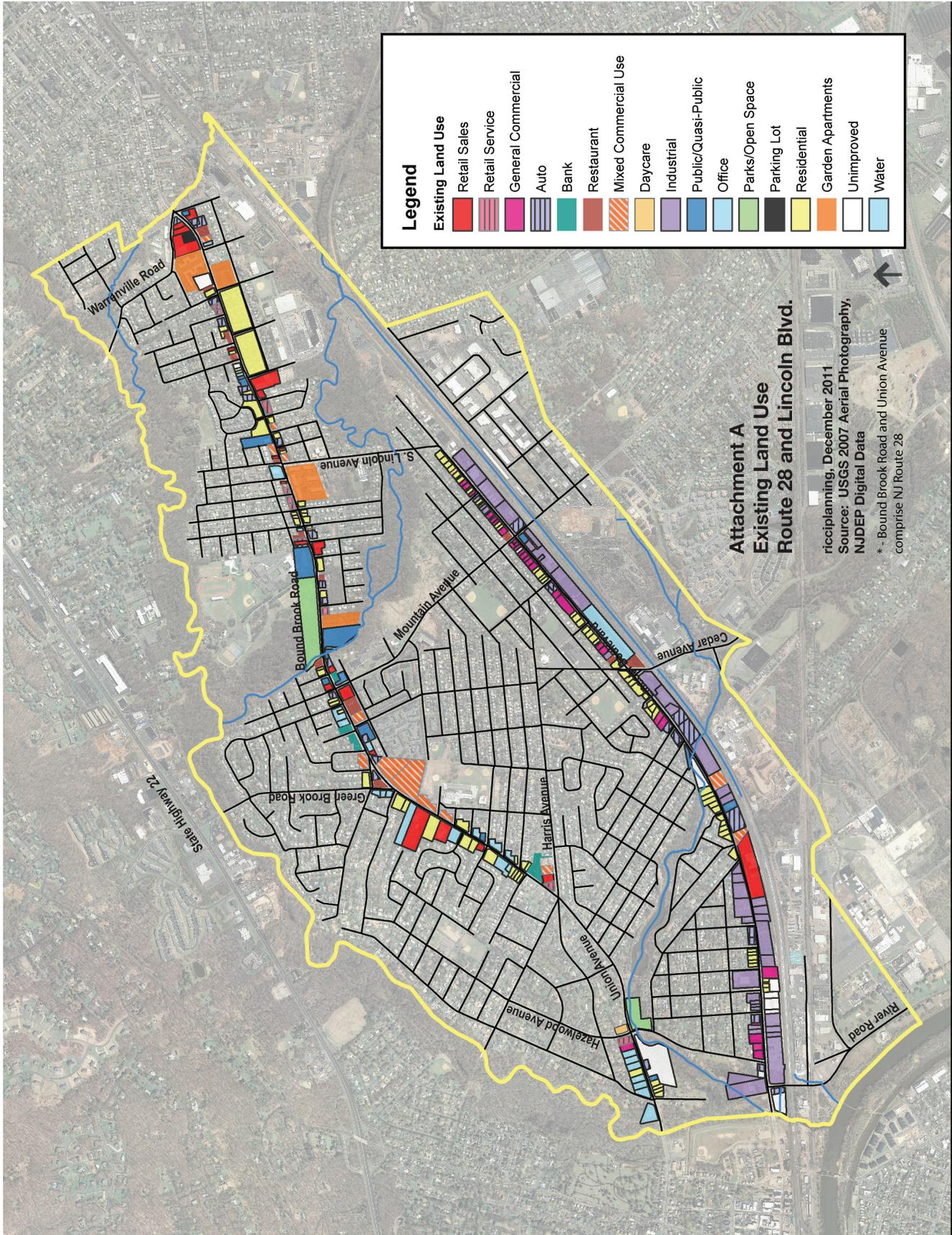
clearly define how to measure structures with flat or mansard roofs.

11. Eliminate retail shopping facilities and service establishments as a principal permitted use in the Borough's industrial districts. This is needed to retain viable industrial areas.
12. Allow for wholesale sales and service in the IND and CLW districts as long as the use occupies 10% or less of a warehouse or similar use.
13. Create new opportunities for emerging land uses such as animal day care facilities, solar panels and other land uses.
14. Provisions for fences on corner lots should be updated in accordance with recommendations from the Zoning Officer.
15. Permit solar (photovoltaic) panels in all districts when they generate power for only the structure or use on the subject property. Create specific standards for roof-mounted, building-mounted and ground-mounted solar panels.
16. Update the tree replacement ordinance. Consider updating tree replacement fees, creating incentives to preserve specimen trees and define what constitutes a tree, i.e., should an arborvitae be considered a tree?
17. Revise parking standards to permit a shared parking approach to mixed use developments. Update off-street parking ratios with current off-street parking standards. Many of the Borough's existing standards require more parking than necessary for nonresidential uses. Create parking standards for medical offices in addition to professional offices. Require residential parking in accordance with the Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS).
18. Update the sign ordinance to properly regulate electric message center (EMC) signs.
19. Create a maximum permitted height for accessory building and structures and the outdoor storage of equipment. Clearly indicate that no outdoor storage of equipment shall be permitted in the required front yard in any zone district.
20. Create varying standards for pool setbacks based upon the size of properties or by zone district rather than having a static setback as regulated in Section 420-15.
21. Update the zoning ordinance to require a structure on each lot to be associated with a use. For example, outdoor storage without a principal structure should not be a permitted use in the Borough.
22. Community Design. Community Design is a key component of the Land Use Plan for a Borough such as Middlesex. Quality of life issues are directly related to community design. The intent of a community design component is to recognize and enhance, where feasible, those elements of the Borough to create the character and context for which any future development and redevelopment should be designed and planned for. From a community design perspective, the Borough has many opportunities to improve its community design. It has established neighborhoods and an extensive system of community facilities.
23. Patiently work toward a bicycle network of shared or dedicated use ("bike lanes" and "bike paths," respectively). The aim is to identify the safest and most effective routes to provide better access to parks and schools as well as other local destinations. The design should better link residential communities to community facilities. Bike lanes, when painted on a roadway, not only provide access, but they are also a means of traffic calming. The long-term goal is to develop an interconnected circuit of bike lanes and paths that circumnavigate the Borough, such that bicycling is a realistic alternative to the car.
24. Revise the Borough's ordinance to reconcile ordinance inconsistencies identified by the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

Creation of a new Master Plan - At this time, the Planning Board recommends that there is not a need to prepare a new master plan. The last full Master Plan adopted in 2000 and the associated updates in this Reexamination Report and Amended Land Use Plan are sufficient to guide the Borough for the immediate future. However, changes in land use, housing and circulation policy at the state level may create the need to evaluate sections of the Master Plan prior to the next required master plan review.

REDEVELOPMENT PLANS - As indicated in the Land Use Progress Report, the Borough adopted the Lincoln Boulevard Redevelopment Plan in 2007. This Plan recommends incorporating the Redevelopment Plan into the Land Use Element of the Master Plan recognizing that the Plan is likely to be updated from time to time to reflect changing market conditions.

The Borough's Zoning Map should be updated to show the location of the redevelopment districts and overlay districts in accordance with the requirements of the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (LRHL).

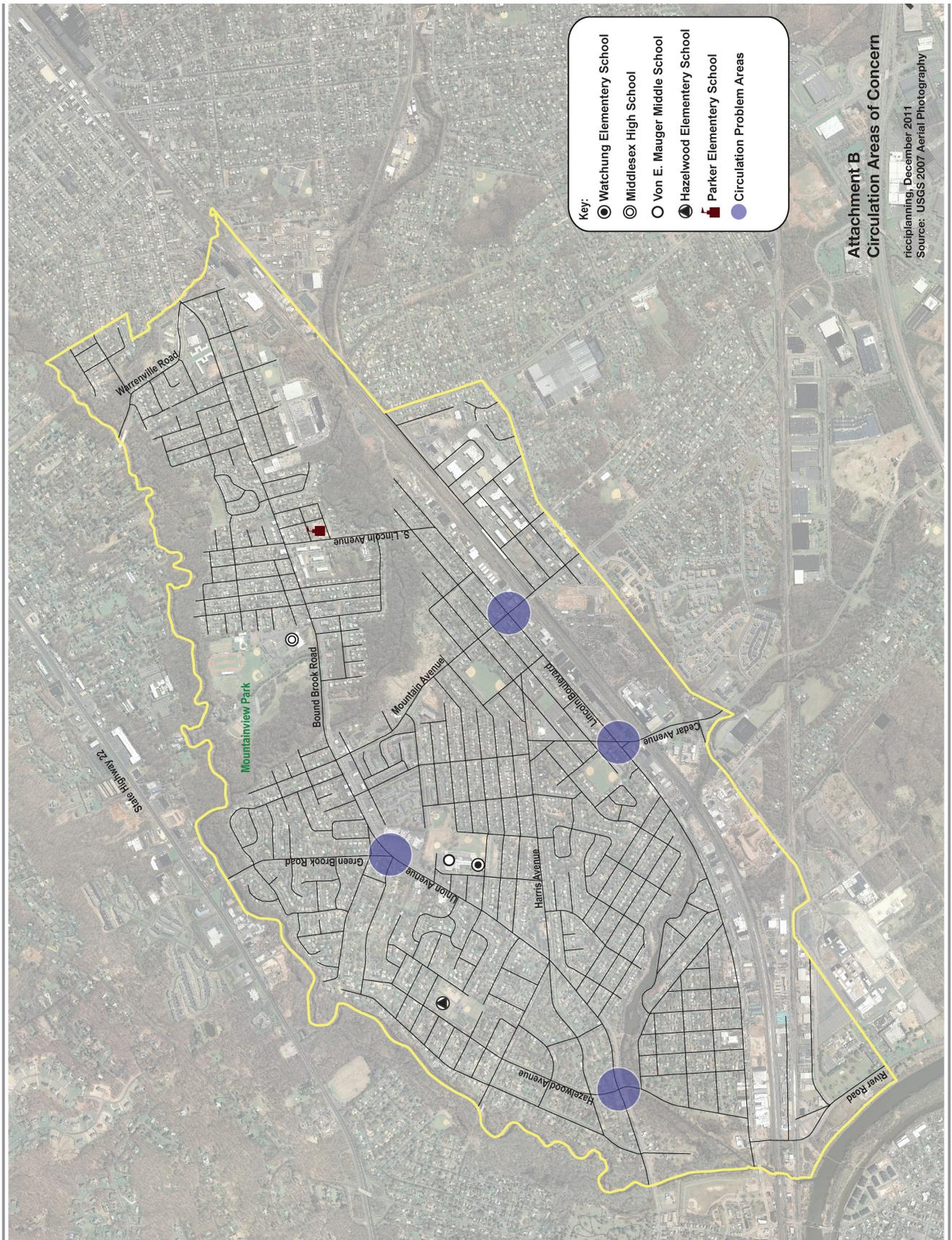


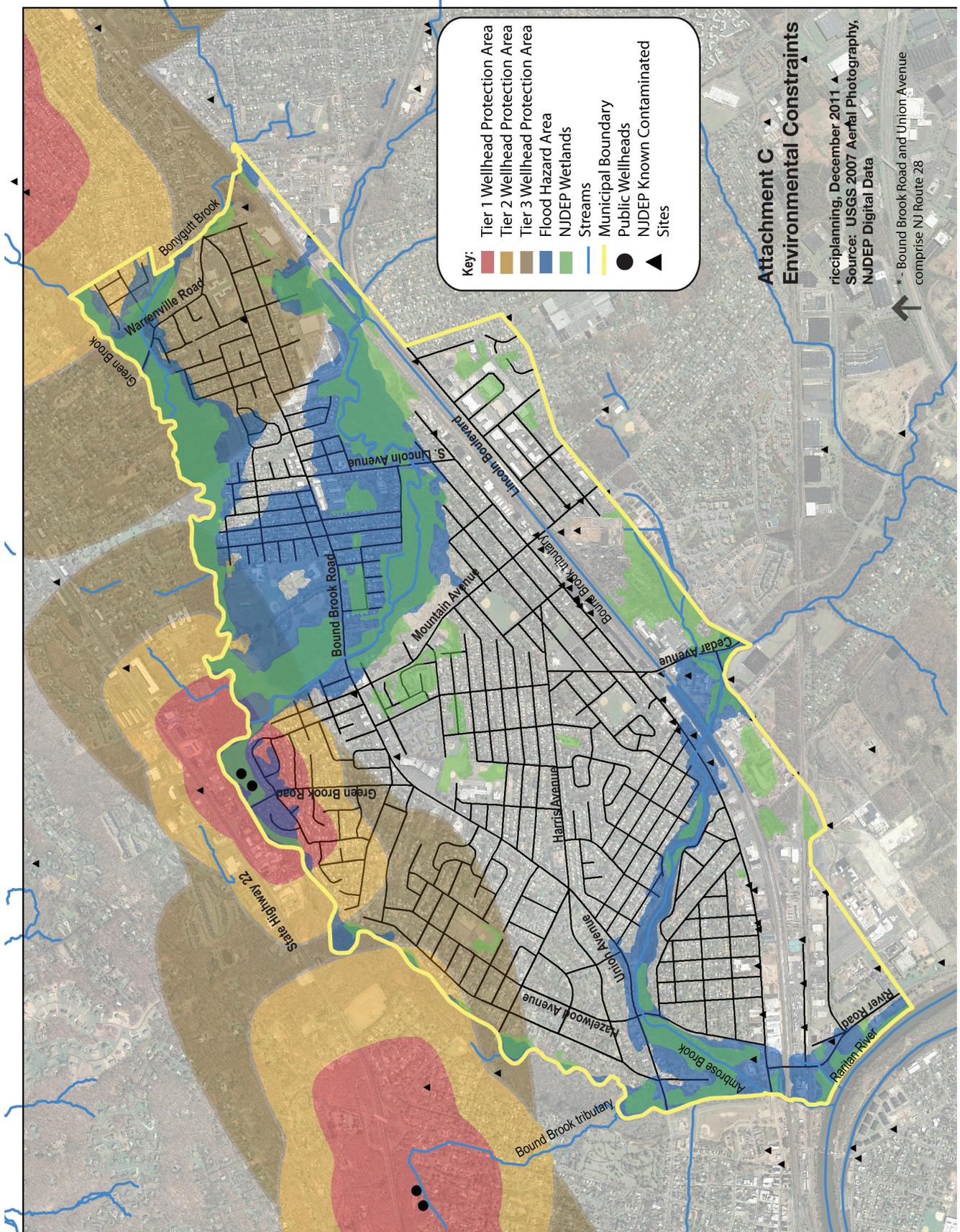
Legend

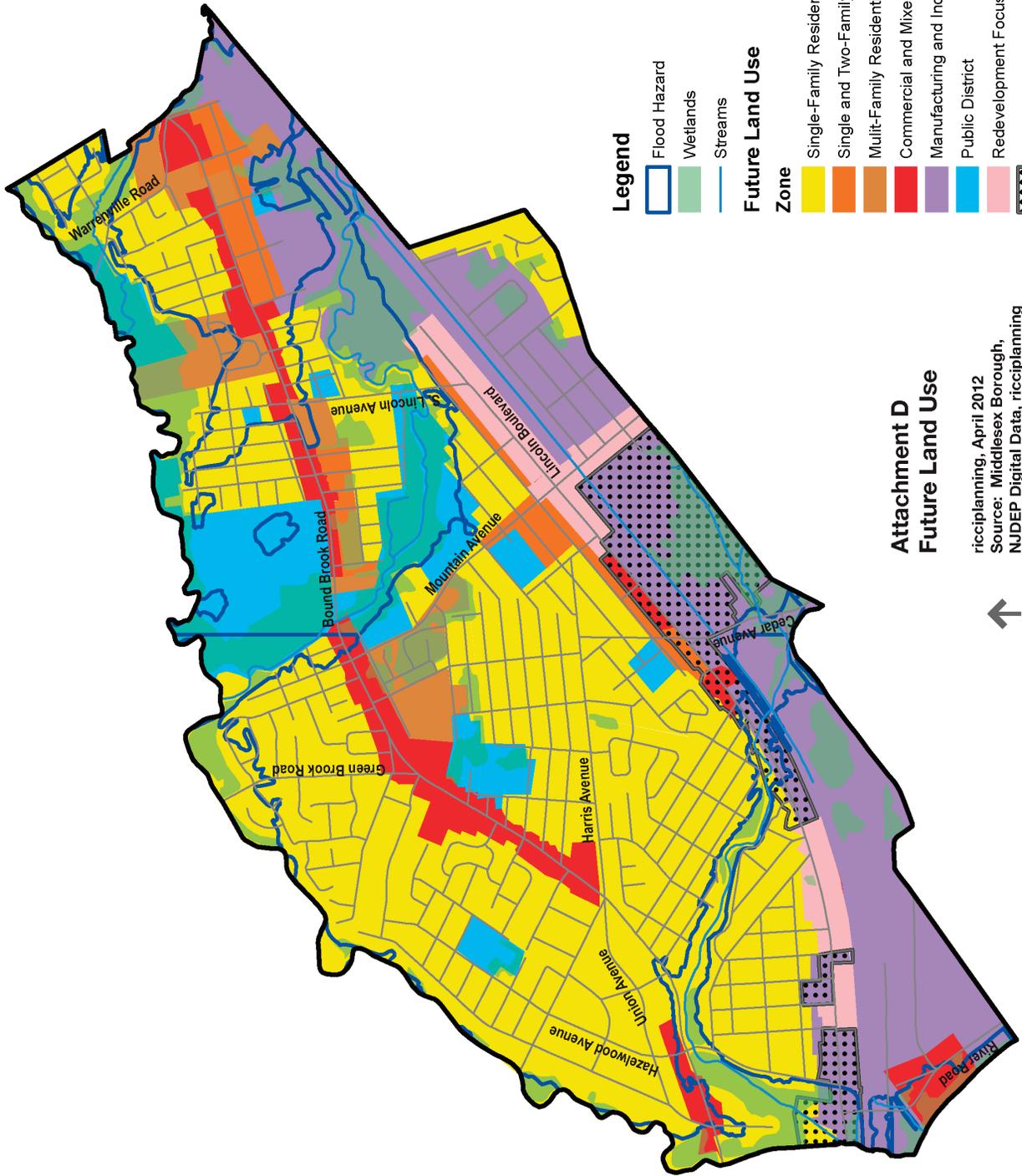
Existing Land Use	Red
Retail Sales	Red with diagonal lines
Retail Service	Pink with diagonal lines
General Commercial	Pink
Auto	Blue with diagonal lines
Bank	Teal
Restaurant	Orange
Mixed Commercial Use	Orange with diagonal lines
Daycare	Yellow
Industrial	Purple
Public/Quasi-Public	Blue
Office	Light Blue
Parks/Open Space	Green
Parking Lot	Black
Residential	Light Yellow
Garden Apartments	Orange
Unimproved	White
Water	Light Blue

**Attachment A
Existing Land Use
Route 28 and Lincoln Blvd.**

riciplanning, December 2011
 Source: USGS 2007 Aerial Photography,
 NUDEP Digital Data
 * - Bound Brook Road and Union Avenue
 comprise NJ Route 28







**Attachment D
Future Land Use**

riciplanning, April 2012
 Source: Middlesex Borough,
 NJDEP Digital Data, riciplanning



Attachment E: FEMA Floodprone Properties		
Address	Occupancy	Flood Zone
304 John Street	2-4 Family	A04
Rear of 8 Marshall Place	Single-Family	A04
107 Rock Lane	Single-Family	AE
239 Raritan Avenue	Single-Family	A01
73 Warrenton Road	Single-Family	A06
126 5th Street	Single-Family	AE
127 5th Street	Single-Family	A06
123 6th Street	Single-Family	A07
124 6th Street	Single-Family	AE
127 6th Street	Single-Family	A04
128 6th Street	Single-Family	A06
127 7th Street	Single-Family	A02
130 7th Street	Single-Family	AE
131 7th Street	Single-Family	A02
126 7th Street	Single-Family	N/A
Source: FEMA		