

Borough of Highlands, NJ

Goals and Objectives from 2016 Master Plan Reexamination Report

General Objectives

1. Physically- to meet the needs of the Borough with the creation of mixed-use development of exceptional design quality, a waterfront destination for activity and relaxation.
2. Socially- a redeveloped community offering homes, employment, services, civic spaces and leisure in a quality environment which will form part of the established communities of the Bayshore Region.
3. Naturally- to protect the existing resource base through sensitive design, energy efficiency, sustainable waste management and to minimize the impact on the local environment.
4. Strive to increase the percentage of owner- occupied housing in the Borough.
5. To create a balanced Borough- residential, business/ employment, retail, community and leisure.

Residential

1. Encourage the maintenance and preservation of residential properties.
2. Preserve and protect the existing residential character of the Borough. Require that infill development be compatible with the neighborhood and conform to the setbacks of existing buildings on the block.
3. Limit new development and infill development that increases the intensity of neighborhood land and property use.
4. Ensure that public and quasi-public land use remains compatible with the needs and character of adjacent neighborhoods.
5. Prevent non-residential uses from locating on residential streets or in residential areas.
6. Limit developments that would generate a high volume of traffic on local and collector streets.
7. Identify sources of funds for rehabilitation of residential dwellings and provide assistance to property owners in procuring funds.
8. The Borough should recognize historic assets without a formal designation.

Commercial

1. Strengthen commercial districts, especially the Bay Avenue Central Business District, by encouraging a mix of uses that provides employment, retail opportunities, services and entertainment.
2. Continue the improvement of commercial properties in the Borough.
3. Require buffering around commercial properties to soften the visual and functional impact of their design and use.

4. Encourage redevelopment of commercial properties that need rehabilitation or improvement.
5. Encourage upgrading of commercial properties and their surroundings.
6. Encourage the development of small-scale commercial and office uses and encourage the design of buildings with a residential scale.
7. Strive to enhance and retain existing businesses and promote new business development along Bay Avenue from Valley Street to the Bay Avenue/ Shrewsbury Avenue intersection, and recommended redevelopment areas.
8. Provide for adequate parking to serve established residential and commercial areas. Incorporate adequate parking into new developments.
9. Create a program to implement strict enforcement of sign regulations.
10. Update ordinances to streamline the development review process for improvements such as use changes, redevelopment, expansions, and developments.
11. Create attractive gateways at the principal entrances to the Borough through upgraded land uses, streetscape improvements and signage. Utilize gateways to attract visitors to business districts.
12. Consider the location of parking structures where appropriate, so long as they are consistent with the overall objectives of the Borough's planning documents and sound planning principles and design, while having no adverse impacts on the surrounding neighborhood.

Circulation

1. Promote the creation of a fully intermodal transportation system that enhances local circulation, increases regional access and provides links to regional destinations. Coordinate land uses with transportation investments to promote intermodal connections and encourage alternatives to driving such as mass transit, ferry and bicycle/ pedestrian facilities.
2. Increase bicycle/ pedestrian safety and circulation by improving traffic signals at key intersections, utilizing traffic calming measures and providing bike lanes that connect activity centers throughout the Borough.
3. Evaluate and implement methods of providing adequate parking to serve existing development and proposed redevelopment. Consider facilitating lease parking options between private sector business operators to take advantage of low peak parking demand.
4. Ensure a well maintained and safe circulation system.
5. Coordinate maintenance and improvement actions with neighboring communities and Monmouth County.
6. Monitor areas with high traffic accident rates and develop improvement programs.
7. Discourage developments that do not meet minimum frontage requirements on public or private roads.

8. Encourage circulation patterns that are compatible with land use goals and public safety.
9. Monitor private roads to ensure that the maintenance and safety needs continue to be satisfied.
10. Improve the appearance of intermediate and major thoroughfares, such as Route 36 and Bay Avenue.
11. Encourage landscaping along intermediate and major thoroughfares to buffer residential and non-residential land uses from the noise and pollution of vehicular traffic.
12. Cooperate with NJ DOT and adjacent communities to improve the appearance of entranceways into the Borough from Route 36.
13. To improve public access to the waterfront.
14. To encourage pedestrian and bicycle access through redevelopment projects, parkland and civic spaces to the waterfront.
15. Provide clear signage to parking facilities.

Economic Development/ Redevelopment

1. Capitalize on the Borough's competitive advantages for economic development purposes including its location in the New Jersey/ New York City region, extensive transportation and utility infrastructure, land available for redevelopment, stable labor force and quality of life.
2. Encourage the development of a diversified economic base that generates employment growth, provides increased tax ratables, increases income levels and promotes the reuse of underutilized properties.
3. Focus economic activity in the Borough's economic centers including Bay Avenue and commercial waterfront areas. Recognize the unique character of each area and promote development that will strengthen and reinforce market niches.
4. Promote the revitalization and aesthetic appearance of the Bay Avenue CBD through the public-private partnership between the Borough and the Business Improvement District (BID) with a focus on niche retail, specialty services, restaurants and entertainment uses. Consider the development of small scale anchor uses to make the CBD a destination and attract shoppers as well as visitors.
5. Encourage selected retail, marina and office mixed use development along the Sandy Hook Bay waterfront that take advantage of extensive waterfront frontage and regional access. Target the corridor for uses that complement Bay Avenue rather than compete with it.
6. Encourage redevelopment in areas that need rehabilitation or improvement.
7. Work with the Business Improvement District (BID) and the Economic Development Committee to extend the existing peak summer season.
8. Capitalize on the economic resources represented by Sandy Hook, Route 36, the Twin Lights, the New York Ferry and the physical attractiveness of the area.
9. Investigate the creation of mixed use marine development at targeted locations.

Landscaping/ Hard Landscaping

1. To provide a marine landscape setting; to maximize public access to both informal and formal spaces; to capitalize on the Veterans Park formal play area and to develop areas of public art.
2. To encourage use of high quality landscaping design- to enhance dramatic views to the bay, to develop civic space and public art, to develop and to screen and integrate development.
3. To encourage the use of low maintenance, hard-wearing materials in parks and public spaces.
4. To minimize visual intrusion through the development of car parking under buildings or landscape courts.

Community Facilities and Utility Infrastructure

1. Provide adequate sewer and water services to meet the demands of proposed economic development and a growing population in a manner that will limit sprawl and promote concentrated development.
2. To achieve the storm water quality standards established by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection.
3. Improve storm water management along the bay front, roads and intersections through effective infrastructure, maintenance, and replacement.
4. Preserve and upgrade the existing utility infrastructure including water, stormwater management and wastewater treatment. Continue rehabilitation programs while pursuing selected replacement and expansion projects in order to accommodate growth and redevelopment.
5. Continue to investigate the consolidation and privatization of municipal services.
6. Encourage regularly scheduled infrastructure maintenance consistent with long range plans to avoid system failures.
7. Study and periodically review future service needs and implementation methods.
8. Continue trash reduction, reuse and recycling efforts in cooperation with appropriate County, Regional, and State agencies.
9. Maximize the use of existing and planned facilities consistent with the efficient use of public funds.
10. Maintain facilities that are in current use and renovate or reuse obsolete facilities for other uses.
11. Cooperate with surrounding communities, County, and State organizations to make the best use of available public facilities.

Open Space and Recreation

1. Provide adequate park, open space, and recreational facilities for all Borough residents.
2. Cooperate with public and quasi-public institutions to utilize and maintain their undeveloped land for open space or recreation.
3. Consider enhancing regulations to assure that quality open space is provided and maintained as redevelopment occurs.

4. Provide through block pedestrian paths to parking and recreation facilities.

Community Identity

1. Develop and effectively communicate a strong and appealing identity for the Borough.
2. Creative attractive, memorable "gateways" into the Borough.
3. Develop and implement streetscape projects for major public thoroughfares.
4. Preserve and protect historic and major natural features in the Borough.
5. Enhance and maintain the appearance of community facilities and Borough owned properties.
6. Recognize excellent building and landscape design aesthetics with awards.
7. Encourage higher quality architectural and landscape design through the use of design standards.
8. Encourage neighborhoods to improve their aesthetic appeal and identity.
9. Publish information regarding Borough regulations, issues, and agendas on the Borough Web site.
10. Obtain NFIP compliance and apply for CRS certification.

Cultural

1. To encourage sensitive design in the conversion and re-use of the buildings and their environment and to mitigate the effect of adjoining developments.
2. Expand recreational and cultural facilities and services.