



MASTER PLAN REEXAMINATION REPORT

Town of Hackettstown
Warren County, New Jersey

Adopted by the
Hackettstown
Land Use Board:
November 27, 2018

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

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Introduction

The New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law, N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1 et seq. stipulates that each municipality in the State of New Jersey shall reexamine its Master Plan and development regulations at least every ten years. Specifically, N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89 states:

“The governing body shall, at least every ten years, provide for a general reexamination of its Master Plan and development regulations by the Planning Board, which shall prepare and adopt by resolution a report on the findings of such reexamination, a copy of which report and resolution shall be sent to the County Planning Board and the municipal clerk of each adjoining municipality.”

The current Town of Hackettstown Master Plan was adopted by the Planning Board pursuant to Article 3 of the MLUL (N.J.S.A. 40:550-28) on October 1988. The Town of Hackettstown’s last complete Master Plan Reexamination Report (“MPR”) was adopted by the Planning Board in January 2008. Two additional Supplemental Modification to the MPR were adopted in March 2010 and December 2012. The Town also adopted an MPR in March 2012 to achieve consistency with the Highlands Regional Master Plan.

The purpose of a Reexamination Report, prepared in accordance with the Municipal Land Use Law, is to periodically reexamine the master plan, zoning, and land development regulations of a municipality to determine whether they continue to address the development goals and objectives of the municipality and to provide recommendations that will address proposed changes in development goals, the impact of development within the municipality and the impact of planning and development regulations by the County, the State of New Jersey and the Federal government.

This reexamination of the Town of Hackettstown Master Plan conforms to the requirements of the Municipal Land Use Law and addresses the requirements of N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89 by including the following:

- A. The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of adoption of the last reexamination report.
- B. The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date.
- C. The extent to which there have been significant changes in the assumptions, policies and objectives forming the basis for the master plan or development regulations as last revised, with particular regard to the density and distribution of population and 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.
- D. The specific changes recommended for the master plan or development regulations, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether a new plan or regulations should be prepared.
- E. The recommendations of the planning board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans adopted pursuant to the "Local Redevelopment and Housing Law", N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 et al., into the land use plan element of the municipal master plan, and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.

Town of Hackettstown

It is important that a Master Plan be kept up-to-date and flexible so that it can respond to changing conditions and reflect the current land use policies of the municipality. The Master Plan should be a document that is easily amended so that it can respond to both concerns and opportunities. The aforementioned requirements of the Municipal Land Use Law are addressed in the sections of this report that follow.

Municipal Summary

The Town of Hackettstown contains approximately 3.7 square miles (or 2,374 acres) situated in the easternmost part of Warren County, New Jersey. Hackettstown is bordered by Washington Township and Mount Olive Township in Morris County and Allamuchy, Independence and Mansfield Townships in Warren County. Hackettstown is traversed by US Route 46, State Route 182, County Route 517, and State Route 57. Additionally, Hackettstown is served by a transit stop on the NJ Transit Montclair-Boonton and Morristown rail lines.

Hackettstown is a suburban community with predominately single-family detached housing units. Hackettstown has three primary commercial corridors in Town. The area along the Main Street (US Route 46) corridor, between the Stiger Street intersection and the Warren Street, Mountain Avenue, Mill Street and Willow Grove Street intersection, is commonly referred to as the Downtown Area or Downtown Corridor. The Downtown Area primarily consists of the TCC Town Center Commercial District, which is generally developed as a traditional, walkable downtown center with one-, two- and three-story commercial structures with residential apartments on the upper floors. The Mountain Avenue corridor and the Route 57 corridor are the Town's automobile oriented commercial areas, zoned for HC Highway Commercial and CC Community Commercial. The Town also contains large areas of limited manufacturing

uses, primarily along the railroad line. Lastly, the Town is home to the Hackettstown Regional Medical Center and other medical office uses along Willow Grove Street and Bilby Road, as well as the Centenary University campus, located off of Grand Avenue, between Fifth Avenue and Jefferson Street.

Hackettstown has an estimated population of 9,579 residents and estimated 8,314 jobs. Hackettstown is served by public water and sewer.

Hackettstown is situated entirely within the Highlands Region, with 203 acres being located within the Highlands Preservation Area and 2,171 acres within the Highlands Planning Area. According to the Highlands Land Use Capability Zone ("LUCZ") Map, Hackettstown includes 426 acres of land in the Protection Zone, 1,336 acres in the Existing Community Zone, 152 acres of land in the Existing Community Zone – Environmentally Constrained Sub-Zone, and 214 acres of land in the Wildlife Management Sub-Zone.

Hackettstown received Plan Conformance from the Highlands Council on August 3, 2011 for lands in both the Preservation Area and Planning Area. The approved Petition for Plan Conformance was accompanied by approval of a Highlands Center Designation for the Hackettstown Highlands Center, which encompasses the central business district, the Hackettstown Historic District, the Centenary University Campus, the Stiger Street Redevelopment Area, the Hackettstown Regional Medical Center and adjacent affordable housing projects, M&M/Mars, and commercial/residential development near the border with Mansfield Township. The total area of the Highlands Center includes approximately 743 acres, all of which is in the Planning Area and is served by both water and sewer service.

According to the 2001 State Development and Redevelopment Plan (“SDRP”) Policy Map, Hackettstown contains 1,905 acres situated in the PA4B Rural/Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area and 51.6 acres in the PA5 Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area. The SDRP also designates 211.1 acres as Parks and Natural Area.

Planning History

- 1978 – Comprehensive Master Plan
- October 1988 – Comprehensive Master Plan Revision
- July 1994 – Master Plan Reexamination Report
- July 2001 – Master Plan Reexamination Report
- April 2006 – Housing Element & Fair Share Plan
- January 2008 – Master Plan Reexamination Report
- March 2010 – Supplemental Modification to Master Plan Reexamination Report [Bilby Road]
- April 2010 – Housing Element & Fair Share Plan
- March 2012 – Master Plan Reexamination Report [Highlands Plan Conformance]
- December 2012 – Supplemental Modification to Master Plan Reexamination Report [Bergen Tool]
- July 2017 – Housing Element & Fair Share Plan

Master Plan Reexamination Process

Land Use Board Subcommittee

The Hackettstown Land Use Board formed a Master Plan Subcommittee consisting of four Land Use Board Members to meet regularly to review and guide the master plan reexamination process.

Meeting with Stakeholders

As part of the reconnaissance phase of the Master Plan Reexamination process, Maser Consulting has collected information from major stakeholders and property owners in the Town to determine what their future plans are and how these plans may relate to the current Zoning and Master Plan of the Town. Maser Consulting conducted a series of public information sessions on October 5, 2017. The following six stakeholder groups were invited to attend the information session at Town Hall to discuss the Zoning and Master Plan:

- Hackettstown Business Improvement District
- Peter Paftinos (Varus, LLC)
- Centenary University
- Hackettstown Regional Medical Center
- Hackettstown Board of Education ¹
- Mars Wrigley (M&M) ¹

Additionally, Maser Consulting met with Kathleen Corcoran, PE, PP, Executive Director of the Hackettstown Municipal Utilities Authority (“HMUA”) on January 23, 2018, to discuss information regarding water and sewer capacity.

These results of these discussions with the stakeholder groups was presented to the full Land Use Board and addressed in their deliberations in the master plan process.

¹ Did not attend.

Master Plan Goals and Objectives

A list of goals and objectives relating to land development is presented in the Land Use Plan and Housing Plan Elements of the 1988 Master Plan. Elsewhere within the Master Plan documents there are discussions identifying specific problems or needs. Specifically, nine goals and objectives that were enumerated in the 1978 Master Plan were found to remain valid through the 1994 MPR. These are as follows:

1. To encourage the preservation and revitalization of the historic center of Hackettstown, the Main Street area from Mountain Avenue to the railroad, by endorsing the proposed Town program of rehabilitation and public improvements; by creating an Historic District Zone; and by zoning which permits, on a controlled basis, the use of upper floors of existing buildings for residential accommodations appropriate for low and moderate-income families.
2. To encourage the preservation of the older residential sections adjoining the Main Street area by extending the Historic District Zone to Centenary University on the south and along High Street on the north.
3. To recognize environmental constraints and the need to conserve open space, as well as to provide for desirable new housing construction, by establishing planned residential and cluster zoning for appropriate sections of undeveloped land in the northeast and southwest sections of the Town.
4. To provide for appropriate adjustments in the boundaries of the business and industrial zones, and restrictions on business uses unduly increasing traffic congestion.
5. To make provisions for the location of Senior Citizen housing developments for moderate-income families, in appropriate locations.

6. To create special districts for office and related development, in areas where other business would not be appropriate.
7. To encourage needed traffic control and street widening projects, particularly in the Mountain Avenue area where there has been a substantial increase in traffic flow.
8. To encourage continuing modest investment in the improvement of public facilities, on a programmed basis.
9. To encourage industrial development through the widening of a critical access road and the extension of sewer and water facilities, in the northern section of the Town.

Additionally, the following seven "Goals and Objectives" were proposed in 1988 which both embellished and added to the nine "purposes" appearing in the prior 1978 Master Plan Report:

1. The Development Plan of the Town of Hackettstown should build upon and refine the past planning decisions of the municipality, consistent with present local and regional needs, desires and obligations.
2. The identity of the Town as a whole, and the integrity of the individual residential neighborhood areas should be preserved, enhanced, and protected via buffering from inconsistent adjoining land uses such as retail commercial and industrial activities.
3. The Development Plan should recognize the physical characteristics of the Town and acknowledge the inherent capabilities and limitations of the land to host different types of community development:

- a. The conservation of existing natural resources should be an integral part of the planning process, even though the Town is largely physically developed with special attention to the constraints of particularly environmentally sensitive land areas;
 - b. The preservation of the existing open space areas within the Town should be safeguarded and maintained, and additional open space areas should be set aside, wherever and whenever possible and appropriate, in order to maintain a balance of non-residential and residential development and open space areas planned and used for a variety of passive and active purposes; and
 - c. The water quality of the Musconetcong River should be safeguarded in order to prevent any adverse impact upon the water resulting from development within the Town of Hackettstown.
 - d. The development of non-residential lands should be controlled and monitored to assure that no activity causes pollution to the air or the ground.
4. The development plan should ensure that any future residential development of currently vacant land areas within the Town contains sufficient amounts and types of open space for a variety of conservation, passive recreational and active recreational needs.
 5. The Development Plan should strive to maintain and improve upon the commercial and industrial vitality of the Town, and should promote new development and redevelopment of non-residential uses in appropriate locations so that the local economy of Hackettstown remains strong and unemployment remains low.
 6. The traffic circulation difficulties experienced within and around the Town Center should be addressed and resolved in a manner which:
 - a. Preserves the historic qualities and attributes of the Town Center;
 - b. Coordinates local plans for traffic circulation improvements with those of Warren County and the State of New Jersey;
 - c. Provides, whenever possible, off-street parking facilities for the commercial activities along Main Street in order to lessen congestion along the roadway and add to the convenience of shoppers; and
 - d. Limits and controls driveway access to the major roadways in the Town by encouraging adjacent landowners to cooperatively share access points to the roadways whenever possible.
 7. Sidewalks should be constructed, depending upon the probable volume of pedestrian traffic and the location of the subject property relative to destinations in walking distance, such as the center of Town.
- This 2018 MPR reaffirms that these underlying goals and objectives are still relevant, with exception to the following:
- Goal 5. To make provisions for the location of Senior Citizen housing developments for moderate-income families, in appropriate locations.*
- Due to changes in affordable housing regulations, a maximum of 25 percent of the affordable housing obligation can be composed of age-restricted affordable units. Due to the substantial amount of age-restricted

housing that was developed over the past 20 years, the Town now has exceeded its 25 percent cap for the Prior Round and Third-Round obligations and has an excess capacity of age-restricted housing credits that have been reserved for future obligations. Being a walkable community with a convenient mixture of retail goods and services, educational and cultural attractions, and institutional uses, it is expected that Hackettstown will continue to be attractive to older persons and households seeking senior or age-restricted housing, built either as low-cost housing or private market housing. Until appropriate legislative changes are adopted, giving older centers like Hackettstown greater Mount Laurel credits for providing low cost senior housing, there will be less incentive for low and moderate-income senior housing in Hackettstown.

Goal 9. To encourage industrial development through the widening of a critical access road and the extension of sewer and water facilities, in the northern section of the Town.

Goal 9 encouraged additional industrial development along Bilby Road. This goal has been achieved through the reconstruction of Bilby Road in the 1980s, along with subsequent master plan amendments, rezoning and development approvals. Therefore, Goal 9 is no longer valid.

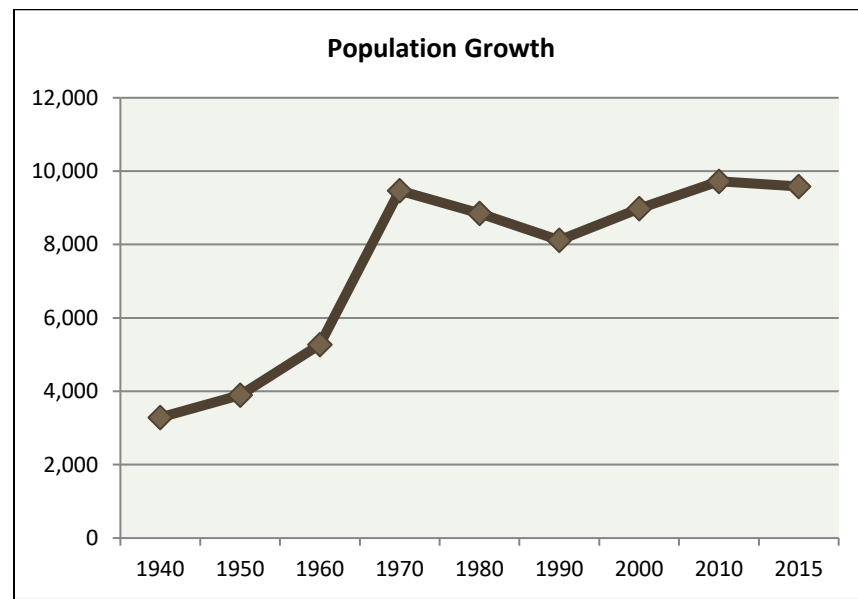
Significant Changes in Assumptions, Policies and Objectives

Population Changes

Hackettstown is a largely built-out community with a current population of 9,579 persons according to the 2015 American Community Survey. Hackettstown went through a period of growth from the 1940s through the 1970s, during which the Town nearly tripled in population. The Town saw a period of decline, losing 1,350 residents from 1970 to 1990. The

population rebounded by 2010 and again saw a slight decline by 2015. This cycle of growth and decline is typical for a built-out community.

POPULATION GROWTH			
Year	Population	Change	Percent
1940	3,289	---	---
1950	3,894	605	18.4%
1960	5,276	1,382	35.5%
1970	9,472	4,196	79.5%
1980	8,850	-622	-6.6%
1990	8,120	-730	-8.2%
2000	8,984	864	10.6%
2010	9,724	740	8.2%
2015	9,579	-145	-1.5%
Sources: http://lwd.dol.state.nj.us/labor/lpa/census/2kpub/njsdcp3.pdf , DP-1: 2010 Census Table and DP05: 2015 ACS Table			



The North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) projects that the Town's population will grow by 2,376 residents by 2040. This represents a 24.4 percent increase over 30 years, or an annualized increase of 0.81 percent. To achieve this, Hackettstown would need to grow by approximately 76 residents each year. As shown above, Hackettstown's population has decreased by an average of 29 residents annually since 2010. This decline in population is related to the national housing crisis in 2008 and the Town expects that housing development will turn around in the next ten years. There are several housing projects that have been approved and not yet built, which the Town expects to see developed in the future. It is also anticipated that the Main Street will undergo a transformation through redevelopment and densification, which will also result in a population increase.

PERMANENT POPULATION PROJECTION

Year	Population	Change	Percent
2000	8,984	---	---
2010	9,724	740	8.2%
2040	12,100	2,376	24.4%

Source: NJTPA Population Forecast by County and Municipality 2010-2040; DP-1: 2000 and 2010 Census

Land Use Changes

According to NJDEP Land Use / Land Cover data from 2007 and 2012, Hackettstown has seen minimal changes in land use since the 2008 MPR. The mapping shows that Hackettstown lost 59 acres of vacant and forest land between 2007 and 2012. These lands were primarily developed with residential (26.7 acres), industrial (6.5 acres) and commercial (5.4 acres) land uses. The increase in residential uses is primarily attributed to the Hunters Brook community containing 101 residential units off Willow Grove Street, which was constructed in 2009.

Land Use Land Cover (2007-2012)			
Land Use / Land Cover	2007 (acres)	2012 (acres)	Change (acres)
Residential	852.79	879.53	26.73
Commercial/Services	246.74	252.13	5.39
Industrial	94.76	101.30	6.54
Industrial / Commercial Complex	2.35	2.35	0
Mixed Urban or Built-Up Land	8.87	8.93	0.06
Military Installations	2.10	2.10	0
Airport Facilities	1.05	1.05	0
Transportation/Communication/Utilities	57.07	78.05	20.97
Cemetery	2.54	1.43	-1.11
Recreational Land	54.47	54.47	0
Athletic Fields (Schools)	52.22	52.22	0
Other Urban or Built-Up Land	102.53	104.41	1.88
Agriculture	68.05	68.66	0.61
Barren Land	34.29	17.18	-17.11
Forest	463.60	421.82	-41.78
Wetlands	242.59	242.74	0.15
Water	88.31	85.98	-2.33
Total	2,374.33	2,374.33	0

Property tax data is also utilized to identify changes in land use since the 2008 MPR. The NJ Department of Community Affairs – Division of Local Government Services publishes a summary of the tax ratables for each year. From 2008 to 2016, there was a loss of 122 vacant parcels. Meanwhile, the net increase in residential, apartment, commercial and industrial properties increased by 100 parcels. This means that 22 vacant properties in 2008 are

no longer on the tax rolls. These parcels may have been deed restricted as open space, merged with other parcels, or purchased by a tax-exempt entity.

The most notable change since 2008 is the decrease in total equalized assessed property values² from \$1.07 billion to \$976 million. Despite the revaluation of properties, Hackettstown saw a decrease of nearly \$60 million in residential assessed value from 2008 to 2017. Commercial and industrial properties decreased by \$21 million in equalized assessed values. Apartment properties saw an increase in valuation of \$10 million since 2008.

Property Tax Ratable Base						
Land Use Type	Number of Parcels			Equalized Property Value (millions of dollars)		
	2008	2016	Change	2008	2016	Change
Vacant	176	54	-122	35.78	14.35	-21.43
Residential	2,266	2,373	107	682.47	622.64	-59.83
Commercial	268	261	-7	194.18	181.91	-12.28
Industrial	31	34	3	99.22	90.02	-9.20
Apartments	34	31	-3	56.07	66.67	10.60
Total Value	2,775	2,753	-22	1,067.72	975.59	-92.13
Source: http://www.state.nj.us/dca/divisions/dlgs/resources/property_tax.html						

² In 2008, the Town's equalization ratio was 56.5%, which means that the Town was assessing properties at 56.5% of actual property values. By 2016, the equalization ratio was 105.8%, indicating that the Town had reassessed property values between 2008 and 2016. The equalized assessed values can be compared by multiplying the assessed property values by the equalization ratio.

Employment Changes

The NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDL&WD) maintains tabulations of employment and wage data for employers covered under the New Jersey Unemployment Compensation Law. The data is published quarterly and annually, utilizing the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS).

In 2003, Hackettstown had an average of 8,667 private sector jobs and 539 local government jobs (including local education). According to the data, the 2015 employment is the lowest during the thirteen-year period, despite the job growth seen from 2003 to 2007. Jobs in the private sector have decreased by 378 jobs (4.36 percent) while local government jobs have decreased lost 59 jobs (10.95 percent). At the peak in 2007, there were on average 9,328 private sector jobs and 564 local government jobs, for a total of 9,913 jobs in Hackettstown.

Based on the trends since 2007, the Town of Hackettstown does not foresee significant job growth within the next ten years. The Town would expect that there may be some fluctuations from year-to-year, but the range would likely remain between 8,000 to 9,000 jobs by 2025.

Employment Projections

The NJTPA estimates that employment within Hackettstown will grow by 1,110 jobs between 2010 and 2040. This equates to an average of 37 new jobs per year for the next 30 years. Given the current economic climate and the lack of available land and utilities in Hackettstown, these projections are unrealistic. The Town does not anticipate any substantial job growth over the next 10-year period.



EMPLOYMENT GROWTH (2003-2015)			
Year	Private Sector Jobs	Local Gov't Jobs	Total Jobs
2003	8,667	539	9,206
2004	8,797	525	9,322
2005	8,953	523	9,476
2006	9,118	548	9,666
2007	9,349	564	9,913
2008	9,328	562	9,890
2009	9,209	541	9,750
2010	9,041	511	9,552
2011	9,146	485	9,631
2012	9,096	487	9,583
2013	8,496	505	9,001
2014	8,403	495	8,898
2015	8,289	480	8,769
Source: NJDLWD, Employment and Wages, 2015 Annual Report			

- Goal #1: Targeted Economic Growth – Enhance opportunities for attraction and growth of industries of statewide and regional importance.
- Goal #2: Effective Planning for Vibrant Regions – Guide and inform regional planning so that each region of the State can experience appropriate growth according to the desires and assets of that region.
- Goal #3: Preservation and Enhancement of Critical State Resources - Ensure that strategies for growth include preservation of the State’s critical natural, agricultural, scenic, recreation, and historic resources, recognizing the roles they play in sustaining and improving the quality of life for New Jersey residents and attracting economic growth.
- Goal #4: Tactical Alignment of Government – Enable effective resource allocation, coordination, cooperation and communication among those who play a role in meeting the mission of this Plan.

It should be noted that this new plan does not include a map, nor does it include planning area designations as the 2001 plan did.

Changes in State Planning Regulations

State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP)

In March of 2001 the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP) was adopted, which amended the previous plan adopted in 1992. In 2010, the State released a new draft State Plan, which has been going through public comment and hearing. The *Draft Final State Strategic Plan: State Development and Redevelopment Plan* was approved in November of 2011 and is awaiting final adoption. As this is the most recent SDRP, it has been reviewed for the purposes of this report. The document contains only four goals, which are:

Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL)

Amendments to the Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) since the 2008 Master Plan was adopted that are worth noting include:

1. The MLUL was amended to include the “Statewide Non-residential Development Fee Act” at N.J.A.C.40:55D-8.1 through 8.7, which allows municipalities to collect development fees for non-residential development to be utilized for the provision of low- and moderate-income housing (Sections 32 through 38 of P.L.2008, c.46, approved July 17, 2008).

2. The Statewide Non-residential Development Fee Act was later amended by the “New Jersey Economic Stimulus Act of 2009” (P.L. 2009, c. 90, approved July 28, 2009).
3. N.J.A.C. 40:55D-66.11 now provides that renewable energy facilities on parcels comprising 20 or more contiguous acres that are owned by the same person or entity shall be a permitted use within every industrial district of a municipality (P.L. 2009, c. 35, adopted March 31, 2009).
4. A Master Plan Reexamination Report is now required at a minimum of once every 10 years instead of every 6 years (P.L. 2011 c. 65, approved on May 4, 2011).
5. The MLUL was amended to define "inherently beneficial use" for purposes of zoning variance and specifically includes facilities and structures that supply electrical energy produced from wind, solar, or photovoltaic technologies (P.L. 2009 c. 146, approved on November 20, 2009).
6. The MLUL was amended to add a “Green Buildings and Environmental Sustainability Plan Element” to the components that comprise a municipal master plan, which shall provide for, encourage, and promote the efficient use of natural resources and the installation and usage of renewable energy systems; consider the impact of buildings on the local, regional and global environment; allow ecosystems to function naturally; conserve and reuse water; treat storm water on-site; and optimize climatic conditions through site orientation and design (P.L. 2008, c.54, approved on August 5, 2008).
7. General development plan (GDP) protection can now be extended to development projects situated on sites less than 100 acres based on certain criteria. GDP’s can now be sought for projects with a non-residential floor area of 150,000 square feet or more, or with 100 residential dwelling units or more, on sites of 100 acres or less (P.L. 2011 c. 86, approved July 1, 2011).
8. The MLUL was amended to allow municipalities to authorize noncontiguous development, including the transfer of floor area ratio or density between noncontiguous parcels (P.L. 2013, c. 106, approved August 7, 2013).
9. The MLUL was amended to require that for any land use element of a municipal master plan adopted after the effective date of P.L. 2017 c. 275 (January 8, 2018), the land use element shall include a statement of strategy concerning: smart growth, including consideration of potential locations for the installation of electric vehicle charging stations; storm resiliency with respect to energy supply, flood-prone areas, and environmental infrastructure; and environmental sustainability (P.L. 2017 c. 275, approved on January 8, 2018).

Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (LRHL)

A “Non-Condensation Redevelopment Area” provision was included in the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-6) by P.L. 2013, C. 159, approved on September 6, 2013. This amendment significantly changes the way that municipalities may designate areas in need of redevelopment pursuant to the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 et seq.). Chapter 159 provides that a municipality shall make a decision to utilize or reserve the power of eminent domain at the beginning of the redevelopment process. When a planning board investigates whether an area should be designated as being “in need of redevelopment”, the municipality must indicate whether it is seeking to designate a potential redevelopment area as a “Non-Condensation Redevelopment Area” or a “Condensation Redevelopment Area”. The evaluation criteria for each type of redevelopment area are the same except

for determining whether the power of eminent domain will or will not be exercised.

Council on Affordable Housing (COAH)

Hackettstown received its first substantive certification from the Council on Affordable Housing (“COAH”) on August 4, 1993 with an employment adjustment. The Town received 81 units of credit for Heritage House, a US-HUD Section 202 funded housing development. The Town also adopted a Planned Residential Development (PRD) zone at a gross density of 4 units per acre with an 11 percent set-aside for affordable units.

On May 3, 2000, Hackettstown received substantive certification for its Housing Element & Fair Share Plan (“HEFSP”), which addressed the Town’s 1987-1999 cumulative pre-credited need of 135 units, with a 74-unit rehabilitation share and a 61-unit new construction obligation. With the First Round employment adjustment, the Second Round obligation was reduced to 122 units, consisting of a 74-unit rehabilitation obligation and a 48-unit new construction obligation. Hackettstown contracted with Affordable Housing Management Services to administer its housing program and with the Warren County Housing Rehabilitation Program to administer its rehabilitation program. Hackettstown adopted an Affirmative Marketing Ordinance and payment in lieu of construction after receiving COAH certification.

Hackettstown adopted a HEFSP in April 2006 to address its Third Round obligation under N.J.A.C. 5:94. This plan addressed a 53-unit rehabilitation obligation, a Prior Round obligation of 66 units, and a growth share obligation of 113 units. The growth share period in this report was 2004 to 2014. The Plan was submitted to COAH, but never received substantive certification because COAH’s Third Round Rules (N.J.A.C. 5:94) were overturned.

In October of 2008, COAH adopted numerous amendments to its substantive and procedural regulations to address the Third Round fair housing requirements in New Jersey. The Third Round methodology, adopted in September 2008, required that a municipality’s fair share consist of three elements: the 1) rehabilitation share, 2) any remaining Prior Round obligation that was not provided for, and 3) the Growth Share or Third Round, which is based upon one affordable housing unit for every four market-rate units built and one affordable unit for every 16 new jobs created. In addition to these new rules, COAH gave new rehabilitation, Prior Round and Third Round obligation numbers to each municipality. Additionally, the State legislature passed Assembly Bill A-500 (now P.L. 2008) that made significant changes to COAH’s rules.

On December 8, 2008, the Hackettstown Town Council adopted a non-binding Notice of Intent to Petition the Highlands Council for Plan Conformance. By doing so, the December 31, 2008 submission deadline for Hackettstown was extended to December 8, 2009, in accordance with the October 30, 2008 Memorandum of Understanding between the Highlands Council and COAH. On August 12, 2009, COAH further extended the deadline for municipalities in the Highlands Region that had filed the non-binding Notice of Intent to Petition the Highlands Council for Plan Conformance, from December 8, 2009 to June 8, 2010.

Hackettstown adopted another HEFSP in April 2010 to address its Third Round Obligation under COAH’s 2008 Rules (N.J.A.C. 5:97). The 2010 HEFSP addressed a rehabilitation obligation of 76 units, a 62-unit Prior Round obligation, and a growth share obligation of 132 units. Hackettstown petitioned COAH for Third Round substantive certification again on June 3, 2010. COAH deemed the petition complete on August 31, 2010 but never completed the substantive review due to litigation of N.J.A.C. 5:97.

In 2009, appeals were filed regarding the new Third Round rules’ methodology. The case worked its way through the Appellate Division

and finally went before the Supreme Court. Oral argument occurred in November 2012 and an order was finally issued by the Supreme Court on September 26, 2013. The Supreme Court ruled that the key set of rules establishing the growth share methodology as the mechanism for calculating “fair shares” was inconsistent with the Fair Housing Act (FHA) and the Mount Laurel doctrine. The Supreme Court instructed COAH “to adopt new third round rules that use a methodology for determining prospective need similar to the methodologies used in the first and second rounds,” within five months. In March 2014, the N.J. Supreme Court extended the deadline for adoption of rules to November 2014.

After COAH failed to promulgate its revised rules by the November 2014 deadline, the Supreme Court made a ruling on March 10, 2015, which allows for judicial review for constitutional compliance, as was the case before the FHA was enacted. The ruling allows low- and moderate-income families and their advocates to challenge exclusionary zoning in court, rather than having to wait for COAH to issue rules that may never come. It also provides a municipality that had sought to use the FHA’s mechanisms the opportunity to demonstrate constitutional compliance to a court’s satisfaction before being declared noncompliant and then being subjected to the remedies available through exclusionary zoning litigation, including a builder’s remedy.

Pursuant to the March 10, 2015 Supreme Court Order, Hackettstown filed a motion with the court on July 7, 2015 seeking a Declaratory Judgement that the municipality has fulfilled its constitutional obligation to provide affordable housing. On January 12, 2017, Hackettstown entered into a Settlement Agreement with the Fair Share Housing Center to memorialize the terms of settlement of the Town’s affordable housing obligations. On March 9, 2017, a Fairness Hearing was held, and the Honorable Judge Miller approved the Settlement Agreement. The Hackettstown Planning Board adopted a HEFSP on July 25, 2017 to effectuate the terms of the Settlement Agreement. The Town is still in the process of seeking a Judgement of Repose and Compliance from the Court for its HEFSP.

Stormwater Management Program

Enacted on February 2, 2004, New Jersey’s stormwater management program, comprised of two separate Rules (N.J.A.C. 7:8 and 7:14A), establishes a framework for addressing water quality impacts associated with existing and future stormwater discharges. Together with the new Flood Hazard Control Act Rules (N.J.A.C. 7:13), they provide for Category One (C1) Water Protection including a 300-foot Special Water Resource Protection Area or riparian buffer for new major development adjacent to all C1 waters and upstream tributaries of C1 waters within the same HUC-14 sub-watershed. These regulations have implications in Hackettstown, as the Musconetcong River, Bowers Brook, Hatchery Brook and Trout Brook are all classified as C1 waterways.

The Town has complied with the 2004 rule changes as follows:

1. Obtaining a Stormwater Permit from the State of New Jersey and addressing the Statewide Basic Requirements (SBN’s) in that permit on a recurring basis.
2. Preparing and adopting a Stormwater Management Plan.
3. Preparing and adopting a Stormwater Control Ordinance.
4. Reviewing development applications for compliance with the adopted Stormwater Control Ordinance where applicable.

As part of this 2018 MPR process, the Municipal Stormwater Management Plan and Stormwater Control Ordinances have been reviewed and determined to be in conformance with the State stormwater control regulations. Therefore, no changes to the Stormwater Management Plan or Stormwater Control Ordinances are recommended at this time.

The Highlands Act

On December 8, 2008, the Town of Hackettstown adopted a Resolution stating the Town’s intent to petition to the Highlands Council for Plan Conformance. Subsequently, Hackettstown received a grant from the Highlands Council to prepare a *Highlands regional Master Plan: Initial*

Assessment Study (“IAS”). The purpose of the IAS is to provide the Town of Hackettstown with information regarding the Highlands Regional Master Plan (“RMP”) and a review of Hackettstown’s available land use data and regulations and how they relate to the goals and objectives of the RMP. The report assesses the level of consistency between the RMP and the Town of Hackettstown’s planning and land use regulations and requirements to bring the Town’s local plans and ordinances into conformance with the RMP, which is mandatory for the 203 acres of land within the Preservation Area and voluntary for the 2,171 acres within the Planning Area.

The Town then completed the required components of the municipal Petition for Plan Conformance, consisting of seven (7) Modules. On November 9, 2009, the Town submitted a Petition for Plan Conformance for land in the Preservation Area. The following components were submitted with the Petition for Plan Conformance:

- Modules 1 and 2 – “Hackettstown Town Municipal Build-Out Report” (July 2009).
- Module 3 – An Affordable housing summary in lieu of the Town’s Housing Element and Fair Share Plan was submitted due to the extension granted by COAH submitted with Module 7, the Municipal Self-Assessment Report.
- Module 4 – “Highlands Element of the Hackettstown Town Municipal Master Plan” (August 2009).
- Module 5 – “Highlands Environmental Resource Inventory for the Town of Hackettstown” (2009)
- Module 6 – “Model Highlands Land Use Ordinance for Municipalities” (September 2009).
- Module 7 – “2009 Plan Conformance Grant Program Module 7. Municipal Self-Assessment Report” (October 2009).

Subsequently on January 10, 2011, Hackettstown submitted an Amended Petition for Plan Conformance that included lands in the Planning Area. The Petition was then posted for public comment between May 20, 2011

and June 6, 2011. After the comment period, the Highlands Council reviewed all documents and comments and approved the Petition for Plan Conformance for the Town of Hackettstown on August 3, 2011 in Resolution #2011-25. The Town then adopted Ordinance #2012-01 on March 8, 2012 which formalized the Petition for Plan Conformance and declared it fully effective for all lands in the Planning Area.

The approved Petition for Plan Conformance was accompanied by approval of a Highlands Center Designation for the Hackettstown Highlands Center, which encompasses the central business district, the Hackettstown Historic District, the Centenary University Campus, the Stiger Street Redevelopment Area, the Hackettstown Regional Medical Center and adjacent affordable housing projects, M&M/Mars, and commercial/residential development near the border with Mansfield Township. The total area of the Highlands Center includes approximately 743 acres, all of which is in the Planning Area and is served by both water and sewer service.

The following documents were submitted in support of plan conformance for the Planning Area:

- Module 3 – “Town of Hackettstown Housing Element & Fair Share Plan” (April 27, 2010)
- Module 4 – “Town of Hackettstown Highlands Master Plan Element” (May 2011).
- Module 5 – “Highlands Environmental Resource Inventory for the Town of Hackettstown” (May 2011)
- Module 6 – “Town of Hackettstown Highlands Area Land Use Ordinance” (May 2011)

After the Highlands approved Hackettstown’s Petition for Plan Conformance, an Implementation Plan and Schedule was developed. As of March 2015, the following tasks have been completed:

- Task 2 – Highlands Environmental Resource Inventory (Module 4), adopted March 2012.
- Task 3 – Highlands Element of Municipal Master Plan via a Reexamination Report and Resolution (Module 5), adopted March 2012.
- Task 4a – Update to Land Use Inventory, completed March 2012.
- Task 5a – Planning Area Petition Ordinance and Checklist Ordinance, adopted March 2012.
- Task 8d – Wastewater Management Plan, adopted February 12, 2016.

The following tasks were prioritized for 2016:

- Task 4f – Sustainable Economic Development Plan Element.
- Task 8h – Municipal Stormwater Management Plan.
- Task 14 – Hackettstown Highlands Center Designation Planning.

The following tasks have yet to be completed:

- Task 1 – Housing Element and Fair Share Plan (Module 3) (In progress – see discussion under COAH section of this report)
- Task 4g – Historic Preservation Plan Element.
- Task 6 – Zoning Map Update.
- Task 8a – Water Use and Conservation Management Plan.
- Task 8b – Habitat Conservation and Management Plan.
- Task 8c – Stream Corridor Protection/Restoration Plan (optional).
- Task 17a – Training Session - Municipal Exemption Determinations & Ordinance Administration.
- Task 17b – Training Session - Ordinance Administration: Application Procedures, Implementation, Enforcement.

Water Quality Management Planning

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) administers the Statewide Water Quality Management (WQM) Planning rules, N.J.A.C. 7:15, in conjunction with the Statewide WQM Plan, which together constitute the Continuing Planning Process conducted pursuant to the Water Quality Planning Act, N.J.S.A. 58:11A-1 et seq., the Water Pollution Control Act, N.J.S.A. 58:10A-1 et seq., and N.J.S.A. 13:1D-1 et seq., and as required by Sections 303(e) and 208 of the Federal Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.). The intent of the continuing planning process is to align federal, state, regional and local land use planning to ensure that these land use plans do not conflict with each other.

NJDEP readopted the WQM Planning rules on May 20, 2008, with the rule readoption effective May 21, 2008 and adopted rule amendments, repeals and new rules effective July 7, 2008 (see 40 N.J.R. 4000(a)). The rule amendments and new rules provide the following:

- Reassign wastewater management planning responsibility to the county boards of chosen freeholders and require counties to update WMPs;
- Establish clear standards for delineating appropriate sewer service areas to protect environmentally sensitive areas as well as clear, environmentally protective standards for the review of WQM plan amendments;
- Set forth clear standards to require identification of adequate wastewater management alternatives, address water supply, and control nonpoint source pollution (including controls related to stormwater, riparian zones and steep slopes);
- Require updated WMPs to address septic density in a manner that demonstrates compliance with a 2 mg/L (ppm) nitrate planning

target on a HUC 11 watershed basis or as required by development type and location.

- Make provisions to allow the withdrawal of sewer service areas and redesignate these areas as general wastewater service area of 2,000 gallons per day or less and less than six residential units (restricted septic service areas) where the applicable WMP is not in compliance with the mandatory update schedule contained in the rules; and
- Require municipalities to develop a septic system inventory and tracking system through an ordinance or other means which will ensure that septic systems are functioning properly through a mandatory maintenance program.

P.L.2011, c.203 was enacted on January 17, 2012, which permits a Wastewater Management Planning Agency to prepare and submit to the NJDEP at least that portion of a wastewater management plan designating sewer service area, which shall comply with the NJDEP's regulatory criteria. The law requires that wastewater service area designations and sewer service area designations remain in effect and not be withdrawn for a period not to exceed two years. This law expired on January 17, 2014.

The Warren County Board of Chosen Freeholders opted not to accept the role of responsible entity for wastewater management planning in Warren County. Each municipality in Warren County is therefore responsible for preparing their own municipal wastewater management plan. Hackettstown adopted a wastewater management plan on February 12, 2016.

Together North Jersey

In November 2011, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awarded Together North Jersey ("TNJ", also known as the North Jersey Sustainable Communities Consortium) a \$5 million Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant. The grant is matched

with an additional \$5 million in leveraged funds from project partners. TNJ brought together a coalition counties, municipalities, educational institutions, nonprofits, businesses and other groups, to develop the first comprehensive plan for sustainable development for the 13 northern New Jersey counties: Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, Union and Warren.

The final TNJ Plan was released in November 2015. The plan presents an overview of the TNJ regional planning process that took place from 2011 to 2015 and proposes strategies for achieving a competitive, livable, efficient, and resilient region. The Goals and Objectives of the TNJ Plan are as follows:

Goal 1: Grow a Strong Regional Economy

- Keep and create well-paying jobs.
- Ensure infrastructure (transportation, utilities, and communications) is in good repair, can support economic development and is resilient to extreme weather.
- Ensure the region's workforce has the training and skills needed to support current and future industry needs.
- Support small businesses and entrepreneurship.

Goal 2: Create Great Places

- Maintain or expand vibrant downtowns and "main streets."
- Create safe, stable, resilient neighborhoods with high-quality housing options affordable to a range of incomes.
- Preserve and enhance the character of existing neighborhoods and communities.
- Make it easier and safer to walk, bike and take transit.

Goal 3: Increase Access to Opportunity

- Connect where people live with where they need to go.

- Create inclusive, mixed-income neighborhoods.
- Maintain and improve the quality of schools.
- Improve access to community, arts, cultural and recreational resources (e.g. theaters, museums, libraries, senior centers, youth activities, and parks).
- Improve public health and access to health services.

Goal 4: Protect the Environment

- Preserve and enhance open space, natural areas and wildlife habitat.
- Improve air quality and reduce emissions that contribute to climate change.
- Increase ability to respond to and recover from extreme weather events.
- Improve water quality and ensure adequate supply.

Goal 5: Work Together

- Ensure broad participation in planning efforts, including populations traditionally under-represented.
- Foster collaboration among levels of government and provide a regional framework for making decisions about growth and investment.
- Respect property rights during planning and implementation.

Changes in County Planning Regulations

Warren Heritage Byway (NJ State Route 57)

New Jersey State Route 57 is a 19-mile two-lane roadway that runs west from Hackettstown through Mansfield Township, Washington Township, Washington Borough, Franklin Township, Greenwich Township and Lopatcong Township. The entire Route 57 corridor was designated a State

Scenic Byway in February 2009. The Warren Heritage Byway Corridor Management Plan (“WHBCMP”) was released in November 2010.

According to the WHBCMP, the easternmost 0.56-mile segment of Route 57 runs through Hackettstown and terminates at the signalized intersection at Mountain Avenue (Route 182). The State Fish Hatchery, as well as a suburban residential neighborhood (Lawrence Drive, Herbert Lane, and Laurie Terrace), and free-standing commercial/retail businesses (including a gas station and restaurants) front along Route 57 in Hackettstown. Route 57).

The WHBCMP provides the following vision statement for the corridor:

- To preserve and enhance the beauty of natural, cultivated, and built landscapes and their relationship to our history, culture, and future.
- To enhance tourism in proximity to centers of recreation and commerce.
- To encourage land uses that create and complement scenic viewsheds, vistas, and panoramas.
- To highlight historic sites and, through heritage tourism, help residents and tourists discover the stories in the landscape.
- To mitigate the tensions between preservation and development.

Changes in Municipal Land Use Regulations

Since the 2008 MPR, the Town has adopted several ordinance changes to the land use regulations, as follows:

- **Ordinance 2008-5 – Adopting Section 601 “Mixed Multi-Family Residential Commercial Uses (MXRC)”.** This Ordinance was adopted to effectuate the 2008 MPR recommendation relative to the

mixed multi-family commercial uses permitted as a conditional use on the east side of Mountain Avenue within the HC Highway Commercial District. The MXRC allows for a maximum residential density of ten (10) dwellings units per acre, with a 17 percent set-aside for affordable housing.

- **Ordinance 2009-13 – Amending Section 601 “Mixed Multi-Family Residential Commercial Uses (MXRC)”.** This Ordinance amends the MXRC regulations to allow for an increased density from 10 units per acre to 12 units per acre to provide for a greater number of affordable credits on Block 125, Lot 9.01.
- **Ordinance 2010-08 – Adopting Section 410 “Planned Mixed Use Downtown Development (PMU) District”.** This Ordinance rezoned the Bergen Tool property to PMU Planned Mixed Use Downtown Development, which allows for mixed use redevelopment with a minimum of 30,000 square feet of retail and a maximum residential density of 9 units per acre up to a maximum of 99 total units. This Ordinance required a minimum affordable housing set-aside of 10 percent or a payment-in-lieu of affordable housing at \$25,000 per affordable unit obligation. The Ordinance also required that the Bergen Tool building be preserved and incorporated into the development plan.
- **Ordinance 2011-15 – Expanding the HF Health Facilities District.** As recommended by the 2010 Supplemental Modification to the Master Plan Reexamination Report, this Ordinance rezoned Block 45, Lots 1, 1.01, 2, 2.01, 3, 3.01 and 3.02 from LM Limited Manufacturing to HF Health Facilities and incorporated Block 45, Lots 1.01 and 2 into the Planned Family Rental Development Overlay District. The overlay zone allowed for up to 200 multi-family non-age-restricted rental units to be constructed, with a required 40 percent affordable housing set-aside.
- **Ordinance 2012-02 – Adopting Highlands Submission Requirements for Development Applications.** This Ordinance added subsection 802.E entitled “Highlands Submission Requirements”, which requires that applications received a consistency

determination from the Highlands Council prior to being deemed complete by the Town.

- **Ordinance 2012-5 – Prohibiting “Cash for Gold” Businesses in the TCC Town Center Commercial District.** This Ordinance recognizes that there are already several jewelry stores and other retail establishments that provide “cash for gold” opportunities and limits the further establishment of such businesses in the TCC District.
- **Ordinance 2013-01 – Amending Section 410 “Planned Mixed Use Downtown Development (PMU) District”.** In response to the December 2012 Supplemental Modification to the Master Plan Reexamination Report, this Ordinance amended the PMU District regulations to help foster redevelopment of the Bergen Tool property. The most significant change was that the Bergen Tool building was no longer required to be preserved.
- **Ordinance 2015-02 – Amending Section 709 regarding the Historic Preservation Commission.** This Ordinance changed the membership of the Historic Preservation Commission from seven (7) members to five (5) members, due to difficulties obtaining a quorum of the seven-member commission.
- **Ordinance 2015-09 – Amending Section 410 “Planned Mixed Use Downtown Development (PMU) District”.** This Ordinance was adopted to permit an increase in residential density for the Bergen Tool redevelopment project from 99 units to 108 units along with other adjustments to the bulk requirements to accommodate the increased density.
- **Ordinance 2016-07 – Adopting a Highlands Area Exemption Ordinance.** This Ordinance was adopted to establish the procedural and substantive requirements by which the Town may issue Highlands Act Exemption Determinations for development applications.
- **Ordinance 2015-17 – Adopting Section 526 “Soil Remediation”.** This Ordinance establishes the requirements for soil remediation for environmentally contaminated properties.

- **Ordinance 2018-10 – Dissolving the Board of Adjustment.** This Ordinance dissolved the Hackettstown Board of Adjustment and vested its power in the Land Use Board, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40:55D-25(3).c(1).

Master Plan Problems & Objectives

As required under N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89 (a) and (b), the following section of the MPR examines the major problems and objectives relating to land development in the Town of Hackettstown that were included in the 2008 MPR and identifies the extent to which such problems or objectives have changed.

1. Preservation and Revitalization of Main Street

The preservation and revitalization of the Main Street area is a continuing long-term goal. Many objectives to accomplish this goal have been achieved.

Special Improvement District

The 2001 Master Plan recommended the establishment of a Special Improvement District for the downtown area. The “All Aboard for Hackettstown” program, which was affiliated with the “Main Street, New Jersey” program and funded in part by the Hackettstown Town Council was, in many respects, similar to a Special Improvement District. The program had the goal of enhancing the downtown area and has extended loans to property owners and lent design assistance that has resulted in improvements to commercial structures in the downtown area.

Since 2001, efforts to revitalize the downtown area have intensified. The Hackettstown Business Improvement District (BID) was established and is currently operating.

The 2008 MPR recommended that the needs of the downtown area should be studied with input from All Aboard for Hackettstown and the Chamber of Commerce. The continued revitalization of the downtown area and the best way to proceed requires input from BID and the Chamber of Commerce. A particular concern related to the appearance of the downtown area and the feasibility of establishing architectural standards.

As part of the 2018 MPR process, the BID has indicated that there are ongoing concerns with the current state of the Downtown Main Street corridor. The BID reports that many of the existing shops are underutilized and there is a vacancy/turnover rate of approximately 20-25 percent. The residential housing stock downtown needs to be revitalized to bring wealthier residents to the downtown, which would help support a vibrant downtown shopping district.

The BID’s vision for the Downtown Main Street area is four and five-story architecturally appealing buildings with a vibrant street frontage of thriving retail, service and restaurant businesses and new residential and office spaces on the upper floors. The BID envisions new buildings adhering to architectural standards that promote the historic character of the downtown while accommodating the needs of a modern society. The upper floors should be stepped back to avoid overshadowing the street and maintain adequate light and air.

Area in Need of Redevelopment

The 2001 MPR recommended that an investigation be undertaken to determine whether portions of the downtown qualify as an area in need of redevelopment.

Bergen Tool Redevelopment

The 2008 MPR identified the 10+ acre Bergen Tool site on Main Street as an opportunity to bring new life to Main Street. The Bergen Tool property, known as Lot 18 in Block 21, is situated at the northern edge of the

downtown corridor, at the intersection of Main Street and Stiger Street. It was recommended that the Planning Board prepare a concept plan for the most appropriate reuse of the Bergen Tool site establishing through fiscal impact and marketing analyses the most appropriate mix of development activities.

There was much discussion and debate since 2008 regarding the potential brownfield remediation and redevelopment of the property. A concept plan was prepared and the property was rezoned as the PMU Planned Mixed Use Downtown Development Zone in 2010 with subsequent amendments in 2013 and 2015. The PMU Zone permits a mix of non-residential and residential uses.

The Bergen Tool property received preliminary and final site plan approval for the redevelopment of the property with a CVS Pharmacy of approximately 15,000-square feet of additional retail space, and 108 multi-family residential dwelling units (including 66 townhouse units and 42 apartment units). The CVS Pharmacy has since been constructed. The property has approvals for the remaining retail and residential development in the rear portion site, which has been reserved for a future phase of development.

Future Redevelopment Opportunities

In order to achieve the BID's vision for the downtown district, the BID believes that the Town should declare portions of the downtown as a non-condemnation area in need of redevelopment. This would allow for tax incentive financing for property owners to make improvements to the buildings. The BID believes that permitting an increased building height is necessary to attract new investors and make the necessary improvements to the corridor financially feasible but also to increase the downtown population to support the small businesses.

The 2012 Highlands MPR noted that the Highlands Council has provided the Town with a grant to investigate redevelopment opportunities within the designated Highlands Center. The MPR recognizes that while this grant would start the process, it would not cover all of the costs to review numerous sites and qualify each of them as an Area in Need of Redevelopment and create each site's respective Redevelopment Plan.

According to the Highlands Implementation Plan and Schedule for Hackettstown, \$20,000 has been allocated for Highlands Center Designation Planning, which could include form-based codes or redevelopment investigations.

The Land Use Board recommends that the Highlands grant funds be utilized (subject to Highlands Council approval) to investigate redevelopment opportunities in the downtown central business district. Any redevelopment investigation should carefully consider whether the existing building(s) can and should be preserved. The Land Use Board does not recommend the total redevelopment of the entire downtown corridor, but rather a few key sites that would encourage economic development and growth in the area.

The BID has recommended to the Land Use Board the following sites as potential areas to be redeveloped:

- Block 77, Lots 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7
- Block 79, Lots 1, 3 & 4
- Block 79, Lot 9, 10 & 11
- Block 66, Lot 10
- Block 59, Lots 17-24 & 24.01

The Land Use Board has not performed any analysis of these sites to determine whether they would in fact qualify as an area in need of redevelopment nor whether the sites contain any historic elements that should be preserved. These sites were simply the recommendation from

the BID for consideration of sites to be studied. The Land Use Board recommends that a preliminary study be conducted of the downtown corridor to determine which sites, if any, should be further studied to determine whether they are in need of redevelopment.

Future Rehabilitation Opportunities

The Local Redevelopment and Housing Law defines rehabilitation as the repair, reconstruction, or renovation of an existing structure, with or without new construction or the enlargement of the structure. A rehabilitation program may be an effective strategy to arrest and reverse patterns of decline and disinvestment in a residential neighborhood or commercial district.

Regardless of whether any sites are identified for redevelopment, the Land Use Board recommends that the entire downtown corridor be designated as an Area in Need of Rehabilitation, which would allow for five-year tax abatements to encourage building improvements.

Any redevelopment or rehabilitation project should include “Green” initiatives, such as LEED accreditation.

Underground Utilities

The feasibility of placing utilities underground in the downtown area was recommended by the 2008 MPR to be explored, including the availability of grants to fund such an undertaking. The Land Use Board recognizes that placing the utilities underground would be aesthetically pleasing, but there is a high cost relative to a marginal benefit for this effort. Additionally, the recent streetscape improvements would need to be redone to facilitate underground utilities. This objective is not a high priority issue to be pursued at this time but should be revisited in the future as the downtown area redevelops or additional streetscape or roadway improvements are made.

Architectural Design Standards

The 2001 MPR recommended that design standards be established for downtown architecture and specific ordinance requirements adopted including the creation of a design review committee. The design standards should focus on preservation of existing structures and ensuring design compatibility of new structures and renovations with what already exists. Standards should be sensitive to cost concerns of property owners.

The 2008 MPR envisioned that the Highlands Regional Plan and its implementing regulations would impose substantial development constraints on the Preservation Area surrounding Hackettstown, which could stimulate market interest in redevelopment in Hackettstown, particularly on Main Street, one of the few downtown centers serving this section of the Highlands.

This 2018 MPR recommends that the historic preservation ordinance be updated to include specific architectural design standards that would enhance the streetscape of the downtown corridor (see additional discussion of historic preservation on Page 23).

Sign Standards

The 2018 MPR also recommends that updated sign standards be prepared for the downtown corridor. The following preliminary recommendations from the Land Use Board should be considered in drafting updated sign standards for the TCC District:

1. The following types of wall signs shall be permitted:
 - a. internally lit raised letters with concealed ballast,
 - b. back-lit raised letters with concealed ballast,
 - c. signage board with gooseneck lighting, and
 - d. individual cut letters with gooseneck lighting.
2. Internally illuminated sign panels shall be prohibited.
3. Traditional style awnings (aka shed style) shall be permitted.

4. Other types of awnings shall be prohibited, including waterfall, domed, arched, circular, etc.
5. Awnings shall be illuminated by gooseneck lighting only. Backlit awnings shall be prohibited.
6. Temporary banners shall be kept to a minimum.
7. Window perimeter lighting shall be prohibited.
8. Temporary A-frame (aka sandwich board signs) shall be permitted in the TCC District. Such signs are currently only permitted in the CC and HC Districts.
9. Signage shall be limited to a maximum of three or four colors (excluding logos or trademarks) and shall be architecturally compatible with the principal structure.
10. Signage lighting shall be turned off no more than one hour after closing.
11. The Land Use Board recommends that wall murals be permitted in a few key locations. Applicants may apply on a case-by-case basis to the Town Council for approval of location and mural design.

Form-Based Code

The 2012 Highlands MPR stated that the Highlands Council has provided the Town with a grant to prepare a Form-Based Code for the downtown area, which would include new bulk requirements and architectural guidelines to guide the appearance of both buildings and signage. The 2012 Highlands MPR stated that a Form-Based Code could assist in alleviating the issues facing the downtown. The Town should consider utilizing the Highlands grant funds to prepare a Form-Based Code.

Urban Enterprise Zone (UEZ)

The 2008 MPR recommended that the municipality investigate the potential of an Urban Enterprise Zone (UEZ) designation for Main Street. The Land Use Board no longer recommends pursuing UEZ designation in Hackettstown.

Downtown Parking

Sufficiency of parking and the appropriate requirement for off-street parking are concerns common to all older downtowns and Hackettstown is no exception. The 2008 MPR recommended that off-street parking standards be reviewed and calibrated for the proper amount of parking space considering the nature of downtown businesses. The 2008 MPR states that the current requirement for retail and service activities of one parking space per 200 square feet of floor area is not consistent with current research that states that a more realistic downtown parking standard for retail use should be closer to one space per 350 square feet of space, considering the shared parking synergies of downtown activities. For situations where a particular use cannot meet the minimum parking requirement, rather than grant variance relief, the ordinance should be amended to provide for alternative parking solutions, such as:

- a. Providing the required spaces off-site, but within 1,000 ft. of the proposed use, in a lot owned or leased by the developer of the proposed use;
- b. Participating in a commonly-held and maintained off-street parking lot within 1,000 feet where other businesses maintain their required space;
- c. Participating in a parking district which provides parking spaces through a fee or assessment program or payment to the Hackettstown Municipal Parking Authority created by ordinance.
- d. Any combination of the above.

The 2018 MPR recognizes that parking will continue to be an important issue for the downtown corridor, particularly as properties begin to redevelop or be rehabilitated, which may result in an increased parking

demand. The issue of parking standards should be further studied for the downtown corridor prior to making any changes in parking requirements.

Wayfinding

This 2018 MPR recommends the development of a Wayfinding Signage program to help guide pedestrians and motorists to parking areas and other destinations. Wayfinding signage should utilize color coded symbols to help provide easy-to-follow directions.

Outdoor Dining

This 2018 MPR recommends that outdoor dining be permitted on the sidewalk in the TCC, CC and HC Districts. Restaurants may apply for a Zoning Permit for outdoor dining with approval by the Zoning Officer and Town Engineer. Outdoor dining areas shall be demarcated by physical barriers, such as removable fencing, hedges, planters, or removable columns. Barriers shall not exceed a height of 36 inches. Barriers and outdoor furniture, including tables, chairs, umbrellas, etc., shall be free of advertising signage. Adequate sidewalk clearance shall be provided in accordance with ADA accessibility requirements.

2. Historic District

Issues and concerns related to requirements of the Historic District have been ongoing since it was first recommended in the 1978 Master Plan (See Goal #1 of the 1978 Master Plan).

The 1994 MPR recognized that the preservation and revitalization of the Main Street area is a continuing long-term goal and that many of the specific objectives to achieve this goal as listed in the 1988 Master Plan had been achieved. Specifically, a program of rehabilitation and public improvements, including new curbing, landscaping, sidewalks and street paving, undertaken since 1988 have enhanced the appearance of Main Street. The 1994 MPR recommended the creation of a Special

Improvement District (SID) be explored to further enhance the downtown area.

The 1994 MPR reported that an Historic District Zone had been created but the reaction of residents and merchants to the requirements of the Zone has been mixed. The 1994 MPR recommended that the concept of the Historic District should be reviewed to determine on balance whether the creation of the District was beneficial or detrimental and the extent to which District requirements help preserve historic features. A point to consider is whether enforcement of the BOCA code accomplishes many of the same objectives of the Historic District designation. Consideration should be given to removing Main Street from the Historic District requirements and substituting architectural review for historic review. Whether or not Historic District requirements should be more site specific and apply only to truly "historic" structures rather than all structures within the District should be reconsidered.

It was recommended in the 2001 MPR that an updated historic resources inventory be prepared for the entire Town and that the Morris Canal be recognized as an historic resource. Another recommendation was that more "teeth" be put into the historic preservation ordinance.

The 2008 MPR reported that there were still conflicting opinions whether Main Street should be removed from the Historic District to expedite improvements by removing a layer of review (Historic Preservation Commission review).

The 2008 MPR recommended that the Town should consider the preparation of an architectural plan that provides a basic set of architectural guidelines of inexpensive but visually harmonious building improvement ideas, like using paint to mask or replace missing building features, to ease the financial concerns of property owners and to stimulate renovations that are attractive and compatible with a desired historical appearance but do not entail costly replications.

The 2012 Highlands MPR noted that the Highlands Council has provided the Town with a \$5,000 grant to update the existing Historic Preservation Plan Element with appropriate architectural guidelines. It was also noted that this grant would resolve issues with regard to the Ordinance, but not the historic resource inventory update that was recommended in the 2008 MPR.

The 2008 MPR stated that applications to expand St. Mary's School and St. James Episcopal Church brought a focus to historic preservation issues in the Town. These issues and concerns are still ongoing in 2017, as was evident in the recent QuickChek application on Mountain Avenue heard by the Zoning Board of Adjustment in November 2017.

During the QuickChek application, the Historic District came under scrutiny as to whether QuickChek had a right to demolish five single-family homes along Mountain Avenue within the Historic District. The matter was referred to the Historic Preservation Commission, which failed to make a determination on the proposed demolition due to a deadlock vote by the Commission. The matter was then heard by the Zoning Board. QuickChek presented an expert witness, Dr. Steven Bedford, who testified and provided an Historic Impact Statement for the proposed demolition. Dr. Bedford found that, while the dwellings appear to fit the general time period and character of the section of the district, the buildings themselves did not appear to have any historic importance or architectural style worthy of preserving. He concluded that the buildings had been allowed to deteriorate to the point where they were no longer of significance of the costs of repairs would be beyond the value of the properties.

Dr. Bedford's testimony also revealed deficiencies in the Town's Historic Preservation Ordinance. He did not believe that the Ordinance followed the historic preservation guidelines from the US Secretary of the Interior and found the Ordinance vague and difficult to implement.

It was also revealed that the Hackettstown Historic District includes approximately 546 properties, representing one-third of the 3.5 square mile municipality. A historic district this large gives the Historic Preservation Commission discretion over a monumental segment of the entire community, which could have a significant impact on economic development in the Town.

It is, therefore, the recommendation of this 2018 MPR that the Town prepare a comprehensive historic resources inventory to help determine the appropriate boundaries of the Historic District. It is recommended that non-contributing properties along Main Street and Mountain Avenue be removed from the Historic District. The Historic District should focus on preserving historic residential areas. It is also recommended that the Town utilize the Highlands grant to update the Historic Preservation Plan Element with appropriate architectural standards. The Town should also amend the Historic Preservation Ordinance (Section 806 of the Land Development Ordinance) to provide mechanisms to evaluate or determine historic quality in conformance with the historic preservation guidelines from US Secretary of the Interior.

3. R12.5/Office Zone

In 2001, it had become apparent that there was little, if any, demand for office conversions in the R12.5/Office Zone on Water Street. On the other hand, there was an expression of interest in extending the R12.5/Office Zone further west along Grand Avenue. The Water Street area was rezoned to R12.5/Office Zone to encourage revitalization of residential structures. However, revitalization had occurred without the added incentive of office use. Therefore, the Water Street area was rezoned back to R12.5/Residential. A recommendation of the 2001 MPR was that the R12.5/Office Zone should not be expanded on Grand Avenue. The 2008 MPR indicated that since 2001 there had been no changes with regard to expanding the R12.5/Office Zone further west on Grand Avenue and there have been no requests to create office uses in this area. This appears to be a dormant issue at this time.

4. Traffic Control and Street Widening on Mountain Avenue

The 2001 MPR identified a problem with traffic control and street widening along Mountain Avenue. This problem had been reduced in the years prior to 2001 as new development had occurred which involved the dedication of right-of-way and monetary contributions for roadway widening and traffic signal improvements on Mountain Avenue and East Avenue (Rite Aid, Eckerd and Van Paftinos). Further widening and signalization improvements have occurred since 2001 with the approval and construction of Lowes.

The 2008 MPR indicated that the widening of Mountain Avenue associated with the completion of Lowes, the relocation of the Lowes entrance opposite Shelley Drive with a new signalized intersection, and recent widening work on Mountain Avenue between the Lowes and East Avenue have resulted in traffic flow improvements on Mountain Avenue. Further widening or improvement to Mountain Avenue is probably not feasible given right-of-way limitations and development patterns on Mountain Avenue. Some adjustments to the East Avenue signal to provide a lead left onto East Avenue from southbound Mountain Avenue and a restriping of the shoulder of Mountain Avenue south of the Lowes were recommended to be pursued by the Town with the NJDOT to further improve traffic flow. This has been completed.

The 2008 MPR reported that making left turn movements on Mountain Avenue continued to be a concern. The Town had requested NJDOT approval and funding to have a lead left to provide a gap for motorists to make a turn onto East Avenue from southbound Mountain Avenue. This lead left has since been implemented and has helped improve traffic flow.

The 2008 MPR recommended the exploration of a service road on the west side of Mountain Avenue within Block 127 to facilitate left turn movements

at the Shelley Drive traffic signal. With the improvements to Mountain Avenue, this service road is not needed at this time.

The 2008 MPR recommended as part of future circulation studies on Mountain Avenue, an evaluation should be toward the goal of lowering its speed limit. The Land Use Board does not believe this is a critical issue at this time. It was also noted that the posted signage may not reflect the actual speed limits set by NJDOT.

5. Protection of Residential Neighborhoods from Incompatible Adjoining Land Uses

Protection of residential neighborhoods from incompatible land uses was an ongoing concern in the 2001 MPR. It was felt that the identity of the Town as a whole, and the integrity of the individual residential neighborhood areas should be preserved, enhanced, and protected via buffering from inconsistent adjoining land uses, such as retail commercial and industrial activities. This concern extended to the expansion program of Centenary University and its potential impact on surrounding residential areas.

The 2008 MPR stated that the need to buffer residential neighborhoods from adjoining inconsistent land uses is handled on a case-by-case basis as applications come before the Planning Board and Zoning Board. According to the 2008 MPR, the buffers requirements for commercial and industrial uses have generally been satisfactory. One exception noted was the buffer adjacent to the former roller rink on Route 57 along the HC/R-12.5 zone boundary. The commercial recreation use has been problematic and the Town has been considering changes to the LDO to increase setbacks and/or buffers for commercial recreation uses where said uses are permitted.

The 2008 MPR indicated that the strict enforcement of buffers and setback requirements for non-residential properties is a strongly held land use policy

of the Town's planning and zoning boards. It was recommended that Town officials should explore the need to impose prohibitions on outdoor speakers and enforcement of noise abatement regulations, the imposition of hours of operation limitations, and other measures to control the effects of non-residential activities situated in residential settings. Concerns regarding this issue appear to have diminished recently. This MPR does not recommend any regulatory changes at this time.

6. Conservation of Natural Resources

Even though the Town was largely developed, concerns were stated in the 2001 MPR that special attention needed to be paid to those remaining areas that were as yet undeveloped and the natural resources and environmental constraints that existed on the vacant parcels.

Brook Hollow Estates

The 2008 MPR noted that Brook Hollow Estates was developed and natural resources were protected to the extent allowable under the zoning ordinance and Municipal Land Use Law. In particular, steep slopes adjacent to the Musconetcong River were protected by prohibiting development in this area and by dedicating open space along the river. No additional recommendations are needed for this tract.

Trout Brook Estates

The 2008 MPR noted that the ability to preserve natural areas on the former Trout Brook Estates property was enhanced by the State declaring Trout Brook to be a C-1 water body thereby requiring a 300-foot buffer and through ordinance amendments adopted by the Town to permit age restricted housing on the site. The 2008 MPR recommended that the Town support the proposed open space acquisition by the State of the Trout Brook Estates property. The property has since been acquired by the State for open space preservation. No further action is recommended for this tract.

Musconetcong River

In addition to the Hunters Brook and Trout Brook tracts, the Town was successful in acquiring easement rights along the Musconetcong River in connection with the redevelopment of the Hackettstown Mall and BAS properties along Mountain Avenue. Conservation easements were procured to protect the river and allow public access for the enjoyment of residents. The 2012 Highlands MPR noted that the Highlands Council has provided the Town with a \$20,000 grant to develop plans to protect and restore the Musconetcong River and investigate the potential for a recreational greenway. This grant will permit the Town to complete this long-awaited study. The Town should consider moving forward with the study.

Highlands Regional Master Plan

The Highlands Regional Master Plan ("RMP") adopted in 2008 includes a number of policies aimed at preserving the quality and quantity of groundwater and surface water in the Highlands Region. The 2008 MPR included a discussion of the draft Highlands RMP and the potential for additional conservation protections. It recommended that the Town evaluate whether certain properties with high preservation value should be recommended for acquisition, either wholly or partially, using grant monies under the direction of the Highlands Council and whether existing land development ordinances should be revised to be consistent with Highlands regulations. The Town did opt to voluntarily conform to the Highlands RMP and received Plan Conformance from the Highlands Council in 2011.

It was noted in the 2012 Highlands MPR that the Highlands Council provided the Town with a grant to complete an Environmental Resource Inventory. A Highlands Environmental Resource Inventory was subsequently prepared as part of the Highlands Plan Conformance process.

7. Preservation of Open Space Areas

A major objective expressed in the previous MPR was the preservation of additional open space wherever and whenever possible. At the time of the 2001 Report, the Town was moving forward with the acquisition of the Spina Tract and had just received funding from the Warren County Open Space Trust Fund. It was noted that Greenways along the Morris Canal and Musconetcong River should also be explored as well as a linkage between the two. It was recommended that better use should be made of existing open space such as that associated with Brook Hollow Estates by identifying points of public access. The Town subsequently acquired and developed the Spina Tract for recreational fields, walking trails and open space preservation.

The need for more athletic fields was also identified as an area to be investigated. Although the development of the Spina tract has increased the number of playing fields and other recreational facilities, there is still pressure on the Town's facilities and the Town needs to continue its search for additional property for recreational development if same should become available in the future.

The 2008 MPR also recommended studying the feasibility of Greenways along the Morris Canal and Musconetcong River. In 2012, Warren County adopted a Morris Canal Greenway 25-Year Action Plan. The County Plan provides the following discussion of Hackettstown's Morris Canal preservation efforts:

Hackettstown provides a section of its land development ordinance dedicated to Morris Canal preservation even though the canal is not physically located within the municipality. In a fashion similar to the model ordinance and county's requirements, it designates the important areas of concern and specifies that these resources be defined on land-development plans. Other than require the

identification of the canal and a related resource on the plans, the ordinance does not provide many requirements for land development around the canal. It does prohibit indiscriminate filling or destruction of features within the canal zone and also prohibits issuance of building permits surrounding the canal that would negatively affect the cultural resource or its ability to serve as a drainage way. Per the ordinance, the determination of a "negative" effect is largely left to the interpretation of the zoning officer. The ordinance section does not go as far as the county does in providing details except for buffer provisions or requiring public access. (Page 31)

The 2008 MPR recommended that Town officials should strongly support the preservation by the Highlands Regional Council of the Morris Canal, the Musconetcong River corridor, and the Fish Hatchery since these features form a greenbelt completely around the Town. Preservation of large open space tracts by any governmental level should also include developable land capable of accommodating an active outdoor recreation use.

The Highlands Regional Master Plan recommends that key historical and natural features like the Morris Canal and the Musconetcong River be preserved and kept undisturbed either through acquisition or development buffer regulations. Through Highlands Plan Conformance, the Town has adopted several documents which will aid in the preservation of open space areas.

8. Pollution Control for Non-Residential Development

A concern was expressed in 2001 with respect to pollution on non-residential lands related to development in the LM – Limited Manufacturing Zone. The 2008 MPR stated that this was no longer a concern since permitted uses in this zone district excludes those uses which produce

noticeable noise, vibrations, smoke, dust, odors, heat or glare outside of enclosed buildings. Development in the LM Zone has been limited to low impact, non-polluting uses.

Manufacturing of the type that generates exterior pollution is almost completely gone from the Town. The major source of air pollution in the Town is from traffic congestion, whose solutions lie with road improvements or an automotive transformation, such as electric cars.

9. Open Space for Residential Development

The 2008 MPR recommended that future residential development in vacant areas should contain sufficient open space. Existing zoning regulations require open space dedication in those zoning districts which account for the majority of the vacant areas in the Town. This includes the areas where single family residential clusters and planned residential developments are permitted as optional development alternatives. Brook Hollow Estates and Hunters Brook have since been developed as a planned residential development with a mandatory 30% open space set-aside. Open space is also required as part of the Bergen Tool and 2016 Mountain Hackettstown redevelopment projects.

10. Economic Development

It was previously recommended that new development and redevelopment of non-residential uses be promoted. It was noted in the 2001 MPR that this objective had been reduced in the years between 1994 and 2001. Due to the strong economy, there was much new development and redevelopment of non-residential uses. Projects noted in the 2001 MPR that fall into this category included Boston Market, McDonald's, QuickChek, Rite Aid, Eckerd, DiFiglia, Hackettstown Regional Medical Center and associated medical offices, Mama's Pizzeria, Skyland Orthopedics, Van Paftinos Shopping Center, Dr. Sandhu, Piemontesi Body Shop, 216 Stiger Street, Cunningham, and the P&D Realty Shopping Center and Garden State Asphalt facility.

The 2008 MPR noted that new development and redevelopment had continued to be strong since the 2001. The most significant redevelopment that occurred was the replacement of the abandoned Hackettstown Mall with a Lowes, Applebee's and Wendy's. The 2008 MPR also reported that Hackettstown Regional Medical Center underwent a major expansion, Centenary University built a technology center and two residence halls, and reconstructed its gymnasium, and the Compac Corporation relocated its corporate facilities from Morris County to Bilby Road (although no longer at that location). The recent increase in restaurants and microbreweries as well as Centenary University's Lackland Center is a cultural attraction bringing about a downtown revival.

The 2008 MPR noted that while some of the development that has occurred was positive for the community, there were other impacts including increased traffic, increased water usage and wastewater generation, impacts to established residential areas and the loss of open space. The ability to reduce traffic impacts in Town by the construction of a bypass road has been eliminated by Highlands Regional Council and NJDEP policies.

The 2008 MPR advised that one of the potential side effects of new non-residential development will be the need to deal with the affordable housing obligation generated by COAH's Third Round Rules, which established a "growth share methodology" by which all residential and non-residential development incurred an obligation for affordable housing. The growth share methodology has since been invalidated, thus making this concern moot. (See discussion of COAH on page 12).

As was stated in the 2008 MPR, the Town will have to continue to wrestle with the benefits and side effects of new development pressures as one of the few places in the vast Highlands region available for growth with infrastructure, a solid balanced land use base and range of existing services. The Town will continue to experience pressure for the intensification of

buildings along Main Street and Mountain Avenue corridors in the form of increased density, coverage and the use of structured parking. The benefits of this future development market will be the opportunity to generate greater tax revenue sources to offset the Town's limited land area base for hosting tax-generating activities.

It is also noted that the Town Council designated the Stiger Street Redevelopment Area pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-6 and 98-ORD17 on December 14, 1998. The Stiger Street Redevelopment Area extends along both sides of Stiger Street. Although no redevelopment plan was prepared for the area, the Town did adopt the Five-Year Tax Exemptions Ordinance (Chapter 18 of the General Ordinances), which allows property owners to apply for five-year tax abatements for property improvements. Several properties have utilized the five-year tax abatements to rehabilitate or redevelop their property, including the two strip retail developments on the southwest and southeast corners of Stiger Street and Main Street. However, there are still several properties in need of redevelopment that have not utilized this tool.

This 2018 MPR recommends that the Town investigate the potential to designate the entire Town of Hackettstown as an Area in Need of Rehabilitation. This would allow for five-year tax abatements to encourage property owners to upgrade their buildings.

11. Traffic Circulation

The 2008 MPR recommended that traffic circulation difficulties experienced within and around the Town Center should be addressed and resolved in a manner which:

- a. Preserves the historic qualities and attributes of the Town Center;
- b. Coordinates local plans for traffic circulation improvements with those of Warren County and the State of New Jersey;
- c. Provides, whenever possible, off-street parking facilities for the commercial activities along Main Street in order to lessen congestion along the roadway and add to the convenience of shoppers; and

- d. Limits and controls driveway access to the major roadways in the town by encouraging adjacent landowners to cooperatively share access points to the roadways whenever possible.

At the time of the 2001 MPR, it was noted that Warren County commissioned a study for a Hackettstown Bypass, with the intent of diverting traffic from Mountain Avenue and East Avenue and a portion of Route 46. Based on the evaluation of alternatives in the Bypass Study, a bypass from Route 57 to Route 46, roughly paralleling East Avenue was thought to be the preferred alternative. However, during the community involvement phase of the study, it became clear that Washington Township (Morris County) officials strongly opposed the bypass alignment. In the interest of achieving consensus and progressing the project, the Hackettstown Town Council suggested that the East Avenue alternative be selected initially to provide short term relief in the corridor. Hackettstown also requested, however, that the bypass be retained as an optional part of the plan, so that it could be revisited at some future time as a long-term solution. As noted in the 2008 MPR, the Highlands RMP policies have effectively eliminated the ability to implement a Bypass route around the periphery of the Town. Additionally, the recent approval of the 2016 Mountain Hackettstown redevelopment project eliminates any prospect of the Bypass.

The traffic circulation issues expressed in the 2001 MPR relative to the Mountain Avenue bypass are still valid. As indicated previously, improvements were constructed on Mountain Avenue in connection with the redevelopment of the Hackettstown Mall to improve traffic flow. Future circulation plans should focus on funding projects to upgrade existing roads and improvement of the State Highways in Town.

It was also noted in the 2008 MPR that the Land Development Ordinance encourages adjacent landowners to improve traffic flow by sharing access points and granting floor area ratio and lot coverage bonuses for shared access. This provision has been utilized along Mountain Avenue to the

benefit of the landowners and the traveling public. This policy should continue to be encouraged as additional properties develop or redevelop along the Mountain Avenue corridor.

The 2008 MPR recommended that the pedestrian improvements proposed in the NJTPA Walkability Study should be considered as part of plans to improve Main Street. These improvements have since been implemented.

The 2008 MPR recommended that the Town consider moving forward with a traffic signal need study at the Washington Street and Grand Avenue intersection to facilitate State funding support of this signal. This has not yet been completed.

12. Sidewalks

The 2008 MPR recommended that sidewalks be constructed whenever possible, depending upon the probable volume of pedestrian traffic and the location of the subject property relative to destinations in walking distance, such as the center of Town.

The 2008 MPR noted that both the Planning Board and Zoning Board had been proactive in requiring sidewalks in association with new development. The problems associated with lack of sidewalks are gradually being reduced, particularly along Willow Grove Street where new development has occurred in an area previously without sidewalks and where the respective Boards have required the installation of sidewalks. The Land Use Board continues to require sidewalks wherever feasible.

Preparation of a Sidewalk Master Plan was recommended, which would serve as an aid in receiving State sidewalk grants. A Sidewalk Master Plan has not been prepared. However, the Town did receive grant funding in 2009 for streetscape improvements along Main Street, including sidewalk upgrades, landscaping, lighting and street amenities.

It was previously noted that the Town eliminated a number of sidewalk gaps through capital projects sponsored by the Town with NJDOT funding including gaps on Washington Street, Bells Lane, Willow Grove Street, Stiger Street, Grand Avenue, Beatty Street, and Madison Street. The Town should investigate whether similar capital projects should be implemented in other areas.

Greater emphasis is being placed on the importance of pedestrian safety and connectivity of sidewalks and paths by State and Federal agencies. The Warren County Planning Board with the NJ Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) recently examined walkability opportunities and deficiencies in Hackettstown and made recommendations on needed walkability improvements. The NJTPA is the regional agency which determines funding priorities for the northern New Jersey area.

The prior recommendation that a sidewalk, trails and bikeway Master Plan be prepared is still valid. It can be used to secure new pedestrian-oriented grants offered under such funding programs as The Safe Routes to School Act.

13. Health Facilities Zone/Bilby Road

The prior MPR recommended that the feasibility of expanding the HF Zone should be examined. This objective was partially addressed prior to 2001 when a study was undertaken and a zoning ordinance amendment was adopted in 1998 that permitted medical offices as a conditional use in the R-30 Residential District within 1,000 feet of the Health Facilities Zone (HF Zone). In 2001, it was noted that the Hackettstown Regional Medical Center (“HRMC”) should be encouraged to realistically determine their need for additional space and discuss these needs with the Planning Board. The HRMC previously occupied facilities in other areas of the Town on a short-term basis.

At the time of the 2001 MPR, the HRMC and Mr. Van Paftinos requested consideration of an expansion to the HF Zone to extend into the Limited

Manufacturing (LM) Zone District on Bilby Road. The Planning Board was not receptive to this proposal unless and until the HRMC could demonstrate a clear need for additional lands to be zoned HF in order to accommodate needs directly related to hospital use. The Planning Board recommended no changes to the LM Zone District at that time. The Planning Board also was not receptive to the proliferation of medical office uses in residential zones on Willow Grove Street. No changes to the Master Plan were recommended at that time.

The 2008 MPR noted that the Board of Adjustment approved a use variance to permit a medical office building of 45,000 square feet on a 4.782-acre tract in the LM zone district adjacent to HRMC property in the Health Facilities Zone. This new office facility has since been constructed and contains an ambulatory surgical care facility, offices for specialty physicians and administrative office space for hospital staff.

Under the assumption that the HRMC would likely expand as one of the few medical centers serving this section of the Highlands Region, the 2008 MPR recommended that the Town explore the potential of expanding the area of the Health Facilities Zone into the current Limited Manufacturing Zone district to attract higher quality uses to the area around the hospital. It was also recommended that private for-profit medical uses be permitted as a conditional use in the LM zone within a half mile of the HF zone.

It was also recommended in 2008 that the HF Zone be expanded to Bilby Road replacing the existing LM Zone. It was assumed that the area would eventually be interconnected to the current medical center which would facilitate improved emergency access. An expanded HF Zone would be viewed as a regional medical park campus that could encompass a range of uses that would complement the medical center.

In 2010, the Planning Board adopted a Supplemental Modification to the MPR, which updated the status and recommendation of the previous MPR regarding the HF District. The 2010 MPR stated that since the adoption of

the 2008 MPR, a number of problems have developed that will make it difficult for the HRMC or other entity to construct medical related uses in an expanded HF District in the short term. These problems include:

1. Local and national economic conditions have caused Hackettstown Regional Medical Center (HRMC) to reconsider a number of projects. Except for the completion of the medical arts building on Lot 1 in Block 45, no new projects were planned at that time. HRMC is only planning a renovation/remodel of existing space within the hospital at this time.

This continues to be true in 2018. At the public information sessions on October 5, 2017, HRMC representatives provided the following list of recently completed, ongoing, or planned interior renovation projects:

- Cancer/Infusion Center – Complete
- 4th Floor PT/OT Fit Out (Former Maternity Ward) – Complete
- 2nd Floor Emergency Department Renovations – Ongoing
- Interventional Radiology/Vascular Lab – Planning for the future

HRMC representatives stated that there are no plans to expand the current facilities beyond the existing hospital structure. There was some discussion of potentially collaborating with Centenary University or Warren County Community College to provide additional education opportunities, but nothing is planned at this point. HRMC indicated that it does not have any issues or concerns regarding the existing zoning or Master Plan.

2. The November 12, 2008 resolution adopted by the Council on Affordable Housing (“COAH”) imposed a scarce resource restraint on all Highlands communities under COAH’s jurisdiction, which

includes the Town of Hackettstown. The scarce resource restraint applies to all municipal actions, associated development approvals, water allocation, and wastewater allocation except various residential developments, including residential developments that include at least a 20 percent set-aside on-site for affordable housing. This scarce resource restraint will remain in effect until either the municipality receives substantive certification from COAH for its third-round plan or if the municipality demonstrates to COAH that appropriate measures have been taken to preserve scarce land, water, and sewer resources and that these resources have been dedicated on a priority basis for the production of affordable housing, whichever is earlier.

In addition, the Town determined that it has significant affordable housing obligations and that two (2) parcels along Bilby Road (Lots 1.01 and 2 in Block 45) that were part of the HF rezoning discussed in Part 13D of the 2008 MPR are needed to satisfy the affordable housing obligations.

It was recommended that a Planned Family Rental Development Overlay District be established on Lots 1.01 and 2 in Block 45 to permit family rental units with a minimum 40% set-aside for the construction of affordable housing units. A maximum of 200 units would be permitted on these tracts to offset the expenses associated with the development of the tracts and in recognition that 40% of the units will have affordability controls for a thirty (30) year period pursuant to COAH guidelines in order for the Town to receive credit for the same. In addition, a maximum of 15,000 square feet of commercial space would be permitted to be used for retail, general office, and/or medical offices. The base zoning, which is currently the LM District, was still recommended to be changed to the HF District pursuant to the recommendations in Part 13D of the 2008 MPR.

Since 2010, the Town amended the Land Development Ordinance to establish a Planned Family Rental Development Overlay District on Lots 1.01 and 2 in Block 45. Van Paftinos III received final site plan approval

for 200 apartments and 15,000 square feet of retail on Block 45, Lots 1.01 and 2 along Bilby Road. The approval requires a 40 percent affordable housing set-aside for a total of 80 affordable units.

At the public information sessions on October 5, 2017, Mr. Peter Paftinos came to discuss the Van Paftinos III (Bilby Road) inclusionary affordable housing development. Mr. Paftinos requested consideration of the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance to be amended to increase the density and/or decrease the affordable housing set-aside for the project. In order to facilitate the development of the site with affordable housing, the Land Use Board recommends that the zoning be amended to permit up to 275 apartments with a 20 percent set-aside (55 units) for low- and moderate-income housing and that the requirement to provide retail be removed.

The Town is currently in the process of investigating whether the property qualifies as an area in need of redevelopment, in accordance with the Local Redevelopment & Housing Law (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A). If the property is designated as an area in need of redevelopment, the redevelopment plan will regulate the redevelopment of the property. If the property is not designated as an area in need of redevelopment, this MPR recommends that the zoning be amended to permit up to 275 apartments with a 20 percent set-aside (55 units) for low- and moderate-income housing.

14. State Owned Properties

It was previously recommended that contingency planning be undertaken for future use of state-owned properties should they become available. This objective was noted in 2001 and remained valid in the 2008 MPR. It was suggested that the possibility of leasing properties from the State for use as athletic fields should be investigated. Also, potential use of the National Guard Armory on Willow Grove Street for municipal purposes was recommended to be explored.

No action has been taken since 2008 in this area. It should be noted that no State parcels were available for purchase by the Town since the last MPR. The NJDEP was contacted to discuss the future of the Fish Hatchery facility. NJDEP staff indicated that the Hatchery operates from revenues from fish and wildlife game permits. Staff indicated that the hatchery is operated on State owned lands within a wildlife management area and that it would be difficult for the property to be used for any other purpose. The Town should meet with State Officials to explore the potential of utilizing the undeveloped and underutilized portions of the Hatchery property for recreation and athletic fields.

15. Circulation Plan Element

The 2001 MPR recommended that Circulation Plan Element be revised to reflect recent improvements proposed by NJ Transit and the New Jersey Department of Transportation. It was also recommended that the Circulation Plan Element be amended to include the recommended improvements in the Hackettstown Bypass Study. The 2008 MPR noted that many of the improvements in this study will not be able to be constructed due to the Highlands RMP policies. It should also be noted that the recent approval of the 2016 Mountain Hackettstown redevelopment project puts an end to any chance of the bypass being developed.

The 2008 MPR acknowledged that Hackettstown will be one of the few Highlands Existing Community Zones within Warren County capable of accommodating future development and anticipated that the Town would be eligible for an increased number of State and Federal grants to make road, transit and pedestrian improvements. The Town has since been designated as a Highlands Center, which should provide additional opportunities for grant funding.

A number of roadway and transit improvements have been completed by the Town and other agencies since the last MPR. Some of the projects completed including:

1. Mountain Avenue Improvements (State and Developers)
2. Route 57 (State)
3. Grand Avenue (Town)
4. Stiger Street (Town)
5. Beatty Street (Town)
6. Washington Street (Town)
7. Bells Lane (Town)
8. Madison Street (Town)
9. Valentine Street (Town)
10. East Prospect Street (Town)
11. Warren Street (Town)
12. Train station including parking lot (N.J. Transit)
13. Shelley Drive Traffic Signal (State and Developers)

The 2008 MPR recommended that the Circulation Plan Element be revised to put the Town in the position to take advantage of greater funding assistance due to its Existing Community Zone status. The Town should focus its efforts on upgrading existing streets under its jurisdiction in the Municipality and lobbying other governmental agencies to upgrade the roads within the Town due to the inability to effectuate the regional improvements recommended in the County's Hackettstown Corridor Study of 2000.

Seven specific projects were recommended by the 2008 MPR. The following lists the recommended projects and the status:

1. Further improvements to Mountain Avenue to improve safety particularly at intersections (State).

Status: Still needed

2. Improvements to Warren Street between Washington Street and the high school (Town with assistance from the municipal aid portion of the Transportation Trust Fund).

Status: Completed

3. Traffic signal at the Washington Street – Grand Avenue intersection (Town with assistance from the municipal aid portion of the Transportation Trust Fund).

Status: Since the 2008 MPR, the Town Council has not authorized a study of the intersection to confirm that a traffic signal is warranted at this location. The Land Use Board does not believe that a traffic signal is wanted or needed at this location and removes this recommendation from the 2018 MPR.

4. Valentine Street (Town with assistance from the municipal aid portion of the Transportation Trust Fund).

Status: Completed

5. Franklin Street (Town with assistance from the municipal aid portion of the Transportation Trust Fund).

Status: Still needed

6. Maple Avenue (Town with assistance from the municipal aid portion of the Transportation Trust Fund).

Status: Still needed

7. Request the State and County to have signage alerting motorists to the presence of pedestrian crosswalks.

Status: Still needed. The Land Use Board recommends that crosswalks be signed on Main Street from the intersection with

East & West Baldwin Streets eastward to the intersection with Willow Grove Street, Mountain Avenue, Warren Street and Mill Street. Additional traffic calming measures are recommended be implemented on the eastbound approach along Route 46 into town.

16. Stormwater Management Plan Element

The 2008 MPR recommended that the Stormwater Management Plan Element be revised to reflect recent changes to Stormwater Management Design Standards. Although the Stormwater Management Plan Element was not revised, this objective had been addressed by 2001 through the adoption of the Residential Site Improvement Standards (“RSIS”) by the State of New Jersey, which regulates stormwater management design of residential properties and supplants municipal requirements. The municipal standards, which control non-residential development, underwent a comprehensive revision in the early 1990’s and were considered current. However, since 2001, the State required the adoption of new Stormwater Management Plans consistent with State Stormwater Management Regulations. The Municipal Stormwater Management Plan was amended in 2005 and a new Stormwater Ordinance was adopted in 2006 to implement these regulations.

The Stormwater Management Plan and Stormwater Control Ordinances has been examined in concert with this 2018 Master Plan Reexamination Report and determined to be in conformance with the State stormwater control regulations.

17. Community Facilities Plan Element

The 2008 MPR recommended that the Community Facilities Plan Element be updated to reflect current needs for municipal facilities, including municipal office space, court space, police space and other improvements. Town officials report that the current municipal facilities have been operating efficiently recently. This appears to be a dormant issue at this time.

18. Recreational Needs

The 2001 MPR recognized that there was a shortage of athletic fields and recommended that a comprehensive assessment of recreational needs be performed to compare existing facilities against recognized standards. The Recreation Master Plan should be updated by the Recreation Commission in anticipation of a 2040 Town population of 11,955 persons.

19. Recreational Waterways, Pedestrian Trails and Bikeways

The 2001 MPR recommended that a feasibility study be conducted regarding the potential for waterways to be used for recreation, including pedestrian trails and bikeways parallel to waterways. No studies have been performed in these areas since 2001. However, the Town did construct pedestrian paths along the former Spina tract in connection with the municipal park construction. Additionally, the approval for the 2016 Mountain Hackettstown (formerly Lions Gate at Musconetcong) redevelopment project required a pedestrian recreation path along the Musconetcong River and dedication of a pedestrian easement to the Town. Subsequently, the Town Council adopted a resolution on December 28, 2017, which removed the condition that the pedestrian recreation path and easement be provided along the Musconetcong River. It is understood that the reason for the removal of the trail is due to concerns regarding safety, maintenance and lack of connectivity to other trails. It is still the goal of this 2018 MPR to provide a continuous trail along the Musconetcong River. It is recommended that alternatives be explored to overcome the hurdles to providing a trail linkage on this tract, which may include use of a non-profit trail association to maintain the trail.

20. Municipal Facilities Capital Improvement Program

The 2001 MPR recommended that a five-year capital improvement program for municipal facilities be established. This objective has not been addressed, although it has been frequently discussed. Capital improvements are still being considered on an as-needed basis, which has worked well historically. More comprehensive planning is anticipated to be needed due to the upcoming capital needs of the Town, particularly as it relates to the municipal building.

A joint committee of Land Use Board and Governing Body members should be established to prepare a capital improvements program dealing with new capital equipment replacement and major maintenance projects, particularly those dealing with resolving current drainage and stormwater management issues.

21. Conservation Plan Element

The 2001 MPR recommended that the Conservation Plan Element be reviewed and revised as appropriate taking into consideration recent court cases dealing with environmental constraint ordinances. This objective has not yet been addressed.

The Conservation Plan Element should be reviewed and revised as appropriate taking into consideration recent court cases dealing with environmental constraint ordinances. The Highlands Environmental Resource Inventory will provide a basis for the Conservation Plan update.

22. Limestone (Carbonate Rock Areas)

The 2001 MPR recommended that the feasibility of a Limestone Ordinance should be studied. The 2008 MPR noted that there was no apparent need for such an ordinance since there has not been any construction problems related to Karst geology in the municipality.

As part of the Highlands Plan Conformance process, the Town prepared a Highlands Environmental Resource Inventory (“ERI”), which includes a chapter regarding carbonate rock areas, also known as karst topography. The Highlands ERI notes that

“the Town of Hackettstown contains approximately 1,928 acres of Carbonate Rock Areas... Most of the Town is underlain by undifferentiated Kittatinny and Jacksonburg limestone formations. While the Kittatinny limestone is a relatively good water source, it is subject to solution action and is the least resistant rock to weathering. The Washington loam soil group is characterized by limestone formations which are cavernous in places; the location of the caverns is not predictable, creating development limitations and a potential for groundwater pollution. Most of the remaining formations in the Town are shale, primarily the Martinsburg formation which is a poor source of groundwater. Groundwater is found only in fractured areas; fault lines run through the Town within the vicinity of the shale location.”

Section 6.5.3 of the Highlands Land Use Ordinance would require any Application for Development within the limits of the Carbonate Rock Area shall be preceded by a Geotechnical Investigation. No such development application shall be deemed complete or considered for review by the applicable land use board or other designated municipal authority until such time as the Geotechnical Investigation program described herein has been satisfactorily completed, as certified by the individual(s) designated to review and make such findings on behalf of the municipality.

Limestone issues have been noted recently along Grand Avenue, on the Centenary University campus and within the College View neighborhood.

23. Utility Service Plan Element

The 2001 MPR recommended that the Utility Service Plan Element be updated. The 2008 MPR noted that this objective does not fall into the category of a problem and has not been addressed. The only area of concern identified in 2001 with respect to utilities was the desire to put overhead utilities on Main Street underground. Grant monies should be investigated to help accomplish this objective.

The Hackettstown Municipal Utilities Authority (“HMUA”) should be asked to evaluate the effect of the Highlands Regional Master Plan on the expansion capabilities of the Hackettstown Municipal Utilities Authority in terms of its service area and permitted yields. These new constraints could affect both development potential and the availability of new flows and utility improvement costs and customer fees.

The Hackettstown BID indicated at the public information session that it would like to see utility lines placed underground, particularly along Main Street. The BID also believes the Town should work with the HMUA to reserve water and sewer capacity necessary to implement a plan for the redevelopment and revitalization of the downtown.

24. Center Designation

The 2001 MPR recommended that Hackettstown pursue center designation in accordance with the provisions of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan. The Town had actively pursued center designation as a Regional Center since 1995. This was a joint effort with Mansfield, Independence, Mount Olive and Washington Townships and the Counties of Warren and Morris. Many meetings were held among the municipalities, counties and the Office of State Planning to refine the center boundaries. Consensus was never reached on these boundaries. The process was put on hold during the 1997-1999 Cross Acceptance and Reexamination process associated with the new version of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan which was adopted on March 1, 2001.

Hackettstown received Plan Conformance from the Highlands Council on August 3, 2011 for lands in both the Preservation Area and Planning Area. The approved Petition for Plan Conformance was accompanied by approval of a Highlands Center Designation for the Hackettstown Highlands Center, which encompasses the central business district, the Hackettstown Historic District, the Centenary University Campus, the Stiger Street Redevelopment Area, the Hackettstown Regional Medical Center and adjacent affordable housing projects, M&M/Mars, and commercial/residential development near the border with Mansfield Township. The total area of the Highlands Center includes approximately 743 acres, all of which is in the Planning Area and is served by both water and sewer service.

25. Mountain Avenue

The 2001 MPR recommended that the area of Mountain Avenue which includes the Hackettstown Mall and the abandoned mall, be investigated to see if it qualifies as an area in need of redevelopment. The 2008 MPR noted that the Hackettstown Mall has undergone redevelopment and a site plan has been approved for redevelopment of the abandoned mall site. The abandoned mall site was declared a non-condemnation area in need of redevelopment in 2017.

There has been turnover in businesses in recent years (e.g. Auto Zone has replaced the White Castle and the Med-Express urgent care facility has replaced Burger King). Future changes in uses here are likely given the changing trends in the retail market. Turnovers in use present an opportunity to upgrade Mountain Avenue's streetscape character and make it a more attractive and walkable transition to the Hackettstown downtown core. Mountain Avenue has a different character than downtown with deeper building setbacks, on-site parking and a market appeal to motorists. The Land Use Board has been vigilant in requiring streetscape upgrades as part of any development application along Mountain Avenue, including MedExpress and Auto Zone. The Land Use Board will continue to ensure that streetscape improvements are included in future applications.

However, the Land Use Board recommends that a comprehensive streetscape plan be prepared for the Mountain Avenue corridor.

An area in need of rehabilitation study was recommended for the CC zone district section of Mountain Avenue, near its intersection with Route 46 to determine if the area meets the statutory criteria under the local Housing and Redevelopment Law for the rehabilitation designation. The 2008 MPR also recommended that before making a decision to encourage development of this area for commercial uses, the feasibility of restoring homes in this area for affordable housing using affordable housing fee monies, State housing grants, tax abatement and tax credits should be explored. This area is now part of the Hackettstown Highlands Center and could be considered for redevelopment in the future. Several homes along Mountain Avenue and a portion of the CC zone are currently proposed for private redevelopment by QuickChek. At this time, it is not recommended to pursue other redevelopment options in this area.

As was recommended in 2008, the Mountain Avenue corridor continues to be a candidate for a Streetscape Plan, which would incorporate aesthetic improvements such as new signage standards, i.e. replacing the hodge-podge of pylon signs with monument signs with a uniform sign structure, landscaping, and lighting fixtures as well as pedestrian and vehicular circulation improvements. The Town should also consider adopting a new comprehensive signage ordinance for the HC and CC Zone Districts.

David's Country Inn, located along the west side of Main Street at the five-way intersection with Main Street (US Route 46), Mill Street (US Route 46), Mountain Avenue (State Route 182), recently received use variance approval from the Hackettstown Land Use Board to permit the existing non-conforming banquet hall use to be expanded by adding an outdoor ceremony area as well as other site improvements. David's Country Inn has been in operation since 1978 as a popular banquet facility that hosts countless weddings and events each year. It is recommended that the CC District be amended to permit banquet halls as a permitted principal use.

The Land Use Board has noted that the parking lot for Lowe's (Block 125, lots 9 & 10) is largely underused and could be better utilized if another pad retail/restaurant site were developed behind Applebee's. The HC Zone currently requires 1 parking space per 175 square feet of retail floor area and 1/2 space per 1,000 square feet of garden center outdoor storage. For Lowe's and the former Marshall's, this requires 984 parking spaces (excluding the Wendy's and Applebee's restaurants).

According to the 2004 Amended Site Plan for the property, the development is currently at the maximum lot coverage of 70 percent and is below the maximum floor area ratio of 0.25. Based on the existing/approved FAR of 0.203, the property could be developed with an additional 48,000 square feet of floor area without exceeding the maximum FAR. Therefore, the maximum lot coverage and maximum floor area ratio do not need to be amended to accommodate an additional pad retail/restaurant site within the existing parking lot.

This MPR recommends amending the HC Zone requirements (Section 407F) to permit a reduction in the required parking ratio for shopping centers to lessen the potential for large expanses of underutilized parking spaces. The Land Use Board has not studied the specific parking ratio that would be appropriate as part of this MPR. It is recommended that any proposed ordinance amending the parking standard for shopping center be based on site specific parking analysis or nationally recognized parking standards.

26. Centenary University

The future development of Centenary University (formerly Centenary College) has long been discussed in the Hackettstown Master Plan. The 2001 and 2008 MPRs discussed many issues and recommendations regarding Centenary University, including the following:

1. Future expansions should reduce impacts on surrounding residential properties. The integrity of the residential neighborhood around Centenary University must be protected. Any additional encroachment into this residential neighborhood will be viewed as a substantially negative community planning impact. The Town and the University need to come to an agreement as to how future growth of the University can be orchestrated for the benefit of both the University and the Town.
2. Solutions to on-street parking issues were recommended to be developed, including the creation of more on-campus parking areas as the University expands. The 2008 MPR recommended ordinance requirements to permit the implementation of a parking garage in the middle of the campus away from neighboring residences or wrapped by a campus building to effectively screen the parking structure. The Town should continue to monitor the parking situation at Centenary University. Under an agreement reached with the University, every January 1st the University will present to the Town a review of the existing and projected supply and demand of campus parking including recommendations on how the University would remedy on campus any parking shortfall.
3. The Town and University should jointly study the need for athletic fields with an eye towards sharing of facilities.
4. The historic integrity of existing buildings should be preserved. Establishment of a "way finding" system is also endorsed.
5. The Master Plan should be amended to recommend that a zoning district be established recognizing the University as a permitted principal use or conditional use and establishing appropriate Zoning Standards and bulk requirements. By amending the Zoning Ordinance to create a University Zone, every application for development will not need Zoning Board of Adjustment approval.

A Zoning Ordinance Amendment was adopted in 2003 which made the University a conditional use in the R-30 Single Family Residential Zoning District (Section 601.M of the Land Development Ordinance). The ordinance was further amended in 2004 and 2005 in response to litigation and other issues. Several site plans have been submitted under the conditional use requirements, including the addition of a residence hall and associated parking area and a site plan for a new gymnasium. A major impact of these site plan approvals has been the increase in off-street parking demand.

6. The Town should expeditiously prepare a planning study to determine the appropriate zoning district boundaries for a University Zone that includes the existing University campus and a possible area for future development. This study would define for all stakeholders – Centenary University, the Town and the residential neighborhood surrounding the University – where and how the University's future growth should be steered. One concept that should be explored with University officials are ways of drawing Centenary University activities and improvements onto Main Street. This is an integration concept that Rutgers University has implemented in New Brunswick and it has contributed to the revitalization of that older central city.

At the public information sessions on October 5, 2017, Centenary representatives indicated that there are currently no plans to expand the existing campus, other than the new baseball field being planned in the southwest corner of the campus, near Fifth Ave and Reese Ave. The following is a summary of the issues and concerns discussed at the public information session:

1. Centenary is working on preparing a strategic master plan to develop the University's vision for the future.

2. Centenary would like to increase enrollment by 80 students to fill existing vacancies in the residence halls. No plans to increase off campus housing, other than the new President's house at the corner of Moore Street and Jefferson Street.
3. Centenary would like to work with the Town to implement wayfinding signage. Centenary would also like to install an LED message board along Grand Avenue.
4. Centenary was concerned about traffic circulation and congestion during events.
5. There was discussion of the conditional use standards required in the current Land Development Ordinance (Section 601.M). Centenary representatives are fairly new to the institution and would like an opportunity to review the LDO requirements and discuss potential changes with the Town in the future if needed.
6. Centenary University did not have any other issues or concerns regarding the existing zoning or Master Plan at this time.

It is noted that the reduction in enrollment in recent years has reduced concerns regarding impacts to the surrounding neighborhoods. No changes to the master plan or land development ordinance are recommended at this time.

27. Trout Brook Estates

The 2008 MPR reported that representatives of Trout Brook Estates requested consideration for rezoning to allow age-restricted housing on the property at a higher density than permitted with current approvals. The property has since been acquired by the State for open space.

28. R-30 District

The 2008 MPR noted that property owners in the R-30 district have needed to apply for variance relief for greater impervious coverage to accomplish even minor home improvements. The MPR identified concerns about teardowns of existing older homes, and their replacement with massive residential structures out of scale with the neighborhood. The 2008 MPR recommended that the R-30 zone district, particularly lots along Fifth Avenue, be studied to determine appropriate area and bulk regulations consistent with the applications that have come before the Board of Adjustment. This has not been an issue in recent years.

29. Age-Restricted Housing

The 2008 MPR noted that the Town has exceeded the allowable amount of age-restricted affordable housing for which it can receive affordable housing credit. As documented in the 2017 Housing Element & Fair Share Plan, the Town has 67 excess age-restricted credits that could not be utilized to satisfy the prior round and third round obligations. These credits are being reserved to satisfy future obligations that may be established. No additional age-restricted housing should be developed in the Town.

The 2008 MPR recommended that the Ordinance be amended to remove the MXRC conditional use provisions permitting age-restricted housing in the HC District. In place of the MXRC conditional use, the 2008 MPR recommended that three-story non-age-restricted mixed commercial residential use be permitted at a gross density of 10 dwelling units per acre. The Ordinance was subsequently amended to require a 17 percent set-aside for non-age-restricted affordable housing.

30. Limited Manufacturing Zone/Valentine Street

The Land Use Board has noted a recent change in the character of the area along the west side of Valentine Street, currently zoned LM light manufacturing. The area is now developed with a cross fit gym, dance studio, general office space, and other non-industrial uses. It has been

suggested that the LM zone around the train station should be evaluated for mixed use, transit-oriented development (TOD). TOD is the creation of compact, walkable, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use communities centered around a transit stop. The Land Use Board supports the concept of TOD in this area, along with the possible relocation of the train station to Main Street to provide better access to the downtown businesses. This concept will require significant further study and coordination between the Town, NJDOT, NJ Transit and other agencies.

31. Property Maintenance & Enforcement

The Land Use Board has noted an ongoing issue with what was termed "demolition by neglect", which is the lack of property maintenance resulting in properties becoming deteriorated to the point that the building is no longer salvageable and must be torn down. The Land Use Board has noted several examples of historic structures being demolished due to this reason. Additionally, the Land Use Board acknowledges that a lack of maintenance and the existence of progressive deterioration can have the further effect of creating blighted conditions that, if not curtailed, could grow and spread, necessitating in time the expenditure of large amounts of public funds to correct and eliminate.

The Town currently has two separate sections of the General Code Ordinance that regulate property maintenance conditions:

1. The Property Maintenance Code (Section 7-20 et. seq.) is codified at Article 3 of Chapter 7, Building Regulations. The Property Maintenance Code adopts and refers to the "The Basic Property Maintenance Code, First Edition, 1978", as published by Building Officials and Code Administrators (BOCA) International, Inc., with certain amendments or modifications thereto. The Property Maintenance Code is enforced by the Construction Official.
2. Removal of Debris, Plant Growth, Etc., (Section 11-1 et. seq.) is codified at Article 1 of Chapter 11, Health Sanitations. This

section is enforced by the Director of Public Works or a designee, to require the removal of brush, weeds (including ragweed), dead and dying trees, stumps, roots, obnoxious growth, filth, garbage, trash and debris, or grass that is over eight (8") inches in height.

The Land Use Board recognizes that, generally, the BOCA Basic Property Maintenance Code is no longer used and has been replaced with the International Property Maintenance Code developed updated annually by the International Code Council (ICC). It is recommended that all references to the BOCA Basic Property Maintenance Code be removed and replaced with the International Property Maintenance Code.

Further, the Land Use Board is concerned that the Property Maintenance Code and Zoning Ordinance are not being adequately enforced. The Land Use Board strongly encourages the Town to dedicate additional resources to the strict enforcement of the Property Maintenance Code and Zoning Ordinance to ensure that the Town is properly maintained as a clean and orderly community for the benefit of all residents, patrons and businesses.

32. Master Plan Implementation

The Land Use Board recognizes that while the Town did accomplish many of the goals and recommendations from the 2001 and 2008 MPRs, there were also many recommendations that were not achieved. In order to foster the implementation of the recommendations of this MPR, the Land Use Board recommends that a Master Plan Implementation Committee ("MPIC") be created upon adoption, consisting of members of the Land Use Board and Town Council, as appropriate. The MPIC should be charged with coordination with the appropriate agencies and monitoring progress to ensure that the recommendations are completed in a timely manner. The MPIC should meet regularly to establish a timeline of action items and monitor the progress. The MPIC should report back to the Land Use Board and Town Council annually.

Specific Changes Recommended for the Master Plan or Development Regulations

The following section identifies specific recommendations for the Master Plan or development regulation, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether a new plan or regulations should be prepared. This section summarizes the recommendations previously discussed in the Master Plan Problems & Objectives section. The Appendix includes a Summary of Recommendations, Responsible Parties and Benchmarks for each recommendation.

The first recommendation is for the immediate establishment of the Master Plan Implementation Committee.

1. Establish a Master Plan Implementation Committee, consisting of members of the Land Use Board and, Town Council.

The next six recommendations pertain to the downtown corridor. The Land Use Board recommends that these items be addressed in a coordinated manner that will ensure that any future development or redevelopment within the downtown corridor to encourage economic growth is balanced with the need or desire to preserve the existing characteristics.

2. Investigate redevelopment opportunities in the downtown central business district.
3. Investigate potential to designate an Area in Need of Rehabilitation to provide five-year tax abatements for the entire downtown corridor and possibly the whole Town.
4. Prepare architectural design standards for downtown corridor.
5. Evaluate the benefits of implementing a Form-Based Code for the downtown corridor.
6. Ensure that any future redevelopment plan or change in zoning for downtown area consider appropriate parking requirements.

The next four recommendations pertain to historic preservation. The Land Use Board recommends that these items be addressed in a coordinated manner that will ensure the proper balance of historic preservation without overregulation and stifling of economic growth.

7. Prepare updated Historic Resources Inventory.
8. Based on findings of Historic Resources Inventory, consider revising the boundaries to remove non-contributing properties from the Historic District.
9. Update the Historic Preservation Plan Element. The updated Historic Preservation Plan Element will address architectural and design standards for the Historic District.
10. Amend the Historic Preservation Ordinance (Section 806 of the Land Development Ordinance) to provide mechanisms to evaluate or determine historic quality in conformance with the historic preservation guidelines from US Secretary of the Interior.

The remaining recommendations pertain to the whole Town or other areas outside of Main Street or the Historic District. These items are generally independent, stand-alone items.

11. Consider implementing a wayfinding signage program.
12. Consider amending the zoning ordinance to permit outside dining.
13. Develop plans to protect and restore the Musconetcong River and investigate the potential for a recreational greenway.
14. Prepare a Bike & Pedestrian Master Plan.
15. Investigate future funding opportunities for sidewalk gap projects.
16. Investigate area in need of redevelopment or amend Planned Family Rental Development Overlay District Ordinance for Van Pafinos III (Bilby Road) inclusionary housing development.

17. Meet with State Officials to explore the potential of utilizing the undeveloped and underutilized portions of the Hatchery property for recreation and athletic fields.
18. Improvements to Mountain Avenue to improve safety particularly at intersections.
19. Request the State and County to have signage alerting motorists to the presence of pedestrian crosswalks as well as other traffic calming measures.
20. Update Recreation Master Plan (Recreation Commission).
21. Explore options for Trail along Musconetcong River.
22. Establish a Joint Committee of Land Use Board and Governing Body members to prepare Capital Improvements Program.
23. Update Conservation Plan Element.
24. Prepare a Streetscape Plan for Mountain Avenue.
25. Prepare a Comprehensive Signage Ordinance for the HC and CC Zone Districts along Mountain Avenue.
26. Amend CC Zone District to permit banquet facilities as a principal permitted use.
27. Amend HC Zone District to reduce required parking ratio for large shopping centers.
28. Consider TOD along Valentine Street.
29. Update the Property Maintenance Ordinance (Section 11-1 et. seq.) to replace references to the BOCA Basic Property Maintenance Code with the International Property Maintenance Code.
30. Allocate additional resources to the strict enforcement of the Property Maintenance Code and Zoning Ordinances.

Recommended Changes in the Master Plan and Development Regulations to effectuate Municipal Redevelopment Plans

There is currently one redevelopment plan that has been adopted by the Town of Hackettstown that should be incorporated into the municipal master plan and zoning regulations.

In October 2016, the Hackettstown Town Council adopted a resolution declaring Block 125, Lot 9.01 as a Non-Condemnation Area in Need of Redevelopment. The property is the abandoned mall site along Mountain Avenue, formerly known as the Lion Gate at Musconetcong property. The Town Council adopted a Redevelopment Plan for the property on February 23, 2017. On March 9, 2017, the Town Council designated 2016 Mountain Hackettstown LLC as the Redeveloper of the property. The Redevelopment Plan calls for a 5,558 square foot Wawa convenience store with six fuel pumps under a canopy on 1.8 acres (proposed Lot 9.02) and 145 multi-family apartments units within two buildings on 13.9 acres along with a pedestrian recreation trail, parking, driveways and other associated improvements.

The Planning Board granted Preliminary and Final Major Subdivision and Preliminary and Final Major Site Plan approval on June 27, 2017. Subsequently, the Town Council adopted a resolution on December 28, 2017 which removed the condition that the pedestrian recreation path and easement be provided along the Musconetcong River. Since the Redevelopment Plan supersedes the underlying zoning for the redevelopment area, the regulations of the Redevelopment Plan are recommended be incorporated into the Land Development Ordinance.

It is noted that the Bergen Tool site was redeveloped privately without the adoption of a redevelopment plan pursuant to the LRHL. The PMU Planned Mixed Use Downtown Zone was created in 2010 to encourage the redevelopment of the tract. The PMU zone was subsequently amended in 2013 and 2015 to accommodate the redevelopment concept plan. The site has since been developed with the new 15,000 square foot CVS and has development approvals for another 15,000 square feet of retail and 108 multi-family units. No changes to the zoning regulations are anticipated at this time.

As other redevelopment plans are adopted in the future, it is recommended that the redevelopment regulations be incorporated into the zoning to ensure that they are implemented.

Appendix

Summary of Recommendations, Responsible Parties and Benchmarks

Timing: Short = 1-2 years, Medium = 2-5 years, Long = 5-10 years

Action Item	Timing	Importance	Responsibility	Comments
1. Establish a Master Plan Implementation Committee	Immediate	High	Land Use Board, Town Council, BID	
2. Investigate redevelopment opportunities in the downtown central business district.	Short	High	Town Council, Land Use Board	
3. Investigate potential to designate Town-wide Area in Need of Rehabilitation to provide five-year tax abatements.	Short	High	Town Council, Land Use Board	
4. Prepare architectural design guidelines for downtown corridor.	Short	High	Land Use Board	
5. Consider preparing a Form-Based Code for downtown.	Short/Medium	High	Land Use Board, Town Council	
6. Ensure that any future redevelopment plan or change in zoning for downtown area consider parking requirements	Medium	Moderate	Land Use Board, Business Improvement District, Town Council	
7. Prepare updated Historic Resources Inventory.	Short/Medium	High	Land Use Board, Historic Preservation Commission	
8. Based on findings of Historic Resources Inventory, consider revising the boundaries to remove non-contributing properties from the Historic District	Short/Medium	Moderate	Land Use Board, Historic Preservation Commission, Town Council	
9. Update the Historic Preservation Plan Element, including architectural and design standards for the Historic District.	Short/Medium	High	Land Use Board, Historic Preservation Commission	
10. Amend the Historic Preservation Ordinance (Section 806 of the Land Development Ordinance) to provide mechanisms to evaluate or determine historic quality in conformance with the historic preservation guidelines from US Secretary of the Interior.	Short/Medium	High	Land Use Board, Historic Preservation Commission, Town Council	

Action Item	Timing	Importance	Responsibility	Comments
11. Consider implementing a wayfinding signage program.	Medium	Moderate	Town Council	
12. Consider amending the zoning ordinance to permit outside dining.	Short/Medium	Moderate	Town Council	
13. Develop plans to protect and restore the Musconetcong River and investigate the potential for a recreational greenway.	Short/Medium	Moderate	Land Use Board, Town Council	
14. Prepare a Bike & Pedestrian Master Plan.	Medium	Moderate	Land Use Board	
15. Investigate future funding opportunities for sidewalk gap projects.	Medium	Moderate	Town Council	
16. Investigate area in need of redevelopment or amend Planned Family Rental Development Overlay District Ordinance for Van Paffnos III (Bilby Road) inclusionary housing development.	Short	Moderate	Town Council / Land Use Board	
17. Meet with State Officials to explore the potential of utilizing the undeveloped and underutilized portions of the Hatchery property for recreation and athletic fields.	Short/Medium	Moderate	Town Council	
18. Improvements to Mountain Avenue to improve safety particularly at intersections.	Short/Medium	Moderate	Town Council, NJDOT	
19. Request the State and County to have signage alerting motorists to the presence of pedestrian crosswalks as well as other traffic calming measures.	Short/Medium	Moderate	Town Council, NJDOT	
20. Update Recreation Master Plan.	Medium	Moderate	Recreation Commission, Land Use Board	
21. Explore options for Trail along Musconetcong River.	Short	Moderate	Town Council	
22. Establish a Joint Committee of Land Use Board and Governing Body members to prepare Capital Improvements Program.	Short	Moderate	Town Council, Land Use Board	
23. Update Conservation Plan Element.	Medium	Moderate	Land Use Board	

Action Item	Timing	Importance	Responsibility	Comments
24. Prepare a Streetscape Plan for Mountain Avenue.	Medium	Moderate	Land Use Board, Town Council	
25. Prepare a Comprehensive Signage Ordinance for the HC and CC Zone Districts along Mountain Avenue.	Medium	Moderate	Land Use Board, Town Council	
26. Amend the CC Zone to permit banquet facilities	Short	Moderate	Town Council	
27. Amend HC Zone to reduce parking ratio for large shopping centers	Short/Medium	Moderate	Town Council	
28. Consider TOD along Valentine Street	Long	Moderate	Town, NJDOT, NJ Transit	
29. Update the Property Maintenance Ordinance (Section 11-1 et. seq.) to replace references to the BOCA Basic Property Maintenance Code with the International Property Maintenance Code	Short	High	Town Council	
30. Allocate additional resources to the strict enforcement of the Property Maintenance and Zoning Ordinances.	Short	High	Town Council	