

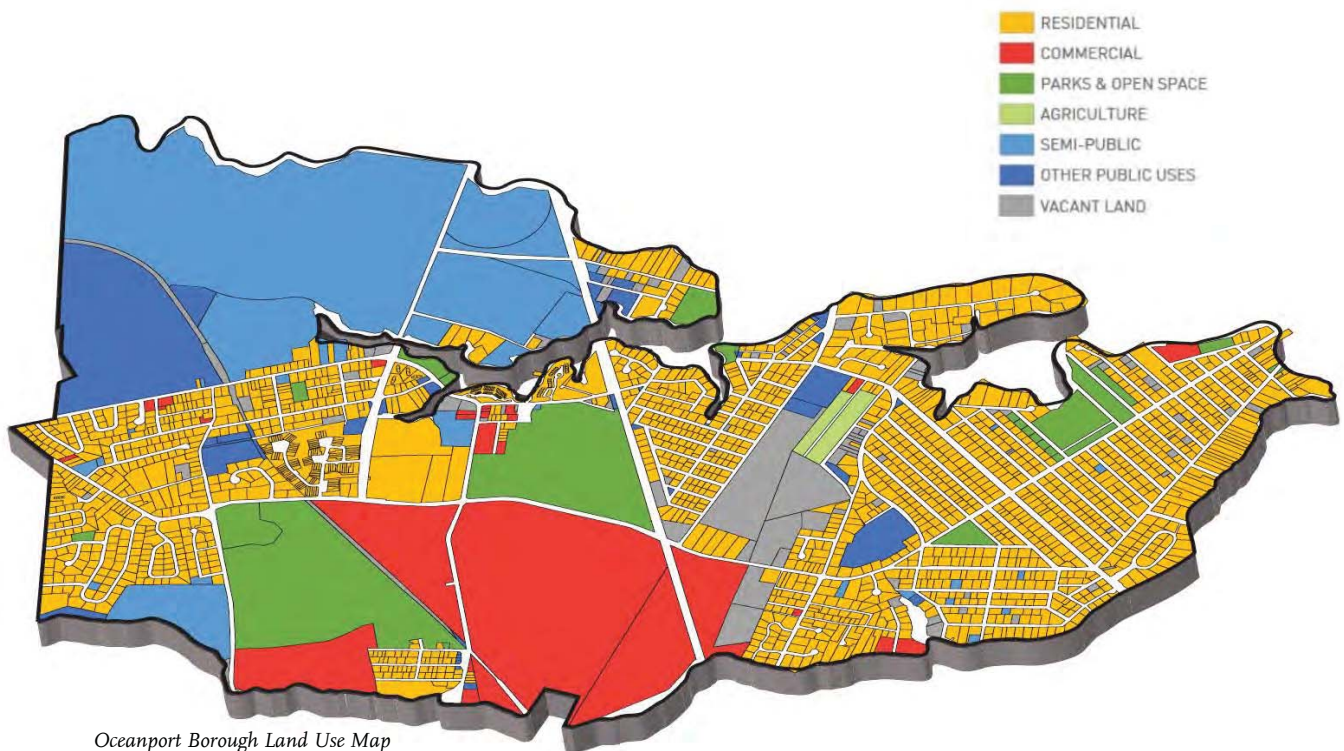


## LAND USE PLAN ELEMENT

### SECTION 1-L

#### Introduction

The Land Use Plan Element seeks to maintain a balance in land use while providing a framework for planning and policy goals designed to maintain and improve the quality of life in the Borough of Oceanport. The Land Use Plan is a comprehensive document that synthesizes the policies and recommendations from other elements and statements within the Master Plan and considers the management of growth and preservation on the land. Given the experience with Superstorm Sandy and the overwhelming need to build resiliency against future stresses and shocks, the Land Use Plan recommends that the Borough incorporate development regulations to incorporate resiliency measures through the promotion of green building and infrastructure techniques and is meant to inform the future development and redevelopment in the Borough. This Land Use Plan does not contemplate zoning map revisions to meet the resiliency goals of the Master Plan. Instead, the goals and objectives can be met by incorporating resiliency measures into zoning and design standards and policies.



Oceanport Borough Land Use Map



## **Resiliency**

**Green Infrastructure.** Much of the Borough's stormwater is conveyed through a grey infrastructure system. Green infrastructure manages stormwater differently than an engineered network of pipes and treatment systems, which is commonly referred to as "grey infrastructure". Vegetated green roofs, bioretention areas along streets and sidewalks, street trees and rain gardens are all examples of managing stormwater with green infrastructure. These approaches can reduce the amount of stormwater and slow the rate of stormwater, which in turn improves the water quality of water that enters the local waterways. Resiliency from flooding events is supported through the requirement and implementation of green infrastructure. The Borough should revise zoning ordinances, where appropriate, that remove barriers to green infrastructure and low impact development and encourage the use of green infrastructure within streetscapes, public parks and facilities, redevelopment and development sites.



*Green Infrastructure Example: Green Street Planters, New Jersey Future*

**Living Shorelines and Conservation Based Zoning.** The importance of wetlands within the resiliency conversation is focused on the ability of wetlands to provide short and long term storage of surface water by reducing the velocity of flooding waters. Wetlands provide erosion control and shoreline stabilization which helps to dissipate energy from a storm. This natural process reduces the impact of flooding by capturing, storing and slowly releasing waters over time.

Currently there are approximately 7 miles of Estuarine wetlands located adjacent to the Borough shoreline which represents 50% of the overall length of the shoreline (14.1 Miles) within the Borough.

Borough shorelines are often stabilized with hardened structures, such as bulkheads which often increase the rate of coastal erosion, remove the ability of the shoreline to carry out natural processes, and provide little habitat for estuarine species. New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection is working to implement a permit process that will encourage more



natural bank stabilization using a technique called “living shorelines.” This approach uses plants, sand, and limited use of rock to provide shoreline protection and maintain valuable habitat.

While the Borough recognizes the importance of wetlands and living shorelines for future resiliency mitigation from flooding, the majority of the shoreline property is held in private ownership and the primary protection mechanisms are bulkheads. Therefore, conservation and protection of the existing wetlands and the improvement of the natural shoreline on public property is essential in the realization of a multi-prong approach to reducing exposure of the loss of life and property from flooding. The implementation of a shoreline buffer conservation zoning district would protect the existing shoreline and wetland resources and provide incentives for private property owners to convert the hardened structures to living shorelines.

**Non-Contiguous Clustering.** Approximately 25% of the Borough’s land area is located in the Special Flood Hazard Area which has a 1% annual chance of flooding (also referred to as the 100-year flood hazard area) with base flood elevations of 7 feet above sea level. Up to 35% of the Borough’s land area has a 0.2% chance of flooding annually (also referred to as the 500-year flood hazard area). The Special Flood Hazard Area encompasses 1,100 parcels in the Borough potentially impacting up to 3,000 individuals which accounts for approximately 50% of the Borough’s total population. It is estimated that an additional 300 parcels would be impacted by sea level rise by 2050 which could affect up to 3,500 people or 60% of the population. Rising sea levels will exacerbate the risks to the Borough’s population and economic activity from flooding.

Given the large land mass that is vulnerable to flooding, the Borough should explore retreat strategies such as acquisition and non-contiguous cluster zoning as mechanisms to preserve open space in the flood hazard area and areas susceptible to sea level rise. Non-contiguous cluster zoning is basically a transfer of density/floor area from lands which are most vulnerable to flooding and those that are best able to provide flood mitigation to those lands which are most appropriate for increased density with the ability to incorporate resilient strategies and elements. This type of zoning can offer incentives to the private sector to participate in reducing the Borough’s vulnerability to future storms and flooding.

The policy basis for this project lies in the 2013 amendments to the Municipal Land Use Law, whereby non-contiguous clustering was defined and added to the list of land conservation strategies that were part of a municipal “toolbox”.

### **Connectivity**

The ability for a community to provide daily connections between people, places and services is not only an essential community need, but can also provide rapid mass evacuation opportunities during times of emergency. To maximize the relationships between the Borough’s commercial centers, public spaces and residential neighborhoods, it is important that they be linked by



vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian connections along the street and between properties. Additionally, the Borough should promote interconnectivity and shared parking.

During the community input sessions, the participants recognized a strength that makes Oceanport a great place to live is having a strong community character and identity. The adequacy and accessibility of public gathering spaces are elements that contribute to bolstering the community's identity and encourage social integration and active community engagement.

There are four transit points centrally located with the Borough. NJ Transit provides three bus stops (Oceanport Avenue and Crescent Place, East Main Street at Oceanport Gardens and Oceanport Avenue at Monmouth Park Racetrack) and one train station that operates on an intermittent schedule servicing the Monmouth Park Racetrack while in season.

Monmouth County Division of Transportation also provides a variety of demand responsive transportation services including the Shared Ride for people with special needs (medical & dialysis) and for veterans through a combination of contractors and MCDOT staff drivers and vehicles.

There are bike paths that connect the train station stop to the Village Commercial District and the Monmouth Park Racetrack. Sidewalks are provided on either side of East Main Street allowing ease of pedestrian access to business and personal services from the adjacent residential districts. However, Oceanport Avenue does not contain sidewalks or bike paths and lanes creating a connectivity challenge for the surrounding neighborhoods. Bike paths and wide pedestrian trails are particularly important for creating safe and convenient access for those that do not drive including children, those with disabilities, low and moderate income families and seniors. It is also these populations that tend to be most in need of local services and amenities, such as those that can be provided by quality public spaces.

Additional transportation options including transit, bike and pedestrian facilities should be located near new planned communities, such as Fort Monmouth and neighborhoods that have higher concentrations of vulnerable populations to ensure adequate access is provided to jobs and services in the community and region.

A wider transportation network, such as a local jitney service, that provides more coverage of the community will provide greater access to goods and services bolstering the social and economic characteristics of the community while also providing additional mass transportation options during emergency events. However, given the higher cost of such a service, the feasibility of this transportation mode should be thoroughly evaluated.

## Community Design

Design standards should be used to promote attractive neighborhoods and commercial and industrial areas. Standards which address architecture as well as site design, such as but not limited to lighting, plantings and parking design, have a significant impact on an area's desirability. New development and redeveloped areas should be required to promote a unique





sense of place through distinctive site design that differentiates the particular neighborhood or commercial/mixed use district from other parts of the Borough.

The architectural design of new and renovated buildings has a significant impact on the character of an area. Architectural design standards can be instrumental in ensuring quality in the built environment such that attractive and worthwhile neighborhoods and destinations are created. Additionally, interesting and context sensitive architecture can mitigate the visual impact of new development on surrounding land uses. Compatible building design, in terms of building massing, materials and character, should be required through architectural standards, particularly where commercial uses abut residential uses.

**Commercial Development.** Commercial development adjacent to residential districts should have a character and scale which is compatible with the surrounding area. The typical negative impacts of commercial uses should be limited so they do not unduly impact the surrounding residential neighborhoods and their quality of life. These negative impacts can be constrained by design standards which are sensitive to the adjacency of residential development and may include such items, but is not limited to, preventing light intrusion, planted buffers and building and parking setbacks that reduce noise, smell and visual impact. Additionally, architectural standards which address items such as building massing, materials and character can mitigate the impact of commercial development adjacent to residential uses.

**Crime Prevention and Safety Design.** As indicated, design standards can also provide a safer environment. While the crime rate per 1,000 people has decreased in the Borough since 2014, the implementation of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) regulations will help to meet the goal of having the lowest crime rate in Monmouth County. The goal for CPTED regulations is to prevent crime by designing a physical environment that positively influences human behavior. The theory is based on four principles: natural access control, natural surveillance, territoriality, and maintenance. CPTED strategies rely upon the ability to influence offender decisions that precede criminal acts which can range from the small-scale (such as the strategic use of shrubbery and other vegetation) to the overarching, including building form of an entire urban neighborhood and the amount of opportunity for "eyes on the street"

## Community Development

Community development can be described as the process of helping a community strengthen itself to reach its full potential. It often focuses on the Health and Well Being principles including:

- 1. Minimal human vulnerability:** Indicated by the extent to which everyone's basic needs are met.
- 2. Diverse livelihoods and employment:** Facilitated by access to finance, ability to accrue savings, skills training, business support and social welfare.
- 3. Effective safeguards to human health and life:** Relying on integrated health facilities and services, and responsive emergency services.



Community development is strongly rooted in enhancing the quality of life as it can strengthen community bonds and promote revitalization. Diverse livelihoods and employment opportunities are strengthened through access to personal finance and business development educational programs.

Resilient communities provide access to training and skills development for its residents. While the existing regional education facilities provide a broad range of educational opportunities, partnering with the Long Branch division of Brookdale Community Center as well as the Monmouth County Vocational School District to provide personal finance and business development classes closer to the Oceanport community furthers a commitment to locally accessible personal and business improvement courses. The Borough should adopt zoning regulations that permit educational facilities in all non-residential districts.

Community revitalization and resiliency is also rooted in the ability to safeguard human health and life which depends on the network of medical uses readily available to a community. According to The World Bank website, there was an average of 2.5 physicians per 1,000 people in the United States in 2011. Oceanport has an estimated population of 5,834 in 2014. To meet the average number of physicians per 1,000 people, Oceanport would require access to a minimum of 13.25 physicians.

While it appears that Oceanport has access to the minimum number of physicians to meet the average, there are at least three other communities, Monmouth Beach, Long Branch and West Long Branch, which had an estimated combined population of 42,259 in 2014 which also share the physician and medical clinic and hospital resources. Given the size of Oceanport and the population of the surrounding communities, providing adequate overall medical facilities should be addressed at a local and regional scale. Locally, the Borough should adopt zoning regulations that permit medical facilities in all non-residential districts, as appropriate and with the necessary use and site design conditions.



## SECTION 5-L

### **Implementation Plan**

The following action items are among those recommended for implementation of the Land Use Plan Element of the Master Plan.

1. The Borough should revise zoning ordinances, where appropriate, that remove barriers to green infrastructure and low impact development and encourage the use of green infrastructure within streetscapes, public parks and facilities, redevelopment and development sites.
2. Provide for flexibility of appropriate bulk regulations in flood hazard areas to address the conflicts that may arise from elevating structures in compliance with the Borough Flood Damage Prevention ordinance.
3. Implement appropriate zoning regulations and design standards that is sensitive to the scale and character of a neighborhood in order to prevent a visual intrusion from elevating buildings within the flood hazard areas.
4. The Borough should consider undertaking an investigation of the East Main Street/Village Center District to determine if this area meets the Area in Need of Rehabilitation or Redevelopment criteria as provided in the NJ Redevelopment and Housing Law.
5. Continued coordination with FMERPA regarding future land use decisions is necessary to ensure the Borough's vision for this land area is considered.
6. Implement a shoreline buffer conservation zoning district which would protect the existing shoreline and wetland resources and provide incentives for private property owners to convert existing hardened structures to living shorelines.
7. Study and provide an analysis of retreat strategies such as acquisition and non-contiguous cluster zoning as mechanisms to preserve open space in the flood hazard area and areas susceptible to sea level rise.
8. Provide zoning regulations that require multi-modal transportation options including transit, bike and pedestrian facilities for new development and redevelopment.
9. Study the feasibility of providing a wider transportation network, such as a local jitney service, that provides more coverage of the community will provide greater access to goods and services.



10. Implement architectural design standards which address items such as building massing, materials and character that reduce the impact of commercial development adjacent to residential uses.
11. Implement Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) regulations.
12. Adopt zoning regulations that permit educational facilities in all non-residential districts.
13. Adopt zoning regulations that permit medical facilities in all non-residential districts, as appropriate and with the necessary use and site design conditions.
14. Create zoning incentives to motivate desirable redevelopment and revitalization.
15. Promote connectivity throughout the Borough, particularly bicycle and pedestrian connectivity.