

Highland Park Borough, Middlesex County, NJ



Leadership and Vision

Highland Park 2020: A Sustainable Community

Mayor Meryl Frank, together with the Borough Council unveiled a long-term vision for the Borough. The plan, *Highland Park 2020: A Sustainable Community*, focuses on the Borough's need to sustain the environment, local economy, and its diverse and changing population.

The Highland Park 2020 Plan outlines its sustainability strategies into three areas: environmental, economic and social.

Environmentally Sustainable- A Green Community

- ✓ Public buildings such as Borough Hall, the Senior/Recreation Center, Police and Fire Departments, Library, schools and interested houses of worship have been retrofitted for energy and water efficiency;
- ✓ new major redevelopment projects are underway, based on green building standards;
- ✓ streetscape projects and MainStreet Highland Park projects feature recycled content, LED traffic signals, and high efficiency lighting on street lamps;
- ✓ additional plantings in downtown areas on Raritan and Woodbridge Avenues provide the conservation and health benefits of shade as well as aesthetic screening;
- ✓ a program entitled *Taking Back Paradise: Taking Back a Parking Lot* has replaced a used car sales lot with an environmental state of the art park (Centennial Park) that features native plants, recycled glass pavers and a rain garden;
- ✓ Walk Safe Highland Park, a program already underway in the Borough, will continue to promote bicycling and walking through the redesign of curb cuts and installation of bike racks to ease traffic congestion;
- ✓ a shuttle service to New Brunswick for commuters, Rutgers students, faculty, and staff, senior citizens, and youth to the Route 1 movie theater has been awarded by NJ Transit;
- ✓ purchase of hybrid police and inspections vehicles; and,
- ✓ creation of and participation in Green Purchasing Co-op with Rutgers University.

Highland Park Borough - <http://hpboro.com/index.htm>

Highland Park 2020 Plan - http://hpboro.com/news_hlp2020_051903.htm

Highland Park "Green" Community web page - www.greenhp.org

Township Statistics
Population in 2000 - 13,999
Land Area - 1.8 sq. mi.



The Eugene Young Environmental Center

The Eugene Young Environmental Center was dedicated on Earth Day - April 22, 2007. The Center will be a solar powered building and will serve as the principal location for public education about green technologies, native plants and Green Highland Park.



Concept sketch for the proposed environmental education structures at the Native Plant Preserve on River Road

The glass-walled building, designed by Sage Coombe Architects and MKW Landscape, demonstrates several principles of environmental construction: passive solar design, a “green roof” of plants, partial earth sheltering, and (on a separate shade structure) active solar panels that will power the electric needs of the building and have enough left over to put back into the power grid for a credit—the meter will run backward! The Center will also encompass the Borough’s Native Plants Garden and will be home to a new interactive environmental / art park.

Economically Sustainable - An Affordable Community

The economic component of Highland Park 2020 seeks to both overcome the property tax burden and assure that the Borough is able to endure and prosper in the future.

An aggressive revitalization campaign will seek to attract new commercial ratables while reinvesting in existing businesses. Redevelopment of commercial and industrial sectors, employing principles of smart growth, will be pursued.

Successful economic activity, such as the Highland Park Urban Farm Market, will continue to receive the support and patronage of the administration and Borough residents.

Socially Sustainable - A Livable Community

The goals of social sustainability include creating a community which is welcoming, understanding, and accessible for everyone. Some of the initiatives include:

- ✓ The annual Unity Fest, an outgrowth of the Highland Park Community Relations Task Force, celebrates the Borough’s diverse cultures with food, table displays, and performances by area businesses and not-for-profit groups;
- ✓ Promotion of the arts in the Borough including folk art from Highland Park’s diverse population, community murals, a new Highland Park Mexican American Dance Troup, and a new program which will provide arts programming for children with disabilities.
- ✓ Developing an accessible community - creating an inventory of areas in need of improved accessibility and installation of curb cuts and repaired sidewalks as part of the *Walk Safe Highland Park* program.

For more information contact:

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