

STATE PLAN ENDORSEMENT MUNICIPAL SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT

**Township of Middle
Cape May County, New Jersey**

September 2021



Prepared for State of New Jersey
Office of Planning Advocacy



Middle Township

DRAFT

EDA ENGINEERING
DESIGN
ASSOCIATES, P.A.

Engineers - Landscape Architects - Planners

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State Plan Endorsement Municipal Self-Assessment Report

September 2021

Township of Middle, Cape May County, New Jersey

MIDDLE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

Timothy C. Donohue, Mayor

Theron Gandy, Deputy Mayor

James Norris, Committeeman

Kimberly Osmundsen, Business Administrator/Township Clerk

PLAN ENDORSEMENT CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mayor Timothy Donohue

Susan Copson

Mark Saioni

Rachel Shepherd

John Menz, Jr.

Gary Farrow

Tracey Cardwell

Vincent C. Orlando, P.E., P.P., LLA, Board Engineer and Professional Planner

Carol L. Tutelian, AICP, P.P., Professional Planner, Engineering Design Associates

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1.0 Introduction

On December 29, 2005, The Township of Middle in Cape May County formally submitted a petition for Initial Plan Endorsement to the New Jersey State Planning Commission (Commission). The petition was deemed complete on January 27, 2005 by the Office for Planning Advocacy (OPA). The petition commenced the regulatory process under the State Planning Act for the Township to have its zoning, land development and related planning policies and regulations certified by OPA and the Commission. The certification, known as Plan Endorsement, signifies that a municipalities' policies, regulations and related growth and land use are consistent with the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan (State Plan) and grants municipalities special status associated with permitting and development.

On December 4, 2006, the Township adopted Resolution Number 574-06 to enter a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with OPA, and the Township actively worked with the State to complete the Action Plan items outlined in the MOU.

On September 28, 2011, the Commission found that the Executive Director's Recommendation Report dated August 17, 2011, the Township's proposed center designations and the Planning Implementation Agreement (PIA) were consistent with the goals, policies and strategies of the State Plan (refer to: *Exhibit I Planning Implementation Agreement*). Therefore, the Commission passed Resolution 2011-05 to approve the Township's petition for plan endorsement. The Commission authorized the designation of the following seven (7) Centers on the State Plan Policy Map.

- Cape May Court House Coastal Regional Center
- Rio Grande/Whitesboro/Burleigh Regional Center
- Swainton Village
- Green Creek Village
- Del Haven Village
- Hildreth Village
- Goshen Hamlet

In April 2014, the Township submitted a "Biennial Report and Petition for Centers Boundary Amendment" to the Commission requesting the inclusion/expansion of six (6) parcels into the endorsed Centers. The Commission approved the expansion of 516 Stone Harbor Boulevard (Block 132.01, Lot 28) and 521 Stone Harbor Boulevard (Block 321.01, Lots 2 and 3) Regional Centers. In addition to the Centers boundary amendment request, the 2014 Biennial Report provided an update on the Township's planning endeavors, a self-assessment report and a statement of local goals and objectives.

The Township is now seeking an extension to their existing Centers designation through Plan Endorsement. In addition to obtaining a re-designation of the Township's existing Centers, the Township is seeking to expand their Regional Centers in two areas as shown on the Proposed Centers Re-Designation Plan (refer to: *Exhibit II Proposed Centers Redesignation Plan*) provided as Exhibit II. To achieve their goal, the Township attended a Plan Endorsement Pre-Petition Meeting with OPA on April 27, 2021. The meeting provided an overview of Plan Endorsement and Mapping, and various State agencies provided input. On June 21, 2021, the Township created a Plan Endorsement Citizens'

Advisory Committee to guide the plan endorsement process and increase public awareness and participation in the plan endorsement process for the community.

1.1 Local Goals and Objectives

The Township Planning Board approved the Re-examination of their Master Plan on May 3, 2021. The Re-Examination report recognized goals and objectives which remain viable recommendations for the future. The overall goals of the Township are:

- *Improve quality of life through sound land use planning.*
- *Provide for sustainable development.*
- *Balance development with the necessary infrastructure and land to support growth.*
- *Promote smart development and redevelopment in Centers.*
- *Protect environmentally sensitive lands and farmlands with appropriate development techniques.*
- *Identify transportation improvements to support planned growth.*
- *Support existing businesses and new initiatives to expand economic opportunities.*

The current Centers are consistent with the goals, policies, and strategies of the Township Master Plan and the State Plan. Each of the seven Centers are areas of existing, concentrated residential and commercial development. They represent locations along road corridors of existing population settlements and areas of land appropriate for development. The Township's Zoning Ordinance was revised in 2011 and promotes sound and comprehensive planning and cooperation of planning activities in the Township with the State Plan. The current zoning standards balance development with necessary infrastructure and land to support growth, promote smart development and redevelopment in Centers and protect environmentally sensitive land and farmlands. The requested re-designation of the existing Centers through Plan Endorsement will serve to further the Township's efforts to support and enhance development in appropriate areas.

On September 28, 2011, the Commission memorialized a Planning Implementation Agreement (PIA) reflecting a commitment by Middle Township to work with County and State agencies to implement the goals, strategies, and policies of the State Plan. The PIA activities, the parties responsible for carrying out each activity and the status are provided as Exhibit I.

1.2 Summary of Requested Center Boundary Changes

The Township is proposing small adjustments to the existing Center boundaries as shown on the mapping in Exhibit II. The following is a summary of the requested changes:

- Block 1436.01, Lots 6, 7, 11 and 13 between NJSH Route 9 and the Garden State Parkway. It is recommended the subject properties be included in the Rio Grande Regional Center. The zone was changed from Suburban Residential (SR) to Town Center (TC) to facilitate the continued growth of the Rio Grande Regional Center. Including this area in the Rio Grande

Regional Center will support the expansion of appropriate commercial and residential development.

- Block 1434, Lots 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 and 26 located along Railroad Avenue. It is proposed to expand the boundaries of the Rio Grande/Whitesboro/Burleigh Regional Center to provide a linear consistency with the surrounding designated Regional Center. Including this area in the Rio Grande Regional Center will support the expansion of appropriate development. Any environmentally sensitive areas will be addressed within the existing regulatory framework.
- Block 132.01, Lot 31 along the Garden State Parkway. It is recommended that the property be included in the Cape May Court House Regional Center. The zone was changed from Rural Conservation (RC) to Town Center (TC) due to physical changes to the access road from the Parkway. The site has been approved for the development of a gas station, convenience store and office building consistent with the type of development permitted in the TC zone. Including this area in the Cape May Court House Regional Center will support the expansion of appropriate commercial and residential development.

2.0 Existing Conditions/Opportunities and Challenges

2.1 Location and Regional Context

The Township of Middle is made up of 83 square miles and is located on the Cape May County mainland surrounded by the Delaware Bay to the west, Lower Township to the south, Avalon, Stone Harbor and the Wildwoods to the east, and Dennis Township to the north. The Township is entirely within the Coastal Area Facilities Review Act (CAFRA) area. The Garden State Parkway, State Highways 83, 47 and 147 as well as County Routes 657, 619 and several local roads serve the Township.

2.2 Background – Population and Trends

Since 1990, Middle Township’s population has grown by 25.2%. At the same time, New Jersey’s population has grown 14.9% while Cape May County’s population has decreased 1.5%. Cape May County’s population has been decreasing since 2000, with the population total noted as 102,326 in 2000 and subsequently decreasing to 93,705 in 2018. In recent years between 2010 and 2018, Middle Township’s population has also decreased by 2.2%. Prior to 2010, Middle Township experienced a large population growth, increasing by 11.1% between 1990 and 2000, and 15.3% between 2000 and 2010.

Population Totals			
Year	Middle Township	Cape May County	New Jersey
1990	14,771	95,089	7,730,188
2000	16,405	102,326	8,414,350
2010	18,911	97,265	8,791,894
2018	18,492	93,705	8,881,845
Population Change			
1990-2000	11.1%	7.6%	8.9%
2000-2010	15.3%	-5.0%	4.5%
2010-2018	-2.2%	-3.7%	1.0%
1990-2018	25.2%	-1.5%	14.9%

Source: U.S. Decennial Census Data / American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2014-2018)

The number of housing units in Middle Township has gradually increased, with the most dramatic increase between 2000 and 2010 at 23.8%. Between 2010 and 2018, the number of housing units increased 4.0%.

Housing Units - Middle Township	
Year	Housing Units
1990	6,970
2000	7,510
2010	9,296
2018	9,665
Change in Housing Units	
1990-2000	7.8%
2000-2010	23.8%
2010-2018	4.0%
1990-2018	38.7%

Source: U.S. Decennial Census Data / American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2014-2018)

Demographics - Middle Township		
Sex	Persons	Percentage
Male	8,982	48.6%
Female	9,510	51.4%
Age	Persons	Percentage
<5	1,136	6.1%
5-9	1,117	6.0%
10-14	1,121	6.1%
15-19	910	4.9%
20-24	997	5.4%
25-34	2,591	14.0%
35-44	1,855	10.0%
45-54	2,217	12.0%
55-59	1,359	7.3%
60-64	1,257	6.8%
65-74	2,109	11.4%
75-84	1,179	6.4%
>85	644	3.5%
Median Age	42.3	---
Race	Persons	Percentage
White	15,644	84.6%
Black or African American	2,576	13.9%
American Indian or Alaska Native	60	0.3%
Asian	350	1.9%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	16	0.1%
Some other race	291	1.6%

Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2014-2018)

Between 2010 and 2018, the distribution in Middle Township’s age groups shifted. The most notable declining age groups are the 35-44 and 45-54 year-olds, which decreased 3.3% and 4.6% respectively. The largest increasing age group in the same time period is the 25-34 year-olds, which increased 2.0% since 2010. This is reflective in the decreasing median age for the Township, now at 42.3 years from the previous 43.1 years in 2010. Other notable increasing age groups include 55-59, 65-74, and older than 85 years population, at 1.7%, 1.6%, and 1.6% respectively.

Age Distribution - Middle Township				
Age	Persons (2018)	Percentage (2018)	Persons (2010)	Percentage (2010)
<5	1,136	6.1%	1,318	7.2%
5-9	1,117	6.0%	1,284	7.0%
10-14	1,121	6.1%	967	5.3%
15-19	910	4.9%	834	4.5%
20-24	997	5.4%	710	3.9%
25-34	2,591	14.0%	2,201	12.0%
35-44	1,855	10.0%	2,443	13.3%
45-54	2,217	12.0%	3,056	16.6%
55-59	1,359	7.3%	1,038	5.6%
60-64	1,257	6.8%	1,325	7.2%
65-74	2,109	11.4%	1,802	9.8%
75-84	1,179	6.4%	1,039	5.7%
>85	644	3.5%	357	1.9%
Median Age	42.3	---	43.1	---

Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2014-2018) / (2006-2010)

Income - Middle Township			
	Households	Families	Non-Family
Median Income	\$60,293	\$73,965	\$35,971
Mean Income	\$84,938	\$99,436	\$53,388

Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2014-2018)

Mean Income			
	Households	Families	Non-Family
Middle Township	\$60,293	\$73,965	\$35,971
Cape May County	\$89,857	\$105,920	\$55,555
New Jersey	\$110,140	\$129,025	\$63,080

Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2014-2018)

Percentage of Population Below Poverty Level	
Middle Township	12.9%
Cape May County	11.1%
New Jersey	10.4%

Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2014-2018)

Employment Status of Population 16 Years and Older		
	Labor Force Participation Rate	Unemployment Rate
Middle Township	60.7%	10.0%
Cape May County	58.0%	7.7%
New Jersey	65.6%	6.1%

Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2014-2018)

The mean (average) income levels of Middle Township are below the County and State levels. Consequently, the Township has a higher percentage of population below the poverty level as compared to Cape May County and New Jersey. Additionally, the unemployment rate of Middle Township is higher than the County and State, noted as 10.0% as compared to 7.7% and 6.1%.

2.3 Inventory of Key Characteristics

The Township's population has decreased by 2.2 percent between 2010 and 2018, compared to a large population growth between 1990 and 2000. Between 2010 and 2018, the number of housing units has increased by 4.0 percent.

2.4 Status of Planning

The Township's recent planning activities include:

- a. Re-examination of the 2013 Open Space and Recreation Plan in September 2021
- b. Adoption of Stormwater Best Management Practices and Stormwater Control Ordinance in April 2021
- c. Re-examination of the 2010 Master Plan in November 2020
- d. NJDEP approval of the Municipal Public Access Plan in April 2020
- e. Ongoing negotiations with Fair Share Housing Center since 2019 to address the municipality's obligations under New Jersey's Third Round Housing Formula

- f. Designation of tracts of land in Rio Grande and Burleigh as “Areas in Need of Redevelopment in 2018

2.4.1 Open Space and Recreation Plan

In 2021, the Township received a Sustainable Communities Grant from Atlantic City Electric to prepare a Re-Examination of the 2013 Middle Township Open Space and Recreation Plan. The Steering Committee was comprised of the following members:

- Township Planner/Engineer
- Chairman of the Planning Board
- Chairperson of the Environmental Committee
- Member of the Township’s Green Team
- Member of the Recreation Committee
- Cape May County Representative
- Chairman of the Economic Development County
- Chairman of the Cape May County Open Space Board
- Chairman of the Zoning Board
- Mayor
- Business Administrator
- Economic Development and Grants Director
- Athletic Director
- Deputy Athletic Director
- Administrative Secretary

The Steering Committee reviewed the existing plan and provided recommendations regarding the improvement of existing facilities, prioritizing of recreational activities and suggestions for new and improved recreational programs. In addition, a survey was posted on the Township’s website to gain input from the community regarding the open space and recreational needs. It was determined that the goals and policies defined in the 2013 Open Space and Recreation Plan remain important to the purpose of promoting responsible public recreation, preserving and enhancing historic and cultural resources, conserving land for wildlife, protecting water quality and open space lands, and ensuring the health and wellness of the community. A re-examination of the Plan affirmed that the local, state, and federal regulations and programs in place serve to protect the existing open space areas for the future. The Township has consistently prioritized the funding of improvements to recreation facilities throughout the community. Recommendations for improvements to existing Township facilities, and for upgrades to areas with water access were made based on the Committee’s input and the Community Feedback Survey. This process led to the conclusion that open space must be protected based on the significant benefits provided to the community’s present and future well-being, and that the Township’s recreation program should be structured to provide a variety of activities, programs and facilities for all ages and interests.

2.4.2 Stormwater Ordinance

On April 5, 2021, the Township adopted a Stormwater Best Management Practices and Stormwater Control Ordinance (218-73.1) pursuant to NJDEP’s stormwater management rules. The new rule amendments require the use of green infrastructure best management practices (GI BMPs), and nonstructural stormwater strategies for flood control, groundwater recharge and pollutant reduction. The stormwater control ordinance specifies that GI BMPs and low impact development (LID) should be utilized to meet the goal of maintaining natural hydrology to reduce stormwater runoff volume, reduce erosion, encourage infiltration and groundwater recharge, and reduce pollution.

2.4.3 Master Plan Re-Examination Report

The Middle Township Planning Board adopted a Re-Examination of the Master Plan in May 2021. Feedback was provided from the Board members regarding the 2010 Township goals and objectives and whether these goals have been achieved or remain relevant. New recommendations were made regarding development regulations pertaining to short-term rentals, accessory rental apartments, the definition of a marina and the re-establishment of a zone permitting light industrial uses as a conditional use. The report also recommended that certain properties be re-zoned to achieve the purpose and intent of the Master Plan more effectively. The report was presented at a public hearing at which time community response was heard (refer to: *Exhibit III Zone Changes*).

2.4.4 Municipal Public Access Plan

On April 14, 2020, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) determined that the Township’s Municipal Public Access Plan (MPAP) met the criteria of the Coastal Zone Management Rules, Public Access Rule, N.J.A.C. 7:7-16.9. In accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:7-16.9(h), the Township will incorporate the MPAP into the municipal Master Plan at a public hearing in September 2021 (refer to: *Exhibit IV Municipal Public Access Plan Map*).

The MPAP provides a comprehensive plan for the Township which lays out the Township's vision for providing access to tidal waters and shorelines along Middle Township’s borders. The development and implementation of the MPAP supports the policy of municipal determination of public access locations and facilities, while safeguarding regulatory flexibility and potential funding opportunities for Middle Township. Upon incorporation into the Master Plan, the Township will be responsible for ensuring that public access to tidal waterways along the municipality’s shorelines is provided in accordance with the plan.

2.4.5 Affordable Housing

The Township has had ongoing dialogue with the Fair Share Housing Center since 2019 to address the municipality’s obligation under New Jersey’s Third Round Housing Formula. The Township has made a good faith commitment to developing a fair share housing plan.

2.4.6 Redevelopment

Rio Grande Town Center Redevelopment

On March 19, 2018, the Township approved the “Study Area” known as Block 1434, Lots 2, 3, 4, 8 and 9 as a Non-Condemnation Area in Need of Redevelopment consistent with smart growth planning principles. The total, combined land area of the five parcels is approximately 22 acres with 550 feet of frontage along NJSH Route 47. The area was developed with a concrete batch plant, retail store and service yard active from the 1950s until the early 1990s. The buildings associated with the concrete facility were demolished between 2006 and 2010. The Study Area is located within the Rio Grande-Whitesboro-Burleigh Regional Center. (refer to: *Exhibit V Rio Grande Town Center Redevelopment Area*).

Indian Trail Redevelopment

On April 2, 2018, the Township approved the “Study Area” known as Blocks 169 through 173, Blocks 175 through 208, Block 210 and Block 211 as an Area in Need of Redevelopment. Certain properties within the Study Area were designated as “Condemnation” and certain properties were designated as “Non-Condemnation”. The entire area is approximately 230 acres, the total area of the parcels (excluding the unimproved roadways) is approximately 170 acres, with approximately 150 acres of vacant land and approximately 20 acres of properties developed with single family dwellings (refer to: *Exhibit V Indian Trail Redevelopment Area*).

3.0 Community Vision and Public Participation

On June 21, 2021, the Township Committee passed a resolution creating a Plan Endorsement Citizens’ Advisory Committee (committee) to increase public awareness of, and involvement by, the general public in planning for the future of the Township. The primary purpose of the committee is to gain an understanding of the needs, desires, and intentions of the community regarding land use. A representative of the governing body is included to assure the governing body is aware of issues being raised and to provide support from the community leadership in the efforts of the committee. The committee is comprised of seven members, including one representative of the governing body, a Class IV member of the planning board, one representative of the zoning board, and two representatives of the public.

The members were asked to consider the long-term future of the Township with regards to Land Use, Housing, Economic Development, Infrastructure and Service, and Natural and Cultural Resource Protection. The eight Goals and Strategies of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan were considered.

The existing Centers on the State Plan Policy Map, the existing Planning Area designations, and the recently adopted Master Plan Re-Examination Report were reviewed. The committee discussed whether the Township should consider changes to the Center boundaries based on the future goals set forth in the Master Plan Re-Exam and a review of upcoming and approved projects throughout the township, as

provided in the following Section 4.0 of this document and in Exhibit VI (refer to: *Exhibit VI Development Application Activity*).

The committee found that the existing Center designations promote the purpose of concentrating residential and commercial development within locations along the road corridors of existing population settlements in accordance with the Goals and Strategies of the State Plan. It was determined that the adoption of new zoning in 2011 accomplished the goals of encouraging redevelopment within Township Centers that support higher density mixed-uses and encourages residential and commercial uses within the Center core areas. The committee established that the current zoning promotes the conservation and preservation of sensitive lands outside of the Centers through open space residential clustering and the establishment of Environmental Assessment requirements for proposed development. It was determined that the local, state, and federal regulations and programs in place serve to protect the existing open space areas for the future. The proposed adjustments to the Centers were discussed and the Committee agreed that the changes are consistent with the goals of the State Plan.

4.0 Recent and Upcoming Development Activities

Table 4.1: Approved Township Projects Under Construction

OWNER/NAME	BLOCK/ LOT	LOCATION	PROJECT
Hober	1421/ 4	1084 Rte. 47 S.	Storage Units
Vision Properties	983/ 1	Route 9/ NWW Blvd	Retail
WJO/ Johnson	348.02/ 3	Shunpike	Subdivision
Barto	1450/ 18	20 Church Rd.	Warehouse Bldgs
County of Cape May	1450/ 5	County Commons	Movie Theatre
608-610 Mullica Hill	220/ 3	210 N. Main Street	Dominoes/ Retail
Plaza at Cape May	212.03/ 46	Ch -So. Dennis Rd.	Starbucks/ Taco Shop/Retail
Mitch Nichols	1436.01/15	3112 Rte. 9 S.	Bulk Storage
M. Williams	389/ 9.01	66 Bayshore Rd.	Shellfish processing

Table 4.2: Proposed Township Projects

Owner/Name	Block	Lot	Site Location	Project Description
Stone Harbor Golf Club	99.02	115.01, 115.02, 115.03,115.04	Stone Harbor Golf Club	Residential
La Monica	918	2	Indian Trail	Commercial
Cape Plaza LLC	212.03	46	Magnolia Road	Storage
Victoria Richard LLC	212.01	3	Dennisville Road	Retail
2 Bros 2 Sis	353	4	Route 9 South	Business
SDK Property	355.01	7	Johnstown Road	Storage
Fulton Bank	56.01	43	Goshen Road	Residential
Baywood Court	350	28-32	Shellbay Avenue	Townhomes
Hallett	355.02	27	Oyster Road	Dinner Theater
Robson	1414.01	14	Route 47 South	Storage
3156 South LLC	1436.01	5	Route 9 South	Apartments
DiPalantino	350	54	1037 Route 9 South	Retail/Condos
Andre Properties	1414.01	40	310 N. Railroad	Storage
Luke Williams	132.01	10	Stone Harbor Blvd.	Site Plan
Backwater Marine	132.01	26	Stone Harbor	Retail
Celtic Air	354.02	9	Indian Trail	Commercial/Retail
La Terra Stone	124	5	Route 9 North	Commercial

5.0 Statement of Planning Coordination

This Centers re-designation request incorporates minimal changes to the existing centers. It has been established that the existing Centers are consistent with the goals of the State Plan. The municipal master plan re-examination report reflects consistency with State planning area policies. The Township zoning ordinance incorporates regulations to address appropriate development of the Centers and to refine development in the Environs. The Township’s Planning Implementation Agreement (PIA) incorporates recommendations as set forth within the Middle Township Transportation Improvement Study funded by

the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) in July 2011. The Township continues to work with the County, NJDOT, and New Jersey Transit to advance the target goals of the PIA.

The adopted County Master Plan is dated 2005. The Cape May County Planning Department is currently working to update the Cape May County Comprehensive Plan. The Township will continue to work with the County to coordinate planning efforts. The Township recently entered into a co-op with the County to evaluate the downtown area, located in the Cape May Court House Regional Center, for the purpose of generating design ideas that can be incorporated into the County Plan. The Township envisions future cooperation with County to improve their Centers.

6.0 State Programs, Grants and Capital Projects

NJDOT SAGE Municipal Aid Application 2022 for the reconstruction of Church Road from NJSH Route 9 to Railroad Avenue to improve the condition of the roadway.

NJDOT SAGE Municipal Aid Application 2022 to provide vehicle and pedestrian access from the commercial district along Route 47 to residential neighborhoods along Walsh and Pennsylvania Avenues. Sidewalks along 3rd Street are proposed to provide safe pedestrian access from residential and commercial districts to the NJ Transit bus stops along Route 47.

NJDOT SAGE Safe Streets to Transit Application 2022 for the construction of sidewalks along Hand Avenue from Boyd Street to Haman Avenue. The purpose of the project is to provide a continuous, safe sidewalk connection for residents of age-restricted and affordable housing communities to the New Jersey Transit bus stop along NJSH Route 9.

NJDOT Local Aid – Safe Routes to Schools Program to provide sidewalks and other improvements for safe pedestrian and bicycle access to Middle Township schools from surrounding residential neighborhoods.

7.0 Sustainability/Resiliency Statement

The Township participates in the Sustainable Jersey program and is a certified municipality. The Environmental Commission, which also serves as the Green Team, was re-established in 2011 and carries out the actions of the Sustainable Jersey program. On August 17, 2017 The Township passed a Sustainable Land Use Pledge to make land use decisions with the intent of make Middle Township a sustainable community. The Township Public Works, Construction Official, Grants Coordinator, Emergency Management Officer and Business Administrator formed a committee to work with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection to identify vulnerabilities to coastal hazards based on existing tools developed by the NJ Coastal Management Program. Middle Township's Jurisdictional Annex within the Cape May County Hazard Mitigation Plan Update prepared by Tetra Tech, Inc. was developed over the course of several months with input from many jurisdiction representatives. The mapping prepared by Tetra Tech based on this input, and existing Centers are overlain on the map (refer to: *Exhibit VII Hazard Mitigation Map*).

8.0 Consistency

8.1 Local and Regional Planning

The 2020 Master Plan Re-Examination Report was a review of the goals and objectives of the July 2010 Land Use Plan to “reflect the new direction toward Centers based development and to further protect lands in the Environs outside of the Centers.” These goals and objectives were presented in nine separate sections based on the Township’s vision for the future growth of the Township. The extent to which such goals and objectives have been addressed was discussed in the report. Many goals and objectives were recognized to be viable recommendations for the future and many of the stated goals were accomplished through the adoption of new zoning ordinances in 2011.

Overall Township Goals

- Improve quality of life through sound land use planning
- *Provide for sustainable development*
- *Balance development with the necessary infrastructure and land to support growth*
- *Promote smart development and redevelopment in Centers*
- *Protect environmentally sensitive lands and farmlands with appropriate development techniques*
- *Identify transportation improvements to support planned growth*
- *Support existing businesses and new initiatives to expand economic opportunities*

8.2 State Plan Goals Policies and Indicators

Goal # 1 Revitalize the State’s Cities and Towns

The existing Centers and proposed Center adjustments support this goal by providing for infill development and opportunities for redevelopment and revitalization.

Goal # 2 Conserve the State’s Natural Resources and Systems

Over 43 percent of the Township are public lands, covered by freshwater and tidal wetlands. Large areas of land within the Township are owned and managed by State and Federal Agencies for the protection of threatened and endangered species and wildlife habitats. These areas represent a significant amount of undeveloped land. The “Open Space” Mapping prepared by Maser Associates in May 2010 shows the breakdown of existing open space areas located within Middle Township including Federal, State, County and Municipal open space areas, as well as preserved farmland (refer to Exhibit VIII: *Open Space Map*). Most of the open space consists of State-owned land. The Delaware Bay Division of the Cape May National Wildlife Refuge is in Middle Township along the Delaware Bay. This area contains wildlife habitats including salt marshes, forested uplands, forested wetlands, vernal pools, shrub/scrub vegetation and grasslands. Large concentrations of migrating shorebirds visit the Delaware Bay area each spring. The Delaware Bay Division attracts large numbers of waterfowl, marsh birds, raptors, songbirds, reptiles, and amphibians.

The Natural Resources Inventory prepared in 2010 serves to identify natural systems and to further the protection of existing natural areas through the appropriate development of vacant parcels and the re-development of developed lands. The State Office of Planning Advocacy endorsement of the Township's Center, and the refinement of the Township's zoning and land use ordinances have enhanced the protection of natural resources.

Goal # 3 Promote Beneficial Economic Growth, Redevelopment and Renewal for All Residents of New Jersey

The Township has been actively engaged in promoting appropriate balanced economic growth consistent with the carrying capacity of the land and available infrastructure. As evidenced by the Development Application Activity mapping provided Exhibit VII, most development is infill development concentrated in the existing Centers.

Goal # 4 – Protect the Environment, Prevent and Clean Up Pollution

The Township developed an Environmental Assessment review process to ensure that all future development (including those developments not under CAFRA jurisdiction) will appropriately consider environmental resources. The environmental review process provides a stronger level of local regulation.

Goal # 5 – Provide Adequate Public Facilities and Services at a Reasonable Cost.

The Township supports the extension of public sewers and public water to accommodate development in the Centers.

Goal # 6 – Housing at a Reasonable Cost

The Township has had ongoing dialogue with the Fair Share Housing Center since 2019 to address the municipality's obligation under New Jersey's Third Round Housing Formula. The Township has made a good faith commitment to developing a fair share housing plan.

Goal # 7 – Preserve and Enhance Areas with Historic and Cultural, Open Space and Recreational Value

The goals and policies defined in the 2013 Open Space and Recreation Plan remain important to the purpose of promoting responsible public recreation, preserving and enhancing historic and cultural resources, conserving land for wildlife, protecting water quality and open space lands, and ensuring the health and wellness of the community. A 2021 re-examination of the plan affirmed that the local, state, and federal regulations and programs in place serve to protect the existing open space areas for the future. The Township has consistently prioritized the funding of improvements to recreation facilities throughout the community. The re-examination process led to the affirmation that open space must be protected based on the significant benefits provided to the community's present and future well-being, and that the Township's recreation program should be structured to provide a variety of activities, programs and facilities for all ages and interests.

Goal # 8 – Ensure Sound and Integrated Planning and Implementation Statewide

The PIA adopted by the State Planning Commission in 2011 incorporates numerous transit and transportation improvements based on the 2011 Transportation Improvement Study. The Township has coordinated with the County and NJDOT to facilitate improvements recommended in the Study. Many of the initiatives have been completed or are ongoing.

9.0 Conclusion

The Plan Endorsement Citizens' Advisory Committee found that the existing Centers designations are consistent with the goals, policies, and strategies of the Township Master Plan and the State Plan. Each of the seven Centers are areas of existing, concentrated residential and commercial development. They represent locations along road corridors of existing population settlements and areas of land appropriate for development. The Township's Zoning Ordinance promotes sound and comprehensive planning and cooperation of planning activities in the Township with the State Plan. The current zoning standards balance development with necessary infrastructure and land to support growth, promote smart development and redevelopment in Centers and protect environmentally sensitive land and farmlands. In addition, it was found that local, state, and federal regulations and programs in place serve to protect open space. The requested re-designation of the existing Centers through Plan Endorsement will serve to further the Township's efforts to support and enhance development in appropriate areas. Further, the proposed adjustments to the Centers are consistent with the goals of the State Plan.

EXHIBIT I: PLANNING IMPLEMENTATION AGREEMENT (PIA)

PIA #	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMEFRAME		STATUS
TRANSIT AND TRANSPORTATION					
NJT1	Explore the feasibility of different seasonal transportation options in order to reduce seasonal traffic congestion	SITPO, County and Middle Township in consultation with NJDOT and NJ Transit	Medium	10/1/2014	This is an ongoing initiative with the County and the NIDOT
NJT2	Explore vehicular at grade crossings across the existing rail ROW that coordinate directly with the township's Transportation Analysis in order to provide more efficient local circulation and alternatives to Rte 9.	Middle Township in consultation with the County, NJDOT and NJ Transit	Short	10/1/2012	This is an ongoing initiative with the County and the NIDOT
NJT3	Pursue improved bus transit facilities to increase route headways, increase bus pickup locations, develop central transit locations coordinated with parking	Middle Township and County to coordinate with NJT	Short	10/1/2012	The Township routinely coordinates efforts with NJT to optimize bus stop location.
NJT4	Determine feasibility of private east-west shuttle service in coordination with the mainland and barrier island municipalities. The goal of this regional service would be to enhance transit service between campgrounds, mainland attractions and barrier island destinations.	The County will assist in an effort to determine feasibility of private east-west shuttle service in coordination with the mainland municipalities.	Medium	10/1/2014	These initiatives are under County jurisdiction
NIDOT1	Construct key paper streets improvements listed in the Transportation Improvement Study	Middle Township	Long	10/1/2017	Under evaluation
NIDOT2	Develop western alternative roadway to Route 9	Middle Township, coordinating with landowners	Long	10/1/2017	This initiative is under NIDOT jurisdiction
NIDOT3	Develop new roadway of Honesuckle Lane extension	Middle Township	Long	10/1/2017	Evaluated and determined to be unattainable due to private land ownership
NIDOT4	Develop new roadway of Shunpike extension	Cape May County or Middle Township	Long	10/1/2017	This initiative is under County jurisdiction
NIDOT5	Plan for other roadway connections in general locations	Middle Township coordinating with landowners	Long	10/1/2017	Under evaluation
NIDOT6	Coordinate with K-Mart Plaza landowners to plan alternative access	Middle Township; NIDOT	Long	10/1/2017	The Plaza is now under County ownership and is being improved
NIDOT7	Explore installation of new median on Route 47 in coordination with prospective developers and other agencies	NIDOT	Long	10/1/2017	This initiative is under NIDOT jurisdiction
NIDOT8	Install signage directing motorists to Rio Grande Avenue	Cape May County	Short	10/1/2012	The Cape May County Engineer has reported that Rio Grande Avenue is a State roadway, therefore, this initiative is under NIDOT jurisdiction.
NIDOT9	Pursue addition of southbound left turn lane, modify signal timing at Route 9 and Route 47	NIDOT and coordination with WalMart developers	Medium	10/1/2014	Completed
NIDOT10	Investigate modification of signal timing at Route 9 and Stone Harbor Boulevard	Middle Township, in coordination with NIDOT	Short	10/1/2012	Completed
NIDOT11	Evaluate one-way treatment for Mechanic Street and Hand Avenue	Cape May County; Middle Township	Short	10/1/2012	This initiative was denied by the NIDOT
NIDOT12	Pursue installation of bulb-outs or median islands on Route 9 in Cape May Court House, and stripe parking spaces through state and federal funding sources	Middle Township, in coordination with NIDOT	Short	10/1/2012	Completed
NIDOT13	Install parking lot signage to County lot	Cape May County	Short	10/1/2012	Completed
NIDOT14	Adopt Complete Streets Policy	Middle Township	Short	10/1/2012	Adopted on October 15, 2017 - Middle Township Resolution Number 509-12
NIDOT15	Adopt access management ordinance	Middle Township	Short	10/1/2012	Not Complete
NIDOT16	Adopt shared parking ordinance	Middle Township	Short	10/1/2012	Not Complete
NIDOT17	Adopt street connectivity ordinance	Middle Township	Short	10/1/2012	Not Complete
NIDOT18	Investigate development of bicycle network; phasing in physical improvements	NIDOT; Cape May County; Middle Township	Long	10/1/2017	The extension of the bike path is an ongoing initiative.
NIDOT19	Pursue installation of sidewalks on priority roadways	NIDOT; Cape May County; Middle Township	Long	10/1/2017	NIDOT SAGE Grants have been obtained for sidewalks along Hand and Fourth Avenues
NIDOT20	Investigate signal optimization along Route 9 on summer weekends	Middle Township, in coordination with NIDOT	Short	10/1/2012	This initiative is under NIDOT jurisdiction
NIDOT21	Modify the Transportation Improvement Analysis by adding the MLUL requirements for a circulation element. Adopt the circulation element	Middle Township	Short	10/1/2012	Not Complete
NIDOT22	Strongly request that New Jersey Highway Authority proceed with the planned grade separated interchange at Crest Haven Boulevard, Stone Harbor Boulevard and Shell Bay Avenue along with the elimination of other at-grade intersections	SITPO Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) - NJTPK Authority	Long	10/1/2017	Completed
NIDOT23	Extend Mechanic Street eastwardly to Bayberry Drive to provide secondary ingress/egress to schools and assess related access roads improvements	NJ Turnpike Authority and County of Cape May	Long	10/1/2017	This is no longer viable due to Garden State Parkway overpass project.

Table 1.1 Middle Township PIA: Adopted by the State Planning Commission on 9/29/2011

PIA #	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMEFRAME	STATUS
NIDOT24	Provide southbound on/off ramps at Shell Bay Avenue to reduce traffic through the Cape May Court House area.	SITPO Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) NJTPK Authority	10/1/2017	Completed
NIDOT25	Revise the Township's Land Development Ordinance to comply with the MLUL requirement that municipal zoning conform with the State Highway Access Management Code. The Township can address this issue 4 different ways: Wait for main street designation in the access management code, create an access management plan with NIDOT to make a DTS change or wait for NIDOT to create an access management guide.	Middle Township, in coordination with NIDOT	10/1/2014	Completed
NIDOT26	Prepare and implement Route 9 Cape May County Access Management Plan with other Mainland Route 9 communities to reduce congestion along corridor	County to coordinate regional access plan with Cape May mainland municipalities	10/1/2014	The Cape May County Comprehensive Management Plan is presently being updated.
INFRASTRUCTURE				
CMC1	Prior to CAFRA center designation, the County shall prepare and submit a Wastewater Management Plan for the Township that implements the 2011 Master Plan and that is in compliance with the NJDEP WQMP rules. Service areas will include all lands within planned Centers except Goshen Hamlet and the Mattered Farm in Rio Grande.	Township and Cape May County, DEP technical assistance	12/15/2011	The Wastewater Management Plan for Middle Township was adopted in 2013. The County has submitted revisions to the NJDEP which are presently under review.
CMC2	Prior to CAFRA center designation, the County, NJDEP and the Township shall identify existing and proposed water supply sources and strategies that document how water supply capacity will exist for the amount of growth detailed in the Endorsed Master Plan. The USGS recently published its study, Future Water-Supply Scenarios, Cape May County, New Jersey, 2003-2050. The County should refer to this study and 7:15-5.25(f) for guidance on the necessary submittals	Township and Cape May County, DEP technical assistance	12/15/2011	The Water Supply Plan is under the jurisdiction of the NJDEP.
CONSERVATION				
DEP4	Open Space and Recreation Plan: Prepare Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI) as an updated Master Plan element. Use Plan to prioritize open space and farmland preservation acquisition efforts. Coordinate efforts with County Farmland Preservation Plan and County Open Space and Recreation Plan and other planning efforts including Priority Aquifer Recharge sites. Prioritize acquisition of open space in coordination with State and Federal agencies and not-for-profit groups. Prepare ROSI and submit to NJDEP to enable funding.	Middle Township	10/1/2012	A ROSI was prepared as part of the Township's Open Space and Recreation Plan adopted by the Planning Board on April 25, 2013. The Open Space and Recreation Plan is presently under re-examination by the Township.
DEP5	Outline a strategy that allows developers in the center to share centralized stormwater collection basins that serve as pleasant water features for citizens to enjoy. These larger, shared water features will maximize efficiency by preventing unsightly retention basins in each development	NJDEP technical assistance	10/1/2012	The Township's Stormwater Management Ordinance was revised in May 2021 to comply with NJDEP requirements.
HOUSING				
DCA1	Continue to provide for the rehabilitation of affordable housing units through State and Federal grants	Township Committee will seek funding for rehabilitation grants for this area to support low/moderate income families	10/1/2014	The Township requests funding annually for rehabilitation of affordable housing units.
DCA2	Continue to foster innovative policies that enhance the diversity of housing products available in Middle Township, ensuring that Middle Township remains an attractive place for all people in all stages of life.	Middle Township	10/1/2014	Middle Township has entered into negotiations with the Fair Share Housing Center (FSHC) to address its obligation under fair-share housing formulas. The Township introduced a mandatory affordable housing set-aside ordinance within the Town Center zoning district.

Table 1.1 Middle Township PIA: Adopted by the State Planning Commission on 9/29/2011

**EXHIBIT II: MIDDLE TOWNSHIP STATE PLAN ENDORSEMENT
CENTERS RE-DESIGNATION MAPPING**

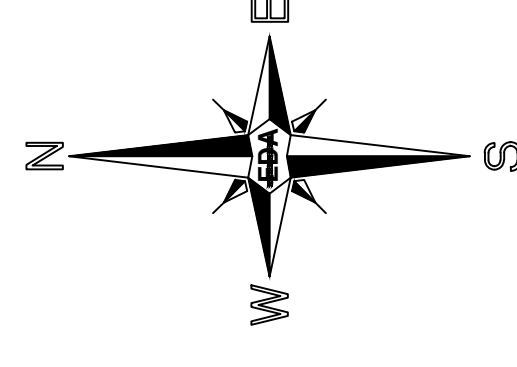
MIDDLE TOWNSHIP STATE PLAN ENDORSEMENT CENTERS RE-DESIGNATION



EXISTING SEWER
SERVICE AREA

EXISTING CENTERS

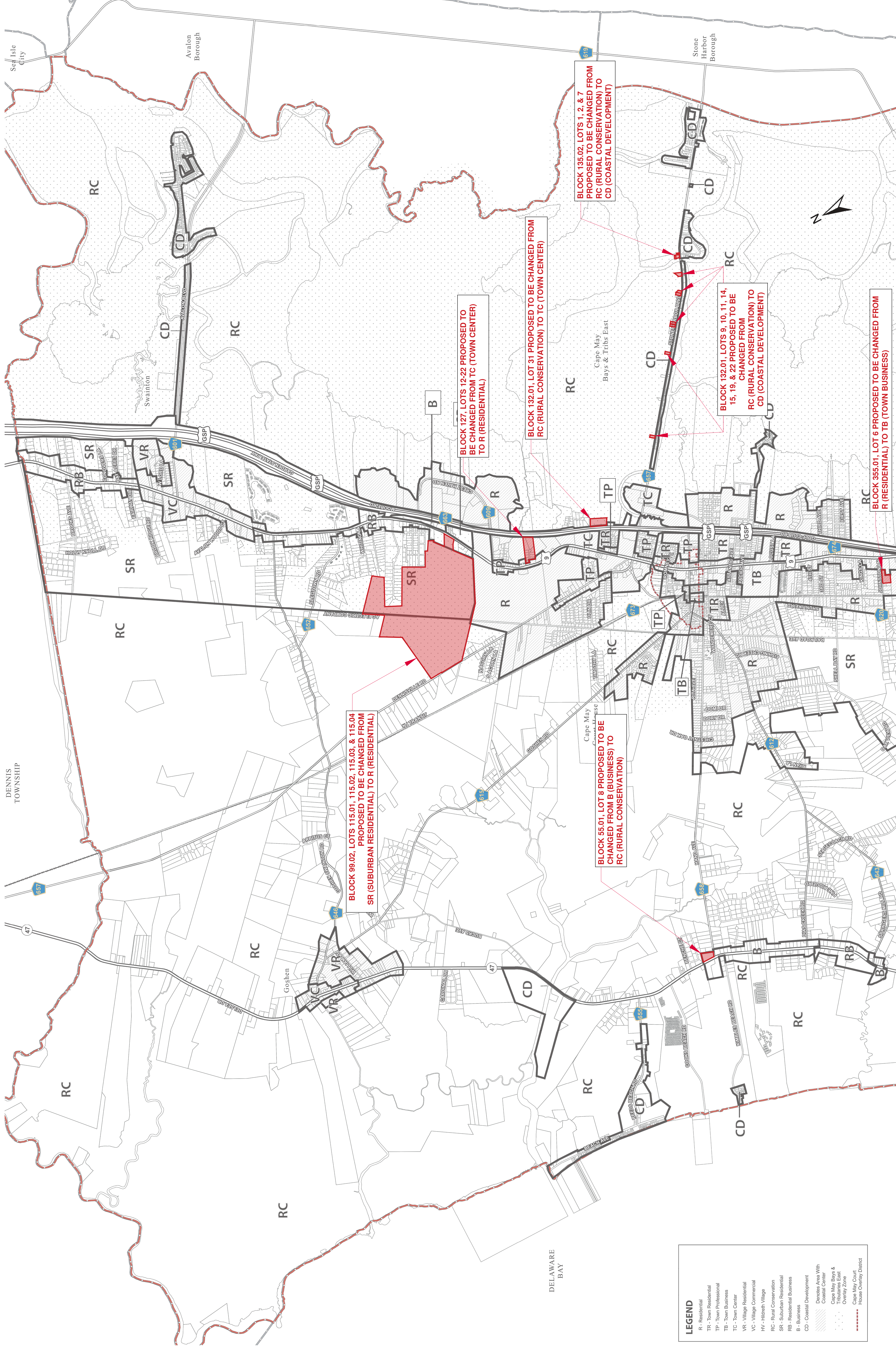
LOTS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE RIO
GRANDE & CMCH REGIONAL CENTERS



EDA Engineering
Design
Associates, P.A.

Engineers Environmental Planners Landscape Architects
CAMBRIDGE PROFESSIONAL OFFICES
 5 Cambridge Drive Ocean View, NJ 08230
 (609) 390-0332 FAX (609) 390-9204
 Carol L. Tutelian AICP, P.P.

**EXHIBIT III: MIDDLE TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN RE-EXAM ZONING
CHANGES**



LEGEND

- R - Residential
- TR - Town Residential
- TP - Town Professional
- TB - Town Business
- TC - Town Center
- VR - Village Residential
- VC - Village Commercial
- HV - Hillside Village
- RC - Rural Conservation
- SR - Suburban Residential
- RB - Residential Business
- B - Business
- CD - Coastal Development

- Densities Area With Coastal Center
- Cape May Bays & Trilbs East Overlay Zone
- Cape May Court House Overlay District

PROPOSED ZONING AMENDMENTS FOR MIDDLE TOWNSHIP NORTH

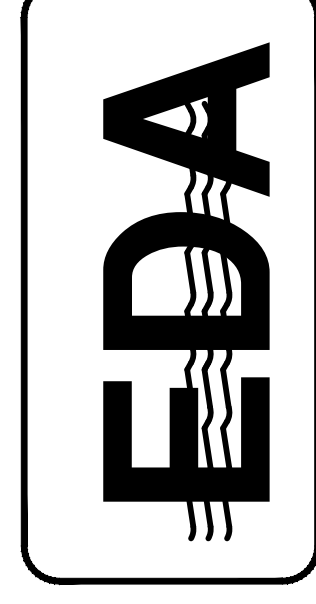
EDA engineers - landscape architects - planners

EDA Design Associates, P.A.
 CAMBRIDGE PROFESSIONAL OFFICES
 609-990-0322
 609-990-0204
 1000 Cambridge Drive Ocean View, NJ 08250
 CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORIZATION (EA0279799)
MIDDLE TOWNSHIP ZONE AMENDMENTS
 VARIOUS BLOCKS AND LOTS
 CAPE MAY COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

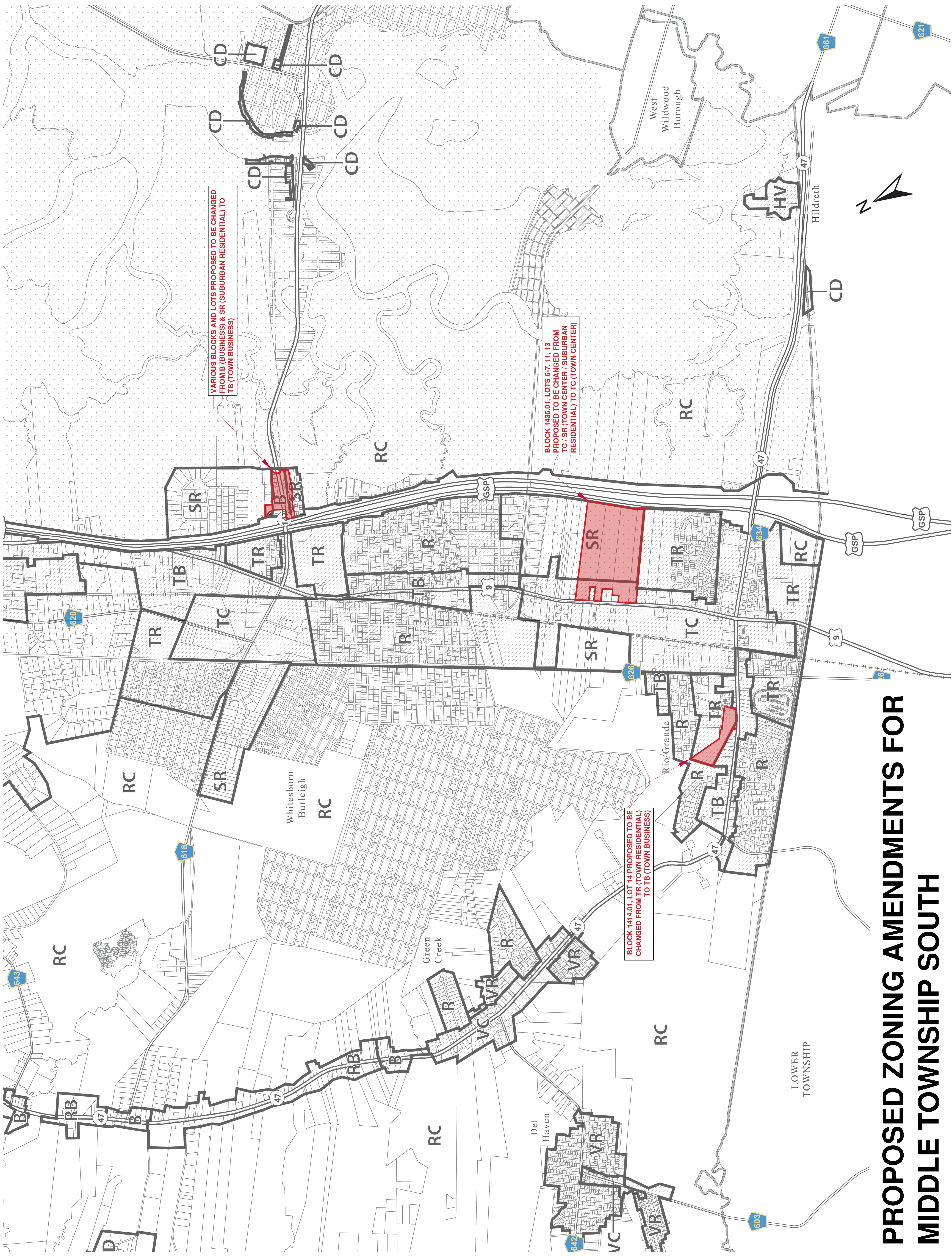
VINCENT C. ORLANDO
 PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER
 N.J.P.E. LIC. #32498

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REVISION	DATE	BY



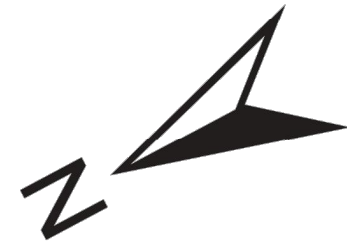
DATE: 10/28/2020	DRAWN BY: CEH
SCALE: 1" = 1500'	CHECKED BY: VCO
PROJECT #: M2629	SHEET: 2 OF 2



VARIOUS BLOCKS AND LOTS PROPOSED TO BE CHANGED FROM B (BUSINESS) & SR (SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL) TO TB (TOWN BUSINESS)

BLOCK 1486.01, LOTS 6-7, 11, 13 PROPOSED TO BE CHANGED FROM TC / SR (TOWN CENTER / SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL) TO TC (TOWN CENTER)

BLOCK 1414.01, LOT 14 PROPOSED TO BE CHANGED FROM TR (TOWN RESIDENTIAL) TO TB (TOWN BUSINESS)



PROPOSED ZONING AMENDMENTS FOR MIDDLE TOWNSHIP SOUTH

EDA engineers - landscape architects - planners

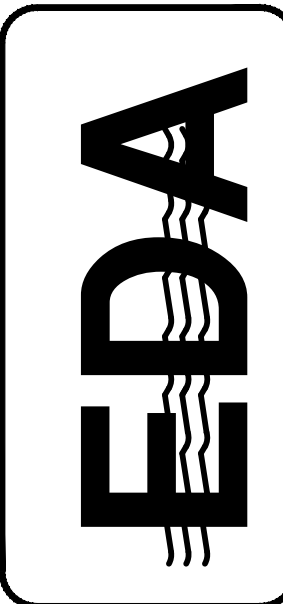
EDA Engineering Design Associates, P.A.
 Cambridge Professional Offices
 2 Cambridge Drive Ocean View, New Jersey 08250
 (609) 390-0322 • Fax (609) 390-0204
 CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORIZATION: 240473790

MIDDLE TOWNSHIP ZONE AMENDMENTS
 VARIOUS BLOCKS AND LOTS
 CAPE MAY COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

VINCENT C. ORLANDO
 PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER
 N.J. E. LIC. #32498

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REVISION	DATE	BY



DATE: 10/28/2020	DRAWN BY: CEH
SCALE: 1" = 1000'	CHECKED BY: VCO
PROJECT #: M6229	SHEET: 1 OF 2

EXHIBIT IV: MUNICIPAL PUBLIC ACCESS MAP (MPAP)



MUNICIPAL PUBLIC ACCESS PLAN
Township of Middle,
Cape May County, New Jersey

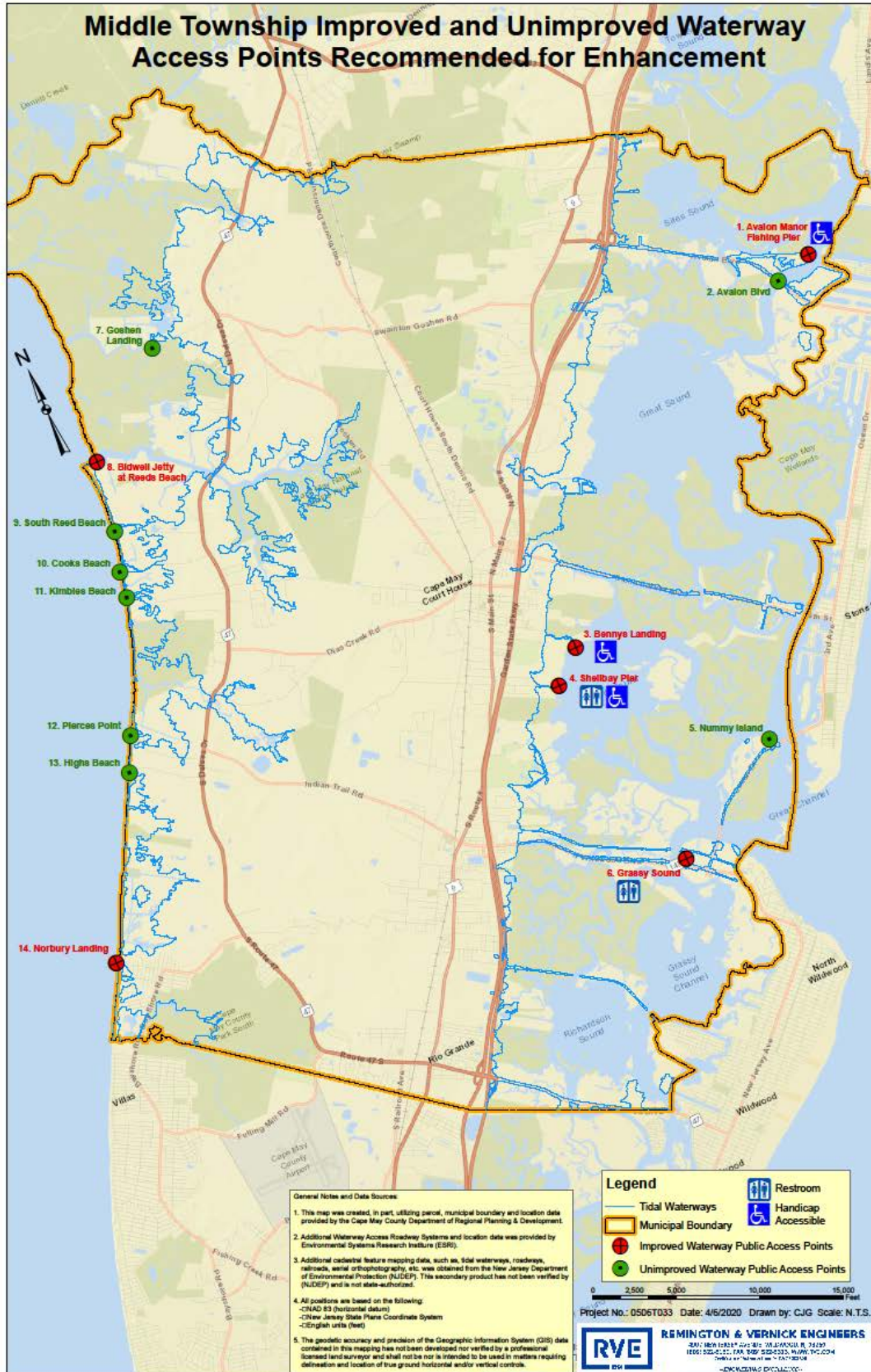


EXHIBIT V: AREAS IN NEED OF REDEVELOPMENT MAPPING



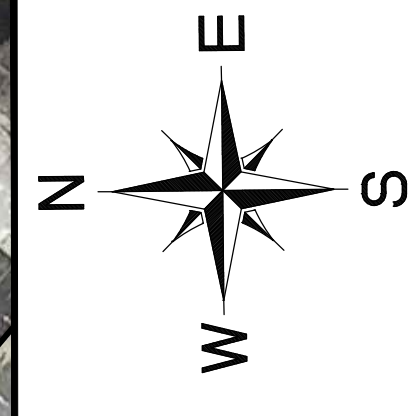
**RIO GRANDE TOWN CENTER
REDEVELOPMENT AREA**
BLOCK 1434, LOTS 2-4, 8 & 9
MIDDLE TOWNSHIP, NJ

DATE: 2/28/18

SCALE: 1"=100'

DRAWN BY: MAJ

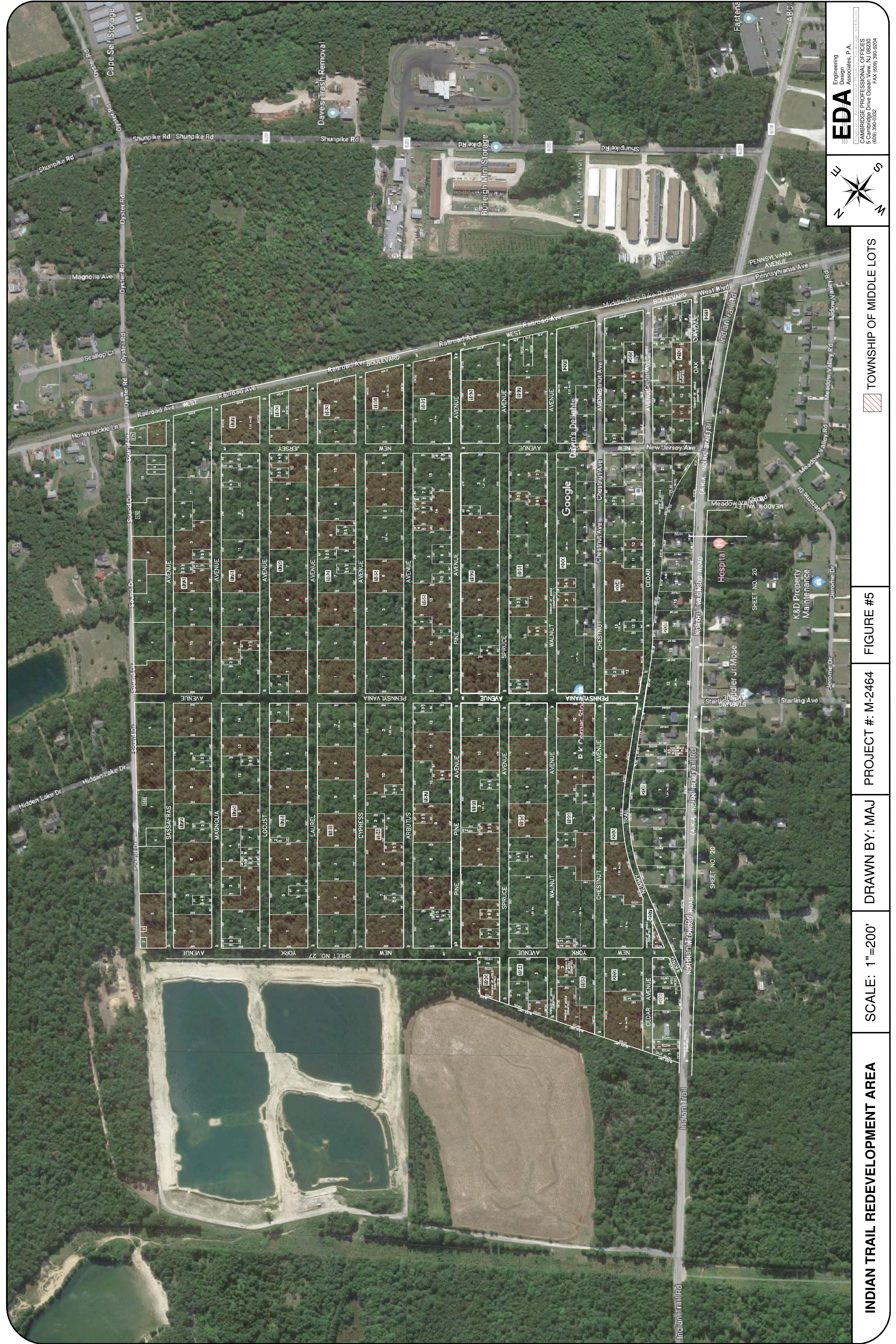
PROJECT #: M-2464



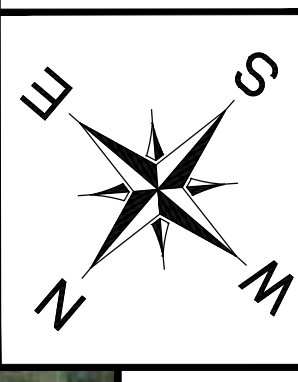
EDA Engineering
Design
Associates, P.A.

Engineers Environmental Planners Landscape Architects

CAMBRIDGE PROFESSIONAL OFFICES
5 Cambridge Drive Ocean View, NJ 08230
(609) 390-0332 FAX (609) 390-9204



EDA
 Engineering
 Design
 Associates, P.A.
 CAMBRIDGE PROFESSIONAL OFFICES
 5 Cambridge Drive Ocean View, NJ 08230
 (609) 390-0332 FAX: (609) 390-9244



TOWNSHIP OF MIDDLE LOTS



FIGURE #5

PROJECT #: M-2464

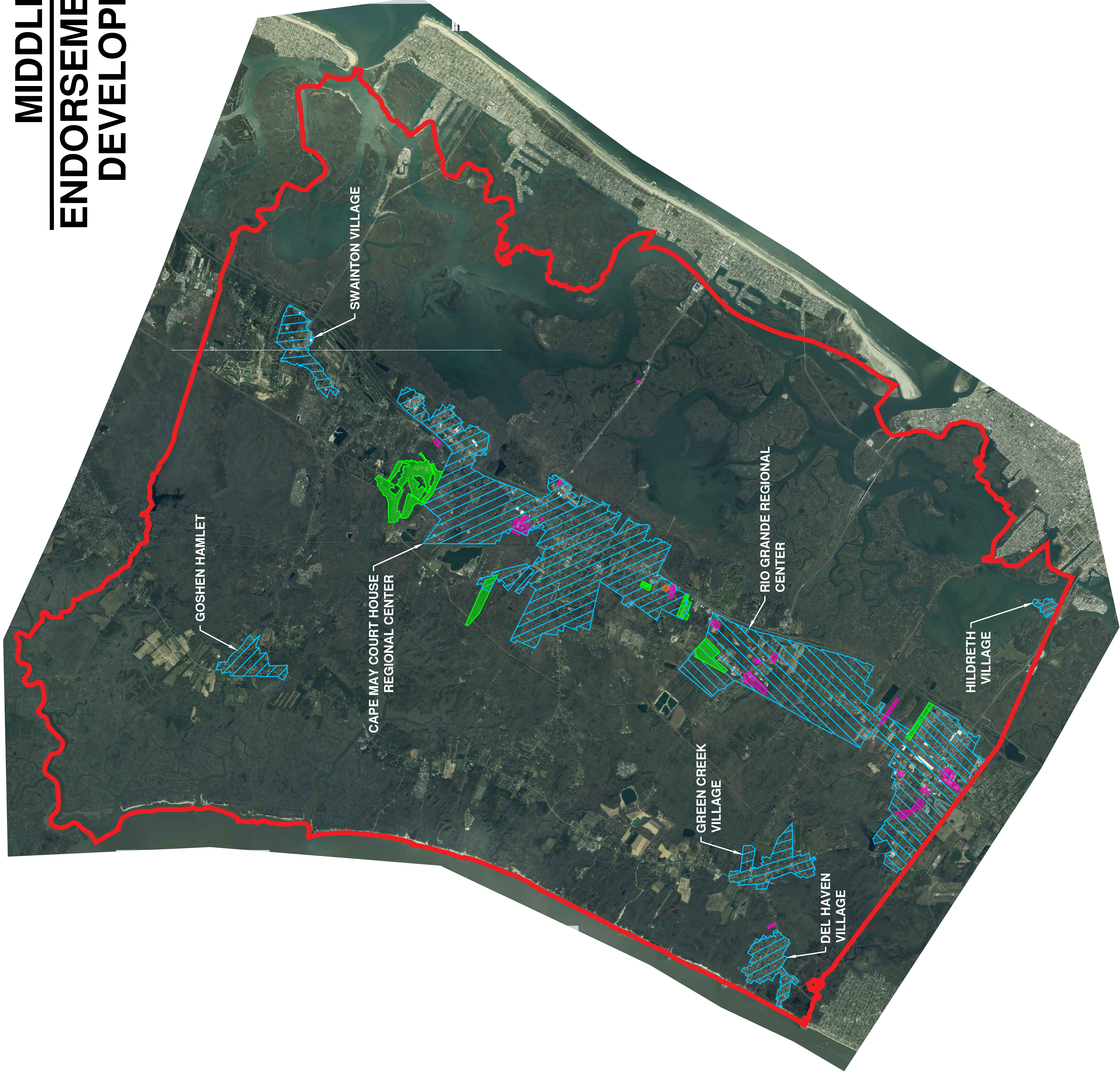
DRAWN BY: MAJ


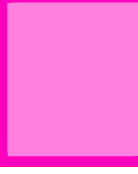
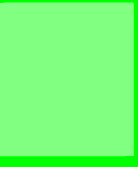

SCALE: 1"=200'

INDIAN TRAIL REDEVELOPMENT AREA

EXHIBIT VI: DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION ACTIVITY MAP

MIDDLE TOWNSHIP STATE PLAN ENDORSEMENT CENTERS RE-DESIGNATION DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION ACTIVITY



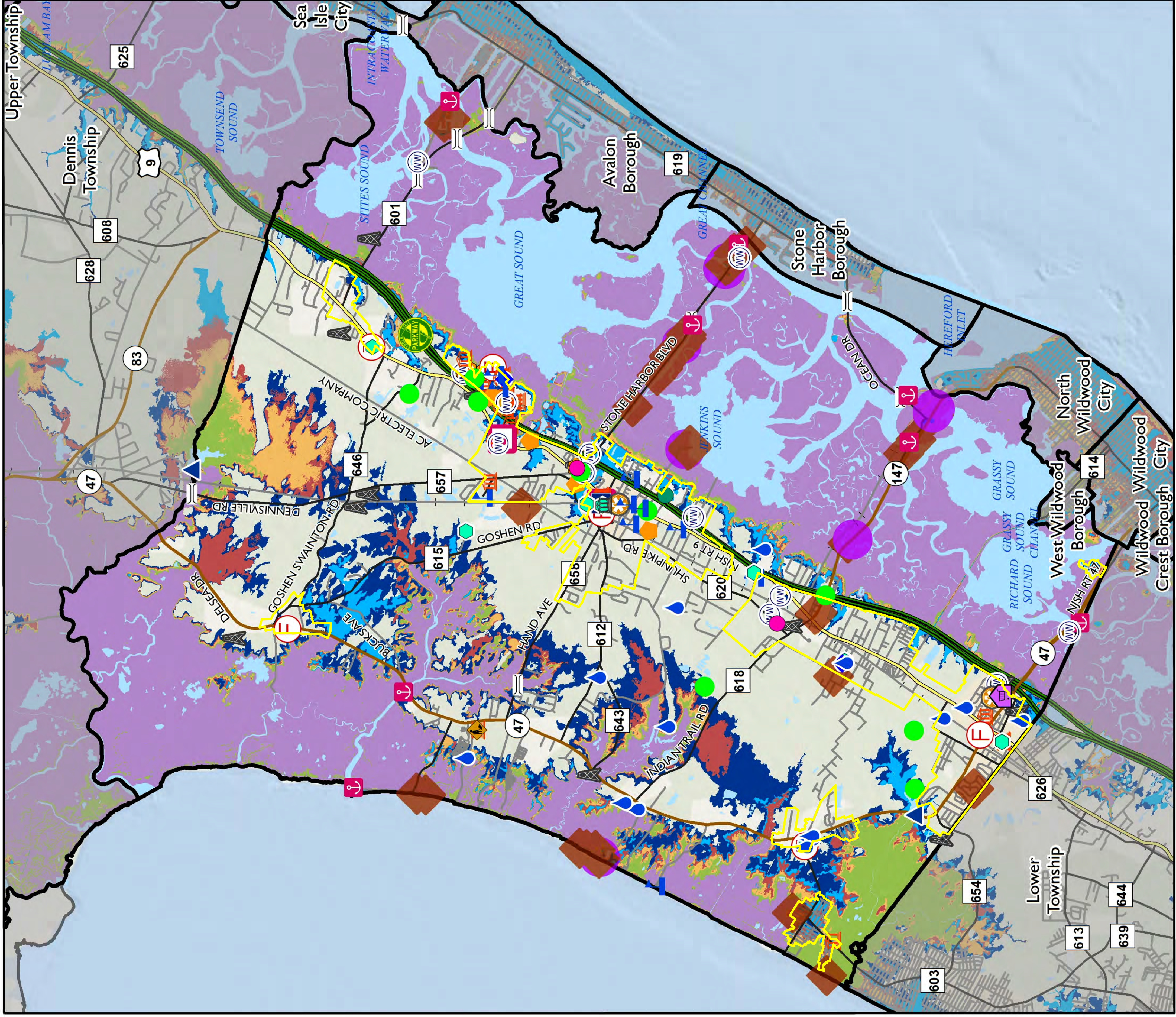
-  DESIGNATED CENTERS
-  COMMERCIAL
-  RESIDENTIAL
-  MIXED USE



EDA Engineering Design Associates, P.A.
Engineers Environmental Planners Landscape Architects

CAMBRIDGE PROFESSIONAL OFFICES
 5 Cambridge Drive Ocean View, NJ 08230
 (609) 390-0332 FAX (609) 390-9204
 Carol L. Tutelian AICP, P.P.

**EXHIBIT VII: HAZARD MITIGATION MAP WITH CENTERS
OVERLAY**



Middle Township

- Toll Road
- U.S. Route
- State Route
- County Road
- Local Road
- Railroad
- Municipality Boundary
- Waterbody

Middle Town Centers

- Airport
- Bridge
- Bus Station
- Commercial
- Communication
- County
- Cultural
- DPW
- Dam
- Day Care
- EMS
- EOC
- Education
- Electric
- Ferry
- Fire Station
- Food Distribution
- Health Services
- Library
- MUA
- Marina
- Municipal
- Natural Gas
- Police Station
- Polling Site
- Potable Water
- Recreation
- Senior Facility
- Shelter
- Superfund Site
- TRI Site
- Veterinary Services
- Wastewater

Sea Level Rise

- +1 Foot
- +2 Feet
- +3 Feet
- +4 Feet

Flood Hazard Area

- 1-Percent Annual Chance Flood Event
- 0.2-Percent Annual Chance Flood Event

New Development

- Recent
- Anticipated

NFIP Property

- Repetitive Loss
- Severe Repetitive Loss

The flood hazard area depicted is the June 30, 2014 Preliminary DFIRM and the October 4, 2017 Effective DFIRM.

The map and data depicted are considered approximate and suitable for most planning purposes. Mapped hazard areas, geographic boundaries and other features depicted may not absolutely align due to the differing resolution of available data.

SEA LEVEL RISE

Data Sources: CMCGIS - 2020; NJOGIS - 2018/2020
 NJDOT - 2019; ESRI - 2002/2020; NOAA OCM - 2017;
 FEMA - 2014/2017 (Preliminary/Effective); NFIP FEMA - 2020

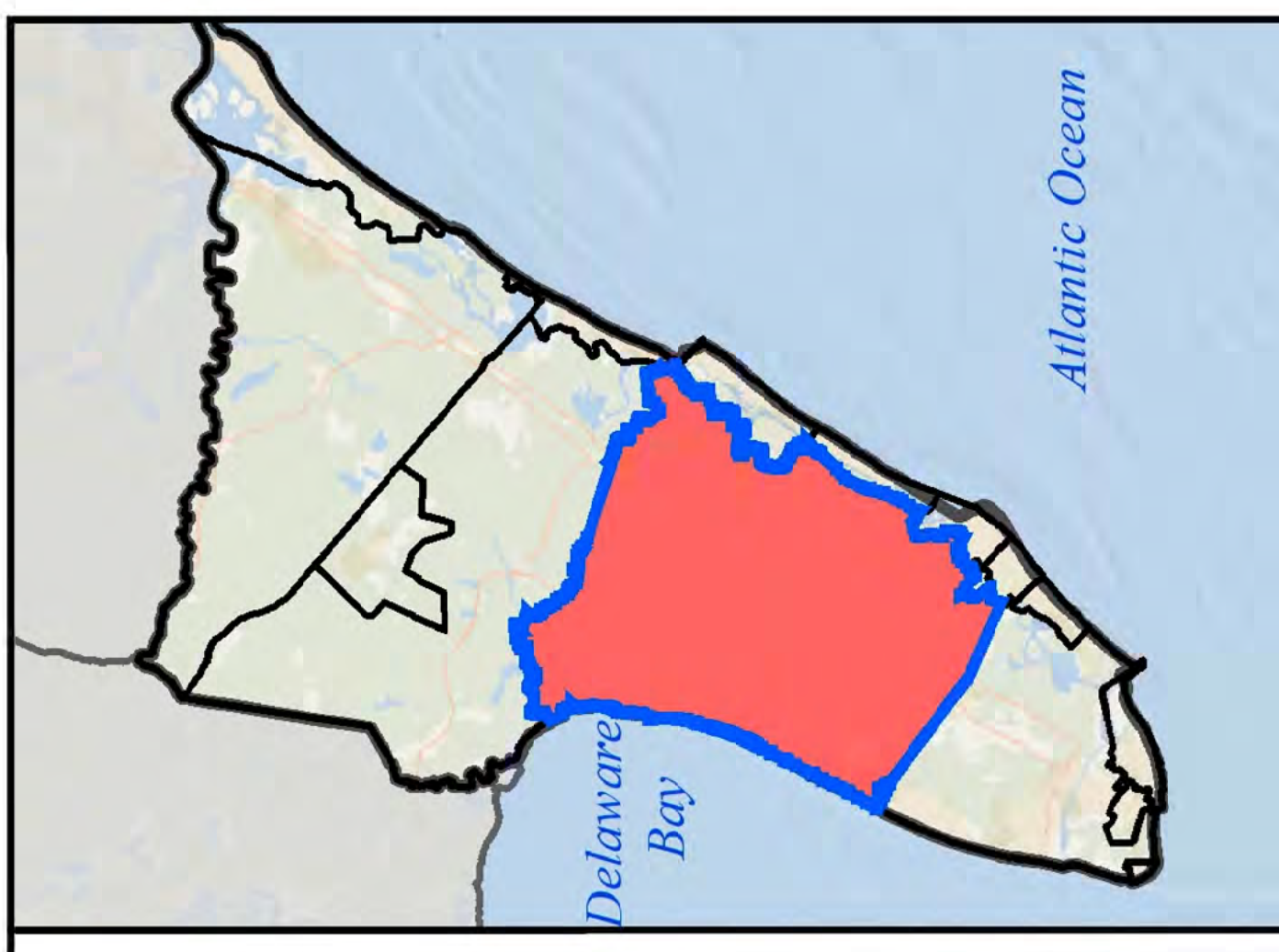
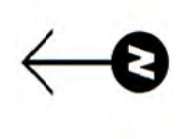
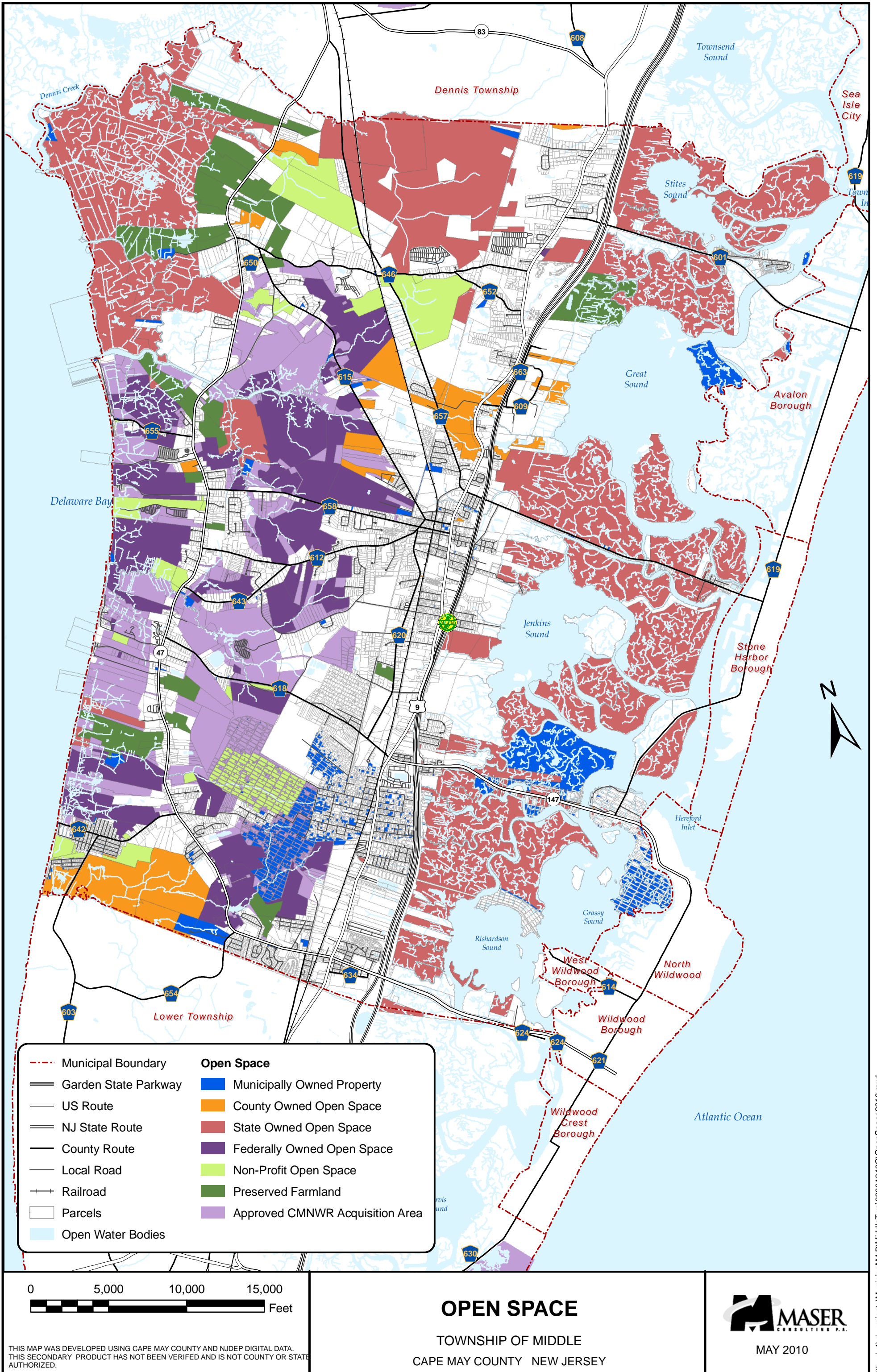


EXHIBIT VIII: OPEN SPACE MAP

FIGURE 1



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Municipal Boundary Garden State Parkway US Route NJ State Route County Route Local Road Railroad Parcels Open Water Bodies 	<p>Open Space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Municipally Owned Property County Owned Open Space State Owned Open Space Federally Owned Open Space Non-Profit Open Space Preserved Farmland Approved CMNWR Acquisition Area
---	---

0 5,000 10,000 15,000 Feet

OPEN SPACE
 TOWNSHIP OF MIDDLE
 CAPE MAY COUNTY NEW JERSEY



MAY 2010

THIS MAP WAS DEVELOPED USING CAPE MAY COUNTY AND NJDEP DIGITAL DATA. THIS SECONDARY PRODUCT HAS NOT BEEN VERIFIED AND IS NOT COUNTY OR STATE AUTHORIZED.