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DRAFT CONSISTENCY REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT

PETITION FOR PLAN CONFORMANCE TOWN OF BOONTON, MORRIS COUNTY

Prepared by the State of New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council in Support of the Highlands Regional Master Plan

APRIL 17, 2026

NEW JERSEY HIGHLANDS WATER PROTECTION AND PLANNING COUNCIL
Town of Boonton Petition for Plan Conformance
Draft Consistency Review and Recommendations Report

INTRODUCTION

The Town of Boonton petitioned the New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council (“Highlands Council”) for Center Designation and plan conformance by adoption of Resolution 26-79 on February 17, 2026. The Town’s Petition is for designation of the entire municipality as a Highlands Center.

Boonton is a small municipality in northeastern Morris County. The municipality consists of 1,590 acres (approximately 2.5 square miles), located entirely in the Planning Area. Boonton is home to a population of 8,894 people as of 2024. It is served by rail, bus, and major highways. It also features two major commercial corridors – Main Street and Myrtle Avenue.

In February 2026, the Town completed their Petition for Plan Conformance and Center Designation. The Petition identifies the characteristics of the community, outlines the rationale for the Center, and proposes an implementation schedule.

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REPORT SUMMARY

Municipality: Town of Boonton, Morris County

Date of Petition: February 18, 2026

Conformance Area: Planning Area

Staff Recommendation: Approval - Subject to Conditions

A. REVIEW OF ADMINISTRATIVE SUBMITTALS

1. Town of Boonton’s Petition for Plan Conformance in support of a Highlands Center Designation by the Highlands Council, February 18, 2026 (Appendix B).
2. Town of Boonton Resolution 26-79 “Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the Town of Boonton, New Jersey, Authorizing Submission of Petition of Plan Conformance to the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council,” February 17, 2026.

B. SUBSTANTIVE REVIEW

Municipal Petition

The Town of Boonton is an approximately 2.5 square mile municipality in northeastern Morris County. The Town has a population of 8,894 people and is located entirely within the Planning Area of the Highlands Region. Boonton enjoys a rich cultural resource base, including six officially recognized historic districts. These districts comprise approximately 434 acres, which is 27.3% of the town’s land area. The town has a long history of industrialization, including in the Rockaway River corridor, creating both opportunities and constraints for redevelopment.

Boonton is served by two major bus routes and the NJ Transit Montclair-Boonton Line with regular commuter service to neighboring towns and New York City. It also has two major commercial corridors – Main Street and Myrtle Avenue - and is intersected by Interstate 287 and U.S. Route 202. It is directly upstream of the Jersey City Reservoir.

The Town completed a Highlands Center Designation Report to determine the feasibility of designating the entire municipality as a Highlands Center. The Town is in the process of encouraging walkable, transit-oriented and mixed-use growth around its train station. By pursuing Center designation, Boonton hopes to utilize the Council’s support and resources to facilitate appropriate growth in their Center. Currently the Town is well-suited for the type of sustainable growth associated with the Highlands Planning Area. Designation as a Highlands Center will provide technical and financial assistance to the Town in achieving the goals it has set out for itself.

As identified in their Petition, the Town finds itself “in alignment with the goals of the Highlands Regional Master Plan.” They specifically point to the following goals to be accomplished through Center designation:

- 6B: Preservation of the land and water resources and ecological function of Highlands areas in the Protection Zone.

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- 6C: Limitation of development in the Protection Zone to development and redevelopment which does not adversely affect the natural resources of the Highlands Region ecosystem.
- 6E: Incorporation of regional development patterns and related environmentally sensitive areas within Existing Community Zones.
- 6F: Support of compact development, mixed use development and redevelopment and maximization of water, wastewater and transit infrastructure investments for future use of land and development within the Existing Community Zone.
- 6H: Guide development away from environmentally sensitive and agricultural lands and promote development and redevelopment in or adjacent to existing developed lands.
- 6J: Accommodation of regional growth and development needs through the reuse and redevelopment of previously developed areas, including brownfields, grayfields, and underutilized sites.
- 6K: Concentrate residential, commercial and industrial development, redevelopment and economic growth in existing developed areas in locations with limited environmental constraints, access to existing utility, and transportation infrastructure.
- 6L: Conforming municipalities and counties consider development, redevelopment and brownfields and opportunities in their Master Plans.
- 6M: Protection and enhancement of Highlands resources through the remediation of contaminated sites in the region.
- 6N: Use Smart Growth principles, including low impact development, to guide development and redevelopment in the Highlands Region.
- 6O: Market-Rate and Affordable Housing sufficient to meet the needs of the Highlands Region within the context of economic, social, and environmental considerations and constraints.

The Town intends to adopt a model Highlands Master Plan element to demonstrate further alignment with the Highlands Regional Master Plan.

Highlands Center Designation

A Highlands Center is an area within a municipality, or an entire municipality as is the case for Boonton, where development and redevelopment is encouraged and fostered. Highlands Centers are intended to support economic balance in the Highlands Region, providing for sustainable economic growth, while protecting critical natural and cultural resources.

With the implementation of a Highlands Center, the Land Use Capability Zones within the Center are replaced by zones that result from a comprehensive planning process, designed to identify the goals and best uses for the lands within the Center. The process is community-driven, allows flexibility in creating a tailored development plan for the Center, and should result in a healthy, active community with opportunities for growth and development consistent with the goals and principles of the Highlands Act and the RMP. Lands within a Highlands Center benefit from the detailed site-specific planning associated with center planning and may also be eligible for an expedited process toward inclusion in a sewer service area. The concept of Highlands Centers is similar to State Plan Centers but are not subject to expiration. Highlands Centers remain intact unless a specific action (or inaction) by the municipality causes their elimination. Like other land within the municipality, Highlands Centers may receive grant funding to implement important aspects of the center plan.

Upon approval of the Petition for Plan Conformance with Highlands Center designation, the Town of Boonton will undertake the appropriate center planning steps to develop a land use plan specific to the relevant needs and regional opportunities within the Town. As noted in the Highlands Center Designation Procedures, the process of center planning is intended to be community driven and public outreach is a

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critical component of the process. Ultimately the Highlands Center will adopt zoning and regulations that are in alignment with the Highlands Regional Master Plan.

Environmental Factors

The Petition Report (see Appendix B) outlines the cultural, environmental, and infrastructure resources within the Town. Additional resource maps are attached as Appendix C. The Report includes information related to net water availability and sewer service areas.

The Town is intersected by four (4) subwatersheds and the majority of the Town has a positive net water availability. Only the Troy Brook (above Reynolds Ave) subwatershed, which covers a small section of the Town adjacent to Mountain Lakes, has a calculated net water availability of -7.1 MGD. The remaining three (3) subwatersheds have net water availability ranging from 0.0 MGD to 0.1 MGD. Boonton Township Water Department supplies water to the Town. Wells are located outside the Town in neighboring Boonton Township. The Town of Boonton receives up to 21 million gallons per month of surface water from the Taylortown Reservoir (located in Kinnelon and Montville Townships) and 40 million gallons of groundwater per month from four wells in the Stratified Drift Formation. The Town’s Water Supply Firm Capacity is 3.348 MGD; Daily Demand is 1.255 MGD; and Firm Capacity Surplus is 2.093 MGD. The water supply service area covers the entire municipality, though reservoir lands and some other small areas are not served.

Sewer service area covers approximately 1,397 acres, comprising 87.9% of the land area. Non-sewered areas are comprised of reservoir lands and the Rockaway River. Boonton contracts with the Rockaway Valley Regional Sewage Authority (RVRSA) for sewer service. Currently the RVRSA, which provides sewer service to all or parts of ten municipalities in Morris County, has a permit limit of 12-million gallons per day, average flow. The RVRSA is currently near or at capacity. Any available capacity is assigned on a case-by-case basis with a policy of first come, first serve.

Land Use Capability Zones

The Highlands Land Use Capability Zones are mapped as follows:

Land Use Capability Zone	Acres	%
Protection Zone	128	10%
Wildlife Management Area	0	0%
Conservation Zone	0	0%
Conservation Zone Environmentally-Constrained Subzone	0	0%
Existing Community Zone	1,016	78%
Existing Community Zone Environmentally-Constrained Subzone	67	5%
Lake Community Subzone	92	7%

The majority of the Town is mapped as Existing Community Zone. The Protection Zone is mapped for some of the lands surrounding the reservoir and the NJ Firemen’s Home. The Firemen’s Home was established in 1898 by the New Jersey Legislature and is the only licensed health care facility in the State of New Jersey whose primary mission is dedicated to the men and women of the New Jersey Fire Service. The facility

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provides both long term care and residential health care services. The property is known as the historic Lathrop Estate and consists of the estate house, picnic grounds, a cemetery, fields, and some woodlands.

Findings

In accordance with the adopted Plan Conformance Procedures (2019), the following criteria are used to determine if a proposed center is consistent with the goals, policies, and objectives of the RMP. Findings related to each criteria are provided below.

- 1) The proposed Highlands Center is located in an area with sufficient water availability, water supply, wastewater, and transportation capacity and is appropriate for increased land use intensity;
- 2) The proposed Highlands Center is consistent with the resource protection standards of the Regional Master Plan, in accordance with the intent and purpose of the Highlands Act;
- 3) The proposed Highlands Center is consistent with the Smart Growth and Low Impact Development (LID) standards of the Regional Master Plan; and
- 4) There is a need for land uses within the community that may be met by the Highlands Center, particularly those that complement local and regional (or sub-regional) socio-economic needs, provide for affordable housing, increased transit opportunities, and the potential use of Highlands Development Credits.

- 1) Sufficient Infrastructure Finding – The Town of Boonton has sufficient existing infrastructure capacity regarding water & wastewater service areas, transportation, and other resources to serve existing development and future projects in the proposed center.

As part of their Center planning, the Town will undertake a circulation study to analyze existing transportation patterns, including pedestrian and bicycle, parking needs/supply, and opportunities associated with existing train and bus service.

Boonton Town has adequate wastewater service for existing development. Due to the regional and first come first serve nature of RVRSA, additional wastewater management planning may be necessary if additional future growth that requires sewer capacity is identified during the center planning process.

- 2) Resource Protection Standards Finding – The Town of Boonton has developed within its environmental constraints. Steep slopes, floodplains, and wetlands have shaped the development of the Town and will continue to be protected under RMP standards. The majority of environmentally sensitive land areas are undeveloped and associated with the Rockaway River and the Boonton Reservoir. Open water buffers of 300 feet will be maintained. Additional resource protection standards will be incorporated as necessary into the land use regulations for the Center.
- 3) Smart Growth/Low Impact Standards Finding – The Town of Boonton has historically been functioning as a center. Due to its settlement history, the Town has been a historic, cultural and economic center for the area. Boonton currently provides public transportation access to the region and the larger metropolitan area. Designation as a Highlands Center and implementation of a Center Plan will further the smart growth and low impact development standards of the Regional Master Plan.
- 4) Community Land Use Needs Finding – The proposed Highlands Center addresses the need for land uses within the local community as well as regional needs. The Town’s Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, adopted May 14, 2025, is in compliance with the Highlands Affordable Housing Implementation

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Guidelines. Given its transportation resources and available infrastructure, Boonton is suitable for reasonable growth within the limits of its geography. Much of the anticipated growth will be in the form of redevelopment.

C. STAFF RECOMMENDATION AND CONDITIONS

Staff Recommendation: Approve with Conditions

The approval of the Town of Boonton's Petition for Plan Conformance with Center Designation for the entirety of the Town is recommended with the following conditions:

- 1) **Implementation Plan and Schedule.** Adherence to the Plan Conformance Implementation Tasks set forth in the Implementation Plan and Schedule (IPS) (Appendix A). The Highlands Council is available to provide technical assistance and guidance for activities listed in the IPS. The Council's approval of the Town's Petition specifically includes grant funding for those items listed in Fiscal Year 2027 of the IPS. Funding for items beyond Fiscal Year 2027 are subject to future Highlands Council approval. The approval of the petition includes approval of grant funding in the total amount of \$117,000 for FY2027 (July 2026 to June 2027) for the purposes outlined below and in the Implementation Plan and Schedule found at Appendix A.
- 2) **Adoption of Planning Area Petition Ordinance.** The Town shall prepare and adopt a Planning Area Petition Ordinance and provide a certified copy to the Highlands Council.
- 3) **Center Planning.** The Town of Boonton shall undertake the full process of center planning for the entirety of the Town. As noted above, center planning is intended to be community driven with a significant public outreach component.
 - The land dedicated to the New Jersey Firemen's Home will be given special consideration to ensure its ability to meet its legislated mission while protecting the resources on-site.
 - The 300-foot Open Water Buffer shall be maintained and appropriate resource protections will be implemented as necessary.
 - As required by the Fair Housing Act, any residential development must provide for 20% affordable units. Upon completion of the center planning, relevant master plan updates and zoning updates shall be adopted.
- 4) **Circulation Plan Element.** The Town will prepare a circulation study and develop a municipal circulation plan element to assess existing conditions and plan for future growth. The Circulation Plan element will analyze existing transportation patterns, including pedestrian and bicycle, parking needs/supply, and opportunities associated with existing bus and train service. The Plan will include assessment of the potential for a continuous trail system with multiple access points throughout town, with a goal to connect to the larger Morris County trail system and the loop trail around the Reservoir.
- 5) **Approval of Highlands ERI.** The Town shall review the Highlands Interactive Environmental Resource Inventory (ERI) as it relates to municipal resources and notify the Highlands Council of any necessary updates. Upon conclusion that the ERI is accurate, the Town shall provide for and complete the required process of formal approval of the ERI. At the conclusion of the process, a copy of the minutes of the meeting(s) or resolution shall be provided to the Highlands Council.

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- 6) **Water Use and Conservation Management Plan.** In collaboration with the Highlands Council, the Town shall undertake completion and adoption of a municipal-wide Water Use and Conservation Management Plan.

D. INTERAGENCY COORDINATION

In accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding with the Office of Planning Advocacy (OPA), the Highlands Council provided a copy of the Town of Boonton Petition for Plan Conformance to the OPA for comment.

E. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

The Draft Consistency Review and Recommendations Report was posted to the Highlands Council website and made available at the Highlands Council offices in Chester, NJ, for review and comment by the general public.

comments were received during the period established by the Highlands Council for receipt of written public comment (April 21, 2026 – May 21, 2026).

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APPENDIX A

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND SCHEDULE
Town of Boonton, Morris County

**Town of Boonton
Implementation Plan and Schedule**

PLAN CONFORMANCE TASK	Proposed Cost Fiscal Year 2027	Future Projects (requires future HC Approval)	Status and Comments
Highlands Interactive Environmental Resource Inventory	\$ 3,000.00		Review Highlands Interactive ERI, propose amendments as necessary, and adopt.
Center Plan / Master Plan Reexamination Report & Highlands Master Plan element	\$ 50,000.00		Undertake the full process of center planning which will be community driven with significant public outreach. Relevant and necessary master plan updates and zoning updates will follow.
Center Conformance Ordinance	\$ 10,000.00		Adopt a Center Conformance Ordinance which reflects the center planning process and incorporates Highlands standards.
Other Municipal Master Plan Elements (as applicable)			
a. Land Use Plan Element (<i>with resiliency requirements addressed</i>)		TBD	
b. Land Preservation and Land Stewardship Plan Element		TBD	
c. Sustainable Economic Development Plan Element		TBD	
d. Historic Preservation Plan Element		TBD	
e. Circulation Plan Element (<i>including Parking Analysis for the downtown area</i>)	\$ 40,000.00		A Circulation Plan element will analyze existing transportation patterns, including pedestrian and bicycle, parking needs/supply, and opportunities associated with existing bus and train service.
f. Open Space and Recreation Plan element		TBD	
g. Historic, Archaeological and Cultural Preservation Plan		TBD	
Planning for priority areas identified in Petition for Plan Conformance (DPW/DPW Yard, Arch Bridge/Boonton Foot Bridge, Post Office, Darress Theatre)		TBD	
Zoning Map Update	\$ 8,500.00		Adopt updated zoning map which reflects center planning and conformance ordinance.
Resource Management Plans, Programs, and Ordinances			
a. Update Steep Slope Ordinance	\$ 5,000.00		Adopt an updated steep slope ordinance which addresses steep slope conditions in the Borough and is in conformance with Highlands standards .
c. Water Use and Conservation Management Plan		TBD	
d. Wastewater Management Plan (if applicable)		TBD	
e. Municipal Stormwater Management Plan (<i>including inventory and ordinances</i>)		TBD	
Board of Health Ordinances			
Implementing Ordinances for Management Plans and Programs		TBD	
Redevelopment and Brownfields Opportunities			
a. Highlands Redevelopment Area Planning		TBD	
RMP Updates			
Attendance at Highlands Council Training Sessions			
a. Municipal Exemption Determinations	\$ 500.00		Adopt Municipal Exemption Determination Ordinance
b. Ordinance Administration: Application Procedures, Implementation, Enforcement		TBD	
Estimated Subtotal	\$ 117,000.00		

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APPENDIX B

Highlands Center Designation Report for the Town of Boonton
Town of Boonton, Morris County



Date: February 18, 2026
 To: Maryjude Haddock-Weiler, Highlands Council
 From: Topology (Chris Colley, Nicole Goldstein) on behalf of Town of Boonton

**SUBJECT: TOWN OF BOONTON:
 PETITION FOR PLAN CONFORMANCE**

1. Introduction

Purpose

This document serves as the Town of Boonton’s Petition for Plan Conformance in support of a Highlands Center designation by the Highlands Council. Submission of this document was authorized by the Town of Boonton Council via Resolution 26-79.

Introduction of Boonton

Boonton is a roughly 2.5 square mile municipality in northeastern Morris County. Interstate 287 and U.S. Route 202 run through the Town, providing ease of access to residents and visitors. The Town is located entirely within the Planning Area of the Highlands Region in northern New Jersey.

According to the American Community Survey 5-year estimates and NJTPA data, the Town of Boonton’s population stands at 8,894 as of 2024. Over the past 80 years, the Town has witnessed fluctuations in the population. From the 1950s to the 1970s, there was a significant increase, followed by a slight decline after 1980. However, the population began to rise steadily again after 2010. In contrast, Morris County has experienced a consistent population increase, with a sharp rise in the 1960s and 1970s, followed by steady growth up to 2024. New Jersey has followed a similar pattern.

Table 1: Population Trends

Year	Boonton Town			Morris County			New Jersey		
	Population	Change		Population	Change		Population	Change	
		Number	Percent		Number	Percent		Number	Percent
1950	7,163	N/A	N/A	164,371	N/A	N/A	4,835,329	N/A	N/A
1960	7,981	818	11.4	261,620	97,249	59.2	6,066,782	1,231,453	25.5
1970	9,261	1,280	16.0	383,454	121,834	46.6	7,171,112	1,104,330	18.2
1980	8,620	-641	-6.9	407,630	24,176	6.3	7,365,011	193,899	2.7
1990	8,343	-277	-3.2	421,353	13,723	3.4	7,730,188	365,177	5.0
2000	8,496	153	1.8	470,212	48,859	11.6	8,414,350	684,162	8.9
2010	8,347	-149	-1.8	492,276	22,064	4.7	8,791,894	377,544	4.5
2020	8,815	468	5.6	509,285	17,009	3.5	9,272,794	480,900	5.5

2024	8,894	79	0.9	523,053	13,768	2.7	9,500,851	228,057	2.5
<i>Source:: NJ State Data Center, New Jersey Population Trends 1790 to 2000, US Census Bureau; NJTPA, "Appendix E - 2050 Demographic Forecasts"</i>									

Introduction of Highlands

The New Jersey Highlands Council (“Council”) is a regional planning agency that was created in 2004 via the Highlands Act. Subsequently, in 2008, the Highlands Council adopted the Highlands Regional Master Plan (“RMP”) with the goal “to protect and enhance the significant values of the resources [of the Highland].”

One of the key components of the RMP is the Plan Conformance process. Per the Highlands Council: “Plan Conformance involves the revision of local planning and regulatory documents to integrate the land use provisions and resource management protections of the Highlands Act, so that those documents align with the goals, policies, and objectives of the RMP.”

One part of the Plan Conformance process is the Highlands Center designation. As per the Council, “Highlands Centers are intended to support economic balance in the Highlands Region, providing for sustainable economic growth, while protecting critical natural and cultural resources.” Highlands Centers are generally areas that have already been developed, like Boonton, and which form the historic, cultural and economic center of their area.

In the RMP, the Highlands is divided into two distinct areas: Preservation Areas and Planning Areas. In Preservation Areas, Plan Conformance is required. In Planning Areas, Plan Conformance is optional. The Town of Boonton is entirely within a Planning Area, meaning the Plan Conformance and/or Center Designation process is optional.

The Town of Boonton is seeking designation of the entirety of the Town as a center. As is outlined in subsequent sections, the Town’s designation as a Center aligns with the RMP’s focus on concentrating development within Centers.

Rationale for Pursuing Center designation

By pursuing Center designation from the Highlands Council, the Town hopes to utilize the Council’s support and resources to facilitate appropriate growth of our Center. Currently, the Town of Boonton is perfectly suited to encourage the kind of sustainable growth associated with Highland’s Planning Areas. The Town is already in the process of encouraging development that is walkable, transit-oriented and mixed-use around its train station. Being designated as a Center will help Boonton more efficiently achieve the goals it has set out for itself by receiving Highland’s Council technical assistance and funding that will enable the Town to complete the items set forth in the Implementation Plan.

2. Community Assessment

Land Use Characteristics

The Town is comprised of a mix of distinctive architecturally rich buildings and scenic views. Natural features such as the Rockaway River and the Boonton Reservoir account for approximately 20% of the Town's total geographic area. Additionally, areas of developable land are environmentally constrained by floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes and wooded terrain. These natural elements play an important role in shaping the Town's development.

Currently, Boonton's land use pattern reflects a mix of uses, with commercial and industrial zones concentrated around Route 287, comprising 13.5% of the Town's developable land. The industrial zone extends northward, beyond Route 287. Higher density uses are distributed throughout the Town, with a slightly higher concentration in the central area, accounting for 8.6% of the total land area.

The largest land use category is open space, which makes up 23.2% of the land and is primarily located along the Town's periphery, particularly near the Reservoir and Rockaway River. Residential land use, totaling 4.8%, is distributed equally across the Town. Lastly, areas characterized by natural features that pose as constraints to development, such as steep slopes, account for 6.5% of the land, further influencing how and where development can occur.

The train station is in the center of the Town. The land around the train station is zoned as mixed use and permits higher density development, encouraging transit-oriented development.

Cultural/Historic Resources¹

The historic structures of Boonton contribute significantly to the Town's distinctive character. The Town's architecture plays an important role in shaping the overall character of the Town and contributes to a creating a distinct sense of identity for the community.

Historic resources in Boonton have been listed on the State and National Registers by way of evaluation based on criteria such as age, architectural style, and other historically significant elements. Boonton has six officially recognized historic districts:

- a. The Boonton Historic District reflects typical industrial workers' housing from 1830-1890.
- b. The Main Street Historic District reflects development that occurred between 1880 and 1920
- c. The Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad Station Boonton Line Historic District
- d. The Jersey City Waterworks Historic District includes the original U.S. Route 202 Bridge (now pedestrian only) over Rockaway River entering the Boonton Reservoir
- e. The Morris Canal reflects a revolution in American technical education and in transportation. It also represents demographic and industrial growth in towns along the canal route.
- f. The Rockaway Street Residential District

¹ Maps and data generated for this section were generated using the Highlands Council's Highlands Region Interactive Environmental Resource Inventory. New Jersey Highlands Council. Accessed September 30, 2025. <https://www.highlandseri.com/location>

In addition to these recognized districts, several individual sites such as the Darress Theatre, the Boonton Opera House, and the Othmar Ammann House possess strong cultural and historical significance within the Town of Boonton.

Preservation efforts are supported through funding from the Morris County Open Space, Farmland, Floodplain Protection, and Historic Preservation Trust Fund. Additionally, the Morris County Trail Construction Grant Program provides grants to support and enhance the county’s quality of life and cultural and heritage tourism efforts. It also enables the acquisition and protection of land for recreational and conservation purposes, provided it meets eligibility criteria and this also includes the preservation of areas with scenic, historic and cultural value.

- a. **Archaeological Site Grid:** Approximately 21.2% of the Town of Boonton, or 337.2 acres contains areas covered by the archaeological site grid. These sites are those that possess archaeological value and may contain prehistoric or historic occupation or activity.

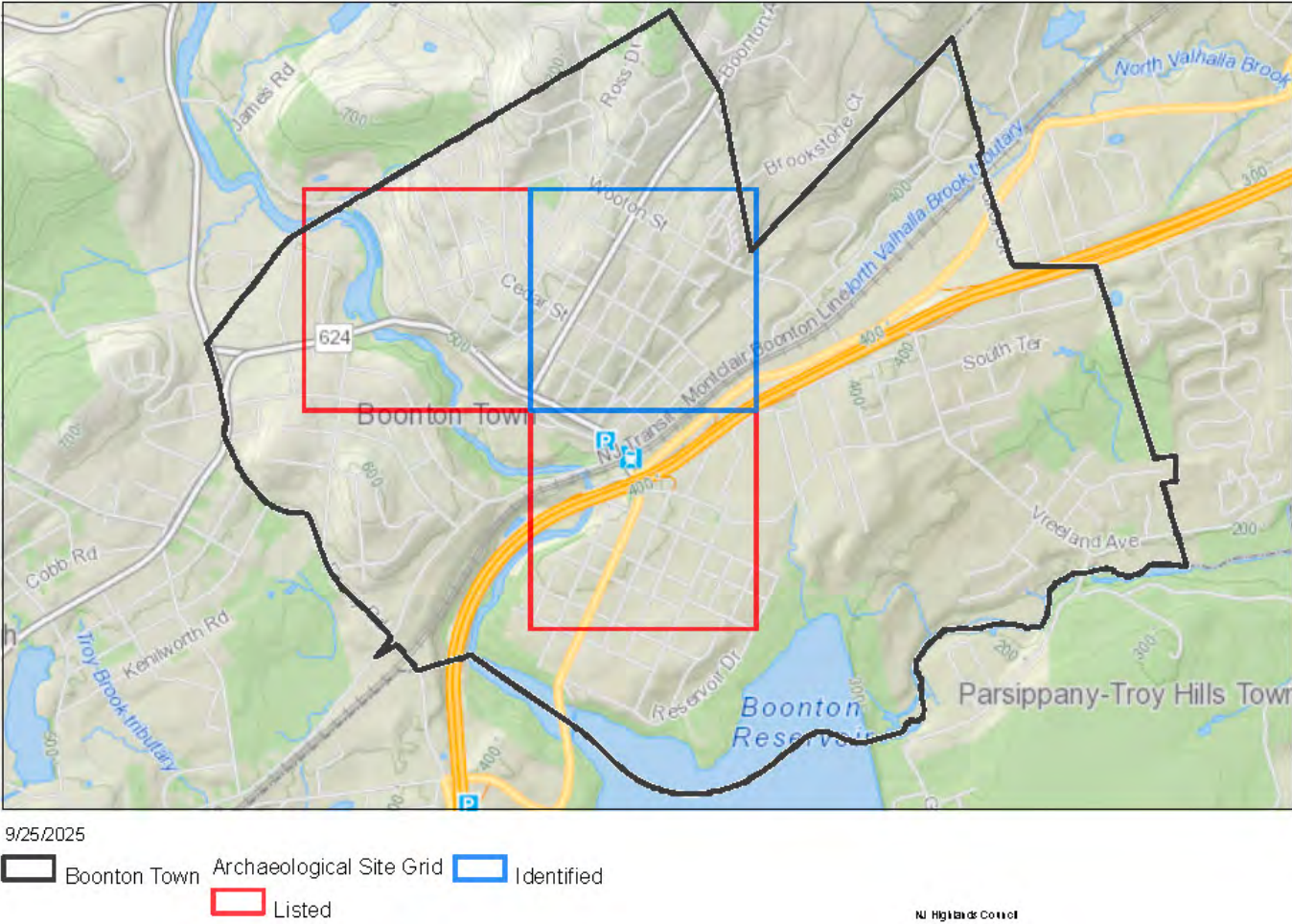
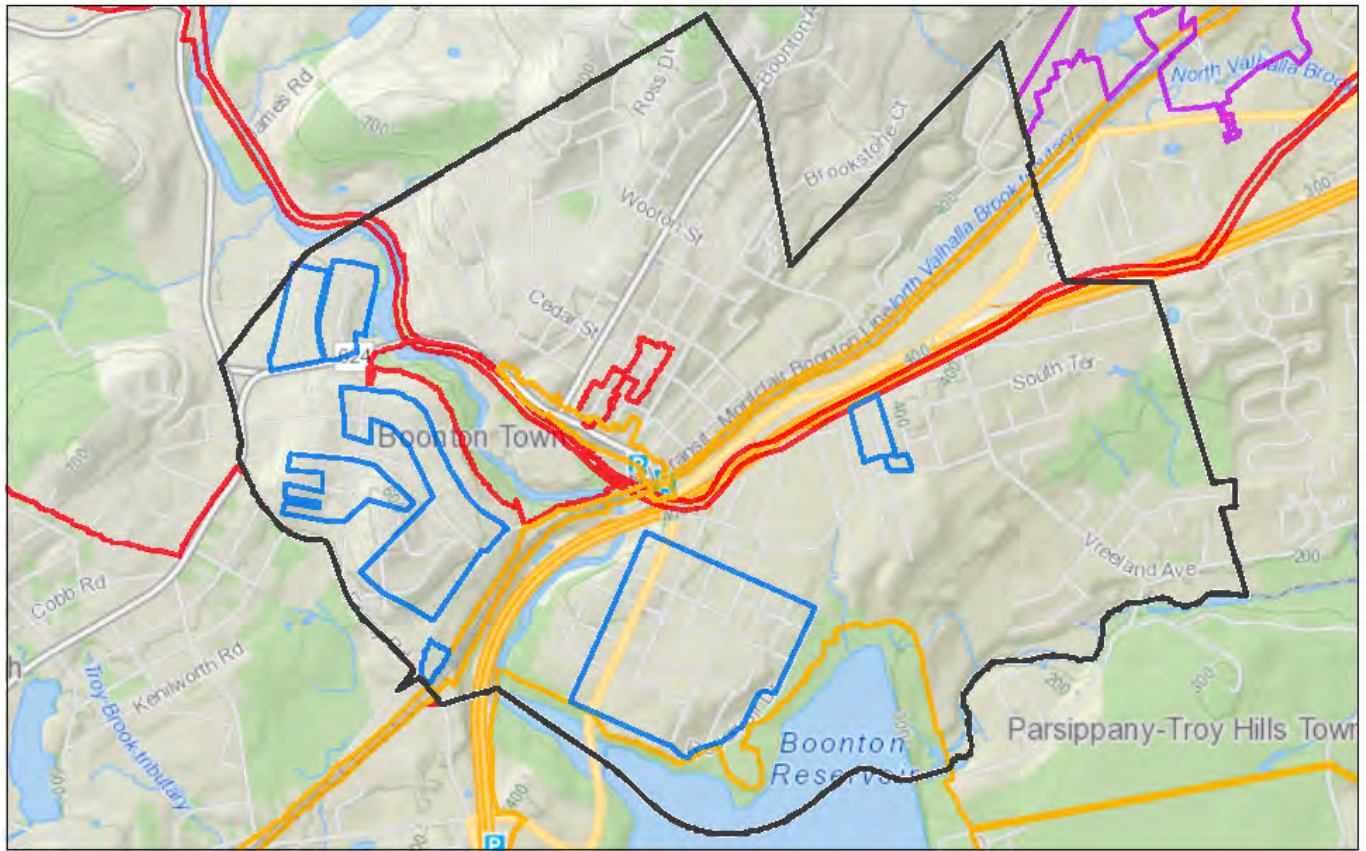


Figure 1: Archaeological Site Grid depicted in the Town

- b. **Historic Districts:** There are several historic districts within the Town, which comprise 27.3% of Boonton or a total of 433.9 acres. The Highlands Region Interactive Environmental Resource Inventory tool identifies additional districts that are not listed in the Boonton Master Plan. Several of these districts appear to be outside of the Boonton boundaries. An inventory of historic districts is recommended as part of the implementation strategy for the Town to most accurately identify the Town's historic districts and resources. The historic districts identified using the Highlands Region Interactive Environmental Resource Inventory include:
- i. Capstick Historic District
 - ii. Morris Canal
 - iii. Boonton Historic District
 - iv. Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad Boonton Branch Historic District
 - v. Jersey City Waterworks Historic District
 - vi. Mountain Lakes Historic District
 - vii. Boonton Ironworks Historic District
 - viii. Boonton Main Street Historic District
 - ix. Chestnut Street
 - x. Lathrop Avenue Streetscape
 - xi. Morris Avenue streetscape
 - xii. The Park Historic District
 - xiii. Wilson Street streetscape
 - xiv. Flats
 - xv. Bucco, Sterling Construction Company Historic District
 - xvi. Lake Avenue



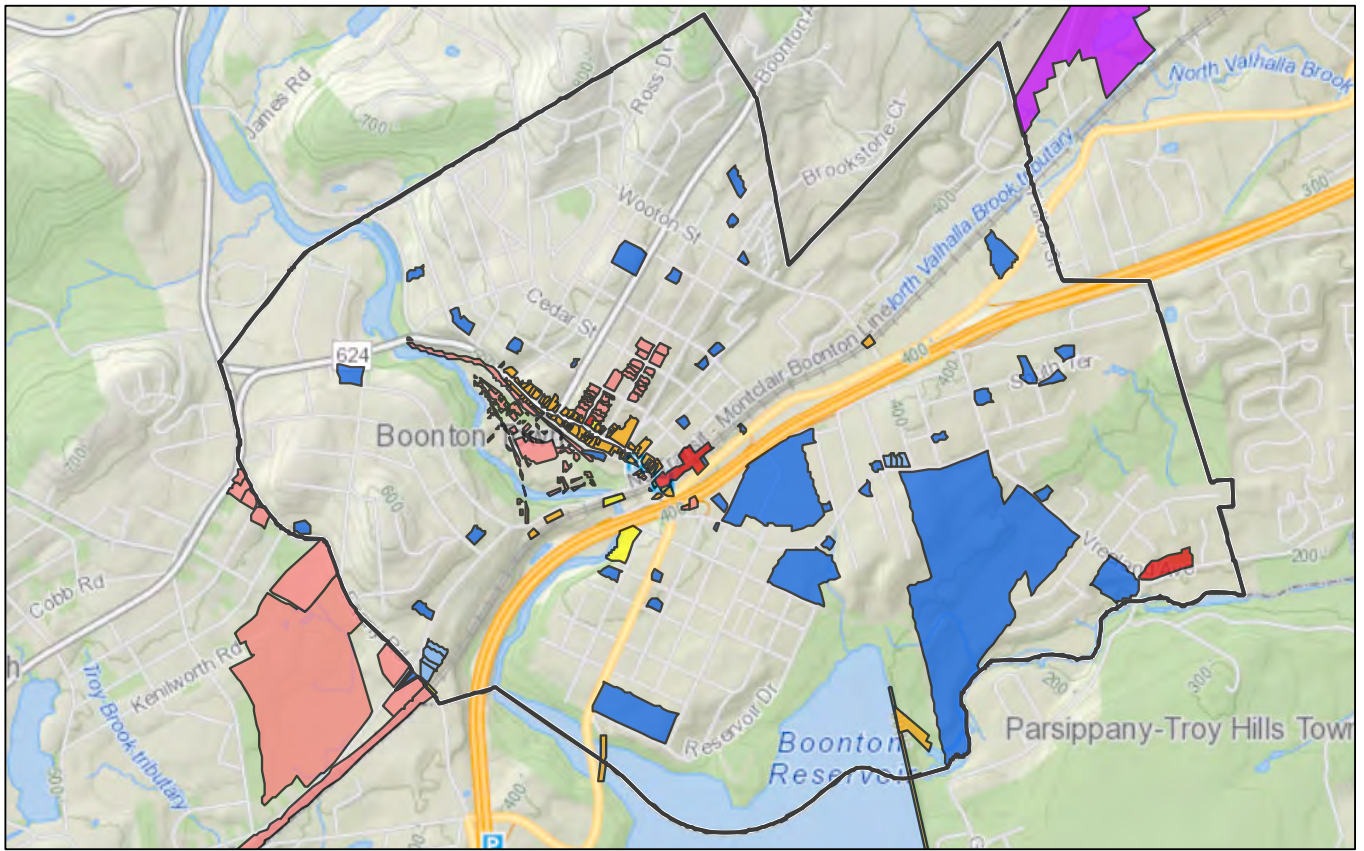
9/25/2025

- Boonton Town
- NR Eligible
- Identified
- Historic Districts
- Listed
- Locally Designated

NI Highland Council

Figure 2: Historic Districts in the Town

c. **Historic Properties:** The Town of Boonton contains 199 historic properties, as recorded by the New Jersey State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).



9/25/2025

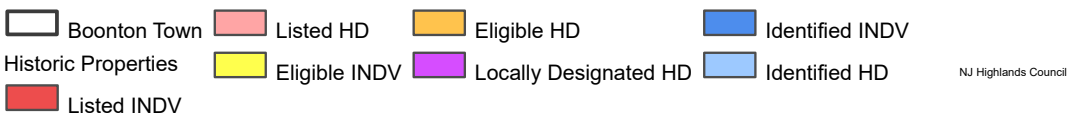


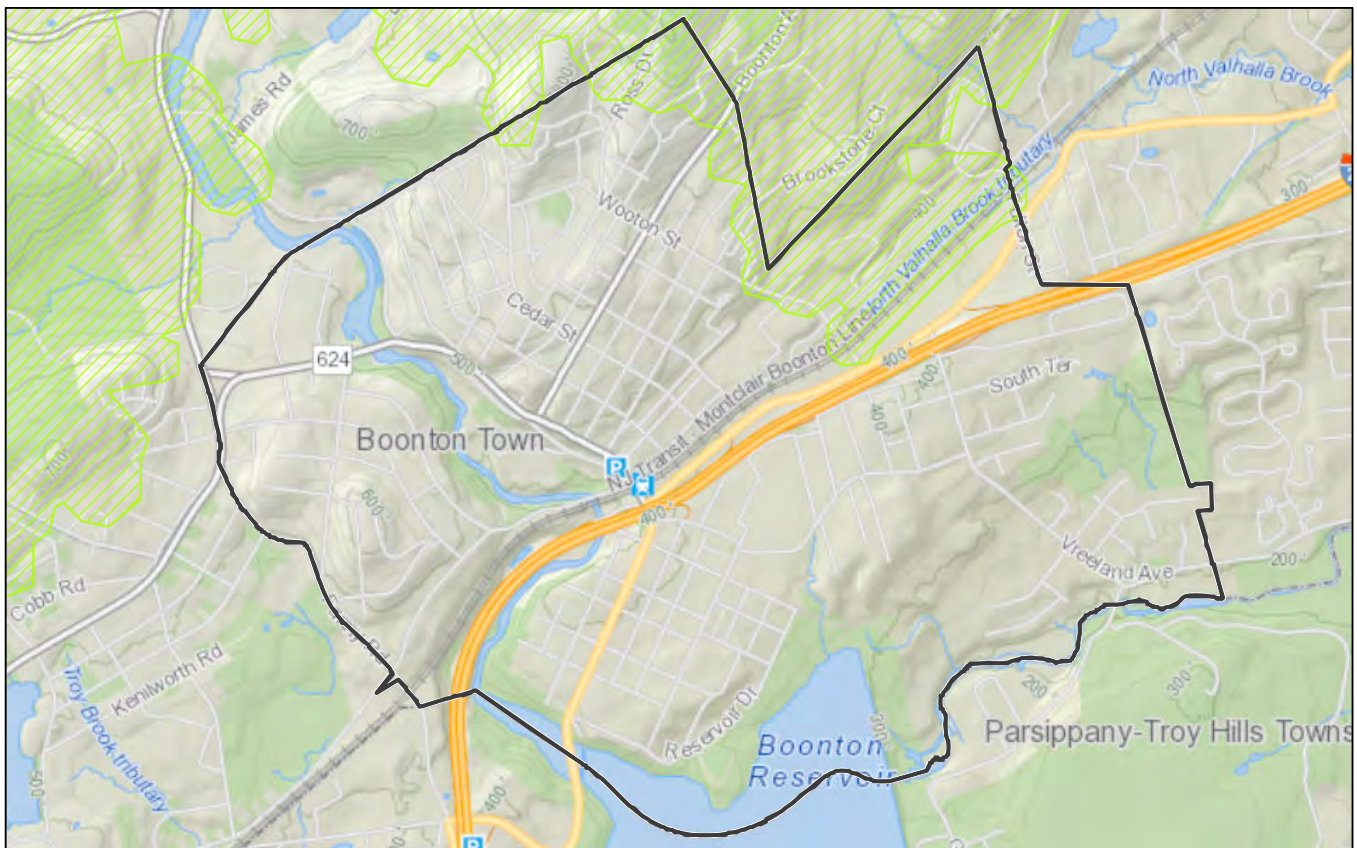
Figure 3: Historic Properties within the Town

Environmental Resources

The following maps depict the environmental resources located within the Town of Boonton:

Conservation

- b. **Forest Resource Area:** 9.2% or 146.1 acres of the Town of Boonton are located within the Forest Resource Area, highlighting the significant forests within the Highlands Region.



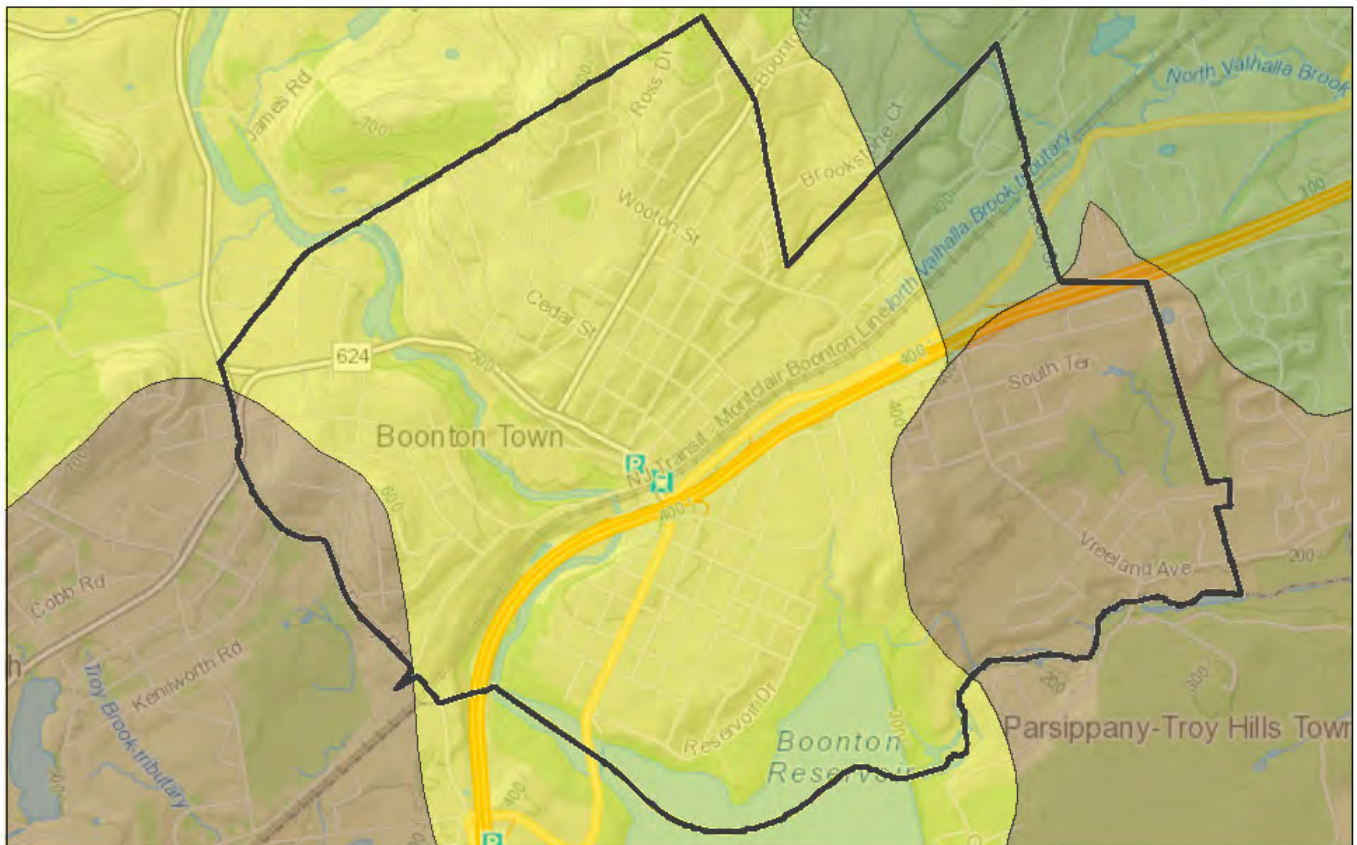
9/25/2025

- Boonton Town
- Forest Resource Area

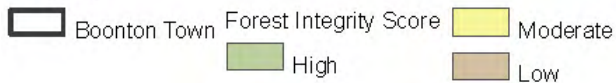
NJ Highlands Council

Figure 4: Forest Resource Area in the Town

- c. **Forest Integrity:** Boonton Town is in 4 subwatersheds, which have forest integrity scores as follows:
 - i. Montville Tribs. subwatershed (HUC14 02030103030160), which has a forest integrity value of High
 - ii. Rockaway R (Boonton dam to Stony Brook) subwatershed (HUC14 02030103030150), which has a forest integrity value of Moderate
 - iii. Rockaway R (Passaic R to Boonton dam) subwatershed (HUC14 02030103030170), which has a forest integrity value of Low
 - iv. Troy Brook (above Reynolds Ave) subwatershed (HUC14 02030103020080), which has a forest integrity value of Low



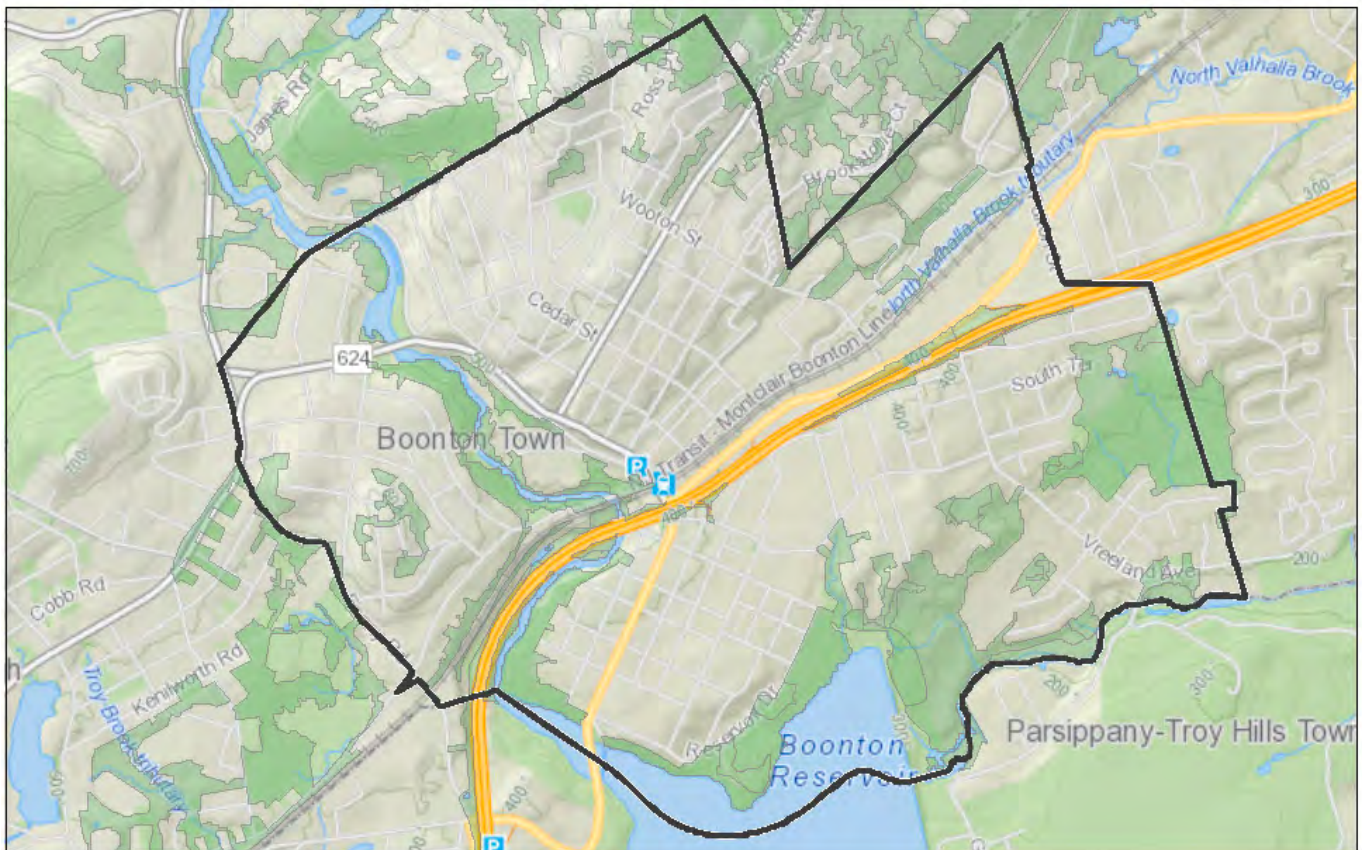
9/25/2025



NU HighRes Color

Figure 5: Forest Integrity Score within the Town

- d. **Total Forest Area:** The Town has a total of 300.9 acres that are located within a forested area, comprising 18.9% of the Town. The following is a breakdown by forest area type:
- i. Deciduous Forest (>50% Crown Closure): 219.9 acres (13.8%)
 - ii. Deciduous Forest (10-50% Crown Closure): 31.6 acres (2.0%)
 - iii. Deciduous Brush/Shrubland: 20.5 acres (1.3%)
 - iv. Deciduous Wooded Wetlands: 9.6 acres (0.6%)
 - v. Mixed Forest (>50% Deciduous With >50% Crown Closure): 6.7 acres (0.4%)
 - vi. Mixed Forest (>50% Coniferous With >50% Crown Closure): 6.5 acres (0.4%)
 - vii. Mixed Deciduous/Coniferous Brush/Shrubland: 4.9 acres (0.3%)
 - viii. Coniferous Forest (>50% Crown Closure): 0.7 acres (0.0%)
 - ix. Deciduous Scrub/Shrub Wetlands: 0.4 acres (0.0%)



9/25/2025

-  Boonton Town
-  Total Forest Area (2020)

NY Highways Council

Figure 6: Total Forest Area within the Town

- e. **Critical Wildlife Habitat:** In the Town, 274.2 acres, or 17.2% contain Critical Wildlife Habitat, meaning that endangered, threatened and special concern species are documented within the Town. Species include the following
 - i. Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)
 - ii. Barred Owl (*Strix varia*)
 - iii. Bobcat (*Lynx rufus*)
 - iv. Brown Thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*)
 - v. Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*)
 - vi. Northern Copperhead (*Agkistrodon contortrix mokasen*)
 - vii. Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*)
 - viii. Red-shouldered Hawk (*Buteo lineatus*)
 - ix. Veery (*Catharus fuscescens*)
 - x. Wood Thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*)
 - xi. Wood Turtle (*Glyptemys insculpta*)
 - xii. Worm-eating Warbler (*Helmitheros vermivorum*)

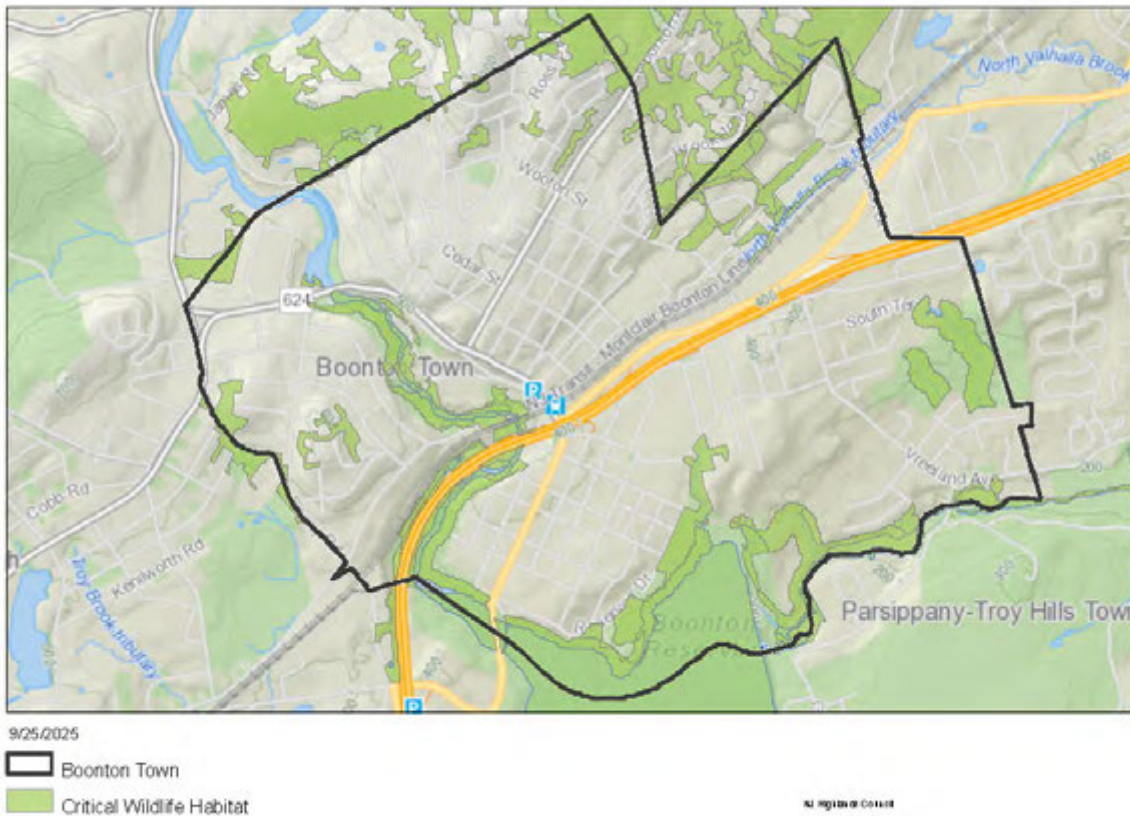
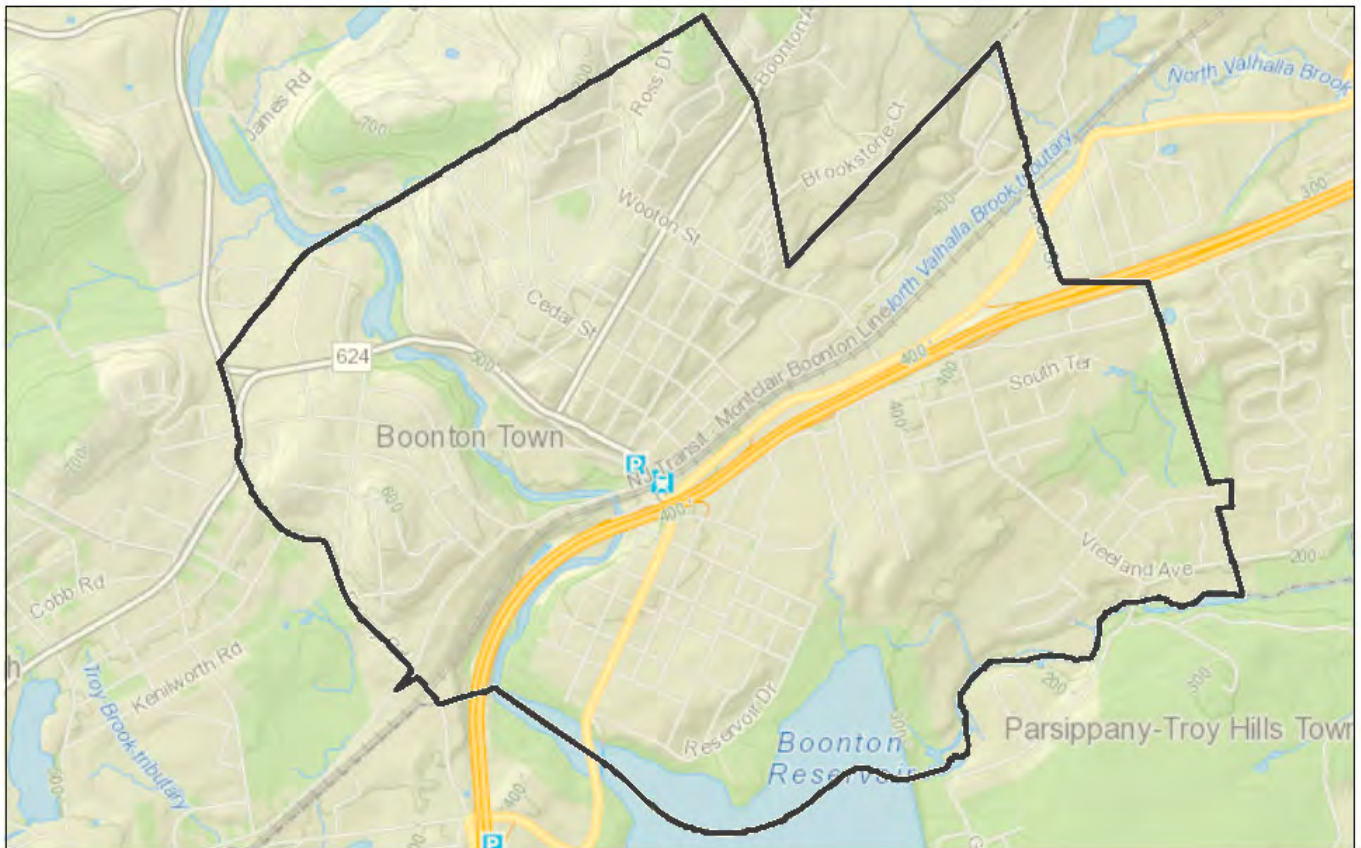


Figure 7: Critical Wildlife Habitats within the Town

Highlands Administrative Layers

- a. **Preservation and Planning Area:** The entirety of the Town of Boonton is located within the Highlands Planning Area, meaning conformance with the Highlands Regional Master Plan is voluntary.



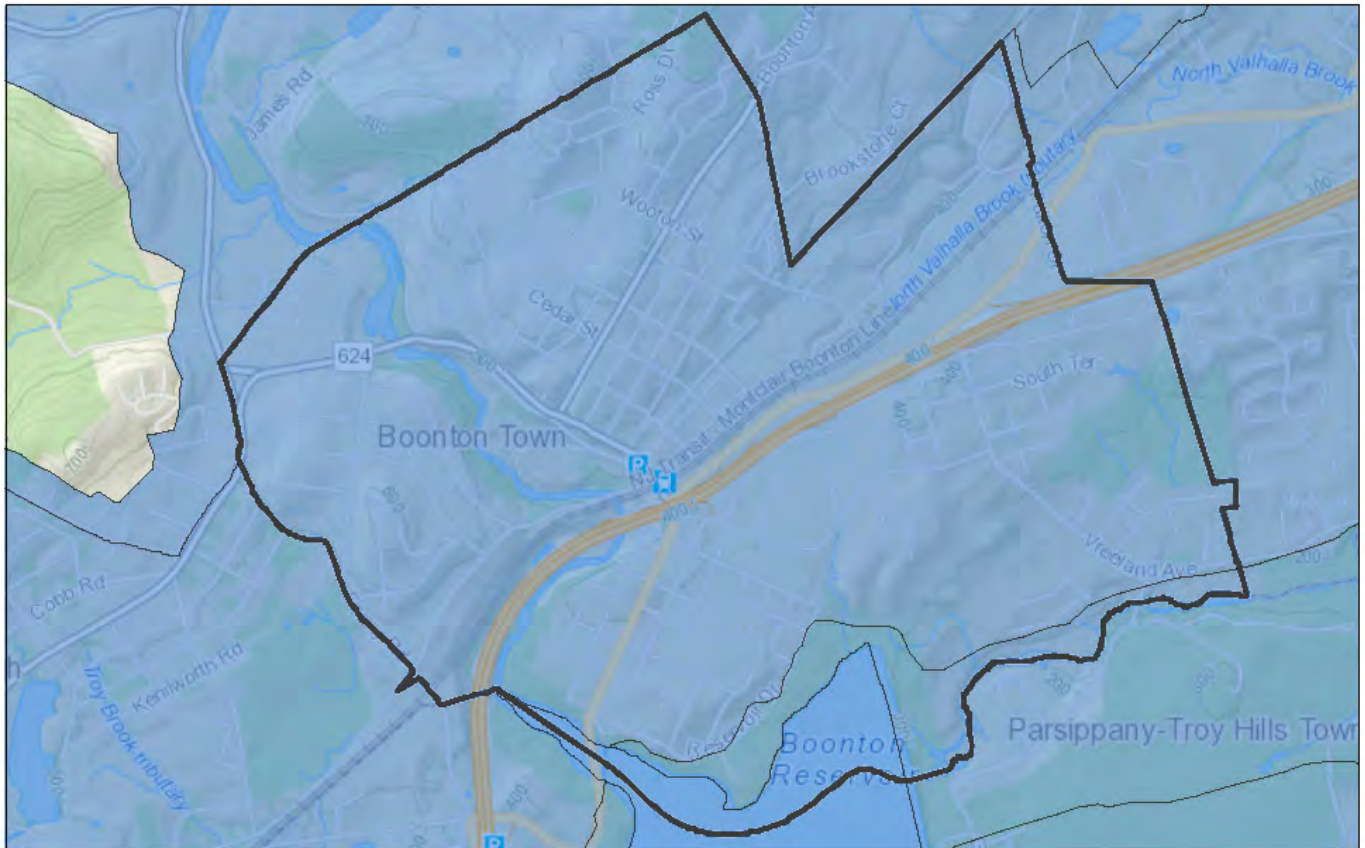
9/25/2025

Boonton Town Preservation and Planning Area
Highlands Planning Area



NI Highlands Council

Figure 8: Depiction of the entirety of the Town located within the Highlands Planning Area

- b. **New Jersey State Planning Area:** The Town of Boonton is located within the following planning areas:
 - i. Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area (Planning Area 5)
 - ii. Metropolitan Planning Area (Planning Area 1)
 - iii. Water



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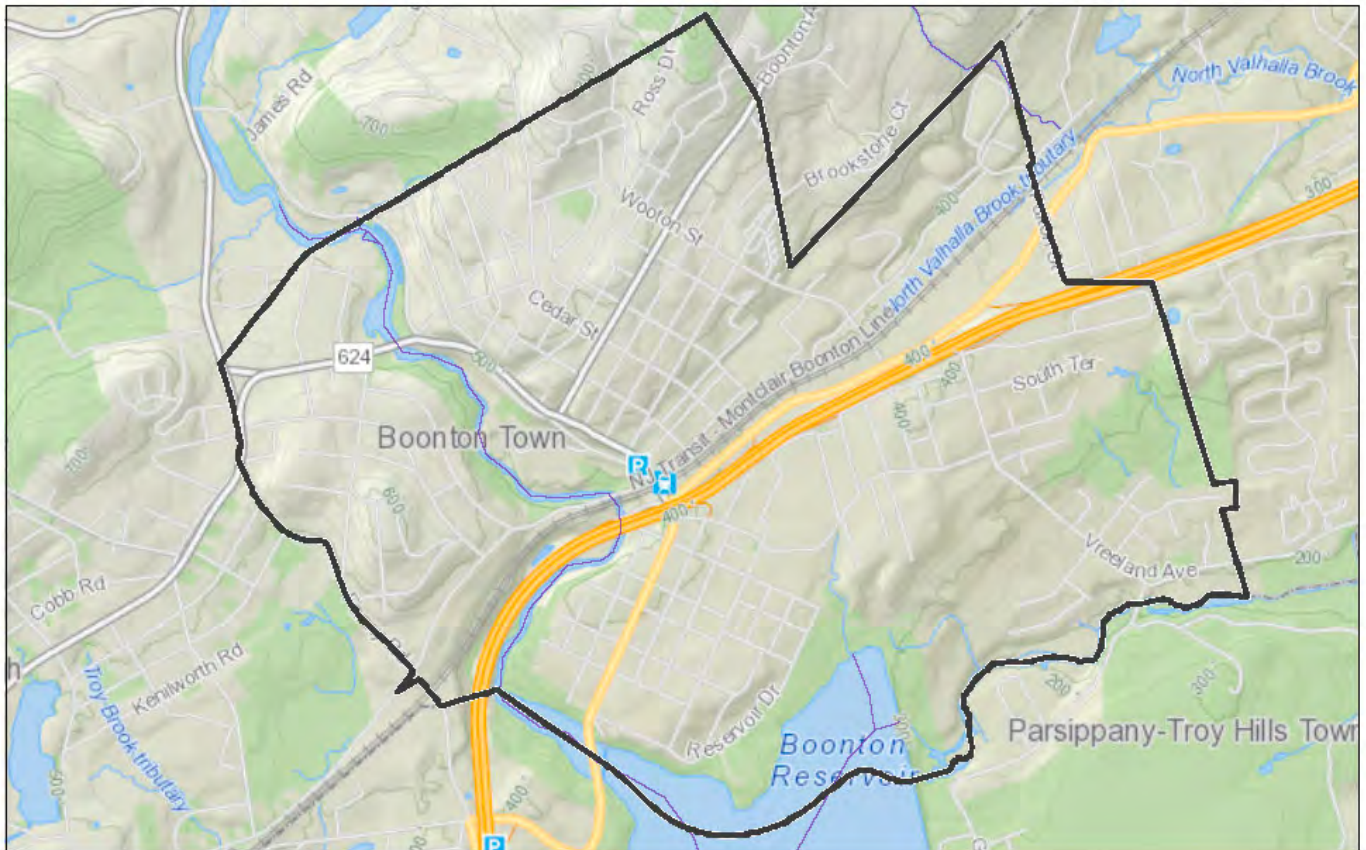
-  Boonton Town
-  New Jersey State Planning Areas

NI HighRes Council



Figure 9: New Jersey State Planning Areas

Hydrology

- a. **Category 1 Waterways:** The Town contains 2.6 miles of one or more C-1 waterways, which are as follows:
 - i. Rockaway River: 1.7 miles
 - ii. Boonton Reservoir: 3,766.4 feet
 - iii. Crooked Brook Tributary: 691.2 feet
 - iv. Rockaway River UNT: 68.7 feet



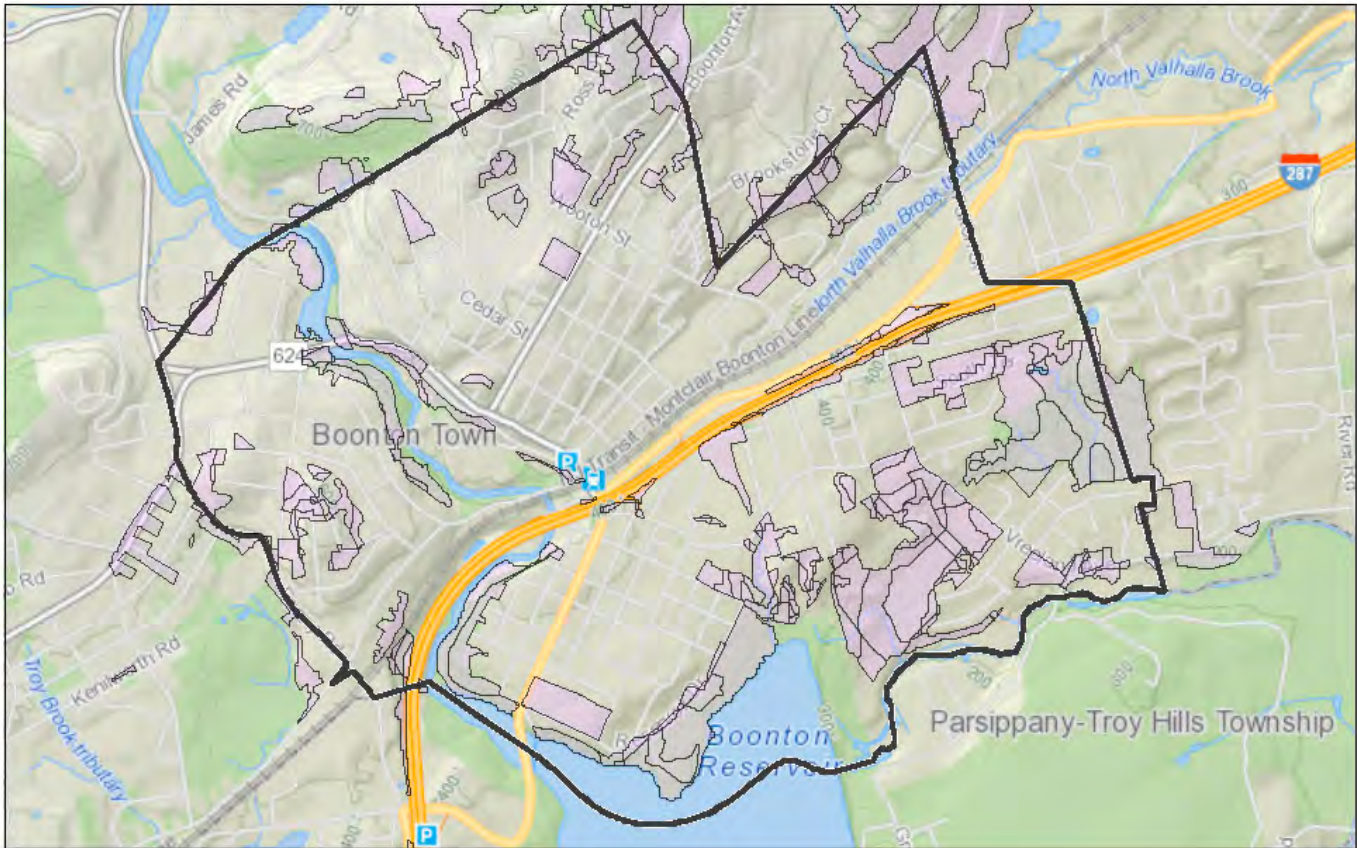
9/25/2025

-  Boonton Town
-  Category 1 Waterways

NU Highland Council

Figure 10: Category 1 Waterways within the Town

- b. **Prime Groundwater Recharge Areas:** Prime Ground Water Recharge Areas cover 382.2 acres, or 20.6% of the Town.



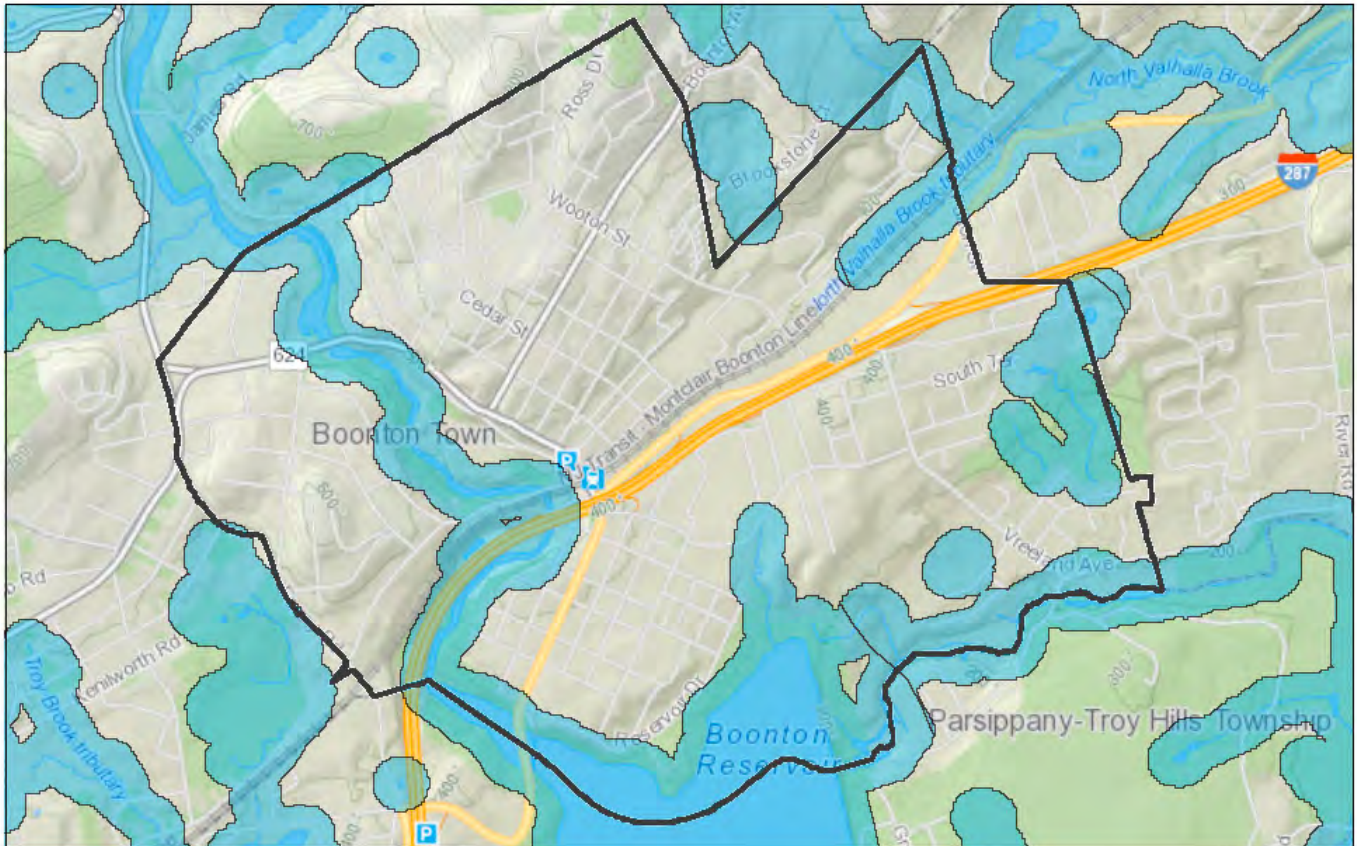
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- Boonton Town
- Prime Groundwater Recharge Areas

NU Highways Control

Figure 11: Prime Groundwater Recharge Areas in the Town

- c. **Highlands Open Water Protection Areas:** Within the Town, there are 469.7 acres that are located within an Open Water Protection Area, which accounts for 29.5%. The Highlands Open Waters Protection Areas include a 300-foot buffer around Highlands Open waters, which includes all springs, streams, wetlands, and bodies of surface water.



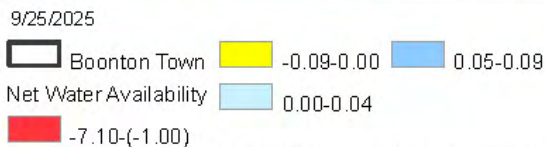
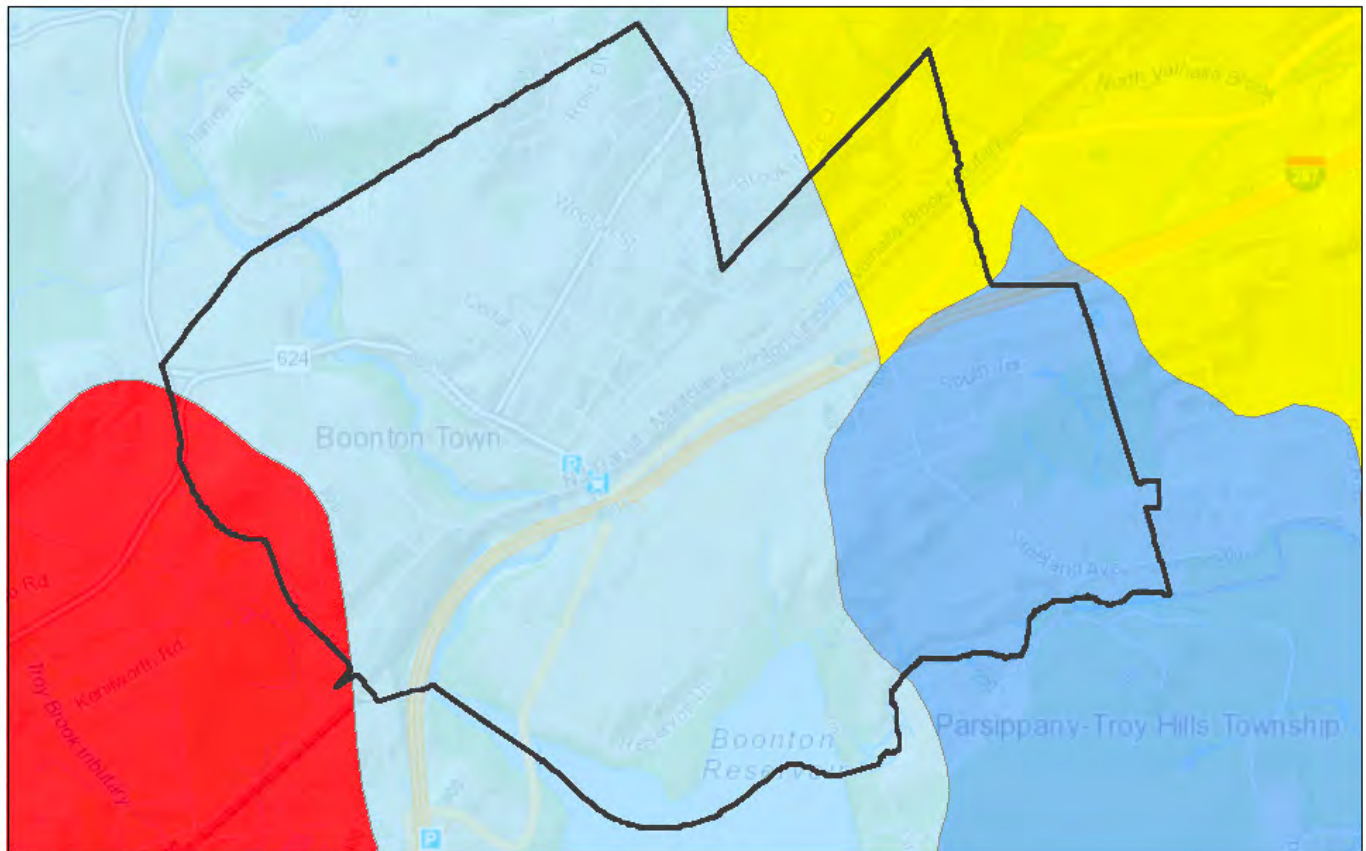
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- Boonton Town
- Highlands Open Water Protection Areas

NY Highlands Council

Figure 12: Highlands Open Water Protection Areas within the Town

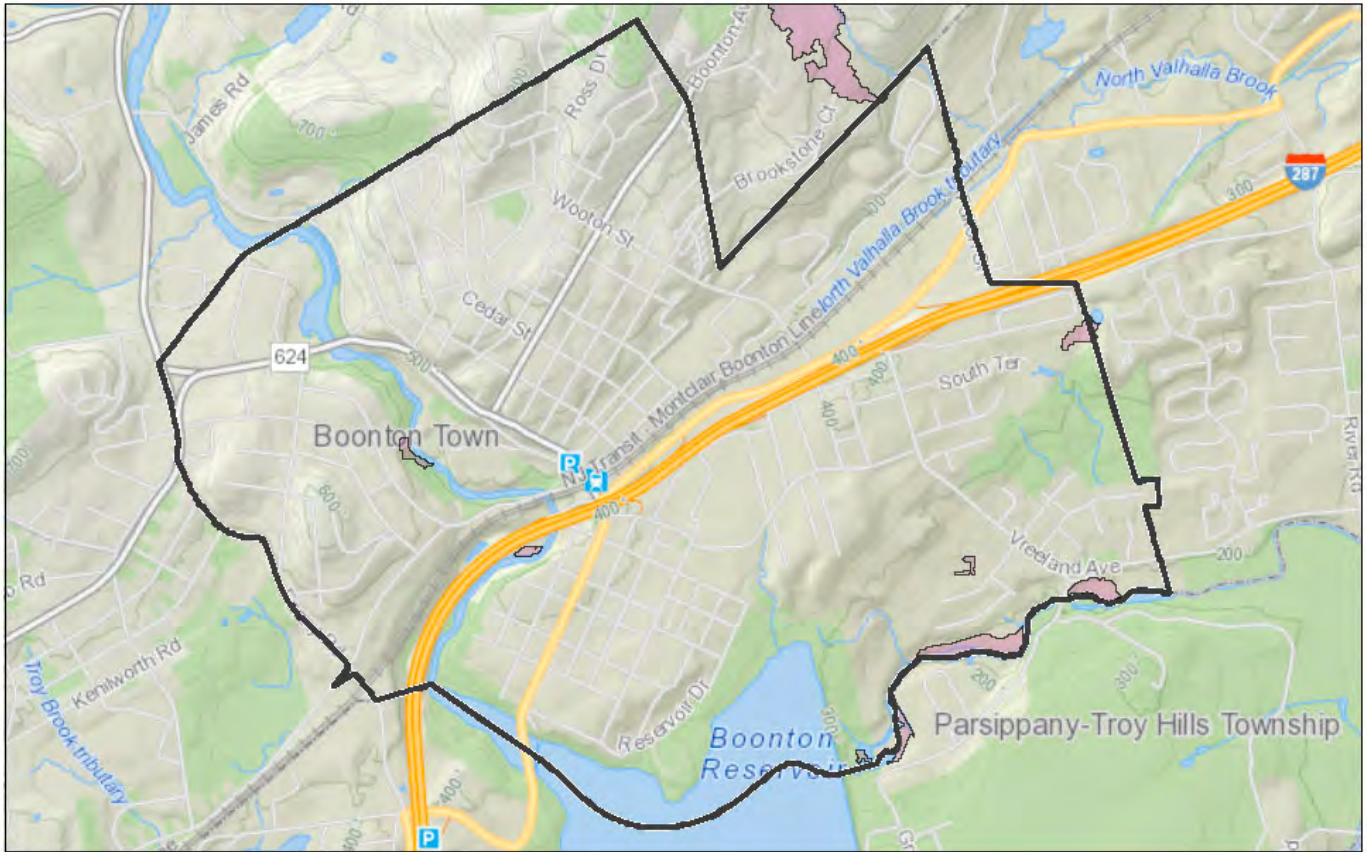
- d. **Net Water Availability:** The Town of Boonton is in 4 subwatersheds, which have net water availability values calculated as follows:
 - i. Rockaway R (Boonton dam to Stony Brook) subwatershed (HUC14 02030103030150), which has a calculated net water availability of 0.0 MGD
 - ii. Rockaway R (Passaic R to Boonton dam) subwatershed (HUC14 02030103030170), which has a calculated net water availability of 0.1 MGD
 - iii. Montville tribs. subwatershed (HUC14 02030103030160), which has a calculated net water availability of 0.0 MGD
 - iv. Troy Brook (above Reynolds Ave) subwatershed (HUC14 02030103020080), which has a calculated net water availability of -7.1 MGD



NI HighRes Color

Figure 13: Net Water Availability within the Town

- e. **Wetlands:** There is a total of 10.9 acres, or 0.7% within the Town that contain mapped wetland areas, as of 2015.



9/25/2025

- Boonton Town
- Wetlands

NI Highland Council

Figure 14: Wetlands in the Town

- f. **Water Service:** The Town of Boonton receives up to 21 million gallons per month of surface water from the Taylortown Reservoir and 40 million gallons of groundwater per month from four wells in the Stratified Drift Formation.²

² 2025 Annual Water Quality Report to Customers. Town of Boonton. Accessed September 30, 2025. <https://www.boonton.org/DocumentCenter/View/6439/Boonton-2025-CCR>

Topography

- a. **Steep Slope Protection Areas:** In total, 327 acres which accounts for 20.6% of the Town is located within a Steep Slope Protection Area. The following is a breakdown of the constraints:
 - i. Severely Constrained: 309.7 acres (19.5%)
 - ii. Moderately Constrained: 17.4 acres (1.1%)



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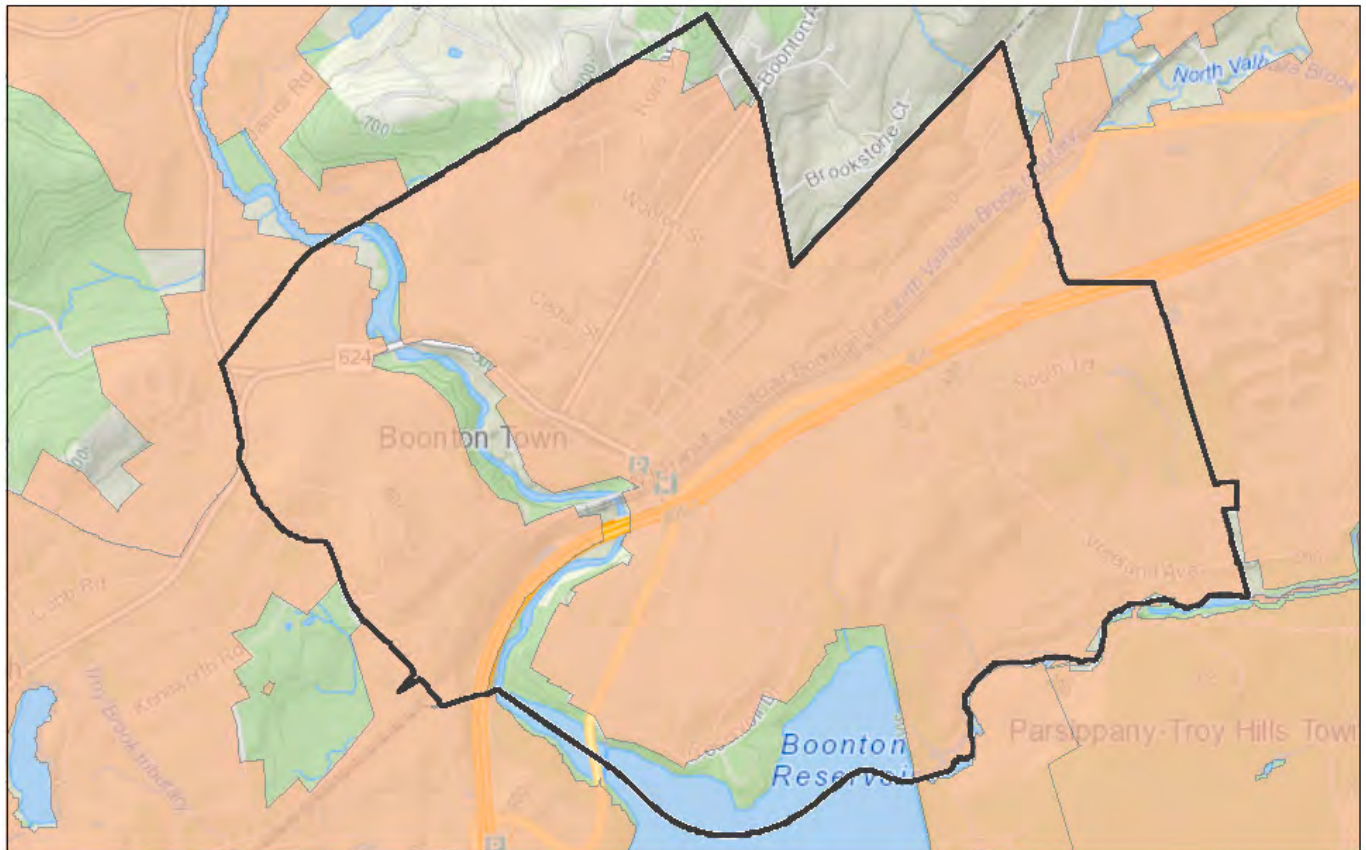
-  Boonton Town
-  Moderately Constrained
-  Steep Slope Protection Area
-  Severely Constrained

NI Highways Council



Figure 15: Steep Slope Protection Areas within the Town

Infrastructure

- a. **Sewer Service:** Overall, there is a total of 1,397.2 acres, comprising 87.9% of the Town which is located within the sewer service area.



9/25/2025

-  Boonton Town
-  Sewer Service Area

NJ Highlands Council

Figure 16: Sewer Service Areas located within the Town

Roadways + Transit

Since the Town of Boonton has been an important industrial town historically, transportation has been an important aspect of the Town's growth and development. Currently, Boonton has a passenger rail station along the NJ Transit Montclair-Boonton Line and two major bus routes. The NJ Transit route provides a weekday commuter service to Hoboken as well as connections to the New York Penn Station via transfer. The NJ Transit serves as an important link connecting Boonton to the New York City Metropolitan Area and other neighboring towns, supporting economic activity and commuter travel.

Boonton has two major commercial corridors – Main Street and Myrtle Avenue. The former serves as the traditional downtown and the latter provides more automobile-oriented amenities. These corridors help in promoting Boonton to infuse its community with new population and activity.

Boonton also promotes a small-town atmosphere that supports convenient and safe travel by providing multiple modes of transportation to choose from. In this context, walking and biking have also become major components of local mobility.

Open Space

Boonton has numerous open spaces. Town parks include Santa Land Park, Grace Lord Park, Canalside Park, Pepe Field, Sheep Hill Park, Mayor's Park, Pocket Park, Kanouse Pocket Park and Veterans Memorial Park. Aside from these parks, the following outdoor recreational spaces exist in the Town: Miller-Kingsland Preservation Project-Beccia, School Street School Athletic Fields, John Hill School Athletic Fields, Boonton High School Athletic Fields, and New Jersey Fireman's Home Athletic Fields. The Town also contains several cemeteries.

In the 2018 Boonton Master Plan Parks and Open Space Element several Open Space initiatives that are underway are outlined. Some of the initiatives include the following

- Boonton Trails improvements
- Acquisition of properties for the purpose of preserved open space, conservation, or recreational opportunities

Additionally, the Master Plan discusses the strategy of establishing a Municipal Open Space Trust Fund to help further some of the goals mentioned above.

Finally, the Master Plan identifies several resources the Town can pursue to implement some of the open space programs and initiatives discussed in the Master Plan. Resources include the following:

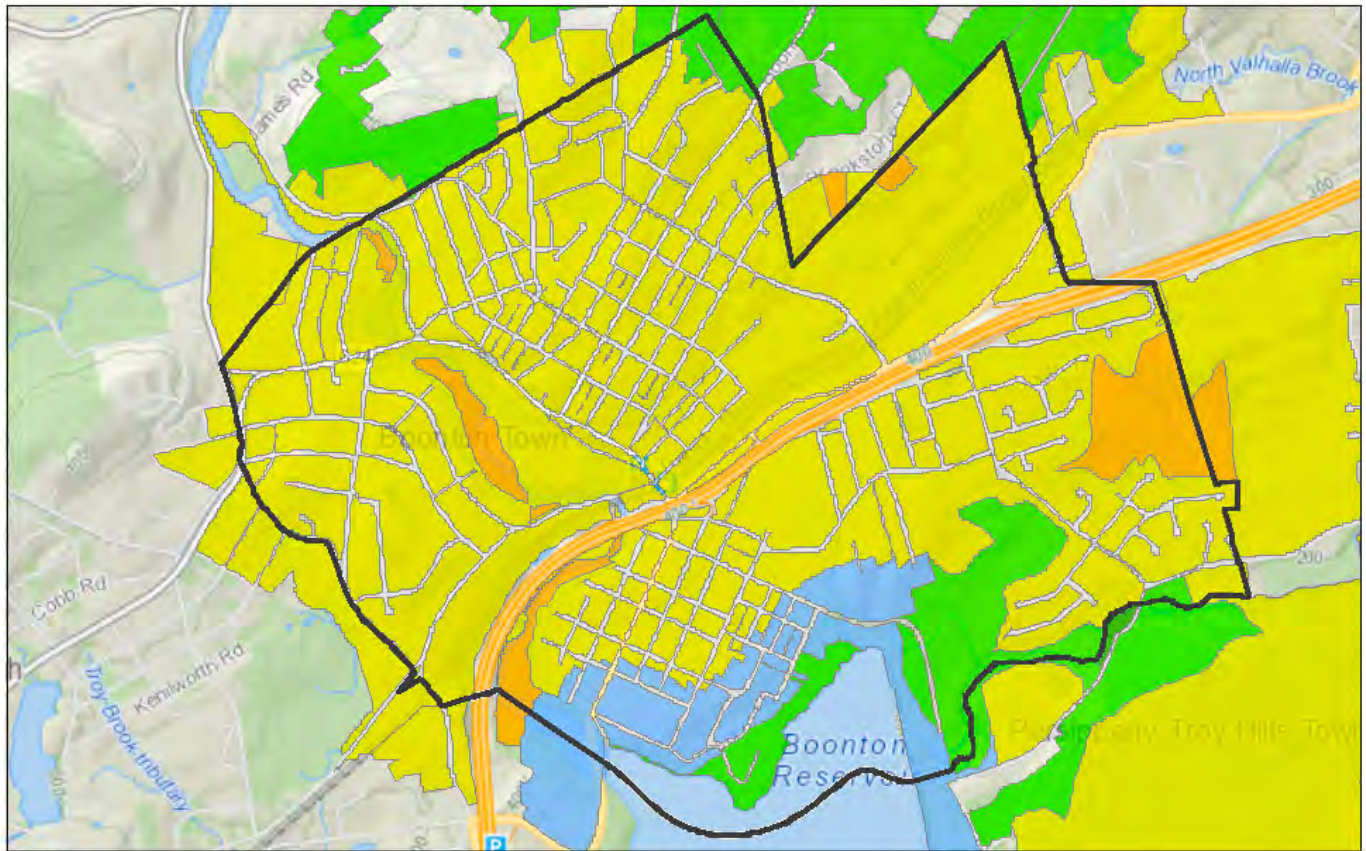
- NJDEP Recreational Trails Grant
- NJDEP Green Acres
- Morris County Trail Construction Grant
- Morris County Open Space Trust Fund
- National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) grants and other funding opportunities
- The Land Conservancy of New Jersey technical assistance

These initiatives and resources provide insight into the ways in which resources from the Highlands Council could be of use for the Town to achieve their open space goals set forth in the Parks & Open Space Element.

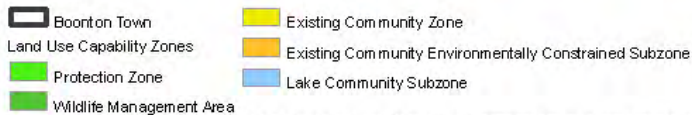
3. Assessment of Existing Land Use Documents

Assessment of Master Plan Documents in Relation to Highlands Model Documents

- a. **Land Use Capability Zones:** Boonton falls into the following Land Use Capability Zones and Sub Zones, as defined the by the Highlands Council:
 - i. **Existing Community Zone:** 1,016.4 acres (63.9%): *Areas characterized by existing development with comparatively fewer natural resource constraints than the Protection and Conservation Zones; they often are currently or more easily served with public infrastructure. The Existing Community Zone includes previously developed lands of regional significance in size, geography and infrastructure that may include areas of opportunity for future growth and development, including development and redevelopment which may involve the use of Highlands Development Credits (HDC), provided that such growth and development are consistent and compatible with existing community character, natural resource constraints and is desired by the municipality.*
 - ii. **Protection Zone:** 96.9 acres (6.1%): *Lands within the Highlands Region which contain the highest quality resource value lands, which are essential to maintaining and enhancing water quality and quantity and preservation ecological function. Includes regionally significant lands that serve to protect environmentally sensitive resources of the Highlands Region.*
 - iii. **Conservation Zone:** 159.5 acres (10.0%): *Lands of significant agricultural importance and associated resource lands that are adjacent to, or in common ownership with, land used for agricultural purposes. Development potential in the Conservation Zone is limited in location and intensity because of agricultural and natural resource protection requirements and infrastructure constraints.*
 1. **Lake Community Subzone:** 92.0 acres (5.8%):
 2. **Existing Community Environmentally Constrained Subzone:** 67.5 acres (4.2%)



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NJ Highlands Council

Figure 17: Land Use Capability Zones within the Town

- b. **Town of Boonton Master Plan:** The Town of Boonton's 2018 Master Plan Land Use Element includes a Future Land Use plan (see map below).³ As is expanded upon below, the Future Land Use Plan generally aligns with the goals of the Land Use Capability Zones outlined in the RMP.

³ The 2018 Master Plan was reexamined in 2024. In addition to the Land Use Element, it also includes Circulation, Economic Development, Parks & Open Space, Historic Preservation and Community Facilities Elements.

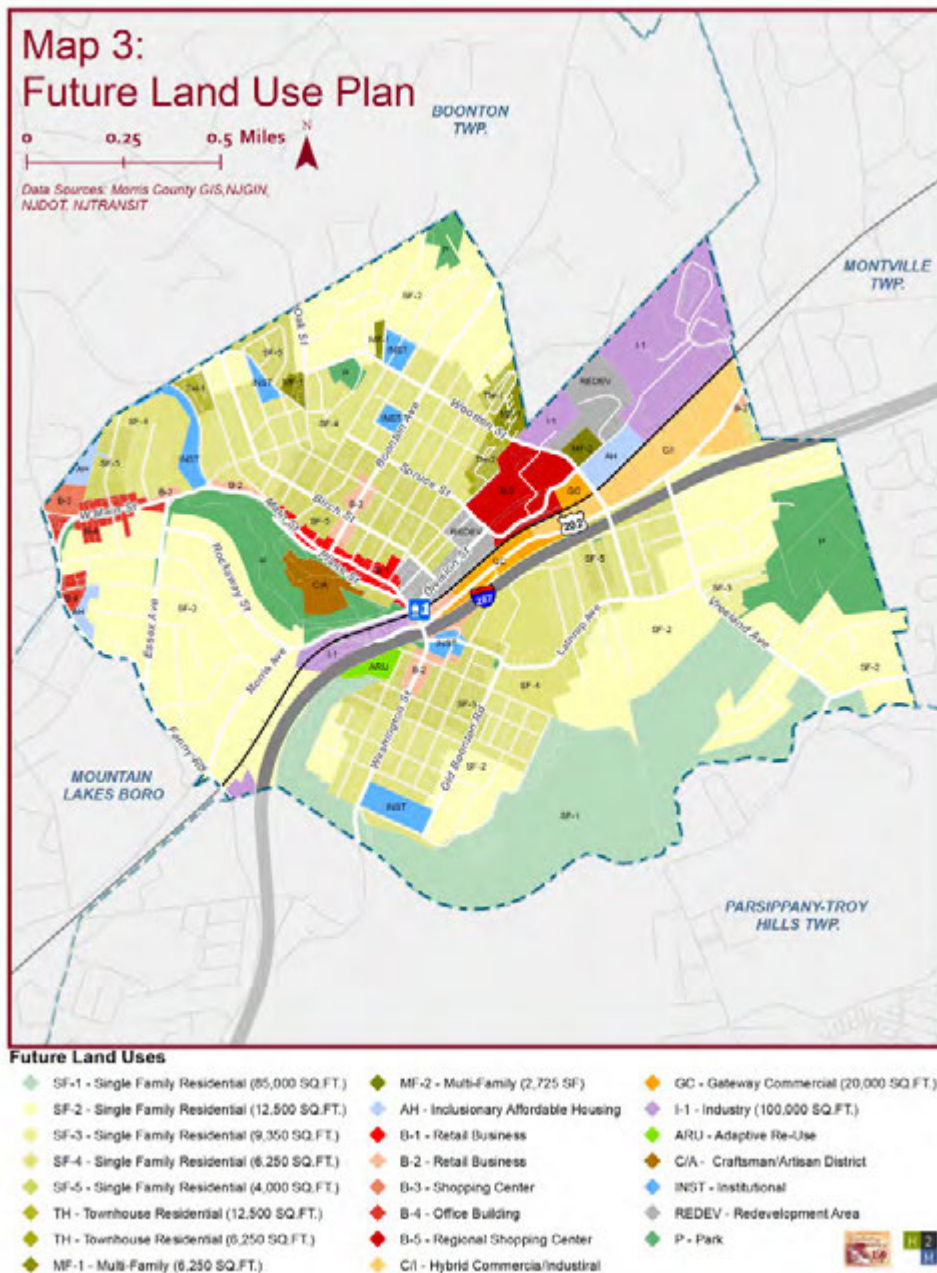


Figure 18: Future Land Use Plan of the Town Master Plan

- c. **Alignment of Boonton Town Master Plan and RMP Goals:** The Town of Boonton Master Plan is in alignment with the goals of the Highlands Regional Master Plan. The table below provides a breakdown of specific RMP goals which align with the Boonton 2018 Master Plan.

GOAL	ALIGNMENT WITH TOWN OF BOONTON MASTER PLAN
<i>6B: Preservation of the land and water resources and ecological function of Highlands areas in the Protection Zone.</i>	Development potential within the Protection Zone is extremely limited. The two areas of Protection Zone within Boonton are identified in the Master Plan as either Park or SF-1. SF-1 is the Town's most restrictive zoning district.
<i>6C: Limitation of Development in the Protection Zone to Development and Redevelopment which does not adversely affect the natural resources of the Highlands Region ecosystem.</i>	Development potential within the Protection Zone is extremely limited. The two areas of Protection Zone within Boonton are identified in the Master Plan as either Park or SF-1. SF-1 is the Town's most restrictive zoning district.
<i>6E: Incorporation of regional development patterns and related environmentally sensitive areas within Existing Community Zones.</i>	Boonton is a commercial center for the region. The Town has zoned its downtown and Main Street area to accommodate commercial demand. Boonton has a train station that may be accessed by the region and has zoned and planned for activity around that train station. Where environmentally sensitive areas exist in the existing community, land use regulations limit intensity of development in accordance with Highlands objectives.
<i>6F: Support of compact development, mixed use development and redevelopment and maximization of water, wastewater and transit infrastructure investments for future use of land and development within the Existing Community Zone.</i>	The Town of Boonton is committed to supporting compact development, as evidenced by the zoning around its train station which promotes mixed use development and a pedestrian friendly environment. Further, the Town is in the process of pursuing Transit Village designation, further demonstrating alignment with the intent of development within the Existing Community Zone.

<p><i>6H: Guide development away from environmentally sensitive and agricultural lands and promote development and redevelopment in or adjacent to existing developed lands.</i></p>	<p>Areas that are located within the Existing Community Environmentally Constrained Subzone are primarily located in areas designated as Park or SF-1, making development potential low. SF-1 is the Town’s most restrictive zoning district.</p>
<p><i>6J: Accommodation of regional growth and development needs through the reuse and redevelopment of previously developed areas, including brownfields, grayfields, and underutilized sites.</i></p>	<p>The Town intends to continue utilizing redevelopment to implement development that aligns with the Highlands Regional Master Plan, including the redevelopment of brownfield sites, such as the DPW site.</p>
<p><i>6K: Concentrate residential, commercial and industrial development, redevelopment and economic growth in existing developed areas in locations with limited environmental constraints, access to existing utility, and transportation infrastructure.</i></p>	<p>Development potential is highest in the parts of Boonton which are designated as less-restrictive areas that are zoned for residential, commercial, and mixed-use, which is consistent with the Existing Community Zone.</p>
<p><i>6L: Conforming municipalities and counties consider development, redevelopment and brownfields and opportunities in their Master Plans.</i></p>	<p>The future land use map in the Boonton Master Plan identifies the land around the Boonton Train Station as a redevelopment area. This area is the designated Division Street Redevelopment Area, which encourages mixed-use compact development around the train station.</p>
<p><i>6M: Protection and enhancement of Highlands resources through the remediation of contaminated sites in region.</i></p>	<p>The Town seeks to protect the Highlands resources through remediation that has and/or is anticipated to take place within Boonton. Pepe Field was remediated by way of the EPA Superfund Program. Additionally, the Town intends on remediating the DPW Site.</p>
<p><i>6N: Use Smart Growth principles, including low impact development, to guide development and redevelopment in the Highlands Region.</i></p>	<p>The Town of Boonton establishes in the Master Plan that it employs development that is transit oriented. The Town is also seeking status as a Transit Village. Development around the train station is mixed use, which supports smart growth.</p>

6O: Market-Rate and Affordable Housing sufficient to meet the needs of the Highlands Region within the context of economic, social, and environmental considerations and constraints.

The Town is committed to providing opportunities for affordable housing in accordance with the Mount Laurel doctrine. The Town was granted a Judgment of Compliance and Repose for the Third Affordable Housing Round and is in the process fulfilling its Fourth Round requirements under the Fair Housing Act. The Town adopted its Fourth Round Housing Element and Fair Share Plan in June 2025.

*Zoned identified are based on future land use, not present zoning districts

- d. **Model Highlands Element for Municipal Master Plans:** The Town of Boonton intends to adopt a Model Highlands Master Plan Element to demonstrate further alignment with the Highlands Council.

Assessment of Zoning and Land Use Standards in Relation to Highlands Model Ordinances

As Boonton is in the Planning Area and the entirety of Boonton is proposed to be a Highlands Center, there is no requirement to modify the Town's existing zoning ordinance by adopting the Land Use Capability Zones as overlay zones. Nevertheless, the Town's zoning ordinance is generally in alignment with the land use principles of the RMP: compact development where it makes sense with minimal impact to environmentally sensitive areas.

- a. **Zone Districts:** The Town of Boonton has the following zones:
- i. **R-1:** Residence Districts, A, B, C, D and E
 - ii. **R-2:** Residence Districts A and B
 - iii. **R-3, R-4, RH:** R-3 Residence Districts A and B; R-4 Residence District; RH Residential High-Density
 - iv. **AH-1:** Affordable Housing-Industrial District
 - v. **B-1:** Business District
 - vi. **B-2:** Business District
 - vii. **B-3:** Business District
 - viii. **B-4:** Business District
 - ix. **B-5:** Business District
 - x. **C-1:** Commercial District
 - xi. **C-2:** Commercial District
 - xii. **I-1:** Industrial District

- xiii. **I-2:** Industrial District
 - xiv. **ARU:** Adaptive Re-Use
 - xv. **MAO:** Myrtle Avenue Multifamily Residential Overlay District
- b. **Steep Slope Ordinance:** The Town of Boonton has adopted a Steep Slope ordinance, per § [300-94.1. Steep slope regulations](#). It should be noted that updates may be needed to ensure steep slope standards in the Town of Boonton are in adherence to the Highlands Ordinance.
 - c. **Division Street Redevelopment Plan:** The Town of Boonton has adopted the Division Street Redevelopment Plan, which promotes vibrant pedestrian-scaled development around the Town’s train station, including mixed-use and residential uses. Overall, the redevelopment plan helps support transit-oriented development.
 - d. **Stormwater Management Ordinance:** The Town of Boonton has adopted a Stormwater Management Ordinance per [Chapter 249 Stormwater Regulations](#).
 - e. The Town of Boonton has **not** adopted regulations pertaining to the following. The Town would be open to adopting relevant ordinances to the extent that they are applicable and/or required as part of the Center designation process.
 - i. Highlands Referral Ordinance (not applicable)
 - ii. Land Use Capability Zones (not applicable)
 - iii. Water Use and Wastewater Treatment
 - iv. Cluster Development (not applicable)
 - v. Open Water Protection
 - vi. Critical Habitat
 - vii. Carbonate Rock Areas (not applicable)
 - viii. Water Use
 - ix. Prime Groundwater Recharge
 - x. Lake Management (not applicable)
 - xi. Agricultural Resources (not applicable)
 - xii. Forest Resources (not applicable)
 - xiii. Wellhead Protection
 - xiv. Historic, Cultural, Archaeological and Scenic Resource Protection
 - xv. Zoning Map Amendments

4. Goals and Objectives of Highlands Center Designation

Geographic area of Highlands Center Designation

The Town of Boonton is petitioning the Highlands Council to designate the entirety of the Town as a Highlands Center.

Center Wide Goals

- a. Promote development that is environmentally, economically and socially sustainable;
- b. Establish and maintain a walkable, active and dense downtown core;
- c. Ensure that development and redevelopment that occurs within the Town is aligned with both the Highlands Regional Master Plan and the Town Master Plan;
- d. Maintain the distinct character of the Town and pursue preservation that honors the local history and culture and stimulates economic development;
- e. Remediate environmental concerns associated with brownfields identified within the Town;
- f. Prioritize conservation of the Town's environmental resources and assets and create a welcoming natural environment for residents and visitors to enjoy.

Area Specific Goals

- a. DPW / DPW Yard
 - i. The Boonton Department of Public Works Yard and Recycling Center is located along Plane Street on the bank of the Rockaway River, a short walk from the center of downtown. The Site currently houses office buildings, garage facilities, a salt dome and a recycling center. The area, known locally as "the Hollow," is potentially historically significant based on its proximity to Boonton's historic Ironworks and the Morris Canal. In the Town's Master Plan, it was recommended that the DPW be consolidated/reduced in size and then subsequently relocated to a different site within the Town. Relocating the DPW site would allow the Town to free up this valuable land, potentially to create new recreational amenity along the Rockaway River that both improves residents' access to this natural resource and celebrates the historic nature of the area.

Relocating the DPW site is a complicated endeavor. The endeavor is complicated by both regulatory uncertainty and practical uncertainty. From a regulatory perspective, the historic use of the site creates uncertainty about the environmental condition and the cost of remediation for conversion to another use. Additionally, there is regulatory uncertainty stemming from proximity to the river and the fact that the site is on the Town's ROSI, meaning that a change of use may require a ROSI amendment or diversion process.

The endeavor is also complicated by practical uncertainties. Relocating the DPW will require the Town to identify alternative locations, undertake studies necessary to assess the feasibility of these sites, and ultimately acquire the sites and make the improvements necessary for them to house the DPW. Funding to support these activities is hard to come by, particularly considering the regulatory uncertainties.

Should the Town receive Center Designation, the Town would like to petition the Council for funding to facilitate the DPW relocation. The funding would be used for due diligence activities on the actual DPW site, as well as conduct analyses about prospective relocation sites. Ultimately, if the DPW site can be relocated, the Town would have the opportunity to create a new amenity along an environmentally sensitive resource near the heart of the Center, goals which are aligned with the RMP and overall objective of Boonton's center.



Figure 19: DPW Site Context in relation to Boonton's downtown along Main Street and the Rockaway River

b. Arch Bridge / Boonton Foot Bridge⁴

- i. The Arch Bridge is in Grace Lord Park and crosses the Rockaway River. The bridge was constructed in 1866 to serve the Town's nearby ironworks during the Industrial Revolution era. The Arch Bridge is on the National Register of Historic Places due to its significant engineering, as it was constructed as an aqueduct to carry piped water. The Town, supported by county and state historic preservation grants, recently completed the rehabilitation of the historic Stone Arch Bridge—the only crossing along the

⁴ Boonton Ironworks Historic District. New Jersey Historic Trust. Accessed November 21, 2025.
<https://www.nj.gov/dca/njht/funded/sitedetails/boontonironworksHD.shtml>

Rockaway River and a key feature of the Boonton Trail System. With additional support from a Morris County Trails Grant, the Town is designing improvements to make the trail ADA-compliant and transform it from a worn gravel path into a fully accessible network. Through the Highlands grant program, Boonton aims to develop a continuous trail loop with multiple access points throughout town. Plans also include restoring a second river crossing—the Ironworks Trail trestle—by converting it into a pedestrian footbridge. Ideally, the Boonton trail system will eventually link to the Morris County trail system that is being developed to loop the Reservoir. The Town would seek Highlands Council funding to support design and other work related to these efforts.



Figure 20: The Arch Bridge⁵

c. Post Office

- i. The Town is interested in relocating its Post Office to utilize its current location to construct a parking structure to increase the availability of parking along Main Street. The Town would like to explore potential alternative locations to house a relocated Post Office. Additional parking along Main Street would help increase economic activity within Boonton’s downtown core, which would support the Highlands Council’s desired vision for designated Centers. The Town proposes to use Highlands Council funding to evaluate the feasibility of alternative locations, as well as potentially advance design documents for feasible alternative sites.

⁵ Historic Boonton Arch Bridge reopens after renovation. Daily Record. Accessed November 21, 2025. <https://www.dailyrecord.com/picture-gallery/news/2024/07/02/historic-boonton-arch-bridge-reopens-after-renovation/74277230007/>

d. Darress Theatre

- ii. The Darress Theatre is located along Main Street, and is over 100 hundred years old, constructed in 1919. In 2020, the Town purchased the Theatre with the intent of reimagining it into a Regional Performing Art Theatre, with a 500-person capacity. As the transformative process is still underway, the Darress Theatre is poising itself to be an important economic driver for the Town of Boonton and the region, helping it to sustain a viable source of revenue and increased patronage to the downtown. The Town is currently seeking an operator for the project. Once a partner is identified, the Town may pursue funding through the Highlands Council to support the preparation of construction documents for the renovation.



Figure 21: The Darress Theatre⁶

- e. Other areas to be identified as developed in conjunction with the Town.

5. Proposed Activities Following Designation (See Implementation Plan)

Immediate Action Items

- a. Prepare updated ERI
- b. Develop and adopt Highlands Master Plan Element / Center Plan / Reexamination

⁶ PHOTOS: The Darress Theatre in Boonton was built in 1915. Daily Record. Accessed November 21, 2025. <https://www.dailyrecord.com/picture-gallery/news/history/2015/07/31/photos-the-darress-theatre-in-boonton-was-built-in-1915/30965263/>

- c. Adopt Highlands Conformance Ordinance (e.g., Steep Slopes, etc.)
- d. Zoning Map update

Potential Future Projects Requiring Highlands Council Approval

- a. Planning for priority areas identified in Master Plan Element / Center Plan / Reexamination
- b. Planning activities associated with “Area Specific Goals” identified herein
- c. Circulation Plan Element, including a Parking Analysis for the downtown area
- d. Open Space and Recreation Plan Element
- e. Historic Preservation Plan Element
- f. Land Preservation and Land Stewardship Plan Element
- g. Land Use Plan update to address resiliency requirements
- h. Sustainable Economic Development Plan
- i. Historic, Archaeological and Cultural Preservation Plan
- j. Infiltration and Inflow Study
- k. Wastewater Management Plan
- l. Water Use and Conservation Management Plan
- m. Municipal/Regional Stormwater Management Plan, Inventory, and Ordinances
- n. Forest Stewardship Plan
- o. Board of Health Ordinances (as applicable)
- p. Planning for Redevelopment and Brownfields Opportunities

6. Public Outreach Approach

The Town intends to share the contents of this Petition for Plan Conformance by way of several methods. The Town will present the contents of this Petition at a Council Meeting, whereby members of the public will have the opportunity to engage in person. Additionally, the Town will publish this Petition on the Town’s website as well as the Town’s bulletin board where it can be easily accessed. Finally, as part of this public outreach approach, the Town will adhere to the required public open comment period, whereby members of the public can review and provide any feedback, which then the Town can revisit the contents of this Petition and revise as needed.

The Town will also conduct a public engagement process during the development of the Center Plan. This process will be designed to ensure that residents are aware of, and can comment on, the Center Plan. The Town intends to employ several engagement strategies. The Town will launch a survey to gather input from the community. This survey will be particularly focused on understanding community priorities, partially as it relates to implementation plan activities. The Town will also take advantage of well attended community events for tabling, where input can be gathered in a more informal setting. As part of this public outreach approach, the Town will attend at least two separate events. Events may include Art Walk, Summer Music on Main, Boo-nton, and Holidays on Main.

Finally, the Town will conduct at least two focus groups to facilitate more structured and in-depth discussions regarding center designation. These focus groups may involve elements of the community less likely to participate in traditional engagement activities such as students.

**Town of Boonton
Implementation Plan and Schedule**

Amended Grant Agreement Task #	PLAN CONFORMANCE TASK	Proposed Cost Fiscal Year 2026	Future Projects (requires future HC Approval)	Status and Comments
	Highlands Interactive Environmental Resource Inventory	\$ 3,000.00		
	Center Plan / Master Plan Reexamination Report & Highlands Master Plan element	\$ 50,000.00		
	Other Municipal Master Plan Elements (as applicable)			
	a. Land Use Plan Element (<i>with resiliency requirements addressed</i>)		TBD	
	b. Land Preservation and Land Stewardship Plan Element		TBD	
	c. Sustainable Economic Development Plan Element		TBD	
	d. Historic Preservation Plan Element		TBD	
	e. Circulation Plan Element (<i>including Parking Analysis for the downtown area</i>)		TBD	
	f. Open Space and Recreation Plan element		TBD	
	g. Historic, Archaeological and Cultural Preservation Plan		TBD	
	Planning for priority areas identified in Petition for Plan Conformance (DPW/DPW Yard, Arch Bridge/Boonton Foot Bridge, Post Office, Darress Theatre)		TBD	
	Zoning Map Update	\$ 8,500.00		
	Resource Management Plans, Programs, and Ordinances			
	a.Center Conformance Ordinance	\$ 10,000.00		
	b. Infiltration and Inflow Study (if applicable)		TBD	
	c. Water Use and Conservation Management Plan		TBD	
	d. Wastewater Management Plan (if applicable)		TBD	
	e. Municipal Stormwater Management Plan (<i>including inventory and ordinances</i>)		TBD	
	f. Regional Stormwater Management Plan (if applicable)		TBD	
	g. Forest Stewardship Plan (if applicable)		TBD	
	h. Ground Water Recharge Ordinance		TBD	
	Board of Health Ordinances			
	a. Septic System Maintenance (if applicable)		TBD	
	b. Potential Contaminant Source Management (if applicable)		TBD	
	Implementing Ordinances for Management Plans and Programs		TBD	
	Redevelopment and Brownfields Opportunities			
	a. Highlands Redevelopment Area Planning		TBD	
	RMP Updates			
	Attendance at Highlands Council Training Sessions			
	a. Municipal Exemption Determinations	\$ 500.00		Adopt Municipal Exemption Determination Ordinance
	b. Ordinance Administration: Application Procedures, Implementation, Enforcement		TBD	
	Estimated Subtotal	\$ 72,000.00		

NEW JERSEY HIGHLANDS WATER PROTECTION AND PLANNING COUNCIL
Town of Boonton Petition for Plan Conformance
Draft Consistency Review and Recommendations Report

APPENDIX C

HIGHLANDS RESOURCE MAPS
Town of Boonton, Morris County

Exhibit 1: Highlands Area and Highlands Land Use Capability Zones

Boonton Town

Land Use Capability Zones

- Protection Zone
- Existing Community Zone

Land Use Capability Sub-Zones

- Wildlife Management Sub-Zone
- Existing Community - Environmentally Constrained Sub-Zone
- Lake Community Sub-Zone

Municipal Boundary

Parcel Boundaries

Roads

- Interstates
- US Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Alleys
- Interstate Ramps



0 0.25 0.5 Miles

Map Created: 5/21/2025

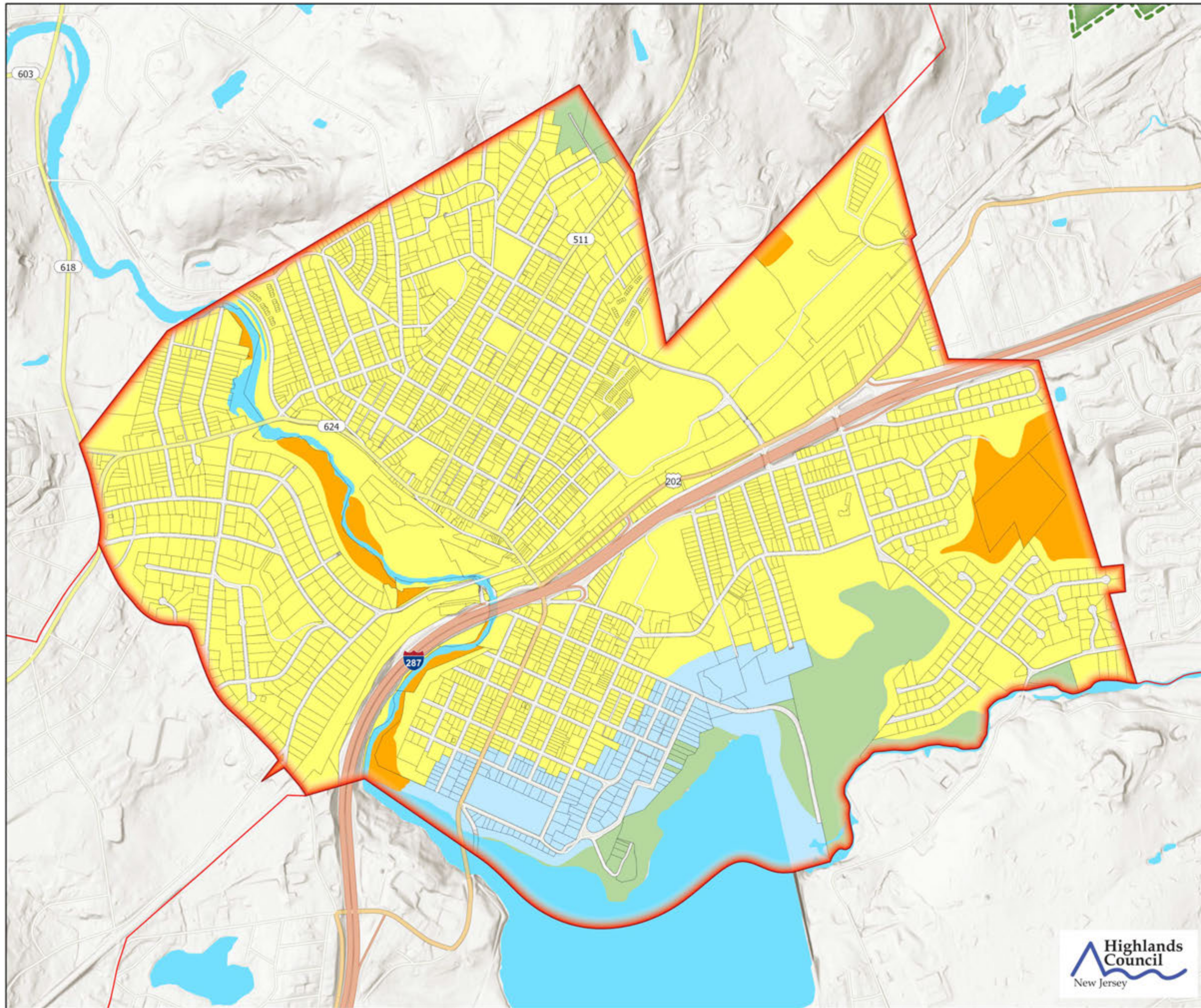


Exhibit 2: Wellhead Protection Areas

Boonton Town

-  Municipal Boundary
 -  Highlands Preservation Area
 -  Parcel Boundaries
- Roads
-  Interstates
 -  US Highways
 -  County Highways
 -  Local Roads
 -  Alleys
 -  Interstate Ramps



0 0.25 0.5 Miles

Map Created: 5/21/2025



Exhibit 3: Highlands Open Waters and Buffers

Boonton Town

- Streams
- Wetlands
- Hydrology
- Highlands Open Water Buffers (300ft)
- Municipal Boundary
- Highlands Preservation Area
- Parcel Boundaries

Roads

- Interstates
- US Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Alleys
- Interstate Ramps



0 0.25 0.5 Miles

Map Created: 5/22/2025

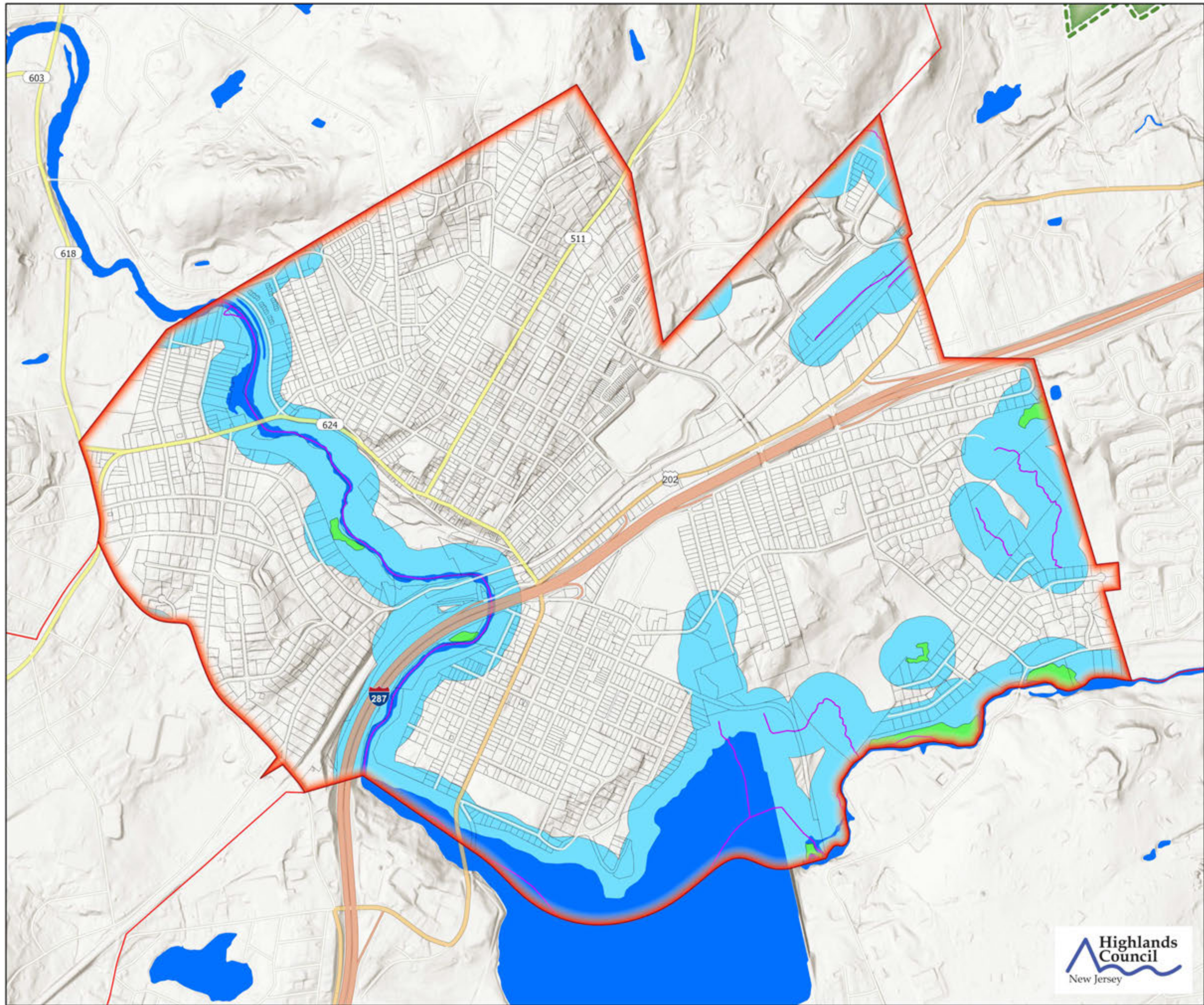







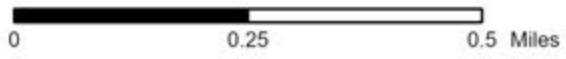
Exhibit 4: Highlands Riparian Areas

Boonton Town

-  Riparian Area
-  Municipal Boundary
-  Highlands Preservation Area
-  Parcel Boundaries

Roads

-  Interstates
-  US Highways
-  County Highways
-  Local Roads
-  Alleys
-  Interstate Ramps



Map Created: 5/20/2025

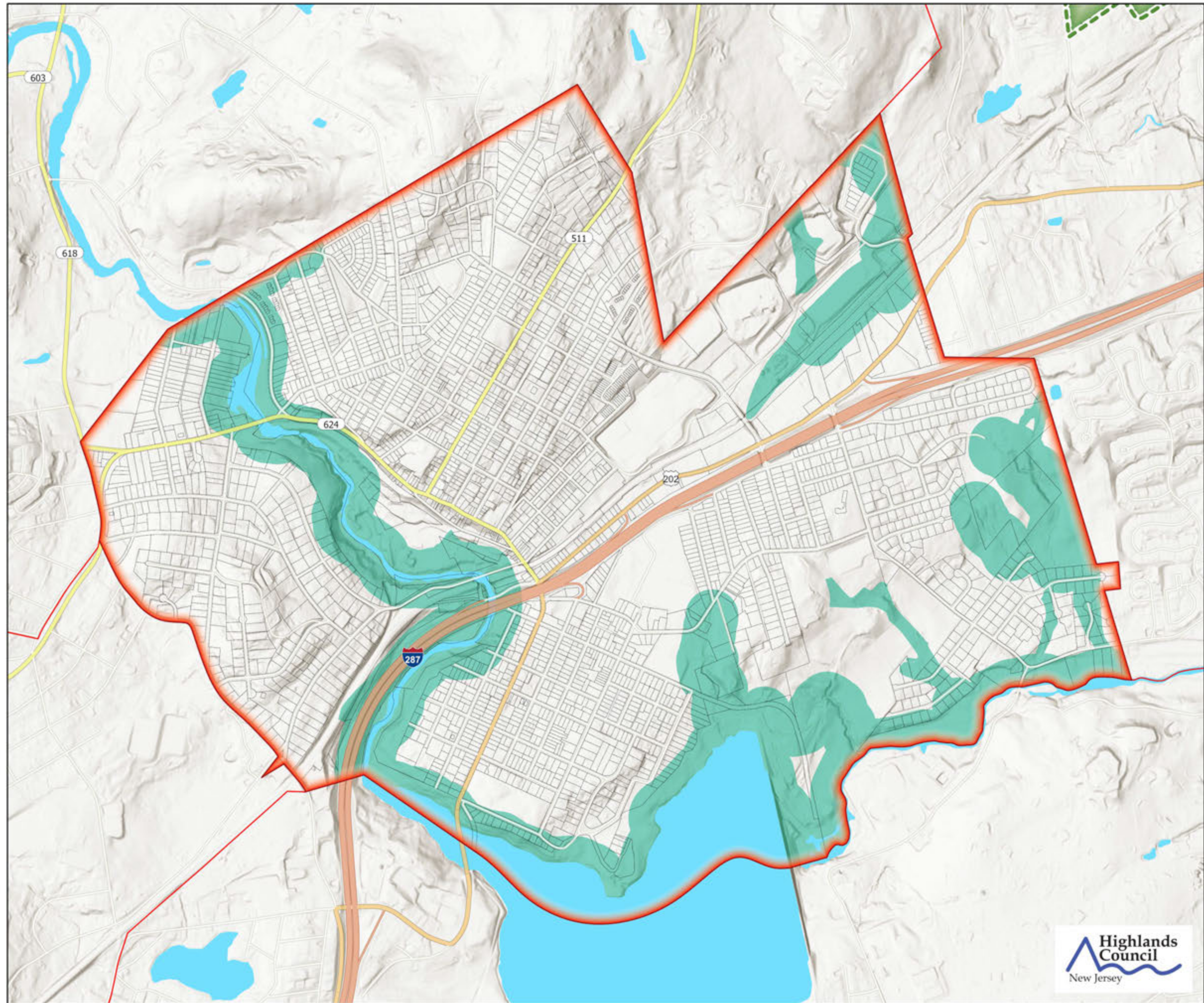


Exhibit 5: Net Water Availability

Boonton Town

Net Water Availability by HUC14 Subwatershed (MGD)

- 0.09 - 0.39
- 0.04 - 0.09
- 0.00 - 0.04
- 0.09 - 0.00
- 0.99 - (-0.10)
- 7.11 - (-1.00)

- Municipal Boundary
- Highlands Preservation Area
- Parcel Boundaries

- Roads
- Interstates
 - US Highways
 - County Highways
 - Local Roads
 - Alleys
 - Interstate Ramps

* Indicates updated data was used in for this HUC



Map Created: 5/20/2025

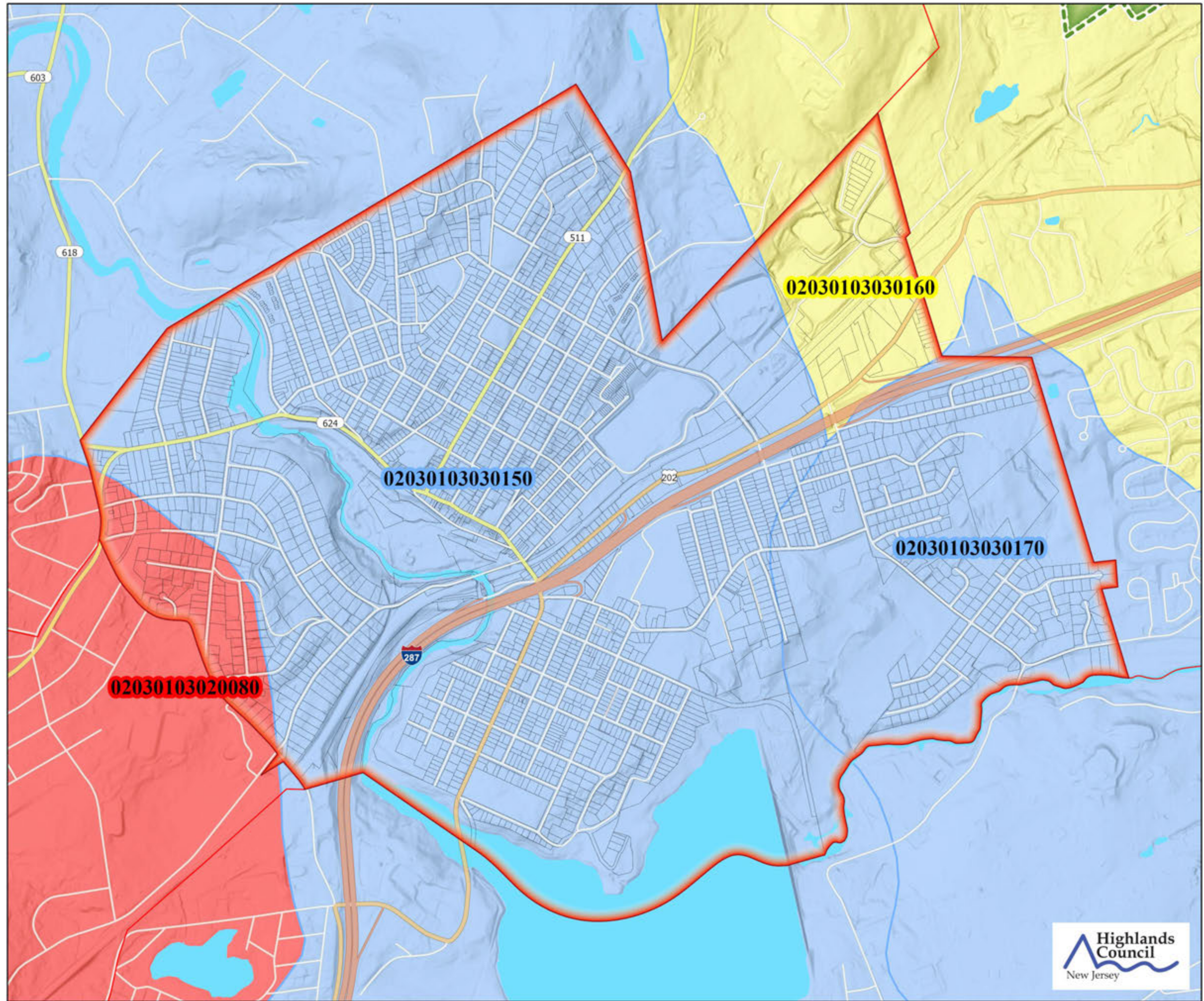










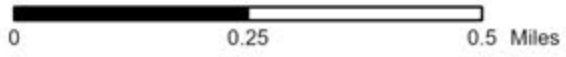


Exhibit 6: Forest Area

Boonton Town

-  Total Forest Area
 -  Municipal Boundary
 -  Highlands Preservation Area
 -  Parcel Boundaries
- Roads
-  Interstates
 -  US Highways
 -  County Highways
 -  Local Roads
 -  Alleys
 -  Interstate Ramps













Map Created: 5/21/2025



Exhibit 7: Prime Groundwater Recharge Areas

Boonton Town

-  Prime Ground Water Recharge Areas
 -  Municipal Boundary
 -  Highlands Preservation Area
 -  Parcel Boundaries
- Roads
-  Interstates
 -  US Highways
 -  County Highways
 -  Local Roads
 -  Alleys
 -  Interstate Ramps



0 0.25 0.5 Miles

Map Created: 9/11/2025

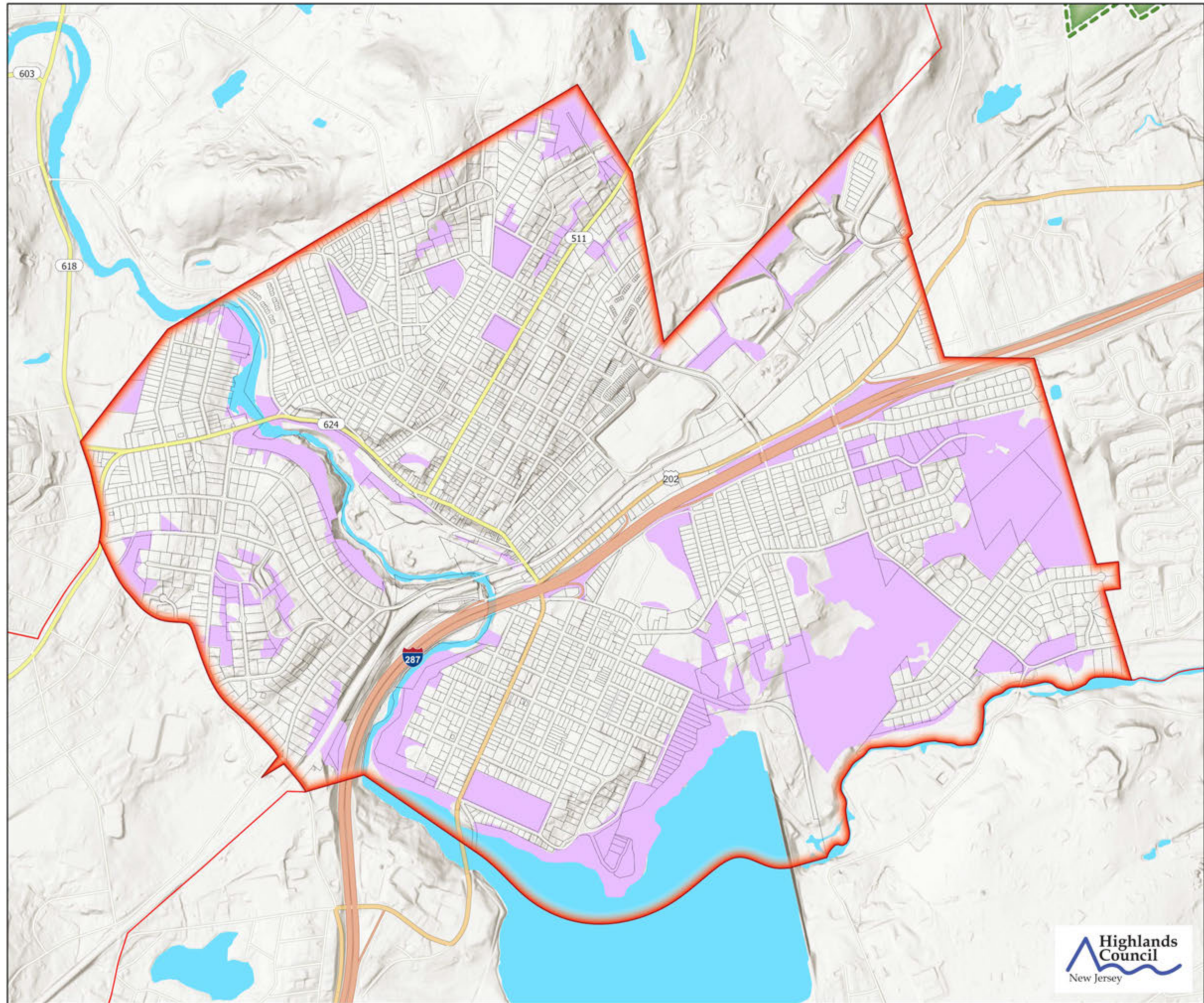


Exhibit 8: Steep Slope Protection Areas

Boonton Town

Steep Slope Protection Area

- Moderate
- Severe

Municipal Boundary

Highlands Preservation Area

Parcel Boundaries

Roads

- Interstates
- US Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Alleys
- Interstate Ramps



0 0.25 0.5 Miles

Map Created: 5/19/2025

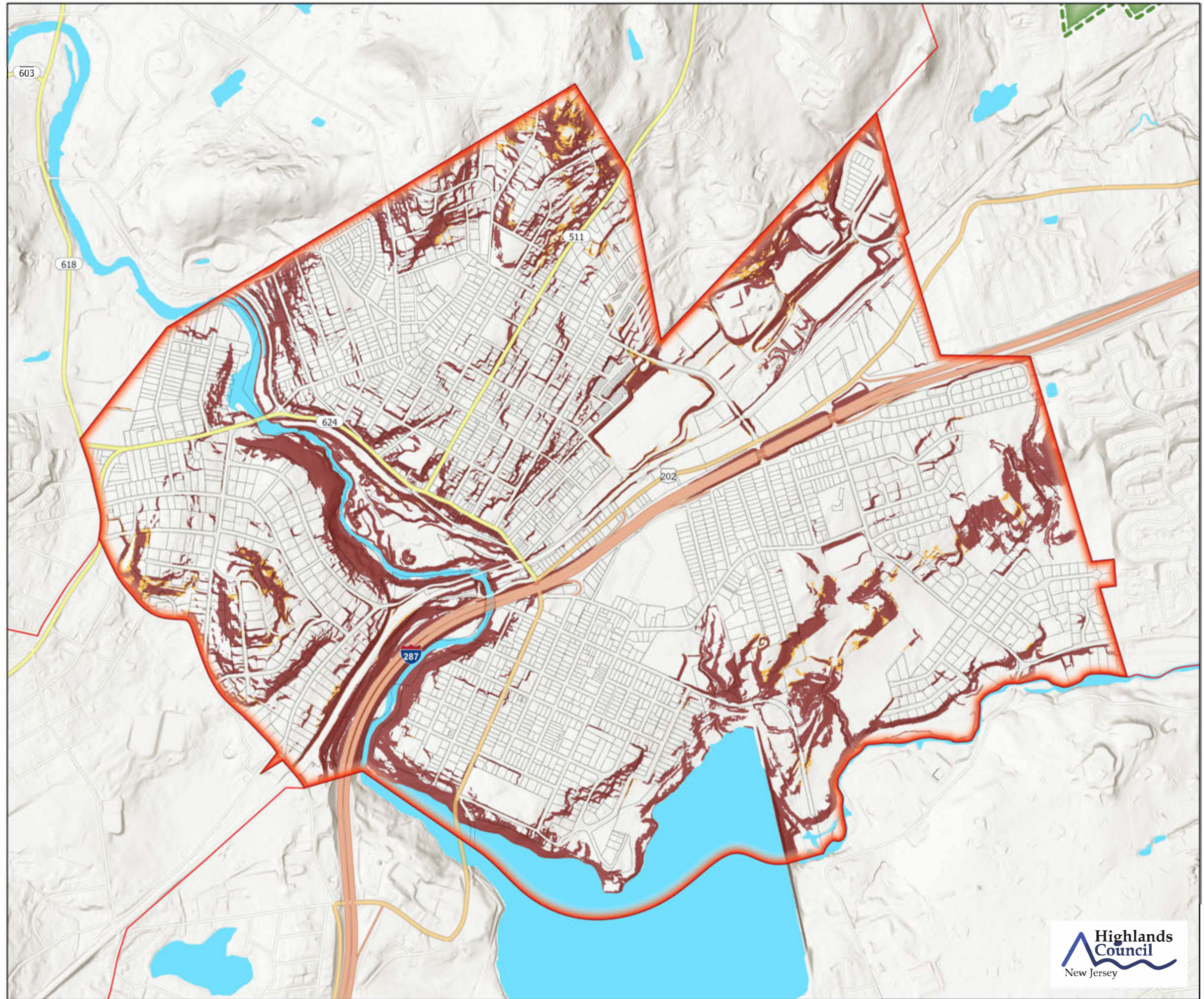


Exhibit 9: Critical Wildlife Habitat, Vernal Pools and NJDEP Natural Heritage Priority Sites

Boonton Town

-  Critical Wildlife Habitat
 -  Municipal Boundary
 -  Highlands Preservation Area
 -  Parcel Boundaries
- Roads
-  Interstates
 -  US Highways
 -  County Highways
 -  Local Roads
 -  Alleys
 -  Interstate Ramps



0 0.25 0.5 Miles

Map Created: 4/17/2025

