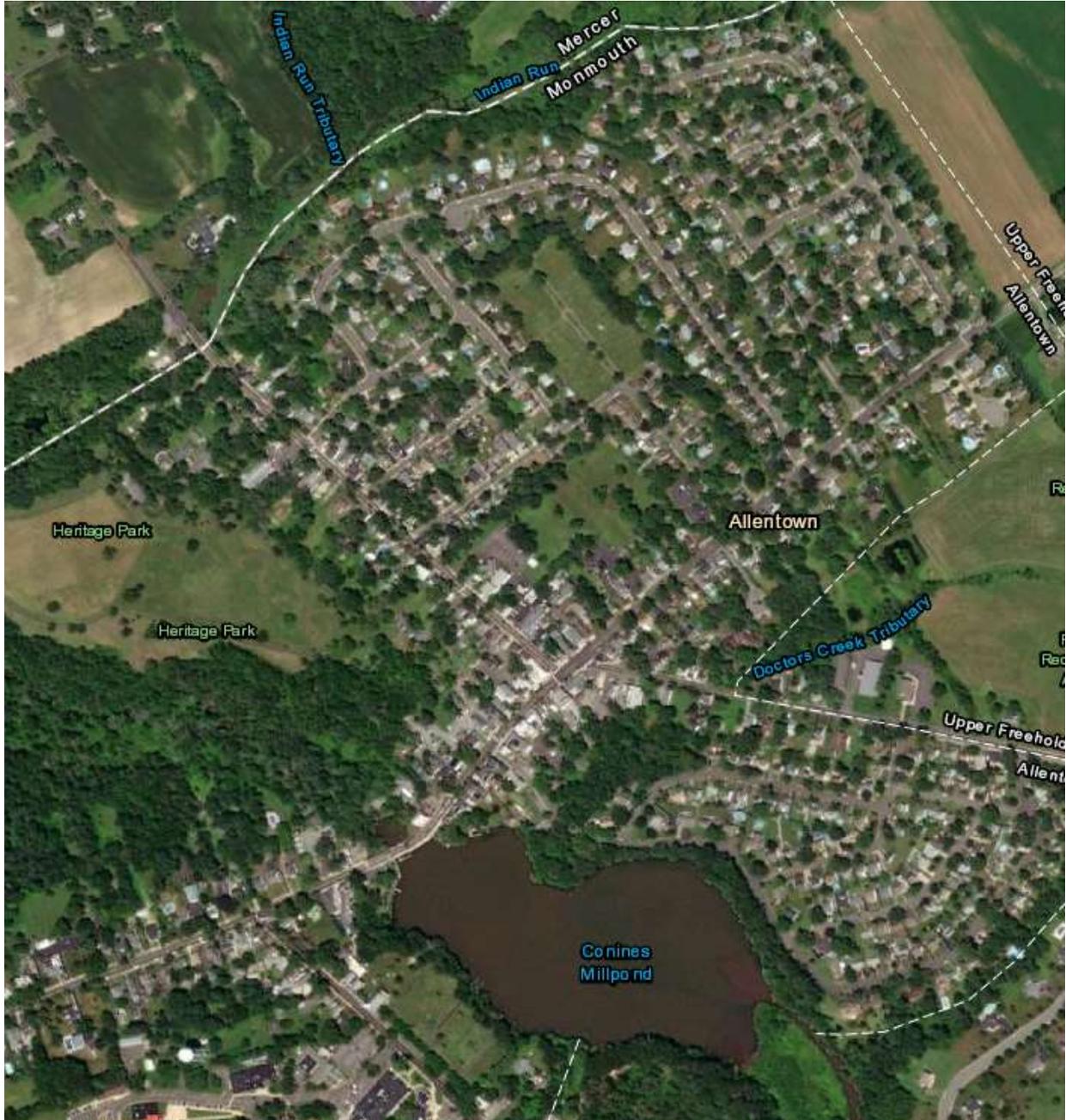


Plan Endorsement Recommendation Report for Borough of Allentown



New Jersey Department of State
Business Action Center
Office of Planning Advocacy

This document is a recommendation report prepared by the Office of Planning Advocacy (OPA) as staff to the State Planning Commission (SPC) based on input of our partner agencies, Borough of Allentown, Monmouth County, and members of the public. OPA will post this report and other materials related to Borough of Allentown Plan Endorsement petition on our website. You can contact our office by email regarding petitions for Plan Endorsement by providing contact information, including name, organization, address, and e-mail address to osgmail@sos.state.nj.us.

Documents submitted by Borough of Allentown for Plan Endorsement can be found here: <https://nj.gov/state/planning/plan-endorsement.shtml>
Master Plan, Examination Report, Environmental Commission Report, Zoning and Land Use Maps, etc.

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INTRODUCTION

The Borough of Allentown (hereafter Allentown or Township) in Monmouth County received Village Center designation by the State Planning Commission (SPC) on May 15, 2002. This designation was set to expire June 30, 2020; however, the expiration has been extended through various extensions approvals by legislation, executive orders and/or State Planning Commission resolutions. According Allentown's Municipal Self-Assessment, Allentown's primary reason for Village Center designation renewal is to maintain State agency support to preserve the Borough's historic character through rehabilitation, to maintain the village's economic viability, and to discourage sprawl and encourage farmland preservation and natural resource conservation outside its municipal borders in the Village Center's environs. The proximity of Interstate-195 and the New Jersey Turnpike Interchange 7A has encouraged significant residential and industrial development in the rural environs in recent years.

This report contains findings and conclusions concerning consistency of the Borough's plans with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (State Plan). The review of the petition is based on information submitted by the petitioner and information otherwise available to the Office of Planning Advocacy (OPA).

Adopting a resolution in support of Plan Endorsement of their plans will demonstrate that they are taking appropriate steps to plan for the sustainable future by addressing their infrastructure, economic development, housing, open space, environmental and resiliency concerns.

BACKGROUND

The Borough of Allentown initiated the Plan Endorsement (PE) process with a prepetition meeting, so they could renew their Village Center designation. They followed the PE guidelines and requested a waiver for establishing a Plan Endorsement Advisory Committee. The waiver requested was approved on May 14, 2020 as a result of their demonstrated commitment to public input in recent land use policy development. On March 18, 2021, Allentown submitted their Municipal Self-Assessment Report (MSA). OPA and our State agency partners responded with an Opportunity and Constraints Report on October 7, 2021. At this time, OPA, Allentown, and our state agency partners are in negotiations regarding the draft Plan Implementation Agreement (PIA). It is expected that the Allentown’s Council will formally approve the PIA at their meeting of January 25, 2022. Allentown will be adding the draft PIA to their Council meeting on January 25, 2022 and adopting a resolution stating that they have reviewed the agreement and agree to update the items listed. The draft PIA includes items that OPA and our State agencies believe will achieve consistency with the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan (State Plan), as well as the recently updated Plan Endorsement Guidelines, which address State priorities for environmental justice and climate resiliency, including recent amendments to the New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL).

CHRONOLOGY

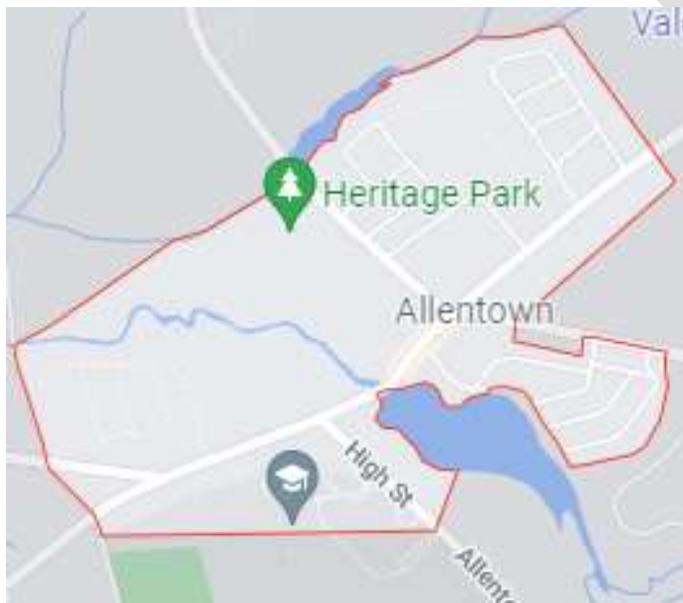
Event(s)	Date	Notes
Water Conservation Ordinance	1975	
Master Plan adopted	10/17/1978	
Village Center Designation	05/15/2002	
Open Space and Recreation Plan	2003	Update under PIA
Natural Resource Inventory updated	2006	Update under PIA
Stormwater Protection Plan and Management Ordinance updated	11/20/2006	Update under PIA
Forest and Tree Protection Ordinance	2017	Update under PIA
Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI)	03/16/2018	
Master Plan updated	06/04/2018	
Land Use Inventory	06/04/2018	
Plan Endorsement Advisory Committee waiver request granted	05/14/2020	
Municipal Self-Assessment	03/18/2021	
Historic Preservation Implementation Ordinance	4/2021	Update under PIA
Opportunity and Constraints Report	10/7/2021	
Consistency Review Report	Ongoing	
Plan Implementation Agreement (PIA)	Ongoing	

PIC Approval	TBD	With Mapping &PIA
SPC Adoption	TBD	

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Borough requested a waiver for Community Visioning on October 26, 2021. In the request Allentown stated that the Borough’s elected and appointed officials place a high value on public information and transparency; the result of which is more engaged residential and business community. Since 2018, Allentown has sought out a great number of public response to many elements related to Plan Endorsement. A list of meetings in which public participation was sought was attached to the waiver request. On November 9, 2021, Executive Director Donna Rendeiro approved the waiver request.

LOCATION & REGIONAL CONTEXT



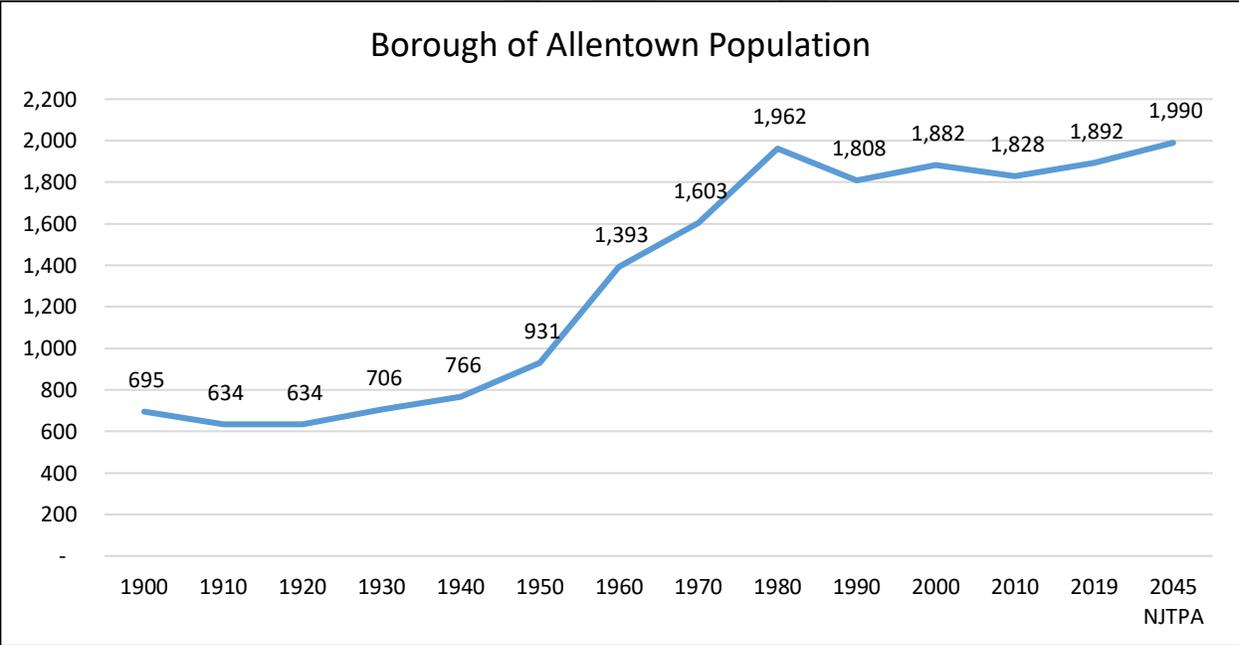
Originally settled in the 17th century, Allentown is a small historic village located on the western border of Monmouth County. The Borough is recognized as one of the largest historic districts in New Jersey. According to Allentown’s Municipal Self-Assessment, the Borough has a land area of 0.6 square mile, a historic mill, and a tree-lined main street. “With 56% of the land use assessed as residential, Colonial and Victorian houses populate the streets of Allentown.”

	Borough of Allentown	Monmouth County
Land Area (sq. mile)	0.62	665.32
Population	1,892	618,795
Households	709	261,579
Average Household Size	2.60	2.75
Average Family Size	3.11	2.66
Population Density (Persons/Sq. Mile)	3,052	930
Housing Units	720	261,579

Home Ownership Rate	80.3%	73.8%
Median Household Income	\$105,938	\$85,242
Per Capita Income	\$41,401	\$43,469
Persons Below Poverty Rate	2.38%	5.9%
Sources: US Census Bureau, NJDOL; Data from Decennial Census and ACS, U.S. Community Survey 2016 unless otherwise noted		

DEMOGRAPHICS AND BOROUGH OF ALLENTOWN’S FUTURE

The population has been steadily growing since the 1920’s. According to Allentown’s Municipal Self-Assessment, following World War II, population growth in Allentown resulted from both high birth rates and in-migration of population. The 1980 census data revealed that Allentown’s population reached a high of 1,962, however it dropped to 1,808 in 1990. The population decreased as a result of a reduction in the birth rate and a modest net out-migration of population. As of 2019, while the population did increase, Allentown’s population has not surpassed its all time high of 1,962 in the 1980’s. However, the NTPA 2045 Population Forecast states that 1,990 is the expected number.

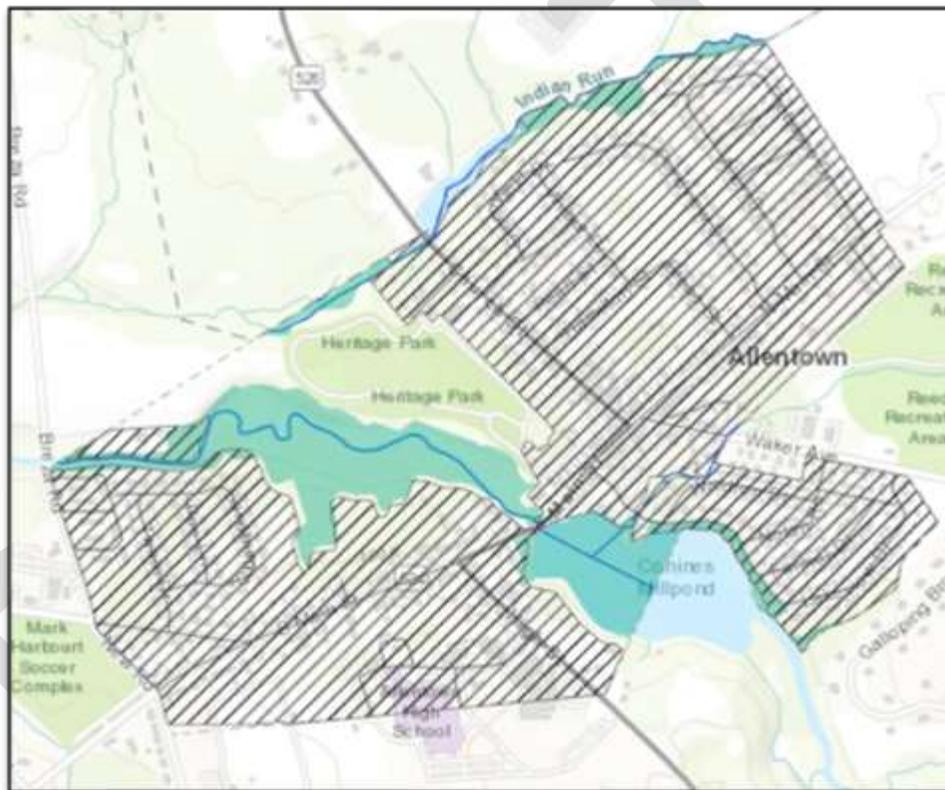


INFRASTRUCTURE

Water

According to Allentown’s 2018 Master Plan, “The Borough of Allentown is served by both public water and sanitary sewer services. The Borough sewerage and water systems are owned and operated by the Borough. The Borough water is obtained from two wells in the Potomac-Raritan – Magothy and Mount Laurel Aquifers.” H2O Services, LLC is municipality’s Water Operator and Lyons Environmental Services, LLC are their Sewer Operator.

Sewer Service Area



Water Quality Management Planning

The Borough has a wastewater management plan, but it is included as a part of the overall Monmouth County Plan. The Wastewater Management Plan (WMP) for Monmouth County was adopted on April 11, 2013. Monmouth County Planning Staff, with the oversight of ARC and NJDEP, is working to produce a new draft Wastewater Management Plan (WMP) for the county. This involves modeling and analysis for capacity of sewer service areas and septic areas in Monmouth County, and could influence revisions to the FWSA map. Planning staff has been in contact with sewerage agencies and municipal representatives for information necessary regarding the development of a new WMP.

TRANSPORTATION

Circulation

The Borough has 6.96 miles of total roadways. County roadways are the primary roadways in the Borough and account for 2.01 total miles (29%) of the total roadway mileage in the Borough. The County roadways include: County Route 524, County Route 526, County Route 539, and County Route 524/539. According to the Borough's 2018 Master Plan, "County Roadways within the Borough are classified as either Urban Major Collectors or Urban Minor Arterials by the New Jersey Department of Transportation Functional Classification Map as revised April 30, 2017." The remaining 4.95 miles of roadway fall under the Borough of Allentown's jurisdictional responsibility.

Truck Traffic Prohibition

According to the Borough's Master Plan, "In November 2016, the Borough Council approved a Truck Prohibition Ordinance, Ordinance 14-2016 adopted on November 11, 2016, which amended Chapter 7-16 of the Borough Code banning all truck traffic (vehicles over 4 tons except those making local deliveries or pickups) on all Borough and County roadways in the Borough. The next step was Monmouth County review of the Ordinance and evaluation of approximately ten factors to allow removal of the County Roadways in the Borough from the National and State Truck Network. Factors include sight distance at intersections, traffic volumes, roadway geometrics, roadside development or environment, accident records, use of the route by other trucks to date, and alternate routings. In October 2017, Monmouth County submitted its recommendation for banning truck traffic on Church Street and Waker Avenue to the New Jersey Department of Transportation." The Borough rejected the recommendation because it would push traffic to one County road. Monmouth County is currently working with Allentown on traffic studies and monitoring from the Southwest into Allentown.

Scenic Roadways

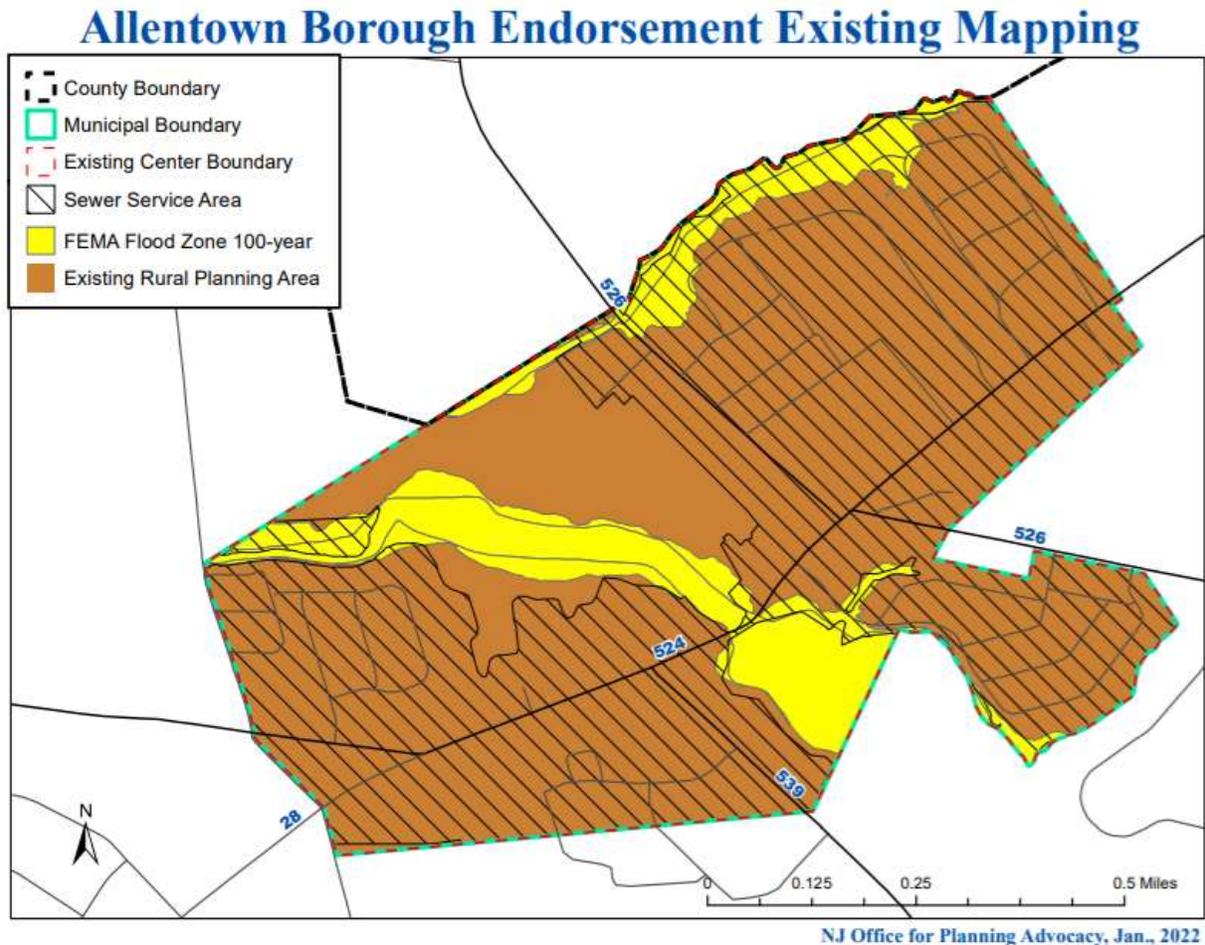
On September 17, 2001 Monmouth County Planning Board adopted the Monmouth County Scenic Roadway Plan (MCSR). According to the Borough's Master Plan, "It identifies County roadways that possess such a high degree of visual quality that driving, biking or walking along these roadways is deemed a pleasurable and enjoyable experience. The Scenic Roadway Plan provides design guidelines to be followed in preserving and enhancing County Scenic Roadways. All of the County roadways within the Borough of Allentown are listed on the Monmouth County Scenic Roadway Plan. This is due to the historic nature of the Borough and the mature trees and natural vistas that are within the Borough."

Public Transportation

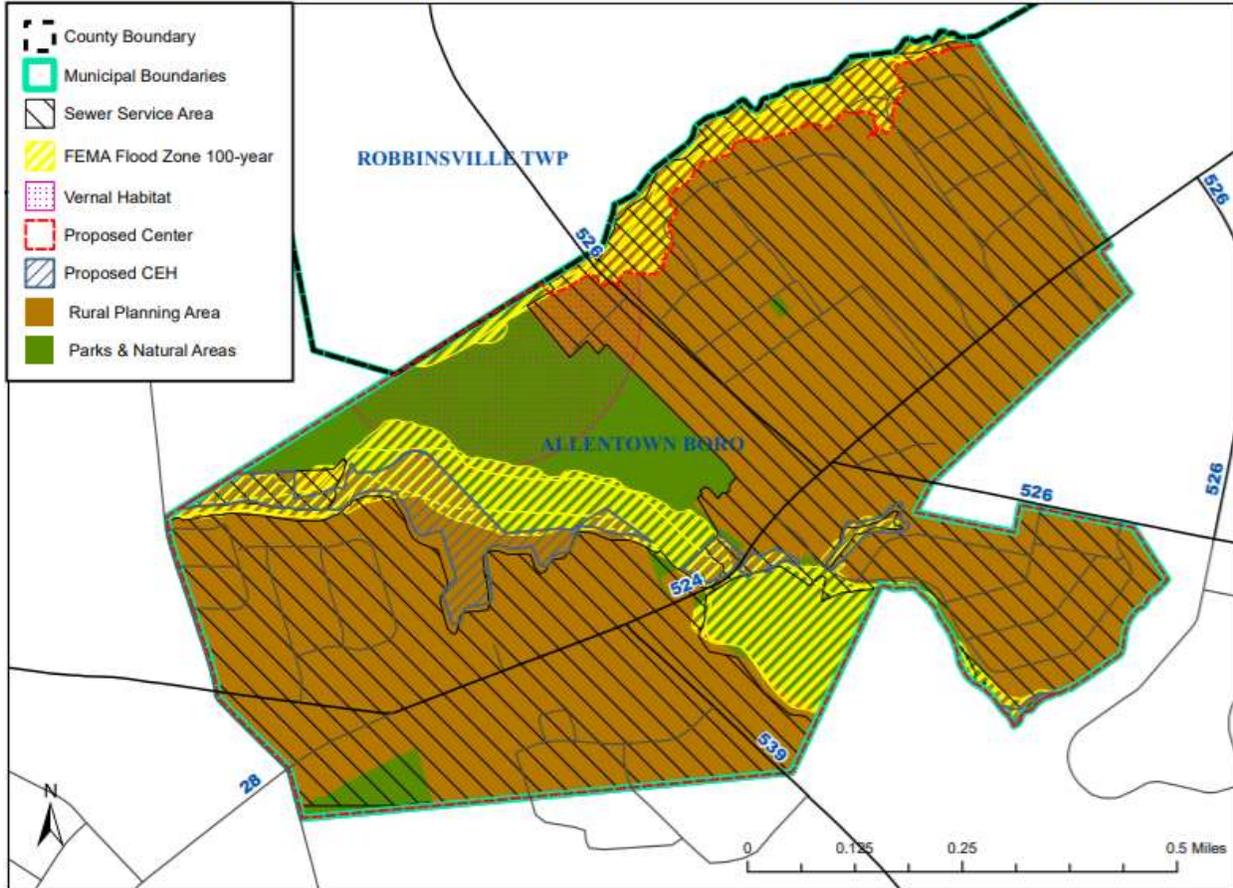
According to Allentown’s Master Plan there is no public transportation available within the Borough. This includes: bus, rail, or park and ride facilities. Residents are dependent on private transportation including personal vehicles, ridesharing, and bicycle and pedestrian routes for local destinations. The Borough is served by private taxi services located out the Borough and ride sourcing services, such as Uber and Lyft.

PROPOSED MAP AMENDMENTS

In 2002 the State Planning Commission designated 396.12 acres of Allentown Borough a Village Center. Due to Executive Order 89 and the history of flooding in portions of the Borough near Indian Lake and Indian Run (a stream located .8 miles from Allentown), the Borough of Allentown agrees to the following proposed map. 66.89 acres of previously classified Rural Planning Area (PA4) is now classified as Parks.



Allentown Borough Endorsement Proposed Mapping



NJ Office for Planning Advocacy, Jan., 2022

Summary of Proposed Map Amendments

Planning Area	Label	Existing Acreage	Proposed Acreage
PA 4	Rural	396.12	324.89
Park	Park	0	66.89

Center Designation	Existing Acreage	Proposed Acreage	Change in Acreage
Village Center	396.12	391.78	- 4.34

STATE PLAN GOALS REVIEW

Goal #1: Revitalize the State's Cities and Towns

- Village Center Designation in the PA-4 Rural Planning Area had the intention to: maintain the Environs as large contiguous areas of farmland and other lands; revitalize cities and towns; accommodate growth in Centers; promote a viable agricultural industry; protect the character of existing stable communities; and confine programmed sewers and public water services to Centers.

Goal #2: Conserve the State's Natural Resources and Systems

- Conservation Plan Element: The policies and strategies of this Conservation Plan seek to limit the impacts of development and redevelopment and retain the natural terrain and features to the greatest extent practicable. This Plan also promotes the restoration of natural systems that have been degraded by past activities.

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

- Allentown Borough has a thriving main street. The main commercial area is located generally along Main Street between Conines Millpond and Broad Street and accounts for 17.7 acres of 4.5% of the land total.
- Fair Share Housing – Rehabilitation (Present Need) Component
 - According to the Borough's Master plan, the Borough plans to seek rehabilitation (either CDBG or HOME) funds from Monmouth County on an annual basis until the number of units required have been rehabilitated. The Borough will also enter into an agreement with Monmouth County through its Community Development Program to manage the rehabilitation component.

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

- Conservation Plan Element: The policies and strategies of this Conservation Plan seek to limit the impacts of development and redevelopment and retain the natural terrain and features to the greatest extent practicable. This Plan also promotes the restoration of natural systems that have been degraded by past activities.

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

- According to the Borough Master Plan, “Public property, park and open space and vacant land account for 80.1 acres within the Borough. Land uses within this category include the following subcategories:
 - Public Municipal Building – Located at 8 North Main Street (Block 7, Lot 39) includes the Borough administrative facilities, council room and police headquarters.
 - Municipal Annex Building – Located at 14 Church Street (Block 17, Lot 46). The municipal annex building is presently being utilized by the Department of Public Works.
 - Sewer Plant – The sewer plant is located on a 5 acre parcel in the northwest corner of the Borough (Block 17, Lot 1.01). Access is from Breza Road through the Township of Upper Freehold. II-7
 - Water Pump Station and Tower properties – A water pump station is located on Block 17, Lot 98 on Church Street along the border of Robbinsville Township and opposite Indian Run Lake (aka Patterson Pond). The Allentown Water Tower is located just south of the Allentown High School property south of High Street.”
- There are 2 public school properties located in Allentown: Allentown High School and Newell Elementary School.

Goal #6: Provide Adequate Housing at a Reasonable Cost

- Housing Plan Element and Fair Share Plan: According to Allentown’s Master Plan “The approximate number of low- and moderate-income units within the Borough can be estimated based on the 2015 American Community Survey and 2015 COAH income limits for low- and moderate-income persons.
 - The approximate number of housing units that are affordable to two-person low- and moderate-income households for rental and for sale units are as follows based on 2015 COAH income limits and 2015 Census data:
 - Low-income rental units: approximately 26 units of 138 units paying rent (18.8 percent of rental units)
 - Moderate income rental units: approximately 99 units of 138 units paying rent (72 percent of rental units)
 - Low income for-sale units: approximately 9 units out of 565 total owner-occupied housing units (1.6 percent of for-sale units) IX-16
 - Moderate income for sale units: approximately 30 units out of 565 owner occupied units (5.3 percent of for-sale units)”

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

- Open Space and Recreation Plan was adopted in 2003. The general goals of this plan include the acquisition of undeveloped land and the preservation of existing farmland in order to: protect the Allentown Historic Greenbelt, address the diverse interests for environmental protection, historic preservation and active recreational development expressed by Borough residents and officials.
- Historic Preservation Element was adopted in 1989 and 2006. The purpose of this Plan Element is to provide an understanding of the Allentown Historic District, and the importance of protecting its setting, the vistas, contributing resources and special overall character.

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

- Keeping up to date on Master Plan, including affordable housing element. Working with Monmouth County on County Wastewater Quality Management Plan.

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STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Based on the work the Borough of Allentown has supplied, actions taken and are committed to complete, it is my recommendation that the State Planning Commission adopt the Resolution for Plan Endorsement.

PLANNING IMPLEMENTATION AGENDA

See the attached PIA.

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