

Plan Endorsement Recommendation Report for Township of Willingboro



**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, Township of Willingboro, Burlington County Bridge Commission, and members of the public. OPA will post this report and other materials related to Township of Willingboro's 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 Township of Willingboro can be found here:

<https://nj.gov/state/planning/plan-endorsement.shtml>

Master Plan, Reexamination Report, Zoning and Land Use Maps, etc.

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INTRODUCTION

The Township of Willingboro (hereafter Willingboro or Township) in Burlington County received Towns Center designation by the State Planning Commission (SPC) on April 28, 1999. This designation was set to expire on June 30, 2020; however, the expiration has been extended through various extension approvals by the legislation, executive orders and/or State Planning Commission resolutions. According to the Regional Municipal Self-Assessment Report (MSA), prepared on behalf of the Burlington County Board County Commissions by the Burlington County Bridge Commission, Department of Economic Development and Regional Planning, the Township is seeking Plan Endorsement to align its local planning goals and objectives with the State Plan and to make mapping changes consistent with resiliency and sustainable development practices and New Jersey State Planning Commission policies. The MSA report was written for the U.S. Route 130/Delaware River Corridor Regional Plan Endorsement, which includes the following 12 municipalities: Township of Florence, City of Burlington, Township of Burlington, City of Beverly, Township of Edgewater Park, Township of Delanco, Township of Willingboro, Township of Cinnaminson, Township of Delran, Borough of Palmyra, Borough of Riverton, and Township of Riverside.

This report contains findings and conclusions concerning consistency of the Township'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 Township of Willingboro initiated the Plan Endorsement process by attending a pre-petition meeting with OPA and our partner State agencies on March 10, 2020. The Township will be utilizing their Economic Development Committee as their Plan Endorsement Advisory Committee. The MSA was authorized by the Township of Willingboro on September 22, 2021, via resolution 2021-156. OPA and our State agency partners responded with an Opportunity and Constraints Report on September 7, 2022. As part of the Plan Endorsement process, the Township completed their Community Visioning session. The Township held their local visioning session on March 30, 2022, and participated in the regional visioning session on July 27, 2022, along with the Township of Florence, City of Burlington, Township of Burlington, and Township of Edgewater Park. Currently, OPA, Willingboro, and our state agency partners are in negotiations regarding the draft Plan Implementation Agreement (PIA). It is expected that Willingboro's Governing Body will formally approve the PIA at their December 2022, meeting. This endorsement will be conditional on the approval and adoption of the PIA. The adoption of the PIA is not expected to be delayed. 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).

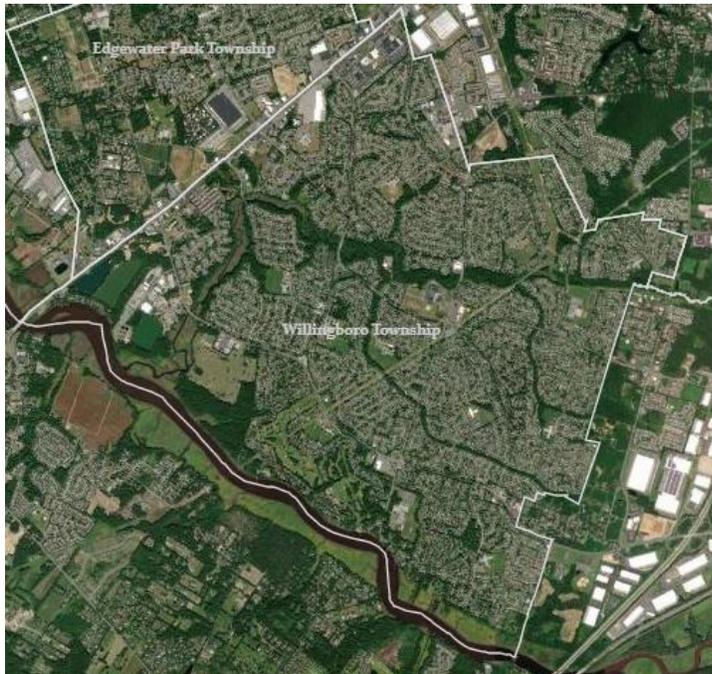
CHRONOLOGY

Event(s)	Date	Notes
Master Plan	4/14/1997	
Town Center Designation	4/28/1999	
Burlington County Wastewater Management Plan	2017	With Build-out analysis
Flood Damage Prevention	11/21/2017	
Master Plan Reexamination	3/29/2018	
Burlington County Hazard Mitigation Plan	2019	
Pre-petition Meeting	3/10/2020	
Municipal Self-Assessment	09/22/2021	
Stormwater Control Ordinance	3/2/2021	
Opportunity and Constraints Report	9/7/2022	
Plan & Implementation Agreement	Ongoing	
PIC Approval	TBD	With mapping & PIA
SPC Adoption	TBD	

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

As part of the Plan Endorsement process, the Township completed their Community Visioning session. The Township held their local visioning session on March 30, 2022, and participated in the regional visioning session on July 27, 2022, along with the Township of Florence, City of Burlington, Township of Burlington, and Township of Edgewater Park.

LOCATION & REGIONAL CONTEXT



The Route 130/Delaware River or River Route Corridor lies in the western portion of Burlington County. The Corridor is located along U.S. Route 130 and the Delaware River and extends approximately 16 miles from Cinnaminson Township in the south to Florence Township in the north. The combined area of the 12 municipalities is approximately 64 square miles. It is strategically located 20 minutes from Center City Philadelphia and an hour and a half from Midtown Manhattan. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the population of the Corridor was 142,714 in 2010. The Corridor contains approximately 32% of the population of Burlington County yet accounts for less than 8% of the total land area.

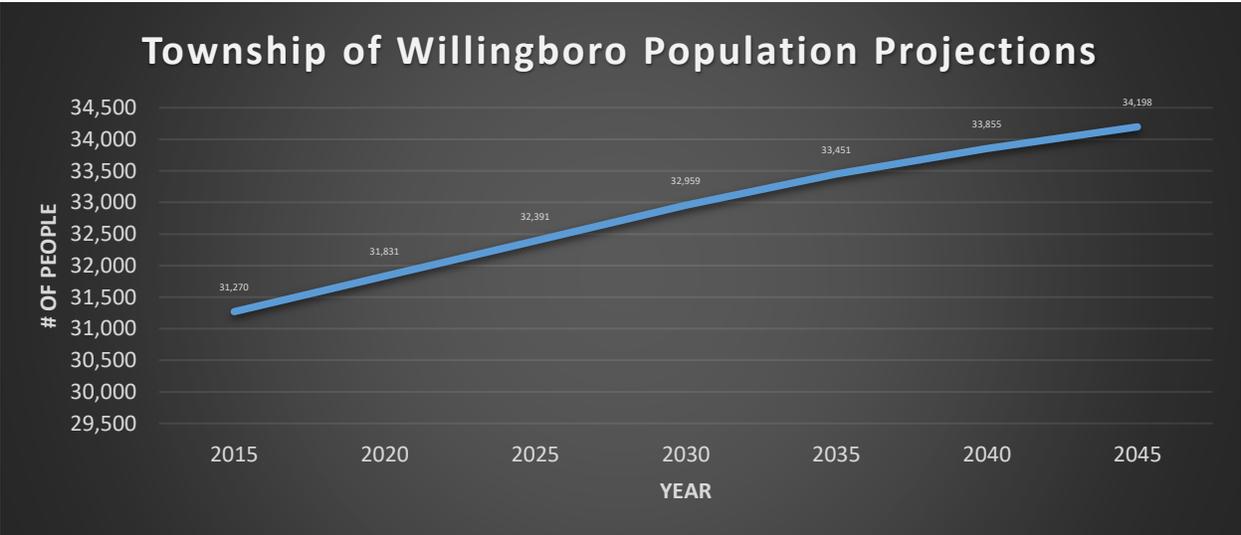
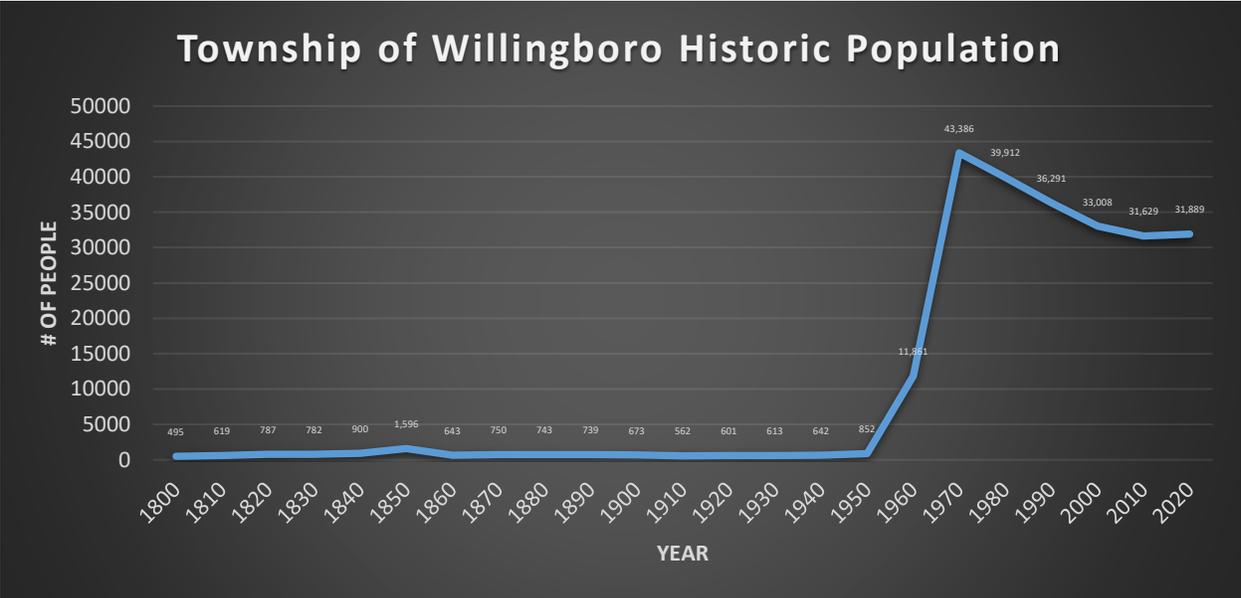
Township of Willingboro is 8.14 square miles, including 7.73 square miles of land and .41 square miles of water. The Township borders the Burlington County municipalities of Burlington Township, Delanco Township, Delran Township, Edgewater Park Township, Moorestown Township, Mount Laurel Township, and Westampton Township. Willingboro is largely built-out and with few vacant lands available for development. New development will be redevelopment. Willingboro has easy access to I-295, the New Jersey Turnpike and other major state highways.

	Township of Willingboro	Burlington County
Land Area (sq. mile)	8.14	827
Population	31,822	446,301
Households	10,789	168,195
Average Household Size	2.95	2.58
Population Density (Persons/Sq. Mile)	3,916	539.6
Housing Units	11,442	179,955
Home Ownership Rate	77.7%	75.1%
Median Household Income	\$79,684	\$90,329
Per Capita Income	\$32,085	\$44,735
Persons Below Poverty Rate	9.2%	6.0%

Sources: US Census Bureau

DEMOGRAPHICS AND TOWNSHIP OF WILLINGBORO'S FUTURE

According to the Township of Willingboro's Municipal Questionnaire, the Township's population peak was in 1970 with just over 43,000. In 2010, the Township had a population of 31,629, representing a 9% decline from 2000 and a 26% decline from 1970. The Municipal Self-Assessment lists that by the year 2045, Township of Willingboro will have a population of 34,198 people. Willingboro Township is the most populated municipality in the Corridor and is expected to experience the most growth in absolute change between 2015 and 2045. This may be due to the recent trend of condominium construction along U.S. Route 130.



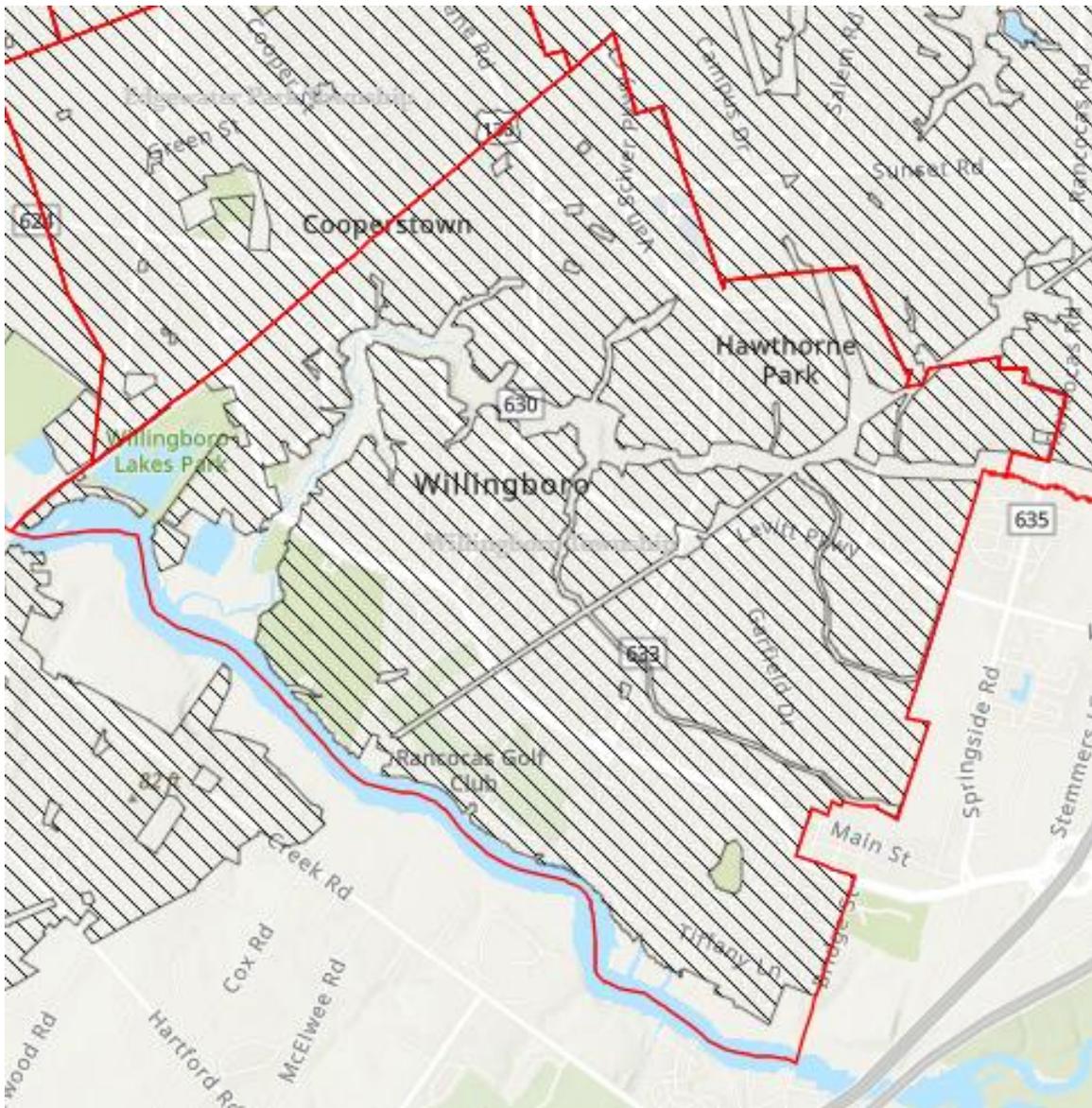
INFRASTRUCTURE

Water

The Township is served by Willingboro Municipal Utilities Authority (WMUA). The mission of the MUA states, "Our mission is to produce and distribute the highest quality drinking water and to collect and treat the wastewater created by Willingboro's citizens and return it safely to the environment at the lowest possible cost. Willingboro MUA provides potable water and sanitary sewer services to the Township of Willingboro and Westampton."

Sewer Service Area

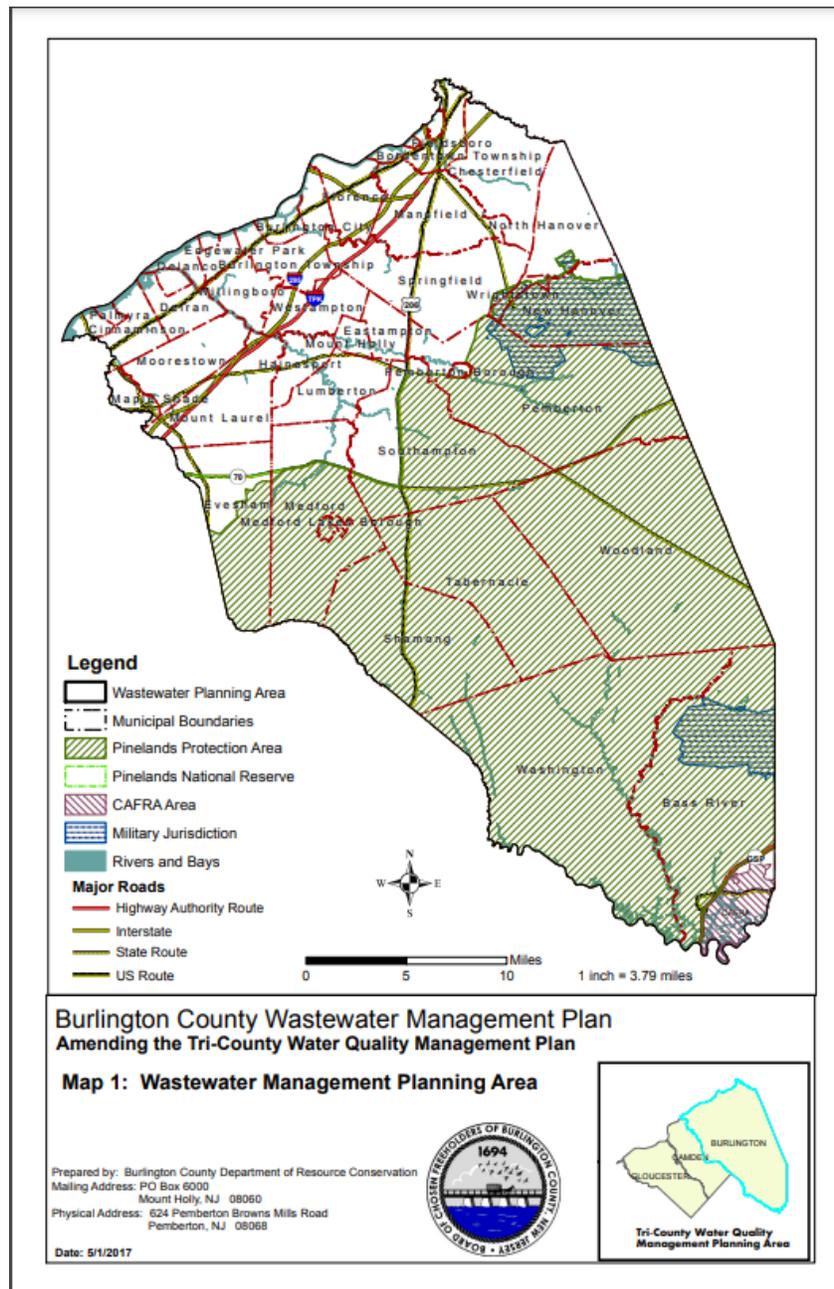
There are ten wastewater treatment plants in Corridor, which are operated by either the local municipality or an independent utility authority. As stated above, WMUA provides sanitary sewer services to the Township. Delanco is served by Beverly Sewerage Authority and the Willingboro Municipal Utilities Authority. Edgewater Park is also served by the Willingboro Municipal Utilities Authority.



Water Quality Management Planning

On May 24, 2017 by Resolution No. 2017-00240, the Freeholders authorized submission of the Burlington County Wastewater Management Plan to DEP for adoption into the Tri-County Water Quality Management Plan. The Township of Willingboro is included as part of the overall Burlington County Wastewater Management Plan

On July 11, 2012 by Resolution No. 2012-00369, the Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholders approved a Future Wastewater Service Area map as the first phase of development of the county-wide wastewater management. Following public review and comment, DEP adopted the Future Wastewater Service Area map as an amendment to the Tri-County Water Quality Management Plan on May 7, 2013.



TRANSPORTATION

Circulation

As of May 2010, the Township had a total of 122.11 miles of roadways, of which 109.02 miles were maintained by the municipality, 11.53 miles by Burlington County and 1.56 miles by NJDOT. U.S. Route 30 is the main highway serving Willingboro.

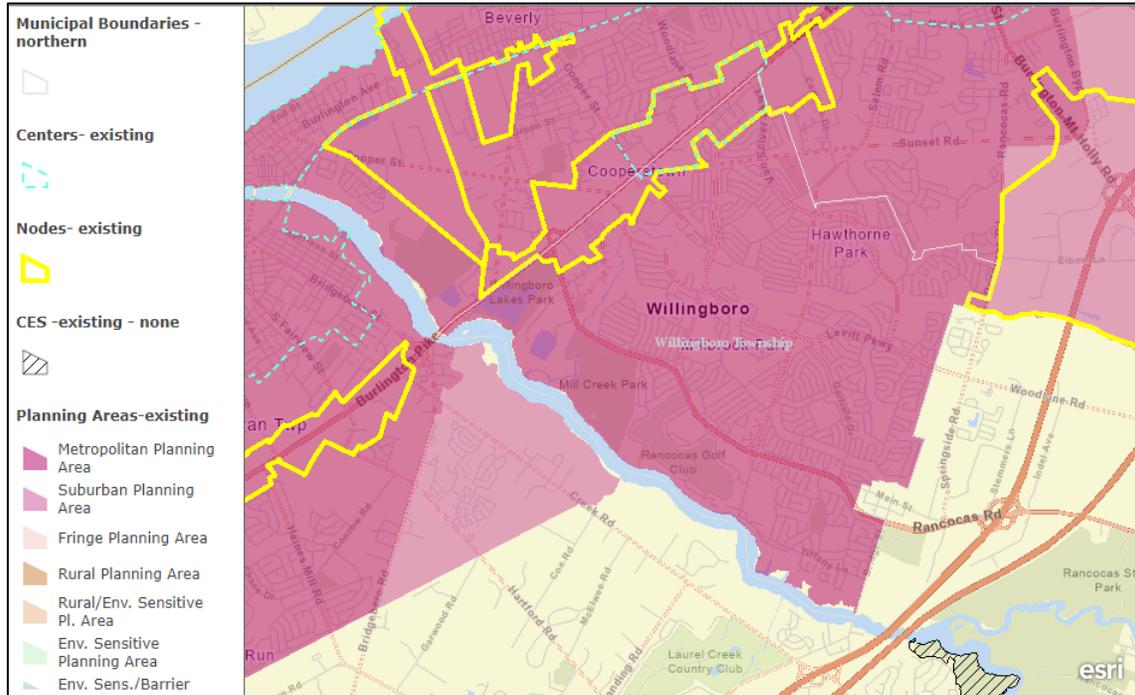
Public Transportation

Willingboro Township's Senior Services Transportation Department will transport Willingboro's senior citizens door-to-door for a very affordable fee. Willingboro has several NJ Transit bus stops in convenient locations. The #409 bus provides regular transport to and from Willingboro to various stops between Philadelphia and Trenton. It is very easy to travel to Newark International Airport, or to catch a transfer into New York. Residents can catch a bus or train and go to the Aquarium in Camden or enjoy the day in Philadelphia. The River Line stops at the PATCO Speedline's Broadway Station (Walter Rand Transportation Center) and the NJ Transit Atlantic City Line's Pennsauken Transit Center, allowing passengers to transfer to and from these connections to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Burlington County's Burlink Bus Services have operated along four different routes for more than 15 years, in their mission to best serve the transportation needs of County residents. Academy Bus Company is one of the largest providers of commuter bus service from New Jersey, and Willingboro recognize the enormous value of the transition period from home to work, and work to home. They are committed to providing an environment where our commuters can relax and be prepared for both the upcoming day's events, as well as unwinding for evenings at home.

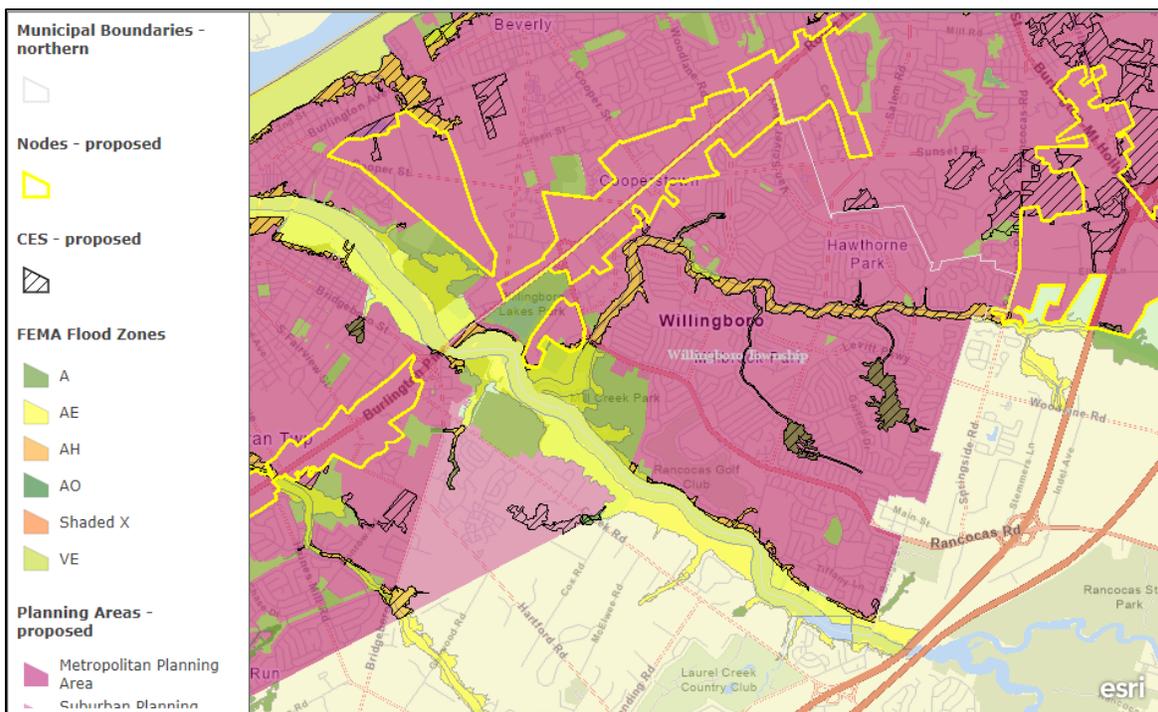
PROPOSED MAP AMENDMENTS

In 1999, the State Planning Commission designated 133.48 acres of Willingboro a Town Center. This Town Center designation overlapped with the Route 130 Commercial Node.

Township of Willingboro Plan Endorsement Existing Mapping



Township of Willingboro Plan Endorsement Proposed Mapping



Summary of Proposed Map Amendments

Planning Area	Label	Existing Acreage	Proposed Acreage
PA 1	Metropolitan	5,013.01	4,520.87
PA 5	Environmentally Sensitive	0	41.89
Open Space	Open Space	0	439.75
CES	Critical Environmental Site	0	341.0

Center Designation	Existing Acreage	Proposed Acreage	Change in Acreage
Town Center	133.48	0	-133.48
Commercial Node	265.83	262.4	-3.43
Industrial Node	0	75.42	75.42

STATE PLAN GOALS AND REVIEW

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

- Town Center Designation in the PA-1 Metropolitan Planning Area has the intention to provide for much of the State's future redevelopment, revitalize cities and towns, promote growth in compact forms, stabilize older suburbs, redesign areas of sprawl, and protect the character of existing stable communities.
- The core concepts contained in the Township's Master Plan, Master Plan Re-examination Report, vision statements and various planning studies all revolve around the revitalization and sustainability of the Willingboro Township and our residents.

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

- Environmental Commission: The ordinance establishing a conservation commission in Willingboro Township was passed in 1971 and is codified as municipal ordinance #2-21. However, in 1992 by Ordinance 1992-2, the Township adopted the Environmental Commission. Environmental commissions work on many issues, including open space preservation, smart growth, wetlands and water resource protection, green infrastructure, recycling and litter, environmental cleanups, wildlife habitat, energy efficiency and conservation and transportation.
- Green Buildings and Environmental Sustainability Element: In 2011, the Township authorized Remington & Vernick Engineers to prepare this element. Their Green Building and Environmental Sustainability Element provides for, encourages, and promotes the efficient use of natural resources and the installation and usage of renewable energy systems. This element also considers the impacts of buildings on the environment.

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

- On June 14, 2011, the Township adopted by Ordinance 2011-4 their Economic Development Committee whose purpose is to act as an advisory board to the Township Council on matters of business and development within the Township. The members of the Willingboro Economic Development Committee are responsible to recommend to Council effective strategies that will aid in the development of and implementation of an overall Township economic development plan and shall perform related duties as required.

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

- Environmental Commission: The ordinance establishing a conservation commission in Willingboro Township was passed in 1971 and is codified as municipal ordinance #2-21. However, in 1992 by Ordinance 1992-2, the Township adopted the Environmental Commission. Environmental commissions work on many issues, including open space preservation, smart growth, wetlands and water resource protection, green infrastructure, recycling and litter, environmental cleanups, wildlife habitat, energy efficiency and conservation and transportation.
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resources and the installation and usage of renewable energy systems. This element also considers the impacts of buildings on the environment.

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

- The Township has upgraded The Kennedy Center, DPW Building and municipal building with energy efficient equipment and materials, as well as, installing solar panels on each building. The Township also continues to engage in share services contracts.
- 8 public schools serving students from pre-kindergarten – 12th grade
- Willingboro Township Municipal Complex – located 1 Rev Dr. M L King Jr. Drive,
- Willingboro Public Library – located 220 Willingboro Way

Goal #6: Provide Adequate Housing at a Reasonable Cost

- The Township of Willingboro Planning Board adopted a Housing Element and Fair Share Plan pursuant to the Municipal Land Use Law. The Fair Share Plan was subsequently endorsed by the governing body. The Fair Share Plan describes how the Township of Willingboro shall address its fair share of low- and moderate-income housing as documented in the Fair Share Plan itself, the settlement agreement entered into between the Township and Fair Share Housing Center ("FSHC") on November 9, 2016 (hereinafter "FSHC Settlement Agreement"), and the Court order approving same, which was entered by the Court on June 21, 2017.
- According to New Jersey Fair Share Housing Obligation for 1999-2025 (Third Round) Under Mount Laurel IV:
 - Present Need, 2015 – 325 units
 - Prior Round Obligation, 1987-1999 – 268 units
 - Cumulative Prospective Need, 1999-2025 – 0 units
- Willingboro Township has met its affordable housing obligation.

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

- Willingboro benefitted from the 2020 reopening of Willingboro Lakes Park.
 - Formerly Olympia Lakes, this 105-acre park is now re-opened to the public for passive recreation as of October 22, 2020.
 - This park underwent improvements that include a paved parking lot, picnic tables with grills and 1 small picnic shelter, 3 fishing and kayak piers, children's play area, boulder amphitheater, restrooms and improved trails.
 - Featuring: Fishing, Hiking Trails, Playground, Picnic Areas, Picnic Shelter, and Kayak Launch.
- Willingboro is working to improve our bike trails. And they continue to improve and promote our parks and lakes.

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

- Keeping up to date on Master Plan
- Completing the items agreed upon in the Planning & Implementation Agreement
- Working with State and County to be consistent with their planning.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

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

PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATION AGREEMENT

See attached PIA