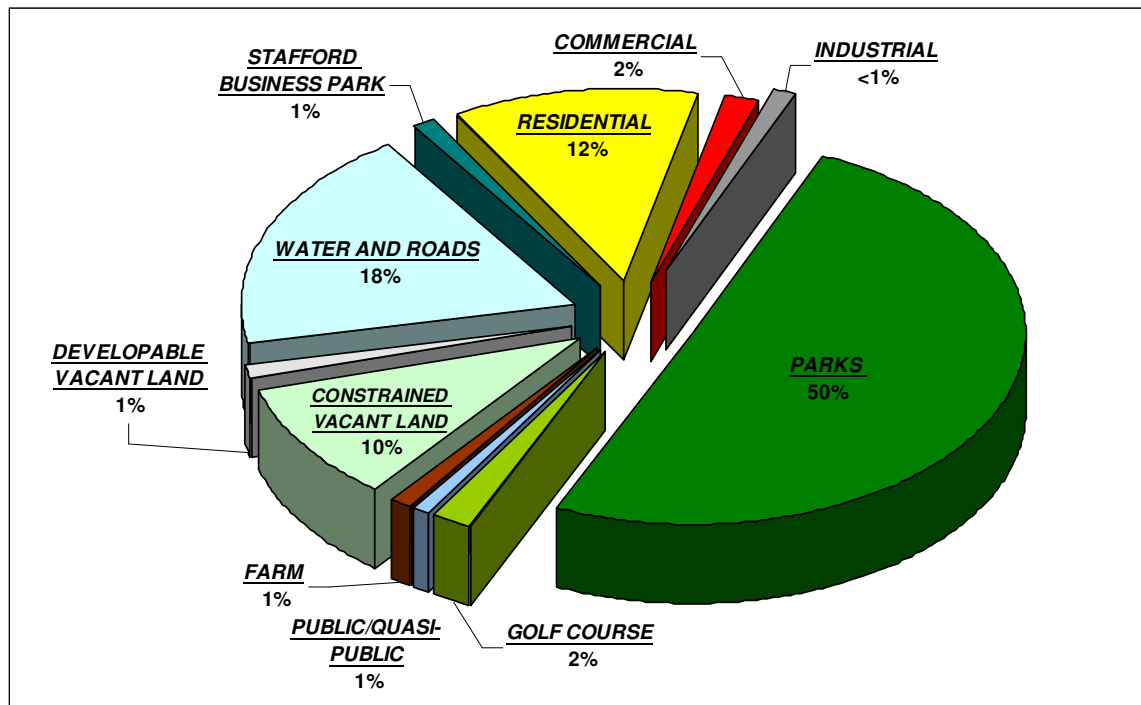


## INTRODUCTION

The last comprehensive revision of the Township's Master Plan occurred in 1994. This Land Use Element describes the Township's existing development pattern and changes that have occurred since the prior Master Plan, the current redevelopment initiative underway, and the Township's zoning districts. The Element also provides recommendations to modify existing land use policy and zoning incorporated into the Land Use Plan discussion.

### Existing Development Pattern

A land use analysis of Stafford was conducted using existing mapping and tax records. As can be seen on the attached Existing Land Use Map (Map III-1), residential uses comprises approximately 12% of the Township's total land mass and is concentrated into scattered residential developments such as the areas west of the Garden State Parkway and north of Route 72 (Ocean Acres/Atlantic Hills/Fawn Lakes); south of Route 72, east of Route 9 (Beach Haven West/Village Harbor); the older "Manahawkin" and Bay Avenue sections of the Township, and newer development on Oak Avenue and newer subdivisions in the northern section of the Township, west of Route 9. Commercial development is generally found within the neighborhood and highway commercial corridors, concentrated along Bay Avenue, and along Routes 72 and 9. Since the last Master Plan, newer development along Route 72 includes the Market Place at Stafford, BJ's, Lowes and a new Holiday Inn. The industrial land is less 1% of the Township's land, and is comprised of the NJ Natural Gas facility, Bell Atlantic and NJDOT storage. Public and semi-public uses, including the schools, churches and cemeteries, comprise 1% of the Township's land. Today- 17,700 acres, or 50% of the town is under municipal, county, state and federal jurisdiction, including Edwin Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge, State Stafford Forge Wildlife Management Area, and the Pinelands state lands. At the time of the last master plan, roughly 1/3 of the town was owned by state or federal government.



Stafford is primarily built-out in nature, with approximately 11% of the Township's land as vacant. However, it should be noted that a great deal of the vacant land is undevelopable due to various environmental constraints. As a result, the Township has been committed to focus its growth within the Regional Center and Pinelands Regional Growth areas and has been actively acquiring and preserving open space through the assistance of the County, State, Federal agencies and non-profit groups.

Existing Land Use- 2007	%	Acreage
Residential	12	4,166
Commercial	2	631
Industrial	<1	63
Parks	50	17,698
Golf Course	2	559
Public/Quasi-Public	1	688
Farm	1	389
Constrained Vacant Land	10	3,630
Developable Vacant Land	1	211
Water and Roads	19	6678
Stafford Business Park	1	371
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>35,084</b>

Since the last Master Plan, the Township has undergone a number of development activities in proximity to the Route 72 corridor, including:

- BJ's, off Doc Cramer Boulevard
- Landings and Landings South at Manahawkin townhouse development
- New Primary Learning Center and St. Mary's Church
- Lowes, off Captain Randolph Boulevard
- Kohls & Bed, Bath and Beyond
- Holiday Inn
- Stafford Business Park

Additional development activities include: the Paramount Homes development, which has 120 homes and a clubhouse in Stafford, and approximately 500 homes in Barnegat; and the planned Eagles Lake Golf Course, which is located in both Stafford and Eagleswood.

## Redevelopment Initiatives

### **Stafford Business Park**

Stafford Business Park is located at the interchange of Route 72 and the Garden State Parkway and is bordered by those two highways to the north and east respectively and by 17,000 acres of preserved state forest to the south and west. It is within the Regional Growth Area of the New Jersey Pinelands Region. The New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP), adopted by the New Jersey State Planning Commission in 2001 also recognizes Stafford Park as a regional growth area on the State Plan Policy Map, in accordance with the Memorandum of Agreement between the Pinelands Commission and the State Planning Commission.

In August 2005, the Stafford Municipal Council adopted a resolution directing the Planning Board to conduct a preliminary investigation into whether the Stafford Business Park site meets the statutory criteria for designating it as an "area in need of redevelopment" as defined in the New Jersey Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, N.J.S.A. 40A: 12A-1 et seq.

In September of 2005, the Planning Board recommended to the governing body at a public hearing that the area meets the redevelopment criteria. The governing body adopted a resolution designating all of the proposed area a redevelopment area on October 4, 2005. On October 5, the Redevelopment Plan was introduced to the Planning Board at a Public Hearing. The report was amended to reflect the comments provided by the Planning Board, and

subsequent amendments in the course of the development process. On November 15, 2005, the Township adopted the Redevelopment Plan for the Stafford Business Park and amended its Zoning Map to reflect the Redevelopment Area.

In July of 2006, the Pinelands Commission approved a Memorandum of Agreement, between itself, the Township and Ocean County, that enabled the Township to proceed with a plan to redevelop the Stafford Business Park. In October 2006, the Township adopted an ordinance indicating that all development in the Redevelopment Area is consistent with the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan, and on December 8, 2006, the Pinelands Commission passed a resolution indicating the same.



The redevelopment plan proposes a mixed used development of approximately 370 acres in size that will include both market rate and affordable housing, retail, entertainment, and office, which can function as a self-sufficient economic unit and that will provide a mix of employment opportunities. The project's visual character will respect a traditional architectural vocabulary drawn from nearby seashore communities.

This "traditional neighborhood development" will include 565 age-restricted residential units, 112 affordable housing units, and 650,000 square feet of retail and office space. Included in the 650,000 square feet is a "Main Street" consisting of 90,000 square feet of "lifestyle" retail directly linked to the residential components. Main Street will be developed at a pedestrian friendly scale and form, to encourage pedestrian travel between the residential and retail areas. The residential neighborhood contains a boulevard and pedestrian paths connected to Main Street and an adjacent clubhouse facility. Residential streets will have few driveways due to their rear alley design with garages. This concept promotes a richer travel experience for pedestrians while reducing the "cluttered" look of cars in the front.

Internal features will include wide travel lanes, sidewalks, depressed curbs, crosswalks, intersections marked by multi-colored pavers, intersection and street lighting, and signage. The development has several uses each linked by tree-lined

boulevards for vehicular access and sidewalks along these boulevards. There are proposed road surface changes to identify different functions within the community. These nodes will also be connected by pedestrian paths and reinforced with site amenities and signage. The project will also include a bus stop on boulevard streets.



The project is consistent with the County and Township Master Plans as well as the Redevelopment Study and Plan adopted by the Township. It has received General Development Plan Approval by the Stafford Planning Board and site remediation work has begun. Development Applications are expected to be submitted to the Planning Board during 2007. In addition, the project's affordable housing component is a key element of Stafford's Third Round COAH Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, which is expected to be certified by COAH in 2007.

## Zoning

As shown on the Township's Zoning Map, there are over 30 zoning districts within Stafford:

- Rural Residential
  - (RA, RA-3)
- Residential
  - (R-2, R-3, R-4, R-90, RR-1, RR-2A, RR-2, R-75)
- Affordable Housing
  - (ARMFAH, MRAH-10, MFAH-12, MHAH)
- Senior Housing
  - (ARMFAH, R-3/PRC)
- Commercial
  - (MC, HC, NC, HMC, NMC, RMC, LB, RB, CC)
- Business Park
  - (BP, BRO)
- Recreation-Preservation
  - (ROS, P, C, WPO)
- Special Zoning Districts
  - (W, ML, ML-SCH, ML-P, ML-OFF, CO, C-P, S CM, RGL-SCH, PS/C)
- Pinelands Districts
  - (PV, FA, PA)

Each of these categories has been described in further detail.

### **Residential**

There are ten residential zoning districts, ranging from the lower density, single-family RA-3 and RA-1 districts to the higher density, RR-1, RR-2 and R-90 districts. The purpose of residential categories is to guide residential

development to the appropriate location, and at the appropriate density. Permitted uses and minimum lot sizes within in these zones include:

<b>Permitted Uses</b>	<b>RA</b>	<b>RA-3</b>	<b>R-2</b>	<b>R-3</b>	<b>R-4</b>	<b>R-90</b>	<b>RR-1</b>	<b>RR-2A</b>	<b>RR-2</b>	<b>R-75</b>	<b>R-3/ PRC</b>
Single-family detached	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Minimum Lot Size	43,560	130,680	20,000	15,000	10,000	9,000	7,500	6,000	4,000	7,500	15,000

Source: Stafford Township Zoning, Chapter 211, Article I. March 2007.

There are four affordable housing zoning districts within Stafford, as listed below. Permitted uses within in these zones include:

<b>Permitted Uses</b>	<b>ARMFAH</b>	<b>MFAH-10</b>	<b>MFAH-12</b>	<b>MH AH</b>
Multifamily dwellings	X <sup>1</sup>	X	X	
Mobile Home Parks				X

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<sup>1</sup> Limited to age-restricted units for residents who are persons 55 years of age or older.

The following table outlines conditional uses allowed within the residential districts:

Conditional Uses	RA	RA-3	R-2	R-3	R-4	R-90	RR-1	RR-2A	RR-2	R-75	R-3/ PRC
Integrated Commercial Development <sup>2</sup>	X									X	X
Churches	X									X	
Bed and Breakfasts	X <sup>3</sup>										
Planned Retirement Communities					X						X
Planned Mobile Homes											X

Specific recommendations to amend the Zoning Chapter have been provided at the end of this Element.

### **Infill Design Standards**

Infill development is the process of developing vacant or underutilized parcels within existing areas that are already largely developed. Given the Township's built out nature, this type of development occurs on a regular basis, but not necessarily in a manner consistent with the fabric and character of the existing neighborhoods or relative to the historic nature of the building. In order to ensure uniformity across the board, the Township should consider adopting infill residential design standards which would apply to each of the Residential Districts, as well as historic homes within proximity to the downtown and along Bay Avenue.

At a minimum, the standards should reflect setbacks, building massing, architectural features, open space and landscaping. Building lines and façade treatment should respect the existing development patterns; prevailing setbacks should be used as a guide for infill development. The existing bulk standards should be reviewed to ensure they create the appropriate building envelope, some open space, and on-site parking. Development on undersized or non-conforming lots should be discouraged.

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<sup>2</sup> Integrated Commercial Development is defined as a development of a commercial or business nature, comprised of single or multiple uses.

<sup>3</sup> Fronting Bay Avenue and Route 9.

In addition, the design standards should include architectural guidelines that will serve as a guide to all residential rehabilitation and new construction. For example, rehabilitation should preserve any existing features, such as cornices, windowsills, transoms, and other traditional façade components reflective in the existing neighborhood development.

### **Impervious Coverage**

The governing body should consider creating a maximum total impervious coverage for each of the residential zoning district, which would limit the size of building footprints, site improvements, driveways and parking/paved areas so that landscaping and stormwater infiltration can be provided on-site.

### **Commercial**

There are 10 commercial zoning districts in the Township: MC Marine Commercial, HC Highway Commercial, NC Neighborhood Commercial, HMC Highway Medical Commercial, NMC Neighborhood Medical Commercial, RMC Recreation Marine Commercial, LB Local Business, RB Rural Business, CC Community Commercial and MU Mixed Use. Permitted uses in these zones include:

Permitted Uses	MC	NC	HMC	NMC	RMC	LB	RB	CC	MU
Detached SF	X	X			X	X	X		X
Marinas, Boat Repair, Outdoor Boat Storage	X				X	X			X
Retail	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Personal Service							X	X	
Aquaculture					X				
Restaurants		X	X	X		X			X
Hotels/Motels									
Child-care centers		X	X	X		X	X		X
Family Day-care			X	X	X	X			X
Community Residences					X	X	X		X
Bed and Breakfasts						X			X
Combined residential/commercial 4						X			X
Inns									
Boatels									
Professional Offices		X				X	X		X
Veterinaries		X				X	X		X
Banks		X	X	X		X	X		X

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4 Combined residential and commercial uses in one structure or on one lot, provided that the minimum floor area for the residential unit meets the requirements of this chapter, and further provided that only one residential unit shall be permitted in a building which has a square footage of up to 5,000 square feet. In regard to any building which has square footage in excess of 5,000 square feet, no residential unit shall be permitted.

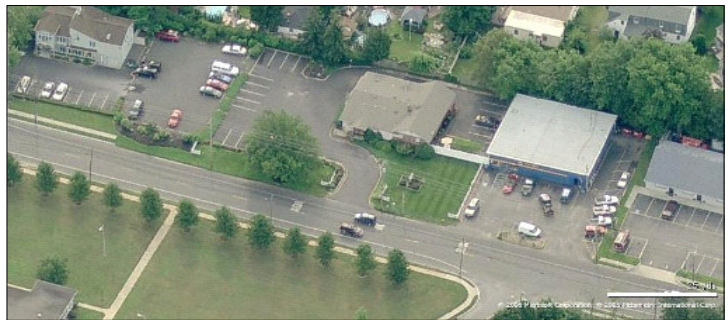
Churches and other places of worship		X				X	X		X
Private recreational buildings		X				X	X		X
Funeral Homes		X					X		
Hospitals			X	X					
Doctors office and associated uses			X	X					
Long-term care facilities, assisted living,			X	X		X	X		X
Motor Hotels with amenities			X						
Schools and Institutions of Higher Learning			X	X		X			X
Municipal Parks				X					
Contractors, Lumber Yards and self storage						X			
Car Washes						X			X
Funeral Homes						X			X
Public Buildings						X			X
Microbreweries						X			X
Motor Vehicle Repair						X			X

The Township's main commercial districts include the:

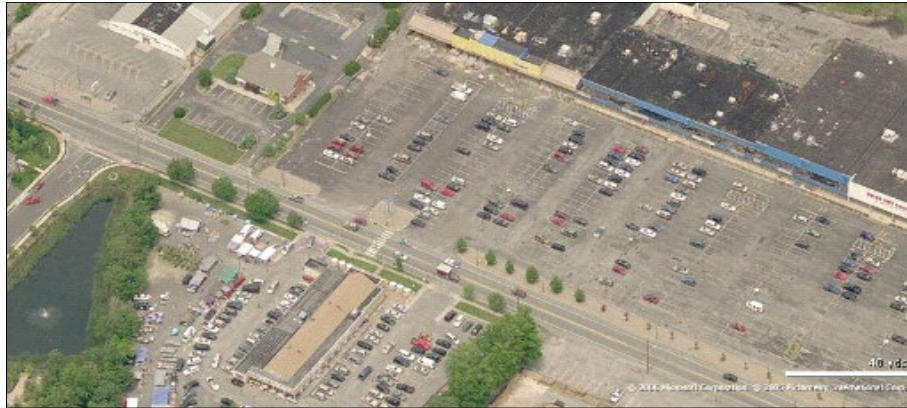
- Highway Commercial along Route 72, both east and west of Route 9;
- Local Business District, found along Route 9 both north and south of Route 72, and along Bay Avenue.
- Mixed Use District, also found along Bay Avenue, east of the municipal building.
- Rural Business, found along the western side of Route 9, north of Cedar Bridge Road.

Given the diversity of land uses along Route 9 and Bay Avenue, and as part of the Master Plan process, the Township is undergoing a visioning process to examine existing conditions and recommendations within the Local Business and Mixed Use Districts.

Along the Route 9 corridor, land uses include the Lakeside Village, multiple-use buildings, hair salons, professional offices and medical uses, restaurants, day care, lumber yards and auto parts, as well as the Manahawkin Lake Park and Oxycocus Middle School. Much of the area is represented by excessive curb cuts, or lack of curbing, underutilized parking areas, missing sidewalks, and a lack of landscaping or screening.



Along Bay Avenue, the uses include medical and professional offices, retail shops and grocery stores, the municipal complex, several banks, the post office and traditional strip development, including the Manahawkin Plaza.



The Township should consider establishing a coordinated “gateway” theme for the Route 9 corridor from Bay Avenue to Hilliard Boulevard which would include signage, coordinated/shared parking efforts, additional sidewalks, crosswalks, and traffic calming. Ongoing efforts to enhance the Route 9 corridor should be coordinated with the Route 9 Corridor Master Plan.

Along Bay Avenue, the Township should examine the permitted uses for each of its zoning districts. For example, new uses along the Bay Avenue commercial corridor should include antique shops, cafes, restaurants, bookstores, art galleries, coffee shops, more upscale and diversified retail uses. As discussed at the visioning session, the Township should build off its “civic center” uses, which include the Municipal Complex and the Post Office, and emphasize its historic structures and homes located throughout the downtown. One of the larger properties along Bay Avenue, the Manahawkin Plaza strip development, was a main focus for discussion at the visioning session. The property is similar in nature to many traditional strip malls, with an older facade, buildings setback significantly from the road, limited to no landscaping or buffering from Bay Avenue, and an underutilized parking area.

Along this segment of Bay Avenue, the zoning should be amended to encourage a greater diversity of neighborhood uses, while encouraging pedestrian oriented development, and greater employment opportunities in this area. At a minimum, auto-related uses and fast food establishments should be eliminated along the Bay Avenue corridor. Recommendations may also include evaluating the Township’s bulk standards to encourage greater building heights, reduced front yard setbacks, shared parking, increased landscaping, new and infill design standards.

### **Industrial**

There are two industrial zoning categories within Stafford, including the BP- Business Park, and BPO Business Park Office. However, this area has been the subject of an adopted Stafford Business Redevelopment Plan, and the Zoning Map should be updated to reflect this new designation.

### **Recreation**

The Township has four recreation-preservation zones: ROS Recreation Open Space, P Preservation, C Conservation, and WPO Wellhead Protection Overlay. Permitted uses within the ROS include: recreational parks, golf courses, and private recreation buildings and clubs. The Preservation and Conservation Districts permits: single family detached dwellings, berry agriculture and horticulture, fish and wildlife management, forestry and beekeeping.

The Wellhead Protection Overlay Zone is an overlay zone whereby, in addition to the requirements of the underlying zoning district, specific uses and activities are prohibited, including:

- Permanent storage or disposal of hazardous wastes, industrial or municipal sludge or radioactive materials,
- Collection and transfer facilities for hazardous wastes, solid wastes and radioactive waste landfills,
- Any use or activity requiring the underground storage of hazardous material or waste in excess of an aggregate total of 300 gallons.

All regulated activities regulated within the zoning overlay district and all site plan and major subdivision applications occurring within this area must submit an environmental impact assessment which demonstrates that the applicant and the proposed use fulfills the best management practices to protect groundwater quality within the WPO zone.

### **Special Zoning Districts**

There are several special zoning districts, as shown on the Township's zoning map, that include lands which are publicly owned, and certain quasi-public lands, including:

- National Wildlife Refuge Zone (W)
- Municipal Land Zone (ML)
- School Zone (ML-SCH, or RGL-SCH)
- Park Zone (ML-P)
- Office Complex Zone (ML-OFF)
- County Park Zone (C-P)

- County Land Zone (CO)
- State Land Zone (S)
- Private School Zone (PS)
- Private School/Church Zone (PS/C)

Permitted uses in these districts include federal, state, county and municipal buildings and grounds, including schools, libraries, museums, parks and playgrounds, offices and related facilities, private and parochial schools and churches associated with private and parochial schools. Where a Special District Zone is located within the Pinelands, the designated permitted uses are authorized only to the extent that the same are in conformance with the Comprehensive Management Plan.

## LAND USE PLAN

The Land Use Plan, Map 2, for Stafford was based on a review of the Township's existing development patterns, the current zoning map, the various redevelopment initiatives, and discussions with Township staff and agencies. The Plan sets forth the vision for land use policy and zone changes, and through the township's efforts, 61% of entire land area of the township will be preserved as open space as shown on the map. The Future Land Use Plan has 13 categories of land use designations as shown in the list below:

- Residential:
  - Low Density
  - Medium Density
  - High Density
  - Mixed Use
- Commercial:
  - Medical/Medical Commercial
  - Neighborhood/Local Commercial
  - Highway Commercial
- Industrial
- Public/Semi-public
- Public Park/Recreation/Open Space
- Stafford Business Park

## LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS

The following list briefly summarizes the land use recommendations:

- Undertake a comprehensive revision of the Township's Land Use and Development including procedures, definitions, use standards, regulations and design standards.
- Update the Zoning Map to reflect the designated Stafford Business Redevelopment area.
- Eliminate RA-3 standards on the Eagles Lake Golf Course tract, otherwise known as the Silvi property.
- Adopt a tree ordinance to encourage tree preservation, establish limits for tree removal and permitting, when necessary.
- Establish impervious coverage standards within all residential districts.
- Revisit Township's parking standards.
- Rezone the Township's environmentally constrained lands as Preservation (Block and Lots to be provided).
- Create coordinated "gateway" design standards along Route 9 between Bay Avenue and Hilliard Boulevard.
- Create a visioning strategy to attract more traditional retail and pedestrian oriented uses along Route 9 and Bay Avenue.
- Create additional Commercial District standards to revitalize Bay Avenue.
- Revisit miscellaneous regulations to ensure compatibility with the Municipal Land Use Law, specifically for child-care and daycare facilities.
- Develop infill design standards for residential development and rehabilitation projects ensuring consistency with the existing fabric and character of the neighborhoods.
- Create a civic and historic hub connecting the Township's civic and quasi-public uses (Municipal Complex, Post Office, Library, Schools, Parks, etc.)
- Update signage and parking standards, ensure coordinated street furniture lighting, banners and landscaping standards.
- Ensure environmentally sensitive design and encourage green building such as LEED as part of new development or alteration.
- Encourage communication and coordination with the school districts and hospitals; incorporate their long-range planning strategies into the Township's revitalization efforts.

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