



**Executive Summary to the  
2015 Master Plan Reexamination Report and  
Master Plan Amendments**

Ocean Township  
Ocean County, New Jersey

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**Prepared for:**  
Ocean Township  
Ocean County, New Jersey

**Prepared by:**



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*The original of this document was signed  
and sealed in accordance with New Jersey Law*

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**Acknowledgements**

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Dennis F. Tredy, Deputy Mayor  
Joseph Lachawiec, Committeeman  
Diane Ambrosio, Township Clerk

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## **Introduction**

The New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) requires that each municipality in the state undertake a periodic review and reexamination of its local master Plan. The purpose of the reexamination report is to review and evaluate the master plan and municipal development regulations on a regular basis in order to determine the need for updates and revisions. The reexamination report also reviews the progress of the Township in achieving its planning objectives, and considers the need for changes in order to ensure that the municipal master plan is current and meets the needs of the Township. The Ocean Township Planning Board is responsible for completing the reexamination, and preparing and adopting by resolution a report on same.

The Township of Ocean adopted its comprehensive master plan in 1982. The Township subsequently adopted a reexamination report in 2005. The current document (hereinafter referred to as the 2015 Master Plan Reexamination Report) serves as a reexamination of the 1982 Master Plan, as supplemented by the 2005 Master Plan Reexamination Report. The document also offers new opportunities for examining community resiliency and ensuring that recovery efforts address the Township's needs for the future.

The 2015 Master Plan Reexamination Report is the Township's response to Hurricane Sandy's impacts. It therefore places special emphasis on facilitating recovery from Hurricane Sandy, as well as promoting resiliency to future storm impacts and other potential natural hazards. To achieve this, the 2015 Master Plan Reexamination Report recommends a number of updates and revisions to the municipal master plan. These changes have been compiled into a master plan amendment. Additionally, the master plan amendment updates and adds to the master plan goals and objectives. The amendment also updates the land use plan element, community facilities and resiliency plan element, open space and recreation plan element, and circulation plan element by incorporating discussion of promoting resiliency in the Township.

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## Impacts of Hurricane Sandy

Hurricane Sandy struck the coast of New Jersey on October 29, 2012, and brought extensive damage to Ocean Township from both storm surge and wind damage. The Township reported that 87 properties within the Township's jurisdiction faced substantial damage. Five of the Township's sewage pump stations went offline due to floodwater inundation and/or power system failure. Trees and power lines throughout the Township also fell, in some cases damaging roofs and buildings. The Township also faced total power outages for 14 days.

Hurricane Sandy exposed several of the Township's vulnerabilities, including: the fact that land to the east of Route 9, which is the most flood prone area of the Township, is largely built out; there are limited options for relocating debris after major storms; the building that houses the municipal zoning and construction departments has no generators; the municipal building's generator is 30 years old; the Township's community center has no generator and is in a flood zone; and, erosion from the Barnegat Bay shoreline compounds vulnerability.

With the impacts of Hurricane Sandy so great and the vulnerabilities so significant, Ocean Township has serious concern and reason for promoting not only recovery from Sandy, but also building resiliency to future storm impacts and other potential natural hazards. While the current 2015 Master Plan Reexamination Report is broad in scope, the experience of Hurricane Sandy and the need to build resiliency has influenced and informed its development.



## The Local and Regional Reaction to Hurricane Sandy

### Strategic Recovery Planning Report

As a response to Hurricane Sandy, Ocean Township adopted a Strategic Recovery Planning Report in 2014. The purpose of the Strategic Recovery Planning Report is to outline a recommended set of actions to guide the Township in promoting recovery from the impacts of Hurricane Sandy and resiliency to future storms. The actions recommended by the Strategic Recovery Planning Report have been incorporated and described in detail in the master plan reexamination report.



### Review of Land Use Designations

Given the experience of Hurricane Sandy and the need to build resiliency to the impacts of future storms and other potential natural hazards, the Township is currently conducting a review of its zoning and underlying land use designations. This review has focused upon the Township's waterfront zones and has indicated that there is a need for distinct regulations for waterfront properties and zone districts, specifically with regard to: minimum lot sizes and setback requirements; decks; sheds; preservation of viewsheds; placement of above-ground pools and hot tubs; storage of recreational vehicles; and, parking. This work was ongoing as of the preparation of the 2015 Master Plan Reexamination Report.

### 2014 Ocean County Multi-Jurisdictional All Hazard Mitigation Plan

The 2014 Multi-Jurisdictional All Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) is intended to provide a blueprint for saving lives and reducing property damage from the effects of natural and man-made disasters in Ocean County, as well as to improve community resiliency following disastrous events. The HMP is also intended to fulfill state and federal legislative requirements related to local hazard mitigation planning, and facilitate access to pre- and post-disaster grant funding. The HMP is comprehensive in its scope and hazard mitigation strategy.

As part of its participation in the Ocean County HMP, Ocean Township identified various actions to mitigate hazards; for example:

- Acquiring and/or elevating flood-prone residential properties;

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- Adopting Advisory Base Flood Elevation maps;
- Continuing to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP);
- Developing and implementing shelter management plans;
- Implementing erosion control related projects;
- Implementing flood control related projects;
- Installing riprap along shoreline;
- Joining, maintaining, or increasing rating for CRS program;
- Maintaining, improving, and expanding education and awareness programs;
- Relocating community facilities/ infrastructure.

Enactment of the recommendations made in Ocean County’s Multi-Jurisdictional All Hazard Mitigation Plan by Ocean Township will promote recovery from and resiliency to future storms and all other types of hazards. The 2015 Master Plan Reexamination Report and resulting master plan amendment, therefore, incorporate goals to support and enact many of the actions that have been outlined in the Multi-Jurisdictional All Hazard Mitigation Plan.

**Additional Planning Efforts**

Ocean Township’s planning efforts also emphasize smart growth principles, as well as sustainability and resiliency, as evidenced by the following:

In 2005 Ocean Township received Plan Endorsement from the New Jersey State Planning Commission, which included the designation of the Waretown Town Center as a redevelopment area. This designation legitimized over a decade of planning in Ocean to create a vibrant new mixed-use town center at Waretown. The Waretown Town Center is reflected on the Township’s zoning map as the “Town Center Redevelopment District (TC)”, and integrates land uses and smart growth planning principles into a comprehensive mixed-use center design. The Waretown Town Center has also been designated a coastal town center under the Coastal Area Facility Review Act (CAFRA). The Plan Endorsement and Town Center Designation also included the extension of Volunteer Way to the Garden State Parkway, providing a key evacuation route for new and existing development in the Township.

In 2007, the Economic Redevelopment Plan was amended to include the Town Center Conceptual Plan approved by the State Planning Commission. In 2013, the Economic Redevelopment Plan was further amended to outline more detailed design standards for the Waretown Town Center Redevelopment Area. The current redevelopment plan for the Town Center (TC) District, which incorporates green infrastructure techniques

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and encourages green building design, is reaffirmed and made part of the overall land use plan for the Township and comprehensive strategy for resilient development.

Additionally, the Township designated areas of the Township as Environmental Conservation (EC) Districts to protect important habitat areas and environmentally sensitive lands in the environs outside of the Town Center and established several Bayfront Conservation (BC) Districts to help protect environmentally sensitive and flood prone areas close to the Barnegat Bay. The Township reaffirms its previous planning framework and overall land use plan, which concentrates future development in centers and preserves land in environmentally sensitive areas as a foundation for a future sustainable and resilient community.

## **Specific Changes Recommended for the Master Plan and Development Regulations**

Given the extent to which there have been significant changes in assumptions, policies and objectives at the local, county, and state levels, the 2015 Master Plan Reexamination Report recommends a number of changes to the Township's municipal master plan and development regulations, many of which have been developed in accordance with the preparation of the Township's 2015 Floodplain Management Plan, 2014 Strategic Recovery Planning Report, and the Township's capital improvement plan. These changes are discussed in the following subsections.

### **Changes to the Master Plan**

The 2015 Master Plan Reexamination Report recommends the following actions to aid the Township in promoting local recovery and in building resiliency:

- A land use plan amendment to facilitate the changes to zoning and development regulations that are recommended in the master plan reexamination (below) and incorporating green building and infrastructure techniques to aid the Township to build resiliency through development regulations;
- Update the Open Space and Recreation Plan to provide current mapping of the Township's recreation and open space network, encourage buyouts of flood-prone properties, and promote living shoreline and other green infrastructure strategies;
- Update the Circulation Plan Element to promote the development of bicycle and pedestrian connections in the Township; and,

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- Update the Community Facilities Plan to provide current mapping of public facilities and other critical infrastructure within the Township, as well as promoting resiliency at these facilities and infrastructure.

To reflect these recommendations, the master plan has been amended to incorporate updates to each of these recommendations as separate plan elements.

Furthermore, the master plan goals and objectives have been amended and supplemented. Examples of supplemented goals include:

- Automating and updating the Township's system for processing zoning and construction permits;
- Updating the Township's Emergency Operating Plan;
- Developing a Geographic Information System (GIS) to increase resiliency. This is currently being prepared and is used as a foundation to the master plan;
- Increasing participation in FEMA's Community Rating System (CRS);
- Preparing a Debris Management Plan; and
- Installing a town-wide Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system.

### Changes to Development Regulations

The 2015 Master Plan Reexamination Report also recommends a number of changes to the Township's development regulations which seek to promote recovery and resiliency to future storms, such as:

- Changing the zone district designations of specific waterfront neighborhoods to R-1A, BC, or WD where necessary, in order to promote marine-oriented development and to preserve wetlands in areas that are not sewered.
- Revising and updating the zoning in the waterfront development districts (R-1A, BC, and WD zones) to better accommodate the typical lot size in each waterfront neighborhood. Updated zoning standards will promote sustainable development and resiliency to future Sandy-type storms. It will also facilitate rebuilding and reinvestment by providing zoning standards that minimize non-conformities and



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reduce the number of bulk variances that may be required to rebuild dwellings damaged by Hurricane Sandy or future storm events.

- Evaluating the Bayfront Conservation (BC) District to ensure that the zoning in this area supports the preservation of natural environmental systems, such as coastal wetlands. To achieve this, the Township should consider the adoption of noncontiguous clustering provisions.
- Other miscellaneous changes and improvements related to issues ranging from: setback requirements for generators and air conditioning units, and stairs on elevated residential dwellings; to standards for accessory apartments; to ground-mounted solar facilities; among others.

These recommendations have been incorporated as part of the master plan amendments. In addition to these changes, the Township will continue to evaluate its ordinances in order to ensure continuing efforts in facilitating resiliency to storm events.

## **Summary**

Hurricane Sandy caused extensive damage in Ocean Township and exposed many vulnerabilities. While much has been done to promote recovery, additional work is needed. Furthermore, it is important to ensure that the Township's master plan helps the Township to build resiliency to future storms and other potential natural disasters. The 2015 Master Plan Reexamination Report and Amendments will help the Township to meet these needs.