



# Township of Berkeley Heights 2017 Master Plan Update

## What is a Master Plan?

A Master Plan provides a long-range vision for the built environment of a community. The New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law requires that all municipalities have a Master Plan and that it be updated at a minimum once every 10 years. To meet the State requirement, the Township must provide an updated Master Plan by the close of 2017.

The Master Plan guides the appropriate use of lands within a municipality in order to protect the public health and safety and to promote the general welfare. Among other issues, the Master Plan can identify:

- Locations where the Township should increase/decrease density, promote the use of redevelopment, or intervene in other ways that would guide future development;
- Opportunities to expand and/or improve open space, recreational areas, and civic facilities;
- Strategies for increasing economic development;
- Suitable locations for commercial, housing, and mixed-use development;
- Environmental, historic and cultural resources that need conservation;
- Strategies for solving congestion and improving transit services; and
- Recommendations for updating and/or introducing land development ordinances that would strengthen the goals and recommendations of the Master Plan.

The Master Plan provides a policy foundation for the Township's land use laws and regulations. The courts require that the Township's ordinances, planning decisions, and regulations have a rational connection to the Master Plan, including its vision and goals. As a result, the Master Plan has a direct relationship to its citizens, whether you live, work, or own a business in Berkeley Heights.

## Stakeholder Participation and Public Input

Stakeholder and public participation are key to a successful Master Plan – after all, it is a document written for the community that has direct implications on its future.

The Master Plan is prepared and adopted by the Township Planning Board. The Planning Board has retained Harbor Consultants, the Township Planner, to coordinate the Master Plan Update process.

In January 2017, representatives from many stakeholder organizations within Berkeley Heights (such as the Environmental Commission, The Board of Education, the Rotary Club of Berkeley Heights) were asked to provide short-term and long-range goals to Harbor Consultants to help guide them as they begin to prepare the new Master Plan. These goals and ideas were due by April 2017. For a complete list of those organizations that were asked to participate, see the township website, Master Plan tab.

An informal open house meeting is being scheduled for July that will be advertised and open to everyone to (1) review the 2007 Master Plan, (2) ask questions of the professionals on the 2017 Master Plan, and (3) provide written recommendations on relevant land use issues in the Township.

### **Timeline**

The Housing Plan Element portion of the Master Plan was adopted in March, 2017 as a result of the Court-mandated affordable housing process (and may need to be amended due to recommendations from the Court and Special Master).

The Land Use Plan Element of the Master Plan is expected to be adopted in September, 2017.