

# 2024 MASTER PLAN RE-EXAMINATION REPORT

Prepared by:

Van Cleef Engineering Associates

Prepared for:

Township of Oxford

Original Issue Date: October 28, 2024 (For Public Review/Hearing)

Revised: 11/15/2024

Read at Public Meeting: 11/21/2024

Issued: December 17, 2024

Resolution #

---

Timothy M. O'Brien, PE, PP, CME

NJPP # PP650900/NJPE#5442500

---

## OFFICE LOCATIONS

[www.vancleefengineering.com](http://www.vancleefengineering.com)

Hillsborough, NJ  
908-359-8291

Mt. Arlington, NJ  
862-284-1100

Phillipsburg, NJ  
908-454-3080

Doylestown, PA  
215-345-1876

Pottstown, PA  
610-323-4040

Hamilton, NJ  
609-689-1100

Toms River, NJ  
732-573-0490

Freehold, NJ  
732-303-8700

Bethlehem, PA  
610-332-1772

## Contents

I. INTRODUCTION .....	2
II. GOALS & OBJECTIVES .....	3
III. MAJOR PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED.....	7
IV. STATUS OF MAJOR PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED .....	9
V. SIGNIFICANT CHANGES & CHALLENGES .....	12
VI. RECOMMENDATIONS.....	15
VII. GOALS & OBJECTIVES (REVISED).....	19
VIII. MAJOR PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED (REVISED) .....	23

## Appendices

Resolution from Council (on File with Township)

Zoning Map

## I. INTRODUCTION

The New Jersey Municipal Land Use (MLUL) (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1 et seq.) requires that each municipality within the State of New Jersey periodically reexamine its Master Plan and development regulations, and prepare and adopt by resolution, a report on the findings of such reexamination. The Reexamination Report must include the following components (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89):

1. The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of the adoption of the last reexamination report.
2. The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date.
3. The extent to which there have been significant changes in assumptions, policies, and objectives forming the basis for the master plan or development regulations as last revised, with particular regard to the density and distribution of population and land uses, housing conditions, circulation, conservation of natural resources, energy conservation, collection, disposition, and recycling of designated recyclable materials, and changes in State, county and municipal policies and objectives.
4. The specific changes recommended for the master plan or development regulations, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether a new plan or regulations should be prepared.
5. The recommendations of the land Use Board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans adopted pursuant to the “Local Redevelopment and Housing Law,” into the land use plan element of the municipal master plan, and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.
6. The recommendations of the planning board concerning locations appropriate for the development of public electrical vehicle infrastructure, including but not limited to, commercial districts and areas proximate to public transportation and transit facilities and transit corridors, and public rest stops; and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary or appropriate for the development of public electric vehicle infrastructure.

The current Oxford Township Master Plan was adopted by the Land Use Board pursuant to Article 3 of the MLUL (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28) on January 10, 2000. Prior to that, the Township of Oxford had adopted a master plan in 1978 with updates to that Plan occurring in 1989. An amendment to the Land Use Plan related to implementation of the Planned Active Adult Development Zoning Overlay Option was adopted by the Land Use Board in April of 2006. At the time of the 2000 Master Plan, it was noted that significant changes had occurred in the Township’s development trends since the 1978 plan and 1989 updates. In 2014 the Township of Oxford conducted a reexamination of the 2000 Master Plan. During this reexamination it was determined that the major problems identified in the 2000 Master Plan have remained largely unresolved. The most recent reexamination occurred in 2018 when the Township adopted the 2018 Reexamination Report and Oxford Highlands Center Plan.

While much has changed in Oxford since 2000, many of the Master plan’ goals and objectives remain valid. Those that are no longer are removed and new updated goals and objectives are presented in section VI of this report.

## II. GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The following are the goals and objectives based on the most recent reexamination of the 2000 Master Plan that was adopted March 15, 2018.

### Goals:

- a. Preserve and enhance the historic nature of the community.
- b. Within the Township, promote and encourage the location of clean, high technology uses which are aesthetically and environmentally safe.
- c. Provide for appropriate intensity of new development through adoption of appropriate floor area ratios (FAR) in commercial/industrial zones.
- d. Continue to improve the traffic safety and aesthetics of the Route 31 corridor by coordinating with the New Jersey Department of Transportation whenever possible.
- e. Recognize environmentally sensitive areas and promote their preservation in compliance with State regulations, while not limiting development within the Highlands Planning Area.
- f. Expand/maintain local parks and other recreational areas.
- g. Preserve/enhance/protect the existing farmland and open space within the Township.
- h. Conform to the requirements of the Highlands Regional Master Plan as required within the Preservation Area.
- i. Encourage new development and redevelopment within the Oxford Town Center that is compatible with its historic nature.
- j. Encourage the planning and construction of appropriate residential development within the Oxford Town Center to support modest growth in commercial services.
- k. Recognize the historic character of the town center area and strive to maintain and enhance it through the use of consistent and compatible architectural themes and community design features such as lighting, landscaping and trees, street furniture and paving materials.
- l. Continue to support the rehabilitation of substandard housing within the Township.
- m. Protect residential zones which abut commercial and industrial zones through appropriate measures including buffering, setbacks and transitional uses.
- n. Promote non-residential development.
- o. Promote mixed use to improve sense of community in new development and redevelopment areas.

## Objectives:

### Community Facilities

- a. Continue to provide adequate emergency service for the Township residents.
- b. Provide adequate facilities for community groups and cultural activities
- c. Assess the need for future expansion of municipal facilities such as the municipal building, public works department, and the library.

### Recreation and Open Space

- a. Prepare an Open Space and Recreation Plan to identify the Township's current and future recreation needs and plan for future facilities as needed.
- b. Preserve open space wherever possible through cluster development and parkland dedication.
- c. Continue to develop non-motorized pathway systems between major residential areas, schools, parks, etc. in the Township adjacent townships, but particularly in areas that will connect the Oxford Town Center for its environs.
- d. Encourage the development of new recreational facilities in future residential subdivisions compatible with an overall recreational goal.
- e. Continue to expand the use of Furnace Lake to provide a more active recreation area.
- f. Prepare a comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan to preserve agriculture as an industry in the Township, including the preservation of active agricultural lands as appropriate.

### Conservation

- a. Prepare an environmental resource inventory.
- b. Develop a water use and conservation plan.
- c. Prepare a stream corridor protection and restoration plan.
- d. Protect environmentally sensitive areas such as stream corridors and steep slopes.
- e. Encourage development which preserves natural amenities and does not aggravate existing problems.
- f. Encourage cluster development and the use of conservation easements to protect sensitive areas.
- g. encourage conservation and provide design flexibility to promote conservation techniques.
- h. Take a more active role in the preservation of agriculture within the Township and in the region.

### Circulation

- a. Ensure that the traffic demand generated by new developments would not exceed the existing and planned capacity of the Township circulation system.

- b. Make every effort to include the road extensions and improvements shown in the master Plan in future capital improvements programs or grant applications.
- c. Develop a viable bikeway and pedestrian network throughout the Township.
- d. Encourage necessary improvements to Route 31 located in the Township.

#### Historic Preservation

- a. Establish a Township historic preservation committee to guide local efforts to protect historic and culturally significant properties.
- b. Continue to identify historic sites, buildings, structures, and areas.
- c. Coordinate with the Warren County Cultural and Heritage Commission regarding the preservation of historic sites in Oxford Township.

#### Residential Development

- a. Provide an appropriate variety of housing types within the Township.
- b. Create an appropriate plan for the expansion of residential development opportunities within the Oxford Town Center.
- c. Address the continued need for age-restricted development within the Township.
- d. Create design guidelines to recognize and preserve the historical architecture in the Township.
- e. Continue to review and evaluate the Township's obligations to the Council on Affordable Housing.

#### Non-residential Development

- a. Prepare a sustainable economic development plan for the Township.
- b. Encourage redevelopment/renovation to the existing downtown area in a manner compatible with the historic character of the area.
- c. Concentrate non-residential development in appropriate locations along Route 31 and in the area of the access road to the EFR.
- d. Coordinate non-residential development to be compatible with and not adversely impact residential development.

#### Land Use

- a. The Land Use Plan of Oxford should not conflict with nor inhibit those of Warren County or adjoining municipalities.
- b. The Township master plan should be consistent with the provisions of the Warren County Solid Waste Management Plan.
- c. The Master Plan should be consistent with the Highlands Regional Master plan.

- d. The development standards and potential for the Township's non-residential zones should be realistic.

### III. MAJOR PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED

When the reexamination report was prepared in 2014, the problems and objectives identified in the 2000 Master Plan were reviewed. Few of these problems were identified as resolved in the 2018 Master Plan Reexamination Report and Oxford Highlands Center Plan. The outstanding problems were identified as the following:

- a. Public transportation is virtually nonexistent in the Township.
- b. Build out of all nonresidential properties in the Township would result in significant impact to the Township and its residents. Maximum impervious coverage, maximum floor area ratio and increased front yard setbacks should be implemented to reduce permitted intensities.
- c. Intersections with Route 31 are unsafe and require improvement.
- d. Roadway maintenance should be continued to reduce overall costs in the long term.
- e. Pedestrian and bike activity should be encouraged and increased and areas adjacent to the Village should be connected to it by non-vehicular means.
- f. The realignment of Route 31 should be encouraged, and a bypass should be considered. This should include the realignment of certain intersections and channelization of uncontrolled intersections should occur.
- g. The Wall Street-Oxford Place-Washington Avenue-Belvidere Avenue intersection should be studied.
- h. The Jonestown Road-Mine Hill Road- Washington Avenue-Academy Street intersection should be studied for potential problems.
- i. Various intersections on Belvidere Avenue and Buckley Avenue should be studied.
- j. The Oxford Central School is over capacity and in need of expansion.
- k. There has been a significant increase in demand for recreational facilities.
- l. There is a need to purchase and restore the historic buildings in the triangle created by Route 31, Washington Street and Wall Street.

The Master Plan outlined a number of recommendations related to zoning and development regulations, several of which were addressed by the Township of Oxford at the time of adopting the 2018 Master Plan Reexamination Report and Oxford Highlands Center Plan. The following recommendations were not addressed as of the completion of the 2018 Master Plan Reexamination Report and Oxford Highlands Center Plan:

- a. Require all future developments to address the recreational needs of the Township prior to approvals. This should include either mini-parks or contributions to town wide recreational facilities.
- b. Encourage the construction of a park and ride facility that will ease the commuter burden through the Township. This park and ride facility will be intended to also induce some additional public transportation to Oxford Township.

- c. Provide mechanisms to encourage the preservation of the historic buildings and property in the Township. The first step would be to establish a Mayor's Advisory Committee to evaluate and identify potential historic sites.
- d. Recognize the need for future expansion to the Oxford Central School by designating areas as school property.
- e. Encourage the sensible expansion of the economic base in the Township with development in those areas as identified as industrial/commercial properties.
- f. Continue to coordinate with COAH to maintain the Township's Fair Share Housing Plan.

#### IV. STATUS OF MAJOR PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED

Each of the problems and objectives identified in section III above are discussed below **bolded in black**. Generally, many of the problems identified in the 2000 Master Plan have not been addressed.

1. Public transportation is virtually nonexistent in the Township.
  - **Comment remains, currently there is no public modes of transportation servicing the Township of Oxford, mostly due to the lack of demand. As future development occurs within the downtown area, public transportation may become a desired infrastructure.**
2. Build out of all nonresidential properties in the Township would result in significant impact to the Township and its residents. Maximum impervious coverage, maximum floor area ratio and increased front yard setbacks should be implemented to reduce permitted intensities.
  - **Comment reviewed. Within the Township of Oxford there is currently a need to consider preservation but enable development. Since the economic boom in Oxford that occurred during its days as a mining town, there has been a lack of rateables for the Township to achieve economic gain. The Township must work to develop a non-residential economic base by leaning towards increased development of industrial and commercial use, rather than emphasizing mass preservation. The problem statement has been revised as seen in section VI below.**
3. Intersections with Route 31 are unsafe and require improvement.
  - **Comment remains. Many of these intersections are within the jurisdiction of the New Jersey Department of Transportation. The Township has worked to achieve grants that will increase pedestrian safety in areas around Route 31 and Wall Street.**
4. Roadway maintenance should be continued to reduce overall costs in the long term.
  - **Comment remains, the Township of Oxford utilizes NJDOT funding annually to improve roadways.**
5. Pedestrian and bike activity should be encouraged and increased and areas adjacent to the Village should be connected to it by non-vehicular means.
  - **Comment remains, progress has been made since the adoption of the most recent reexamination in 2018. The Township of Oxford should continue to utilize grants to improve sidewalk infrastructure, as well as develop walking and biking trails to increase connectivity.**
6. The realignment of Route 31 should be encouraged, and a bypass should be considered. This should include the realignment of certain intersections and channelization of uncontrolled intersections should occur.
  - **Comment reviewed. There has been no initiation on efforts to address this issue. It is unlikely that realignment of route 31 will occur, therefore additional safety measures is the best route to address this issue. See revisions/consolidation in Section VI below.**

7. The Wall Street-Oxford Place-Washington Avenue-Belvidere Avenue intersection should be studied.
  - **Comment remains, it would be beneficial for a study to occur to enhance pedestrian and vehicular safety.**
8. The Jonestown Road-Mine Hill Road-Washington Avenue-Academy Street intersection should be studied for potential problems.
  - **Comment remains, it would be beneficial for a study to occur to enhance pedestrian and vehicular safety.**
9. Various intersections on Belvidere Avenue and Buckley Avenue should be studied.
  - **Comment remains.**
10. The Oxford Central School is over capacity and in need of expansion.
  - **Comment remains, the Township of Oxford did not conduct a detailed analysis of Oxford Central School's capacity for additional expansion.**
11. There has been a significant increase in demand for recreational facilities.
  - **Comment reviewed. Problem statement has been revised as noted in section VI below.**
12. There is a need to purchase and restore the historic buildings in the triangle created by Route 31, Washington Street and Wall Street.
  - **Comment reviewed. The structures within the physical triangle (Block 45, Lot 1), have since been demolished. However, historic buildings remain within close proximity of the site that should be protected. Problem statement has been revised as noted in section VI below.**

Many of the recommendations in the 2000 Master Plan were unfulfilled as of the adoption of the 2018 Master Plan Reexamination Report. Each is noted below along with a brief discussion **bolded in black**.

1. Require all future developments to address the recreational needs of the Township prior to approvals. This should include either mini-parks or contributions to town wide recreational facilities.
  - **Comment remains unchanged and is still valid; Recommendation should remain included in the Master Plan.**
2. Encourage the construction of a park and ride facility that will ease the commuter burden through the Township. This park and ride facility will be intended to also induce some additional public transportation to Oxford Township.
  - **Comment remains unchanged and is still valid; Recommendation should remain included in the Master Plan.**

3. Provide mechanisms to encourage the preservation of the historic buildings and property in the Township. The first step would be to establish a Mayor's Advisory Committee to evaluate and identify potential historic sites.
  - **Comment remains unchanged and is still valid; Recommendation should remain included in the Master Plan.**
4. Recognize the need for future expansion to the Oxford Central School by designating areas as school property.
  - **Comment remains unchanged and is still valid; Recommendation should remain included in the Master Plan.**
5. Encourage the sensible expansion of the economic base in the Township with development in those areas as identified as industrial/commercial properties.
  - **Comment reviewed; revisions noted in section VI below.**
6. Continue to coordinate with COAH to maintain the Township's Fair Share Housing Plan.
  - **Comment reviewed. With the passing of P.L. 2024, c2, COAH has been formally abolished, and its regulatory duties transferred to the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA). DCA will be releasing the round four affordable housing obligations for municipalities across New Jersey. With obligations set to rise, it is imperative that the Township of Oxford have a plan in place to meet their obligation.**

## V. SIGNIFICANT CHANGES & CHALLENGES

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89.c: The reexamination report shall identify significant changes that have occurred in the State, County, and municipal policies and objectives.

### Incinerator Closure:

Within the Township of Oxford, the biggest challenge over the past half decade has been the development of rateables. This has become a pressing issue for the Township since the closure of the trash incinerating plant in 2019, leaving a significant hole in the municipal budget. Since the closure of the plant in 2019, it was the hope of the Township that the plant would become operational again, however this is no longer a possibility with demolition recently occurring on the site in May of 2024. The trash incinerating plant made up **24% (\$643,000)** of the Township of Oxford's municipal budget each year through host community fees. This creates a need to make up the hole the closure makes in the municipal budget. As a result, the Township of Oxford has transitioned from a state of preservation to having a need to be open to development. The most viable way for the Township of Oxford to generate income is through permitting the development of non-residential operations within the township.

### Cannabis:

Since the legalization of cannabis through N.J.S.A. 24:6I-3, also known as the New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory Enforcement Assistance, and Market Place Modernization Act, which authorizes the sale and personal use of cannabis in the State of New Jersey, municipalities have been able to see large economic gains through permitting cannabis operations within their jurisdictions. On July 7, 2021, the Township of Oxford adopted Ordinance No. 2021-10, effectively adding a Cannabis Business Overlay Zone (CBO) to their zoning map. This permits any business requiring a class 1, 2, 3, or 4 cannabis licenses to be established in areas designated within the CBO zone. Establishment of such operations will economically benefit the Township of Oxford through the taxes imposed on such facilities. With more rateables coming in, the Township of Oxford will be able to increase their budget, resulting in further development of the downtown area and surrounding communities.

### Electric Vehicle Charging Stations:

On July 9, 2021, an amendment to MLUL was enacted stating that variances will not be required for an application in which the proposed purpose of the submittal is for the installation of electric vehicle supply equipment or make-ready parking spaces. Installation shall be considered a permitted accessory use and permitted accessory structure in all zoning districts within any municipality.

Additionally, such infrastructure shall not be subject to site plan or variance relief for installation at any gasoline service station, existing retain establishment, or any other existing building. The approval shall occur through the issuance of a zoning permit contingent on compliance with the provided criteria. Criteria for the installation of electric vehicle supply equipment for buildings with five or more dwelling spaces is also stated in addition to model land use requirements.

### Hazard Vulnerability Assessment for Land Use Plans:

On February 4, 2021, Governor Murphy signed into law P.L. 2021, c6, amending the Municipal Land Use Law. Under the amended law, municipalities are required to incorporate a climate change-related hazard vulnerability assessment into any Master Plan Land Use Element adopted after the signing. Re-examinations of land use elements adopted prior to the law are not required to incorporate this assessment. However, future updates to the Master Plan and its Land Use Element will require an examination of current

and future threats to, and vulnerabilities of, the Township of Oxford associated with climate-change related natural hazards, based on the most recent natural hazard projections and best available science provided by the New Jersey Environmental Protection Agency.

#### Hazard Mitigation Plan:

On January 10, 2022, Warren County received FEMA approval for its Multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, updating the previous 2016 plan. In the plan, the Warren County Department of Public Safety divides the county into five regional groupings, based on the regional risks present. The Township of Oxford, along with Franklin Township and Washington Township and Borough, is located in the Southeastern Warren County group (Group 4).

Natural hazards deemed threats to municipalities across the county, such as dam failure, drought, earthquakes, flooding, landslides, hurricanes, severe weather, and wildfire, are unchanged from the 2016 plan. The 2022 plan instead expands its scope to consider several human-based hazards. In addition to the previous plan's assessment of hazardous materials issues, the 2022 plan considers the threat of animal disease, civil unrest, crop failure, cyber-attack, economic collapse, pandemic, power failure, and terrorism. The inclusion of these human based hazards is critical in establishing a basis for risk assessment and evaluating decisions about risk control, both for the Township of Oxford and other municipalities across Warren County.

#### Open Space and Recreation Plan:

Since the adoption of the Master Plan Re-Examination in 2014 by the Township of Oxford, Warren County has taken the initiative to adopt several plan updates to documents referenced in the re-examination report. One such update is to the Open Space and Recreation Plan, in which Warren County published an amendment pertaining to natural resources within the County. The plan was adopted on September 27, 2018, and is titled Open Space and Recreation Plan Update: Amendment – Water Resources for Warren County.

The main goal and objective of this amendment is to provide an updated strategic inventory and assessment of Warren County's natural resources, with a heightened focus on protecting lands responsible for maintaining high water quality for residents. It is identified that most of the drinking water, as well as water for agricultural uses in Warren County, is supplied heavily through groundwater. This is largely possible due to Warren County being located within the Highlands Region, and this region being underlined by granite and metamorphic rock, however weathering affects the occurrence of groundwater in these rocks, making preservation imperative.

The major steps outlined in preserving this groundwater infrastructure and water quality include determining areas where preservation will be most effective, by targeting resources for preservation of these areas, and by prioritizing lands for protection. Warren County initiated an effort utilizing GIS mapping and other technology tools to analyze and identify water quality and water resource attributes of regions throughout the County. Several identified areas provide beneficial resources to the Township of Oxford.

To determine the best course of action to provide protection and preservation for these areas that affect water quality and water supply, hydrology, stream and aquifer quality, and aquatic ecosystems functions were mapped and analyzed. With this data, Warren County can continue their vigorous efforts of preserving the water quality and supply not only within the County, but within the Highlands Region as a whole.

### Transportation Master Plan:

In 2023, Warren County published an updated version to their Transportation Master Plan. The new plan is a response to a rise in truck traffic issues throughout the County. The past five years have seen a rise in warehouse development, increasing freight traffic volumes on underdeveloped one and two-lane roadways. This has negatively affected the roadway infrastructure and circulation throughout the Town.

To resolve this issue, Warren County has undertaken efforts to identify a truck route map, to be implemented with a larger truck routing infrastructure redevelopment plan. The Highlands currently offers grant programs to mitigate negative traffic impacts associated with the warehouse boom occurring throughout the Highlands Region, including select rural areas of Warren County.

Warren County has been proactive in analyzing its truck routing infrastructure. A 2020 study by the County analyzed the traffic impacts in fifteen industrial areas to assess their potential traffic impacts at full build-out under existing zoning. It was determined that, in almost every study area, existing transportation infrastructure could not support the increased truck traffic without significant improvements that would need several years to fully implement.

Since this study, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has reported an increase in the number of fatal truck related incidents in Warren County. In response, the upcoming Truck Route Map for Warren County directs all trucks and freight traffic to the nearest State or Interstate roadway whenever possible. While this is just the start of a larger effort to reduce truck traffic and related issues within the County, it is imperative to lay the foundation for a larger redevelopment of the Warren County transportation infrastructure to meet the demand.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. On July 7, 2021, the Township of Oxford adopted Ordinance No. 2021-10, effectively adding a Cannabis Business Overlay Zone (CBO) to their zoning map. This comes as a result of N.J.S.A. 24:6I-3, also known as the New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory Enforcement Assistance, and Market Place Modernization Act, which permits the sale and personal use of cannabis by those over 21 in the State of New Jersey. It is recommended that the Township of Oxford continue to work towards the establishment of cannabis related businesses requiring a class 1, 2, 3, or 4 license, by adopting or readopting zoning ordinances within the Township as deemed appropriate by the governing body, in order to establish an additional flow of funding into the municipal budget through taxes placed on such operations. **Increasing the non-residential development within the Township is of a high priority in order to generate additional income. The introduction of a cannabis related businesses can provide the financial foundation for this process. As part of the this exam included adoption of a new zoning mapping to reflect cannabis overlay zone.**
2. The utilization of electric vehicles is rising in the State of New Jersey, and as a result, regulations have been put into place to facilitate their continued growth. NJ DCA has developed a model statewide Municipal EV Ordinance to ensure that such spaces are able to be (but not required to be) installed on proposed developments in a manner consistent with the amendment. With the demand on the rise, the Township of Oxford should consider permitting the installation of electrical vehicle charging stations in a manner consisted with the amended MLUL. Suitable locations could include existing gas stations, as well as public recreational areas. **As user fees for electric vehicle charging stations may yield an additional source of revenue for the Township. it is recommended that a more thorough investigation into local and regional electric vehicle demands be conducted to better understand the conditions of the Township of Oxford.**
3.
  - a. Prior Problem Statement:

“Build out of all nonresidential properties in the Township would result in significant impact to the Township and its residents. Maximum impervious coverage, maximum floor area ratio and increased front yard setbacks should be implemented to reduce permitted intensities.”
  - b. Discussion of change:

Within the Township of Oxford there is currently a need to consider preservation, but enable development. Since the economic boom in Oxford that occurred during its days as a mining town, there has been a lack of rateables for the Township to achieve economic gain. The Township must work to develop a residential and non-residential economic base by leaning towards increased development of industrial and commercial use, rather than emphasizing mass preservation.
  - c. The problem statement shall be replaced entirely as follows:

**“In context of the current needs and long-term planning efforts, the Township needs to consider preservation, while enabling residential and non-residential development.”**

4.

a. Prior Problem Statement:

“There has been a significant increase in demand for recreational facilities.”

b. Discussion of change:

While it is important for the Township to consider the implementation of recreational facilities to meet the needs of the community, it should be noted that the current demand has declined. The most recent redevelopment area saw its recreational area closed due to lack of use and high maintenance costs. Additionally, the overall trend within the community is that passive activities have become more prevalent.

c. The problem statement shall be replaced entirely as follows:

**“Due to changes in recreational space demands towards passive recreation, the Township must emphasize maintenance of existing facilities while considering cost-effective expansions of passive recreation opportunities as warranted.”**

5.

a. Prior Problem Statement:

“There is a need to purchase and restore the historic buildings in the triangle created by Route 31, Washington Street and Wall Street.”

b. Discussion of change:

The structures within the physical triangle created by Route 31, Washington Street, and Wall Street (Block 45, Lot 1) have since been demolished and the site was cleared. This was the result of a fire that occurred several years ago. However, there are still historic buildings within the Township of Oxford, and in close proximity to this site of historic significance.

c. The problem statement shall be replaced entirely as follows:

**The Township of Oxford Historic Committee needs to protect the local historic assets and balance future development, as this could be a hazard to historic sites.”**

6.

a. Prior Problem Statement:

“Encourage the sensible expansion of the economic base in the Township with development in those areas as identified as industrial/commercial properties.”

b. Discussion of change:

The Township of Oxford has a growing need to expand its economic base, and must find a way to develop rateables to feed the municipal budget. Therefore, the Township should

focus its efforts on non-residential developments within the industrial and commercial zones to receive host fees and take in a higher tax revenue.

- c. The recommendation statement shall be replaced with an objective, to read as follows:

**“The expansion of non-residential development should be encouraged throughout the Township in order to increase the economic base, a town wide review should be conducted to determine sensible areas.”**

7.

- a. Prior Problem Statement:

“Currently within the Township of Oxford there is little to no access to the surrounding park facilities and preservation areas. Such areas include the Oxford Mountain Natural Resource Area, as well as the Lake Marguerite Wildlife Refuge.”

- b. Discussion of change:

These preservations offer hiking trails within the 100’s of acres of protected outdoor recreation space for the residents of Oxford. However, due to the lack of trail access and parking, these areas are underused by Oxford residents.

- c. Therefore, the following objective shall be added:

**“The development of additional parking and trail access through state funding should be pursued to provide residents with readily available access to the preservation areas located within the Township.”**

8.

- a. Prior Problem Statement:

The realignment of Route 31 should be encouraged, and a bypass should be considered. This should include the realignment of certain intersections and channelization of uncontrolled intersections should occur.

- b. Discussion of change:

Objectives and issue statements relating to Route 31 appear at multiple points in the 2018 Reexamination report. However, because it is unlikely that Route 31 will be realigned without considerable involvement with NJ DOT, there is a need to consider a more flexible choice of wording in addressing safety issues relating to Route 31.

- c. Therefore, the problem statement shall be consolidated into the existing objective statement for Route 31, to read as follows:

**“Encourage necessary safety and circulation improvements to Route 31 within the Township, coordinating with NJ DOT as needed in exploring the possibility of larger-scale modifications.”**

9. The Township will consider, in anticipation of a future update to the Master Plan, additions to the Land Use Element to include a climate change-related hazard vulnerability assessment in accordance with revisions of the Municipal Land Use Law as amended by P.L. 2021, c6. The assessment shall include analysis of current and future threats to, and vulnerabilities of, the Township associated with climate change-related natural hazards, a build-out analysis of future development and its vulnerabilities to such hazards, identification of critical facilities, utilities, roadways, and other infrastructure that is necessary for evacuation purposes and sustaining quality of life during a natural disaster, analysis of the potential impact of natural hazards on relevant components and elements of the Master Plan, and provide strategies and design standards that may be implemented to reduce or avoid risks associated with natural hazards. The vulnerability assessment will include a specific policy statement on the consistency, coordination, and integration of the climate-change related hazard policy assessment with the Warren County Hazard Mitigation Plan, and be developed using the most recent natural hazard projections and best available science provided by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

The following sections reflect the proposed Goals and Objectives and Major Problems Identified sections, as adopted per Resolution December 17, 2024 and issued on December 17, 2024.

## VII. GOALS & OBJECTIVES (REVISED)

### Goals:

- a. Preserve and enhance the historic nature of the community.
- b. Within the Township, promote and encourage the location of clean, high technology uses which are aesthetically and environmentally safe.
- c. Provide for appropriate intensity of new development through adoption of appropriate floor area ratios (FAR) in commercial/industrial zones.
- d. Continue to improve the traffic safety and aesthetics of the Route 31 corridor by coordinating with the New Jersey Department of Transportation whenever possible.
- e. Recognize environmentally sensitive areas and promote their preservation in compliance with State regulations, while not limiting development within the Highlands Planning Area.
- f. Expand/maintain local parks and other recreational areas.
- g. Preserve/enhance/protect the existing farmland and open space within the Township.
- h. Conform to the requirements of the Highlands Regional Master Plan as required within the Preservation Area.
- i. Encourage new development and redevelopment within the Oxford Town Center that is compatible with its historic nature.
- j. Encourage the planning and construction of appropriate residential development within the Oxford Town Center to support modest growth in commercial services.
- k. Recognize the historic character of the town center area and strive to maintain and enhance it through the use of consistent and compatible architectural themes and community design features such as lighting, landscaping and trees, street furniture and paving materials.
- l. Continue to support the rehabilitation of substandard housing within the Township.
- m. Protect residential zones which abut commercial and industrial zones through appropriate measures including buffering, setbacks and transitional uses.
- n. Promote non-residential development.
- o. Promote mixed use to improve sense of community in new development and redevelopment areas.

## Objectives:

### Land Use

- a. The Land Use Plan of Oxford should not conflict with nor inhibit those of Warren County or adjoining municipalities.
- b. The Township master plan should be consistent with the provisions of the Warren County Solid Waste Management Plan.
- c. The Master Plan should be consistent with the Highlands Regional Master plan.
- d. Ensure that the traffic demand generated by new developments would not exceed the existing and planned capacity of the Township circulation system.
- e. The development standards and potential for the Township's non-residential zones should be realistic.

### Residential Development

- a. Provide an appropriate variety of housing types within the Township.
- b. Create an appropriate plan for the expansion of residential development opportunities within the Oxford Town Center.
- c. Address the continued need for age-restricted development within the Township.
- d. Continue to coordinate with NJ DCA to maintain the Township's Fair Share Housing Plan.

### Non-residential Development

- a. The expansion of non-residential development should be encouraged throughout the Township in order to increase the economic base, a town wide review should be conducted to determine sensible areas.
- b. Prepare a sustainable economic development plan for the Township.
- c. Encourage redevelopment/renovation to the existing downtown area in a manner compatible with the historic character of the area.
- d. Concentrate non-residential development in appropriate locations along Route 31 and in the area of the access road to the EFR.
- e. Coordinate non-residential development to be compatible with and not adversely impact residential development.

Permit, to the extent practicable, electric vehicle charging stations in accordance with the model Municipal EV Ordinance produced by NJ DCA in support of P.L. 2021, c.171.

## Circulation

- a. Make every effort to include the road extensions and improvements shown in the master Plan in future capital improvements programs or grant applications.
- b. Develop a viable bikeway and pedestrian network throughout the Township.
- c. Roadway maintenance should be continued to reduce overall costs in the long term.
- d. Pedestrian and bike activity should be encouraged and increased and areas adjacent to the Village should be connected to it by non-vehicular means.
- e. Encourage the construction of a park and ride facility that will ease the commuter burden through the Township. This park and ride facility will be intended to also induce some additional public transportation to Oxford Township.
- f. Encourage necessary safety and circulation improvements to Route 31 within the Township, coordinating with NJ DOT as needed in exploring the possibility of larger-scale modifications.

## Community Facilities

- a. Continue to provide adequate emergency service for the Township residents.
- b. Provide adequate facilities for community groups and cultural activities
- c. Recognize the need for future expansion to the Oxford Central School by designating areas as school property.
- d. Assess the need for future expansion of municipal facilities such as the municipal building, public works department, and the library.

## Recreation and Open Space

- a. Prepare an Open Space and Recreation Plan to identify the Township's current and future recreation needs and plan for future facilities as needed.
- b. Preserve open space wherever possible through cluster development and parkland dedication.
- c. Continue to develop non-motorized pathway systems between major residential areas, schools, parks, etc. in the Township adjacent townships, but particularly in areas that will connect the Oxford Town Center for its environs.
- d. Encourage the development of new recreational facilities in future residential subdivisions compatible with an overall recreational goal.
- e. Continue to expand the use of Furnace Lake to provide a more active recreation area.
- f. Prepare a comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan to preserve agriculture as an industry in the Township, including the preservation of active agricultural lands as appropriate.
- g. The development of additional parking and trail access through state funding should be pursued to provide residents with readily available access to the preservation areas located within the Township.

- h. Require all future developments to address the recreational needs of the Township prior to approvals. This should include either mini-parks or contributions to town wide recreational facilities.

#### Conservation

- a. Prepare an environmental resource inventory.
- b. Develop a water use and conservation plan.
- c. Prepare a stream corridor protection and restoration plan.
- d. Protect environmentally sensitive areas such as stream corridors and steep slopes.
- e. Encourage development which preserves natural amenities and does not aggravate existing problems.
- f. Encourage cluster development and the use of conservation easements to protect sensitive areas.
- g. encourage conservation and provide design flexibility to promote conservation techniques.
- h. Take a more active role in the preservation of agriculture within the Township and in the region.

#### Historic Preservation

- a. Provide mechanisms to encourage the preservation of the historic buildings and property in the Township. The first step would be to establish a Mayor's Advisory Committee to evaluate and identify potential historic sites.
- b. Establish a Township historic preservation committee to guide local efforts to protect historic and culturally significant properties.
- c. The Township of Oxford Historic Committee needs to protect the local historic assets and balance future development, as this could be a hazard to historic sites.
- d. Create design guidelines to recognize and preserve the historical architecture in the Township.
- e. Coordinate with the Warren County Cultural and Heritage Commission regarding the preservation of historic sites in Oxford Township.
- f. Continue to identify historic sites, buildings, structures, and areas.

## VIII. MAJOR PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED (REVISED)

### Community Facilities

1. The Oxford Central School is over capacity and in need of expansion.

### Recreation and Open Space

1. Due to changes in recreational space demands towards passive recreation, the Township must emphasize maintenance of existing facilities while considering cost-effective expansions of passive recreation opportunities as warranted.

### Conservation

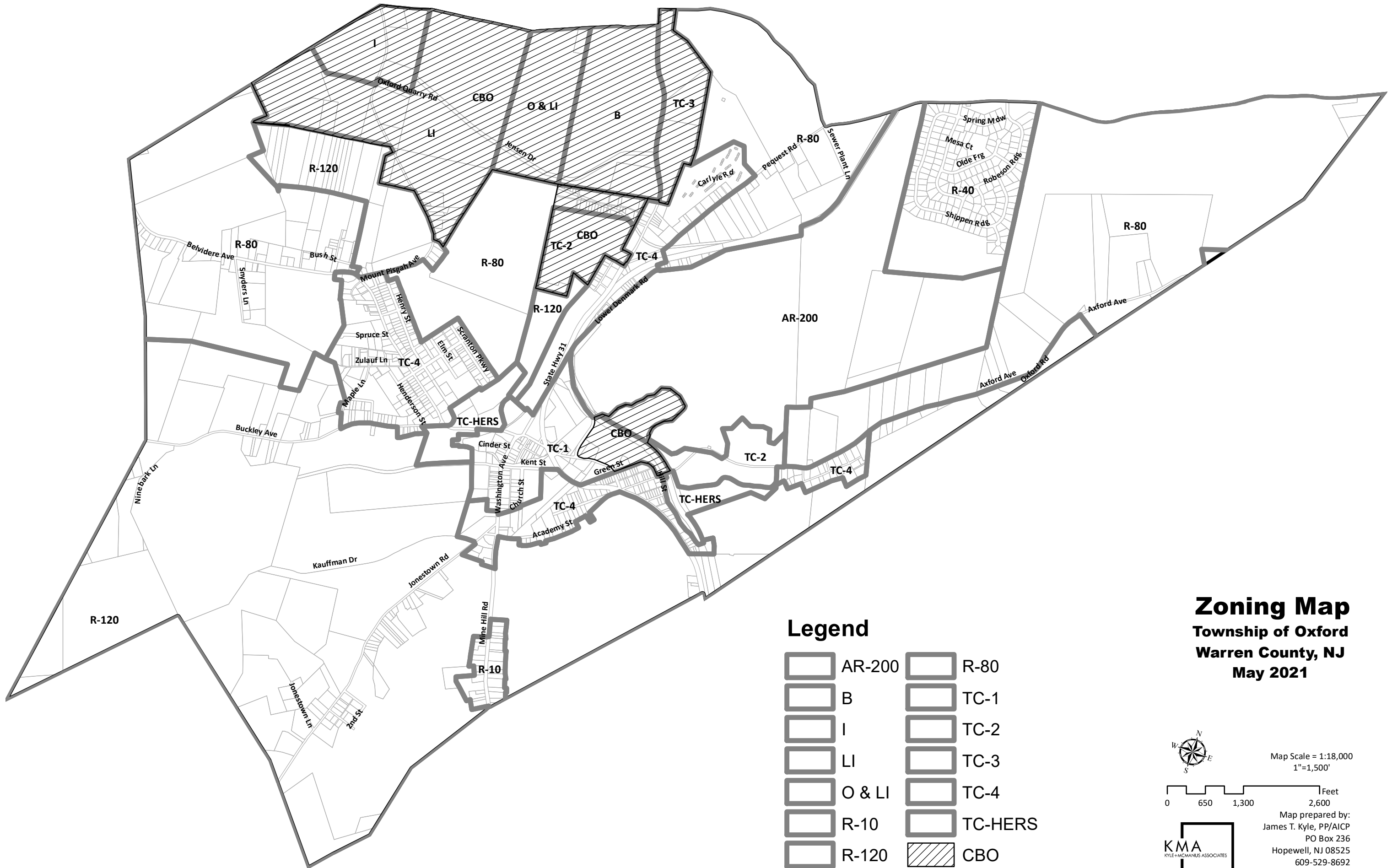
1. In context of the current needs and long-term planning efforts, the Township needs to consider preservation, while enabling residential and non-residential development.

### Circulation

1. Public transportation is virtually nonexistent in the Township.
2. Intersections with Route 31 are unsafe and require improvement.
3. The Wall Street-Oxford Place-Washington Avenue-Belvidere Avenue intersection should be studied.
4. The Jonestown Road-Mine Hill Road- Washington Avenue-Academy Street intersection should be studied for potential problems.
5. Various intersections on Belvidere Avenue and Buckley Avenue should be studied.

### Land Use

1. Oxford will need to undertake a comprehensive update of the Land Use Plan Element to incorporate State requirements for hazard vulnerability assessment.



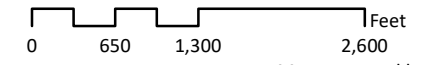
### Legend

	AR-200		R-80
	B		TC-1
	I		TC-2
	LI		TC-3
	O & LI		TC-4
	R-10		TC-HERS
	R-120		CBO
	R-40		

## Zoning Map Township of Oxford Warren County, NJ May 2021



Map Scale = 1:18,000  
1"=1,500'



Map prepared by:  
James T. Kyle, PP/AICP  
PO Box 236  
Hopewell, NJ 08525  
609-529-8692  
jkyle@kylemcmamus.com