

Land Use Plan Element

Borough of Ringwood
Passaic County, New Jersey

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Prepared by the Ringwood Borough Planning Board

In consultation with

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**The original of this report was signed and sealed
in accordance with N.J.A.C. 13:41-1.3**

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INTRODUCTION

Ringwood Borough has entered the 21st Century to find a paradigm shift in its long range planning policies and strategies. Enactment of the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act and adoption of implementing regulations has transformed the playing field for development throughout the Highlands, but nowhere more so than in Ringwood, one of five New Jersey municipalities situated entirely within the Highlands Preservation Area. This designation is not surprising, given the vast repository of protected watershed lands interspersed among lakefront communities and rural neighborhoods in the Borough. Ringwood, in many respects, is the essence of the Highlands, providing drinking water for roughly ¼ of New Jersey's residents.

Before the Highlands Act, residential subdivisions were approved that sacrificed hilltops and ridgelines. In addition, occasional approvals for light industrial development resulted in clearcutting forests. However, residential and non-residential development under new Highlands standards that are mandatory for preservation areas, has been dramatically curtailed. As a result, development-induced change will be minimal in area and impact.

As the Borough charts a course for the 21st Century, protecting fragile resources, reclaiming degraded environments and reshaping suburban sprawl will take center stage. As Ringwood promotes sustainable practices of a wide variety, the Borough must reconcile changes to the scenic natural environment with community planning objectives.

MUNICIPAL PLANNING AUTHORIZATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

Municipal Land Use Law (NJSA 40:55D-1 et seq.) authorizes municipalities to plan and zone to promote the public health, safety, morals and general welfare. Enabling statute identifies fifteen purposes for which the state confers on municipalities these planning and zoning powers.

Preventing sprawl and protecting resources is an overriding theme throughout the purposes of the MLUL. Likewise, promoting good civic design and arrangements and providing sufficient space in appropriate locations for a variety of land uses are objectives reflecting the need to balance the sometimes competing goals of environment vs. development.

Goals of the Enabling Legislation

The Municipal Land Use Law at N.J.S.A. 40:55D-2 sets forth the purposes of zoning in New Jersey. Local power to regulate land use comes from the Municipal Land Use Law (NJSA 40:55D-1 et. seq.). These powers are provided to municipalities to foster the following purposes:

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- a. To encourage municipal action to guide the appropriate use of development of all lands in this State, in a manner which will promote the public health, safety, morals and general welfare;
- b. To secure safety from fire, flood, panic and other natural and manmade disasters;
- c. To provide adequate light, air and open space;
- d. To ensure that the development of individual municipalities does not conflict with the development and general welfare of neighboring municipalities, the county and the State as a whole;
- e. To promote the establishment of appropriate population densities and concentrations that will contribute to the well-being of persons, neighborhoods, communities and regions and preservation of the environment;
- f. To encourage the appropriate and efficient expenditure of public funds by the coordination of public development with land use policies;
- g. To provide sufficient space in appropriate locations for a variety of agricultural, residential, recreational, commercial and industrial uses and open space, both public and private, according to their respective environmental requirements in order to meet the needs of all New Jersey citizens;
- h. To encourage the location and design of transportation routes which will promote the free flow of traffic while discouraging location of such facilities and routes which result in congestion or blight;
- i. To promote a desirable visual environment through creative development techniques and good civic design and arrangements;
- j. To promote the conservation of historic sites and districts, open space, energy resources and valuable natural resources in the State and to prevent urban sprawl and degradation of the environment through improper use of land;
- k. To encourage planned unit developments which incorporate the best features of design and relate the type, design and layout of residential, commercial, industrial and recreational development of the particular site;
- l. To encourage senior citizen community housing construction;
- m. To encourage coordination of the various public and private procedures and activities shaping land development with a view of lessening the cost of such development and to the more efficient use of land; and

- n. To promote the utilization of renewable energy sources.
- o. To promote the maximum practicable recovery and recycling of recyclable materials from municipal solid waste through the use of planning practices designed to incorporate the State Recycling Plan goals and to compliment municipal recycling program.

The MLUL confers upon municipalities the right to zone when at least the basic elements of the master plan have been duly adopted, including a housing element, statement of goals, policies and objectives and a land use plan. The statute also authorizes (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28.b) discretionary master plan elements, including the conservation plan to be adopted by Ringwood during 2007.

The Municipal Land Use Plan describes the Land Use Plan Element of the Master Plan at N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28.b.(2):

A land use plan element (a) taking into account and stating its relationship to the statement provided for in paragraph (1)” (statement of goals and objectives) “hereof, and other master plan elements provided for in paragraphs (3) through (14) hereof and natural conditions, including, but not necessarily limited to, topography, soil conditions, water supply, drainage, flood plain areas, marshes, and woodlands; (b) showing the existing and proposed location, extent and intensity of development of land to be used in the future for varying types of residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, recreational, educational and other public and private purposes or combination of purposes; and stating the relationship thereof to the existing and any proposed zone plan and zoning ordinance; and (c) showing the existing and proposed location of any airports and the boundaries of any airport safety zones delineated pursuant to the “Air Safety and Zoning Act of 1983,” P.L.1983, c.260 (C.6:1-80 et seq.); and (d) including a statement of the standards of population density and development intensity recommended for the municipality;

The Highlands regulations have brought a heightened focus to the need to protect critical resources within New Jersey’s Highlands. Nonetheless, the Highlands Regional Master Plan (RMP) does not substitute for the local master plan, although local planning will be shaped in part by the RMP consistency requirements. Specifically, significant potential exists in the context of both the MLUL and the Highlands Act to advance a planning and implementation agenda for the Borough that improves pedestrian and vehicular safety and linkages, protects neighborhood character and defines the community’s sense of place and vision for the 21st century.

VISION STATEMENT

The Borough of Ringwood, being mindful of its semi-rural character and historic settlements, and recognizing the natural constraints that limit the location, type and intensity of development, envisions a safe, healthy, and pleasing environment for all of its residents,

Accordingly, the Borough of Ringwood commits to:

- Maintaining the prevailing character and unique sense of place of its neighborhood communities;
- Fostering the arts and culture;
- Creating improved vehicular traffic flow, and new pedestrian walkways and bicycle paths that will improve non-vehicular access between neighborhoods, schools and commercial centers;
- Ensuring complete remediation and restoration of environmentally compromised sites;
- Becoming a role model and providing leadership to achieve sustainable economic development, including green technologies;
- Revitalizing our commercial areas;
- Continuing to seek environmentally suitable uses for the industrially zoned area with a view to stabilizing our tax base;
- Assuring that a variety of housing opportunities, including affordable housing, exists in the Borough for new families and senior citizens that are financially accessible to low and/or moderate income households;
- Providing diverse recreational opportunities;
- Encouraging an informed citizenry;
- Being stewards of the pristine waters, drinking supply for millions of New Jersey residents, and other environmentally sensitive habitat found within its borders; and
- Protecting, preserving and restoring its natural resource assets and seeing to it that responsible state agencies fulfill their mandate to the parks and resources under their jurisdiction.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Stewardship of land and water resources is critical to a sustainable environment and economy. The following goals elaborate Ringwood's stewardship objectives.

Land Use and Management

- To exercise stewardship over the lands and waters of the Borough of Ringwood to ensure that these resources are available for the sustenance and enjoyment of present and future generations.
- To protect and maintain the prevailing character and unique sense of place of the Borough, including diverse neighborhoods, historic settlements and scenic landscapes, which result from the natural topography, woodlands and water bodies and courses.
- To promote the goals and objectives of Ringwood through the incorporation of local policies and strategies that respond to the basic premises, intent and purposes of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan and the Highlands Regional Master Plan.
- To provide a future land use pattern that preserves large contiguous areas of open lands.
- To continue and expand upon land use policies that promote controlled development at suitable locations and appropriate intensities by discouraging the extension of growth-inducing infrastructure into areas of fragile environmental resources.
- To establish development densities and intensities at levels, which do not exceed the current planning capacity of the natural environment and available infrastructure, based on the sensitivities and limitations of these systems.
- To encourage the best possible design for new developments, and to protect established neighborhoods and utilities.

Community Design

- To develop standards to ensure good visual quality and design for all land use categories.
- To ensure that new development is visually and functionally compatible with the physical character of the Borough.

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- To provide for a proactive approach to physical design and community planning so that adjacent land uses function compatibly and harmoniously in terms of scale and location.
- To improve the visual and physical appearance of developed areas through the implementation of design standards for features such as signs and buffering and protect neighborhoods from encroachment by incompatible uses.
- To retain to the greatest extent practicable attractive vistas from public rights-of-way, including views of hills, valleys, ridgelines, woodlands, lakes, stream corridors, flood plains and other natural areas.
- To encourage improvement of the appearance of existing commercial development to provide for eco-tourism related shopping and dining services.
- Reshape suburban development to create a pedestrian-friendly town commons with aesthetically pleasing design, and appropriately scaled development with significant pedestrian linkages.

Natural Resources

- To protect environmental resources which contribute to the environmental character of the Borough, including but not limited to steep slopes, ridgelines, lakes, streams, wetlands, potable water supplies, watersheds, aquifers, viewsheds, forests and other vegetation, habitats of threatened and endangered species and unique natural systems.
- To limit the intensity of development, in areas relying on groundwater supplies and on-site sewage disposal, based on conservative estimates of available water resources and the ability of the soil and ground water to sustain on-lot disposal systems without degrading or impairing the water quality.
- To promote the protection of biological diversity through the maintenance of large contiguous tracts and corridors of recreation, forest, flood plain and other open space lands.
- To continue the acquisition of important open space through the use of the Borough's open space tax and other sources of funding.
- To promote land use and management policies that provide for clean air and protection from noise and light impacts.
- To promote the development and adoption of resource management standards to manage land use activities in a manner that protects and maintains natural resources for the future use and enjoyment of generations to come.

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- To identify and manage stream corridor, lake and wetland buffer areas by maintaining undisturbed vegetation in order to protect and improve water quality, wildlife corridors and opportunities for passive and active recreation.
- To limit the amount of disturbance in development involving steep slopes.
- To require the protection of ridgelines.
- To protect groundwater supply and quality through the adoption of aquifer management programs, including relevant standards for wellhead protection programs, and standards to protect groundwater recharge areas, such as impervious coverage limitations.
- To recognize and protect the watershed lands and the drainage basin of the reservoir lands in the Borough as an important regional source of potable water.

Housing

- To promote and support the development, redevelopment and rehabilitation of affordable housing intended to address the Borough's fair share of the region's lower income housing.
- To provide a range of housing opportunities within the Borough.
- To develop housing strategies to address the needs of various age groups, including affordable housing for senior citizens.
- To provide for residential densities and lot sizes that do not exceed the capabilities and limitations of natural systems and available infrastructure.

Transportation

- To create a circulation plan sufficient to accommodate planned development, while retaining the unique and scenic features of the road network.
- To coordinate with other municipalities and governmental bodies for a regional approach to transportation that respects and enhances the character of the community.
- To establish transportation policies and programs that improve connections among housing, employment and commercial uses, including provisions for vehicular and pedestrian travel and bicycle paths.

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- To control development so that traffic will not exceed the capacity of the existing road network to provide safe, efficient and convenient traffic movements, based on rural road service standards designed to maintain the character of the community.
- To recognize that roadways are public lands that deserve aesthetic design consideration as well as efficient movement of vehicles, and to carefully plan entrances to the Borough because they represent a visitor's first impression of the Ringwood.
- To encourage transportation funding for maintenance of the existing transportation system, rather than encouraging the development of new systems in the Borough or the region.
- To minimize the impacts of transportation systems on the environment, including air and noise pollution.

Economic Development

- To provide for desirable non-residential development in appropriate areas of the Borough that will complement the existing character of the community and aid in broadening the local tax base.
- To promote the redesign of existing commercial sites to provide a more efficient land use pattern through such approaches as reduced curb cuts, interconnecting driveways, improved pedestrian and bicycle linkages and enhanced landscaping and aesthetics.
- To provide for new commercial areas in compact forms in areas with utilities in order to concentrate businesses and provide a variety of services.
- To coordinate such items as architectural design, access, landscaping, adequate parking, lighting, signs and similar design features to produce visually and functionally compatible economic development.
- To promote better utilization of existing industrially zoned lands to support local employment and broaden the local tax base.
- To utilize the natural resources of the Borough to attract visitors that wish to explore and view its beauty.

Historic and Cultural Resources

- To safeguard and conserve the heritage of the Borough by preserving those resources that have historic, archaeological, social, cultural, economic and architectural significance, based on national, state and local importance and criteria.

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- To discourage encroachment on historic structures and sites by uses and buildings that are incompatible or detracts from the design of the historic features.
- To encourage the preservation, rehabilitation or adaptive reuse of historic buildings and structures that protects their architectural integrity and preserves their context within the historic landscape.
- To encourage the development of land use regulations which acknowledge and permit special treatment for historic landscapes, districts, sites, and structures including set back community facilities through the payment of the fair share of any off-tract improvements for community facilities to the extent permitted by law.
- To encourage the coordination of facilities between the Borough and local School District so that the schools serve as multi-age facilities for the community.

Recreation and Open Space

- To promote the provision of appropriate and balanced public open space and recreational facilities through public action and to some extent the development review process.
- To update and maintain a recreation and open space master plan to establish and enhance recreational lands and public open space; to establish linkages of public spaces through the use of greenways, hiking trails, waterways, paths and bikeways; and, to establish as the highest priority for public acquisition, areas of unique recreational, scenic or environmental value.
- To encourage the public acquisition of areas of exceptional recreational or scenic value, or environmental sensitivity, at all levels of government, with consideration given to acquisition of land to meet present and future demand for active and passive recreation.
- To support passive recreation in the Skylands Region as a sound method of helping preserve environmentally sensitive lands.
- To encourage the development of new private and public recreation facilities in appropriate locations serving the different residential neighborhoods in the community.

EXISTING LAND USE

Ringwood Borough is dominated by densely forested areas, publicly owned natural lands, and residential neighborhoods surrounding the lakes and main thoroughfares. This combination of factors give the Borough a unique character prized by residents and enjoyed by visitors.

Land Use/Land Cover

Most of the Borough is covered with mature forest (66%) and water and wetlands (17.5%), which combine to contribute a wild, natural character to the overwhelming majority (68%) of preserved lands. Ringwood's land cover has changed little in the last 16 years, as seen on Table 1 and Figure 1, which illustrate the distribution of Land Use/Land Cover for Ringwood based on 1986, 1995 and 2002 aerial photography. As seen in the comparison, agricultural areas have seen the largest percentage increase (23.9%) over the past 16 years, with an increase of just 8.5 acres in cropland and pasture lands. Land covered by water increased by 187 acres (9.1%), attributed mainly to the filling of the Monksville Reservoir. Urban areas have increased slightly in area by 15 acres over the past 16 years.

Three land cover types (barren land, wetlands, and forest) have seen a decline during this period. Barren land has declined 41%. Barren land is land that has been disturbed or is in a state of transition from a natural area to a developed or urban land cover. In the case of Ringwood the reason for this decline was the construction of Monksville Reservoir. During the 1986 aerial photography, the reservoir was being built, and hence classified as barren land. Once the reservoir was flooded with water, the land cover classification became water. Finally, 0.8% of forest was converted to other land cover, primarily to suburban residential and non-residential uses.

Table 1 – Land Use/Land Cover Change (1986, 1995 and 2002)

Land Use/Land Cover Type	1986		1995		2002		Change (1986 – 2002)	
	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%
Agriculture	35.55	.2	28.13	.2	44.03	.2	8.48	23.9
Barren Land	178.66	1	48.70	.3	105.13	.6	(73.53)	(41.2)
Forest	11,945.88	66.4	11,745.85	65.3	11,852.26	65.9	(93.62)	(.8)
Urban	2,822.97	15.7	2,984.35	16.6	2,837.92	15.8	14.95	.5
Water	2,048.08	11.4	2,270.32	12.6	2,234.95	12.4	186.86	9.1
Wetlands	967.49	5.4	921.27	5.1	924.31	5.1	(43.18)	6.2

Figure 2 displays the 2002 Land Use/Land Cover as released from NJDEP.

A measure of assurance that the Borough will remain largely natural is the vast amount of preserved open space through public and quasi-public ownership. The total amount of

preserved land in the Borough is 68% (12,296.08 acres). However, combine this total with the amount of water in the Borough (924 acres) and the percentage increases to 73% (413,220 acres). Most of the preserved lands in the Borough is held by the New Jersey District Water Supply Commission. The following table 2 (see figure 3) shows a breakdown of preserved lands by zone:

Table 2 – Preserved lands by Zone

Zone	Public/quasi public lands	% of total area per zone
C-200	9,534.6	84.4
CC-80	41.5	21.6
GB - 80W	2.7	4.6
I-60	91.6	12.8
R-20	94.8	5.6
R-40	234.1	15.2
R-40V	1,617.8	72.8
R-80W	431.5	25.0
RT-40	213.5	87.1
SRD	34	36.6
Total	12,296.08	68%

Zoning Districts

The Borough currently includes a mix of residential, commercial, industrial and conservation zoning districts (Figure 4).

Residential Districts

R-20 Single Family

The R-20 district contains many of the historic lake communities in the Borough. Located around Cupsaw Lake, Erskine Lake, Upper Erskine Lake and Skyline Lake, this district represents much of the residentially developed portion of the Borough. The entire R-20 district accounts for 9% (1,681 acres) of the Borough's land area. The R-20 District has many smaller lots and requires a minimum lot area of 20,000 square feet. The permitted uses in the R-20 district are typical of a small lot residential area and include, single family dwellings, municipal parks, buildings, libraries and fire stations and other neighborhood parks and playgrounds.

The R-20 district is primarily classified as residential with the 2002 Land Use/Land Cover showing that 70% (1,182 acres) are residential. The remaining area is classified as water (13% or 218 acres), forest (16% or 265 acres), and wetlands (1% or 13.21 acres).

R-40 Single Family

The R-40 district, located in several areas in the Borough, accounts for 8% of the entire Borough. West of Wanaque Reservoir, the R-40 district follows Stonetown Road and is found in pockets off Westbrook Road. East of Wanaque Reservoir, the district is located in residentially-developed areas surrounding the lake communities (R-20 districts). The R-40 district requires a minimum lot area of 40,000 square feet. The permitted uses are the same as those in the R-20 district, generally single family residential and parks and playgrounds.

Land cover in the R-40 district is also primarily residential development with 737 acres (48%) classified as urban development, forest cover at 44% (674 acres), and wetlands at 6% (88 acres). Water 1% (18 acres) and agricultural lands cover 1% (16 acres).

R-40V Single Family Residential

The R-40V district is located in pockets throughout the Borough. The primary areas of the R-40V is on the outskirts of the R-40 District east of Wanaque Reservoir and in the northern portion of the Borough along Sloatsburg Road and Margaret King Avenue. Like the R-20 and R-40 districts, the R-40V permitted uses are single family homes, parks and playgrounds. The R-40V district has a minimum lot size scaled to the proportion of the lot encumbered by steep slopes. The minimum lot size on a lot not encumbered by slopes, or slopes under 15%, is 40,000 square feet if public water is available and 80,000 square feet if public water is not available. However, lots that have slopes greater than 15% require a larger lot size depending on the amount of total lot area with steep slopes.

The R-40V district is 62% forested (307 acres), with 28% wetland area (136 acres). The remaining 10 % is divided among water and urban land cover.

R-80V Single Family Residential

The R-80V district is located along West Brook Road and Stonetown Road west of Wanaque Reservoir. This district mirrors the requirements of the R-40V district, except for the provision of lot size being affected by the availability of public water.

The R-80V district is mainly forested (79%), with wetlands and residential areas accounting for the rest of the land cover in the area.

RT-40 One and Two Family

The RT-40 district is located along Peter's Mine Road in the northern portion of the Borough. The permitted uses in this district include single and two family dwellings, parks, playgrounds and other municipal services. The minimum lot size for the district is 40,000 square feet.

The RT-40 district is dominated by forest land cover (59%), and residential development covers 31%. The remaining 10% of the district areas are covered by wetlands and barren areas.

SRD Special Residential Zone

The Special Residential District is located near the intersection of Sloatsburg and Morris Roads. The purpose of the Special Residential District was to help meet the Borough's low and moderate income housing obligation by providing a realistic opportunity for the construction of affordable housing. It also met the Master Plan objectives for the construction of senior citizen housing. The zone also followed the environmental objectives of the Master Plan in that there are minimal areas with slopes over 15 percent and soils that were rated good for waste absorption.

C-200 Conservation

The C-200 district consists of the lands surrounding the various reservoirs in the Borough and owned either publicly or by the New Jersey Water Supply District. These lands are held primarily for public use. The permitted uses in this district relate to activities associated with open space and recreation such as; day camps, tennis courts, swimming pools, botanical gardens, hiking trails, fish and game preserves, conservation and municipal services. Single family dwellings are permitted and are subject to the regulations.

The C-200 district is almost entirely comprised of Forest (75%) and Water (17%). The remaining land cover is wetlands and urban areas.

Non-residential Districts

CC-80 Community Commercial

The CC-80 is located along Skyline Drive where the major shopping centers in the Borough are located. The Fieldstone Plaza, Ringwood Plaza and Ringwood Commons are all located in this district. The permitted uses in this district include a variety of retail and commercial uses such as antique shops, art galleries, bakeries, banquet halls, banks lodges and many other similar uses.

The CC-80 district is primarily forested (70%) with urban development accounting for 22%. The remaining area is primarily covered by wetlands.

CS - 40 Community Shopping

The CS- 40 District is located along Greenwood Lake Turnpike, in the southern portion of the Borough bordering Wanaque Borough. The district is primarily populated with retail and commercial services catering to local needs. The permitted uses of the district allow for the same variety of commercial and retail services identified in the CC-80 District.

The district is mainly developed with urban uses (60%) with forested areas covering the remaining area (30%).

GB-80 General Business

The GB-80 district is located in the north western portion of the Borough along Greenwood Lake Turnpike and Margaret King Avenue. The district contains a few retail and commercial services, catering primarily to the residents of the Stonetown area. The permitted uses in this district include a variety of smaller scale retail and commercial services.

The district is primarily forested (95%) with the remaining land cover dominated by more urban development.

GB-80W General Business – Water

The GB-80W is located near the GB-80 district has the same permitted uses. However, the GB-80W contains provisions to account for critical water features by limiting the size and type of development. The primary land cover is urban (45%) and forest (31%) in this area.

NB-15 Neighborhood Business

The NB-15 district is located at the southern tip of Cupsaw Lake. The NB-15 District contains a small area of neighborhood centered retail and commercial uses. Permitted uses in the district include small scale retail and commercial uses that benefit neighborhood residents.

NC – 15 Neighborhood Commercial

The NC – 15 Districts are located at the Southern tips of Cupsaw Lake and Lake Erskine. As with the NB-15 district, this district accounts for locally derived commercial needs.

CR-800 Commercial Recreation

The CR-800 district is located in the southern portion of the Borough along the boundary of Wanaque Borough. The district's permitted uses include swimming pools, tennis courts, and other community recreational type facilities as well as single family homes, and municipal parks.

The district is primarily covered with forest and urban type development.

I-Industrial

The Industrial district is located in the northern portion of the Borough along Margaret King Avenue. This district contains many of the Borough's light industrial and manufacturing facilities. The permitted uses include a variety of light manufacturing and wholesale type business. The primary land cover in the district is forested (75%), followed by urban development (12%) with wetlands and water making up the remaining land cover.

FUTURE LAND USE

Despite the widely held perception that the Highlands Preservation Area designation will prevent all development, this will not be strictly so. A series of exemptions provided in the Highlands Act, including a single family residence exemption for existing lots, will allow some new development to proceed. Additionally, the Borough has explored redevelopment and eco-tourism options under an MP3 Grant from the Highlands Council to find that redevelopment opportunities may be available if the Borough chooses to pursue them.

The densities and lot area requirements prescribed by current zoning are no longer applicable to new development. Apart from exempt development, very low density development will be required under the Highlands Regional Master Plan. This land use plan cannot prescribe development standards for new development that differs from the Highlands Regional Master Plan which have not yet been released. . Conformance activities will require a reconciliation of Ringwood's plan with the regional plan. Nonetheless, the Borough's general plan for land use will be shaped largely by existing development and long standing policies.

A primary objective of this Land Use Plan is to maintain and safeguard the unique character and quality of the Borough. Small incremental development and expansion over time can alter the character and identity of a region and impact natural resources. Appropriate controls are needed to preserve the environmental features, natural resources, historic development pattern and scale of neighborhoods. A variety of techniques are available to achieve goals of maintaining and enhancing community identity and scale while allowing for development and expansion of existing uses as allowed by the Highlands Regulations. The following is a brief summary of some regulatory techniques that can address this concern, either separately or in combination.

Regulatory Techniques

Floor Area Ratio (FAR) - This technique limits the floor area permitted on a lot, and measures the sum of all floors of all buildings as a ratio of the lot area. Floor area ratio is a regulatory control that carries special significance, since only the Zoning Board can approve variances from this standard, and only by a super majority vote.

FAR is most frequently used in regulating non-residential land uses, although some municipalities have also used it to regulate residential use. It can be particularly invaluable in preventing the conversion of the character of historic villages by the introduction of large buildings that are out of scale with village form and frequently disregard historic architectural styles. In Ringwood, the control could be used to preserve community character and the scale of buildings within neighborhoods.

Maximum Building Size/Width - Neighborhood character is generally perceived along a linear processional experience, as one travels along a street or roadway. A drive down

the street, observing the size and placement of homes on both sides of the street, reinforces our sense of neighborhood character. Avoiding the introduction of buildings that are out of scale with their surroundings is a valuable tool for protecting neighborhood character and can take the form of controls on overall building size and/or width of front façade. Where FAR regulates the amount of building that can be on any individual lot, it does not control the size of any individual buildings, but rather the floor area of all buildings on a lot. A maximum building size requirement, conversely, prevents individual buildings from becoming out of scale with their surroundings, when properly gauged to neighborhood character.

Historic and traditional neighborhood areas typically have a fabric which is also susceptible to damage by the removal and replacement of older and smaller buildings with new larger buildings. Yet, in many cases, prevailing zoning standards permit a building envelope, based on setbacks, coverage and other standards, which can accommodate substantially more development than the historic forms. Where older settlement areas tend to be incremental, with a series of smaller buildings combining to create a sense of place, modern architectural and design efficiencies often provoke larger buildings with disparate architectural styles rather than individual appearances. The use of a maximum building size and/or house width requirements can help to assure that when the floor area associated with a given area of land is established or modified, that the size of buildings can be reasonably related to the character that exists prior to the new construction. Of course, new construction will of necessity make changes in this character over time. However, this only makes it more important to prevent significant departures from neighborhood character.

Building Placement - Zoning regulations have typically required the placement of buildings within an “envelope” established by the minimum front, side and rear yards. Except for the limitations imposed by floor area or coverage controls, the building envelope may be “filled up” by the addition of the unused development rights. Frequently, desirable residential locations are affected by market forces which make it attractive to alter the prevailing character by capturing the additional development potential. However, it is frequently this real estate investment incentive that destroys or dramatically alters neighborhood character. In residential neighborhoods, where some homes have been built at the minimum front yard setback while others have been set substantially further back, the results can be a “front yard vs. back yard” arrangement. In this setting, one resident’s front door faces another resident’s accessory uses in the rear yard, which include pools, fences, dog runs and the wide variety of on-lot recreation which is typical in residential zones.

The new urbanist design approach requires that new dwellings be built at a comparable front yard setback, creating a relationship where front yards are fairly consistent across a block and rear yard areas are preserved throughout the neighborhood for those activities more appropriate to rear yards. The mandates of new urbanism attempt to dictate architectural styles and may require porches and specific types of fences or other details. However, the theory underpins design attempts to recreate neighborhood forms which have been found to be desirable and workable in the past. In fact this theory advances

these strategies to replicate a sense of place such as that which exists and the Borough seeks to protect. In the era of increasingly large lots which include flag lots and other arrangements that could result from lot mergers, such as through lots (street to street), juxtapositions of formal and informal spaces will become more common and require careful attention.

Lot-of-Record Restrictions - One technique for preventing the consolidation of multiple lots and the tearing down of existing buildings ties the use permitted in any specific zone to a lot-of-record. That is, a parcel existing as of a certain date. Restrictions on the use of lots-of-record are intended to prevent the combination of lots into larger parcels for larger development opportunities. While the assembly of parcels is not universally undesirable, it generally has a negative impact on neighborhood character, as it results in fewer buildings of larger size. Use rights associated with a specific lot-of-record can acknowledge the level of existing development with appropriate controls on bulk and intensity, but can also penalize users of land which has been combined with other lots to form a development parcel. Such penalties may limit permitted floor area, total building coverage, total impervious coverage and setbacks, and require landscaping designed to minimize the intrusiveness of new development.

Resource Conservation Factors/Lot Yield - As recommended in the Reexamination Report, resource restricted lands (steep slopes, wetlands, floodplains, etc.) should be deducted from total tract area for purposes of calculating permitted residential development yield, or improvable lot area.

Lot Circle - Ringwood should consider utilizing a "lot circle" as a shaping feature. This requires that lots be shaped so that a circle of a minimum diameter can be inscribed within the lot lines or setback lines. Another useful lot shaping mechanism is a requirement for a minimum area within a minimum depth of measure. This requires that each lot can provide a minimum area within proximity of the street providing access.

Flag Lot Limitations - Flag lots, which can use narrow flag stems to access remote lands, are frequently a key feature in further subdivision of lands previously passed over for development or otherwise inaccessible. Ringwood may wish to prohibit or limit flag lots.

Proposed Land Use Plan

Stepping back from the individual zoning standards affecting each zone, a general plan of land use emerges that will continue to guide the Borough. Figure 5 depicts the future Land Use Plan, which includes the following districts:

- RR – Rural Residential
- C – Conservation
- LC – Lake Community
- CR – Commercial/Retail
- I - Industrial
- NC-15 – Neighborhood Commercial
- NB-15 – Neighborhood Business

RR – Rural Residential

The RR district replaces the R-80, R-80W, R-40 R-40V, RT-40 and SRD districts to the east, west and north of Wanaque Reservoir. The existing lots in these areas are larger residentially developed lots than those seen to the east of Wanaque Reservoir. These districts also have limited water availability and excessively steep slopes. New development in these areas should be sensitive to environmental constraints and work within the context of the existing development of the area. Ordinances that can help achieve the goal of protecting environmental features and the rural character of this district can include resource calculation factors/lot yield and lot circle regulations.

C – Conservation District

The Conservation District replaces the C-200 district, comprising mostly of publicly and quasi publicly held land in the Borough. Since this land is primarily held by public agencies and not private development, land use regulations should remain, allowing for recreational development opportunities as already permitted with existing regulations.

LC – Lake Community

The Lake Community district combines all the R-20 districts east of Wanaque Reservoir, where the existing developed patterns of small lots in older developments include much of the historical identity of the Borough. Potential new development in this area will consist primarily of residential infill, tear-downs and additions to existing homes. The Highlands regulations allow exemptions for single family dwelling development and expansions. This may permit new development that can significantly alter the character of the existing neighborhoods.

Regulatory rules such as FAR, building placement, maximum building size and lot-of-record ordinances can help the Borough maintain the overall scale and character of the

lake front communities while still allowing for modest development and expansion of current and new homes that is not burdensome to homeowners.

CR – Commercial Retail

The Commercial Retail district combines the non-residential districts of NC-15, NB-15, CC-80, CS-40, GB-80 and GB-80W. Given the Highlands Regulations for the Preservation Areas, expansion and development of non-residential uses will require approval of water and wastewater systems. This will limit future non-residential development and expansion. However, new development and expansion is possible in the Borough and regulations that restrict FAR and impervious coverage should be reexamined as well as the implementation of design standards to help new development and expansion maintain the scale and character of commercial and retail districts. This can be achieved through corridor design standards, FAR restrictions and set back ordinances.

I – Industrial Districts

The Industrial District remains the same as previously seen, along Margaret King Avenue. The Industrial district is very limited by environmental features such as steep slopes, wetland and transitional buffer zones to State Open Waters. New development or expansion in this district is fairly self limiting. However, when development and expansion occur, the Borough should have standards that will protect the existing scenic viewshed, as seen by travelers through the Borough. As noted previously, new development and expansion should keep in scale with the existing development pattern.

NB-15 Neighborhood Business

The NB-15 district will remain as part of the proposed Land Use Plan. The district is located at the southern tip of Cupsaw Lake. The NB-15 District contains a small area of neighborhood centered retail and commercial uses and is unique in size and permitted uses. The district is also built out and can not accommodate any significant growth, only minor modification to existing buildings.

NC-15 Neighborhood Commercial

The NC-15 Districts will also remain as part of the proposed Land Use Plan. The NC-15 District is located at the Southern tips of Cupsaw Lake and Lake Erskine. As with the NB-15 district, this district accounts for locally derived commercial needs and can not accommodate new buildings or development.

REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Ringwood Borough, with the assistance of grant funds through the New Jersey Highlands Council, prepared an analysis of redevelopment options for the Borough. This analysis examined opportunities for beneficial redevelopment within the context of the adopted Highlands rules and regulations under the Administrative Code including rules unique to the five municipalities located entirely within the Highlands Preservation Area.

The analysis examined how regulations affecting the Highlands Preservation Area will permit opportunities for beneficial development and redevelopment. While limited in scale, these sites can be valuable to Ringwood if they aid in realizing the Borough's Master Plan goals or a liability if they impede these objectives. The appropriate use of the Highlands redevelopment regulations to foster development in Ringwood will build on the Borough's essential strengths and minimize any damage or destruction of these intrinsic values.

Redevelopment Options Under The Highlands Regulations

The Highlands rules provide three unique opportunities for redevelopment in the Preservation Area and redevelopment in Ringwood can happen through one or all of three mechanisms, including:

1. Brownfield redevelopment
2. The 125% rule
3. The 70% rule

The first option targets Brownfield redevelopment opportunities (N.J.A.C. 7:38-6.6). The Council may, on a case-by-case basis, exempt Brownfield redevelopment and remediation. The "Tracks" under which Brownfield redevelopment may be approved include:

1. Track One - sanitary landfill facility;
2. Track Two - current or former commercial or industrial site where a Letter of No Further Action (NOFA) has been supplied; and
3. Track Three - current or former commercial or industrial site listed on the State's "Known Contaminated Sites".

After a determination of which Track applies, Brownfield redevelopment may occur on the site. If remediation of the site is required in order to deem the land safe and usable, remediation efforts can occur with the approval of a work plan with an end result of obtaining a "No Further Action Letter".

The second option is for existing developed residential and non-residential properties. Under N.J.A.C 7:38-2.3, existing buildings or structures are granted an exemption to

expand or reconstruct up to 125 percent of the footprint of the existing impervious surface of the site. However, the proposed expansion of the existing structures or buildings cannot increase the existing impervious surface by one-quarter acre or more.

The third option, under the Highlands Regulations, requires the designation of a redevelopment area that contains at least 70 percent impervious coverage (N.J.A.C. 7:38-6.7). A municipality may designate the redevelopment area, which would then have to be approved on a case-by-case basis by the Highlands Council provided such development can be shown to not negatively impact ground and surface water quality or critical habitat and ecological integrity. In order to achieve this performance, redevelopment located on an existing impervious surface footprint must utilize stormwater systems that remove at least 50 percent of Total Suspended Solids (TSS). Redevelopment that will take place outside of existing impervious coverage areas will require a treatment system to remove 80% TSS, and vegetation removal and freshwater wetland mitigation will be required.

Assessment of Redevelopment Opportunities

Given the limited playing field for additional development within the Highlands Preservation Area, viable development and redevelopment sites in Ringwood will be keenly sought after. The designation of redevelopment sites in the Borough would allow for some economically viable opportunities that would service residents as well as visitors to the area. Allowing for opportunities for development and redevelopment can also improve economic vitality and bring in additional revenue streams from untapped markets such as the tourism industry. Additionally, involvement by the Borough in Highlands redevelopment opportunities can create an open dialog between potential developer and the Borough to ensure appropriate measures are maintained relating to the scale, use and ability of new development to meet local needs while preserving natural resources. In general, it can create a “win-win” situation allow for new development opportunities through a joint developer-Borough negotiation.

Successful implementation of an accepted redevelopment district will require ongoing efforts by Ringwood to ensure environmentally sensitive and appropriate development standards. Given the sensitive nature of the Borough and long standing water and sewer capacity issues, a balance between development and environmental protection will have to be examined. Densely wooded tracts, seen throughout the Borough, are highly visible to passersby and their appearance after development could have significant negative impacts, both environmentally and as it affects significant scenic vistas. The wholesale clearing that might be associated with this development should be evaluated for its impact on local and regional scenic and environmental resources. The following sections provide more detailed redevelopment and development opportunities in the non-residential districts.

Redevelopment Potential in the Non-residential Districts

Through the analysis performed as part of the Highlands Grant, the Borough was able to evaluate the potential redevelopment of the non-residential districts. The report provided a separation between a majority of the smaller non-residential districts and the CC-80 District (discussed in the next section of this Plan). Due to the sheer amount of environmental constraints found in the General Business, General Shopping, and Light Industrial Districts smaller scale redevelopment on a lot by lot basis is the only viable option.

Redevelopment and development in the General Business and General Shopping districts will likely take advantage of the remaining vacant parcels. The type of development expected in these districts will expand on the valuable commercial and retail services that serve residents and visitors of the Borough. The appearance of development in these districts should be appropriately scaled, well landscaped and aesthetically pleasing to upgrade the districts. The General Shopping and General Business Districts along Route 511 are highly visible to travelers and act as a gateway to the Borough. Development or redevelopment in these areas should be sensitive and not harm the landscape.

Remote infill sites located in the Light Industrial will be less obvious to travelers within the Borough, given the industrial park setting. Nonetheless, care should be taken to assure that a continuation of the existing LI development pattern respects the environment and does not scar the visible landscape and detract from the scenic attributes that have defined Ringwood and will attract visitors in the future.

Potential new development and redevelopment in these districts can be satisfied by on-lot septic systems, because the scale of possible development at these locations will not require advanced wastewater treatment. Water supply will be available through individual on-site wells for all potential redevelopment areas.

The Ford site, a federally listed Superfund site located off Peter's Mine Road, offers another opportunity for redevelopment upon completion of a successful cleanup, although the timing of cleanup and potential area to be available for redevelopment is unknown at this time. Appropriate decisions about redevelopment at the Ford site will be best made when a near-term horizon for viable redevelopment is in sight, because redevelopment of this site will not be possible in the short term. Given the location and nature of the site, redevelopment of the Ford site could allow for additional municipal recreational opportunities and facilities or remain in a natural state allowing for additional passive recreational opportunities and linkages to other existing trails and open space.

Town Commons Opportunity (CC-80 District/Skyline Drive)

As redevelopment options for Ringwood are explored, meeting the needs of Borough and nearby residents assumes a high priority in the planning process. This brings a focus to

the CC-80 zone, where the most significant and best-located redevelopment opportunities in Ringwood will be found. Given the considerable land area involved, and its location at the heart of the Borough's retail/service node, it appears that a realistic opportunity may exist at this location to expand commercial services to meet a variety of local retail and service needs in a town commons-type setting. In order to achieve an appropriately scaled and designed town commons in the CC-80 district, a visioning process involving all stakeholders should be implemented to clearly identify redevelopment objectives and create an attractive town commons area, with an opportunity for community gatherings and enhanced commercial activity, through meaningful development and redevelopment.

Town commons areas can provide a large variety of services that are easily accessible and beneficial to residents and visitors. First and foremost a town commons offers a unifying area for Borough residents. Commons areas should be pedestrian friendly, offer a wide variety of retail and commercial services and aesthetically pleasing and unique to the Borough's identity. Areas dedicated to pedestrian oriented facilities, such as benches, walkways, adequate lighting and green space will encourage a sense of community. Mixed retail and commercial uses and services can provide for economic vitality and offer services to residents as well as attract business from visitors who may stay longer and shop more.

There are a several options for redevelopment in the CC-80 District. Expansion of the current shopping center would consolidate uses and provide for efficient land development patterns. However, to facilitate development along Skyline Drive, significant new wastewater treatment capacity will be required. This may provide an opportunity to replace existing on-site facilities with updated treatment works capable of accommodating existing and new development.

Other potential redevelopment sites are located along Skyline Drive in the southern portion and also to the west of the shopping district. While these areas or not contiguous to the existing shopping center they may be more adequately situated to provide for wastewater treatment systems that do not exceed the 2,000 GPD limit on septic systems imposed by the Highlands Regulations.

Regardless of which location is chosen and accepted by the Highlands for redevelopment and new development, design standards should be developed to promote an attractive and engaging town commons area. Making any new development attractive and pedestrian friendly and linking existing and new development should be encouraged.

Additionally, clearing, grading and architectural design will be critical for the Skyline Drive area, which is a prominently visible functional gateway to the Borough. While not situated at the Borough boundary, the Community Commercial development along Skyline Drive is the first significant built element seen by travelers entering Ringwood. The prominent elevation of these lands and their gateway character will make quality design an important feature for any development, and design standards should help shape an appropriate architectural interpretation at this location.

The Borough should undertake a separate study to evaluate not only the feasibility of creating a redevelopment zone in the CC-80 district, but also to develop specific design criteria that could be applied to the redevelopment area. As discussed earlier, any redevelopment in the district would require sensitivity to wastewater and water supply issues. New development could lead to upgrading currently inefficient wastewater systems. Additionally, new development and redevelopment should remain smaller in scale and appropriately sized to the current type of development in the area. Small scaled development and redevelopment with a variety of services and pedestrian friendly areas can create an attractive commons area, beneficial to the Borough.

Quarry Redevelopment Opportunities

Braen Industries operates the Quarry located along West Brook Road in the R-80W district which expanded production in 1990, but will eventually be decommissioned and converted to some other use. In 1992, the Planning Board passed an ordinance to provide for the licensing and regulation of extraction activities in the Borough, which prompted a lawsuit by Braen Industries against Ringwood, wherein Braen obtained an injunction preventing the ordinance from taking effect. In the spring of 1996, the Borough and the quarry owner reached an out-of-court settlement. Ultimately the court ruled in favor of the Borough's right to regulate quarrying and the quarry, scaled back operations in 2000.

The ordinance requires that the quarry must renew its license every three years with a stipulation that a reclamation plan be submitted that is consistent with local zoning. With the introduction of the Highlands Regulations, the reclamation plan will have to conform to the Act. The Highlands Act would preclude the previous plan for residential uses on the site, and the owner of the quarry is requesting input from the Borough on future reclamation projects. Reclamation is to be ongoing, not a final act taking place when quarrying is over, so deciding the future of this site is of immediate importance and should include ongoing air and water quality monitoring at the site until the quarrying is completed, as well as, adoption of an ordinance for redevelopment of quarry sites. In addition the quarry has become subject to more stringent State regulations relating to stormwater runoff.

Adjacent to the quarry, is 425-acre Saddle Mountain, which also was purchased by Braen Industries in 1990. Saddle Mountain is arguably the most spectacular piece of privately owned property in the northern Highlands and the State has reportedly made acquiring the property a priority. Above the Wanaque Reservoir and traversed by pristine streams, deep gorges and hiking trails, Saddle Mountain affords striking views of Manhattan and Sterling Forest.

ECO-TOURISM AND HERITAGE TOURISM

Heritage tourism and ecotourism are economic development approaches that can capitalize on the Borough's natural and cultural resource assets, making them a logical fit for the Borough.

Eco-tourism

Designed for the discovery and understanding of wild, natural environments, eco-tourism is frequently associated with wilderness, national parks, birds, tropical forests and wildlife. Eco-tourists have a strong affinity for sustainability and environmental protection and prescribe desired behaviors which are shared by these affinity groups. Activities like bird watching and wildflower photography are common eco-tourism pursuits in the northeast.

Eco-tourists are generally interested in observing and understanding nature as well as themselves. Social contact is unimportant to a worthwhile eco-tourism experience and many, in fact, degrade the experience. Eco-tourists are among people of all ages with high levels of formal education and income, major influences on pursuit of eco-tourist activities. Strongly held attitudes of eco-tourists are reflected in other cultural expressions including literature and art and a philosophy that guides travel actions and behavior. Eco-tourists are generally sensitive to the rules of the road as they have come to be understood and constitute a powerful group gaining in influence on the production of tourist services. Eco-tourism is a reflection of an increasing global consciousness about the importance of sustainable human activities to natural resource protection. It is currently in the growth stage of its business cycle where increasing participation and interest suggests a need for a greater market supply and more private development.

Heritage Tourism

Heritage Tourism is a fast growing niche market in the travel industry that is defined by the National Trust for Historic Preservation as “traveling to experience the places, artifacts and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present.” Recent studies conducted by the National Trust for Historic Preservation show that those who participate in heritage tourism are often older, more educated and more affluent. This tourist also tends to stay longer in a particular area and take a larger role in exploring what the local area has to provide.

The benefits of heritage tourism are two fold. First, culturally and historically significant sites already exist and require little or no additional development or improvements of infrastructure. Second, heritage tourism brings heightened awareness of historic and cultural sites which can increase the preservation of significant sites. These two factors lead to a tourism base that taps into existing sites, with little capital improvements necessary. Money and interest raised at the sites leads to greater preservation and conservation efforts, a win-win situation for the region.

Ringwood is fortunate to have a unique natural environment that attracts residents and visitors alike to take advantage of the water resources, hiking trails and other passive recreational opportunities. Ringwood is also home to many historic and cultural sites and

places that attract those interested in heritage sites. The combination of these two factors can help to promote local economic diversity by creating a niche market dedicated to supporting eco-tourism and heritage tourism. Small scale retail services, restaurants and eateries and places for overnight stays not only add to the quality of life for Borough residents but can provide the needed extra services to support additional visitors to the Borough.

Strategic Tourism Initiative

Ringwood and neighboring communities have a unique opportunity to capitalize on the scenic natural resources, cultural heritage and regional recognition of the Highlands as a tourism destination.

A successful strategic tourism initiative should involve the following:

Product Development Strategy

Build on Ringwood's Strength as a Tourism Destination

Goals:

- Protect, preserve, and enhance Ringwood's authentic natural, cultural, historic and architectural heritage assets and distinctive "sense of place" as the foundation for future sustainable tourism development and promotion
- Focus resources on prioritized areas and corridors with the greatest potential for sustainable tourism development

Infrastructure and Mobility Strategy

Make it Easy for the Visitor – Connect People and Places

Goals:

- Enhance visitor mobility and access through transportation improvements
- Increase the quality of the visitor experience
- Explore strategies for opening and reopening scenic hiking trails to the public

Marketing Strategy

Focus on Brand Equity, Continuity and Packaging

Goals:

- Build on the N.J. Highlands strong brand awareness and as a unique and scenic natural area
- Enhance existing and create new collaborative marketing initiatives and partnerships with a range of communities of interest (art, historic preservation, outdoor activities, etc.)
- Focus initially on day trip visitors and develop a long range strategy for overnight tourism opportunities for the greatest economic impact

Outreach and Public Involvement Strategy

Educate and Involve the Community

Goals:

- Increase recognition of tourism's importance to the economy and to the overall quality of life in Ringwood, Passaic County and the Highlands
- Engage all stakeholders in refining the local vision for sustainable tourism
- Involve the community in the tourism planning process

Organizational/Collaborative Strategy

Keep it Simple and Collaborate for Success

Goals:

- Create a Tourism Development organization to guide Ringwood's Strategic Tourism Development Plan
- Establish a creative, collaborative and results-oriented organizational structure to support tourism development
- Create strong partnerships and systems to increase cooperation of the public and private sectors in tourism planning and development

- Develop new and stable sources of funding for product development, infrastructure improvements and marketing

Developing a clear vision for strategic tourism planning should involve all stakeholders and should be an ongoing, collaborative process.

To expand the tourism industry base, Ringwood's long-term tourism strategy should include the following:

1. "Connect the dots" – Identify and create functional pathways between and among the various points of interest in the Borough and beyond to help guide tourists and local and regional residents.

This strategy involves creating and expanding trails and bike and pedestrian paths to the various places of interest in the Borough. This can be done through trail marking, informational map brochures and other educational material that will allow visitors to take full advantage, not only of the recreational opportunities, but other services available in the Borough.

2. Pedestrian and bicycle safety – Work with all involved parties to achieve a safe and functional travel route for those who walk, bike or use alternative mode of transportation.

This strategy can include designated parking areas with safe accessibility to recreational opportunities. Also, maintaining trails and bike path areas for safety and visibility to users as well those traveling in vehicles on shared roadways.

3. Expand the range of permitted uses – Allow for flexible and creative permitted uses in the districts to take advantage of recreational and historic attributes of Ringwood, such as bed and breakfast inns, homestay accommodations and home occupation businesses that permit retailing of art and handicrafts. Homestay accommodations are very similar to bed and breakfast except in a homestay situation guest have more interaction with their host family.

Allowing for flexibility in uses can create an additional economic diversity that can meet the needs of residents as well as visitors. Allowing a local homeowner to dedicate a percentage of their home floor area to the sale of handicrafts made on site can attract visitors and extend their time in the Borough, spending more money locally. Additionally, allowing for bed and breakfasts and "homestays" in appropriate residential districts allows visitors increased opportunities to stay over night and visit more local attractions and take advantage of more recreational opportunities.

CONCLUSION

The long range planning strategies highlighted throughout the Land Use Plan, reflect Ringwood's vision for the future. Ringwood hosts a wide variety of environmentally sensitive areas, valuable water supplies and historical settlement patterns that give the Borough a unique sense of place. This has been further reinforced by the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act and implementing regulations. Ringwood is one of five New Jersey municipalities situated entirely within the Highlands Preservation Area and provides drinking water for roughly ¼ of New Jersey's residents.

The existing land use in the Borough is predominately residential in nature. Lake communities and homesites set atop the scenic hilltops and ridgelines reflect consumer preference and not environmental awareness. Additionally, non-residential development resulted in substantial tree removal. Increased environmental awareness and the passage of the Highlands Act has dramatically altered the way future development patterns will be conducted. Preservation of critical environmental features and the appropriate siting of new development now works in tandem to achieve a more harmonious bridge between the environment and development.

To improve this balance, and conform with the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act, Ringwood has set out to redefine future Land Use Regulations in the Borough. The proposed Land Use Plan takes into account existing development patterns and ecosystems and recommends a toolbox of strategies that will encourage development and redevelopment at an appropriate level to maintain ecosystem health.

Ringwood has also developed a series of refined goals as they pertain to the Highlands Water Protection and Planning act and subsequent draft Regional Master Plan. An MP3 grant provided by the Highlands Council helped the Borough investigate possible redevelopment scenarios under the new Highlands regulations and encouraged new initiatives to promote the Borough as an ecotourism and heritage tourism destination. Both of these initiatives could potentially add a new dimension to the economic base of the Borough by facilitating economic development that protects and enhances the cultural resources and valuable ecosystem attributes of the Borough.

While the Borough awaits adoption of the Highland Regional Master Plan and subsequent regulations, long range planning efforts seek to ensure the protection of valuable natural resources and maintain the existing unique character of the Borough that results from profound natural beauty and historic settlement patterns. While the proposed Land Use Plan will have to remain flexible to any upcoming State Regulations, the Borough has set clear goals that will advance the Highlands Council goal of protecting valuable resources, especially water, for future generations.