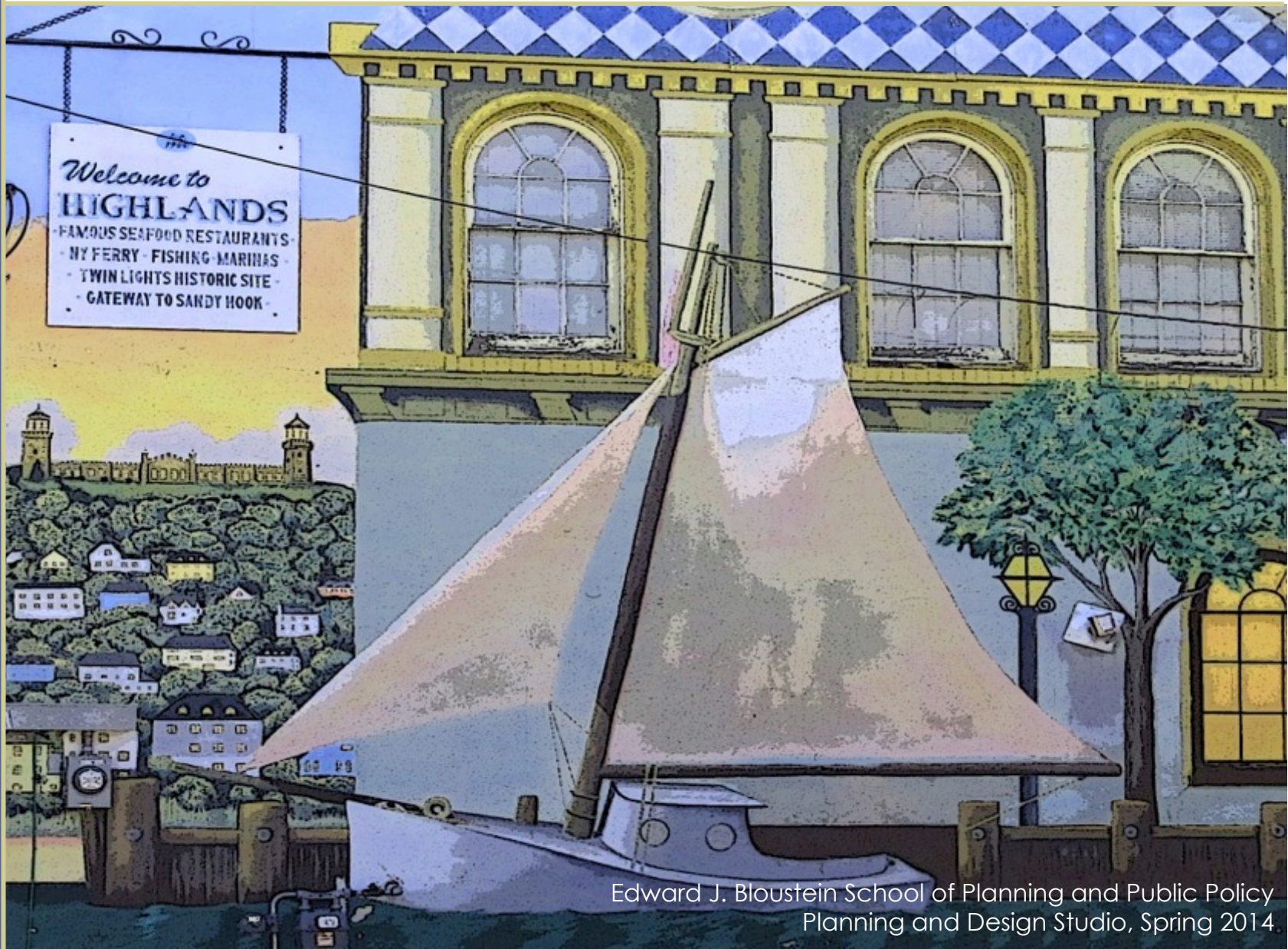


A CLAM-TASTIC PLAN

for the Valley to Vet's neighborhood of Highlands Borough, NJ



PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- ❑ Introductions & Acknowledgements
- ❑ The Studio's Mission
- ❑ The Study Area: Existing Conditions, Recent Trends, Planning Goals, Planning Analysis
- ❑ A Planning & Design Framework for Positive Transformation
- ❑ Implementation Mechanisms
- ❑ Questions?



INTRODUCTIONS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Planning Studio Team

- ❑ Elizabeth Carter
- ❑ Erwin H. Flesch
- ❑ Julie Grof
- ❑ Greer Reinalda
- ❑ Sharon Williams

Instructors

- ❑ Anton Nelessen
- ❑ Carlos Rodrigues



Stakeholders

Highlands Borough

- ❑ Mayor Frank L. Nolan
- ❑ Councilman Chris Francy
- ❑ Carla Cefalo-Braswell - HBP
- ❑ Charles Heck – Tax Assessor
- ❑ Donna Conrad – Clerk
- ❑ Bruce Padula, Esq. – Borough Attorney

Monmouth County Division of Planning

- ❑ Joseph Barris
- ❑ Brittany Ashman
- ❑ Sharon Rafter

Monmouth County Parks & Recreation

- ❑ Paul Gleitz

Others

- ❑ Paul Cefalo – Weichert Realty
- ❑ Chris Kok – FEMA
- ❑ Leo Cervantes - Chilango's Restaurant

THE STUDIO'S MISSION

The Assignment

Create a “big-picture” conceptual framework for the Study Area to:

- ❑ Offer a more informed planning and urban design framework
- ❑ Activate latent commercial opportunities
- ❑ Repopulate the surrounding residential neighborhood
- ❑ Improve public access to the waterfront
- ❑ Foster storm-sustainable and green community design features and strategies

Implementation Mechanisms

Suggest more effective ways for Highlands to deploy its regulatory authority:

- ❑ Explore pros and cons of market-driven approaches to transformation (zoning, land development regulations) and public sector driven approaches (Abandoned Properties Act, Local Redevelopment and Housing Act)
- ❑ Inform strategic choices regarding neighborhood transformation





Regional Location

Highlands Borough, Monmouth County, NJ



THE STUDY AREA

- ❑ Between Valley Street and Veteran's Memorial Park, and between the Shrewsbury River and Shore Drive
- ❑ 20 Blocks, 56.4 Acres
- ❑ Includes a portion of Bay Avenue, Highlands' "Main Street", struggling with vacancies
- ❑ Prime waterfront real estate, not fully utilized
- ❑ Lands occupied by sub-prime uses, such as parking, the municipal public works department and private light industrial uses



STUDY AREA – Existing Conditions

Key Indicators

	Study Area	Highlands	Monmouth County
Median income	NA	\$67,292	\$84,746
Avg. household size	NA	1.91 persons	2.66 persons
Families below poverty level	NA	17%	5%
Unemployment rate	NA	13%	8%
Occupied housing units:			
Owner-Occupied	37%	59%	75%
Renter-Occupied	63%	41%	25%
Vacant housing units:			
For rent	53%	25%	21%
For seasonal use	31%	53%	45%
25-34 year old householders	22%	14%	10%
Non-family households	59%	56%	30%

Highlands as a whole has lower household income, higher poverty, higher unemployment and smaller households than the Monmouth County average. The Study Area has younger households, far more rental housing and far less seasonal housing than Highlands as a whole.



STUDY AREA – Existing Conditions

Defining Features

- ❑ Short seasonal economy – hard to sustain
- ❑ Lack of every day goods and services for local residents
- ❑ Generic “suburban” street and streetscape treatments
- ❑ Poor public access to waterfront – largely private
- ❑ Severely underutilized waterfront – largely private
- ❑ Latent commercial, tax-generating opportunities
- ❑ Visibly deteriorated structures and streetscapes
- ❑ Erosion of the historic character as a working waterfront community



STUDY AREA – Existing Conditions

Overview

Physical Attributes

- ❑ Average elevation: 0 to 10 ft
- ❑ Mainly residential, except for Bay Av and Shrewsbury Av
- ❑ Average lot size +/- 2,500 sq ft
- ❑ Inefficient block structure and awkward street pattern
- ❑ Street network does not facilitate waterfront access



Local and Regional Attributes

- ❑ Limited regional access
- ❑ Lack of clearly identified gateways; poor local wayfinding, in particular directions to the waterfront
- ❑ 2 million annual visitors to Sandy Hook Recreational Area, but only 100,000 annual visitors to Highlands
- ❑ Need to better capitalize on other local attractions:
 - ❑ Twin Lights National Historic Site
 - ❑ Pompora Park
 - ❑ Henry Hudson Trail
 - ❑ Certified Clam Depuration Plant
 - ❑ Mount Mitchell overlook
 - ❑ Clamming, restaurants, marinas, and NYC ferry

STUDY AREA – Existing Conditions

Past and Present Issues

- ❑ Routine flooding, both tidal and from stormwater runoff
- ❑ Severe inflow + infiltration in sewer system, and very limited reserve capacity for treatment of additional effluent
- ❑ Uncertainty regarding possible future construction of Army Corps of Engineers bulkhead / seawall project to prevent tidal inundation / storm surges
- ❑ Flood insurance mandates and local construction code require flood proofing of commercial buildings and substantial elevation of residential structures
- ❑ Persistent ground floor vacancies and lack of active street life on Bay Avenue



STUDY AREA – Recent Events

Impacts from 2012 Hurricane Sandy

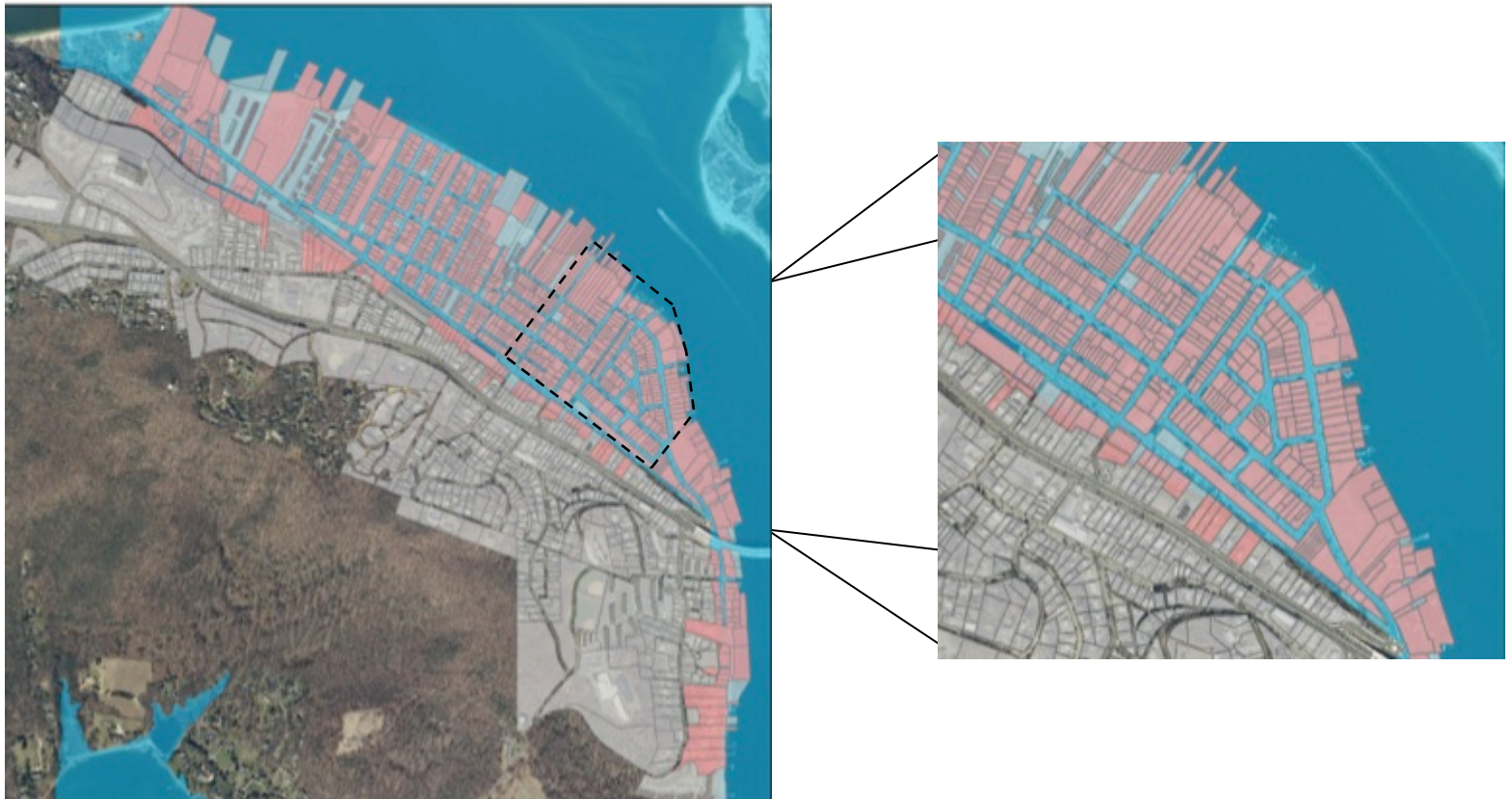
- ❑ Widespread flooding, with substantial damage to real property and both personal and business assets
- ❑ Dilapidated, vacant and abandoned homes and businesses
- ❑ Substantial loss of real estate value (up to 1/3 of tax base) and devaluation of real estate
- ❑ Required ground floor elevation of new, or substantially damaged structures – between 12 and 18 feet



STUDY AREA – Possible Future Events

Flooding Conditions During Sandy

Flood Scenario: 15 ft

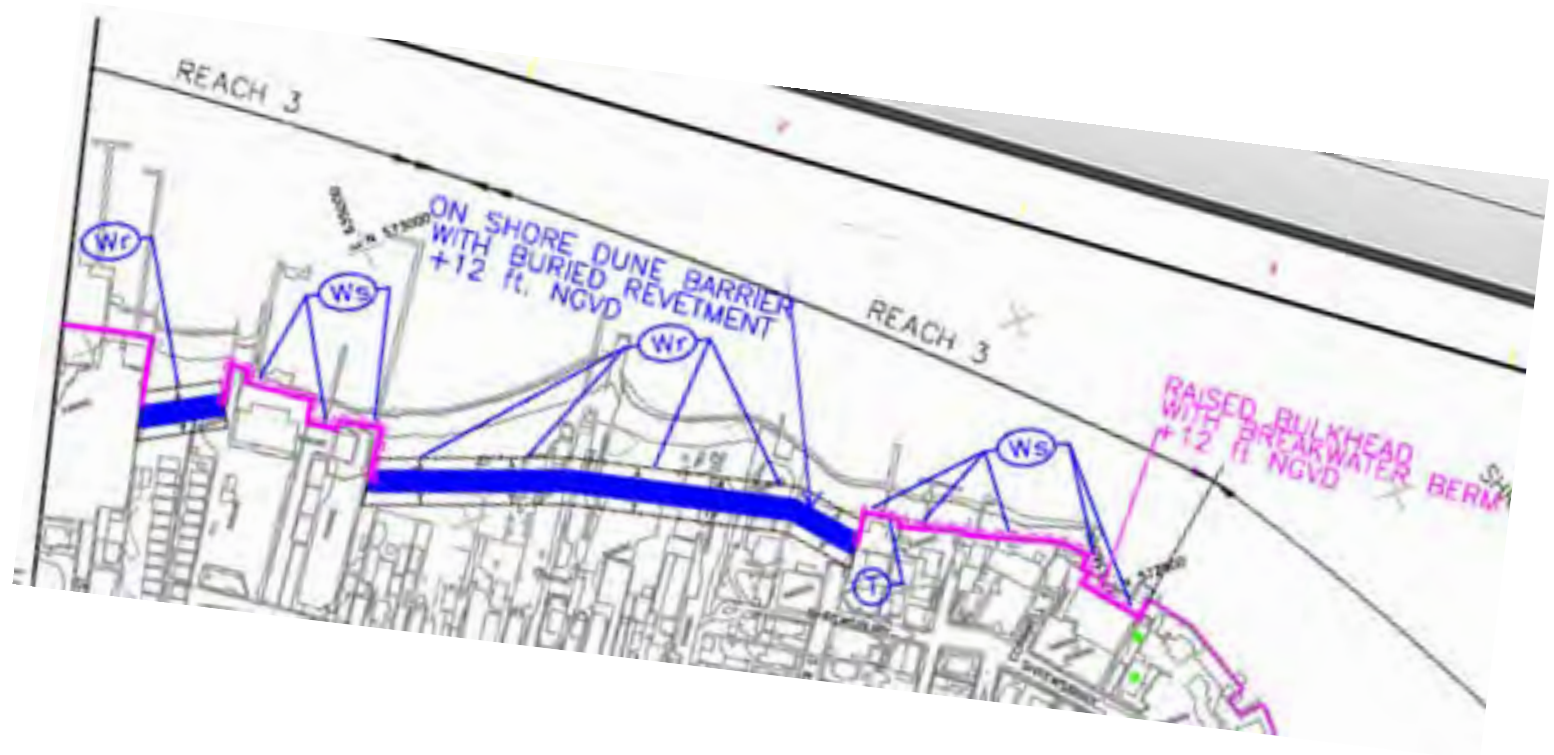


Source: NJGIN, State LIDAR, Lyna Wiggins and Students

STUDY AREA – Possible Future Events

FEMA / ACE Plan

- ❑ Proposed ACE design of Reach 3 tidal protection devices for the Study Area



STUDY AREA – Planning Goals

- ❑ Adopt smart responses to flood control and mitigation measures
- ❑ Address under-performing Main St
- ❑ Facilitate public access to waterfront
- ❑ Increase high-quality waterfront development
- ❑ Enhance streetscapes and public spaces
- ❑ Improve circulation for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians
- ❑ Develop new urban infill prototypes
- ❑ Increase real property values through private investment and public actions
- ❑ Address community equity concerns



STUDY AREA – Planning Analysis

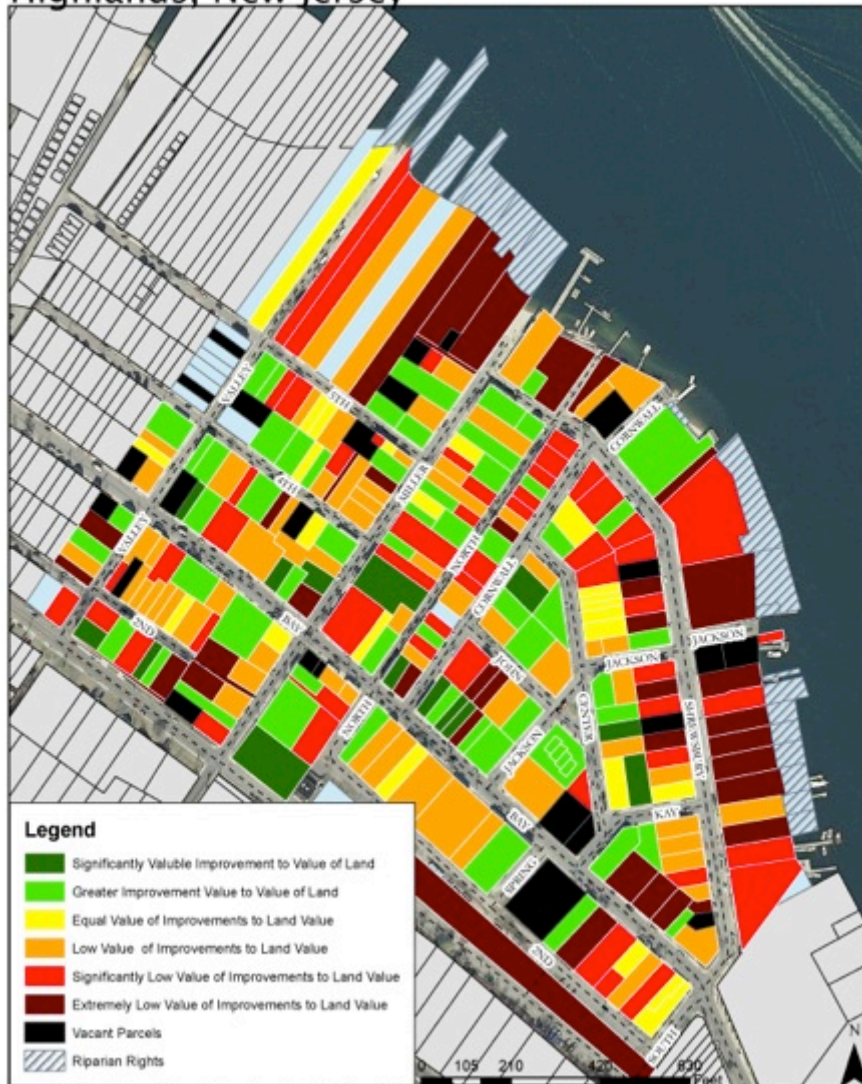
Candidates for Infill Development – Quantitative Criteria

- ❑ “Significantly low” and “extremely low” ratios of value of improvements to value of land
- ❑ Vacant parcels (no improvements) as per County Tax Assessment Data
- ❑ Properties deemed locally under the UCC as presenting an “imminent hazard”
- ❑ Properties with tax liens as per Borough tax collector data
- ❑ Properties “susceptible to change”



STUDY AREA – Planning Analysis

Value of Improvements to Value of Land Ratio
Highlands, New Jersey



76 Parcels, **23% of our study area**, are either empty lots or have the lowest improvement to land value ratios

Land/Parcel Value Category	Improvement to land ratio	Valley to Vets parcels %	
Empty lots to extreme low value	.00 to .20	76	22.75
Significantly low value	.21 to .49	66	19.76
Low value	.50 to .79	71	21.26
Improvements equal to land value	.80 to .99	29	8.68
Improvements greater than land value	1.00 to 1.99	76	22.75
Significantly valuable improvements	2.0 and up	16	4.79
TOTAL Parcels		334	

STUDY AREA – Planning Analysis

Properties Deemed an Imminent Hazard Highlands, New Jersey



8 Properties deemed by the local Construction Code Official to constitute an “imminent hazard”

STUDY AREA – Planning Analysis

Vacant Parcels According to MOD IV
Highlands, New Jersey



25 vacant parcels

STUDY AREA – Planning Analysis

Infill and Redevelopment Opportunities



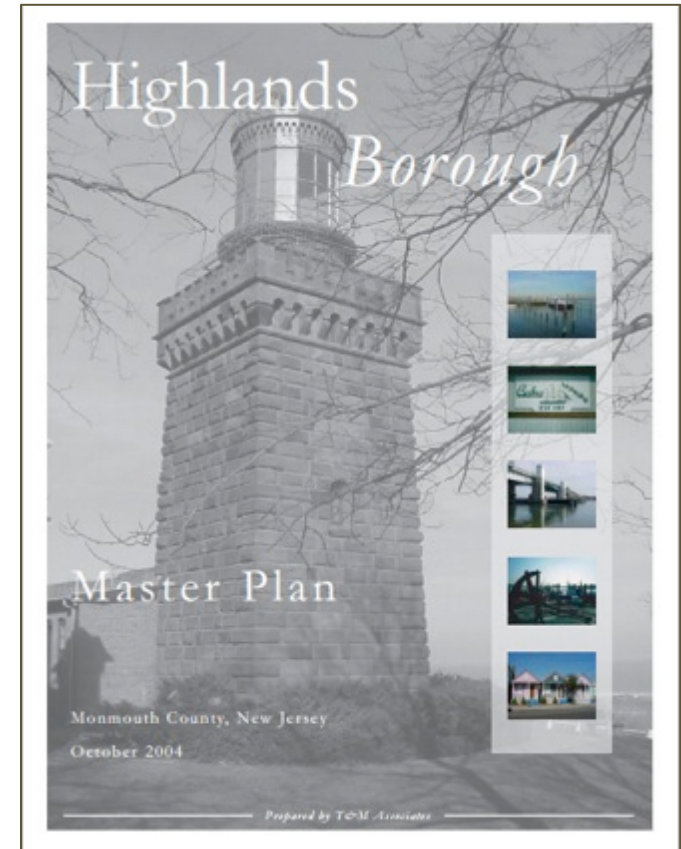
133 parcels with significant infill potential

PLANNING VISION

Some of the generic goals from the 2004 Master Plan are still relevant:

- ❑ Physically: create mixed use development, make the waterfront a destination for activity and relaxation.
- ❑ Socially: redevelop the community offering homes, employment, services, civic spaces and leisure.
- ❑ Naturally: protect the existing resource base through sensitive design, energy efficiency, and minimize the impact on the local environment.

But the Master Plan is functionally obsolete with respect to the Study Area. It offers no practical guidance and must be replaced ASAP.



DESIGN VISION

Visual Preference Survey Results

Rated +5.6 on the Visual Preference Survey

Standard Deviation of 6

The responses from Highlands residents to the Bloustein on-line survey suggest a much higher than expected embrace of positive change and support for transformation.



DESIGN VISION

Challenges

- ❑ Vacant, storm damaged properties
- ❑ Very small average lot size
- ❑ Awkward, inefficient block structure
- ❑ Sanitary and storm water sewer capacity limitations
- ❑ Conflicts between existing commercial and residential uses
- ❑ Parking overflow from commercial properties in residential areas

Opportunities

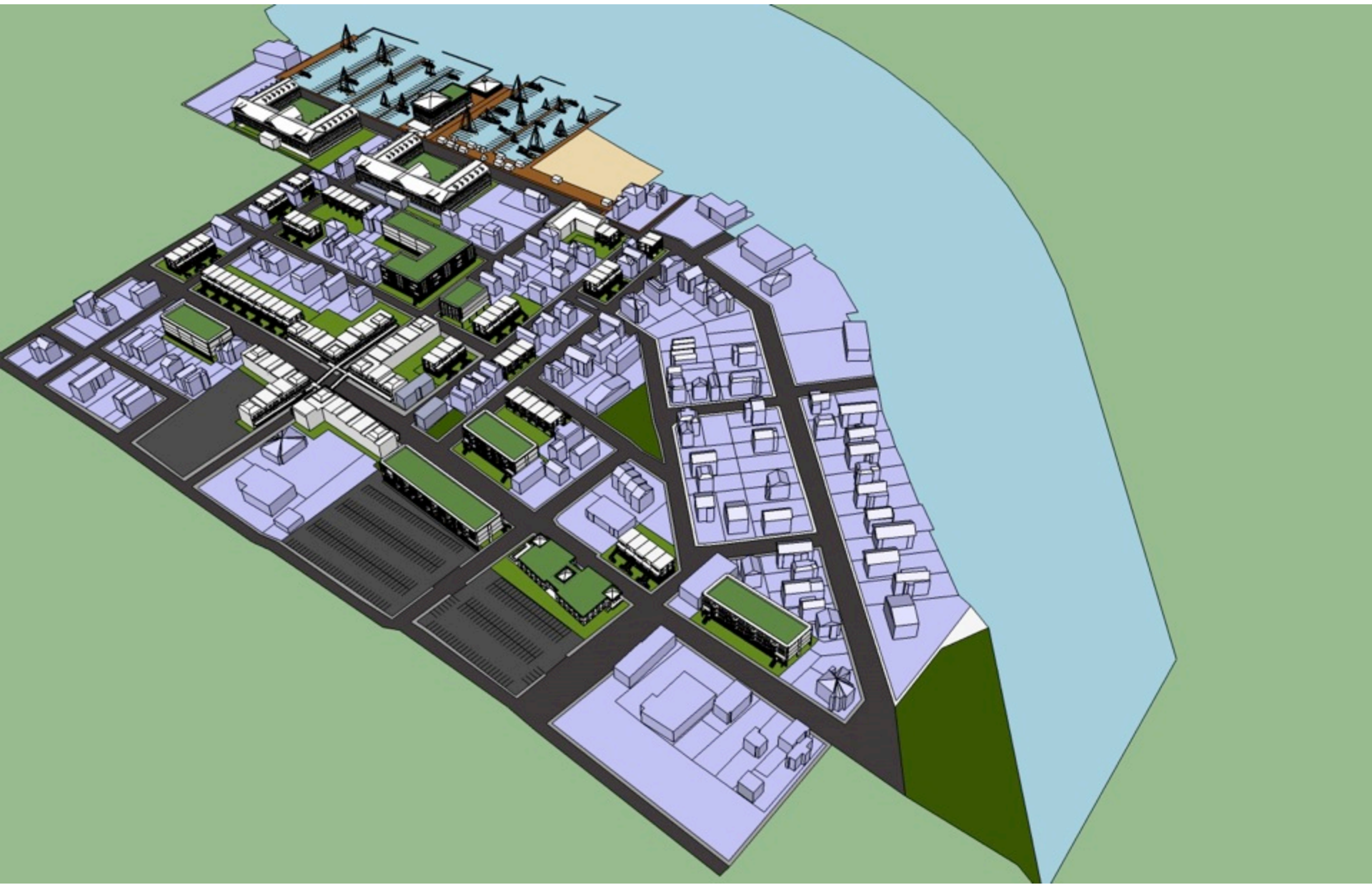
- ❑ The Shrewsbury River waterfront
- ❑ Miller Street waterfront access
- ❑ Miller Street and Bay Avenue intersection – the “100% corner”
- ❑ North Street pedestrian walkway
- ❑ Luring regional visitors to local attractions and landmarks
- ❑ Adopting new storm-resilient building typologies



DESIGN VISION

- Reimagine this section of Bay Av as a multi-purpose, mixed-use corridor for incubator retail, remote parking, services and class C office, as well as attached housing.
- Reimagine Miller St as the main gateway / connector to the waterfront
- The Bay Av / Miller St intersection becomes a major focus for redevelopment
- Miller St becomes the new “Main St” with a regional draw and an emphasis on uses focused on the proximity and access to the waterfront
- Shrewsbury Av takes on a new role as the locus for higher value waterfront uses, such as a new marina and hotel
- The adjacent residential neighborhood increases in value and becomes more storm-resilient by gradually converting to attached housing types as a result of market forces.
- Reimagine the local streets as “green streets” and “shared spaces” – green stormwater and bike/ped facilities.

















DESIGN VISION

Proposed Site Plan

Proposed Land Use
Urban Design Studio - 2014

Legend	
 Single Family Proposed	 Single Family Existing
 Multi-Family Proposed	 Multi-Family Existing
 Civic Proposed	 Civic Existing
 Open Space Proposed	 Open Space Existing
 Mixed Use/Retail Proposed	 Mixed Use/Retail Existing
 Inn Proposed	 Inn Existing



DESIGN VISION

Proposed Site Plan

Legend

- 1 -- Mixed Use Retail
- 2 -- Single Family Attached
- 3 -- Multi-Family Units
- 4 -- Inn and Conference Center
- 5 -- Borough Hall & Civic Center
- 6 -- Public Access Beach & Marina
- 7 -- Closed Off Sand Street
- 8 -- Shrewsbury Avenue Extension
- 9 -- Green Space & Spray Park
- 10 -- Parking Garages



DESIGN VISION

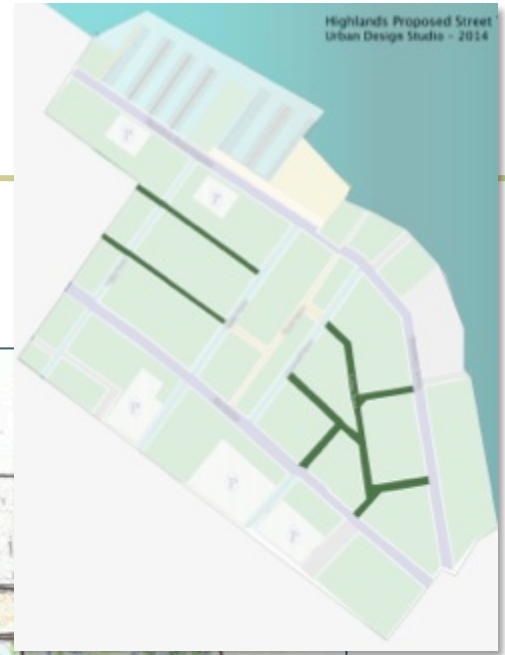
Streets

The retrofitting of the current suburban street design into the proposed “green”, “shared” streets will help recreate the maritime character Highlands residents value in their community, improve the quality of place, improve circulation (both vehicular as well as bike/ped), clarify parking options, mitigate flooding from stormwater and generally institutionalize a 21st Century street design standard.



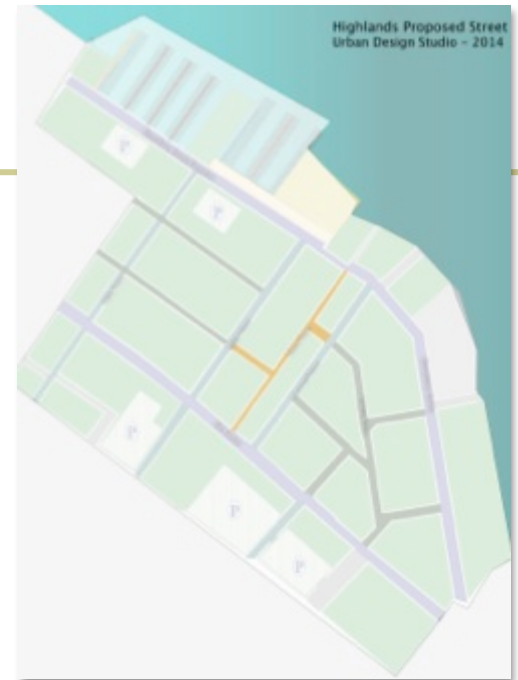
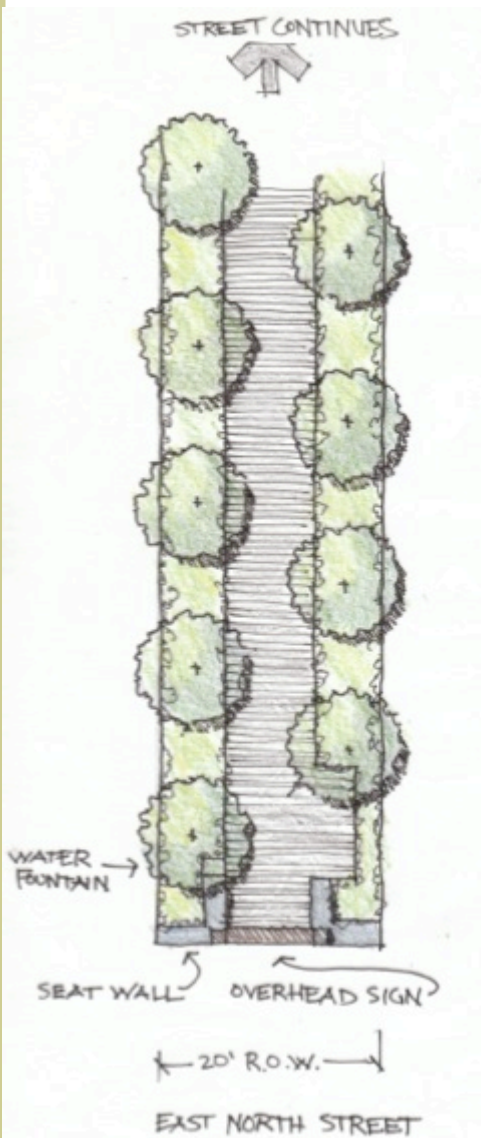
DESIGN VISION

Shared Streets



DESIGN VISION

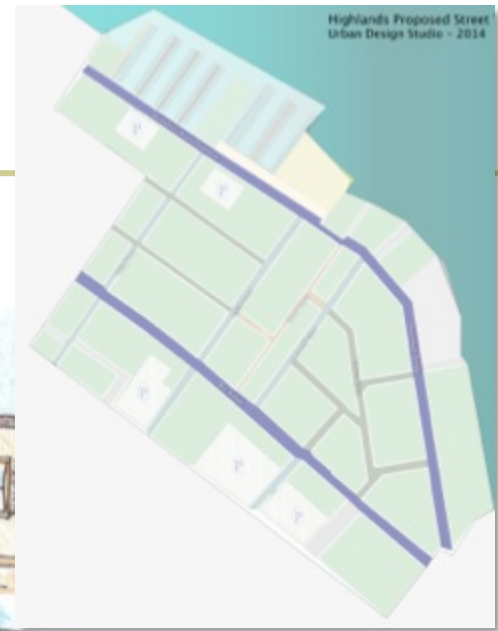
North Street



1" = 10'

DESIGN VISION

Bay Avenue at Miller Street

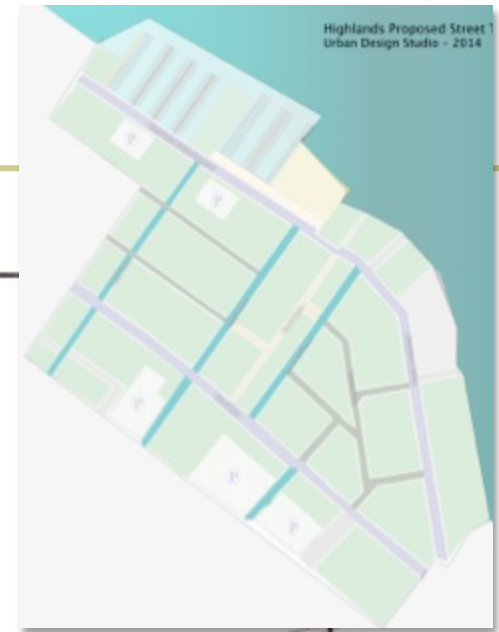


This intersection assumes heightened importance as the planned major gateway to the waterfront and the anchor for new higher-density, waterfront-oriented retail and housing



DESIGN VISION

Miller Street



DESIGN VISION

Single Family Attached Typologies



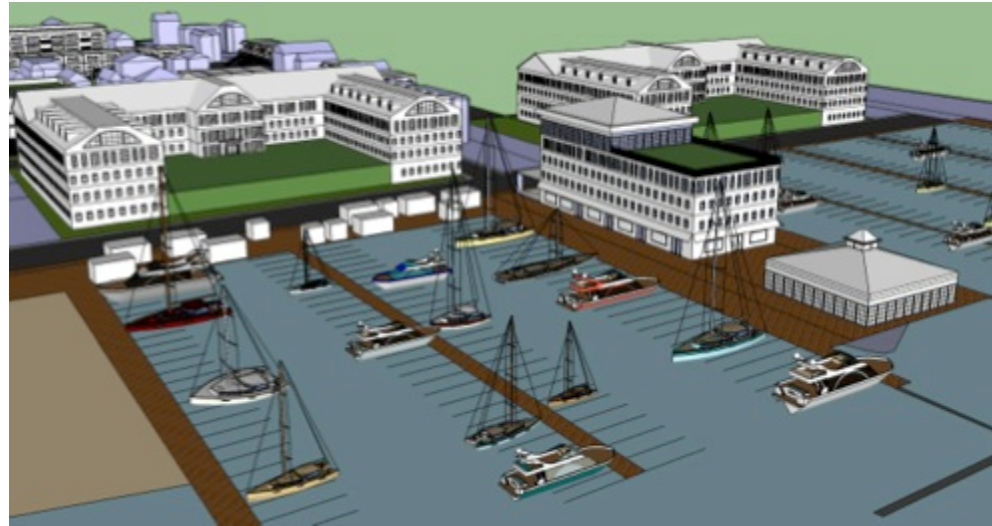
DESIGN VISION

Public Space & Spray Park



DESIGN VISION

The Marina



DESIGN VISION

Waterfront Shops



DESIGN VISION

The Highlands Inn



The Highlands Residence



DESIGN VISION

Civic Building



DESIGN VISION

Parking and Circulation



**Parking Garage
Square Footage**

577,237

**Total Parking
Spaces**

1,675

DESIGN VISION

Visual simulations – what might it look like?



IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS

Options

- ❑ Zoning reform - collapsing 8 zoning districts into 4
- ❑ Uniform Construction Code – properties deemed an “imminent hazard” – tool already used by the Borough
- ❑ Abandoned Properties Rehabilitation Act
- ❑ Local Redevelopment and Housing Law: “Area in Need of Rehabilitation” and “Area in Need of Redevelopment” with, or without, the possibility of using eminent domain

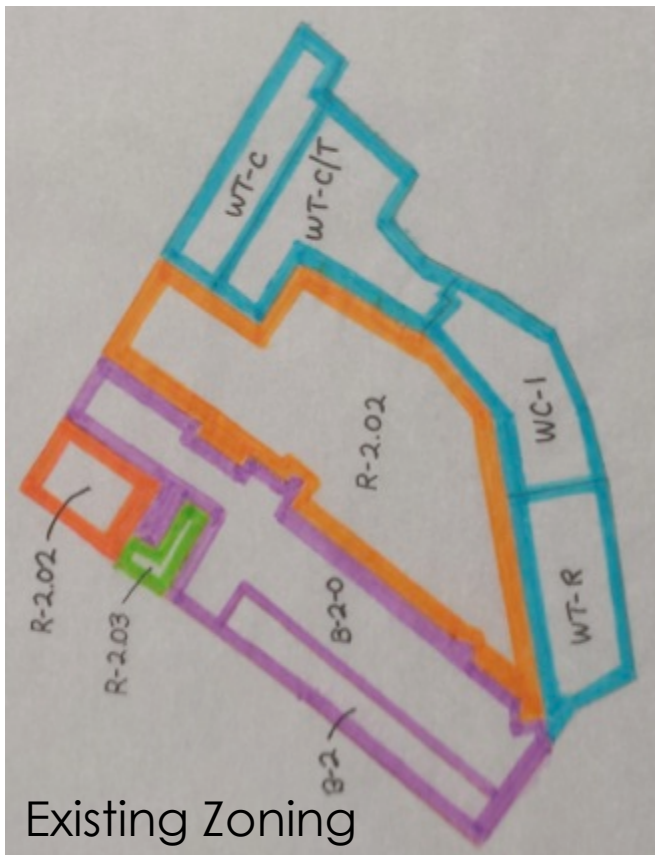
IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS

Municipal Land Use Law: Zoning – NJSA 40:55D et seq

- ❑ Borough creates the planning and legal framework, but does not have a role in implementation
- ❑ Market-driven – the private sector sets the tone and pace
- ❑ Implemented by individual property-owners / developers
- ❑ Development proposals are reviewed by the Planning Board or the Zoning Board
- ❑ Limited public incentives
- ❑ Fragmented, incremental transformation

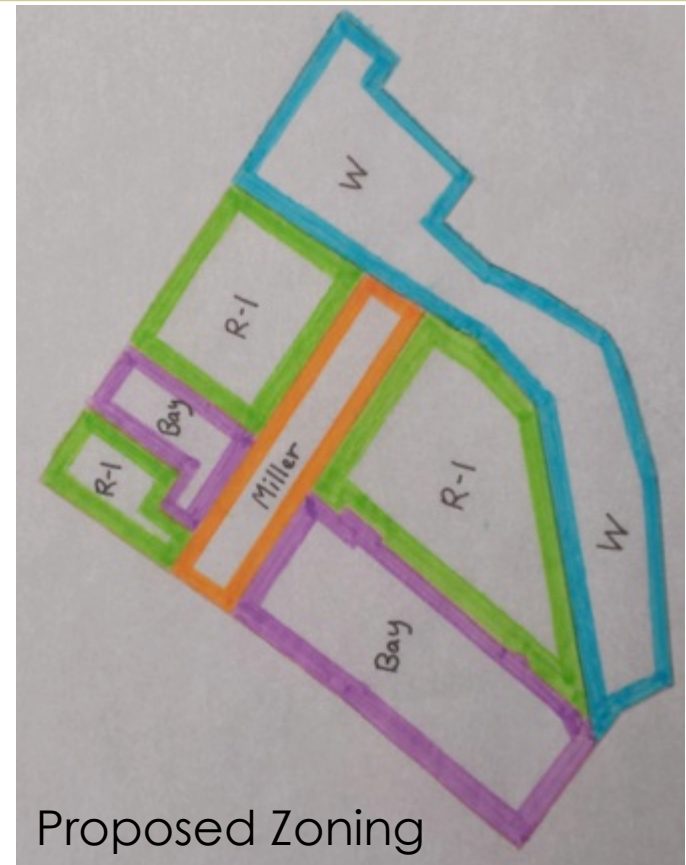


IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS



Existing Zoning

- R-2.02** Single Family Residential
- R-2.03** Single Family Residential
- B-2** Central Business District
- B-2-0** Central Business Overlay District
- WT-C** Waterfront Transition – Commercial
- WC-T/C** Waterfront Transition – Commercial/Townhouse
- WC-1** Waterfront Commercial
- WT-R** Waterfront Transition - Residential



Proposed Zoning

- W** Waterfront
- R-1** Residential
- Miller** Miller Avenue Corridor
- Bay** Bay Avenue Corridor

IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS

Uniform Construction Code – Properties Deemed an “Imminent Hazard”

Properties Deemed an Imminent Hazard
Highlands, New Jersey



Criteria for Intervention:

Emergency actions directed at unsafe buildings/structures

- Fire Hazard
- In Danger of Collapsing
- Unsanitary
- Dangerous to life/welfare
 - Emergency repairs
 - Demolition

Limitations:

- Not a tool for public acquisition
- Cannot compel rebuilding
- Allows risk of land speculation
- Not coordinated with other redevelopment tools
- No “end-game” vision

IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS

Area in Need of Rehabilitation - NJSA 40A:12A et seq

- ❑ Purpose: to restore buildings to a good condition, operation, or capacity; infill vacant lands
- ❑ The Borough adopted a Rehabilitation Ordinance in 2008 and re-adopted it in 2012
- ❑ All of Highlands was designated an area “in need of rehabilitation”
- ❑ Financial incentives are limited to short term tax abatements (up to 5 years, \$25,000); eligibility expires after 10 years from ordinance adoption.
- ❑ Only one application has been filed since the adoption of the rehabilitation ordinance.
- ❑ Conclusion: not providing the incentives needed to get things moving.

IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS

Abandoned Properties Rehabilitation Act - NJSA 55:19-81

APRA

Seasonal Properties with at least 2 additional criteria



Criteria for Designation:

- Not legally occupied for at least 6 Months
- Seasonal properties
- Tax liens
- “in need of rehabilitation”
- Allows the application of “redevelopment” to individual properties without a formal determination of “area in need”

Limitations:

- Applies to abandoned properties only
- Implemented parcel by parcel
- Requires “big picture” strategy for successful outcomes

IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS

Area in Need of Redevelopment, N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5

Possible Redevelopment Opportunities
Windshield Test -- Possible Criteria A or D



Criteria for Designation: A, D Buildings/Improvements

- Dilapidated
- Obsolete layout
- Faulty arrangement
- Unsafe
- Overcrowding

IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS

Area in Need of Redevelopment, N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5

Possible Redevelopment Opportunities Windshield Test -- Possible Criteria B



Criteria for Designation: B Commercial buildings

- Discontinued Use
- Abandoned
- Disrepair

IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS

Area in Need of Redevelopment, N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5

Possibilities for Redevelopment
-- Criteria C or D



Criteria for Designation: C
Unimproved vacant land for at least 10 years and not likely to be developed

- Location
- Remoteness
- Lack of access
- Topography

Criteria for Designation: D
Deleterious land use

IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS

Area in Need of Redevelopment, NJSA 40A:12A-5; 40A: 20-12

Types of redevelopment (at Borough's discretion)

- Non-condemnation
- Condemnation (ie, allows eminent domain)

Possible public financing incentives

- Tax exempt bonds
- Long-term tax exemptions (30/35 years)
- "Payments-in-lieu of taxes ("PILOTS")
- Exemption from sewer hook-up fees
- Conveyance of public lands
- Public / private partnerships

Affordable Housing Trust Fund

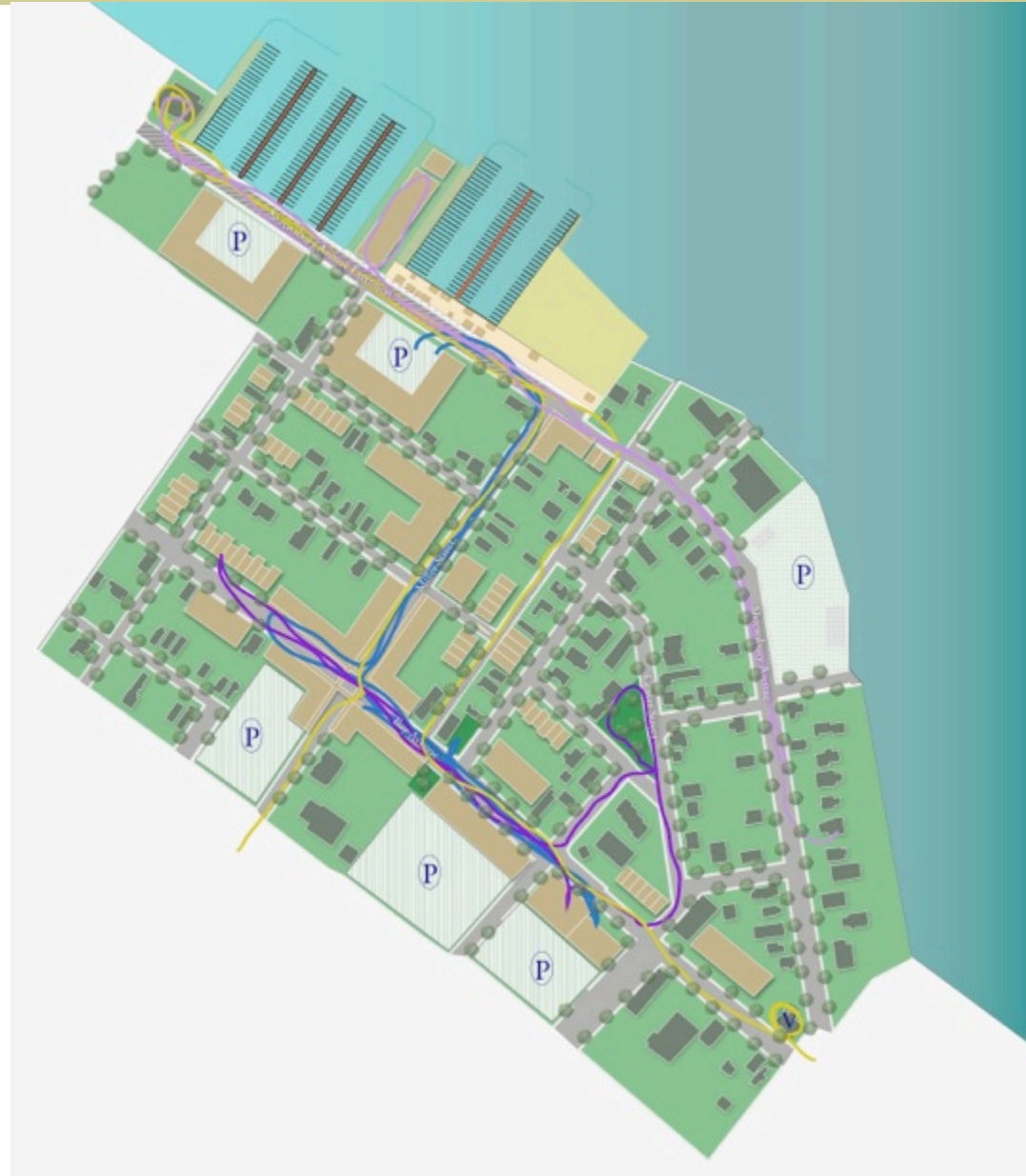
Public space dedication

Developer-funded infrastructure

Puts the Borough in the "driver's seat"

NEW HIGHLANDS

Movement Plan: Year-Round



NEW HIGHLANDS

Movement Plan: Summer Season



NEW HIGHLANDS

Old North Street





NEW HIGHLANDS

This plan achieves:

Residential Units	Residential Square Footage	Inn Square Footage	Retail Square Footage	Total Proposed Square Footage	Parking Spaces Needed	Parking Spaces Total	Jobs Added
393	344,070	53,104	124,595	1,099,006	1,669	2,010	283



Thank You for Inviting Us Into Your Community



QUESTIONS?