



ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

a. Marketing and Branding:

Proper marketing and branding can lead to financing opportunities that the Borough may not have previously contemplated. The Borough may find that the unique character of the Downtown could lead to corporate sponsorship of wayfinding signage, creative use of vacant storefronts for advertising or holiday decoration until new leases begin, and even donations for various improvements. The Borough should work closely with the Business Improvement District to implement a marketing and branding strategy.

b. Wayfinding:

Wayfinding is a valuable tool that can be utilized to create a more efficient circulation system and enhance the retail environment. All signage should be developed consistent with the architecture of the Downtown. Such signage should relate to the features of the Downtown in terms of location, scale, color, lettering, materials, texture and depth. Signs should be proportionate and complement the buildings, existing signs and surroundings.

The Borough may work with owners of corner buildings to affix community directional signs to buildings. Such signs should not obscure, conflict with, or cover any architectural element or window and must be aligned with major building elements such as windows, trim and structure lines.

c. Water Quality and Flood Control Improvements

Shabbecong Creek is a tributary to the Pohatcong Creek. It originates in Washington Township, travels through the Borough, and empties into the Pohatcong (west of the Borough's sewage treatment plant located in Washington Township). The creek itself has been classified a Category 1 (C-1) stream. To date, there has been quite a bit of work performed through the "Conceptual Stream Corridor Protection Plan" dated January 16, 2006

by the Borough Engineer Robert Miller. There is also a number of recommendations that remain to be accomplished. To coincide with these worthy efforts, this Plan also recommends pursuit of the non-structural recommendations in-concert with the recommendations for Sub Area 4 and Sub Area 5. This Plan is consistent with the Borough's ongoing efforts with regard to this important watercourse and will in-fact improve the stream's water quality while also seeking to address flood mitigation.

d. Highlands Plan Conformance

The Borough has received 2 grants, one being an analysis of the impacts and opportunities that the Highlands Regional Master Plan presents the Borough, and the other, an analysis of Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) opportunities. The Borough will have to consider the impacts that these regional initiatives will have on the Borough and this Plan.

The Borough is in the Highlands Planning Area and not the Preservation Area. This designation renders the Borough's conformance to the Highlands Regional Master Plan voluntary. The Highlands recognizes that in order to preserve land in the Preservation Area, growth areas must be identified. As such, the Borough is uniquely positioned to work with the Highlands even though sewer and water capacities are limited under today's current treatment plant configurations and allowances. The critical factor in participating in the Highlands will be the scale of new development densities associated with TDR.

e. Low-Impact Design/ Green Design

The Borough should continue to review and encourage sustainable design practices within all redevelopment projects. As technology and markets improve, the Borough should consider revising this Plan to mandate additional “Green” standards for development. Notwithstanding a future mandate, the Borough should always encourage low impact design practices and performance standards such as these put forth by the Green Building Council.

f. Affordable Housing; Council on Affordable Housing (COAH)

COAH recently released new regulations addressing the Statewide need for affordable housing and each municipality’s obligation in accordance with the Fair Housing Act. While Highlands towns were offered a 1 year extension for the Borough to draft a plan for COAH’s certification, the Borough should take immediate steps to comply with these new regulations as the COAH/Highland Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has significant impacts on the Borough’s ability to approve development and even issue permits as mundane as new awnings. Development of affordable housing should be created within the Redevelopment Area and it is recommended that all projects include the COAH mandated 20% affordable unit counts.



IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

This Plan recommends the following implementation schedule with a focus on prioritization.

a. First Priorities

Sub Area 2- Public parking lot design and acquisition process.

1. Continue working toward the most efficient design of the new public parking area.

2. Continue to pursue acquisition of strategic sites in order to ensure that the long-term vision of this plan can be realized and the most functional design of the parking lot can be achieved while allowing the potential for a future parking garage.

Sub Area 3- Gateway Improvements of Route 31 and Route 57 intersection.

- Because improvements to this intersection will take time to implement, the Borough should initiate discussions with the NJDOT to get the process started. Points worthy within such a discussion include:
 1. Elimination of right turn only lanes.
 2. Boulevard treatments.
 3. Clear, distinct crosswalk delineations.
 4. Pedestrian head countdown installations.
 5. Additional gateway treatments.
 6. Costs and Time lines.

BID- The Borough should continue working with the BID and design and implement a wayfinding system.

Second Priority

Sub Area 6- Redevelopment opportunities

1. Sub Area 6 presents the Borough’s most salient development opportunity. Upon adoption of this Plan, the Borough should consider creating a Request for Proposals (“RFP”) to gauge the interest in development of Sub Area 6.
2. The Borough should work with property owners in this Sub Area to develop a comprehensively designed parking layout that coordinates existing and future parking needs.



GENERAL PROVISIONS

Third Priorities

Sub Area 4- Redevelopment Opportunities

1. Explore the redevelopment opportunities for the properties located at the corner of Broad Street and Washington Avenue.
2. Determine the viability of a shared parking area along Broad Street and Allegar Street.

Sub Area 5- Coordination of Borough-owned property with business community needs.

- Borough-owned property is available to satisfy a number of the community's needs, namely:
 1. Public parking.
 2. A multi-purpose public gathering place that can work to spur economic development activity that may also enable the Borough to conduct events such as a farmer's market and festivals.
 3. Property for flood protection and water quality improvements. The Borough should work with the Highlands and NJDEP to identify funding opportunities to restore the Shabbecong Creek bank, increase flood storage for residents downstream as well as improving water quality for this C-1 tributary.

Fourth Priority

Sub Area 1- Redevelopment/ Rehabilitation efforts

- The Borough should engage in conversations of the property owners of this Sub Area to determine existing redevelopment and rehabilitation opportunities.

a. Redeveloper Agreements

Any development or construction within the Redevelopment Area must be undertaken in accordance with a fully executed valid and binding redevelopment agreement with the designated redevelopment entity. The redevelopment entity shall be the entity authorized by the Borough's governing body to implement this Plan and carry out the various redevelopment projects within the Redevelopment Area. The redevelopment agreement must be in full force prior to granting final site plan approval.

b. Procedure for Amending the Plan

This Plan shall be in effect for 30 years from the time of adoption. The Mayor and Municipal Council for the Borough may amend, revise or modify this Plan as they see appropriate and in the best interest of the people of the Borough.