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# State of New Jersey

## HIGHLANDS WATER PROTECTION AND PLANNING COUNCIL

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## **DRAFT** CONSISTENCY REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT

**PETITION FOR PLAN CONFORMANCE AND CENTER DESIGNATION:  
TOWN OF BELVIDERE, WARREN COUNTY**

Prepared by the State of New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and  
Planning Council in Support of the Highlands Regional Master Plan

**APRIL 23, 2025**

**NEW JERSEY HIGHLANDS WATER PROTECTION AND PLANNING COUNCIL**  
**Petition for Plan Conformance –Draft Consistency Review and Recommendations Report**

**PETITION SUMMARY**

<b>Municipality:</b>	<u>Town of Belvidere</u>
<b>Date of Petition Submission:</b>	<u>April 3, 2025</u>
<b>Conformance Area:</b>	<u>Planning Area</u>
<b>Staff Recommendation:</b>	<u>Approve Petition with Conditions</u>

**Summary of Petition Submittal**

1. Resolution for a Notice of Intent of Plan Conformance Within the Planning Area and in Accordance with the Highlands Regional Master Plan
2. Town of Belvidere, Warren County, NJ – Highlands Council Plan Conformance Petition, dated March 31, 2025.

The Town of Belvidere, located in Warren County, has 950 acres in the Planning Area of the Highlands Region where Plan Conformance is voluntary. Belvidere is a regional center, serving as the County seat amid a rural agricultural landscape, providing access to many of the goods and services residents throughout the area rely on. The Town is located at the junction of the Delaware and Pequest Rivers and is bordered by the State of Pennsylvania and White Township, New Jersey. As the County seat of Warren County, the Town is home to over 2,500 residents. The core of the Town is characterized by historic buildings, with many several serving as courthouse and administration buildings, surrounded by single-family homes.

The Belvidere Historic Waterfront Business District oversees several programs in the Town including a façade and streetscape improvement program, grants for façade rehabilitation, and the Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP). The program was awarded a five-year grant from NJ DCA Neighborhood Preservation Program with a focus on the Historic Waterfront Business District. The NPP Implementation Plan was adopted in 2021. The study was updated in 2022 with the goal of “Redistrict/Rezone Specific Town-wide Areas for Economic Growth”. Expansion and rezoning of the district was completed in 2024

In accordance with Section 15 of the Highlands Act (N.J.S.A. 13:20-15), the Town has indicated its intent to revise its master plan and development regulations, as applicable to the development and use of land in the planning area, to conform with the goals, requirements, and provisions of the Regional Master Plan (RMP). The Town shall proceed in revising its master plan and development regulations in accordance with the Highlands Council’s adopted Plan Conformance Procedures (RMP Addendum 2019-2). There will be additional opportunities to more firmly align the overall planning with specific regulations and policies of the RMP as noted in this recommendation report. These opportunities will be pursued as implementation of Plan Conformance proceeds. The Plan Conformance tasks outlined below facilitate these efforts.

**NEW JERSEY HIGHLANDS WATER PROTECTION AND PLANNING COUNCIL**  
**Petition for Plan Conformance –Draft Consistency Review and Recommendations Report**

On April 14, 2025, the Town of Belvidere approved a resolution indicating the municipality's intention "to revise its master plan and development regulations for Plan Conformance to the Highlands Council" and in March of 2025 the Town completed their Initial Assessment. These actions affirm the Town's commitment to engage in the Highlands Plan Conformance process.

In the process of completing its Initial Assessment for Plan Conformance, the Town determined that Highlands Center designation was in the best interest for the municipality. Areas along the Delaware River, former BASF site (north), and Block 1 Lot 8 (central) have been the subject of substantial redevelopment planning consistent with the Town's historic development as an economic and cultural center. It is the intention of the Town to incorporate these redevelopment plans and designations into the comprehensive center planning that will be required as a component of Plan Conformance implementation. This initiative was completed with assistance of Highlands Council funding, as an eligible component of the Highlands Council Plan Conformance program. The resultant analyses propose designation of a Highlands Center within the Town, which is intended to advance the goals and intents of both the Town Master Plan and the Highlands Regional Master Plan (RMP).

**Center Designation Review**

**Proposed Boundaries:** The Town of Belvidere is 100% Planning Area. The entirety of the Town will be contained within the center boundaries except for a portion of vacant land in the north of the Town to remain Protection Zone outside of the Center boundary. Areas along the Pequest River, western boundary, and along the undeveloped portions of the Delaware River will be designated as a Highlands Environmental Resource Zone (HERZ). Areas along the Delaware River and Lot 1 Block 8 in the center of Town have been the subject of extensive Redevelopment Planning. These HERZ will be subject to enhanced planning intended to maximize resource protection while providing valuable infill development and redevelopment opportunities.

Highlands Environmental Resource Zones (Appendix B): *A Highlands Environmental Resource Zone (HERZ) is a land area within a designated center that contains environmentally sensitive resources. The delineation of the HERZ recognizes that a designated center, while generally suitable for future development and redevelopment, may contain areas of sensitive resources that may require additional protections. Each HERZ will be identified according to its features and be afforded appropriate planning and management as part of the comprehensive center planning.*

The majority of the proposed Town of Belvidere Center is currently developed and identified as Existing Community Zone. Undeveloped areas within the Town are constrained by Open Water Protection Areas, and forest resources. Highlands resources within the developed area are very limited. Where Highlands resources do exist within the proposed Highlands Center, they will be protected in the same manner as those resources existing in the Protection Zone of the Planning Area. The Town, through its center planning process, will evaluate the need for additional HERZ boundaries as appropriate and incorporate existing and future Redevelopment Plans to recognize and protect sensitive resources while furthering the goals of the Center. As a condition of approval, the requirements of the Protection Zone septic density and the limitation of extension of public/community water and sewer to any area designated as a Highlands Environmental Resource Zone (HERZ) shall apply.

**NEW JERSEY HIGHLANDS WATER PROTECTION AND PLANNING COUNCIL**  
**Petition for Plan Conformance –Draft Consistency Review and Recommendations Report**

**Available Infrastructure:**

Public Water Service: The Town of Belvidere is serviced by New Jersey American Water as its potable water system. The system has a permitted capacity of 28.4 MGM and 219 MGY under the Water Allocation Permit. In 2005 a moratorium on new connections was placed on the system due to limitations in firm capacity. Improvements to the wells and distribution system remedied the issue. The moratorium was lifted in 2006.

Wastewater Service: The Town of Belvidere owns and operates a municipal sewer treatment plant. The treatment plant has a permitted flow of 0.5 MGD. The current average flow is 0.401 MGD. Though some capacity will likely be regained through an Inflow and Infiltration study, capacity currently exists for limited infill development.

**Staff Recommendation**

On the basis of the components of the Conformance Petition, outlined above, Highlands Council Staff recommends that the Petition for Plan Conformance, including Center Designation and Implementation Plan and Schedule for the Town of Belvidere, be approved with conditions as outlined below. These mandatory conditions (except as noted) will bring the Town into alignment with the Highlands Plan Conformance Procedures, the Highlands Regional Master Plan (RMP) and the Highlands Act. Not all items below are funded in the current Implementation Plan and Schedule, these items are intended to be funded at a later date. The Town of Belvidere will not be required to complete unfunded items until funding is provided.

The following items are intended to be completed consistent with the Town's center planning process to ensure continuity of the goals and objectives of the center. The Highlands Center Designation shall not be effective until the completion of the Center Planning Process and confirmation by the Highlands Council.

- 1. Development of a Comprehensive Center Plan-** The Town shall undertake a comprehensive Center Planning Process inclusive of public outreach, stakeholder engagement, and economic development. The resultant Plan shall incorporate or modify existing Redevelopment Plans and identify where further study is appropriate.
- 2. Adoption of Approved Highlands Plan Conformance Ordinance-** The Town shall review the model Highlands Plan Conformance Ordinance, prepare it in accordance with the procedures set forth for Center Designation and submit it to the Highlands Council for final approval. Upon receipt of approval, the Town shall formally adopt it after noticing and public hearings in accordance with the municipality's standards for ordinance adoption.

**NEW JERSEY HIGHLANDS WATER PROTECTION AND PLANNING COUNCIL**  
**Petition for Plan Conformance –Draft Consistency Review and Recommendations Report**

At the conclusion of the process the Town shall submit a certified copy of the Ordinance to the Highlands Council with notice of its effective date.

- a. Adoption of Updated Zoning Map** – The municipality shall prepare an updated Municipal Zoning Map which shall be adopted immediately following or at the time of adoption of the Highlands Area Land Use Ordinance, to reflect the new overlay Highlands Zones and Sub-Zones, including the Highlands Designated Center and approved Highlands Environmental Resource Zones (HERZ). The adoption process shall mirror that outlined above for the Highlands Plan Conformance Ordinance.
- 3. Adoption of Approved Highlands ERI** – The Town shall review the Highlands Interactive Environmental Resource Inventory (ERI) as it relates to municipal resources and notify the Council of any necessary updates. Upon conclusion that the ERI is accurate, the municipal Land Use Board shall provide for and complete the required process of formal adoption of the ERI. At the conclusion of the process, a copy of the minutes of the meeting(s) shall be provided to the Highlands Council.
- 4. Adoption of Approved Master Plan Highlands Element** – The municipality shall prepare the Master Plan Highlands Element and submit it to the Highlands Council for final approval. Upon receipt of final Highlands Council approval, the municipal Planning Board shall arrange for the required process of scheduling, notice, public hearing, consideration, and formal adoption of the Highlands Element by the municipal Land Use Board. At the conclusion of the process, a certified copy of the adopted Highlands Element shall be provided to the Highlands Council.
- 5. Stormwater Management Plan** – The municipality shall prepare an updated Stormwater Management Program to include, at a minimum, three components: 1) GIS mapping of stormwater outfalls; 2) Amend municipal stormwater control ordinance; and 3) Adoption of a stormwater mitigation plan.
- 6. Water Use and Conservation Management Plan** – The municipality shall prepare a Water Use and Conservation Management Program to include four components: 1) Update/revise net water availability calculations for relevant subwatersheds; 2) Develop a municipal-wide Water Use and Conservation Management Plan; 3) Implement water conservation/deficit mitigation strategies identified in the Plan; and 4) Monitor, review and update Plan as necessary.
- 7. Municipal Exemption Determination Ordinance (optional)** – Adopt the Highlands Municipal Exemption Determination Ordinance and designate municipal officials to serve as exemption designee(s).

**NEW JERSEY HIGHLANDS WATER PROTECTION AND PLANNING COUNCIL**  
**Petition for Plan Conformance –Draft Consistency Review and Recommendations Report**

- 8. Infill and Infiltration Study** – Complete an Infill and Infiltration (I&I) study to identify leaks in the existing wastewater infrastructure and provide for future capacity.
- 9. Utilities Plan Element-** Update the Town’s Utilities Plan Element consistent with current State and Highlands requirements.
- 10. Housing Element and Fair Share Plan–** Revise the Town’s Housing Element and Fair Share Plan consistent with the 2024 Fair Housing Act and Highlands Affordable Housing Guidance.
- 11. Transfer of Development Rights** – Conduct a phase 1 Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) feasibility analysis. If warranted, phases 2-4 will follow.

**NEW JERSEY HIGHLANDS WATER PROTECTION AND PLANNING COUNCIL**  
**Petition for Plan Conformance –Draft Consistency Review and Recommendations Report**

**APPENDIX A**

**HIGHLANDS IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND SCHEDULE**  
**Belvidere Town, Warren County, New Jersey**

**DRAFT**  
**Union Township, Hunterdon County, New Jersey**  
Highlands Implementation Plan and Schedule

Amended Grant Agreement Task #	PLAN CONFORMANCE TASK	Proposed Cost Fiscal Year 2025	Future Projects (requires future HC Approval)	Status and Comments
1	Housing Element and Fair Share Plan	\$ 25,000.00		Affordable Housing Round IV Tasks (inclusive of Housing Element and Fair Share Plan)
1a	Adoption of Implementing Ordinances	\$ 5,000.00		Adoption of ordinances required as per the Fair Share Plan
2	Highlands Interactive Environmental Resource Inventory	\$ 3,000.00		Review Highlands Interactive ERI, propose amendments as necessary, and adopt.
3	Highlands Element of Municipal Master Plan	\$ 6,000.00		Adoption of Highlands element and reexamination report.
4	Municipal Master Plan Elements (as applicable)			
	a. Land Use Plan Element		TBD	Municipal Priority - To include a climate change related hazard vulnerability assessment.
	b. Land Preservation and Land Stewardship Plan Element			
	c. Sustainable Economic Development Plan Element			
	d. Historic Preservation Plan Element			
	e. Trails Planning			
5	Adoption of Highlands Land Use Ordinance	\$ 5,000.00		Adoption of Highlands Land Use Ordinance serves to protect municipal resources; future land use ordinance amendments may follow to update existing municipal ordinances.
6	Update Municipal Land Use Ordinances			
7	Zoning Map Update			
	Resource Management Plans and Programs			
	a. Water Use and Conservation Management Plan		TBD	Funding available upon signed tri-party agreement & municipal scope of work
	b. Habitat Conservation and Management Plan			
	c. Stream Corridor Protection/Restoration Plan			
	d. Wastewater		TBD	Conduct an Inflow and Infiltration study to determine possible leaks in wastewater system.
8	e. Lake Restoration Management Plan		TBD	Conduct watershed assessment of lakes greater than 10 acres for the causes of eutrophication and other water quality impairments and develop recommendations for watershed management measures to be implemented.
	g. Scenic Resource Management Plan			
	h. Municipal Stormwater Management Plan	\$50,000	TBD	Preparation of Stormwater Management Plan including MS4 Requirements
	i. Regional Stormwater Management Plan (if applicable)			
	j. Land Preservation and Land Stewardship Program			
	k. Forest Stewardship Plan			
	Board of Health Ordinances			
	a. Septic System Maintenance			
	b. Potential Contaminant Source Management			
	Implementing Ordinances for Management Plans and Programs			
	a. Water Use and Conservation Management Plan Ordinance		TBD	
	b. Habitat Conservation and Management Plan Ordinance			
	c. Stream Corridor Ordinance		TBD	
	d. Lake Restoration Management Plan Ordinance			
	e. Tree Clearing Ordinance			
	f. Right to Farm Ordinance (if applicable)			
	g. Scenic Resource Mgmt Ordinance (if applicable)			
	h. Stormwater Management Ordinance			
	i. Other Ordinance Provisions (specify)			
	Redevelopment and Brownfields Opportunities			
	a. Highlands Redevelopment Area Planning			
	Highlands Center Planning	\$ 30,000.00	TBD	
	Public Outreach/Education			
	RMP Updates			
9	Attendance at Highlands Council Training Sessions			
	a. Municipal Exemption Determinations		\$ 500.00	Adopt Municipal Exemption Determination Ordinance
	b. Ordinance Administration: Application Procedures, Implementation, Enforcement			
	Estimated Subtotal	\$ 124,000.00		

*\*The Highlands Council is available to provide technical assistance and guidance through the adoption of any of the above listed plans. The Highlands Council is committed to providing financial support for all Plan Conformance activities once funding becomes available.*



**NEW JERSEY HIGHLANDS WATER PROTECTION AND PLANNING COUNCIL**  
**Petition for Plan Conformance –Draft Consistency Review and Recommendations Report**

**APPENDIX B**

**HIGHLANDS INITIAL ASSESSMENT AND CENTER DESIGNATION REPORT**  
**Belvidere Town, Warren County, New Jersey**



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# Highlands Initial Assessment and Center Designation Report

Town of Belvidere  
Warren County, New Jersey

Prepared: March 31, 2025

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## I. Introduction

The Town of Belvidere was awarded a grant by the New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council (“Highlands Council” or “Council”) to perform preliminary municipal Plan Conformance activities for lands within the Planning Area where municipal Plan Conformance is voluntary. The grant, known as the Highlands Initial Assessment Grant, is to be used to fund the following activities:

- Assess existing municipal planning program for consistency with the Highlands Regional Master Plan (RMP) (i.e., by review and comparison between the RMP and municipal Master Plan, Zoning, Land Use, & Development Ordinances, and Environmental Resource Inventory);
- Determine whether RMP Updates (factual corrections) are needed to make the RMP accurate and up-to-date (including maps, tables, and technical data);
- Evaluate the extent of the municipal planning program changes necessary to achieve “Basic” and/or full Plan Conformance;
- Prepare any of the actual documents, inventories, maps, master plan and/or regulatory updates required to achieve Basic and/or full Plan Conformance; and
- Determine the estimated cost to achieve Basic and/or full Plan Conformance.

The purpose of this report is to document the findings related to the grant activities specified by the Council. A review of the Regional Master Plan (“RMP”) has been completed and inconsistencies between the RMP and Town’s planning and land use regulations have been identified and discussed in general terms herein. Recommended updates to the RMP’s data and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping layers have been detected and detailed. Finally, an estimated cost to achieve Plan Conformance was developed based upon the items that would need to be completed in order to obtain Plan Conformance.

### A. Highlands Regional Master Plan Summary

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The New Jersey Highlands Region covers over 850,000 acres and includes 88 municipalities in parts of seven counties – Bergen, Hunterdon, Morris, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex and Warren. The greater Highlands Region is divided into two parts: the Preservation Area and the Planning Area, where Belvidere is located.

The significance of the Highlands Region is that it provides water to over 50% of New Jersey’s population. Portions of Bergen, Essex and Hudson County obtain more than 75% of their drinking water from the Highlands Region. In 2004, the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act was passed, which designated specific boundaries for both the Preservation and Planning Areas. The Highlands Council was immediately created and required to develop a Regional Master Plan (RMP) that establishes capacity limits for future growth within the Region to protect the State’s natural resources. The Highlands Council approved the RMP on July 17, 2008, which sets forth the goals, policies and objectives necessary to implement the Highlands Act.

There are a number of requirements that the RMP must address, specifically it is required to include a resource assessment that presents information concerning the amount and type of development that can be provided without detriment to the quality of the Region. These resources include, but are not limited to, steep slopes, water bodies, wetlands, streams, endangered species, priority farmland, existing community character and transportation. All of these resources have the ability to limit the Region’s development capacity.

### B. Belvidere Community Profile

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The Town of Belvidere is located in the western portion of Warren County and contains approximately 1.4 square miles, all of which is within the Planning Area. Belvidere is located at the junction of the Delaware and Pequest Rivers, and is bordered by the State of Pennsylvania across the Delaware River and White Township in New Jersey. Although Belvidere is only one square mile, it is the county seat of Warren County and home to over 2,500 residents as of 2023.

Considered by the State as a Rural Planning Area, the Town is within a sewer service area and the majority of properties are served by public water. Belvidere is characterized by a small downtown with a variety of historic buildings surrounded by predominately single-family homes. As of 2003, approximately 88% of the municipality's parcels are residential. Another 7% of parcels are commercial uses and 9% of parcels are vacant land.<sup>1</sup>

### *Population*

Between 2000 and 2020, Belvidere's population decreased to 2,520, down 251 persons since the 2000 Census. This decline contradicts the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority's projections of growth between 2015 and 2050.

Belvidere has an average age of 43.8 years old. In terms of racial and ethnic characteristics, 87% of Belvidere residents identify as white; of those remaining, 7% identify as two or more races, 2% as some other race, 1% as Black or African American, 0.9% as Asian, and 0.3% as Native American. The Hispanic or Latino population accounted for 8% of the population. The 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) estimated that 5.1% of the population spoke a language other than English at home.<sup>2</sup>

The 2023 ACS estimates that Belvidere had 1,220 housing units, of which 1,200 were occupied and 20 were vacant. Of the occupied units, 53% were owner-occupied and 47% were renter-occupied. Single-family attached and detached housing was the predominant housing type, accounting for an estimated 61% of the housing stock.<sup>3</sup>

### *Education*

The 2022 ACS estimated that 26% of Belvidere's population age 25 or older had obtained a bachelor's degree or higher and 22% of the population had graduated from high school and did not have a bachelor's degree (inclusive of those with some college or an associate's degree). Those with less than a high school degree accounted for 4% of the population. The portion of the population currently enrolled in post-secondary education was 4%. A further 12% of the population was enrolled in nursery, primary, or secondary school.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, Office of Local government Services, property tax information – Property Value Classification 2023.

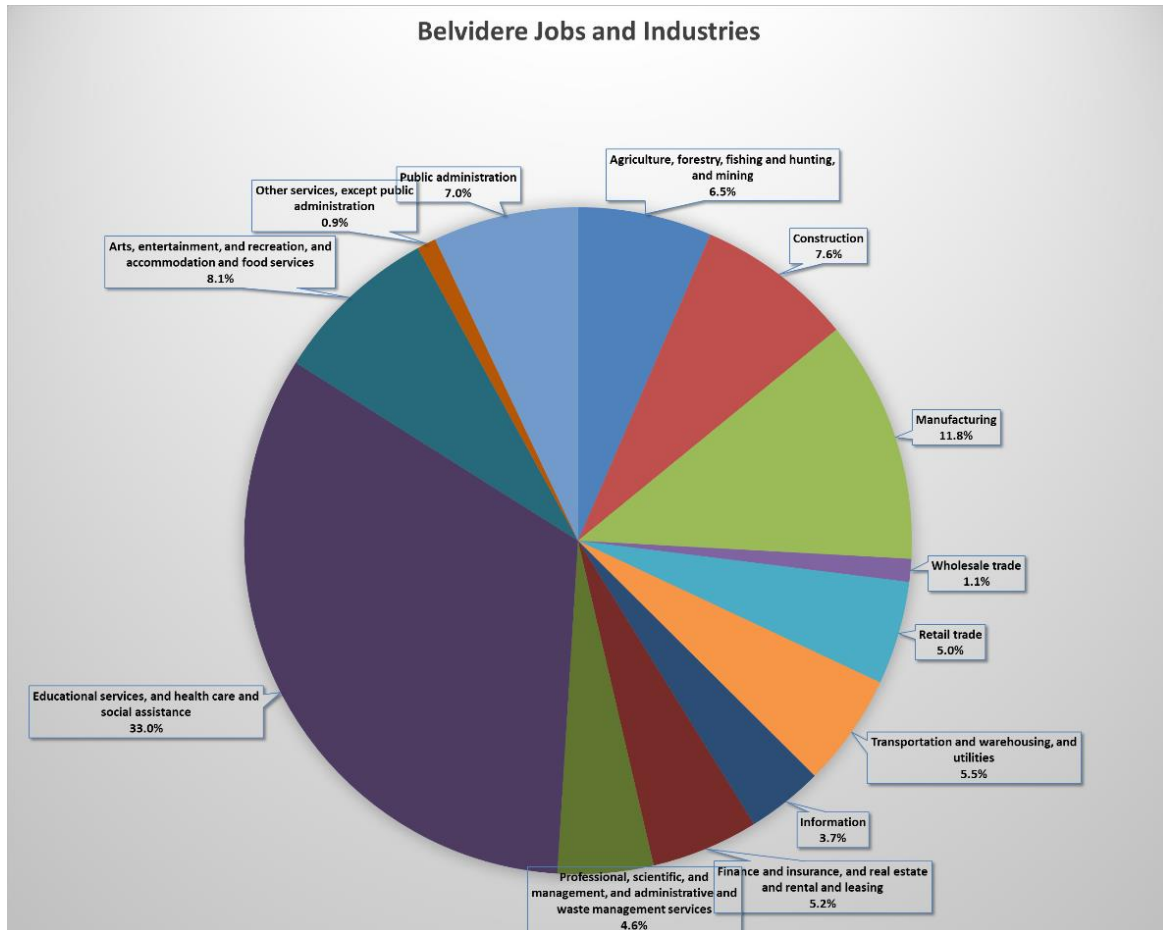
<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census, Decennial Census 2020, Tables P3 and P4. American Community Survey 2023, 5-Year Estimates, Table S0601.

<sup>3</sup> American Community Survey 2023, 5-Year Estimates, Table DP04.

<sup>4</sup> American Community Survey 2023, 5-Year Estimates, Tables S1501 and S1401.

## Jobs and Industries

The median household income in Belvidere was estimated as \$100,334. The portion of the population below the poverty level was 9.1%.<sup>5</sup> Industries within which workers were employed are as shown below.



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<sup>5</sup> American Community Survey 2023, 5-Year Estimates, Table DP03.

## C. Planning Context

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### *Affordable Housing*

Belvidere petitioned COAH for Third Round Substantive Certification on May 26, 2010, with a Housing Element and Fair Share Plan adopted by the Planning Board on December 9, 2008. COAH deemed the petition complete on August 16, 2010, but due to the ongoing litigation and subsequent invalidation of N.J.A.C. 5:97, the petition was never processed and certified by COAH. Pursuant to the March 10, 2015, Supreme Court Order, Belvidere filed a motion with the court on July 8, 2015, seeking a Declaratory Judgement that the municipality has fulfilled its constitutional obligation to provide affordable housing. On November 29, 2016, Belvidere entered into a Settlement Agreement with the Fair Share Housing Center to memorialize the terms of settlement of the Town's affordable housing obligations. On March 9, 2017, a Fairness Hearing was held and the Honorable Judge Miller approved the Settlement Agreement. The Superior Court issued an Order on April 3, 2017, finding the Settlement Agreement to be fair and deemed it to be preliminarily in compliance with the Town's affordable housing fair share obligation. The Superior Court held a Final Compliance Hearing on February 20, 2018, and a Conditional Order of Judgment of Compliance and Repose ("JOR") was issued by Judge Miller on February 20, 2018, which found that the Town to be in compliance with its constitutional obligation to create a realistic opportunity for affordable housing. Upon demonstration that the Town has met the conditions, the Town is granted repose and immunity from exclusionary zoning litigation through July 1, 2025. The Town of Belvidere was not required to adopt a mandatory inclusionary housing set-aside ordinance.

### *Historic Waterfront Business District – Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP)*

The Belvidere Historic Waterfront Business District oversees a façade and streetscape improvement program, material grants for commercial façade rehabilitation, and the Neighborhood Preservation Program. This program was awarded a 5-year, \$125,000 grant from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs' Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP) to assist with economic and community development, as well as technical assistance from a team of place-based revitalization experts. The focus was on revitalizing the Historic Waterfront Business District.

In 2021, a NPP Implementation Plan was adopted, identifying several goals and related projects that the NPP wished to undertake in the coming years. In 2022, that Implementation Study was updated, and the goal of "*Redistrict/Rezone Specific Town-Wide Areas for Economic Growth*" identified.

The NPP Implementation Plan recognizes the Historic Waterfront Business District ("the HWB District") which is overseen by the Town of Belvidere NPP team and stakeholders. The HWB District "*once housed Victorian two-story balconied businesses, riverside barns and mills for local commerce, with picturesque views of converging rivers with easy access from dozens of walkable access zones. The district is ripe for a revitalization because it offers multiple options to improve the quality of life for its citizens, and visitors that come to the town. Eateries, local shopping, nightlife, outdoor recreational activities, small business, and more are all located within this district*" (District Implementation Plan Update 2023, pg. 20).

The HWB District, as recently expanded, is irregularly shaped but runs roughly along Market Street/Greenwich Street, Prospect Street/Hardwick Street, Mansfield Street, Water Street, Front Street, Second Street, and Third Street. The specific HWB District boundaries are shown on the attached map.

There are four zones within the HWB District: B (Business – Retail), R-75 (Single-Family Residential), LM (Light Manufacturing), and CH (Courthouse).

The Planning Board adopted a Master Plan Amendment in October 2023, which recommended that the zoning code be amended to create an overlay district that would be coterminous with the HWB District as per NPP Implementation Plan. The Master Plan recommended that the overlay district consideration include:

- A future overlay zone should permit conditional uses to allow ground floor commercial occupancy of existing structures. Such uses would mirror most of the B – Business – Retail zone and would include retail stores; offices; personal service stores or studios; restaurants.
- The underlying zone and permitted uses and bulk requirements would remain in effect.
- It is recommended that the overlay encompass the entire HWB District for continuity of zoning.
- Conditions for the overlay should include permitting commercial uses on the ground floor in residential districts while keeping the upper floors residential, hours of operation, limiting façade modifications and building expansions in order to preserve the character of the buildings, and other necessary site plan and performance considerations, which may include parking, lighting, noise, etc.

The Town Council adopted Ordinance No. 2-24=27 on December 9, 2024, which created the Business Overlay District (BO). The intent and purpose of the BO Business Overlay District is to encourage downtown business development within the Historic Waterfront Business District adopted in 2021 as part of the Neighborhood Preservation Program ("NPP") Implementation Plan. The intent of the BO District is to provide incoming businesses with more options for potential locations, as Belvidere does not have vacant properties to build upon, thereby generating activity, economic growth, and small business development. The BO District is intended to allow for single-family dwellings to be converted to mixed-use by allowing for limited commercial uses on the ground floor of the existing residential structures. The BO District encompasses the R-75 (Single-Family Residential), LM (Light Manufacturing), and CH (Courthouse) Districts within the Historic Waterfront Business District boundaries. Property owners may continue to develop their properties in accordance with the underlying zoning. Optionally, the BO District permits mixed-use conversions of structures originally constructed for single-family residential as a conditional use, subject to compliance with certain conditional use standards.

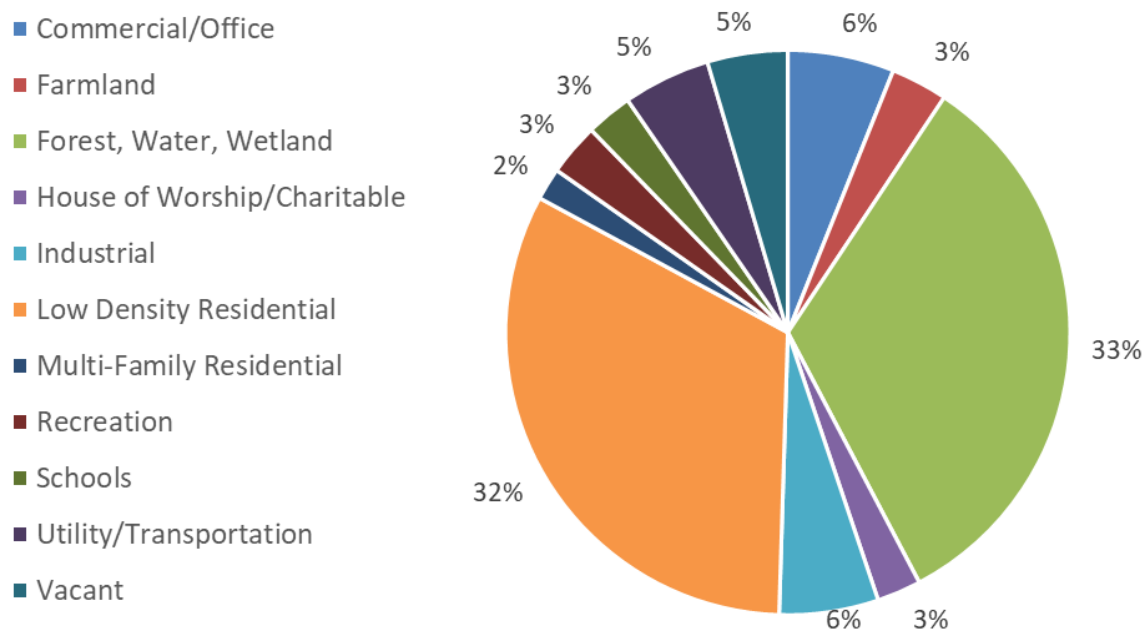
## D. Land Use and Zoning

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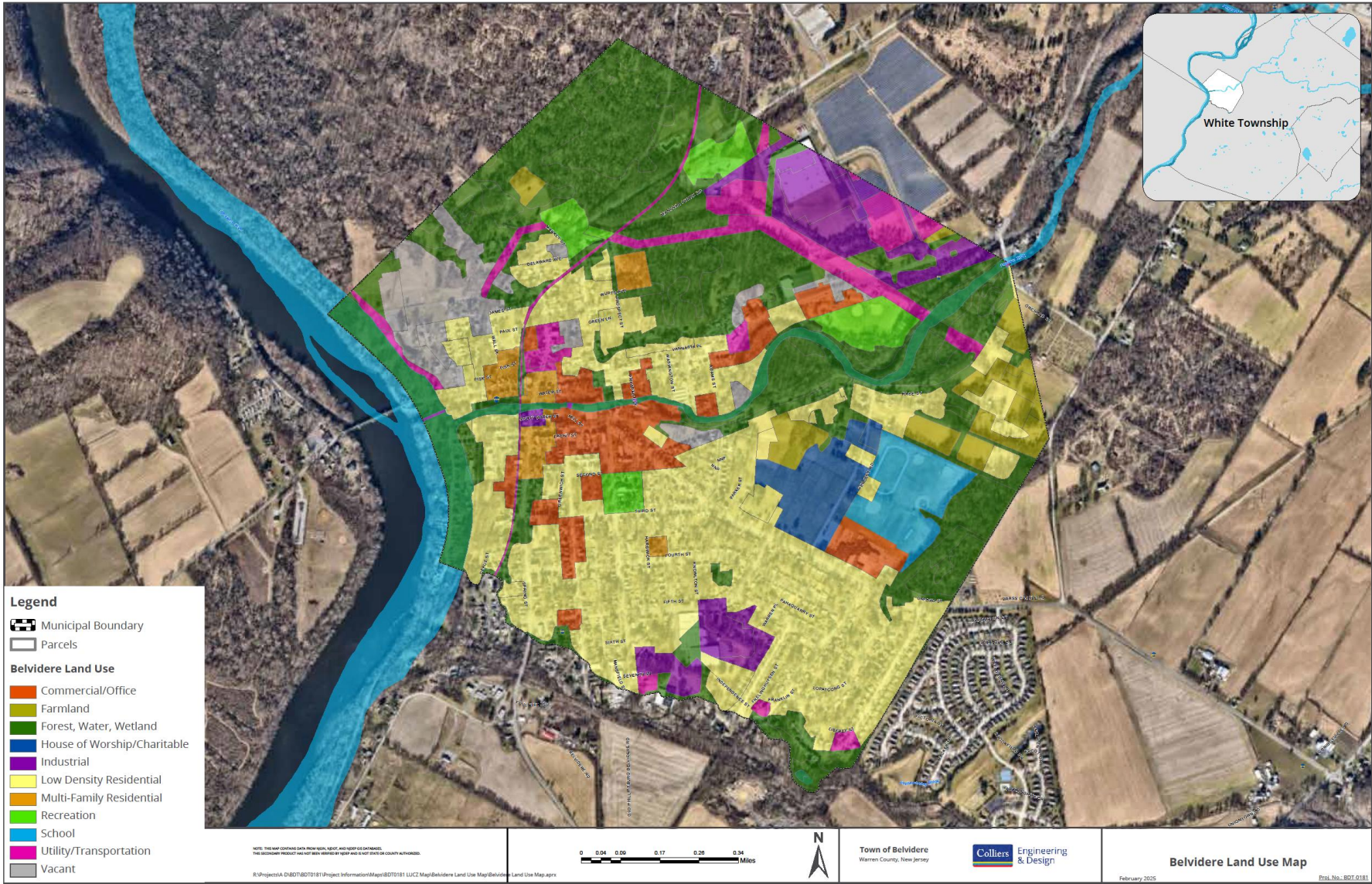
### *Land Uses*

According to the NJDEP Land Use/Land Cover data, the two most predominant land uses in Belvidere are low density residential (32%) and forest, water, and wetland areas (33%). All other uses have relatively low percentage of land area, with both industrial and commercial/office each at 6%; utility/transportation (which includes roads, railroad rights-of-way, etc.) and vacant land each at 5%; and all other uses at 3% or less. The following map shows the distribution of these land uses.

Belvidere Land Use Distribution







## *Zoning*

The Town of Belvidere has eleven zoning districts, including two single-family residential districts, two multifamily districts, two business districts and one business overlay, two industrial districts, a courthouse district, and an open space and recreation district.

### **Single-Family Residential Districts (R-100 and R-75)**

The Town's single-family residential districts permit single-family detached dwellings; houses of worship, public parks and, in the case of R-100, playgrounds, agriculture and horticulture. The R-100 zone requires a minimum lot area of 20,000 square feet and a maximum lot coverage of 20%, whereas the R-75 zone requires 11,250 square feet of lot area and 25% lot coverage. Both allow a maximum building height of 35 feet. Both also require a minimum ground floor area, with R-100 requiring 1,200 square feet and R-75 requiring 1,000 square feet.

### **Multifamily Districts (R-M and MFATWFH)**

Belvidere has two multifamily districts. The R-M district allows for single-, two-, and multiple dwellings as well as houses of worship and public parks and playgrounds. This district has a minimum lot area of 130,000 square feet, a maximum lot coverage of 20%, and a maximum building height of 35 feet. The code also regulates unit size, starting at 600 square feet and increasing with bedroom count.

The MFATWFH district (Multi-Family Age Targeted Work Force Housing), on the other hand, allows single-family semi-detached dwellings, townhouses, stacked townhouses, patio homes, and flats. For large-scale developments, rather than regulate lot size, this district has a minimum tract size of 35 acres to accommodate 250 units, or 6.75 units per acre, a maximum lot coverage of 45%, and a maximum building height ranging from 35 to 40 feet depending on housing type. Within such development, fee-simple patio homes are permitted on lots of 4,500 square feet. The code also regulates unit size, with a minimum requirement of 750 square feet.

The MFATWFH zone has additional requirements, including the inclusion of two low-and moderate-income housing units and a minimum of 35% of the overall tract area be specifically set aside for recreation or common open space.

On May 29, 2018, the Town Council declared approximately 37 acres south of Manunkachunk Road and east of Wurtz Street in the northern part of Belvidere as a non-condemnation area in need of redevelopment (Resolution R2018x40). This designation followed detailed investigation conducted by Maser Consulting (now Colliers Engineering and Design, Inc.) and the Planning Board and a public hearing on April 3, 2018, where the Board recommended such designation to the governing body.

The redevelopment area, which consists of one tax parcel designated as Block 2, Lot 8, is currently vacant and is mostly wooded. Traversed by a 150' right of way for transmission lines in the northern portion of the tract near Manunkachunk Road, the site is characterized by severely constrained slopes along its southern and northern boundaries, which in combination with the utility lines presents a challenge for development. These challenges also present an opportunity to conceal redevelopment from adjacent parcels, which include residential uses on the western and southern limits of the redevelopment area.

The Town Council adopted a Redevelopment Plan for the property in 2019, which was later repealed and replaced with a new Redevelopment Plan in 2023. The Redevelopment Plan acts as an overlay to the MFATWFH (Multi-Family Age Targeted Work Force Housing) District. The Redevelopment Plan permits light manufacturing; warehouse and distribution centers; cannabis cultivation, manufacturing and processing; and residential development in accordance with the MFATWFH Zone (including single-family semi-detached

dwelling, townhouses, stacked townhouses, patio home and flat units). The property received site plan approval from the Planning Board on February 6, 2024 for development of a 370,000 square-foot warehouse.

### **Business and Commercial Districts (B, C, and BO)**

The B district allows retail stores, offices, banks, personal services, restaurants, theaters, and municipal parking. There is a significant list of conditional uses permitted: Funeral home; Membership club; Museum, art gallery, community center building and library; Bus passenger station; Single- or two-family detached dwelling; Multiple dwelling; Public utility building or structures; Hotel and motel; Multiple dwellings above office and/or retail business use; and Essential services.

The C district allows for a much broader range of commercial uses: Gas station and automotive sales; Retail store, office, office building, restaurant, tavern; Telephone exchange building; Bank, savings and loan association; Personal service store or studio, or shop for custom work; Business or vocational school; Automobile sales agency with accessory service facilities; Dry-cleaning plant, laundry; Wholesale establishment, distribution station; Printing plant, newspaper plant; Theater or motion-picture theater, other than an outdoor drive-in theater; Municipal or proprietary parking area; Workshop. Further, a list of conditional uses is provided, as: General medical and surgical hospital; Car washing station; Funeral home; Membership club; Museum, art gallery, community center building; Bus passenger station; Public utility building or structure; Single- or two-family dwelling; Multiple dwelling; Hotel, motel; and Essential services.

Both the B and C districts have no minimum lot regulations, though a maximum coverage of 40% is established and a maximum height of 35 feet.

The BO district is a business overlay which allows only conditional uses in an effort to provide incoming businesses with more options for potential locations. The BO District is intended to allow for single-family dwellings to be converted to mixed-use by allowing for limited commercial uses on the ground floor of the existing residential structures. The BO District overlays portions of the R-75, LM, and CH Districts within the Historic Waterfront Business District boundaries. The conversion of structures originally constructed and occupied as single-family dwellings are conditionally permitted to convert ground floor space into: Retail store; Office; Personal service store or studio; Restaurant or cafe without drive-through; and Bed-and-breakfast residences. A number of conditions pertaining to location, business hours, and parking have been established.

### **Courthouse District (CH)**

The Town's CH district allows single-family detached dwellings; Government office and use; Mixed-use residential and professional office; and House of worship. Furthermore, conditional uses include: Public or private school; Community center building and public library; Public utility building(s) or structure(s); Two-family dwellings; Essential services; and Bed-and-breakfast residences.

This district has a minimum lot area of 11,250 square feet, a maximum lot coverage of 25%, and a maximum building height of 35 feet. Residential units must have a minimum floor area of 600 square feet.

### **Light Manufacturing Districts (LM and B/LM)**

The LM District allows Light manufacturing; Offices, office building, research institute or laboratory; Storage building; Public utility building or structure; Membership clubs; Warehouses; and Cannabis cultivation, manufacturing, and processing facilities. Bus passenger stations are conditional uses.

The B/LM is designed as a hybrid light manufacturing and business district, allowing all permitted principal uses in both the B and the LM zones, in addition to warehouses and coffee roasters. All conditional uses in the B and LM zones are similarly conditional in the B/LM zone.



Both zones require a minimum lot area of 40,000 square feet, a maximum lot coverage of 35%, and a maximum building height of 35 feet.

The Belvidere Planning Board adopted a Master Plan Amendment in January 2021 which recommended that the LM District be amended to permit minor solar and photovoltaic energy systems as an accessory use in all zoning districts, and major solar and photovoltaic energy systems as a principal permitted use, as well as cannabis cultivation, manufacturing and processing as a principal permitted use. The Town Council adopted Ordinance No. 2021-02 on February 8, 2021 to these uses in the LM Zone.

### **Open Space Recreation District (OSR)**

The purpose of the OSR district is to protect areas of environmental sensitivity, including floodplain and flood hazard areas, and to allow for reasonable use of land. The permitted uses in the OSR district are open space and active or passive recreation. Single-family residential uses are conditionally permitted. No yard or bulk requirements are established. Circulation

## *Circulation*

### **Roads**

The Town's network of roadways is almost entirely local roads. County Roads 620 (Greenwich Street and Water Street) and 623 (Oxford Street) are classified as Major Collectors by the NJDOT. There are truck height and weight restrictions on the two County Roads.

The Town has a prioritized list of repair projects for local roads, which it implements on an annual basis. There is a need for the Town to undertake larger roadway projects, including installation of an emergency bypass under the railroad tracks. The Town is also desirous of completing a Town-wide traffic study and circulation plan to ensure the safe and efficient movement of people using motorized and non-motorized transportation modes. Such a study must also account for future development and growth of Belvidere as Center.

### **Transit**

No public transit serves Belvidere.

### **Bicycle and Pedestrian Connections**

Belvidere has limited pedestrian connections. Sidewalks are primarily along County Road 620 with limited smaller connections at areas of newer development. There are no bike lanes, however the 2021 Warren County Transportation Master Plan analyzed bicycle compatibility county-wide and found that Belvidere has number of roadways that could accommodate bicycle use, ranging from a Level of Traffic (LTS) 1 (most compatible) through 3 (need for improvements to enhance safety).

In 2022, the Town conducted an evaluation of the roadway system to recommend improvements to accommodate bike lanes or shared lanes. The following segments were evaluated for possible bicycle treatments: Oxford Street from Hardwick Street to the Municipal Boundary, Pequest Road and Race Street loop bounded by Oxford Street, Front Street from Hardwick Street to Municipal Boat Ramp, Prospect Street between Oxford Street and Water Street (C.R. 620), Water Street (C.R. 620) from Hriczak Field to the Riverton-Belvidere Bridge, Market Street between Water Street (C.R. 620) and Manuka Chunk Road, and Manuka Chunk Road from Market Street to Municipal Boundary.

Colliers Engineering & Design conducted the evaluation referencing the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO), AASHTO, and local/state bicycle guidelines to comprehensively review several alternatives with the assumption that no physical changes to curb or sidewalk should be considered at this time.

The study made the following conclusions:

- It's feasible and recommended for painted Shared Lane Markings (SLMs) / Sharrows to be installed in the travel lane in their respective direction with traffic on the corridors of Oxford Street, Race Street/Pequest Road, Front Street, Prospect Street, Water Street (C.R. 620) and Market Street.
- It is not feasible and not recommended for painted dedicated Bicycle Lane and Shared Lane Markings (SLMs) / Sharrows on the Manuka Chunk Road corridor.
- Provide appropriate signing that designates each bicycle facility.
- The total new linear bicycle facilities miles that are proposed is 7.5 miles.
- Concept Signing and Striping Plans for the recommended bicycle facilities in the Township of Belvidere have been provided.
- Estimated costs for the aforementioned is \$47,200.00.

## *Recreation*

### **Trails**

While the county does have a regional trail network, the only regional trail that is near Belvidere is an old rail trail passing from the Delaware River in White Township. A small walking and bike loop is located on Manunkachunk Road at the Belvidere Pool property, and there is a perimeter trail along the Pequest River at Hriczak Field.

### **Parks**

Belvidere has the following park facilities:

- boat access on 7.02 acres at the Delaware River
- 4-acre County Courthouse Park
- 24.5-acre Hriczak Field between Water Street and the Pequest River. It provides baseball/softball/and soccer fields and a tot lot, as well as a perimeter trail along the Pequest River.
- 7.3-acre area of open space on Race Street adjacent to NJ State Fish and Game property providing fishing access
- Bud Jones Park on Water Street
- There is also a playground at the former 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Elementary School and recreational fields at the High School

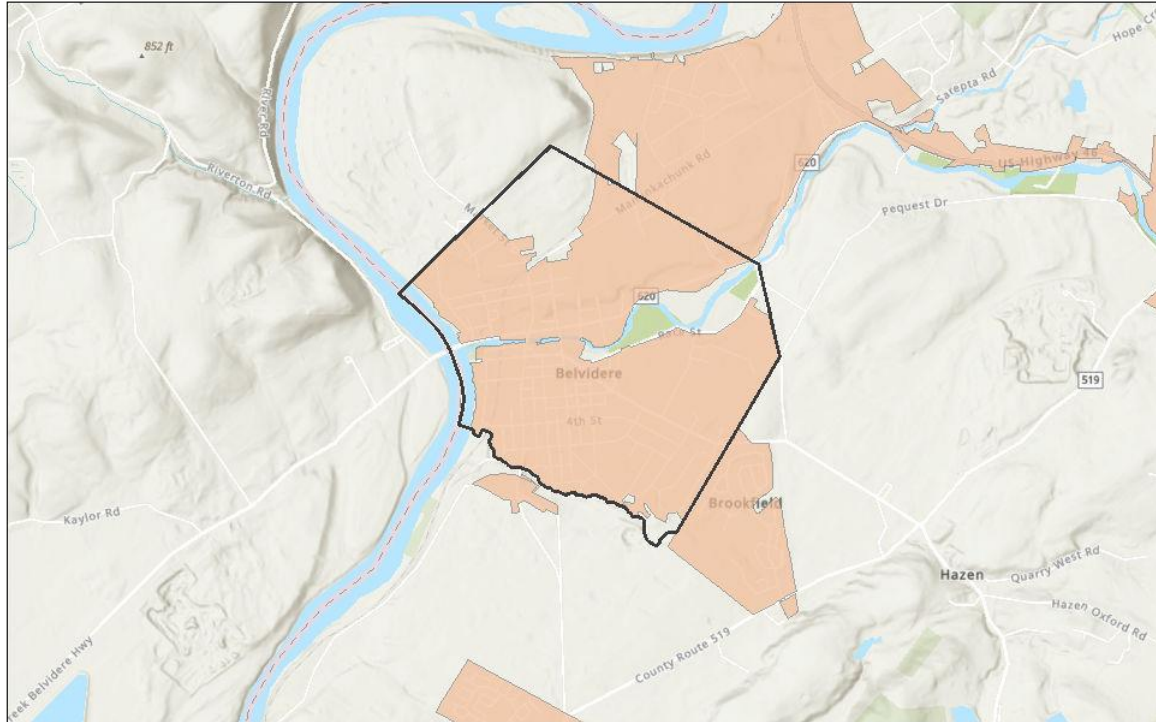
## *Infrastructure*

### **Sewer Service**

The Highlands ERI indicates that 753.1 acres of the Town (79.2%) is within a sewer service area. The mapped sewer service area includes areas that are currently served (i.e. connected to) by permitted wastewater treatment facilities as well as areas of permitted discharges to surface or groundwater. Based on the map view, the only land area portions of the Town that are outside a sewer service area include the far northern wooded area of town north of Manunkachunk Road, Hriczak Field park, and woodlands at the southern tip of Town.

The Town indicates a need to complete infill and infiltration (I&I) work to accommodate future development and growth.

## Belvidere Sewer Service Area



2/28/2025

- Belvidere Town
- Sewer Service Area

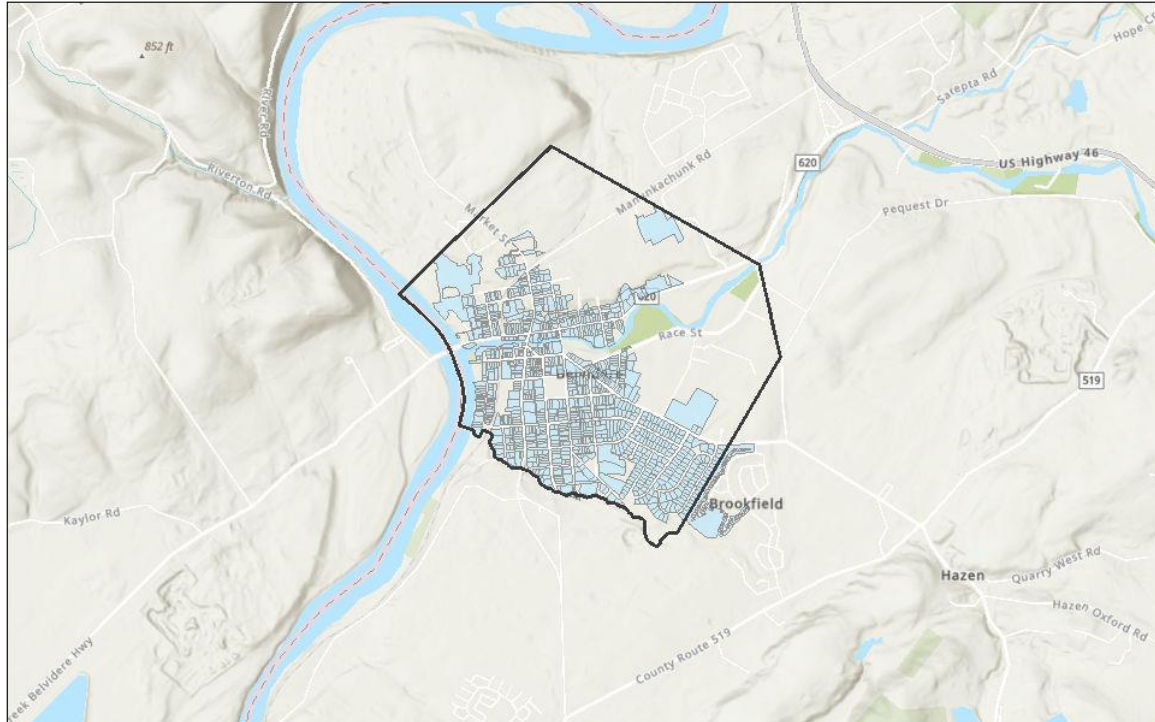
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This map was developed using the New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council Geographic Information System digital data, but this secondary product has not been verified by the Highlands Council and is not state-authorized.

## Public Water

Belvidere receives its potable water from New Jersey American Water Company, which has a capacity of 28.5 MGM and 219 MGY as part of their diversion privilege under Water Allocation Permit.

## Belvidere Water Service Area



2/28/2025

- Belvidere Town
- Public Water — Existing Areas Served

Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, FEMA, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

This map was developed using the New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council Geographic Information System digital data, but this secondary product has not been verified by the Highlands Council and is not state-authorized.

The available municipal planning documents and regulations do not have any specific policies for potable water capacity, quality or service area expansion. The Utilities Element has not been updated since 1979 and should be reevaluated in light of the numerous changes in regulations at the State level. The Land Use Ordinance does not contain any language with regard to potable water or water in general.

## II. Highlands Indicators and Protections

### A. Land Use Capability Zones

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#### *Overview*

In 2008, the Highlands RMP created Land Use Capability Zones to “provide regional guidance for the implementation of the policies contained in the Regional Master Plan,” and to determine the overall carrying capacity for development. Using this carrying capacity metric, both natural resource capacity and infrastructure capacity must be addressed to establish an appropriate development density, and “growth can only occur if the natural resource carrying capacity (e.g., water supply source, pollutant assimilative capacity, ecological viability) and infrastructure carrying capacity (e.g., public water supply, wastewater treatment, and transportation systems) are available”

A map was also created to “recognize the range and nature of land throughout the Highlands Region and assign an overlay zone that best represents the requirements of the Highlands Act and the policies of the Regional Master Plan.”

The Highlands Council has three primary overlay zones and four sub-zones, each with their own purpose, application, and development criteria. The zones and sub-zones are defined as follows, as taken directly from the RMP:

The **Protection Zone** consists of high natural resource value lands that are important to maintaining water quality, water quantity and sensitive ecological resources and processes. Land acquisition is a high priority in the Protection Zone and development activities will be extremely limited; any development will be subject to stringent limitations on consumptive and depletive water use, degradation of water quality, and impacts to environmentally sensitive lands.

The **Wildlife Management Sub-Zone** consists of both areas managed by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service as part of the National Wildlife Refuge System and Wildlife Management Area System administered by the NJDEP Division of Fish & Wildlife’s Bureau of Land Management. These areas are part of a network of lands and waters for conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats and permit compatible wildlife-dependent recreational uses such as hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education and interpretation. There is no minimum mapping threshold for the delineation of the Wildlife Management Sub-Zone.

The **Conservation Zone** consists of areas with significant agricultural lands and interspersed with associated woodlands and environmental features that should be preserved when possible. Non-agricultural development activities will be limited in area and intensity due to infrastructure constraints and resource protection goals.

The **Conservation Zone – Environmentally Constrained Sub-Zone** consists of significant environmental features within the Conservation Zone that should be preserved and protected from non-agricultural development. Development activities will be limited and subject to stringent limitations on consumptive and depletive water use, degradation of water quality, and impacts to environmentally sensitive lands.

The **Existing Community Zone** consists of areas with regionally significant concentrated development signifying existing communities. These areas tend to have limited environmental constraints due to previous development patterns and may have existing infrastructure that can support development and redevelopment



provided that such development is compatible with the protection and character of the Highlands environment, at levels that are appropriate to maintain the character of established communities.

The **Existing Community Zone – Environmentally Constrained Sub-Zone** consists of significant contiguous Critical Habitat, steep slopes and forested lands within the Existing Community Zone that should be protected from further fragmentation. They serve as regional habitat “stepping stones” to larger contiguous Critical Habitat and forested areas. As such, they are not appropriate for significant development and are best served by land preservation and protection. Development is subject to stringent limitations on consumptive and depletive water use, degradation of water quality, and impacts to environmentally sensitive lands.

### *Land Use Capability Zones in Belvidere*

There are five Land Use Capability Zones in Belvidere – Existing Community Zone, Existing Community Zone – Environmentally Constrained Subzone, Conservation Zone - Environmentally Constrained Subzone, Protection Zone, and Wildlife Management Sub-Zone.

The majority of Belvidere is in the Existing Community Zone or its associated Environmentally Constrained subzone. The northern and northwesternmost edges of town are in the Protection Zone (105 acres); pockets along the Pequest River and Delaware River are Wildlife Management Sub-Zones (34.1 acres); farmland and forestland on the eastern municipal boundary is Conservation – Environmentally Constrained Sub-Zone (62.1 acres).

<b>Land Use Capability Zones in Belvidere</b>	<b>Area (Acres)</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Existing Community Zone	568.8	68.6%
Existing Community Environmentally Constrained Sub-Zone	62.1	7.5%
Protection Zone	105.0	12.7%
Wildlife Management Sub-Zone	34.1	4.1%
Conservation – Environmentally Constrained Sub-Zones	59.5	7.2%
Total Land Area	829.5	100%
Source: “Land Use Capability Zones” GIS Geodatabase. NJ Highlands Council, NJGIN Open Data. Published June 3, 2024.		



## B. Sensitive Land and Water Resources and Protections

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The Town's Stormwater Management Code acknowledges the need for environmental considerations in §433-6.C as part of the development of a stormwater plan.

Environmental site analysis. A written and graphic description of the natural and man-made features of the site and its surroundings should be submitted. This description should include a discussion of soil conditions, slopes, wetlands, waterways and vegetation on the site. Particular attention should be given to unique, unusual, or environmentally sensitive features and to those that provide particular opportunities or constraints for development.

The summaries and maps below of all sensitive land and water resources are taken directly from the Highlands Regional Interactive Environmental Resource Inventory (ERI) unless otherwise noted.

### *Waterways and Streams*

Belvidere Town contains 3.1 miles of one or more C-1 waterways. C-1 waterways within Belvidere Town are:

- Pequest River: 2.0 miles
- Pophandusing Brook: 1.1 miles
- Pophandusing Brook UNT: 337.2 feet

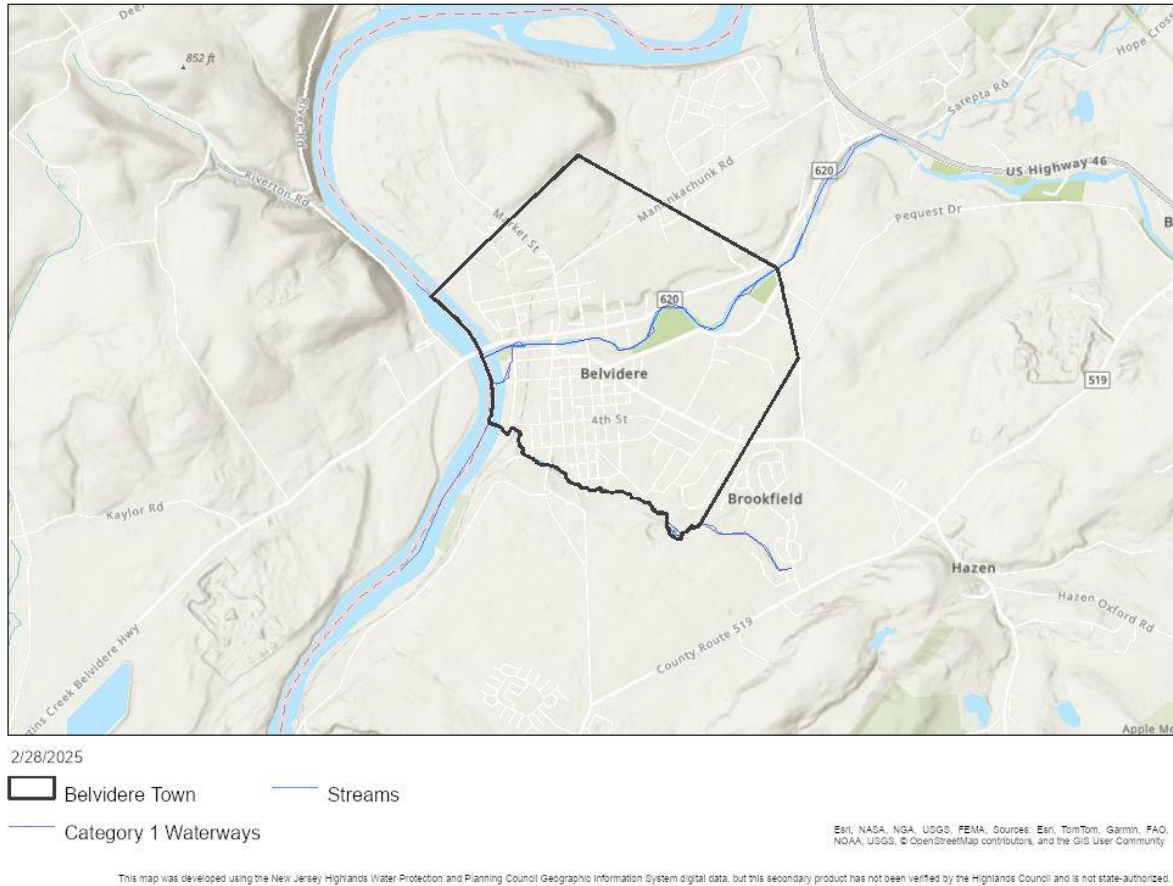
Policies regarding surface water classifications and surface water quality criteria that are necessary to protect the quality of New Jersey's surface waters are found in the Surface Water Quality Standards (SWQS), established under the New Jersey Administrative Code at N.J.A.C. 7:9B. Waterways designated as Category 1 (C-1) have Exceptional Ecological Significance, are an Exceptional Fisheries Resource, are defined as having an Exceptional Water Supply Significance, or have Exceptional Recreational Significance. Additionally, within the Highlands Region, C-1 waterways are typically capable of supporting reproductive populations of trout and other species that are highly dependent upon exceptional water quality. The C-1 classification signifies the highest level of protection for waterways throughout the Highlands and the rest of New Jersey.

Belvidere Town contains multiple streams totaling 2.9 miles in length. Among the streams are:

- Pequest River: 1.5 miles
- Pophandusing Brook: 4,653.6 feet
- Delaware River: 1,880.8 feet
- Delaware River tributary: 813.8 feet



## Belvidere Waterways and Streams



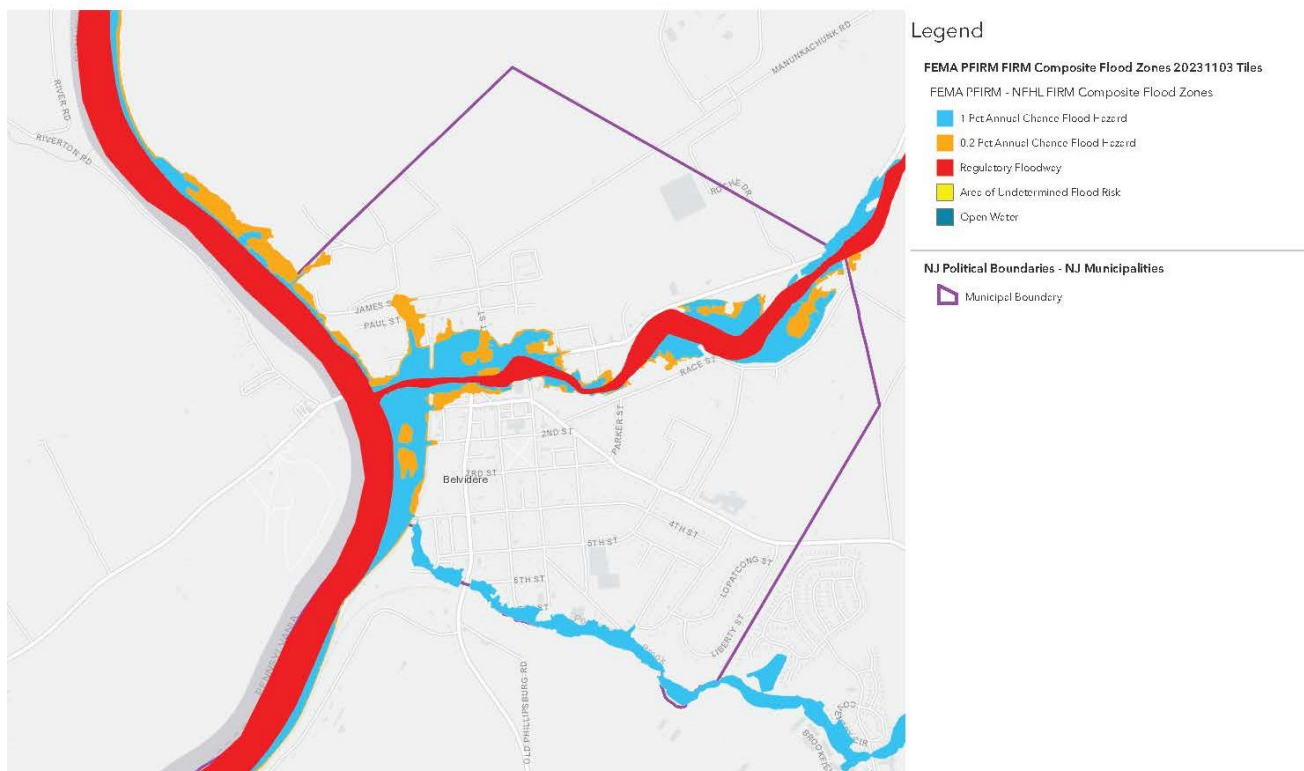
### *Flood Hazard Areas*

A total of 950.5 acres, or 100.0 percent, of Belvidere Town is located within one or more Special Flood Hazard Area, as follows:

- X: 820.7 acres (86.3%)
- AE: 116.9 acres (12.3%)
- A: 12.8 acres (1.4%)

Flood hazard areas identified by FEMA are classified as Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHAs). These areas are defined as being inundated by a flood event having a one-percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year. The one-percent annual chance flood is also referred to as the base flood or 100-year flood.

Moderate Flood Hazard Areas (MFHAs), labeled Zone B or Zone X (shaded), are areas between the limits of the base flood and the 0.2-percent annual chance, or 500-year flood. Areas of minimal flood hazard, which are the areas outside the SFHA and higher than the elevation of the 0.2-percent-annual-chance flood, are labeled Zone C or Zone X (unshaded).



Source: FEMA PFIRM FIRM Composite Flood Zones 20231103 Tiles

## Wetlands and Riparian Areas

A total of 29.6 acres, or 3.1%, of Belvidere Town contains mapped wetland areas as of 2015.

Wetlands are important natural resources that contribute significantly to an area's social, economic, and environmental health. Among the services they provide are filtration of chemicals, pollutants, and sediments from water, flood control, critical habitat for wildlife, and recreation and tourism.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) regulates many activities in a wetland, including removing vegetation, filling, and placing obstructions. Depending on the environmental value of a particular wetland, there may also be a transition area, or buffer, around the wetland that will require a waiver issued by the NJDEP for any activity within that zone. The RMP and Highlands Act include wetlands in its definition of Highlands Open Waters and thus they are afforded a 300-foot protection area.

A total of 225.8 acres, or 23.8%, of Belvidere Town is comprised of Riparian Areas.

The Regional Master Plan identifies Riparian Areas as the integration of flood prone areas, riparian soils, wetlands and streams, and wildlife corridors. Specifically, they include:

- **Flood Prone Areas:** defined as United States Geological Survey documented and undocumented flood prone areas and Federal Emergency Management Agency 100-year floodplain.
- **Riparian Soils:** a soil exhibiting a shallow depth to seasonal high-water table, or alluvial soil.
- **Wetlands and Streams:** all mapped streams and wetlands that are adjacent to a stream as identified in the Highlands Open Water Inventory

- Wildlife Corridors: a 300-foot corridor on each mapped stream bank or from the stream centerline if no stream bank is mapped.

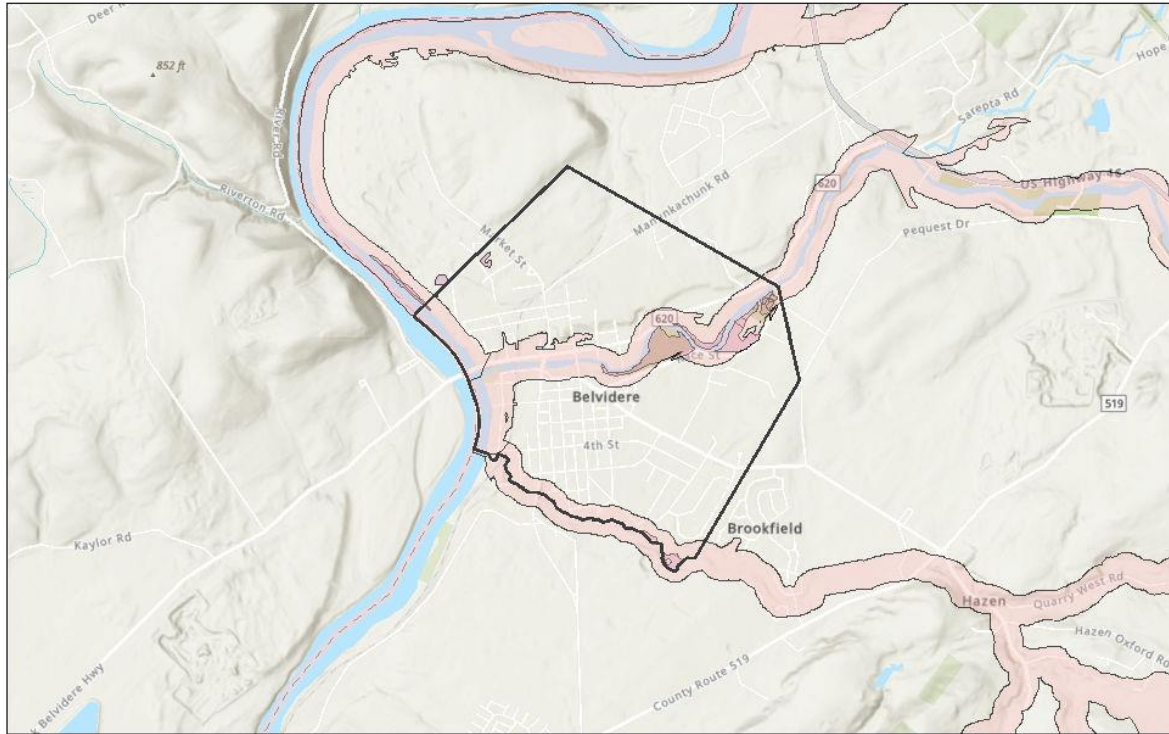
Riparian Areas serve as an interface between surface water bodies (e.g., streams, rivers, lakes, or reservoirs) and terrestrial ecosystems. Riparian Areas are hydrologically connected to surface water through overland surface runoff, hydric soils, wetlands, or subsurface flow. They moderate fluctuations in water temperature, help maintain groundwater recharge and stream base flow, stabilize stream banks, and provide flood storage areas.

During high flow or overland runoff events, riparian areas reduce erosion, and sediment loads to surface water and remove excess nutrients and contaminants from flood water. Riparian Areas also provide habitat and for a variety of animal species and support terrestrial and aquatic food webs through deposition of woody debris. The effectiveness of riparian areas is influenced by their size, intensity, type of land use, and riparian corridor condition (e.g., soils, slope, vegetation, wetlands, and floodplain).

Anthropogenic disturbance to riparian areas often significantly alters the movement and storage of water that is critical to ecological functions. Land use changes, impervious (i.e., paved) surfaces, and riparian vegetation removal decrease infiltration rates within riparian areas and increase overland storm or flood water runoff. Overland surface or flood water runoff within disturbed riparian areas may negatively affect downstream aquatic ecosystem health.

There are no vernal pools, nor any vernal pool buffers in Belvidere Town.

## Belvidere Wetlands and Riparian Areas



2/28/2025

Belvidere Town
  Wetlands
  Riparian Areas

EIRI, NASA, NGA, USGS, FEMA. Sources: EIRI, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

This map was developed using the New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council Geographic Information System digital data, but this secondary product has not been verified by the Highlands Council and is not state-authorized.

## Steep and Critical Slope Areas

A total of 105.6 acres, or 11.1%, of Belvidere Town is located within a Steep Slope Protection Area, as follows:

- Severely Constrained: 101.5 acres (10.7%)
- Moderately Constrained: 4.1 acres (0.4%)

Steep slopes within the Highlands Region play an important ecological, recreational, scenic, and functional role. Steep slopes and rocky ridgelines provide specialized habitats that are home to rare plant and animal species. Areas of steep slopes also provide popular recreational opportunities including hiking, climbing, and wildlife observation. Additionally, ridgelines, hillsides, and associated steep slopes provide scenic views and vistas, which contribute to the rural character of the Highlands Region and help to define the landscape.

Disturbance of areas containing steep slopes can trigger erosion and sedimentation, thereby resulting in the loss of topsoil. Silting of wetlands, lakes, ponds, and streams damages and degrades these aquatic habitats, especially trout streams that are found throughout the Highlands and receive the state's highest water quality protections. These processes, when severe, can also result in land slumping and landslides that can damage both developed property and ecosystems.

The severity and extent of slopes, soil characteristics, and land cover all affect the potential for damages from the disturbance of steep slopes. The identification and classification of steep slopes is, therefore, important in order to effectively manage critical natural resources in the Highlands Region. Accordingly, Steep Slope Protection areas have been defined by the Highlands Council. These are classified as described below.

- Severely Constrained Slopes — All lands with slopes of 20 percent or greater, and lands within riparian areas with slopes of 10 percent and greater
- Moderately Constrained Slopes — All non-riparian area lands having a slope of 15 percent to less than 20 percent that are forested.
- Constrained Slopes — All non-riparian area lands having a slope of 15 percent to less than 20 percent that are non-forested with one or more of the following characteristics:
  - Highly susceptible to erosion
  - Shallow depth to bedrock
  - A soil capability class indicative of wet or stony soils
- Limited Constrained Slopes — All non-riparian area lands having a slope of 15 percent to less than 20 percent that are non-forested, not highly susceptible to erosion, and do not have a shallow depth to bedrock or a soil capability class indicative of wet or stony soils.

The Town ordinance regulates steep and critical slope areas in §505-57.2.C Design Standards, as such:

Any development shall strive to maintain the existing topographic contour and vegetation on-site. Unless otherwise permitted herein, steep slope areas over 15% shall be protected and the area deed restricted for conservation purposes. This conservation deed restriction boundary shall extend five feet beyond the limits of the 15% or greater slopes.



## Belvidere Steep Slope Protection Area



2/28/2025

Belvidere Town  
 Steep Slope Protection Area  
 Severely Constrained  
 Moderately Constrained

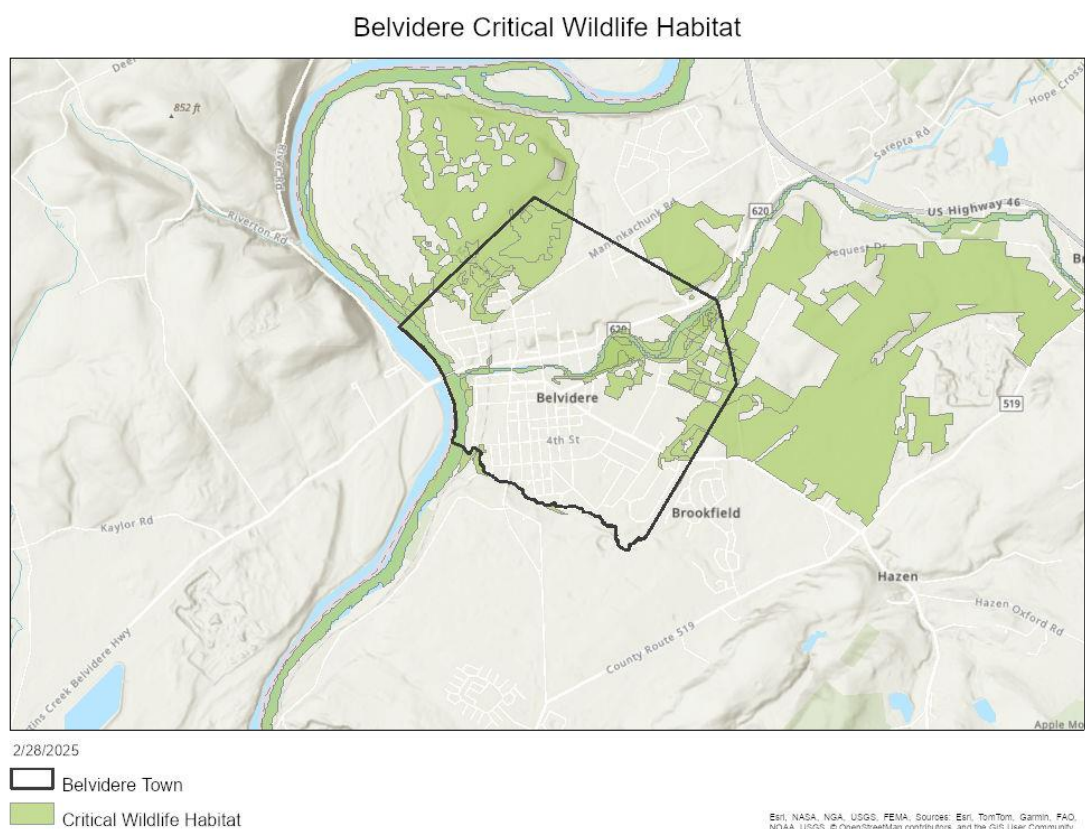
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## Critical Wildlife Habitat

A total of 258.7 acres, or 27.2%, of Belvidere Town contains Critical Wildlife Habitat. Endangered, threatened, and special concern species documented in this habitat include:

- American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*)
- Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)
- Blue-headed Vireo (Solitary Vireo) (*Vireo solitarius*)
- Bobcat (*Lynx rufus*)
- Eastern Box Turtle (*Terrapene carolina carolina*)
- Northern Parula (*Parula americana*)
- Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)
- Vesper Sparrow (*Pooecetes gramineus*)



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## *Forest Areas*

A total of 177.2 acres, or 18.6%, of Belvidere Town is located within the Forest Resource Area.

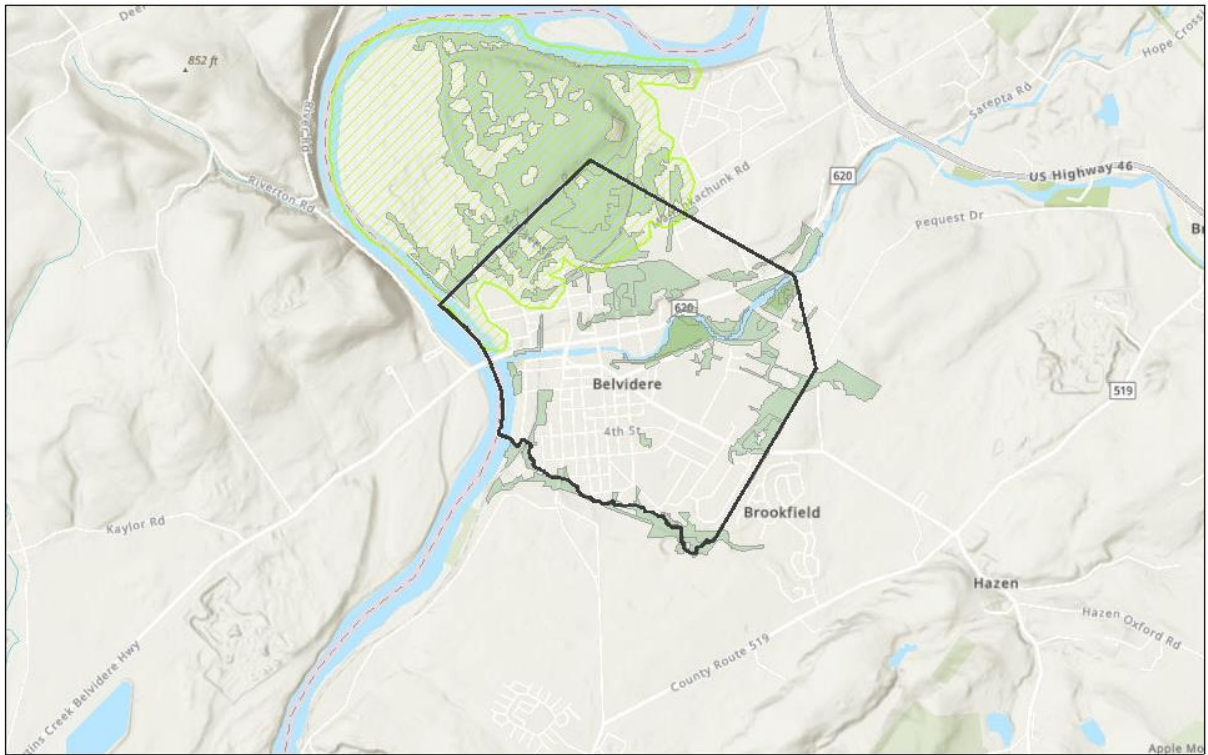
To identify where regionally significant forests are located within the Highlands Region, the Highlands Council assesses the ecological integrity of forests through the examination of landscape-level characteristics at both the forest patch and subwatershed (HUC14) level using measures of forest fragmentation. The result of this assessment is the spatial delineation of the Forest Resource Area within the Highlands Region.

The Forest Resource Area includes the forests that are most suited to support ecological processes. The Forest Resource Area also includes high ecological value forest areas, including those forested areas that exhibit the least fragmentation and are vital for the maintenance of ecological processes.

A total of 264.3 acres, or 27.8%, of Belvidere Town is located within a forested area.

- Deciduous Forest (>50% Crown Closure): 132.7 acres (14.0%)
- Deciduous Forest (10-50% Crown Closure): 67.3 acres (7.1%)
- Deciduous Wooded Wetlands: 26.9 acres (2.8%)
- Deciduous Brush/Shrubland: 16.7 acres (1.8%)
- Mixed Deciduous/Coniferous Brush/Shrubland: 15.2 acres (1.6%)
- Deciduous Scrub/Shrub Wetlands: 2.1 acres (0.2%)
- Mixed Forest (>50% Deciduous With >50% Crown Closure): 1.9 acres (0.2%)
- • Mixed Forest (>50% Deciduous With 10-50% Crown Closure): 1.5 acres (0.2%)

## Belvidere Forested Area



2/28/2025

- Belvidere Town
- Total Forest Area (2020)
- Forest Resource Area

Esri, NASA, NOAA, USGS, FEMA, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

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### III. Proposed Highlands Town Center Boundary

The proposed Highlands Town Center boundary will encompass the entire developed area of the Town of Belvidere. This accounts for over 1,000 parcels and over 682 acres of land according to MOD-IV data. The entirety of Belvidere is within the Highlands Planning Area.

Belvidere currently is primarily designated in the Existing Community Zone and eligible for development. One area along the eastern municipal boundary is designated in the Existing Community–Environmentally Constrained Subzone, which tend to cover forest areas, critical wildlife habitats, wetlands, and encumbered open space. While this area is proposed to be added to the Center, future growth would need to comply with State and municipal regulations related to sensitive areas, wetlands, etc.

Additionally, an Existing Community–Environmentally Constrained subzone is proposed to be changed to the Existing Community zone (no subzone), as the property has been approved for development. A small area of Protection Zone south of Manunkachunk Road is proposed to be reclassified from Protection Zone to Existing Community Zone. Two swaths of Protection Zone near the northeast corner of the Town west of Market Street (Block 1, Lots 5 and 5.01) are proposed to be reclassified as an Existing Community Zone, as they are currently under review by the Town for designation as an Area in Need of Redevelopment.

#### A. Goals of the Highlands Center Designation

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The Town of Belvidere’s goals as a designated Center shall be the following:

Goal 1: Revitalize and rejuvenate the downtown business district through redevelopment and zoning.

Goal 2: Attract investment through infill development and conversions.

Goal 3: Support mix uses and smart growth principles.

Goal 4: Balance future growth with infrastructure capacity.

Goal 5: Increase opportunities for and safety of bicycle and pedestrian mobility.

Goal 6: Protect sensitive natural resources.

Goal 7: Promote inclusionary housing development to help meet affordable housing demand in the Highlands Region.

### IV. Highlands Plan Conformance Goals

#### A. Land Use

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Promote a balanced land use pattern compatible with the natural environment.

- Enhance the physical appearance of the “downtown” area, the Town overall, and transportation routes.
- Seek public and/or private source of capital to study strategies for revitalization, including uses, parking, signage, lighting, etc.
- Stricter enforcement of property maintenance code and zoning regulations, including the removal of residential uses from commercial ground floor locations.



- Encourage appropriate development and redevelopment of vacant and underutilized lands and buildings through private capital.
- Investigate whether properties qualify as an area in need of redevelopment or rehabilitation, in accordance with the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:12A.

## B. Natural, Historic and Cultural Resources

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Preserve the Town's unique and important natural resources.

- Protection and conserve critical resources through appropriate environmental regulations.
- Protect the quality of the environment, such as the Delaware and Pequest Rivers, groundwater resources, wetlands, and riparian buffers.
- Retain and preserve existing natural vegetation during new construction.
- Pursue state and federal funding for protection of open space and natural resources.
- Proactively coordinate with State officials regarding the use and maintenance of water access and areas surrounding the boat launch.
- Provide a comprehensive network of open space recreation for bike and walking paths.
- Preserve and enhance the historic, cultural, and scenic environment of the Town.

## C. Economy

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Promote a balanced diverse and strong economic tax base.

- Promote the diversification and expansion of the local economy through appropriate development and redevelopment techniques.
- Promote a diverse and balanced community with a mix of commercial service and residential dwellings.
- Promote design controls to support high quality commercial development.
- Provide appropriate sign standards that promote safety and aesthetic presentation, while discouraging sign proliferation.
- Work with the business community to support and sustain the year-round economy through appropriate marketing efforts.

## D. Housing

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Provide housing to meet the needs of current and future Township residents by providing a full range of housing opportunities for all income levels and housing needs.

- Encourage and provide opportunities for affordable housing.
- Support housing rehabilitation activities to maintain housing stock and housing affordability.
- Provide senior housing opportunities at all ability levels including independent living, assisted housing, congregate care, and nursing care.

## V. Key Recommendations

### *Flood Plan Management*

The Natural Features Element of the 1979 Master Plan noted a concern over flood plain management due to the Town's proximity to the Delaware and Pequest Rivers. Flood plain management continues to be a concern due to the number of developed properties within the flood hazard areas of the Delaware and Pequest Rivers in the Town. Damages to numerous properties occurred during flood events that inundated these flood hazard areas in the 2004, 2005 and 2006 calendar years. While development in these areas is regulated by the State, the Town needs to track regulatory changes proposed by the State that could affect property owners. In addition, the Town should be supportive of efforts by property owners to better floodproof their structures as long as such efforts do not impact other property owners. This 2018 MPR reaffirms these concerns.

### *Vacant Developable Tracts*

There has been an ongoing concern as highlighted in the Existing Zoning and Land Use, over several vacant developable tracts in the Town, including the Kasson Belvidere, LLC site (Block 2, Lot 8), the Quality First Builders, LLC Site (R-100 zone district) and two industrially-owned tracts of land. These tracts are still vacant after 39 years (1979-2018) despite several efforts by the Town to promote development of these tracts.

#### **Quality First Builders**

The Quality First Builders property (Block 2, Lot 8) is the last remaining vacant and developable parcel along Oxford Street. The tract is isolated from the rest of the residential development in the R-100 zone by the school property. Despite the Town's efforts to foster an appropriate development of the Quality First Builders site in the R-100 District, including an approved subdivision plan for 13 single-family units, construction has not commenced. In fact, the property owner has indicated to the Planning Board, that he cannot develop the Quality First Builders LLC site as approved by the Planning Board for economic reasons and is in need of amendments to the current ordinance to make the project more economical and thus viable.

Subsequent to the adoption of the 2008 MPR, a number of problems developed that have made it difficult for Quality First Builders, LLC to develop its site situated in the R-100 District pursuant to §160-24 of the Zoning Ordinance and the 2012 final subdivision plan approval granted by the Belvidere Town Planning Board. In May 2016, the Planning Board adopted a Supplemental Modification to the 2008 MPR to address these problems with the Quality First Builders tract.

The 2016 Supplemental Modification to the MPR recommended that the section of the 2008 Master Plan Reexamination Report entitled "Changes Recommended for the Master Plan or Development Regulations" be amended to add a new recommendation as follows:

1. Due to the persistent lack of development of the Quality First Builders tract, known as Block 31, Lot 15, and in furtherance of the Master Plan objective of providing additional residential development to expand the local tax base and increase clientele for local business, it is recommended that the site should be rezoned from the R-100 Single Family Zone to the R-75 Single Family Zone District. This zoning change would provide for the economic feasibility for the development of the property in a manner more consistent with the existing single-family neighborhood along Liberty Street in the R-75 Zone.

As recommended by the 2016 Supplemental Modification of the MPR, the Town Council adopted Ordinance 2016-07, rezoning Block 31, Lot 15 from R-100 to R-75. To date, no development application has been filed subsequent to the rezoning of the property.

### **Kasson Belvidere, LLC Property**

There has been a continued concern over the lack of development of the Kasson Belvidere, LLC parcel Block 2, Lot 8. The site has been zoned for multi-family residential housing since the 1970s. Senior citizen housing became a permitted use via ordinance amendments in 1991. The provisions of the Land Use Code relative to senior citizen housing were later updated by the Town in 2004, 2006, and 2010 via Ordinances 2004-10, 2006-17 and 2010-12. The 2004 and 2006 ordinance amendments allowed for a wider variety of choice for consumers looking to purchase age restricted housing and provided consistency with trends that were occurring at that time in the senior housing market. The 2010 ordinance amendment eliminated the age restriction to allow for age targeted housing instead and allowed an applicant to provide a contribution in lieu of constructing affordable housing units on the tract.

Following the adoption of Ordinance 2004-10, the applicant sought development approvals from both the Zoning Board of Adjustment and Planning Board in 2004 and 2005 to develop the property for an age restricted community consisting of 244 units, including 124 townhouse units and 120 condominium flat units. The Board of Adjustment granted a use variance in 2004 to permit the primary road access and various community and recreational facilities to be constructed on former Lot 23.03 in Block 2 which is situated within the LM District subject to site plan approval. The Planning Board later granted preliminary and final major site plan approvals at its August 9, 2005 meeting for the project subject to various conditions, which are outlined in a resolution memorialized on September 13, 2005.

The applicant later sought and received amended approvals from the Planning Board in May 2007 to develop the property for an age restricted community consisting of 259 units, including 124 townhouse units and 135 condominium flat units. The amendments were sought following the adoption of Ordinance Number 2006-17, which increased the maximum number of units permitted in the SC District from 244 to 259.

The age restricted project was affected by a water moratorium that was imposed by the State in 2006 and a portion of 2007. The moratorium was lifted on February 2, 2007, following the completion of water-system-wide improvements by the NJ American Water Company. As a result of the moratorium, the Planning Board adopted a resolution on November 13, 2007, indicating that the period of approval for the project was extended to February 2, 2009 as a result of the water moratorium pursuant to the tolling provisions in the Municipal Land Use Law ("MLUL").

The applicant later sought and received one-year extensions from the Planning Board in 2009, 2010 and 2011. The third extension granted by the Board extended the approvals for the age restricted development to February 2, 2012.

Following the adoption of Ordinance 2010-12, the applicant sought amendments to the previous site plan approvals to permit age targeted housing, as well as the following:

1. To amend the recreation area as follows:
  - a. Reduce the size of the community building from 6,000 square feet to 3,000 square feet as permitted by Ordinance 2010-12.
  - b. Reduce the number of off-street parking stalls serving the recreation area from 52 to 27 as permitted by Ordinance 2010-12.
  - c. Rearrange the recreational amenities that are proposed in the recreation area.



2. To amend the layout and configuration of the northeasterly portion of the site where the flat units are proposed. The flat buildings were rearranged to allow for additional at-grade parking stalls. Additional at-grade parking stalls were needed due to the elimination of the parking garages beneath the flat buildings.
3. To decrease the overall number of units from 259 to 257. The overall number of units was reduced to provide area to construct at-grade parking. Two (2) townhouse units were proposed to be eliminated.
4. To regrade the portions of the property that were proposed to be modified in an effort to better balance earthwork on this site.

The applicant's request for approval of amendments to the site plan was approved at the September 22, 2011 Land Use Board meeting. A resolution memorializing the Board's action was adopted by the Land Use Board on October 27, 2011.

Despite all the actions taken by the Town to facilitate development activity on the site, no construction has commenced. On September 11, 2017, the Town Council adopted Resolution R2017-63, which was later amended on February 26, 2018 by Resolution R2018-18, requesting the Planning Board to perform an investigation to determine whether the Kasson Belvidere site (Block 2, Lot 8), along with the BASF site (Block 1, Lots 5 and 5.01) and the Industrial Zone – Fifth Street (Block 47, Lot 10; Block 48, Lots 7 & 8; Block 44, Lot 12; Block 46, Lots 2, 3, 4 & 5; Block 45, Lots 5, 6 & 7; and Block 42, Lots 1, 2, 3 & 9), qualify as an Area in Need of Redevelopment pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:12A et seq. A study was prepared on January 22, 2018 and revised on February 8, 2018, which recommended that the Kasson Belvidere site (Block 2, Lot 8) be designated as a Non-Condensation Area in Need of Redevelopment. As a result of the Planning Board recommendation, the Town Council adopted Resolution R2018-40 on May 29, 2018, designating the Area in Need of Redevelopment.

The Town Council adopted a Redevelopment Plan for the property in 2019, which was later repealed and replaced with a new Redevelopment Plan in 2023. The Redevelopment Plan acts as an overlay to the MFATWFH (Multi-Family Age Targeted Work Force Housing) District. The Redevelopment Plan permits light manufacturing; warehouse and distribution centers; cannabis cultivation, manufacturing and processing; and residential development in accordance with the MFATWFH Zone (including single-family semi-detached dwellings, townhouses, stacked townhouses, patio home and flat units). The property received site plan approval from the Planning Board on February 6, 2024, for development of a 370,000 square-foot warehouse.

### *Commuter Traffic*

The 1979 Circulation Plan observed that the most serious traffic problem in the Town was the handling of commuter traffic and its impact on the central sections of Belvidere during peak business hours. The Plan also noted that the downtown parking problem would require more attention as the county offices continued to grow. As stated in the 2008 MPR, these problems continue to be concerns to Belvidere. There is a shortage of parking around the Courthouse. These shortages will be exacerbated in the future if the County continues to occupy other spaces and/or renovates the existing courthouse to accommodate other judges. This lack of sufficient parking creates conflicts and presents safety problems.

A cooperative effort between the Town and County is needed to study and implement better parking solutions and arrangements.

Future development in the Town and recent development in White Township of the residential areas along County Routes 519 and 623, contributes to a need in the Town for bicycle and pedestrian pathways providing safe travel for cyclists and pedestrians into and within the Town.

In addition, the Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (1995) and the Countywide Open Space Plan (2008) identify needs for bikeways, bicycle-compatible roadways and pedestrian paths and facilities. These State and County plans create an environment in which the Town can request and reasonably expect to receive Federal or State funds both for the planning and for the construction of bicycle and pedestrian pathways.

The Town has improved a number of streets within the Town, particularly near the courthouse, through grants provided from the municipal aid portion of the Transportation Trust Fund. The Town was also the recipient of a CAI grant from the Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission to improve Water Street (CR 620) between Greenwich Street and Wall Street. This project was completed in 2010.

### *Community Facilities*

Community Facilities needs in 1979 included an improved fire department. Preservation efforts were also recommended in Town to maintain the historic significance of Belvidere.

The Town has addressed a number of the needs previously identified in the 1979 Community Facilities Plan prior to the 2008 MPR, including the construction of a new 5,500 square foot municipal building with facilities for the Town's police force, and the improvement and expansion of the Town's library at the intersection of Greenwich Street and Second Street. The Town also, through local and State monies, renovated and improved the municipal pool complex on Manunkachunck Road in 1998 to address handicap accessibility and construction code requirements and address obsolescence and deterioration. The fire department also constructed a new facility in the 1990's.

The 2002 MPR recommended continued preservation efforts to maintain the Town's historic character. The Town improved its preservation efforts by amending its historic preservation provisions in Chapter 27 by Ordinance 2008-02.

### *Economic Growth*

The 1979 Land Use Plan observed the need for continued industrial and residential development to expand the tax base, create jobs and increase clientele for local businesses. The 2008 MPR noted that 15 new homes and 4,000 square feet of storage space was built between 2003 and 2007. As discussed on page 6 of this 2018 MPR, the Town continues to experience a decline in nonresidential ratables and jobs. The Town should consider preparing an Economic Development Plan that will focus on retaining and attracting businesses that are sustainable year-round businesses. The Town should take advantage of the County and State workforce located in the Courthouse and the Annex and ancillary government offices. The Town should review the zone plan and zoning regulations to determine if there are zoning and policy changes that could be conducive to business development and retention. For example, the Town may consider amending the zoning to permit bed-and-breakfast and other tourist related uses to encourage economic development.

### *Stabilization of Business District*

The 1979 Master Plan identified the need to stabilize and preserve the local business district due to a number of business conversions to office use and a growing local concern that the development of a regional mall may jeopardize small business owners in Belvidere.

The 2008 MPR noted that the economic vitality of Belvidere's downtown remains a major concern. New highway-commercial development continues to occur outside of Belvidere, which attracts would-be consumers away from the downtown area. Subsequent to the 2002 MPR, Rutgers University completed an economic redevelopment study for the Belvidere Economic Development Committee. The report studied the Town's existing economic situation and developed recommendations on ways to improve Belvidere's current economic

conditions. The report listed eleven short-term recommendations and eight long-term recommendations to aid Belvidere's local economy. The eleven short-term recommendations included:

- A. Develop subcommittees – i.e. advertisement committee, fundraising committee, etc.
- B. Beautification Committee – goal to improve the appearance of Belvidere with trees, flowers, benches, etc.
- C. Theater – encourage Country Gate Players to apply for funding and work with Town to coordinate events.
- D. Warren County Chamber of Commerce (CoC) – the Economic Development Committee should reach out to the CoC and encourage businesses to become members.
- E. Farmers Market – organize to attract visitors to the downtown.
- F. Additional surveys – perform more surveys to better understand what attracts people to Belvidere.
- G. Fishing Tournament – capitalize on the Delaware and Pequest Rivers, could be a fund-raising activity.
- H. Advertise stores in Victorian Days pamphlet – assist in educating visitors of the shopping options in the downtown.
- I. Create gateways/entrances to Town – no indication of entering Belvidere, signage is needed to inform visitors when they enter Belvidere.
- J. Apply for grants – grant money can help to attain other goals.
- K. Vendor unification – businesses in downtown must be united to enhance the Town's economy.

The 2008 MPR noted that items D and G had been completed items I and J were in process. The Warren County Farmers Market operated for several years near the courthouse. To accommodate the need for better highway visibility, the farmers market has been operating from the White Township School on US Route 46 and County Route 519. The Economic Development Committee also coordinated the planting of heritage trees in various locations in Belvidere. As of 2018, the Economic Development Committee was not functioning.

### *Downtown Parking*

The continued need for increased downtown parking has become a significant constraint to downtown office and commercial uses and development. The 2002 and 2008 MPRs noted that parking remains a problem in Town. Particular problem areas exist in the business districts around Water, Mill, Market, Front and Greenwich Streets. Courthouse area parking problems exist on Second, Hardwick, Oxford, Mansfield and Third Streets. It was recommended that the Town and County perform a joint study to determine how to increase the amount of parking in the downtown.

The Town Council adopted Ordinance 2016-02 on February 16, 2016, establishing municipal parking lots. A municipal parking lot designated as "Parking Lot 1" is established at 236 Water Street, Block 14, Lot 10, more commonly known as "Riverside Park". A municipal parking lot designated as "Parking Lot 2" is established at a location east of Greenwich Street on the easterly end of South Water Street, Block 11, Lot, more commonly known as "Skoogy's". Ordinance 2016-02 also contains provisions allowing for additional parking lots to be leased from private landowners from time to time as needed. Downtown parking is no longer a concern at this time.

### *Architectural Preservation*

A continued concern over architectural preservation and the continuation of local styles in new development has been expressed by Planning Board officials. Architectural preservation of the existing Victorian housing stock

and other significant architectural styles remain a priority within the Town. A new historic preservation ordinance was adopted in 2008 that strengthens the Town's preservation efforts.

### *State Planning Area Designation*

There was previously concern that the development of the State of New Jersey Master Plan would create planning designations for Belvidere that may become a local planning issue. The 2001 State Development & Redevelopment Plan Policy Map designated Belvidere as a PA4 Rural Planning Area. Despite a statutory obligation to update the State Plan every 6 years, it has not been updated since 2001. The 2012 Draft State Strategic Plan was never adopted. The State Planning Commission released a Preliminary Draft of the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan on December 4, 2024. The plan is currently undergoing Cross Acceptance, a negotiating process designed to encourage consistency between municipal, county, regional, and State Plans to create a meaningful, up-to-date, and viable State Plan and State Plan Policy Map that incorporates input at all levels of government and public input. The Town of Belvidere will be participating in the Cross Acceptance process to request that the PA4 Rural Planning Area designation be changed. Belvidere is a long established Town that is served by public utilities and should be mapped as such. The PA4 mapping from 2000 is not reflective of the Town and its development patterns and culture and history.

### *Property Maintenance*

Continued concern over building maintenance in the Town lead to a prior recommendation to adopt a maintenance code. In August 2016, the Town Council adopted Ordinance 2016-05, which established a property maintenance code for the Town. It is recommended that the property maintenance and zoning code be enforced more stringently to benefits the overall appearance and character of the Town. This may also include the removal of illegal residential uses from commercial ground floor locations.

### *School Enrollment*

Changing school enrollments may eventually create the need for a school re-use plan. During the 2008 MPR process, a representative from the Board of Education informed the Planning Board that they have discussed building an addition to the school or buying adjacent buildings for more space. Currently the facilities are "tight", but the teachers are managing. The Board of Education has never completed a long-range facilities plan. Since 2002, school enrollment has increased. The 2018 MPR recognizes that this may still be a concern; however, it is recommended that the Board of Education complete a long-range facilities plan.

### *County Facilities*

Expansion and growth of the Warren County administration and court offices was previously identified as a concern to the Town of Belvidere. Since the adoption of the 2008 MPR, the County Library Headquarters has been relocated from Belvidere to the new County complex along Route 519 in White Township. The former library building has been repurposed for County offices. This item is no longer a concern at this time.

### *Belvidere Regional Pool*

The municipal pool, located on Manunkachunck Road, is in the LM Light Manufacturing zone district. It is recommended to rezone this parcel to OSR Open Space Recreation. This rezoning would bring the land use and zoning into conformance and reflect the current use of this important municipal facility. The Town addressed this issue in 2007 through the adoption of Ordinance 2007-11, which rezoned the property to OSR Open Space Recreation.

### *County Park*

The County Park in front of the County Courthouse occupies a prominent location in the Town. Prior MPRs have noted that while this park is generally pleasant with its trees and grass, continued landscaping improvements are needed. The 2008 MPR noted that permanent structures are prohibited in the park due to an existing deed restriction. This is no longer an issue for Belvidere.

### *Downtown Revitalization*

Previous MPRs noted that the Downtown may be in need of revitalization. This needed revitalization requires both public and private vision and resources. Part of this process will involve streetscape improvements, such as pedestrian scale streetlamps, landscaping and new street furniture. New parking opportunities are also needed. Additionally, individual merchants and property owners can make improvement in signage and building facades. These efforts can make the downtown inviting to the public. Enhancement of the physical appearance can make the Downtown competitive in supplying local and community retail and personnel services. It was recommended that civic and business leaders meet and study the means to plan for the revitalization of the Downtown. The 2008 MPR stated that revitalization of the downtown remains a key issue within Belvidere and the Planning Board had discussed this issue in length and made recommendations to address this issue in the Changes Recommended for the Master Plan or Development Regulations section of the 2008 MPR. Those items are addressed in the Future Land Use section of this 2018 MPR.

### *Pool and Park Maintenance*

Additional work must be performed at the municipal pool complex including the paving of the parking lot. The facilities in the existing Bud Jones Park must be better maintained. The improvement work at the pool and Bud Jones Park remains outstanding and is still a goal of the municipality.

### *Delaware Riverfront Open Space and Recreation*

The riverfront along the Delaware River is an undeveloped open space asset. Pedestrian access with walkways, bikeways, landscaping, and other improvements would be an enhancement to the Town and its quality of life. No improvements were done, and this work is still a goal. It is also recommended that the Town proactively coordinate with State officials regarding the use and maintenance of water access and areas surrounding the boat launch and investigate additional opportunities for recreation, bike and walking paths along the river.

### *Pequest Riverfront Open Space and Recreation*

The Pequest riverfront is another open space asset that should be open and available to the public. This riverfront area could be developed as a greenway, park or walkway linking the Downtown along the river to other locations in the Town. Pedestrian paths and bikeways should be developed as a greenway, park or walkway linking the Downtown along the river to other locations in the Town. Pedestrian paths and bikeways should be installed between the recreational fields opposite the municipal complex and the downtown. A recreation trail was installed adjacent to the river in Hriczak Park in 2005 and a new pavilion was installed at Hriczak Park in 2018.

## *Future Land Use*

During the 2008 MPR process, the Planning Board invited various groups within the Town to make comments with regards to the existing 2002 MPR. The Historic Preservation Committee, Shade Tree Commission, Zoning Board, Economic Development Committee and other entities submitted comments and concerns regarding existing land use and other issues within Belvidere. As a result of this open public process the following recommendations were proposed in the 2008 MPR:

### *Economic Development Committee*

The 2008 MPR recommended the Town Council establish an ad hoc committee with the Council and Economic Development Committee, which would review the 2005 Rutgers economic report and determine how it could be utilized to address downtown issues and then recommend most appropriate mechanisms to be acted upon. As discussed in Issue #8 above, the Town established an Economic Development Committee, but it is not currently functioning. It is recommended that the committee be reestablished to address downtown and economic issues. The first task of the committee should be to foster the preparation of an Economic Development Plan to spur economic development in Belvidere.

### *Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan*

The 2008 MPR recommended that the Town apply to the Bureau of Bicycle and Pedestrian Programs of the New Jersey Department of Transportation for technical assistance in the preparation of a comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian transportation plan. This has not yet been completed.

### *Recreation and Open Space Plan Element of the Master Plan*

The 2008 MPR recommended that the Town complete a new Recreation and Open Space Plan Element of the Master Plan. Five of the seven new issues contained in the 2002 MPR were related to parks and/or open space. Some of these issues have been resolved in the interim, but it is clear that a plan is needed to prioritize open space/park needs and create a comprehensive plan that addresses Belvidere's open space and parks but also looks beyond the Town's borders to potentially link to other municipal parks and trails. A future recreation plan should also consider coordinating recreation facilities with Lower Mt. Bethel Township in Pennsylvania. This has not yet been completed.

### *Amendments to SC District*

The 2008 MPR recommended an amendment be made to the SC District, Chapter 160, Article 10 of the Land Use Ordinance. It was recommended that the Town add a provision to provide affordable housing in accordance with the new Third Round rules published by the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH). A 20% affordable housing set-aside would address the obligation that a residential development would generate on-site. Therefore, due to the substantial changes that have occurred with COAH's rules and methodology since the Article was approved, the Board recommends adding the 20% affordable housing set-aside provision to Article 10. In accordance with the 2017 HEFSP and the Settlement Agreement with the Fair Share Housing Center, the 2018 MPR does not recommend that these changes at this time.

### *Master Plan and Land Use Regulation Updates:*

The 2018 MPR recommends the following changes to the Master Plan or Land Use Regulations:

1. Prepare an Economic Development Element of the Master Plan to encourage economic growth.
2. Prepare a Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan.



3. Prepare a Recreation and Open Space Plan Element of the Master Plan.
4. Consider amending the zoning to permit bed-and-breakfast and other tourist related uses to encourage economic development.
5. Reinstate the Economic Development Committee.
6. Enhance pedestrian access with walkways, bikeways, landscaping, and other improvements.
7. Amend the provisions in the Zoning Ordinance relative to the LM District in Section 160-75 to permit warehouses as principal permitted uses.

## VI. Relationship with Planning Documents

### A. Relationship with the Belvidere Master Plan

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The last municipal Master Plan was adopted in 1979, with Reexamination Reports adopted in 1989, 1996, 2002, 2008, and 2018, and Master Plan Amendments were adopted in 2021 and 2023.

Belvidere's Master Plan goals align with the intentions of this Highlands Center designation. They are as follows:

- A. To provide adequate open space, light, air and otherwise a clean environment.
- B. To ensure that development in Belvidere is in harmony with its neighbor, White Township.
- C. To provide for the appropriate housing requirements for residents of the Town as well as the region.
- D. To encourage the appropriate use of funds for capital improvement programs for public benefits.
- E. To provide a "mix" of land uses, residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, etc., in keeping with environmental limitations.
- F. To encourage conservation of open space, the preservation of natural resources, and the continued expansion of parks and recreational facilities.
- G. To encourage the use of the best features of design and layout of each particular site whether for residential, commercial, industrial or recreational purposes.

Belvidere recognizes the importance of development that is appropriate in context, protects the surrounding natural resurfaces, and benefits the community. Moreover, the 2023 Master Plan Amendment seeks to encourage development in the downtown area, expanding the permitted uses within existing structures and providing economic opportunity for local businesses. Belvidere supports this growth at a scale and level of quality that Belvidere residents enjoy.

### B. Relationship with the Highlands Regional Master Plan

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The Highlands Council adopted the Highlands Regional Master Plan (RMP) in July of 2008. The RMP assessed the conditions of the Highlands Region at the time, and set forth various goals, policies, and objectives.

Belvidere seeks to become a Center-designated place within the Highlands Region. The compact land area, intact downtown, and mainly peripheral areas of sensitive land allow the community to grow in the existing developed footprint. The goals and key recommendations set forth in this report are consistent with RMP's goals, policies, and objectives, as follows.

*Goal 6E: Incorporation of regional development patterns and related environmentally sensitive areas within existing community zones.*

**Policy 6E1:** To promote the location of sustainable and economically viable development activities in the Existing Community Zone where not constrained by existing environmentally sensitive resources.

**Objective 6E1a:** The Existing Community Zone in the Highlands Land Use Capability Zone Map shall include existing previously developed areas of regional significance.

**Consistency Statement for Goal 6E:** The proposed Center designation encompasses the majority of the Town of Belvidere with exceptions at the northern municipal border, swaths along the Delaware and Pequest Rivers, a conservation area on the eastern municipal border, and at the southern tip. The proposed Center is largely developed or anticipating development.

*Goal 6F: Support of compact development, mixed use development and redevelopment and maximization of water, wastewater and transit infrastructure investments for future use of land and development within the existing community zone.*

**Policy 6F1:** To promote compatible development and redevelopment within the ECZ.

**Policy 6F2:** To promote the restoration and redevelopment of brownfields, particularly those located in or adjacent to transportation corridors or transit stations. In cases where redevelopment is not appropriate, encourage “brownfield to greenfield” approaches.

**Policy 6F3:** To ensure that development activities within the ECZ are subject to standards and criteria which ensure that development and redevelopment incorporate smart growth principles and do not adversely affect natural resources.

**Policy 6F4:** To ensure that development and redevelopment within the ECZ are served by adequate public facilities including water supply, wastewater treatment, transportation, educational and community facilities.

**Policy 6F5:** To ensure that development and redevelopment in the ECZ are compatible with existing community character.

**Policy 6F6:** To encourage new population growth, where desired by the municipality, and development in the ECZ is in the form of center based and mixed-use development.

**Objective 6F6a:** Center based development initiatives shall be planned within the Existing Community Zone at densities appropriate to the Zone, the community character, the State Development and Redevelopment Plan. Densities of five dwelling units and above are encouraged and are required in areas designated as voluntary TDR Receiving Zones where TDR benefits are sought under the Highlands Act.

**Policy 6F7:** To encourage redevelopment in the Existing Community Zone as a means to relieve development pressure from more environmentally sensitive areas.

**Consistency Statement for Goal 6F:** Map changes are proposed for the Town of Belvidere to more accurately reflect existing and pending development. These proposed map changes would incorporate additional areas into the Existing Community Zone, and based on these proposed map changes the entire center would be within the Existing Community Zone and Sub-zones. The Center designation goals are supportive of new development and infill redevelopment, with the promotion of compatible development and redevelopment, brownfield to

greenfield approaches, smart growth, compatibility with community character, and center-based development, all of which can take development pressure off more sensitive lands.

*Goal 6H: Guide development away from environmentally sensitive and agricultural lands and promote development and redevelopment in or adjacent to existing developed lands.*

**Policy 6H4:** To promote compatible growth opportunities that include in-fill development, adaptive re-use, redevelopment, and brownfields redevelopment in existing developed areas.

**Objective 6H4a:** Identification of existing developed areas within the Highlands Region using the Developed Lands Analysis.

**Objective 6H4b:** Identification of brownfields, grayfields and underutilized properties that have potential for redevelopment that is compatible with resource protection and smart growth principles.

**Policy 6H5:** To promote land uses which create a sense of place with attractive, walkable neighborhoods that support community connectivity of developed lands and community facilities.

**Objective 6H5a:** Communities of place with a mix of uses which promote multi-purpose trips, through proximity of neighborhood retail, commercial, and entertainment uses to residential land uses that create communities that are largely self-sufficient regarding daily needs.

**Objective 6H5b:** Communities of place with a pattern of development which promotes the use of transit, walking, and biking.

**Policy 6H8:** Regional growth, where accepted through local planning and regulations, should identify opportunities to maximize land use intensity while protecting natural features and community character.

**Objective 6H8a:** Development and redevelopment initiatives shall encourage the use of HDC as a means to enhance the existing or adjacent community while protecting local and regional natural resources.

**Objective 6H8b:** Preparation and implementation of standards ensuring that development protects environmentally sensitive resources in all Land Use Capability Zones and Sub- Zones.

**Policy 6H9:** To incorporate smart growth principles and green building design and technology in development and redevelopment initiatives.

**Consistency Statement for Goal 6H:** As a designated Center, Belvidere will encourage development within its compact land area, particularly through the recently-adopted zoning amendments to encourage ground floor commercial spaces in the downtown, as well as redevelopment in areas adjacent to developed land. Such economic development activities will support the business district. The most environmentally sensitive areas will remain protected.

*Goal 6J: Accommodation of regional growth and development needs through the reuse and redevelopment of previously developed areas, including brownfields, grayfields, and underutilized sites.*

**Policy 6J1:** To encourage Preservation Area redevelopment of sites with 70% or greater impervious surfaces or a brownfield in areas designated by the Highlands Council as Highlands Redevelopment Areas in accordance with N.J.A.C 7:38-6.6 and 6.7.

Policy 6J2: To encourage redevelopment in the ECZ in the Planning Area of brownfields, grayfields, and other previously developed areas that have adequate water, wastewater, transportation capacity, and are appropriate for increased land use intensity or conversion to greenfields, as approved through Plan Conformance or the Highlands Redevelopment Area Designation process.

**Consistency Statement for Goal 6J:** An Area in Need Investigation is currently underway for an existing brownfield site at the northwest corner of Belvidere. Redeveloping this site is consistent with Goal 6J.

*Goal 6K: Concentrate residential, commercial and industrial development, redevelopment, and economic growth in existing developed areas in locations with limited environmental constraints, access to existing utility, and transportation infrastructure.*

**Policy 6K1:** To promote redevelopment of brownfields, grayfields, and other previously developed areas in a manner consistent with the goals and requirements of the Plan.

**Consistency Statement for Goal 6K:** The proposed Center aligns with existing concentrated development, anticipated redevelopment of a brownfield, and furthers the 2023 Master Plan Amendment to allow for a broader range of uses to spur economic growth in Belvidere's business district.

*Goal 6M: Protection and enhancement of Highlands Resources through the remediation of contaminated sites in region.*

**Policy 6M1:** Encourage and support the restoration and redevelopment or open space use of contaminated areas.

**Consistency Statement for Goal 6M:** An Area in Need Investigation is currently underway with the intent of designating an existing brownfield site as a Redevelopment Area.

*Goal 6N: Use of smart growth principles, including low impact development, to guide development and redevelopment in the Highlands Region.*

**Policy 6N5:** To require through Plan Conformance that municipalities and counties incorporate programs for community and neighborhood design that support a variety of housing options, mixed uses, redevelopment, adaptive re-use of historic sites and structures, and infill development in their master plans and development regulations.

**Objective 6N5b:** Local development regulations and guidelines that advocate mixed use development and redevelopment where appropriate.

**Consistency Statement for Goal 6N:** Belvidere's 2023 Master Plan amendment and subsequent zoning amendments expand the permitted uses in the business district, allowing for ground for conversions from residential uses and historic structures to commercial in order to promote economic growth. The resulting mixed use buildings and district further support a compact, pedestrian-friendly environment.

*Goal 6O: Market-rate and affordable housing sufficient to meet the needs of the Highlands Region within the context of economic, social, and environmental considerations and constraints.*

**Policy 6O1:** To establish a region-wide, comprehensive approach to addressing housing needs in the Highlands Region, serving all age groups, income levels, and mobility options.

**Objective 601a:** A comprehensive housing program addressing regional housing needs within the context of preserving the character and environmental integrity of the Highlands.

**Objective 601b:** An interagency partnership with the COAH in support of the achievement of both the resource protection requirements of the RMP and the municipal constitutional obligation, in “growth areas,” to provide a realistic opportunity for the construction of a fair share of affordable housing for low- and moderate-income households.

**Objective 601c:** Preserve and monitor existing stocks of affordable housing.

**Policy 602:** To promote, where appropriate and permitted by the Land Use Capability Zone, center-based development approaches that address a mix of housing types, support mixed uses, and implement compact development approaches.

**Policy 603:** To promote, where appropriate and permitted by the Land Use Capability Zone, affordable housing within new residential and mixed use development, redevelopment, or adaptive reuse projects.

**Policy 604:** To encourage the targeting of new housing to areas with compatible existing densities and within walking distance of schools, employment, transit, and community facilities and services.

**Policy 605:** To locate and maintain community facilities and services that support compact development patterns, shared services, and provide a high level of service.

**Policy 607:** To require that conforming municipalities implement both the resource protection requirements of the RMP along with the New Jersey Supreme Court’s doctrine, in its Mount Laurel decisions, that every municipality in a “growth area” has a constitutional obligation to provide through its land use regulations, sound land use, and long range planning, a realistic opportunity for a fair share of its region’s present and prospective needs for housing for low and moderate income families.

**Policy 608:** To require that conforming municipalities update and adopt a housing element, fair share plan, and implementing ordinance(s) to reflect current conditions and resource protection requirements of the RMP.

**Objective 608a:** Conforming municipalities, through housing plans, will evaluate and provide for alternate mechanisms to address affordable housing obligations where RMP resource protection standards restrict the ability of planned but not built sites to be developed for affordable housing.

**Consistency Statement for Goal 60:** As a designated Center, the Town of Belvidere will be poised to develop inclusionary and affordable housing options for residents of the Highlands Region. Due to Belvidere’s compact character, residents of new housing options will have access to goods, services, and community facilities, often within walking distance. The Town of Belvidere has complied with its Third Round affordable housing obligations and is preparing a plan for the Fourth Round.

### *Goal 8A: Sustainable economic development in the Highlands Region.*

**Policy 8A1:** To maintain and expand the existing job and economic base by promoting appropriate, sustainable, and environmentally compatible economic development throughout the Highlands Region.

**Objective 8A1a:** Highlands Economic Development Program to identify and promote sustainable economic development opportunities in the Highlands Region, in a manner that integrates economic, social, and environmental factors.

**Policy 8A2:** To preserve the high quality of life in the Highlands Region through economic planning and implementation of the RMP.



**Consistency Statement for Goal 8A:** As mentioned in this Assessment, in 2023 Belvidere amended its Master Plan and zoning ordinance to expand the permitted uses in the business district, allowing for the conversion of ground floor spaces in existing residential buildings, many of which are historic in character. The intent of this amendment is to support local businesses and spur economic growth. Moreover, by allowing such uses in existing structures, there will be no environmental impact or land disturbance.

**RESOLUTION NO. R2025x37**

**TOWN OF BELVIDERE**

**WARREN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**

**A RESOLUTION FOR A NOTICE OF INTENT OF PLAN CONFORMANCE WITHIN  
THE PLANNING AREA AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE HIGHLANDS  
REGIONAL MASTER PLAN**

WHEREAS, the Highlands Water protection Act (“Highlands Act”), N.J.S.A. 13:20-1 et seq., finds and declares that protection of the New Jersey Highlands is an issue of State level importance because of its vital link to the future of the State’s drinking water supplies and other natural resources; and

WHEREAS, the Highlands Act creates a coordinated land use planning system requiring the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council (“Highlands Council”) to prepare and adopt a Regional Master Plan for the Highlands Region; and

WHEREAS, Section 13:20-15(a), of the Highlands Act states that for any municipality located wholly in the Planning Area or for the portion of a municipality lying within the Planning Area, the municipality may, by ordinance, petition the Highlands Council of its intention to revise its master plan, development regulations and other regulations, as applicable, to the development and use of land in the Planning Area, to conform them with the goals, requirements and provisions of the Regional Master Plan (“Plan Conformance”); and

WHEREAS, the Town of Belvidere (“the Town”) is located wholly within the Highlands Region Planning Area as defined by Section 7 of the Highlands Act; and

WHEREAS, the Highlands Council prepared and distributed to the Town and other municipalities within the Highlands Region guidelines outlining the process and procedures for petitioning the Highlands Council for Plan Conformance which includes a comprehensive package of planning and implementation documents that meet the requirements of the Highlands Act, the Regional Master Plan and the Highlands Plan Conformance Guidelines; and

WHEREAS, Plan Conformance by municipalities is strictly voluntary for lands in the Planning Area and the Town may at any time voluntarily revise its master plan, development regulations and other regulations, as applicable, to the development and use of land in the Planning Area to conform them to the Regional Master Plan and may also choose to rescind its participation with the Highlands Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Town has completed the required Assessment report dated March 31, 2025; and

WHEREAS, and intends to become a conforming town pending the Consistency Review of the Highlands Council;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Governing Body pf the Town of Belvidere intends to become a conforming town pending the Consistency Review of the Highlands Council;

Certification

I, Teresa A. Yeisley, Municipal Clerk/Administrator, Town of Belvidere do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted by the Governing Body of the Town of Belvidere at a public meeting held on April 14, 2025.

*Teresa A. Yeisley*

Teresa A. Yeisley, RMC/CPM  
Municipal Clerk/Administrator

**NEW JERSEY HIGHLANDS WATER PROTECTION AND PLANNING COUNCIL**  
**Petition for Plan Conformance –Draft Consistency Review and Recommendations Report**

**APPENDIX C**

**PUBLIC COMMENTS/HIGHLANDS COUNCIL RESPONSES**

**Petition for Plan Conformance**  
**Belvidere Town, Warren County, New Jersey**

**NEW JERSEY HIGHLANDS WATER PROTECTION AND PLANNING COUNCIL**  
**Petition for Plan Conformance –Draft Consistency Review and Recommendations Report**

**APPENDIX D**

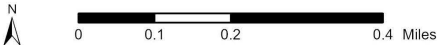
**CENTER MAP WITH HIGHLANDS ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE ZONES**  
**Petition for Plan Conformance**  
**Belvidere Town, Warren County, New Jersey**



**Figure 1:  
Highlands Center and HERZ  
Boundaries with Underlying  
Land Use Capability Zones**

Belvidere Town

- Highlands Center
- Center
  - HERZ
- Land Use Capability Zones
- Protection Zone
  - Existing Community Zone
- Land Use Capability Sub-Zones
- Wildlife Management Sub-Zone
  - Conservation - Environmentally Constrained Sub-Zone
  - Existing Community - Environmentally Constrained Sub-Zone
- Municipal Boundary
- Parcel Boundaries
- Roads
- Interstates
  - US Highways
  - State Highways
  - County Highways
  - Local Roads
  - Alleys
  - Interstate Ramps



Map Created: 4/22/2025

