



Township of Stafford Plan Endorsement Recommendation

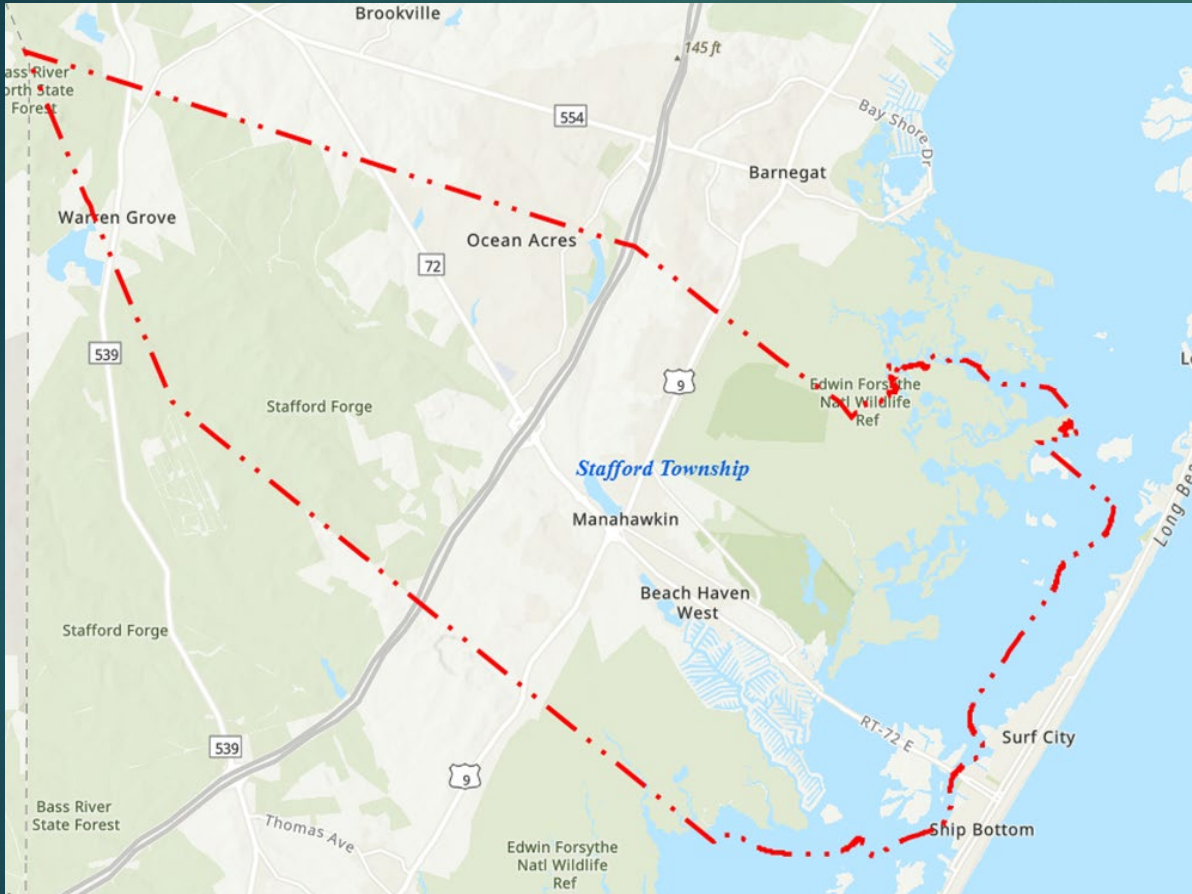
Presented to the

Plan Implementation Committee

July 20, 2022

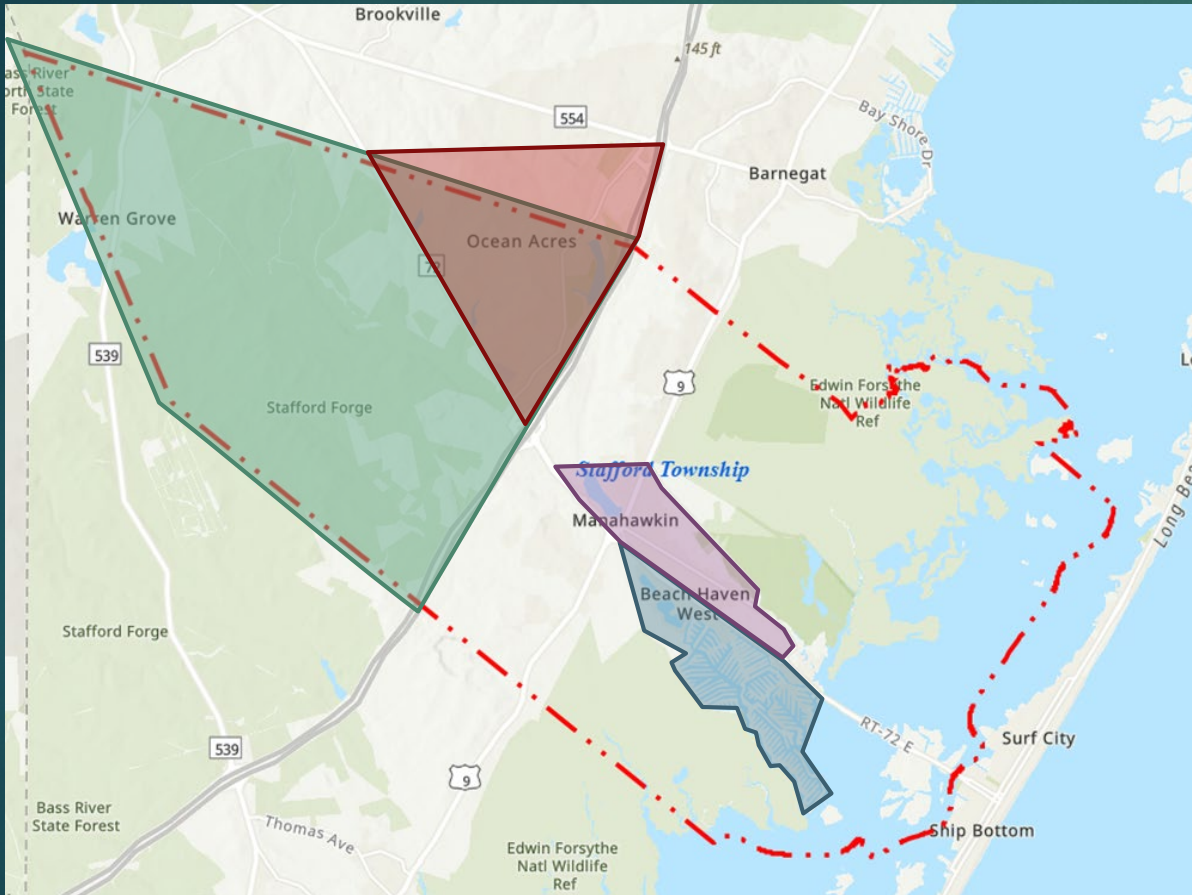
NJ Office of Planning Advocacy

Location & Regional Context



- Located in the southern section Ocean County.
 - 6th largest municipality in the County
- Approximately 54.8 square miles
 - 45.8 square miles of land
 - 9.033 square miles of waterways
- According to Stafford's Municipal Self Assessment:
"The Township serves as a gateway to Long Beach Island. Due to the Township's desirable location as a suburb of the metropolitan area and proximity to a seasonal tourism destination, development has steadily increased."

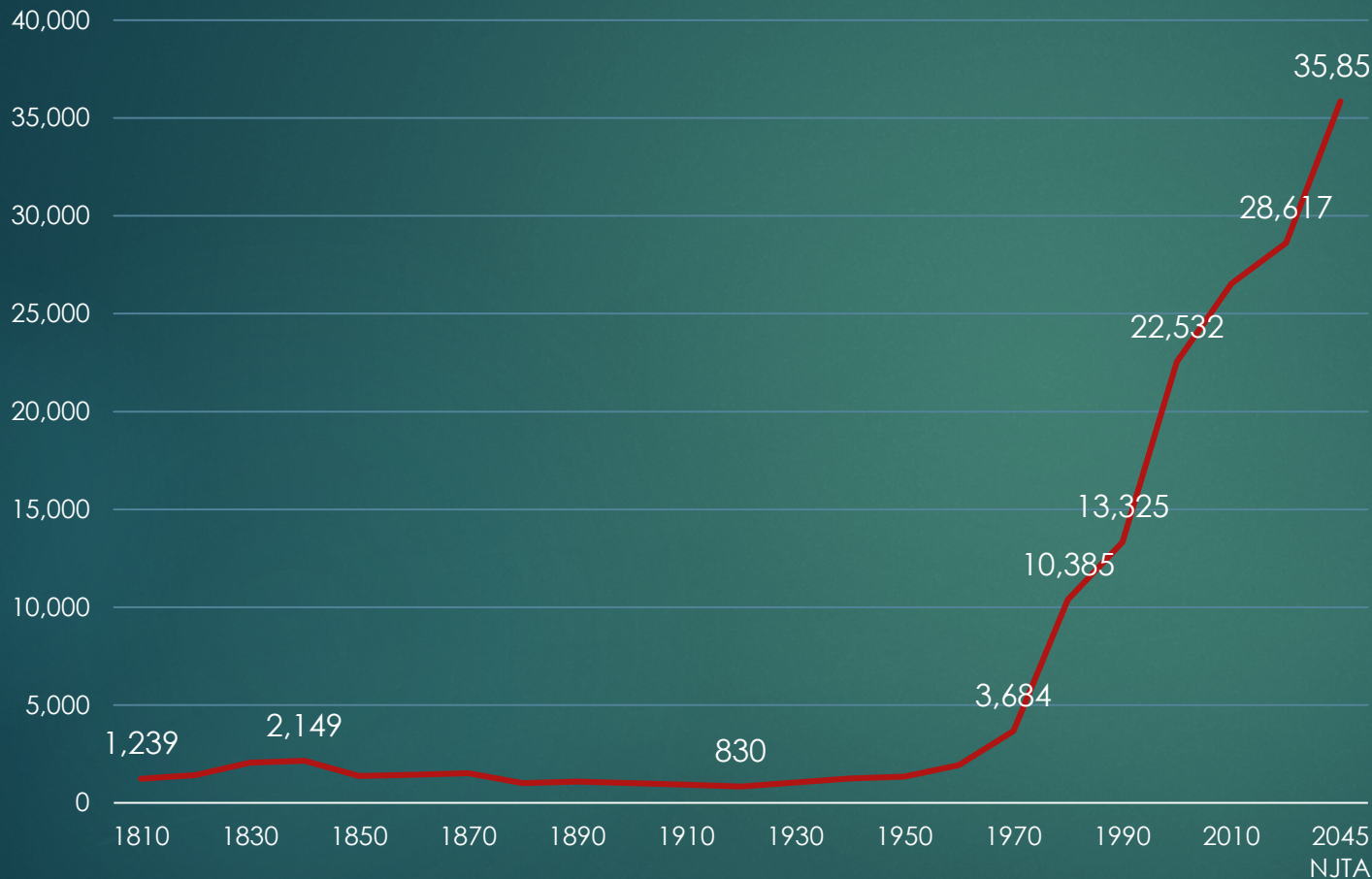
Location & Regional Context



- According to the State Plan Policy Map, 13,845 acres are depicted as Pinelands in the Township of Stafford.
- Communities within Stafford
 - Beach Haven West
 - Manahawkin
 - Ocean Acres (split between Stafford and Barnegat Township)

Demographics/Trends

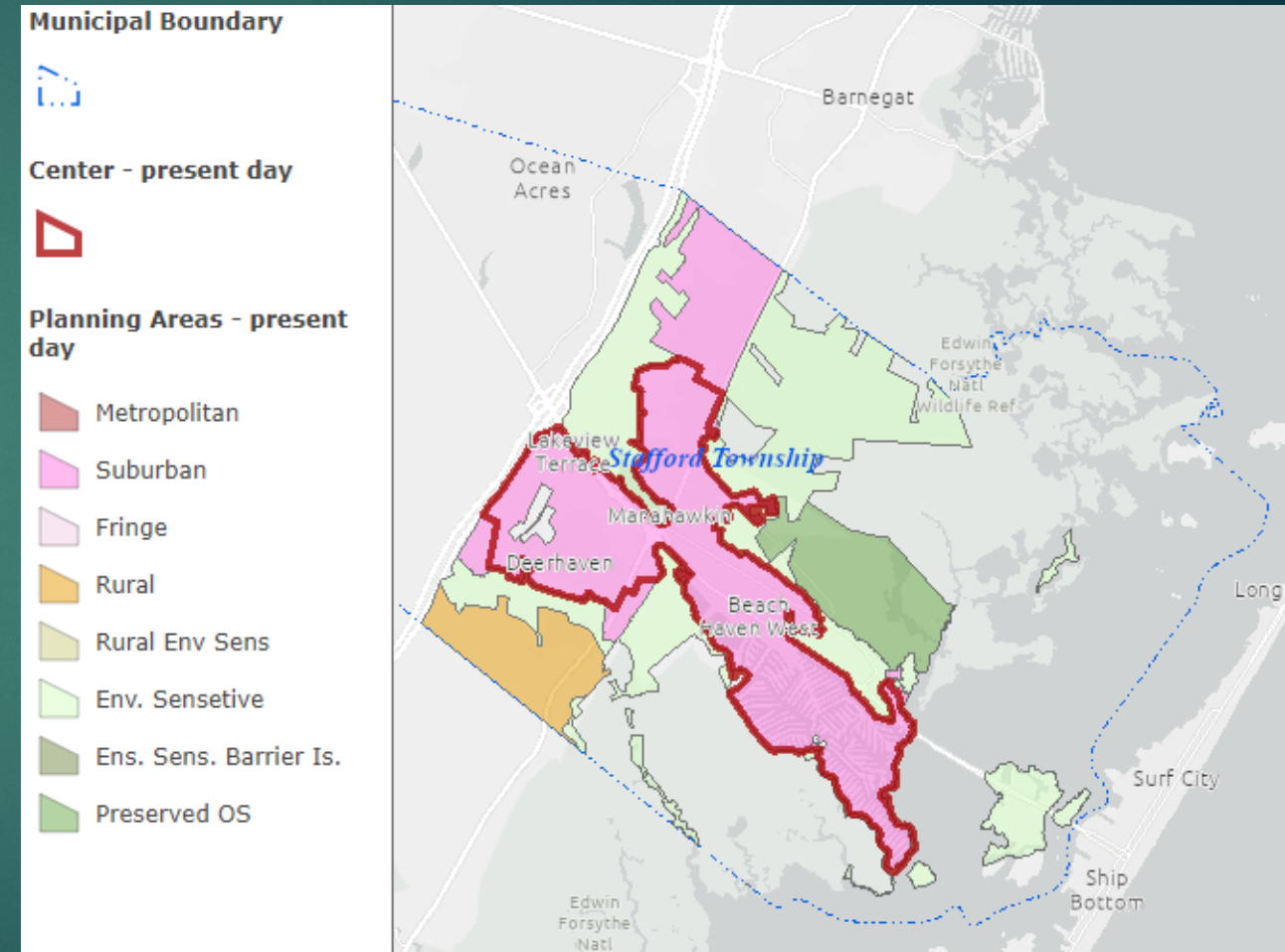
Population



- The population has been steadily growing since the 1950s.
- Stafford Township is one of twelve Ocean County municipalities that continues to see growth.
- The 2020 Census population estimate for the Township was 28,617, which is a 7.8% increase from 2010, which had a population estimate of 26,535.
- The NJTPA 2045 Population Forecast states that 35,856 is the expected number.

Plan Endorsement

- Township of Stafford received Regional Center designation by the State Planning Commission (SPC) on May 16, 2007.
- This designation was set to expire June 30, 2020.
- The expiration has been extended through various extension approvals by legislation, executive orders, and/or SPC resolutions.
- Stafford's primary reason for Regional Center designation renewal is that the Center designation will help the municipality by bringing together necessary entities to work together and make the Township a better community while supporting economic development, based off the already established commercial area in the Township.



Planning Milestones

Event(s)	Date
Natural Resource Inventory	2006
Master Plan	2007
Regional Center Designation	05/16/2007
Historic Preservation Inventory	2017
Master Plan	2017
Land Use Inventory Map	2017
Zoning Ordinance	2017
Hazard Emergency and Mitigation Plan/Ordinance	2018
Pre-petition Meeting	08/28/2019
Municipal Self-Assessment	05/25/2020
Climate Vulnerability Assessment & Resilience Plan	Ongoing
Zoning map and schedule	2021
Housing and Fair Share Plan	2021
Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI)	2021
Vacant Land Inventory	2021
Traffic Circulation Element	2021
Sustainable Jersey Report	2022
Opportunity and Constraints Report	03/15/2022









Municipal Boundary

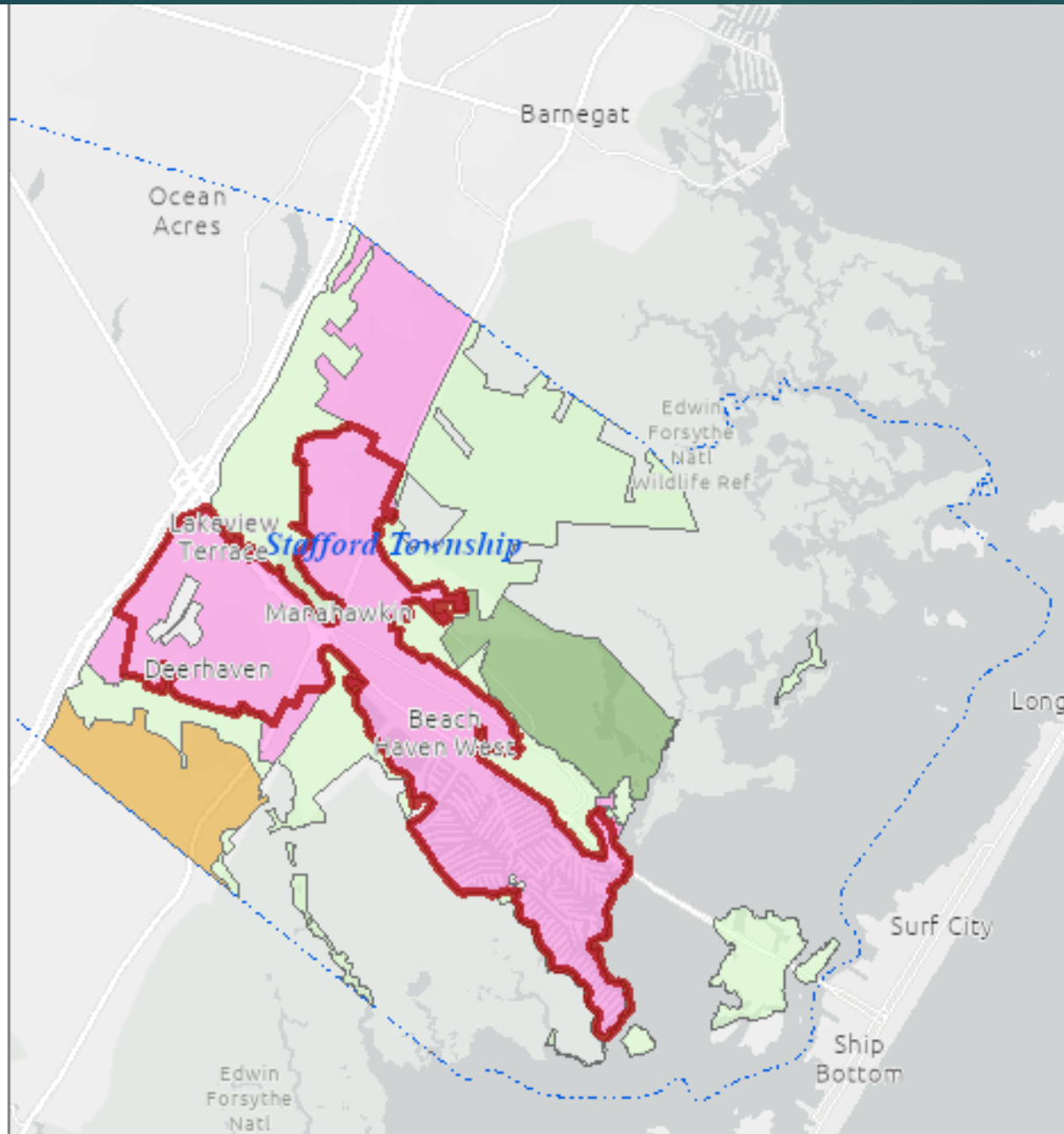


Center - present day



Planning Areas - present day

-  Metropolitan
-  Suburban
-  Fringe
-  Rural
-  Rural Env Sens
-  Env. Sensetive
-  Ens. Sens. Barrier Is.
-  Preserved OS



Existing Mapping

Municipal Boundary



Nodes - proposed





Center - proposed

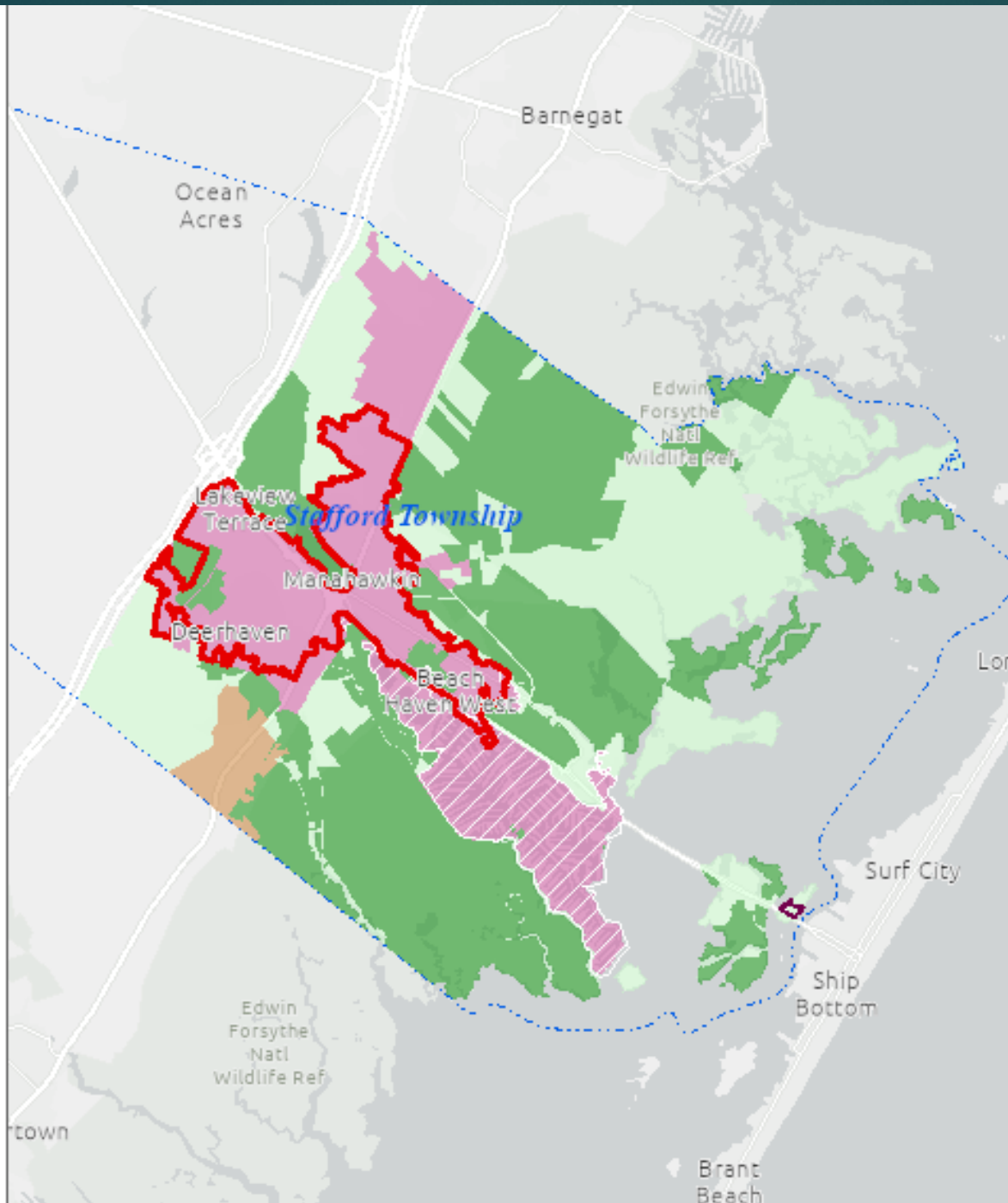


CEHS - proposed



Planning Areas - proposed

-  Metropolitan
-  Suburban
-  Fringe
-  Rural
-  Rural Env Sens
-  Env. Sensetive
-  Env. Sens. Barrier Is.



Proposed Mapping

Summary of Proposed Map Amendments

Planning Area	Label	Existing Acreage	Proposed Acreage
PA 2	Suburban	4,473.84	3,977.94
PA 4	Rural	757.34	348.03
PA 5	Environmentally Sensitive	4,104.18	5,315.12
Park/Preserved Open Space		7,081.77	6,776.23
Pinelands Area		13,845.2	13,845.2
CES	Critical Environmental Site	65.54	1,309.11

Center Designation	Existing Acreage	Proposed Acreage	Change in Acreage
Regional Center	3,589.70	1,986.60	-1,603.10

Addressing the Goals of the State Plan



Goal #1: Revitalize the State's Cities and Towns

- Regional Center Designation in the PA-2 Suburban Planning Area has the intention to organize growth that otherwise would sprawl throughout a corridor and create unserviceable demands. Regional Centers contain a mix of residential, commercial, and office uses at an intensity that make a variety of public transportation options feasible as the Centers are built out. These centers have a core of commercial activity, and the boundaries of the Centers are well defined by open space/significant natural features.

Addressing the Goals of the State Plan

Goal #2: Conserve the State's Natural Resources and Systems

- The Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) was completed on 4/6/22 and approved and accepted by the Township Council on 4/26/22.
- The Township has a Water Conservation Ordinance, which was adopted by the Township Council of the Township of Stafford in 2001.
- The PIA lists “adopt a Conservation Plan Element” to explore improvements to enhance natural resources, such as forest and park management for invasive plant species and measures to prevent saltwater intrusion into freshwater wetlands, especially vernal pools.

Addressing the Goals of the State Plan

Goal #3: Promote Beneficial Economic Growth, Development and Renewal for All Residents of New Jersey

- The Township has a Community Development Department, which is responsible for various land use related activities throughout the Township.
 - The Township plans to create an Economic Development Committee in the future before the 2027 Master Plan update.
- Stafford Township has two thriving commercial districts.
 - Route 72 Corridor for the length of Route 72
 - Route 72/Route 9 to Hilliard Boulevard – Economic Downtown area.
- Stafford Township was granted a non-residential commercial node on Cedar Bonnet Island.

Addressing the Goals of the State Plan

Goal #4: Protect the Environment, Prevent and Clean Up Pollution

- The Township has an Environmental Commission, which is an advisory board that reviews all development applications that come before the Planning Board or Zoning Board of Adjustments.
- The Stafford Township Green Team was established in 2019 and received its Certified Bronze Level in 2020.
- Over 186 acres of bay have been cleaned up as a result of the major sewer and infrastructure work the Township has accomplished in Beach Haven West.
- The PIA lists “adopt a Conservation Plan Element” to explore improvements to enhance natural resources, such as forest and park management for invasive plant species and measures to prevent saltwater intrusion into freshwater wetlands, especially vernal pools.

Addressing the Goals of the State Plan

Goal #5: Provide Adequate Public Facilities and Services at a Reasonable Cost

- The Township has four schools in the Township.
- Stafford Township Municipal Complex – Located at 260 E Bay Avenue
- Pine Street Community Center – Located at 25 Pine Street
- Stafford Township's Water and Sewer Utility has 4 water treatment plants, 14 sewer pump stations, and 7 water towers.

Addressing the Goals of the State Plan

Goal #6: Provide Adequate Housing at a Reasonable Cost

The Stafford Township Planning Board adopted a Housing Element in 2017 and Fair Share Plan in 2021.

Township is in the process of meeting all its affordable housing needs.

- Round One (1) of the Affordable Housing obligation was 555 units
- Round Two (2) and Three (3) obligation was 94 Rehab and 360 units

Addressing the Goals of the State Plan

Goal #7: Preserve and Enhance Areas with Historic, Cultural, Scenic, Open Space and Recreational Value

- The Township has a Historic Preservation Commission.
- Historic Preservation Element: The Historic Preservation Plan Element of the Stafford Township Master Plan of 2017 is prepared for the purposed of “(a) indicating the location and significance of historic sites and historic districts; (b) identifying the standards used to assess worthiness for historic site or district identification; and (c) analyzing the impact of each component and element of the Master Plan on the preservation of historic sites and districts.”
- The Township recently adopted a Historic Preservation Ordinance on May 5, 2022.
- The Township’s Open Space and Recreation Element is part of the 2017 Master Plan.
- The PIA lists “adopt a Conservation Plan Element” to explore improvements to enhance natural resources, such as forest and park management for invasive plant species and measures to prevent saltwater intrusion into freshwater wetlands, especially vernal pools.

Addressing the Goals of the State Plan

Goal #8: Ensure Sound and Integrated Planning and Implementation Statewide

- Stafford Township plans to complete a Master Plan update in 2027.
- Keeping up to date on affordable housing elements.
- Completing the items agreed upon in the Plan Implementation Agreement
- Working with the State and County to be consistent with their planning.

Planning & Implementation Agreement



- The PIA has been sent to Stafford Township for review and adoption via resolution
- It is expected that Stafford's Governing Body will formally approve and adopt the PIA on August 9, 2022.
- Stafford's endorsement by the SPC will be conditional on the approval and adoption of the PIA

Recommendation

Based on Township of Stafford's continuing efforts in working with the State and Ocean County in achieving consistency with both the State Development and Redevelopment Plan and with the Ocean County Plans, it is recommended that Township of Stafford's petition move forward to the State Planning Commission in order to be awarded their Plan Endorsement inclusive of the proposed Regional Center.