



Master Plan Reexamination Report &
Amended Housing Master Plan Element and
Open Space, Recreation and Conservation Master Plan Element

Middletown Township Planning Board
Monmouth County, New Jersey

March 2023

Prepared by:

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Amy H. Citrano". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

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Introduction

The Municipal Land Use Law requires a municipality to conduct a general reexamination of its master plan and development regulations at least once every 10 years from the previous reexamination.

The Middletown Township Planning Board adopted a comprehensive Master Plan in 2004. Consistent with the provisions of the MLUL, the Planning Board periodically reexamines and updates certain elements of its Master Plan and to proactively plan for future development. The Planning Board has reexamined the Master Plan in 2009, 2011 and 2014. The 2009 Master Plan Reexamination Report amended the Land Use Plan. The 2011 Master Plan Reexamination Report amended the Land Use; Circulation; Open Space, Recreation and Conservation; Utilities; and Community Facilities Master Plan Elements.

Much has happened since the adoption of the last Master Plan Reexamination Report. The scope of this Master Plan Reexamination Report supplements the prior Reexamination Reports, unless specifically indicated to the contrary. Moreover, specific amendments to Master Plan Elements including Housing and Open Space, Recreation and Conservation are made part of this reexamination report.

Major Problems and Objectives Relating to Land Development at the time of adoption of the last Reexamination Report in 2014; and The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date

The following were identified as problems and objectives in 2014:

1. The need to address the Township's affordable housing obligations per regulations established by the New Jersey Council on Affordable Housing.

This need is continually addressed by the Township. Much has occurred since the adoption of the Township's Housing Element and Fair Share Plan in 2008, and recommended amendments to the Housing Element and Open Space, Recreation and Conservation Master Plan Elements are included in this Reexamination Report to acknowledge what has occurred since 2008, and to continue to plan for the provision of affordable housing.

2. The need to lower residential dwelling unit densities in areas where significant environmental constraints exist and where significant amounts of potentially developable land exists.

This objective, included in the 2011 and 2014 Master Plan Reexamination Reports, continues to remain valid.

3. The need to mitigate impacts from flood events and maintain participation in FEMA's Community Rating System.

This objective remains valid. At the time of writing the 2014 Master Plan Reexamination Report the Township of Middletown had been recently impacted by two major storms, Hurricane Irene and Superstorm Sandy. The Township amended its flood zone regulations that requires the first floor of living area to be above the base flood elevation. The Township continues to participate in FEMA's CRS Program and implement all relevant floodplain management regulations.

4. The need to develop a Green Building and Environmental Sustainability Element of the Master Plan.

This objective remains valid.

5. The need to reinforce the long term stabilization of the North Middleton neighborhood.

This objective remains valid.

6. Rezoning a certain area in the Port Monmouth neighborhood (Block 239, Lots 1-3 and Block 243, Lots 1 and 2.01) to more accurately reflect established development patterns.

This recommendation for rezoning remains valid.

7. Amendments to various development regulations.

These amendments remain valid. Since 2014, the Township conducted several amendments consistent with this objective related rezoning parcels to more accurately represent existing development patterns.

8. Adoption of Redevelopment Plans for certain areas.

The 2014 Master Plan Reexamination included a potential site for redevelopment, known as Block 615, Lot 94, that has now since redeveloped with Planning Board approval, and no longer serves as a valid area in need of redevelopment.

Also, the location of the former Middletown Tool Rental on Block 502, Lots 1, 2 and 7 was identified in the 2014 reexamination report as a potential site for redevelopment and this recommendation is no longer valid. The Township acquired this area for the development of affordable housing for veterans.

The following redevelopment areas and plans have been adopted by the Middletown Township Committee since 2014:

- North Middletown Redevelopment Area and Plan (Block 70, Lots 1, 2, 3)

- Port Belford Redevelopment Area and Plan
- Circus Liquor Redevelopment Area and Plan
- Town Hall municipal complex Redevelopment Area and Plan
- Half Mile Road and Schultz Drive Redevelopment Area and Plan, and Rehabilitation Area
- Exit 109 Redevelopment Area and Plan

Significant Changes in Assumptions, Policies & Objectives

Since the 2014 Master Plan Reexamination Report, 2020 US Census data and updated 5-year American Community Survey estimates have been released. A demographic, housing and employment analysis utilizing the newly released data is included in the amended Housing Element that is part of this reexamination report.

Also in November 2020, Middletown voters supported an additional one-cent increase in the open space fund tax, increasing their yearly open space contribution from 2 to 3 cents per \$100 of assessed property value. As a result, properties have been newly identified as having some potential as open space or as a site for active recreation. Recommended amendments to the Open Space, Recreation and Conservation Master Plan Element are included in this reexamination report.

Specific Changes Recommended for the Master Plan or Development Regulations

1. Comprehensive Master Plan

A comprehensive Master Plan update is recommended including new Elements such as an Economic Development Plan Element and Sustainability Element.

2. Changes to Development Regulations included in the 2014 Master Plan Reexamination Report remain valid.

Recommendations concerning the incorporation of the Redevelopment Plans into the Land Use Element of the Master Plan.

The Township Committee adopted the following Redevelopment Plans since the last reexamination in 2014. These must be incorporated into the Land Use Master Plan Element.

- North Middletown Redevelopment Area and Plan (Block 70, Lots 1, 2, 3)
- Port Belford Redevelopment Area and Plan
- Circus Liquor Redevelopment Area and Plan
- Town Hall municipal complex Redevelopment Area and Plan
- Half Mile Road and Schultz Drive Redevelopment Area and Plan, and Rehabilitation Area
- Exit 109 Redevelopment Area and Plan

Additionally, the Route 36 Corridor is currently undergoing a redevelopment investigation study.

2023 Amendment to the Middletown Township 2008 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan

This document serves as an amendment to the Township's State Certified 2008 Housing Master Plan Element and Fair Share Plan (HEFSP). Much has happened since the adoption of that Plan including the release of 2010 and 2020 US Census data; the substantive certification of the Township's HEFSP for the Third Round; the invalidation of substantive portions of the Third Round regulations; the failure of COAH to adopt revised Third Round rules; the establishment of a transitional process by the NJ Supreme Court moving from administrative to judicial review for all the municipalities that had submitted their HEFSP to COAH; and the ultimate decision by the Township to withdraw from the court process after being unable to reach an agreement with the Fair Share Housing Center; and that withdrawal being approved by the NJ Superior Court.

The provision of fair housing opportunities for low and moderate income households has been, and remains a priority in Middletown since the adoption of the Township's first HEFSP in 1992. Since the adoption of the Township's 2008 HEFSP there has been over 350 affordable housing units constructed, 86 single family dwellings containing low and moderate income households rehabilitated as part of the Township's Home Rehabilitation Program, and 13 more accessory apartments for low and moderate income households constructed.

The Township has determined that is necessary to amend their HEFSP to not only acknowledge what has occurred since 2008 but to continue to plan for the provision of affordable housing and identify new sites for affordable housing that are suitable and appropriate. Portions of the following sections of the HEFSP are hereby amended:

- Introduction
- Demographics, Housing Inventory and Employment Characteristics
- Appropriate Lands for Low and Moderate Income Housing
- Housing Projections
- Housing Plan

Introduction

Middletown received Round I substantive certification from COAH on March 14, 1994. Middletown immediately initiated implementation of that plan and – as demonstrated by the sheer number of affordable housing units created throughout the Township – has steadfastly continued to implement its housing programs to create affordable housing for the region.

On March 3, 2000, Middletown timely petitioned COAH for substantive certification of its cumulative Rounds I/II plan, which included a Fair Share Plan for a staggering 1,670 affordable units, even though the Township's obligation was determined to be 1,655 units. Even though the Fair Housing Act provides that the Township did not need to commence implementation until after COAH certified its plan, the Township took many steps to create affordable housing as it awaited COAH's review and approval of its affordable housing plan.

On October 14, 2009, the Township's Housing Element and Fair Share Plan (HEFSP) for the Third Round was granted substantive certification by COAH. Subsequent to COAH's certification, the Township implemented zoning changes in November 2009 to achieve consistency with the Master Plan Land Use and Housing Elements. However, in October 2010, the Appellate Division invalidated substantive portions

of COAH's revised Third Round regulations, including a declaration that the "growth share" methodology as applied by COAH was unconstitutional. It was these revised Third Round regulations that helped to form the policy basis of the Township's Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, for which the Township obtained substantive certification from COAH as mentioned above. The court ultimately remanded the regulations back to COAH so that new regulations could be developed more in alignment with the First and Second Round methodologies.

Subsequent to the Appellate Division's remand, the then Governor issued a Reorganization Plan to formally abolish COAH. COAH was abolished before any revisions to Third Round regulations were developed, and while the "growth share" methodology was still under appeal to the NJ Supreme Court. However, in July 2013, the NJ Supreme Court invalidated the Governor's Reorganization Plan, and COAH was no longer abolished.

In September 2013, the NJ Supreme Court upheld the 2010 Appellate Division decision and invalidated the Third Round rules and the "growth share" methodology. The Court once again directed COAH to develop new regulations consistent with the First and Second Round methodologies. The revised Third Round Rules, intended to be consistent with the NJ Supreme Court's directive, were published in the New Jersey Register on June, 2, 2014. It was anticipated that upon completion of the public comment period, COAH would adopt the regulations on or before October 22, 2014 with an effective date of November 17, 2014. However, on October 20, 2014 COAH reached a deadlock and failed to adopt the proposed Third Round regulations.

Subsequently, on March 10, 2015, the Supreme Court in a unanimous decision clarified the procedures for determining affordable housing in the 566 municipalities in the state. The Supreme Court divested COAH of jurisdiction of the municipal housing plans and entrusted that to the vicinage courts instead. Additionally, the Supreme Court established a transitional process for moving from administrative to judicial review for all the municipalities that had submitted their HEFSP to COAH. The Court stayed the effectiveness of its order for a period of 90 days with an additional 30-day period, which ended on or about July 8, 2015, during which municipalities that had "participated" under the Third Round regulations would be protected against builders' remedy suits. During this period, the municipalities were offered an option to seek a judgment declaring their plans to be constitutionally compliant with the Mount Laurel doctrine. Middletown Township filed a declaratory judgement with the Court.

Through the court process, the Township had been operating in good faith with the Fair Share Housing Center. Over time, the Township was unable to reach an agreement with the Fair Share Housing Center and decided to pull out of negotiations. On July 17, 2019, Middletown Township submitted a request to withdraw from its affordable housing obligation, and on July 19, 2019 that request was approved by the New Jersey Superior Court and agreed to by Fair Share Housing Center.

GOALS

The principal goals of the Housing Element are:

1. To provide affordable housing by demonstrating that existing zoning and planned changes in zoning provide adequate capacity to accommodate household and employment growth projections; and
2. To provide households with access to affordable housing to meet present and prospective housing needs, with particular attention to low and moderate income housing.

Middletown has demonstrated a long-standing commitment to providing its fair share of affordable housing. A simple review of the demographics and diverse housing types within the Township demonstrates that Middletown clearly has not used its zoning powers to exclude low and moderate income households. An examination of the most recent information, the 2020 Census, demonstrates Middletown Township's open door zoning policies:

- According to the 2020 ACS Five Year Estimates, 30.5 % percent of all households in the Township (or a total of 7,364) earn an income of less than \$75,000 per year. A moderate-income for a family of two in Region 4 in 2022 was \$78,474.
- In 2020, at least 17% of all households in the Township (or a total of 4,201) earn an income of less than \$55,000 per year, which is considered a low income household for a family of three in Region 4.
- Per the 2020 Census, 72% of all rental units in the Township (or a total of 2,642) has a specified asking rent of under \$1,500 per month. This is just about level with the 2022 rent level for a moderate-income two-person household. Of those units, the median rent was \$1,333 per month. This figure represents a slightly lower rent than that determined to be affordable to a moderate income two-person household.
- According to the 2020 Census, 20% of all owner-occupied housing units in Middletown (or a total of 4,064) had a value of under \$300,000. These homes are therefore considered affordable to a moderate-income family of four.
- According to the 2020 Census, the median family income in Middletown is \$136,705 per year. However, 5,606 or 31% of Township families have an income of under \$100,000 per year, and 3,701 or 20% have an income under \$75,000 per year. In 2022, the moderate income level for a family of four was approximately \$98,000 per year.
- Over 350 affordable units have been issued certificates of occupancy in Middletown since 2008. These affordable units come in many forms such as for-sale family units, senior, and family rentals and accessory rental apartments.

These facts demonstrate that the Township has created one of the most diverse and successful affordable housing programs in New Jersey.

Demographics

Population

Middletown's resident population remained somewhat steady from 66,522 people in 2010 to 67,106 in 2020, increasing less than one percent. Table 1 shows the greatest growth rate in Middletown Township over the last 80 years occurred during the post-World War II suburban boom years (1950-1960) when the population increased by 143 percent from 16,203 to 39,375. In 1990, the Township's population peaked at 68,183, and steadily decreased through 2020.

Table 1: Middletown Population, 1940-2020

Year	Population	% Change
1940	11,018	
1950	16,203	47.1
1960	39,375	143.0
1970	54,623	38.7
1980	62,574	14.6
1990	68,183	9.0
2000	66,327	-2.7
2010	66,522	0.29
2020	67,106	0.88

Source: US Census Bureau

Household Size

Middletown's average household size has continued to shrink over the past 30 years, and is down from 2.83 in 2010 to 2.7 in 2020. The average household size of owner-occupied units have also continued to shrink in size down from 2.95 in 2010 to 2.79 in 2020.

Table 2: Household Size

	1990	2000	2010	2020
Average household size	2.95	2.84	2.83	2.7
Average household size of owner-occupied unit	3.09	2.96	2.95	2.79
Average household size of renter-occupied unit	2.19	2.09	2.06	2.16

Source: 2020 ACS 5 year estimate, 2010 ACS 5 year estimate

Age

Indicators continue to suggest Middletown Township is a maturing community. The median age in Middletown increased from 42 in 2010 to 44.9 in 2020, surpassing the median age in both Monmouth County (43.4) and the State (40). Additionally, there was a 24.1% increase in those aged 55 to 64, and a 25.8% increase in those aged 65 to 84.

Table 3: Population by Age

	2020	2010	% Change
Under 5	3,148	4,015	-21.6
5 to 14	7,487	9,782	-23.5
15 to 19	4,811	4,587	4.9
20 to 34	9,662	8,572	12.7
35 to 54	17,938	21,825	-17.8
55 to 64	10,682	8,606	24.1
65 to 84	10,142	8,064	25.8
85 years and over	1,446	1,258	14.9
Median age (years)	44.9	42	

Source: 2020 ACS 5 year estimate, 2010 ACS 5 year estimate

Household Income

Middletown's median household income increased by 23% from \$96,190 in 2010 to \$119,013 in 2020. Between 2010 and 2020 (in absolute and percentage terms) the income range of \$200,000 or more increased the most by 2,840 households and 11.4%.

Table 4: Household Income

	2010 (#)	2010 (%)	2020 (#)	2020 (%)	% Change
<i>Total Number of Households</i>					
Less than \$10,000	705	3.0	507	2.1	-0.9
\$10,000 to \$14,999	540	2.3	266	1.1	-1.2
\$15,000 to \$24,999	1,268	5.4	1,159	4.8	-0.6
\$25,000 to \$34,999	1,245	5.3	1,038	4.3	-1.0
\$35,000 to \$49,999	1,949	8.3	1,231	5.1	-3.2
\$50,000 to \$74,999	3,124	13.3	3,163	13.1	-0.2
\$75,000 to \$99,999	3,499	14.9	2,560	10.6	-4.3
\$100,000 to \$149,999	5,261	22.4	4,950	20.5	-1.9
\$150,000 to \$199,999	2,748	11.7	3,284	13.6	1.9
\$200,000 or more	3,124	13.3	5,964	24.7	11.4
Median Household Income	\$96,190		\$119,013		

Source: 2020 ACS 5 year estimate, 2010 ACS 5 year estimate

Housing Inventory

The following section provides detailed summary of the housing stock in Middletown, including occupancy rates, tenure, vacancy, year built, type, value, rents, and housing quality indicators.

Number of Housing Units and Vacancy Rates

Between 2010 and 2020 the number of occupied and vacant housing units remained relatively stable, at 96% occupied and 4% vacant. According to 2020 ACS 5 Year Estimates Data, the rental vacancy rate was 4.5% compared to 3.9% in 2010.

Table 5: Occupied and Vacant Housing Units, 2010 and 2020

	2010		2020	
	Units	% Total	Units	% Total
Occupied	23,962	96.0	24,710	96.6
Vacant	997	4.0	1,149	4.5
Total	24,959		25,859	

Source: US Census Bureau, 2010 and 2020 Redistricting Data

Number of Units in Structure

In 2020, there were a total of 25,107 housing units in Middletown Township. The majority of the Township’s housing units remain single family detached (78.2%) but that has been decreasing over time from 80.6% in 2000. There was an increase (275) in the number of structures housing more than five units.

Table 6: Number of Units in Structure, 2010 and 2020

	2010		2020	
	Units	% Total	Units	% Total
Total Housing Units	24,555		25,107	
1-unit, detached	19420	79.1	19,638	78.2
1-unit, attached	1929	7.9	1,837	7.3
2 units	398	1.6	444	1.8
3 or 4 units	534	2.2	601	2.4
Greater than 5 units	2,242	9.1	2,517	10.0
Mobile home	32	0.1	70	0.3
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0	0.0	0	0.0

Source: 2020 ACS 5 year estimate, 2010 ACS 5 year estimate

Age of Housing

The majority of Middletown Township’s housing stock was constructed between 1950 and 1979. This is typical of post-war development trends in the United States, and certainly matches Middletown’s population trends. Slightly over 9% of the Township’s housing stock has been built since 2000.

Table 7: Housing Stock Age

Year Built	Number	% Total
Total Housing Units	25,107	
Built 2014 or later	458	1.8
Built 2010 to 2013	418	1.7
Built 2000 to 2009	1,454	5.8
Built 1990 to 1999	1,243	5.0
Built 1980 to 1989	4,043	16.1
Built 1970 to 1979	4,639	18.5
Built 1960 to 1969	3,460	13.8
Built 1950 to 1959	5,226	20.8
Built 1940 to 1949	1,059	4.2
Built 1939 or earlier	3,107	12.4

Source: 2020 ACS 5 year estimate

Housing Values: Owner Occupancy & Affordability

The 2020 median housing value in Middletown Township was \$433,800 remaining relatively stable from the 2010 median value of \$433,500. The greatest percentage (43.9%) of owner-occupied units by housing value was in the \$300,000 to \$499,999 range. Housing units valued in the range of \$200,000 to \$299,999 are becoming rare; only 13.5% of the 2020 owner-occupied housing inventory were valued in this range, compared to 15.2% in 2010.

Table 8: Housing Values, Owner-Occupied Units, 2010 and 2020

	2010		2020	
	Units	% Total	Units	% Total
Total Owner-Occupied Units	20,230		20,490	
Less than \$50,000	104	0.5	256	1.2
\$50,000 to \$99,999	91	0.4	107	0.5
\$100,000 to \$149,999	399	2.0	354	1.7
\$150,000 to \$199,999	653	3.2	577	2.8
\$200,000 to \$299,999	3,080	15.2	2,770	13.5
\$300,000 to \$499,999	8,510	42.1	9,005	43.9
\$500,000 to \$999,999	6,719	33.2	6,910	33.7
\$1,000,000 or more	674	3.3	511	2.5
Median Housing Value	\$433,500		\$433,800	

Source: 2020 ACS 5 year estimate, 2010 ACS 5 year estimate

In 2015-2019, 21.7% of total owner households fell within HUD-defined low-income categories, amounting to 4,365 households. This represents a 0.9% increase, or an additional 245 low-income owner-occupied households from the 2014-2018 time period.

Changes that are most apparent occurred in the number “very low income” and “low income” households. In both income categories, the number increased by 7.6% (95 households) and 15.7% (175 households) respectively.

Table 9: Income Breakdown of Owner-Occupied Households, 2015-2019 and 2014-2018

Income Categories	Total Owner Households	% Total	Total Owner Households	% Total	Change 2015-19 and 2014-18	% Change 2015-19 and 2014-18
	2015-2019		2014-2018			
Household Income <= 30% HAMFI	1,350	6.7	1,255	6.3	95	7.6
Household Income >30% to <=50% HAMFI	1,290	6.4	1,115	5.6	175	15.7
Household Income >50% to <=80% HAMFI	1,725	8.6	1,750	8.9	-25	-1.4
Household Income >80% to <=100% HAMFI	1,560	7.8	1,320	6.7	240	18.2
Household Income >100% HAMFI	14,170	70.5	14,325	72.5	-155	-1.1
Total	20,090		19,765			

Source: HUD CHAS data based on 2015-2019 and 2014-2018 ACS 5-year estimates

Contract Rents & Affordability

In 2015-2019 the median contract rent for rental units was \$1,209 with 43.8% of renters paying \$1,000 to \$1,499 monthly.

Table 10: Contract Rents, 2020

	# of Rental Units	% Total
Less than \$200	27	0.7
\$200 to \$299	102	2.8
\$300 to \$499	169	4.6
\$500 to \$749	268	7.3
\$750 to \$999	474	13.0
\$1,000 to \$1,499	1,602	43.8
\$1,500 to \$1,999	561	15.3
\$2,000 or more	377	10.3
No cash rent	77	2.1
Total Units	3,657	

Source: 2020 ACS 5 Year Estimates

The percentage of renter-occupied households in Middletown increased from 13.9% in 2010 to 15.1% in 2020. According to Comprehensive Affordable Housing Strategy (CHAS) data provided by the US Census

Bureau, during the 2015-2019 time period, 57% of total renter households fell within HUD-defined low- and moderate-income categories, amounting to 2,120 households, or 3.6% increase from 2014-2018.

Notable changes include a 37.5% increase in the number of moderate-income renter households, and a 25.6% decrease in the number of renter households earning greater than 100% of the median family income.

Table 11: Income Breakdown of Renter-Occupied Households, 2015-2019 and 2014-2018

Income Categories	Total Renter Households	% Total	Total Renter Households	% Total	Change 2015-19 and 2014-18	% Change 2015-19 and 2014-18
	2015-2019		2014-2018			
Household Income <= 30% HAMFI	795	21.4	825	21.0	-30	-3.6
Household Income >30% to <=50% HAMFI	830	22.3	860	21.9	-30	-3.5
Household Income >50% to <=80% HAMFI	495	13.3	360	9.2	135	37.5
Household Income >80% to <=100% HAMFI	505	13.6	410	10.4	95	23.2
Household Income >100% HAMFI	1,090	29.3	1,465	37.3	-375	-25.6
Total	3,715		3,925			

HAMFI=Hud Area Median Family Income

Source: HUD CHAS data based on 2015-2019 and 2014-2018 ACS 5-year estimates

Housing Cost Burden

CHAS data measure the degree of “housing cost burden” for those earning less than 80% of Middletown’s median household income, i.e. \$119,013.

“Housing cost burden” is defined as follows:

- Cost burdened (households paying between 30 and 50 percent of their household income on housing);
- Severe cost burdened (households paying more than 50% of their household income on housing)

Of Middletown’s total 20,090 households during the 2015-2019 time period, 3,980 (19.8%) experienced some degree of cost-burden, and 3,100 (15.4%) households experienced severe housing cost burden. Table 12 shows a detail of the cost burden issue by income category and housing type.

Table 12: Percent/Number Cost Burdened by Income and Housing Type

Housing Cost Burden	Owner	Renter	Total
Cost Burden <=30%	14,545	2,000	16,545
Cost Burden >30% to <=50%	3,075	905	3,980
Cost Burden >50%	2,310	790	3,100
Cost Burden Not Available	155	20	175
Total	20,090	3,715	23,805

Source: HUD CHAS data based on 2015-2019

- Overall, 4,365 owner-occupied households earning less than 80% of median household income experience some degree of housing cost burden. This represents 21.7% of the Township’s total owner-occupied households.
- 2,120 renter-occupied households earning less than 80% of median household income experience some degree of housing cost burden. This represents 57% of the Township’s total renter households.
- The total number (5,385) of cost burdened, owner occupied low income households triggers the need to provide financial assistance, particularly housing rehabilitation activities for extremely low income households.
- Based on the number of renter-occupied, cost burdened and severely cost burdened households, there remains a continuing need to provide affordable housing rental units throughout the Township.

Housing Quality and Rehabilitation

Housing condition relies on functional utility and the suitability for human habitation. Households suitable for habitation are generally considered as standard units. Those not suited for habitation are substandard.

A unit may also be considered substandard if one or more of the following defects are present:

1. No bath facilities or only a half bath.
2. Source of water other than a public water system, a private water company, a drilled or dug individual well.
3. No kitchen facilities.
4. Sewage disposal is other than public sewer, septic tank, or cesspool.
5. Heating equipment is by fireplace, stove, portable room heater or none at all.
6. Lacks complete plumbing.
7. Contains 1.01 or more persons per room.
8. No cooking fuel used.
9. No fuel used to heat hot water.
10. Any other violations constituting health and/or safety hazards.

It is extremely difficult to provide an accurate count of substandard units in Middletown. The 2020 US Census indicates that 21 occupied housing units lack complete plumbing facilities, and 202 housing units lack complete kitchen facilities. Combined these units represent 0.9% of the Township’s 24,147 occupied housing units in 2020.

Technically, every structure in Middletown is capable of being rehabilitated. However, a small portion of the substandard units are not financially feasible to repair. An example of a non-rehabilitatable” unit would be a household in such poor condition that it would be less expensive to demolish the building and construct a new dwelling of equal utility than it would be to repair the building.

Given the advancing age of housing units in Middletown and number of households experiencing housing problems, there remains a need for rehabilitation programs, particularly for low income families. The Township will continue to administer its Home Rehabilitation Program as part of its annual federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) entitlement.

Table 13: Housing Stock Quality Indicators

	# Units	% Total
Built before 1959	9,014	37.3
Overcrowded	146	0.6
Lacking complete plumbing facilities	21	0.1
Lacking complete kitchen facilities	202	0.8
No telephone service	199	0.8
No heating fuel	9	0.0
Total	24,147	

Source: 2020 ACS 5 Year Estimates

37.3% of Middletown’s housing stock is over 60 years old, and less than one percent is considered “overcrowded,” lacking complete plumbing or kitchen facilities, or without telephone service or heating fuel.

Employment Characteristics

Resident Employment

Due to the increase in population 16 years and older, Middletown’s total labor force remained steady from 2010 to 2020 at 66%, along with the number of employed persons in the civilian labor force. The unemployment rate decreased from 7.2% in 2010 to 5.6% in 2020.

Table 14: Employment Status, 2020 and 2010

	2020	% Total	2010	% Total
Total Population (16 years and over)	53,780		51,842	
In labor force	35,652	66.3	34,386	66.3
<i>Civilian labor force</i>	<i>35,614</i>	<i>99.9</i>	<i>34,346</i>	<i>99.9</i>
<i>Employed</i>	<i>33,615</i>	<i>94.3</i>	<i>31,876</i>	<i>92.7</i>
<i>Unemployed</i>	<i>1,999</i>	<i>5.6</i>	<i>2,470</i>	<i>7.2</i>
Armed Forces	38	<1%	40	<1%
Not in labor force	18,128	33.7	17,456	33.7

Source: 2020 and 2010 ACS 5 Year Estimates

Occupation

In 2020, the top four industry groups based on employment in Middletown were: 1) Educational services, and health care and social assistance (21.5%); 2) Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services (16.7%); 3) Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing (12.1%); and 4) Retail Trade (10.5%).

Table 15: 2020 Employed Civilian Labor Force by Industry

Industry	Number	Percent
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	109	0.3
Construction	2,210	6.6
Manufacturing	1,813	5.4
Wholesale trade	967	2.9
Retail trade	3,515	10.5
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	1,828	5.4
Information	982	2.9
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	4,066	12.1
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	5,606	16.7
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	7,224	21.5
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	2,813	8.4
Other services, except public administration	1,139	3.4
Public administration	1,343	4.0
Total Civilian Employed Population	33,615	

Source: 2020 ACS 5 Year Estimates

Appropriate Lands for Low and Moderate Income Housing

This section includes a discussion of land in Middletown most appropriate for construction of low and moderate income housing.

When considering lands most appropriate, substantial weight is given to reducing cost burdens shouldered by low and moderate income households. Rising costs in fuel and living continue to deplete resources of those most in need of affordable housing. Accordingly, sites that exhibit the following characteristics rank high in terms of lands most appropriate:

- Adjacent to or within one mile of major shopping and services
- Location that promotes walking to places of employment and the use of modes of transportation other than vehicles (mass transit, bicycling)
- Proximity to highways and major arterial roadways to reduce length of daily vehicular trips
- Component of a mixed-use development promoting sustainability and smart growth
- Location within the Metropolitan Planning Area (PA-1), an area designated by the State Plan as most suitable for growth and residential infill
- Locations that re-use underutilized, developed land
- Locations that will make efficient use of existing infrastructure

Another important consideration for selecting appropriate affordable housing sites is the ability to take a pro-active approach to “redeveloping” existing improved non-residential sites that are dilapidated, outmoded or are pending vacancy or demolition. A measurable aesthetic improvement can result. Often, the amount of peak hour vehicular trips is reduced from pre-development conditions based on the changed use, thus reducing strain on heavily taxed roadway infrastructure. The reduction in overall costs to developers (and thereby future residents) by utilizing established infrastructure such as existing water and sewer lines and capacity can be significant. An added benefit is the potential for the Township to receive future credit for jobs lost associated with any commercial building demolition.

Unique approaches to site design that promote preservation of significant resources are favored during site selection. These approaches would include:

- Dedication of substantial open space, particularly if said open space is adjacent to existing parkland or other types of preserved land
- Opportunities to preserve scenic corridors and historic roadways identified in the Township’s Master Plan
- Preservation of architecturally and historically significant structures
- Dedication of open space for active recreation, especially if said open space already contains recreation and athletic facilities
- Dedication of open space for passive recreational use, particularly if said open space contains environmentally sensitive features such as wetlands, stream corridors and/or steep slopes

As pointed out in the Demographics section, there is a need to provide affordable rental units throughout the Township based on the number of renter-occupied, cost burdened and severely cost burdened households. Accordingly, landowners who have expressed an eagerness to provide affordable rental units as part of an inclusionary development have been given priority consideration.

All sites included in Middletown’s Fair Share Plan exhibit several of the foregoing traits, rendering them most appropriate for construction of low and moderate income housing.

It is important to note that as the Township considers locations that are suitable and appropriate for affordable housing, the Township has also considered the presumption that additional residential units substantially impact school enrollment. To the contrary, in review of total enrollment of the Middletown Township Public School District, over the past 10 years, enrollment has steadily declined from 9,835 to 9,034 public school children. Also within that time period the Port Monmouth Elementary School closed as other elementary schools had the capacity to absorb those children.

	PUBLIC SCHOOL TOTAL ENROLLEMENT 2012/13 – 2021/22									
Middletown Township Public School District	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Middletown High School North	1,472	1,434	1,426	1,391	1,379	1,370	1,408	1,391	1,381	1,353
Middletown High School South	1,382	1,417	1,402	1,419	1,432	1,431	1,540	1,583	1,524	1,521
Bayshore Middle School	664	663	643	672	653	655	626	623	639	616
Thompson Middle School	916	944	945	1,032	1,032	1,062	1,005	978	939	917
Thorne Middle School	747	706	731	748	742	711	677	685	632	625
Bayview Elementary School	433	427	404	387	387	372	366	370	355	341
Ocean Avenue Elementary School	295	292	279	293	281	298	294	282	296	292
Fairview Elementary School	327	312	304	279	286	308	295	289	302	304
Harmony Elementary School	527	486	502	506	520	496	507	531	464	471
Leonardo Elementary School	236	231	233	233	244	251	274	285	267	258
Lincroft Elementary School	516	510	491	456	438	442	450	456	449	452
Middletown Village Elementary School	431	416	413	391	377	384	384	393	408	425
Navesink Elementary School	279	294	295	282	283	274	233	236	206	194
New Monmouth Elementary School	472	458	431	412	394	380	367	359	467	486
Nut Swamp Elementary School	560	552	575	565	583	579	572	557	514	519
Port Monmouth Elementary School	262	267	247	249	234	219	207	195	Closed	Closed
River Plaza Elementary School	316	325	325	314	300	281	286	272	248	260
TOTAL	9,835	9,734	9,645	9,628	9,564	9,513	9,491	9,485	9,091	9,034

Source: NJDOE Fall Enrollment Reports

There were sites identified in the 2008 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan as not necessarily “unsuitable” for affordable housing, but instead exhibited limitations that do not bring them to the forefront at this time. As indicated below, the status of these sites have changed and with this Amendment, have been updated, and new sites added, exhibiting similar limitations:

- The parcel known as the Murray Construction Site contained a vacant office building that has now been redeveloped and the existing office building renovated to contain Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center.
- The Bamm Hollow site was the subject of a Master Plan Amendment in 2011 in response to a Settlement Agreement made between the Township and Bamm Hollow LLC. As part of the settlement, the Bamm Hollow property (Block 1048, Lots 35, 66 and 68, and Block 1049, Lots 10, 11, 15 and 51) was rezoned to permit up to 190 single family housing units.
- The DeFelice property is 11 acres of farmland situated on the east side of Dwight Road south of the realigned Red Hill Road intersection. All potential residents at this site would be entirely dependent on personal vehicles due to the site’s remote location from transportation. Development at this site would involve the elimination of farmland. Accessibility to the site from Malus Lane and/or Holland Road provides challenges in mitigating impacts on adjacent residences.
- The West Nut Swamp Road site (Block 1045, Lots 2, 3 and 4) contains over 18 acres of undeveloped, heavily wooded land with environmentally sensitive areas such as steep slopes and wetlands. The ROW of West Nut Swamp Road is 50” wide, and paved for approximately 900’ and changes over to gravel for the remaining length. In somewhat close proximity to the DeFelice property, all potential residents at this site would be entirely dependent on personal vehicles due to the site’s remote location from public transportation.
- The Red Hill Road site (Block 1045, Lot 12) is currently vacant and utilized as informal and illegal storage of vehicles and landscape equipment. This site is not large, containing just over 2 acres, and environmentally sensitive features such as steep slopes. All potential residents at this site would be entirely dependent on personal vehicles due to the site’s remote location from public transportation.
- The Mater Dei Prep Catholic High School in Middletown closed in 2022 due to declining enrollment since 2014. The site contains x acres and substantial athletic facilities including football field, baseball fields and track. Redevelopment of this site for uses other than active recreation would eliminate existing, substantial and in good condition athletic facilities, athletic facilities that could be put to good use for the benefit of the Township and surrounding area.

Housing Projections

Following is an examination of past and anticipated residential and non-residential development patterns for the years 2009 to present.

Table 16: Completed and Anticipated Residential Development since 2009 through 2028

Development	Status	Housing Type	Total
Heritage*	Complete	Multifamily	176
Four Ponds	Complete	Multifamily	228
Conifer*	Complete	Multifamily	160
Harmony Glen*	Complete	Multifamily	90
Cottage Gate*	Complete	Multifamily	118
Navesink Woods* (formerly known as Atlantic Pier)	Complete	Multifamily	40
Village at Chapel Hill*	Complete	Multifamily	150
Bayshore Village* (rebuilt after Sandy)	Complete	Multifamily	110
Browns Landing / Middletown Crossing*	Complete	Multifamily	21
Park Avenue Condos*	Complete	Multifamily	6
Supportive Housing at Cottage Gate*	Complete	Multifamily	5
Supportive and Special Needs Housing*	Complete	Detached	8
Supportive Housing at Impact Oasis*	Complete	Detached	10
33 Vanderbilt*	Complete	Multifamily	15
Accessory Apartments*	Complete (13) and Anticipated (5)	Detached	18
Bamm Hollow	Complete (181) Under Construction (9)	Detached	190
Middletown Walk*	Under Construction	Multifamily	350
Meadowview*	Anticipated	Multifamily	35
Whirl*	Anticipated	Mixed Use	3
Misc. Minor Subdivisions	Anticipated	Detached	15
Veterans Housing*	Anticipated	Multifamily	12
DeFelice Farm	Anticipated	Detached	11
North Middletown Redevelopment Plan*	Anticipated	Multifamily	20
Exit 109 Redevelopment Plan*	Anticipated	Multifamily	398
Eastpointe Shopping Center*	Anticipated	Multifamily	60
Port Belford Redevelopment Plan*	Anticipated (Phase 1)	Multifamily	200

*Includes Affordable Housing Units

In review of the data presented in Tables 16 and 17, more than 700 additional housing units have been completed since 2009, and 300-500 units anticipated over the next 5 years. The overwhelming majority of completed and anticipated housing development includes housing units that are affordable to low and moderate income households. This projection has been made without specific knowledge of future housing market demands.

Annual housing unit demolitions represent 36% of total Certificates of Occupancy (COs) issued over the 10 year period of 2011-2021.

Table 17: 10-year Trend of Certificates of Occupancy and Demolition Permits

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Through June 2022	Total 2011-2021
COs Issued	51	52	38	51	51	78	202	149	30	27	8	2	737
Demolitions	21	13	52	43	37	10	5	25	21	17	22	9	266
Net	30	39	-14	8	14	68	197	124	9	10	-14	-7	471

Source: New Jersey Construction Reporter

As can be seen in the table above, a total of 737 certificates of occupancy for new housing units were issued between 2011 and 2021. After deducting housing demolitions, the net increase in housing units authorized by CO is 471.

Table 18 below illustrates completed new non-residential development since 2009, and what is expected for the next five years. Additional non-residential development has certainly occurred within the Township since 2009 but more in the form as redevelopment of existing buildings, and not included in the table below.

Table 18: Completed and Anticipated Non-Residential Development since 2009 through 2028

Application	Type	New Non-residential SF	Status
Ouellette	Mixed Use	4,300	Complete
D-Block, LLC (car wash)	Retail	3,200	Complete
BBMK LLC	Medical Office	15,600	Complete
DeVimy Equities	Mixed Use	21,505	Complete
Pomon Plaza	Fast Food	2,087	Under Construction
Lifetime Fitness	Mixed Use	120,000	Under Construction
Seth Beller Trust (Wawa)	Retail	4,700	Under Construction
Village at 35	Mixed Use	300,000	Anticipated
North Middletown Redevelopment Plan	Mixed Use	1,700	Anticipated
Port Belford Redevelopment Plan	Mixed Use	+100,000 (Phase 1)	Anticipated
Exit 109 Redevelopment	Mixed Use	2,200	Anticipated

Housing Plan

The following describes several methods and tools the Township intends to employ to encourage affordable housing in locations appropriate and suitable and consistent with the methodology indicated in the 2008 HEFSP and as amended herein.

- 195 Leonardville Road - Middletown Township recognized a need to provide affordable housing for its veterans. The Township purchased Block 502, Lots 1 and 7 with the desire to consolidate the property with the adjacent township owned parcels and redevelop the site for affordable housing for local veterans. The Middletown Veterans' Housing project will provide 12 residential units within a three-story, 21,660 square foot multifamily building with associated parking, drainage improvements, landscaping and lighting. The entire building will be above the base flood elevation. The proposed area of disturbance will be located within the original area of disturbance, which will leave most of the property undisturbed.
- Port Belford Redevelopment Plan presents an opportunity for waterfront multi-family residential development and mixed use development that is proximate to ferry transportation.
- North Middletown Redevelopment Plan for Block 70, Lots 1-3 – Located in the Bayshore North Middletown neighborhood, this area is a designated non-condemnation redevelopment area with a Redevelopment Plan in place to permit mixed use development including 20 residential units and 1,700 square feet of nonresidential space. The area is developed with an existing towing and repair operation and unoccupied deli/convenience store that has since been demolished.
- Designated Redevelopment Area for Block 1131, Lots 30-32 and Block 1086, Lots 29-30 – Located along Newman Springs Road (CR 520) east of the Garden State Parkway. The area is developed with older, multi-story office buildings that have notable vacancy rates and surface parking lots. Consistent with the Township's methodology for identifying sites suitable and appropriate for affordable housing, the area is proximate to public transportation, existing and developed, and presents an opportunity for efficient use of existing infrastructure.
- East Point Shopping Center (Block 729, Lot 21) – Existing shopping center along the Route 36 Corridor. The owner has expressed interest in redeveloping the site with inclusionary multifamily development. The site is consistent with the Township's methodology as potentially appropriate and suitable for inclusionary multifamily residential development such that it is proximate to public transportation, efficient use of existing infrastructure, and developed with no significant disturbance to environmentally sensitive features.
- Accessory Apartments – Continue to administer the Township's accessory apartment program. The Township increased the grant amount to construct accessory apartments and offers \$20,000 to the owner for a moderate income apartment and \$25,000 for a low income apartment. Since 2009, 13 accessory apartments have been built. All were affirmatively marketed and developed in accordance with COAH criteria.
- Continue to administer the Township's Home Rehabilitation Program funded with Community Development Block Grant entitlement. Since 2009, 86 sub-standard existing single family dwellings occupied by low and moderate income households have been rehabilitated.
- Continue to support non profit organizations such as Habitat for Humanity to find municipally-owned vacant, underutilized parcels for the construction of detached housing for low and moderate income households.
- Continue to forge partnerships with non-profit organizations to renovate existing housing stock within the Township to serve as supportive and special needs housing.
- Continue to closely monitor affordability controls of existing affordable housing units that are approaching expiration and utilize Affordable Housing Trust Fund money to provide a financial

incentive for owners to renew their affordability controls for their affordable units; and/or renovate and upgrade the Township's existing affordable housing stock to better suit needs of low and moderate income households.

- **Overlay Zoning.** The Township is in the midst of developing a Route 36 Corridor Redevelopment Plan. Route 36 is an older commercial corridor with marginal commercial development, primarily constrained by smaller the ideal property sizes for commercial development. It is likely that the redevelopment plan for this corridor will consider the inclusion of multi-family residential on certain properties meeting certain criteria, yet to be established. In recognition of the changing economies for commercial and retail development, this approach could also be a consideration for future redevelopment of the Route 35 corridor as well.

**2023 Amendment to the
Middletown Township Open Space, Recreation and Conservation Master Plan Element**

This document serves as an amendment to the Township’s 2004 Open Space, Recreation and Conservation Master Plan Element, specifically the Executive Summary and the List of Possible Open Space/Recreation Sites.

Executive Summary

In November 1998, Middletown taxpayers overwhelmingly supported a one cent dedicated municipal open space tax. An additional one cent increase was equally well supported and became effective in 2002. Almost two decades later, in November 2020, more than 66% of Middletown voters supported an additional one-cent increase in the open space fund tax, increasing their yearly open space contribution from 2 to 3 cents per \$100 of assessed property value.

The Open Space Trust Fund is used for open space, recreation, flood plain protection and farmland and historic preservation, all critical assets for the Township to preserve its residents quality of life. The increased open space fund tax expands the purchasing power of Middletown of these critical assets.

Detailed in the table below, just some of the ongoing projects for park improvements some of which were/are funded in part by the Open Space Trust Fund include a new dog park, tennis and basketball courts at Tindall Park, McMahon Park improvements, new skate park at Kunkel Park, historic preservation work of the National and State Register Conover Beacon Lighthouse, and various playground repairs.

Park Name/Location	Project description	Status
Hillside Basketball Court	Resurfaced	Complete
Tonya Keller Community Center	Basketball court resurfaced, new hoops, benches, trees and drainage improvements	Complete
Various Parks	ADA improvements	In progress
Conover Beacon Lighthouse	Historic Preservation repairs	In progress
Dempsey House and surrounding property	Open space preservation and application for the house to be placed on the historic register	In progress
Kunkel Skatepark	Design and build	In progress
Library walk at Poricy Park	Design and build	In progress
Lincroft Acres	Playground improvements	In progress
McMahon Park	Playground improvements	In progress
Normandy Turf Field	Maintenance and drainage	In progress
Nut Swamp Turf Field	Beautification	In progress
Various parks and parcels with potential as open space	Preliminary Assessments and Site Investigations	In progress
Tindall Dog Park	Construction	In progress
Tonya Keller Community Center	Building improvements	In progress

Green Acres

The Township continues to have an excellent relationship with the New Jersey Green Acres Program. Middletown successfully implemented several grants and loans from Green Acres. The Township is currently working with the NJ Green Acres Program to update our Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI) and expects to increase the Township’s open space inventory by 43 acres.

List of Possible Open Space/Recreation Sites

The following properties have been newly identified as having some potential as open space or as a site for active recreation. The listing within the 2004 Open Space, Recreation and Conservation Element is hereby amended to include the properties listed below:

Park Type

- RP = Regional Park
- RA = Recreation Area
- CA = Conservation Area
- NP = Neighborhood Park

Potential Uses

- A = Active Recreation
- P = Passive Recreation
- Ag = Agricultural Area
- M = Mixed Use Park

Site Location	Acreage	Key Assets	Park Type/Uses
Block 1045, Lots 2, 3, and 4	+18 ac	Natural, undeveloped tract containing wetlands and steep slopes. The property has very limited access, fronting on the end of West Nut Swamp Road. West Nut Swamp Road is partially paved.	CA/P
Block 1045, Lot 12	+2 ac	This property could be suitable for limited active recreational uses as a portion of this site is level and cleared. The rear portion of the site is in its natural, undeveloped state and contains steep slopes and wetlands, and suitable for preservation.	RA/A, CA
Block 532, Lots 42, 43, 44, and 45	+12 ac	Undeveloped tract on Route 36. A large portion of this site adjoins an existing township park and could be annexed to it. Portions of this site are suitable for passive recreation, such as nature trails.	CA/P
Block 372, Lots 6, 13, and 14	+2/3 ac	Natural, undeveloped tract containing wetlands. Limited access with frontage on a paper street. Adjacent to state undeveloped land	CA/P

Site Location	Acreage	Key Assets	Park Type/Uses
Mater Dei Prep Catholic High School	+30 ac	The Mater Dei Prep Catholic High School in Middletown closed in 2022 due to declining enrollment since 2014. The site contains +30 acres and developed with substantial athletic facilities including a football field, running track and baseball fields. The former School Structure is now obsolete and would be an appropriate location for an indoor recreation facility as all necessary infrastructure, including parking is already in place.	RA/A
Block 638, Lot 30	+11 ac	Contains vacant single family dwelling but mostly undeveloped natural wooded tract with wetlands and steep slopes.	CA/P
Block 423, Lot 5	0.5 ac	Developed with existing non-residential business. Adjoins an existing township park and could be annexed to it.	NP/P
Block 1030, Lots 7 and 10	+16 ac	Partially cleared upland developed with a residential structure, remaining portion of parcel is wooded, wetlands and steep slopes.	CA/P
Manitto Place/Comanche Drive	+67 ac	This site is no longer suitable for open space or recreation purposes due to failure of owners to complete the transaction as originally contemplated and there is no prospect of this being rectified in the future. Township should seek to recoup the funds expended.	-