

**Burlington County Route 130 Corridor
Municipal Questionnaire**

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**Please review these questions and fill in as much as you can
to paint a picture of your status and trends in planning:**

(We'd love to see additional planning documents if you have them, though we're primarily interested in you telling the story of your community in narrative form so that we get a feel for what makes it unique and what's important to you and your citizens.)

1. Visioning

Do you have a vision statement for your future? Please share it here:

In 2019, Florence Township commenced the preparation of a comprehensive Master Plan that was scheduled to be adopted by the end of 2020. Because of the pandemic, the schedule was delayed in order to obtain the information needed for the various Master Plan Elements and to properly introduce the elements to the Planning Board and to seek public comment throughout the process. One of the first tasks the Board completed in October, 2019, was a Statement of Objectives, Principles, Assumptions, Policies and Standards. The Board began the process with Statements from the 1976 Master Plan and Master Plan Amendments and Reexaminations from 1976 to the most recent Reexamination Report which was adopted on May 22, 2018. While not technically a Vision Statement, the following statements were thoroughly discussed by the Planning Board during public Planning Board meetings.

The following Objectives, Principles, Assumptions, Policies and Standards have been adopted by the Township of Florence Planning Board for this 2021 Master Plan.

1. Managed and balanced economic development and residential growth is encouraged in the Township to achieve land development that is both aesthetically pleasing and economically valuable. Township policies such as zoning and upgrading municipal services should encourage the development of environmentally conscientious commercial, retail and service development providing needed services, jobs and a strengthened tax base.
2. The unique character, existing scale, history and heritage of the Township and in particular, the Roebling Village area and the Town of Florence, should be preserved and protected through the use of

appropriate development controls. Individual historic sites throughout the Township should likewise be preserved and all should be promoted.

3. Develop Route 130 in a manner generally consistent with the other goals of the Master plan.
4. Improvements and expansions to the Township's water and sewer systems should be balanced with the existing need and coordinated with the Township's future land use policies.
5. Residential development standards should permit flexibility of design in order to promote the retention of open space and the preservation of critical areas. Growth should be managed and consistent with the availability of municipal services. While complying with affordable house requirements, growth impacts and financial costs should be minimized.
6. The remaining agricultural areas of Township that are situated to the south of the New Jersey Turnpike Extension and east of the Highway Commercial Zoning District represents an important and rapidly diminishing resource that should be protected and preserved from inappropriate development that will be harmful to its long term viability as an agricultural area.
7. Residential development should be generally confined to the area north of the New Jersey Turnpike Extension in the more densely populated urban areas of the Township in order to prevent sprawl, wasteful expenditures on infrastructure, and adverse impacts on agriculture, wetlands, floodplains, water bodies and other environmentally sensitive areas that are more prevalent in the areas south of the New Jersey Turnpike Extension and east of the Highway Commercial Zoning District. The areas targeted for denser residential development are the older portions of the Township close to the Delaware River where infrastructure and services are available and where additional development is consistent with smart growth and the existing scale and character Township.
8. Future residential development in areas to the south of the New Jersey Turnpike Extension and east of the Highway commercial Zoning District should be limited to very low density residential development where public sewerage is not and should not be available with the exception of water and sewer service to Florence Township Memorial High School.

9. Gaps in water and sewer infrastructure can be connected but water and sewer should not be extended to areas outside of the sewer service area or water service area.
10. The existence of neighborhood commercial areas serving the needs of neighborhood residents is important to the Township. The Township should look for and support realistic ways to assist these areas in becoming more economically viable.
11. The closing of the Roebling Plant, a site of strategic importance to the Township, still adversely affects the Township's character and economic base. The Township should look for ways to make this site more attractive to redevelopment and accessible to the waterfront and Route 130.
12. Significant changes have occurred to the road networks in Florence Township. The changes have affected the character and rate of development in the Township and the region. The implications on the character and future development of Florence should be actively monitored so that the consequences and impacts of development, specifically on circulation and road networks, can be addressed and mitigated by the Township and where required, the Township in conjunction with County, State and regional authorities.
13. Township objectives, principles, assumptions, policies and standards should be consistent with smart growth and sustainable development.
14. Detailed, refined definitions should be provided of distribution centers and warehouses since there are unique distinctions, each with a different impact on surrounding land uses and infrastructure.
15. Permitted and accessory uses in each zoning district should be reviewed, revised and updated, as needed, to reflect current uses than may have been previously envisioned and to meet the needs of the citizens of the Township of Florence.

If so, when was it last affirmed? October, 2019.

Through what process? The Master Plan process.

Who participated? The Planning Board, a Subcommittee of the Planning Board and the Township Planner/Planning Board Planner.

What matters most to your community?

1. Balancing commercial growth with the impacts on our resident's quality of life.
2. Resolving the traffic issues on Rt. 130 and Florence/Columbus Road caused by motorist traveling from N.J. Turnpike Exit 6 and Rt 295.
3. Traffic issues in our neighborhoods and highways caused by industrial/commercial growth in neighboring towns (River Road warehouses Burlington Twp., warehouses in Mansfield Twp. on Rt 130 & Florence / Columbus Road.

Have you thought about your sustainability? Your contributions to Green House Gases (GHG)? How to reduce your GHG contributions? Yes. In 2013, the Township developed and adopted a comprehensive Renewable Energy Ordinance designed to permit solar and photovoltaic energy facilities in appropriate locations in the Township in a way that is consistent with State legislation to facilitate alternative forms of energy production and to minimize potential land use conflicts and potential negative impacts associated with such facilities on surrounding properties. The ordinance was also intended to accomplish the following:

1. Retaining prime agricultural soils for agricultural use by avoiding siting such facilities on lands within the Agricultural District (AGR) and lands with significant areas of prime farmland soils and soils of statewide importance.
2. Preserving the industry of agriculture and agricultural use of the Township's rural environs by avoiding siting such facilities on lands which have the realistic potential to become permanently preserved farmland in accord with state legislative policies and state and county planning initiatives.
3. Preserving areas with an established rural and/or historic character by avoiding siting such facilities on land within areas of rural and/or historic character, particularly on land which is exposed to public view and where, by reason of topography or other natural features, the facility cannot be effectively screened from view.
4. Protecting the quality of life in residential districts by siting ground-mounted facilities in locations that minimize the visibility of such facilities from adjacent residential areas.
5. Providing standards for buffering and screening of renewable energy facilities to protect surrounding properties from glare and to mitigate the negative visual impact of ground mounted facilities.
6. Providing for proper decommissioning of the renewable energy facility after its useful life.

7. Preventing heat islands or unnatural heat absorption, causing ecological damage and habitat loss.
8. Preserving and protecting existing forested areas which provide multiple direct environmental benefits, such as carbon sequestration, wildlife habitat and local cooling.

2. Resiliency

Have you started planning for resiliency to climate change and sea level rise?

Yes. Every three years the Township updates its Emergency Plan. The Township has also prepared a new Stormwater Management Ordinance and other documents required by the March 2, 2020 Stormwater Management regulations (NJAC 7:8) that must be adopted and implemented by March 1, 2021.

If so, please attach any planning documents. Attach Ordinance 91, Article XLVI. Renewable Energy, the Stormwater Management Ordinance, and other relevant documents.

Who has been engaged in the discussions? Mayor and Township Council, Administration, Township Engineer, Township Planner.

Have you identified your risks? (Flooding? Erosion? Heat island effect? Increased storms? Disease? Other? Yes.

Have you assessed vulnerable populations? Yes.

Do you have an inventory of community assets? (Schools, emergency buildings, senior care, churches, businesses, infrastructure, transportation, energy, communications, health & medical facilities, hazardous materials; food water & shelter; safety & security, natural areas, parks, other?) Yes. The Emergency Plan and various elements of the 2021 Master Plan provide an inventory of most of the assets identified above.

3. Equity

Do you have issues of Environmental Justice or other concerns about equity in your community? If so, list communities/neighborhoods that have borne an outsized burden of pollution, traffic and or other considerations that impact on quality of life. The Township is not aware of issues of Environmental Justice. The Township as a whole, has been burdened by air pollution from landfills. Within the

last several years, certain areas of the Township have reported concern over truck traffic, traffic increases and congestion which the Township is addressing with increased signage and policing to divert traffic to appropriate routes and by working with DVRPC, Burlington County, Burlington Township and NJDOT on measures to increase roadway capacity and to provide a by-pass route to avoid residential areas.

What is the status of your affordable housing agreement? And, the status of implementation? The Township's Housing Element and Fair Share Plan has been revised a number of times due to Rounds One, Two and Three of the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) regulations and the more recent requirement that municipalities obtain approval of their affordable housing obligation from the Court. Housing Elements and Fair Share Plans were prepared, dated, or adopted as follows:

January 5, 1987, Resubmitted June 1, 1987
June 27, 1988 Amendment
July 25, 1988 Amendment
March 31, 1989
April 27, 1992
March 1993, Amended February, 1994
April 20, 1998
December 2, 2008
December 8, 2015
April 24, 2018 **Amended August, 2018**

The Township reached a Settlement Agreement with Fair Share Housing Center on 11/10/2016 and in 2018 the Court approved the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan and received Third Round Judgment of Compliance and Repose. The Township has in the past and continues to participate in providing affordable housing in accordance with its Fair Share Plan.

4. Community Characterization

If not identified in the earlier questions, what are the key elements that define your community? [Answered in previous questions](#)

5. Mapping

Please attach a file with your zoning map in GIS format (shape files). ([Planner researching and will forward](#))

If you have your community assets and vulnerabilities mapped, please include them as well.

Who is your municipal contact for GIS mapping? (please include email and phone #) David Hudson, Environmental Resolutions, Inc., dhudson@erinj.com, 856-235-7170. Please copy the following with all emails to Mr. Hudson: Barbara J. Fegley, Township Planner, Environmental Resolutions, Inc., bfegley@erinj.com, 856-235-7170. Stephen Fakezas, Township Administrator, sfazekas@florence-nj.gov, 609-499-2525.

6. State Plan Consistency

Please review the 8 goals of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (attached) and address how your master plan and vision for your community is (or is not) consistent with these goals, policies & indicators.

Goal 1: Revitalize the State's Cities and Towns

Florence Township has recognized the desirability of revitalizing and enhancing economic opportunities and effectively planning development in areas of existing development and growth where utilities and services are available. The Township has been extremely proactive in its revitalization efforts. In 2009, the Township embarked on a plan to redevelop and revitalize the Route 130 Corridor. A Preliminary Investigation for the Determination of An Area in Need of Redevelopment for 56 lots was prepared and approved. In 2013, these efforts were expanded along Route 130 and in other areas of the Township that were in Need of Redevelopment. The 2013 investigation included 109 lots. As a result of the Determination, numerous Redevelopment Plans were prepared for development and redevelopment within the Township.

Goal 2: Conserve the State's Natural Resources and System

The Township is keenly aware of the need to conserve its natural resources and systems. Preservation of farmland and targeting development to those areas of the Township that are developed and within existing utility service areas is identified in the Objectives, Principles, Assumptions, Policies and Standards identified by the Planning Board for its 2021 Master Plan. The Township will be preparing and adopting a Conservation Plan Element of the Master Plan in 2021 to further identify areas that should be reserved for conservation.

Goal 3: Promote Beneficial Economic Growth, Development and Renewal for All Residents of NJ

As stated in Goal 1, the Township firmly believes in beneficial economic growth, development and renewal for its residents and has taken definitive steps to achieve that goal.

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

The Township has been working with US EPA for years to remediate and clean up the Roebling Steel Plant site and to convert portions of it to a premier waterfront park along the Delaware River. Recently, a redeveloper worked with the Township to clean up pollution at the Griffin Pipe Plant and redevelop it to warehousing. The redevelopment was mindful of sensitive environmental areas and protected those areas while providing economic opportunities to the Township. These are just two examples of the Township efforts. The Township has an active Environmental Commission that provides comments to developments at the Planning Board and Zoning Board and the Township Professionals echo the concerns of the Township and Commission to protect, prevent, and clean-up the environment.

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

The Township has been proactive in its efforts to provide public facilities and services to its residents at reasonable costs. Costs have successfully been offset by forward thinking and planning for public facilities and services and appropriate economic developments. The average Township residential property tax is significantly lower than both the County and State taxes. In Burlington County, Florence Township has the 7th lowest average total property tax.

Goal 6: Provide Adequate Housing at a Reasonable Cost

The Township provides a wide range of housing at reasonable costs: from historically significant townhouse style housing units in Roebling constructed for the workforce at Roebling Steel Plant, to the age restricted, owner occupied community on the western side of the Township, to the planned community at Mallard Creek. In addition, the Township seeks opportunities to develop or redevelop sites for affordable housing. A prime example of this is the reconstruction of the Duffy School into affordable age-restricted rental units. Duffy School is just one example of Township efforts to provide adequate housing at reasonable costs.

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

The Township is proud of its past and protective of its scenic views of the Delaware River, preserved farmlands and its open space and recreational areas. For the 2021 Master Plan, the Township has prepared a Community Facilities Plan Element, a Recreation Plan Element, A Farmland Preservation Plan Element, and an Historic Preservation Plan Element. Other elements relevant to Goal 7 include a Public Access Plan Element and Conservation Plan Element that are currently under preparation.

Goal 8: Ensure Sound, Integrated Planning and Implementation Statewide

The Township recognizes the importance of sound, integrated planning with neighboring communities, the County, the region, and the State. As evidence of this, the Township is most recently working with the Burlington Township, Burlington County, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, and New Jersey Department of Transportation to resolve truck traffic and circulation issues resulting from the rise of warehouse uses in Florence Township and Burlington Township and surrounding communities. Planning efforts by these agencies for a By-Pass route and improvements to US Route 130 have been underway for some time and a final plan is anticipated in the near future with construction the next step in the process for implementation.

7. State requests

NJDOT – Continue to work with Burlington County and Florence Township to improve the intersection of Rt. 130 & Florence/Columbus Road and funding for the project.

Please list any ‘asks’ that you have of the state including OPA, DEP, DOT, DCA, BPU or any other state agencies. OPA is committed to bringing them to the table, though we can’t guarantee exactly the resolution that you’re looking for.

Please feel free to add anything else that you feel would be pertinent to a planning discussion and THANK YOU for your time!