

# 1 INTRODUCTION & COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

## 3 Executive Summary

### 5 Plan Mission

7 Long Hill Township is a special blend of five communities, each with a distinct history and heritage, collectively  
8 forming a semi-rural landscape.

10 The mission of the Master Plan is to responsibly grow the Township, while maintaining the semi-rural landscape of  
11 Meyersville and Homestead Park, regenerating Stirling's Workers Village, respecting Millington's Historical features  
12 and recognizing Gillette as a visitor's gateway to the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge.

14 The Master Plan promotes responsible change for a sustainable future while honoring the past, creating a Township  
15 where people will want to build their own future for generations to come.

### 17 What is a Master Plan?

18 A Master Plan is a governing document that articulates a community's vision for its future and establishes a framework  
19 of policies to enact that vision. More specifically, a Master Plan specifies how a community's built and natural  
20 environment will evolve and how it will utilize the land going forward. The laws enacted must conform to the goals and  
21 strategies adopted in the Master Plan.

23 Like Long Hill Township, a Master Plan is made up of many different parts, or elements that discuss issues like  
24 transportation, land use, housing, open space and conservation that coalesce into a larger entity. The vision outlined in  
25 the Plan will outline important policy decisions affecting land development, ranging from individual residential  
26 renovations to the proper location of business districts and areas that should be preserved for open space. Additionally,  
27 it serves as a high-level guide for the Township's Planning and Zoning Boards in their review of applications that come  
28 before them. This Plan was written with implementation in mind to help Long Hill realize its goals, and remove barriers  
29 to investment into the Township.

### 31 Master Plan Requirements

32 A Master Plan is among the most important components of the State of New Jersey's Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL),  
33 which gives and outlines authority to local governments to make their own policies that they believe will advance their  
34 unique local interests. The Master Plan guides local policies, such as zoning ordinances, which implement the plan and  
35 give it regulatory teeth through resident-led Planning and Zoning Boards. A Master Plan is by its nature, an aspirational  
36 document. It's a guide for a community to set the land use policies to provide direction in effectuating priorities to set  
37 the course for the future it desires. Simply stated, a Master Plan outlines a vision for a community and the steps that  
38 are needed to attain that vision. It is also an important tool for prioritizing investments, solving existing problems and  
39 for attracting more resources into the community.

41 The MLUL requires every municipality to update its Master Plan once every 10 years. Long Hill last passed a  
42 comprehensive update of its Master Plan in 1996. Officials have approved updates and passed a reexamination in  
43 the decades since, but even those changes are framed and shaped by recommendations made over two decades ago.  
44 Since 1996, the challenges and opportunities at hand for Long Hill have evolved, as have the aspirations of its residents.  
45 Those aspirations are embodied in the goals and objectives contained in this Master Plan, which articulates an intricate  
46 set of tools and strategies meant to realize them.

48 A Master Plan is composed of a series of individual plans, or "elements," each pertaining to a specific subject. The MLUL  
49 requires municipalities to prepare a Land Use and a Housing Element. Land use and housing, though, constitute only a  
50 part of the built environment. Communities prepare other plan elements to address such areas as parks and open space,  
51 transportation, sustainability, economic development, and historic preservation. The MLUL provides guidance for  
52 elements that address many of these areas so that they may be used by decision makers to manage the growth and  
53 preservation of their community. This Plan includes elements that address each of these disciplines and presents

54 thoughtful proposals for how to enhance the aspects of life in the Township that residents value the most, while  
55 addressing those that residents see as the most in need of improvement.

56  
57 This document also meets the MLUL Master Plan requirement to include “a statement of objectives, principles,  
58 assumptions, policies and standards upon which the constituent proposals for the physical, economic and social  
59 development of the municipality are based.” As such, it shall serve as the basis for any subsequent Master Plan elements  
60 or revisions to existing elements. Going forward, all planning efforts and policies must describe how they are consistent  
61 with or serve to further the vision, goals, and objectives contained within this document.  
62

## 63 Methodology

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65 The Master Plan was prepared through an open and public process designed to reach and obtain significant input from  
66 a wide spectrum of voices from every sector of Long Hill’s community. Each part of the outreach process was facilitated  
67 by the members of the Master Plan Committee, who worked with Town Planning professionals to ensure that it remained  
68 accessible and relatable to the Township’s residents. The recommendations within are based on the ideas, challenges,  
69 aspirations, and insights shared with professionals by members of the community.  
70

71 This process extended throughout several years, and included a mix of in-person engagement (including public sessions  
72 held in the Fall of 2017 that focused upon Stirling and Millington), online-based surveys, meetings with key stakeholder  
73 groups and regular Master Plan Committee meetings. Hundreds of residents would participate in this outreach process.  
74 Throughout the course of these years, the Township would experience changing conditions, and adopt specific elements  
75 such as the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan to satisfy the Township’s legal obligations. All these changes, along  
76 with the results from community engagement were carefully reviewed and organized by the members of the Master  
77 Plan Committee.  
78

79 Beyond the adoption of this Master Plan, updates to the Elements should be sought on a regular basis as determined  
80 by Township Committees, Boards and Commissions or any legal obligations that may be imposed. Therefore, it is the  
81 intent of the Planning Board to address such changes periodically to keep this Master Plan current and relevant  
82 between Re-examination and Revision.  
83  
84

## 85 Community Profile

86  
87 Long Hill Township is located in the southernmost corner of Morris County bordering Union County to the southeast and  
88 Somerset County to the south and west. The semi-rural, small-town characteristics of Long Hill Township exemplifies the  
89 transitional area between the higher density municipalities to the east and more rural communities to the west.  
90

91 Long Hill largely consists of areas of natural beauty, including the Millington Gorge along the Passaic River. Several  
92 of the town’s parks touch the Passaic River, a waterway that defines its western and southern borders. The 7,800-acre  
93 Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge comprises much of the township’s northern land area and is among the most  
94 defining features of Long Hill. In fact, Federal and State lands, Township Open Space, and steep slope properties,  
95 account for about 55% of the Township land which is unavailable for future development.  
96

97 Long Hill Township is greater than the sum of its parts and is a uniquely pleasant community. With its own distinctive  
98 charms and character, many consider it a great place to raise a family. Township residents take pride in their  
99 community, many volunteering on the various boards and committees to keep it vibrant and active.  
100

101 Three of Long Hill’s distinct centers (Millington, Stirling & Gillette) offer commuter rail service to New York City via the  
102 NJ Transit Gladstone Branch of the Morris and Essex Rail Line. Nearby highways such as Interstates 78 and 287 offer  
103 easy access to major regional centers and beyond.  
104

105 Since the early 1990s, the Township has not undergone significant business or residential growth with much of the  
106 developable land utilized by existing businesses and residences. Growth was also limited as a result of the sewer  
107 hookup ban caused by flow limitations at the Township Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP). The sewer ban also  
108 contributed to the Township maintaining the small town charm that most residents deeply appreciate. In addition, during  
109 this timeframe some existing businesses have fallen into disrepair which creates further challenges for the Township.

110  
111 Over the last five years, the Township has been faced with meeting future housing obligations as the result New Jersey  
112 statutory changes. On July 6, 2015, Long Hill Township sought a declaratory judgment for compliance with the Mount  
113 Laurel doctrine and Fair Housing Act of 1985. The purpose of judgment was to allow the Township to negotiate a  
114 settlement agreement with the Fair Share Housing Center that met the terms of the Mount Laurel doctrine and Fair  
115 Housing Act of 1985. On December 15, 2017, a settlement agreement was reached requiring the adoption of an  
116 updated Housing Element and Fair Share Plan. The Township prepared a Fair Share Plan in conjunction with a revised  
117 Housing Element in April 2018 meeting these requirements.

118  
119 Recognizing that large capital improvements would be necessary to lift the sewer ban, a requirement of the Fair Share  
120 settlement, the Township looked at the available alternatives to fund these necessary changes. The Township Committee  
121 twice recommended, and in November 2019 residents approved, through a referendum, to sell the WWTP to New  
122 Jersey American Water Company. The terms of the sale will lead to improvements at the WWTP which will allow for  
123 sewer hook-ups to existing residences, where possible, and future growth opportunities in the Township.

124  
125 The Master Plan needs to reflect upon changes that have already taken place, and to identify where improvements  
126 can be made while considering future needs and address the changing priorities taking place in our society. To this  
127 extent, the Master Plan includes a new element on Sustainability, and expands the Conservation Element.

128  
129 Finally, the Master Plan should provide a vision for the future that considers the desires of the township residents based  
130 on the feedback received from the recent Township Master Plan Assessment.

131

## 132 Demographics

133  
134 Total Population  
135 The Township's population has neither grown nor fallen dramatically in the last fifty years. The 2010 Census found that  
136 8,702 people lived in Long Hill. The 2010 estimate represents a decline from 2000, when the Township had an  
137 estimated population of 8,777 residents. The most recent Census data, the 2018 American Community Survey, put the  
138 population at 8,659 residents. If accurate, the Township would have a population density of 713 residents per square  
139 mile.

140  
141 Total households and household size  
142 Long Hill has 3,194 households, as per the most recent Census data. The average household size in the Township is 2.74  
143 persons, which is slightly higher than the Morris County average, 2.68 residents.

144  
145 Population Projections  
146 Looking forward, the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority projects Long Hill's population to grow over the  
147 next three decades, rising to 9,343 residents and 3,487 households by 2045. The population increase projected would  
148 necessitate an annual growth rate of 0.2%. While the Township's population has been in a slight decline for the past  
149 two decades, new housing projects in compliance with the Township's affordable housing requirements would suggest  
150 a modest increase to overall population is likely over the next decade.

151  
152 Age  
153 The median age of Long Hill residents is 43.4 years old, approximately the same as that of Morris County and  
154 surrounding communities.

155  
156 Race + Ethnicity  
157 Non-Hispanic whites are the largest demographic group by race and ethnicity, accounting for 93.5% of the population.  
158 Residents of Asian descent comprise an estimated 3.6% of the Township's population and are the second largest  
159 demographic group.

160  
161 Educational Attainment  
162 Long Hill is a highly educated community. According to the 2018 ACS, 62.2% of residents have a bachelor's degree  
163 or higher. Approximately 28.9% of residents have a graduate degree or higher.

164  
165 Employment – Overall

166 According to the 2018 American Community Survey, Long Hill Township had an unemployment rate of 4.8% and a  
167 labor force participation rate of 67.9%. By comparison, the Census estimated the unemployment and labor force  
168 participation rates for New Jersey to be 6.1% and 65.6%, respectively.

169  
170 **Occupational Statistics**

171 Residents work in a wide range of industries. Of the total workforce, 15.9% of Township residents work in the financial  
172 services and the insurance sector, making it the most prominent industry for Long Hill residents. The healthcare and social  
173 services industry, which employs 12.5% of Long Hill workers, is the next largest employer. The professional scientific  
174 and technical services sector also employs a substantive share of the Township workforce representing 11.4% of the  
175 total workforce.

176  
177 **Relationship to Other Plans**

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179 **Morris County Master Plan**

180 Morris County’s Future Land Use Element has not been updated since 1975. That document recognized Villages such as  
181 Millington, Stirling and Gillette as providing the “small town” or rural atmosphere that many Morris County residents  
182 value. The preservation of this lifestyle remains an important planning objective today.

183  
184 **State Development and Redevelopment Plan**

185 The 2012 State Strategic Plan (New Jersey’s revised State Development and Redevelopment Plan) provides a strategic  
186 framework for growth, development, and preservation activities throughout the State. The goals contained in this  
187 document are consistent with those of the 2012 State Plan, which are: (1) Targeted Economic Growth, (2) Effective  
188 Regional Planning, (3) Preservation, Protection, and Enhancement of Critical State Resources, and (4) Tactical Alignment  
189 of Government. Provisions within this Plan will advance these goals, particularly those relating to the conservation of  
190 open space and critical environmental resources owing to the large percentage of protected natural areas within the  
191 Township.

192  
193 **Morris County Solid Waste Management Plan**

194 The Solid Waste Management Act designates every county in the state as a solid waste management district, and each  
195 district is required to prepare a Solid Waste Management Plan. The Morris County Municipal Utilities Authority is  
196 responsible for the Morris County Solid Waste Management Plan, which serves as a blueprint for how the County  
197 reduces, recycles, and disposes of all waste generated within the district. This Plan encourages the reduction and  
198 recycling of solid waste and recognizes both as important Township-wide objectives.

199  
200 **Passaic River Consideration**

201 The Passaic River is one of the defining natural features of Long Hill Township. The river and its tributaries flow through  
202 Harding and Chatham Townships to the north and east, then forms the boundary along our western and southern edges  
203 with the Townships of Bernards, Warren and Berkeley Heights. The opportunities it offers and potential challenges it  
204 raises are discussed elsewhere in this document and are shared by all these communities as well as others further  
205 downstream. The Township is cognizant that how it manages those challenges may impact those other communities too.  
206