

ELK TOWNSHIP
Gloucester County, New Jersey



2026 Master Plan Reexamination

Adopted by the Elk Township Combined Planning and Zoning Board
On _____ (Resolution #2026-__)

Steven M. Bach, PE, RA, PP, PLS, CME

Candace A. Kanaplua, AICP, PP

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304 White Horse Pike, Haddon Heights, NJ 08035
(856) 546-8611 • Fax (856) 546-8612

Elk Township 2026 Combined Planning and Zoning Board

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Introduction and Planning Background.....	3
II. Elk Township Context.....	4
III. Reexamination of the Master Plan.....	6
A. The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of the adoption of the last reexamination report.	6
B. The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date.	7
C. The extent to which there have been significant changes in the assumptions, policies and objectives forming the basis for the master plan or development regulations as last revised, with particular regard to the density and distribution of population, housing conditions, circulation, conservation of natural resources, energy conservation, collection, disposition and recycling of designated recyclable materials, and changes in State, county and municipal policies and objectives.....	11
D. The specific changes recommended for the Master Plan or development regulations, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether a new plan or regulations should be prepared.	19
E. The recommendations of the planning board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans adopted pursuant to the "Local Redevelopment and Housing Law," P.L. 1992, c. 79 (C.40A:12A-1 et al.) into the land use plan element of the municipal Master Plan, and recommend changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.	20
F. The recommendations of the planning board concerning locations appropriate for the development of public electric vehicle infrastructure, including but not limited to, commercial districts, areas proximate to public transportation and transit facilities and transportation corridors, and public rest stops; and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary or appropriate for the development of public electric vehicle infrastructure.	21
IV. Conclusion	21

MAPS

- MAP 1 Aerial Exhibit**
- MAP 2 Existing Zoning Map**
- MAP 3 Redevelopment Areas Map**
- MAP 4 2025 State Plan Policy Map**
- MAP 5 Farmland Preservation Map**

I. Introduction and Planning Background

Master Plan Reexamination

The Master Plan is a document, adopted by the Combined Planning / Zoning Board that sets forth the goals, objectives, and policies for land use as envisioned by the Township. The Master Plan serves as a guide that addresses the manner and locations in which development, redevelopment, conservation, or preservation will occur within the Township. The Master Plan is intended to serve as a road map and a reference to guide the decisions made by public officials and those of private interests involving the use of land.

Municipal Land Use Law (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89) requires that Township Committee must provide for the reexamination of the Township's Master Plan and development regulations by the Combined Planning / Zoning Board at least once every ten years. The Elk Township Combined Planning / Zoning Board adopted a Master Plan in July 2016. In accordance with N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89, a reexamination of the Master Plan is now required.

The purpose of a Master Plan Reexamination is to assess how the assumptions, policies and objectives that form the basis for the Master Plan and development regulations have changed since the last Master Plan adoption or Reexamination, and to determine whether any specific changes to the Master Plan or development regulations are recommended, including underlying objectives, policies and standards. This Master Plan Reexamination is being undertaken to consider some specific land use and zoning concerns that have been developing since the last Master Plan. Though the focus of this Reexamination is on a particular zoning district, these land use issues are appropriately addressed in the context of the Master Plan overall.

For reference, the following is a listing of the relevant statutory requirements:

40:55D-89 Periodic examination.

The governing body shall, at least every ten years, provide for a general reexamination of its Master Plan and development regulations by the planning board, which shall prepare and adopt by resolution a report on the findings of such reexamination, a copy of which report and resolution shall be sent to the county planning board. A notice that the report and resolution have been prepared shall be sent to the municipal clerk of each adjoining municipality, who may, on behalf of the governing body of the municipality, request a copy of the report and resolution. A reexamination shall be completed at least once every ten years from the previous reexamination.

The reexamination report shall state:

- a. The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of the adoption of the last reexamination report. (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89a)
- b. The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date. (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89b)

- c. The extent to which there have been significant changes in the assumptions, policies and objectives forming the basis for the master plan or development regulations as last revised, with particular regard to the density and distribution of population and land uses, housing conditions, circulation, conservation of natural resources, energy conservation, collection, disposition and recycling of designated recyclable materials, and changes in State, county and municipal policies and objectives. (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89c)
- d. The specific changes recommended for the Master Plan or development regulations, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether a new plan or regulations should be prepared. (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89d)
- e. The recommendations of the planning board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans adopted pursuant to the "Local Redevelopment and Housing Law," P.L. 1992, c. 79 (C.40A:12A-1 et al.) into the land use plan element of the municipal Master Plan, and recommend changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality. (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89e)
- f. The recommendations of the planning board concerning locations appropriate for the development of public electric vehicle infrastructure, including but not limited to, commercial districts, areas proximate to public transportation and transit facilities and transportation corridors, and public rest stops; and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary or appropriate for the development of public electric vehicle infrastructure. (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89f)

40:55D-89.1. Reexamination report; absence of adoption.

The absence of the adoption by the planning board of a reexamination report pursuant to section 76 of P.L. 1975, c. 291 (C. 40:55D-89) shall constitute a rebuttable presumption that the municipal development regulations are no longer reasonable.

II. Elk Township Background

The land area of Elk Township is 19.7 square miles (12,608 acres) and is located in Gloucester County. The Township shares a boundary with Glassboro Borough to the northeast, Clayton Borough to the east, Franklin Township to the southeast, Upper Pittsgrove Township in Salem County to the south, South Harrison Township to the west, and Harrison Township to the north.

Elk is a historically agricultural community. Farmland continues to dominate the landscape, but is now fragmented by development in some areas. The Township is, and has for many years, been working to balance its interests in safeguarding and enhancing existing neighborhoods, providing opportunities for locally appropriate development, preserving farmland and the agricultural industry, prioritizing and facilitating preservation and conservation of environmentally valuable and recreationally desirable open spaces, and promoting good design.

The Planning Board and the Township Committee have undertaken numerous efforts over the years since the first comprehensive Master Plan in 1978 to participate in regional planning efforts and to ensure that the Township's plans are kept current. The following planning reports and documents have been prepared by the Township or its partner agencies over the last several decades:

- 1963 Elk Township Master Plan was prepared by Herbert Smith Associates but never adopted.
- 1978 Elk Township Comprehensive Master Plan was prepared by Brown / Sullivan Associates.
- 1982 Master Plan Reexamination
- 1988 Master Plan Reexamination
- 1989 Master Plan Update prepared by Thomas Scangarello and Assoc., P.A.
- 1999 Master Plan Reexamination prepared by Marc Shuster PP, AICP
- 2002 Master Plan Reexamination prepared by Marc Shuster PP, AICP
- 2004 Master Plan Reexamination prepared by Marc Shuster PP, AICP
- 2005 Master Plan Reexamination Housing Plan Element and Fair Share Plan prepared by Marc Shuster PP, AICP
- 2006 Master Plan Reexamination prepared by Marc Shuster PP, AICP
- 2008 Master Plan Housing Plan Element and Fair Share Plan prepared by Bach Associates PC.
- 2008 Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan, prepared by the DVRPC
- 2009 Environmental Resource Inventory, prepared by the DVRPC
- 2009 Master Plan Reexamination prepared by Bach Associates
- 2016 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, prepared by Bach Associates
- 2016 Master Plan Reexamination prepared by Bach Associates
- 2025 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, prepared by Bach Associates

Population Overview

The 2020 Census population for Elk Township was 4,424 persons, an increase of 208 from the 2010 Census. Elk Township's population nearly doubled from 1930 to 1980 and continues to steadily climb. The table below shows the population changes from 1930 through 2020 in Elk Township.

Elk Township Population ¹ 1930 to 2020									
1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
1,623	1,656	2,074	2,635	2,707	3,187	3,806	3,514	4,216	4,424

The 2020 Decennial census indicated the median age in Elk Township was 43.1. This census recorded a 65 and older population of 17.4%.

2020 Population by Age		
Age	Count	Percent
<14 Years	772	17.4%
15-24 Years	543	12.3%
25-54 Years	1,651	37.2%
55-64 Years	692	15.6%
>65 Years	766	17.4%

III. Reexamination of the Master Plan

The Township is undertaking this Master Plan Reexamination in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89 to review the Township's planning policies, to ensure that the Township's planning documents reinforce one another, to set the stage for consistency between the Master Plan and the zoning ordinances and to provide the underlying basis for future Township planning efforts. The Master Plan Reexamination outlines the considerations required by Municipal Land Use Law (Section 40:55D-89) and provides the responses as appropriate. The first three sections (A, B, and C) require a look back at the Township's earlier Master Plans, and include observations and an assessment of current conditions, as well as consideration of changes since the last Master Plan was prepared. The last three sections (D, E and F) include recommendations for actions to guide land use and related policies into the future.

A. The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of the adoption of the last reexamination report. (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89a)

¹ Source: United States Census Bureau, Decennial Population Counts, 1930-2020

At the time of the 2016 Master Plan Reexamination, it was noted that “while the Township’s goals and objectives have remained constant over the last ten years, the means to achieve them have evolved over time. Experience has informed the Township’s land use strategy, and development pressure has brought in to focus aspects of the development regulations in need of refinement. As the Township has encountered new situations and as land use regulations have been implemented, the opportunities for improvement have become clearer. Experience with the land use policies and regulation has allowed the Township to assess the effectiveness of current regulations and to determine where revisions may improve the process. The focus of this report is on making improvements and adjustments to the Master Plan and Land Development regulations as they relate to the potential for commercial development along Route 77(Bridgeton Pike) and along County Route 553 (Buck Road) as well as to address other specific land use concerns that have arisen over the last seven years.”

**B. The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date.
(N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89b)**

1. Lake Gilman.

The residential neighborhood known as Lake Gilman was developed in the 1940s and 1950s without regard to many of the land use and environmental issues that are of concern today. There are 77 homes in the area (57 in Elk and 20 in Harrison) and 79.20 acres of land and lakes owned by the Lake Gilman Owners, Inc. The neighborhood is within the RE residential zoning district on the Township zoning map, and none of the residential lots meet the requirements of the RE zone. The purpose of the RE zone is to provide appropriate regulations in the areas of the Township that include substantial amounts of wetlands and other sensitive lands, generally consistent with the rural environmentally sensitive planning area of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan.

In an effort to resolve issues related to failing septic systems, some of the property owners have endeavored to replace the failing systems with more modern systems. This is often prompted by an impending real estate transfer, where the buyer insists on a new septic system prior to closing. Due to the proximity of the septic systems and potable water wells and the relatively small lot sizes, it is often impossible to meet current codes. Also property owners cannot construct additions to their homes without bringing the septic system up to current standards. In order to enlarge the size of a lot to accommodate a modern septic system, several home owners have worked with their homeowners association, Lake Gilman Owners, Inc. to add a piece of the adjacent commonly owned property to the residential lot through a minor subdivision. This has been effective in resolving problems on a few lots. In order to create a long term solution and ensure that resolving the wastewater issues on one lot will not be to later detriment of another lot, and with the encouragement of the Township, the Lake Gilman Owners set about crafting a comprehensive long range plan to address the current and potential future septic issues as they relate to the RE zoning requirements, public health and the water quality of the lake.

The 2009 Master Plan Reexamination recommended that “once a comprehensive septic management plan is crafted that establishes a baseline, assesses current and potential health and water quality problems related to septic systems, proposes a strategy to address the problems, considers the potential for additional subdivisions and lot line adjustments, and provides a septic system maintenance plan; that the Township consider adopting zoning requirements for the unique neighborhood so it becomes possible for some property owners (if not all) to make minor improvements to their homes (such as the addition of a deck or small addition) without the need for variances.”

As of 2011 the Lake Gilman Owners, Inc. (LGO) had gathered plot plans/surveys from about half of the 77 homes. They had also sketched some possible subdivision lines on the overall Lake Gilman map, but soils testing or assessment of septic feasibility was not considered. The Committee met with a septic design engineer and received a cost estimate of \$70,000 plus the cost of surveying. The proposal is cost prohibitive and thus the likelihood of this coming to fruition is small. In light of the attempts by the LGO to craft the septic plan and the costliness of it, this Master Plan recommends the following zoning overlay for the Lake Gilman neighborhood.

- Minimum lot size of 15,000 square feet, with grandfather clause for existing lots at the time of ordinance adoption
- Minimum frontage on Lake (if lakefront): 60 feet
- Minimum frontage on private road: 50 feet
- Minimum lot width: 50 feet
- Minimum lot depth: 150 feet
- Minimum principal building setback from lake: 30 feet
- Minimum principal building setback from private road: 30 feet
- Minimum side yard setback: 10 feet each side
- Minimum accessory structure set back from lake: 30 feet
- Minimum accessory structure set back from private road: 10 feet
- Minimum accessory structure set back from side yards: 3 feet shed, 5 feet carport or garage
- Maximum building coverage: 30%
- Maximum impervious coverage: 40%
- Minimum driveway/pavement set back from side yard: 5 feet
- Minimum required common open space area for zone.

Response: No longer valid. Zoning map was amended and zoning ordinance was adopted.

2. **Commercial zoning.** Providing zoning for commercial development provides opportunity, but of course does not guarantee commercial development. The market in this area may not support large scale commercial development in the foreseeable future, but there are some opportunities that may arise. For example, on the eastern side of the Township as residential development progresses, neighborhood convenience commercial may be in demand. On the western side of the Township, niche market commercial uses taking advantage of pass-through traffic may find the area attractive.

- a. Block 5 lot 11.01 and 11.02 zone change. These lots are currently zoned C-1, however both are narrow lots, especially for commercial uses. The owners of these lots have requested to be returned to residential zoning. The lots are recommended to be returned to their LD residential zoning status, however they should remain in the overlay commercial district to retain the opportunity for commercial development under the right conditions.

Response: No longer valid. Zoning map was amended

- b. Route 77 and Buck Road. Create a zoning overlay that encompasses the lands along these roadways that are realistically developable (i.e. excluding preserved farms). Then the designated area should be added to the zoning map in order to more clearly communicate the options. Include within this overlay permitted uses within the C-1 and C-2 in addition to adding to permitted uses: Restaurants (without drive-through), fitness centers, medical offices, furniture stores (along Route 77), child development/day care centers, private education such as tutoring, martial arts, dance studio, liquor stores, bar and taprooms.

Response: No longer valid. Neighborhood Commercial Overlay Zone was established and medical centers, private education, and child development were added as permitted uses.

- c. C-2 Highway Commercial. Add retail and services uses to C-2 list of permitted uses to clarify that they are permitted (super market, convenience store, barbershop/salon, coffee shop). Auto showrooms are permitted, clarify that this means that new car dealerships are permitted. Address fast food/drive-through restaurants, consider adding this as a conditional use in the C-2 Highway commercial district.

Response: No longer valid.

- d. Consider whether the zoning of Block 172 Lot 4, 99 acres owned by Gloucester County, should be changed from C-2. 44 acres of the lot are permanently preserved (listed on the Recreation and Open Space Inventory filed with the State), and 55 acres are owned by the County, but not considered permanently preserved. The zoning of the preserved portion could be changed to the RE zone, consistent with adjacent land, and the non-preserved portion could remain in the C-2 zone. It is recommended that the Township contact the County to determine the plan for the remaining 55 acres of this property.

Response: No longer valid. Part of Block 172 Lot 4 was rezoned to RE Rural Environmental.

- e. Re-zone the RE portion of Silvergate PUD, Block 52 Lot 12.02, C-2. This parcels is part of Phase 7 and part of Phase 5, which has been referred to as the "Regional Commercial Center". For consistency, this parcel should be rezoned to match the adjacent C-2 use and their intent within the PUD that has been approved is to be commercial in nature.

Response: No longer valid. The PUD has expired. All phases of the Silvergate PUD have been addressed in the Villages of Still Run Redevelopment Plan.

3. **Moderate Density Residential (MD) District.** The Land Use Board recommends evaluating the existing lot sizes within the MD District. The minimum lot size was amended by ordinance 2006-2 in August 2006. With this ordinance, the minimum lot size was increased from 12,500 to 25,000 square feet. A study should be initiated that quantifies the existing lot sizes so the Township can consider whether a change in lot size is warranted to minimize variance requests for lots within the MD zoning district.

Response: No longer valid. The minimum lot size was decreased to 20,000 square feet.

4. **Protect groundwater.** The 2009 Master Plan Reexamination reviewed the 1999 Master Plan and provided a list of goals along with recommendations. The current Master Plan contains several goals that are existing and in line with the goals of the Water Quality Management Planning Rules adopted by the NJDEP in 2008. The new standard for septic service area aims to protect groundwater drinking sources. The following are recommendations to further protect and enhance water quality within the Township.
 - a. The Township should consider reviewing and revising the clustering ordinance. The addition of non-contiguous clustering should be added.
 - b. The Master Plan could be adjusted to coordinate more closely with the Gloucester County Wastewater Plan standards and recommendations for Elk Township.
 - c. Seek alternatives to conventional suburban development patterns. The Township should evaluate the adoption of noncontiguous clustering, cluster subdivisions and open lands subdivisions within the residential districts.
 - d. There is growing concern for the development within the Township on the areas of available uplands where sewer service is not available. Due to the large amount of wetlands that are located within the Township, many upland areas are in close proximity to environmentally sensitive lands and are therefore putting the Township at risk of exceeding acceptable nitration dilution levels. Therefore, it is recommended that all residential and commercial development be located closer to infrastructure, where possible.
 - e. The Township should evaluate the residential zoning districts to determine the amount of buildable upland space, and reevaluate the bulk standards and densities for those districts. Noncontiguous clustering could be considered, residential districts.

Response: No longer valid. The above items have been addressed. The Township ordinance has been updated to be consistent with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection best management practices for stormwater. In addition, as part of the Township's Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, a vacant land analysis was prepared which identified current and projected sewer service area.

- C. The extent to which there have been significant changes in the assumptions, policies and objectives forming the basis for the master plan or development regulations as last revised, with particular regard to the density and distribution of population and land uses, housing conditions, circulation, conservation of natural resources, energy conservation, collection, disposition and recycling of designated recyclable materials, and changes in State, county and municipal policies and objectives. (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89c)**

Changes in Local Conditions

The Township is currently experiencing the realization of two Planned Unit Developments, currently known as Silvergate and Aura, that were approved several decades ago. These will have a significant impact on the landscape of the Township. These changes are discussed here because, although approved many years ago, the developments are now moving forward, requiring current residents and Township officials to adapt and plan for projects that may conflict with the Township's present vision, goals, and objectives.

Planning and site acquisition for the Silvergate Planned Unit Development (PUD) began in the mid-1980s coincident with construction of Route 55. The General Development Plan (GDP) for the overall Silvergate PUD was ultimately approved by the Elk Township Planning Board on April 18, 1996 and consisted of seven (7) phases. The current iteration of the overall Silvergate development consists of 1,149 residential units, commercial uses in phases 5 and 7, and 294 acres of open space.

The Aura III development is comprised of a total of 962 residential housing units consisting of 685 single-family age-restricted units and 276 multi-family residential units. The development is divided into three (3) sections, The Willows, The Carriages and The Reeds. The Willows at Orchard Glen consist of 186 single family age-restricted detached dwellings. The Carriages at Orchard Glen consist of 250 active adult single family detached dwellings and 250 active adult twin dwellings (34 of which are affordable). The Reeds Apartments are garden style apartments that consist of 276 units (76 of which are affordable).

Below outlines updates within the Elk Township's municipal conditions, including policy/regulatory changes, population changes, housing changes, energy and natural resources, and other land-use related changes since the last reexamination of the Master Plan.

Policy/Regulatory Changes

The following policy changes have been made since the 2016 Master Plan Reexamination:

1. Cannabis Establishment Overlay Zone ordinance adopted 2022.
2. Business Hours of Operation ordinance adopted 2025.
3. C-1 Commercial Neighborhood ordinance amended 2025.
4. C-2 Commercial Neighborhood ordinance amended 2025.
5. Housing Element and Fair Share Plan with Vacant Land Analyses adopted 2025, revised 2026.

6. Block 31 Lot 2.01 & Block 58 Lot 2 Affordable Housing Inclusionary Overlay ordinance adopted 2026.
7. Block 34, Lots 6, 7, 8 & 9 Affordable Housing Inclusionary Overlay ordinance adopted 2026.
8. Affordable Housing Overlay Townhouse ordinance adopted 2026.
9. Data Center ordinance adopted 2026.

Population and Housing Changes

The population in Elk Township rose rapidly between 1940 to 1960. In the 1990s, the population had begun to decline, but increased another 20 percent between 2000 and 2010.

Population Growth Rate 1930 to 2020									
	1930 - 1940	1940 - 1950	1950 - 1960	1960 - 1970	1970 - 1980	1980 - 1990	1990 - 2000	2000 - 2010	2010 - 2020
Elk Township	2%	25%	27%	3%	18%	19%	-8%	20%	5%
Gloucester County	2.0%	27.0%	47.0%	28.0%	15.8%	15.1%	10.7%	13.2%	4.9%
New Jersey	2.9%	16.2%	25.5%	18.1%	2.7%	5.0%	8.9%	4.5%	5.7%

The 2020 census recorded that there were 1,702 housing units in Elk Township, 1,587 (93%) of which were occupied. Of these occupied housing units, 88.7% were owner occupied and 11.3% were rented in 2020. From 2010 to 2020, the number of occupied housing units in Elk Township increased by 7.7%. The number of vacant houses increased from 6.5% in 2010 to 6.8% in 2020.

Changes in County & Regional Conditions

Gloucester County Hazard Mitigation Plan

Hazard Mitigation Plans (HMP) are required for a community to be eligible for certain types of State and Federal hazard mitigation funding. In addition, the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 requires local government agencies to update their Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) every five years. In 2017, Gloucester County collaborated with Camden, Salem, and Cumberland Counties to form the Mitigation Plan for Four New Jersey Counties. In 2022, Gloucester County issued its Hazard Mitigation Plan update. In it, the following mitigation initiatives were identified for Elk Township:

- The Township's flood damage prevention ordinance requires update.
- The Township lacks a stand-alone Disaster Debris Management Plan.
- Lack of backup power for two fire stations.
- Dam replacement process for Lake Garrison has begun including engineering and funding.
- Filled-in pond located on Hollywood Ave., surrounding area of pond floods.
- Flooding at end of street and basements throughout the street on Douglas in the Lawns section of Elk Twp.

GC2040: Community Vision for Gloucester County

Gloucester County is in the process of updating its existing 1982 Master Plan. The first step in this extensive process is the Community Vision, in which the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) office of Smart Growth collaborated with County residents, business owners, and other community stakeholders to establish long term goals that will shape the County Master Plan. The Community Vision sets the County Master Plan in motion with the following goals:

- Enable residents to live healthy lifestyles regardless of age, income, or ability
- Increase local opportunities for knowledge and success
- Attract new residents and visitors to the county
- Make strategic infrastructure improvements
- Maintain the county's rural character and variety of community types
- Develop high quality jobs and local amenities
- Maintain the relatively low cost of living while retaining the quality of life valued by county residents

DVRPC: Connections 2050 Long Range Plan & Traffic Improvement Plan

The DVRPC adopted the long-range Plan and Traffic Improvement Plan for the greater Philadelphia Area.

Gloucester County Highway Agency Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SPPP) 2023

The Gloucester County Highway Division prepared updates to the Gloucester County Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan in 2020 and 2023.

Changes in State Conditions

1. Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) In February 2025, Assembly bill A2792 was passed, which allows accessory dwelling units (ADUs) as a by-right permitted use in any single family or two-family zoned area. In May 2026, Senate introduced bill S-1786, which would require that ADUs be permitted in single-family zones. This bill has not yet been passed.
2. Affordable Housing Legislation Updates - In March 2024, bill A4/S50 was signed into law ushering in substantial amendments to the New Jersey Fair Housing Act (FHA) and significantly altering the manner in which municipalities will determine their Fourth Round "fair share" obligations, maintain immunity from Mount Laurel lawsuits, respond to objections, and secure approval of their Fourth Round Housing Element and Fair Share Plans. The new affordable housing legislation, A-4 and S-50, establishes processes for calculating municipal housing obligations, compliance filing deadlines, procedures for challenges and dispute resolution mechanisms. The legislation includes considerable amendments to the New Jersey Fair Housing Act and significantly changes the manner in which municipalities will determine their Fourth Round "fair share" obligations, maintain immunity from Mount Laurel lawsuits, respond to objections, and secure approval of their Fourth Round Housing Element and Fair Share Plans. The Township adopted its Housing Element and Fair Share Plan in 2025 and amended it in 2026. The Township is in compliance and up to date with the State's requirements for affordable housing.

3. State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP) The 2025 New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP) is intended to provide guidance and foster collaboration among stakeholders. The Goals of the 2025 SDRP are:
- a. Reverse the Concentration of Adverse Environmental and Public Health Impacts in Overburdened Communities and Redress Inequities Resulting from Past Planning Actions
 - b. Effectively Address the Adverse Impacts of Global Climate Change
 - c. Protect, Maintain, and Restore the State's Natural and Water Resources and Ecosystems
 - d. Protect the Environment; Prevent and Clean Up Pollution
 - e. Revitalize and Recenter the State's Underutilized Developed Areas
 - f. Promote Economic Growth that Benefits all Residents of New Jersey
 - g. Provide an Adequate Supply of Housing For Residents of All Ages and Incomes, In Location-Efficient Places with Ready Access to the Full Range of Supportive Goods and Services
 - h. Provide Affordable and Effective Public Facilities and Services
 - i. Protect, Enhance, and Improve Access to Areas with Exceptional Archeological, Historic, Cultural, Scenic, Open Space and Recreational Value
 - j. Ensure Sound and Integrated Planning and Implementation at all Levels Statewide

The 2025 SDRP continues to identify the Township as a mix of Suburban Planning Area (PA2), Fringe Planning Area (PA3), Rural Planning Area (PA4B), Rural Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area (PA4B), and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area (PA5B) and.

The State Plan's intent for the Suburban Planning Area (PA2) is to:

- a. Provide for a portion of the state's future growth in compact development and redevelopment in Centers and other appropriate areas;
- b. Promote walkability and multi-modal transportation options;
- c. Protect and enhance the character of existing stable communities;
- d. Protect and enhance natural resources and promote increased biodiversity, reforestation and habitat restoration;
- e. Redesign auto-oriented areas and promote traffic calming and other forms of pedestrian counter measures;

- f. Reverse any further sprawl development, including warehouse sprawl; and
- g. Revitalize and enhance towns and other traditional settlements.

The State Plan's intent for the Fringe Planning Area (PA3) is to:

- a. Accommodate growth in Centers, excluding floodprone areas;
- b. Protect and enhance natural resources;
- c. Protects the Environs primarily as open space or forested areas;
- d. Provide a transition between more developed Metropolitan and Suburban Planning Areas; and less developed Rural and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas;
- e. Confine programmed sewers and public water services to Centers, except where public health is at stake;
- f. Revitalize towns and older traditional communities; and
- g. Protect and diversifies the character of existing stable communities.

The State Plan's intent for the Rural Planning Area (PA4B) is to: maintain the Environs as large contiguous areas of farmland, open space, and forested areas;

- a. Enhance habitats and sensitive lands;
- b. Accommodate growth in centers, excluding floodprone areas;
- c. Reverse auto-oriented patterns of development;
- d. Promote a viable agricultural or forestry industry;
- e. Revitalize cities, towns, and other traditional settlements;
- f. Protect, enhance, and support local agricultural economies; and
- g. Confine programmed sewers and public water services to centers, except where public health is at stake.

The State Plan's intent for the Rural Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area (PA4B) is to:

- a. Adhere to the intent of the Rural Planning Area (PA4) above; and
- b.
- c. Recognize those areas which also have one or more environmental resources.

The State Plan's intent for the Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area (PA5B)) is to:

- a. Protect environmental resources;

- b. Protect both large and small contiguous areas of land;
 - c. Promote restoring habitats and bio-diversity;
 - d. Accommodate growth only in centers, excluding floodprone areas;
 - e. Confining programmed sewers and public water services to centers;
 - f. Revitalize cities, towns, and older traditional settlements; and
 - g. Protect, enhance, and support the existing character of stable communities.
4. Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (LRHL) – Expansion of Area in Need of Redevelopment Criterion The Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (LRHL) was amended in 2019 to expand the N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5(b) criterion as follows: The discontinuance of the use of a building or buildings previously used for commercial, retail, shopping malls or plazas, office parks, manufacturing, or industrial purposes; the abandonment of such building or buildings; significant vacancies of such building or buildings for at least two consecutive years; or the same being allowed to fall into so great a state of disrepair as to be untenable.
5. Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) The following changes have been made to the MLUL since 2016:
- a. Time of Application (TOA) Rule - In 2017, the Supreme Court of New Jersey in *Dunbar Homes, Inc. v. Zoning Board of Adjustment of Franklin Twp.* clarified the “Time of Application Rule” found within the NJ MLUL (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-10.5). The Supreme Court of New Jersey held that an application for development is only complete when all required documents are submitted for review, including all documents mandated under a municipal ordinance.
 - b. Performance and Maintenance Guarantee Requirements - In 2018, the MLUL was amended by law (Assembly Bill 1425/Senate Bill 3233) to include reforms to performance and maintenance guarantee provisions.
 - c. Statement of Strategy - In January 2018, P.L. 2017, Chapter 275 (A4185/S2873) amended the Municipal Land Use Law requiring the adoption of any subsequent Land Use Element to include a “statement of strategy” concerning with (1) smart growth with consideration to potential locations for the installation of electric vehicle charging stations, (2) storm resiliency with respect to energy supply, flood-prone areas, and environmental infrastructure, and (3) environmental sustainability.
 - d. Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure - In 2019, the New Jersey State Legislature adopted Senate Bill 606 (P.L. 2019, Chapter 267), amending the Municipal Land Use Law (N.J.S.A. 40:55d-1 et. seq.) (and in addition to the LRHL amendment). The new law intends to encourage municipalities to consider electric vehicle charging infrastructure as a component of their master plan, periodic master plan reexamination and redevelopment plans.

- e. Master Plan Reexamination Report - As described in the next section of this Report, reexamination reports are now required to include a section that recommends locations appropriate for the development of public electric vehicle infrastructure; and recommend changes in the local development regulations as necessary or as appropriate for the development of public electric vehicle infrastructure.
 - f. Redevelopment Plans - Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-7(a), redevelopment plans are now required to provide provisions as to proposed locations of zero-emission vehicle fueling and charging infrastructure within the redevelopment area.
 - g. Climate Change-Related Hazard Vulnerability Assessment (CCRHVA) - In February 2022, the Municipal Land Use Law (Section 19 of P.L.1975, c.291 (C.40:55D-28)) was amended to require that the land use plan element of a municipal master plan include a climate change-related hazard vulnerability assessment (CCRHVA). The Township will be required to include a Climate Change-Related Hazard Vulnerability Assessment upon the adoption of an updated Land Use Plan Element.
6. Stormwater Regulations The following summarizes new stormwater regulations in the state with regards to green infrastructure and stormwater utilities.
- a. Green Infrastructure. Amended stormwater management rules took effect on March 2, 2021, and require the use of green infrastructure. The new rules will require decentralized, distributed stormwater management practices that enable stormwater to infiltrate and more closely resemble the natural water cycle. These “best management practices” (BMPs) include vegetated swales, bioretention, green roofs, cisterns, wet ponds, infiltration basins and constructed wetlands.
 - b. Clean Stormwater and Flood Reduction Act took effect in March 2019. The Act seeks to provide means of funding stormwater infrastructure by authorizing the creation of stormwater utilities and allowing those utilities to assess fees. A stormwater utility is currently the only mechanism able to dedicate funds directly to stormwater management. This should help municipalities and counties to properly operate, maintain, repair, and improve their storm sewer system, as necessary.
- This Act requires the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) to create a stormwater utility guidance manual for the use of municipalities, counties, and authorities seeking to establish stormwater utilities. The manual will provide rate structure guidance. The NJDEP would receive 5% of the annual fees collected by stormwater utilities as stormwater utility charges to fund program planning, implementation, and coordination activities related to stormwater utilities. The Act also authorizes municipalities, counties, and authorities to contract with private firms for the operation or improvement of stormwater utilities.

- c. NJDEP REAL Legacy Provisions – The Resilient Environment and Landscapes (REAL) rule amendments were adopted in January 2026, which made significant changes to the Freshwater Wetlands Protection Act, the Flood Hazard Area Control Act, , and Stormwater Management Rules. In May 2026, legacy provisions were extended until July 20, 2027.

- 7. Cannabis Legalization - Assembly Bill 21/Senate Bill 21, also known as the Cannabis Regulatory, Enforcement Assistance, and Marketplace Modernization (CREAMM) was signed into law on February 22, 2021. The bill legalizes personal use cannabis for certain adults, subject to state regulation, decriminalizes small amounts of marijuana and hashish possession, and removes marijuana as a Schedule I drug. The bill defines 6 classes of licenses: Class 1 – cultivator, Class 2 – manufacturer, Class 3 – wholesaler, Class 4 – Distributor, Class 5 – retailer, Class 6 – Delivery Service. It provides an option for municipalities to adopt regulations or ordinances that permit or prohibit one or more classes of license within the municipality, as well as location, manner, and times of operation. Additionally, municipalities are also permitted to levy an optional Cannabis “Transfer Tax and User Tax” that is capped at 1% of wholesale activities and 2% of cultivation, processing, and retail activities.

In May 2026, bill 4297 was introduced, which would allow the state’s three remaining medical cannabis dispensaries to apply for Class 5 retail cannabis licenses without obtaining local approval first.

- 8. 2019 Energy Master Plan: Pathway to 2050 - The New Jersey Energy Master Plan (EMP) Pathway to 2050 was made public in January 2020, envisioning initiatives that will help achieve 50% clean energy by 2030 and 100% clean energy by 2050. The EMP outlines seven key strategies and includes an implementation plan and energy efficiency measures that can help reduce energy demand and lower emissions. The New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (NJBPU) serves as the lead agency implementing the EMP.

Goal 6.1 of the EMP encourages municipalities to establish and enact community energy plans that will allow them to identify their own priorities and obstacles to complement the Energy Master Plan; this goal comprises of the following objectives:

- a. Develop a comprehensive Community Energy Plan program in concert with local community groups to identify energy needs and establish ways to participate in and benefit from the clean energy transition at the local level, prioritizing education and incentives in low-income and environmental justice communities.
- b. Encourage communities to incorporate land use, zoning, and multimodal transportation plans into their Community Energy Plans
- c. Prioritize energy efficiency programs in low- and moderate income and environmental justice communities

The NJBPU launched the Community Energy Plan Grant (CEPG) program to support local communities in creating Community Energy Plans and enable them to establish their own set of priorities, understand their obstacles, and develop a plan that is consistent with the 2019 EMP. This CEPG is an opportunity that the Township may consider.

D. The specific changes recommended for the Master Plan or development regulations, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether a new plan or regulations should be prepared.
(N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89d)

1. **Cluster Zoning.** Remove cluster zoning from all sections of Chapter 96 Unified Development Code, including §96-73 Cluster Single-Family Residential Developments, §96-71 RE Rural Environmental Zoning District, §96-69 LD Low Density Residential District, §96-70 R Rural Residential District, and §96-68 MD Moderate Density Residential District.
2. **Maximum Density Requirements.** Revise the Township Ordinance to remove maximum density requirements.
3. **Commercial Uses.** Revise the permitted uses in the C-1 Commercial-Neighborhood and C-2 Commercial-Highway Zoning District. The C-1 Commercial-Neighborhood shall be revised to remove golf courses, combine barber shops, beauty shops, and beauty salons into one use. The use of radio and television services shall also be removed. The C-2 Commercial-Highway Zoning District shall be revised to remove the use of golf courses.
4. **Open Space.** Require 25% Open Space for all developments of five (5) residential units or more.
5. **Accessory Structures.** Reevaluate Accessory Structure Maximum Sizes.
6. **Traffic Flow and Dangerous Intersections.** The following intersections saw the most traffic accidents from 2017-2025:
 - Fislerville Road (CR 618) and Bridgeton Pike (Route 77).
 - Ellis Mill Road (CR 641) and Bridgeton Pike (Route 77).
 - Whig Lane Road (CR 619) and Aura Road (CR 667).
 - Hardingville Road (CR 609) and Whig Lane (CR 619).
 - Whig Lane (CR 610) and Buck Road (CR 553).
 - Elk Road (CR 538) and Hardingville Road (CR 609).

The Board should consider issuing comments to Gloucester County in its current Master Plan process to bring attention to these intersections.

7. **Climate Change-Related Hazard Vulnerability Assessment (CCRHVA).** To comply with the new Master Plan requirement, the Township should create and adopt a Climate Change-Related Hazard Vulnerability Assessment (CCRHVA) as part of its Master Plan Land Use Element.
8. **Electric Vehicle Charging Stations.** The State provided for EV charging requirements by way of statute that all municipalities must enforce. The Township should explore possible locations of electric vehicle charging stations.

E. The recommendations of the planning board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans adopted pursuant to the "Local Redevelopment and Housing Law," P.L. 1992, c. 79 (C.40A:12A-1 et al.) into the land use plan element of the municipal Master Plan, and recommend changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality. (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89d)

It is the Township's intent to maintain the option to utilize all available planning tools to work toward realization of its vision for a healthy, vibrant, and attractive business environment, to improve the quality of life for current and future residents, and to maintain and enhance opportunities for smart growth and economic development. As the Township continues to monitor and assess conditions in the nonresidential areas in the context of the overall land use picture, specific properties or areas may emerge as candidates for redevelopment. Where redevelopment or rehabilitation area designation has the potential to advance the Township's goals and objectives, to incentivize redevelopment of properties vital to anchoring the local economy, to create community value, and to have positive ripple effects throughout, then those areas may be recommended for study in accordance with Local Redevelopment and Housing Law.

The Township has added two areas in need of redevelopment and adopted subsequent redevelopment plans for the Silvergate and Aura project areas. Elk Township's designated redevelopment areas are shown on Map 3. Below is a list of the Township's redevelopment efforts since the 2016 Master Plan Reexamination.

1. Preliminary Need Investigation Redevelopment Study for Block 30, Lot 21; Block 52, Lot 12.02; Block 53, Lot 1; Block 55, Lots 5, and 5.01 - 5.52; Block 55.01, Lots 1, and 2 - 7; Block 55.02, Lots 1, and 2 - 51; Block 55.03, Lots 1, and 2 - 18; Block 55.04, Lots 1, and 2 - 18; Block 55.05, Lots 1, and 2 - 17; Block 56, Lots 4, and 4, and 12; Block 62, Lots 3.01 and 3.02; Block 63, LOT 2.01 and 2.02; Block 65, Lots 4.02 and 5; Block 68, Lot 7.02; Block 170, Lots 14 and 18; Block 171, Lots 6 and 9; Block 174, Lot 1; and Block 213, Lot 3 and 3 performed May, 2016.
2. Preliminary Need Investigation Redevelopment Study for Block 29, Lots 13.01, 13.02, 13.03, 14, 24.01, 25, 26, 28 and 29; Block 31, Lots 1, 2.01, 3, 2.02, 4, 5.01, 5.02, 6, 6.01, 7 and 22; Block 32, Lots 1-12, 14, 15, 16.01 and; Block 33 Lot 12.01, Block 34, Lots 1.03, 3, 4, and 6-9 and Block 58, Lots 1 and 2 performed May 2016.
3. Aura Redevelopment Plan (Block 29, Lots 24.01, 28 and 29; Block 31, Lots 2.01, 2.02, 3, 5.01, 7 and 22; Block 32, Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9; Block 33 Lot 12.01, Block 34, Lots 1.03, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9; and Block 58, Lots 1 and 2) adopted June 4, 2020.

4. The Villages at Still Run Redevelopment Plan (Block 52, Lot 12.02 QFARM; Block 53, Lot 1; Block 55, Lots 5 QFARM, and 5.01 - 5.52; Block 55.01, Lots 1 QFARM, and 2 - 7; Block 55.02, Lots 1 QFARM, and 2 - 51; Block 55.03, Lots 1 QFARM, and 2 - 18; Block 55.04, Lots 1 QFARM, and 2 - 18; Block 55.05, Lots 1 QFARM, and 2 - 17; Block 56, Lot 4; Block 62, Lots 3.01 QFARM, 3.02 and 3.03; Block 63, LOT 2.01 and 2.02 QFARM; Block 65, Lots 4.02 QFARM and 5 QFARM; Block 68, Lot 7.02 QFARM; Block 170, Lots 14 QFARM, 14.01 and 18 QFARM; Block 171, Lots 6 and 9; Block 174, Lot 1 QFARM; and Block 213, Lot 3 and 3 QFARM) adopted December 3, 2020.
5. Amended Aura III Redevelopment Plan (Block 31, Lots 2.02, 5.01, 7 and 22; Block 32, Lot 1; and Block 58, Lot 1) adopted April 4, 2024.

As the Township has been active in its efforts to utilize redevelopment designations since the 2016 Master Plan Reexamination, there are no specific areas recommended for “redevelopment area” designation at this time.

F. The recommendations of the planning board concerning locations appropriate for the development of public electric vehicle infrastructure, including but not limited to, commercial districts, areas proximate to public transportation and transit facilities and transportation corridors, and public rest stops; and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary or appropriate for the development of public electric vehicle infrastructure.

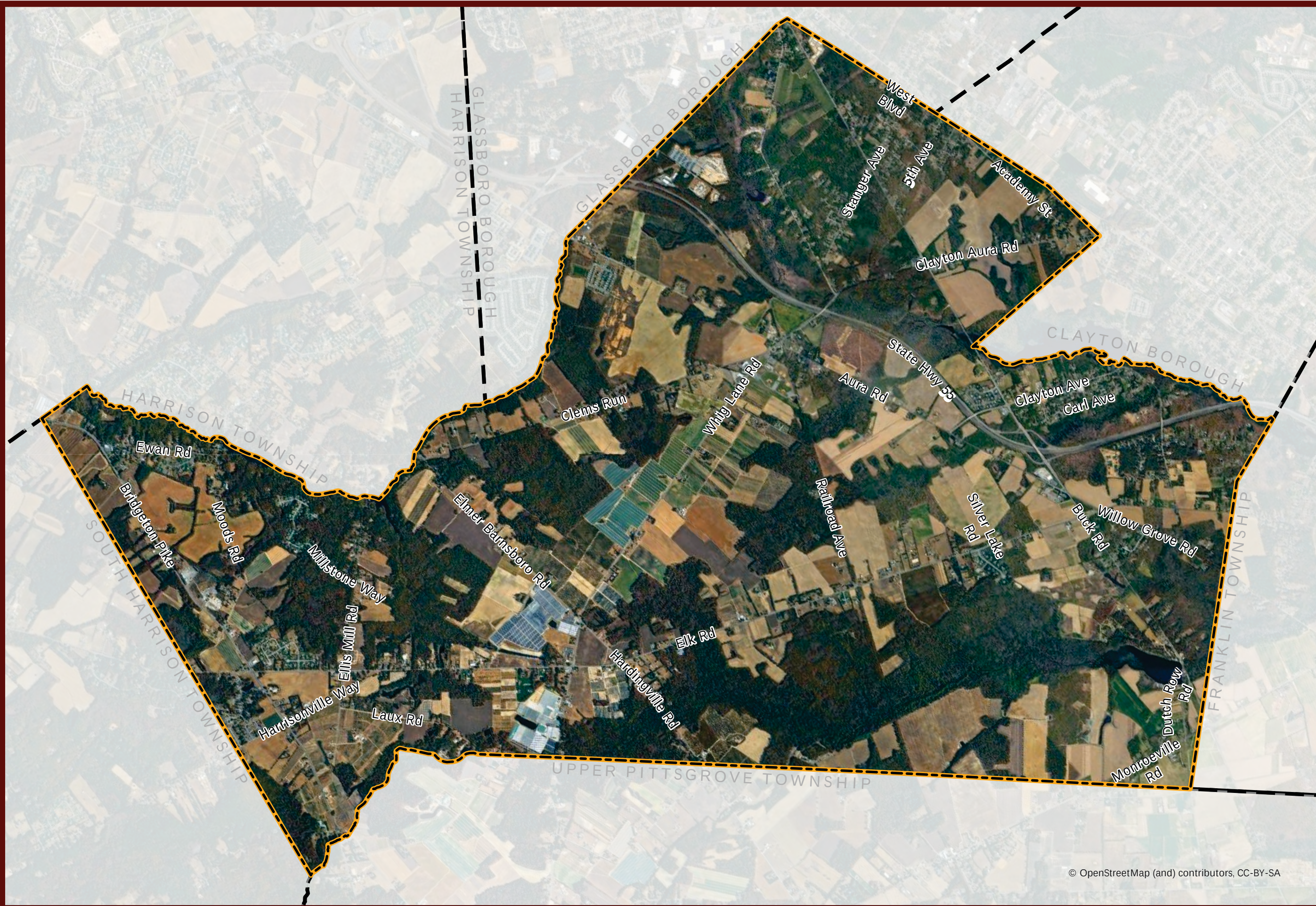
The Township currently does not have public electric vehicle (EV) charging stations that are open for public use. At the time of drafting this report, no specific locations have been selected for the development of public electric vehicle infrastructure. However, this report recommends for the Township to assess potential locations that may be suitable for public EV charging stations. As required by law, commercial developments will be required to install on-site EV charging stations.

IV. Conclusion

This Reexamination Report concludes that the existing Master Plan remains a viable document for guiding the future development and redevelopment of land within the Township. The Township should continue to advance Master Plan goals while providing for revisions and recommendations, as recommended in this Reexamination Report. The Township should continue to perform a new reexamination report every 10 years, to conform to statutory requirements.

MAP 1

AERIAL EXHIBIT



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BACH Associates, PC
ENGINEERS • ARCHITECTS • PLANNERS

304 White Horse Pike
Haddon Heights, New Jersey 08035

Tel: 856-546-8611
Fax: 856-546-8612

www.BachDesignGroup.com

*This map was developed using NJGIN/NJDEP Geographic Information System digital data, but this is a secondary product which has not been verified by NJGIN/NJDEP and is not state authorized

**MASTER PLAN REEXAMINATION
AERIAL MAP**
Township of Elk
Gloucester County, NJ

Map Data & Source:

Data Source: NJGIN

Scale: 1" =

Project Number: ET2026-4

Date: October 2026

Drafted by: Chloe Bach

Prepared by: Steven M. Bach,
PE, RA, PP, PLS, CME



MAP 2

EXISTING ZONING MAP

Legend

 Elk Township Boundary

Zoning

 C1-Neighborhood Commercial

 C2-Highway Commercial

 M1-Light Manufacturing

 MHP-Mobile Home Park

 MD-Moderate Density Residential

 LD-Low Density Residential

 R-Rural Residential

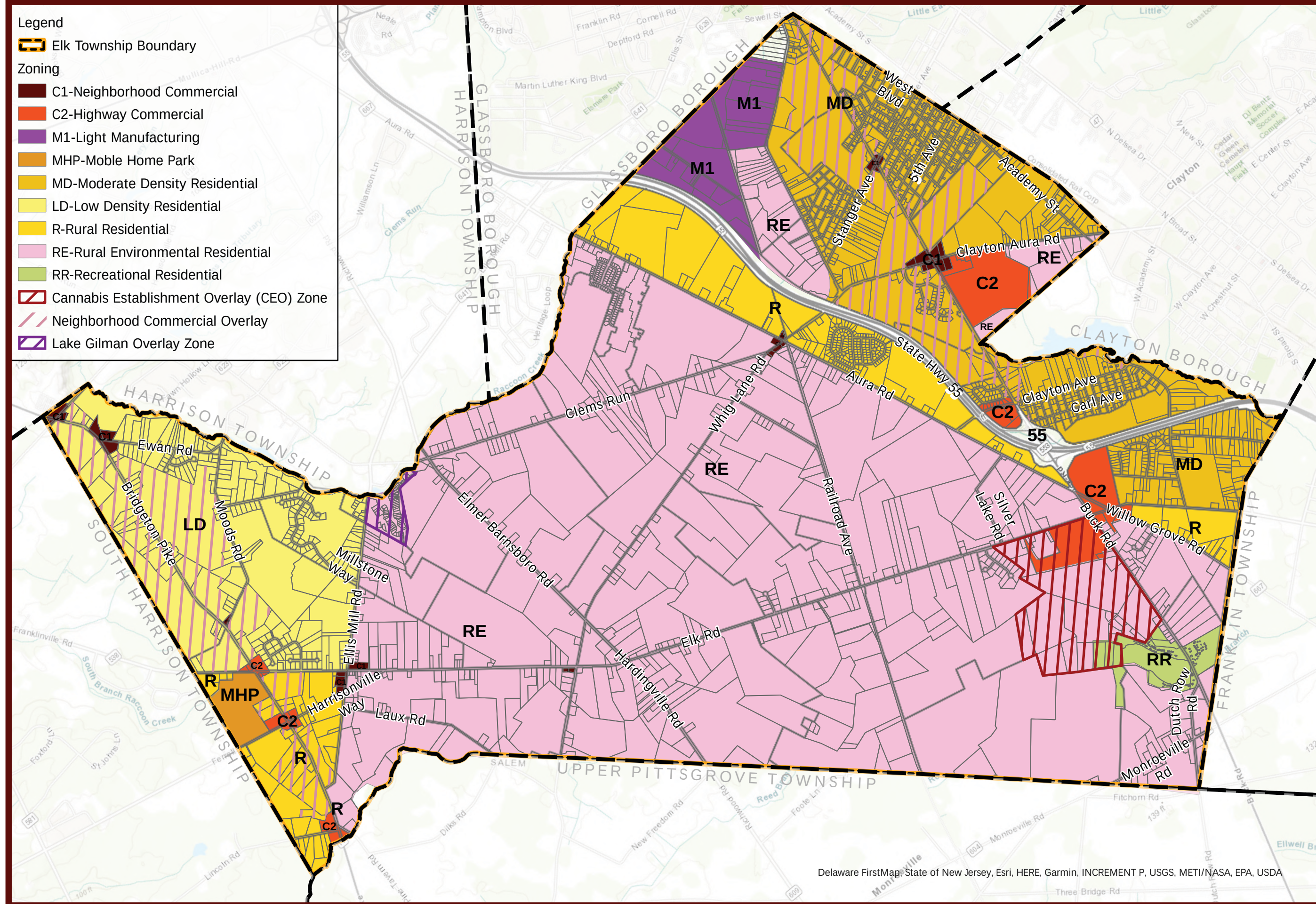
 RE-Rural Environmental Residential

 RR-Recreational Residential

 Cannabis Establishment Overlay (CEO) Zone

 Neighborhood Commercial Overlay

 Lake Gilman Overlay Zone



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**MASTER PLAN REEXAMINATION
EXISTING ZONING MAP**
Township of Elk
Gloucester County, NJ

Map Data & Source:

Data Source: NJGIN

Scale: 1" = 3,700

Project Number: ET2026-4

Date: October 2026

Drafted by: Chloe Bach

Prepared by: Steven M. Bach,
PE, RA, PP, PLS, CME



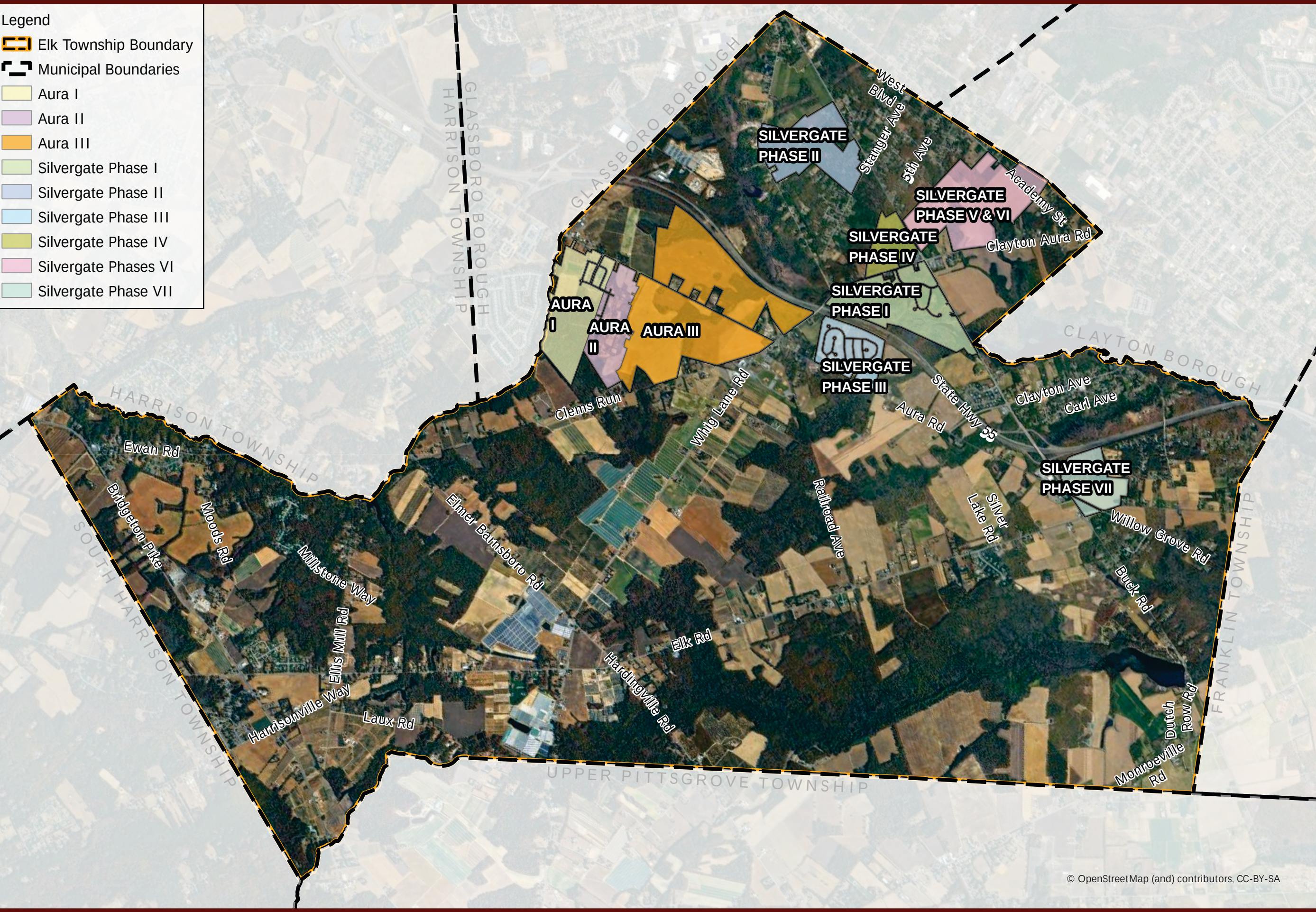
Delaware FirstMap, State of New Jersey, Esri, HERE, Garmin, INCREMENT P, USGS, METI/NASA, EPA, USDA

MAP 3

REDEVELOPMENT AREAS MAP

Legend

- Elk Township Boundary
- Municipal Boundaries
- Aura I
- Aura II
- Aura III
- Silvergate Phase I
- Silvergate Phase II
- Silvergate Phase III
- Silvergate Phase IV
- Silvergate Phases VI
- Silvergate Phase VII



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Haddon Heights, New Jersey 08035

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MASTER PLAN REEXAMINATION REDEVELOPMENT AREAS MAP

Township of Elk
Gloucester County, NJ

Map Data & Source:

Data Source: NJGIN

Scale: 1" = 3,700

Project Number: ET2026-4

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Drafted by: Chloe Bach

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MAP 4

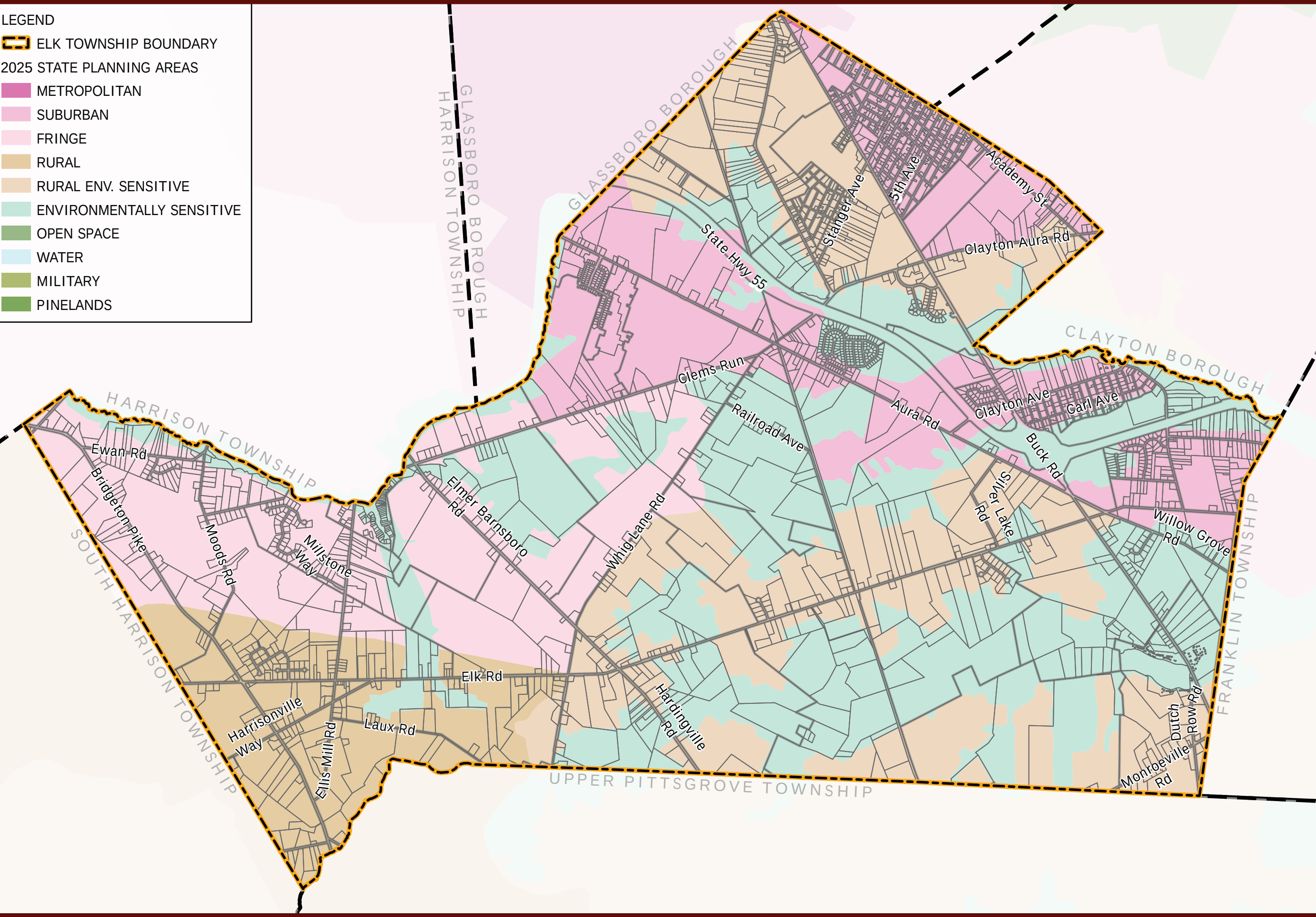
2025 STATE PLAN POLICY MAP

LEGEND

 ELK TOWNSHIP BOUNDARY

2025 STATE PLANNING AREAS

-  METROPOLITAN
-  SUBURBAN
-  FRINGE
-  RURAL
-  RURAL ENV. SENSITIVE
-  ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE
-  OPEN SPACE
-  WATER
-  MILITARY
-  PINELANDS



BACH Associates, PC
ENGINEERS • ARCHITECTS • PLANNERS

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Haddon Heights, New Jersey 08035

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Fax: 856-546-8612

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**MASTER PLAN REEXAMINATION
STATE PLANNING AREAS MAP**
**Township of Elk
Gloucester County, NJ**

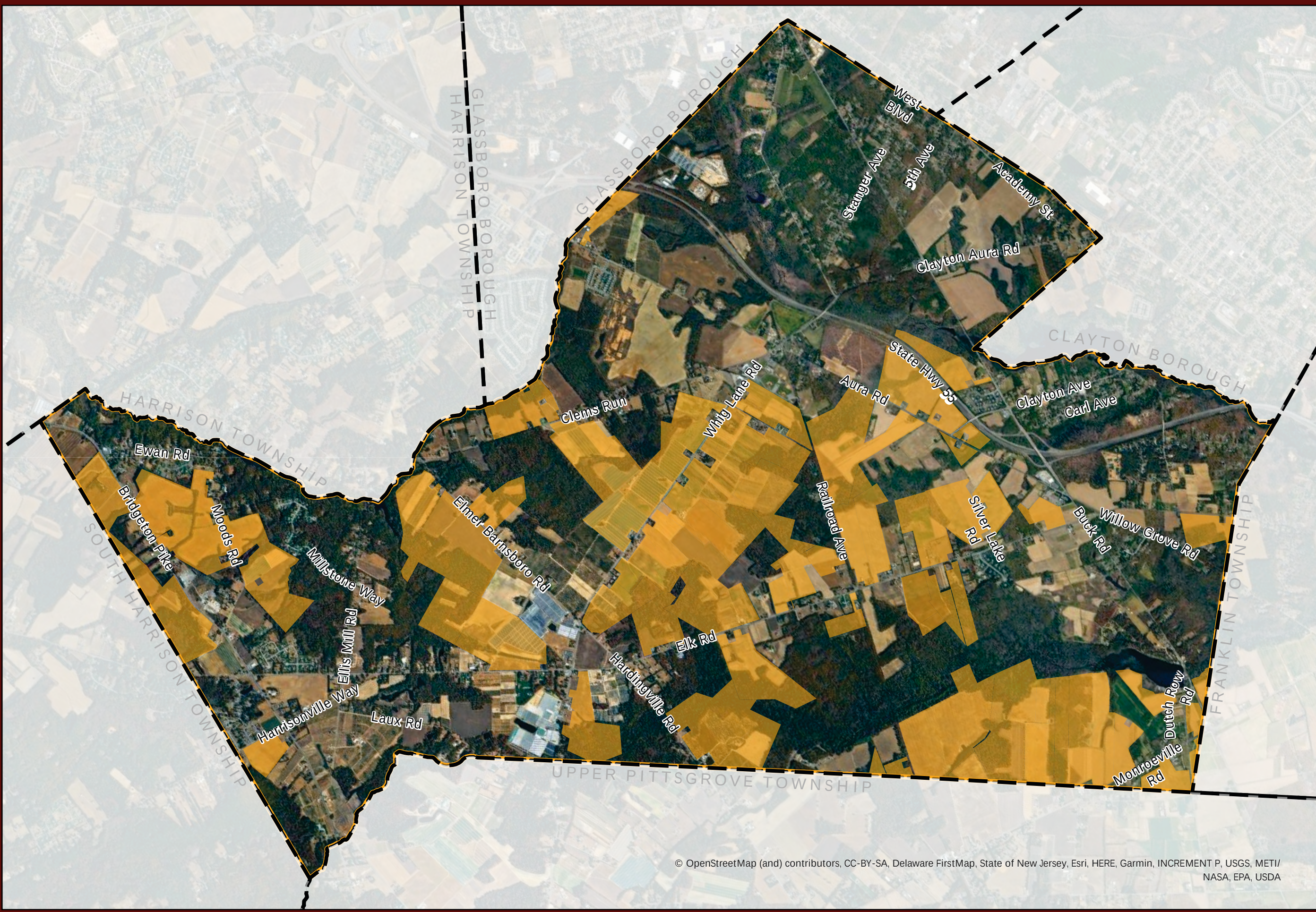
Map Data & Source:

Data Source: NJGIN
Scale: 1" = 3,700
Project Number: ET2026-4
Date: October 2026
Drafted by: Chloe Bach
Prepared by: Steven M. Bach, PE, RA, PP, PLS, CME



MAP 5

FARMLAND PRESERVATION MAP



BACH Associates, PC
ENGINEERS • ARCHITECTS • PLANNERS

304 White Horse Pike
Haddon Heights, New Jersey 08035

Tel: 856-546-8611
Fax: 856-546-8612

www.BachDesignGroup.com

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**MASTER PLAN REEXAMINATION
FARMLAND PRESERVATION MAP**
**Township of Elk
Gloucester County, NJ**

Map Data & Source:

Data Source: NJGIN

Scale: 1" = 3,700

Project Number: ET2026-4

Date: October 2026

Drafted by: Chloe Bach

Prepared by: Steven M. Bach,
PE, RA, PP, PLS, CME

