
INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

(Adopted March 14, 2005)

Harding Township has long recognized the value of building a community consensus around a vision of the future of the township. The purpose of this document is to articulate that vision based upon a clear evaluation of facts. It is the result of contributions from many individuals, groups and the public. Part One (Background Studies) covers Harding as it is, providing data and background about the township. It is the foundation for the second part (the Master Plan Elements) which sets forth the goals and policies for Harding's future. Part Two is organized into nine elements, each dealing with different aspects affecting future development.

Two substantial areas of the township, the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge and the Morristown National Historical Park, represent areas of national importance because of their environmental and historic significance. The remainder of the township lies between these areas and also contains extensive and sensitive environmental resources. The township has to a remarkable degree retained the characteristics of a historic rural community because of private and public efforts over many decades. The overall purpose of this plan is to continue this legacy of preservation which began in 1922 when the township was founded upon the principle of protecting these characteristics.

The Master Plan serves as a basis for the development of zoning, land subdivision, site plan, and other development regulations for the township and is utilized as a basis for evaluating and coordinating with state, regional, county, and adjacent municipal planning programs. The development of a Master Plan is an ongoing process reflecting continuing changes in circumstances, and a refinement of goals.

Harding Township adopted its first Master Plan in December 1972 and amended the Plan in July 1978. The 1982 Reexamination Report led to a new Master Plan adopted in December 1984. Since that time, a number of important amendments to the Master Plan were made, many to address state planning policies. They include plans addressing affordable housing, reflecting concerns about water resources, and a new Land Use Plan establishing the basis of a new lower density residential zone. In summary, this plan is intended to realistically address current needs while strongly continuing a commitment to protecting Harding's special sense of place and high quality of environmental and cultural resources.

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