

MASTER PLAN REEXAMINATION REPORT

Township of Knowlton
Warren County, New Jersey

Adopted by the Knowlton
Planning Board:
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Prepared by:



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The original of this report was signed and sealed in accordance with N.J.S.A. 45:14A-12

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Introduction

The New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (“MLUL”), N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1 et seq. stipulates that each municipality in the State of New Jersey shall reexamine its Master Plan and development regulations at least every ten years. Specifically, N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89 states:

“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 and the municipal clerk of each adjoining municipality.”

The Township of Knowlton adopted its last Comprehensive Master Plan in 1984 pursuant to Article 3 of the MLUL (N.J.S.A. 40:550-28). The Planning Board has adopted numerous master plan revisions, amendments, and reexamination reports since 1984. The most recent reexamination was adopted in May 2009.

The purpose of a Master Plan Reexamination Report (“MPR”), prepared in accordance with the Municipal Land Use Law, is to periodically reexamine the master plan, zoning, and land development regulations of a municipality to determine whether they continue to address the development goals and objectives of the municipality and to provide recommendations that will address proposed changes in development goals, the impact of development within the municipality and the impact of planning and development regulations by the County, the State of New Jersey and the Federal government.

This reexamination of the Township of Knowlton Master Plan conforms to the requirements of the Municipal Land Use Law and addresses the requirements of N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89 by including the following:

- A. The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of adoption of the last reexamination report.
- B. The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date.
- 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.
- 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.
- E. The recommendations of the planning board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans adopted pursuant to the "Local Redevelopment and Housing Law", N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 et al., into the land use plan element of the municipal master plan, and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.

It is important that a Master Plan be kept up-to-date and flexible so that it can respond to changing conditions and reflect the current land use policies of the municipality. The Master Plan should be a document that is easily amended so that it can respond to both concerns and opportunities. The aforementioned requirements of the Municipal Land Use Law are addressed in the sections of this report that follow.

Municipal Summary

The Township of Knowlton contains approximately 25.4 square miles (16,253 acres) and is situated in the north western part of Warren County New Jersey. Knowlton is adjacent to the Townships of Hardwick, Blairstown, Hope, and White. Additionally, the Borough of Portland and Upper Mount Bethel Township in Northampton County, Pennsylvania are located to the west, across the Delaware River, of Knowlton Township. Interstate 80 bisects the Knowlton in the middle of the Township, dividing it into a northern and southern section. US Route 46 traverses the Township in a north-south direction along the Delaware River. Additionally, State Route 94 traverses the Township in the northern section. All three of these roads intersect at the Columbia-Portland Interchange in the Columbia section of the Township. Knowlton does not have access to any public transportation.

Knowlton is a rural community with predominately single-family detached housing units and farm properties. Most of the commercial properties are located along US Route 46 and State Route 94. However, there are other commercial properties scattered throughout the Township. The Worthington State Forest and Paulinskill Valley Trail are both partially located in Knowlton, as are State-designated fishing access points and Wildlife Management Areas.

Knowlton has an estimated population of 2,976 residents according to the 2017 American Community Survey (“ACS”) and 707 jobs according to the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development 2018 municipal report. The Township has very limited public sewer service with only approximately 122 acres of the Township service by the Knowlton Wastewater Treatment Plant. There is no public water service in the Township.

According to the 2001 State Development and Redevelopment Plan (“SDRP”) Policy Map, Knowlton contains 4,411 acres within the Rural Planning Area (PA4), 6,110 acres within the Rural/Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area (PA4B), and 3,587 acres within the Environmentally Sensitive

Planning Area (PA5). The SDRP also designates 1,818 acres as Parks and Natural Areas.

Planning History

- 1984 – Comprehensive Master Plan
- 1991 – Master Plan Revision and Farmland Preservation Ordinance
- 1996 – Master Plan Reexamination and Housing Element
- 1997 – Revisions to Master Plan Reexamination and Housing Element
- 1999 – Master Plan Amendment
- 2000 – Housing Element and Fair Share Plan
- 2003 – Land Use Plan Amendment
- 2008 – Housing Element and Fair Share Plan
- 2008 – Farmland Preservation Plan
- 2009 – Master Plan Reexamination Report
- 2018 – Housing Element and Fair Share Plan
- 2019 – Amended Housing Element and Fair Share Plan

Master Plan Goals, Objectives and Vision

This section of the MPR recites the various master plan goals and objectives that form the underpinning of the Knowlton Township Master Plan.

1984 Master Plan Goals

The 1984 Master Plan was based upon the following Master Plan Goals:

1. To plan thoughtfully for the long range. There must be avoided, on the one hand, the hazards of indiscriminate and reckless growth for the short-term economic advantage of a few; and on the other, the debilitating effects of stagnation and isolation. It is more difficult, and often impossible, to reverse development, pollution, and contamination than to avoid them in the first place through reasonable long-range planning. Population densities and development must be geared at all costs to the water resources and the sewage disposal ability of the land.
2. To provide recreational facilities for residents of all ages, but especially for the young people of the Township.
3. To discourage unsightly strip development along the highways and to channel commercial development into the center where it now exists. This will help preserve valuable resources such as road frontage.
4. To preserve open space and farmland and to protect flood plains.
5. To achieve balance between providing employment opportunities through commercial development and maintaining the scenic character of the Township, so that it will remain a desirable place in which to live.
6. To exploit the ready access of Route 80 by welcoming selected commercial and light industrial development, but at the same time to ensure that the natural beauty of the Township is not despoiled by such development.

7. To initiate such actions that will enhance the quality of life for senior citizens.
8. To provide a reasonable balance of land uses, including farming, commercial developments, and housing for a variety of age and income groups.

1999 Revised Master Plan Goals

The Township adopted a comprehensive Master Plan Revision in 1991, which included a listing of 12 goals and objectives for the Township. The 1997 Master Plan Reexamination Report amended the goals and objectives to add goals 13 and 14. The 1999 Master Plan Reexamination Report subsequently revised and supplemented the goals. The revised Master Plan Goals are as follows:

1. To minimize the visual impact of development in the Township.
2. To retain Knowlton's rural features.
3. To minimize site disturbance by development.
4. To retain the Township's woodland features.
5. To retain water quality and quantity.
6. To minimize development impact upon wildlife.
7. To encourage the preservation and enhancement of wildlife habitat.
8. To preserve open space consistent with the Township's rural character.
9. To provide and maintain contiguous open space.
10. To minimize the impact of development on community facilities.
11. To concentrate new community facilities in areas suitable for higher intensity development.
12. To minimize impacts of development on the Township's road network.

13. In areas appropriate for the endeavor, permit and encourage tourism which creates:
 - a. A minimum of environmental damage and encourages interest in protecting and benefiting the natural environment;
 - b. An understanding and appreciation of the special contributions of agriculture to society; and
 - c. An awareness of the history of the area. These activities may be known as eco-tourism, agricultural tourism and historical tourism, respectively.
14. To generate and adopt a practical plan for historic preservation, in order to encourage an understanding and appreciation of the history of the Township.
15. To protect the Delaware River and its tributaries. Special attention should be given to constraints at environmentally critical areas along the river, such as wetlands, flood plains, steep slopes and areas affected by stormwater runoff.
16. To preserve and protect farmland and open space. To provide for the preservation of open space and farmland and to ensure that adequate and contiguous parcels of land are available to encourage economic farming operations in the future, specific steps should be taken now to protect the land against unwanted development and subdivision.
17. To promote Knowlton's villages in recognition of their cultural, historic and commercial importance in a manner that is compatible with the objectives of the Township. Ensure that zoning regulations are upheld.
18. To encourage the development of neighborhood retail commercial ventures in Columbia, Hainesburg and Delaware, which promote and support ecotourism, agricultural tourism, and historical tourism.
19. To promote the viability of all permitted commercial activities in the C-1 and C-2 zones, and at the same time balance the public interest and ensure that these activities comply with all federal, state, county and municipal regulations, and particularly with the Knowlton Township Land Development Ordinance.
20. To include, among the resources considered for preservation, such features as scenic views, historic structures, sites and districts, bridges, open space, hedgerows, tree lines, undulating topography and a limited network of narrow curvilinear country roads (rather than a network of typical suburban streets).
21. To maintain a full range of recreational facilities to meet the needs of the township residents of varying ages.
22. To identify and reserve locations in the Township for a future school, fire house, or building for other municipal uses.
23. To improve the visual character of the Township, particularly the hamlet and village centers and along the more traveled highways.
 - a. Conceal unsightly views wherever possible and increase the use of trees, tree rows and non-deciduous shrubs and hedges as screening and buffer materials.
 - b. Improve the appearance of the village of Delaware along Route 46 in order to enhance the visual character of the Route 46 corridor as a gateway to Knowlton Township. Explore the possibilities of improving the appearance of major township roads through landscaping, signage, lighting, fencing and other amenities.
 - c. Protect and enhance the village of Delaware as a historically significant community, and protect the historic sites and features along the Delaware River and the Paulinskill.
 - d. Minimize visual and environmental impact of new development. Assure that new development is visually and environmentally compatible with physical characteristics and historic character of the Township and that design standards reflect aesthetic considerations.
 - e. Retain the Township's wooded areas and encourage tree growth throughout the Township, but especially in the village and hamlet

- centers and along the roadways. Encourage the preservation of shade trees and specimen trees of exceptional value.
- f. Require replacement plantings in areas of disturbance that reflect natural vegetation indigenous to these areas.
24. To retain water quality and quantity through conservation measures and responsible planning.
- a. Protect against non-point source pollution.
 - b. Locate wells and septic systems with diligence and respect for the environment.
 - c. Discourage the improper use of pesticides and fertilizers on lawns and farms, without jeopardizing the economics of farming operations. Encourage the concept of integrated pest management.
 - d. Consider characteristics of soil and underlying geology in all phases of planning, especially in density considerations, locating wells and septic systems and issuing variances.
 - e. Protect established villages and neighborhoods from encroachment by expansion of incompatible uses. Protect areas within floodplains, especially along the Delaware River, from new development that will adversely affect water quality and preserve the capacity of these areas to absorb additional run-off during periods of flood hazard.
25. To preserve, protect and enhance the quality of all rivers in the Township, and especially the Delaware River, and its tributaries, as well as lakes, ponds and streams and their borders, and to preserve wildlife, rare species and natural communities.
- a. Minimize the negative impact of environmentally harmful activities on all water bodies, especially the Delaware River, including activities which detract from passive recreational uses. Encourage and promote appropriate development within the Township's hamlets and villages that minimizes impacts on river and bodies of water, especially the Delaware River and its tributaries, and is compatible with the goals and objectives of the Master Plan. Such development

may include eco-tourism, neighborhood retail and passive recreation.

- b. Protect the lands along the Township rivers, and especially the Delaware River and its tributaries, by preserving stream buffers, steep slopes, wetlands, flood plains, areas of natural vegetation and woodlands that form part of the river corridors.

2003 Land Use Plan Element Vision

The 2003 Land Use Plan Element provided a statement of the vision for the Township, which reads as follows:

It is the year 2020. Knowlton Township is one of the most successful communities in preserving open space and farmland in the State. The Township retains its charm as a rural Warren County community with abundant natural resources. Its designation as a model community by the Office of Smart Growth makes it an example for other rural communities to emulate. The assets of the Township – open space, scenic vistas, farmland and wildlife habitat have been preserved.

2003 Land Use Plan Objectives

The 2003 Land Use Plan Element amended the prior goals and objectives and reorganized them into categories of land use plan objectives, which were reviewed and reaffirmed by the 2009 Master Plan Reexamination Report. The land use objectives are as follows:

Residential Objectives

- To minimize the visual impact of development in the Township.
- To retain Knowlton's rural features.
- To minimize site disturbance by development.
- To retain the Township's woodland features.

Township of Knowlton

- To minimize the impact of development on community facilities.
- To concentrate new community facilities in areas suitable for higher intensity development.
- To minimize impacts of development on the Township's road network.
- To promote a desirable visual environment through creative and flexible development techniques with respect to environmental assets and constraints of the Township.
- To increase housing opportunities for senior citizens.
- To improve the quality of neighborhood business areas.
- To recognize the Township's role as a rural community.

Commercial Objectives

- To provide for a range of commercial activities in appropriate locations where the circulation, utility and community services are best suited to handle these higher intensity uses.
- To promote the development of commercial areas that are attractive from the public rights-of-way, which protect adjacent residential areas through the use of landscaped buffers.
- To protect the environs by directing commercial development into the Township's sewer service area and existing villages.

Conservation and Natural Resource Objectives

- To protect natural and environmental resources including floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes, and aquifer recharge areas and areas suitable for public and quasi-public recreational activities.
- To identify and preserve environmentally sensitive areas in the Township.

- To encourage the use of conservation easements on environmentally sensitive lands in private ownership to minimize future disturbance.
- To conserve wooded rights-of-way and institute a tree planting program.
- To retain water quality and quantity
- To minimize development impact on wildlife
- To encourage the preservation and enhancement of wildlife habitat
- To preserve open space consistent with the Township's rural character
- To provide and maintain contiguous open space

Parks and Open Space Objectives

- To identify as open space/recreation certain public and private lands that serve as open space, buffers, streetscape or vistas; and/or are in a strategic location as it relates to existing parks and recreation.
- To preserve and enhance park and recreation facilities, where appropriate, within the Township to meet the needs and demands of present and future residents.
- To create physical trail linkages, where feasible, between Township parks and the County, Federal and State park system and community facilities and existing trail systems.

Historic Objectives

- To recognize and preserve the historic character of the Township.
- To explore incentives to encourage the maintenance and restoration of historically notable buildings.
- To encourage the preservation of historic buildings and landmarks that are significant to Knowlton's past.

Infrastructure Objectives

- Continue to review the needs of community facilities to determine the need for replacement or additions including, but not limited to: schools, fire substations, police station, highway department and recreational facilities.

Significant Changes in Assumptions, Policies and Objectives

As required under N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89(c), this section of the MPR addresses 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.

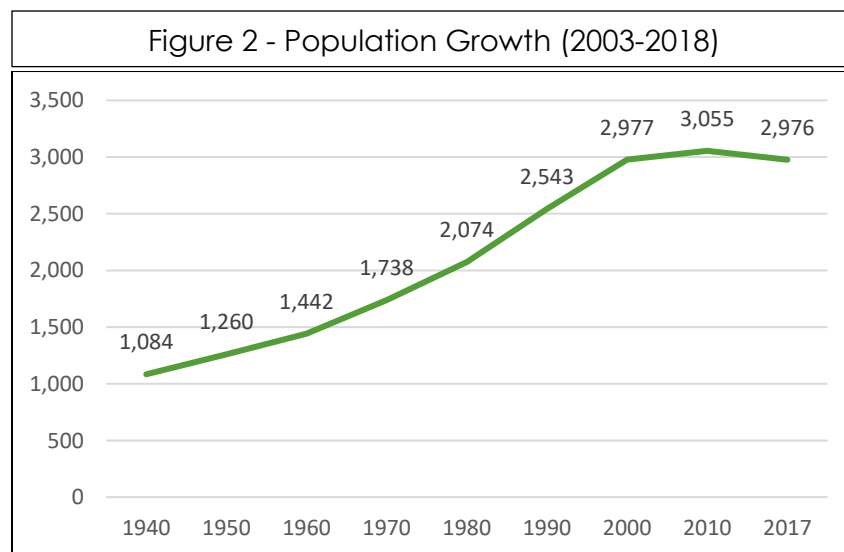
Population Changes

Knowlton is a rural community with an estimated population of 2,976 residents according to the 2017 ACS, which equates to a population density of about 117 persons per square mile. This is 79 residents less than the 3,055 residents reported in the 2010 Decennial Census. Between 1940 and 2010, the Township’s population has steadily been rising. The 1980s saw the largest increase, with 469 new residents or a 22.6 percent gain over the 1980 population of 2,074 residents. During the 2000s, the population growth rate was only 2.6 percent, compared to a 17.1 percent growth rate during the 1990s.

Figure 1 - Population Growth

Year	Population	Change	Percent
1940	1,084	---	---
1950	1,260	176	16.2%
1960	1,442	182	14.4%
1970	1,738	296	20.5%
1980	2,074	336	19.3%
1990	2,543	469	22.6%
2000	2,977	434	17.1%
2010	3,055	78	2.6%
2017	2,976	-79	-2.6%

Sources: 2010 Census table DP-1; 2017 American Community Survey ("ACS") table DP05; <http://lwd.dol.state.nj.us/labor/lpa/census/2kpub/njsdcp3.pdf>



Township of Knowlton

The North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (“NJTPA”) projects that the Knowlton Township will grow by 225 residents (7.5 percent) by 2045 from 3,067 residents to 3,295 residents. This equates to an annualized increase of approximately eight residents (0.25 percent). However, the 2017 ACS estimated the population of the Township at 2,976, which indicates a decline of approximately 10 residents per year. If the Township’s population were to begin rising after 2020, the Township would need to gain 319 new residents, or an annualized increase of approximately 18 residents over the next 28 years. Based on the recent downward trend in population since 2010, the Planning Board is skeptical of the NJTPA population projections.

Figure 3 - Permanent Population Projection			
Year	Population	Change	Percent
2010	3,055	-	-
2015	3,067	12	0.4%
2045	3,295	228	7.5%
Source: 2000 & 2010 Census table DP-1; NJTPA Population Forecast by County and Municipality 2015-2045			

In contrast, the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development published population projections from 2014 to 2034 for each of the 21 Counties in New Jersey. Those projections show Warren County decreasing in population from an estimated 106,900 residents in 2014 to 102,100 in 2034.

Based on the population decline that Knowlton Township has experienced since 2010 and without any substantial residential development anticipated within the Township, it is expected that population levels will not change substantially from present.

Land Use Changes

According to NJDEP’s Land Use / Land Cover data from 2007 and 2012, Knowlton has seen minimal land use changes over the five-year period. The data shows that Knowlton lost nearly 129 acres of agricultural lands, a majority of which are classified as forest land in 2012 (102 acres). The Township also saw a reduction of recreational land and other urban or built-up land. Land Use / Land Cover categories that saw an increase in area include residential, commercial, wetlands, and water areas. Commercial land uses increased by approximately three acres.

Figure 4 - Land Use / Land Cover (2007 - 2012)			
Land Use / Land Cover	2007 (acres)	2012 (acres)	Change (acres)
Residential	1,520.34	1,554.54	34.19
Commercial/Services	66.04	68.94	2.90
Industrial	8.64	8.23	-0.41
Mixed Urban or Built-Up Land	67.70	69.10	1.40
Airport Facilities	13.45	13.45	0
Transportation/Communication/Utilities	231.69	232.92	1.23
Cemetery	14.85	14.85	0.00
Recreational Land	166.67	160.88	-5.79
Athletic Fields (Schools)	3.13	3.13	0
Other Urban or Built-Up Land	144.67	134.94	-9.73
Agriculture	3,889.51	3,760.61	-128.90
Barren Land	38.76	42.83	4.06
Forest	8,234.13	8,336.52	102.39
Wetlands	1,341.74	1,359.35	17.61
Water	483.71	502.55	18.84
Total	16,225.02	16,262.82	37.80

Property tax data is also utilized to identify changes in land use since the 2009 MPR. The NJ Department of Community Affairs – Division of Local Government Services publishes a summary of the tax ratables for each year. From 2010 to 2018, there was a net loss of seven parcels. Vacant and residential parcels decreased by two, while farm homesteads decreased by four. The Township gained one commercial parcel. Interestingly, the equalized property value of commercial parcel decreased by approximately \$680,000 despite the new commercial parcel. Similarly, residential parcel value increased by approximately \$1,160,000 despite a loss of two parcels. Overall, there was a net loss of approximately \$1,960,000 equalized assessed property value between 2010 and 2018.

Figure 5 - Property Tax Ratable Base

Land Use Class	Number of Parcels			Equalized Property Value (millions of dollars)		
	2010	2019	Change	2010	2019	Change
Vacant	157	155	-2	6.84	6.32	-0.52
Residential	942	940	-2	193.05	194.21	1.16
Apartment	3	3	0	0.67	0.67	0.00
Farm Homestead	147	143	-4	35.54	33.71	-1.83
Farmland	323	323	0	2.80	2.70	-0.10
Commercial	59	60	1	20.64	19.96	-0.68
Industrial	0	0	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	1,631	1,624	-7	259.53	257.57	-1.96

Source: http://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/dlgs/resources/property_tax.html

Employment Changes

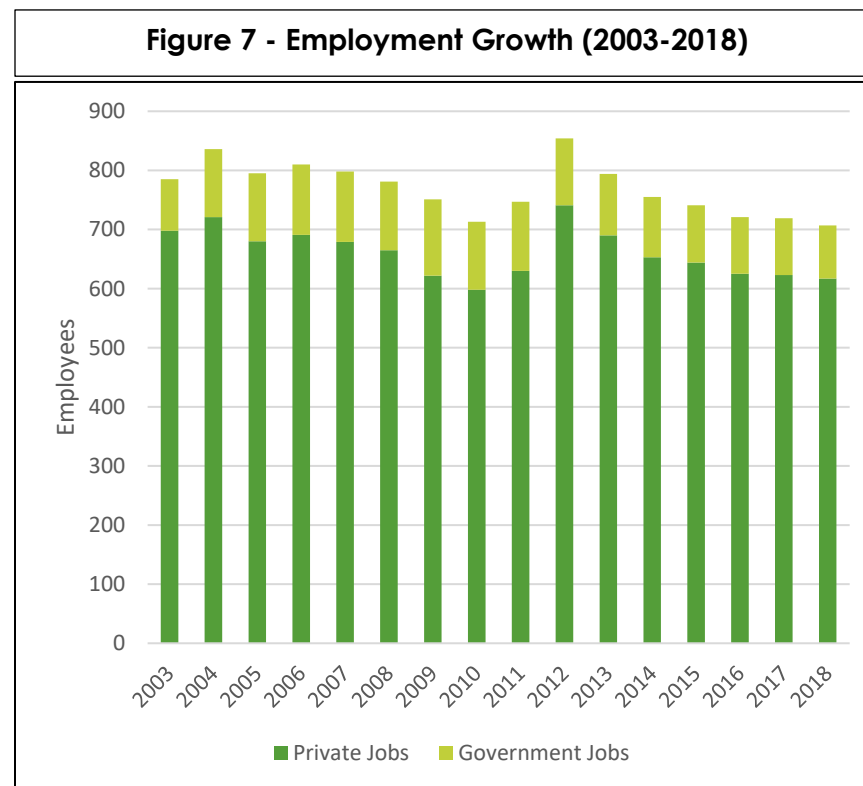
The NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDL&WD) maintains tabulations of employment and wage data for employers covered under the New Jersey Unemployment Compensation Law. The data is published quarterly and annually, utilizing the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS).

In 2003, Knowlton had an average of 698 private sector jobs and 87 government jobs (including local education). Government jobs include federal, local, and local education. According to the data, the 2018 employment is the lowest during the fifteen-year period, despite the job growth seen in 2004 and from 2010 to 2012. Jobs in the private sector have decreased by 81 jobs (11.64 percent) while government jobs have gained 3 jobs (3.45 percent). However, it should be noted that there were over 100 government jobs between 2004 and 2014. At the peak in 2012, there were on average 741 private sector jobs and 113 government jobs, for a total of 854 jobs in Knowlton. It should be noted that in 2009, there were 129 government jobs.

Based on the trends since 2012, the Knowlton does not foresee significant job growth within the next ten years. The Township would expect that there may be some fluctuations from year-to-year, but the range would likely remain between 700 and 800 jobs by 2025.

Figure 6 - Employment Growth (2003-2018)			
Year	Private Sector Jobs	Government Jobs	Total Jobs
2003	698	87	785
2004	721	115	836
2005	680	115	795
2006	691	119	810
2007	679	119	798
2008	665	116	781
2009	622	129	751
2010	598	115	713
2011	630	117	747
2012	741	113	854
2013	690	104	794
2014	653	102	755
2015	644	97	741
2016	625	96	721
2017	623	96	719
2018	617	90	707

Source: NJDLWD, Employment and Wages, 2003-2018 Annual Reports



Employment Projections

The NJTPA estimates that employment within Knowlton will grow by 167 jobs between 2015 and 2045. This equates to an average of six new jobs per year for the next 30 years. Given the declining employment trend, current economic climate, and the lack of available land and utilities in Knowlton, these projections are unrealistic. The Planning Board does not anticipate any substantial job growth over the next 10-year period.

Figure 8 - Employment Projection			
Year	Jobs	Change	Percent
2010	800	---	---
2015	825	25	3.1%
2045	992	167	20.2%
Source: NJTPA Employment Forecast by County and Municipality 2010-2040 & 2015-2045			

Changes in State Planning Regulations

Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL)

Amendments to the Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) since the 2009 MPR was adopted that are worth noting include:

1. The Statewide Non-residential Development Fee Act was later amended by the “New Jersey Economic Stimulus Act of 2009” (P.L. 2009, c. 90, approved July 28, 2009).
2. N.J.A.C. 40:55D-66.11 now provides that renewable energy facilities on parcels comprising 20 or more contiguous acres that are owned by the same person or entity shall be a permitted use within every industrial district of a municipality (P.L. 2009, c. 35, adopted March 31, 2009).
3. A Master Plan Reexamination Report is now required at a minimum of once every 10 years instead of every 6 years (P.L. 2011 c. 65, approved on May 4, 2011).
4. The MLUL was amended to define "inherently beneficial use" for purposes of zoning variance and specifically includes facilities and structures that supply electrical energy produced from wind, solar, or photovoltaic technologies (P.L. 2009 c. 146, approved on November 20, 2009).
5. The MLUL was amended to add a “Green Buildings and Environmental Sustainability Plan Element” to the components that comprise a municipal master plan, which shall provide for, encourage, and promote the efficient use of natural resources and the installation and usage of renewable energy systems; consider the impact of buildings on the local, regional and global environment; allow ecosystems to function naturally; conserve and reuse water; treat storm water on-site; and optimize climatic conditions through site orientation and design (P.L. 2008, c.54, approved on August 5, 2008).
6. General development plan (GDP) protection can now be extended to development projects situated on sites less than 100 acres based on certain criteria. GDP’s can now be sought for projects with a non-residential floor area of 150,000 square feet or more, or with 100 residential dwelling units or more, on sites of 100 acres or less (P.L. 2011 c. 86, approved July 1, 2011).
7. The MLUL was amended to allow municipalities to authorize noncontiguous development, including the transfer of floor area ratio or density between noncontiguous parcels (P.L. 2013, c. 106, approved August 7, 2013).
8. The MLUL was amended to require that for any land use element of a municipal master plan adopted after the effective date of P.L. 2017 c. 275 (January 8, 2018), the land use element shall include a statement of strategy concerning: smart growth, including consideration of potential

locations for the installation of electric vehicle charging stations; storm resiliency with respect to energy supply, flood-prone areas, and environmental infrastructure; and environmental sustainability (P.L. 2017 c. 275, approved on January 8, 2018).

Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (LRHL)

A “Non-Condemnation Redevelopment Area” provision was included in the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-6) by P.L. 2013, C. 159, approved on September 6, 2013. This amendment significantly changes the way that municipalities may designate areas in need of redevelopment pursuant to the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 et seq.). Chapter 159 provides that a municipality shall make a decision to utilize or reserve the power of eminent domain at the beginning of the redevelopment process. When a planning board investigates whether an area should be designated as being “in need of redevelopment”, the municipality must indicate whether it is seeking to designate a potential redevelopment area as a “Non-Condemnation Redevelopment Area” or a “Condemnation Redevelopment Area”. The evaluation criteria for each type of redevelopment area are the same except for determining whether the power of eminent domain will or will not be exercised.

On August 9, 2019, the LRHL was amended by P.L. 2019, C. 229 to expand the redevelopment designation criterion at N.J.A.C. 40A:12A-5(b) to include the discontinuance 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.

Council on Affordable Housing (“COAH”)

Since the 2009 MPR, Knowlton received Substantive Certification of its Third Round Housing Plan Element and Fair Share Plan (“HEFSP”) from COAH on October 14, 2009. However, on March 10, 2015, the Supreme

Court ruled that COAH has failed to act and as a result, the Courts will be assuming jurisdiction over the Fair Housing Act. The Order divided municipalities into one of three categories – those that achieved Third Round Substantive Certification, those that filed or petitioned COAH and those that had never participated in the COAH process.

The Order permitted towns to file a Declaratory Judgment during a thirty-day window (approximately June 8 to July 8, 2015) to alert the Court that the municipality wishes to comply with its constitutional mandate to provide affordable housing. Knowlton filed its Complaint for Declaratory Judgment on July 1, 2015. The Borough’s case was assigned to the Honorable Thomas C. Miller.

Knowlton then entered into a Settlement Agreement with the Fair Share Housing Center (“FSHC”) on December 5, 2016, which settled the Declaratory Judgment Action and addressed the Township’s affordable housing obligations for the period between 1999 and 2025. The Settlement Agreement establishes that the Township has a Rehabilitation Obligation of 10 units, a Prior Round Obligation (1987-1999) of 14 units, and a Third Round Obligation (1999-2025) of 32 units.

The 2018 Knowlton Township HEFSP was adopted by the Planning Board on September 25, 2018 and endorsed by the Township Committee on October 25, 2018. The HEFSP was subsequently amended by the Planning Board on June 25, 2019 and was endorsed by the Township Committee on July 25, 2019. A Final Compliance Hearing is being scheduled, in which the Township will request an Order and Judgement of Repose, protecting the Township from builders’ remedy lawsuits through July 2025.

Stormwater Management Program

Enacted on February 2, 2004, New Jersey’s stormwater management program, comprised of two separate Rules (N.J.A.C. 7:8 and 7:14A), establishes a framework for addressing water quality impacts associated with existing and future stormwater discharges. Together with the new Flood Hazard Control Act Rules (N.J.A.C. 7:13), they provide for Category One

(C1) Water Protection including a 300-foot Special Water Resource Protection Area or riparian buffer for new major development adjacent to all C1 waters and upstream tributaries of C1 waters within the same HUC-14 sub-watershed. These regulations have implications in Knowlton, as the Delawanna Creek, Knowlton Brook, Stony Brook, Yards Creek, and their tributaries are all classified as C1 waterways. It should be noted that the DEP has proposed nearly 750 additional miles of C1 waterways as of March 4, 2019. The Paulinskill is included as one of the proposed C1 waterways.

The Township has complied with the 2004 rule changes as follows:

1. Obtaining a Stormwater Permit from the State of New Jersey and addressing the Statewide Basic Requirements (SBN's) in that permit on a recurring basis, including the filing of annual MSRP reports and complying with the required 12 points of credit each, which involves public education, signage, promotional items, website information, and Land Use Board member education.
2. Preparing and adopting a Stormwater Management Plan, approved October 18, 2005.
3. Preparing and adopting a Stormwater Control Ordinance, adopted June 18, 2006.
4. Reviewing development applications for compliance with the adopted Stormwater Control Ordinance where applicable.

As part of this 2020 MPR process, the Municipal Stormwater Management Plan and Stormwater Control Ordinances have been reviewed and determined to be in conformance with the State Stormwater Control regulations. Therefore, no changes to the Stormwater Management Plan or Stormwater Control Ordinances are recommended at this time.

Water Quality Management Planning

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) administers the Statewide Water Quality Management (WQM) Planning rules, N.J.A.C. 7:15, in conjunction with the Statewide WQM Plan, which together constitute the Continuing Planning Process conducted pursuant to the Water Quality Planning Act, N.J.S.A. 58:11A-1 et seq., the Water Pollution Control Act, N.J.S.A. 58:10A-1 et seq., and N.J.S.A. 13:1D-1 et seq., and as required by Sections 303(e) and 208 of the Federal Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.). The intent of the continuing planning process is to align federal, state, regional and local land use planning to ensure that these land use plans do not conflict with each other.

NJDEP readopted the WQM Planning rules on May 20, 2008, with the rule readoption effective May 21, 2008 and adopted rule amendments, repeals and new rules effective July 7, 2008 (see 40 N.J.R. 4000(a)). The rule amendments and new rules provide the following:

- Reassign wastewater management planning responsibility to the county boards of chosen freeholders and require counties to update WMPs;
- Establish clear standards for delineating appropriate sewer service areas to protect environmentally sensitive areas as well as clear, environmentally protective standards for the review of WQM plan amendments;
- Set forth clear standards to require identification of adequate wastewater management alternatives, address water supply, and control nonpoint source pollution (including controls related to stormwater, riparian zones and steep slopes);
- Require updated WMPs to address septic density in a manner that demonstrates compliance with a 2 mg/L (ppm) nitrate planning

target on a HUC 11 watershed basis or as required by development type and location.

- Make provisions to allow the withdrawal of sewer service areas and redesignate these areas as general wastewater service area of 2,000 gallons per day or less and less than six residential units (restricted septic service areas) where the applicable WMP is not in compliance with the mandatory update schedule contained in the rules; and
- Require municipalities to develop a septic system inventory and tracking system through an ordinance or other means which will ensure that septic systems are functioning properly through a mandatory maintenance program.

P.L.2011, c.203 was enacted on January 17, 2012, which permits a Wastewater Management Planning Agency to prepare and submit to the NJDEP at least that portion of a wastewater management plan designating sewer service area, which shall comply with the NJDEP's regulatory criteria. The law requires that wastewater service area designations and sewer service area designations remain in effect and not be withdrawn for a period not to exceed two years. This law expired on January 17, 2014.

The Warren County Board of Chosen Freeholders opted not to accept the role of responsible entity for wastewater management planning in Warren County. Each municipality in Warren County is therefore responsible for preparing their own municipal wastewater management plan. On April 14, 2009, the NJDEP adopted a revision to the Upper Delaware Water Quality Management Plan, reassigning the responsibility to Knowlton Township for the update of its Township WMP.

The Knowlton Township Wastewater Management Plan was adopted by NJDEP on May 22, 2009. The Township subsequently prepared a Future Wastewater Service Area Map, pursuant to P.L.2011, c. 203, which was adopted by NJDEP on December 17, 2013. The Township submitted a draft WMP to NJDEP in May 2016, which has not yet been adopted.

Subsequent to the submittal of the draft WMP, the NJDEP adopted amended WQMP rules on November 7, 2016. The Knowlton WMP may need to be revised to comply with the new rules. The Township Committee should determine the status of the WMP review at NJDEP and whether it is in compliance with the amended WQMP rules. The Planning Board should also review the draft WMP submitted to NJDEP to determine if the plan reflects the goals of the 2020 Master Plan Reexamination Report.

Together North Jersey

In November 2011, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awarded Together North Jersey ("TNJ", also known as the North Jersey Sustainable Communities Consortium) a \$5 million Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant. The grant is matched with an additional \$5 million in leveraged funds from project partners. TNJ brought together a coalition counties, municipalities, educational institutions, nonprofits, businesses and other groups, to develop the first comprehensive plan for sustainable development for the 13 northern New Jersey counties: Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, Union and Warren.

The final TNJ Plan was released in November 2015. The plan presents an overview of the TNJ regional planning process that took place from 2011 to 2015 and proposes strategies for achieving a competitive, livable, efficient, and resilient region. The Goals and Objectives of the TNJ Plan are as follows:

Goal 1: Grow a Strong Regional Economy

- Keep and create well-paying jobs.
- Ensure infrastructure (transportation, utilities, and communications) is in good repair, can support economic development and is resilient to extreme weather.

Township of Knowlton

- Ensure the region’s workforce has the training and skills needed to support current and future industry needs.
- Support small businesses and entrepreneurship.

Goal 2: Create Great Places

- Maintain or expand vibrant downtowns and “main streets.”
- Create safe, stable, resilient neighborhoods with high-quality housing options affordable to a range of incomes.
- Preserve and enhance the character of existing neighborhoods and communities.
- Make it easier and safer to walk, bike and take transit.

Goal 3: Increase Access to Opportunity

- Connect where people live with where they need to go.
- Create inclusive, mixed-income neighborhoods.
- Maintain and improve the quality of schools.
- Improve access to community, arts, cultural and recreational resources (e.g. theaters, museums, libraries, senior centers, youth activities, and parks).
- Improve public health and access to health services.

Goal 4: Protect the Environment

- Preserve and enhance open space, natural areas and wildlife habitat.

- Improve air quality and reduce emissions that contribute to climate change.
- Increase ability to respond to and recover from extreme weather events.
- Improve water quality and ensure adequate supply.

Goal 5: Work Together

- Ensure broad participation in planning efforts, including populations traditionally under-represented.
- Foster collaboration among levels of government and provide a regional framework for making decisions about growth and investment.
- Respect property rights during planning and implementation.

Changes in County Planning Regulations

Warren County Transportation Technical Study Update (2018)

On June 30, 2018, Warren County prepared a Transportation Technical Study Update as the first phase of the process to prepare a Transportation Plan Element of the Warren County Master Plan. This Study does not specifically mention Knowlton Township. The study reviews bridge and pavement deficiencies but does not provide exact locations. The Planning Board notes that Route 94 was recently repaved but Route 46 has some bridge and pavement issues in Knowlton. The Route 46 bridge over Paulinskill is rated as poor condition by the Federal Highway Administration’s LTBP InfoBridge database.

Warren County Open Space Plan (2018)

The Warren County Planning Board adopted an update to the 2008 Open Space Plan in 2018. The Plan identifies existing open space properties and recommends additional areas that should be preserved in the future. Existing open spaces areas identified within or partially within Knowlton Township include the Beaver Brook Wildlife Management Area, Columbia Lake Wildlife Management Area, “Knowlton access”, Worthington State Forest, Tunnel Hill Fields, Camp Taylor, Triplebrook Campground, Delaware River Family Campgrounds, and Warren County ARC. Plan also indicates portions of the Paulinskill Valley Trail and the Warren Railroad Trail are located within the Township, as is a portion of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. In total, there are 3,632 acres of open space, including 526 acres of privately-owned open space and 3,106 acres of publicly-owned open space, in Knowlton. Note that these numbers include preserved farmland. It is not clear whether the 12 acres at Ramsayburg are included in these figures. There are no existing County-owned open space preserves in Knowlton Township and the Plan does not specify any target properties to be acquired or open space projects to be completed in Knowlton.

Changes in Municipal Land Use Regulations

Since the 2009 MPR, Knowlton has adopted two ordinance changes to the land use regulations, as follows:

- Ordinance 2018-08 amends Chapter 11, Article 53 “Affordable Housing Regulations” of the Township Code, pursuant to the terms of the Affordable Housing Settlement Agreement.

- Ordinance 2018-10 amends Chapter 11, Article 35.1 “Land Development” of the Township Code to prohibit the cultivation, processing, or dispensing of marijuana within the Township.

By looking at the Planning Board and Zoning Board approvals between 2009 and 2019, problematic ordinances and regulations can be identified. Since 2009, the Planning Board has approved 23 development applications, including but not limited to, 7 minor subdivisions, 4 lot line adjustments, and 6 site plans. Additionally, the Zoning Board saw 11 applications over the ten-year period. However, after a review of the approved applications, there does not appear to be any continuous pattern of development, as the applications were site-specific and in various locations within the Township. Therefore, there are no recommendations for revisions to the Master Plan or Zoning Ordinance in response to Zoning Board decisions.

Other Projects Affecting Knowlton Township

Columbia Lake Dam Removal Project

In January 2019, the NJDEP Division of Fish and Wildlife completed the removal of the Columbia Lake Dam, located 1/4 mile upstream of the Paulinskill River's confluence with the Delaware River in Knowlton Township. According to NJDEP, the 18-foot high, 330-foot long dam, constructed in 1909 by Warren County Power Co., impounded the 43-acre Columbia Lake that stretched more than 1.5 miles upstream of the dam. According to NJDEP, the obsolete dam blocked American Shad to their historic spawning grounds and impedes the movement of American Eel.¹ According to the project timeline², the area will remain closed to the public until the project is complete in 2020.

¹ https://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/columbiadam_project.htm

² https://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/news/2019/columbiadam_timeline_update.htm

Proposed Delaware Water Gap Scenic Byway

The Knowlton Township Environmental Commission is in the process of applying to the New Jersey Scenic Byways Program for the proposed Delaware Water Gap Scenic Byway.

The New Jersey Scenic Byways program is a voluntary, community-based initiative lead by the NJ Department of Transportation (NJDOT) to promote the recognition and enjoyment of memorable roadways. The program provides a framework for communities to create a management strategy and to develop plans that balance development, conservation, tourism and economic vitality. There are currently eight designated scenic byways in New Jersey.

The New Jersey Scenic Byways Program is a two-step process. First, the nomination application is submitted and reviewed by NJDOT. Approval of the application gives the proposed byway provisional designation as a State Scenic Byway. The next step is to develop a Corridor Management Plan (CMP), which leads to official designation from the NJDOT Commissioner as a Scenic Byway.

The Delaware Water Gap Scenic Byway is proposed to include portions of Interstate 80 (from exit 12 to Old Mine Road), Old Mine Road, County Route 602 (Millbrook Road), Main Street (Blairstown), Academy Street (Blairstown), State Route 94, Warren County Route 521, Sussex County Route 615, and Peters Valley/Wagon Wheel Road.

Grant Awards to Historic Commission

The Historic Commission has been active in pursuing grant funding for historic preservation projects. The following grants have been received:

- Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Grants - \$860,000
- Warren County Municipal and Charitable Conservancy Trust (WCMCCT) - \$225,000
- New Jersey Historic Trust - \$365,725

Master Plan Problems & Objectives

As required under N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89 (a), (b) and (d), the following section of the 2020 MPR (a) examines the major problems and objectives relating to land development in the Township of Knowlton that were included in the 2009 MPR, (b) identifies the extent to which such problems or objectives have changed, and (d) identifies specific recommendations for the Master Plan or development regulation, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether a new plan or regulations should be prepared.

This section is organized by various topic headings with a recitation of the prior stated problem or objective from the 2003 Land Use Plan, followed by the review from the 2009 MPR, and the 2020 review for this MPR, which identifies the extent to which such problem has changed since 2009 and any recommended actions to resolve the problems. The Planning Board notes that while the objectives remain valid goals for the Township, many of the objectives lack actionable items to actually achieve the objectives.

1. Residential Objectives

The 2003 Land Use Plan stated the following residential land use planning objectives:

- a. To minimize the visual impact of development in the Township.
- b. To retain Knowlton's rural features.
- c. To minimize site disturbance by development.
- d. To retain the Township's woodland features.
- e. To minimize the impact of development on community facilities.
- f. To concentrate new community facilities in areas suitable for higher intensity development.
- g. To minimize impacts of development on the Township's road network.

- h. To promote a desirable visual environment through creative and flexible development techniques with respect to environmental assets and constraints of the Township.
- i. To increase housing opportunities for senior citizens.
- j. To improve the quality of neighborhood business areas.
- k. To recognize the Township's role as a rural community.

2009 Review:

The 2009 MPR affirmed that these continue to be relevant planning objectives for the Township. The Township Council and Planning Board continue to review applications in the furtherance of the residential objectives.

2020 Review:

This 2020 MPR reaffirms these planning objectives. These residential objectives will continue to provide guidance to ensure that future development will be consistent with the rural character of the Township.

2. Commercial Objectives

The 2003 Land Use Plan stated the following commercial land use planning objectives:

- a. To provide for a range of commercial activities in appropriate locations where the circulation, utility and community services are best suited to handle these higher intensity uses.
- b. To promote the development of commercial areas that are attractive from the public rights-of-way, which protect adjacent residential areas through the use of landscaped buffers.
- c. To protect the environs by directing commercial development into the Township's sewer service area and existing villages.

2009 Review:

The 2009 MPR affirmed that this continues to be a planning issue for the Township, with little in the way of additional commercial development since the last Master Plan re-examination.

2020 Review:

This 2020 MPR reaffirms these planning objectives. There is an ongoing desire to spur economic development to attract high quality commercial services that are compatible with the rural character of the Township. The Planning Board notes a problem with Objective 2.c. The objective is to direct commercial development into the sewer service area and existing villages. However, none of the villages are within the sewer service area.

3. Conservation and Natural Resource Objectives

The 2003 Land Use Plan stated the following conservation and natural resource planning objectives:

- a. To protect natural and environmental resources including floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes, and aquifer recharge areas and areas suitable for public and quasi-public recreational activities.
- b. To identify and preserve environmentally sensitive areas in the Township.
- c. To encourage the use of conservation easements on environmentally sensitive lands in private ownership to minimize future disturbance.
- d. To conserve wooded rights-of-way and institute a tree planting program.
- e. To retain water quality and quantity
- f. To minimize development impact on wildlife
- g. To encourage the preservation and enhancement of wildlife habitat
- h. To preserve open space consistent with the Township's rural character

- i. To provide and maintain contiguous open space

2009 Review:

The 2009 MPR affirmed that this continues to be a planning issue for the Township. The Township Council and Planning Board continue to review applications in the furtherance of these objectives.

2020 Review:

This 2020 MPR reaffirms these land use objectives. It is recommended that the Township prepare an update to the 1991 Natural Resources Inventory (“NRI”) to establish a baseline documentation of the environmental systems within the Township that are in need of protection. The NRI should contain detailed maps at a useable scale to show mapped resources at the parcel level. Following the preparation of the NRI, a Conservation Element of the Master Plan should be prepared to establish protective measures for those natural environments.

The Planning Board has concerns regarding flooding and water quality of the Township’s streams and rivers. There are noted areas where there are conflicts between land uses prone to cause pollution located in close proximity to environmentally sensitive areas, such as the Delaware River Natural Heritage Priority Sites, floodplains, threatened & endangered species habitat, and C1 trout production stream. The Planning Board is concerned with the large amounts of impervious surfaces and high level of truck traffic associated with uses within the C-1 Zone District along Route 46.

An example of this conflict was the topic of discussion during the recent Zoning Board application for Delaware Gap Realty, LLC (Application 17-007) involving a proposal to expand the pre-existing nonconforming gas station along Route 46 and the Delaware River. The applicant sought “D(2)” use variance approval to convert the existing service station to a convenience store and expand the gasoline and diesel fuel pumps. The Zoning Board

denied the application in finding that the property is abutting Category One (1) trout production streams, the Delawanna Creek and the Delaware River. The Board found that, while the Applicant had made some minimal attempts to mitigate the concerns of the Board and the public with regard to surface runoff into the Delaware River, the efforts were not adequate to safely protect the residents of Knowlton given the proximity to not only protected surface waters but also Natural Heritage protected areas. The NRI and Conservation Plan should address these issues to ensure that the important natural resources in the Township are not adversely affected by harmful human actions.

The Planning Board also recommends the Township Committee consider adopting an Environmental Rights Ordinance, which would ensure that every person has a right to a clean and healthy environment, including pure water, clean air, and ecologically healthy habitats, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic, and esthetic qualities of the environment.

The State of Pennsylvania ratified an Environmental Rights Amendment to the State Constitution in 1971. The New Jersey Legislature considered similar legislation in 2018 but died in committee. The Township of Knowlton could be proactive in adopting local laws that would further protect the natural resources within the Township.

The 2003 Land Use Plan recommended the institution of a tree planting (see Objective 3.d). However, this objective has not been implemented. The Planning Board considered whether such a program could be implemented and found that due to roadway safety, tree planting programs would not be feasible.

4. Parks and Open Space Objectives

The 2003 Land Use Plan stated the following parks and open space planning objectives:

- a. To identify as open space/recreation certain public and private lands that serve as open space, buffers, streetscape or vistas; and/or are in a strategic location as it relates to existing parks and recreation.
- b. To preserve and enhance park and recreation facilities, where appropriate, within the Township to meet the needs and demands of present and future residents.
- c. To create physical trail linkages, where feasible, between Township parks and the County, Federal and State park system and community facilities and existing trail systems.

2009 Review:

The Township has actively been working to preserve open space and create new parkland. The Township has recently acquired a 31-acre parcel along Route 94.

2020 Review:

This 2020 MPR reaffirms these park and open space land use objectives. Although it is recognized that the Township contains many park and recreation areas, the Township does not have an Open Space & Recreation Plan (OSRP) Element of the Master Plan to ensure that there will be adequate park and recreation lands within the Township for future generations. An OSRP inventories existing recreation and open space properties, natural and cultural resources, and wildlife and biological diversity to determine Township needs and provide a blueprint for balanced growth with open space preservation and recreation opportunities. Additionally, the NJDEP Green Acres Program requires adoption of an OSRP for eligibility in the Planning Incentive Grant category of 50 percent matching funds.

5. Historic Objectives

The 2003 Land Use Plan stated the following historic preservation planning objectives:

- a. To recognize and preserve the historic character of the Township.
- b. To explore incentives to encourage the maintenance and restoration of historically notable buildings.
- c. To encourage the preservation of historic buildings and landmarks that are significant to Knowlton's past.

2009 Review:

The 2009 MPR states that the Township was taking steps to achieve these historic objectives. The Planning Board was working with the Historic Commission and was in the process of amending the Historic Preservation ordinance to comply with Certified Local Government standards.

2020 Review:

Despite the discussions between the Planning Board and Historic Commission in 2009 to work together to amend the Historic Preservation Ordinance, the initiative ultimately fell through and the ordinance remains unchanged.

Recently, the Planning Board has heard a number of comments from the public regarding the preservation of historic structures. The Township Code currently has a Section entitled "Historic Preservation Commission", which can be found in Section 10-15 through 10-21. This section includes the purpose, membership and officer election, procedures, powers, and duties. However, detailed regulations to enforce the preservation of historic sites, buildings, and structures are not provided in the Ordinance. It is recommended that the Township adopt a detailed Historic Preservation Ordinance that provides a variety of regulations and standards relating to the preservation and protection of historic sites, buildings, and structures, consistent with the US Department of Interior standards for historic preservation and the New Jersey Certified Local Government Guidelines.

CLG certification affords the municipality eligibility for additional historic preservation grant funding, participation in the NJ and federal historic preservation programs, and better coordination and cooperation with the NJ State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). The Township should adopt an Ordinance that defines historic preservation terms and phrases, provide requirements for applications involving historic sites, buildings, and structures, and contains detailed development standards and design guidelines. Additionally, if any historic site, building, or structure is proposed for demolition, specific criteria should be provided to ensure that the removal of the historic feature is the most viable option. This could include the historic, architectural, cultural, and/or aesthetic significance, importance to the Township, impact of removal, and the feasibility of restoration over demolition. The Planning Board also recommends that the Township institute a safeguard process for public review of demolition applications to protect structures of rural agricultural historic importance, including barns, outbuildings, summer kitchens, outhouses, wagon sheds, etc.

Additionally, signage standards should be adopted to allow existing and future uses to be identified within historic sites, structures, or buildings. It is recommended that signage not be greater than 5 square feet if mounted on the front façade of a building or structure, hanging signs not exceed 10 square feet, directory signs, sandwich boards to advertise products sold in the use.

6. Community Facilities Objectives

The 2003 Land Use Plan stated the following infrastructure objectives:

- a. Continue to review the needs of community facilities to determine the need for replacement or additions including, but not limited to: schools, fire substations, police station, highway department and recreational facilities.

2009 Review:

The 2009 MPR affirmed that this continues to be a planning issue for the Township.

2020 Review:

This section has been retitled as “Community Facilities” instead of “Infrastructure”.

Based on the recent decline in population since 2010, there does not appear to be a pressing need for any additional community facilities at this time. It is recommended that residential development activity be monitored closely over the next ten years. If there is a boom in development, a Community Facilities Element of the Master Plan should be prepared to ensure that there is a plan in place to accommodate the anticipated growth in population.

7. Traffic Concerns

According to the 2003 Land Use Plan, a commonly voiced concern throughout the community is the circulation pattern at the Interstate 80 Exit 4 interchange. Specific concerns were identified in the 2003 Land Use Plan related to the layout and design of the interchange, truck traffic volume, traffic safety, and car and truck conflicts near the intersection of Route 94 and County Route 605.

2009 Review:

The 2009 MPR noted that, after several discussions between members of the Township Council and representatives of the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT), traffic flow was altered in order to facilitate truck U-turns. The 2009 MPR reported that has reduced some of the traffic safety conflicts in the immediate area.

2020 Review:

According to the NJDOT Straight Line Diagrams, Route 80 traverses Knowlton Township from mileposts 1.51 to 8.75. The so-called “cloverleaf” at the Exit 4 interchange with Routes 94 and 46 is located between mileposts 4.2 and 5.0.

NJDOT crash data indicates that the annual average daily traffic (AADT) for this section of I-80 was 45,227 vehicles in 2009 and there were 142 crashes. The greatest number of crashes occurred in the vicinity of milepost 3.59, which is the Exit 4 interchange. By comparison, NJDOT crash data for 2018 showed that the AADT has increased to 56,936 vehicles within Knowlton Township and the number of crashes increased to 165.

The Planning Board also acknowledges even greater traffic concerns within the “S-Curve” portion of Route 80 from milepost 1.5 approaching the toll bridge to Pennsylvania. There have been over 70 accidents per year within the “S-curve” area, many of which involve tractor trailers overturning due to the sharp turns. The NJDOT is also planning to install a rockfall fence along the edge of the roadway, which may exacerbate the issue. The Township is engaged in discussion with NJDOT to address safety concerns within the “S-curve” portion of Route 80.

This 2020 MPR acknowledges that traffic safety will be an ongoing topic of interest for the Township due to the location of the Exit 4 interchange within the Township. The Township is also concerned that future increase in truck traffic generated by the proposed warehouse complex in the neighboring community of White Township will further exacerbate traffic safety issues in Knowlton Township.

The Warren County Planning Department recently received a grant from the Highlands Council to conduct a traffic study to determine the impacts on traffic conditions that would result from the full buildout of the fourteen industrial zoning districts throughout Warren County. This issue should be revisited by the Knowlton Planning Board once the County completes its study.

The Planning Board also has concerns regarding the cut-through traffic along Decatur Rd (County Route 657) through the village of Columbia. Excessive truck and vehicular traffic causes a nuisance to the local residents.

8. Commercial Economy

The 2003 Land Use Plan noted that a general lack of suitable commercial reinvestment has proven to be an issue throughout the Township. The 2003 Land Use Plan discussed problems under this topic that were specific to certain areas of the Township. Each area is discussed separately below.

8.1. Columbia

The 2003 Land Use Plan identified a lack of reinvestment and transformation of Columbia from a mixed-use area to a predominantly residential area. This problem was largely caused by the construction of Interstate 80 in the mid-twentieth century, which bisected the village. The Township encourages a mixture of low-medium intensity commercial and residential uses in Columbia.

2009 Review:

The 2009 MPR did not comment specifically on the conditions in Columbia.

2020 Review:

This 2020 MPR affirms that this continues to be an issue for the Township. The limited commercial uses remaining in Columbia are aging and in need of reinvestment to spur economic development in the area. The Township should consider designating that area in need of rehabilitation to offer short-term tax abatements to incentivize reinvestment. The Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (LRHL, N.J.S.A. 40A:12A) defines rehabilitation as the repair, reconstruction, or renovation of an existing structure, with or without new construction or the enlargement of the structure. A rehabilitation program may be an effective strategy to arrest and reverse patterns of decline and disinvestment in a residential neighborhood or commercial district.

Per the LRHL (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-14), an area may be determined to be in need of rehabilitation if there exist in that area conditions such that:

1. A significant portion of structures therein are in a deteriorated or substandard condition and there is a continuing pattern of vacancy, abandonment or underutilization of properties in the area, with a persistent arrearage of property tax payments thereon;
2. More than half of the housing stock in the delineated area is at least 50 years old, or a majority of the water and sewer infrastructure in the delineated area is at least 50 years old and is in need of repair or substantial maintenance; and
3. A program of rehabilitation, as defined in section 3 of P.L.1992, c.79 (C. 40A:12A-3), may be expected to prevent further deterioration and promote the overall development of the community.

If Columbia is designated as an area in need of rehabilitation, a Redevelopment Plan can be prepared to allow the municipality to utilize the powers of redevelopment under N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-8, except that eminent domain may not be utilized and only short-term tax abatements of five years may be granted, as opposed to long-term tax abatements of 30 years under a redevelopment designation. The Redevelopment Plan should address the issue of whether commercial uses should be expanded in Columbia or if the village should be a residential area only. The problem of cut-through traffic on Decatur Rd (County Route 657) should also be addressed, as well as potential public infrastructure to address aging or failing septic systems.

8.2. Simpson Road

The 2003 Land Use Plan raised concerns about the commercial properties along Simpson Road and at the interchange within the Township's sewer service area. This area is governed by the Township's C-2 and PCD district regulations. The 2003 Land Use Plan recommended that the Township investigate maintaining the overall floor area ratio for the area while reducing lot sizes to create a more compact form of development. Ideally, the sewer service area would be designed as one comprehensive development with a coordinated design theme.

2009 Review:

The 2009 MPR reported that the minimum lot size was reduced from 3 acres to 2 acres in the C-2 District. The PCD district still retains the three-acre minimum lot size.

2020 Review:

The PCD District remains largely undeveloped save for the Township municipal building and public works, and a number of single-family homes. The Brook Hollow Winery relocated Columbia in 2013 to operate its vineyard and winery on a large tract of land in the PCD District.

The Delaware Gap Travel Center was recently developed along the southern side of Simpson Road in the C-2 Zone. The travel plaza includes 13,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space, and a motor vehicle fueling station.

The TA Travel Center along Simpson Road has undergone changes since 2009. In 2014, the Planning Board granted approval to demolish the vacant 7,200 square foot hotel, which was replaced with landscaping. The TA also made some minor improvements in 2018 to the gasoline fueling station by adding two additional fueling stations and replacing the canopy.

8.3. Adaptive Reuse

The property commonly referred to as the Hainesburg Inn on Route 94 along the Paulinskill was identified in the 2003 Land Use Plan as having particular historic qualities and setting appropriate for a bed and breakfast establishment or similar commercial use. The 2003 Land Use Plan reported that numerous attempts to create a viable commercial business have been unsuccessful.

The Garden State Heirloom Seed Society has completed its renovation of the Delaware Lake farmhouse on County Route 605 and is now open as the headquarters of the organization with a museum-quality display of historic farming tools and implements, ephemera and memorabilia highlighting the area's agricultural and dairy farming history. This property is leased to

Knowlton Township by the NJDEP Division of Fish and Wildlife. Also leased to the Township's Historic Commission is the Ramsaysburg Homestead on State Highway 46, with work currently underway to complete stabilization of the site toward its development as an Arts and Culture Center housed in the 18th Century Ramsaysburg Tavern and outbuildings. The site features nearly twelve acres on the Delaware River offering active and passive recreational opportunities including fishing, hiking and canoeing to local residents and ecotourism visitors. The KTHC has staged a number of public events at the site highlighting it as a work in progress to publicize the project.

2009 Review:

The 2009 MPR reported that the Hainesburg Inn has been renovated for use as a veterinary hospital.

2020 Review:

The animal hospital continues to operate within the Hainesburg Inn at present. Additional opportunities for adaptive re-use of historic or significant structures should be explored.

8.4. Eco-Tourism

The Township has long expressed an interest in expanding its eco-tourism environment, according to the 2003 Land Use Plan. With the exception of the Township's three campgrounds, the Township's eco-tourism efforts have had only modest success, with one new bed and breakfast establishment, which opened in 2002. To grow within the eco-tourism market, a community must contain necessary services such as bed and breakfasts, local eateries and places to purchase goods. In Knowlton, there is little incentive for new businesses to open in a small market with a low population density.

The Township should consider the creation of public/private partnerships to assist the creation of new businesses. Possible solutions include seeking and obtaining grant monies to provide low interest loans or a revolving loan program to create the necessary "spark" for business creation. This typically requires the Township to work with local financial institutions. The

procurement of grant monies could also assist businesses in creating viable business plans, which will assist in their viability.

Another important aspect for eco-tourism is the "look" of an area. Typically, areas attracting tourism in this region provide an attractive setting within both the natural and built environment. The Township should consider creating design guidelines to assist in the establishment of the appropriate "look" for development with the ultimate goal of creating a sustainable eco-tourism environment.

2009 Review:

The 2009 MPR did not specifically comment on this issue.

2020 Review:

The local economy remains much the same in 2020 as it was in 2003. There has been very little economic growth, if any, since 2003. The Township should consider preparing an Economic Development Plan to provide a comprehensive overview of the economy, set policy direction for economic growth, and identify strategies, programs, and projects to improve the local economy. Existing assets, such as the parks, trails and recreation opportunities, existing business such as the winery, and other destinations in and around Knowlton should be linked to encourage eco-tourism, agri-tourism, and historic/heritage tourism. The Township should also take advantage of other existing and anticipate programs and initiatives, such as the Grown in Warren program funded by the USDA Rural Business Development program or the anticipated Greater Highlands & Pinelands Economic Growth Plan currently being considered by the State Legislature.

The Columbia Wildlife Management Area provides a future park and public access for fishing, kayaking, and boating. This presents an opportunity to link the Paulinskill Valley Rail Trail, which is part of the Liberty Water Gap Trail and the proposed 9/11 Memorial Trail. Opportunities for biking, birdwatching, kayaking, hiking, and other eco-tourism activities should be marketed to attract tourists from the region to Knowlton Township.

9. Education Facilities

Schools in the Township are nearing capacity having the ability to accommodate approximately 30 additional students. The Township continues to closely monitor school capacities and school population projections. The Board of Education closely monitors these issues.

2009 Review:

The 2009 MPR noted that the capacity of the Township's educational facilities was able to accommodate additional students at that time. However, the educational facilities are aging, have reached the end of their lifespans, and are in need of significant improvements.

2020 Review:

The educational facilities continue to age and deteriorate. Ultimately, this is the responsibility of the Board of Education.

10. Renewable Energy

The 2009 MPR recommended the following objective regarding renewable energy:

The Township of Knowlton has noted an increased interest in the development of small-scale wind energy systems within the Township. New Jersey legislation currently being considered will promote the construction of renewable energy systems. It is therefore recommended that the Town monitor state and federal legislation regarding the opportunities to develop renewable energy at the local level. Furthermore, the Township should consider incentives and other measures to promote sustainability for the purpose of reducing energy consumption, conserving resources and maximizing the generation of energy from renewable sources. For example, it is recommended that the Town explore the possibility of adopting ordinances that encourage small scale renewable energy projects, such as solar, wind, and geothermal. The Township may also wish to consider the

preparation of a sustainability element to the municipal Master Plan provided that grant funding can be procured for the preparation of such an element.

2020 Review:

The Planning Board adopted Ordinance 12-04 on June 11, 2012, which created a new section of the Township’s Land Development Ordinance entitled, “Solar and Photovoltaic Energy Facilities” (§11-283.2). This new section permits minor and major alternative solar photovoltaic energy facilities subject to certain conditions. This Ordinance also adopted definitions for minor and major solar or photovoltaic energy facilities or structures, as follows:

Minor solar or photovoltaic energy facility or structure

A fuel cell, solar, or photovoltaic panel or system of panels for the production of energy that:

- (1) Conditions
 - (a) Uses solar energy as its fuel;
 - (b) Is located on the power beneficiary’s premises;
 - (c) Is designed and intended primarily to offset part or all of the beneficiary’s requirements for energy consumption on site; and
 - (d) Is secondary to the beneficiary’s use of the premises for other lawful purpose(s); or,
- (2) Is intended to mitigate electrical system improvement requirements; and
- (3) Is designed to generate not more than 110% of the power consumed by the beneficiary’s premises, which shall be documented through the submission of power company electricity usage bills or other form of documentation acceptable for the Knowlton Township Zoning Officer.

Major solar or photovoltaic energy facility or structure

A system of fuel cells, solar, or photovoltaic panels and equipment for the production of energy that is not a minor solar or photovoltaic energy facility or structure.

The goal from the 2009 MPR, involving the implementation of regulations for renewable energy resources, is reinforced. The Township has adopted regulations to support the development of solar energy facilities. However, regulations for wind, geothermal, and other renewable energy resources have not been implemented into the Land Development Ordinance. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that the Township Committee adopt Ordinances to support the development of all renewable energy resources, including small-scale wind and geothermal energy facilities.

11. Recommendations

One intention of the 2003 Land Use Plan was to recommend the creation of appropriate ordinances to preserve rural character, agricultural land and environmentally sensitive properties. The Plan specifically recommended the creation of revised zoning and bulk regulations and the creation of design standards in the Land Development Ordinance to achieve these goals. The table on the following page lists the nine ordinance recommendations from the 2003 Land Use Plan along with the 2009 MPR review and the 2020 update.

Recommendation	2009 Review	2020 Review
<p>1. Revise the zoning districts in the environs in accordance with the Future Land Use Map</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease the minimum density in the FPD district from 0.2 to 0.1 (average density of one unit per ten acres) 	<p>This was achieved and implemented by ordinance in 2003.</p>	<p>This was achieved and implemented by ordinance in 2003. No further action required.</p>
<p>2. Continue to permit lot averaging on lots as small as 60,000 square feet.</p>	<p>This continues to be true. 60,000 square feet is the minimum lot size for septic and well development.</p>	<p>No issues have been reported regarding the minimum lot area of 60,000 square feet for lot averaging.</p>
<p>3. Develop improved cluster/lot averaging housing ordinances, which place greater attention on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location of building envelopes • Distances between building envelopes • Landscaping and lawns • Wildlife management (large tracts) • Place a greater emphasis on submittal requirements to properly evaluate cluster development proposals. This should include an informal pre-meeting plan that includes location maps, sketch plans, rough drainage calculations, the conceptual "by right" plan 1 for the tract and any other information deemed necessary to allow a maximum input of all parties to assure that the review criteria and goals and objectives of the municipal master plan are achieved. 	<p>This was achieved and implemented by ordinance in 2003. These types of standards govern the density and bulk standards in the Farmland Preservation Zone. These standards should be reevaluated for effectiveness.</p>	<p>The FPZ requires mandatory clustering for tracts 50 acres or greater. There have not been any major subdivision applications since 2009 to evaluate the mandatory cluster provisions.</p>

Recommendation	2009 Review	2020 Review
<p>4. Continue to monitor and improve ordinances that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimize site disturbance for the construction of roads, basins and other improvements • Retain woodland features • Minimize visual impact of development • Discourage the creation of frontage lots • Retain rural features • Hillcrest preservation - Create better definitions and maps of hillcrests • Detention Basin Design 	<p>This was achieved and implemented by ordinance in 2003. These types of standards govern the design standards in the Farmland Preservation Zone. These standards should be re-evaluated for effectiveness.</p>	<p>There have not been any major development applications since 2009 to evaluate the effectiveness of the ordinances.</p>
<p>5. Give consideration to modifying the lot size and bulk requirements in the C-2 district.</p>	<p>This was achieved and implemented by ordinance in 2006. These types of standards govern the density and bulk standards in the C-2 Commercial Zone. These standards should be reevaluated for effectiveness</p>	<p>There has not been any major development in the C-2 District since 2009 to evaluate the effectiveness of the standards.</p>
<p>6. Create specific design guidelines to preserve rural character</p>	<p>This was achieved and implemented by ordinance in 2003. These types of standards govern the design standards in the Farmland Preservation Zone. These standards should be re-evaluated for effectiveness.</p>	<p>There have been no issues reported regarding the FPZ design guidelines.</p>

Recommendation	2009 Review	2020 Review
<p>7. Continually monitor and update the Township's recreation and open space inventory (ROSI) with NJDEP to be eligible for state grant monies.</p>	<p>The Open Space Subcommittee of the Township Committee works to identify additional properties for open space preservation and the expansion of the Township's recreation facilities.</p>	<p>The Open Space Subcommittee continues to be active in preserving open space and farmland properties. There is an Open Space Map on the Township website prepared in 2014 showing all of the preserved properties. Funding is from the municipal open space tax, Green Acres, and County preservation programs. The Township has over 2,200 acres of preserved farmland and over 3,100 acres of preserved public open space.</p>
<p>8. Update the Historic Plan Element and implement Design Standards for commercial and residential development.</p>	<p>The Township is taking steps to achieve these historic objectives. The Planning Board is working with the Historic Commission and is currently in the process of amending the Historic Preservation ordinance to comply with Certified Local Government standards.</p> <p>The Historic Commission has been asked by the Planning Board to draft a Historic Plan Element for the Township. The Historic Commission is not presently regulatory in nature, but is advisory in nature; the Historic Commission currently reviews development applications at the Planning Board's request that effect properties or structures within historically significant areas or historic districts.</p>	<p>The Planning Board recommends that the Township Committee authorize the Planning Board and Historic Commission to prepare a Historic Plan Element of the Master Plan. The Township Committee should also adopt an updated Historic Ordinance. Grant funding opportunities should be explored.</p>

Specific Changes Recommended for the Master Plan or Development Regulations

The following section identifies specific recommendations for the Master Plan or development regulation, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether a new plan or regulations should be prepared.

12. Sustainability and Resiliency

A major planning concern today throughout the world is how to effectively plan for and mitigate the effects of climate change. Knowlton Township should consider preparing a Green Buildings and Environmental Sustainability Plan Element of the Master Plan to plan for future climate change and provide local controls to promote local resiliency, carbon sequestration, renewable energy infrastructure, preservation of food sources and farmlands, smart growth (including consideration of potential locations for the installation of electric vehicle charging stations), storm resiliency (with respect to energy supply), and environmental sustainability.

13. Automotive Service Stations

C-1 Neighborhood Commercial Zone Districts are located in several locations along State Route 46 and State Route 94. Among a number of other permitted and conditional uses in the C-1 District, automobile service stations are a permitted conditional use. Automotive service station is defined by the Knowlton Township Land Development Ordinance as “Lands and buildings where motor fuel, lubricants and miscellaneous accessories for motor vehicles other than tractor trailers are sold and dispensed and where services are rendered for engine and mechanical repairs, but where no vehicular painting and/or body work is conducted and where no junked or unregistered motor vehicles are kept or stored”. In addition to meeting the requirements of the C-1 Zone, the following additional standards are applicable to automotive service stations:

1. Location. No service station, gas station, vehicle repair shop or any vehicular access thereto shall be located within 200 feet of schools, playgrounds, churches, hospitals, public libraries and institutions for dependents or for children and senior citizen housing.
2. Vehicular access. Vehicular access shall not be closer to the intersection of any two street lot lines than 50 feet, nor shall any such use be located within 25 feet of any boundary line or any residential zone.
3. These operations shall be conducted on a lot of no less than one acre.
4. The maximum impervious cover shall be 60%.

In reviewing recent Planning and Zoning Board applications, there has been a marked increase in automotive service station applications to expand existing or construct new service stations. The Planning Board wishes to establish a Master Plan Objective against the proliferation of automobile service stations and truck stops in the Township. While service stations may provide a valuable service to passing motorists, the uses are not desirable for the Township. They are generally inconsistent with the rural character of the Township and have a high risk of pollution and contamination of the Township’s rich environmental resources.

The Planning Board also believes that there is already a proliferation of service stations throughout the Township that well exceed the needs of the Township.

For these reasons, the Planning Board recommends that the Township Committee amend the Land Development Ordinance to remove automotive service stations from the list of permitted uses in the C-1 District.

14. Light Pollution

The Planning Board has noticed a trend towards brighter and whiter LED lighting in recent years due to advances in lighting technology. Although LED lighting is more energy efficient than other incandescent bulbs, outdoor lighting and signage utilizing LED fixtures has a tendency to result in light spillage and light pollution if it is not controlled correctly. The Planning

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Board recommends that the Township Committee amend the lighting regulations within the Land Development Ordinance to provide minimum and maximum illumination levels. A model lighting ordinance is available from the Illuminating Engineering Society and the International Dark-Sky Association.

(See <https://www.darksky.org/our-work/lighting/public-policy/mlo>)

Recommended Changes in the Master Plan and Development Regulations to effectuate Municipal Redevelopment Plans

Knowlton Township has not designated any areas in need of redevelopment or in need of rehabilitation and, therefore, no redevelopment plans have been adopted that would need to be incorporated into the master plan and development regulations.

Appendix

Summary of Recommendations, Responsible Parties and Benchmarks

Timing: Short = 1-2 years, Medium = 2-5 years, Long = 5-10 years

Action Item	Responsibility	Timing	Importance	Effort	Comments
1. Prepare an updated Natural Resources Inventory.	Environmental Commission, Planning Board	Medium	High	Medium	
2. Prepare a Conservation Plan Element of the Master Plan.	Environmental Commission, Planning Board	Medium	High	Medium	
3. Prepare an Open Space & Recreation Element of the Master Plan.	Planning Board, Open Space Committee	Long	Low	Medium	
4. Update the Historic Preservation Plan Element of the Master Plan.	Historic Commission, Planning Board	Medium	High	Low/Med.	
5. Adopt an Historic Preservation Ordinance.	Historic Commission, Governing Body	Medium	High	Low/Med.	
6. Monitor residential development trends to indicate whether a Community Facilities Element of the Master Plan should be prepared.	Planning Board	Ongoing	Low	Low	
7. Consider designating Columbia as an area in need of rehabilitation.	Governing Body, Planning Board	Short	High	Low	
8. Prepare an Economic Development Plan to encourage eco-tourism, agri-tourism, and historic tourism.	Planning Board	Medium	High	Medium	
9. Amend the Solar and Photovoltaic Energy Facilities Ordinance to permit and promote other renewable energy systems, such as small-scale wind and geothermal energy facilities.	Governing Body	Short	High	Low	
10. Prepare a Green Buildings and Environmental Sustainability Plan Element of the Master Plan.	Planning Board	Medium	High	Medium	

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Action Item	Responsibility	Timing	Importance	Effort	Comments
11. Continue to pursue designation of the Delaware Water Gap Scenic Byway.	Environmental Commission, with assistance from Planning Board and Township Committee	Short/Med.	Medium	Medium	
12. Identify scenic vistas in need of protection. Consider implementing strategies to protect those identified scenic resources.	Governing Body, with assistance from Planning Board, Environmental Commission, Historic Commission	Long	Medium	Medium	
13. Amend the Land Development Ordinance to prohibit automotive service stations in the C-1 District.	Governing Body	Short	High	Low	
14. Adopt a Dark-Sky Lighting Ordinance.	Governing Body	Short	High	Low	
15. Adopt an Environmental Rights Ordinance	Township Committee	Med./Long	Medium	Low	
16. Review Wastewater Management Plan for consistency with NJDEP Amended WQMP Rules and 2020 Knowlton MPR	Township Committee, Planning Board	Short	Medium	Low	