

2007

Highland Park Green Community Plan

Requested and Overseen by
The Highland Park Green Community Working Group

Prepared by
The New Jersey Sustainable State Institute



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The Green Community Working Group would like to thank the Borough Council, Borough officials and Borough staff for their assistance and enthusiasm in the preparation of this Green Community Plan. We also would like to thank Randy Solomon, Director of the New Jersey Sustainable State Institute (NJSSI); Maren Haus, NJSSI Sustainable Communities Project Coordinator; William LoSasso, Katie Thielman, and Jessica Noon, graduate assistants at NJSSI for their research and guidance. Finally, we extend thanks to the public for their insightful comments, questions and feedback at crucial points during the process.



Highland Park at a Glance

Highland Park is a residential suburban community nestled alongside the Raritan River in west-central Middlesex County, New Jersey. Approximately two (2) square miles in area, Highland Park is a compact, culturally diverse place that offers residents and visitors of all ages a vibrant downtown, numerous parks and abundant open space and recreation.



Raritan River, Donaldson Park

Bordered by the City of New Brunswick and Edison and Piscataway Townships, Highland Park is just minutes from Rutgers University and within commuting distance of Manhattan. As one of 222 Boroughs within the State of New Jersey, Highland Park maintains a Mayor-Council system of government with the Mayor serving a four (4) year term of office and Council members serving staggered three (3) year terms. The Borough is operated through various Committees of the Council that oversee the Borough's various departments, boards and commissions.

Highland Park is currently home to approximately 14,000 residents and projections suggest a population approaching 15,000 by 2020. As of the 2000 census, Highland Park had a median household income of approximately \$53,000 and a median family income of approximately \$71,000. The per capita income of Borough residents was approximately \$29,000 and the median value of a single-family home was about \$183,000.

The Borough's four (4) schools educate students from kindergarten through the 12th grade. Highland Park schools consistently receive high marks and Highland Park High School routinely graduates its students at a rate well above the state average. More than 90% of adult Highland Park residents possess a high school diploma and nearly 60% hold a Bachelor's degree or higher.

We invite you to visit us and discover for yourself all that Highland Park has to offer!



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Highland Park residents have been working to make the Borough more sustainable by adopting a long-term perspective and striving to improve economic vitality, social cohesion, and environmental quality. In 2006, the Borough began to coordinate the many disparate activities by establishing a systematic framework for discussion, planning, and implementation of sustainability initiatives. The result is this Green Community Plan.

The Green Community Plan evolved during a multi-year process that started with the mayor's Highland Park 2020 policy vision in early 2003, followed later in the year by formation of the Highland Park Green Community Working Group. Receipt of several external grants allowed rapid progress on the green, sustainability agenda. Rutgers students helped with background sustainability audits and green planning elements, and dedicated volunteers engaged with members of the public at street fairs and other events. Expert consultants provided a final push during 2007 to complete the plan.

Goals established for a green Highland Park are to achieve (1) a healthy environment, (2) healthy people, (3) a strong community, (4) convenient transportation, and (5) fairness and equity. Indicators of our progress toward those goals suggest that we are doing well on some and less well on others. Our population is steadily increasing and it remains very diverse in terms of income levels, education levels, and ethnicity. Crime rates are stable at a low level. Recycling rates are relatively high, but the amount of solid waste we throw away continues to grow each year. The Borough is very walkable, but few people are actually walking. Commuters either have very short trips to New Brunswick and Piscataway, or much longer trips to jobs along Route 278 or in New York.

Many actions designed to bring Highland Park closer to its goals have already been completed or are underway, and others are planned. This plan proposes dozens of actions, a few of which are highlighted here. Proposed ordinance revisions include solar access preservation, waiving permit fees or granting tax abatements for green improvements, requiring installation of sidewalks on properties undergoing renovation, and requiring pervious paving materials. More aggressive enforcement of existing laws should focus on anti-litter, anti-idling, anti-noise, and sidewalk and alley maintenance ordinances. Borough operations should include environmentally preferable purchasing practices; continued efforts to provide traffic calming, pedestrian zones, bike lanes, and shuttle buses; and training of municipal officials in the latest green building, purchasing, operations, and maintenance practices. Public outreach and engagement activities should include information on green landscaping, remodeling, backyard habitats, home cleaning, energy audits, and purchasing; establishing an annual freecycle day; regular green home and garden tours; regular local hazardous waste collection days; and additional Green Challenges.

Next steps following publication of this plan are to seek its acceptance by the Borough, and assignment of responsibilities for implementation to specific parties. The Green Community Working Group or a successor should track and report on overall progress. This plan should be revisited in five years.

INTRODUCTION

About this Plan

Highland Park has dedicated itself to becoming a green community that supports a healthy and sustainable environment, economy and society. To achieve this vision the Borough has created this Green Community Plan as a navigation tool to guide the Borough on its journey toward sustainability. The plan specifies goals and objectives that operationalize the concept of sustainability for the Borough. It tracks indicators that measure the Borough's progress. Finally, the plan identifies actions that have been, are being, or should be taken by municipal government, residents, businesses, schools, and civic organizations.

Many of the issues identified in this plan, such as global warming and equity, will take years and decades to solve. Because sustainable development is a journey and not a destination, this plan is intended to be used as an ongoing guide to the Borough's actions and be updated on a regular basis. Updated versions of the plan reside on the web at www.greenhp.org.

Background

In February 2003, Mayor Frank issued "Highland Park 2020: A Sustainable Community," a policy vision built explicitly around sustainability principles. It included a tripartite platform of supporting Highland Park's environment, economy, and society, and corresponding goals of greenness, affordability, and livability. Under each goal were numerous activities that the Borough had already undertaken—often with external resources—or that it hoped to support within the next five years.

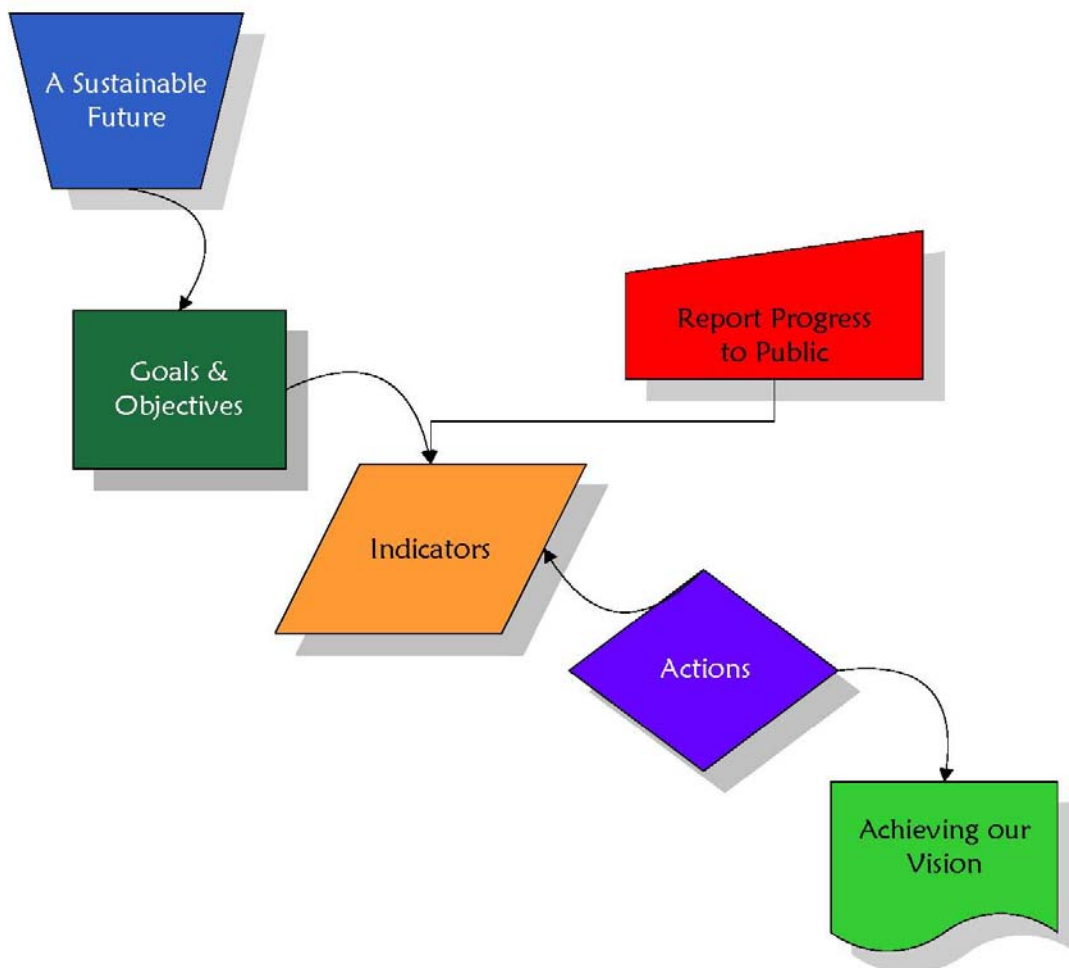
Examples of the vision's environmental initiatives included requiring green certification of all major new construction projects, a solar photovoltaic roof for Borough Hall paid for by the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities, an environmental education center paid for by Middlesex County, and open-space acquisition funded in part by the Garden State Preservation Trust. Among the key economic initiatives were the creation of a Main Street organization with external funds, a Business Improvement District (BID) that provided internal funds for amenities such as storefront awnings and litter collection, and a Redevelopment Agency to improve underutilized areas. Social initiatives included, among others, pedestrian safety improvements funded by the New Jersey Department of Transportation and Middlesex County, a self-funded handicapped ramp for Borough Hall, and better public communication mechanisms, also self-funded.

The Highland Park Green Community Working Group was convened in December 2003 to oversee the environmental initiatives in the 2020 plan. The Working Group was structured as an ad hoc committee that was implementation-oriented, and it has successfully managed an energy efficiency retrofit of Borough Hall, installation of a rooftop solar photovoltaic energy generation system at Borough Hall, a Green Challenge to engage the public, and several other projects. During 2004 and 2005, the Working

Group also served as the Borough liaison for a series of Rutgers graduate urban planning classes that produced a green community audit, elements of a green community plan, and an outreach strategy for green community planning in Highland Park. In 2006, the working group received a Smart Future Grant from the Office of Smart Growth (OSG) in the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, allowing the Borough to hire the New Jersey Sustainable State Institute (NJSSI) as a consultant to help the Borough craft a strategic community green plan based in part on the student work. The Working Group serves as the Borough's liaison for that effort. This Green Community Plan is the result.

Organization of this Plan

The Highland Park Green Community Plan has a framework and organizational hierarchy that includes goals, objectives, indicators, and actions. The following flow-chart illustrates the strategic planning framework used to create the Green Community Plan.



The elements of the plan are described in more detail below.

- **GOALS** are statements addressing the question: “**What do we want to achieve?**” **Goals** are general descriptions of our desired outcome for Highland Park. The whole plan is organized into five major goals. Each goal is broken down into detailed objectives to further explain what we want to achieve. These goals for the future are drawn from existing documents such as the master plan, Vision 20/20, and public input.
- **INDICATORS** are statistics that report actual conditions in the Borough and tell us “**How are we doing?**” In this report, indicators were selected for each of the goals to provide real world feedback on our progress. For example, it is great to say we want to stop global warming, but are our efforts actually making progress? Indicators can track improvement (trends) in a desired areas such as how many tons of greenhouse gases we produce. They enable us to track the effectiveness of our actions and in general report on the wellbeing and sustainability of the Borough. In the future, the Borough can establish target levels for indicators, as a way to signal a commitment to achieve specific outcomes by specific dates.
- **ACTIONS** are the steps we are taking to achieve the goals and answer the question: “**What are we doing?**” Actions are specific projects, programs, and policies designed to move the indicators and reach the goals. Each goal has a number of actions identified.

How to Use This Report

The plan is organized by each of the five sustainability goals:

1. Healthy Environment
2. Healthy People
3. Strong Community
4. Convenient Transportation
5. Fairness and Equity

Section One contains the **goals** and **indicators**, and has links (page numbers) to the **actions** related to the goal. Although each goal lists and references the categories of action that are associated with it, the actions themselves are fully described in Section Two, the Action Plan.

Section Two is an Action Plan that details each of the actions called for by this plan. To make finding them easier, they are organized by the five main goals, and further broken down into a series of objectives (sub-categories). The action plan is further organized by sector (i.e., local government, businesses, residents, schools, and civic organizations), and stage of completion (i.e., C= Completed/Underway Action; P=Planned/Priority Action; F=For Future Consideration).

For example, if you wanted to know what businesses were doing to improve the environment, and more specifically minimize exposure to environmental contaminants, you could easily look it up. This will be made clear by looking at the matrix and introduction at the beginning of Action Plan section of the report.

Table 1 summarizes the framework of this plan (see page 7)

Implementing this Plan

Over time, the goal is for each stakeholder group -- municipal departments and committees, schools, civic organizations, businesses, and residents -- to incorporate relevant plan elements into each of their ongoing operations and activities. The plan is not intended to be a new layer of government but rather a device for communicating and coordinating the many diverse, ongoing activities throughout Highland Park. By providing clear goals for the future we hope to enable all residents to do their part. By reporting our progress through indicators we hope to provide feedback to motivate change. By showing what everyone in town is doing, inside and out of government, we hope to foster a sense of community and shared purpose as we work together to achieve our vision of a sustainable and green Highland Park.

To initiate this process, we recommend that a standing committee be charged with coordinating the implementation of this plan and reporting progress annually. This recommendation may include one of the following pathways:

- a) Conversion of the Green Community Working Group into a standing committee of the Borough Council
- b) Assignment of responsibility to the Highland Park Environmental Commission accompanied by creation of the Green Community Working Group as a new subcommittee of the Environmental Commission
- c) Assignment of responsibility to the Highland Park Planning Board accompanied by creation of the Green Community Working Group as a new subcommittee of the Planning Board

We recommend that this new entity be charged with the following tasks:

- a) Coordinating the implementation of the plan
- b) Identifying and codifying within the plan all of the major sustainability related activities in the Borough on an ongoing basis
- c) On an annual basis report progress from the previous year, update the indicators in the plan, and consider any new actions that should be taken and placed in the updated plan

Table 1: Highland Park Strategic Green Community Planning Framework

Goals				
Healthy Environment	Healthy People	Strong Community	Convenient Transportation	Fairness and Equity
Indicators				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Greenhouse Gas Emissions -Recycling Rate -Production of Solid Waste -Water Consumption -Clean and Renewable Energy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Infant mortality rate -Death Rate by Heart Disease 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Crime Rate -Voter Turnout -Percent of Income Spent Locally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Transportation Choices -Time Spent Commuting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Educational Attainment -Disparities in Student HSPA Assessment
Objectives / Actions				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protect open space and environmentally sensitive areas -Minimize solid waste production and maximize recycling -Reduce greenhouse gas emissions -Minimize groundwater pollution -Purchase green products -Improve air quality - Educate all residents about the cost-saving benefits of more efficient resource use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Minimize exposure to environmental contaminants -Promote healthy, sustainable diet and exercise habits -Ensure access to healthcare services -Maintain strong emergency and safety systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Ensure mixed-use downtown corridor that is vibrant, safe, and walkable -Encourage green construction, redevelopment, and rehabilitation -Foster a strong sense of community through events, public spaces, and lively streets and sidewalks -Attract businesses that meet the everyday needs of residents - Government that anticipates the needs of citizens and practices stewardship toward the environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Prioritize pedestrian and bicyclist safety -Promote the use of and access to train and bus for commuting -Minimize the environmental impact of municipal transportation investments -Make Borough a place where one can live comfortably without a vehicle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide a mix of housing that is affordable and accessible to shopping, services, and recreation -Ensure that educational and recreational opportunities are available to all residents

SECTION ONE: GOALS and INDICATORS



Goal 1: Healthy Environment



Rutgers Ecological Preserve
Photo by Arnold Henderson

Goal 1: Healthy Environment

What Do We Want to Achieve?

An environment consisting of healthy ecosystems, clean air and water, and preserved environmentally sensitive areas that conserve the finite resources upon which our quality of life depends.

A healthy environment in Highland Park encompasses a great number of things, from the restoration of water quality to the conservation of our natural resources through reducing our consumption of throw away products. It includes preserving and restoring the natural “services” provided by functioning ecosystems, such as clean air and water, as well as protecting these ecosystems through preserving enough open space and environmentally sensitive areas within the Borough to maintain these processes and reduce human pressures on our natural environment. When we begin to “think globally and act locally”, we can take on issues such as global climate change at the municipal and household level by limiting our energy consumption and doing our part to slow global warming trends. The attainment of a healthy environment in Highland Park will benefit not only the plant and animal life within Borough boundaries, but will also serve to increase our awareness of the importance of a healthy environment as an essential component of a sustainable community.

How Are We Doing? Indicators of Success

Below is a list of the indicators related to this goal and where to find them in this plan.

Indicator 1.1 Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Page 11
Indicator 1.2 Recycling Rate	Page 12
Indicator 1.3 Production of Solid Waste	Page 13
Indicator 1.4 Water Consumption	Page 14
Indicator 1.5 Clean and Renewable Energy	Page 15

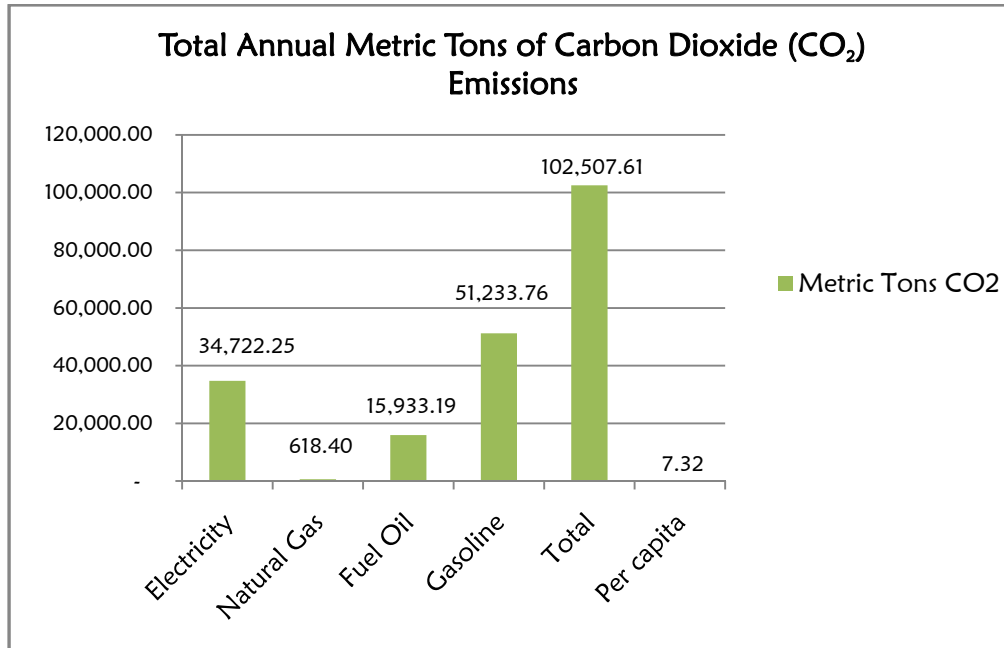
What Are We Doing? Actions to Achieve the Goal

The many actions related to this goal have been organized by the objectives that appear below. Go to the page to view the complete descriptions of the actions.

- Protect open space and environmentally sensitive areas Page 44
- Minimize solid waste production and maximize recycling Page 50
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions Page 54
- Minimize groundwater pollution Page 60
- Purchase green products Page 63
- Improve air quality Page 67
- Educate all residents about the cost-saving benefits of more efficient resource use Page 69

Goal 1: Healthy Environment

Indicator 1.1: Greenhouse Gas Emissions



Source: PSE&G and U.S. Census

Why do we care?

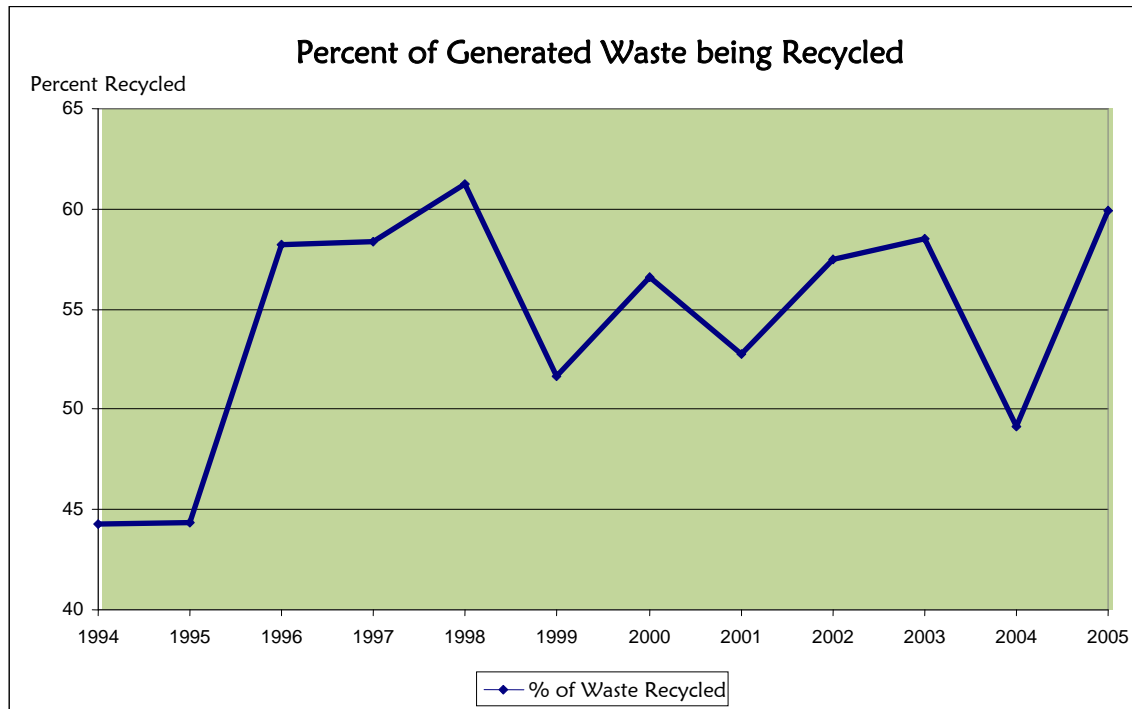
Carbon dioxide emissions from human activity, mostly the combustion of fossil fuels, are the primary causes of the now famous “greenhouse effect” and global warming. Experts say that no matter what we do, some warming, and related negative effects, will occur. However, the current consensus among experts is that it is not too late to stop “catastrophic warming” from occurring if we reduce our carbon emissions by 20% by the year 2020, and 80% by the year 2050. Failure to do so will result in more flooding, blazing hot summers, tropical diseases, global famine, more intense storms, and, ironically droughts in much of New Jersey.

How are we doing?

Indicator 1.1 shows the contributions to Highland Park’s total carbon dioxide emissions for 2003-2004. Electricity use and gasoline make up the highest percentage of the Borough’s carbon emissions, and therefore, show the greatest opportunity for cutting emissions through a combination of energy conservation, clean and renewable energy investments, and sustainable transportation strategies. While the average resident in the Borough emits 7.3 tons of carbon dioxide each year, which is below the 14 tons of carbon dioxide emitted annually by the average person in New Jersey, future data collection is necessary to see whether per capita CO₂ emissions are on the rise in Highland Park. Achieving a 20% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2020 will require commitments from municipal government, individuals, businesses, and organizations in Highland Park.

Goal 1: Healthy Environment

Indicator 1.2: Recycling Rate



Source: Middlesex County Planning Board – Solid Waste Management

Why Do We Care?

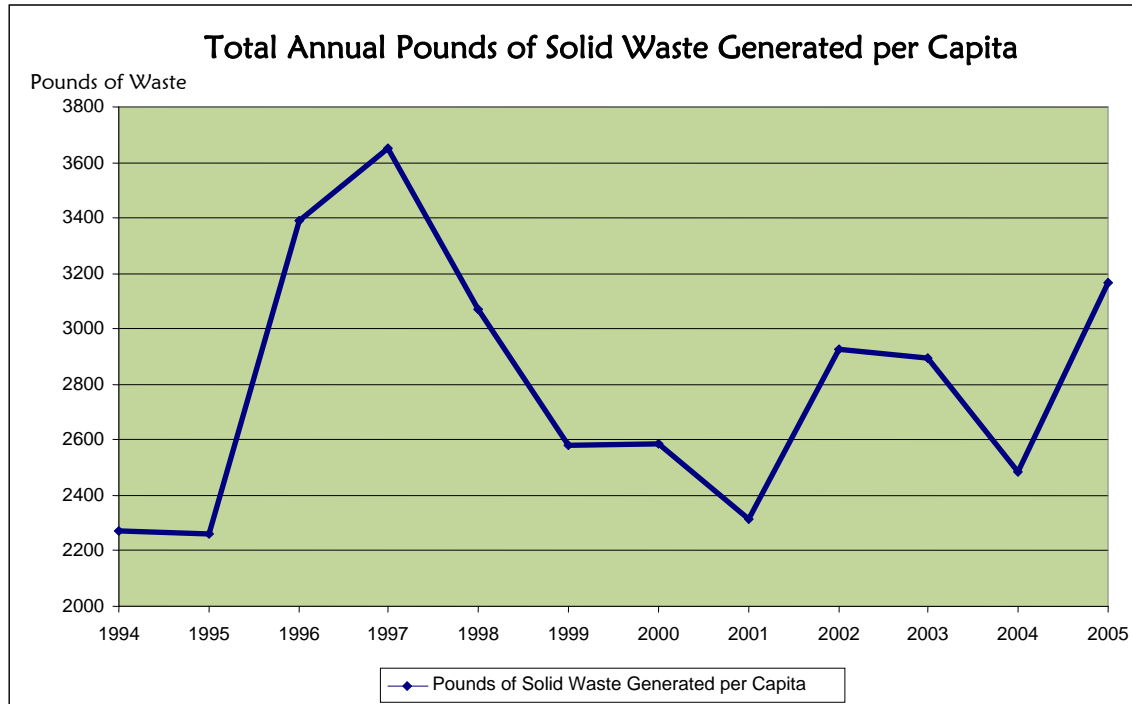
One of the biggest impacts we have on the environment is through consuming resources. Our consumption utilizes materials that are extracted through oil wells, cutting down trees, mining, and other methods. Extracting these materials in the first place damages the environment and creates pollution. Disposing of these materials once we use them and they are turned into waste creates more pollution through landfills or trash incinerators. Recycling alleviates these impacts by reducing the amount of new materials that must be extracted from the environment and the amount that must be disposed of. Increasing the amount of waste material recycled is an important step in the Borough's efforts to maintain a healthy and sustainable natural environment, as non-recycled waste can generate land, water and air pollution. By tracking its recycling rate annually, Highland Park can monitor its varied efforts to create a greener, more sustainable Borough through the conservation of limited natural resources.

How Are We Doing?

While significant variation has occurred during the past decade Indicator 1.2 shows a 15% overall increase since 1994, highlighted by more than 10% increase from 1995-1996 alone. While a noticeable decrease in recycling did occur in 2004, the Borough rebounded in 2005 by recycling approximately 60% of its solid waste. This is well above the national and New Jersey average, but less than it could be.

Goal 1: Healthy Environment

Indicator 1.3: Production of Solid Waste



Source: Middlesex County Planning Board – Solid Waste Mgmt.; US Census Bureau

Why Do We Care?

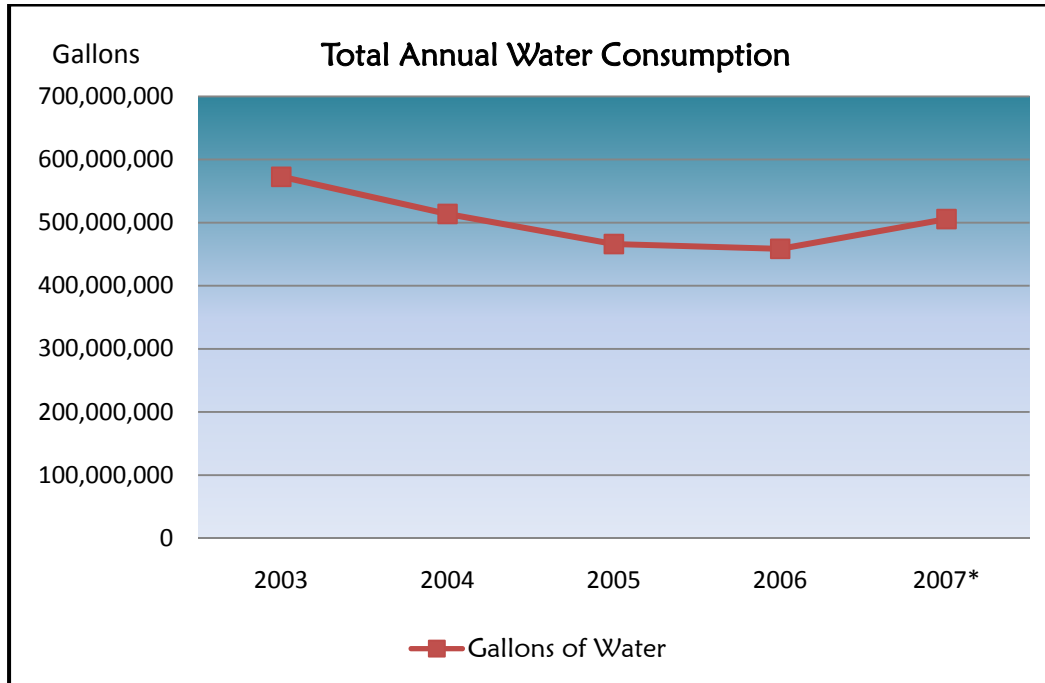
Indicator 1.3 displays the total amount of solid waste generated by Highland Park from 1994-2005. Decreasing the total amount of solid waste generated by the Borough is an important step in Highland Park's efforts to reduce its impact on the environment. Even with high recycling rates, there is still a significant impact. In the old adage, "reduce, reuse, recycle," recycling comes last. That is because the recycling process uses a lot of energy and creates pollution in its own right. It is much better to never have created the waste in the first place, or, as with glass bottles or bags, reuse them as long as possible.

How Are We Doing?

Indicator 1.3 suggests room for improvement in Highland Park's effort to decrease its generation of solid waste. The Borough has experienced an increase in solid waste generation since 1994. While the Borough did decrease solid waste in the late 1990s following a large spike in solid waste generation, the Borough was generating more per person in 2005 than in 1994. So, even with its increased recycling efforts, the Borough is still producing more total solid waste per person, and its environmental impact is likely larger, than it was more than a decade ago. This data represents the total solid waste that is disposed of by both Highland Park and private contractors.

Goal 1: Healthy Environment

Indicator 1.4: Water Consumption



*Data for December 2007 was estimated
Source: Middlesex County Utility Authority

Why Do We Care?

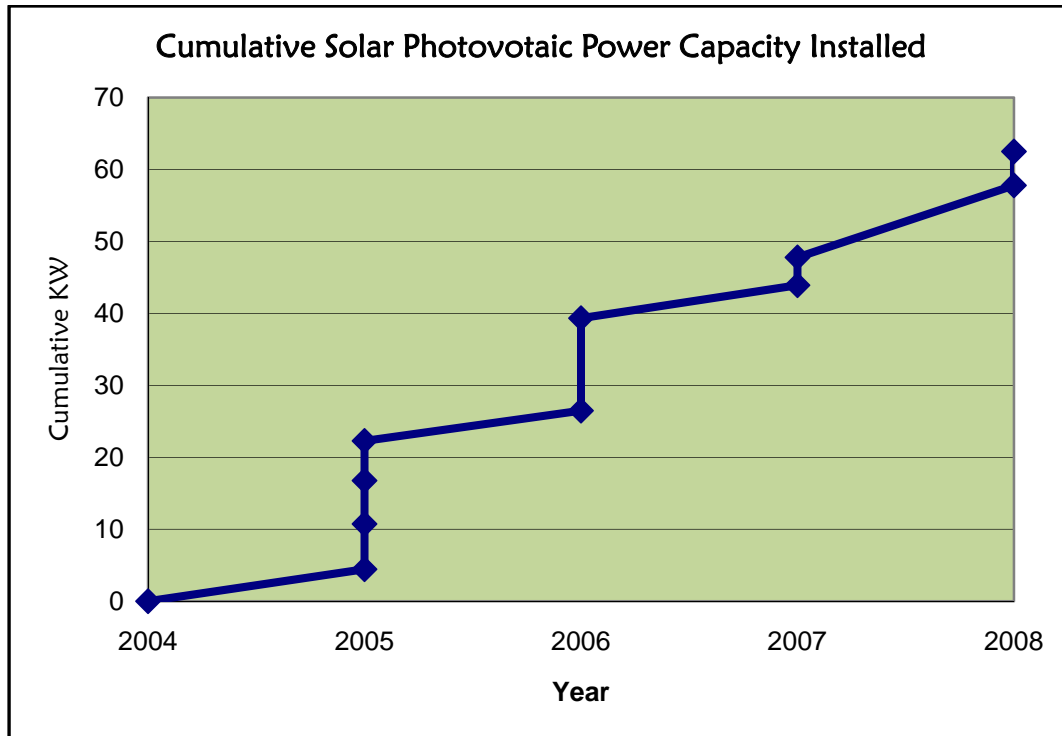
This indicator shows the annual amount of water consumed by Highland Park. Water is essential for life, and it is necessary for supporting a high quality of life in Highland Park. Access to potable water is the single biggest public health issue in the world. Our water comes from the Delaware and Raritan Canal. Clean potable water for drinking, washing, and other needs is a limited resource that is periodically threatened by droughts. In addition, cleaning and treating water, and delivering it to your tap, uses energy and chemicals that impact the environment. Once we use fresh water, it becomes wastewater that must be processed.

How Are We Doing?

Indicator 1.4 demonstrates a decrease in the total amount of water used by Highland Park in the five year period from 2003-2007. During that time, the Borough was able to decrease the amount of annual water it consumed by approximately 67 million gallons even as its population increased. The Borough can reduce water consumption further through ordinances that encourage residents to employ water efficient landscape techniques. Rain gardens and rain barrels collect rainwater that can be used to water gardens, thereby reducing the demand on potable water supplies. Replacing lawns with native grasses and drought tolerant vegetation also can help to reduce the Borough water consumption. Finally, it is important to educate residents on ways that individuals can decrease daily water consumption, such as installing low flow fixtures and only washing full loads of laundry.

Goal 1: Healthy Environment

Indicator 1.5: Clean and Renewable Energy



Source: New Jersey Clean Energy Program

Why do we care?

Indicator 1.5 shows the annual cumulative electricity production capacity installed in Highland Park using photovoltaic technology that produces energy from the sun. Each dot on the graph represents a photovoltaic installation. Producing and consuming energy from fossil fuels has a tremendous negative impact on the environment. Global warming, acid rain, smog, oil spills, and strip mining are some of the many impacts that are a result of our need for cheap energy. But we have a choice. The State of New Jersey allows people to choose clean and renewable electricity that comes from sources such as solar and wind through the CleanPower Choice Program (www.njcleanpower.com). There are also many incentives for people to put solar panels, fuel cells, and geothermal installations right on their homes and businesses (There is a solar array on Borough Hall!).

How are we doing?

This indicator shows that Highland Park has increased the number of photovoltaic installations in the Borough from zero in 2004 to ten in 2008. The percentage of energy that comes from clean and renewable sources is also increasing due to the number of residents that have signed up for the CleanPower Choice Program. Based on data through October 2007, at least 115 Highland Park residents have subscribed to CleanPower Choice.

Goal 2: Healthy People



Scentennial Garden Project

Goal 2: Healthy People

What Do We Want to Achieve?

A healthy community that is active and physically fit, with access to quality healthcare and strong police, fire and ambulance services, and where residents are protected from exposure to toxic contaminants in the home and in the environment.

Ensuring that we have a healthy community includes promoting not only positive exercise habits and a healthy, sustainable diet for all, but expands to encompass the provision of quality healthcare for all living in our community, including access to preventative healthcare from infants to the elderly. While personal health is a large component of establishing and maintaining a healthy Highland Park, strong emergency, medical, and safety systems are necessary to provide us with the services we need when emergency situations arise. While the risks posed by environmental pollutants from within the Borough's boundaries may seem small, we are still exposed to a number of environmental contaminants in our homes and community through our use of common household cleaners, pesticides, and lead paint, among others. By being cognizant the health risks associated with these environmental and household contaminants, we can improve the quality of our health, and the health of our community.

How Are We Doing? Indicators of Success

Below is a list of the indicators related to this goal and where to find them in this plan.

Indicator 2.1 Infant Mortality Rate	Page 18
Indicator 2.2 Death Rate by Heart Disease	Page 19

What Are We Doing? **Actions organized by Borough Objective**

The many actions related to this goal have been organized by the objectives that appear below. Go to the cited page to view the complete descriptions of the actions.

- Minimize exposure to environmental contaminants Page 72
- Promote healthy, sustainable diet and exercise habits Page 74
- Ensure access to healthcare services Page 77
- Maintain strong emergency and safety systems Page 78

Goal 2: Healthy People

Indicator 2.1: Infant Mortality

Total Infant Mortality in Highland Park	
Year	Deaths
2000	1
2001	1
2002	1
2003	1
2004	0

Source: New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services

Why Do We Care?

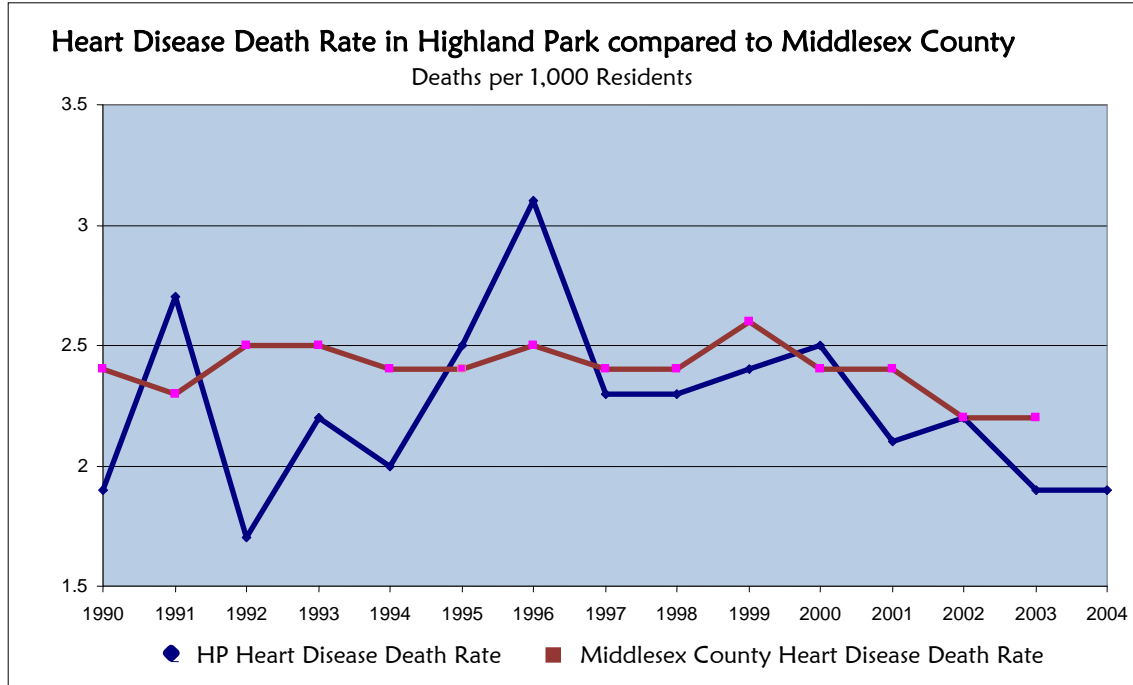
Indicator 2.1 shows the number of people who died in Highland Park in the first year after birth from 2000-2004. Infant mortality is strongly linked to poor prenatal health care, poverty, and exposure to unsafe conditions. In addition, it depends in large part on the education of the parents and the amount of pre-natal care the infant receives. It is a strong indication of the overall well being of the population and our ability to provide health care services to those who need them. Although we cannot show the average life expectancy for Highland Park residents, it is reasonable to expect that populations with low rates of infant mortality will also have high overall life expectancies.

How Are We Doing?

The number of infant deaths in Highland Park has remained steady at one death per year. In 2004, the most recent year, there were no deaths. If infant mortality were to increase beyond these low levels it should cause for concern.

Goal 2: Healthy People

Indicator 2.2: Death Rate by Heart Disease



Source: New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services; US Census Bureau

Why Do We Care?

Figure 2.2 displays percent of total deaths that are attributable to heart disease for both Highland Park and Middlesex County from 1990-2004. Since heart disease is so closely related to diet and exercise, this indicator provides valuable information about the extent to which Borough residents are living healthy lifestyles. Regular monitoring will allow Highland Park to determine how actions taken by the Borough to increase community health have impacted residents.

How Are We Doing?

Heart disease mortality roughly mirrors the total death rate for Highland Park, with a decreasing trend following an increase in the mid-1990s. In addition, Highland Park has generally experienced a lower death rate due to heart disease than Middlesex County since 1990. In most years, Highland Park has experienced 2.5 or fewer deaths attributable to heart disease annually, while Middlesex County experienced a death rate of approximately 2.5 during much of the past 15 years. Once again, it is possible that these patterns are in part due to the relative age structure within the Borough and not only to the general health of residents.

Goal 3: Strong Community



Native Plantings, Reserve River Road

Goal 3: Strong Community

What Do We Want to Achieve?

A walkable community with a vibrant downtown where residents can socialize and celebrate, with green businesses that meet local needs, and a responsible and efficient government that ensures the provision of community and municipal services for residents of all ages.

Establishing a community where we feel safe, know our neighbors, and are able to participate in local educational and recreational opportunities can go a long way to improve our quality of life and foster a sense of pride in our community. There are a number of ways in which we can establish a sense of “neighborliness” that will lead to a livable and strong community in Highland Park. The creation of neighborhoods where we can safely walk and interact with our neighbors begins with mixed-use downtown corridors and shops that serve our community’s needs. Reducing the need to take trips outside of our community to shop allows us to leave our automobiles at home more often, employ more sustainable forms of transportation, and support local businesses. A strong community also has a government that supports the establishment of a strong local business base, particularly through the encouragement of neighborhood-serving and green businesses, as well as encourages citizen participation, is responsive to community needs, and strives for efficiency and sustainability.

How Are We Doing? Indicators of Success

Below is a list of the indicators related to this goal and where to find them in this plan.

Indicator 3.1 Crime Rate	Page 22
Indicator 3.2 Voter Turnout	Page 23
Indicator 3.3 Percent of Income Spent Locally	Page 24

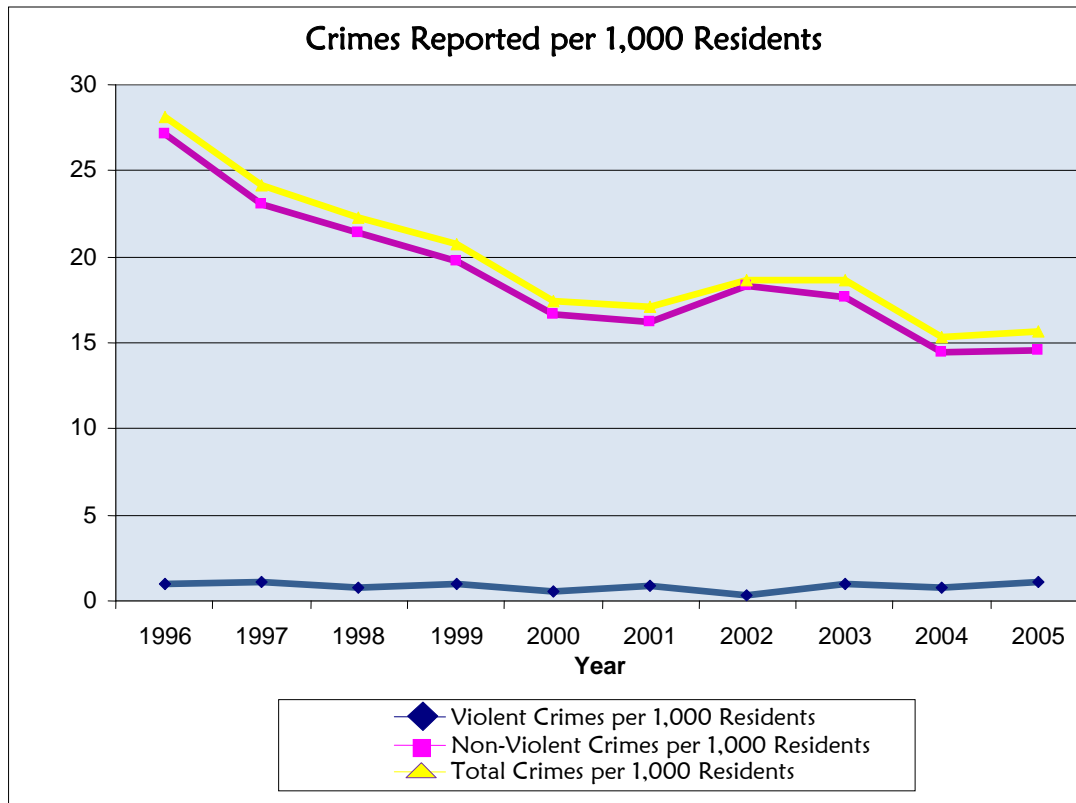
What Are We Doing? **Actions organized by Borough Objective**

The many actions related to this goal have been organized by the objectives that appear below. Go to the page to view the complete descriptions of the actions.

• Ensure mixed-use downtown corridor that is vibrant, safe, and walkable	Page 79
• Encourage green construction, redevelopment, and rehabilitation	Page 81
• Foster a strong sense of community through events, public spaces, and lively streets and sidewalks	Page 85
• Attract businesses that meet the everyday needs of residents	Page 87
• Government that anticipates the needs of citizens and practices stewardship toward the environment	Page 88

Goal 3: Strong Community

Indicator 3.1: Crime Rate



Source: NJ State Police Uniform Crime Reports

<http://www.c-n.com/specialsections/datauniverse/crimereport.html>

Why Do We Care?

Figure 3.1 shows the number of violent, non-violent and total crimes reported per 1,000 residents in Highland Park from 1996 – 2005. The incidence of crime within Highland Park is a strong indicator of success in achieving the Borough’s objective of building a stronger and more sustainable society. When residents do not feel safe they cannot fully enjoy the many local amenities that make Highland Park a great place to live.

How Are We Doing?

Crime has notably declined throughout the past ten years. Further, the incidence of violent crimes reported per 1,000 residents remained low, with the Borough consistently recording approximately one violent crime or less per 1,000 residents since 1996. A possible cause for concern is that the rapid rate of decline in crime observed from 1996-2000 has leveled off in recent years and even increased temporarily from 2001 to 2003.

Goal 3: Strong Community

Indicator 3.2: Voter Turnout

Year	Presidential Election Years	Local-Only Election Years
1993		67%
1994	63%	
1999		40%
2000	69%	
2003		39%
2004	74%	

Source: Middlesex County Clerk, Office of Elections

Why Do We Care?

Indicator 3.2 measures the percent of registered voters within Highland Park that actually voted in general elections from 1993-2004. Voting is the bedrock of any democracy and is the means by which citizens make their voices heard on important issues. In not voting, citizens risk the creation of a local government that is not representative of the entire community and which advocates the interests of a few, rather than all. Tracking voter turnout is an important way to measure community strength by measuring how engaged Highland Park residents are in local matters, and the extent of their faith in local government’s ability to effect change.

How Are We Doing?

In presidential election years Highland Park averages approximately 70% or greater turnout among registered voters. In off-years, with only local candidates running for office, the Borough has experienced a steady decline in turnout, holding steady at approximately 40%. This indicates that Highland Park residents are making their voices heard in greater numbers on national issues than state and local ones. It is a trend that is reflected statewide and nationally. The local-only pattern also reflects the importance of primary election contests in the Borough.

Goal 3: Strong Community

Indicator 3.3: Percent of Income Spent Locally

	2002 Census of Retail Trade Sales	2002 Purchasing Power	2002 Sales as a % of Purchasing Power
Retail Consumption Expenditures	\$76,770,000	\$141,039,191	0.54
Food and Tobacco	\$18,215,000	\$53,380,051	0.34
Clothing, Accessories, Jewelry	\$2,999,000	\$20,829,369	0.14
Personal Care	N/A**	\$4,772,291	N/A**
Household Operation*	\$1,833,000	\$9,544,582	0.19
Medical Care	N/A**	\$9,113,955	N/A**
Transportation	\$23,753,000	\$28,209,018	0.84
Recreation	N/A**	\$15,189,925	N/A**
* Includes category of building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers ** N/A represents Census of Retail Trade (CRT) data withheld to avoid disclosing information about individual companies; data is included in higher level CRT totals.			

Source: U.S. Census

Why do We Care?

Indicator 3.3 shows the percent of disposable income or purchasing power of Highland Park residents in 2002 compared to the total sales for local stores and businesses. In a perfect world, we could be 100% self reliant, only consuming goods and services produced locally. From an environmental standpoint, people shopping and doing business in Highland Park means that they are not driving to malls and other locations, emitting greenhouse gasses and pollution along the way. Spending money locally also means that we have a connection to the people from whom we buy services and goods. Given the recent rash of food and product safety scares, having a personal, local connection to the people who provide the things you need means more accountability that those products are safe and of high quality.

How are We Doing?

If Highland Park were 100% self reliant, the ratio between money made and money spent in the Borough would be exactly 1. In a small dense town clearly this isn't possible. Indicator 3.3 shows that the ration of money made in the Borough (Census of Retail Trade Sales) to money spent (Purchasing Power) is 0.54. This means that on average Highland Park residents spend 54% of their disposable income on food, clothing, personal care, medical care, transportation, and recreational goods sold in the Borough, and spend the rest of their money outside of Highland Park. People could help increase this number by committing to shop locally. Through redevelopment and business incentives, the Borough could increase this number by bringing in more stores and services that residents need. The Borough could also host "shop local" weeks or sponsor a "Restaurant Week" to offer fixed-priced meals at local eateries.

Goal 4: Convenient Transportation



Raritan Avenue

Goal 4: Convenient Transportation

What Do We Want to Achieve?

A transportation system with minimal negative environmental impacts, which allows residents to live without automobiles and promotes the health and social benefits of safely walking and biking in Highland Park.

In Highland Park, we often depend on automobiles to get to and from the places we need to go every day. From shopping to the daily commute, these trips require not only the more apparent personal expenses of gasoline and car maintenance, but also include the time we spend in traffic and the air pollution that damages our health and the natural environment. In order to establish a sustainable transportation network in Highland Park, a number of transportation options must be accessible to all. Convenient and sustainable transportation options in our community, such as public transit, walking, and bicycling, can reduce or eliminate entirely our dependence on automobiles, while concurrently allowing us to enjoy the health and social benefits of these more sustainable transportation choices. Additionally, environmentally friendly municipal transportation investments, such as vehicles that use alternate fuels and energy-efficient traffic lights, will minimize the negative impacts that are often associated with automobile use and the associated infrastructure, such as roads and traffic signals.

How Are We Doing? Indicators of Success

Below is a list of the indicators related to this goal and where to find them in this plan.

Indicator 4.1 Transportation Choices	Page 27
Indicator 4.2 Time Spent Commuting	Page 28

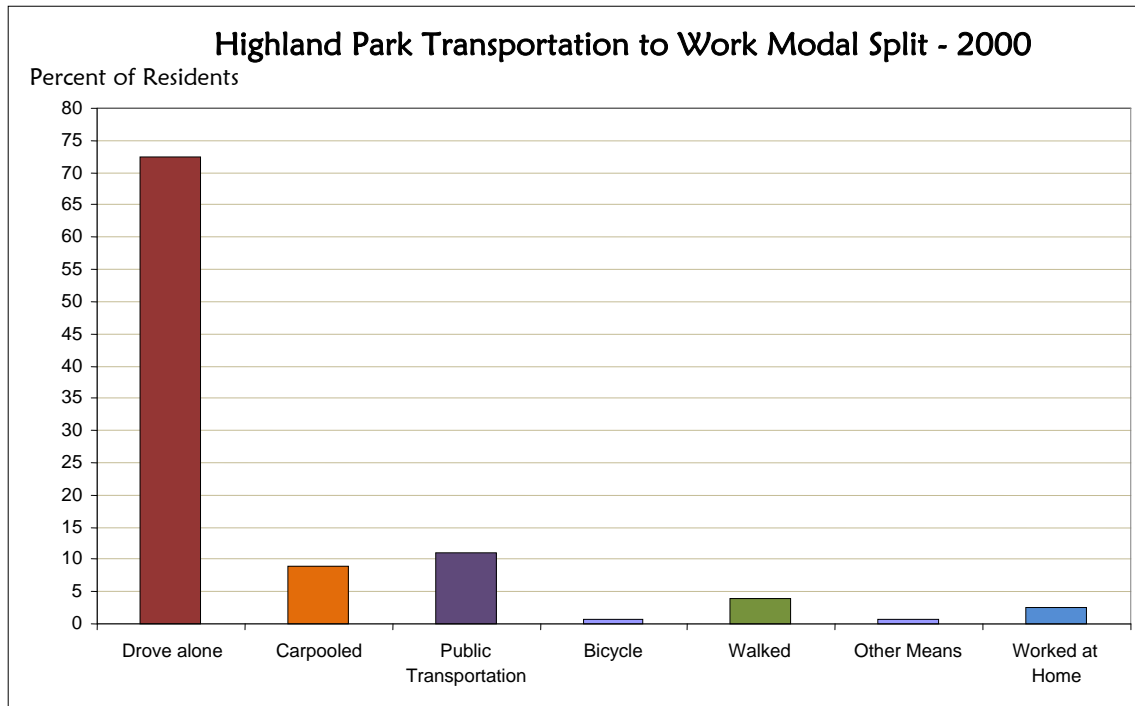
What Are We Doing? **Actions organized by Borough Objective**

The many actions related to this goal have been organized by the objectives that appear below. Go to the cited page to view the complete descriptions of the actions.

- Prioritize pedestrian and bicyclist safety Page 88
- Promote the use of and access to train and bus for commuting Page 90
- Minimize the environmental impact of municipal transportation Investments Page 92
- Make Borough a place where one can live comfortably without a vehicle Page 94

Goal 4: Convenient Transportation

Indicator 4.1: Transportation Choices



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Why Do We Care?

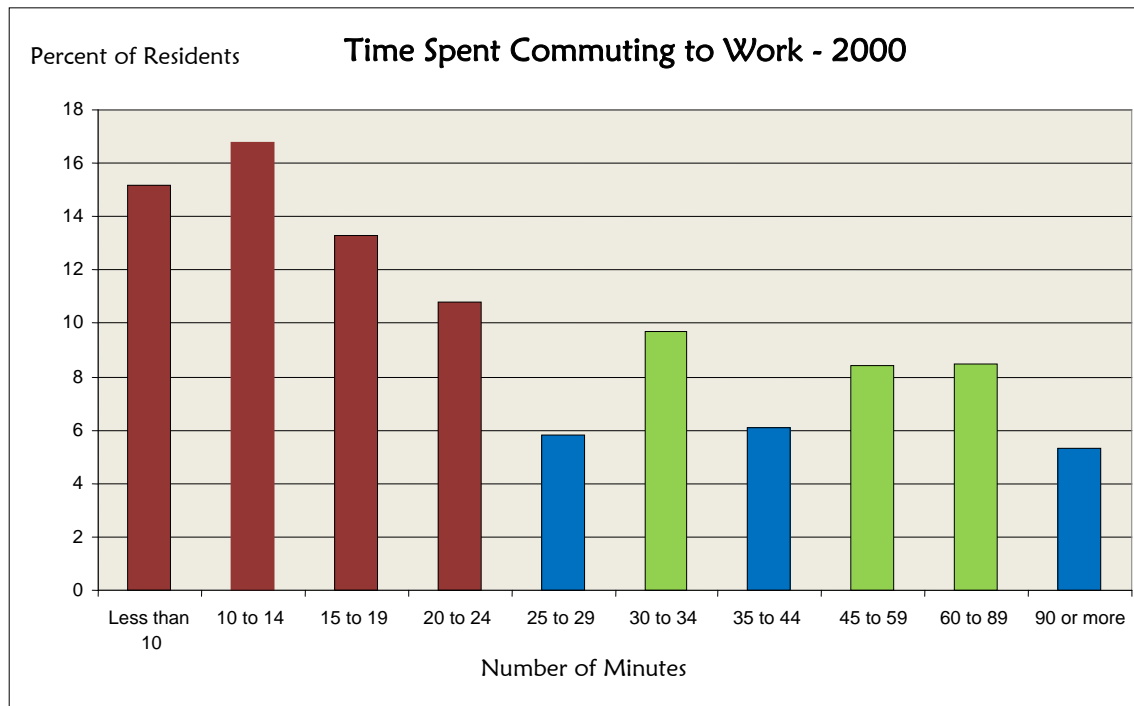
This indicator shows the percent of Highland Park residents that use various means of transportation to reach work. It is an indication of the degree to which our land use patterns and transportation system support a green and healthy lifestyle. Driving contributes to traffic congestion, and the consumption of gasoline contributes to global warming and local air and water pollution. Mass transit, biking and walking are good for the environment and good for our health. To support more beneficial forms of transportation we need development patterns that put jobs and services close to where we live, and provide easy access to trains and buses. In the future, this indicator can show if our policies aimed at increasing alternative transportation and a walkable mixed-use community have been effective.

How Are We Doing?

Despite a seemingly walkable and transit rich location, as of the 2000 census, approximately 80% of Highland Park residents traveled to their jobs in an automobile, with more than 70% traveling alone. Nearly 20% either carpooled to work or utilized public transportation, and approximately 5% either walked or biked. The good news is that, given the dense walkable structure of Highland Park, and the proximity to the train and employment destinations like New Brunswick, this is an area where improvements seem possible.

Goal 4: Convenient Transportation

Indicator 4.2: Time Spent Commuting



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Why Do We Care?

Indicator 4.2 displays the average commute time to work for Highland Park residents, as reported by the 2000 census. Lengthy commute times reduce the quality of life of Borough residents and are indicative of an inefficient transportation and land use system. Putting jobs close to residential areas, and making public transit more accessible, reduces commute times. Reducing individuals' travel times to work allows for more time to enjoy other things and reduces environmental impact when commutes are in vehicles. Review of this indicator allows the Borough to evaluate the effectiveness of its actions aimed at promoting walking, biking, local economic development, public transportation, and reducing traffic congestion.

How Are We Doing?

More than one third of Borough residents still experience a commute of thirty minutes or more. Nearly one third of Borough residents, however, have a commute time of 15 minutes or less. It is worth noting that this data represents commute times regardless of the means of transport employed. Due to Highland Park's proximity to much larger cities, it is possible that much of these long commute times are due to Borough residents traveling to places such as Philadelphia and New York City, while others walk or bike to New Brunswick.

Goal 5.0: Fairness and Equity



Eugene Young Environmental Education Center
Photo by Arnold Henderson

Goal 5.0: Fairness & Equity

What Do We Want to Achieve?

A community that has a mix of housing with services, recreation, and shopping nearby, where all residents have equal educational and recreational opportunities, and are engaged in Highland Park's sustainability initiatives.

Fairness and equity are essential components of social sustainability in Highland Park. A sustainable community, in turn, encourages us to work collectively to safeguard the natural environment for future generations. In order for us to fully participate in Highland Park's Green Community Plan, we must first be aware of and engaged in our local government, feel that we are part of the local decision making process, have a sense of pride and belonging in our community, and be physically healthy enough to engage in sustainable practices such as walking and biking to everyday destinations or participating in community clean-up or restoration activities. A sustainable community is one that is educated about environmental, social, and economic impacts on the world, engaged in the political process, aware and supportive of diversity within the community, has a sense of identity and cohesiveness, works together to safeguard natural and man-made resources, and makes lifestyle choices which are healthy for both humans and the planet.

How Are We Doing? Indicators of Success

Below is a list of the indicators related to this goal and where to find them in this plan.

Indicator 5.1 Educational Attainment	Page 31
Indicator 5.2 Disparities in Student HSPA Assessment	Page 32

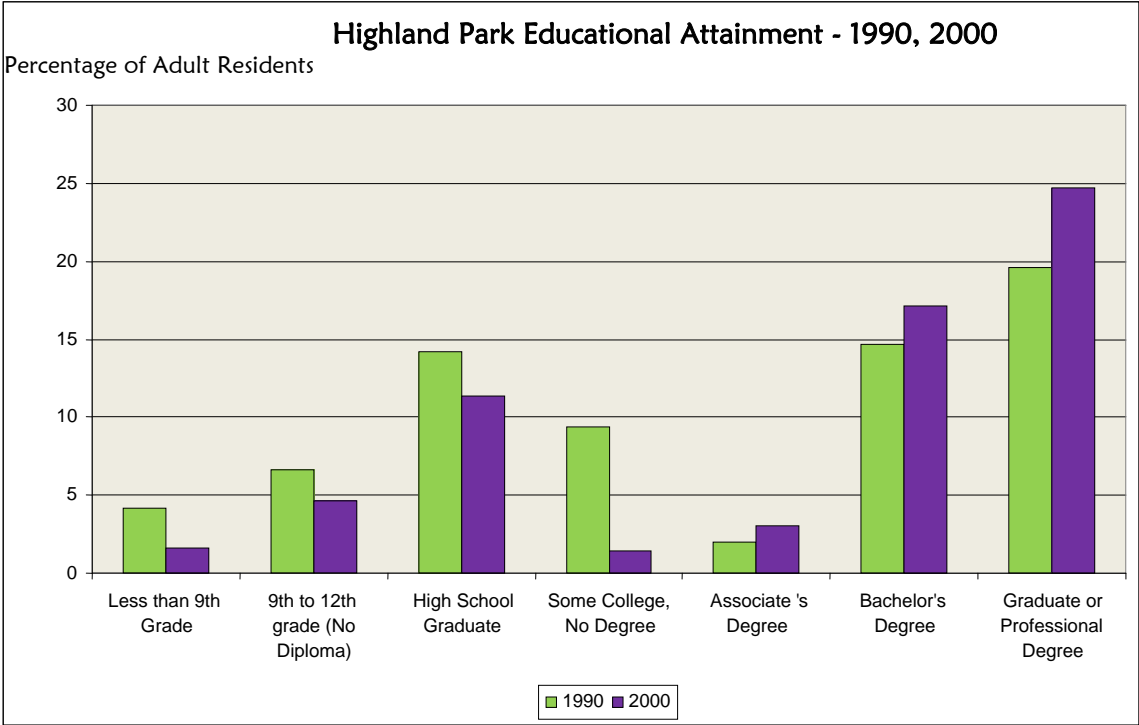
What Are We Doing? **Actions organized by Borough Objective**

The many actions related to this goal have been organized by the objectives that appear below. Go to the page to view the complete descriptions of the actions.

- Provide a mix of housing that is affordable and accessible to shopping, services, and recreation Page 97
- Ensure that educational and recreational opportunities are available to all residents Page 99

Goal 5.0: Fairness & Equity

Indicator 5.1: Educational Attainment



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Why Do We Care?

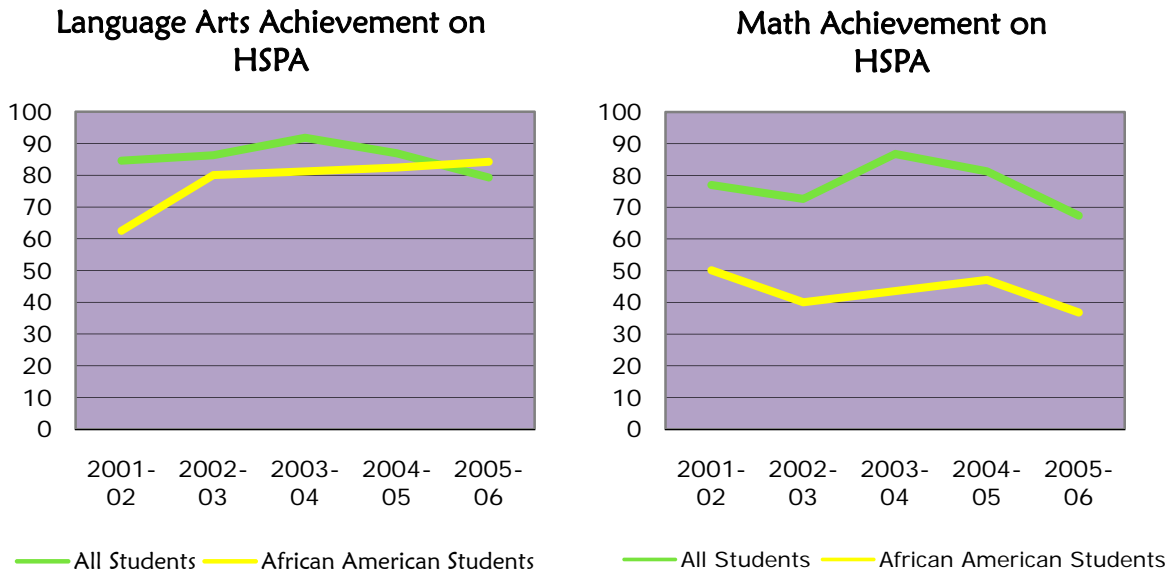
This indicator shows the highest level of education reached by adult Highland Park residents, by percentage, in both 1990 and 2000. Since an individual’s level of education is a strong indicator of their economic well being and life opportunity, it is important for Highland Park to foster a community supportive of residents’ educational goals. Further, individuals are more likely to pursue higher education when they have been exposed to a positive experience in their early education. Educational attainment of current residents is partly an indication of the local schools’ and community’s ability to launch the careers of lifelong residents, and also a function of the Borough’s ability to attract successful, well educated citizens who have many options about where to live.

How Are We Doing?

As seen above, Highland Park has experienced a shift in the educational make-up of the community in recent years. Between 1990 and 2000, the percentage of Borough residents possessing no college degree has decreased while the percentage possessing an Associate’s degree or higher has increased. Despite this decrease, more than 5% of Borough residents still did not possess a high school diploma. However, the Borough did experience noticeable increases in the percentage of residents attaining Bachelor’s degrees or higher between the 1990 and 2000 census. It is worth noting Highland Park’s status as a popular home to Rutgers University students and faculty.

Goal 5.0: Fairness & Equity

Indicator 5.2: Disparities in Student HSPA Assessment



Source: New Jersey School Report Card
<http://education.state.nj.us/rc/>

Why Do We Care?

Indicator 5.2 displays the percentage of students who measured proficient or advanced proficient in Math and Language Arts according to the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA). The graphs show the proficiency among all students in the Borough (average) and African American students during the 2001-2006 school years. The gap in proficiency between minority students and the overall student population is one measure of equity and fairness. It is vital that the Borough create an atmosphere in which all residents are able to learn and have access to a quality education. By monitoring the success of minority students on standardized exams like the HSPA, the Borough can identify any existing deficiencies and take corrective action.

How Are We Doing?

Indicator 5.2 shows that African American students historically have underperformed in both Language Arts and Math compared to the average student in Highland Park. While African American students have shown a gradual increase in Language Arts proficiency, culminating in a higher level of proficiency than the average student in the 2005-2006 school year, the story in Math is less encouraging. From 2001 to 2006, African American students have been consistently 10-15% less proficient in Math than the average student in Highland Park. In general, proficiency in Math compared to Language Arts is lower for both student populations. This indicator suggests that improvements are needed to both reduce the gap in proficiency among minority students and all Borough students as well as to increase the average level of student proficiency.

SECTION TWO: ACTION PLAN



Goal 1: Healthy Environment	Status	Municipality	Residents	Businesses	Schools	Partner/Civic Organizations	Page
(C= Completed/Underway; P= Planned/Priority Action; F= For Future Consideration)		●	●	●	●	●	
1.1 Protect Open Space and Environmentally sensitive areas							
Dedicated additional active and passive open space	C	●					44
Native tree planting	C	●					44
Highland Park Green Challenge- Plant a tree	C	●	●	●	●	●	45
Required that all municipal lands adopted sustainable landscaping techniques and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices	C	●					45
Take back paradise- unpave a parking lot	P	●					46
Create sustainable landscaping policy: Plant appropriate native landscaping and vegetation to minimize invasive species and conserve water	P	●	●	●	●	●	47
Create ordinance that requires new building/development projects to adopt sustainable and water-efficient landscaping	P	●					47
Dedicate a percentage of Highland Park land as permanent open space	P	●					47
Develop a simple one page Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to assess anticipated impacts upon woodland, water quality, wildlife, and air quality associated with Borough facilities, assets and practices	P	●					48
Provide toolkits to residents and local business owners on how to maintain lawns in natural state with native trees, shrubs and wildflowers	P	●			●	●	48
Pass ordinance permitting greening of verges	F	●					
Work through the creation of easements and covenants to dedicate privately held space as open space permanently	F	●					
Develop Adopt-A-Spot Program to clean-up lands and add plantings	F	●	●	●	●	●	
Plant community gardens on school lands and commit to keeping a certain percentage as pervious surface	F	●		●	●		

Goal 1: Healthy Environment	Status	Municipality	Residents	Businesses	Schools	Partner/Civic Organizations	Page
(C= Completed/Underway; P= Planned/Priority Action; F= For Future Consideration)		●	●	●	●	●	
1.2 Minimize solid waste production and maximize recycling							
Aggressive recycling program; recycling containers in public areas	C	●		●	●	●	50
Green streetscape with recycled materials	C	●					50
Annual Highland Park yard sale	C	●	●	●	●	●	51
Highland Park Green Challenge- Use a canvas bag	C	●	●	●	●	●	51
Stock composting bins at low or no charge to residents	P	●					52
Create free-cycle day and website	P	●	●	●	●	●	52
Enact an Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) policy; provide residents and businesses with EPP guidelines	P	●			●	●	53
Promote the use of rain barrels	F	●				●	
Enforce mandatory residential and commercial recycling, with penalties	F	●					
Develop a green seal business program	F	●			●		
Provide education on waste reduction and recycling; disseminate information on why, what, and where to recycle (i.e., cfls, electronics, hazardous waste, etc.)	F	●		●	●	●	
Revise existing ordinance to allow composting	F						
Make forms available/submittable online to minimize paper waste	F	●	●	●	●	●	
Require that 50% of construction and demolition waste is recycled	F	●		●	●		
1.3 Reduce greenhouse gas emissions							
Endorsed Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI)- "Cool Cities" tree planting	C	●	●				54
Conducted municipal energy audit	C	●					54
Retrofitted public buildings for energy efficiency	C	●					55
Expanded green utility incentives	C	●		●	●	●	56
Installed geothermal heating/cooling system	C				●		56

Goal 1: Healthy Environment	Status	Municipality	Residents	Businesses	Schools	Partner/Civic Organizations	Page
(C= Completed/Underway; P= Planned/Priority Action; F= For Future Consideration)		●	●	●	●	●	
Green Challenge: Switch to compact fluorescent light bulbs	C	●		●	●	●	56
Join the New Jersey CleanPower Choice Program Community Partnership Campaign	C	●					57
Enact a solar access ordinance	P	●					57
Conduct a municipal carbon footprint calculation	P	●					58
Create a 5-year property tax abatement for energy efficiency and renewable retrofits	P	●					58
Install parking meters and assign residential parking permits	F	●					
Require disclosure of utility bills to new owners at time of residential sale transaction	F	●	●				
Participate in the New Jersey Clean Power Choice Program	F	●			●		
Initiate pilot programs to install/use renewable energy	F	●		●	●		
Require use of Energy Star rated or equivalent, energy efficient appliances in all new and renovated buildings	F	●		●	●	●	
Enact a policy prioritizing energy efficiency in new construction and renovations, and during operations & maintenance of public buildings	F	●			●		
1.4 Minimize groundwater pollution							
Rain Gardens	C	●					60
Green Snow Removal	C	●					60
Enforce anti-littering ordinance	P	●					61
Increase number of household hazardous waste collection days (e.g., batteries, computers, CFLs, paint, oil, etc.)	P	●					61
Require new parking lots, pathways, and driveways to use porous paving materials	P	●	●	●	●	●	62
1.5 Purchase Green Products							
Member of Rutgers Green Purchasing Cooperative	C	●					63
Enact ordinance that requires retailers to take back and recycle all packaging and plastic bags	P	●		●			64
Ask supermarkets and local stores to charge for plastic bags	P	●		●			64

Goal 1: Healthy Environment	Status	Municipality	Residents	Businesses	Schools	Partner/Civic Organizations	Page
(C= Completed/Underway; P= Planned/Priority Action; F= For Future Consideration)		●	●	●	●	●	
Enact an Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) policy; provide residents and businesses with EPP guidelines	P	●		●	●	●	65
Develop a residential/commercial purchasing cooperative	P	●	●	●			66
1.6 Improve air quality							
Organize a series of Community Sustainability Events that help to raise awareness about local air quality (i.e., Walk Your Child to School Day; Bike to Work Day; Car Free Day, etc.)	C	●	●	●	●	●	67
Publish a regular column in local newspapers and Borough newsletters about sustainability issues such as local air quality	C	●				●	67
Encourage residents and employees to bike or walk whenever possible; provide ample storage for bicycles, and shower/changing facilities for those who bike to work	P	●		●			68
Maintain vehicles so that they run efficiently	F	●	●	●	●	●	
Encourage residents and employees to bike or walk whenever possible; provide ample storage for bicycles, and shower/changing facilities for those who bike to work	F	●		●			
Weatherize buildings/homes to be more energy efficient	F	●		●			
Purchase alternative fuel vehicles	F	●	●	●	●	●	
Provide parking incentives and rebates to encourage a switch to alternative fuel vehicles and minimum-sized vehicles	F	●					
1.7 Educate all residents about the cost-saving benefits of more efficient resource use							
Created Residents "Go Green" booklet	C	●	●				69
Construction of Eugene Young Environmental Center	C	●					69
Green Highland Park Community Website	C	●	●	●	●	●	70
Provide factsheet and toolkits to the public about green building and energy conservation practices	P	●					70
Celebrate local residents, businesses, groups that have helped promote sustainability in Highland Park through public recognition	P	●					71

Goal 1: Healthy Environment	Status	Municipality	Residents	Businesses	Schools	Partner/Civic Organizations	Page
(C= Completed/Underway; P= Planned/Priority Action; F= For Future Consideration)		●	●	●	●	●	
Sponsor workshops on different sustainability issues (i.e., sustainable landscaping, using rain barrels, weatherizing your home)	P	●		●		●	71
Develop a reuse center for home building materials through the Solid Waste Management Department, where residents can drop off unwanted building materials which can be given to local non-profits or resold to residents at a nominal price	P	●	●				71
Incorporate energy efficiency studies, renewable energy and green building into school curricula in subjects such as physics and math	F				●		
Provide developers and property owners with information about using green roofs or high-reflectance roofs on buildings and other reflectance and shading techniques for parking lots and impervious surfaces	F	●					
Provide information and guidance to residents and local business owners on rain water collection and landscaping for water efficiency (e.g., rain barrels, xeriscaping)	F	●					
Distribute free sustainability starter kits at Borough events (i.e., CFLs, low flow shower heads, and information on actions residents can take to live more sustainably)	F	●					
Provide mini-grants to promote recycling awareness. Small grants (\$500-1500) can encourage school, community groups or non-profits to develop innovative projects that promote source reduction, reuse, or recycling in the community	F	●		●	●	●	

Goal 2: Healthy People	Status	Municipality	Residents	Businesses	Schools	Partner/Civic Organizations	Page
(C= Completed/Underway; P= Planned/Priority Action; F= For Future Consideration)		●	●	●	●	●	
2.1 Minimize exposure to environmental contaminants							
Required that all municipal lands adopt sustainable landscaping techniques and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices	C	●					72
Provide information on Green Highland Park Website about green cleaning practices and include listing of local suppliers for green cleaning products and services	P	●	●	●	●	●	72
Enforce anti-idling ordinance	P	●					73
Have Main Street and Chamber of Commerce investigate how to sell green cleaning products and lawn products	P	●	●	●	●	●	73
2.2 Promote healthy, sustainable diet and exercise habits							
Support of local farmers' market	C	●	●	●	●	●	74
Mayor's Wellness Campaign	C	●	●	●	●	●	74
Insure the all bike and walking paths are maintained	P	●					75
Create an ordinance that requires missing, buckled, or broken sidewalks to be replaced as a prerequisite for planning board approval of building renovations	P	●					75
Enact sidewalk replacement ordinance that respects trees	P	●					75
Educate community on the proper selection and disposal of products	P	●	●	●	●	●	76
2.3 Ensure access to healthcare services							
Offer health services and exercise programs at reduced fees	C	●	●	●	●	●	77
Free In-Town Transportation and Out-of-Town Medical Transportation	C	●	●			●	77
2.4 Maintain strong emergency and safety systems							
Publish response times of emergency responders; set targets	C	●					78
Educate community on disaster response and fire response plans; publicize location of contact information for all local emergency responders, such as Fire Department, First Aid, etc.	F	●			●	●	

Goal 3: Strong Community	Status	Municipality	Residents	Businesses	Schools	Partner/Civic Organizations	Page
(C= Completed/Underway; P= Planned/Priority Action; F= For Future Consideration)		●	●	●	●	●	
3.1 Ensure mixed-use downtown corridor that is vibrant, safe, and walkable							
Establish pedestrian zones closed to motor vehicles on Sundays	P	●					79
Complete pathway connecting Donaldson and Johnson Parks	P	●					79
Provide adequate lighting at night to keep corridors well lit and safe	P	●		●	●		80
Establish a bylaw to create a Neighborhood Activity Center Overlay District in order to encourage small-scale commercial and mixed-use development in convenient locations that provide daily services and jobs within walking distance of neighborhoods	F	●					
3.2 Encourage green construction, redevelopment, and rehabilitation							
Green Redevelopment Plan	C	●					81
Highland Park Master Plan 2003	C	●					81
Highland Park 2020- A Sustainable Community	C	●					81
Green Community Plan	C	●					81
Green land use ordinances	C	●					82
Green standards for major construction projects	C	●	●	●	●	●	82
Green public buildings	C	●			●		82
Strive for a minimum of LEED certification or equivalent on all new construction and renovation projects	P	●	●	●	●	●	83
Provide information about green building with each planning and zoning application	P	●	●	●	●	●	84
Train municipal officials in green building; designate a municipal official	P	●					84
3.3 Foster a strong sense of community through events, public spaces, and lively streets and sidewalks							
Continue to organize community events in local parks	C	●	●	●	●	●	85
Host block parties and get-togethers at local parks and community facilities	C	●	●	●	●	●	85

Goal 3: Strong Community	Status	Municipality	Residents	Businesses	Schools	Partner/Civic Organizations	Page
(C= Completed/Underway; P= Planned/Priority Action; F= For Future Consideration)		●	●	●	●	●	
Designate space for community gardens	C	●	●	●	●	●	85
Encourage sidewalk commerce through zoning that allows for walk-up windows, sidewalk dining, and retail displays in appropriate settings	F	●					
3.4 Attract businesses that meet the everyday needs of residents and provide support for local entrepreneurs							
Create a sustainable business program that encourages and distinguishes sustainable businesses with identifiable logo to be placed on storefront/business windows, websites and promotional materials	P	●		●			87
Sponsor an annual “Shop Highland Park Week”	P	●	●	●	●	●	87
3.5 Government that anticipates the needs of citizens and practices stewardship toward the environment							
Enforce the law: ensure that anti-littering, anti-idling, and non-conforming renovations and driveways are addressed with appropriate penalties	P	●					88
Annual reporting on Green Highland Park Indicators	P	●	●	●	●	●	88
Develop a municipal sustainability awareness campaign using messages in local publications	P	●	●	●	●	●	88
Develop job description and funding stream for a Borough staff level Sustainability Coordinator	F	●					

Goal 4: Convenient Transportation	Status	Municipality	Residents	Businesses	Schools	Partner/Civic Organizations	Page
(C= Completed/Underway; P= Planned/Priority Action; F= For Future Consideration)		●	●	●	●	●	
4.1 Prioritize pedestrian and bicyclist safety							
Employ traffic calming devices	P	●					90
Maintain and expand pedestrian and bicycle safety education programs	P	●	●	●	●	●	90
Define bike lanes in Borough downtown and major thoroughfares	P	●					91
Make pedestrian and bicycle planning a routine and required part of all transportation planning and development	P	●					91
Implement recommendations from Borough pedestrian and bicycle survey	F	●	●	●	●	●	
4.2 Promote the use of and access to train and busses for commuting							
Commuter Shuttle Bus	C	●	●	●	●	●	92
Publicize proximity to transit as a reason to shop in local stores; provide incentives to bicyclists, and public transit riders	P	●		●			92
Lobby state and county officials to improve pedestrian routes to bus and train	P	●	●	●	●	●	93
4.3 Minimize the environmental impact of municipal transportation investments							
Solar, pedestrian activated cross walk signals	C	●					94
Hybrid/Alternative Fuel Use police and inspection vehicles	C	●					94
High efficiency lighting and LED traffic signals	C	●					95
Implement "fix it first" practices	P	●					95
4.4 Make Borough a place where one can live comfortably without a vehicle							
Lower minimum parking requirements for new commercial developments or set maximum parking requirements, particularly near transit services	P	●					96
Establish a ride-sharing website	P	●	●	●	●	●	96

Goal 5: Fairness and Equity	Status	Municipality	Residents	Businesses	Schools	Partner/Civic Organizations	Page
(C= Completed/Underway; P= Planned/Priority Action; F= For Future Consideration)		●	●	●	●	●	
5.1 Provide a mix of housing that is affordable and accessible to shopping, services, and recreation							
Provide incentives to retrofit and renovate existing affordable housing to Energy Star, LEED or an equivalent green building standard	P	●	●				97
Mr. Fix-it Program for Seniors and/or disabled residents	P	●	●				98
5.2 Ensure that educational and recreational opportunities are available to all residents							
Utilize public buildings, schools, and churches for community events after regular business hours	C	●	●	●	●	●	99
Highland Park Teen Community Service Program	C		●		●		99
Before and After School Programs for Working Parents	C		●		●		99
Highland Park Community Teen Center	C		●		●		100
Highland Park Arts Commission- Open Studios	C		●			●	100
Host Green Home and Garden Tours	P	●	●	●	●	●	100
Involve residents and children of all ages in Green Highland Park Challenges	P	●	●	●	●	●	101
Clean up Brownfield sites and other unused areas to create recreational spaces for the community	F	●	●			●	

Goal 1: Healthy Environment

Related indicators:

- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Recycling Rate
- Production of Solid Waste
- Water Consumption
- Clean and Renewable Energy

1.1 Protect open space and environmentally sensitive areas

Dedicated Additional Active and Passive Open Space (Completed)

As a part of the continual “greening” of Highland Park, the Borough has dedicated additional land for a mix of active and passive outdoor recreational uses. These include the revitalization of Donaldson Park and the addition of other recreation spaces throughout the Borough.

Definition of success:

- Percentage of land zoned as open space

References/Resources:

- New York State Local Open Space Planning Guide
<http://www.dos.state.ny.us/lgss/pdfs/openspaces.pdf>

For more information on the recreational opportunities within Highland Park please contact the Department of Community Services at (732) 819-0052 or visit http://www.hpboro.com/depts_comservices.htm.

Native Tree Planting (Completed)

The Borough has remained committed to planting trees and other plant species that are native to the local area. Native species are better acclimated to the local environment, require minimal watering, reduce the need for fertilizers and pesticides, and eliminate the problems associated with the introduction of invasive species. Because they require minimal maintenance, these species limit the need for upkeep with fossil fuel powered equipment, saving valuable natural resources and Borough funds. Tree and plant species native to Highland Park and Central New Jersey can be found at the Borough rain gardens, Donaldson Park and the native plant garden at the Environmental Center.

Definition of success:

- Total annual net tree stock

References/Resources:

- Brooklyn Botanical Gardens- Easy Lawns Resources
<http://www.bbg.org/gar2/topics/sustainable/handbooks/lawns/index.html>
- North American Native Plant Society
<http://www.nanps.org>

For more information on native plantings within Highland Park, please contact the Department of Public works at (732) 247-9397 or http://www.hpboro.com/publicworks/depts_pworks.htm.

Highland Park Green Challenge – Plant a Tree (Completed)

The Green Challenges are a series of actions posed directly to residents by the Borough that make a positive contribution to the greening of Highland Park. These actions are designed to be activities that Borough residents can do in their everyday lives to minimize their environmental footprint. One existing challenge is for Highland Park residents to plant a tree in their neighborhood. Since trees consume carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, produce oxygen and shade, and filter other pollutants from the air, planting a tree is a simple and inexpensive way for residents to help create a greener Highland Park.

Definition of success:

- Percentage of Borough residents who participate in the challenge.

References/Resources:

- Arbor Day foundation
<http://www.arborday.org/>
- Highland Park Department of Public Works – Tree Planting
<http://www.hpboro.com/publicworks/documents/Trees.pdf>

For more information on the Green Challenge please visit www.greenhp.org.

Require that all municipal lands adopt sustainable landscaping techniques and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices (Completed)

See also: Goal 2: Healthy People, page 70.

Highland Park has mandated that sustainable landscaping techniques be used in the maintenance of Borough lands. These techniques ensure that Borough lands remain in balance with the local environment by reducing the need for fertilizers, pesticides, watering and other forms of maintenance. Sustainable landscaping reduces air and noise pollution associated with maintenance equipment and helps to mitigate the problems associated with runoff such as flooding and erosion. Highland Park has also adopted integrated pest management (IPM) practices in caring for Borough lands. IPM seeks to control insects and other pests through an array of natural methods and relies upon polluting synthetic pesticides only as a last report. These natural methods include a

combination of prevention, avoidance, monitoring and suppression techniques that are implemented through physical, horticultural and biological practices.

Definition of success:

- Annual volume of pesticides, herbicides, and non-green cleaners used for Borough operations

References/Resources:

- Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions
<http://www.anjec.org/html/ipm.htm>
- Beyond Pesticides
<http://www.beyondpesticides.org/>
- Pest Management Office of Rutgers Cooperative Extension
<http://www.pestmanagement.rutgers.edu/>
- IPM Institute of North America
<http://www.ipminstitute.org/school.htm>
- Landscaping for Water Conservation: A Guide for New Jersey
<http://www.montville-township.org/pdf/e080.pdf>

For more information on sustainable landscaping and IPM within Highland Park please contact the Department of Public Works at (732) 247-9397 or http://www.hpboro.com/publicworks/depts_pworks.htm.

Take back paradise: unpave a parking lot (Priority Action)

The Borough can identify parking lots that are underutilized or in need of repair and transform them into ‘green parking lots.’ Green parking lots utilize materials such as gravel, permeable pavers or porous concrete (depending on usage levels and size). In addition, they often provide sufficient space for rain gardens and landscaped buffers (including overhead trellises to reduce heat gain) within and surrounding the lot. Many sidewalks and parking lots have low traffic loads or at least selective areas with lighter loads that make them prime candidates for porous materials, but instead are paved with impervious asphalt or concrete. The benefits of porous pavements include biodegrading the oils from cars and trucks, infiltrating the soil with rainwater, dissipating the heat of the sun, replenishing groundwater, and giving tree roots room to breathe.

Definition of success:

- Total percentage of impervious surface in the Borough

References/Resources:

- Better Site Design Fact Sheet: Green Parking
http://www.stormwatercenter.net/Assorted%20Fact%20Sheets/Tool4_Site_Design/GreenParking.htm
- City of Seattle Green Parking Lots
<http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/dclu/Publications/cam/CAM515.pdf>

Create sustainable landscaping policy: Plant appropriate native landscaping and vegetation to minimize invasive species and conserve water (Priority Action)

The Public Works Department can create an internal policy identifying sustainable landscaping techniques and materials. This policy should include topics such as: an appropriate (native) plant list that meets various ornamental and wildlife needs; irrigation systems and techniques that conserve water; Integrated Pest Management; reduced mowing schedules; use of low-toxic and organic fertilizer and pesticides; and others. This policy should be developed in partnership with staff and include educating staff on sustainable landscaping methods. Finally, the department should track the changes it makes in landscaping methods and materials to assess challenges and successes.

Definition of success:

- Creation of sustainable landscaping policy

References/Resources:

- Landscaping for Water Conservation: A Guide for New Jersey
<http://www.montville-township.org/pdf/e080.pdf>
- Native Plant Society of New Jersey
<http://www.npsnj.org/>

Create ordinance that requires new building / development projects to adopt sustainable and water-efficient landscaping (Priority Action)

The Borough can create an ordinance that mandates sustainable landscaping in new construction projects, as part of the original development proposal. Code enforcement can enforce this ordinance.

Definition of success:

- Creation of sustainable and water-efficient landscaping ordinance

Resources/References:

- Seattle Green Factor
<http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/permits/greenfactor/>

Dedicate a percentage of Highland Park land as permanent open space (Priority Action)

The Borough should conduct a survey of the available open space within the community, and create a list of open space lands to be preserved. The Borough can then set a target for the percentage of open space it would like to achieve by a certain date and develop an action plan to preserve listed spaces. Preserving open space ensures that Borough residents will always have municipal lands to gather and interact as a community. By planning for the future, the Borough can ensure that additional development is achieved

in a strategic manner that preserves land within the community for the full range of possible uses.

Definition of success:

- Annual progress toward open space preservation target

References/Resources:

- Green Acres provides low interest loans and grants for municipalities. <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/greenacres/trust.htm>
- The Bureau of Planning and Information Management provides open space and recreation planning guidance. <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/greenacres/plan.htm>
- New Jersey Natural Lands Trust: Handbook of Landowner's Options provides information to landowners on donating land as public open space. <http://njedl.rutgers.edu/ftp/PDFs/2116.pdf>

Develop a one page Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for woodland, water quality, wildlife, and air quality associated with Borough facilities, assets and practices (Priority Action)

By developing a one page EIS, Highland Park can make a quick determination of the impact on the natural environment by the day-to-day operation of the Borough. This will allow the Borough to determine which actions and policies must be pursued to mitigate the impact of Borough practices and allow the community to move towards a more sustainable Highland Park. An EIS would require the identification and prediction of the environmental impact of Borough facilities and practices, evaluation of the cause of the impact and mitigation strategies to correct the problem.

Definition of success:

- Development of a EIS statement

References/Resources:

- NEPA, Environmental Impact Statement <http://www.nepa.gov/nepa/regs/ceq/1502.htm>

Provide toolkits to residents and local business owners on how to maintain lawns in natural state with native trees, shrubs and wildflowers (Priority Action)

The Borough should develop a set of guidelines and resources for residents and local businesses on how they can landscape their properties with flora native to Central New Jersey. Since indigenous plants are acclimated to local weather and environmental conditions, they require less maintenance and a smaller expenditure of fossil fuels in their upkeep. Such a toolkit will allow other members of the community to follow the Borough's lead in remaining committed to native planting throughout Highland Park.

Definition of success:

- Development of guidelines and resources and posting of information on Green Highland Park website

Resources/References:

- Rutgers University New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station- Lawn & Garden
<http://njaes.rutgers.edu/garden>
- Brooklyn Botanical Gardens
<http://www.bbg.org/>
- Organic Gardening
<http://www.organicgardening.com/>

1.2 Minimize solid waste production and maximize recycling

Aggressive Recycling Program; Recycling Containers in Public Areas (Completed)

Highland Park has instituted an aggressive recycling program to minimize the amount of solid waste that the Borough sends to landfills. The program mandates that residents recycle a wide variety of materials to insure that the Borough conserves limited natural resources and minimizes its landfilled solid waste. The Borough has also placed recycling containers in public areas to encourage recycling among the public. The success of the recycling program will be monitored annually by measuring the annual percentage of solid waste that is recycled by the Borough.

Definition of success:

- Indicator 1.2: Increase in annual percentage of solid waste that is recycled
- Indicator 1.3: Decrease in total annual pounds of solid waste generated per capita

References/Resources:

- EPA's Consumer Tips on How to Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Buy Recycled Products
<http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/osw/specials/funfacts/index.htm>
<http://www.epa.gov/msw/reduce.htm>
- Building Material's Reuse Association (BMRA)
<http://www.ubma.org/>
- New Jersey Business Guide to Recycled Products- Association of New Jersey Recyclers (ANJR) http://www.anjr.com/buyrecycled/how_to_use.html

For more information on the Highland Park recycling program please contact the Department of Public Works at (732) 247-9379 or http://www.hpboro.com/publicworks/depts_pworks.htm.

Green Streetscapes with Recycled Materials (Completed)

Highland Park is in the process of creating a new system of green streetscapes within the Borough. Centennial Park, which is constructed from recycled materials and includes a large rain garden of native plants, is an example of responsible urban landscaping that minimizes solid waste and utilizes indigenous species to mitigate problems associated with runoff. The first phase of this action at Centennial Park has already been completed and the Raritan Avenue phase will begin in spring 2008.

Definition of success:

- Total percentage of recycled or refurbished streetscape furnishings

References/Resources:

- Brooklyn Botanical Gardens- Easy Lawns Resources
<http://www.bbg.org/gar2/topics/sustainable/handbooks/lawns/index.html>
- Native Plant Society of New Jersey
http://www.npsnj.org/rain_garden_home.htm
- Homeowner Rain Gardens
<http://learningstore.uwex.edu/pdf/GWQ037.pdf>

Annual Highland Park Yard Sale (Completed)

The Highland Park Yard Sale is an annual Borough-wide event where residents buy and sell used goods in one organized, two-day-long event. This event is an opportunity for residents to put old goods to new, productive uses rather than throwing them out. The event decreases solid waste production within the Borough by eliminating the disposal of used goods and the packaging associated with new ones. In addition, the annual yard sale is a fun community event that provides residents with an opportunity to socialize and get to know one another.

Definition of success:

- Number of sellers participating in annual yard sale

References/Resources:

For more information, please contact Main Street Highland Park at (732) 828-8444 or www.mainstreethp.org.

Highland Park Green Challenge – Use a Canvas Bag (Completed)

The Green Challenges are a series of actions posed directly to residents by the Borough that make a positive contribution to the greening of Highland Park. These actions are designed to be activities that Borough residents can do in their everyday lives to minimize their environmental footprint. One existing challenge is for Highland Park residents to purchase reusable canvas bags for use in grocery shopping. This easy and inexpensive action will prevent single-use plastic bags from reaching landfills and conserve the natural resources used to produce them.

Definition of success:

- Percentage of Borough residents who sign up for the green challenge.

References/Resources:

For more information and to sign up for the Green Challenge please visit www.greenhp.org.

Stock composting bins at low or no charge to residents (Priority Action)

Highland Park can further reduce solid waste disposal by encouraging residents to purchase subsidized composting bins available at The Middlesex County Division of Solid Waste Management. This will encourage residents to recycle lawn, yard and other organic waste to be reused in gardens and as a natural source of fertilizer. The Borough could facilitate the purchase of bins by making bins available at a Highland Park location. Currently, bins can be purchased on the first and third Wednesday of each month, between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., at the MCI Recycling Office, 55 Edgeboro Road, East Brunswick. Four types of bins are available, ranging in price from \$5 to \$40. A free kitchen pail and composting guide are included with each purchase. Further, the Highland Park can establish several drop-off points throughout the Borough where residents can dispose of lawn and yard waste. This will reduce solid waste and also provide the Borough with a steady, cost-free source of natural fertilizer for municipal lands.

Definition of success:

- Percentage increase in the number of Highland Park households that compost (annual survey)

References/Resources:

- Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station: Composting Fact Sheets
<http://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/subcategory.asp?cat=5&sub=36>

For more information, call the Middlesex County Division of Solid Waste Management, (732)745- 4170, or e-mail solidwaste@co.middlesex.nj.us.

Create free-cycle day and website (Priority Action)

To reduce the generation of solid waste, Highland Park can create a Borough-wide free-cycle effort. Free-cycle is when individuals commit to give away old and unused items rather than throw them out. The benefits are many – solid waste is reduced, resources are saved in the production of replacement goods and individuals save financial resources. Highland Park can sponsor a Borough-wide event in conjunction with the Highland Park Yard Sale where individuals place out items that are no longer used and are free to anyone who wants them. Additionally, a message board can be created on the Green HP website where individuals can post what items they are looking to give away and what items they are looking for.

Definition of success:

- Annual participation rate in free-cycle day and average number of exchanges on free-cycle website

References/Resources:

- The Freecycle Network
<http://www.freecycle.org/>

Enact an Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) policy; provide residents and businesses with EPP guidelines (Priority Action)

The EPA defines EPP as "products or services that have a lesser or reduced effect on human health and the environment when compared with competing products or services that serve the same purpose." By providing residents and businesses with EPP guidelines, everyone within the Borough will be able to make informed purchasing decisions. Provision of EPP guidelines will reduce the amount of toxic chemicals being reduced into the environment, leading to healthier people and ecosystems within Highland Park.

Definition of success:

- Creation of EPP policy and guidelines for the community

References/Resources:

- New Jersey Co-Op Purchasing Program
http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/purchase/coop_agency.shtml
- Buy Recycled in New Jersey
www.nj.gov/dep/dshw/recycling/buy_recy
- Greenseal Labeled Products
www.greenseal.org
- Energy Star Bulk Purchasing
http://energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=bulk_purchasing.bus_purchasing

1.3 Reduce greenhouse gas emissions

Endorsed Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI); “Cool Cities” Tree Planting (Completed)

The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) is a cooperative effort between the Northeastern and Mid-Atlantic states to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through development and enactment of a regional strategy for reduced carbon dioxide emissions. Highland Park has endorsed this initiative and has taken a variety of actions to reduce Borough emissions, such as initiating sustainable landscaping practices, purchasing hybrid municipal vehicles, and conducting a Borough-wide energy audit, among many others. Highland Park has also planted more than 500 trees within the Borough since 2000 as part of the Cool Cities program – a statewide urban forest initiative aimed at reducing greenhouse gases through tree planting and providing natural shade from tree cover.

Definition of success:

- Indicator 1.1: Decrease in the total annual metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions and progress towards reaching the target set by Executive Order 54- reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, and to 80% below 2006 levels by 2050.

References/Resources:

- Burlington’s 10% Challenge
<http://www.10percentchallenge.org/>
- Energy Savers: Tips on Saving Energy & Money
http://www.njcleanenergy.com/media/energy_savers.pdf
- Energy Star:
http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=home_improvement.hm_improvement_index
- New Jersey Clean Energy
<http://www.njcleanenergy.com/residential/home/home>

For more information please visit RGGI at <http://www.rggi.org/> and <http://newjersey.sierraclub.org/ConCom/CoolCities/>.

Conducted Municipal Energy Audit (Completed)

In 2004 Highland Park conducted an energy audit of Borough Hall and green audits of all public facilities. Serving as a baseline for the Green Community Master Plan, the audit studied public works practices, municipally owned vehicles, solid waste production, cogeneration feasibility and current energy use within Highland Park. Municipal and Borough school buildings were also subjected to Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) assessments in the audit. Included in the audit were assessments of current energy use, identification of existing problems and suggestions for future improvements.

This allowed the Borough to identify areas for improvement in efficient natural resource use and provided the Borough with a benchmark against which to compare future audits.

Definition of success:

- Indicator 1.1: Decrease in total annual metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions and progress towards achieving Executive Order 54
- Indicator 1.5: Increase in percentage of total annual kWh derived from renewable energy sources

References/Resources:

- U.S. Department of Energy – Home Energy Audits
http://www.eere.energy.gov/consumer/your_home/energy_audits/index.cfm/mytopic=11160
- New Jersey Clean Energy:
<http://www.njcleanenergy.com/residential/home/home>

For more information and to view the green audit click on the following link
<http://policy.rutgers.edu/andrews/projects/Greenplanning/LEED%20HP%20buildings/Green%20Audit.pdf>

Retrofitted public buildings for energy efficiency (Completed)

Numerous efforts have been taken to “green” public buildings within Highland Park. The newest example is the newly opened Eugene Young Environmental Center, which features numerous elements of green building and a native plant garden. In addition, Highland Park Borough Hall has been retrofitted with solar panels and the Irving School has been retrofitted with geothermal heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC).

Definition of success:

- Percentage of public buildings that have been retrofitted for energy efficiency

References/Resources:

- U.S. Green Building Council
<http://www.usgbc.org/DisplayPage.aspx?CategoryID=19>
- Green Building Institute
http://www.greenbuildinginstitute.org/pages/courses/green_renovations.html
- National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) – Green Building Guidelines
http://www.nahb.org/publication_details.aspx?publicationID=1994§ionID=155

Expanded Green Utility Incentives (Completed)

Highland Park has encouraged consumers to support renewable energy by signing up for the CleanPower Choice Program from the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities' Office of Clean Energy. The program allows residents to choose a clean, renewable energy provider that supplies energy from sources including solar, wind, geothermal, and sustainable biomass.

Definition of success:

- Percentage of Highland Park residents that have signed up for the CleanPower Choice Program

References/Resources:

For more information please visit <http://www.njcleanenergy.com/>.

Installed Geothermal Heating/Cooling System (Completed)

Numerous efforts have been taken to make public buildings within Highland Park more energy efficient. As an example, Irving School has been retrofitted with geothermal HVAC as part of its renovation. Other energy efficient measures have been installed in other schools as well. Geothermal heating and cooling is the process of utilizing the Earth's ability to store heat to transfer heat to and from the ground to heat and cool structures above the ground. This is a natural, renewable heating and cooling method that reduces reliance on fossil fuels.

Definition of success:

- Reduction in energy use by public buildings

References/Resources:

- U.S. Department of Energy – Geothermal Energy
http://www.eere.energy.gov/consumer/your_home/space_heating_cooling/index.cfm/mytopic=12650

Green Challenge: Switch to Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs (Completed)

The Green Challenges are a series of actions posed directly to residents by the Borough that make a positive contribution to the greening of Highland Park. These actions are designed to be activities that Borough residents can do in their everyday lives to minimize their environmental footprint. One existing challenge is for Highland Park residents to replace a traditional incandescent light bulb in their homes with a more energy efficient, longer lasting fluorescent bulb. Accepting this challenge will help reduce the Borough's consumption of natural resources and lead to a greener Highland Park. Although more expensive up-front, these energy efficient bulbs more than pay for themselves through their energy efficiency and long lifespan.

Definition of success:

- Percentage of Borough residents who sign up for the challenge.

References/Resources:

- Energy Star
http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=lighting.pr_lighting
- Earth Easy
http://www.eartheasy.com/live_energyeff_lighting.htm
- U.S. Department of Energy:
http://www.eere.energy.gov/consumer/your_home/lighting_daylighting/index.cfm/mytopic=11970
- For more information and to sign up for the Green Challenge please visit www.greenhp.org.

Enact a solar access ordinance (Priority Action)

Borough Council can enact a solar access ordinance that guarantees access to sunlight within the Borough. This involves the protection of existing solar installations from subsequent shading and requires that new buildings are sited to provide ample solar access. New development projects will be assessed to determine the shade created by structures and new trees upon reaching maturity. Such efforts are aimed at encouraging the use of solar energy to reduce dependence upon fossil fuels.

Definition of success:

- Creation of solar access ordinance

References/Resources

- Boulder, Colorado
http://www.smartcommunities.ncat.org/codes/boldera1_gb.shtml

Join the New Jersey CleanPower Choice Program Community Partnership Campaign (Priority Action)

The Borough can join several New Jersey communities that have already committed to raise awareness about clean power options and increase the number of local residents enrolling in the CleanPower Choice Program. The program allows residents to choose a clean, renewable energy provider that supplies energy from sources including solar, wind, geothermal, and sustainable biomass.

Definition of success:

- Percentage of Highland Park residents that have signed up for the CleanPower Choice Program

References/Resources:

- CleanPower Choice Program Community Partnership Campaign
<http://www.njcleanenergy.com/residential/programs/cleanpower-choice/community-partnership-campaign/community-partnership-campaign>

Conduct a municipal carbon footprint calculation (Priority Action)

In 2004 Highland Park had an energy audit performed on the Borough which measured energy usage by Highland Park. As a follow up, the Borough can conduct a complete municipal carbon footprint, calculation the amount of greenhouse gases generated by the Borough annually. This will allow Highland Park to set a benchmark from which to improve, as well as inform the borough as to which mitigation strategies to pursue to decrease their overall contribution to global warming.

Definition of success:

- Indicator 1.1: Decrease in the total annual metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions and progress towards reaching the target set by Executive Order 54

References/Resources:

- International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI)
www.iclei.org
- Clean Air and Climate Protection Software (CACP)
www.cacpsoftware.org
- California Climate Action Registry
<http://www.climateregistry.org/Default.aspx?refreshed=true>

Create five-year property tax abatement for energy efficiency and renewable energy retrofits (Priority Action)

Highland Park could encourage energy efficiency and renewable energy use within the Borough by enacting an ordinance that creates a partial property tax abatement for a property that employs energy efficiency measures and/or renewable energy retrofits according to an agreed upon standard. The property tax abatement would be for not more than 5 years and would not exceed 50% of the incremental property taxes due.

Definition of success:

- Creation of a five-year tax abatement and an annual increase in the percentage of homeowners who take advantage of the tax abatement through energy efficiency and renewable energy retrofits

References/Resources:

- Database of State Incentives for Renewables and Efficiency (DSIRE) – Property Tax Incentives for Energy Efficiency
<http://www.dsireusa.org/library/includes/tabsrch.cfm?state=NV&type=Property&back=fineetab&Sector=S&CurrentPageID=7&EE=1&RE=1>

Install parking meters and assign residential parking permits (For Future Consideration)

Installation of parking meters along Raritan Avenue in the Borough will create an incentive for residents to patronize other forms of transportation that are more sustainable, such as walking, biking and public transit. Further, revenues collected from parking meters can be reinvested in Highland Park's efforts to create a greener, more sustainable community.

Definition of success:

- Parking meters installed along Raritan Avenue and creation of residential parking permit program

References/Resources:

- Parking Recommendations Council to achieve livable neighborhoods, City of Sacramento, California
http://thehoytco.com/central_city_parking/Council_Report_11-29-05.doc.pdf

1.4 Minimize groundwater pollution

Rain Gardens (Completed)

Highland Park is in the process of creating a new network of green streetscapes and rain gardens within the Borough. Rain gardens utilize bioretention to mitigate the problems associated with runoff. Once planted in areas prone to high volume water flow, plants and soils in rain gardens both retain excess water and filter pollutants from runoff before they reach natural water sources. Centennial Park includes a large rain garden of native plants. Another rain garden will be constructed along Raritan Avenue in spring 2008.

Definition of success:

- Indicator 1.4: Decrease in annual water consumption in Highland Park

References/Resources:

- Brooklyn Botanical Gardens- Sustainable Techniques
<http://www.bbg.org/gar2/topics/sustainable/>
- Native Plant Society of New Jersey- Rain Garden Manual
http://www.npsnj.org/rain_garden_home.htm

Green Snow Removal (Completed)

Highland Park has transitioned to using calcium chloride in de-icing Borough roads and properties. Calcium chloride is more effective and causes less corrosion than other deicing products, and only requires about 1/3 as much material as sodium chloride to be effective. Calcium chloride is less harmful to vegetation as well, making it more environmentally friendly to Borough lands.

Definition of success:

- Annual review to insure best practices for green snow removal are being utilized

References/Resources:

- Green Seal
<http://www.green Seal.org/>
- Green Purchasing: A Guide for Local Governments and Communities
<http://www.state.nj.us/dep/dsr/bscit/epp.pdf>

For more information, please contact the Department of Public Works at (732) 247-9397 or http://www.hpboro.com/publicworks/depts_pworks.htm

Enforce anti-littering ordinance (Priority Action)

Highland Park can take additional steps to enforce the anti-littering ordinances that already exist in the Borough. For example, the Borough Council passed a new anti-littering ordinance that applies to unwanted free newspapers and circulars. Circulars must now be placed within 3 feet of where mail is delivered. Aside from the negative aesthetic impact of litter, trash that is not properly disposed of causes various types of pollution and impacts natural ecosystems. By insuring that waste material is properly disposed of through recycling and other efforts, the Borough can reduce its generation of solid waste and make Highland Park a more sustainable place.

Definition of success:

- Indicator 1.2: Increase in the annual percentage of solid waste that is recycled
- Indicator 1.3: Decrease in the total annual pounds of solid waste generated per capita

Increase number of household hazardous waste collection days (Priority Action)

Highland Park has already designated procedures for the pick-up of hazardous waste. However to insure that hazardous wastes (such as batteries, computers, compact fluorescent light bulbs, paint, oil, etc.) are disposed of properly in all instances, the Borough can increase the number of collection days. When combined with community education about the importance of the proper disposal of hazardous waste, making disposal more convenient for residents will help insure that all of the hazardous waste within Highland Park is disposed of in the most environmentally responsible manner.

Definition of success:

- Increasing percentage of residents satisfied with the convenience of household hazardous waste collection (annual survey)

References/Resources:

- Association of New Jersey Hazardous Waste Coordinators
<http://www.njhazwaste.com/midhome.htm>

Require new parking lots, pathways, and driveways to use porous paving materials (Priority Action)

In the future, Highland Park can reduce the pollution and other negative effects caused by runoff by requiring that all new parking lots, driveways and other surfaces implement porous paving materials. The addition of porous construction materials will allow rainwater to reenter the water table and reduce the negative impact of runoff which includes pollutant transport, flooding and erosion.

Definition of success:

- Decrease in the total percentage of impervious surface in the Borough

References/Resources:

- NJ Stormwater Best Management Practices: Chapter 9.7 Standard for Pervious Paving Systems (Feb 2004)
http://www.state.nj.us/dep/watershedmgt/DOCS/BMP_DOCS/bmpfeb2004pdfs/feb2004chap9_7.pdf
- Paving Paradise: The Peril of Impervious Surfaces
<http://www.ehponline.org/members/2005/113-7/ehp0113-a00456.pdf>
- Research Links for Permeable Paving
http://www.plantsf.org/Research_PermPavers_0511_Friedel.pdf

1.5 Purchase green products

Member of Rutgers Green Purchasing Cooperative (Completed)

Highland Park was the first municipality to sign on to the Rutgers University's environmentally preferable purchasing (EPP) guidelines. The Rutgers Green Purchasing Cooperative is a growing partnership of local governments, schools, universities and other public and private institutions that purchases green cleaning materials and other products in bulk. This partnership allows a fuller array of entities to take advantage of green purchasing guidelines while saving money by buying in bulk. Municipal government is now adhering to the same EPP guidelines that are used by Rutgers University. This means that when the Borough is purchasing goods, from cleaners to paper to fertilizers, if a more environmentally friendly product has been identified within the existing guidelines the Borough chooses that product. This allows Highland Park to minimize the environmental impact in day-to-day operations. These purchasing guidelines have now been implemented throughout the Borough and are being adhered to by the various departments and offices of municipal government. The Borough is currently trying to grow the program with other municipalities in the area as well.

Definition of success:

- Increasing percentage of total Borough purchases that utilize the Rutgers Green Purchasing Cooperative

References/Resources:

- Rutgers Green Purchasing Cooperative
http://procure.rutgers.edu/green/gp_cooperative.html
- Rutgers Solid Waste Policy Group
<http://www.cook.rutgers.edu/~envpurchase/>
- Green Seal
<http://www.greenseal.org/>
- Green Purchasing: A Guide for Local Governments and Communities
<http://www.state.nj.us/dep/dsr/bscit/epp.pdf>
- New American Dream Institutional Purchasing Program
<http://www.newdream.org/procure/>

Enact ordinance that requires retailers to take back and recycle all packaging and plastic bags (Priority Action)

Highland Park can take a firm stance on reducing waste and encouraging recycling by mandating that retailers within the Borough take back and recycle all packaging associated with the goods they sell. This will not only insure that a larger portion of Highland Park's waste is recycled, but will also encourage retailers to reduce their use of unnecessary packaging. Companies such as Sony, Hewlett Packard and Dell are currently taking back their products for recycling. Highland Park can join this effort and go further by requiring that retailers within the Borough join the recycling effort.

Definition of success:

- Creation of producer responsibility recycling ordinance

References/Resources:

- Publix Supermarkets provide recycling bins for plastic shopping bags and egg cartons at their stores.
<http://www.publix.com/wellness/greenwise/feature/Home.do>
- San Francisco Plastic Bag Ordinance
<http://www.reusablebags.com/store/images/sfplasticbagordinance.pdf>

Ask supermarkets and local stores to charge for plastic bags OR give a discount for shoppers who bring their own bags (Priority Action)

Plastic bags and other take-out containers add unnecessary waste to landfills and often end up in our natural ecosystems, clog waterways, and impact wildlife health. Further, many take-out containers are constructed from polystyrene, which is non-biodegradable and takes up an excessive amount of space in landfills. To reduce the impact of disposables, Highland Park can encourage local stores to reduce the use of plastic bags and ask restaurants to allow customers to bring their own containers for take-out food.

Definition of success:

- Annual decrease in the percentage of Highland Park establishments that use plastic bags and non-recyclable or biodegradable take-out containers

References/Resources:

- George Street Coop in New Brunswick provides a \$.05 rebate for customers who bring their own bags. <http://www.georgestreetcoop.com/index.html>

Enact an Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) policy (Priority Action)

The municipality can create a list of EPP products that replace currently used items and serve the same needs. This should be done in partnership or by those staff members who normally purchase goods for municipal operations. The municipality can pass an ordinance mandating that all departments use environmentally-preferable products as recommended.

Definition of success:

- Enacting an EPP policy

References/Resources:

- Rutgers Green Purchasing Cooperative
http://procure.rutgers.edu/green/gp_cooperative.html
- Rutgers Solid Waste Policy Group
<http://www.cook.rutgers.edu/~envpurchase/>
- Green Seal
<http://www.greenseal.org/>
- Green Purchasing: A Guide for Local Governments and Communities
<http://www.state.nj.us/dep/dsr/bscit/epp.pdf>
- New American Dream Institutional Purchasing Program
<http://www.newdream.org/procure/>

Provide residents and businesses with EPP guidelines (Priority Action)

These guidelines can be formulated from web resources or can be based on the trial-and-error EPP project of the municipality.

Definition of success:

- Distributing EPP guidelines at outreach events and posting guidelines on Green Highland Park website

References/Resource:

- Northeast Recycling Council- How to Guides
http://www.nerc.org/how_to_guides/index.html
- Green Purchasing in the Twin Cities
<http://www.greenguardian.com/residents/throw-buy>

Develop a residential / commercial EPP cooperative (Priority Action)

Determine what products are in greatest demand by these members, and seek bulk purchasing discounts with national suppliers. Recycled-content office paper, for instance, is a prime bulk EPP item.

Definition of success:

- Development of a community EPP cooperative; increase in the annual number of cooperative participants

References/Resources:

- King County Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Tools: A variety of online documents on EPP products and municipal programs.
<http://www.metrokc.gov/procure/green/EPPTools.htm#3>
- EPA Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines
<http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/non-hw/procure/products.htm>

1.6 Improve air quality

Organize a series of community sustainability events that help raise awareness about local air quality (Completed)

Highland Park has organized a series of events to raise local awareness of sustainability issues within the Borough. These events are intended to put theory into practice and help Borough residents join in the sustainability effort through everyday activities. Some of the past events include Walk Your Child to School Day, Bike to Work Day, and Car Free Day. These events have helped reduce natural resource consumption and helped educate residents on easy ways to live more sustainable lives.

Definition of success:

- Increasing number of participants at annual community sustainability events

References/Resources:

- One Day Vancouver's Online Guides to Sustainability
Work: http://www.onedayvancouver.ca/take_action.php?itemId=97
Home: http://www.onedayvancouver.ca/take_action.php?itemId=68
- Sustainability Curriculum in Schools
<http://www.state.nj.us/dep/seeds/links.htm>
http://santa-monica.org/epd/environmental_links.htm
- Environmental Defense- Tips to reduce vehicle emissions
<http://www.environmentaldefense.org/page.cfm?tagid=1142>

For more information on future community events, please check out the Highland Park website events link <http://www.hpboro.com/>

Publish a regular column in local newsletters about sustainability issues such as local air quality (Completed)

The Highland Park Environmental Commission maintains a website that contains regular updates about sustainability efforts within the Borough and other environmentally-related matters. Residents can also visit the Green Highland Park website for information on the Borough's effort to become a more sustainable community.

Definition of success:

- Running a regular sustainability column in local newspaper

References/Resources:

- Grist- Environmental News and Commentary
<http://www.grist.org/>
- E/The Environmental Magazine
<http://www.emagazine.com/>

For more information on Highland Park's sustainability efforts, please visit the Environmental Commission at <http://www.leoraw.com/hpenv/> and the Green HP website at <http://greenhp.org/>.

Provide and promote convenient transportation alternatives to individual automobile trips (Priority Action)

See also: Goal 4: Convenient Transportation

The Borough should conduct a study of the transportation needs of Highland Park residents and create a public transportation system that fits these needs. This could include expanding shuttle services, carpooling options, bus rapid transit, and bike-sharing programs.

Definition of success:

- Indicator 4.1: Modal Split- Increasing percentage of trips made by sustainable modes of transportation

References/Resources:

- Keep Middlesex Moving
http://www.kmm.org/kmm/kmm_home.html
- Communities in Motion- Mayors Wellness Campaign
<http://www.mayorswellnesscampaign.org/dev/index.php>

1.7 Educate all residents about the cost-saving benefit of more efficient resource use

Created Residents "Go Green" Booklet (Completed)

The Environmental Commission created a Resident's "Go Green Booklet" in Fall 2006, with tips on how individuals could live more sustainably. The Green Highland Park website is the new virtual home for tips and resources on how residents can reduce their ecological and carbon footprints.

Definition of success:

- Number of "Go Green" booklets distributed, requested and/or downloaded from Borough website

References/Resources:

- Green Highland Park
<http://www.greenhighlandpark.org>
- National Geographic: Going Green Guide
<http://green.nationalgeographic.com/environment/going-green/?nav=TOPNAV>

Construction of Eugene Young Environmental Center (Completed)

Highland Park has constructed the Eugene Young Environmental Center, an educational facility that itself is an example of green building. Funded in part by Middlesex County and named for former council member Eugene Young, the Center was built upon a former brownfield and includes a green roof, solar-powered crosswalks along the street, and the Borough's native plants garden. There are plans to add solar panels to the Center to power its electricity needs as well. Located along the Raritan at River Road and Walter Street, the Center serves as the primary location within the Borough for public education about green technologies, green building, native plants and Green Highland Park. The Environmental Center was dedicated on Earth Day, April 22, 2007.

Definition of success:

- Annual resource savings and benefits calculated from a Building Performance Evaluation (BPE)

References/Resources:

- Rutgers Center for Green Building
www.greenbuilding.rutgers.edu
- Center for the Built Environment
<http://www.cbe.berkeley.edu/>

For more information on the Environmental Center please visit the Highland Park Environmental Commission at <http://www.leoraw.com/hpenv/>

Green Highland Park Community Website (Completed)

The Green Highland Park Community Website is one of many tools used by the Borough to educate residents about Highland Park's commitment to its new Green Community Plan. The website contains the most recent Green Challenges, a printable version of the Green Community Plan, and a resident discussion board among various other resources. The Borough invites all residents to visit the Green HP website frequently for updates on what the Borough is doing to make Highland Park a greener place.

Definition of success:

- Annual number of hits to Green Highland Park website; number of residents signed up for the Green Discussion Group

References/Resources:

- Green Highland Park Community Website
<http://greenhp.org/>.

Provide fact sheets and toolkits to the public about green building and energy conservation practices (Completed)

The Green Highland Park website contains information for residents, businesses and other organizations about energy conservation and other sustainability matters. These resources are intended to provide residents with links to further information on how they can incorporate sustainable practices into their everyday lives.

Definition of success:

- Number of residents that have utilized resources on the Green Highland Park website (annual survey)

References/Resources:

- US Green Building Council
<http://www.usgbc.org/>
<http://www.usgbc.org/DisplayPage.aspx?CMSPageID=147>
- Rutgers Center for Green Building
www.greenbuilding.rutgers.edu
- Energy Star Qualified Home
http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=bldrs_lenders_raters.nh_features

For more information please visit the Green HP website at http://greenhp.org/green_challenge.asp?Level2ItemID=39.

Celebrate local residents, businesses, and groups that have helped promote sustainability in Highland Park through public recognition (Priority Action)

Develop a communitywide sustainability recognition and awards event. Create and distribute a list of local businesses and organizations that have taken steps towards sustainability, and recognize them based on their levels of commitment. Distribute Green Highland Park stickers or awards that businesses can display prominently to publicize their green commitment.

Definition of success:

- Creation of an annual Green Highland Park sustainability awards event

Sponsor workshops on different sustainability issues (Priority Action)

The Borough could partner with local and regional organizations and experts (in the private sector as well as public, i.e. Rutgers University, Cooperative Extension, etc.) to schedule public workshops on various sustainability issues important to Borough residents. Topics could include: sustainable landscaping, using rain barrels, and weatherizing your home.

Definition of success:

- Sold out attendance at annual sustainability workshops

References/Resources:

- Seattle Green Home Remodeling Workshops
http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/GreenBuilding/SingleFamilyResidential/Overview/DP_DS_007575.asp

Develop a reuse center for building materials, where residents can drop off unwanted building materials that can be given to local nonprofits or resold to residents at a nominal price (Priority Action)

Designate a staff member or task force to develop a concept plan for the reuse center. A location for drop-off, storage and resale is needed, as well as a marketing campaign and staff. Consider partnering with a local home building or remodeling assistance organization that can make use of these items.

Definition of success:

- Establishment of a reuse center for building materials in Highland Park

Resources/References:

- Middlesex County Habitat for Humanity
<http://www.middlesexhabitat.org/>
- Building Materials Reuse Association
<http://www.buildingreuse.org/>

Goal 2: Healthy People

Related indicators:

- Infant Mortality
- Death Rate by Heart Disease

2.1 Minimize exposure to environmental contaminants

Required that all municipal lands adopt sustainable landscaping techniques and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices (Completed)

See: Goal 1: Healthy Environment, page 42.

Definition of success:

- Percentage of total municipal lands that have adopted sustainable landscaping techniques and IPM

Provide information on Green Highland Park website about green cleaning practices and include listing of local suppliers for green products/services (Completed)

Highland Park has made information about green cleaning practices and local green businesses available on the Green Highland Park website for residents, businesses and other organizations. These links are intended to provide residents with basic information sources so that they can incorporate green practices into their everyday lives.

Definition of success:

- Number of residents that have utilized resources on the Green Highland Park website (annual survey)

References/Resources:

- Green Seal
<http://www.greenseal.org/>
- Green Purchasing: A Guide for Local Governments and Communities
<http://www.state.nj.us/dep/dsr/bcit/epp.pdf>

For more information please visit the Green Highland Park website at <http://greenhp.org/>.

Enforce anti-idling ordinance (Priority Action)

To further reduce the release of greenhouse gases and pollution into the local air, the Borough can enforce the anti-idling ordinance for motor vehicles which prevents vehicles from idling for more than a prescribed period of time. For example, employees from Aspen Colorado's environmental health department go around once a week to look for idling cars and hand out \$50 tickets if the engine is on for more than 5 minutes. Similar enforcement in the Highland Park, would improve both the health of Borough residents and of the local environment. Further, reduction of idling by vehicles will help conserve limited natural resources.

Definition of success:

- Weekly monitoring and enforcement of anti-idling ordinance by Borough Police

Have Main Street and Chamber of Commerce investigate how to sell green cleaning products, lawn products and other Environmentally Preferable Products (EPP) products (Priority Action)

A natural complement and logical next step to the implementation of an EPP within Highland Park is the creation of a market for green products. Extra-governmental organizations like the local Chamber and Main Street Highland Park can identify businesses that would carry green products, locate local or regional suppliers, and promote the program to Highland Park retailers. The local availability of green products will spur local commerce and encourage green purchasing, contributing to a strong, sustainable Highland Park.

Definition of success:

- Feasibility report on whether Main Street and Chamber of Commerce can coordinate the sale of EPP products to the Highland Park Community

References/Resources:

- King County Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Tools: A variety of online documents on EPP products and municipal programs.
<http://www.metrokc.gov/procure/green/EPPtools.htm#3>
- EPA Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines
<http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/non-hw/procure/products.htm>

2.2 Promote healthy, sustainable diet and exercise habits

Support of Local Farmers' Market (Completed)

For 11 years now, the Borough and Main Street Highland Park have partnered to manage the Highland Park Farmers' Market. During this time the Farmers' Market has experienced a steady increase in vendors and has developed a devoted following. Farmers' Market vendors sell a wide variety of fresh products, including seasonal produce, organic produce, and local artisanal cheeses and baked goods. The Farmers' Market is located in the municipal lot between 2nd and 3rd Avenues, on Raritan Avenue, and operates from mid-summer through late fall from 11am – 5pm.

Definition of success:

- Annual increase in the total sales revenue at the Highland Park Farmer's Market

References/Resources:

- Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Jersey- (NOFA-NJ)
<http://www.nofanj.org/cof.htm>
- Farmers Market Education Programs
<http://santa-monica.org/epd/residents/Education/farmers.htm>

For more information on the Highland Park Farmers' Market please visit Main Street Highland Park at <http://www.mainstreethp.org/home.nfs?a=mainsthp&o=home>

Mayor's Wellness Campaign (Completed)

Highland Park Mayor Meryl Frank has joined the statewide Mayors Wellness Campaign designed to assist municipal mayors in implementing programs that help citizens remain active and healthy. In addition, the Borough has increased spaces for active and passive recreation throughout the Borough. By encouraging healthy lifestyles, Highland Park hopes to increase resident participation in daily physical activity, reduce health care costs and encourage a healthier Borough.

Definition of success:

- Percentage of Highland Park residents who get at least 30 minutes of exercise most days of the week (annual survey)

References/Resources:

- Mayors Wellness Campaign
<http://www.mayorswellnesscampaign.org/>
- New Jersey Bicycle and Pedestrian Resource Center
<http://www.njbikeped.org/web/index.html>
- New Jersey Safe Routes to School Program
<http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/community/srts/>

Insure that all bike and walking paths are maintained (Priority Action)

Identify bicyclist and pedestrian paths in the community (sidewalks, bike lanes, park paths, etc.) and appoint a staff member or task force to perform regular maintenance.

Definition of success:

- Percentage of total Borough bike and walking paths that have passed an annual maintenance check.

References/Resources:

- Highland Park Department of Public Works and Public Utilities
http://www.hpboro.com/publicworks/depts_pworks.htm

Create an ordinance that requires missing, buckled, or broken sidewalks to be replaced as a prerequisite for planning board approval of building renovations (Priority Action)

Sidewalks are the responsibility of the property owner. Throughout the Borough there are missing or buckled or broken sidewalks that create unfriendly pedestrian and bicyclist zones in Highland Park. To help solve this issue, the Borough should create an ordinance that requires missing sidewalks to be installed when a home or business is to be renovated. Currently, the Borough requires that missing sidewalks be installed for newly constructed buildings but not renovations.

Enact a sidewalk replacement ordinance that respects trees (Priority Action)

Highland Park can strive to retain existing trees lining Borough streets when it becomes necessary for Borough sidewalks to be replaced. Trees provide a multitude of benefits, including shade, air filtration, greenhouse reduction and a source of beauty within the community. By mandating that existing trees be retained whenever possible, Borough Council can demonstrate its commitment to making Highland Park a greener place.

Definition of success:

- Passing of sidewalk replacement ordinance

Resources/References:

- Highland Park Tree Ordinance
<http://www.hpboro.com/publicworks/documents/TreeOrdinance.pdf>
- Sample Tree Ordinance
<http://www.scdhec.net/environment/baq/docs/ModelOrdinances/TreeOrdinanceBrief.pdf>
- Alameda County, CA Tree Ordinance
http://www.acgov.org/pwa/programs_services_urban_forestry.shtml
- Austin, TX Tree Ordinance
http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/trees/preserve_code.htm

Educate community on the proper selection and disposal of cleaning products (Priority Action)

Highland Park can develop a low-cost informational packet for distribution to residents and businesses interested in green purchasing. These packets would complement other actions taken by the Borough to encourage the purchase of environmentally friendly cleaning materials. Once completed, the packet can be posted on the Green Highland park website for download by interested parties. This will allow all residents to take advantage of these resources.

Definition of success:

- Distribution and online posting of green cleaning guidelines

References/Resources:

- The Green Guide to Cleaning Products
<http://www.grist.org/advice/possessions/2003/03/18/possessions-cleaning/index.html>
- Seventh Generation
http://www.seventhgen.com/living_green/toxic_cleaning/cleaning_tips.html
- Detox Your Home Guide- Easy Steps you can take for a Safer & Healthier Home.
http://www.tec.org.au/dev/safersolutions/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=5

2.3 Ensure access to healthcare services

Offer health services and exercise programs at reduced fees (Completed)

Highland Park recognizes the importance of every Borough resident having access to health services and opportunities to maintain an active, healthy lifestyle. By insuring access to regular exercise opportunities, the Borough can prevent future health related problems through preventative care. By providing reduced rate services to Borough residents in need, Highland Park reaffirms its commitment to maintaining a population of healthy residents. The Highland Park Recreation Department currently hosts aerobics and yoga classes at the Senior/Youth Center located at 220 South 6th Avenue.

Definition of success:

- Percentage of Highland Park residents who get at least 30 minutes of exercise most days of the week (annual survey)

References/Resources:

For more information, visit the Highland Park Recreation Department at <http://www.hpboro.com/RecreationEvents.htm> or contact the Senior/Youth Center at (732) 819-0411

Free In-Town Transportation and Out-of-Town Medical Transportation (Completed)

Highland Park seniors (age 60 and older) are welcome to use Highland Park local transportation services to reach in-town destinations. Out-of-Town transportation service is also available for medical appointments. Busses are equipped to carry wheel chairs, walkers, and other assistance devices.

Definition of success:

- Senior's satisfaction with the reliability and accessibility of free transportation systems (annual survey)

References/Resources:

- Highland Park Department of Aging
www.hpborough.com/depts.aging.htm

2.4 Maintain strong emergency and safety systems

Publish response times of emergency responders; set targets (Completed)

Highland Park remains committed to making the community a safe, responsive place to live. By publishing the response times of emergency responders and setting response time targets, the Borough expresses this commitment and establishes a baseline from which to improve. Further, publishing response times informs residents of the capabilities and competency of these service professionals and reaffirms their faith that the Borough is a safe place in which to live.

Definition of success:

- Annual progress towards average emergency response time target

References/Resources:

For more information, contact the Highland Park Volunteer First Aid Squad (non-emergency) 732-985-8960.

Goal 3: Strong Community

Related indicators:

- Crime Rate
- Voter Turnout
- Percent of Income Spent Locally

3.1 Ensure mixed-use downtown corridor that is vibrant, safe and walkable

Establish pedestrian zones closed to motor vehicle traffic on Sundays (Priority Action)

Every Sunday, Highland Park could close designated streets on heavily used pedestrian thoroughfares to vehicles as a way to advocate a lively, pedestrian friendly environment. Throughout Europe, pedestrian streets and malls are a relatively common feature. Cities as diverse as Trondheim, Norway; Florence, Italy; and Graz, Austria have pedestrian zones that act as central features of the community. By establishing pedestrian galleries, the Borough can both encourage resident interaction and alternative, sustainable forms of transportation.

Definition of success:

- Established policy that every Sunday a designated section of streets is off limits to motor vehicles

References/Resources:

- Pedestrian Streets
<http://www.strans.org/plaza.html>

Complete pathway connecting Donaldson and Johnson Parks (Priority Action)

The Borough should establish a pedestrian and bicycling pathway between Donaldson and Johnson Parks to improve accessibility and the linkages between Highland Parks green spaces.

Definition of success:

- Completed pathway connecting Donaldson and Johnson Parks

References/Resources:

- The East Coast Greenway
<http://www.greenway.org/>

Provide adequate lighting at night to keep corridors well lit and safe (Priority Action)

There are a number of benefits to street lighting. It can be used to promote security in urban areas and to increase the quality of life by artificially extending the hours in which it is light so that activity can take place. Street lighting also improves safety for drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians. The Borough could conduct a survey of municipal streets and identify those which need lighting maintenance or installation.

Definition of success:

- Percentage of residents who feel that Highland Park is a safe place to live (annual survey)

3.2 Encourage green construction, redevelopment and rehabilitation

Redevelopment Plan (Completed)

Highland Park was the first municipality in New Jersey to create a green redevelopment plan based on the United State Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) criteria. The plan strongly encourages construction efforts within the Borough to adhere to LEED standards.

Definition of success:

- Percentage of new development projects that meet or exceed LEED standards

References/Resources:

- Highland Park Green Redevelopment Plan
http://www.hpboro.com/documents/102005HP_DRP_09_30_05_screen.pdf

Highland Park Master Plan 2003 (Completed)

The Master Plan was last updated in 2003. It has a number of provisions for sustainable planning and smart growth, including the preservation of open space and environmentally sensitive areas.

Highland Park 2020 – A Sustainable Community (Completed)

This plan, which was unveiled in 2003 by Mayor Meryl Frank, serves as a green planning blueprint for the future of the Borough to become environmentally, economically and socially sustainable by 2020.

Green Community Plan (Completed)

With a Smart Future Grant from the Office of Smart Growth (OSG) in the State Department of Community Affairs, the Borough of Highland Park hired the New Jersey Sustainable State Institute (NJSSI) as a consultant to help the Borough craft a strategic community green plan. The Highland Park Green Community Plan will serve as an ongoing planning and decision making tool to guide Highland Park toward sustainable development.

Definition of success:

- Use of Green Community Plan as a planning, policy, and outreach tool

References/Resources:

For more information and to view an online version of the Highland Park Green Community Plan please visit <http://greenhp.org/>

Land Use Ordinances (Underway)

As part of the Borough's commitment to creating a sustainable Highland Park, Borough Council will be enacting new ordinances aimed at codifying recommendations of the Green Community Plan

Definition of success:

- Complete review of Highland Park Land Use ordinance and formal recommendation to update ordinances with green criteria

References/Resources:

- Smart Communities Network
<http://www.smartcommunities.ncat.org/greendev/codes.shtml>

Green Standards for Major Construction Projects (Completed)

The Highland Park Redevelopment Plan strongly encourages green building technologies be used in construction projects within the Borough.

Definition of success:

- Number of private developments incorporating green building practices

References/Resources:

- HP Green Redevelopment Plan:
http://www.hpboro.com/documents/102005HP_DRP_09_30_05_screen.pdf
- U.S. Green Building Council
<http://www.usgbc.org/>
- American Institute of Architects (AIA) Sustainability Toolkit
http://www.aia.org/static/state_local_resources/adv_sustainability/
- Global Green: Green Building Resource Center
<http://www.globalgreen.org/gbrc/index.htm>

For more information on green building standards within the Borough please contact the Department of Code Enforcement at (732) 777-6013 or http://www.hpboro.com/depts_construction.htm.

Green Public Buildings (Completed)

Numerous efforts have been taken to “green” public buildings within Highland Park. Perhaps the best known example is the Eugene Young Environmental Center, which features numerous elements of green building and a native plant garden. In addition, Borough Hall has been retrofitted with solar panels and Irving School has been retrofitted with geothermal HVAC as part of its renovation. Other energy efficient measures have been installed in other schools as well as the entire Borough moves towards a greener future.

Definition of success:

- Number of public facilities incorporating green building practices

References/Resources: (See also Green Standards for Major Construction Projects, above)

- LEED Initiatives in Government and Schools
<http://www.usgbc.org/DisplayPage.aspx?CMSPageID=1779>

Strive for a minimum of LEED certification or equivalent on all newly constructed and renovation projects (Priority Action)*Municipal Projects*

The Borough should designate a municipal staff member or task force to oversee that all new construction and major renovation projects incorporate a baseline standard of green building criteria that is established by the Borough. This process could include enacting an ordinance that all new buildings and renovations employ sustainable building practices and materials (see resources below for examples); training municipal employees in sustainable building practices; providing incentives for developers to build green, and/or hiring green building-certified professionals for construction and renovation projects.

Redevelopment and Development Projects

The Borough should develop a green building standard (expectations) and reward development projects that meet these standards with incentives. For example, the Borough could:

- Offer a full rebate on applications fees for new buildings that become certified according to LEED or other standards.
- Reduced inspection and permitting fees.
- Expedited plan and field check: Reduce processing time 20-50%.
- Code / zoning variances: Density bonuses, other smart growth strategies.
- Tax credits / exemptions: Tax relief on all or part of allowable costs of green building techniques.
- Below-market capital: Provide revolving, low-interest loan funds and extended payment options (often used in building rehabilitation and infill).
- Monetary awards and rebates: Provide competitive grant programs for innovative projects.
- Recognition: Promotion on websites, events, educational materials.
- Free or reduced-rate services: Green building consulting, design support, construction site management teams, etc.

Definition of success:

- Number of private and public buildings incorporating green standards

Resources/References: (See also Green Standards for Major Construction Projects, above)

- Senick, Jennifer (2006). An Analysis of Residential Green Building Best Management Practices
http://www.greenbuilding.rutgers.edu/docs/Residential_Green_Bldg_MAY_06.pdf

- Somerset County High Performance Building Toolkit
<http://www.scbp.org/member/greenbuildings.html>
- Ordinances and Specifications for Sustainable Development
<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/sustainable/sustcodes.htm>

Provide information about green building with each planning and rezoning application (Priority Action)

Develop a packet of information on green building that will best suit Highland Park development projects.

Definition of success:

- Number of private developments incorporating green building practices

References/Resources: (See also Green Standards for Major Construction Projects, above)

- U.S. Green Building Council (LEED)
<http://www.usgbc.org/>
- National Association of Home Builders' Model Green Home Building Guidelines
http://www.nahb.org/publication_details.aspx?publicationID=1994§ionID=155
- Green Globes Environmental Assessment System
<http://www.thegbi.org>

Train municipal officials in green building; designate a municipal official to become a USGBC-NJ Chapter member (Priority Action)

One of the first hurdles to overcome when transitioning to green building is the learning curve. The Borough can accelerate the rate at which Borough employees get up to speed and stay current on green building design strategies and technologies by providing green building training and workshops opportunities for employees. In addition, the US Green Building Council's New Jersey Chapter is a membership based network of green building professionals in New Jersey. The USGBC-NJ Chapter's website provides an undated list of upcoming green building events, trainings, and news.

Definition of success:

- Number of municipal staff involved in building and construction that are LEED certified and/or members of the USGBC-NJ Chapter

References/Resources: (See also Green Standards for Major Construction Projects, above)

- USGBC-NJ Chapter
<http://chapters.usgbc.org/newjersey/>
- Somerset County High Performance Building Toolkit
<http://www.scbp.org/member/greenbuildings.html>

3.3 Foster a strong sense of community through events, public spaces and lively streets and sidewalks

Continue to organize community events in local parks (Completed)

Highland Park can encourage a sense of community within the Borough by continuing to host community events in local parks such as “Autumn in the Park” and the “Highland Park Arts Festival.” With the additional development and redevelopment of several parks, the Borough has a nice opportunity to provide a forum for community interaction and promote the recent achievements of the Borough in making Highland Park a greener, more sustainable community.

Definition of success:

- Number of residents attending community events

References/Resources:

For more information, please check the Highland Park website events link <http://www.hpboro.com/>

Host Block Parties at local parks and community facilities (Completed)

Residents and community organizations can contribute to the sense of community within the Borough by hosting get-togethers, picnics and parties at local parks and facilities. This encourages use of the Borough’s extensive public spaces and helps contribute to a lively, interactive community for neighbors of all ages.

Definition of success:

- Continued use of local parks and community facilities for block parties and other neighborhood social events

References/Resources:

- Neighborhood Block Party Guide
<http://www.city.palo-alto.ca.us/civica/filebank/blobdload.asp?BlobID=3951>

Designate space for community gardens (Completed)

Highland Park has dedicated Borough land for community gardens in several locations. A new native plants garden has been established on the grounds of the Environmental Center, there is a new recycled materials and rain garden at Centennial Park, new plantings at Donaldson Park and various plantings on school grounds. In addition, the Highland Park Environmental Commission is undertaking a project to have the Borough certified as a National Wildlife Federation “Community Wildlife Habitat.” The Community Wildlife Habitat project will enhance and create urban habitats in Highland Park to give wildlife more opportunities to find food, water, shelter, and places to raise their young. All this adds to the biodiversity of the Borough and makes the Borough a greener, more beautiful place to live, work and play.

Definition of success:

- Certification of Highland Park as a National Wildlife Federation “Community Wildlife Habitat”

References/Resources:

- National Wildlife Federation- Community Wildlife Habitat
<http://www.nwf.org/community/>
- Community (flower/butterfly/hummingbird) Gardens
<http://www.njaudubon.org/education/backyardhabitat/butterhummgarden.html>
<http://www.gardensites.info/states/nj.htm>
- Project for Public Spaces
<http://www.pps.org/info/aboutpps/>

For more information on Highland Park community gardens, please contact Steve Barnes via email through the Environmental Commission web site
<http://www.leoraw.com/hpenv/>

3.4 Attract businesses that meet the everyday needs of residents and provide support for local entrepreneurs

Create a sustainable business program that encourages and distinguishes sustainable businesses with identifiable logo to be placed on storefront/business windows, websites and promotional materials (Priority Action)

The Borough should develop guidelines and a certification system by which participating businesses can earn designation as a sustainable business. The sustainable business program could include educational information/training on how businesses work to improve resource and energy efficiency, save money, and provide jobs for local residents. In addition, the program would help market participants through a print and online sustainable business directory.

Definition of success:

- Creation of sustainable business criteria and rating system; increasing number of businesses who participate in the program each year

References/Resources:

- Chicago Sustainable Business Alliance
<http://www.sustainablechicago.biz/>
- Chicago Green Business Directory
<http://www.sustainablechicago.biz/members/>
- Co-Op America National Green Pages
<http://www.coopamerica.org/pubs/greenpages/>
- Rochester Green Business Network
<http://ceinfo.org/rghbn/dirsearch.php?by=organization>
- Sacramento Sustainable Business Program
<http://sacberc.org/Web/programs/ssbp/>

Sponsor an annual “Shop Highland Park Week” (Priority Action)

Highland Park could dedicate a week each year when residents are encouraged to make a commitment to do all of their shopping and within the Borough to help support the local economy and reduce travel-related emissions. In addition, the Borough could sponsor a “Restaurant Week” to offer fixed-priced meals at local eateries.

Definition of success:

- Indicator 3.3: Increase in the annual income spent locally

References/Resources:

- Buy Local Philly Holiday Shopping Week <http://www.buylocalphilly.com/>

3.5 Government that anticipates the needs of citizens and practices stewardship toward the environment

Enforce the law (Priority Action)

Enactment of ordinances by Borough Council is only one step in developing a more sustainable community. All branches and departments of the Borough must partner to realize the goals of the Green Community Plan. Strict enforcement of Borough ordinances insures that Highland Park continues to make progress and all residents are held accountable for their actions. This includes insuring that noise, anti-littering, anti-idling, and non-conforming renovations and driveways are addresses with appropriate penalties.

Definition of success:

- Enforcement of Highland Park ordinances

Annual reporting on Green Highland Park Indicators (Priority Action)

The Highland Park Green Community Plan represents an ongoing commitment on the part of the Borough to create a greener, more sustainable community for the future. Part of that Commitment includes a continual review of progress toward this goal. By reporting on designated indicators annually, the Borough can measure its progress while holding itself accountable to its residents.

Definition of success:

- Annual “State of Highland Park” public address where the results of the Green Highland Park Indicators are released, successful sustainability actions are recognized, and new action steps are planned

References/Resources:

- Minneapolis, MN- Sustainability Indicators
<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/sustainability/indicators.asp>
- City of Santa Monica, CA – Sustainability Indicators
http://santa-monica.org/epd/scp/goals_indicators.htm

Develop a municipal sustainability awareness campaign using messages in local publications (Priority Action)

The Borough should create one or more informational campaigns to be used in print, radio and television as well as for outreach conducted at community events. In addition, the Borough should partner with local newspapers and distribute press releases of notable activities and achievements related to the greening of Highland Park.

Definition of success:

- Regular weekly coverage in local papers and media channels on Highland Park sustainability efforts

References/Resources:

- Burlington's 10% Challenge
<http://www.10percentchallenge.org/>
- National Conversation on Climate Action
<http://climateconversation.org/toolkit.cfm>

Goal 4: Convenient Transportation

Related indicators:

- Transportation Choices
- Time Spent Commuting

4.1 Prioritize pedestrian and bicyclist safety

Employ traffic calming devices (Priority Action)

The Borough school help to ensure safe walking and biking pathways by incorporating a combination of the following traffic calming devices: widen sidewalks, install curb extensions, center islands and plantings, road narrowing, diagonal parking, and raise and repaint crosswalks at priority locations such as schools, high-density commercial areas and at transit stops to make it easier for people to cross the street.

Definition of success:

- Decrease in the annual number of pedestrian/bicyclist collisions with motor vehicles

References/Resources:

- TrafficCalming.org
<http://www.trafficcalming.org/index.html>
- NJ FIT: Future in Transportation- Toolkit
<http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/works/njfit/toolbox/efficiency.shtm>

Maintain and expand pedestrian and bicycle safety education programs (Priority Action)

The Borough should partner with local school district to offer courses in pedestrian and bicycle safety to all students and members of the community. Input from the community can help identify where improvements need to create safer walking and cycling environments including improving roads and sidewalks, enforcing speed limits, educating students and improving personal safety.

Definition of success:

- Decrease in the annual number of pedestrian/bicyclist collisions with motor vehicles

References/Resources:

- Safe Routes to School Program
<http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/community/srts/>

Define bike lanes in Borough downtown and major thoroughfares (Priority Action)

Bike lanes help insure a safe and accessible transportation network for bicyclists. Designating bike lanes through Highland Park's downtown area and major thoroughfares can encourage more residents to bike to shops, work, and school.

Definition of success:

- Percentage of arterial streets and collector roads which have bike lanes; total miles of bike paths, lanes & routes.

References/Resources:

- Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center
<http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/pp/exemplary.htm>
- Bike Lane Design Guide
http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/pdf/bike_lane.pdf

Make pedestrian and bicycle planning a routine and required part of all transportation planning and development (Priority Action)

The Borough can enact a policy requiring that all future development and planning prioritize pedestrian and bike traffic. Pedestrian and bicycle travel must not be an afterthought to car-centered development. Walking and biking can be a central element of the planning process from the outset if it is codified into municipal planning policies and procedures. Crosswalks should be plentiful, marked with a physically distinct surface or raised area and signage, and they should be facilitated with prioritized, pedestrian-activated signals. Traffic signals should be timed to allow pedestrian to cross before turning vehicles and to have adequate time to complete the crossing. Routes must be safe, pleasant and offer connectivity.

Definition of success:

- Enacting policy that requires all future development and planning to consider the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists before automobiles

References/Resources:

- Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center
<http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/pp/exemplary.htm>
- Bike Lane Design Guide
http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/pdf/bike_lane.pdf

4.2 Promote the use of and access to train and busses for commuting

Commuter Shuttle Bus (Completed)

The commuter shuttle bus is a service that will run between Highland Park and the New Brunswick train station. Initiated by local government and funded through a grant from the New Jersey Department of Transportation, the shuttle will make it easier for Borough residents to access public transportation and reduce reliance on automobiles for commutes. The shuttle service should be operational in Spring 2008.

Definition of success:

- Increase in annual average daily ridership of the Highland Park/New Brunswick Train Station Shuttle

References/Resources:

- New Jersey Transit
http://www.njtransit.com/hp/hp_servlet.srv?hdnPageAction=HomePageTo
- Bus Rapid Transit 101: Center for Transportation Excellence
<http://www.cfte.org/trends/brt.asp>

Publicize proximity to transit as a reason to shop in local stores (Priority Action)

The Borough should work with Highland Park businesses to develop a marketing plan that advertises the Borough's convenient location and accessibility by public transportation or foot as a way to promote shopping in the downtown area. Discounts could be offered to cyclists or transit riders at local shops and restaurants to promote further the transportation-shopping link.

Definition of success:

- Indicator 3.3: Increase in the percentage of annual income spent locally

References/Resources:

- New Jersey Transit
http://www.njtransit.com/hp/hp_servlet.srv?hdnPageAction=HomePageTo

Lobby state and county officials to improve pedestrian routes to bus and train (Priority Action)

The Borough should work with residents and community groups to lobby state and county officials on improving pedestrian access to public transportation. The Borough could organize “town meetings” regarding the issue and work with community members to get their voice heard through collective efforts such as sending letters, making phone calls, and signing petitions.

Definition of success:

- Total number of letters and/or petition signatures from Highland Park residents regarding the improvement pedestrian routes to bus and train

References/Resources:

For a list of current local state and county representatives, please see <http://www.hpboro.com/gov.htm>

4.3 Minimize the environmental impact of municipal transportation investments

Solar, Pedestrian Activated Crosswalk Signals (Completed)

The Borough has installed solar pedestrian activated crosswalk signals near the Environmental Center to aid pedestrian crossings of River Road at Walter, Harrison, and Cleveland Avenues. These signals, which are powered by the sun, reduce Highland Park's reliance upon fossil fuels, and are another example of Highland Park's commitment to creating a greener, most sustainable community.

Definition of success:

- Indicator 1.5: Increase in the percentage of total annual kWh of electricity that are derived from renewable energy sources

References/Resources:

- HP Environmental Commission
<http://www.leoraw.com/hpenv/>

Hybrid/alternative fuel use police and inspection vehicles (Completed)

Highland Park has begun to transition its fleet of municipal vehicles from traditional gasoline powered vehicles to hybrid or alternative fuel vehicles. Already, three (3) hybrid or alternative fuel vehicles have been purchased for use by the Borough. These vehicles are yet another example of the Borough's commitment to utilizing renewable, non-polluting sources of energy as it creates a more sustainable community.

Definition of success:

- Increase over time in the percentage of municipal vehicles that are hybrid and/or alternative fueled vehicles

References/Resources:

- The Clean Fleet Guide
<http://www.eere.energy.gov/fleetguide>
- The Alternative Fuels Data Center (AFDC)
<http://www.eere.energy.gov/afdc/>

High Efficiency Lighting and LED Traffic Signals (Completed)

Highland Park has replaced most of the Borough-owned signals with high-efficiency LED lights. This commitment to energy efficiency will save the Borough money in the future due to the longer life and higher energy efficiency of LED bulbs. In addition, these energy efficient LED bulbs will further reduce the Borough's use of limited fossil fuels and help decrease air pollution.

Definition of success:

- Percent of traffic lights installed/retrofitted using LEDs

References/Resources:

- Energy Star
http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=lighting.pr_lighting
- Earth Easy
http://www.eartheasy.com/live_energyeff_lighting.htm
- U.S. Department of Energy – Efficient Lighting
http://www.eere.energy.gov/consumer/your_home/lighting_daylighting/index.cfm/mytopic=11970

For more information please contact the Department of Public works at (732) 247-9397 or http://www.hpboro.com/publicworks/depts_pworks.htm

Implement “fix it first” practices (Priority Action)

Fix-It-First is a state policy focused on keeping existing transportation infrastructure in good repair. Highland Park can implement this policy by instituting preventative care of its roadways.

Definition of success:

- No annual increase or a decrease in the percentage of transportation infrastructure in need of repair

References/Resources:

- NJFIT: Future in Transportation
<http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/works/njfit/links/faq.shtm>

4.4 Make the Borough a place where one can live comfortably without a vehicle

Lower minimum parking requirements for new commercial development or set maximum parking requirements, particularly near transit services (Priority Action)

Highland Park could create an overlay district, such as a Pedestrian Overlay (PO) District or Transit Oriented (TO) District that provides an automatic reduction in parking requirements. A 10% reduction (or more) can be recommended in these districts. The Borough could also provide a reduced parking requirement to developments, but require those developments to create a “parking reserves.” These are reserves of unpaved land (which can also be landscaped or natural) of an appropriate size that can be paved and used as parking in the future if need. This is especially useful for phased projects.

Definition of success:

- Decrease in the percentage of impervious surface in the Borough

References/Resources:

- City of Minneapolis Pedestrian-oriented off-street parking regulations <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/lrtrezoning/tod-haiwatha-09.asp>
- Boston Metropolitan Area Planning Council: Landscaped Parking Reserves http://transtoolkit.mapc.org/Parking/Strategies/parking_reserves.htm

Establish a ride-sharing website (Priority Action)

The Borough can create a page on the Borough website that provides links to established regional ride-sharing websites as well as covers general information on all transportation alternatives. Additional topics could include: public transit systems within Highland Park and nearby communities; designated bike routes / lanes; greenways and other pedestrian routes; local rideshare programs; and private commuter / transport services.

Definition of success:

- Indicator 4.1: Transportation Choices- Increase in the percentage of trips taken by bike or public transportation

References/Resources:

- E-rideshare <http://www.erideshare.com/carpool.php?city=Middlesex&state=NJ&zip=08846>
- NJ commuter/rideshare <http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/commuter/rideshare/matchin.shtm>
- Ridester http://www.ridester.com/search_driver/searchState?browsestate=yes&statepr=/search_driver/searchState?browsestate=yes&statepr=nj

Goal 5: Fairness and Equity

Related Indicators:

- Educational Attainment
- Disparities in Student HSPA Assessment

5.1 Provide a mix of housing that is affordable and accessible to shopping, services, and recreation

Provide incentives to retrofit and renovate existing affordable housing to Energy Star, LEED or equivalent green building standard (Priority Action)

Green housing lowers the impacts on the environment and on human health by using non-toxic, renewable, and local materials and reduces the cost of operations and maintenance by providing- healthy, durable, and energy and water efficient buildings. Affordable housing provides housing at an initial low purchasing price or rental price but does not necessarily guarantee the on-going, more affordable utility bills and reduced maintenance costs that green building can assure. Highland Park can create opportunities for housing that is both affordable and healthy by educating its residents on available green affordable housing grants and rebate programs as well as creating green affordable housing incentives at the local level. The focus should be on reducing utility bills in rental units.

Definition of success:

- Percentage of total affordable housing units in Highland Park that are built/retrofitted according to green building standards

References/Resources:

- New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency- NJ Green Homes Office
<http://www.state.nj.us/dca/hmfa/biz/devel/gho/>
- New Jersey's Clean Energy Program Incentives:
Energy Star products <http://www.njcleanenergy.com/residential/programs/energy-star-product-rebates/new-jersey-energy-star-product-rebates>
High efficiency natural gas heating systems and/or hot water heaters
<http://www.njcleanenergy.com/residential/programs/warmadvantage/warmadvantage>
Geothermal heat pumps and energy-efficient central air conditioners
<http://www.njcleanenergy.com/residential/programs/cooladvantage/cooladvantage-program>
- ENERGY STAR Audit Program
<http://www.njcleanenergy.com/residential/programs/home-performance-energy-star/homeowners/what-home-performance/what-home-performance>

Mr. Fix-it Program (Priority Action)

The Borough should create a "Mr. Fix-It" Program that performs minor home repairs and provide the labor at no charge to seniors and/or disabled residents in Highland Park free of charge. The resident pays only for the cost of the materials. To participate in the program, residents must be 60 and over, unable to do the repair themselves, financially unable to hire a contractor or unable to get a contractor to their home because the project is too small. Services may include:

- Repair of broken windows or doors
- Simple plumbing repairs (toilets, dripping faucets, etc.)
- Repair of small appliances
- Weather stripping
- Painting
- Installing hooks, pictures, curtain rods
- Home safety inspections

Definition of success:

- Creation of Mr. Fix-it Program

References/Resources:

- Mr. Fix-it of Edison, New Jersey
http://www.edisonnj.org/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC=%7BBEFF18E6-D6EB-4DBC-AAC9-531C43480796%7D

5.2 Ensure that educational and recreational opportunities are available to all residents

Utilize public buildings, schools, and churches for community events after regular business hours (Completed)

Highland Park recognizes the need for everyone in the community to have access to public meeting spaces to build community. The Borough has made public buildings and locations available for various groups to gather.

Definition of success:

- Number of public-private partnerships that utilize untapped resources and create new opportunities for community engagement and recreation

References/Resources:

For more information, please visit the Highland Park Department of Community Services at http://www.hpboro.com/depts_comservices.htm

Highland Park Teen Community Service Program (Completed)

The Mayor's Teen Council coordinates volunteer opportunities for teens. Volunteers are encouraged to donate at least 24 hours per year. Individuals can sign up to work once a month or once a week. Volunteer opportunities are available with the Food Pantry, Recreation Department, Senior Center, Main Street Highland Park, and the Green Community Working Group.

Definition of success:

- Increase in the number of teens that participate in the service program over previous years

References/Resources:

For more information, please contact Eli Gabel-Frank at hpteenservice@yahoo.com. Applications are available on the Highland Park website.

Before and After School Programs (Completed)

The Board of Education provides the before and after school programs in Highland Park as a service to working parents.

Definition of success:

- Annual survey on the availability of quality services for working parents

References/Resources:

For more information, contact the Teen Center and Community Program at the Highland Park High School (732) 572-2400, ext. 3125

Highland Park Community Teen Center (Completed)

The Highland Park Community Teen Center offers youth service programs that are open to all middle school and high school students in Highland Park. Programs include counseling, health services, substance awareness services, and career services. The Center is located at the Highland Park Middle and High School Building, 102 North Fifth Avenue, in Room 105.

Definition of success:

- Annual survey on the availability of educational and social programs for teens

References/Resources:

For more information, contact the Community Teen Center at 732) 572-2400 Ext. 3125 or log onto their website at:

<http://www.highlandpark.k12.nj.us/users/ctc/teen%20center/index.html>

Highland Park Arts Commission- Open Studios (Completed)

The mission of the Highland Park Arts Commission is to “enrich the quality of life for the citizen of Highland Park by developing, sustaining and promoting artistic expression and arts appreciation in a manner that reflects all of our community’s diverse cultures.” Open Studios is an annual event that celebrates the talented artists who live and work in our community. It offers the public free self-guided tours of local artists’ studios and galleries representing an exciting variety of art media. Past events have included photography, book art, printmaking, painting, pottery, fiber arts, sculpture, jewelry, video, and performance art.

Definition of success:

- Participation in annual Open Studios event

References/Resources:

- Highland Park Arts Commission
<http://www.highlandparkartists.org/HPArtsCommission.htm>

Host Green Home and Garden Tours (Priority Action)

Highland Park residents, businesses, and organizations should host an annual green home and garden tour. The event would be a fun and educational opportunity for the community to learn about green projects in the Borough such as no-mow lawns, wildlife habitat gardens, water efficient landscaping, green roofs, rain gardens, composting, solar panels, and geothermal heating.

Definition of success:

- Creation of an annual green home and garden tour

References/Resources:

- Earthways Center- Annual Green Home Tour
<http://www.earthwayscenter.org/festival.html>

Involve residents and children of all ages in Green Highland Park Challenges (Priority Action)

Develop a youth program that can assist in the Green Highland Park effort. Coordinate with the Highland Park School District, the YMCA, Senior Services, local congregations and other community organizations to increase involvement and create an ongoing series of Green Highland Park Challenges.

Definition of success:

- Annual participation in Green Highland Park Challenges

References/Resources:

- A Viable Futures Toolkit
http://www.viablefuturestoolkit.org/toolkit_tab.htm
- Sustainable Table
<http://sustainabletable.com>
- New Jersey Higher Education Partnership for Sustainability (NJHEPS)
<http://www.njheps.org/>
- Cool New Jersey Handbook
<http://www.coolnewjersey.org/files/handbook.pdf>