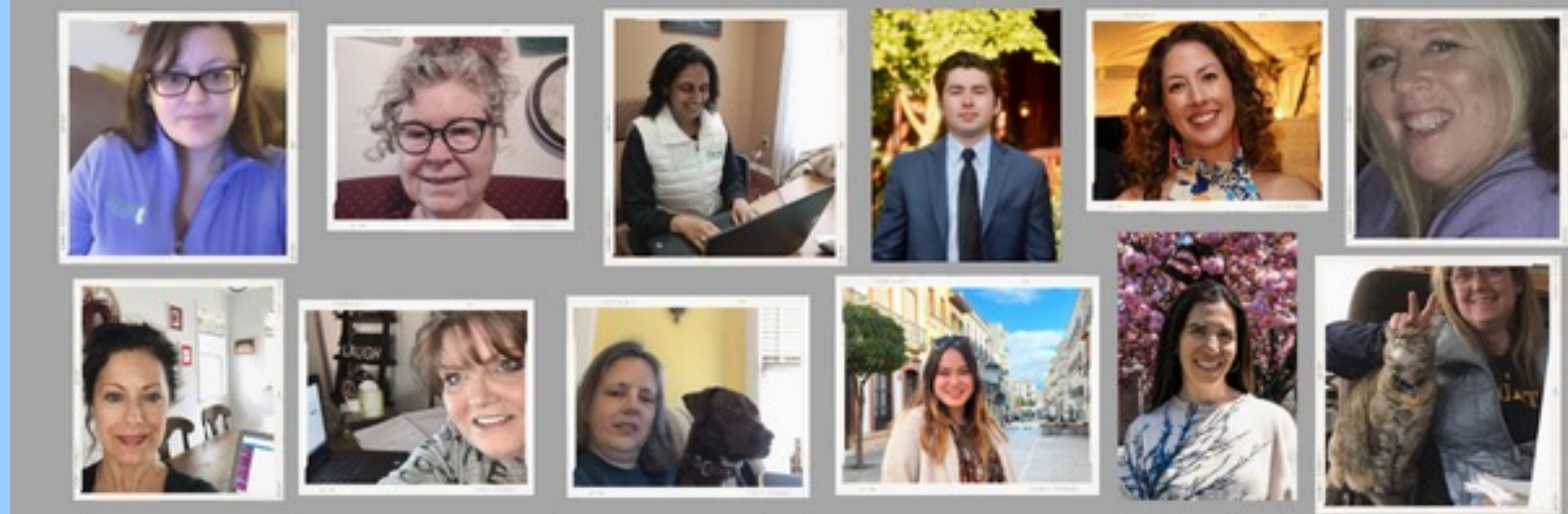


Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions





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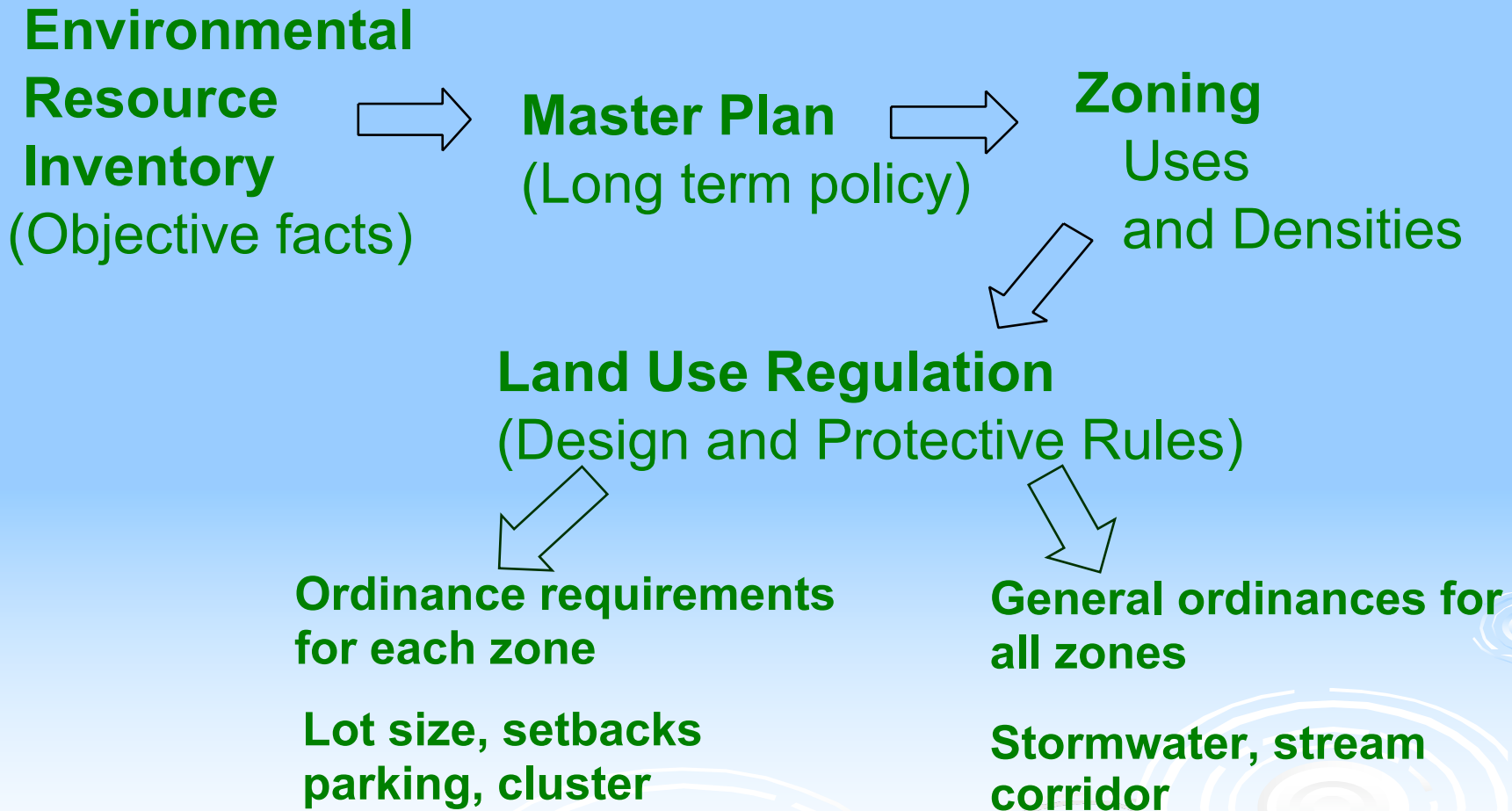


Understanding Municipal Master Plans

***Fundamentals for Effective
Environmental Commissions
March 22, 2023***



MUNICIPAL LAND USE

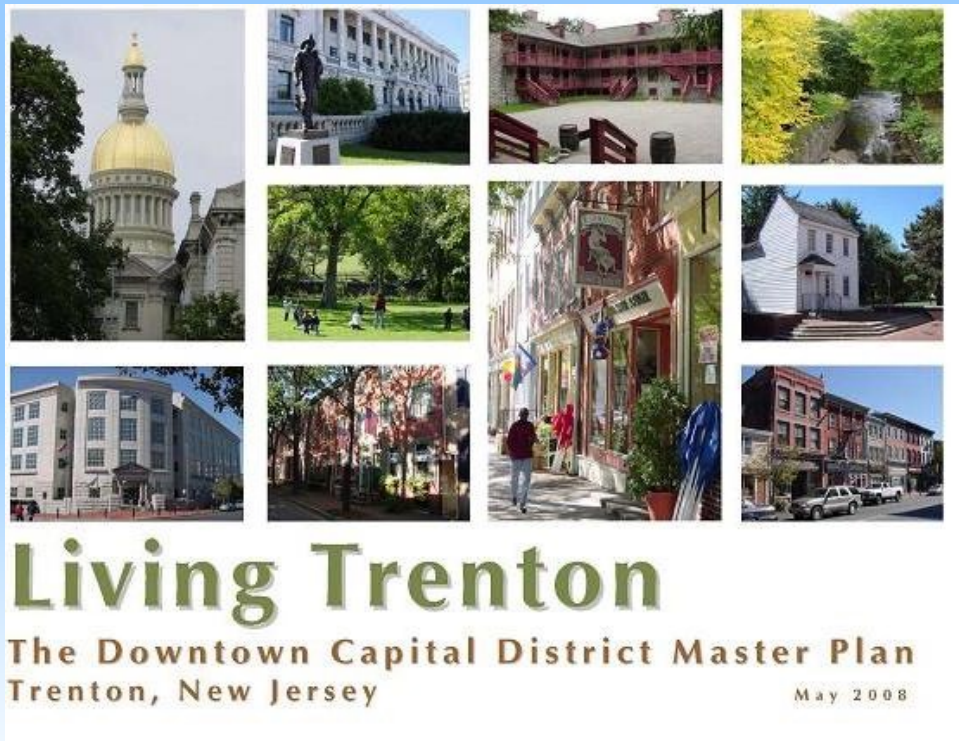


The Master Plan

- **Community's vision for the future**
- **Guides local planning process including protecting natural resources**
- **Plans for schools, parks, economy**
- **Designating areas for future growth and HOW town will grow**



Master Plan: The framework for local land use policy over time



Master Plan

➤ REQUIREMENTS

- A Statement of Purpose
- The Relationship to Other Plans
- Land Use Plan Element
- Housing Element
- Climate Hazard Assessment *New!



➤ OPTIONAL ELEMENTS – IMPORTANT TO EC'S

- Conservation Element
- Open space and Recreation
- Green Buildings and Sustainability planning
- Farmland Preservation



Master Plan

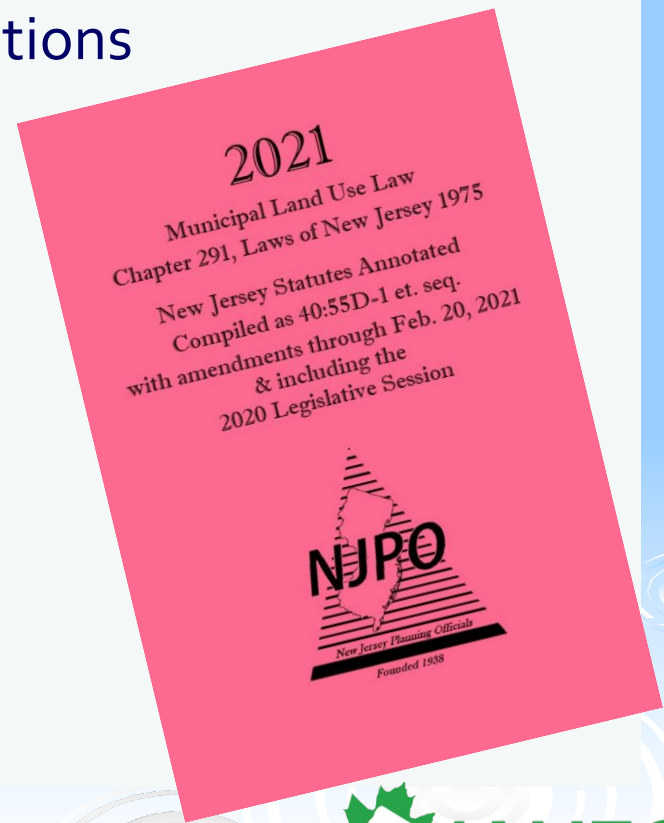
- Adopted by the Planning Board
- Guides future land use in the town
- Establishes goals/policies such as protecting water supply, forest, farms, floodplains and steep slopes
- Must be re-examined every 10 years; more frequently if needed
- Environmental Commission should be involved in master planning so that town's natural resources are protected



Municipal Land Use Law

40:55D-1, et seq.

- New Jersey has delegated land use powers to the municipalities, with some exceptions
- MLUL covers
 - Master Plans
 - Zoning
 - Planning and Zoning Board of Adjustment powers and duties
 - Land Use Ordinances



What is EC's Role in the Master Plan?

- Review: Conservation plan element during master plan reexamination using data in ERI/NRI – Land Use element
- Add: Green buildings and environmental sustainability, Climate action plan elements



What is in the Land Use Element

- Considers natural conditions including topography, soil conditions, water supply, drainage, floodplain areas, marshes and woodlands.
- Shows existing and proposed land use and describe population and development intensity as well as the natural conditions of the town.

Much of this information can be found in an Environmental Resource Inventory which can be adopted as part of the master plan.

What are some newer requirements

- As of 2018 - Requires a statement of strategy concerning:
 - (i) smart growth which, in part, shall consider potential locations for the installation of electric vehicle charging stations;
 - (ii) storm resiliency with respect to energy supply, flood-prone areas, and environmental infrastructure;
 - (iii) environmental sustainability
- **NEW (started in 2021) Requirement for climate-change related hazard vulnerability assessment**

Other Municipal Plans

- **Open space and Recreation Plans**
- **Historic Preservation Plans**
- **Flood Management**
- **Stormwater Management Plans**
- **And many others**



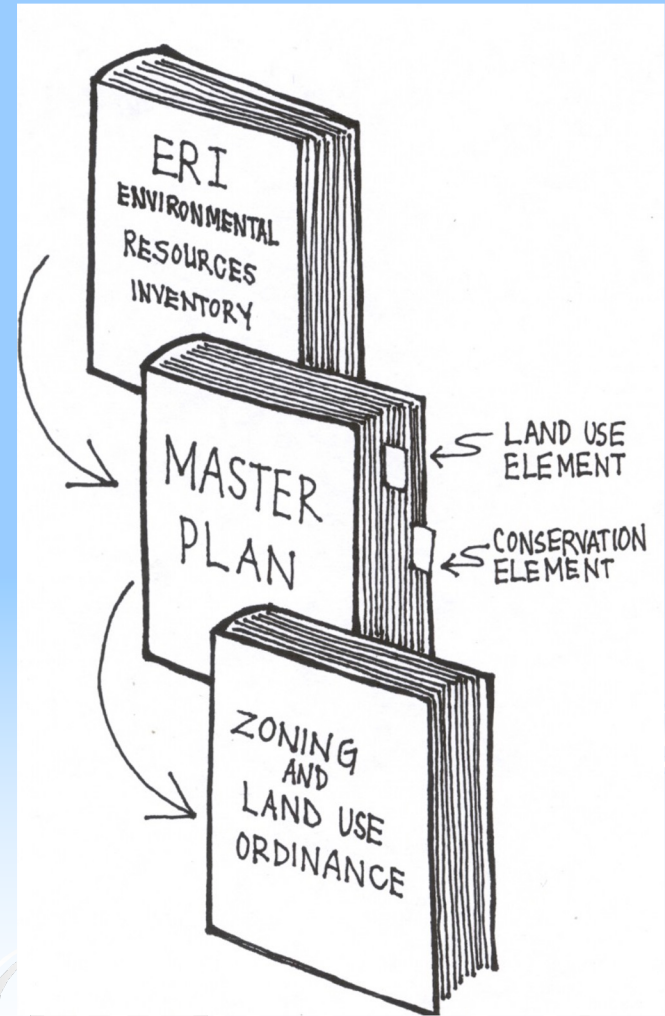
Open Space and Recreation Plans

The Municipal Land Use Law (40:55D-1 et. seq.) specifically authorizes the protection of open spaces as a purpose:

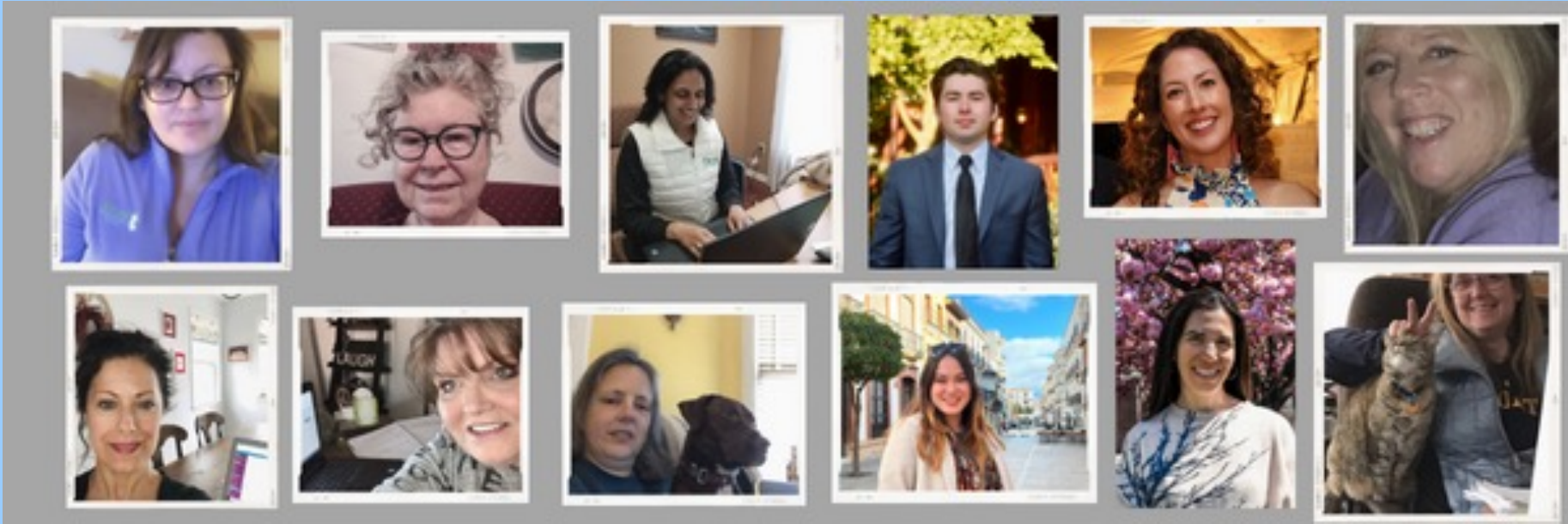
“To promote the conservation of historic sites and districts, open space, energy resources, and valuable natural resources in the State and to prevent urban sprawl and degradation of the environment through improper use of land” .

In Summary

- Environmental Information
- Master Plan
- Zoning
- Ordinances
- Thematic Plans (e.g. Open Space and Recreation)



Thank you!



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