



# Fundamentals for Effective Environmental Commissions

## Land Use Strategies

SPRING 2026



[www.anjec.org](http://www.anjec.org)



- This session will be recorded & available afterwards to all registrants, and on our YouTube Page.
- Please send us your questions in the Q&A.
- If we do not get to your question today, email us at [info@anjec.org](mailto:info@anjec.org).
- CEUs are available from NJUCF, One credit (1) for each session attended. If you'd like to receive an attendance certificate, please email Elizabeth Ritter at [eritter@anjec.org](mailto:eritter@anjec.org) with your name, municipality/county and passcode.



**ANJEC Views**

# ANJEC's Mission

## Our Mission

To promote local action to protect and restore New Jersey's natural resources and ensure equitable, healthy communities.

ANJEC advances its mission by engaging in diverse and inclusive practices through leadership, partnerships, education, advocacy for strong public policy and support of environmental commissions, public officials and communities throughout New Jersey.



# Don't forget to renew your ANJEC membership for 2026!



ANJEC Membership Information & Forms  
[anjec.org/memberships](https://anjec.org/memberships)

As an ANJEC member, environmental commissions and organizations join a statewide network of local groups who work to protect New Jersey's natural resources, and ensure that the environment has a strong voice in local government. Membership with ANJEC includes:

- **Community Connection:**
- **Education and Resources:**
- **Policy Updates:**
- **Partnership Opportunities.**



**Memberships**



[anjec.org/memberships](https://anjec.org/memberships)



# Check out the Resource Center

1 ANJEC Report

6 Sample Ordinances

2 Displays and Games

7 Resource Papers

3 DVDs with screening rights

8 Toolkits

4 Assessment tools for EC

9 Brochures

5 Past training resources

10 Open Space Grants

► Website:



<https://anjec.org/resources-and-tools/>



# Candace McKee Ashmun

## Open Space Grants



ANJEC is pleased to continue offering grants to environmental commissions in New Jersey for projects to further stewardship and community involvement in parks and other preserved spaces. The 2026 Grant cycle marks the 13th year of the program. ANJEC will accepting applications from environmental commissions for grants of up to \$1500 each for local stewardship projects.

**2026 Application Deadline: April 13**

More info at:



<https://anjec.org/open-space-stewardship-grants/>



# Upcoming Events

April 8, 7 pm

Lame Duck Policy Update: Actions for EC's and your Town (webinar)

April 9, 7 pm

Data Centers in NJ (webinar)  
Hosted by the New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance

May 2, 2026; 9 am - 1 pm

In person Commissioners Course  
Branch Brook Park, Newark

April 14, 7 pm

Advocacy in Action: Crafting Powerful Campaigns That Create Change (webinar)

Sept 25, Save the Date  
Environmental Congress  
New Brunswick Theological Seminary



# Our Experts



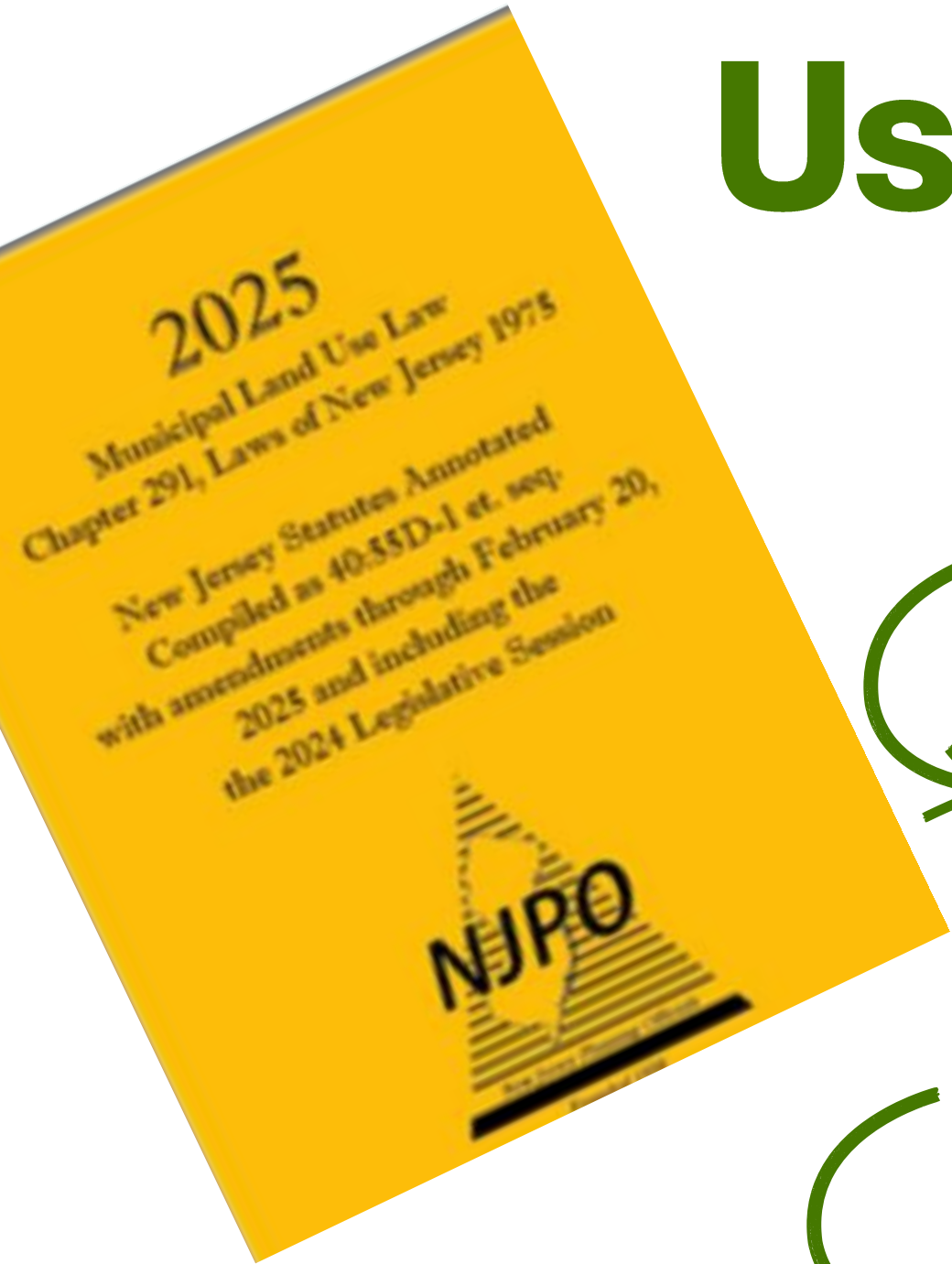
**Lois Kraus**  
**Westfield Green Team**



**Jennifer M. Coffey**  
**ANJEC Executive Director**



# The Municipal Land Use Process



- Environmental Resource Inventory
- The Municipal Master Plan
- Ordinances
- Site Plan Review



# The Environmental Resource Inventory



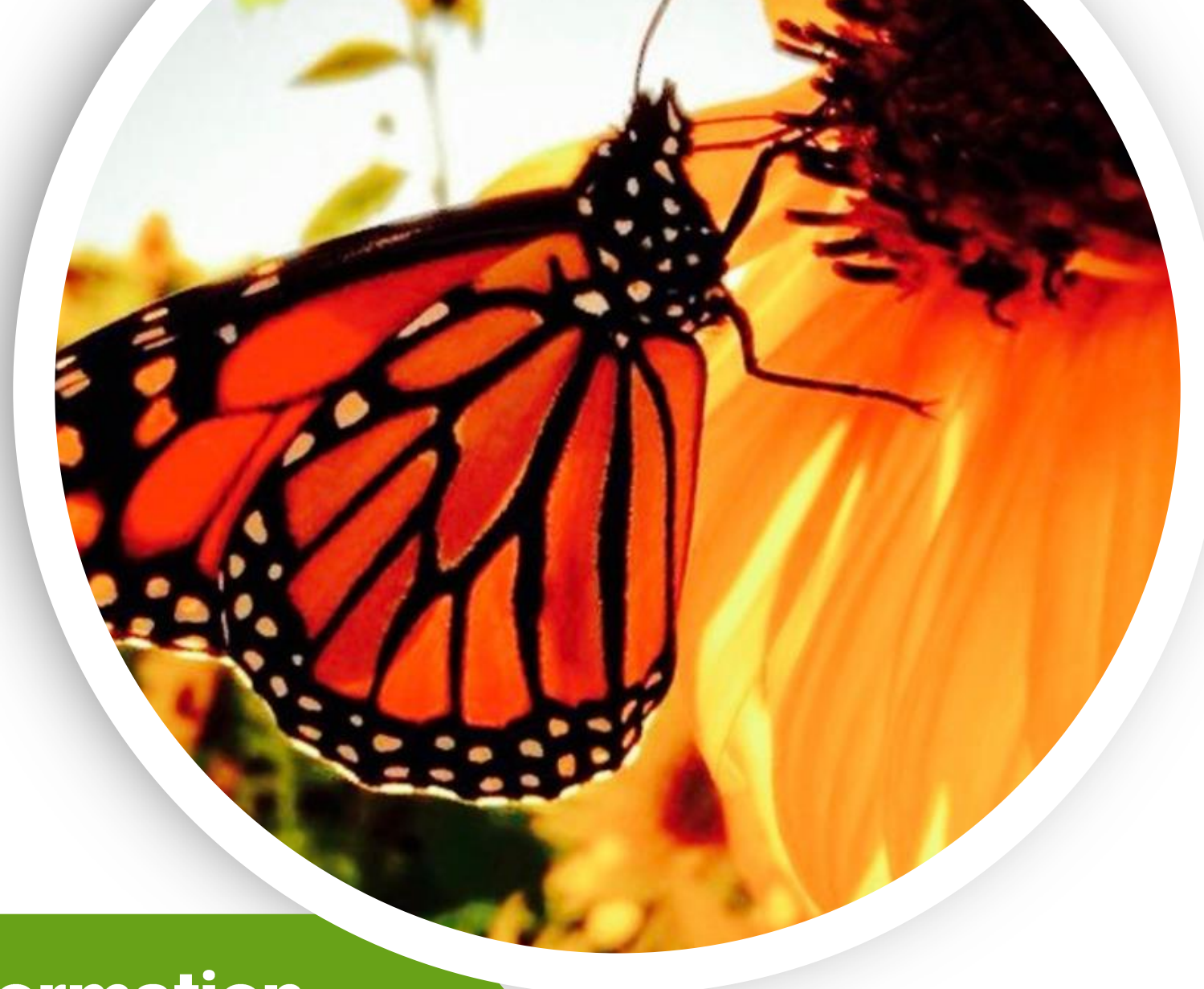
Environmental Resource Inventory



- Created/updated by the Environmental Commission
- Comprehensive information about the town's built environment & natural resources and environmentally-significant features
- Objective and factual – not policy
- Typically, a consultant is used, EC oversees and manages the project
- Should be updated every 10 years or sooner as conditions change



Environmental Resource Inventory



# Why Develop an ERI?

## ► Knowledge

Gives in-depth knowledge about the town's local natural resources including habitat, wildlife, water supply, streams and air quality

## ► Information

Provides information for town government, planning boards, planners, engineers, developers and the public

# What is in an ERI ?

1 Maps

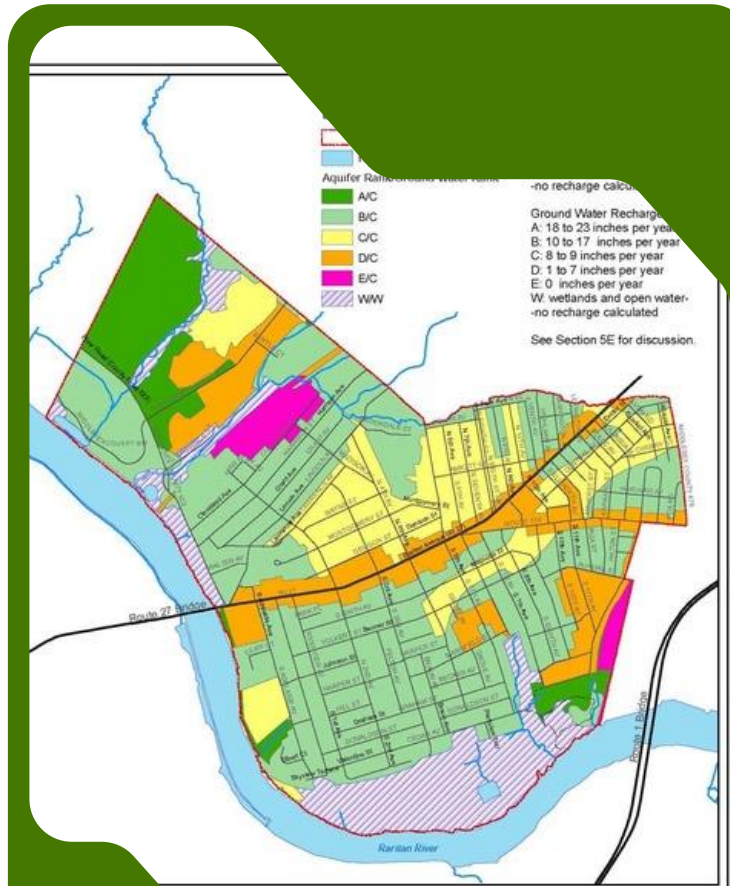
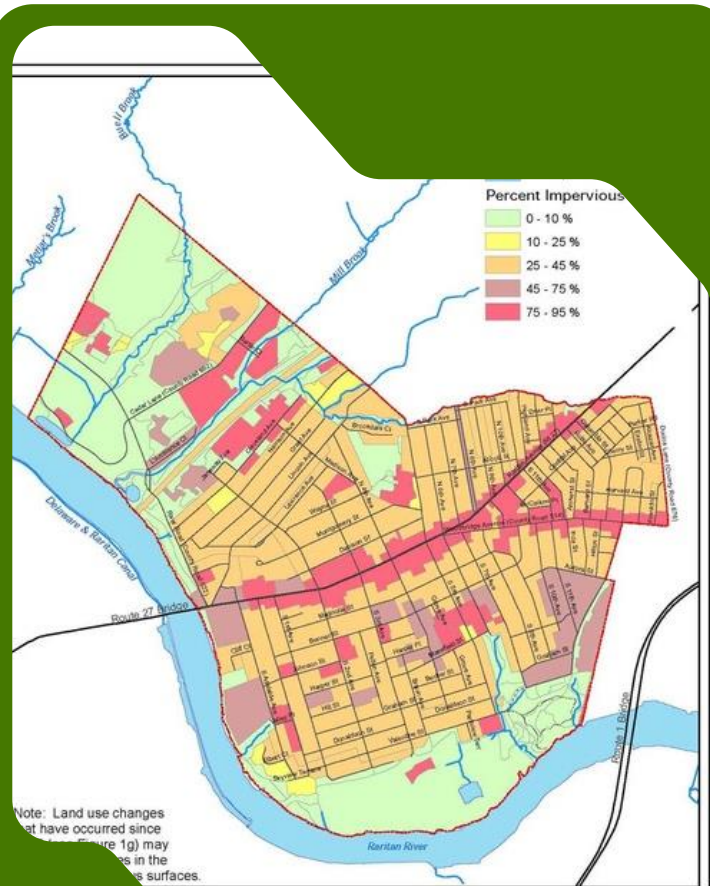
2 Hydrology

3 Geography & Geology

4 Soils and Vegetation

5 Habitat & Wildlife

6 Threatened & Endangered Species



Many online tools and resources exist to gather this information

# How is the ERI Used?

- Planning – what areas are most appropriate for development, preservation or special treatment
- Zoning- Commercial (including warehouses), residential, parks
- Protecting by ordinance - sensitive features like waterways, habitat, wetlands, soils....and human health



# Poll Question 1

## Does your municipality have an ERI?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not sure

**HINT:** ERI should be on file with the Planning Board, now's a good time to introduce yourself to the Planning Board Secretary, review the ERI!

**HINT 2:** If your municipality is in the Highlands Region, the Highlands Council can help with creating/updating your ERI!

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE INVENTORY  
FOR THE BOROUGH OF FRANKLIN LAKES



SUBMITTED TO:

Attention: Thomas Lambrix, Chair Environmental Commission  
Borough of Franklin Lakes  
County of Bergen

# Municipal Land Use Law

40:55D-1, et seq.

## ► Powers

NJ has delegated land use powers to the municipalities, with some exceptions (hazardous site clean up, drinking water standards, wetlands disturbance/fill, plastic bag/container ban)

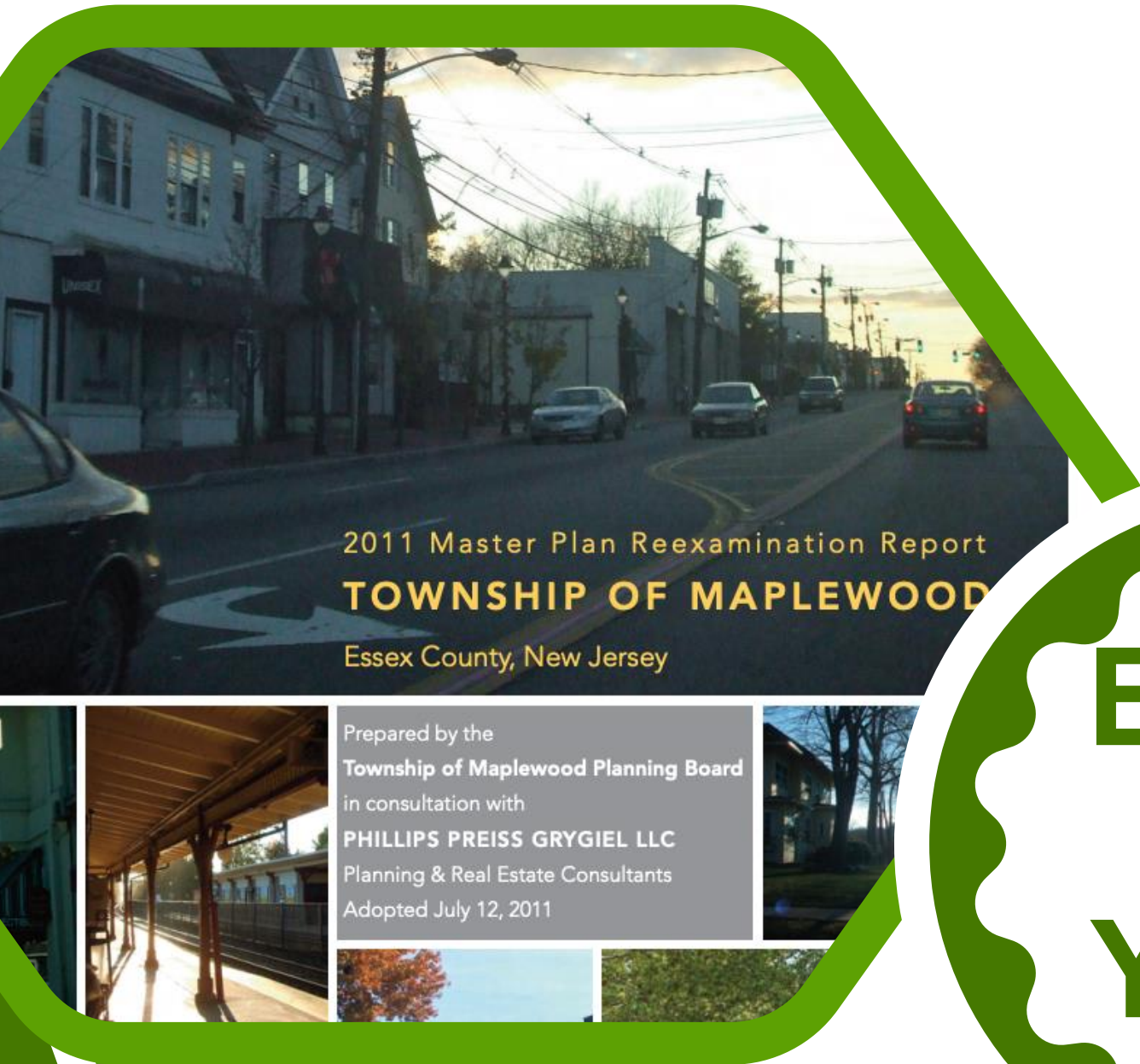
## ► Covers

MLUL covers

- Master Plans
- Zoning
- Planning and Zoning Board of
- Adjustment powers and duties
- Land Use Ordinances



# The Municipal Master Plan



**Every  
10  
Years**

**1** Public hearings are required

**2** EC should be part of the process

**3** EC can help engage the public

**4** EC Reviews Land Use Element

# The Municipal Master Plan

1

Adopted by Planning Board

2

Guides Future Land Use in Town

3

Establishes goals/policies such as protecting water supply, forest, farms, floodplains and steep slopes

2025 Master Plan



TOWNSHIP OF GREEN, SUSSEX COUNTY

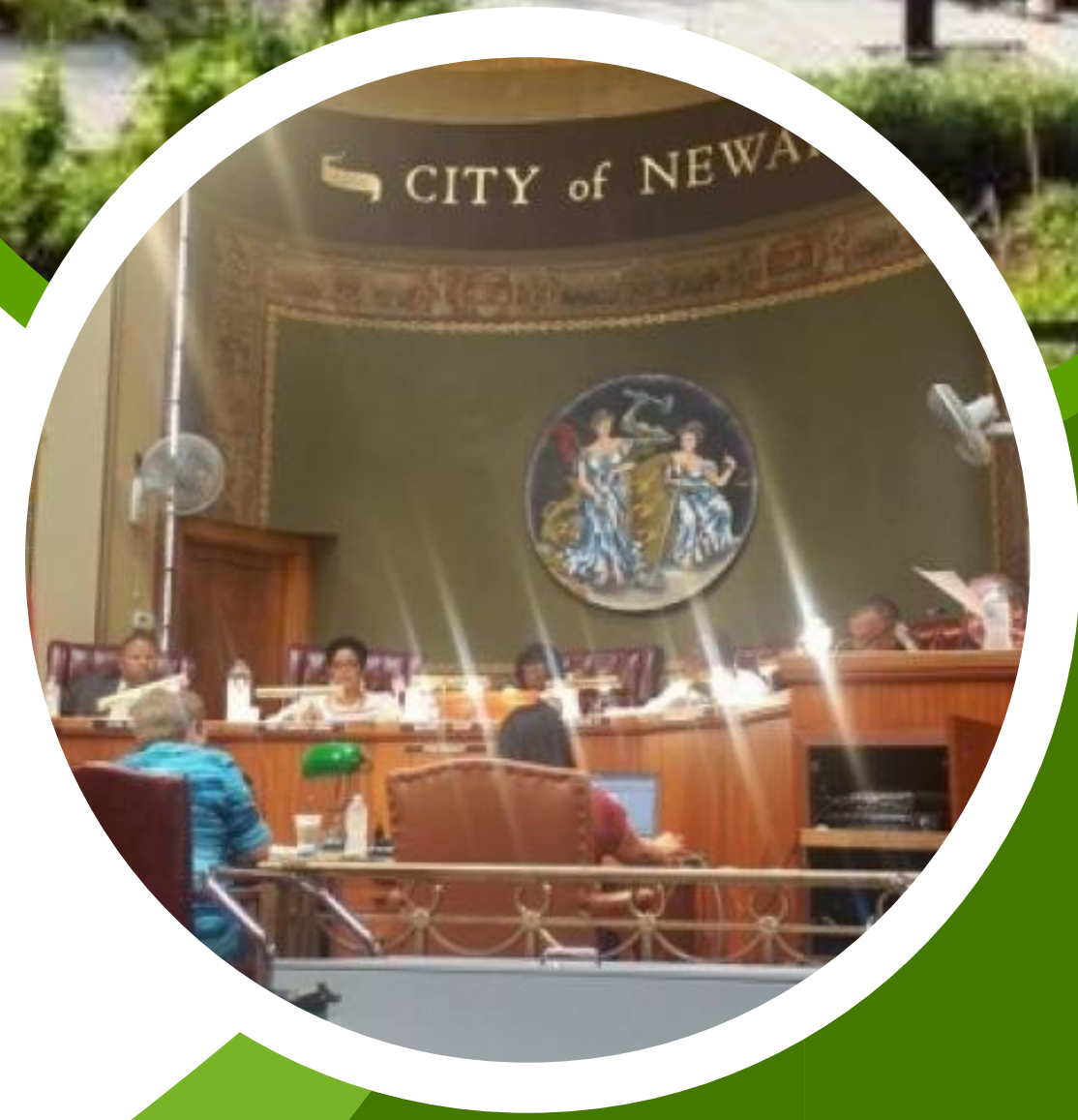
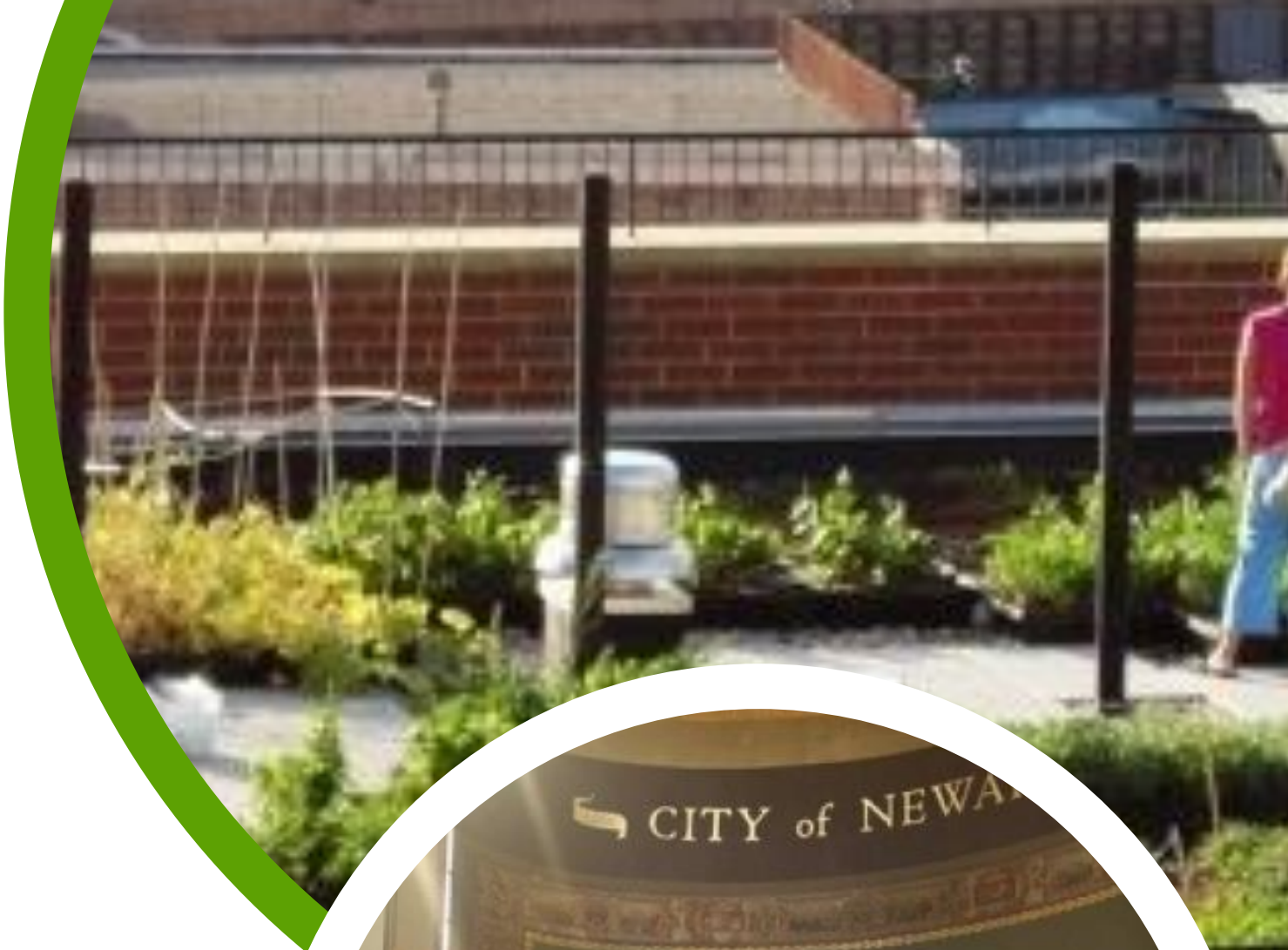
February 13, 2025

# What is the EC's Role in the Master Plan

**1** Review Land use/ Conservation Element

**2** Advocate for other elements: Green Buliding, Climate Action Plan

**3** Help with Climate Hazard Mitigation element



# Ordinances

**Municipal Land-use and Zoning Ordinances are Regulations**

**Ordinances Govern Development:  
Site Plan Applications**

- **Steep Slopes**
- **Stream Corridors**
- **Buffers**
- **Environmental Impact Statements**

***The EC is required to have a liaison member on the town planning board***



# Municipal Ordinances



## The Municipal Master Plan Guides the Ordinance Process

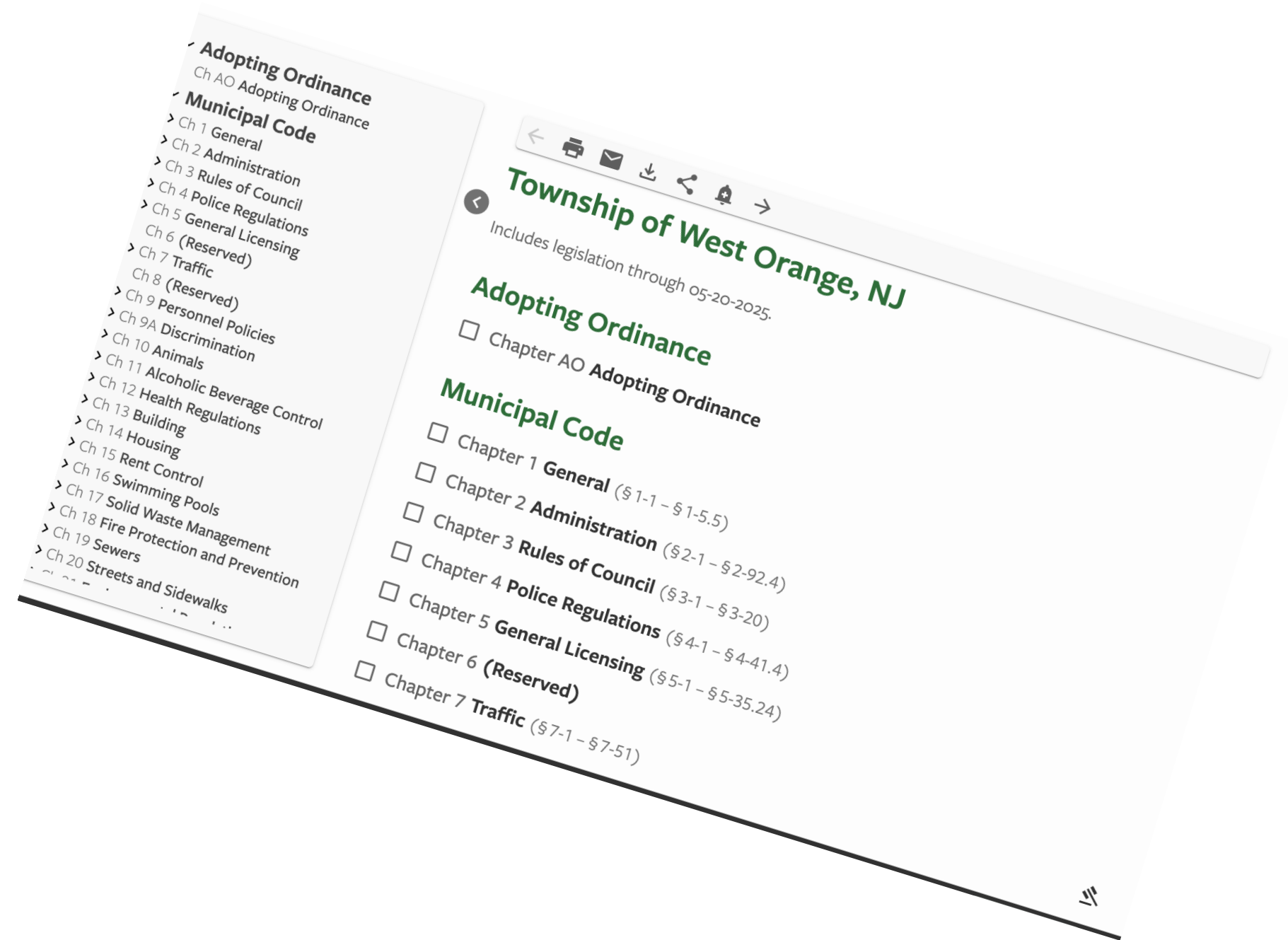
- Use ordinances when reviewing development applications
- Update based on new state regulations
- Municipal ordinances can be more protective
- Advocate for new ordinances such as Environmental Justice, enhanced stormwater control, additional plastic pollution reduction, permitted uses (warehouse, data centers)



# Poll Question 2

## Who passes municipal ordinances?

1. Planning Board
2. Environmental Commission
3. Governing Body
4. Concerned Citizens



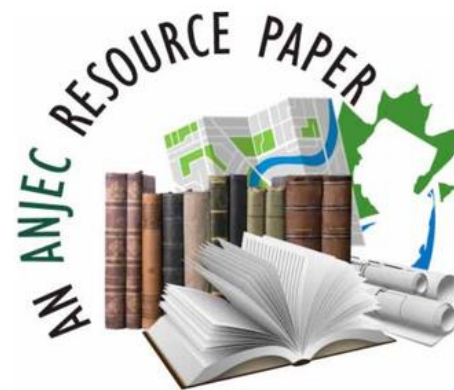
# Site Plan Review

By Law, Environmental Commissions that have an ERI are entitled to receive Development Plans and submit comments, questions.

Check for items such as tree replacement, native species, stream protection, wildlife habitat, steep slopes, wetland protection, stormwater management



**Site Plan / Subdivision Review:**  
Protecting the environment  
during development





# Stay in touch!



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**ANJEC Views**



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Phone Number:  
[\*\*\(973\) 539-7547\*\*](tel:(973)539-7547)



Mailing Address:  
**P.O. Box 157  
Mendham, NJ 07945**



Website:  
**anjec.org**



Email Address:  
**info@anjec.org**

CONTACT US

