

Gateway into Rockaway from Denville on Route 46

INTRODUCTION

Purpose & Authority

The Master Plan is a document that sets forth the policies for land development and redevelopment as envisioned by the municipality and adopted by the Planning Board. It serves as a comprehensive approach to planning issues and considers many factors impacting a community's economic development needs. Through its goals and objectives statement, the Master Plan establishes a vision for the community in the coming years and serves as the basis for the Zoning Ordinance.

The Borough of Rockaway adopted its last Master Plan in 1995 and conducted a Re-examination of the Master Plan in 2002 and in 2008. In accordance with the Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28, the Borough of Rockaway updated the Master Plan as required every 10 years. The Master Plan gives the community the legal basis for control over future development, as well as land use planning policy and zoning changes. Most changes are implemented in the form of zoning amendments and land development ordinances. Strategies are identified at the end of each Plan Element.

Plan Implementation

This Master Plan is built on a comprehensive analysis of existing conditions and opportunities in the Borough, and documentation of prior planning efforts and initiatives.

In the MLUL at N.J.S.A 40:55D-28, a master plan must include a "*statement of objectives, principles, assumptions, policies and standards upon which the constituent proposals for the physical, economic and social development of the municipality are based.*" The Borough of Rockaway's Master Plan expresses these statements as a set of goals for each element. These elements and their goals are described in the following pages.

Land Use Element

The Land Use Element addresses community form and development patterns of the Borough. The Land Use Element recommends zone code improvements and changes, identifies potential redevelopment areas, and generally aims to reinforce the historic nature of Rockaway while working towards its future. It updates the Land Use Plan Element from the 1995 Master Plan.

Land Use Element Goals

1. Ensure new and in-fill development is compatible with the existing character of the Borough.
2. Preserve and enhance the historic nature of the community.
3. Encourage and enhance public access to the Rockaway River.
4. Minimize negative impacts between land uses.
5. Protect existing stable communities and promote growth in the Borough's Center.
6. Ensure the Borough's Land Use Plan is compatible with adjacent municipalities, the county, the state, and special planning areas.
7. Recognize existing environmental constraints and implement sound planning policies to ensure adequate protection of natural resources.
8. Preserve open space to protect critical environmental resources.

Economic Development Element

The Economic Development element provides a quantitative analysis of economic conditions in Rockaway, and advances strategies to strengthen the commercial areas. The element identifies opportunities for the Borough to prepare its residents for the current and future employment needs through training and education. An Economic Element has not previously been drafted for the Borough of Rockaway.

Economic Element Goals

1. Create a pleasant public realm in the Borough Center that will enhance the quality of life for residents, workers, and visitors.

2. Leverage the Borough's natural and historic assets to attract businesses, dwellers, and visitors to the Borough Center, and enhance the local economy.
3. Support Redevelopment and/or Rehabilitation Area designations and Redevelopment Plans.
4. Support local businesses and provide opportunities for residents to start their own local business.
5. Connect the residential labor force with larger employment sectors locally and regionally.

Community Facilities Element

This element examines civic facilities and institutions for the Borough of Rockaway. The element reviews the school system, public safety, the library, community centers, and the Department of Public Works yard. This will be the first Community Facilities Plan Element drafted as part of the Borough's Master Plan.

Community Facility Element Goals

1. Create a safe and healthy community.
2. Invest in civic spaces that are assessible to the public.
3. Support excellence in education for Rockaway Borough district school children.
4. Ensure high quality and responsive public works, safety, security and emergency response services.
5. Encourage greater use of community services through coordination and shared services.

Recycling Element

This element articulates the Borough's recycling efforts in accordance with the law. It updates the Recycling Element from the 1995 Master Plan.

Recycling Element Goals

1. Increase education and understanding of the importance of recycling and programs.
2. Increase recycling levels in the Borough that are consistent with statewide goals.

Other Elements

Other elements from the 1995 Master Plan not included within this Master Plan Update continues to be in effect for the Borough in 2018. These elements include the Circulation Element and the Open Space, Parks, and Recreation Element. The Housing Element is being drafted in coordination with the Borough's Fair Share Plan required for affordable housing. A Historic Preservation Element, Sustainability Element, and Utility Element have never been drafted by the Borough.

Housing Element Goals

**While the last Master Plan did not provide goals pertaining to Housing, this Master Plan offers the following goals.*

1. Preserve and enhance the character of existing, well established residential neighborhoods.
2. Develop a variety of housing options for current and future residents.
3. Promote and provide for affordable housing and meet the obligations of the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) or successor entity.

Circulation Element Goals

**While the last Master Plan did not provide goals pertaining to Circulation, this Master Plan offers the following goals, although a Circulation Element was not included as part of this Master Plan.*

1. Ensure local roadways are safe for all users and in good condition.
2. Make transportation and safety improvements in Borough Center.
3. Support the local economy by enhancing parking availability through increased supply and wayfinding signage.

Open Space, Parks, and Recreation Element Goals

1. Recognize environmentally sensitive areas and promote their preservation.
2. Expand/maintain local parks and other recreational areas.
3. Preserve/enhance/protect the Rockaway River corridor for passive recreational use and environmental conservation whenever possible.

Strategies

Each Element includes a series of aspirational goals provided at the beginning of the Element and Strategies designed to assist the Borough in achieving those goals at the end of the Element. The strategies are provided in a checklist format, which provides information on responsible party or partner, and a space to “check off” a completed strategy as a way to measure progress. In addition, a column is provided indicating the priority level of the strategy. The priority level chosen for each strategy was based on the following:

- Utilization of Borough resources (i.e. financial, time, personnel)
- Relative ease of implementation
- Public demand

These priority levels help the Borough determine how soon a strategy should be accomplished or how resources should be allocated towards that strategy. Strategies indicated as a Priority 1 have the highest priority.

Plan Updates

The Master Plan is an evolving document that may need to change to fit current trends or changed circumstances. Members of the Borough of Rockaway Planning Board may amend the Master Plan document as they see fit. In 10 years, the Planning Board may pursue a Master Plan Re-examination or may opt to draft a new Master Plan document to supersede this one. A re-examination is recommended if circumstances have not significantly changed. **The Master Plan or Master Plan Re-examination should be adopted before the end of 2028.**

Element Strategy Plan

| <i>Strategy</i> | | <i>Implementing Party</i> | <i>Priority Level</i> | <i>Completed</i> | <i>Year Completed</i> |
|--------------------------|----------|---------------------------|--|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strategy Category | | | | | |
| 1 | Strategy | Borough and/or partner | Priority 1 Priority 2 Priority 3 | ✓ | insert year |

Community Engagement

Successful community engagement fosters project interest, encourages community consensus, and most importantly, gathers valuable insight from the public which helps identify well-informed recommendations for the Master Plan and the Borough of Rockaway. Obtaining ideas, opinions, feedback, and concerns from Rockaway residents is a critical part of the larger Master Plan process. Over the span of the 6-month long project, the Master Plan team organized a stakeholder committee group, held a series of community workshops and conducted a Master Plan survey.

A stakeholder group comprised of Rockaway community leaders and business owners was formed, to frame the outline for the development of the new Master Plan. The stakeholder committee met on four (4) occasions, the dates of which are listed below:

- May 15, 2018 – Meeting with the Rockaway Borough Business Owners Association (RBBOA)
- May 29, 2018 – Stakeholder Committee Meeting Kick-Off
- August 18, 2018 – Borough Center Walking Tour
- October 24, 2018 – Stakeholder Committee Meeting

The Master Plan Team held two (2) public Master Plan Workshops. More than 200 Rockaway residents participated in the community workshops and survey, where the team gained valuable feedback into the development of the new Master Plan. The workshop locations and dates are listed below:

- September 16, 2018 – Celebrate Rockaway Day
- September 26, 2018 – Public Master Plan Workshop

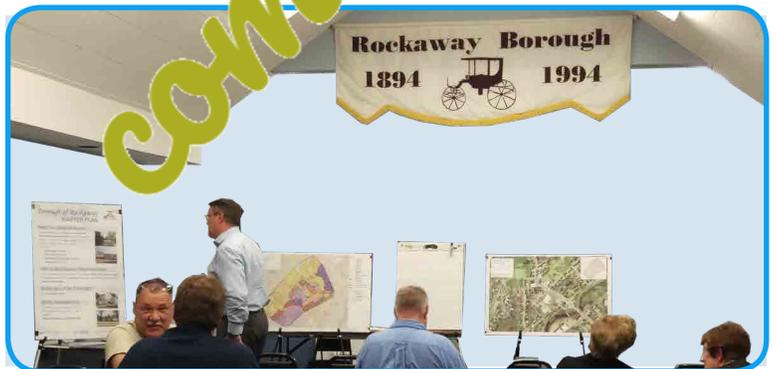
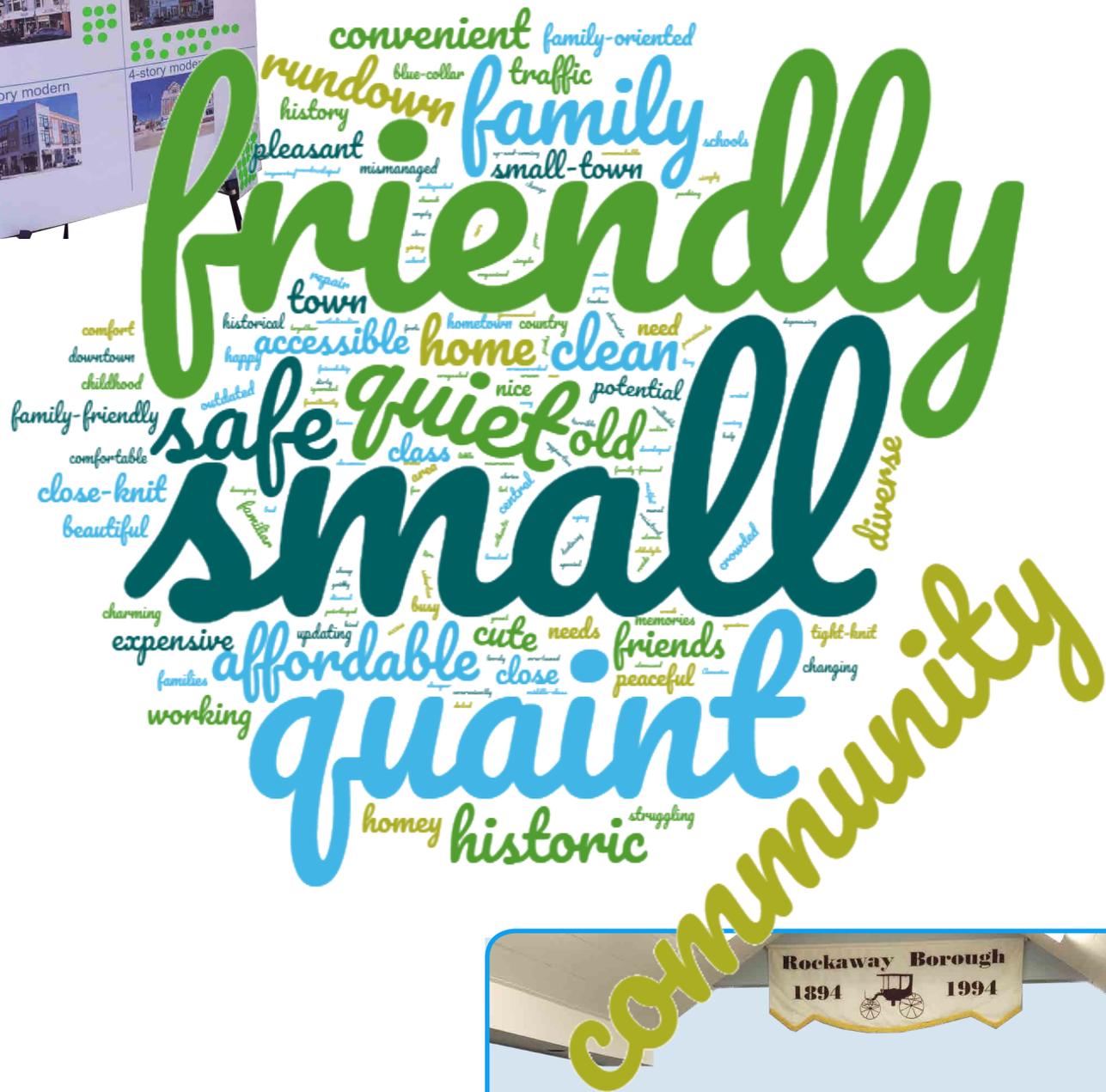
Master Plan Workshops were advertised through several methods. Workshop dates and locations were posted on the Borough of Rockaway's Master Plan project webpage (<http://www.rockawayborough.org/2018-06-21-master-plan-update---help-wanted>). Flyers were also available at public municipal locations and posted online in Facebook groups.

The results of the Master Plan Survey can be found in **Appendix A**.

Feedback provided from the Stakeholder Committee, the Master Plan Workshops, and the Survey results are incorporated into this Rockaway Borough Master Plan.



Celebrate Rockaway Day 2018



Population Characteristics

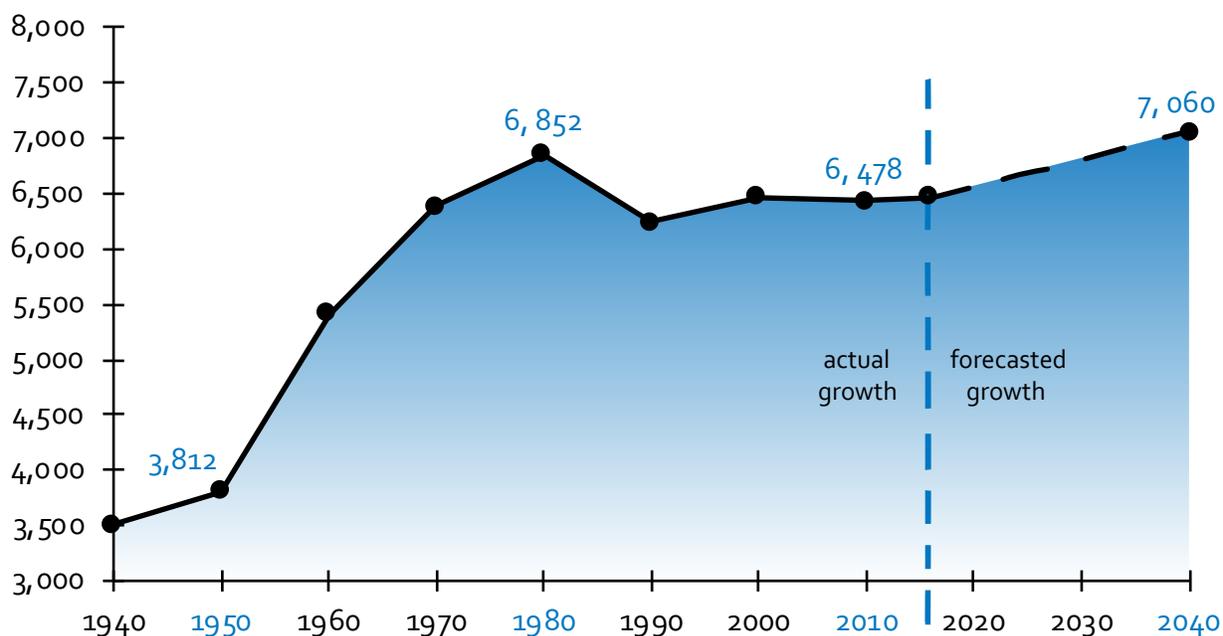
**The following discussion of city demographic conditions relies largely on the latest available data at the time of this report, Census 2010 data, and as such, may not accurately reflect current conditions in the Borough. Most current data, 2016 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates data (collected from years 2012-2016), is used where possible instead of using Decennial Census data.*

It is important to understand demographic conditions and population trends in order to identify and enhance Rockaway population's unique characteristics, to identify and address growing problems or potential areas of concern, and to comprehensively plan for Rockaway's future.

Population

Rockaway experienced a population boom between 1950 and 1980, although population decreased slightly during the '80s. The Borough population has just started to show growth again, beginning in 2010. The North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) population forecast indicates that population in Rockaway will continue to grow into the year 2040 (a forecast of 7,060 residents), beyond its 1980 peak of 6,852 residents. This forecast establishes the need for a range of activities, including additional housing, infrastructure, and transportation improvements in order to meet the needs of all current and future residents.

Rockaway Population Growth 1940-2040



Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012-2016 5-Year Estimates & NJTPA Population Forecasts

Age

Millennials

One of the largest generations in the United States is the Millennial Generation (generally, people born between 1980 and 2000). As of 2018, the age of this group ranges between 18 and 38 years old. The Millennial population is estimated to be over 86 million people nationwide, which represents over one-quarter of the United States population (~27%,

2016 ACS). In Rockaway, Millennials only make up 18% of the Borough's population (2016 ACS), significantly under the national representation. Millennials represent the new generation of workforce, renters or homeowners, and consumers.

Generally, Millennials are not attracted to Rockaway as there are little rental units, a lack of downtown amenities, and limited by bus service

only. A 2014 Urban Land Institute (ULI) survey of Millennials found that 50% are renters (635 of 1,270), and two-thirds of respondents reported that they are very satisfied or satisfied with being a renter.¹ The ULI's Millennial report also notes that one-third rent in an urban area. Although one-third of occupied housing units in Rockaway are renter occupied according to 2016 census data, only 3% of renters were Millennials in 2010. Additionally, home-ownership rates of people in these age cohorts have declined.² Nationally, the 2015 home ownership rate for households under 35 was 35%, 8% less than it was ten years ago in 2005.³

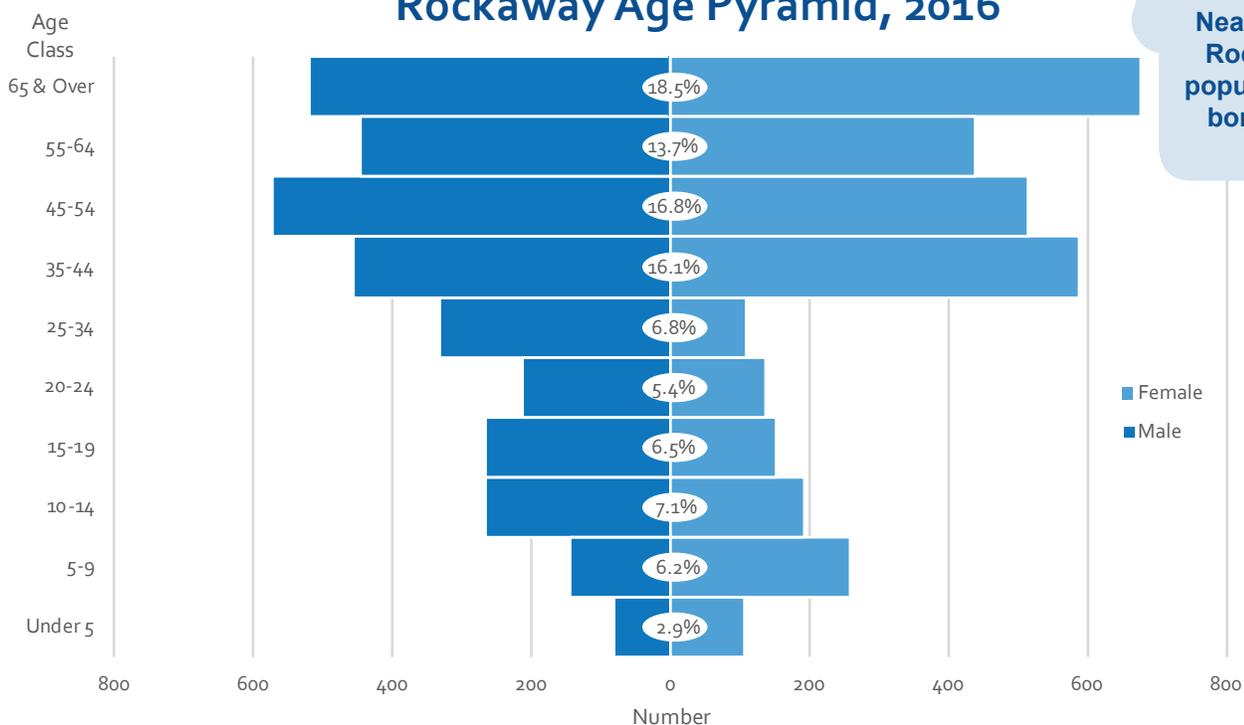
Millennials also tend to use public transportation and other modes at a higher rate than previous generations. In a survey of Millennials from the Rockefeller Foundation and Transportation for America⁴, 54% of respondents said that they would consider moving to another city if it had more and better transportation options, and two-thirds identified access to high quality transportation as one of their top three criteria when choosing a place to live. Eighty percent (80%) said that it is important to have a wide range of transportation options, such as public transportation, bike- and car-sharing, and pedestrian-friendly streets.

An unknown about the long-term impacts of Millennials is whether the preferences to rent and use public transportation will stay consistent across their lifetime. Some of their preferences may be more a matter of financial considerations. The average student-loan debt for a person who graduated in 2016 is \$37,172⁵, over double the average debt of someone who graduated in 2013 (\$18,271). The higher than average debts may impact a person's ability to afford a car, save for a down payment on a home, or start a family. As their incomes increase, they marry, and save more money, the question remains on whether Millennials will continue to prefer to rent and eschew car ownership, or whether they will look to move to more suburban areas to own homes and drive an automobile to work.

Baby Boomers

Using 2010 Decennial Census data, nearly 43% of Rockaway residents are Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964), which is drastically larger than the percentage of Baby Boomers throughout the nation (~25%). The first Baby Boomers reached the age of 65 in 2010, and by 2030, the entire generation will reach the typical age of retirement. As they retire and age, there will be an increased

Rockaway Age Pyramid, 2016



Nearly half of Rockaway's population was born before 1962.

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012-2016 5-Year Estimates

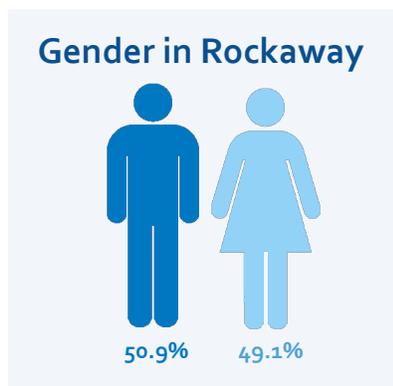
demand to provide transportation, housing, recreation, and social services that cater to their needs.

The overall preference for aging adults is to stay in the current community or home in which they live. A survey⁶ by the American Association of Retired Persons' (AARP) Public Policy Institute revealed that 87% of individuals age 70 and above who responded to the survey wanted to stay where they lived, while those between 50 and 64 of age shared the same preference at 71%. This concept is known as "Aging in Place." A key factor in aging in place is the ability to downsize in home if needed and continued mobility even without access to an automobile. AARP identified some policies⁷ to promote aging in place related to transportation, including transit-oriented development (TOD), "complete streets", and human services transportation (such as municipal dial-a-rides). Rockaway's access to public transportation and the ability to address a person's "household lifecycle and housing choices", provide some of these characteristics. Rockaway may become a desirable space for other Baby Boomers looking for such amenities if their current communities cannot provide for their needs.

"Household lifecycle and housing choices"
The ability to address a person's housing needs throughout their lifetime. Movement through lifecycle stages brings characteristic changes in the size and composition of households and in their housing requirements -HUD

Gender

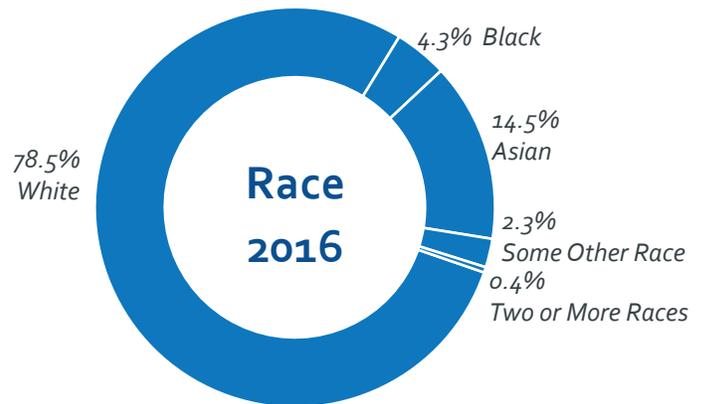
Rockaway has more males (51%) than females (49%), where the inverse is the case for both the County and the State.



Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012-2016 5-Year Estimates

Race

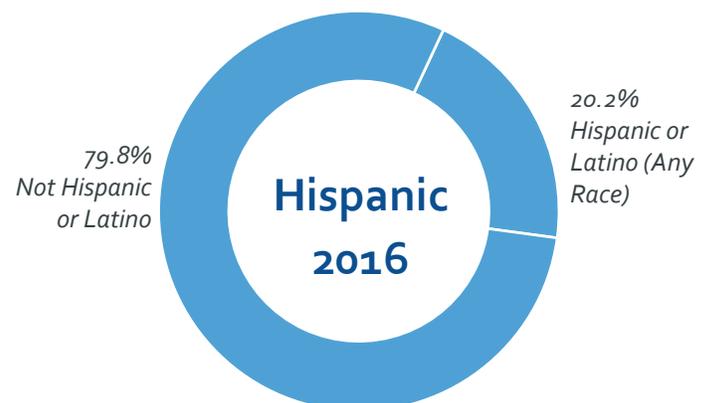
Approximately 78.5% of the population in Rockaway is white. Rockaway is considered less diverse than the State but more diverse in racial composition to the County. Given Rockaway's medium-sized minority population, it is important to continue efforts to provide equal access to Borough land uses and amenities while catering to the needs of all Rockaway residents.



Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012-2016 5-Year Estimates

Hispanic Population

There are more people living in Rockaway who identified themselves as being Hispanic or Latino in the 2010 Census than the 2000 Census. Persons of Hispanic origin can be any race; origin is defined as ancestry, nationality, group, lineage or country of birth of the person or the person's parents or ancestors before their arrival in the United States. According to 2016 data, Rockaway has a higher percentage of people identifying themselves as Hispanic or Latino (20.2%) than the county average (12.7%) and the state average (19.3%).



Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012-2016 5-Year Estimates

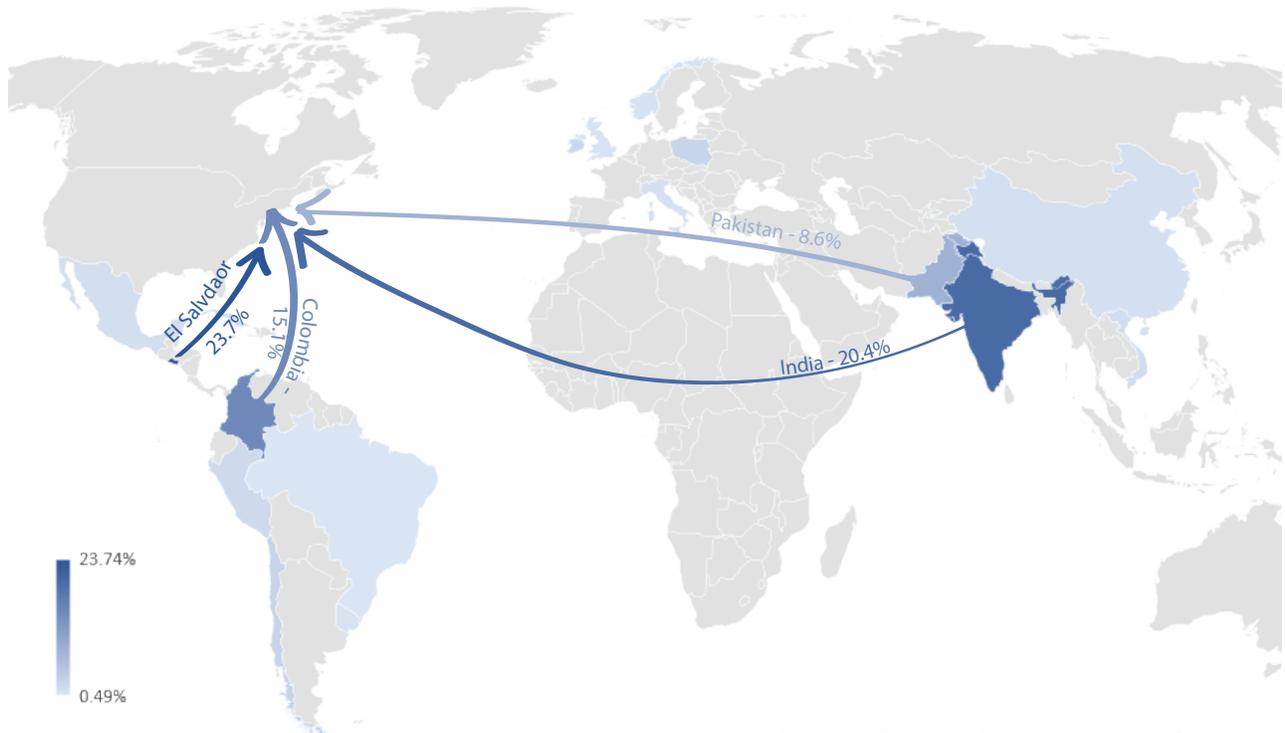
Foreign-Born

The foreign-born population makes up 28.5% of the total population in Rockaway (1, 845 residents), more than the foreign-born representation in both the County and the State. Of the Rockaway foreign-born population, 28.9% were born in Asia, approximately 16.3% born in Latin America, and approximately 15.6% in Europe. Of all foreign-born residents, a higher number of residents came from countries in Asia and Latin America: 23.7%

were born in El Salvador, 20.4% were born in India, 15.1% in Colombia, nearly 9% in Pakistan, 3.4% from Saudi Arabi, and 3% from Chile.

Of the foreign-born residents who have entered the U.S. and are living in Rockaway, only 38.2% have become naturalized citizens, less than by at least 15% compared to both Morris County (59%) and the State (53.9%).

Rockaway's Foreign-Born Residents' Place of Birth



Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012-2016 5-Year Estimates

Relationship to Other Plans

The Borough of Rockaway is bordered by two (2) municipalities: Rockaway Township and Denville Township, both in Morris County.

Rockaway Township

Rockaway Township is located generally to the west of the Borough, linked by several roadway connections: Route 46 to the west heading into downtown Dover, Mt. Pleasant Avenue in the direction of Rockaway Townsquare Mall, Mt. Hope Road/Academy Street to the north, and Green Pond Road to the north. Route 80 traverses both municipalities, although only a small portion of Route 80 crosses into the Borough. The Borough has one on-ramp headed east and one off-ramp from the west. The Township has one on-ramp headed west and one off-ramp from the east.

Rockaway Township's last Master Plan Re-examination Report was completed in 2006. The Land Use Plan noted areas designated as Moderate Density Residential which coincides with the R-13 zone designation area located near to the Borough of Rockaway. This zone is designed for single-family detached residential on minimum lot sizes of 13,125 square feet. Per the zone map, a large low density residential zone (R-20) also borders Rockaway Borough. The Land Use Plan also recognizes the B-2 Highway Business zone on Route 46 near to the Borough. This zone is oriented towards nearby neighborhoods' retail sales and services needs (i.e. ShopRite) and also accommodates a broader range of business uses such as wholesale activity, storage facilities, and lumber yards.

The 2006 Report identifies floodplains throughout the Township, including those along the Rockaway River, just as in the Borough, and near to Parks Lake which is located partly in the Township and partly in the Borough.

The Open Space and Recreation Plan Update from 2013 references recreation and community facility information pertaining to the Borough. The Morris Hills High School is located in Rockaway Borough but services Rockaway Township, Rockaway Borough, and Wharton Borough. Morris Knolls

High School located on Franklin Avenue in Denville Township but near to Rockaway Borough serves Rockaway Township and Denville Township. Park Lake is jointly owned with Rockaway Township and is maintained by both municipalities. No portion of the Rockaway Township Highlands Preservation area shares a boundary with Rockaway Borough.

Denville Township

Denville Township is located generally to the east of the Borough of Rockaway, linked by two major roadway connections: Route 46 and Franklin Avenue. Route 80 traverses both municipalities, although only a small portion of Route 80 crosses into the Borough.

The Route 46 connection between the municipalities is especially important for economic development. The 2000 Denville Township Master Plan recommends zoning along Route 46 should be considered for restaurant and professional uses, not to conflict with the retail oriented downtown business district. The 2006 Re-examination Report states business uses should only be encouraged in commercial highway corridors on the portion of Route 46 that is east of Route 80 where there are two lanes of traffic per direction of travel and more commuter congestion, thus away from the Borough of Rockaway. To the west of Route 80, nearer to Rockaway Borough, there is only one lane of traffic per direction of travel and less commuter congestion.

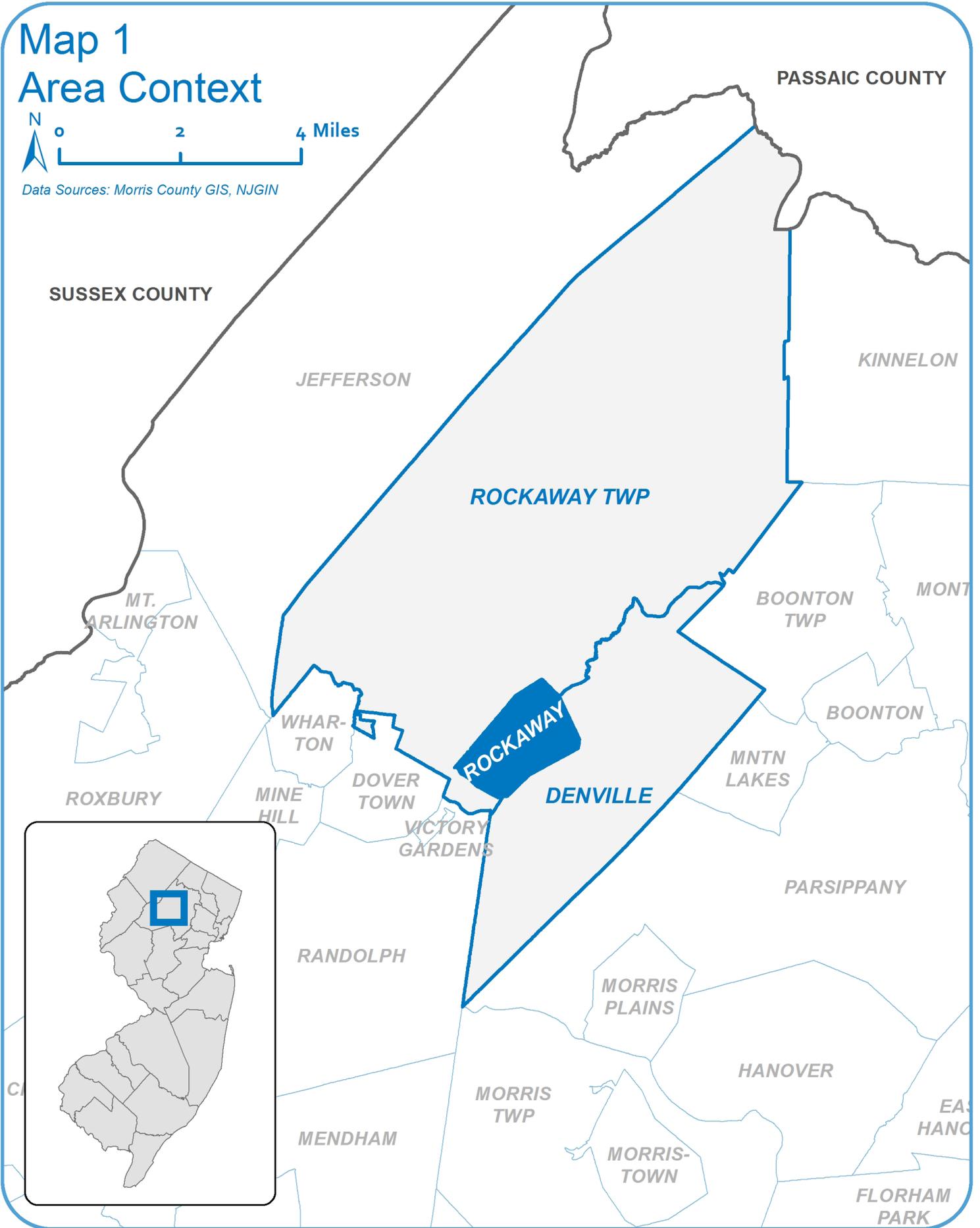
The Land Use Plan of the 2000 Master Plan recommends the OB-1 land use designation in Denville should continue to the Rockaway Borough border, changing the existing I-2 land use designation and affecting four properties near Franklin Avenue. In Rockaway at that time, properties were designated with industrial land uses. Today, both municipalities are shifting from a once predominantly industrial area to other land uses.

Both the 2006 and the 2013 Re-examination Reports do not mention Rockaway Borough, specifically.

Map 1 Area Context



Data Sources: Morris County GIS, NJGIN



Morris County

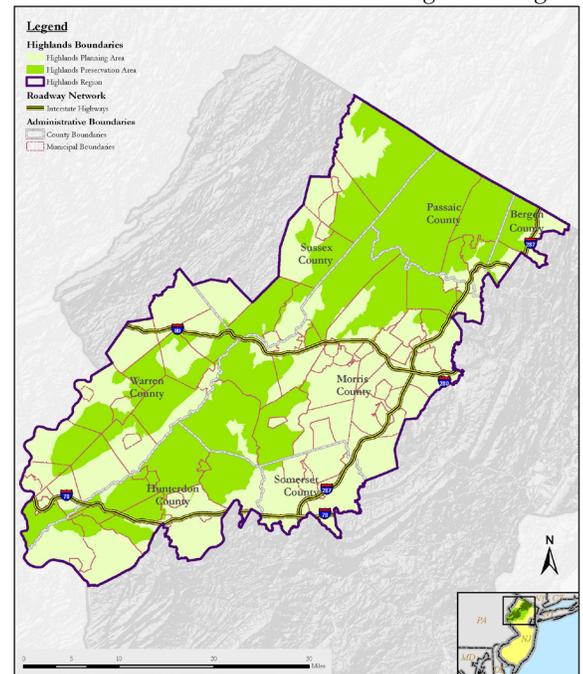
The Morris County Master Plan is comprised of individual elements adopted over a period of time, beginning with the Future Land Use Element of 1975. The Plan recognizes Rockaway as a well-developed community with environmental constraints including drainage and steep slopes. According to the Plan, Dover is the closest municipal “center.” In the County’s 1998 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Element, Rockaway Borough is characterized as having a well-defined network of sidewalks to service its downtown area and is noted as being surrounded by lower density municipalities. The County’s 1988 Open Space Element describes each of Rockaway’s parks and other open spaces such as the school recreational facilities. The county’s 2018 Circulation Element describes the county-owned Dover and Rockaway freight rail line that traverses Rockaway Borough. The plan also discusses the potential for the Rockaway River Greenway, a regionally proposed bicycle and pedestrian path that would follow the route of the historic Morris Canal.

Highlands Regional Master Plan

The Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act (N.J.S.A. 13:20-1), adopted by the State Legislature and signed by the Governor in 2004, required that the Highlands Council adopt a Master Plan, of which “the goal of the regional master plan with respect to the entire Highlands Region shall be to protect and enhance the significant values of the resources thereof in a manner which is consistent with the purposes and provisions of this act” (N.J.S.A. 13:20-10). The Highlands Council adopted the Highlands Regional Master Plan (RMP) on July 17, 2008.

Rockaway Borough is entirely within the delineation of the Planning Area of the Highlands Region. Conformance with the RMP is voluntary for Planning Area communities.

Highlands Region



The Highlands Council makes no representation of any kind, including, but not limited to, the accuracy or completeness of the information contained on this map. The State of New Jersey shall not be liable for any action taken or inaction made based on any information contained herein. Additional sources of information may include NJDOT or USGS GIS digital data, but the accuracy of such information is not guaranteed by the Highlands Council.

Highlands Regional Master Plan
Final Draft, November 2007



Sources:
New Jersey Highlands Council, 2006

2001 State Development and Redevelopment Plan

In 1986, the New Jersey Legislature passed the New Jersey State Planning Act, which created the State Planning Commission and required the preparation and adoption of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (the "State Plan"). The most current adopted plan is dated March 1, 2001. The purpose of the State Plan is to:

"Coordinate Planning Activities and establish statewide planning objectives in the following areas: land use, housing, economic development, transportation, natural resource conservation, agriculture and farmland retention, recreation, urban and suburban redevelopment, historic preservation, public facilities and services and intergovernmental coordination." (N.J.S.A. 52:18A-200(f), the State Planning Act).

The State Plan uses a policy map to differentiate areas from highest growth to lowest growth based on information, such as natural resources, sewer availability, etc. These differentiations are called planning areas, which range from PA1-Metropolitan to PA-8 state park.

All of the Borough of Rockaway's land area (1,326 acres) lies within Metropolitan Planning Area 1 (PA1) on the State Plan Policy Map of the 2001 State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP). The remainder of the acreage of Rockaway is categorized as Water (31 acres).

The SDRP specifies that PA1 areas shall be the locations for the majority of the State's future growth through expansions, infill and redevelopment. The SDRP promotes growth

within existing urbanized areas, preferably in the form of compact development with ready access to existing infrastructure, including transit systems. The Borough of Rockaway has a compact borough center and is generally urban in its character with a multi-modal transportation network that includes vehicular travel and bus service presence. The Borough of Rockaway lies fully within Metropolitan Planning Area 1 (PA1) which:

- Provide for much of the state's future redevelopment;
- Revitalize cities and towns;
- Stabilize older suburbs;
- Redesign areas of sprawl; and
- Promote growth in Centers and other compact forms;
- Protect the character of existing stable communities.

Draft State Strategic Plan

The draft State Strategic Plan: New Jersey's update to the State Development and Redevelopment Plan and the draft Infrastructure Needs Assessment was released for public comments and hearings in November 2011. The Plan is *"to focus the State's policies and investments on vibrant regions by fostering targeted job growth, supporting effective regional planning and preserving the State's critical resources"*. The intent of the State Plan is to direct growth and development into areas served by public infrastructure as a means of more efficiently using public resources. A total of six public hearings were scheduled throughout the State. Since the initial public meetings and the addition of several more, the State Planning Commission has not acted on the adoption of the plan.