Sustainable Jersey Certification Report

This is the Sustainable Jersey Certification Report of Highland Park Boro, a Sustainable Jersey silver certified applicant.

Highland Park Boro was certified on October 31, 2013 with 355 points. Listed below is information regarding Highland Park Boro's Sustainable Jersey efforts and materials associated with the applicant's certified actions.

Contact Information

The designated Sustainable Jersey contact for Highland Park Boro is:

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Actions Implemented

Each approved action and supporting documentation for which Highland Park Boro was approved for in 2013 appears below. Note: Standards for the actions below may have changed and the documentation listed may no longer satisfy requirements for that action. Additionally, points associated with actions prior to 2013 certifications may not be accurate.

Community Partnership & Outreach

Green Team

10 Points

Bronze Required

Program Summary: Sustainable Highland Park (SHP) is the Green Team for the Borough of Highland Park. It originated from the Green Community Working Group in the early 2000s. SHP meets monthly on the 4th Wednesday of the month at the Environmental Education Center at 20 River Road. All meetings are open to the public. Historically, Sustainable Highland Park has

several projects promoting home composting and community gardens. SHP has organized the Borough’s Earth Day events for the last four years, including 2013 (see Green Fair action for details). Its most recent major project is “It’s in Our Power Highland Park”, which was a two-year EPA Climate showcase Community Grant (with Montclair and Cherry Hill). Among the accomplishments to date, include 244 home audits have been performed and 35 NJHPwES Projects have been completed or scheduled.

PDF: **COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES - SHOWING ONGOING SUPPORT FOR SHP**

PDF: **GREEN TEAM RESOLUTION 2013**

PDF: **SHP MEMBERSHIP LIST**

PDF: **SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES**

Green Fair

10 Points

Program Summary: Highland Park's largest sustainability event (or Green Fair) in 2013 was its Earth Day celebration. The event was held at the borough's Environmental Education Center, which is tucked into nature on the banks of the Raritan River adjacent to a Native Plant Preserve. The effort was spearheaded by Sustainable Highland Park, the borough's Green Team, in partnership with our Main Street organization and Borough Council. The borough supported the event by providing communications assistance, traffic safety police during the course of the day as well as making public works personnel available to prepare the Environmental Education Center building and grounds as well as deliver equipment. The event had several workshops, more than 25 exhibitors, live music and food. With more than 250 people in attendance, Earth Day was a tremendous success and plans have already begun for 2014. Photos are posted on the borough's facebook page here: http://tinyurl.com/l652uo8

PDF: **EARTH DAY 2013 FLYER**

Community Education & Outreach

10 Points

Program Summary: Following a very successful Earth Day event at the Environmental Education Center in Highland Park, the Borough of Highland Park and Sustainable Highland Park launched a summer Environmental Education Series that is targeted at children and parents, but all are welcome. The first event focused on native wildlife with demonstrations and a bird walk. The second put beekeeping in the spotlight, with a local beekeeper offering a demonstration as well as fielding questions and answers from residents. The borough promoted the event through its website, facebook page, as well as the nixle email service for residents. The summer series took a hiatus in August, but will resume this September on a monthly basis. The following is a summary of the two events that have taken place thus far: -- Saturday, June 15: native wildlife, bird walk -- Sunday, July 14: beekeeping demonstration See attached documentation to view the promotional flyers and some photos of the events.

PDF: **PHOTOS FROM SUMMER SERIES**

PDF: **FLYERS - 06/13 AND 07/14**

Energy

Municipal Onsite Solar System

10 Points

Program Summary: In 2006, solar panels were installed on Highland Park’s borough hall using financial incentives from the Board of Public Utilities. The system generates one fourth of the building’s energy needs. There was extensive education and promotion about this project, a good example being a gathering of several mayors, council members and state officials at borough hall to view the panels and discuss related energy conservation and sustainability efforts. The attached article from the League of Municipalities magazine documents this effort. Also attached is the BPU "success story" profile of Highland Park's program.

PDF: **LEAGUE OF MUNICIPALITY ARTICLE**

PDF: **BPU SUCCESS STORY PROFILE**

Food

Community Gardens

10 Points

Program Summary: The Highland Park Edible Gardens Project, supported by a $10,000 grant from WalMart via the Sustainable Jersey program, enabled the Borough to establish three edible gardens at Irving Elementary School, Bartle Elementary School, and the Middle School/High School. The project involved considerable public outreach and education as well as volunteer, school and borough support. Since April 2010, the school and library gardens have been continuously active in the spring, summer and fall and incorporated into student activities and learning.

PDF: **2013 PLANTING SCHEDULE**

WORD: **ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE-SCHOOL GARDENS**

WORD: **GARDENS-EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS**

Farmers Markets

10 Points

Program Summary: Main Street Highland Park staff manages the Downtown Farmers Market, which will mark its 17th year in 2013. It runs Fridays, mid-June through Dec 20, 11:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. in the municipal parking lot between 2nd and 3rd Avenue on Raritan. The New Jersey Council of Farms and Communities (NJ-CFC) inspects and certifies the farmers who paricipate in the

Highland Park Farmers Market. The Highland Park Farmer’s Market farmers and vendors feature CERTIFIED Jersey Fresh produce, grown on their own land. The focus of the Downtown Farmers Market is the New Jersey growers. Some vendors, however, sell baked items, cut flowers. There is also an Artisan's Market next door to the Farmers' Market, where artisanal products, jams, preserves, and even a knife sharpener are available. The Borough of Highland Park fully supports the Farmers Market, from providing the location to financially supporting Main Street Highland Park, which helps manage and promote the market. Photo gallery of the market: http://www.mainstreethp.org/polGallery.cfm?Keyword_Desc=Market&StartRow=1 The required documentation is being gathered and will be uploaded shortly.

PDF: **OUTREACH-MARKETING MATERIALS**

Making Farmers Markets Accessible *Retires 12/31/27*

5 Points

Program Summary: The Highland Park Farmers Market is located between 2nd and 3rd Avenues on the municipal parking lot and is within a 1/2 mile of the New Brunswick train station and a short walk from the NJTransit bus stops on 2nd and 3rd Avenues. Three of the Farmers accept EBT payments, and the borough's Main Street program is in the process of setting up a reader we received through a grant process, so that all vendors can accept such payments. Everyone accepts SNAP/WIC checks, and the Highland Park Market has an innovative voucher program we use together with the HP Food Pantry. Also, Farmers donate unsold produce, etc. to the Food Pantry and/or Elijah's Promise kitchens.

PDF: **FARMERS MARKET - MAP OF TRANSIT ACCESS**

Health & Wellness

Building Healthier Communities

20 Points

Program Summary: Highland Park has had an active Mayors Wellness Campaign since 2006 (see attached pledge). The following is a summary of our activities across each of the areas. Youth in Motion: Highland Park created a Walking School Bus in 2007 for Bartle Elementary School, a direct outgrowth of the Mayors Wellness Campaign launch the previous year. The walking bus continues to be active. In addition, the borough’s recreation department offers numerous programs for kids (see flyer on recreational activities). Seniors in Motion: The Highland Park Senior Center offers a wide array of programming for the senior citizen community, including relaxations programs, Tai Chi, a drama program and yoga and exercise (see October 2013 calendar) Communities in Motion: The borough recently launched its walking program for adults. They are mid-week themed walks, such as environmental walk through meadows trails (held on July 23 6:30pm, led by Allan Williams, Environmental Commission), Fall foliage Walk, pointing out specimens and discussing them (held on Oct. 20, led by Karen Swain, Shade Tree Committee). The foliage program was so popular a second one was scheduled for the following day (see attached email promotion) – next up will be a historical walking tour of Raritan Avenue on November 7. Employees in Motion: Highland Park recently launched an employee wellness

program in conjunction with the Garden State Joint Municipal Insurance Fund (GSJMIF). The first offering, a regular yoga class on Mondays and Fridays from 1-1:30 is now being offered to all employees (see attached flyer).

PDF: **EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAM YOGA FLYER**

PDF: **HP WALK IN THE PARK FOLIAGE WALK**

PDF: **BUILDING HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES DOCUMENTATION**

PDF: **SENIOR CALENDAR OCTOBER 2013**

PDF: **YOUTH RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Innovative Projects

Innovative Community Project 1

10 Points

Program Summary: In 2009, Highland Park gained national recognition by being named the 13th Fair Trade Town in America by Fair Trade Towns USA. Fair-trade practices involve giving farmers or makers of a product, mostly in developing countries, a guaranteed minimum price, safe working conditions and an opportunity to sell directly to importers, eliminating the middleman. Highland Park Councilman Jon Erickson, Who Is My Neighbor? Inc., (WIMNI), a grassroots community agency whose mission is to create neighborly care locally and globally along with Main Street Highland Park pursued the designation. The borough had to meet five criteria before they could be considered for the designation, including: form a steering committee; outreach to area retailers; engaging the community; and gain media attention and to pass a Fair Trade resolution.

PDF: **FAIR TRADE NEW ARTICLE**

Land Use & Transportation

Sustainable Land Use Pledge

10 Points

Bronze Priority Silver Priority

Program Summary: The governing body of the Borough of Highland Park unanimously adopted the Sustainable Land Use Pledge via resolution on December 2, 2009. Prior to adoption, the pledge was placed on the agendas of both the Planning Board and Board of Adjustment for their consideration, as well as to get comments and input from the public. In addition, the Environmental Commission endorsed the concept of the sustainable pledge resolution at their October 21, 2009 meeting. Following adoption, the pledge was distributed to the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment as certified by the board secretary in the attached document.

PDF: **SUSTAINABLE LAND USE PLEDGE**

PDF: **PLEDGE DISTRIBUTION**

Natural Resources

Environmental Commission

10 Points

Program Summary: The Highland Park Environmental Commission was established by ordinance (see attachment) in 1968. The EC meets on the 1st Wednesday of the month at 8:00 PM (except for August) at the Highland Park Environmental Education Center, 20 River Road, Highland Park. The meetings are open to the public. The primary statutory functions of the Environmental Commission (EC) are the following: 1. Review site applications before the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Adjustment and provide written comments to the appropriate board. 2. Conduct research into the use of open land areas of the Borough, keep an index of all public or private open areas, and make recommendations to the Planning Board and to the Borough Council on plans and programs for the use of such lands. As summarized in the 2012 Annual Report, the EC has successfully competed for grants. The most recent grant was for an Environmental Resource Inventory, which was completed in February 2012. The ERI has been incorporated into the Borough's Master Plan. The EC generated a significant amount of original data for inclusion in the ERI. A significant amount of the county and state data had errors, which were corrected for the ERI. The EC also has built a Trail in the 17 acre Borough owned property "The Meadows", which is in the southeast corner of the Borough, zoned conservation/recreation, and adjacent to the Raritan River. The EC has stewardship over the property. A number of Eagle Scout projects have been performed under the guidance of the EC and include construction of wooden benches and boardwalks. The EC has a website (www.leoraw.com/hpenv/), which includes monthly bird sighting in Highland Park.

PDF: ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION HIGHLAND PARK CODE

PDF: 2012 ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT

Natural Resource Inventory

20 Points

Bronze Priority Silver Priority

Program Summary: In 1992, the Environmental Commission (EC) generated a Natural Resources Inventory. In March of 2010, the EC applied for and received an ANJEC grant to write an Environmental Resource Inventory (ERI). A project team was established with member from multiple boards and a councilman. The project team contracted with Kratzer Environmental Services to generate the ERI. One of the reasons that Kratzer was chosen was her willingness to customize the ERI for Highland Park, to integrate information from past EC's historical studies, and to have the project team draft the Historical Resources section. One significant problem, we encountered was that Middlesex County Planning had not generated a digitized tax map (by Block and Lot) for the Borough. Thus, to generate maps of building of historical interest, the project team had to gather GPS data. Similarly for a section on tree species, GPS data was gathered. Review of county and state GIS date revealed significant errors or absence of data. Numerous outfalls were not included, half of street names were incorrect, and local streams were missing.

Additional GPS data was generated and corrections made. It was noted that residential properties were included in DEP Brownfield databases and DEP contaminated site data layers were out of date (as long as 5 years). DEP databases on line were more accurate. The major lesson from generating the ERI was to check all data from all sources, The ERI was completed in February 2012. The ERI was incorporated into the Borough's Master Plan in February 2012. Copies of the ERI were distributed to the municipal boards, municipal offices, libraries, and Middlesex County Planning. The Borough's planner requested and received a copy. The Environmental Commission has found the ERI vary useful in assessing site applications.

PDF: **2012 HIGHLAND PARK ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE INVENTORY FRONT PAGE**

PDF: **LINKS TO HIGHLAND PARK ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE INVENTORY**

PDF: **INCORPORATION OF ERI INTO HIGHLAND PARK'S MASTER PLAN**

PDF: **POLICY ON PERIODICALLY UPDATING ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE INVENTORY**

Sustainability & Climate Planning

Community Energy Plan or Climate Action Plan

10 Points

Program Summary: With the support of the Sustainability Institute at the College of New Jersey, Highland Park along with Cherry Hill and Montclair secured a Climate Showcase Communities Grant from the USEPA. As part of this project, Highland Park performed both a municipal and community carbon footprint in order to develop attainable carbon reduction targets for the community. This work was pulled together in the form a Highland Park's Energy Plan, which sets forth a 4 percent annual reduction goal along with the steps that can be taken to achieve them across a variety of sectors - municipal, residential (renters and homeowners), commercial and schools. The borough adopted the targets set forth in the Energy Plan at the July 5, 2011 Council Meeting with resolution 07-11-198 (see attached minutes, page 6).

PDF: **HIGHLAND PARK ENERGY PLAN 2011**

PDF: **COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES - ADOPTING TARGETS 070511**

Municipal Carbon Footprint

10 Points

Bronze Priority Silver Priority

Program Summary: As part of the USEPA Climate Showcase Communities grant program, the Sustainability Institute at TCNJ created a Municipal Carbon Footprint, which was a component of the adopted Energy Plan.

EXCEL: **MUNICIPAL CARBON FOOTPRINT DOCUMENTATION**

Waste Management

Construction & Demolition (C&D) Waste Recycling *Retires 12/31/27*

10 Points

Program Summary: Per Highland Parks Municipal Code, Chapter 350-20. Issuance of building permits. [Added 4-1-2008 by Ord. No. 2008-1736; amended 5-20-2008 by Ord. No. 2008-1739] At the time of issuance of any building permit, the Building Code Official will provide written instruction on proper disposal and recycling of construction and demolition waste and furnish a notification of construction/demolition activity form that must be filled out by the permittee and faxed to the Middlesex County Division of Solid Waste Management within 48 hours of the issuance of the permit. Attached please find a copy of the notification of construction/demolition activity form.

PDF: **C/D NOTIFICATION FORM**

Community Paper Shredding Day

5 Points

Program Summary: Highland Park hosted a paper shredding event on Friday, May 3, 2013 in conjunction with Middlesex County from 9am to 12pm at the Senior/Youth Center. The event was promoted using nixle, the community's email newsletter, as well as on the Borough's website and the county's recycling guide.

PDF: **EMAIL SENT RE: SHREDDING DAY**