

7. COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND UTILITIES PLAN

Mountain Lakes has for many years been an essentially fully developed community. Development in recent years has been largely limited to redevelopment of pre-existing developed properties and infill development on relatively small parcels of land in otherwise developed areas. One notable exception is the development of the Park Place property where the potable water for the development is being provided by the neighboring town of Boonton, and all other services will be provided by Mountain Lakes. Other potential development sites include two lots of approximately 8 acres, one being in the Willow Rd area and the second being the King of Kings property. Both sites are potential developments that would require an expansion of municipal services. The trend in redevelopment rather than new development is expected to continue in coming years because of the limited availability of vacant developable land. As such, no major extensions of public utilities in Mountain Lakes are projected to be needed. Due to the limited potential for new development, the focus of this element is to provide a general description of the facilities and utilities that currently exist in the Borough and to make recommendations for maintenance and improvements.

FACILITIES AND UTILITIES OVERVIEW/BACKGROUND

The following are the major events and significant issues relating to Facilities and Utilities in Mountain Lakes leading up to this point.

- The Borough Hall's condition is problematic and needs renovations and upgrades
- Federal and State law requires inspection and repair of dams. All major dams have been renovated or repaired since 1996. Minor repair work on the Sunset Lake dam was completed in 2008 but the dam may need further work.
- Impact from development, especially in adjacent communities, and escalating consumption patterns have increased concern about the Borough's potable water supply in recent years.
- The Borough's schools have long been recognized as among the best in the state; a fact important to the residents and to the character of the community.

FACILITIES AND UTILITIES OBJECTIVES

The following are the major facilities and utilities objectives that should be pursued by Borough officials and should continue to be reflected in Borough policies.

1. Maintain, upgrade and replace existing facilities in a manner that minimizes public expenditures.
2. Promote capital budgeting for ongoing maintenance/replacement of facilities/utilities in a manner that will maintain them in good condition and spread out the costs.
3. Encourage inter-municipal cooperation for the provision, maintenance and upgrading of municipal services, facilities and utilities where possible.
4. Promote the efficient utilization of all community facilities.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The following are the major public facilities in Mountain Lakes:

Public Schools

Public schools are the most important public facilities in the Borough. The Borough has a long tradition of commitment to public education and its public schools, which is reflected in its state-wide reputation for excellence. Approximately 70 percent of local taxes are committed to their support. A high level of commitment to public education has been a cornerstone of Mountain Lakes' attractiveness to families and should be continued. School facilities plans are submitted to the County Superintendent annually to outline the District's plans for renovations and maintenance. The Borough Board of Education regularly evaluates future facility needs. Any proposals need to be carefully evaluated by the entire community.

Existing School Facilities - Three school buildings, located in a campus setting, are currently utilized for regular classes. There is another school building for classes for hearing impaired students.

EXISTING SCHOOL FACILITIES
(Source: Mountain Lakes Board of Education)

SCHOOL / LOCATION (Site Acreage)	YEAR BUILT / EXPANDED	SIZE	FUNCTION
Lake Drive School, Lake Drive and the Boulevard (2.4 acres)	1914 expanded 1920	175 student capacity	Regional facility for the hearing impaired, more than 90 sending Districts
Wildwood Elementary School, Glen Road (14.1 acres)	1953 expanded 1965, 1999	590 student capacity *	Grades K through 5
Briarcliff Middle School, Briarcliff Road (12.7 acres)	1936 expanded 1999	381 student capacity*	Grades 6 through 8
Mountain Lakes High School , Powerville Road (41.1 acres)	1958 expanded 1972, 2005	715 student capacity *	Grades 9 through 12

* Based on Board of Education Long Range Facilities Plan for 2005-2010.

Recent School Improvements - In 2005, following passage of a referendum, and with a significant contribution of State funds, the High School received an overall facelift plus the addition of a new media center, band room, new classrooms, training center and a second gym. The addition of a new hallway greatly improved the traffic flow of the building.

In 2003, two new playing fields were completed on land in the Halsey A. Frederick Memorial Park. In 2007, the football field, now referred to as Wilkins' Field, was resurfaced with artificial turf that will allow greater usage at times of the year when natural grass fields cannot be utilized due to their wet condition.

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT
(Source: Mountain Lakes Board of Education)

	1969-70	1979-80	1989-90	1999-00	2009-2010
Mt. Lakes Students	1,793	1,224	856	1,180	1,209
Non-resident Students	16	12	41	33	12
Hearing impaired	-	51	136	224	164
Boonton Twp HS Students	-	-	-	189	270
TOTAL	1,809	1,287	1,033	1,626	1655

Public Library

The Mountain Lakes Free Public Library is located at Elm Road adjacent to the Post Office. The Library has over 40,000 books and over 3,000 audio/visual items. A major renovation was made in 1996 for better utilization of the existing space. In 2002 the Children’s Room was expanded. A large meeting room is in the lower floor of the building, specifically dedicated to and heavily used by community organizations. This room was renovated in 2006 to make it handicapped accessible and a bathroom was added. A Borough archives room was also added. Through their library cards Mountain Lakes residents also have access to the M.A.I.N. (Morris Automated Information Network) system.

Borough Hall

The Borough Hall houses the Borough Administration, School District Administration, Police and Volunteer Fire Departments, Council Chambers and meeting rooms. In 1996, an individual stair elevator was installed in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Court services were moved to Denville, as of May 2010.

In 2008 the Borough established a Facilities Committee to study Borough Hall. The committee determined that the building did not provide the space that the building user groups required; particularly space for the Police Department. The Borough Council decided not to proceed with the expansion at that time due to overall cost the state of the economy and the possibility of establishing shared services with the neighboring communities.

Fire Department

The Mountain Lakes Volunteer Fire Department is housed within the Borough Hall. Facilities available to the Fire Department are fully utilized. The facilities consist of three bays which house two pumpers and one rescue vehicle. There is a small meeting room/kitchen facility which serves multiple functions primarily for the Fire Department's office and meeting space, but also for the Police Department's lunch room, holding/interview room and various other functions on an as-needed basis. The facility does not have a decontamination area for hazardous materials which the Fire Department considers to be a risk.

The following objectives remain paramount to the Department in order to maintain, and improve, the level of service and protection.

- Maintain adequate response time.
- Maintain adequate pumping capacity.
- Enhance the water supply system for improved hydrant yields where necessary.
- Attract and retain qualified volunteer officers and staff.

Attention to the water system is a continuing long-term issue which the Borough is addressing. Almost all areas of the Borough except for a few small dead end roads have eight inch water mains which are adequately sized for fire-fighting purposes. The Borough's practice of periodically replacing aging fire trucks, upgrading water delivery for fire-fighting, and upgrading communications systems should continue. The Borough replaced the rescue vehicle in 2008 and one pumper in 2010. Mutual aid arrangements continue to exist on a voluntary, reciprocal and "as available" basis.

Although additional future development is projected to be modest, the regulatory and compliance environment affecting the Fire Department is expected to continue to be more stringent. In addition, it has become more difficult to attract volunteers in recent years. The Borough will need to monitor these trends and respond accordingly to avoid diminution of fire protection service.

Department of Police

Formed in 1924, the 13 person police force with 7 vehicles is committed to providing a safe environment, proactive policing and assistance to all the Borough entities. The headquarters for the Department of Police is housed in the lower level of the Borough Hall as is the Fire Department and its equipment.

In 2008 the Borough switched to a County dispatch system to handle 911 emergency, fire and police calls.

Department of Public Works

The Department of Public Works headquarters is located in the same block as the Borough Hall, with access from Pocono Road. The facilities include the Borough Garage and storage area as well as an office for the director, a meeting room and personnel rooms. The twelve bays in the garage are used to capacity by the Department's vehicles of various sizes and types. Vehicles and other equipment are replaced in accordance with a schedule reflected in the Capital Improvement Program.

Most of the normal Borough maintenance (streets, parks, lakes, dams, buildings and grounds) and some construction of new facilities is done by the Department of Public Works (DPW). Other responsibilities include the public water, sanitary sewerage and storm drainage systems and the Recycling Center (behind the Borough Garage). The Department's buildings and equipment are generally adequate for the purposes and no major expansions are expected.

Dams

The federal and state governments have required inspections and upgrading, repair and /or replacement of all earthen dams. All major Borough dams, with the exception of Sunset Lake have been substantially rebuilt. Active monitoring and maintenance of the dams in the Borough is being done.

PUBLIC UTILITIES

The utilities in or serving Mountain Lakes include:

UTILITIES

FUNCTION	AGENCY
Electricity	Jersey Central Power and Light Co
Natural Gas	New Jersey Natural Gas Company
Telephone / Internet/ TV (landline)	Verizon, Cablevision
Potable water	Mountain Lakes Water Utility
Sanitary sewage collection	Mountain Lakes Sewer Utility
Sanitary sewage treatment	Parsippany-Troy Hills Sewer Utility
Solid wastes collection/disposal	Borough of Mountain Lakes *
Recycling	Borough of Mountain Lakes *
Storm drainage	Borough of Mountain Lakes

*Municipal contract with private scavenger for residential and public building pick-up, individual private contracts for businesses.

Energy, Telephone and Cable TV

Electricity, telephone and cable TV utilities are furnished primarily through overhead lines. These services are available throughout the Borough. Natural gas is available in most sections of the Borough. Heating oil is truck-delivered to individual homes by a number of purveyors.

Public Potable Water

For the most part, all homes and non-residential units in the Borough are served by public water provided by the municipal system (53 homes in the Lake Arrowhead area are served by Denville.) The number of customers is about 1,520 (4Q, 2010), including 84 commercial customers. There are no major industrial water consumers in the community.

Water Supply - There are four working wells serving the community. The major one designated Well #5 is located near the Boulevard, south of Route 46, and provides for most of the needs. In 2000 an air stripper was added to Well #5 in order to eliminate trace contamination. Another well located at Tower Hill Road and two wells in Denville assist meeting firm capacity requirements. The treated water meets all governmentally mandated quality requirements and the Environmental Commission reviews the monthly quality read-outs for all the wells. The long term impact on groundwater quality and quantity from development in our region is a major concern, especially because the aquifer, upon which the Borough depends for its water, crosses municipal boundaries into areas of rapid development.

Distribution System - The water is stored in two tanks, with a combined capacity of 1,500,000 gallons, located on Lookout Road opposite Summit Avenue. The Borough pumps between 700,000 (off-season) and 1,000,000 (peak summer season) gallons of water per day. The distribution system does not show any major weaknesses in serving the Borough's existing development. Pressure is adequate except for some spots in the vicinity of the storage tank. There are two small streets still serviced by 2 inch water mains. However, the existing capacity has been deemed adequate due to the small number of homes on these streets. Water leakage, defined as unaccounted for, unbilled water usage was 27 percent in 2008, while in 2010 it was lowered to 14 percent. There is an ongoing plan of repair. Not all of the leaks are within the control of the Borough since many occur in old service lines between the curb box and the meter to the house and are the customer's responsibility.

Water System Needs - Regular maintenance and gradual improvements and extensions of the public water system should provide adequate services to the existing development. The water supply is largely supplied by a single well (Well # 5). With three other wells recently upgraded the Borough has 100% back-up capacity. Consumption patterns and trends should be monitored.

Sanitary Sewer System

The Borough's sanitary sewerage system was installed in 1977-78. Residential and commercial development since then has been integrated into the system. The one residential street (Arden Road) not included in 1977-78 was added in 1996; it is the only residential street using a pumping station in the otherwise all-gravity collection system. The only other pumping station (private) is on Morris Avenue by the Park Place property.

The Parsippany-Troy Hills Sewer Utility provides secondary and tertiary treatment of the collected wastes, under a contract based on a maximum flow of 520,000 gallons per day generated by the estimated volume from an ultimate 1,300 homes. Another 120,000 gallons per day has been allocated for non-residential customers. This capacity should be adequate for present and future development in Mountain Lakes.

Storm Drainage

The storm drainage system in the community has been mapped. Most of the drainage water infiltrates the ground or ends up in the lakes. Flooding does not constitute a major problem in Mountain Lakes as it is a headwater area. Excessive rain storms will, on occasion, flood a number of basements. Run off problems have been identified in several areas and are being addressed with installation of additional catch basins and lateral connections. Ten detention or retention areas have been built in the Borough as part of residential and commercial developments. As a headwater area, the community should continue to take responsibility to provide zero increase in surface-water run off in connection with major developments for the benefit of the downstream communities. In addition, the Borough's Surface Water Management regulations should provide for mitigation of pollution in storm water of such developments. The Borough also follows New Jersey Surface Water Management regulations, aggressively maintaining catch basins and lateral connections, replacing when necessary. See the Stormwater Management plan, adopted in 2006.

FACILITY AND UTILITY PROPOSALS

The following are the major community facility and utility related proposals that should be pursued by Borough officials and embodied in Borough policies.

Public Schools

The Borough's traditional strong commitment to public education should continue. However, it must be recognized that there are limits to that commitment. High property taxes, in large part resulting from that commitment, may make it difficult to address other important municipal needs. High property taxes may also make it difficult for some residents (including many long term residents on fixed incomes) to afford to remain in the Borough.

The Borough's future school age population is not expected to grow substantially. The Future Land Use Plan provides for only very modest residential development, due to the lack of vacant and developable land. The Board of Education monitors fluctuations in the school population and takes appropriate actions to adjust to changes. Large changes are not expected in the near future. However, the inclusion of Boonton Township students into the high school requires additional monitoring since unlike Mountain Lakes there are substantial areas of land in Boonton Township that could be developed.

Utilization of Buildings

There has been increased emphasis on the efficient utilization of community facilities and activities. In the absence of a community center, numerous spaces are used for gatherings - Borough Hall, Library, schools, churches and Mountain Lakes Club (often for a fee unless sponsored by a club member).

To some extent, additional meeting room space for community group and volunteer committee functions may be provided through more efficient coordination of scheduling and dual use of existing facilities. As a first priority, ways of encouraging the efficient and flexible use of built space and better coordination between the Board of Education and Borough Council and among Borough service groups and agencies should be pursued in order to minimize the need to build additional space. The overall goal should be to ensure adequate accessible space for meeting and training for resident committees, boards, organizations, and municipal employees and for storage of public records

Shared Services

The Borough is a small community; as a result, some services cannot be provided as efficiently as would be the case in a larger municipality. In order to control costs and maintain service quality, the Borough should look for additional opportunities to cooperate or contract with other communities or private vendors. The identification of potential opportunities for such cooperation and alliances should be broadly-scoped, recognizing a 15-20 year planning horizon.

Currently, the Borough shares 19 services and equipment with other towns. The Borough is part of a county dispatch system for police and fire. It has agreements with Denville, Boonton and Parsippany for sharing water services and fire department resources should the need arise. Court services are shared with Denville.

In 2009, the Borough Council commissioned a study of shared services that could impact the Borough's need for space and affect future capital and operating costs. After a long process with a great deal of public involvement, the community expressed a willingness to share additional services as long as the quality of service was not impaired.

Infrastructure Upgrading/Replacement

Many of the pipes in the Borough water distribution system are old. Replacement or upgrading is an ongoing project. Road resurfacing, curb replacement and storm drainage improvements should be coordinated with the important project of protecting the water quality in the Borough lakes.

Water Utility

Water Supply - Vigilance by the Borough shall continue to monitor the quality and quantity of the water supply. Extensive testing of the water is conducted periodically as required by the State of New Jersey.

Distribution System Improvements - The Borough water utility should continue to schedule minor improvements to the distribution system in an orderly fashion with specific reference to the judicious replacement of any remaining two-inch lines deemed to warrant replacement. Water line loops should be completed where feasible to provide better fire-fighting flow conditions. Water system leaks should continue to be aggressively identified and eliminated.

Storm Drainage

The Borough's traditional approach of gradually improving the storm drainage system should be continued.

Americans With Disabilities Act Compliance

With the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act a major effort was made to make all public buildings barrier free and accessible.

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