

# **Master Plan Housing Element and Fair Share Plan**

**City of Linden**  
Union County, New Jersey

May 29, 2025

Prepared by:

**ricci**planning

177 Monmouth Avenue  
Atlantic Highlands, NJ 07716



Paul N. Ricci, AICP, PP  
New Jersey Professional Planner  
License No.: LI005570

*The original of this document was signed  
and sealed in accordance with New Jersey Law*

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>I. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>II. HOUSING ELEMENT .....</b>	<b>5</b>
A. ANALYSIS OF DEMOGRAPHIC, HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS .....	5
1. <i>Housing Stock Inventory</i> .....	5
2. <i>General Population Characteristics</i> .....	8
3. <i>Household Characteristics</i> .....	10
4. <i>Income Characteristics</i> .....	10
5. <i>Resident Employment Characteristics</i> .....	11
6. <i>Employment within Linden</i> .....	12
<b>III. FAIR SHARE PLAN.....</b>	<b>13</b>
A. INTRODUCTION.....	13
B. PRESENT NEED OBLIGATION .....	13
C. PROSPECTIVE NEED OBLIGATION.....	14
1. <i>RDP</i> .....	14
2. <i>Unmet Need</i> .....	15
D. POTENTIAL ADDITIONAL CREDITS.....	<b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b>
E. THE 25 PERCENT REQUIREMENT .....	20
F. DEVELOPERS WHO HAVE COMMITTED TO A PROJECT WITH AFFORDABLE HOUSING .....	21
G. RESERVATION OF RIGHT AND AUTHORITY .....	22

**Appendices**

Appendix A – Vacant Land Adjustment

Appendix B – Affordable Housing Sites Map and Table

Appendix C – Proposed Ordinance for 208-210 South Wood Avenue

Appendix D - Proposed Ordinance for 1113 North Wood Avenue

Appendix E – Adopted Redevelopment Plans for Roselle Street and Amici’s Restaurant

Appendix F – Proposed Overlay Ordinance and Map

Appendix G - Proposed Prophylactic Ordinance

Appendix H - Spending Plan

Appendix I – Proposed Affordable Housing Ordinance

**City of Linden**  
**2025 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

This Housing Element and Fair Share Plan has been prepared on behalf of the City of Linden, Union County, in accordance with the New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1 et seq.) and the New Jersey Fair Housing Act (N.J.S.A. 52:27D-301 et seq. as amended through P.L. 2024, c. 2 and hereinafter referred to as “FHA II”).

FHA II established a new process whereby a municipality could secure approval of its Housing Element and Fair Share Plan. FHA II requires any municipality that wished to participate in the new process to adopt a resolution committing to fair share obligations by January 31, 2025, and to file a declaratory relief action within 48 hours of adopting this resolution. By adopting this resolution and filing this declaratory judgment action, FHA II provides that the municipality is immune from exclusionary zoning lawsuits. FHA II further provides that if a municipality wishes to extend immunity, it must adopt a Housing Element and Fair Share Plan by June 30, 2025, and file the duly adopted Housing Element and Fair Share Plan with the Dispute Resolution Program.

The City has determined that it is in the best interest of the community to participate in the procedures established by FHA II and secure the immunity promised by the Legislation.

Accordingly, the City of Linden adopted a resolution committing to certain fair share numbers by January 31, 2025 and subsequently filed a declaratory relief action within 48 hours of its adoption. In a further effort to follow the procedures created by FHA II, the City directed Paul Ricci, AICP, PP to prepare a Housing Element and Fair Share Plan for consideration by the Planning Board and Governing Body. Accordingly, Paul Ricci, AICP, PP prepared this Housing Element and Fair Share Plan. If the Planning Board adopts, this plan will be filed with the Dispute Regulation Program within 48 hours.

FHA II specifies that all parties may continue to rely on regulations previously adopted by the New Jersey Council on Affordable Housing unless those regulations contradict FHA II. A municipality’s affordable housing obligation consists of its rehab obligation, also known as its Present Need, and its new construction obligation, also known as its Prospective Need. The City’s Prospective Need includes its obligations for Round 1 through 4.

As to the rehab obligation, the obligation is 299 units.

As to the Prospective Need, the total obligation is 1,222 units. This consists of an obligation of 466 units for Rounds 1, 2, and 3 and a Round 4 obligation of 756 units.<sup>1</sup> N.J.S.A. 52:27D-310.1 provides that a municipality with insufficient land to satisfy its new construction obligation may

---

<sup>1</sup> The Round 4 obligation has been mediated down from 787 units.

**City of Linden**  
**2025 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan**

request a vacant land adjustment of that component of its obligation. N.J.S.A. 52:27D-310.1 largely incorporates the standards COAH set forth in N.J.A.C. 5:93-4.2. The City of Linden is requesting such an adjustment and has determined that its Realistic Development Potential (RDP) is 18 units, thereby resulting in an unmet need of 1,204 units. This is Linden's Round 4 obligation after adjusting for the amount of vacant land in the municipality.

This Housing Element and Fair Share Plan constitutes an amendment of the Linden City Master Plan and explains how it proposes to address its obligations. N.J.S.A. 52:27D-310 sets forth the required contents of a Housing Element as follows:

- a. An inventory of the municipality's housing stock by age, condition, purchase or rental value, occupancy characteristics, and type, including the number of units affordable to low- and moderate-income households and substandard housing capable of being rehabilitated, and in conducting this inventory the municipality shall have access, on a confidential basis for the sole purpose of conducting the inventory, to all necessary property tax assessment records and information in the assessor's office, including but not limited to the property record cards;
- b. A projection of the municipality's housing stock, including the probable future construction of low- and moderate-income housing, for the next ten years, taking into account, but not necessarily limited to, construction permits issued, approvals of applications for development and probable residential development of lands;
- c. An analysis of the municipality's demographic characteristics, including but not necessarily limited to, household size, income level and age;
- d. An analysis of the existing and probable future employment characteristics of the municipality;
- e. A determination of the municipality's present and prospective fair share for low- and moderate-income housing and its capacity to accommodate its present and prospective housing needs, including its fair share for low- and moderate-income housing, as established pursuant to section 3 of P.L. 2024, c.2 (C.52:27D-304.1);
- f. A consideration of the lands that are most appropriate for construction of low- and moderate-income housing and of the existing structures most appropriate for conversion to, or rehabilitation for, low- and moderate-income housing, including a consideration of lands of developers who have expressed a commitment to provide low- and moderate-income housing.

**City of Linden**  
**2025 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan**

- g. An analysis of the extent to which municipal ordinances and other local factors advance or detract from the goal of preserving multigenerational family continuity as expressed in the recommendations of the Multigenerational Family Housing Continuity Commission, adopted pursuant to paragraph (1) of subsection f. of section 1 of P.L.2021, c.273 (C.52:27D-329.20);
- h. For a municipality located within the jurisdiction of the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council, established pursuant to section 4 of P.L.2004, c.120 (C.13:20-4), an analysis of compliance of the housing element with the Highlands Regional Master Plan of lands in the Highlands Preservation Area, and lands in the Highlands Planning Area for Highlands-conforming municipalities. This analysis shall include consideration of the municipality's most recent Highlands Municipal Build Out Report, consideration of opportunities for redevelopment of existing developed lands into inclusionary or 100 percent affordable housing, or both, and opportunities for 100 percent affordable housing in both the Highlands Planning Area and Highlands Preservation Area that are consistent with the Highlands regional master plan; and
- i. An analysis of consistency with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan, including water, wastewater, stormwater, and multi-modal transportation based on guidance and technical assistance from the State Planning Commission.

**II. HOUSING ELEMENT****A. Analysis of Demographic, Housing and Employment Characteristics**

As required by N.J.S.A. 52:27D-310, all housing elements must contain a discussion of the community's demographic, housing, and economic characteristics. In fulfillment of this requirement, the following subsections profile the City of Linden with information obtained from the United States Census Bureau and the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

**1. Housing Stock Inventory**

According to the most recent data of the United States Census Bureau, there are 16,142 housing units in the City of Linden, of which 852 or 5.3 percent are vacant. Of the 15,290 occupied housing units, 9,364 are owner-occupied and the remaining 5,926 units are renter-occupied. See Table 1, Housing Tenure by Number of Units in Structure, 2023 for a detailed explanation of the housing units identified in the United States Census Bureau's 5-Year American Community Survey.

**Table 1: Housing Tenure by Number of Units in Structure, 2023**

<i>Unit Type</i>	<i>Owner-Occupied Units</i>	<i>Percent of Total Occupied Units</i>	<i>Renter-Occupied Units</i>	<i>Percent of Total Occupied Units</i>	<i>Total Occupied Units</i>	<i>Percent of Total Occupied Units</i>
1 unit, detached	6,529	69.7	744	12.6	7,273	47.6
1 unit, attached	633	6.8	142	2.4	775	5.1
2 units	1,690	18.0	2,157	36.4	3,847	25.2
3 or 4 units	72	0.8	1,045	17.6	1,117	7.3
5 to 9 units	68	0.7	436	7.4	504	3.3
10 to 19 units	23	0.2	225	3.8	248	1.6
20 to 49 units	79	0.8	587	9.9	666	4.4
50 or more	247	2.6	580	9.8	827	5.4
Mobile home	23	0.2	10	0.2	33	0.2
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>9,364</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>5,926</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>15,290</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Note:** Percentage totals may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding

**Source:** United States Census Bureau, 2023 Five-Year American Community Survey

As can also be seen in Table 1, the City of Linden has a mix of housing types. Although 8,048, or approximately 52.7 percent of all occupied housing units, are single-family units, including 7,273 single-family detached and 775 single-family attached units, a total of 7,242 occupied housing units, or about 47.4 percent of all occupied housing units, are in structures that contain

**City of Linden**  
**2025 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan**

at least two housing units. Moreover, nearly ten percent of all housing units (9.8 percent) of the occupied housing units are in structures that contain at least 20 units.

Table 2, Housing Units by Age of Structure, 2023, indicates the age of the City's housing stock. More than half (53.0 percent) of Linden's existing housing units were constructed before 1969, which reflects the trend towards suburbanization in the New York/New Jersey/Connecticut metropolitan area during this period. The City's housing stock is aging, with the median year built of all housing units being 1957; owner-occupied housing units being 1954; and renter-occupied housing units being 1967.

**Table 2: Housing Units by Age of Structure, 2023**

<i><b>Year Built</b></i>	<i><b>Total Units</b></i>	<i><b>Percent of Total Units</b></i>	<i><b>Owner-Occupied Units</b></i>	<i><b>Percent of Owner-Occupied Units</b></i>	<i><b>Renter-Occupied Units</b></i>	<i><b>Percent of Renter-Occupied Units</b></i>
2020 or later	53	0.3	0	0.0	53	0.9
2010 to 2019	946	6.2	480	5.1	466	7.9
2000 to 2009	606	4.0	223	2.4	383	6.5
1990 to 1999	718	4.7	171	1.8	547	9.2
1980 to 1989	1,243	8.1	555	5.9	688	11.6
1970 to 1979	1,307	8.5	663	7.1	644	10.9
1960 to 1969	1,606	10.5	1,002	10.7	604	10.2
1950 to 1959	3,669	24.0	2,813	30.0	856	14.4
1940 to 1949	1,952	12.8	1,661	17.7	291	4.9
1939 or earlier	3,190	20.9	1,796	19.2	1,394	23.5
<b>Totals</b>	<b>15,290</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>9,364</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>5,926</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Median Year Built</b>	<b>1957</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>1954</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>1967</b>	<b>N/A</b>

**Note:** Percentage totals may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding

**Source:** United States Census Bureau, 2023 Five-Year American Community Survey

Table 3, Housing Units by Number of Rooms, 2023, shows that 70.2 percent of the City's housing stock contains five or more rooms, with all housing units containing a median of 5.5 rooms. When considering just owner-occupied units, however, it is noted that they contain a median of 6.3 rooms, with 87.0 percent of them containing five or more rooms. On the other hand, the City's renter-occupied units contain a median of 4.3 rooms with just 43.6 percent of them containing five or more rooms.

**City of Linden**  
**2025 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan**

**Table 3: Housing Units by Number of Rooms, 2023**

<i>Rooms</i>	<i>Total Units</i>	<i>Percent of Total Units</i>	<i>Owner-Occupied Units</i>	<i>Percent of Owner-Occupied Units</i>	<i>Renter-Occupied Units</i>	<i>Percent of Renter-Occupied Units</i>
1 room	472	3.1	43	0.5	429	7.2
2 rooms	419	2.7	61	0.7	358	6.0
3 rooms	1,148	7.5	230	2.5	918	15.5
4 rooms	2,522	16.5	885	9.5	1,637	27.6
5 rooms	3,222	21.1	1,863	19.9	1,359	22.9
6 rooms	2,967	19.4	1,983	21.2	984	16.6
7 rooms	2,164	14.2	2,006	21.4	158	2.7
8 rooms	1,317	8.6	1,292	13.8	25	0.4
9 or more rooms	1,059	6.9	1,001	10.7	58	1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,290</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>9,364</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>5,926</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Median Rooms</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>N/A</b>

**Note:** Percentage totals may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding

**Source:** United States Census Bureau, 2023 Five-Year American Community Survey

Table 4, Value of Owner-Occupied Housing Units, 2023, provides a detailed description of housing values within the City of Linden. Indeed, it shows that most (51.8 percent) of the owner-occupied housing units in the City have a value of between \$300,000 and \$499,999, with the median value of owner-occupied housing units being \$387,200.

**Table 4: Value of Owner-Occupied Housing Units, 2023**

<i>Home Value</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
\$199,999 or less	1,156	12.3
\$200,000 to \$299,999	1,537	16.4
\$300,000 to \$499,999	4,853	51.8
\$500,000 to \$999,999	1,777	19.0
\$1,000,000 or more	41	0.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,364</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Median Value</b>	<b>\$387,200</b>	<b>N/A</b>

**Note:** Percentage totals may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding

**Source:** United States Census Bureau, 2023 Five-Year American Community Survey

Table 5, Gross Rent of Renter-Occupied Units, 2023, details gross rents within Linden. As shown in Table 5, a cash rent is paid in all except 152, or 2.6 percent, of Linden's 5,926 renter-occupied housing units. When a cash rent is paid, the gross rent of most (68.5 percent) renter-occupied housing units with a cash rent ranges from \$1,000 to \$1,999 per month.