



**TOWNSHIP OF TOMS RIVER**

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# **MASTER PLAN**

## **Cultural Arts Plan Element**

**Township of Toms River  
Ocean County, NJ**

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Prepared by:

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## **Cultural Arts Plan Master Plan Element**

### **Introduction:**

Arts, culture and musical expression are the foundations to building an economically vibrant, year round community that encourages the tourists of today into becoming the new residents and business owners of tomorrow. A burgeoning creative arts and cultural community is developing in Toms River Township. This plan provides a vision of Toms River Township as the cultural and arts destination of Ocean County, NJ and provides goals and objectives to implement the vision. It serves as a guideline for all current and future organizations, individuals and agencies who are striving to improve Toms River Township, as well as provide support for the arts, heritage, culture and musical expression.

### **What is a Cultural Plan?**

A cultural plan is intended to guide and focus the efforts of every organization, individual and/or agency that advocates on behalf of the creative arts, and culture. It states goals and objectives for a shared mission to implement and/or financially support.

### **Cultural Plan Mission**

The mission of the cultural plan for Toms River Township is to provide leadership, guidance, advocacy and support for the cultural development of Toms River Township, thereby ensuring that the arts, music, culture, heritage and creativity (by non-traditional artistic fields) are articulated priorities for all aspects of community development and planning.

### **Existing Resources**

**Facilities:** The Township of Toms River has 10 active facilities for the promotion of arts and culture, 5 publically owned properties for arts and culture activity use, and 5 Revolutionary War sites.

### Library

The Ocean County Library System serves all 33 Ocean County municipalities with a total of twenty branches. The library headquarters is located in the Historic Village of Downtown Toms River. In addition to the headquarters' vast literary collection, the library also provides services to the public including family programs for all age groups, exhibits, book discussions and a variety of classes ranging from computer training to yoga instruction. Directly adjacent to the County Library Headquarters is the Bishop Building, named after Nathaniel Holmes Bishop, a local author during the post-civil war era. This building was constructed in 1941 using funds left by the estate of Mr. Bishop and his wife specifically for the establishment of a Toms River public library. The Ocean County Library also maintains a permanent collection of statues, paintings, ceramic and other medium types of works throughout the library and three outdoor statues.

### Ocean County Historical Museum

Toms River Township has a diverse cultural foundation. Toms River is home to the Ocean County Historical Museum located in the Sculthorpe House at 26 Hadley Avenue. Construction of this historic house commenced in 1820 and was completed in 1866. The museum has several permanent exhibits that include Revolutionary and Civil War memorabilia, a history of the Lakehurst National Air Station, Native American artifacts and Barnegat Bay duck decoys. The museum also has continually changing exhibits on loan from local residents, which represent the native history, folklore, and lifestyles of the township.

### Toms River Maritime Museum

The Toms River Maritime Museum located on East Water Street is dedicated to Barnegat Bay maritime heritage. The shallow nature of the Barnegat Bay has prompted the design of many unique boat types, some of which can be viewed at the museum. Additionally, the museum displays art, maps, clothing and other memorabilia that address the distinctive history of the Barnegat Bay.

### The Jay and Linda Grunin Center for the Arts

The Jay and Linda Grunin Center for the Arts, located on the campus of Ocean County College, is home to the Ocean County College Theatre Company and the Ocean County College Concert Band. In addition, the Garden State Philharmonic is the Orchestra-in-Residence.

### The Robert J. Novins Planetarium Sky Theater

The Robert J. Novins Planetarium is the largest and most active planetarium in New Jersey located on the Ocean County College Campus. The facility provides programming for children and adult/general admission. The facility also hosts laser shows.

### One Flight Up

One Flight Up is an event venue for Toms River Artist Community (TRAC), artist and musicians, and the general public. This venue is home to the Listening Room, a monthly pop-up club for music and arts lovers in downtown Toms River. The Listening Room hosts two musical acts and one visual artist interacting in a unique space once a month. The Listening Room is striving to expand to a bi-monthly operation.

### Business Improvement District (BID) Activity Room at the Shops at 53 Main Street

The activity room is a community space located in Downtown Toms River that hosts painting parties and other art and cultural related activities and classes.

### The River Lady

The River Lady is a 150 passenger, 85' authentic reproduction of a paddle wheel riverboat. The River Lady splendidly captures the ambiance of a 19<sup>th</sup> century Mississippi Paddleboat. The River Lady hosts tours of the river and provides lunch and dinner cruises. Cruises include Historical lunch cruises, Dinner Cruises, and Dinner and Dancing Cruises. The River Lady is located on Robbins Parkway, next to the Water Street Restaurant.

### Toms River Intermediate East: Toms River Multi-Generational Orchestra (TRMO)

The Toms River Multigenerational Orchestra is a community orchestra which performs through the county and is based at Toms River Intermediate East School during the school year and at Township Hall during the summer months and school holidays (or TR Elks when Town Hall is not feasible). The group plays orchestra music, classical music, holiday music, and a variety of Genre. Individuals are encouraged to bring instruments and music stands. Sheet music is provided. The group performs at nursing homes, assisted living facilities, the Ocean County Library as well as other locations in Toms River and Ocean County.

### Town Hall (33 Washington Street)

Toms River Township hosts events, such as the annual tree lighting, and permits the use of public meeting rooms for use by various organizations. The following cultural, arts and musical organizations currently utilize public meeting rooms at town hall for their meetings:

1. *Toms River Multi-Generational Orchestra* – A musical group for all generations (adults and children) meets at Town hall during the summer and school holidays (when space is available). The group plays orchestra music, classical music, holiday music, and a variety of Genre. Individuals are encouraged to bring instruments and music stands. Sheet music is provided. The group performs at nursing homes, assisted living facilities, the Ocean County Library as well as other locations in Toms River and Ocean County throughout the year. A minimal annual membership of \$25 is charged by the group.

2. *Tole Time at the Jersey Shore* - Tole Time at the Jersey Shore is a local chapter of the Society of Decorative Painters (SDP), a national, non-profit organization. In 1995 a group of painting friends decided to explore membership in the SDP. Over a period of two (2) years, following the rules and guidelines supplied by the SDP, they formed a steering committee to elect officers, selected an original chapter name and logo, held regular recorded meetings, and submitted regular minutes and financial reports to the SDP. Tole Time at the Jersey Shore was officially recognized as an affiliated chapter of the SDP by charter in 1997.

The Chapter provides its members with quality monthly painting projects, holds regular business meetings, hosts seminars with nationally known decorative artists, provides educational demonstrations and regularly displays members' prized artwork locally at the Toms River Branch of the Ocean County Library.

While painting is what brought the group together, the group's obligation to give back to the community forms a unique camaraderie within our group. Tole Time at the Jersey Shore members have worked together to provide many painted items for local and national charities and organizations such as, the Make a Wish Foundation; Ocean of Love; Stephens Specialized Hospital for Children; Habitat for Humanity Resale Store; Childrens National Medical Center in Washington,

DC Art Therapy Program; Riverview Hospital; and the ToleNet Outreach Program which distributes hand painted "memory boxes" to hold keepsakes for families who have suffered the loss of an infant.

Membership in Tole Time at the Jersey Shore is open to all decorative artists and those interested in decorative painting. Tole and Decorative Painting, as defined by the SDP, is a diverse art form that utilizes a variety of techniques and media to decorate functional and nonfunctional surfaces. Tole painting is the term that has been used historically for decorative painting on tin surfaces. Many styles of early American folk art painting are incorporated in today's decorative painting. Contemporary decorative painting is a teachable art form because of the systematic method that is employed. It allows for the use of either pre-drawn or freehand designs thereby assuring a high degree of success without academic training or inherent drawing ability.

Tole Time at the Jersey Shore generally meets the third Monday of most months in the Community Room at Toms River Town Hall from 7:00 PM (doors open at 6:30 PM) – 9:00 PM. Full-day painting seminars are typically planned for April (the Chapter's "birthday" month) and October (Ornament Day), while members enjoy an annual holiday dinner and ornament exchange in December. Annual Membership is required in both the Society of Decorative Painters (SDP), which includes *The Decorative Painter* magazine, and in Tole Time at the Jersey Shore.

### **Publically owned land for hosting of arts and culture events:**

#### Ortley Beach Public Beach (3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue lot)

Although it currently only hosts one event a year, the Ortley Beach Summer Bash Party, the public beach could be utilized in similar fashion as neighboring communities to host movies on the beach, a temporary summer stage for local musicians, sand building competitions, and other similar activities.

#### Huddy Park

Huddy Park is the former location of the Farmers Market and current location of the Arts and in the Park and Wooden Boat show event. Huddy Park is a popular location for wedding pictures.

#### Iron's Street Lot (South Corner of Iron Street & West Water Street)

The Iron's Street lot is the current location of the Farmer's Market. The Farmer's Market operates every Wednesday from late May to mid-November from 11:00 am to 5:00pm. A special Thanksgiving Market is held the Monday before Thanksgiving from 11:00 am to 4:00pm.

### Town Hall & Town Hall Court Yard (33 Washington Street)

Town Hall Public Meeting Rooms are utilized by community groups. Any community group may utilize the space so long as the space is scheduled in advance through the Township Clerk's Office. The Town Hall Court Yard is currently utilized for the Annual Tree lighting ceremony and for the Beer Garden during Toms River FoodFest. Community Groups must seek permission to use the court yard from the Township.

### Ocean County Library (Toms River Branch)

Ocean County Library Toms River Branch has public meeting rooms that can be scheduled by local community organizations. Rooms must be scheduled in advance and approved for use. The library also hosts concerts and various cultural events throughout the year.

## **Revolutionary War Sites:**

### Blockhouse Replica

Located in Huddy Park.

The original Block House was manned by local militiamen, led by Captain Joshua Huddy, to defend the Village of Toms River against loyalist attacks, marauders, and pine robbers. On March 24, 1782, a British force of 80 men attacked Toms River, burned the forts, and left the village in ashes. The incident led to the cessation of Peace Negotiations in Paris, which eventually gave Toms River the distinction of being a Historic Site of the American Revolution.

### Original Site of the Toms River Blockhouse

Robbins Street near Washington Street, next to the Municipal Building.

A boulder monument on the Robbins Street side of the Toms River Municipal Building marks the approximate site of the Toms River Block House, which was burned by the British in March 24, 1782.

### Revolutionary War Cannon

Washington Street and Allen Street in front of the Ocean County Courthouse.

Old Methodist Cemetery – Hooper Avenue and Washington Street. At least three Revolutionary War Soldiers are buried in this cemetery.

- Private Timothy Page  
Born 1763/Died October 31, 1840  
Private New Jersey Regiment, Monmouth Co. Militia in Captian Wycoff's and Coward Companies
- Private William Williams  
Born 1765/Died September 10, 1842  
Private in Captain Lolyd's Co. 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade N.J. Continental Line

- Captain James Newell

Cedar Grove Cemetery (formerly Applegate Cemetery) – Cedar Grove Road and Bay Avenue. There are at least five Revolutionary War Soldiers buried in this cemetery.

- Private Bartholomew Applegate  
1757- May 20, 1846
- Daniel Applegate  
1759-May 20, 1836  
Matross in Captain Joshua Huddy's Artillery, State Troops also in the Continental Army  
Fought in Toms River Block House Attack on March 24, 1782
- Jacob Applegate  
1723-October 6, 1818  
Gave land for this cemetery
- Garrett Irons  
1759 – June 14, 1838  
Private – New Jersey Regiment, Monmouth County Militia Guard, Pennsylvania Salt Works
- Isaiah Weeks  
Patriot – killed a British Captain attacking the boat of Garret Irons and Bartholomew Applegate whose boat was adrift at sea.

#### **Other Historical Artifacts/Memorials:**

Anchor from the Aircraft Carrier USS Randolph CV-15 (1944-1969) – 15 tons  
Robins Parkway median (across from River Lady and Water Street Restaurant)

Served with Distinction during Kamikazi attacks in the Pacific Theatre during World War II. It later joined fleets in the Atlantic and Mediterranean and played a part in America's Early Space Program, recovered astronaut Gus Grissom from his Mercury space capsule and returned John Glenn, the first American to orbit the earth, to Grant Turk Island for Medical Exams. This anchor is also a symbol that represents the early shipping commerce on the Toms River which helped build the village as a commercial center. The anchor was dedicated to the Township in 1993.

### September 11, 2011 Memorial

Town Hall Court Yard (33 Washington Street)

Dedicated by Toms River Kiwanis DayBreak in 2013.

Piece of the World Trade Tower supporting beam provided by the New Jersey New York Port Authority and two small replica statues of the World Trade Towers honoring the victims and heroes of September 11, 2011.

### “Our Brightest Day” 9/11 Memorial

Dedicated on behalf of the people of the Toms River Township (Dover Township)

September 11, 2002

A Memorial placed in memory of the innocent people, heroic firemen, policemen and rescue workers who died during the attack on the twin towers, the pentagon, and on the airliners used as tools of destruction. The memorial includes a poem titled “Our Brightest Day” written by Samantha L. Ruocco, when she was an 8<sup>th</sup> grade in the Toms River Regional School System.

### Armed Forces Memorial

Erected in 1958

A memorial erected by the Township of Dover (Toms River Township) in Honor of the Men and Women who served and sacrificed in the armed forces of our country to preserve the free nation and our way of life. The following wars/conflicts are listed: Persian Gulf, Kuwait, Iraq, Afghanistan, Grenada, Lebanon, Vietnam Conflict, Panama, Bosnia, Somalia, Sicily, Italy, Normandy, Holland, Belgium, Germany, Korea, Burma, Okinawa Japan, North Africa, Pearl Harbor, Baiann, Guam, Guadalcanal, San Juan, Verdun, Valley Forge, and Gettysburg.

### **Murals & Public Art Locations:**

All the murals are located in the Downtown Toms River and must have a historic or civic theme. The Downtown has a total of six existing murals and numerous proposed murals. The Township has a total of four sculptures and numerous proposed sculptures.

#### **Existing Murals:**

Historic Walkway (Revolutionary War theme)

Alleyway connecting Irons Street and Main Street.



Business Improvement District (BID) Past Present Future Mural  
313 West Water Street

The Jay and Linda Grunin Foundation Community Mural  
207 Main Street

Barnegat Bronte (mosaic mural with internationally created fish)  
218 Main Street

### **Planned Mural Projects:**

Seaport Mural  
78 East Water Street

Toms River 250 by TRAC  
17 Washington Street

### **Existing Outdoor Statues**

**Fireman Memorial** (Brian Hanlon)  
Corner of Washington and Robbins Street

**Barcode Luminescence** (modern art sculptures by Mikyoung Kim)  
Washington Street, Ocean County Library Toms River Branch, East of Clock Tower  
Stainless Steel and Dichroic Glass Statue

**Little Girl Sitting Holding a Book and Casually Petting Her Cat** (by Clifford Sheely)  
Washington Street, Ocean County Library Toms River Branch, West of Clock Tower  
Bronze Statue created in memory of Virginia Tross Harvey

**Sail** (by Lyman Whitaker)  
Washington Street, Ocean County Library Toms River Branch, East of Clock Tower  
Copper Wind Sculpture

**“Welcome to Ocean County”** (Brian Hanlon)  
Main Street Slip Ramp and Route 37

**Huddy Park historical Metal Figures** (designed by FPA Associates Engineers)  
Throughout Huddy Park main entrances and parking adjacent to Huddy Park  
Water Street

**Proposed Outdoor Statues**

Veterans Memorial (Brian Hanlon) – construction underway  
 Bey Lea Park

Ortley Beach Dolphins (numerous sites throughout Ortley Beach as identified in the Ortley Beach Streetscape Plan)

**Ocean County Library Toms River Branch Permanent Collection:**

The Ocean County Library Toms River Branch has a permanent collection of artwork consisting of statues, paintings and art of various mediums. The collection currently consists of 25 pieces of artwork displayed inside throughout the Library. The library also has three statues on the grounds of the property that have been identified under the statues section above.

First Floor			
Artist Title	Title of Work	Medium	Location in Library
Brain Hanlon	Reflections of the Ocean County Library	Bronze Bas-Relief Sculptures	Lobby
Brain Hanlon	James J. Mancini	Bronze Sculpture	Rotunda
Michele Oka Doner	Protoplants	Terrazo Floor: Bronze, Granite, Organic Materials	Atrium
Helaine Rainier	Drifting	Oil on Canvas	Atrium
Helaine Rainier	Embryo	Oil on Canvas	Atrium
Helaine Rainier	Sunyata	Oil on Canvas	Atrium
Beverly Golembeski	Red Float	Watercolor	Reading area outside Green Room
Robert Edelhauser	A Stand in the Heartland	Oil on Canvas	Reading area outside Green Room
Robert Edelhauser	Gypsy	Oil on Canvas	Reading area outside Green Room
Robert Edelhauser	After the Wave 2	Oil on Canvas	Reading area outside Green Room
June Wilson	Cormorant	Oil & Acrylic on Wood	Green Room
Judith Harzer	Once Upon a Book (Boy)	Oil on Canvas	Youth/Easy Reading
Judith Harzer	Once Upon a Book (Girl)	Oil on Canvas	Youth/Easy Reading
Josey & Earl Stamm / NetworkArts	Barnegat Bay Mosaic Mural	Ceramic and Glass Tile	Outer Wall of Discovery Room, Youth Services
Chris Kappmeier	Cherry Blossom Tree at Branch Brook Park	Oil on Canvas	Fiction

Second Floor			
Artist Title	Title of Work	Medium	Location in Library
Joanie San Chirico	Sandbar 1 and Sandbar 2	Textile Sculpture	Suspended over Lobby Area
Helaine Rainier	Acqua Viva	Oil on Canvas	Outside Entrance to Silent Study Tower
Michael Malpass	"Buzzy"	Steel Sculpture	Silent Study Tower
Chris Freeman	Woven Light/Flowing Fabric	Neon/Argon/Xenon Light Sculpture	Hugh B. Wheeler Reading Room
J. Kenneth Leap	Veil of History	Hand-Painted/ Etched & Screen-Printed Glass	Reference Office
Elizabeth O' Neill Verner	Hagaar Maczyk and Untitled	Signed Lithographs	Entrance to Administration
Koslow, Howard	Storm Clouds – Sandy Hook	Acrylic/ Gesso on Masonite	Administration
Koslow, Howard	Barnegat Light	Acrylic/ Gesso on Masonite	Administration
Beverly Golembeski	Barnegat Light	Watercolor	Administration
Michael Malpass	"O"	Copper and Bronze Sculpture	Administration

### **Arts & Culture Organizations:**

The Downtown Business Improvement District (BID) in partnership with the Ocean County Library, Ocean County Historical Society, Ocean County Cultural and Heritage Commission, the Jay and Linda Grunin Foundation, Community Art Project (CAP), Toms River Artist Committee (TRAC), and local businesses, artists, and musicians will continue to sponsor and plan events to develop Toms River Downtown into a year round Arts and Cultural Mecca for Ocean County. These groups coordinate special events and develop programs to further promote the special events. "Exit 82 A Toms River Theater Company" could be utilized to develop new programming.

A new nonprofit, Friends of Ortley Beach, is a 501(c)(3) created in 2016. Friends of Ortley Beach seeks to develop activities and programs which foster community engagement in education and local arts as well as advocating and protecting the coastal environment. This group strives to improve the quality and sustainability of the Ortley Beach Barrier Island community and should be introduced to existing downtown nonprofits working to improve art and cultural opportunities for residents of Toms River.

#### Downtown Business Improvement District (BID):

The Downtown Business Improvement District is a special improvement district authorized by the Toms River Township Council. It was created to promote and implement the economic revitalization of the downtown Toms River business district. The goals of the Downtown Business Improvement District are to preserve the Township's cultural, historic, tourist and civic interest, while accessing public and private resources to improve business profitability and property values. Downtown Toms River is managed by the Toms River Business Development Corporation, a not-for-profit corporation whose members are elected by the commercial property owners, business owners, and residents of the district. The Downtown Business Improvement District office is located on 53 Main Street, on the second floor. The organization is responsible for promoting the downtown through marketing, meeting with businesses and township officials to address concerns and encourage redevelopment and revitalization, and planning and hosting events. The Toms River Improvement District also has a cultural and

#### Ocean County Library:

The Ocean County Library provides a venue for meetings and hosts events (such as concerts, art displays) at the Toms River Branch Ocean County Library. Ocean County Library staff and Ocean County Library Foundation members attend organizational meetings; develop programs and events to further the local culture and art community. From time to time the Ocean County Library Foundation will award grants to local organizations that are in line with their organizations values and mission.

#### Ocean County Historical Society:

The Ocean County Historical Society is responsible for maintaining the history of Ocean County and its municipalities. It is responsible for managing the Ocean County Historical Museum, producing and managing publications chronicling the historical data and stories of the county and municipalities. The Ocean County Historical Society also plans and hosts numerous events throughout the year. In 2016 the Ocean County Historical Society ran downtown Toms River Historical Tours from April to October on Saturdays. Other events hosted in Toms River are the Antiques and Collectibles Faire and the Fall Victorian Tea event.

#### Ocean County Cultural and Heritage Commission:

The Ocean County Cultural and Heritage Commission encourage creative and cultural expressions through inclusiveness and education. The Ocean County Cultural and Heritage Commission promote the public interest in the arts and the preservation of cultural and heritage. The Ocean County Cultural and Heritage Commission provide grant funding to nonprofits and agencies that further the arts, culture and heritage of Ocean County and prepared a Cultural Plan for Ocean County.

#### The Jay and Linda Grunin Foundation:

A proactive grant making 501(c) (3) working to make Toms River the regional template for quality of life and strong economic health through root-cause focused investment in healthcare, education and the arts.

### Community Art Project (CAP):

The Community Arts Project is a subcommittee of the Toms River Business Improvement District Cultural and Arts Committee. Its main focus is to facilitate bringing art and the arts to Downtown Toms River. Its goal is to make Downtown Toms River an Art and Cultural destination. It also plans and seeks sponsorships for art events and creates tie-in events. The members consist of Ocean County and Toms River officials, Ocean County Library officials, Ocean County Cultural & Arts Commission representative, Ocean County Historical Society representative, the Jay and Linda Grunin Foundation representative, local artists, and local businesses.

### Toms River Artist Committee (TRAC):

TRAC is a small but growing, art organization in Downtown Toms River. Their members are from all walks of life and their talents cover a broad range of art mediums from paint, sculpture, photography, glass, and etc. The mission of the group is two-fold. First, to strengthen the artist community by creating an affordable, active and vibrant environment, where local artists can work, teach, and exhibit their art- thus enriching the culture and the arts in our local community. Second, by enriching the local community, we hope to serve as part of the catalyst for revitalization on Downtown Toms River.

### Exit 82 A Toms River Theater Company

Exit 82 A Toms River Theater Company is a 501(c)3 non-profit performing arts organization whose mission is to provide quality artistic entertainment that involves and inspires the local community to develop talents in all aspects of theatre arts. Exit 82: A Toms River Theater Company was founded in 2008 and became a 501(c) 3 organization in 2009. The organization performs fund raising from local patrons and sponsors. In the summer of 2009 Exit 82: A Toms River Theater was able to produce the first production. Since 2009, the organization has been able to expand programming and produced its 12<sup>th</sup> production in 2016. The organization currently performs at the Stand Theater due to a lack of professional Theater space in Toms River. During its early years, Exit 82: A Toms River Theater Company used to perform at Ocean County College, but has since outgrown the space. In addition to productions, Exit 82 runs a Creative and Performing Arts Academy and a Shore Stars program to educate the next generation. Exit 82 offices and academy are located on Main Street Downtown.

### Friends of Ortley Beach

A 501(c)(3) nonprofit established in 2016. The Friends of Ortley Beach enhances, protects and sustains the natural beauty and resources of the Ortley Beach barrier island community for future generations. Friends of Ortley Beach seeks to develop activities and programs which foster community engagement in education and local arts as well as advocating and protecting the coastal environment.

## **Festivals & Events:**

### **Toms River Food Fest:**

Toms River Food Fest is hosted in early to mid-May. Toms River Food Fest features the best local food trucks, arts, crafts and vendor booths, children's rides and live entertainment great bands and DJ's from Greater Media, 100.1 WJRZ and 95.9 WRAT, who will be emcees on the stage throughout the day. Beyond food, guests can also go shopping as the festival includes a number of businesses and vendors with merchandise for sale. For the younger crowd, there will be kid-friendly rides, a rock climbing wall and face-painting. Food this year includes barbeque, seafood, sausage and peppers, gyros, empanadas, cheesesteaks and more. Those with a sweet tooth can snack on funnel cake, fried Oreos and cupcakes. The 21 and over crowd is invited to the beer and wine garden, sponsored by Toms River Fire Company #1.

### **The New Jersey Chili & Salsa Cook-off sponsored by the Business Improvement District (BID):**

The New Jersey Chili & Salsa Cook-off is hosted in May and it is a state sponsored festival. The event has a chili eating contest for kids and adults, inflatable rides, face-painting, Sand Art, and other activities for children, local bands, vendors, and crafters.

### **Art in the Park by the Toms River Artist Community (TRAC)**

Visitors are treated to a wide array of visual art, music, poetry and dance. Artists offer unique, creative items for sale. Interactive exhibits add to the fun. Food Vendors are provided on site. The event displays incredible local creative talent. The event is presented by the Toms River Artist Foundation, Merrill Lynch, Downtown Toms River, with additional grants administered by the Ocean County Cultural and Heritage Commission and the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.

### **Harvest Arts Festival sponsored by Business Improvement District (BID):**

Fall Arts Festival is held in mid-October and is a potpourri of all types of artists, including: Potters, Glassworks, Photographers, Oils (painters), Watercolors (painters), and Juried Crafters (knitting, hand-made clothing, quilts, etc.) In addition, a variety of entertainment from bands and dance acts encompassing various traditions, styles and genres, rides for children, pumpkin decorating, street performers, a fall desert contest, and beer sponsored by Fire Co. #1.

### **Halloween Parade:**

The Halloween Parade is hosted by the Toms River Fire Company #1 and is held on Halloween in Downtown Toms River. Parade consists of floats, marching bands, organizations and individuals dressed in costumes. In 2015, the Jay and Linda Grunin Foundation sponsored a Halloween Parade Float Challenge with the winning float winning \$10,000. The Toms River Township Halloween Parade is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest parade in the world according to the Guinness World Record, second only to New York City's parade. In the spirit of the festivities, downtown businesses windows are painted

by Toms River High School South students in Halloween and fall themes days before the parade.

Cruisin Downtown sponsored by the Business Improvement District (BID):

Good times, great music and loads of vintage cars each night! Cruisin' Downtown is held the 2nd Wednesday each month from June through September from 6pm to 9pm, presented by Downtown Toms River.

Summer in the Street sponsored by the Business Improvement District (BID):

Summer in the street offers a little bit of everything summer has to offer! Live entertainment, food vendors, a free carnival game area for the kids, rides, and much more. The Toms River Township Volunteer Fire Co. #1 also sponsors a Beer & Wine garden. The event is hosted in July from 12:00pm to 6:00pm.

Christmas Tree Lighting sponsored by the Business Improvement District (BID):

The Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony includes music performed by a chorus, theater presentation, "Twis the Night before Christmas Reading" by Mrs. Clause, pictures with Santa Clause, and the tree lighting. Hot chocolate and cookies are offered for sale by the Toms River Fire Company #1.

Sculpture Special Events presented by the Business Improvement District (BID):

In 2015, the Downtown placed twenty J. Seward Johnson sculptures throughout the downtown and in 2016 twenty Brain Hanlon Sculptures have been placed throughout the downtown. Downtown tie-in activities are also planned and marketed with the Sculptures. In 2016, the Downtown added:

1. Downtown Toms River Arts Stroll – Once a month special art event hosted on Washington and Main Street. Streets will be lined with visual artists, musicians, poets and performing artists. Shops & Restaurants will be open during the Stroll. Presented by Downtown Toms River BID and the Toms River Artists Community.

2. Historic Walking Tours – A guided tour provided by the Ocean County Historical Society. Tour provides exploring and learning opportunities about interesting people that have helped shape Toms River Township over the years. Four different tours are offered, with each tour being approximately 1 and ½ hour in length and covering one mile.

3. Ocean County Library tie-in events – the Ocean County library will host various events during the summer to tie into the theme of the sculptures, sports and health. A sampling of the programs offered in the summer of 2016 has been provided below.

- Meet Former Rutgers Defensive Lineman Eric LeGrand - Former Rutgers defensive lineman Eric LeGrand will visit the Toms River branch of the Ocean County Library to share his truly inspiring story of finding purpose in pain and facing setbacks with strength. As part of the 90-minute program, Eric will be signing his book, Believe: My Faith and the Tackle

That Changed My Life, which will be available for purchase at the program.

- Maker Monday - 3D Printing! Stop by Sparks's Lab and experiment with TinkerCad, the 3D Scanner and the MakerBots.
- The Teens are All Write – Writers Group for Teens.

Weekly Events are offered through the BID at the Community Room at the Downtown Shops at 53 Main Street such as:

- Van Gogh Pottery Painting
- Fused Glass Workshop 101 - This 2 hour workshop provides a hands-on introduction to glass fusing and its many possibilities. I will teach you to cut, grind, and layer glass. We will focus on a specific project. You may choose between making a jewelry pendant or a sun-catcher. The final art work can be fused (melted) flat or just fused enough to barely melt together, but still have texture- a sculptural, three dimensional look. (class taught by a local artist)

Restaurant Events –various restaurants provide live bands and DJ music, paint parties and other events throughout the year.

## **TOMS RIVER CULTURE AND ARTS VISION:**

Arts, culture and creativity are the economic drivers to building a vibrant, year round community that converts the tourists of today to the new resident and business owners of tomorrow. It is the vision of the Township to continue to foster and expand on the existing relationships and collaborations between agencies, artists, non-profits, businesses and the public to continue to grow the arts, culture, heritage, and musical (the creative) community and create a culture of “we”. Together we will link Downtown Toms River’s new Arts and Culture District with Ortley Beach and Toms River proper in dynamic and unique ways. The focus on arts, culture, heritage and music will be seen in practice in Kindergarten to University education; and in the way we run our businesses. A creativity based economy will generate positive economic activity, greatly contributing to Toms River resident’s quality of life.

## **Toms River Cultural and Arts Goals and Objectives:**

### **Downtown Toms River:**

Goal 1: Encourage restaurants, hotels, and hospitals to incorporate local artists and musicians into their facilities to create an upscale and creative environment for both residents and tourists of Toms River Township.

- Utilize portions of hotel, hospital and restaurant lobbies as art gallery spaces.



- Invite local musicians, poets, and other artists to present live talent to hotel guests in hotel lobbies, meeting rooms, and/or other general access locations
- Hang locally created art on walls of restaurants, hotels and hospitals

Goal 2: Support the creation of micro-breweries and the acquisition of a downtown shared liquor license.

- Encourage TRBID and Greater Toms River Chamber of Commerce to partner with trusts or non-profits to develop micro-enterprise grants to assist in the recruitment of micro-breweries (in particular nano-breweries) or micro-pubs to encourage a brewpub bus tour. Brewpub bus tours target communities with 5 or more locations in close proximity to each other. The Township currently has one microbrewery and one micro-pub. It is important to select micro-breweries/micro-pubs that will not be competing with the existing established businesses. New microbreweries/micro-pubs should aim to create a different brew/taste from the existing establishments.
- Modifying the Village Business land use zone in the downtown to permit micro-breweries (limited brewery license), brew-pubs (restricted brewery license), and artisan distilleries (Craft Distillery License).
- Encourage the State of New Jersey to amend ABC regulations to define nano-breweries and develop a separate license for such facilities. Nano-breweries are small scale micro-breweries which may be more beneficial to Downtowns with limited space.

Goal 3: Construct a Toms River Tourism website to promote Toms River as a year round destination with the following objectives:

- Develop downtown as a year round Cultural and Arts center by encouraging all organizations to develop programs for the fall, winter, and early spring to encourage the flow of tourists and locals to the downtown
- Identify all local artists and musicians
- Host website that spotlights artists, events, museums, businesses and other venues that promote the arts, culture and tourism.

Goal 4: Build and foster partnerships and programs that provide outstanding, sustainable and broadly defined arts education for all ages in Toms River Township.

Goal 5: Encourage the development of music, theatre, film and cultural heritage facilities, programs, and business cluster in Downtown Toms River.

- Rezone the Village Office area located on Route 166 between downtown Toms River Core zoned Village Business and Route 37 zoned Highway Business area to another zone that would permit restaurants, cafes, galleries, bed and breakfast facilities. New zone language must provide language to maintain historic character of corridor.

Goal 6: Establish the Downtown Toms River Arts and Culture District.

- Establish an arts and culture district that meets the definition of NJ Assembly bill A-4202 adopted by the NJ Assembly's Tourism, Gaming and Arts

Committee. A cultural district should have a foundational infrastructure that incorporates three core activities: teaching, developing, showcasing the arts.

- Create a district that teaches the arts. The district should nurture a network of the area's diverse arts education providers such as commercial schools and individual teachers of music, dance, theatre, visual, and literary arts along with new programs in digital arts technology (audio video production, web design/content, animation/ multimedia creation) that emphasize applied skills for the future workspace. This network must have links to local private and public schools, colleges, tech and trade schools and is an active partner in numerous public art projects highlighting the community's reputation as a creativity and knowledge center. Research the NJ Repertory Theater in Long Branch New Jersey as a potential example.
- Create a district that develops the arts. Encourage the relocation and start-up businesses to create a nucleus of businesses that develop and deliver arts-related merchandise and services, ranging from musical-instrument makers, graphic designers, dance-supply stores, and craft artisans to sound and light engineers, stage construction firms, intellectual-property attorneys, arts publicists, rehearsal-room rentals, and nonprofit support groups. A special effort should be made to recruit arts technology businesses (both established entrepreneurs and startups) seeking research, testing, and manufacturing space for their new designs and products.
  - Consider creating an incubator site offering low-cost space and shared administrative services (Downtown "Garage") and permit some uses that are compatible with retail to be located in the existing downtown shops incubator location.
  - Encourage existing businesses to display local artists work, hire local musicians, or provide a low cost portion of their establishment to sell locally created merchandise/art.
- Showcase the arts. Develop a theatre for larger productions and performances by well-known artists and other smaller satellite venues to present programming by lesser-known and local performers and artists emphasizing experimental, low-cost entertainment appealing to a wide audience spectrum. The small spaces should be developed in coordination with local arts educators to ensure that they can accommodate their use. They should also be large enough to co accommodate exhibits, meeting spaces for local nonprofits, seminars and training sessions, product unveilings, trade expositions, and research and development demonstrations for local arts developers and entrepreneurs.
- Designate the Toms River Business Improvement District (TRBID) as the full-time economic development agency to include the responsibilities of soliciting capital and investment for the district, recruit arts businesses, arts producers, and individual artists

- Create a Toms River Township Cultural and Arts Commission as described in Goal 15.
- Permit the TRBID to research the possibility of creating a 501(c)(3) local arts council that vigorously markets the district (its artists, arts businesses, arts events, living amenities) while serving as an information clearinghouse for local artists, residents, and visitors and a conduit for obtaining grants and tax-exempt donations.

Goal 7: Support the development of a public transportation loop that makes the arts and historic sites accessible to all residents residing in the Downtown.

- Include the idea of a Jitney/shuttle that would take people to and from the parking areas, galleries, on-going exhibits, restaurants, etc. into the redevelopment Plan for Downtown Toms River Area in Need of Redevelopment and establish a Transit Improvement District (TID) to fund it.

Goal 8: Develop ecotourism activities on the Toms River with the following objectives:

- Utilize the boat ramp at the Irons Street ramp to provide kayak, paddle board eco-tours of the Toms River.
- De-snap the Toms River north of Huddy Park to allow the use of Kayaks, paddle boards and other non-motorized boats.
- If feasible acquire the TP Hotel with blue acres, green acres, or hazard mitigation funding to expand Huddy Park to the Iron's Street ramp and provide better access to the boat ramp and provide flood mitigation to the redevelopment area.

Goal 9: Support the development of programs that entertain and educate the public about the rich history of Toms River Township

- Develop re-enactment events of revolutionary war to present for the public utilizing the existing revolutionary war sites
- Develop themes and have actors dress and act in the selected time era (incorporation of improve)
- Develop Ghost Tours that present the rich history of Toms River

Goal 10: Encourage the collaboration of the Historic Commission and Arts Community to develop a plan that would preserve the existing historic houses in downtown Toms River, while defraying the cost associated with designating a historic district.

- Consideration should be provided for permitting historic houses to be utilized as bed and breakfast facilities.

Goal 11: Encourage the reestablishment of an Independent Film Theater in the downtown, which can also serve as a venue for local musicians, poetry, comedians and small plays.

Goal 12: Encourage the designing and planning of an outdoor theatrical venue along the Toms River which is resilient to flooding with the following objectives:

- Acquire or lease flood prone properties located South of Herflicker Boulevard as identified in the Downtown Neighborhood Circulation Plan. Potential funds for acquisition are blue acres, green acres or Hazard Mitigation funding. The Township may wish to lease space or hold off on acquisition until NJ Department of Environmental Protection has indicated that the sites are free of contaminants or remediated to reduce/eliminate liability for cleanup.
- Encourage the Downtown BID and other arts organizations to host a design competition for the creation of an outdoor theatrical venue that would be resilient to future flooding. Design competition should include materials that are flood proof or moveable solutions and address existing contamination from the New Jersey Natural Gas site, TRMUA site and potential contamination from BPU site.

Goal 13: Encourage the establishment and operations of at least one significant cultural arts center within Toms River Township to house the offices, rehearsal spaces, studios, galleries, and performance spaces for Toms River Township cultural arts organizations and to serve as the primary audience destination for the arts in Toms River Township.

Goal 14: Encourage the development of programming for arts in motion, such as improve in the street, creating art in the public sphere, and street entertainers with the following objectives:

- Identify publicly owned locations such as wide sidewalks, open space and parks that could accommodate temporary public art and/or entertainers.
- Organize flash mob dances or concerts
- Organize improvisational street shows centered around a theme

Goal 15: Encourage the environment of “creators and makers” and the use of such an environment by other strong industries in the Township (such as health, military, and green tech).

- Identify a venue (existing or new) for collaboration of artists and other sector leaders/businesses (“the makers”) to present problems and ideas that may or may not lead to new technologies and/or advancements in existing product lines and services.
- Encourage the Green Team in partnership with an arts and culture agency to host an AWE (Arts from Waste) artist competition. Artists would create new art utilizing recycled waste during a given time period in view of the public. Community could vote on the best AWE art work and winning artist could receive prize. Competition should be held around Earth Day in the downtown.

Goal 16: Create a Toms River Township Cultural and Arts Commission to be appointed by the Toms River Township Council and Mayor.

- Members of the group should include at least one member from each existing arts and culture organization identified in this Master Plan Element, Green Team member, OBVTA member, Greater Toms River Chamber of Commerce or interested businesses, Toms River Recreation Department member, Toms River Community Development member, Mayor or member of Township Council, and public members interested in the arts and culture.
- Purpose of the group should be to promote arts, culture and creativity in Downtown Toms River and Ortley Beach.

Goal 17: Create a “Sense of Place” for Downtown Toms River.

Goal 18: Recruit at least 3 commercial galleries to locate into Downtown Toms River Area. Art lovers will travel to a town that has three (3) or more commercial galleries to visit. The galleries will service as an everyday-of-the-week anchors.

Goal 19: Encourage the development and hosting of a Toms River photography and film festival in Downtown Toms River.

Goal 20: Foster and promote International artistic collaboration with the following objectives:

- Design events and programs that include international artist’s work, alongside local artists
- Create new work that incorporates portions that are created by international artists (such as the Bronte Fish mural which incorporated smaller mosaic fish created by international and national artists)
- Better promote local artists to the state, nation and internationally.

Goal 21: Develop a partnership and collaborate with sister Arts and Cultural communities such as Asbury Park, Red Bank, and Long Branch and other arts and cultural communities.

## **Ortley Beach:**

Goal 1: To Position Ortley Beach as a summer time Arts and Cultural destination by developing recreational programming which supports barrier island businesses and incorporates music, arts, and/or film.

- Construct a temporary stage on the beach (after beach is widened by the Army Corp. of Engineer Dune project) for various musical and artist events. Hours should be limited to after 5 PM or early AM so as not to conflict with Beach Hours.
- Weekly Band Jam on the beach events
- Bon fires and stories on the beach
- Movie nights on the beach
- Yoga on the beach
- Radio hosted and judged competitions on the beach (singing contest, sand castle contests, etc.)

Goal 2: Provide transportation linkages between Ortley Beach and Downtown Toms River, such as encouraging Ocean Ride to develop a summer shuttle in partnership with OBVTA and Downtown Business Improvement District.

Goal 3: Encourage the development of the Ferry that was identified in the Ocean County Long Term Recovery Plan and encourage a stop in Ortley Beach and Downtown Toms River. (Township is also open to water taxi businesses)

Goal 4: Encourage the incorporation of music and arts into existing restaurants in Ortley Beach.

Goal 5: Create a "Sense of Place" by implementing the Neighborhood Plan for Ortley Beach

Goal 6: Develop sustainable ecotourism activities on the bay and ocean through partnerships with the Barnegat Bay Partnership and other environmental nonprofit agencies.