

Reexamination Report of the Master Plan
TOWNSHIP OF LAWRENCE

**PLANNING BOARD
LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP
MERCER COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**

April 3, 2006

RESOLUTION 16-06

RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE REEXAMINATION REPORT OF THE LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

WHEREAS, the Lawrence Township Planning Board adopted the 1995 Master Plan by Resolution 25-95; and

WHEREAS, consistent with N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89, the Planning Board developed a report entitled "Reexamination Report of the Master Plan and Land Use Ordinance", prepared by David G. Roberts, AICP/PP, CLA of Schoor DePalma, Inc, dated July 1, 1998; and

WHEREAS, over the years, certain elements of the Master Plan were amended, specifically the Housing Element in September 1999, January 2000 and October 2003, the Utility Element in April 2005, the Land Use Element in July 2005, and the Housing Element in December 2005; and

WHEREAS, consistent with N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89, the Planning Board began the re-examination of the Master Plan and developed a report entitled "Reexamination Report of the Master Plan, Township of Lawrence", prepared by Philip P. Caton, PP, AICP, of Clarke Caton Hintz, dated April 3, 2006; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Board discussed a draft version of the report at two public meetings, March 6, 2006, and March 20, 2006, and also held a public meeting on the final version of the report on April 3, 2006; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Board concurs with the entire report, including the 17 recommendations found in Section V of the report.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Planning Board of the Township of Lawrence, County of Mercer, State of New Jersey, hereby adopts the Reexamination Report of the Master Plan, Township of Lawrence, dated April 3, 2006.

ACTION TAKEN BY THE PLANNING BOARD ON MONDAY, APRIL 3, 2006, ADOPTING THE REEXAMINATION REPORT OF THE MASTER PLAN DATED APRIL 3, 2006.

INTRODUCED BY: Councilperson P. Mount

SECONDED BY: Richard S. Krawczun

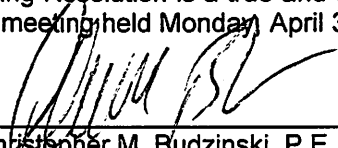
ROLL CALL VOTE: 9 AYES 0 NAYS 0 ABSTAINED 1 ABSENT 1 PRESENT, NO VOTE

AYES: Duran, Kleiner, Kownacki, Krawczun, Mason, Waters, Mayor Powers, Councilperson Mount, and Wilfrid

ABSENT: Crowley

PRESENT BUT INELIGIBLE TO VOTE: Moorman

I, Christopher M. Budzinski, Secretary to the Planning Board of the Township of Lawrence, County of Mercer, do hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution is a true and correct copy of Resolution 16-06 adopted by the Planning Board at its regular meeting held Monday, April 3, 2006.



Christopher M. Budzinski, P.E.
Secretary to the Planning Board

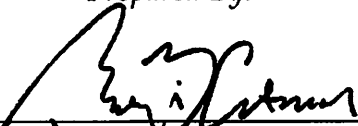
Reexamination Report of the Master Plan
TOWNSHIP OF LAWRENCE

Prepared pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89* of the
New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law

Adopted by the Lawrence Township Planning Board
April 3 , 2006

◆ ◆ ◆

Prepared By:


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A signed and sealed original is on file with the Township Clerk's office

Township of Lawrence
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Christopher M. Budzinski, Planning Board Engineer and Secretary
Philip B. Caton, PP, AICP, Planning Consultant
James L. Kochenour (Arora and Associates, PC), Traffic Engineer
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David M. Roskos Esq. (Sterns and Weinroth) - Attorney
Eric M. Zwerling (The Noise Consultancy) – Noise Consultant

I. INTRODUCTION

The municipal Master Plan is a document, adopted by the Planning Board, which sets forth the policies for land use as envisioned by the municipality. The Master Plan is the principal document that addresses the manner and locations in which development, redevelopment, conservation and/or preservation occur within a municipality. It is intended to guide the decisions made by public officials and those of private interests involving the use of land. Through its various elements, the Master Plan sets out a vision for the community in the coming years.

The Master Plan forms the legal foundation for the zoning ordinance and zoning map. New Jersey, among a handful of other states, specifically ties the planning of a community as embodied in the Master Plan with the zoning ordinance and zoning map. The zoning ordinance and map, which are adopted by the Township Council, constitute the primary law governing the use of land at the local level. Under New Jersey's Municipal Land Use Law *N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1 et seq.*, a zoning ordinance must be substantially consistent with the land use plan.

A Reexamination Report is a review of previously adopted master plans, amendments and local development regulations to determine whether the ideas and policy guidelines set forth therein are still applicable. Under the Municipal Land Use Law, the Planning Board must conduct a Reexamination at least every six years. Five specific topics are to be considered in the Reexamination Report. These are:

a. The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of the adoption of the last reexamination report.

b. The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date.

c. The extent to which there have been significant changes in the assumptions, policies and objectives forming the basis for the master plan or development regulations as last revised, with particular regard to the density and distribution of population and land uses, housing conditions, circulation, conservation of natural resources, energy conservation, collection, disposition and recycling of designated recyclable materials, and changes in state, county and municipal policies and objectives.

d. The specific changes recommended for the master plan or development regulations, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether a new plan or regulations should be prepared.

e. The recommendations of the planning board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans adopted pursuant to the "Local Redevelopment and Housing Law," P.L.1992, c.79 (C.40A:12A-1 et al.) into the land use plan element of the municipal master plan, and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.¹

II. PRIOR PLANNING EFFORTS

Lawrence Township has long supported planning to shape and focus the economic forces leading to the development and redevelopment of the municipality. The most recent planning documents adopted by the Planning Board are summarized below.

1995 Master Plan

The Township last adopted a comprehensive Master Plan on June 14, 1995. In large measure, the 1995 Plan continued the environmentally-based growth management concepts of previous Master Plans, adopted in 1982 and 1987. The 1995 Plan also advances an evolving vision of Lawrence as a group of neighborhoods interconnected by greenways, bicycle paths, and local streets, with private and public goods and services in close proximity. In addition to a statement of goals and objectives, fiscal analysis and plan consistency statement, the 1995 Master Plan includes the following plan elements: Conservation, Historic Preservation, Community Facilities, Recycling, Housing and Fair Share, Utility, Circulation, and Land Use.

1998 Reexamination Report

In 1998, the Township adopted a Reexamination Report to assess changes in land use policy since the adoption of the 1995 Plan and to ensure consistency between the 1997 Land Use Ordinance and the Land Use Element of the 1995 Master Plan. Pursuant to the December 17, 1997 Township Council Resolution that set forth reasons for zoning deviations from the Master Plan, the Reexamination Report recommended the following 11 amendments to the Land Use Element of the Master Plan:

- I. Amend Land Use Plan map to designate the western corner of the intersection of Province Line Road and Route 206 as EP-1 instead of RD-1.

¹ N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89

2. Amend Land Use Plan map to designate North Lawrenceville, on the north side of Route 206 as EP-1 instead of R-2A or R-2B.
3. Amend Land Use Plan map to designate area northwest of Lawrenceville-Pennington Road and Santina Court as AT instead of Residential 2.
4. Amend Land Use Plan map to designate areas in the vicinity of Gordon and Phillips Avenues as R-2B in place of AT.
5. Amend Land Use Plan map to designate the area between George Street and the old trolley as R-2B in place of NC-1.
6. Designate Cranstoun Farm as EP-2 and the Dyson Trust (DKM) Tract as OS on the Land Use Plan map; amend Land Use Element discussion of EP-2 designation to include Cranstoun Farm, amend Open Space Inventory within the Community Facilities and Recreation Element to include the Dyson Trust (DKM) tract.
7. Designate Saturn Chemical property and former DPW garage as OS on the Land Use Plan map; amend Table 9 (inventory of municipal open space) to include these sites.
8. Amend Land Use Plan map to designate areas along Lewisville Road as R-2B instead of EGI and RD.
9. Amend Land Use Plan map to replace OS designation of former State land adjacent to Motor Vehicle Inspection Station on Route 1 with HC designation inside the curve of Grovers Mill Road and LI-1 designation outside of the curve.
10. Amend Land Use Element discussion regarding land use along Whitehead Road and Alternate Route 1.
11. Amend Land Use Plan map to designate the east side of Princeton Avenue south of the former State lottery building as NC-1 instead of Residential-5.

The 1998 Reexamination Report also proposed three additional amendments not specifically addressed in the 1997 Council Resolution as follows:

12. Amend Land Use Plan map to designate southwest corner of Trenton Princeton Road (Route 206) and Lawn Park Avenue as Neighborhood Shops instead of R-2B.
13. Retain SCR designation for Trenton Diocese Property. (No amendment required.)
14. Amend Land Use Plan map to designate industrial Properties along Route 1/Trenton Border as Office Industrial instead of R-4.

The final section of the 1998 Reexamination Report noted that the Growth and Redevelopment Committee of the Township had been discussing redevelopment efforts in the southeastern section of the Township along Alternate Route One (Brunswick Pike) and that a traffic study was also being conducted for this area. However, no specific recommendations regarding the Redevelopment Area were made in the report.

1999 and 2000 Housing Plan Amendments

The 1995 Housing Plan Element of the Master Plan was amended in September 1999 to convert the Yorkshire Village inclusionary development site to a payment in lieu of construction to fund a Regional Contribution Agreement (RCA) with the City of Trenton. In January 2000, the Housing Plan was again amended to include an affordable housing family rental complex for persons with disabilities, known as Project Freedom.

2003 Housing Plan Amendment

In October 2003, the Housing Plan was further amended to include replacement of an inclusionary site (Avalon Bay) with a 62 unit RCA with the City of Trenton, the addition of two new inclusionary developments (Milestone at Lawrenceville and Traditions at Federal Point), and the conversion of on-site units into a payment in lieu of construction for the Denow Associates (also known as Ventana) site. Also included in the amendment was documentation on three previously approved, constructed and occupied sites (Avalon Run East, Liberty Green and Tiffany Woods), revisions to a previously approved inclusionary development (Brookshire/RFP Inc.), and the addition of a mixed use site (CIS/Hofing) that will receive 62 approximately affordable age-restricted units funded in part through an RCA with the Township of Manalapan.

2005 Utility Plan Amendment

In April 2005, the Utility Plan Element of the Master Plan was amended to incorporate the Township's 2005 Municipal Stormwater Management Plan ("SWMP"). As required under the State's Municipal Stormwater Regulations, the SWMP addresses groundwater recharge, stormwater quantity, and stormwater quality impacts by incorporating stormwater design and performance standards for major new developments, defined as projects that disturb one or more acres of land.

2005 Land Use Plan Amendment

In July 2005, the Land Use Element of the Master Plan was amended to replace the previous Office Industrial land use classification along the south side of Quakerbridge Road with the Planned Residential Development (PVD-3) land use classification. This amendment was intended to reflect the largely residential nature of development on adjoining lands and to encourage redevelopment of the Princeton

Corporate Center to address the housing needs of senior citizens, including those of low or moderate income, within the Township.

2005 Housing Plan Amendment

In response to the adoption of new "third round" rules regarding affordable housing by the New Jersey Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) in December, 2004, the Township recently prepared an amendment of the Township's Housing Element and Fair Share Plan. Adopted on December 5, 2005, the Housing Element amendment addresses the Township's rehabilitation obligation, prior round housing obligation and third round "growth share" obligation through a combination of affordable housing programs. Additional discussion of the Township's compliance with COAH's requirements, including the Third Round rule changes is provided under Section IV, below.

III. MAJOR PROBLEMS AND OBJECTIVES AT THE TIME OF THE ADOPTION OF THE 1998 REEXAMINATION REPORT AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH THEY HAVE CHANGED

Master Plan Consistency with Land Use Ordinance

The 1998 Reexamination Report included a list of 11 locations where the zoning designation under the 1997 Land Use Ordinance was inconsistent with the Master Plan land use designation, based on the Township Council's December 16, 1997 resolution setting forth reasons for zoning deviations from the Master Plan. In addition to the 11 locations noted in the Council's Resolution, the Reexamination Report identified three other locations where corrections and/or adjustments to the Land Use Plan appeared to be warranted to achieve greater consistency with the Land Use Ordinance zoning map.

The 1998 Reexamination Plan recommended that these inconsistencies be resolved through revisions to the Land Use Plan Map and/or through minor amendments of the Land Use Element and Community Facilities and Recreation Element of the Master Plan. However, not all of these revisions to the Master Plan have been completed to date. As indicated in Section V, below, it is recommended that the mapping and text inconsistencies identified in the 1998 Reexamination report be addressed in a forthcoming amendment of the Master Plan.

Redevelopment Planning Along Alternate Route One

The 1998 Reexamination Report noted that the Growth and Redevelopment Committee of the Township had been discussing redevelopment efforts in the southeastern section of the Township along Alternate Route One (Brunswick Pike) and that a traffic study was also being conducted for the Alternate Route One corridor to implement traffic calming measures and the boulevard concept envisioned in the 1995 Master Plan.

In 1998, the lots fronting on Alternate Route One between Mayflower Avenue and the Brunswick Circle and an adjoining segment of Whitehead Road were formally designated as the Brunswick Pike South Redevelopment Area by the Township. In subsequent years the Township has worked closely with the New Jersey Department of Transportation to plan for transforming the Brunswick Pike into a boulevard. A draft Redevelopment Plan for this area was prepared in April 2004 that recognized three distinct redevelopment "districts" within the larger Brunswick Pike Redevelopment Area: the Whitehead Road Extension Redevelopment District, the Brunswick Pike North Redevelopment District, and Brunswick Circle Gateway Redevelopment District. The draft Redevelopment Plan included land use regulations for each of the three redevelopment districts to guide new construction and redevelopment efforts within the Redevelopment Area. The Redevelopment Plan, including specific land use regulations and design guidelines should be formally adopted by the Township Council following the Planning Board's review. See additional discussion under Section VI, Redevelopment Plan.

IV. CHANGES IN ASSUMPTIONS, POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES AT THE LOCAL, COUNTY AND STATE LEVELS

The 1998 Reexamination Report described several state and regional planning "events" that occurred subsequent to the preparation of the Township's Master Plan in 1995 that would have bearing on land use in the Township. These included the adoption of the Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS) effective June 3, 1997, the Telecommunications Act of 1996, and the 1997 State Plan Reexamination Report and Preliminary Plan.

The section below lists additional changes in assumptions, policies and objectives at the local, county, state and regional levels that will have an impact on land use in Lawrence Township:

2001 State Development and Redevelopment Plan

In March, 2001 a new State Development and Redevelopment Plan was adopted by the State Planning Commission. This Plan concluded the extensive statewide "Cross-Acceptance" planning process that had been initiated by the release of the 1997 State Plan Reexamination Report and Preliminary Plan. As with the first State Plan (adopted in 1992), the 2001 State Plan delineated a series of Planning Areas based on natural and built characteristics and sets forth the State's vision for the future development of those areas. The five Planning Areas (listed in descending order from the most developed to the least developed condition) include the Metropolitan Planning Area (PA1), Suburban Planning Area (PA2), Fringe Planning Area (PA3), Rural Planning Area (PA4) and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area (PA5).

Within Lawrence Township, the Planning Areas designated under the 2001 State Plan remain essentially unchanged from the Planning Areas designated under the 1992 State Plan. These include the Metropolitan Planning Area (PA1) in the southern portion of Lawrence bordering Trenton, Hamilton and Ewing; the Suburban Planning Area (PA2) in the western-central portion of the Township, roughly following the I-95/I-295 corridor; the Fringe Planning Area (PA3) and Rural Planning Area (PA4) located in the northern portion of the Township, and the Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area (PA5), largely located in the eastern portion of the Township along the Shipetaukin stream corridor and in the vicinity of the Delaware & Raritan (D&R) Canal. The most notable change under the 2001 State Plan was the expansion of designated "Park" lands within the Township to include areas such as the Northwest County Park and public open space along the D&R Canal. Additionally, the 2001 State Plan included Eldridge Park as a Planned Village, but removed the Planned Village designation for Lawrence Square Village (in the southeast portion of the Township) that was shown in the 1997 State Plan.

As noted below, amendments to the 2001 State Plan have been proposed as part of a new Preliminary Plan released by the State Planning Commission. However, until such time as a new State Plan is adopted, the 2001 State Plan remains in effect.

2004 Preliminary State Plan

In April 2004, the State Planning Commission released a Preliminary Plan proposing amendments to the 2001 State Plan, triggering a third round of the State Plan Cross-Acceptance process.

Under the 2004 Preliminary State Plan, the statewide goals, strategies and policies as outlined in the 2001 State Plan remain fundamentally the same. However, the 2004 Plan proposes to reorganize the Plan to consolidate the goal statements and

background sections for the existing eight goals under one statement and background section and to relocate policies and strategies under a specific goal. The State Plan Policy Map also remains fundamentally the same under the 2004 Preliminary Plan, although greater detail is provided with regard to the location of parkland and open space and sewer service areas.

Under Cross-Acceptance, County governments take the lead with their respective municipalities and residents in coordinating review and comments on the Preliminary Plan. In November 2004, Mercer County completed a draft Cross-Acceptance Report, which provides a comparison of municipal and county planning documents with the State Plan and summarizes proposed changes to the State Plan.

No changes in the existing State Planning Area designations are recommended for Lawrence Township under the County's draft Cross-Acceptance report. However, the County report does recommend that additional areas of preserved open space and parkland be delineated throughout the County, including a number of sites within Lawrence Township. The Township supports those changes.

Council on Affordable Housing Rules

Lawrence Township received first round substantive certification of its Housing Element and Fair Share Plan from COAH on October 19, 1987. The certified plan addressed a 784 unit new construction obligation and a 127 unit rehabilitation component. The Township received second round substantive certification from COAH on December 4, 1996. This plan addressed an 890 unit new construction obligation and seventy-two (72) unit rehabilitation component.

Lawrence Township received an extension of its second round substantive certification from COAH on November 6, 2002 and again on April 13, 2005 for a period of "up to one year after the effective date of the adoption of the Council's third round methodology and rules", or December 20, 2005.

On December 20, 2004, COAH adopted its third round rules, which apply a "Growth Share" methodology to determine the amount of affordable housing a municipality must provide during the ten year period of 2004 to 2014 (*N.J.A.C. 5:94-1 et seq.*). Third round Housing Elements and Fair Share Plans must address three affordable housing components: the rehabilitation share, the prior round recalculated obligation, and the growth share obligation. The growth share methodology marks a significant departure from COAH's two prior rounds of affordable housing needs assessment. The growth share approach links the production of affordable housing with residential and non-residential growth in each municipality. The key changes to the third round methodology are ratios that require one affordable unit for every 8 market rate housing units constructed and one affordable unit for every 25 jobs as

expressed in new square footage of nonresidential space constructed in each municipality.

On December 5, 2005, the Township adopted a new Housing Element and Fair Share Plan to address COAH's Third Round rules. This Third Round plan indicates that the Township's 10 unit rehabilitation obligation has been satisfied with the prior rehabilitation of 24 units and that the Township will satisfy its recalculated prior round affordable housing obligation of 944 units with a combination of 161 prior cycle credits, 160 RCA units, 30 bedrooms in 7 alternative living facilities, 85 units in two 100% affordable housing developments, 186 prior round rental bonuses and 521 units in 11 inclusionary developments. Additionally, the Township will satisfy its third round 285 unit growth share obligation with 23 bedrooms in 5 alternative living facilities, 199 prior round surplus credits, 88 units from 4 sites that did not receive full credit in the prior round, 13 Third Round rental bonuses, 40 units from the Extension of Expiring Controls program, and 40 units from a site that will provide for its own growth share obligation. This Fair Share Plan has a surplus of 118 units that may be utilized in case of a credit shortfall (i.e. more development occurs than currently projected) or it may be utilized in future rounds of affordable housing compliance.

NJDEP Stormwater Management Requirements

In February 2004, the NJDEP published two sets of new stormwater rules. The first set of rules is the Phase II New Jersey Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Stormwater Regulation Program Rules (N.J.A.C. 7:14A), which addresses the reduction of pollutants associated with existing stormwater runoff. The second set of rules, known as the Stormwater Management Rules (N.J.A.C. 7:8), sets forth the required components of regional and municipal stormwater management plans and establishes the stormwater management design and performance standards for new (proposed) development. Together the two sets of rules are intended to establish a comprehensive framework for addressing water quality impacts associated with existing and future stormwater discharges.

As required under the new stormwater management rules, the Township prepared a Municipal Stormwater Management Plan (MSWMP), dated April 7, 2005. The goals of the MSWMP include reducing flood damage, minimizing increases in stormwater runoff from new development, reducing soil erosion, assuring the adequacy of culverts and bridges, maintaining groundwater recharge, preventing an increase in nonpoint source pollution, maintaining the integrity of stream channels, minimizing pollutants in stormwater runoff, and protecting public safety through proper design and operation of stormwater basins. To achieve these goals, the plan outlines specific stormwater design and performance standards for new development and proposes stormwater management controls to address impacts from existing development.

The plan also includes preventative and corrective maintenance strategies to ensure long-term effectiveness of stormwater management facilities and outlines safety standards for stormwater infrastructure.

As noted in Section II – Prior Planning Efforts, the MSWMP has been incorporated into the Township’s Master Plan through an amendment of the Utility Plan Element that was adopted by the Planning Board on April 18, 2005.

Statewide Transfer of Development Rights Act

The 1995 Master Plan recommended that Transfer of Development Credits be utilized to help preserve farmland and retain rural character in designated areas of the Township by transferring development rights from these areas to the Regional Commercial district (the Quakerbridge Mall). Criteria for prioritizing land preservation and other components of a Transfer of Development Credits program were outlined in the Master Plan and incorporated into the 1997 Land Use Ordinance (Section 421H). However, in the absence of any development in the Regional Commercial district in subsequent years the transfer mechanism provided by the ordinance has not been utilized.

In March 2004, the State Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Act (*N.J.S.A. 40:55D-137*) was signed into law, authorizing transfer of development rights by municipalities on a state-wide basis. However, under the statute prior to implementing a TDR program a participating municipality needs to meet a number of requirements, including the adoption of Transfer Plan Element and Utility Service Plan Elements of the Master Plan as well as a capital improvement plan and a real estate market analysis. A municipality also needs to receive Initial Plan Endorsement from the State Planning Commission prior to adopting a TDR ordinance.

The Township’s transfer ordinance has been effectively obsolesced by the 2004 State TDR Act. In order to proceed with a transfer of development rights program as framed in the 1995 Master Plan the Township would have to comply with all of the regulations established under the State TDR Act. However, in light of the fact that significant farmland and open space preservation in the Township has occurred since 1995 through mechanisms other than the TDC program, such an effort does not appear warranted.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

I. 1998 Master Plan Reexamination Report Recommendations

The revisions to the Land Use Plan Map and minor amendments of the Land Use Element and Community Facilities and Recreation Element (open space inventory) as recommended in the 1998 Reexamination Report should be reassessed and incorporated as may be warranted as part of the next amendment of the Township's Master Plan. This includes the 11 locations identified in the December 1997 Council Resolution regarding zoning deviations from the Master Plan as well as the three additional locations where corrections and/or adjustments to the Land Use Plan were recommended to achieve greater consistency with the Land Use Ordinance zoning map.

2. State Development and Redevelopment Plan

As discussed under Section IV above, the release of the 2004 Preliminary State Plan has initiated a third round of the State Plan Cross-Acceptance process. Following adoption of a new State Plan, the Township Master Plan and Land Use Ordinance should be reviewed for consistency with this document. Since the Master Plan and Land Use Ordinance are generally consistent with the 2001 State Plan, it is expected that they will be similarly consistent with the upcoming State Plan.

The rules of the State Planning Commission (*NJAC* 17:32-7) and the Council on Affordable Housing (*NJAC* 5:94-2) have been restructured to encourage municipalities to conform their Master Plans and local land use ordinances to the State Plan. The process which has been created to assess the degree of consistency is called "Plan Endorsement". Through Plan Endorsement all state agencies with a stake in local land use are expected to review municipal plans and ordinances and provide findings and recommendations that would coordinate and integrate these municipal plans in a manner consistent with the State Plan. In return, municipalities that receive Plan Endorsement are to be entitled to a variety of benefits, including but not limited to priority for funding, expedited permit review, and eligibility for approval of State Plan Policy Map amendments.

The Plan Endorsement process is not entirely voluntary: the COAH rules have been revised to require municipalities whose Fair Share Plans have been granted substantive certification to obtain initial Plan Endorsement within three years of their petition to COAH or face possible revocation of COAH's approval. Consequently, Lawrence Township should seek Plan Endorsement within the next two years so as to meet the COAH deadline and to become eligible for such other benefits that the State provides.

3. Proposed Renovation and Expansion of the Quakerbridge Mall

The Quaker Bridge Mall, which comprises the southeast quadrant of the intersection of Route 1 and Quakerbridge Road, is the most prominent retail development in the Township. The enclosed mall consists of approximately 1,300,000 sf of retail floor area on a site of over 100 acres, comprising a Floor Area Ratio of .30.

The 1995 Master Plan revised the land use designation of the mall from Highway Commercial (which applies to much of the highway-oriented retail development along the Township's major roadways) to Regional Commercial, a single land use category which reflects the unique status of the mall as a retail destination with a regional market draw.

The 1995 Master Plan contemplated an expansion of the Quaker Bridge Mall from .30 FAR to .40 FAR and recommended that the ability to develop additional floor area be linked to the acquisition and transfer of development credits from the Township's Environmental Protection "EP" zoning districts.

The principal owners of the Quaker Bridge Mall have recently proposed a major overhaul and expansion of the center. This development would involve a complete renovation and remodeling of the mall as well as the construction of up to 895,000 sf of additional retail floor area. The proposal envisions three or four new department stores along with associated retail space both within the center itself and on free-standing "pads" on the perimeter of the property. Decked parking is proposed to accommodate the additional parking demand.

The proposed expansion of the Quaker Bridge Mall would result in an FAR of as much as .50. As such, the Planning Board should consider whether the Master Plan should be amended to increase the current maximum FAR of .40 at the site in order to accommodate the proposed mall expansion. Although the mall does not front on any Township roads, traffic impacts from the proposed expansion on the State and County roads which surround it will be a key consideration. The capacity of the adjacent highways – with capital improvements as may be warranted – to accommodate the additional traffic from an expansion of the mall must be assessed within the current land use context. This analysis should take into consideration the traffic impacts from development on the Route One corridor since the 1995 Master Plan was adopted as well as the potential impact of a Route One Bus-Rapid Transit System (see Section V 14).

As noted in Section IV of this Report, the Transfer of Development Credits (TDC) program recommended in the 1995 Plan cannot be readily implemented due to new requirements set forth under the Statewide Transfer of Development Rights Act adopted in March 2004. Additionally, the TDC program is no longer warranted due

to the substantial increase in preserved farmland and open space acreage which the Township has secured since 1995 through other funding programs. Thus the Planning Board should focus its consideration on the extent to which the mall site and the infrastructure which serves it can accommodate an increase in FAR above the current level.

4. Capital Health Systems Hospital Proposal

Capital Health Systems has proposed to relocate most of its existing Mercer Medical Center campus on Belleview Avenue in Trenton to Lawrence Township and has identified a site for the hospital on Princess Road. The site is approximately 42 acres and includes the existing HUB City distribution facility in addition to a vacant tract that was previously approved for an office park. The proposed hospital campus would include a 600,000 sf/350-bed hospital facility, a 75,000 sf cancer center and 100,000 sf of medical offices with approximately 1,500 parking spaces. As currently envisioned, the hospital facility would include a diagnostic building, concierge building, pediatric facility and two mid-rise towers for patient beds.

The Master Plan designates the majority of the proposed hospital site for Office Industrial land use, with the eastern portion of the site designated as Environmental Protection & Office Industrial due to the presence of wetlands and hydric soils in this area. Under the LUO, the majority of the site is zoned as Industrial-1, with the western end zoned as Industrial-2, neither of which permit the hospital use.

Capital Health Systems has requested that the Township consider revising the Master Plan and rezoning the site to permit the hospital use including a greater building height and FAR. The Planning Board should consider amending the Master Plan to accommodate this proposal either through designation of a new land use category or revision of an existing use category definition and density standards. A key issue in this consideration will be the degree to which potential impacts, and in particular traffic impacts, related to the proposed hospital campus can be satisfactorily addressed through appropriate zoning controls and site planning requirements.

5. 2000 Draft Open Space and Recreation Plan

In December 2000, a draft Open Space and Recreation Plan for the Township was prepared that expanded on the 1995 Master Plan recommendations regarding open space preservation, a greenway network and recreation planning. The 2000 Open Space and Recreation Plan updated the inventory of open space indicating a total of 829.86 acres of municipal open space (a significant increase over the 618 acres of Township open space identified in the 1995 Master Plan), 957.89 acres of other government-owned open lands, 886.71 acres of privately-owned open space, 271.61

acres of preserved farmland, and 89.2 acres of pending open space, for a grand total of approximately 3,035 acres of preserved open space within the Township. A related System Map showing existing and potential open space within the Township was prepared in April, 2001.

Although the goals and objectives and the needs analysis sections contained within the 2000 Open Space and Recreation Plan are essentially the same as in the 1995 Master Plan, the 2000 Plan provides an updated list of potential open space acquisitions and includes a more detailed list of recommended actions to achieve the goals and objectives. The Master Plan should be amended to incorporate an updated Open Space and Recreation Plan, including the latest Greenways Committee mapping of existing and proposed trails and a current open space inventory and revised needs analysis based on level of service information (as now recommended by the National Recreation and Park Association). The recommendations for action from the 2000 Open Space and Recreation Plan should be reviewed and incorporated into an amended Master Plan as appropriate.

6. Northwest County Park

The 1995 Master Plan included a recommendation that approximately 50 acres at the eastern corner of the AT&T tract (now Northwest Mercer County Park) be reserved as a future school site, based on site selection criteria, the stated preference of the Lawrence Township Board of Education and the site's availability for school use. However, the Board of Education is no longer seeking to build a new school, having decided instead to expand existing schools within the Township. As such, the previously proposed school use at this site should be deleted from the Master Plan.

The Mercer County Parks Commission is now preparing plans for Northwest Park. In conjunction with these plans, the Township has expressed an interest in utilizing approximately 35 acres of the park for athletic fields. The County is considering this request; upon its determination the Planning Board should incorporate any additional facilities plans which may result into the recommended update of the 2000 Open Space and Recreation Plan and Master Plan amendment discussed above.

7. Lawrence Hopewell Trail

The Lawrence Hopewell Trail (LHT) is a proposed 20 mile system of biking and pedestrian trails that would form a loop through public and private lands in northern Lawrence and eastern Hopewell. Four sections of the LHT have been completed, including three in Lawrence Township (Lawrence Village Park, Lawrenceville School and the ETS Campus sections) and one along the eastern boundary of the Bristol-

Myers Squibb campus on Pennington-Rocky Hill Road. Additionally, sections through the Northwest County Park, the Township's Carson Woods Property and along Lewisville Road and the Princeton Pike are being planned.

To support the development of the LHT, the non-profit Lawrence Hopewell Trail Corporation has been formed with the Bristol-Myers Squibb and ETS corporate sites serving as anchors. The continued development of the Lawrence Hopewell Trail will improve circulation and access and provide additional recreational opportunities within the Township. A description and map of the LHT should be included as part of the recommended update of the 2000 Open Space and Recreation Plan Element discussed above along with the latest mapping of existing and proposed trails by the Greenways Committee.

8. Infill Housing: Scale and Design Issues

In recent years the inventory of large, vacant developable tracts in Lawrence has dwindled as the Township has approached full build-out. This trend, in conjunction with a housing market which has fueled unprecedented high prices has triggered an upsurge in interest in creating and developing infill housing lots in established residential neighborhoods. However, infill development in existing neighborhoods can result in residential structures that are substantially larger than and architecturally incompatible with existing dwellings. This is a particular concern where semi-detached or duplex dwellings are permitted, such as in the R-3 and R-4 zoning districts, as well as in established residential neighborhoods such as Eggerts Crossing, where the older residential units are typically considerably smaller than more recently developed and/or approved housing units.

In addition to being incompatible in terms of size and scale, the architectural design of new residential construction may not be compatible with the traditional housing designs found in many of the Township's neighborhoods. However, the Land Use Ordinance provides little guidance on either the scale or the design of infill housing.

In recent years, a number of communities have been trying to guide new residential infill development to be more compatible with existing housing. Some of the approaches for addressing this issue include establishing Floor Area Ratio (FAR) limits for residential zones and/or establishing a maximum "cap" on residential building area, requiring additional landscape improvements in conjunction with residential development and requiring architectural design review for residential development. The Planning Board should review these options, and others as appropriate, for incorporation into the Master Plan and into the Township's design review process. This review should include an assessment, by the Planning Board, of the potential benefits/detriments of infill housing including the extent to which such

housing is affordable to middle income households (a market segment not typically served by new single-family detached housing).

9. Route 206 Commercial Node

As Mayor of Lawrence Township in 2005, Pam Mount was invited to participate at the New Jersey Mayor's Institute on City Design held in June 2005. Among the projects which were addressed at the Institute's sessions were strategies to enhance commercial development along Route 206 between Jasper and Meadowbrook Roads in southern Lawrence. Although this area is an active neighborhood commercial district, it lacks a strong sense of visual or physical cohesion and presents many obstacles to pedestrians.

In its recommendations for improving the area, the Mayor's Institute recommended a two-phase approach. The first phase would focus on enhancements to the public realm to make the area more attractive for private investment. For example, a plan detailing street trees, building setbacks, and streetscape and signage elements (e.g. common materials and/or graphics) should be developed. In the second phase, mixed use and higher density development would be encouraged, such as through "performance zoning." The Mayor's Institute also recommended that shared parking areas and short term parking along Route 206 be considered to help calm traffic and improve the pedestrian environment in this area.

The Township has been awarded funding from the NJ Department of Community Affairs to pursue these recommendations and to prepare the planning and design standards to guide future development of this area. These plans/standards should be prepared and presented to the Planning Board for incorporation in the Master Plan.

10. Mercer Crossings Study Area

In August, 2004, Township representatives participated in an advisory panel study conducted by the Urban Land Institute (ULI) that focused on redevelopment opportunities along the northern Olden Avenue and Spruce Avenue corridors (known as the "Mercer Crossings" Study Area.) The study, sponsored by Mercer County in conjunction with representatives from Lawrence and Ewing Townships, the City of Trenton, the NJ Office of Smart Growth and the College of New Jersey, included a review of demographic, housing and employment trends, an assessment of market opportunities, and an analysis of the geographic, developmental and socio-economic characteristics of the study area which have kept it from realizing its full potential.

As an overall development strategy for the Mercer Crossings study area, the ULI panel recommended focusing on improving the physical appearance of the study area by encouraging development in concentrated nodes along the regional transportation corridors and improving signage, streetscapes, building aesthetics and parking. Specific recommendations were made with regard to circulation improvements, enhancement of signage and streetscapes and creation of design criteria to promote a sense of place. To implement these recommendations, the panel recommended that coordinated redevelopment plans be prepared for the study area, to be facilitated by the County.

The Township should continue to participate in the on-going study group established by the County for the Mercer Crossings area. In coordination with the other stakeholders, the Township should consider preparation and adoption of a redevelopment plan for the Mercer Crossings study area located within Lawrence that would implement a number of the ULI Panel recommendations.

11. Eggerts Crossing Neighborhood Improvement Strategy

Building on a 2002 study of the Eggerts Crossing neighborhood by graduate students at the Edward J. Bloustein School of Rutgers University, the Township has initiated several improvement projects in the Eggerts Crossing area. These include preparation of a multi-phased greenway plan incorporating street tree plantings and other enhancements to the streetscape as well as pedestrian and circulation improvements.

Other revitalization efforts recommended in the 2002 study include providing additional housing, enhancing the entrance of the community with a mixed-use development, providing infrastructure improvements, and implementing traffic-calming measures. The Master Plan should be revised to reflect the existing and proposed improvements and revitalization efforts that are envisioned for the Eggerts Crossing neighborhood. Zoning amendments to address the scale and type of infill housing within the Eggerts Crossing Neighborhood are discussed under Section 8: "Infill Housing: Scale and Design Issues."

12. Sustainable Development

A growing number of communities are incorporating principles of sustainable development (development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs) into municipal decision-making, operations, and purchasing. In terms of municipal planning, principles of sustainable development can involve a wide range of initiatives, including encouraging recycling and waste reduction, energy efficiency, and

stormwater management in the site planning process; promoting “green” building design; improving pedestrian and bicycle circulation and access; and creating more livable communities by focusing growth and development in appropriate locations (e.g. “smart growth”).

Building on a community forum held at the Lawrenceville School in January 2005, a private, non-profit corporation known as Sustainable Lawrence has been established to explore ways of promoting sustainable development practices within the municipality. The Planning Board should review the recommendations of Sustainable Lawrence, when available, and incorporate these recommendations as appropriate into the Master Plan and/or the development review process.

13. Lawrence Township Board of Education Long-Range Facilities Plan

Growing enrollments have triggered the need for expansion of four school buildings within the Township: Lawrence High School, Lawrence Middle School, Lawrenceville Elementary School and Ben Franklin Elementary. The Master Plan should be revised to update school size and enrollment data and to reflect the Board of Education’s Long-Range Facilities Plan.

14. Bus-Rapid Transit System Planning for the Route One Corridor / Circulation Plan Element

In 2004, NJ Transit initiated an alternatives analysis in collaboration with NJDOT, DVRPC and NJTPA to study the feasibility of providing a Bus-Rapid Transit (BRT) system along the Route 1 Corridor to reduce the anticipated growth in roadway congestion along this corridor. The alternatives analysis will also examine the potential for smart growth land use development and implementation of travel demand reduction strategies, as well as evaluate related highway improvements, route alternatives, station locations, ridership, potential for coordination with private sector development, municipal plans and cost effectiveness. The findings of the Route One Corridor Transportation Alternatives Study, when complete, should be evaluated by the Planning Board and incorporated, as appropriate, in an amendment to the Circulation Element of the Master Plan. In addition, a number of the recommendations of this Re-examination Report relate in large measure to traffic circulation and the ability of the road network within Lawrence Township to reasonably accommodate existing and projected traffic along with additional trips which would be generated by new and/or expanding land uses. The Circulation Element of the Master Plan should incorporate the results of the traffic analyses contemplated in this Report and should be revised and updated to reflect current traffic counts and conditions.

15. Kings Highway Historic District and Israel Stevens House

The Historic Preservation Element of the Master Plan should be updated to include the Kings Highway Historic District, which was listed on the State and National Historic Registers in October and December 2000, respectively. The Kings Highway Historic District includes portions of US Route 206 and NJ Route 27, extending from the intersection of Route 206 and Franklin Corner Road in Lawrenceville to the intersection of Route 27 and Raymond Road, east of the Village of Kingston (South Brunswick and Franklin Townships). Originally an Indian trail, this historic right-of-way evolved into an early stage coach route, the main colonial link between New York and Philadelphia, the first postal route, the scene of Revolutionary War battles, and the first mapped state highway.

The Historic Preservation Element should also be revised to acknowledge the listing of the Israel Stevens House on the State and National Historic Registers in 2004 and 2005, respectively. This historic home is currently identified as a locally designated landmark in the Historic Preservation Element.

16. Environmental Resources Inventory

The Environmental Commission of Lawrence Township is applying for a grant from the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC) to partially fund the preparation of an Environmental Resource Inventory (ERI). The ERI will document-through text, maps and photographs – the natural resources in Lawrence Township as well as strategies to preserve and restore them. The resources may include open space, steep slopes, water supply, aquifer recharge areas, woodlands, soils (including those soils particularly conducive to farming), marshes/wetlands, streams and water bodies, endangered and threatened species, wildlife habitat, and other features. Once completed, the ERI should become the core of a revised and updated Conservation Element of the Master Plan as well as amendments to the Land Use Ordinance.

17. Mixed-use Convenience / Gas Sales Facilities

In light of a recent application to the Zoning Board of Adjustment for a commercial use which involved sale of both convenience goods and gasoline the Planning Board should assess whether such combined uses should be permitted and, if so, how the Land Use Ordinance should regulate the location and development character of such facilities.

VI. REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

As indicated in Section III above, the Township has designated one redevelopment area (the Brunswick Pike South Redevelopment Area) in the southern portion of the municipality. A draft Redevelopment Plan, including land use regulations for the three Redevelopment Districts within the Redevelopment Area has been prepared. It is recommended that the Redevelopment Plan be incorporated into the Land Use Element of the Master Plan and that the Redevelopment Area land use regulations set forth in the April 2004 draft Plan be incorporated into the Township's Land Use Ordinance.

The Township should continue working collaborately with the NJ Department of Transportation to finalize the plans for and to reconstruct the Brunswick Pike right-of-way as a landscaped commercial boulevard from the Brunswick Circle north to a round-about at the Whitehead Road intersection. Once the Redevelopment Plan for the Brunswick Pike South Redevelopment Area has been adopted, the Planning Board and Township Council should explore extending the Redevelopment Area north along the corridor. This analysis should include consideration of whether amending the Land Use Ordinance to permit increased density of commercial development on Route One would facilitate redevelopment at a scale which could support mass transit.

The Growth and Redevelopment Committee, which was instrumental in promoting the concept of the Brunswick Pike South Redevelopment Area in the 1990's should be encouraged to identify other areas of Lawrence Township which could benefit from a similar approach.