

**MASTER PLAN RE-EXAMINATION**

**TOWNSHIP OF NEPTUNE  
MONMOUTH COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**



**Neptune Township Planning Board**

**July 2009**

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## INTRODUCTION

As required by Section 40:55D-89 of the New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL), municipalities must periodically review and revise if necessary, their' municipal Master Plan every six years.. In compliance with the statutory requirements of the MLUL, this Master Plan Reexamination Report has been adopted by resolution of the Planning Board. Neptune adopted a re-examination report on September 17, 2003 and subsequently an additional re-examination of the master plan and land development ordinance on December 14, 2005

The re-examination report is intended to present a concise overview of the Township's present Master Plan Elements and Land Development Ordinance and assess the changes in land use policy at all levels of government since the last Mater Plan Re-examination.

A copy of the report, along with the said resolution, shall be submitted to the Monmouth County Planning Board and the Municipal Clerk of each adjoining municipality. The Municipal Land Use Law (N.J.S.A. 4055D-89) requires a re-examination report to address several issues relating to the growth and development of the Township as follows:

- A. The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of 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, dispositions 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 new 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.40 A:12A-1 et seq.) 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.

This 2009 Reexamination Report provides an evaluation of land use changes since the adoption of the 2003 & 2005 Re-examination Reports, as well as recommendations to guide future development within Neptune Township.

**Methodology**

The goal of the re-examination report is to evaluate the progress of the Master Plan goals and objectives. In compliance with the requirements stated above, the reexamination report should include of the following:

- A. Review of the goals and objectives of the previous Master Plan in order to place them in the context of 2009, including survey of new land use related plans, ordinances and data which the Township has developed since the previous Master Plan.
- B. Review of the goals and objectives of the previous Master Plan in light of the changes in:
  - Population increase and distribution,
  - Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) requirements,
  - Environmental perception,
  - State regulations, and
  - Regional and State goals and objectives.
- C. Overview of the goals and objectives in the Master Plan in terms of quantitative and qualitative progress.
- D. Recommendations for changes in the Master Plan and the Land Use Ordinance, which will allow the Township to continue with and be able to measure its progress.

## I. MAJOR LAND DEVELOPMENT PROBLEMS AND OBJECTIVES AT TIME OF LAST RE-EXAMINATION

The 2003 and 2005 Master Plan is a comprehensive statement of land use policies adopted by the Township of Neptune Planning Board and intended as a supporting document for the zoning laws adopted by the Governing Body and as a base for evaluating land use issues, which may arise in the future.

The 2003 and 2005 Master Plan Re-examinations was based upon a list of objectives, principles, assumptions, policies and standards developed over time by the Mayor and Committee, Planning Board Subcommittee, and other Municipal boards and agencies. It represents an update to the 2000 Master Plan. The 2002 Plan and all subsequent re-examination reports identified concerns regarding future land use and identified specific land use goals and recommendations, which are outlined below.

### Land Use Plan Element Objectives

The Land Use Plan Element seeks to promote the overall goals and objectives of the Township's Master Plan. Essentially, the Land Use Plan Element is a compilation of various categories of land use – residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, public and recreational/open space uses – each of which are assigned with recommended land use policies to be implemented by the Township. The Land Use Plan Map of the Land Use Plan Element delineates the boundaries of the specific land use categories. The Land Use Plan Element together with the Land Use Plan Map serves to achieve the following Goals and Objectives of the Township:

1. Promote a balanced variety of residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, public and conservation land uses.
2. Preserve and enhance the existing character of the residential neighborhoods in the Township while providing a mix of housing types and uses.
3. Provide a variety of housing opportunities for all income levels in appropriate locations consistent with environmental constraints.
4. Promote aesthetic and site improvements in the Township's major commercial and industrial areas.
5. Provide for the utilization of the Township waterfront for appropriate uses.
6. Guide the redevelopment and development of the remaining large parcels and scattered vacant sites within neighborhoods to ensure proposed uses support existing uses without adverse impacts in terms of land use compatibility, traffic, economic and aesthetic impacts.

7. Maintain a balance between residential and non-residential uses to ensure a stable and sound community tax base and provide local employment opportunities.
8. Reclaim underutilized and/or constrained parcels for productive use.
9. Provide a circulation network for vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians that permits safe and efficient travel.
10. Provide adequate community facilities and services in order to enhance the quality of life for existing and future Township residents and respond to changing demographics.
11. Promote the preservation of natural systems and environmentally sensitive areas, particularly wetland, woodland, coastal, flood hazard and aquifer recharge areas.
12. Provide for additional open space and maintain and enhance existing parkland.
13. Ensure that the Township's historically and architecturally significant buildings and districts will be preserved and protected in accordance with the Master Plan's Historic Preservation Element.
14. Ensure that the Township's Land Use Plan is compatible with those of adjacent municipalities, the County and the State of New Jersey.

In addition to the Township goals and objectives discussed above, the legislated purposes of the Municipal Land Use Law are adopted as general planning objectives.

### **2005 Master Plan Reexamination Report Recommendations**

The Township undertook the required periodic reexamination of the 2003 Re-examination Master Plan in 2005. The recommended objectives of the reexamination report provided a framework for the 2005 Master Plan and the Land Use Plan Element, which promoted and ultimately lead to the rewriting of the entire Land Development Ordinance. The stated recommendations from the 2005 Master Plan Reexamination included:

1. Completely rewriting the Land Development Ordinance to better reflect the land development objectives and policies of Neptune Township, paying attention to specific design standards for site plan and subdivision to provide for high quality design.
2. Preparing a Redevelopment Plan for the Route 35 corridor and Shark River Waterfront area of Neptune Township.

3. Including an Economic Development Plan Element in the Master Plan, and participation in state and county economic development programs.
4. Updating the Housing Element of the Master Plan to incorporate the Fair Share Plan and to support redevelopment and rehabilitation efforts in the Midtown Neighborhood.

## II. EXTENT TO WHICH PROBLEMS HAVE BEEN REDUCED OR INCREASED

A revised list of goals and objectives are provided in Section IV of this Reexamination Report. The new list of goals and objectives will supplement the goals of the 2003 and 2005 Master Plan Reexamination Reports respectively. If there is any case in which the goals and objectives of the two documents are in conflict, the 2009 goals and objectives will supersede the prior goals and objectives.

**III. SIGNIFICANT CHANGES SINCE THE 2005 RE-EXAMINATION**

**A. Demographics**

The Neptune Master Plan, amended May 20, 2002, utilized 1990 Census data. While the most recent Census data available is from 2002, both the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) and Monmouth County Planning Board have released revised demographic information such as population projections for Neptune Township and Monmouth County have been incorporated herein.

**1. Population**

The Township of Neptune encompasses 8.8 square miles with a total population, as reported in the 2008 Monmouth County Demographics and Economic Statistics report, of 29,040. The Township has a population density of 3,630 residents per square mile. The total population of Neptune Township increased by 4.88% from 27,690 in 2000 to 29,040 in 2008. It should be noted that the only growing population in the ten-year period between 1990 and 2000 was that of age group 5 through 20, with a growth rate of only .44 percent. The remained of the population cohorts decreased. The working age (ages 21 to 64) decreased the least at -.94 percent. Table I below illustrates the trend in population change from 1990 to 2000 for the Township of Neptune.

<b>Table I: Population by Age Group</b>			
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>Percent Change (%)</b>
<b>Preschool (Under 5 Years)</b>	1,835	1,657	-9.7%
<b>School Age (5 to 20 years-1990) 5 to 19 years- 2000</b>	5,285	5,308	0.44%
<b>Working Age (21 to 64 years-1990)</b>	16,238	16,086	-0.94%
<b>Senior Citizen (65 and over)</b>	4,790	4,639	-3.2%
<b>Total</b>	28,148	27,690	-1.6%

*Source: 1990 United States Census, Monmouth County Demographic and Economic Statistics, August 2008*

Based on NJTPA projections given in Table II below, the population of Neptune Township is projected to increase every 5 years by a smaller percentage every interval. The population was estimated to increase by 4.6% from 2000 to 2005 but is estimated to only increase by 0.9% by 2025 to 2030.

Year	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Township of Neptune	27,690	28,980	30,270	31,370	32,360	33,220	33,530
Monmouth County	615,300	639,500	657,900	674,100	689,200	705,000	713,000

Source: NJTPA Approved Demographic Forecasts, May 2005.

## 2. Racial Composition

As illustrated below in Table III, the racial composition of the Township of Neptune in 2000 was 15,485 white, 10,567 African American, 1,638 Asian and other, and 1,537 Hispanic. During the decade, between 1990 and 2000 the population for the White racial group was the only one to decreased, while the population for African American, Asians and others, and Hispanic racial groups increased. The racial composition of the Township as reported by the Monmouth County Demographic and Economic Statistics report, is illustrated in Table III, below.

Race	1990	2000	Percent Change (%)
White	17,719	15,485	-12.6%
African American	9,514	10,567	11.1%
Asian and Other	915	1,638	79.0%
Hispanic Origin	1,173	1,537	31.0%

Note: Hispanic Origin is not a race class.

Source: Monmouth County Demographic & Economic Statistics, August 2008

## 3. Income

As depicted in Table IV below, the average income of the Township residents increased between 1989 and 1999. The per capita income for the Township increased by almost forty percent (39.4%), while the median family and household incomes increased approximately by twenty-six percent (26.9%) and twenty-one percent (21.9%), respectively. In 1999, Neptune Township's median family income, median household income, and per capita income were lower than Monmouth County as a whole, where the median family income was \$76,823, the median household income was \$64,271, and the per capita income was \$31,149.

<b>Table IV: Income</b>			
	<b>1989</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>Percent Change (%)</b>
<b>Median Family Income</b>	\$45,496	\$57,735	26.9%
<b>Median Household Income</b>	\$37,911	\$46,250	21.9%
<b>Per Capita Income</b>	\$16,186	\$22,569	39.4%

Source: Monmouth County Demographic & Economic Statistics, August 2008

#### 4. Education

Table V. illustrates the highest level of educational attainment for those Neptune residents over the age of twenty-five (25) in 1990 and 2000. Overall, it appears that the residents of Neptune Township are achieving significantly higher levels of education than they were in 1990. The number of bachelors and graduate/ professional degree holders has increased considerably over the last ten (10) years by ten percent (10.6%) and twenty-two percent (22.4 %), respectively. Also, the data shows that those residents whose highest level of education was less than a high school diploma or equivalent decreased by approximately fifty percent (61.6%). Likewise, those residents whose highest level of education was a high school diploma or equivalent decreased by approximately three percent (3.6%).

<b>Table V: Education Attainment of Population Ages 25 Years and Older</b>			
<b>Highest Level of Education</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>Percent Change (%)</b>
<b>Less than 9<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	1,499	932	-37.8%
<b>9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> Grade (no diploma)</b>	2,852	2,174	-23.8%
<b>High School Graduate</b>	6,807	6,559	-3.6%
<b>Some College (no degree)</b>	3,407	4,086	19.9%
<b>Associate Degree</b>	1,229	1,120	-8.9%
<b>Bachelor's Degree</b>	2,720	3,009	10.6%
<b>Graduate or Professional Degree</b>	1,283	1,570	22.4%
<b>Total Population 25 years and over</b>	19,797	19,450	

Source: Monmouth County Demographic & Economic Statistics, August 2008

**B. Density and distribution of population and land uses** – Overall, the density and distribution of population and land use has not changed significantly from the 2005 Re-examination report. The predominant land use in the Township is single-family residential with multi-family residential uses located in the central portion of the Township and in small pockets in the eastern and northeastern portions of the Township. The western portion of the Township contains low-density residential uses, while the eastern portion of the Township contains moderate, medium and high-density residential units. Nearly 84 percent of the Township is residential, while approximately 7 percent of

the Township is devoted to commercial and industrial uses. The Township is approaching "build-out" with few remaining developable lots. These are located in the Commercial and Planned Unit Development/R-1 zones in the Township.

**C. Conservation of natural resources-** As mentioned earlier, the Township is approaching "build-out" with few remaining developable lots, therefore consideration should be given to the maintenance of open space and creation of better open space linkages. As per the NJDEP data, environmentally sensitive areas are located in the western portion of the Township, more specifically to the northwest and southeast of Route 66. These are located in the commercial and Planned Unit Development /Very Low Density Single-Family Residential (PUD/R-1) zones of the Township. It is essential to continue the policy to guide the limited growth away from these areas and concentrate the growth to other suitable locations within the Township.

**D. Housing conditions** - In general, the Neptune Township community's housing stock is in good condition. The 2005-2007 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, by the U.S. Census Bureau, revealed that the height of development for housing units was between 1950 and 1959, with 2,437 housing units built.

Also according to the American Community Survey, approximately 69% of the Township's occupied housing units are owner-occupied, while 31% are renter occupied.

Housing values continue to rise in the Township. The median value for residential properties in the Township was \$138,100 in 2000 and \$334,600 for the 2005-2007 estimates. Retaining affordable and moderate-income housing units remains an important policy of Neptune.

The American Community Survey indicates that the Township gained 158 housing units, from a total of 12,217 in 2000 to 13,050 for the 2005-2007 estimates. The 6.8% increase from 2000 to 2005-2007 in the Township is reflective of the developed nature of the Township, where there is an emphasis on redevelopment and reuse rather than new development.

**E. Energy conservation** - Promoting the construction of energy efficient homes, office and public buildings remains an objective of the community.

**F. Collection, disposition and recycling of designated recyclable materials** - The Township collects waste twice a week, either Monday and Thursday or Tuesday and Friday depending on the zone. Brush pick up and bulk and metal pick up is done every four weeks and the week of the month is also dependent on the zone. Yard waste is picked up every other week, either the first and third week of the month or the second and fourth week depending on the zone. Recycling is picked up once a week, with the day depending on the area of designation. Public works also has a Recycling Drop-Off Center, which accepts cell phones, computers, monitors, TVs,

stereos, DVDs, ipods, telephone equipment, and electronic waste.

**G. State, county and municipal policy changes** - The New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP) was adopted March 1, 2001. The SDRP is intended to serve as a guide for public and private sector investment in New Jersey and as a policy document to guide state and local agencies planning.

The state plan designates large masses of land that share a common set of conditions, such as population density, infrastructure, level of development, or natural systems into one of five planning areas. Each planning area has a series of policy objectives that guide the application of the SDRP. None of these designations preclude development.

Majority of the Township is classified as being located in the Metropolitan Planning Area (PA1). The PA1 includes large urban centers and post war suburbs that are fully or almost fully developed so that future development is dominated by an intensification of land uses through redevelopment and reuse. These areas are characterized by a wide range of public services and land uses. Municipal boundaries have become blurred and many functional problems such as traffic congestion management have become extra municipal in scope. The State Plan envisions the creation of cooperative regional programs aimed at addressing these issues. It also makes public and private investment and reinvestment in a PA1 a high priority to sustain and leverage the existing investment in public and private infrastructure facilities and services that exist there. Also, along the southern edge of the Township where it borders Wall Township, there is a portion of land designated as County Park Planning Area (PA6).

#### **IV. Specific Changes Recommended for the Master Plan and Development Regulations**

Throughout this re-examination report we have discussed changes that have occurred in the Borough. Some of these changes are readily apparent, others less apparent, and some are just beginning to be felt. While there have been changes, many issues continue to be in the forefront of our planning. The community continues to focus on the following:

- A shortage of vacant developable land to meet the many competing needs in the community.
- Encouraging single-family housing while maintaining existing residential character.
- Enhancing the character of each unique neighborhood.
- Meeting the housing needs of a growing senior population and the recreation needs of school aged children.
- The use of redevelopment and rehabilitation plans without the use of the Townships eminent domain powers.
- Maintaining a range of housing opportunities to ensure a diverse population at all age and economic levels.
- Providing adequate recreation, open space and environmental conservation.
- Ensuring an economically healthy aesthetically pleasing commercial corridor.

This re-exam recommends that the Master Plan be updated to address the above issues, and incorporate the following items, along with any other issues that come to light upon detailed review and public comment.

#### **LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS**

1. Recommend the refinement and partitioning of the existing Corridor Zone because some of the existing boundary lines between residential zones and nonresidential zones still need to be better refined to reflect established and desired patterns of land uses and development, specifically to avoid situations involving split zone properties.
2. Recommend amending the Zoning Map to identify specific areas that fall under the jurisdiction of neighborhood or commercial design guidelines. This is intended to provide any prospective homeowner or developer with an additional resource identifying existing zoning controls that must be followed.
3. Establish architectural standards for all commercial corridors within the Township, specifically the Rte 35 and West Neptune corridors.
4. The easternmost properties of Shark River Hills south of Lakewood Road and in close proximity to the Shark River Waterfront are currently located in four different zone districts – Towns Commercial, Marina Mixed Use Zone, Moderate Density and Low Density One Family. As previously stated in the 2005 Plan, the

multiple zone designations in this waterfront area are unwarranted and in need of re-evaluation. Resolve the inconsistencies between current zoning and stated objectives of the Master Plan, the zoning for this area should be refined into one category with a lower level of permissible development intensity. The specific zone district refinement should be based on existing property ownership patterns to avoid split zone properties and desired patterns of development.

5. The 2005 re-examination report recommended that the permitted use list for individual zoning districts be revised to identify all specific business industries rather than broad use categories. Since this recommendation, it was determined that the specific uses for each zone were not working and therefore it is recommended that broader based uses be adopted.
6. Develop a split zone ordinance that allows for the extension of one use or another for fifty feet (50') on a property that is split zoned between two zoning districts.
7. The list of permitted uses in the C-4 Zone appears to be inconsistent and lacks commercial viability. The Planning Board should revisit the permitted uses.
8. Review and recommend modifications to the current Neptune Township Land Development Ordinance to clarify current inconsistencies within the document.
9. Address comments from Monmouth County regarding the Stormwater Management Plan and then readopt at the Township.
10. Due to the changing Economy at the time of the 2009 re-examination report preparation, the Redevelopment Plan known as the High Tech area should be reassessed to determine any proposed changes to the permitted uses in the plan.
11. Separate the Land Development standards for places registered as National Historic Districts and the remainder of Neptune Township for ease of use by professional and homeowners, because of the distinct differences in land patterns and zoning requirements.

## TRANSPORTATION

1. Develop a transportation plan that coordinates traffic patterns and services between the existing eight (8) areas of town, taking into account the intended increase in traffic from the future development /redevelopment of Asbury Park's waterfront and neighborhoods.
2. Determine the status of the Rte 66 corridor widening, as Rte 66 is a main arterial on the Evacuation Route for Neptune and the surrounding municipalities. In addition, the intersections along the evacuation Route should be assessed for capacity and functionality in the case of an emergency evacuation.

### ADDITIONAL RECOMENDATIONS

1. Develop an enforcement and maintenance program for the Townships many privately and municipally operated Stormwater Management Facilities to maintain the functionality and intended performance of the structures, such as Vortechincs Chambers.
2. Develop a program to dredge and maintain the water surface bodies in the Township, that due to their reduced retention and flow capacity result in the flooding of properties and roadways.
3. Establish standards that will encourage the use of sustainable “green” technology in future development initiatives.

## V. REDEVELOPMENT RECOMENDATIONS

As part of Neptune Township's comprehensive effort to guide development improve the physical environment, quality of life and economic conditions, the Township has over the years, approved a series of Needs Determination Studies resulting in Redevelopment Plans at different locations throughout the municipality. While several of these redevelopment areas have been adopted and are in some cases under constructions, the Township has identified the following three existing redevelopment plans that they are considering amending.

- Shark River Waterfront, which was adopted in November of 2006
- The High Tech Park, originally adopted in 2000.
- Route 35 and West Bangs Avenue, adopted in 2008