

Reexamination of Master Plan & Development Regulations

Adopted: March 2, 2016

*Franklin Township
Somerset County, New Jersey*

Prepared by:

Franklin Township Planning Board

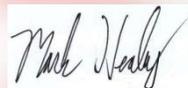
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I. INTRODUCTION

The Municipal Law Use Law (MLUL) requires that municipalities conduct a general reexamination of its master plan and development regulations at least every 10 years. This review is conducted by the Planning Board. This reexamination is necessary to assure that the Master Plan and development regulations of the Township remain viable, current and capable of addressing the planning, zoning and development issues facing the municipality.

This Report constitutes the Master Plan Re-Examination Report of Franklin Township, Somerset County, per the MLUL (N.J.S.A 40:55D-89) and serves as a precursor to the comprehensive update of the Township's Master Plan.

Section II, Township Master Plan, summarizes the status of the Master Plan and the various documents that comprise the Township's Master Plan. In particular, this section demonstrates how the Township Master Plan is a dynamic document that has been updated in the form of six updates and the adoption of five additional elements of the Master Plan as the need has arisen over the last decade.

Section III comprises the Master Plan re-examination. It evaluates the Township's master plan and development regulations following the criteria required pursuant to N.J.S.A 40:55D-89:

- a. The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of the adoption of the 2006 Master Plan.
- 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.

II. TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

The Planning Board last updated a comprehensive Master Plan on March 22, 2006. That plan consists of the following elements:

- Land Use Plan
- Parks, Recreation and Open Space¹
- Conservation Plan
- Historic Preservation Plan
- Community Facilities Plan
- Circulation Plan
- Economic Plan
- Utility Plan
- Recycling Plan
- Plan Consistency

The Township Master Plan is not a static document. In fact, the Township Master Plan has been updated in the form of six updates and the adoption of five additional elements of the Master Plan as needs have arisen over the last decade.

A. LAND USE PLAN UPDATES

Subsequent to the 2006 adoption of the Master Plan, as issues have arisen, circumstances have changed and/or objectives have evolved, a number of issue-oriented and/or area-specific updates to the Land Use Plan Element of the Master Plan have been adopted by the Planning Board. Since 2006, a total of six (6) such amendments to the Master Plan have been adopted.

➤ **June 2007**² – This amended the Land Use Plan Element primarily with respect to the following four issues:

- (1) Identified the then-recent changes to the Redevelopment Plan with respect to the Leewood and RPM redevelopment areas and made recommendations regarding G-B zones remaining in the Redevelopment Area;
- (2) Had the Consolata Missions property retain its C-R designation pending further investigation of a more appropriate zoning designation of the property;

¹ Superseded in its entirety by the 2013 Open Space and Recreation Plan and therefore not addressed in this re-examination.

² <http://franklintwpnj.org/home/showdocument?id=1220>

- (3) Placed certain properties along Hamilton Street within the R-10 zone consistent with its existing zoning; and
 - (4) Placed certain properties within East Millstone within the R-10-H zone to provide for the continuance of 10,000 square-foot residential lots.
- **July 2008**³ – This amended the Land Use Element primarily with respect to the following issues:
- (1) Made the Land Use Plan Element consistent with the December 2007 amendment to the Fair Share Plan which eliminated the “Bennett’s/ Veronica” project;
 - (2) Made the Land Use Plan Element consistent with the Board’s determination to eliminate the “West Point Avenue” site from the Fair Share Plan;
 - (3) Amended the Land Use Plan Element to place additional properties in the easterly portion of Bennetts Lane within the A (Agricultural) designation on the Land Use Plan map;
 - (4) Placed preserved land tracts of >40 acres within a new “Parks/Open Space/Agricultural” designation on the Land Use Plan map in the Master Plan and recommended placement within a new “Parks/Open Space/Agricultural” zoning district on the Township Zoning Map
- **November 2009**⁴ – This amended the Land Use Element primarily with respect to the following issues:
- (1) Changed the Land Use Plan designations in the “superblock” bounded by Cedar Grove Lane, New Brunswick Road, Elizabeth Avenue and Weston Road so as to place the Somerset Run, Sterling Point and Renaissance developments within the S-C-V (Senior Citizen Village” designation and to retain the M-1 and R-40 “base” designations for the portions of the “superblock” not within these developments; and, to eliminate the “SCV Overlay” zone in the “superblock.”
 - (2) Placed the “CB” Zone north of I-287 and west of Elizabeth Avenue within the “R-10” land use designation consistent with development in and around the area and in light of significant environmental constraints that would render corporate business development nearly impossible.

³ <http://franklintwpnj.org/home/showdocument?id=1216>

⁴ <http://franklintwpnj.org/home/showdocument?id=1232>

(3) Recommended changes to the R-7 zone so as to have density requirements for 1- and 2-family homes (i.e., 7,500 square feet per unit) and to encourage home ownership by allowing zero-lot line development subject to that same density.

➤ **March 2012**⁵ – This Master Plan amendment addressed a comprehensive evaluation of permitted multi-family residential development within the Township with particular emphasis on permitted residential development within the Township’s Renaissance Redevelopment Area and within the Township’s commercial districts. This amended the Land Use Element primarily with respect to the following issues:

- (1) Recommended elimination, as permitted uses, high-density residential uses from the Neighborhood Business Residential (NBR) Underlying Zone and the Renaissance Commercial (RC) zone within the Renaissance Redevelopment Area;
- (2) Recommended rezoning of Block 536.01, Lot 2.03, a Township-owned parcel from MR to CB (i.e., its previous zoning designation); and
- (3) Recommended elimination of “garden apartment developments” and “townhouse developments” as permitted conditional uses in the General Business (GB) zone.

The March 2012 Master Plan Amendment cited numerous factors that informed these recommendations including:

- potential for over-development in the Redevelopment Area with respect to the density of residential development based on the significant number of such approved and pending residential developments in the Area;
- the significant overall residential growth already experienced within the Township over the last decade;
- the extent of additional residential development in the future anticipated from already approved and pending development within the Township;
- the significant amount of affordable housing that had already been developed and the amount of additional affordable housing to be developed from approved and planned developments;
- the fact that the Township did not rely upon garden apartment and townhouse development within the General Business zone (or the other zones affected) to meet its affordable housing obligation; and
- the Township’s desire to encourage development in these zones consistent with the intent of the zone and the Master Plan (e.g., the stated purpose of the General Business zone which is “to provide business and commercial uses for the local traveling public, and to preserve and enhance commercial, financial, retail and similar services.”)

⁵ <http://franklintwpnj.org/home/showdocument?id=1224>

It is noted that the 2015 Housing Element addressed similar matters – i.e., it demonstrated the diversity of the existing housing stock within the Township. For example, it indicated that Franklin Township had a greater rate of renter occupancy than the County (28%, compared to 23%). Based upon the nature of the recent and approved residential development, it is anticipated that the availability of rental housing will only increase in Franklin,

Further, the 2015 Housing Element demonstrates the Township's varied housing stock. Notably, it demonstrated that greater than 50% of the Township's housing stock consists of attached single-family units (i.e., townhomes) and multi-family units. Comparison of the Township's figures from 2000 to 2010 shows that the Township's housing stock became increasingly diverse with a sizeable increase in the number of dwelling units containing 10 or more units. The number of units in multi-family buildings (i.e., 2-4 unit, 5-9 unit and 10+ unit buildings) increased by 2,190 units (from 5,379 to 7,566 units) between 2000 and 2010. This represents 60% of the 3,658-unit County-wide increase in such units.

The table also demonstrates that the Township housing stock has become increasingly diverse and is more diverse than Somerset County as a whole. Based upon the nature of the recent and approved residential development, it is anticipated that the Township's housing stock has become even more diverse since 2011 since most of such development has been in the form of multi-unit housing.

Housing Units by Number of Units in Structure

	1 Unit Detached	1 Unit Attached	2-4 Units	5-9 Units	10+ Units
2000					
Franklin Township	9,797 (50%)	4,581 (23%)	1,449 (7%)	1,100 (6%)	2,830 (14%)
2011					
Franklin Township	11,931 (47%)	5,712 (23%)	2,172 (9%)	1,300 (5%)	4,094 (16%)
Somerset County	61%	15%	10%	5%	10%

Source: Somerset County "Trends & Indicators 2013" Original source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2007-2011, 5-Year Estimates, Selected Housing Characteristics; 2000 Census
 Note: 5-Year Estimates are based on a sample of data collected between January 1, 2007 and December 31, 2011.

➤ **October 2012**⁶ – This amended the Land Use Element with respect to the following issues:

- (1) Addressed the Trap Rock Area of the Township located in the southerly portion of the Township and generally bounded by Route 27 to the east, Georgetown-Franklin Turnpike to the north and the Millstone River to the west. In particular, it updated the Land Use Plan element to:

⁶ <http://franklintwpnj.org/home/showdocument?id=1230>

- Recommend that the permitted uses in the M-3 (Mining) district be revised to eliminate uses (manufacturing, office, warehouse, laboratory and other such uses) that are inconsistent with the rural character of the surrounding area and for which sufficient infrastructure does not exist while retaining the mining and mining associated uses for which the district was formed.
- Amend the Land Use Plan map to: remove the "State Park lots" from the M-3 zone and place them within the CP (Canal Preservation) zone consistent with the existing and future use of these lots; re-designate the portions of the "quarry lot" (block 5.02, lot 1.02) and the "quarry offices lot" (block 5.02, lot 172.04) that are currently within the R-O-L zone into the M-3 zone and place the small portion of the "quarry offices lot" that is currently within the A zone (i.e., the narrow portion containing the entrance road and guard house) into the M-3 zone; and eliminate the R-O-L zone from this area. These changes placed the portions of these properties currently involved in quarry operations within one zone that permits uses consistent with the existing and future use of the area and within a zone (the "M-3 Mining zone", as revised) which would no longer permit uses that are inconsistent with the character of the surrounding area and for which sufficient infrastructure does not exist (nor planned to be provided).

(2) Placed the 13.5 acre site in proximity to First Street and Lakeside Drive in the R-20 designation consistent with the nature and density of the surrounding residential neighborhood.

➤ **April 2015**⁷ – This amendment to the Land Use Plan element addressed a comprehensive evaluation of the Hamilton Street Business District (HBD) by the Township's Hamilton Street Advisory Board (HSAB) and Planning Board. It addressed one of the high priority objectives identified by the HSAB to spur revitalization through private investment and redevelopment. The zoning of the area had been identified as a weakness that was possibly thwarting such private redevelopment and investment in the area. The HSAB established a zoning subcommittee to investigate this matter and to offer zoning recommendations. That investigation resulted in the production of a report from the HSAB to the Township Planning Board outlining the HSAB's analysis of the Hamilton Street zoning and their recommended zoning changes for the area. The Planning Board subsequently reviewed this matter with that review culminating in the Land Use Plan amendment. This Master Plan Update outlined the zoning amendments recommended by the Planning Board to encourage revitalization of the Hamilton Street corridor through private investment and redevelopment and include:

- Recommending increases in permitted building height to 3 stories and 4 stories under circumstances (e.g., units contain no more than 2 bedrooms and minimum requirement for 1-bedroom units and certain minimum lot sizes and dimensions). Such requirements are intended to encourage investment and redevelopment in the corridor while encouraging residential use that may be attractive to young professionals or other smaller households.

⁷ <http://franklintwpnj.org/home/showdocument?id=5478>

Further, the larger lot area and dimensions requirements for 4-story buildings acknowledge the larger land area needed to accommodate a larger scale development (e.g., off-site parking requirement, drainage, etc.) and also address the objective of encouraging developers to revitalize larger portions of the corridor.

- Eliminating stand-alone townhouse, apartments and independent senior living facilities as permitted uses in the HBD zone, as the zone should require mixed-use development - i.e., only permit residential use when provided with first floor commercial (require entire first floor to be commercial).
- Eliminating two-family dwellings as permitted uses throughout the district and eliminate single-family dwellings as a permitted use fronting on Hamilton Street (i.e., encourage their conversion/ redevelopment to commercial or mixed use).
- Adding "outdoor dining" as a permitted accessory use
- Increasing building coverage from 40% to 50%
- Allowing the approving board, on a case-by-case basis, to reduce the parking requirements for 1-bedroom and/or 2-bedroom units below that required by RSIS provided the applicant proves that a lower parking ratio is warranted based upon the expected occupancy of the development and/or other relevant factors
- Recommending that the ordinance be amended to supplement design standards with more illustrations/ diagrams, to update the design standards to contain site layout design standards (e.g., building fronting Hamilton Street and side street, parking to the rear, limit on frontage occupied by parking, no parking at corners, screening of parking along frontage; standards for drive-thru facilities); and, to prohibit freestanding signage
- Placing the following sites within the HBD zone: Lots 1.01 and 1.02 in Block 29; Lots 1 through 16 in Block 133; Lots 1 through 31 in Block 134; and Lot 63 in Block 154

B. ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS OF THE MASTER PLAN

Since 2006, the Planning Board has subsequently adopted five (5) additional elements of the Master Plan:

➤ **Housing Element & Fair Share Plan**⁸ – 2010 & 2015

Franklin Township has a long history of responsibly and comprehensively addressing its “Mt. Laurel” affordable housing obligation to meet the needs of its residents and its fair share of its region’s need for affordable housing. The Township has received Substantive Certification of its Fair Share Plan/Housing Element under the First, Second and Third Round of the COAH Rules, with the most recent Substantive Certification being received in July 2010 per the Third Round rules then in effect. That plan was adopted after a very deliberate process which included the Planning Board’s evaluation of presentations from several developers wishing to have their proposals included in the plan. The plan proceeded through COAH’s mediation process as several of the developers not selected for inclusion filed objections. At the conclusion of mediation COAH sided, without exception, with the Township. As a result, COAH subsequently granted Substantive Certification to the Township’s plan. As noted below (and as demonstrated in the 2015 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan and subsequent submittals), the soundness of the Township’s Fair Share Plan has been conclusively demonstrated by the degree to which the developments proposed within it have been subsequently developed and occupied by low- and moderate-income households.

The validity of COAH’s Third Round Rules remain an issue before the court. On March 10, 2015, the New Jersey Supreme Court issued a decision which “dissolved” the “exhaustion of administrative remedies” requirement under the Fair Housing Act, N.J.S.A. 52:27D-301, et seq., (that no exclusionary zoning cases may proceed if a town is before COAH) and provided that municipalities may initiate declaratory judgment actions and seek approval of their affordable housing plans. The Supreme Court directed that prospective municipal affordable housing obligations are to be determined by trial courts on a case-by-case basis using the methodologies from the First and Second Rounds as developed by COAH and approved by court decisions.

In response to the New Jersey Supreme Court decision, the Township prepared a new Housing Element & Fair Share Plan which was adopted by the Planning Board in May 2015. That plan demonstrates the degree to which the Township has continued to implement its Fair Share Plan (i.e., the impressive degree to which the developments in the plan have been constructed and occupied, as well as the construction of several additional affordable developments not included in the prior Fair Share Plan).

⁸ <http://franklintwpnj.org/Home/ShowDocument?id=5482>

Subsequently, the Township has submitted to the court, at the direction of the court, submittals that demonstrate the degree to which the Township exceeds any reasonably applied obligation for affordable housing. The Township will continue to monitor the matter and will respond, as necessary and appropriate, to the direction of the court.

➤ **Farmland Preservation Plan**⁹ – 2007 & 2009

The Township's Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) prepared the Township's Farmland Preservation Plan (dated November 2007). This plan follows the guidelines put forth by the State Agricultural Development Committee (SADC), but most notably identifies "target farms" – i.e., farms identified for potential farmland preservation. This plan was adopted by the Planning Board as an element of the Township Master Plan and submitted to the SADC for approval. Following subsequent input from staff of the SADC, the plan was revised in consultation with the AAC, re-adopted by the Planning and re-submitted to the SADC. In response to subsequent input from the SADC the Farmland Preservation Plan is being revised once more and will be presented in 2016 to the AAC and the Planning Board for re-adoption and re-submittal to the SADC.

➤ **Environmental Resource Inventory**¹⁰ – 2008

In 2008, the Township commissioned a comprehensive Township-wide Environmental Resource Inventory (ERI), which was prepared with the aid of a Smart Growth Planning Grant from the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions. The ERI was prepared in consultation with the Township Environmental Commission and was adopted by the Township Planning Board as an element of the Township Master Plan in 2008.

The ERI serves as an outstanding resource in terms of both constraints and opportunities that might guide development and conservation objectives. In fact, the Township's most-recent Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP), adopted in 2013, indicated that "future open space acquisitions should take into consideration the presence of important environmental resources and the relative benefit of open space preservation in the protection of these resources." The 2013 OSRP (see summary below) outlined the following environmental conditions most commonly pertinent to open space preservation decisions in Franklin: geology; aquifers and recharge areas; wellhead protection; sole-source aquifers; known contaminated sites; wetlands; steep slopes; woodlands; prime farmland; watershed management areas; drainage basins and major surface water features; category 1 and 2 waters; point and nonpoint source pollution; surface water quality; riparian corridors; floodplains and flood hazard areas; and endangered and threatened species. The ERI describes and/or maps each of these conditions in detail.

⁹ <http://franklintwpnj.org/home/showdocument?id=1226>

¹⁰ <http://franklintwpnj.org/home/showdocument?id=4402>

➤ **Pathways & Trails Plan**¹¹ – 2009

The Pathways and Trails Plan (dated December 2008) was prepared by the Township Trails Advisory Committee in consultation with Loos Consulting and was adopted by the Township Planning Board as an element of the Township Master Plan in 2009.

The Pathway and Trails Plan (PTP) offers a design for an interconnected, Township-wide trail system, connecting neighborhoods to local parks, schools, historic sites, cultural centers, shopping areas, and regional trail systems. It also provides an alternative transportation network for bicyclists and pedestrians. The PTP indicates the interconnection of preserved lands through a system of trails and pathways as a "natural outgrowth" of the Township's successful open space preservation program. This network of trails is envisioned for non-motorized use and the PTP is meant to guide the Township and other levels of government in the development of safe, comprehensive, and enjoyable trails for residents both within and outside of Franklin Township.

An important factor driving the development of the PTP was the attempt to connect the various geographic zones of the township - north to be connected to south and east to be connected to west. Other important factors were connecting the residential areas of the Township with its commerce and educational centers and connecting population centers with recreational destinations. Connecting many of the existing Township trail systems to each other is another key objective.

The PTP Map proposes a township-wide pathways system that, if implemented, would make Franklin Township one of the more biker-hiker-walker-equestrian-cross-country skiing friendly townships in New Jersey. Recommendations include (but are certainly not limited to):

- *North-South Trail.* A bike path more or less paralleling South Middlebush Road connecting various Township and State open space and historic resources and providing bike/pedestrian access thereto from residential areas in both the northern and southern portions of the Township. The North-South Trail is also envisioned as a means for bicycle travel and even commuting between the southern and northern areas of the Township.
- *D&R Canal State Park, Easton Avenue and JFK Boulevard.* Pedestrian bridge from land adjacent to Somerset Diner to the D&R Canal towpath. This bridge is currently in the final design stage by the State, but full funding for the bridge is not yet available.
- *Funding.* The Plan recommends the Township continue to seek grant funding and suggests that the Township's Open Space Trust Fund should be considered as a revenue source for implementing the trails plan in the Township. It also recommends that the Township research the legality of adopting an ordinance that would establish a Township Trails Fund

¹¹ <http://franklintwpnj.org/home/showdocument?id=1356>

into which it can receive contributions from developers towards the cost of constructing trails and bike paths.

➤ **Open Space and Recreation Plan**¹²– 2013

The Township’s Open Space and Recreation Plan was adopted by the Planning Board as an element of the Township Master Plan in December 2013. The development of the OSRP was initiated by the Township Open Space Advisory Committee (OSAC) and the plan was endorsed by the OSAC in June 2013.

The 2013 OSRP is essentially a synthesis and update of the OSRP prepared in 2000 and the 2012 Preservation and Recreation Needs Assessment and Action Plan (Needs Assessment).¹³ It replaced the May 2000 OSRP and the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Element of the 2006 Element of the Township Master Plan. Most importantly, the OSRP contains all of the information and analysis required by the State's Green Acres Programs' Open Space and Recreation Plan Guidelines. Thus, the OSRP is a comprehensive document which contained the following components:

- (1) *Inventory*: Provides a detailed, up-to-date inventory of: permanently preserved open space and parks; agricultural resources (including permanently preserved farmland and prime agricultural soils); trails; natural resources; and, historic and scenic resources. It also provides a description of significant Township accomplishments since the 2000 OSRP including open space preservation of nearly 900 acres and farmland preservation of over 700 acres, which by 2013 raised the total amount of preserved land in the Township to 9,401 acres - or 34% of the Township.
- (2) *Goals*: Outlines updated “General Goals” with respect to open space and recreation, and more detailed “Program-Specific Goals” under the following topic areas: goals for land preservation and acquisition; goals for resource protection; goals for agricultural preservation, goals for recreation; goals for cultural resources; and goals for public education and involvement.
- (3) *Recreation Needs Analysis*: Relying principally upon the input and analysis conducted as part of the Needs Assessment, the OSRP contains an analysis of the adequacy of the open space and recreation system to satisfy present and future needs. The needs analysis identified a large

¹² <http://franklintwpnj.org/home/showdocument?id=4426> and <http://franklintwpnj.org/home/showdocument?id=4428>

¹³ The Township commissioned the preparation of the Preservation and Recreation Needs Assessment and Action Plan, completed in January 2012 which contained:

- A detailed, Township-wide recreation needs assessment accomplished in a statistically valid and comprehensive manner to identify the current and future recreation needs of the Township; and
- An evaluation of the amount of funds needed for the various competing uses of the Trust Fund along with strategies for the use of the Fund to meet those needs.

shortage of active recreation facilities, especially athletic fields, throughout Franklin Township and gaps in the locations of parks and facilities.

(4) *Preservation Action Plan*: Implementation of the land preservation goals of the OSRP is recommended to be achieved through the following:

- Land Preservation Areas: The 2000 OSRP outlined a number of "land preservation areas" that provide structure, guidance and direction in the Township's land preservation efforts. The 2013 OSRP indicated that these "land preservation areas" remained valid and incorporated them in the 2013 OSRP: Canal Preservation / Millstone Valley Area; Kingston / Griggstown Preserve; Village Greenbelts; Stream Greenways; Ten Mile Run Greenway; State / County Lands Preservation Area; Greenways/ Connectivity; and Scenic Corridor Planning Area.
- Implementation of the Farmland Preservation Plan: The OSRP recommends that the Township continue to pursue implementation of the Farmland Preservation Plan as a key means of addressing the Township's open space preservation goals.
- Implementation of the Pathways and Trails Plan: The OSRP recommends that the Township continue to pursue implementation of the Pathways and Trails Plan and the trails-related recommendations in the Needs Assessment.
- Historic Preservation Efforts: The OSRP outlines a number of on-going and potential historic preservation efforts that should be pursued including: implementation of the "HPAC Report" that evaluated the condition, necessary and future capitals repairs, and potential future use of the 21 Township-owned historic buildings; continuing to evaluate preservation options for the Franklin Inn and Kingston School; obtaining Certified Local Government (CLG) status; continuing to maintain the Township's invaluable partnership with The Meadows Foundation; continuing the Historic Preservation Advisory Committee's inventory and mapping of historic Sites; and continuing to pursue grants from Somerset County, NJ Historic Trust, NJ State Historic Preservation Office, NJ Certified Local Government program, NJ Cultural Trust, or private foundations.
- Zoning Techniques. The OSRP recommends that the Township continue to pursue zoning techniques that are compatible with open space and farmland preservation and the retention of agriculture and rural character.
 - *Rural Density Zoning*: The OSRP identifies the following zoning districts as being most compatible with such objectives: Agricultural (A) Zone; Canal Preservation (CP) Zone; Rural Residential (RR-3) Zone; and Rural Residential (RR-5) Zone. The OSRP

recommends that the Township maintain the rural density of those areas currently within the A, CP, RR-5 and RR-3 zoning districts.

- *Cluster Provisions*: The Township's development regulations have a number of clustering provisions (Lot Size Averaging, NRPC cluster option, NRPC R-40 Cluster Option, Agricultural Cluster Option) that have been very successful in preserving agriculture and open space while managing a significant amount of growth. In this way, development in the more rural areas of the Township have not simply consumed massive amounts of agricultural land but has actually led to the permanent preservation of open space.

The OSRP recommends that the Township continue to encourage the use of cluster techniques when such techniques could serve to protect existing farmland, areas of scenic value and/or natural resource value. Further, it recommends that the Township re-evaluate the cluster provisions in order to: identify ways to either increase the likelihood of their use (e.g., greater flexibility in minimum lot sizes and other standards and/or density bonuses if certain additional objectives are met); and consider the use of mandatory clustering in certain areas and/or circumstances.

- Infrastructure Considerations. The OSRP notes that comparison of the existing sewer service area to the Township Zoning Map reveals that the sewer service area within the Township correlates almost exactly to the Township's non-residential, multi-family residential, higher-density single-family zones (1-acre per unit or denser) and certain cluster developments. Conversely, areas planned to remain less dense (i.e., those zones that permit less than 1 unit per acre) are not served by sewer. Map 4, below, shows the sewer service area in a light beige cover overlaid on the Township Zoning Map.

Since the provision of sewer service significantly increases development pressure and significantly increases potential intensity of development, the OSRP indicates that it is critical that the Township carefully restrict the expansion of the sewer service area into areas of the Township that are inappropriate and/or unsuitable for more intensive development. It also recommends that the Township also carefully restrict the expansion of public water service for similar reasons.

(5) *Recreation Recommendations and Action Plan*. Relying principally upon recommendations in the Needs Assessment, the OSRP outlines an action plan for recreation which included recommendations addressing:

- Existing park improvements (e.g., expansion of facilities at existing neighborhood parks)
- New park improvements (e.g., development of additional active recreation areas, mini-parks in Wards 4 and 5, a mini-park in the Hamilton Street Business District, additional athletic fields, an outdoor family aquatic center, and a wellness and fitness center for the community)

- Nature areas and nature education (e.g., continue to purchase open space with a priority on linkages between parks, schools, neighborhoods and commercial areas).
- Address identified programming needs (e.g., fitness and wellness programs)
- Partnerships (e.g., partner with a private or non-profit organization in the development and operation of a recreation and fitness center).

III. RE-EXAMINATION OF MASTER PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

This section evaluates the Township's master plan and development regulations following the criteria required pursuant to N.J.S.A 40:55D-89. This evaluation is organized by Master Plan Element (i.e., Land Use Plan, Historic Preservation Plan, Circulation Plan, etc.) and the particular issues identified in each Element. This evaluation is organized as follows:

- **Issue** – Summarizes the problem, issue or objectives as raised in the 2006 Master Plan (40:55D-89.a)
- **Status** – Addresses the current status of this issue (e.g., extent to which has been reduced, increased or addressed (40:55D-89.b)
- **Change(s)** – Identifies any changes in the assumptions, policies and objectives affecting an issue from the 2006 Master Plan (40:55D-89.c). When an issue starts with this heading it means that it is a new issue not addressed in the 2006 Master Plan. If no “change(s)” are identified for a particular issue it means that no changes have occurred that would warrant further action on that issue.
- **Recommendation(s)** – Identifies specific changes recommended to the Master Plan or development regulations (40:55D-89.d) If no “recommendation(s)” are identified for a particular issue it means that the matter was resolved (e.g., implemented by ordinance) and that no changes have occurred that would warrant further action on that issue.

Where applicable, this evaluation addresses 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 (40:55D-89.e).

A. LAND USE PLAN

- **Issue:** The goals and objectives of the Land Use Plan Element of the Master Plan are as follows:

Goal: Maintain the diversity of housing, but encourage infill and stabilization of current residential areas rather than continuing sprawl patterns of development.

- Encourage new construction and renovation, including accessory apartments, in revitalization and developed areas.
- Encourage the subdivision of larger lots into conforming lots in appropriate locations in developed areas.

Goal: Encourage commercial and industrial development in areas with access to major regional highways (I-287) and in established areas.

- Locate major employment and traffic-drawing uses in areas where they will least impact residential neighborhoods.
- Maintain size of industrial districts to ensure adequate space for light industry and warehousing.

Goal: Differentiate between neighborhood commercial nodes and regional commercial development.

- Locate regional shopping centers in nodes with regional access.
- Concentrate commercial development into nodes or districts in areas where residential densities can support commercial activities.
- Limit commercial activities in villages to neighborhood commercial uses, those which serve the adjacent residential community

Goal: Maintain the character of the existing villages of Kingston, Griggstown, Franklin Park, Middlebush and East Millstone.

- Develop special design standards for villages.
- Discourage the intrusion of incompatible uses.
- Maintain the hard edge between villages and environs to protect character.

Goal: Protect the Township's cultural heritage by encouraging the continuation of farming as a viable land use.

- Protect farmland by purchase of development rights, continued use of farmland assessment and other effective mechanisms
- Discourage the extension of utilities to large farms except where needed to service existing development and improve environmental conditions.

Goal: Support the redevelopment of declining areas within the Township.

- Periodically reexamine redevelopment plans to ensure viability.
- Continue to use the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law to identify additional areas "in need of redevelopment" in the Township.

Status: Generally, these goals and objectives remain valid.

Recommendation: While generally valid, the goals and objectives should be re-evaluated as part of the new Land Use Plan element. For example, revitalization of Hamilton Street should be identified as a major goal and more specific language should be added addressing the extension of public sewer and water.

- **Change(s):** The Township's 2015 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan¹⁴ and the County's Trends & Indicators Report¹⁵ identify numerous population, demographic, housing and other factors that may affect Franklin. These include:

¹⁴ <http://franklintwpnj.org/Home/ShowDocument?id=5482>

¹⁵ <https://www.co.somerset.nj.us/planweb/pdf/Trends%20and%20Indicators%20for%20Somerset%20County%20-%202013%20Report.pdf>

- The Township has a varied housing stock (e.g., greater than 50% of the Township's housing stock consists of attached single-family units (i.e., townhomes) and multi-family units).
- The Township's housing stock has become increasingly diverse with a sizeable increase in the number of dwelling units containing 10 or more units. The number of units in multi-family buildings (i.e., 2-4 unit, 5-9 unit and 10+ unit buildings) increased by 2,190 units (from 5,379 to 7,566 units) between 2000 and 2010.
- The Township population increased by approximately 11,000 persons between 2000 and 2010. At the time of the 2010 Census the Township population was 62,300.
- By far the largest age-group increases occurred in the 55-64 and 65+ age group categories. The 55-64 age group increased 75% from 4,261 in 2000 to 7,466 in 2010. Similarly, the 65 & over age group increased 47% from 5,805 in 2000 to 8,513 in 2010. Together these age groups accounted for 52% of the Township's population increase (i.e., of the new residents 1-out of-2 was 55 years of age or older) between 2000 and 2010.
- The number of residents aged 25 to 44 remained virtually identical between 2000 and 2010 (18,790 and 18,926 respectively) with a very minor increase in the 25-34 age group and a very minor decrease in the 35-44 age group. These age groups declined in comparison to overall Township population (together, 36.9% in 2000 declined to 30.3% by 2010).
- While the number of school-aged children (5-17) increased by roughly 1,200, the percentage of overall population represented by this age group decreased slightly to 15% (lower than the County-wide figure of 19%). School-aged children represented 11% of the Township's overall increase in population (in other words, of the new residents 1-in-10 was a school-aged child).
- The North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority forecasts a year 2040 population of 71,390 for Franklin Township, at an annualized percent population change of 0.5%. Similarly, they forecast an annualized percent household change of 0.5% resulting in a forecast of 26,930 households in Franklin by the year 2040. The Township's 2014 population was estimated at 65,938.
- The average household size in Franklin Township is 2.63 persons. The household composition, in terms of household size, remained relatively constant in the Township between 2000 and 2010, with only a minor increase in the percentage of 2 person households and a minor decrease in the number of households with 5 or more persons.
- In comparison to the County as a whole, the Township has a somewhat higher percentage of smaller households (i.e., 1 and 2 person households) and correspondingly lower percentage of larger households (i.e., 4 and 5+ person households). The supply of housing in the Township is consistent with this in that the Township has a greater percentage of smaller units (1 and 2-bedroom units), while the County has a greater percentage of larger units (3 and 4-bedroom units)
- Franklin Township is a racially-diverse community and the Township became increasingly diverse between 2000 and 2010 with significant increases in the African-American, Asian--American and Hispanic populations.

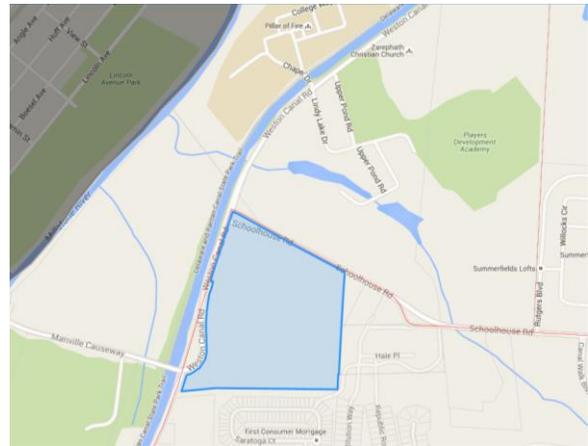
- **Issue:** *Zarephath/Pillar of Fire International.* Lands owned by Pillar of Fire International should be considered for a new zoning district to recognize the uses currently existing and proposed in its Long Range Plan. The new zoning district could also apply to larger tract institutional sites such as Rutgers Prep.

Status: This recommendation has not been implemented. This was recommended largely in response to a Long Range Plan that Pillar of Fire had developed around the time of the last Master Plan.

Recommendation: Pillar does not appear to be implementing that plan. The area should retain its existing zoning within the A (Agricultural) zoning district. If Pillar pursues a long range plan, the Township may wish to reconsider this recommendation.

- **Issue:** *S-C-V Zone on Weston Canal Road.* It is recommended that those lands that are not used for Senior Citizen Village development as part of Canal Walk be returned to an Agricultural (A) zoning designation.

Status: This recommendation has not been pursued. This land, located at the corner of Schoolhouse Road and Weston Canal Road, is owned by Pillar of Fire.



Recommendations: This recommendation should be reconciled in the Master Plan, as appropriate, with the recommendation discussed immediately above. The site is not large enough to accommodate permitted development in the SCV zone. Further, the lack of public water and sewer limit development potential. Placement within the A (Agricultural) zoning district (consistent with zoning immediately to the north and west) should be evaluated.

The Master Plan should also evaluate appropriate zoning for the residential properties along Weston Canal Road and Weston Road within the SCV which are not part of the Canal Walk Development. For example, placement within the Agricultural (A) or one of the RR zones should be evaluated.

- **Issue:** C-R Zone: Property North and South of Skillman's Lane at Route 27. The properties in the C-R Zone, should they be acquired for open space or farmland preservation purposes, should be rezoned from Cluster Residential to A to better reflect their restricted use.



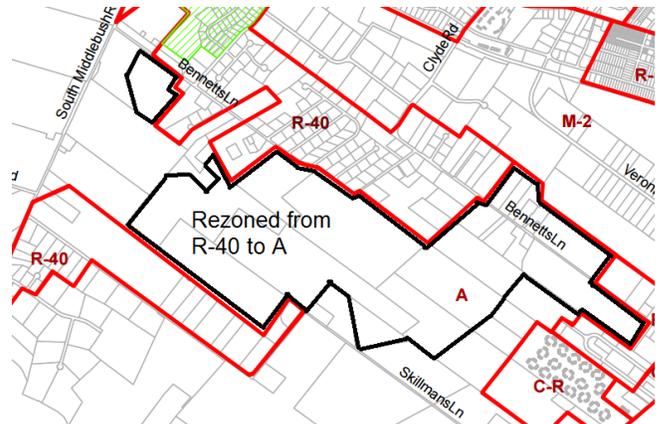
Status: Accomplished. These properties were farmland preserved and subsequently rezoned to the Agricultural (A) zone via Ordinance 3905-10.

Recommendation: Other properties which have been farmland preserved (e.g., Block 37.02, Lot 2; 61 Cortelyous Lane) should be similarly rezoned to the Agricultural (A) zone reflective of their preserved status. The new Master Plan should identify them and reflect them appropriately on the Land Use Plan map.

- **Issue:** R-40 Area Between Cortelyous Lane and Bennett's Lane. In the 1999 Master Plan, much of the area between Skillman's and Bennett's Lane was recommended for re-zoning to RR-3, to decrease residential density that could have occurred where the farms in the area developed. Since the time of the last Master Plan, much of this land has been preserved as open space or permanent farmland. Lots that have been preserved and that closely conform to the A Zone standards are recommended to be rezoned to A, as are several of the larger parcels between Cortelyous and Bennett's Lanes. The smaller parcels to the east of South Middlebush Road, south of Skillman's Lane and in the vicinity of Hilltop Lane, and mostly already developed, should remain R-40.

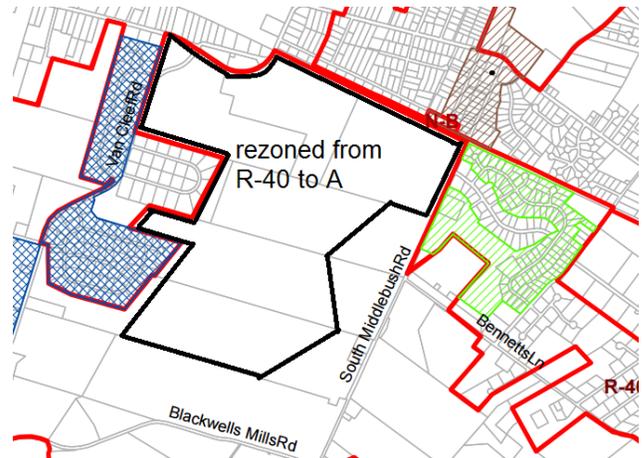
Status: Accomplished via Ordinance 3905-10.

Recommendation: The Master Plan should consider rezoning several large properties along the north side of Skillman's Lane to the A zone. Most of these properties are part of the State Six Mile Run site. Further, these properties are considerably larger than 1 acre, are located on a narrow rural road, are located in a rural area of the Township, and not served by public sewer. The smaller parcels to the east of South Middlebush Road, south of Skillman's Lane, should remain R-40 as this zone best matches the development pattern of that area.



- **Issue:** R-40 Area west side of South Middlebush Road. The Land Use Plan recommends that properties within the R-40 along the west side of South Middlebush Road between Amwell Road and Blackwells Mills Road be rezoned to the Agricultural (A) zone.

Status: Accomplished via Ordinance 3905-10.



- **Issue:** Additional public access points to the D&R Canal along the Easton Avenue corridor should be supported.

Status: Various planning documents have made the same recommendation, including the Township's Pathways & Trails Plan and the Canal Access and Vision Plan and the County's Easton Avenue Corridor Plan. Each document has concentrated on the area near the terminus of JFK Boulevard.

Change: The State is currently conducting an engineering study on the placement of a bridge to span the canal behind the Somerset Diner. Further, via a recent subdivision approved by the Zoning Board of Adjustment, a parcel of land will be dedicated to the Township that will accommodate this bridge and a path leading to it from Easton Avenue.

Recommendation: After the engineering study and dedication occur, the next step will be the procurement of funds, by the State, necessary to build the bridge. Construction of the path leading to it will be the responsibility of the Township. The Township should advocate for the procurement of necessary funds.

- **Issue:** Split Zone Lot. Block 424.02, Lot 24 is split between two zones- the front portion of the lot that fronts Easton Avenue is in the GB Zone, and the rear portion of the lot is in the R-40 Zone. The site contains one restaurant and is currently converting into a banquet hall. It is recommended that the entirety of Block 424.02, Lot 24 should be in the GB Zone to better reflect the existing land use.

Status: Accomplished via Ordinance #3640.

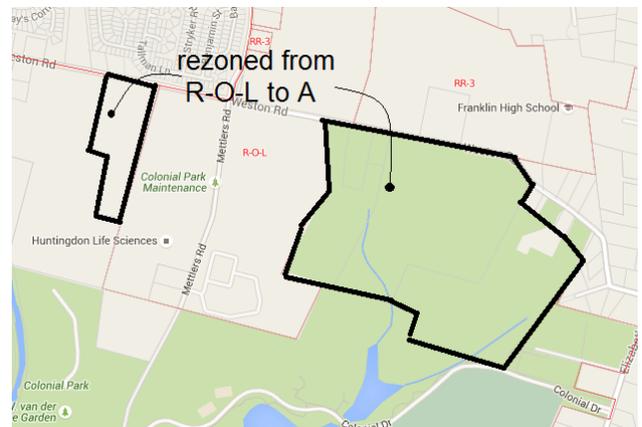
- **Issue:** *R-O-L Zone on Northeastern Corner of Mettler's and Weston Roads* - The property on the northeastern corner of Mettler's and Weston Roads is currently the subject of a use variance request before the Board of Adjustment for a mixed-use retail, office and high-density residential project, including a YMCA. In light of the potential saturation of residential uses in this area, and the need to provide for non-residential opportunities particularly adjacent to the shrinking industrial area to the north on School House Road, it is recommended that the R-O-L zoning be retained on this property at this time.



Status: The described use variance was approved. However, site plan approval was neither pursued nor obtained and the use variance approval has since lapsed. The site remains undeveloped.

Recommendation: Potential development of the site in accordance with its R-O-L zoning may be limited due to potential for limited market demand for research and laboratory development at that location. The adjoining roads (Mettlers and Weston Roads) are unsuited for traffic-intensive development. Further, while located within the Township's Sewer Service Area, the nearest available public sewer is located a significant distance away in Schoolhouse Road (which significantly affects development potential). The Master Plan should investigate alternative zoning.

- **Issue:** *R-O-L Zone on Mettlers and Weston Roads*. The R-O-L Zone east of the Exxon property and north of the current Agricultural (A) zone should be rezoned to Agricultural (A) because much of it has been purchased by the County for open space purposes. This rezoning was a recommendation in the 1999 Master Plan that has not been implemented. These lots should be removed from the sewer service area. Also, the two lots to the north of the Huntingdon Life Sciences property that are currently in residential and farm use should be rezoned from R-O-L to Agricultural (A) to better reflect their current land use, lack of sewer service, and location in State Planning Area 4b.



Status: Accomplished. The recommended zoning of the R-O-L zone located east of the Exxon property to the A zone was accomplished via Ordinance #3653A and removal of these parcels from the sewer service area was accomplished as part of the County's Wastewater Management Plan. Recommended zoning of the two lots to the north of the Huntingdon Life Sciences property was also accomplished via Ordinance #3653A.

Recommendations: The property at the southeast corner of Metters Road/ Weston Road has recently been acquired by the County for open space purposes. This property should be rezoned to the A zone (consistent with the recommendation contained elsewhere herein to rezone preserved open space and preserved farmland to the appropriate low density zoning district).

The Master Plan should also evaluate the appropriate zoning of the undeveloped portion of the Huntingdon Life Sciences property located at the southwest corner of Metters Road/ Weston Road which remains in the R-O-L zone. While located within the Township's Sewer Service Area, the nearest available public sewer is located a significant distance away in Schoolhouse Road (which significantly affects development potential). Further, the site's location on Metters Road and Weston Road (both very narrow roadways) render traffic-intensive use of the site inappropriate.

- **Issue:** *M-1 Zone, New Brunswick Road between Davidson Avenue and Cedar Grove Lane (Block 507).* It is recommended that the large farmland assessed lot along New Brunswick Road (Lot 67) be rezoned to R-40, consistent with the lots to the east, in order to not conflict with the now-surrounding residential development. This lot is depicted as potentially containing significant wetlands, therefore it is believed that the development potential of this lot is limited.

Status: Accomplished via Ordinance 3905-10.

- **Issue:** *Block 72, Lots 1.01, 1.02, 1.03 and 7.01.* It is recommended that this area (located to the east of the Wortman Street/ Amwell Road intersection in East Millstone) be rezoned from A to RR3 to allow for the continuance of three acre residential lots.

Status: Accomplished via Ordinance 3637A.

- **Issue:** *Retail Overlay Zone - Elizabeth Avenue/Davidson Avenue/ New Brunswick Road.* Township staff has developed a Neighborhood Business (NB) Overlay Zone for the area bounded roughly by New Brunswick Road, Davidson Avenue, Pierce Street and Elizabeth Avenue. This overlay zone is intended to encourage neighborhood service uses in a portion of the Township that is not currently served. There are several large-scale housing developments in this area, as well as the large office and industrial developments in the area.



Status: Creation of the Retail District Overlay (RDO) in this area was accomplished via Ordinance 3597. The bulk standards of the RDO zone (e.g., minimum lot area, etc.) were subsequently amended in order to encourage appropriately-scaled development. As a result of these ordinance amendments, the RDO zone has been highly effective with several high quality retail developments being developed along the Elizabeth Avenue corridor over the last few years.

Further, as a result of the Planning Board’s success in implementing the requirements of the RDO zone’s design standards and the effectiveness of the standards in creating attractive and functional commercial development, the Township adopted Ordinance No. 3737 which made the design standards applicable to all commercial development throughout the Township (not only within the RDO zone).

- **Change:** *Office Vacancies.* Following the recent economic downturn and resulting from what appear to be permanent changes in the national economy (e.g., reduced need for office space due to technology advances and other changes in business practice), office vacancy rates have increased significantly. This issue affects not only employment opportunities within the Township but has long-term potential to negatively affect the Township’s non-residential tax base.

Franklin certainly isn’t the only town faced with this challenge. According to the County’s “Trends & Indicators” report (2013) Somerset County has experienced one of the highest overall office vacancy rates of all counties in New Jersey. According to the “Trends & Indicators” report “this space represents an opportunity for economic growth to occur in an efficient and sustainable manner; taking advantage of the existing infrastructure system and locational assets. The County Investment

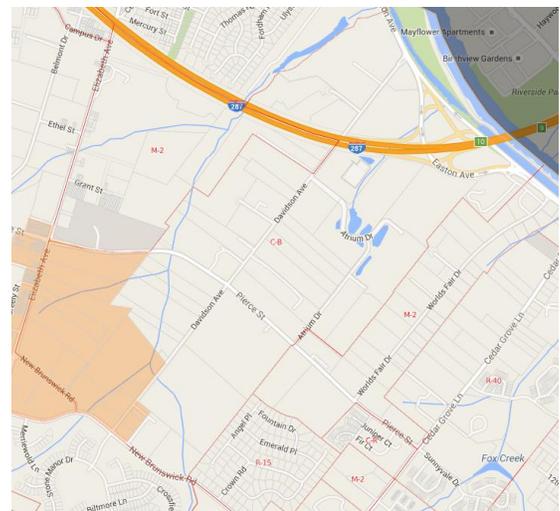
Framework and the county’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) in conjunction with new State incentives associated with the recently adopted Economic Opportunity Act of 2013 encourage and support improvements in the office market and overall economy.”

Recently, the County, with participation by the Township, evaluated potential redevelopment opportunities in the office/ industrial area in the northwest quadrant of the Township as part of the County’s “Access and Mobility” planning study. In particular, this study evaluated potential redevelopment opportunities in the Atrium Drive area between Davidson Avenue and Worlds Fair Drive. The study also evaluates certain circulations improvements (e.g., connection of Atrium Drive to Napoleon Court) to improve access to the area in order to increase its potential for job creating development.

The Township is currently in the process of establishing a Council-level Economic Development Committee which will be charged with addressing such issues.

Recommendation: The Township needs to proactively address this matter. Efforts should include: development of a comprehensive economic development strategy (including identification of business sectors that would benefit from locating in Franklin and recruitment of same to the Township) and evaluation of appropriate zoning changes to allow appropriate job-creating redevelopment in this area of the Township.

- **Issue:** *CB Zone Infill Mixed-Use Overlay Zone, Davidson Avenue.* In the Corporate Business (CB) zone on either side of Davidson Avenue there exists potential to create infill mixed-use development. An Infill Mixed-Use Overlay Zone could be created to promote such an opportunity. Depending on the success of the Elizabeth Avenue Retail Overlay Zone, consideration may be due to ultimately create a separate Infill Mixed-Use Zone. Retail uses could support the workforce and residential communities in the area. Parking would have to be accommodated in parking structures.



Status: This recommendation has not been implemented. The economic development strategy discussed above with respect to the office vacancy issue should evaluate amendments to the CB zone (e.g., permitting a different mixture of uses such as retail, restaurants, etc.) to ensure that this area remains fully occupied and productive.

- **Issue:** *CB/S-C-V Parcel, New Brunswick Road.* There is one parcel on the northern side of New Brunswick Road, west of the existing R-15 area, that is zoned CB/Senior Citizen Village. Because this parcel was not utilized for the Somerset Run age-restricted project, it is recommended that the S-C-V overlay zone on this property be removed and for it to remain zoned CB.

Status: Accomplished via Ordinance 3660.

- **Issue:** *R-40 Zone, Corner of New Brunswick Road and Cedar Grove Lane.* This area is recommended to be rezoned from R-40 to R-15 consistent with the residential lots to the north. Site access should be as far from the high activity New Brunswick Road/Cedar Grove Lane intersection as possible.

Status: This recommendation has not been implemented. A portion of this area received a use variance for the development of townhouses a few years ago but has yet to be constructed.

- **Issue:** The 2006 Master Plan made a number of conservation-related recommendations that would primarily affect single-family subdivision development in the A, CP, RR and R-40 districts. These recommendations are as follows:

- *Net Lot Area Requirements.* The Township may want to consider amending the zoning ordinance to define “lot area” to exclude sensitive environmental features such as wetlands, buffer areas, etc. from the calculation of total lot area with the percentage of an environmental feature that is excluded from lot area weighted by significance.
- *Conservation Design Ordinance.* For major subdivision applications in the A, CP, RR and R-40 districts, it is recommended that a Conservation Design Ordinance be created that requires more creativity and preservation of important site features in lot and building layout. The Conservation Design Ordinance is somewhat similar to the intent of the lot size averaging option in the CP and RR districts, and to the NRPC Option, however requires the applicant to work more collaboratively in the beginning of the process with the Planning Board on layout issues, and preserves features throughout the site, rather than just in a preservation area, and does not require the mandatory set-aside of a percentage of land as open space or preservation area, although the areas to be preserved should be protected by conservation easement.
- *Rural Design Standards.* Either alone or in conjunction with a Conservation Design Ordinance, the Township should consider adopting rural design standards for the A and RR districts, and under the NRPC Option, similar to that which are required in the Canal Preservation (CP) district. Areas along Scenic Roadways should be prioritized. Such an ordinance would include: requirements addressing minimizing sight disturbance and preserving views; flexibility in the siting of homes and infrastructure to encourage their

placement in less sensitive areas of the site (and to preserve sensitive areas); encouraging preservation of vegetation and hedgerows; and encouraging linkages to adjacent open space and recreation opportunities.

Status: These recommendations have not been implemented.

Change: While the Township has seen significant amount of residential development since the 2006 Master Plan, virtually none of this development has occurred in the zoning districts affected by these recommendations (A, CP, RR-3 and RR-5 and R-40) as only a very few, relatively small-scale subdivisions have occurred in these zones over the last decade. Nonetheless, developable land remains in these zones and the potential remains for cluster development that results in additional open space preservation.

Recommendation: The Township should consider the above recommendations from the 2006 Master Plan as some additional development applications within these zones will inevitably occur.

These recommendations, however, should be considered in the context of a comprehensive re-evaluation of the Township's clustering/ lot averaging regulations. Currently, clustering options are available in the Township's development regulations:

- Lot size averaging in the C-P zone (§112-142),
- Lot size averaging in the RR-3 zone (§112-145)
- Lot size averaging in the RR-5 zone (§112-146)
- Natural Resource Cluster Option (*Article XXX*) which allows clustering in certain zones
- Agricultural Cluster Option (*Article XXXI*) which allows clustering in certain zones

However, there exist significant differences in the various cluster provisions with various inconsistencies. The various clustering provisions should be streamlined, simplified and made consistent (e.g., similar methodology for determining lot yield). Consideration should be given to combining and/or consolidating these various clustering/ lot averaging regulations into one chapter of the land development ordinance.

- The lot size averaging provisions in §112-142, §112-145 and §112-146 allow rather limited flexibility in lot size (e.g., in the RR-3 zone the 3 acre minimum is only to 2 acres), whereas the clustering provisions of Articles XXX and XXXI offer *significantly* more flexibility (e.g., down to 15,000 square feet).
- In the Agricultural Cluster Option it is difficult to discern the planning rationale for requiring that the tracts be located across several zoning districts and requiring a certain percentage of the tract in certain zones.
- The Agricultural Cluster Option offers a rather significant density bonus - in particular, lands in the A zone receive a nearly 3x bonus (i.e., nearly 3 times the number of homes result if

clustered), where no other cluster requirements offer any bonus. The lot yield methodology in §112-142, §112-145 and §112-146 and Article XXX are logical and effectively offer no density bonus.

- The stated purpose of the Agricultural Cluster Option is to encourage continued practice of agriculture through retention of large contiguous farmland, however required "findings" also address preservation of natural resources and "active recreational or active public use" (which contradicts the purpose and the requirement that 50% of the preserved area be actively farmed).
- The Natural Resource Cluster Option and the Agricultural Cluster Option require unclear and unnecessary procedural requirements and steps (e.g., formal submittal of a "sketch plat").
- The Natural Resource Cluster Option allows non-contiguous clustering. However, this needs to be reviewed for consistency with new legislation.
- The legality of the financial commitment requirement in the Natural Resource Cluster Option needs to be reviewed.

It is noted that the 2013 OSRP recommends that the Township continue to encourage the use of clustering techniques when such techniques could serve to protect existing farmland, areas of scenic value and/or natural resource value. Further, it recommends that the Township re-evaluate the cluster provisions in order to:

- identify ways to either increase the likelihood of their use (e.g., greater flexibility in minimum lot sizes and other standards and/or density bonuses if certain additional objectives are met); and
- consider the use of mandatory clustering in certain areas and/or circumstances.

- **Issue:** In terms of the Township's parking requirements, the Board has also expressed concern that the non-residential parking requirements, particularly with respect to those for warehouse and industrial uses, are high, and could be reduced. A reduction in the amount of required parking spaces could increase building size, and could also increase groundwater infiltration of stormwater.

Status: Accomplished. Ordinance 3708 revised the parking requirements for warehouse and industrial uses as recommended. Further, the parking requirements for commercial and personal service establishments and shopping centers were similarly revised via Ordinance 3844.

- **Issue:** The 2006 Master Plan made a number of recommendations addressing design and aesthetics of development:
- It is recommended that architectural and signage design standards be created for the commercial uses in the Route 27 corridor, similar to those that have been created for the Hamilton Street Business District and the Renaissance 2000 Redevelopment Area.
 - The Township should monitor the aesthetics of in-fill development in the Township. If in-fill development deviates substantially from the existing architectural design and aesthetics,

design standards to regulate the appearance, including height, of in-fill development should be created to protect existing neighborhoods and promote good civic design.

Status: Accomplished. As discussed above, as a result of the Planning Board's success in implementing the requirements of the RDO zone's design standards and the effectiveness of the standards in creating attractive and functional commercial development, the Township adopted Ordinance No. 3737 which made the design standards applicable to all commercial development throughout the Township (not only within the RDO zone). These guidelines are incorporated into the Township's Land Development ordinance. Further, Township planning staff has created a guidebook¹⁶ that illustrates examples of developments within the Township that exemplify the design standards.

Recommendation: For ease of reference by potential applicants, the Township should consider consolidating the various design standards sections (i.e., general, HBD, various sections within the Redevelopment area) into one portion of the ordinance. Such review would eliminate any inconsistencies that may exist and should be supplemented with appropriate illustrations to better explain the standards.

- **Issue:** *Residential Overlay Zones* - Where areas have been developed through cluster provisions of the ordinance, such as Town & Country and Wildflower Ridge, overlay zones should be created for the developed areas to more accurately reflect the actual development. The overlay zones should contain relevant bulk standards, however should not be construed to permit additional subdivisions of land. Subdivisions of land and density standards should relate to the underlying zoning.

Status: Accomplished via Ordinance 3905-10. The Zoning Map was amended to place such areas within overlay zones and the bulk tables in the Zoning Ordinances were revised to provide appropriate bulk standards (e.g., lot area, setbacks, coverage requirements).

Recommendation: The applicability of the NRPC Overlay zone should be reviewed in the area of Tornquist Court and Hans Voji Drive as these lots are over 6 acres in size consistent with the "underlying" Canal Preservation (CP) zone.

- **Issue:** There are other residential developments in the Township that also do not conform to existing zoning, such as Buffa Drive. These areas, however, require specific study to determine whether they fit into other existing zoning classifications, or whether new districts should be created for the developments with respect to lot area, frontage and building setbacks so that widespread non-conformities are not created. With respect to requirements such as maximum impervious coverage, where an undersized lot in a large lot zone such as A may be severely limited in terms of the amount of impervious or building coverage permitted, it is recommended that a sliding scale approach be

¹⁶ <http://franklintwpnj.org/home/showdocument?id=1254>

considered, wherein the percentage of impervious coverage permitted could be related to actual lot size, not to exceed a specified threshold. This could help to offset re-zoning requests in areas where there are non-conforming lots.

Status: This issue has been addressed, in part, by creation of the residential overlay zones whereby overlay zones were created to accurately reflect the actual development areas developed through cluster provisions of the ordinance. This issue was also addressed in part by Ordinance 3905-10 which rezoned the CB Zone north of I-287 to the R-10 zone, consistent with development in and around the area. The issue was further addressed by Ordinance 3905-10 by rezoning single-family frontage lots along Cortelyous Lane to the R-40 zone to reflect existing development.

Recommendation: The Township has not received an inordinate number of variance or rezoning requests in any particular residential neighborhood which suggests that the zoning is incompatible with the existing pattern of development (including along Buffa Drive). Nonetheless, a review of zoning for consistency with existing development patterns remains a valid exercise and should be performed in the Master Plan.

- **Issue:** *Residential Cluster Option* – Because there is no longer any opportunity for property owners to exercise the Residential Cluster options, which are two of the earliest cluster options that were made available in the Township, it is recommended that they be removed from the zoning ordinance.

Status: Accomplished.

- **Issue:** There are several definitions pertaining to open space, including “Open Space,” “Cluster Open Space/Preservation Areas,” “Open Space, Cluster,” “Open Space, Common,” “Open Space, Useable” and “Open Space, Public.” It is recommended that the following definitions be deleted because they relate to old ordinances that have either been repealed, are no longer viable, or have been updated to exclude this language: “Cluster Open Space/Preservation Areas” “Open Space, Common”; “Open Space, Useable”; “Open Space, Public”. Additionally, it is recommended that “Open Space,” “Open Space, Cluster” and “Preservation Area” be reviewed in conjunction with the NRPC Option, where this ordinance refers to Preservation Areas to determine whether they can be consolidated as well.

Status: Recommended deletion of definitions has been accomplished. The recommendation pertaining to the NRPC has not.

- **Issue:** The Griggstown R-40 areas along Bunker Hill Road should be reflected on the State Plan Policy Map as a higher density or “village” area.

Status: No change to the State Plan Policy Map reflective of this recommendation has been made.

Change: The area has been added to sanitary sewer service area for public health reasons. Therefore, there no longer exists a reason to change the area's Rural/ Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area designation on the State Plan Policy Map.

- **Issue:** The section related to abandonment of non-conforming uses should be updated pursuant to more recent case law on the matter.

Status: Accomplished.

- **Issue:** Sections 112-24 (A3) page 112-851 regarding “approved consultants” should be removed.

Status: Accomplished via Ordinance 3652.

- **Issue:** The section regarding temporary use permits should be clarified to indicate whether it is uses or activities that are eligible for relief, and under what circumstances.

Status: This recommendation has not been implemented.

- **Issue:** All terms in the development ordinance should be defined and updated, especially each use that is mentioned in Schedule 1. The terms “code enforcement officer,” “zoning officer,” “administrative officer,” “construction official,” “director of planning,” etc. are used somewhat interchangeably and should be better defined and their respective responsibilities updated. The usage of the words “building” and “structure” should be reviewed for situational accuracy.

Status: This recommendation has not been implemented.

- **Issue:** Standards for residential driveways should be created.

Status: This recommendation has not been implemented. The Master Plan does not elaborate what type of standards are recommended. There exists no need for residential driveway standards above that already in the ordinance.

- **Issue:** Standards for fences should be created that could include height and/or style limitations in required front yards, a requirement that the fence be located 3+ inches off the property line for maintenance purposes, fences should not be located in sight triangles, the unfinished sides of fences should not face neighboring lots, etc.

Status: Draft ordinance prepared by Planning Board but never introduced.

- **Issue:** Through-lots are prohibited except under certain circumstances. Shape should be added as a qualifying circumstance.

Status: Accomplished via Ordinance 3652.

- **Issue:** Lot frontage should be required on an improved street.

Status: This recommendation has not been implemented as it is addressed in the Municipal Land Use Law.

- **Issue:** The usage of the words “building” and “structure” should be reviewed for situational accuracy.

Status: This recommendation has not been pursued.

- **Issue:** The section on temporary construction trailers should be amended to indicate that the zoning officer is the agent responsible for granting approvals and extensions. The location of the trailers should be indicated on a plot plan at the time of zoning permit approval, not site plan or subdivision approval.

Status: Accomplished.

- **Issue:** Institute a permanent joint advisory committee for Kingston Village to oversee implementation of Village of Kingston Center Implementation Activities.

Status: The Joint Township Advisory Committee for the Village of Kingston (KVAC) was created to facilitate and monitor implementation of Village Center Planning Implementation Agenda (PIA) and generally to advise the townships of Franklin and South Brunswick on Kingston issues. This group continues to be very active.

- **Issue:** The Townships of Franklin and South Brunswick should develop uniform zoning and design standards for the Kingston Village Center and environs areas. Specifically, in Franklin, the Office-Professional Zone on Route 27 in the Kingston area should be re-zoned to R-20-H, with professional office permitted as a conditional use in existing structures. Conditions could limit the amount of exterior modifications to buildings, and a limit on the square-footage of expansion to no more than 10 percent of the original area of the structure. It is recommended in the Historic Preservation Plan Element that this area be added to the local Kingston Village Historic District.

Status: Accomplished via Ordinance 3701.

- **Issue:** Implement the reclamation plan for Trap Rock Quarry which was presented and approved by Franklin Township. Plans for the conversion of Trap Rock Quarry to a public park after the closure of the quarry should continue to be supported.

Status: Discussions with representatives of the Trap Rock Quarry over the last few years suggest that quarry operations are anticipated to continue for several more decades. This fact notwithstanding, it is important to note that State water supply plans have addressed potential use of the quarry for water storage when quarrying ceases. Such plans are incorporated into the reclamation plan for the quarry. The Township's Master Plan and zoning are consistent with the objective of maintaining the rural nature of the southerly portion of the Township while allowing the continuation of the mining and mining associated uses in the quarry zone.

- **Issue:** Seek ways to limit construction of cell towers. If constructed, seek ways to construct them with minimal visual and aesthetic impact.

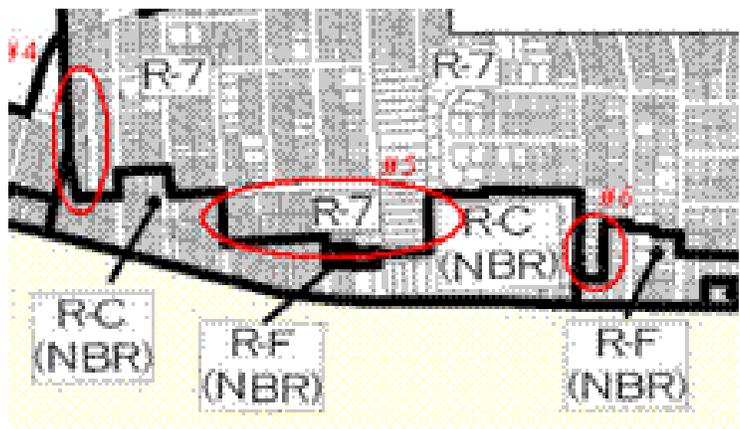
Status: The Township's zoning ordinance was amended in 2010 via Ordinance 3845 to further encourage the co-location of cellular antennas on existing facilities and structures (rather than on new towers) and to improve requirements addressing minimizing visual and aesthetic impact.

- **Issue:** *Renaissance 2000 Redevelopment Plan* – The relevant use and bulk standards of the districts should be compiled into a zoning schedule for ease of interpretation.

Status: This recommendation has not been implemented.

Recommendation: The zoning within the Renaissance Redevelopment Plan needs to be reviewed. Generally, it needs to be streamlined and simplified. For example, there exist three different sets of design standards (one each for the RPM and Leewood areas and another general section), different signage standards in the different zones, etc. Further, the applicability of the “underlay” vs. “base” zones needs to be clarified/ simplified.

- **Change:** *Renaissance 2000 Redevelopment Plan* – Per the June 2007 Master Plan Amendment, there are several areas currently designated General Business (G-B) within the Renaissance Redevelopment Area that should be in the R-7 residential zone. These changes are proposed since none of these areas actually front Route 27 (where general business use is appropriate), since these areas are currently occupied by residences and/or since they adjoin existing and/or future residential development. These are reflected as changes #4, #5 and #6 on



the map below.

Status: This recommendation was evaluated during the preparation of Ordinance 3905-10. However, it was decided at that time that it would be best to re-evaluate the zoning in the area in a comprehensive manner in the Master Plan.

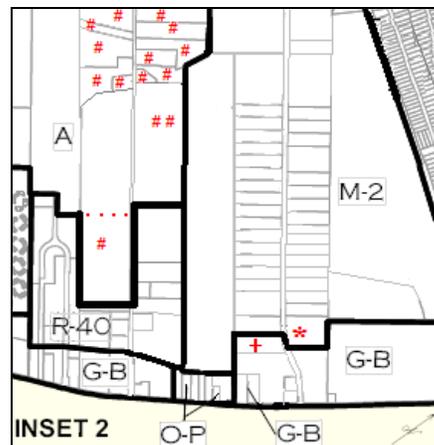
Recommendation: The recommendation to re-evaluate the zoning in a comprehensive manner in the Master Plan is repeated herein. This evaluation should be conducted as part of the larger re-evaluation of the zoning with the Renaissance Redevelopment Area discussed immediately above.

- **Change:** Block 73.01, Lots 25-27 and 31-36. The June 2007 Master Plan Amendment recommended that several parcels within the East Millstone area be rezoned from A to R-10H to provide for the continuance of 10,000 square-foot residential lots.

Status: Accomplished via Ordinance 3637A.

- **Change:** The July 2008 Master Plan Amendment recommended that: Block 88.02, Lot 26 (identified on Map #3 with double number signs “# #” be zoned A (Agricultural) reflective of: (1) the property’s location outside the sewer service area; (2) the farmland status of the property; (3) the property’s planning area designation on the existing State Plan Policy Map (PA3) and its proposed designation in the on-going Cross-Acceptance process (PA4B); and (4) consistency with Land Use Recommendation #3 on pages 8 and 9 of the Land Use Plan Element of the Master Plan which also recommends that the similarly situated R-40 Area between Cortelyous Lane and Bennett’s Lane be zoned A (Agricultural). Similarly, consistent with the proposed designation of Block 88.02, Lot 26, similarly-situated properties along Bennetts Lane should also be rezoned to the A zone (identified on the map with a single number sign “#”). Block 88.02, Lot 90 (identified with a plus “+” sign) should be rezoned to the G-B (General Business) zone reflective of the property’s past and approved use as a shopping center.

Status: Accomplished via Ordinance 3905-10.



- **Change:** *Open Space Zone.* The July 2008 Master Plan Amendment recommended that lands that have been permanently preserved as open space or parkland by the Township, County or State and owned by such entities for such purposes) be placed within a new “Parks/Open Space/Agricultural” designation on the Land Use Plan map in the Master Plan and within a new “Parks/Open Space/Agricultural” zoning district on the Township Zoning Map. However, smaller (e.g., under 40 acres) isolated open space lands should retain their existing zoning designations. The placement of these preserved properties within the “Parks/Open Space/Agricultural” designation on the Land Use Plan map within the Master Plan and within a new “Parks/Open Space/Agricultural” zoning district on the Township Zoning Map was proposed to reflect the existing, preserved condition of these lands and to reflect the intent of the Township, County and State regarding the future disposition of these lands as evidenced by their preserved status – i.e., that they remain as open space in perpetuity.

Status: The creation of an Open Space zone was evaluated during the preparation of Ordinance 3905-10. At that time it was decided not to implement the recommendation since creation of the zone was of relatively low priority (the lands are already preserved) and since it would significantly affect the Zoning Map. It was decided at that time to re-evaluate the matter in the new Master Plan.

Recommendation: A better approach may be to put preserved open space lands (as well as preserved farmland) in the Agricultural (A) zoning district or other such low density zoning district (e.g., CP, RR-5).

- **Change:** *Elimination of S-C-V “Overlay” zone within “superblock” bounded by Cedar Grove Lane, New Brunswick Road, Elizabeth Avenue and Weston Road.* Since this area has been developed in accordance with the S-C-V zone, the November 2009 Master Plan Amendment recommended that the Township Zoning Map be revised to eliminate the S-C-V “overlay” designation where it exists in this area and to simply place it within an S-C-V “base” designation, with the M-1 and R-40 “base” designations in this area being eliminated. Similarly, a portion of the Cluster-Residential (C-R) zoned property at the corner of Cedar Grove Lane and Pierce Street is located within the S-C-V “overlay.”

Status: Accomplished via Ordinance 3905-10.

- **Change:** *CB Zone North of I-287, West of Elizabeth Avenue.* As a result of the area’s environmental constraints, the recent single-family development applications in the area (which now occupy the majority of the buildable uplands areas) and the existence of Township open space in the area, there exists minimal land remaining for development and certainly not enough land to support development permitted in the C-B zone (i.e., corporate development on minimum 5 acre lots). Thus, the November 2009 Master Plan Amendment recommended that this area be zoned R-10 consistent with development in and around the area.

Status: Accomplished via Ordinance 3905-10.

- **Change:** *R-7 Zone Density.* The November 2009 Master Plan Amendment recommended that the zoning ordinance be revised to require 15,000 square feet for two-family homes within the R-7 zone (consistent with the 7,500 square foot requirements for one-family homes) and to establish lot and yard requirements for a “zero lot line single-family dwellings” in a R-7 zone.

Status: Accomplished via Ordinance 3846-10.

- **Change:** *Evaluation of Permitted Residential Uses -* The March 2012 Master Plan Amendment recommended: elimination, as permitted uses, high-density residential uses from the Neighborhood Business Residential (NBR) Underlying Zone and the Renaissance Commercial (RC) zone within the Renaissance Redevelopment Area; rezoning of Block 536.01, Lot 2.03, a Township-owned parcel from MR to CB (i.e., its previous zoning designation); and elimination of “garden apartment developments” and “townhouse developments” as permitted conditional uses in the General Business (GB) zone.

Status: All recommendations accomplished via Ordinance.

- **Change:** *Trap Rock Area -* The October 2012 Master Plan Amendment addressed the Trap Rock Area of the Township and recommended: that the permitted uses in the M-3 (Mining) district be revised to eliminate uses (manufacturing, office, warehouse, laboratory and other such uses) that are inconsistent with the rural character of the surrounding area and for which sufficient infrastructure does not exist; rezone “State Park lots” from the M-3 zone and place them within the CP (Canal Preservation) zone; rezone portions of the “quarry lot” (block 5.02, lot 1.02) and the “quarry offices lot” (block 5.02, lot 172.04) that are currently within the R-O-L zone to the M-3 zone and place the small portion of the “quarry offices lot” that is currently within the A zone (i.e., the narrow portion containing the entrance road and guard house) to the M-3 zone; and eliminate the R-O-L zone from this area.

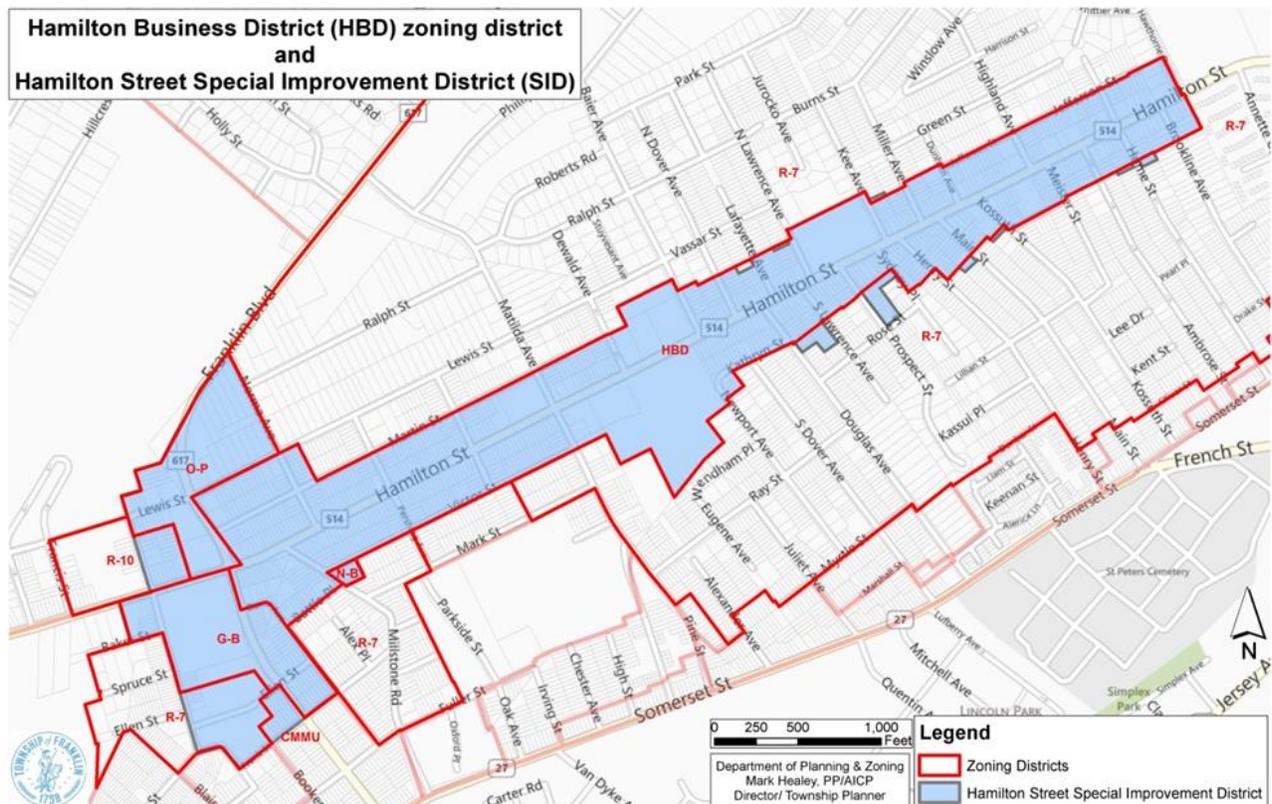
Status: All recommendations accomplished via Ordinance 4007-13.

- **Change:** *Lakeside Drive Area -* The October 2012 Master Plan Amendment Placed recommended that the 13.5 acre site in proximity to First Street and Lakeside Drive in the R-20 designation consistent with the nature and density of the surrounding residential neighborhood.

Status: Accomplished via Ordinance 3996-12.

- **Issue:** The Master Plan offered a number of recommendations regarding the revitalization of the Hamilton Street area:

- Encourage the revitalization of the Hamilton Street commercial corridor. A marketing analysis was conducted as part of the Hamilton Street Revitalization Study which indicated that the area specializes in retail goods and services, of a smaller, neighborhood scale. This area may be both suited for niche or specialized goods, as well as larger establishments attracting a broader market. In either case, a marketing strategy should be developed, focusing on ways to attract and retain the types of businesses which will cater to the needs of the area and larger community.
- Consider designating the Hamilton Street area as an area “in need of rehabilitation.” This option is permitted by the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law and is generally used as an alternative to redevelopment area designation. The primary difference between a “Redevelopment Area” and a “Rehabilitation Area” is that a municipality or redevelopment entity does not have the authority to take or acquire private property by condemnation in a “Rehabilitation Area.” A redevelopment plan still must be prepared for a rehabilitation area. Such an alternative allows municipalities to offer 5- year tax abatements on improvements to structures.



Change: Working with the Hamilton Street Business Corporation, the Township implemented a number of initiatives to aid the revitalization of Hamilton Street including community programs, a façade improvement programs and streetscape improvement.

A renewed emphasis lead the Township to form Township's Hamilton Street Advisory Board (HSAB) in 2014. The voting membership of the HSAB is comprised of Hamilton Street property owners, Hamilton Street business owners, a Hamilton Street resident and one at-large member. Non-voting member of the HSAC include the Mayor and three Council members as well as various Township employees including the Township Manager.

Upon its formation, the HSAB identified a Vision for Hamilton Street and conducted an analysis of the weaknesses and threats that may negatively affect the Township's ability to revitalize Hamilton Street and identified the various opportunities and strengths that may be capitalized upon in these efforts. This analysis (see below) effectively serves as the HSAB's "strategic plan" for revitalize Hamilton Street.

VISION

- We envision a revitalized Hamilton Street with a unique and genuine sense of place which fosters economic opportunity and community vitality.
- We envision a Hamilton Street that enhances the quality of life for residents and visitors alike by offering a safe and clean setting and by providing a comfortable and attractive streetscape and storefronts, a pedestrian friendly street, and outstanding public spaces.
- We envision a Hamilton Street that is conducive to business enterprises, employment opportunities and stores that offer special and distinctive merchandise that creates a pleasant and varied shopping experience and which provides a wide variety of services.
- We envision a Hamilton Street that celebrates and shares its ever evolving ethnic and cultural diversity by providing a vibrant urban setting for cultural experiences, diverse dining, the arts, entertainment, community festivals, and quality residential living.
- Our vision is achieved and maintained through a strong public-private partnership among local government, businesses, educational institutions, non-profit community based organizations, and residents. This partnership is devoted to constantly working together to make Hamilton Street an attraction, an asset, and a success as both a business district and thriving neighborhood.

WEAKNESSES and THREATS

- Length of the corridor with scattered land use pattern (residential mixed with business along length of corridor)
 - results in there being no "place" along Hamilton Street
 - no significant concentration of retail, residential, government in a concentrated "center" or "place" along Hamilton Street
- Scattered ownership patterns along the corridor
 - numerous, small properties (along Hamilton Street and back streets)
 - impedes assembly of property into larger, profitable, redevelopment sites
 - entrenched residential uses amongst business uses

- Safety, crime and perception thereof
 - women afraid to walk along Hamilton Street
 - shootings have hurt perception of safety and turned customers away
 - perception of crime - how to turn that around?
 - drugs
- No community space/ park
 - No central community space/ no park for outdoor community events, etc.
 - No community room/ meeting space for indoor events
- No real "destination uses" with the possible exception of certain restaurants
 - no reason for people outside the immediate area to go to Hamilton Street
 - no destination retail uses or other such uses to attract those outside of immediate area
- Lack of business diversity (e.g., prevalence of beauty salons)
 - Need for more breakfast/ coffee places
 - No modern convenience stores
- Property maintenance issues - harms perception of the district
 - boarded up buildings
 - weeds/ lack of mowing
 - need for facade and sign improvements on various properties
 - graffiti
- Vacant, undeveloped and underdeveloped lots detract from perception of Hamilton Street
- Revitalization of Hamilton Street doesn't seem to be a priority to the Township
- Need a "Big Bang" to attract attention, interest and investment along Hamilton Street
- Lack of public parking in certain areas
 - Particular areas of concern:
 - Along Hamilton Street between Norma and Pershing Avenues
 - Hamilton Street near Dewald Avenue (near SaveRite is worst)
 - Hamilton Street near Baier Avenue
 - South side of Hamilton Street between Lawrence Avenue and Henry Street
 - Hamilton Street between Kossuth Street and Meister Street
 - Merchants park along Hamilton Street all day blocking spaces for use by potential customers
 - Sight distance issue in certain areas caused by parked cars too near the intersection (e.g., Norma Avenue and Dewald Avenue accessing Hamilton Street)
- Hamilton Street is a County highway (arterial)
 - traffic can be significant at times
 - vehicular/ pedestrian/ bike conflicts
 - [this is an opportunity as well]
- Assessment levels/ taxes
 - Roughly \$900k/ acre
 - assessment levels do not align with rents

- significant disincentive to redevelopment, investment and tenants
- Homelessness and loitering
- Zoning
 - need to allow greater density/ intensity of use
 - alignment of the HB Business Improvement District (BID) and the Hamilton Street Business zoning district
- Inappropriate selection of street trees blocks visibility of stores
- DPW needs to empty trash cans more frequently

STRENGTHS and OPPORTUNITIES

- Proximity to Rutgers University, Robert Wood Johnson and Saint Peters hospitals, theaters, etc. in New Brunswick
- Located in most populated area of Franklin (plus, population along Hamilton Street in New Brunswick) provides customer base
 - planned/ potential redev. along Hamilton Street
 - nearby apartment complexes (along Hamilton and Franklin Blvd)
- Recent streetscape improvements (lights, benches, sidewalks) improves appearance
 - need to continue
- Vacant, undeveloped and underdeveloped sites provide development/ redevelopment opportunities
- Hamilton Street is a County highway (arterial) providing access to New Brunswick from Franklin and other communities
- 2 large sites along Hamilton Street (Johns Plaza and Nora Shopping Center) have significant redevelopment potential
 - Infill could provide both economic, community character and streetscape improvements.
 - potential parking enhancements including potential public/private partnerships including park-n-ride and/or public parking (which would benefit Hamilton Street as a whole).
 - pedestrian enhancements
 - if properly redeveloped, each site could act as an anchor for revitalization of the corridor and spur additional investment and revitalization along the corridor
 - redevelopment could involve complete redevelopment of the site (i.e., tear down of building) or redevelopment may involve retention of the existing building (e.g., pad sites along frontage along with parking, transportation and other site modifications)
- The existence of the HB Business Improvement District (BID) and the Hamilton Street Advisory Board (HSAB)
- Existence of continuous sidewalk system
- Detailed design standards in Zoning Ordinance encourage attractive development (both on-site and streetscape)

- CDBG funding
 - capitalize more?
 - other grant opportunities?
- Transit opportunities
 - bus stations
 - train
 - County potentially adding new bus stops with access to NB train stations
- Changes to the zoning plan could help encourage investment, revitalization and redevelopment
- Area in Need of Rehabilitation (eligible?)? Area in Need of Redevelopment (eligible?)?
- Opportunity to increase awareness and interest in Hamilton Street through marketing and dissemination of information
- Political will/ relationships
- Police substation would help with crime (both in real terms and perception)

One of the high priority objectives identified was the desire/ need to spur revitalization through private investment and redevelopment with the zoning of the area being identified as a weakness that was possibly thwarting private redevelopment in the area. The HSAB established a zoning subcommittee to investigate this matter and to offer zoning recommendations. That investigation resulted in the production of a report from the HSAB to the Township Planning Board outlining the HSAB's analysis of the Hamilton Street zoning and their recommended zoning changes for the area.

Status: The Township, working with the HSAB, is implementing the high priorities issues identified in the “strategic plan” outlined above. These initial efforts include: assignment of 2 dedicated Police officers to Hamilton Street; installation of new security cameras throughout the district; development of a street tree replacement plan; further streetscape improvements including banners and flags; and adoption of the April 2015 Master Plan Amendment which addressed a comprehensive evaluation of the HBD zoning (as outlined above in Section II). The zoning recommendations in the April 2015 Master Plan Amendment were implemented via Ordinance 4115-15, with the exception of the recommendations addressing improvements to the design standards.

A vacant building on Lewis Street, owned by the Somerset Community Action Program (SCAP), is being purchased by the Township. The Township plans to demolish the existing building and to construct a new youth/community center on the property which will have programs to target at-risk youth in the community.

Recommendation: The issues identified in the “strategic plan” outlined above should continue to be implemented. The improvements to the design standards recommended in the April 2015 Master Plan Amendment should be pursued.

- **Issue:** Expand the list of permitted uses in industrial districts, recognizing new and emerging uses which should be directed to such districts.

Status: The Township's industrial districts permit a wide variety of uses such that, to the Township's knowledge, no otherwise appropriate use has been dissuaded from locating in Franklin due to the language of the zoning ordinance. Nonetheless, this remains a valid planning objective and should be evaluated in the Master Plan (e.g., specifically listing certain appropriate and sought-after uses (e.g., data centers).

- **Issue:** Maintain sufficient areas of light industrial zoning to ensure a varied tax base. The area available for industrial development has been significantly reduced via the approval of several large-scale senior residential developments along New Brunswick Road, Schoolhouse Road and Randolph Road.

Status: This remains a valid planning objective which should be addressed in the Master Plan.

- **Recommendation:** *Cedar Grove Lane north of New Brunswick Road.* North of New Brunswick Road, and particularly north of Pierce Street, this corridor has been developed with a mixture of multi-family housing, some commercial uses and large-scale places of worship. The Master Plan should evaluate the zoning of the Cedar Grove Lane corridor north of New Brunswick Road with low-intensity non-residential uses.

The R-40 zoning south of New Brunswick Road should be maintained. The character of the roadway and the surrounding area becomes decidedly less intense and decidedly single-family residential in nature southward from New Brunswick Road.

- **Recommendation:** Township Planning & Zoning staff have reviewed the Land Development Ordinance and identified a number of provisions that should be reviewed including:
 - Definitions - Some updated is needed (e.g., "Administrative Officer", subdivision committee, etc.).
 - Add prohibition of any accessory structure being in front of the principal structure (residential only)
 - Conditional use standards - Need to comprehensively review for internal consistency and consistency with law, update and delete accordingly..
 - Should put section in that when a use variance is requested that, at a minimum, the ordinance standards for said use must be complied with (e.g., conditional use standards for

places of worship would apply in the case of a use variance for a place of worship in a zone were such use is not permitted)

- Review and revise 112-67 Restoration - This section deals with non-conforming structures that are destroyed or altered. It also deals with existing undersized lots and certifications for preexisting nonconforming uses.
- 112-72 (flag lots) - Clarify that minimum setbacks for front yards are only for principal structures and to decide what the setbacks would be for accessory structures
- 112-74 affordable housing - Review and revise (e.g., eliminate bonus density, eliminate low/moderate split that is inconsistent with State UHAC rules)
- Parking requirements - Review requirements (e.g., schools, retail) and update accordingly
- 112-118 Noise - This section deals with the maximum decibel levels permitted. Should noise levels be in a development Ordinance? If not, this section should be deleted. If not deleted, they should be reviewed for consistency with current standards including the Township noise ordinance.
- 112-180 D - This section deals with the makeup of the Minor Subdivision Committee. It needs to be clarified and consistent with subdivision committee definition and the current makeup of the Committee
- 112-199 - This section deals with the requirements for an environmental assessment. This should be revised to reflect what is currently required.
- 112-299 - This section allows for an appeal to the Township Council when a use variance is granted by the Zoning Board. This section should be deleted
- 112-250 - This section deals with the process for informal reviews to the Planning Board. This section should be revised to reflect current practice.
- Reconsider footnote which allows hotels to be 12 stories in height in situations where such zones adjoin lower density residential areas
- Temporary use permits - Clarify what is eligible or delete

➤ **Change:** As indicated above, the 55 and over population increased by over 5,900 persons between 2000 and 2010 to 15,979 (a 59% increase). The 55 and over population accounted for 52% of the Township's population increase between 2000 and 2010. The vast majority of this increase was due to the construction of four large age-restricted communities (Canal Walk, Somerset Run, Renaissance and Sterling Point) in the northwesterly portion of the Township. This demographic trend will have lasting effects on the Township including increased demands on emergency services and with likely increased need for public transportation as these communities age in place.

Recommendation: The significant increase in the older population will undoubtedly increase the demand and need for specialized housing geared towards aging seniors (e.g., residential health care, long-term care and assisted living facilities). The Township should review its zoning and accommodate for such uses, particularly in the northwesterly portion of the Township (e.g., in the C-B, M-1, M-2 and/or R-O-L zoning districts).

- **Recommendation:** The zoning district boundary line near the termini of Gates and Ellison Roads should be changed to place the entirety of this neighborhood within the R-40 zone. There is no legitimate planning rationale for the last few properties at the end of these roads to be placed within the R-20 zone. An adjoining over-sized lot on Renfro Road should be reviewed for placement in this R-40 zone as well.

Preparation of the Master Plan should include a review of the Zoning Map for identification of any similar situations.



- **Issue:** Support the redevelopment of declining areas in the Township. Encourage the redevelopment of the “Renaissance 2000” redevelopment area. Use the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law to identify additional areas “in need of redevelopment.”

Status: These remain valid recommendations. The Township and the Franklin Township Redevelopment Agency continue to implement the Renaissance Redevelopment Plan. See recommendations above regarding necessary review of the redevelopment area zoning.

B. HOUSING PLAN

- **Status:** The Township has received Substantive Certification of its Fair Share Plan/ Housing Element under the First, Second and Third Round of the COAH Rules, with the most recent Substantive Certification being received in July 2010 per the Third Round rules then in effect.

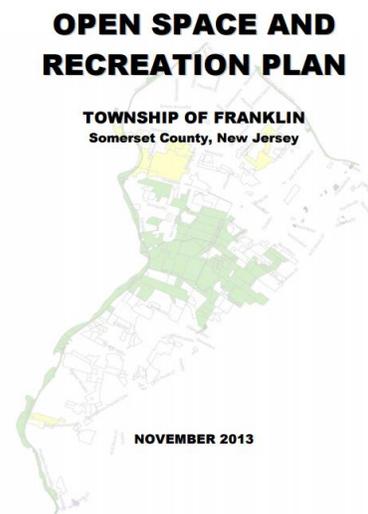
Changes: The validity of COAH’s Third Round Rules remain an issue before the court. On March 10, 2015, the New Jersey Supreme Court issued a decision which “dissolved” the “exhaustion of administrative remedies” requirement under the Fair Housing Act, N.J.S.A. 52:27D-301, et seq., (that no exclusionary zoning cases may proceed if a town is before COAH) and provided that municipalities may initiate declaratory judgment actions and seek approval of their affordable housing plans. The Supreme Court directed that prospective municipal affordable housing obligations are to be determined by trial courts on a case-by-case basis using the methodologies from the First and Second Rounds as developed by COAH and approved by court decisions.

In response to the New Jersey Supreme Court decision, the Township prepared a new Housing Element & Fair Share Plan which was adopted by the Planning Board in May 2015.¹⁷ Subsequently, the Township has submitted to the court, at the direction of the court, submittals that demonstrate the degree to which the Township exceeds any reasonably applied obligation for affordable housing.

Recommendation(s): The Township should continue to monitor the matter and respond, as necessary and appropriate, to the direction of the court.

C. OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN

- **Status:** The Township’s Open Space and Recreation Plan was adopted by the Planning Board as an element of the Township Master Plan in December 2013. A detailed summary of the 2013 OSRP is provided above in Section II and a copy of it is available for review on the Township website.¹⁸ As indicated above, the 2013 OSRP is essentially a synthesis and update of the OSRP prepared in 2000 and the 2012 Preservation and Recreation Needs Assessment and Action Plan.¹⁹ It superseded the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan element in the 2006 Master Plan.



Change(s): No significant changes in the assumptions, policies, objectives or circumstances have occurred since the December 2013 adoption of the OSRP that would warrant a comprehensive update of the document. The OSRP is up-to-date and continues to serve as an important resource in guiding Township recreation and open space decisions.

Recommendation(s): In the preparation of the new Master Plan, the 2013 OSRP should be distributed to the appropriate township committees (e.g., Open Space Advisory Committee, Recreation Advisory Council) in order to identify any particular updates and modifications that may be appropriate. This revised document should then be adopted by the Planning Board as an element of the new Master Plan.

Preparation of the Land Use Plan Element should consider the “zoning techniques” and “infrastructure considerations” described in the OSRP as compatible with open space and farmland preservation and the retention of agriculture and rural character. These include:

¹⁷ <http://franklintwpnj.org/Home/ShowDocument?id=5482>

¹⁸ <http://franklintwpnj.org/home/showdocument?id=4426> and <http://franklintwpnj.org/home/showdocument?id=4428>

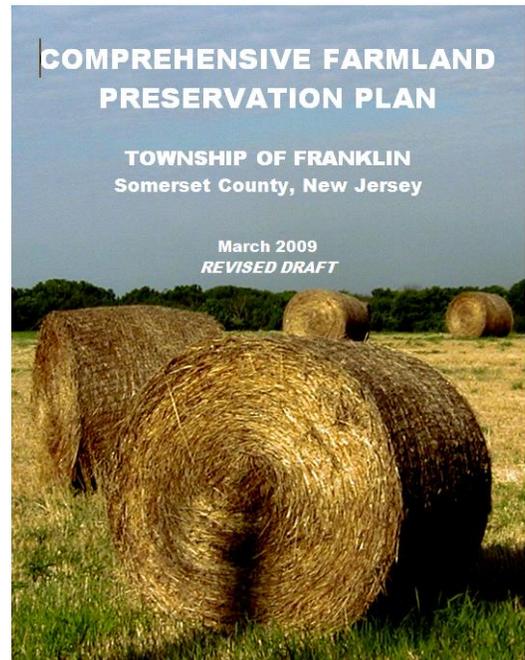
¹⁹ <http://franklintwpnj.org/what-s-new/parks-and-recreation-needs-assessment>

- *Rural Density Zoning* – retaining agriculture and rural character and maintaining the rural densities by maintaining the zoning of areas zoned A, CP, RR-5 and RR-3.
- *Cluster Provisions* – when residential development does occur continue to use clustering provisions (e.g., lot size averaging, NRPC cluster option, NRPC R-40 cluster option,) in order to preserve agriculture and open space while managing growth. The OSRP also recommends that the Township identify ways to either increase the likelihood of their use and consider the use of mandatory clustering in certain areas and/or circumstances.
- *Infrastructure Considerations* – Since the provision of sewer service significantly increases development pressure and significantly increases potential intensity of development, the OSRP indicates that it is critical that the Township carefully restrict the expansion of the sewer service area into areas of the Township that are inappropriate and/or unsuitable for more intensive development (i.e., those zones that permit less than 1 unit per acre). It also recommends that the Township carefully consider the expansion of public water service for similar reasons.

D. FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN

- **Change(s):** As discussed above in Section II, the Township’s Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) prepared two iterations (2007 and 2009) of the Township’s Farmland Preservation Plan following the guidelines of the SADC), both of which were adopted by the Planning Board as an element of the Township Master Plan and submitted to the SADC for approval.²⁰

Recommendation(s): In response to subsequent input from the SADC, the Farmland Preservation Plan should be revised once more and will be presented in 2016 to the AAC and the Planning Board for re-adoption and re-submittal to the SADC. Approval of this document by the SADC is necessary to qualify for certain farmland preservation funding.



²⁰ <http://franklintwpnj.org/home/showdocument?id=1226>

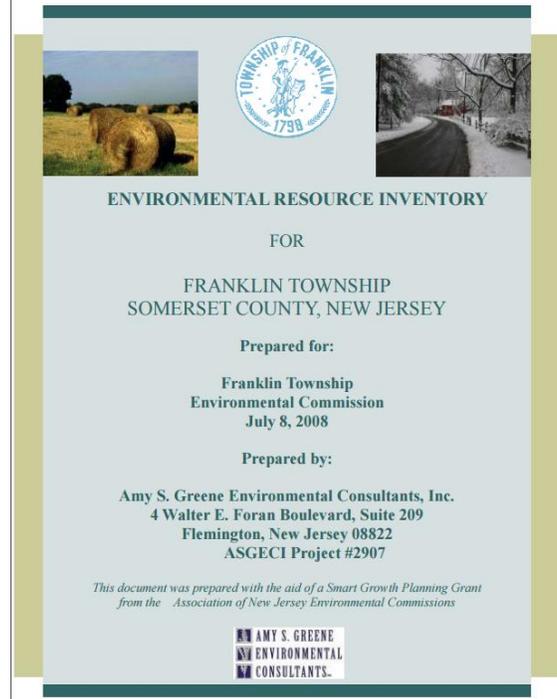
E. ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE INVENTORY

- **Status:** As discussed above in Section II, a comprehensive Township-wide Environmental Resource Inventory (ERI) was prepared in 2008 in consultation with the Township Environmental Commission and was adopted by the Township Planning Board as an element of the Township Master Plan. A summary of the ERI is provided above in Section II and a copy of it is available for review on the Township website.²¹

Change(s): The Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC) recommends that ERI's be revised and re-adopted periodically to reflect new data and changed conditions. Sustainable Jersey criteria reflect an update period of 10 years.

The Township Environmental Commission, with input from Township staff, is currently reviewing the ERI in order to identify necessary updates.

Recommendation(s): The ERI should be updated as recommended by the Environmental Commission. Such updates will help assure that the ERI continues to serve as an outstanding resource guiding planning and conservation decisions. This revised document should be adopted by the Planning Board as an element of the new Master Plan.



²¹ <http://franklintwpnj.org/home/showdocument?id=4402>

F. CONSERVATION PLAN

- **Issue:** The following goal and objectives were established for the Conservation Plan Element of the Master Plan:

Goal: Conserve open space, rural character, scenic vistas, sensitive environmental areas and farmland:

- Identify and protect such resources by continued use of the Open Space Trust Fund and non-contiguous parcel clustering;
- Maintain open space and link to other open spaces and community resources;
- Maintain clustering as a design technique which preserves open space and protects environmentally sensitive areas;
- Limit the extension of utilities to currently approved service areas, unless otherwise indicated herein;
- Promote retention of wildlife and species diversity by conserving contiguous tracts of differing vegetative types; and
- Maintain design and siting standards to protect the Township's historic and rural character, particularly in villages and along scenic corridors;
- Continue to support the Right to Farm Ordinance;
- Strongly enforce limits on impervious coverage and encourage innovate water quality enhancement techniques in site design.

Goal: Protect water quality in Township streams, the Millstone and Raritan Rivers and the Delaware & Raritan Canal.

Status: These remain valid goals and objectives. In fact, similar language is reflected in the 2013 Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) and the Environmental Resource Inventory (ERI).

- **Issue:** Rezoning requests and other modifications to land use should continue to be based on capacity-based planning. It indicates that capacity based planning should be considered when creating standards for lands in the Township. Capacity-based planning relates to the carrying capacity of the land in terms of supporting utilities, not impacting sensitive environmental features such as wetlands, floodplain, groundwater recharge areas, forested areas and species habitat, not creating burdens upon the circulation system, and fitting in with the desired character of an area, as indicated in planning documents of applicable jurisdictions and as indicated by other relevant public policy.

Status: This remains a valid recommendation. In fact, similar language is reflected in the 2013 Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) and the Environmental Resource Inventory (ERI).

- **Issue:** Most of Franklin Township is relatively level in terms of topography, and possesses soils in the highest and second highest classifications for agricultural capability. Land in these categories that is currently farmed has been included in the Agricultural (A) zoning district, and is widely sought

for development rights acquisition when funding is available. However, the majority of soils in the Township also exhibit relatively shallow depth to shale bedrock, as well, which results in relatively poor stormwater infiltration. The majority of land in the Township is underlain by the Passaic Formation (Brunswick shale). A small portion of the southern tip of the Township is underlain by diabase material. This material is igneous in origin, which means that it is very strong and impermeable. It is not suitable for septic fields, nor for potable water production. Zoning in the Township has taken these formations into consideration. The diabase areas that are not in the Canal Preservation (CP) area that are not sewerred have been set at a density of 5 acres per unit. Shale formation areas that are not served by water and sewer and that are not located in the Canal Preservation (CP) areas are zoned at a density of 3 acres per unit.

Status: These factors, along with other factors including the Township's desire to retain the rural nature of these areas of the Township, support of the Township's desire to retain agriculture in these areas, and the lack of supporting infrastructure (e.g., roadways, public water and/or public sewer), all support the retention of the Township's lower density zoning districts (CP, A, RR-3 and RR-5).

- **Issue:** Land use planning should follow the key concepts and policies of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan and the Planning Areas established through the Cross Acceptance process.

Status: The Township's Master Plan and development ordinance correlate highly with the State Plan Policy Map (SPPM). Areas on the SPPM within the "Metropolitan" and "Suburban" Planning Areas correspond to the Township's non-residential, multi-family residential, higher-density single-family zones (1-acre per unit or denser) and certain cluster developments. Similarly, comparison of the sewer service area maps to the State Plan Policy Map reveals that the Township's sewer service areas correlate with the "Metropolitan" and "Suburban" Planning Areas (see Map 4).

Conversely, the Township's less intensive residential zoning districts (i.e., those zones that permit less than 1 unit per acre) correlate with areas on the SPPM within the "Rural/ Environmentally Sensitive" Planning Area. Similarly, areas planned to remain less dense are not served by sewer. Comparison of the sewer service area maps to the State Plan Policy Map reveals that the sewer service areas correlate with the "Metropolitan" and "Suburban" Planning Areas, while areas not served by sewer correlate very highly with areas within the "Rural/ Environmentally Sensitive" Planning Area.

- **Issue:** The Township has long had in place a Stream Corridor Protection Ordinance which limits the types of development in various stream corridors in order for the land to function as a water infiltration area. Due to severe flooding that has occurred in the Township in recent years due to the extensive amount of up-stream development that has occurred in the region, adherence to the Stream Corridor Protection Ordinance has gained additional importance. Deviations from the ordinance should not be granted, and the Township should continue to explore ways to strengthen

the Stream Corridor Ordinance and create a more stringent, effective and legally defensible ordinance.

Status: Deviations from the ordinance have not been granted. However, there exists a loophole in the ordinance which permits stream buffers to be reduced to 50 feet wherever wetlands are present along the stream (which there virtually always are). A similar loophole exists with respect to the regulation of steep slopes.

Recommendation: The ordinance should be revised to eliminate loopholes and to reduce any conflicts with requirements of the NJDEP or D&R Canal Commission. The ordinance's 300-foot buffer should be reviewed in comparison to NJDEP buffer requirements. The Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association has produced a model ordinance which could be reviewed for potential applicability in Franklin.

- **Issue:** The sewer service area should be extended to include the Griggstown quail farm at the corner of Canal and Bunker Hill Roads to control current water pollution in that area but not to encourage additional dwellings.

Status: This property has been added to the Sewer Service Area. Only the existing wastewater generating structures on the farm including two single-family homes have been served, not the whole property.

- **Issue:** The Conservation Plan Element recommends that sewer service areas should be extended only in accordance with the Master Plan.

Status: The Utilities Plan in the 2006 Master Plan identifies very limited extension of the sewer service areas within the Township – i.e., the School District owned property on Claremont Road, a few developed subdivisions along the north side of Bennett's Lane and the quail farm on Bunker Hill Road.

Change: Adopted changes to the Township's Sewer Service Area as part of the County Wastewater Management Plan reflected the preservation of the Township Sewer Service Area recommended in the 2006 Master Plan. Changes to the Sewer Service Area in the County Wastewater Management Plan consisted of the very limited extension described above as well the addition of a shopping center located at the corner of Route 27/ 518 due to a failing septic system on that site. All changes to the Sewer Service Area were minor (i.e., no change would open up large, previously un-sewered areas of the Township to private development). Deletions from the Sewer Service Area primarily consisted of preserved lands, also consistent with the Utilities Plan from the 2006 Master Plan.

Recommendation: The existing sewer service area, approved in the County Wastewater Management Plan, should be maintained. Extensions of the sewer service area should only be made in order to address public health issues (e.g., extension for the quail farm and the Griggstown

extension) and not to allow high density development in areas of the Township not currently served by sewer. Further discussion is provided under Utility Plan Element, as well as the Land Use Plan Element and the Open Space and Recreation Plan.

- **Issue:** If applicants can prove to the Board's satisfaction that they do not need all of the required spaces, the ordinance should permit landbanking of at least 50 percent of spaces for all non-residential uses, not just in conjunction with warehousing uses as currently permitted.

Status: Accomplished via Ordinance 3708 which permits landbanking of at least 50 percent of spaces for all non-residential uses.

- **Issue:** Where appropriate and feasible, stands of significant trees or individual trees should be preserved.

Status: This remains a valid objective. The Township implements it via its open space preservation program, in the review of development application and via enforcement of Chapter 222, Trees. Chapter 222, Trees, was recently amended to further encourage the preservation of forested areas and significant trees.

- **Issue:** Greenbelts should be planned and acquired to define a hard edge between centers and environs around historic villages. Open space acquisition should include lands that contain sensitive natural resources. Lands near the D&R Canal are recommended for acquisition.

Status: These remain valid recommendations. The creation of "Village Greenbelts" around each of the Township's historic hamlets is one of the "Land Preservation Areas" identified in the 2013 OSRP to guide Township open space preservation decisions.

- **Issue:** The Township should purchase the large, vacant New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) property, Block 5.02, Lot 119.03, for open space purposes, should NJDOT deem it as excess property.

Status: This remains a valid recommendation. Attempts have been made to transfer this lot to the State's Natural Land Trust.

G. HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN

- **Issue:** The following goals and objectives were established for the Historic Preservation Plan Element of the Master Plan:

Goal: Promote the preservation and restoration of the Township’s historic buildings, sites and districts:

- Uphold the Township’s Historic Preservation Ordinance and the review processes of the Historic Preservation Commission.
- Pursue designation of the Franklin Park and Middlebush Village Historic Districts.
- Pursue the designation of local landmarks.

Goal: Protect historic structures located in historic districts from insensitive encroachment and renovation and/or demolition:

- Uphold the Township’s Historic Preservation Ordinance and the review processes of the Historic Preservation Commission.
- Complete designation process for Middlebush Village.
- Pursue designation of the Franklin Park Historic District.
- Pursue the designation of local landmarks.

Goal: Protect historic viewsheds:

- Uphold the Township’s Scenic Corridor Ordinance.
- Provide input into the Millstone Valley Scenic By-Way planning process.

Status: These remain valid goals and objectives. Similar goals were identified in the 2013 OSRP under “Goals for Cultural Resources”:

- Protect historic resources by preserving land around them and protecting their historic context.
- Maintain and protect the existing villages through the identification and establishment of “greenbelts” surrounding the historic villages.
- Protect and rehabilitate historic resources including those that have been abandoned and/or neglected and identify opportunities for ongoing maintenance of the resource.

Recommendation: A new Historic Preservation Element should be prepared. As part of the new Master Plan, these Goals and Objectives should be reviewed and updated as necessary. Obviously, the new Historic Preservation Element would address the components identified in the Municipal Land Use Law. Further, it should contain the topics identified in the “What to Include in a Historic Preservation Element” as outlined by Sustainable Jersey.

- **Issue:** Franklin should make revisions to its Historical District Ordinance to meet Certified Local Government (CLG) guidelines and apply for CLG status.

Status: The historic district ordinance was completely overhauled via Ordinance No. 3943 a few years ago and meets the CLG guidelines. The Township subsequently filed for CLG status with the

State. The Township's application for CLG status was reviewed by the State and the Township is currently in the process of addressing the State's comments which including certain amendments to the historic district ordinance and/or the Commission's By-Laws. These are currently being addressed.

- **Issue:** Pursue the nomination of the Middlebush Village Historic District and the Franklin Park Historic District for the inclusion in the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

Status: The Middlebush Village Historic District has been placed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places, the Franklin Park Historic District has not, however it is a Township-designated historic district (and thus development activity is subject to the review of the Township Historic Advisory Commission).

Recommendation: As part of the new Master Plan, the recommendation to seek State and National Registers designation for the Franklin Park Historic District should be evaluated.

- **Issue:** Encourage organizations to apply for grants via the County's Historic Grant Program to preserve historic resources in the Township.

Status: This remains a valid recommendation.

- **Issue:** The Historic Preservation Element offers the following recommendations regarding the identification, mapping and designation of historic structures:

- A list of all properties, on a Block and Lot basis, that are contained in either local, State and/or National historic districts, and within 1,000 feet of the D&R Canal, should be prepared for use by the Historic Commission and Township residents for clarification purposes.
- The list of resources compiled by the State and County should be thoroughly reviewed for currency as many of the structures are believed to have been demolished.
- Individual structures, whether designated as municipal landmarks or as contained in the State and/or National Registers of Historic Places, should be considered for inclusion in the Historic District Overlay Zone. When implemented on the Zoning Map, such inclusion would give the HPC advisory review powers over those resources.

Status: Such an inventory was prepared by Township planning staff in 2013. It identifies roughly 300 historic structures within the Township based upon a review of various sources: "Historic Resources Inventory" from Township Master Plan; New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places - NJDEP Historic Preservation Office, last updated 1/18/2013; Middlebush Village Historic District nomination document, 2005; Somerset County Cultural Resource Survey, 1989; Six Mile Run

Historic District nomination document and map, 1993; Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park - Historic Structures Survey, 1982; East Millstone - Historic Structures Survey, 1980; Griggstown - Historic Structures Survey, 1980; Township geographic information system (GIS); Historic site GIS data from NJDEP; Township tax maps; Google aerial maps; Bing aerial maps; and field verification.

The inventory consists of a series of 9 maps with 1 Township-wide map and 8 more detailed maps (Kingston, Griggstown, East Millstone, Middlebush, Southern Franklin, Central Franklin, Northern Franklin, Blackwells Mill). Based upon the information obtained from the source data, the map identifies each structure by type: "S/N Register" - sites individually listed on Registers of Historic Places; "Contributing" - sites identified as "contributing" in "Historic Resources Inventory"; "Opinions" - sites identified in "Historic Resources Inventory" as having "opinions" from SHPO; and "Other" - other identified historic structures.

An accompanying table provides further detail on each structure including address, block, lot, identifying reference numbers (per source data), year and style of construction, and additional notes as necessary.

This inventory is by far the most accurate, up-to-date and detailed Township-wide inventory of historic structures in the Township produced to date. However, additional work is needed including additional field verification, additional descriptions of each resources and to fill in gaps in the available source data which may have resulted in omitted sites (e.g., sites along the Easton Avenue portion of Canal district; sites in areas not in a designated district such as along Old Georgetown Road). For this purpose, the inventory was provided to the Township Historic Preservation Advisory Commission (HPAC) which is currently working on the inventory.

Recommendations: The inventory should be used to identify individual structures worthy of individual inclusion in the historic district overlay.

The inventory should also be used to evaluate the delineation of local historic districts particularly the 1000-foot distance from the D&R Canal (i.e., do the boundaries of the local historic district appropriately correspond to local of significant historic structures, should any district be enlarged or made smaller?).

- **Issue:** The National Register Criteria used for designation of resources in the State and National Registers of Historic Places should be utilized to evaluate additional resources in the Township and should be implemented via Ordinance.

Status: Accomplished. This was incorporated in the overhaul of the historic preservation ordinance adopted via Ordinance No. 3943.

- **Issue:** Preserve the historic character of Main Street and the King's Highway within Kingston. Work to secure the placement of appropriate portions of the Environs on the National Register of Historic Places. Secure Scenic Roadway status for the Kings Highway. .

Status: Both Franklin and South Brunswick Townships and KVAC worked together on the King's Highway National and State Registration. KVAC has been involved in the Millstone Valley Scenic Byway Corridor Management Committee and was able to extend the Byway to include the Kingston Lock and Mill areas (including a section of the King's Highway.)

- **Issue:** The Township should continue to preserve public use of the Laurel Avenue School and field.

Status: The historic Laurel Avenue School and grounds have been preserved. The Township has developed a plan for the preservation, rehabilitation and adaptive re-use of the building. In November 2015, the Township Council agreed to enter into a twenty-four(24) year lease agreement with the Tuchman Foundation, which would allow the Tuchman Foundation to renovate the building (estimated between \$1.8M - \$2M) and to sublease the building to non-profit uses. The development of this plan was complicated by numerous factors including the need for approval NJDEP Green Acres since the site is on the Township's Recreation Open Space Inventory (ROSI) and needed approval from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

The anticipated renovation completion date is June 2016. The newly renovated building will also provide a community room that will be available for the public to use with terms of use for the community room being determined over the next couple months.

- **Issue:** Recognition of Kingston as part of the Crossroads of the American Revolution Project. Franklin and South Brunswick should work with Lawrence Township, Princeton Borough and Township to build upon their successful nomination and submit portions of Route 206 and 27 to the State and National Registers of Historic Places to address common historic preservation concerns.

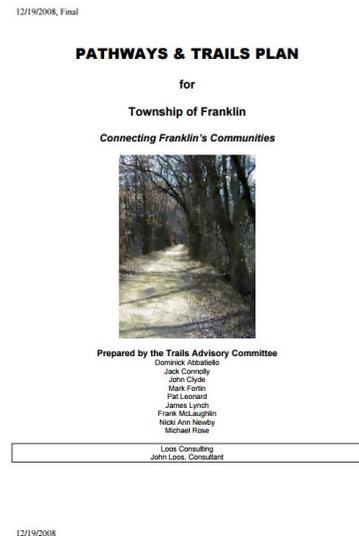
Status: KVAC worked with both Townships and other groups for the inclusion of all of Kingston in the National Heritage Area. KVAC been monitoring Crossroads developments and also is working on its own Crossroads recognition plan.

H. PATHWAYS AND TRAILS PLAN

- **Status:** The Pathways and Trails Plan (dated December 2008) was prepared by the Township Trails Advisory Committee and was adopted by the Township Planning Board as an element of the Township Master Plan in 2009. A detailed summary of the Pathways and Trails Plan is provided in Section II above and a copy of it is available for review on the Township website (<http://franklintwpnj.org/government/departments/planning-zoning/township-master-plan>).

Change(s): No significant changes in assumptions, policies, objectives or circumstances have occurred since the adoption of the Pathways and Trails Plan that would warrant a comprehensive update of the document. The Pathways and Trails Plan continues to serve as an important resource in guiding Township decisions and the Township continues to pursue implementation of the recommendations contained in it.

Recommendation(s): In the preparation of the new Master Plan, the Pathways and Trails Plan should be distributed to the Trails Advisory Committee in order to identify any particular updates and modifications that may be appropriate. This revised document should be then by adopted by the Planning Board as an element of the new Master Plan.



I. COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN AND UTILITY PLAN

Sanitary Sewer Service

- **Issue:** Franklin Township Sewerage Authority (FTSA) reports sewer service capacity issues in the Route 27 corridor area north of Franklin Boulevard. This system was designed in the early 20th Century, and is not sized to accommodate additional sewer users. The capacity issue is being resolved by FTSA via (1) the installation of manhole covers that do not allow stormwater to enter the system and consume capacity, (2) diversion of flows to the North Crossing through Piscataway rather than to the City of New Brunswick and (3) the installation of a new pump station that can divert flow to the Township's School Avenue Station that contains significant capacity. These improvements will provide the necessary infrastructure for redevelopment projects in the Renaissance 2000 Redevelopment Area.

Status: A sewer pump station has been constructed along Pine Street and is in operation and various improvements have been made system-wide improvements to reduce Inflow/Infiltration (I/I)

throughout their collection system. The FTSA follows an ongoing sewer main flushing and manhole rehabilitation program throughout their collection system. Their staff has retrofitted manholes, in areas prone to inflow of rain water, with inserts. These efforts in combination with their continuous inspection and repair of our sewer lines and manholes have resulted in significant reductions in Inflow/Infiltration (I/I) throughout their collection system.

The FTSA is currently pursuing construction of a series of pump stations in the northeastern portion of the Township which would allow connection to the Middlesex County Utilities Authority (MCUA) rather than through the City of New Brunswick.

- **Issue:** The FTSA indicates that the sewer line in Belmont Drive is near capacity, and any new development or re-tenanting of the area should be with uses that require a minimum amount of wastewater treatment.

Status: According to the FTSA, capacity concerns in the Belmont Drive area have waned a bit in the short term since flows have decreased. However, the FTSA indicates that certain sections of sewer lines in the area are simply too small and need to be replaced particularly if flows increase due to re-tenanting or additional development.

- **Issue:** Modifications to the existing Sewer Service Area are recommended on the Utilities Plan map in the Master Plan. Areas proposed for removal from the sewer service area reflect areas that have been preserved as permanent open space. Areas proposed for removal from the Sewer Service Area are shown in pink on the Utilities Plan map.

Status: Accomplished. As explained in greater detail below, consistent with these 2006 Master Plan recommendations, as part of the County Wastewater Management Plan the Sewer Service Area (SSA) was revised consistent with the recommendations in the Utility Plan Element and the Utilities Plan map. Deletions from the SSA consisted primarily of preserved open space and preserved farmland and additions consisted of the school district site on Claremont Road and a very limited number of properties in order to address specific public health or environmental concerns – not to induce growth.

- **Issue:** *Proposed addition to the Sewer Service Area - The Griggstown Quail Farm.* Addition of this area to the Sewer Service Area is recommended for improvement of waste removal from the farm-- not the service of any new dwellings. The Township has approved this extension; the extension now requires County and State approval. The proposed addition of this area to the Sewer Service Area is reflected in green hatching on the Utilities Plan map.

Status: Accomplished. This area has been added to the Sewer Service Area. By letter dated January 2, 2008, the NJDEP approved an amendment to the Lower Raritan/Middlesex County WMP and WQMP to include the existing quail farm on Block 20.02, Lot 45.03. Per that letter, only the

existing wastewater generating structures on the farm including two single-family homes will be served, not the whole property. References: P.I. #435463; Act. # AMD060001

- **Issue:** *Proposed addition to the Sewer Service Area - area north of Bennett's Lane that has been experiencing repeated septic failure.* The Township has approved this extension; the extension now requires County and State approval. The proposed addition of this area to the Sewer Service Area is reflected in green hatching on the Utility Plan map in the Master Plan.

Status: Accomplished. This area has been added to the Sewer Service Area. By letter dated January 2, 2008, the NJDEP approved an amendment to the Lower Raritan/Middlesex County WMP and WQMP to include 43 existing single-family homes comprising Block 86.04, Lots 1-12 and Block 86.06, Lots 9.07-9.38. References: P.I. #435463; Act. # AMD060001.

- **Issue:** The sewer service area boundaries are intended as a growth management tool to prevent sprawl in the southern portion of the Township. The sewer service areas for the most part follow the Planning Area 1 and 2 designations of the State Plan.

Status: Status remains unchanged. This remains a critical Master Plan objective and is similarly addressed in the Conservation Plan Element, the Open Space and Recreation Plan and the Land Use Plan Element.

The new Sewer Service Area (SSA) associated with County Wastewater Management Plan maintained (with a few specific deletions and additions as explained herein) the sewer service area boundary recommended in the Utility Plan Element and the Utilities Plan map in the 2006 Master Plan. According to the County's Trend's & Indicator's Report, the Township's Sewer Service Area covers approximately 47% of the Township's land area and serves nearly 94% of the Township's population.

Comparison of the existing sewer service area to the Township Zoning Map (see Map 4, *Adopted Sewer Service Area Overlaid on Existing Zoning Map*) reveals that the sewer service area within the Township correlates *exactly* to the Township's non-residential, multi-family residential, higher-density single-family developments (lot 1-acre or smaller). Areas planned to remain less dense (i.e., residential zones that requires lots to be greater than 1 acre in size) are not served by sewer.

Similarly, comparison of the sewer service area maps to the Draft State Plan Policy Map reveals that the sewer service areas correlate with the PA-1 (Metropolitan) and PA-2 (Suburban) Planning Area. The sole notable exceptions to the above consist of the following:

- Sanitary sewer service was extended within the last 15 years to serve the Griggstown and Sunset Hill neighborhoods located off of Bunker Hill Road. These neighborhoods were originally built with summer residences and pre-date the Township's zoning ordinance. Sanitary sewer was extended to these neighborhoods to mitigate existing malfunctioning

septic systems (and the health and environmental impacts that might result), not to induce growth. The infrastructure (e.g., the capacity of the sewer mains, force main and pump station) was carefully sized to meet the sewerage needs of these two, existing neighborhoods only and do not allow for further development/ effluent.

- The quail farm on Bunker Hill Road was added to the sewer service area to address environmental issues. The infrastructure was carefully sized to meet the sewerage needs of the existing operation and do not allow for further development/ effluent.
- Addition of the existing Marketplace shopping center located at the corner of Route 27/ Route 518 to the SSA to address a failing septic system.

➤ **Issue:** The sewer service areas for the most part follow the Planning Area 1 and 2 designations of the State Plan, except in the vicinity of the Exxon and Huntingdon Life Science facilities on Mettler's Road, which are located in Planning Area 4, however have been served by their own private sewer system since the 1970s. These areas will remain both PA4 and within a sewer service area for this reason.

Status: No change. These properties remain in the SSA.

Public Water Service

➤ **Status:** The "Water Distribution System Master Plan," prepared for the Township in August 2008 analyzed and provided recommendations for the Township's water distribution network for capital project planning purposes. A total of 44 flow tests were performed which provided model calibration points throughout the Township's system.

Based on the spacing and make-up of homes within the Township, target needed fire flows (NFFs) at a 20 pounds per square inch (psi) system-wide, residual pressure should be 1,500 gallons per minute (gpm) for residential structures, and 3,000 gpm for commercial structures during peak daily flows. A minimum residual NFF threshold under best case scenario building structure spacing and construction material/layout is 500 gpm. For most areas of the Township, these minimum NFFs are presently met.

Storage

According to the Water Distribution System Master Plan, based on the Average Day Demand (ADD) of 6.9 million gallons per day (MGD), the Township's present day storage is deficient. NJDEP standards (NJAC 7:19-6.7(b)) dictate that a minimum of 50% of Average Day Demand (ADD) must be provided for.

- *Required Amount of Storage:* 3.45 million gallons (MG)
- *Existing Effective Storage:* 1.3 million gallons (MG)
- *Additional Storage Required:* 2.15 million gallons (MG)

According to the Water Distribution System Master Plan, even with a more liberal reading of NJAC 7:19-6.7(b) which outlines a minimum of 30% of ADD storage (2.07 MG), an additional 1.38 MG of effective storage is required.

The degree of turnover in the Township's two existing tanks is strictly dependent on the time of year and the amount of water being directly supplied by the existing wholesale interconnects. Because of this, according to the Water Distribution System Master Plan, it would be prudent to provide in-tank mixing systems for the Township's two existing tanks, and for any future tank(s).

Existing System

Of the 1,607 modeled nodes, 3 showed available fire flows below 500 gpm. The nodes with low available fire flow were located along the Route 27 area south of the Route 518 pump station. Often, however, these points are paralleled by larger-diameter mains with greater than 500 gpm available flow. Specific areas of low available flow were noted at the south end of the distribution systems, where the distribution grid drops to consistently small diameters, and where distance from the tanks is at a maximum.

Future System

Modeling was performed for estimated ultimate build-out demands for the Township. Under future conditions, of the 1,607 modeled nodes 107 showed available fire flows below 1,500 gpm. Specific areas of low available flow were noted at the terminuses of the distribution systems, where the distribution grid drops to consistently small diameters, and where distance from the tanks is at a maximum. Nodes with unacceptably low available fire flow (less than 500 gpm) were located along the Route 518 corridor being serviced by the Route 518 pump station.

Improved System

Several scenarios were concentrated on for modeling possible future water distribution conditions. Each scenario depicts a necessary future capital upgrade to the Township's water system. Scenarios modeled under future upgrades and their corresponding results are (future scenarios accounted for maximum month, average daily demands with fire flows available at 20 psi at the time of ultimate Township build out):

- *Future Model 1:* Upgrade pumps at Route 518 pump station to provide adequate fire-fighting capability (1,500 gpm) and improved domestic water deliverability along Route 518 corridor
- *Future Model 2:* Add pressure reducing valve (PRV) to connect southern district to northern/central district to provide adequate fire-fighting capability (1,500 gpm) and improved domestic water deliverability along southern Route 27 corridor

- *Future Model 3*: Add 2.0 MG tank to northern district to provide improved and equalized pressures in the northern area of the Township, as well as access to additional average daily domestic demand water.

Recommendations from Water Distribution System Master Plan

According to the Water Distribution System Master Plan, most of the distribution system issues were associated with undersized or disconnected water mains. According to the Water Distribution System Master Plan, it is not cost efficient to rehabilitate 6" mains, rather it is more economically prudent to replace 6" mains with hydraulically and materially superior 8" or larger mains, as conditions dictate.

The recommendations of the Water Distribution System Master Plan are as follows:

- Eliminate critical system disconnects on a priority basis (looping water mains: Charles Street, Hillcrest Avenue between Arden and Elmwood Streets; Mattawang Drive to Claremont Road; Magellan Way to Yardley Court).
- Replace existing 6" water mains that currently constrict or serve as bottlenecks on a priority basis (Kingsbridge Road)
- Budget for replacement of remaining, lower priority 6" water mains.
- Install a connection with pressure reducing valve to supply water to the south end of the Township system along Route 27.
- Upgrade the Route. 518 pump station with higher rated service pumps and install a fire service pump capable of conveying 1,500 gpm. In lieu of this, keep existing constant rate speed pumps in place and provide elevated storage on discharge side of pump station.
- Construct a new 2.0 million gallon (MG) tank in the northern district of Township in order to accommodate existing storage deficiencies.
- Provide automatic tank mixing systems on existing and any future water storage tanks.

It is critical to note that the improvements recommended in the Township's Water Distribution System Master Plan solely address existing and potential future deficiencies (e.g., storage, pressure) in areas of the Township *currently served* by public water. Consistent with Township planning objectives, the Township's Water Distribution System Master Plan recommends no improvements that would extend public water in areas of the Township that are not currently served by public water – most notably, there is no planned extension of public water into unserved areas within the Township's lower density zoning districts (RR-3, RR-5, A and CP).

Change(s): In order to address storage deficiencies, the Township has pursued interconnection with the New Brunswick water system. This interconnection is expected to come on line soon and will reduce the need to construct the new 2.0 (MG) tank in the northern district of Township recommended in the Water Distribution System Master Plan.

As a further follow-up to the Water Distribution System Master Plan and further evaluations, the following has been found.

- The low pressure issue along the southern end of Route 27 in Little Rocky Hill is due to the physical condition of the pipe. The pipe itself cannot handle the increased pressure. The Township is currently under design for replacement/repair of the line, but has run into some issues with the NJDOT. This repair/ replacement will connect the line to the remainder of the Township system and the current sole supply from South Brunswick will become an emergency interconnection. These improvements will provide more water at a higher pressure to this area.
- The Route 518 pressure issue was corrected with pump station upgrades.

Recommendation(s): After the interconnection to the New Brunswick water system comes on line the Water Distribution System Master Plan will be reviewed and updated/revised as necessary. Consistent with objectives and recommendations in the Land Use Plan Element, Conservation Plan Element and the OSRP, the update to the Water Distribution System Master Plan should affirmatively state, as a fundamental premise, that future system improvements should be limited to those that address deficiencies in areas of the Township currently served by public water and that future extension of public water into areas not currently served should be limited to those necessary to address critical environmental or public health (e.g., failing wells) – *not* to induce growth in currently unserved areas within the Township’s lower density zoning districts (RR-3, RR-5, A and CP). The delineation of the “Franklin Township Water” service area depicted on the “Water Master Plan” map in the Water Distribution System Master Plan should reflect this as well.

Other Community Facilities and Services

- **Issue:** The 2006 Master Plan identified increases in school enrollment as an issue and described the response including construction of a new high school and construction of new wings at several schools, and the purchase of several properties on Claremont Road for the location of a future school.

Status: Franklin Township Public Schools has pursued various improvements to schools within the District and has constructed a new high school on Elizabeth Avenue. Franklin Township Public Schools has recently prepared a Long Range Facilities Plan (January 2012). The Long Range Facilities Plan (LRFP) looks ahead at how existing facilities can best be adapted to meet future educational program needs through capital repairs, upgrades, expansion, and improvements. Capital improvements are planned in the LRFP to address a number of factors/objectives including:

- reconfiguring of school boundaries and grade alignments to improve educational services - shift to a three-tier educational delivery system. The LRFP projected needs consist of: six PK-5 Elementary Schools (including adding 1 new PK-5 elementary school on Claremont Road), two 6-8 Middle Schools (converting SGS to a 2nd 6-8 middle school), and one 9-12 high school (enlarging existing high school when needed).

- significant building re-investments and capital infrastructure repairs to improve functional operations, revitalize building systems, conserve energy, and enhance classrooms to improve learning.
- achieve maximum school size and target class size objectives
- accommodate projected increases in enrollment

More recently a bond referendum was passed to address the long term facilities of the School District. Franklin Township Public Schools is in the process of implementing these improvements including construction of new elementary school on Claremont School and renovations and improvements to a number of other schools.

- **Issue:** The 2006 Master Plan discussed the need for the new library which was under construction at the time.

Status: Accomplished. The new library was completed several years ago.

- **Issue:** The 2006 Master Plan recommended that the Township monitor opportunities to provide greater access in the southern portion of the Township to library services.

Status: The library opened the Franklin Park Branch in the Franklin Towne Center shopping center, located at the Route 27/ South Middletown Road. The location is in proximity to the largest population center in the southern portion of the Township. It is a full service facility including programming for children and teens.

- **Issue:** The 2006 Master Plan recommended the maintenance of existing first aid facilities and planning for the future improvement or replacement of facilities. It recommended planning for adequate daytime first aid service and coverage by recruiting volunteers, coordinate with police and fire departments. The 2006 Master Plan identified the impending influx of more than 2,000 units of senior housing in the northwest sector of the Township as having potential impact on first aid services

Status: Maintaining adequate emergency service (police, fire and first aid) remains a critical Township objective. Along with increases in overall Township population, the Township must continue to monitor changes in Township demographics that may affect demand for emergency services. For example, the >2000 unit influx in senior housing has come to fruition. These developments have increased demand on emergency services. Further, it is anticipated that emergency service demands from these developments will only increase as these developments “age in place.”

J. CIRCULATION PLAN

➤ **Issue:** *The Middlebush Traffic Study*. The following improvements were recommended:

- Traffic signal at Amwell Road and South Middlebush Road and modification of the intersection.
- Intersection improvement at Amwell Road and Cedar Grove Lane through the creation of a “T” intersection.
- Reconstruction of Amwell Road between South Middlebush Road and Cedar Grove Lane
- Alignment of Blackwell’s Mills Road/Skillman’s Lane at South Middlebush Road and traffic signal.
- Roadway improvements to Blackwell’s Mills Road between South Middlebush Road and Van Cleef Road

In addition to the foregoing improvements, the following additional improvements were recommended in the study:

- New Brunswick Road alignment at Cedar Grove Lane.
- Elizabeth Avenue and Amwell Road signal and intersection improvements (signal phasing at this intersection be modified to include a lead green arrow for eastbound Amwell Road)
- Amwell Road and Van Cleef Road intersection/signal improvements (additional green time assigned to Van Cleef Road)
- Cedar Grove Lane and Weston Road signal installation
- Cedar Grove Lane and Treptow Road signal installation
- Davidson Avenue and Atrium Drive intersection improvements/signal installation (left turn lane for southbound Davidson Avenue at Atrium Drive)

The following improvements, while not included in the Middlebush Traffic Study, were also recommended to improve volume and safety concerns:

- *Pierce Street between Elizabeth Avenue and Belmont Drive roadway improvements* (widen Pierce Street to 40’ and make it a through-street. A Stop sign would be installed on Belmont Drive at its intersection with Pierce Street.
- *Pierce Street and Cottontail Lane traffic signal:* This intersection is recommended for improvement and signal installation. This would further encourage the use of Pierce Street/Cottontail Lane as an alternative to Davidson Avenue/Easton Avenue for access to I-287 and would improve safety issues at the current intersection.

Status: The following recommendations have been implemented:

- Traffic signal at Amwell Road and South Middlebush Road and modification of the intersection.

- Intersection improvement at Amwell Road and Cedar Grove Lane through the creation of a “T” intersection.
- Reconstruction of Amwell Road between South Middlebush Road and Cedar Grove Lane.
- Elizabeth Avenue and Amwell Road signal and intersection improvements
- Amwell Road and Van Cleef Road intersection/signal improvements
- Cedar Grove Lane and Weston Road signal installation
- Cedar Grove Lane and Treptow Road signal installation (including left turn lane)
- Traffic signal at South Middlebush Road/ Blackwells Mills Road with left turn lanes at Blackwells Mills Road and Skillmans Lane
- Roadway improvements to Blackwell’s Mills Road between South Middlebush Road and Van Cleef Road.
- Pierce Street between Elizabeth Avenue and Belmont Drive roadway improvements

The following recommendations have not been implemented:

- New Brunswick Road alignment at Cedar Grove Lane
- Restriping of Davidson Avenue to include a left turn lane for southbound Davidson Avenue at Atrium Drive.
- Pierce Street and Cottontail Lane traffic signal

Recommendation: Most of the recommended improvements have been accomplished. Had these improvements not been made traffic congestion through these corridors would likely be far worse than it is today, particularly during the peak hour periods. Nonetheless, traffic continues to be a significant concern along these roadways particularly during peak hours. Additional improvements should be pursued including, but not necessarily limited to: New Brunswick Road alignment at Cedar Grove Lane and installation of left turn lanes along South Middlebush Road at Cortlelyous Lane and Jacques Lane.

➤ **Issue:** *I-287 Middlesex/ Somerset Raritan River Crossing Needs Analysis.* The study addressed two interchanges with I-287: River Road and Easton Avenue (Exits 9 and 10), and the related traffic congestion problems on both sides of the Raritan River. The study recommended the following short-, mid-, and long-term improvements:

Short-Term

- Reconfigure U-turn ramps from northbound I-287 Exit ramp and Easton Avenue Northbound.
- Eliminate the left/u-turn slot on Easton Avenue Southbound.
- Eliminate the traffic signal and left-turns at Easton Avenue and World’s Fair Drive.

Mid-Term

- Re-align I-287 Southbound Interchange 9 Exit ramp to intersect with Centennial Avenue.

- Reconfigure I-287 Northbound Interchange 9 Entrance ramp, eliminate the on-ramp and provide receiving lane for River Road Southbound.
- Widen Easton Avenue Northbound at Davidson Avenue and provide two left-turn lanes on Easton Avenue.
- Combine the entrance ramps from Easton Avenue onto I-287 Northbound.
- Widen and lengthen the I-287 Southbound Exit ramp at Interchange 10.

Long-Term

- Construct collector/distributor roads (service roads) in each direction of I-287.
- Improve the connections with Easton Avenue at Intersection 10.
- Improve the connections with River Road at Interchange 9.

Status: The traffic signal and left-turns at Easton Avenue/ World’s Fair Drive has been eliminated, U-turn ramps from northbound I-287 Exit ramp and Easton Avenue Northbound have been re-configured, and two left turn lanes have been provided on Easton Avenue to Davidson Avenue. The remainder of the recommended improvements remain to be implemented.

- **Status:** *Easton Avenue.* Easton Avenue continues to experience significant traffic back-ups, particularly during the peak hours, at the easterly (Landing Lane) and westerly (I-287) ends within the Township.

Recommendation: The County commissioned the Easton Avenue/ Main Street Corridor Plan a few years ago. This plan should be reviewed in the preparation of the Master Plan for any recommendations within the capability of the Township. It is anticipated, however, that implementation of the most effective solutions (e.g., reconstruction of the I-287 interchange and the reconstruction of the Easton Avenue/ Landing Lane/ Franklin Boulevard intersection) would require Federal, State and/or County action.

- **Issue:** *Top Accident Locations.* The Master Plan identified the following top highway problem locations with input from the Township Traffic Safety Bureau:
 - Easton Avenue/I-287 Interchange (from both approaches).
 - Weston Canal Road/I-287 Interchange.
 - South Middlebush Road intersection with Amwell Road and Blackwell’s Mills Road.
 - Route 27 at Franklin Boulevard, Veronica Avenue, Bennett’s Lane, Cozzens Lane, Beekman Road, Princeton Highlands Boulevard, South Middlebush Road.
 - Easton Avenue between Foxwood Drive and Franklin Boulevard, Easton Avenue between Willow Avenue and Cedar Grove Lane.

Status: Improvements addressing the above have been made at the South Middlebush Road intersection with Amwell Road and Blackwell’s Mills Road and at the Route 27/ Beekman Road intersection and I-287 interchange at Weston Canal Road has been signalized. However, significant

improvements addressing the rest have not been made (with the exception of the elimination of the traffic signal at World's Fair Drive/ Easton Avenue). Implementation of these recommendations by the Township is not possible as all of these road segments and intersection fall under Federal, State and/or County jurisdiction.

Recommendation: The Master Plan should evaluate current conditions (e.g., do these remain the top traffic safety locations or are there other locations?).

- **Issue:** The 2006 Master Plan recommends that the 2001 Bikeway Master Plan continue to be implemented as funding becomes available. Recommendations address: installation of bike lanes; bike compatible shoulders; bike paths; shared roadways; and bikeway and sidewalks along Route 27.

Status: All of the above remain valid recommendations. Several of the recommendations (e.g., bike lanes and bike compatible shoulders have been implemented along several roads in the Township (e.g., Cedar Grove Lane). The subsequent Pathways and Trails Plan made similar recommendations and its implementation continue to be pursued by the Trails Advisory Committee and the Township.

Change: The need to safely accommodate bike traffic is likely to increase in the Hamilton Street area as this planned developments in the area come on line. Necessary coordination with the City of New Brunswick may need to be pursued.

- **Issue:** *Pedestrian Safety.* Per the 2006 Master Plan: Pedestrian accident patterns should be monitored to determine whether pedestrian safety improvements are needed in a specific location; sidewalks should be examined within walking radii from schools to determine adequacy for pedestrian travel; developers should be encouraged to plan pedestrian and bicycle routes through developments to schools to decrease the need for bussing to schools; and the construction of sidewalk along Route 27 should be a priority given the number of retail establishments located in the corridor.

Status: All of the above remain valid recommendations. Both the Planning Board and Zoning Board require developers to plan pedestrian and bicycle routes through developments.

- **Issue:** The Master Plan incorporate the "Planning and Implementation Agenda" for Kingston which contained a number of transportation-related recommendations including: increasing parking in the business district; installation of crosswalks at pedestrian intersections; improving pedestrian and bicycle access to the business district and evaluating the pedestrian and bicycle linkages with village of Rocky Hill; increasing traffic calming, traffic speed reduction, and traffic law enforcement; redirecting heavy trucks from residential areas unsuitable for such traffic by establishing light truck only ordinances and by designating official Township truck routes; and redesigning problem intersections with improved pedestrian safety.

Status: Many of these recommendations have been implemented: crosswalks installed at major intersections and stanchions in regular rotation with cooperation between FT and SBT police; completed NJDOT and KVIC Bicycle & Pedestrian Study for the Village, which has resulted in various safety improvements on Main Street for pedestrians and cyclists; a multi-use path exists between Rte. 27 and 518 over the former Rocky Hill Branch Railroad ROW; bicycle access is being pursued through the D&R Canal State Park and the preserved areas of the former Princeton Nurseries lands; a sidewalk has been constructed between the Village center and the D&R Canal; the impact of heavy trucks has been reduced by the implementation of a 4-ton limit on Academy, Division, and Mapleton Roads; and certain traffic calming measures (stanchions, crosswalk enhancement, and signage) have been implemented. Remaining recommendations continued to be pursued by the Kingston Village Advisory Committee through their partnership with Franklin and South Brunswick Townships. The intersection of Route 27/ Laurel Avenue remains an issue (particularly back-ups resulting from lack of left turn lanes). Other objectives (e.g., extending a sidewalk from the village along Route 27 to the Kingston Shopping Center) remain.

➤ **Issue:** *Implementation of Hamilton Street Parking and Circulation Improvements Study.* The Circulation Plan Element in the 2006 Master Plan recommends that the Township “encourage the implementation of improvements in the Hamilton Street Business District.” Several primary circulation issues were identified for Hamilton Street:

- The parking supply is more than adequate for current land uses. A parking analysis was also conducted for the entire corridor. Most blocks do not exceed even a 50 percent parking rate. This indicates that there are more than adequate parking capacity, and that the streets could be developed with more intensive land uses if desired.
- Recommendations from the Hamilton Street Parking and Circulation Improvement Study include:
 - Install a signal at Douglas Avenue and Hamilton Street.
 - Install an improvement program with textured crosswalks, curb extensions, and “Yield to Pedestrian” stanchions at key pedestrian crossings.
 - Install “Gateway” median islands at two entrances to the business district.
 - Paint parking stalls to better control parked vehicles along the corridor.
 - Removal of several curb cuts, and the creation of shared driveways/parking.

Status: Many of the recommendations have (or are in the process of being) implemented (e.g., painting of parking stalls throughout the district, installation of pedestrian stanchions, elimination of curb cuts as sites are redeveloped), while a few (e.g., installation of “Gateway” medians) have not.

Change: The Hamilton Street Advisory Board (HSAB) identified a number of transportation and parking-related matters in their “Strategic Plan” (see description above in the Land Use Plan Element

section). In particular, it noted a few locations with localized parking issues, a few intersections with poor sight distance, bicycle/ pedestrians conflicts as issues affecting the corridor.

Recommendation: The HSAB, with input from the Traffic Safety Bureau, Planning and Engineering Departments, should continue to take the lead in identifying specific traffic- and parking-related issues affecting the Hamilton Street area. This input could be sought during the preparation of the Master Plan and will most likely continue and evolve as the planned revitalization of Hamilton Street progresses.

- **Issue:** *Public Transportation.* The 2006 Master Plan provided very brief descriptions of available transportation (i.e., bus service, jitney service, passenger rail) but made no specific recommendations.

Recommendation: The Master Plan should evaluate the availability of public transportation in and within proximity to the Township. The Master Plan should address the potential extension and/or expansion of public transportation to address:

- existing and/or future needs of the Township’s residents and/or workforce (e.g., expansion of service along Hamilton Street to facilitate access to New Brunswick or mass transit)
- to help achieve Township planning objectives (e.g., the revitalization of the Hamilton Street and Renaissance Redevelopment areas and to spur job-creating redevelopment in the Davidson Avenue area of the Township).
- as housing is developed in the northwestern corner of the township (Summerfields and the age-restricted development), including low & moderate income housing, public transportation is needed there (e.g., re-routing of the DASH line should be rerouted to Randolph Road)

K. ECONOMIC PLAN

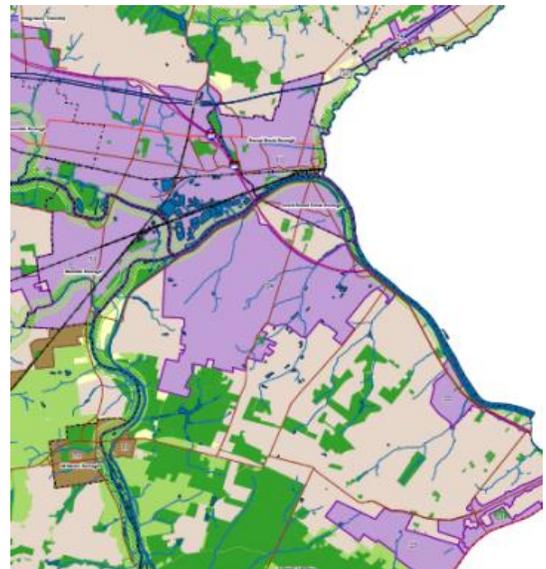
- **Issue:** The 2006 Master Plan recommends that the Township continue to implement the recommendations of the two-phase Economic Development Study prepared by The Center for Urban Policy and Research (CUPR) where consistent with the general goals and objectives of the Master Plan. The major findings and recommendations of the CUPR Study were as follows:

- Franklin Township’s economic base is strong and diverse. The employment growth rate surpasses the state and regional averages, and the Township offers a wide range of employment opportunities.
- The Township has a strong concentration of “high-tech” industries.
- The manufacturing sector, while declining at the statewide level, continues to maintain a high level of activity in Franklin due to the connectivity to major roadways, availability of land, and presence of workers.

- There is an under-representation of retail activity. The report stated a need for additional retail goods such as grocery stores, family restaurants, fine dining and entertainment establishments. By locating retail services close to hotels, and in proximity to Davidson Avenue and World's Fair Drive, Franklin Township can become a more attractive destination for businesses.
- Although health services were not a part of Franklin's basic economy in 2001, given the Township's proximity to two major hospitals, nursing and personal care, pharmaceutical and medical and dental establishments are becoming more competitive in the Township. In fact, several health care clusters are found along Route 27, Easton Avenue and Clyde Road. Additional medical office space is locating on World's Fair Drive and Veronica Avenue. The report suggests that Franklin Township has the necessary ingredients for an agglomeration of health-related service industries including medical office and suppliers to medical offices. The Township should continue to promote these types of uses.
- The Township should encourage a greater mix of retail uses by permitting a greater variety of retail activity, including grocery stores, restaurants, and new retail development in closer proximity to employment centers.
- The Township should encourage special events and marketing campaigns to promote the creation of a health-care agglomeration of medical office and services uses.
- The Township should develop a marketing strategy to attract to small-to-medium sized manufacturers.
- The Township should encourage ecotourism and historic site tourism.
- Encourage the economic development of firms that will provide high-quality jobs to local residents.

Recommendation: The Township is currently in the process of establishing a Council-level Economic Development Committee which will be charged with addressing such issues.

As recommended above in the Land Use Plan section, the Township should commission development of an updated comprehensive economic development strategy (including identification of business sectors that would benefit from locating in Franklin and recruitment of same to the Township) and evaluation of appropriate zoning changes to allow appropriate job-creating redevelopment in the Township



This study should build upon work already conducted by the Somerset County Business Partnership and the

Somerset County Planning Board through their County Investment Framework and Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) initiatives.

- **Issue:** Encourage and promote retail activity in the New Brunswick Road/Elizabeth Avenue area via implementation of a Neighborhood Business Overlay Zone.

Status: Accomplished via Ordinance 3597

- **Issue:** Assist farmers in maintaining and increasing profitability in a sustainable manner. Protect farmland by purchase of development rights, continued use of farmland assessment and other effective mechanisms.

Status: The Township continues to implement an aggressive farmland preservation program. Further, the Township is planning to maintain a directory of farms and tree farms selling directly to the public on the Township website.

- **Issue:** Maintain sufficient areas of light industrial zoning to ensure a varied tax base. The area available for industrial development has been significantly reduced via the approval of several large-scale senior residential developments along New Brunswick Road, Schoolhouse Road and Randolph Road.

Status: This remains a valid planning objective which should be addressed in the Master Plan.

- **Issue:** Encourage commercial and industrial development in areas with access to major regional highways and in established areas. Encourage infill within existing industrial districts to reduce sprawl by increasing density while minimizing environmental impact.

Status: This remains a valid planning objective.

- **Issue:** Expand the list of permitted uses in industrial districts, recognizing new and emerging uses which should be directed to such districts.

Status: The Township's industrial districts permit a wide variety of uses such that, to the Township's knowledge, no otherwise appropriate use has been dissuaded from locating in Franklin due to the language of the zoning ordinance. Nonetheless, this remains a valid planning objective and should be evaluated in the Master Plan (e.g., specifically listing certain appropriate and sought-after uses (e.g., data centers) with modification of requirements such as parking when these uses employ fewer employees than the traditional uses in such districts.

- **Issue:** Continue work on accelerating the permitting and development review process through the use of pre-application and developer meetings.

Status: Accomplished. The Township provides the following services to developers and applicants to facilitate the permitting and development review process:

- *Staff knowledge/ availability/ familiarity with the Boards* – Planning & Zoning staff’s knowledge of the process and their familiarity with the Planning and Zoning Boards allow them to provide developers and applicants with invaluable input and advice. Staff routinely make specific suggestions on project modifications that will make or to steer away developments that have no chance of getting approved (this prevents developers from unnecessarily wasting time and money). Throughout the process (i.e., before submittal of an application, during staff review, while meeting Board conditions), Township staff are available and regularly communicate (via phone and/or face-to-face meetings) with developers and applicants.
- *Conceptual meetings, pre-application meetings and pre-hearing meetings* – Planning & Zoning staff (and Engineering staff as necessary) meet regularly with potential developers and applicants (including homeowners) to discuss their potential development ideas or conceptual-level plans (e.g., what can be built, where it can be built, etc.). In these meetings, Planning & Zoning staff input includes: input on applicable requirements; likely issues of concern to the Board; suggested project modifications to get development approval; and education on the development approval process. In comparison to the “conceptual meetings,” input received in “pre-application meetings” meetings is far more detailed, specific and technical. These meetings allow developers to better incorporate applicable requirements, likely Board and staff concerns, etc. within their initial submittal (rather than submitting incorrect or unapprovable plans from the get-go), saving developers significant time and money. After submittal of a development application, Township staff regularly meet with developers in “pre hearing meetings” to discuss and resolve major review issues prior to the hearing before the Board.
- *In-house engineering and planning review/ Staff availability* – Many towns send the engineering and planning review of development applications to outside consultants. This practice significantly increases the time and cost (in escrow \$ spent) to developers to achieve development approval. In addition, it significantly decreases the effectiveness of the conceptual meetings, pre-application meetings and pre-hearing meetings. The fact is you simply can’t get an outside planning or engineering consultant to a conceptual meeting or pre-application meeting unless you pay them (\$ hundreds) and since the application hasn’t been submitted yet, the Township would have to pay the consultants for each of these meetings. Having in-house planning and engineering review also: significantly increases their availability to the developer’s representatives (phone calls/ meetings/ etc to resolve review comments); and provides the developer with a critical certainty (typically outside consultants are hesitant to make decisions on behalf of their municipal client).

- *Simplified Completeness Review* – In Franklin Township, completeness review of a development application is conducted by one staff person – the Zoning Officer. The Zoning Officer review is usually conducted within a matter of days (a fraction of the 45 days permitted by law). In other towns, this review is commonly conducted by: various staff members; outside consultants; a committee of the Board; or the Board itself. Franklin Township’s simplified one-stop process potentially saves developers months of time and significant money.
- *Technical Review Committee (TRC) Approval of Site Plans* – The TRC is comprised of the Township staff that review development applications (i.e., Construction Official, Township Engineer, Planning Director, Zoning Officer, Health Director, Director of Fire Prevention, Traffic Safety Bureau). The Township recently amended its development ordinance authorizing the TRC to grant site plan approval to development applications that meet certain criteria (disturbance under a certain square footage and no variances). The TRC meets at least 3 times a month on Tuesday mornings. Applications for TRC review can be submitted as late as the day before the meeting. This process is unique in New Jersey and was highlighted in New Jersey Municipalities magazine.
- *Expedited Construction Permit Review* – The Construction Department has a process for expediting the review of construction permits.

L. RECYCLING PLAN

- **Issue:** It is recommended that the municipal recycling ordinance be updated as the Municipal Land Use Law is amended and as additional recyclable materials are added to the municipal collection system.

Status: This remains a valid recommendation.

Zoning Map

Franklin Township (Somerset Co.)



Department of Planning & Zoning

Mark Healey, PP/AICP
Director/ Township Planner

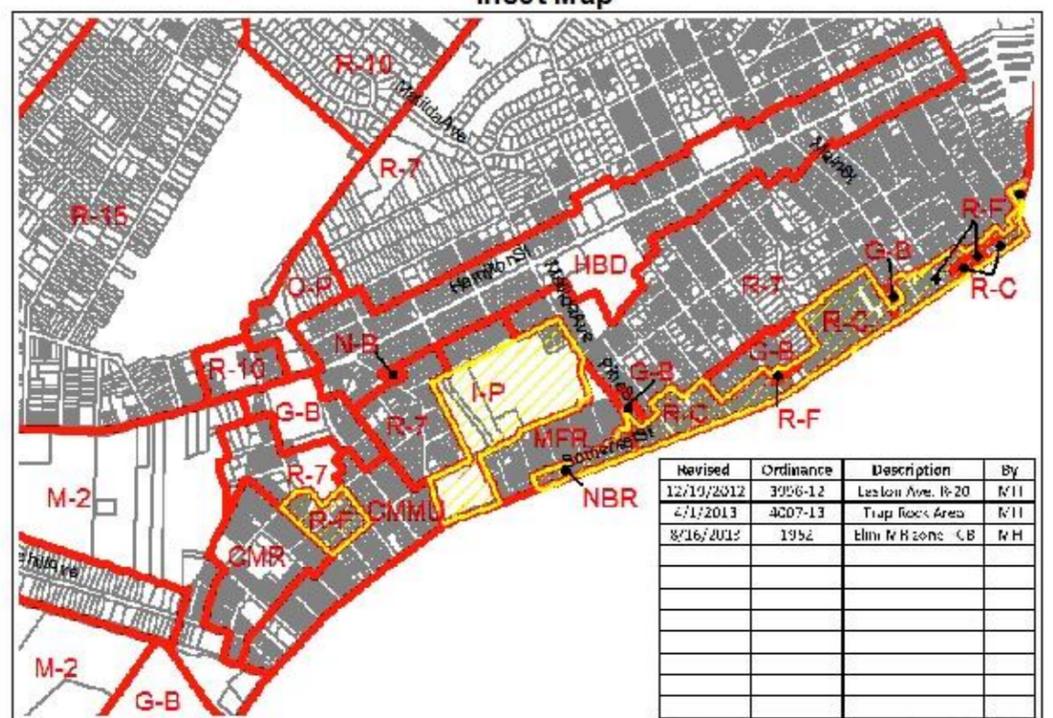
Zoning Districts

- A Agricultural
 - CP Canal Preservation
 - RR3 Rural Residential
 - RR5 Rural Residential
 - R-40 Single-Family Residential
 - R-20 Single-Family Residential
 - R-15 Single-Family Residential
 - R-10 Single-Family Residential
 - R-10A Single-Family Development
 - R-10B Single-Family Development
 - R-7 Residential
 - C-R Cluster-Residential
 - S-C-V Senior Citizen Village
 - PAC Planned Adult Community
 - PRC Planned Residential Community
 - ISL Independent Senior Living
 - N-B Neighborhood Business
 - G-B General Business
 - HSD Hamilton Street Business District
 - C-B Corporate Business
 - R-O-L Research-Office-Laboratory
 - O-P Office-Professional
 - M-1 Light Manufacturing
 - M-2 Light Manufacturing
 - M-3 Mining
 - M-3 Mining
- Renaissance Redevelopment Area*
- I-P Institutional/Public
 - R-C Renaissance Commercial
 - NBR Neighborhood Business/Residential
 - R-F Residential Infill
 - CMMU Churchill-Millstone Mixed Use
 - CMR Churchill-Millstone Residential
 - MFR Multi-Family Residential
- D&R Canal Redevelopment Area*
- M-S Market Street District
 - O-B Onka Bus District
 - F-I Franklin Inn District
 - O-G Old Georgetown District

Overlay Zoning Districts

- AC -- Agricultural Cluster Option
- CR - NH -- Cluster Residential (Nob Hill)
- H -- Local Historic District
- NBR -- Neighborhood Business - Residential
- NRPC -- Natural Resource Protection Cluster Option
- NRPC (R-40) -- Natural Resource Protection Cluster (R-40 option)
- RC -- Residential Cluster Option
- RDO -- Retail District Overlay

Inset Map



Lands within Historic Districts and land area located within 1000 feet of the D & R Canal are subject to the requirements of Section 112-200. Historic District Overlay. Brown dashed line on map indicates the 1000 foot distance from the D & R Canal.



September 2010

Map 2: Water Master Plan Map

