



**RE: MEETING NOTES – STEERING COMMITTEE
BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY (B-I) ZONE
MASTER PLAN REEXAMINATION
Franklin Township, Somerset County, NJ
PLANNING EVALUATION
CONTRACT # MC-FO-0015-23**

Our Project No. 230024b-FRK

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES

Meeting called by:
FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP
Date: Thursday, June 6, 2024
Time: 6:00 to 8:15 PM

Consultant Team Members:
John J. Jahr, Principal
David G. Roberts, AICP/PP
Alizon Serrano

Franklin Township Staff:
Mark Healey, AICP/PP
Director of Planning

Steering Committee Members Present:
Theresa Thorsen, Citizen member
David Robinson, Citizen member
Robert Thomas, Planning Board member; Zoning Board of Adjustment member
Charles Brown, Planning Board member

Steering Committee Members Absent:
Kiki Anastasokos, Citizen member
Emmanuel Maldonado, Business community
Sivaraman Anbarasan, Councilman and Planning Board member
Randy Jones, Citizen member

PROJECT PURPOSE

To provide the Township with an objective and thorough analysis of traffic impacts from various types of warehouses in the form of a Reexamination of the Master Plan and Land Development Regulations, with recommendations and potential zoning map amendments for a legally defensible regulatory strategy that will address resident concerns and fortify the Planning and Zoning Boards for dealing with future development applications in the Business-Industry (B-I) Zone.

Introduction of Consultant Team and Committee Members

Mr. Healy introduced himself as the Director of Planning for Franklin Township and Dave Roberts and John Jahr introduced the consultant team from Bright View Engineering. The members of the Steering Committee introduced themselves and gave background as to their roles in the community.



Overview of Scope of Work & Schedule

- Dave Roberts briefed the Committee on the activities of the consultant team, which included traffic counts taken between the start of the school year and the start of the holiday shopping season in 2023. The team also reviewed and mapped the development applications for warehouse uses in the Township and the traffic reports associated with each. Finally, Automatic Trip Recorder (ATR) data was collected by the Franklin Police Department and provided to the consultant team.
- Mr. Roberts and Mr. Jahr summarized the scope of the project, which involves the coordination of traffic analysis with land use analysis to produce a Master Plan Reexamination Report that provides recommendations to the Planning Board on a regulatory strategy for dealing with future warehouse development in the Township.
- Steering Committee meetings will occur periodically in a virtual format during the life of the project and between the two in-person Community Meetings. The first Community Meeting is scheduled for June 27 and the second is tentatively scheduled for August. The first Community Meeting would provide the public with an overview of the purpose and scope of the study and provide an opportunity for feedback. The second Community Meeting would provide the public with a summary of recommendations for amendments to the Master Plan and regulatory framework for the B-I Zone. It is anticipated that the final presentation of the final version of the Reexamination Report will be in October.

Committee Comments on Draft Presentation for Community Meeting #1

- Mr. Roberts walked the Committee through the draft presentation PowerPoint presentation for the first community meeting. The following comments were provided:
 - Labels will be revised to clarify the difference between the existing conditions and the conditions with projected traffic from constructed and approved projects (“No Build 1”) and all submitted projects (“No Build 2”).
 - Coloration of the arrows depicting the failing (LOS “F”) turning movements will be revised to make them easier to distinguish.
 - Add a slide to describe/define Level of Service (LOS) “A” through “F” prior to the slides showing the failing (“F”) turning movements.

Overall Committee Comments

- Mr. Thomas expressed concern that a couple of key intersections were omitted from the study. Mr. Healy explained that the 14 intersections that were analyzed were selected by the Township in consultation with the Township Police Department and other sources.
- Mr. Thomas asked if vehicular and truck traffic could be differentiated. Mr. Jahr explained that they use video recorders to be able to break down existing traffic by car and truck trips.
- The consultant team used the mapped developments to illustrate how the B-I Zone was close to being built out as far as available vacant land, based on the assumption that all the applications currently in the “pipeline” were eventually approved and constructed. However, the study results would still be useful in dealing with future applications, as the



Boards would be equipped with the “big picture” analysis when dealing with the traffic studies submitted for individual sites. It was pointed out that the “final wave” of applications would likely be sites that are currently developed with other uses, such as office buildings or hotels.

- The Committee asked if intersection geometry would play a part in the study, as several intersections lack the turning radii needed for a semi-tractor trailer. Mr. Jahr explained that the team was aware of the substandard intersections and suggested that one technique for dealing with future improvements would be to set up a Transportation Improvement District (TID), which would require future developers adding to traffic impacts at failing intersections to pay their pro-rata share of the cost of the improvements.
- Mr. Healy and Mr. Roberts explained that the recommendations in the Reexamination Report for amendments to the Land Use Element could point to other Master Plan Elements, such as the Circulation Element and the Community Facilities Element regarding impacts of traffic congestion on air quality, noise and environmental justice issues.

Follow-up Actions

- The consultant team will revise the PowerPoint per the Committee comments.
- Mr. Healey will begin working on a dedicated project page for the Township website for posting meeting notes, maps presentations, etc.
- Public notice for the first Community Meeting to be held on June 27 will be posted on the website and elsewhere.
- The next Steering Committee meeting will be scheduled in July in virtual format.