



**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

Virtual Meeting on MS TEAMS called
by:
FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP
Date: Wednesday, October 9, 2024
Time: 6:30 to 8:00 PM

Consultant Team Members:
David G. Roberts, AICP/PP

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

Steering Committee Members Present:
Sivaraman Anbarasan, Councilman and
Planning Board member
Theresa Thorsen, Citizen member
David Robinson, Citizen member
Kiki Anastasokos, Citizen member
Randy Jones, Citizen member

Steering Committee Members Absent:
Emmanuel Maldonado, Business
community
Robert Thomas, Planning Board
member; Zoning Board of
Adjustment member
Charles Brown, Planning Board
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. Healey introduced himself as the Director of Planning for Franklin Township and Dave Roberts from Bright View Engineering.

Status of Work & Schedule

- Dave Roberts shared a PowerPoint presentation with the Committee that updated them on the activities of the consultant team since the second Steering Committee Meeting held on August 29, 2024. Originally the second Community Meeting had been planned for October 9, but the work that had been done on draft changes to the Zoning Map and regulations led to a different approach than had been described to the Committee at the August meeting and it was necessary to brief the Committee prior to developing the approach more fully.
- The approach recommended by the consultant and Township staff is to apply performance standards, such as maximum truck trips per day or within any hour of the day, to all light industrial uses, including warehouses, to define them as either low intensity, medium intensity or high intensity uses. High intensity uses would be prohibited. Medium intensity uses might be a Conditional Use within a certain proximity to Interstate 287. Low intensity uses might be a Conditional Use within a specific minimum distance from a residential zone. The conditions would specify the proximity standards of the use and other standards designed to protect residents from the impacts of truck noise and exhaust emissions.
- Mr. Roberts explained that the objective of using the higher order streets (collectors and arterial roads) as the basis for regulating the location and routes to I-287 of medium and low intensity light industrial uses could form the basis to establish truck routes recommended to Somerset County, as many of the higher order streets that lead to I-287 are County roads.
- In response to a Steering Committee member, Mr. Roberts and Mr. Healey explained that, while slowing or stopping additional development applications for warehouses, it also made all the existing warehouses nonconforming uses, irrespective of their level of impact on traffic, noise or air quality. The likely result of a measured control structure, as proposed, based on the intensity of use would be that existing low impact warehouses could become conforming, while the higher intensity uses would remain prohibited.
- Mr. Roberts and Mr. Healey added that having such regulations in place would enable the Township to prevent conversions of existing low intensity light industrial uses into higher intensity uses, or when a “spec” warehouse site comes in for a zoning permit for a high intensity end-use. Mr. Healey gave an example of the height and number of loading doors as a key indicator, as fulfillment center uses have many loading bays with lower heights for the smaller vehicles used in “last mile” deliveries, while storage warehouses have fewer loading bays that are sized for tractor-trailers. The ordinance could be designed to either prevent such a conversion, or at a minimum, require Board approval under certain circumstances.
- Mr. Healey observed that there are miles of zone boundaries between the current B-I Zone and various residential zones, which will be a consideration when determining proximity standards for low intensity uses.



- Steering Committee members expressed general support for the recommended approach but indicated that they needed more detail – they requested that the areas where the proposed regulatory standards would allow medium and/or low intensity uses to locate be mapped and that the map delineate the residential zones that would be protected. Mr. Healey also suggested that when the standards are developed and the requested map created, it would be helpful to determine how many of the warehouses that had been approved and constructed over the past four years would have been approved if the standards had been in effect - e.g., what may have been classified as “light”, “medium” or “high” intensity so the Committee can understand real life examples.

Follow-up Actions

- The consultant team will further develop the zoning strategy, including the requested map.
- The recommended regulations and map will be reviewed with the Steering Committee prior to the public presentation at the second Community Meeting.