


MASTER PLAN
REEXAMINATION REPORT


Township of East Brunswick
Middlesex County, New Jersey

February 2011

Prepared by:

Department of Planning & Engineering


Leslie P. McGowan, P.P.#3137, AICP


Debra Rainwater, P.P.#2835, AICP

**TOWNSHIP OF EAST BRUNSWICK, N.J.
PLANNING BOARD**

RESOLUTION

2011 MASTER PLAN REEXAMINATION REPORT

WHEREAS, the Planning Board of the Township of East Brunswick is a duly constituted body as authorized by statute with the responsibility to supervise and be concerned with the orderly development and planning of the Township as authorized by the statutes and ordinances made and provided; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the requirements of N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89, a Master Plan Reexamination Report, dated February 2011, prepared by the Department of Planning and Engineering was reviewed by the Planning Board on February 16, 2011; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Board has reviewed and discussed the contents of the Reexamination Report and the recommendations contained therein;

WHEREAS, the Planning Board finds the report dated February 2011 accurately reflects the policies of the Planning Board .

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the East Brunswick Planning Board hereby adopts the Reexamination Report of the Master Plan.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of the report and resolution be sent to the Middlesex County Planning Board and to the municipal clerk of each adjoining municipality.

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that the foregoing is a true copy of a Resolution adopted by the Planning Board of the Township of East Brunswick at its public meeting held on February 16, 2011.


Charles Heppel
Planning Board Secretary

REEXAMINATION REPORT

Township of East Brunswick

Middlesex County, New Jersey

February 2011

INTRODUCTION

The Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) requires municipalities to reexamine their master plans at least every six years. The purpose of this requirement is to have regular reviews of current information and changing conditions in the interest of keeping long-range planning as up to date as possible.

In C. 40:55D-89 of the MLUL, the following language is set forth:

"The governing body shall, at least every 6 years, provide for a general reexamination of its master plan and development regulations by the planning board which shall prepare and adopt by resolution a report on the findings of such reexamination, a copy of which report and resolution shall be sent to the county planning board and the municipal clerk of each adjoining municipality.

The Planning Board originally adopted a new comprehensive Master Plan on April 4, 1990. This plan has been revalidated through Reexamination Reports adopted in 1995, 1999 and 2005. In addition, various elements of the Master Plan have been adopted since 1990 and remain in effect. The East Brunswick Adopted Plans are as follows:

- *Master Plan and Background Report, adopted 4/4/90
- *Land Use Plan Amendment for the RP, R-1, & MMHC Zoning Districts, adopted 6/2/99
- *2000 Farmland Preservation Plan Element, adopted 2/9/00
- *Open Space and Recreation Plan, adopted 3/7/01
- *Golden Triangle Redevelopment Plan, adopted 5/5/04, revised 10/26/05
- *Municipal Stormwater Management Plan, adopted 3/9/05
- *Revised Third Round Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, adopted 12/3/08

MUNICIPAL LAND USE LAW REQUIREMENTS

As mandated by the MLUL, the following five topics are required to be addressed within a municipality's reexamination report.

1. "The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of the adoption of the last reexamination report."
(MLUL C.40:55D-89a)

The 1995, 1999 Reexamination Reports and 1999 Land Use Plan Amendment and

the 2005 Reexamination Report readopted the goals and objectives from the 1990 Master Plan with the addition of several new goals to refine the Township's vision for its future. The following is a composite listing of all adopted goals with major problems, changes in assumptions, policies, or objectives relating to land development since the last reexamination noted in **bold print**.

1. To protect and preserve established residential areas, including single family, townhouse and multifamily areas.
2. To conserve as many environmentally sensitive areas in the township as feasible, with particular attention given to wetlands, areas with steep slopes, and those areas which are served by septic systems but which have seasonally high water tables.

The Environmental Commission initiated the annual temporary closure of Beekman Road to protect small migrating amphibians and reptiles crossing the road to breed in vernal pools. This annual closure occurs in late March.

3. To enhance services and accessibility to existing industrial and commercial concentrations located in the township.
4. To encourage preservation of historical landmarks.
5. To encourage development of a unified town center around the existing Civic Center as the major source of community identity, providing opportunities for a full range of activities and services to include: recreation and open space; additional governmental and educational offices; as well as civic, cultural, social and community services.

A community garden was established on a portion of the former Kelemen tract.

6. To encourage existing agricultural areas to remain.

The Township supported the County in acquiring the Warren Farm's development rights (Fresh Ponds Road), the former Matzel & Mumford property (200+ acres) and is participating in the purchase/retention of the Foerter Farm on Riva Avenue.

7. To continue to meet the housing needs of wide ranges of incomes and

age levels.

The Township incorporated planned senior citizen residence developments as a conditional use to the O/I zone on August 13, 2007.

8. To continue to provide varied housing types in meeting these needs.

The Township facilitated a forty (40) unit addition to the Oak Creek Affordable Senior Housing Complex. Occupancy occurred in 2007.

The Township was granted Third Round substantive certification by COAH in August 2009. Since 2005 twenty units of affordable housing have been created through the East Brunswick Community Housing Corporation (EBCHC) buy-down program.

9. To utilize planning and development techniques which consider social and environmental factors in meeting future housing needs.

10. To locate higher density housing near public transportation.

As part of the redevelopment of the Golden Triangle an ordinance allowing higher density housing was approved on October 31, 2005.

11. To locate public transit facilities near higher density housing.

A new municipal park and ride facility was constructed at the Golden Triangle site and opened to the public in 2008.

12. To continue to evaluate the role of industrial development in the township to ensure that the land use plan is balanced as well as being realistically responsive to regional growth opportunity.

13. To encourage additional tax producing uses in appropriate locations, such as office facilities, to assist in meeting local fiscal needs, to provide professional support services for the residents of the township and to provide additional local job opportunities.

A new ordinance exempting improvements with minor impacts from site plan approval was adopted on April 20, 2009.

14. To continue to recognize the role of Route 18 as a major regional

commercial retail area, but to continue to tightly define the extent of commercially-zoned land along Route 18 to minimize adverse impacts on nearby residential areas and to improve the quality of existing commercial development along the highway.

15. To promote adequacy, variety, convenience and pleasantness of shopping for local residents.
16. To utilize modern water runoff control techniques to improve local drainage patterns and enhance the environment, applying such controls in a manner which would enhance the safety of residents and animals.

A Municipal Stormwater Control Ordinance and Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan was enacted in 2006. Additionally, all public stormwater inlets were mapped and inlet markers were installed.

In accordance with Federal regulations the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance was updated on May 24, 2010.

17. To ensure all development is adequately served by public water, storm drainage and other utility systems in an economic and coordinated manner.

Storm drainage improvements were completed on Tompkins Road, Hamilton Road, Sanford Road, Watchung Road, Fourth Street and East Zoller Road. Watermain replacements were completed on West Amherst Street, Cotters Lane, Harrison Avenue, Roosevelt Avenue, Main Street, Madison Avenue, Coolidge Avenue, Lincoln Avenue, McKinley Avenue, Vaux Hall Road, Oak Crest Drive, Wilmot Street, Stella Court, Buffalo Run and Taylor Avenue.

18. To develop coordinated open space and recreational programs, both for improving utilization of existing areas as well as newly acquired park areas.

The Heavenly Farms parcel continued to be developed for open space and recreational uses including a dog park, turf fields for a variety of recreational programs, community theater, handicapped accessible level playing field, and bike paths.

The courtyard at the Municipal Complex was renovated into a passive park area with benches, walkways and new landscaping to link the three buildings together.

The Crandall School Playground located in the Historic District was renovated with new equipment, landscaping and walkways.

19. To continue to relate school and park areas to existing and future development patterns.

Memorial School is to be rebuilt in compliance with current education building standards after being substantially damaged by a fire.

20. To provide quality education at all levels for residents of the township.
21. To promote the full use of school facilities for recreational and community activities.
22. To continue adequate fire and police services with appropriate facilities, manpower and equipment distributed according to need.

Fire Districts 1 & 2 are upgrading firehouse facilities in these districts.

23. To cooperate in improvement and provision of local health and social services coordinated with regional efforts.
24. To encourage continued monitoring of needed regional highway improvements, particularly on Route 18 and the New Jersey Turnpike, to assure that they will not adversely affect township residents and that they will be designed to best serve the township and its immediate environs.

A major roadway improvement and intersection reconfiguration at the intersections of Route 18/ Tices Lane/ W. Prospect Street was completed in 2006.

25. To develop a safe, efficient, local circulation system with maximum convenience and minimum adverse effect on land traversed.

The following Township roads were upgraded:

Willow Street, Tices Lane, Kimberly Road, Riva Avenue, Old Stage Road, Fresh Ponds Road, Dutch Road, Cotters Lane, Sullivan Way, Farms Road, Harts Lane, and Church Lane.

26. To promote the construction of bikeways and pedestrian ways.

A bikeway from Fern Road through Diderickson Park and Heavenly Farms to Dunhams Corner Road was completed in 2010.

27. To continue to evaluate existing development controls regarding design standards, lot sizes, building setbacks, coverage and density of various land uses, in order to ensure compatible development with the existing environment and nearby developed areas.
28. To address the particular problems involved in establishing appropriate development standards for lots which adjoin high density residential and commercial areas.
29. To promote the retention of existing agricultural lands and to support ongoing agricultural activities through a combination of land use policy, acquisition of development rights, creative development techniques and limitations on land use activities that interfere with continued farming.

The Township has supported retention of the Foerter Farm, the Warren Farm as well as the agricultural parcels included in the former Matzel & Mumford lands.

30. To provide land use management strategies which promote the conservation of sensitive natural resources and which limit the impact of future development in this area.
31. To retain the largely undeveloped and rural character which pervades western and southwestern East Brunswick, in part by limiting the introduction of growth-inducing infrastructure.

The Middlesex County future wastewater service area maps to be adopted in early 2011 are consistent with this Master Plan goal.

32. To promote the conservation of open space through public acquisition, acquisition of less than fee interests and implementation of land use policies supportive of the permanent preservation of open space areas.

The Township supported the County in acquiring the Warren Farm's development rights (Fresh Ponds Road), the former Matzel & Mumford property (200+ acres) and is participating in the purchase/retention of the Foerter Farm on Riva Avenue.

33. To support the objectives of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan including the retention of large contiguous areas of agriculture and open space, and providing for development which respects the carrying capacity of land and water resources while also preserving unique and sensitive natural areas.

C.40:55D-89b.

This provision of the MLUL reads as follows:

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

Many of the problems and objectives continue as stated in the Master Plan. The following matters are of particular interest to the Planning Board as of the date of the preparation of this report:

1. The RP/Rural Preservation zoning was upheld for most of the properties within the RP District. Eleven properties involved in challenging the zoning reverted to the prior RP standards (1 lot per 2 acres minimum density).
2. The Township was granted Revised Third Round Substantive Certification by the Council On Affordable Housing (COAH) in 2009. Due to court challenges to the COAH regulations which formed the basis for this Substantive Certification as well as other pending housing legislation, the status of the Township's position as it relates to its affordable housing obligation is uncertain.
3. In 2010 legislation was enacted that permits the conversion of approved, not yet occupied, age-restricted housing to non-age-restricted housing.
4. Providing for bikeways and pedestrian paths as alternative transportation modes.
5. Implementation of the Golden Triangle Redevelopment Plan.
6. Implementation of the State mandated Stormwater Management plan and Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan.
7. The economic recession starting in December 2007 has had a major impact on many aspects of the Townships economic vitality particularly in the housing and commercial sectors.

C.40:55D-89c.

This provision of the MLUL reads as follows:

"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."

Since the 2005 Master Plan reexamination, the following changes have occurred which have a bearing on the planning process in the Township:

1. Regulations governing the provision of affordable housing are in a state of flux with lawsuits and new legislation pending. East Brunswick was granted substantive certification based on the revised third round COAH regulations in 2009. Despite the continuous legal challenges to the Affordable Housing certification process in New Jersey, the Township has a demonstrated commitment to providing affordable housing.
2. Major road improvements completed include: Willow Street, Tices Lane, Kimberly Road, Riva Avenue, Old Stage Road, Fresh Ponds Road, Dutch Road, Cotters Lane, Sullivan Way, Farms Road, Harts Lane, and Church Lane.
3. In October 2008, the state finalized an Energy Master Plan for New Jersey "to place New Jersey at the forefront of a growing clean energy economy with aggressive energy efficiency and renewable energy goals and action items, and the development of a 21st century energy infrastructure." Designed to achieve New Jersey's 2020 and 2050 greenhouse gas targets while maintaining affordable, adequate and reliable energy supplies, the Energy Master Plan proposes to reduce projected energy demand by 20% by 2020.
4. On Feb. 13, 2009, Congress passed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). The Township received a grant through the ARRA which funded the replacement of 25 year old lighting within the municipal complex parking lots with LED energy efficient lighting. Savings in electricity costs and energy usage was immediate.
5. East Brunswick became a certified municipality by Sustainable Jersey in 2009.
6. The 2009 American Community Survey released data from 2005-2009 providing updated demographic information about the characteristics of the population and housing stock in the Township. The significant changes based on an analysis of this data (see attachment one) are as follows:

- a. The population continues to age as evidenced by the median age.
- b. The level of educational attainment continues to show improvement by the percentage of high school and college graduates.
- c. The labor force is becoming increasingly white collar, while fewer workers are in blue collar jobs.
- d. Growth in population has slowed considerably. East Brunswick can be considered a developed municipality.

C.40:55D-89d.

This provision of the MLUL reads as follows:

"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."

The following changes are recommended:

1. The Bikeway/Pedway Element should be updated to reflect existing bikeways & pedways, new development and locations for future bikeway/pedways;
2. An evaluation of the maximum allowable impervious cover for each zone should be completed to determine whether a reduction in allowable pervious cover is appropriate; *Implemented in May 2012 - New Ordinance*
3. The following locations should be studied for possible rezoning as noted due to incompatibility with existing land use patterns:
 - a. Change Schoolhouse Lane C-3 to residential.
 - c. Turnpike Headquarters change from R-3 to office.
 - d. Milltown Rd./Ryders Lane intersection - review OP-1 and R-3 designations.
 - e. Delete P-I by Turnpike & Milltown Rd., change to R-3.
 - f. R-3 / R-4 boundary line south of Rues Lane should follow property lines.

- g. Review C-2 zones on Summerhill Road.
 - h. Review outparcels with PURD option which have insufficient qualifying acreage for deletion of the PURD option and investigate a transition lot option.
4. Rezoning recommendations not addressed from the 1990 Land Use Element of the Master Plan should be reviewed and implemented. These are as follows:
 - a. Rezone Briar Ridge to VG;
 - b. Review Sunrise Landing for R-3;
 - c. Review Sunburst Hills for VG;
 - d. Remove underlying zone for developed PURD's.
 5. A conservation plan element providing for the preservation, conservation, and utilization of natural resources, including energy and other resources should be prepared. Pursuant to Municipal Land Use Law this element would address energy conservation and energy efficiency goals for all Township properties and vehicles.
 6. The "Definitions" section of the Township Land Use Ordinances should be revised to address definitions for words that no longer appear in the ordinance and definitions that vary from Municipal Land Use Law definitions. Additionally, occurrences of definitions included within the text of the Land Use Ordinances should be rectified.

C.40:55D-89e.

This provision of the MLUL reads as follows:

"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."

The Planning Board adopted the Golden Triangle Redevelopment Plan on May 5, 2004. The Township Council initially adopted the Redevelopment Plan on May 24, 2004. The Redevelopment Plan was amended on October 26, 2005 by the Township Council. The Plan may undergo further revisions given changes in development trends since 2005.

2000 - 2009 Census Data Comparison
General Population Characteristics

	<u>2000</u>		<u>2009</u>		<u>%Change</u>
Population	46,756		47,148		0.8
Pop. Density (sq. mi.)	2,106		2,124		0.8
Med. Household Income	\$75,956		\$101,283		33.3
Housing Units	16,640		17,124		2.9
Single-fam. Det. Units	11,133		11,375		2.2
<u>Age Groups</u>		<u>% of Pop.</u>		<u>% of Pop.</u>	
Under 5	2,768	5.9%	2,635	5.6%	-4.8
5-64	38,559	82.5%	39,160	83.1%	1.6
65 & over	5,429	11.6%	5,361	11.4%	-1.3
Median Age	39.1		41.1		5.1
<u>Housing Values</u>	<u>2000</u>		<u>2009</u>		<u>%Change</u>
Owner Occup. Med. Val.	\$212,800		\$401,600		88.7
Renter Occup. Med. Val.	\$877		\$1252		42.8
<u>Educational Attainment</u>					
Grades Completed					
0-8	1004	3.2%	613	1.9%	-38.9
High Sch. 1-3	1484	4.7%	1047	3.3%	-29.4
4	7050	22.3%	6693	20.9%	-5.1
College 1-3	7204	22.8%	6376	20.0%	-11.5

4+	14,910	47.1%	17,219	53.9%	15.5
% of H.S. Grads or higher	29,164	92.1%	30,288	94.8%	3.9
	<u>2000</u>		<u>2009</u>		<u>%Change</u>
<u>Labor Force Status</u>					
Civilian Labor Force	25,008		25,657		2.5
Employed	24,136		24,234		0.4
Unemployed	872		1,423		63.2
% of Civ. Lab. Force unemployed	3.5		5.5		
Armed Forces	11		42		281.8
Not in Labor Force	10,999		10,998		0.01
<u>Industry of Employed</u>					
Agriculture	16		44		175.
Construction	863		869		0.7
Manufacturing	2791		2275		-18.5
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	1158		1179		1.8
Wholesale Trade	1176		895		-23.9
Retail Trade	2746		2138		-22.1
Finance., Insur. & Real Est.	2805		3333		18.8
Services	10,338		12,668		22.5
Public Administration	777		833		7.2