



2026 PLAINSBORO TOWNSHIP RE-EXAMINATION REPORT

Plainsboro Township, New Jersey

DATE: January 20, 2026



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade or so development the Township has been following national trends and shifting away from classic single-use suburban office space with large office and corporate tenants. In Plainsboro and elsewhere, office tenants have been relocating and seeking to downsize or move to more urban locations. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath have also sent office workers home to work, if only in a hybrid capacity (three days in the office and two days at home), which has reduced the demand for office space by existing office tenants, particularly corporate tenants. This condition was recognized in the April 2019 and October 2022 Re-examination Reports. The former most importantly resulting in Master Plan and ordinance changes related to the Princeton Nurseries planned mixed use development (Integrated Mixed-Use Neighborhood Development), and the latter relating to comprehensive changes to Chapter 2 of the Master Plan (Statement of Objectives, Principles, Assumptions, Policies and Standards or SOPAPS), as well as Chapter 3 (Land Use Plan Element). With the land use trends described in the 2019 and 2022 Re-examination Reports continuing largely unabated, and in response to the need to comply with state mandated Fourth Round affordable housing obligations, this Re-examination focuses on the opportunity that the aforementioned land use trend presents in terms of utilizing under-performing (i.e., vacant or nearly vacant office buildings) or in some cases, sites that received approvals in the past for office development, but have remained undeveloped, in some cases for decades.

2.0 RE-EXAMINATION REQUIREMENT

The State's Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) requires a municipality to re-examine their Master Plan and land development regulations at least every ten (10) years. Such re-examination is required to include consideration of the following items:

- A. The major problems or issues and objectives related to land development in the Township at the time of the adoption of the last Re-Examination Report and the extent to which such matters and objectives have been reduced or increased since that time.
- B. The extent to which there have been significant changes in the assumptions, policies, and objectives forming the basis of the Master Plan and development regulations since last revised, with particular regard to the density and distribution of land uses; housing conditions; circulation; conservation of natural resources; energy conservation; the collection, disposition and recycling of designated recyclable materials; and changes in State, County, and municipal goals, objectives, or policies.
- C. The specific changes recommended to the Master Plan and development regulations, if any, including underlying goals, objectives, policies, and standards, or whether a new plan or regulations should be prepared.



3.0 LOCAL RE-EXAMINATION HISTORY

The purpose of the re-examination requirement in the MLUL is to ensure that the Master Plan and development regulations remain consistent or compatible with each other, as well as being current and capable of addressing the development needs and concerns of the community. In 2009 the Township undertook a comprehensive re-examination of the Master Plan which resulted in an updated Master Plan document. In 2014, the Township again undertook a re-examination of the Master Plan; this time with a particular focus on the Land Use Plan Element as it pertains to the PMUD Zone and the PMUD Zone regulations. In 2016, the Township completed another re-examination that was largely focused on the R-300 residential zone. In August 2018, the Township completed a re-examination related to the location and regulations of public utility facilities in the township. As referenced above, in April 2019, the Township undertook a re-examination due to the need to consider changes to the Master Plan and the PMUD Zone regulations arising from the expiration of the GDP approval for the Princeton Forrestal Center. The exercise led to amendments to the Master Plan and zoning regulations, the major change of which included land use policy and zoning changes related to the Princeton Nurseries planned mixed-use development. Lastly, as referenced above, in October 2022, the Township undertook a re-examination of the Master Plan, focused principally on an update to Chapter 2 of the Master Plan (Statement of Objectives, Principles, Assumptions, Policies and Standards or SOPAPS), as well as Chapter 3 (Land Use Plan Element).

4.0 RE-EXAMINATION DISCUSSION

A. The major problems or issues and objectives related to land development in the Township at the time of the adoption of the last Re-Examination Report and the extent to which such matters and objectives have been reduced or increased since that time.

1. The major issues presented in the 2022 Re-examination Report related to the following:

- a) Local trends involving population and housing:
 - i. Stagnation in local population growth and housing unit growth is likely due to reaching build-out capacity on developable land with its current zoning and regulatory framework. Support of the vitality of existing commercial centers and any future mixed-use centers (e.g., Princeton Forrestal Village, Princeton Nurseries, and Fusion at Plainsboro) will require an increase in the number and diversity of housing types and population.
- b) Regional and national changes related to land use demand:
 - i. Due to current trends involving a shift away from low-density, isolated, car-oriented, single use suburban-style office parks, towards more desirable, walkable, highly “amenitized” mixed-use developments, as well as the

impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on office space demand and work preferences (hybrid or full-time work from home), as well as the effect of generational preferences (e.g., millennials) and changes in technology (e.g., internet services).

- c) Climate change and hazard vulnerability assessment:
 - i. Passage of Senate Bill 2607 (2/4/2021) required all local Master Plan to incorporate climate change risk and adaptation strategies.

2. Extent to which such matters and objectives have been reduced or increased since that time:

- a) As noted in both the 2019 and 2022 re-examination reports, locally, large areas in Plainsboro continue to be dedicated to suburban-style office parks. There continues to be a persistent lack of demand for large-scale office development and a high vacancy rate within existing office developments in the Township. Additionally, lands that were approved for large-scale office development decades ago, remain undeveloped to this day.
- b) As noted in the 2022 re-examination report, the Township's population growth and housing unit growth has remained relatively flat for years (2010: 23,000, 2020: 24,000, 2025" 24,884 est.), which is largely due to restrictions on developable land currently planned and zoned for non-residential development.

B. The extent to which there have been significant changes in the assumptions, policies, and objectives forming the basis of the Master Plan and development regulations since they were last revised.

1. The 2019 re-examination principally resulted in changes to the Land Use Plan Element portion of the Master Plan intended to facilitate the development of a mixed-use development (referred to as "Integrated Mixed-Use Neighborhood Development") on a large undeveloped area of land located in the PMUD Zone. Such area had been planned and designated for decades under the former general development plan (GDP) for the Princeton Forrestal Center (PFC) for a large-scale office-research development (two million sq. ft. of office with 100,000 sq. ft. of commercial). In association with the 2019 re-examination, changes were also made to the PMUD Zone regulations and to the site plan regulations related to the aforementioned planned mixed-use development.
2. The 2022 Master Plan Update is recognized as a comprehensive update to the assumptions, policies, and objectives section of the Master Plan (referred to above as "SOPAPS"), as well as the Land Use Plan Element. While the 2022 Master Plan updates addressed the recommendations in the 2022 Re-examination Report, among the most significant changes that came out of that Master Plan update is the shift to encourage mixed-use development in many of the Township's non-residential zoning districts;



however, given the persistent lack of demand for large-scale office development and the high vacancy rate of existing office within the township, against a backdrop of large tracts of land in the PFC that is zoned, planned, and in some cases approved for large scale office development, one of the major challenges continues to be the consideration of new land use options for such areas that will complement both existing and planned nearby developments.

5.0 RE-EXAMINATION RECOMMENDATIONS

This re-examination is being undertaken in anticipation of possible planning and zoning changes to the PFC related to sites zoned and designated for Office-Research Development (see PMUD Use Location Map), which are well suited for multifamily residential development and which would include a significant component of affordable housing in compliance with the New Jersey Fair Housing Act and the Uniform Housing Affordability Controls (UHAC). It is recommended that the following changes be made to the Master Plan (Land Use Plan Element) and to the PMUD Zone regulations and the PMUD Zone Use Location Map.