

TOWNSHIP OF PLAINSBORO

MASTER PLAN

RE-EXAMINATION REPORT

August 23, 2016

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Township of Plainsboro, as well as other municipalities within the State of New Jersey, is required to maintain an up-to-date Master Plan and associated land development regulations. To this end, New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (NJSA 49:55D-89) requires that municipalities undertake a re-examination of their Master Plans and development regulations at least every ten (10) years. The Township last undertook a re-examination of the Master Plan in June 2014 in association with changes then under consideration involving the PMUD Zone and the Princeton Forrestal Village. This Re-examination is in response to changes contemplated to the Master Plan and the R-300 residential zone regulations in order to comply with Court imposed affordable housing obligations. The changes under consideration involve the Land Use Plan Element (R-300 Zone provisions) and the Housing and Fair Share Plan Element of the Master Plan and the R-300 Zone regulations. The findings and conclusions resulting from this process shall be adopted by the Planning Board by resolution, of copy of which shall be sent to the Middlesex County Planning Board and the Municipal Clerks of the adjoining municipalities.

2. OVERVIEW

The Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) requires a municipality to re-examine its 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 and objectives related to land development in the Township at the time of the adoption of the last Master Plan or Re-Examination Report.
- 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 of the Master Plan and development regulations, as 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 policy, goals, and objectives.
- D. The specific changes recommended for the Master Plan and development regulations, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, whether a new plan or regulation should be prepared.

The purpose of the re-examination requirement is to ensure that the Master Plan and development regulations remain viable, current and capable of addressing the development pressures and concerns of the Township. In 2009 the Township undertook a comprehensive re-examination of the Master Plan, which resulted in an entirely 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 the two years since the last re-examination, there have been no substantive changes in local conditions or policies related to land use to warrant a comprehensive re-examination of the Master Plan or development regulations. There have, however, been ongoing discussions with entities associated with affordable housing and analyzes prepared by the Township's special consultant on the issue that have resulted in the preparation of a new Housing and Fair Share Plan Element; the details of which are contained in such document. While this re-examination incorporates by reference the analyses and conclusions associated with that document, it is intended primarily to focus on the particular changes to the Master Plan and zoning regulations needed to allow the development of high quality low and/or moderate income housing on a particular Township owned parcel located in the R-300 Zone. As such, the response to the required review items below will be within the context of the proposed changes to the Master Plan and zoning regulations relative to the subject R-300 zoned parcel under consideration.

3. ISSUES AND OBJECTIVES RELATED TO LAND DEVELOPMENT IN THE TOWNSHIP OF PLAINSBORO AT THE TIME OF THE ADOPTION OF THE LAST RE-EXAMINATION REPORT AND MASTER PLAN AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH SUCH MATTERS HAVE BEEN REDUCED OR INCREASED SINCE THAT TIME

The primary issues and objectives set forth in the 2014 Master Plan were identified in the areas of land use, circulation, and parks and open space. These same issues and objectives are recognized as being as relevant today as they were in 2014. With the township approaching full build-out of much of its land under current planning policies, a new emphasis has been placed on opportunities for redevelopment and strategic development of properties in the township, whose current use is inefficient and does not represent the full development potential and positive impact that such properties could provide in terms of satisfying the varied goals and objectives of the Master Plan.

In view of the discussions and analyses done on the affordable housing issue to date and the affordable housing obligation being imposed on the Township at this time, it is imperative that where the Township has developable land that it owns that is not otherwise preserved for farmland or open space, that such land be identified and favorably zoned to provide a realistic opportunity for the development of such housing.

4. THE EXTENT TO WHICH THERE HAVE BEEN SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN THE PRINCIPLES, ASSUMPTIONS, POLICIES, GOALS AND/OR OBJECTIVES SINCE THE ADOPTION OF THE LAST RE-EXAMINATION REPORT AND MASTER PLAN

With the exception of the affordable housing issue mentioned above, there have been no major changes in circumstances or policies related to land development since the adoption of the 2014 Master Plan Re-examination Report.

5. PROPOSED MASTER PLAN AMENDMENTS

Purpose of Proposed Amendments

The proposed amendments to include Low and/or Moderate Income Dwelling Units in the R-300 Zone as a permitted use subject to satisfying a number of development standards are intended to facilitate the development of high quality low and/or moderate income housing on a parcel of land owned by the Township where such housing could be suitably accommodated and would contribute to partially fulfilling the Township's overall affordable housing obligation under the current state affordable housing requirements.

Specific Amendments

The following represents the changes to the Master Plan that are relevant to the land use and zoning changes contemplated for the R-300 Zone.

Note: New text is in **boldface** and underlined.

III. LAND USE PLAN ELEMENT

D. Residential Land Uses

1. Low Density Residential Light Impact Zone (one du/3 acres, R-350)
2. Low Density Residential Zone (one du/acre, R-300)

In the R-300 low density residential zone, the following uses are permitted:

- Detached single-family dwellings on one acre lots
- Type I planned residential cluster on minimum 100 acre tracts at a maximum gross residential density of 0.65 du/acre
- Type II planned residential cluster on minimum 50 acre tracts at a maximum gross residential density of 0.55 du/acre



Single Family Detached House

- Type III planned residential cluster on minimum 100 acre tracts at a maximum gross residential density of 0.34 du/acre
- **Low and/or moderate income dwelling units**
- Parks and playgrounds
- Conservation and open space areas
- Necessary public utilities and services, including schools and other public facilities
- Cemeteries
- Volunteer organizations
- Childcare centers
- Family day care homes
- Home occupations and professional offices

For by-right single family development, the minimum lot size is one acre or 43,560 square feet, with a minimum frontage of 200 feet. The maximum building height is 35 feet.

Conditional uses are permitted for the following:

- Agricultural activities
- Institutions
- Camps for children

This land use classification is located east of the Amtrak railroad tracks along Dey Road. The northern boundary of this area consists of the Shallow Brook which, with its stream corridor and adjacent poor quality soils and mature tree masses, provides a permanent buffer and land use separation between any residential development within the zone and the existing R-350 zone to the north of the Shallow Brook. The R-350 zone allows for single-family detached residential development at one du/3 acres and clustering on minimum 1 acre lots and even smaller lots provided septic system suitability is proven by the developer.

The southern border of the R-300 area abuts the existing high density PCD zone. The PCD zone contains thousands of residential dwelling units developed by Lincoln Properties or Linpro, an 18-hole Middlesex County Golf Course, the Enterprise Business Park, and the Princeton Meadows Neighborhood Shopping Center. The PCD zone also permits the development of low and moderate-income housing.

To the west, the R-300 zone is bordered by the VC Village Center Zone and the Amtrak railroad tracks. The Queenship of Mary Church is located opposite the Municipal Center within the R-300 zone along the western edge. To the east, the zone is bordered by South Brunswick Township and is also within proximity to Cranbury Township. The land in South Brunswick is planned for open space conservation, recreation, and rural residential development. South Brunswick requires a minimum of 2 acres

and 3 acres of land per dwelling unit and also permits clustering on minimum 1 acre lots. The area in Cranbury is classified Light Impact Residential which permits single family detached residential on minimum 4 acre lots. Two (2) minimum 1-acre single-family residential development projects known as Harding Hills and Brentwood Estates are located within the eastern portion of the R-300 zone. The construction at both of these projects has been completed for a number of years.

The R-300 zone contains approximately 840.31 total acres. Dey Road, Scudders Mill Road, and Plainsboro Road are the three major roadways which service the zone. Middlesex County someday plans to widen Dey Road from 2 to 4 lanes and the Township has implemented a secondary parallel collector roadway network to interconnect various development parcels located north of Dey Road in the R-300 zone. The collector roadway is known as Woodland Drive. The zone contains many scattered single-family detached dwellings located along Dey Road, Scotts Corner Road and Eiker Road. A significant amount of residential development within the R-300 zone is serviced by public sewer and centralized water.

The R-300 zone permits single-family dwellings on minimum 1-acre lots as well as parks and playgrounds, conservation and open space areas, and planned residential clusters on minimum 100-acre tracts. The maximum residential density of a planned residential cluster is not permitted to exceed .65 dwelling units per gross acre. In addition, planned residential clusters must devote at least 45 percent of the land mass to conservation, open space, and/or recreational purposes and be serviced with a public sewer and centralized water system. Single-family homes in a planned residential cluster development would have to be located on minimum 20,000 square foot lots. The R-300 zone provides the Township with a low-density residential environment that promotes a desirable and necessary contrast from townhouse and garden apartment living in the nearby PCD zone and elsewhere.

Much of the new residential subdivision activity in the R-300 zone has been clustered to create significant amounts of common open space that has been permanently preserved as natural conservation areas, buffer areas, farm land or land used for a Township Community Park and the Township Public Works facility.

In addition to the predominant single family development that serves the demand for market rate housing in this area of town, is an undeveloped 30± acre parcel owned by the Township on Dey Road that is suitable for low and/or moderate income housing development in recognition and partial satisfaction of the Township's affordable housing obligation under the current state requirements for such

housing. The development of low and/or moderate income housing on this parcel shall be permitted subject to compliance with a number of development standards set forth in the R-300 Zone regulations, intended to ensure that such housing will be developed in a manner that results in high quality development that is integrated into the character and fabric of the immediate neighborhood and overall community.

6. PROPOSED DRAFT ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS

Note: Deleted text is enclosed in [brackets]; new text is underlined.

DRAFT

R-300 Low-Density Zone Regulations

§ 101-32. Permitted uses.

In the R-300 Low-Density Residential Zone, no lot shall be used and no structure shall be erected, altered, or occupied for any purpose except the following:

- A. Detached single-family dwellings and the accessory structures and uses normally auxiliary thereto.
- [G]B. Planned residential cluster Type I, subject to the following requirements and conforming to the findings of a planned development as defined by the Municipal Land Use Law, N.J.S.A. 40:55D-45, and in accordance with an approved general development plan[.];
- [H]C. Planned residential cluster Type II, subject to the following requirements and conforming to the findings of a planned development as defined by the Municipal Land Use Law, N.J.S.A. 40:55D-45, and in accordance with an approved preliminary and final subdivision plan[.];
- [I]D. Planned residential cluster Type III, subject to the following requirements and conforming to the findings of a planned development as defined by the Municipal Land Use Law, N.J.S.A. 40:55D-45, and in accordance with an approved preliminary and final subdivision plan:
- E. Low and/or moderate income dwelling units subject to the following standards:
 - (1) The land associated with such use shall include undeveloped land not designated as preserved farmland or open space in the Township Master Plan, contain a minimum of 30 acres, have a minimum frontage of 1,000 feet on a minor arterial roadway, and be owned by the Township.
 - (2) A mix of affordable housing units shall be constructed as deemed necessary and desirable by the Township in association with the Township's affordable housing obligation as determined by the court.
 - (3) Residential density shall not exceed 10 dwelling units per acre on the portion of the tract dedicated to affordable housing. The residential density on the overall tract shall not exceed 3.5 dwelling units per acre.

- (4) Outdoor recreational amenities and play space shall be provided within the development to serve the residential units being constructed subject to the approval of the Planning Board.
- (5) Pedestrian and bicycle access to adjoining residential areas shall be provided where practical and feasible to do so.
- (6) Building and improvement coverage shall not exceed 15 percent and 40 percent, respectively, of the land associated with the affordable housing development site.
- (7) Building height shall be limited to 35 feet, with additional height allowed subject to Planning Board approval.
- (8) The minimum building and parking setbacks from a public street and existing residential properties shall be 100 feet.
- (9) Parking shall be provided at a rate of 1.25 spaces per one bedroom unit, 2.0 spaces per two bedroom units, 2.5 per three bedroom units, and 0.25 parking spaces per unit for visitor parking, or as determined to be adequate by the Planning Board pursuant to §85-44C of the Township Code. All parking shall be adequately screened and/or buffered from abutting residential properties subject to Planning Board approval.
- (10) All such development shall be served by public sewer and water systems.

[B]E. Parks and playgrounds.

[C]G. Conservation and open space areas, e.g., wilderness areas, forests, scenic areas and woodlot management.

[D]H. Necessary public utilities and services, including schools and other public facilities.

[E]I. Cemeteries.

[F]J. Volunteer first aid and rescue squad units and volunteer fire companies.

[J]K. Child-care centers, subject to the minimum standards found in § 101-25F. Child-care centers as an accessory use are permitted subject to the standards contained in § 101-13.4.

[K]L. Family day-care homes, subject to the terms set forth in the family day-care home definition in § 101-1.

[L]M. Home occupations and professional offices, subject to the standards found in § 101-13.5.