

TOWNSHIP OF PLAINSBORO

RE-EXAMINATION REPORT

February 27, 2019

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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 and development regulations on August 20, 2018 in association with changes under consideration involving the location and regulation of Necessary Public Utilities and Services in the township.

This re-examination is being undertaken in anticipation of possible planning and zoning changes to an area of the township known as the *Princeton Forrestal Center* (PFC). The PFC is a 1,724± acre planned development by the Trustees of Princeton University, located on the west side of the township, with primary access from Route One, College Road East, and Scudders Mill Road. The PFC represents nearly one-quarter of the township's total land area. It's current zoning, PMUD Planned Unit Development, permits a wide range of non-residential and residential uses, with limited bulk requirements intended to provide maximum flexibility in both planning and site design. Among the key features of the PFC are its scale, its varied non-residential and residential uses, its large preserved open space areas, and its somewhat bucolic auto oriented circulation system, that includes a network of nature trails and pedestrian paths to accommodate the needs of pedestrians and cyclists. The planning impetus for the PFC goes back over forty years to 1975, initially involving what was referred to as a "Tentative Approval," and then later, in the 1999, General Development Plan (GDP) approval. The current GDP approval, which was granted by the Planning Board on June 21, 1999, has a twenty year time horizon, expiring later this year.

In light of the expiration of the PFC GDP this year, questions and issues have arisen regarding the manner in which certain properties in the PFC, which are owned by Princeton University and which have yet to be developed, should be handled, including the possibility of one or more new GDP approvals to accommodate their future development in compliance with the prevailing requirements for GDPs. In addition, Master Plan and PMUD Zone amendments will need to be considered both to address such possible GDPs, as well as to clarify the applicable use and bulk regulations for those portions of the existing PFC that will fall outside any new GDPs.

2. OVERVIEW

The State's 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 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.

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. Most recently, in August 2018, the Township completed a re-examination related to the location and regulations of public utility facilities in the township.

As noted above, due to the upcoming expiration of the GDP approval for the PFC, the Planning Board recognizes the need to investigate and respond to the various planning and zoning issues that present themselves at this time. Among the issues that the Planning Board has identified include: 1) how best to plan for and regulate the development of Princeton University owned properties which have not yet been developed under the current GDP; 2) what new planning and

development opportunities present themselves at this time that may better support and enhance the future of the PFC, the township, and adjoining areas, than the current land use planning and zoning policies of the PFC GDP (e.g., Princeton Nurseries area); and 3) what zoning use and bulk regulations will be needed for those portions of the existing PFC GDP that will fall outside of any new GDPs that may be considered.

This re-examination is focused on this urgent and timely need to investigate and respond to these matters by putting in place land use plans and policies needed to address the opportunities and challenges posed by the future development of the PFC. The responses to the required review items below should be viewed within this context.

3. MAJOR PROBLEMS/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 HAVE BEEN REDUCED OR INCREASED SINCE THAT TIME.

The major problem or issue and objective under consideration at the time of the last Re-examination Report in 2018 was related to the need to examine the then existing Township policies for locating and regulating necessary public utilities throughout the township. The Township became aware of the need to address this issue while collaborating with the local electric utility company, PSE&G, on an upcoming project. With the adoption of a new ordinance by the Township in October 2018, the Planning Board is of the opinion that the principal issue that was the subject of the last Re-examination Report has been addressed.

4. 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.

Given the persistent lack of demand for large scale office development and the high-vacancy rate of existing office within the township, against a back drop 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, more sustainable, land use options for such areas that will complement planned and existing nearby developments, and contribute to an enhancement of the quality of life in the community.

In view of the situation involving the PFC GDP described above, yes, consideration is being given to changes in the assumptions, policies, and objectives that underlie the current Master Plan as it relates to the PFC and the

development regulations related thereto; including possible amendments to the existing PMUD zone regulations, as well as possible consideration of one or more new GDP areas as a basis for the future development of portions of the PFC.

5. RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO MASTER PLAN AND ZONING REGULATIONS

As noted above, this re-examination is being undertaken in anticipation of possible planning and zoning changes to the PFC. It is expected that the results of this effort will conclude with changes to the Master Plan pertaining to the PFC, including amendments to the PMUD Zone regulations intended to address the needs of both existing development in the PFC, as well as potential new development (e.g., planned mixed-use development that includes compact, walkable varied residential areas in close proximity to mixed commercial/residential district).