

**TOWNSHIP OF MONROE PLANNING BOARD**

**RESOLUTION**

**ADOPTION OF MASTER PLAN**

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Planning Board of the Township of Monroe, County of Middlesex, New Jersey, that:

WHEREAS, the Planning Board of the Township of Monroe deems it appropriate to reconsider the Master Plan of the Township of Monroe in accordance with the Municipal Land Use Law; and

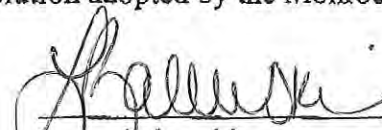
WHEREAS, public hearings to consider proposed revisions as submitted by the Monroe Township Planning Consultant, Mark A. Remsa, P.P., were held on June 6, 2011 and July 28, 2011, upon proper notice in compliance with the requirements of the Municipal Land Use Law, N.J.S.A. 40:55D-13; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Board finds that the proposed Master Plan prepared by Mark A. Remsa, P.P. dated June 2011, reflects the goals and objectives of the Township of Monroe for the next several years, and will guide the use of lands within the municipality in a manner which protects public health and safety and promotes the general welfare.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Planning Board of the Township of Monroe, Middlesex County, New Jersey, hereby adopts the Master Plan prepared by Mark A. Remsa, P.P. dated June 2011 for the reasons set forth in said Master Plan and also stated on the record, for the comprehensive development of the Township of Monroe and in compliance with the requirements of the Municipal Land Use Law, N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28.

**CERTIFICATION**

I certify that the foregoing is a true copy of a Resolution adopted by the Monroe Township Planning Board on July 28, 2011.

  
Laura Zalewski  
Board Secretary



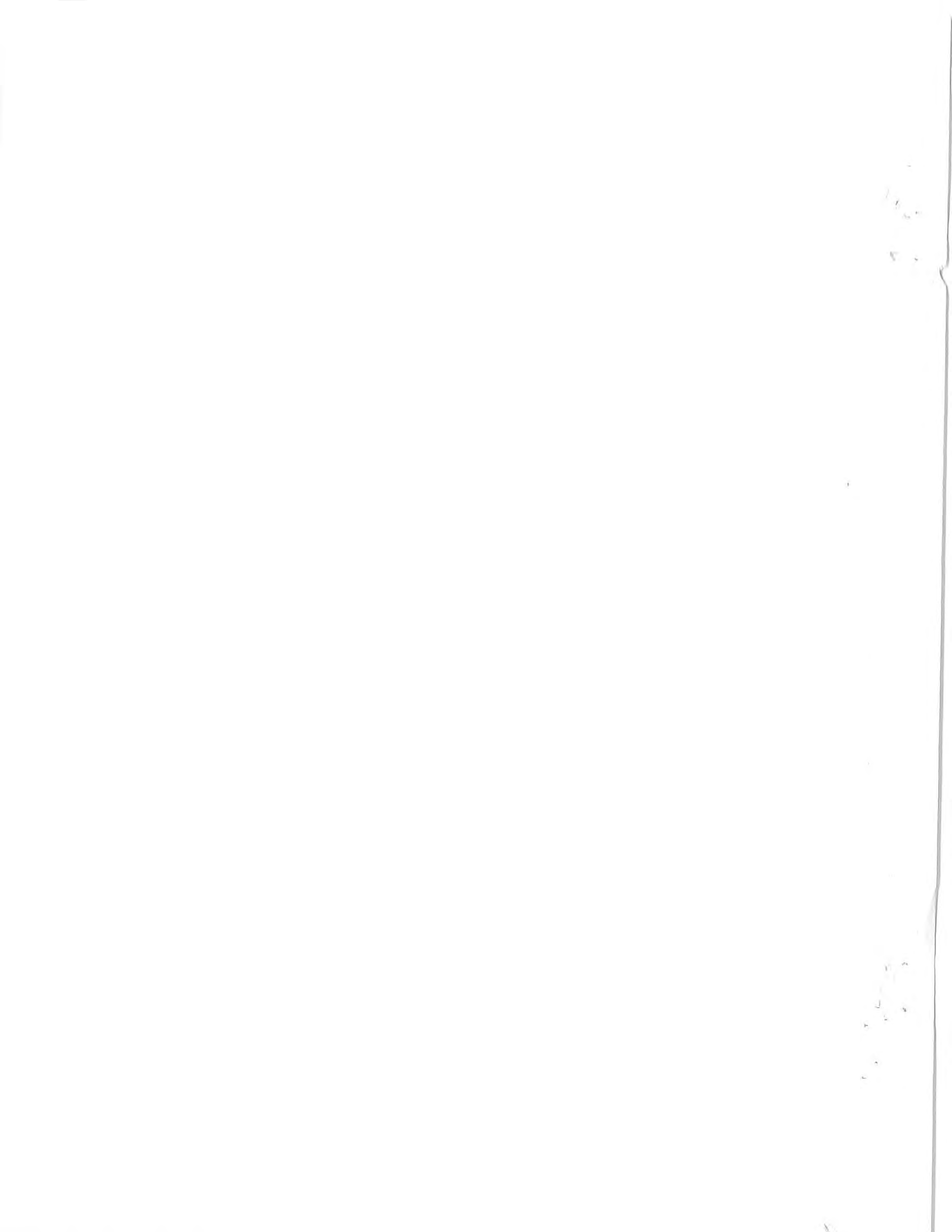
# **2011 MASTER PLAN LAND USE PLAN ELEMENT**

**TOWNSHIP OF MONROE  
MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**

**Prepared for:  
Monroe Township Planning Board  
One Municipal Plaza  
Monroe Township, N.J. 08831**

**Prepared by:  
Mark A. Remsa, P.P., L.L.A.  
10 Dew berry Court  
Mount Laurel, N.J. 08054**

**Adopted July 28th, 2011**



# **2011 MASTER PLAN LAND USE PLAN ELEMENT**

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**Mark A. Remsa, N.J.P.P. Lic. No 4039**

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# **2011 MASTER PLAN LAND USE PLAN ELEMENT**

## **Township Mayor and Council**

**Richard Pucci, Mayor**  
**Gerald W. Tamburro, Council President**  
**Leslie Koppel, Councilwoman**  
**Michael Leibowitz, Councilman**  
**Henry L. Miller, Councilman**  
**Irwin Nalitt, Councilman**

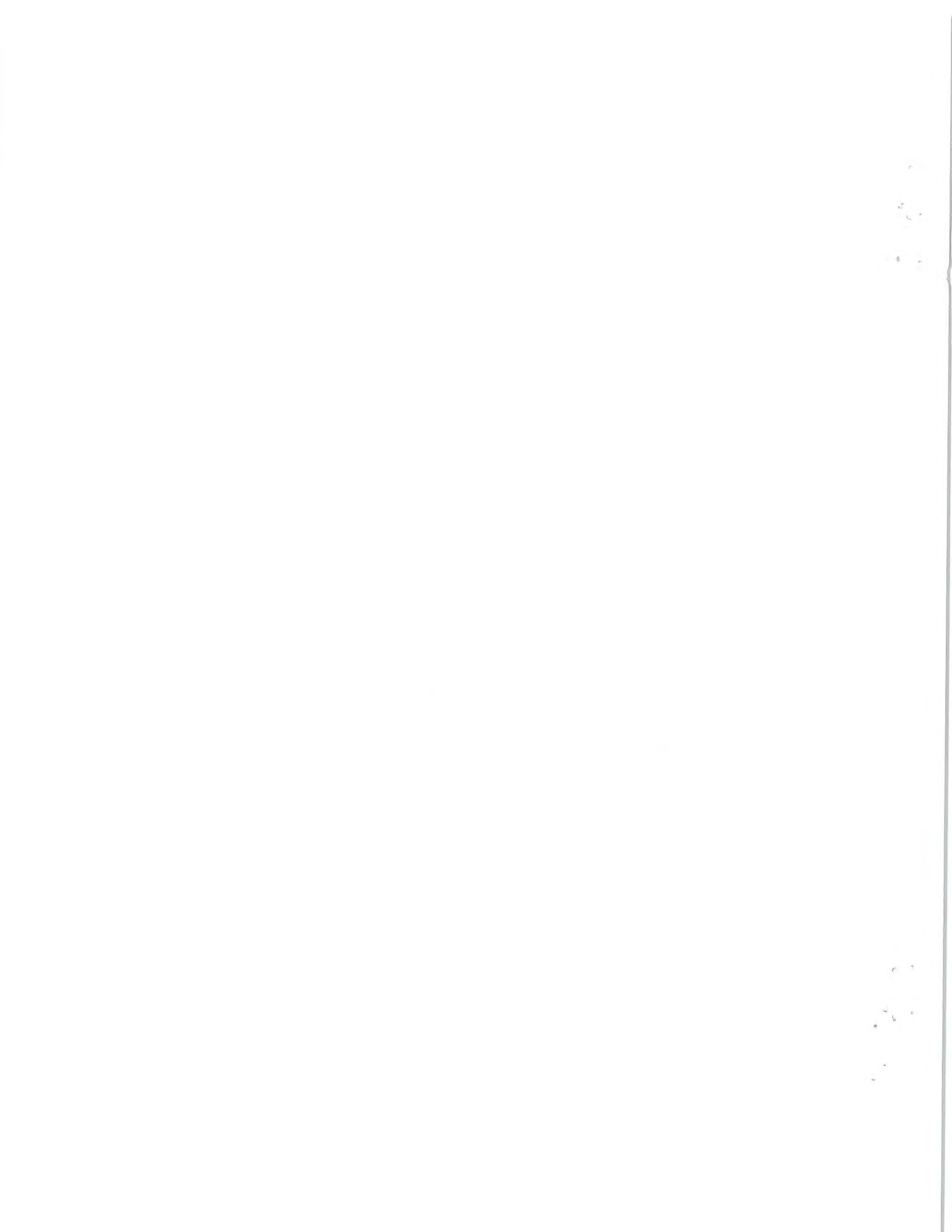
**Wayne R. Hamilton, Business Administrator**  
**Sharon Doerfler, Township Clerk**

## **Township Planning Board**

**David Rothman, Chairman**  
**Len Levene, Vice Chairman**

<b>Morris Glass</b>	<b>Leslie Koppel-Egierd, Councilwoman</b>
<b>Judy Sforza</b>	<b>Richard Pucci, Mayor</b>
<b>Judy Brodman</b>	<b>John Riggs</b>
<b>Dr. Lloyd Kalugin</b>	<b>Andy Paluri, Alternate 1</b>
	<b>Karen Polidoro, Alternate 2</b>

**Robert Tucker, Board Administrator**  
**Laura Zalewski, Board Secretary**  
**Jerome Convery, Esq., Board Attorney**  
**Ernest Feist, P.E., P.P., C.M.E., Board Engineer**  
**Mark A. Remsa, P.P., Board Planner**





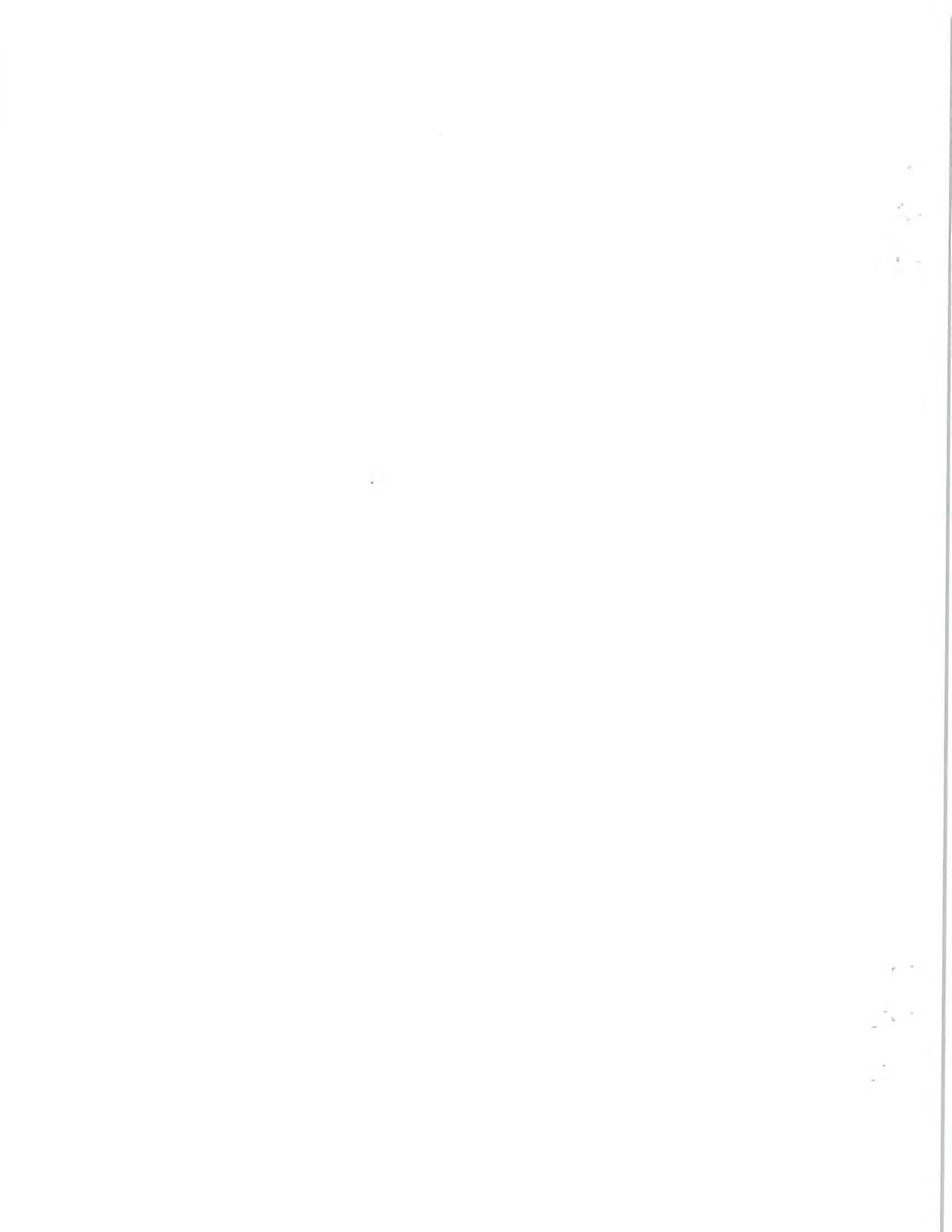
# **2011 MASTER PLAN LAND USE PLAN ELEMENT**

## **Master Plan Steering Committee**

**David Rothman, Planning Board Chairman  
Leslie Koppel, Councilwoman  
Daniel Mann, Zoning Board of Adjustment Chairman  
Karen Polidoro, Board Alternate 2  
Gerald W. Tamburro, Council President**

### **Staff:**

**Robert Tucker, Planning Board Administrator  
John Riggs, Environmental Officer  
Jerome Convery, Esq., Planning Board Attorney  
Ernest Feist, P.E., P.P., C.M.E., Planning Board Engineer  
Mark A. Remsa, P.P., Planning Board Planner**



# **2011 MASTER PLAN, LAND USE PLAN ELEMENT**

## **MONROE TOWNSHIP, MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Master plans provide a comprehensive guide for the future development and preservation of areas within communities. Master plans, upon being prepared, should consider the many factors that impact the quality of life within communities, often with a focus on physical, social, economic and aesthetic needs and wants. These factors, as well as others, influence quality of life and therefore must be carefully evaluated for the betterment of the communities.

The New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (c.291, N.J. 1975) establishes legal criteria for preparing and adopting master plans, specifically at N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1 et seq. Under the law, the local planning board prepares and adopts the master plan for its municipality. The law requires master plans to be reexamined every six (6) years. The Monroe Township Planning Board reexamined its 2003 Master Plan in 2009. The Planning Board, through its 2009 Reexamination Report, recommended preparing a new master plan with refined and improved goals and objectives and changes to the land use plan element.

The Municipal Land Use Law requires certain mandatory elements be included in all master plans. Those elements include:

- A statement of goals and objectives upon which the master plan is based
- A land use plan element that indicates natural conditions, extent and intensity of land to be used for varying types of future development, the location of existing or proposed airports and airport hazard areas, and statement of recommended population density and development intensity
- A specific policy statement indicating the relationship of master plan proposals to the plans of neighboring municipalities, the county and other appropriate jurisdictions
- A housing plan element
- A recycling plan element

The law does not limit the number or type of optional elements that may be included in master plans. Such elements may include a circulation plan, a utility service plan, a recreation plan, an open space and/or farmland preservation plan, an economic development plan, and others.

The Monroe Township Planning Board has utilized the goals and objectives set forth in the 2009 Reexamination Report for the preparation of this new master plan for the Township, which consists primarily of the land use plan element. Land use goals and objectives of the reexamination report are repeated below. The relationships of this master plan to the plans of Monroe Township's neighboring communities, Middlesex County and the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment are provided herein. Monroe Township's housing plan element and fair share plan was prepared and adopted by the Planning Board in 2008. Its recycling plan was prepared in 2003.

# **2011 MASTER PLAN, LAND USE PLAN ELEMENT**

## **MONROE TOWNSHIP, MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**

### **Land Use Goals and Objectives**

Monroe Township's 2003 master plan set forth extensive and comprehensive goals and objectives for the development and preservation of the municipality. The goals and objectives and corresponding responses, whether they remain valid as well as additional comment when warranted, are provided below.

#### ***Previous Land Use Goals and Objectives***

##### Residential

Protect and enhance the residential character of the Township. Avoid conflicting land uses and create buffers between residential and non-residential uses. Continue and augment land use policies that reduce residential densities in appropriate areas and preserve open space farmland and critical environmental features. Future residential and nonresidential growth should be planned to preserve environmentally sensitive areas, create open space and preserve the rural suburban amenities of the community.

1. Preserve and protect existing viable residential neighborhoods by promoting infill development within the framework of existing zoning densities. Maintain a sound balance between planned retirement communities and non-age restricted residential development.

*Response: Still valid; retain.*

2. Continue the use of practical and flexible zoning controls, and planned residential development in order to: gain open space; conserve the natural landscape, especially mature woodland; protect sensitive ecological areas of the community and provide for development on a coordinated and comprehensive basis. Encourage non-contiguous cluster development in order to gain open space and preserve farmland and maintain the Township's rural - suburban character.

*Response: Still valid; retain.*

3. Continue to review the cluster development policy with the objective to avoid potential gains in density yields and insure a greater percentage of open space in addition to preserving environmentally sensitive areas, especially woodlands and stream corridors.

*Response: Goal has been reviewed and addressed; no longer a concern.*

4. Establish a density transfer method at the sole direction of the Planning Board that would encourage planned retirement communities in residentially zoned areas, but in order to obtain higher densities, it would require an open space benefit in other residentially zoned areas.

## **2011 MASTER PLAN, LAND USE PLAN ELEMENT**

### **MONROE TOWNSHIP, MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**

*Response: The Land Development Ordinance already provides for a density transfer mechanism. There is no longer a need to encourage planned retirement communities in residentially zoned areas by means of density transfer.*

5. Continue the trend in open space acquisition, environmentally sensitive area preservation, and farmland preservation through various planning techniques and State or County funding resources as indicated in the previous Master Plan. The objective is to retain 50% of the Township in a combination of the above land categories.

*Response: Still valid; retain.*

6. Residential densities should be reduced in areas not within the 208 Water Plan, areas designated as an Agricultural Development Area (ADA) or designed as Rural Planning Area in the State Development and Redevelopment Plan or other non-sewered areas.

*Response: Still valid; non-sewered areas must be reevaluated under newly promulgated New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection regulations that apply nitrate dilution analysis to determine the environment's carrying capacity of the Township.*

7. Approved or proposed residential growth may in the future be subject to limitation of Township water supply and well draw down limits. Residential zoned areas (not presently sewerred) should be reviewed for possible rezoning.

*Response: Still valid; non-sewered areas must be reevaluated under newly promulgated New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection regulations that apply nitrate dilution analysis to determine the environment's carrying capacity of the Township.*

8. Continue to eliminate incompatible land uses that have existed in residential or rural areas, especially the successful closing of the surface mining operations through planned development or other land use options.

*Response: Still valid.*

9. Enforce the new buffering and screening requirements between residential and non-residential uses with particular attention to screening noise and lighting from adjacent residential areas or other major non-residential land use.

*Response: Need to continue enforcing the requirements that are provided in the Land Development Ordinance.*

**2011 MASTER PLAN, LAND USE PLAN ELEMENT  
MONROE TOWNSHIP, MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**

10. Residential uses should be separated from roads that carry primarily non-residential traffic loads, i.e. Route 33.

*Response: No longer valid; the mixing of residential and non-residential uses should be provided in appropriate locations along Route 33. Not all locations along that highway are appropriate, and therefore careful examination and evaluation of locations for mixed-uses should be undertaken in the Land Use Plan Element.*

11. In wooded areas, residential uses should be clustered in order to preserve woodlands and enhance residential development.

*Response: Still valid; this goal should be combined with Goal #3.*

12. Encourage additional farmland preservation through property owner participation in the Middlesex County Agricultural Retention Program, especially in the presently established 5,400-acre agricultural development areas (ADA).

*Response: Still valid.*

13. Develop non-potable water resources by requiring retention basins in all new development.

*Response: The Township has undertaken steps, through its former Monroe Township Utilities Authority that has been changed to the Monroe Township Utilities Department, to develop non-potable water sources. This goal remains valid; however, it should be expanded to include addressing water quality issues for reuse of said water resources and establishing a minimum size of housing development that should be required to provide or contribute toward the funding of non-potable water resources.*

Commercial

Encourage appropriate commercial development in areas of population concentration and in areas so zoned and especially in the Route 33 corridor.

1. Channel future commercial uses to the Route 33 corridor Highway Development (H-D) zone and discourage small lot non-residential development on Route 33.

*Response: Still valid.*

2. Prohibit strip commercial development along major collector, arterial roads and the intersections formed by these roads. Where appropriate, commercial development at intersections can be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

*Response: Providing commercial development in nodes located at appropriate road intersections remains valid. Evaluating and identifying appropriate locations for such*

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*nodes should be accomplished during the process of preparing the Land Use Plan Element.*

3. Encourage neighborhood and community commercial centers to be designed in a village style and integrated with surrounding architectural motifs and land uses. Such centers should be located in appropriately zoned areas.

*Response: Still valid.*

### Industrial

Promote industrial development in the following areas:

1. Encourage future industrial office and research development within the Route 33 Highway Development corridor. Such development should be encouraged in corporate or industrial parks.

*Response: In general, this goal is still valid. With regard to lands located along the highway between Perrineville and Bentley Roads, this goal is no longer valid because it was determined to be appropriate for mixed commercial and residential (market-rate and affordable housing) development, which is set forth in the Township's adopted 2008-2018 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan.*

2. Encourage industrial development within the industrial zone north of the Conrail line along the new industrial road from Possum Hollow Road to Cranbury South River Road.

*Response: This goal is no longer valid because it was achieved.*

3. Encourage infill industrial development with the industrial park southwest of the 8A Turnpike interchange.

*Response: Still valid.*

4. Promote sewer and water utilities to the Route 33 corridor to encourage industrial and commercial development in this location.

*Response: Still valid; it should be expanded to include the encouragement of the mixed-use commercial and residential development that is described further in Industrial Goal #1 above.*

### ***New General Land Use Goals and Objectives***

The reexamination report the following deemed the following land use goals and objectives important for planning the future of Monroe Township;

### Residential

**2011 MASTER PLAN, LAND USE PLAN ELEMENT**  
**MONROE TOWNSHIP, MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**

1. Residential zoning districts located within areas that are to remain un-sewered according to the Township's and Middlesex County's wastewater management plan should be evaluated, in terms of newly promulgated New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection regulations that apply nitrate dilution analysis to determine the environment's carrying capacity, for a reduction in density. Requiring larger lots in these un-sewered areas are intended to address the carrying capacity of the environment in which septic systems will be utilized and, as a consequence, may cause more variances sought for undersized lots. Each variance request must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
2. While the un-sewered areas are to be evaluated for increasing lot area requirements, retain the area and bulk requirements for the residential districts that are served by public sewers because there is insufficient evidence from recent Zoning Board of Adjustment activity to indicate that there is the need to change such requirements.
3. Prepare a new water supply study and plan to determine water supply and well drawdown limits. Prepare a buildout analysis of all zoning districts to determine present and future demand for water in the Township. Adjust zoning as needed to align future zoning and water demand with water supply and well drawdown limits.
4. Re-evaluate the Township's Route 33 corridor to determine appropriate locations for mixed-uses (commercial, office and residential uses) and areas where commercial, office and light industrial uses should not be mixed with residential uses. Incorporate the mixed commercial-office-residential area recommended by the 2008 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan for the north side of Route 33 between Applegarth and Bentley Roads into the new Land Use Element Plan of this master plan.
5. Retain the permitted uses within the residential zoning districts because there is insufficient evidence from recent Zoning Board of Adjustment activity to indicate that there is a need to change and/or add to the uses permitted.
6. Reevaluate the noncontiguous parcel clustering provisions of the Land Development Ordinance in terms of meeting needs for preserving open space and farmland and updating the ordinance in view of changes to the MLUL and recent case law. The original ordinance, which is still in effect and was highly innovative at its time of adoption, needs to be updated.
7. Reevaluate Township fence ordinance and recent changes to said ordinance to determine whether the requirements of the ordinance should be changed to reduce variances in the various residential zoning districts.



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### Commercial

1. Evaluate and identify appropriate locations for nodes of commercial development at road intersections, recognizing that all road intersections should not have commercial development. The evaluation process should include, but not be limited to, the following factors: proximity and impacts to existing residential development; traffic volumes; and safety to pedestrians and drivers of motor vehicles; and demand for and the convenience of providing for commercial uses and services at particular locations.
2. Strip-type commercial development along roadways within the Township must be prohibited. Commercial nodes at appropriate intersections as described in the previous Commercial Goal are recommended. The commercial zones along Route 33 should be the only area in the Township where stretches of roadway should have contiguous commercial development.
3. Evaluate the need to amend the NC Neighborhood Commercial zone to include the commercial uses that were approved as a result of recently granted use variances: truck and/or automobile sales; cabinet business; and storage yard. Ensure that the inclusion of such uses are compatible with permitted uses in the NC zone and avoid detrimental impacts to neighboring areas that are typically residential zones, many of which are more dense in nature.
4. Evaluate the need to amend the HD Highway Development zone to address shopping centers as a conditional use and the propensity for seeking use variances for shopping centers because of the inability of meeting conditions required for shopping centers. The goal is to avoid the HD zone being developed by use variances.
5. Retain the area and bulk requirements for permitted uses in the commercial zoning districts because there is insufficient evidence that there is a need to change them given recent variances granted by the Zoning Board of Adjustment in such zones.

### Industrial

1. The south side of Route 33 from the vicinity of Bentley Road to the Monroe Township-Millstone Township municipal boundary should be developed with light industrial uses.
2. Other areas along Route 33 should be evaluated to determine whether other uses, e.g., mixed commercial and residential uses such as the area north of the highway from Bentley Road to Applegarth Road, should be encouraged.
3. Evaluate the need to amend the LI Light Industrial zone to permit the uses recently granted by the Zoning Board of Adjustment: hotel; repair of vehicles and

## **2011 MASTER PLAN, LAND USE PLAN ELEMENT**

### **MONROE TOWNSHIP, MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**

sales of parts; veterinarian hospital; and packaging facility. Ensure that such uses are compatible with the uses permitted in the LI zone.

4. Evaluate the need to amend the POCD Planned Office Commercial Development zone to permit a shopping center and the OP Office Professional zone to permit a house of worship, given the recent uses variances granted for such uses in said zones by the Zoning Board of Adjustment. Ensure that such uses are compatible with the uses permitted in the respective zones.
5. Retain the area and bulk requirements for permitted uses in the light industrial and office zoning districts because there is insufficient evidence that there is a need to change them given recent variances granted by the Zoning Board of Adjustment in such zones

#### **Organization of Master Plan**

The master plan is organized into two major sections: (1) land use plan element, and (2) background studies. The land use plan element contains recommendations for improving and enhancing residential and non-residential land use categories within Monroe Township and the comparison of the master plan to other jurisdictions. The background studies examine demographic, socio-economic and major environmental factors that impact Monroe Township and implications of how these factors may influence future development and preservation of the community.

# **2011 MASTER PLAN, LAND USE PLAN ELEMENT**

## **MONROE TOWNSHIP, MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**

### **LAND USE PLAN**

The Land Use Plan Element sets forth the recommendations that guide the future growth, development and preservation of the Township of Monroe that are consistent with goals, objectives and policies of the Master Plan and in concert with other elements of the Master Plan. The recommendations are provided by land use categories that are based on type and intensity of use. When applied on an individual basis, unique issues germane to each land use category are addressed. When approached on a holistic basis, the recommendations for all land use categories fit together in a comprehensive basis thereby providing policies and strategies to achieve the vision for the future of Monroe Township.

The land use categories are divided into four broad types: (1) residential, (2) non-residential, (3) mixed-use and (4) public and environmentally sensitive. The Residential Land Use category includes various types of residential land uses such as large-lot residential developments in rural areas to multi-family age-restricted and affordable housing developments. The Non-Residential Land Use category includes land uses that generate economic development activities, e.g., the neighborhood convenience stores and shops, major retail centers along county and state highways, office buildings, warehouses and manufacturing facilities. The Mixed-Use Land Use category comprises a mix of residential and commercial uses that are manifested in a traditional, more compact setting. The Public and Environmentally Sensitive Land Use category includes lands and facilities owned and managed by municipal, county, state and/or federal government for public purposes and lands that are highly environmentally sensitive.

Each broad land use category is further divided to subsets of related land use categories, which have specific policies, recommendations and strategies. The subdivided land use categories have a geographical relevance within Monroe Township and therefore are delineated into specific districts throughout the municipality.

Land use recommendations to improve the quality of life of residents living within Monroe Township and make the Township attractive to the business community while addressing concerns, issues and problems that have arisen over the years are based on: public input; discussions with the Planning Board, its designated master plan subcommittee and Township professional staff; analysis of the Township's 2009 Master Plan Reexamination Report and 2003 Master Plan; review of the municipality's master plan and zoning ordinances prepared and adopted over the past 20 years plus; analysis of the local and regional economies; consideration of current state statutes that impact the physical development of communities; evaluation of environmental sensitivities and limitations affecting growth, development and preservation of land; and various studies and data.

The recommendations for the land use categories and their subsets and districts are provided below and are graphically depicted on the Land Use Map.

#### **Residential Land Uses**

## **2011 MASTER PLAN, LAND USE PLAN ELEMENT MONROE TOWNSHIP, MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**

Monroe Township's residential land uses are categorized into two major types: (1) rural residential development and (2) suburban residential development. Within each type are subsets of residential land uses and respective districts. In general, the southern and southeastern portions of the municipality are rural in nature. The balance of the municipality consists of suburban development of varying degrees of intensity. It is within the suburban areas where traditional neighborhoods with small-scale commercial development, larger tract suburban residential development, public facilities, highway corridor commercial development and other forms of economic development have occurred. This section of the Land Use Plan deals with rural and suburban residential land uses. The other land use categories are addressed in subsequent sections of this plan.

The recommendations for Residential Land Uses begin with an examination and discussion of existing zones that are set forth in Chapter 108, The Land Development Ordinance of the Township of Monroe, Middlesex County, New Jersey and end with recommended changes to policies and strategies for each residential land use subset and district.

### ***Rural Residential Land Uses***

Within Monroe Township there are two land use categories that are considered rural in nature. These rural land use categories consist of areas that lack public sanitary sewers and water service and rely on individual septic systems and wells for potable water. The recommendations for the two rural residential land use categories are provided below.

#### **Rural Residential/Farmland Preservation RR/FP**

The area of Monroe Township that is designated RR/FP coincides with the Township's Agricultural Development Area (ADA) encompassing about 5,400 acres in the southern portion of the municipality. Agricultural uses still occupy about one-quarter of the Township's landmass of which most is found in the RR/FP area. The area with the RR/FP land use designation extends from the Cranbury Township boundary to the Manalapan Township boundary along a broad swath north of Route 33 and south of lands located along both sides of Federal Road. The Millstone River and many of its tributaries flow through the RR/FP area. Floodplains and freshwater wetlands associated with these streams exist throughout the area. Current zoning regulations for the RR/FP district require residential lots to have a minimum size of six (6) acres.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. While this master plan was being prepared, Middlesex County was in the process of preparing a new wastewater management plan (WMP) for the county. Addressing water quality in non-sewered (septic system) areas is part of the new WMP, which is required by New Jersey Department of

## **2011 MASTER PLAN, LAND USE PLAN ELEMENT**

### **MONROE TOWNSHIP, MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**

- Environmental Protection regulations for achieving acceptable nitrate levels in groundwater. These regulations require a nitrate dilution study be prepared for watersheds within communities – essentially determining the carrying capacity of the environment in areas served by septic systems. The anticipated result of the nitrate dilution study that the County is preparing should provide guidance on minimum lot sizes for non-sewered areas of the Township. In response to the findings of the study, the minimum lot size should be adjusted.
2. After the results of the County's nitrate dilution study are provided to the Township, the Planning Board should revisit the issue of determining whether lot dimension, setback, coverage and other bulk requirements should be changed in the event minimum lot size should be changed.

#### Rural Residential R-3A

The R-3A land use category is designated for a few areas within the eastern section of Monroe Township that lack sanitary sewers and public water. Current zoning for the R-3A district requires a minimum lot size of three (3) acres for residential development. This required density of one (1) dwelling unit per three (3) acres complements the existing land use patterns in the R-3A areas.

Current zoning establishes an overlay zone that provides for non-contiguous parcel clustering, which allows, under a single land development application, potential development of residential units to be transferred from parcels of land in the R-3A district to other parcels in higher density zones within the Township thus preserving the R-3A parcels as open space. The idea behind this mechanism is to preserve the rural nature of the R-3A areas by minimizing further development and preserving remaining lands as open space and/or for municipal purposes within these areas.

#### Recommendations:

1. Since the objective for the R-3A land use category is to encourage low-density and low-intensity development, it is recommended to remove private recreation facilities, private schools, quasi-public uses, hospitals, and extended, intermediate and long-term care facilities from the conditional uses in the R-3A zoning regulations.
2. Satellite antennas and home occupations should be included as a conditional use in the R-3A district.
3. Landscape buffer requirements should be provided for the R-3A district.
4. The lands that are currently zoned R-30 along both sides of Buckelew Avenue between Grace Hill Road and the Barclay Brook School should be changed to the R-3A land use category. As indicated above for the R-3A recommendation, the rationale for this change is that the lots in this area have been developed with single-family residential dwellings on lots that contain three (3) to four-and-one-half (4-1/2) acres, as well as some at around two (2) acres. In essence, the low-density character of these large lots that are

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narrow (about 100 to 200 feet wide) and deep (about 600 to 1,000 feet in depth) will be preserved without any further subdivision. It is important to note that this recommendation was made in the 2003 Master Plan and is carried forward in this master plan

5. Portions of the southeastern corner of Monroe Township that is zoned R-3A has undergone various changes that diverge from the lower density rural residential character recommended for the R-3A zone. One such area is the single-family residential subdivision located at the southwestern corner of Old Bridge-Englishtown Road (County Route 527) and Mounts Mills Road. This subdivision, which is known as Sarah Lane, was created with residential lots containing, on average, 7,500 square feet. Currently, it is served by public water supply and individual septic systems. This area should be changed from R-3A to R-7.5 Residential.
6. Another area in the southeastern corner of Monroe that should be changed from R-3A to another land use category is the emergent commercial development located just south of the recommended R-7.5 district indicated above and along the western side of Old Bridge-Englishtown Road to the existing NC Neighborhood Commercial district at McBride Road. This area, which has developed with various small-scale commercial businesses on former vacant and residential lots, should be changed from R-3A to NC.
7. The current R-3A district that is opposite the NC district recommended above should be changed to NC as well. This area has developed with commercial establishments and complements the existing NC district located just north along the eastern side of Old Bridge-Englishtown Road.
8. The crossroads of Mounts Mills Road and Spotswood-Englishtown Road that is designated R-3A is situated next to a recommended affordable housing overlay zone PRD-AH-AR Planned Residential Development-Affordable Housing-Age Restricted, an existing NC zone and an existing PRC-2 Planned Retirement Community zone. This area has the potential to be developed as a crossroads "village" consisting of a mix of commercial and more compact residential development that would serve the surrounding residential development, existing and planned, and the pass-by traffic occurring on the two crossroads. The R-3A lands located at the north- and southwestern corners of the crossroads should have a VC-1 Village Center overlay zone that would permit the development of a crossroads village. Furthermore, the existing NC zone located at the northeastern corner of the crossroads should have a VC-1 Village Center overlay to complement the two other corners in the R-3A district.

#### Recommendations for VC-1 Village Center Overlay in R-3A District:

- a. A VC-1 Village Center Overlay zone is recommended for a portion of Lot 1 in Block 35 and Lot 24 in Block 53 in the R-3A district, Lot 4 in Block 54 in the NC district and Lot 3 in Block 54 in FHC Flood Hazard Conservation District.

## **2011 MASTER PLAN, LAND USE PLAN ELEMENT**

### **MONROE TOWNSHIP, MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**

- b. The purpose for the VC-1 Overlay is to promote a range of commercial, office and residential land uses within a newly created, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use environment that will serve local and community-wide needs and create new business and employment opportunities. Pedestrian movement is encouraged to flow throughout the overlay zone area by generally permitting stores and shops and personal service establishments on the ground floor of buildings and promoting the use of upper floors for office and, in certain circumstances, residential dwelling units. Land uses within the overlay zone should be arranged to provide for commercial and office uses with and without residential uses on upper floors in the vicinity of the crossroads. The balance of the residential uses should be developed in areas extending outward in a grid-like pattern from the commercial and office uses.
- c. General goals for the VC-1 Overlay include providing:
  - Proper screening and buffering around the perimeter of the area and along surrounding roads;
  - Adequate building setbacks from surrounding roads;
  - Well-landscaped interior spaces for residential and non-residential land uses;
  - Open space for active and passive recreational amenities for residential land uses;
  - Public amenities including, but not limited to, pedestrian plazas and sitting areas;
  - Opportunities for shared off-street parking and stormwater management facilities;
  - Off-street parking that is well screened from public view;
  - Controlled and coordinated internal circulation system for pedestrians and vehicles; and
  - Coordinated design themes, i.e., buildings, streetscapes, parking areas, landscaping, lighting and signage.
- d. The VC-1 Overlay should apply to contiguous or non-contiguous parcels of land that contain a total of at least 120 acres.
- e. Principal uses permitted in the VC-1 Overlay should include:
  - Retail stores and shops that are permitted in the NC zone;
  - Personal service establishments permitted in the NC zone;
  - General and administrative offices;
  - Professional offices;
  - Restaurants, cafes, luncheonettes and delicatessens with the option of outdoor dining, excluding curb service and drive-through facilities for all eating and drinking establishments;
  - Instructional studios and fitness centers;
  - Banks and similar financial institutions, excluding check-cashing businesses, and drive-through facilities should be permitted only in

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- locations where such a facility is not a dominant visual element and located adjacent to residential dwellings;
  - Retail dry-cleaning services;
  - Art galleries and similar facilities;
  - Childcare centers;
  - Parks and playgrounds; and
  - Residential dwellings: townhouse and multifamily dwellings in individual buildings located throughout the overlay; affordable housing units over non-residential uses that are on the ground floor within mixed-use buildings located at and along the crossroads; and affordable housing units in one-hundred percent (100%) affordable housing buildings on five (5) acres of land.
- f. Conditional use should include gasoline filling station that is located on a small lot that is about one acre in area (avoid large sprawling lot) with a building for attendants with or without a convenience store that has masonry or brick facades and has a small canopy over fuel dispensers (avoid large canopy that is brightly lit and creates light spillage and glow onto adjoining lots), well-landscaped with solid fence or wall along side and rear yards, landscaped with low-growing shrubs and street trees along road frontage and low-mounted signage (avoid high pole-mounted signage).
- g. Accessory uses permitted in the VC-1 Overlay should include:
- Off-street parking areas and loading spaces;
  - Signs;
  - Fences and walls;
  - Outdoor swimming pools and active recreational facilities and community centers that are part of permitted residential buildings; and
  - Satellite antennae.
- h. Intensities of development should be limited to:
- Residential gross density of four (4) dwelling units per acre, and at least a fifteen percent (15%) set-aside for affordable housing is required;
  - Non-residential gross floor area ratio (FAR) of 0.025 and net FAR of 0.35;
  - Building coverage for residential and non-residential uses of twenty percent (20%);
  - One hundred percent (100%) affordable housing in the amount of 100 dwelling units on five (5) acres dedicated to Monroe Township; and
  - At least thirty five percent (35%) open space set-aside.
- i. General bulk standards should be required in the following manner:



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- For commercial, office and mixed-use land uses bulk standards should be flexible to create a downtown village feel – additional study is needed prior to developing bulk standards for the zoning ordinance that regulates the VC-1 Overlay;
  - Parking and loading areas for smaller commercial, office and mixed-use land uses should be restricted to the rear and sides of buildings to provide for pedestrian-friendly front yards and small front yard setbacks to create a downtown village feel;
  - For freestanding residential buildings bulk standards should be flexible to create a village feel – additional study is needed prior to developing bulk standards for the zoning ordinance that regulates the VC Overlay;
  - Height limitations: Three (3) stories of occupied space in all commercial, office, one hundred percent (100%) affordable housing buildings and multifamily dwellings; and two-and-one-half (2-1/2) stories for townhouses;
  - Height requirements: Three (3) stories of occupied space in mixed-use buildings with residential units in upper floors; and
  - Townhouse and condominium type dwellings should have the following setbacks for: front yards to entrance of buildings and sides of buildings a minimum of six (6) feet and a maximum of eighteen (18) feet; rear yard a minimum of fifteen (15) feet; between ends of residential buildings a minimum of twenty five (25) feet; and to accessory buildings, e.g., detached garage, a minimum distance of fifteen (15) feet. Additional study is needed to refine bulk standards for permitted residential buildings in order to create a village feel.
- j. Design requirements for the VC-1 Overlay should include:
- Main entry roads from the two crossroads should be provided in a manner that provide access internally to residential and non-residential uses;
  - The main entry roads should be wide enough to permit two-way traffic, on-street parking, sidewalks and street trees and lighting;
  - The internal road network should be arranged in a grid-like fashion;
  - Parking for non-residential uses should be provided in a manner that is screened from public view – located in such a way so that parking is located behind and between non-residential and mixed-use buildings that face the crossroads and screened with walls and landscaping along internal roads;
  - Parking for residential uses should be provided in a manner that is screened from public view – located internally between buildings that face internal streets with access from alleys and driveways from internal streets;
  - Garages under residential townhouse buildings with access from the rear of the buildings should be encouraged;

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- Buildings facing the crossroads should have adequate setbacks to provide landscaped areas that enhance, but not hide, buildings – low fencing and walls with landscaping and lighting should be provided;
  - Adequate internal buffering between residential and non-residential uses, particularly for screening parking lots, loading areas and refuse enclosures;
  - Multi-purpose sidewalks and paths linking all sections of development within the overlay zone;
  - Formal public spaces, i.e., sitting areas and pocket parks, throughout the overlay area;
  - Walking trails through open space areas;
  - Freestanding identification signs are monument signs restricted to a size and scale that are appropriate for the type of road from which the signs are viewed;
  - Incorporation of “green” building and site design techniques and technology, i.e., solar panels on roofs and in parking areas, “green” roofs for lowering energy consumption and improving stormwater management, rain gardens for improving water quality and reducing quantity from stormwater runoff, and other innovations.
9. About seventeen (17) acres of Lot 1 in Block 35 should be changed from R-3A to PRC-2 Planned Retirement Community so that it complements the adjacent PRC-2 district that exists to the south along Spotswood-Englishtown Road. This change will allow for a portion of a lot to be developed in concert with the adjoining PRC-2 district because significant grade changes and environmentally sensitive areas separate the remaining portions of the parcel to the north.
10. The PRD-AH-AR Planned Residential Development-Affordable Housing-Age Restricted area is designated for affordable housing production. It is located in the eastern portion of the Township along the eastern side of Spotswood-Englishtown Road. It is planned for all residential development that would consist of age-restricted, single-family dwelling units and affordable apartments that are not age-restricted. This area designated PRD-AH-AR is designed to be an overlay zone placed over the underlying R-3A district. It is part of the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan (HEFSP) submitted to COAH to meet the Township’s third-round affordable housing obligation. No changes to the PRD-AH-AR land use category zoning are recommended. At the time of writing this master plan, the HEFSP is under COAH review and is subject to changes required by the state agency.

### ***Suburban Residential Land Uses***

The balance of the remaining residential land uses are considered suburban in nature because they are intended to be served by public sanitary sewers and water lines. The suburban residential land uses vary in intensity ranging from large-lots for detached single-family dwellings to multifamily affordable housing units and age-restricted

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dwelling units. Suburban residential land uses exist and are proposed throughout the municipality.

The 12 suburban residential land use categories and their corresponding recommendations are presented below in ascending order of density.

### Low Density Residential R-60

The R-60 land use category is designated in a few areas in the southwestern and southern portions of Monroe Township. The minimum lot size of single-family residential development in the R-60 districts is 60,000 square feet (about 1-1/2 acres). In general, the R-60 area lacks public sanitary sewers and water lines.

The 2003 Master Plan for Monroe Township described the R-60 land use category as "land [that] exhibits a rural undeveloped character with single-family homes fronting on rural, collector or county arterial roads...[and] lacks sewer and water utilities" (8). It went on to say that "...in recent years new development used the cluster zoning and on-contiguous cluster zoning options where utilities were accessible, which preserved open space, woodland or provided open space lots in more medium density residential zones" (ibid). The success of the zoning ordinance cluster options saved larger parcels of open space while permitting a more suburban-type of residential development to occur. Given this resulting residential development that is served by public utilities on smaller lots while preserving larger lots of open space in the R-60 areas, this master plan considers the R-60 land use category to be suburban in nature.

#### Recommendations:

1. Since the objective for the R-60 land use category is to encourage low-intensity development, it is recommended to remove private recreation facilities, private schools, quasi-public uses and horticultural nurseries in the R-60 zoning regulations.
2. Satellite antennas and home occupations should be included as conditional uses.
3. The parcel (Block 14, Lots 12.01 and 13) that received a use variance to permit age-restricted, single-family residential housing should be removed from the R-60 zone and rezoned to PRC-3 Planned Retirement Community.

### Medium Density Residential R-30 and R-20

The lands currently zoned R-30 (a minimum lot size of 30,000 square feet for single-family residential dwellings is required) and R-20 (a minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet for single-family residential dwellings is required) represent the medium density residential land use categories in Monroe Township. The medium density land use categories are designated in the central and northeastern sections of the municipality. These areas are either served with or planned to have public sanitary sewers and water lines.

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As indicated in the 2003 Master Plan the R-30 zoning districts have been “the area of major subdivision activity, especially along Schoolhouse Road, Jamesburg-Englishtown Road and Spotswood-Englishtown Road” (8). Furthermore, the cluster option has been successfully applied in these areas resulting in subdivisions with preserved open space and woodlands. Most of the developable lands in the R-30 districts have been subdivided, and many of remaining parcels of land in these districts have freshwater wetland limitations that will result in lower residential lot yields.

#### Recommendations:

1. Since the objective of the R-30 and R-20 land use categories is to foster the creation of and protect and preserve the medium density residential character of areas designated these categories, it is recommended to remove hospitals as conditional uses in the R-30 and R-20 zoning regulations.
2. Satellite antennas should be permitted conditional uses in R-30 and R-20 zones.
3. The lands that are currently zoned R-30 along both sides of Buckelew Avenue between Grace Hill Road and the Barclay Brook School should be changed to the R-3A land use category. As indicated above for the R-3A recommendation, the rationale for this change is that the lots in this area have been developed with single-family residential dwellings on lots that contain three (3) to four-and-one-half (4-1/2) acres, as well as some at around two (2) acres. In essence, the low-density character of these large lots that are narrow (about 100 to 200 feet wide) and deep (about 600 to 1,000 feet in depth) will be preserved without any further subdivision. It is important to note that this recommendation was made in the 2003 Master Plan and is carried forward in this master plan.
4. The 2009 Reexamination Report recommended evaluating and identifying locations for nodes of commercial development at road intersections, recognizing that all road intersections should not have commercial development. The parcels that are currently zoned R-20 and R-30 and are located at two corners of Jamesburg-Englishtown Road and Schoolhouse Lane and identified as Block 62, Lot 7.01, which is vacant and located in the R-20 district at the northern corner opposite the Township’s firehouse, and a portion of Block 60, Lot 24.03 (western trapezoidal portion of this lot should remain R-30 as a buffer to existing residences), which contains a television repair shop and a separate dwelling at the western corner in the R-30 district, should be changed to NC Neighborhood Commercial.
5. Block 109.37, Lots 1.02, 1.04 and 33.01 and Block 109.38, Lots 1.01, 5.01, 9.01 and 21.01 along Avenue K in the northern portion of the Township are recommended to be changed from R-30 to R-10. This recommendation is made to adjust the land use and zone boundaries to facilitate the orderly development of undeveloped lots so that they would be more consistent in size and shape, when developed with detached single-family dwellings, with the smaller lots that surround them.

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6. No other changes to the R-30 and R-20 land use categories are recommended.

### High Density Residential

High-density residential land use category is further subdivided into two (2) major types: (1) high density single-family residential development; and (2) high density planned residential development and multifamily residential development. The former type consists of, for the most part, single-family dwellings occurring on small lots in the older, more established areas of Monroe Township. The latter type consists of more recent, large-scale planned residential developments that may consist of single-family dwellings and/or multifamily dwellings. This master plan discusses each high-density residential land use sub-categories separately.

### High Density Single-Family Residential R-10, R-7.5 and R-5

The three high-density single-family residential land use categories are essentially located in the northern sections of Monroe Township that are adjacent to or in the vicinity of Jamesburg Borough, Helmetta Borough and Spotswood Borough. These areas developed in and around the same time these older boroughs developed during the mid- to late-nineteenth century and early to mid-twentieth century. In particular, many of these areas were subdivided during the 1920s and 1930s in a "grid iron" pattern with lots measuring 25 feet wide by 100 feet deep (2,500 square feet) and 50 feet by 100 feet (5,000 square feet). These subdivisions predate the Township's first land development ordinance by about 40 years.

While the "grid iron" subdivisions were efficient in lot arrangement, they ignored environmental features, e.g., streams, floodplains, wetlands and steep slopes. As a result of these lot layouts many of the subdivided lots were not constructed and some were located in flood-prone areas. Notwithstanding these development obstacles, limited infill development continues to occur within these areas on portions of land with little to no environmental constraints. Highly constrained land will most likely to remain undeveloped due to state and federal environmental regulations. Lot sizes with single-family dwellings range in size from about 5,000 square feet to 10,000 square feet. They are served by public sanitary sewers and water service.

The High Density Single-Family Residential land use sub-category consists of three (3) districts: R-10 Residential (requires a minimum lot size of 10,000 square feet; R-7.5 Residential (minimum 7,500-square foot lot size); and R-5 (minimum 5,000-square foot lot size). Each district is discussed below.

### *R-10 Residential*

The R-10 district is located in three areas of the Township that have established development patterns of 10,000-square foot lots. The first area is located south of Spotswood along Spotswood-Englishtown Road and extends south past Eleventh

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Street toward the municipal boundary. The master plan goal for this area is to protect and preserve the established residential land use patterns in the area.

The second area, which is known as "Outcalt," is located west of Spotswood-Englishtown Road along the northern municipal boundary of Monroe Township. This area was developed in random settlement patterns, and in response to these patterns Monroe Township installed public improvements to improve health and safety to the residents of the area. Over the years when new subdivisions have been approved, the developers of these subdivisions installed all public improvements, e.g., utilities, curbs, sidewalks, storm drainage, etc. Outcalt continues to experience small residential developments of one to four lots.

The third area is located north of Jamesburg along Jamesburg-Helmetta Road. It consists of more recent subdivisions of 10,000-square foot lots and older gridiron pattern of lots with varying sizes. The master plan goal is to continue the newer 10,000-square foot lot pattern that has been establishing in this area.

### Recommendations:

1. Since the objective of the R-10 land use category is to encourage and preserve and protect the compact, higher density housing development patterns in the R-10, it is recommended to remove farm stand or market, private recreation facilities, private schools, annual membership clubs and similar uses, quasi-public uses, community residences for developmentally disabled and hospitals as conditional uses from the R-10 zoning regulations.
2. Block 109.37, Lots 1.02, 1.04 and 33.01 and Block 109.38, Lots 1.01, 5.01, 9.01 and 21.01 along Avenue K in the northern portion of the Township are recommended to be changed from R-30 to R-10. This recommendation is made to adjust the land use and zone boundaries to facilitate the orderly development of undeveloped lots so that they would be more consistent in size and shape, when developed with detached single-family dwellings, with the smaller lots that surround them
3. Satellite antennas should be permitted conditional uses in the R-10 category.

### *R-7.5 Residential*

The northern area of Monroe Township that is located in the Mill Lake Manor section along the eastern side of Spotswood-Englishtown Road is designated R-7.5 Residential. This area developed with subdivisions containing 7,500-square foot lots. It is fully developed.

### Recommendations:

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1. Since the objective of the R-7.5 land use category is to encourage and preserve and protect the compact, higher density housing development patterns in the R-7.5, it is recommended to remove farm stand or market, private recreation facilities, private schools, annual membership clubs and similar uses, quasi-public uses, community residences for developmentally disabled and hospitals as conditional uses from the R-7.5 zoning regulations.
2. Satellite antennas should be permitted conditional uses in the R-7.5 category.
3. Portions of the southeastern corner of Monroe Township that is zoned R-3A has undergone various changes that diverge from the lower density rural residential character recommended for the R-3A zone. One such area is the single-family residential subdivision located at the southwestern corner of Old Bridge-Englishtown Road (County Route 527) and Mounts Mills Road. This subdivision, which is known as Sarah Lane, was created with residential lots containing, on average, 7,500 square feet. Currently, it is served by public water supply and individual septic systems. This area should be changed from R-3A to R-7.5 Residential

#### *R-5 Residential*

The northern portion of the Township has three (3) areas designated R-5 Residential in which existing lot patterns reflect 5,000-square foot lots. The first area is located along the southern end of neighboring Jamesburg Borough along New and State Streets. It was platted in the early part the twentieth century and lacked fully improved streets with proper drainage, curbing and sidewalks. Monroe Township had installed improvements to the streets thus leading to the clearing of dilapidated lots and constructing new homes on 5,000-square foot lots. This area has experienced a “turnaround.”

Two areas located north of Jamesburg between Mott Avenue and Jamesburg-Helmetta Road and Franklin Street are designated R-5. These areas had experienced sporadic development on small lots over the years. Similar to the previously mentioned R-5 these two areas lack fully improved streets and in some cases are devoid of any street improvements and public utilities.

#### Recommendations:

1. Since the objective of the R-5 land use category is to encourage and preserve and protect the compact, higher density housing development patterns in the R-5, it is recommended to remove farm stand or market, private recreation facilities, private schools, annual membership clubs and similar uses, quasi-public uses, community residences for developmentally disabled and hospitals as conditional uses from the R-5 zoning regulations.

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2. Satellite antennas should be permitted conditional uses in the R-5 category.

High Density Planned and Multifamily Residential Age-Restricted Residential Communities and Affordable Housing Residential Communities

Within Monroe Township numerous areas have developed with planned and multifamily, high-density residential developments. These developments consist of age-restricted and non-age-restricted developments. In some of these developments affordable housing as defined and regulated by the New Jersey Council on Affordable Housing is provided. The Age-Restricted Residential Community land use categories include PRC Planned Retirement Community districts. High density planned housing land use categories include PRGC Planned Residential Golf Community districts. Affordable Housing Residential Community land use categories include: PD-AH/NC Planned Development-Affordable Housing/Neighborhood Commercial, PRD-AH Planned Residential Development-Affordable Housing, PD/SH Planned Development/Senior Housing, AHMUD/HD Affordable Housing Mixed Used Development/Highway Development Overlay, PRD-AH-AR Planned Residential Development-Affordable Housing-Age Restricted Overlay and VC Village Center Overlays. The AHMUD/HD, PRD-AH-AR and VC Overlays are discussed in this section of the land use plan element as well as in the Rural Residential (R-3A), Commercial (HD) and Mixed-Use land use category sections of the element.

*Age-Restricted Housing Communities*

*PRC Planned Residential Community*

The development called "Rossmoor" was the first planned retirement community permitted in the State of New Jersey back in the 1960s. It contained over 400 acres in the vicinity of Interchange 8A of the New Jersey Turnpike. In the late 1980s zoning was changed to reduce the size, scale and scope of planned retirement communities. In recent years several smaller PRC developments ranging in size from 50 to 100 acres have been approved. The PRC land use category is designated for lands located in the central and west-central portions of Monroe Township. PRC-2, which are smaller the smaller type, are located in the western-central, southern and southeastern portions of Monroe.

Recommendations:

1. About 17 acres of Lot 1 in Block 35 should be changed from R-3A to PRC-2 Planned Retirement Community so that it complements the adjacent PRC-2 district that exists to the south along Spotswood-Englishtown Road. This change will allow for a portion of a lot to be developed in concert with the adjoining PRC-2 district because



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- significant grade changes and environmentally sensitive areas separate the remaining portions of the parcel to the north.
2. The parcel (Block 14, Lots 12.01 and 13) that received a use variance to permit age-restricted, single-family residential housing should be removed from the R-60 zone and rezoned to PRC-3 Planned Retirement Community.
  3. No other changes to the PRC land use category and zoning regulations are recommended.

*High Density Housing Communities*

*PRGC Planned Residential Golf Community*

The PRGC area is designated in the northwestern portion of Monroe Township along the northern side of Forsgate Drive and bisected by Possum Hollow Road. The PRGC has been developed with four clustered residential projects with two associated golf courses preserved. No additional residential development is permitted in the PRGC.

Recommendation:

No changes to the PRGC land use category and the PRGC zoning regulations are recommended.

*Affordable Housing Residential Communities*

Several areas within Monroe Township are designated for affordable housing that is planned to be a component of larger developments that include market-rate housing – the combination of affordable and market-rate housing is known as “Inclusionary” housing in New Jersey according to the rules of the state’s Council on Affordable Housing (COAH).

*PD-AH/NC Planned Development-Affordable Housing/  
Neighborhood Commercial*

The PD-AH/NC category is designated in the southern portion of the municipality south of Route 33 and along the western side of Butcher Road. The development of this area is planned to have 690 dwelling units consisting of townhouses, apartments and single-family units, of which 127 affordable units will be provided. Approvals have been granted for the development, which is known as “Monroe Manor.” Construction of the project has commenced.

Recommendation:

No changes to the PD-AH/NC land use category and the PD-AH/NC zoning regulations are recommended.

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*PRD-AH Planned Residential Development—Affordable Housing*

In the southwestern portion of Monroe Township along the western side of Applegarth Road and extending to the south from Union Valley Road across Halsey Road, about 390 acres of land are designated PRD-AH. This area is planned to have a mix of single-family homes, townhouses, flats or apartments and age-restricted housing. A project known as “Stratford at Monroe” has been approved and is under construction to produce 889 dwelling units of which 204 units will be affordable and of which 109 of the affordable units will be age-restricted.

Recommendation:

No changes to the PRD-AH land use category and the PRD-AH zoning regulations are recommended.

*PD/SH Planned Senior Housing Development*

The PD/SH district is located in the eastern portion of the Township along the eastern side of Jamesburg-Englishtown Road. The development of this area consists entirely of age-restricted housing for the purpose of the developer to fund a regional contribution agreement (RCA) for the transfer of 115 low- and moderate-income units from Monroe Township to the City of New Brunswick. The PD/SH lands have been developed, and the RCA transacted in accordance with COAH’s rules.

Recommendation:

No changes to the PD/SH land use category and the PD/SH zoning regulations are recommended.

*AHMUD/HD Affordable Housing Mixed Use/Highway Development*

The lands located in the southern portion of the Township along the northern side of Route 33 from Perrineville Road to the vicinity of Bentley Road is designated AHMUD/HD Affordable Housing Mixed Use/Highway Development for planned mixed use development that would consist of residential and non-residential land uses. The residential land uses would comprise market-rate townhouses and apartments, affordable housing in the form of apartments. The affordable housing component consists of 295 units for veterans and their families and 187 units for families and households that are not age-restricted. The non-residential land uses would include commercial and retail uses, hotels, offices and similar type uses permitted in the HD Highway Development zoning district. The AHMUD/HD category is designed to be an overlay zone placed upon the underlying HD zone. The AHMUD/HD land use category was created in response to Monroe Township’s third-round COAH obligation for providing affordable housing and, therefore, is one of the methods for meeting the Township’s affordable housing obligation that is set forth in Monroe’s 2009 Housing

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Element and Fair Share Plan (HEFSP). The HEFSP was submitted to COAH in December 2009, and, as of the writing of this master plan, the plan is under the mediation review process facilitated by COAH.

Recommendation:

No changes to the AHMUD/HD land use category zoning are recommended. At the time of writing this master plan, the HEFSP is under COAH review and is subject to changes required by the state agency.

*PRD-AH-AR Planned Residential Development-Affordable  
Housing-Age Restricted*

The PRD-AH-AR Planned Residential Development-Affordable Housing-Age Restricted area is designated for affordable housing production. It is located in the eastern portion of the Township along the eastern side of Spotswood-Englishtown Road. It is planned for all residential development that would consist of age-restricted, single-family dwelling units and affordable apartments that are not age-restricted. This area designated PRD-AH-AR is designed to be an overlay zone placed over the underlying R-3A district. It, too, is part of the HEFSP submitted to COAH to meet the Township's third-round affordable housing obligation.

Recommendation:

No changes to the PRD-AH-AR land use category zoning are recommended. At the time of writing this master plan, the HEFSP is under COAH review and is subject to changes required by the state agency.

*VC-1 Village Center Overlay in R-3A Residential Land Use  
Category*

As discussed for the R-3A Residential land use category a VC-1 Village Center Overlay zone is recommended for a portion of Lot 35 in Block 35 and Lot 24 in Block 53 in the R-3A district, Lot 4 in Block 54 in the NC district and Lot 3 in Block 54 in FHC district. The purpose for the VC-1 Overlay is to promote a range of commercial, office and residential land uses within a newly created, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use environment that will serve local and community-wide needs and create new business and employment opportunities. The residential component is planned to consist of market-rate and affordable housing opportunities.

Recommendation:

Create a VC-1 Overlay in the R-3A district as set forth above in the Rural Residential land use category section of this element of the master plan.

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### *VC-2 Village Center Overlay in HD Highway Development Land Use Category*

As discussed for the HD Highway Development land use category a VC-2 Village Center Overlay zone is recommended for Block 4 in the HD Highway Development zone that is located along the northern side of Route 33 that extends from Applegarth Road to the municipal boundary shared with East Windsor Township in Mercer County and portions of Blocks 5 and 6 zoned HD along Applegarth Road and Route 33. The purpose for the VC-2 Overlay is to promote a full range of commercial, office and residential land uses within a newly created, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use environment that will serve a local, community-wide and regional needs and create new employment opportunities. The residential component is planned to consist of market-rate and affordable housing opportunities.

#### Recommendation:

Create a VC-2 Overlay in the HD district as set forth below in the Commercial land use category section of this element of the master plan.

### **Non-Residential Land Uses**

Non-residential land uses exist throughout Monroe Township in patterns that reflect various periods of settlement and development of the municipality. Non-residential land uses have become more diversified over the years. Older, small-scale commercial development is found throughout the Township near neighboring communities that developed more fully during the late nineteenth and early to mid-twentieth centuries. For example, in the northern most portion of Monroe Township near Spotswood Borough are older, small-scale commercial establishments along Spotswood-Englishtown Road. Another area in which older commercial development has occurred on a small scale is just north of Jamesburg Borough near Helmetta Borough along Helmetta Road. In the west-central portion of Monroe is the commercial strip shopping center of 1970s vintage situated at the crossroads of Prospect Plains-Hoffman Station Road and Applegarth Road. Recent commercial centers have developed along Applegarth Road in the west-central portion of Monroe. A mix of old and newer commercial development exists along the western section of Route 33 in the southern portion of Monroe Township.

Significant amounts of light industrial uses along with offices have developed in the northwestern portion of Monroe in the vicinity of the New Jersey Turnpike Interchange 8A. Large expanses of agricultural and vacant lands in proximity to the Turnpike interchange provided opportunities for these lands to be developed mostly as warehouses and distribution facilities.

### **Commercial Land Uses**

The 2003 Master Plan and current Land Development Ordinance designate two types of

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categories for commercial development: NC Neighborhood Commercial and HD Highway Development. The NC category is intended to provide for the daily retail and service needs of a neighborhood and adjacent rural-suburban area. Development of NC commercial uses is required to occur on a lot having at least 40,000 square feet of area.

The HD category is strictly limited to lots fronting along Route 33 from the East Windsor Township boundary in the west to the borders of Millstone and Manalapan Townships in the east. The HD category includes a greater variety of intensive commercial, office and light industrial uses.

This master plan recommends refining the commercial land use categories by reclassifying the NC category into two categories: NC for truly small-scale commercial development that serves neighborhoods and CC, which is a new category, for commercial development that is larger in scale than NC commercial development and serves the community at large. It is also recommended that the HD zone be retained with refinements and enhancements and one significant change.

### *NC Neighborhood Commercial*

The areas of the Township designated NC Neighborhood Commercial are located along segments of heavily traveled roads in the Township and at certain intersections of highly trafficked roads. The NC areas are convenient to residential neighborhoods and developments because of their relatively close proximity to each other. These areas developed with stores, shop and offices that provide convenient goods and services that satisfy local demand. The NC land use category contemplates neighborhood commercial development on small lots having at least 40,000 square feet, which is reflective of existing land development patterns. Furthermore, the commercial development in NC areas is intended to occur at a small size and scale for providing convenience to local patrons in physical locations of limited concentrations. Furthermore, the 2009 Reexamination Report of the master plan recommended prohibiting strip-style commercial development along roadways within the Township and requiring commercial development to be concentrated in nodes.

### Recommendations

1. The 2009 Reexamination Report identified three (3) use variances that were granted for sites in the NC district by the Monroe Township Zoning Board of Adjustment. The variances were for a truck/automobile sales facility, a cabinet business and a storage yard. The Report recommended evaluating whether these uses that were granted by use variances should be permitted in the NC district. As a result of evaluating these uses it is determined that truck/automobile sales and storage yards should be prohibited from the NC category in order to avoid land use conflicts with surrounding residential areas and neighborhoods and lower intensity, small-scale commercial uses that

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are permitted in the NC district. Truck/automobile sales facilities and storage yards require significant amounts of impervious cover and are difficult to screen thus negatively impacting aesthetics. Cabinet businesses that manufacture and sell cabinets should be permitted as conditional uses with limits on the amount of impervious coverage and floor area ratio. Conditions should also include proper buffering and screening and have strict limits on noise generation so as to avoid negative impacts on surrounding residences. These conditions should be fleshed out at the development of zoning regulations for cabinet businesses in the NC districts.

2. The 2009 Reexamination Report recommended evaluating and identifying locations for nodes of commercial development at road intersections, recognizing that all road intersections should not have commercial development. The following lands should be included in NC districts:
  - a. Parcels located at three corners of Cranbury Station Road and Applegarth Road: Block 15, Lot 17.01 that contains an existing bank at the southeastern corner (current zone is R-30); Block 26, Lot 17 that contains an existing automobile repair facility (it will remain a pre-existing non-conforming use) at the northeastern corner (current zone is R-30); and Block 25, Lot 15.01 that contains a dwelling at the northwestern corner (current zone is PO/CD).
  - b. Parcels located at two corners of Jamesburg-Englishtown Road and Schoolhouse Lane: Block 62, Lot 7.01 that is vacant located at the northern corner (current zone is R-20) opposite the Township's firehouse; and Block 60, Lot 24.03 (western portion of this lot should remain R-30 as a buffer to existing residences) that contains a television repair shop and a separate dwelling at the western corner (current zone is R-30).
3. An area in the southeastern corner of Monroe located just south of an existing development known as Sarah Lane (see R-3A land use category for discussion about changing from R-3A to R-7.5) and along the western side of Old Bridge-Englishtown Road to the existing NC Neighborhood Commercial district at McBride Road should be changed from R-3A to NC. Over time, this area has developed with various small-scale commercial businesses on former vacant and residential lots. Therefore, the recommended change from R-3A to NC should be made to the lots fronting along Old Bridge-Englishtown Road.
4. The current R-3A district that is opposite the NC district recommended above should be changed to NC as well. This area has developed with commercial establishments and complements the existing NC district located just north along the eastern side of Old Bridge-Englishtown Road.

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5. The NC district, which contains about 28 acres and is located at the northeastern corner of Mounts Mills Road and Spotswood-Englishtown Road, should be changed to CC Community Commercial in order to reflect the larger-scale potential for commercial development that would serve a communitywide market area.
6. The crossroads of Mounts Mills Road and Spotswood-Englishtown Road that is designated NC and R-3A is situated next to a recommended affordable housing overlay zone PRD-AH-AR Planned Residential Development-Affordable Housing-Age Restricted and an existing PRC-2 Planned Retirement Community zone. This area has the potential to be developed as a crossroads "village" consisting of a mix of commercial and more compact residential development that would serve the surrounding residential development, existing and planned, and the pass-by traffic occurring on the two crossroads. The existing NC zone located at the northeastern corner of the crossroads should have a VC-1 Village Center overlay to complement the two other corners in the R-3A district that is recommended as a VC-1 overlay. Note that the NC zone is recommended to be changed to a CC zone and the overlay should be applied to the CC zone as well.
7. The OP Office Professional designations for the small-scale offices and lots in the vicinity of the intersection of Applegarth Road and Prospect Plains-Hoffman Station Road are recommended to be changed to NC. The service-based land uses permitted in the OP zones are similar to those permitted in NC zones, such as offices, banks, etc. The NC zone allows for more flexibility in permitted uses. This area of Monroe functions as one node of commercial and office activities and therefore should be changed to NC.
8. The existing NC district that is located along the eastern side of Applegarth Road opposite Halsey Reed Road should be changed to CC Community Commercial in order to reflect the larger-scale of commercial development on a 19.8-acre parcel that serves a communitywide market area.
9. No changes to the NC development regulations are recommended except for the addition of neighborhood shopping centers as a conditional use.

#### *CC Community Commercial*

The CC Community Commercial land use category is a new designation recommended in this master plan. The CC category is intended to provide goods and services to the community at large as well as parts of neighboring communities. The locations of lands designated CC are planned to be along major roadways and heavily traveled roadway intersections. The idea is to provide relatively easy access to the community at key locations. The goods and services provided in concentrated locations of CC land uses should be sufficiently broad to meet the demand of community. It is paramount to understand that the CC category is not meant to be the provider of all goods and

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services within the community and region; those types of goods and services are intended to be provided in the HD Highway Development land use category. Furthermore, the 2009 Reexamination Report of the master plan recommended prohibiting strip-style commercial development along roadways within the Township and requiring commercial development to be concentrated in nodes.

### Recommendations

1. The existing NC district that is located along the eastern side of Applegarth Road at its intersection with Federal Road opposite Halsey Reed Road should be changed to CC Community Commercial in order to reflect the larger-scale of commercial development on a 19.8-acre parcel that serves a communitywide market area.
2. The NC district, which contains about 28 acres and is located at the northeastern corner of Mounts Mills Road and Spotswood-Englishtown Road, should be changed to CC Community Commercial in order to reflect the larger-scale potential for commercial development that would serve a communitywide market area. Furthermore, it should have a VC-1 Village Center overlay to complement the two other corners in the R-3A district that is recommended as a VC-1 overlay.
3. The following types of principal uses should be permitted in the CC district:
  - a. Retail stores serving local and communitywide needs.
  - b. Personal service establishments, such as barber and beauty shops, tailor, minor repairs of electronics, shoes and similar consumer goods, but excluding tattoo parlors and similar establishments.
  - c. Outlets and pick-up stations for laundry and dry cleaners.
  - d. Fully enclosed eating and drinking establishments, excluding fast-food drive-ins.
  - e. Banks and lending institutions, excluding check cashing establishments.
  - f. Business, professional and medical offices.
4. The following accessory uses should be permitted in the CC district:
  - a. Customary accessory uses and buildings that are clearly incidental to permitted principal uses and buildings.
  - b. Parking and loading facilities.
5. The following area, yard and bulk requirements should be provided in the CC district:
  - a. Minimum lot area should be ten (10) acres.
  - b. Maximum FAR should be 0.35.
  - c. Minimum lot width should be five hundred (500) feet.



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- d. Minimum lot depth should be five hundred (500) feet.
- e. Minimum front yard setback should be fifty (50) feet.
- f. Minimum side yard setback should be twenty five (25) feet.
- g. Minimum rear yard setback should be forty (40) feet.
- h. Maximum building height should be thirty (30) and two-and-one half (2.5) stories.
- i. Minimum buffer along road rights-of-way and property line abutting residential uses should be fifty (50) feet.

#### *HD Highway Development*

The HD Highway Development land use category is designated for lands located in the southern part of Monroe along Route 33. Most of the HD area is vacant land consisting of open fields and woodland as well as older residential dwellings. Existing development in the HD area is characterized as a mix of limited new commercial development and older development consisting of residential dwellings and small commercial structures on large and small lots. This area of the Township represents one of the last opportunities to provide large-scale commercial and light industrial development. The consolidation of small lots to create larger lots for HD land use development is encouraged. The purpose of the HD land use category is to create a diverse mix of commercial and light industrial uses that have a regional market for goods and services that reaches into neighboring municipalities. The 2009 Reexamination Report recommended the HD district as the only area where commercial development should be developed in a contiguous manner along a roadway (Route 33).

#### Recommendations

1. The 2009 Reexamination Report recommended “amending the HD zone to address shopping centers as a conditional use and the propensity for seeking use variances for shopping centers because of the inability of meeting conditions for shopping centers.” In order to address this problem, it recommended that shopping centers be changed from a conditional use in the HD zone to a permitted principal use in said zone with the requirement that prospective shopping center sites contain at least twenty-five (25) acres. In general, shopping centers should not be permitted on sites containing less than twenty-five (25) acres. However, providing a shopping center on parcels of land containing less than twenty-five (25) acres due to hardships related to the nature of the site or when public benefits are derived from sites smaller than twenty-five (25) acres should be considered by means of a variance on a case-by-case basis by application to the Planning Board. Yard, bulk and buffer requirements for shopping centers as a conditional use should be required for shopping centers as permitted principal uses.
2. As recommended in the 2009 Reexamination Report the lands that include Block 3, Lots 12.01, 13, 27 and 28 that are designated HD

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Highway Development along the southern side of Route 33 should be changed to LI Light Industrial. The purpose of making this change is to concentrate light industrial uses in one of the last large, undeveloped areas of the Township that has direct access to a major state highway. Designating this area LI will help to expand the Township's tax ratable base and employment base.

3. The lands located in the southern portion of the Township along the northern side of Route 33 from Perrineville Road to the vicinity of Bentley Road is designated AHMUD/HD Affordable Housing Mixed Use/Highway Development for planned mixed use development that would consist of residential and non-residential land uses. The residential land uses would comprise market-rate townhouses and apartments, affordable housing in the form of apartments. The affordable housing component consists of 295 units for veterans and their families and 187 units for families and households that are not age-restricted. The non-residential land uses would include commercial and retail uses, hotels, offices and similar type uses permitted in the HD Highway Development zoning district. The AHMUD/HD category is designed to be an overlay zone placed upon the underlying HD zone. The AHMUD/HD land use category was created in response to Monroe Township's third-round COAH obligation for providing affordable housing and, therefore, is one of the methods for meeting the Township's affordable housing obligation that is set forth in Monroe's 2009 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan (HEFSP). The HEFSP was submitted to COAH in December 2009, and, as of the writing of this master plan, the plan is under the mediation review process facilitated by COAH.

No changes to the AHMUD/HD land use category zoning are recommended. At the time of writing this master plan, the HEFSP is under COAH review and is subject to changes required by the state agency.

4. A VC-2 Village Center Overlay zone is recommended for Block 4 in the HD zone that is located along the northern side of Route 33 that extends from Applegarth Road to the municipal boundary shared with East Windsor Township in Mercer County and portions of Blocks 5 and 6 zoned HD along Applegarth Road and Route 33. A development known as Twin Rivers adjoins the recommended overlay zone in neighboring East Windsor. Twin Rivers has been developed with a mix of higher density residential and non-residential land uses.

The purpose for the VC-2 Overlay is to promote a full range of commercial, office and residential land uses within a newly created, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use environment that will serve a local, community-wide and regional needs and create new employment

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opportunities. Pedestrian movement is encouraged to flow throughout the overlay zone area by generally permitting stores and shops and personal service establishments on the ground floor of buildings and promoting the use of upper floors for office and, in certain circumstances, residential dwelling units. Land uses within the overlay zone should be arranged to provide for highway-oriented commercial and office uses along Route 33. In order to create a neo-traditional downtown, less-intensive commercial and office uses mixed with residential uses on upper floors should be oriented toward the interior of the area along a primary access road that runs from Route 33 to Applegarth Road. The bulk of the residential uses should be developed in areas that are in the vicinity of the less intensive "downtown" and extend toward the edge of woods along the Millstone River.

General goals for the VC-2 Overlay include providing:

- Proper screening and buffering around the perimeter of the area and along surrounding roads;
- Adequate building setbacks from surrounding roads;
- Well-landscaped interior spaces for residential and non-residential land uses;
- Open space for active and passive recreational amenities for residential land uses;
- Public amenities including, but not limited to, pedestrian plazas and sitting areas;
- Opportunities for shared off-street parking and stormwater management facilities;
- Off-street parking that is well screened from public view;
- Controlled and coordinated internal circulation system for pedestrians and vehicles; and
- Coordinated design themes, i.e., buildings, streetscapes, parking areas, landscaping, lighting and signage.

The VC Overlay should apply for only parcels of land that contain at least 75 acres.

Principal uses permitted in the VC Overlay should include:

- Retail stores and shops that are permitted in the HD and Neighborhood Commercial NC zone;
- Personal service establishments permitted in the HD and NC zones;
- General and administrative offices;
- Professional offices;

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- Restaurants, cafes, luncheonettes and delicatessens with the option of outdoor dining, excluding curb service and drive-through facilities for all eating and drinking establishments;
- Instructional studios and fitness centers;
- Banks and similar financial institutions, excluding check-cashing businesses, and drive-through facilities should be permitted only in locations where such a facility is not a dominant visual element and located adjacent to residential dwellings;
- Retail dry-cleaning services;
- Art galleries and similar facilities;
- Shopping centers and office complexes that must be located along Route 33 to a depth of at least 75 feet from the highway;
- Childcare centers;
- Parks and playgrounds; and
- Residential dwellings: townhouse and multifamily dwellings in individual complexes separate from non-residential land uses that must be located 500 feet from Route 33; affordable housing units over non-residential uses that are on the ground floor within mixed-use buildings located in the “downtown” area; and affordable housing units in one-hundred percent (100%) affordable housing buildings that must be located 500 feet from Route 33.

Accessory uses permitted in the VC Overlay should include:

- Off-street parking areas and loading spaces;
- Signs;
- Fences and walls;
- Outdoor swimming pools and active recreational facilities and community centers that are part of permitted residential complexes and buildings; and
- Satellite antennae.

Intensities of development should be limited to:

- Residential density of six (6) dwelling units per acre of the portion of the tract of land that is located between the Millstone River and the internal boundary that is 500 feet from Route 33, and at least a twenty percent (20%) set-aside for affordable housing is required;
- Non-residential floor area ratio of 0.35; and
- Building coverage for residential and non-residential uses of twenty percent (20%).

General bulk standards should be required in the following manner: