

TOWNSHIP OF MONROE PLANNING BOARD

RESOLUTION

ADOPTION OF RE-EXAMINATION REPORT OF THE 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

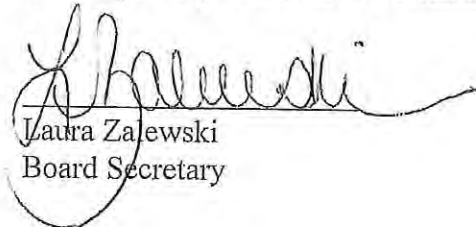
WHEREAS, a public hearing to consider the adoption of a Re-examination Report of the Master Plan as submitted by the Monroe Township Planning Consultant, Mark A. Remsa, P.P., was held on December 7, 2009, upon proper notice in compliance with the requirements of the Municipal Land Use Law, N.J.S.A. 40:55D-13; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Board finds that the Re-examination Report of the Master Plan prepared by Mark A. Remsa, P.P., dated December 2009, 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 Re-examination Report of the Master Plan prepared by Mark A. Remsa, P.P. dated December 2009 for the reasons set forth in said Re-examination Report of the 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 December 7, 2009.


Laura Zalewski
Board Secretary

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

***REEXAMINATION REPORT
OF
MASTER PLAN***

December 2009

Adopted December 7, 2009

**Prepared for
Monroe Township Planning Board**

**Prepared by
Mark A. Remsa, P.P., C.L.A.
10 Dewberry Court
Mount Laurel, New Jersey 08054**



Mark A. Remsa, P.P.

N.J.P.P. License No. 4039

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

**REEXAMINATION OF MASTER PLAN
December 2009**

STATUTORY REEXAMINATION OF MASTER PLAN

N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1 et seq. entitled Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) requires all municipalities to reexamine their master plans at least every six years. The purpose of this requirement is for municipalities to have regular, periodic reviews of current information and changing conditions within the municipality in the interest of keeping long-range planning as up-to-date as possible.

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

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

Monroe Township prepared its last master plan in July 2003. It built upon previous master plans prepared in 1998.

The MLUL requires consideration of five areas of concern within the statutory reexamination report: (1) review of past conditions; (2) changing conditions; (3) changing assumptions and objectives; (4) specific recommendations; and (5) redevelopment plans.

The first two areas are combined in this reexamination report in order to provide a complete review of past goals and objectives and corresponding responses in view of changing conditions.

REVIEW OF PAST CONDITIONS AND CHANGIN CONDITIONS

C.40:55D-89a. of the MLUL provides that the reexamination report shall review:

The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of the last reexamination report.

C.40:55D-89b. provides that the following shall be stated in the reexamination report:

The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have

increased subsequent to such date.

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 are provided by master plan element below.

LAND USE

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.

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-sewerred 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.

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 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 Applegarth 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.

HOUSING PLAN

Continue to implement Low and Moderate Income Housing Plan (Fair Share Plan) through:

1. Development of the Township's affordable housing sites as designated in the adopted housing plan and Master Plan.

Response: Still valid.

2. Redevelop the housing stock through community development funds and the Township's Affordable Housing Developers Fee Ordinance.

Response: Still valid.

3. Continue to implement the Regional Contribution Agreement (RCA) with funds generated from two COAH housing sites.

Response: No longer valid because New Jersey statutes prohibit further use of RCAs. In the event the law changes, this goal would be revived making it valid.

4. Implement the percentage of low and moderate housing for senior citizens within the designated housing sites.

Response: Still valid.

5. Continue the improvement and maintenance of the existing housing stock in the Township, as per the Property Maintenance Code and Affordable Housing Rehabilitation Program.

Response: Still valid. Funding for accomplishing this goal should be obtained from the Township's Affordable Housing Trust Fund that is funded by development fees that are authorized by the New Jersey Council on Affordable Housing and its rules.

CIRCULATION PLAN

Encourage the development of a safe, practical and efficient circulation system, discourage through traffic and install traffic calming devices through the following goals:

1. Propose roadway improvements and road alignments in order to form a coordinated and comprehensive circulation system.

Response: Still valid.

2. Develop road design standards that will permit safe and convenient access to all portions of the Township.

Response: General road design standards have been developed. There still is the need to incorporate bicycle and pedestrian standards into road design standards.

3. Continue the implementation of signalized intersections as per the Circulation Plan.

Response: Continue implementing signalized intersections as recommended in the prior Circulation Plan.

4. Develop a functional classification system to meet the traffic generation demands of future development.

Response: Classification system for roads in the Township has been developed. Need to continue updating the system to meet future traffic generation demands.

5. Upgrade existing roads to meet their functional classification.

Response: Still valid.

6. Coordinate the Township's circulation element with the County Master Plan and New Jersey's Residential Site Improvement Standards.

Response: Still valid.

7. Encourage the use of public transportation by establishing appropriate locations for additional commuter parking.

Response: While several commuter parking locations have been established in the Township, there is a need to encourage commuter parking linkages from the Township to the New

Jersey Transit train station at Princeton Junction and to explore potential commuter parking locations along Route 33.

8. Oppose the construction of a commuter rail line through Monroe Township because of the impact on existing residential areas.

Response: Still valid.

9. Plan for a parallel access road at the rear of the properties fronting on Route 33 as development occurs along this highway.

Response: Still valid.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN

Plan for future community facilities in order to accommodate anticipated population growth and to serve the residents of the Township.

1. Maintain appropriate emergency, fire and first aid services for Township residents.

Response: Still valid.

2. Reserve Township property for a future First Aid Station which would service future needs in southern area of Monroe Township.

Response: Goal has been accomplished.

3. Provide for three new fire stations within the Township as indicated on the Community Facilities Map. Provide for the expansion of the Schoolhouse Road Fire Station and the Applegarth Road Fire Station on an as needed basis.

Response: Goal, for the most part, has been achieved. Fire District One still needs land for a new station.

4. Plan for future school sites or expansion of current facilities based on current and projected population growth and in areas convenient to current and future residential growth.

Response: Still valid.

5. Develop a small athletic stadium at the high school (with a potential seating capacity for 2,500) which would serve the new high school on Schoolhouse Road and is appropriate for a community of Monroe's size and population.

Response: Goal has been accomplished.

6. Utilize the new Construction Office complex on Gravel Hill Road for future municipal needs.

Response: Goal has been accomplished.

UTILITY SERVICE

Coordinate the improvement and expansion of the Township's utilities infrastructure to ensure adequate service for present and future development in accordance with the Master Plan land use policy and the Water Management Plan.

1. Achieve coordination between the extension of utilities with the growth policies of the land use plan.

Response: Still valid.

2. Continue to ensure an adequate and safe water supply by adopting a zero loss recharge standard within aquifer recharge outcrop areas.

Response: Still valid.

3. Expand the capacity of the sewer utility system by implementing the Phase VIII Expansion Plan, however, future limits in sewer capacity may delay residential development.

Response: Still valid. Continue to monitor growth and potential growth estimated from approved development applications that have not been built for the purpose of determining future impacts to the capacity of the Township's sewer utility system and planning for needed capital improvements to the system.

4. Develop additional water supply to support future planned growth, however, future lack of water supply and limits on well draw down may limit or delay planned development.

Response: Still valid. Continue implementing non-potable water supplies and delivery system to augment potable water supply.

5. Water conservation and retention policies should be established for all future developments.

Response: Policies have been established; continue implementing them.

ECONOMIC PLAN

Maintain the economic vitality of the community by encouraging continued light industrial and commercial development in appropriate areas as designed on the Land Use Plan.

1. Encourage light industrial, research and office development in the Route 33 corridor Highway Development (H-D) zone.

Response: This goal, in general, remains valid. Moreover, with the addition of future mixed-use development set forth in the 2008 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan for lands along Route 33 between Perrineville and Bentley Roads, there is a need to revisit this goal to ensure that light industrial, research and development, and office developments are compatible with the mix of recently constructed large-scale residential developments and future mixed-use development along the highway. This goal should be accomplished in the Land Use Plan Element of the Master Plan.

2. Channel future large scale 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. Furthermore, for the same reasons stated in the previous Economic Plan goal, large-scale commercial development should be compatible with recently constructed large-scale residential developments and future mixed-use development along Route 33.

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

Response: Still valid.

4. Provide for office development on the south side of Prospect Plains Road adjacent to Cranbury Township industrial zone.

Response: No longer valid because the area is now Planned Retirement Community (PRC).

5. Provide for additional industrial and corporate center growth along Cranbury – South River Road.

Response: Still valid.

CONSERVATION PLAN

Preserve and protect environmentally sensitive lands and natural resources through the Conservation Plan by the following methods:

1. Utilize the Township's Natural Resources Inventory and the new GIS Base Map to identify flood plains, wetlands, aquifer recharge areas and woodland and ensure their protection through State and local land use controls.

Response: Still valid.

2. Develop additional land use policies to preserve, and protect natural resources especially aquifer recharge areas and mature woodland in the Township, which would constitute part of the 50 percent goal of green space in the Township.

Response: Still valid.

3. Restrict development in critical environmental areas, such as flood plains and wetlands and minimize the impacts of development on environmentally sensitive areas including wetlands, stream corridors woodland and aquifer recharge areas through flexible zoning techniques.

Response: Still valid.

4. Recommend changes to the Township's Land Use Ordinance, and propose new Township ordinances to implement these initiatives.

Response: Still valid.

5. Preserve the quality of both groundwater sources and surface water bodies through flexible design techniques.

Response: Still valid.

6. Provide a continuous network of open spaces along streams, scenic areas and critical environmental areas through cluster subdivision techniques.

Response: Still valid, and need to employ other innovative techniques to create the network.

7. Encourage lot averaging, planned development cluster development and other techniques in order to preserve natural amenities, woodlands, scenic views and open space and aquifer recharge areas and farmland.

Response: Still valid.

8. Restore and preserve existing bodies of water for scenic and water conservation purposes.

Response: Still valid.

9. Encourage energy conservation through subdivision and site plan techniques.

Response: Still valid.

10. Protect unique agricultural resources by preserving prime agricultural lands through the Farmland Preservation Program and through the transfer of development rights.

Response: Still valid.

PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

Provide for adequate parks, open space and recreational facilities for present and future population, and protect wildlife and biodiversity through a comprehensive recreation and open plan that includes the following:

1. Obtain land from the N.J. Training School for Boys for additional active and passive recreational facilities and open space.

Response: Still valid; there is a need to expand the Pop Warner football fields that are adjacent to the N.J. Training School for Boys. Therefore, there is a need to investigate the availability of land for future acquisition.

2. Acquire and improve future recreation sites through the State Green Acres Acquisition Program.

Response: Still valid. Utilize other funding sources to leverage Township's local open space tax.

3. Establish additional recreational facilities as needed in James Monroe Park which presently still has 140 undeveloped acres.

Response: No longer valid because remaining lands are wetlands that cannot be developed for active recreational facilities.

4. Continue the acquisition of open space and recreational lands through flexible development techniques, such as cluster zoning, lot averaging, conservation easements and other techniques.

Response: Still valid.

5. Require that developments of more than 50 housing units provide usable land for recreational purposes. This could be achieved through cluster zoning or lot averaging techniques.

Response: There is a need to revisit this goal to determine whether a higher threshold of housing units in housing developments should be established in order to avoid the scattering of small parcels of open space that have marginal utility and costly maintenance.

6. Encourage a network of pedestrian greenways along stream corridors and bicycle paths which link residential neighborhoods with open space, community facilities and commercial areas.

Response: Still valid. Pedestrian and bicycle pathways should be expanded throughout the municipality to achieve a complete network.

7. Encourage the acquisition of additional recreation lands as outlined in the Recreation and Open Space Plan within this Master Plan.

Response: Still valid.

8. Provide for an additional 2,000 acres of natural open space which would protect natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas while providing compatible limited recreational facilities through acquisition, clustering, lot averaging and transfer of development rights. The goal is to preserve 50 percent of the Township's land in open space, wetlands, farmlands and State and County lands.

Response: Still valid.

9. Recommend the strategic acquisition of property for preservation, park development, and environmental factors. The Department of Recreation and the Recreation Advisory Board is charged with the task of reviewing properties and making official recommendations to the Mayor and Council. Property acquired shall remain consistent with the Master Plan of the Township.

Response: Still valid. The Open Space and Farmland Preservation Committee fulfills the functions of reviewing properties and recommending acquisition of properties to the Mayor and Council.

10. Continue to promote Farmland Preservation as a viable way to preserve property. The Monroe Township Council approved an Agricultural Development Area (ADA) in 2000. This was submitted to the County Agriculture Board and was officially designated an ADA in August 2001.

Response: Still valid. Furthermore, property owners in non-ADA areas should be encouraged to preserve their land as well.

11. Support both the State and County in continuing their pursuit in acquiring conservation lands for resource protection and passive recreational uses. The Township will continue to make every effort to work with the Department of Environmental Protection (Green Acres Office) and Middlesex County on cooperative initiatives that will ultimately benefit the public.

Response: Still valid.

12. Continue cooperating with the Board of Education and the many other departments and boards within the Township to ensure a successful open space and recreation program.

Response: Still valid.

13. Make every effort to link parks with schools and with residential areas, through stream corridors and biking paths.

Response: Still valid.

14. Continue to enforce a sense of pride in the park and recreational facilities within the community through youth sports groups, clubs, and organizations and adopt a park programs. Educating the public on the importance of treating the environment with respect and care is critical.

Response: Still valid.

15. Review developments to insure through cluster option that adequate recreation facilities are constructed, a reasonable land is obtained and bikeways throughout developments are planned.

Response: Still valid.

16. Develop linear parks along stream corridors and flood plains, on abandoned rail lines and along utility easements for the creation of hiking paths and bikeways.

Response: Still valid. Explore the need for expanding this goal to include equestrian trails – this should be undertaken in the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan Element.

17. Ensure that all parks and facilities meet the Americans with Disabilities Act to provide access for the disabled of the community.

Response: Still valid.

18. Implement the approved 2002 County Bikeways Master Plan.

Response: Still valid; goal includes updates to the County Bikeways Master Plan.

19. Continue the process of developing an additional community center that services the southern part of the community.

Response: Still valid.

20. Coordinate with the Recreation Advisory Board on programs and facility developments to meet the changing needs of this growing community.

Response: Still valid.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN

Preserve and protect the historical sites and villages within the Township.

1. Preserve significant historical sites as listed in the Monroe Township Historical Society.

Response: Still valid.

2. Nominate historically significant structures to the State and Federal historic register as recommended in the Historic Resource Inventory.

Response: Still valid.

3. Adopt a historic preservation ordinance.

Response: Still valid.

4. Establish an area for a Historical Village on the Dey Farm on Old Church Road.

Response: Area established; need to develop the historical village.

5. Establish a Historic Hamlet Designation for Cranbury Station and Prospect Plains and request such designation as part of the State Plan as identified in the Historical Survey.

Response: Still valid.

6. Ensure review of all proposed demolitions taking into account the Historical Resource Survey.

Response: Still valid; continue undertaking such reviews.

CHANGING ASSUMPTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

C.40:55D-89c. provides that the reexamination report shall state:

The extent to which there have been significant changes in the assumptions, policies and objectives forming the basis for the master plan or development regulations as last revised with particular regard to the density and distribution of population and land uses, housing conditions, circulation, conservation of natural resources, energy conservation, collection disposition and recycling of designated recyclable materials, and changes in State, county and municipal policies and objectives.

STATE CHANGES

1. An interim State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP) was prepared several years ago. Although the initial outreach to municipalities has been concluded and municipal responses have been provided to the State Planning Commission, the cross-acceptance process for the interim SDRP has yet to be fully completed by the State Planning Commission finalizing the new SDRP. Monroe Township provided its input for the development of the SDRP through the cross-acceptance process. The Township must continue monitoring the SDRP process to ensure the plan includes Monroe's input

provided during the cross-acceptance process.

2. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection has adopted new water quality rules that change the planning for and preparation of wastewater management plans (WMPs). The new rules strongly encourage all Counties with New Jersey to assume the role of the water quality planning entity within their respective counties. Middlesex County has assumed that role. Furthermore, the new rules change the way in which sewer service areas and non-sewer service areas are planned. Without going into extensive detail, which the rules do, it is understood that the new rules have the potential to cause currently designated sewer service areas that do not have existing infrastructure and are located within areas mapped as environmentally sensitive (freshwater wetlands, sensitive habitat for flora and fauna, etc.) to be re-classified as non-sewer service areas. Also, such changes will occur when sewer service areas without existing infrastructure located in state planning areas other than Metropolitan Planning Area (PA) 1 and Suburban PA 2.

In addition, the new rules require lower levels of nitrate in non-sewered areas. The rules provide for the application of a standardized nitrate dilution model that is used to determine overall densities of development within non-sewered areas. In general, these new rules have the impact of lowering overall densities in order to meet the lower nitrate standards.

These changes to water quality rules in New Jersey have tend to reduce overall development potential in both sewered and non-sewered areas within communities, particularly suburban communities like Monroe Township. The impacts of these rules must be examined carefully when preparing the Land Use Plan Element and related master plan elements. Furthermore, it is imperative for Monroe Township to be an active participant in Middlesex County's preparation of the countywide WMP.

3. The New Jersey Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) has adopted new rules that require municipalities to meet their affordable housing obligations. These rules have changed considerably over the past several years due to court challenges and admitted weakness and confusion of the hastily prepared rules. Notwithstanding, these rules are in effect and strongly influence the way in which municipalities address their obligations. Monroe Township prepared and adopted its housing plan element and fair share plan within the deadline set by COAH and has since encountered challenges raised by several private entities. It is imperative for Monroe Township to defend its plan for providing affordable housing within the municipality. The outcome of the challenges have the potential to alter the Township's plan.
4. The State of New Jersey (the Governor, the Legislature and numerous state agencies) has promulgated several laws and rules and created programs that encourage the use of and created incentives for implementing strategies for "green" energy and sustainable

measures for protecting and conserving the environment. These laws, rules and programs are directed toward both public and private sectors.

COUNTY CHANGES

1. As indicated in the preceding subsection regarding state changes Middlesex County has assumed the role of preparing the county WMP. It is imperative for Monroe Township to actively participate in this process to protect the interests of the municipality.

MUNICIPAL CHANGES

1. Based on the 1990 and 2000 U.S. Censuses of Population, Monroe's population increased from 22,255 in 1990 to 27,999 in 2000, representing an increase of 5,744 or 25.8 percent. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Monroe Township's 2008 population is estimated to be 37,122.
2. Monroe's median age of population was 58.9 years based the 2000 U.S. Censuses of Population. In 2000 Middlesex County's median age was 35.7 years. The two latest decennial censuses indicate that the Township's 65 years and over age group increased from 8,040 in 1990 to 12,185 in 2000, representing an increase of 4,145 or 51.6 percent.
3. Most of the Township has been developed in accordance with previous master plans and land development ordinances. The southern portion of the Monroe, particularly the areas along Route 33, represent that remaining area of significant acreage that has the potential for development, principally commercial and light industrial development with a mix of various types of residential development. Other areas of the Township have the potential for infill development, and the potential for low-density residential development exists in the rural, non-sewered areas located mostly in the southern portions of the municipality.
4. An examination of Zoning Board of Adjustment approvals from 2005 to third-quarter 2009 revealed the following results:

<i>Bulk Variances:</i>		<u>Approvals</u>
<u>Zone</u>		
R-7.5 Residential:		
	Single-family dwelling on undersized lots/deficient setbacks	2
	Addition to dwelling creating deficient setbacks	2
	New garage creating deficient setbacks	1

New front yard steps creating deficient setback	1
Fence height	2
R-10 Residential:	
Single-family dwelling on undersized lots/deficient setbacks	4
Addition to dwelling creating deficient setbacks	2
New garage creating deficient setbacks	1
New deck creating deficient setback	2
New pool creating deficient setback	1
Fence height	1
R-20 Residential:	
New porch creating deficient setback	1
R-30 Residential:	
Single-family dwelling on undersized lots/deficient setbacks	3
Addition to dwelling creating deficient setbacks	1
New garage creating deficient setbacks	2
New deck creating deficient setback	3
New pool creating deficient setback	1
New barn creating deficient setback	1
Fence height	5
Lot line adjustment	1
R-60 Residential:	
Single-family dwelling on undersized lots/deficient setbacks	1
Four-lot subdivision on undersized lots	1
Wall height/setback	1

R-3A Residential:	
Single-family dwellings on undersized lots/deficient setbacks	1
Addition to dwelling creating deficient setbacks	3
New garage creating deficient setbacks	1
New front porch creating deficient setbacks	1
RR-FLP Residential:	
Single-family dwellings on undersized lots/deficient setbacks	8
New deck creating deficient setback	1
New driveway creating deficient setback	2
PDSH Planned Residential Development/Senior Housing:	
New driveway creating deficient setback	1
PRD-AH Planned Residential Development-Affordable Housing:	
Fence height	1
NC Neighborhood Commercial:	
New buildings creating deficient setback	3
LI Light Industrial:	
New garage creating deficient setback	1
<i>Sign Variances:</i>	
<u>Zone</u>	<u>Approvals</u>
R-10 Residential:	
New sign size/setback	1
PRC Planned Retirement Community:	
New sign size/setback	1
POCD Planned Office Commercial Development:	
New sign size/setback	1
HD Highway Development:	
New sign size/setback	1

<i>Use Variances:</i>	<u>Approvals</u>
<u>Zone</u>	
R-20 Residential:	
Office use	1
R-60 Residential:	
Single-family senior housing	1
Church	1
R-3A Residential:	
Dance studio use	1
RR-FLP Residential:	
Pool in existing day camp	1
NC Neighborhood Commercial:	
Truck and/or automobile sales	2
Cabinet business	1
Storage yard	1
HD Highway Development:	
Shopping center	2 ¹
Two-story storage building	1
Not-for-profit headquarters/office	1
POCD Planned Office Commercial Development:	
Shopping center	1
Antennae	1
OP Office Professional:	
Synagogue	1
LI Light Industrial:	

¹ Four use variance applications for shopping centers in the HD zone were filled from 2005 to August 2009. Two were approved, one was denied, and one was withdrawn.

Hotel	1
Repair of vehicles and sale of parts	1
Veterinarian hospital	1
Packaging facility	1

5. Monroe Township, through actions of its municipal government, commissions and committees, has been interested in making the community more environmentally responsible and sustainable.
6. It is assumed that through developing a creative vision and implementation process, Monroe Township can facilitate the improvement and enhancement of the municipality, with its diverse landscapes and land use patterns that range from older settlements and developments to newer residential, commercial and industrial development to low-density rural areas that have significant amounts of preserved farmland and open space.

NEW GENERAL GOALS

The reexamination of previous goals determined which goals are still valid and those that have been addressed and/or are no longer valid. Given the elapse of time and emergence of new issues, problems and concerns, the following new goals are deemed important for planning the future of Monroe Township.

LAND USE

Residential

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 Perrineville 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.

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 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

HOUSING PLAN

1. Monroe Township cannot solely fund affordable housing development within the municipality. The Township should apply innovative techniques to encourage mixed-use development that can include affordable housing and partnerships with affordable housing providers to develop municipally sponsored, 100% affordable housing developments. The 2008 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan must be incorporated into this master plan.

CIRCULATION PLAN

1. Prepare a comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian system, including bicycle lanes and walkways and their design standards, for the entire municipality. It is important to connect residential areas with recreational and community facilities, commercial centers and nodes, employment centers, commuter bus facilities and other important destinations throughout Monroe Township.
2. Prepare streetscape standards for various categories of streets and roads for improving pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular safety and enhancing visual qualities.
3. Update the Circulation Plan Element by including recommendations for where curbing and sidewalks should and should not be provided, e.g., provide curbing and sidewalks in more urbanized and suburbanized areas and limit curbing and sidewalks in rural areas.

4. Update the Circulation Plan Element by identifying the need for additional traffic signalization projects with the township.
5. Revisit recommendations for making road realignments set forth in the Circulation Plan Element because the need or the ability to make these realignments may no longer be required, due to changes in circumstances, or possible, due to lands having been developed or unavailable for acquisition.
6. Examine the circulation of vehicles, particularly trucks, in the vicinity of the two New Jersey Turnpike interchanges that serve Monroe Township in order to address emergent traffic issues that may affect the flow of vehicles. The areas of the Township within the vicinity of the two interchanges have experienced increased growth in development and traffic and are planned for more growth in the future. It will be necessary to work with county and state agencies to plan for improvement of the road system that includes municipal, county and state roads and highways.
7. Explore ways to provide a commuter parking lot along Route 33 for the purposes of connecting, by means of a bus or shuttle, to the Princeton Junction train station and making available parking for a commuter bus to New York City.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN

1. Track residential development (recently built, under construction, approved but not built yet, and in the application pipeline) in order to project population and school-age children growth for purposes of planning for future community and school facilities and services.
2. Evaluate the need to expand municipal police and emergency management facilities.

UTILITY SERVICE

1. Work with the newly formed Monroe Township Utility Department (formerly the Monroe Township Utility Authority) in preparing the updated utility service plan element that addresses current and future water and sanitary sewer needs of the community.

ECONOMIC PLAN

1. Study the HD zone along Route 33 to identify ways to enhance the economic potential of this area. Any recommendations for enhancement should be suitable for development along the highway and compatible with surrounding land uses and zones. Furthermore, the implementation of any recommendations should truly improve the municipal ratable base, expand the local job base, provide for entrepreneurial opportunities and further diversify the local economy.
2. Encourage outdoor dining at restaurants in appropriate locations and zones.

CONSERVATION PLAN

1. In addition to Monroe Township acquiring lands for open space preservation, apply innovative techniques that involve development applications, including but not limited to cluster subdivisions, non-contiguous parcel clustering, conservation easements and others, to provide a continuous network of open space throughout Monroe Township.
2. Protect and enhance wildlife habitats and natural ecosystems.
3. Prevent invasive species from degrading biodiversity and plant native species that require fewer resources to thrive to foster a healthy, resilient ecosystem.
4. Prepare a new separate master plan element – sustainability plan element.

PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

1. Prepare an updated parks, recreation and open space plan element.
2. Fulfill the need for providing parks, recreation and open space in the southwestern portion of the Township.
3. Examine opportunities for providing shared recreation, e.g., school sites.
4. Examine the potential for utilizing the old municipal police station for active recreational opportunities.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN

1. Prepare an updated historic preservation plan element.
2. Include the Dey Farm, the preserved historic working farm, on master plan mapping. Explore ways to obtain funding to complete the historic restoration and operation of the Dey Farm.

SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

1. Prepare a sustainability plan element that encourages and promotes the efficient use of natural resources and the installation and usage of renewable energy systems; considers the impact of buildings on the local, regional and global environment; allows ecosystems to function naturally; conserves and reuses water; treats stormwater onsite; and optimizes climatic conditions through site orientation and design.
2. Encourage the consideration of building orientation and preserving shade trees to lessen the need to heat and cool buildings thus conserving energy.
3. Encourage the use of nonstructural drainage systems to reduce stormwater runoff and improve water quality.
4. Encourage the use of non-potable water sources, such as wet basins, to minimize the use of

potable water for irrigation of plantings and landscapes.

5. Encourage the adoption and use of “green” building checklists for various types of development.
6. Encourage the reuse of construction and demolition debris.
7. Encourage the provision of efficiently connecting buildings, development, multiple uses and public facilities to each other by pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular routes. Also, encourage the provision of easy, efficient, pleasant access to public transportation and pedestrian and bicycle trails and pathways.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

C.40:55D-89d. provides that the reexamination report shall state:

The specific changes recommended for the master plan or development regulations, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether a new plan or regulations should be prepared.

Based on the new local and regional planning issues that have emerged since 2003, the foregoing changes in the conditions observed for the Township, and the new assumptions, policies, goals and objectives developed for this master plan reexamination report, the master plan reexamination report recommends the preparation of a new master plan and the revision of the land use zoning regulations to comport with the new master plan. The following recommendations are made for the new master plan to include and address:

1. Prepare a vision statement for the Township.
2. Update the following plan elements:
 - Land use
 - Circulation
 - Community facilities
 - Utility service
 - Economic
 - Conservation

- Parks, recreation and open space
 - Historic preservation
3. Prepare a new element of the master plan: Sustainability.
 4. Prepare the elements of the new master plan that address and develop strategies for implementing the previously established goals that remain valid and the new general goals that have been established in this reexamination report.

REDEVELOPMENT PLANS

C.40:55D-89e. provides that the following shall be stated in the reexamination report with regard to redevelopment plans:

The recommendations of the planning board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans adopted pursuant to the "Local Redevelopment and Housing Law," P.L.1992, c.79 (C.40A: 12A-1 et seq.) into the land use plan element of the municipal master plan, and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.

The Township of Monroe has designated no redevelopment areas within the municipality. Therefore, this provision of the MLUL is irrelevant to the Township's master plan and land development regulations.