

**TOWNSHIP OF MONTGOMERY
MASTER PLAN
MASTER PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS
PERIODIC REEXAMINATION REPORT
December 5, 2008**

INTRODUCTION

The Township of Montgomery is situated in the southeastern corner of Somerset County and contains approximately 32.26 square miles, or 20,646 acres of land. The municipality is traversed from north to south by State Route 206, County Route 601 (the Belle Mead-Blawenburg & Great Roads), County Route 533 (River Road North), and County Route 605 (River Road South). East-west access is provided by County Route 518 (the Georgetown & Franklin Turnpike), County Route 604 (Dutchtown-Harlingen Road), and County Route 602 (Skillman Road) in conjunction with Orchard Road and portions of Sunset and Burnt Hill Roads.

The Township of Montgomery is bounded by Hillsborough Township to the north; Princeton Township to the south; Franklin Township to the east; Hopewell and East Amwell Townships to the west; and surrounds the Borough of Rocky Hill on its north, west and south sides.

Very importantly regarding traffic circulation in Montgomery Township, the natural boundaries of the Sourland Mountains to the west and the Millstone River to the east are particularly significant, since they effectively limit intra-municipal vehicular access points and channel most traffic flow to a north-south direction, along both State Route 206 and County Route 601.

The current Master Plan of Montgomery Township originally was dated November 1971 and was adopted by the Planning Board on April 13, 1972. During the past thirty-six (36) years since that time, the Master Plan has been reexamined, changed, modified, refined and expanded.

Today, the existing Master Plan of the Township of Montgomery consists of the following twenty-five (25) documents, which include seven (7) of the principal Master Plan Elements as permitted and noted at N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28 of the Municipal Land Use Law:

- # **MASTER PLAN**, dated November 1971 and adopted by the Planning Board on April 13, 1972;
- # **LAND USE PLAN ELEMENT**, adopted by the Planning Board on April 15, 1985;
- # **MASTER PLAN PERIODIC REEXAMINATION REPORT**, dated August 1986, which was incorporated by reference in the **MASTER PLAN PERIODIC REEXAMINATION REPORT**, dated July 1988 and adopted by the Planning Board on August 8, 1988;

- # **Part I: BACKGROUND STUDIES**, dated October 1988 and adopted by the Planning Board on October 31, 1988, with updated information appearing in subsequent Master Plan documents;
- # **Part II: TRAFFIC CIRCULATION PLAN ELEMENT**, dated December 15, 1986 and adopted by the Planning Board on December 15, 1986, with five (5) amendments adopted thereafter through December 13, 1993;
- # **Part III: LAND USE PLAN AND HOUSING PLAN ELEMENTS**, dated November 1989 and adopted by the Planning Board on November 20, 1989;
- # **Part IV: RECREATION PLAN AND CONSERVATION PLAN ELEMENTS**, dated July 1991 and adopted by the Planning Board on August 12, 1991;
- # **Part V: EXISTING LAND USE UPDATE AND BUILD-OUT ANALYSIS**, dated June 1990 and adopted by the Planning Board on October 15, 1990;
- # **Part VI: HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN ELEMENT**, dated May 1992 and adopted by the Planning Board on July 13, 1992;
- # **Part VII: HOUSING PLAN ELEMENT AND FAIR SHARE PLAN**, dated February 1995 and adopted by the Planning Board on February 27, 1995, with later modifications as requested by the New Jersey Council On Affordable Housing (COAH) and "Substantive Certification" granted by COAH on March 5, 1997;
- # **MASTER PLAN SUMMARY DOCUMENT**, dated June 1993 and adopted by the Planning Board on June 14, 1993, which included an updated "Land Use Plan Element";
- # **MASTER PLAN ADDENDUM: GENERAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE NORTH PRINCETON DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER PROPERTY**, dated February 1996, adopted by the Township Committee and formally adopted by the Planning Board as part of the Master Plan on May 11, 1998;
- # **MASTER PLAN PART III: LAND USE PLAN PERIODIC REEXAMINATION AND UPDATE REPORT**, adopted by the Planning Board on May 13, 1996;

- # **SUPPLEMENTAL MODIFICATIONS NO. 1 TO THE MONTGOMERY TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN PART III: LAND USE PLAN PERIODIC REEXAMINATION AND UPDATE REPORT**, adopted by the Planning Board on August 8, 1997;
- # **MASTER PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS PERIODIC REEXAMINATION REPORT**, dated April 1998 and adopted by the Planning Board on May 11, 1998, which comprehensively reexamined and updated the various elements of the Master Plan and the implementing Land Development Ordinance regulations;
- # **MASTER PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS PERIODIC REEXAMINATION REPORT**, dated May 2000 and adopted by the Planning Board on June 12, 2000, which specifically recommended the rezoning of approximately 138.10 acres of land to be included in a new "ARH" Age-Restricted Housing zoning district;
- # **MASTER PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS PERIODIC REEXAMINATION REPORT**, dated November 2001 and adopted by the Planning Board on December 10, 2001, which specifically recommended that lands previously included within the "R-2" and "R-3" zoning districts be rezoned into a new "R-5" zoning district, requiring a minimum lot size of five (5) acres for the construction of a single-family detached dwelling, and that the zoning provisions governing development of the lands within the "MR" zoning district be changed to require a minimum lot size of ten (10) acres for the construction of a single-family detached dwelling;
- # **TRAFFIC CIRCULATION PLAN ELEMENT, 2002 AMENDMENT NO. 1**, dated March 15, 2002 and adopted by the Planning Board on April 8, 2002, which specifically recommended proposed improvements to the Route 206 intersection with Cherry Valley Road and Princeton Avenue;
- # **TRAFFIC CIRCULATION PLAN ELEMENT, 2002 AMENDMENT NO. 2**, dated July 15, 2002 and adopted by the Planning Board on July 29, 2002, which specifically recommended new roadways to help alleviate traffic congestion at the Route 206/518 intersection;
- # **TRAFFIC CIRCULATION PLAN ELEMENT, 2003 AMENDMENT NO. 1**, dated April 30, 2003 and adopted by the Planning Board on May 12, 2003, which specifically recommended new roadways to help alleviate traffic congestion at the Route 206/518 intersection, and at the Route 206 intersection with Cherry Valley Road & Princeton Avenue, and related Route 206 corridor improvements;

- # **2002 SUPPLEMENT NO. 1 TO THE MASTER PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS PERIODIC REEXAMINATION REPORT**, dated October 2002 and adopted by the Planning Board on October 15, 2002, which specifically recommended changes to the Princeton Airport;
- # **LAND USE PLAN ELEMENT, 2003 AMENDMENT NO. 1**, dated June 30, 2003 and adopted by the Planning Board on July 14, 2003, which specifically proposed land use alternatives for development within the study area bordered by Orchard & Montgomery Roads to the north, by Cherry Valley Road & Princeton Avenue to the south, by Cherry Hill & Opossum Roads to the west, and by Rocky Hill Borough & Montgomery Road to the east;
- **MUNICIPAL STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN**, dated August 10, 2005 and adopted by the Planning Board on August 22, 2005, later revised and adopted in July of 2007;
- **REDEVELOPMENT PLANNING FRAMEWORK & GUIDLEINES FOR THE CORE PORTION OF THE NORTH PRINCETON DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER PROPERTY - TO BE KNOWN AS SKILLMAN VILLAGE**, dated October 15, 2005 and adopted by the Planning Board; and
- **HOUSING PLAN ELEMENT & FAIR SHARE PLAN**, dated November 15, 2005 and adopted by the Planning Board on December 1, 2005.

MUNICIPAL LAND USE LAW REQUIREMENTS

In accordance with N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89 of the Municipal Land Use Law, this "Master Plan And Development Regulations Periodic Reexamination Report" includes an addressment of the following five (5) items:

- "a. The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of the adoption of the last reexamination report.
- b. The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have been increased subsequent to such date.

- c. 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, dispositions and recycling of designated recyclable materials, and changes in State, county and municipal policies and objectives.
- d. 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.
- e. 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 al.) 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."

As required by the Municipal Land Use Law, the Montgomery Township Planning Board authorized the preparation of this "Master Plan And Development Regulations Periodic Reexamination Report" in order to continue the efforts of the Township to both protect its environmental resources and to promote sound land use planning and development.

MAJOR PROBLEMS AND OBJECTIVES

The Municipal Land Use Law, enacted by the State Legislature on January 14, 1976, empowers municipal governments with the right to control the physical development of the lands within their bounds. N.J.S.A. 40:55D-2 of the Municipal Land Use Law, as amended, lists fifteen (15) general purposes regarding the local planning process which are as follows:

- "a. To encourage municipal action to guide the appropriate use or development of lands in this State, in a manner which will promote the public health, safety, morals, and general welfare;
- b. To secure safety from fire, flood, panic and other natural and manmade disasters;
- c. To provide adequate light, air and open space;
- d. To ensure that the development of individual municipalities does not conflict with the development and general welfare of neighboring municipalities, the county and the State as a whole;

- e. To promote the establishment of appropriate population densities and concentrations that will contribute to the well-being of persons, neighborhoods, communities and regions and preservation of the environment;
- f. To encourage the appropriate and efficient expenditure of public funds by the coordination of public development with land use policies;
- g. To provide sufficient space in appropriate locations for a variety of agricultural, residential, recreational, commercial and industrial uses and open space, both public and private, according to their respective environmental requirements in order to meet the needs of all New Jersey citizens;
- h. To encourage the location and design of transportation routes which will promote the free flow of traffic while discouraging location of such facilities and routes which result in congestion or blight;
- i. To promote desirable visual environment through creative development techniques and good civic design and arrangements;
- j. To promote the conservation of historic sites and districts, open space, energy resources and valuable natural resources in the State and to prevent urban sprawl and degradation of the environment through improper use of land;
- k. To encourage planned unit developments which incorporate the best features of design and relate the type, design and layout of residential, commercial, industrial and recreational development of the particular site;
- l. To encourage senior citizen community housing construction;
- m. To encourage the coordination of the various public and private procedures and activities shaping land development with a view of lessening the cost of such development and to the more efficient use of land;
- n. To promote utilization of renewable energy sources; and
- o. To promote the maximum practicable recovery and recycling of recyclable materials from municipal solid waste through the use of planning practices designed to incorporate the State Recycling Plan goals and to compliment municipal recycling programs."

Consistent with these general purposes of the Municipal Land Use Law, which the Township of Montgomery embraces, the Township has extrapolated certain specific overall objectives and goals for its future land use development in order to prevent future problems and to create a desirable living and working environment.

Specifically, eleven (11) overall goals and objectives of the Montgomery Township Master Plan were first adopted on November 20, 1989 as part of the "Land Use Plan Element" portion of the Master Plan.

Since that time during the past nineteen (19) years, changes and/or modifications have been made to only three (3) of the goals and objectives, primarily due to prevailing conditions and new environmental information. The changes and/or modifications amended goals and objectives #3, #6 and #10 as part of the "Master Plan And Development Regulations Periodic Reexamination Report" which was adopted by the Planning Board on December 10, 2001.

The current overall goals and objectives of the Montgomery Township Master Plan are as follows:

1. The Development Plan of Montgomery Township should maintain the continuity of the Township's planning process and build upon and refine the past planning decisions of the municipality, consistent with present local and regional needs, desires and obligations.
2. The identity of the Township as a totality and the integrity of individual neighborhood areas should be preserved, enhanced and created to the maximum extent possible.
3. The Development Plan should recognize the physical characteristics of the Township and acknowledge the inherent capabilities and limitations of the land to host different types of community development at appropriate densities and intensities.
 - a. Conservation of existing natural resources should be an integral part of the planning process, with special attention to the constraints of environmentally critical and sensitive areas including, by not limited to, wetlands, wetlands transition areas, aquatic buffer zones, stream corridors, 100-year flood plains and lands with topographic slopes of fifteen percent (15%) and greater;

- b. In order to safeguard against contamination of underground potable water supplies from the septic effluent discharged above or near ground level, the capacity of the soils throughout the Township to absorb and adequately filter septic effluent before the effluent enters the potable water supply should be a basic consideration in establishing residential densities and minimum lot sizes for housing within the Township;
 - c. The groundwater resources of the various geological formations within the Township should be considered, and care should be taken to permit densities and intensities of development commensurate with the capacities of the underlying aquifers to provide an adequate potable water supply;
 - d. Applicable stormwater facilities and drainage basin and watershed plans, especially concerning the regional potable water supply, should be implemented in order to prevent adverse environmental impacts upon lands within the Township and upon surface and subsurface water resources; and
 - e. Based upon the documented information regarding the physical characteristics of the land and its ability to support the development of residential dwelling units which rely upon septic disposal systems, the minimum lot sizes required within the residentially zoned land areas of the Township should be periodically reassessed and changed when deemed prudent in order to protect existing and future homeowners from any degradation of the environment which would affect the homeowners' quality of life.
4. The Development Plan should strive to prevent the homogenous spread of suburban development throughout the municipality. Specific areas of the Township should be designated for specific types of residential and non-residential development. The rural and country atmosphere which prevails throughout most of the municipality should be maintained.

5. Recognizing the housing obligations of the municipality, but attempting to prevent sprawl and maintain a development mix balanced between residential and non-residential construction, the Development Plan should guide and contain the principal commercial and higher density residential development within the municipality to specific areas of concentrated land uses. One of these areas, referred to as the Rocky Hill node, currently exists along Route 206 near its intersection with Route 518. A second area, originally proposed in the 1974 "Housing Report", is situated within the Belle Mead area of the Township at the northern terminus of Route 206 north of Crusier Brook and Belle Mead-Griggstown Road, and is referred to as the Belle Mead node.
6. Between the two (2) nodes of concentrated development along Route 206, referred to as the Rocky Hill node and the Belle Mead node, the Development Plan should continue to prevent the evolution of strip commercial uses along Route 206.
7. The Development Plan shall provide that the future relatively high density housing to be permitted in the Belle Mead node be planned as part of relatively large scale developments in order to insure that adequate roads, recreational areas, drainage facilities, public water and sewerage facilities and other infrastructural improvements are constructed commensurate with the residential development.
8. The principal retail shopping facilities within the municipality should be provided within proximity to the two (2) nodes of concentrated residential development in order to avoid the proliferation of vehicular shopping trips.
9. Industrial, research and office acreage should be controlled with appropriate regulations, without denying the needs of modern research and manufacturing activities and without threatening the existing balance between residential and non-residential development within the municipality and the benefits of a balanced tax base.
10. The Development Plan should safeguard and promote the preservation of farmland, open space and woodlands areas within Montgomery Township, and such areas should be set aside whenever possible for conservation and/or recreational purposes.
11. A policy of encouraging the preservation of historic districts, sites and structures, through the formulation of appropriate mechanisms to identify and protect those districts, sites and structures which are of value to Montgomery Township, should be pursued and implemented."

Essentially, the eleven (11) "objectives and goals" noted hereinabove remain valid for Montgomery Township today. Regarding the Rocky Hill and Belle Mead Nodes, it is noted that significant residential development already has been constructed in both node areas, yet there still is land available to develop the planned non-residential development in order to create a "development mix balance between residential and non-residential construction."

THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE IDENTIFIED PROBLEMS AND OBJECTIVES HAVE BEEN REDUCED OR HAVE INCREASED

The Township of Montgomery has striven to achieve the overall goals and objectives stated in its Master Plan in order to create a desirable living and working environment, to protect its environmental resources and to promote sound land development. At this time, the currently adopted goals and objectives continue to reflect the general preferences of the Township to manage its growth.

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN ASSUMPTIONS, POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

Since the last reexamination of the Montgomery Township Master Plan and the subsequent modifications and additions to the Master Plan adopted during the last approximately six (6) years, there are no significant changes in the assumptions, policies and objectives of the Township's Zone Plan.

RECOMMENDED MASTER PLAN CHANGES TO BE IMPLEMENTED BY AMENDMENTS TO THE LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE

At this time, there are no specific recommended changes either to the Master Plan or to the Land Development Ordinance provisions; however, a review of the master plan documents and the ordinance provisions indicate that data updates and updated Master Plan Elements should be completed during the next few years as follows:

1. The "Existing Land Use Map", which was last updated during October 2000, should be updated.
2. The combined "Recreation Plan & Conservation Plan Elements" document, which was last comprehensively prepared and adopted on August 12, 1991, should be updated.
3. The "Historic Preservation Plan Element" document, which was last comprehensively prepared and adopted on July 13, 1992, should be updated.

4. The "Traffic Circulation Plan", which has been amended numerous times during recent years regarding specific sub-areas of the Township, was last comprehensively prepared and adopted on December 15, 1986, and should be updated.
5. The "CC" Community Commercial and "HC" Highway Commercial zoning district ordinance provisions should be critiqued and amended as necessary to assure that they will foster the most optimum development pattern along Route 206.
6. A new "Statement of Objectives, Principles, Assumptions, Policies and Standards" should be added to the Master Plan addressing "Sustainable Development" and guidelines should be added to the "Land Development Ordinance" provisions.
7. A new "Housing Plan Element & Fair Share Plan" should be adopted to address Montgomery Township's "third round" affordable housing obligation as mandated by the New Jersey Council On Affordable Housing (COAH).

RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE INCORPORATION OF REDEVELOPMENT PLANS

The following two (2) sites have been declared "Redevelopment Areas" in accordance with the "Local Redevelopment And Housing Law", P.L. 1992, c. 79 (C.40A:12A-1, et al.). Both properties are zoned within the "PPE", Public, Parks & Education zoning district.

Skillman Village

The Township of Montgomery purchased approximately 256.5 acres from the State of New Jersey which is now known as "Skillman Village". The property was the core portion of the land area most recently previously used as the North Princeton Developmental Center (NPDC). The property includes approximately 2.0 acres leased from the State by the Eden Institute. The property excludes approximately 12.0 acres which has been leased to the Montgomery Township Board of Education by the State and is used for the Village Elementary School.

The Township also purchased the existing sanitary sewage treatment plant on an approximately 7.5 acre land area east of Burnt Hill Road.

Since 1995, when it became apparent that the State intended to close both the "North Princeton Developmental Center" and the "Skillman Training Center", the disposition of the property and the future land uses on the property have been the subject of deliberation and action by the Township.

The Montgomery Township Planning Board prepared and adopted a Master Plan document entitled "Redevelopment Planning Framework & Guidelines For The Core Portion Of The North Princeton Developmental Center Property - To Be Known As Skillman Village." The Township solicited development proposals based upon the development plan included within the Master Plan document, but none were submitted because of a turn-down in the economy. The Township intends to restudy and reconsider the current development plan.

Stonebridge At Montgomery

The subject forty (40) acre property was once part of an overall land area approximately two hundred two (202) acres in size which was used by the Ingersoll-Rand Corporation. The overall land area contained a combined office/research laboratory building (approximately 71,547 sf) which was situated within the subject forty (40) acre portion of the overall land area, as well as one of the original homes on the once actively farmed property.

The office/research laboratory building was demolished subsequent to Ingersoll-Rand leaving its operation with Montgomery Township during 1986; however, the house remains and was renovated as the "1860 House" which was used until recently for historical preservation and cultural activities.

The Township of Montgomery purchased the overall 202 acre land area, and the Township recognized that the subject forty (40) acre property might be suitable for designation as a "Redevelopment Area" pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:12 A-1, et seq. More specifically, the Township Committee noted that the subject forty (40) acre property might be appropriately developed for age-restricted housing and continuing care facilities.

Indeed, Montgomery Township declared the property as an area in need of redevelopment and adopted a "Redevelopment Plan" for the subject forty (40) acre property. At this time, and in accordance with the adopted "Redevelopment Plan", the "Stonebridge At Montgomery" continuing care community has been constructed on the property by Presbyterian Homes and is fully operational.