

**Franklin Township
Warren County**

Master Plan Reexamination Report: December 2006

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Franklin Township last adopted a Master Plan Reexamination Report in 2000. Since that time the Township has updated the Land Use Plan Element in 2001 and added the Historic Preservation Plan in 2000, the Housing Element in 1995 and again in 2005, and the Open Space and Recreation Plan Element in 2006.

It is appropriate at this point to create a more cohesive Master Plan that reflects the evolving policies of the Township and addresses the influence of external policy and regulatory factors including but not limited to COAH, the Highlands Regional Master Plan, the County's Strategic Growth Plan, the Residential Site Improvement Standards, and the recent stormwater management rules.

It is the recommendation of this Master Plan Reexamination Report that Franklin Township should prepare and adopt an updated comprehensive Master Plan in 2007. This updated Master Plan should consist of at least the following components:

- Statement of objectives, principles, assumptions, policies, and standards upon which the constituent proposals for the physical, economic, and social development of the municipality are based.
- Land Use Plan Element
- Housing Plan Element (revised)
- Conservation Plan Element
- Farmland Preservation Plan Element
- Analysis of the relationship and consistency with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan, the Highlands Regional Master Plan, the Warren County Strategic Growth Plan, and adjacent municipal master plans.

B. INTRODUCTION

The Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL), at N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89, includes the following statement relative to the periodic examination of a municipal Master Plan:

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. The first such reexamination shall have been completed by August 1, 1982. The next reexamination shall be completed by August 1, 1988. Thereafter, a reexamination shall be completed at least once every 6 years from the previous reexamination.

The most recent *Master Plan Reexamination Report* adopted by the Planning Board (since consolidated into a Land Use Board) was on August 2, 2000 and, prior to that date, the Planning Board completed reexaminations in 1982, 1988 and 1994.

The 1988 Reexamination Report called for major amendments to the Master Plan and development regulations in order to effectuate the recommendations of the Report which led to the adopted of a revised Master Plan on November 6, 1991. This Plan was readopted on June 1, 1994 followed by the 1994 Master Plan Reexamination Report, adopted in August 1994.

In 1995 the Planning Board adopted a revised Housing Plan Element to address the Second Round fair share obligation established by the New Jersey Council on Affordable Housing (COAH). This revised Housing Plan was submitted to COAH in October 1995 and certified in February 1997. In 1999 the Planning Board adopted an amendment to the Land Use Plan Element which changed the land use designation for three parcels that formerly were part of the Township's 1989 Housing Plan, but which were not included in the 1995 Housing Plan because the mediation agreements which covered these sites had expired.

The 2000 Master Plan Reexamination Report led to a revised Land Use Plan Element which was adopted in March 2001. More recently the Land Use Board adopted Housing Plan Element and Fair Share Plan (HS/FSP0) on December 7, 2005 to address the Third Round cumulative obligation and projected growth share requirement. Endorsed by the Township Committee, the HE/FSP was submitted to COAH to secure substantive certification, however; an objection was filed with COAH challenging the HE/FSP on the basis that the proposed inclusionary development known as Brandywine would result in adverse environmental consequences. The subsequent denial of the Brandywine application by the Land Use Board in May 2005 rendered the objection moot for the present.

Additional changes to the Master Plan since the 2000 Reexamination Report include the Historic Preservation Plan Element, also adopted in 2000 and the Open Space and Recreation Plan Element adopted in March 2006.

C. STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

The **Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL)** sets forth the following five questions to be addressed in preparing the Reexamination Report:

- C. 40:55D-89a The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of the adoption of the last reexamination report.
- C. 40:55D-89b The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date.
- C. 40:55D-89c 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.
- C. 40:55D-89d The specific changes for the master plan or development regulations, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether a new plan or regulations should be proposed.
- C. 40:55D-89e 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.

Each is addressed in turn, below.

D. THE MAJOR PROBLEMS AND OBJECTIVES RELATING TO LAND DEVELOPMENT IN THE MUNICIPALITY AT THE TIME OF THE ADOPTION OF THE LAST REEXAMINATION REPORT. [40:55D-89a]

1. Master Plan Reexamination Report: August 2000

At the time of the last Reexamination Report in 2000, the following areas of concern were as follows:

- The Master Plan should be revised to incorporate an Open Space and Recreation Plan, designed to address both the requirements of the MLUL and the guidelines of the N.J. Department of Environmental Protection Green Acres Program.
- The Master Plan should be revised to incorporate a Farmland Preservation Plan, designed to address the requirements of the MLUL. This plan element is necessary in order for the Township to participate in the Planning Incentive Grant program.
- The Historic Preservation Commission should continue its preparation of a survey of historic sites so that the designated buildings, structures, districts and landscapes can be incorporated into the Historic Preservation Plan.
- The Township should continue its efforts to have the Council on Affordable Housing approve its ordinance to rezone the three sites which have expired mediation agreements.
- The Township should continue its efforts to develop an ordinance that requires testing for water supplies to assure that sufficient potable water is available to serve proposed development.
- The Township should submit the limestone ordinance to the Site Improvement Advisory Board so that the special investigative, design and construction techniques outlined in the ordinance are not superseded by the RSIS.
- The Planning Board should review planning and zoning options for the village of Asbury. Currently designated as Village Commercial and Village Residential in the Master Plan, and listed on the State and National Register of Historic Places, the village has considerable potential as a true community of place, as suggested in the State Plan. Providing additional opportunities for expanded commercial uses, within a strict set of use and

performance standards, may provide opportunities for adaptive reuse that would enhance the character of the community.

- The Township and Planning Board should examine opportunities to promote and enhance agriculture and agricultural uses in the community. As the dominant land use in the community, and one which provides much of the Township's character, every effort is needed to maintain its viability in the future. Items to examine include financial mechanisms to support the agricultural industry and agricultural preservation, and enhanced use opportunities that would support the agricultural economy and contribute to its retention.
- The Township and Planning Board have discussed in the past the development of an ordinance to permit bed and breakfast establishments, which could support the rural economy and promote agricultural and recreational opportunities. An ordinance to permit this use should be developed.
- The Planning Board, through both its planning and development review functions, has sought to provide safe and efficient access to new development. Of particular concern has been the provision of two accesses for existing and proposed subdivisions. The Board continues to express its desire for two means of access to larger subdivisions and, to the extent such an approach may be inconsistent with the RSIS, will seek agreement to exceed the RSIS where appropriate and necessary.

E. THE EXTENT TO WHICH SUCH PROBLEMS AND OBJECTIVES HAVE BEEN REDUCED OR HAVE INCREASED SUBSEQUENT TO SUCH DATE. [40:55D-89b]

With the adoption of the Historic Preservation Plan Element in 2000, a new Land Use Plan Element in 2001, the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan in 1995 and again in 2005 for the Third Round, and the Open Space and Recreation Plan in 2006, some of the recommendations in the 2000 Master Plan Reexamination Report were implemented while others have yet to be realized. A summary of each of these Master Plan Elements is presented below.

1. Historic Preservation Plan Element

On March 16, 2000 the Planning Board adopted the Historic Preservation Plan Element. The Township also established a Historic Preservation Commission in accordance with the standards and procedures set forth in Chapter 21 of the Township Code. The Historic Preservation Plan Element established eight recommendations as follows:

- The Franklin Township Historic Preservation Commission would create a Township Historic Site Survey of historic districts (both rural/agricultural and town), individual properties and thematic resources;
- Prepare a Township Historic Preservation Plan. The plan would include the establishment of specific preservation priorities and goals
- Assist the Township with the establishment of a system of rehabilitation tax credits where permitted, for significant historic buildings that can be put to income producing uses, Eligibility criteria should include listings on the New Jersey and National Register of Historic Places;
- Recommend a system of tax incentives for the preservation of agricultural buildings. Base selection criteria on the results of the agricultural buildings study;
- Prepare a Township-wide priority list for the nomination of districts to the National and State Registers;
- Assist in the preparation of thematic nominations for the county, State and/or National Registers for late eighteenth/early nineteenth century houses, churches, schools, lime kilns and transportation-related resources;
- Create a prioritized list of the Township's most endangered buildings with recommendations for action to be taken to lessen their loss through documentation, adaptive re-use or preservation; and
- Sponsor workshops, lectures and seminars on preservation and rehabilitation techniques and on common problems encountered during rehabilitation work.

2. Land Use Plan Element: March 2001

In 2001, following the adoption of the Master Plan Reexamination Report the previous year, Franklin Township adopted a new Land Use Plan Element in which it proposed zoning to reduce residential densities “...throughout unsewered portions of the municipality, to respond to the objective of protecting groundwater and surface water quality, and to better accomplish the goals of rural conservation, agricultural retention, and protection of the scenic attributes of Franklin Township. Lower residential densities and the use of lot size averaging will serve to retain significant land masses for open space, farmland, woodlands, and other desirable natural and cultural features.”

With regard to commercial and industrial development, the 2001 Land Use Plan noted the elimination of conditional uses along Route 57 in favor of “...more traditional non-residential zoning districts.”

The 2001 Land Use Plan Element established the following set of goals and objectives:

Growth

- Regulate growth in an orderly fashion and channel new development to appropriate locations.
- Encourage commercial, agricultural business, office and light industrial development in suitable locations along Route 57.
- Provide for development opportunities that are consistent with the Township's natural resources and the capacity of these resources to support growth.

Natural Resources

- Protect the steep slopes in the Township from development that would negatively impact this resource.
- Maintain and enhance the existing groundwater and surface water quality in the Township.
- Preserve and protect prime agricultural soils for their potential agricultural use.
- Protect the Township's ridgelines and other prominent views from the impact of development.

- Identify and manage stream corridor buffer areas adequate to maintain undisturbed vegetation and to maintain and improve water quality, wildlife corridors and opportunities for passive and active recreation.

Community Type

- Retain the rural and agricultural character of the Township while diversifying the tax base with commercial and industrial expansion.
- Maintain and improve the aesthetic quality of the Township.

Land Use

Agricultural Preservation

- Preserve prime farmland in the Musconetcong and Pohatcong valleys.
- Explore the use of Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) as a preservation tool.

Residential

- Encourage a mixed housing balance by incorporating lot size averaging, clustering, large lot single family developments, farmettes, and limited multi-family housing as residential options.

Commercial

- Promote commercial development along designated portions of Route 57, and maintain village neighborhood shopping opportunities in Asbury, Broadway, and New Village.

Industrial

- Provide opportunities for office and light industrial development, particularly agriculturally-oriented businesses that would utilize locally-grown produce.

Recreation/Open Space

- Acquire centrally located land for the expansion of Township recreational facilities.

- Encourage lot size averaging and clustering of single-family developments as a means of acquiring open space and recreational areas.
- Preserve the Morris Canal in its present condition and request that developers dedicate its right-of-way when development occurs.

Historic Sites

- Preserve and protect historically significant buildings in the villages of Asbury, Broadway, and New Village.
- Establish a Township Historic Preservation Commission, as provided for in the Municipal Land Use Law, to develop a historic preservation plan and to advise the Planning Board.
- Examine opportunities for the preservation of lime kilns.

Housing

- Encourage the use of lot size averaging and clustering for single-family development.
- Provide for the Township's obligation for low- and moderate-income housing.
- Attract high quality housing for middle and upper income levels.

Circulation

- Improve the Township's road system to provide safe and efficient service.
- Explore the possibility of a new route(s) across Pohatcong Mountain.

Stormwater Management

- Design and adopt a stormwater management plan element to be incorporated into the Master Plan. Such plan should conform to the stormwater management regulations of the N. J. Department of Environmental Protection.

- Develop a stormwater management ordinance to implement the stormwater management plan.

The 2001 Land Use Plan Element identified the following areas of concern:

Residential

The Land Use Plan Element analyzed the Township's three residential zone districts. These are the Rural Conservation District (RC), the Planned Development Option District (PD), and the Village Residential District (R-75).

The purpose of the RC district was described as follows:

The RC district has been designed to address the goals of protecting groundwater quality, conserving the scenic rural character and promoting continued agricultural use opportunities. Recognizing the importance of retaining significant land areas in an undeveloped state, in furtherance of the goals of this Plan, the RC district will permit the use of lot size averaging and clustering.

The Planned Development (PD) district was created as a result of the COAH mediation process and designed to accommodate a planned unit development option with a maximum density of 120 units and commercial development of up to 129,000 square feet. Development in this district was expected to provide affordable housing comprised of four low income and three moderate income units in addition to a contribution of \$60,000 to the Township's Housing Rehabilitation and Assistance Fund.

The third residential district is the Village Residential (R.75) encompassing the developed residential sections of Asbury, Broadway and New Village. The Land Use Plan Element noted Asbury's potential as an identified center in the State Plan and its listing on the State and National Register of Historic Places.

Non-Residential

Six nonresidential districts were identified. These are the Industrial (I) District, the Industrial Park (IP) District, the Office Building (OB) District, the Township Commercial (C-2) District, the Highway Commercial (HC) District, and the Village Commercial (C-1) District.

The significance of the Route 57 corridor in the Township is described as follows:

Route 57 is the principal artery serving the Township and, carrying the largest volumes of traffic, is largely responsible for creating the image that people have of the Township. A visually harmonious, functional land use pattern along this corridor will serve the interests of the Township in a far more effective manner than will an unplanned assortment of conflicting uses. In order to promote development of the non-residential districts, it is recommended that the Township permit more than one non-residential use and more than one building on individual lots, provided the building design and uses are compatible.

The only change to the I-Industrial district was to increase the minimum lot size from 40,000 square feet to three acres. No changes to the type of permitted uses were proposed.

The IP-Industrial Park district was expanded to include the area north of Route 57 in the eastern part of town.

The OB-Office Building district was established as a new zone on the north side of Route 57 between Halfway House Road and the border of Washington Township. The purpose of this district was to “...attract uses not currently found in the Township by providing an area in which office development can focus.”

No changes in area or range of uses were recommended for the C-2 Commercial district which is located on both sides of Route 57, west of White Road. With regard to the HC-Highway Commercial district, located on the south side of Route 57 in proximity to the Washington Township boundary, the Land Use Plan Element recommended design criteria to be incorporated in the zoning ordinance to address setback and coverage standards, façade treatments, landscaping and buffering. Other recommendations for this district called for permitting multiple, compatible uses per lot and the establishment of a conditional use category to provide for a “...broader retail commercial development...” to combine the established permitted uses in the district with “...and sales of convenience goods, professional offices (excluding medical offices), personal services, and similar retail uses.”

The 2001 Land Use Plan Element recommended the C-1 Village Commercial zoning expand beyond its existing delineation around the eastern edge of New Village.

4. Housing Plan Element and Fair Share Plan: December 2005

A Housing Plan Element and Fair Share Plan was adopted by the Land Use Board on December 7, 2005 and submitted to COAH for substantive certification on December 21, 2005 and, as noted above, an objection was filed with COAH regarding the Brandywine

inclusionary site as the mechanism to address the Township's affordable housing obligation. The Brandywine development was to be located within the PD district however; following the denial of the preliminary major subdivision and preliminary major site plan by the Land Use Board in May 2006, alternative locations are being considered to satisfy the Township's affordable housing obligation. As such a revised Housing Element and Fair Share Plan must be prepared and resubmitted to COAH in accordance with the repetition provisions of the Third Round rules.

5. Open Space and Recreation Plan Element: March 2006

On March 1, 2006, the Land Use Board adopted the Open Space and Recreation Plan Element which established the following goals:

- Protect forested ridgelines;
- Protect, restore and promote historic resources;
- Provide recreation facilities to adequately support community recreation programs;
- Preserve natural areas for resource-based recreation; trail creation and wildlife habitat protection;
- Protect and improve surface and ground water resources;
- Preserve farmland and the agricultural heritage of the Township;
- Preserve lands along the Pohatcong and Musconetcong River corridors, and;
- Form partnerships and preservation strategies to help achieve open space preservation in the Township.

The Plan introduced a system for preserving natural resources, waterways, agricultural land and greenway and set forth an "Action Program" to implement these objectives. The activities listed for the first year after the completion of the Plan are the most urgent and will further Franklin Township's Open Space program immediately. The "three year" recommendations are also important, but will take some time to complete. The "five year" projects should take place in the appropriate time frame, as opportunities arise. The Open Space and Recreation Plan is not a static document. The Action Program should be updated every year, and progress should be reported annually to the governing body.

First Year

- Adopt the Open Space and Recreation Plan as an amendment to the Township of Franklin's Master Plan.

- Submit the final Open Space and Recreation Plan to Green Acres for the State's Planning Incentive Program.
- Apply to the N.J. Green Acres Planning Incentive Grant program for funding based upon the Open Space and Recreation Plan.
- Prepare a Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI) for the Township. Include both Asbury Field and Broadway Field.
- Review and prioritize the properties highlighted in the Open Space and Recreation Plan. Visit the properties and decide which one(s) to submit for county and state preservation funding.
- Prepare at least one application per year for the Warren County Open Space and Farmland Preservation Trust.
- Identify sites for new recreational facilities in Franklin Township.
- Meet with the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJ DEP) Division of Parks and Forestry and Division of Fish and Wildlife to discuss the preservation of properties within and adjacent to existing state holdings in the Township, including but not limited to the Musconetcong River and Warren Trail.
- Meet with Warren County Morris Canal Committee and Canal Society of N.J. to discuss the preservation of the Morris Canal in the Township.
- Continue to pursue the designation of the Musconetcong River as a "Wild and Scenic River" by the National Park Service.
- Send a municipal representative to the meetings of the Highlands Council, as the land south of Route 57 in the Township is within the Planning Area as established by the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act.

Within Three Years

- Update the Township's Farmland Planning Incentive Grant ("PIG") application to the State Agriculture Development Committee for the preservation of farmland clusters in the township, including farmland within the Pohatcong Valley Farmland Belt.

- Educate local residents on the benefits of placing agricultural, conservation or historic easements on their property.
- Acquire parcel(s) in Franklin Township for recreational use, including the use of the municipal farmland and Edison Field.
- Meet with the owners of the Merrill Creek properties and N.J. Green Acres to encourage Merrill Creek to enroll their land in the Green Acres program to ensure permanent preservation of this critical and beautiful watershed land.
- Identify, acquire, or otherwise protect, land in areas of the Township that are important to the recharge and protection of Franklin Township's ground water supply.
- Meet with adjacent municipalities and counties to discuss open space objectives and common programs and goals.
- Discuss with the Lawrenceville School Camp the establishment of a conservation easement on either a portion of their camping facility in the Township.
- Enact, or enhance existing, critical areas ordinances to protect, at a minimum, floodplains and wetlands, stream corridors (especially Pohatcong Creek and its tributaries, category one streams), steep slopes, well-head protection areas and groundwater recharge areas. This should be done in concert with the Planning Board.
- Work with neighboring municipalities to coordinate and enhance the above ordinances.
- Working with the local Soil Conservation Service, offer information and resources to local farmland owners regarding soil conservation techniques and alternatives to protect the prime farmland soils located within the Township.
- Work with the Historic Preservation Commission to complete the Historic Sites Survey, to identify properties and districts eligible for listing on the state and federal historic registers. Encourage the owners to include these properties on the register.

- Review the Open Space and Recreation Plan yearly to update the properties and information, and submit the update to Green Acres.

Within Five Years

- Conduct a workshop with local landowners explaining the benefits of the Forest Stewardship Program; distribute informational materials on the program and resources landowners can contact to enroll into the program.
- Discuss preservation priorities and other work being done by nonprofits active in the area to form partnerships, including the Musconetcong Watershed Association, The Nature Conservancy, and NJ Audubon Society.
- Meet with the NY/NJ Trail Conference, N.J. Green Acres and Warren County to identify and acquire properties to establish the Warren Trail with links into Franklin Township.
- Develop a formal network of walking and bicycling trails.
- Pursue the listing of additional historic sites in Franklin Township on the state and national registers of historic places, including the Plenge site.
- Maintain ongoing communication and monitoring for the clean-up and protection of the ground water wells within the Pohatcong Valley with the Environmental Protection Agency.

5. Municipal Assessment Report

A report entitled **Taking the Next Steps: Franklin Township, Warren County Municipal Assessment**, dated August 2006 was prepared by the Musconetcong Watershed Association. The focus of the study is described as follows:

The purpose of a Municipal Assessment is to provide external analysis of the municipality's Master Plan and how it is supported by the township's ordinances, policies, plans, and practices. The result of this is the "Taking the Next Steps" report which provides recommendations on measures that can be taken to ensure that the township's natural

*resources are preserved by implementing the necessary regulatory structure to bring the protection about.*¹

By comparing the goals set forth in the Township's Master Plan against the land use regulations in place in Franklin Township, the Municipal Assessment identified specific areas where the new or improved provisions will be needed in the Township Code in order to achieve those goals. The Municipal Assessment recommends the following tasks be undertaken in that regard:

- Ensure groundwater supplies are adequate for all proposed development
- Raise awareness about proper septic system maintenance
- Strengthen limestone ordinance
- Encourage appropriate commercial development "of high quality visual design" on Route 57 Corridor and in Village Centers
- Protect the ridgelines of Pohatcong and Scotts Mountain
- Encourage the use of lot size averaging and clustering in new subdivisions
- Historic Preservation Commission should continue its preparation of a survey of historic sites
- Establish an orientation program for elected and appointed officials
- Promote agriculture as a sustainable business in the Township
- Encourage public participation in local affairs
- Identify and manage stream corridor buffer areas in order to maintain undisturbed vegetation and to maintain or improve water quality
- Address affordable housing obligation with a growth share ordinance
- Protect the steep slopes in the Township in order to discourage erosion of soils by maintaining adequate foliage cover on hillsides
- Enforce the use of low impact construction methods

In order to benefit from the detailed analysis provided in the Municipal Assessment Report as the township prepares a new comprehensive Master Plan, this Reexamination Report incorporates the August 2006 study in its entirety as an addendum in Appendix A.

F. 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

¹ Taking the Next Steps: Franklin Township, Warren County Municipal Assessment, by Barry, Beth Styler, Mucconetcong Watershed Association, August 2006, page iii.

DESIGNATED RECYCLABLE MATERIALS, AND CHANGES IN STATE, COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES. [40:55D-89c]

1. Affordable Housing

A revised Housing Element and Fair Share Plan will be prepared for repetition to COAH with the objective of securing substantive certification for the third round cycle.

2. Highlands Region

The enactment of the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act in August 2004 will have a significant impact on how municipalities within the Highlands Region plan for their future. The Highlands Region is divided between the “Planning Area” and the “Preservation Area”. Franklin Township is located entirely within the Highlands Region with approximately 25 percent of the Township situate within the Preservation Area.

The Highlands Council is charged with the responsibility to develop a regional Master Plan. The original release date of June 2006 has been delayed as has the subsequent October 2006 target. In accordance with N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28(14)d, Franklin Township’s Master Plan must include “...a specific policy statement indicating the relationship of the proposed development in the municipality, as developed in the master plan, to the Highlands regional master plan...”

In addition, the Highlands Act requires the constituent municipalities to address the Regional Master Plan as follows:

Within nine to 15 months after the date of the adoption of the regional master plan or any revision thereof, according to a schedule to be established by the council, [Highlands Council] each municipality located wholly or partially in the preservation area shall submit to the council such revisions of the municipal master plan and development regulations, as applicable to the development and use of land in the preservation, as may be necessary in order to conform them with the goals, requirements, and provisions of the regional master plan.

The goal of the regional master plan is described in the Act is as follows:

The goal of the regional master plan with respect to the entire Highlands Region shall be to protect and enhance the significant values of the resources thereof in a manner which is consistent with the purposes and provisions of this act.

The goals of the regional master plan with respect to the preservation area shall be to:

- (1) Protect, restore, and enhance the quality and quantity of surface and ground waters therein;
- (2) Preserve extensive and, to the maximum extent possible, contiguous areas of land in its natural state, thereby ensuring the continuation of a Highlands environment which contains the unique and significant natural, scenic, and other resources representative of the Highlands Region;
- (3) Protect the natural, scenic, and other resources of the Highlands Region, including but not limited to contiguous forests, wetlands, vegetated stream corridors, steep slopes, and critical habitat for fauna and flora;
- (4) Preserve farmland and historic sites and other historic resources;
- (5) Preserve outdoor recreation opportunities, including hunting and fishing, on publicly owned land;
- (6) Promote conservation of water resources;
- (7) Promote brownfield remediation and redevelopment;
- (8) Promote compatible agricultural, horticultural, recreational, and cultural uses and opportunities within the framework of protecting the Highlands environment; and
- (9) Prohibit or limit to the maximum extent possible construction or development which is incompatible with preservation of this unique area.

The goals of the regional master plan with respect to the planning area shall be to:

- (1) Protect, restore, and enhance the quality and quantity of surface and ground waters therein;

- (2) Preserve to the maximum extent possible any environmentally sensitive lands and other lands needed for recreation and conservation purposes;
- (3) Protect and maintain the essential character of the Highlands environment;
- (4) Preserve farmland and historic sites and other historic resources;
- (5) Promote the continuation and expansion of agricultural, horticultural, recreational, and cultural uses and opportunities;
- (6) Preserve outdoor recreation opportunities, including hunting and fishing, on publicly owned land;
- (7) Promote conservation of water resources;
- (8) Promote brownfield remediation and redevelopment;
- (9) Encourage, consistent with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan and smart growth strategies and principles, appropriate patterns of compatible residential, commercial, and industrial development, redevelopment, and economic growth, in or adjacent to areas already utilized for such purposes, and discourage piecemeal, scattered, and inappropriate development, in order to accommodate local and regional growth and economic development in an orderly way while protecting the Highlands environment from the individual and cumulative adverse impacts thereof; and
- (10) Promote a sound, balanced transportation system that is consistent with smart growth strategies and principles and which preserves mobility in the Highlands Region.

3. Land Conservation

The adoption of the 2006 Open Space and Recreation Plan Element may require amendments to the Township's land use regulations to implement the short and long term strategies.

G. THE SPECIFIC CHANGES FOR THE MASTER PLAN OR DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS, IF ANY, INCLUDING UNDERLYING OBJECTIVES, POLICIES AND STANDARDS, OR WHETHER A NEW PLAN OR REGULATIONS SHOULD BE PROPOSED.

The last comprehensive Master Plan for Franklin Township was adopted in 1991 with subsequent amendments in March 2000 (Historic Preservation Plan), March 2001 (Land Use Plan), October 1995 [Second Round] and December 2005 [Third Round] (Housing Plan Element), and May 2006 Open Space and Recreation Plan).

It is the recommendation of this Master Plan Reexamination Report that a new comprehensive Master Plan be formulated and adopted by the Franklin Land Use Board in 2007 to consist of at least the following Elements and reports:

- Statement of objectives, principles, assumptions, policies, and standards upon which the constituent proposals for the physical, economic, and social development of the municipality are based.
- Land Use Plan Element
- Housing Plan Element
- Conservation Plan Element
- Farmland Preservation Plan Element

H. 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. [40:55D-89e]

The 2000 Master Plan Reexamination Report offered the following observation on this question:

The Township has not adopted a redevelopment plan pursuant to the “Local Redevelopment and Housing Law” P.L. 1992, c. 79 (C. 40A:12A-1 et seq.), and therefore the Planning Board does not need to comment on its incorporation into the Land Use Plan Element. However, the Township may want to consider a redevelopment plan for commercial and industrial properties, or its historic villages.

There has not been any change in status regarding redevelopment plans in the Township since the 2000 Master Plan Reexamination Report.