

14. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This new Master Plan and reexamination report, which includes an updated Land Use Plan Element, represents the Township's on-going, long-range planning efforts intended to provide the best possible environment for River Vale's residents. The Plan should be considered a general guide as opposed to a hard and fast rule of development activity. It should be used with flexibility so that those changing circumstances that cannot be predicted can be used to local advantage as a means of achieving Township goals. These conditions emphasize that planning, if it is to be effective, must be a dynamic and continuous process. Such an approach will insure that each new development and redevelopment, and each land use change that takes place, will result in the greatest possible benefit to the Township.

Finally, this new Master Plan and reexamination report has been drafted with due consideration to master plans of contiguous municipalities, plans of the County having an impact on the Township, the latest update of the N.J. State Development and Redevelopment Plan, and the Township's Council on Affordable Housing obligation. Where pertinent, these plans have been reviewed and evaluated and are consistent with Township planning policies. As a result, the Township can look to the future with the confidence that its planning program follows statewide legal guidelines as well as meeting realistic, local planning objectives, and expresses the land use vision desired by the Township.

In summary the revisions of significance to the 1975 Master Plan and its subsequent periodic reexaminations, including the last reexamination dated 2000, are as follows:

1. Continue to develop creative means of providing opportunities for affordable housing.
2. Continue to find opportunities to acquire land for open space, recreation, and community facilities purposes. Particular attention should be paid to those 305 acres of parcels identified in Section 3.1.1.12 Vacant Lands of this Master Plan, paragraph #2 "Parcels that could expect development in the foreseeable future".
3. Monitor the effectiveness of the new building height limitations, and eliminate the conflicting definitions in the land use code.
4. Eliminate the EO Executive Office Building Zone.
5. Revise the Township's residential development standards to achieve consistency with the N.J. Residential Site Improvement Standards.
6. Revisit the Township's regulations pertaining to payment in lieu of recreation facilities within the Multi-Family Housing Zones.
7. Develop and enact Floor Area Ratio (FAR) ordinance provisions.
8. Develop and enact Improved Lot Coverage limitations within residential zones.
9. Remove the residential zoning designations from environmentally sensitive lands, public facilities, and golf courses.
10. Reconsider the limitations currently placed on locating senior citizens residential developments.
11. Reduce the extent of the multi-family affordable housing zone to more acceptable boundaries.
12. Reduce the extent of the general business zone to more acceptable boundaries.
13. Consider permitting affordable rental housing, senior citizens housing, and offices on the second floors of buildings within the general business zone.
14. Increase the extent of the professional office zone, and revise the dimensional limitations to enable this use as infill development within River Vale's central business district.
15. Introduce a new mixed-use district at the edge of the central business district that permits first floor office uses and second floor rental affordable housing uses.
16. Permit open space, recreation, and parkland uses in all Township building zones.

17. Revise the HDD Housing District for the Disabled regulations to accommodate and enable assisted living, congregate care, skilled nursing, long-term medical care, and senior housing uses. Expand the district to include the new Jewish Home site and the strip of land along the north side of Piermont Avenue.
18. Pursue Round 3 Substantive Certification from COAH.
19. Expand the Township's sketch plat submission provisions for subdivisions to also include conceptual site plan submissions.
20. Community-wide design vernacular standards of the highest order should be established, thereby introducing quality of design into the landscape.
21. Modify those Land Use Code provisions that have the objective of harmoniously blending new and redevelopments into existing neighborhoods by means of maintaining and enhancing existing site features. Sections 175-164 A (3) and 175-227.2 N (6) (a, c and d) both attempt to preserve existing trees, and topographic and other site features. Their qualitative provisions should either become more quantitative, or they should feature measurable performance standards.
22. Enhance the streetscapes of both the pedestrian-oriented and suburban vehicular-oriented configurations that exist within River Vale's central business district.
23. Consider embarking upon a Community Forestry Management Plan program.
24. In order to limit over-building and inappropriate redevelopment while still permitting reasonable building, formulate bulk standards that include controls for mimicking prevailing development patterns within existing neighborhoods.
25. Develop design standards for off-street parking lots.
26. Refine the Township's signage standards and ordinance, and include aesthetics among other considerations. Introduce signage regulations to govern multifamily residential land uses.
27. Improve the street tree presence on River Vale's streets.
28. Consider pursuing "Tree City USA" status from the National Arbor Day Foundation.
29. Repair and complete continuous sidewalks along the Township's collector roads.
30. Consider implementing "Sidewalk Banking" provisions in the land use ordinances.
31. Expand the bicycle route network within the Township and extend it to its boundaries.
32. Revisit the Township's site plan standards to emphasize better aesthetics and design in the built environment.
33. Revisit the Township's lighting regulations to bring them closer to contemporary standards. Items for consideration should include illumination levels, light sources, fixture designs, and the advisability of requiring a minimal level of lighting on residential streets that currently have no lighting.
34. Revisit the Township's landscaping regulations to bring them closer to contemporary standards. Items for consideration should include preserving natural features, the use of native vegetation, and utilizing plants that serve multiple purposes.
35. Review traffic conditions along the north central portion of Rivervale Road, and review plans for roadway improvements within the Four Corners, to better understand the improvements that may be necessary.
36. Undertake a traffic analysis of the Blue Hill Road and Orangeburgh Road intersection.
37. Interconnect, expand, and improve the bicycle routes within the Township.
38. Implement an interconnected trail system through the Township's parks and open spaces to various community destinations.
39. Address the library's expressed need to expand.
40. Resolve the spatial issues that plague the Police Department, the Fire Department, and the DPW.
41. Resolve how to replace the Community Center to replace the closed facility.
42. Address the issue of the absence of a full service postal facility within the Township.
43. Investigate the possibility of acquiring a site along the north side of Piermont Avenue to develop a new Town Hall.

44. Continue to request annual funding through the Township's existing Planning Incentive Grant from NJDEP Green Acres.
45. Continue to pursue the new park parcel that has been offered at the west end of the Jewish Home site within the Four Corners. Continue to pursue the reconstruction of the Cornelius Holdrum House on this same site.
46. Through the use of greenways, pursue the interconnections of active and passive recreation areas, points of cultural interest, community facilities, public rights-of-way, nearby neighborhoods, and other places of public congregation.
47. Conduct an investigation into the feasibility of adding sports lighting to the unlighted Township fields and courts.
48. Encourage benign improvements to the municipal wildlife sanctuary.
49. Continue to pursue the establishment of a municipal amphitheater on the slope leading down to the lower grove of Grove Field.
50. Continue to pursue the public acquisition of the Bergen Hills golf course.
51. Conduct a study to determine the feasibility of introducing a public recreation facilities targeted towards the needs of senior citizens.
52. Prepare a detailed recreation facilities and programming plan.
53. Create a municipal Environmental Commission.
54. Prepare a community wide Natural Resource Inventory (NRI), and then adopt it by reference as background information upon which future Conservation Elements are based.
55. Follow up the NRI with the preparation of an open space preservation strategies report.
56. Revise the Tree Preservation and Removal ordinance to rectify its shortcomings.
57. Monitor the effectiveness the Township's 2004 stormwater management regulations.
58. Revisit the objectives of the A-1 Zoning District for the regulation's appropriateness within environmentally sensitive undeveloped lands. Consider whether or not the CN Conservation District would be more appropriate. Confine the A-1 district to non-sensitive sites.
59. Update the checklist for attachment to land development applications to include more contemporary considerations.
60. Continue to participate in future NJSDRP Cross Acceptance processes.
61. Complete the public process for adopting the Green Acres Open Space and Recreation Plan.
62. Revisit and make any corrections that may be necessary in the Township's Green Acres Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI).
63. Consider amending the Township's ordinance that establishes the Historic Preservation Commission to authorize the Commission to create a locally adopted landmark list, and to provide for approval authority of projects affecting landmarked resources. At a minimum, consider creating a landmarking program for the formal recognition of sites, even if the Commission's input regarding proposed changes to the sites remains advisory.
64. Adopt a policy of adaptive re-use of historic sites and resources before they are demolished.
65. Pursue Township certification in the Certified Local Government Program (CLG) for historic preservation.
66. Initiate the preparation of a comprehensive inventory of historic resources within the Township, particularly for those resources that are not eligible for inclusion on rosters.
67. Resolve to locate a suitable cell tower site that would serve to offset the "dead zone" reportedly covering the northern portion of the Township. In this regard, obtain a ruling from NJDEP on the previously selected site at the eastern end of the Bergen Hills Golf Club.
68. Revisit municipal regulations pertaining to group homes.
69. Continue to monitor and measure the impact of New Jersey's new stormwater management regulations of 2004 on proposed developments, both public and private in sponsorship.
70. Continue to monitor all proposed state land use planning regulations for their impacts on the Township.

71. Monitor the progress of the Bergen County Master Plan process for its impacts on the Township. When the appropriate time comes, participate in the County's public hearing process to ensure that River Vale's concerns are adequately addressed.
72. Continue to monitor the progress of the zone change proposals in neighboring Orangetown, N.Y. Continue to attend public meetings, and establish official interested party status under the NYS Environmental Conservation Law. Establish a rapport with Orangetown officials. If approved, these proposals would permit Planned Adult Communities, some office uses and a hotel, all of which would be adjacent to River Vale.
73. Continue to monitor the progress of the redevelopment plans for the former N.Y.S. Rockland Psychiatric Center. This should include both publicly and privately sponsored projects. In particular, the Township should pay close attention to Orangetown's interest in finding private firms to develop 130 acres of this site for senior citizen housing and/or research and development facilities.
74. Promote a greater level of compliance with statewide recycling goals and statutes within the Township. Encourage the DPW to expand the recycling program as their capacity permits.
75. When space permits, develop a Township recycling center for manmade materials for use by the community.
76. When land area permits, develop a Township composting site for windrowing leaves, for use by the Township DPW.
77. Consider entering into a Township-wide agreement with a private carter for solid waste collection and disposal. This would relieve property owners from the burden of having to enter into individual contracts with haulers.
78. Continue to examine and revisit the applicability of redevelopment in River Vale, in accordance with the N.J. Local Redevelopment and Housing Law.

One other Master Plan element that should be considered for future preparation and adoption by the Township is a Utility Services Plan Element. Such an Element would report on the state of all public utility services within the Township, and would project their adequacy into the future. It would also identify any planned upgrades by the various utility companies that service the Township. At the Township's option, this element could also explore and report on the status of private utilities that do business within the Township, such as cable, satellite and cellular companies.

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