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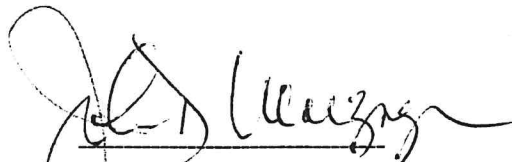
FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN ELEMENT PLUMSTED TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

PLUMSTED TOWNSHIP OCEAN COUNTY, NJ

Prepared For:
Planning Board
Township of Plumsted
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February 1, 2001



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Adopted by the Plumsted Township Planning Board on March 5, 2001. The original of this document was signed and sealed in accordance with N.J.A.C. 13:41-1.3 and is on file with the Plumsted Township Planning Board.

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1.0 Introduction

The preservation of farmland and woodlands protects our natural resources and maintains the rural character of our community and helps establish a sustainable economy. Farmland protection, since it prevents development of prime farmlands, is an investment in the infrastructure of agriculture and is the foundation of an agricultural industry.

The purpose of this plan is to formulate Plumsted's strategy to preserve as much farmland as possible in the short term by leveraging monies made available by the Garden State Preservation Trust Act. The plan includes goals, an inventory of existing preserved farmland, evidence that the municipal Master Plan and ordinances support and promote agriculture as a business and a plan for preserving farmland. This document also provides a description of the farming trends in the community and a discussion of the plans to develop the agricultural industry in Plumsted Township.

Regional and Local Setting

Plumsted Township is comprised of almost 40.7 square miles (or 26,048 acres) of land area and is situated in the western section of Ocean County. The Township is bordered on the north by Upper Freehold Township (Monmouth County); on the east by Jackson Township (Ocean County); on the south by Manchester Township (Ocean County); and on the west by New Hanover Township and North Hanover Township, both in Burlington County.

Plumsted Township is a largely rural municipality with its center in New Egypt. New Egypt is an approved and delineated designated town center pursuant to the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan. The remainder of the Township, outside of the jurisdiction of the Pinelands Commission, is designated as Planning Area 4 (Rural Planning Area).

The predominate land use in the Township is agriculture. The southern 45% of the land area of the municipality is within the Fort Dix Military Reservation. There are no major state highways through the Township, and the primary road network consists of two-lane County and Municipal roadways.

Population

At the time of the 1990 Census, Plumsted Township had a total population of 6,005 persons. The Ocean County Planning Board estimates that the current population of the municipality is 7,150 persons in the year 2000. (The results of the year 2000 Census are not yet available; preliminary figures will be available in April or May of 2001.) The population density in 1999 was 173 persons per square mile compared to a density of 753 persons per square mile for Ocean County.

Land Use

As previously noted, Plumsted Township is largely a rural and agricultural community. The Fort Dix Military Reservation comprises 11,693 acres, or, essentially, the southern half of the Township. Approximately 70% of the municipality, outside of the military property, consisted, in 1994, of undeveloped

lands such as forested areas, agricultural lands, and other vacant lands, as well as, public open space. Agriculture comprised 6,954 acres in 1994, the time of the most recent land use study, followed by residential land use, which totaled 4,038 acres. Commercial and industrial uses encompassed 166 acres, or 1% of the land area of the municipality in 1994. Many of the retail commercial uses are situated in New Egypt, the economic center of the region.

2.0 Goals

The guiding concepts of the Plumsted Township Farmland Preservation Plan are as follows:

1. Participation in the acquisition of development easements from agricultural parcels or fee simple purchase shall be strictly voluntary.
2. All existing farm qualified properties are included in the plan to provide maximum flexibility and eligibility for participation in the farmland preservation efforts of the Township, County, and State.
3. Notwithstanding No. 2 above, acquisition of development easements or fee simple purchase of farms located in general proximity to existing farm-restricted properties should be targeted to encourage the creation of larger contiguous areas of preserved farmland.

4. Coordination of the Township's County and State farmland preservation efforts with the Township's Recreation and Open Space Plan to promote the overall goal of preserving large contiguous areas of open space and to take advantage of the protection afforded by buffering farmland with preserved public open space.
5. Coordinate farmland preservation efforts with adjoining municipalities such as Upper Freehold Township and non-profit conservation organizations.
6. Encourage the use of creative land use regulation techniques that promote the preservation of significant areas of active farmland.

3.0 Inventory

Farmland and Open Space Preservation Tax

The Plumsted voters approved a dedicated open space tax to provide a steady source of funding for farmland and open space preservation. The current open space tax rate is \$ 0.01 per \$100 dollars of assessed value.

Farmland Preservation

The first farm preserved in Ocean County by the Ocean County Agriculture Development Board was the Hallock U-Pick Farm in Plumsted Township in 1991.

The table provided below, entitled *"Farmland Preservation 1991 to Present, Plumsted Township, Ocean County, New Jersey"*, indicates the number of Plumsted

farms and acres of farmland entered into the County's Farmland Preservation Program. The data in the table indicates that almost 1,800 acres were preserved in fourteen farms between 1991 and 1999 in Plumsted Township. In addition, there are three farms currently awaiting settlement on the sale of development rights (pending applications) and another eleven applicants have preliminary approval from the County farmland preservation program (current applications). If all of the current and pending applications are approved, the Township will more than double the number of farms and add 40% to the number of acres permanently preserved in Plumsted. The preserved acreage, plus the pending and current applications, represent almost 10% of the total land area of Plumsted Township and 18% of the non-military portion of the municipality. The majority of the preserved farms in Ocean County, at this time, are located in Plumsted Township.

**Farmland Preservation 1991 To Present
Plumsted Township, Ocean County, New Jersey**

Years	No. of Farms	Acres
1991-1995	4	869
1996-1999	10	917
Subtotal	14	1,786
2000		
Pending Applications	3	183
Current Applications	12	566
Subtotal	15	749
Total	29	2,535

Source: Ocean County Planning Board – Farmland Preservation Program, February 2000.

4.0 Supportive Planning and Ordinances

The Plumsted Township Master Plan and Land Use Ordinances are very supportive of farmland preservation and promotion of agriculture as a business. Examples of such support are discussed below:

4.1 Master Plan

The Land Use Element of the 1995 Master Plan establishes in its "Community Statement " that Plumsted Township is, first and foremost, an agricultural community. The foundation of the Master Plan is to preserve open space, farmland, forested areas and the overall rural character of the municipality while accommodating reasonable opportunities for development.

The 1995 Master Plan contains the following objectives, which relate to farmland preservation and agricultural industry:

"To promote agriculture and agriculture-related business as part of the economic future of the Township."

"To encourage the preservation of farmland and promote and preserve the agricultural industry of the Township."

In addition, the Master Plan recommends that the Township utilize development alternatives to large lot zoning to preserve farmland through such techniques as

"farmettes", conventional clustering, farmland preservation bonus density and lot averaging.

In August 1999, the Plumsted Township Planning Board adopted a Land Use Plan Amendment to the Plumsted Township Master Plan which recommended creation of a "Recreation and Open Space Zone" to recognize the existence of publicly owned lands for recreation and open space. The Land Use Amendment also recommended the expansion of the "Farmland Preservation Zone" and a reduction of the permitted residential densities of certain areas in the northeast quadrant of the Township. The Plumsted Township Committee implemented the recommended revisions to the Township Zoning and Land Use Regulations in late 1999.

4.2 Zoning Ordinance

The Plumsted Township Zoning Ordinance is supportive of agriculture in several ways. First, one of the intent and purpose statements of Chapter 15, entitled "Zoning", is as follows: "To encourage the preservation of farmland and promote and preserve the agriculture industry of the Township." Second, agriculture is a principal permitted use in the RA-5 (Rural Agricultural Zone, minimum 5 acre lot size), RA-3 (Rural Agricultural Zone, minimum 3 acre lot size), RA-2 Rural Agricultural Zone, minimum 2 acre) and the FP (Farmland Preservation Zone) districts. Third, the Plumsted Zoning Ordinance establishes a Farmland Preservation Zone, which includes all deed-restricted farms. This zone district

draws attention to the farmland preservation program during all aspects of the development review process and seeks to protect such properties. Fourth, the Plumsted Land Development Ordinance contains a provision that encourages the preservation of large contiguous tracts of farmland by providing a bonus for clustering building lots and deed restricting the balance of the tract.

4.3 Right-To- Farm

Similar to the Master Plan, the Plumsted Township Ordinances are supportive of farmland preservation and promotion of agriculture as a business. The strongest evidence of the Township encouragement of agriculture is the Right-To-Farm law. Right-to-Farm law strengthens the farmers' position from a legal standpoint when neighbors sue them for private nuisances and protects farmers from unreasonable governmental restrictions on farm operations.

The Right-to-Farm provisions, Chapter 2 of the Plumsted Township Code, addresses the following aspects of farming:

- Right to farm throughout the Township;
- Use of equipment and chemicals;
- Methods;
- Acceptable practices;
- Times;
- Noise odor, dust and fumes; and,
- Inconveniences to the public.

In addition, the Plumsted Township Ordinance requires that every subdivider of property adjacent to unimproved lands being commercially farmed include a provision in the contract of sale and deed notifying the future property owner of the close proximity to a farm use and waive objection to the farm activities by virtue that the conveyance is accepted.

5.0 Farmland Preservation Plan

The Farmland Preservation Plan is intended to be the municipality's strategy to preserve as much farmland as possible in the short term by leveraging monies made available by the Garden State Preservation Trust Act through a variety of mechanisms.

A total of 1,852 acres have been deed restricted in Plumsted Township, the largest program in Ocean County. This acreage was preserved over the time period of 1991 to the present time. An additional 749 acres are pending approval or closing for a grand total of 2,535 acres of existing or proposed deed restricted lands. The Farmland Preservation Program has preserved farmland at an average rate of approximately 250 acres per year during the aforementioned time period. The Farmland Preservation Plan recommends that Plumsted Township continue the preservation efforts at an acquisition rate generally consistent with the last ten years, that is, about 250 acres per year. The location of the development easement acquisition activity should be consistent with the "Potential Farmland Preservation

Parcels " shown in the Farmland Preservation Plan Map (Figure One) and the guiding concepts of this plan.

Acquisition of 250 acres of development easements per year through the Ocean County Farmland Preservation Program would be equal to an additional 1,250 acres of deed-restricted land over a five-year period and an addition of 2,500 acres over a ten-year period. The inventory of farmland indicates that there is a total of over 6,500 acres of farm-qualified properties in the Township. Therefore, there is sufficient land from which the Township and County may select for preservation.

Currently, the deed-restricted lands are 17% of the land area of Plumsted Township. If an additional 2,500 acres of development easements were acquired, the deed-restricted land would equal 5,000 acres, or 35% of the municipality outside of the military base.

The acquisition of development easements is funded through a combination of monies from the New Jersey State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC), the Ocean County Farmland Preservation Program and Plumsted Township. In the past, the SADC share of the funding has averaged 70% of the cost of the easement purchase, while Ocean County provides 26% and Plumsted Township funds the remaining 4% of the costs. The aforementioned funding allocation is not fixed and is subject to change. The SADC is required to provide at least 60% of the cost and is authorized to supply up to 80% of the cost. Also note that increased municipal

share of the development easement cost raises the priority ranking of individual farms for funding.

According to Dave McKeon, Administrator of the Ocean County Farmland Preservation Program, the cost of an agricultural development easement in Plumsted Township averages \$4,000 per acre for upland parcels in the recent past. The acquisition costs decrease for properties with wetlands. For purposes of this plan, the rate of \$4,000 per acre is utilized as an average and appears to be a good conservative estimate.

If the Township were to agree to fund the equivalent of 250 acres per year over the next 10 years and if the easement purchase costs remain steady; the costs of easement purchase would be as follows:

Total acres to be preserved: 2,500

Easement cost/acre: \$4,000

	<u>Ten Year Plan</u>
Total easement cost	\$10,000,000
SADC share @70%	\$ 7,000,000
County share @26%	\$ 2,600,000
Municipal share @4%	\$ 400,000

Timing of Easement Acquisitions

Plumsted Township has several options in terms of the timing of the easement purchase process. The Township may decide to fund the easement program over the next 10 years based on the open space tax funds. A second option is for the Township to bond the cost of the easement purchases for a 2, 5 or 10 year time period. One of the benefits of bonding for the farmland preservation cost is the Township can lock in some of the land costs.

It is the recommendation of the Farmland Preservation Plan for Plumsted Township to submit grant applications for Planning Incentive Grant funds from the Garden State Preservation Trust. The current open space tax revenues may be utilized to leverage funding from the Preservation Trust.

Current Funding

Plumsted Township has adopted an open space tax, currently \$0.01 per \$100, for funding of open space and farmland easements. In the 2000 tax year, the Township is projecting the collection of \$34,000 for open space. A continuation of the open space tax at the current rate should be able to finance most of the Township goal for farmland preservation as identified above, provided additional grants are obtained.

Should the Township desire to pursue a more aggressive farmland preservation program, there are several strategies which may be considered. Those strategies are as follows:

1. Seek voter referendum approval of increasing the dedicated open space tax rate to raise additional funds to acquire additional easements;
2. Use of bonded indebtedness to accelerate or increase the amount of open space funds;
3. Municipal appropriations for development easement purchase;
4. Encourage private individuals and corporations to donate development easements;
5. Encourage nonprofit organizations such as the Trust for Public Lands and the Nature Conservancy to participate in the development easement program;
6. Coordination of open space funding of state agencies to achieve farmland preservation goals; and,
7. Consider adoption of a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program, when permitted pursuant to legislation.

Planning Consistency

New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan

As previously noted, the NJ State Planning Commission approved Plumsted Township's petition for Town Center designation for New Egypt on July 24, 1996. In addition, the NJ Office of State Planning has issued a determination that the 1995 Plumsted Township Master Plan and municipal land use regulations are generally consistent with the goals and policies of the NJ State Development and Redevelopment Plan. All non-Pinelands land areas of the Township, exclusive of the designated town center, are designated by the State Planning Commission as "Rural Planning Policy Area 4" to encourage farmland preservation and ensure the continued viability of farming without conflicting and threatening residential uses.

6.0 Farm Trends

The agricultural economy of Plumsted Township is quite diverse and includes all types of livestock, poultry, horticulture, forestry, and vineyards. The larger components of the agricultural economy of Plumsted, in terms of acres and finance, are the horse farms and the vegetable production, according to the Ocean County Agricultural Agent. This section provides an examination of the elements of the agricultural economy of Plumsted Township.

Animals raised in Plumsted Township as part of agricultural operations include: horses, cattle (meat and dairy), hogs, chickens, goats (meat and dairy), turkeys, donkeys, miniature horses, pigeons, pheasant, quail, mallards, rabbits and peacocks.

Field crops include mixed vegetables (that is, cool, warm and fall season type vegetables), soybean, herbs, blueberries, strawberries, apples, pumpkins and hay. Plumsted is also noted for their specialty vegetables, which cater to the Oriental, Caribbean and other ethnic markets. There are several Christmas tree farms, nurseries and greenhouses in Plumsted Township. There are no sod farms in Plumsted. The Agricultural Agent also noted that the Christmas tree operations are growing and the “pick –your- own” farms are successful.

Based on information submitted to the Ocean County Board of Taxation for 1999 for purposes of farmland assessment, the breakdown of farm acreage in Plumsted is as follows:

**Farm Assessed Property and Farmland Acreage
Plumsted Township and Ocean County
1999**

	Plumsted		Ocean Co.	
	#	% of Cty	#	%
Farm Assessed Properties	143	40	362	100
Cropland Harvested (acres)	3,424	64	5,325	100
Cropland Pastured (acres)	339	70	481	100
Permanent Pasture (acres)	579	50	1,154	100

Source: Ocean County Planning Board and the Ocean County Board of Taxation, 1999.

Farm characteristics in Plumsted Township are provided in the above table, which reports the results of Farmland Assessment forms from property owners. As shown in the table, the number of farm assessed parcels and farm acreage in Plumsted Township comprises large portions of all farms and acreage in the entire County.

7.0 Future Agricultural Industry

To date, the most concerted effort by the Township of Plumsted to develop the agricultural industry in the municipality has been the very important step to preserve farmland. The preservation of the farmland creates the demands for the agricultural industrial products such as feed, fertilizer, herbicides, and equipment or in turn produces the agricultural goods, which are inputs to other agricultural industry. The Township's land development regulations and zoning should be

reviewed for the purposes of determining appropriate zones and/or additional locations for farm supply and equipment sales and service.

The Plumsted Township Committee is currently discussing a proposal to create a "farmer's market" on a vacant lot in downtown New Egypt. The market will create another outlet for local farmers to address retail demand for local produce and provide some publicity for the farms in the area. The Township should also investigate other sources of promotional assistance for all aspects of its agricultural industry such as the State's "Jersey Fresh" program and services offered by the State Bureau of Travel and Tourism.

The Plumsted Township Farmland Preservation Plan recommends the following actions for the development of additional agricultural industry in Plumsted Township:

- a. Continuation of the Farmland Preservation Program to increase the acreage of preserved farmland.
- b. Examine the Township land use and development ordinances for opportunities for increasing agricultural industry.
- c. Establish a municipal task force to investigate economic development opportunities related to the agricultural base of the Township. Some examples of other industries, which use agriculture as a base, are food processing and agric-tourism. Examples of agric-tourism are "Living Historical Farms," educational tours, petting zoos, winery/vineyard tours and farm vacations. The "Living History Farm" concept consists of an operating farm authentic to a particular historical period. The farm would be staffed by full and part time employees to operate the farm and provide interpretative tours for visitors. The "Living History Farm" would promote farming heritage and outdoor education and provide recreation to residents while preserving farmland.

- d. The municipality should also consider if there is a municipal role in marketing assistance through maps and “way-finding” signage for pick-your-own operations and farmstands.
- e. Re-examine Land Use Plan Element of the Master Plan in areas adjacent to substantial concentrations of active farms with the intent of lowering permitted densities to allow increased buffers between future residences and active farmland.

Specific Recommendations are as Follows:

1. The redesignation of substantial portions of the area presently designated RA-3 (Rural Agricultural, 3 acre minimum lot size) to RA-5 (Rural Agricultural, 5 acre minimum lot size). This redesignation would include the entire current RA-3 designated area west of Ocean County Route 539 (Pinehurst Road).
2. Portions of the current R-40 Zoning District are redesignated to RA-5. Such areas include: the area north of Millstream Road, west of Ocean County Route 539 (Pinehurst Road); portions of the area between Ocean County Route 528 (Lakewood Road) and Magnolia Avenue, west of Applegate Lane; and Block 8, Lots 8, 9, & 10 and Block 83, Lot 12.
3. Additional cluster option in the RA-5 Zone. It is recommended that the Township consider an amendment to the Land Use Regulations creating an additional cluster option in the RA-5 Zone. Under this cluster option, owners of parcels of a minimum of twenty (20) acres, but less than fifty (50) acres, would be permitted to develop at a reduced residential building lot size in return for deed restricting the remaining property to farming or open space purposes. The number of residential building lots to be created would be limited to the recommended density of the RA-5 Zone, i.e. one (1) dwelling unit per five (5) acres. The deed restricted portions of the tract would be eligible for future agricultural subdivision. The addition of this cluster option would promote the preservation of smaller farmland or woodland parcels, as well as, reducing sprawl and decreasing the infrastructure costs by allowing permitted development to be “clustered.”

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

DEED RESTRICTED PARCELS PLUMSTED TOWNSHIP

Name	Location	Block	Lot	Acres	Type
Hallock	38 Fischer Rd.	75	3	139	Fld Crops, Vegetab.
C Plum Corp.	Archertown Rd.	75	4,5	374	Fld Crops, Vineyrd.
		83	1		
Emley	High Bridge Rd	43	1	166	Dairy, Field Crops
Kessler	Brindletown Rd	86	10	190	Field Crops
Lee	W. Millstream Rd.	43	6	30	Field Crops
Van Kirk	Brindletown Rd	85	8	118	Horse
Hlubik	Brynmore Rd.	86	7	140	Cropland, Dairy
		83	13		
		84.01	56		
DeWolf	W. Colliers Mills	82	6,7	210	Field Crops
B &W	Brynmore Rd.	83	11	128	Field crops
Vodak	Brynmore Rd	84.01	57	10	Nursery
Emley (south)	No. of Rt. 528	74	10.01	75	Field Crops
McCormack	High Bridge Rd	74	10	125	Field Crops
Liedtka	Archertown Rd.	84	17	81	Field Crops
Lech	Long Swamp Rd.	84.01	50.01	66	Field Crops
TOTAL				1,852	

Source: Ocean County Planning Board, February 2001.

APPENDIX B
PLUMSTED TOWNSHIP
FARM ASSESSED PARCELS

BLOCK	LOT	BLOCK	LOT	BLOCK	LOT	BLOCK	LOT
10	37	54	13	77	7	84.01	58.05
10	61	54	6	77	98	85	8
24	8	54	7	78	12.01	85	9
25	1	54	9.01	78	6.01	85	9.02
25	35	54	9.02	78	7.01	85	9.03
25	4	54	9.03	79	12.01	85	9.04
27	20	54	9.04	79	14	86	10
4	12	55	104	79	18	86	7
40	1	55	136	79	25	86	8
40	10	55	137.01	79	38	89	10
40	17	55	139.04	79	39	89	2
40	18	55	149	79	40	89	20
40	19	55	158	79	8	89	25
40	2	55	179	79	8.03	89	3
40	20	55	181	79	8.07	89	31
40	23	55	187	8	10	89	34
40	24	55	192	8	11	89	4.01
40	28	55	207.01	8	9	89	5
40	7	55	54	80	11	89	6.01
41	2	55	57	80	12	89	6.02
41	4.01	55	79	80	14	89	6.06
41	9.01	58	12	80	9	89	7
42	7.01	73	11.01	81	1	89	7
42	9.01	73	11.03	81	2	89	8
43	1	73	9	82	1.02	9	19
43	108	74	10	82	1.04	90	1.04
43	13	74	10.01	82	1.05	90	1.05
43	30	74	11	82	1.06	90	1.11
43	31	74	13.01	82	1.08	90	1.12
43	32	74	13.04	82	1.09	90	1.15
43	33	74	18	82	1.11	95	66
43	35	74	19	82	1.12		
43	38	74	19.01	82	2		
43	4	74	20	82	35		
43	40	75	17.01	82	36		
43	42	75	18.01	82	6		
43	5	75	3	82	7		
43	5.01	75	4.01	83	1		
43	50	75	5.01	83	10		
43	51	75	6	83	10.04		
43	6	75	7	83	11		
43	64	76	103	83	13		
43	65	76	104	83	14.03		
44	13	76	38	83	14.04		
44	15.02	76	63	83	14.05		
44	15.03	76	65	83	17		
44	15.04	76	75	83	2		
44	37	76	75.03	83	22		
46	1	76	77	83	22.02		
46	16	76	82.01	84	11		
46	18	76	82.05	84	14		
46	19	76	97	84	17		
46	22	76	99	84	29		
46	22.03	77	113	84	30		
46	40	77	12	84	37		
46	6	77	13	84	50.02		
47	10.03	77	24	84.01	50.01		
47	25	77	38	84.01	50.05		
47	5	77	39	84.01	56		
54	12	77	40	84.01	57		
		77	44	84.01	57.01		

FIGURE 1
FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN
GARDEN STATE GREEN ACRES PRESERVATION TRUST FUND
PLANNING INCENTIVE GRANT PROGRAM

PLUMSTED TOWNSHIP
 Ocean County, New Jersey
 JANUARY, 2001

LEGEND:

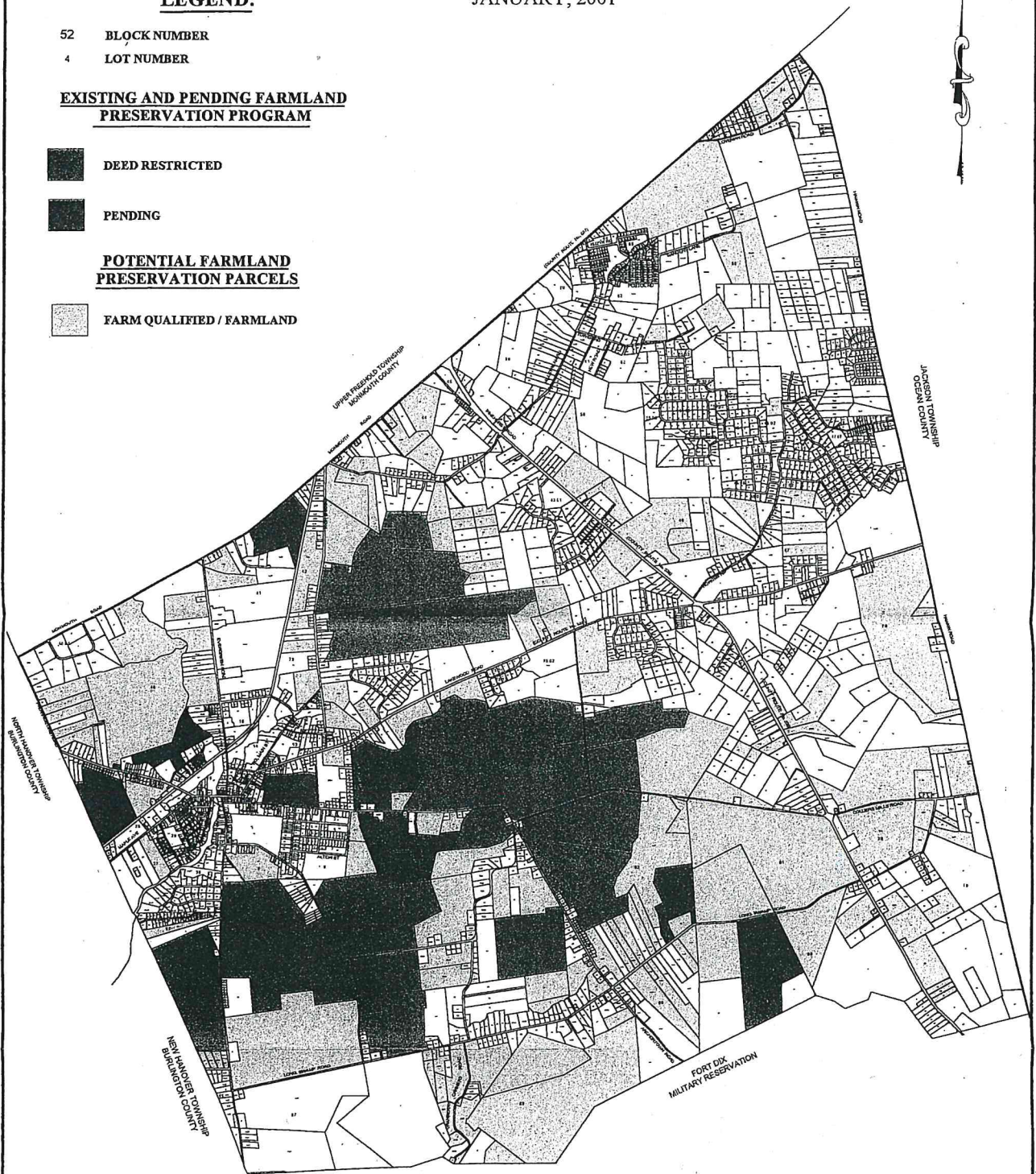
52 BLOCK NUMBER
 4 LOT NUMBER

EXISTING AND PENDING FARMLAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM

 DEED RESTRICTED
 PENDING

POTENTIAL FARMLAND PRESERVATION PARCELS

 FARM QUALIFIED / FARMLAND



MAP SOURCE: PLUMSTED TOWNSHIP TAX LIST ROSTER
 OCEAN COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT
 N.J.D.E.P. - GIS RESOURCE DATA

BASEMAP PREPARED BY: BAY POINTE ENGINEERING ASSOCIATES, INC.
 DECEMBER 2000

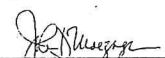
BASEMAP REFERENCE: TOWNSHIP OF PLUMSTED 1989 TAX MAPS
 OCEAN COUNTY NATURAL LAND TRUST PROGRAM
 OCEAN COUNTY FARMLAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM
 N.J.D.E.P. GIS RESOURCE DATA

GRAPHIC SCALE
 1000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 Feet
 1 inch = 2000 ft.



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