2003
MASTER PLAN REEXAMINATION REPORT

TOWNSHIP OF PLUMSTED
OCEAN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

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Adopted by the Plumsted Township Land Use Board on May 5, 2003 and re-adopted, with revisions, on May 19, 2003. The original of this document was signed and sealed in accordance with the statute and is on file with the Land Use Board of the Township of Plumsted.
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2003
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INTRODUCTION

According to the Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89), “the governing body shall, at least every six years, provide for a general reexamination of it 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.”

A Master Plan Reexamination Report is a periodic review of the municipal planning documents and the changing circumstances related to planning and development. The Plumsted Township Planning Board adopted the last Reexamination Report on July 19, 1999. Prior to the 1999 Reexamination Report, a comprehensive Master Plan was adopted on February 6, 1995. Due to the adoption of new elements of the Master Plan, land preservation activities and recent zoning revisions, a Reexamination Report is appropriate at this time.

The Land Use Board is not required to hold a public hearing on the Reexamination Report; however, it must adopt, by resolution, a report of the findings of this reexamination. The MLUL requires that the report address five (5) specific areas. These requirements are set forth below and are followed by the appropriate response statements.
MASTER PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS REEXAMINATION REPORT

I. The first provision of N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89 of the MLUL states that a Reexamination Report shall include:

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

The Plumsted Township Land Use Board itemized several concerns in the 1995 Master Plan. The same concerns were detailed in the 1999 Reexamination Report. They were as follows:

1. Preserving agriculture as an industry;

2. Preserving the rural character of the Township while promoting balanced economic growth;

3. Parking in downtown New Egypt;

4. Circulation in both the northeastern portion of the Township and in New Egypt;

5. Lack of public sewer facilities in New Egypt;

6. Inadequate community facilitates, specifically the municipal building and educational facilities; and,

7. Anticipated need for additional passive recreation facilities.

II. The second provision of 40:55D-89 of the MLUL requires that the Reexamination Report address:

"The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date."

1. Preserving agriculture as an industry.

Over 200 acres of farmland have been preserved with agricultural deed restrictions since the date the prior Reexamination Report was adopted. In addition, in 2001, the Farmland Preservation Zone District was expanded by the Township to incorporate all of the deed restricted parcels.

Plumsted Township has taken several measures to preserve agriculture as an industry and to preserve open space. Those steps are as follows:
a. On February 1, 2001, the Plumsted Township Land Use Board adopted a Farmland Preservation Plan Element of the Township Master Plan. The purpose of a Farmland Preservation Plan is to formulate the municipality's strategy to preserve as much farmland as possible through funds available at the State and County levels.

b. Assisted in the deed restriction of additional agricultural lands.

c. Adopted clustering provisions for farmland preservation.

2. Preserving the rural character of the municipality.

Plumsted Township has taken the following steps to preserve the rural character of the municipality:

a. As noted above, Plumsted Township adopted a Farmland Preservation Plan as an Element of the Plumsted Township Master Plan.

b. In July of 2000, Plumsted Township adopted an Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) Element to the Master Plan. The OSRP serves as a framework for implementation for open space acquisition. The purpose of the OSRP is to establish an overall guiding vision for open space and recreation in the municipality. The OSRP is a required component for funding through the New Jersey Green Acres Planning Implementation Grants. The approval of an OSRP, together with a stable open space tax, qualifies Plumsted Township for 50 percent grants for open space acquisition funding.

c. Adopted revisions in the Zoning Ordinance to rezone the R-3A (minimum 3-acre lot area) east and west of Route 539 (Pinehurst Road) to R-5A (minimum 5-acre lot area).

d. Adopted cluster development and lot averaging provisions to encourage the dedication of open space.

3. Parking.

Plumsted Township, utilizing a State grant, constructed thirty four (34) spaces at the site of the former municipal library on Evergreen Road. The site is linked to the municipal building by a short pedestrian path. Additional parking is still required in the downtown to address parking requirements for downtown business establishments.


The recommended traffic studies of New Egypt have not been performed.
5. Lack of public sewers.

No actions have been implemented to obtain municipal sewer service for New Egypt.

6. Inadequate community facilities.

A new municipal building is currently under construction. The new high school has opened.

7. Anticipated need for additional passive recreation facilities.

Municipal efforts to obtain New Jersey Planning Implementation Grants have facilitated acquisition of lands for passive recreation.

III. The third provision of 40:55D-89 of the MLUL requires that a Reexamination Report address:

“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.”

1. 2000 Census.

Since the date of the last Reexamination Report, the United States Census has released much of the data from the Year 200 Census. Some demographic information is provided below:

a. The population of Plumsted Township was 7,275 persons on April 1, 2000, an increase of 1,270 persons from 1990, or 21 percent. The majority of the population increase is from new single-family residential development. During the corresponding time period, Ocean County grew by 18 percent. Ocean County had the second highest growth of New Jersey counties from 1990 to 2000 in both number and percent increase. The population information indicates that there has been a considerable amount of growth in Plumsted Township. Efforts to preserve the rural character of the Township and to acquire open space should continue.

b. The population density of Plumsted Township was 178.5 persons per square mile, the second lowest in Ocean County. In comparison, the population density of Ocean County was 800.7 persons per square mile in the year 2000.
c. Total housing units increased by 428 units from 1990 to 2000, a 16 percent increase.

d. Median age increased from 33 years of age in 1990 to 36 years of age in 2000.

2. Rural character.

The character of Plumsted Township continues to be rural. However, the Township has had a significant amount of new population and housing growth. After Plumsted Township adopted the rezoning of the R-3A to R-5A west of Pinehurst Road in 2000, there has been a shift in the focus of new development to the northeast sector of the Township.

3. Downtown revitalization.

Plumsted Township is a "Main Street New Jersey" community. Main Street is a comprehensive revitalization program that promotes historic and economic redevelopment of traditional business districts. It is a multiyear program focusing on the efforts of downtown business people, the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (NJDCA) and Plumsted Township. In addition, Plumsted Township established an Economic Development Authority for the purpose of obtaining funding for improvements to the downtown area. As a result of all of the efforts, there is an increased emphasis on the revitalization of New Egypt, which should be encouraged and promoted by the Master Plan.

4. Blueprint for Intelligent Growth (BIG)/New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP).

In early 2003, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) released several versions of a "Blueprint for Intelligent Growth" (BIG) Map for public comment. The map contained three (3) areas or tiers: red - development is restricted; yellow - a cautious approach to development; and green – development is appropriate. It is a new approach by the NJDEP “to achieve smart growth and protect the state’s waters and natural resources.”

Preliminary review of BIG Map information for Plumsted Township indicates that the New Egypt Town Center designation was not included in the State’s data set. At this time, no definitive conclusions may be drawn concerning the effect of the BIG Map on the assumptions and policies upon which the Plumsted Township Master Plan and Development Regulations are based.
IV. The fourth provision of 40:55D-89 of the MLUL requires that the Reexamination Report address:

"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."

1. Master Plan.

Based on the foregoing discussion, a comprehensive Master Plan is not required at this time. The revisions proposed in the draft Land Use Plan Element Amendment will address many of the issues raised in this Reexamination Report. Those amendments address redesignation of the RA-3 area and one R-40 lot east of Pinehurst Road to RA-5, redesignation of the Kuzyk Road area to R-40, redesignation of the C-3 Zone on Hawkin Road and Route 528 to residential use, and modification of the list of permitted uses and allowing mixed uses in the C-4 Zone (New Egypt).

2. Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP).

The Plumsted Township Environmental Commission has compiled a comprehensive list of vacant parcels, which are appropriate for open space acquisition, based on environmental characteristics of the properties. The Land Use Board may wish to further amend the OSRP to incorporate the Commission’s inventory.

3. C-4 Zone.

Additional review of the permitted uses and Development Regulations in the C-4 Zone, the downtown New Egypt area, should be performed in accordance with the “Main Street” program.

4. Light Industry (LI-2) Zone

The Light Industry (LI-2) Zone District, approximately 300 acres in area, is located north of New Egypt and consists of farmed and vacant lands. The zone district represents the largest contiguous tract in the Township, which has the appropriate designations in municipal and State planning documents for growth. The Township Committee has authorized the Township Planner to perform a planning and analysis of the tract for future land uses. Modifications of the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance may be appropriate after consideration of the report.
V. The final provision of 40:55D–89 of the MLUL requires that the Reexamination Report address:

"The recommendations of the planning board concerning the incorporation of the 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 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."

Plumsted Township should consider the preparation of a comprehensive redevelopment area investigation and plan for a portion of the downtown area of New Egypt. A Redevelopment Plan would be consistent with the Town Center designation under the State Plan and with a similar recommendation in the 1999 Reexamination Report.