

*Master Plan Reexamination
Report*

For the

*Township of Franklin
Gloucester County, NJ*

Prepared by:

**The Franklin Township
Planning Board**

**Adopted: May 18, 1999
Amended: September 21, 1999**

Franklin Township Planning Board

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I. INTRODUCTION

Under the provisions of the New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL), at 40:55D-89 et seq., the municipality is required, at least every six (6) years, to provide for the general re-examination of its master plan and development regulations by the Planning Board.

Franklin Township adopted its current Master Plan in May 1992. Thus, the Township has reached a point in time where it is obligated to undertake the requisite re-examination process.

As required by the MLUL, the re-examination report shall state the following:

- A. The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of the adoption of the Master Plan or re-examination report, whichever is most recent.
- B. The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have been increased subsequent to such date.
- C. The extent to which there have been significant changes in the assumptions, policies, and objectives forming the basis for the Master Plan or development regulations, 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.
- D. The specific changes recommended for the master plan or development regulations, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards or whether a new plan or regulation should be prepared.
- E. The recommendations of the planning board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans adopted pursuant to the "Local Redevelopment and Housing Law" (40A:12A-1 et al.) into the land use plan element of the municipal master plan, and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.

The purpose of the 1999 Re-examination of the Master Plan of Franklin Township is to reaffirm the objectives of the Master Plan that remain valid at this time and to alter those which no longer serve the interests of its citizens.

Aside from the legal requirements established in the MLUL to re-examine the Township's Master Plan, the Planning Board and Township Committee must also recognize that a master plan is not a static document, but in reality a guide for change that allows the decision makers of the community to make informed management decisions within a comprehensive framework which is the "Master Plan". By following a pattern of informed decision making, the resources of the community can be judiciously allocated to maximize the greatest return for the taxpayer's dollar.

Furthermore, the Master Plan can be used by the Township as a tool with which to coordinate and negotiate policy issues with surrounding communities and other agencies that affect development in the Township, including, but not limited to, the County Planning Board, NJDOT, NJDEP, and the NJ Pinelands Commission.

II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION: CHANGES IN POPULATION, EMPLOYMENT & LANDUSE AND ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE APPROVALS

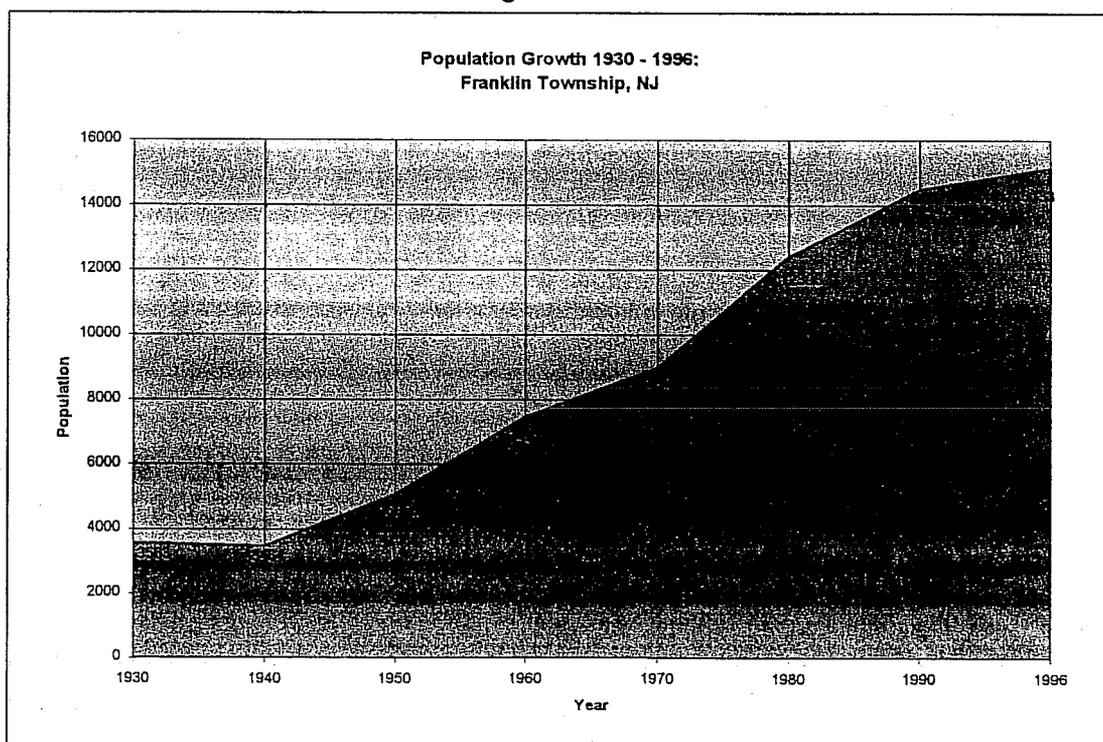
This section of the Reexamination Report has been prepared to provide Planning Board members with an overview of the changes that have occurred in the Township since the adoption of the Master Plan in 1992. Also included is an analysis of variances approved by the Zoning Board of Adjustment from 1994 through 1998, which is used to assess the appropriateness of current land use regulations.

Population Change

In 1990, the Census Bureau reported that Franklin Township had a population of 14,482 persons residing in 4,652 dwelling units. Since the Census the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) estimates that the population has grown by 651 persons (4.5%) to 15,133. This should be a conservative estimate of growth in the municipality. Data distributed by the NJ Department of Labor (DOL) and Census Bureau with the NJ State Development and Redevelopment Plan Reexamination Report reports the issuance of 451 residential construction permits from 1990 to 1996. Based on an average household size of 3.07 person per unit reported in the 1990 Census, the construction of these units would result in a population increase of 1384 persons to a total of 15,866 or an increase of 9.6%.

The following chart, identified as Figure B-1, traces population growth in the Township from the 1930 Census to the most recent DVRPC estimates. This figure reflects an historic trend of continuing population growth beginning in 1940 and continuing over the last 50+ years. The figure indicates that the rate of growth is beginning to plateau, indicating a period of slow population growth over the first six years of this decade.

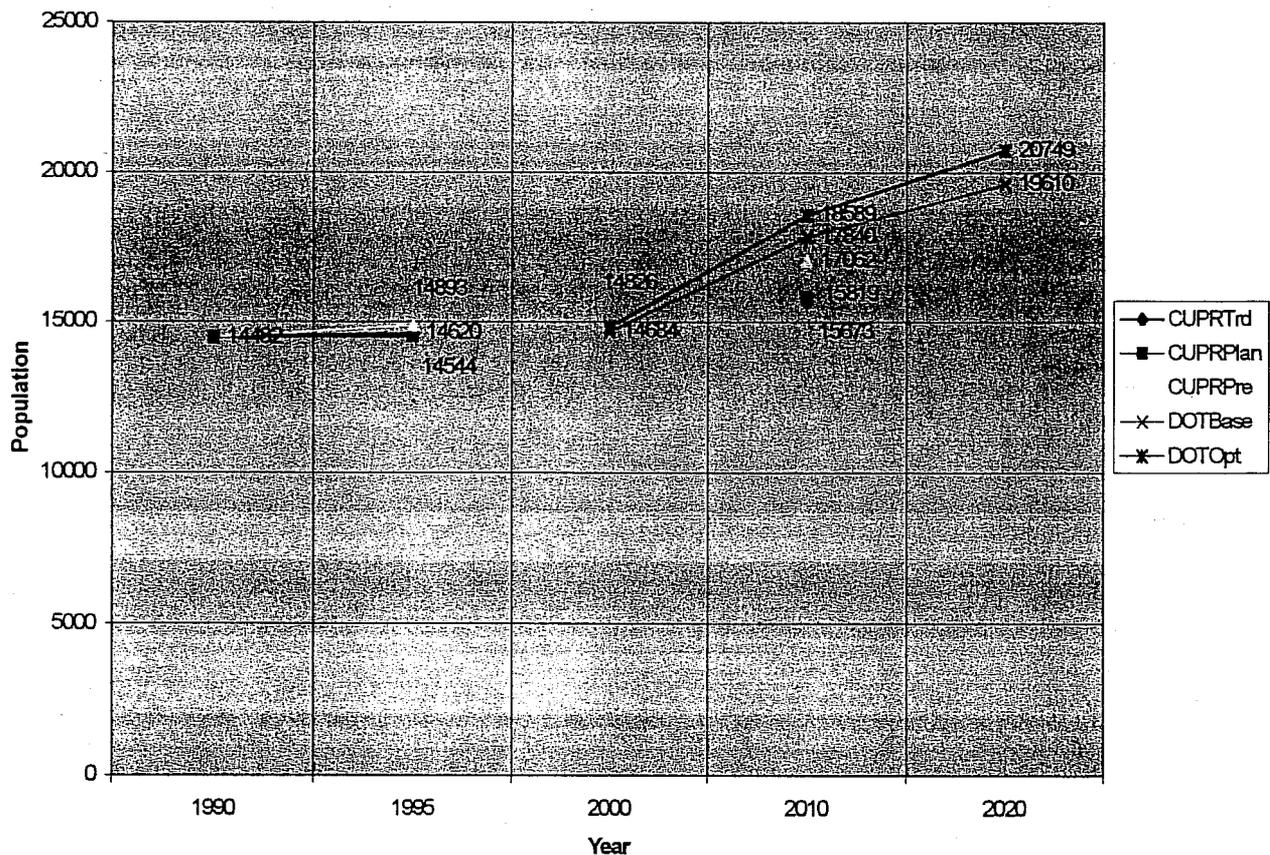
Figure B-1



Future Population Growth

In conjunction with the NJ State Development and Redevelopment Plan Reexamination Report, the NJ Office of State Planning (OSP) made available (in a CD ROM format) background information and information relating to the State planning process. Included in this information are a series of five population forecasts for municipalities that prepared by the Center for Urban Policy Research (CUPR) at Rutgers University in 1992 and the NJ Department of Transportation in 1994. The population forecasts are identified as CUPR TrendFit (CUPRTrd), CUPR PlanFit (CUPRPln), CUPR Prefit (CUPRPre), NJDOT Trend Baseline (DOTBase) and NJDOT Optimistic (DOTOpt). These forecasts are shown on the following Figure B-2.

Figure B-2
Forecasted Population Growth:
Franklin Township, NJ

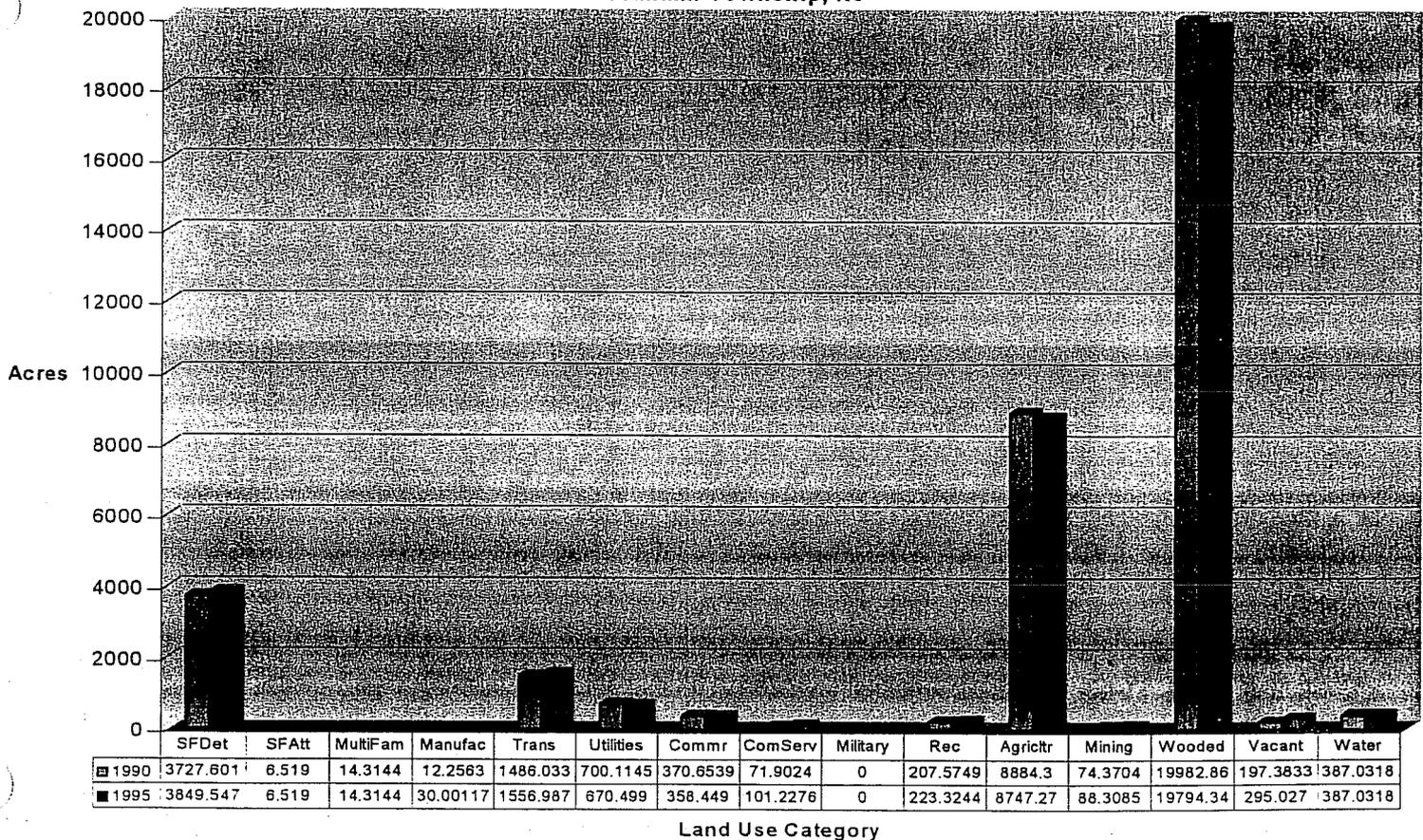


These forecasts reflect 1995 and 2000 population estimates that are significantly lower than the 15,133 persons reflected in the 1996 population estimate. The future growth reflected on the chart is varied with all three CUPR projections reflecting a slower growth trend than either DOT projection. All of the growth forecasts should be considered conservative (low) since they were prepared in the first half of the decade when the economy was in the early stages of a 6+ year long period of sustained economic growth that includes low mortgage interest rates, a high rate of employment and low fuel prices that result in rural communities like Franklin being considered attractive bedroom communities.

Land Use Changes

Figure B-3 is a bar chart comparing land use in the Township in 1990 and 1995 as reported by the DVRPC. This table reflects and increase in the area occupied by seven (7) of the fifteen (15) land use categories listed (single family detached, manufacturing, transportation, community service, recreation, mining and vacant), a decrease in the area occupied by four use categories (utilities, commercial, agriculture and wooded) and four (4) categories that are unchanged (single family attached, multifamily, military and water).

Figure B-3
Changes in Land Use - 1990 to 1995:
Franklin Township, NJ

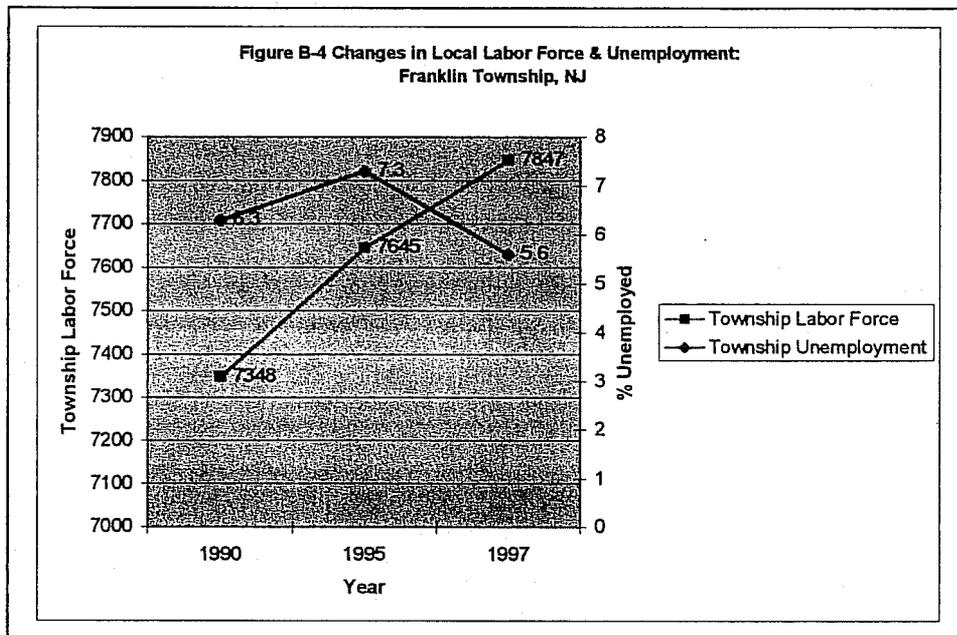


1990 1995

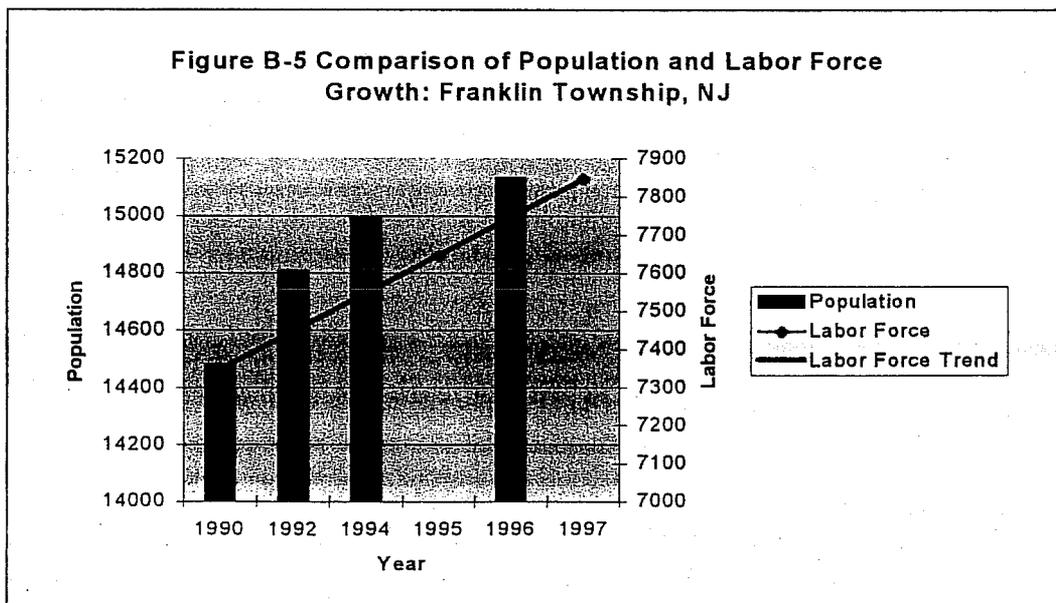
The changes in land use allocations over the five years are consistent with the previously discussed housing development trend.

Employment Changes

As the population in the Township continues to grow, the labor force also continues to expand. Figure B-4 compares growth in the local labor force with changes in unemployment from 1990 through 1997. This figure shows that the available labor force continues to steadily rise while unemployment spiked in 1995 and dropped significantly in 1997.



As shown in the Figure B-5 (below) the growth of the labor force is comparable to the rate of population growth that the Township has experience this decade.

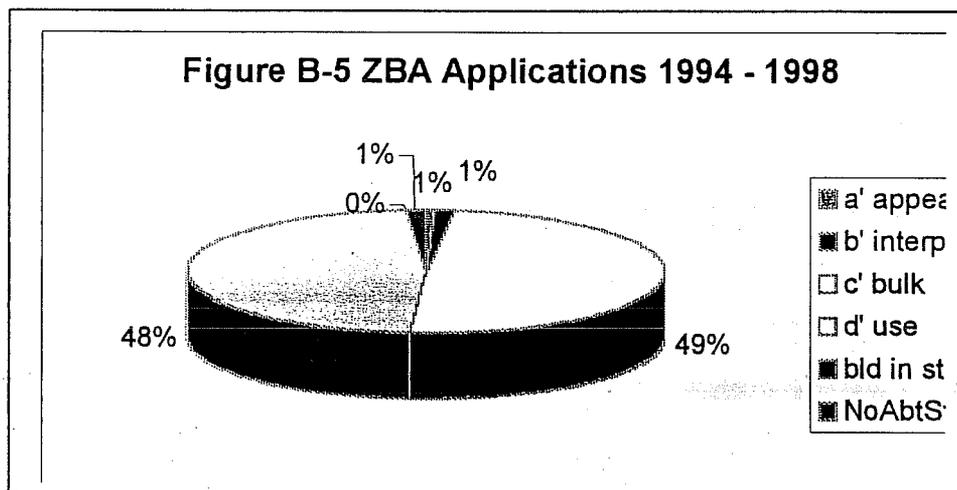


Although the local labor force continues to grow, a vast majority of the local working population is employed outside of the Township. In 1995, the NJ Department of Labor estimated a private sector employment of 1620 persons in the Township. This represents approximately 23% of the employed labor force. The low percentage of "local" jobs reinforces the need for the Township to implement an economic development program that stimulates growth of existing business and attracts new businesses in order to achieve a balanced community.

Actions of the Zoning Board of Adjustment

Under the Municipal Land Use Law, the zoning board of adjustment is required to review its decisions on applications and appeals for variances and prepare a report of its findings at least once a year. Copies of the report are to be sent to the governing body and the planning board. These reports can and should be used by these agencies to test the effectiveness of current zoning standards. A significant number of variances for a use or from standards in a district would indicate the need to reevaluate the controls for that area. Conversely, very few or no variance applications for a use or in a district would indicate that current regulations are adequate. For the purpose of this reexamination report, the annual reports of the Zoning Board for the last five years (1994 through 1998) were reviewed. The last significant amendment to the Ordinance was adopted in 1993 therefore review of variances over the last five years appropriate to evaluate the effectiveness of current zoning.

During the analysis period, 145 applications for variance approval (including interpretations) were filed with the Zoning Board of Adjustment. Figure B-5 identifies the breakdown of variance applications by type. This figure clearly shows that a majority of the variance applications were for 'bulk' (or 'c') and use (or 'd') variances. The Zoning Board approved 141 of the applications (97.2%) denying only 3 'd' variances and 1 interpretation (a 'b' application).



Review of the 'c' variance applications finds that the Zoning Board approved all 70 applications (100% approval) filed. Slightly over half of the applications (51.5%) were setback variances for existing principal structures. Through discussions with Zoning Board Members, staff and members of the governing body, it is our understanding that many of these applications were cases where the expansion would be in line with an existing nonconforming front setback. The frequency of these applications indicates that it may be appropriate to amend the Ordinance to include standards allowing these expansions without the need for variance approval.

Included in the 'c' variance analysis were six applications (8.5%) from Ordinance standards for the minimum dwelling unit size (both square footage and the number of bedrooms). The New Jersey Supreme Court has ruled (*Home Builders League of So. Jersey Inc. v. Berlin Tp.*) that minimum building sizes in single family residential districts have no relationship to legitimate zoning objectives. Amendment of the Ordinance to delete these standards would be appropriate.

Of the 69 applications for 'd' variances 37 (53.6%) were for locations in a residential or agricultural zoning district and 32 were for sites in commercial or industrial districts. The board denied 2 applications in residential areas and 1 in a commercial zone.

Analysis of the 'd' variance approvals found the following:

- The ZBA approved 14 applications for utility and communication facilities, eight in residential zones and 6 in commercial/industrial districts. This is expected considering the expanding growth of the wireless communication industry.
- Less than 46% (16) of the applications for properties in residential and agricultural districts were for the establishment of a commercial use. Of the remaining applications, 11 (31%) were for 'non permitted' residential uses and the remaining eight approvals were the aforementioned utility and communication facilities.
- Slightly over one half (51.6%) of the variances approved in commercial or industrial districts were for commercial uses that are not permitted under the Land Use Ordinance. This points to the need to update the list of uses permitted in these districts to provide flexibility in order to respond to market conditions.

The general conclusion of this analysis is that the Land Development Ordinance of the Township requires a thorough review and update to address the findings of this section and to maintain consistency with the MLUL.

III. REEXAMINATION REPORT FINDINGS

A. Land development objectives & principles that existed in 1992.

Objective A

Provision of a Balanced Land Use Development Pattern Which Can be Effectively Serviced by the Transportation, Utility and Community Facilities System.

Principles on which Objective A are based:

1. Provide for environmentally suitable locations for higher density development in those areas best served by the transportation, utility and community facilities system.
2. Encourage development to take place in and adjacent to the established towns and villages at densities consistent with existing patterns.
3. Encourage growth of tax ratable lands through addition of manufacturing and commercial uses in locations which are environmentally, socially and economically suitable.
4. Provide for limitations on uncontrolled single family housing proliferation in the prime agricultural areas of the Township, particularly strip single family developments along collector and arterial roads and streets.
5. Provide for adequate separation and screening of non-residential uses from adjoining residential and agricultural uses.
6. Provide development patterns along the borders of the Township which are compatible and consistent with existing and proposed uses in adjoining municipalities.
7. Protect and enhance the recreational advantages provided by lakes and natural wooded areas of the Township.

The extent to which Objective A has been reduced or increased subsequent to 1992.

Several factors contribute to an increase in the importance of achieving Objective A.

The focus of the State on consistency of local master plans and development patterns and regulations with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP) increases need the Township to achieve principles 1 & 2 of this Objective.

The increase in residential development since 1992 increases the need for the Township to achieve a growth in tax ratables called for in principle 3.

Favorable regional economic conditions and generally low mortgage rates have contributed to an increased demand for single family housing in the Township, thus increasing the need to achieve principle 4 in order to preserve the rural character of the municipality.

Objective B

Provision of a Broad Range of Housing Types for Permanent Residents.

Principles on which Objective B are based:

1. Plan future Franklin residential development areas in a manner which will permit the Township to provide its fair share of the housing supply for all segments of the future regional housing demand through utilization of its existing supply and proposed future housing development.
2. Provide for varied housing types, including single family detached homes, apartments and townhouses to satisfy the desires and needs of the anticipated future housing demand in the Township.
3. Encourage the rehabilitation and improvement of existing housing within the Township.
4. Promote housing growth at a rate and in locations consistent with the Township's ability to provide sanitary sewers and other community services.

The extent to which Objective B has been reduced or increased subsequent to 1992.

The principles and conditions relating to Objective B remains unchanged since 1992.

Objective C

More Efficient Movement of People and Goods Through Improvement of the Township Transportation System.

Principles on which Objective C are based:

1. Provide for improved interconnection between streets and highways of the various functional classifications (freeway, arterial, collector and local street systems).
2. Develop standards for each of the above road facilities to ensure proper and thorough development of the local road system.
3. Provide improvements which will result in the most effective and efficient use of streets and highways.
4. Orient future Township growth and development to the location of the new completed Route 55 and other major circulation facilities in the northwest portion of the Township.

The extent to which Objective C has been reduced or increased subsequent to 1992.

The principles relating to Objective C remain unchanged since 1992.

Objective D

Promote the Orderly Development of Utility Services to Satisfy the Needs of the Township Population.

Principles on which Objective D are based:

1. Coordinate expansion plans of the Gloucester County Utilities Authority with the development proposals of the Master Land Use Plan.
2. Provide long range plans for solid waste disposal.
3. Provide for the protection of the ground water resources of the Township. Provide for long range plans to implement potable water system.
4. Coordinate solid waste facility planning with studies conducted by the Gloucester County Planning Department.
5. Provide for the alleviation of existing storm water drainage problems in the Township.
6. Provide development controls which will preclude the creation of future storm water drainage problems in connection with new development.

The extent to which Objective D has been reduced or increased subsequent to 1992.

The importance of Objective D has increased since 1992 based on the following:

- *Ongoing studies by NJDEP that have identified a high potential for elevated levels of mercury and radon in ground water extracted from the Cohansey aquifer.*
- *Court decisions that have deregulated solid waste disposal and ongoing issues to resolve costs such as the 'environmental investment charge.'*
- *The need to resolve the issue of long term maintenance and ownership of stormwater management basins to assure that they function properly thus preventing future storm drainage problems.*
- *Emphasis of the SDRP on concentrating development in centers and suburban development areas, thus increasing the need for public utilities to serve these areas.*

Objective E

Encourage Orderly Development of Community Facilities to Service the Needs of the Township Population.

Principles on which Objective E are based:

1. Provide locations for future school, fire fighting and first aid squad facilities necessary to service future development as projected by the Land Use Plan.

The extent to which Objective E has been reduced or increased subsequent to 1992.

The principle relating to Objective E remains unchanged since 1992.

Objective F

Provisions for a Comprehensive System of Public Recreation Facilities to Serve All Segments of the Population.

Principles on which Objective F are based:

1. Provide for the development and expansion of existing Township recreation areas with facilities to satisfy the needs of all age groups within the Township.
2. Promote the provision of recreation areas within future residential developments through the utilization of cluster developments, reinforcement of existing towns and villages, and other incentives.
3. Promote expanded use of school facilities in the recreational program of the Township.
4. Initiate the acquisition of public lands which would serve as the foundations of the Franklin Township Park System.
5. Designate those properties to be acquired for parks and open space and encourage contributions of or payments-in-lieu of land for additional acquisition of property.

The extent to which Objective F has been reduced or increased subsequent to 1992.

The principles on which Objective F is based remain unchanged since 1992.

Objective G

Protection of Natural and Environmental Resources.

Principles on which Objective G are based:

1. Preserve the wetlands and floodways along streams, lakes and rivers in a natural state in order to insure a continual recharge of essential elements required for the sustenance of the aquatic food chain.
2. Prevent encroachment onto flood hazard areas along streams, lakes, rivers and wetlands by buildings or uses which would be detrimental to the quality of subsurface and surface water supplies.
3. Promote the use of planning techniques, such as cluster developments and reinforcement of the existing villages, which aid in the preservation of natural resources such as wooded areas and wetland areas.
4. Utilize the findings of the Franklin Township Natural Resources and Conservation Inventory and Classification Study in determining the intensity of development suitable to all of the undeveloped portions of the Township.
5. Encourage the utilization of natural and environmental resource areas such as wetlands and flood hazard areas for appropriate public and quasi-public recreational uses.
6. Prevent encroachment upon habitat of endangered and/or threatened species of flora and fauna.

The extent to which Objective G has been reduced or increased subsequent to 1992.

The increased level of residential development in the Township increases the importance of meeting principle 3, which identify appropriate techniques to preserve the rural character of the Township.

Objective H

Provision of an Effective Energy Conservation Program which will assist all residents, businesses, and public agencies to reduce energy expenditures.

Principles on which Objective H are based:

1. Provide sites for energy efficient homes.
2. Provide protection of solar access.

The extent to which Objective H has been reduced or increased subsequent to 1992.

The principles on which Objective H are based remain unchanged since 1992.

Objective I

Provision of Effective Storm Water Drainage Program.

Principle on which Objective I are based:

1. Provide standards for storm water drainage in all development proposals.

The extent to which Objective I has been reduced or increased subsequent to 1992.

The increased levels of residential development and the need to resolve issues regarding long term maintenance and ownership of stormwater drainage facilities has increased the need to achieve this Objective.

B. PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED IN THE 1992 MASTER PLAN

Land Use Element

1. Franklin Township has seen, and will continue to experience the pressure for greater development. This is caused by the recent opening of NJ Route 55, connecting the previously portion south of Route 40 in Malaga, with segments leading into Camden and Philadelphia. As land north of Franklin Township are developed for housing and commercial development, vacant parcels within Franklin Township will become extremely attractive.(page 6, paragraph 4)

The extent that Land Use Problem #1 has been reduced or increased since 1992

This problem has increased in recent years because of sustained positive national economic conditions; favorable mortgage rates and fuel prices (gasoline) that are historically low when adjusted for inflation. The combination of these factors results in Franklin Township being considered a viable option for persons working in the Philadelphia metropolitan area. While the demand to date is for housing, continued residential growth will lead to demand for expanded commercial development, particularly for uses that benefit from proximity to major highway corridors such as big box retail, multiplex theaters and personal communications facilities. As a proactive planning measure, the Township needs to review its land use ordinances and adopt appropriate amendments that enable the town to address the continuing evolution of land development in the area.

2. Although Franklin Township can still state that it has not developed the extensive environmental problems that have stemmed from out-of-control growth, certain environmental problems continue to arise. These problems are primarily related to the pollution of groundwater and aquifer layers by on-site septic treatment sewage disposal systems. In addition,, there has been reports of groundwater contamination in the Forest Grove section of the Township.(page 7, paragraph 1)

The extent that Land Use Problem #2 has been reduced or increased since 1992

Land Use Problem #2 has increased since 1992. In addition to problems caused by septic systems, more thorough testing of water supply wells has identified potential problems of exposure to radon and elevated levels of mercury. Fortunately, these conditions can be treated through the installation of appropriate water treatment systems and drilling of new wells. The cost of abatement to treat elevated mercury levels is funded by the NJ Spill Compensation Fund.

Housing Plan Element

1. Until public sewer and water is provided, it will not be feasible to provide multi-family housing. Franklin Township, however, will make every reasonable effort to encourage residents of the Township to participate in the Gloucester County Housing Rehabilitation Program for the rehabilitation of existing housing (page 17, paragraph 2)

The extent that Housing Problem #1 has been reduced or increased since 1992

Housing Problem #1 remains unchanged since 1992. The Planning Board should be aware that the NJ Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) is in the midst of preparing the 1999 round of low/moderate income housing allocations. Since the lack of sewer limits the impact of COAH changes this is not an item of immediate concern. However, if sewer is installed in the Township and is available in residential areas the Township should be prepared to address providing affordable housing for its prospective future population.

Circulation Plan Element

No specific problems were identified or are identifiable in the Circulation Plan Element of the Master Plan.

Utility Service Plan

1. Currently, residents of Franklin Township obtain water from individual on-site wells. It is possible that the Township could continue to rely on individual wells and accrue no increased capital costs. However, there are two reasons why this course of action is not advisable. Obviously, the first is that there has already been reports of well contamination in the Forest Grove section of the Township. Secondly, as a result of the Clean Water Act, local monitoring of well will probably be mandated. Well monitoring could be conducted by the County, the Township or some other agency, but in the end Township residents bear the costs of what will be an expensive process.(page 42, paragraph 1)

The extent that Utility Service Problem #1 has been reduced or increased since 1992

Utility Problem #1 is increased. The Gloucester County Dept. of Health has been actively encouraging homeowners to have wells tested for mercury contamination and high levels of radon. This has resulted in 'hot spots' of elevated mercury levels being identified at other locations in the Township. Fortunately, the cost for remediation of mercury contamination is handled through the NJ Spill Compensation Fund thus minimizing any out of pocket costs to residents.

2. The biggest hurdle facing the Township in deciding whether to construct a public water system is, of course, the cost. There is going to be a cost of some kind associate with whatever decision the Township makes, whether it be the cost of operating numerous monitoring wells, or the risks to the health of Township residents, or limits placed on growth and development in the Township.(page 42, paragraph 4)

The extent that Utility Service Problem #2 has been reduced or increased since 1992

Utility Problem #2 remains unchanged.

3. Second only to the acquisition of a safe supply of drinking water is the provision of municipal sanitary sewage disposal. Currently no centralized sewage disposal exists within the Township, residents are served by individual on-site septic systems. Although on-site septic systems are sufficient for rural areas, in developing communities they become less and less effective. In addition to health risks which may result from septic system failures, such as well contamination, the degradation of the environment can also result from surcharged or malfunctioning septic systems.

A number of factors combine to make on-site septic systems especially hazardous to the environment of the Township. The Township possesses an important natural resource in its significant lake system. However, due to the sandy soils located within the Township, which are characterized as very well drained and having very fast percolation rates, and the proximity of concentrations of populations and associated septic systems up stream of the lake, pollution of these water bodies is a very real and serious threat. (page 44, paragraphs 1 & 2)

The extent that Utility Service Problem #3 has been reduced or increased since 1992

Utility Problem #3 remains unchanged.

4. In addition to possible health risks to the community and damage to the environment, the lack of a public sanitary sewer system will limit new growth and development in the Township especially within the corridor now served by Route 55.(page 44, paragraph 4)

The extent that Utility Service Problem #4 has been reduced or increased since 1992

Utility Problem #4 remains unchanged.

5. An issue of considerable concern throughout the region relating to stormwater management is the responsibility and liability of stormwater management facilities. Traditionally, when a housing development is constructed, a homeowners' association is established to maintain whatever stormwater management facilities are located outside of the dedicated right-of-ways, such as detention and retention basins, swales, outfall structures, etc.

The two major problems with this arrangement are that often the number of dwelling units in the development are too few to effectively support the facilities or that after a number of years and after a succession of homeowners, interest in maintenance lessens, maintenance is deferred and facility failure results. Ultimately, in both cases, the responsibility for maintenance falls to the Township.

The extent that Utility Service Problem #5 has been reduced or increased since 1992

Utility Problem #5 remains unchanged.

Community Facilities Element

1. Since it now appears that all municipal services will not be centralized at one location, it is recommended that a study be initiated to identify the most efficient uses for the existing Township Building and Annex. This is a critical issue since early census data results indicate a significant population increase which will translate into greater demands for public services.(page 49, section II., paragraph 2)

The extent that Community Facilities Problem #1 has been reduced or increased since 1992

Community Facilities Problem #1 remains unchanged.

2. The library space shortage is manifested in that programming at the library is restricted to times when the facility is closed and is limited to six to eight participants. This chronic shortage of meeting space severely handicaps the programming effort of the library. The meeting space shortage is compounded by limited parking spaces available at the library. Currently, only 14 off-street parking spaces are available for staff and client use.(page 50, section IV, paragraph 3)

The extent that Community Facilities Problem #2 has been reduced or increased since 1992

Community Facilities Problem #2 remains basically unchanged. The Township has obtained grant funding to develop a combined library/community center at the old Franklinville school site. The construction of this facility should eliminate the space shortage.

3. As the Township population continues to increase and become more concentrated, there is the possibility that the demand for additional police officers may stabilize, however, at present, according to the Township Administration, additional officers are needed. A review of the Township's manpower allocation appears warranted.(page 51, section V.A., paragraph 1)

The extent that Community Facilities Problem #3 has been reduced or increased since 1992

Community Facilities Problem #3 remains unchanged.

4. Since there is no public water system in the Township, water must be brought to the fire scene by tankers or pumped from nearby water bodies. The installation of a public water system in at least some parts of the Township would simplify firefighting operations for the local fire departments.(page 51, section V.B., paragraph 3, sentences 2 & 3)

The extent that Community Facilities Problem #4 has been reduced or increased since 1992

Community Facilities Problem #4 remains unchanged.

5. Projected enrollment for the primary school levels (K-grade 3) is expected to be approximately 1,100 students by 1995 and approximately 1,300 students by 2000. Currently, the maximum capacity of the Janvier School is 860 students, thus, a significant primary grades classroom shortage is anticipated to occur by the middle of this decade.(page 52, section VI.A., paragraph 1, sentences 2 & 3)

The extent that Community Facilities Problem #5 has been reduced or increased since 1992

~~*Community Facilities Problem #5 remains unchanged. [NOTE: VERIFY WITH SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION]*~~

Community Facilities Problem #5 has been reduced since 1992. The enrollment information from the district office reflects enrollment at the Janvier School (K-2) of less than 600 students, which is less than 50 % the enrollment anticipated in the Master Plan. According to the school administration, the enrollment in Township schools has declined from a peak 1700 students in 1996-97 to approximately 1500 in the current school year. Anecdotally, the drop in students is attributed to the age of new homebuyers (new dwellings selling for \$150,000+ which are selling to households with high school aged children) and the half day kindergarten program (a full day program is generally favored by two income households). The Township schools anticipate a moderate (3 - 5%) annual enrollment growth over the next few years however, this would be spread through grades 1 - 6.

6. The planning study executed on behalf of the [regional] district recommends comprehensive and substantial expansion and rehabilitation of the Delsea Regional High School. The district's consultant actually recommended two options for the proposed building additions and renovations, but both options basically seek the same object: the construction of new program facilities and modernization of existing facilities (page 53, section VI.B., paragraph 2)

The extent that Community Facilities Problem #6 has been reduced or increased since 1992

Since the adoption of the Master Plan in 1992, the regional school board has undertaken the recommended program of expansion and renovation to the Delsea Regional High School. While the high school has been renovated, the regional school district still faces the need for renovation and expansion of the Delsea Middle School. That facility, which is nearly 20 years old, has a current enrollment of approximately 680 students. Within the next 2 to 5 years, the administration sees the need to extend the usable life of the facility through renovation and to add 6 classrooms to serve anticipated increases in enrollment. Community Facilities Problem #6 has been reduced, but is not eliminated since future growth of residential development may trigger the need for further renovation/expansion.

Recreation Plan Element

~~No specific problems were identified or are identifiable in the report. This element incorporated an extensive inventory of existing facilities, identified deficiencies, and established a list of recommendations (goals).~~

1. The recreation element identifies 'problems' in two broad categories; conditions at existing township recreation areas that need to be addressed and lands that should be reserved for future recreation needs of the Township.

The extent that the problems in the Recreation Plan Element have been reduced or increased since 1992.

The problems identified in the Recreation Plan remain unchanged. Through the efforts of the Public Works Department and the Recreation & Public Buildings and Grounds Committees the Township has adopted a systematic programs for improving the parks and recreation areas under local jurisdiction and acquiring additional lands for future recreation needs. Much of the funding for improvements and acquisitions has been provided by dedicated recreation trust funds paid by developers in lieu of constructing on site recreation areas. Given the purpose of the public recreation areas, ongoing maintenance activities will be required as will the acquisition of additional lands for future recreation and open space purposes.

Conservation Plan Element

1. Every effort should be made to prevent septic effluent and storm water runoff from directly entering the lakes of the Township (page 76, section II, paragraph 1)

The extent that Conservation Plan Problem #1 has been reduced or increased since 1992

Conservation Plan Problem #1 remains unchanged.

2. A task force should be derived from the newly formed Parks and Recreation Commission to deal with the influx of geese and ducks, as well as other sources which lead to the elevated coliform bacteria counts in the Township lakes (page 76, section II, paragraph 3)

The extent that Conservation Plan Problem #2 has been reduced or increased since 1992

Conservation Plan Problem #2 remains unchanged. In 1999, the Township will take steps to address the growing waterfowl population, however this is a long-term process that will require continual monitoring and action by the municipality.

3. Development in areas adjacent to production agriculture contributes to an unfavorable economic environment for farmers through escalating taxes, enactment of inhibiting ordinances and increased trespassing and vandalism. The long term vitality of agricultural activities depends upon the protection from competing land uses and continued use of agricultural practices that conserve the soil and water resources of the Township (page 84, section XII, paragraph 1, sentences 5 & 6)

The extent that Conservation Plan Problem #3 has been reduced or increased since 1992

Conservation Plan Problem #3 remains unchanged.

Economic Development Plan

1. Generally speaking, the foregoing analysis reveals that there are few employment opportunities within Franklin Township for the bulk of the Township's labor force. Less than 17 percent of the Township work force actually works in the Township. These individuals are most likely engaged in agriculture or local manufacturing and services. Over half of the Township labor force is employed in manufacturing and services, occupations which for the most part are not available in Franklin Township. (page 92, section V.A., paragraph 1)

The extent that Economic Development Problem #1 has been reduced or increased since 1992

Economic Development Problem #1 remains unchanged. The Township has taken the first step to address this problem by making economic development one of the primary functions of the newly established position of Community Development Director.

2. Currently, two factors appear to be limiting the success of the Industrial Park: the lack of public water and sewer within the Township and the quality of access between the sites and Route 55 (page 93, section V.B., paragraph 2)

The extent that Economic Development Problem #2 has been reduced or increased since 1992

Economic Development Problem #2 remains unchanged.

3. That there has been only a limited reduction in traffic volume along Route 47 is positive, however, vigilance in maintaining the viability and vitality of the Township's commercial centers cannot be relaxed. Other communities in the Gloucester County area have invested in their commercial districts and are sufficiently accessible to Franklin Township residents so as to be considered competition for businesses in the Township. It is therefore, the final recommendation of the Economic Development Plan that a strategy be developed to both maintain and improve the economic vitality of the Township's village centers. (page 94, section V.D., paragraph 3)

The extent that Economic Development Problem #3 has been reduced or increased since 1992

Economic Development Problem #3 remains unchanged. The Township has taken the first steps to address this problem by instituting a Corridor Improvement Program (CIP) that focuses on working in cooperation with property owners to clean up any property maintenance and/or zoning violations.

Historic Preservation Element

1. The purpose of this element of the master plan is to outline a plan of action to initiate the preservation of historic sites and buildings in the Township. (page 100, section I, paragraph 2, sentence 1)

The extent that Historic Preservation Problem #1 has been reduced or increased since 1992

Historic Preservation Problem #1 ~~remains unchanged~~ has increased. The 1992 Historic Preservation Element recommended expanding the function of the Township Historic Advisory Commission to serve as the Historic Preservation Commission as established in the MLUL (at 40:55D-107). Similar to the Environmental Commission, the HPC would participant in the development review process through the referral of Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment Applications. The HPC would also be the lead agency in nominating buildings and sites to the State and National Historic Registers and in the designation and establishment of historic districts. The ongoing growth and development in the Township increases the need to address the issue of historic preservation.

Recycling Plan Element

1. Also available at this location (Coles Mill Road) are retaining bins for newspaper, glass and aluminum. These bins, however, are not covered and are exposed to the elements. The Township is charged by weight for disposal of these materials, therefore, water saturation resulting from exposure to rain and snow significantly increases the weight of these materials, and thus the cost of disposal. The Township should make plans to construct an indoor storage facility for recyclable materials. Any new facility should be sized to accommodate both increasing demand and other recyclable materials which are not accepted by the Township. (page 113, paragraph 1, sentences 2 through 6)

The extent that Recycling Problem #1 has been reduced or increased since 1992

The Township has modified operation of the recycling program so that newspaper picked up at curbside (approximately 80% - 90% of the recycled newspaper) is deliver directly to the vendor and newspaper delivered to the recycling center is sent to the vendor weekly. This has served to reduce, but not fully eliminate Recycling Problem #1. Construction of a covered storage facility for newspaper and cardboard would further reduce the potential for saturation of those materials dropped off at Coles Mill Road.

2. Plastics are not collected at curbside; residents drop off plastics at the Township's Coles Mill facility. Since residents are probably more inclined to include plastics with their solid waste if they are not required to separate it out, the Township may wish to consider expanding curbside recyclable pick-up to include plastics. (page 113, paragraph 2, sentences 2 & 3)

The extent that Recycling Problem #2 has been reduced or increased since 1992

The Township recycling program has been modified to include plastic containers in the list of recyclable materials picked up at curbside. Recycling Problem #2 has been addressed.

3. As mentioned previously, the Township operates a leaf composting station at its Coles Mill Road facility. This may not be the most appropriate location for the Township's leaf composting operation. Currently there is no municipal leaf collection and residents must transport yard waste to the composting station themselves. One location in the western portion of the Township may be inconvenient for residents in the eastern and northeastern portions of the Township and may result in illegal dumping of yard waste. (page 114, paragraph 1)

The extent that Recycling Problem #3 has been reduced or increased since 1992

Recycling Problem #3 has reduced since the Township has purchased a leaf vacuum thus simplifying residential leaf disposal. Materials picked up by the leaf vacuum, which represent the majority of the leaves recycled in the Township, are taken directly to a vendor for disposal. This reduces use of the leaf disposal area at Coles Mill Road to residential drop-offs and a very small percentage of the material picked up by the Township.

C. THE EXTENT TO WHICH THERE HAVE BEEN SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN THE ASSUMPTIONS, POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES FORMING THE BASIS FOR THE MASTER PLAN OR DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS AS LAST REVISED, WITH PARTICULAR REGARD TO THE DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND LAND USES, HOUSING CONDITIONS, CIRCULATION, CONSERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES, ENERGY CONSERVATION, COLLECTION, DISPOSITION AND RECYCLING OF DESIGNATED RECYCLABLE MATERIALS, AND CHANGES IN STATE, COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES.

1. Master Plan Assumptions

A. *Master Plan of 1984*

- 1) As a base for preparation of the New Master Plan, information on existing conditions and historic development from the 1984 Plan were assumed to be correct. Objectives, goals and concepts from the 1991 Master Plan were reviewed by the Township and those that were considered to still be valid are included in the Master Plan and Reexamination Report of 1991.
- 2) When reexamining the Master Plan, it was assumed that the plan as adopted in 1984 was valid. The conditions depicted in the 1984 Plan were compared to known 1991 existing conditions with recommendations as appropriate following.

B. *Representation by Officials*

The Franklin Township Planning Board legally represents the citizens of Franklin Township as provided by the Municipal Land Use Law. This Master Plan was prepared under the guidance, review and approval of the Franklin Township Planning Board. The Planning Board was assisted by the Blue Ribbon Committee consisting of representatives from the Planning Board, municipal officials, representatives of numerous Township departments, agencies, committees and boards, school boards, and other key groups.

C. *Data Base*

The contents of this Master Plan, including accompanying maps and drawings, are based on information and mappings pertaining to existing conditions supplied by the Gloucester County Planning Department, the New Jersey Department of Transportation, the Atlantic City Electric Company, the Franklin Township Planning Board, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, the planning departments of adjoining municipalities and other agencies, as noted in the bibliography.

In cases of conflict, field observations and first hand information were given precedence. Information was field checked for accuracy and updated.

Have there been significant changes in the assumptions of the 1992 Master Plan?

There are no changes in the assumptions used in preparation of the Master Plan.

2. Objectives

See the preceding sections of this reexamination report that analyze the extent of changes to the objectives that form the basis of the Master Plan.

3. Changes in State, County and Municipal Policies and Objectives

A. State of New Jersey

1) Residential Site Improvement Standards

In 1996, the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs adopted and implemented the New Jersey Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS). These standards were prepared pursuant to amendments to the Municipal Land Use Law enacted in 1993 and are intended to provide objective design standards statewide that will provide predictability to developers and streamlining the approval process. With the exception of limited circumstances, the RSIS supercedes local development standards for site improvements such as streets, sidewalks, etc.

2) State Development and Redevelopment Plan

The New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP) was first adopted in July 1992. The original intent of the SDRP was to serve as a policy document guiding State Departments and Agencies in their decision making process, principally in making determinations of funding. In November 1995, Governor Whitman directed all State agencies to support the SDRP and to develop programs for its implementation. This has changed the perception of the SDRP from a policy document to a statewide 'Master Plan'. To facilitate implementation of the SDRP incentives (such as, but not limited to, prioritized funding and bonus points in competitive funding applications) are given to local master plans that are found to be consistent with the SDRP, either as an 'endorsed' master plan or by the approval of a 'Centers designation'.

The process of reexamining the SDRP began in 1997 and is anticipated to continue until late 1999. This process, known as cross acceptance, includes not only compliance with the SDRP goals and policies but also any changes in the designation of Planning Areas and Planning Area boundaries on the Resource Planning and Management Map (RPMM). No changes to the RPMM have been proposed in Franklin Township. Given the funding incentives available from the State, the Planning Board should amend the Master Plan as necessary to qualify for an endorsed plan designation and establish the development area boundaries

and petition for Centers designation for the two villages identified in the SDRP – Franklinville and Malaga.

3) New Jersey Pinelands Commission (Pinelands)

Since 1992 several amendments have been made to the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP). For the most part these have been procedural changes and other modifications intended to allow Pinelands to balance accommodation of the demand for new development with its mission to preserve the ecologic characteristics of the region. The most significant amendments have been the modification of standards for the issuance of forestry permits, which have limited the municipal role in review and approval, and changes to the standards for the design, maintenance and monitoring of stormwater management facilities.

B. Gloucester County

In June 1997 the Gloucester County Board of Freeholders adopted the countywide Farmland Preservation, Open Space Protection and Recreational Needs Study. This report sets forth policies, strategies and recommended actions to be undertaken by the County, its constituent municipalities and other public and private entities to implement each of the report components. Franklin Township should review the appropriate components of its Master Plan and zoning regulations to determine if revision is warranted to implement appropriate the recommended County strategies.

C. Municipal

Any changes in the local land use policies and objectives are discussed in the previous sections of this Reexamination Report.

D. 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.

Master Plan Changes

Although the 1992 Master Plan incorporates a thorough examination of issues facing the Township and establishes the goals and principals on which it is founded, one significant criticism is that these elements are presented without any reference in context of 'where the Township was coming from' and what the vision of what the Township wants to be in the future. Accordingly, it is recommended that, at a minimum, a new Statement of Goals and Objectives and Land Use Element be prepared setting forth a vision of what Franklin Township will be in a ten to twenty year period and updating land use recommendations to achieve that vision.

Once the Land Use Element has been adopted, the Township Committee and the Planning Board should focus on the need to update the Housing Element to address the pending 1999 – 2005 affordable housing allocations from COAH.

Land Development Ordinance Changes

The provisions of the Land Development Ordinance should be amended to implement zoning standards consistent with the Land Use recommendations of the 1992 Master Plan. This includes, but is not limited to, standards creating incentives to encourage conservation designs or cluster development designs for new subdivisions and development intensities consistent with neighborhood commercial designations.

Consideration should also be give to broadening the text of the Ordinance relating to permitted uses in commercial districts in an effort to minimize use variances for commercial establishments in these areas. The Township should also give consideration to establishment of zoning standards regulating 'large scale' commercial development typically found near major highway interchanges such as big box retail, multi-plex theaters, etc. Enclosed as Exhibit A is an outline of proposed zoning modifications to accomplish this task. The proposed changes provide a more specific sub-designation of existing commercial zoning districts to fit the character of development that is most appropriate to the area and examples of the types of uses that would be allowed in the recommended district.

Township Committee should also take steps necessary to expand the duties of the Historic Advisory Commission to function as the Historic Preservation Commission.

THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PLANNING BOARD CONCERNING THE INCORPORATION OF REDEVELOPMENT PLANS ADOPTED PURSUANT TO THE "LOCAL REDEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING LAW" INTO THE LAND USE PLAN ELEMENT OF THE MASTER PLAN, AND RECOMMENDED CHANGES, IF ANY, IN THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS NECESSARY TO EFFECTUATE THE REDEVELOPMENT PLANS OF THE TOWNSHIP.

A redevelopment plan is a strategic plan that allows the municipality to be proactive in its efforts to comprehensively promote the development or the redevelopment of the land or the rehabilitation of buildings in the designated area. Currently Franklin Township has not undertaken the process of determining if any area(s) of the Township qualify as an area in need of redevelopment. That is not to say that there are not areas of the Township that may fit the criteria for being designated as a redevelopment area.

Redevelopment does not rely on traditional 'static' planning tools (i.e. zoning) that rely on others to implement individual development projects which puts the Township in a defensive position of reacting to a development proposal that may or may not meet the goals of the municipality. Redevelopment is a process by which the Township actively participates in development, through the formation of Public/Private partnerships, in order to expand the local economy.

A redevelopment plan can serve as tool to attract new development and to revitalize existing developed areas of the Township. Furthermore, the adoption of a strategic a redevelopment plan gives the Township the advantage of "bonus" points when applying for grants and other sources of funding from state and regional agencies.

Exhibit A
Recommended Commercial Zoning Designations

Currently, the Franklin Township Land Development Ordinance establishes two commercial zoning designations outside of the Pinelands area, Highway Commercial (H-C) and Neighborhood Commercial (N-C). These broad categorizations do not take into account the character of the particular location or the types of development that would be most appropriate for the location. As an example, the N-C district in Franklinville has a substantially different character (e.g. pattern of development, traffic, etc.) from the N-C district in Forest Grove or Malaga. Similarly, the H-C district on Delsea Drive north of Franklinville has a substantially different character than the H-C district on Route 40 near Main Road.

It is recommended that commercial zoning be expanded to six (6) classifications; Neighborhood Commercial, Franklinville Village Commercial, Malaga Village Commercial, Highway Commercial-1, Highway Commercial-2 and Interchange Commercial. With the exception of the Star Cross and Forest Grove areas, the boundaries of the new commercial zones would generally be consistent with the existing. As proposed the uses permitted within each zone based on the character of the specific zone and the type of development most appropriate for the location.

The following are descriptions of the recommended zoning changes:

1. **Neighborhood Commercial Districts (NC).** These consist of the existing Neighborhood Commercial in the Star Cross, Janvier and Forest Grove sections of the Township. The purpose of the Neighborhood Commercial (NC) Districts is to accommodate commercial and service uses at appropriate locations to serve the needs of residents in the more rural sections of the Township.

The permitted and conditional uses in the NC Districts should include, but not be limited to: convenience retail stores; diners and restaurants, excluding drive thru establishments; bars, taverns and inns; personal service establishments; child care centers; automotive repair garages; and, automobile fueling stations.

2. Franklinville Village Commercial District (FVC). The purpose of this district is to encourage appropriate development in the Franklinville commercial area, which generally extends along Delsea Drive from MacArthur Avenue to Wall Street and along Coles Mill Road from Blackwood Avenue to the railroad tracks. Commercial and office uses are encouraged to maintain compatibility with the historic and residential character of the area by: promoting the conversion of existing buildings in a manner that maintains and restores the exterior architectural character of the building and is reflective of the historic nature of the district; discouraging the development of highway oriented commercial uses that generate high traffic volumes, require numerous curb cuts and large parking areas; minimizes the visual and functional conflicts between residential and nonresidential uses with and adjacent to the district; encourages shared parking and shared driveways in the rear yard area; encourages pedestrian activity and uses that minimize noise and congestion.

The recommended permitted uses in the FVC District should include: Business offices; professional offices; personal service establishments; retail specialty shops, including but not limited to bakeries, gift shops, antique shops, flower shops, bookstores, jewelry shops, clothing stores, craft shops; studios for artists, craftsmen, photography, dance or music; museums; restaurants and cafes excluding restaurants with drive thru windows; bed and breakfast establishments; single family detached dwellings; clubs, lodges or fraternal organizations; places of worship; retail stores and shops existing as of the date of adoption of this ordinance; government buildings; public utilities and public utility substations; and, dwellings located over ground floor commercial, business or professional uses.

3. Malaga Village Commercial District (MVC). The purpose of this district is to encourage appropriate development in the traditional core commercial area in the Malaga section of the Township, which is concentrated around the Delsea Drive/Harding Highway/West Boulevard intersection. This is an area subject to high volumes of pass through traffic yet in close proximity to existing concentrations of residential development. Commercial and office uses are encouraged to minimize the visual and functional conflicts between residential and nonresidential uses within and adjacent to the district; encourages shared parking and shared driveways; encourages pedestrian activity and uses that minimize noise and congestion.

The recommended permitted and conditional uses in the MVC District should include, but not be limited to: Business offices; professional offices; personal service establishments; retail stores and shops; studios for artists, craftsmen, photography, dance or music; restaurants and cafes, including restaurants with drive thru windows; bars, taverns and inns; clubs, lodges or fraternal organizations; places of worship; mass transit stations and depots; existing retail stores and shops; childcare centers; government buildings; public utilities and public utility substations; and, automotive service stations.

4. Highway Commercial –1 (HC-1). The purpose of the HC-1 District is to recognize Delsea Drive and Route 40 (west of Grub Road) outside of the village areas of Franklinville and Malaga as the traditional commercial corridors in the Township, and to provide for new office and commercial uses with a goal of avoiding the strip commercial image that could occur along these highways.

The recommended permitted and conditional uses in the HC-1 District should include: business and commercial uses such as, but not limited to, building materials and garden supplies, food markets, apparel and accessory stores, furniture and home furnishings, drug stores, pharmacies, banks, credit Unions, savings and loans, blue print, photocopying and duplicating services, printers, lithographers, electrical and electronics goods, automotive and truck parts and accessories (excluding automotive salvage and/or junk yards), automotive repair shops, and other retail commercial uses; personal service establishments; professional and business offices, including but not limited to medical offices and clinics, attorneys and legal services, architects, engineers, landscape architects, planners and land surveyors, accountants, bookkeeping services and tax preparation services, real estate agents, brokers and services, insurance agents, brokers and services, securities brokers and financial planners, computer programming, data processing and other computer related services, mortgage and loan services and collection agencies, advertising and public relations agencies, medical laboratories, and analytical testing laboratories; diners and restaurants, including drive thru restaurants; bars, pubs and taverns; theaters; bowling alleys, skating rinks and similar indoor amusement and recreation facilities; government buildings; public utilities and public utility substations; mass transit stations and depots; child care centers; automobile fueling stations; automobile sales and service facilities; local communication facilities, and; assisted living centers, nursing homes and convalescent centers.

5. Highway Commercial–2 (HC-2). The purpose of the HC-2 District is to recognize the existing mix of agricultural, residential and commercial uses along Route 40 east of Grubb Road, and to provide for new commercial uses in the area consistent the existing rural character. Another purpose of this section is the avoidance of a strip commercial image that could occur along this highway.

The recommended permitted and conditional uses in the HC-2 District should include, but not be limited to: agriculture; agricultural equipment sales and service; agricultural commercial and processing facilities; garden centers; nurseries and greenhouses; building materials and garden supplies; automotive repair shops; restaurants, excluding drive thru restaurants; convenience commercial; government buildings; public utility substations; child care centers; automobile fueling stations with convenience retail; truck terminals; local communication facilities; assisted living centers, nursing homes and convalescent centers.

6. Interchange Commercial (IC). The purpose of the IC District is to recognize the area around the interchange of Route 55 and Route 40 as a unique opportunity to create a commercial enclave focused on serving the travelling public passing through the Township.

The recommended permitted and conditional uses in the IC District should include, but not be limited to: automobile fueling stations, including fueling stations with convenience retail; diners and restaurants, including drive thru restaurants; bars, pubs and taverns; hotels and motels; government buildings; public utilities and utility substations; mass transit stations and depots; child care centers; automotive sales and service facilities; planned business parks; regional and design commercial shopping centers; and local communications facilities.