

## **Introduction**

This report constitutes a Master Plan Reexamination Report for the City of Linwood as defined by the New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (N.J.S.A.40:55D-89). The purpose of the Reexamination Report is to review and evaluate the local Master Plan and Development Regulations on a periodic basis in order to determine the need for update and revisions. The City adopted a Comprehensive Master Plan in 2002. This Reexamination Report also serves as an amendment to the 2002 Master Plan.

Section A of this report identifies the goals and objectives which were established in the 2002 Master Plan and sections B and C describe changes that have occurred in the City, the County and the State since the adoption of the 2002 Master Plan. Finally, Sections D and E discuss recommended actions to be addressed by the City.

## **Periodic Reexamination**

The New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law requires that the Reexamination Report contain the following:

- A. The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of the adoption of the last reexamination report.
- B. The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date.
- C. The extent to which there have been significant changes in 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.
- 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 regulations 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," P.L. 1992, c. 79 (C.40A:12A-1 et seq.) into the land use plan element of the municipal master plan, and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.

## **A. Major Goals and Objectives**

According to the 2002 Master Plan, the following goals and objectives form the basis for the plans, policy statements and proposals of the 2002 Master Plan.

### ***Land Use***

- a. Maintain, preserve, and enhance the existing established residential character of Linwood.
- b. Develop strategies to limit the potential for incompatible subdivision of land in infill areas.
- c. Comprehensively review municipal land use ordinances, regulations and procedures.
- d. Limit residential development in Planned Commercial districts.
- e. Avoid strip commercial development on New Road and other major streets.
- f. Avoid the intrusion of business uses into residential zoning districts.
- g. Ensure that commercial development fits in well with the character and scale of Linwood.
- h. Address redevelopment of the former Prudential site and other underutilized commercial sites.

### ***Circulation***

- a. Take necessary measures to mitigate the effects of increased regional traffic.
- b. Employ traffic calming measures to retain the character of the City.
- c. Ensure that the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians are met.

### ***Community Facilities***

- a. Maintain and enhance the existing high level of community facilities consistent with the character and development of the City.
- b. Identify uses for municipally owned facilities, particularly the Poplar Avenue school site.
- c. Expand school facilities in a way that keeps pace with enrollment while respecting community character.

### ***Parks and Recreation***

- a. Maintain and expand the City's parks and recreation system to meet the recreation needs of Linwood residents.
- b. Expand the bike trail to serve residential developments west of New Road.
- c. Develop active and passive recreation facilities on newly acquired sites.

### ***Conservation***

- a. Use all available tools to protect the City of Linwood's natural resources as the community continues to mature.
- b. Complete a Natural Resources Inventory for the City.
- c. Enhance the protection of the meadowland in its current state.
- d. Protect and enhance environmental features in the developed areas of the City.
- e. Identify additional open space sites for acquisition.

- f. Identify funding sources to acquire additional open space.

***Historic Preservation***

- a. Encourage awareness and protection of Linwood's cultural, social, and historic heritage.
- b. Respect the Linwood Historic District when making land use policies and decisions.
- c. Consider additional historic properties for protection under the National and State Registers of Historic Places.

**B. The Extent to Which Such Problems and Objectives Have Been Reduced or Have Increased Since 2002**

The problems and planning objectives included within the 2002 Master Plan continue to remain valid. The following discusses the status of the issues and objectives previously identified:

***Land Use***

The 2002 Master Plan acknowledges that the City is a "largely developed residential community... The developable area of the City is almost fully built out; little vacant land remains outside the marshland". Since 2002, the "redevelopment" of properties has increased. In particular, the City has experienced an increasing trend towards the teardown of existing older residential homes and the construction of larger homes, often out of scale, with the residential neighborhood character. Further, larger parcels are being subdivided. These trends are occurring throughout the City although the area east of Shore Road appears to have been most impacted. In addition, the following "development/redevelopment" has occurred.

- The former Prudential site was designated a redevelopment area (See Proposed Zoning map) and a Redevelopment Plan was adopted. The site has been redeveloped by Cornerstone, the designated redeveloper. The existing building has been adaptively reused for a mix of retail, office and restaurant uses.
- The property known as the Bloom tract along Route 9 has also been designated a Redevelopment Area. The southern portion of the tract has been developed as the Lowe's medical office building.
- A portion of the Krumm vineyard property has received subdivision approval. Another part of the property was deeded to the City for park/open space.
- The greenhouses on Shore Road and Poplar Avenue are being torn down. It is anticipated that the property will be "redeveloped" with residences.
- The Linwood Convalescent Center was specifically discussed in the 2002 Master Plan. As recommended in the 2002 Master Plan, any redevelopment of the site should consider reuse of the property for office or as a nursing home. The provision of parking for any reuse proposal should be carefully evaluated. Out of scale parking structures should not be permitted.

- In 2002, the former Poplar Avenue School was being used by the Chart Tech School. Since then, the school has left and the building is currently vacant. It is recommended that the site be rezoned for low density small scale professional office use.

### ***Circulation/Utilities***

The City continues to experience increased traffic congestion especially in the summer. The southern portion of the New Road corridor is particularly congested with traffic heading into the Somers Point commercial district. Efforts should be made on a regional level to address and mitigate traffic impacts on the regional road corridors especially along New Road. In addition, the following has occurred since 2002.

- Three four-way intersections along the bikeway have been completed since 2002:
- As part of the City's ongoing capital improvement program, several streets have been paved and stop signs have been installed. In addition, Seaview Avenue was repaved and curbing installed to improve the drainage.
- NJDOT has recently approved the vacation of a portion of West Avenue from Seaview Avenue to Route 9.
- The City has also completed drainage improvements along Ocean Heights Avenue.

### ***Community Facilities***

The upgrade of community facilities has continued since 2002 with the completion of the following projects:

- Substantial reconstruction of City Hall.
- The reconfiguration of Wabash Avenue around Seaview School which has resulted in additional parking, a delineated drop off area and a better pedestrian pattern.
- Mainland High School has completed several capital improvement projects including a new aquatic center, additional classrooms and expansion of parking areas. The school is currently evaluating the need for additional expansion and upgrades to their facility.

### ***Housing***

The City adopted a Housing Element/Fair Share Plan and filed for substantive certification with COAH in June 2007. Cornerstone, the redeveloper of the former Prudential site, has filed an objection to the City's Plan.

### **C. Significant Changes Impacting the Master Plan**

Since the City adopted its 2002 Master Plan, there have been several significant changes at the state level affecting the assumptions, policies and objectives forming the basis of the Master Plan. These include the following:

#### ***State Development and Redevelopment Plan and 2004 State Plan Cross Acceptance***

The State Planning Commission adopted the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP) in June of 1992 and adopted a revised SDRP on March 1, 2001. The SDRP contains a number of goals and objectives regarding the future development and redevelopment of New Jersey. The primary objective of the SDRP is to guide development to areas where infrastructure is available or can be readily extended such as along existing transportation corridors, in developed or developing suburbs, and in urban areas. New growth and development should be located in "centers", which are "compact" forms of development, rather than in "sprawl" development. The overall goal of the SDRP is to promote development and redevelopment that will consume less land, deplete fewer natural resources and use the State's infrastructure more efficiently. The 2001 SDRP identifies Linwood as part of the PA1 Metropolitan Planning Area.

The State is currently conducting the Cross Acceptance process regarding the State Plan. The City is participating in this process.

#### ***NJDEP Stormwater Management Rules***

In 2004, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) released new rules for the management of stormwater designed to protect water quality and provide a framework for municipalities to address existing and future impacts. The new Stormwater Management Rules emphasize building techniques that prevent the impacts on water quality associated with development. These techniques include minimizing tract disturbance, minimizing impervious surfaces and new designs in infiltration basins and landscaping filters. The new rules provide requirements for regional and municipal stormwater management plans. The rules also establish design and performance standards for stormwater management for new development requiring all stormwater be recharged to groundwater on-site, eliminating off-site runoff. The City should evaluate its current ordinances, plans and regulations to ensure consistency with the new stormwater management rules.

#### ***COAH***

COAH is currently revising its Third Round regulations regarding municipal affordable housing obligations.

The proposed new rules are the Council's promulgation of the Council's Third Round Methodology following the Appellate Division decision. Remanded back to the Council were elements of the rules relating to the calculation and allocation of the affordable housing need, filtering, implementation of the

growth share requirement, economic feasibility of inclusionary zoning, and the mechanism available to a municipality for meeting its affordable housing need. The City should evaluate the proposed regulations in order to determine the potential impact on its adopted 2007 Housing Plan/Fair Share Plan.

***Educational Facilities Plan***

The Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) (NJSA 40:55D-31) was amended in 2002 to require a review by the Planning Board of any long range facilities plan submitted pursuant to the Educational Facilities Construction and Financing Act. The Planning Board must devote a full meeting to presentation and review of the facilities plan.

***Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS)***

The New Jersey Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS) were adopted in January 1997 and revised November 1999. The RSIS governs any site improvements carried out in connection with a new residential development. The RSIS were designed to create uniform standards and ensure predictability in the development process.

It is recommended that the City's Land Development Ordinance continue to be evaluated in light of consistency with the RSIS as implemented by the State.

**D. Recommended changes to the City's Master Plan or Development Regulations, if any, or whether a new Plan or Regulations should be prepared.**

The last comprehensive revision to the Master Plan was prepared and adopted in 2002. The 2002 Periodic Revision involved an extensive public outreach. As a consequence of input from the public, the City has formed a subcommittee to work with the City and its Planning and Zoning Boards and a Consultant has been engaged to prepare a comprehensive revision to the City's Land Development Ordinances. The subcommittee, in conjunction with the professional consultant, has developed revised Ordinances and a revised zoning map for recommendation to the governing body.

It has been concluded that a comprehensive revision is necessary and appropriate, inasmuch as the last comprehensive revision to the Municipal Land Use Ordinances occurred in the 1980s. Although the Ordinances have been amended and supplemented from time to time, comprehensive revision is presently needed to facilitate proper land use regulation, which will be better attuned to existing development and current development trends. The objective of the comprehensive revision is also to eliminate ambiguities and omissions that have been identified over the years and to better interface the municipal land use regulations with State land use requirements.

It is recommended that the attached proposed revised zoning map and revised Ordinances be adopted by the City. The proposed zoning map is substantially consistent with the land use map in the City's adopted 2002 Master Plan and the land use map contained in this Reexamination Report. The Ordinance is proposed to be revised to change zone boundaries, the classification of certain zoning

districts, identify redevelopment areas and revised bulk standards where appropriate. The proposed Ordinances will also revise land use procedures. The overall goal of these proposed revisions is to make the land use regulation in the City more consistent with the existing development pattern and the City's land use policies reflected in the Goals and Objectives stated in this Report.

The draft Ordinances contain extensive community design standards, as recommended in the 2002 Master Plan. The standards include setbacks, buffers, signage, lighting, landscaping, street, furniture, fencing, architectural details, layout and design of parking lots and pedestrian amenities.

**E. Recommendations of the Planning Board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans 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 City has utilized the State Redevelopment statute in the designation of a redevelopment area and has prepared and implemented the Redevelopment Plan for the former Prudential site. The proposed zoning map identifies the designated Redevelopment area as required by statute. No changes in the land development ordinance are necessary to effectuate the Redevelopment Plan of the City.