

Master Plan Reexamination Report A Master Plan Revision

***BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP
SOMERSET COUNTY, NEW JERSEY***

*Prepared by the
Bridgewater Township Planning Board*

For Public Hearing

February 22, 2022

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**MASTER PLAN REEXAMINATION REPORT-
A MASTER PLAN REVISION**

**BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP
SOMERSET COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**

I. INTRODUCTION

The Master Plan Reexamination Report addresses the required areas outlined in the provisions of the Municipal Land Use Law: N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89 and is intended to be considered a Master Plan Revision:

- A. Identify the major problems and objectives relating to land development at the time of adoption of the last Reexamination Report.
- B. Discuss the extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date.
- C. Discuss 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 and energy, collection, disposition and recycling of designated recyclable materials, and changes in State, County and Municipal policies and objectives.
- D. Outline 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. Provide 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, to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.

II. AREAS OF DISCUSSION

**** 1 ****

A. Identify the major problems and objectives relating to land development at the time of adoption of the last Reexamination Report.

MAJOR PROBLEM: There have been no Major Problems cited.

MAJOR OBJECTIVE: TO PRESERVE THE DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER AND QUALITY OF BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP. THIS OBJECTIVE APPLIES TO RESIDENTIAL AND NON-RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES.

- In the December 15, 2016 Master Plan and Reexamination report, there was increased municipal concern for the objective of identifying permitted uses along the major corridors of Route 22, 202 and 206 to improve the visual and economic benefit.

- There was increased municipal concern for study and recommendation of compatible land uses for the existing uses on land known as the SJP corporate complex.
- There was increased municipal concern to reconcile residential land uses along Route 202/206. As a first phase, the study should consider existing multifamily uses with the objective to reconcile the existing, stable multifamily neighborhoods with the single-family zone in which they lie.
- There was increased municipal concern to reinforce the residential zoning of an existing non-permitted use (Redwood Inn) so that the land use will strengthen the existing and stable character of the single-family zone that surrounds it.

B. Extent that the objective has increased or decreased as a municipal concern:

The objective to reexamine the planning approaches remains as a strong municipal concern in order to improve and fortify the overall appeal of living in the township. Preserving the character of the individual neighborhoods remains a clear objective. Bridgewater Township should continue to maintain and improve its residential neighborhoods and its commercial sectors without creating undue intrusion from traffic, noise, light and degraded air quality. This ongoing concern includes the desire to preserve the residential character as well as the corporate character of the township, particularly as viewed from the highway corridors. Further, adapting to changing circumstances caused by shifting social, demographic and economic trends increases the municipal interest in updating the ordinance to respond to modern needs in order to maintain the quality of neighborhoods and more actively promote a robust commercial sector.

C. Extent to which there have been significant changes in assumptions/policies:

As often the case, changes in land use are needed to adjust to lifestyle needs that may occur swiftly or gradually over time. Changes in Master Plan and Reexamination Report assumptions and policies must acknowledge and respond to these changing circumstances. The Bridgewater policy is that a stable fiscal foundation is needed to strengthen the desirability of the Bridgewater lifestyle and thereby keep Bridgewater as one of the most sought-after communities in the state. Increased emphasis on Master Plan and Master Plan Reexaminations by the Planning Board was initiated in 1990. A summary of the Planning Board studies is summarized below and demonstrate the policy to focus on improvement of the commercial sector which contributes to fiscal stability.

- Master Plan, dated 1990 provides a vision for the Township, citing valued policies and objectives for the township. The Master Plan recommends that:
 - a) *'The Township continue to investigate and adopt development controls for conservation such as clustering...'*
 - b) *'Municipal ordinances should be adopted to permit clustering.'*
- Master Plan Amendment and Reexamination Report, dated February 28, 2005 addresses newly-developed policies and development strategies intended to serve as a basis for focused study in an effort to preserve the goals outlined in the 1990 Master Plan and to

further enhance the quality of life in the township through additional sound planning policies.

- Master Plan Amendment and Reexamination Report, dated November 11, 2008 deals with impervious coverage and floor area ratio standards to maintain the established scale within several residential and non-residential districts.
- Master Plan Amendment of the Recreation Element of the Master Plan adopted on May 24, 2010 sets forth a plan for facilities and uses on public lands.
- Master Plan Amendment and Reexamination Report-Economic Element, was adopted on April 13, 2010. This study was developed in response to the Master Plan Amendment and Reexamination Report, dated February 28, 2005, where the study was recommended to, “Encourage appropriate development of land use focus areas in the Township that will, within the limits of zoning, return underutilized land to productive use, generate economic development activity, diversify the municipal economic base, create new employment opportunities, and strengthen the tax base.” This particular study, and the resulting reports, focus on non-residential improvements along much of the Route 22 corridor in an effort to bring land use along the highway to its higher potential.
- Master Plan Amendment and Reexamination Report-Circulation Element, dated September 2010 studied traffic circulation and modes of transportation throughout the Township which resulted in recommendations to be addressed moving forward. The focus of this study and resulting reports was to establish modernized criteria for commercial-based development, parking and sound strategies for site plan evaluation of such development.
- Reexamination Report dated February 8, 2011 addressed recommendations for places of assembly (e.g., Houses of Worship), focusing these on roadways that can better accommodate higher volumes of traffic.
- In 2014, Bridgewater tackled the redevelopment criteria which included the study of ‘areas in need of redevelopment’. The Plan accelerated the goal to identify “areas in need of redevelopment” and design Redevelopment Plans offered a framework to bring underdeveloped or underutilized lands into productive use.
- The Reexamination Report of April 27, 2015 addressed several issues that were documented in prior Master Plans and Reexamination Reports, most particularly dealing with areas in need of redevelopment and also addressed the need to revisit zoning districts along the highway corridors.

Below is a condensed excerpt of the matters that address study and recommendations in the April 27, 2015 Reexamination Report which highlights significant changes:

Master Plan studies should be conducted to offer development regulations for the Route 22, Route 202/206 and the Route 202 corridors should be considered as a continuation of the corridor studies conducted in 2010.

The Reexamination Report also suggests review of residential development along the highway.

Studies should also be conducted for zoning districts along the highway corridors. Studies should consider the residential character....

The Reexamination Report also specifically addresses the need to study residential zones along Route 202-206 and also identifies the increase in interest to reconcile existing uses with their zoning:

...there is an enhanced interest and objective toward evaluation of the highway corridors and regulations which will continue to have a mix of uses which are compatible with and complimentary to their surroundings.

- The Reexamination Report of December 13, 2016 responds to a municipal settlement agreement with a religious organization, another matter presents itself as a significant change in a policy and assumption – to study non-permitted premises that was not located on the highway corridor. Evaluation of this non-permitted land use was viewed as an opportunity to bring the original land use (non-conforming commercial use) into conformity with the surrounding single-family residential neighborhood.

The Master Plan Amendment and Reexamination Report of December 13, 2016 addressed needs for zoning changes that deal with environmental needs, such as cluster zoning measures, to better address objective of preservation of neighborhoods and the environment, as well as to address zoning inconsistencies. This aspect of the Reexamination Report was in furtherance of the 1990 Master Plan which recommends that: *‘The Township continue to investigate and adopt development controls for conservation such as clustering...’*

Complimentary permitted Principal uses were also encouraged through zoning ordinance recommendations.

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:

In some instances, a developed property does not conform to the permitted principal use or bulk standards for the zone in which it lies and due to the size of the lot, meaningful development of the tract is not feasible and the improvements fall into disrepair. In some cases, abutting lots may be suitable for consideration of a zone change, where it is apparent that a zone change is warranted to enable meaningful development.

It is recommended that there be an amendment to the zoning for Block 221, lot 29 in an effort to achieve a reasonable opportunity for use of land where the building on the abutting lot (in common ownership) has been vacant and has fallen into disrepair.

Abutting Lot 28 is a small size and the existing building is higher in improved lot coverage than is permitted by the ordinance. This building has been vacant and in extreme disrepair for over fifteen years. The building is not being used and the property is a spot where trucks and automobiles park erratically from time to time as may be seen in the aerial below.

Since the building and site are in a severe state of disrepair, this lot will require demolition and cleanup in order to develop this lot. Due to the smallness of the lot and the several bulk standards that are not, meaningful development is unlikely. The owner of commercial Lot 28, located in the C-1 zone, also owns abutting Lot 29; however, this is a larger lot which is located in the R-10.1 single-family residential zone. The owner appeared before the Zoning Board on two occasions for a d(1) use variance on lot 28, but because commercial Lot 29 is zoned residential and the owner wanted to develop the property pursuant to a C-1 standard, there were impediments to development. As such, the application was never able to be carried to a conclusion which would allow development to occur. If lot 29 was zoned as C-1 and the two lots were combined into one lot, there would be greater incentive for development and greater flexibility in designing a reasonable project. One of the goals of the Township is to enhance the streetscape appearance of the Township, and lot 28 has long

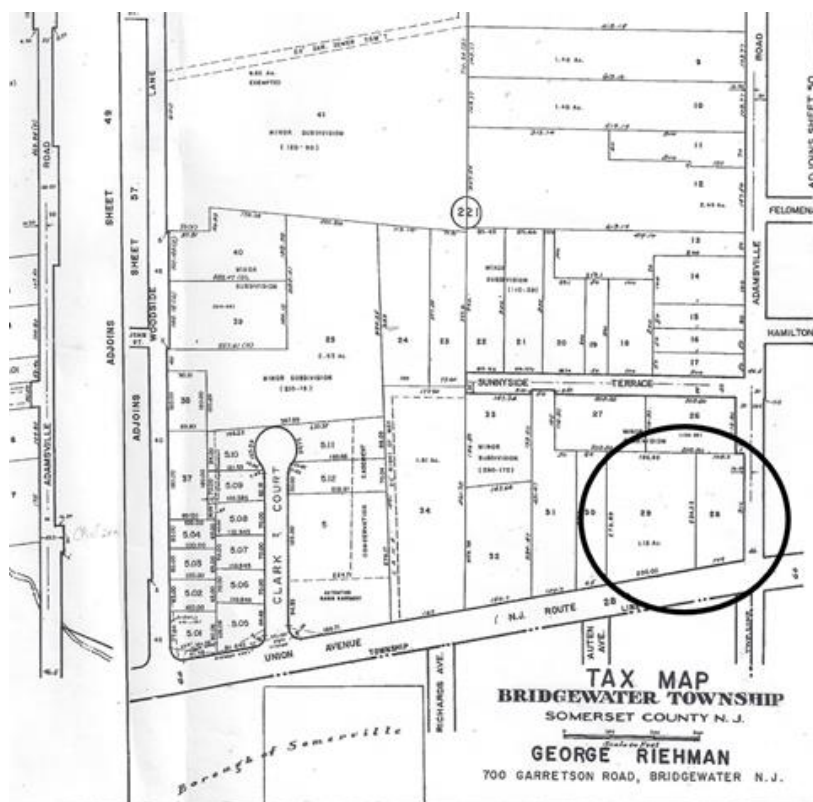


In *Gallenthin Realty Development, Inc. v. Borough of Paulsboro*, 191 N.J. 344 (2007), the NJ Supreme Court clarified the identification of *blight*. In the absence of a definition of blight, the Court called upon a dictionary definition as “[s]omething that impairs growth, withers hopes and ambitions, or impedes progress and prosperity.” It further stated, “At its core, blight’ includes deterioration or stagnation that has a decadent effect on surrounding property”. Id. at 365. Further, the Court explained, “The Blighted Areas Clause enables municipalities to intervene, stop further economic degradation, and provide incentives for private investment.” Id. At 362.

The corner lot clearly exhibits evidence of blight and poses a threat to the welfare of the community due to unsafe or deleterious land use. Progress toward smart growth objectives is impeded and these conditions unquestionably impair growth and prosperity for the general public.

Due to the highly constrained geometry of Lot 28, it may be reasonably argued that the cost and effort for demolition and cleanup may diminish the owner’s incentive to develop the land and that deterioration or stagnation has had a decadent effect on surrounding property. Consideration for improving the opportunity for some modest development is clearly warranted.

Rezone of Block 221 Lot 29 should be initiated to bring this lot into the C-1 (Neighborhood Business) District so that, with merging of lots 28 and 29, there will be a building envelope that is suitable for a modern design development, thereby increasing the incentive to eliminate the blighted property. The Zoning Map should be amended to include both Lots 28 and 29 in Block 221 to be in the C-1 zone.



- Consider revisiting the permitted uses around the major state and county corridors to improve the visual and economic benefits and to address sustainable uses that have emerged with changes in lifestyle trends.

One such matter is that of the craft brewery (microbrewery) with a limited brewery license (License 1b) where the former Somerville Lumber store was located. While the permitted principal uses of ‘manufacturing’ may be interpreted to permit the creation of a craft brewery in the M1-C Manufacturing zone, it would be well to specifically note the craft brewery as a Principal permitted use in this zone in order to distinguish it from other zones that permit manufacturing.

The authority to establish a craft brewery requires a manufacturing license from the New Jersey ABC, which was created by ‘Special Ruling’ guidelines by James Graziano, Acting Director of the License Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control.

Some current requirements of the N.J. Limited Brewery License for craft breweries are:

- Brew malt beverages, not in excess of 300,00 barrels (31-gallon barrels) per year.
- May sell to wholesalers in and out of state and at festivals in the state (with restrictions)
- Sell 5.5 gallons of beer (1 keg) for consumption off-premises.
- Limitation of a maximum of 25 ‘special events’ per year. Special events are promoted through the media or provide entertainment, such as sports event broadcasts (no more than 2 televisions bigger than 65 inches), live or DJ performances.
- Maintain a warehouse
- Private parties are capped at 52 events per year, with hosts permitted to bring their own wine and beer to the event.
- Requirement to give patrons tours of their facilities before serving them.
- Sales to patrons can be by the glass or open container as well as offering 4-ounce samples.
- Sales of unchilled 4-packs or 6-packs of bottles or cans of beer is permitted for patrons that have taken the tour.
- Sales of any product is limited to only those individuals who have toured the brewery or who have been logged in as already taking a tour within that year.
- The limited brewery is prohibited from operating as a restaurant or being in partnership with a restaurant. Only de-minimis types of food may be sold (such as peanuts and pretzels.)
- While restaurant menus from nearby restaurants can be provided, food trucks are prohibited.

Consideration of the following amendment is suggested for the M1-C zone; however, the Council may wish to alter the standards and location for expanded uses within the township. The following ordinance amendments are recommended.

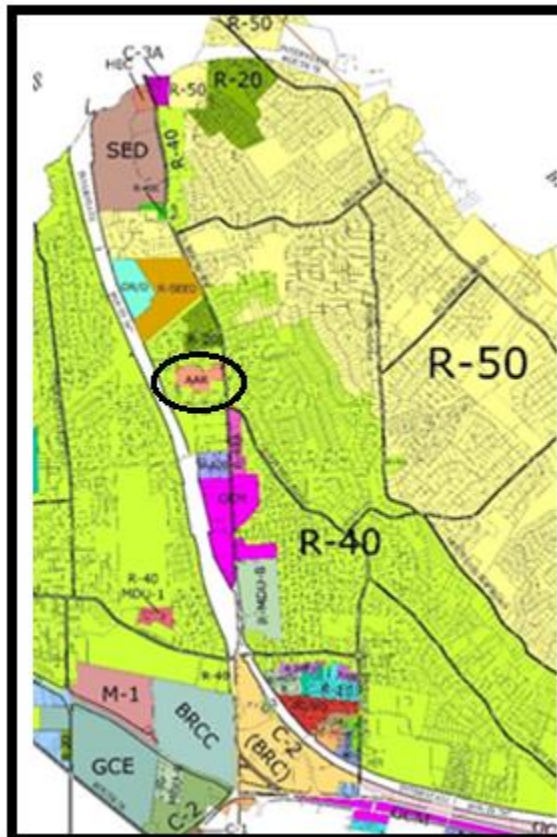
New Section, 126-317.1.A.(1)(a)[11]: Craft breweries with a New Jersey ABC Limited Brewery License (1b) brewing not more than 300,000 barrels of beer per year and operated in strict conformance with all other State regulations for craft brewery establishments.

(Re-numbered) Renumber 126-317.1.A.(1)(a)[11]: M-1C Economic Development Option (See below) to be 126-317.1.A.(1)(a)[12]: M-1C Economic Development Option (See below)

New Section, 126-317.1.A.(1)(b)[5]: Permitted accessory uses. An additional subsection should be added: (5) Limited retail for craft breweries in strict accordance with State Craft Brewery regulations.

Add to the Parking Ordinance Section 126-169 Craft Brewery: 1 space per 300 gross square feet of brewing, tasting and warehouse space.

- Since 'Light Manufacturing' is a permitted principal use in some zones, a definition of this use is appropriate. Add a definition of Light Manufacturing to Section 126-2 Definitions to read: *Light Manufacturing. Processing, assembly or packaging of material, including pharmaceutical materials, that does not involve the basic refinement of bulk raw material. Light Manufacturing does not involve fabrication, such as metal work fabrication as an example, where there is a manufacture from standardized parts of a distinct object differing from the individual components.*
- In order to have realistic consistency in zoning, the Master Plan should attempt to reconcile zoning with uses that will not likely ever conform to that zone. The Active Adult Residential zone, is located along Route 202/206 North. The AAR zone is an isolated, one-large lot condition which was originally created to offer age restricted housing on individually-owned lots.



The land has since been fully developed for a House of Worship, thereby making the zoning and associated permitted uses not applicable. It is recommended that Section 126-321.5, Active Adult Residential, be *deleted* from the Ordinance, including references to the AAR zone throughout the Land Use Ordinance. The AAR zone should also be deleted from the Zoning Map, with the replacement being the R-40 zone, which surrounds the current AAR zone.

- In order to address frequent concerns and difficulties experienced by the residential community, there is a frequent appeal to the Zoning Board of Adjustment, which Board made reference to the issue in its Annual Report to the governing body and to the Planning Board. The Board recognized that despite the zone in which they lie, homes that are renovated often have front yard setback departures for stoops in front of the front door. This has been recognized by the Zoning Board of Adjustment and there has been a Board recommendation that this deviation from the setback requirement should be considered. Residential dwellings should be permitted to install a simple porch covering over the front door. It is recommended that Section 126-328.A(7) Yard Regulations, should be added to read, *“Porch overhangs over the front door of a single-family detached dwelling shall be permitted, even if the porch traverses the front yard setback line. Porches are limited to two feet either side of the doorway and a six feet projection out from the dwelling.”*
 - Similarly, the treatment of open decks within the minimum required rear yard causes concern for those dwellings that were constructed with steps leading from a rear door down to a patio. Current lifestyle trends favor having an open deck for convenience and for enhancement of the appeal of a home. It is suggested that Ordinance Section 126-328 add a new subsection D. *Rear Yard Exceptions*. New Section 126-328.D(1) should read, *“In all residential zones, open decks, attached to the rear of the first floor of a dwelling, shall be permitted to extend 12’ into the minimum required rear yard setback for the principal dwelling in the zone in which the property lies. Principal structure additions which will also intrude into the minimum rear yard setback, are not included in this exception.”*
 - A new Master Plan is recommended at this time. The study of zoning changes should include additional permitted uses, where appropriate, revisions, clarifications and amplification of uses that are viewed as archaic in the description of permitted uses, and amending bulk standards as may be necessary to achieve consistency with lot sizes and neighborhood development patterns.
- E. Provide 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, to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.**

The more recent redevelopment areas have been adopted by the Township Council for the Eden Woods neighborhood (Finderne) and Center of Excellence (Route 202/206) sites. These redevelopment plans have included an obligation for construction of affordable housing units

for low, moderate, and very low-income persons and families. There are no plans for additional ‘areas in need of redevelopment’ or for redevelopment plans at this time; however, the Board is willing to address this issue should there be an area that is raised for consideration of a Preliminary Investigation Report (PIR).

**** 2 ****

A. Identify the major problems and objectives relating to land development at the time of adoption of the last Reexamination Report.

MAJOR PROBLEM: There were no Major Problems cited.

MAJOR *OBJECTIVE*: TO PROMOTE A WELL-BALANCED VARIETY OF RESIDENTIAL, RECREATIONAL PUBLIC, COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL AND CONSERVATION LAND USES.

B. Extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date.

The extent of the concern for such balance is currently reduced due to being addressed by conserving lands through the cluster development option. With the purchase of Camp Cromwell, a site having more than 100 acres, the Township has demonstrated its commitment to offering high-value land conservation and recreational facilities to its residents.

As it relates to the balance for a variety of residential uses, housing options for its seniors, was particularly evident in the zoning and approval of two major sites previously envisioned for senior housing, one on Route 28 (an apartment complex) and one on Route 202/206 North (A large lot in the AAR zone), were either converted to unrestricted housing by the state legislature, or developed instead for house of worship purposes. The Four Seasons complex on Route 202/206 North is an existing owner-occupied townhouse community for seniors. The new Master Plan should present attention to other potential locations for owner-occupied senior citizen housing communities within the township.

In order to achieve an acceptable balance between uses, there is need to consider planning and zoning decisions that will reconcile traffic impacts of a land use with the objective not to cause congestion of traffic along the roadways.

C. 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.

Since adoption of the Amendments to the Master Plan Reexamination Report of April 27, 2015, there is significant change in policy regarding the evaluation of the highway corridors and regulations which will continue to encourage a mix of compatible uses without over-burdening its residents with frustrating and inconvenient traffic congestion.

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.

A Master Plan amendment should consider appropriate uses that have traffic impacts on the highways and other county and local roads. Developing zone change strategies to produce an economically-viable uses along Route 202/206 should be explored without creating conditions of congestion.

Changes recommended in the Master Plan should result in the creation of new employment opportunities in existing commercial zones which would help diversify the economy, as well as offer local residents more service options, particularly within the Regional Center.

The Master Plan should explore the concept of having a licensed consultant architect at the service of the Planning and Zoning Boards, similar to that of a consultant traffic engineer, so that the Board can be advised of architectural designs and revisions to architectural designs which would make proposed structures more compatible with the neighborhood in which a building lies.

E. Provide 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, to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.

There are no redevelopment plans recommended at this time.

**** 3 ****

A. Identify the major problems and objectives relating to land development at the time of adoption of the last Reexamination Report

MAJOR PROBLEM: There were no Major Problems cited.

MAJOR *OBJECTIVE*: TO GUIDE LAND DEVELOPMENT AND LOCATION OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP RESIDENTS AND TO PROMOTE THE PRESERVATION OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.

B. Extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date.

The matter of open space remains a strong municipal interest. A Recreation Plan Element to the Master Plan was adopted in 2010. Bridgewater Township Open Space Advisory Board and Park Board continue to actively analyze municipal lands for possible Green Acres, Recreation and Open Space (ROSI) designation. With the acquisition of Camp Cromwell, there is a strong

commitment to expand the inventory of recreational opportunities, along with assuring conservation of valuable woodland assets.

C. 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.

There are no significant changes in assumptions, policies or objectives for open space since the time of adoption of the last 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.

There are no recommendations for open space beyond the expansion of lands if the opportunity proves favorable for the residents of Bridgewater Township. Camp Cromwell is one of the current open space and recreation initiatives in the township.

E. Provide 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, to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.

There are no redevelopment plans recommended at this time.

**** 4 ****

A. Identify the major problems and objectives relating to land development at the time of adoption of the last Reexamination Report.

MAJOR PROBLEM: There were no Major Problems cited.

MAJOR *OBJECTIVE*: COORDINATE FUTURE GROWTH WITH NEEDED EXPANSION OF PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES.

B. Extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date.

The extent of the objective has been reduced. The municipal complex is constructed; the new animal shelter is completed, the turf field adjacent to the municipal building is completed and the venue for individual residents and for many Bridgewater sports teams. There are no major problems relating to expansion of public facilities and services. Also see Open Space discussion found in #3 above.

C. 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.

There have been no significant changes in assumptions, policies or objectives.

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.

Although specific development regulations are not recommended for Public Facilities and Services, Bridgewater Township intends to continue to monitor and implement, where possible, quality of life amenities, including the initiative to consider programs that will encourage the arts as well as physical sporting activities.

E. Provide 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, to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.

There are no recommended new redevelopment plans recommended at this time.

**** 5 ****

A. Identify the major problems and objectives relating to land development at the time of adoption of the last Reexamination Report.

MAJOR PROBLEM: There were no Major Problems cited.

MAJOR *OBJECTIVE*: TO PROMOTE THE CONSERVATION OF NATURAL SYSTEMS, ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES, RURAL APPEARANCE, AND THE NATURAL AMENITIES WHICH PRESENTLY CHARACTERIZE BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP.

B. Extent that the objective has increased or decreased as a municipal concern:

The objective remains an ongoing and important objective, and has not changed as a municipal concern.

C. Extent to which there have been significant changes in assumptions/policies:

There have been no significant changes in assumptions or policies, but this objective remains strongly-held.

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.

Adoption of a more current storm water management ordinance which includes adoption of State-mandated controls on dealing with management practices for impervious coverage from an environmental perspective would improve Bridgewater’s natural systems. Regulations would deal with the use of natural swales, rain gardens and similar environmentally-friendly approaches to stormwater management.

Bridgewater should adopt an ordinance to require an Electric Vehicle Readiness Plan for all commercial and multifamily developments in the Township. This conservation element should require applicants to develop more detailed site design review for all new parking stalls that are required pursuant to 126-169. This will require detailed site design review. The zoning ordinance should be amended to require, or include incentives for, introducing or adding pre-wiring for charging stations in new commercial development seeking Preliminary Site Plan approval. The ordinance should establish preferential parking policies and allow the parking at charging stations to count towards minimum parking requirements. On July 2021, NJ Governor Murphy signed a law that amended the MLUL, which became effective immediately. The law stated that Make-Ready (electric charging infrastructure) and electric charging stations (EVSE) must be provided for Site Plans. Some of the following is required by the amendment to the MLU:

- a. Install at least 1 Make-Ready equipped or EVSE parking space if there are 50 or fewer spaces.
- b. Install at least two Make-Ready parking spaces if there will be 51 to 75 off street spaces.
- c. Install at least three Make-Ready parking spaces if there will be 76 to 100 off street spaces
- d. Install at least four Make-Ready parking spaces if there will be 101 to 15 parking spaces
- e. Install at least 4% Make-Ready parking spaces if there will be 151 or more off street spaces.
- f. A Make-Ready equipped or EVSE parking space may count as 2 parking spaces so long as the total required spaces does not result in a reduction more than 10% of the total required parking.

There is also a State requirement to convert ‘Make-Ready’ parking spaces into full EVSE spaces over a prescribed time.

An important addition to the law is that a site plan application solely for parking space installations will not be required, unless the installation conflicts with bulk requirements applicable to the property.

Bridgewater Township has already been successful in securing electric vehicle charging stations at some offices and there is a bank of charging stations that has been approved for the parking area at the Wawa, near the Promenade Shopping Center, as well as at the Bridgewater Commons Mall.

E. Provide 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, to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.

There are no redevelopment plans recommended at this time.

**** 6 ****

A. Identify the major problems and objectives relating to land development at the time of adoption of the last Reexamination Report.

MAJOR PROBLEM: There were no Major Problems cited.

MAJOR *OBJECTIVE*: RECONCILE USES ALONG THE HIGHWAY CORRIDORS TO CORRELATE TO ZONING.

OBJECTIVE IS EXPANDED IN DESCRIPTION: REMEDY IS NEEDED TO RESOLVE INCONSISTENCY BETWEEN THE NON-PERMITTED RESTAURANT/BANQUET USE AND THE SINGLE-FAMILY USE PERMITTED IN THE ZONING ORDINANCE. APPROPRIATE ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS MAY BE NEEDED.

B. Extent that the objective has increased or decreased as a municipal concern:

The following objectives are increased in municipal concern:

- There is decreased municipal concern regarding the use at the site of the former restaurant and banquet hall at the Redwood Inn. The improvements on this property have been totally removed and the resulting vacant site has been sold to a developer for single-family residential purposes in a cluster setting, thereby strengthening the existing and stable character of the surrounding single-family zone which abuts another environmentally-responsible, single-family cluster development.
- There is increased municipal concern for the objective of identifying appropriate permitted uses along the major corridors of Routes 22, 28, 202 and 206 to improve the visual and economic benefit of lands on these corridors, e.g., Houses of Worship and traffic-generating commercial uses. The Master Plan should consider zoning amendments, in particular amendments that would achieve lowering commercial and residential vehicular presence and resulting impacts of congestion along the already-constrained corridor of Route 202/206 North.
- With the development of the hotel, restaurant and Lifetime Fitness at the SJP property located along the highway, the municipal concern for compatible zoning for the existing uses on land known as the SJP corporate complex has decreased since the SJP tract is now fully developed.

C. Extent to which there have been significant changes in assumptions/policies:

Although not a significant change in assumptions and policies, the Planning Board emphasizes that the land on the highway corridors should be in continual review in order to proactively adapt to the evolving needs of its citizenry, both residential and corporate.

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.

- There is a recommendation that a new Master Plan should be prepared. With the increased concern over policies cited in this report, the need for expanded opportunities for its citizens, and improved zoning consistency, ordinance amendments are recommended for consideration throughout many zones in the Township.

E. Provide 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, to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.

There are no redevelopment plans recommended at this time.

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A. Identify the major problems and objectives relating to land development at the time of the adoption of the last Reexamination Report.

MAJOR PROBLEM: There were no Major Problems cited.

MAJOR *OBJECTIVE*: PRIOR MASTER PLANS AND REEXAMINATION REPORTS IDENTIFIED THE MUNICIPAL NEED TO DEVELOP PLANNING STRATEGIES WHICH WOULD ENHANCE BRIDGEWATER’S QUALITY OF LIFE.

B. Extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date.

The objective for improved aesthetics and compatible development design has been reduced with the rezoning of the land formerly known as the Redwood Inn, where a non-permitted use affected a stable surrounding residential use.

Maintaining a high quality of life for its residents and commercial partners remains as a strong objective in the Township.

C. Extent to which there have been significant changes in assumptions, policies and objectives

Bridgewater is at the forefront of continually reexamining its Master Plan to better achieve its policies and objectives. Bridgewater desires to accommodate changes in residential lifestyles and corporate needs by evaluation of the planning regulations. Whereas a continuous series of Reexamination reports were previously considered to be adequate to

deal with changes in assumptions, policies and objectives, a new Master Plan is recommended.

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.

- In large part, highway corridors, with their high volume of drivers, establish a perception of the quality of life that living and working in Bridgewater offers. It is desirable for the sustained quality of the township that existing uses be evaluated for consistency with zoning and compatibility with the preferences of the citizenry. It is suggested that the Master Plan study and provide revisions, where applicable, for permitted uses along the major corridors of Somerset County roads as well as the state highways of Routes 22, 28, 202 and 202/206 to improve upon the visual and economic assets that the township derives from these corridors.
- Section 126-2, Definitions. Accessory Structure, B, currently reads, “*B. For purposes of this chapter, a garden or utility shed or structure shall be considered an accessory structure even if it does not exceed 10 feet in height as measured to the peak of the structure and it contains not more than 100 square feet of floor area, including any base or platform area. No such garden or utility shed shall be located closer than 10 feet to any property line nor within any part of any required front yard. There shall be no more than two garden or utility sheds on any lot in a residential zone. Dog houses and children's play equipment shall not be included as part of this restriction.*” This definition should be revised to read,

“B. For purposes of this chapter, a garden or utility shed or structure shall be considered an accessory structure even if it does not exceed 10 feet in height as measured to the peak of the structure and it contains not more than 100 square feet of floor area, including any base or platform area. No such garden or utility shed shall be located closer than 10 feet to any property line nor within any part of any required front yard. There shall be no more than two garden or utility sheds on any lot in a residential zone. Dog houses, children's play equipment, patios, fences, pavilions, gazebos and flagpoles shall not be included as part of this restriction.”

E. Provide 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, to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.

Bridgewater Township has redevelopment areas known as The Commons at Route 202/206 and Route 22, The Sixth Avenue Redevelopment Tract located on North Bridge Street and Prince Rodgers Road, and more recently the Eden Woods site on East Main Street and the

Center of Excellence on Route 202/206. There are no plans for consideration of more 'areas in need of redevelopment' or redevelopment plans.