

**AMENDMENT
TO THE
MASTER PLAN
LAND USE ELEMENT
OF
WARREN TOWNSHIP**

Prepared By:

John T. Chadwick IV P.P.

**The original of this document was signed and sealed according to law
John T. Chadwick, IV P.P. License No. 995**

November 17, 2015

WARREN TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD - 2015

PETER VILLANI, CHAIRMAN

DANIEL GALLIC, VICE CHAIRPERSON

MICK MARION, MAYOR

RICHARD KAUFMANN

GARY DINARDO, COMMITTEEMAN

NICK MALANGA

JOHN LINDNER

JERRY TOTH

DERRICK R. FREIJOMIL

SAL DIBIANCA, ALTERNATE 1

MICHAEL SCUDERI, ALTERNATE 2

ALAN A. SIEGEL, ESQ., BOARD ATTORNEY

MARY ELLEN VAUTIN, SECRETARY

CHRISTIAN KASTRUD P.E. TOWNSHIP ENGINEER

JOHN T. CHADWICK, IV, P.P., PLANNING CONSULTANT

WARREN TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD – 2016

PETER VILLANI, CHAIRMAN

DANIEL GALLIC, VICE CHAIRPERSON

GEORGE LAZO, MAYOR

RICHARD KAUFMANN

GARY DINARDO, COMMITTEEMAN

BARRY ARGIRO

JOHN LINDNER

JERRY TOTH

DERRICK R. FREIJOMIL

SAL DIBIANCA, ALTERNATE 1

MICHAEL SCUDERI, ALTERNATE 2

ALAN A. SIEGEL, ESQ., BOARD ATTORNEY

MARY ELLEN VAUTIN, SECRETARY

CHRISTIAN KASTRUD P.E. TOWNSHIP ENGINEER

JOHN T. CHADWICK, IV, P.P., PLANNING CONSULTANT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....1

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS.....2

FLOOD HAZARD AND FLOODWAY AREAS2

WETLAND2

TOPOGRAPHY2

EXISTING LAND USE2

ZONING.....3

PUBLIC LAND AND CONSERVATION AREAS3

TOWN CENTER DISTRICT3

POPULATION, EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME.....3

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS AND PROFILE.....3

RECREATION AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES4

UTILITIES4

TRAFFIC AND CIRCULATION.....4

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS4

PROPOSED LAND USE PLAN AMENDMENT4

LAND USE PLAN AMENDMENT MAP7

INTRODUCTION

Master planning is a process which inevitably leads to changes to the land. The process of plan development has a short cycle, whereas physical construction as a result of this plan has a long term impact, typically extending beyond even the lifetime of the participants in the process. In the end only the actual “improvements” and the remaining natural features are important, with the economic and social policies of the Township as the means to implement the plan.

The Warren Township Master Plan amendment has been prepared in accordance with the New Jersey municipal land-use law that sets the standards requirements for preparation and adoption of a master plan. Further, this document incorporates and references the Warren Township Re-Examination Report adopted 2006 and updated background studies completed September 2015. The findings and conclusions of the re-examination report have been considered in connection with all further study, findings of fact and conclusions conducted subsequent and as a part of this updated master plan.

The amendments presented herein will be codified in the adopted 2006 Master Plan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document proposes amendments to the adopted Master Plan of Warren Township. The current plan was adopted June 4, 2001 updated in 2006, 2010 and 2014. Subsequent amendments included the Open Space Plan adopted August 2005 and 2010, third round Affordable Housing Plan adopted November 2005, Land Use Plan amendment 2010 and Historic Plan Element 2014.

The preparation of the proposed amendments included the advice and comment of following boards, commissions and departments:

- Warren Township Sewerage Authority
- Warren Township Board of Adjustment
- Warren Township Board of Health
- Warren Township Environmental Commission
- Warren Township Historic Sites Committee
- Warren Township Open Space Advisory Committee
- Warren Township Recreation Commission
- Warren Township Traffic Advisory Committee
- Warren Township Senior Citizen Committee

A complete update of the background studies was conducted. Background studies are the foundation to the policies and goals contained within the Township master plan. In some instances studies incorporate findings of reports of other Township agencies and are referenced

within the complete background studies document. Submitted hereafter are summary statements of findings within the background studies.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

The environmental commission has completed an environmental resource inventory. This document is available on online at www.warrennj.org.

FLOOD HAZARD AND FLOODWAY AREAS

Drainage and flood control are managed by the Township engineering department. NJDEP regulations require that storm water facilities and the maintenance of the same be performed on a scheduled basis by the Township DPW.

Drainage facilities on county roads are the responsibility of Somerset County.

WETLAND

The Township has adopted NJDEP regulations including riparian buffer standards. NJDEP administers regulations. The Township requires all development applications to conform to these regulations.

TOPOGRAPHY

Elevation in the Township ranges from a low of 220 feet to 500 plus feet above mean sea level. The lowest elevation is in the extreme northeast corner of the Township adjacent to the Passaic River. Township development regulations provide flexibility to address topographic conditions throughout the community.

EXISTING LAND USE

The Township has a total land area of 12,355 acres. Of this total approximately 1,400 acres are in private ownership, vacant and/or are assessed as farmland.

A significant portion of the remaining undeveloped land in private ownership features environmental constraints (floodplain or steeply sloped).

Township regulations require that all new development preserve environmentally critical areas. Conservation easements require the land to remain in its natural state. All conservation easements are a deed restriction and an easement to the Township.

ZONING

The Zoning Plan for the Township is consistent with the adopted Land Use and Housing Plan of the Township. The zoning plan reflects the neighborhood characteristics throughout the Township.

PUBLIC LAND AND CONSERVATION AREAS

The Township has aggressively pursued acquisition of land in partnership with the Somerset County Parks Commission and the State of New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. Major tracts have been purchased over the past 15 year period. The Township continues to investigate and assess benefits and priorities for future acquisition.

TOWN CENTER DISTRICT

The Town Center District is at the crossroads of Mountain Boulevard and Mount Bethel Road. The district has evolved into a center of retail and service uses coupled with higher density housing at its periphery. The evolution of development within the Town Center District forecasts continued reuse and redevelopment.

POPULATION, EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

The current total population of the Township is approaching 16,500 persons. The 2010 U.S. Census showed the Township's population at 15,311 persons. The projected future population of the Township at full buildout ranges from 18,000 to 18,250 persons.

Township population characteristics are similar to adjacent communities and the county at large. The Township educational attainment (college or higher) is slightly less than two thirds of the total population of 25 years of age or over. The State average is approximately 35% of the same population segment.

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS AND PROFILE

Housing development over the past 14 years is comprised of traditional single-family homes many of which are located on lots of more than one acre in size, age restricted housing within a planned community in the Town Center District and special needs housing located in various parts of the community. The diversity of housing stock continues to expand as a result of new projects consisting of apartments and townhomes.

RECREATION AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The Township Recreation Commission is the principal planning agency administering and providing recreational opportunities within the community. The commission completed a five-year plan in 2015. The plan is "a work in progress". The plan is continuously reviewed and updated to address the needs of the community.

UTILITIES

Public water supply is provided by New Jersey American Water Works. No known constraints to served areas exists.

Sewer facilities are provided through the Warren Township Sewerage Authority. Service areas ultimately require the approval of NJDEP.

TRAFFIC AND CIRCULATION

The road system in Warren Township is established. But for new local residential streets no new road connections or bypass routes are anticipated.

The major travel routes within the community are County roads. Somerset County in consultation with the Township has studied the King George/Mount Bethel Roads corridor. The study focuses on the synchronization and real-time signal adjustments to improve peak hour circulation.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

Proposed amendments to the 2001 Master Plan are intended to be codified to the existing document. The amendments are referenced to appropriate sections of the 2001 Master Plan.

PROPOSED LAND USE PLAN AMENDMENT

The Land Use Plan is proposed to be amended for the locations shown on the accompanying map. The facts and conclusions for amendments are set forth hereinafter.

1. Mountain View/Liberty Corner Road (TD Bank)

Four lots constitute the BR-40 zone. One lot is developed for TD Bank. A second lot has approval for office use. The remaining two lots are impacted by wetlands.

A single large lot is located to the rear of the four lots fronting Liberty Corner Road. This lot is 8.7 acres in size and is currently zoned R-65. Access is restricted to a 57 foot wide strip. No change to the land use plan is proposed.

2. This property is owned by Chubb Insurance Company. It is zoned CR-130/65. This plan recommends the property be included in the OR district to permit expansion of the Chubb headquarters. Currently the Chubb property has no further development potential under the FAR regulation.

3. This area is located in both the R-65 and R-40 zone. No public water or sewer services are available. The property is in single ownership. The tract was recently subdivided for three lots in consideration for vacation of paper streets. Due to lack of public services and wetland constraints the plan recommends the property be re-zoned CR-130/65.

4 and 5. This area (Ferguson Road) is zoned R-65. No sewer or water facilities are available. The properties abut CR 130/65 zone. The plan recommends area be included in the CR-130/65 zone.

6. This area is developed for 1½ acre lots. The plan recommends rezoning to R-65 from current CR130/65.

7. Area is a part of the former Citibank property. The property is restricted by conservation easement as well as agreement with adjoining property owners for no future development. The plan recommends including property in the OR district to permit expansion of existing facilities fronting King George Road. Currently no expansion is permitted under FAR rule.

8. This site is currently zoned OR. Development is limited to pure office use. The plan recommends inclusion of hotels, extended stay facilities, commercial recreation, restaurant, meeting space and support retail/service uses. No change of permitted development intensity (building height or coverage) is recommended.

9. The area is a part of the Passaic River flood plain. The area should be rezoned to CR-130/65. This area is a part of the Wagner Farm owned by the Township. The Township is exempt from its zone regulations.

10. This property is vacant with several small deteriorated structures. The site has been the discussion of a number of rezoning proposals advanced by owners. The property is currently zoned for residential use.

The property is currently zoned for three acre residential lots. The property is a transition property abutting industrial, commercial and low density residential development. Three sides of the property are zoned for non-residential development.

The property may assist the Township in the third round affordable housing solution. Due to the uncertainty of affordable housing requirements no change to the plan is proposed.

11. This is the Technology Drive complex. The plan recommends re-examination of the permitted uses (expansion of use groups) to assist in the re-occupancy/retrofitting of buildings to assist in their continued productive use.

12. This site consists of Forest Lodge and an AT&T warehouse. The Forest Lodge use is not specifically identified in the permitted uses within the G-I zone. Modification of permitted uses in the zone to assist in Forest Lodge continuation is recommended.

13. This site consists of four developed residential lots. All lots are located in the industrial district. The property should be rezoned for residential use.

14. This site consists of preserved farmland and vacant property. The property abuts Township open-space. Rezoning to CR-130/65 is recommended.

15. This is the Plainfield Gardens neighborhood of Warren Township. Nearly all lots are 10,000 sq. ft. or less in size. The area is zoned for half acre residential use. The plan recommends zoning the neighborhood to R-10 (10,000 sq. ft. lots) and making modest adjustment to FAR and lot coverage.

16. Wilshire Lane neighborhood is currently zoned R-65 (1½ acre lot size). All lots are 10,000 sq. ft. Recommend rezoning as R-10 (10,000 sq. ft. lots) and revisiting FAR in context with the Plainfield Gardens neighborhood.

17. This site is substantially wetland area. A portion of the site (not wetlands) is a lot fronting Mountain Boulevard (currently developed and used as a single-family home). The lot is in two zones (RBLR and R-65). This plan recommends all of the lot fronting Mountain Boulevard be included in the RBLR zone.

18. This area is one of the largest undeveloped portions of the Township. A substantial portion is owned and utilized as a gun club. A portion of the property (westerly side) is owned by a nonprofit entity.

The property meets the standards established by the EP-250 zone district. The EP-250 zone standards were validated by Supreme Court decision. The plan recommends the majority of the area be rezoned EP-250.

