

REEXAMINATION REPORT

Borough of Allentown

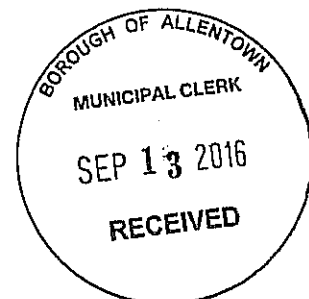
Monmouth County, New Jersey

Prepared By

**ALLENTOWN BOROUGH
PLANNING/ZONING BOARD**

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Monmouth County, New Jersey

The New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law, N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89 et seq., requires that municipal Planning/Zoning Boards review municipal master plans, zoning and land development regulations for their municipalities at least once every ten years. Allentown Borough prepared Reexamination Reports in 1982, 1988 and March 19, 1997. The last Reexamination Report was adopted on May 1, 2006.

In January 2016, the Planning/Zoning Board initiated a reexamination of the Borough Master Plan adopted in 1978 as amended with the addition of a Natural Resource Inventory in 2000; a Critical Natural Resource Analysis Study prepared in 2005; an Open Space Plan Element adopted in 2002; Housing Plan Elements in 2005, 2006 and 2008; a Stormwater Management Plan Element in 2006 and a Recycling Plan Element in 2010. The Planning/Zoning Board also reviewed the Zoning Ordinance codified in 1978 and amended through March 2016.

The purpose of a Reexamination Report is to review the master plan, zoning and land development regulations of the Borough to determine whether they continue to address the development goals and objectives first established in 1978 and updated through 2016 and to provide recommendations that will address changes in development goals, the impact of development within and surrounding the Borough and to assess the impact of planning and development regulations by Monmouth and Mercer Counties, the State of New Jersey, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission and existing and proposed development in adjacent Robbinsville Township as it affects the Borough in terms of natural resources, local and regional traffic, economic development, historic preservation and the overall quality of life of Allentown residents.

The Municipal Land Use Law requires that municipalities reexamine their master plan and zoning and land development regulations in terms of the following:

- a. The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of 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 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, all hazards mitigation including flood mitigation, 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/Zoning Board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans adopted pursuant to the "Local Redevelopment and housing Law", P.L. 1992, c. 79 (N.J.S.A. 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 Planning/Zoning Board has reexamined the following:

1. The Borough Master Plan was adopted on October 10, 1978 as amended November 6, 2006 with the adoption of a Stormwater Plan Element; on December 1, 2008 with the adoption of a Housing Plan Element and on September 13, 2010 with the adoption of a Recycling Plan Element.

2. The Borough Code was adopted in 1975 and updated as "The Revised General Ordinances of the Borough of Allentown" in 1996. Several ordinances were amended and new ordinances were adopted subsequent to 1996 and included in the Borough Code. The Borough Code is available on-line and includes the following planning, zoning, subdivision and related development regulations:

- a. Chapter II – **Historic Preservation Commission**: Administration, Section 2-49: codified in 1975 as last amended by Ordinance 05-2016 (Sections 49.5 and 49.6) requiring referral by the Planning/Zoning Board and Board of Adjustment of development applications within historic districts or designated historic sites and issuance of permits by the Zoning Officer or Construction Code Officer pertaining to the exteriors of historic sites or properties within designated historic districts to the Historic Preservation Commission.
- b. Chapter XII - **Property Maintenance**: Section 12-8, Maintenance of Vacant and Abandoned Properties, adopted by Ordinance 05-2015 on December 22, 2015.
- c. Chapter XXIII – **Fire Code**: revised in its entirety by Ordinance 04-2016 adopted on March 8, 2016
- d. Chapter XVII - **Solid Waste Management**: codified in 1975 as last amended by Ordinance 10-2010.
- e. Chapter XXVII - **Land Use Procedures**: codified in 1975 as last amended by Ordinance 06-1989.
- f. Chapter XXIX - **Off-Tract and Off Site Improvements**: codified in 1975 as last amended by Ordinance 02-1977.
- g. Chapter XXX - **Land Subdivision**: codified in 1975 as last amended by Ordinance 07-2012.
- h. Chapter XXXII – **Zoning**: codified by Ordinance 015-1978 as last amended by Ordinance 12-2000.
- i. Chapter XXXIII - **Affordable Housing Regulations**: adopted by Ordinance 08-2009.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS OF A REEXAMINATION REPORT

The statutory requirements for a reexamination of the master plan and development regulations are contained in N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89 and 89.1 A through E described as follows.

A. THE MAJOR PROBLEMS AND OBJECTIVES RELATING TO LAND DEVELOPMENT IN THE MUNICIPALITY AT THE TIME OF SUCH ADOPTION, LAST REVISION OR REEXAMINATION

1. MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES

As outlined in the adopted Master Plan of the Borough of Allentown dated 1978, the goals and objectives are referred to in Figure III-2.1 beginning on Page 36 and summarized as follows:

OBJECTIVES RANKED BY PREFERENCE

RANK	OBJECTIVE
1	Preserve small village character
2	Preserve land for future open space
3	Accessibility of open space
4	Regeneration of commercial viability
5	Reasonable residential land-use mix
6	Plan within existing service capacities
7	Avoid undue fiscal burdens

In addition, other concerns not covered in the stated planning objectives were:

- a) Traffic congestion and need for a bypass (circulation)
- b) Off-street parking in the Borough center
- c) Aesthetic separation of land uses by means of vegetation areas and buffer zones.
- d) Diversity of land uses for tax stability

2. MAJOR PROBLEMS

As outlined in the 1978 Master Plan and the 1982, 1988, 1997 and 2006 Reexamination Reports, the major problems in the Borough are related to achieving several of the Borough Master Plan objectives. The areas of concern are as follows:

(A) Traffic Circulation

All analyses indicate that traffic circulation in Allentown is inadequate to meet current and anticipated needs. Overall traffic volumes on the primary arterial roadways within the Borough are above current roadway capacities during peak-hour periods. It was also determined in the 1978 Master Plan that the amount of road service for residential access and the amount of road service by both local and County Roads is below the county and state averages. Prior Reexamination Reports noted that congestion occurs seasonally at peak hours due to the convergence of recreation traffic to and from the Shore on the County road system at the center of the Borough. The roadway congestion has increased annually and now, in addition to seasonal recreation traffic peaks, daily commuter traffic from both the south and east converge on County Roads every morning and every evening. Traffic conditions are particularly severe at intermittent times including the following:

- High school open and closing times (buses and cars)
- High school special events (Homecoming, plays, concerts)
- Shore traffic in the summer, mostly on Friday and Sunday evenings
- Amazon Fulfillment Center-Robbinsville (1.1 million square feet with more than 1,000 employees Robbinsville) traffic for a month prior to Christmas

These intermittent traffic circulation issues could be alleviated by police-directed traffic flow at the intersections of Church and Main St. and High and Main St. during the one hour periods when the heaviest flow of traffic occurs.

This problem is somewhat handled by the crossing guard at the High St/Main St intersection during school open/closing hours.

Allentown is one of a few communities in Monmouth County where County roads bisect the community in two directions: north-south by C.R. 539 and east-west by C.R. 524 and 526. Traffic was cited as a contributing factor in the relocation of both the Hope Fire Company and the Allentown First Aid Squad, both formerly located on Church Street (County Route 526).

Subsequent to the 1997 Reexamination Report, in excess of 1,000 new residential units were constructed in Upper Freehold Township adjacent to and in close proximity to the Borough. This residential development at the Borough borders has dramatically increased the daily volume of traffic to and from the campus of the Upper Freehold Regional School District campus on C.R. 539. Traffic on C.R. 539 southbound frequently extends north of the intersection of C.R. 526 (Church Street) in the Village Center due to heavy traffic from the Upper Freehold, Crosswicks, Yardville and areas to the south and east of the Borough. Student enrollments increased more than 70 percent subsequent to the 1997 Reexamination Report.

Commercial developments including extensive distribution warehouse facilities and commerce parks in Upper Freehold Township, in Robbinsville Township, Mercer County, and "Big Box" Retail development in Hamilton Township, Mercer County, have become

major traffic generators which severely impact the major Borough roadways. While the full impact of truck traffic, particularly semi-trucks, from these developments had been minimized temporarily by weight restrictions on the Mill Pond Bridge and Dam on County Route 539 (South Main Street), once the improvements were completed, there has been a major increase in both truck and automobile traffic by employees and customers and small delivery vans through the Borough along County Routes 526, 539 and 524.

An Easterly Bypass, connecting Route 526 in Upper Freehold Township to Route 539 near Interchange 8 of Interstate Route 195, was opened at the end of 2003. The Easterly Bypass relieved a significant traffic burden on the north side of Allentown. There has been no such relief, however, for the balance of the Borough.

A Westerly Bypass was proposed by Monmouth County and right-of-way for the proposed Westerly Bypass was deeded to Monmouth County by the K. Hovnanian Companies as a condition of approval for nearly 400 residential units in adjacent Upper Freehold Township. However, once the development was completed many of the residents opposed the construction of the Westerly Bypass, despite its incorporation in the developer's plans as a requirement for approval. The Western Bypass would connect Ellisdale Road in Upper Freehold Township to Monmouth County Route 539 East just south of Allentown

The balance of the Westerly Bypass would be constructed along New Road on the Allentown/Upper Freehold border along part of what is now Breza (aka Fowler's Bridge) Road. Breza Road would be modified to connect directly to a realigned intersection at Mercer County Route 526 and Circle Drive on an easement that was part of the 2006 Breza Preserve purchase . At the time of the 2006 Reexamination Report opposition by Upper Freehold Township residents to the Westerly Bypass led Upper Freehold Township officials to require that any road improvements terminate at the first of two single lane bridges along Breza Road. This would have left two single lane, four ton bridges between Monmouth County Route 524 (Yardville Allentown Road) and the re-aligned section of Breza Road thus forcing truck traffic to exit at Mercer County Route 526 near Interchange 7 of Interstate 195. There is, however, no eastbound entrance to Route 195 from Route 526 which forces eastbound trucks to make U-turns further west in Mercer County or seek alternate routes. One such alternate route would include traveling east into Allentown along Route 526 (Church Street) and then north along Route 539 (North Main Street) to Interchange 8 of Interstate 195. This pathway has led to numerous incidents of property damage to Borough streetscape improvements at the corner of Church and Main Street as trucks try to make this failing intersection turn. Another alternate route that has been proposed is a northwesterly bypass route that would pass through the Mercer Corporate Park property, crossing Indian Run and intersecting County Route 539 near the Easterly Bypass intersection.

In 2003, South Main Street was closed due to a sinkhole in the vicinity of the Mill Pond Bridge and Dam. During the subsequent 6 days, Emergency Management, Borough and State Police, Fire Departments and First Aid squads worked closely to ensure that emergency services could be provided. Breza Road became a de facto "Western Bypass" for vehicles under 4 tons. However, due to the rural nature of Breza Road, primarily a

gravel road, Monmouth County had to provide gravel and stone repeatedly during the emergency period to maintain the road surface for vehicular traffic.

The Conines Mill Pond Bridge and Dam were rebuilt in 2011. During this time a temporary traffic bypass was built upstream of the bridge and the Old Mill was closed due to the fear that pile driving would cause structural damage to the Mill. The Allentown Business District was negatively affected as a result of the 2008-2009 recession, limited crossing during bridge reconstruction and the loss of businesses which had previously occupied the Old Mill.

An Allentown traffic study has never been performed including all the comprehensive impacts on this well-known bottleneck location. Rather, traffic studies have tended to include only solutions to mitigate impacts from development contiguous to, or near Allentown, or to widen the New Jersey Turnpike for example – piecemeal studies that either ignored Allentown or lost the complete picture. Allentown is in desperate need of a traffic study focused on Allentown Borough needs relative to the Master Plan vision of the Allentown Historic District.

(B) Off Street Parking in the Village Center

Concerns about the limited on-street parking were cited in the 1978 Master Plan and have continued to be noted in all previous Reexamination Reports. The off-street parking concern still exists, despite improved signage directing motorists to the off-street Borough Parking Lot on Church Street. Additional signage could help, as demonstrated by La Piazza Restaurant at their parking lot entrance indicating Municipal and Methodist Church parking availability.

The Planning/Zoning Board recommends that ^{the} Borough undertake a Parking Study for the Village Center to include signage and short-term and long-term recommendations for improved parking facilities.

Obstacles to adequate off-street parking include physical dimensions, location, easements, and other legal and social issues which result in limited, if any, off street at multiple locations throughout the Borough business district. It is clear that municipally-owned off-street parking would help resolve the current obstacles to private parking and improve business revenue and positive customer experiences.

In 2013 the Borough purchased a property of several acres that connects Lakeview Drive to Waker Avenue with the intention of developing it for off-street parking for businesses and residents of the core of the Borough business district. The Borough Engineer is currently evaluating the possibility of a road that would connect Lakeview Drive (and 4-5 private properties) to this property. It is clear that the future Borough Master Plan revision should look to identify current and anticipated future business parking needs and locations.

(C) Utility Services

(1) Sewage: At the time of the 1988 Reexamination Report, the Borough was under a moratorium imposed by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection against additional sewer hook-ups due to the inefficiency of its treatment plant. The moratorium was lifted after the Borough entered into an administrative consent order and completed \$2.1 million in improvements to the treatment plant. The improvements, however, did not increase the capacity of the plant. At the time of the 1997 Master Plan Review, the plant was operating at nearly 100 percent of capacity during several months of the year. Growth in student population and expansion of facilities at the Upper Freehold Regional Schools Campus further strained the plant capacity. While meeting all NJDEP discharge criteria, there is little additional capacity in the plant. Further sewer connections will require review by the Borough Engineer on a case by case basis.

As a result of lack of compliance at the wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) during the last few years, the Borough conducted an extensive public participation process and made a request for engineering services to improve the WWTP. A contract was awarded for improvement of the plant in early July 2016 with an anticipated completion of the WWTP upgrade by spring 2018.

(2) Water: Allentown's drinking water system has benefited from a number of upgrades since the 1997 Reexamination Report. In July 5, 1989 rains caused flooding along Indian Run that damaged both municipal pumping and treatment facilities and highlighted concerns that both plants were located within a 100 year flood plain. Extensions of public water by AQUA NJ (formerly Consumers Water New Jersey) to developments in Upper Freehold Township allowed the development of an emergency interconnect between the two systems. That interconnect has been used a number of times to permit maintenance on the Allentown Water Treatment Plant equipment and the Borough water storage tower without service interruptions. It also allows for the orderly shutdown of pumping and treatment equipment if the plants are threatened by flood conditions.

(D) Drainage and Flood Control:

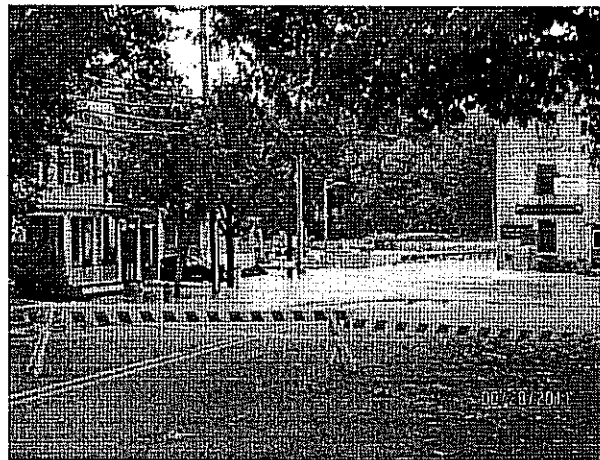
There are no significant drainage problems within the Borough borders; however, Allentown is affected by runoff through Doctor's Creek and Indian Run. Runoff into Doctor's Creek results in continued silting of the Mill Pond. This required a dredging project in 1985 to restore the pond.

Doctor's Creek and the Mill Pond continue to receive runoff from development along both sides of the waterway. While runoff from each development is considered, little emphasis was placed on the cumulative amount of increased runoff under NJDEP regulations prior to the Stormwater Management Regulations of 2004, unless a stream was designated a Class One Waterway. When so designated, developers would need to provide greater buffer areas and would require increased scrutiny of runoff projections. It would also subject a significant number of existing homeowners to NJDEP scrutiny for home

improvements and alterations, as the law makes no distinction between new and existing uses.

The 1989 storms caused flooding adjacent to the Mill Pond Dam and spillway and at the Borough Water Treatment and Sewage Treatment Plants. Development along the Borough's borders has increased the risk of future flooding within the Borough. Large scale distribution warehouse development in Robbinsville Township, Mercer County, has increased flow along Indian Run, which directly threatens the Borough Water Treatment facilities. Runoff controls originally sought by the Washington (now Robbinsville) Township Planning/Zoning Board, at Allentown's request, were later dropped when the Board Counsel felt they were not enforceable.

On August 28, 2011 Hurricane Irene flooding divided Allentown Borough into two parts due to the overtopping of the Monmouth County-owned Doctors Creek Bridge, which was then under construction, just downstream of Allentown Lake. Also, the Allentown Waste Water Treatment Plant facility was under flood water. As a result of a Borough and County agreement made at the time of the bridge reconstruction, Allentown Borough assumed ownership of the Allentown Lake dam. According to the operation and maintenance manual the dam is self-regulating which means that there is no opening or closing of its valves/gates for flood control purposes. The gates/valves at the dam are to be used solely for maintenance of the associated fish ladder, upstream dam face and the lake which is also owned by Allentown Borough.



South Main Street Looking Toward Doctors Creek Bridge, Old Mill on Right

Stormwater runoff from development in Robbinsville Township may be exacerbated by development in other parts of Robbinsville and Upper Freehold Township. After Indian Run crosses Interstate 195, it meanders through wetlands along the northern portion of Allentown before passing the Allentown Water Treatment Plant at County Route 526. Approximately 110 acres between Interstate 195 and Allentown, located in Upper Freehold and Robbinsville Townships, are zoned for commercial development. Additional development in this location could cumulatively create significant increases in runoff resulting in degradation of what the Monmouth County Planning/Zoning Board has determined to be an "environmentally sensitive area".

Allentown Borough participates in the Monmouth County Panhandle Region Environmental Commission program monitoring water quality and runoff of chemicals. The Borough also has created "storm watch" procedures to maintain a safe water level in the Mill Pond spillway. The water level is monitored by the Borough Police Department and Public Works Department personnel.

(E) Recreation

Outdoor recreation opportunities were held to be inadequate at the time of the 1988 Reexamination Report, which indicated the desire to acquire additional open space that would balance the open space concentrated along the Mill Pond. The 1997 Reexamination Report noted that what is now known as Heritage Park purchased in 1995 would help to balance the Mill Pond facilities while expanding the green belt along Doctor's Creek. Subsequently, additions were made to Byron Johnson Park and soccer fields were added at Heritage Park and at the Reed Sod Farm / Easterly Bypass Fields.

Development of Heritage Park has included the ongoing mowing of an approximately 20 acres open area to prevent over-growth by small trees and brush; construction of parking facilities and two picnic areas at Gordon Street; installation of the nearly one mile long perimeter trail with 3 successive National Recreational Trail Program grants of \$25,000 each over a ten year period; planting of approximately five acres of finished grass for recreation; continued planting of ornamental trees and bushes throughout the park and installation of a paved entrance from South Main Street to the eastern end of the park as well as the purchase of a landlocked piece of property permitting public park access from the Church Street municipal parking lot. Additionally, two kiosks were constructed and installed at the Main Street and Gordon Street entrances using a Heritage Conservancy grant. The Main Street entrance tied the park to the Village Center, provided increased visibility of the park and improved pedestrian flow by offering an alternative to traversing sidewalks along County Roads.

In addition to the installation of improvements throughout Heritage Park, approximately eighteen acres of woods and freshwater wetlands along Doctor's Creek have been preserved and remain in a natural state.

The Borough Recreation Commission provides input for the development of Heritage Park in coordination with the Allentown Environmental Commission. The Recreation Commission directs the maintenance of Pete Sensi Park and Dr. Farmer's Park around the Conine Mill Pond in addition to coordinating Youth Basketball Leagues and other activities.

The Board of Recreation Commissioners, in conjunction with the Mayor and Council, actively sought funding to replace playground equipment and promote Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance at the Sarah Barnes playground, located on Pearl Street.

(F) Conservation and Preservation of Open Space

The 1978 Master Plan proposed the acquisition of undeveloped portions of the stream channels along Doctor's Creek and Indian Run in order to preserve the integrity of the stream channel and to protect lowland vegetation while providing open space required by planned development. This was accomplished to a great extent by the acquisition of the KEM/Heritage Tract, now known as Heritage Park which includes the Allentown Conservation Area. This tract was originally slated for development of 300+ condominiums.

In 2006 the Borough approved a municipal open space tax of 1 cent per \$100 assessed value. In 2008 this was raised to 4.5 cents per \$100 assessed value. A proposal to create a warehouse park was followed by the \$6.1 million preservation of the Breza Preserve I (146 acres) which were preserved in 2006 and 2008, respectively with open space funding from Allentown Borough, Upper Freehold Township, State of New Jersey, The Trust for Public Land, Monmouth County, Monmouth Conservation Foundation and private donations. The 46 acre Breza II purchase for \$1.31 million was funded by the State of New Jersey, Monmouth County, The Trust for Public Land, and the Borough of Allentown. These properties, as a result of the State of New Jersey contribution, are part of the Monmouth Battlefield continuum. In 2008 Robbinsville Township purchased the 53 acre Kulp property located on the west side of County Route 526 between Circle Drive and the Robbinsville-Allentown municipal boundary. All of these areas are preserved for public use.

The Borough Council has continued to provide a Bond Ordinance to fund acquisition of land or development rights as they may become available for preservation.

A Natural Resource Inventory was prepared by environmental consultants from Princeton Hydro, LLC, in August, 2002. The Planning/Zoning Board incorporated this inventory into the Master Plan in accordance with the Municipal Land Use Law in 2006.

A number of planning and zoning recommendations came forth from the Natural Resource Inventory including a review to determine whether Borough Ordinances adequately addressed and/or protected steep slopes, floodplains, erosion and sedimentation control, wetland buffers, stormwater treatment, open space and other resource protective regulations. The Borough was advised to consider requiring Environmental Impact Assessments and environmental protection requirements for all land development proposals, particularly those in sensitive areas noted in the NRI.

In January of 2005, F.X. Browne, Inc. presented the results of a Critical Natural Resources Analysis Project that was conducted on the Borough's behalf. It is recommended that these findings be incorporated as an Appendix of the Master Plan review. F. X. Brown also made recommendations to enhance Borough Ordinances in order to protect natural resources and manage open space.

In June, 2003, the Mayor and Council were presented with a proposed Open Space Plan, drafted by members of the Borough Environmental Commission. The Commission conducted a survey, established an inventory of vacant and critical natural resources and developed a recommended priority for future acquisition of open space and preservation of stream corridors. The results were accepted by the Mayor and Council as a basis for future acquisitions.

The Borough requested and received grant funding for a Greenways Study that involved representatives from four counties (Monmouth, Mercer, Burlington and Ocean) and seven municipalities. Its final report outlines ways to promote protection of stream corridors through development controls and open space acquisition on a coordinated basis.

The Planning/Zoning Board recommends that the Park and Open Space Plan Element of the Borough Master Plan be updated to include the status of existing park and recreation facilities, the recommendations of the Environmental Commission for open space protection, recommendations by the Recreation Commission for long-term development of the Borough park and recreation facilities and recommendations of the four County Greenway Study.

The Board recommends acquisition and preservation of properties along the westerly side of Indian Run and Indian Lake in Robbinsville Township and along the easterly side of Indian Run in Upper Freehold Township. In Robbinsville Township these properties include the Wittenborn property (Block 41.01 Lot 1 which is 15.15 acres and Lot 33 which is 5.01 acres); the Baldachino property (Block 41.01 Lot 2 which is 3.5 acres) and the Arnoff Development Company Properties (Block 41.01 Lot 3 which is 28 acres and 4 which is 26.7 acres). In Upper Freehold Township this would include the Stein property at the northern gateway to the Borough (Block 26, Lot 1 which is 12.48 acres and Lot 3 which is 47.67 acres).

(G) Other Problems

(1) Historic Preservation Regulations. The 1988 Reexamination Report noted the lack of historic designation ordinances and recommended that such ordinances be adopted by the Borough. This was addressed by the creation of a Historic Preservation Review Commission (HPRC) in 1988 by Ordinance 018-1988 as Section 2-49 in Chapter 2 of the Borough Code. The Commission actively reviews all construction permit applications which may alter the facades of buildings in the Allentown Village Historic District and provides recommendations (non-binding) to applicants and to the Construction Office. The Commission also provides reviews of matters before the Planning/Zoning Board. In these matters, the HPRC written recommendations are presented to the Board and may be incorporated in any approvals made by the Board.

In a recent case, buildings, which were later deemed to be out of keeping with a neighborhood's historic character, were reviewed and approved by the Construction Office. Had the Commission advised against the developer's plan,

there would have been little recourse to prevent the exterior design since the buildings complied with all zoning requirements in terms of lot area, building setbacks, coverage, etc.

The Planning/Zoning Board recommends that the Mayor and Council reconstitute the Historic Preservation Review Commission as a Historic Preservation Commission, by ordinance, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40:55D-107 of the Municipal Land Use Law including appointments, administrative procedures and responsibilities of the Commission per Statute.

(2) Affordable Housing. At the time of the 2006 Reexamination Report, it was believed by Borough officials that Allentown would not have an affordable housing obligation since there was no vacant land available for development of an affordable inclusionary development within the Borough in accordance with the Rules adopted in 1986 and 1993 by the New Jersey Council on Affordable Housing. In December 2004, COAH changed its regulations to establish a “growth share” methodology based on future residential development and projected employment in all municipalities. The Planning/Zoning Board adopted a Round 3 Housing Plan in compliance with the COAH Round 1 and 2 requirements in February 2005. The Council on Affordable Housing returned the Plan and requested that the Borough adopt a Housing Plan in accordance with the newly adopted Round 3 Rules. The Planning/Zoning Board adopted a revised Housing Plan on December 1, 2008 which was endorsed by the Borough Council on December 9, 2008 and submitted to COAH for Substantive Certification. As a result of the pending changes in COAH Rules, the Borough withdrew its request for Substantive Certification from COAH, but maintained the approved Housing Plan consistent with the Municipal Land Use Law and Fair Housing Act.

(3) State Planning Commission Cross Acceptance Program. The 1988 Reexamination Report recommended that the Borough participate in the State Planning Commission Cross Acceptance Program. This was addressed by the formulation of a Cross Acceptance Committee in 1989, which was successful in having a special delineation created for Allentown as a Historic Village in 2002. The Borough also participated in the 2007 and 2008. A Final Draft State Development and Redevelopment Plan was prepared on January 13, 2010. The Plan was not adopted. A Draft State Strategic Plan was prepared on October 11, 2011 to replace the State Development and Redevelopment Plan. To date it has not been adopted by the State Planning Commission.

B. THE EXTENT TO WHICH SUCH PROBLEMS HAVE BEEN REDUCED OR HAVE INCREASED, AND OBJECTIVES MET, SUBSEQUENT TO SUCH DATE

The Borough of Allentown, subsequent to the adoption of its Master Plan in 1978, prepared and adopted revisions to its Zoning Ordinances and Land Subdivision Ordinances in order to meet the objectives outlined in the Master Plan. Land Development and related ordinances codified in 1975

and re-codified in 1996 have been updated and supplemented through March 2016. Revisions and new ordinances deemed necessary to preserve the character of the Borough were adopted in order to update procedures, fees and development regulations

At the time of the 1997 Master Plan Review, Monmouth County had acquired the tract known as the Steelman Property. While this tract is principally located in Upper Freehold Township, approximately five acres are located in the Borough of Allentown. Monmouth County exchanged the right to develop the property as a recreation area with Upper Freehold Township, who relinquished ownership of those parts of Walnford Road that divided the County Park known as Historic Walnford. This parcel, known as Byron Johnson Park, provides recreation space for youth athletic programs and public functions.

Since the 2006 Reexamination Report there have been no major subdivisions. There has been no new residential construction since 2006 when 7 new building permits were issued. Only 12 new residential permits have been issued since 2000. There are no other major tracts available for development within the Borough without extensive variances. Future development is expected to be individual homes on pre-existing lots or minor sub-divisions, as long as sanitary sewer capacity is available. Dedication or purchase of scenic easements will be necessary to protect major historic homes, their character and settings. Additionally an ordinance to avoid flag lot development is needed.

The Borough has made progress towards addressing or alleviating a number of the problems, cited in prior Reexamination Reports through the efforts of the Mayor, Council, Planning/Zoning Board and several volunteer commissions and committees.

(1) TRAFFIC CIRCULATION.

With regard to traffic circulation, the Borough was successful in promoting a 1992 regional traffic study which confirmed:

- That traffic volumes on all three County Roads (CR 524, 526 and 539) within the Borough are above capacity during peak travel periods, and
- That the intersections of CR 526 and 539 (Main Street, Waker Ave and Church Street) and the intersection of CR 539 and 524 (High and Main) fail during peak travel periods.

A regional study was needed due to:

- The Borough's location on the border of two counties
- The fact that the Borough is the point of intersection for three Monmouth/Mercer County roads.
- Developers presenting plans in adjoining communities had testified that there would be no traffic impacts in Allentown. The Monmouth County Freeholders, in conjunction with the Mercer County Freeholders, Upper Freehold Township, Washington Township and Allentown, and five major developers with projects

anticipated at that time met to develop a traffic plan for the area. The resulting document was called the Allentown Regional Traffic Study.

At the time of the 1997 Master Plan review, the Borough had obtained commitments from both Counties to construct bypasses around the Borough as development occurred around the Borough borders. The first phase of these bypasses (from the entrance to the Galloping Brook development in Upper Freehold on Route 526 to the intersection of Route 539 and Interstate 195) was expected in 1997 but was not completed until December of 2003. This bypass was expected to include improvements to Route 526 and Sharon Station Road to Route 539 in Upper Freehold Township. While planned, these improvements had not yet begun as of July 2016.

A second bypass from Route 526 in Washington Township to Ellisdale Road in Upper Freehold Township (along the route of Breza Road) was planned in 1992, with an eventual connection to Route 539 west of the Upper Freehold Regional Schools. The 1997 Master Plan review noted that this route would have to be expedited if a planned development, now known as Beacon Hill, by the K. Hovnanian Company was constructed in Upper Freehold Township. That development was constructed and right-of-way for a portion of the bypass was deeded to Monmouth County. As previously noted in Section B under Circulation, the residents of that development and others near it organized to prevent construction of the Western Bypass.

The Breza Road Bypass was a major factor for resident circulation during the successful replacement of the bridge and dam at the Conine's Mill Pond. During the time of construction, the Borough was divided in half, with emergency services based on one side and the largest public structures based on the other. Breza Road allowed residents to travel from one side of town to the other over a much shorter route than now possible (CR 526 to Sharon Station Road to CR 539).

The Borough continues to support the Monmouth County efforts to lobby for an interchange along Interstate 195 in Upper Freehold Township at Sharon Station Road. This would permit a direct connection to CR 539 in Upper Freehold Township from Interstate 195, provided that needed improvements to Sharon Station Road and its intersection with CR 539 are also accomplished.

At the time of the 1997 Master Plan Review, the Borough had been successful in redirecting bus and truck traffic from Church Street (CR 526 in Monmouth County) to Main Street, through the implementation of directional signage. Bus and truck traffic traveling east on CR 526 was diverted onto Interstate 195 in Robbinsville Township and directed to Route 539 in Upper Freehold Township. The Eastern Bypass allows those traveling east and west to connect to CR 526 and CR 539 (via Sharon Station Road) without travel through the Borough. Upper Freehold representatives profess a desire to obtain an interchange at Interstate 195 and

Sharon Station Road, development of the surrounding area may prevent that option politically rather than physically.

No further development is proposed within the Borough borders at this time. The age-restricted housing considered in the 1988 Master Plan Reexamination was never built and the property was subsequently acquired by the Borough through the Green Acres program that provided grants and low interest loans for park and recreation purposes. This property subsequently became the Borough-owned Heritage Park. The 1988 Master Plan review, however, cited attempts to build off-street parking on the KEM/Heritage site between Main Street and Church Street. Based on legal and physical barriers to creation of parking near the business district, the Borough sought grant funding for pedestrian walkways to link Heritage Park with the downtown shopping area.

(2) PARKING IN THE BUSINESS DISTRICT. The Borough should make sure that the commercial area is viable by ensuring adequate parking. During previous Reexamination Reports, the Planning/Zoning Board examined the current business uses and the ordinance requirements for parking. The Board found that the parking provisions were extremely deficient. Development of the off-street municipally owned parking property in the area between Lakeview Drive and Waker Avenue should be completed with a review of its impacts when it is completed. The Planning/Zoning Board should not be granting variances on parking requirements without fulfilling municipal parking needs.

(3) SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT. At the time of the 1997 Master Plan review, the NJDEP imposed a moratorium against additional sanitary sewer hook-ups. The moratorium was subsequently rescinded following \$2.1 million in improvements to the treatment plant. While the improvements produced enhanced sewerage treatment and upgraded effluent discharges to Doctor's Creek, the improvements did not increase the capacity of the plant. The plant runs at or near 100 percent of its design capacity during several months each year. As previously noted, additional student population and expanded educational facilities at the Upper Freehold Regional Schools campus have continued to utilize any remaining capacity. Further sewer connections will require review by the Borough Engineer on a case by case basis.

The Borough pumps nearly all of its annual water diversion allotment for the Borough water system. At the time of the 1997 Master Plan review, the Borough was constructing an improvement project to recover water used to back wash filter equipment. Currently the Borough is experiencing approximately 30 percent water loss (metered vs. pumped) and is investigating numerous points where this could be taking place including unmetered properties, aging meters, leakage in the distribution system, illicit water removal at Borough-owned hydrants, etc. In addition, the Borough now has a water system inter-connection that provides for emergency service and maintenance shut-downs when required.

(4) DRAINAGE AND FLOOD CONTROL

Drainage and flood control measures will largely be affected by affirmative actions taken by neighboring communities and by the impact of new State Stormwater Management Regulations adopted in 2004. To the extent possible the Borough will seek to promote positive, affirmative efforts to reduce stormwater runoff and non-point source pollution in accordance with new regulations and best management practices.

Recommended ordinances to promote effective stormwater management were included in the Natural Resource Inventory (Princeton Hydro, 2002) and Critical Natural Resource Inventory (F.X. Brown, 2005). The Planning/Zoning Board and Environmental Commission recommended adoption of these ordinances by the Borough Council.

Monmouth County, under mandate from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, is currently reviewing options for the Indian Run Dam, located on Monmouth County Route 526, directly upstream from the Borough's Water Plant.

(5) RECREATION

The Borough continues to maintain and improve the recreation facilities that were present at the time of the 1997 Master Plan Reevaluation. A current inventory of recreational facilities and recent maintenance/improvements is attached as an Appendix.

A recreation area has been developed in Upper Freehold Township which encompasses nine acres adjacent to the Borough. This acreage was severed from the Reed Sod Farm on Monmouth County Route 526 by the construction of the Eastern Bypass. This recreation area serves surrounding communities and provides better facilities for Borough residents and the Upper Freehold School District.

To better coordinate and improve consideration of grant applications for recreation space, the Borough of Allentown and Township of Upper Freehold have applied for a Joint Planning Grant.

In June, 2003, the Mayor and Council were presented with a proposed Open Space and Recreation Plan, drafted by participants from the Borough Environmental Commission, Board of Recreation Commissioners, Historic Preservation Review Commission, Planning/Zoning Board, the Allentown-Upper Freehold Historical Society and Friends of Heritage Park. This document identifies needs for open space for both active and passive recreation, conservation of natural resources, protection of stream corridors and protection of historic vistas. It is recommended that this review be incorporated into the Master Plan. The Open Space and Recreation Plan was adopted as part of the Master Plan in 2006.

(6) CONSERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

As noted in the 1997 and 2006 Reexamination Reports, the greatest single change in passive recreation opportunities resulted from the development of the Heritage Park also known as the Allentown Conservation Area. Though its acquisition was driven principally by conservation concerns, the tract now provides compatible recreation opportunities including bike and pedestrian paths, picnic areas and a sledding hill.

The decision to acquire this property was driven by the following:

- (a) Preservation of approximately ten acres of freshwater wetlands.
- (b) Reduction of congestion within the Borough.
- (c) Provide open space for residents and area communities.
- (d) Meet the goals of the Master Plan to:
 - i. Preserve open space along the stream corridors of Doctor's Creek and Indian Run.
 - ii. Preserve Allentown's small town character.
 - iii. Improve accessibility of open space.
 - iv. Protect the Allentown Borough water system wellheads.

The acquisition of Heritage Park helped balance the concentration of recreational and open space at the Mill Pond Park, extended the "green belt" along Doctor's Creek, improved water retention and reduce runoff, helped reduce the risk of flooding at the Allentown water and sewer plants and provided additional activities to enhance experiences of Allentown visitors. In recent years, the park has been home to Civil War Re-enactors during the annual Harvest Festivals, as well as several family entertainment events during the summer months.

The evolution of "best practices" results in a continual need to review ordinances and regulations that affect conservation and environmental protection. The Natural Resources Inventory and Critical Natural Resources Analysis present the Borough with recommendations for ordinance changes, suggested actions to help preserve open space and historic vistas, recommended areas for continued study and environmental monitoring and cooperation with regional and State environmental and recreation organizations.

The Planning/Zoning Board recommends the adoption or amendment of ordinances that are in the best interest of the Borough of Allentown.

(7) OTHER PROBLEMS

The four problems listed in the 1997 Master Plan review were resolved in the time period immediately following that review. The Planning/Zoning Board reviewed the existing Land Use and Zoning Ordinances and found several sections in need of updating and revision, notably the height of buildings and the requirement that developers provide

garages in the R-40 district, which is characterized by small, historic homes. Changes to these and other zoning and development regulations will be prepared by the Planning/Zoning Board and forwarded to the Mayor and Council with a recommendation for adoption.

C. THE EXTENT TO WHICH THERE HAVE BEEN SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN THE ASSUMPTIONS, POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES FORMING THE BASIS FOR SUCH PLAN OR REGULATION 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, AND CHANGES IN STATE, COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL OBJECTIVES.

The State of New Jersey promulgated extensive Stormwater Management Regulations in 2004. The Borough of Allentown, like all other municipalities, is in the first phase of compliance with these regulations. Phase One emphasizes documentation of existing conditions, with local regulation and action plans to follow in successive phases.

The balance of the various background analyses, as included in the original Master Plan, are for the most part still viable with the noted exceptions in this report. The Round 1 and 2 Housing Plan adopted in 2005 and 2006 and the Round 3 Housing Plan adopted in 2008 provide additional documentation concerning demographic data, housing data, projected population and job growth, existing land use and natural resources mapping and other data pertaining to the Borough. When a new Housing Plan is adopted consistent with current Court initiatives, current demographic and housing data will be included.

D. THE SPECIFIC CHANGES, RECOMMENDED FOR SUCH PLAN OR REGULATION, IF ANY, INCLUDING UNDERLYING OBJECTIVES, POLICIES AND STANDARDS, OR WHETHER A NEW PLAN OR REGULATIONS SHOULD BE PREPARED.

As a result of the Reexamination of the Borough Master Plan, zoning and development regulations, the Planning/Zoning Board finds that no major changes are needed for the Land Use Plan Element of the Master Plan adopted in 1978. The Planning/Zoning Board does recommend amending the Round 1 and 2 Housing Plan adopted in 2005 and 2006 and Round 3 Housing Plan adopted in 2008 be updated in conformance with the guidelines being developed by the Superior Court of Monmouth County and the New Jersey Supreme Court.

The Planning/Zoning Board recommends that studies prepared and received since the time of the 1997 Master Plan review including the Natural Resource Inventory prepared by Princeton Hydro in 2002 and the Critical Natural Resource Inventory prepared by F.X. Brown in 2005 be incorporated into the Master Plan. The Planning/Zoning Board also recommends that the ordinances included in these studies designed to promote effective stormwater management, stream corridor protection and open space preservation be adopted by the Borough Council.

E. THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PLANNING/ZONING BOARD CONCERNING THE INCORPORATION OF REDEVELOPMENT PLANS ADOPTED PURSUANT TO THE "LOCAL REDEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING LAW", P.L. 1992, C. 79 (N.J.S.A. 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 Planning/Zoning Board does not recommend redevelopment in accordance with the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law at this time. The Planning/Zoning Board does encourage private redevelopment consistent with the architectural and historical character of the Borough of Allentown.