

# **Master Plan Reexamination Report**

## **Township of Scotch Plains Union County, New Jersey**

**Adopted:  
February 26, 2007**

## **Township of Scotch Plains Planning Board**

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February 26, 2007

*Original Signed and Sealed in Accordance with the Law*

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## INTRODUCTION

The New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) requires that each municipality in New Jersey undertake a periodic review and reexamination of its local Master Plan and development regulations at least every six years. The purpose of this 2007 Scotch Plains Reexamination Report is to review and evaluate the Scotch Plains Township Master Plan and development regulations to meet the statutory requirement and to provide, based on current conditions, for a basis for community development.

## REQUIREMENTS OF THE PERIODIC REEXAMINATION REPORT

The five statutory criteria of the MLUL, N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89, that are required to be addressed by the Reexamination Report are as follows:

1. The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of the adoption of the last reexamination or master plan report.
2. The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or increased subsequent to such date.
3. The extent to which there have been significant changes in the assumptions, policies and objectives that formed the basis for the master plan or development regulations as last revised, with particular regard to the density and distribution of population and land uses, housing conditions, circulation, conservation of natural resources, energy conservation, collection, disposition, and recycling of designated recyclable materials, and changes in State, county and municipal policies and objectives.
4. 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.
5. The recommendation of the Planning Board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans adopted pursuant to the "Local Redevelopment and Housing Law," P.L.1992, c.79 (C.40.A:21A-1 et seq.) into the land use plan element of the municipal master plan, and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.

The 2007 Master Plan Reexamination Report follows the 1976 Scotch Plains Master Plan, the Reexamination Reports of 1982, 1988 1994-95 and the 2001 Scotch Plains Master Plan. This Reexamination Report considers and addresses the above criteria and with the adoption of the 2007 Master Plan Reexamination Report satisfies the reexamination requirement due in 2007. The next required master plan or reexamination will be due in 2013.

The 2007 Master Plan Reexamination Report will review and evaluate the 2001 Scotch Plains Township Master Plan and development regulations to provide a basis for community development that is based on current conditions. The 2007 Master Plan Reexamination Report will first restate the major problems and the goals and objectives relating to land development in Scotch Plains as presented in the 2001 Master Plan Report. Second, the Report will examine the extent to which such problems, goals and objectives have been reduced or increased. Third, the extent to which there have been significant changes in the assumptions, policies and objectives will be examined. Fourth, specific recommended changes will be addressed and fifth and finally, a master plan matrix will chart principal recommendations and land use issues.

## **1. MAJOR PROBLEMS AND GOALS & OBJECTIVES OF THE 2001 MASTER PLAN**

### **Major Problems, Planning Principles and Assumptions & Major Planning Issues**

The 2001 Scotch Plains Master Plan identified the current major problems and suppositions within a section entitled Underlying Principles and Assumptions.

The 2001 Scotch Plains Master Plan identified the following Principles and Assumptions that formed the basis for the 2001 Master Plan. These Principles and Assumptions have been found to continue to remain valid by the 2007 Reexamination, although the affordable housing goal has been updated and simplified as noted below and in Section 3.C. Housing Element Update - Progress Report (2001 – 2007). The 2001 Principles and Assumptions are quoted below with the exception of the simplification of the affordable housing objective or goal.

- Scotch Plains is essentially a fully developed community with a predominantly single-family residential character. Distinct neighborhoods have been developed throughout the township with a variety of residential densities.

- The Central Business District is of great importance to the character of the community. It serves as the primary focus of the commercial and cultural life in the township with traditional commercial development, community institutions, and pedestrian-oriented scale.
- The township is strategically oriented along the Route 22 corridor, is close to Interstate 78, and continues to be a desirable place to live and work in the metropolitan region.
- While little vacant land remains in the township, there will likely be opportunities for additional development of underutilized properties situated in established neighborhoods.
- Redevelopment opportunities will be important in the future, especially along the Route 22 corridor.
- The township has met its constitutional affordable housing (*Mount Laurel*) responsibilities in a manner consistent with the state regulations and the goals of this Master Plan. Any future state-estimated fair share obligation will need to be reexamined prior to the expiration of the current term of the township's affordable housing plan (*substantive certification expires in July 2002*).
- Affordable Housing Objective (simplification): Scotch Plains Township remains committed to providing their constitutional "fair share" housing obligation.

Additional major planning issues, major events and changes occurring between 1976 and 2001, were identified in the 2001 Master Plan as from previous Master Plan and Master Plan Reexamination Reports as remaining valid and are quoted as follows:

- Most of the large vacant tracts of land have been developed.
- The need to address the township's constitutional "fair share" housing obligation became a focus of community planning concern in the 1980's. The township received *Substantive Certification* from the NJ Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) in 1990 and 1996 which will remain valid until 2002.
- Since most of the vacant land in the Township has been developed the planning focus in the community is shifting toward infill sites or areas with potential for redevelopment. A

plan for the redevelopment of the Broadway neighborhood was adopted by the Township Council in 1997.

- As a result of full “build-out” and population growth, there is an increased need for open space and recreation areas.
- The township’s population is aging, resulting in changing housing needs
- The township has started to implement the recommendations of a special consultant for the downtown area improvements intended to revitalize the Central Business District.
- More active state involvement in land use planning went into effect including state regulation of wetlands, the adoption of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan, the adoption of statewide Residential Site Improvement Standards and the Highway Access Management Code.
- Traffic congestion on Route 22 and within the township has increased.
- There has been an increased appreciation of historic structures and areas in the township.

#### **Goals and Objectives of the 2001 Master Plan**

The 2001 Scotch Plains Master Plan identified the following Goals and Objectives as the basis for the 2001 Master Plan, which continues to remain valid with one additional goal, one additional phrase and one clarification, as noted below.

Only one new goal has been suggested as a result of the Reexamination process and it relates to the effects of the new circulation improvements of the Route 22 and Park Avenue overpass. This new goal has been noted in bold italics below. This item is further discussed in Section 3. The Extent to Which There Have Been Significant Changes in Assumptions, Policies and Objectives.

The 2007 Reexamination process has identified infill related development increases that affect the traditional character of Scotch Plains. An additional phrase has been added to goal related to the development to environmentally sensitive lands, by adding “preservation of neighborhood quality”. The other is recognition that infill development needs further zoning guidance but the goal related to “infill residential development” remains valid.

The additional phrase relating to the development of environmentally sensitive lands has been noted in bold italics below. This item is further discussed in Section 2. The Extent to Which Problems and Objectives Have Been Reduced or Have Increased.

The goal relating directly to “infill” residential development remains valid, but it has been noted by the reexamination process that the intensity and complexity of infill has increased and possible additional development regulation should be considered. This is further discussed in Section 2. The Extent to Which Problems and Objectives Have Been Reduced or Have Increased.

The following are quoted from the 2001 Master Plan, with the two exceptions noted above:

**Retain the Traditional Residential Character of Scotch Plains**

- The township is and should continue to be a predominantly single family residential community.
- “Infill” residential development should be undertaken consistent with zoning and the residential densities of surrounding neighborhoods.
- The development of remaining vacant or underdeveloped parcels should be undertaken in a manner that will preserve natural resources and protect sensitive environmental areas such as wetlands, steep slopes, and stream corridors (***New phrase follows in bold italics.***) ***and must be undertaken in a manner that will preserve the existing neighborhood quality.***
- Commercial development should not be encouraged in established residential neighborhoods.

**Continue the Implementation of the Central Business District Revitalization Plan**

- The Central Business District (CBD) should continue to be the cultural and commercial focal point for the township.
- Steps being taken to implement the downtown redevelopment plan should be continued as funding or financing permits.

- Major institutional community facilities should remain in or very close to the CBD and any renovation, redevelopment or new community facilities should be undertaken consistent with the pedestrian orientation and scale of the CBD.
- **(New Goal follows in bold italics)** *Monitor the effect of the new circulation improvements for the Route 22 and Park Avenue overpass, which connects Scotch Plains and the surrounding area to Route 78 and the CBD. Protect street parking along Park Avenue, the existing traffic speed, and consider traffic calming techniques, as necessary.*

**Provide Areas for Highway-orientated and Other Nonresidential Development and Redevelopment**

- Highway-orientated businesses should be limited to the commercially zoned portions of the Route 22 corridor and other existing nonresidential zones with direct access to major thoroughfares.
- New or redeveloped commercial uses in the existing commercial zones and bordering on or near residential neighborhoods should be developed in a manner that protects adjacent properties from the potential negative impacts with nonresidential land uses.

**Provide Opportunities for and Encourage Redevelopment for Specific Uses in Designated Areas**

- Permitted uses should be compatible with the goal of preserving the established residential character of the township and other goals of this Master Plan.
- Redevelopment opportunities should represent high quality development that can be achieved in a manner that may improve environmental quality, lessen flooding, avoid traffic congestion and promote proper circulation.
- Redevelopment plans should be targeted to specific areas so as to avoid blight and abandonment of developed properties.

**Expand Opportunities for the Open Space and Recreation Needs of the Community**

- Additional active and passive recreation facilities should be provided in strategic locations to meet local needs.

- Areas of open space should continue to be set aside and protected from development.

**Encourage Beneficial Intergovernmental Relationships**

- Establishing relationships with adjoining communities should be investigated to determine whether joint planning and provision of services could benefit each community. Enhancing the township's relationship with adjoining communities is also important in terms of seeking beneficial resolutions to land use issues of joint concern.
- Consideration should be given to participation in the state planning process. Seeking cooperation from the State Planning Commission may provide increased priority for funding projects such as Central Business District revitalization plans, open space preservation and transportation improvements.

The following is an additional summary of the concerns and recommendations raised by the public and considered by the Subcommittee and Planning Board in the preparation of the 2001 Master Plan. These are included since they framed the discussion of the 2001 Goals and Objectives as 2001 planning issues and these issues remain valid concerns that have been noted by the 2007 Reexamination.

- **Residential Character.**

The township's residential character should be preserved and protected. The township should not encourage new commercial development. In particular, there should be strict adherence to height limitations for commercial development (including signs) and lighting should be restricted. Noise and traffic are negatively impacting adjoining residential neighborhoods.

- **Environmental Protection**

Environmental protection is of increasing importance to residents. New development should be undertaken in ways that will minimize environmental degradation, tree clearing, and changes to the landscape. Conservation easements

could help protect environmentally sensitive areas and cluster zoning could help preserve open space.

- **Community Facilities/ Open Space**

Additional recreation facilities are needed, especially ball fields and possibly a community/senior center. New developments should be required to provide on-site recreation facilities.

- **Development Regulations**

Consideration should be given to permitting home occupations, day care facilities, assisted living for elderly residents, personal storage facilities, freestanding signs in the business zones along Route 22, and subject to strict limitations, wireless telecommunications facilities in specified areas. Relaxed setbacks should be considered for decks and porches.

## **2. THE EXTENT TO WHICH PROBLEMS AND OBJECTIVES HAVE BEEN REDUCED OR HAVE INCREASED**

The goals and objectives detailed in the 2001 Master Plan and reaffirmed from previous reexamination reports continue to remain valid with the following exceptions related to infill development and protection of environmentally sensitive land. The following problems and or objectives have increased since the 2001 Master Plan. The following goals from the 2001 Master Plan are still pertinent but the issues are more critical since the related development impacts are more significant:

### **INFILL DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Retain the Traditional Residential Character of Scotch Plains**

**“Infill” residential development should be undertaken consistent with zoning and the residential densities of surrounding neighborhoods.**

The goal of having “infill” residential development undertaken, consistent with zoning and the residential densities of surrounding neighborhoods remains valid as stated in the 2001 Master Plan but the intensity and complexity of infill residential development has increased. An increase

in infill developments is occurring because of the regional expanding housing market, the desirability of Scotch Plains and because less vacant land is available. People are taking advantage of the economic opportunity of the good housing market by developing infill residential lots. The complexity comes because the vacant land sites presented to be developed are an accumulation of acreage from a number of oversized residential lots and often include a stream, complex drainage issues or are a woodland property. In addition, most residential development projects within Scotch Plains include either existing lot line reconfigurations, bulk variances or road frontage deficiencies, teardowns and/or environmental constraints. The challenge related to the infill residential developments comes with the fact that the current infill developments fit like a missing puzzle piece within a larger developed puzzle of an existing residential neighborhood. The infill developments pose a balancing complexity of protecting and enhancing the character of the existing neighborhood, creating an appropriate infill development concept, while not strangling the redevelopment process, nor denying the rights of the developer with the ramification of over-regulation.

Major planning concerns related to infill residential development include oversized residences as they relate to lot size; irregularly shaped lots that do not correspond to the existing neighborhood; lots without sufficient road frontage such as “flag” lots or lots without any road frontage but with driveway easements and lots with limited side and rear usable yards due to environmental constraints.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION & NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER**

From the 2001 Master Plan:

### **Retain the Traditional Residential Character of Scotch Plains**

**The development of remaining vacant or underdeveloped parcels should be undertaken in a manner that will preserve natural resources and protect sensitive environmental areas such as wetlands, steep slopes, and stream corridors.**

The goal of having the development of remaining vacant or underdeveloped parcels undertaken in a manner that will preserve natural resources and protect sensitive environmental areas such as

wetlands, steep slopes, and stream corridors has not changed, but a new emphasis has been added of preserving sensitive environmental lands while preserving the neighborhood character.

New phrase added to the Reexamination Report:

- **The development of remaining vacant or underdeveloped parcels should be undertaken in a manner that will preserve natural resources and protect sensitive environmental areas such as wetlands, steep slopes, and stream corridors, undertaken in a manner that will preserve the existing neighborhood quality.**

The development of environmentally sensitive areas has increased. Much of the remaining undeveloped or underdeveloped land within Scotch Plains has an environmentally sensitive component. Major planning concerns include and relate to the amount of impervious coverage proposed, and the protection of wetlands and stream buffers and tree preservation, while preserving the traditional neighborhood.

## **RECREATION & OPEN SPACE**

### **Expand Opportunities for the Open Space and Recreation Needs of the Community**

- Additional active and passive recreation facilities should be provided in strategic locations to meet local needs.

The population of Scotch Plains has continued to increase at a rate that is higher than the County's rate. The 2000 Census shows the highest population group in Scotch Plains is the 34-44 age group, with the 44-54, 5-14, and 65 and over age group following as the next highest population percentages. The Township should plan for the recreation and park needs of growing families with middle and high school age children and senior citizens while continuing to monitor future growth projections.

### **3. THE EXTENT TO WHICH THERE HAVE BEEN SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN ASSUMPTIONS, POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES**

With the previously mentioned exceptions, the majority of the goals and objectives of the 2001 Master Plan are still valid. The following section is an update where there have been significant changes in assumptions, policies and objectives forming the basis for the plan or regulations since last revised, with particular regard to the density and distribution of population and land uses, housing conditions, circulation, conservation of natural resources, energy conservation, collection, disposition, and recycling of designated recyclable materials, and changes in State, county and municipal policies and objectives:

#### **Goals and Objectives**

During the evaluation of the Township policies during this Master Plan Reexamination Process, the Township has determined that the following additional goals and objectives are appropriate for Scotch Plains.

#### **Central Business District – Traffic and Circulation Additional Goal**

An additional goal that relates to traffic and circulation within the Central Business District, CBD, should be added since proposed circulation improvements for the Route 22 and Park Avenue overpass will quite possibly add additional traffic to the CBD and thereby might threaten the pedestrian scale of the area through increased traffic speed, increased traffic and changes of traffic signalization that will result in increased difficulty for street parking and reduced visibility for the store fronts. The preferable traffic speed for downtown areas is 25 M.P.H. with a traffic speed of 35 M.P.H. being the maximum traffic speed for store signage visibility and pedestrian safety. As a traffic improvement that is part of a circulation linkage from Route 22 to Route 78, there may be a state and/ or county proposal to increase the traffic volume and the number of traffic lanes beyond the two preferable traffic lanes by removing on street parking. The importance of on street parking can not be over emphasized. Parking is essential to the adjacent businesses but it also serves as traffic calming device and creates a safe confined sidewalk area for pedestrian circulation.

Scotch Plains should monitor the affect of the new circulation improvements for the Route 22 and Park Avenue overpass, protect street parking along Park Avenue, the existing traffic speed, and consider the implementation of traffic calming techniques.

*The following goal has been added by this Reexamination Report:*

- **Monitor the effect of the new circulation improvements for the Route 22 and Park Avenue overpass, which connects Scotch Plains and the surrounding area to Route 78 and the CBD. Protect street parking along Park Avenue, the existing traffic speed, and consider traffic calming techniques, as necessary.**

#### **4. SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IMPACTING THE TOWNSHIP**

Since the Township of Scotch Plains adopted its 2001 Master Plan there have been significant changes at the local, state and county level that have had an impact on the Township's planning efforts. At the state and local level, a number of new laws, programs and planning initiatives have been adopted that affect the planning process in Scotch Plains.

##### **A. Land Use Element Progress Report (2001 – 2007) - Changes at the Local Level**

###### **Demographic Characteristics Update**

Since the Township of Scotch Plains adopted the 2001 Master Plan, data from the 2000 U.S. Census are available. Since knowledge of demographic changes is necessary for effective planning efforts, the demographic characteristics have been updated. Below is an examination of population, age and housing characteristics that affect the current state of planning in Scotch Plains as of the year 2006.

###### **Population:**

Scotch Plains' population has increased by 1,572 persons (7.4%) between 1990 and 2000, following the growth trend in the county and state. Scotch Plains' growth, however, is 1.6%

above county growth. While the Township gained 7.4% of its population during the ten year period, the county's population increased by 5.8% and the state's population increased by 8.9%.

Scotch Plains experienced a population decrease, as did the county during the 1970's which in Scotch Plains was followed by a slight increase in population in the 1980's. The peak population of Scotch Plains, 22,732 persons, was recorded by the 2000 census.

Year	Scotch Plains			Union County			New Jersey		
	Population	Number Change	Percent Change	Population	Number Change	Percent Change	Population	Number Change	Percent Change
1930	14,993			328,344			4,160,165		
1950	19,069	4,076	27.2%	398,138	69,794	21.3%	4,835,329	675,164	16.0%
1960	18,491	(578)	(3.0%)	504,225	106,117	26.7%	6,066,782	1,231,453	25.2%
1970	22,279	3,788	20.5%	543,116	38,861	7.7%	7,168,164	1,101,382	18.2%
1980	20,774	(1,505)	(6.8%)	504,094	(39,022)	(7.2%)	7,364,158	195,994	2.7%
1990	21,161	386	1.9%	493,819	(10,275)	(2.0%)	7,730,188	366,030	5.0%
2000	22,732	1,571	7.4%	522,541	28,722	5.8%	8,414,350	684,162	8.9%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census 1940 - 2000

Table 2 presents the 1990 and 2000 population by age groups for Scotch Plains. The greatest increase within Scotch Plains is within the 5-14 and the 35-44 age categories which represent the middle age parent families with school age children. As shown, the Township experienced a significant decline in the 15-24 and 25-34 age groups, which represents high school, college and entry job age populations. In addition, a decline was shown in the 55-64 seniors citizens age group although the 65 and over age group has increased.

The Scotch Plains population growth from 1980 to 1990 also experienced similar decreases in the 15-24, 25-34 and 55-64 age groups.

The percent of the Scotch Plains 2000 population is highest for the 34-44 age group, with the 44-54, 5-14, and 65 and over age group following as the next highest population percentages.

The Planning Board should continue to monitor population growth and composition to craft the most effective and desirable planning focus. Careful consideration should support the aging in place for senior citizens and the needs of growing families with middle and high school age children.

Age Group	1990		2000		Change: 1990-2000	
	No. of Persons	Percent	No. of Persons	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 5	1,365	6.5	1,777	7.8	412	26.2
5-14	2,332	11	3,226	14.2	894	56.9
15-24	2,567	12.1	1,828	8.0	-739	-47.0
25-34	3,478	16.4	2,964	13.0	-514	-32.7
35-44	3,333	15.8	4,273	18.8	940	59.8
45-54	2,736	12.9	3,256	14.3	520	33.1
55-64	2,464	11.6	2,194	9.7	-270	-17.2
65+	2,885	13.6	3,214	14.2	329	20.9
Totals	21,160	100	22,732	100.0	1,572	100.0

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 & 2000

The 2000 median age of the Scotch Plains residents is 36.6 years, which is just under a year decrease from the median age of Scotch Plains' residents in 1990 and exactly the same as the 2000 median age of Union County.

Age Group	1990		2000	
	Scotch Plains (percent)	Union County	Scotch Plains (percent)	Union County (percent)
Under 5	6.5	6.6	7.8	7.0
5-14	11.0	11.8	14.2	14.1
15-24	12.1	13.2	8.0	11.7
25-34	16.4	17.2	13.0	14.4
35-44	15.8	14.9	18.8	16.9
45-54	12.9	11.1	14.3	13.3
55-64	11.6	10.2	9.7	8.8
65+	13.6	15.0	14.2	13.8
Totals	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Median Age	37.5	35.8	36.6	36.6

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 & 2000

The 2000 Census recorded the majority population of Scotch Plains Township as 78.9% white, 11.3 % African American and 7.2% Asian. In comparison, Union County’s race breakdown is 65.5% white, 20.8% African American and 3.8% Asian. The Hispanic breakdown is not a racial division but an ethnic origin division. In Scotch Plains, the Hispanic or Latino people category is 3.9% of the total population where the Union County Hispanic or Latino people are 19.7% of the total population (See Table 4).

Race	Scotch Plains		Union County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
White	342,302	78.9	342,302	65.5
Black or African American	108,593	11.3	108,593	20.8
American Indian, Alaskan Native			1,215	0.2
Asian			19,993	3.8
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander			201	0.0
Other			33,277	6.4
Two or more races			16,960	3.2
Total	522,541	100.0	522,541	100.0
Hispanic or Latino of any race	103,011	19.7	103,011	19.7

Source: U.S Bureau of Census 2000

The average household size of Scotch Plains as per the U.S. 2000 Census is 2.71 persons which falls between the average household size of Union County and the State of New Jersey. The Census defines a household as one or more persons, whether related or not, living together in a dwelling unit. See Section C. Housing Element Update - Progress Report (2001 – 2007).

2000 Average Household Size	
Scotch Plains	2.71
Union County	2.77
New Jersey	2.68

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

**Income:**

The median household income of Scotch Plains in 1999 was \$81,559. This was approximately \$26,000 higher than the Union County median household income of \$55,339 and the New Jersey median household income of \$55,146. The median household income in Scotch Plains grew greatly from \$58,194 in 1989 to \$81,599 in 1999 as did the per capita income.

	1989 Median Household Income	1989 Per Capita Money Income	1999 Median Household Income	1999 Per Capita Money Income
Scotch Plains	\$58,194	\$27,093	\$81,599	\$39,913
Union County	\$41,791	\$19,660	\$55,339	\$26,992
New Jersey	\$40,927	\$18,714	\$55,146	\$27,006

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 & 2000

Income	Scotch Plains		Union County	
	Number of Households	Percent	Number of Households	Percent
Less than \$10,000			10,067,027	9.5
\$10,000 - 14,999			6,657,228	6.3
\$15,000 - \$24,999			13,536,965	12.8
\$25,000 - \$34,999			13,519,242	12.8
\$35,000 - \$49,999			17,446,272	16.6
\$50,000 - \$74,999			20,540,604	19.5
\$75,000 - \$99,999			10,799,245	10.2
\$100,000 - \$149,000			8,147,826	7.7
\$150,000 - \$199,999			2,322,038	2.2
\$200,000 or more			2,502,675	2.4
Total households			105,539,122	100
Median household income			\$55,339	

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census 2000

The total number of households in 2000 in the Township and County is represented by Table 6. The number of households in Scotch Plains in 1990 was 7,589, as reported in the 1990 Census, as compared with 8,338 household in 2000, which means the number of households in Scotch Plains grew by 779 households between 1990 and 2000.

**Employment Data:**

Table 7 presents the employment data as reported in the U.S. 2000 Census.

TABLE 8 EMPLOYMENT DATA, 2000 BY OCCUPATION SCOTCH PLAINS & UNION COUNTY				
Occupation	Scotch Plains		Union County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Management, professional and related occupations	6,381	55.4	86,482	35.4
Service	3,811	33.0	32,436	13.3
Sales and office	3,139	27.2	69,268	28.4
Farming, forestry & fishing	50	0.4	141	0.1
Construction, extraction and maintenance	583	5.1	18,555	7.6
Production, transportation and moving occupations	656	5.7	37,315	15.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11,520</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>244,197</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<i>Industry</i>				
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	0	0.0	158	0.1
Construction	467	4.1	12,151	5.0
Manufacturing	1,285	11.1	36,638	15.0
Wholesale trade	417	3.6	11,400	4.7
Retail trade	1,245	10.8	24,964	10.2
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	0	0.0	18,211	7.5
Information	392	3.4	10,929	4.5
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing	1,226	10.6	23,493	9.6
Professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management	2,070	18.0	27,926	11.4
Education, health and social services	2,210	19.2	44,881	18.4
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	672	5.8	13,067	5.4
Other services (except public administration)	1,435	12.4	11,047	4.5
Public administration	781	6.8	9,332	3.8
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>11,520</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>244,197</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000				

The majority of employment in Scotch Plains is in the management, professional and related occupations at 55.4% of the labor force of the working population of Scotch Plains. Corresponding with labor force data is the information on the major industries within Scotch Plains with the industries of education, health and social services at 20.3% and professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management at 17.1% of the jobs in Scotch Plains.

	Scotch Plains		Union County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<i>Class of Worker</i>				
Private wage & salary	201,538	82.5	201,538	82.5
Government Workers	31,341	12.8	31,341	12.8
Self-employed	10,906	4.5	10,906	4.5
Unpaid family	412	0.2	412	0.2
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>244,197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>244,197</b>	<b>100</b>
<i>Commuting to Work: (over 16)</i>				
Drive alone	169,325	71	169,325	71
Carpool	27,686	11.6	27,686	11.6
Public Transportation (including taxi)	25,294	10.6	25,294	10.6
Walk	7,729	3.2	7,729	3.2
Other Means	2,880	1.2	2,880	1.2
Work at home	5,692	2.4	5,692	2.4
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	28.7	(x)	28.7	(x)
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>238,606</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>238,606</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

Since the 1990 census there has been a slight decrease in the category of driving to work as a single occupant. In 1990 79.9% drove to work alone and in 2000 75.5% drove to work alone.

This is a decrease of 4.4% in the years between 1990 and 2000 and the percentage of workers using public transportation in Scotch Plains is only slightly higher than the county percentage of workers using public transportation. The opportunity provided by a railroad station in Fanwood has not been exploited. Scotch Plains link bus should look into providing a shuttle bus loop that would connect various neighborhoods to the Fanwood NJTRANSIT railroad station as a way to increase public transportation usage and decrease automobile traffic.

### **Physical Characteristics Update**

The physical characteristics of Scotch Plains have not changed. New Flood Maps from the Flood Emergency Management Agency, FEMA, with basically the same flood plain delineation, dated September 20, 2006, have been issued. The Township Council is in the process of adopting this revised set of flood maps. The revised flood maps are now presented over aerial topography rather than a street map base. Since FEMA divided the Scotch Plains mapping into nine different panels and the flood plain delineation is effectively the same, the new flood plain mapping has not been included in this 2007 Reexamination Report.

### **Zoning Update**

The 2001 Master Plan recommended a number of zoning and ordinance changes that have been implemented. These included the adoption of a new sign ordinance and the continuing work on sign design recommendations, the implementation of the Broadway Redevelopment Area, the expansion of the Municipal Complex, the re-zoning of the Hedge Property – CBD Infill, and an application for Substantive Certification for the Third Round of COAH. In addition, an Open Space Inventory has been prepared. The completion of a Natural Resource Inventory, NRI is the next environmentally related priority. The NRI along with environmental related studies and ordinances, such as the Open Space Inventory and any F.A.R., impervious coverage or tree ordinances should, in the future, be incorporated into a Conservation Element that would include all related conservation and environmental data.

The current zoning in Scotch Plains contains a number of mixed zoning districts, which are generally considered a positive trend that creates multi-use neighborhoods. Some uses though,

are considered to be incompatible, such as industrial and residential related uses. This incompatibility has been recognized in the M-1 and M-2 Industrial Zone Districts where residential uses are prohibited and buffering is required between industrial uses and residential zones. Residences can still exist in the Industrial Zones, but only as a result of grandfathered non-conforming uses (built before the ordinance prohibition) or approved use variances. Because the industrial zones are surrounded by residential zones, the incompatibility of uses is more intensified. This incompatibility issue should continue to be monitored. Future solutions could include: increased buffer requirements between industrial uses and residential uses as opposed to just residential zones; a change of the zoning district or allowable uses; a declaration of a redevelopment area; or the creation of an overlay zone.

#### **Circulation Update**

The existing overpass over Route 22 is an extension of the Park Avenue, Scotch Plains' "Main Street". It is slated for improvement by the State of New Jersey that will quite possibly increase traffic in the downtown central business district. Because this improvement is part of a regional improvement linking Scotch Plains to Interstate 78, the Township should be taken to continue to monitor related the improvement to limit any local negative affects.

Another issue of concern is the lack of access points for full crossing or turning movements across U.S. Route 22 for a distance of over 1.5 miles east of the Park Avenue overpass. The Scotch Plains community is essentially split in two, with blocked emergency access, limited business access and restricted access to one of the gems of Scotch Plains, the Watching Reservation. The NJDOT Access Management Code has guidelines for urban highway design turning movements which should be investigated and used to lobby for at least one additional access point along that stretch of U.S. Route 22.

#### **B. Housing Element Update - Progress Report (2001 – 2007)**

The Township of Scotch Plains received its first substantive certification by the Council on Affordable Housing, COAH, in 1990 and the second on July 10, 1996. The 2001 Scotch Plains Master Plan Housing Update housing characteristics has been revised as part of this 2007

Reexamination Report of the Master Plan. The Township has recently completed and submitted to COAH a document titled the 2006 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan and is awaiting further direction from COAH. Since the 2001 Housing Element was not updated by this document the following Housing Element Update has been provided in this 2007 Master Plan Reexamination. The 2006 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan anticipates a surplus of 97 units over the third round period and did not propose any changes to the Township's existing Master Plan, an addition of a growth share ordinance, a development fee ordinance or update of the affordable housing objective. The following is an update of the affordable housing objective or goal that simplifies the goal found in the 2001 Master Plan.

- **AFFORDABLE HOUSING OBJECTIVE:** Scotch Plains Township remains committed to providing their constitutional "fair share" housing obligation.

**Housing Changes:**

The average household size in Scotch Plains has decreased by 12%, while Union County has seen a decrease of .01% since the 1990 Census. The average household size of 2.71 persons compares favorably with the county household size of 2.77 persons, but Scotch Plains had a larger household size in 1990 and is now reflecting the general state decrease in family size.

TABLE H1 HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS 1980 - 2000 AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE SCOTCH PLAINS & UNION COUNTY						
Scotch Plains	1990		2000		Change: 1980-00	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Average Household Size	2.81	(0.91)	2.71	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.12)
Union County	1990		2000		Change: 1980-00	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Average Household Size	2.70	(0.04)	2.77	0	(0.04)	(0.01)
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980, 1990 & 2000						

Type of Household	1990 Total	1990 Percent	2000 Total	2000 Percent
Family Households	6,036	79.5	6,291	75.4
w own children under 18	2,185	28.8	3,022	36.2
Married-couple family	5,189	68.3	5,376	64.4
w own children under 18	2,185	28.8	2,689	32.2
Female Householder, no husband present	644	8.5	703	8.4
w/ own children under 18	282	3.7	264	3.2
Non-Family Households	277	3.6	2,068	24.6
Householder living alone			1,737	20.8
Householder 65+			331	3.9
Households w individuals under 18			3,173	38.1
Households w individuals over 65	1,961	26.0	2,262	27.1
Average family size			3.15	3.63
Average household size	2.81	(x)	2.74	3.3(x)
Total Households	7,594		8,349	100.0
*Not a member of a family: roomer, boarder, rental employee, foster child, etc. are included in this category				
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 & 2000				

A household is defined by the 2000 Census as one or more persons, whether related or not, living together in a dwelling unit, while a family is defined as persons related to the householder living together in a dwelling unit. The pattern from 1980 to 1990 of decreasing household size has continued into the 2000's. While the size of households has decreased between 1990 and 2000, the total number of households in Scotch Plains has increased by 755 households. Note that a household includes both non-family households and single person households.

The census category breakouts for non-family households changed between the 1990 and 2000 census, so comparing data in this area is suspect. The greatest increase by far was the increase in the number of households that include related children both under and over 18 years of age. Scotch Plains also saw an increase in the number of households that include an individual of 65 years or older.

	Scotch Plains		Union County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<i>Unit Occupancy</i>				
Occupied Units	8,349	98.5	186,124	96.5
Vacant Units	130	1.5	6,821	3.5
Total Units	8,479	100.0	192,945	100.0
<i>Tenure of Occupied Units</i>				
Owner Occupied	6,548	78.4	114,638	61.6
Renter Occupied	1,801	21.6	71,486	38.4
Total Occupied Units	8,349	100.0	186,124	100.0

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000

The total number of housing units per the 2000 Census is 8,349 which is an increase of 755 housing units over number of housing units found in the 1990 Census. This corresponds with the increase in the number shown in Table H2. Scotch Plains residential units have a high occupancy rate of 98.5%. Owner occupied units make up 78.4% of the housing inventory with 21.6% as rental units.

Table H4 shows the tenure of the households in Scotch Plains and Union County's housing. The pattern of housing tenure of Scotch Plains and Union County are very similar. Fewer units turned over in the Township during the period from 1999 through March 2000 than in Union County and more households have continued to live in the same housing as they did in 1970 – 1979 and 1990 – 1994 than did those in Union County.

Year Householder Moved into Unit	Scotch Plains		Union County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1999 - 3/2000	1,093	13.0	27,513	14.8
1995 - 1998	2,237	26.8	49,967	26.8
1990 - 1994	2,381	28.5	28,797	15.5
1980 - 1989	1,287	15.4	29,008	15.6
1970 - 1979	1,099	13.2	20,728	11.1
1969 or earlier	1,452	17.2	30,111	16.2
Total: Occupied Housing Units	8,349	100.0	186,124	100.0

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000

Table H5 indicates the age of the housing in Scotch Plains as compared to Union County. The majority of the housing in Scotch Plains was built during the 1960's, 1950 and 1940's which is 60.4% of the total housing stock. The number of homes built each decade has steadily declined since 1959. Since the housing stock will likely continue to age, care should be taken to not discourage renovations and upgrading of aging housing stock.

TABLE H5 HOUSING UNIT DATA: 2000 SCOTCH PLAINS & UNION COUNTY				
Characteristics:	Scotch Plains		Union County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Units	18,419	100.0	192,945	100.0
<i>Year Structure Built</i>				
1999 - 3/2000	16	0.1	1,030	0.5
1995 - 1998	259	1.4	2,937	1.5
1990 - 1995	501	2.7	3,289	1.7
1980 - 1989	598	3.2	8,797	4.6
1970 - 1979	1,190	6.5	15,799	8.2
1960 - 1969	1,129	6.1	29,205	15.1
1940 - 1959	3,171	17.2	81,542	42.3
1939 or earlier	1,117	6.0	50,346	26.1
<i>Number of Units</i>				
1-unit, detached	5,426	29.5	102,794	53.3
1-unit, attached	14	0.1	7,951	4.1
2 units	224	1.2	29,415	15.2
3 or 4 units	15	0.1	16,704	8.7
5 to 9 units	178	1.0	7,785	4.0
10 to 19 units	26	0.1	7,754	4.0
20 or more units	176	1.0	20,290	10.5
Mobile home	16	0.1	239	0.1
Boat, RV, van, etc	10	0.1	13	0.0
<i>Number of Rooms</i>				
1 room	56	0.3	4,961	2.6
2 rooms	58	0.3	8,301	4.3
3 rooms	180	1.0	21,631	11.2
4 rooms	1,157	6.3	26,556	13.8
5 rooms	1,000	5.4	29,785	15.4
6 rooms	1,178	6.4	34,669	18.0
7 rooms	1,788	9.7	28,857	15.0
8 rooms	1,514	8.2	20,140	10.4
9 or more rooms	1,577	8.5	18,045	9.4
median number of rooms	5.9		5.7	

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000

The majority (75.8%) of the housing in Scotch Plains, as per the 2000 Census is single-family detached housing, which is 22.5% greater than the proportion of single-family detached housing in Union County, but is a decrease of 16.5% over the 1990 Census.

The housing within Scotch Plains numbers more units with 8 or 9 or more rooms than the housing in Union County. The median number of rooms is 6.9 rooms in Scotch Plains and 5.7 rooms in Union County.

The year a structure was built, persons per room, plumbing facilities, kitchen facilities, substandard heating facilities, sewer or septic and water availability are general considerations when determining the overall condition of housing stock. It is generally accepted that units built before 1940 are much more likely to be in a substandard condition. 11.9% of Scotch Plains' housing stock was built earlier than 1939. When considering the number of persons per room 1.01 persons per room is the index of overcrowding, therefore 10 units or 2.1% are considered overcrowded in the Township. The other factor is a lack of or inadequate heating, plumbing or kitchen facilities in Scotch Plains and 7 units are deemed substandard based on the lack of a heating system heat, 7 units based on inadequate plumbing and 15 units are deemed substandard on inadequate kitchen facilities. In this case, it would seem that around 15 housing units are substandard.

<b>TABLE H6 INDICATORS OF HOUSING CONDITIONS 2000 SCOTCH PLAINS &amp; UNION COUNTY</b>				
	<b>Scotch Plains</b>		<b>Union County</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<i>Deficient Units</i>				
Units Lacking complete plumbing	1,465	0.9	1,465	0.8
Units Lacking complete kitchen	1,628	0.9	1,628	0.9
No Telephone Service	3,962	2.1	3,962	2.1
<i>Occupied Units by Persons Per Room</i>				
1.00 or less	173,620	93.3	173,620	93.3
1.01 to 1.50	7,089	3.8	7,089	3.8
1.51 or more	5,415	2.9	5,415	2.9
Occupied Housing Units	186,124	100.0	186,124	100.0

Table H6 Continued	Scotch Plains		Union County	
<i>House Heating Fuel</i>	Scotch Plains		Union County	
Utility gas	6,149	77.2	133,816	71.9
Bottled, tank, or LP gas	235	0.7	3,034	1.6
Electricity	789	9.9	9,747	5.2
Fuel oil, kerosene, etc.	1,856	16.4	38,214	20.5
Coal or coke	0	0	60	0
Wood	11	0.1	79	0
Solar energy	0	0	8	0
Other fuel	7	0.1	662	0.4
No fuel used	12	0.1	504	0.3

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000

Table H7 presents the 2000 Census housing values in both Scotch Plains and Union County. The majority of homes in Scotch Plains were valued between \$200,000 and \$499,999 with the median housing value being \$258,800. This median value is much higher than in Union County which has a median housing value of \$188,880.

Table H7 HOUSING VALUES 2000 SCOTCH PLAINS & UNION COUNTY				
Value	Scotch Plains		Union County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than \$50,000	666	0.7	666	0.7
\$50,000 to \$99,999	4,849	5.0	4,849	5.0
\$100,000 to \$149,999	21,352	22.0	21,352	22.0
\$150,000 to \$199,999	26,728	27.6	26,728	27.6
\$200,000 to \$299,999	22,869	23.6	22,869	23.6
\$300,000 to \$499,999	14,807	15.3	14,807	15.3
\$500,000 to \$999,999	4,981	5.1	4,981	5.1
\$1,000,000 or more	736	0.8	736	0.8
Specified owner-occupied units	96,988	100.0	96,988	100.0
Median (dollars)	\$258,800		\$188,800	

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000

In 2000, 41.6% of the renter occupied housing units had contract rents of between \$750 and \$999 per month with 39.7% between \$1000 and \$1,499. The township's median rent was a high of \$985 and compares to Union County's median rent of \$752. The total number of rental units in Scotch Plains, as per the 2000 Census, is 1,773 which is 20.9% of the total 8,479 housing units.

<b>TABLE H8 CONTRACT RENTS: 2000 SCOTCH PLAINS &amp; UNION COUNTY</b>				
Gross Rent	Scotch Plains		Union County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than \$200	24	1.4	2,559	3.6
\$200 to \$299	9	0.5	1,946	2.7
\$300 to \$499	13	0.7	5,810	8.1
\$500 to \$749	12	0.7	24,271	34.0
\$750 to \$999	13	0.7	22,694	31.8
\$1,000 to \$1,499	12	0.7	10,230	14.3
\$1,500 or more	1	0.1	2,039	2.9
No cash rent	1	0.1	1,858	2.6
<b>Total: Specified renter-occupied units</b>	<b>1,773</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>71,407</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Median Rent (dollars)</b>	<b>\$985</b>		<b>\$752</b>	
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000				

**C. Community Facilities, Parks, & Recreation Plan Element Progress Report (2001 – 2007)**

Almost 24% or 13,000 acres of the Township's land is publicly owned or devoted to open space, parks or recreation areas. The Township has recently approved plans and completed construction for a miniature golf course on the Township owned Scotch Hills Golf Course and continued to coordinate a Shared Service Agreement between Scotch Plains and Fanwood related to recreational activities through the purchase and use of shared park maintenance equipment. An Open Space Preservation Trust Fund of \$0.02/\$100 assessed value was approved by a Township referendum in 1999 which is anticipated to generate \$185,000 to \$190,000 per year. This funding could possibility be leveraged and used with the Garden State Preservation Funding and/ or the Union County open space funding.

The former Ponderosa or Sevell property on Cooper Road has been purchased by Union County and various recreation uses are in the process of being explored. Since recreation space is a limited commodity in the township, perhaps the Township could negotiate a long term lease of some of the former Seville property for recreation field use.

The demographic section of the Reexamination Report should be shared with the Recreation Committee since it could possibly aid them in the selection of recreation long range planning efforts.

**D. Relationship to Other Plans Element Progress Report (2001 – 2007)**

The Master Plan Reexamination Report must look to the extent to which there have been significant changes in municipal policies and objectives including adjoining municipalities. There are eight municipalities located in three counties, Union, Somerset and Middlesex, that border the Township of Scotch Plains. The adjoining municipalities have not changed their zoning, municipality policies or development regulations since the last Master Plan was adopted. The adjoining municipalities include Berkeley Heights, Mountainside, Westfield, Clark, Edison, Plainfield, Fanwood and Watchung and no border changes have occurred.

The only significant future change is a proposed change that relates of the zoning of the Weldon Quarry in Watchung. A change in zoning from Limited Industrial/Quarry to Quarry with the removal of the light industrial use and the addition of an overlay zone that includes additional use options for conference center, office and hotel uses frame the proposed zoning change. Since the area of the quarry abuts the Watchung Reservation in Scotch Plains the proposed change should not be incompatible with the zoning or land uses in Scotch Plains. As noted in the 2001 Scotch Plains Master Plan, the redevelopment plans for the quarry and the process should continue to be evaluated by Scotch Plains to ensure that any proposed use does not have any negative impacts on the Township.

**E. Significant Changes at the State or County**

**Cross Acceptance**

Cross Acceptance is a two phase process developed by the State Planning Commission (SPC) empowered by the State Planning Act of 1985, N.J.S.A. 52:18A-196 et seq., to update the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP) known as the State Plan. The first phase is the development of a cross acceptance report and the second phase is plan endorsement. The objective of this process consists of updating the State Plan approximately every three years along with fostering a cooperative nature between municipalities, counties, and state agencies throughout this process.

Union County worked with the Township and completed the Cross Acceptance Report in 2005 and found Scotch Plains generally consistent with the State Plan intent, key concepts and policy objectives for the Metropolitan Planning Area (PA1).

The Cross Acceptance process compares municipal documents and the State Plan in the following areas: land use; housing; economic development; transportation; natural resource conservation; agriculture; recreation; redevelopment; historic preservation; public facilities and services; historic preservation and intergovernmental coordination. The only areas suggested by the Cross Acceptance Report where the Township could reach a higher degree of consistency with the State Plan was by engaging in historic preservation efforts and expanding regional efforts with neighboring municipalities and the county. The first steps toward the historic preservation could include the Planning Board exploring the creation of a historic committee, the creation of a historic inventory and discussion of the potential historic preservation grants that could to be used in conjunction with downtown revitalization. Regional planning efforts that the Planning Board might want to explore could include introductory meetings with the Fanwood Planning Board to discuss common planning interests.

The 1991 Open Space Inventory prepared by the Environmental Commission and the new zoning area the Conservation Zone was noted by the Cross Acceptance Report as a positive recent environmental related planning effort. Related to this is the recommendation by the

reexamination process that a Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) be completed. The NRI will also be needed to complete the Plan Endorsement process or would be the basis of a Conservation Plan Element of the Master Plan.

#### **New Jersey Storm Water Management Regulations**

The Phase 2 of the NJDEP Storm Water Regulations required the Township, and all New Jersey municipalities, to pass various ordinances regarding pet waste, solid waste disposal, feeding of wildlife, etc. The biggest and most technically involved ordinance required to be passed is an update to our existing Storm Water Control Ordinance and the adoption of a Storm Water Control Section of the Master Plan. A new ordinance based on language and stricter requirements supplied by NJDEP will be scheduled for Council adoption after the Planning Board is presented with the draft copy. Care must be taken that not only with Storm Water Control ordinances but also with a Storm Water Master Plan Element be adopted so the zoning ordinance will be legal and be substantially consistent with the Master Plan.

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

The New Jersey Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS) were adopted in January 1997, revised in November 1999 and again revised January 20, 2004. The RSIS governs any site improvements carried out in connection with new residential development. The RSIS were designed to create uniform standards and ensure predictability in the development process. The rules supersede municipal standards for residential development. It is recommended that the Township's zoning and land development ordinances continue to be evaluated as to RSIS consistency.

#### **State Development and Redevelopment Plan**

The State Planning Commission adopted the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP) in June 1992 and adopted a revised SDRP on March 1, 2001. This planning document contains various goals and objectives that relate to the future development and redevelopment of New Jersey. The Council on Affordable Housing, COAH, has required that after a municipality

has applied to COAH for Substantive Certification, as has Scotch Plains, that with the Third Year Monitoring Report to COAH the municipality must certify that the municipality has filed for Plan Endorsement that relates to conformance with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan. Scotch Plains Planning Board should review the Plan Endorsement Process and begin to work toward various required items such as a Natural Resource Inventory.

## **5. SPECIFIC CHANGES RECOMMENDED**

The following specific changes have been recommended by this Reexamination Report. Most of the following have also been identified by the 2001 Master Plan. The changes and related actions have also been listed in the following Master Plan Implementation Matrix.

- The Reexamination Report has focused on increased infill development pressure and related zoning tools to help guide future development. Zoning tools recommended for further study include floor area ratios (F.A.R.), lot coverage and lot circle regulations. F.A.R. relates the square footage of the building footprint to the overall square footage of the lot area, reflecting building massing to the lot size. Lot coverage can relate to total building coverage and/or total impervious coverage. Leaving a portion of each lot with pervious cover can recharge the ground water aquifer and provide for the greening of especially dense neighborhoods. Lot circles work to curb very irregular yard areas by requiring a portion of the building envelope or lot to be within a specific lot circle dimension.
- Increased development pressure has also impressed the need for tree replacement and/or tree conservation ordinances. Much of Scotch Plains is a suburban forest, and the wooded street frontages and conservation of the forested outbounds of lots is necessary if the character of Scotch Plains is to remain unchanged.
- The protection of the environment and the preservation of neighborhood character remains important, as environmentally sensitive land continues to be developed.

Zoning tools to be examined and possibility implemented include lot size modifications by the removal of either all or part of the environmentally sensitive lands from the building or yard area or the implementation of specific lot coverage requirements relating to environmentally sensitive lands.

- A Wireless Telecommunications Study and Ordinance is mentioned as a priority in the 2001 Master Plan and the Zoning Board of Adjustment Annual Reports that are examined by this Reexamination Report. A study of dead cell areas and a Wireless Telecommunications Ordinance need to be prepared. This issue is deemed critical by the Zoning Board of Adjustment, as they currently deal with this difficult issue without direct zoning guidance.
- The Central Business District Revitalization continues to be an important issue for Scotch Plains. A new sign ordinance was approved that included the sign changes for the central business district. Currently, both the infill plans for the Hedge property and the sign design guidelines for the downtown are being brought into fruition. A Special Improvement District (SID) had been investigated and at that time, it was rejected by the Township Council based on input from business leaders. No alternative management solution has been found to address combined marketing, advertising, business recruitment or grantsmanship. The issue of a SID should continue to be revisited to protect the health of the Central Business District.
- The Planning Board's long range planning viewpoint could be used by the Recreation Commission. Recreation Plans & Recreation Facilities' planning could be guided by the demographic studies completed by the Planning Board and the long-range planning of a community center and/or survey of recreation facilities.
- The "flag" lot issue has been brought to the forefront by the increased developmental pressure and requires further examination to determine whether either further regulation

or prohibition is necessary. An ordinance revision removed all flag lot requirements, and currently the zoning ordinance is silent on this issue. If regulation or prohibition of flag lots is found to be desirable, the lot widths at road frontage requirements and/ or reduction of the secondary frontage can further regulate flag lots.

- Intergovernmental coordination was mentioned in the 2001 Master Plan and as a goal remains valid. Working with other municipalities, Scotch Plains can share costs, be more creative and lobby more effectively.
- Affordable Housing remains as an important issue for Scotch Plains, as the Township is currently seeking Third Round Certification. Along with the new checkpoints for COAH, Plan Endorsement should also be considered.
- A Home Occupation Study remains on the matrix as an issue that may be considered at a future time.