

# **Master Plan Reexamination Report**

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

**Adopted:  
December 12, 2016**

**Township of Scotch Plains  
Planning Board**

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The Master Plan Reexamination  
Report is the result of the Master Plan  
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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 ten years. The purpose of this 2016 Reexamination Report is to meet the statutory requirement to evaluate the 2001 Township Master Plan, primarily based upon the 2007 Reexamination Report, along with current development regulations; and to provide concepts toward future community development.

Scotch Plains Township is required to submit its next adopted reexamination report not later than February 27, 2017. However, the subcommittee of the Planning Board on this date, December 12, 2016, has accomplished the task of reviewing the required data; is able to state desired objectives for incorporation into a new Master Plan and has prepared this document, the 2016 Reexamination Report for formal adoption.

The subcommittee informs the Board that this report lacks specific updated data related to affordable housing obligations demographics, due to legal issues concerning the township's affordable housing requirements. When clear information is available, a revision of this report will be necessary. Following that report, a revised Housing Element of the Master Plan should be considered. The board is aware that this information is unlikely to be available for incorporation into this report anytime sooner than the mandated deadline of February 2017.

### **Scotch Plains Township**

Scotch Plains is a township in Union County, New Jersey, United States. As of the 2010 Census, the township's population was 23,510, reflecting an increase of 778 (+3.4%) from the 22,732 counted in the 2000 Census, which had in turn increased by 1,572 (+7.4%) from the 21,160 counted in 1990.

## **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 2016 Master Plan Reexamination Report follows the 1976 Scotch Plains Master Plan, the Reexamination Reports of 1982, 1988 1994-95, 2007 and the 2001 Scotch Plains Master Plan. This Reexamination Report considers and addresses the above criteria and with its adoption, satisfies statutory requirements. The next required master plan or reexamination will be due in December 2026.

The 2016 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 2016 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 2007 Reexamination

Report of 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.

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

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

The 2001 Scotch Plains Master Plan identified 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 were found to remain valid by the 2007 Reexamination and remain valid for this 2016 report.

The 2016 Reexamination Report agrees with the 2001 Master Plan Principles and Assumptions as quoted below:

- 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.

- Affordable Housing Objective (simplification): Scotch Plains Township remains committed to providing its constitutional “fair share” housing obligation.

The 2016 Reexamination report identifies additional major planning issues, major events and changes occurring 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 planning board regularly continues to hear applications from property owners who are subdividing large properties into smaller parcels. In some cases, retaining existing residential dwellings, in others building homes to the maximum size permitted. This trend is expected to continue.

- 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 (CGAH) in 1990 and 1996. The current requirements, at the time of this report, are under judicial review.
- 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.
  - Plans were approved in 2016 for a major residential development to replace a long-standing commercial enterprise. The “Bowcraft Amusement Center”. This decades-old privately-operated operation, that grew from an archery-oriented park to a full-scale amusement center, with mechanical rides and family-oriented recreation, will be developed with more than 200 homes and a club house within the next three years. Forty-one of those homes will satisfy the township’s court-mandated Mt. Laurel affordable housing obligation.
- There is a need for open space and recreation areas.
- The township’s population is aging, resulting in changing housing needs
- In December 2016, the Ashbrook Nursing Home failed to gain approval from the Zoning Board of Adjustment for considerable expansion of its facilities. Within the past 10 years, two applications before the Zoning Board of Adjustment for new assisted living facilities were denied.

- The Broadway site, referred to in the 2007 Reexamination Report has been developed successfully as an age-restricted community.
- The Township continues to explore means to enhance the Central Business District.
- 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 & OBJECTIVES OF THE 2001 MASTER PLAN REEXAMINED**

The 2016 Reexamination Report agrees that the Goals and Objectives of the 2001 Master Plan remain valid. This report will discuss additional goals. The 2001 Scotch Plains Master Plan identified the following Goals and Objectives as the basis for the 2001 Master Plan. The 2007 Reexamination Report identified these as remaining valid and added the goal of monitoring the effects of the new circulation improvements of the Route 22 and Park Avenue overpass. This goal is restated below.

The 2007 Reexamination process identified infill related development increases that affect the traditional character of Scotch Plains. An additional phrase [has been] was added that 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.

In 2007, the Reexamination Report added the phrase relating to the development of environmentally sensitive lands, noted 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 a 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, and reviewed in the 2007 and 2016 Reexamination Reports:

### **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 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 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 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.

The 2016 Reexamination Report Agrees with the following objectives, as stated in previous reports:

### **Provide Areas for Highway-orientated and Other Nonresidential Development & 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 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 Open Space and Recreation Needs**

This 2016 Reexamination Report notes that several recreational sites operate in Scotch Plains.

Many of these facilities have undergone extensive renovations and remain popular attractions:

#### ***RECREATIONAL SITES:***

##### ***Brookside Park, 1255 Hetfield Avenue***

Playground, basketball court, baseball/softball field, soccer field, roller hockey, bocce, picnic tables

##### ***Crestwood Wildlife Sanctuary, 2406 Morse Avenue***

Wildlife sanctuary and nature center

##### ***Farley Avenue Park, 436 Farley Avenue***

##### ***Green Forest Park, , 554 Westfield Road***

##### ***Greenside Playground, 355 Westfield Road***

##### **Playground**

##### ***Haven Park, 336 Haven Avenue***

##### ***Jerseyland Park, 2377 Richmond Street***

Playground, 2 basketball courts, baseball/softball field, soccer field, picnic area

##### ***Kramer Manor Park, 1950 Evelyn Street***

Playground, 2 basketball courts, baseball field, soccer field, wildlife preserve

**Memorial Park, 2435 Plainfield Avenue**

**Southside Ballfield, 1910 Raritan Road**

**Baseball field, soccer field, wildlife preserve**

**Route 22 Field, 1909 Route 22**

Baseball field, wildlife preserve

**County Vo-Tech, 1776 Raritan Road**

Lighted baseball field, soccer field

**Shared Recreational Facility:**

**Ponderosa Field, Cooper Road**

In 2010, Union County developed a parcel of land know as the Ponderosa. It has become a popular sprinkler park with an array of playground equipment, ample parking and seating.

- Additional active and passive recreation facilities should be provided in strategic locations to meet local needs. New and planned developments are designed for families who would benefit from added recreational facilities.

**The 2016 reexamination report finds**

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

**Betty Frazee House Property, 1451 Raritan Road, a passive park and historic site**

This site was part of the former Terri Lou Zoo and acquired by the township following failed development proposals. An historic home, added to the National Historic Register in 2009, is on the property and is in need of extensive renovation. It was stabilized and saved from demolition, but funding to restore the home is insufficient. Nevertheless, efforts to save the home and better utilize the property continues with strong emphasis on seeking grants for historical renovations to help defray costs.

**A. 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 with State and County agencies and programs. Seeking cooperation from agencies, such as, the Department of Community Affairs, the Main Street Program and other sources, 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 that framed the discussion of the 2001 Goals and Objectives as 2001 planning issues. These issues stood as valid in the 2007 Reexamination; and are acknowledged as valid in this 2016 report

***Residential Character.***

The township's residential character should be preserved and protected. 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, street 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***

- In 2007, the Reexamination Report stated that additional recreation facilities are needed, especially ball fields and possibly a community/senior center.
- In this 2016 Reexamination, it is recommended that the Planning Board works closely with the Recreation Department to investigate whether and where new ball fields are necessary.
- It is noted that some recreation area will be removed from Park Middle School due to construction of new parking facilities by the end of 2017.
- The Planning Board agrees that new developments should offer recreational amenities for residents.

- A true community center is added here as an objective for the future.

The building, known as Shady Rest at the Scotch Hills Country Club, recently underwent extensive renovation. It serves as a meeting and activity place for the Township's senior citizens and other groups, But it does not offer accommodations to expand activities appreciably and does not compete with many senior centers in the area. Additionally, it is not considered large or versatile enough for the community-at-large.

### *Development Regulations*

Consideration should be given to permitting 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.

## **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:

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

#### ***INFILL DEVELOPMENT***

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

***Definition: “The development of new housing or other uses on scattered vacant sites in a built-up area.” (Harvey Moskowitz, AICP, PP, and Carl Lindbloom, AICP, PP, 2004.)***

The most significant infill development since the last reexamination report is the construction of 60 age-restricted townhouses on the Shackamaxon Golf Course Property. The 135 acre site was dedicated only to a privately-owned golf course. The Township declared the area to be in need of

redevelopment and, in accord with the Master Plan and local ordinances, the application to develop the housing and modify the property, was approved by the Planning Board.

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] continuing to develop infill residential lots.

In 2016, the Scotch Plains Planning board faced legal action when it rejected an application in 2015 for three acre infill development with a number of variances off Cooper Road. The application was determined not compatible with existing standards and the neighborhood by the Board. The Board’s decision was rejected by the Superior Court and, upon remand, an amended application with a flag lot was submitted by the developer (a homeowner on the site) and approved. The Board did not consider an alternative plan that was designed in full compliance of the zoning ordinance. The compatible plan, it was determined would have a much larger impact on the neighborhood and environment.

This experience underscores the need for the board and its professionals to carefully consider zoning language and standards that could cause such conflicts.

The complexity of addressing the infill issue 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**

The 2016 Reexamination Report is consistent with the wording of 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 steam 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 steam corridors has not changed, but a new emphasis has been added of preserving sensitive environmental lands while preserving the neighborhood character.

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 steam 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.

## **LAND USE ORDINANCE**

- In 2012, the Planning Board Master Plan Subcommittee, along with the Scotch Plains Code Official, undertook a comprehensive review of the Scotch Plains Zoning Map. Its goal was to learn whether the zoning standards remained valid in each designated area. As a result of the study, it was determined that designated zoning was appropriate for each area and specific zone changes were not warranted.
- In December 2016, a number of changes to the zoning ordinance were proposed to the township council. Among those are changes and conditions that allow electronic signs. Also, the new language will identify the number of “units” in a new development, rather than the term “bedrooms.” Another change regards the amount of unadorned showroom glass that downtown businesses must maintain.

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

- The 2016 Reexamination Report finds that, 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 the 2007 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***

Within the Central Business District, CBD, circulation improvements for the Route 22 and Park Avenue overpass have not appeared to threaten the pedestrian scale of the area through increased traffic speed, increased traffic and changes of traffic signalization. The improvements have not resulted 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 of this report, Wallace, Roberts & Todd are conducting a traffic/parking study that should yield solutions to parking and traffic/pedestrian safety. Monitor the effect of the 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.  
traffic calming techniques.

## **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.

### ***ROUTE 22 CORRIDOR***

- The East Bound Side and West Bound Side of Route 22, near the Mountainside Border, face a number of issues, as a result of recent actions affecting the land use in the area. The board must review these events and investigate whether ordinance changes and focused planning strategies are necessary. Changes would be aimed toward encouraging economically viable commercial development of this business corridor.

- An application at the Glenside Avenue jug handle, was submitted to develop 2650 Route 22 E., a vacant Gulf gas station with new pumps and a retail outlet. The plan required a “d” variance before the Township Zoning Board of Adjustment. After lengthy testimony and residents’ challenges, the application was denied.

The gas station has re-opened with only service pumps under a different retail brand.

- A more expansive application, at 2600 Route 22E, proposing a discount gas station and retail/food store was presented by WAWA and denied by the ZBA on the other side of the Glenside Avenue. Traffic considerations numbered among the objections raised by the board and neighbors. It is assumed that the present owner seeks to sell the property, now a garden and masonry center, and develop it to its maximum
- Also on the East Side of Route 22, a Burger King, 2510 Route 22 E., is closed, for sale and unoccupied.
- A publishing firm at 2590 Route 22 E has placed its building for sale.
- Olympia Plaza, 2520 Route 22, has a mix of retail stores and restaurants. While it experiences some turnover, it is more stable than the past.
- Dunkin Donuts plaza 2560 Route 22 E, anchored by a UPS store, a restaurant, jeweler and financial services office, has been stabile.

***Route 22 West; same vicinity:***

- Bowcraft Amusement Park 2545 Route 22 W, an attraction for more than 70 years, will be replaced by more than 200 residential units under an approval from the Planning Board in 2016. Development is expected to begin in 2018 or sooner.  
It is speculated that with the influx of new families, businesses within close proximity of the development will benefit.
- Nearby, at 2885 Route 22 W is a restaurant building that has seen limited occupancy is again vacant.

- Pet Shanty a retail center, at 2507 Route 22W., also closed in the same vicinity. The building is being renovated for a martial arts school.
- Route 22 in Scotch Plains has seen more business turnover within the past 10 years than it has seen in decades. Some vacancies are being filled, but particularly, of concern are the areas pointed out in this report

#### *Demographic Characteristics*

The 2010 Census Report below explains the demographic changes within the Township.

#### *Physical Characteristics*

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. FEMA divided the Scotch Plains mapping into nine different panels and the flood plain delineation is effectively the same.

#### *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 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.

These conflicts continue to be monitored and, on a case-by-case basis, when business seek to expand, change or intensify use, the Planning Board has been astute in recommending lighting, parking, buffering and other amenities to make the businesses more compatible with residential neighbors.

- 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. At this time, there is no urgency raised by residents or adjacent businesses that warrant immediate attention.

### ***Circulation Update***

- The existing overpass over Route 22 is an extension of the Park Avenue, Scotch Plains' "Main Street". Because this improvement is part of a regional improvement linking Scotch Plains to Interstate 78, the Township should continue to monitor related the improvement to limit any local negative effects.
- 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 Watchung 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.

***Housing Element Update - Progress Report (2001 — 2016)***

- Scotch Plains Township remains committed to providing their constitutional “fair share” housing obligation. As of the preparation of this report, the State of New Jersey is revamping its approach to Affordable Housing. The current plan, as it impacts the Township is in litigation.

***Community Facilities, Parks, & Recreation Plan Element Progress Report (2001 — 2016)***

- 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 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/\$1.00 assessed value was approved by a Township referendum in 1999 which is anticipated to generate \$185,000 to \$190,000 per year. This funding has been used to upgrade needed recreational facilities, as noted here.

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.

***Relationship to Other Plans Element Progress Report***

- Scotch Plains Township continues to monitor the only significant future 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 to ensure that any proposed use does not negatively impact the Township.

**Significant Changes at the State**

***Cross Acceptance.***

The 2007 Reexamination Report noted that Scotch Plains actively participated in Cross Acceptance with Union County and the State of New Jersey Office of State Planning as part of the compliance phase with the

State Development and Redevelopment Plan.

Since 2008, the State of New Jersey has relaxed implementation of the Plan. Therefore, the Cross Acceptance information of the 2007 Reexamination Report is the latest.

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

Pending before the Township Council at the time of the 2007 Reexamination were the Phase 2 NJDEP Storm Water Regulations that 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 was an update to the Storm Water Control Ordinance and the adoption of a Storm Water Control Section of the Master Plan. An ordinance based on language and stricter requirements supplied by NJDEP was adopted and, at the same time, the Planning Board adopted a Storm Water Element of 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. The Township's zoning and land development ordinances continue to be evaluated as to RSIS consistency.

## **SPECIFIC CHANGES RECOMMENDED**

The following specific changes have been recommended by this Reexamination Report

### ***CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT***

- The Central Business District Revitalization continues to be an important issue for Scotch Plains. The 2016 Reexamination Report suggests:
  - The results of a parking study currently under way by the professional planning firm, Wallace Roberts & Todd, should be carefully considered. The firm was retained by the Township Council.
  - The planning board should be formally a part of future committees, activities or considerations by the township council as it affects the CBD.
  - Non-partisan volunteer groups, comprised of citizens, merchants and professional experts familiar with

Scotch Plains and, generally, with downtown improvement, should be encouraged to advise the township council, the planning board and hired professionals.

- All means should be investigated to gain funding for improvements, promotions and development projects that enhance the CBD. With internet access such an important part of life today, installing a wireless access system in the CBD would be an attractive component.
  - An ordinance establishing a Special Improvement District was passed and remains in effect. The district, in compliance with standards established by the State of New Jersey, was organized and implemented for only a short while. The operating body disbanded after failing to reach agreement on a number of issues. This report expresses no opinion on whether the S.I.D. should be revived. The importance of a S.I.D. should be monitored carefully, for example; should business owners agree to its reemergence, or new guidelines are adopted by the State, or if funding advantages arise that could enhance the CBD.
- With regard to downtown, development should be pursued in a budget-neutral fashion with funding coming from grants and/or commercial entities that stand to profit from the development opportunities.
- The Board should continue to monitor the effect of the 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.
- The Planning Board's long range planning viewpoint could be used by the Recreation Department. 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.
- Energize the concept of a Scotch Plains Community Center that would offer broad appeal to organizations, groups and residents of all ages. The Board should create a community center subcommittee to explore the feasibility of a location, funding and all aspects of such an endeavor.

- 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. The Township has successfully created working relationships with other municipalities over the past decade.
- Affordable Housing remains as an important issue for Scotch Plains. This Reexamination Report and the Master Plan are likely to be updated in coming months as the New Jersey court system announces its final mandates.

### ***Route 22 Corridor Proposals***

- Encourage properties on Route 22 E & W. to bring "cohesiveness" in the facades, so that those who drive through the area from Glenside Avenue to Blue Star Shopping Center will have a sense that that part of Route 22 belongs to the same community-Scotch Plains.
- Seek "Name Brand Businesses" that would bring more business into our community, as well as on Route 22.
- With the State Department of Transportation, investigate the feasibility and available funding to build a pedestrian walkway, or footbridge, near the Bowcraft development with sidewalks from there to the footbridge and sidewalks connecting the development off of Glenside. Currently, people must drive to get to the businesses on the East bound side. The suggested footbridge would enhance safety and potentially to bring more business to the east side of the highway.
- Include in a Route 22 traffic study changes at the Jug handle at Glenside Avenue, to create a better intersection than what is there now. Normal traffic and turning is below standard and at rush hours, the backup on Mountain Avenue in the morning and then Glenside in the evening would benefit.

***Throughout Scotch Plains***

- Staying with the Green Theme, Electric Charging Stations for the anticipated increase in electric vehicles.
- 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.
- Dwelling setbacks be graduated based on the size of the planned building, that is; greater setbacks for larger houses, consistent with goals to preserve the residential density of the town.

**2010 Census – Scotch Plains Township**

As of the 2010 Census, the township's population was 23,510, reflecting an increase of 778 (+3.4%) from the 22,732 counted in the 2000 Census, which had in turn increased by 1,572 (+7.4%) from the 21,160 counted in 1990.

At the 2010 United States Census, there were 23,510 people, 8,595 households, and 6,429 families residing in the township. The population density was 2,606.9 per square mile (1,006.5/km<sup>2</sup>). There were 8,896 housing units at an average density of 986.4 per square mile (380.9/km<sup>2</sup>). The racial makeup of the township was 77.43% (18,203) White, 11.08% (2,605) Black or African American, 0.12% (29) Native American, 7.65% (1,799) Asian, 0.01% (2) Pacific Islander, 1.39% (327) from other races, and 2.32% (545) from two or more races. Hispanics or Latinos of any race were 6.73% (1,582) of the population.<sup>[9]</sup>

There were 8,595 households, of which 37.4% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 62.6% were married couples living together, 9.2% had a female householder with no husband present, and 25.2% were non-families. 21.7% of all households were made up of individuals, and 10.0% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 2.72 and the average family size was 3.20.<sup>[9]</sup>

In the township, 25.9% of the population were under the age of 18, 5.7% from 18 to 24, 24.9% from 25 to 44, 29.3% from 45 to 64, and 14.2% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age was 40.9 years. For every 100 females there were 91.5 males. For every 100 females age 18 and over, there were 88.3 males.

The Census Bureau's 2006–2010 American Community Survey showed that (in 2010 inflation-adjusted dollars) median household income was \$104,873 (with a margin of error of +/- \$6,397) and the median family income was \$126,138 (+/- \$7,410). Males had a median income of \$90,016 (+/- \$11,033) versus \$66,022 (+/- \$5,055) for females. The per capita income for the borough was \$52,488 (+/- \$3,094). About 1.3% of families and 3.0% of the population were below the poverty line, including 2.7% of those under age 18 and 4.7% of those age 65 or over.<sup>[43]</sup>

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Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American\\_Community\\_Survey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Community_Survey)

Updated: 2016-10-25T06:51Z

The American Community Survey (ACS) is an ongoing statistical survey by the U.S. Census Bureau. It regularly gathers information previously contained only in the long form of the decennial census, such as ancestry, educational attainment, income, language proficiency, migration, disability, employment, and housing characteristics. These data are used by many public-sector, private-sector, and not-for-profit stakeholders to allocate funding, track shifting demographics, plan for emergencies, and learn about local communities. Sent to approximately 295,000 addresses monthly (or 3.5 million per year), it is the largest survey after the decennial census that the Census Bureau administers.

Scotch Plains township New Jersey Population Chart

Population (2010 Census)	
• Total	23,510
• Estimate (2015) <sup>[13]</sup>	24,149
• Rank	105th of 566 in state 7th of 21 in county <sup>[14]</sup>
• Density	2,606.9/sq mi (1,006.5/km <sup>2</sup> )
• Density rank	239th of 566 in state 19th of 21 in county <sup>[14]</sup>