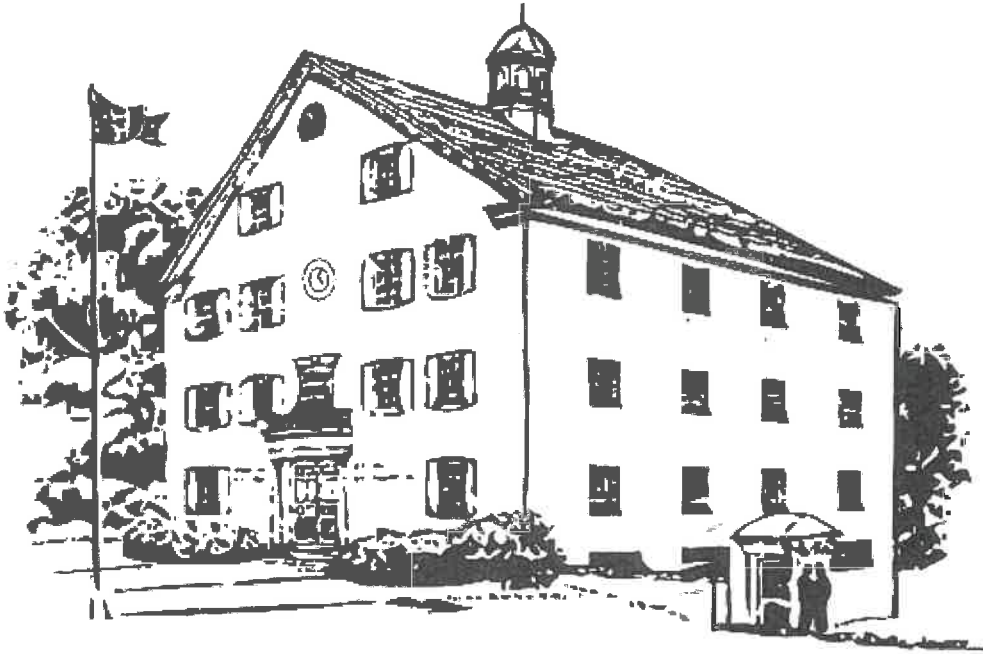


**BOROUGH OF BERNARDSVILLE
2017 MASTER PLAN REEXAMINATION**



Adopted:

December 15, 2016

**Prepared and Adopted by:
BERNARDSVILLE BOROUGH
PLANNING BOARD**

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The following Statutory Reexamination paragraph is addressed herein:

- c. *The extent to which there have been significant changes in the assumptions, policies and objectives forming the basis for the master plan or development regulations as last revised, with particular regard to the density and distribution of population and land uses, housing conditions, circulation, conservation of natural resources, energy conservation, collection, disposition and recycling of designated recyclable materials, and changes in State, county and municipal policies and objectives.*

Changes In State, County and Municipal Policies And Objectives

The New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan and the Borough of Bernardsville

On June 12, 1992, the New Jersey State Planning Commission adopted Communities of Place: The New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan (“SDRP”) which serves as a guide for state, municipal and county master planning. It serves as a guide to State departments and agencies by establishing land use priorities for the allocation of State resources.

Bernardsville has a long standing participatory relationship with the New Jersey State Planning Commission. Bernardsville’s initial participation was to petition the commission for center designation (November, 1998). Centers become designated after the municipalities or counties that encompass them submit development plans to the State Planning Commission, which are subsequently endorsed by the Office of Smart Growth. Bernardsville received its Town Center designation on April 28, 1999 and it is set to expire on December 31, 2018. The Center is the downtown commercial and adjacent residential area. This area roughly corresponds to the public sewer service area of Bernardsville. In addition to participating in the State planning process, center designation gives Bernardsville priority in seeking assistance and resources from State agencies and departments.

The present New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan, March 1, 2001 places all land in the State into distinct planning areas. Three planning areas describe Bernardsville:

- a. Town Center (TN)

Towns are the traditional centers of commerce or government throughout the State. They are relatively freestanding in terms of their economic, social and cultural functions.

Towns reflect a higher level of investment in public facilities and services than their surrounding environs. They provide a core of commercial services to adjacent residents and provide employment in their regions.

The Bernardsville Town Center additionally provides regional commercial/retail sales and service facilities to communities abutting Bernardsville. The Town Center provides a variety of housing choices including multifamily and affordable housing. It is encompassed within the PA2 planning area described below.

b. Suburban Planning Area (PA2)

The Suburban Planning Area is generally located adjacent to the more densely developed Metropolitan Planning Area, but can be distinguished from it by a lack of high intensity Centers, by the availability of developable land, and by a more dispersed and fragmented pattern of predominantly low-density development. Suburban Planning Areas are or will be served by regional infrastructure, except that, outside of Centers and major transportation corridors, there is limited, if any, availability of alternative modes of transportation to the automobile. These Areas have generally been designated for growth in municipal master plans. As development expands, these services will become increasingly available if planned properly.

This designation by the State Plan is not compatible with the Bernardsville Master Plan nor zoning for this area. First, the area in Bernardsville shown as PA2 is fully developed with very little, if any growth potential. Second, the vast majority of this area is not and will not be served by public sewers. As a consequence, contrary to the State Plan, future growth is not planned to be accommodated in this area of Bernardsville. Rather, this area has already reached its growth limit. Planning for this area should address needs for open space, recreation space, and reduction in traffic and improvements in pedestrian circulation. The extensive single family housing character of this area will remain. There are 1,445 acres in PA2 or 17.5% of Bernardsville.

Unfortunately, there is no State planning area designation that more accurately and appropriately describes this section of Bernardsville.

c. Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area (PA5)

The Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area contains large contiguous land areas with valuable ecosystems, geological features and wildlife habitats particularly in the Delaware Bay and other estuary areas, the Highlands region, and coastal area. The future environmental and economic integrity of the state rests in the protection of these irreplaceable resources. Some of these lands have remained somewhat undeveloped or

rural in character. Other areas, particularly New Jersey's coastal barrier islands, have experienced advanced levels of development, but remain highly vulnerable to natural forces. Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas are characterized by watersheds of pristine waters, trout streams and drinking water supply reservoirs; recharge areas for potable water aquifers; habitats of endangered and threatened plant and animal species; coastal and freshwater wetlands; prime forested areas; scenic vistas; and other significant topographical, geological or ecological features, particularly coastal barrier spits and islands. These resources are critically important not only for the residents of these areas, but for all New Jersey citizens.

The PA5 in Bernardsville is identified by the R-1-10 zone and approximately half of the R-5 zone. PA5 is characterized by open space, environmentally sensitive land, larger lot single family, and estate properties. There are 6,586 acres or 79.7% of Bernardsville in PA5.

PA8 consists of land dedicated for public benefit. There are 230 acres or 2.8% of Bernardsville in PA8 belonging to the Federally owned Cross Estate and Cross Estate Gardens, (NJ Brigade) and part of the Morristown National Historic Park in Bernardsville.

The State Office of Smart Growth and Somerset County Planning Board have conducted a "Cross Acceptance III" process regarding a further update and modification to the State's Plan. Bernardsville participated in this process with the objective that no major changes will be made to the State Plan that will affect Bernardsville.

The Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act and the Effect on Bernardsville

The New Jersey State Legislature enacted the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act (HWPPA) on August 10 2004. The Highlands Council approved the final Highlands Regional Master Plan (RMP) in July 2008, which was then ratified via a September 5, 2008 Executive Order by N.J. Governor Jon S. Corzine. In an effort to ensure the integrity of northern New Jersey's drinking water resource, the HWPPA imposes strict land use controls over large parts of the 88-municipality region, known as the Highlands Preservation Area. Lands within the Preservation Area are subject to heightened restrictions on development, water use and activities that affect water quality, or environmentally sensitive lands. Lands in the Highland Planning Area are not subject to the strict land use controls of the Preservation Area. However, municipalities in the Planning Area can choose to conform to the stricter standards. Conformance is voluntary and involves the completion of several planning modules and the preparation of a Conformance Petition submitted to the Highlands Council. Bernardsville is located entirely within the Highlands Planning Area but has chosen not to conform to land use restrictions governing Preservation Areas.

Somerset County

Recognizing that agriculture is a major component of the County economy and that farmland is an irreplaceable natural resource, the Somerset County 2008 *Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan* lays out the long-term goals and provides a framework for the County's efforts in preserving its remaining agricultural lands. The County Agriculture Development Board designated the County's Agricultural Development Area, to identify lands suitable for long-term agricultural sustainability. The northwestern region of Bernardsville is located within the Upper Raritan East Project Area. Nine farms are identified as potentially eligible for preservation are based on the State Agricultural Development Committee's (SADC) Minimum Eligibility Criteria for soils and tillable lands.

The Somerset County Planning Board prepared a series of GIS-based infrastructure, community and environmental asset maps to form a "criteria-based approach" for identifying the County's most suitable areas for preservation and growth. These maps provide a geographic framework for guiding regional and local planning, ensuring that state, county and local policies are leveraged to implement mutually-supported outcomes. More specifically, these maps serve in part to indicate areas where environmental protection, restoration and agriculture are supported through state, regional and local planning and land use policies. The *County Investment Framework* was adopted as an element of the 1987 *County Master Plan* in October 2014, replacing the 1987 *Land Use Management Map*. The *County Investment Framework* provides the foundation for planning initiatives undertaken by the County Planning Board.

The County identifies five investment framework categories. Just over half of Bernardsville (55%) is identified as a Limited Growth Investment Area. These are areas outside sewer service areas where large-scale investments with the potential for additional development or changes to neighborhood characteristics are not desired. 31% of Bernardsville is designated as Priority Preservation Investment Areas. These are areas where agriculture, open space, and the preservation and restoration of environmentally sensitive natural resources are preferred. Ten percent are Local Priority areas. These are areas with distinct town and village centers, some of which have been designated by the State Planning Commission. And a small percentage of Bernardsville (4%) is identified as Alternate Growth Investment Areas. These areas generally consist of residential areas and community-oriented business and service establishments.

Stormwater Management and Permitting Rules of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

The New Jersey State Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) has concluded that changes in land use resulting in an increase in impervious surfaces, runoff, suspended sediment and pollutant loading directly affect the hydrology, geomorphology and water quality

of streams.

Accordingly, on January 5, 2004, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection adopted two (2) sets of stormwater rules to help reduce pollution levels caused by stormwater runoff and help replenish groundwater supplies.

To address these new rules, on March 5, 2005, the Bernardsville Planning Board adopted “Stormwater Management Plan” that implements State requirements. The Bernardsville Plan addresses groundwater recharge, stormwater quantity and stormwater quality impacts by incorporating stormwater design and performance standards for new major development. These standards are intended to minimize the adverse impact of stormwater runoff on water quality and water quantity and the potential loss of groundwater recharge that provides baseflow in receiving water bodies. The Plan describes long-term operation and maintenance measures for existing and future stormwater facilities.

Subsequently, Bernardsville implemented the Plan by the also adopting new stormwater management rules in February, 2006 and later supplementing them in November, 2007.

Density and Distribution of Population and Land Uses, Housing Conditions

**Bernardsville And Somerset County
Population 1960 – 2010**

Year	Bernardsville		Somerset County	
	Number	Percent Change	Number	Percent Change
1960	5,515	-	145,913	-
1970	6,652	+20.6	198,372	+37.8
1980	6,715	+ 2.4	203,129	+2.4
1990	6,597	- 1.8	240,279	+18.3
2000	7,345	+11.3	297,500	+23.8
2010	7,707	+ 4.9	326,207	+9.6

Source: US Census of Population and Housing

Most of the growth in Bernardsville came in two periods. Between 1950-1970 it grew by 2,696, a 60% increase, coincident with the completion of interstate highways. This growth mirrored similar suburban trends in Somerset County and other outer ring communities. Between 1980-1990 Bernardsville lost population (-118 persons). Between 1990-2000 Bernardsville grew modestly by 748 persons or 11.3% to 7,345. Between 2000-2010 the growth rate significantly decreased; Bernardsville gained only 362 persons or 4.9% to 7,707.

As a built-out community, Bernardsville’s population will experience only very modest increases. A recent census estimate places its 2013 population at 7,758; an increase of 51

persons in three years. At this rate, Bernardsville may reach a population of 7,877 (7,707 + 170) by 2020. Given the average household size (2010) of 2.71 persons, this population increase represents only 63 new dwelling units in 10 years. These statistics are reasonable since Bernardsville is a substantially built-out municipality.

A recent population projection published by the Somerset County Planning Board shows a 2014 population of 7,756: a very modest gain of 49 persons in four years. This number is consistent with the above 2013 census number and supports the conclusion Bernardsville will only experience low growth in the future.

**Table 2: Residential Structures By Year Built
In Bernardsville and Somerset County, Pre-1949-2009**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Bernardsville</u>		<u>Somerset County</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Pre-1949	1072	37.6	19,598	-
1950-1959	434	15.2	14,728	12.0
1960-1969	461	16.2	16,565	13.5
1970-1979	183	6.4	13,982	11.4
1980-1989	271	9.5	23,268	18.9
1990-1999	276	9.7	22,468	18.3
2000-2009	151	5.3	12,258	9.9
Total	2,848		122,867	

Source: US Census Bureau

There are distinct differences between Bernardsville and the County. First, most residential structures in Bernardsville were built prior to 1959: 1,506 units or 52.9 percent of total number of units. Contrasted with Somerset County with 28.0 percent built prior to 1959. Second, the rate of residential building in Bernardsville has noticeably declined, whereas growth in Somerset County is still robust. The obvious reason for this decline is that Bernardsville is built-out whereas, the County still has vacant land to accommodate present and future residential development.

Conclusion

Analysis of State, County and Highlands assumptions, policies and objectives show that they are generally compatible with and supportive of the goals and objectives contained in the 2000 comprehensive Master Plan.

Bernardsville, in general is a developed municipality. The Town Center, in particular, is built-out. Growth in the sewer service area is not anticipated nor desired given the scarcity of developable land. Outlying areas are characterized by large lot residential development and