

Amendment to the Master Plan Land Use Plan and Circulation Elements City of Millville, Cumberland County

Interchange Southwest Study

INTRODUCTION

The Planning Board's May 9, 2005 Master Plan for the City of Millville examined and created policy for land use throughout the municipality. Since that time, certain areas of the City have experienced strong development pressure and none more intense than the northern Rt. 47 corridor where it intersects with Rt. 55. This development pressure resulted in the construction of major retail centers, approvals for hotels and proposals for housing. The withdrawal of the major residential proposal and the poor economic climate has presented the opportunity to review the land use policies for this area and refine them as the state emerges from the recession. An amendment is proposed that modifies the land use plan and circulation elements of the Master Plan for this specific study area. The amendment will be the basis for reconsidering the zoning regulations applicable to the property.

The study area of the amendment is limited to the area generally bounded by Rt. 55 on the north, Rt. 47 to the east, Union Lake to the west and Sharp Street to the south. The emphasis of this amendment is on the undeveloped land in this sub-region and its relationship to existing residential, open space, commercial and institutional uses that surround it. This amendment is undertaken pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28 and -89*.

MASTER PLAN GOALS FOR THE INTERCHANGE SOUTHWEST AREA

The study area is identified as a Village Node in the Master Plan. The land use goal for the Village Node is to create a residential development with a wide variety of lot sizes and housing types, associated convenience retail where it was lacking, open space for conservation, active and passive recreation and connections to the arterial/collector street system for adequate circulation. The Village Node is also intended to satisfy much of the demand for new housing in Millville that is not focused on the downtown waterfront to reduce development pressure on agricultural lands. In the study area, the Village Node is viewed as a means of balancing competing land use interests

that includes land preservation, development of new retail sales and services, neighborhood preservation and maintenance of institutional uses. These interests are geographically represented by the Union Lake Wildlife Management Area, the Rt. 55 and Rt. 47 highway interchange, the Woodland Shores and Oakland Estates neighborhoods, bordering the tract to the southwest, and the combined Lakeside Middle School and Lakeside Soccer Complex to the southeast. The City's Land Use Development Regulations ordinance was amended in late 2006 to include a type of planned unit development to implement the Village Node concept.

The specific objective of the residential uses in the Village Node was to create a mixture of housing sizes, types and lots to offer a wider choice of housing to potential residents at differing income levels, which is the historical pattern of development in Millville. The diversity of the housing stock also serves to allow intra-neighborhood moving so residents can maintain their social network while matching their housing needs with their lifestyle. The integration of neighborhood parks aids in reducing vehicular traffic, increases social cohesion, and promotes public health by placing outdoor recreation within reasonable walking distance of each house.

CHANGES IN LAND USE ASSUMPTIONS OF THE INTERCHANGE SOUTHWEST AREA

A Planning Board application called the Union Lake Planned Residential Development was submitted under the PUD option established in the zoning ordinance. This was the first application submitted under the Lakeshore Planned Unit Development option in the City's land development ordinance. In a practical way, the application showed how the regulations of the ordinance would be applied to the land. While the proposed Union Lake PRD had many good features – such as the creation of neighborhood parks and interconnected trail system – ultimately the real extent of development over the tract proved excessive in hindsight and did not meet the City's goal for land preservation. In addition, concern over rising traffic levels due to the completion of nearby major development projects, the economic effects of the NJ Motorsports complex and the desire to create jobs as factory work diminished led to this reexamination of the balance between the level of development, the type of development and City preservation goals in the study area. The applicant's withdrawal of the application in October 2008 in the face of the severe recession created the opportunity to reexamine the land use assumptions in the area.

In addition to the changes in assumptions for the Interchange Southwest Village Node, other trends emerged since 2005 that are described below:

DEVELOPMENT CHANGES IN MILLVILLE SINCE 2005

Since the land use plan was adopted, the New Jersey Motorsports Park opened in the summer of 2008. The track complex was immediately successful. The developer has completed two road courses and a go-kart track with additional phases of work planned. The complex already generates significant demand for lodging, dining, and race support services that will only increase as new phases of the project are completed. This has already had an effect within the interchange study area where two hotels have been approved by the Planning Board. The hotels will also be able to provide lodging for Rt. 55 travelers. In addition to this major development, the Union Lake Shopping Center opened the prior year in the summer of 2007 to create, alongside the existing Lowe's (2006) and Wal-Mart (1972) shopping centers, a commercial shopping area of 1 million square feet. Combined with the Cumberland Mall and its secondary development in Vineland on the north side of the interchange, in excess of 2.5 million square feet of retail space has been created.

ZONING ORDINANCE REVISION

As noted, the demand for more lodging in Millville as the result of the success of the racetrack led to an approval for two hotels northwest of the Lowe's home improvement store on Rt. 47. As one of the conditions of approval, the developer was required to construct a public street from Bluebird Lane, an existing street that parallels Rt. 55, to Union Lake Boulevard. While Union Lake Boulevard presently ends at the rear of the Union Lake Shopping Center, it is slated to be extended westward. In order to accomplish this objective to improve circulation, the Planning Board recommended an expansion of the Interchange Mixed Use (I-2) district to the City Commissioners¹. This area encompassed approximately 87 acres to the rear of Lowe's, and the Acme and Shop Rite grocery stores in the Union Lake Shopping Center. The City Commissioners adopted the ordinance on November 16, 2009.

LARGER ECONOMIC TRENDS AFFECTING THE CITY

During the development of the Master Plan during the latter part of 2004 and early 2005 a very different economic climate was present. The City was faced with unprecedented residential growth pressure that eventually reached a proposed 5,000 housing units. The NJ Motorsports Park was being

¹ - The Planning Board based its recommendations on the study, "Rezoning Report Rt. 47/55 Interchange Area: Phase I Commercial Areas", dated June 25, 2009, prepared by Kimberly Ayres, PhD, PP, AICP, Millville Planning Director.

planned and expansions in the City's industrial parks were anticipated. The Rt. 47 and Rt. 55 Interchange, the subject of this Master Plan amendment, was finally seeing new growth since the interchange was first constructed in 1972. Now, the country has just come through what some economists are calling the 'Great Recession'. While officially the country has emerged from recession, it faces slow growth and slight to no growth in employment for the foreseeable future. For instance, the unemployment rate for the Vineland-Millville-Bridgeton metropolitan statistical area was 5.2% in May 2005 when the Master Plan was adopted. This compared to 3.8% for New Jersey and 5.1% for the nation. In July 2010, on the other hand, the unemployment rate for Vineland-Millville-Bridgeton has skyrocketed to 13.8% compared to 9.7% for both New Jersey and the United States. New jobs in the retail service sector will be created to cater to racing enthusiasts and others if there are appropriate locations to build facilities.

BUDGETARY CONSTRAINTS

Though the Master Plan is not primarily concerned with fiscal matters, its recommendations and policies can have a substantial effect on costs and the revenues available to pay for government. Recent events have affected municipality's ability to have sufficient revenues to run government. In an effort to hold the line on state spending, municipal aid was reduced in the budget passed in June. Further, recent legislation limits budget increases to a 2% cap with few exceptions. Costs to the municipality continue to rise from pension and health insurance premiums, energy increases, and materials. These factors have created an extraordinary fiscal environment in which to provide services to residents and affect the ability to add, for example, new open and recreation land to the municipality. Since this plan recommends the creation of open space with conservation, active and passive recreation components, means will need to be found to address ownership and maintenance.

STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT PLAN/SANITARY SEWER SERVICE

The State Planning Commission has been drafting the third state plan since 2003 when the cross-acceptance process was initiated. In January 2010, the draft final policy maps were released by the Office of Smart Growth², the staff of the Commission. For Millville overall, the new maps mark a significant change from the existing state plan by sharply curtailing new areas designated for development. However, in the study area the change is unremarkable. The draft map merely codifies that the land north of the

² - The function of the Office of Smart Growth is changing and the anticipated new name is the Office of Planning Advocacy. The agency is moving from the NJ Dept. of Community Affairs to the Dept. of State under the Lieutenant Governor.

Wood House³ is now owned by the state. However, what affects the study areas as well as other parts of Millville is the use of the policy maps as regulatory boundaries by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP).

The study area includes three different land use classifications. The Metropolitan Planning Area (PA1) encompasses Woodland Shores, Oakland Estates and the Lakeside Middle School. The Suburban Planning Area (PA2), includes the eastern half of the study area from a north/south line connecting the westernmost development with access to Bluebird Lane to the easternmost extent of Woodland Shores. West of the line, the mapping puts the land into the Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area (PA5). The land is classified as environmentally sensitive because there is a bald eagle nest in the Union Lake Wildlife Management Area. The land itself is remarkably free of environmental constraints.

NJDEP promulgated new water quality management planning rules that became effective in June 2008 that shifted the jurisdiction for planning wastewater services to Cumberland County. In practical terms, the three cities (Millville, Vineland and Bridgeton) that provide wastewater management services are supplying the components to the County who will package them with their own policies for on-site disposal of effluent elsewhere in the more rural parts of Cumberland. The new water quality rules tie the provision for sanitary sewer service areas to the state planning areas. Sewer service areas are intended only for Planning Areas 1 and 2 or in designated centers in the other planning areas. A designated center in this context is a town, village or hamlet. Consequently, once the new plans are put in place, many areas previously in the City's sewer service area will be removed, including the land in the western part of the study area. The date for implementation is April 7, 2011. The withdrawn PRD included considerable parts of the western section.

PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH THE STUDY AREA

The necessity for a new means of diverting traffic away from the Rt. 47 corridor became more obvious after the construction of the Union Lake Shopping Center. Even though the state reconstructed Rt. 47 from the interchange south past the shopping center and the developer built a direct access drive from Sharp Street, congestion and lane weaving is a growing problem. Sharp Street is classified as a major arterial road that links Rt. 47 (Delsea Drive/Second Street) and Rt. 49 (Bridgeton Pike/W. Main Street) and provides one of only three means of crossing the Maurice River in Millville.

³ - The Wood house is the family home of the Wood family who established the Wawa Corporation.

The Union Lake PRD demonstrated the need to review the land uses in the study area and separate the potential development intensities more fully to meet the goals and objectives of the master plan. While the study area has virtually no environmental constraints, its proximity to the Union Lake Wildlife Management Area establishes the need for sensitive use of the western section and low disturbance in a zone along Union Lake. This would also be more consistent with the planning areas established in the existing and proposed State Plan Policy Map

PROPOSED LAND USES IN THE INTERCHANGE SOUTHWEST STUDY AREA

The land use plan for the study area is depicted on the following page. The organizing theme of the plan is for more intensive uses to be located in the northeast quadrant with a focus on meeting regional commercial needs. West of this area is a proposed band of no to low disturbance conservation along the edge of the lake. Potentially, a small beach with a dock for fishing could conceivably be constructed. The extension of Union Lake Boulevard would provide access and serve to separate active from passive recreation. Active recreation would lie to the south and passive recreation to the north of the boulevard extension. The ravine that leads northeast from the lake creates another organizing element where a low impact boutique hotel could be constructed as part of the overall open space or recreational area. The lodging could be specifically designed as an environmental destination or learning center or possibly some type of retreat area in the context of designated open space and passive recreation.

A green belt incorporating the tract's storm water management facilities and mature trees would function to separate Woodland Shores from non-residential development in the study area. Residential uses similar in size and scale to the two neighborhoods are proposed to complete the existing road network on the north side and extend the neighborhood eastward to the Rt. 47 diverter road. Flanking the diverter road as it interconnects with Sharp Street would be professional office uses consistent with the size and scale of the veterinarian's office and compatible with the residential uses in Oakland Estates. Completing the land use plan at the southeast corner of the study area is a proposed use for a school facility and expansion space for the school athletic facilities.

The study land use plan correlates with the land use categories in the Land Use Plan Element of the Master Plan in the following manner:

Land Use Study

SOUTHWEST QUADRANT:

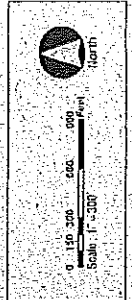
Roughly in terms of land use it works out as follows:

Total acres:	390
Open space/conservation:	210 acres
School	13 acres
Residential expansion	57 acres (roughly 100-125 homes)
Professional office	12 acres
Business park	94 acres**
Historic bldgs	4 acres

** this is our 86 acre Phase 1 which can get reduced down when we draw the actual lines on a real map
These figures relate to the drawing prepared by Brian Slaugh which will be forwarded

Millville
Cumberland County
September 2010

Clarke Cation Hintz
Architectural
Planning
Consulting Architecture



BUSINESS PARK AND REGIONAL COMMERCIAL – This description matches up with the Regional Commercial land use in the Master Plan by continuing the regional focus of the interchange for retail sales and services, entertainment, flex space (combined office and distribution/manufacturing), and lodging

OPEN SPACE, RECREATION AND RESORT – A resort use is not typically considered an open space use, but the intent is that the development would have a very low impervious cover limit of 10-15% of the tract area which would permit the retention of a large percentage of the natural features of the place. Otherwise, this land use in the study is consistent with the Open Space land use category in the Master Plan should it be used for conservation or passive recreation use.

RESIDENTIAL – The intent of the residential uses depicted on the land use plan is to continue the pattern of development of the existing neighborhoods. The two neighborhoods are identified for single family detached residential consistent with the Residential – 2-3 units per acre category of the Master Plan.

PROFESSIONAL OFFICE/ASSISTED LIVING – The Neighborhood Business classification in the 2005 Land Use Plan Element encompasses the concept described in this amendment. For this particular area, however, retail sales and services are not intended because this part of Millville has excellent access to those uses on High Street. Further retail services would be most heavily used on weekends when nearby residents are home. For these reasons, the district should be limited to professional and medical offices as well as suitable residential/medical uses, such as assisted living facilities and comprehensive personal care homes.

SCHOOL FACILITIES – The proposed location for additional school facilities, whether they are labeled for elementary school use or an expansion of the middle school, are an institutional use of the property. The recreational part of the school, which serves both the school and youth soccer, is also included as an ancillary use of the educational facility.

REVISIONS TO THE CIRCULATION ELEMENT

This document also amends the Circulation Element in the Interchange Southwest study area to implement the road system depicted on the Land Use Plan on page 7. The 2005 Circulation Plan depicted generalized improvements for the study areas, but as events have unfolded, a more comprehensive approach has been taken to planning the road system necessary to handle traffic at an acceptable level of service. Improvements for

vehicular circulation have been seriously studied by both the municipality and commercial land owners. The NJ Dept. of Transportation (NJDOT) has been involved because the future ramp system at the interchange is proposed to be reconstructed. As this date, NJDOT supports the concepts being developed by the City. The major change in circulation is the development of a major arterial paralleling Rt. 47. This road would be accessed via an exit ramp that would begin farther away from the interchange than the exit ramp that exists there today. This ramp would allow motorists to either take the new street south to Sharp Street, where there would be a new traffic signal, or out to Rt. 47 via Bluebird Lane. See the Circulation Plan, following page.

Union Lake Boulevard, classified as a major collector, would be extended westward to intersect this new street as well as to provide access to the park proposed in the western half of the study area.

As part of the development approvals for the Union Lake Shopping Center, Sharp Street will be reconstructed where it intersects High Street. Instead of going straight, the road will curve to the right and head due east where it will intersect Rt. 47 farther south at a new signalized intersection.

Internal to the study area, the plan creates a loop street tying Bluebird Lane at its western end into the Union Lake Boulevard extension. The exact location and geometry of the road would be determined in the future when development actually takes place.

With these improvements, the City will have a well-connected street network that will permit traffic circulation without gridlock.

CONCLUSION

This amendment to the Master Plan's Land Use Plan and Circulation Plan Elements is designed to foster a more focused plan for the Interchange Southwest area. It restricts major development to the eastern side of the area, while providing for needed open space consistent with the State Plan. It includes a road plan for the comprehensive development and preservation of the various land uses in the study area and functions as a sub-plan element of the Master Plan.

The next step after the completion of this document is to develop the implementing ordinance embodying the land use concepts into Millville's land development regulations.



MEMORANDUM

Clarke Caton Hintz
Architecture
Planning
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To: Millville Planning Board

From: Brian Slaugh, PP, AICP
Planning Consultant

Re: Reexamination Report Schedule

Date: March 14, 2011

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Following is a proposed schedule for the completion of the reexamination report of the master plan. It is based on the five required components of reexamination reports.

Component of Report	Date to be Supplied
The goals and objectives for land development (or redevelopment) of the last reexamination report or master plan, including any major problems identified in them	April 4, 2011
Analysis of how well the master plan addressed the problems identified.	April 4, 2011
A review of the changes in assumptions and policies since that time. In particular, changes in the assumptions about populations, land use, housing, and other master plan components	April 25, 2011
Based on the analysis, whether or not there needs to be any changes in the municipality's land development policies and regulations	May 2, 2011
Recommendations by the Planning Board on the incorporation of any redevelopment plan into the land use plan element and its implementation through the zoning ordinance or other land development ordinances.	May 2, 2011

John Clarke, FAIA
Philip Caton, FAICP
Carl Hintz, AICP, ASLA
John Hatch, AIA
George Hibbs, AIA
Brian Slaugh, AICP
Michael Sullivan, AICP

This schedule will allow the Planning Board to consider and possibly adopt the reexamination report at its May 9, 2011 meeting. Please note that the reexamination report does not require a public hearing or public notice, but only adoption by resolution. Of course, some boards prefer to take public comment on the reports before adoption.