

**Washington Township Master Plan  
Introduction  
and  
Goals and Objectives  
May 2004**

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**Introduction**

The Township of Washington was incorporated on 17 February 1836 and was named after George Washington, the Nation's first president. Originally a portion of Gloucester County, the Township became a part of Camden County in 1844. However, on 28 February 1871, the Township, once again, and permanently, became a portion of Gloucester County.

The earliest communities in the area were Dilkesboro, which is the present day Bethel Mill Park and South Hurffville, and Chestnut Ridge, which is now known and referred to as Cross-Keys. Dilkesboro was founded in 1699 and Chestnut Ridge was settled in 1715. However, the Township's oldest community is Grenloch Terrace, which was a thriving Lenni-Lenape Indian village called Tetamekon, dating back to at least the 1600's.

**Washington Township Today**

In accordance with the New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law, the purpose of the Washington Township Master Plan is to provide a guide to accomplish a coordinated and harmonious development of the Township. Based upon the analyses of present and future needs, the plan is designed to promote health, safety, and general welfare, as well as efficiency and economy in the land development process, and the maintenance of property values.

Washington Township is a relatively large Township in terms of land area -- approximately 22 square miles ( $\pm$ 14,455 acres), and a population of 47,114 (US Census, 2000). The Township has experienced rapid growth since 1960, when the population was only 4,923 persons. Such growth is not unlike other suburban areas throughout the country that typified a nationwide trend after World War II -- decentralization, improved automobile transportation network (with the implementation of the interstate system), and increased economic means for citizens.

Today, Washington Township is a relatively built-out community with a strong desire to preserve and improve the quality of life that the citizens have come to expect. Endeavors such as the following will further these goals:

- open space protection
- enhanced recreational and cultural opportunities
- redevelopment of existing areas that have declined or that remain static
- the creation of a Town Center to further define a sense of place/a sense of community

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- ❑ economic development that "fits into" the community thus affording residents the opportunity to not only live in Washington Township but work here as well
- ❑ the proposed Greenways Corridor and other safe non-vehicular modes of transportation that allow parents and children alike the opportunity to move about their Township as pedestrians or cyclists
- ❑ improved development/design standards for new construction that relates to and improves the existing/surrounding environment

**Organization of the Master Plan**

The Master Plan has been organized into components, or elements, that specifically describe the various facets and policies for articulating the community's vision. The following Goals and Objectives are outlined according to individual elements.

**Goals of the Township Master Plan**

**Land Use**

1. Smart Growth policies as recommended by the American Planning Association should be incorporated into the Township Ordinance and into the day-to-day planning activities that occur at the Planning and Zoning Board level;
2. Cluster development must be adhered to within the central portion (areas of higher density) of the Township, while lands within the outer ring or less developed areas of the Township (specifically those lands zoned Rural and within the SDRP PA-2 classification) should be further protected from increased development/density;
3. This type of neo-traditional development must be adhered to at all levels of development: residential, commercial, and industrial;
4. The implementation of a township-wide Greenways (pedestrian and bicycle) Corridor Plan that ties the community together in a safe and efficient manner;
5. The creation of a Town Center:
  - Revise the development regulations to encourage village clusters throughout the community. Such village areas should include areas for housing, commercial, and public facilities;

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- Promote walking and pedestrian circulation through design standards that provide regulations for infill development, sidewalk installation, rear-parking for commercial uses, and traffic calming techniques;
6. Identify areas within the Township which are in need of redevelopment as defined by the Local Housing and Redevelopment Law (NJSA 40A:12-A-1 et seq.).

### **Housing**

1. Encourage all future housing development proposals to utilize mix-use developments of neo-traditional design that fully incorporate pedestrian/bicycle links within the development and that connect to the Township-wide system;
2. Enhance and expand the current building and zoning code enforcement program -- provide property maintenance incentives and penalties for both rental and owner occupied housing;
3. Determine neighborhoods that are in need of a local identity;
  - Investigate the use of signage and themed design controls to create local identities for subdivisions and villages which lack a community character;
  - Encourage the use and reference of "Washington Township" rather than zip codes such as Turnersville or Sewell. Initiate discussions with the US Post Office to locate a post office within the Township and to consolidate the zip codes of the area;
4. Continue to provide a variety of affordable housing to meet the present and future housing needs of the community;
5. Through enhanced design/development standards within the Township Zoning Ordinance, support the concept of varied housing designs within new housing developments rather than permitting "cookie-cutter" designs that are replicated throughout individual developments and beyond.

### **Transportation and Circulation**

1. The Township should undertake a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to determine the existing needs/deficiencies. Such study should be completed in conjunction with the Township Police, Public Works, Board

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of Education, Planning and Zoning Boards, Council, and public input (via a Committee);

2. Coordinate efforts of Gloucester County, Township Police, and Public Works to prioritize intersection improvements based upon safety needs;
3. Revise development standards to promote shared access and limited curb cuts along major commercial thoroughfares.
4. Promote alternative modes of transportation including walking, cycling, and transit:
  - Implement the proposed Greenways Corridor Plan and expand upon the Township Sidewalk Implementation Plan to fully connect all residents within the Township;
  - Develop shared parking throughout the Township to discourage the over-development (over-sizing) of parking lots. Township Ordinance revisions are required;
  - Provide multi-modal links between residential neighborhoods and places of employment;
  - Improve pedestrian and bicycle access that will connect neighborhoods, with parks and recreation facilities, places of employment, schools, and other neighborhoods;
  - Require permanent bicycle racks as part of all new development proposals. Additionally, encourage the provision of such racks in recreation and commercial areas and the designation of bicycle routes along Township and County Roads (painted lanes);
  - All development, both residential and commercial (industrial) must provide for sidewalks and bicycle routes;
5. Discourage road-widening projects that will create increased speeds along local roads. Rather, the Township should intently examine the existing signalization and synchronization of the traffic lights;
6. Create a positive identity for the Township by creating inviting gateways at major entry points into the Township.

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**Utilities**

1. Provide adequate sewer and water services to meet the demands of proposed economic development and a growing population, while simultaneously limiting such resources to areas zoned Rural (R) and/or used for agricultural or open space purposes;
2. Create a Stormwater Management Facilities map, township-wide;
3. Create a Township-wide GIS plan that incorporates all utilities within.

**Community Facilities**

1. Expand the range of current municipal services to meet the changing and increasing needs of the population as a whole -- varied ball-fields, picnic areas, water amenities (both visual and functional);
2. Ensure that such facilities are easily accessible via all modes of transportation and are strategically located throughout the Township;
3. Expand the range of current municipal services to meet the increasing needs of an aging population.

**Open Space and Recreation**

1. Provide both passive and active recreational opportunities for all residents that are safe and accessible to meet the needs of the present and future community;
2. Creation of a Plan that identifies parcels of land that should be utilized as Open Space and/or Park & Recreation Space;
3. Utilize the newly implemented Open Space tax for funding the purchase of properties based upon evaluation criteria;
4. Augment the Township Funds with the State of New Jersey Green Acres funding sources;
5. Increase the amount of open space lands required of future developments to 15% (of gross). These lands shall not be inclusive of wetlands or stormwater management basins. Township Ordinance revisions will be required;

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6. Preserve and expand the presence of street trees and green space;
7. Develop a management program for streetscapes (streets, signs, lights, sidewalks, amenities, etc.);
8. Examine the opportunity to create a regional park (sports complex) to meet the growing needs of the area's sports teams. This should, further, be examined as a potential revenue source for the Township and as a means to attract weekend tournaments and associated economic stimuli to the commercial establishments located within Washington Township;
9. Develop recreational policies and facilities which function to support the increasing demand for day-care and after-school recreation programs;
10. Continue to meet the growing senior population's needs and desires by expanding and enhancing the current recreation program.

**Economic Development**

1. Capitalize on the Township's geographic location within the region as an engine for controlled economic growth;
2. Capitalize upon the growing medical needs of the region and the strengths of Kennedy Hospital. The location of such facility is well suited to the development of a Town Center overlay district and the creation of a medical community of mixed uses;
3. Redevelopment Area designation should be examined for Delsea Drive (State Route 47) and the Black Horse Pike (State Route 42). Both corridors are in need of economic assistance and implementation of appropriate Redevelopment Area status would afford the areas the opportunity to improve economically with additional funding resources and associated incentives;
4. Evaluate various commercial centers/strips for the development of Special Improvement Districts (SID) or Business Improvement Districts (BID);
5. Realize the economic opportunity and value of agricultural lands, and associated markets, and promote the preservation of both.

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**Historic Preservation**

1. Increase awareness of the Township's historically significant structures and sites;
2. Promote and preserve the historic character of neighborhoods and buildings that provide a connection to the Township's past;
3. Promote architectural compatibility of new development with the historic and/or agricultural characters of the recognized historic areas in the Township;
4. Examine the possibility of a Local Historic Designation Area, or, at minimum, the designation of individual sites.

**Recycling**

1. Decrease the amount of trash produced by Township residents and businesses through the active promotion of recycling;
2. Increase opportunities for recycling via the creation of additional drop-off locations as necessary;
3. Demonstrate/market recycling and composting methods to citizens of all ages.

**Land Use Ordinance -- General Recommendations**

Maintain/improve the quality of life for the residents of the Township by way of improved Zoning Ordinance standards and Planning practices that reflect the importance of:

- Aesthetics

Architectural character of new construction and rehabilitation and its relation to neighborhood and regional context -- not just "Anywhere USA" type development; design guidelines (architectural and landscape) should be incorporated into the Township Ordinance; a new signage ordinance should be enacted; a tree protection ordinance should be adopted; new parking lot standards that lessen the impact of non-residential uses on adjacent properties is necessary; a wireless communication tower ordinance should be adopted;

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- Environmental Concerns

Preservation of Open Space, not only to protect parklands, etc. but also to provide for adequate aquifer recharge within the Township to protect drinking water supplies; reduction in impervious surface utilization for development (building coverage and parking lot coverage); requirements for stormwater basins to be fully landscaped to provide for runoff cleansing and beautification; a wellhead protection ordinance should be adopted;

- Lifestyle Changes

Creation and implementation of a pedestrian and bicycle circulation plan that accommodates today's active lifestyle and encourages the opportunity for residents to use non-traditional modes of transportation for not only leisure, but work (commute to/from) as well;

- Energy Conservation

By way of expanded pedestrian ways and corridors, the safe movement of residents by means other than automobiles will be facilitated, thus reducing unnecessary energy consumption.