

City of Lambertville Master Plan Re-Examination Report
City of Lambertville, NJ

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Master Plan Re-Examination Report

City of Lambertville, NJ

Adopted by the
Lambertville City Planning Board
on

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City of Lambertville Master Plan Re-Examination Report

Section 1. Introduction

This document was prepared in accordance with the Municipal Land Use Law, *NJSA 40:55D-1 et seq.* A municipal Master Plan is prepared and adopted by the Planning Board and serves as the legal foundation for a community's zoning and land development ordinances. The Master Plan addresses the manner and locations in which development, redevelopment, conservation and preservation occurs within the community. The Master Plan is an important municipal document that provides the basis for all land use policies and related projects. Through its various elements, the Master Plan sets out a comprehensive, long-term vision for the community.

Once a Master Plan has been adopted, the Planning Board is required to "re-examine" it every six years, in accordance with the Municipal Land Use Law, *NJSA 40:55D-89*. The purpose of this review is to determine if the contents of the Master Plan still provide the desirable goals and policies for guiding development in the community. The Re-Examination Report concludes whether the collective Master Plan and development regulations are still current or if revisions or new plan elements are recommended. The five required topics of Reexamination Report are as follow:

- a. The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of the adoption of the last reexamination report.
- b. The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date.
- 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.
- d. 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.
- e. The recommendations 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.40A:12A-1 et al.) 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 Lambertville Master Plan Re-Examination Report addresses each of the above statutory requirements. The Report concludes that the overall goals and objectives of the 1998 Master Plan are still valid and the Plan continues to provide an effective and desirable foundation for the City's land use policies.

The Lambertville Master Plan goals and objectives, as included in the 1998 Land Use Plan Element, are noted below.

1998 Master Plan Goals and Objectives

- 1) Preserve the historic integrity of the City.
- 2) Encourage new public park areas throughout the City for passive and active recreational areas.
- 3) Facilitate access to a variety of housing to meet the income, aesthetic and other personal requirements of the City's present and future population.
- 4) Seek long term solutions to problems of parking and traffic congestion, particularly truck traffic.
- 5) Encourage a greater diversity of personal service retail opportunities in appropriate areas throughout the City and encourage a balance of residential as well as commercial uses in the central business district.
- 6) Promote commercial, light industrial and office uses in appropriate areas throughout the City.
- 7) Preserve and protect environmentally sensitive areas, including but not limited to, flood plains, wetlands, and steep slopes.
- 8) Maintain a healthy balance of land use development and open space in order to protect existing public access and encourage future public access to the river front while preserving its natural assets.
- 9) Encourage the development of a capital improvement plan.
- 10) Encourage tree planting and maintenance of existing trees in order to enhance neighborhood quality.
- 11) Strive to preserve the natural, scenic, historic, aesthetic aspects of the community and its environment
- 12) Promote the development of recreational opportunities for young people.
- 13) Encourage the formation of cooperative agreements with the County or adjoining municipalities for the provision of needed services in the regional area.
- 14) Foster regional planning with adjoining municipalities to achieve common objectives in a complementary - rather than competitive - manner.

- 15) In accordance with the American Disabilities Act (ADA), promote equal access for all people to facilities and structures throughout the City.
- 16) Encourage the development of community design goals so that new development is compatible with the surrounding character of buildings, streetscape and structures, and the preservation of property values.
- 17) Adopt State recycling goals as City goals for recycling.

Section 2. Major Problems and Objectives from the 2001 Reexamination Report and Extent of Changes

A. 2001 Planning Issues and Problems

The 2001 Lambertville Master Plan Re-Examination Report identified land use planning issues and problems that were current at the time of the Report. Those issues and problems and their current status are summarized below:

Senior Citizen Housing Options

The 1995 and 2001 Re-Examination Reports identified the need to provide more senior housing opportunities in the City. This had particularly become an issue with the high price of housing not only in the City, but also throughout the County and State. Since that time, Heritage Village, a project of 87 age-restricted rental apartments, was approved in 2003 and is located on Route 518 near the West Amwell Township municipal border. In 2006, the City revised its ECHO Housing ordinance to permit ECHO units as accessory uses in the R-1 and R-L zoning districts, rather than conditional uses. ECHO is an acronym for Elder Cottage Housing Opportunities. Although affordable housing for senior citizens continues to remain a challenge in the City, this issue has largely been resolved.

Hillside Zoning

Prior to the 2001 Re-Examination Report, the Planning Board adopted a Master Plan amendment that recommended lowering the density of the planned development zoning tracts on the City's hillsides. The purpose of the rezoning was to address the City's concerns regarding soil erosion, tree and forest removal, water quality and neighborhood character. The zoning change was implemented, creating the Residential Low Density zone. Subsequent to the re-zoning, two of the three owners of the largest re-zoned parcels filed suit against the City in protest against the lower density. Although the litigation was still pending at the time of the 2001 Re-Examination Report, the Report reiterated the importance of the lower density to protect the issues previously cited. The Report also recommended the creation of overlay districts for each of the tracts of land affected by the litigation.

Since the time of the 2001 Report, the City adopted a master plan amendment and zoning ordinance that created the two overlay districts. One of the tracts has since been developed as townhouses and is known as “Lambert’s Hill”.

Community Facilities

The 2001 Re-examination Report identified the need for several new and improved community facilities. First, the Report indicated that the City Hall did not have the capacity to accommodate the various functions of the municipal government. This issue was addressed in 2004 with the renovation of the former Acme supermarket on South Union Street into a Justice Complex with a municipal courtroom and meeting space. Then, in 2007, the City Hall on York Street was renovated to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Currently, an elevator is planned for the building and extensive historic renovations are underway utilizing a grant from the NJ Historic Trust.

The 2001 Report also suggested the need for a community facility for youth and/or senior citizen activities. Since that time, a new playground has been constructed at Ely Field and a new pocket park was developed in Connaught Hill. Additionally, the recreational facilities at Cavallo Park have been improved. The youth or senior center recommend in the 2001 Report has not yet been addressed. While a youth and/or senior center is still a laudable project, the City’s current budgetary constraints render capital projects such as these to a much longer timeframe. Therefore, this is no longer considered to be a current issue.

City Design Guidelines

The Planning Board adopted a Community Design Plan sub-element in its 1998 Master Plan. The 2001 Re-Examination Report suggested that the City adopt new land development regulations to implement the Community Design Plan. In 2002, the City adopted design guidelines for the historic district and, in 2005, the City was awarded a grant from the NJ Office of Smart Growth for the preparation of a complete new set of guidelines for all of the City’s districts. The latter is expected to be adopted in 2009.

Land Use Ordinances

The 2001 Report identified the need for the City to update its administrative land use ordinances. Several of the City’s land use ordinances are dated from the early 1970’s and reference outdated legislation. These ordinances should be updated to reflect the current Municipal Land Use Law and other legislative requirements. This issue remains a concern.

Retail Development and Parking

The demand for downtown commercial store space and the high cost of renting space has resulted in the internal subdivision of larger stores. The 2001 Report suggested that the City monitor this trend closely. If the subdivision of store space leads to a type of co-operative building where there is a host of tenants renting spaces, it could have a significant impact on parking. On the other hand, the majority of tourists visit the City as a destination in itself. The fact that there are more stores within a certain area may not significantly increase the number of tourists, but, rather, provide for a more diverse and, perhaps, more pleasurable shopping

experience. Since the 2001 Report, the internal division of commercial space has been minimal and there have been no discernable parking problems that relate specifically to that issue.

Tourism

The 2001 Report discussed the costs and benefits of tourism. The greatest cost of tourism is the resulting traffic and parking congestion; however, tourism also provides local jobs, promotes investments in local businesses and fosters unique and interesting shops in the City. This issue of balancing the economic benefits of tourism with the needs of City residents is an ongoing challenge. A related topic on tourism and marketing is discussed later in this report.

Traffic and Parking

Traffic and parking congestion, particularly in the lowlands of the City, was identified as a major problem in the 2001 Report. The supply of parking continues to be limited in both residential and commercial districts. The City has investigated all areas of potential parking within the City limits, including the idea of remote lots for shuttling tourists. While this idea has since been implemented for special events, like the Shad Festival, it does not address the parking problem during non-event, seasonal days.

In addition to tourist traffic, the 2001 Report discussed the impact of heavy truck traffic on the City, primarily from deliveries to and from the rock quarries along the Route 29 corridor. During that year, the State issued a permanent truck restriction on trucks exceeding 13 tons on Route 29 from its intersection with I-95 to its northern terminus at Route 12. This restriction effectively addresses heavy trucks that would drive through the City, however it does not address the large trucks that serve local businesses on Route 29, such as the quarries located just north and south of the City's border.

B. 2001 Planning and Zoning Recommendations and Objectives

Master Plan Elements

The 2001 Report recommended that the Planning Board prepare and adopt three master plan elements: a Historic Preservation Element, Circulation Element and Housing Plan Element.

The Historic Preservation Element was adopted shortly after the 2001 Report and recommended the establishment of a local historic district using the same boundaries as the Central Business District. In June 2002, the City Council adopted an ordinance creating the local historic district and established a Historic Commission to review development applications within the district. New design guidelines for the historic district were also prepared and adopted by the City Council. The City has completed this task.

The Planning Board has not formally updated its circulation plan element. However, in 2003, a traffic calming plan was prepared for the City and addresses many of the local traffic and multi-modal circulation issues. The traffic calming plan includes recommended streetscape and roadway improvements to reduce vehicular speed and provide safer modes of travel for pedestrians and cyclists. The construction of these improvements is nearly complete.

The City Planning Board adopted a housing plan element in 2005 and then again in 2008 to respond to new and revised state (COAH) regulations. These plans were submitted to the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) with a petition requesting substantive certification. As of the date of this Report, the 2008 Housing Plan was still under review by COAH.

Redevelopment Plan

The 2001 Report recommended that the Planning Board pursue more opportunities for redevelopment in the City, especially for the Connaught Hill area. The procedures for the preparation of a redevelopment plan in New Jersey are governed by *N.J.S.A. 55:19-20 et al.* Just after the adoption of the 2001 Report, the City initiated these procedures for Connaught Hill by preparing and adopting a report on the “Area in Need of Redevelopment”. The City Council then designated a section of Connaught Hill as a Redevelopment Area and in September 2002, adopted a Redevelopment Plan for that section. A total of nine new houses and two rehabilitated houses are complete or pending completion in this redevelopment area. This program does not use eminent domain to displace property owners.

In April 2003, the City expanded the Connaught Hill redevelopment area to include the former Lambertville High School site and several surrounding vacant parcels. An Area in Need of Redevelopment report was prepared and adopted by the Planning Board. A redevelopment plan for the expanded portion of this area has not yet been prepared due to several issues. The cost of extending public water to the high school site is a significant hurdle for its redevelopment. Also, the rear portion of the expanded area on Connaught Hill was a former municipal and private landfill. Extensive site studies and potential clean-up must be undertaken before the land can be legally cleared for development. The expense of site remediation is a major impediment to its (re)development.

The 2001 Report also identified two potential areas for redevelopment in the lowlands of the City: the lot behind the former Ben Franklin store (now CVS) that fronts on North Union Street at Cherry Street, and the former Acme market on South Union Street, which was then vacant. The Acme market has since been redeveloped as the City’s Justice Center. The site behind the CVS has since received Planning Board approval for the development of six duplex homes.

Section 3. Relevant Changes in Assumptions, Policies & Objectives at the Local, County and State Levels

Since the 2001 Re-Examination Report and 1998 Land Use Plan, new legislation, local initiatives and government programs have modified the land use context from which current and future planning decisions are made. Yet in spite of these changes, the Lambertville 1998 Land Use Plan element and accompanying master plan elements still provide a sufficient foundation and desirable direction for guiding future growth. A summary of the new legislation, initiatives and programs is reviewed below.

A. Regional and State Legislation and Planning Programs

Hunterdon County Growth Management Plan

In December 2007, the Hunterdon County Planning Board adopted a growth management plan that provides a vision for the County through the year 2020. The growth management plan was the product of nearly five years of public input and visioning. The overriding themes of the growth management plan include the need to preserve the county's remaining agricultural landscape; the importance of locating future development in centers or areas near existing infrastructure; and the desire to establish an extensive network of public open spaces, farmland and protected natural resources. Recognizing that additional growth will continue to occur in the County, the plan offers guidance as to how future development should occur given the County's unique, ecologically-sensitive landscape. The plan offers municipalities a variety of tools, techniques and recommendations for municipalities to implement the County vision.

State Plan Cross Acceptance Process

From 2004 through 2007, the City participated with Hunterdon County in the State Plan Cross Acceptance process. Lambertville is located in the County's Planning Region 6, which also includes West Amwell Township, East Amwell Township, Delaware Township, and Stockton Borough. The 2004 Preliminary (State Plan) Map includes the entire City of Lambertville within Planning Area 4B, the Rural Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area. No Planning Area changes were ultimately recommended in the County's Cross Acceptance Report. However, Lambertville joined with West Amwell and East Amwell, as well as municipalities in Mercer and Somerset Counties in recommending that the Sourland Mountains be designated as a Special Resource Area (SRA).

Lambertville also joined other municipalities in supporting the designation of the Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River watershed as an SRA. Joining with Delaware Township, Kingwood Township, Holland Township, West Amwell Township, and Frenchtown Borough, the City called for State recognition of the River's watershed, a federally recognized asset.

Throughout the state planning process, local officials have also contemplated making the City a designated center for the purposes of securing increased funding for infrastructure improvements. The City has not yet applied for center designation.

COAH Third Round Regulations and Housing Plan

(Lambertville's compliance with the Fair Housing Act and the rules and regulations of the Council on Affordable Housing Act are discussed in the master plan section of this Report.)

Alexauken Creek Category One (C-1) Designation

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) designated the Alexauken Creek as a Category One (C-1) waterway in July 2004. The primary reason for this designation is the Creek's connection to the federal scenic river designation of the Delaware River, its value as a habitat for threatened and endangered fish and bird species, and the relatively undeveloped nature of its watershed. Swan Creek was also nominated for C-1 status; however, the City requested that the designation terminate at the City line. In turn, the City has instituted its own 75 foot stream buffer, which it believes is a better solution given the densely developed nature of the areas adjacent to Swan Creek.

NJDEP Stormwater Management Requirements

The NJDEP published two sets of new stormwater rules in the early part of 2004. The first set of regulations is the Phase II New Jersey Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Stormwater Regulation Program Rules (N.J.A.C. 7:14A), which addresses the reduction of pollutants associated with existing stormwater runoff. The second set of regulations, known as the Stormwater Management Rules (N.J.A.C. 7:8), sets forth the required components of regional and municipal stormwater management plans and establishes the stormwater management design and performance standards for new (proposed) development. Together the two sets of rules are intended to establish a comprehensive framework for addressing water quality impacts associated with existing and future stormwater discharges.

In 2005, Lambertville was the first municipality in the County to prepare and adopt a Municipal Stormwater Management Plan (MSWMP). The City also adopted an enforcement ordinance and mitigation plan. The goals of the MSWMP include reducing flood damage, minimizing increases in stormwater runoff from new development, reducing soil erosion, assuring the adequacy of culverts and bridges, maintaining groundwater recharge, preventing an increase in non-point source pollution, maintaining the integrity of stream channels, minimizing pollutants in stormwater runoff, and protecting public safety through proper design and operation of stormwater basins.

B. City of Lambertville – Local Issues and Initiatives

Regional Traffic Increases

The past couple decades of growth in central New Jersey, but particularly in Hunterdon and Mercer counties, fostered a marked increase in traffic traveling through the City of Lambertville. The Route 29 corridor carries commuter traffic from residences north of Lambertville to employment centers due south, including the City of Trenton and the Route 1 corridor. Many of these commuters are also traveling from nearby Bucks County, Pennsylvania, a desirable place of residence due to its lower taxes, rural character and greater housing supply. The result of this regional development has been a significant increase in traffic on Route 29, a major north-south connection that travels through the City of Lambertville.

Redevelopment Opportunities

In the late 1990's, several large, former industrial properties in the City were redeveloped. The Old Trenton Cracker factory was transformed into offices, a micro-brewery and a fitness center. The Lambertville House was rehabilitated and reopened as a small hotel. The Diamond Silver factory was renovated for offices. And, in a combination of rehabilitation and new construction, the Riverwalk complex was developed for office uses. These projects helped to create a larger, local office market that has been one of the City's master plan goals. There are additional redevelopment opportunities in the City, although most of these will be residential development, some of which has already begun.

In 2003, the City adopted a Redevelopment Plan for Connaught Hill. The Plan identifies various ways to improve the Connaught Hill neighborhood, as authorized by New Jersey redevelopment laws. To date, nine houses have been constructed or contracted for construction in the redevelopment area. Of these nine houses, four were constructed with the assistance of the Habitat for Humanity program. The City also is working to

clear the legal title of properties in the area to free up land for sale and redevelopment. Lambertville's rehabilitation program is also available to homeowners and two homes in the redevelopment area have been upgraded in accordance with this program. The Lambertville redevelopment will not displace any resident or property owner.

The former Lambertville High School on Washington Street sits on top of the bluff on Connaught Hill above Rt. 179 and has been vacant since a fire destroyed much of the building 15 years ago. This area was adopted by the Planning Board as an "Area in Need of Redevelopment" in 2003. A redevelopment plan for the High School site has been delayed as a result of the site's severe development constraints, including poor access, the lack of public water and a former landfill site nearby.

Gateways and Scenic Byways

Route 29 is the only federally designated Scenic Byway in New Jersey. The program originates from the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and its successor, the Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). Both of these programs encourage the designation of scenic byways by state transportation departments. In turn, money is earmarked for enhancing the scenic corridor. Such enhancements might include billboard and scenic easement purchases, establishing gateways to a community, the removal of overhead utility lines and similar beautification and preservation projects. Since most of Lambertville is on the National and State Registers of Historic Places, these enhancements would have to be compatible with the City's historic character.

In addition to the Scenic Byway, Lambertville includes a portion of a designated Scenic River. The (Lower) Delaware River, which forms the western boundary of Lambertville, was accepted by Congress as a Scenic River in 2000 and signed into law by President Clinton as part of the national Wild and Scenic River system. The Scenic River designation may create opportunities for future recreation and scenic enhancements and both designations may provide funding for desirable enhancements to the City and its immediately surrounding environs.

Route 29 Improvements

Since the last Re-Examination Report in 2001, Lambertville local officials have been working closely with the NJ Department of Transportation to improve the safety of pedestrian crossings on Route 29. Several residents have been struck by vehicles, resulting in serious injuries and one fatality. In response to the City's request, NJDOT agreed in 2008 to install a pedestrian traffic light at the intersection of Swan Street and Route 165. The installation of the light is scheduled for 2009.

Traffic Calming Plan and Implementation

In 2003, the City undertook an extensive traffic calming study that examined traffic and pedestrian conditions throughout Lambertville. The goals of the plan include reconnecting the city, increasing access and safety for pedestrians, providing on-street parking, reducing motor-vehicle speeds and improving streetscape aesthetics. The plan features various traffic-calming measures in a context-sensitive design and targets the downtown area for improvements, as well as the intersections surrounding the elementary school. The implementation of the plan is almost complete. In 2007, curb bump-outs and streets were installed throughout the lowlands of the

City. Then in 2009, with funding assistance from the Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission, curb bump-outs, street trees, new benches and decorative street lighting were installed downtown.

Delaware River and Stream Flooding

In September 2004, April 2005, and then again in June 2006, the City was affected by three significant flood events. While a major cause of the flooding is associated with water flows from New York reservoirs or ice dams outside of the City's direct control, a significant amount of damage occurred when the Delaware River backed up into Swan and Alexauken Creeks. To minimize future flooding and property damage, the City is studying two critical areas - the Swan Creek and Ely Creek watersheds. These projects are summarized below.

Swan Creek Flood Control

In 2006, the City of Lambertville entered into an agreement with the Natural Resources and Conservation Service (US Department of Agriculture) to study the feasibility of an engineering solution to the Delaware River back-flooding into Swan Creek that impacts neighboring homeowners and businesses. The study developed five structural and non-structural alternatives to alleviate this type of flooding and recommended further study of the financial and environmental costs and benefits associated with each option. To the extent the City can address causes of flooding within its control, it is committed to doing so through the protection of the surrounding hillsides, construction of mitigation measures, and the continued study of ways to reduce property damage to residents and business owners. Lambertville is now seeking grants to help subsidize the cost of the recommended improvements and further studies.

Ely Creek Flood Control

In 2005 and 2006, the flooding of the Delaware River resulted in the backflow of Ely Creek, causing considerable damage to residential and commercial buildings in the northern section of the City. The storm sewers that discharge to Ely Creek backflow and surcharge to North Union and Arnett Avenue. Additionally, the Delaware River causes flooding of the Alexauken Creek, which backflows to the same Ely Creek lowland area through storm sewers. The result has been the flooding of 29 residences and five commercial structures and the temporary closure of North Union Street and Arnett Avenue.

In 2007, the City contracted with consultant Princeton Hydro to study the flooding problem and offer specific suggestions for mitigation. Princeton Hydro's recommendations included a flood gate to be installed on an existing headwall on Ely Creek and a second backflow device to be installed on an existing storm sewer to prevent the backup of the Alexauken Creek. The slide gate would be installed on the Niece Lumber property, 2 Elm Street, and the backflow device will be installed on the CVS Property, 299 North Main Street. The City has accepted these recommendations and submitted grant applications to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) to help fund the cost of the improvements. A first application to FEMA was denied based on FEMA's Benefit-Cost analysis. As of the date of this report, the City is reapplying to FEMA for funding. This project area is located on North Union Street bounded by Arnett Avenue and Cherry Street.

Sustainability

Over the last few years, Lambertville has been developing new planning strategies to foster green and sustainable projects. In 2008, the Mayor signed the Climate Protection Pact from the US Conference of Mayors, committing Lambertville to making greener choices in all facets of its operations. One of those projects, a city-wide system of single-stream recycling, was adopted in 2008. The single-stream recycling will make it easier for residents to recycle, thereby reducing trash output, the cost of collection, and the need for landfill space.

Another Lambertville green project is an alternative energy program sponsored by the City. In 2008, Lambertville initiated efforts to bring solar power to the City and surrounding communities. The City helped form the South Hunterdon Renewable Energy Cooperative to pool municipal resources for implementing alternative energy strategies. Thus far, members of the cooperative include South Hunterdon Regional High School, West Amwell Township, West Amwell Public School and the Lambertville Municipal Authority, in addition to the City of Lambertville and the Lambertville Public School. The first project for the cooperative will be to attract solar power investors to install a solar power system on top of public schools and municipally-owned land and buildings. The investor would sell the electricity at a set rate to the school district and/or municipality and the excess electricity would be sold at a higher rate back into the power grid.

The City's Environmental Commission is working closely with the Mayor and Council to identify and implement other "green" programs.

Open Space and Parks

Lambertville continues to preserve and protect open space in the City when land and funding is available. Since the 2001 Re-Examination Report, 16 acres of land behind the public school were preserved and an additional 6 acres are pending preservation. The City has also developed a new pocket park in the redevelopment area of Connaught Hill, called Arnett Park. And the Environmental Commission is working closely with the NJ Trails Association on a system of hiking trails throughout the City and to nearby destinations. Some of the trails have since been constructed by Eagle Scout and resident, Wyatt Brady.

Downtown Marketing and Tourism

The economy of the Lambertville downtown district is critical to the fiscal health of the community. As a community of fine arts and antiques, the downtown merchants rely heavily upon the tourist industry. Recently, Lambertville officials have been contemplating the creation of a local tourism board to bring together representatives of the governing body, the business community and residents to develop and implement a comprehensive marketing strategy. The City is also researching possible revenue sources to cover the cost of future marketing programs.

Limited Growth Potential

The combination of land development and open space preservation since 2001 has resulted in a significant reduction in lands available for development in the City. Future growth will occur on a much smaller scale than it has in the past. The larger, vacant tracts of land have now been almost fully developed and the

underutilized former industrial buildings have been redeveloped. The majority of future growth will therefore occur as infill development throughout the community.

C. Local Master Plans and Ordinances

Historic Preservation Plan and Ordinances

The Planning Board adopted a Historic Preservation Plan element in 2001. The Historic Preservation Plan was one of the recommended master plan elements identified in the 1995 Re-Examination Report. The Plan builds on earlier documentation that led to the establishment of major portions of the City being listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. The Plan provides a list of recommended preservation projects and tasks, with the most significant being the recommendation of a new local historic district using the boundaries of the Central Business District.

In 2002, as a direct result of the Historic Preservation Plan, the City adopted a local historic district ordinance using the Central Business District boundaries recommended in the master plan. Concurrently, a Historic Preservation Commission was created to review development proposals and design guidelines were prepared and adopted to guide development within the district.

2008 Housing Plan Element and Fair Share Plan

In 2005, the Lambertville Planning Board and City Council adopted a Housing Plan Element and Fair Share plan in accordance with the third round regulations of the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH). These plans and a petition for substantive certification were submitted to the Council on Affordable Housing on December 20, 2005. However, due to extensive litigation of the affordable housing rules and the later invalidation of sections of the rules, COAH did not review any plans under the original third round regulations. The newly revised Third Round COAH regulations were adopted in 2008, and the City revised its Housing Plan and Fair Share Plan in compliance with the new regulations. On December 31, 2008, the City submitted the 2008 plans and petition for substantive certification to COAH. The petition was declared complete in February, 2009. The City hopes to receive substantive certification by the end of 2009.

Stormwater Management Plan and Ordinance

In March 2005, the Lambertville's Stormwater Committee adopted a Stormwater Management Plan that provided a strategy to address stormwater runoff impacts within the City, which, due to the steep hillsides in its eastern half, are substantial. The plan outlined specific stormwater design and performance standards for new development and redevelopment. Additionally, the plan proposed stormwater management controls to address impacts from existing development. Preventative and corrective maintenance strategies were included in the plan to ensure long-term effectiveness of stormwater management facilities. The plan also outlined safety standards for stormwater infrastructure to protect public safety.

As a result of the recommendations of the Stormwater Committee, the City adopted a stormwater ordinance in April 2006. This ordinance established minimum stormwater management requirements and controls for major development with the goal being to reduce the amount of non-point source pollution entering surface and

ground waters. The City was the first municipality in the State to adopt a stormwater ordinance to enforce the stormwater provisions and a set of mitigation measures.

ECHO Housing Ordinance

In August 2006, Lambertville revised its Elder Cottage Housing Opportunity (ECHO) ordinance to permit ECHO dwelling units as accessory uses in the R-1 and R-L zoning districts instead of conditional uses. ECHO units are an important option for providing affordable, senior citizen housing. By permitting these structures as accessory uses, rather than conditional uses, the application process will be easier for landowners.

Environmental Resource Inventory

The Lambertville Environmental Commission updated the City's Environmental Resource Inventory (ERI) in 2007. The Lambertville ERI is a comprehensive study of natural resources in the City, using both text and maps to convey the information. The document is a useful, unbiased tool for Board, Commissions and land developers in the evaluation of land development proposals and related planning projects. The ERI was adopted by the City Planning Board as a supplemental document to the City master plan in 2008.

Lambertville City Design Guidelines

Through a grant from the New Jersey Office of Smart Growth, Lambertville has nearly completed the preparation of new design guidelines for both new construction and the renovation of existing structures in the City. The guidelines seek to preserve the integrity of Lambertville's diverse neighborhoods and ensure that infill development is compatible with the historic character of the City. The guidelines will replace the existing design guidelines for the downtown, historic and commercial districts and include new guidelines for the residential districts. The new design guidelines are expected to be adopted in 2009.

4. Recommendations for Future Planning Policies and Considerations

Based upon the analysis of land use problems and opportunities identified in this Report, the Planning Board has identified the following recommendations for future consideration:

a. Affordable Housing

The City should continue to seek substantive certification from the NJ Council on Affordable Housing for its affordable housing plan.

b. Investigate New Redevelopment Opportunities

As a densely developed and built-out community, Lambertville should continue to investigate redevelopment opportunities both within the downtown core area and on the hillsides. The City should continue to investigate options for the redevelopment of the former High School site and adopt a redevelopment plan to guide the transformation of that parcel into a productive use.

c. Citywide and Historic District Design Guidelines

The pending citywide and historic district design guidelines are intended to assist local officials, property owners and developers in the design and evaluation of new development, alterations and re-construction. Once adopted, the City should monitor the efficacy of these guidelines and make any amendments or revisions it deems necessary to improve their effectiveness.

d. Update and Consolidate/Codify Land Development Ordinance

The city's administrative land use ordinances should be updated to reflect the current enabling legislation and legislative requirements. All land development ordinances should then be consolidated into a single document for ease of publication and codification.

e. Flood Control

The City should continue to address flood control through a combination of physical improvements and regulatory measures. The municipality should investigate the need for zoning changes and changes to the subdivision and site plan ordinances to facilitate flood prevention within flood prone areas.

f. Steep Slope Ordinance Revision

The protection of the City's steep slopes are important for the safety and welfare of the community. Deviations from the existing steep slope ordinance (§519) are currently permitted as exceptions from the Planning Board or Board of Adjustment. As infill development has increased on the hillsides, the importance of adherence to these provisions has become more apparent. It is recommended that the Steep Slope Ordinance be moved from the subdivision and site plan ordinance to a zoning ordinance so that any future deviations become a variance application rather than a design exception. The latter requires a stricter set of legal proofs that must be provided by the applicant. In addition, the ordinance should be reviewed and evaluated for its effectiveness in accomplishing the ordinance's purpose and overall goals.

g. City Traffic Calming Plan

The City should continue to implement Lambertville's Traffic Calming Plan to promote a safe and attractive environment for pedestrians, cyclists and traveling vehicles.

h. Landscaping Ordinance

The City's landscaping ordinance should be reviewed for its overall effectiveness in implementing the master plan goals and objectives. In particular, consideration should be given to tree removal, tree replanting and additional landscaping requirements for subdivision applications.

i. Sustainability Master Plan Element

With the assistance of the Lambertville Environmental Commission, a new Sustainability Master Plan Element should be prepared to encourage and promote the efficient use of natural resources and the installation and usage of renewable energy systems in the City.

j. Center Designation

The City should pursue an application to the Office of Smart Growth for center designation, pursuant to the New Jersey State Plan.

k. Route 29 Scenic By-Way Designation

The City should consider pursuing grants and scenic/recreational opportunities to promote and enhance the Route 29 Scenic By-Way.

l. State and National Historic District

The City should continue to support and promote its listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

Section 5. Redevelopment Opportunities

Connaught Hill

The City adopted the Connaught Hill Redevelopment Plan in September 2002 (revised in November 2002). A key component of the Plan was to create a Residential Overlay District (Residential Option 3 Overlay Redevelopment District) that allows for development at a higher density while requiring a building product that preserves and enhances the existing neighborhood character. However, a developer may only take advantage of the increased density, including an allowance for attached, single-family housing, if public water and sewer are available. Although public sewer was extended to the area, the provision of public water has proved problematic. The City investigated the feasibility of placing a tank on the hill or in West Amwell Township, but neither United Water nor the Township was receptive.

Former Lambertville High School Site and Surrounding Properties

The Lambertville High School Site and several surrounding properties were included in an Area of Need of Redevelopment in 2003. No redevelopment plans have yet been adopted. The provision of public water and site access remain challenges to the successful redevelopment of the site. The City should continue to investigate redevelopment options for the site and adopt a redevelopment plan for this area.