



MASTER PLAN  
REEXAMINATION REPORT  
BOROUGH OF NEPTUNE CITY

PREPARED FOR:  
BOROUGH OF NEPTUNE CITY PLANNING BOARD

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**BEACON PLANNING AND CONSULTING SERVICES, L.L.C.**

COLTS TOWNE PLAZA, SUITE 207  
41 STATE HIGHWAY 34 SOUTH  
COLTS NECK, NJ 07722

TEL. (732) 845-8103  
FAX (732) 845-8104

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**BOROUGH OF NEPTUNE CITY, NEW JERSEY**

The original copy of this report was signed and sealed on in accordance with N.J.S.A. 45: 14A-12.

Victor Furmanec, P.P., A.I.C.P.  
Professional Planner #5180

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Overview

This Master Plan Reexamination Report is part of the Borough's continuing comprehensive planning efforts initiated more than 50 years ago with the adoption its first development ordinances. The Borough has adopted a number of master plan reports and documents since then, each designed to guide the future development of the community.

This 2005 Reexamination Report represents a continuing effort on the part of the Borough to ensure its planning policies and land use goals and objectives remain current and up-to-date. This document does not radically depart from the policies set forth in the previous master plan, although this report enumerates a more detailed and definitive set of goals and policy statements regarding the Borough's future growth and development. It also offers modifications to the Borough Land Use Plan, zoning ordinance and subdivision and site plan regulations, where changes are warranted, as well as provide information regarding changes in the demographics of the community.

This report recognizes that Neptune City is an attractive, developed community. Its largely developed character necessitates a planning response which should focus on reaffirming the community's established character, and identifying those areas warranting refinement to ensure the community's planning properly identifies and addresses its needs.

The Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) requires every municipality in New Jersey to re-examine its Master Plan and development regulations at least once every six years to ensure periodic review of information and changing conditions in order to keep municipal planning efforts current. The Borough adopted its current comprehensive Master Plan on August 10, 1999.

The MLUL sets forth that the reexamination report must address five specific issues, which are as follows:

- a. Major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of the adoption of the last Master Plan;

- 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 use, housing conditions, circulation, conservation of natural features, energy conservation, collection, disposition and recycling of designated recyclable materials, and changes in State, County and municipal policies and objectives;
- d. Specific changes recommended for the Master Plan or development regulations, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether a new plan or regulation should be prepared;
- e. Recommendations of the Land Use Board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans adopted pursuant to the "Local Redevelopment and Housing Law," 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.

This reexamination of the 1999 Master Plan and Land Use Plan has been prepared to meet the statutory requirements specified in the MLUL. It is designed to update that document and ensure that the Borough's planning efforts remain current and consistent with the applicable statutory criteria. The first section of this report enumerates the various problems faced by the Borough at the time of the preparation of the 1999 Plan, and enumerates the various objectives which were set forth in that document. The second section identifies the manner in which these problems and objectives have been addressed. The following section identifies significant changes in State and local governmental policies which influence the Borough's land use policies, and the extent of change which has taken place in the community. Following a review with the subcommittee, a subsequent document will be submitted which identifies recommendations pertaining to the various planning and zoning issues which are identified herein.

## **1.2 Legal Requirement for Planning**

The Municipal Land Use Law establishes the legal requirements and criteria for the preparation of a master plan and reexamination report. The Land Use Board is responsible for the

preparation of the master plan and subsequent reexaminations. The Board is required to prepare a review of the plan at least once every six years.

The MLUL identifies the required contents of a master plan and the master plan reexamination. The reexamination provisions are set forth above. The statute requires that a master plan include a statement of goals, objectives, and policies upon which the proposals for the physical, economic and social development of the municipality are based. The plan must include a land use element which takes into account physical features, identify the existing and proposed location, extent and intensity of development for residential and non-residential purposes, and state the relationship of the plan to any proposed zone plan and zoning ordinance. The MLUL also requires municipalities to prepare a housing plan and recycling plan, and additionally identifies a number of other plan elements such as circulation, recreation, community facilities, historic preservation and similar elements, which may be incorporated into a comprehensive master plan document.

The master plan gives the community the legal basis to control development in the municipality. This is accomplished through the adoption of development ordinances which are designed to implement the recommendations of the master plan.



## 2.0 PROBLEMS AND OBJECTIVES AT TIME OF ADOPTION OF 1999 MASTER PLAN

The MLUL requires a Reexamination Report to identify the major land use problems and planning objectives that were enumerated in the most recently adopted master plan. The following is noted with respect to Neptune City's 1999 Master Plan.

### 2.1 Problems Identified in the 1999 Master Plan

#### *Maintaining Existing Residential and Commercial Areas*

The prevailing distribution of uses in Neptune City maintains a relatively uniform land use arrangement with limited intrusions of non-residential development in residential neighborhoods. It would be appropriate for the Borough to encourage the continuation of this established pattern and reaffirm it through the master plan. The plan should reflect the need to reinforce appropriate distribution of land uses, and also reinforce the delineation of boundaries through buffers, landscape elements, fencing, etc., that serve to separate residential and non-residential uses. The Borough should also address the issue of land use compatibility by clearly defining the extent and intensity to which development may occur in these areas in an effort to minimize any intrusions of incompatible uses or intensities of use.

A related area of concern regards the future use and development of the Borough's industrial lands. The Borough should seek to promote only that type of development that is compatible with the limitations posed by their proximity to neighboring residential neighborhoods. This issue should be pursued within the framework of ordinances that reaffirm the protection of the Borough's residential neighborhoods.

#### *Addressing the Borough's Affordable Housing Obligation*

The Borough of Neptune City contains a broad and varied housing stock consisting of detached single-family dwellings, two-family residences, and multi-family residential units. Approximately 56 percent of the nearly 2,342 occupied dwelling units in the Borough are owner-

occupied and 39 percent are renter-occupied. This data reflects the community's broad diversity of housing.

Neptune City Housing Element indicates that the Borough's total obligation from prior rounds consisted of 33 units, which comprised its new construction obligation. Neptune City has a zero rehabilitation obligation from prior rounds.

The Borough has indicated that it intends to satisfy its rehabilitation component through a contract with the Monmouth County Community Development Department, which administers a rehabilitation program that includes affordability controls and monitoring of the rehabilitated components. The Borough's 2003 housing plan anticipates that the new construction obligation will be met through the redevelopment of the industrial district located along Steiner Avenue. Alternatively, the Borough may meet part of this 33-unit obligation through an RCA agreement.

The Borough is currently updating its housing plan in accordance with COAH's Third Round Regulations. The plan will update the manner in which the Borough intends to meet its prior round obligations, as well as its growth share obligation, which is based on development occurring in the Borough subsequent to January 1, 2004.

#### *Controlling the Use and Design of the Industrial District*

The 1999 Master Plan found a need to control the use and design of industrial properties in the Steiner Avenue industrial area. This area historically provided substantial employment opportunities for Borough residents. However, as industrial location requirements have changed over time, the area became less attractive for industrial establishments and the number of jobs dwindled. Current industrial operations in this area offer few jobs, and include establishments that are incompatible with and substantially impact the quality of life in adjacent residential neighborhoods.

In August of 2005, the Borough acted to designate the largely industrial area along Steiner Avenue as an "area in need of redevelopment." However, several property owners within this

area have appealed the Borough's action, thus staying any substantial actions on the part of the Borough until this legal action is settled.

In the interim, the Borough is cautiously proceeding with its review of alternative development scenarios for this area. These scenarios include the provision of single-family attached residences, age-restricted dwellings, mixed commercial and attached residences along Steiner Avenue, and a business "park" into which some existing businesses can be relocated.

*Protection and Acquisition of Riverfront Areas for Beneficial Use of Residents*

The Shark River water basin forms much of the Borough's southern boundary. However, Borough residents are afforded limited access to this environmental and recreational asset. Such access can be enhanced through a policy that seeks the acquisition of property and easements that would advance a policy seeking such access.

*Industrial Uses between Steiner Avenue and Memorial Drive*

A mixed land use arrangement consisting of industrial, commercial and residential activity characterizes the industrial area between Steiner Avenue and Memorial Drive. The Borough's planning efforts should be directed to assessing the existing development pattern of this area and to establish a clear policy to direct the future growth and development of this area in a manner that will serve the interests of the community and eliminate incompatible land use arrangements.

*Visual Appearance of the Borough, particularly along Route 35*

A mixed land use arrangement comprises much of the Borough Route 35 corridor. Many of these uses are characterized by parking within required front yards, excessive signage, and lack of adequate property maintenance. It is anticipated that this undesirable condition will be addressed through the adoption of updated sign regulations, which will control the size, number and appearance of signage along Route 35, as well as other commercial districts in the Borough. The Borough's sign regulations may be amended from time to time, as needed, to further address the impact of signs on the Borough's streetscapes.

The 1999 Master Plan also identified parking in required front yards as an aesthetic issue of concern. There are two primary means to address this issue. The first is to require site plan approval for any new use of a non-residential development. This serves as a means to address existing nonconforming site layouts. The second is to monitor commercial properties to ensure that any new parking lots or any enlargement of an existing parking lot conforms to the setback requirements of the Borough zoning regulations.

With respect to property maintenance, it is apparent that the Borough's staff has limited ability to conduct inspections of properties with respect to property maintenance issues, and thus enforcement will likely continue to rely on complaints or chance observations. The use of a digital camera can serve as an aid in documenting changes in the development and maintenance of properties over time.

## **2.2 Master Plan Objectives and Goals**

The Borough of Neptune City Master Plan proposals for the physical, social and economic development of the community are predicated upon the following general objectives, goals and policies:

### Objectives:

The Master Plan is predicated on the following general objectives:

1. To encourage municipal actions which will guide the long-range appropriate use and development of the lands within the Borough of Neptune City in a manner which promotes the public health, safety, morals and general welfare of present and future residents.
2. To provide safety from fire, flood, panics and other natural and man made disasters.
3. To provide adequate light, air and open space.
4. To ensure that development with the Borough does not conflict with the development and general welfare of neighboring municipalities, the County, the Region and the State as a whole.

5. To promote the establishment of appropriate population densities in locations that will contribute to the well being of persons, neighborhoods and preservation of the environment.
6. To encourage the appropriate and efficient expenditure of public funds by coordinating public and private development within a framework of land use and development guidelines, principals and policies.
7. To provide sufficient area in appropriate locations within the Borough for residential, business, office, and public and quasi-public uses in a manner which will provide for balanced growth and development.
8. To encourage the location and design of transportation and circulation routes which will promote the free flow of traffic in appropriate locations while discouraging roadways in areas which would result in congestion, blight or depreciate property values.
9. To promote a desirable visual environment through creative development techniques which respect the environmental qualities and constraints of the Borough and of particular sites therein.
10. To promote the conservation of open space and valuable natural resources and prevent degradation of the environment through improper use of land.
11. To encourage the preservation and restoration of historical buildings and sites within the Borough to maintain the heritage of Neptune City for enjoyment by future generations.
12. To encourage coordination of the numerous public and private regulations and activities which influence land development towards a goal of producing efficient uses of land with appropriate development types and scales.
13. To encourage the practicable recovery and recycling of municipal solid waste through the use of planning practices designed to incorporate the State Recycling Program and to complement Monmouth County and existing Borough recycling programs.
14. To encourage the construction of senior citizen and age-restricted housing in order to address the growing demand for this type of housing in the Borough.

Principles:

The Neptune City Master Plan is based on several principles concerning land development, as follows:

1. Encouraging residential development in location and at densities which are compatible with existing development patterns and consistent with Borough standards. Any new development should be properly serviced by public roads, utilities, and services.
2. Locating public, commercial, service and office uses at sites and in locations which are suitable for their use environmentally, economically, and geographically. While promoting economic stability, care should be taken to keep new uses compatible with existing uses, public facilities, roadways, and natural features.
3. Protection of natural and environmental resources, including floodplains, wetlands and areas suitable for public and quasi-public uses.
4. Encouraging a development pattern which will protect and enhance the long term economic, social and welfare interests of present and future residents of the Borough.

Assumptions:

The Neptune City Master Plan is based on the following set of assumptions:

1. That there will be no catastrophic disruption of the existing physical and/or cultural development of the Borough. Being in a coastal area, the Borough is subject to potential damage from hurricanes and periodic flooding.
2. That Neptune City will be able to guide its growth in accordance with the Municipal Land Use Law, and will have major input into any proposed County, Regional, State and/or Federal development plans that may affect the Borough or its immediate environs.
3. Future growth that has the potential to occur will not exceed the capacity of the Borough to provide essential community facilities, utilities and/or services.

Policies:

The Neptune City Master Plan is based on the following set of policies, which have been developed by the Borough Land Use Board and other land development review agencies:

1. Planning will include a variety of residential and non-residential uses that will encourage continuation of an enhancement of the Borough of Neptune City as a quality suburban residential community and as a commercial, employment and recreation center for eastern Monmouth County.
2. To protect and enhance the environmental quality of the Borough.

3. To encourage commercial, office, recreational and service development within the Borough which will provide employment for residents and contribute to a balanced economic and ratable base for the Borough.
4. To enhance and increase public access to the Shark River water basin for the purpose of enhancing active and passive recreational opportunities in the Borough.
5. To encourage a transition of existing industrial properties to commercial and residential uses, which will serve to minimize impacts due to the juxtaposition of incongruous land uses.

### 3.0 EXTENT OF CHANGE REGARDING PROBLEMS AND OBJECTIVES

Pursuant to the MLUL statutory provisions, this section of the report examines the extent to which the aforementioned problems and objectives listed in the 1999 Plan have been addressed. The analysis finds that many of the problems, as well as the objectives, have been partially addressed, while others remain relatively static.

#### 3.1 Manner in Which Problems Have Been Addressed

##### *Maintaining Existing Residential and Commercial Areas*

Neptune City has not experienced a substantial amount of development in either its residential or commercial areas. The Borough should monitor applications for building construction to ensure that such development remains compatible and consistent with existing development.

##### *Affordable Housing Obligation*

Neptune City adopted a Housing Element and Fair Share Plan on December 7, 2005. These documents demonstrate the Borough's intent to comply with the procedural and substantive rules governing each municipality's obligation to address its affordable housing obligation.

##### *Controlling the Use and Design of the Steiner Avenue Industrial District*

In August, 2005, the Borough acted to designate the Steiner Avenue industrial area as an area in need of redevelopment. In part this was based on the stagnant condition of land in the area and the impact of industrial uses located proximate to residential neighborhoods. It is the intent of the Borough to redevelop this area in a manner that is compatible with its predominantly residential character with minimal impacts to existing municipal services and facilities.

##### *Protection and Acquisition of Riverfront Areas for Beneficial Use of Residents*

There have not been any substantial changes in waterfront access since the adoption of the 1999 Master Plan.



*Visual Appearance of the Borough, particularly along Routes 33 and 35, and Sylvania Avenue*

The Route 33 and 35 corridors, as well as commercial properties along Sylvania Avenue, have not seen any significant changes in their appearance since the adoption of the 1999 Master Plan. There is a general need to improve the condition and appearance of the commercial properties along these roadways. The Borough should consider addressing this issue through the implementation of an aggressive property maintenance initiative aimed, in part, at removing structures and signs that are not properly maintained. The program can also include a façade improvement program, with incentives such as low interest loans and tax abatement. A strict program of zoning enforcement should be considered to control new signage in these commercial areas, as well as other commercial properties in Neptune City.

**3.2 Manner in Which Goals Have Been Addressed**

One of the municipality's goals, to provide a variety of housing types, densities, and a balanced housing supply, has been partially addressed. The goal has been partially addressed due to the fact that the Borough prepared and adopted a housing plan. Although the housing plan has not yet been certified by COAH, the Borough has been successful in providing a variety of housing types within the municipality.

To support the overall philosophy of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP) as a means of promoting growth management on a statewide basis while retaining the principles of home rule. The municipality has been active in the cross-acceptance process as the Office of State Planning prepares the second SDRP.

#### 4.0 EXTENT CHANGES IN ASSUMPTIONS, POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

There are a number of changes at the state and local level which require the Borough's attention that were not contemplated at the time of the preparation of the 1999 master plan. The State has adopted new land use policies and the Borough has experienced modest changes resulting from growth and development that are noteworthy.

##### 4.1 Changes at the Local Level

###### *Population Size*

The 1990 census indicated that the Borough had a population of 4,997 residents. The 2000 Census indicates the Borough had a population of 5,218 and the latest estimate from the State of New Jersey indicates the municipality's population at 5,196 residents. Table 1 below presents the change in population growth in Neptune City from 1920 through 2000. As can be seen from this table, the Borough experienced its most significant growth in the two decades between 1950 and 1970

Table 1  
Historic Population Trends: 1920 – 2004  
Neptune City, New Jersey

| Year | Population | Population Change | Percent Change |
|------|------------|-------------------|----------------|
| 1920 | 539        | ---               | ---            |
| 1930 | 2,258      | 1,719             | 318.9          |
| 1940 | 2,392      | 134               | 5.9            |
| 1950 | 3,073      | 681               | 28.5           |
| 1960 | 4,013      | 940               | 30.6           |
| 1970 | 5,502      | 1,489             | 37.1           |
| 1980 | 5,276      | -226              | -4.1           |
| 1990 | 4,997      | -279              | -5.3           |
| 2000 | 5,218      | 221               | 4.4            |

Source: U.S. Census of Population

*Birth Statistics*

The number of births is important in assessing future needs for community facilities and services, particularly with respect to the school system and recreational facilities. As shown in Table 2, between 1989 and 2002 there were a total of 901 births. Statistics representing the number of deaths in the Borough are not available because deaths are not reported for a municipality if the number is less than five in a given year.

**Table 2**  
**Births and Deaths: 1989 - 2002**  
**Neptune City, New Jersey**

| Year         | Births     |
|--------------|------------|
| 1989         | 74         |
| 1990         | 67         |
| 1991         | 55         |
| 1992         | 77         |
| 1993         | 88         |
| 1994         | 65         |
| 1995         | 71         |
| 1996         | 63         |
| 1997         | 72         |
| 1998         | 50         |
| 1999         | 64         |
| 2000         | 54         |
| 2001         | 61         |
| 2002         | 49         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>910</b> |

Source: NJ Department of Health, New Jersey Health Statistics

*Age Characteristics*

The age characteristics of the Borough's population are presented in Table 3. Data from the 1990 and 2000 census indicates that the Borough's population is getting older, with the median age increasing slightly from 38.0 years of age in 1990 to 39.8 years in 2000. This is slightly older than the median age in Monmouth County of 37.7 years. The increase in median age is directly attributable to the aging "baby boomer" generation and the increasing life expectancy rates of individuals 65 years of age and older.

**Table 3**  
**Age Distribution: 1990 And 2000**  
**Neptune City, New Jersey**

| Age Group    | Population 1990 | Percent of Total | Population 2000 | Percent of Total |
|--------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| under 5      | 301             | 6.0              | 304             | 5.8              |
| 5-19         | 750             | 15.0             | 904             | 17.0             |
| 20-24        | 305             | 6.1              | 254             | 4.9              |
| 25-34        | 912             | 18.0             | 734             | 14.0             |
| 35-44        | 779             | 16.0             | 918             | 18.0             |
| 45-54        | 479             | 9.6              | 816             | 16.0             |
| 55-64        | 479             | 9.6              | 434             | 8.3              |
| 65+          | 992             | 20.0             | 854             | 16.0             |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>4,997</b>    | <b>100.3</b>     | <b>5,218</b>    | <b>100.0</b>     |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 & 2000, Characteristics of the Population.

#### *Household Size*

The Borough's household size has declined marginally over the past decade, from 2.30 persons in 1990 to 2.29 persons per household in 2000. This decline is consistent with county, state and national trends. Similar declines in household size have been registered in most municipalities in Monmouth County.

**Table 4**  
**Average Household Size: 1990 And 2000**  
**Neptune City, New Jersey**

| Year | Population | Number Of Households | Household Size: Neptune City | Household Size: Monmouth County |
|------|------------|----------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1990 | 4,997      | 2,298                | 2.30                         | 197,570                         |
| 2000 | 5,218      | 2,342                | 2.29                         | 224,236                         |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1970-2000

#### *Income Characteristics*

Table 5 below provides data for household income, by income category, as reported in the 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census. The median household income in Neptune City in 1990 was \$32,843. By 2000, the median household income had increased to \$43,451. This income level was lower

than that of Monmouth County as a whole. For Monmouth County the median household income was \$45,912 in 1990 and \$64,271 in 2000.

**Table 5**  
**Household Income: 1989 And 1999**  
**Neptune City, New Jersey**

| Income Category         | 1989          |              | 1999          |              |
|-------------------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
|                         | Number        | Percent      | Number        | Percent      |
| Less than \$10,000      | 235           | 10.9         | 146           | 6.6          |
| \$10,000 to \$14,999    | 138           | 6.4          | 125           | 5.6          |
| \$15,000 to \$24,999    | 391           | 18.2         | 266           | 12.0         |
| \$25,000 to \$34,999    | 407           | 19.0         | 285           | 12.8         |
| \$35,000 to \$49,999    | 494           | 23.0         | 551           | 24.8         |
| \$50,000 to \$74,999    | 412           | 19.2         | 413           | 18.6         |
| \$75,000 to \$99,999*   | 40            | 1.9          | 208           | 8.9          |
| \$100,000 to \$149,999  | 16            | 0.7          | 197           | 9.4          |
| \$150,000 or more       | 14            | 0.7          | 31            | 1.4          |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>2,147</b>  | <b>100.0</b> | <b>2,222</b>  | <b>100.1</b> |
| <b>Median Household</b> | <b>32,843</b> |              | <b>43,451</b> |              |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Housing and Population Characteristics.

### *Housing Characteristics*

This section provides a brief overview of the characteristics of Neptune City housing stock. A more comprehensive analysis is contained in the Borough's 1997 Housing Background Data Report, wherein detailed information is provided regarding the number of year-round and seasonal units, housing age, housing conditions, purchase or rental value, occupancy characteristics and type, number of units affordable to low and moderate income households, and substandard housing units capable of being rehabilitated. Some of the key housing indicators and their implications regarding land use planning in the borough are highlighted below.

The 2000 U.S. Census indicated there were a total of 2,342 housing units in the Borough, including 121 vacant units, representing a 5 percent vacancy rate. Only 39 percent of the housing stock was rental.

**Table 6**  
**Year Round Housing Units**  
**Tenure and Occupancy Status, 2000**  
**Neptune City, New Jersey**

| Category        | Number Of<br>Units | Percent      |
|-----------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Owner Occupied  | 1,312              | 56%          |
| Renter Occupied | 909                | 39%          |
| Vacant Units    | 121                | 5%           |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>2,342</b>       | <b>100.0</b> |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000.

Table 7 indicates the age of the Borough's housing stock. The housing stock is relatively old. The data reveals that most of the housing units were constructed between 1940 and 1960. Less than 11 percent of the units were constructed after 1970. The greatest number of units was constructed in the 1940's when over one-third of the Borough's current housing stock was built.

**Table 7**  
**Year Structure Built For All Housing Units: 2000**  
**Neptune City, New Jersey**

| Year Constructed   | Number       | Percent      |
|--------------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1999 to March 2000 | 0            | 0            |
| 1985 to 1988       | 62           | 2.6          |
| 1980 to 1984       | 97           | 4.1          |
| 1970 to 1979       | 96           | 4.1          |
| 1960 to 1969       | 297          | 12.7         |
| 1950 to 1959       | 586          | 25.0         |
| 1940 to 1949       | 899          | 38.4         |
| 1939 or earlier    | 305          | 13.0         |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>2,342</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Selected Housing Characteristics, 2000.

Most of the Borough's housing is single-family detached dwellings. There are a total of 1,332 single-family detached dwellings, or 56.9 percent of all housing in the community. Two-family dwelling units account for only 49 units, or 2.0 percent of all housing.

**Table 8**  
**Units in Structure: 2000**  
**Neptune City, New Jersey**

| Units In Structure      | Number       | Percent      |
|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Single Family, Detached | 1,332        | 56.9         |
| Single Family, Attached | 111          | 4.7          |
| 2 Family                | 48           | 2.0          |
| 3 or 4 Family           | 133          | 5.7          |
| Multi-Family            | 641          | 27.4         |
| Mobile Home             | 77           | 3.3          |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>2,342</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Selected Housing Characteristics, 2000.

### *Housing Values*

Housing values have increased in Neptune City and throughout the state between 1990 and 2000.

Shown in the following two tables (Tables 9 and 10) are the renter-occupied contract rents and the owner-occupied housing values from 1990 and 2000. The median contract rent in 2000 of \$705 was a 17.3 percent increase from the average contract rent of \$601 in 1990. Monmouth County's median contract rent for 2000 was \$687.

Similarly, housing values of owner-occupied units decreased slightly from 1990 to 2000. The median value of such housing was \$124,000 in 2000, a slight decrease from the 1990 median value of \$124,200. The median value of homes in Neptune City in 2000 was 31.3% percent less than the county average of \$180,400.

**Table 9**  
**Specified Renter-occupied Housing Units: 1990 And 2000**  
**Neptune City, New Jersey**

| Rent: 1990         | Units (#/%)        | Rent: 2000         | Units (#/%)        |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Less than \$200    | 53 / 5.9           | Less than \$200    | 51 / 5.6           |
| \$200 to \$299     | 30 / 3.3           | \$200 to \$299     | 33 / 3.7           |
| \$300 to \$499     | 69 / 7.7           | \$300 to \$499     | 31 / 3.4           |
| \$500 to \$749     | 685 / 76.0         | \$500 to \$749     | 459 / 50.8         |
| \$750 to \$999     | 39 / 4.3           | \$750 to \$999     | 273 / 30.2         |
| \$1,000 or more    | 3 / 0.3            | \$1,000 or more    | 48 / 5.3           |
| No cash rent       | 20 / 2.)           | No cash rent       | 9 / 1.0            |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>899 / 100.0</b> | <b>Total</b>       | <b>904 / 100.0</b> |
| <b>Median Rent</b> | <b>\$601</b>       | <b>Median Rent</b> | <b>\$705</b>       |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Housing and Population Characteristics, 1990 & 2000.

**Table 10**  
**Value of Specified Owner-Occupied Housing Units: 1990 and 2000**  
**Neptune City, New Jersey**

| 1990                   |                       | 2000                   |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Value Range            | Units (%)             | Value Range            | Units (%)             |
| Less than \$50,000     | 27 (2.6)              | Less than \$50,000     | 0 (0.0)               |
| \$50,000 to \$99,999   | 209 (20.5)            | \$50,000 to \$99,999   | 207 (17.4)            |
| \$100,000 to \$149,999 | 580 (56.8)            | \$100,000 to \$149,999 | 709 (59.6)            |
| \$150,000 to \$199,999 | 165 (16.2)            | \$150,000 to \$199,999 | 224 (18.8)            |
| \$200,000 to \$299,999 | 32 (3.1)              | \$200,000 to \$299,999 | 42 (3.5)              |
| \$300,000 to \$499,999 | 8 (1.0)               | \$300,000 to \$499,999 | 8 (0.7)               |
| \$500,000 to \$999,999 | 0 (0.0)               | \$500,000 to \$999,999 | 0 (0.0)               |
| \$1,000,000 or more    | 0 (0.0)               | \$1,000,000 or more    | 0 (0.0)               |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>1,021 (100.0%)</b> | <b>Total</b>           | <b>1,190 (100.0%)</b> |
| <b>Median Value</b>    | <b>\$124,200</b>      | <b>Median Value</b>    | <b>\$124,100</b>      |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

### *Resident Employment Characteristics*

Employment characteristics and occupational patterns of employed Neptune City residents over the age of 16 did not change significantly between 1990 and 2000. In 2000, as reported in the



U.S. Census, 2,233 residents were in the work force. 57 percent of these residents were concentrated in 4 industries: educational, health and social services (23.1%), retail trade (14.5%), manufacturing (9.3%), and construction (9.2%). By occupation, approximately 27 percent of the work force was in the managerial and professional occupations category; when combined with the category of sales and office occupations categories, these two occupations accounted for nearly 54 percent of the workforce.

**Table 11**  
**Employment by Occupation: 1990 and 2000**  
**Neptune City, NJ**

| 1990                           |                      | 2000                           |                      |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Occupation                     | Number / %           | Occupation                     | Number / %           |
| Managerial/Professional        | 597 / (22.9          | Managerial/Professional        | 690 / 27.2           |
| Technical/Administrative/Sales | 879 / 33.8           | Technical/Administrative/Sales | 675 / 26.6           |
| Service                        | 380 / 14.6           | Service                        | 436 / 17.2           |
| Farming/Forestry/Fishing       | 11 / 0.4             | Farming/Forestry/Fishing       | 7 / 0.3              |
| Production/Craft/Repair        | 335 / 12.9           | Production/Craft/Repair        | 359 / 14.2           |
| Operator/Fabricator/Laborer    | 401 / 15.4           | Operator/Fabricator/Laborer    | 366 / 14.4           |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>2,603 / 100.0</b> | <b>Total</b>                   | <b>2,533 / 100.0</b> |

Table 12 reflects the place of employment of residents. The data shows 80 percent worked in Monmouth County, 16 percent worked elsewhere in the state and 4 percent worked out of state. The average commute time of workers was slightly more than one-half hour.

**Table 12**  
**Workers 16 Years or Older by Place of Employment: 2000**  
**Neptune City, New Jersey**

| Place Of Employment               | Neptune City |              | Monmouth County |              |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
|                                   | #            | %            | #               | %            |
| Monmouth County                   | 2,005        | 80.2         | 175,070         | 60.0         |
| Home                              | 31           | 1.2          | 7,654           | 2.6          |
| New Jersey                        | 400          | 16.0         | 116,868         | 40.0         |
| Other States                      | 94           | 3.8          |                 |              |
| <b>Total Workers</b>              | <b>2,499</b> | <b>100.0</b> | <b>291,938</b>  | <b>100.0</b> |
| <b>Mean Travel Time (Minutes)</b> | <b>24.8</b>  |              | <b>34.8</b>     |              |

Source: Monmouth County Planning Board; Census 2000.

*Recent Development Activity*

Table 13 provides data on the amount of residential development which has occurred in the Borough over the past 13 years. The data reveals that all 49 residential building permits which were issued were for single-family dwellings. Over the last decade there has been an average increase of 4 units per year.

**Table 13**  
**Residential Building Permits Issued: 1990 - 2003**  
**Neptune City, New Jersey**

| Year         | Single Family | Multifamily | Total     |
|--------------|---------------|-------------|-----------|
| 1990         | 1             | 0           | 1         |
| 1991         | 3             | 0           | 3         |
| 1992         | 0             | 0           | 0         |
| 1993         | 5             | 0           | 5         |
| 1994         | 3             | 0           | 3         |
| 1995         | 3             | 0           | 3         |
| 1996         | 3             | 0           | 3         |
| 1997         | 1             | 0           | 1         |
| 1998         | 3             | 0           | 3         |
| 1999         | 3             | 0           | 3         |
| 2000         | 5             | 0           | 5         |
| 2001         | 1             | 0           | 1         |
| 2002         | 10            | 0           | 10        |
| 2003         | 8             | 0           | 8         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>49</b>     | <b>0</b>    | <b>49</b> |

Source: New Jersey Residential Building Permits, New Jersey Department of Labor; 1990-2003

*Nonconforming Residential Lots*

A large number of residential lots located throughout Neptune City have a nonconforming lot area, or do not conform to one or more applicable bulk standards. As a result, many improvements contemplated by residential property owners necessitate applying to the Land Use Board for variances. While changing the bulk standards would serve to reduce the number of

such applications, it would eliminate the ability to consider the potential impacts on neighboring properties afforded by the development application review process. This is critical in view of the nearly completely developed character of the Borough. As a result, no changes to the Borough's current residential bulk standards are recommended.

#### *Vacant Residential Lots*

A small number of vacant residential lots remain in scattered location through Neptune City. A review of the Borough's tax records indicates there are approximately 25 vacant residential lots, of which 9 are used in conjunction with an adjacent residential property. The development of these properties would not be anticipated to have any substantial impacts on either municipal or school services or facilities. As a result, no changes to the Land Use element of the Borough's residential zoning standards are recommended.

#### *Flood Mapping*

It has become apparent that the current mapping of flood zones in the Borough includes inaccuracies in the manner in which some properties are identified on flood maps. However, the Borough is not currently in a position to bear the cost of the study necessary to amend such mapping. The Borough should identify grants that would enable it to retain the professional services necessary to accomplish this task.

#### *Hotels and motels*

It is the Borough's experience that these two particular land uses are not compatible with adjacent residential uses. Further, in view of the fact that all commercial properties are located in close proximity to residential properties, leaving minimal opportunity for the substantial buffering and screening that would otherwise be required. Thus, it shall be the policy of the Borough to discourage any new development of hotels and motels in Neptune City.

### *Adult uses*

Because adult uses, when left unregulated, have the potential to substantially impact schools, houses of worship, and residential neighborhoods, the Borough should consider adopting zoning regulations that provide for a reasonable opportunity for such uses only in such locations that would not impact the quality of life within the Neptune City. These locations are those that provide a distance of 1,000 feet or two blocks, whichever is greater, between any school, house of worship, or residence, and any use defined in such ordinance as a regulated adult use.

### *Tattoo parlors*

Because these uses, when left unregulated, pose a potential danger to the public health, it is the stated policy of the Borough of Neptune City to provide zoning regulations that provide for the reasonable opportunity for such use in locations deemed suitable. These locations shall include properties within the Highway Commercial zoning district that have frontage on Route 33. All building openings, entries, windows, etc., for tattoo parlors shall be covered or screened in such a manner as to prevent a view into the interior from any street or adjacent property. Only one sign shall be permitted bearing the name of the tattoo parlor and the hours of business.

## **2.2 Changes at the State Level**

### *The State Development and Redevelopment Plan*

The main objective of the SDRP is to guide future development and redevelopment to ensure the most efficient use of existing infrastructure systems, and to maintain the capacities of infrastructure, environment, natural resources, fiscal, economic and other systems. Toward this end, the Plan divides the State into five different categories Planning Areas that are regional in scale. Generally, the Plan attempts to curb development in rural areas and in those parts of the State where development has only recently begun, encourage new development along transportation corridors, in older cities and in suburbs that have the necessary infrastructure to accommodate it, and concentrate development in rural areas around selected centers. Planning and zoning decisions remain the providence of the municipality. The State utilizes the SDRP as

a guide in determining the distribution of funds for infrastructure improvements, and within that framework its recommendations will be implemented as a growth management tool.

Neptune City has been classified in a category entitled Metropolitan Planning Area. As stated in the SDRP, the communities in this Planning Area form a part of the "metropolitan mass" where there is little distinction between municipal boundaries. The communities in the Metropolitan Planning Area have the following characteristics: they are predominantly developed with little available vacant land; have an aging infrastructure; recognize that development will be the predominant form of growth; and understand that certain municipal services and systems need to be regionalized. The Plan recommends that there be both public and private investment/reinvestment in the Metropolitan Planning Area and that growth and redevelopment be promoted in these communities. The Plan encourages both development and redevelopment in order to take advantage of the benefits of areas within the Metropolitan Planning Area which have an existing development pattern, extensive public transportation system, and access to regional markets.

The State is currently conducting a re-examination of the SDRP. Part of this re-examination process is the cross-examination of county and local goals and trends with respect to land use and development. The report indicates that Neptune City is nearly completely developed, and is primarily looking to improve certain conditions with respect to land use and drainage. In particular, the Cross Examination Report identifies the Steiner Avenue industrial district as an area that the Borough seeks to improve through the redevelopment process. In addition, the Borough is actively seeking to improve flooding problems along Route 35 and Third Avenue.

### *Housing Issues*

In 1986, the State of New Jersey established the Council On Affordable Housing which was directed to prepare a comprehensive planning and implementation response to the constitutional obligation to provide, through municipal land use regulations, a realistic opportunity for the construction of low and moderate income housing to accommodate the needs of the State's lower

income households. Every municipality is obligated, by virtue of a 1987 amendment to the Municipal Land Use Law, to prepare and adopt a Housing Plan. Municipalities have the discretionary authority to prepare the Plan in accordance with the COAH regulations and seek substantive certification of the Housing Plan from the State agency. The major benefit of achieving certification is the protection it offers municipalities in the event of a Mount Laurel lawsuit. COAH updated its substantive and procedural regulations in 2005. The updated regulations now require municipalities to provide affordable housing in response to new development occurring in the community. The Borough is currently updating its housing plan to conform to the updated the COAH regulations.

#### *Local Redevelopment and Housing Law*

In 1992 the State of New Jersey adopted into law legislation which revised and updated the State's local redevelopment and housing enabling legislation. The Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (LRHL) replaced a number of former redevelopment statutes, including the Blighted Area Act, Redevelopment Agencies Law, Local Housing and Redevelopment Cooperation Law, and Local Housing Authorities Law, with a single comprehensive statute.

The LRHL provides the statutory authority for municipalities to designate areas in need of "redevelopment", prepare and adopt Redevelopment Plans, and implement redevelopment projects. The principal benefit to older developed municipalities is that this law provides the wherewithal to redevelop, rehabilitate, and upgrade deteriorating areas through rehabilitation and/or new construction. Specifically, the law provides that the governing body has the power to cause a preliminary investigation to determine if an area is in need of redevelopment, determine that an area is in need of redevelopment, adopt a Redevelopment Plan, and determine that an area is in need of rehabilitation. A Planning Board has the power to conduct, when authorized by the governing body, a preliminary investigation and hearing and make a recommendation as to whether an area is in need of redevelopment, make recommendations concerning a Redevelopment Plan and prepare a plan as determined to be appropriate, and make recommendations concerning a determination if an area is in need of rehabilitation.

The State Legislature amended the LRHL in 2003 to provide an additional criterion for designating areas for redevelopment. This "smart growth" criterion provides for the designation of an area where such designation would advance the principles of smart growth. The Borough, in part, relied upon this new criterion in its designation of the Steiner Avenue Redevelopment Area.

#### *Residential Site Improvement Standards*

On January 16, 1997 New Jersey adopted the Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS). These regulations went into effect on June 3, 1997 and were last amended on February 7, 2005. The RSIS provide uniform regulations for residential development throughout the State. It sets forth regulations for streets, parking, water supply, sanitary sewers, and stormwater management. These regulations do not necessitate adoption of revised codes on the part of the municipality. They automatically replace other local ordinances in those instances where the local regulations conflict with the new State provisions. However, it is recommended that a detailed analysis of the differences between local and the new state-imposed requirements should be prepared to enable the municipality to fully understand the magnitude of change that results from this State regulation.

#### *Environmental Legislation*

The State has enacted wetlands legislation to protect this important resource. The Act requires those proposing to engage in various activities in and around wetlands to apply to the DEP for a permit. The Act establishes a presumption that there is a practicable alternative to the proposed activity that would result in a lesser impact on wetlands and requires the applicant to prove there are no alternative locations, sites, configurations or designs that would serve the basic project purpose and result in less impact on wetlands. To protect the overall health of the wetlands ecosystem and to reduce the impacts of adjacent upland development on wetlands, the Act establishes criteria to review activities proposed adjacent to most wetlands and provides for transition (buffer) areas. This latter provision, which provides for a 25-50 foot buffer adjacent to

wetlands classified as an intermediate resource value and a 75-150 foot buffer for wetlands classified as an exceptional resource value, went into effect in July 1989.

In an effort to ensure protection of wetlands areas, the submission of a Letter of Interpretation (LOI) should be required for all development, as part of its development application checklist. It is recommended that the Borough review its LOI requirements and determine whether certain categories of applications should be exempt from this checklist requirement where NJDEP approvals are not necessary.

The State has also adopted legislation regulating development adjacent to Category I streams in New Jersey. These waterways include the Shark River and its tributaries, which form much of Neptune City's southern boundary. The Borough's zoning regulations should be amended to identify the affected properties and indicate that a buffer area is required.

#### *Stormwater Management Regulations*

The State enacted regulations to control stormwater runoff generated by residential and non-residential development. The Borough adopted a Stormwater Management Element in 2005 in accordance with these regulations.



## 5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MASTER PLAN AND ZONING ORDINANCE

### *Land Use Element*

An assessment of current zoning and planning issues should be included in an updated Land Use Element. The areas that should be given specific attention include the following:

- Land uses for the Steiner Avenue Redevelopment Area.
- The properties to the east and west of the intersection of Route 35 and Third Avenue should be designated for mixed use development to encourage the development of a “Main Street” district in this location. This area is appropriate for retail and offices uses, as well as upper story residences.
- Properties along Steiner Avenue, exclusive of the properties located within the Steiner Avenue Redevelopment Area, should be designated for residential use.
- The RLC zoning district along Sylvania Avenue should be narrowed to those properties that currently have a commercial use. The remainder of the properties should be designated for residential use.

### *Housing Element*

On December 7, 2005, the Land Use Board adopted a Housing Element intended to address Neptune City’s third round affordable housing obligation, which covers the period from 1999 to 2014. The calculation of the Borough’s growth share obligation was left incomplete in view of litigation affecting the Steiner Avenue Redevelopment Area. In the absence of a redevelopment plan, it is not possible to estimate the character and intensity of the development that may ultimately occur within this redevelopment area. Once pending litigation is cleared and the Borough develops a redevelopment plan for this area, the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan should be amended to incorporate the projected development for this redevelopment area.

### *Community Facilities Plan Element*

The Borough should prepare a general assessment of existing community facilities and determine what areas are in need of short- and long-term improvements. New and/or improved facilities should take into account any assistance the Borough could receive, including funds from the State School Construction Bond Act, Green Acres, and other State and Federal assistance that could aid in the improvement of community facilities.

*Recreation and Conservation Plan Element*

A Master Plan update should provide an inventory of park and recreation areas available to the Borough, including an assessment of existing facilities. Parcels that could be acquired for recreational purposes should be identified.

*Economic Plan Element*

The Borough may consider an economic plan measuring the commercial activity occurring in Neptune City. Specifically, the emphasis would be on employment and the types of jobs generated within the Borough.

*Utilities Plan*

The Borough should consider conducting an assessment of public utility services within Neptune City, including sanitary sewage disposal, water services, electric and gas service. In particular, the sewage treatment system should be assessed to determine what changes can be made to eliminate odor problems within the Steiner Avenue Redevelopment Area. Also, the stormwater drainage system should be assessed to determine changes that may be implemented to eliminate isolated areas of flooding in the Borough. The assessment would determine the need for any short- and long-term improvements, and should investigate funding programs that would assist the Borough in making any necessary improvements.

*Stormwater Management Plan*

The Borough adopted a Stormwater Management Plan Element to the Master Plan in June, 2005. The Borough is currently drafting an ordinance to implement this element of the Plan.

## 6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING REDEVELOPMENT

In 1992, the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (LRHL) was enacted into law. The LRHL replaced a number of former redevelopment statutes, including the Redevelopment Agencies Law, Local Housing and Redevelopment Corporation Law, Blighted Area Act, and Local Housing Authorities Law, with a single comprehensive statute. At the same time, the MLUL was also amended to require, as part of a master plan reexamination, that the issues raised in the LRHL be addressed.

The LRHL provides the statutory authority for municipalities to designate areas in need of "redevelopment," prepare and adopt redevelopment plans, and implement redevelopment projects. Specifically, the governing body has the power to initially cause a preliminary investigation to determine if an area is in need of redevelopment, determine that an area is in need of redevelopment, adopt a redevelopment plan, and/or, determine that an area is in need of rehabilitation.

A planning board has the power to conduct, when authorized by the governing body, a preliminary investigation and hearing and make a recommendation as to whether an area is in need of redevelopment. The planning board is also authorized to make recommendations concerning a redevelopment plan, and prepare a plan as determined to be appropriate. The board may also make recommendations concerning a determination if an area is in need of rehabilitation.

The statute provides that "a delineated area may be determined to be in need of redevelopment if "after investigation, notice and hearing...the governing body of the municipality by resolution concludes that within the delineated area "any of the following conditions are found:

- a. The generality of buildings are substandard, unsafe, unsanitary, dilapidated, or obsolescent, or possess any of such characteristics, or are so lacking in light, air, or space, as to be conducive to unwholesome living or working conditions;

- b. The discontinuance of the use of buildings previously used for commercial, manufacturing, or industrial purposes; the abandonment of such buildings; or the same being allowed to fall into so great a state of disrepair as to be untenable;
- c. Land that is owned by the municipality, the county, a local housing authority, redevelopment agency or redevelopment entity, or unimproved vacant land that has remained so for a period of ten years prior to adoption of the resolution, and that by reason of its location, remoteness, lack of means of access to developed sections or portions of the municipality, or topography or nature of the soil, is not likely to be developed through the instrumentality of private capital;
- d. Areas with buildings or improvements which, by reason of dilapidation, obsolescence, overcrowding, faulty arrangement or design, lack of ventilation, light and sanitary facilities, excessive land coverage, deleterious land use or obsolete layout, or any combination of these or other factors, are detrimental to the safety, health, morals, or welfare of the community;
- e. A growing lack or total lack of proper utilization of areas caused by the condition of the title, diverse ownership of the real property therein or other conditions, resulting in a stagnant or not fully productive condition of land potentially useful and valuable for contributing to and serving the public health, safety and welfare;
- f. Areas in excess of five contiguous acres, whereon buildings or improvements have been destroyed, consumed by fire, demolished or altered by the action of storm, fire, cyclone, tornado, earthquake or other casualty in such a way that the aggregate assessed value of the area has been materially depreciated.
- g. In any municipality in which an enterprise zone has been designated pursuant to the "New Jersey Urban Enterprise Zones Act," P.L.1983, c.303 (C.52:27H-60 et seq.) the execution of the actions prescribed in that act for the adoption by the municipality and approval by the New Jersey Urban Enterprise Zone Authority of the zone development plan for the area of the enterprise zone shall be considered sufficient for the determination that the area is in need of redevelopment pursuant to sections 5 and 6 of P.L.1992, c.79 (C.40A:12A-5 and 40A:12A-6) for the purpose of granting tax exemptions within the enterprise zone district pursuant to the provisions of P.L.1991, c.431 (C.40A:20-1 et seq.) or the adoption of a tax abatement and exemption ordinance pursuant to the provisions of P.L.1991, c.441 (C.40A:21-1 et seq.). The municipality shall not utilize any other redevelopment powers within the urban enterprise zone unless the municipal governing body and planning board have also taken the actions and fulfilled the requirements prescribed in P.L.1992, c.79 (C.40A:12A-1 et al.) for determining that the area is in need of redevelopment or an area in need of rehabilitation and the municipal governing body has adopted a redevelopment plan ordinance including the area of the enterprise zone.

- h. The designation of the delineated area is consistent with smart growth planning principles adopted pursuant to law and regulation.

The statute defines redevelopment to include "clearance, replanning, development and redevelopment; the conservation and rehabilitation of any structure or improvement, the construction and provision for construction of residential, commercial, industrial, public or other structures and the grant or dedication of spaces as may be appropriate or necessary in the interest of the general welfare for streets, parks, playgrounds, or other public purposes, including recreational and other facilities incidental or appurtenant thereto, in accordance with a redevelopment plan". It is noteworthy that the statute specifically states that a redevelopment area may include lands which of themselves are not detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare, but the inclusion of which is necessary for the effective redevelopment of an area.

In August 2005, the Borough designated the largely industrial area generally located between Steiner Avenue and Memorial Drive as an area in need of redevelopment. Most of the affected properties are privately-owned. A plan has yet to be prepared for the redevelopment area.

The Borough should investigate the possibility of delineating certain properties along Route 35 and Third Avenue for purpose of creating a mixed use central business district that would essentially function as the Borough's "Main Street."

The former Shop 'N Bag property is largely vacant, and represents a potentially blighting influence at a major gateway to the community. The Borough should investigate designating this property as an "area in need of redevelopment" for the purpose of redevelopment and/or rehabilitation.