

Do Not Destroy

**AMENDMENT TO THE
MASTER PLAN REEXAMINATION REPORT
INDEPENDENCE TOWNSHIP
WARREN COUNTY, N.J.**

**INDEPENDENCE TOWNSHIP
PLANNING BOARD**

March 31, 2003

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The Municipal Land Use Law (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28a) enables a municipal planning board to amend its planning documents: "The planning board may prepare and, after public hearing, adopt or amend a master plan, or component parts thereto..." On March 18, 2002 the Independence Township Planning Board held a public hearing and at the hearing adopted the "Master Plan Reexamination Report."

Subsequently, the planning board has been implementing various recommendations expressed in this master plan reexamination as well as considering land use concepts from other sources. As a consequence of this process, the planning has examined the land use policies in the Route 517 corridor area and makes the following findings and recommendations.

1. Historically, this area has been the focus of commercial and multifamily housing land uses. This is a result of the important circulation function of this county roadway which connects interstate 80 ("I-80") with the center of Hackettstown. As a result, this area is eminently accessible and thereby attractive to such uses and development. Indeed, in comparison with the rest of Independence Township this area contains the most intense land development. From time to time, the Township has amended the zoning in this area in recognition of these land use and circulation characteristics.
2. This area has contributed in a very significant manner to the economic base in the Township. In aggregate, the apartments, townhouses and commercial uses represent approximately 25% of the assessed value of land in the Township. The remainder is represented by single family housing.

Continued commercial development in this corridor will maintain its valuation and rateable contribution to the Township. It will balance continued single family development occurring in the remainder of the Township. It will provide local employment and business opportunities. New commercial uses will expand local shopping needs and be a convenience to the area's population and workforce.
3. Development of lots 21 and 22.04 in block 8 will promote the above goals and objectives. Presently, lot 21 is in the B Business zone and lot 22.04 is in the R-2 Low Density Residential zone. Lot 22.04 is undersized, being 1.04 acres where 2.0 acres is required in the R-2 zone. Both lots are owned by Owen properties. Historically, various concepts for development of the tract have included both properties.

A plan has been received by the planning board which shows the use of both properties (8.95 acres) for a ±55,000 s.f. shopping center (“Liberty Square”). Upon examination, the use of lot 22.04 (1.04 acres) is integral to the reasonable development of this tract. In particular, use of this lot serves a critical circulation function which promotes the free flow of traffic. That is, presently Old Allamuchy Road intersects Route 517 at an acute or skewed angle which is a traffic hazard. The proposed use of lot 22.04 allows for a realignment of Old Allamuchy Road to intersect with Route 517 at a right angle thereto and also aligns opposite to Bilby Road. A traffic light will be installed once this realignment is completed. There will be other improvements including left turn lanes and roadway widening. The County endorses the roadway realignment and improvements. This realignment will be a significant improvement to public safety and traffic circulation at this intersection.

The Township Circulation Plan identified this intersection for an “intersection improvement.”

4. Examination of the shopping center plan shows lot 22.04 to be developed in a manner that enables the above roadway improvements to be made but is also proposed for, in the main, passive use. That is, the majority of this area will be used as a detention basin which will be planted to resemble a meadow and lawn and bordered by variety of trees and shrubs. Only a minor portion is proposed for ingress-egress. The present plans show this lot will function as a wide, and large landscaped buffer to properties to the west.
5. In conclusion, it is the finding of this amendment that the present B Business zoning along the Route 517 corridor area be maintained and lot 22.04 be also designated business. The land use plan recommendation is to rezone this lot to B from R-2.
6. Examination of lots 22.03, 22.01 and 22.02 in block 8 reveal the following facts.

<u>Lot</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Use</u>
22.03	1.15	Vacant flag lot
22.01	1.04	Single family home
22.02	1.00	Single family home

All three lots are presently in the R-2 zone district. This zone has a minimum lot

size of 2 acres. If the new zoning is adopted as recommended in the Master Plan Reexamination (March 18, 2002). The minimum lot size will be 3 acres.

Presently, however, the three lots are undersized: less than 2 acres. The consequence is that any development changes on these lots will require variances.

All three lots face Old Allamuchy Road, a county roadway. They also front the rear facade of a shopping center. To their rear is a large single family property (lot 23.01, 5.26 acres).

7. It is appropriate that these three lots, as well as lot 22.04, be rezoned to B Business from R-2 Residential. The planning and zoning reasons for rezoning are as follows:

a. The B zone allows single family use as a permitted use. The minimum lot size is 1 acre. Thus, the lots will no longer be undersized, rather they will conform to the minimum lot size standard of one acre.

b. These lots are part of the Route 517 corridor neighborhood due to their orientation towards Old Allamuchy Road, proximity to the existing shopping center and finally to Route 517. They are not integral to the residential neighborhood to the west.

c. Rezoning will allow a greater variety of uses. While single family can continue or even be developed, the B zone allows office and business uses. Professional office use may also be an appropriate use for these three properties and would represent transition uses between commercial to the east and single family to the west.

8. This rezoning will promote the following purposes of the MLUL:

a. *To encourage municipal action to guide the appropriate use or development of all lands in this State, in a manner which will promote the public health, safety, morals, and general welfare;*

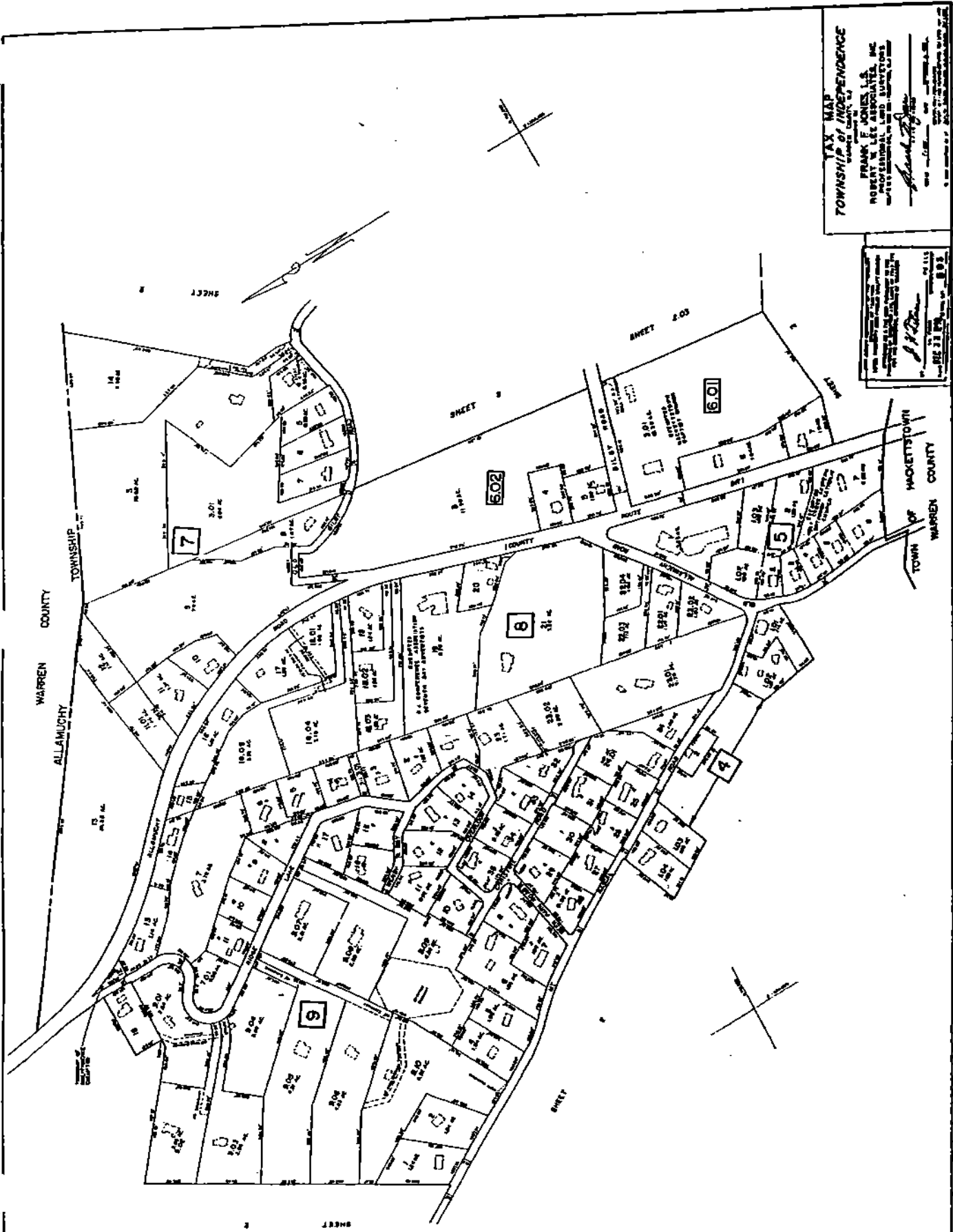
c. *To provide adequate light, air and open space;*

g. *To provide sufficient space in appropriate locations for a variety of agricultural, residential, recreational, commercial and industrial uses and open space, both public and private, according to their*

respective environmental requirements in order to meet the needs of all New Jersey citizens;

- h. To encourage the location and design of transportation routes which will promote the free flow of traffic while discouraging location of such facilities and routes which result in congestion or blight;*
- i. To promote a desirable visual environment through creative development techniques and good civic design and arrangements;*
- m. To encourage coordination of the various public and private procedures and activities shaping land development with a view of lessening the cost of such development and to the more efficient use of land.*

P. David Zimmerman, P.P./A.I.C.P.
Township Planner



TAX MAP
TOWNSHIP OF INDEPENDENCE
 WARREN COUNTY, OHIO
 FRANK E. JONES, INC.
 PROFESSIONAL LAND SURVEYORS
 100 EAST MAIN ST., COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215
Frank E. Jones, Inc.

ALL INFORMATION ON THIS MAP IS BASED ON THE RECORDS OF THE TOWNSHIP ENGINEER'S OFFICE.
 THE TOWNSHIP ENGINEER'S OFFICE IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACCURACY OF THE INFORMATION ON THIS MAP.
 PREPARED BY: *Frank E. Jones, Inc.*
 DATE: *1/1/88*
 SHEET NO. *201*

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