

**MASTER PLAN REVISIONS:
Elk Township, Gloucester County**

**1999 Master Plan Revision
2002 Master Plan Revision
2004 Master Plan Report**

**Adopted after a public hearing by Resolution 99-24 by the
Elk Township Planning Board on June 17, 1999.**

**Adopted after a public hearing by Resolution 2005-10 by the
Elk Township Planning Board on November 18, 2004**

**Adopted after a public hearing by Resolution 02-10 by the
Elk Township Planning Board on February 21, 2002**

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The original of this document was signed and
sealed in accordance with NJAC 12:41-1.3.b

**Elk Township
1999 Master Plan Revision**

I. INTRODUCTION AND GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The basic purpose of this 1999 Master Plan Update is to provide the citizens of Elk Township with the best physical, economic and social environments possible through the conscientious planning and the optimum use of the natural resources of the Township. The following goals and objectives represent an updating of the "objectives and principles" section of Elk Township's original 1978 Master Plan. While a number of the 1978 problems and objectives relating to land development in the Township have remained the same, there have also been numerous changes in the assumptions and policies forming the basis of the original master plan. These changes are reflected in the revisions to the 1978 list of "objectives and principles" (reclassified here as "goals and objectives") below.

LAND USE - GOAL #1: Provide a balanced land use development pattern which can be effectively serviced by the transportation, the utility and the community facilities systems of the Township.

OBJECTIVES:

- a. Provide for environmentally suitable locations for moderate density development in those areas best served by the transportation, utility and community facilities systems in and around Elk Township.
- b. Utilize the P.U.D. and clustering concepts, where appropriate, to regulate pace and intensity of development within the Route 55 growth corridor. This area should include the development of a "Town Center" with a strong visual identity as an identifiable municipal core. A "Town Center" should include a mix of residential and commercial uses, with consideration given to incorporating appropriate government uses and open space to reinforce the core as the hub of activity in the Township.
- c. Lands outside the Route 55 growth corridor should have primarily clustered residential and low intensity commercial uses. In non-sewered areas, the development of limited commercial cores should be encouraged in recognition of existing routes, with low density residential use moving out from the commercial core.
- d. Encourage growth of tax ratable uses through addition of manufacturing and commercial areas in locations which are environmentally, socially and economically suitable.

ECONOMIC PLAN - GOAL #5: Encourage the continued diversification of a viable Township economic base.

OBJECTIVE:

- a. Make provisions to sustain and to enhance a viable and diverse economic base in order to provide job opportunities and economic security to the Township's residents.

RECREATION PLAN - GOAL #6: Provide for a comprehensive system of public recreation facilities to serve all segments of the population.

OBJECTIVES:

- a. Provide for the development and the expansion of existing Township recreation areas with facilities to satisfy the needs of all age groups within the Township.
- b. Promote the provision of recreation areas within future residential developments by providing appropriate recreational standards for cluster developments and Planned Unit Developments.
- c. Promote expanded use of centralized school facilities in the recreational program of the Township by the coordination and combination of educational and municipal recreation facilities.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES PLAN - GOAL #7: Protect the Township's environmental resources.

OBJECTIVES:

- a. Preserve the wetlands and the floodways along lakes, streams and rivers in a natural state in order to insure a continual recharge of essential elements required for the sustenance of the aquatic food chain.
- b. Prevent encroachment into flood hazard areas along streams, lakes, rivers and wetlands by buildings or uses which would be detrimental to the quality of subsurface and surface water supplies.
- c. Promote the use of planning techniques such as cluster development and the transfer of development rights to aid in the preservation of natural resources such as wooded areas and wetland areas.

Population Change - Table 2

<u>Area</u>	<u>1940</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1998</u>
Elk	1,656	2,074	2,635	2,707	3,187	3,806	4,041
County	72,219	91,727	134,840	172,681	199,917	230,082	244,203*
State	N/A	N/A	6,060,782	7,168,164	7,364,823	7,730,188	7,987,933 *

* 1996 Census Bureau estimates

As with much of Southern New Jersey, Elk Township has experienced significant growth since 1970 (see Table 2). This growth is evidenced by the population growth rate from 1970 to 1998 of 67%. A large part of this population increase was from the significant number of single-family dwelling units constructed in the 1980's. By contrast, the population in Gloucester County increased 70% to 244,403 persons and the State of New Jersey increased 9% to 7,987,933 persons in the period of 1970 to 1996. This increase in the population of Elk Township is due to development pressures creeping south as families seek less expensive housing and are commuting greater distances.

AGE COHORTS: The overall growth in the population of the Elk Township population correlates with the steady increase of schoolage children. This trend continued with the 1990 Census as shown in Table 1 and has been compounded by an increase in average household size to 2.92 persons per household which is slightly greater than both Gloucester County with 2.87 persons per household and the State with 2.70 persons per household (see Table 7). These trends, the increase in the proportion of children and in the size of families are common throughout much of South Jersey, but are anomalies when compared to trends nationally. Social trends have for some time been toward a smaller household size through divorce and single parent households and the fact that the elderly are living to much older ages and that the elderly women significantly outnumber elderly men. This is true in Elk Township with 252 or 55% of the elderly population are women and 210 or 45% are men. It is also important to note that Elk Township's proportion of population 65 years and older is on par with both the County or State portion. This is likely to increase as a major demographic shift that will continue is the general aging of the population. There are important implications for planning in this phenomenon that are discussed later.

RACE, ETHNICITY AND GENDER: The 1990 Census further revealed, as shown in Table 3, that Elk Township has a predominantly white population similar to the State of New Jersey, but significantly less than Gloucester County on average. The percentage of the population that was White was 79.6, the percentage Black was 19.1, the percentage of Asian descent was less than 1 and the percentage of all other races was 1.2 for Elk Township. By comparison Gloucester County is 89.3% White and the State is 79% White. Gloucester County is 8.7% Black and the State is 13.4% Black. Persons of Hispanic origin comprised 1.9% of the population of Elk Township and 1.8% of the population of Gloucester County, both significantly less than the 9.6% of

the State.

The breakdown of gender is generally slightly in favor of females (see Table 3). Elk Township follows this trend with 50.4% female and 49.6% male. Gloucester County was 51.3% female and 48.6% male, while the State was 51.7% female and 48.3%.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS: The increases in household size, schoolage children, and in the very aged population will require a response from public agencies. The increase in schoolage children will affect the school system. In addition, the recreation facilities for the Township should be further analyzed to determine if a restructuring of facilities is required to better meet the current population. The demand for local services by the elderly will center around housing rehabilitation programs, or alternative housing type, as it will become increasingly difficult for the elderly to maintain their homes and demands will eventually lead to the need for affordable rental housing for the elderly. Existing housing rehabilitation programs will need to be expanded as of the percentage senior occupied housing units increases with the aging population.

1990 Population by Categories - Table 3

	ELK		GLOUCESTER		NEW JERSEY	
	Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	%
Total	3,806	100	230,082	100	7,730,188	100
Sex						
F	1,919	50.4	118,115	51.3	3,994,503	51.67
M	1,887	49.6	111,967	48.7	3,735,685	48.33
Race						
White	3,031	79.6	205,509	89.3	6,130,465	79.31
Black	726	19.1	19,935	8.7	1,036,825	13.41
Asian	3	0.1	2,876	1.2	272,521	3.53
Other	46	1.2	1,762	0.8	290,377	3.76
Hispanic Origin	75	2	4,131	1.8	739,861	9.57

1990 Population by Categories - Table 3 (continued)

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	ELK		GLOUCESTER		NEW JERSEY	
	Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	%
18 - 64	2,273	59.7	143,783	62.5	4,898,701	63.37
> 64	461	12.1	24,761	10.7		
Median Age	33.2	n/a	32.5	n/a	34.5	
Persons Per Household	2.92	n/a	2.87	n/a	2.70	

Elk Township 1990 Population Distribution by Age and Race - Table 4

Age	WHITE		BLACK		ASIAN		OTHER		HISPANIC ORIGIN	
	Total	Female	Total	Female	Total	Female	Total	Female	Total	Female
School Age										
5 - 11	337	159	86	50	0	0	4	3	4	2
12 - 14	135	67	42	17	0	0	3	1	3	1
15 - 17	128	58	41	20	1	1	6	3	4	3
Working/Voting										
16+	2,274	1,134	537	305	2	2	33	11	62	9
16 - 64	1,924	943	428	246	1	1	22	11	61	8
18+	2,194	1,098	509	292	2	2	29	9	60	7
18 - 64	1,844	907	400	233	1	1	28	9	59	6
Other										
0 - 4	237	112	48	26	0	4	4	1	4	1
5 - 17	600	284	169	87	1	13	13	7	11	6
18 - 44	1,256	602	240	139	0	18	18	5	54	5
45 - 64	588	305	160	94	1	10	10	4	5	1
62+	431	241	141	78	1	4	4	1	3	1
65+	350	191	109	59	1	1	1	0	1	1

HOUSING TRENDS: As indicated on Table 5, and by the number of building permits issued, the greatest

growth in the Elk Township housing stock took place during the period of 1980 to 1990. During this period the housing stock grew by more than 21%, average with the growth in Gloucester County. In actual construction units, Elk Township added 320 dwelling units during the 1970 to 1990 period. This number is average for municipalities of similar size in Gloucester County. The growth in dwelling units within Elk Township has remained steady through the 1990's with an average of 9.1 new single family dwellings being constructed each year. This case was on par with the percentage increase for most surrounding municipalities in Gloucester County. Thus, Elk Township faces many of the same sprawl-driven issues as it's neighbors, the control of development, evolving infrastructure needs, and preservation of the existing agricultural base.

Population Trends 1970 - 1990 - Table 5

Municipality	Sq.Miles	1970 Units	1980 Units	% Change 70-80	1990 Units	% Change 80-90	% Change 70-90
South Harrison	15.82	341	458	34.3	626	36.7	83.6
Harrison	19.2	813	1,221	50.2	1,610	31.9	98
Glassboro	9.22	3,649	4,724	29.5	5,019	6.2	37.5
Clayton	7.34	1,659	1,930	16.3	2,069	7.2	24.7
Franklin	56.42	2,741	3,856	40.7	4,679	21.3	70.7
Upper Pittsgrove		843	1,051	23.1			
Elk	19.71	959	1,054	9.9	1,279	21.3	33.4
Gloucester Co.	336.91	51,708	65,129	26	78,845	21.1	52.5
Salem Co.		19,598	24,165	23.3	25,333	4.9	29.3

1990 Household Type and Relationship - Table 6

	Elk Township		Gloucester County		New Jersey	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Total Population	3,806		230,082		7,730,188	
In Households	3,734	98.1	225,971	98.2	7,558,820	97.8
In-Family Households	3,397	89.3	203,746	88.6	6,618,159	85.6
Householder	1,003		60,808		2,021,346	
Spouse	820		49,629		1,578,702	
Child	1,283		79,963		2,443,499	
Other Relative	215		10,354		441,252	
Non-Relatives	76		2,992		133,360	
In Non-Family Household	337	8.9	22,225	9.7	940,661	12.2
Live Alone	224		14,8759		646,171	
Not Alone	52		3,162		127,194	
Non-Relatives	61		4,188		167,296	
In Group Quarters	72	1.9	4,111	1.8	171,368	2.2
Institutions			1,7112	0.7	92,670	1.2
Other	72	1.9	2,399	1.0	78,698	1.0

It is also interesting to note that the average household size has continued to decrease with the 1990 Census of Population and Housing. The average household size in 1990 was 2.92 person per dwelling and in 1980 the average household size was 3.02 persons per dwelling. This figure is similar to Gloucester County (3.03 persons per dwelling in 1980 and 2.87 persons per dwelling in 1990) and Camden County (2.88 persons per dwelling in 1980 and 2.76 persons per dwelling in 1990). This trend affects policies for future land use and service needs of the residents of Elk Township.

The dwellings in Elk Township are slightly smaller than the homes in Gloucester County (see Table 9). There are 42.1% of all dwelling units with less than 5 rooms in Elk Township while there are 38.6% of all dwelling units with less than 5 rooms in Gloucester County. This does create some limitations to the housing market in Elk Township. Although the extremely high proportion of single-family dwellings in Elk Township impacts this data, the result remains.

Household Size - Table 7

<u>Size of Hh</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Cum %</u>
1	17.5	
2	32.4	50.0
3	17.0	67.0
4	17.7	84.7
5	8.5	93.2
6	4.2	97.4
7+	2.6	100.0

Persons per Unit in 1990 - Table 8

<u>Persons</u>	<u>%</u>
1	17.5
2	32.4
3	17.0
4	17.7
5	8.5
6	4.2
7+	2.6

Average persons per unit = 2.9

Size of Units in 1990 - Table 9

<u>Rooms</u>	<u>Elk %</u>	<u>County %</u>
1	.4	.3
2	1.9	1.2
3	3.8	7.0
4	14.1	12.4
5	21.9	17.7
6	25.1	20.0
7	15.4	17.1
8	10.4	13.7
9+	7.0	10.6

During recent years there has been significant growth in the number of dwelling units constructed outside of the established neighborhoods on larger parcels. This new construction has contributed greatly to the increase in the percentage of owner-occupied units in the Township to 82.2%. The number of renter occupied units is only 10.5%. This trend is expected to moderate as the Silvergate P.U.D. is phased in with a significant percentage of townhomes and garden apartments to better meet the low/moderate housing demand. In contrast, Gloucester County had 20.7% of the dwelling units occupied by renter households and 74.9% of dwelling units as owner-occupied households.

Value of Units in 1990 - Table 10

	<u>Units</u>	<u>Elk %</u>	<u>County %</u>
less than \$15,000	9	1.1	0.3
\$15-29,999	6	0.7	0.7
\$30-49,999	66	8.1	4.2
\$50-74,999	105	20.2	15.3
\$75-99,999	215	26.3	30.3
\$100,149,999	229	28.1	34.4
\$150-199,999	76	9.4	10.9
\$200-299,999	39	4.8	3.9
\$300,000+	6	0.7	0.6

1990 Housing Data - Table 11

	<u>Elk</u>	<u>County</u>
Median Value	\$93,300	\$99,300
Median Rent	\$341	\$437

1990 Income Data - Table 12

Area	Median Household Income	Per Capita Income	% Change in Median Income (1979-1989)	% of Families w/income in 1989 Below Poverty Line
New Jersey	\$40,927	\$18,714	N/A	5.6
Gloucester County	\$39,387	\$15,207	49.6	4.7
Elk Township	\$34,203	\$13,139	50.8	5.9
Harrison Township	\$45,429	\$17,931	60.3	2.7
Logan Township	\$44,966	\$15,329	49.3	1.5

Note: Harrison was selected for comparison due to similar land area (12,274 acres). Logan was selected for comparison due to similar population density (226.2 per sq. mile)

Only four towns (of 24) had lower Median Household Income in the County.

Only four towns (of 24) had lower Per Capita Income in the County.

Elk performed better than 11 towns in Percent Change in Median Household Income.

Only five towns (of 24) had a greater percentage of families living under the poverty line in 1989.

1990 Employment Data - Table 13

Area	% of Population in Labor Force
New Jersey	67.4
Gloucester County	68.0
Elk Township	65.4
Harrison Township	70.7
Logan Township	73.6

Recognizing that the data in this analysis was collected almost ten-years ago, the indications remain that Elk Township had, and continues to face, significant economic challenges. In the majority of categories examined, Elk is consistently ranked in the lower 20% of all municipalities in Gloucester County.

While other municipalities in Gloucester County with large areas of developable land have experienced significant growth and have expanded the economic opportunities available for residents, Elk has lagged behind. Certainly one factor is the geographic location, with Elk Township located at the extreme southern end of Gloucester County (away from the areas of growth in Burlington and Camden Counties, and Philadelphia). However, Washington Township, which faces similar geographic challenges, has fared significantly better than Elk Township and continues to experience new growth and revitalization.

Clearly revisions are needed to the Master Plan to better serve the existing residents as well as to attract new residents to the Township.

III. LAND USE PLAN BACKGROUND

The Township Master Plan was adopted in 1978. Reexaminations took place in 1982 and 1988 and a Housing Element/Fair Share Plan was adopted in 1992. The basic, overriding problem relating to land development was and remains the reconciliation, through appropriate land use planning and zoning design, of the pressures for development with the preservation of the pastoral, delicate social and physical environment that is Elk Township. All the goals and objectives of the 1989 Master Plan Update relate to the necessity of balancing development in an appropriate manner.

These objectives were detailed and complete in their attention to land use, recreation, housing, and transportation issues. Their basic thrust, however, was toward accommodating a significant amount of growth through higher densities, P.U.D. development and a Town Center concept.

The issue of growth and development and their potential impacts upon the social and natural environment of Elk Township has become a greater concern. The first large scale development in Elk Township, i.e., Silvergate P.U.D., has received approvals for its first sections of both residential and nonresidential development. This project as it progresses will alter the scale of the Township, particularly the Rt. 55 corridor.

As noted, the goals and objectives of the prior Master Plan documents were oriented to accommodating a significant amount of growth. Indeed, the 1989 Master Plan update and implementing zoning called for a total potential population in Elk Township of 90,000 persons. This consisted of over 6,400 acres of a P.U.D. overlay that could generate 24,000 units and 72,000 persons and the balance of the Township residential zones of 6,000 acres $\pm$.

The density of this build-out would be 4,592 persons per square mile. For comparison purposes the 1990 density of Cherry Hill Township was 2,868 persons per square mile; for Washington Township, 1,940 persons per square mile; for Deptford Township 1,377 persons per square mile. Clearly, the existing land use/zoning plan contemplates an Elk Township vastly different from today's.

The ability to generate these numbers rests upon the extent of the '208' Sewer Service Area, which is consistent with P.U.D. overlay area and includes about two-thirds of the Township.

There has been a significant policy accomplishment effecting land use since the last Master Plan document was approved. In 1992, under the aegis of the State Planning Act, the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP) was adopted. This plan and policy document divides the State into Planning Areas based upon their environmental capabilities, infrastructure availability, existing patterns of development and other principles. At this time, a number of State agencies have agreed to base their decision-making upon the SDRP and Planning Area designations.

The County has supplied an overlay map showing the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP) planning areas for Elk Township.

There are five Planning Areas in Elk Township: Suburban, Fringe, Rural, Rural-Environmentally Sensitive, and Environmentally Sensitive. There are gross inconsistencies between these designations and the existing land use plan zoning configurations. For example, over 50% of the current P.U.D. overlay zone includes acreage in Fringe and Environmentally Sensitive Areas.

IV. POLICY OBJECTIVES

It is now the primary goal of the planning function of Elk Township to significantly reduce the potential build-out population of the Township to 20,000-25,000 persons. The majority of this potential exists in the P.U.D. overlay zone. The primary objective, therefore, is to shrink significantly the acreage now in that P.U.D. overlay zone. It is also an objective of this land use plan to bring it into feasible consistency with the SDRP.

Obversely, the conservation of natural resources shall be given greater importance in the enlargement of lower density areas.

Other objectives which shall be effected by this primary goal change will include less traffic on roads within the Township, less water use and sewage generation and less need for storm water management facilities.

These objectives have been realized through the revised Land Use Plan.

The biggest change is the reduction of the P.U.D. overlay zone. This is now conterminous with the MD - Moderate Density land use. The area is basically the Rt. 55 corridor and the easternmost portion of the Township, and is consistent with the Suburban Planning Area (PA-2) designation of the SDRP. This area is designed for single-family detached dwelling units at a density of 2.5 units per acre. This would generate lot sizes of about 15,000 sq. ft. A cluster provision will be encouraged to permit lots of about 12,000 sq. ft., keeping that maximum density.

P.U.D.'s will also be permitted with the same density maximum. Net densities will vary for the different types of units as they now do. A total of 3,210 acres is included in this land use category at about 25% of the Township.

The Low Density land use area is 2,077 total acres and about 17% of Elk Township. It is generally consistent with the Fringe Planning Area of the SDRP and is located in the northwest portion of the Township between CR 609 and CR 538. The density proposed here is one dwelling unit per acre.

South of this area is the Rural land use section of Elk Township. It is about 895 acres or 7% of the Township and is consistent with the Rural Planning Area of the SDRP. Its density is intended at one-half dwelling unit per acre or two acres per unit.

The largest land use area is the Rural-Environmental portion. A total of 5,328 acres or 42% of the Township is included. Most of the Township's wetlands are located here and it encompasses both the Rural Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area and Environmentally Sensitive Planning area of the SDRP. The density for this land use will be 2 dwelling units per acre or five acres per unit.

The C-1 and C-2 commercial areas have been expanded to include tax lots at major intersections in the municipality.

Permitted uses in the residential and nonresidential zones will remain basically consistent with the current zoning plan.

All major residential developments will be encouraged to provide cluster development and unusable land will only be counted at 50% of the acreage to determine lot yield.

Estimates have been made of the potential population that this Land Use Plan represents.

1999 ELK TOWNSHIP LAND USE PLAN GROSS ACREAGE BUILD OUT - Table 14

ZONE	TOTAL ACRES	GROSS UNITS PER ACRE	UNITS	PERSONS/ UNIT	POPULATION
MD	3,430	2.5	8,575	2.5	21,438
LD	2,070	1.0	2,070	3	6,210
R	927	0.5	464	3	1,392
RE	5,125	0.2	1,025	3	3,075
TOTAL					32,115

This represents the total maximum potential build out of the Township, including the current population of about 4,000 persons. In order to provide a more realistic estimate of potential population, usable acreage in each category was calculated. The data provided in the following chart provides a more accurate base for Township planning purposes

NET ACREAGE BUILD OUT - Table 15

ZONE	USABLE ACRES (% of total)	NET UNITS PER ACRE	UNITS	PERSONS/ UNIT	POPULATION
MD	2,607 (76)	2.80	7,300	2.5	18,249
LD	1,471 (71)	1.145	1,684	3	5,052
R	671 (72)	.575	386	3	1,158
RE	2,563 (50)	.250	641	3	1,923
TOTAL					26,382

V. HOUSING & FAIR SHARE PLAN

This section is a supplement to the Housing Element/Fair Share Plan adapted in 1992 and certified by COAH. All requirements and standards not revised or supplemented in this document shall remain as the policies and plans of Elk Township.

The previous land use plan and zoning ordinance permitted P.U.D.'s at a density of 5.5 units per acre with a mandatory set-aside of 20%. Under that ordinance, the "Silvergate" project was approved with 137 affordable family rental units, resulting in a total of 171 total units to be credited against Elk Township's fair share allocation. This approval remains in place and the project has begun obtaining the final approvals.

In addition, the P.U.D. overlay zone although reduced will continue to accommodate substantial residential development. As the gross density for P.U.D.'s is being reduced to 2.5 units per acre, so will the mandatory set-aside be reduced to 8.5% of total units. It is estimated that 1,866 acres remain for P.U.D. development. This would generate 4,665 total units and 397 set-aside units. Thus, the approved and potential fair share unit total is 568.

VI. CONCLUSION

This new Land Use Plan will alter the course previously set by Elk Township. From a future of typical suburbanization throughout most of the Township to a reasonable limit to that type of development. Most of Elk will remain as it is today, with unburdened vistas for the eye and of the mind.

<u>EXHIBITS</u>

Soils

Flood Prone Areas

Wetlands

Geology

Existing Land Use

SDRP Planning Areas

Land Use Plan

SDRP with Land Use Plan

Elk Township 2002 Master Plan Revision

The goals of the Master Plan include “developing a balanced density distribution”, to “stabilize the growth pattern and zoning transitions” and to “enhance the development flow with appropriate densities and concentrations that promote the preservation of the environment.” In order to obtain these goals by providing a natural transition of zones and densities the following is proposed:

The existing Moderate Density (MD) zoning district is bisected by Route 55. To the east of Route 55 is an approved PUD, manufacturing and commercial zoning districts. The land use patterns are reflective of this zoning, wherein the majority of the Township’s higher densities are located here. To the west of Route 55 the same higher density, MD zoning, is in place while the development has not occurred. Realizing the dramatic impact the MD district can have adjacent to the Rural Environmental (RE) district, the MD district will be replaced with the Low Density (LD) and Rural (R) land use designations.

The MD zoning district allows 2.5 dwelling units per acre. This abuts the existing RE district which allows 0.4 dwelling units per upland acre. The change from 2.5 units per acre to the 0.4 dwelling units per upland acreage required in the RE district is drastic and a more gradual transition should be provided to help preserve these environmentally sensitive areas of the Township.

In order to accomplish this less drastic transition the area west of Route 55 to Route 667 should be rezoned from MD to LD. This will allow for a density of one dwelling unit per acre. The MD area west of Route 667 should be rezoned to R, allowing for 0.5 dwelling units per acre. This provides a total reduction of 2,600 units along the western side of Route 55. By these changes, a gradual rather than abrupt change is effected adjacent to the more environmentally sensitive RE district.

It is further proposed that the LD land use allow age-restricted development or planned unit developments as conditional uses with a proposed density of 2.0 units per acre for age-restricted developments and 1.5 units per acre for planned unit developments on 150 acres or more. In the R district age-restricted developments at 1.5 units per acre and planned unit developments on 150 acres or more with a density of 1.0 unit per acre should be permitted as conditional uses, with densities as permitted in the LD under limited circumstances.

Elk Township 2004 Master Plan Reexamination Report

Pursuant to the Municipal Land Use Law (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89) a reexamination of the master plan should be completed every six years. The report must state the major land development problems and objectives present when the last report or plan was prepared and the status of these conditions today. The report must also make any recommendations for changes to the master plan or development regulations that would further achieve the original goals or address any significant changes that have occurred since the last report was adopted. This report is separated into five sections addressing each element required by the Municipal Land Use Law. (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89a-e)

The Township Master Plan was last reexamined in 1999 and updated in 2001. These documents were used as the basis for this report.

a. The major problems and objectives relating to land development at the time of the last reexamination report.

These major goals of the Master Plan are:

- Provide a balanced land use development patterns
- Provide for a broad range of housing types
- Provide for more efficient movement of people and goods
- Promote the orderly development of utility services
- Encourage the diversification of a viable Township economic base
- Provide for a comprehensive system of public recreation facilities
- Protect the township's environmental resources.

The major concern of the Township was to reduce the development potential from 30,000 units and 90,000 persons to a more manageable, environmentally sound level. This was done. However, as more of the Township becomes involved in the variety of farmland preservation programs and as development increases, the goal of maintaining Elk Township's character as a rural community becomes more important.

b. The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such data.

The development pressure on Elk Township has increased dramatically over the last several years. The Township's location at the southern portion of Gloucester County, bracketed by exits of Rt. 55, means the pressure will continue to increase.

The Planning Board has approved two large residential projects in recent months of several hundred units and a number of smaller ones. It is clear that the basic character of the Township is at risk of major impact.

The increase in population since 1990 equals almost 20%. That is, in 1990, the population was 3,803. Since then, 256 building permits have been issued for single-family homes. Using the average household size of 2.9 persons present in 1990, that equals an increase of 742 persons or 19.5%.

- 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.**

Based upon the increase in the problems enunciated in the 1999 Revisions and Updates to the Master Plan, there have been resultant changes in the assumptions therewith as well. A major assumption was that the reductions in density and new zoning districts were sufficient to protect the integrity of Elk Township's resources of the natural environment and community character. As the pace of development approvals has increased, it is clear that more needs to be done to assure that Elk Township will remain a rural area in basic character and perception which respects the constraints imposed by varied environmental conditions.

Thus, in order to better distribute population in terms of environmental conditions and "enhance the development flow with appropriate densities and concentrations that promote the preservation of the environment", additional land use revisions are warranted.

- d. **The specific changes recommended for the Master Plan or development regulations:**

In order to effectuate a land use pattern more consistent with the goals and objectives a number of changes to the Land Use Plan are proposed:

1. Low Density area west of Rt. 55 to Rural
2. Rural area immediately west of CR 667 to Rural – Environmental
3. Low Density area bounded by CR's 641, 538, 619, 609, 623, and Township boundary by Rural Environmental
4. Rural area bounded by SH 77, CR's 641, 616, 538, 619 and Township boundary to Rural Environmental
5. Reduce the maximum density in the Moderate Density area to 2.0 units per acre.

These changes will result in a more reasonable pace and reduced level of development for Elk Township. It is estimated that they will lower potential build out by 1,350 dwelling units and about 3,300 persons.

Other land use plan changes include:

1. Change M-2 area between rail right-of-way and Rt. 55 to M-1
2. Eliminate M-1 area east of CR 609 and change to MD land use
3. Add commercial land use to various intersections and enlarge areas at others:
 - (a) SH 77/CR 618
 - (b) SH 77/Mullica-EwanRd
 - (c) SH 77/Harrisonville-Ferrell Rd
 - (d) CR 553/Stanger Ave.
 - (e) CR 553/CR 610
 - (f) CR 553/CR 608 near Rt. 55

(See attached Land Use Plan dated 8/17/04)

These changes are shown on the Land Use Plan attached dated 11/01/04.

e. Recommendations concerning adoption of redevelopment plans

There are no recommendations for use of C40:12A-1 et seq. in Elk Township.