

**IRVINGTON TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN
2009 RE-EXAMINATION REPORT**

February 2009

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**Irvington Township Planning Board
Adopted February 26, 2009**

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Introduction

Every six years the Municipal Land Use Law (Chapter 291, Laws of N.J. 1975, amended) (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1 et. seq.) requires that the governing body shall provide for a general reexamination of its master plan and development regulations by the Planning Board. The law goes on to require that a reexamination be completed at least once every six years from the previous reexamination.

In March 2002, The Irvington Township Planning Board adopted the Irvington Township Master Plan, and on April, 2002, the 2002 Irvington Township Master Plan was adopted by the Municipal Council. The 2002 Master Plan expresses community goals for the use of Irvington's land and facilities.

The primary theme woven through each element in the Master Plan emphasizes zoning and existing land use conflicts. The 2002 Master Plan identified the prevalence of non-conforming uses; illegal residential conversions and uses that are not defined in a zoning district. Also, the Plan uncovered the growing encroachment of three and four family dwellings into the R1 zones.

The 2002 Irvington Township Master Plan represents the collective thinking of Irvington on its growth and development as well as its vision for the future. The 2002 Master Plan was a strategic plan to guide our future and a policy tool for retaining and enhancing the special character, values, and quality of life that are fundamental to our community. A major purpose of the 2002 Irvington Township Master Plan was to express community goals for the use of Irvington's land and facilities. Guided by a broad community consensus, these goals included meeting the community's affordable housing obligation, meeting age restricted senior housing needs, providing for educational needs, preserving open space, developing adequate recreation facilities, and retaining Irvington's small-town atmosphere. The Master Plan also sought to preserve the existing character, mix, and densities of commercial, residential, and other land uses in Irvington.

The purpose of this report is to discuss how well the 2002 Master Plan anticipated the Township's needs to date and how its goals have been implemented by Irvington's development regulations. Following adoption of this report the Planning Board will undertake a detailed review of the changes recommended and look towards amending the Master Plan.

The law (Section 40:55D-89) requires that the reexamination report shall state:

- **The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of the adoption of the last reexamination report.**
- **The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date.**

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- **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.**
- **The specific changes recommended for the master plan or development regulations, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether a new plan or regulations should be prepared.**
- **The recommendations of the planning board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans adopted pursuant to the "Local Redevelopment and Housing Law," P.L. 1992, c. 79 (C.40A:12A-1 et al.) into the land use plan element of the municipal master plan, and recommend changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.**

SECTION 1

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

The 2002 Master Plan was a comprehensive plan that replaced the 1982 Master Plan. This current re-examination report is the first update of the 2002 Plan.

The following major objectives of land development confronting Irvington at the time the Master Plan was adopted were reported in the Plan as:

- *Continue to seek out opportunities for retaining and attracting businesses, revitalizing vacant and abandoned sites, and cleaning up contaminated sites.*
- *As discussed in the Land Use Element, expand the number of commercial zones from two to five, thereby strengthening the commercial activity in the Township.*
- *Continue to ensure that UEZ plans and proposals are consistent with the Master Plan.*
- *Prepare Redevelopment Plans immediately following the adoption of the Areas in Need of Redevelopment for the Coit Street Industrial Area, portions of the East Ward, Springfield Avenue East, and the Mill Road Area.*
- *The Planning Board should undertake a study to determine if 18th Avenue between Myrtle and Vermont Avenues; the East Ward between 18th Avenue, 20th Avenue, Grove Street, and the Newark City Line; Clinton Avenue, east of Springfield Avenue; Chancellor Avenue between Rutgers Street and Temple Place; and the commercial node near the intersection of Lyons and Union Avenues are Areas in Need of Redevelopment. If these areas are found to be Areas in Need of Redevelopment, the Township should prepare Redevelopment Plans to revitalize those areas.*
- *Develop criteria or standards for developers seeking to develop or redevelop property in Irvington in accordance with standards used by the New Jersey Redevelopment Authority. The RFQ (Request for Qualifications) or SOQ (Statement of Qualifications) will ensure developers experience, a good track record, and are qualified to undertake projects that range from small rehabilitation to large-scale development.*
- *Undertake a planning process to petition the Office of State Planning for a Center Designation for the Township, which would amend the State Development and Redevelopment Plan's (SDRP) Resource Planning and Management Map (RPMM) to include Irvington as a Center. A Center Designation may increase the allocation of state resources to the Township.*
- *Create a Planning Office in Municipal Building to serve the Township Departments, appointed and elected bodies, and the general public. The Planning Office should have experience in land use, zoning, economic development, demography (i.e., Census), mapping (conventional and Geographic Information Systems), and graphics.*

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- *Continue to work with Essex County under the Inter-Local Service Agreement to support job growth, develop business opportunities, and improve the quality of life within the Coit Street Industrial Area.*
- *Strongly consider the recommendations outlined in the Coit Street/I-78 Industrial Area Plan prepared by the Port Authority that suggests improving roadway access in the industrial area; decommissioning the rail line; improving the Pathmark Shopping Center; and establishing a “brand” for the industrial area by enhancing the gateways, installing signage, and improving the physical appearance.*
- *Strongly consider the recommendations provided in the Springfield Smart Growth Handbook that suggests better pedestrian access from the Maple Gardens complex to the Mini-Mall/Supremo Shopping Area, as well as pedestrian, streetscape, and traffic calming measures along Springfield Avenue, particularly in Irvington Center and the NJ Transit Bus Terminal Area.*
- *Conduct an urban design study to improve the appearance of the downtown commercial area, especially the Township’s most visible intersection — Clinton and Springfield Avenues. The Township should ensure that the design of this intersection takes advantage of its location, urban form, and architectural and historic character, and that the design transforms this space to promote the identity of the Township. The Township should consider removing the Police Booth and replace it with a strong design element such as a clock. The Township should examine the streets, stores, and signage that surround the intersection.*
- *Initiate a new gateway program to upgrade all the gateways into the Township. The improvements should include new and better signs, cleaner roadways and lots, demolition of abandoned buildings, and removal of graffiti.*
- *Continue to seek grants from the New Jersey Economic Development Agency and the Department of Environmental Protection for the Hazardous Discharge Site Remediation Fund. Work with NJ Transit to ensure the design and layout of the new Bus Terminal helps reinforce the Township’s importance as one of the key transportation nodes in the County.*
- *The Township should develop a business attraction plan to encourage uses to locate near the bus terminal that complement the transportation node.*
- *The Township should explore links to parking facilities (i.e., the Nye Avenue Garage or another location that could serve as a park and ride for commuters.*
- *The design of the new terminal should make an architectural statement by using neo-traditional design elements rather than contemporary design elements that may look outdated within a few years.*
- *In conjunction with the Port Authority's continuing interest in conducting port-related business in the Coit Street Industrial Area, pursue a "Foreign Trade Zone" designation for that area.*

The Master Plan recognized three major residential issues: 1) Irvington was facing a building trend toward density increases, especially in its single-family districts; 2) a shrinking supply of affordable housing due to foreclosure, abandonment, fire and dilapidation; and, 3) the prevalence

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of overall neighborhood decline in its East and South wards. Opportunities were cited in the Plan for which the Township could foresee a better residential future, such as stimulating activity in new housing construction and rehabilitation as well as creating incentives to restore second-story residential living in the Irvington Center along Springfield Avenue. The Plan expounded on this capacity to rebuild residential living given the excellent regional access to jobs and shopping via I-78, the Garden State Parkway, Route 22 and the NJ Transit Bus Terminal.

The major sections of the Master Plan addressing land development issues are addressed below.

Housing - Balancing housing needs with concerns about environmental issues and neighborhood protection were major goals of the land use and housing elements. The balance between housing and jobs was also a critical need identified in the Plan. The goal is to reduce the trip lengths and travel time for residents to help reduce automobile use and increase transit and pedestrian modes of travel to work.

In the Township, the appropriate density for new units in the East and South wards was a major concern, as was the completion of mixed use projects featuring upper story residences over retail and offices.

The Master Plan presented several housing objectives: protecting the scale and integrity of existing neighborhoods from incompatible land uses or changes in density; maintaining and enhancing the diversity of housing types; and providing opportunities for age restricted housing.

The following are the housing objectives relating to developing Irvington land:

- *Prepare a Fair Share Housing Plan that meets all relevant State requirements and that is consistent with the provisions of this Master Plan.*
- *Conduct an inventory of housing built after 1980 that can be credited toward the Township's fair share housing obligation.*
- *Continue to provide adequate affordable housing for Irvington residents.*
- *Encourage and increase homeownership through new construction, rehabilitation and homeowner assistance.*
- *Focus the construction of new affordable housing in neighborhoods that have been depleted of their housing stock through abandonment and/or demolition, particularly in the East Ward and the South Ward.*
- *Identify sites in all wards that could potentially be used for the development of affordable housing.*

Economic Development – The land use element of the Plan describes making the economic well being of Township's center and its shopping corridors a major long term objective. Balancing the need to intensify land development in the Township's Urban Enterprise Zone with creating

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transitions to residential neighborhood was a major objective in the 2002 land use and circulation elements. The community identified redevelopment as an appropriate strategy to be implemented in areas and in scattered sites.

The Master Plan recognized that there was a need to expand commercial and office amenities into existing residential neighborhoods help stabilize communities, keeps local shops and services within comfortable walking distance and stems the erosion of the tax base and destruction of the fabric of neighborhoods.

The salient economic development objectives of the 2002 Master Plan included:

- *Continue to seek out opportunities for retaining and attracting businesses, revitalizing vacant and abandoned sites, and cleaning up contaminated sites.*
- *As discussed in the Land Use Element, expand the number of commercial zones from two to five, thereby strengthening the commercial activity in the Township.*
- *Continue to ensure that UEZ plans and proposals are consistent with the Master Plan.*
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- *Continue to seek grants from the New Jersey Economic Development Agency and the Department of Environmental Protection for the Hazardous Discharge Site Remediation Fund.*
- *Work with NJ Transit to ensure the design and layout of the new Bus Terminal helps reinforce the Township’s importance as one of the key transportation nodes in the County.*
- *In conjunction with the Port Authority's continuing interest in conducting port-related business in the Coit Street Industrial Area, pursue a "Foreign Trade Zone" designation for that area.*

Environment - Guiding growth away from environmentally sensitive areas and directing it to more suitable locations was a major objective in the land use and open space plan elements of the 2002 Master Plan. Areas in need of preservation and protection included the Elizabeth river running through the Township's center, floodplain and wetlands flanking the western side along the Lightning Brook. Another major issue facing Township was finding a stable source of funding that would permit Irvington to improve the Elizabeth River channel to protect properties that are threatened by flooding.

Traffic Circulation - The Master Plan reported that traffic levels on the arterials (Springfield, Clinton, Lyons, Chancellor avenues) declined between 1975 and 1998. However, congestion during the peak hours remains high, especially along Lyons Avenue approaching the 1-78 eastbound

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entrance. Irvington is well served by transit busses, taxi-cabs and is a very walkable center. This makes the Irvington center (the cross roads of Springfield and Clinton avenues) well-used by pedestrians.

The Plan reported that this use by pedestrians in an automobile oriented creates conflicts that have to be avoided. The Plan said:

“For the continued health of downtown business, it is critical that downtown remain a safe, comfortable, and convenient environment for pedestrians. Infill development should be encouraged on empty lots, “filling in” the gaps in the compact building pattern. Pedestrians tend to feel less safe in areas with vacant lots and buildings, so infill development helps promote walking. Moreover, new development needs to fit in with the traditional building pattern and design. These measures would increase the size and extent of the pedestrian realm, creating additional business opportunities.

In the late 1990s, the State Department of Transportation determined that the Springfield-Clinton intersection was one of the worst locations for pedestrian-related accidents in the State. The Springfield-Grove intersection was also identified as being prone to pedestrian accidents. In early 2000, the Township received a grant from the New Jersey Department of Transportation to develop and implement improvement plans for the two intersections. Of the total grant money, \$300,000 was earmarked for the Springfield-Clinton intersection, and \$100,000 was set aside for the Springfield-Grove intersection.”

Specific circulation goals in the 2002 Master Plan addressing land development included:

- *Develop a Capital Improvement Program for roads and sidewalks, which identifies needed improvements, repairs, and maintenance activities and itemizes the costs of those needs.*
- *Implement sidewalk, crosswalk, and streetscape improvements (decorative paving, decorative lighting, trees and landscaping, undergrounding of overhead wires, installation of benches and new bus shelters, etc.) in Irvington Center, in order to enhance pedestrian circulation and attract more customers.*
- *Continue efforts to establish a direct pedestrian linkage between the Nye Avenue Parking Garage and the Bus Terminal.*
- *Improve pedestrian entrances into the Nye Avenue Parking Garage, as well as pedestrian circulation and visibility within the garage.*
- *Explore the feasibility of establishing a vehicular entrance to the Nye Avenue Garage from Clinton Avenue.*
- *Encourage NJ Transit to increase bus service, as needed, to keep up with demand.*

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- *Continue working with NJ Transit and the New Jersey Highway Authority to revitalize the Irvington Bus Terminal and to improve pedestrian linkages between the terminal, the Nye Avenue Parking Garage, and the commercial areas along Springfield Avenue and Clinton Avenue.*
- *Encourage "infill" development of vacant and underutilized lots in Irvington Center and in Business Districts. Through the provisions of the zoning code, require "infill" development to be sidewalk-oriented, like traditional buildings in those areas.*
- *In conjunction with planning for new parks and the upgrading of existing parks, establish convenient and well-designed pedestrian linkages and signage from adjacent streets into the parks.*
- *Develop a bicycle circulation plan that identifies potential locations for bicycle paths (offroad) and bicycle lanes (on-road).*
- *As part of the zoning code, include requirements for installation of permanent bicycle racks in conjunction with normal parking requirements for commercial uses.*
- *Work with NJ Transit to provide bicycle racks and lockers at the Bus Terminal.*
- *Provide and/or improve bicycle racks at Township facilities, including Township Hall, the Library, and the Gatling Recreation Center.*

Recreation and Open Space - The protection and acquisition of open spaces was a major goal in the 2002 Master Plan. Techniques to preserve open space were discussed in the open space/recreation and parks elements of the Master Plan. Providing a stable source of funding for open space acquisitions was a major objective.

The Master Plan open space/recreation and parks land development goals include:

- *Work with residents, merchants, property owners, the Board of Education, the Police Department, and the Township Recreation Department to develop a security and maintenance plan for each park site. Consider creating a conservancy to help maintain parks.*
- *The plan should be a multi-faceted strategy, addressing police surveillance, capital improvements, maintenance, funding, lighting, fencing, and landscaping design in a coordinated fashion.*
- *Continue to seek out grants and low-interest loans that the Township can use to make improvements and expansions to recreational facilities.*
- *Identify at least three half- or quarter-acre sites in each ward that can be potentially used as the location of future pocket parks. Seek community groups or faith-based institutions to serve as caretakers of the pocket parks.*
- *Identify at least one five- to ten-acre site or a series of sites that total five to ten acres in each ward that can be potentially used as the location of future active recreational facilities, such as a soccer field.*

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- *In identifying sites for potential new parks, focus on sites that are currently vacant or abandoned.*
- *Explore the feasibility of establishing walking, running, and/or biking trails along portions of the Elizabeth River.*
- *Work with residents in each ward to select potential park locations, based on the list of potential sites identified by the Township, and to plan and design these parks.*
- *In developing a security and maintenance plan for park, share these draft plans with the Irvington Police Department and the Township Recreation Department, so that they can comment on those plans and offer suggestions.*
- *Work with NJ Transit to establish weekend bus service from the Irvington Bus Terminal to South Mountain Reservation.*
- *Work with the County to increase landscaping and reduce paved surfaces along County roads.*
- *Develop a plan to increase landscaping and reduce paved surfaces along Township roads and in Township parking lots.*
- *Increase landscaping requirements on commercial properties and in parking lots as part of the zoning code.*
- *Adopt updated environmental standards for industrial uses as part of the zoning code.*
- *Continue working with State officials to clean up brownfield sites.*
- *Work with the New Jersey Highway Authority to install noise barriers and/or plant additional evergreen trees or hedges alongside the Irvington section of the Garden State Parkway.*
- *Require off-street loading facilities for warehouse and industrial sites, large enough to accommodate eighteen-wheeler trucks.*
- *Work with the Camptown Business Improvement District to coordinate roadway and sidewalk*

Community Facilities - The Irvington Township continues to be adequately served by a comprehensive system of municipal services that include public utilities, police and fire protection, emergency services, the public library, public health, public school system, and recreational and cultural facilities.

Major community development objectives addressing land development were the following.

- *As part of the zoning code, continue to allow a variety of potential locations for child care facilities and family day care.*
- *Encourage childcare providers to seek locations along transportation routes to increase access to households that do not own motor vehicles.*

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- *Pursue additional hiring grants to increase the size of the Police force and to increase Police surveillance, particularly during nighttime hours.*
- *Work closely with the Police and Fire Departments and other code enforcement agencies to pursue "quality of life" violations, such as loitering, graffiti, non-compliance with zoning and building codes, and poor building maintenance.*
- *Identify additional funding sources that can be used to demolish abandoned and hazardous buildings and to secure (i.e., board up) such buildings prior to demolition.*
- *Explore the feasibility of expanding Township bus service for seniors to and from the Senior Citizen Center.*
- *Make crossing the street safer for seniors by changing the signal timing of the traffic lights.*
- *Construct a second police station in the East Ward and seek funds to construct a Public Safety Complex that houses the Police and Fire Headquarters and Municipal Court. Based upon the Attorney General report, the Police Department should be increased by 40 police officers. The current police headquarters will not be adequate to handle additional personnel. In addition, the Public Safety Complex was poorly-designed and constructed over a brook and is experiencing environmental, plumbing, heating and ventilation issues. In the long-term, this facility should be re-built at its current site by using the employee parking areas surrounding the Public Safety Complex.*

Utilities/Infrastructure - The provision of adequate infrastructure to meet the needs of Irvington Township was a primary concern of the 2002 Master Plan. Ensuring adequate water supply for residential use and fire fighting capabilities continued as a major focus of the utility plan element. The Master Plan also identified the need to direct growth into areas served by public sewer and water.

Other related goals listed in the 2002 Master Plan include the following:

- Encouraging recycling.
- Conserving energy in residential, commercial, and transportation areas.
- Developing strategies to ensure all utilities are underground.
- Controlling the quantity and quality of storm water run off from new development.

SECTION 2

The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to the Plan's adoption in April, 2002.

Irvington began implementing its Master Plan land development objectives from the outset with an immediate comprehensive update of its Zoning Ordinance, adopted in 2004 and amended through 2007. This ongoing zoning effort created land development incentives such as, reducing parking requirements, permitting FAR increases, expanding locations for business services and restaurants and making undersized lots developable.

The Township created five focus areas for continuous data collection and analysis and to facilitate neighborhood planning. The Master Plan is implemented in these areas by staff focusing developer's attention on places where our planning is targeted. Within those areas the Township adopted commercial and residential redevelopment plans that have built new projects where they would otherwise not have occurred. To help implement its Plan objectives, the Township built its first geographic information system with layers of analysis information, and developed data mining tools to ferret out and compose data into meaningful ways to microscopically steer growth.

Through the implementation of its Master Plan, the Township has out-built the pace of property decline.¹ In 2002 over 450 properties were defined as structurally dilapidated or vacant. Over the ensuing years this deterioration continued with fires, abandonment, foreclosures, etc. However, in 2008 the stock of deteriorated projects dropped to 275. This is attributed to the building activity that on net reduced the Townships prevailing condition of property devastation.

Land Development

The Township has few opportunities for virgin land large tract development. Much of the staff planning focus is and will be on deploying in-fill strategies to encourage consistent and appropriate land development. This does not ignore the existence of a few privately owned parcels that will attract re-use opportunities, such as the Irvington General Hospital site.

The most critical land development need to address is preparation of a detailed database on land use. A survey of land that would identify the use and development intensity of individual parcels would produce a knowledge base to support planning and land development control. This remains an uncompleted objective of the Master Plan. The land use knowledge base starts with inventory of existing use conditions, and with appropriate tools would convert the data into useful information that staff can utilize to provide decision-support to the Planning Board and the Board of Adjustment. This information will be useful to the Mayor and his operating departments and the Municipal Council.

The Township has prepared redevelopment plans that come with design guidelines for site development. This strategy will be discussed in the Section 5 of this report.

¹ Fire Department listing of unsafe properties 2002 through 2008

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Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization

Irvington has made significant strides in rebuilding its housing stock and improving neighborhoods particularly in the East Ward. Increasing its stock of affordable housing and preserving the diversity of housing in Irvington remains an important objective, and both communities have undertaken major efforts to preserve and expand their affordable housing stock.

A total of 172 new and rehabilitated housing units (52 were affordable) were planned or constructed in the Township since the 2002 Master Plan adoption through this report. In the East Ward alone about 30 new homeowners and tenants are now Township residents. The Township is seeking to secure 11 parcels in the East Ward from the New Jersey Education Development Administration, taken by eminent domain in 2005 for the construction of a new Middle School in the East Ward. The shift downward of middle school aged children has prompted the Board of Education to not advocate for building a new Middle School. The Township would like to see this land sold to qualified developers to build needed affordable and market rate housing in the East Ward.

Protecting existing neighborhoods from incompatible development continues to be a concern. Pressure on the scale and integrity of residential neighborhoods has increased in recent years. Irvington has received proposals for residential density increases as developers plan to subdivide regulation lots are planned into substandard lots with consequent yard and parking issues. These development plans are brought to the Board of Adjustment because the Planning Board does not review density cases and tend to get approved on a case-by-case basis. The challenge for staff is to address such issues as Master Plan concerns and help Board of Adjustment members see the broader context within which developers are attempting to divide lots when they can build on existing lots within zoning requirements. Such development applications for in-fill development have increased, and to establish new development that is harmonious with existing neighborhoods remains a Master Plan objective.

Traffic Circulation

Due to Irvington's location, the community continues to benefit by great local and regional access. A cooperative effort between Irvington, neighboring communities, the county, state, and regional authorities is essential to take appropriate advantage of the concentration of transit and automobile systems.

With respect to local traffic, volumes are congested in some areas of the Township: Lyons Avenue from Lincoln Place to Newark and to a lesser extent, portions of Union Avenue, Chancellor Avenue, and Springfield Avenue as they direct traffic into Irvington Center. Expansion of transit opportunities are a solution to expected growth in traffic volumes as development proceeds in the Township over the next half-decade². NJ Transit has funded a free bus shuttle serving Irvington

² Large projects on the horizon: 179 square foot mixed use Township Center plan; development of mixed uses at the 6-acre Irvington General Hospital; 2.5 acre commercial development at Mill Road and Stuyvesant Avenue; 80,000 square foot Pabst site commercial development

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Center and a new express GO Bus service is operating along Springfield Avenue, which with growth to threshold patronage could support an upgrade to light rail transit service.

Irvington is taking steps to channel automobile traffic away from Irvington Center by strategically enhancing peripheral parking supply, such as the Nye Avenue Municipal Parking Garage and fostering pedestrian and transit-only use where appropriate to create auto-free zones. The Township is also working with Essex County to implement a number of traffic calming strategies to slow vehicle speed on Springfield Avenue and its approach roads. The feasibility of peripheral parking for central business district employees is an as yet, unmet objective of the Master Plan and must be investigated.

Developing alternative means of transportation remains an achievable objective. A comprehensive bikeway study is required, and a committee consisting of local officials and the business community will be formed to discuss enhancing non-motorized access to Irvington Center. NJ Transit has provided a free journey to work bus that in the off peak hours will operate as a free jitney bus service between residential neighborhoods and the shopping districts in Irvington.

The Township, working with NJDOT funds and Essex County support is continuing an examination of key Township Center intersections and examine ways to reduce traffic bottlenecks and ease traffic congestion.

A few remaining Master Plan objectives to be met in transportation are:

- Complete a study on the design and financial feasibility of improving access to and expanding Township owned surface parking lots.
- Develop a business attraction plan to encourage uses to locate near the bus terminal that complement the transportation node.
- The Township should explore links to parking facilities (i.e., the Nye Avenue Municipal Parking Garage or another location that could serve as a park and ride for commuters.

Economic Development

The Township has a central business district and retail corridors along major roads that reach into residential neighborhoods. The Township's central business district remains economically healthy. These areas have seen recent renovations to existing stores and infrastructure. Efforts to facilitate the provision of adequate parking in the Township's business district remain a high priority. The Township has recently taken steps to study the strategic use or peripheral parking surrounding the Township Center, looking for ways to intercept automobiles and create a safe pedestrian-transit oriented CBD.

Since the Plan's adoption in 2002, widespread Township-sponsored redevelopment and private land development activity has occurred within the Township's residential neighborhoods, as well as the commercial and industrial districts.

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In 2004, the Township completed a study of residential spending patterns. This study revealed a number of services and products that are patronized by residents that do not exist within the Township. The results of the study are being used in an economic development strategy to attract such businesses to Irvington. The study is very specific and allows the Township to quantify the gap in service and product offerings to square footages that can be absorbed in Irvington.

Recreation/Open Space

The Township made major strides in meeting the goals and objectives of the open space and recreation element of the 2002 Master Plan.

Since 2002, every Township owned park has had newly built playground equipment. Park renovations funded through the Green Acres program has transformed the parks, particularly Orange, Raymond Burgess (formerly Montgomery Park) and Chancellor parks, where new park buildings and fencing have been constructed.

Every Township Ward now features a community facility, where youngsters are exposed to recreation activities.

Community Facilities

The Township is funding a complete renovation of Fire Station 4, which will permit the Station to house larger fire trucks.

The Irvington Township Board of Education saw major renovations undertaken using State school construction funds. Two schools: Mt. Vernon Avenue Elementary, and Augusta Elementary underwent complete rehabilitation, while two others: Grove Street Elementary and Montgomery Elementary has just started a complete renovation.

Energy Conservation

The Township is addressing energy conservation leading by example with the installation of new energy-efficient office lighting and upgrading its telephone system to limit cost and electrical use. Private developers are encouraged to build solar energy roofs and design energy efficient buildings.

Utilities/Infrastructure

Ensuring that Irvington Township has adequate infrastructure to serve the needs of the community without adversely affecting the environment or quality of life in Irvington remains an ongoing objective.

Street Paving: Beginning in 2002 the Township began using a backlog of NJDOT. These funds were designated for repaving roads but were languishing. The Township Department of Public Works developed a Paving Information System to guide the selection of roads that required new surfaces. This system resulted from a rigorous field investigation of road surface conditions. The initial pace of repaving was 2 to 3 streets each year. At the current time, the Township is fully implementing the Pavement Information System by funding the resurfacing of 67 roads throughout Irvington. This work will be completed by the end of Autumn 2008.

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Essex County has repaved roads it owns: Stuyvesant Avenue, Sanford Avenue and Grove Street

Street repair: There were several problem streets the Township identified in 2002 and completed work to repair them. The neighborhoods along Columbia Avenue, University Avenue experienced washed out fill that supported the stability of these roads..

Solid Waste and Recycling

The Township contracts for twice a week pick-up of solid waste for all its residents. The Township offers bi-weekly recycling at the curbside of all recyclable material, except plastic. The Township maintains a recycling facility at its Coit Street Public Works facility as an additional convenience to residents. The Irvington Township currently recycles slightly more than 30 percent of its solid waste.

SECTION 3

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.

Density and distribution of population and land uses – Overall, the density and distribution of population and land use has not changed significantly from 2002 Master Plan. The majority of new units in the Township were constructed as 2 and 3 family houses and with minor exceptions complied with the Township’s general zoning and redevelopment plans ordinances.

Table One below shows the change in population and housing units for the Township between 2000 and 2007. The Township population as estimated by Census decreased by 4,000 persons from 60,695 in 2000 to 56,920 in 2007. The number of housing units remained fairly stable with a decrease of 75 units. Irvington’s redevelopment program bore fruit in 2006 and 2007, which reversed the double-digit decline in housing units since the 2000 Census (See Table 2)

Table 1

U.S. Census Population and Housing Units 2000 - 2007				
	Population		Housing Units	
	2000	2007	2000	2007
Census	60,695	56,920	24,122	24,047
Density	20,929/sq mi	19,629/sq mi	8,318/sq mi	8,292/sq mi

Table 2

Housing Unit trend 2000-2007

2000 Census			24,122	
	Demolition	Certified	Estimates	% Change
2002	53	6	24,075	-19%
2003	45	7	24,037	-16%
2004	34	7	24,010	-11%
2005	38	3	23,975	-15%
2006	20	26	23,981	3%
2007	9	75	24,047	28%

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Table 3 shows the change in land use between 2002 and 2007. As shown, the relative ratio of uses remained stable between 2002 and 2004. In 2005 the Township experience a dramatic increase in the development of commercial and industrial properties. The economic climate was very good for development and much of the commercial development was spurred by the redevelopment activities. Residential uses slightly decreased over this 6-year period. Notably parcels devoted to apartment use experienced a significant decline. Vacant land increased between 2002 and 2007. Much of this vacant land was generated by code enforcement demolitions and land in the East Ward that was purchased by the then New Jersey Schools Construction Corporation and the structures were razed.

Table 3
Land Use Trend
2002 – 2007

No. of Parcels- Twp Assessors Records

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Residential	8,003	8,003	8,006	7,987	7,977	7,954
Apartment	340	340	337	174	174	173
Commercial	645	641	632	1,145	1,143	1,188
Industrial	176	173	172	635	637	685
Vacant	316	311	336	345	391	399

Housing conditions – There have been no significant changes in housing policy since the 2002 Master Plan was adopted. The Township continues to plan for sound neighborhood development, with amenities such as neighborhood businesses located within walking distances and cross-town bus services operating between residential areas.

The lead strategy to replace dilapidated housing with new or rehabilitated homes is infill development. Every ward in the Township has experienced upgraded residential development. The Township has seen its 2-family housing stock get much of the focus of developers, although the Township is continuing to encourage 1-family housing development and enhancing the quality of offerings in the multi-family market.

Circulation - The Township will continue to focus attention on pedestrian safety. The Township is also steadfast in stimulating transit-oriented and bicycle-oriented commuting in the Irvington Center. This policy and vision is consistent with

Conservation of Natural Resources and Energy - There has been no change in the Master Plan vision of the Township to generally establish design criteria to foster efficient energy use and natural resources protection as criteria for development.

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Each of the five redevelopment plans for the areas listed below have guidelines promulgated to encourage sustainable development at the project development stage:

- East Ward Redevelopment Area
- Mill Road Redevelopment Area
- Urban Enterprise Zone (UEZ) Rehabilitation Area
- Scattered Sites Redevelopment Areas (77 properties)
- Coit Street Redevelopment Area

These guidelines will be incorporated into the Township zoning ordinance as specific requirements to guide development.

State, county and municipal policy changes - The New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP) was adopted March 1, 2001. The Irvington Township was an active participant in the development of the SDRP, particularly in the cross-acceptance of this state plan. The SDRP is intended to serve as a guide for public and private sector investment in New Jersey and as a policy document to guide state and local agencies planning.

A portion of the Irvington Township has been designated as a Regional Center. The SDRP defines Regional Centers as a compact mix of residential, commercial, and public uses, serving a large surrounding area and developed at intensity that makes public transportation feasible. The majority of the regional center in Irvington is developed.

The state plan also designates large masses of land that share a common set of conditions, such as population density, infrastructure, level of development, or natural systems into one of five planning areas. Each planning area has a series of policy objectives that guide the application of the SDRP. None of these designations preclude development.

The Township is entirely within Planning Area 1, which is describe as follows:

Planning Area (PA1)

The intent of this area is to provide for much of the state's future development; promote growth in Centers and other compact forms; protect the character of existing stable communities; protect natural resources; redesign areas of sprawl; reverse the current trend toward further sprawl; and revitalize cities and towns.

For the most part Planning Area 1 in the 2001 SDRP correspond to the definition found in the 1992 SDRP. The changes in the SDRP have not altered the assumptions, policies and objectives that formed the basis for Irvington's 2002 Master Plan, Zoning Ordinance and Redevelopment regulations. The Irvington Township's planning efforts were consistent with the 1992 SDRP and remain consistent with the 2001 SDRP.

SECTION 4

The specific changes recommended for the master plan or development regulations, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether a new plan or regulations should be prepared.

Throughout this re-examination report we have discussed changes that have occurred in the Irvington Township. Some of these changes are readily apparent, others less apparent, and some are just beginning to be felt. While there have been changes, many issues continue to be in the forefront of our planning. The community continues to wrestle with the following issues:

- A shortage of sizable tracts of vacant developable land to meet the growth needs in the Township.
- Maintaining a balance of market and affordable housing.
- Meeting the housing needs of a growing senior population.
- Maintaining a range of housing opportunities to ensure a diverse population at all age and economic levels.
- Providing adequate recreation and open space.
- Ensuring an economically healthy downtown and shopping districts.
- Balancing institutional needs with neighborhood protection.
- Limiting traffic impacts in the Irvington Center.

This re-examination report recommends that the Irvington Township Master Plan be updated to address the above issues, and incorporate the following items, along with any other issues that come to light upon detailed review and public comment.

A. Land Use

1. The zoning for the Irvington Center should be reviewed, with a eye towards developing it as a mixed-use zone. This zone could permit age restricted and affordable housing, and market rate housing, as well as additional nonresidential development.
2. A study/survey of existing land uses throughout the Township especially along the main corridors: Springfield Avenue, Clinton Avenue, Chancellor Avenue, Lyons Avenue, Stuyvesant Avenue and Sanford Avenue. This review should include capacity analysis, density measurement, development of design standards, and traffic circulation.
3. Service zones as an emerging commercial activity should be explored along the same roads listed in bullet #2 above.
4. The areas around existing mixed-use zones and nonresidential zones in Irvington Center and along commercial corridors that course through residential neighborhoods should be examined to determine if these areas need additional protection, have changed and require rezoning, or should be considered for mixed-use development. In the Township the Office-Residence zone along Sanford and Stuyvesant avenues should be reviewed first.

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5. The strategic designation of parking in Irvington Center will have an impact on land uses in this area. It will also support the planned 180 million dollar Irvington Center Mixed Use Project at the NJ Transit Bus Terminal and help influence upscale business development of Clinton Avenue between Ball Street and the Newark border. The Planning Board should review its objectives, policies and zoning for the CBD zone to determine if any changes are warranted based upon the anticipated impacts from enhancing parking at the Nye Avenue Municipal Parking Garage.

B. Housing

1. The housing element should be revised to include innovative ways to meet the needs of a growing senior population.
2. Maintaining housing that is affordable to all income levels continues to warrant further study and action.
3. Maintaining the existing character of Township neighborhoods should be ensured through the development of additional zoning controls on the height, setback, and bulk of homes. Building 2 and 3 family homes on small lots designed to accommodate single family houses that are out of scale with their neighborhood should be discouraged.

C. Circulation

1. A revision to the existing pedestrian and bicycle section of the circulation element is necessary. Upon completion of this plan it should be adopted as part of the Irvington Township Master Plan.
2. Regional express transit opportunities continues to be a primary goal for Irvington Township. The Township should continue to monitor NJ Transit's study of regional bus service and seek to upgrade express service as the Irvington Center grows transit-supporting threshold employment levels over the next half decade. The circulation element should be amended when more is known about the Greater Newark Bus Study.
3. Develop a vision for discouraging automobile use of Irvington Center through local solutions to local traffic issues.

SECTION 5

The recommendations of the planning board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans adopted pursuant to the "local redevelopment and housing law," P.L. 1992, C. 79 (C.40A:12a-1 et al.) into the land use plan element of the municipal master plan, and recommend changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.

Since 2002 the Township has declared the following five areas of redevelopment in the Township:

- East Ward Redevelopment Area
- Mill Road Redevelopment Area
- Urban Enterprise Zone (UEZ) Rehabilitation Area
- Scattered Sites Redevelopment Areas (77 properties)
- Coit Street Redevelopment Area

With the adoption of this Re-examination report the Planning Board is incorporating these redevelopment plans into the Irvington Master Plan Land Use Element.

Some key development concepts and actual development that are occurring in established redevelopment areas since 2002 are listed below:

1. 53 units of new housing in the East Ward
2. \$140 million Center City mixed use concept in the UEZ Rehabilitation Area
3. \$20 commercial development in the Mill Road Redevelopment Area
4. Opening of the International House of Pancakes in UEZ Rehabilitation Area
5. New Advanced Auto building on Lyons Avenue
6. 19-Unit fully rehabilitation apartment building on Lyons Avenue
7. Opening of Plaza Suites a fully rehabilitated commercial building on Springfield Avenue in the UEZ Rehabilitation Area
8. Rehabilitation of the former Board of Education into a health clinic, and Cerebral Palsy service in the UEZ Rehabilitation Area
9. 20 acres of planned and actual development in the Coit Street Redevelopment Area
10. A new car wash/detailing center, the Spotless Car Wash on Lyons Avenue
11. New building constructed as an Autozone in the Coit Street Redevelopment Area
12. Several residential properties rehabilitated and newly constructed as an implementation of the Scattered Sites Redevelopment areas.