



**SCHOOR DEPALMA**  
Engineers and Consultants

---

**MASTER PLAN  
REEXAMINATION REPORT**

**BOROUGH OF RIDGEFIELD  
BERGEN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**

---


Prepared For:  
Borough of Ridgefield  
Planning Board

**ADOPTED**  
November 25, 2003

Prepared by:  
Sean Moronski, P.P., A.I.C.P.

**SCHOOR DEPALMA INC.**

The original of this report was signed and sealed in accordance with NJSA 45:14A-12

  
Sean Moronski, P.P. LI # 5601

**Your Bottom Line Results Partner™**

Justin Corporate Center, 200 State Highway Nine, P.O. Box 900, Manalapan, NJ 07726-0900 Tel: 732.577.9000 Fax: 732.577.9888  
Manalapan ■ Armonk ■ Atlantic City ■ Brick ■ Clinton ■ Exton ■ Kulpsville  
Parsippany ■ Philadelphia ■ Phillipsburg ■ Stafford ■ Voorhees  
[www.schoordepalma.com](http://www.schoordepalma.com)

**2003 BOROUGH OF RIDGEFIELD MAYOR AND COUNCIL**

Stewart V. Veale, Mayor

**Borough Council**

Anthony Suarez, Council President

Javier Acosta

Gary Bonacci

Edward Catherina

John Quaregna

Jeffrey Trifari

**2003 BOROUGH OF RIDGEFIELD PLANNING BOARD**

Bruce Nicoletta, Chairman

Joanne Orecchio, Vice Chairman

Mayor Stewart V. Veale

Councilman Gary Bonacci

Robert Fioravanti

James Mariniello, Sr.

Anthony Mauro

Robert Rathgeber

Joseph Spadola

Harry Pfaff, Alternate #1

Thomas Asfar, Alternate #2

Valerie Nicolosi, Secretary

Arthur Neiss, Esq., Attorney

Frank Rotonda, P.E., Engineer

**CONSULTANT**

**Schoor DePalma, Inc.**

**Justin Corporate Center**

**200 State Highway Nine**

**P.O. Box 900**

**Manalapan, New Jersey 07726-0900**

Sean Moronski, P.P., A.I.C.P., Project Manager

**BOROUGH OF RIDGEFIELD  
Master Plan Reexamination Report  
November 25, 2003**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**1.0 INTRODUCTION..... 1**

**2.0 REEXAMINATION OF MASTER PLAN..... 2**

**2.1 Problems and Objectives at Time of Adoption of Last Master Plan..... 2**

**2.2 The Extent of Increase or Reduction of Problems and Objectives..... 5**

**2.3 Extent of Significant Changes In Assumptions, Policies and Objectives ..... 8**

**2.4 Specific Changes Recommended for the Master Plan or Development  
    Regulations..... 13**

**2.5 Recommendations Concerning the Incorporation of Redevelopment Plans  
    Adopted ..... 16**

**LIST OF TABLES**

**Table 1: Population Growth (1980-2000) – Borough of Ridgefield..... 8**

**Table 2: Population by Racial and Ethnic Origin – Borough of Ridgefield ..... 8**

**Table 3: Median Household and Per Capita Income (1990-2000)  
– Borough of Ridgefield ..... 9**

**Table 4: Residential Building Permit Data (1992-August 2003)  
– Borough of Ridgefield ..... 9**

**BOROUGH OF RIDGEFIELD**  
**Master Plan Reexamination Report**  
**November 25, 2003**

---

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) requires every municipality in New Jersey to reexamine at least once every six (6) years (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89) to ensure periodic review of information and changing conditions in order to keep municipal planning efforts current. On October 31, 1989, the Borough adopted its current comprehensive Master Plan. The last revision of the Master Plan was adopted in October 1991.

A public hearing on the Reexamination Report is not required, but the Planning Board must adopt, by resolution, a report on the findings of such reexamination. The Planning Board must submit a copy of the report and resolution to the Bergen County Planning Board and the Clerks of all adjoining municipalities.

The statute sets forth that the reexamination report address five specific areas. These requirements are set forth below:

- a. Major problems and objectives relating to land development in the Municipality at the time of such adoption, last revision or re-examination, if any;
- b. Extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date;
- c. Extent to which there have been significant changes in the assumptions, policies and objectives forming the basis for such plan or 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, and changes in State, County and Municipal policies and objectives;
- d. Specific changes recommended for the master plan or development regulations, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether a new plan or regulations should be prepared; and
- e. 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:12 A-1 et al.) into the land use plan element of the municipal master plan, and recommended changes if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.

This Reexamination Report has been prepared to meet statutory requirements as specified in the MLUL. Said report represents an evaluation of the comprehensive Master Plan Elements and the Zoning, Development and Construction Ordinance (hereinafter referred to as the "Zoning Ordinance"), assesses the changes in land use policy since the last comprehensive Master Plan, and recommends any necessary amendments or additions to the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

**BOROUGH OF RIDGEFIELD**  
**Master Plan Reexamination Report**  
**November 25, 2003**

## 2.0 REEXAMINATION OF MASTER PLAN

The Borough of Ridgefield Master Plan, hereinafter referred to as the "1989 Plan," consists of the following sections and elements:

Master Plan Report #1:	Housing, Part 1
Master Plan Report #2:	Land Use
Master Plan Report #3:	Community Facilities
Master Plan Report #4:	Traffic and Energy Conservation
Master Plan Report #5:	Housing, Part 2
Master Plan Report #6:	Summary of Master Plan

The Planning Board amended the Master Plan by adopting an updated Housing Plan Element and Fair Share Plan (Master Plan Report #7) in October 1991. Other planning efforts undertaken by the Borough include a Center Designation Report petition submitted to the State Planning Commission on September 27, 1993, and approved with conditions by the State Planning Commission on November 29, 1994. In 1998, a Cross-Acceptance II Report was filed on behalf of the Borough.

### 2.1 Problems and Objectives at Time of Adoption of Last Master Plan

#### Master Plan Report #6: Summary of Master Plan

Report #6 outlined several objectives to guide development within the Borough.<sup>1</sup> These objectives are as follows:

1. To sustain and protect existing residential neighborhoods consisting of predominantly single- and two-family detached homes. In order to maintain residential character of such areas from the encroachment of multi-family residential and non-residential uses, home occupations, offices and conversions shall be prohibited from all low-density residential districts.
2. Channel and guide multi-family residential growth to areas proposed to be zoned for such uses.
3. Encourage the maintenance and upgrading of the Light Manufacturing Zone along Overpeck Creek and Route 46.
4. Provide for regional business oriented uses such as offices, hotels, restaurants, etc., in a planned, compact, centralized and well accessible manner so as to encourage reduction of traffic volumes, traffic hazards and congestion in the area north of Route 46.
5. Maintain general business uses in areas so designated.

<sup>1</sup> Borough of Ridgefield Master Plan, Report VI, Summary Master Plan, adopted October 31, 1989, p. 41

**BOROUGH OF RIDGEFIELD**  
**Master Plan Reexamination Report**  
**November 25, 2003**

These objectives were intended to address the broad planning issues of concern to the Borough. More specific concerns were outlined in each of the sections of the 1989 Plan.

**Master Plan Reports #1 and #5: Housing**

The Housing Reports were drafted to address the Borough's obligations to provide opportunities for the development of affordable housing units, pursuant to the 1985 New Jersey Fair Housing Act. Given the timing of Reports #1 and #5, only 1980 U.S. Census data was available to complete the Housing Plan Element. In 1991, the Planning Board amended the 1989 Plan with an updated Housing Plan Element and Fair Share Plan.

**Master Plan Report #2: Land Use**

The Land Use Report outlined the development contrasts between the "eastern," or mostly developed, and "western," that area under the authority of the Hackensack Meadowlands Development Commission (now called New Jersey Meadowlands Commission, and hereinafter referred to as "NJMC"), sections of the Borough. Specific objectives outlined in the 1989 Plan refer to the "eastern" section of the Borough. Objectives specific to land use<sup>2</sup> in areas under the zoning jurisdiction of the Borough were outlined as follows:

1. Maintain character of one- and two-family neighborhoods.
2. Encourage redevelopment of aging and deteriorating older garden apartment developments to new modern townhouse clusters and duplexes.
3. Aid and assist in development of senior citizen apartments.
4. Promote redevelopment of aging commercial and industrial areas to modern low and mid-rise office, commercial, hotel and townhouse development.
5. Establish substantial scenic and stream corridors along Hackensack River frontage.

A "new redevelopment trend" during the 1980s was cited in the 1989 Plan, focusing on marginal pieces of land and redevelopment of parcels containing obsolete uses. Among the concerns outlined was the increasing number of two-family dwelling units, creating a situation where "the increased intensity of uses will invariably result in increased traffic, congestion and other urban problems."<sup>3</sup>

The land use survey included in the 1989 Plan identified 19 separate land use categories. In addition to reviewing residential and non-residential categories, the plan referenced billboards, mixed uses, the proposed resource recovery plant, land under the jurisdiction of the NJMC, and flood zones. Proliferation of billboards was a concern as the plan stated that "a number of large objectionable billboards have escaped scrutiny."<sup>4</sup> Mixed uses, primarily located along Broad Avenue and Bergen Boulevard, were discouraged.

<sup>2</sup> Borough of Ridgefield Master Plan, Report VI, Summary Master Plan, adopted October 31, 1989, p. 13

<sup>3</sup> Borough of Ridgefield Master Plan, Report II, Land Use, adopted October 31, 1989, p. 2

<sup>4</sup> Borough of Ridgefield Master Plan, Report II, Land Use, adopted October 31, 1989, p. 22

**BOROUGH OF RIDGEFIELD**  
**Master Plan Reexamination Report**  
**November 25, 2003**

---

According to the 1989 Plan, commercial land uses should be concentrated along Bergen Boulevard (N.J. State Highway Route 63), Broad Avenue (U.S. Route 1 & 9), and U.S. Route 46. Industrial, railroad and utility areas are primarily located in the "western" section of the Borough, which is regulated by the NJMC.

At the time of the 1989 Plan, a resource recovery plant was proposed to be located near the Hackensack River. Its purpose was to incinerate garbage for conversion into energy. Opposition to the project led to its demise and it is no longer under consideration.

In 1989, vacant land in the Borough, not including parcels under the jurisdiction of the NJMC, comprised only 37 acres, approximately 4.2 percent of the land area within Ridgefield. The lack of vacant land for development is one of the factors that lead to the encouragement of redevelopment at the time of the 1989 Plan.

**Master Plan Report #3: Community Facilities**

Adopted in February 1989, this report included several sections in addition to community facilities. Master Plan Report #3 included sections dealing with economic conditions, recycling, and historic preservation.

The community facilities section included an inventory of public services, including police, fire, public works, ambulance corps, and code enforcement officials. It also included a general assessment of the library, community center, parks and Borough Hall. In addition to calling for more space and staffing, Master Plan Report #3 recommended a reassessment of Ridgefield's needs as it relates to community facilities and how the existing services are able to support the Borough's population.

Population data in the 1989 Plan is based on 1980 U.S. Census. The "economy" section of Master Plan Report #3 provided statistics on land values, ratables, and data regarding business and retail trades within the Borough. The recycling plan element highlighted the Borough's adoption of a recycling ordinance on February 8, 1988.

An historic preservation section of cited the historic sites survey conducted in 1980 by Bergen County. Many sites within the Borough were considered to be of particular historic and/or architectural interest to the Bergen County Historical Advisory Board. Among them were the English Neighborhood Reformed Church and Cemetery, the "Morse Avenue district," and the "Artist Colony" area, consisting of 12 homes along Art Lane and Studio Road having historical and/or architectural interest.

**BOROUGH OF RIDGEFIELD**  
**Master Plan Reexamination Report**  
**November 25, 2003**

---

**Master Plan Report #4: Traffic and Energy Conservation**

Adopted April 1989, Master Plan Report #4 made several recommendations regarding transportation improvements, including the following:

- Providing medians on Broad Avenue (U.S. Route 1 & 9) from the Fairview boundary line to the Ridgefield Circle.
- Elimination of the Ridgefield Traffic Circle.
- Improvements to Hendricks Causeway.
- Grade crossing at Edgewater Avenue.
- Improvements at intersection of Grand and Maple Avenues, including prohibiting left turns for southbound traffic from Grand Avenue to Maple Avenue, and installation of warning signs.

The energy conservation section discussed several ideas that encouraged conservation, including facilitating pedestrian and bicycle access in the following areas:

- Easement access across vacant land between Broad and Grand Avenues at Banta Place.
- Developing an overpass or tunnel to cross the Northern Branch Railroad right-of-way at Edgewater Avenue.
- Improve access between School #3 and residential areas by opening the fence at the end of Ridge Court cul-de-sac.

## **2.2 The Extent of Increase or Reduction of Problems and Objectives**

**Master Plan Report #6: Summary of Master Plan**

One of the objectives of the 1989 plan was to "sustain and protect existing residential neighborhoods consisting of predominantly single- and two-family detached dwellings." Lot requirements for single- and two-family detached dwellings include a sliding scale of maximum building coverage. The greater the lot area, the lower the permitted maximum percentage of building coverage. The purpose of these zoning ordinance amendments was to maintain the character of single- and two-family neighborhoods. Preservation of the character of single- and two-family neighborhoods remains an issue that needs to be addressed.

Several zoning districts have been created to "channel and guide multi-family residential growth to areas proposed to be zoned for such uses." Among the zones provided for multiple-family and townhouse use include: District C (Multiple-Family Zone); R-TH Townhouse Residential Zone; R-SR and TH Senior Citizens Housing and Townhouse Residential Zone; O-TH Office and Townhouse Zone; and the MF Medium Density Multi-Family Zone.

**BOROUGH OF RIDGEFIELD**  
**Master Plan Reexamination Report**  
**November 25, 2003**

---

Several zoning districts were created along Overpeck Creek and Route 46, including: District E Light Manufacturing; O-5 Office and Mid-Rise, O-7 Office and Mid-Rise; and CH Commercial/High Rise Hotel. These districts were intended to meet the objective of encouraging the maintenance and upgrading these areas that have been utilized by light manufacturing uses. The CH Zoning District provides an area for offices, hotels, restaurants, etc., in the area north of Route 46.

**Master Plan Reports #1 and #5: Housing**

In October 1991, the Planning Board amended its Housing Plan Element and Fair Share Plan, incorporating 1990 U.S. Census data. Key factors that affected the obligation of the Borough included a slightly declining population and a 40 percent reduction in the number of jobs in Ridgefield between 1986 and 1991. A vacant land adjustment, based on the lack of available developable land, was granted to the Borough by COAH, thereby limiting its obligation under the Fair Housing Act to the rehabilitation of existing units. The Zoning Ordinance was amended to include regulations and zoning districts for the provision of affordable housing (i.e., low- and moderate-income units). On July 10, 1996, COAH granted substantive certification to the Borough's affordable housing plan.

**Master Plan Report #2: Land Use**

Many of the objectives outlined in Master Plan Report #6 (Summary of Master Plan) are similar to those outlined in Master Plan Report #2. In concert with the objective of "maintaining the character of single- and two-family neighborhoods," additional bulk requirements were included among many Zoning Ordinance amendments. Included in single- and two-family residential dwelling bulk requirement amendments were are maximum building coverage (amended 1989 and 2000), maximum basement ceiling height (amended in 2000) and restrictions preventing single- and two-family residences within 500 feet of each other from having the same color and style (amended in 2000).

The multi-family residential zoning districts, including District C Multiple-Family Zone, R-TH Townhouse Residential Zone, and the R-TH and SR Senior Citizens Housing and Townhouse Residential Zone, are so designated to encourage redevelopment of aging and deteriorating garden apartment developments to new modern townhouse clusters and duplexes, as well as provide additional senior citizen apartments. Although the zoning districts have been created, there still exists a demand for senior citizen housing within the Borough.

Zoning districts along Route 46 and adjacent to Overpeck Creek and the railroad right-of-way are intended to promote redevelopment of aging commercial and industrial areas to modern low and mid-rise office, commercial, hotel and townhouse development. Development in the areas along Route 46 includes light industrial uses that are not consistent with the objectives of the 1989 Plan.

**BOROUGH OF RIDGEFIELD**  
**Master Plan Reexamination Report**  
**November 25, 2003**

---

The objective of establishing substantial scenic and stream corridors along the Hackensack River frontage has not been achieved. This area is located within the jurisdiction of the NJMC. The Borough should cooperate with the NJMC to encourage such development and consider development of scenic corridors along Overpeck Creek.

**Master Plan Report #3: Community Facilities**

An assessment of Borough facilities has determined there is a need for a new Borough complex to address needs for space and staffing of municipal services. The Borough is working to find an appropriate site and develop a new municipal complex to address the needs as outlined in the 1989 Plan.

The Borough received a \$500,000 grant from the State of New Jersey to develop a new library facility. Said library, expected to be complete in 2004, will contribute to the goal of the 1989 Plan to improve community facilities and provide "state-of-the-art" facilities for Ridgefield residents.

No action has been taken regarding sites within the Borough were considered to be of particular historic and/or architectural interest as outlined in the 1989 Plan.

**Master Plan Report #4: Traffic and Energy Conservation**

Several of the recommendations in Master Plan Report #4 have either been completed or are in the process of being implemented. Improvements have been made at the intersection of Grand and Maple Avenues, which also includes access ramps to and from U.S. Route 46. Southbound traffic on Grand Avenue is prohibited from making left turns onto Maple Avenue. The Ridgefield Traffic Circle is currently being reconfigured into a new intersection, as recommended in the 1989 Plan.

Activation of the Northern Branch right-of-way as a light-rail line is planned, with Ridgefield hosting a passenger station. The West Shore Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) dated April 8, 1997 recommended three potential sites for the light-rail passenger station. Two of the sites are located near the Ridgefield Traffic Circle and a third is located on Railroad Avenue between Wilt and Industrial Avenues. Ridgefield should address issues such as commuter parking and future development around the light-rail station. Activation and development of the Northern Branch light-rail line will provide another option for commuters from Ridgefield to New York City and other New Jersey destinations through its connection to the Bergen-Hudson light-rail line.

**BOROUGH OF RIDGEFIELD**  
**Master Plan Reexamination Report**  
**November 25, 2003**

### 2.3 Extent of Significant Changes in Assumptions, Policies and Objectives

- **Population Changes**

#### 2000 U.S. Census

The demographic data contained in the 1989 Plan is based on the 1980 U.S. Census. Since then the 1990 and 2000 Census have been conducted. Consequently, a comprehensive demographic analysis should be undertaken in conjunction with any comprehensive master plan update. The changes in Borough population during the 1990s are outlined in **Table 1** as follows:

	1980	1990	2000
<b>Total Population</b>	10,294	9,996	10,830
<b>% Increase</b>	--	-2.9%	+8.3% since 1990 +5.2% since 1980

Despite the population decline of 2.9 percent recorded between 1980 and 1990, the population of Ridgefield grew 5.2 percent from 1980 to 2000. Population growth in Ridgefield was supported by large increases in the Asian and Hispanic populations. Since 1990, the Asian population has more than tripled and now comprises one in six Ridgefield residents. At the same time, Ridgefield's Hispanic population has more than doubled. Hispanics and Asians now make up over 30 percent of the Borough's population. **Table 2** outlines the population growth along racial and ethnic origin categories as follows:

	1990 U.S. Census Data		2000 U.S. Census Data	
	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage
<b>White</b>	8,677	86.8%	7,189	66.4%
<b>Black/African-American</b>	67	0.7%	71	0.6%
<b>Asian</b>	557	5.6%	1,881	17.4%
<b>Other (see Notes 1 &amp; 2)</b>	14	0.1%	195	1.8%
<b>Hispanic/Latino*</b>	681	6.8%	1,494	13.8%

**Note 1:** 1990 US Census Data "Other" includes reporting as American Indian, Eskimo or Aleut, and Other Race

**Note 2:** 2000 US Census Data "Other" includes reporting as American Indian and Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, Some Other Race, and Two or More Races.

\*Hispanic/Latino can be any race

The Borough's median household income increased from \$43,479 in 1990 to \$54,081 in 2000, a 24.3 percent increase. Over the last decade, the Borough also experienced an increase in per capita income of 33.2 percent. **Table 3** outlines the income data for the Borough.

**BOROUGH OF RIDGEFIELD**  
**Master Plan Reexamination Report**  
**November 25, 2003**

	1990	2000
<b>Median Household Income</b>	\$43,479	\$54,081
<b>Per Capita Income</b>	\$19,175	\$25,558

The largest increase in age group population was among residents under 18 years of age, growing over 40 percent from 1,753 in 190 to 2,479 in 2000. This increase should increase awareness regarding the need for resources dedicated to the school system and other community facilities (parks, library, etc.) to address this segment of the population. Although the percentage of senior citizens (65 years and over) in the Borough did not experience significant growth during the last decade, the nation as a whole is experiencing a "graying" of the population. This trend may change as the "baby boom" generation, those born between 1946 and 1964, reach senior citizen age and placing a greater demand on community services and senior housing. The school age segment -- 5 through 19 years of age -- comprises a significant percentage of the Borough's population, reflecting a need in future years for increased school system resources.

▪ **Building Permit Data**

**Residential Building Permits**

According to the New Jersey Department of Labor, more residential building permits have been issued by the Borough during 2000-2002 than in any three-year period since 1992. From January 2000 through August 2002, 131 residential building permits have been issued. Since 1992, the Borough issued 73 residential building permits. The yearly breakdown of residential building permits in the Borough is illustrated on the **Table 4**.

<b>BOROUGH OF RIDGEFIELD</b>	<b>Total Units</b>	<b>Single-Family Units</b>	<b>Two-Family Units</b>	<b>Multi-Family Units</b>
Year 2003 (Jan-Aug)	8	4	4	0
Year 2002	7	5	2	0
Year 2001	19	3	16	0
Year 2000	24	14	10	0
Year 1999	44	32	12	0
Year 1998	12	2	10	0
Year 1997	4	0	4	0
Year 1996	2	0	2	0
Year 1995	3	3	0	0
Year 1994	3	3	0	0
Year 1993	1	1	0	0
Year 1992	4	4	0	0

**BOROUGH OF RIDGEFIELD**  
**Master Plan Reexamination Report**  
**November 25, 2003**

---

From 1998 through 2001 there was a dramatic increase in residential building activity in contrast to most of the 1990s. During that four-year period, there were 48 two-family dwelling units developed. Many of the two-family homes were developed on formerly single-family lots. Most of the single-family units were issued permits in 1999, reflective of new townhouse units in the Borough.

Design standards for single- and two-family residential dwelling units should be reviewed, and where necessary enhanced, to guide development in a fashion that encourages creative design of housing, enhances neighborhood aesthetics, and preserves neighborhood character as envisioned in the 1989 Plan.

- **County Planning Policies**

**Bergen County Master Plan**

Bergen County adopted its current Master Plan in 1973. A comprehensive review of this Master Plan is under consideration. Ridgefield should stay informed about County planning activities and how they relate to the Borough, particularly regarding land use and transportation issues.

- **State Planning Policies**

**1993 Center Designation Report**

The New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan (hereinafter referred to as "State Plan") defines center as "*a compact form of development with one or more cores and residential neighborhoods. Centers range in scale from an Urban Center, to a Regional Center, Town Center, Village, and Hamlet.*"<sup>5</sup> Ridgefield was the first municipality in Bergen County to be granted designation as a center, specifically a "town center." As outlined in the 2001 State Plan, a town center means "*a center that has a high investment in public facilities and services several neighborhoods with a highly diverse housing stock and a central core of retail, office and community facilities.*"<sup>6</sup>

Ridgefield submitted its petition for center designation on September 27, 1993. The State Planning Commission approved the petition on November 29, 1994 with the following conditions:

- The Borough shall establish guidelines for the office/hotel redevelopment proposals that will incorporate such factors as pedestrian circulation, open space and waterfront access, transit-friendly road and building placement, and a mixture of uses including residential. Linkages to and impacts on surrounding municipalities should also be considered; and

---

<sup>5</sup> New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan, adopted March 2001, p.290.

<sup>6</sup> New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan, adopted March 2001, p.311.

**BOROUGH OF RIDGEFIELD**  
**Master Plan Reexamination Report**  
**November 25, 2003**

---

- Initiate a dialogue with the surrounding municipalities and the County with the goal of establishing a regional planning agenda that will identify shared issues and proposes mechanism for addressing those issues.

Centers and plans designated and endorsed by the State Planning Commission are deemed eligible for priority assistance from the State. The Borough should seek "Plan Endorsement" when it conducts a comprehensive update of its Master Plan.

**State Development and Redevelopment Plan ("State Plan")**

In March 2001, the State Planning Commission (SPC) re-adopted the current State Development and Redevelopment Plan. The State Plan provides direction for investing and spending state dollars in ways that are consistent with the State Plan's goals.

The Borough of Ridgefield is a Designated Town Center in the State Plan. Almost all of Ridgefield not under the jurisdiction of the NJMC is located in the Metropolitan Planning Area (PA-1). Designated Town Centers are eligible for priority assistance from the State. Ridgefield is in a unique position to reap the benefits afforded to Centers and is the only Center in Bergen County.

The goals and objectives of the 1989 Plan are generally consistent with the goals and concepts set forth by the State Plan although those goals should be reviewed to address current land use and planning issues. Ridgefield has been awarded a "Smart Growth" Planning Grant to develop a land use plan in the area of the proposed light-rail station.

**"Big Map"**

In 2002, the State Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) unveiled the "Big Map," the purpose of which was to guide development to areas with infrastructure and away from environmentally sensitive areas. Most of the area under the planning jurisdiction of the Borough was designated "green," which in this case meant it was appropriate for development. The "Big Map" is currently under review since its initial introduction. Borough officials should monitor any new developments.

**Residential Site Improvement Standards**

On June 3, 1997, the New Jersey Administrative Code was amended to include the Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS) (N.J.A.C 5:21 et seq.). RSIS supersedes many local design standards for new residential development, including local standards for number of parking spaces and new roadways.

Upon the Borough's preparation of a new Master Plan, the Circulation Element should be amended to include the residential street hierarchy system set forth by the RSIS. Further, the Borough's Land Development Ordinance should be reviewed to determine if the RSIS residential parking requirements are appropriate given the local pattern of development or if the Borough should seek a waiver from said standards.

**BOROUGH OF RIDGEFIELD**  
**Master Plan Reexamination Report**  
**November 25, 2003**

---

**Council on Affordable Housing (COAH)**

In August 2003, COAH has announced proposed rule changes providing a new methodology to determine the "third round" affordable housing obligation of all New Jersey municipalities. The new methodology proposes determining a municipality's obligation using a "growth share" and "rehabilitation share."

The growth share would determine the affordable housing unit obligation based on projected growth, with one affordable housing unit for every 10 dwelling units developed and one affordable housing unit for every 30 jobs created. The rehabilitation share would be based on the number of units identified by COAH as substandard from 2000 U.S. Census information. The third round would include the period 1999 through 2014. Credits for the provision of senior citizen housing will increase as well as opportunities to provide for units through regional contribution agreements. The rule changes are anticipated to take effect early 2004. The Borough should consider updating its housing element.

▪ **New Jersey Meadowlands Commission Planning Policies**

**New Jersey Meadowlands Commission (NJMC) Master Plan**

For the first time since 1970, the NJMC is drafting a new Master Plan to guide development within the NJMC District. One of the recommendations for the Borough is designate most of the area along the Hackensack River as "Hackensack River Preserve." The Preserve is designed to protect and preserve the remaining wetlands in the NJMC District. A section of the NJMC District the Borough recommended as "marshland preservation" has been proposed for designation as "Logistics/Intermodal/Industrial" by the NJMC in its draft Master Plan. Adoption of the NJMC Master Plan is expected by 2004. The Borough should work with the NJMC to ensure that striking a balance between preservation of environmentally sensitive land and the potential for economic development is a priority.

▪ **Federal Policies**

**Telecommunications Act of 1996**

The Federal Government passed the Telecommunications Act in 1996. This Act requires all municipalities to permit wireless telecommunications providers with a reasonable opportunity to provide their service to the general public. Further, this Act prohibits the exclusion of such facilities based on health and safety concerns. The Borough's Zoning Ordinance includes guidelines regarding placement of wireless telecommunication facilities. Towers or antenna are currently permitted uses in any industrial and commercial zoning district subject to distance and setback regulations outlined in the Zoning Ordinance.

**BOROUGH OF RIDGEFIELD**  
**Master Plan Reexamination Report**  
**November 25, 2003**

---

In addition, antenna are permitted on an existing structure other than a tower that is 50 feet in height or greater, provided the antenna add no more than 20 feet to the height of said structure, and antenna may be installed on any existing tower of any height. Where wireless telecommunications facilities are not permitted, applicants are required to obtain a conditional use permit. The Borough should determine if the current regulations are governing placement in a way that balances the general welfare of the residents with the needs of FCC-licensed wireless providers should be considered.

#### **2.4 Specific Changes Recommended for the Master Plan or Development Regulations**

The following items have been identified as areas and issues that may merit further examination or changes to the Borough's Master Plan and/or land development regulations.

##### **Land Use Element**

A review of land use goals and objectives should be undertaken to determine what changes should be considered in order to determine current development patterns and trends. Conducting a Borough-wide land use study would also permit the determination of the level of non-conforming uses that exist, with particular attention paid to the impact on residential neighborhoods. An assessment of current zoning and planning issues should be included in a new Land Use Element.

Among the areas that should be given specific attention include the following:

- Parcels along the U.S. Route 46 corridor, with particular attention to the Pfister property, where there is potential for development of "big box" retail.
- Light industrial and commercial property between Grand Avenue and the Northern Branch Right-of-Way.
- Parcels around the potential light-rail passenger station, with particular attention to the area around the Ridgefield Traffic Circle improvements and potential for mixed-use transit-village development.
- Commercial and light industrial parcels along Broad Avenue south of the Ridgefield Traffic Circle.

Upon completion of the land use plan element of the updated Master Plan, consideration to consolidate some of the zoning districts would reflect a more uniform plan of development for the Borough.

**BOROUGH OF RIDGEFIELD**  
**Master Plan Reexamination Report**  
**November 25, 2003**

---

**Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendments**

The term "special exceptions" is used in certain zoning districts to permit several uses that are permitted subject to additional requirements. In District A (Single-Family Residence Zone), District B (Two-Family Residence Zone), District C (Multiple Family Zone), and District D (Business, Commercial or Office Zone) use the term "special exception" while the other zone districts refer to "conditionally permitted uses." For consistency with the MLUL, the term "conditional use" should refer to all such uses. A review of the "conditional uses" should include whether such uses are appropriate as conditional uses, should be permitted uses, or are no longer appropriate for the zoning district.

There are 21 zoning districts outlined in §390-35 of the Zoning Ordinance. Two of the zones – District H (Marshland Zone) and District I (Public Utility Zone) – are located within the planning jurisdiction of the NJMC. Many of the zoning districts appear to mirror each other in terms of general intent, examples including:

- O-LR Office Low-Rise Zone and O-C Office Commercial Zone
- O-5-MR Office Mid-Rise Zone and O-7-MR Office Mid-Rise Zone
- C-H Commercial Hotel Zone and OMH Office/Mid-Rise Hotel Zone

Bulk requirements for single- and two-family residential districts have provided for a sliding scale of maximum building coverage to prevent the structures from dominating the properties and preserving yards and open space. The Borough may consider including floor area ratio requirements, impervious coverage for the whole lot and the front yards in order to preserve yards and green space.

**Population/Demographics**

As part of the Master Plan update, a comprehensive demographic review should be undertaken to provide an accurate portrait of the social and economic characteristics of the Borough.

**Housing Plan Element**

The third round affordable housing obligation of the Borough, intended to cover the period from 1999 through 2014, would be addressed through this plan element. Any update would be subject to the adoption of rule changes by COAH.

**BOROUGH OF RIDGEFIELD**  
**Master Plan Reexamination Report**  
**November 25, 2003**

---

**Circulation Plan Element**

An updated circulation plan element should address how ongoing and potential improvements – including the improvements at the Ridgefield Traffic Circle and the potential activation of the Northern Branch rail line for light-rail service – will impact the Borough's circulation patterns. Said plan should ensure that the transportation network adequately and efficiently handles all proposed revitalization efforts. The issues related to the light-rail line include traffic impact on surrounding roadways, commuter parking, and the effect on commuting patterns of Borough residents.

**Community Facilities Plan Element**

Given the needs addressed in the 1989 Plan, many of which are still relevant as of this date, the Borough should prepare a general assessment of existing community facilities and determine what areas are in need of short- and long-term improvements. New and/or improved facilities should take into account any assistance the Borough could receive, including monies from the State School Construction Bond Act, Green Acres funds for parks and open space preservation, and other State and Federal assistance that could aid in the improvement of community facilities.

**Recreation and Conservation Plan Elements**

A Master Plan update should provide an inventory of park and recreation areas available to the Borough, including an assessment of facilities provided. In concert with such an update, the Borough should review areas appropriate for conservation, with particular attention to wetlands and flood prone areas along creeks and streams. Cooperation with the NJMC, which has planning jurisdiction over a large portion of the Borough's environmentally sensitive land, is encouraged.

**Economic Plan Element**

The Borough may consider an economic plan measuring the commercial activity occurring in Ridgefield. Specifically, the emphasis would be on employment and the types of jobs generated within the Borough. Projections on job growth in Ridgefield will be important if the proposed "growth share" methodology for the third round affordable housing obligation is adopted.

**Other Plan Elements**

A review of the utilities, recycling and historic preservation sections of the Plan should determine if the stated goals and recommendations of the 1989 Plan are still applicable. Individual plan elements in these areas would be included in a comprehensive master plan if the Borough determines they are appropriate.

**BOROUGH OF RIDGEFIELD**  
**Master Plan Reexamination Report**  
**November 25, 2003**

---

▪ **Conclusion**

The potential for redevelopment of its light industrial areas and the reactivation of the Northern Branch Railroad right-of-way for light-rail service may bring significant change to land use in the Borough. There continues to be concerns about how to preserve the character of single- and two-family neighborhoods. In addition, development of housing for senior citizens is also a need to be addressed. Despite having little vacant land under its zoning jurisdiction, Ridgefield needs to address how redevelopment will take place and its short- and long-term effects on the Borough. Given these circumstances, a comprehensive review and updating of the 1989 Plan is recommended.

**2.5 Recommendations Concerning the Incorporation of Redevelopment Plans Adopted**

The Borough has not designated any areas "in need of redevelopment" pursuant to the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, P.L. 1992, c. 79 (C.40A:12 A-1 et al.).

**DIKTAS NEISS**  
596 Anderson Avenue  
P.O. Box 2199  
Cliffside Park, New Jersey 07010  
(201) 943-8020

-----	X	
IN THE MATTER OF THE	:	PLANNING BOARD OF THE
<b>ADOPTION OF THE MASTER PLAN</b>	:	<b>BOROUGH OF RIDGEFIELD</b>
<b>REEXAMINATION REPORT DATED</b>	:	
<b>NOVEMBER 20, 2003</b>	:	RESOLUTION 03-20
FOR RIDGEFIELD, NEW JERSEY.	:	
-----	X	

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with the Municipal Land Use Law of the State of New Jersey and, in particular, with regard to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89 which, inter alia, requires the governing body, at least every six years, to provide for a general reexamination of its master plan and development regulations by the Planning Board, which shall prepare and adopt by resolution a report on the findings of such reexamination pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89; and


**WHEREAS**, the Planning Board engaged the services of the engineering firm School DePalma, Inc. to prepare a master plan reexamination report, and that firm did prepare a report dated October 21, 2003; and

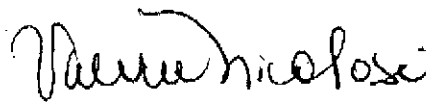
**WHEREAS**, a public hearing was held by the Planning Board on November 25, 2003 with regard to the said report; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Board has recommended adoption of the Reexamination Report dated October 13, 2003

**WHEREAS**, a motion was made by Robert Fioravanti and seconded by Mr. Pfaff to recommend adoption of the Master Plan Reexamination Report dated October 13, 2003;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Planning Board of the Borough of Ridgefield does hereby adopt the Reexamination Report dated October 13, 2003 in order to satisfy the statutory requirements pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89.

  
THOMAS ASFAR, CHAIRMAN

  
VALERIE NICOLOSI, SECRETARY

Motion Made By: Robert Fioravanti  
Second By: Harry Pfaff  
In Favor: Mayor Stewart Veale  
Councilman Gary Bonacci  
Harry Pfaff  
James Mariniello, Sr.  
Robert Fioravanti  
Robert Rathgeber  
Jason Tuvel  
Opposed: None  
Date Approved: November 25, 2003  
Date Resolution Memorialized: December 16, 2003