

CA - Middlesex County

4/6/73

letter re: County Planning Board
Staff's review of proposed ordinances

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MIDDLESEX COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

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April 6, 1973

Mrs. Mary M. Brown, Township Clerk
Madison Municipal Building
Route 9 and 34
Madison Township, New Jersey

Dear Mrs. Brown:

In a letter dated March 23, 1973 you forwarded to the Middlesex County Planning Board for review a copy of a proposed major amendment to the Madison Township Zoning Ordinance which amendment is entitled "Planned Unit Development and Cluster Ordinance (Article XXVI)". Also, a second amendatory ordinance was attached to your letter. As you indicated, a public hearing concerning the PUD Ordinance and a special meeting of the Township Council concerning the amendatory ordinance is set for April 9, 1973. This letter contains the County Planning Board staff's review of both ordinances.

County's Questions

In reviewing the ordinances, the staff compared the development pattern that would be permitted throughout Madison Township if all current amendments were incorporated into the existing ordinance with land use projections contained in Middlesex County's adopted Interim Master Plan and related studies. The comparison focused on the following questions which are among the most important from our County-wide viewpoint:

1. Does the entire Zoning Ordinance, including the PUD and amendatory revisions, permit the attainment of sufficient multi-family and single-family dwelling units and industrial acreage commensurate with the projections set forth in Middlesex County's Master Plan?

2. Are the major concentrations of the above land uses properly located in terms of their proximity to the necessary supporting facilities and are they located in a manner that will have the highest potential beneficial impact on the natural resource base?

Township Master Plan/Zoning Relationship

Before answering these questions, we would like to take the opportunity to discuss the Madison Township Master Plan (adopted June 8, 1971). Madison Township planning consultants have pointed out that the Township Master Plan is not "a detailed document of a high reproduction level" (see page 1 of Master Plan.) The consultants indicated in the Plan that they anticipated the publication of a second edition of the Master Plan within a year (of May 1970). In anticipation of the second edition and considering that the County Planning Board had not completed all of its projections, the staff's review of the Madison Plan (as submitted to the Township two years ago) only discussed roads and open space. The County has not received a second edition of the Plan and the current Township Master Plan does not permit the County to determine, among other things, the degree to which the levels of overall growth in population and jobs are consistent with established County projections. For example, the Township Plan does not establish any residential density figures or state specific population levels for the Township. Except for Master Plan discussions concerning the need for PUD, it was not possible for the staff to determine the degree of compatibility between the Township Plan and the Zoning Ordinance as a first step in reviewing the amendments.

Zoning Review Findings

Our review of the Zoning Ordinance and amendments is stated below:

1. We are pleased and encouraged to review an ordinance permitting planned unit development in Madison. This ordinance can be a very effective way of conserving open space while permitting more flexibility in the layout and type of residential units and related uses permitted in Madison. The room size reductions are also encouraging because they permit the construction of dwelling units at lower costs and therefore provide more variety of living opportunities for more people. Similarly, we are also pleased to point out that the amendments establish a number of Recreation-Preservation that encompass stream areas, Cheesequake State Park and the water company lands.

2. We find that the general level of single-family units permitted under the Zoning Ordinance is more than sufficient to accommodate the needs as projected by the County. There is a large gap that the Zoning Ordinance amendment is beginning to close regarding permitted multi-family units as indicated in the following table:

	<u>Approximate Number of Housing Units Permitted</u>		<u>County Projection of Housing Demand</u>
	<u>Existing Ordinance</u>	<u>Proposed Ordinance</u>	
Single-Family Housing	23,000	23,000 d.u. (est.)	19,828
Multi-Family Housing	7,200	13,000*	24,093

*This figure represents upper limit assuming maximum development in multi-family uses in PUD.

The 13,000 multi-family figure represents almost a doubling of the 7,000 multi-family units permitted under the existing ordinance. It also represents more than a tripling of the number of multi-family units existing in Madison in 1970 (3,703 multi-family units). We find that this is a significant step in the right direction toward the end of closing the gap even further in the future in line with Middlesex County projected multi-family needs.

3. The total amount of industrial acreage corresponds closely to the total amount of similar acreage projected by the County for the Township.

Recommended Changes

The County's generalized inventory map of major natural resource areas throughout the County, as well as other related plans, indicates the following:

- a) The proposed PUD abutting Route 9 encompasses a significant amount of land designated as swamp land;
- b) The proposed PUD abutting Route 18 will also encompass land known as swamp area but to a lesser extent than the PUD adjacent to Route 9;

- c) The Route 18 PUD is removed from existing water and sewerage facilities. These facilities are somewhat closer to the Route 9 PUD.
- d. The PURC zone located at the intersection of Route 9 and 516 is in an excellent location for a future community development because there is no significant impact on any swamp area. Moreover, this PURC zone is located adjacent to existing community development and existing water and sewer lines. It is also located at the intersection of two of the most important roads crossing Madison in the east-west and north-south direction. It is also noted that the utilization of this general area for the type of development shown in the ordinance is compatible with plans developed by the County Planning Board staff which will be reviewed shortly by the Planning Board.

In light of the above findings, we strongly urge consideration of the following recommendations:

1. We recommend that there be a reduction in size in the Route 9 PUD commensurate with the amount of swamp area included within its current boundaries. This reduction may total as much as half of the 600+ acres. We recommend further that the Route 18 PUD be eliminated from the ordinance.
2. We recommend that the proposed PURC zone at the intersection of Route 9 and 516 be expanded further south of Route 516 to include the same amount of area as the Route 18 PUD recommended for elimination. This zone has the potential for becoming the commercial, residential and civic hub of the Township.
3. Because, large swamp areas extend beyond the Recreation-Preservation zone which encompasses the water company lands in the vicinity of Bordentown-Amboy Turnpike, we recommend that the above noted Recreation-Preservation zone be expanded to encompass the two adjacent Special District Zones and the adjacent Heavy Industrial Zone (M-3) that lies adjacent to the "S" curve in Bordentown-Amboy Turnpike.

rs. Mary M. Brown

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4. A Light Manufacturing Zone and Special District are proposed adjacent to an old alignment of the Driscoll Expressway. It is recommended that these zones be eliminated because the Expressway alignment has been shifted into Monroe and because the east-west connector road that will connect the interchange to Route 18 will be a limited access roadway.

Sincerely yours,

Herman Volk (civ)

Herman Volk
Principal Planner

HV:ms

cc: Mr. Richard Dealy, Chairman, Madison Planning Board
Hon. Thomas J. English, Mayor, Madison Township
Mr. Douglas S. Powell, Director of County Planning
Mr. Dennis Lanning, Abeles and Swartz