

CA - North Brunswick

10/24/77

cover letters

Middlesex County Planning Board  
report on recent zoning ~~Board~~  
Board Amendments

pg 13

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*Township of North Brunswick*

NEW JERSEY

711 HERMANN ROAD

POST OFFICE BOX 182

NORTH BRUNSWICK, N. J. 08902



June 24, 1977

Mr. Roger Rosenthal  
National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing  
1425 H Street N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Rosenthal:

Enclosed please find the report of the Middlesex County Planning Board on our recent Zoning Board Amendments. I refer specifically to Section 25, Residential Mobile Home Zoning.

I concur fully with the County Board concerning its report.

Yours truly,

Frank Triarico  
Township Committeeman

FT/al  
enc.

CA001725Z

# MIDDLESEX COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

40 LIVINGSTON AVENUE  
NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY 08901

(201) 246-6062

*Frank Yvarico*

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Director of County Planning

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Counsel

PATRICIA A. LYCOSKY  
Secretary

December 16, 1976

Ms. Edna Swanson, Clerk  
Township of North Brunswick  
511 Hermann Road  
North Brunswick, New Jersey 08902

Dear Ms. Swanson:

Enclosed is the County Planning Board review of North Brunswick's recent zoning ordinance amendments. This review, as adopted by the Board at its December 14, 1976 meeting, slightly differs from the staff review previously sent, on pages 5, 6, and 7. Please note these changes.

Sincerely yours,

MIDDLESEX COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

*John A. Sully*  
John A. Sully  
Supervising Principal Planner

JAS:iws

Enclosure

cc: Mr. Frank Zorn, Chairman, North Brunswick Planning Board  
Mr. Paul Keller, Planning Director, North Brunswick Planning Board

NOTE

MEMORANDUM

TO: North Brunswick Township Committee  
FROM: Middlesex County Planning Board ~~SECRET~~  
DATE: December 14, 1976  
RE: Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendments

SECTIONS 1-23

1. The changes proposed in Sections 1 thru 23 of the Amending Ordinance all potentially would serve to reduce housing costs, and are consistent with adopted County planning goals.

SECTION 24 - RTD Zone

2. Section 24, the proposal for a Townhouse Duplex residential zone, is a desirable addition to the Township Zoning Ordinance. The standards found in this section would encourage efficient and economical land use at a moderate density between that of large-lot single family housing and garden apartments. We strongly urge that the proposed maximum density of 7 du/acre be retained in the RTD zones. With good site design, this density can offer real economies and land conservation, along with the open space and amenity that most suburban residents want and need. Two of North Brunswick's neighboring communities--South Brunswick and East Brunswick, already have included similar districts in their recent Master Plans, and we hope others will do so.

3. With regard to the 3 sites proposed for RTD development, two of the sites appear to be very appropriate locations for this type of housing. The sites along or near Route 27 are well-suited by virtue of their accessibility to travel routes and public transit, and by their proximity to a range of other housing types, including both single and multi-family developments. Taken together, the new and existing multi-family sites in this area work together to form a small residential node, serviced by regular public transit, as recommended in the County's Plan Alternative.

The third site, between Livingston Avenue and the Penn Central tracks, also meets these criteria. However, on this site sufficient buffering must be provided to protect residents from the noise and visual interference of the most heavily used rail corridor in the County. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development standards for residences in relationship to railroads specify a minimum of 600 feet between railroad and residence. This standard could not be met on this site; for this reason, reduction in overall density to 5 dwelling units per acre would be appropriate on this location, along with great care in site planning.

X SECTION 25

4. The addition of the RM residential mobile home zone, replacing the Township's present prohibition against mobile homes, is desirable. While mobile homes alone cannot be relied upon to solve all low and moderate income housing needs, they can meet a portion of that need. Mobile homes are a legitimate and heretofore underused form of moderate income

housing, and sites appropriate for them should be set aside not only in North Brunswick, but in other of the County's suburban and rural municipalities as well.

However, it should be noted that the mobile home market is not open to all lower income groups, in part because the interest rates on mobile home loans are high. The banking industry, rightly or wrongly, holds that mobile home owners are less affluent than other borrowers and thus more likely to default on loans. Consequently, creditors demand a substantially higher return than they can get on more presumably secure investments, like conventional housing.

For this reason, mobile homes have been called "high cost housing in the low-income market." In fact, truly low-income families, as distinct from those of moderate incomes, usually cannot afford new mobile homes.

In addition, many mobile home park owners require that tenants buy their mobile home from them, often at prices higher than the purchasers would pay on an open market. But, because of the scarcity of mobile home parks in this area, pressure remains great to purchase mobile homes from park owners in order to gain entrance to the park.

These factors are worth noting, because they bear heavily on the practical ability of mobile homes to meet low and moderate housing needs in the Township.

For most persons of moderate incomes, other types of permanent housing more or less equal in carrying cost to mobile homes may be of greater benefit to the township in terms of social acceptability, than the proposed number of mobile homes would be. We believe that any proposal for low and moderate income housing also should be designed to contribute to the stability of the neighborhood and community to the greatest degree possible. While mobile homes have a rightful if specialized place in the range of housing types offered, they should be balanced with more permanent low and moderate income housing as well.

The standards for mobile home sites development contained in the proposed amendment are in accordance with sound planning practice.

5. With regard to the site proposed by the Township for mobile homes, we offer the following comments:

- A. Location - Because of the predominantly industrial uses and zoning surrounding the proposed site in all directions, direct access to local facilities and service--schools, shopping, churches, social services, etc.--is not available. Auto-travel would be necessary to reach presently available services. While U.S. 150 provides good auto access to other parts of the municipality and region, public transit service along this route presently is very limited. As a minimum, if this site is to be so used, consideration should be given to the concurrent development of regular bus service linking the proposed

housing with regional shopping and service modes in New Brunswick and along Route 18 in East Brunswick.

B. Location - Environmental - Environmental considerations are found in the attached memorandum. None precludes use of this site, but careful site planning must be carried out to preclude noise and runoff-related problems.

C. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Standards - HUD standards for its own funding of low and moderate income housing address three locational issues: proximity to services, surroundings, and concentration of low/moderate income families. The first of these was addressed above. With regard to the second, surroundings, the predominantly industrial zoning surrounding this site probably would result in its not meeting this standard. As a minimum, a buffer of other more compatible uses should be provided; open space would be one such appropriate use.

With regard to concentration of low/moderate income residents, current HUD standards provide for a maximum of 20% low and moderate income units, in the context of other residential development, to avoid the ghettoization of such families.

While the HUD

standards may be overly conservative in the light of the predominantly moderate income market at which mobile homes



are aimed, the proposed concentration of almost 900 moderate income families in distinct isolation from the rest of the population and from most services does not seem to be appropriate. This factor of concentration would be mitigated somewhat if the site of the proposed development were in closer proximity to other existing or large-scale planned residential development.

D. Recommendations - Based on the above observations, we offer the following conclusions and recommendations:

1. The proposed site for the Residential-Mobile Home zone is too isolated from community services and other residential development.
2. Therefore, we recommend that alternate ways to meet the demand for low and moderate income housing be considered, including apartments and more townhouses/duplex housing, and that federal and state financing be sought to enable the construction of these types of permanent housing. Provision for some mobile homes should be retained, but the principal emphasis should be on seeking those types of low and moderate income housing more likely to meet with community acceptance. One such nearby example is Princeton Community Village in Princeton Township of Mercer County. While such solutions to the low and moderate income housing needs of the Township could

not be achieved as quickly as that proposed, we believe that in the long run they would be of greater benefit to the residents of the new housing, the community as a whole, and the larger region.

Even if smaller in local impact than the proposed number of mobile home units, a decision by North Brunswick to actively pursue a course of seeking to provide well-located and well-designed permanent housing for low and moderate income families would set a practical example which others trying to solve the same problems could follow. We badly need such an example in the County, to reduce community fear of low and moderate income housing. Leadership by North Brunswick could thus have a multiplier effect which ultimately might result in many more units of low and moderate income housing than the Township alone ever could provide.

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MEMORANDUM

TO: John Sully - Comprehensive Planning  
FROM: Robert J. Nardi - Environmental Systems  
DATE: December 3, 1976  
RE: Proposed Zoning Change - Township of North Brunswick

In response to your request for information regarding the environmental characteristics and development limitations of the 131.67 acre tract in North Brunswick, a brief investigation of the area has been carried out. My report is as follows:

SOILS

Based on the SCS soil survey carried out for East Brunswick (which included a sizeable portion of the tract), the following soils interpretation has been carried out.

Predominant soil types in the area are:

Woodstorm Loam  
Parsippany Silt Loam  
Sassafras Loam

Woodstorm soils are moderately well drained, moderately sandy soils. Natural fertility is medium, available water capacity and permeability are moderate. Normally the water table rises to 1½ to 4 feet in late winter and spring and drops to below 5 feet in summer.

Parsippany are deep, poorly drained soils. Natural fertility and available water capacity are high. Permeability is slow. In most places the soils flood by slowly rising, wide spreading stream water. Depth to seasonally high water is less than one foot.

Sassafras soils are well drained, moderately sandy soils with slopes ranging to five feet. Available water capacity and permeability are moderate with depth to seasonally high water greater than 5 feet.

Implications

Obviously development should not be allowed in areas where the water table is at or near the surface for much of the year. The problem here, though, is with the data. It is recommended that a detailed soil survey be carried out prior to the detailed site planning.

FLOODPLAINS

Data identifying flood prone and flood hazard areas are derived from

three separate sources, the US Geological Survey, NJDEP Division of Water Resources and Department HUD Federal Insurance Administration.

### USGS

USGS has mapped flood prone areas for Middlesex County based on a 100 year storm frequency. Although the Lawrence Brook and Davidson Mill Pond is clearly within the flood prone area, Oakeys Brook is not.

### NJDEP

The Division of Water Resources has mapped, in much greater detail the Lawrence Brook System and has identified both flood hazard and floodway limit areas. Unfortunately, these maps do not extend up Oakeys Brook.

### HUD-FIA

The maps prepared for North Brunswick under this program show Oakeys Brook falling under the Special Flood Hazard Area. A copy of this map is attached.

### Implications

Apart from the restrictions on the location of structures within the flood hazard areas, development brings within it the likelihood of increased runoff. In addition this development tends to increase the speed with which precipitation flows into the area's streams. This results in increased peak flows and attendant down stream flooding. Furthermore, the Farrington Lake is used as a water supply source for the City of New Brunswick and impacts on the areas water quality must be considered carefully.

### NOISE

An evaluation of potential noise problems in the study area involves both an assessment of railway and roadway noise.

#### Railway

In accordance with the criteria of the HUD Noise Assessment Guidelines an area defined by a line parallel to and 600 feet from the railroad tracks (Penn Central) would be considered normally unacceptable due to railroad noise. The area between 600 and 3,000 feet from the tracks would be considered normally acceptable for housing uses and the area 3,000 feet and greater from the tracks would be considered clearly acceptable for housing uses.

#### Roadway

An evaluation of roadway noise could not be carried out as part of this review but it is recommended that such an analysis be carried out prior to detailed site planning.

## AIR QUALITY

Existing air quality is likely to be good over the site with possible minor deterioration close to Route 130, the Penn Central Railroad line, the nearby industrial sites and a number of point sources in close proximity. Further details can be supplied upon request.

## VEGETATION

The vegetation types identified for the study area were mapped originally by the U.S. Forest Service in 1955 and were made available to the staff by the NJ Bureau of Forestry. It should be noted that these maps have not been field checked by the Middlesex County Planning Board staff.

The vegetation maps have identified two separate but similar forest types in and around the property. The first is Hard Oak-Pine composed primarily of pitch, short leaf and virginia pines with 50-74 percent of the stands in mixture with various oaks. The second type is Oak-Hard Pine with the same species included except only 25-49 percent of the stands are in a mixture with various oaks. Recent aerial photographs have shown the property to be densely forested. The staff has not identified any wetlands type vegetation in the area.

## Implications

The best stands of trees and isolated individual specimens should be identified and mapped before detailed site planning begins and retained whenever possible.