

Critique of the Proposed Route
(Report No. 5)

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Note: Expert Report

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REPORT NO. 5

CRITIQUE OF THE PROPOSED ROUTE

202-206 BY-PASS

PREPARED BY
RSWA, INC.
SEPTEMBER 7, 1978

1. THE PROPOSED BY-PASS IS NOT IN KEEPING WITH THE HISTORIC CHARACTER OF PLUCKEMIN VILLAGE AND CONTRADICTS THE STATED OBJECTIVE OF THE 1978 BEDMINSTER TOWNSHIP ZONING.

In the Statement of Purpose concerning the Village of Pluckemin, Article 7 of the 1978 Zoning Code states that "Because of the special historic significance of the (Village)...any structure shall support and be consistent with the historic character and architecture of the area." Bedminster Township, however, in proposing the location of the Route 202-206 by-pass, adjacent to Pluckemin Village, has seen fit to disregard and contradict their own commendable objective. By no stretch of the imagination would the proposed by-pass, a high speed limited access road, contribute to maintaining the historic character of Pluckemin Village.

In Pluckemin Village the scale is small, intimate, human. It is a place for people primarily, the automobile secondarily. The nature of a high speed, limited access road, however, is the complete opposite. The scale is large, to accommodate speed, it is a place for vehicles, not people.

The by-pass thus also contradicts the township's own Master Plan which states, that "the appropriateness of scale must be considered in all developments" (Section III, Housing Plan). Surely this

important factor has been overlooked.

The township's logic of proposing the by-pass adjacent to Pluckemin Village while simultaneously desiring to preserve the Village's historic character is difficult to ascertain. In fact it is the self-defeating in terms of historic preservation and contradicts the intent of the Master Plan and the purpose of the zoning ordinance.

2. THE PROPOSED BY-PASS EFFECTIVELY ISOLATES AREAS EAST OF PLUCKEMIN VILLAGE AND CUTS OFF ACCESS FROM ARTILLERY PARK. THE ALLAN DEANE PROPOSAL WOULD LINK THESE AND THE HISTORIC AREAS.

Being limited access the proposed by-pass would serve as an effective barrier between Pluckemin Village and lands to the east. In order to gain pedestrian or vehicular access to the east major construction in the form of bridging would be necessary. The township has not included this in their proposal. One of the lands thus cut off from Pluckemin Village is Artillery Park, which Bedminster Township has defined in Article 7.2 of the 1978 Zoning Ordinance as being an "historic section of the Village of Pluckemin". Good planning practice would attempt to link, not sever connection between the two areas, thus creating a physical continuity between them.

In addition to Artillery Park, the R20 zone, allowing Compact Residential Clusters, lies to the east of Pluckemin and the pro-

posed by-pass. Among Bedminster's stated objectives in their Master Plan is that Residential Clusters should..."be within walking distance to stores, services, potential transportation and supporting facilities". (Section III Housing Plan, Pluckemin and Bedminster Village Details). Further the Master Plan states that "(r)ecreational and basic shopping facilities provide an immediate supplement to shelter located within walking distance of related dwelling units and they reduce and limit the effort and energy resources associated with the use of automobiles". (Master Plan, III Housing Plan, General Principles).

The barrier effect of the proposed by-pass is contrary to the achievement of both these stated objectives.

3. THE PROPOSED BY-PASS WOULD EFFECTIVELY PREVENT LAND USE INTEGRATION, THE CREATION OF A UNIFIED WHOLE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SENSE OF PLACE.

By substantially isolating the Allan Deane development from Pluckemin Village the by-pass would severely constrain any possibility of integrating the two in a mutually beneficial manner. In situations where new growth must deal with an existing historic character it is especially desirable to find physical means of achieving integration. The objective being to give the area a unified form. The presence of the by-pass would effectively and permanently inhibit this objective. A unified sense of place would be impossible to attain.

The Allan Deane proposal integrates the proposed residential and commercial uses with the Village of Pluckemin. The Village would become a neighborhood center, with the scale of development in keeping with the existing village and easy pedestrian accessibility. In addition the open space provided by Allan Deane would serve to tie Pluckemin Village and Artillery Park together. In fact the Allan Deane proposal would serve the public welfare and fulfill the objectives of the township Master Plan to a far greater degree than would construction of the by-pass in its proposed location.

4. THE PROPOSED BY-PASS, BY ITS NECESSARY R.O.W. REQUIREMENTS, LIMITS POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE R20 ZONE.

The by-pass would require a 100' R.O.W. dedication, resulting in a loss of developable land of 6.8 acres in that area of the R20 zone east of Pluckemin Village. This represents more land than the 5 acre requirement for open space and recreation on the largest possible compact cluster development that would fit as a unit in that zone. Thus, 6.8 acres of potential recreation land are lost to a road R.O.W. whose need is questionable. This does not serve the public health, safety and welfare.

Further negative impact would be created by the limited access nature of the proposed by-pass. Presently, the R20 zone in question can be readily serviced from route 202-206. The geometry of the

zone, in fact, reinforces the value of this route for access purposes - they parallel each other. With the by-pass, however, access would be limited and possible only from Washington Valley Road resulting in congestion along this road, and the additional need of a 90 foot R.O.W. paralleling the by-pass within the zone, for the purpose of providing safe access within it. This amounts to further loss of development land in the R20 zone.

5. THE PROPOSED BY-PASS COUNTERS PRESENT GOOD TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROPOSALS, AND COULD WORSEN RATHER THAN IMPROVE EXISTING TRAFFIC.

The Allan Deane proposal of having a loop connected to both route 202-206 and Washington Valley Road allows development-generated traffic to remain internalized. People wanting to get to and from the residential and commercial areas could do so by driving along internal roads, without overloading the area's through-roads. Orth & Rodgers, traffic consultants, refer to this proposed condition as "good transportation planning". The proposed by-pass, on the other hand, would eliminate the internalized arrangement, forcing traffic to through roads, unnecessarily loading them.

Furthermore, should the by-pass be built, the only remaining reasonable development access alternative would be a closed loop solely from Washington Valley Road. A consultation with Orth & Rodgers indicated that this alternative would cause undue burden on the area's roads, and to compensate for such, it would at a

minimum necessitate the widening of Washington Valley Road to 4 lanes and grade-separate the intersection of such at the proposed by-pass. In effect, the by-pass is creating unnecessary congestion.

6. THE BY-PASS WOULD DEGRADE THE AREA'S ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY.

The Village of Pluckemin presently provides a good buffer from the noise and fumes generated along the 202-206 route. The proposal of other commercial areas abutting this route would further help shield the residential areas east of the village from the environmental degradation created by this road. The proposed by-pass, however, would bring this pollution load immediately adjacent to these residential areas, with the higher speeds of such route augmenting the noise levels affecting such areas.

In this manner, the by-pass would apply undue constraints to a land well suited for development and impinge unnecessary hazards on those areas set aside to accommodate the highest concentration of people.

7. SUMMARY

The proposed by-pass, in view of the points made above, would be of no benefit to the people of the area, nor would it improve the condition of land around it. It is not in keeping with the historic character of Pluckemin Village and would segment the area's major elements of historic interest - Pluckemin Village and Artillery Park;

it thus contradicts the intent of the Master Plan; it uses up land which can better be used for public use, residential or otherwise; and it applies constraints on the land, where it need not be. For these reasons, the by-pass in question would be contrary to the public health, safety and general welfare.

SUPPLEMENT

8. THE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION SEES NO NEED FOR A LIMITED ACCESS BY-PASS AS PROPOSED BY BEDMINSTER TOWNSHIP.

In discussions between Orth, Rogers and Associates, traffic engineers and the Director of Transportation Research for the New Jersey Department of Transportation three major points were reviewed:

- 1) The proposed 202-206 by-pass does not appear on any State Transportation Master Plan or Transportation Improvements Program.
- 2) The state has no evidence or data which supports the need to construct the by-pass.
- 3) Even if there was a need to construct the by-pass, which there isn't, the state sees no reasons which could justify a limited access roadway.

The state clearly shows that they do not contemplate a limited access by-pass for Route 202-206. In light of this and the other points outlined Bedminster's proposal is further suspect.

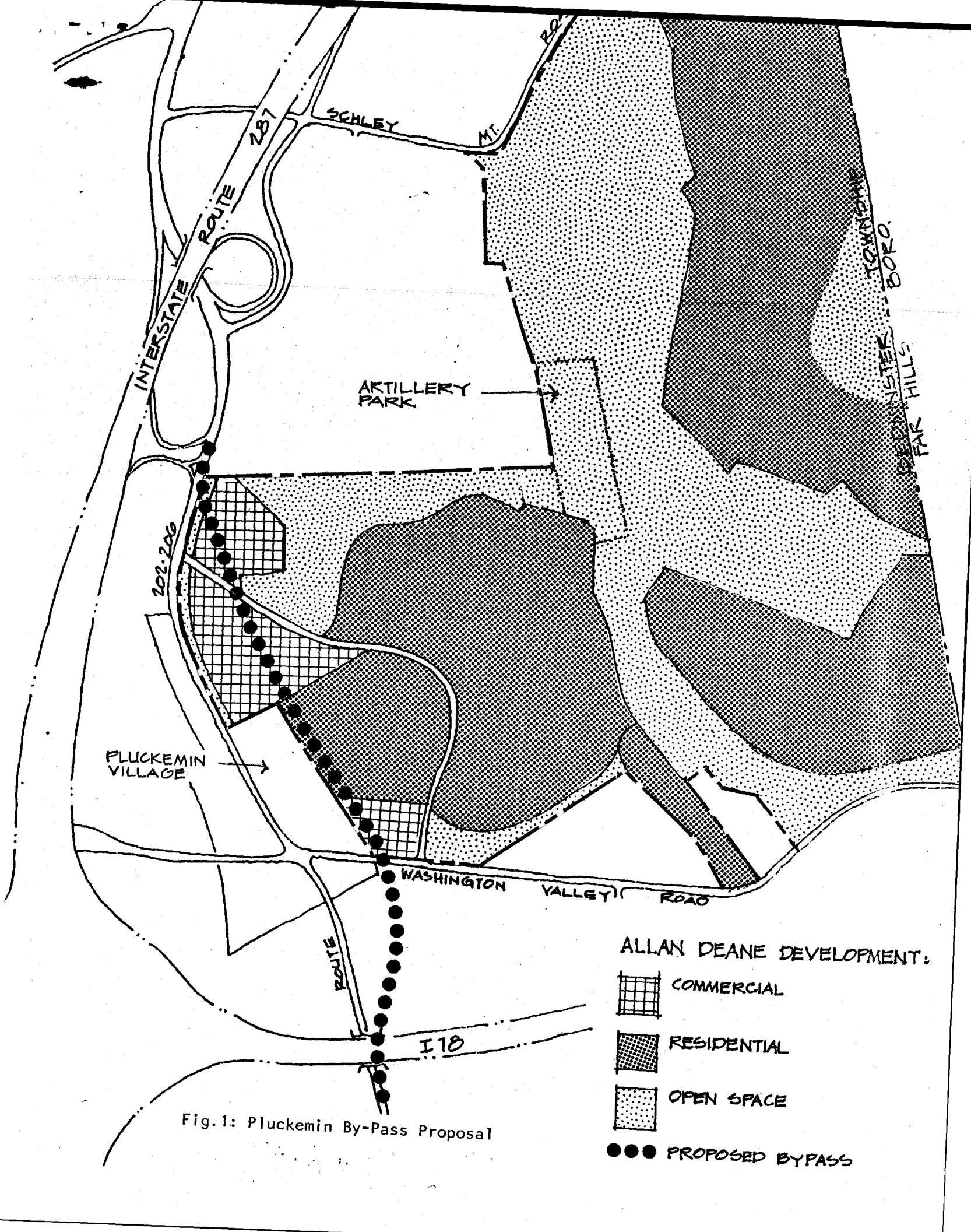






Fig.1: Pluckemin By-Pass Proposal

- ALLAN DEANE DEVELOPMENT:
-  COMMERCIAL
 -  RESIDENTIAL
 -  OPEN SPACE
 -  PROPOSED BYPASS