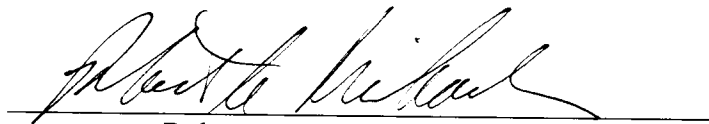


**TOWNSHIP OF SPRINGFIELD PLANNING BOARD
UNION COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**

**TOWNSHIP OF SPRINGFIELD
2017 MASTER PLAN REEXAMINATION
AND UPDATE**

February 16, 2017

PREPARED BY;

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert A. Michaels", is written over a horizontal line.

Robert A. Michaels, P.P., AICP
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The Original Document is signed and sealed pursuant to N.J.A.C. 13:41-1.3

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TOWNSHIP OF SPRINGFIELD
2017 MASTER PLAN REEXAMINATION AND UPDATE

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TOWNSHIP OF SPRINGFIELD

2017 MASTER PLAN REEXAMINATION AND MASTER PLAN UPDATE

1.0 Introduction

The structure of the Master Plan Reexamination is prescribed in the Municipal Land Use Law in N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89. Generally, the Planning Board is required to reexamine its master plan and development regulations at least every ten (10) years, although the review may be conducted sooner. The previous Master Plan Reexamination conducted by the Township's Planning Board was dated October 11, 2005. The statute requires that the Master Plan Reexamination report address the following concerns:

- a. The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of the adoption of the last reexamination report.*
- b. The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date.*
- c. 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 the State, county and municipal policies and objectives.*
- d. 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.*
- e. 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 recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.*

This reexamination report analyzes each of the above areas in separate sections as follows. The last comprehensive Master Plan adopted by the Springfield Planning Board was in 1997. The Planning Board also adopted a Housing Element in February 1995 and modified and readopted it in January 1997. Additional Housing Plans were conducted in 2005, 2008, 2010 and 2016. A master plan reexamination was conducted and adopted in June 1996. Earlier comprehensive planning efforts were undertaken in 1985, 1980 and earlier.

2.0 Major Problems and Objectives Relating to Land Development at the Time of the Last Master Plan Reexamination Report

The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the Township of Springfield at the time of the last master plan reexamination has been determined by reviewing the goals and objectives and major recommendations of the 2005 Master Plan Reexamination report. The last full Master Plan from 1997 was also consulted.

The following goals of the Land Use Plan were identified in the 1997 Master Plan and reiterated in the 2005 Master Plan Reexamination. They are as follows:

Land Use

1. *Amend the land use plan to conform with the housing plan concerning designation of areas for low and moderate income housing.*
2. *Avoid conflicting land uses, and land uses which generate commercial traffic through residential areas, with special attention to the Neighborhood Commercial Zones and adjacent residential districts.*
3. *Take advantage of redevelopment opportunities along the Route 22 corridor as new uses are proposed for underutilized sites. Sign pollution, landscaping deficiencies, and circulation problems should all be addressed as properties are redeveloped.*
4. *The continued economic health of the downtown Morris Avenue areas and other commercial sections of the Township is of paramount importance. This includes programs to provide new street trees and landscaping, street furniture, and improved parking areas.*

This effort should also include the neighborhood commercial areas and Millburn Avenue to maintain their vitality and ensure that they are harmoniously developed with neighboring residential areas.

The 2005 Master Plan Reexamination included discussion of other problem areas and issues concerning land development. Sections of the recommendations of the 1997 Master Plan were quoted and the report included a discussion of the status of those problems in 2005. Two issues identified relating to residential land use were flag lot development and conforming the Land Use Plan to the Housing Plan. Those issues that remained a problem relating to commercial development in 2005 were as follows:

Land Use Plan

1. *The commercial center of the community also serves as an entrance to the municipality, and has been the focus of upgrading efforts in recent years. Some of the parking areas have been improved, and there have been beautification efforts with signage and store*

fronts with the cooperation of some building owners. Additionally new street trees were recently planted along Morris Avenue, also to further this effort.

Redevelopment of some of the marginal commercial uses within the downtown should be encouraged. Service commercial uses including restaurants could help to revitalize the area. The rezoning of the Black's Lane area for senior citizen multi-family housing could help bring added pedestrian traffic to the area. Automobile service businesses should be restricted in the downtown area in favor of businesses which attract pedestrian traffic, including outdoor uses especially during the warm weather months. There have been successful projects which include new street trees planted along Morris Avenue and the clean-up and upgrading of parking lots located behind the buildings on the north side of Morris Avenue. The parking lot improvements should be continued, and landlord cooperation requested as tenant changeover occurs. (1997 Master Plan pp. 27-28)

The revitalization of the downtown of Springfield continues to be an issue and goal of the community. In 2001 a downtown study was completed that focused on street improvements and also forwarded recommended ordinance changes. No action was taken to implement the road improvements or to amend the ordinance. (2005 Master Plan Reexamination, p.4)

2. *The redevelopment of the former Saks property along Millburn Avenue property along Millburn Avenue offers both problems and opportunities. The approximately nine (9) acre lot is located in both the GC and S-75 zones. The municipal boundary with Millburn Avenue runs along the site's frontage which is actually in that community. The existing department store building and parking lot are physical features which may also impact the site's usage.*

A mixed use development option is proposed for this parcel which would allow a combination of commercial and multi-family residential use developed as a single entity. This type of development scheme would create a transition between the single family residential development existing to the east and south of the site, and the commercial uses in Springfield and Millburn along Millburn Avenue. Residential uses for senior citizens would be appropriate in this location given its proximity to shopping and public transportation. (1997 Master Plan p. 28)

An amendment to the zoning ordinance was adopted that created a zone that was similar to that described above. Also the area was changed from General Commercial to Neighborhood Commercial. The zoning for the Saks property was challenged by owners of that property. Also, a development application for supermarket was pursued for the site. The future of the site remains uncertain and is still the subject of litigation. (2005 Master Plan Reexamination, pp. 4-5)

Other issues that are indirectly related to land development were noted in the goals and objectives of the 1997 plan and repeated in the 2005 Reexamination were listed under circulation, community facilities and utility service. Those were as follows:

Circulation

1. *The circulation plan should strive to avoid commercial traffic routed through residential areas.*
2. *The circulation plan should establish road categories which conform to the State Residential Site Standards, and adopt appropriate improvement standards, which conform to the current requirements.*

Community Facilities

1. *The facility deficiencies for the Fire Department and the Public Works Department need to be addressed.*
2. *The location and operation of the recycling center should be resolved.*
3. *The future use of the Chisholm School has been addressed to function as the headquarters and program base for recreation for the Township.*
4. *The maintenance and improvement of open space and recreation facilities in the Township are of primary concern, and should be consistently monitored.*

Utility Service

1. *The sanitary sewage inflow and infiltration problem requires continuing attention and resolution.*
2. *Well head protection in the vicinity of the New Jersey American water supply wells should be addressed through the land use plan, utilities plan and conservation plan.*
3. *Regulations should be adopted which specifically address communication towers and antennas. Zones and development regulations need to be established to permit them in appropriate locations with appropriate conditions.*
4. *The high water table problem in the Marion Avenue neighborhood needs to be addressed.*

In addition to the above, the circulation plan included the following recommendations in the 1997 Master Plan, which was also noted as issues in 2005 that have implications on land use.

- *The traffic circulation patterns for parking lots in the Neighborhood Commercial District should include the most direct route to the collector road.*
- *No direct connection should be allowed from the AH-17 zone to Becker Road.*
- *Non-residential traffic through the PUD zone should be discouraged by physical means such as gates, etc., while allowing full emergency services.*

- *There should be no direct access to residential streets in conjunction with any development or redevelopment of the Saks property.*
- *Where appropriate one-way traffic patterns should be investigated to avoid outside traffic cut throughs in local residential streets. (1997 Master Plan, p.32)*

3.0 Increase or Decrease in Problems Relating to Land Development

Affordable Housing

The Township of Springfield Planning Board adopted a Housing Element and Fair Share Plan dated October 20, 1994 and revised January 23, 1997. That plan was submitted to the Superior Court and was reviewed by the Special Master appointed by the Court. It was the basis for a Judgment of Repose issued by the Court. That plan met the requirements of the first and second round regulations of the New Jersey Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) and addressed the Township's obligation to provide for its fair share of low and moderate income housing. Another Housing Plan dated November 11, 2005 was adopted and submitted to COAH for substantive certification pursuant to the original third round regulations. Review of that plan was not completed and substantive certification was not issued.

A Housing Element and Fair Share Plan was prepared in 2008 and submitted to COAH for substantive certification. An objection was filed to that plan from Baltusrol Golf Club, owner of approximately 500 acres of land within the Township. Baltusrol objected to their property being included in the plan and stated as a member owned private golf club they had no intention of ever permitting any non-golf related development to their property. As a result of their objection the Township agreed to amend the plan and removed the acreage from the inventory of developable land. An amended plan was prepared in 2010 and filed with COAH for substantive certification with a request for a vacant land adjustment. That plan was not reviewed by COAH due to other challenges to their rules.

The Land Development Ordinance was amended to conform to the Housing Plan and all of the sites that were proposed for development in the 1997 Housing Plan and its amendments to satisfy Rounds One and Two of COAH's housing obligations have been constructed. Due to subsequent court decisions concerning COAH's Third Round regulations the Township's prospective need affordable housing obligations are uncertain. The Township has continued to provide opportunities for low and moderate income housing with appropriate developments that have been proposed during this period. A new Housing Element and Fair Share Plan has been prepared, adopted by the Planning Board and submitted to Superior Court. The Township pursued a vacant land adjustment as part of the Housing Plan since there is little available land for the development of new affordable housing.

The Development Ordinances have been amended to implement the Housing Plan. This has established some certainty to the municipality's affordable housing obligation since the Court has approved the plan and granted the Township the equivalent of substantive certification.

Land Use Plan

The Township is essentially fully developed. A vacant land analysis was conducted as part of the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan. That analysis showed that there are few vacant parcels of land within the Township of any significant size. The largest parcel is the world famous Baltusrol Golf Club, which will remain as a private golf club and is not available for development. The existing land use map and accompanying spreadsheet of vacant parcels are included in this report.

The former Saks property still contains the vacant department store and has not been redeveloped due to a number of factors including litigation with the Township of Millburn. The litigation involving Springfield and the court approved the application for the use of the site as a supermarket. Therefore the future use of this site continues to be an issue since it remains in the same state as in the last reexamination.

Although there has been progress towards the redevelopment and revitalization of the downtown of Springfield, there has been no construction as of the preparation of this report. The Planning Board granted preliminary site plan approval for Morris Center LLC for the construction of a mixed use building along the south side of Morris Avenue between Center Street and Caldwell Place. This site was approved for approximately 30,000 square feet of retail space and 140 dwellings with a set-aside of low and moderate income dwellings.

There are other properties within the Redevelopment Area in which no current plans have been filed for site plan approval. A Redevelopment Plan has been provided for new residential development in the Church Mall neighborhood, although no site plan has been submitted as of this time. Redevelopment of the center of Springfield will continue to be an issue until the entire redevelopment plan is realized.

Many properties along the Route 22 corridor have been upgraded since the last Master Plan and the last Master Plan Reexamination. Some amendments to the sign ordinance have also been adopted to help control sign pollution and clutter. The still remains a problem and continued efforts would be appropriate to encourage additional private reinvestment and redevelopment of underutilized properties along the corridor.

As was noted above the previous Master Plan and Master Plan Reexamination discussed problems noted in other master plan elements that were related to land use. The following items have increased or decreased since the last Reexamination Report:

- The Fire Department is now located in a new building that addresses their space deficiencies previously noted.
- An ordinance concerning the location and standards for cellular communications antennas and towers was adopted.
- The space deficiency for the Public Works Department continues to be an issue.

As part of the Housing Plan was prepared and submitted to Superior Court for a judgement of repose, a vacant land analysis was undertaken to determine if there is available

land for affordable housing development. The map that was prepared is attached to this Reexamination Report along with a spreadsheet that identifies the remaining vacant parcels. The result of that analysis is that Springfield is almost completely built-out, with only small parcels available for development. The over 400 acres that comprises the world famous Baltusrol Golf Club is not available for development. Any future significant development within the Township will involve redevelopment of lands that are currently occupied by other uses.

Demographic Changes

In order to determine whether there has been an increase or reduction of the problems relating to land development since the last master plan reexamination, a review of the current conditions of the Township is needed. The 2005 Reexamination Report primarily relied upon data from the 2000 Census. Data from the 2010 Census is now available which can illustrate changes to the community. Additionally more recent data is available from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs and other state agencies that can supplement the Census information.

TABLE 1 TOWNSHIP OF SPRINGFIELD AND UNION COUNTY TOTAL POPULATION 1970 - 2010							
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	Change 2000-2010	
						Number	Percent
Springfield	15,740	13,995	13,420	14,429	15,817	1,388	9.6
Union County	543,116	504,094	493,819	522,541	536,499	13,958	2.7
Source: U.S. Census							

The population of Springfield declined from a high point in 1970 to 1990 and then increased in 2000 and 2010. The total population in 2010 was slightly higher than that in 1970. The population for Union County followed a similar pattern, but has not reached the high that was reached in 1970. The percent increase in Springfield from 2000 to 2010 was 9.6 percent, which surpassed the 2.7 percent increase of Union County.

As shown in Table 2, the population of Springfield has been estimated to have continuously increased from the count of the 2010 Census to July 2015. While the population has increase in the Township, so has the number of housing units. Table 3 illustrates the number of owner occupied and renter occupied housing units in the Township and in Union County between 2000 and 2010. In the Township the total number of housing units increased by 8.6 percent during the decade. It should be noted that the majority of the increase was in rental units, which grew by 32.3 percent. The percentage increase of total units and rental units was greater for Springfield than for Union County.

TABLE 2 TOWNSHIP OF SPRINGFIELD POPULATION ESTIMATES 2010 - 2015	
Year	Population
2010	15,853
2011	16,165
2012	17,051
2013	17,320
2014	17,444
2015	17,502
Source: N.J. Department of Labor and Workforce Development Estimates are as of July 1st of each year.	

TABLE 3 TOWNSHIP OF SPRINGFIELD AND UNION COUNTY HOUSING UNITS 2000 AND 2010				
	2000	2010	Change 2000-2010	
			Number	Percent
Springfield				
Total	6,204	6,736	532	8.6
Owner-Occupied	4,444	4,451	7	0.2
Renter Occupied	1,557	2,060	503	32.3
Vacant	203	225	22	10.8
Union County				
Total	192,945	199,489	6544	3.4
Owner-Occupied	114,638	112,843	-1795	-1.6
Renter Occupied	71,486	75,275	3789	5.3
Vacant	6,821	11,371	4550	66.7
Source: 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census				

TABLE 4 TOWNSHIP OF SPRINGFIELD RESIDENTIAL CERTIFICATES OF OCCUPANCY 2010 - 2015	
Year	Residential C.O.'s
2010	3
2011	86
2012	296
2013	30
2014	8
2015	2
Source: New Jersey Department of Community Affairs	

Table 4 illustrates the number of residential certificates of occupancy that were issued in Springfield between 2010 and 2015. They total 425 units with 296 issued in 2012. The bulk of those units are attributed to the Springfield Gardens development.

TABLE 5 AGE DISTRIBUTION, SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP AND UNION COUNTY 2000 AND 2010								
Age Group	Township of Springfield				Union County			
	2000		2010		2000		2010	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 5	893	6.2	950	6.0	36,441	7.0	35,783	6.7
5 - 9	849	5.9	835	5.3	37,777	7.2	36,057	6.7
10 - 19	1,446	10	1,797	11.4	67,428	12.9	72,776	13.6
20 - 24	461	3.2	651	4.1	29,764	5.7	32,521	6.1
25 - 34	1,847	12.8	1,974	12.5	75,189	14.4	69,279	12.9
35 - 44	2,400	16.6	2,200	13.9	88,398	16.9	78,418	14.6
45 - 54	2,062	14.3	2,499	15.8	69,568	13.3	83,409	15.5
55 - 64	1,499	10.4	2,142	13.5	45,935	8.8	60,495	11.3
65 and older	2,972	20.6	2,769	17.5	72,041	13.8	67,761	12.6
Total	14,429	100	15,817	100	522,541	100	536,499	100
Median Age	42.1		42.9		36.6		38	
Source: U.S. Census 2000 and 2010								

Table 5 compares the age distribution of residents of Springfield and Union County in 2000 and 2010. The median age of residents of Springfield increased slightly from 42.1 to 42.9 during the decade. It remained higher than Union County for both Censuses. The percentage of residents aged 65 and older dropped from 20.6 percent to 17.5 percent for the Township, while those between 55 and 64 increased. While there was a slight percentage increase in children between 10 and 19 years of age, the actual number grew by about 350 persons.

4.0 Changes in Assumptions, Policies and Objectives

There have not been dramatic changes to municipal assumptions, policies and objectives that formed the basis of the 2005 Master Plan Reexamination and its recommendations.

1. Redevelopment of the downtown of Springfield continues to be a goal of the Township. Some progress has been made in furtherance of that goal with the adoption of the redevelopment plan and the preliminary site plan approval of the Morris Center application for the property fronting on Morris Avenue between Caldwell Place and Center Street. It is anticipated that the development of this project will provide incentives for additional areas of the downtown to undertake redevelopment.
2. The Township has continued to fulfill its obligation to provide the opportunity for the development of housing affordable to low and moderate income families. Since the oversight of municipal obligations for affordable housing has been transferred back to the courts the Township has decided to pursue a settlement of the litigation. The implementation of that settlement is provided through the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan adopted by the Planning Board. That Housing Element established through a vacant land analysis that there is insufficient land to satisfy the affordable housing obligation that was assigned to the Township. The Township has amended the zoning ordinance to create overlay zones to address the unmet need identified in the Housing Plan. The areas of the community that are included in those overlay zones are identified on a map included with the Housing Plan. This action is due to a change in agencies external to the Township of Springfield.
3. There continues to be interest in redeveloping the residential uses and properties in the Church Mall / Blacks Lane neighborhood. This area is part of the overall redevelopment efforts of the downtown area of Springfield. Residential redevelopment of this location is intended to include a component of affordable housing units.
4. There has been a growing concern and increasing efforts to mitigate stormwater impacts and lessen the threat of flooding in the community. The Township seeks to have developers include measures that will positively impact stormwater runoff and decrease the chances for flooding with all new development.

5.0 Recommendations

A new and updated Housing Element and Fair Share Plan dated September 19, 2016 was adopted by the Planning Board. This plan was intended to address the Township's housing obligations through the year 2025. The Housing Plan called for changes to the Land Use Plan and Development Ordinance to implement the plan. Those specific changes to the Land Use Plan, which were adopted by ordinance #2016-26, are summarized as follows:

- The PUD zone that encompasses the Park Place development was amended to permit additional residential construction in the location that was previously intended for office development. This approximately 8.5 acre parcel would permit residential development at a density of twenty (20) dwelling units per acre with a fifteen (15%) percent set-aside for affordable units if they are offered for rent and twenty (20%) percent if they are for sale.
- The ordinance was amended and the redevelopment plan should be amended to require that the Rica properties on Church Mall and Blacks Lane include affordable housing with their redevelopment plans. An affordable housing set-aside of fifteen (15%) percent is included in the Housing Plan.
- A small property on the Millburn border (Block 204, Lots 1 and 2) is rezoned from I-20 to affordable housing at a density of sixteen (16) units per acre with a fifteen (15%) percent set-aside.

The above changes and existing zoning and projects will address the affordable units that can be accommodated in the plan given the lack of available vacant properties in the community. There is an unmet need identified in the Housing Plan that is addressed through the adoption of overlay zones in limited locations in the Township that will permit multi-family housing with an affordable set-aside. The conditions of the overlay zone are as follows:

- The site has to be a minimum of three (3) acres.
- The maximum density permitted is sixteen (16) units per acre, unless the total size of the property to be developed is five (5) acres or more, in which case the maximum density permitted shall be eighteen (18) units per acre.
- No property shall be developed unless it shall have access to a public street other than or in addition to U.S. Highway Route 22.
- The minimum percentage of low and moderate income units to be set-aside is twenty (20%) percent for sales units and fifteen (15%) percent for rental units.
- Thirteen (13%) percent of the units have to be devoted to very low income residents.

Should any multi-family development be created through rezoning, use variance, redevelopment plan or rehabilitation plan that provide for densities greater than six (6) dwelling units per acre, a low and moderate income set-aside must be provided. This does not give any developer the right to any such rezoning, variance or other relief, or establish any obligation on the part of Springfield to grant such rezoning, variance or other relief.

An overlay zone was also included in the Housing Plan for Block 101, Lots 34, 45 and 46, (commonly known as the Saks Property), that will allow redevelopment of this site for residential use at a maximum density of eighteen (18) units per acre, with a minimum percentage of low and moderate income units to be set-aside of twenty (20%) percent for sales units and fifteen (15%) percent for rental units, with thirteen (13%) percent of the set-aside units to be devoted to very low income residents.

Other Recommendations

1. Block 3701, Lots 2 and 3, which is currently used as a charitable collection drop-off site and previously was a farm market is zoned for multi-family residential use. The property is less than an acre and is adjacent to the Highway Commercial (HC) zone. Therefore it is recommended that the property be included in the HC zone, since that is the current use and it does not meet the parameters of the MR zone.
2. The property that contains Dobbs Auto repair, (Block 209, Lots 12, 13 & 14, 21 and 23 Springfield Avenue), is currently locate in the AH-SC zone. The AH ordinance includes a two acre limit on property to be devoted to multi-family housing use, therefore properties less than two acres would be allowed the uses permitted on the land as it was previously zoned as General Commercial (GC). It is recommended that this property be rezoned to GC due to its size and location at the prominent location of the intersection of Morris Avenue and Springfield Avenue.
3. The Redevelopment Plan for the downtown of Springfield includes buildings with mixed residential and commercial use. The ordinance should be amended to permit this type of mixed use in all portions of the General Commercial district. This will permit the same benefits that are intended in the redevelopment areas.

6.0 Relationship to Redevelopment Plans

Redevelopment plans have been adopted for the downtown of Springfield and the Planning Board has granted preliminary site plan approval to Morris and Center Avenue LLC for a mixed use residential and commercial project for the block on Morris Avenue between Center Street and Caldwell Place. Additional conceptual redevelopment plans have been forwarded for the Church Mall / Blacks Lane neighborhood. It was determined that the redevelopment plans were consistent with the previous Master Plan Reexamination and Master Plan. To the extent necessary to further conform to the ongoing redevelopment efforts, this Master Plan Reexamination endorses changes and amendments to the development ordinances in order to effectuate those redevelopment efforts.