



WOOLWICH TOWNSHIP

GLOUCESTER COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS 2016 UPDATE

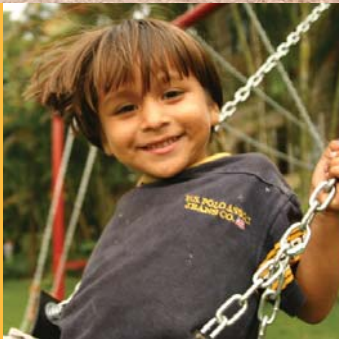




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Alan Schwager, Mayor
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NJ Department of Environmental Protection
NJ Office for Planning Advocacy
NJ Department of Agriculture, State Agriculture Development Committee
NJ Department of Community Affairs
NJ State Planning Commission
Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Urban Land Institute

*The approved TDR Plan was prepared by melvin | kernan development strategies in February 2007.
An amended TDR Plan was prepared by GROUPmelvinDESIGN in July 2008.

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Growth is inevitable and desirable, but destruction of community character is not. The question is not whether your part of the world is going to change. The question is how.

- Edward T. McMahon, The Conservation Fund

PREAMBLE

According to Arthur C. Nelson, in *Toward a New Metropolis: The Opportunity to Build a New America*, 2004, "In 2030, about half of the buildings in which Americans live, work and shop will have been built after 2000." Further, James Howard Kunstler in *The Geography of Nowhere*, states that "Eighty percent of everything ever built in America has been built in the last fifty years."

These two statements speak to the speed to which our collective landscape has changed and the inevitability that it will change again – significantly – in the next 30 years.

The last 50 years have brought us a landscape noted for its decentralization of populations fueled by the availability of inexpensive land, cheap gasoline and a first class, 20th century highway system. The resulting sprawling land pattern designed around and dependent on the single occupancy automobile has resulted in what many have called "The American Dream."

So, what does the American Dream look like? Is it the single family home on its own plot of land, nestled among other single family detached homes in which the family of four lives? On first blush, these homes seem perfectly situated, neither in the city nor in the country, but somewhere accessible to both by automobile. Yet it has become increasingly clear that the benefits to the individual household have come at an enormous cost to the collective public. This cost translates into loss of community character and identity, disappearance of rural landscapes in favor of sprawling suburbs, a sense of isolation, escalating property taxes, a housing affordability crisis, socio-economic segregation, declining public health, congestion, and land, air and water pollution.

Surely we can do better than this. And in the face of a rapidly changing physical and demographic landscape we must. Take, for example, New Jersey's rural landscape. Each day, our state loses 50 acres of open space to development. Yet open space is a resource New Jerseyans have held sacred since 1961, when they voted for the first of nine statewide land preservation bond issues.

Consider who lives in New Jersey today. The prevalence of the traditional family, consisting of the married couple and two children, is becoming a phenomenon of the past. According to the 2010 census, just over 24% of households in New Jersey comprised married couples with children. The preponderance of single family units will not respond to the needs of our changing demographics – the increase in "nontraditional" households, such as people living alone, couples without children, and single parent households. Moreover, declining birth rates evident in the United States suggest the need for new and different housing options.

All of this background information leads to the following questions: How do we plan for the future? How do we create a more sustainable "American Dream"? What are the defining characteristics of a sustainable community in 21st century New Jersey?

We believe that a sustainable community exhibits the following characteristics:

- Neighborhood connectivity
- Socio-economic diversity
- High quality public spaces
- Design features that enhance social interaction
- Decreased land consumption
- Increased land preservation
- Use of renewable resources
- Water and energy conservation
- Reduced reliance on cars

Change is happening rapidly but it does not have to be to our detriment. Folding the fundamental characteristics of "sustainable community" into a comprehensive planning process will enable a township like Woolwich to position itself today to provide a new, sustainable 21st century American Dream for its residents in the future.