

# 2016 MASTER PLAN REEXAMINATION

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## Woolwich Township

Gloucester County, New Jersey

Adopted: \_\_\_\_\_

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Prepared by:



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## Woolwich Township

### 2016

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law, N.J.S.A. 40:55 D-1 et seq. stipulates that each municipality in the State of New Jersey shall reexamine its Master Plan and development regulations at least every ten years. Specifically, N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89 states:

*“The governing body shall, at least every ten years, provide for a general reexamination of its Master Plan and development regulations by the Planning Board, which shall prepare and adopt by resolution a report on the findings of such reexamination, a copy of which report and resolution shall be sent to the County Planning Board and the municipal clerk of each adjoining municipality.”*

This reexamination of the Woolwich Township Master Plan conforms to the requirements of the Municipal Land Use Law and addresses the requirements of N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89 by including the following:

- 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 such plan or regulations as last revised, with particular regard to the density and distribution of population and land resources, energy conservation, collection, disposition and recycling of designated recyclable materials, and changes in 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 seq.) 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.

These requirements are addressed in the sections of this report that follow. This reexamination report considers the Master Plan Phase I: Assumptions, Land Use and Housing Elements adopted on October 3, 2003.

## II. COMMUNITY PROFILE & DEMOGRAPHICS

In order to evaluate how the 2003 Master Plan's goals and objectives have been addressed, or how those needs may have changed in the proceeding twelve years, it is necessary to understand the current community profile as it relates to the most recent population, housing and land use, age, and income statistics. In most cases below, 2010 data is used, which is from the most recent decennial census.

Woolwich Township is located in the southwestern part of New Jersey as well as the southwestern part of Gloucester County. The Township is located just east of the Delaware River which divides New Jersey from Pennsylvania and Delaware. Woolwich is bordered by the Townships of Logan, Greenwich, East Greenwich, Harrison and South Harrison in Gloucester County, as well as the Townships of Oldmans and Pilesgrove in Salem County. Woolwich also surrounds the Borough of Swedesboro. Woolwich is home to 10,200 persons as of the 2010 Census.

### Population

The table below shows the population growth of the Township between 1930 and 2010. The Census reveals moderate loss between 1950 and 1980, and then an incredible boom in growth starting in 1980 and escalating in the following decades, with the years between 2000 and 2010 showing 236% growth.

POPULATION GROWTH			
Year	Population	Change	Percent
1940	1,193	---	---
1950	1,343	150	12.6%
1960	1,235	-108	-8.0%
1970	1,147	-88	-7.1%
1980	1,129	-18	-1.6%
1990	1,459	330	29.2%
2000	3,032	1,573	107.8%
2010	10,200	7,168	236.4%

Source: <http://lwd.dol.state.nj.us/labor/lpa/census/2kpub/njsdcp3.pdf> and DP-1 Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics 2010

While surrounding municipalities all experienced growth or generally held steady, Woolwich far outpaced all others. This was the case even at the time of the last Master Plan, however the numbers have become more dramatic. Even East Greenwich, the municipality with the second highest growth at 76%, is dwarfed by Woolwich at over 236% growth.

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) makes population projections for counties within its jurisdiction. Woolwich ranks second highest in the region for absolute anticipated growth, with an estimate of 23,098 residents by 2040, and first in terms of percent change, up 127% from 2010.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Analytical Data Report: Municipal, County, and Municipal Population Forecasts, 2010-2040," ADR 18-A, DVRPC, March 2013.

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POPULATION GROWTH IN NEIGHBORING MUNICIPALITIES 2000 & 2010			
Municipality	2000 Census	2010 Census	Percent Change
<b>Woolwich</b>	<b>3,032</b>	<b>10,200</b>	<b>236.4%</b>
Swedesboro	2,055	2,584	25.7%
Logan	6,032	6,042	0.2%
Greenwich	4,879	4,899	0.4%
East Greenwich	5,430	9,555	76.0%
Harrison	8,788	12,417	41.3%
South Harrison	2,417	3,162	30.8%
Oldmans	1,798	1,773	-1.4%
Pilesgrove	3,923	4,016	2.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,546</b>	<b>36,075</b>	

Source: DP-1 Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics 2000 / 2010

Also impacted by this significant growth, the municipal density reflects the changing character of Woolwich. Between 2000 and 2010, the overall population density increased from 144.8 persons per square mile to 487.1 persons per square mile, and while Woolwich is by no means the densest of the neighboring communities, it is the only one to experience such dramatic change.

DENSITY IN NEIGHBORING MUNICIPALITIES 2000 & 2010						
Municipality	Area (sq. mi.)	2000		2010		Percent Change
		Population	Persons / sq. mi	Population	Persons / sq. mi	
<b>Woolwich</b>	<b>20.94</b>	<b>3,032</b>	<b>144.8</b>	<b>10,200</b>	<b>487.1</b>	<b>236.4%</b>
Swedesboro	0.73	2,055	2,815.1	2,584	3,539.7	25.7%
Logan	22.62	6,032	266.7	6,042	267.1	0.2%
Greenwich	18.16	4,879	268.7	4,899	269.8	0.4%
East Greenwich	14.75	5,430	368.1	9,555	647.8	76.0%
Harrison	19.13	8,788	459.4	12,417	649.1	41.3%
South Harrison	15.8	2,417	153.0	3,162	200.1	30.8%
Oldmans	19.97	1,798	90.0	1,773	88.8	-1.4%
Pilesgrove	34.91	3,923	112.4	4,016	115.0	2.4%

Source: DP-1 Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics 2000 / 2010

### Housing and Land Use

Woolwich Township is primarily a residential community. As of 2010, fewer than 4,000 parcels make up the Township. The following chart summarizes the land use categories and displays the number of parcels and land value for each category.

In 2010, a total of 73.4% of the parcels in Woolwich were residential and had a total value of \$526,066,000. Residential property values were 85% of the total property value within the Township. The second most common use category was vacant land, which comprised 15.5% of all parcels, but – unsurprisingly - only 3.2% of the Township’s total value. Farmland and farm homestead properties combined to total 360 properties, or 9.2% of the municipal parcels. There were 68 commercial

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properties (1.7%) in 2010, which had a value of more than \$21 million (3.6%). Apartment and industrial properties were the least common, with 1 parcel (0%) and 9 parcels (0.2%) respectively.

It is of note that between 2010 and 2014, all land use classes increased in number *except* vacant, farm homestead, and farmland, which all decreased through conversion to other uses.

The Land Use table below illustrates all the land uses within the Township and their related total value.

Land Use - 2010				
Land Use Class	Number of Lots	Percentage	Total Value	Percentage
Vacant	614	15.5%	\$20,088,000	3.2%
Residential	2,900	73.4%	\$526,066,000	85.0%
Farm Homestead	105	2.7%	\$14,063,400	2.3%
Farmland	255	6.5%	\$4,954,300	0.8%
Commercial	68	1.7%	\$21,996,900	3.6%
Industrial	9	0.2%	\$23,066,100	3.7%
Apartment	1	0.0%	\$8,741,400	1.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,952</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>618,976,100</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: [http://nj.gov/dca/divisions/dlgs/resources/property\\_tax.html](http://nj.gov/dca/divisions/dlgs/resources/property_tax.html)

Of the residential properties, it is clear that Woolwich Township has overwhelmingly single-family detached homes (85.6%), of which over 90% are owner-occupied. Additionally, most of the housing stock in Woolwich has been built since 2000, with significant numbers of older buildings being demolished.

HOUSING TYPE BY UNITS IN STRUCTURE		
Unit Type	Number of Units	Percent
1, Detached	2,529	85.6%
1, Attached	156	5.3%
2	45	1.5%
3 or 4	34	1.2%
5 to 9	78	1.6%
10 to 19	80	2.7%
20 or more	0	0.0%
Mobile Home	31	1.0%
Other	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,953</b>	<b>99.0%</b>

Source: DP04: Selected Housing Characteristics 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

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OCCUPANCY STATUS		
	Households	Percent
Owner Occupied	2,556	90.9%
Renter Occupied	255	9.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,811</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

DP04: Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics: 2010

AGE OF HOUSING STOCK		
Year Built	Number of Units	Percent
1939 or earlier	98	3.3%
1940 to 1949	17	0.6%
1950 to 1959	91	3.1%
1960 to 1969	75	2.5%
1970 to 1979	109	3.7%
1980 to 1989	192	6.5%
1990 to 1999	485	16.4%
2000 to 2004	1,189	40.3%
2005 or later	697	23.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,953</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: US Census Bureau 2006-2010 ACS 5-Year Est., DP-04 Selected Housing Characteristics

### Age & Income

Woolwich is also a relatively young Township. At the time of the 2010 Census, the largest age cohort within the Township was the 35 to 44 year range with 21.5% of the total population. However, if you combine all school students - those between age 5 and 19 - they composed 26.2% of Woolwich's population in 2010.

The second largest cohort was those from 45 to 54 with 15% of the population. Finally, 6.4% of the Township's population is age 65 and over. The median age of Woolwich Township in 2010 was 35.7 years of age according to the Census Bureau. The table below shows the 2010 Age Distribution of Population.

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POPULATION BY AGE COHORT		
Age	Total	Percent
Under 5 years	930	9.1%
5 to 9 years	1,129	11.1%
10 to 14 years	934	9.2%
15 to 19 years	605	5.9%
20 to 24 years	324	3.2%
25 to 34 years	1,040	10.2%
35 to 44 years	2,203	21.6%
45 to 54 years	1,531	15.0%
55 to 59 years	471	4.6%
60 to 64 years	383	3.8%
65 to 74 years	423	4.1%
75 to 84 years	171	1.7%
85 years and over	56	0.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,200</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: DP-1: Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics 2010

Woolwich is also a relatively wealthy community relative to the county and the state. Figures below are for 2014.

INCOME CHARACTERISTICS			
Income Type	Woolwich Township	Gloucester County	New Jersey
Median Household Income	\$117,571	\$76,213	\$72,062
Median Family Income	\$128,240	\$90,352	\$87,999
Per Capita Income	\$42,904	\$33,609	\$36,359
Poverty Status (Percent of People)	4.1%	8.0%	10.7%
Poverty Status (Percent of Families)	3.2%	5.7%	8.1%

Source: DP03: Selected Economic Characteristics 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

### III. PROBLEMS AND OBJECTIVES IDENTIFIED IN 2003 MASTER PLAN

This chapter of the 2016 Master Plan Reexamination report examines the major problems and objectives relating to land development in Woolwich Township that were included in the last Master Plan.

Woolwich Township’s most recent Master Plan was adopted in 2003 and Phase I consists of Assumptions, Land Use and Housing elements. This Master Plan outlines the demographic and development trends that the Township had experienced both recently and for many decades, and from

that information a long-term vision for the future of the Township was developed. The Master Plan, for example, recognizes the substantial growth that Woolwich had been experiencing, even relative to adjacent municipalities, the predominance of single-family detached housing, and a growing youth population.

## Goals and Objectives

The 2003 Master Plan identified the following nine (9) goals and underlying objectives:

1. *Goal:* To preserve and enhance the quality of life in Woolwich Township in the face of rapid development.

*Objective:* Insure that new development is well designed and adheres to recognized principles of good planning and smart growth.

*Objective:* Strengthen ordinances that enhance community character such as design standards, landscaping and buffer regulations, and signage control.

*Objective:* Preserve open space opportunities through public and private actions.

*Objective:* Retain the existing character of the community, to the extent practical, through open space preservation.

*Objective:* Encourage commercial development in the Weatherby Town Center and along the 322 Corridor while limiting nonresidential encroachments into residential neighborhoods.

2. *Goal:* To promote orderly growth within the Township.

*Objective:* Review current densities with an eye towards balancing designated growth nodes with lower density environs.

*Objective:* Develop in accordance with the State Plan and encourage the creation of communities of place. However, some land use assumptions of the State Plan may need to be reassessed, including tier designations and utility service areas.

*Objective:* Concentrate new development around established nodes or at planned locations that are well served by utilities and the road network.

*Objective:* Explore opportunities for land conservation during the process of subdividing tracts of land.

*Objective:* Encourage a sound fiscal mix of future uses.

3. *Goal:* To provide a safe and attractive residential environment.

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*Objective:* Provide a variety of housing opportunities and dwelling types for residents at all income levels.

*Objective:* Comply with applicable laws and policies regarding affordable housing.

*Objective:* Insure that major new residential development contributes fairly to the provision of needed services, including recreation.

4. *Goal:* Provide conveniently located and well-designed retail and commercial opportunities to serve the residents of Woolwich and the surrounding area.

*Objective:* Provide opportunities for more intensive regional-scale retail development, which will become possible once sewer and water can be provided to the Route 322 Corridor.

*Objective:* Due to limitations in the road network, retail activities in the area now designated as Woolwich's Town Center should be directed towards a community-scale market and should be integrated with other planned community facilities. Mixed office and/or apartment uses in this area shall be permitted.

5. *Goal:* Limit the expansion of office and light industrial uses to areas that have good highway access to either Route I-295 or to the New Jersey Turnpike, and public sewer and water availability.

*Objective:* Review existing patterns of zoning to determine if any changes are necessary in the areas designated for office and light industrial use.

6. *Goal:* To provide a full range of community services to residents of Woolwich Township.

*Objective:* Provide a new municipal administration building capable of meeting the current and projected needs of the Township.

*Objective:* Provide enhanced public safety service, including police, fire, and EMS, to meet the current and projected needs of the population.

*Objective:* Work with the local and regional school districts to provide appropriate locations for necessary new school facilities.

*Objective:* Work with the Gloucester County MUA, the Borough of Swedesboro and/or Logan Township to cooperatively determine the appropriate future rules and boundaries of sewer and water service areas.

*Objective:* Work cooperatively with the County and Regional Planning Agencies, recognizing that some adjustments to current policies may need review.

*Objective:* Provide opportunities for private and quasi-public institutional uses, including houses of worship, recreational facilities, and similar uses.

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7. *Goal:* To work with State, County, and Local Officials to improve the traffic circulation system within and through the Township.

*Objective:* Encourage NJ DOT and Regional officials to improve US Route 322.

*Objective:* Work cooperatively with County officials to upgrade County highways within Woolwich Township.

*Objective:* Review existing street patterns to determine if new streets are required to improve cross-township traffic patterns, including bypasses of congested areas.

*Objective:* Take every opportunity to create an effective system of pedestrian sidewalks, particularly on collector and arterial roadways, during the subdivision and site plan approval process. Encourage the provision of trails and bikeways during the plan review process.

*Objective:* Encourage the development of opportunities for public transportation in cooperation with regional agencies.

8. *Goal:* To protect environmentally sensitive lands in the Township.

*Objective:* Enforce environmental policies.

*Objective:* Protect all sensitive lands through public and private action.

*Objective:* Link various areas of the township through a system of greenways, made available to the public through either acquisition or conservation easements.

*Objective:* Ensure that all municipal policies protect and favor the environment.

9. *Goal:* To protect historic and cultural resources in the Township.

*Objective:* Identify and protect historic resources.

*Objective:* Foster opportunities for the arts.

## Recommendations

The 2003 Master Plan made the following specific land use recommendations:

1. A small portion of land located east of the Turnpike should be deleted from the sewer service area in order to control density.
2. A new sewer service area should be created along the Route 322 corridor to encourage the development of more intensive regional retail, office, light industrial and warehouse/distribution uses in this area.
3. A new Land Use Plan map (shown in the Master Plan as "Map 5") should be adopted by the Township Committee as a basis for a new zoning map.

4. The Route 322 corridor should be served by the redevelopment of a Joint Swedesboro-Woolwich Sewage Treatment Plant.
5. Density in the existing R-1 District should be lowered from one unit per 1.5 acres to one unit per two acres.
6. Area west of the Turnpike not located within a sewer service area should be rezoned into a new R-2 District, with a density of one unit per 1.5 acres.
7. Block 18, Lot 3, a 37-acre lot on Kings Highway, should be rezoned from LIO to R-2. This will allow the Kingsway Regional High School District to acquire the property for a new middle school if possible or otherwise subject to lower density R-2 zoning.
8. A Planned Adult Community District is proposed on both sides of Kings Highway near Pancoast Road. This will be in conjunction with Woolwich Adult, LLC's legal settlement and will be dedicated to age-restricted housing with a golf course, market-rate housing, and affordable housing. An RCA contribution will also be required.
9. R-1, R-2, R-3, and 5A zoning districts should limit permitted residential uses to single-family detached dwellings. A wider variety of housing types should be permitted in PUD, PAC, and RLM districts.
10. Zoning should be revised to add buffer requirements for residential uses adjacent to existing, operating farms.
11. A scenic/conservation overlay should be established beyond the boundary of any wetland buffer that is associated with the Pargey, Raccoon or Oldmans Creeks or their tributaries.
12. Subdivision applications should be required to submit a conceptual yield plan to establish the base number of dwelling units that can be developed on the tract.
13. TDRs should be used.
14. Establish a Flexible Office Commercial (FOC) District to allow an intensive mix of commercial, retail, office and warehousing to develop along the Route 322 Corridor.
15. Block 14, Lots 2 and 4 (abandoned and contaminated Nike missile bases) should be investigated as possible Areas in Need of Redevelopment and, if deemed appropriate, rezoned as Redevelopment Plans.

#### **IV. EXTENT THAT PROBLEMS & OBJECTIVES HAVE CHANGED SINCE 2003**

This chapter of the Reexamination report looks at the extent to which problems and objectives identified above have been reduced or increased since 2003. The issues listed in Chapter III are summarized below, along with a 2016 status evaluation and response.

##### **Goals and Objectives**

1. *Goal:* To preserve and enhance the quality of life in Woolwich Township in the face of rapid development.

*Objective:* Insure that new development is well designed and adheres to recognized principles of good planning and smart growth.

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*Objective:* Strengthen ordinances that enhance community character such as design standards, landscaping and buffer regulations, and signage control.

*Objective:* Preserve open space opportunities through public and private actions.

*Objective:* Retain the existing character of the community, to the extent practical, through open space preservation.

*Objective:* Encourage commercial development in the Weatherby Town Center and along the 322 Corridor while limiting nonresidential encroachments into residential neighborhoods.

***2016 Response: The quality of life in Woolwich is what keeps residents here, and draws in new residents year after year. Development such as Weatherby Town Center has progressed as anticipated, with continued development on the horizon.***

***The character of the Township is largely found in the ample open space and farmland, so the preservation of that space is critical. In 2008 Woolwich Township's Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Plan was adopted, promoting development which is in line with good planning and smart growth principles. Additionally, zoning ordinance amendments developing specific design standards (Article XXII), signage control (Article XXI), and landscaping requirements (203-159) were all adopted subsequent to the last Master Plan. Combined, these two regulatory documents encourage development only where appropriate and set specific standards in place to protect the aesthetic character of the Township.***

***Furthering the efforts to protect the environment, in 2006 new buffer regulations (Article XIII, Ord. 2006-12) were adopted requiring a 100 foot buffer between agricultural uses and residential development to help offset any negative impacts that the two may have on one another.***

***Moreover, with a 2002 voter-approved 5-cent open space tax, and state and county cost-share funding, the Township was able to take advantage of the national recession and launched an aggressive effort to preserve nearly every farm with a valid subdivision approval in place at that time. As a result, between 2008 and 2015, the Township and its State and County partners preserved over 1,500 acres - extinguishing approvals and development plans for 650 houses and counting. In 2013, Township voters approved a public question to allow Woolwich to utilize a portion of its open space levy for park development projects. Woolwich is currently focused on expanding and developing passive and active recreational uses at Locke Avenue and High Hill Road Park, and is moving forward with ambitious plans for a Shared Use Path on High Hill Road, including a new parking area and trailhead.***

***A growing Community Garden now thrives in land that was part of a municipal set-aside, with plans for a dog park, picnic area and playground in the future.***

***Lastly, an Open Space & Recreation Plan was drafted in 2014 and is pending adoption at the time of this writing.***

2. *Goal:* To promote orderly growth within the Township.

*Objective:* Review current densities with an eye toward balancing designated growth nodes with lower density environs.

*Objective:* Develop in accordance with the State Plan and encourage the creation of communities of place. However, some land use assumptions of the State Plan may need to be reassessed, including tier designations and utility service areas.

*Objective:* Concentrate new development around established nodes or at planned locations that are well served by utilities and the road network.

*Objective:* Explore opportunities for land conservation during the process of subdividing tracts of land.

*Objective:* Encourage a sound fiscal mix of future uses.

***2016 Response: The use of TDR and other zoning limitations has allowed Township growth to occur in a controlled, intentional way.***

***TDR will allow growth to be focused in central nodes while preserving farmland by allowing landowners to sell development rights on their farm parcels and developers can then execute that development in more preferable locations with the desired infrastructure and intensity.***

***Additionally, as recommended by the Master Plan, R-1 zoning was revised in 2005 (Ord. 2005-25) to reduce density from 1.5-acre zoning to 2-acre zoning, further limiting the intensity of municipal growth.***

***Specific developments have proven that this focus can be successful. The Kings Landing development will promote communities of place, the clustering of development, and consequential preservation of contiguous open space. Weatherby and Kings Landing both serve as concentrated mixed use development in active nodes, providing a broad fiscal mix while allowing open space and farmland to remain untouched by allowing increased density in those areas.***

3. *Goal:* To provide a safe and attractive residential environment.

*Objective:* Provide a variety of housing opportunities and dwelling types for residents at all income levels.

*Objective:* Comply with applicable laws and policies regarding affordable housing.

*Objective:* Ensure that major new residential development contributes fairly to the provision of needed services, including recreation.

***2016 Response: As development in Woolwich continues, zoning has been revised to direct the aesthetics and character of the Township.***

***PUD (Weatherby) and PAC districts allow a variety of housing types. However, the existing PAC zone will best be used as a sending zone to limit development on the site (a change of goal). RLM is now preserved farmland.***

***As of 2016, changes to the TDR receiving zones have been made in an effort to further incentivize development in the Regional Center and encourage preservation elsewhere.***

4. *Goal:* Provide conveniently located and well-designed retail and commercial opportunities to serve the residents of Woolwich and the surrounding area.

*Objective:* Provide opportunities for more intensive regional-scale retail development, which will become possible once sewer and water can be provided to the Route 322 Corridor.

*Objective:* Due to limitations in the road network, retail activities in the area now designated as Woolwich's Town Center should be directed toward a community-scale market and should be integrated with other planned community facilities. Mixed office and/or apartment uses in this area shall be permitted.

***2016 Response: Retail continues to grow in Woolwich as the population increases, but not nearly as quickly as is desired.***

***The Kings Landing Regional Center (formerly Woolwich Regional Center) has been established, creating opportunities for regional scale development along the 322 Corridor. With pending TDR amendments, the zoning for the Regional Center is expected to increase in flexibility in order to accommodate the ever-changing market and mixed-use opportunities.***

5. *Goal:* Limit the expansion of office and light industrial uses to areas that have good highway access to either Route I-295 or to the New Jersey Turnpike, and public sewer and water availability.

*Objective:* Review existing patterns of zoning to determine if any changes are necessary in the areas designated for office and light industrial use.

***2016 Response: A 2014 Urban Land Institute (ULI) report was published, studying the regional center including land uses. The report indicated that the existing small box industrial buildings were well-functioning, and the Panel recommended expanding the area north to create a larger industrial park. The report suggested that Woolwich was in a unique opportunity to***

***create a niche market for Small Box Industrial.<sup>2</sup> Zoning changes are currently being proposed consistent with those recommendations.***

6. *Goal:* To provide a full range of community services to residents of Woolwich Township.

*Objective:* Provide a new municipal administration building capable of meeting the current and projected needs of the Township.

*Objective:* Provide enhanced public safety service, including police, fire, and EMS, to meet the current and projected needs of the population.

*Objective:* Work with the local and regional school districts to provide appropriate locations for necessary new school facilities.

*Objective:* Work with the Gloucester County MUA, the Borough of Swedesboro and/or Logan Township to cooperatively determine the appropriate future rules and boundaries of sewer and water service areas.

*Objective:* Work cooperatively with the County and Regional Planning Agencies, recognizing that some adjustments to current policies may need review.

*Objective:* Provide opportunities for private and quasi-public institutional uses, including houses of worship, recreational facilities, and similar uses.

***2016 Response: Woolwich continues to increase the provision of community services for its residents.***

***A new municipal building was developed in 2009 along Village Green Drive. Twelve acres of land thus far has been agreed to be donated as part of a settlement agreement and set aside for municipal purposes.***

***Public safety is an ongoing priority, with police personnel rising from 7 officers in 1997 to 22 in 2016. Gloucester County took over EMS in 2005.***

***Schools have also been built to meet the needs of a growing community. The new middle school campus was developed, General Charles G. Harker School was opened in 2007, and the Kingsway Regional School District continues to expand and seek additional land. A twelve million dollar referendum is pending for continued improvements.***

***As it pertains to infrastructure, it has been determined that Woolwich will work cooperatively with Logan Township for sewer services, and all development is directed towards areas with existing or planned water and sewer services.***

***Woolwich believes that regional planning is a great asset, and the Township continues to work with DVRPC and various area nonprofits.***

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<sup>2</sup> "Rethinking the Woolwich Township (NJ) Regional Center," Urban Land Institute, July 22-23, 2014.

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7. *Goal:* To work with State, County, and Local Officials to improve the traffic circulation system within and through the Township.

*Objective:* Encourage NJ DOT and Regional officials to improve US Route 322.

*Objective:* Work cooperatively with County officials to upgrade County highways within Woolwich Township.

*Objective:* Review existing street patterns to determine if new streets are required to improve cross-township traffic patterns, including bypasses of congested areas.

*Objective:* Take every opportunity to create an effective system of pedestrian sidewalks, particularly on collector and arterial roadways, during the subdivision and site plan approval process. Encourage the provision of trails and bikeways during the plan review process.

*Objective:* Encourage the development of opportunities for public transportation in cooperation with regional agencies.

***2016 Response: As Woolwich grows the potential for unwanted traffic and congestion is a very real concern.***

***Complete Streets was adopted in October 2014 in an effort to prioritize pedestrian safety.***

***Route 322 improvements are underway in a cooperative effort between the NJDOT and a developer with approvals for three developments fronting Rt. 322. Additionally, intersection improvements are planned for the area. County highway improvements are being made the responsibility of developers along each stretch of roadway.***

***Concurrent with this Reexamination Report, a revised TDR/Circulation element is being prepared. The prior Circulation element addressed only those areas within the Regional Center, and the new document will provide guidance for the Township as a whole, including streets, sidewalks, and other traffic-related concerns.***

***The current Public Spaces Plan, which is being updated, calls for an off-road Multi-Use Path along both sides of Auburn Road fronting Weatherby and Auburn Road Village developments.***

***Improved public transportation is an ongoing matter for the Township. There are currently bus lines along Route 322, although a previously contemplated bus rapid transit (BRT) has been abandoned due to lack of demand and finances. These efforts should continue.***

8. *Goal:* To protect environmentally sensitive lands in the Township.

*Objective:* Enforce environmental policies.

*Objective:* Protect all sensitive lands through public and private action.

*Objective:* Link various areas of the township through a system of greenways, made available to the public through either acquisition or conservation easements.

*Objective:* Ensure that all municipal policies protect and favor the environment.

***2016 Response: As outlined above, protection of open space, farmland, and environmentally sensitive lands were the major impetus for the 2008 adoption of the Woolwich TDR Plan. That priority remains.***

***Additionally, Woolwich is currently focused on expanding and developing passive and active recreational uses at Locke Avenue and High Hill Road Park, and is moving forward with ambitious plans for a Shared Use Path on High Hill Road, including a new parking area and trailhead.***

***An Environmental Conservation area is located alongside Raccoon Creek, with additional buffers recommended. Other environmentally sensitive areas are generally protected by proximity to sending areas and already developed parcels.***

***The OSRP and current municipal efforts have focused on acquiring several waterfront parcels as part of Greenway development for open space and conservation purposes.***

9. *Goal:* To protect historic and cultural resources in the Township.

*Objective:* Identify and protect historic resources.

*Objective:* Foster opportunities for the arts.

***2016 Response: While the protection of historic and cultural resources remains a valid goal, no changes have been made to these goals and objectives since the 2003 Master Plan.***

## Recommendations

The 2003 Master Plan made the following specific land use recommendations:

1. A small portion of land located east of the Turnpike should be deleted from the sewer service area in order to control density.

***2016 Response: No longer a goal.***

2. A new sewer service area should be created along the Route 322 corridor to encourage the development of more intensive regional retail, office, light industrial and warehouse/distribution uses in this area.

***2016 Response: Achieved. A Wastewater Management Plan (WMP) was adopted in September 2012.***

3. A new Land Use Plan map (shown in the Master Plan as "Map 5" should be adopted by the Township Committee as a basis for a new zoning map.

***2016 Response: The zoning map has been updated and regularly revised, most recently in 2012.***

4. The Route 322 corridor should be served by the redevelopment of a Joint Swedesboro-Woolwich Sewage Treatment Plant.  
**2016 Response: This goal was abandoned in favor of a cooperative arrangement with Logan Township. A public-private partnership has been established between Aqua New Jersey, the Wolfson Group, and the Township to have a sewer conveyance system to the Logan Treatment Plant in order to facilitate the expected commercial development along Route 322.**
5. Density in the existing R-1 District should be lowered from one unit per 1.5 acres to one unit per two acres.  
**2016 Response: R-1 zoning was revised as recommended in 2005 (Ord. 2005-25).**
6. Area west of the Turnpike not located within a sewer service area should be rezoned into a new R-2 District, with a density of one unit per 1.5 acres.  
**2016 Response: Rezoning was revised as recommended in 2005.**
7. Block 18, Lot 3, a 37-acre lot on Kings Highway should be rezoned from LIO to R-2. This will allow the Kingsway Regional High School District to acquire the property for a new middle school if possible, or otherwise subject to lower density R-2 zoning. **As anticipated, this site now houses the Middle School Campus.**
8. A Planned Adult Community District is proposed on both sides of Kings Highway near Pancoast Road. This will be in conjunction with Woolwich Adult, LLC's legal settlement and will be dedicated to age-restricted housing with a golf course, market-rate housing, and affordable housing. An RCA contribution will also be required.  
**2016 Response: No longer a goal.**
9. R-1, R-2, R-3, and 5A zoning districts should limit permitted residential uses to single-family detached dwellings. A wider variety of housing types should be permitted in PUD, PAC, and RLM districts.  
**2016 Response: R-1, R-2, R-3 and 5A were revised to permit only single family detached dwellings as residential uses, with the exceptions of Farmhouses and farm buildings and community residences. As was desired, PUD districts allow a variety of housing types. RLM is preserved farmland, and the remaining PAC is slated to become a sending zone.**
10. Zoning should be revised to add buffer requirements for residential uses adjacent to existing, operating farms.  
**2016 Response: In 2006, zoning code Article XIII was adopted (Ord. No. 2006-12) requiring agricultural buffers of one hundred feet in order to isolate and insulate residential uses from agricultural uses.**
11. A scenic/conservation overlay should be established beyond the boundary of any wetland buffer that is associated with the Pargey, Raccoon or Oldmans Creeks or their tributaries.  
**2016 Response: A buffer is proposed alongside Raccoon Creek, with new buffers recommended. Pargey and Oldmans Creeks are generally protected by proximity to TDR sending areas and already developed parcels.**
12. Subdivision applications should be required to submit a conceptual yield plan to establish the base number of dwelling units that can be developed on the tract.  
**2016 response: Achieved.**

13. TDRs should be used.

**2016 Response: In 2008 the Woolwich Township Transfer of Development Rights Plan was formally adopted.**

14. Establish a Flexible Office Commercial (FOC) District to allow an intensive mix of commercial, retail, office and warehousing to develop along the Route 322 Corridor.

**2016 Response: The FOC district encompasses only the westernmost portion of the Route 322 Corridor. Instead, the Woolwich Regional Center has been established, creating zones RC-1 through RC-4 (Regional Center) which occupy the entire stretch of the 322 Corridor and allow for an intensive mix of uses, ranging from commercial to residential depending on subdistrict.**

15. Block 14, Lots 2 and 4 (abandoned and contaminated Nike missile bases) should be investigated as possible Areas in Need of Redevelopment and, if deemed appropriate, rezoned as Redevelopment Plans.

**2016 Response: Area In Need Studies have been undertaken and adopted. Woolwich is now in the process of preparing Redevelopment Area Plans and zoning.**

## V. EXTENT OF CHANGES IN POLICIES & OBJECTIVES FORMING THE BASIS OF THE 2006 REPORT

The third step in the reexamination process, known as letter “c”, looks at the extent to which there have been significant changes in the assumptions, policies and objectives forming the basis for the Master Plan or regulations as last revised and changes in State, County and municipal policies and objectives. Since the 2003 Master Plan Reexamination report, a number of State, County and Municipal planning policies have been created, updated, or significantly changed, including but not limited to the State Development and Redevelopment Plan and the Municipal Transfer of Development Rights Plan.

### State Changes

#### State Development and Redevelopment Plan

In 2010, the State released a new draft State Plan, which has been going through public comment and hearing. The *Draft Final State Strategic Plan: State Development and Redevelopment Plan* was approved in November of 2011 and is awaiting final adoption. As this is the most recent SDRP, it has been reviewed for the purposes of this report. The document contains only four goals, which are:

Goal #1: Targeted Economic Growth – Enhance opportunities for attraction and growth of industries of statewide and regional importance.

Goal #2: Effective Planning for Vibrant Regions – Guide and inform regional planning so that each region of the State can experience appropriate growth according to the desires and assets of that region.

Goal #3: Preservation and Enhancement of Critical State Resources - Ensure that strategies for growth include preservation of the State’s critical natural, agricultural, scenic, recreation, and historic resources, recognizing the roles they play in sustaining and improving the quality of life for New Jersey residents and attracting economic growth.

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Goal #4: Tactical Alignment of Government – Enable effective resource allocation, coordination, cooperation and communication among those who play a role in meeting the mission of this Plan.<sup>3</sup>

It should be noted that this new plan does not include a map, nor does it include planning area designations as the 2001 plan did.

## County & Regional Changes

### Gloucester County Master Plan

The Gloucester County Master Plan was last updated in 1982, and there are therefore no changes as it pertains to consistency.

### 2005 Gloucester County Northeast Region Strategic Plan

The *Gloucester County Northeast Region Strategic Plan* was developed in 2005 to provide a uniform growth strategy for the 14 municipalities in the northeastern portion of the county. The plan establishes a regional context for identifying strategies and implementation mechanisms for addressing four themes: towns, corridors, subdivisions, and open space.

Each of these four themes has a series of vision statements, including: towns: “Support vibrant, fully productive, compact and walkable, mixed-use town centers,” and corridors: Create compact, focused, mixed-use developments that enable the surrounding farms and open spaces to be preserved.”

Additionally, Land Use Strategies in the Strategic Plan include the following:

- For towns: “Establish TDR receiving zones in the towns. Establish TDR sending areas in adjacent townships, for sending development rights to the towns, and for preserving open space in those townships.”
- For corridors: “On growing corridors, identify specific nodes and potential centers, possibly at key intersections or transit stops, and take steps to further define them through the preservation of intervening open space and farmland, and the promotion of very low intensity uses in the intervening areas.”
- For subdivisions: “Include a variety of residential types in each new development to accommodate a variety of family types such as families with children, empty nesters, grandparents, and young singles.”
- For open space: the Strategic Plan incorporates that 1997 county Open Space Plan, which recommends the use of Transfer of Development Rights, at that time noting that Woolwich Township was investigating this as a possibility.

These are just a few examples of specific ways in which the Woolwich Master Plan aligns with the *Gloucester County Northeast Region Strategic Plan*; the goals and objectives of the two work hand-in-hand.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://nj.gov/state/planning/publications/192-draft-final-ssp.pdf>, page 20.

### Connections 2040 Plan for Greater Philadelphia

In 2013 the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission created a long-range plan for the future growth and development of the DVRPC region, which includes Gloucester County and thereby Woolwich Township. The Connections 2040 Plan includes land use, environmental, economic competitiveness, and transportation strategies, and puts forth a vision for investing in the transportation system.

Within the document, four *Core Plan Principles* are identified which are intended to guide growth: Manage Growth & Protect the Environment; Create Livable Communities; Build the Economy; and Establish a Modern Multimodal Transportation System.

The following are relevant to this Reexamination Report.

- Manage Growth & Protect the Environment. The establishment of greenspaces and environmental conservation is promoted in the Connections 2040 Plan. Within Woolwich, this specifically includes Raccoon Creek and Gloucester County Farm Belt B.
- Create Livable Communities. The 2040 plan, like the State Development and Redevelopment Plan, identifies planning areas and centers as a means by which to direct growth. Woolwich Township is listed as a Planned Center, which is described as “developments on greenfields in Growing Suburbs or Rural Areas...” and with plans that call for village-type development, incorporating mixed, integrated land uses, relatively high densities, and pedestrian connections.
- Build the Economy. While there is no directive specifically for Woolwich in the Connections 2040 Plan, the general emphasis on “coordination across state, city, and county lines, across sectoral interests, and across the public and private sectors is essential to maintaining a broad view of the region and finding a common vision, goals, and policies” is certainly applicable.
- Establish a Modern Multimodal Transportation System. The Connections 2040 Plan emphasizes Complete Streets, transportation safety, increased accessibility, and congestion and environmental impact reduction for transit in the region. While none of the circuit trails identified in the document are within Woolwich, an emphasis on bikeways and walkways is relevant.

### Municipal Changes

Since the 2003 Master Plan was adopted, the following Master Plan documents were reviewed and adopted:

#### Transfer of Development Rights Plan

In 2008 the Township adopted a TDR Plan. The purpose of the plan was to preserve farmland and open space in designated “sending zones” and concentrate development in “receiving zones” by selling development rights in the sending zones and allowing that development to take place in concentrated nodes. Sending area landowners will then retain the agricultural rights to their land and the Township will preserve the rural, agricultural, scenic and open character it treasures. Mixed use and higher-intensity development, therefore, was zoned for areas along the Route 322 and the Swedesboro-Paulsboro Rd. corridors.

In 2013 a 5-year Review Report was published, providing recommended revisions to receiving areas and the Real Estate Market Analysis to be looked at during the next master plan reexamination.

Presently and in concert with the Reexamination Report, revisions are proposed for the TDR Plan that will redirect some of the development within the Regional Center and provide for more flexible zoning to accommodate ever-changing market demands.

#### ULI Technical Assistance Panel Report

The Urban Land Institute (ULI) provided a report, *Rethinking the Woolwich Township (NJ) Regional Center*, prepared by a Technical Assistance Panel (2014) which outlined the current conditions of development and market forces on the Regional Center and TDR Plan. This report identified slowing market forces and the ongoing effort to preserve farmland, and made specific land use recommendations, many of which are included below in Section VI.

## **VI. CHANGES RECOMMENDED FOR THE MASTER PLAN OR DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS**

This chapter of the 2016 Master Plan Reexamination looks at specific changes that are recommended for the Master Plan or existing development standards, which can include the underlying objectives, policies and standards. The following recommendations are made in no particular order.

1. The Land Use Ordinance should be revised with the following:
  - a. R-1, R-2, R-3 and 5A zones shall have permitted principal uses expanded to include wineries, breweries, and distilleries. Size limitations and regulations on any retail functions of the site should be studied and incorporated into the zoning.
  - b. The cluster of small box industrial development north of Rt. 322 should be considered for expansion.
  - c. The Land Use Ordinance should broaden the range of permitted accessory uses in conjunction with a farm so that farmers can develop secondary and tertiary sources of income to help support the farming operation, including farm-to-table zoning.
  - d. Existing R-3 zoning boundaries should be redrawn, limiting the zone to parcels fronting on the Turnpike and rezoning any other parcels for residential uses and/or parkland.
  - e. PAC is to become a Sending Parcel
2. The existing Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Plan shall be revised, as follows:
  - a. At the time of the 2008 TDR adoption, the anticipated development was predicated on the 2003-2004 Woolwich Adult Settlement Agreement which allowed a senior community with upward of 1,000 units, affordable housing, a golf course, and between 1.2 and 2.9 million square feet of non-residential uses. Subsequently, the residential portion of the settlement agreement has been renegotiated and TDR is now an option. The TDR Plan must be revised to reflect this change, and rezone this as a receiving area overlay for residential uses that will complement the adjacent commercial developments.

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- b. Existing zoning along the Rt. 322 corridor (RC zones) should be reconsidered for flex zoning, allowing a mix of different residential formats designed to meet market demands.
  - c. Commercial uses originally anticipated along the Swedesboro-Paulsboro Rd. should be eliminated and redirected to commercial development (“Wolfson development”) along Rt. 322 between Kings Highway and the NJ Turnpike.
  - d. The opportunity to increase density within the TDR receiving areas should be studied in order to further incentivize development.
  - e. Certain parcels currently included in the TDR receiving zones and identified in the 2013 *5-Year Review Report* area should be reconsidered as sending zones in order to address the decelerated growth that Woolwich has faced.
3. Pursue opportunities to increase the walkability of Woolwich, including walking and biking trail networks for both recreational use and as an alternate mode of transportation.
  4. Continue the effort to make highways safer and more attractive corridors. Pedestrian islands, sidewalks, crosswalks, narrow streets where practical, landscaped medians, and greenways should all be considered as design solutions to beautify the community, calm traffic, and encourage pedestrianism. All new development should have sidewalks.
  5. The zoning code should be revised to enhance municipal design standards, emphasizing quality materials and the rural vernacular while remaining flexible so as to accommodate the needs and direction of the market.
  6. Consider redesignating the existing PAC zone to a sending zone.
  7. Consider if zoning changes are appropriate in light of the 2014 Urban Land Institute report which recommended expanding light industrial area and creating a niche market for Small Box Industrial.
  8. Continue efforts to advocate for enhanced public transportation, particularly along the Rt. 322 corridor.
  9. Continue exploring the expansion and development of passive and active recreational uses at Locke Avenue and High Hill Road Park, as well as a shared Use Path on High Hill Road.
  10. Protect historic and cultural resources in the Township.
  11. The draft Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) needs to be reconciled with requirements for an off-road Multi-Use Path along both sides of Auburn Road front Weatherby and Auburn Road Village developments.
  12. Expand the Shade Tree Ordinance to advise applicants of the Flood Hazard Area regulations adopted by the Township, identifying various wetland buffers where NJDEP has jurisdiction for regulated activities.
  13. Improve targeting environmentally sensitive areas such as areas bordering/buffering tidal creeks not otherwise protected under TDR.

## **VII. RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE INCORPORATION OF REDEVELOPMENT PLANS**

It is recommended that Nike Missile Redevelopment Plan and the PMC Redevelopment Plan be finalized and adopted.