

PITTSGROVE TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN REEXAMINATION REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

Each municipality in New Jersey is required by the Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) to re-examine its Master Plan and development regulations at least once every six years. Pittsgrove Township's intention is for this Reexamination to evaluate progress on its Master Plan goals and objectives.

Pittsgrove Township adopted a new Master Plan in December 2000. The land use designations are based on the Master Plan's goals and objectives and are in conformance with the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan's Planning Areas for Pittsgrove. In the six years since its Master Plan's adoption, Pittsgrove has actively worked to implement the intent of the Master Plan.

The reexamination must consider the goals and objectives of the Master Plan in 2000 and analyze the state of those conditions in terms of the current situation. The Reexamination report must conclude with any recommendations for changes to the Master Plan (or to the development regulations which flow from it) based on any significant changes described in the Reexamination.

The major theme of the Township's 2000 Master Plan was to have Pittsgrove achieve a balance between growth and preservation. The Township Planning Board has affirmed that there is no change in the overall goals and objectives as stated in 2000. There has, though, been some increase in the pace, size and pressures associated with residential development within the Township. This Reexamination, then, is an opportunity to examine how well the Township is maintaining its goals under increasing development pressure.

There have been changes in demographic and land use patterns in the six years since the Master Plan was developed which should be examined in terms of how they have impacted the Township's goals and objectives. Other factors, extraneous to the Township, such as the national and regional economy and State level policy shifts, must be considered in terms of how they may influence attainment of the Township's Master Plan goals.

This Re-examination functions as fulfillment of Section 40:55D-89 of the Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) which requires that a Reexamination report shall state:

- The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of the adoption of the last reexamination report.
- The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date.
- 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 State, county and municipal policies and objectives.

- 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.
- 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 recommend changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.

This Reexamination Report is composed of the following sections in compliance with the requirements of the MLUL. Section One reviews the goals and objectives of the 2000 Master Plan in order to place them in the context of 2006. It also surveys new land use related plans, ordinances and data which the Township has developed over the last six years in response to the Master Plan. Section One establishes the ongoing validity of the 2000 Master Plan goals and objectives.

Section Two focuses on how the goals and objectives of the Master Plan, while still valid, should be reviewed in light of changes in:

- Population increase and distribution,
- COAH requirements,
- Environmental perception,
- State regulations, and
- regional and State goals and objectives.

Section Three is an overview of the goals and objectives in the Master Plan in terms of quantitative and qualitative progress. Based on this evaluation, Section Four makes recommendations for changes in the Master Plan and the Land Use Ordinance which will allow the Township to continue with and be able to measure its progress.

SECTION ONE: LAND DEVELOPMENT PROBLEMS AND OBJECTIVES

The 2000 Master Plan has ten major goals and 25 associated objectives. Not surprisingly, there is considerable overlap among the objectives. In addition, the Master Plan's individual Elements each contain recommendations. Overlaps among objectives and recommendations indicate a strong consistency of theme and purpose which are the hallmark of a strong document. These goals and objectives, along with the recommendations in the Elements, will form the basis for judging whether the Master Plan has been achieving its purpose as conditions, policies and assumptions have changed over the past six years.

The ten goals cover the scope of concerns and aspirations for the Township. As seen below, the goals are focused upon preservation of the rural, agricultural character of the Township.

- I. AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION:** Pittsgrove is defined by its farmland and woodland and it is essential to the preservation of its economic well being and rural character to implement policies that support the retention of agriculture

- II. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION:** The protection of environmentally sensitive lands from development and inappropriate agricultural practices will ensure that Pittsgrove will remain in ecological balance for future generations.
- III. LAND USE:** Land use is to be related to the existing natural capacities of the environment and the level of infrastructure existing or proposed in the Master Plan. Pittsgrove is to remain a place of hamlets surrounded by farmland and woodland with new development appended to these existing places.
- IV. OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION:** Opportunities for open space acquisition, conservation and recreational purposes should be enhanced through public and private efforts. Adequate active recreation facilities should be maintained through governmental action and citizen participation
- V. COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND MUNICIPAL SERVICES:** Establish and maintain a level of community facilities and public services sufficient to satisfy the needs of present residents and to allow for the well-planned expansion of facilities to meet future needs.
- VI. HOUSING:** Implement the Housing Plan Element and Fair share Plan to meet Pittsgrove's affordable housing obligation
- VII. CIRCULATION:** Provide for the efficient movement of people and goods within and through the Township in a manner compatible with the objectives of the Land Use Plan Element
- VIII. UTILITIES:** All areas of Pittsgrove Township will remain on individual well and septic systems, except in very limited circumstances where larger commercial or industrial uses can provide their own facility.
- IX. RECYCLING:** Adopt the recycling goals of Salem County and the State of New Jersey
- X. STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT PLAN:** Follow the precepts of the planning policies for Planning Areas 4b and 5

The goals' overall dual themes of farmland and rural character preservation are only as powerful as the objectives associated with them and the fulfillment of those objectives. In order for the Master Plan to be reviewed, there must be measurable achievements including, most importantly, a Land Use ordinance which reflects the intent of the Master Plan. In addition, the Master Plan, through its objectives and recommendations, should give direction to undertakings outside the ordinances which will move it toward its goals. Many of the objectives and recommendations fall into this category. These, too, must meet standards for measurability and execution.

As the Township moves forward, it should ascertain that the goals and objectives which it is implementing are still pertinent and achievable. The goals and their twenty-six associated objectives, as well as the recommendations for the Master Plan's Elements, will be explored in Section Two and Three. They will be considered in light of both their continued relevance under changing circumstances and in terms of their measurable effectiveness.

SECTION TWO: SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN ASSUMPTIONS, POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

There are four areas of change which the Township should monitor in terms of their effect on its Master Plan. They are:

- Population increase and distribution
- COAH housing
- Increasing environmental awareness
- New State regulations and policies

State policy presents an ongoing conundrum which must be addressed concerning the divergence between the Township's population growth and the intent of both the Master Plan and the State Plan. The State Plan's placement of almost all of Pittsgrove in the Planning Areas 4B and 5 (with a very small area in Planning Area 4) substantiates the Township's primary goals to preserve farmland and the rural environment. The State Plan's intent for Planning Areas 4 and 5 are noted in the accompanying box.

While both the Master Plan and the State Plan (by its Planning Area designation) envision preserving large areas of Pittsgrove from development, Pittsgrove continues to have the highest rate of population growth in the County. The chart below demonstrates population change over the last twenty-five years.

The 2005 US Census number of 9,462 people exceeds the South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization (the official source for municipal population estimates in Salem County) estimate for 2005 by 480 persons. An analysis of Planning Board applications over the last five years reveals that the vast majority of this growth is not confined to the Township's centers but is spread throughout the Environs.

**Rural Planning Area:
PA4/Rural/Environmentally Sensitive
Planning Area: PA4B**

Maintain the Environs as large contiguous areas of farmland and other lands; revitalize cities and towns; accommodate growth in Centers; promote a viable agricultural industry; protect the character of existing stable communities; and confine programmed sewers and public water services to Centers.

**Environmentally Sensitive Planning
Area: PA5**

Protect environmental resources through the protection of large contiguous areas of land; accommodate growth in Centers; protect the character of existing stable communities; confine programmed sewers and public water services to Centers; and revitalize cities and towns

PITTSGROVE TOWNSHIP POPULATION AND CHANGE

YEAR	POPULATION	CHANGE	% CHANGE
1990	8121	1167	16.8
2000	8893	772	9.5
2005*	9462	569**	6.4**

* US Census estimate

** 5 year

It is fairly clear that the Township's overall goal to preserve large, contiguous areas of farmland is endangered by the pace and type of development occurring. Developers are not eager to build within the established villages. And there is not sufficient land within the two designated villages to accommodate the anticipated and actual growth. An ongoing problem for the Township, then, is to better manage the growth in its environs in order to preserve as much of its rural character as it can in the face of determined developers.

Another ongoing difficulty for the Township's objectives is the changes in regulations under the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) rules. The Township is experiencing housing development and would like to attract additional economic development in its Highway Business and Redevelopment Areas. These new jobs and new houses must, under COAH third round rules, be figured into the Township's ongoing rehabilitation and new affordable housing obligations. The Township has contracted with a consultant to write a Fair Share Housing Plan. In the interim, it is in the process of creating and adopting a COAH compliant Growth Share Ordinance to satisfy its Mount Laurel obligations. The Growth Share Ordinance is consistent with the Master Plan as written and with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan's policies on housing.

Pittsgrove is mostly within the State Plan's Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas. The Township has just added a stormwater management section to its Ordinance in order to improve erosion control, groundwater recharge, and stormwater runoff quality standards. The increasing sensitivity to the negative impacts of impervious cover and other development accouterments requires that growth be balanced with Master Plan's objectives and recommendations to protect environmentally sensitive lands. In terms of residential growth, the Township's efforts to protect its particularly sensitive lands are caught up in the Statewide standards for Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS). Residential development's infrastructure is largely governed by these statewide standards, which are often not specific enough for areas with particular environmental requirements.

The State's changing policies and assumptions on ground water which prompted the new stormwater management ordinance should positively affect the Township's attempts to attain its goals and objectives, but changes in the State's rules and in developer's methodologies merit attention. The DEP is moving toward increasing regulation of developments that utilize septic systems as it realizes the regional impact of numerous individual ground water discharges. Changes in State rules will compel developers to change their methodology for water supply and wastewater treatment at their

sites. The assumption that all development in the Township will be on individual septic system and individual wells may not hold as developers increasingly resort to new technology to cope with State regulations.

In essence, the goals, objectives and recommendations of the 2000 Master Plan have stood the test of six year's time. In order to evaluate the success of the Master Plan over the last six years, the goals, objectives and recommendations should be examined in terms of their quantitative and qualitative accomplishments.

SECTION THREE: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES EVALUATION

The goals, their associated objectives and the recommendations within the Master Plan can be seen as the gauge by which to measure whether the Master Plan is succeeding. By reviewing the objectives and recommendations in terms of whether they are leading to any action or realization, the Township can measure the progress it is making. With that in mind, the chart below presents each Master Plan goal, objective and Element recommendation. It indicates the action that the item infers and who should perform the action. In the final column, the chart suggests a measurement criteria for the action's implementation. Utilizing this chart, the Planning Board can gauge how well it is doing in fulfilling the intent of the Master Plan and proceed accordingly.

MASTER PLAN EFFECTIVENESS CHART

GOALS/OBJECTIVES AND MASTER PLAN ELEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTION (bolded items have been accomplished or are underway)	BY*	MEASUREMENT
I. AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION: Pittsgrove is defined by its farmland and woodland and it is essential to the preservation of its economic well being and rural character to implement policies that support the retention of agriculture			
A. Zone for appropriate use and intensity in order to keep contiguous agricultural areas from intrusion by other uses.	Enact ordinances	2	Farmland loss
B. Redefine ADAs to be consistent with existing land use in conjunction with Salem County	Work with Salem County Agriculture Development Board to ensure consistency	3, 2	Changes in Salem County ADA within Pittsgrove
C. Strongly encourage new houses in agricultural areas to be clustered on lesser soils.	Revise cluster ordinance	2	Use of clustering in future developments
D. Acquire farmland preservation easements and development rights in ADAs and balance acquisition efforts between small and large farms.	Farmland Preservation local tax	2.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of easements and development rights gained 2. Diversity of farm size preserved/eased
E. Support State and County farmland funding preservation efforts with permanent local budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmland Preservation local tax • AAC working with State and County 	2, 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ordinance for tax in place 2. Active role of AAC
II. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION: The protection of environmentally sensitive lands from development and inappropriate agricultural practices will ensure that Pittsgrove will remain in ecological balance for future generations.			
A. Stream corridor preservation is a high priority for protection and preservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stream buffer ordinance • Greenway program 	2, 1, 4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. # of developments based on stream buffers 2. Increased land in greenways program
B. Use innovative zoning techniques to minimize intrusions into environmentally sensitive lands by development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study zoning options • Ordinances 	4, 2	Monitoring of developments based on ERI recommendations
C. Encourage the use of conservation easements on environmentally sensitive land to prevent future encroachments	Education of citizens and information on conservation policy to developers at first contact	4	Number of conservation easements

* 1 = Planning Board 2 = Township Committee 3 = Agricultural Advisory Committee
 4 = Environmental Commission 6 = Recreation Committee

GOALS/OBJECTIVES AND MASTER PLAN ELEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTION (bolded items have been accomplished or are underway)	BY*	MEASUREMENT
III. LAND USE: Land use is to be related to the existing natural capacities of the environment and the level of infrastructure existing or proposed in the Master Plan. Pittsgrove is to remain a place of hamlets surrounded by farmland and woodland with new development appended to these existing places.			
A. Maintain land use objectives that support agriculture and the rural landscape in nearly all locations, and promote the visual enjoyment of the land through retention of scenic outlooks and corridors.	Master Plan Updates	1	Reexam reports
B. Direct new development and redevelopment to places in relation to their transportation and environmental capacities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoning Ordinance • Redevelopment Plan 	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor successful development applications for sensitivity to ERI recommendations and access to existing roads • Efficacy of Redevelopment Plan in concentrating economic development on State Highways
C. Utilize natural features to distinguish the permitted intensity of land development. Establish controls on the permitted disturbance of natural features, including tree clearance, in developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create guidelines for intensity • Tree clearing ordinance • Stream buffer ordinance • Steep slope ordinance • Floodplain/conservation district • Water and septic capacity ordinance 	4, 1, 2	Monitor successful development applications for sensitivity to ERI recommendations
D. Commercial and industrial land uses should be limited in extent and concentrated in relation to the state highways and where adequate sewerage facilities exist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoning districts for commercial/industrial • Plan for future public/private sewers 	1, 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monitor applications for commercial/industrial to ensure districts are adequate 2. Update Water Quality Management Plan as needed to petition for additional sewer service area if needed for economic growth.

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GOALS/OBJECTIVES AND MASTER PLAN ELEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTION (bolded items have been accomplished or are underway)	BY*	MEASUREMENT
IV. OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION: Opportunities for open space acquisition, conservation and recreational purposes should be enhanced through public and private efforts. Adequate active recreation facilities should be maintained through governmental action and citizen participation			
A. Plan a conservation oriented Greenway Network to connect open space, utilizing stream corridors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement recommendations of the Open Space & Recreation Plan Zoning district changes 	1, 2	Increased land in greenways program
B. During the development review process, examine applications for ways to enhance and extend the Greenway Network	Revise ordinance	1, 2	
C. Ensure that new residential development is designed to provide for the recreational needs of future residents and connections to the Greenway Network	Recreation ordinance NOTE: Greenway is not intended for active recreation but is conservation goal	2	Monitor completed developments for effectiveness recreation component
D. New trends in sports and the evolving needs for recreation should be periodically reviewed	Recreation Advisory Committee agenda	6, 1	Include in Rec. Ad. Committee annual report
V. COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND MUNICIPAL SERVICES: Establish and maintain a level of community facilities and public services sufficient to satisfy the needs of present residents and to allow for the well-planned expansion of facilities to meet future needs.			
A. Provide for adequate police and emergency response personnel and facilities, community use facilities and recreation sufficient to meet the needs of the Township	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital planning as part of Planning Board function Township budget 	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measure against state parameters for police, fire and emergency Measure against state parameters for recreation per capita
B. Based upon the Master Plan and development trends, periodically assess the need for new services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Master Plan Reexam Capital planning 	1, 2	

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GOALS/OBJECTIVES AND MASTER PLAN ELEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTION (bolded items have been accomplished or are underway)	BY*	MEASUREMENT
VI. HOUSING: Implement the Housing Plan Element and Fair share Plan to meet Pittsgrove's affordable housing obligation			
A. Meet the fair share requirements within the five population centers in a manner that does not substantially affect existing neighborhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update Fair Share Plan for third round • Ordinances to implement obligation • Petition COAH for certification 	1, 2	Certification by COAH
B. Petition COAH for certification	See above		
VII. CIRCULATION: Provide for the efficient movement of people and goods within and through the Township in a manner compatible with the objectives of the Land Use Plan Element			
A. Recognize and preserve the scenic characteristics of local roadways in order to promote a positive community identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue guidelines for rural road design • Make compact with County with regard to future County road improvements • Write ordinances to implement guidelines within RSIS 	1, 2	Implementation of scenic road guidelines and ordinances
B. Discourage the widening of existing two land arterial roads in rural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask for RSIS <i>Special Area Designation</i> to permit alternate road design standard to preserve rural character • Work with County 	1, 2	Changes in circulation map and roads
C. Limit heavy truck uses to state highways through weight limits on local roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Township Ordinance (legality?) <p>NOTE: Most trucks are using County roads over which Township has no authority</p>	2	Ordinance implementation
VIII. UTILITIES: All areas of Pittsgrove Township will remain on individual well and septic systems, except in very limited circumstances where larger commercial or industrial uses can provide their own facility.			
IX. RECYCLING: Adopt the recycling goals of Salem County and the State of New Jersey	Adoption of recycling goals	2	Insertion of regional/State goals in Master Plan
X. STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT PLAN: Follow the precepts of the planning policies for Planning Areas 4b and 5			
A. Concentrate development in and around existing hamlets	Ordinances to restrict development in the environs	2	Number of new infill developments within existing centers

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GOALS/OBJECTIVES AND MASTER PLAN ELEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTION (bolded items have been accomplished or are underway)	BY*	MEASUREMENT
B. To the extent consistent with the State Plan, add commercial nodes along State Route 40 to the State Map	Highway Business Zoning districts	2	Commercial business district on Rte. 40
CONSERVATION ELEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS			
1. The Zoning Ordinance should be amended to provide expanded and new techniques to achieve clustering in major subdivisions	I-C and II-B	1, 4, 2.	Ordinance revisions
2. Individual site design should maximize open space according to Master Plan criteria	I-C, II-B, II-B, and III-C	4, 1	Changes to ordinances
3. Mitigation of and limitations/prohibition on development on farmland, environmentally sensitive areas and woodlands	II-B		
4. Using Master Plan criteria, preserve additional conservation/open space through contributions and easements.	II-C		
5. Give land preservation responsibility to one person/committee who will work closely with governing body to pursue acquisitions.	I-D	2	Increase in easements/acquisitions
HOUSING ELEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS			
1. Seek Approval of Housing Element for six year certification ¹	VI-A and VI-B		
UTILITY SERVICES ELEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS			
1. Soil types should be a factor in determining development density	Zoning and zoning regulations be based on verifiable soil data	2	
2. Aquifer recharge should be added as a standard to site plan review process. Impervious coverage should be related to overall land use goals.	Ordinance change	2	
3. If a public sewer system becomes feasible and desirable, boundaries should be drawn to effectuate the Master Plan's goals and objectives.	Change Water Quality Management Plan to provide for/protect in future	4, 2	Approval of a proactive WQMP by NJDEP

¹ The Housing Element predates the Round Three rules and new petition and certification programs of COAH. In essence, though, the recommendation is to seek certification

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GOALS/OBJECTIVES AND MASTER PLAN ELEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTION (bolded items have been accomplished or are underway)	BY*	MEASUREMENT
4. Best Management Practices for storm water management should be considered and incorporated into Ordinance	Ordinance change	2	Insertion in Ordinance
5. Consider stream corridor setbacks in the land development regulations.	Change stream setback requirement (§60-53) to include vegetated buffer	1, 2.	Ordinance change
RECYCLING ELEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS			
1. Extend Land Development Ordinance to include recycling for commercial and industrial uses	Ordinance change	2	Insertion in Ordinance
CIRUCLATION ELEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS			
1. Amend Land Development Ordinance to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit cul de sacs • Remove reverse frontage/suburban type streets • Encourage rural streets and lanes • Recognize certain roads as scenic 	Ordinance change (cul de sac) Guidelines for rural and scenic prior to Ordinance	1, 2	Changes in Ordinance
2. Plan a bicycle system in conjunction with the County	Work with County	6	Implementation of bicycle paths
3. Develop a highway access management plan for Rte. 40 to service highway commercial district.	Write Plan in conjunction with State DOT	2	Implementation of Highway Plan and inclusion in Redevelopment Plan
FARMLAND PRESERVATION ELEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS			
1. Designate north central section (as depicted in Element) as PIG project area.	Work with Salem County and Morris Land Conservancy on County wide farmland preservation and open space plan to support Pittsgrove's farmland preservation goals	3	Responsiveness of County Plan to Pittsgrove's Element goals.
2. Encourage preservation to all farmers in western section which already ranks high by State criteria	Work with Salem County and Morris Land Conservancy on County wide farmland preservation and open space plan to support Pittsgrove's farmland preservation goals	3	Responsiveness of County Plan to Pittsgrove's Element goals.
3. Work with selected farms in east section using conventional preservation programs to preserve as much contiguous farmland as possible.	Work with Salem County and Morris Land Conservancy on County wide farmland preservation and open space plan to support Pittsgrove's farmland preservation goals	3	Responsiveness of County Plan to Pittsgrove's Element goals.

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LAND USE ELEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS			
1. Implement policies to retain agriculture as a viable economic activity	I-A to I-D		
2. Preserve environmentally sensitive lands from development and inappropriate agricultural practices	Agricultural ordinance which promotes BMPs with regard to environmentally sensitive lands	2	Enactment of ordinance
3. Relate intensity of allowed development to natural capacity of land, existing infrastructure, and transportation availability	III-B, III-C, and III-D		
4. Reduce the village areas to be more consistent with existing development there	Decide on village development boundaries and make necessary changes to ordinance	1, 2	Changes in districts
5. Ensure adequate recreational lands consistent with population	IV-C		
6. Determine regularly that sufficient lands and facilities for services are maintained for population	V-B		
7. Provide continuity with previous planning documents	Appoint individual to monitor/coordinate all planning initiatives among different committee and to track ordinances	2	

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The action items for this chart fall into three broad categories:

- Implementation (Ordinance and zoning changes and recommendations)
- Budget (Capital planning)
- Plan (Study, research and education)

The action items should be monitored and measured on a regular basis and a report prepared to demonstrate whether the Master Plan goals are functioning for the benefit of the Township. Scrutiny of the chart should show a high degree of cross referencing between the “goals and objectives” on one hand and the recommendations of the Master Plan Elements. The various Elements of the Master Plan act as the support material for the goals and objectives. In general, there is a close correlation between the two, but there are a few which require clarification. For example, Land Use Element recommendation #4 to reduce the village areas could be seen as in conflict with the State Plan Objective X-A to concentrate development in and around villages. In another example, the Land Use Element Recommendation #2 referring to minimizing inappropriate agricultural practices should be reflected in a general Environmental Protection goal.

An examination of the minutes from the last year’s Planning Board meetings demonstrates that the Board does not regularly refer to the Master Plan’s goals and objectives as part of its deliberations. The habit of basing decisions, particularly variances, on the foundation of the Master Plan can be beneficial in the case of challenges.

One of the most crucial Element recommendations is the very last. Appointing an individual (or a Committee) to monitor progress toward the Master Plan goals and report to the Planning Board and Township Committee on a regular basis will compel the Planning Board to keep the Master Plan in mind as the basis of its actions.

SECTION FOUR: SPECIFIC CHANGES RECOMMENDED TO THE MASTER PLAN/LAND USE REGULATIONS

The Pittsgrove Master Plan is well crafted and remains consistent with the intent when it was adopted six years ago. While there have been some changes both locally and regionally, they do not change the basic premise of the Master Plan. There are only a few areas in which the Planning Board and/or the Township Committee needs to take action to ensure the vision of the Master Plan.

The Master Plan’s Housing Element must be updated to reflect Pittsgrove’s projections for jobs and housing development through 2015. The Land Use Ordinance requires amendments to ensure that developers fulfill their obligations and to provide a methodology for the Township to fulfill its past rehabilitation obligation. Once these are in place, the Township should petition COAH for certification in order to protect itself from builders’ suits.

The COAH rules and provision for affordable housing must be managed closely for the Township’s best interests to be realized. The Township should closely monitor the rules and regulations issued by COAH and maintain a relationship with the Council’s area manager in order to protect its Land Development Ordinance and its Master Plan from builders’ suits. Allowing affordable housing to slip off the front burner will come back to scorch the intent of the Master Plan.

The second area of concern with the Master Plan relates to development potential. The Master Plan strongly and repeatedly states its vision of preserving farmland, open space and environmentally sensitive areas of the Township. The Land Use and Development Ordinance does not fully effectuate that goal. Based on the Master Plan goals, objectives and recommendations, the Ordinance should be more restrictive in terms of zoning areas and development regulations, such as clustering.

In addition, the Township could consider crafting voluntary guidelines for the type of development it would like to see within the municipality. Developers who are informed about the Township's site design inclinations from the outset are more likely to voluntarily plan within that framework. Since it is inevitable that there are going to be housing developments built, the Township will better fulfill its vision of the future by utilizing proactive techniques to be an active partner in design.

Another action item is to incorporate the proposed Redevelopment Plan, after its adoption, into the Land Use Element of the Master Plan. The Redevelopment Plan for land along State Highway 56 (Landis Avenue) is in agreement with the Land Use goals of the Township to areas in relation to their transportation capacity. The Redevelopment Plan does not require changes to the Land Development Ordinance since, where it is specific, it supercedes the ordinance. In fact, the Plan's proposals utilize the current Master Plan vision with its call for context sensitive design and LEED® certified buildings. Redevelopment of this corridor, while it will remove some farmland and open space from the Township, provides a greater benefit in terms of utilizing existing circulation and condensing the possible area of development.