

**Section XI**

**RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS**

## SECTION XI - RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS

### INTRODUCTION

The land development plans<sup>1</sup> for the municipalities bordering West Windsor were reviewed to determine their relative compatibility to the planning policies of West Windsor as described in the Land Use Element of the Master Plan and to identify any areas of potential conflict. In addition, the County Master Plan and State Development and Redevelopment Plan were examined, as was the relationship to the County Solid Waste Management Plan.

A regional zoning map of Princeton Borough and Township, East Windsor Township, Washington Township, Hamilton Township and Lawrence Township will be included in this element to illustrate the importance of the adjoining municipalities working together in the spirit of cooperation on issues of regional impact.

### ADJOINING MUNICIPALITIES

#### *Princeton Township*

Princeton Township does not directly abut West Windsor but is separated by the Delaware and Raritan Canal to the north. This separation is further augmented by large areas of preserved open space and greenbelt existing along the canal in West Windsor, providing a substantial separation between the two municipalities in terms of potential land use conflicts. In any event, the land use categories of the two municipalities are substantially compatible. Education zones in Princeton, permitting both housing and educational facilities, abut West Windsor's "E" Educational zone and higher density housing areas (R-4, R-3). The Princeton R-HF-W zone is a preservation zone where maintenance of natural conditions is promoted. This abuts residential zoned land and preserved open space in West Windsor. Finally, the Princeton R-1 zone abuts R-5A, B-3 and R-2 zones in West Windsor. The only area of potential conflict would be with the B-3 zone, however, the canal and preserved open space eliminates any potential for conflict.

#### *Plainsboro Township*

Like Princeton, any potential land use conflicts between West Windsor and Plainsboro are preempted by a natural separation, in this case the Millstone River. In conjunction with the river, the corridor is characterized by existing floodplain and woodlands. In West Windsor, much of this is in preserved Greenbelt area or planned for preservation as future Greenbelt.

Without the river, adjacent zoning in Plainsboro to the east and across the Millstone River would still be compatible with that in West Windsor. Starting at the northern-most point, West Windsor's R-2 zone abuts the SR Service Residential zone in Plainsboro, although separated by substantial floodplain and wetland area in West Windsor. Further south, the West Windsor ROM-1 zone abuts Plainsboro's I-100 Limited Industrial area. The ROM-1 zone also abuts a R-90 residential zone further south, however, this part of the ROM-1 zone is environmentally constrained and undevelopable. Continuing south along the river, there are three residential zones in Plainsboro, allowing medium to low-density housing. Across the river, these face low and medium density residential areas in West Windsor.

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<sup>1</sup> For this study, local zoning in adjacent municipalities is considered to represent local land use planning.

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### *East Windsor Township*

East Windsor lies along West Windsor's southeastern border extending from the Millstone River to the vicinity of Village Road East. Beginning at the Millstone River, East Windsor has a RO Research-Office zone, which extends south across Route 571. This is compatible with the West Windsor's RO-1 and P Districts, although the East Windsor plan allows a higher intensity of commercial use. The only area of potential conflict is where the East Windsor RO zone abuts the R-32 Residential Zone in West Windsor. This conflict is eliminated, however, because these two areas are separated by existing woodlands and wetland area in East Windsor preserved as part of East Windsor's Greenway Plan.

Further south, the East Windsor RM (residential multi-family) zone abuts portions of West Windsor zoned for business and professional office. Much of this area is already developed. Any new development in West Windsor would be separated by proposed greenbelt area or through buffers required by West Windsor between residential and nonresidential uses.

Last along this common border is the East Windsor R-1 zone, which abuts the PRRC, and R-2 residential zones in West Windsor. The R-1 is a moderate density residential zone in which clustering is permitted. This is compatible with the PRRC zone in which single family clustered homes are also permitted and where, through an approved development plan, there will be substantial open space buffer provided along this common boundary. This zoning is also substantially compatible with West Windsor's R-2 residential zone, which abuts a very small area of East Windsor.

### *Washington Township*

Washington Township shares the remainder of West Windsor's southern boundary. All of Washington Township along this border is zoned for residential development or conservation (RR, R-1.5 and CONS), allowing agriculture and moderate to low-density single-family development with a cluster option. Most of this area is still in farmland. Washington's zoning is substantially consistent with the West Windsor Land Use Plan, in which almost all abutting area is located in the RR/C Rural Residential/Conservation category, where low density residential development and farmland preservation are encouraged. In fact, in accordance with West Windsor's Open Space Plan, much of this area has already been preserved as open space or farmland. There are two areas in West Windsor abutting this border where smaller residential lots are permitted (R-20), however, these small zones merely reflect existing development and do not provide any potential conflict with adjacent residential areas in Washington Township.

### *Hamilton Township*

The southwestern portion of West Windsor is bordered by Hamilton Township. This area of Hamilton Township is zoned as either C Conservation or R-15 Residential. Both areas permit agriculture in addition to housing. On the West Windsor side are the RR/C, E and R-1/C land use designations, which support residential and educational uses. In reality, existing land use in West Windsor avoids any potential for direct conflict with Hamilton's land use policies since the area in West Windsor, which abuts Hamilton, is taken up by Mercer County Parkland, Mercer County College and the Mercer County Vocational School.

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### *Lawrence Township*

The central and northwestern border of West Windsor abuts Lawrence Township, most of this area being separated by Quakerbridge Road. Overall, the zoning in the two communities is compatible. At the southernmost boundary, Lawrence has an Open Space zone abutting Mercer County Parkland in West Windsor which is zoned R-1/C, both permitting parkland. At Village Road, West Windsor supports professional office use whereas professional office and neighborhood commercial uses are permitted in Lawrence. Between the railroad and Route 1, West Windsor's R&D land use category supports campus style research and development uses, also permitting small amounts of commercial development under certain conditions. Across Quakerbridge Road, this R&D area faces four different Lawrence zones that allow regional and highway commercial, industrial and mixed-use development. These areas are developed with commercial use and will not have a negative impact on West Windsor's R&D area.

Finally, north of Route 1, Lawrence has a Planned Village Development Zone located at Quakerbridge Road across from the existing Nassau Park - B-3 business zone and small R-2 residential zone located at the northwestern most corner of the municipality. The majority of commercial activity at Nassau Park is internally oriented with most traffic utilizing Route 1, however, Nassau Park Boulevard does have an opening near existing residential development in Lawrence. Landscaping and berming on both sides of this roadway help provide a buffer between these two areas.

### **MERCER COUNTY MASTER PLAN**

The West Windsor Township Master Plan as amended herein is substantially consistent with current Mercer County Master Plan policies. Primary County Land Use Policies are identified in the Mercer County Growth Management Plan, Parts 1 and 2.

### *Growth Areas*

Overall land use planning proposed for the County is identified in the County Growth Management Plan. The plan sets forth a framework for growth and development on a regional scale. It designates the County into four major growth areas, reflecting desired levels of intensity of growth. These are: *Urban Growth Areas*, *Regional Growth Areas*, *Suburban Growth Areas* and *Limited Growth / Agricultural Areas*. Three of the four County growth categories are identified in West Windsor. These include the Regional Growth Area, Suburban Growth Area and Limited Growth Agricultural Area.

The Regional Growth Area is identified along the Route 1 corridor and in the surrounding area, stretching from the D&R Canal to the north, to the vicinity of Clarksville Road to the south, and including much of the Princeton Junction area. The County characterizes these areas as including substantial amounts of developable land served by infrastructure with sufficient existing or proposed capacity to sustain forecasted rates of new development. The main policy thrust in this area is to maximize the use of new public investment and to divert development pressure from areas less suited for high intensity development. The County further recognizes, however, that the capacity to support additional growth in these areas remains uneven, and that additional development in these areas may be incompatible with facilities and services to support it. For Regional Growth Areas, a residential density of 5 du/ac and a nonresidential intensity of 32,000 square feet per acre are considered acceptable.

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The Suburban Growth Area is located in the Township's central region, extending generally east from Village Road West and Conover Road to the Bear Brook. The County Plan characterizes these areas as including both developed and developing areas of single family residential housing, limited areas of farmland, neighborhood shopping centers, small professional offices, and some highway commercial strips. The County objective in Suburban Growth Areas is to guide land development and associated public and private investments in improving public facilities to optimize the use of the existing system of infrastructure as a whole. For Suburban Growth Areas, a residential density of between .5 and 4 du/ac and a nonresidential intensity of 8,000 to 32,000 square feet per acre are considered appropriate.

Limited Growth/Agricultural Areas are described as lands in suburban and rural areas in which land development is constrained by the absence or limited additional capacity of public infrastructure and the presence of sensitive environmental features, extensive agricultural activity, or other conditions that render the provision of public facilities or services undesirable or impractical. The general County policy in these areas is to limit use to that which will not overburden existing resource functions, exceed the capacity of existing infrastructure or otherwise conflict with neighboring land uses. In these areas, the County Plan recommends that development intensity not exceed .5 du/ac for residential uses or 8,000 square feet per acre for nonresidential uses.

While actual densities may vary, the Township's plan remains substantially consistent with the general areas delineated for regional, suburban and limited growth in the County Plan. Highest residential and nonresidential intensity of development is located primarily in the Regional Growth Area in the Route 1 vicinity. This area contains the majority of the Township's higher density residential use, including most affordable housing. The highest intensity nonresidential use is also located in this area, although not at the level of development originally indicated in the County Plan. A top permitted FAR of .30 in portions of this area yields just over 13,000 square feet per acre, whereas, other nonresidential areas have been reduced to .15 FAR. These lower FAR levels recognized that, while infrastructure in this area exists to support development, it is not unlimited. The obvious example of this is the Route 1 Corridor, which is experiencing an increasingly long peak "hour". Other roadways in the vicinity are also becoming increasingly clogged. As the County Growth Management Plan is 15 years old, it is anticipated that as revisions are developed, anticipated intensity levels for all development will be adjusted to reflect current roadway conditions, as well as desires to reduce coverage, improve groundwater recharge, reduce drainage problems and protect dwindling environmental resources.

The Township's Land Use Plan is also substantially consistent with the Suburban and Limited Growth Areas. Moderate density is located in the Suburban Growth Area and lower densities and open space/farmland protection areas are located in the areas identified for Limited Growth and Agricultural Preservation.

As for the Suburban Growth Area, moderate density residential development falling in the range of .5 to 4 du/ac is found in this area, as is reflected in the current land use plan. The R-20 and R-32 standard lot sizes reflect existing development conditions and represent a density of .5 to .75 du/ac. The R-7.5 zone, which includes the Berrien City area, is also substantially consistent with this range, as new lots require 10,000 square feet, representing a density of just slightly over 4 du/ac. Including all preserved open space in the Suburban Planning Area, actual residential densities would be lower. Nonresidential density permitted in this area falls in the .12 to .18 FAR range, representing about 5,200 to 7,800 square feet per acre. This is lower than the County anticipated, but again reflects limitations on local roads, and a desire to protect environmental

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resources. Lower intensities are also provided to increase compatibility with nearby residential uses.

The Township's residential densities in "Limited Growth Areas" are also substantially consistent with that of the County. The County Plan proposes that density not exceed .5 du/ac in these areas. Township planning allows densities ranging from .60 du/ac (R-1/C) to 30 du/ac (RR/C). Including existing and proposed open space and farmland preservation in these areas, actual density will be even lower. There are small areas where the Township's plan allows higher densities, however, these relate to existing or approved, including small R-20 areas and the PRRC district.

There are some minor discrepancies in boundary locations related to the Limited Growth Area/Suburban Growth Area boundaries located along portions of Route 571 and Old Trenton Road. These discrepancies relate to changes in the Township sewer service district, as well as changes to existing and proposed development developed in more recent years. For example, changes to address the Bear Brook Senior Development and existing and proposed development east of Bear Brook in the vicinity of Southfield and Old Trenton Roads are not addressed in the County Plan. Overall, however, the West Windsor Plan is substantially consistent with the County Plan. Also, as the County Plan is at this time 15 years old, it is anticipated that, when and if a new County Plan is developed these discrepancies can be remedied.

### *Villages*

In addition to these growth areas, the County Plan also identifies village centers, i.e., "established settlements that have a recognizable center and discrete physical boundary". Such areas are characterized as having a predominantly residential character, although they may also contain varying degrees of commercial uses and services, such as public water, sewer and transit. The general policy promoted in these areas is to enable them to maintain their individual identities. Development is to match the existing village character, and open space is to be preserved in association with park or cluster development to form a permanent boundary for the Village Center. In West Windsor, Dutch Neck, Grovers Mill and Edinburg are identified as existing village centers.

The West Windsor Master Plan recognizes many of the older villages and hamlets throughout the Township. The local plan expands upon those identified in by the County and includes Penns Neck, Grovers Mills, Port Mercer, Dutch Neck, Edinburg, Berrien City and Princeton Junction. With the exception of Edinburg, most of these areas are surrounded by development. Where possible, however, the Township will pursue opportunities to maintain existing natural buffers surrounding these distinct neighborhoods and to protect their inherent character. The West Windsor Plan recommends the development of special neighborhood conservation districts in order to help these exceptional places retain their unique characteristics. This process would include an inventory of features and end with the implementation of special zoning requirements; probably in the form of village design overlay zoning.

While in overall agreement with the intent for villages in the County Plan, one distinct difference with the County Plan, aside from the omission of several village areas, is the recommendation that such areas permit increases in intensity through the conversion of single family to multi-family housing. In order to maintain existing character, any substantial change in residential density in these areas is to be avoided.

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### *County Open Space and Recreation*

The County Open Space and Recreation Plan encourages the protection of linear open space areas connecting stream valleys throughout the County and providing links between the sites included in the County's park system. This linear open space connection is also reflected in the County Growth Management Plan, which includes "conservation areas". These County Plans are largely consistent with the Township's Greenbelt Plan, which acts as a part of and further augments the County's linear open space program.

The County Open Space Plan also encourages the preservation of farmland in connection with the efforts of the County Agricultural Development Board. The Agricultural Development Areas (ADA) identified by the Board and incorporated in the County Open Space Plan are in substantial compliance with the Township's prime agricultural preservation area, i.e., the area located south of Old Trenton Road.

### **STATE PLAN**

The New Jersey Office of State Planning adopted the State Development and Redevelopment Plan on June 12, 1992. Since 1997, the State Plan has been undergoing revision through the cross-acceptance process. This process, which involved review and input from West Windsor, was completed in 1999. The final Plan was adopted at the beginning of 2001.

The State Plan provides planning guidelines for five general "Planning Areas," indicating the desired growth for various regions. The majority of this growth is to be encouraged in "Centers", i.e., towns, villages, etc. As indicated below, the Township's land use plan is generally consistent with the overall intent of the State Plan.

### *Planning Areas*

There are four Planning Areas included in the Township, these are: Planning Area 2 (Suburban Planning Area), Planning Area 4 (Rural Planning Area) and Planning Area 5 (Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area). Areas designated on the State Plan Map as "#8" represent major parks and open space concentrations.

### *Planning Area 2*

Planning Area 2 or the "Suburban Planning Area" is described by the State Plan as being located near Metropolitan Planning Areas but distinguished from these more densely concentrated areas by a lack of high intensity centers, by the availability of vacant land and by a more dispersed and fragmented pattern of predominantly low-density development. These are areas that are served or are planned to be served by regional infrastructure. These are also areas that, outside of centers and major transportation corridors, have limited availability of alternative modes of transportation. They are very dependent on automobile transportation. This area is generally designated for growth in municipal master plans.

Due to an inventory of undeveloped and underdeveloped land and the presence of existing or planned infrastructure, the State Plan identifies this a key area for accommodating market forces and demand for new development. The intent of the State Plan is to reverse the current trend towards further sprawl in this area by guiding both redevelopment and new development into more efficient and serviceable development patterns, i.e., centers, where conditions make this possible. It is also the policy of the Plan to encourage in this area a wide range of land uses and

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users to achieve a more balanced community. Where centers are not feasible, the Plan encourages better-designed single-or limited use areas. The Plan also encourages the conservation of continuous natural systems and the use of strategically located open space and buffer areas to reinforce neighborhood and community identity and to protect natural linear systems.

The majority of the Township is presently designated as Planning Area 2, which generally reflects more intensive development and/or areas with existing infrastructure or planned for infrastructure. This category dominates the northern and central portions of the Township where existing zoning, existing construction and the presence of public water and sewer infrastructure support the Township's greatest concentrations of development. This is substantially consistent with the intent of the State Planning Area 2 Designation.

### *Planning Area 4*

The State Plan describes the Rural Planning Area as having large masses of undeveloped land interspersed by sparse residential, commercial and industrial development; wooded tracts; rural towns and villages; and most of the State's prime farmland. The area also includes lands related to other rural economic activities such as resource extraction and fishing. With respect to agriculture, these lands are currently under cultivation and are the State's most productive. They also have the greatest potential of sustaining continued agricultural activities in the future.

The primary land use objective for Planning Area 4 is to protect farmland and open space and enhance agricultural viability and rural character by guiding development and redevelopment into Centers. The plan seeks to ensure that the location, pattern and intensity of any development in the environs around centers maintains existing low-density development patterns that complement the rural character and landscape, and maintain large contiguous areas of open space. Any development in this planning area should be designed using creative land use and design techniques to ensure that it does not conflict with agricultural operations, does not exceed the capacity of natural and built systems and protects areas where past public investments in farmland preservation have been made.

The area along the Millstone River and the southernmost portion of the Township are designated Planning Area 4 or Rural Planning Area. The Township has zoned these areas for its lowest density residential development and has actively pursued the preservation of open space and farmland consistent with the intent of the State Plan to preserve these areas. Much of the area designated as Planning Area 4 has been or is planned to be preserved as farmland or open space.

### *Centers*

In both Planning Area 2 and 4, the State Plan encourages new development to be located in centers. Centers are generally defined under the State Plan as "a compact form of development with a Core, a significant residential component in neighborhoods around the Core, within a Community Development Area". Centers range in scale from Urban Center to Regional Center, Town Center, Village and Hamlet.

At present, Edinburg is identified as a "Village Center" and Route 1 is identified as a "Regional Center". This identification, however, does not imply any special status with regard to State or County funding or development since these areas are not currently "designated" as centers. Designation only occurs upon a formal submission for Center status, at which time the Office of State Plan will review the specific characteristics of the area in question to determine which "Center" designation is correct for an area and to define actual boundaries related to the Center. In

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addition to Edinburg and Route 1, Princeton Junction, by virtue of the formal submission of a Center Designation Report filed in 1999 by West Windsor, has been identified as a "proposed" Village Center.

West Windsor's centers are largely defined by existing development. Their ability to accommodate new development varies. With the exception of Edinburg, much of West Windsor's highest density development corresponds to the location of centers. The crossroads village of Edinburg is not suitable for extensive development. Most vacant land surrounding developed parcels in the area have been targeted for farmland and open space preservation, creating a protection area consistent with Planning Area 4 preservation goals.

Princeton Junction has the ability to sustain some increase in commercial use through redevelopment, and current zoning would permit some intensification in this use. The Princeton Junction Village Center Plan submitted to the Office of State Planning supports redevelopment of this area in conjunction with specific design guidelines. This area is not, however, appropriate for substantial new residential development as some of the Township's highest density single-family housing is already located in this center. Further review of Princeton Junction and the Village of Edinburg is recommended as part of the Master Plan.

The Regional Center identified along the Route 1 corridor will continue to include absorb new commercial growth. Undeveloped land remains in this area, much of which has been planned for or has experienced the Township's most intensive development. Several million square feet of approved but as yet-unbuilt commercial development are also anticipated. This corridor also has absorbed much of the Township's highest density housing, which is consistent with the State's Center policy. Current plans to scale back potential commercial development in some areas reflect concerns over potential circulation infrastructure limitations and other environmental concerns.

### ***Planning Area 5 and Parkland (8)***

A small portion of Township Greenbelt area located north of Route 1 behind Nassau Pavilion has been designated Planning Area 5, the "Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area." Planning Area 5 is generally described as a contiguous area of land with valuable ecosystems, geological features and wildlife habitats that may be undeveloped or rural, or developed but highly vulnerable to natural forces (for example, the State's coastal barrier islands). The primary land use intent in this area is to protect natural systems and environmentally sensitive features. As this area has been protected as part of the Township's Greenbelt Plan, this goal has been achieved.

The Township's Planning Area 5 connects to the Delaware and Raritan Canal which separates West Windsor from Princeton Township. The Delaware and Raritan Canal, along with Mercer County Park, other Mercer County owned lands and several West Windsor Parks (or land preserved for parks) are shown on the plan as parkland (#8). This simply reflects major areas that are used as parks and therefore not subject to future development.

### ***COUNTY SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT***

The Township of West Windsor is located in the Mercer County Solid Waste Management District. The Mercer County Solid Waste Management Plan was developed in accordance with the New Jersey Solid Waste Management Act (N.J.S.A. 13:1E01 et seq.) which established a comprehensive system for the management of solid waste in New Jersey and designated all of the

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State's 21 counties, and the Hackensack Meadowlands District, as Solid Waste Management Districts.

