

TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL

*Master Plan Statement
Land Use Plan Element
Development Transfer Plan Element*

DRAFT

FEBRUARY 2007

HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD
CUMBERLAND COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL

Land Use Plan Element Development Transfer Plan Element

Prepared in accordance with the
Municipal Land Use Law, NJSA 40:55D

Adopted by the Hopewell Township
Planning Board on

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A signed and sealed original is on file with the Township Clerk's office

**TOWNSHIP OF HOPEWELL
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BRIDGETON, NEW JERSEY 08302**

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Hopewell Township Master Plan – Draft

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SECTION 1

Hopewell Township Master Plan Statement

1.0 Legislative Authority

The Hopewell Township Planning Board is authorized under the Municipal Land Use Law, NJSA 40:55D et al, to adopt a master plan to guide future land use within the municipality. This plan has been prepared in accordance with the NJSA 40:55D028, which requires that a master plan included a statement of objectives, principles, assumptions, policies and standards upon which the constituent proposals for the physical, economic and social development of the municipalities are based. Following the statement is the land use plan element which takes into account this statement and establishes the framework for which future land uses should occur.

1.1 Introduction

Hopewell Township is a rural community in Cumberland County, New Jersey bordered by the Cohansey River to the south and the City of Bridgeton to the east. The communities of Greenwich, Shiloh, Stow Creek and Alloway border the Township to the west. Hopewell is an agricultural community with 74 percent of its lands enrolled in farmland assessment. Residential development is concentrated around public infrastructure in the central portion of the Township, bordering the City of Bridgeton. This central area is bisected by Shiloh Pike (Route 49), which is zoned for commercial uses and has incurred a low density of retail and office development.



A view of the Cohansey River

The Township is located in a fragile ecosystem of the Delaware Bay Estuary and the Cohansey River watershed. These environmentally sensitive features are reflected in the character of the southern section of the Township, defined by its open field, vast areas of tidal wetlands, and relatively little development. The watershed is a precious resource and has been described as one of the best habitats for raptors and migratory birds in the Northeastern United States.

Hopewell Township has been successful at maintaining a rural, undeveloped character because of its remote location, its relative distance from employment centers, and the lack of development pressure in the region. There are signs that this is changing. In the past couple of years, the Township has witnessed a surge in development activity. In 2004, a large NJ real estate developer contracted to purchase over 500 acres of land in the Township for development. And major subdivisions were again filed in 2005 and 2006. Neighboring communities are also experiencing new construction. Upper Deerfield Township, which borders Hopewell Township to the northeast just across the River, has over 800 pending residential units, including single-family, multi-family and age-restricted developments.

The increasing development pressure prompted Hopewell officials to re-evaluate its vision and planning documents. The consensus was that additional land use tools would be needed to protect farmland as the residential real estate market increased and a TDR program offered that protection. This master plan presents the fundamental goals and objectives for a municipal-wide TDR program. The vision and descriptive elements of the program are outlined in the development transfer plan element. The implementation documents will include several land use ordinances, including zoning standards, design guidelines and administrative procedures.

1.2 Land Use Goals and Planning Objectives

This master plan identifies the following goals to broadly govern the direction of future land use activity within the Township. These goals are similar to the planning goals in the 1977 master plan and subsequent re-examination reports.

Land Use Goals – 2007

- 1 Preserve critical masses of farmland
- 2 Maintain the Township's rural character
- 3 Accommodate a variety of housing types, styles and affordability
- 4 Protect the Township's environmental resources
- 5 Direct growth to areas within close proximity to infrastructure
- 6 Prevent sprawl patterns of development
- 7 Provide a safe, healthy environment to live, work and visit.

While the above planning goals have gone virtually unchanged over the last three decades, the planning objectives originally included in the 1977 master plan have become dated. New planning and design tools are now available to the municipality and are considered to be more effective in meeting its land use goals, given the current development pressure. Forging a new direction, this master plan recommends the use of a transfer of development rights program and community design guidelines to help implement the goals identified above. The following planning objectives expound upon the Township's land use goals:

Hopewell Township Planning Objectives - 2007

- 1 Balance the need to accommodate future residential growth with the need to protect farmland, open space and environmentally critical lands – all of which contribute to the unique character and economy of Hopewell Township.
- 2 Encourage compact development patterns in areas with access to existing or future utilities and infrastructure. Limit the extension of public water and sewer facilities to established neighborhoods and the receiving area.

- 3 Encourage the use of innovative planning and design techniques that result in the development of new neighborhoods that are compatible with the character of Hopewell Township.
- 4 Encourage a variety of housing sizes and styles for all ages and income levels and provide for the Township's fair share of the regional need for low and moderate income housing.
- 5 Implement a zoning approach to farmland preservation that protects landowner equity through the assignment of development credits.
- 6 Minimize the reliance on the motor vehicle and shorten vehicular trips by improving pedestrian connections and decreasing the distance between residences, retail and service businesses, schools and civic facilities.
- 7 Provide a vision for the physical development of Hopewell by identifying the desired quality and amenities of new development in community design principles and design guidelines.
- 8 Encourage the creation of walking and cycling trails that connect residences with scenic, recreational, civic and commercial facilities.
- 9 Encourage the protection of environmentally sensitive lands included wetlands, stream corridors, unique vistas, wildlife habitats and the Cohansey River corridor.
- 10 Encourage the creation of a compact, mixed-use center along Route 49 that functions as Hopewell's town center.