

April 29, 2004

MEMORANDUM TO: Members, Plan Implementation Committee

FROM: Adam Zellner, Executive Director
Paul M. Drake, Planning Director

RE: East Brunswick Center Petition

Pursuant to Subchapter 8 of the State Planning Rules (N.J.A.C. 17:32 et seq.), the Township of East Brunswick submitted a petition as part of the Middlesex County Cross Acceptance Report to amend the State Plan Policy Map to designate an area known as Historic Old Bridge as a Village Center.

Recommendation

This memo constitutes our report. This center petition has been pending for some time. The Village Center to be designated is approximately 60 acres consisting of a late 19th century mixture of residential and commercial uses in an arrangement of small lots (4,500 sq feet) on a tight grid pattern of streets. Approximately 450 people live within the center. Except for incremental infilling, the Village is for the most part, a historic no-growth center that the township would like designated since it would affirm the intent of its master plan. This area is on the State and National register as a historic district. It is currently PA1 and also shown on the State Plan with an HCS overlay. Several discussions with the Township planner to explain the status of the remaining centers have reaffirmed the township's desire to have this area designated. We agree with the township that designation would help to maintain the integrity of the historic village by treating it differently from the surrounding PA 1 area.

We recommend approval of this center petition on its merits as supported in the attached documents from its master plan. It is clear that this area is a special little place amidst a sea of many other forms of urban development, which includes the Route 18 corridor. The center boundary has been modified from the original petition to exclude a large area of wetlands that had been shown within the center. We agree with the township that this area meets the criteria for an existing village in accordance with the State Plan and that designation is appropriate.

It is noteworthy that we are also working with the township to provide a Smart Future grant to redevelop a portion of Route 18 in the area known as the golden triangle. Municipally owned property that is now a commuter bus parking lot to Manhattan will be redeveloped as a mixed-use transit village. They are also participating in the Middlesex County Strategic planning efforts, which will be coming forward for Plan Endorsement. East Brunswick has agreed to submit for PE along with the County Strategic plan.

Table 1: Village Center Criteria

	Guidelines	2000	2020	#Δ	%Δ
Historic Old Bridge Village Center					
Area (Sq. Miles)	< 1	0.09	0.09	n/a	n/a
Population	< 4,500	450	500	50	10%
Gross Pop. Density (pop./sq mile)	>5,000	5000	5555	555	10%
Housing	100 to 2,000	120	130	10	8%
Gross Housing Density (DU/Acre)	>3	2	2.1	10	10%
Employment	50 to 1,000	60	85	25	30%
Jobs: Dwelling Unit Ratio	.5:1 to 2:1	0.5:1	0.65:1	--	--

Attached: Draft PIA, Proposed Center Boundaries

Activity	Local Effort	State/County Assistance	Timeframe
Land Use			
<p>Stimulate improvement of existing commercial areas and attract desirable business to vacant and redeveloped store spaces.</p> <p>Identify areas for potential residential/retail /mixed –use redevelopment near the within the village core. Focus on small sites (to keep scale of development small) of vacant land or underutilized property.</p> <p>Develop targets and indicators to measure planning progress</p>		Smart Growth Grant from DCA for East Brunswick - Historic Old Bridge Village plan.	
HOUSING	Local Effort	State/County Assistance	Timeframe
Provide additional opportunities for housing rehabilitation to maintain the quality of the existing housing stock.	Continue existing rehab program.	CDBG funds for rehab.	Underway
Economic Development			
<p>Identify marketability of space in Village center for various types of small-scale commercial uses, and promote opportunities for such uses where appropriate.</p> <p>Increase nonresidential tax base.</p>		OSG technical Assistance, Main Street NJ program	1-5 years

<p>Transportation</p> <p>Continue with sidewalk planning and installation efforts to improve pedestrian accessibility throughout the village.</p> <p>Improve mass transit opportunities.</p>	<p>Upgrade signalization at key intersections along Main Street.</p> <p>Evaluate bus routes for better service to Village; include bus shelters at key locations in planning for Main Street Improvements.</p>	<p>Coordinate with Middlesex County, NJDOT, NJ Transit; financial assistance from NJDOT and Smart Growth funds.</p>	<p>Current – 5 years</p>
<p>Natural Resources Conservation</p> <p>Plant street trees.</p> <p>Prepare and update an Open space, recreation and conservation plan for the village and incorporate into the master plan.</p>	<p>Develop a “Memorial Tree” program and incorporate a street tree planting plan into the Master Plan.</p>		<p>Underway/1-5 years</p>

<p>Recreation</p> <p>Improve and maintain neighborhood parks.</p> <p>Promote efficient use of parks through recreational programming.</p>	<p>Replace and repair older recreational equipment</p> <p>Maintain/support currently active public recreational program run by Recreation Commission and coordinate with Youth Athletic League programs.</p>	<p>Green Acres funding;</p> <p>Coordinate with County re riverside park system.</p>	<p>Underway</p>
<p>Historic Preservation</p> <p>Encourage, promote preservation of historic properties.</p> <p>Continue to develop and refine historic district development and restoration guidelines.</p>	<p>Work with County and state to identify eligible properties.</p>	<p>SHPO, Middlesex County</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Public Facilities and Services			
<p>Create "civic spaces" in each business area.</p> <p>Identify, replace/improve water and sewer lines as needed, especially if they are known to have problems with inflow or infiltration.</p>	<p>Identify appropriate "civic spaces" and prepare plans for each.</p> <p>Identify potential water line problems and seek outside funding for evaluation/correction.</p>	<p>Green Acres funding for civic spaces and civic center? Smart Growth funding?</p> <p>Business Association contributions for localized civic spaces.</p>	<p>2-5 years</p>
Intergovernmental Coordination			
<p>Coordinate with surrounding municipalities, County, and State regional planning efforts re housing, transportation, riverside park system.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participate in PE Process with county strategic plan 2. Continue coordination with Middlesex County in its efforts to revitalize towns. 3. Attend County meetings addressing regional and local planning issues. 	<p>All State of New Jersey Departments, OSP, COAH, County Planning Board.</p>	

Note: Development projects that are located within the floodplain or the NJ Flood Hazard Area will require a stream encroachment permit from the NJDEP. Development plans should identify the elevation of the NJ Flood Hazard Area so as to determine if any properties fall within the NJ FHA.

Prior to the site planning of any parcel within the Town Center it is recommended that the extent of wetlands be verified on these parcels by obtaining a Letter of Interpretation from NJDEP. This requires the identification of the limits of wetlands on these properties, if any, using the three-parameter approach in accordance with the FWPA Rules.