

**2013 REEXAMINATION REPORT OF THE MASTER PLAN
& UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE**

**TOWNSHIP OF LAKEWOOD
OCEAN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**

Prepared For:
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by the
Township of Lakewood Planning Board

Original Signed and Sealed in Accordance with Law

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INTRODUCTION

According to the Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL), “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.” (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89)

A Master Plan Reexamination Report is a periodic review of the municipal planning documents and the changing circumstances related to planning and development. The Lakewood Township Planning Board last adopted a Master Plan Reexamination Report on March 13, 2007. Prior to the 2007 Reexamination Report, the Planning Board adopted a comprehensive Master Plan in 1999.

The 2013 Reexamination Report is not intended to be a comprehensive review of all of the master plan elements and the Township land development regulations. Lakewood Township by law does not have to perform such a reexamination until 2017. However, a significant change that has impacted land use planning in Lakewood since the adoption of the last reexamination report is the adoption of the Lakewood Smart Growth Plan in 2009 by the Township Committee as the vision plan for the Township. To formally establish the vision plan as a foundation for future planning and zoning in the Township, the Planning Board has determined that the Smart Growth Plan should be adopted as an element of the municipal master plan. An updated version of the Smart Growth Plan accompanies this report and is made part of this reexamination report by reference. The 2013 Smart Growth Plan establishes the foundation for and provides further detail in support of the conclusions and recommendations contained in this report.

The MLUL requires that the reexamination report address five specific areas. These requirements are set forth below and are followed by the appropriate response statements.

I. The first provision of N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89 of the Municipal Land Use Law(MLUL) states that the Reexamination Report shall include:

“The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of adoption of the last reexamination report.”

The 2007 Master Plan Reexamination report was the result of a comprehensive and thorough review of the Township’s planning and zoning documents during 2006 and early 2007. The reexamination process included numerous public hearings prior to the adoption of the report. The adopted report included a series of zoning and planning recommendations, proposed changes to the Township’s Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), and an updated vision statement. Some of the problems facing the Township that were identified at the time of the last reexamination included increased development pressures, the need to provide housing and services for Lakewood’s growing population, the need for community facilities and schools, and traffic. The reexamination report also noted that the Township had filed a petition with the New Jersey State Planning Commission for Plan Endorsement and a determination regarding the consistency of the Township’s plan with the 2001 New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan.

II. The second provision of 40:55D-89 of the MLUL requires that the Reexamination Report address:

“The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date.”

Most of the problems and objectives listed in the 2007 Master Plan Reexamination report are still valid and continue to affect planning and zoning decisions in the Township. Lakewood’s substantial population growth has continued, with the Township’s population increasing by 32,000 persons from 2000 to 2010, further exacerbating the need for new housing and community services. The challenge for the Township continues to be designing and implementing an approach to community planning that balances opportunities for growth and development with preservation strategies that protect the Township’s environmental and natural resources.

In conjunction with its smart growth planning initiatives, the Township also is continuing to pursue plan endorsement with the State Planning Commission. In 2008, Lakewood conducted a series of visioning meetings as part of the plan endorsement process to gather community input regarding smart growth, open space preservation and transportation issues. A Smart Growth Plan was adopted by the Township Committee in 2009 that constitutes the Township vision statement was prepared based on smart growth principles, public input and the town’s planning strategies.

The Township Committee also has been engaged over the past two years formulating the revisions to Lakewood’s sewer service area as part of the update of the County’s Wastewater Management Plan to ensure that the Township has sufficient infrastructure capacity to support its future growth and development.

III. The third provision of 40:55D-89 of the MLUL requires that a Reexamination Report address:

“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 assumptions, policies and objectives forming the basis of the Lakewood Township Master Plan and the Lakewood Township Unified Development Ordinance have not significantly changed. The population growth in Lakewood Township will continue and requires a comprehensive planning response on behalf of the Township. The one major change has been the establishment of a vision for future growth and development in the Township through the adoption of Lakewood’s Smart Growth Plan in 2009. As stated in the Smart Growth Plan:

“Lakewood’s Smart Growth Plan seeks to create a balance between growth and preservation strategies to improve communities, enhance transportation options, and create economic opportunity. The plan also strengthens community, promotes sustainable development policies, preserves open space and promotes environmental protection in a comprehensive planning framework.” (Smart Growth Plan, p. 8)

The plan proposes a center-based approach to new development that concentrates new development into well-planned compact communities of place, promotes redevelopment and revitalization of Lakewood’s traditional downtown, encourages new infill development and redevelopment along the Township highway corridors, and protects critical environmental resources.

In order to adequately address anticipated growth and development in the Township, Lakewood should implement the vision and land use planning strategy established in the Township’s Smart Growth Plan.

IV. The fourth provision of 40:55D-89 of the MLUL requires that the Reexamination report address:

“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.”

Based on the preceding sections, the Planning Board is of the opinion that the most prudent step is to adopt a balanced strategy to growth and preservation in a center-based approach to development. This overall strategy is encapsulated for Lakewood Township in the updated 2013 Lakewood Smart Growth Plan. The Smart Growth Plan should be adopted as amendment and supplement to the Lakewood Township Land Use Plan Element of the Township’s Master Plan.

V. The final provision of 40:55D-89 of the MLUL requires that the Reexamination report address:

“The recommendations of the planning board concerning the incorporation of the 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 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.”

As recommended in the 2007 Master Plan Reexamination report, the redevelopment plan boundaries of the Franklin Street Redevelopment Plan should be identified on the Lakewood Township Zoning Map. The boundaries of the Cedarbridge Redevelopment Plan are already delineated on the Lakewood Township Zoning Map.