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2022 Morristown Master Plan Re-Examination

The Town of Morristown last adopted a Master Plan Reexamination in 2018. The New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law requires a Master Plan Re-examination at least every ten years. However, given the pace of change within Morristown – and the world – a reassessment of planning policies is in order.

The most significant local development was the adoption of an overhauled zoning ordinance (the Land Development Ordinance or “LDO”) four years ago. In the three years since the code was adopted, Morristown has seen significant development activity. Each application heard by the Town’s Planning or Zoning Boards demonstrated the LDO’s real world application. While the LDO has largely achieved the goals behind its inception, the Town has identified several ways in which the Code may be improved. This Reexamination is the culmination of those and other insights.

As we emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic, this Reexamination outlines recommendations to prepare Morristown for a post-pandemic future. Given this context, the Reexamination provides both immediate recommendations while also providing broad goals and flexibility to adapt to evolving conditions.

The draft document can be found on the Town’s website. Questions and comments may be provided via email to morristown@topology.is. The following pages contain answers to Frequently Asked Questions. The Reexamination will be heard at a special meeting of the Planning Board on May 11, 2022. Interested parties should consult the Town’s calendar for link to virtual hearing.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is a Master Plan Reexamination?

A Master Plan Reexamination is a municipal planning document required under the New Jersey Municipal Land Use (N.J.S.A 40:55D-89). At least every ten years, the Planning Board must adopt a new Reexamination. This document is required to consider problems, conditions, and recommendations at the time of the last Reexamination. In turn, the Reexamination provides recommendations in response to evolving conditions. Ultimately a Reexamination may recommend zoning amendments or other municipal actions. This process ensures that local plans remain up-to-date, practical, and effective.

2. What does the Reexamination contain?

The Reexamination, in accordance with legal requirements, is organized into six distinct parts, as follows:

1. A review of the major land development issues and objectives identified in the 2018 Reexamination
2. Updates to the status of the issues and objectives from Part I
3. Changes to assumptions, policies, and objectives, including at the State, County, and municipal level.
4. Recommended Changes to the Master Plan and Land Development Ordinance
5. Recommended changes to redevelopment activities
6. Recommendations concerning electric vehicle infrastructure

Members of the public are encouraged to review the 2022 Reexamination report, which elaborates upon each of these components.

3. What does the Reexamination do?

The Reexamination is a “policy document” that outlines recommendations for the Town to consider or pursue in the future. The document **does not** enact new

zoning ordinances or otherwise implement the recommendations contained therein.

4. Why is the Town adopting a new Reexamination now?

As noted above, the Town of Morristown last adopted a Master Plan Reexamination in 2018 and is not legally obligated to adopt a new Reexamination until 2028. However, as described throughout the 2022 Reexamination, several lessons have been learned from ongoing development activity and the real-world application of the 2018 Land Development Ordinance. As such, the Planning Division and Planning Board have elected to take this proactive step to ensure the Town's policies keep pace with evolving trends and conditions.

5. What recommendations does the 2022 Reexamination include?

In addition to affirming the recommendations from the 2018 Reexamination that remain relevant, the Reexamination contains eight categories of new recommendations that primarily focus on opportunities to improve the Town's Land Development Ordinance:

1. Recommendation #1: Restructure the Code Framework
2. Recommendation #2: Refine Permitted Uses
3. Recommendation #3: Refine Permitted Building Types
4. Recommendation #4: Refine Intensity Controls
5. Recommendation #5: Revise Frontage Type Map
6. Recommendation #6: Targeted Map Amendments
7. Recommendation #7: Continue to Develop Local Housing Policies
8. Recommendation #8: Continue to Monitor Areas of Concern

A detailed description of each recommendation is contained in Part IV of the 2022 Reexamination.