



MASTER PLAN

BOROUGH OF HOPEWELL
NEW JERSEY 1979

CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION 1

II. RESOURCE INVENTORY 3

 A. Regional Setting 3

 B. Natural Resources. 4

 C. Land Use 6

 D. Housing. 9

 E. Population 11

 F. Circulation. 12

 G. Community Facilities 12

 H. Utilities. 13

III. PLAN GOALS 14

IV. MASTER PLAN DESCRIPTION. 15

 A. Land Use and Housing 15

 B. Community Facilities 17

 C. Conservation 18

 D. Circulation. 19

V. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION. 20

 A. Introduction 20

 B. Legal Requirements 20

 C. Periodic Plan Review 21

VI. POLICY STATEMENT ON PLAN RELATIONSHIPS . . . 23

MAPS

Existing Land Use

Land Use Plan - 1979

Historic District, Streams, By-Pass

I. INTRODUCTION

Hopewell Borough's Master Plan represents the first step in planning for the future development of the Borough. It is intended to serve as a guide to subsequent planning by bringing together current, relevant data and establishing a comprehensive framework for Hopewell's growth. Detailed planning -- by land developers, the Borough Planning Board, or by other municipal agencies -- will be expected to utilize this framework. The zoning ordinance for the Borough must reflect and articulate the planning decisions made here. Prospective developers seeking permits from any of the Borough's agencies can expect those permit applications to be reviewed with criteria established in this master plan.

The Master Plan was prepared by the Hopewell Borough Planning Board and its consultant. They have tried to prepare a document which will provide a long-range, comprehensive, yet flexible guide for Hopewell's future. The plan strives to include future land use, transportation, community facilities, public utilities, and the appearance of the Borough. While it is intended to establish long-range guidelines, it is also flexible enough to accommodate unforeseen opportunities and changing objectives.

The Master Plan can have a substantial role to play in determining the future social, economic, and physical character of the Borough. On the surface, the preceding may appear to be an overstatement since at the present time there appears to be very little land remaining to be developed in the Borough. However, the location of these vacant lands within the Borough, coupled with the magnitude and forms of development pressure being exerted on the entire Hopewell Valley region multiplies the impact that they will have on Hopewell's future.

The Master Plan, while having a substantial role in shaping the Borough's future, will not itself be a pat answer to Hopewell's future. The degree to which the Plan will be successful in accomplishing the objective set forth will largely be dependent upon the logic upon which it is based today. More substantially, however, its success will hinge upon the people who will have the responsibility of interpreting and implementing the Plan.

This Master Plan is a revision of the Borough's first Master Plan, which was adopted in 1970. The first plan was part of a joint planning study with Hopewell Township and Pennington Borough that began in 1964. Some of the information, on

which the 1970 Plan was based is now 15 years old. Pennington Borough and Hopewell Township have already updated their 1970 Plans.

Although the 1970 Plan served the Borough well for many years, the Planning Board in 1977 recognized that the Plan, and its background data, should be reviewed to determine its validity with respect to local and regional changes over the years. In addition, the 1975 Municipal Land-Use Law made extensive changes in required Master Plan format and content, requiring major plan review and updating.

II. RESOURCE INVENTORY

As part of the process of revising the 1970 Master Plan, the Planning Board has gathered extensive inventories of the resources within the Borough. This information provides the background for the decisions made with respect to planning for the Borough's future growth.

A. Regional Setting

Hopewell Borough is located in the northern portion of Mercer County, in the west-central portion of New Jersey. It is located approximately 40 miles from Philadelphia and 50 miles from New York City. These two cities can easily be reached from Hopewell by train, bus, or private automobile, and consequently, they do exert an influence on some Borough residents as places for employment, shopping, recreation, or cultural affairs.

Growth in the Borough, however, has not been in response to events in New York City or Philadelphia. Instead, it has reflected more local concerns. Hopewell Borough is surrounded by Hopewell Township and is very near Trenton, Princeton, Montgomery Township, and Hunterdon County. As homes, industry, and large commercial centers move into this area, the Borough can expect increased pressure for development.

Sewers, which are expected for Hopewell Borough within the next five years, also can be expected to exert a major impact on the Borough's remaining open space and on that of the Township near the Borough.

There are many strong ties between Hopewell and its region at the present time. The Hopewell Valley Regional School District is a consolidation of the Hopewell Township, Pennington Borough, and Hopewell Borough school systems. The Hopewell Fire Department and First Aid Squad services sections of Hopewell Township that are near the Borough as well as the Borough itself. The Borough Police Department is establishing a cooperative program with the Township. Hopewell is a member of the Stony Brook Regional Sewer Authority which includes several neighboring communities. Furthering the process of regional cooperation could work to the advantage of the Borough if it were to include combined efforts on library facilities, road maintenance, recreation programs, water-pollution-control projects, and planning.

B. Natural Resources and Historic Sites Inventory

Soils and Slopes. Nearly all of the land in Hopewell Borough is what the Soil Conservation Service refers to as "B" slope. This is a very gentle slope, up to 5% and does not present any limitation to development. Most of the soil in the Borough is what is known as "made soil". This means that man has interfered with the natural conditions to an extent that the usual means of classifying soils no longer applies. The larger undeveloped tracts in town are characterized as various types of silt loams -- soils that present no real limitations to development.

Surface Water. Hopewell Borough lies in the headwaters of Bedens Brook, a tributary to the Millstone River which drains to the Atlantic Ocean via the Raritan River. There are a surprisingly large number of small branches of the Bedens Brook that reach through the Borough. Unfortunately, historic development has tended to ignore these waterways, developing to their edge where convenient and frequently putting them into conduits. The flow in these branches is generally very low with several no-flow days each year in all but the branch that leaves the Borough via the field behind the Post Office. Water quality is poor as a result of septic tank leaching and storm sewer discharge. When the Borough begins using sewers, these streams doubtless will improve in quality, but decrease in quantity.

At present, there are three places where the streams are open and flow through fairly large undeveloped lots. These are the field behind the Post Office, the field in the northeast corner of town, and the field south of the train tracks and off Louellen Street. Open space corridors should be left on either side of the streams in these cases in order to prevent flood damage, to allow an area for filtration of overland flow, and to provide attractive open-space.

Vegetation and Animal Life. The sizable pieces of land in the Borough that are not developed are used for agriculture. The smaller pieces of vacant land are generally in varying stages of plant succession from old field to early hardwood forest. There are no areas of town with a sizable natural vegetative cover of significance. The Borough, however, is rich in vegetative cover. Most of the streets are lined with trees, predominantly maples, but in recent years pin-oaks have been planted. Borough

yards are filled with mature trees of a wide variety -- native hardwoods, pine and spruce, ornamentals, and exotics of all kinds are found throughout the town. This dense and varied cover provides excellent shelter and food for a wide variety of birds and for many squirrels. The fields and forests surrounding the Borough are filled with deer that occasionally stray into Borough yards. Opossum and raccoon frequently visit the Borough and some evidently live within our borders. Rabbits commonly visit gardens in the community, to the disgruntlement of gardeners, but the joy of children.

Historic Sites. Four structures in the Borough deserve to be singled out for their historic significance.

1. The Railroad Station. This building is a striking example of the Victorian design used on train stations in the 19th century when the railroad companies were rich and powerful. It is a brick building, three stories tall, with a slate mansard roof and wooden trim. The building is badly in need of repair.
2. The John Hart House. John Hart, signer of the Declaration of Independence, has left many mysteries to 20th century historians. Little is known of his life or even what he looked like. It is believed, however, that he lived at one time on the site of what is now locally known as the Hart House, and he may even have lived in a part of the structure that now stands. The house has undergone several additions, but it is basically a Federalist structure, 2 1/2 stories, brick front with clapboard sides and additions. A stone barn and the foundations of a stone house remain on the property, apparently from an earlier date than that of the house.
3. Old School Baptist Church. This 2 1/2 story brick building with a gable front was first built in 1717, but was rebuilt after a fire in 1822. Adjoining the building is the Church cemetery with several old gravestones, including a commemorative marker for John Hart.
4. The Hopewell Academy. The exact age of this 2 1/2 story clapboard building is unknown, but it probably dates from the first half of the 18th century. It has been a private residence for years, but at one time it was an academy, founded by two men who later moved to Providence, Rhode Island, and founded Brown University.

These four structures are of special importance but it should be noted that nearly all of the Borough is comprised of attractive and interesting Victorian buildings. The quality of the town is remarkably like that of a small, rural town of the late Victorian period. Perhaps the primary asset of the town is this quality; it is admired and valued by those of us who live here as well as by all who visit.

C. Land Use

Three major facts emerge from an examination of the land-use survey carried out by the Planning Board. (See accompanying Existing Land Use map and table.)

1. The Borough is principally a residential center. Approximately 40% of the Borough land is used for homes and apartments. Even at the one intersection in town which warrants a traffic light, three of the corners have structures which are entirely or partly residential.
2. The Borough is an important commercial center for the region. Commercial establishments are sprinkled throughout the town, but most of them are concentrated on Broad Street. The number of antique shops, bars, or liquor stores, lumber yards, and gas stations clearly exceed what would be expected for service to the Borough and its immediate surroundings. Most of these commercial outlets are located where automobile access is good; parking is adequate and the street is wide enough to handle the traffic.
3. Thirty-two percent of the Borough's land is either vacant or used for agriculture. This land is mostly in large parcels that adjoin undeveloped land in the Township. This means that the Borough may have a significant growth in population -- as well as in the number of people who live on the immediate border. Since these are large parcels, the growth could come very rapidly, probably soon after the sewer system is complete. The development of this land will have to be closely guided in order to maintain the historic qualities of the Borough.

Several other aspects of the land-use survey deserve mention:

1. The school property appears adequate to afford room for whatever growth might be necessary. There are, however, no present plans by the school board for change in the existing facilities.
2. There is no publicly owned land for outdoor recreation. There is a small parcel of land that the Borough takes responsibility for and which is utilized as a park.

3. The industrial base is extremely low. More industry -- of an appropriate nature -- would be helpful for its tax contribution and in order to provide more jobs in the Borough.

TABLE ONE
EXISTING LAND USE
Hopewell Borough, New Jersey
March, 1978

<u>Use Category</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>PERCENT OF</u>	
		<u>Developed Area</u>	<u>Total Area</u>
Residential	191.00	58.91	39.79
Commercial	20.16	6.22	4.20
Industrial	4.14	1.28	0.86
Institutional	24.00	7.40	5.00
Streets	63.20	19.49	13.17
Railroad	21.74	6.70	4.53
Agricultural	65.62	--	13.67
Vacant	90.14*	--	18.89
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total Land Area	480.00	--	100%
Total Developed	324.24	100%	67.55%

*46.26 Acres north of Broad Street

Source: Field Survey by Borough Planning Board.
Calculations by Carl Lindbloom.

D. Housing

We have two different figures for the total number of housing units in the Borough. The 1970 census lists a total of 761 housing units, while the Planning Board's survey of March, 1978 uncovered a total of 716. Our records show that 14 permits were issued for housing units since the 1970 census and only one unit was destroyed. Therefore, one of these totals must be mistaken. The 1978 survey was principally based on information supplied by the Borough Police Chief and our long-time reader of water meters. Both of these men have detailed knowledge of our little town. The Planning Board prefers to use their own survey, rather than the 1970 census figures.

Approximately two-thirds of the total number of units is owner occupied and one-third is occupied by renters. Interestingly, the number of units in structures with more than one housing unit is just about the same as the number of renter occupied units. Of these multi-unit structures, the average number of units per structure is 2.3, while the median number is 2.1. The apartments are not in buildings that are identifiably "apartment buildings" but are mostly found in older homes that are large enough to be divided into two or three units. Our survey also shows that these structures are not located in a particular section of town; they are fairly evenly spread throughout the Borough. (See Table Two, Dwelling Unit Distribution.)

TABLE TWO
DWELLING UNIT DISTRIBUTION
Hopewell Borough, New Jersey
March, 1978

TOTAL UNITS	SINGLE FAMILY	%	MULTI-FAMILY	%	TOTAL
March 1978	467	65	249	35	716
April 1970 (census)	517	68	244	32	761

AREA ANALYSIS	SINGLE FAMILY	%	MULTI-FAMILY	%	TOTAL
North of Railroad	96	81	22	19	118
Between Railroad & Broad	179	60	121	40	300
South of Broad Street	192	64	106	36	298

*Two or more units in one structure

Source: Field Survey by Borough Planning Board
Calculations by Carl Lindbloom

E. Population

The population of Hopewell Borough has remained fairly stable over the last several years. The 1960 census found 1,928 people living in Hopewell and ten years later the figure had increased only to 2,271 residents. Estimates for the 1978 population vary, depending on who does the estimate. Most guesses, however, are below 2,500.

Dramatic changes in the Borough population are unlikely to occur until the sewage treatment plant is in operation. When sewage treatment becomes available, the Borough Planning Board expects the large undeveloped parcels in town to be developed to the maximum allowed under the zoning ordinances. Projections for the future are always subject to error, but the figure set by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission for the year 2000 is 3,200 residents for Hopewell Borough. That figure is possible, but it would seem to reflect total development of the Borough.

The following are some statistics from the 1970 census that are either relevant or interesting for planning purposes.

Age Distribution

The age distribution for the three municipalities and the county as a whole have been reproduced below. The figures have been expressed as percentages of the total population.

	<u>UNDER 15</u>	<u>15- 19</u>	<u>20- 34</u>	<u>35- 44</u>	<u>45- 54</u>	<u>55- 64</u>	<u>Over 65</u>
Hopewell Borough	30.9	7.0	19.7	11.6	8.7	9.9	10.8
Pennington Borough	30.3	8.5	13.9	14.1	12.3	10.9	12.5
Hopewell Township	30.8	8.6	15.8	14.8	14.4	9.4	8.4
Mercer County	29.5	9.0	20.2	12.0	12.9	9.4	9.7

Income Characteristics

The most meaningful indicators of personal wealth are statistics pertaining to median and average family income.

	# Families	1969 Median Family Income	1969 Average Family Income
Hopewell Borough	628	\$11,429	\$13,207
Hopewell Township	2,648	14,373	18,596
Pennington	549	16,359	18,435
Trenton	24,564	8,726	9,744
Suburban Mercer County	51,061	12,246	14,474

The use of 1969 statistics for a plan published in mid-1979 may seem like a terrible mistake. Unfortunately, we are almost ten years from the last census when really reliable information was available. State projections for 1975 estimate a 50% increase in income for the Borough but those figures are a straight projection of the 1969 information. On an informal basis, it seems clear that Hopewell is becoming more affluent. More and more middle and upper-middle class families seem to replace the older couples who used to see the Borough as a place for their retirement home.

F. Circulation

A substantial amount of regional traffic passes through Hopewell Borough. Mercer County Highway 518, together with 518 Spur, is an important route which links more populous sections of Central Mercer County with Somerset and Middlesex Counties. Greenwood Avenue is an important route leading into Southern Hunterdon County, and Princeton Avenue carries traffic to Princeton and points further east.

The network of residential streets is largely complete in the Borough and the streets are adequate for the demand.

Bus service links Hopewell with Trenton and New York City in the morning and evening. The Reading Railroad provides train service to Newark (with connections to New York City) in the morning or to Philadelphia in the evening.

G. Community Facilities

Hopewell Borough provides a full range of basic services to the town's residents. Excellent fire and ambulance service is provided through the volunteer program which operates out of the

municipal building on South Greenwood Avenue. The municipal building also houses the police department, the municipal court, and the meeting room for the governing body and other Borough agencies.

The library on Broad Street houses a collection of its own and, through the County library, can borrow other books for Borough readers. There is no publicly owned recreation area in Hopewell but the Mini-Park, next to the train station on North Greenwood Avenue, is used by the Borough and provides facilities for youngsters. It also has an extremely popular basketball court for teenagers and adults. The Hopewell Museum is not a public agency but it provides a cultural resource for the town by displaying historic memorabilia from the region. The museum also houses an excellent collection of materials from the 19th century plains Indians.

H. Utilities

All residents of the Borough are painfully aware that the Borough has just had a collector sewer system installed on every street in town. Unfortunately, there is no sewage processing plant to serve the Borough and there is no sure date for the construction of such a structure. The need for a municipal sewage system has been recognized since the 1930's and apparently it will be met within the decade of the 1980's. Until that date we will continue to suffer with the present back yard septic systems that overflow into storm sewers and streams after every sizable rain.

The municipal water system is supplied by three wells, two off Burton Avenue near the railroad tracks and one at the intersection of Model Avenue and Louellan Street. The exact amount of water available to be drawn from these wells is unknown, but the State Geologist has characterized the fault from which our water is drawn as containing "adequate" water for future development.

Garbage and trash removal is carried out by a private contractor, paid out of general municipal revenues. The service is satisfactory.

III. PLAN GOALS

The following goals for the Hopewell Borough Master Plan have been prepared to give direction to detailed planning. They are intended to be flexible enough to accommodate the changing circumstances that will occur over the next few years. The goals are based on an assumption by the Planning Board that in a municipality which is mostly developed, as is the case with Hopewell Borough, the planning function is to protect that which is valuable as well as to guide change.

1. The first goal is that the Borough of Hopewell should remain primarily a residential community. We wish to have a variety of housing stock to allow a rich mixture of people to reside in the Borough. The goal is a community with housing for retired couples, single people living alone or with others, large and small families with both affluent and not affluent living standards.
2. The Planning Board also wants to encourage a healthy commercial district that will serve both Borough residents and the Hopewell Valley region. Appropriate light industrial and office development is also welcome in order to provide jobs for residents and tax revenues for our municipal expenses.
3. The Planning Board would like to see development that is harmonious with the historic character of the community, with the environmental constraints of the site, and with the over-all needs of the Hopewell Valley region.
4. A final goal is the desire to provide public services appropriate for the needs of the town. Recreation areas, schools, fire and police services, library and museums are all important parts of the community and should be encouraged to prosper.

IV. MASTER PLAN DESCRIPTION

A. Land Use and Housing

Two areas in the Borough present special problems for development that is harmonious with the goals of this Master Plan. These are the 22 acre lot behind the Post Office (known locally as the Holcombe property) and an 11 acre tract off Louellen Street (known locally as the Skillman property).

The Holcombe property is a large undeveloped lot in the center of the Borough. It is principally flat meadow land, used at present as a cornfield. But it also contains a stream with a steep bank and large trees, and a marshy low area. Development of the low land or the stream corridor would probably result in flooding and water pollution problems downstream. The lot also has difficult access problems. West Prospect Street, a narrow residential street, enters one end. South Greenwood Avenue borders the east side of the lot. South Greenwood would be more appropriate for an increase of traffic, but the marshy lowland, the stream, and its embankment are between the meadow and this street. A contiguous lot in the Township might be developed concurrently, and through it, this lot could have access onto Princeton Avenue, a county highway. The Holcombe property's location in the center of town would make it possible for people living there to walk to shops, school, churches, a bus stop, and other destinations in town. This proximity to town would be particularly important to senior citizens or low-income families who can not rely on an automobile to satisfy all of their transportation needs.

The Skillman property presents other special conditions. This property also has a brook flowing through it, but this brook is isolated in flat meadowland. There are no significant stands of trees nor are there special problems with wet or steeply sloped soils. The Skillman property is particularly significant because it is extremely visible. The alignment of roads in Hopewell and the configuration of the valley cause this property to be a very important visual part of our community; its development will be critical to the aesthetic quality of Hopewell.

The Planning Board feels that both of these properties should be developed for residential purposes, but in a manner that is appropriate for the special conditions of these sites. The Board would like to encourage imaginative planning and design techniques. The usual residential solutions of single-family homes placed in a geometric pattern or of "garden" apartment buildings would be clearly inappropriate for the character of Hopewell and of the sites. The Board would also like to encourage a mixture of housing types so that the goal of providing houses for people in different circumstances might be realized.

Therefore, these lots have been designated for Mixed Housing (MH) development. They are to be composed of a mixture of single family residences and townhouses at a density of three units per acre. The number of town houses is not to exceed one third of the total number of units in the development.

The remainder of the residential areas are divided between the R-100 zone and the R-75 zones. The R-75 (and R-75P) zone includes most of the already developed residential sections of town. It will allow residential development on empty lots in this area at fairly high densities but densities which match the existing development. The R-100 zone applies to several of the larger undeveloped lots on the edge of the Borough. This less dense development will provide a gradual transition into Hopewell Township lands, which are zoned for even lower densities.

Expansion of the commercial and manufacturing uses in the Borough should be directed primarily toward the eastern end of town. Substantial lots along East Broad Street are presently vacant. Commercial development here would be compatible with existing uses, there is a good access for customers, and sufficient land to allow off-street parking. Manufacturing enterprizes of a suitable type are directed to sites along Railroad Place. This area provides vehicular access as well as proximity to the railroad tracks. Light manufacturing development here would also be compatible with existing land uses. (See Land Use Plan map.)

In order to preserve the greatly admired historic quality that characterizes Hopewell, the Planning Board recommends that an historic district be recognized. The extend of this district is along Broad Street from Princeton Avenue to the western boundary of the town, North Greenwood Avenue from Broad Street to the northern boundary and Blackwell Avenue. This is a remarkably graceful and historically intact collection of homes, churches, and small business structures. The buildings include a number of 18th century examples but the dominant character is of Victorian architectural style. If new developments or alterations take place in this district, they should be in harmony with the historic character of the existing buildings. Preserving this character should preserve the value (both monetary and aesthetic) of the existing buildings. (See map showing historic district, surface streams, and circulation.)

B. Community Facilities

1. Municipal Offices. The Borough Hall houses the police department, the fire and ambulance offices and garages, the local court, the meeting room for municipal agencies and a large room for bingo -- an important fund raising means for the fire and ambulance service. The municipal clerk, the building inspector and the zoning officer either operate out of other buildings or maintain minimal claim to filing and desk space in the municipal building. The Borough Hall is not a large building and it is not really adequate for all who claim a need to use it.

The previous master plan suggested that the town plan to construct a new building next to the Post Office in order to house the municipal offices. At the present time, however, it is apparent that the Hopewell railroad station is to be disposed of by its bankrupt owners. The Planning Board feels that this structure would make an excellent home for the Borough offices. The Victorian style of the building epitomizes the character of the town, the location is relatively central, and access and parking could be easily accommodated.

2. Fire, Ambulance, and Police Services. If the municipal offices are moved from the present Borough Hall, the fire, ambulance, and police services could comfortably occupy this building with no need for expansion. The fire and ambulance service is, however, planning to acquire property next to the Post Office for parking. A new building could also be put there if it should become necessary.

3. Library. The present library is inadequate to properly service Borough residents. It is too small and has too limited a collection to meet the demands it faces. The Planning Board recommends that consideration be given to three apparent alternatives: a) Expand the present facility. This could only be done through the acquisition of a larger structure. b) Join with Pennington and Hopewell Township in a regional facility. c) Join the County library so that Borough residents can use this resource without personal expense.

4. Parking. Provision of parking for the Broad Street commercial area is a perennial issue. The Planning Board feels that it is also a false issue at present. There is no evidence that existing off-street lots and on-street parking is in any way inadequate to service the commercial demand. We would strongly oppose the creation of any more parking yards that are visible to Broad Street.

5. Recreation. Hopewell Borough provides almost nothing for the recreation of its residents. The Borough maintains an area called the Mini Park in which a basketball court and a sliding board and other kiddie structures have been built. Nothing else is provided.

There are no tennis courts, no baseball diamonds, neither football nor soccer fields, no community park, no other tot lots. Organized soccer, baseball, and basketball, the Junior Olympic track events, and tennis courts are all available to Borough residents --if they can drive to Pennington. The Planning Board is fully aware of the financial burden that already faces our community but we strongly recommend that more recreational facilities be provided for all members of the community. We think that these facilities give cohesion to a community, increase property values, and offer an excellent method of maintaining our municipal identification. If our young people must leave the Borough to find recreation, they will lose any feeling of communion with their town. Mischief seems an inevitable result of this failure. Several avenues can be explored for developing recreational facilities in the Borough. We recommend that all of them be pursued.

1. Work with the Hopewell Valley Regional School Board to utilize school property for non-school uses. Both Pennington elementary schools have soccer fields available for YMCA league play. Why can't the same be done in Hopewell?

2. Plan park development projects employing Green Acres Funds.

3. Use existing opportunities more creatively. Put basketball backboards and rims on vacant lots (easements from many owners would surely be easy to obtain) or at dead-end streets. Organize community participation to establish tot-lots (again, with easements rather than by purchase) on vacant lots. Other kinds of ideas are sure to surface if there is a climate of receptivity for them.

C. Conservation

The corridors accompanying the streams in town should be preserved in a natural state. Doing so will provide a buffering area that will filter pollutants in rainwater flowing toward the stream, it will absorb some of this water and thereby mitigate downstream flooding, and it will provide pleasant and interesting outdoor conservation areas.

The practice of lining our streets with trees should continue. The trees provide shelter and food for birds, they shade us in summer and serve as windbreakers in winter, they filter dust and other pollutants from the air, and they provide a lovely setting for our beautiful little town.

D. Circulation

The chief problem with circulation in the Borough is the use of our main streets as regional thoroughfares. These streets are principally residential yet they witness heavy and ever-increasing traffic. There is nothing we can do about this problem; we do not recommend enlarging the existing roads or supplanting them with new thoroughfares within the Borough. We have, however, recommended to both Hopewell Township and to Mercer County that a by-pass be created to direct some of this traffic around the town. The Planning Board has few illusions about the prospect of such a road ever being built, but it does seem to offer some hope as a solution to our problem.

As development comes to our larger vacant tracts it will have to be accompanied by new roads. The Planning Board would like to provide general guidelines for these streets but we do not want to dictate their precise configuration. We do not want to be specific because clustered site planning is either required or permitted in all of these tracts. The alignment of roads should evolve with the design of the site, not dictate how the site should be designed.

There are, however, several guidelines that can be given to those who will be designing the development of these sites.

1. There are three apparent ways of providing access to the Holcomb Tract: from South Greenwood, Columbia, and East Prospect Streets; from West Prospect Street; or from contiguous undeveloped land in the Township. The worst of these is West Prospect Street because it is a narrow residential street that could not safely accept a big increase in traffic. Few, if any, of the houses in the Holcomb Tract should use this street for access. South Greenwood, Columbia, and East Prospect Streets would be more suitable but also should not be expected to carry too much more through traffic. Access from the Township property is clearly superior.
2. The Skillman property fronts on a County road and should be developed to have primary access onto that road.
3. The property in the northeast corner of town also presents special problems. Front Street would not be safe as an access road because its intersection with North Greenwood Avenue is dangerous. This lot should use access from the Township, from a new crossing of the railroad tracks, or from Washington Road.
4. First and Second Avenues, largely paper streets in the southeastern corner of town, can be extended to provide access to the open space in that area.

V. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

A. Introduction

The revision of the Borough Master Plan is by no means the completion of the planning program. The Plan must be examined and revised when necessary. It must be kept current and not be allowed to "gather dust" and eventually bear no resemblance to the real world situation in the community.

Plan implementation involves various measures available to the Borough to insure execution of the Plan. These involve both legal and informal measures. The informal measures include educating the public and governmental officials responsible for the day-to-day decisions that have an affect on Borough development, of the existence of a Master Plan. The legal measures, which are also known as land-use controls, include site-plan review, zoning, subdivision regulations, building codes, and the like. There are additional aids to Plan implementation in the form of capital improvement programming and various State and Federal programs for specific projects.

The adoption of the Master Plan does not signify an end to the local planning effort. Planning is a continuous process through time in a community alert to its changing needs. State law requires a periodic review of the Plan and of the data supporting the Plan, with the necessary updating of various proposals or elements of the Plan. Data of the kind used in the planning process become invalid or obsolete as time passes. New data, therefore, must be acquired, analyzed and interpreted into an updated Plan as conditions require. In addition, a major feature of a continuing planning program is that more detailed proposals may be developed for various elements of the Plan.

Daily decisions as they are formed week after week, month after month, and year after year, are in the end those which create the community as it exists at a given point in time. There have been all too many instances of logical, even inspired, Plans which failed to change the community in any effective way, in the course of time. To be effective, a Plan must live in the minds of those who make daily decisions to insure that those decisions are constantly working toward the final goal.

B. Legal Requirements

The Master Plan, upon adoption by the Planning Board, gives the community the legal basis for control over future development. The major points which are contained in the Municipal Land Use Law (chapter 291, Laws of N.J. 1975) are summarized as follows:

The location and design of new streets created through the process of land subdivision or site plan approval may be required to conform to the provisions of the Circulation Plan Element of the Master Plan. (40:55D-38B(2)).

Where the Master Plan provides for the reservation of designated streets, public drainageways, flood control basins, or public areas, the Planning Board may require that such facilities be shown and reserved in sub-divisions and site plans in locations and sizes suitable for their intended use. The reservation powers are effective for a period of one year after approval of a final plat. The municipality must compensate the owner for such action. (40:55D-44).

Whenever the governing body or other public agency proposes to spend public funds, incidental to the location, character or extent of a capital project, such proposal must be referred to the Planning Board for review and recommendation. No action shall be taken without such recommendation or until 45 days have elapsed (40:55D-31).

All of the provisions of a zoning ordinance, or any amendment or revision thereto shall either be substantially consistent with the Land Use Element of the Master Plan or designed to effectuate such plan element (40:55D-62).

C. Periodic Plan Review

To ensure that an adopted Master Plan is kept current it should be reviewed periodically and revised where necessary. The new Land Use Law requires a periodic re-examination, at least every six years (40:55D-89).

Periodic re-examination. The governing body shall, at least every 6 years, provide for a general re-examination of its master plan and development regulations by the planning board which shall prepare a report on the findings of such re-examination, a copy of which shall be sent to the county planning board and the municipal clerks of each adjoining municipality. The 6-year period shall commence with the adoption or termination of the last general re-examination and shall be completed within 6 years after the effective date of this act.

Such reports shall state:

- a. The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of such adoption, last revision or re-examination, if any.
- b. The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date.

c. The extent to which there have been significant changes in the assumption, policies and objectives forming the basis for such plan or regulations as last revised, with particular regard to the density and distribution of population and land uses, housing conditions, circulation, conservation of natural resources and changes in state, county, and municipal policies and objectives.

d. The specific changes recommended for such plan or regulations, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether a new plan or regulations should be prepared.

VI. POLICY STATEMENT ON PLAN RELATIONSHIPS

The Municipal Land-Use Law requires that all local master plans include a specific policy statement indicating the relationship of proposed development, as presented in the Master Plan, to the master plans of contiguous municipalities to the County Plan; and to related comprehensive guide plans (40:55D-28d).

Hopewell Borough is one of two holes in the doughnut that is Hopewell Township (the other hole is Pennington Borough). Traditionally, the boroughs have served as focal points for the township; the boroughs have been the site of the shops, churches, schools, and frequently the retirement homes of township farmers. This relationship can continue under the plans of the Township and Hopewell Borough. The Township plan proposes residential development circling the Borough. The Borough plan has denser residential development around its periphery with commercial and industrial development in the interior parts of town.

The Borough Master Plan is also in harmony with the State Development Guide Plan, the land-use element of the Mercer County Master Plan, and the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission's Year 2000 Land-Use and Open-Space Plan -- all of which show dense development for the Borough.



H O P E W E L L T O W N S H I P

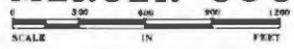


EXISTING LAND USE

-  Residential
-  Community Serving
-  Commercial
-  Agricultural
-  Industrial
-  Vacant

Source: Planning Board Survey - March 1978

BOROUGH OF
HOPEWELL
MERCER COUNTY, NEW JERSEY





H O P E W E L L T O W N S H I P



LAND USE PLAN - 1979

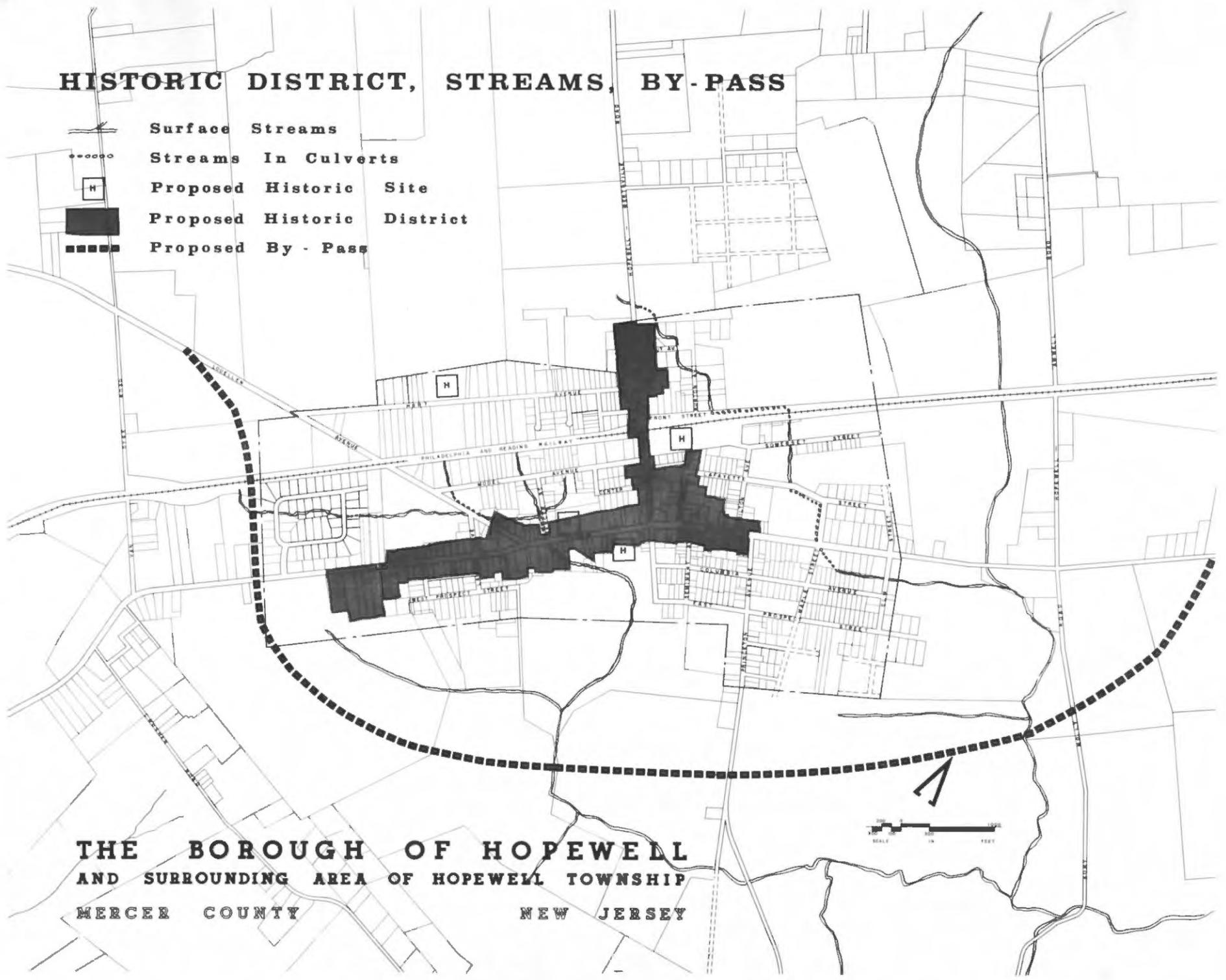
-  Low Density Residential
-  Medium Density Residential
-  Mixed Housing Area
-  Recreation & Open Space
-  Commercial
-  Industrial
-  Public & Semi - Public

BOROUGH OF
HOPEWELL
 MERCER COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

SCALE 0 300 600 900 1200
 IN FEET

HISTORIC DISTRICT, STREAMS, BY-PASS

-  Surface Streams
-  Streams In Culverts
-  Proposed Historic Site
-  Proposed Historic District
-  Proposed By - Pass



THE BOROUGH OF HOPEWELL
AND SURROUNDING AREA OF HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP
MERCER COUNTY NEW JERSEY