



Clarke Caton Hintz

Architecture

Planning

Landscape Architecture

Amendment to the Master Plan:

Statement of Objectives, Principles, Assumptions, Policies, and Standards

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Readington Township

Hunterdon County, New Jersey

Adopted: September 14, 2020



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2020 Planning Board

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NJ PP #5153

A signed and sealed version of this report is available at the Readington Township municipal building.



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Clarke Caton Hintz **Introduction**

Readington Township adopted a comprehensive Master Plan in 1990. Since that time, numerous revisions have been made to individual Plan Elements, including incremental updates to the Land Use Plan, Conservation and Natural Resources Plan, Circulation Plan, Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan, and Housing Plan. This amendment to the Master Plan of Readington Township consists, solely, of the Statement of Objectives, Principles, Assumptions, Policies, and Standards.

The focus of this amendment consists of goals and policies relating to Solberg-Hunterdon Airport to reflect the most current approach to land use on, and around, the airport. It also acknowledges the requirements of the “Air Safety and Zoning Act of 1983”, P.L. 1983, chapter 260, and the provisions of N.J.A.C. 16:62, “Air Safety and Zoning, which identifies necessary municipal actions to create airport safety zones.

The last amendment to the Statement of Objectives, Principles, Assumptions, Policies, and Standards was in 2009, replacing all previous versions. This 2020 amends and replaces the Statement of 2009.



Statement of Objectives, Principles, Assumptions, Policies, and Standards

The basic goal of this Master Plan is to establish reasonable objectives which will provide a balance between farming, open space preservation and appropriate residential and commercial development with regard to the community's highways, facilities and services, natural features, existing development characteristics, and available land. Within this framework, the following specific goals and policies are established for Readington Township. This statement of goals and policies amends and replaces the element that was adopted as part the June 22, 2009 Master Plan update.

1. AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION

Goal:

Preserve farmlands and encourage their continued use recognizing that farming is an important component of the economy of the Township, the region, and the State, and that agricultural lands are an irreplaceable natural resource and a key element of the Township's rural character.

Policies:

Coordinate local agricultural land use preservation efforts with those of the State and the County and with those of adjoining municipalities.

Preserve large agricultural areas free from the intrusion of residential and other uses by zoning for appropriate intensity of use, requiring that new residential units in agricultural areas be clustered and by acquiring development rights and open space in agricultural areas.

2. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Goal:

Protect environmentally sensitive areas, preserve the natural environment, and ensure a compatible balance between economic and environmental interests.

Policies:

Conserve and protect environmentally sensitive areas. To that end (i); continue to require new development to observe rigorous performance standards to minimize any potential adverse environmental effects; and (ii) relate development standards and the permitted intensity of use to the carrying capacity of the soil



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and groundwater quality and to the objective of preserving farmland, open space and natural features.

Encourage the development of a Township-wide "greenbelt" system, incorporating natural areas, stream corridors, environmentally sensitive areas and areas of scenic beauty, in order to connect various parts of the Township through an open space network. It is recommended that the Township sponsor studies to identify the areas that should be preserved.

Promote energy conservation through the use of planning practices designed to reduce energy consumption and provide for maximum utilization of renewable resources.

Actively conserve and protect the biodiversity of the flora and fauna in the region including critical wildlife habitats, such as mature woodlands, grasslands, wetlands and stream corridors, through various mechanisms of open space preservation, including land acquisition.

Lands identified as containing critical wildlife habitat, threatened and endangered flora, or Natural Heritage Priority Sites should be considered the highest priority sites for preservation.

Educate the public regarding environmental protection and natural resources.

Protect and preserve the scenic viewsheds and scenic edges of public thoroughfares through the classification, location and configuration of land uses.

Protect groundwater quality by meeting or exceeding NJDEP standards for nitrate dilution in groundwater for each watershed in the Township.

Protect surface water quality by minimizing erosion, maximizing infiltration of stormwater, and prompting development practices that will not negatively affect water temperature and turbidity.



3. RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Goal:

Preserve the existing housing stock and provide the opportunity for the development of a wide variety of housing types to meet the needs of varied income and age levels, family compositions, and life styles.

Policies:

Increase the opportunities for households to obtain satisfactory housing at affordable prices through use of planned development and clustering techniques where appropriate.

Investigate alternate forms of residential clustering that promote, at selected locations served by public sewer & water, compact residential clusters maximizing the amount of common open space to be achieved.

Meet the housing needs of a wide range of income and age levels, with particular attention being paid to accommodating the Township's affordable housing obligation, by providing varied housing types at varying residential densities dispersed throughout the Township in appropriate locations with pedestrian access to services.

Encourage the construction of affordable housing which does not create an adverse impact on the public health, safety and general welfare of the Township or on future residents of the development.

4. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Goal:

Encourage development of industrial, office, research, commercial, and service uses, selected and regulated so as to preclude land use incompatibilities and in an amount that would increase the tax base which supports the local government and the public school system without disturbing the fragile residential-agricultural balance in the rest of the Township or negatively impacting traffic circulation.



Policies:

Encourage well designed retail and service uses that blend harmoniously with the Township’s rural character with appropriate access from major arteries and in an amount not in excess of that needed to satisfy the commercial demands of local residents and businesses.

Maintain strict performance standards for the development of industrial, office, research or commercial uses such that development compatible with the environment will be assured.

Encourage retention of farmland and agriculture, to the extent practical, adding diversity to the Township's economic and local job base.

5. CIRCULATION

Goal:

The encouragement of transportation routes and traffic controls designed to promote the free and coordinated flow of traffic, and discouragement of facilities and routes which would result in congestion or blight.

Assumptions:

Solberg-Hunterdon Airport has had a presence in Readington Township since its beginnings in the early 1940’s. Its identity reaches beyond the Township to the wider region, as it has served as the perennial host to the New Jersey Festival of Ballooning. The lands surrounding the airport facilities also contain environmentally-sensitive features that serve as critical wildlife habitat. These include freshwater wetlands, streams, vernal pools, woodlands and grasslands. Furthermore, the narrow public roads surrounding, and leading to, the airport reflect relatively low traffic volumes typical of a rural context. It is recognized that changes to the airport, or the characteristics of air traffic at the airport, could result in negative impacts to environmental resources and necessitate significant improvements to thoroughfares that could negatively impact the rural-residential context of the airport. Therefore, Solberg-Hunterdon Airport should be preserved as a public aviation facility in a manner that avoids negative impacts to the environmentally sensitive areas and prime farmlands, and the character of residential neighborhoods and rural thoroughfares in the immediate vicinity and throughout the Township.



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The existing configuration and lengths of runways were identified by the NJ Department of Transportation in a letter to the Mayor, dated February 24, 2020, which identified the following licensed runways:

1. Primary Runway 4/22: 3,735' x 50' (3,000' paved) asphalt, 735' turf)
2. Secondary Runway 13/31: 3,442' x 200' (turf)

The New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) prepared a Draft Environmental Assessment in February 2002 (2002 EA) which was the last comprehensive look by the NJDOT at issues pertaining to the airport.

Policies:

Encourage the channelization of traffic onto appropriate facilities in a manner which produces a minimum detriment to residential or non-residential areas.

Continue to accommodate traffic from approved new land development projects while maintaining existing levels-of-service and without negatively affecting rural character.

Encourage the use of public transportation and mass transit. Support existing and potential park-and-ride and kiss-and-ride facilities in the Township.

Identify roadways with scenic and rural character for preservation and protection

Encourage pedestrian and bicycle transportation throughout the Township.

Maintenance and development of Solberg-Hunterdon Airport should be substantially consistent with the configuration and facilities as identified in the February 2020 NJDOT memo and as recommended in the 2002 draft Environmental Assessment.

The 2002 Environmental Assessment articulated an airport configuration to address deficiencies in the facilities, with respect to FAA standards, to maximize safety and to accommodate future needs. The 2002 EA's recommended configuration is substantially consistent with the NJDOT licensed runway configuration identified in 2020. Known as the "Runway Improvement Alternative", it identified the following configuration:



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“A new primary runway located approximately 240 feet northwest of, and parallel to, Runway 4-22 should be constructed. This runway designation should be Runway 3-21, and consist of a length of 3,735 feet and width of 75 feet. Existing Runway 4-22 should be converted to a full-length parallel taxiway, and reduced from 50 to 35 feet in width. Turf Runway 10-28 should be closed.”

Airport Safety Zones should be maintained pursuant to the “Air Safety and Zoning Act of 1983”, P.L. 1983, chapter 260, and the provisions of N.J.A.C. 16:62, “Air Safety and Zoning.” To that end, the Township Committee adopted an ordinance consistent with these regulations on June 15, 2020.

The Township should ensure that any site development at the airport follows the procedures and regulations contained with the Township’s Chapter 148 Land Development.

6. COMMUNITY FACILITIES/AND RECREATION

Goal:

Ensure the provision of community recreation and educational facilities to adequately accommodate Township needs.

Policies:

Encourage location of new public facilities in appropriate locations in and around centers. Also promote cooperative use of school facilities for recreational and community activities to the extent practicable.

Continue the creation of local park and recreation systems distributed and designed to provide a variety of open space uses. Encourage and develop passive recreation opportunities.

Promote the development of a Township-wide "greenbelt" network which includes major environmentally sensitive areas and enables creation of natural buffers and linkages between development areas as well as parks and public facilities.



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Provide adequate public safety service (police, fire, rescue squad) with appropriate facilities, manpower and equipment distributed according to development patterns.

7. UTILITIES

Goals:

Balance development with sewer capacity and water supply

Policies:

Sewer Service Areas within the Township should reflect available treatment capacity. Reserve any excess sewer capacity for affordable housing in satisfaction of the Township's fair share obligation.

Protect groundwater and surface water quality by ensuring that the Township meet or exceed the NJDEP standard for nitrate dilution in areas that rely on septic disposal systems outside of sewer service areas.

8. HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Goal:

Preserve and protect sites and villages of significant historic interest for present and future generations to appreciate and enjoy.

Policies:

Encourage the preservation and restoration of structures and villages of significant historic interest.

Continue the nomination of significant structures and villages for inclusion on the State and National Register of Historic Places.

Encourage appreciation of the rich history of Readington Township and of the architecture of significant structures.



9. RECYCLING

Goal:

Ensure the recycling of materials within the township is in compliance with the New Jersey Mandatory Source Separation and Recycling Act (N.J.S.A. 13-1E-1 et seq.).

Policies:

Establish and enforce Township and State regulations on the recycling of materials.

Provide for the collection of recyclable materials and increase the types of items to be collected.

Increase awareness of recycling rules and regulations through education and outreach to residents and businesses.