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THE MUNSONHURST DISTRICT

MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT

PREPARED FOR

THE BOROUGH OF FRANKLIN PLANNING BOARD
FRANKLIN, NEW JERSEY

5/11/07

Revised August 6, 2007
Adopted August 20, 2007

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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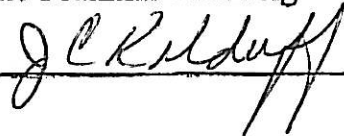
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Adopted by the Franklin Planning Board on August 20, 2007

Attested by



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1.0 INTRODUCTION, PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

The Borough of Franklin is located in the south central portion of Sussex County New Jersey. It is a community of approximately 5,200 residents and 4.6 sq miles. Franklin historically has been one of the “centers” of Sussex County, serving the region immediately surrounding it.

This document, the **Munsonhurst District Master Plan Amendment**, has been prepared in connection with a series of events that have occurred in relation to the southeastern portion of the community. Specifically, the Borough’s thinking regarding the future of this part of the community has been evolving now for several years and part of the change in thinking has been brought about by litigation, in which the Borough has been the defendant. However, the litigation alone is not the only catalyst driving the preparation of this document. The Borough has also decided it is time to take another comprehensive look at this portion of the community and make some policy decisions about this area that will benefit the entire Borough. Furthermore, although the aforementioned litigation involved two large tracts identified as Block 66 Lot 17.01 and Block 74 Lot 24, and totaling approximately 175 acres, this study and the contents of this document focus on a larger area that goes well beyond the aforementioned acreage. The decision to look at this larger area is based primarily on the interrelationships of a number of properties in this part of the Borough and, equally important, to make certain that any policy changes that are made are based on a comprehensive view; not on an isolated and less defensible picture.

In April of 2007, the Nelson Consulting Group and H2M Associates, Inc. were retained to prepare a master plan amendment that would analyze the Munsonhurst District and which also needed to reflect the basic provisions of a settlement agreement related to the aforementioned litigation. The Nelson Consulting Group was designated the lead consultant in connection with the preparation of this document and H2M Associates, Inc. role was limited to the preparation of the maps contained herein and some consultation regarding the content of this document.

In 2003, the Borough Planning Board prepared and adopted a new Master Plan for the community. That master plan was prepared by the firm of Heyer, Gruel and Associates, Inc. and will be referenced herein as the 2003 Plan. This master plan amendment will, in effect, amend parts of the 2003 Plan. Most of the 2003 Plan will remain intact and is not being amended. In fact, there are no community wide changes proposed. The changes are limited solely to the Munsonhurst District.

In addition to the 2003 Plan, the Borough has also prepared several other documents that have some relationship to this amendment. First, the Borough adopted, in 2005, a Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, prepared by Heyer, Gruel and Associates, Inc. which was subsequently submitted to the NJ Council On Affordable Housing (COAH) for substantive certification. Secondly, the Borough had a study done, also by Heyer, Gruel and Associates in 2005, for the purpose of identifying sites that would be suitable for the location of “high density age restricted housing”. Subsequent to the 2003 Plan the

Borough also adopted a new Land Development Ordinance, which controls all land development activity within the Borough. Finally, In addition to the aforementioned efforts the Borough also prepared a redevelopment designation study for the Zinc Mine property and in connection with that effort also prepared a Main St Revitalization Plan. The Borough's efforts in connection with the preparation of these two documents spanned a time frame from 2003 to 2006.

As part of the preparation of this document The Nelson Consulting Group reviewed the aforementioned documents, including a series of maps contained in the 2003 Plan, and conducted a number of site visits within the Munsonhurst District area, in order to directly observe all of the existing conditions in this part of the community.

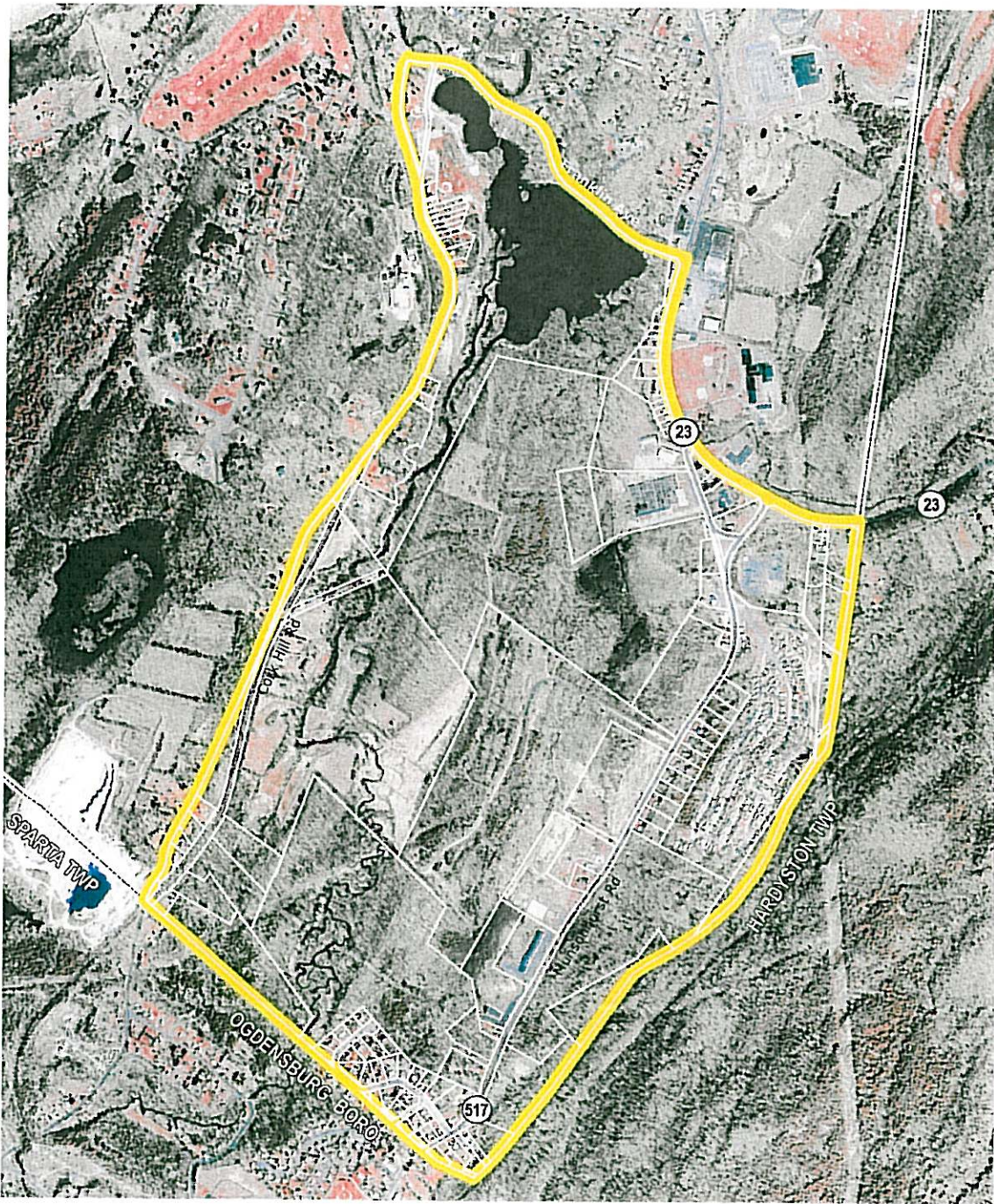
This document, in effect, reconsiders the planning policies that were established for this part of the community, as part of the 2003 Plan, and as incorporated into the Franklin Borough Land Development Ordinance. A new set of planning policies are proposed and the reasons for same are documented herein. It is anticipated that some of the implementing ordinances related to these policy changes will be adopted during 2007 and others will follow in 2008. In short, this master plan amendment serves as the foundation for the planning policy changes that relate to the Munsonhurst portion of Franklin Borough.

Finally, it must be emphasized that the changes contained herein have been shaped using a community wide context. The entire Borough will be impacted by these changes, even though they are limited specifically to the Munsonhurst area. Franklin is a complex and diverse community, with a long and interesting history. The Borough had a population of 5,160 residents in 2000 and is expected to grow to a population of over 7,000 by the year 2015. That growth will be accommodated and, the pace of development, determined by the marketplace in conjunction with the planning policies of the community. This master plan amendment, then, is but one of the steps and one of the pieces being used by the Borough to help shape its future. This amendment recognizes that the needs of a community often evolve over time and the planning policies need to be adjusted periodically. However, that does not mean that the core values and principles of the 2003 Plan are being abandoned or compromised. To the contrary, as noted earlier, most of the 2003 Plan remains intact and this amendment is partly based on many of the goals and objectives contained in that document.

2.0 A DESCRIPTION OF THE MUNSONHURST DISTRICT

The Munsonhurst District, for the purpose of this analysis, includes an area of 1.14 sq miles (730.5 acres), which as already noted, is located in the southeastern portion of the community. This land mass represents approximately 24.7 % of the total land area of Franklin Borough. Exhibit 1 is an aerial photo, taken in 2002, which includes the boundaries of the Munsonhurst District. As can be seen from the aerial photo, the Munsonhurst District is generally bounded on the east by the Hardyston / Franklin boundary, on the north by Rt 23 and Franklin Ave (Rt 631), on the west by Cork Hill Rd and on the south by the Ogdensburg / Franklin boundary. A description of the

Exhibit 1



Munsonhurst District Gateway - Boundary Map

APRIL 16, 2007

0 700 1,400 2,800 Feet



BOROUGH OF FRANKLIN, SUSSEX COUNTY

Source: New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (2002 Ortho). This map was developed using Sussex County Geographic Information System (SCOGIS) digital data, but this secondary product has not been verified by SCOGIS and is not county-authorized.

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Munsonhurst District, which includes information about the existing land use characteristics, natural features, zoning, utilities and circulation related to this area follows:

2.1 EXISTING LAND USE CHARACTERISTICS

Exhibit 2 identifies the existing land use pattern that is found within the Munsonhurst District. As can be seen from that exhibit, most of the land area is vacant or being used for public purposes. In the case of the public purpose acreage most of this area is being used for open space and recreation purposes and includes Franklin Pond, which is the largest water body in the community.

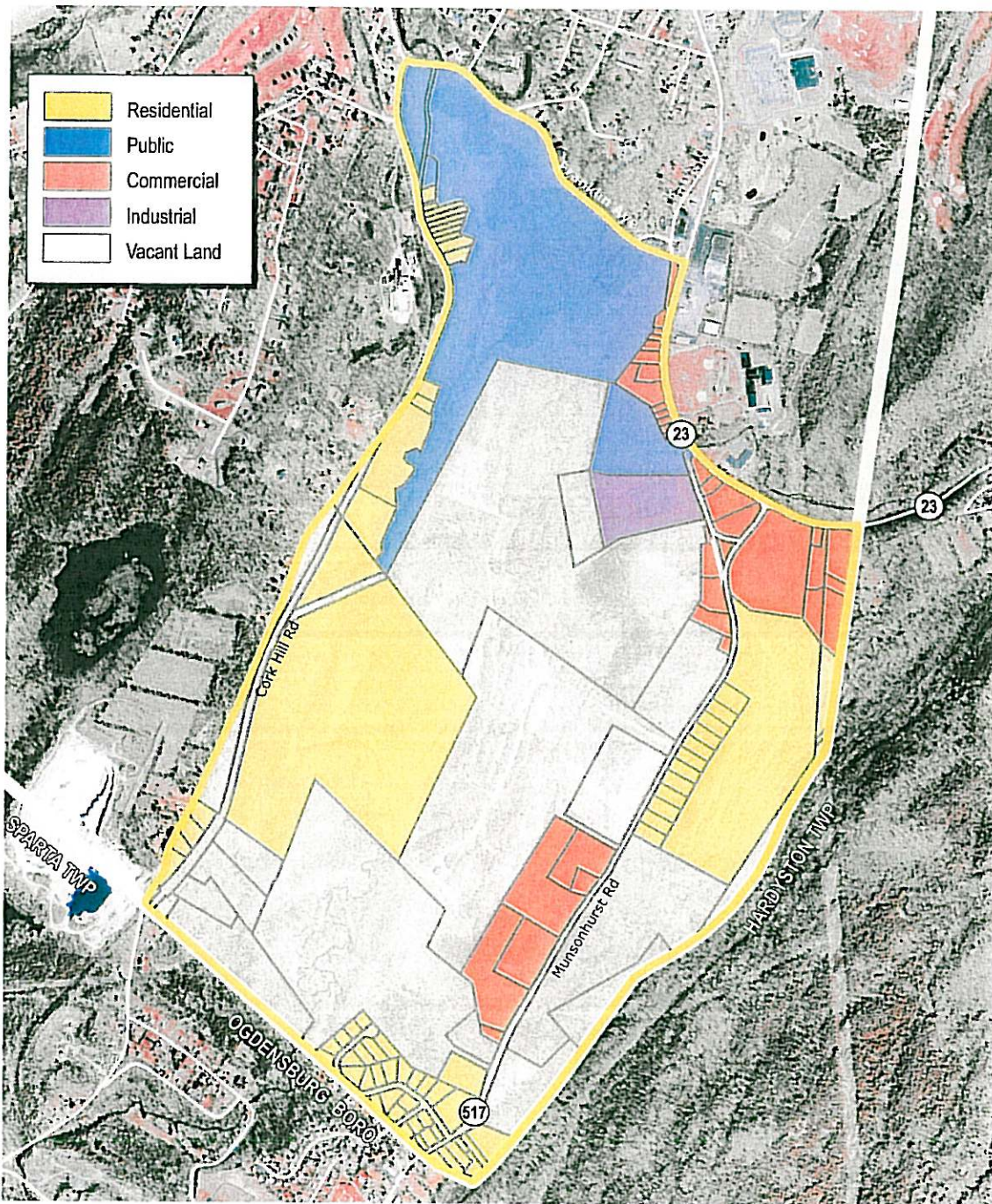
Residential development in this area can be found along Cork Hill Rd and Rt 517, as well as in a small subdivision of approximately 40 homes, which is accessible via Fox Hill Dr., a local street that connects to Rt 517. Also included in this category is a mobile home park, consisting of just under 200 units. Other than the mobile home park units, virtually all of the other residential units are located in single family detached residential structures that have been constructed during the last 30 to 50 years.

There is also some non residential development in this area – primarily retail and service commercial uses, plus some office facilities. It is limited to a small section along the south end of Rt 517 and there are also a number of other non residential uses, clustered in the vicinity of the Rt 23 / Rt 517 intersection. Finally, an industrial property is located near Rt 23 and Rt 517. The structure on this site is mostly vacant, as of the date of this document

2.2 NATURAL FEATURES

The Borough's 2003 Master Plan contains a substantial amount of material about the natural features in this part of the community. Specifically, the 2003 Master Plan data and maps indicate that this area is partly encumbered by some wetlands, a stream corridor and some steep slope areas in excess 25%. However, a substantial amount of the area – 50% or more – is unencumbered and can accommodate additional growth. The 2003 Plan also identifies a natural feature known as the Ogdensburg Fen – a unique wetland area - which is located along the Borough's and the Munsonhurst District's southern boundary. Finally, the importance of groundwater protection is made clear in the Borough's Master Plan. A Water Supply Wellhead Protection Map is included in the 2003 Plan and it graphically depicts the fact that development and redevelopment activities, throughout most of the Munsonhurst District, must be done very carefully in order to protect the Borough's primary source of water supply.

Exhibit 2



Munsonhurst District Gateway - Existing Land Use

APRIL 16, 2007

0 700 1,400 2,800 Feet



BOROUGH OF FRANKLIN, SUSSEX COUNTY

Source: New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (2002 Ortho). This map was developed using Sussex County Geographic Information System (SCOGIS) digital data, but this secondary product has not been verified by SCOGIS and is not county-authorized.

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2.3 EXISTING ZONING

The Munsonhurst District currently includes seven zones – four residential and three non residential. The residential zones are R-1, R-3, R-4 and MHP. The R zones are all single family districts and include minimum lot sizes ranging from 6,250 sq ft (R-4) to 3 acres (R-1). The MHP zone is the Borough’s mobile home park district, which is fully developed.

The non residential districts include the OS/GU, the HC and the I zones. The OS/GU (Open Space/ Government Use) district is the area encompassed by the Franklin Pond open space and recreation complex. The HC (Highway Commercial) and I (Industrial) zones allow various commercial uses and are, for the most part fully developed. As an aside, it should be noted that there are several commercial properties located along Rt 517 that have been in existence for many years but are currently located in the R-1 zone. Finally, it also needs to be mentioned that prior to the current zoning for this area being enacted, which is based on the recommendations in the 2003 Master Plan, a substantial portion of the Munsonhurst District was zoned LC-1 and LC-2. These zones permitted a variety of limited commercial uses. Both of these zones were eliminated, however, in conjunction with the zoning map changes that were enacted in order to conform to the 2003 Master Plan recommendations.

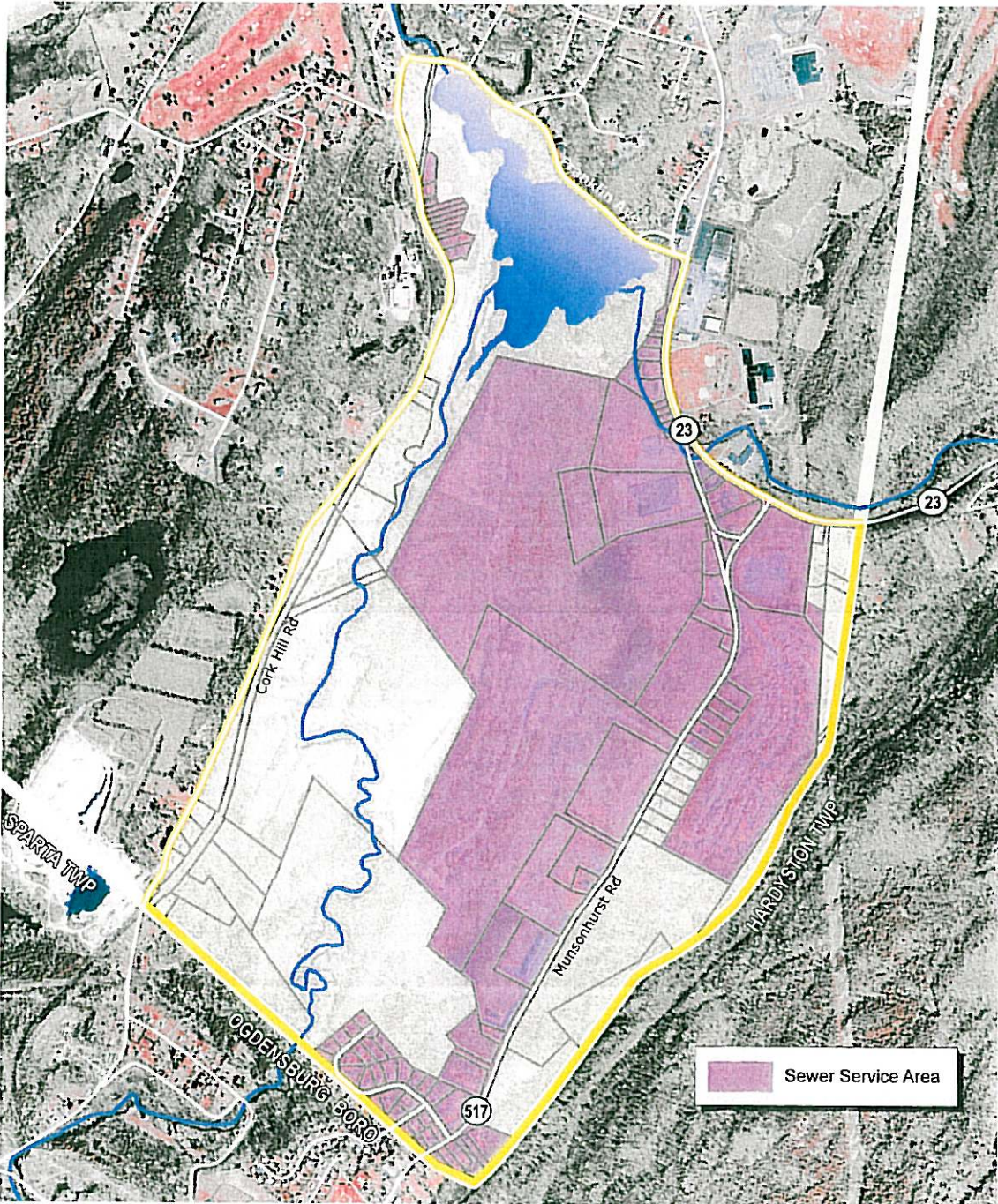
2.4 UTILITY AND TRANSPORTATION CONSIDERATIONS

The Munsonhurst District, as previously noted, is bounded by Cork Hill Rd on the west, as well as Franklin Ave and Rt. 23 on the north. Furthermore, Rt. 517, also known as Munsonhurst Rd traverses an area near the eastern boundary of the Munsonhurst District and is the primary means of access to many of the properties in this part of the community. Rt 517 also connects Franklin to points south of the Borough, including Rt 15 and ultimately Rt 80, so it is important to acknowledge that the Rt 517 corridor is becoming increasingly important in terms of accommodating traffic simply passing through the Borough. With respect to sewer and water considerations, only a small portion of the Munsonhurst District is served by the Borough’s sewer and water utilities. However, as depicted on Exhibit 3, a substantial portion of this area, particularly adjacent to the Rt 517 corridor, is in the Borough’s Sewer Service Area. Furthermore, the Borough water supply is dependent on the wells located in this area.

3.0 PLANNING ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

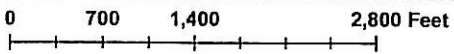
The Borough has a long history of planning and has prepared and updated its planning documents on numerous occasions. The 2003 Master Plan is the most recent comprehensive planning document prepared and adopted by the Planning Board. However, in recent years the Planning Board, as already noted, has prepared and adopted a Housing Plan (2005) and, also in 2005, the Board conducted a study to determine if there were any locations within the Borough that might accommodate one or more “high

Exhibit 3



Munsonhurst District Gateway - Sewer Service Area

APRIL 16, 2007



BOROUGH OF FRANKLIN, SUSSEX COUNTY

Source: New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (2002 Ortho). This map was developed using Sussex County Geographic Information System (SCOGIS) digital data, but this secondary product has not been verified by SCOGIS and is not county-authorized.

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density age restricted housing”. Furthermore, the Planning Board was involved in the preparation of a completely revised set of land development controls, which were aimed at implementing provisions of the 2003 Master Plan, and which the Borough Council adopted in 2004. These aforementioned documents obviously have some relevancy to the material herein. Consequently, a brief review of each follows:

3.1 THE 2003 MASTER PLAN

The 2003 Franklin Borough Master Plan is a comprehensive document consisting of 13 sections and over 100 pages, together with maps and other graphic material. It replaced other master plans and master plan reexamination reports prepared during the last several decades. The 2003 Plan contains a set of Goals and Objectives, as well as a number of plan elements ranging from a Land Use Plan element to elements related to Circulation, Utilities, Historic Preservation etc. There is also a substantial amount of background information about the community contained in the 2003 Plan.

The Goals and Objectives section is divided into eight distinct categories. They are:

- Land Use
- Circulation
- Community Facilities
- Parks and Recreation
- Conservation
- Utilities
- Historic Preservation
- Relationship To Other Plans

Some of the contents of this section can be described as very broad and general such as, “Preserve and enhance the existing established residential character of Franklin”. Other language in this section is more specific such as, “ Strengthen existing commercial districts and corridors by encouraging a mix of uses that provide employment, retail opportunities, services and entertainment”.

The Land Use Plan element, of course, establishes the specific planning policies of the community, via the division of the Borough into discrete land use districts. The 2003 Plan made some major changes in the Munsonhurst District by removing a substantial amount of acreage from the LC-1 and LC-2 districts and designating the acreage in question as R-1 (minimum lot size 3 acres). The reasons behind this change were many but generally involved the environmental constraints associated with this area.

In addition, a primary focus of the 2003 Plan involves the revitalization of the Main St area and adjacent properties. Apparently, this goal was also part of the equation which resulted in the decision to restrict development in the

Munsonhurst District, via the proposed rezoning that was ultimately enacted by the Borough Council.

In summary, as noted previously, the 2003 Plan is still a valid document and will continue to set the overall planning policies of the community. However, this document will establish a new set of planning policies for a portion of the Munsonhurst District, based on a rethinking about the future role that this part of the community should play.

3.2 THE HOUSING ELEMENT AND FAIR SHARE PLAN

In 2005, the Borough adopted a COAH compliant housing plan and it has been submitted to COAH in connection with a petition for substantive certification. As of the date of this document, substantive certification has not been granted and due to the litigation involving COAH's rules and the current effort by COAH to restructure its regulations, it is uncertain what may have to be done in the future in connection with the possible revision of the Borough's Housing Element and Fair Share Plan.

That document, however, assumes a minimal amount of future development in the Munsonhurst District. So, at some point in the future, it will probably be necessary to amend the Borough's Housing Element and Fair Share Plan to reflect any additional development that may be accommodated in that part of the community, as a result of the amendments contained herein.

This document, then, does not actually amend the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, except that it is hereby acknowledged that additional growth in the Munsonhurst District may increase the Borough's affordable housing obligation. Consequently, those responsible for that growth must also be responsible for any affordable housing obligation that is generated by it.

3.3 THE HIGH DENSITY AGE RESTRICTED HOUSING STUDY

In 2004/2005, the Borough Planning Board undertook a community wide study relative to the possible locations of future age restricted housing projects within the Borough. Twelve separate areas were studied with respect to their ability to accommodate this type of housing. It was stated in the study that age restricted housing is needed in the Borough and that the 2003 Plan did not specifically address this issue.

The study identified a number of criteria used in evaluating the locations in question. The criteria included such items as environmental features and the relationship to the proposed Franklin "Town Center". Five separate areas within the Munsonhurst District were among the twelve locations evaluated. Of the twelve locations, only one was found suitable for this type of housing and that

property was identified as a portion of Block 74 Lot 24, which is located at the northern end of the Munsonhurst District.

The study also recommended that the Town Center boundaries be extended to include the above referenced site and any future efforts relative to the designation of a Franklin “Town Center” include this property.

The reasons for rejecting all but one of the areas studied varied but were generally based on environmental constraints issues. A review of the material compiled in the study indicates that, with some further consideration, it would be possible to reach some different conclusions about the suitability of some of the sites. These different conclusions necessarily assume certain mitigating measures would be required, such as the preservation of substantial amounts of acreage for open space purposes.

It is also not clear from the study how “high density” is being defined. High density is a relative term and in Franklin means something quite different than it does in say New York City. Furthermore, it is always important to clarify the distinction between the terms “gross” density and “net” density. A residential complex might have a very low gross density, because of the open space surrounding it that is preserved. But the net density (for that same complex) that is generally calculated by dividing the amount of land area on which the housing units and support facilities are located, into the actual number of housing units, often results in a much higher figure than what is determined to be the gross density calculation. This distinction is obviously important, when considering what is an appropriate density for a large, undeveloped tract of land.

In summary, the study made it clear that Franklin believes that age restricted housing is something should be part of any future growth in the Borough. Furthermore of all the locations studied, a portion of the Munsonhurst District was found to be an area where this type of housing would be appropriate.

4.0 THE PLAN AMENDMENTS

After the careful consideration of a variety of factors related to the future of the Munsonhurst District, the conclusion has been reached that it is appropriate to amend portions of the 2003 Borough Master Plan, in order to facilitate a new and different vision for this part of the community. In short, the vision for this area now entails substantially more residential development, as well as some additional commercial development along the Rt. 517 corridor. At the same time, the longstanding goals of the community relative to the protection of environmentally sensitive areas and the Borough’s water supply source are strengthened and reinforced. And related to these changes is the need to acknowledge how they impact the community’s role as a “center”, as well as the configuration of the center itself. The discussion about the specific plan amendments and their overall relationship to the future of the Munsonhurst District itself and the Borough, as a whole, follows.

4.1 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Most of the goals and objectives contained in the 2003 Plan are either consistent with or unrelated to the vision of the Munsonhurst District as being an area that with accommodate a substantial amount of additional development, while at the same time protecting much of the environmentally sensitive acreage within that part of the community. However, there are several changes to the goals and objectives section that are necessary in order to support and clarify the new vision for this area. They are as follows:

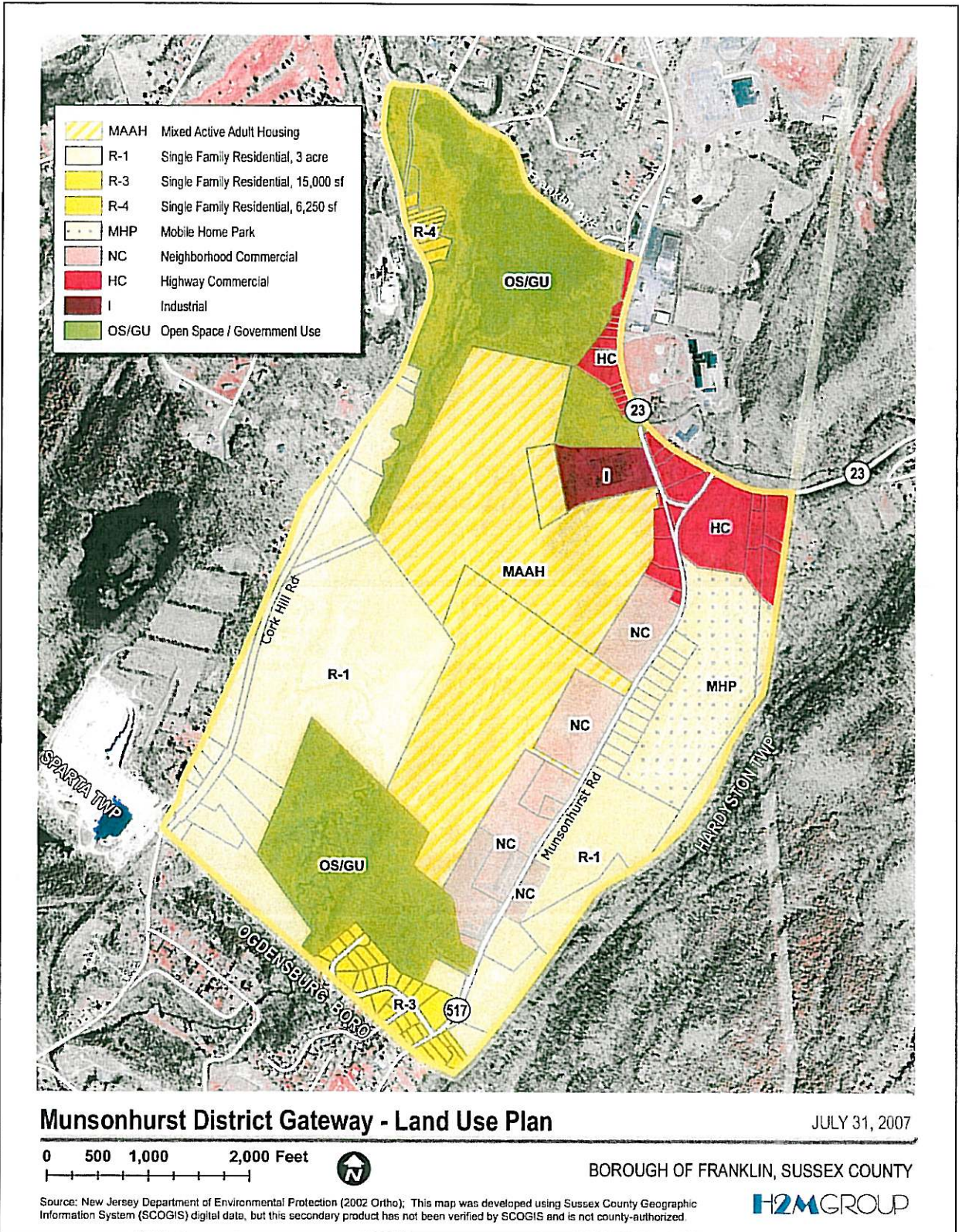
- Under the **Land Use** category add the following:
“Encourage the development of age restricted housing in selected portions of the Borough.”
- Under the **Circulation** category add the following:
“Encourage the construction of a future connection between the anticipated residential development in the Munsonhurst District and Cork Hill Rd.
- Under the **Relationship to Other Plans** category make the following change:
“ Delete: “Promote the designation of Franklin and Hardyston as a “Center” Add: “Include in any center designation for Franklin, the Main St area, portions of the Rt 23 corridor, portions of the Munsonhurst District and any adjoining properties that complement and support those future growth areas of the community.”

4.2 THE LAND USE PLAN ELEMENT

The Land Use Plan element of the 2003 Plan indicates that most of the Munsonhurst District was envisioned, at that time, as being primarily a low density residential area, with a minimum lot size requirement of at least 3 acres. This master plan amendment alters that view and establishes a **Mixed Active Adult Housing (MAAH)** district as the centerpiece of the Munsonhurst portion of the community.

Exhibit 4 depicts the properties to be included in the MAAH district and the recommended gross density for this area, depending on unit type, is proposed to range between 2.5 and 3.5 units per acre. It is further envisioned that the structures will range in height between two and a half and four stories. This change allows for the design and implementation of an age restricted housing “neighborhood”, with sufficient critical mass, so that it can provide the features and social contacts necessary for it to serve the needs of older adult residents, who favor this type of residential experience. At the same time, the intent is for this

Exhibit 4



neighborhood to be an integral part of the entire community and the expectations are that it will be.

Other changes recommended in this area include the following:

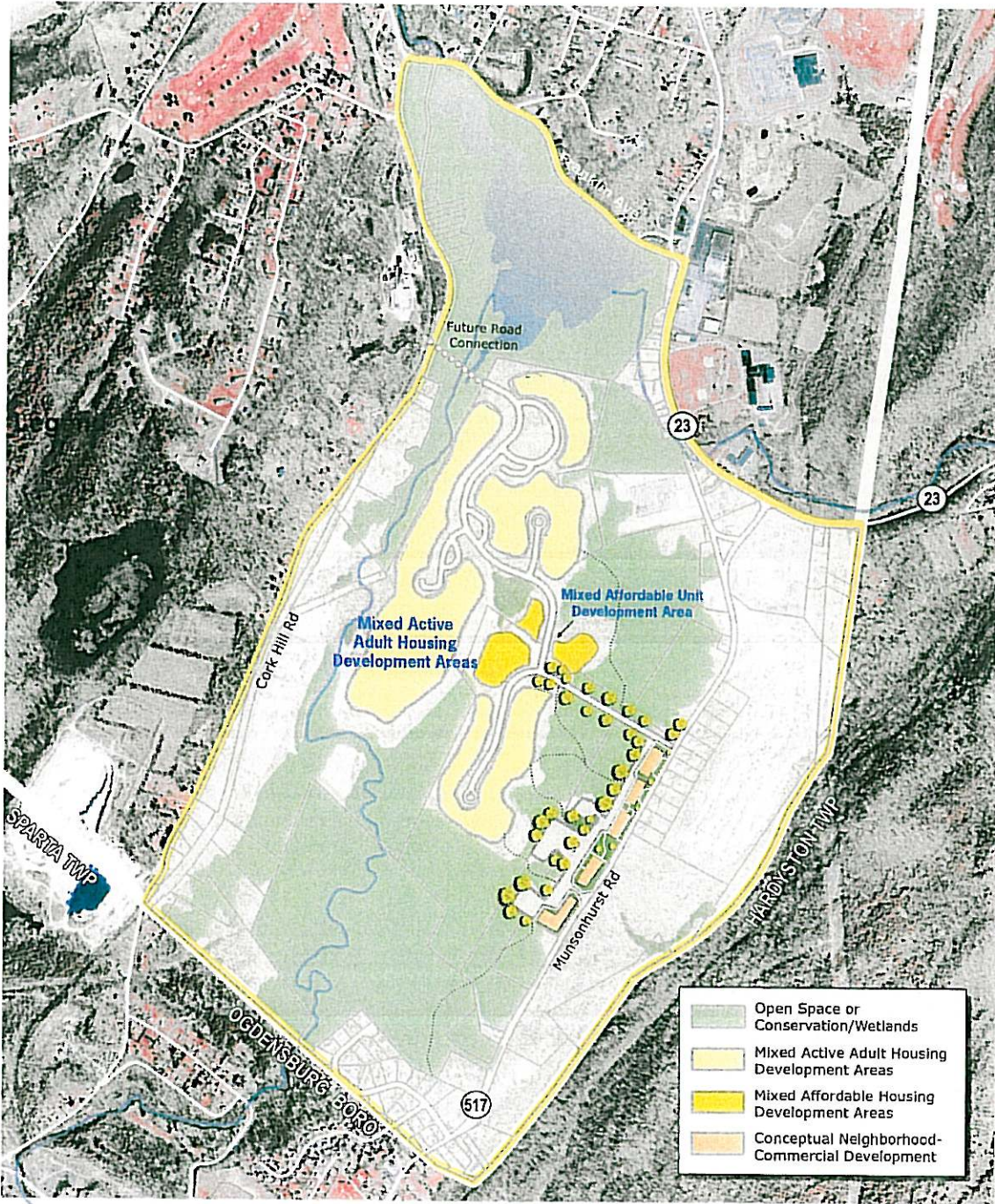
- Expand the **OS / GU Open Space / Government Use Zone** to include the Littell Center and the area at the south end of the Munsonhurst District that accommodates the Borough wells. This area is expected to be deeded to the Borough in conjunction with the development of the MAAH Zone.
- Create a new **NC (Neighborhood Commercial) Zone** that will allow retail and service commercial uses needed by the existing and prospective residents of the Munsonhurst District. This zone will also allow uses that may be of some value to the traveling public but it is not intended to compete with the Borough's primary commercial district along Rt 23.

The land use configuration in the remainder of the Munsonhurst District remains unchanged, primarily because these areas are already developed, as in the case of the mobile home park ,or the environmental constraints are such that the R-1 Zone limitations are still appropriate and only a minimal amount of additional development is expected.

Exhibit 5 is a concept plan for the Munsonhurst District, which in very broad terms depicts a possible development pattern that might be established in the MAAH Zone and the adjoining NC Zone. This concept plan delineates a possible road network, together with the general location of the residential units. It also indicates that any COAH obligation, generated by the development in the MAAH Zone, will be accommodated on site - although not necessarily in the exact location depicted on the concept plan. It is assumed, however, that the final location of the residential structures and roads and the companion open space in the MAAH Zone will be reasonably close to what is shown on the concept plan, based on what is know about the environmental constraints in this area and where the best developable land is located.

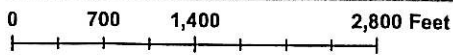
The concept plan also depicts some commercial development along Rt 517. This development is also presented in very broad terms and may not occur, exactly as depicted. However, a goal of any development or redevelopment of commercial space along Rt 517 is that it should not be of the standard "strip commercial" variety. It is anticipated that the designs will be innovative and creative and will attempt to minimize the visual influence and dominance of the automobile. Another goal is for this area to be a walkable environment and to connect with the MAAH development via walkways and bike paths. There is

Exhibit 5



Munsonhurst District Gateway - Concept Plan

APRIL 16, 2007



BOROUGH OF FRANKLIN, SUSSEX COUNTY

Source: New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (2002 Ortho); This map was developed using Sussex County Geographic Information System (SCOGIS) digital data, but this secondary product has not been verified by SCOGIS and is not county-authorized.



also the possibility that this area might accommodate a small residential component as well.

In summary, the Munsonhurst District is envisioned as an area that will provide new lifestyle opportunities, building on what is already there, preserving what needs to be preserved and adding a new residential environment currently missing in the Borough.

4.3 THE CIRCULATION PLAN ELEMENT

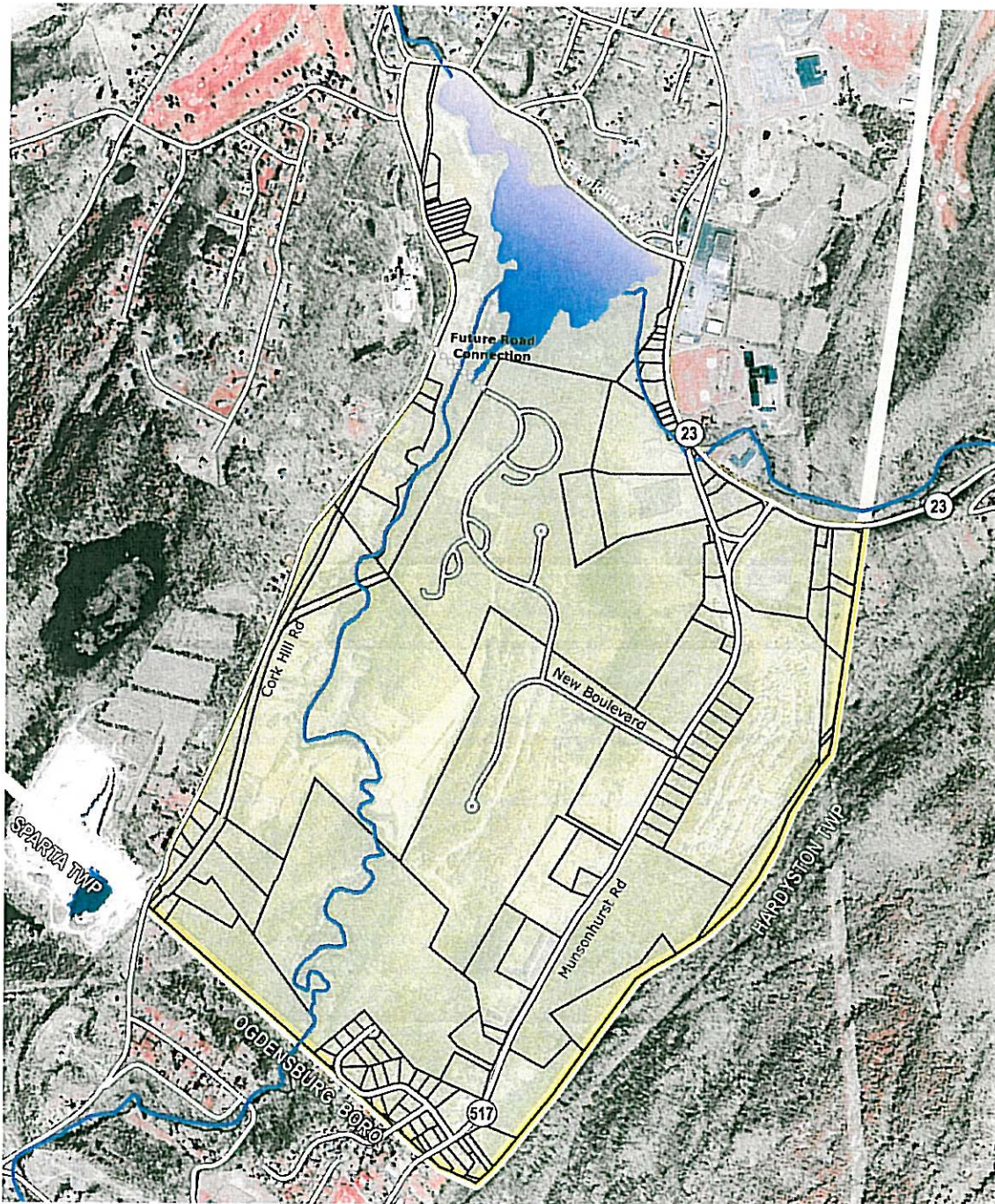
Exhibit 6, The Circulation Plan, depicts the anticipated road network within the MAAH Zone but it also depicts something else that is very important. Specifically, it delineates the possible location of a future connection to Cork Hill Rd. That connection is not anticipated to occur as part of the initial development activity within the MAAH Zone and, quite frankly, due to the cost, it may never happen. However, nothing should be done to preclude that connection from happening in the future, which means the design of the units and the road layout in that part of the Munsonhurst District should be carefully drawn, so that the connection can be implemented someday without any major disruptions. Furthermore, it is essential that future residents in this area be made fully aware of the potential for this connection to Cork Hill Rd, so that there is no opposition to this goal at a later date.

The importance of the connection to Cork Hill Rd is community wide. It isn't just important to the Munsonhurst District. Although it is anticipated that the new residents of this area will interact with other Franklin residents and businesses outside of the Munsonhurst District, just as current residents do, nevertheless, such interactions can be further enhanced and facilitated if the connection to Cork Hill Rd can be made to happen. This connection will be of particular importance with respect to the ease with which residents of the Munsonhurst District will be able to access the Main St and Franklin Pond areas. Consequently, even if initially the envisioned connection is only pedestrian in nature, that by itself will help achieve part of the intended goal.

The Circulation Plan also indicates that the new development in the MAAH Zone will be accessed via a boulevard type thoroughfare, directly accessible to Rt 517. Until the connection to Cork Hill Rd can be accomplished, this will be the only means of access into the MAAH Zone. The reason for this is primarily due to the environmental constraints in this area and the limited locations where access would be feasible.

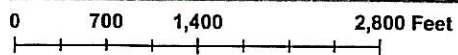
Finally, it is acknowledged that the future activity associated with the MAAH and HC Zones will add traffic to Rt 517 and to the Rt 517 / Rt 23 intersection. Given the number of housing units anticipated, 3,000 or more vehicle trips per day may be generated, which will obviously have a direct impact on Rt 517. However, it is not anticipated that peak hour conditions will be impacted significantly and many

Exhibit 6



Munsonhurst District Gateway - Circulation Plan

APRIL 16, 2007



BOROUGH OF FRANKLIN, SUSSEX COUNTY

Source: New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (2002 Ortho). This map was developed using Sussex County Geographic Information System (SCOGIS) digital data, but this secondary product has not been verified by SCOGIS and is not county-authorized.



of the vehicle trips will occur during off peak hours. Further study will obviously be needed at the time of site plan review to determine what the specific impacts will be and what off site improvements may be needed.

4.4 THE UTILITY PLAN ELEMENT

Because of the low density residential development envisioned for the Munsonhurst District in the 2003 Plan, it was doubtful that much additional area would have been sewered and the Plan recommendation a modification of the Sewer Service Area. Subsurface disposal systems would probably have been sufficient and certainly the most cost effective sewage disposal method. However, given the multi family structures and net densities envisioned in the MAAH Zone, as well as the amount of non residential development possible in the HC Zone, it is clear that the Sewer Service Area previously depicted in Exhibit 3 of this document, must not be altered. This amendment then reinforces and supports the Borough's existing Sewer Service Area, as currently configured, as it pertains to the Munsonhurst District

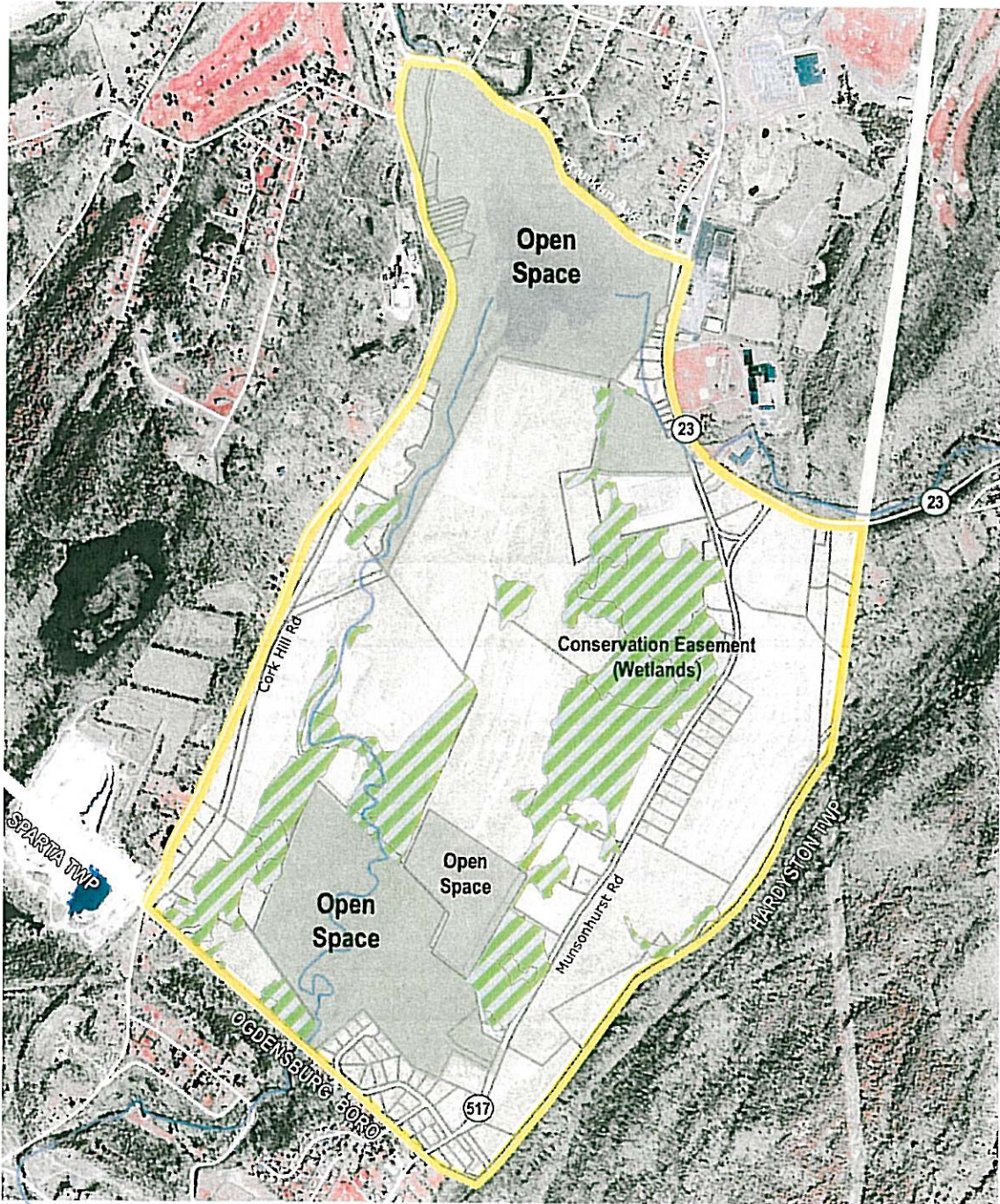
4.5 THE OPEN SPACE PLAN ELEMENT

The 2003 Plan includes a Conservation element and a Parks and Recreation element. This amendment, as depicted in Exhibit 7 – Open Space Plan - reinforces the goals and objectives of those two elements and provides more detail with respect to what will remain undeveloped within the Munsonhurst District. Specifically, Exhibit 7 depicts the open space network in this area and the intent that it be a true, interconnected network, not just isolated fragments of “green space”. Portions of this network, are environmentally sensitive and will generally not be available for human activity and recreation. However, other areas may be suitable for some limited active recreation purposes. This will require additional study.

It should also be noted that a substantial amount of the open space depicted in the southern portion of the Munsonhurst District is intended to provide a buffer and protection for the Borough's water supply resources in that area. Although that acreage may also serve other functions, such as accommodating a trail network, the main function of it will be water supply protection.

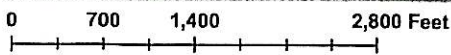
Exhibit 7 does not distinguish between the existing and proposed components of this open space network and, of course, the Franklin Pond recreation complex, as depicted on the map, already serves Borough residents in a variety of ways. It is the recreation jewel of the community and most residents of the community recognize the need to maintain that status. However, with the potential addition of 500 plus housing units, in close proximity to this facility, there is some concern about it being strained to capacity and being a victim of its own success. Consequently, it will be important for the Borough to be vigilant regarding maintenance and usage issues. It is also recommended that consideration be

Exhibit 7



Munsonhurst District Gateway - Open Space Plan

APRIL 16, 2007



BOROUGH OF FRANKLIN, SUSSEX COUNTY

Source: New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (2002 Ortho). This map was developed using Sussex County Geographic Information System (SCOGIS) digital data, but this secondary product has not been verified by SCOGIS and is not county-authorized.

H2MGROUP

given to requiring of the prospective developers in the MAAH Zone certain off site improvements or contributions to such improvements aimed at maintaining the high standards of this facility.

4.6 THE CENTER ISSUE

Franklin Borough at one time was part of a regional center designation effort that also included Hamburg, Hardyston and Ogdensburg. That effort is mentioned in the 2003 Plan but it failed to obtain the necessary cooperation and approvals of the Office of Smart Growth and the NJ State Planning Commission. Consequently, Franklin is not a designated center, although it obviously functions as one and has for more than a 100 years.

The Borough recognizes the importance of being a designated center and intends to pursue that designation via the Plan Endorsement process. In fact discussions in that regard are already underway. The question, of course, is how much of Franklin can and should be included within the boundaries of a designated “center”?

For many years, the “core” of the Franklin center was the Main St area and selected portions of the community adjacent to Main St. However, as the automobile became more and more dominant, Franklin’s “Main St.” in effect shifted to Rt 23. The Rt 23 part of the community now contains a variety of businesses – many of them national chains – and a substantial amount of commercial floor space. Wal-Mart alone has upwards of 80,000 sq ft under one roof. Conversely, Main St that used to be the hub of the community has fallen on hard times.

The Borough, however, is committed to the revitalization of Main St and has been working diligently to make that happen. As previously mentioned a Main St Revitalization Plan was adopted by the Planning Board to help guide the Borough’s efforts and the Borough continues to explore what can be done to make Main St a vital part of the community again.

Any center designation must of course include the Main St area and selected areas adjacent to Main St. The Rt 23 corridor must also be included. However, it should be noted what is clearly understood in the New Jersey Development and Redevelopment Plan – “centers” and “center components” come in a variety of shapes and sizes and function in a variety of ways. This is evident from the comparison of Main St and Rt 23. They each have their own unique characteristics – Rt 23 is automobile dominated and always will be; Main St is a walkable environment and can be rejuvenated in such a way that takes advantage of that particular asset. So, Franklin’s future center designation will undoubtedly recognize the fact that Franklin is not homogenous, it is diverse. And that diversity will extend to the inclusion of at least a portion of the Munsonhurst

District, within the boundaries of what will, at some point, be approved as a designated center by the New Jersey State Planning Commission.

This amendment, then, to the 2003 Plan adjusts the “center concept” relative to Franklin Borough by including portions of the Munsonhurst District. Whether this area will function as a sub center or not remains to be seen but the intent is for it to be an adjunct to the fully revitalized Main St “core” someday. The intent is not for the Munsonhurst District to compete with Main St - or Rt 23 for that matter – it won’t have the population base to do so. But it can be an instrumental player in helping along the Borough’s Main St revitalization efforts. This will be particularly true if just a small percentage of the disposable income associated with these 500 new families can be directed toward Main St businesses. The key to that happening will be to include on Main St those businesses and activities that will draw these new residents into the center of the community. As an aside, the decision of the Borough, a number of years ago, to retain the municipal building on Main St was extremely important and many believe that decision alone may prove to have been the Main St revitalization catalyst. By retaining the presence of the municipal government functions on Main St, a message was sent that Main St has a future. By grouping other activity generators and “destination” type businesses and uses in the Main St area, will further enhance the future of that part of the Borough.

However, the full revitalization of Main will take time and it is still not clear exactly what mix of uses will ultimately draw more residents and visitors into this part of the community. In the meantime, moving ahead with such planning and development efforts, as envisioned in this Plan amendment, can be a positive factor in the Main St revitalization effort as well.

5.0 RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS

The Franklin Borough 2003 Master Plan does not exist within a vacuum and neither does this amendment. In the 2003 Plan, observations are made about other planning documents – municipal and regional - that are essentially still valid. However, since 2003 two new plans have become part of the mix. One of those plans has been produced by a new State agency – The Highlands Council – is known as **The Highlands Regional Master Plan**. The other document of significance to this amendment is the **Sussex County Strategic Growth Plan**.

The Highlands Plan is still in draft form and, as of the date of this report, has not been adopted by the Highlands Council. The draft plan includes several land use categories. First, the 800,000 acre Highlands Region is divided into two primary categories – The Planning Area and The Preservation Area. All lands within the Preservation Area are subject to the controls of the Highlands Council. In contrast, the portion of the Highlands Region that has been designated as The Planning Area is not subject to the controls of the Highlands Council unless the municipality in each instance voluntarily agrees to comply with the Highlands Council regulations. Franklin Borough is entirely within the Planning

Area category and no decision has been reached yet as to whether or not the Borough will abide by the regulations established by the Highlands Council.

The two aforementioned categories – The Planning Area and Preservation Area - were actually established by the Highlands legislation itself. The Highlands draft plan establishes three additional categories – 1.) The Planned Community Zone/ Specially Planned Area 2.) The Conservation Zone and 3.) The Protection Zone. These zones are depicted on the Highlands Council's Land Use Capability Map and each category is used to classify land in the Preservation Area, as well as in the Planning area. The difference, of course, as noted previously is that the regulations associated with these three categories are mandatory in the Preservation Area but optional in the Planning Area, until a municipality agrees to adhere to the applicable controls.

The Highlands Land Use Capability Map, as it relates to Franklin and the Munsonhurst District specifically, indicates that most of the Munsonhurst acreage is either in the Conservation or Protection Zones. The Borough Council has taken the position that it is in disagreement with many portions of the Land Use Capability Map and has so advised the Highlands Council. However, as noted earlier, at this point Franklin Borough is entirely within the Planning Area category and is not required to adhere to the controls of the Highlands Council.

The other planning document of significance with respect to this amendment is the Sussex County Strategic Growth Plan. That document, adopted in 2006 and approved by the New Jersey State Planning Commission in 2007, establishes a number of broad planning policies and specific recommendations with respect to Sussex County Land Use issues. However, that document still indicates that the Borough's zoning in the Munsonhurst District is primarily LC-1 and LC-2. As noted previously, those land use categories were rescinded by the Borough and replaced with the low density residential designation of R-1. Consequently, the Sussex County Strategic Growth Plan, for the Munsonhurst portion of the community, is somewhat outdated. It will be important to meet with Sussex County officials to discuss the changes contemplated for the Munsonhurst District and revise the Strategic Growth Plan at the earliest opportunity. This is important because of the support needed from Sussex County in connection with any Plan Endorsement efforts undertaken by the Borough, which will involve the inclusion of the Munsonhurst District as part of Franklin's delineated "center"

6.0 SUMMARY

This master plan amendment is consistent with Smart Growth principles and attempts to balance a variety of competing interests. There is no doubt the end result of this amendment will produce significant change in the Borough. However, every attempt has been made, via this amendment and other planning and zoning documents of the Borough, to ensure that the changes that are anticipated will ultimately be in the best interests of the community.