

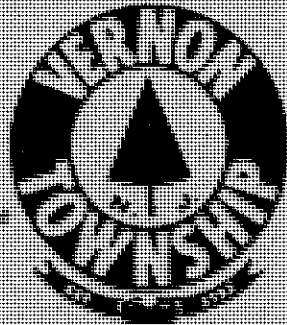
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**1995**  
**Master Plan**

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**Township of Vernon**  
**Sussex County, New Jersey**

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Prepared by  
**Moskowitz, Heyer & Gruel, PA**  
Community Planning Consultants

December 1995

**Moskowitz, Heyer & Gruel, PA**  
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# 1995 MASTER PLAN

Township of Vernon  
Sussex County, New Jersey

Adopted  
December 27, 1995

Prepared by

**Moskowitz, Heyer & Gruel, PA**  
*Community Planning Consultants*  
Cory Commons, Suite 204A  
123 Columbia Turnpike  
Florham Park, New Jersey 07932  
201-966-1188

The original of this report was signed and  
sealed in accordance with N.J.S.A. 45:14A-12.

  
Peter M. Tolischus, P.P. #1448



# Township of Vernon

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Telephone 201-764-4055

21 Church Street  
P.O. Box 340  
Vernon, New Jersey 07462-0340

Fax No. 201-764-3273

January 19, 1996

To the Governing Body and the Citizens of Vernon Township:

The Vernon Township Planning Board is pleased to present to you the 1995 Master Plan which was adopted on December 27, 1995. The Plan strives for a balance between the conservation of the unique qualities of Vernon Township and continued growth of residential, commercial and industrial uses. Several new zoning categories were also established that uniquely fit the land use of Vernon Township.

The Planning Board would like to express its sincere appreciation to our Mayor, the Township Committee, Township Agencies and staff and our citizens for their time and assistance in the preparation of the Master Plan.

This Master Plan represents a sound guide for the future development of Vernon Township to the year 2000.

Sincerely yours,

Bruce Zaretsky

VERNON TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD  
RESOLUTION OF MEMORIALIZATION

Decided: December 27, 1995  
Memorialized: February 28, 1996

MATTER OF THE 1995 MASTER PLAN

WHEREAS, the Municipal Land Use Law, N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1 et seq., specifically Section 28 thereof, enables this Board to prepare and, after public hearing, adopt a Master Plan to guide the use of lands within the municipality in a manner which protects the public health and safety, and promotes the general welfare, and

WHEREAS, in accordance therewith, this Board has caused the preparation of a Master Plan by its planning consultants, Moskowitz, Heyer & Gruel, P.A., which bears the date November 16, 1995, and

WHEREAS, said plan was considered at a public hearing on November 29, 1995, which hearing was continued on November 30, 1995 and December 27, 1995, and

WHEREAS, such hearing was held in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40:55D-13 with respect to notice concerning the said Master Plan, including publication in the official newspaper of the municipality and service to adjoining municipalities and the Sussex County Planning Board, and

WHEREAS, it appears to the satisfaction of this Board, upon presentation of the said plan, public comment thereon, and due deliberation of the Board, that the said plan, with minor revisions as more particularly described herein, represents not only a Master Plan conforming with each and every mandatory and

discretionary element for which provision is made in N.J.S.A. 40:55D-28, but also a Master Plan of high order and meaningful purpose in the expression of objectives, principles, assumptions, policies and standards upon which its constituent proposals for the physical, economic and social development of the Township are based, and

WHEREAS, good cause otherwise appears for the adoption of the said plan, NOW THEREFORE

BE IT RESOLVED by the Planning Board of the Township of Vernon that adoption of the 1995 Master Plan on December 27, 1995 shall be and is hereby memorialized to the extent of and in substantial conformance with the said plan dated November 16, 1995 and revised through December 27, 1995, as prepared by Moskowitz, Heyer & Gruel, P.A., having been signed and sealed in accordance with N.J.S.A. 45:14A-12 by Peter M. Tolischus, P.P., #1448, together with revisions thereto to include the following, which revisions shall be made by the said consultant in a final and complete copy of the Master Plan to be filed with the Secretary of the Planning Board:

1. Page I-1 shall be revised to include a provision that calls for the protection of existing residences through a property maintenance code.

2. Page II-13 shall include a revision to the second paragraph to provide that activities such as "biking", and not "hiking", are contemplated, and that golf courses would also be a permitted use in the agri-eco-tourism zone.

3. The text on page V-7 should be supplemented with a provision to recommend a study for new road service on the east side of Route 515 north of the A&P shopping center for the purpose of facilitating traffic movement among various

commercial facilities that may locate on either side of the existing shopping center, and, additionally, a second road to connect Route 515 in the vicinity of Firemens' Pond with Route 94 in the vicinity of the existing Dairy Queen establishment.

4. Page V-7 should be supplemented to provide substantially as follows:

**OFFICIAL MAP.**

The Township should consider an official map if a future road location or park site is designated and the Township would like to protect the site from development. This can be done by use of an official map as outlined herein.

The official map is a legal document adopted by the governing body of the municipality, designating lands which shall be reserved for future streets, drainage, rights-of-way and parks and playgrounds. It also serves as the official statement of the governing body as to which streets, drainage rights-of-way and parks and playgrounds it has accepted for maintenance. Areas may be reserved for a period of one year or for such further time as is agreed to by a prospective developer. If during this period the municipality has not instituted condemnation proceedings or entered into a contract to purchase the land, the developer is entitled to just compensation for the actual loss found to be caused by such temporary reservation and deprivation of use.

The official map is legally binding upon the governing body. The official map must be an engineered document with detailed, measured dimensions and must be produced and certified by a licensed engineer or land surveyor.

5. Section VIII shall be supplemented by an Open Space and Recreation Map, and a buffer depiction benefitting the Appalachian Trail where the same lies adjacent to Camp Louemma.

6. Page IX-6 shall be revised at the end of the first paragraph thereof following the words "...remains in tact.", to add the following or substantially similar language:

It is recommended that the Township adopt a ridge protection ordinance which would achieve the objectives outlined herein.

7. Page IX-12 shall be supplemented by an additional sentence following the second sentence therein substantially as follows:

As part of the zoning revision to implement the Master Plan, the EIS requirements should also be reexamined and strengthened where necessary.

8. Page XI-1 shall be supplemented with the following or substantially similar language concerning native american settlements prior to the language concerning lime kilns:

The native americans who inhabited the Vernon Valley area were nomadic tribes. They travelled through the region following their food source in order to survive. Remnants of their existence, such as arrowheads, pottery and cemeteries are still present in the Township, although the specific locations of these objects may not reflect their origin due to movement of artifacts by flood water activity.

9. XIII-6 shall be supplemented with the following paragraph:

**CENTER DESIGNATION PROCESS.**

The SDRP recommends that municipalities formally designate centers in their communities. Any interested party, such as a municipality, private organization or concerned citizen, can apply to the State Planning Commission for formal center designation. As was discussed in the land use element of this Master Plan, two centers are proposed for designation in Vernon Township: the McAfee 2-core center and the Vernon center. The proposed locations of the two centers have been delineated on the land use element map. It is recommended that Vernon Township proceed with the designation process.

10. The first sentence on Page XI-5 shall be revised to indicate that the 17 sites thereafter referenced are in need and deserving of identification and "evaluation", not "preservation".



11. Page II-13 shall be revised to delete the sentence: "If this golf course is not developed, the CR zone should be changed to agri-ecotourism". The text shall be supplemented with the following or substantially similar language:

In addition, a limited number of light, commercial recreation uses, such as golf courses, botanical gardens and tennis pavillions should be permitted as conditional uses. The area south of Maple Grange Road is also designated for larger type retail facilities which should only be permitted as a conditional use. Given the scenic aspects of this zone, special zoning controls for this type of retail center should be incorporated in the zoning ordinance including a low floor area ratio and adequate setbacks to preserve the scenic qualities.

12. The land use map shall be revised to include the Apple Valley Inn at Shiawassee Road in the C-1 zone.

13. The plan shall be revised to indicate that uses permitted in what will be formerly known as the ORL zone will be acceptable as permitted uses in the industrial zone.

14. The land use map shall be revised to reflect that the lands proposed for AET designation along Sand Hill Road shall instead remain residential.

15. The tracts known as the "Bill Hill" and "Bell" properties shall be included in the CR zone.

16. The land use map shall be revised to show that the Borderland Farm/Virginia Martin property near the New York State line will lie within the AET zone.

ADOPTED this 28th day of February, 1996 by a majority of the members of the Board present at such meeting who voted for the action taken on December 27, 1995.

Maureen Yelipko  
Maureen Yelipko, Secretary  
Vernon Township Planning Board

Members eligible to vote:

Nelson, Patterson, DeLuca, McVeigh, Zaretsky

3 Yes    0 No    0 Abstain<sup>5</sup>

## LIST OF OFFICIALS

### Township Committee

Mark Nelson, Mayor  
Paulette Anderson  
Daniel Kadish  
Marianne Reilly  
Peter West

### Planning Board

Bruce Zaretsky, Chairman  
Paulette Anderson, Committee Member  
Daniel Borstad  
Michael Jergensen  
Keith Leon  
Mark Nelson, Mayor  
Jeffrey Patterson  
William Turetsky  
Arthur Woodell  
Joseph DeLuca  
James McVeigh

Donald Ross, Esq., Attorney  
John DeGrace, Engineer  
Maureen Yelinko, Secretary

### Township Officials

Richard Sheola, Administrator  
Patricia A. Lycosky, Clerk  
James Rogers, Engineer  
William Fitzgibbons, Attorney

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# INTRODUCTION

# INTRODUCTION

## HISTORY

Vernon Township is located in the northeastern section of Sussex County, as shown on the Regional Location Map. It is bordered by four other municipalities: West Milford borders Vernon to the east, Hardyston to the south, Wantage to the west and New York State's Warwick Township to the north.

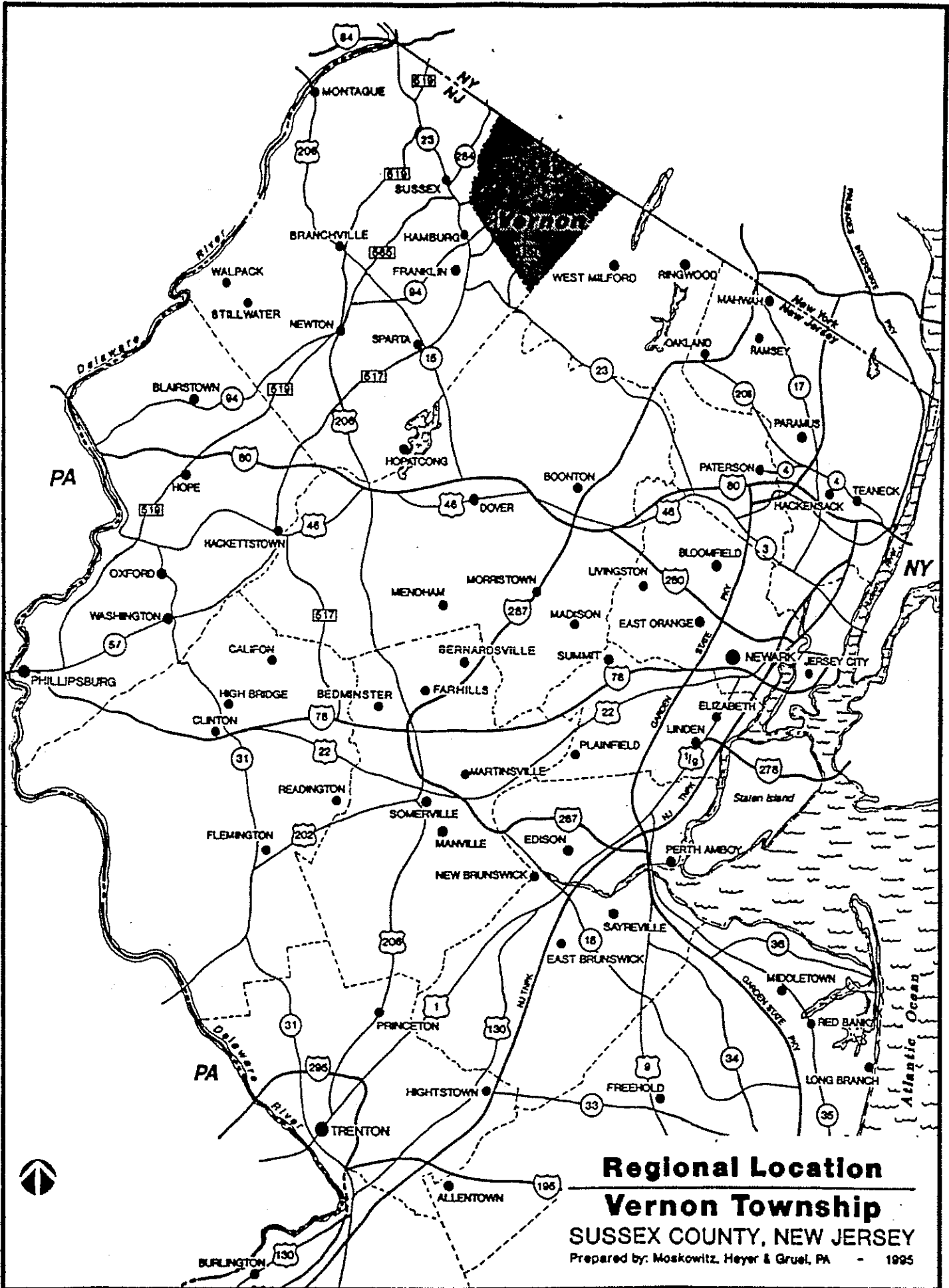
### Geologic History

The Township's bedrock formations originated during the Precambrian and Paleozoic eras. The Precambrian era dates from approximately 570 million to over a billion years ago. The Paleozoic era occurred approximately 220 million to 570 million years ago. New Jersey's limestone and sandstone formations were exposed during this time. Prehistoric glacier activity also formed natural caves and mountainous rock formations. Many of these caves were carved out of the limestone and marble formation by the creeks and rivers.

As a result of this geologic history, Vernon Township is comprised of mountains, valleys and lakes. The Hamburg and Wawayanda Mountains, both of which are part of the Appalachian Mountains, are on the west side of the Township. The Pochuck Mountains, which are part of the Highlands, are on the eastern side of the Township. The rocks of the Highlands are the oldest in New Jersey; they are believed to be 1.1 billion years old. The Township's lakes are natural, glacier-formed lakes and there are also several man made lakes. Some of the natural lakes are Lake Glenwood, Lake Pochung, Lake Wildwood and Wawayanda State Park Lake.

### Early Settlers

It is believed that Native American tribes migrated to the Vernon area as early as 10,000 B.C. Artifacts of their existence, such as arrowheads, pipes and pieces of pottery can be found within Vernon to support this theory.



**Regional Location**  
**Vernon Township**  
 SUSSEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY  
 Prepared by: Moskowitz, Hoyer & Gruel, PA - 1995

Vernon's first permanent settlers were European farmers searching for a new home. The early settlers came from Scotland, England, Holland and Germany. Farming, trapping and mining became popular in the area due to the abundance of natural resources. Lime and iron mining became big industries in Vernon and between 1700 and 1900, there were 15 mines in Vernon Township. They were abandoned in 1900 with the decline in demand.

Vernon was part of Hardyston Township until its official separation in 1793. The Township's early settlements were scattered and self-sufficient villages. Some of Glenwood's earliest deeds date back to 1764 and the first schoolhouse was built in 1795. McAfee's earliest deeds date back to 1826 and in 1851 Stephen Smith built a tavern. Eventually, McAfee became the end of the Warwick Valley and the Sussex Railroads. The Village of Vernon was also settled during the time and by 1840 was the home to 200 residents.

### **Vernon In The Twentieth Century**

Vernon Township, beginning with this rural heritage, has grown significantly in the last 60 years and today contains a complex land use pattern. Farms and farmland representative of its heritage still remain, but it also contains Lake resort communities from the 1930's, newer, attractive subdivisions from 1950 to present and a unique resort industry. This resort industry consists of three ski centers, resort condominium housing and a summer "action park." Also included is a resort-convention center hotel and golf course. Limited retail commercial development has also occurred, some of it in the form of older strip development and one new community shopping center. The population also grew respective of this development process. In 1950, the population of Vernon was 1,528 persons which grew to 21,211 by 1990. Vernon Township contains the Black Creek valleys and two mountain ranges which provide this community with a beautiful geographic setting. As a result of this growth, approximately 30 percent of the Township is presently developed. However, due to State and Federal parks and environmental constraints, less than one-third remains vacant.

## **PLANNING IN VERNON**

Vernon has been engaged in the planning process for the last 25 years. The last Master Plan was adopted in September of 1985 and revised the Township's first Master Plan of December, 1970. The Township adopted its latest Reexamination Report in 1990. In 1992 the Township began a comprehensive Master Plan update. This Plan sets forth a land use policy to serve as a guide for future growth to the year 2000 with a projected population of 24,400.

This Master Plan addresses the basic issue of preserving the Township's unique aesthetic setting while permitting continued development. It examines current land use policies and recommends changes based on sound planning criteria. The environmentally sensitive lands as mapped by State agencies are included in that they affect land use decisions by permitting future growth without any degradation to the environment or aesthetic features of the community.

This consultant worked with a Master Plan Subcommittee comprised of Planning Board members. Various groups made presentations to the subcommittee which provided factual information and a variety of community perspectives and goals.

## **LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

The New Jersey State Municipal Land Use Law requires that each municipality reexamine its Master Plan every six years. Failure to do so shall constitute a rebuttable presumption that the municipal development regulations are no longer reasonable. This Plan has been prepared in accordance with 40:55D-28 et seq. of the Municipal Land Use Law. Vernon Township complies with this requirement.

# I. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

# I. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

## Land Use Plan

1. To achieve a balance between continued development and the preservation of the extensive natural resources of the community.
  - Upgrade zoning in appropriate areas in order to protect ground water quality, steep slopes and scenic vistas.
  - Create new land use categories and apply zoning techniques that permit development of land while preserving environmentally sensitive areas.
  - Recognize and protect the Appalachian Trail through cluster or density zoning techniques.
  - Maintain low density zoning in that area adjacent to the Wallkill National Wildlife Refuge.
  - Utilize the Farmland preservation program to preserve farmland on a voluntary basis.
  - Avoid location of intensive land use areas in wetland and buffer areas.
2. To preserve the existing residential neighborhoods and Lake communities.
  - Review the residential zoning standards governing the Lake communities in order to avoid unnecessary variances.
  - Maintain the current zoning standards of existing residential areas outside of lake communities.
  - Provide for new residential growth at densities sensitive to water quality and environmental constraints.
  - Protect existing residences through a property maintenance code.
3. To encourage commercial development in appropriate locations and governed by modern planning techniques.
  - Avoid strip commercial along Route 94 by designating two commercial centers.
  - Establish neighborhood commercial centers along Route 515 and 517 to serve adjacent residential neighborhoods.



- Establish a two core center for the McAfee area as a primary commercial area for the immediate region and a regional commercial recreation center extending to Vernon Valley Ski area.
  - Establish a Vernon Town Center and commercial area in Vernon.
4. To provide for economic development through commercial, light industrial and Commercial-Recreational zone.
- In areas without infrastructure, to permit environmentally compatible economic development using the carrying capacities of the natural system.
  - For large scale nonresidential uses, select areas for economic development free of environmental constraints.
  - Review the use, bulk and intensity standards of the current industrial zones and the permitted uses.
  - Support the resort industry and recognize it as a positive factor for the economic development of the community.
  - Establish a Agri-Eco Tourism District along the northeastern section of Route 94.
5. To insure adequate infrastructure to accommodate the projected level of intensity of development.
- Protect groundwater resources - the sole source aquifer - through proper septic management.
  - Residential development, other than single-family, should be served by utilities.
  - Major commercial development should be encouraged in designated centers which should be served by utilities.
  - Amend the Township and County 208 Wastewater Management Plan in order to include the two proposed "centers".

### **Historic Plan**

1. To preserve the rich and varied historical heritage of Vernon Township.
- Recognize the many identified historical structures by petition for placement on the State and Federal Historic Register.
  - Ensure protection of former Indian mining and tool manufacturing areas as subdivision development occurs.

- Explore the potential of a historical district in the Vernon Village area.
- Examine the potential of establishing a Historic Preservation Commission.

### **Transportation Plan**

1. To encourage the development of a safe, practical and efficient circulation system.
  - Establish a uniform rights-of-way system in conjunction with the County and State system.
  - Establish a functional classification system for all roads based on State and County criteria.
  - Utilize the State Highway Access Management Code for all development along Route 94.
  - Provide for commercial service roads through the site plan review process in the Vernon C-2 district.

### **Housing Plan**

1. To provide for Vernon Township's Affordable Housing obligation.
  - File the Housing Plan with COAH for substantive certification.
  - Rehabilitate existing substandard housing with State or Federal funds.
  - Meet the inclusionary housing obligation through a Regional Contribution Agreement (RCA).

### **Community Facilities Plan**

1. To plan community facilities to accommodate anticipated future population growth.
  - Maintain appropriate emergency services for Township residents.
  - Continue to monitor the facility needs of Vernon's public schools.
  - Plan for and provide the library with the necessary additional floor space and/or building expansion.

## **Parks, Open Space And Recreation Plan**

1. To provide adequate recreation facilities for all age groups.
  - Obtain fields to be used for active recreation, such as soccer and baseball.
  - Provide recreation facilities for Vernon's senior citizen population.
  - Encourage lot averaging or cluster development techniques which will result in the development of the greenway system as well as the donation of land within the Appalachian Trail corridor.
  - Provide a network of pedestrian and bicycle paths which link residential neighborhoods with open space, community facilities, and commercial areas.
  - Create linkages between existing parks and open space areas and create greenway connections along major stream corridors and the Appalachian Trail.

## **Conservation Plan**

1. Preserve and protect Vernon's natural resources.
  - Develop policies to preserve, protect and maximize the utility of natural resources in the Township.
  - Recommend specific changes to the Township's Land Use Ordinance, and propose new Township ordinances to implement these initiatives.
  - Restrict development in critical environmental areas, such as flood plains, wetlands and steep slopes.
  - Minimize the impacts of development on environmentally sensitive areas including wetlands, stream corridors, and aquifer recharge areas.
  - Preserve existing woodland areas.
  - Preserve the quality of both groundwater sources and surface water bodies.
  - Provide a continuous network of open spaces along streams, scenic areas and critical environmental areas.
  - Encourage lot averaging or cluster development techniques which preserve natural amenities, farms, woodlands, scenic views, and open space.
  - Preserve and protect open space areas having scenic views and/or important historical, cultural, or agricultural significance.

## **II. LAND USE PLAN**

## II. LAND USE PLAN

### INTRODUCTION

The main function of the Land Use Plan Element is to guide the future development of Vernon Township in a manner consistent with the goals and objectives of this Master Plan. This is achieved by setting the type and intensity of land use categories for all lands within the Township of Vernon. The Land Use Plan is a synthesis of the existing land use pattern, and the recommendations and conclusions of the other Master Plan elements. Most particularly, the impact of the environmental characteristics and the availability and capacity of infrastructure were considered in determining the Land Use Plan. The Land Use Plan provides a logical and comprehensive framework on which to base future Township decisions relating to land use and expected community needs for housing, commercial and industrial development, infrastructure, schools, parks and other community facilities. It also serves as the basis for the regulation of land use districts as implemented through the zoning ordinance.

### EXISTING LAND USE

#### Residential

Vernon Township land area totals 43,718 acres or 68.31 square miles. The 1992 land use survey identifies 7,962.2 acres which are residentially developed while 5,707 acres remain in agricultural uses. The residential development started in the 1920's as a series of lake communities which were established for summer recreational purposes. The largest community is Highland Lakes with 1,959 homes and a population of 4,550 persons (1990 census). Approximately 40 percent of Township residents live within these communities as shown on Table II-1.

Table II-1

BUILDING LOTS - VACANT AND OCCUPIED - IN THE LAKE  
COMMUNITIES  
Vernon Township, New Jersey, 1992

<u>Name</u>	<u>No. of Homes</u>	<u>No. Of Vacant Lots</u>	<u>Total</u>
Barry Lakes	500	322	822
Cliffwood Lake	174	5	179
High Breeze Estates	4	63	67
Highland Lakes	1,959	442	2,401
Lake Conway	87	18	95
Lake Glenwood	69	5	74
Lake Panorama	276	230	506
Lake Pochung	36	16	50
Lake Wallkill	328	60	388
Lake Wanda	256	133	389
Pleasant Valley Lake	439	213	652
Scenic Lakes	236	65	301
Vernon Valley Lake	338	166	504
Total	4,702	1,738	6,428

Source: Tax Assessor's Office, November 1995.

These communities represent a significant portion of the residential land use and housing units within the community.

Major new subdivision activity has occurred west of Route 94 and today contains housing for 16,000 persons. In between these subdivisions are steeply sloped areas, vacant land and some of the remaining farmland. Most of the major farms are north of the Appalachian Trail and along the Wallkill River and account for 5,707 acres.

## **Commercial**

Based on a survey conducted as part of the previous Master Plan study there are 172 commercial establishments which accounts for 227 acres or .5 percent of the Township land area. Commercial development consists of individual establishments or small strip malls except for the emerging shopping area on Route 515.

## **Industrial**

There are very few industrial uses in the Township. Industrial development accounts for 431 acres and consists of 18 parcels occupied by several small industrial enterprises and a large soil removal operation.

## **Commercial Recreation**

During the 1970's, commercial recreation uses emerged in Vernon Township, which today comprises 3,000 acres, about 7 percent of the Township's land area. Only one-half of the zoned area is developed. The zone extends north of McAfee on the east side of Route 517 and along both sides of Route 94 through the central portion of the community. These commercial recreational facilities are the Township's largest employers and an important part of the Township's economic base.

The ski resort industry was precipitated when the State of New Jersey leased a portion of Hamburg Mountain to Vernon Valley Ski Resort for commercial recreation. Subsequently the State sold 1,400 acres on Hamburg Mountain to Vernon Valley which gave rise to Great Gorge and Vernon Valley Ski Resort. This was followed by the Playboy Hotel now known as Season's Hotel, related riding stables, the golf courses presently owned by Shinnahon U.S.A., the Great Gorge North Ski Area and Action Park summer amusement area. A second ski resort emerged known as Hidden Valley. During the 1980's resort housing in the form of condominium known as the Spa, Stone Hill, and Great Gorge Village were constructed adjacent to the ski slopes. Hidden Valley also contributed condominium resort housing as part of this ski area. Presently

about 3,000 persons or 12.5 percent of the Township's population reside within the various resort housing centers.

### **Summer Camps**

Another of Vernon Township's land use are the campgrounds. Presently there are three campgrounds, Camp Sussex, Camp Lou Emma and Tall Timbers. Tall Timbers is a condominium campground for recreational vehicles. These uses occupy about 439 acres.

### **State And Federal Lands**

A major portion of the eastern half of Vernon Township consists of State land known as Wawayanda State Park, the Appalachian Trail and Hamburg Mountain Wildlife area. These facilities consist of 11,967 acres of woodlands, and open space including the Township's most dramatic and severe sloped areas and in some cases open escarpment.

On the western border of the community, the Federal Government established the Walkkill National Wildlife Refuge in 1990 under the management of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior. The Refuge includes both sides of the Walkkill River basin in Vernon and Wantage Townships. Forty-six percent of the total area is in Vernon Township and 44 percent in Wantage Township. The Refuge designation line is shown on the Land Use Plan and contains 2,954 acres of which 1,578 acres or 53 percent have been acquired.

### **Farmlands**

Farming, which was once the major land use activity in Vernon Township, has declined to 5,707 acres. The major active farms are south of New York State line between Wawayanda State Park in the east and Pochuck Creek in the west and along the easterly bank of the Walkkill River. There are, however, scattered farms throughout the Township.

A summary of the land use acreage distribution is shown in Table II-2.



Table II-2  
 LAND USE DISTRIBUTION  
 Vernon Township, New Jersey

	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Percent Of Total</u>
<b>RESIDENTIAL</b>		
<u>Low Density Residential</u> , detached one-family homes, including lake areas	7319.2	16.7
<u>High Density Residential</u> , including garden apartments and townhouses	<u>167.9</u>	<u>0.4</u>
Subtotal	7,487.1	17.1
Seasonal Recreation	<u>439.1</u>	1
Subtotal	7926.2	18.1
PUBLIC & SEMI-PUBLIC	361.6	0.8
COMMERCIAL	227.3	0.5
COMMERCIAL RECREATION*	3,249	7.4
INDUSTRY & UTILITIES	<u>431.3</u>	1
TOTAL DEVELOPED	12,195.4	27.9
<b>OPEN SPACE</b>		
Township Parks	106	0.2
Wawayanda State Park	8,968	20.5
Hamburg Mountain Wildlife Area	411	0.9
Appalachian Trail	903	2.1
Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge**	<u>1,579</u>	<u>3.6</u>
Subtotal	11,967	27.3
NEWARK WATERSHED	5,487.3	12.6
ROADS	452.4	1
AGRICULTURAL	<u>5,707.6</u>	<u>13.1</u>
Subtotal	35,809.7	81.9
VACANT	<u>7,908.3</u>	<u>18.1</u>
TOTAL	43,718	100

\*Includes 1,494 acre current development application.

\*\*Acquired portion of 2,954 acre designated area.

Source: Land use acreage estimates from Dorram Associates Inc. The Open Space acreage data are from tax assessor's office, January, 1993 updated to 1995 from State and Federal sources by Moskowitz, Heyer & Gruel, PA

## **Vacant Land**

Vernon Township's land area totals 43,718 acres. Table II-2 presents an analysis of the land use distribution and indicates that 12,195 acres or 27.9 percent are currently developed. The remaining vacant land is further reduced by State and Federal holdings and the Newark watershed since it is proposed for very limited development, and results in a final vacant land area of 7,908 acres. To this can be added the agricultural lands which, although currently farmed, can be considered as vacant, and this yields a total of 13,615.9 acres that are vacant and privately owned. However, as the environmental constraints map (Map No. IX-1) indicates, there are substantial wetlands and steep slope areas that may not be developed. It is estimated that about 4,000 acres are environmentally constrained and when subtracted from the 13,615.9 vacant acres results in a remaining developable land area of 9,600 acres.

## **Land Use Categories**

The land use plan is comprised of 13 land use categories subdivided into the following major groupings and delineated on the land use plan Map II-1.

### *Public Lands*

The State, Federal and Township land holdings are delineated on the Land Use Plan as public lands and identified by their respective name and are discussed in greater detail in the Conservation Plan. Wawayanda State Park, consisting of 8,968 acres, is the major open space area. The Appalachian Trail, traversing the northern portion from east to west and consisting of 903 acres is also a significant open space area. The Hamburg Mountain Wildlife Management area extends into the southern portion of Vernon Township for a total of 411 acres. The Wallkill Fish and Wildlife Refuge, established area by an Act of Congress in 1990, consists of a designated area in Vernon Township of 2,954 acres of which 1,579 acres or 53 percent have already been acquired.

### Conservation Area

The Newark Watershed property has been designated as a conservation district with a proposed overlay zone. First, residential development would be permitted at one unit per five acres given the lack of utilities and the water resource function of the land area. Secondly, an overlay zone would permit eco-tourism as a land use which would encourage commercial inns or places of lodging and cater to various conservation and passive recreational activities such as bird watching, nature trail hiking, cross-country skiing, fishing and other passive activities related to the open lands of the watershed and Wawayanda State Park. Use of any motorized or mechanical activities would be prohibited and land clearance would be limited for the lodging hall and parking area. The Inn would be limited to 10 or 20 rooms and would require a land purchase or density equivalent to the number of rooms. As an example, an Inn of 20 units would require a purchase of 100 acres or one unit per five acres. The objective is to encourage limited economic development of the Newark Watershed by permitting a new passive recreation activity while preserving its main function as a watershed and reservoir of the City of Newark. The final size of the Inn would be determined by septic capacity and effluent restrictions.

A second area designated for conservation is the Wallkill River Wildlife Refuge. Since major portions of the Wallkill River Wildlife Refuge are inundated by wetlands and since 53 percent has already been acquired, this area is also designated as a conservation zone with a density of one unit per five acres. Farming will also be a permitted use and existing homes should be protected through a "grandfather" clause in the zoning ordinance. Once the refuge is fully established, eco-tourism should also be considered adjacent to the refuge with the refuge serving bird watching and other activities under the control of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior

### **Residential**

There are six residential land use classifications on the Land Use Plan.

### Rural-Residential

This category includes significant farmland areas which are designated at a density of one unit per three acres but permitting a one acre lot size for development. It includes the lands north of the Appalachian Trail, the lands along the Wallkill River and Lake Wallkill Road. Since these are the most rural and the lowest density areas of Vernon Township, this density would permit modest residential development in conjunction with the rural character of this rural area. Major farmland within the area is also encouraged to enter the Sussex County farmland preservation program. This would ensure the continuance of the rural aspects of the community and preserve needed farmland and agricultural areas for the support of a growing population in the County and the State.

### Residential-Low Density

The density of this single-family residential category should be one unit per three acres but with a minimum lot size of one acre. This would recognize the existing subdivision and all the bulk standards of the R-2 would apply. The reasons for this density is that a major portion of this land west of Route 94 has been subdivided and most of the remaining portions contain steep slope areas. This density would permit lot averaging techniques for new subdivisions in conjunction with design standards which should be enacted to protect steep slopes and environmental constraints.

This new density would also recognize that much of the area is underlain by Precambrian crystalline bedrock and septic systems within this formation may adversely affect the groundwater quality. A determination as to septic suitability should be conducted on a site specific basis as new subdivisions are submitted.

In order to preserve the environmental and topographic features, Vernon Township currently has a critical area ordinance which excludes environmentally sensitive areas such as flood hazard areas and steep slopes from lot and floor plan calculations. However, Manalapan Builders Alliance, Inc. v. Township Committee of the Township of Manalapan (App. Div., 1992) has

rendered such ordinances invalid. In response, many New Jersey municipalities have adopted steep slope ordinances which comply to the decision reached in the Manalapan case. Such ordinances restrict the amount of disturbance on critical and moderate slope areas but do not attempt to control gross density or floor area ratio (FAR). Vernon should adopt such an ordinance to replace its current ordinance which may be ruled invalid.

Since Vernon Township consists of 68.31 square miles and a diverse land use pattern, Bed and Breakfast uses should be permitted as a conditional use in the R-1 and R-2 zones. One of the conditions should be that the uses have frontage on a major State, County or local collector road.

#### Residential-Medium Density

The medium density residential land use refers to the R-3 zone which includes the existing Lake communities. The density as per the current zoning is for a 30,000 square foot lot although the Lake communities were planned out on a 10,000 square foot or smaller lot basis. This discrepancy in the zoning should be resolved since this zoning requires a variance procedure for any expansion activity of the existing homes within the Lake community. Lots that were established prior to 1978 in the Lake communities are grandfathered under current zoning ordinances. It is recommended, therefore, that a Lake community zoning district be established which would recognize the grandfathered lots and establish appropriate zoning standards that would preclude the need for Board of Adjustment relief for minor dwelling additions without increasing the density in the community. Highland Lakes community prepared a master plan concerning the future management and development of its community. The establishment of this new zoning district would complement the objectives of the Highland Lakes master plan. The Highland Lakes master plan indicates that it is very important that homes be permitted to improve and the zoning should be so structured to permit these improvements. This will also achieve the same objective for the other lake communities.

The R-3 zone for other subdivided areas should also be studied to ascertain if this zone fits all lot sizes of the subdivisions or if a higher lot size zone such as the R-2 could be applicable to larger

lot subdivisions now in R-3. Part of the R-3 zone is developed, but a few interspersed vacant parcels remain. No new R-3 zones are proposed given the absence of utilities and the potential septic problems.

The zoning map indicates a second medium density zoning category consisting of the R-4 zone which requires a 25,000 square foot lot. The reduction of 5,000 square feet between the R-3 or 30,000 square foot requirement and the R-4 should be examined. The Master Plan recommends that a 30,000 square foot R-3 zone should serve as the median density residential land use category.

#### Residential-High Density

There is one high density residential zone within the Township, namely the R-5, which permits single-family attached residences as townhouses and multi-family residences in apartments. The density for the zone is set at four units per gross acre, but the net density on the tract may be a maximum of eight units for townhouses and 12 units for apartments. The zoning ordinance contains special regulations respective to each land use. The ordinance also sets a distinction in that the R-5 also permits motels on a minimum five acre tract. Most of the R-5 areas are developed and are not served by water or sewer utilities. However, areas of the R-5 zone should be reexamined for lower density uses. No new high density areas are proposed in the plan.

#### Seasonal Residential

The Master Plan recognizes the existence of the seasonal recreational campgrounds, however, no permanent year-round occupancy of the campsites is permitted. The developed campsites around Sleepy Hollow Lake east of Glenwood Road is the only area designated seasonal recreation.

#### **Nonresidential Use**

There are three distinct commercial land use categories in the Master Plan; Neighborhood Commercial, General Business and Office Commercial. A new land use designated as Agri-Eco Tourism is also proposed in this Master Plan.

### Neighborhood Commercial

The C-1 Neighborhood Commercial area is limited to retail and service establishments providing for the day to day needs of a neighborhood area. Presently, five neighborhood commercial zones exist in Vernon Township as follows:

1. Warwick Turnpike adjacent to West Milford Township;
2. Wawayanda Road by Lake Wanda;
3. Route 515 south of the C-2 zone;
4. Route 517 at the intersection with Glenwood Road;
5. Route 565 at the intersection of Wallkill Road and Glenwood Road.

The C-1 zone on Route 515 has been changed to a C-2 zone since the land area is utilized as a community shopping center which is only permitted in the C-2 zone. Also, the C-1 zone at the intersection of Route 517 and Glenwood Road has been expanded to the western side of Route 517 but in alignment with the current C-1 zone and extending to Shawassee Drive.

### General Business

The second commercial category is a general business zone or C-2 which requires a minimum lot area of 20,000 square feet but also permits shopping center development on a minimum of three acres and motels and automobile sales on three acres. This district is designed to provide retail services to the community but it also contain uses that attract customers from adjacent communities. Presently there are three general business zones.

The C-2 located on Route 94 at the southern entrance to the community and extending north to McAfee consists of a number of small stores and one shopping area. At the intersection of Route 517 and Route 94, the C-2 zone still contains 55 vacant acres that would be ideal for a "theme type" shopping area outlet center or a major food store and department store. Until this area is

utilized, no additional C-2 should be added in this area. The zoning ordinance should also be amended to encourage shared driveways, proper setbacks and landscaping along Routes 94 and 517 in order to preclude the area from functioning or appearing like a "strip" shopping area.

The second C-2 area exists along Route 94 and extends to the intersection of Route 515. This community commercial area encompasses a large part of Vernon Village. Based on an air photo land use analysis, the C-2 zone was expanded to include the commuter shopping center now zoned C-1.

The third and fourth business zones, although on a much smaller scale, are located at the intersection of Vernon Crossing and Route 517, Sand Hill Road and further west on Vernon Crossing near Church Street.

#### Office Professional

An office professional land use category has been established permitting professional offices, parks and business corporate offices on a 30,000 square foot lot. The conditional use section also permits funeral homes, theaters and child care facilities. This C-3 exists only along Route 94 from the southern side of Cumulus Drive to the southern side of Baldwin Drive. Since residential development exists in this area of Route 94, the office professional zone acts as a good transitional zone between the traffic on Route 94 and the residential areas.

#### Agri-Eco Tourism

A new land use category Agri-Eco Tourism, is established in the Master Plan. This land use category is located on the eastern side of Route 94 and west of Route 94 in areas inundated with wetlands.

The primary objectives of this new land use category are: to preserve the rural scenic attributes of the northern portion of Route 94, preserve the steep slope areas of Wawayanda Mountain,



recognize the agricultural uses in this area and permit their diversification and expansion, thereby encouraging the economic expansion and vitality of this area.

The principal uses under the Agri-Eco Tourism would include riding farms and stables, nurseries, Inns or Bed and Breakfast and cross-country skiing. Specialized retail such as gift shops, antique shops, art stores and farm produce from enclosed buildings would be permitted as a conditional use. Passive recreational activities related to the Appalachian Trail, which crosses Route 94 in the central portion of this land use are also envisioned. Activities such as biking or mountain hiking in order to enjoy the spectacular vistas from the top of Wawayanda Mountain State Park. are an example. In addition, a limited number of light commercial recreational uses, such as golf courses, botanical gardens and tennis pavilions, should be permitted as conditional uses. The area south of Maple Grange Road is also designated for larger type retail facilities which should only be permitted as a conditional use. Given the scenic aspects of this zone, special zoning controls for this type of retail center should be incorporated in the Zoning Ordinance including a low floor area ratio and adequate setbacks to preserve the scenic qualities. A portion of the property is also shown as CR and could be developed as a golf course as per the applicant's current approval status.

This stretch of Route 94 has been described as one of the State's most scenic drives and was mentioned in periodicals for its scenic New England like qualities. The preservation of its unique qualities, including the current agricultural land use while permitting economic development of the land, can be achieved through the agri-eco tourism land use. The present agricultural uses would also be permitted and encouraged.

The intent is to creatively use existing buildings through adoptive reuse of existing structures such as barns to further the objectives of this land use category. The limited and specialized retail facilities should be closely regulated in the Zoning Ordinance through limitation on size and parking area in order to prevent the subversion of the intent of this land use and the rural character of the area.

### Industrial

Currently there are three areas zoned for industrial uses, one located south of the intersection of Route 94 and Route 517 in McAfee and a second extensive industrial area located west of Route 94, north of Vernon Crossing and extending west to Route 517 and northerly to Maple Grange Road. This industrial area extends across Maple Grange Road between the railroad and Black Creek.

The McAfee industrial area has good access via Route 94 and Route 517 and most importantly lies adjacent to a sewer service area and is traversed by the Upper Walkkill Interceptor. It is suggested therefore that this industrial area be expanded west to Route 517. Given that this area has the potential for sewer utilities, a variety of industrial uses could be permitted without potential detriment to ground water resources. The only environmental constraints are found in the western portion consisting of some wetlands and steep slopes that could, however, act as a buffer to the residential zones in the west. The rail line provides rail access to this industrial site and serves as the eastern border. The sewer service area should be amended to include this industrial district. If this is not feasible, potential industrial uses should be carefully monitored in terms of septic suitability.

The Vernon Crossing industrial area presents many potential problems. The three most important factors are that the area does not contain utilities, the site from the western side of the railroad is subject to extensive wetlands and an underlying aquifer recharge area. In view of this, the Master Plan recommends that the industrial district be redrawn to exclude the wetlands and orient the industrial activity towards Route 94 which is the area that also has rail access. Since this area lacks utilities and the underlying geology consists of aquifer recharge soils, the permitted use should be limited in terms of septic use and the performance standards should be stringently enforced to avoid any groundwater contamination. In view of this, these areas should be reclassified as a light industrial area and the industrial zoning categories should be reviewed with the intent of establishing a more restrictive "Light" Industrial zone.

The portions of the Light Industrial zone extending to the Appalachian Trail should be required to provide 200 foot buffers in order not to infringe on the aesthetics function of the trail. This buffer could be part of the rear yard setback. Also, a 100 foot buffer standard should be established where the light industrial zone abuts a residential zone. Essentially this light industrial zone recognizes existing industrial uses in the area and permits areas for modest expansion. A floor area ratio control should be established and the lot coverage should be reviewed in order to insure low land coverage in view of the low density character of the area.

A third small industrial area also exists on the west side of Route 94 and should be included within the sewer service area which is immediately adjacent to this land use.

The uses of the Research Office and Laboratory (ROL) zone which has been deleted, should be permitted in the Light Industrial zone. The same stringent scrutiny for septic suitability and type of product discharge should apply to any of these uses. A modern office building or research laboratory would complement the light industrial uses within these zoning districts.

## **Mixed Land Use**

### **Commercial Recreation**

The largest land use in Vernon Township is Commercial Recreation (CR) consisting of the Seasons hotel and golf course, Great Gorge and Vernon Valley Ski areas, Action Park and condominiums along ski slopes such as the Spa, Stone Hill and Great Gorge Village and Hidden Valley. This zoning category permits these commercial recreational facilities, lake community development and as a conditional use resort oriented housing in conjunction with a ski area, regulation size golf course or lake community. A minimum tract area of 100 acres is required for residential development with a maximum permitted gross density of 1.5 units per acre and a maximum permitted gross density of four units per acre of the developable area. This aspect of the zoning ordinance should be reviewed in view of the "Manalapan" case as previously discussed. It is also recommended that more specific standards be established as to the size of a ski area that is to support the recreational oriented housing. The area consists of about 3,000

acres and is approximately 50 percent developed, although there are approved and pending applications that have not been constructed. With the exception of the Seasons Resort and Hidden Valley, the other uses are clustered near or on Route 94. The CR district, except for Hidden Valley, is also served by utilities in that Seasons has a treatment plant and the remaining CR district on Route 94 is in the Sussex County Municipal Utility Authority (S.C.M.U.A.). Presently a limited amount of sewerage capacity is available to serve this area. The Master Plan proposes to retain the CR zone as presently delineated since vacant land still remain in this zone for future growth subject, however, to revised zoning regulations.

There is also a CR zone north of Vernon on both sides of Route 94 and extending to Meadowburn Road. This zone reflects a golf course that was applied for in 1984 and received preliminary approval in 1991. However, due to the presence of extensive wetlands, the matter is being reviewed by DEP as to its status. The area is not served by utilities and requests for CR land uses other than the golf course should be seriously reviewed.

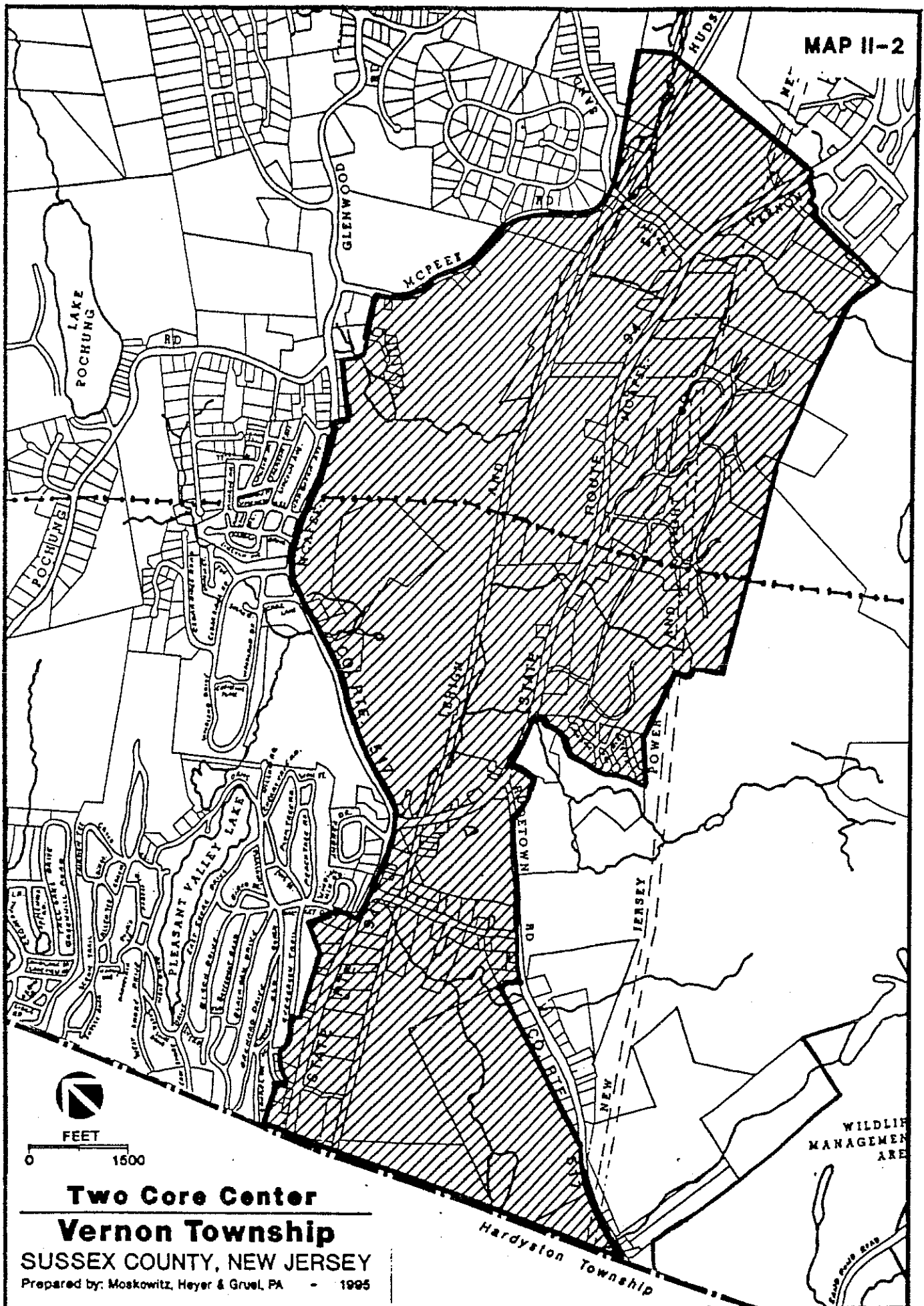
A third CR zone is designated for the Hidden Valley ski resort located south of Breakneck Road. The recent amendment to that zone is also included in the Land Use Plan.

## **CENTERS**

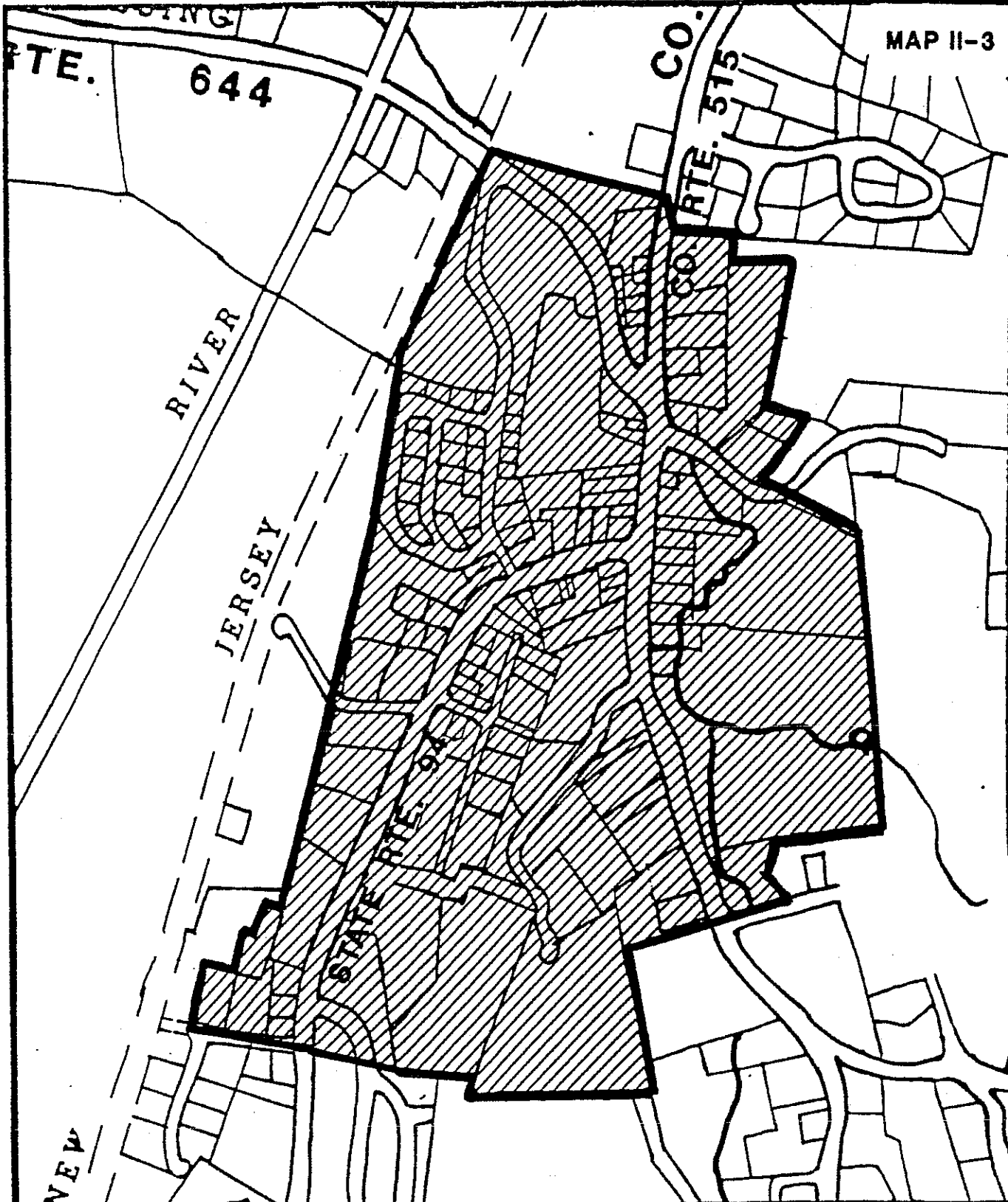
Two Centers are proposed for Vernon Township in conjunction with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan: a two core center consisting of the McAfee Multi-Use Center and the Regional Commercial Recreation Center and the Vernon Center. The Centers are shown in Maps II-2 and II-3.

### **Two Core Center**

The two core Center extends from the southern boundary of Vernon to Vernon Valley ski area. Specifically, the McAfee Center would be a multi-use center including the C-2 zone on Route 94 and Route 515 and the industrial zone east of Route 94. There is ample vacant C-2 property which could be developed as a "theme type" community shopping or outlet center. An industrial



**Two Core Center**  
**Vernon Township**  
 SUSSEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY  
 Prepared by: Moskowitz, Heyer & Gruel, PA - 1995



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**Vernon Center**  
**Vernon Township**  
 SUSSEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY  
 Prepared by: Moskowitz, Heyer & Gruel, PA - 1995

park subdivision was recently approved in the industrial zone and it is recommended that the industrial zone be expanded as shown on the Land Use Plan. It is also recommended that the 208 Wastewater Management Plan be amended to include the McAfee Center.

The Regional Commercial Recreation Center encompasses the existing commercial recreational facilities such as Four Seasons Hotel, Great Gorge and Vernon Valley Ski area and associated condo housing and action park. This center is served by sewer utilities and essentially recognizes the existing land uses and their regional commercial function. Vacant land exists within this Center for combined growth within the parameters as set forth in the Zoning Ordinance.

### **Vernon Center**

A second center, known as the Vernon Center, is proposed from Vernon Crossing and extending southerly to include Route 94 and Route 515. The Center will encompass the main commercial and Township governmental land uses. Ideally, this would become the "Town Center" and all future government activities should be directed into this area. Most of the zoning is C-2 Commercial.

A comprehensive plan should be developed for this area and since this Center contains a number of historic homes and sites, an overall architectural theme which would regulate the development of this Center, is recommended. Open space areas within this Center should also be preserved and serve as a "village green" or town or become settings for other governmental functions. The sewer service area should also be expanded to include this entire Center and the 208 Wastewater Management Plan should be amended accordingly.

### III. HOUSING PLAN



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The New Jersey Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) was established and given the responsibility for implementing the Fair Housing Act (N.J.S.A. 52:27D-301 et seq.). The fair share obligation of the Township of Vernon is based upon the fair share calculations and methodology utilized by the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH).

Using the methodology set forth in the COAH Substantive Rules (N.J.S.A. 5:93A), the Township of Vernon has a total pre-credited need of 131 affordable units, as detailed in Table III-1. Pre-credited need is the cumulative 1987 through 1999 housing obligation of the Township which can be reduced by credits and adjustments.

Table III-1

#### COAH CALCULATION OF PRE-CREDITED NEED FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF VERNON 1987-1999

<u>Housing Need Type</u>	<u>Units</u>
Indigenous Need	79
Reallocated Present Need	44
Present Need (1993)	123
Prospective Need (1993-1999)	29
Total Need (present & prospective) (1993-1999)	152
Prior Cycle Prospective Need (1987-1993)	4
Modifications:	
a. Filtering	-19
b. Residential Conversions	-2
c. Spontaneous Rehabilitation	-8
d. Demolitions	4
Total Modifications	-25
Pre-Credited Need	131 <sup>(1)</sup>

Source: New Jersey Council on Affordable Housing, Substantive Rules - NJSA 5:93.

<sup>(1)</sup> As published by COAH.

## COMPONENTS OF THE PRE-CREDITED NEED

### Indigenous Need

Indigenous need is an estimate of the total number of deficient housing units occupied by low and moderate income households within a community. It is estimated through the use of 1990 census data of substandard housing units for the subregion of which the Township is a part. Six housing quality surrogates are used to determine housing deficiency.

The factors used in the Council on Affordable Housing's approach include:

1. The year the structure is built. A distinction is made between units built before and after 1940.
2. Persons per room. 1.01 or more persons per room is an index of overcrowding.
3. Availability of water or sewer. The unit is unacceptable if it has unsanitary sewerage disposal or less than adequate water supply.
4. Plumbing facilities. A household must have the exclusive use of complete plumbing facilities.
5. Telephone. The unit must have a telephone.
6. Heating fuel. The unit cannot use inadequate heating fuel (i.e. coal, coke or wood) or no fuel.

A unit must have at least two characteristics to be classified as a deficient unit provided it is occupied by a low or moderate income household.

The pool of low and moderate income families living in deficient housing calculated at the subregional level is distributed to individual communities on the basis of the six indices of

deficient housing at the local level to the total deficient housing at the regional level, also measured by these indices. The Township of Vernon has an indigenous need of 71 units.

### **Reallocated Present Need**

Reallocated present need is a share of the excess deteriorated units in a region transferred to all communities of the region with the exception of selected Urban Aid Cities: Typically, urban centers have a disproportionate share of substandard units occupied by low and moderate income households. Excess deficient units are redistributed to all of the other municipalities in the region to no more than the level that would bring them to the regional average.

Low and moderate income housing is distributed to each community using both economic and land use factors. The factors were selected as measures of both municipal responsibility and capacity.

The factors used in distributing reallocated present need include:

1. Equalized nonresidential valuation (commercial and industrial).
2. Undeveloped land.
3. Aggregate income difference.

Using the allocation formula, the Township of Vernon has a reallocated present need of 44 units.

### **Prospective Need**

According to COAH, prospective need is a projection of low and moderate income housing needs based on development and growth which is reasonably likely to occur in a region or municipality. Prospective low and moderate income housing need is derived by projecting the population by age cohort from 1993 to 1999 and converting this to households.

The following factors are used to distribute prospective need to each municipality:

1. Change in equalized nonresidential valuation from 1980 to 1990.
2. Undeveloped land.
3. Aggregate income difference.

Applying this allocation formula to Vernon, the Township has a total 1993-1999 prospective need of 29 housing units.

**Total Need - (1993 - 1999)**

The Township of Vernon's present and prospective need number for the 1993 to 1999 time period is 152 units as reflected in Table 19. Under COAH methodology, this total need number is modified by prior cycle prospective need as well as demolition, filtering, residential conversions, and spontaneous rehabilitation.

**Prior Cycle Prospective Need (1987 - 1993)**

Prior cycle prospective need is a method which addresses any inactivity that characterized the prior cycle. The formula brings forward the prior cycle prospective need after it has been recalculated to reflect the most current projection information available and after it has been netted down to true new construction need by altered secondary sources of supply. Recalculated demolition (1987-1993) are added to prior cycle prospective need before the sum is netted down by reduced secondary sources of housing supply.

The Township of Vernon has a prior cycle prospective need of 4 units.

## Modifications

Demolition. The fair share formula identifies demolition as a factor which eliminates housing opportunities for low and moderate income households. Therefore, the number of demolition is added to the total need number.

The number of municipal demolition which occurred during 1988, 1989 and 1990 are averaged and multiplied by six (6) to obtain the projected 1993 to 1999 demolition estimate. Total demolition are tallied by municipality and the share affecting low and moderate income housing is estimated by a multiple of the subregional low and moderate income housing deficiency percentage.

In Vernon, this represents one additional unit added to the previously calculated total need.

Filtering. Filtering is a factor which causes a reduction in the total need number, based upon the recognition that housing needs of low and moderate income households are partially met by sound housing units formerly occupied by higher income sectors of the housing market. That is, as higher income households vacate certain units, they become available to households of lower income. Filtering is positively correlated with the presence of multi-family housing units. Filtering is measured by using the American Housing survey over the 4 year period 1985 - 1989.

In Vernon, filtering will reduce the total housing obligation by 19 units.

Residential Conversions. Residential conversion is the creation of dwelling units from already existing residential structures. Residential conversion will cause a reduction in total municipal need. Residential conversion is positively correlated with the presence of two- to four-family housing units.

Converted units are measured using the Decennial Census over the period 1980 to 1990. Conversions are the difference between the net change in total housing units minus the net

housing units constructed and demolition lost over the period. The Township of Vernon's residential conversions will reduce the total affordable housing obligation by two (2) dwelling units.

Spontaneous Rehabilitation. Spontaneous rehabilitation measures the private market's ability to rehabilitate deficient low and moderate income units up to code standard. It will cause a reduction to the total municipal need. Spontaneous rehabilitation is positively correlated with income.

In Vernon Township, spontaneous rehabilitation will cause a net reduction of eight (8) units from the indigenous need.

### **Total Pre-Credited Need**

As indicated in Table III-1, the total pre-credited need based upon COAH methodology is 131 units. This fair share obligation consists of indigenous need, reallocated present need, prospective need, plus prior cycle prospective need. The total need is modified by the four factors previously discussed.

### **Reductions**

A reduction is granted for land that has been zoned for low and moderate income housing. No reduction is claimed since the Township did not zone any sites for Mt. Laurel Housing during the previous cycle.

### **Credits**

The Fair Housing Council's guidelines include a provision for crediting. According to N.J.A.C. 5:93-3, credits are granted for all qualified units created after April 1, 1990, when the new housing unit is either funded, financed, or otherwise assisted by a government program specifically designed to provide low or moderate income housing. A unit which was rehabilitated after April 1, 1990, under COAH guidelines and is presently occupied by either the

original low or moderate income household or a subsequent low or moderate income household is also credited. No adjustments are requested.

### **Municipal Adjustments**

The fair housing criteria and guidelines provide for municipal adjustments in the fair share number based upon available land capacity, public facilities, and infrastructure. Adjustments may only be applied to reallocated present and prospective need.

## **FAIR SHARE PLAN**

The Township of Vernon has a total net low and moderate income housing obligation of 131 units. In order to address the Township's affordable housing need, the Fair Share Plan consists of the following components which are summarized in Table III-2.

### **Rehabilitation Component**

The indigenous need of 71 units can be satisfied through the rehabilitation of individual units. Over a 6 year period, therefore, 12 units would have to be rehabilitated with 11 units in the last year for a total of 71 units. The Township will apply for Community Development Block Grant funds from the Department of Community Affairs through the Housing Rehabilitation Program and any other eligible funds that are available. A Housing Trust Fund from development fees may be used to supplement other funding sources.

### **Inclusionary Component**

The inclusionary component consisting of 60 units can be met through the following alternative methods. First, under 5:93-6.1(a), the municipality can enter into a Regional Contribution Agreement (RCA) with a receiving community as designated by COAH but usually within the same region (Bergen, Hudson, Passaic, Sussex). Up to 60 units can be transferred if an acceptable RCA is established. The municipality may elect to transfer 60 units in order to meet the inclusionary obligation.

Secondly, if the community selects not to transfer the inclusionary component, the municipality under 5:93-5.13(a) must require that 25 percent or 15 units of the inclusionary component (60 units) have to be rental units. However, there is a two for one credit for the rental units which in effect means that the construction of 15 rental units equals 30 units of the inclusionary component leaving 30 additional units to be constructed.



Thirdly, the municipality under 5:93-5.12(a)3 can reserve up to six (6) units for senior citizens with a 1 for 1 credit on three (3) units of credit.

Considering the options, it is recommended that the Township pursue a Regional Contribution Agreement (RCA) and transfer the inclusionary component of 60 units to a receiving community within the housing region. This will require, however, that the community establish a Housing Trust Fund. Under this provision, all new construction would be assessed a small percentage of its assessed value and these funds would finance the regional contribution. The financial per unit share is determined between the sending and receiving community with a minimum of \$20,000 per unit as established by COAH.

TABLE III-2

1987-1999 PRE-CREDITED NEED	131 units
Rehabilitation Component	71 units
INCLUSIONARY COMPONENT	
Regional Contribution Agreement	<u>60</u> units

## IV. DEMOGRAPHICS

## IV. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

### INTRODUCTION

This element presents general demographic and housing information for Vernon Township which influences the present and future development of the Township. While it is difficult to generalize about the "average resident of Vernon Township," it is important to understand demographic conditions and populations trends in an effort to comprehensively plan for the Township. The Demographic element analyzes the changes that have taken place over time in population, housing and income characteristics. Although past trends do not necessarily guarantee those of the future, they do provide an historic sense of direction and call attention to emerging trends.

### SUMMARY OF DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Major demographic trends in Vernon Township can be summarized as follows:

- Between 1970 and 1990 both Vernon Township and Sussex County experienced an increase in population.
- Like the rest of the country, Vernon's population increases are being led by the baby boom generation.
- The Township's 1989 median household income was higher than that of the County and the State.
- Vernon's 1990 median housing value was \$3,100 lower than Sussex County's median housing value.
- Vernon Township experienced a sharp increase in the number of dwelling units authorized by building permits between 1984 and 1988.

## DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

### Population Trends

Sussex County and Vernon Township both experienced large population increases from 1950 to 1990. Vernon's population increase, however, was much more significant than that of the County. Overall, Vernon's population increased by 19,683 individuals, or 1,288 percent from 1950 to 1990. The major increases occurred in the 1960s and 1970s which saw population increases of approximately 181 and 169 percent, respectively.

Sussex County, in turn, experienced an overall population increase of 96,520 individuals or 280 percent. The County sustained its largest increases in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, when population increased approximately 43, 57, and 50 percent, respectively.

Table IV-1  
POPULATION CHANGE, 1950-1990  
Township Of Vernon

Year	Population	Population Change	
		Number Changed	Percent
1950	1,528	N/A	N/A
1960	2,155	627	41.03
1970	6,059	3,904	181.16
1980	16,302	10,243	169.05
1990	21,211	4,909	30.11

Source: Housing Element and Fair Share Plan: Master Plan Report #1, prepared by Dorram Associates, Inc., 1992.

Table IV-2  
**POPULATION CHANGE, 1950-1990**  
 Sussex County

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Population Change</u>	
		<u>Number Change</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1950	34,423	N/A	N/A
1960	49,255	14,832	43.09
1970	77,528	28,273	57.4
1980	116,119	38,591	49.78
1990	130,943	14,824	12.77

*Source:* Housing Element and Fair Share Plan: Master Plan Report #1, prepared by Dorram Associates, Inc., 1992.

### **Population Age Distribution**

Vernon followed national trends with its age-segmented population increases. The 35-44 and 45-54 age cohorts experienced the largest increases, 79 and 80 percent respectively, from 1980 to 1990. These individuals are part of the baby boom generation, which is comprised of individuals born from the late 1940s through the early 1960s. This cohort represents the major population force in this country. Therefore, the increases in the baby boom generation seen in Vernon conform to those experienced on a national level.

Table IV-3  
POPULATION BY AGE, 1980 & 1990  
Township of Vernon

	1980		1990		1980-1990 Change	
	Number of Persons	Percentage of Total	Number of Persons	Percentage of Total	Number	Percent
Under 5	1,706	10.46	2,101	9.91	395	23.15
5-14	3,344	20.51	3,801	17.92	457	13.67
15-24	2,199	13.49	2,556	12.05	357	16.23
25-34	3,733	22.9	4,143	19.53	410	10.98
35-44	2,398	14.71	4,302	20.28	1,904	79.4
45-54	1,151	7.06	2,074	9.78	923	80.19
55-64	878	5.39	1,039	4.9	161	18.34
65 & Over	<u>893</u>	<u>5.48</u>	<u>1,195</u>	<u>5.63</u>	<u>302</u>	<u>33.82</u>
Totals	16,302	100	21,211	100	4,909	275.78

Source: Vernon Township 1985 Master Plan & 1990 Census

### Race And Gender

Vernon Township, like Sussex County, is a predominantly white community. As indicated in Table IV-4, whites comprise 98.68 and 97.62 percent of the 1990 Township and County populations, respectively. In 1990, minorities constituted 1.32 percent of the Township population and 2.38 percent of the County population. These are slight increases from 1980. In 1990, 50.22 percent of the population was male and 49.78 of the population was female.

Table IV-4  
**PERSONS BY RACE AND GENDER, 1980 AND 1990**  
 Vernon Township and Sussex County

	1990				1980			
	Vernon Township		Sussex County		Vernon Township		Sussex County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>RACE</b>								
White	20,932	98.68	127,831	97.62	16,194	99.34	114,418	98.54
Black	79	0.37	1,242	0.95	6	0.04	651	0.56
American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut	27	0.13	196	0.15	14	0.09	167	0.14
Asian or Pacific Islander	125	0.59	1,222	0.93	72	0.44	664	0.57
Other Race	48	0.23	452	0.35	16	0.1	219	0.19
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21,211</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>130,943</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>16,302</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>116,119</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>GENDER</b>								
Male	10,652	50.22	64,967	49.61	8,106	49.96	57,345	49.38
Female	10,559	49.78	65,976	50.39	8,119	50.04	58,774	50.62
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21,211</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>130,943</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>16,225</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>116,119</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980 and 1990.

## EXISTING HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

### Household Size

Household size decreased in Vernon Township from an average of 3.46 persons per household in 1970, to an average of 3.35 persons per household in 1980, to an average of 3.15 persons per household in 1990. Likewise, as is shown in Table IV-5, the two and four person households were the largest percentage of Vernon's population. Similar results are seen on a County basis.

The decline in household size is a nationwide trend. Several factors have led to this decline. These include individuals marrying later in life, increased divorce rates, married couples having fewer children, and the elderly living alone.

Table IV-5  
1990 HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS  
Township of Vernon and Sussex County

Household Size	Township Number	Township Percent	County Number	County Percent
1 person	795	11.81	7,193	16.18
2 person	1,728	25.68	13,182	29.65
3 person	1,394	20.71	8,965	20.17
4 person	1,734	25.77	9,332	20.99
5 person	767	11.4	4,033	9.07
6 or more person	<u>312</u>	<u>4.64</u>	<u>1,751</u>	<u>3.94</u>
TOTALS	6,730	100	44,456	100

### Median Persons Per Household

	Township	County
1970	3.46	3.33
1980	3.35	3.08
1990	3.15	2.91

Source: 1985 Vernon Township Master Plan & 1990 Census



## Household Income

Vernon Township is wealthier than Sussex County as a whole and the State of New Jersey. Vernon's 1990 median household income was \$50,987. This was over \$10,000 greater than the 1990 median income for the State and over \$2,000 greater than Sussex County's 1990 median income level.

Table IV-6  
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME, 1979 & 1989  
Township of Vernon, Sussex County, and New Jersey

	Median Household Income 1989 (Current Dollars)
State	\$40,927.00
County	\$48,823.00
Vernon Twp.	\$50,987.00

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980 and 1990.

## Housing Data

Table IV-7 provides an overview of the housing units in Vernon Township. Approximately 85 percent of the housing stock in Vernon consists of single-family detached homes. Over 70 percent of the homes are owner occupied. Lastly, in 1990 almost 80 percent of Vernon's housing stock contained five or more rooms. This is consistent with the rest of the country; the popular trend is for bigger houses with many rooms.

Table IV-7  
HOUSING DATA IN 1990  
Township of Vernon

<u>Characteristics</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
<b>Tenure of Occupied Units</b>		
Owner Occupied	6,047	70.56
Renter Occupied	683	7.97
Vacant	1,840	21.47
<b>Year Structure Built</b>		
1989-March of 1990	267	3.12
1985-1988	1,192	13.91
1980-1984	1,042	12.16
1970-1979	2,670	31.16
1960-1969	1,533	17.89
1950-1959	834	9.73
1940-1949	410	4.78
Before 1940	622	7.26
<b>Units in Structure</b>		
One (single family detached)	7,307	85.26
One (single family attached)	150	1.75
Two or More Units	1,054	12.3
Mobil Home & Other	59	0.69
<b>Number of Rooms</b>		
One	27	0.32
Two	115	1.34
Three	423	4.94
Four	1,206	14.07
Five	1,608	18.76
Six	1,621	18.91
Seven	1,504	17.55
Eight	1,186	13.84
Nine or More	880	10.27
1990 Total Housing Units	8,570	100

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980 and 1990.

### **Housing Values**

The homes in Vernon are relatively affordable. As shown in Table IV-8, over 76 percent of Vernon's owner occupied housing stock is valued between \$100,000 and \$199,999. Less than one percent of the housing stock is valued over \$400,000. The 1990 median value for homes in Vernon Township was \$153,200, which is comparable to Sussex County's 1990 median housing value of \$156,300.

Rent prices, however, are higher in Vernon than in the rest of Sussex County. The 1990 median contract rent in Vernon was \$675. This is \$81 more than Sussex County's 1990 median contract rent.

Table IV-8  
**HOUSING VALUES, 1990**  
 Township of Vernon

*Owner Occupied Housing*

<u>Value Range</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Less than \$99,999	332	6.13
\$100,000 - \$199,999	4,141	76.43
\$200,000 - \$299,999	782	14.43
\$300,000 - \$399,999	127	2.34
\$400,000 - \$499,999	25	0.46
\$500,000 or more	11	0.2
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>5,418</b>	<b>100</b>

Median Value: \$153,200

*Renter Occupied Housing*

<u>Contract Rent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Less than \$399	50	7.74
\$400 - \$499	49	7.59
\$500 - \$599	101	15.63
\$600 - \$699	119	18.42
\$700 - \$999	227	35.14
\$1000 or more	31	4.8
<b>Total With Cash Rent</b>	<b>577</b>	<b>89.32</b>
<b>No Cash Rent</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>10.68</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>646</b>	<b>100</b>

Median Contract Rent: \$675

Source: 1990 U. S. Census

## Housing Construction

Table IV-9 details the dwelling units authorized by building permits since 1980. Over the 14 year period, there were a total of 3,031 building permits issued. Approximately 58 percent of these permits were issued for the construction of 1,768 single family homes. Approximately 42 percent of the permits were issued for the construction of five or more family dwellings. The most active years were 1984-1988. This is consistent with national trends as much of the country experienced a major increase in new construction during this time period. Lastly, 29 residential units were demolished during the 14 year period detailed in Table IV-9 .

Table IV-9  
DWELLING UNITS AUTHORIZED BY BUILDING PERMITS,  
1980-1994

Year	Total	Township of Vernon			Demolitions
		Single-Family	2-4 Family	5+ Family	
1994	80	78	2		1
1993	116	104		12	3
1992	168	114	2	52	3
1991	82	82			3
1990	82	82			1
1989	113	111	2		2
1988	384	238		146	2
1987	417	219		198	
1986	440	198		242	3
1985	411	114		297	
1984	323	101		222	1
1983	113	113			2
1982	142	54		91	1
1981	67	67			7
1980	93	93			
TOTALS	3,031	1,768	6	1,260	29

Source: New Jersey Department of Labor, Summary of Residential Building Permits, 1980-1994.

### **Population Projection**

A population projection of 24,391 individuals was predicted for Vernon for the year 2000. This projection was based on existing state and regional economic trends and conditions. It was obtained by studying the number of building permits issued from 1990 through 1994. Earlier years, such as 1983 through 1989, were excluded because Vernon, like much of the northeast, was experiencing a massive construction boom. Therefore, this time period was excluded because it does not represent the Township's typical construction activity. The complete methodology used to determine the projection is as follows.

As shown in Table IV-10, the average number of building permits issued for the construction of single-family and 2-4 family dwelling units from 1990 through 1994 was obtained. This average (92.8 permits) was multiplied by the Township's 1990 median household size of 3.15 individuals to determine the average annual population increase related to most new residential construction. This figure approximated 292 persons. In addition, the average number of building permits issued for the construction of five and more family dwelling units was obtained for the same time period. These building permits were attributed to the construction of resort condominium units. Therefore, it was assumed that each unit contained approximately two persons rather than the average household size of 3.15 persons. The average (12.8 permits) was multiplied by two rather than the average household size to obtain the average annual population increase related to the construction of five and more family dwelling units. This figure approximated 26 persons.

The average annual population increases of 292 and 26 persons were added to compute the total average annual increase of 318 individuals. This figure was multiplied by 10 to determine the ten-year population increase of 3,180 persons, which was added to the 1990 population of 21,211. Vernon's 2000 population was then determined to be 24,391 persons. This projection is consistent with Sussex County's population estimates as the County approximates Vernon's 1994 population at 22,686. This represents a 1,475 person from the 1990 Census population while the 2000 projection estimates a 3,180 increase over a ten year period.

Table IV-10  
**2000 POPULATION PROJECTION**  
 1990-1994  
 Vernon Township

	<u>1-4 Family Dwelling Bldg. Permits Issued</u>	<u>5+ Family Dwelling Bldg. Permits Issued</u>
1994	80	0
1993	104	12
1992	116	52
1991	82	0
1990	82	0
Totals	464	64
Five Year Averages	92.8	12.8

1990 Population	21,211
Average Annual Increase	317.92
10 Year Increase	3,179.2
2000 Projected Population	24,390.2

*Source:* Prepared by Moskowitz, Heyer & Gruel, PA.