

RTD 34
South

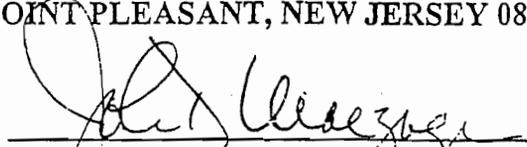
AMENDMENT TO THE LAND USE PLAN ELEMENT
OF THE
WALL TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

ADOPTED BY RESOLUTION OF THE WALL TOWNSHIP
PLANNING BOARD ON MARCH 30, 1998

PREPARED FOR:
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THE ORIGINAL OF THIS DOCUMENT WAS SIGNED AND SEALED IN ACCORDANCE WITH NJAC 13:41-1.3(b) AND IS ON FILE WITH THE WALL TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD.

I. INTRODUCTION

Due to increased development pressures along the Route 34 Corridor and heavy seasonal traffic volumes on the southern segment of the highway, the Wall Township Planning Board began the first phase of the comprehensive revision of the Master Plan by focusing specifically on the Route 34 Corridor. After some early discussions, the Board further narrowed its focus to the segment of Route 34 south of the Garden State Parkway. The Planning Board conducted several Master Plan Workshop meetings at which the Route 34 Corridor and changes to the land use regulations were discussed. Once the Board reached consensus on the proposed revisions, the members agreed to proceed immediately with an amendment to the Land Use Element of the Master Plan addressing the segment of Route 34 south of the Garden State Parkway.

The purpose of this report is to comprehensively examine current development patterns, vacant lands, and factors affecting development in the Route 34 Corridor and to adopt recommendations (amendments to the Land Use Plan Element) to guide land use decisions in the Township.

This document amends only that portion of the Land Use Plan Element of the current Wall Township Master Plan for the Route 34 study more fully shown on Figure 1 herein. The remainder of the current Master Plan remains in full force and effect.

II. GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE OF STUDY

The geographic area of the study is limited to the Route 34 Corridor, from the Garden State Parkway to its southern terminus at the Route 70 (Brielle) traffic circle. The study area generally includes properties fronting both sides of Route 34 to the depth of such properties.

III. REGIONAL LOCATION

The Route 34 Corridor in Wall Township has an excellent strategic location with respect to the regional transportation network. Route 34 intersects with the Garden State Parkway, a major north-south arterial for New Jersey, and with Interstate 195/NJ Route 138, an important east-west arterial which extends from Belmar to Trenton. The study area is slightly more than one hour west of Philadelphia and one hour south of New York City. Another key attribute of the area is its proximity to the beach resort areas of Monmouth and Ocean Counties.

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS

As part of a comprehensive examination of the Route 34 Corridor for future land use planning, Bay Pointe Engineering Associates, Inc. developed environmental resource maps which document the degree of environmental constraints on the remaining vacant parcels.

A review of freshwater wetlands maps (NJDEP, 1987), steep slopes maps (slopes 15% or greater, USGS) and flood insurance rate maps (100 yr. flood area, US HUD) further indicates minimal environmental constraints in the area of study. Environmental constraint mapping was utilized in the evaluation of the individual properties within the study area.

V. EXISTING LAND USE

The existing land uses in the Route 34 study area include a mixture of retail stores, offices and general commercial uses. A partial listing of the business and commercial uses include: gasoline service stations; several free-standing office-professional uses; an automobile rental establishment; two (2) automobile sales dealerships; a real estate agency; an insurance agency; two restaurants; a building supply firm; a self-storage facility; a motel; a funeral home; a delicatessen; and Paynters Ridge Office Plaza. There are several light industrial uses bordering Route 34 in the study area including areas along Atlantic Avenue, Landmark Place and Ridgewood Road. With very limited exception, however, these uses do not have direct access to Route 34. Also noteworthy is that many of the highway business/commercial uses abut single family residential uses and neighborhoods to the rear.

Residential areas in the study area include the Orchard Crest single family development and the Hovnanian developments (i.e. Four Seasons, an adult community and a multi-family development along Lakewood Road). In addition, there are several scattered single family residences with frontage on Route 34.

Lot sizes in the Route 34 study area range from several large parcels (10-20+ acre size) on the east side of the highway near the Allaire Circle and, to the north, smaller lots (less than 2 acres) on the west of Route 34 side north of Paynters Road. Lot sizes on the west side of Route 34, between the bike path and Paynters Road, are generally one plus acres in area due to lot platting prior to the current zoning.

A significant portion of the Route 34 study area can be characterized as developed. However, there are a significant number of vacant developable parcels which due to their particular location, existing roadway configurations and existing and projected future traffic volumes, can have a considerable effect on future traffic conditions.

One such parcel is a tract abutting the north side of the Bel-Aire Golf Course. The parcel's highway frontage is on the northbound side of Route 34, south of the Allenwood Road intersection, and includes a right hand turning lane for Allenwood Road. This shoulder lane is also utilized for ingress to the Garden State Parkway "on" ramp which is just north of the traffic light.

Another key vacant parcel in the Route 34 study area is located at the southeast quadrant of the intersection of Allaire Road and Route 34. This parcel is about 22 acres in area and has frontage on Route 34 and Allaire Road. The proximity of these large vacant properties to existing traffic trouble spots underscores the importance of future land use planning within the Route 34 study area.

VI. CIRCULATION

Route 34 is one of the primary arterial roads in Wall Township. A primary arterial serves as major feeder road to and from the freeway system and also carries major volumes of traffic between regional locations. Route 34 carries large volumes of commuters to and from the Garden State Parkway and serves as a regional truck route. In the summer months, Route 34 is a major route for commuter and beach traffic, serving as a feeder to, and alternate route for, the Garden State Parkway.

In the study area, Route 34 is a four (4) lane, median-separated highway. Intersection with traffic signals in the study area include: Allenwood Road; Paynters Road; and Lakewood Road. In addition, there are traffic circles at the intersection of Route 34 with Allaire Road and Route 70.

Traffic statistics presented to Wall Township officials by staff members of the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT), during the discussion of the Route 18 freeway extension, indicate that 59% of Route 34 traffic is Garden State Parkway-bound. NJDOT's needs assessment in 1997 indicated that Route 34 near the Garden State Parkway was in a "failure" condition (i.e. roadway is at or over capacity) based on 1995 figures. The NJDOT report also contained projected year 2010 traffic conditions and forecast a "failure" condition of all circles on Route 34. There are no immediate plans to construct improvements to Route 34 south of the Garden State Parkway, except for the reconstruction of the Brielle Circle as part of the Route 70 widening project. Therefore, the impact of future development upon traffic conditions on Route 34 are a critical land use planning consideration. Land use decisions must be carefully made to find reasonable uses of property within the study area which will not seriously worsen conditions at problem traffic locations.

VII. FINDINGS

Based upon the foregoing comprehensive review of the Route 34 study area, the following findings have been made:

- A. Route 34 in the study area is subject to heavy traffic volumes and congestion, particularly at the following locations: Brielle Circle; Allaire Road Circle; and the Allenwood Road/Parkway Ramp area. These problems are particularly acute during peak seasonal periods.
- B. Adequate accommodation of retail uses are provided within the Township in the Route 35 corridor and other locations in and proximate to Wall Township.
- C. Although significant portions of the Route 34 Corridor, south of the Garden State Parkway, contain a mixture of retail, office and other commercial uses, there remains numerous and sizable vacant parcels within the study area and therefore the pattern of development can still be shaped through land use regulation.
- D. The peak hours of traffic generation for most offices uses do not conflict with the periods of congestion (weekends) on Route 34. This is in sharp contrast to most retail uses where peak traffic generation coincides with the peaks on Route 34.
- E. Office professional uses are generally more compatible with the adjoining residential uses that abut much of the Route 34 frontage properties. Due to their "weekday only" operation, office professional uses generate less traffic; have smaller parking requirements; require less lighting and signage; and generate less noise and debris.
- F. There are many potential alternative land uses to retail development in the Route 34 study area that are economically viable, compatible with existing and future land uses and minimize the potential adverse traffic impacts.

VIII. LAND USE PLAN AMENDMENT

Figure 1, Amendment to the Land Use Plan Element, details proposed land uses in the Route 34 study area. This plan is intended to serve as a guide to future zoning decisions within the study area.

The overriding planning strategy of the proposed amendment is aimed at reducing the amount of land within the study area where additional retail development could occur. This change involves the de-emphasis of retail business and the promotion of office type development and other alternative land uses.

The major features of this amendment to the Land Use Plan are as follows:

A. Office/Business - O/B

One of the proposed land use recommendations consists of the creation of an "Office/Business" (O/B) designation for two areas along the west side of Route 34 and an area along the east side between Route 34 and Paynters Road. This designation is intended to recognize and permit the continuation of existing retail uses in these areas, while promoting the development of vacant parcels and redevelopment of developed or underutilized properties for office type uses. Incentives to encourage office development could include reduced bulk requirements for office development versus retail development. Recommended standards include a minimum lot size of two (2) acres for office uses and three (3) acres for retail uses. Reduced setbacks for office development should be considered in rear yard areas where enhanced landscaping is provided. Bulk requirements for the O/B designated area between Paynters Road and Route 34 should be lower due to generally smaller existing lot sizes in this area.

These areas are comprised of lands presently zoned HB (Highway Business). Existing retail uses would generally continue to be permitted. However, other permitted uses should be reviewed eliminating certain uses presently permitted but inconsistent with 1) the generally small existing lot sizes in the areas designated O/B; and 2) those uses of a retail or commercial nature not currently located in areas designated O/B which are inconsistent with the intents of the O/B designation. By way of example, fast food restaurants are presently a permitted use in the HB-120 Zone, which is the current zoning designation of much of the area designated O/B. There are no existing fast food restaurants in areas designated O/B. A fast food restaurant, as a land use, is inconsistent with the intent of this land use plan amendment to minimize the number and types of uses which would exacerbate existing traffic problems on Route 34, particularly during peak seasonal periods. Fast food restaurants should not be a permitted use in areas designated O/B.

B. Office - O (2 Acre)

Office O (2 Acre) designated areas include a large tract situated at Allenwood Road and Route 34 and the west side of Route 34 from Ridgewood Road southward to just beyond the bike path. The northern parcels which are already zoned for offices, are currently developed with a mix of uses such as a gas station, offices and a restaurant. The latter area, a largely vacant strip, is comprised of numerous relatively small lots, many of which have sub-optimal access to Route 34 due to topographic conditions, sight distances, roadway geometry or proximity to key intersections. Consistent with the overall planning or strategy for the Route 34 study area this section has been designated O (2 Acre).

Permitted uses in areas designated O (2 Acre) are intended to be in line with those presently permitted in the OP-2 (Office Park) Zone. Consideration should also be given to expanding the uses permitted, either as permitted principal uses or as conditional uses, to include a broad spectrum of health care facilities and specialty age restricted housing such as assisted living and life care facilities.

C. Office - O (10 Acre)

Areas designated O-Office (10 Acres) consist of portions of the Route 34 study area presently zoned OP-10 (Office Park) and Highway Business. Areas so designated are generally comprised of properties somewhat larger in size than areas designated O (2 Acre) suitable for integrated office/business development. The intent of the designation is to encourage integrated office development, which would limit the number of traffic access points on Route 34 and Route 70 and the traffic impacts of development during peak seasonal periods.

Areas designated Office (10 Acre) include several large vacant properties: a large vacant area along the east side of Route 34 to the immediate north of the Bel-Aire Golf Course extending to Allenwood Road and several large contiguous vacant properties located at the southeast quadrant of Route 34 and Allaire Road. These O (10 Acre) designated areas are presently zoned HB-120 and 200 (Highway Business) and should not be zoned to permit retail development given their proximity to the key traffic problem locations on Route 34 and inconsistency/conflicts with adjoining land uses.

As in the O (2 Acre) designated areas, consideration should be given to promoting a broad spectrum of health care facilities and services and age restricted housing such as assisted living and life care facilities. Restaurants and other eating facilities, intended primarily for employees within such integrated developments, or with other size limiting features, should be conditionally permitted.

D. Office Research - OR

Areas designated OR (Office Research) correspond exactly with areas presently zoned OLI (Office Light Industrial) within the Route 34 study area. Such designation recognizes the existing character of development in these areas.

E. Highway Business - HB

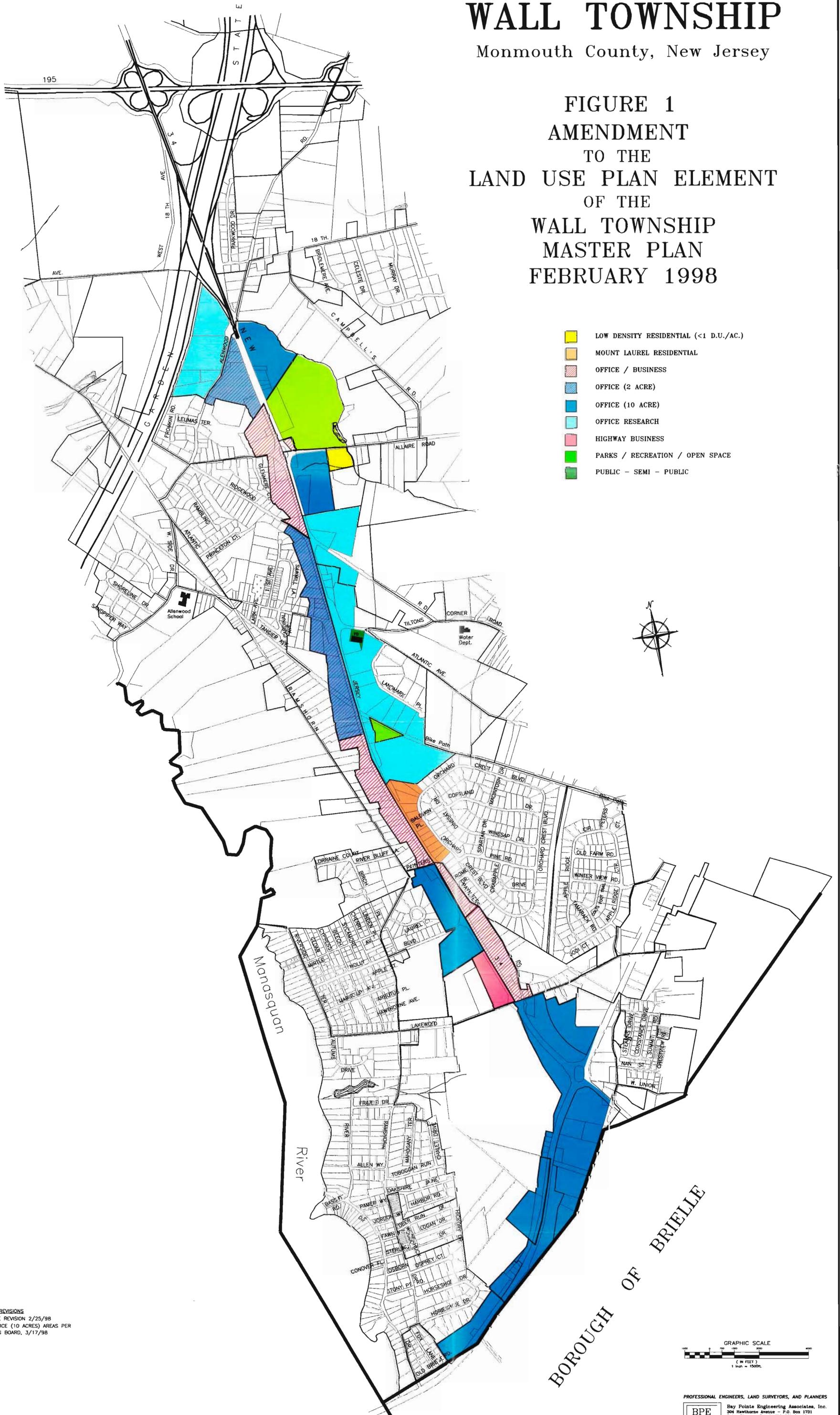
Areas designated HB (Highway Business) consist exclusively of areas along the east side of Route 34 between Route 34 and Paynters Road and the approved shopping center site at the northwest corner of the intersection of Route 34 and Lakewood Road. All areas designated HB are presently zoned HB-20, HB-40 or HB-200. Such zoning should remain. The HB designation recognizes the character of existing or approved development within these areas.

F. The remaining land use designations (Low Density Residential, Parks/Recreation/Open Space, Mount Laurel Residential, and Public/Semi-Public) recognize existing development or uses of respective areas.

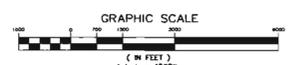
WALL TOWNSHIP

Monmouth County, New Jersey

FIGURE 1 AMENDMENT TO THE LAND USE PLAN ELEMENT OF THE WALL TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN FEBRUARY 1998



REVISIONS
1) OB ZONE REVISION 2/25/98
2) NEW OFFICE (10 ACRES) AREAS PER PLANNING BOARD, 3/17/98



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