

**MASTER PLAN**  
**LAND USE ELEMENT AMENDMENT**  
**FOR THE ROUTE 33 CORRIDOR**

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**MANALAPAN TOWNSHIP**  
*Monmouth County, New Jersey*

*Prepared For*

**MANALAPAN TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD**

*By*

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Approved on June 26, 2003  
By the Manalapan Township Planning Board

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*The original of this document has been signed and sealed in accordance with New Jersey Law*

## **BACKGROUND**

This amendment to the land use element of the Township Master Plan has been prepared to guide development in the Route 33 corridor in Manalapan Township. The major area for development in Manalapan for office, retail and commercial land use has historically been the Route 9 corridor. Commercial growth on Route 9 accompanied the growth of the residential areas east and west of Route 9 from the 1960's through the 1990's. Regional and local development pressures, however, are now shifting toward the open lands to the south and to the west along Route 33. Although most of the land along the Route 33 corridor remains open, regional growth and large residential developments that are planned or in construction on Route 33 will help fuel demand for commercial development along Route 33.

The negative aspects of commercial development on Route 9 included traffic congestion and long stretches of road frontage characterized by a highway strip pattern of poorly coordinated and unattractive development. Parking lots are located close to the highway, curb cuts are spaced closely together, and visual clutter results from commercial signage and unattractive site design. Learning from its experience with Route 9, the Township's goal for Route 33 has been and continues to be to manage the corridor's growth for the community's benefit to secure economic development and to create a positive image for Manalapan. To further this vision, a landscaped edge with a minimum depth from the right-of-way needs to be maintained along the length of the Route 33 corridor.

## **EXISTING ZONE PLAN**

The Route 33 corridor runs for a distance of more than four miles in Manalapan from the Freehold Township border to the Millstone border. The corridor is planned and organized in Manalapan into ten distinct zoning districts. The zones permit commercial, residential, recreational, office and industrial park, and warehouse distribution uses.

The zone districts are:

- ❑ PB Public Use District – The district includes Monmouth Battlefield State Park and its main entrance.
- ❑ GCRC - Golf Course Residential Community District - Located immediately east of the State Park, the district permits and is being developed as a golf course residential community.
- ❑ SED-5 Special Economic Development District- The district permits offices, convention centers, garden supply and nursery centers, indoor recreation, golf training and similar uses on lots of five acres or more.
- ❑ SED-20 Special Economic Development District - The district promotes campus style development of office industrial park use on tracts of twenty acres or more.
- ❑ SED-20/W Special Economic Development/Warehouse District - The district permits warehouse distribution facilities as well as SED- 20 land uses on tracts of twenty acres or more.
- ❑ C-3 General Commercial District – This district is located at the intersections of Route 33 with Millhurst Road and Woodward Road. It permits a variety of commercial uses on lots that are 40,000 square feet or greater.
- ❑ LB-M Limited Business District Millhurst – This district is located along a short stretch of highway frontage west of Millhurst Road. It permits a limited range of nonresidential uses and requires a lot size of at least three acres.
- ❑ VC - Village Commercial District – This district permits the development of a Village Center type of project to provide shopping, employment, recreation, and personal services in proximity to the area’s growing residential population. It requires a minimum tract area of 100 acres and is located on the northwestern corner of the intersection of Route 33 with Millhurst Road.
- ❑ CD- Consent District – This district is located in an area north of Route 33 and fronting on Millhurst Road, Woodward Road, and Route 33. It permits planned residential development to meet the Township obligation for Mount Laurel housing.
- ❑ CD-KH Consent District Knob Hill - This district is located in an area north of Route 33 and west of Daum Road. It has been developed as the Knob Hill golf course and planned residential development to meet the Township obligation for Mount Laurel housing.

Generally, the Route 33 corridor and its zone districts are discernible as three segments, each of which is described below.

*Route 33 Eastern Segment: Millhurst Road to Freehold Township*

The SED-5 zone district encompasses the area between Business 33 and the Route 33 bypass and remains largely open and undeveloped. The Monmouth Battlefield State Park (PB District) is adjacent to the SED-5 district at the Freehold Township border. Battleground Country Club Estates (GCRC District) borders portions of the SED-5 zone district north of Route 33. Several zone districts converge near the intersection of Millhurst Road and Route 33 including the SED-5, C-3, VC, SED-20, and LB-M. The C-3 zone district at this location is nearly fully developed and contains retail uses and automotive related uses.

The development in the C-3 area at Millhurst Road reflects a highway strip appearance that the Township can improve upon through the enactment of new minimum design standards for the Route 33 corridor.

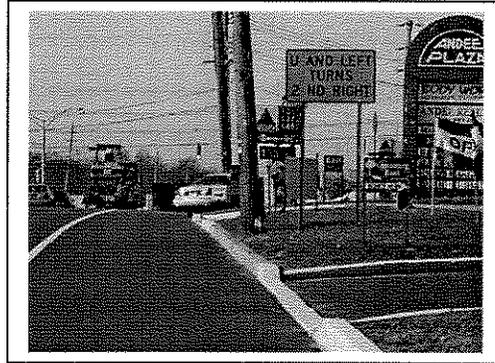
*Route 33 Central Segment: Millhurst Road and Woodward Road*

The SED-20 zone district runs along the south side of Route 33 between the LB-M zone district on Millhurst Road and the C-3 zone district at the intersection of Route 33 and Woodward Road. The north side of this segment is proposed for Village Commercial development at the northwest intersection of Millhurst Road and Route 33. The proposed Four Seasons active adult development will be located in the CD district between Route 33, Millhurst Road and Woodward Road. The SED-20 district surrounds the C-3 zone district on the north side of Route 33 near the intersection of Woodward Road and extends west of Woodward Road towards Knob Hill. The SED-20 zone district remains largely open along this segment and contains some existing farms and the Patriot's Park office/light industrial development. The C-3 zone district in this segment contains some smaller commercial development.

*Route 33 Western Segment: Woodward Road to Millstone Township*

This segment is mostly comprised of the CD-KH, SED-20, SED-20/W and SED-5 districts. The entrance to Knob Hill (CD-KH zone district) is located between the SED-20 zones along the north side of Route 33. The south side of Route 33 has experienced some development in the SED-20/W (33 Research Park) and SED-5 zone district.

## ROUTE 33 - CORRIDOR PICTORAL

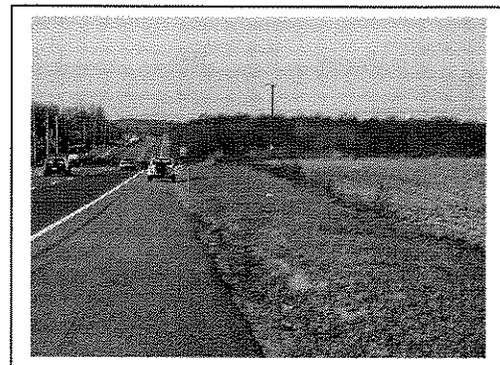


*Route 33 - Eastbound view toward Millhurst Road*

The C-3, General Commercial Zone District, has resulted in parking and loading and tall signage close to the Route 33 right-of-way. A highway commercial strip pattern has emerged.



*Route 33 Eastbound View*



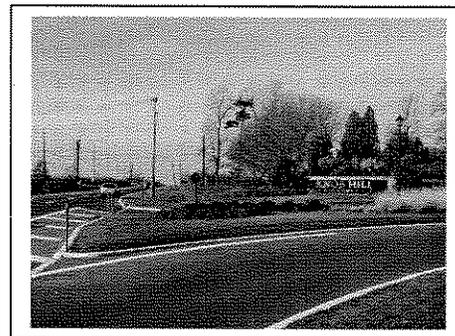
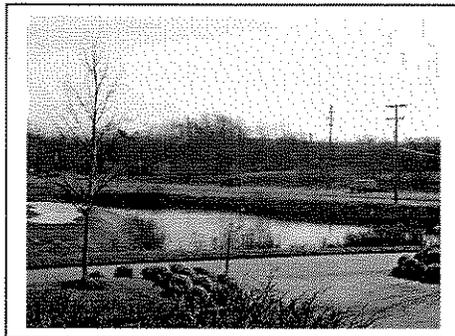
*Route 33 Eastbound View*

Much of the corridor remains open land. Retaining a larger open front yard area along the highway is recommended. Natural vegetation should be retained wherever feasible to screen the view of development. Where vegetation does not exist, landscaping will lessen the visual impacts of commercial use.



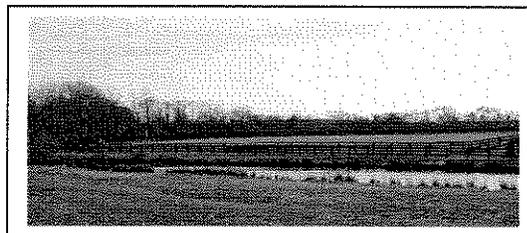
*Route 33- Views toward Patriot's Park*

Patriot Park was developed with a wide front yard area establishing the park like setting of the development as seen from Route 33. Identification signs are low to the ground. Parking is located at the rear of the building and not visible from Route 33.



*Route 33 - Entry to Knob Hill*

Landscaping adds to the aesthetic appeal to a site and defines space and entrances along the corridor. The Knob Hill entrance sign is monument style, low to the ground, and is complemented by landscaping.



*Route 33 - Gaitway Farm*

Scenic views and permanent water bodies complement the open landscape and are important components in the green edge for the Route 33 corridor.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

To promote a desirable visual environment and good civic design and arrangements along the Route 33 corridor, Manalapan should establishing an overlay zone to the existing zone districts to foster a landscaped greenbelt along the frontage of properties on Route 33. The overlay should provide design guidelines and the minimum standards for yards, open space, landscaping, signage, setbacks, connectivity, and screening in order to better protect and enhance the appearance and function of the corridor and establish a positive image for the length of Route 33 in Manalapan. If an existing zone district standard or requirement is more restrictive than an overlay standard, then the more restrictive standard should govern.