



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE PINELANDS

What is sustainable development, and where can I find it in the Pinelands?

We at PPA think sustainable development is development in the right places that uses land efficiently and is designed to be as "green" as technologically possible. Unfortunately, almost all of the development that has occurred in the Pinelands over the last 25 years has been large-scale sprawling development.

To be truly sustainable, development must use land efficiently. That means filling the demand for housing, shops and offices on as little land as possible, rather than sprawling growth with large lots using up all the land assigned for development. Why is that important? Because we only have so much land left, and it needs to be made to work for people, nature and open space.

So what does efficient development look like? Smart Growth America lists several elements.

1. Promoting growth in existing communities.
2. Using existing community assets.
3. Mixing land uses (e.g., housing and commercial).
4. Creating a range of housing opportunities and choices.
5. Creating walkable neighborhoods.



Suburban road conversion



Transit village redevelopment

6. Promoting a strong sense of place by rehabilitating and using historic buildings.
7. Preserving open space, critical environmental areas, farmland, and natural areas.
8. Providing a variety of transportation choices.
9. Making development decisions predictable, fair and cost-effective.
10. Encouraging public participation in development decisions.

To create these elements in a community, municipal officials and concerned citizens should advocate for the following:

- Creating a community master plan that identifies areas for growth and for conservation.
- Creating more walking and biking paths.
- Creating compact, mixed use (residential, commercial and office) areas.
- Implementing traffic calming measures on busy streets.
- Encouraging "green" building materials and practices.
- Establishing pesticide-free zones.
- Preventing stormwater from eroding soil and degrading streams.

continued on page 2

- Encouraging the use of green power and energy efficiency.
- Preserving open space.
- Passing ordinances to protect wetlands, steep slopes and other critical areas.
- Advocating to redevelop brownfields and greyfields and encourage infill development.
- Establishing environmental, historic preservation, and shade tree commissions to assist municipality with sustainable planning efforts.

It is hard to find communities, in the Pinelands or even in New Jersey, that exhibit all of these attributes. Hammonton, a Pinelands town established in the early 1800s, exhibits many aspects of sustainable development: walkable neighborhoods, a mixed-use downtown area, and even a train station!

Princeton Borough (Mercer County) is a good example of an older community that has grown in a sustainable way: walkable neighborhoods with a strong sense of place, preserving open space and providing a variety of transportation choices. However, a range of housing opportunities and choices are limited.

Washington Town Center in Washington Township (Mercer County) is a good example of a new community that has incorporated many sustainable elements into its design: houses with porches on small lots with parking in rear; a new Main Street with shops, restaurants and office space; walking paths and corridors of open space; and a variety of housing options including apartments, townhouses and single family homes. Transportation options are limited, however. And ironically, because the sustainable features of the community are so appealing, housing prices have escalated sharply and thus limited the income diversity of new residents.

The Pinelands Plan has worked to promote growth in existing communities and to preserve open space, critical environmental areas, etc., but the variety of other elements that come with efficient and smart growth development are lacking.

The Pinelands Commission has provided assistance to Egg Harbor Township, a Regional Growth Area of the Pinelands, through the Pinelands Excellence Program to try and achieve some of the principles listed above, but a lot more participation from residents and concerned citizens and organizations is needed to help this process achieve good outcomes.

Pinelands Preservation Alliance (PPA) is advocating

for better use and examination of the developable land that is left in the Pinelands. Not all areas in the regional growth areas are well-suited for development. In some cases, rare plant species or threatened and endangered wildlife are present in these undeveloped portions of the regional growth areas and really should be not designated for growth. For the land that is well-suited for development, the Pinelands Commission and municipalities can achieve efficient development that will promote walkable and attractive neighborhoods. One municipality in New Jersey has recently passed an ordinance to achieve this.

Cranford Township passed an ordinance in 2005 that adopts sustainable building standards for construction in the township. The township committee adopted a policy of "sustainability" which it defined as "decision making about municipal purchasing and operations that will incorporate the 'triple bottom line' of environmental stewardship, economic growth, and social equity, so that the needs of the present generation do not compromise the needs of future generations" (*Ordinance No. 2005-46*).

To help municipalities adopt similar principles, PPA will present to environmental commissions and municipal committees in the Pinelands information on efficient development and draft language of incorporating these principles into ordinances. Call PPA at 609-859-8860 and ask for Jaclyn Rhoads or Mike Hunninghake to schedule a presentation for your commission, committee or board.

PPA is also advocating for clustered and compact development in the Pinelands. The Pinelands Commission has the opportunity to revise the Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) to require clustered development in the Forest Area and Rural Development Areas of the Pinelands. In addition, the Commission is in the process of revising the Pinelands Development Credit (PDC) program, and PPA has advocated for measures that reward developers for efficient development rather than penalize them within the PDC program. In other words, reduce the PDC obligation where these measures are implemented and require increased PDCs for typical sprawl development.

If you would like to support these measures, please contact Jaclyn at 609-859-8860 ext. 18 or jaclyn@pinelandsalliance.org and/or attend and express your support at a Pinelands Commission meeting. Dates and times for these meetings are posted on the Pinelands Commission's web site. Select meetings under calendar of events, at <http://www.state.nj.us/pinelands/>

Off-Road Vehicle Legislation is Needed Now!

Pinelands Preservation Alliance launched an off-road vehicle (ORV) campaign this summer to raise public awareness and to advocate for increased enforcement and penalties against illegal ORV riding in Pinelands municipalities. The campaign was a great success. Half of the 56 municipalities responded to the campaign by requesting PPA's model ordinance, implementing new ordinances, revising their existing ordinances to increase fines or

providing their existing ordinance to show support for our efforts.



Although the campaign was a good start, much more work is needed to be able to stop illegal off-road riders that trespass on private and public property

without permission. A number of landowners' properties have been damaged, and outdoor recreationists find their outdoor experiences destroyed by the noise, disturbance and pollution.

PPA will be circulating a mayoral sign-on letter in December asking Governor Corzine and state leaders for their leadership in creating ORV legislation in 2007. PPA is asking all New Jersey mayors to sign on to this letter which expresses the need for registration fees, mandatory point of sale registration for all ATV/ORV vehicles, safety education, funds for enforcement and tagging of all vehicles.

The riding community has expressed the need for legal riding facilities before legislation takes place. Although PPA can support ORV parks in proper locations, legislation is absolutely needed right now to protect residential communities, landowner rights, the environment, and low-impact recreation. In addition, the ability to create parks is already available. State funds are available to organizations for creating parks, and an off-road park is slated for development by a private company in Millville.

If you are concerned about the illegal use of ORVs in your community, please contact Jaclyn Rhoads, Pinelands Preservation Alliance, at 609-859-8860 ext. 18 or jaclyn@pinelandsalliance.org to get a copy of the sign-on letter.

Hovbilt application again before the Jackson Planning Board

Hovbilt, Inc. has again applied to the Jackson Township planning board to build a planned retirement community on the 650 acres located adjacent to the Colliers Mills Wildlife Management Area in Jackson Township, Ocean County. An application to develop this site was before the planning board in September 2000 but not completed by the developer. At that time the application was for 825 units and an 18-hole golf course. The new application that is currently before the planning board is for approximately 962 age-restricted units and no golf course.

The application is being heard by the **Jackson Township Planning Board over the next several months.** Meetings are held on the first and third Mondays of the month, 7:30 pm, at the Jackson Municipal Building, 95 West Veteran's Highway.

The application is listed on the agenda in three parts comprised of the General Development Plan approval, subdivision approval and preliminary and final major site plan for sections 1 & 2.

The General Development Plan sets out the building of four sections. Section I is situated in the northern section of the site and is composed of five hundred and eighty four (584) age-restricted residential units. Section II is to be located in the southeastern section of the site and is composed of three hundred and eighteen (318) age-restricted units. Sections III and IV are not detailed in the reports but are located in the central part of the site.

The applicants environmental impact statement states Section 1 will enter from Perrineville Road and Section 2 from West Veterans Highway. For more information about the project residents should attend the Jackson Township Planning Board meetings! Voice your concerns. If you want more information about this project contact Theresa at 609-859-8860, ext. 22 or e-mail at theresa@pinelandsalliance.org.



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