

Middlesex County Planning Board Development Activity For The Year 2005

The Middlesex County Planning Board in conformance with the New Jersey County and Regional Planning Enabling Act (NJSA 40:27-1 et. seq.), has the authority to review and approve those subdivisions and site plans which affect County Routes and/or County drainage facilities. The Middlesex County Planning Board has in turn directed the Subdivision and Site Plan Review Committee to act on its behalf as provided by the appropriate State statutes in taking action on all development applications.

The Land Development Review Committee of the Middlesex County Planning Department, in carrying out its directive, received 665 applications for review and approval in the year 2005. Of these 665 applications; 576 were deemed acceptable for review and approval, 58 were rejected, and 31 were revised.

Figure 1 shows the upward trend in total reviewed applications over the past 10 years. The amount of applications reviewed are up 31% over the past 10 years and 6% over the past 5 years. 2005 was the fourth highest year on record for applications, with the other three all falling in the past four years. Sketch Plat Minor Subdivisions and Site Plans represent 65% of the total applications for the year. This current upward trend in applications is expected to continue into the future as Middlesex County expands in the south regions and redevelopment continues to be a strong force in the north.

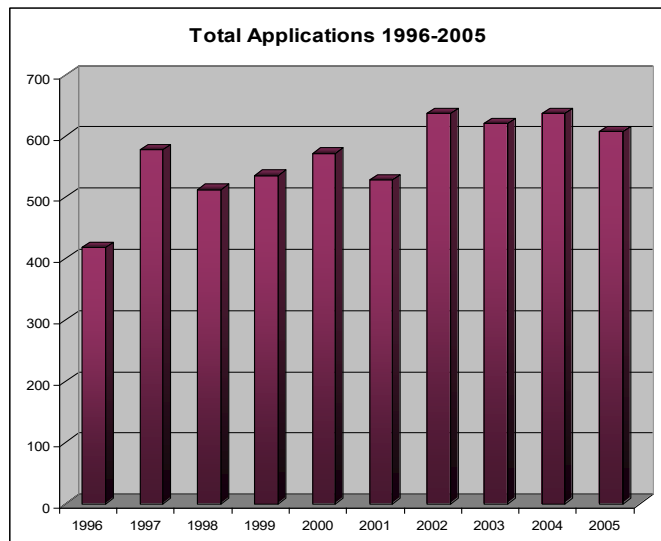


Figure 1

There are five categories of plans the County Planning Board receives. They are; Sketch Plat (Minor Subdivisions, Preliminary Major Subdivision, Final Major Subdivision, Site Plans, and Exempt Site Plans. The 576 plans received in 2005 are broken down into; 168 sketch plat classifications, 46 preliminary subdivision applications, 91 final subdivision applications, and 229 site plan applications which fall under Middlesex County Planning Board jurisdiction, and 42 exempted site plan applications, which do not fall under Middlesex County Planning Board jurisdiction. Figure 2 shows the breakdown of the types of applications reviewed by the Board this year.

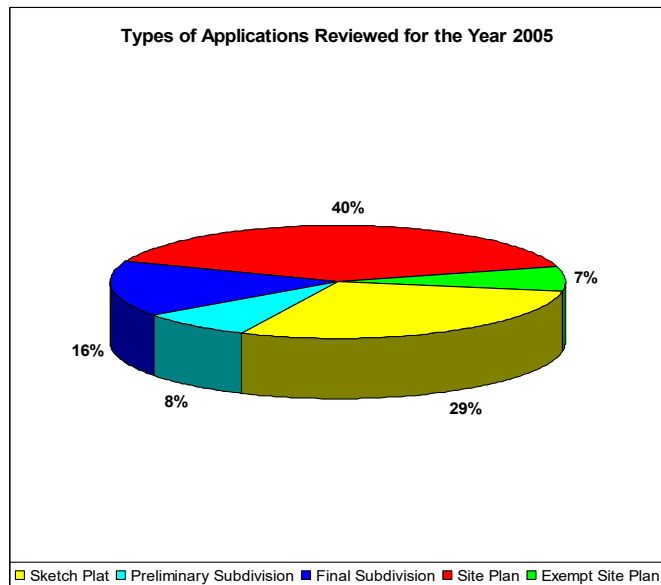


Figure 2

As seen in Figure 3, Site Plans have dipped slightly for the third straight year from a 10 year high four years ago. Preliminary Subdivisions were down below 50 for the first time in six years. This created the substantial dip in Final Subdivisions which are directly linked to the amount of preliminary activity. Sketch Plat Minor Subdivisions increased to an all time high due to the strong residential market in Middlesex County. Many of these subdivisions are lots that have become available to new owners for demolition, subdivision, and new construction which are sometimes referred to as teardowns. Exempted site plans are usually limited to those areas of which exist near the Raritan River and discharge directly to it.

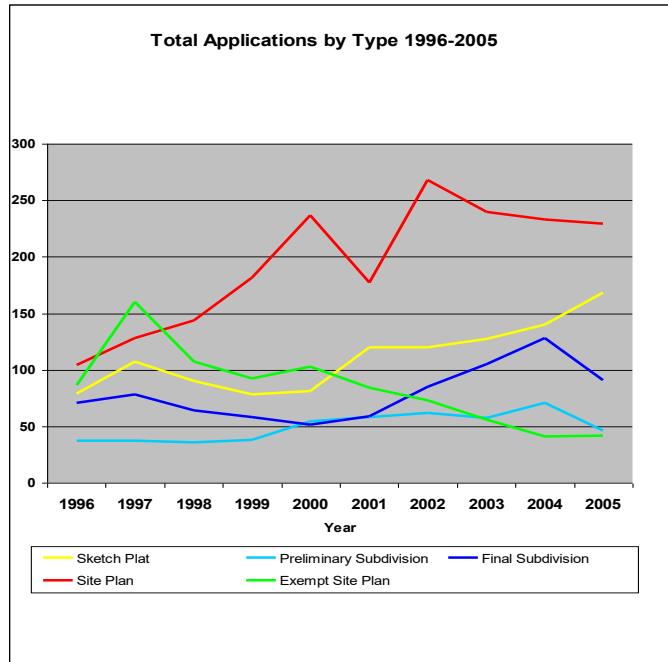


Figure 3

The breakdown of applications by municipality is shown in figure 4. Each municipality within Middlesex County has its own unique characteristics which can be seen in the types of applications that are submitted. Land area used to play a large part in determining how many applications were received within each municipality, but this is not the case anymore. More and more redevelopment is being undertaken in the County. Monroe and South Brunswick lead the way with many single family housing subdivisions, whereas Edison and Woodbridge's numbers were comprised with a mix of development.

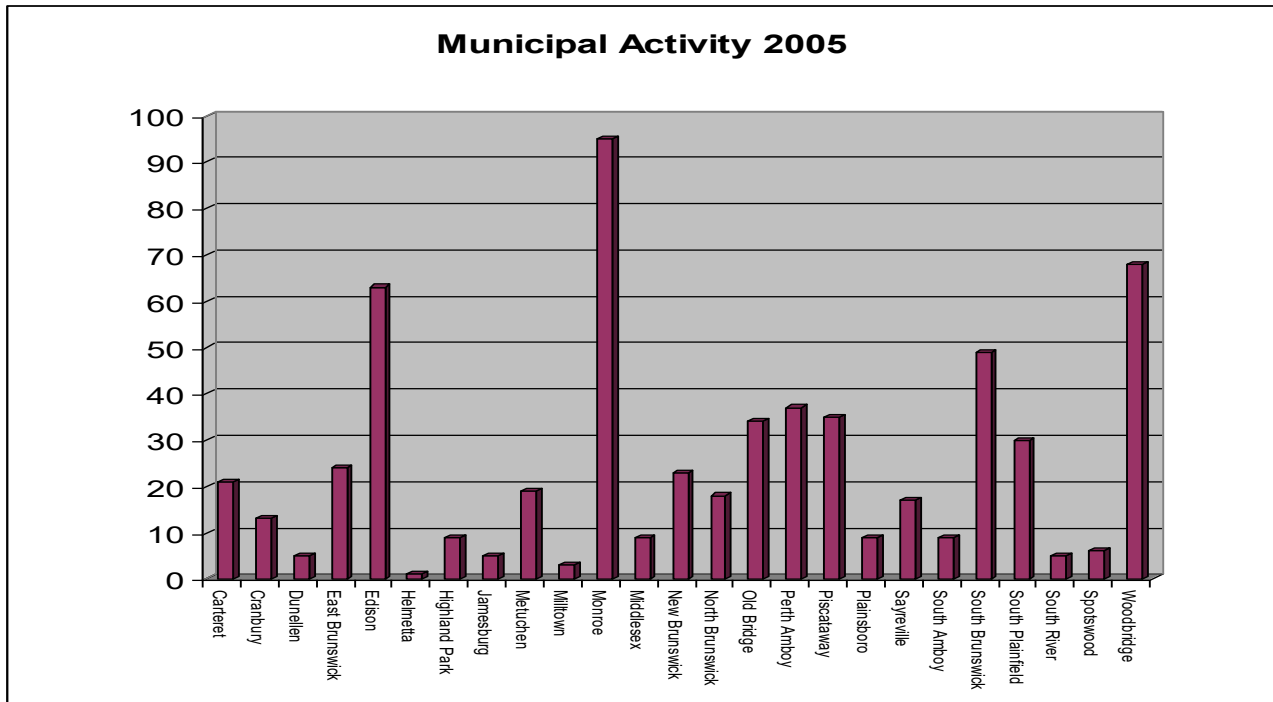
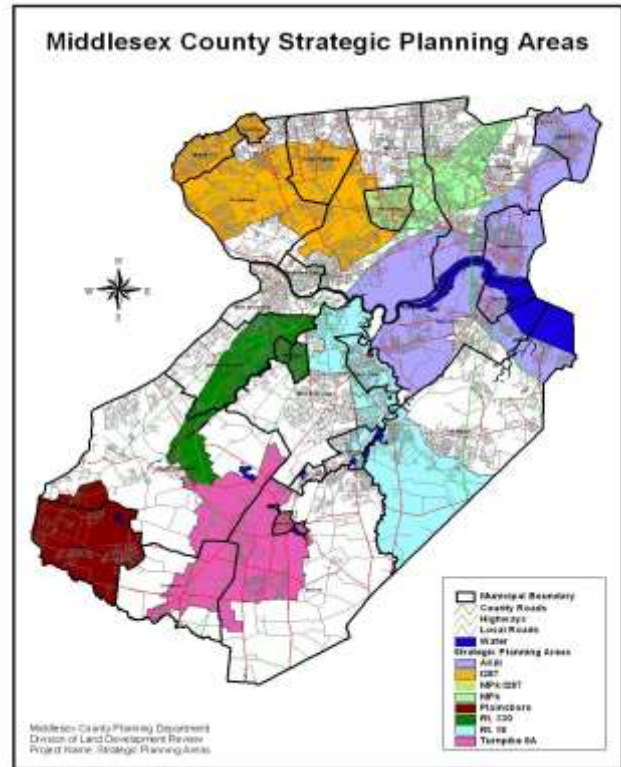


Figure 4

The Middlesex County Planning Board has identified seven regions of the County as Strategic Planning Areas referred to as SPAs. The SPAs have been, and are expected to continue to be, the major growth areas within the County. The SPAs follow the major transportation corridors through Middlesex County. The County's economic future is reliant on the movement of goods and people within and through the County. Middlesex County has identified needed improvements within the SPAs to promote growth in these places which already possess the adequate infrastructure, transportation links, jobs, and population to sustain smart growth over the next 20 to 25 years. The ongoing fine tuning and cross acceptance of the SPAs shows the Planning Board's commitment to smart growth within Middlesex County. The SPAs are as follows (Map 1); Arthur Kill SPA, Metropark SPA, Interstate-287 SPA, Route 18 SPA, Route 130 SPA, Turnpike Exit 8A SPA, and the Plainsboro Forrestal SPA. Even though 60 percent of the development in Middlesex County takes place within an SPA the development outside of an SPA is larger than any SPA alone (figure 5).



Map 1

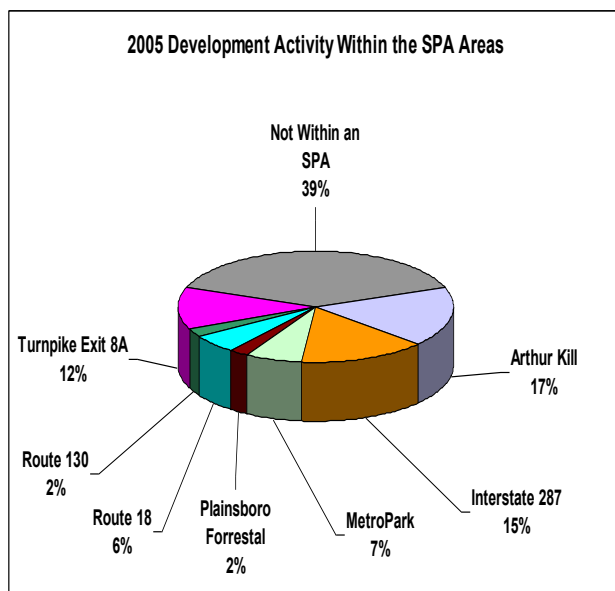


Figure 5

The Land Development Review Committee tracks which SPA all development applications are in. The Arthur Kill SPA and the Turnpike Exit 8A SPA both accounted for one-quarter (25%, or about 1,400 units) of the new dwelling units each; another quarter took place outside an SPA. Also, one-third (3,712,816 square feet) of the total square footage of non-residential development (10,946,828 square feet) took place within the Arthur Kill SPA and is due to many larger warehousing projects within Perth Amboy, Edison, and Woodbridge. The non-SPA areas did lead one good category though. They had the most acres of open space preserved at 182.24 acres for a County wide share of 43%.

The 2005 population estimate for Middlesex County, from the U.S. Census, is 789,516 citizens. This is up 5.2 percent over the 2000 census (750,162). Single family owner occupied dwelling units saw a great increase from 156,030 in 2000 to 189,146 in 2004, an

increase of 17.5 percent. Median home value also jumped \$118,834 to an average of \$287,334 in just four years. This is a testament to the very healthy residential market in Middlesex County and New Jersey.