

# A Closer Look

## Single Family Housing

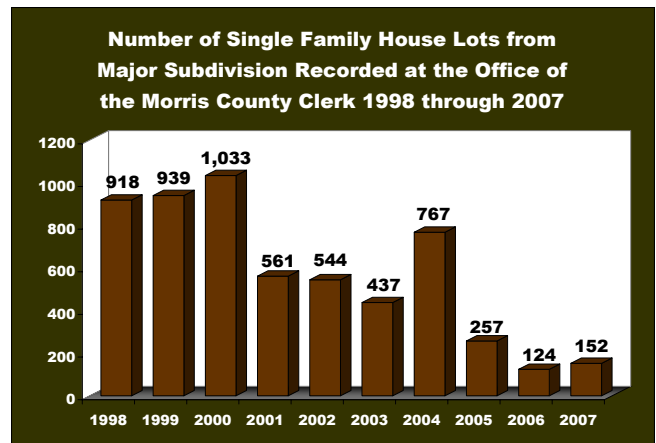
**S**ixteen (16) final subdivision plats consisting of 78 lots were approved by the Morris County Planning Board in 2007. The final plat data provided in Table IV (Section II) represent those subdivisions which have advanced from preliminary plat approval. At the final plat stage, it becomes likely that homes will be constructed in the very near future.

According to the data in Tables IV, final subdivision plats covered a total land area of 212.09 acres including new street area and area set aside within developments for open space. The total linear feet of new street was 4,217 or .8 miles. There were 4.02 acres dedicated for open space. The average lot size was 108,984 sq. ft. and the median lot size was 21,689 sq. ft. The median lot size in 2006 was 20,560 sq. ft.

The largest average subdivision lot size occurred in Harding Township at 482,712 sq. ft. and the smallest average lot size is found in Florham Park at 15,391 sq. ft. The median subdivision lot size for Morris County occurred in Hanover Township at 21,689 sq. ft.

Hanover Township led the County with the most lots at 24 followed by Harding Township with 13 lots and Montville Township with 12 lots. Municipalities in which final plat subdivisions occupy the greatest amount of area are Harding Township (149.60 acres), Montville Township (23.32 acres), and Hanover Township (18.79 acres), includes 4.02 acres of open space.

Shortly following final subdivision approval, final plats are filed at the Office of the County Clerk where the property descriptions become a legal record. The lots can be individually sold at that time. There can be a delay of up to 2 or more years from the time of municipal/county approval and the actual filing of the plat at the Office of the County Clerk. Table V (Section II) provides a 5 year record of final plats recorded for each municipality. One hundred fifty two (152) lots were filed at the Office of the County Clerk during 2007, an 18% increase from the 124 lots recorded in 2006.



**Chart G**

As seen in Chart G, except for the 767 lots recorded in 2004, there has been a steady decline in the number of lots recorded from 2001 through 2006. As a result of the economic slow down in 2001, only 561 lots were recorded that year which was a dramatic drop from the 1,033 lots recorded in 2000. The jump in recorded lots in 2004 was in response to the enactment of the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act of 2004 as well as in response to favorable mortgage interest rates and subdivision approval time limitations imposed by the New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL). As a result of these converging factors, developers brought their subdivisions to final approval sooner than later. Consequently, the number of recorded lots in 2005 and 2006 were lower. In 2007, the number increased by 18%. There is an explanation for this increase in residentially activity. A number of final subdivision plats which received municipal preliminary approval dating back to the year 2002 were presented for filing at the Office of the County Clerk during 2007. This time lapse occurs when economic conditions are not favorable for a developer to start building his subdivision after receiving municipal preliminary approval.

Under the Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL), municipal planning boards grant preliminary approval which protects the applicant against a change in zoning for a period of three (3) years, within which time the applicant can obtain final plat approval. Also, the municipal planning board can grant a one (1) year extension of preliminary approval but not to exceed a total of two (2) years.

Consequently, this five year statutory time limitation prompted developers to record their final subdivision plats in 2007 even in a sluggish housing market. Most of these recordings occurred during the first seven months of 2007. The month of August is significant because the housing market took a downturn which became more severe towards the end of 2007.

The slow down of residential activity throughout the New Jersey Highlands Preservation Area of Morris County continues to be a contributing factor in keeping the number of recorded residential lots down for single family detached homes.

Elsewhere, new residential subdivisions (excluding minor subdivisions) were relatively small in the range of 2 (technical major subdivision) to 14 lots. Many subdivision developments occurred as infill development in established neighborhoods. Of the sixteen final subdivisions approved by the County Planning Board in 2007, ten had frontage only on existing municipal and county roads. The remainder created only 4,217 linear feet or .8 mile of new street.

Table VI (Section II) notes one new residential subdivision of 31 lots was received in 2007. All others were under fourteen lots. The largest (acreage) residential subdivision was the Frelinghuysen subdivision of 13 lots in Harding Township. The distribution of residential activity in Morris County for the year 2007 and during a five year period from 2003 to 2007 is shown on Maps A and B of Morris County following table VIII (Section II).

### Attached and Multi-Family Housing

Shown on Table VII (Section II) is a list of proposed residential site plans received by the Morris County Planning Board which includes apartments, townhouses, age-restricted and senior and assisted living housing. Eight (8) residential site plans were reviewed in 2007 for 581 units compared to nine residential site plans in 2006 for 1,260 units. The effects of the downturn in the housing market in 2007 stalled several large redevelopment projects approved in 2006. For 2007, large residential redevelopment projects were less numerous than the year before and tended to be not as large in scope.

One bright spot was the continued growth in the age-restricted adult (55 and older) housing sector. Within the Highlands Planning Area of Mt. Olive Township, Mt. Olive Center Associates proposes an age-restricted townhouse project (Mt. Olive Mews) on a 62.7 acre site located on Route 46 near Interstate Route 80. The project consists of 224 townhouse units and 56 Mt. Laurel (COAH) units with 895 parking spaces. Also, a 7,300 sq. ft. clubhouse with pool and two bocce courts are proposed. For the Mt. Laurel units, a playground will be provided.

Also, within the Highlands Planning Area of Washington Township, Toll Land Corporation No. 10 proposes

a 45 lot age-restricted townhouse project (Regency at Long Valley) on a 27.83 acre site located on Fairview Avenue in Long Valley. Formerly, the site was occupied by the Welsh Farm milk processing plant. In Parsippany Troy Hills Township, 700 Mountain Way, LLC proposes 38 age restricted townhouse units with clubhouse and pool on a 9.36 acre site located on Mountain Way at its intersection with Old Dover Road. Two large residential homes would be razed for this project. There was limited growth in apartment projects for 2007. Two projects that stand out were received from built-up communities. In the Borough of Madison, Rose City Property Group, LLC will partially demolish and refurbish an existing retail structure (formerly old Savoy Theater building) located on Central Avenue and Elmer Street. They will attach a 12 unit four-story apartment building with 23 parking spaces underneath at street level. The building will be architecturally treated to match the characteristics of the old Savoy Theater building and other buildings within the historic district. In the Borough of Rockaway, Rockaway 50 Associates, LLC proposes a 3 ½ story apartment building with 42 units, a detached garage building and 101 total parking spaces on a 6.2 acre site. The project is unique because it is sensitive to the steep slopes of an existing ridge line by reducing the project's disturbance, impervious coverage and disturbance to steep slopes.

Sunrise Development, Inc. submitted a site plan for a 160 unit senior living facility on 23.88 acres in Hanover Township/Borough of Morris Plains with access to The American Road (Borough of Morris Plains) north of West Hanover Avenue. The project consists of 120 independent units and 40 assisted living units with 125 parking spaces under the building and 29 surface parking spaces. Also, a 13.59 acre parcel will be dedicated to Hanover Township for a municipal park. It will include a lighted pedestrian walkway along the east shoreline of a pond with access to the senior living facility and to a proposed twenty one space municipal parking lot.

### Commercial, Industrial and Office

Site plans can include small building additions with minimal amount of new floor area. Building renovations may not result in any new floor area at all. To the other extreme, construction of office buildings, regional retail facilities and industrial warehouses can result in an inordinate amount of floor area. Industrial site plans as a rule provide larger buildings than do commercial or office, at least in the case of industrial buildings which include warehouse facilities. Table VII (Section

II) provides a list of the more significant site plans of non-residential development with floor areas. Only site plans of 50,000 square feet and greater are included.

Like the previous two years, redevelopment projects took center stage in 2007. Also, there was more development occurring on vacant in-fill/subdivided properties within several existing commercial/industrial/office parks.

Within the Mack-Cali Business Campus (formerly Prudential Business Campus) in Parsippany Troy Hills Township, Parsippany Campus Realty Associates submitted Phase I and Phase II development plans for two three story office buildings totaling 452,358 sq. ft. with 1,797 parking spaces on a vacant 46.16 acre tract located on Sylvan Way. Four existing vacant lots will be assembled into two lots for the project.

Within the International Trade Zone of Mt. Olive Township, Mt. Olive Industrial Realty Company proposes a 62,400 sq. ft. flex-space (warehouse/office/assembly) building with 101 parking spaces on a vacant 11.13 acre site located on International Drive. Down the road, New Jersey Foreign Trade Zone Venture proposes a 65,532 sq. ft. flex unit(5) building for office/warehouse/distribution with 116 parking spaces on a 6.2 acre site subdivided from the Quest International Flavor & Fragrances building site. To the north on Continental Drive North, MTO Realty Holdings proposes redevelopment of the former Corporate Headquarters of BASF, Inc. for future tenants. Two new entrances to the building, two new parking areas for 210 parking spaces, construction of a third parking garage structure for 886 parking spaces and completion of a loop road to enhance traffic circulation are proposed for this office complex. Similarly at Southgate Corporate Office Center off South Street in Morris Township, Advance Realty Group received approval to redevelop their 445 Southgate Parkway building site. The 312,446 sq. ft. 3-story office building has been redesigned for Class A multi-tenant occupancy with substantial renovation of the existing parking lot to enhance traffic circulation.

Within the American Enterprise Park off Hanover Avenue in Morris Plains, Commercial Property Managers, Inc. will construct 69,300 sq. ft. of flex office warehouse with 133 parking spaces on a 6.3 acre site (former Route 24 Extension right-of-way). In Hanover Township, the Red Bulls professional soccer training facility will be constructed on 45.65 acres off Melanie Lane within Hartz Mountain Industrial Park. This is a good example of adaptation of use of vacant properties within existing industrial parks.

In Roxbury Township, Blue Vista Consulting submitted development plans for the new Roxbury-Route 80 Commercial Park located at Route 206 and Mountain Road adjacent to Route 80. The project consists of two medical office buildings, a 62,400 sq. ft. flex office/warehouse building, and a 225 seat restaurant with 552 total parking spaces on a 62.28 acre tract. This commercial/office park is the first new one since the year 2001.

In Randolph Township, Grecco Realty's redevelopment project proposes a 103,721 sq. ft. retail shopping center (The Shoppes at Randolph) with 415 parking spaces on an 11.57 acre site located between Route 10 and Quaker Church Road, east of Center Grove Road. Several commercial and residential structures will be razed for this project.

In downtown Denville, Lerner-Heidenberg Properties submitted redevelopment plans to remodel an old (1950s) retail shopping center on a 3.68 acre site at West Main Street and Diamond Spring Road. The new Denville Square anchor store will be a Walgreens with drive thru window. Other tenant space will be used for retail-food, retail-non-food, a restaurant and a bank. Parking and traffic circulation will be improved. The new façade and landscaping will give a Downtown Main Street/"Lifestyle Center" conceptual approach to compliment the look of Main Street in downtown Denville.

Like the previous two years, small sites throughout the County are being redeveloped commercially for new retail stores, churches of worship, medical office buildings, boat yard, used car dealership, coffee shop and mini golf course, etc.

The tables found in the following Section II provide more development information for all 39 municipalities in Morris County.