

A Closer Look

Single Family Housing

Twenty-four (24) final subdivision plats consisting of 302 lots were approved by the Morris County Planning Board in 2008. 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 Table IV, final subdivision plats covered a total land area of 536.12 acres including new street area and area set aside within developments for open space. The total linear feet of new street was 31,658 or 6 miles. There were 88.19 acres dedicated for open space. The average lot size was 57,822 sq. ft. and the median lot size was 40,166 sq. ft. The median lot size in 2007 was 21,689 sq. ft.

The largest average subdivision lot size occurred in Mendham Township at 383,203 sq. ft. and the smallest average lot size is found in the Borough of Butler at 4,486 sq. ft. The median subdivision lot size for Morris County occurred in Mt. Olive Township at 40,166 sq. ft.

Mt. Olive Township led the County with the most lots at 221 followed by the Borough of Mt. Arlington with 16 lots and Montville Township with 11 lots. Municipalities in which final plat subdivisions occupy the greatest amount of area are Mt. Olive (320.61 acres), Mendham Township (64.33 acres), and the Borough of Mt. Arlington (25.07 acres), which includes 2.26 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 and five (105) lots were filed at the Office of the County Clerk during 2008, a 69% decrease from the 152 lots recorded in 2007.

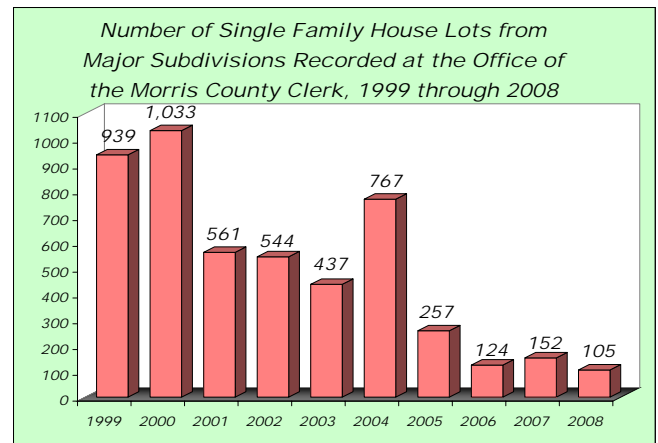


Chart G

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 residential 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 the 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 those recordings occurred during the first seven months of 2007. The month of August, 2007 is significant because the housing market took a downturn which became more severe towards the end of 2007 and continued into 2008.

In 2008, only 105 lots (Table V, Section II) were recorded at the Office of the County Clerk which was a record low. Most were small residential subdivisions consisting of 2 (technical major subdivision) to 11 lots and occurred as infill development in established neighborhoods in eleven of the County's 39 municipalities within the Highlands Planning Area.

Table VI (Section II) notes no new residential subdivisions of 20 or more lots were received in 2008. This signals the end of large tract developments in the NJ Highlands area of Morris County. The distribution of residential activity in Morris County for the year 2008 and during a five year period from 2004 to 2008 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 11) is a list of proposed residential site plans received by the Morris County Planning Board. They include projects for apartments, townhouses, and age restricted housing units. Unlike the year before, no new assisted living housing projects were received in 2008. Also, the downturn in the housing market continued to stall several large residential projects approved in 2006.

A large apartment project was received from Hanover Township. Woodmont Realty Group, Cedar Knolls, LLC proposed Cedar Knolls Mews at Cedar Knolls Road along the Whippany River. The development consists of 140 dwelling units in eight buildings on a 15 acre site. One building will have 28 affordable housing units. A clubhouse/pool and dog run will be provided. Previously, the Colloid Chemical Company occupied the site.

In Morris Township, Paragon Park at Morris Township; a townhouse development is proposed on the former 23 acre Verizon Office building site located at James Street and South Gate Parkway. It will consist of 92 market units in 23 (4 unit) townhouse structures. Also, a gazebo, bocce court and pergola will be provided.

Unlike 2007, growth in the age-restricted adult (55 and older) housing sector was minimal. In Montville Township, Hook Mountain Associates proposes a 28 unit age-restricted condominium building (Montville Residency) on a 3.11 acre site located on Hook Mountain Road at Bloomfield Avenue. A pool and recreation room is provided in the basement. Also, a large 160 unit senior living facility project located off the American Road in Hanover Township/Morris Plains was submitted in late December, 2007 but reviewed and

approved in 2008. It will provide 120 independent units and 40 assisted living units. As we work our way out of the current recession, it is anticipated that mixed use senior housing projects like Sunrise at Hanover will become more prevalent to meet the needs of Morris County's aging population.

Commercial, Industrial and Office

Site plans can include small building additions with a 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 VIII (Section II) provides a list of the more significant site plans of non-residential development with new floor area. Only site plans of 50,000 square feet and greater are included.

Like the previous year, redevelopment projects took center stage in 2008.

The largest project is the phased redevelopment of the former Exxon Research and Engineering facility in the Borough of Florham Park located on Park Avenue along Route 24. The Green at Florham Park will be developed as a planned unit development (PUD) in accordance with a general development plan (GDP). The south parcel (268.7 acres) will initially contain the following:

1. Marriott Renaissance Club Sport hotel containing 231,468 sq. ft. of gross floor area including 250 rooms, fitness club, meeting space, restaurant and lounge, and;
2. Atlantic Health Sports Institute containing 100,176 sq. ft. of gross floor area including diagnostic center, ambulatory surgery center and ancillary sports performance facilities. A parking structure for 224 parking spaces will be provided to serve the medical facility and hotel, and;
3. General business office building containing 130,000 sq. ft., and;
4. The recently completed athletic training facility and executive offices for the New York Jets.

Future phase(s) will include:

1. 550,000 sq. ft. of general business office, and;
2. 425 age-restricted dwelling units consisting of



multi-family, townhome, and single family (detached) units.

The north parcel (213.6 acres) north of Route 24 will remain in open space.

In Montville Township, a 137,993 sq. ft. Lowe's home improvement center and 48,000 sq. ft. retail building with 785 parking spaces are proposed for a 39.9 acre site located at the east end of Bloomfield Avenue and Route 46. Presently, the site is used for an auto salvage yard. About .8 mile west at Bloomfield Avenue, Change Bridge Road and Route 46, Pine Brook Investments, LLC proposes a 58,726 sq. ft. strip retail shopping facility with an 8,000 sq. ft. restaurant on a 4.2 acre site. New parking spaces total 295. An existing motel, car wash, two dwellings and a retail building will be razed for the project.

Like the previous year, there was more development occurring within existing commercial/industrial office parks.

Within the Foreign Trade Zone of Mt. Olive Township, Mt. Olive Industrial Realty Company proposes a 148,611 sq. ft. flex office (5 units) building with 267 parking spaces on a 6.6 acre subdivided lot at 750 Clark Drive. Similarly, within Ivy Corporate Park off Parsippany Road in Parsippany Troy Hills Township, Principal Properties, LP proposes a 62,664 sq. ft. office building within the existing parking area of office buildings 800 and 900.

Two new hotels are proposed in close proximity to Parsippany's office parks at Littleton Road/Route 10. Kamid Giri, LLC proposes a large hotel site on Route 10 consisting of a 4 story, 102 room Spring Hill Suites hotel and a 3 story, 101 room Town Place Suites hotel

with 202 parking spaces on a 5.4 acre site. An existing motel will be razed for the project which also includes a vacant lot. In the north section of the Township on Intervale Road adjacent to Route 287, Palmer Associates, LLC proposes a business campus consisting of 75,515 sq. ft. commercial multi-tenant building with 184 parking spaces on a 5.45 acre site. Four houses will be razed for the project.

Like the previous three years, small sites throughout the County are being redeveloped commercially for day care centers, exercise studio, dental office, retail stores/apartment(s), banks, restaurant and strip commercial buildings, etc.

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