

## TRAFFIC CIRCULATION UPDATE

The referenced map shows proposed roads and road connections adopted July 29 by the Planning Board as amendments to the traffic circulation element of the Township's Master Plan.

In a nutshell, the plan includes the following:

- A north-south connector road running from Orchard Road to Route 518, to the west of Route 206
- A road that runs south from Route 518 (directly across from the road described above) and then east, north of the airport, and intersecting Route 206 across from Burger King.
- A new traffic light at that intersection – next to Burger King and the entrance to Princeton North Shopping Center
- A back entrance to ShopRite off of Route 518
- Intersection improvements at 518/206 that include loop roads behind Amboy Bank and the Tigers Tale to eliminate the most problematic left turns in the intersection and improve through-movement

Environmental engineering consultants reported to the township in April that wetlands constraints and regulatory barriers would make an extension of Linton Drive, which was planned to connect Cherry Valley Road with Route 518, virtually impossible to build. Therefore, the extension of Linton Drive through the large wetlands area has been removed from the Master Plan.

A little background:

This was the second traffic circulation amendment of 2002. The first one, planned jointly with Princeton Township, focused on improvements to the intersection of 206, Cherry Valley Road and Princeton Avenue. The Township has applied to the state DOT for funding through the Transportation Trust Fund for those improvements, and also has appealed to DOT to allow a “delayed green” timing at that intersection. We are awaiting their decision.

In addition, the Township is working with DOT to remove the right-on-red restrictions at the intersection of 518 and 206, and to re-stripe the Orchard Road/206 intersection in a way that will make left turns easier and through-traffic smoother.

The recommendations for all of these improvements were developed by Montgomery's Transportation Advisory Committee, a group of township residents, officials, planners, engineers, and traffic experts who worked with landowners (including Bloomberg L.C., Princeton North Shopping Center, Sharbell Corporation, SSAT, Tiger's Tale, Amboy Bank, Computer Associates, Squibb Convatec and others), the NJ Department of Transportation, and Rocky Hill officials.

The traffic relief plan is designed to serve the following objectives:

- ✓ Enable local drivers to move through and within this area more easily without destroying the character of neighboring residential areas or "blowing out" the intersection by adding two lanes in every direction;
- ✓ Accommodate today's traffic as well as expected increases in the volume of cars due to ongoing regional growth, the Hillsborough Bypass, possible expansion of Bloomberg's Business Park, and additional mixed-use development in this district where development pressure is intense;
- ✓ Safeguard the rights and interests of residents;
- ✓ Assure that the impact on commercial property owners is understood and manageable, and
- ✓ Improve traffic flow without adding unnecessary infrastructure/lanes that invite unwanted development or attract additional unexpected traffic.

Note: The alignment of the southern loop road - the proposed road that extends south from Rt 518 through the Drake Farm and meets Rt 206 across from the Burger King and entrance to Princeton North Shopping Center - may change. The touchdown points on Route 206 and 518 are basically fixed, but the alignment across the farmland may change, depending on what works best for the farmers and to accommodate public open space and mixed uses on land in that quadrant that currently is vacant.

Please also note: these traffic circulation recommendations are one part of a larger community-based planning effort to address zoning, pedestrian mobility and other issues related to land use and the long-term health and vitality of Montgomery's "center of gravity," as one eloquent resident has called this district.

The Township will now turn its attention to implementing the plan. This will require engineering and surveying, permits, and funding. Most of the cost for most of the improvements will be borne by developers, but the township also will aggressively pursue funding from Somerset County and from the State and Federal Departments of Transportation. The work will not be done overnight but will be vigorously pursued.

### **Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)**

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