

# The Informed Citizen

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www.holmdel-cilu.org

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## WILL HOLMDEL BE RUINED BY OVER-DEVELOPMENT?

### HIGH DENSITY HOUSING RECENTLY APPROVED FOR ALCATEL-LUCENT TRACT

In May 2012 the Holmdel Township Committee voted 4-1 to adopt a **Redevelopment Plan** (new zoning) for the 472-acre Alcatel-Lucent tract. This Plan allows 225 homes to be built (with multiple homes per acre) external to the main building.

The Plan requires these 225 homes to be served by public sewers, which is contrary to a 2011 proposed plan that called for only 30 homes outside the building and **did not require sewers**.

### DOES HOLMDEL NEED MORE HOMES AND MORE SCHOOLCHILDREN?

The extension of sewers on the Lucent tract sets a dangerous precedent. It could easily lead to the addition of up to 4,000 homes in our community of 5,500 homes by expanding sewers into the remaining 1,000 acres of undeveloped Holmdel land.

This Redevelopment Plan says that 185 of the 225 homes will be age-restricted; however, a 2009 New Jersey law (used this year in East Windsor) gives developers with unsold age-restricted homes a loophole to remove age restrictions. The result could be hundreds more children in Holmdel's schools, larger class sizes, and more tax money needed to educate them.

### CILU IS VERY CONCERNED - YOU SHOULD BE TOO!

Holmdel's governing body is also pursuing commercial ratables in other portions of Holmdel to intensify development in Holmdel Village, and on Routes 34 and 35, with little apparent regard for the resulting negative impacts on the residents living in those areas.

### THE RATABLES CHASE IS A MYTH

*THE MORE THEY BUILD,  
THE MORE WE'RE  
BILLED!*

Some people assume that towns can lower their property tax rates by adding ratables (developments generating significant tax revenues). This is not always the case. A 2010 study of all New Jersey municipalities by the Trenton-based New Jersey Future [1] revealed that the **Ratables Chase does not work**. It showed that additional commercial ratables often result in the need for more services, which use up the extra tax revenue.

### THE VALUE OF OPEN SPACE

By contrast, the Strategic State Plan found that every \$1 invested in land preservation yields a \$10 overall benefit. It stated that "preserved open space properties can have a net positive impact on a local tax base, particularly in the long term, by increasing property values and taxes paid on nearby properties." [2].

### WHAT'S WRONG WITH SEWERS

#### ***Sewers Decrease and Degrade our Water Supply***

Much of Monmouth County depends on the Swimming River Reservoir to provide adequate amounts of clean water. The Lucent tract and other sections of southern Holmdel are part of the watershed whose streams and aquifers feed into this reservoir.

Public sewers will negatively impact our water supply. They disrupt the process of recharging the streams and aquifers by removing water from the natural soil filtration and recharge processes and discharging it to the ocean instead. **This will lead to the increased likelihood of droughts.**

Public sewers will degrade the quality of our drinking water. Hundreds of acres of impervious coverage yield polluted storm water run-off entering streams that feed into our reservoir.

#### ***Sewers Facilitate Development***

Once land is zoned for sewers, it's difficult to say "no" to developers. Developer profits increase with the density of development. Without sewers, density is limited by the size of the septic fields.

With more than 1,000 acres of undeveloped land left in Holmdel, in addition to the Alcatel-Lucent tract, sewer extensions would allow much more intense development than is now supportable without sewers. Compare the difference in the development patterns of Colts Neck (no sewers) and Aberdeen or Hazlet (with sewers) to see the effect of sewers on development.

Sewering the entire Alcatel-Lucent property facilitates immense development external to the existing two million square foot building. This clearly benefits the developer, but could have severe negative impacts on the community.

#### ***Sewers are Expensive***

Sewers are expensive to install and to operate, both for existing sewer users and for each homeowner who connects into public sewers (see below).

#### **WHAT DO SEWERS COST?**

Installing Public Sewer Line	\$25,000
Subsidy from existing sewer users	-\$2,500
Related costs:	
- demolition of existing septic tank	
- connecting house to public sewer line	
- restoring disturbed landscaping	
- sewer connection fees	\$ 8,000
<b>Approximate Homeowner's Cost</b>	<b>\$31,500</b>

#### **PLUS**

<u>Annual Sewer Utility Bills</u>	<u>\$460</u>
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**NOTE:** In larger projects, existing sewer users may have greater financial obligations if the Township subsidizes the project at the expense of existing sewer users, which has typically been the case.

## WHAT DO WE STAND TO LOSE?

- Holmdel's excellent school system
- Our rural atmosphere
- Lower taxes than comparable towns

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

Before any development of the Alcatel-Lucent tract can move forward, the Township must enter into a **Redeveloper's Agreement** with the chosen developer. This is an opportunity to address some of the deficiencies of the plan.

If you are concerned about Holmdel's future, overdevelopment of the Alcatel-Lucent property, or irreversible damage to our water supply, let your voice be heard! Please urge the Township Committee to amend its Redevelopment Plan and include requirements in the upcoming Redeveloper's Agreement to restrict sewers on this property to prevent sprawl development, limit impervious coverage, limit traffic, and protect our water supply.

We also need to encourage the Township Committee to include specific requirements for open space and farmland preservation,

reforestation of open buffer areas, filtering and treating of stormwater run-off before it enters our streams and reservoir, and integrating public walking and biking trails into the development plan.

### MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!

- Contact the Township Committee: **info@holmdeltownship-nj.com** or Holmdel Township Committee  
4 Crawfords Corner Road  
Holmdel, NJ 07733
- Speak at Township Committee meetings:  
Thursday, Nov. 15  
Thursday, Dec. 13  
Meetings begin at 7:00 p.m. in Town Hall with public comments taken at the beginning and/or end.
- Write letters to the editors or post your opinion on Holmdel-Hazlet Patch.
  - Asbury Park Press**  
yourviews@app.com
  - Independent**  
indy@gmnews.com
  - Holmdel Happenings**  
avamend@aol.com
  - Holmdel Journal**  
nassaujournal@gmail.com
  - Community Magazine –**  
magazine@mycommunitypublications.com
  - Holmdel-Hazlet Patch**  
www.holmdel-hazlet.patch.com  
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## WHAT IS CILU?

Citizens for Informed Land Use was formed in 1998 when Holmdel residents were faced with a Township Committee planning to put up to 600 homes on the former Chase Tract and extend sewers to most of southern Holmdel. Through the efforts of many concerned residents, our community was able to avert these errant proposals and thereby preserve Holmdel's unique character for at least another fifteen years.

In 2012-2013, Holmdel residents face looming official efforts to sell public open space, chase new commercial ratable developments to the likely detriment of nearby residents, and expand the reach of public sewers.

***Citizens for Informed Land Use is chartered as a non-profit, non-partisan 501 (c) (4) membership organization whose mission is to promote informed and thoughtful land use decisions and protect Holmdel's natural resources.***

Contributions are welcome and appreciated, but are not tax deductible.

To join CILU, please go to **www.holmdel-cilu.org**

## REFERENCES

[1] "Chasing Their Tails: Municipal ratables Case Doesn't Necessarily Pay," by Tim Evans, Research Director, New Jersey Future, July 2010  
<http://www.njfuture.org/research-publications/research-reports/ratables-chase-doesnt-pay/>

[2] "State Strategic Plan: New Jersey's State Development & Redevelopment Plan," November 2011  
<http://www.state.nj.us/state/planning/publications/192-draft-final-ssp.pdf>

**Inside:  
The Informed Citizen Newsletter  
WILL HOLMDEL BE RUINED  
BY OVER-DEVELOPMENT?**

NonProfit Org  
US Postage  
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