

# Downtown Woodbridge, Area 1 Redevelopment Plan

Township of Woodbridge  
Middlesex County,  
New Jersey



August 2017

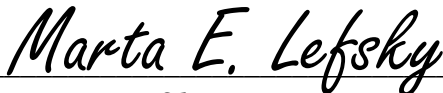
ENDORSED 9/27/2017 by Township of Woodbridge Planning Board

ADOPTED 10/10/2017 by Township of Woodbridge Council

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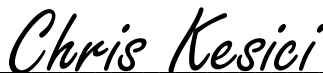
Prepared by  
Township of Woodbridge Department of Planning & Development

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marta E. Lefsky". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath it.

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# INTRODUCTION

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The Woodbridge proper section of Woodbridge Township has a traditional central business district with stores, restaurants, a train station, parks, and a townhall. The Township desires to revitalize “the downtown” with new mixed-use buildings and increased residential density in order to sustain, promote, and grow the downtown into the next century. This redevelopment plan is one of several anticipated redevelopment plans for the redevelopment of Downtown Woodbridge.

The former Stern Towers Township housing site represents an extraordinary opportunity to develop a modern transit-oriented development at the Woodbridge Train Station. The redevelopment area is located in downtown Woodbridge proper between Brook Street and North James Street. This plan will foster the transformation of the property into a productive high density, mixed-use building. Due to its advantageous location adjacent to the train station and downtown Woodbridge, this redevelopment area should be a highly desirable location for people to live and work.

The redevelopment of this property presents unique challenges. In response to the physical and economic conditions at this site, the Township Council requested that the Planning Board evaluate certain properties as a “non-condemnation area in need of redevelopment” on September 1, 2015. Following the Planning Board’s evaluation, the Township Council designated the area as a “non-condemnation area in need of redevelopment” on October 6, 2015.

## STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

According to the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (N.J.S.A. 40A: 12A-1, et. seq.) the Redevelopment Plan shall include an outline for the planning, development, redevelopment or rehabilitation of the project area sufficient to indicate:

- Its relationship to definitive local objectives as to appropriate land uses, density of population and improved traffic and public transportation, public utilities, recreational and community facilities and other public improvements;
- Proposed land uses and building requirements in the project area;
- Adequate provision for the temporary and permanent relocation as

necessary of residents in the project area, including an estimate of the extent to which decent, safe, and sanitary dwelling units, affordable to displaced residents will be available in the existing local housing market;

- An identification of any property within the Redevelopment Area proposed to be acquired in accordance with the Redevelopment Plan;
- Any significant relationship of the Redevelopment Plan to:
  - A) The Master Plans of contiguous municipalities;
  - B) The Master Plan of the County in which the municipality is located; and;
  - C) The State Development and Redevelopment Plan adopted pursuant to the “State Planning Act.”

## PLANNING CONTEXT

The Township of Woodbridge is 24.2 square miles in size and located in northeastern Middlesex County. The Township of Woodbridge is bordered by Clark Township, the City of Rahway, the City of Linden, and Union County to the north; the Borough of Carteret, the Arthur Kill and the City of Perth Amboy to the east; the Raritan River to the south; and Edison Township to the west.

The Woodbridge proper section of the Township is generally bound by the Garden State Parkway to the west, a freight rail line to the north, the City of Perth Amboy to the south, and the New Jersey Turnpike to the east. The Woodbridge section of the Township consists of mostly residential neighborhoods, commercial uses along Route 9 and Route 35. The Woodbridge proper central business district is located along Main Street. The central business district includes the Woodbridge Train Station, public parks, a college and the Township Municipal Complex.

The redevelopment area is located in the Woodbridge proper central business district between Brook Street and North James Street and half a block away from the Woodbridge Train Station. The Woodbridge Train Station is on the New Jersey Transit North Jersey Coast Line with service to New York City and southern shore points. The station has frequent peak hour service and moderate mid-day, night, and weekend service. This redevelopment area is one of several anticipated redevelopment areas intended to

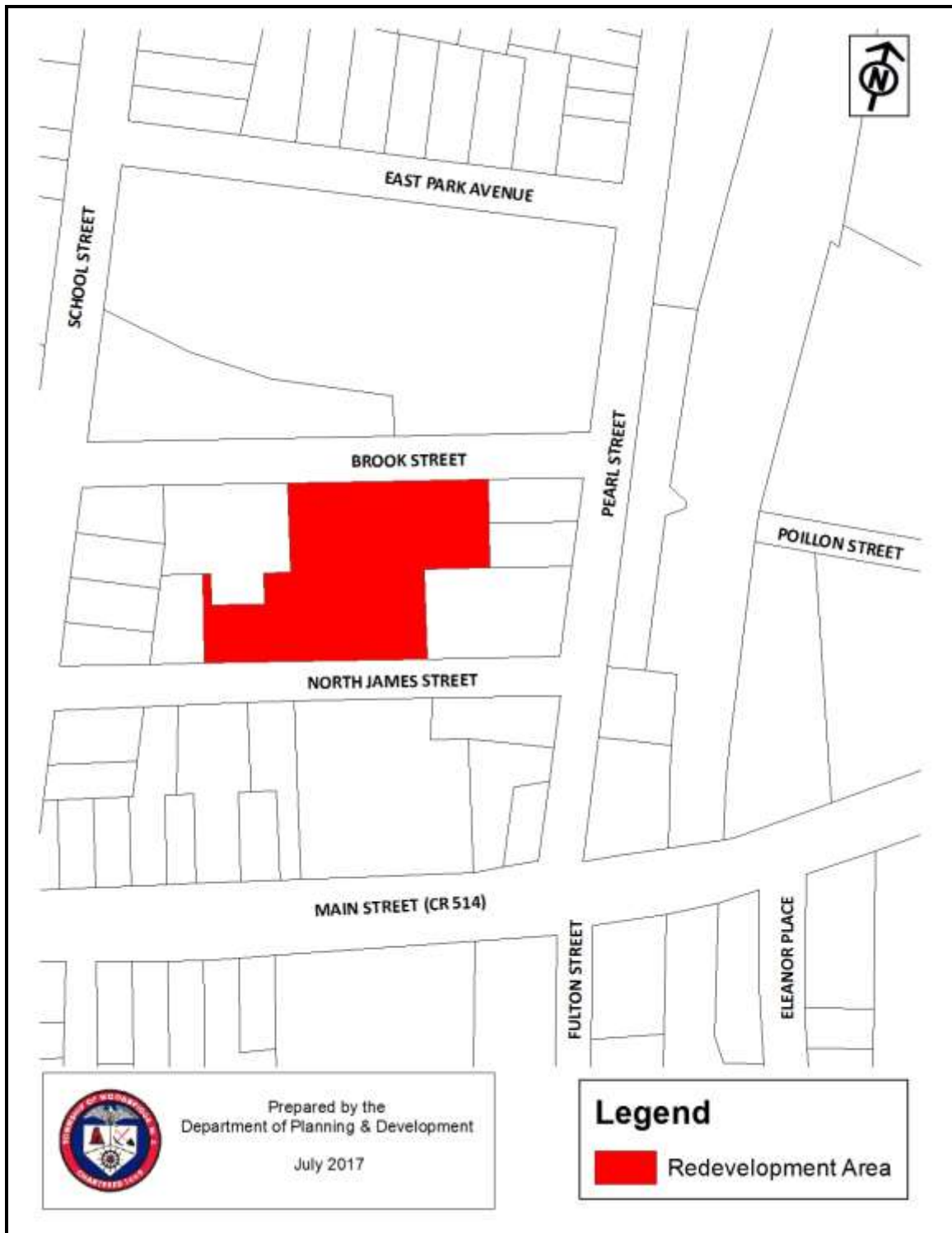
revitalize and modernize downtown Woodbridge. This Plan complements the Rahway Avenue-Nielson Street Redevelopment Plan which also proposes a transit-oriented development and is root in that plan's origin.

The Redevelopment Area is a one acre parcel, known on the Township Tax Map as Block 543.01, Lot 5. A variety of land uses surround the area: Heards Brook, Marion and Norman Tanzman Park, and James Keating Park are north of the area. Single-story commercial buildings are immediately east of the area. The rear of Main Street business are south of the area. A multifamily apartment building and a single-family house are immediately west of the area.

**Figure 1: Downtown Woodbridge Overview**



**Figure 2: Downtown Woodbridge, Area 1 Parcel Map**





**Figure 3: Downtown Woodbridge Area 1 Aerial Map**





## HISTORY OF WOODBRIDGE

The Township of Woodbridge is the first incorporated township in the state of New Jersey. The Woodbridge proper section of Woodbridge Township is one of the earliest settled sections of the Township. Woodbridge proper has been the location of the downtown central business district and is where some of the first community facilities were built, such as townhall, schools, fire houses, libraries, and churches. Woodbridge was known for clay mining in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Woodbridge Center Mall opened in 1971 on the site of a former clay pit.

Woodbridge proper has one of the three New Jersey Transit train stations in the Township.

## MASTER PLANNING & ZONING DESIGNATION HISTORY

The Township Master Plan identifies that the current land use for this area as public property, recognizing its use as a public housing development. The redevelopment area is in the Main Street Rehabilitation and Transit Village Plan. The Master Plan proposes designation of the majority of this area as a rehabilitation area.

According to historic zoning maps, the redevelopment area was in the Central Business Zone from 1960 to 2008. In 2008, the Main Street Rehabilitation and Transit Village Area was created.

## PLAN GOALS

The overall goal of this Redevelopment Plan is to address the existing conditions that have negatively impacted the Area and comprehensively upgrade the area for redevelopment. The Township aims to reach the following goals:

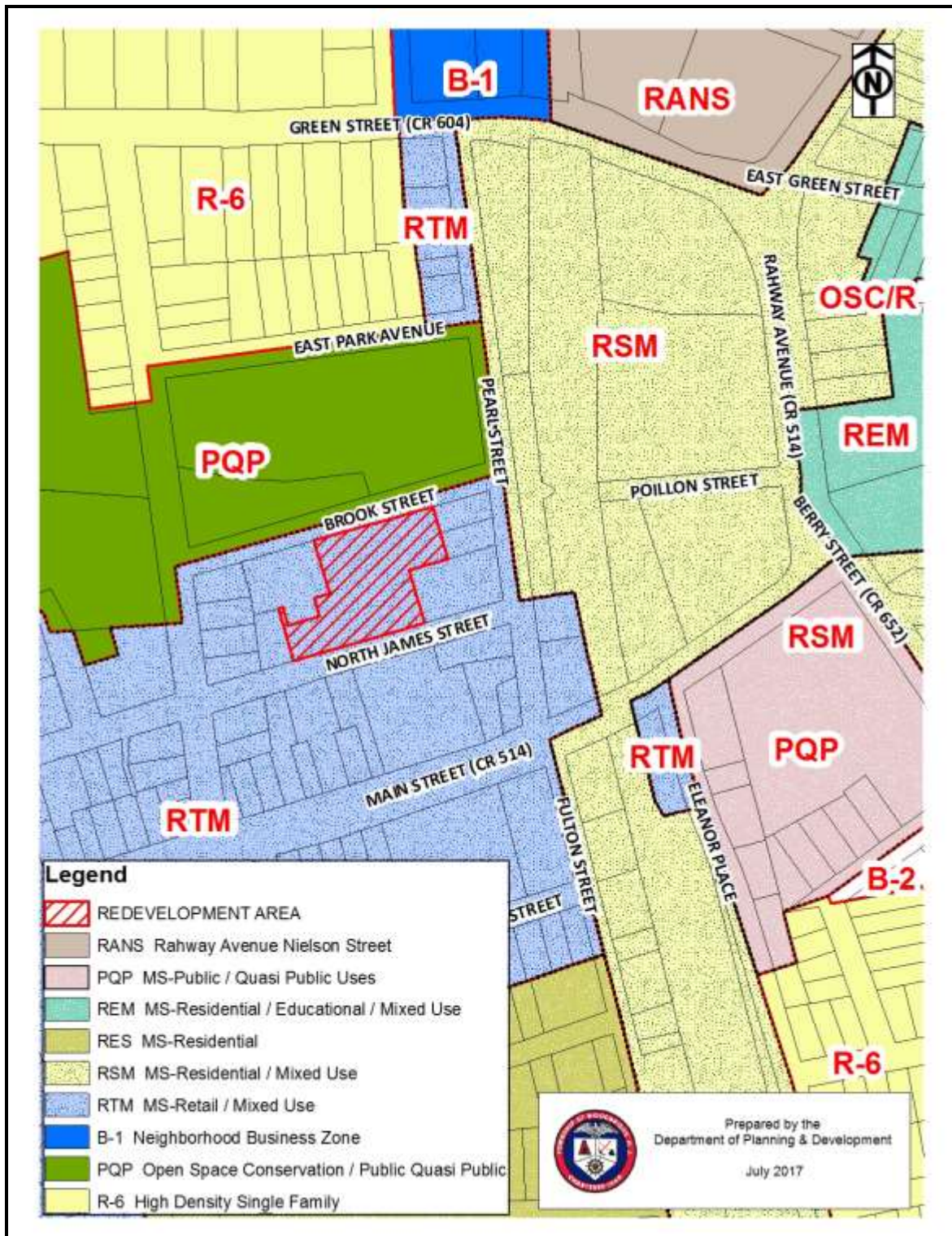
- To promote transit-oriented development at an appropriate scale
- To stimulate economic investment in the Area
- To promote the effective use of all the Redevelopment Area properties and to increase property tax base
- To promote further new development in downtown Woodbridge
- To improve the physical appearance of the Area
- To promote mass transit opportunities

- To provide a wide range of housing opportunities for all socio-economic strata
- To promote and sustain the downtown business community

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Any construction of new housing units presents an opportunity to contribute to the Township's affordable housing stock and must be provided in accordance with the relevant case law, statutes and regulations in effect at the time of an approval for development of the property.

Figure 4: Existing Zoning



## RELATIONSHIP OF PLAN TO THE TOWNSHIP LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE (APPLICATION & PROCESS)

The Redevelopment Area shall be redeveloped in accordance with the standards detailed in this Redevelopment Plan. This Plan supersedes the use and bulk provisions of the Township Land Use and Development Ordinance (Chapter 150) for the Redevelopment Area unless specifically referenced. Other Township regulations affecting developments that are in conflict are superseded by this Plan; however, existing engineering standards, performance standards and definitions shall apply.

In connection with site plan or subdivision applications, the Planning Board may grant deviations from the regulations contained within this Redevelopment Plan where by reason of exceptional narrowness, shallowness or shape of a specific piece of property or by reason of exceptional topographic conditions, pre-existing structures and physical features uniquely affecting a specific piece of property, the strict application of any area, yard, bulk or design objective or regulation adopted pursuant to this Redevelopment Plan would result in peculiar and exceptional practical difficulties to, or exceptional or undue hardship upon, the developer or redeveloper of such property. The Planning Board may also grant a deviation from the regulations contained within this Redevelopment Plan related to a specific piece of property where the purposes of this Redevelopment Plan would be advanced by such deviation from the strict application of the requirements of this Plan and the benefits of granting the deviation would outweigh any detriments.

The Planning Board may grant exceptions or waivers of design standards from the requirements for site plan or subdivision approval as may be reasonable and within the general purpose and intent of the provisions for site plan review and/or subdivision approval within the Plan, if the literal enforcement of one or more provisions of the Plan is impracticable or would exact undue hardship because of peculiar conditions pertaining to this site. No deviations may be granted under the terms of this section unless such deviations can be granted without resulting in substantial detriment to the public good and will not substantially impair the intent and purpose of the Redevelopment Plan.

No deviations may be granted which will result in permitting a use that is not a permitted use within this Redevelopment Plan. Any deviations from standards of this Plan that results in a “d” variance pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-70d shall be addressed as an amendment to the Plan rather than via variance relief through the Township’s Zoning Board of Adjustment. An application requesting a deviation from the requirements of this Redevelopment Plan shall provide public notice of such application in accordance with the public notice requirement set forth in N.J.S.A. 40:55D- 12a.&b. All development must be approved by the

Planning Board and shall be submitted through the normal site plan and subdivision procedures as identified as N.J.S.A. 40:55D, et seq.

Final adoption of this Redevelopment Plan by the Township Council shall be considered an amendment to the Township of Woodbridge Land Use and Development Ordinance and Zoning Map. Unless otherwise defined in the Plan, terms used in this Plan shall have the same meaning as defined in the Township's Land Use and Development Ordinance.



# DOWNTOWN WOODBRIDGE, AREA 1

## REDEVELOPMENT AREA ZONING STANDARDS

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The following standards contain information pertaining to the purpose of the zone; the permitted and accessory uses; bulk standards; and other district-specific standards. The evaluation of any proposal submitted under the Redevelopment Plan shall be based upon sections of this Redevelopment Plan entitled Relationship of Plan to the Township Land Development Regulations including District and Design Standards.

The purpose of this Redevelopment Zone is to provide a transit-oriented development in close proximity to the Woodbridge Train Station, which is compatible with the surrounding land uses, and provides efficient and safe traffic and pedestrian circulation.

### Permitted Uses:

A building may be erected, altered or used and a lot or premises may be occupied and used for any of the following purposes:

- Mid-rise multi-family residential development as a principal use that may include associated neighborhood commercial uses, including small-scale retail, restaurants/cafes, and support service uses such as remote dry cleaning establishments

### Bulk Standards:

- Minimum lot size: 40,000 square feet
- Minimum lot width: 200 feet
- Minimum lot depth: 200 feet
- Minimum front setback: 0 feet
- Minimum each side setback: 0 feet
- Minimum both side setbacks: 0 feet
- Minimum rear setback: 0 feet
- Maximum building coverage (including principal and accessory buildings) : 100%
- Maximum impervious coverage by all buildings and pavement: 100%
- Maximum building height: 6 stories or 80 feet

## Residential Amenities:

- Resident amenities shall be provided, including but not limited to: Luxury interior lobby; Outdoor pool and patio; Fitness center; Community room/lounge, bicycle parking/storage, outdoor public space both passive and active.

## Accessory Buildings:

- Accessory buildings for tools and equipment used for maintenance of the grounds which are not attached to the principal building shall not exceed 10 feet in height as measured from the grade to the ridge at the peak of the roof. No side wall of such accessory buildings may exceed eight feet above grade in height. No such shed shall exceed 150 square feet in area. All such accessory buildings shall conform to at least the front setback requirement of the principal building. The minimum side and rear yard setbacks shall be four feet. All other accessory buildings not attached to the principal building shall not exceed 15 feet in height and shall conform to at least the front setback requirement of the principal building. The minimum side and rear yard setbacks shall be four feet
- Those outdoor swimming pools less than four feet high shall be enclosed by a permanent fence not less than four feet high with a locked gate. Building permits will be required for all swimming pools, above or below ground, with a water surface area of 250 square feet or over

## Parking:

Within an interior parking deck, tandem parking spaces may be utilized where dimensions and design permits.

## Residential Parking Requirement:

- Minimum of 1.25 spaces per unit

## Circulation:

- Curbs cuts and site driveways shall be sized to accommodate the safe access and egress of emergency services equipment
- Sidewalks shall be provided along Green Street and Rahway Avenue

- Commercial units shall be directly accessible from either Green Street or Rahway Avenue

### Loading and Outside Storage:

- Loading spaces shall be at least 12-feet in width and 50-feet in length
- One (1) loading space required for every 5,000-20,000 square feet of retail structure
- Loading and delivery areas shall be separated from residential parking areas.
- No outside storage of materials, raw or finished, shall be stored in any yard or open area

### Landscaping:

- Minimum landscaped area required to be 15 percent and may include all required buffers. In calculating the landscaped areas, the areas of plazas, open pedestrian shopping malls, sitting areas, pools and fountains shall be included. Landscaping shall be required within paved parking areas.
- All setback areas fronting public roadways shall be defined by a combination of decorative fencing and/or landscaping. The landscaped area within should contain a variety of flowering trees, shrubs, perennials, annuals and bulbs to complement the architecture and provide seasonal interest.
- Landscape design should be integrated into overall site design and plans should include a watering and maintenance schedule for each area.
- All trees to be removed shall be done in accordance with the Township Tree Replacement Ordinance.

### Buffering and Screening:

- Any dumpster shall be screened from public view with fencing and landscaping

### Lighting:

- Pedestrian-level, bollard lighting, ground-mounted lighting, or other low, glare-controlled fixtures mounted on building or landscape walls shall be used to light pedestrian walkways.
- Accent lighting on buildings is encouraged.

- Lighting shall be shielded to prevent glare on adjacent properties.
- Exterior light fixtures shall be compatible and relate to the architectural character of the buildings on a site. Site lighting shall be provided at the minimum level to accommodate safe pedestrian and vehicular movements without causing any off-site glare.
- Parking lot lights shall not exceed 20 feet in height and shall contain decorative fixtures.

## Utilities:

- Wherever practical, consideration should be given to relocating above ground utilities to underground.
- Wherever practical, utility meters should not be located in front yards.

## Signage:

- Signs shall be in harmony and consistent with the architecture of the building and relate to the features of the building in terms of location, scale, color, lettering, materials, texture and depth.
- Two (2) freestanding signs are permitted. Such signs shall not exceed eight (8) feet in height and shall not exceed a total of 75 square feet per side. Such signage shall be located no closer than 4 feet to any property line, and shall not be located within the sight triangle of any intersection or access drive with a public street. The sign shall incorporate the design and materials that match the architecture of the development.
- Wayfinding signage to direct visitors toward parking areas, building identification, building entrances and activity centers is permitted as appropriate. Wayfinding signage shall be no greater than ten (10) square feet per sign.
- Wall mounted façade signs for commercial and residential uses are permitted. The total area of all façade signs shall not exceed 10% of the total façade square footage.

# PLAN RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER PLANS

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## RELATIONSHIP TO THE TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

The Township of Woodbridge's last comprehensive Master Plan was prepared in February 2009. The Master Plan recommended this area be a rehabilitation area.

The Master Plan adopted the following goals that are relevant to this Plan:

- To permit residential uses at appropriate densities in locations accessible to major roadways, commercial services, public facilities and traditional downtown areas;
- To provide sufficient residential opportunities, in locations with access to facilities and services, to help the Township's senior residents age in place;

## MASTER PLANS OF ADJACENT MUNICIPALITIES

The Downtown Woodbridge, Area 1 Redevelopment Area is located in the Woodbridge proper section of the Township. The closest adjacent municipality to the area is the City of Perth Amboy to the east. The redevelopment plan is not anticipated to have an adverse impact on the City of Perth Amboy.

## MIDDLESEX COUNTY PLANS

### Middlesex County Growth Management Strategy

Between 1990 and 1995, Middlesex County prepared phased Growth Management Strategy to address infrastructure need, regional design and growth management strategies. The County was subdivided into four regions. Woodbridge Township is located in the northeast region, as were all neighboring municipalities.

Phase I of the plan found that large levels of public & private investment were necessary to maintain infrastructure with the highest cost items being maintenance and improvement to sewers, parks and roads.



Phase II of the plan focused on managing actual growth pertaining to five specific case studies. None of the case studies focused on areas of Woodbridge.

Phase III of the study, three primary recommendations were made as part of the Metropark Case Study:

- Traffic congestion inhibits growth in the area. Access to Metropark is limited by the narrow rail underpasses and New Jersey Transit's parking expansion will place an even greater burden on local roads. Transportation management measures should be implemented intensively for this area;
- The NJ Transit parking deck project includes the construction of space for retail facilities to better serve commuter needs. Additional retail development to serve nearby office workers should be evaluated;
- Growth in this study area is limited by increasingly scarce buildable land and the need for increased sewage capacity in the Township. A stormwater management plan should be developed for the entire South Branch of the Rahway River drainage area in order to determine the most effective stormwater control measures.

This Redevelopment Plan is consistent with the recommendations discussed in the Middlesex County Growth Management Strategy and will serve to offer some of "the retail development" contemplated for neighboring office workers.

### Consistency with Middlesex County Master Plan

The Downtown Woodbridge, Area 1 Redevelopment Plan is generally consistent with the elements of the Middlesex County Master Plan, a document that addresses sprawl and sustainability in the region. This Redevelopment Plan adheres directly to the goals, values and objectives of the Middlesex County Master Plan which aims to:

- Make fuller use of existing transportation lines and facilities. The County Plan anticipated that public transportation would achieve greater significance as a necessary alternative to the private automobile, with its attendant problems of pollution, energy availability, and congestion;
- Find a more feasible alternative to the present situation of "strip" commercial development found on major roads, and single-family homes on unnecessarily large lots;

- “Cluster” future growth around definable town centers and transportation facilities to include commercial and office employment as well as residential, with land use intensity decreasing as distance from the town center increases.

## New Jersey State Development & Redevelopment Plan (2001)

This Redevelopment Plan is consistent and would effectuate the plans and policies of the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP), adopted in 2001. The SDRP is a unique document that guides State-level development and redevelopment policy as well as local and regional planning efforts. This Plan is consistent with the following statewide goals in the SDRP.

- Revitalize the State’s cities and towns;
- Promote beneficial economic growth, development and renewal for all residents of New Jersey;
- Protect the environment, prevent and clean up pollution;
- Provide adequate public facilities and services at a reasonable cost;
- Preserve and enhance areas with historic, cultural, scenic, open space, and recreational value;
- Ensure sound and integrated planning and implementation statewide.

The SDRP also includes a State Plan Policy Map, which divides the state into regions, known as Planning Areas, and includes specific goals for each area.

The Policy Map also identifies “Centers”, locations into which development is to be directed, “Environs,” areas to be protected from future growth. The Township of Woodbridge falls in the ‘Metropolitan Planning Area’ (PA1). The State Plan recognizes that all communities in this planning area are essentially fully developed; hence much of the change in land uses will occur as redevelopment.

The State Plan’s planning objectives for the ‘Metropolitan Planning Area’ includes:

- Providing for much of the state’s future redevelopment;
- Revitalizing cities and towns;

- Redesigning areas of sprawl;
- Protecting the character of existing stable communities.

This Plan will serve to meet each of these goals for the designated area.

The New Jersey Department of State has been preparing a new State Strategic Plan since 2012. The proposed plan has not been adopted by the State Planning Commission.

# IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

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## REDEVELOPMENT ENTITY

The Woodbridge Township Redevelopment Agency will serve as the Redevelopment Entity.

## PHASING:

- Projects may be developed in phases;
- The phasing may include phased start and completion dates among the various land use components, as well as internal phasing schedules within sections, subject to specific provisions in the redevelopment agreement.

## SELECTION OF DESIGNATED DEVELOPERS

Potential redevelopers will be required to submit to the Redevelopment Entity for review and approval prior to the designation of a redeveloper(s) at a minimum:

- Financial responsibility and capability;
- Estimated development cost;
- Estimated time schedule;
- Conceptual site plans including elevations;
- Fiscal impact analysis.

## APPOINTMENT OF A DESIGNATED REDEVELOPER

The Redevelopment Entity may select one or more redevelopers to participate in the implementation of the Redevelopment Plan.

As part of the process to be designated a redeveloper, the Redevelopment Entity will negotiate a formal Redevelopment Agreement.

Designation of a Redeveloper(s) by the Redevelopment Entity shall be subject to the execution of an appropriate Redevelopment Agreement.

## CONDITIONS IN REDEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT(S)

Each Redevelopment Agreement will be contingent upon the following conditions, restrictions, and/or requirements.

1. Each Redevelopment Agreement will incorporate the pertinent aspects of the selected redeveloper's proposal and will address financial considerations, planning, phasing, development and such other issues as deemed appropriate and/or as required according to state law in order to implement the Redevelopment Plan.
2. A designated redeveloper will be obligated to complete on-site improvements as approved, together with any specified off-site improvements, as may be required in accordance with the Redevelopment Plan and the Redevelopment Agreement.
3. Any necessary deed of conveyance shall include a restriction that the designated redeveloper and his successors or assigns shall devote land to the uses specified in the designated redeveloper's final plan and shall not devote such land to any other uses.
4. No designated redeveloper will be permitted to dispose of property until the issuance of the Certificate of Completion, unless the prior written consent of the Redevelopment Agency has been obtained.
5. No covenant, agreement, lease, conveyance, or other instrument shall be effective or executed by the Township of Woodbridge and the Redevelopment Entity or by the purchasers or lessees from them, or by any successors in interest of such purchasers or lessees, by which land in the Redevelopment Area is restricted as to sale, lease, or occupancy upon the basis of race, color, creed, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, or marital status.
6. The Redeveloper(s) shall pay to the Redevelopment Entity an application fee for consideration of redeveloper as a designated redeveloper and will fund an escrow for the Agency's costs in implementing redevelopment.
7. The Redevelopment Entity and the Township of Woodbridge reserve the right to terminate any Redevelopment Agreement with a designated redeveloper subject to the terms and conditions of the Redevelopment Agreement.



## DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

No application for development or redevelopment in the area may be filed with the Planning Board until such time as the applicant has applied for and received a designation as redeveloper from the Redevelopment Entity and has executed a Redevelopment Agreement with the Redevelopment Entity providing for the proposed application. In addition to any requirements of the Agency, major preliminary and/or Final Site Plans and/or subdivisions, with details sufficient to comply with the Municipal Land Use Law and Local Ordinance, shall be submitted for Planning Board review and approval for each development parcel, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1 et seq.

The Planning Board shall require the developer to provide a bond or bonds of sufficient size and duration to guarantee the completion of the various phases of the project in compliance with the requirements of law and planning approvals.

## DURATION OF REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

During the time that the Redevelopment Plan is in effect, any party acting as a redeveloper, (as defined in the LRHL) must obtain the approval of the Redevelopment Entity. The Redevelopment Plan will remain in effect for 30 years.

## AMENDING THE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

This Redevelopment Plan may be amended from time to time in compliance with the requirements of law, provided that the respect to any land in the project area previously disposed of by the Redevelopment Entity for use in accordance with the Redevelopment Plan, the Entity will notice the owner of such land whose interests may be materially affected by such amendment.