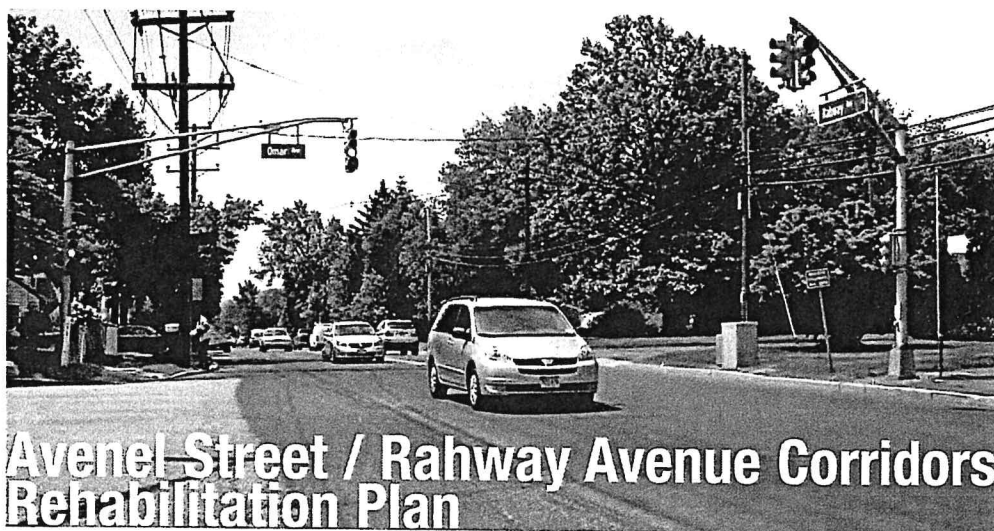




Prepared for the Township of Woodbridge, New Jersey

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May 2009

Avenel Street/Rahway Avenue **Corridors Rehabilitation Plan**

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Avenel Street/Rahway Avenue **Corridors Rehabilitation Plan**

1. Introduction

BASIS FOR THE PLAN

This Rehabilitation Plan has been prepared for the Township of Woodbridge, Middlesex County, New Jersey for properties located along Avenel Street and Rahway Avenue. More particularly, the Rehabilitation Area consists of blocks (or portions of blocks) fronting on Rahway Avenue between Randolph Avenue to the north and the rail lines of the Port Reading Branch of Conrail to the south; and blocks (or portions of blocks) fronting on Avenel Street roughly between Route 1 in the west and Rahway Avenue in the east. The location of the Rehabilitation Area is shown in Figure 1. The properties identified will generally be referred to as the "Rehabilitation Area" or "Plan Area."

The Township of Woodbridge Council directed the Township's Planning Board on May 6th, 2008 to study the area in order to determine whether it was an "Area in Need of Rehabilitation" in accordance with the criteria specified at N.J.S.A. 40A:12A. The Township retained Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates to conduct the Rehabilitation Area investigation. On May 14th 2008, the Planning Board recommended that the study area be designated as an Area in Need of Rehabilitation by Resolution. A public meeting was held on May 21st 2008 and the Woodbridge Council subsequently declared the area in need of Rehabilitation by Resolution on that same date.

The Rehabilitation Area consists of 228 properties located on 50 tax lots along Avenel Street and Rahway Avenue. Currently, the Plan Area is comprised of predominantly residential and convenience-oriented retail uses along the two main thoroughfares. There are also some industrial and auto-related uses along Rahway Avenue in the northern section of the study area. The surrounding area is largely single-family residential in nature. The land uses within the Plan Area are shown in Figure 2.

OVERVIEW OF THE PLAN

The Avenel Street/Rahway Avenue Corridors Rehabilitation Plan is intended to provide a means of upgrading existing property conditions as well as encouraging both rehabilitation and redevelopment where appropriate. The Plan seeks to create a thriving mixed-use district by providing standards and guidelines designed to improve the overall built character of each of the two corridors and contribute to the vitality of these streets as well as Avenel generally.

The existing streetscape within certain commercial segments of the Plan Area is neither visually appealing nor pedestrian-friendly. The sidewalks are not continuous in many areas and require maintenance and upkeep. There are a number of auto-related and industrial uses throughout the Rahway Avenue corridor in particular that are incompatible with existing and adjoining residential and retail/commercial uses. Many of the façades along Avenel Street and Rahway Avenue are unattractive and in some instances not well maintained. In terms of a number of the commercial properties, there are multiple curb cuts leading to front parking lots and/or parking spaces with little or no separation or buffering from the street. A series of photographs depicting existing conditions along both Rahway Avenue and Avenel Street is provided in Appendix 1.

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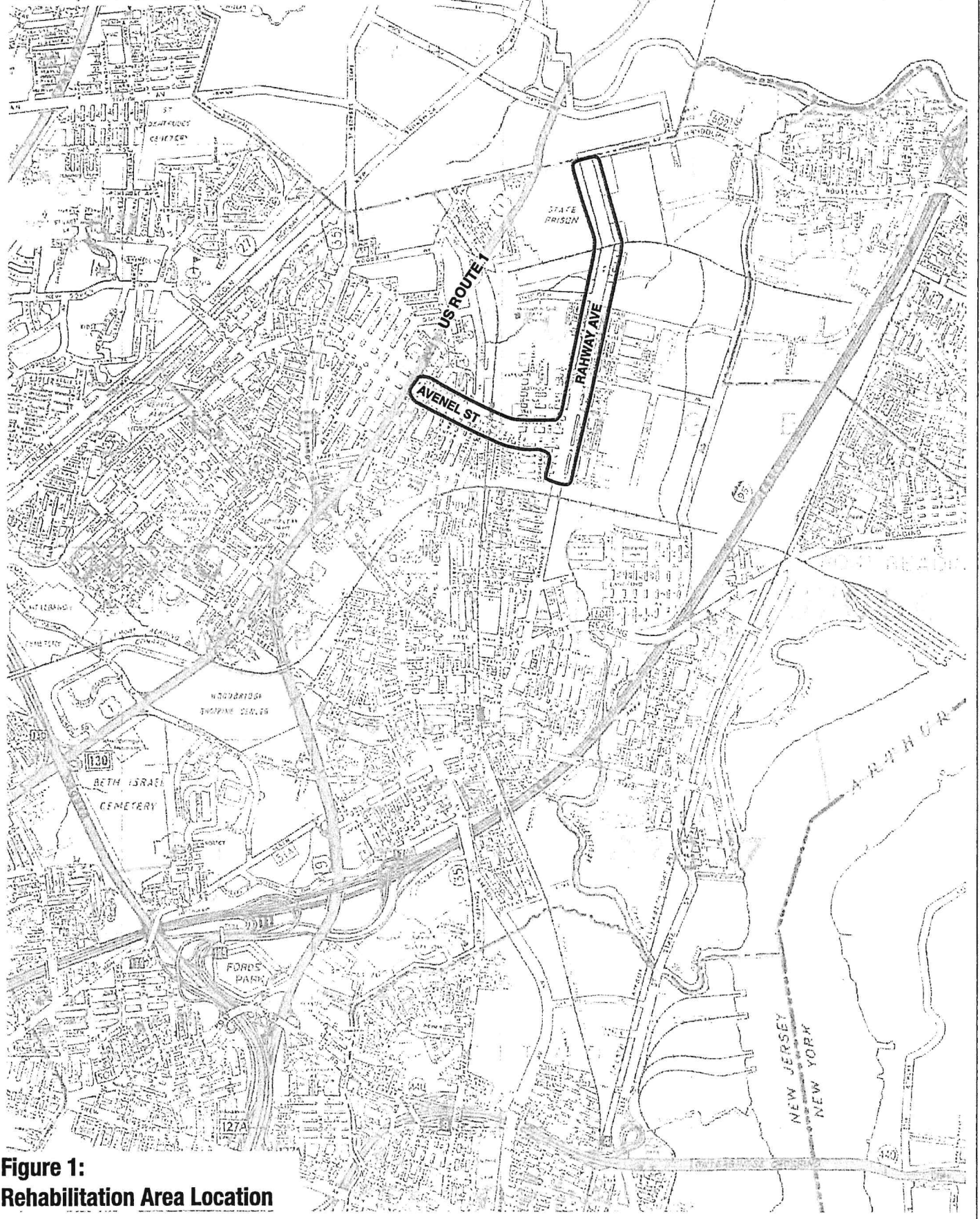


Figure 1:
Rehabilitation Area Location

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Residential

Commercial

Mixed Use with apartments above

Industrial

Public

Vacant

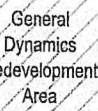


Figure 2:

This Plan presents an opportunity for the Township of Woodbridge to improve the two corridors; to encourage homeowners and businesses to maintain and upgrade the appearances of their properties; and to facilitate the development and growth of Avenel as an arts district with quality retail/arts related stores, a mix of housing options and appropriate commercial services.

NOTE ON PLAN TERMINOLOGY

Throughout this Rehabilitation Plan, a meaningful distinction is made in the regulations between “shall” and “should.”

“Shall” or “must” means that a developer is required to comply with the specific regulation, without deviation.

“Should” means that a developer is encouraged to comply but is not required to do so. If the exact recommendation cannot be met, the Planning Board will entertain any modification that meets the underlying spirit and intent of the regulation and/or the Rehabilitation Plan generally.

2. Rehabilitation Plan Vision

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The key goals and objectives of the Plan are as follows:

- To promote appropriate mixed-use development along both corridors – Avenel Street and Rahway Avenue
- To provide streetscape improvements including street trees, lighting, benches and improved sidewalks to enhance the pedestrian environment and to create a sense of place
- To encourage a variety of housing types that cater to current Avenel residents as well as any future residents of the neighborhood
- To encourage homeowners to maintain and improve their properties
- To provide for the type of rehabilitation that can stem future blight and further act as a stimulus for revitalization efforts within Avenel generally
- To offer incentives to commercial owners and tenants for maintaining and beautifying their storefronts and facades
- To control any future development that conflicts with residential and commercial uses in the neighborhood
- To develop a Façade Improvement Program for commercial uses along the corridors
- To create a lower parking ratio where it is likely to stimulate appropriate redevelopment
- To require that off-street parking spaces or lots be screened or landscaped along the street line
- To develop a visual terminus or node at the intersection of Rahway Avenue and Avenel Street
- To strengthen the image of Avenel as a residential neighborhood with supporting retail and commercial service uses
- To provide development opportunities that support the Arts Village District planned for the former General Dynamics property along Avenel Street
- To create a walkable, human-scaled environment that integrates retail shopping with appropriately-scaled residential development
- To establish site and building design standards that foster a visually pleasing streetscape and quality construction within the Rehabilitation Area.

RELATIONSHIP TO MASTER PLAN AND LOCAL GOALS

2009 Master Plan

The most recent Master Plan for the Township of Woodbridge was adopted in February 2009. The 2009 Master Plan Land Use Element divides the Township into a number of distinct sections, with the subject property located in Avenel. The Land Use Plan Element of the 2009 Master Plan designates those properties that are part of the Avenel Street/Rahway Avenue Corridors Rehabilitation Plan within a Rehabilitation Area classification. As such, the Avenel Street/Rahway Avenue Corridors Rehabilitation Plan is substantially consistent with the Land Use Element of the 2009 Master Plan. Moreover, the Rehabilitation Plan advances the following specific goals of the 2009 Master Plan:

- To encourage the rehabilitation of substandard residential units
- To create downtown commercial areas in Avenel and Port Reading
- To minimize conflicts between residential and non-residential development through appropriate lighting, buffering/landscaping, loading, parking and storage standards
- To preserve the integrity of existing residential areas by preventing intrusion of non-residential uses into residential neighborhoods and by maintaining existing development intensity and population density consistent with residential neighborhood patterns.
- To permit residential uses at appropriate densities in locations accessible to major roadways, commercial services, public facilities and traditional downtown areas.
- To discourage strip development through stringent site planning standards, including the use of common driveways, common rear yard parking areas and unified site plans.
- To control industrial development by limiting industrial development to land suitable for industrial uses, including sites with flat topography, good drainage and access to arterial and primary roadways
- To exclude residential uses from industrial areas

The Rehabilitation Plan also advances the following objective from the Housing Element of the Master Plan:

- To maintain the quality of existing housing by updating maintenance codes and enforcement regulations

The Master Plan classifies Avenel Street as a collector road, defined as follows: "Provides frontage for access to lots and carries traffic of adjoining residential access street. Is not intended to interconnect adjoining neighborhoods or subdivisions. Should not carry regional through traffic." Rahway Avenue is classified as a minor arterial. A minor arterial is defined as a road that "conducts and distributes traffic between lower-order residential streets and arterials and expressways. Designed to promote free traffic flow; therefore, parking should be prohibited and direct access to homes should be avoided. Should be designed so they cannot be used as shortcuts by non-neighborhood traffic."

Nearby Redevelopment Areas

The Avenel Street/Rahway Avenue Rehabilitation Area is located along a portion of Avenel Street which includes the Avenel Arts Village Redevelopment Area. This latter area was recently declared an “area in need of redevelopment” by the Woodbridge Township Council. The Avenel Arts Village Redevelopment area is located along Avenel Street between NJ Transit Avenel Station/right-of-way and the city-owned Avenel Park. It encompasses an area of approximately 27 acres and has access on Avenel Street and Rahway Avenue. The Township envisions an arts village with mixed-use retail/residential development and a “village green” for new residents and existing residents of Avenel.

The Rehabilitation Area also includes an industrial property located along the east side of Rahway Avenue at the intersection of Randolph Avenue that was similarly declared an “area in need of redevelopment” by the Township Council.

RELATIONSHIP TO ZONING CODE

Under the current zone plan, the Rehabilitation Area is located within five (5) zoning districts: M-1 Light Manufacturing Industrial Zone, the B-1 Neighborhood Business Zone, the R-6 and R-6/2F High Density Single-Family Residential Zones, and the R-4 High Density Single-Family Residential Zone. Zoning boundaries are shown in Figure 3.

M-1 Light Industrial Zone

Permitted uses in the M-1 Light Industrial zone include manufacturing and assembly of light machinery; fabrication and assembly of metal products, paper products, concrete and plastic products; food and associated industries; television and radio studios and antennas; warehouses and wholesale sales; storage and distribution; newspaper and publishing plants; and general office buildings. Permitted conditional uses include lumberyards and building material sales; construction contractors; automotive repair garages; public utility installations; and government and public buildings. Accessory uses include private garage space; signs; and fences and hedges.

Bulk standards in the M-1 Light Industrial zone require a minimum lot area of one acre, minimum lot width of 150 feet and minimum lot depth of 200 feet. The required minimum front setback is 60 feet, the minimum rear setback is 60 feet (or 100 feet when abutting a residential zone), and the minimum side yard setbacks are 30 feet for each side (or 100 feet when abutting a residential zone). The maximum building height is 50 feet and minimum gross floor area is 8,000 square feet. Maximum lot coverage is 45% and the maximum FAR is 1.50.

B-1 Business Zone

The B-1 Business zone is intended to “provide retail centers in which will be found the shopping goods and services required to meet the daily needs of residents in the immediate vicinity or neighborhood. It is specifically for retail sales and services in the older established areas of the community”. The primary permitted uses include but are not limited to banks, retail shops, grocery stores, hardware stores, food stores etc. Conditional uses such as churches, government buildings; first-aid and health related buildings, fire stations, automotive gasoline/service stations and automotive repair garages are also permitted subject to approval of the municipal agency.

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Areas not included in rehabilitation plan

- M-1** Light Industrial Zone
- B-1** Neighborhood Business Zone
- R6 & R6/2F** High Density Residential Zone
- R-4** High Density Single-Family Residential Zone

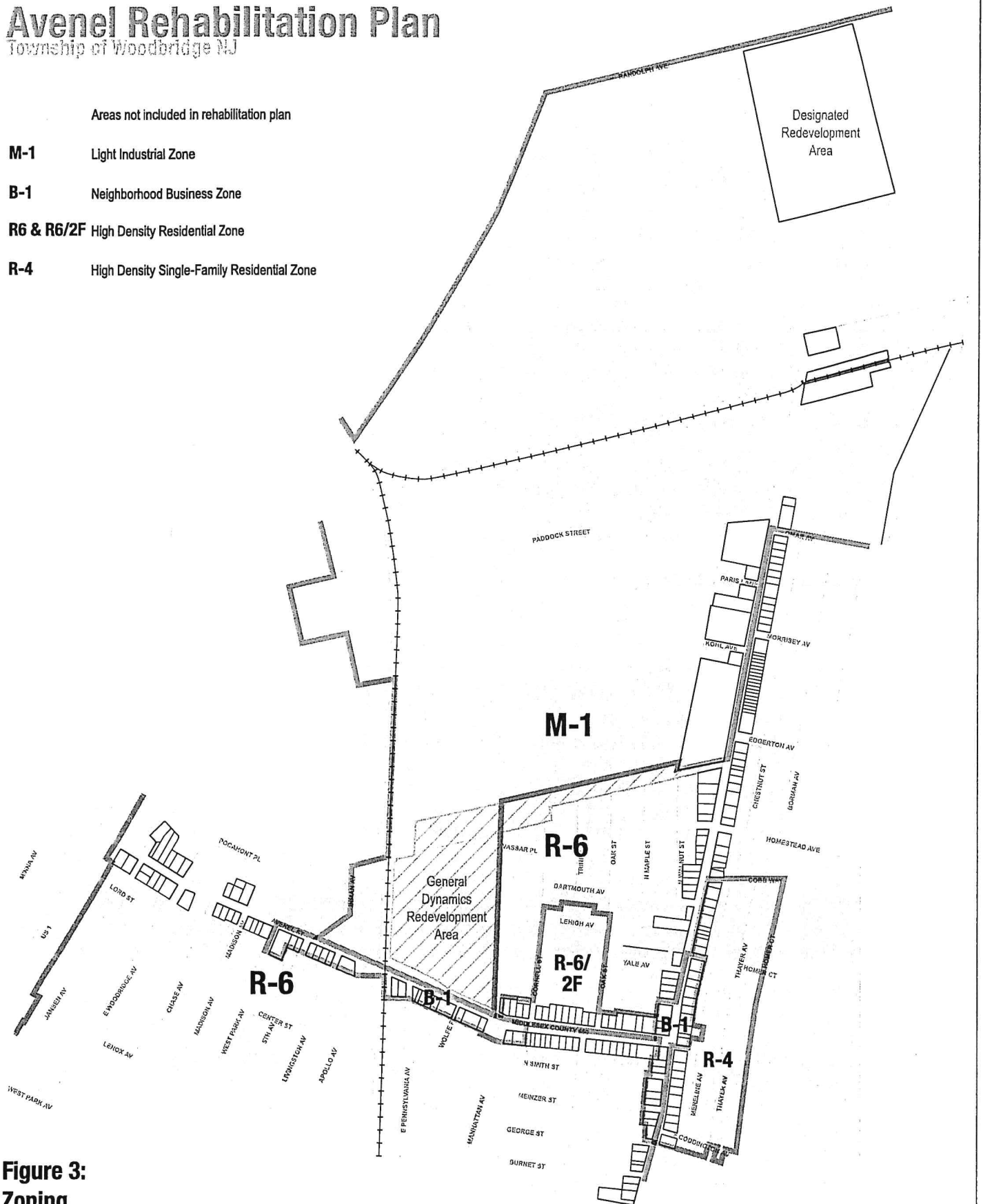


Figure 3:
Zoning

Bulk Standards in the B-1 zone require a minimum lot size of 5000 square feet, minimum lot width of 50 feet and minimum lot depth of 100 feet. The required minimum front setback is five feet for interior lots, five feet and twenty feet on corner lots. Each side setback should be minimum four feet and both side setbacks should be 10 feet. Maximum building height is 35 feet or 2.5 stories, whichever is less. Minimum gross floor area is 500 square feet. The maximum FAR is 0.9 and the maximum lot coverage is 30%.

R6 and R6/2F High Density Single-Family Residential Zone

The primary permitted use in the R-6 district is detached one-family dwellings. Home occupations/home office use is a permitted accessory use subject to certain conditions. Additional accessory uses include private garages, buildings for tools and equipment, swimming pools and tennis courts, signs and fences and hedges. Permitted conditional uses include government buildings and services; churches; synagogues, parish houses and similar religious uses; and public utility installations. The R-6/2F zone also permits two-family homes as a permitted principal use in recognition of areas of existing two-family development.

Bulk standards in the R-6 zone for permitted principal uses require a minimum lot area of 6,000 square feet, minimum lot width of 60 feet and minimum lot depth of 100 feet. The minimum front setback is 25 feet or prevailing, side setback is 5 feet for one and 15 feet for both, and the rear setback is 20 feet. The maximum lot coverage is 25 percent, the minimum gross floor area is 900 square feet, and the maximum floor area ratio is 0.85. The maximum building height is 2.5 stories or 35 feet, whichever is less. The R-6/2F zone has the same bulk standards as the R-6 district, except that the minimum lot area is 7,000 square feet.

R4 High Density Single-Family Residential Zone

The primary permitted use in the R-4 district is detached one-family dwellings and home occupations. Additional accessory uses include private garages, buildings for tools and equipment, swimming pools and tennis courts, signs and fences and hedges. Permitted conditional uses include government buildings and services; churches; synagogues, parish houses and similar religious uses; and public utility installations.

Bulk standards in the R-4 zone for permitted principal uses require a minimum lot area of 4,000 square feet, minimum lot width of 40 feet and minimum lot depth of 70 feet. The minimum front setback is 25 feet or prevailing, side setback is 5 feet for one and 12 feet for both, and the rear setback is 20 feet. The maximum lot coverage is 25 percent, the minimum gross floor area is 900 square feet, and the maximum floor area ratio is 0.85. The maximum building height is 2.5 stories or 35 feet, whichever is less.

Other Relevant Zone Standards

All zones in Woodbridge are subject to § 150-43 of the Zoning Ordinance which outlines the requirements for landscaping of properties throughout the Township. These regulations require that all areas in a development not used for construction of buildings, roads, accessways, parking or sidewalks be fully landscaped and natural site features, such as existing trees, streams, rock outcroppings, etc., be preserved wherever possible. Whenever such natural features are absent or insufficient or have been destroyed during the development of the site, "additional new plantings of a sufficient size as determined by the municipal agency shall be es-

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established to provide environmental protection to beautify the buildings and grounds and to provide privacy, shade and the screening out of objectionable features created on the site.”

All zones are also subject to § 150-42 of the Zoning Ordinance which outlines the requirements for off-street parking and loading on properties throughout the Township. Among the regulations listed are the following:

- There shall be an adequate, safe and convenient arrangement of pedestrian circulation facilities, roadways, driveways, off-street parking and loading space.
- All off-street parking, off-street loading and service areas shall be separated from walkways, sidewalks, streets or alleys by curbing or other protective devices where necessary as required by the municipal agency.
- A driveway, exclusive of curb return radii, shall be not less than 10 feet in width in all residential zones and not less than 15 feet in all other zones. A curb return radius for a driveway at its entrance to a public street shall be a minimum of two feet for single-family residential lots and a minimum of 15 feet for all other uses. The maximum width of the driveway, exclusive of curb-to-curb return radii, shall not exceed 40 feet.
- Each off-street parking space shall be clearly marked, and pavement directional arrows or signs shall be provided wherever necessary. Markers, directional arrows and signs shall be properly maintained so as to ensure their maximum efficiency.
- In any commercial zone, parking shall be permitted in the front yard, provided that a five-foot landscaped area is provided along the front and side lot lines. Within that area, low shrubs, fences or any combination of screening material shall be utilized to buffer those areas from public view. No parking shall be permitted in the front yard in any residential zone, except that parking may be permitted in the front yard if parked on a driveway.

Since the vision for this Rehabilitation Plan is to encourage appropriate mixed-use development and promote an attractive streetscape and pedestrian-friendly environment, this plan recommends certain changes to the current zoning classifications. These are discussed in the next chapter.

3. Rehabilitation Plan

INTENT

The vision of this Rehabilitation Plan is to develop an economically viable and visually attractive mixed-use district; to phase out incompatible uses; and to encourage the maintenance and improvement of existing residential and commercial/retail uses. In order to achieve the above, the Rehabilitation Plan incorporates the following measures: creation of several new zoning districts along select portions of both Rahway Avenue and Avenel Street that are designed to stimulate redevelopment and complement the planned arts village district in Avenel; establish standards for future streetscape improvements throughout the Plan Area; establish standards for façade improvements throughout the Plan Area; and promote the use of existing Township programs to further upgrade existing residential and commercial properties.

NEW ZONING DISTRICTS

A review of existing conditions along both the Avenel Street and Rahway Avenue corridors, together with an assessment of the current zoning, reveals that there are several sub-areas that can benefit from the introduction of a new zoning scheme that provides expanded opportunities for redevelopment. These sub-areas include the following:

Sub-Area A

This area covers the west side of Rahway Avenue from Paddock Street to Homestead Avenue, and includes the following properties: Block 873, Lots 1, 2.01 and 2.02; Block 872, Lots 2A and 4; Block 871, Lot 1; Block 867, Lots 1-F and 3; and Block 865, Lots 15, 17, 20, 24 and 26. It presently includes, among other uses, a mix of older industrial properties, an auto-related use, and a number of older residential or mixed-use dwellings. The bulk of the area is zoned M-1 Industrial. The properties directly across Rahway Avenue are (but for a convenience market) solidly single-family residential and generally well-maintained. In the long term, continued industrial use of this area may not be in the best interests of the larger Avenel community. Rather, either a retail or residential over ground floor retail scenario would be more compatible with and complementary of the surrounding neighborhood.

Sub-Area B

This area encompasses both sides of Rahway Avenue at its intersection with Avenel Street, and includes the following properties: Block 859M, Lots 1-B, 3 and 5; Block 855N, Lot 1.A1; Block 855O, Lots 49 and 91; Block 1007, Lot 64; and Block 1006, Lots 42, 45, 47, 49, 52, 56, 59, 61 and 62. It is largely developed with commercial businesses, although there are several residences as well. The area is zoned largely B-1 Business. An auto-related business stands out as being out of character with the balance of the business uses within this core area. The commercial storefronts on the east side of Rahway Avenue are especially dated and tired/worn in appearance. As such, this critical retail/commercial node would not only benefit from a façade improvement program and more attractive streetscape, but there may also be an opportunity to promote redevelopment in the form of a new mixed-use zoning scheme whereby residential units would be constructed over new ground-floor retail space.

Sub-Area C

This area covers the south side of Avenel Street directly opposite the former General Dynamics Redevelopment Area between N.J. Transit's Avenel station and Manhattan Avenue, and includes the following properties: Block 855B, Lots 502, 507, 509, 511, 513 and 514; Block 855BB, Lots 494 and 499; and Block 855A, Lots 740 and 742. The area is developed almost exclusively with commercial businesses and is located within the Township's B-1 Business zone. Some of the business uses occupy older sites and buildings which have not been upgraded for some time and add very little to the streetscape. Since the planned Arts Village Redevelopment across the street is expected to strengthen demand for both convenience-oriented and arts-related commercial space, a new zoning scenario that provides for residential housing units above retail business use has the potential to foster redevelopment along this small stretch of Avenel Street.

Each of the three new zoning districts (Sub-Areas A, B and C) are shown in Figure 4. The development regulations set forth below are intended to supersede the underlying zoning. Consequently, if a site plan application is filed the new zoning regulations set forth below shall apply in terms of zoning compliance.

Sub-areas A, B and C are envisioned as mixed-use nodes with residential units permitted above any of the principal permitted uses on the ground floor in order to maintain an active street front. Exclusively non-residential uses are also permitted as set forth below. For examples of the type of development envisioned under the new mixed-use zoning, please refer to Appendix 2.

Principal Permitted Uses

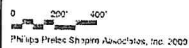
- Residential dwellings above the ground floor of a mixed-use building
- Retail stores and services
- Craft and design studios such as framing shops, etc; studios including dance, rehearsal, exercise, music and multi-media; galleries used by artists; and offices used by architects, interior designers, graphic and web designers, and other design-trade related uses
- Artist housing above the ground floor of a building
- Personal or business services
- Restaurants, cafes and other eating establishments
- Live-work units (i.e., residential units that have a store-front style workspace on the first/ground floor connected to the living space on an upper floor)

Township of Woodbridge NJ

New Zoning Districts

[illegible]

Figure 4:
New Zoning Districts: Sub-areas A, B & C



Avenel Street/Rahway Avenue **Corridors Rehabilitation Plan**

- Civic and community uses on the ground floor
- Office uses, including professional offices, but only on the ground floor of mixed-use buildings
- Publicly or privately-owned open spaces such as parks, plazas and courtyards, including both active and passive recreation such as lawns, sitting areas and playgrounds.

Permitted Accessory Uses

In addition to the uses listed above, the following are permitted as accessory uses:

- Off-street parking lots or structures provided they are integrated into a commercial or mixed-use building and are located in the interior or rear of the lot away from the view from streets.
- Other accessory uses customarily incident to the principal uses.

Prohibited Uses

- “Drive-in” or “drive-thru” establishments
- Industrial and auto-related uses
- Stand-alone billboards or any off-site advertisement signage on building facades
- Any use that is not listed under permitted principal uses or permitted accessory uses

Setbacks, Bulk and Massing

For the purposes of the Rehabilitation Plan, all setbacks shall be measured from the curb line.

Setbacks/Yards

Front Setback – minimum 10 feet, maximum 15 feet

Side Yard – minimum 10 feet each side, minimum total 15 feet

Rear Yard – minimum 20 feet

Building coverage – maximum 40 percent

Impervious coverage – maximum 85 percent

Building Height and Massing

Building heights are expressed by number of stories and by the total allowable height of a single structure. The following height limits shall apply:

- Mixed-use buildings along Rahway Avenue and Avenel Street shall not exceed two and one-half stories and 35 feet in height

Height is measured from the average elevation of the finished grade of the building to the top of the roof surface for mansard and flat roofs and to the ridge line for peaked roofs.

The maximum length of any building along Rahway Avenue and Avenel Street shall be 150 linear feet.

Parking and Loading Standards

The Rehabilitation Plan encourages the use of on-street parking in addition to providing an appropriate level of off-street parking for redevelopment within the sub-areas. On-street parking helps in slowing down traffic and serves as a buffer between pedestrians on the sidewalks and moving cars. On-street parking can serve the retail and business uses as well as visitors.

Parking Ratios and Location

The parking ratios for the residential uses shall be provided consistent with the Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS).

For non-residential uses, the parking ratios required in the Land Use and Development Ordinance of the Township of Woodbridge shall apply. This plan recognizes, however, that the current configuration of lots may not be suitable for providing all the parking that would otherwise be required and therefore allows certain flexibility in meeting parking requirements. Thus, for retail uses, restaurants and eating establishments, and other permitted retail/commercial uses, where there are on-street parking spaces located directly in front of the development or on-street parking is permitted there, the Planning Board may reduce the amount of off-street parking to be provided for non-residential uses by up to 25 percent of the total parking requirement.

The Plan further recognizes that the opportunity may exist for shared parking, in connection with mixed-use development, whereby spaces may be utilized by more than one use at different times during the day. In such cases, the total number of parking spaces required may be reduced by a maximum of 25 percent if credible evidence to the satisfaction of the Planning Board is provided which indicates that the peak parking demand of two or more uses sharing a parking lot or facility do not coincide, and that the accumulated parking demand at any one time of the two or more uses do not exceed the total capacity of the facility. Such evidence shall indicate the use of the facility by residents, employees, customers and visitors on both weekdays and weekends, and both during the day and overnight. No shared parking facility shall be located more than 200 feet from the establishment which it serves.

All new surface parking lots should be located behind buildings, away from the view of public streets, and should adhere to the following:

- All surface parking lots should be screened from public view with a minimum two (2') buffer with shrub plantings.
- No more than 15 cars are allowed in a single parking lot for retail or other permitted commercial use smaller than 5,000 square feet in size.
- For uses greater than 5,000 square feet that would require more than 20 parking spaces, multiple parking lots are encouraged, in addition to providing the planted buffer mentioned above.

No parking is allowed fully above grade unless it adheres to the following:

Avenel Street/Rahway Avenue Corridors Rehabilitation Plan

- No parking structure can be visible from the public right-of-way along Avenel Street and Rahway Avenue.
- Any parking structure extending more than 4 feet above grade must be screened from view with active ground-floor uses.
- Any parking structure extending more than 10 feet above grade shall have its visible façade detailed architecturally and/or screened with landscaping.

Site Access

In order to create a pedestrian-friendly environment, the number of curb cuts and drive-ways within the sub-areas for individual retail commercial developments or for mixed-use buildings should be limited. The maximum width of a single curb cut shall not be more than 24 feet total.

Off-Street Loading

A modified approach to the provision of off-street loading shall be permitted for retail commercial and/or mixed-use developments, as follows:

- Any retail commercial use or mixed-use development having 5,000 square feet or less of non-residential floor area shall not be required to provide off-street loading.
- Any retail commercial or mixed-use development having greater than 5,000 square feet of non-residential floor area shall provide no more than one (1) off-street loading area, a minimum of 12 feet in width and 30 feet in length.

Site Planning and Building Design

The intent of this section is to set forth standards for the three sub-areas that are designed to foster walkable and pedestrian-friendly environments with visually interesting and well-maintained storefronts and residences.

Building Orientation

Front façades of all new buildings shall face Avenel Street or Rahway Avenue. Primary building entries cannot face a parking garage or parking lot.

In no case can the rear of a building face either of the two main corridors.

All new residential units (built over existing or new retail/commercial uses) shall face either of the two main corridors or face the side yards of the adjacent uses.

Landscaping and Site Amenities

All streetscape and landscape improvements shall be integrated with building design and placement, parking, buffering and other site features.

Wherever possible, a landscaped buffer area should be provided between parking lots and the public right-of-way along the two corridors.

Stormwater Management

Any new development shall provide features to reduce stormwater runoff rates by detaining stormwater on-site and allowing for groundwater infiltration consistent with the terms of any remedial action work plan approved by NJDEP. Recommended features include: porous pavement, green sidewalk planting strips, infiltration strips within roadway sections, and use of parks, swales, and other grassy areas for stormwater detention.

Tree Preservation

Where possible, development shall preserve existing trees, particularly the largest and oldest, by incorporating them into the site plan.

Buffers

Buffers of at least ten (10) feet in depth are required along any lot line that abuts existing residences or a residential zone. Buffers shall include evergreen plantings so as to provide a year-round screen, and shall provide a screen at least five (5) feet in height when newly planted.

LEED Certification

Development is encouraged to create “green buildings” that comply with the intent of the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) system sponsored by the US Green Building Council (USGBC).

Broadly speaking, green building design goals include reduced energy and water use; use of sustainable, renewable, non-toxic and locally-produced materials; improved indoor air quality; environmentally-conscious site planning; and a location in a central, developed area with existing services and resources. The USGBC has developed a variety of standards for evaluating green building design in several categories, including LEED-NC for new commercial and multi-family buildings (New Commercial; rental apartments and multi-family condominiums are considered commercial structures) and LEED-H for homes, and has prepared pilot program guidelines for new urbanist multi-family residential developments (LEED-ND for Neighborhood Development).

All new buildings in the Plan Area are encouraged to achieve basic LEED NC certification (LEED for New Construction), defined by LEED 2.2 standards or any newer standards in effect at the time of adoption of this plan. LEED certification ensures a high level of “green” building design and site planning.

Support Services

Each retail commercial or mixed-use building shall be designed to provide adequate storage of solid waste disposal, including provisions for recycled materials, within buildings or parking facilities. Where private haulers are used, each retail commercial or mixed-use building shall have at least one trash and recycling pickup location. In such instances, all exterior trash and recycling facilities shall be located in a manner that can accommodate dumpster collection. Such facilities should be enclosed and obscured from view from parking lots, streets and adjacent buildings by a fence, wall, planting or combination thereof.

All machinery and the mechanical controls, including but not limited to transformers, junction boxes, lift stations, electrical meters, condensers and signal boxes shall be interior to the lot, set back at least 20 feet from the public right-of-way, or masked by building elements in a manner consistent with the design of the building. A wall of venting for mechanical rooms shall not be permitted along facades facing streets or public open spaces.

With the exception of the antenna, all parts and components of personal communications antennas, satellite dishes and television and radio antennas shall be screened from view regardless of elevation, or shall be disguised within an enclosed structure.

CORRIDOR STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

This Rehabilitation Plan seeks to establish guidelines for improvement of the existing streets and sidewalks along both the Avenel Street and Rahway Avenue corridors.

Street Design

All streets should have continuous sidewalks with street trees and adequate pedestrian walkway clearance. All streets should have pedestrian crosswalks clearly marked at key intersections so as to balance public safety with ease of traffic flow.

Traffic calming measures such as bulb-outs or neck-downs should be considered at important intersections such as Avenel Street and Rahway Avenue.

Streetscape Improvements

In general, all streetscape and landscape improvements should be integrated with building design and placement, parking, buffering and other site features.

Street Trees

Sidewalks on all streets within the Rehabilitation Area should incorporate street trees and adhere to the following specifications:

- Streets trees should not block driveways or curb cuts
- Street tree spacing shall be determined by species type. Large maturing trees should be planted at a minimum of 40 feet and a maximum 50 feet on center. Medium and small trees should be planted at a minimum of 25 feet and a maximum of 30 feet on center
- Street trees should be a minimum of 2.5 inches caliper at the time of planting.
- All street landscaping and planting should be recommended by a local arborist, nurseryman, or landscape architect at the discretion of the Planning Board.
- Street trees should be planted in adequately sized tree wells, with appropriate watering and feeding techniques and the area around the tree may be planted with groundcover, covered with decorative grates or paved with decorative pavers. Where possible, the area around tree, especially a newly planted one, should be protected by a low fence.

Street Lighting

All outdoor lighting, including street lamps and accent lighting, should be downcast and illuminate only the intended areas so as not to cause disabling glare that affects driver safety and reduces the visibility of starry night skies.

A unified design family of lighting standards should be used for posts and fixtures throughout the Rehabilitation Area, with the mass and size varying by location and street type. One light should be placed approximately every 25 linear feet of sidewalk, on average, and should not exceed 20 feet in height. Bright, stadium-style lighting is prohibited.

FAÇADE DESIGN AND IMPROVEMENTS

In addition to the site design standards described above, it is further recommended that the Township of Woodbridge adopt a Façade Design and Improvement Manual for the Plan Area, similar to its Downtown (i.e., Main Street) Façade Design & Improvement Manual. The manual would encourage new and current owners to maintain and improve the design and quality of their residences and/or commercial/retail buildings.

The following guidelines should be followed in connection with new construction or renovation within the Plan Area:

Materials

Preferred building materials are brick and clapboard siding (of wood or synthetic materials). No more than three different materials should be used for a single façade. Accent materials include metal, tile, stucco, stone and cultured stone.

Building materials should harmonize with materials used in surrounding development. Mixed-use buildings should be designed so that all street-facing facades are treated with the same amount of design detailing. Any changes in primary wall material from lower to upper levels should occur along a horizontal line, with the visually-heavier material below the visually-lighter material.

Windows

Blank walls are prohibited on facades facing or visible from either Avenel Street or Rahway Avenue. Existing façades should be improved based on the guidelines set forth in this section.

The specific guidelines for window transparency are described below.

Window Placement & Orientation

All windows, with the exception of storefront windows, should be operable. Windows should typically be recessed at least three to four inches in relation to the building façade in order to ensure an adequate shadow line.

Window Materials

Window glass should be clear or lightly tinted. Energy-efficient coatings that tint glass are acceptable provided the coating closest to clear is chosen to meet the energy criteria. Col-

ored or stained window glass is acceptable, but only for retail clerestory or transom windows.

Ground-floor and Upper-level Windows

- The ground retail space should have storefront style plate glass windows occupying a generous proportion of windows; in order to create a relationship between the private space of the building and the public space of the street.
- Retail windows should have at least 50 percent glazing with clear glass windows.
- Residential units should have at least 25 percent glazing on upper-level façade levels, and residential windows should be vertically proportioned.

Storefronts

Storefronts and facades should be designed to be compatible with surrounding areas in addition to contributing to the safety and vitality of the neighborhood. The following design guidelines should apply to the new and existing storefronts.

- All storefronts should have either storefront style large windows or smaller panes (typically 2' squares) to give a pedestrian-scaled feel to the public right-of-way
- Mullions or muntins should be either simple in detail or ornamented depending on the overall design of the façade.
- A storefront in a new building should be 12 to 15 feet in height to clearly distinguish it from the rest of the building.
- If more than one store or business establishment is located within a single building with multiple storefronts, then the design of the storefronts may either be identical or varied to highlight the different businesses.

Doors and Entries

Retail Entries

- Primary entries to individual retail businesses should be provided at-grade on street-facing facades, or at-grade within an open-air entryway lobby along a street-facing façade.
- All retail entries should be articulated by a change in material, projection or recession of minimum 6 inches, or awning or canopy. Awnings should be straight, not fluted or curved, and should not have side panels or valences.
- Ground-floor retail should be constructed with a finished floor elevation at grade and should have at least 10 feet clear height in order to maintain visibility from the street and clearly define such non-residential space.
- All entries should be located at grade for ADA accessibility.

Residential Entries

- Primary entries to the residential portion of mixed-use buildings should be clearly visible and distinguished through projections, material changes, overhangs or canopies.
- Shared entries to upper-level units should include transition areas such as lobbies or glazed doorways and should be easily identifiable with architectural features.

Lighting

Light fixtures on the façades of stores should be attractive and appropriate in relation to the overall design of the façade. Good lighting fixtures will enhance the walking environment; improve the shopping experience; highlight building details and/or merchandise; contribute to the overall safety and visibility of the sidewalks; and enhance outdoor seating areas/cafes.

Signage

Residential Signage

The style of the lettering should be in character with the architecture of the building and should not obstruct architectural features.

Retail Signage

Every retail establishment should be permitted one façade sign per sidewalk frontage. In addition, awning signs and window signs are acceptable.

Façade signs should not exceed 30 inches in height and should not extend beyond the width of the storefront opening.

Façade signs should be pin-mounted or printed directly onto the façade or onto a wood, metal or opaque glass panel that is mounted flat and horizontally within or just above the framed façade opening.

Lettering is acceptable on the front vertical panel of awnings. Such lettering should not exceed $\frac{2}{3}$ of the height of the panel or ten (10) inches, whichever is less.

Lettering and business logos are acceptable on the upper panel of awnings. The maximum letter height should be 18 inches and the overall sign should be limited to 30% of the awning panel area.

Signage is acceptable on retail windows, in the form of foil or silkscreen lettering applied directly to the glass; such signage should not occupy more than 30 percent of the window area and should maintain clear visibility into the storefront space.

Wall signs must be face-mounted or pin-mounted on the building/structure, projecting not more than 14 inches from the face of the building nor above the first floor of the structure.

Such signs cannot project above the parapet wall, mansard or other roofline and shall be located so as not to create a safety or traffic hazard

Any signage cannot be placed perpendicular to the building façade and project outwards into the sidewalk or public right-of-way.

General Signage Requirements

The following additional signage requirements shall apply within the Rehabilitation Area:

- All signage shall be subject to site plan review and approval by the Planning Board.
- Signs should be architecturally compatible with the style, composition, materials, colors and details of the building. Signs should not obscure the architectural details of a façade.
- Fluorescent or glowing paint is prohibited for any signage within the Rehabilitation Area.
- No signs or advertising devices that are rooftop mounted, intermittently illuminated, flashing or moving are allowed.
- Freestanding signs are prohibited, with the exception of way finding identification signs.
- Signage above the second story of any building is prohibited.

Awnings

Awnings are encouraged for retail uses and should be constructed and installed so that the frame and fabric of the awning is integrated into the overall façade design. The following design guidelines shall apply:

- Awnings material should be limited to cloth, canvas and similar materials; metal and aluminum awnings are prohibited.
- No awning should extend more than eight feet from the building façade, unless used to cover an outdoor seating area.
- The minimum clearance height for any awning should be 8 feet clear from the finished grade of the sidewalk or public right-of-way.
- No awning should project into a roadway, driveway, parking or loading area.

Storefront Security gates

Any storefront security gate must adhere to the following guidelines:

- Security grilles and tracks should be carefully integrated into the storefront design
- They should be completely concealed when not in use
- Roll-down grilles should be see-through rather than solid grates so as to provide views of the interior when stores are closed

PROGRAMS FOR REHABILITATION OF EXISTING RESIDENTIAL AND RETAIL/COMMERCIAL USES

As this Rehabilitation Plan encourages existing retail and business uses and residential owners to improve and maintain their properties, implementation of complementary programs and/or use of other revitalization tools to achieve these same goals should be undertaken where appropriate. The programs/tools that would appear most appropriate are discussed below.

Programs for Retail/Commercial Uses

The Township should consider establishing a Special Improvement District for Avenel Street/Rahway Avenue. The creation of a SID would guide and promote the growth and revitalization occurring in Avenel by providing for the management, maintenance, and improvement of properties along each of the two corridors. In addition, the Township has in the past obtained Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for various economic development and neighborhood revitalization efforts, and should seek to secure/utilize such funding for streetscape, façade and other improvements along Avenel Street/Rahway Avenue.

Programs for Residential Uses

Although the overwhelming majority of residential dwellings in the Plan Area are in good condition and properly maintained, there are instances where homes are in need of physical improvement. Therefore, it is recommended that the Township solicit homeowners within the Rehabilitation Area to participate in the Township's Tax Abatement and Exemption Program. Under this program, the Township of Woodbridge offers qualifying homeowners exemptions of up to \$25,000 in assessment for improvements to their dwellings over a five-year period. This program is authorized by the State of New Jersey, under chapter 441 of the Laws of 1992. To qualify for this program, a home must be at least 20 years old and an application must be filed with the Woodbridge Tax Assessor within 30 days of the completion of the project. Almost 99 percent of the homes within the Rehabilitation Area would qualify for this program, as most are more than 20 years old.

4. Plan Consistency Review

RELATIONSHIP TO WOODBRIDGE ZONING CODE

All provisions of the Zoning and Development Regulations of the Township of Woodbridge shall remain in effect, except that the new zones described herein for Sub-areas A, B and C shall supersede the underlying zoning. In all situations where zoning requirements are not specifically addressed herein, the Woodbridge Zoning and Development Regulations shall, however, remain in effect. Final adoption of this Plan by the Township Council shall be considered an amendment of the Township of Woodbridge Zoning Map as it relates to Sub-areas A, B and C.

RELATIONSHIP TO PLANS OF ADJACENT MUNICIPALITIES

The Rehabilitation Area is situated in the southwestern section of the County of Middlesex. The Township of Woodbridge shares borders with many municipalities: Edison Township, Sayreville Township, Perth Amboy City, Carteret Borough, Linden City, Rahway City and Clark Township. Of these municipalities, only the City of Rahway borders on or is within close distance the Rehabilitation Area. As a result, the Plan recommendations have the potential to impact the master plans of the City of Rahway.

Rahway City

The Rehabilitation Area is bordered by the City of Rahway along the northern end of Rahway Avenue. The City of Rahway adopted its Master Plan in October 1996, and was updated later in April 2002. This revision of the Master Plan is the latest document on the city's overall goals and objectives with respect to land use and development.

In the 2002 revised Master Plan, the area adjacent to the Rehabilitation Area (just north of Rahway Avenue) along Randolph Avenue is designated as "medium-density/single-family" housing and a portion of the area is zoned as "neighborhood business". The goals and objectives of the Rahway Master Plan that are relevant to this Rehabilitation Plan are as follows:

- Provide an opportunity for the development of housing of various types and size, to meet the needs of people at various stages in their life cycle.
- Encourage mixed use development where appropriate, such as residential uses within selected commercial/retail zones.

The Rehabilitation Plan recommendations are consistent with the land use designations and do not conflict with the goals and objectives of the 2002 revised Master Plan of Rahway.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE MIDDLESEX COUNTY MASTER PLAN

The Middlesex County Master Plan had not been updated since 1970. Recognizing that land use conditions have changed since that time, as have many of its goals and policies, the County is in the process of updating the Master Plan. The Master Plan did, however, identify a set of general goals, pertinent among them that there should be good variety of housing op-

tions for the county and “attractive living and working areas through creative building and site design, and through conservation and preservation of nature.”

RELATIONSHIP TO THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REHABILITATION PLAN

Among the State Plan’s intentions is to revitalize the state’s existing urban areas by directing growth and development to those areas. On the State Plan Policy Map, the Rehabilitation Area is located in the Metropolitan Planning Area, which is identified in the State Plan as an appropriate location for much of the State’s new growth.

A stated goal of the State Plan is to revitalize the State’s cities and towns by protecting, preserving and developing the valuable human and economic assets in cities, towns and other urban areas. The Rehabilitation Area, by virtue of its location within a part of New Jersey that has extensive existing infrastructure and a long history of development, is by all measures an appropriate location for growth. The Rehabilitation Plan will facilitate growth in the Plan Area and contribute to the economic revitalization of the State. The objectives of the Rehabilitation Plan are consistent with the goals, strategies and policies of the State Plan. The Rehabilitation Plan will address the needs of existing and future residents of Avenel, the Township of Woodbridge and adjacent municipalities. The Rehabilitation Plan seeks to revitalize the area along Avenel Street and Rahway Avenue; provide additional housing choices for the citizens of Woodbridge; provide services for residents; and support the planned center for the arts in Avenel.

5. Rehabilitation Actions

Construction of new structures and other improvements may take place as proposed in Chapter 3 of this Rehabilitation Plan. In addition to demolition and new construction, other actions may be taken by the governing body to further the goals of this plan. These actions may include, but shall not be limited to: (1) provisions for public infrastructure necessary to service new development; and (2) vacation of public utility easements and other easements and rights-of-way as may be necessary for Rehabilitation.

6. General Provisions

DEFINITIONS

Except for those words defined below in this Section, words that appear in this Rehabilitation Plan shall be defined in accordance with the definitions that appear in the Township's land use ordinances, or, where these ordinances do not provide a definition, in accordance with the definitions in the Municipal Land Use Law.

EASEMENTS

No building shall be constructed over a public easement in the Rehabilitation Area without prior written approval of the Township of Woodbridge.

SITE PLAN AND SUBDIVISION REVIEW

Prior to commencement of construction, site plans for construction in accordance with this Rehabilitation Plan shall be prepared in accordance with the site plan ordinance of the Township of Woodbridge and requirements of the Municipal Land Use Law (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1 et seq.), and shall be submitted by applicants for review and approval by the Woodbridge Planning Board.

Any subdivision of lots and parcels of land within the Rehabilitation Area shall be in accordance with the requirements of this Rehabilitation Plan and the subdivision ordinance of the Township of Woodbridge.

ADVERSE INFLUENCES

No use or reuse shall be permitted which, when conducted under proper and adequate conditions and safeguards, will produce corrosive, toxic or noxious fumes, glare, electromagnetic disturbance, radiation, smoke, cinders, odors, dust or waste, undue noise or vibration, or other objectionable features so as to be detrimental to the public health, safety or general welfare.

DURATION OF THE PLAN

The provisions of this Rehabilitation Plan and the requirements and restrictions with respect thereto shall be in effect for a period of 40 years from the date of approval by the Township Council.

DEVIATION REQUESTS

The Woodbridge Planning Board may grant deviations from the regulations contained within Chapter 3 of this Rehabilitation Plan where, by reason of exceptional narrowness, shallowness or shape of a specific piece of property, or by reason of exceptional topographic conditions or 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 Rehabilitation Plan would result in peculiar practical difficulties to, or exceptional and undue hardship upon, the developer of such property. The Woodbridge Planning Board may also grant such relief in an application relating to a specific piece of property where the purposes of this Rehabilitation

Avenel Street/Rahway Avenue **Corridors Rehabilitation Plan**

Plan would be advanced by a deviation from the strict requirements of this Plan and the benefits of the deviation would outweigh any detriments. No relief may be granted under the terms of this section unless such deviation or relief can be granted without substantial detriment to the public good and without substantial impairment of the intent and purpose of the Rehabilitation Plan. An application for a deviation from the requirements of this Rehabilitation Plan shall provide public notice of such application in accord with the requirements of public notice as set forth in N.J.S.A. 40:55D-12.a. and b.

Notwithstanding the above, any changes to the uses permitted in Chapter 3 of the Rehabilitation Plan or any change requiring a "d" variance in accordance with NJSA 40:55D-70 shall be permitted only by means of an amendment of the Rehabilitation Plan by the Township governing body, and only upon a finding that such amendment would be consistent with and in furtherance of the goals and objectives of this Plan.

7. Other Provisions

In accordance with N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 et seq., known as The Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, the following statements are made:

- The Rehabilitation Plan herein has delineated a definite relationship to local objectives as to appropriate land uses, density of population, and improved traffic and public transportation, public utilities, recreation and community facilities and other public improvements. The Plan has laid out various programs and strategies needed to be implemented in order to carry out the objectives of this Plan.
- The Rehabilitation Plan lays out the proposed land uses and building requirements for those sub-areas within the Rehabilitation Area subject to the new zoning described herein.
- The Rehabilitation Plan is substantially consistent with the Master Plan for the Township of Woodbridge. The Plan also complies with the goals and objectives of the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan.
- If any section, paragraph, division, subdivision, clause or provision of this Rehabilitation Plan shall be adjudged by the courts to be invalid, such adjudication shall only apply to the section, paragraph, division, subdivision, clause or provision so judged, and the remainder of this Rehabilitation Plan shall be deemed valid and effective.

8. Procedure for Amending the Approved Rehabilitation Plan

This Rehabilitation Plan may be amended from time to time upon compliance with the requirements of state law. A non-refundable application fee of \$500 shall be paid by the party requesting such amendment, unless the request is issued from an agency of the Township. The Woodbridge Township Council, at its sole discretion, may require the party requesting the amendments to prepare a study of the impact of such amendments, which study must be prepared by a professional planner licensed in the State of New Jersey.

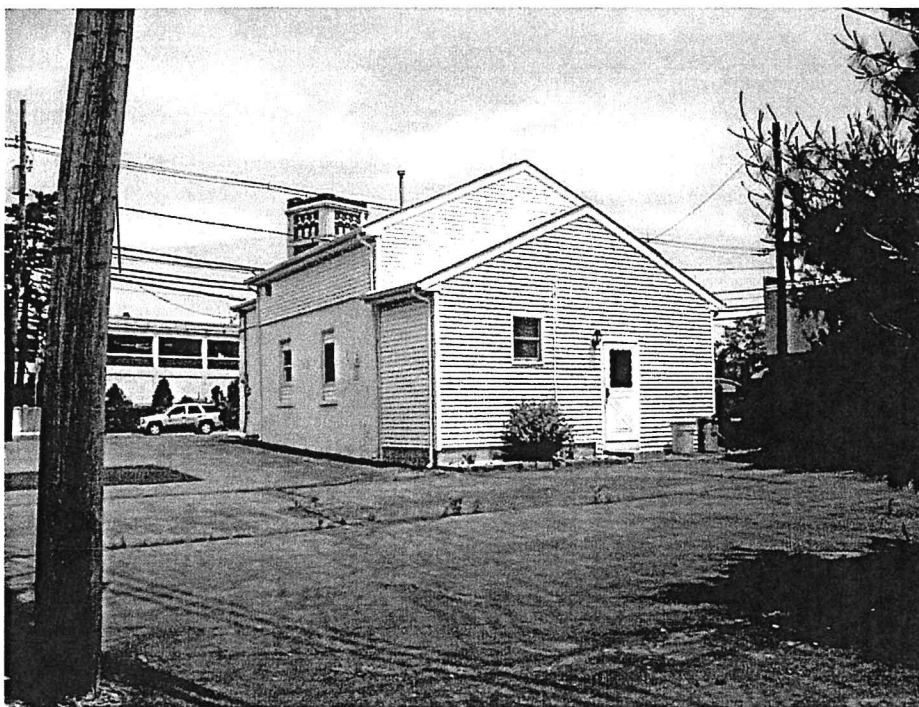
Appendix 1: Photographs of Existing Conditions along Rahway Avenue and Avenel Street

Avenel Rehabilitation Plan

Township of Woodbridge NJ



Existing streetscape - Sub-area C



Vacant building / lot

Photos of Existing Conditions - Avenel Street

Phillips Brown Shaper & Associates, Inc.

Avenel Rehabilitation Plan

Township of Woodbridge NJ



Unattractive facade -
blank walls, poor signage



Typical facade - older commercial
property

Photos of Existing Conditions - Avenel Street

Philips Project Studio Associates, Inc.

Avenel Rehabilitation Plan

Township of Woodbridge NJ



Continuous curb cuts and visible parking lots



Need for sidewalk improvements

Photos of Existing Conditions - Rahway Avenue

Philip Rivers Shapko Associates, Inc.

Avenel Rehabilitation Plan

Township of Woodbridge NJ



Loading areas visible from the public right-of-way



Auto-related uses with storage of vehicles on site adjacent to residential uses

Photos of Existing Conditions - Rahway Avenue

Philip Perini Shapiro Associates, Inc.

Avenel Rehabilitation Plan

Township of Woodbridge NJ



Front parking lots with continuous curb cuts



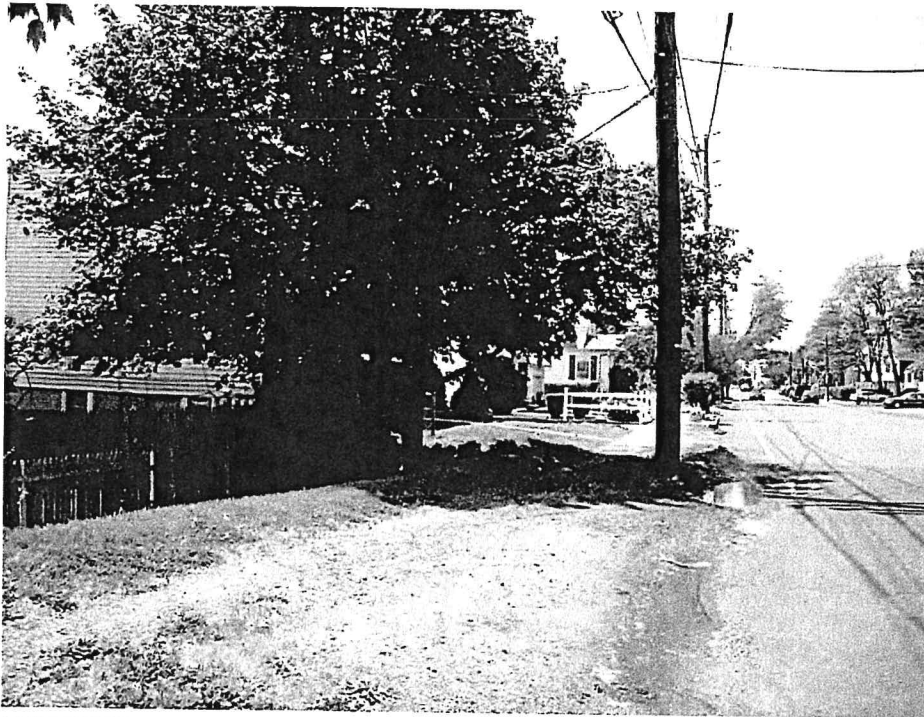
Auto-related uses adjacent to residential use, continuous curb cuts and front parking lots

Photos of Existing Conditions - Rahway Avenue

Photos: Project Group & Associates, Inc.

Avenel Rehabilitation Plan

Township of Woodbridge NJ



Discontinuous sidewalks



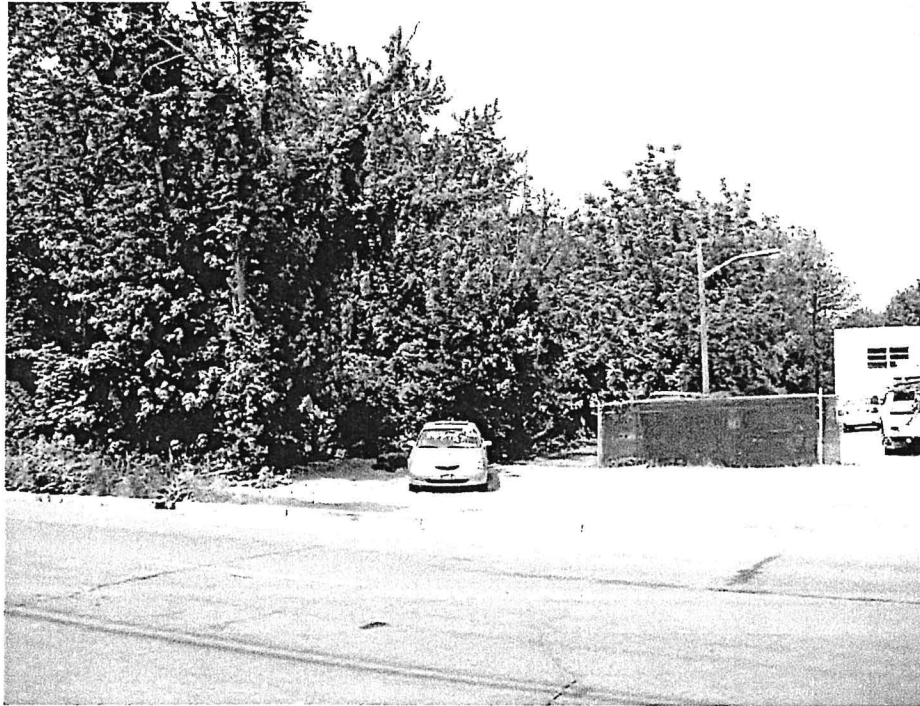
Light-industrial / manufacturing use
across from single family residences

Photos of Existing Conditions - Rahway Avenue

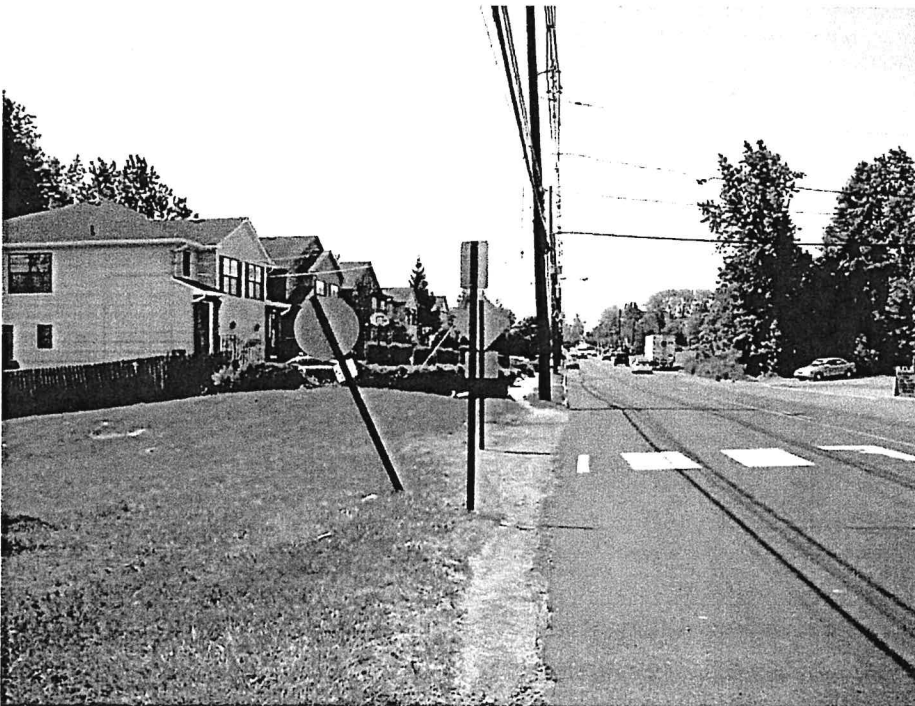
Philip Photo Shop & Associates, Inc.

Avenel Rehabilitation Plan

Township of Woodbridge NJ



Auto-related use with front parking lot and continuous curb cuts



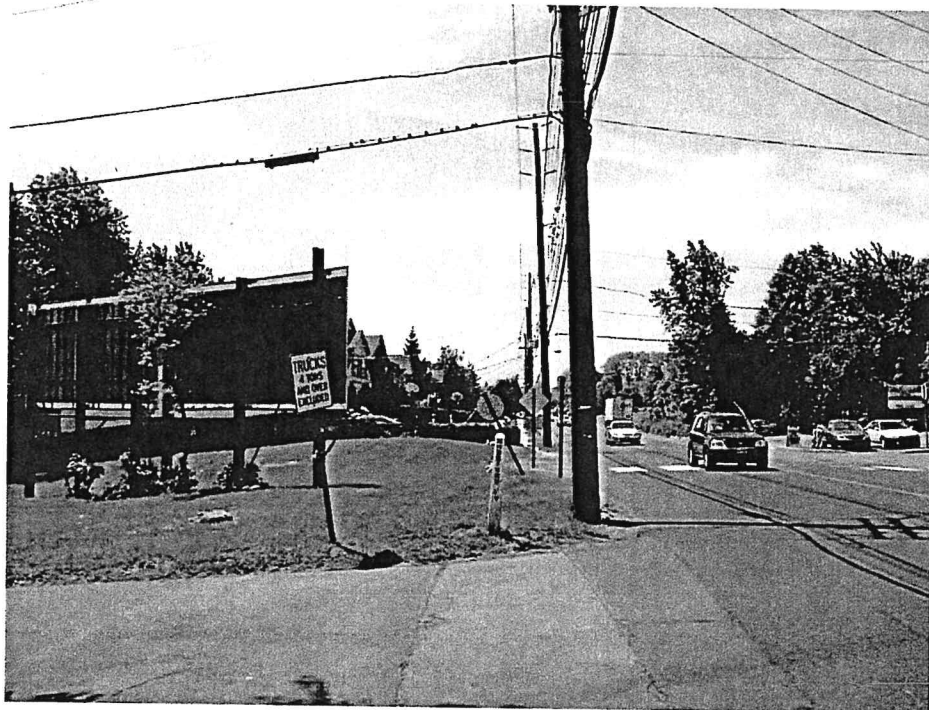
Lack of sidewalk continuity

Photos of Existing Conditions - Rahway Avenue

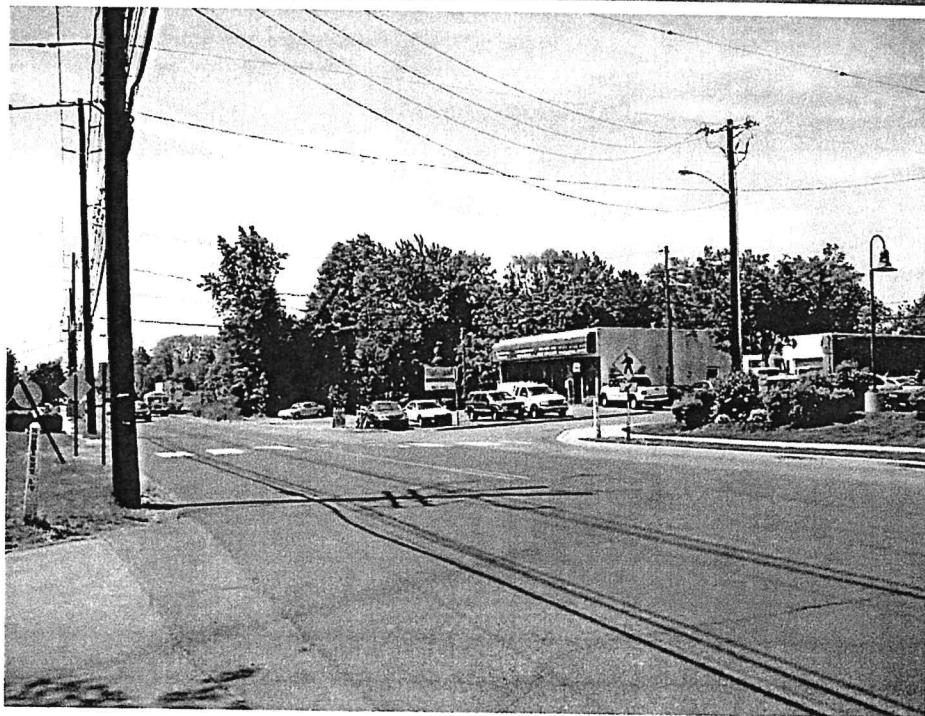
Philip Perone, Senior Architect, Inc.

Avenel Rehabilitation Plan

Township of Woodbridge NJ



Billboards / signage



Auto-related use with front parking lot and continuous curb cut

Photos of Existing Conditions - Railway Avenue

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SHAPIRO ASSOCIATES, INC.

Avenel Rehabilitation Plan

Township of Woodbridge NJ

Retail use with front parking spaces



Candidate property for facade, streetscape and sidewalk improvements



Photos of Existing Conditions - Rahway Avenue

Photos taken August 1, 2004

Appendix 2: Examples of Mixed-Use Zone Prototypical Development

Avenel Rehabilitation Plan

Township of Woodbridge NJ



Examples of Mixed-Use Zone Prototypical Development

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE TOWNSHIP OF WOODBRIDGE, NJ

Avenel Rehabilitation Plan

Township of Woodbridge NJ



Examples of Mixed-Use Zone Prototypical Development

Phillips Project Shapiro Associates, Inc.

