

Cutters Dock Road Redevelopment Plan



Township of Woodbridge
Middlesex County, New Jersey
April 2022

Endorsed 7/06/2022 by Township of Woodbridge Planning Board

Adopted 7/19/2022 by Township of Woodbridge Council

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INTRODUCTION

This Redevelopment Plan represents an opportunity to redevelop land in the Woodbridge Proper section of Woodbridge Township. This Plan will foster the transformation of the property into a modern industrial site. This Redevelopment Area should be a highly desirable location for businesses to thrive and for people to work.

In order to facilitate the redevelopment of the area, the Township Council requested the Planning Board to evaluate certain properties as an “area in need of redevelopment” on March 3, 2020.

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 Plans 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 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 Avenel and Iselin to the North, Port Reading and Sewaren to the east, Fords to the west, and the City of Perth Amboy to the south. Woodbridge Proper consists primarily of residential neighborhoods, schools, and parks. Downtown Woodbridge is found along Main Street between Rahway Avenue and Route 35. Downtown Woodbridge features fine dining, a micro-brewery, shops, banks, a train station, and the Township Municipal Complex. Industrial uses concentrated in the southern portion of Woodbridge Proper along Pennval Road and Cutters Dock Road.

The Redevelopment Area consists of two (2) parcels in the southern portion of Woodbridge Proper: Block 524, Lot 4.01 and Block 524, Lot 5.03. The redevelopment area is located along the southern side of Cutters Dock Road. The southern side of Cutters Dock Road consists predominately of commercial and industrial uses. The northern side of Cutters Dock Road consists predominately of residential uses. Cutters Dock Road is a main access route for industrial properties located along Pennval Road. Three residential structures currently occupy the redevelopment area. The redevelopment is flanked to the east and the west by commercial properties. The NJ Transit North Jersey Coast railroad line is located less than 300 feet east of the redevelopment area. The Cutters Dock Road Bridge extends over the railroad line.

Per 2014 Preliminary FEMA FIRM Maps, the southern portions of the redevelopment area are in a Special Flood Hazard Area (AE zone), the Moderate Flood Hazard Area, (X (shaded)), and contain wetlands. Any new development in the Area of Special Flood Hazard must adhere to the Township's Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance found in Chapter 22 of the Woodbridge Township Revised General Ordinances.

Figure 1: Redevelopment Area Parcel Map

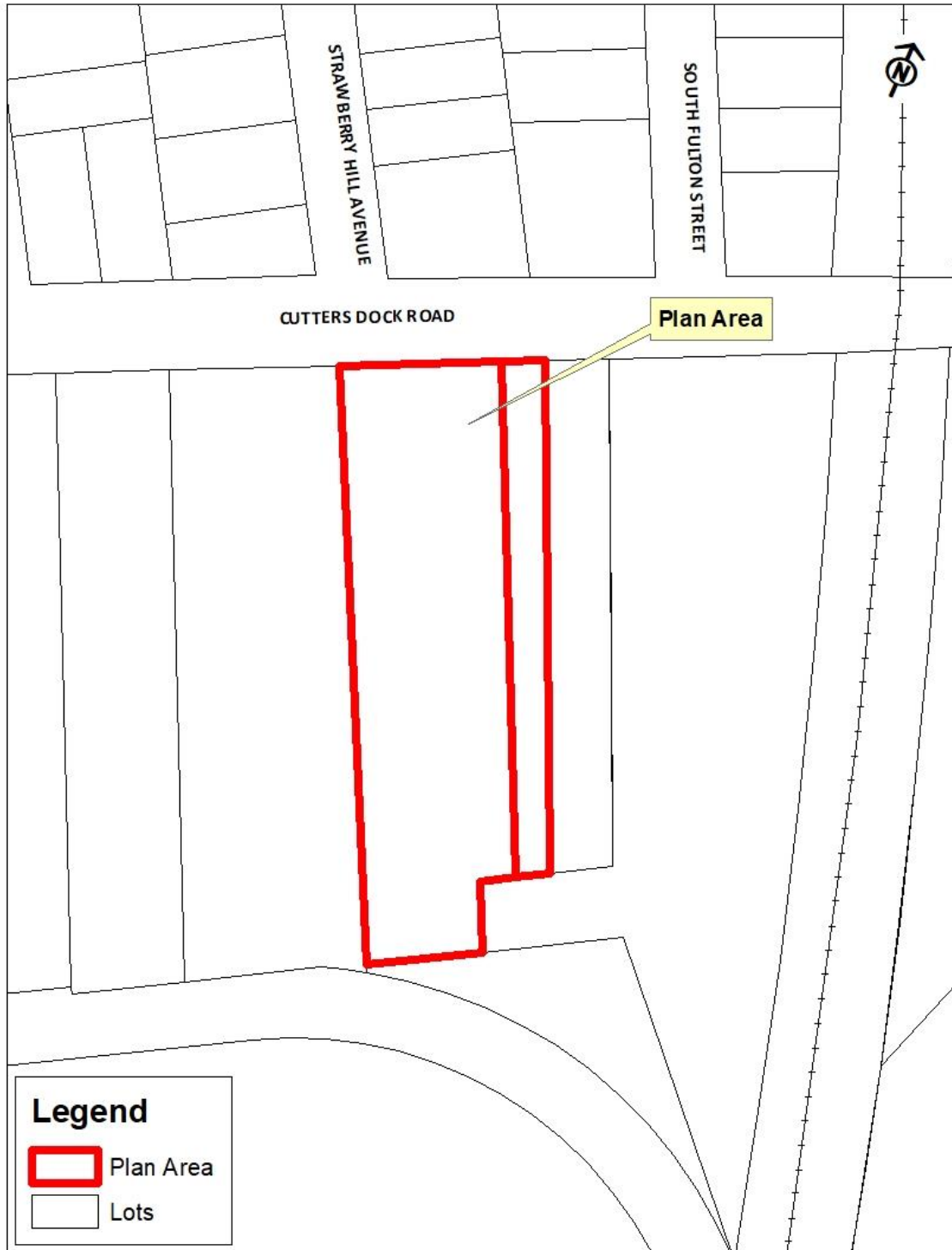
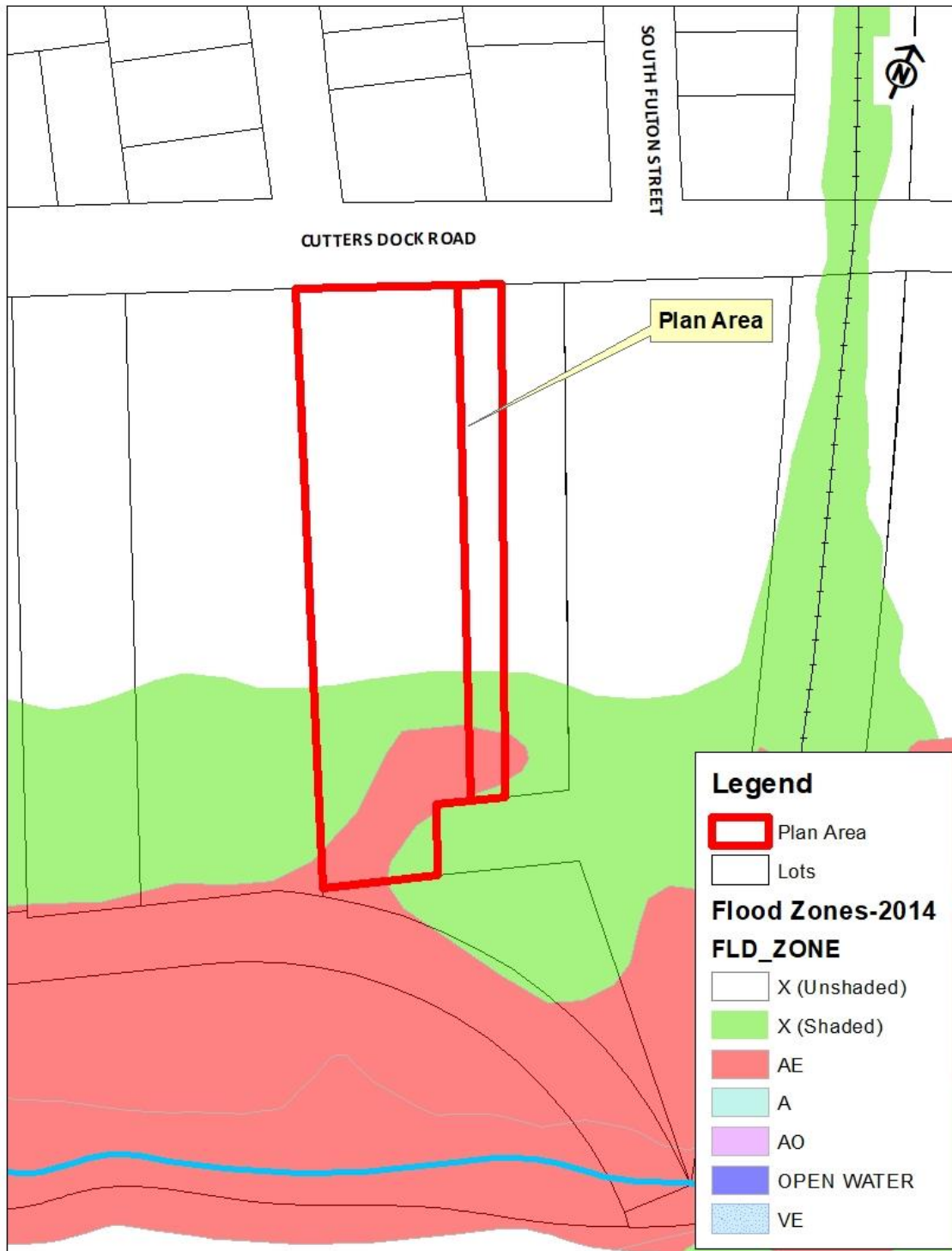


Figure 2: Redevelopment Area Aerial Map



Figure 3: Flood Zone Map



HISTORY OF WOODBRIDGE PROPER

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 a traditional downtown central business district where some of the first community facilities were built, such as townhall, schools, fire houses, and churches. Woodbridge was known for clay mining in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Woodbridge Center Mall, a regional retail destination, opened in 1971 on the site of a former clay pit. Woodbridge Proper has one of three New Jersey Transit train stations located in the Township.

MASTER PLANNING AND ZONING DESIGNATION HISTORY

The Township Master Plan was adopted in 2009 and reexamined in 2016. The Master Plan recognizes that the current land use for this area is residential. The current zoning for this area is the M-1 Light Industrial Zone. The land use and zoning have not changed since the 2009 Master Plan. The Master Plan recommends this area to be remain in the M-1 Light Industrial Zone.

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 stimulate economic investment in the Area;
- To promote the effective use of all the Redevelopment Area property and to increase property tax base;
- To improve the physical appearance of the Area
- To plan for development which will not have a negative impact on nearby residential properties.

COMMUNITY HEALTH:

Redevelopment of any site within the Township which is either outdated and/or not fully productive promotes community health. New construction promotes a reduction in the nuisance of properties.

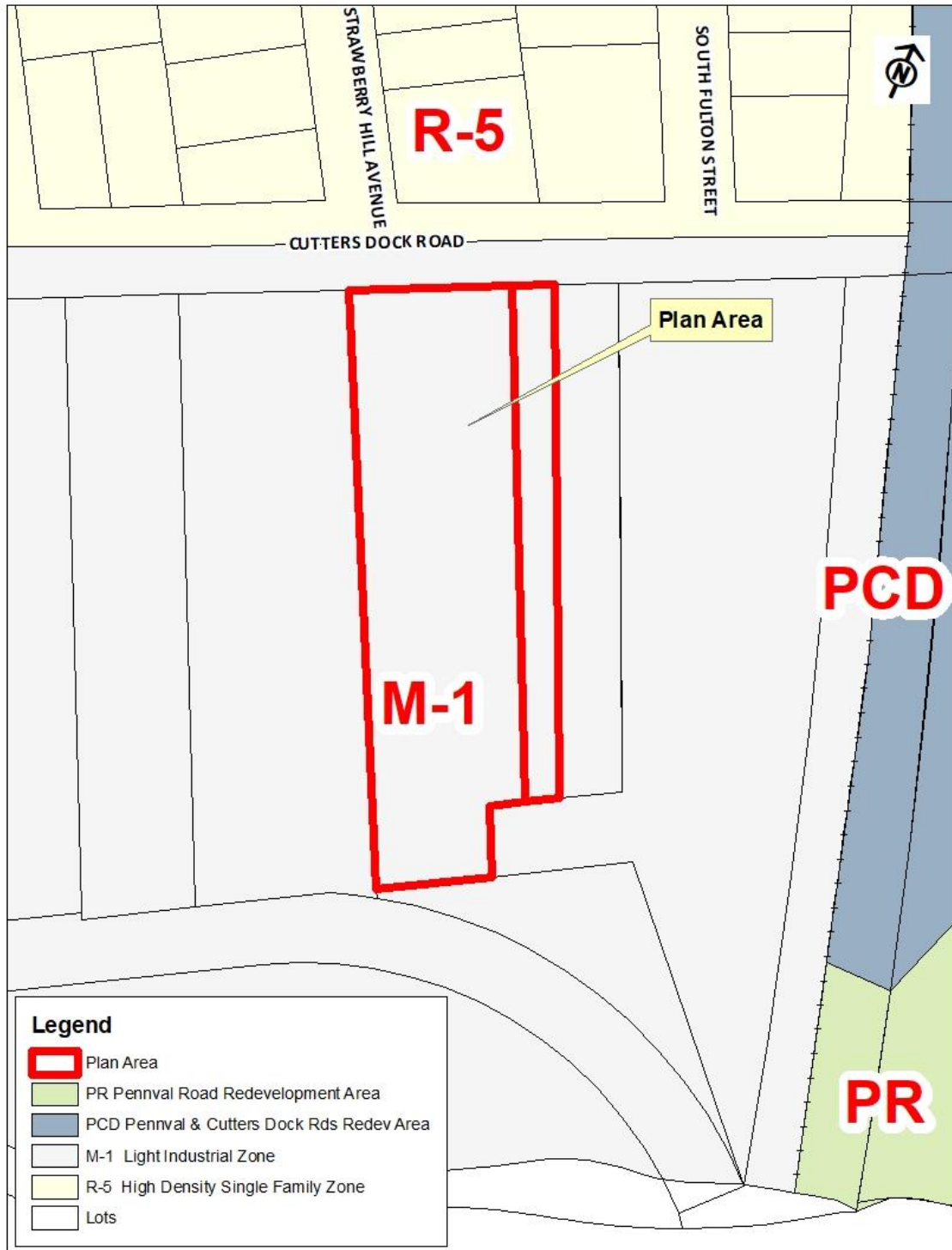
COMMUNITY RESILIENCY:

This Plan promotes resiliency to climate change by complying with all municipal and state stormwater regulations, including any requirements for green infrastructure.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

A redeveloper shall be responsible for any affordable housing obligation generated by development.

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.

AREA ZONING STANDARDS

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 proposed plan and standards take into account the known wetlands of the site, and all of the possible constraints and challenges full scale development of the site pose for attractive redevelopment of these properties. 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 Use and Development Ordinance.

The purpose of this Redevelopment Zone is to enhance current opportunities for this industrial property; to promote compatible land use development of attractive building groups; and to improve and provide for the efficient and safe traffic flow within.

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:

- Self-storage facilities
- Manufacturing and assembly
- Fabrication and assembly of products
- Warehouses, wholesale sales, storage and distribution
- General office and research buildings
- Green energy producing entities and their structures
- Green technology and laboratory or utility buildings
- Data Centers and Disaster Recovery Facilities
- In addition to the above, any industry not inconsistent with the above that is totally similar in purpose, function, character and effort

Bulk Standards:

Principal Building:

- Minimum lot size: one (1) acre
- Minimum lot width: 100 feet
- Minimum lot depth: 200 feet
- Minimum front yard setback: 25 feet
- Minimum rear yard setback: 30 feet

- Minimum side yard setback: 5 feet
- Maximum lot coverage: 45%
- Minimum gross floor area: 8,000 square feet
- Maximum Impervious Coverage: 85%
- Maximum building height: 3 stories or 50 feet

Accessory Buildings:

- Accessory buildings shall be set back a minimum of 5 feet from property lines
- All accessory structures shall not exceed a height of 35 feet
- Security and/or guard outposts are permitted and not considered accessory buildings

Sustainability:

- New development or rehabilitation of existing buildings should employ green building practices and infrastructure (referring to the Township’s Green Building Checklist). A detailed explanation shall be included as part of a site plan application
- Proposed energy saving techniques shall be considered as part of architectural plans and renderings
- Solar Panels are permitted on buildings and on the top level of parking structures.
- “Make-Ready” electric vehicle parking spaces and installed electric vehicle supply equipment shall be installed according to state legislation.

Additional Standards:

Parking:

- Off-street parking and loading areas shall be coordinated with the public street system serving the Area to reduce conflicts with through traffic, obstruction with pedestrian circulation, and vehicle thoroughfares
- All car parking spaces shall be nine (9) feet wide and eighteen (18) feet deep
- All trailer parking stalls shall be a minimum twelve (12) feet in width and fifty-five (55) feet in depth
- Aisles accommodating two-way traffic shall be a minimum of twenty four (24) feet in width
- Manufacturing, research, industrial, warehouses, wholesale or laboratories: 1 space per 2,500 sf of gross floor area. An office component is assumed to be a part of the primary building use.

- Offices, office buildings, office research buildings: one (1) parking space for each three hundred (300) square feet of net floor area (not including common areas)

Circulation:

- Parking areas can be interconnected with adjacent properties, and utilize common entrances and exits, to minimize the number of vehicular access points wherever possible.
- Curbs cuts and site driveways shall be sized to accommodate the safe access and egress of large tractor trailers and emergency services equipment.
- Existing curb cuts at the properties may remain as currently located and configured.
- Curb cuts offset distance may be reduced to zero where existing curb return crosses an existing property line.

Loading:

- Loading and unloading shall be provided according to the following schedule for manufacturing, warehouse & distribution, and similar uses:

GROSS FLOOR AREA	SPACES REQUIRED
4,000 to 25,000	1
25,001 to 50,000	2
50,001 to 75,000	3
75,001 to 100,000	4
Each Additional 50,000	1 Additional

- Self-storage facilities and all other uses are required to have a minimum of one (1) loading space.
- Loading spaces shall be at least 12 feet in width and 50 feet in length.

Buffering and Screening:

- Where not constrained by existing or proposed site improvements such as car parking, truck courts and buildings, a minimum 10-foot landscaped buffer shall be required along all public rights-of-way
- Loading docks, truck parking, outdoor storage, utility meters, HVAC equipment, trash dumpsters, trash compaction, and other service functions shall be incorporated into the overall design of the building and the landscaping so

that the visual and acoustic impacts of these functions are fully contained and out of view from adjacent properties and public streets.

Lighting:

- Accent lighting on buildings is encouraged
- 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, truck parking and truck court lights shall not exceed 30' in height

Utilities:

- Wherever practical, consideration should be given to relocating above ground utilities to underground.
- Pad mounted generators, transformers and refrigeration equipment are permitted when used in conjunction with the principle use

Signage:

The following signage requirements shall apply within the Redevelopment Area:

- One (1) freestanding monument sign shall be permitted for the overall site. Said sign shall not exceed 50 square feet per side; have a maximum height of eight (8) feet; and be located no closer than 5 feet to any lot line. Freestanding signs must have a monument base with planters and cannot be internally lit. Signs may be lighted with ground-mounted lights which operate on a timer.
- One (1) individual lettered façade sign, identifying the tenant may be installed at a maximum area equal to 10 percent of the front façade of the building and shall not project more than eight (8) inches in front of the façade. Each letter of the sign shall be calculated in that total number.
- Tenant emblems or logos, excluding words and letters, may be placed in an amount not to exceed one (1) per each building side. Emblems are encouraged to be located above entrances, at a size appropriate to bring attention to the entrance.
- 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.

Landscaping:

- Any development application shall include a tree survey. Tree removals and plantings must be done in compliance with the Township's Tree Ordinance.
- Minimum Landscaped Area Required: 15%
- Where not constrained by existing or proposed site improvements such as car parking, truck courts and buildings, all areas fronting public roadways shall be defined by a combination of decorative fencing and/or landscaping.
- Landscape design should be integrated into overall site design and plans should include a watering and maintenance schedule for each area

PLAN RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER PLANS

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

The Township of Woodbridge's last comprehensive Master Plan was prepared in February 2009 and reexamined in 2016. The Master Plan recommended this area be devoted to industrial and business uses.

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

- To continue attracting premier Retail, Industrial and Office end users to the Township.
- To expand and protect the Township's ratable base through the attraction and retention of nationally known and respected companies.
- To control industrial development:
 - By limiting industrial development to land suitable for industrial use, including sites with flat topography, good drainage and access to arterial and primary roadways.

MASTER PLANS OF ADJACENT MUNICIPALITIES

The Cutters Dock Road Redevelopment Area is located in the Woodbridge Proper section of the Township. The City of Perth Amboy is located to the south of the redevelopment area, but this redevelopment area is not directly adjacent to any properties in Perth Amboy. The redevelopment plan is not anticipated to have an adverse impact on any of the neighboring municipalities.

MIDDLESEX COUNTY PLANS

Consistency with Middlesex County Master Plan

The Cutters Dock Road 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;
- Ensure sound and integrated planning and implementation statewide.

The SDRP 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. “Town Centers” are “traditional centers of commerce or government...with diverse residential neighborhoods served by a mixed-use core offering locally oriented goods and services.” 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 planning objectives of the State Plan for the ‘Metropolitan Planning Area’ include:

- 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

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. The Redeveloper shall record a declaration in accordance with the Redevelopment Agreement, which will, among other things, include a covenant that the designated redeveloper, and his successors or assigns, shall devote the land to the uses specified in the Redevelopment Plan.
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, subject to the terms and conditions of the Redevelopment Agreement.
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 in compliance with the requirements of the Municipal Land Use Law.

PROPERTY TO BE ACQUIRED

This Redevelopment Plan authorizes the Township to exercise its condemnation powers on all properties in the Redevelopment Area, to acquire property or to eliminate any restrictive covenants, easements or similar property interests which may undermine the implementation of the Plan.

The Township plans, however, to assist the designated redevelopers in working with affected property owners and businesses to promote private redevelopment, where appropriate, of the parcels within the Redevelopment Area.

RELOCATION PLAN

It is anticipated that the designated redevelopers will address any relocation needs through acquisition of parcels. The Township of Woodbridge, however, will provide all displaced tenants and landowners with the appropriate relocation assistance, pursuant to applicable State and Federal law, should relocation be necessary. Such assistance will be provided through an appropriately designated office which will assist in any relocation of persons, businesses or other entities. Further, the Township of Woodbridge and the surrounding area contain sufficient land and buildings which would be appropriate for relocation of existing businesses from the Redevelopment Area. If relocation is not directly caused by the Redevelopment Plan, the Township assumes no responsibility for relocation of businesses.

DURATION OF REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

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.