

200 Wood Avenue South Redevelopment Plan



Prepared by:
Township of Woodbridge
Department of Planning & Development

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I. INTRODUCTION

This Redevelopment Plan represents an opportunity to improve an underutilized property in the Iselin section of Woodbridge Township. This plan will foster the transformation of properties into a mix of productive uses along Wood Avenue South. This Redevelopment Area should be a highly desirable location for businesses to thrive.

The redevelopment of 200 Wood Avenue South presents unique challenges. In response to the physical and economic conditions at the 200 Wood Avenue South site, the Township Council requested that the Planning Board evaluate that certain properties at that intersection as an “area in need of redevelopment” on May 5, 2020. The Council concluded that the Area did meet the criteria to be designated as “area in need of redevelopment” on July 6, 2020.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

According to the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (N.J.S.A. 40:A 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 Redevelopment Plan;
- Any significant relationship of the Redevelopment Plans 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.”

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 the Township’s Land Use and Development Ordinance in effect at the time of an approval for development of the property. Any proposed development must follow regulations found in §150-83.

RELOCATION PLAN

There are no tenants or occupants within the Redevelopment Area, therefore, the Redevelopment Plan will not cause the need for any relocation.

PLANNING CONTEXT

The Township of Woodbridge is 24.2 square miles in size and located in northeastern Middlesex County. The Township contains 10 sections: Avenel, Colonia, Fords, Hopelawn, Iselin, Keasbey, Menlo Park Terrace, Port Reading, Sewaren and Woodbridge. 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 Iselin section of the Township is generally bound by Edison Township to the west, Colonia to the north, Menlo Park Terrace and Woodbridge to the south, and Avenel to the east. The Iselin section of the Township consists of mostly residential neighborhoods, commercial uses along Route 1 and Route 27, and the Metropark Rail Station and its nearby office areas. The subject property is located in an office area near Metropark.

The 200 Wood Avenue South Redevelopment Area is located on the west side of Wood Avenue South. The total acreage of the redevelopment area is approximately 12 acres. The following property comprises the redevelopment area: Block 356.02, Lot 13.01.

Figure 1: Redevelopment Area Parcel Map

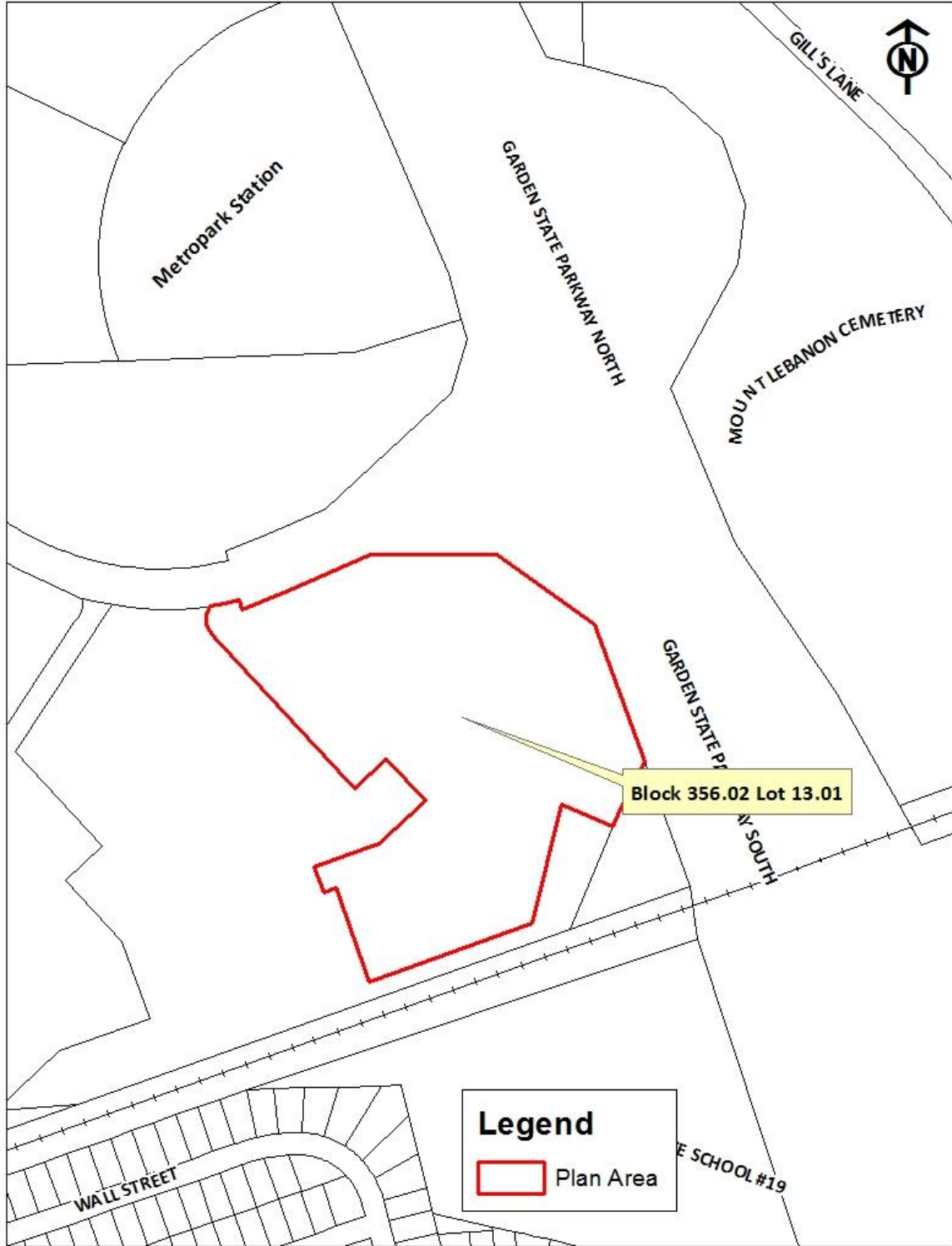
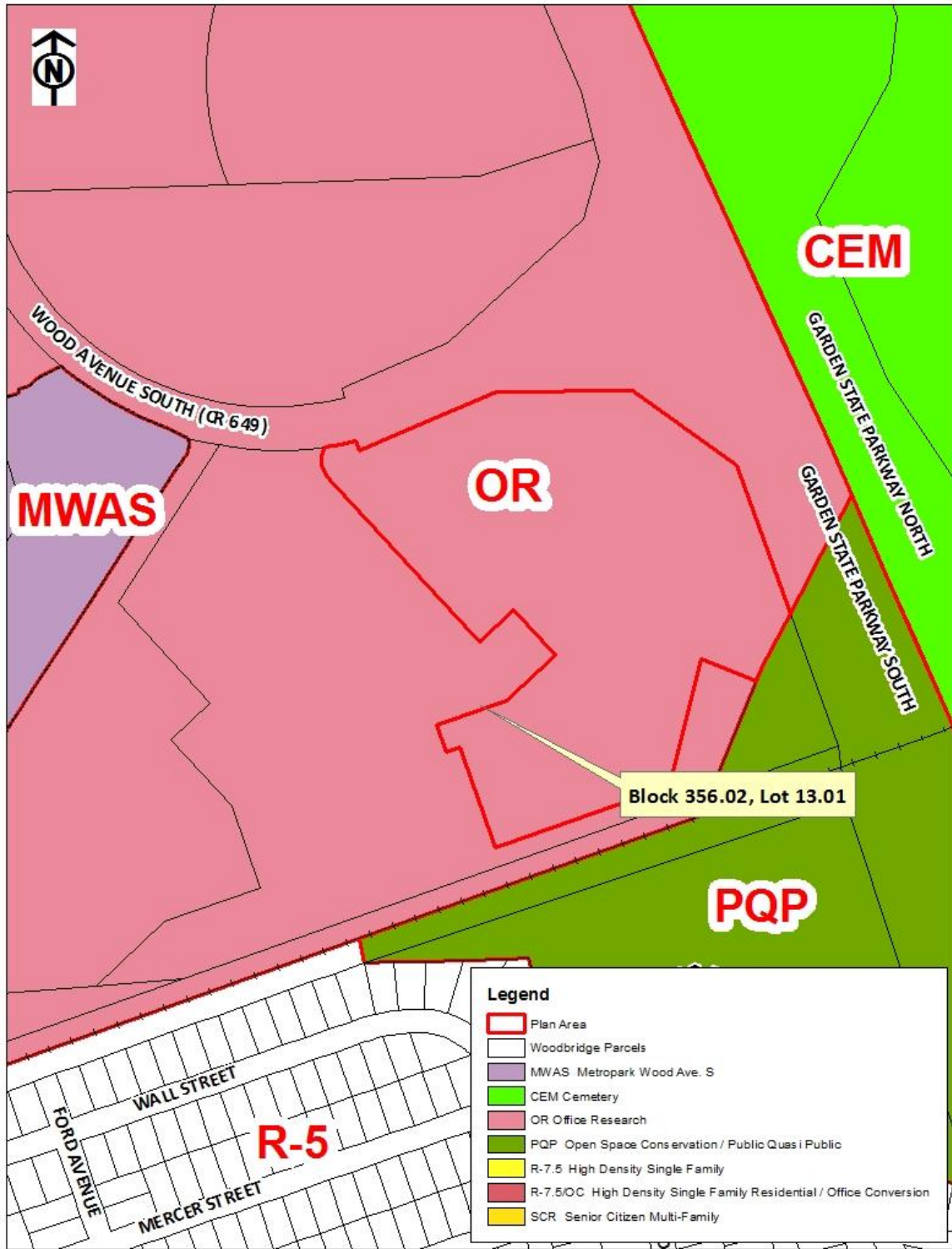


Figure 2: Redevelopment Area Aerial Map



Figure 3: Current Zoning



HISTORY OF ISELIN

The Iselin section of Woodbridge Township was once known as “Perrytown” after John Perry and a Revolutionary War soldier. Perrytown was called Uniontown during the Civil War, because of the abundance of Union troops who passed through. After the war Adrian George Iselin purchased land towards the east end of Green Street. Iselin built a rail station in town and eventually the town became known as Iselin. Today, a large portion of Iselin remains residential, however, commercial uses exist along Green Street, Oak Tree Road, and Routes 1 and 27. The Metropark rail station and its surrounding offices are a major center of Iselin today.

Iselin is one of three sections in the Township with a New Jersey Transit train station.

MASTER PLANNING AND ZONING DESIGNATION HISTORY

The 2009 Township Master Plan recognizes that the current land use for this area is commercial. The Master Plan was reexamined in 2017. The current zoning for this area is OR: Office Research. The land use and zoning have not changed since the 1990 Master Plan. The current Master Plan recommends this area continue to be utilized as Office Research.

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 properties and to increase property tax base;
- To redevelop land occupied by obsolete structures and uses;
- To redevelop the Metropark vicinity into a vibrant mixed use area, including offices, retail and residential uses;
- To improve the physical appearance of the Area.

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 or physical features uniquely affecting a specific piece of property, or by reason of an extraordinary and exceptional situation uniquely affecting a specific piece of property or the structures lawfully existing thereon, the strict application of any provision of, 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. 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.

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 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- 12. 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.

II. REDEVELOPMENT AREA ZONING STANDARDS

The purpose of this Redevelopment Area is to enhance current opportunities for this 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 mix of diverse, compatible uses is encouraged:

Permitted principal uses shall include, at a minimum:

- Offices, including buildings for administrative, business, educational, medical and/or professional purposes;
- Research and development, including activities of an engineering, medical or scientific nature;
- Data processing and computer operations;
- Governmental, educational or cultural facilities;
- Hotels and conference centers, which may include food service, cafés or restaurants with provisions for serving alcohol and other related commercial/convenience uses;
- Retail sales and service establishments, including financial institutions, banks (including drive-through banks), pharmacies and dry cleaning facilities, subject, however, to maximum floor area of 45,000 square feet for any such uses which are in buildings not containing office, hotel or residential use;
- Restaurants (non drive-in);
- Taverns and bars;
- Health and fitness facilities, which may include sauna, spa or hot tub facilities, indoor tennis, handball, racquetball, basketball and other sports activities;
- Child-care centers; and
- Multi-family residential, including apartment buildings and townhomes, but not to exceed a total of 300 residential units.

Permitting accessory uses shall include, at a minimum:

- Parking structures for storage of vehicles operated as part of a permitted use; and
- Other customary accessory uses and structures which are incidental to the principal structure or use.

Bulk Standards:

Principal Building:

- Minimum lot size: 10 acres;
- Minimum front yard setback: 40 feet;
- Minimum side-yard setback: 20 feet;
- Minimum rear-yard setback: 30 feet;
- Maximum building height: 10 stories, excluding mechanical and/or electrical penthouses, and excluding stories devoted in whole or in part to structured parking, cellars, and/or basements;
- Maximum Building Coverage (including principal and accessory buildings): 50%;
- Maximum Impervious Surface Coverage: 75%; provided, however, that the square footage of any green roof permanently affixed to the roof structure on a property shall be excluded from the total square footage of impervious surface coverage on such property;
- Maximum floor area ratio: 2.5:1.

Accessory Buildings:

Accessory Buildings shall conform to the same height and setback requirements as the principal building, except as set forth below:

- Minimum front-yard, side yard, and rear-yard setback: 10 feet.

Green Buildings:

- All development is encouraged to incorporate green building practices.
- Solar Panels are permitted on buildings and on the top level of parking structures.
- Proposed energy saving techniques shall be considered as part of architectural plans and renderings;
- New development or rehabilitation of existing buildings should employ green building practices (refer to the Township’s Green Building Checklist).

Additional Standards:

Shared Parking:

Shared parking spaces shall be permitted to promote efficiency. Where a shared parking analysis is submitted to demonstrate that multiple uses may share parking spaces which

will effectively serve such uses, the total number of required space may accordingly be reduced from the total that would otherwise be required for each individual use.

Parking & Loading Spaces:

The required size of parking spaces in the Redevelopment Area shall be as follows:

- At grade, perpendicular parking spaces: 9 feet wide x 18 feet long;
- Structured/garage parking: 8.5 feet wide x 18 feet long;
- Parallel parking spaces: 7 feet wide x 22 feet long;
- Compact parking spaces in structured/garage parking: 8 feet x 16 feet, provided that compact spaces shall not exceed 10% of the total number of spaces provided.

The required number of parking spaces shall be as follows:

- Office uses (non-medical): 1 parking space for each 300 square feet of gross floor area, not including stairways and common areas;
- Office uses (medical): 1 parking space for each 100 square feet of gross floor area;
- Restaurant or tavern uses: 1 parking space for each 100 square feet of gross floor area;
- Retail uses: 1 parking space for each 200 square feet of gross floor area;
- Health and fitness uses: 1 parking space for each 200 square feet of gross floor area;
- Hotels: 1 parking space per room, plus 1 parking space per employee on the maximum shift, plus 1 parking space per 200 square feet of gross floor area of meeting rooms, restaurants and cocktail lounges;
- Multi-family residential uses: Must conform with Residential Site Improvement Standards.

The required number of loading spaces in the Redevelopment Area shall be as follows:

- 1 loading space required for each office building;
- 1 loading space required for each hotel building;
- 1 common loading space required to serve all retail use, providing justification to the Board.

The Planning Board may authorize deferral of construction of a maximum of 10% of the required parking spaces if the applicant demonstrates that such reduced amount of parking spaces will be adequate. The deferred parking spaces may be installed if required to meet future parking needs.

Signage:

The following signage requirements shall apply within the Redevelopment Area:

- Each use in a building may have one façade sign on any exposed building side, provided that the total area of such signs does not exceed 10% of the total area of the front façade of the building;
- Development within the Redevelopment Area may be served by up to two freestanding signs, each one being intended to facilitate access via a different driveway location, and each sign having maximum height of 10 feet, a minimum setback of 10 feet from any property line, and up to 125 square feet in area on each face of the sign; and
- Additional freestanding directional signs are allowed.

Survey and Replacement of Trees:

- Minimum landscape coverage limits for Redevelopment Zone sites shall be: twenty percent (20%);
- Landscaped area required: In calculating the landscaped areas, the areas of plazas, open pedestrian shopping malls, sitting areas, green roofs, pools and fountains shall be included. For purposes of this subsection, the areas of a paved parking lot shall not be included for purposes of determining the percentage of the site that shall be devoted to landscaped areas. There shall be no landscaping required within the paved parking areas of a parking lot containing one hundred fifty (150) spaces or less. In parking lots containing more than one hundred fifty (150) spaces, landscaping may be allowed within the paved parking areas of the parking lot;
- Any trees removed shall be in accordance with the tree replacement ordinance.

Multiple Buildings and Uses:

A lot in the Redevelopment Area may contain multiple principal buildings and uses, and multiple accessory buildings and uses.

III. 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 2017. The Master Plan recommended this area be devoted to Office Research.

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

- 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.
- To expand retail service activities in appropriate locations to meet the future shopping needs of Township residents.
- To continue attracting premier Retail, Industrial and Office end users to the Township.

MASTER PLANS OF ADJACENT MUNICIPALITIES

The 200 Wood Avenue South Redevelopment Area is located close to the municipal border of Edison Township. This Redevelopment Plan is not expected to have an adverse impact on Edison Township.

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.

In 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 200 Wood Avenue South Redevelopment Plan is generally consistent with the elements of the Middlesex County Master Plan, a document that addresses sprawl and sustainability in the region. The Redevelopment Plan relates 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

The 200 Wood Avenue South 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.

As of the writing of this Plan, a new State Plan is being developed, called “The State Strategic Plan: New Jersey’s State Development and Redevelopment Plan.”

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

IV. 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.

A person or entity that owns or controls the parcels within the Redevelopment Area shall be given priority in the designation of Redeveloper, provided such person or entity has

appropriate development experience and financial resources, as this would minimize acquisition costs and delay.

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 Redevelopment 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 other than as may be provided in 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

An application for preliminary and/or final site plan approval for uses authorized in this Plan may be filed by: (i) a redeveloper designated by the Redevelopment Entity; or (ii) an assignee of the redeveloper as approved by the Redevelopment Entity. In addition to any requirements of the Redevelopment Entity, 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.

AMENDING THE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

This Redevelopment Plan may be amended from time to time in compliance with the requirements of law, and subject to the terms of any Redevelopment Agreement.