



Engineering & Design



Area in Need of
Redevelopment
Investigation

White Township Plaza
Block 53, Lot 1
525-551 US Route 46
White Township,
Warren County, New Jersey

Report prepared on **September 9, 2022**
Adopted by White Township Planning Board on _____
Adopted by White Township Committee on _____

Prepared for:

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Introduction

The purpose of this report is to determine whether the study area, known as Block 53, Lot 1 within the Township of White, Warren County, New Jersey, qualifies as an Area in Need of Redevelopment, as defined by the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (N.J.S.A. 40:12A-1 et seq., "LRHL"). This analysis has been conducted pursuant to the LRHL, which specifies the criteria that must be met within the delineated study area and the process to be undertaken by the Planning Board during the investigation.

This report is written pursuant to Section 6 of the LRHL (N.J.S.A. 40-12A-6), which requires the following:

- a) No area of a municipality shall be determined a redevelopment area unless the governing body of the municipality shall, by resolution, authorize the Planning Board to undertake a preliminary investigation to determine whether the proposed area is a redevelopment area according to the criteria set forth in Section 5 of P.L. 1992 (C.40A:12A-5). Such determination shall be made after public notice and public hearing as provided in subsection b. of this section. The governing body of a municipality shall assign the conduct of the investigation and hearing to the planning board of the municipality. The resolution authorizing the planning board to undertake a preliminary investigation shall state whether the redevelopment area determination shall authorize the municipality to use all those powers provided by the legislature for use in a redevelopment area other than the use of eminent domain (hereinafter referred to as a "Non-Condensation Redevelopment Area") or whether the redevelopment area determination shall authorize the municipality to use all those powers provided by the Legislature for use in a redevelopment area, including the power of eminent domain (hereinafter referred to as a "Condensation Redevelopment Area").
- b) (1) Before proceeding to a public hearing on the matter, the Planning Board shall prepare a map showing the boundaries of the proposed redevelopment area and the location of the various parcels of property included therein. There shall be appended to the map a statement setting forth the basis for the investigation.

(2) The Planning Board shall specify a date for and give notice of a hearing for the purpose of hearing persons who are interested in or would be affected by a determination that the delineated area is a redevelopment area.

The White Township Committee, in a Resolution dated May 11, 2022, requested that the Planning Board undertake a preliminary investigation as to whether the study area identified in the resolution is in need of redevelopment, pursuant to the LRHL.¹

Section 6b(4) of the LRHL also requires the Planning Board to hold a hearing on this matter prior to recommending that the delineated area, or any part thereof, be determined or not determined a redevelopment area by the governing body. After obtaining the Planning Board's recommendation,

¹ Resolution #2022-29, White Township Committee, adopted May 11, 2022. (See Appendix)

the Township Committee may adopt a resolution determining that the delineated area, or any part thereof, is a redevelopment area (Section 6b(5) of the LRHL).

Before presenting the study area investigation and analysis, it is important to note that the determination of need presented in this analysis is only the first step of the redevelopment process and does not provide guidance with respect to planning, development or redevelopment of the study area.

Section 7 of the LRHL describes the tool (the redevelopment plan) which specifies how the redevelopment should be planned, in addition to the process through which such a plan is prepared.

A redevelopment plan, which may supersede the zoning of an area or serve as an overlay thereto, specifies the following:

- Relationship of the project area to local objectives as to appropriate land uses, density of population, 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 to them in the existing local housing market.
- An identification of any property within the redevelopment area, which is proposed to be acquired in accordance with the redevelopment plan. (Note: not every property in a redevelopment area must be acquired and, in fact, none may be acquired; the redevelopment plan can specify buildings or uses to remain in the redevelopment area and to be incorporated into the future design and development of the area.)
- Any significant relationship of the redevelopment plan to the master plan of contiguous municipalities, the master plan of the county, and the State Development and Redevelopment Plan.
- As of the date of the adoption of the resolution finding the area to be in need of redevelopment, an inventory of all housing units affordable to low- and moderate-income households that are to be removed as a result of implementation of the redevelopment plan, whether as a result of subsidies or market conditions, listed by affordability level, number of bedrooms, and tenure.
- A plan for the provision, through new construction or substantial rehabilitation of one comparable, affordable replacement housing unit for each affordable housing unit that has been occupied at any time within the last 18 months, that is subject to affordability controls and that is identified as to be removed as a result of implementation of the redevelopment plan. Displaced residents of housing units provided under any State or federal housing subsidy program, or pursuant to the "Fair Housing Act," provided they are deemed to be eligible, shall have first priority for those replacement units provided under the plan; provided that any such replacement units shall not be credited against a prospective municipal obligation under the "Fair Housing Act," if the housing unit which is removed had previously been credited toward

satisfying the municipal fair share obligation. To the extent reasonably feasible, replacement housing shall be provided within or in close proximity to the redevelopment area. A municipality shall report annually to the Department of Community Affairs on its progress in implementing the plan for provision of comparable, affordable replacement housing required pursuant to this section.

- Existing and proposed locations of public electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

This report and investigation are aimed only at determining whether the study area meets the statutory criteria to be identified as an Area in Need of Redevelopment and, therefore, does not contain any of the specific planning guidance contained in a redevelopment plan.

This Investigation Report is the culmination of information collected from site visits, analyses of historic aerial images, tax maps, zoning maps and ordinances, Google Maps & Street View (accessed in 2022), environmental reports, and other available historical and official documents and maps. Unless otherwise mentioned, all photos were taken during a site visit on July 6, 2021 and June 21, 2022.

Criteria for Redevelopment Area Determination

Section 5 of the LRHL outlines the criteria to be considered in evaluating a study area for Redevelopment. An area may be determined to be in need of redevelopment if, after investigation, notice and hearing, the governing body of the municipality concludes by resolution that any one of the following relevant conditions is found:

- a) The generality of buildings are substandard, unsafe, unsanitary, dilapidated, or obsolescent, or possess any of such characteristics, or are so lacking in light, air, or space, as to be conducive to unwholesome living or working conditions.
- b) The discontinuance of the use of a building or buildings previously used for commercial, retail, shopping malls or plazas, office parks, manufacturing, or industrial purposes; the abandonment of such building or buildings; significant vacancies of such building or buildings for at least two consecutive years; or the same being allowed to fall into so great a state of disrepair as to be untenable.
- c) Land that is owned by the municipality, the county, a local housing authority, redevelopment agency or entity, or unimproved vacant land that has remained so for a period of ten years prior to the adoption of the resolution, and that by reason of its location, remoteness, lack of means of access to developed sections or portions of the municipality, or topography, or nature of the soil, is not likely to be developed through the instrumentality of private capital.
- d) Areas with buildings or improvements which, by reason of dilapidation, obsolescence, overcrowding, faulty arrangement or design, lack of ventilation, light and sanitary facilities, excessive land coverage, deleterious land use or obsolete layout, or any combination of these or other factors, are detrimental to the safety, health, morals or welfare of the community.

- e) A growing lack or total lack of proper utilization of areas caused by the condition of the title, diverse ownership of the real properties therein or other similar conditions which impede land assemblage or discourage the undertaking of improvements, resulting in a stagnant and unproductive condition of land potentially useful and valuable for contributing to and serving the public health, safety and welfare, which condition is presumed to be having a negative social or economic impact or otherwise being detrimental to the safety, health, morals, or welfare of the surrounding area or the community in general.
- f) Areas, in excess of five contiguous acres, whereon buildings or improvements have been destroyed, consumed by fire, demolished or altered by the action of storm, fire, cyclone, tornado, earthquake or other casualty in such a way that the aggregate assessed value of the area has been materially depreciated.
- g) In any municipality in which an enterprise zone has been designated pursuant to the "New Jersey Urban Enterprise Zones Act," P.L.1983, c. 303 (C.52:27H-60 et seq.) the execution of the actions prescribed in that act for the adoption by the municipality and approval by the New Jersey Urban Enterprise Zone Authority of the zone development plan for the area of the enterprise zone shall be considered sufficient for the determination that the area is in need of redevelopment pursuant to sections 5 and 6 of P.L.1992, c. 79 (C.40A:12A-5 and 40A:12A-6) for the purpose of granting tax exemptions within the enterprise zone district pursuant to the provisions of P.L.1991, c. 431 (C.40A:20-1 et seq.) or the adoption of a tax abatement and exemption ordinance pursuant to the provisions of P.L.1991, c. 441 (C.40A:21-1 et seq.). The municipality shall not utilize any other redevelopment powers within the urban enterprise zone unless the municipal governing body and planning board have also taken the actions and fulfilled the requirements prescribed in P.L.1992, c. 79 (C.40A:12A-1 et al.) for determining that the area is in need of redevelopment or an area in need of rehabilitation and the municipal governing body has adopted a redevelopment plan ordinance including the area of the enterprise zone.
- h) The designation of the delineated area is consistent with smart growth planning principles adopted pursuant to law or regulation.

In addition to the above criteria, Section 3 of the LRHL, which defines the redevelopment area, allows the inclusion of parcels necessary for the effective redevelopment of the area, by stating "a redevelopment area may include land, buildings, or improvements, which of themselves are not detrimental to the health, safety or welfare, but the inclusion of which is found necessary, with or without change in their condition, for the effective redevelopment of the area in which they are a part."



<p>0 100 200 300 400 Feet 1 inch = 218 feet</p>	<p>Study Area Map Redevelopment Investigation Block 53, Lot 1 White Township, Warren County, New Jersey</p>	<p> Colliers Engineering & Design June 2022</p>
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Map 1: Study Area Map with 2020 Aerial Photograph

Description of Study Area

Site Description

The study area consists of Lot 1 in Block 53 and is located along US Route 46. The study area contains approximately 9.25 acres. As illustrated in **Map 2** below, the lot is a triangular parcel with road frontages on all sides, including Water St, Massenatts Road, US Route 46, and Manunkachunk Road. The property is generally isolated, with only a freestanding Rite-Aid to the north, across Route 46. To the east, across Water Street, is the Pequest River. To the west, across Massenatts Road, is a religious convent on over 76 acres of undeveloped land. To the west, across Manunkachunk Road, is a 250- acre industrial complex for DSM Nutritional Products. The study area contains a retail strip mall with vehicular entrances along Massenatts Rd and right-in/right-out access to US Route 46 eastbound. The property is within the sewer service area of and is served by the Warren County (Pequest River) Municipal Utilities Authority.



Map 2: Excerpt of Township Tax Map with Study Area Outlined



Map 3: Aerial Photograph of Study Area, 2020 (via NJ Highlands Council Interactive Map)

Lot 1 in Block 53 is a 9.25-acre (402,930-square foot) parcel developed with a 72,000-square foot strip mall on the property known as White Township Plaza. The property contains 380 parking spaces with an area reserved for future construction of 43 additional spaces as needed.

The original building at White Township Plaza was constructed in 1968, which included a 17,000-square foot A&P Sav-A-Center supermarket along with 10,000 square feet of retail space. The former A&P Sav-A-Center is presently occupied by Advance Auto Parts and Family Dollar.

Sometime around 1980, a 5,000 square foot addition was constructed, which included a bank with drive-thru teller lane. Then in 1991, a 35,000-square foot addition with a 2,500-square foot mezzanine was constructed for the rebranded A&P Food Market.

The anchor store, A&P Food Market, closed in 2015 due to financial issues of the parent company and many of the smaller stores continue to be vacant. Presently, only four of the fourteen tenant spaces remain occupied, representing about 28 percent of the 72,000-square foot shopping center. Current tenants include a Family Dollar, Advance Auto Parts, a pizza restaurant, and a martial arts studio.

According to the current tax records, the study area has an assessed valuation of \$3,350,000 in 2021, which includes \$2,271,400 for the land and \$1,078,600 for the building. The property was assessed \$73,097 in property taxes in 2021.

Aerial imagery shows that the roadways surrounding the study area had been built by as early as 1931. **Map 4** below shows an aerial image from 1956 with the vacant property surrounded by the four roadways.

Map 5 shows aerial imagery from 1970 with the original 17,000-square foot A&P Sav-A-Center supermarket along with 10,000 square feet of retail space.

Map 6 shows aerial imagery from 1981 with the bank addition completed on the westerly end of the plaza.

Map 7 shows aerial imagery from 1981 with no change in building construction since 1988.

Map 8 shows aerial imagery from 1992 with the final addition completed for the A&P Food Store.

Map 9 shows aerial imagery from 1995 and **Map 10** shows imagery from 2012. Both maps show the building and parking configuration as exists today. The parking lot appears to be less than 25 percent utilized in both aerial photos.



Map 4: Aerial Photograph of Study Area, 1956



Map 5: Aerial Photograph of Study Area, 1970



Map 6: Aerial Photograph of Study Area, 1981



Map 7: Aerial Photograph of Study Area, 1988



Map 8: Aerial Photograph of Study Area, 1992 (via GoogleEarth)



Map 9: Aerial Photograph of Study Area, 1995 (via NJ Highlands Council Interactive Map)



Map 10: Aerial Photograph of Study Area, 2012 (via NJ Highlands Council Interactive Map)

Evidence of damage, degradation, and general neglect was found around the exterior of the property and throughout the building's interior. **Photo 1** shows the exterior of the former bank with the now defunct drive-thru window. The walls are stained with mildew and algae. There are building materials missing as they have fallen off over the years and not been repaired or replaced. The wooden guiderail is falling down due to rotting wood.



Photo 1: Exterior of Bank and Drive-Thru

Damage to the ceiling and insulation appears to be the major contributor effecting the anchor space and the ancillary units. **(Photo 2).**



Photo 2 – Anchor Space under Renovation

Evidence of water damage and mildew can be found along various points on the interior of each vacant unit.

The front parking lot is in poor condition with cracks and crumbling asphalt with aging patches. **(Photo 3).**



Photo 3 – Deteriorated Asphalt Parking Lot



Photo 4: Interior of Former Nail Salon

The interior of the building is where the most degradation has taken place over time. Water damage and mold can be found along ceiling tiles, which shows evidence of a leak in the roof or a leaky pipe.

There is also evidence of damaged flooring in a few of the spaces as there are gaps between the floor and wall (**Photo 4**). There was also evidence of moldy carpets based on the odor and visible water damage (**Photo 5**).



Photo 5: Interior of Former Dry Cleaners

A few of the vacant units are carpeted and show evidence of water damage. The ceiling has also been affected by damage as a few tiles have fallen throughout the years (**Photo 6**).



Photo 6: Interior of Former Video Rental

At the time of inspection, the anchor space was undergoing renovation for a new tenant fitout. The floor is in poor condition throughout the vacant anchor space with many cracks and crumbling areas, which appears to have been demolished to make way for a new floor to be installed. **Photo 7** shows the damaged floor where former pieces of equipment were removed. Piles of debris litter the floor throughout the building. **Photo 8** depicts the debris in the front of the vacant market space.



Photo 7: Interior of Anchor Store under renovation

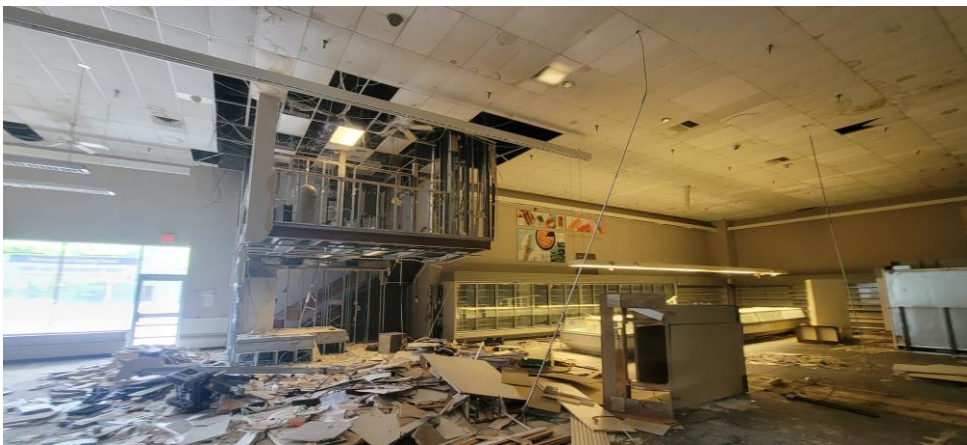


Photo 8: Interior of Anchor Store under renovation

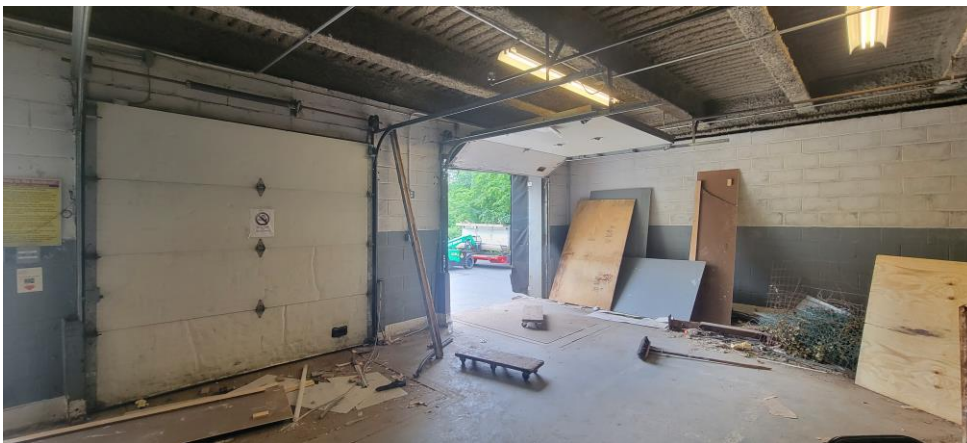


Photo 9: Loading Docks in Anchor Store

Portions of the floor in the rear of the vacant market was partially removed but the debris remained. The ceiling above was also partially removed as the installation is visible. The white wall bordering the partially removed ceiling appears to be lifting off the concrete brick wall (**Photo 10**). Water sprinklers are visible in the space leading to the loading dock. In addition to image boards and carts that were left behind (**Photo 11**).



Photo 10: Interior of Anchor Store under renovation



Photo 11: Interior of Anchor Store under renovation

The rear of one of the ancillary spaces features an exit door that is lifted from the floor and is showing signs of degradation (**Photo 12**). The windows of this space along with a few others have words and images written in the dust alluding to one or more entrances being accessible to trespassers. As pictured in **Photo 13**, unused exterior air conditioning units are visible in the entrance ways.

Damage from removed cooking appliances from an old Subway is pictured in **Photo 15** and **Photo 16**, along with exposed wires. There are many exposed elements that were previously used to support appliances. There is also a stain on the floor to the left due to unknown causes.



Photo 12: Rear entrance to Former Dry Cleaners



Photo 13: Entrance to Former Dry Cleaners



Photo 14: Former Subway



Photo 15: Former Subway



Photo 16: Former Subway

The vacant bank has debris scattered within the foyer and main office (**Photos 17-20**). Evidence of spider nests and other insect occupation are located along the walls of the space.



Photo 17: Former Bank Foyer



Photo 18: Former Bank Interior

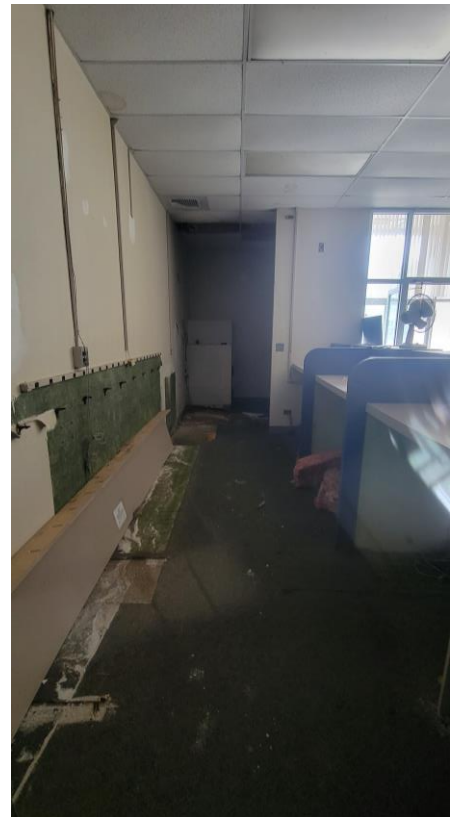


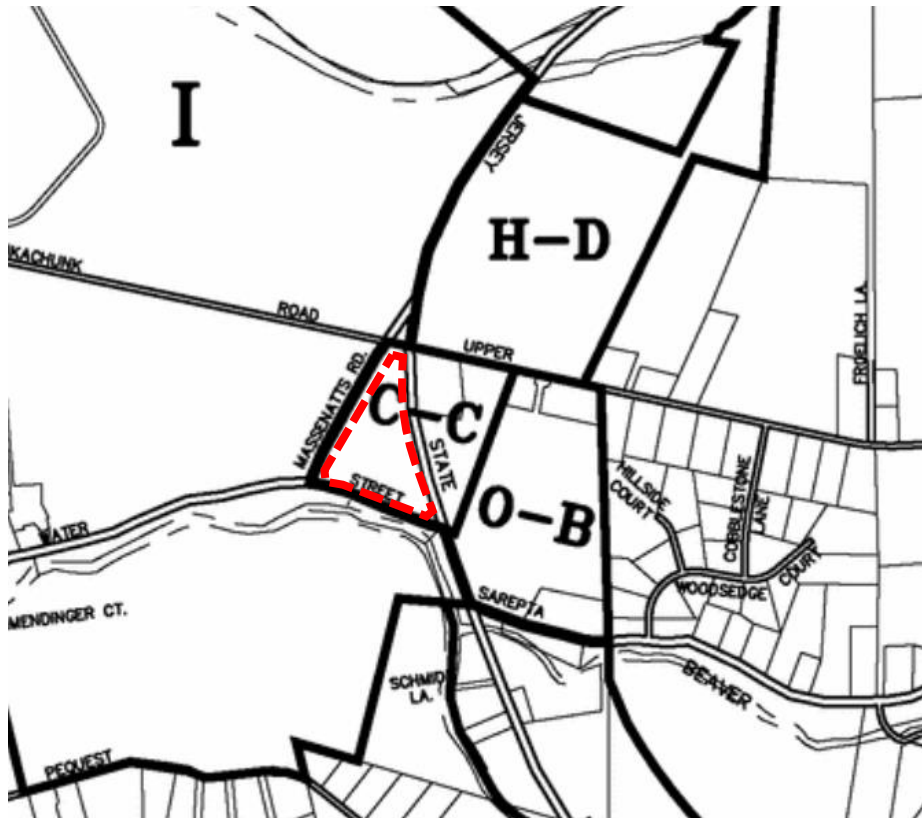
Photo 19: Former Bank Interior



Photo 20: Former Bank Interior

Zoning in the Study Area

As illustrated on **Map 5**, the study area property located along U.S Route 46 is entirely within the C-C Community Commercial Zone District.



Map 11: Excerpt of Zoning Map with Study Area Highlighted

Principal permitted uses in the NB District include the following:

- Hardware, paint, glass, and wallpaper stores
- Department stores and variety stores
- Dry goods stores
- Apparel and accessories stores
- Eating and drinking places, not including drive-in restaurants
- Book and stationary stores
- Jewelry stores
- Florist stores
- Cigar stores and new dealers
- Camera, photographic supply and art stores
- Gift, novelty and souvenir stores
- Optical goods stores
- Luggage and leather goods stores
- Supermarkets
- Home and garden shops
- Convenience stores
- Antique Stores
- Liquor stores
- Food stores, dairy stores, and retail bakeries
- Furniture, home furnishings and equipment stores
- Radio, television, and music stores

Personal service establishments permitted in the NB District include the following:

- Banks, credit unions and credit agencies
- Security and commodity brokers
- Real estate and insurance offices
- Holding and investment company offices
- Laundry and dry-cleaning pickup stores
- Photographic studios
- Barbershop and beauty shops
- Shoe repair shops
- Garment pressing, alteration and repair shops
- Miscellaneous repair services other than automotive
- Motion-picture theaters, except outdoor
- Dance studios and schools
- Medical and health services, excluding veterinarian services
- Legal services
- Engineering and architectural services
- Accounting and bookkeeping services

Conditional uses in the CC District include the following:

- Nonprofit institutional uses
- Profit-making institutional uses
- Limited commercial uses
- Mixed conditional uses
- Planned residential developments
- ECHO housing units
- Uses in conjunction with agriculture
- Cellular communication facilities
- Golf courses
- Self-storage facilities
- Home occupations
- Convenience stores with retail motor vehicle fuel sales
- Public garages and gasoline service stations

Bulk requirements for the CC District are as follows:

- Minimum Lot Area 2.00 acres
- Minimum Lot Width 250 ft.
- Lot Frontage 200 ft.
- Minimum Front Yard Setback 50 ft.
- Minimum Side Yard Setback 60 ft.
- Minimum Rear Yard Setback 40 ft.
- Maximum Lot Coverage 50%
- Maximum Building Height 35 ft.

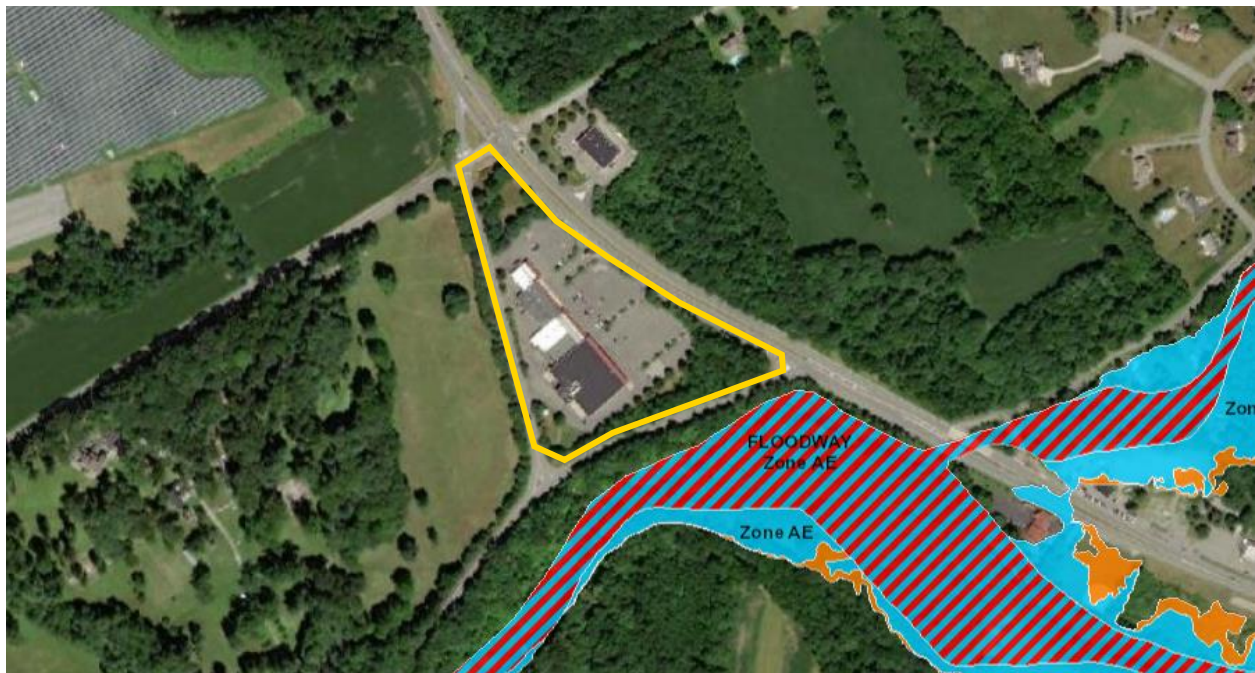
Land Use Setting

The frontage of the study area is located along U.S Route 46 surrounded on one side by the Industrial district, with close proximity to Highway Development District and Office-Building District. Situated in the Industrial District lies both Stoneyfield Orchard, across Water St., and DSM Nutritional Products, across Manunkachunk Rd. This mix of zoning districts in the area immediately surrounding the study site results in the uses around the site being somewhat diverse. However, as the property used to contain the only supermarket within the town, the property would have attracted a variety of customers and consumers. The property is within the sewer service area of and is served by the Warren County (Pequest River) Municipal Utilities Authority.

Environmental Characteristics

According to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, there are no active nor inactive contamination of this property.

The subject property is not located within a flood hazard area. FEMA Flood Zone mapping shows that there is a floodway to the southeast of the property.



Map 12: FEMA Flood Zone Map

Vacancy Rates

Table 1 shows the occupancies for the shopping center dating back to 1976, as provided by the current owner of the property. The table shows there have been substantial vacancies in the shopping center in the past 5 years. Current tenant spaces that are occupied include H&R Block, Little Italy Restaurant, China Wok Restaurant, Advance Auto Parts, and Family Dollar. The former A&P anchor store is currently being renovated and subdivided into two smaller units. One of those units is planned to be occupied by Family Dollar, which would leave a vacancy in the current Family Dollar tenant space. Presently, approximately 21,880 square feet of the total 68,800 square feet of retail space is occupied, representing a 30 percent occupancy rate.

PNC Bank vacated the bank unit in 2007, leaving 1,500 square feet with a drive-thru vacant for almost 15 years. Curves vacated the 1,050 square foot space in 2009, almost 13 years ago. The former 1,575-square foot Navarr Academy space has been vacant for 16 years. Subway recently vacated its 1,120-square foot space due to COVID-19. Sonny's Video & Bake Shoppe closed its 2,720 square foot store 18 years ago. The 1,600-square foot Karate studio has been vacant for 3 years. The 1,120 dry cleaners' space has been vacant for 12 years. The 800-square foot nail salon has been vacant for 9 years. Finally, the A&P anchor store has been vacant for 7 years.

Table 1: Tenant Occupancy

Unit	Approx. Floor Area	Lease	Tenant	Start Date	Move In	Move Out	Years Vacant
1	1,500	BELV-PNC BANK(0)	PNC Bank, N.A.	10-01-1976	10-01-1976	09-30-2007	15
2	1,200	BELV-H&R BLOCK(0)	H&R Block	12-28-2001	12-28-2001		
2-A	1,050	BELV-L&W FITNES(0)	Curves - L&W Fitness	10-01-2009	10-01-2009	09-30-2010	13
		BELV-CURVES(0)	Curves for Women	05-20-2002	05-20-2002	09-30-2009	
3	1,575	BELV-NAVARR(0)	Navarr Academy of Perf. Arts	10-01-2003	10-01-2003	09-30-2006	16
		BELV-PENG VIDEO(0)		05-01-1985	05-01-1985	03-31-2002	
4	1,120	BELV-SUBWAY(0)	Subway	02-01-2005	02-01-2005	07-30-2021	1
4A	2,720	BELV-VIDEO/BAKE(0)		06-24-2002	06-24-2002	09-30-2004	18
5	1,600	BELV-Lil Italy(0)	Little Italy	12-01-2017	12-01-2017		
		BELV-PIZZA(0)	Al's Pizza, Inc.	06-01-1994	06-01-1994	10-31-2017	
6	1,600	BELV-KARATE(0)	Belvidere Academy of Karate	08-01-1997	08-01-1997	01-22-2020	3
7	1,120	BELV-CLEANERS(0)	Valley Cleaners	01-01-1999	01-01-1999	12-31-2010	12
8	800	BELV-NAIL SALON(2)	Q Nails	12-18-2003	12-18-2003	12-31-2013	9
		BELV-NAIL SALON(1)	Q Nails	01-01-2001		12-18-2003	
		BELV-NAIL SALON(0)	Q Nails	01-01-2001	10-18-2000	12-18-2003	
9	1,600	BELV-CHINESE(0)	China Wok Restaurant	12-01-1992	12-01-1992		
10	9,240	BELV-FAM.DOLLAR(0)	Family Dollar Stores of NJ	07-12-1999	04-13-1999		
11	7,840	BELV-ADV. AUTO(0)	Advance Auto -Belvidere	08-15-2013	08-15-2013		
		BELV-HALLOWEEN(0)		08-30-2002	08-26-2002	11-04-2002	
		BELV-HALLOWEEN2(0)		08-28-2003	08-28-2003	11-03-2003	
		BELV-HALLOWEEN3(0)		08-20-2004	08-20-2004	11-02-2004	
		BELV-HALLOWEEN4(0)		08-24-2005	08-24-2005	11-05-2005	
		BELV-HALLOWEEN5(0)		08-28-2006	08-28-2006	11-10-2006	
		BELV-RITE AID(0)	Rite Aid Corporation	04-23-1992	04-23-1992	04-22-2002	
12	35,859	BELV-A&P STORE(0)	A&P	11-09-1991	11-09-1991	12-31-2015	7

Master Plan Studies

The White Township Master Plan was first adopted in 1972 and was subsequently revised in 1978. Comprehensive master plan updates were adopted in 1982 and again in 2004. A Master Plan Amendment was adopted in 1999 to recommend the creation of the LDI Low Density Industrial Zone from a portion of the R-1 Zone. The 2004 Master Plan was reexamined in 2014. A Master Plan Amendment Report was adopted by the White Township Planning Board in 2020.

Master Plan Goals Advanced by Redevelopment

White Township's Master Plan Goals, as listed in the 2020 Master Plan Amendment Report, that could be advanced through a potential redevelopment area designation on the subject site include:

- Provide for commercial and industrial development, where appropriate, in accordance with the highest standards of site design to ensure that such development will have a positive impact on the community and the environment while also providing necessary services, jobs and ratables.
- Preserve and enhance the quality of life enjoyed by White Township residents and visitors
- Provide a sense of community within the Township

State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP)

The 2001 State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP) includes eight statewide goals:

1. Revitalize the state's cities and towns;
2. Conserve the state's natural resources and systems;
3. Promote beneficial economic growth, development and renewal for all residents of New Jersey;
4. Protect the environment, prevent and clean up pollution;
5. Provide adequate public facilities and services at a reasonable cost;
6. Provide adequate housing at a reasonable cost;
7. Preserve and enhance areas with historic, cultural, scenic, open space and recreational value; and,
8. Ensure sound and integrated planning and implementation statewide.

These goals are intended to fulfill the vision of the State Planning Act, in which development and economic growth are encouraged in suitable locations with existing infrastructure, sprawl is reduced, and areas of environmental quality are preserved. The study area is located entirely within the PA 4 Rural Planning Area, as shown on the 2001 adopted State Plan Policy Map.

The intentions of the State Plan for PA 4 Rural Planning Areas include:

- maintain the Environs as large contiguous areas of farmland and other lands;
- revitalize cities and towns;
- accommodate growth in Centers;
- promote a viable agricultural industry;
- protect the character of existing, stable communities; and
- confine programmed sewers and public water services to Centers.

Designating this site as an area for development would further the intentions outlined in state plan; such as revitalizing the town and protecting the character of the existing community. In its current vacant state, the site is more of a detriment to the community and township. The lack of a supermarket in town combined with the reduced retail occupancy pushes residents to meet their needs outside of the township.

Area Evaluation for Conformity with Redevelopment Criteria

As described in the previous sections, an area may be determined to be in need of redevelopment, if after notice and hearing, the governing body of the municipality concludes by resolution that the area is found to meet any one of the criteria described in Section 5 of the LRHL.

The following redevelopment criteria apply to the Study Area and are explained below:

Criterion “a”: *The generality of buildings are substandard, unsafe, unsanitary, dilapidated, or obsolescent, or possess any of such characteristics, or are so lacking in light, air, or space, as to be conducive to unwholesome living or working conditions.*

The buildings on the site are considered substandard, unsafe, unsanitary, dilapidated and obsolescent for the following reasons:

- Many of the retail tenant spaces have been vacant for long periods of time. In its current condition, it is unlikely that this building would be tenable without substantial renovations to the tenant spaces. Extensive work would need to be done to ensure the spaces are safe for tenants and customers.
- With so few customers and visitors, maintenance has been lacking. The exterior of the building shows signs of dilapidation and decay with cracking and crumbling portions of walls. The interior of the building is also in poor condition and would require major renovations to make the building tenantable. The roof leaks, the concrete floor is cracked, the wooden floors are uneven, the walls have holes, and the carpeting is releasing pungent odors of mold.

Criterion “b”: *The discontinuance of the use of a building or buildings previously used for commercial, retail, shopping malls or plazas, office parks, manufacturing, or industrial purposes; the abandonment of such building or buildings; significant vacancies of such building or buildings for at least two consecutive years; or the same being allowed to fall into so great a state of disrepair as to be untenable.*

Information provided by the property owner for the space stated there has been significant vacancies in the shopping center for over two years. The anchor supermarket within the shopping plaza has sat vacant for the past 7 years while ancillary retail has experienced vacancies for many years. The existing occupied units, four out of fourteen shops, account for 28 percent of the retail spaces. The rest lay vacant and are quickly falling into a great state of disrepair as to be untenable.

Criterion “c”: *Land that is owned by the municipality, the county, a local housing authority, redevelopment agency or entity, or unimproved vacant land that has remained so for a period of ten years prior to the adoption of the resolution, and that by reason of its location, remoteness, lack of means of access to developed sections or portions of the municipality, or topography, or nature of the soil, is not likely to be developed through the instrumentality of private capital.*

There is a vacant land area within the study area that could potentially accommodate additional development at the westerly portion of the property nearest to Manunkachunk Road. The property owner has shared concept plans for a free-standing retail pad in that area of the property. The property owner indicated that those plans to be developed under private capital fell through due to lack of interest from a potential tenant due to circulation challenges and the unusual access to the property from Route 46. The lack of a safe left turn from Route 46 westbound ultimately halted the development, according to the property owner.

Designation as an AINR will enable the use of redevelopment tools to alleviate circulation issues, overcome the stagnant economic conditions in the region, and enable the creation of more desirable uses that will serve the community.

Criterion “d”: *Areas with buildings or improvements which, by reason of dilapidation, obsolescence, overcrowding, faulty arrangement or design, lack of ventilation, light and sanitary facilities, excessive land coverage, deleterious land use or obsolete layout, or any combination of these or other factors, are detrimental to the safety, health, morals or welfare of the community.*

Strip retail shopping centers have become a defunct land use in the past 20 years throughout the country. This is largely due to the advent of big box retail stores which have made it difficult for smaller “mom and pop” local businesses to stay in business. The more recent trend of online shopping further exacerbated the difficulties faced by small businesses. Restaurants, convenience stores, and personal service establishments appear to be the less impacted by these trends. The anchor grocery store tenant space was vacated in 2015 due to issues of the national grocer chain company. Despite continued attempts to lease the space, the property owner was unable to secure a tenant for the space due to the size of the space (which is not large enough for a modern grocery store), the deteriorated conditions of the building and the property overall, and the lack of direct access to the site from Route 46 westbound. For these reasons, the property contains an obsolete layout that contribute to the high vacancy rates and the detrimental blighting impact to the surrounding community.

Study Conclusion and Recommendations

The first two findings/declarations of the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (NJSA 40A:12A-2(a), (b)) apply to the situation facing White Township in making a Non-Condemnation Area in Need of Redevelopment determination:

“a. There exist, have existed and persist in various communities of this State conditions of deterioration in housing, commercial and industrial installations, public services and facilities and other physical components and supports of community life, and improper, or lack of proper, development which result from forces which are amenable to correction and amelioration by concerted effort of responsible public bodies, and without this public effort are not likely to be corrected or ameliorated by private effort.

b. From time to time the Legislature has, by various enactments, empowered and assisted local governments in their efforts to arrest and reverse these conditions and to promote the advancement of community interests through programs of redevelopment, rehabilitation and incentives to the expansion and improvement of commercial, industrial, residential and civic facilities.”

As set forth in detail above, this report finds that the Study Area qualifies as “in need of redevelopment” based on Criteria “a”, “b”, “c” and “d” of the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law of N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-05. The principal structure on the site exhibits signs of abandonment, disrepair, and obsolescence, making the property untenable. It is therefore recommended that the governing body designate the entire study area as a “Non-Condensation Area In Need of Redevelopment” and proceed with the development and adoption of a redevelopment plan to expedite the economic recovery for the benefit of the public welfare.

Appendix



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