DOWNTOWN WOODBRIDGE
Vision Plan

prepared for The Township of Woodbridge
by Phillips Preiss Grygiel LLC
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Note: new text added since the April 8 draft is blue and underlined like this

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE

This *Vision Plan* is intended to help strengthen downtown Woodbridge to be a vibrant, inviting destination. The *Plan* explains ways to revitalize downtown with a lively pedestrian scene, create attractive and interesting streetscapes, and a variety of high-quality, pleasant parks and open spaces. Throughout the *Vision Plan*, there is a recurring emphasis on creating more residences downtown and on making streets more inviting for walking and wandering.

PREPARATION OF THE PLAN

This *Vision Plan* was prepared by Phillips Preiss Grygiel LLC, a planning and real estate firm in Hoboken, New Jersey, at the request of the Township of Woodbridge. Its recommendations are based on the professional opinions of its authors (and input from the Township), drawing from decades of experience in downtown revitalization, master planning, redevelopment, and urban design.

USE OF THIS *VISION PLAN*

The Plan envisions Woodbridge's potential to have a thriving, interesting, and unique downtown, and describes the specific changes and policies to bring about this goal. Over the long term, it is hoped that this *Vision Plan* will serve as a useful guide to bringing the best practices in downtown revitalization to Woodbridge. However, the recommendations herein may not all be feasible or palatable today or in the future, and the Township reserves the right to select which strategies to pursue.

While this *Vision Plan* serves as a benchmark or long-term guide to Township improvements, the document is not formally adopted by the Township. However, the Township plans to provide a copy of this *Plan* in future RFQ's / RFP's (requests for qualifications / requests for proposals) to help potential developers understand the Town's vision.

VISION PLAN ORGANIZATION

The *Vision Plan* is organized around three guiding principles used to organize a multitude of strategies. **Chapter 1** deals with generating more activity downtown; **Chapter 2** with improving connectivity and wayfinding; and **Chapter 3** with strengthening the sense of place. **Chapter 4** provides the implementation steps necessary to bring about change. The **Appendix** provides supporting maps and policy documents.

Main Street in the Central Segment

The main entrance to the Woodbridge train station, on Pearl Street

WOODBRIDGE BACKGROUND

Woodbridge is blessed with a traditional downtown, with pedestrian-scaled streets lined with retail shops and restaurants. Nearby, Heards Brook forms a beautiful green corridor linking to the train station. However, storefront vacancies and low levels of foot traffic indicate that Main Street's retail market is not at its strongest. On the other hand, increasing developer interest in downtown and surrounding areas has spurred the Township to take a holistic approach to reinvigorating downtown through this *Vision Plan.* The *Plan* is intended to benefit residents, shoppers, employers, and retail business owners.

OVERVIEW OF DOWNTOWN WOODBRIDGE

Assets

- Woodbridge has a valuable transportation resource: New Jersey Transit train service, direct to Midtown Manhattan and the Jersey shore. The station, near Main Street and adjoining Parker Press Park, has large parking lots.
- The Township has a beautiful linear park space along Heards Brook.
- Downtown Woodbridge has a fine-grained block pattern that makes walking distances short and direct.
- Small-scale parcels and buildings downtown supply a varied and charming framework for a traditional downtown character.
- There are convenient parking lots behind Main Street stores.
- An area of single-family homes converted to offices has an attractive, green, spacious character.
- Closure of the Hess headquarters on the outer end of Main Street offers great potential for redevelopment to add many new residents within a mile of downtown.

Challenges

- Woodbridge's downtown has little pedestrian activity, and Main Street often feels too quiet for a downtown.
- Many Main Street storefronts are filled with signage obscuring views into retail spaces.
- Many buildings along Main Street are only one story high, too low to properly complement or frame the wide street.
- Downtown could benefit from more sit-down dining or casual cafe-style places to eat.
- Sidewalks and buildings could be in better repair in some locations.
- Main Street (County Route 514) and adjoining Amboy Avenue (State Highway 9) have substantial truck traffic and heavy traffic levels during rush hour periods.
- The small parcel sizes and pattern of disparate ownership downtown (see ***Figure 39*** in the **Appendix**) make land assemblage difficult, hampering redevelopment at higher intensities.
- Newer, post-war buildings sometimes are at odds with the traditional downtown character.

DEFINITION AND CHARACTER OF EACH SEGMENT

This report divides the *Vision Plan* Area into three geographic segments (see ***Figure 1***).

Central Segment

- This is the traditional "downtown" of Woodbridge, anchored by Main Street. For the purposes of this *Vision Plan*, it generally includes the area between Amboy and Rahway Avenues, and between New Street at the south to Heards Brook at the north. It also includes Rahway Avenue between Main and Green Streets, where certain large parcels have redevelopment potential or an important civic / community function.
- This area has a traditional downtown fabric, with retail stores and dining, some apartments, and civic uses and parks, flanked by residential neighborhoods. Main Street stores have rear parking lots.
- Many of the non-residential properties are underutilized or vacant.
- Retail in the Central Segment is weak; there could be more sit-down restaurants or retail stores selling goods. Many retail storefronts house service-retail businesses such as tax accountants, realtors, and nail salons.
- There are few chain retail businesses downtown. Rather, most businesses are independent or locally-owned.
- This area is also part of the study area for Woodbridge's *Main Street Rehabilitation and Transit Village Plan* (see Plan area map in **Appendix**).

Middle Segment

- While not strictly part of downtown, this semi-commercial corridor is an important feeder route to downtown, and its entire length is located within a half mile of the Central Segment. It consists of the parcels fronting directly onto Main Street between Amboy Avenue on the east and Route 9 on the west. The Middle Segment is flanked by single-family neighborhoods to the north and south.
- The Middle Segment includes predominantly single-family detached homes, most of which have been converted to small-scale legal or medical offices.
- A few large parcels at the center of the Middle Segment, on the north side of Main street, remain vacant.

Outer Segment

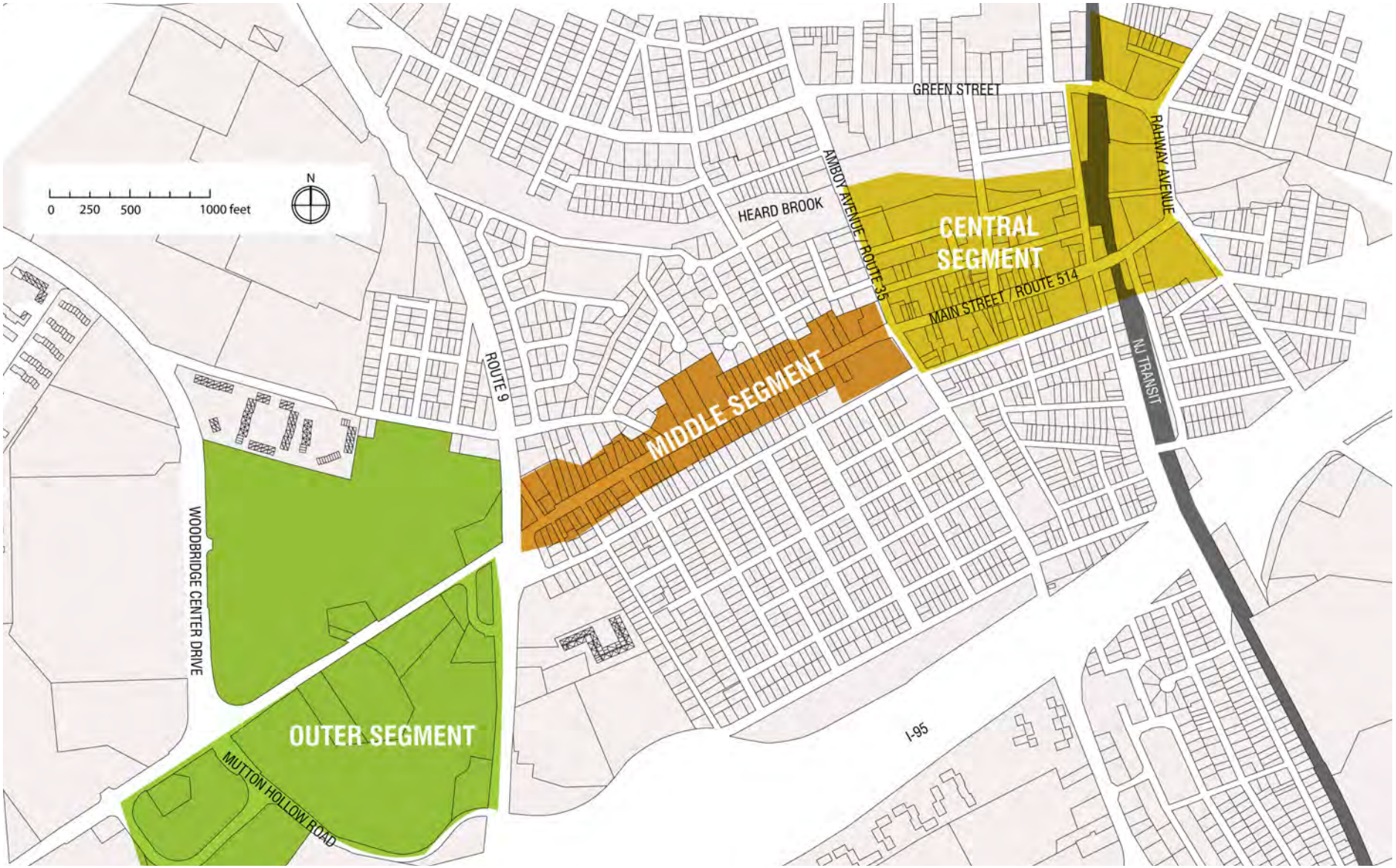
- This segment is entirely different in character from the other two segments. It includes the properties between Route 9 on the east and Mutton Hollow Road on the west, plus some additional land west of Mutton Hollow Road.
- The Outer Segment is defined to include primarily the land owned by the Hess Corporation, plus adjoining properties that create a contiguous planning area. For decades, Hess' land was used for its high-rise office headquarters, extensive parking lots, miscellaneous outbuildings, and a solar farm. It is now being vacated and sold.
- The Outer Segment also includes the shopping center on the north side of Main Street, with the Wegmans, Lowe's, and other stores, and an older Bowling Center. This area is included primarily so that both sides of Main Street are addressed in discussions of streetscape and pedestrian improvements.
- The Hess lands were included in the *Hess-Woodbridge Redevelopment Plan* of November 2014 (see Zoning Map in **Appendix**).

Entry to parking lot for the municipal building along Main Street

Residential-office conversions and large front lawns in the Middle Segment

The Hess Corporation's tower and adjoining lands in the Outer Segment

FIGURE 1, THE VISION PLAN'S PLANNING AREA SEGMENTS



CURRENT DEVELOPMENT MARKET

The following summary explains the current development market and its implications for what types of development are most likely to be attracted to downtown Woodbridge and environs. Combined with an understanding of what land uses are generally most effective for downtown revitalization, this information helps guide the strategies and recommendations of this *Vision Plan*.

RESIDENTIAL

- Residential development offers the highest potential to transform downtown, and is currently the strongest market.
- Today, many people want to live within walking distance of shops, restaurants, and other destinations. They seek the *option* of not relying on cars for transportation, and prefer to have *alternatives* to driving.
- People are also increasingly willing to accept smaller, compact housing space in exchange for this proximity. And many population groups, including young singles and empty-nesters, are actively looking for apartment-style living, in order to avoid the yard work and other maintenance headaches associated with single-family homes.
- Residential development downtown is the most effective way to bring more foot traffic downtown, and customers for retail stores and restaurants. The residents must come first, and then the market for retail will strengthen.
- The Outer Segment offers a chance to build a new neighborhood focused on compact residential development as well as some new retail serving a wider area. Residents here will be able to enjoy their own leafy streets and green spaces and also walk downtown.

RETAIL, ARTS/CULTURE, ENTERTAINMENT, DINING

- Downtown Woodbridge's existing retail and mixed-use buildings are not ideal spaces for national chain retail and dining outfits, due to the small footprints and restricted parking supply. On the other hand, national chain retailers often become much more flexible in their siting criteria when they want to capture part of a booming retail market.
- Suburban locations in the Woodbridge region already offer a full range of modern shopping such as grocery superstores, shopping malls, and suburban family dining.
- As a result, downtown Woodbridge should focus its retail efforts on becoming a destination dining spot, led by unique, creative, and independent local restaurants and cafes. Locals and residents from nearby towns will be attracted to wander Main Street, perusing local goods, and dining in a unique spot found nowhere else. Cafes are particularly important because they offer a quick and casual way to grab a snack downtown, particularly during the day, without committing to a full sit-down meal.

Street-oriented residential over retail

An inviting retail / mixed-use streetscape

An example of a new residential development focused on an attractive central green space

A large-footprint stand-alone restaurant of the type envisoned for the Outer Segment

- The restaurants, bakeries, and cafes that already exist in Woodbridge should be encouraged to relocate or expand to additional locations in the central core of Main Street (between the train tracks and Amboy Avenue), where they can create a critical mass of dining destinations.
- Larger chain restaurants could be directed to new construction in the Outer Segment, where their higher parking requirements may be more easily met without compromising downtown's pedestrian fabric.
- To complement the unique dining scene, Woodbridge should strengthen its arts and festivals sector and related uses. These types of activities help attract pedestrians and patrons downtown, and are a natural complement to restaurants and cafes. The Township can build upon the strength of the existing arts community, as described in the *Woodbridge-Rahway Regional Access to the Arts Study* (2014).

OFFICE

- Nationwide, the suburban office market is weak: many companies are consolidating and closing suburban offices. Businesses increasingly want to locate in walkable downtown locations and/or near public transit, following worker preferences.
- While large new *office* buildings are being built in downtown areas in major cities with strong employment markets, in Woodbridge this is not likely. The types of businesses that may want to locate in downtown Woodbridge will be looking for the relatively affordable rents found in existing older buildings, and will not be able or willing to pay the high level of rent that new buildings command. Therefore, any upper-level space built in *new* buildings downtown should be planned for residential use only.
- With its convenient highway access and high visibility, the Hess tower should be reused as offices. However, new office buildings are not a strong market segment.
- On the other hand, there is a nationwide resurgence in appreciation for design and artisanship, with increasing numbers of micro-businesses focused on crafts and small-scale research and development and production. A niche market exists to transform small downtown office, mixed-use, and industrial buildings into craft / artisan / maker spaces and incubator spaces for start-up businesses. These small-scale businesses are happy to renovate the typical Class B and C spaces prevalent in older, traditional downtowns, and often seek such spaces due to their unique character and layered history, as well as the proximity to downtown restaurants and other conveniences. This trend offers the potential to inject daytime workers and activity downtown, important factors in revitalizing downtown Woodbridge. Such uses would ideally occupy upper-floor spaces along Main Street, or buildings away from the Main Street commercial spine. However, they can also be promising tenants for the street-level vacant storefronts (given certain design standards, as discussed in **Chapter 3**) along Main Street until the area's traditional retail market improves.

A makerspace for crafts and artisan-scale production

THE VISION FOR DOWNTOWN

This *Vision Plan* is intended to help strengthen downtown to be a vibrant, interesting place. Specific strategies and policies for are intended to revitalize downtown with a lively pedestrian scene, attractive and interesting streetscapes, and a variety of high-quality, pleasant parks and open spaces. Throughout the *Vision Plan*, there is a recurring emphasis on bringing more residents downtown and on making streets more inviting for walking and wandering. In total, the Plan recommends building 1,250 to 2,250 new housing units across all three segments. This critical mass of housing within a mile of downtown will be a tremendous asset for the revitalization of downtown Woodbridge.

CENTRAL SEGMENT

- As the core of downtown, Main Street in the Central Segment should focus on becoming a dining and gathering destination.
- Downtown's independent restaurants and retail businesses are an asset, and Main Street should not be converted to a corridor dominated largely by chain restaurants.
- Changes to roadways, parking, and streetscapes should be pursued to help transform the sometimes automobile-heavy landscape into an attractive, walkable environment.
- The *Vision Plan* describes promising opportunity areas where hundreds of new residential units may be built. In addition, uses in some of the civic buildings could be reshuffled to best take advantage of available space.
- Specific changes to adjacent uses, landscaping, circulation, and access in both Heards Brook Park and Parker Press Park could improve these recreation and relax-

Example of a pedestrian-friendly retail business, with large, transparent storefront windows and outdoor seating

ation spaces and link them better to the rest of downtown. Combined with cultural events programming, these open spaces are a critical complement to the suggested increased building intensity downtown.

MIDDLE SEGMENT

- Main Street in the Middle Segment is already quite healthy and fairly well-maintained, but the corridor needs aesthetic upgrades, including more consistent landscaping and better-quality signage.
- A landscape and streetscape strategy will soften the plain and barren sidewalk pedestrian experience with a shady canopy of street trees, while preserving the open expanses of lawn—and visibility to business monument signage—that characterize this area.
- Stricter signage controls will ensure that monument signs for offices in converted residential buildings do not overwhelm the streetscape. A more unified, high-quality streetscape will result.
- The *Vision Plan* recommends zoning provisions to encourage a new neighborhood park at the center of the Middle Segment, to benefit the residential and office uses in the area. This new green space will also provide a convenient mid-point resting spot for pedestrians walking to downtown along Main Street. An allowance for more compact housing types, without an increase in the overall permitted density, will make it more feasible for developers to set aside this land for open space. This proposed zoning change will only affect development on two large parcels of undeveloped land in the Middle Segment.

Generous sidewalks and green planting strips create the basis of a strong visual identity for the Middle Segment

The new Patrolman's Benevolent Association building in the Middle Segment, near Amboy Avenue

OUTER SEGMENT

- Currently a nearly blank slate, land in the Outer Segment should become a new neighborhood of compact, walkable development, focused on residential uses, with the potential to bring a critical mass of new residents to support downtown.
- Site planning and design guidelines for this area will ensure that new buildings are consciously sited to frame streets and public open spaces, rather than following the conventional development style of unrelated buildings on scattered sites.
- The resulting scale and character of this new development area will be a new paradigm for Woodbridge, an appealing, walkable new neighborhood within a one-mile walk of downtown.
- Controls on land use and building size will ensure that retail, restaurants, and other commercial uses here do not detract from the energy and critical mass intended to go into downtown's core, the Central Segment.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Rather than organize recommendations by planning topic, the *Vision Plan* uses several guiding principles that focus on the intended purpose and result. These principles apply across all three segments of the Plan area.

GENERATE MORE ACTIVITY DOWNTOWN (CHAPTER 1)

- Raise height limits in targeted locations to make new residential development more feasible. Encourage infill development on larger parcel agglomerations along Main, Pearl, Fulton, and Ross Streets and Rahway and Amboy Avenues to bring more residents downtown to support retail and energize the public spaces.
- Require that new development frame important pedestrian streets and provide active uses on the ground floor.
- Channel smaller, independent restaurants to the core of downtown. Restrict larger floor plate restaurants to the Outer Segment, so they will not compete with downtown's emerging role as a dining destination.
- To fill vacant storefronts and buildings downtown, allow and encourage arts, design, crafts, and clean production businesses to occupy upper floor spaces, as well as ground-floor storefronts, provided that certain requirements for transparency and active, visually interesting storefronts are met.
- Encourage the Woodbridge Community Center to expand its classes and recreational and other events in a new satellite downtown location. (This will complement the small Main Street storefront of the Woodbridge Artisan Guild, an offshoot of the Center.)
- Allow lower parking ratios and shared parking for downtown infill, and permit some or all required spaces to be provided in off-site parking spaces.
- Build a new parking garage downtown to meet demand from additional retail and dining as well as new residential uses.
- Allocate different parking areas for maximum efficiency, based on location, demand, time of day, and length of typical use.
- Conduct a holistic downtown parking study and explore allowing payments in lieu of parking (PILOP) for new development.
- Change and strengthen the role of the Main Street Special Improvement District (SID)
- Program new events downtown, particularly along Heards Brook and linking the open space corridor to Main Street.
- Reconfigure the parking lot in Parker Press Park to be along Poillon Street, so that Park visibility is increased.

IMPROVE CONNECTIVITY AND WAYFINDING (CHAPTER 2)

- Improve Main Street with bike lanes, bulb outs, and high-visibility crosswalks to slow traffic and make the street more inviting to pedestrians. These improvements are in keeping with adopted policies by the State, County, and Township for "Complete Streets."
- Improve sidewalks and parking lots frontages along Amboy Avenue to make this important regional street safer for pedestrians.
- Explore reconfiguring Rahway Avenue with traffic circles, a narrower travel-way, and tightened intersection geometry to slow traffic and make the street safer for walking. Relocate the existing statue at Main Street and Rahway to the center of a new traffic circle, allowing it to function as a visual landmark and focal point.
- Improve surface parking lots by narrowing and closing curb cuts, re-paving sidewalks, and adding low walls and landscaping along street frontages.
- Close streets in the Heards Brook park area to traffic, making them permanent pedestrian and recreational paths.

Retail signage along Main Street in the Central Segment

Pedestrian walkway to Main Street along west side of train tracks

Wooded riparian corridor and linear green space along Woodbridge's Heards Brook

- Improve Main Street's streetscape with taller street trees that create a branching canopy, benches oriented for pedestrian comfort, regularly-spaced and pedestrian-scaled streetlights, and ongoing removal of sidewalk weeds.
- Consider installing crosswalks at the middle of each of the two long Main Street blocks (Pearl to School, School to Amboy) to encourage shoppers to visit both sides of the street.
- Transform Pearl Street with new development and streetscape changes to create an alternate pedestrian link to the train station that is safer than the existing pathway on the east side of the tracks.
- Improve connectivity and wayfinding between different destinations with easier to read street signs, new destination signs, and posted walking distances and routes.

STRENGTHEN WOODBRIDGE'S SENSE OF PLACE (CHAPTER 3)

- Encourage a variety of small to moderate-size parks, plazas, and similar open spaces throughout the *Vision Plan* area. Allow conversion of on-street parking spaces to mini parklets. Require infill projects over a certain size to provide new public open space in the form of plazas or mini parks, with seating areas, benches, bike racks, and landscaping.
- Encourage outdoor dining in parking lots adjoining restaurants.
- Improve Heards Brook park areas with street closures, decorative paving, evening lighting, and signage linking it to downtown.
- Improve Parker Press Park by relocating the parking spaces to Poillon Street, and creating more connection points through the perimeter fencing to surrounding streets and walkways.
- Require a new public open space to be provided with development of large centrally-located parcels along Main Street in the Middle Segment. Use design controls to ensure the park is accessible, safe, and includes a variety of landscaping and seating areas. To make the park more feasible, permit more compact housing types here, while maintaining the current overall density limit.
- In the Hess site, require new development to provide public parks on-site.
- Use Woodbridge's local and historic architectural styles as a guide to inform new development's character. Define and discourage inappropriate building styles.
- Implement suggested Design Guidelines for everything from site planning for major new projects, such as new streets, block sizes, and park contributions; to concerns for individual buildings, such as massing, transparency, and signage; to site landscaping, lighting, and parking.
- Help businesses redesign their storefronts to boost transparency, rather than obscuring windows with signage, by applying suggested Design Guidelines, coupled with a facade improve program for the downtown core.
- Improve and unify the overall Main Street corridor of the Middle Segment through more restrictive monument sign controls that govern sign characters, colors, and backgrounds.

THE VISION PLAN

1. Generate More Activity Downtown

The strategies in this Chapter aim to bring more pedestrian activity to downtown Woodbridge, creating more energy and supplying more customers for retail businesses. The strategies aim to: encourage more development, particularly new residences; provide a greater variety of land uses, particularly unique, independent restaurants; use existing and new parking facilities efficiently to support the greater intensity of development; and program more cultural and civic events to attract residents and visitors.

1A. ENCOURAGE INTENSIFICATION

The central portion of downtown Woodbridge needs more foot traffic to create a lively downtown ambiance. Bringing more visitors and residents downtown to shop, eat, and stroll on weekdays, weekends, and evenings will provide customers for local merchants. Achieving a critical mass of pedestrians will also increase activity levels, thereby improving safety through "eyes on the street." To build the critical mass, Woodbridge should seek to attract at least 1,250 new housing units to the *Vision Plan* area.

With the exception of the Hess-owned properties in the Outer Segment, the land ownership patterns in the *Vision Plan* area are quite fragmented (see ***Figure 39*** in the **Appendix**), Therefore, it is important to provide sufficient incentive to encourage developers to assemble adjacent, disparately-owned parcels into sites that accommodate today's larger building sizes. Accordingly, this *Vision Plan* provides higher height allowances in targeted areas. This section illustrates development prototypes for several key opportunity sites where new development is in the works, likely, or encouraged as catalyst sites for the transformation of downtown Woodbridge. Such compact, higher-intensity development will also best take advantage of the convenient train station downtown.

Attract 1,250 to 2,250 New Housing Units at Opportunity Sites

In order to generate a critical mass of pedestrian activity to revitalize downtown, the primary focus of new development must be new residential uses. This *Vision Plan* sets a goal of building approximately 1,250 to 2,250 new housing units across all three segments. As described later, the *Vision Plan* estimates that this supply of new housing could be largely met through development on targeted "opportunity sites" (***Figure 3***).

Each opportunity site shown in ***Figure 3*** was selected by virtue of it meeting one or more of the following criteria:

FIGURE 2, POTENTIAL RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT YIELD IN PLAN AREA

OPPORTUNITY SITE	HOUSING UNITS
Housing Authority (Brook Street) and Pearl Street	100 to 200
Main and Amboy, NE and SE corners	50 to 125
Fulton Street (Main to New Street)	100 to 225
Shopping Center (10 Main Street)	100 to 200
Berkeley College (Rahway Avenue)	50 to 150
Quick Chek (Green Street & Rahway Avenue)	200 to 250
Hess (Outer Segment)	450 to 750
Other infill sites	200 to 350
Total	**1,250 to 2,250**

FIGURE 3, CENTRAL SEGMENT: OPPORTUNITY SITES FOR INTENSIFICATION

WOODBRIDGE DOWNTOWN VISION PLAN

Central Segment: Opportunity Sites

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3/8/2016

- Highest-level intensification with housing focus, small amount of retail
- Single-story buildings replaced through gradual intensification with mixed-use retail / residential
- Municipal property reorganized for education, admin, parking, and/or housing

0 125 250 500 feet

N

This diagram shows suggested opportunity sites for infill and intensification. It is not intended to require changes on any particular parcel; nor does it exclude from possible changes any parcels not highlighted.

- A large area with low existing development intensity (typically, a single story building and a high share of the lot area devoted to surface parking), in common private ownership, so as to facilitate modern development styles;
- A cluster of disparately-owned adjacent parcels all having low-intensity uses, but whose key location (such as a highly-visible site for retail use, or proximity to the train and shops for residential use) creates a high incentive for coordinated, higher-intensity redevelopment.
- A large, publicly-owned area enabling Township control over its future use;

These opportunity sites are discussed in more detail in the following pages.

It is important to note that not all potential development sites are shown in the opportunity sites map, and some of those indicated in the map may well have other factors that complicate and preclude or delay their redevelopment. The map and the discussions that follow are simply meant to illustrate prototypical sites, and are not meant to rule out other possible sites.

Chapter 3 of this *Vision Plan* provides design guidance for new and infill development and major renovations to ensure that new projects harmonize with and are sensitive to the scale of surrounding residential neighborhoods. Guidance includes maximum height regulations, site planning and architectural design guidelines, and parking regulations.

Height Allowances

Height:Width on Main Street

A comfortable retail shopping street should have the feeling of an "outdoor room," with buildings and street trees shaping a human-scaled public space. As shown in ***Figure 4***, ideally, the ratio of building height to the space between facing buildings (vertical:horizontal ratio) should be between a 1:2 and 1:1 ratio. Where building heights are low, tall street trees can sometimes serve to create a similar feeling of enclosure, by visually narrowing the width of the street.

On Main Street in the Central Segment, most buildings are just one or two stories tall (15 to 25 feet high, typically). When compared with the width of the public right-of-way (approximately 75 to 80 feet, including public sidewalks), these low building heights do not create a comfortable sense of "enclosure" for pedestrians. The prevailing ratio is more like 1:4 (with single-story buildings) or 1:3 (with two-story buildings), as shown in ***Figure 4***. The openness of the corridor also encourages vehicular traffic to speed.

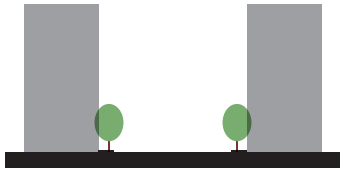
Single-family homes across from station parking lot

As a result, the allowable heights along Main Street should be increased. A similar logic applies to increasing building heights on other streets downtown—in some cases, by filling in vacant parcels and front parking lot areas—in order to create more comfortable environments for walking.

FIGURE 4, HEIGHT TO WIDTH RATIOS

Examples of different ratios

HEIGHT:WIDTH 1:2



HEIGHT:WIDTH 1:1

Existing conditions, Main Street in the Central Segment

CURRENT CONDITIONS: HEIGHT:WIDTH 1:4 TO 1:3

FIGURE 5, CENTRAL SEGMENT: PERMITTED BASE AND MAXIMUM HEIGHTS

Central Segment: Permitted Base and Maximum Heights

Permitted Base Heights may be increased by one to two stories to the Maximum Total Bonused Heights, where shown, via certain Bonus Height programs, as described in the Vision Plan text, and at the discretion of the Township.

- 6 stories/70 feet to 8 stories/90 feet
- 5 stories / 60 feet to 6 stories / 70 feet
- 3 stories / 35 feet to 4 stories / 45 feet

5+1

BASE HEIGHT

MAXIMUM TOTAL BONUSED HEIGHT

N

0 125 250 500 feet

Increase Base Heights

The maximum "base" heights in downtown should be increased in certain areas. The term "Base Height" is used because a building could be awarded one or two additional stories of height through certain Height Bonus programs, described further below.

In the Central Segment along the core two blocks of Main Street and in the Berkeley College area, permit up to three (3) stories as a base height. In most other areas not adjacent to existing single-family residential homes, allow up to five (5) stories as a base height. In certain targeted areas closest to the train station, allow six (6) stories as a base height.

The existing height limit for the Middle Segment (2.5 stories and 35 feet) should remain unchanged.

The base height limit for the Outer Segment should be eight (8) stories and 85 feet.

Section 3C, Design Guidelines, describes how stepbacks are recommended on the upper floors of any buildings of five or more stories.

Offer Height Bonuses above the Base Height

In addition, the maximum permited building height may be increased in the Central and Outer Segments if a project complies with one or more height bonus programs.

These bonus programs may be combined to create additional height up to the limits shown in ***Figure 5*** for the Central Segment, and up to eleven (11) stories for the Outer Segment.

Height Bonus for Cultural Uses

In a later section (**Section 1B, Foster a Greater Variety of Uses**), the concept of encouraging arts-related uses on the ground floors of Main Street buildings in the Central Segment is explained. In exchange, the building owner or developer could be granted an additional one (1) story of height. Refer back to ***Figure 5*** for areas where bonus height floors are permitted.

Height Bonus for Public Open Space

Another concept that could be used to grant one additional story of building height in the Central Segment relates to provision of public space. As discussed later in **Section 3C, Design Guidelines**, a new building that provides street-facing publicly-accessible open space may be granted one additional story of building height. Having additional height makes redevelopment more feasible for developers, and offsets the loss of developable area on the site when open space is created.

Height Bonus for LEED Compliance

Refer to **Section 3D, Bonus Programs** for details on an additional building height bonus program tied to compliance with rating programs for green site planning and buildings. This bonus may be used in the Central and Outer Segments.

Height Transition Areas

In addition, in all areas, height **along property lines adjoining single-family residential** districts should step down to be no more than three (3) stories within 50 feet of the bordering property line and no more than five (5) stories within 50 to 100 feet.

Amendments

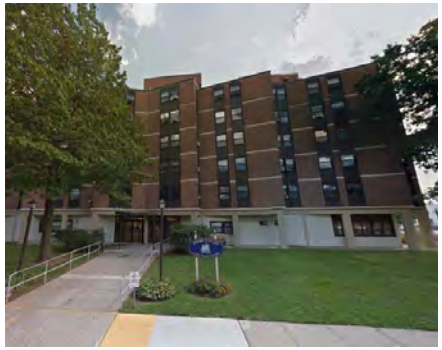
Making these changes to allowable height will require amending the Township's *Main Street Rehabilitation Plan* (***Figure 37*** in the **Appendix**). In that document, the requirement for all parking to be built in structures should be removed, as it may not be economically feasible at lower development densities. Instead, **Chapter 3** of this *Vision Plan* requires that parking, whether surface or structured, be screened from view of streets and other public spaces in certain ways.

Recent three-story mixed-use building on Main Street

Sample Development Sites as Catalysts

The next several pages provide details on example development concepts for some of the suggested opportunity sites. These are not meant to be hard and fast recommendations, but rather are provided to offer suggestions for building massing, parking location, and public amenities such as plazas and pocket parks.

Housing Authority building, Stern Towers



Housing Authority opportunity sites

SOURCE: BING.COM

Central Segment

Housing Authority Site

The Woodbridge Housing Authority owns a 1960's-era high-rise residential building for low-income seniors along Brook Street, with approximately 60 apartment units. While fairly tall, the building is only moderate density, due to the large setbacks and large parking lot area. The Township is considering relocating the residents elsewhere and replacing this building with a more compact residential / retail mixed-use building whose residents could make better use of the train station.

In tandem with this change, there is potential to redevelop several underutilized parcels on the same block, especially those east of the Housing Authority building along Pearl Street, closer to the train station, and perhaps even the entire block.

Figure 6 shows one site plan example that would create 98 new units. This

FIGURE 6, HOUSING AUTHORITY SITE, INFILL WITH MODERATE INTENSITY

OPTION A, 98 UNITS

Phase 1: 50 units

Build temporary parking for existing senior housing as perpendicular pull-in parking along Brook Street. Build new residential building along North James Street, with 5 floors with 10 units per floor. Total 50 units.

Parking required: 1.5 spaces/unit = 75 spaces.

Phase 2: additional 48 units

Relocate senior housing units elsewhere, raze building, construct surface parking lot with approximately. 78 spaces to satisfy demand for building on North James.

Build new residential building along Pearl Street, approximately. 10 units/ floor over 1 level of parking having 36 spaces. Additional 37 spaces available on-street on perimeter of this block. Total 73 spaces is sufficient to support total of 48 units over 5 floors.

Total building height is 6 stories.

FIGURE 7, HOUSING AUTHORITY SITE, INFILL WITH HIGHER INTENSITY

OPTION B: 139 UNITS, 6,000 SF RETAIL

New mixed-use building is oriented towards Pearl and Brook Streets. Place exposed portion of parking garage along North James Street.

Retail and Residential Yield

Level 0 (top left) is one-half level underground and provides 123 parking spaces accessed from Brook Street.

Level 1 (top right) has **6,000 SF retail** at-grade with Pearl Street, and 86 parking spaces at 5 feet elevation, accessed from North James Street. Also includes 6 apartments, at floor elevation 5 feet, each with stoops off Brook Street.

Levels 2 through 6 (bottom left) each include 24 units, with 1, 2, or 3 bedrooms. Total 120 units on 5 floors. A landscape courtyard is provided above Level 1, at 15 feet elevation.

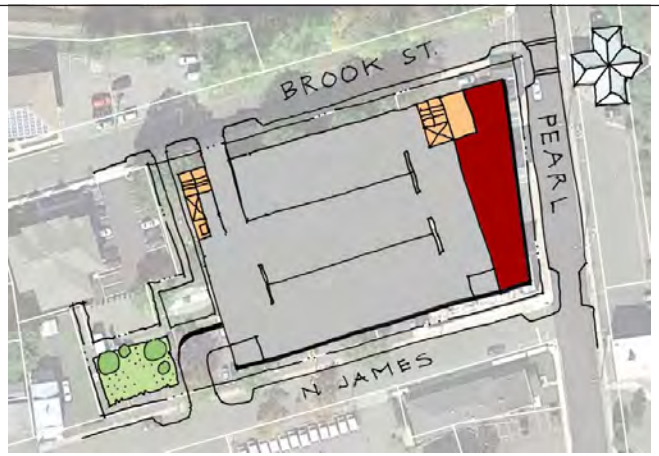
Levels 7 (bottom right) is a partial floor, with 13 units oriented toward Pearl and Brook Streets. Most units have balconies or terraces. Roof height 75 feet.

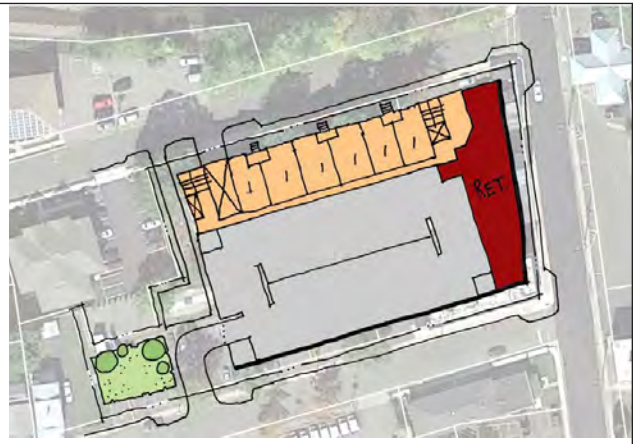
Total 139 residential units.

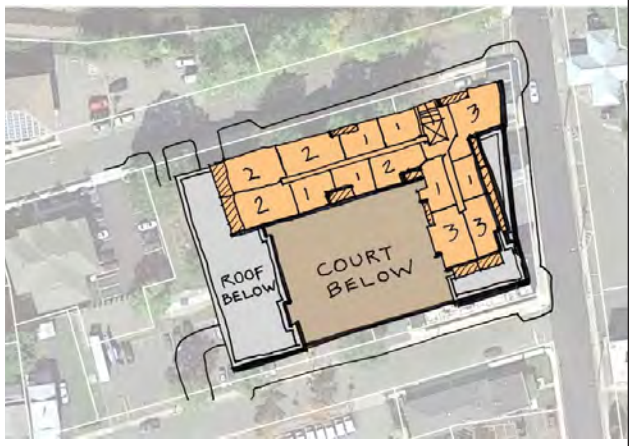
Parking Requirements

For 139 residential units (1.5 spaces/unit) = 209 spaces, all provided within building.

For 6,000 SF retail (4 spaces / 1,000 SF) = 24 parking spaces, all provided on three adjoining streets: 24 spaces.







Public Amenities

Public pocket park along North James.

Building setback along Pearl Street to create wider sidewalk.

Street-facing retail helps improve walking environment along Pearl Street.

Attractive, active frontage along Brook Street (with stoops) makes walking from points west to train station entrance more pleasant.

Pearl Street's existing low-intensity uses (west side)

assumes that the senior housing may be moved elsewhere.

Figure 7 shows an alternate site plan that would yield 139 residential units as well as 6,000 square feet of retail.

While neither of these concepts shows redevelopment of the entire block, doing so would offer more flexibility for creating high-density development and an efficient parking garage with spaces for public and/or commuter use.

See also ***Figure 31*** in **Chapter 2** for recommended streetscape changes along Pearl Street.

Ross School Sites

The Township plans to replace the existing Ross School with a larger school in the same location. ***Figure 8*** shows one option for accomplishing this while also meeting several other goals.

Senior residents living in the Housing Authority building on Brook Street (see discussion above) could be relocated to the current Woodbridge School Board building on School Street, a former public school building. The building's high ceilings, many large windows, and shallow width make it ideal for residential use.

The Board of Education staff could move into the Ross School, and the Ross School could be expanded to the west into its playground. A new playground could be created on the east side of the Ross Street School. Older students at this school could also use the Town park on the north side of Heards Brook.

Main Street and Amboy Avenue

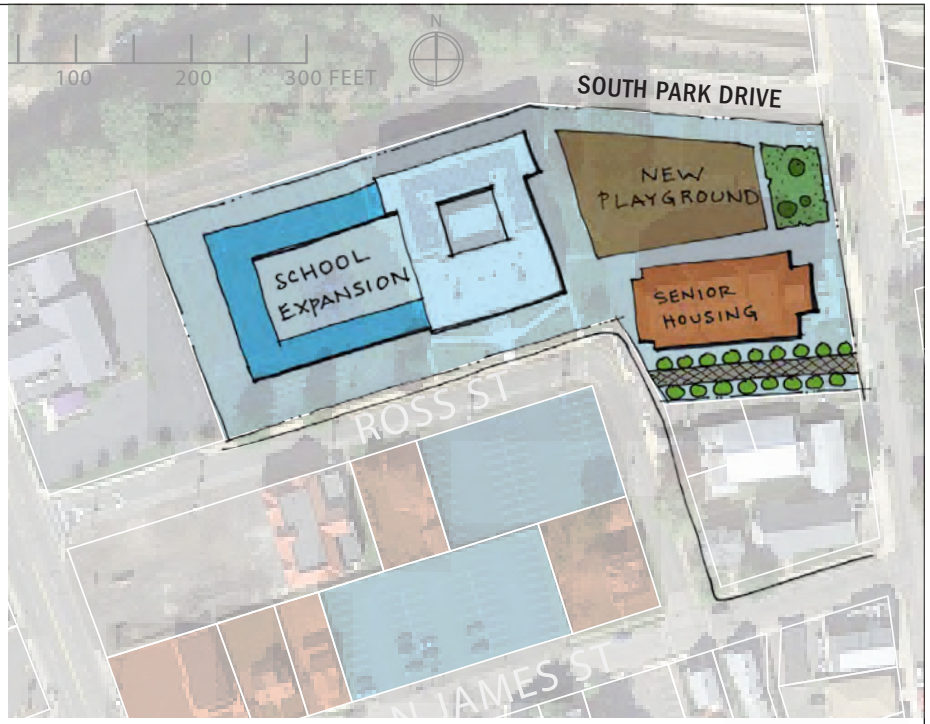
Figure 9 shows how certain parcels at the western end of Main Street, at Amboy Avenue, could be redeveloped for higher density to help bring more pedestrian traffic and activity to the corridor. A series of adjacent single-story commercial buildings fronting on Main Street would be replaced with one four-story mixed-use building having slightly less retail space on the ground level, but an additional three stories housing 36 apartments.

The site plan also creates an outdoor plaza to complement proposed streetscape improvements on Amboy Avenue, and effectively widens the narrow Main Street sidewalk by moving the building back five (5) feet from the current setback.

As part of this concept, the parking lots of the long-standing Reo Diner could also be reworked to create an

FIGURE 8, CENTRAL SEGMENT INFILL STUDY: SCHOOL SITES

Existing Ross School, left, and School District building, right



EXPANDED SCHOOL, SENIOR HOUSING AND SCHOOL BOARD RELOCATION

New playground is built east of the Ross Street School, at South Park Drive and School Street

Ross School is expanded west into existing playground

School District Administration moves from Old Schoolhouse building into south end of existing Ross School

Stern Towers Senior Housing apartments move from Brook Street building into Old Schoolhouse building

New linear walkway built on south side of Old Schoolhouse to provide easy pedestrian connection to Brook Street and thence to train station

outdoor dining area for the historic restaurant, and improved site landscaping.

Additional development may be possible at the southeast corner of Main and Fulton, through redevelopment of the existing Bank of America and perhaps adjacent low-intensity parcels.

Main and Fulton Streets

The parcels on either side of Fulton Street, just south of Main Street, currently have low-intensity single-story buildings. The east side has an auto repair business, while the west side has a retail building with some small businesses.

Per ***Figure 5***, the recommended height range here is five stories and 60 feet, but one additional story could be permitted if the project creates public open space or leases the ground-floor to a non-profit business. One idea for a public space donation is building setbacks along Fulton Street that result in wider public sidewalks on both sides.

Main at Fulton, looking south

Any new development on these lots should create an active retail presence along Main Street, with large storefront windows and store entries onto Main Street. The storefront windows should also extend along Fulton Street for at least 20 feet from Main Street, and if possible along the majority of the building frontage along Fulton. Entries to upper-level residential units should be along Fulton Street. **Section 3C, Design Guidelines**, provides more details on these concepts.

No concept plan is shown in this *Vision Plan* for this site.

Shopping Center Site

The large shopping center on the north side of Main Street, east of the railroad tracks, consists of two large parcels containing a large, multi-tenant retail building and a separate bank building. With the adjacency to the train station and Main Street, the site could be redeveloped with a much higher intensity than the current low-intensity, automobile-

Facade changes over the years at the Reo Diner, 392 Amboy Avenue at Main Street

PHOTO SOURCES: (TOP) HTTP://DODGE.FORWARDLOOK.EU/POSTCARDS/CARDS/NJWOODBRIDGEREODINER1.PHP, (LEFT BOTTOM) HTTP://WWW.REODINERRESTAURANT.COM/

FIGURE 9, MAIN STREET AT AMBOY REDEVELOPMENT

Existing conditions, showing Reo Diner at top left

New mixed-use buildiing along Main Street and public plaza. Main Street sidewalk widened through 5-foot building setback. Amboy Avenue sidewalk widened through landscaped setbacks, except at existing Diner frontage.

MAIN AND AMBOY: 4-STORY MIXED-USE WITH 36 APARTMENTS AND 12,000 SF RETAIL USE

Yield

New building along Main Street with ground-floor retail (12,000 SF) and a total of 36 apartments on levels 2 through 4

3,500 SF, historic Reo Diner maintained as-is, but parking lot reconfigured to share circulation with new parking lot

Parking Supply

88 surface spaces (9 on Main, 9 on North James, 70 spaces in lot) including Reo Diner's spaces. Allocation:

- 11 spaces dedicated for Reo Diner (3 spaces/1,000 SF)
- 36 spaces for new retail use (3 spaces / 1,000 SF); 6 of these are shared with residential use
- 47 spaces for residential use (1.3 spaces / unit, average); 6 of these spaces are available for retail demand during daytime
- Reo Diner could in effect also share the other spaces in the lot

Public Realm

15-foot landscaped setback along Amboy Avenue, with a double-row of street trees, as recommended in **Section 2A** of this Vision Plan

Large outdoor plaza provided behind landscaped setback, available for public use, including accessory retail uses such as outdoor dining, cafe seating

5-foot setback along North James to provide a planted buffer wall to the parking lot

Building set back 5 feet along Main Street frontage to widen the narrow sidewalk

Trash and recycling areas for Diner and new building consolidated in one area with access off North James Street

oriented retail center. The two parcels should be developed together to create a unified project with the most efficient parking and the greatest potential for high-quality public open space such as pocket parks and landscape plazas.

The many restaurants located in the existing shopping center would contribute more vitality to downtown if located in the older, street-facing traditional mixed-use buildings along the central two blocks of Main Street (between the tracks and Amboy Avenue). With reduced parking ratios for restaurants (as recommended in **Section 1C, Improve Parking Supply and Efficiency**), this should be possible.

Figure 10 shows how the shopping center site (both parcels) could be redeveloped at a moderate density with 68 units and 20,000 square feet of retail. As part of this development, the parking lot within Parker Press Park would be relocated to a widened Poillon Street.

Figure 11 shows a higher-density site plan with 8,900 square feet of retail, 131 apartments, and 84 public-use or commuter parking spaces. This option creates a large, efficient parking garage in the bottom three levels of the entire site.

Shopping Center site

Berkeley College

The existing campus of Berkeley College on the east side of Rahway Avenue has a single-story building, a large green / sports field, and a large surface parking lot. This low-intensity, automobile-oriented layout could be reconfigured to better serve the College's needs and contribute more to the vitality of downtown Woodbridge.

Of the College's many campuses, only the White Plains location has on-campus student housing. The College could build a student housing dormitory on its Woodbridge Campus, which would help to boost activity in downtown Woodbridge. The large area of open space and the single-story building could be completely reconfigured with new development of several stories. Through shared parking, structured parking, and/or taking advantage of the proximity to the train station for commuter students, the site should

FIGURE 10, SHOPPING CENTER SITE WITH MODERATE DENSITY INFILL

5-STORY BUILDING WITH 20,000 SQUARE FEET OF RETAIL AND 68 APARTMENTS

Retail

- Ground floor space of 20,000 sf
- Parking required: 60 spaces (3/1,000 SF)

Residential

- Levels two through five: 17 apartments per floor, a total of 68 units
- Parking required: 102 spaces (1.5 spaces per unit)

Parking Provided:

Parking lot in Parker Press Park (84 spaces) removed and replaced with conversion of Poillon Street to a "parking street" with perpendicular parking on both sides.

130 spaces in Poillon "parking street" (50 spaces) and surface lot behind new building (80 spaces), allocated as follows:

- 102 residential spaces, 32 of which are shared with retail customers during the day (about 0.5 space per residential unit)
- 28 dedicated retail spaces

Amenities

- Adjacent to train station
- Public plazas next to train tracks along Main and at Main/Amboy, street-facing retail with outdoor seating areas.
- Widened Poillon Street right-of-way, better visibility towards train station entrance.
- Better visibility into Parker Press Park from Rahway Avenue through removal of parking lot.

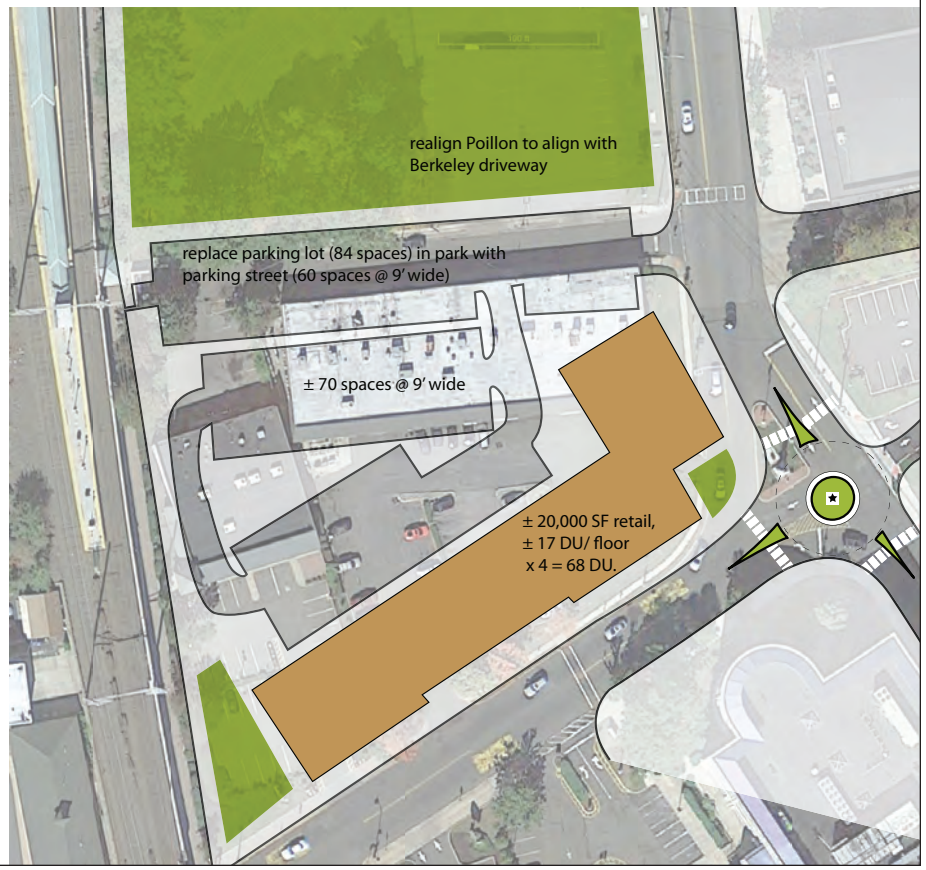
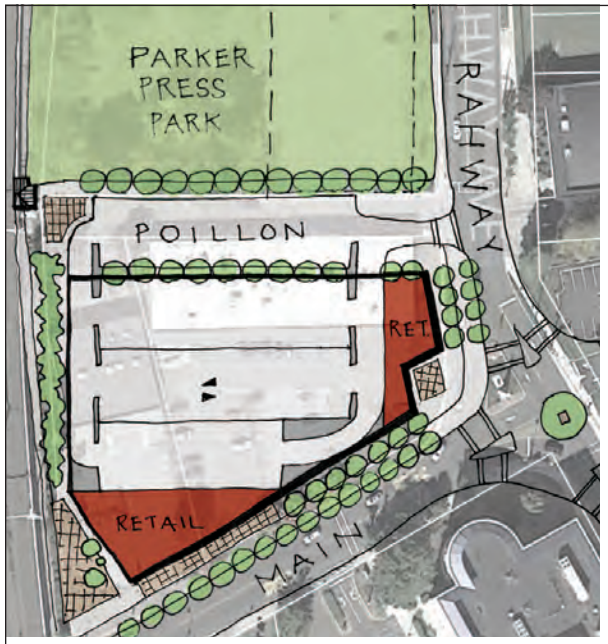
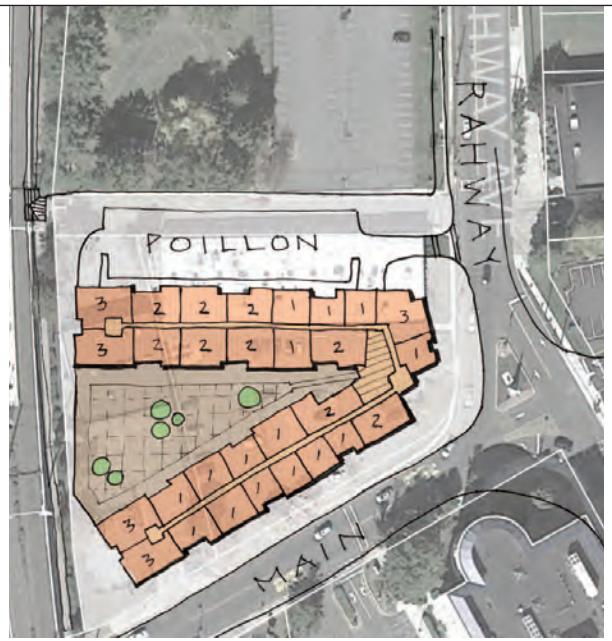


FIGURE 11, SHOPPING CENTER SITE WITH HIGHER DENSITY INFILL





6-STORY BUILDING WITH 8,900 SF RETAIL, 131 APARTMENTS, AND 84 COMMUTER / PUBLIC-USE PARKING SPACES

Retail

- 8,900 SF total in two spaces at street level, with 25-foot ceilings
- Parking required: 4 spaces /1000 SF = 36 spaces, all available on Poillon Street (where 14 surplus spaces may be used for guests or loading).

Residential

- 15 units on Level 2 (not shown)
- 29 units/floor on levels 3 through 6 (4 floors) = 116 units
- Total 131 units, a mix of 1, 2, 3 bedrooms
- Parking required: 1.5 spaces/ unit = 197 spaces

Parking Provided

Parking lot in Parker Press Park (84 spaces) removed and replaced with conversion of Poillon Street to a "parking street" with perpendicular parking on both sides.

50 new parking spaces on Poillon Street.

Parking garage on lowest three levels of building:

- 114 spaces on lowest level 0 (half level below grade)
- 72 spaces on level 1 (5 to 15 feet above grade)
- 30 spaces on level 2 (15 to 25 feet above grade)
- Total 216 spaces in garage.

Total 266 parking spaces

Shared Parking between Residential /Commuter Uses

- 36 spaces on Poillon Street exclusive for retail use (enforced via short-term parking restriction)
- 14 spaces on Poillon Street exclusive for commuters
- 70 garage spaces available for commuters, but 51 of them are shared with residential uses at night (26% sharing of total 197 residential spaces)
- 1 dedicated garage space for each of 131 residential units (131 spaces)
- 15 additional garage spaces exclusive for residential use

Amenities

- Adjacent to train station
- Public plazas next to train tracks along Main and at Main/Amboy, street-facing retail with outdoor seating areas.
- Widened Poillon Street right-of-way with sidewalks on both sides, better visibility towards train station entrance.
- Better visibility into Parker Press Park from Rahway Avenue through removal of parking lot.
- Landscaped plaza for residents above 3rd level.

be able to be developed more efficiently.

New development should create a pedestrian-friendly street presence along Rahway Avenue, with active uses such as student gathering spaces, dining areas, and lobbies facing the street and other public spaces, and buildings sited to frame and complement attractive new open spaces.

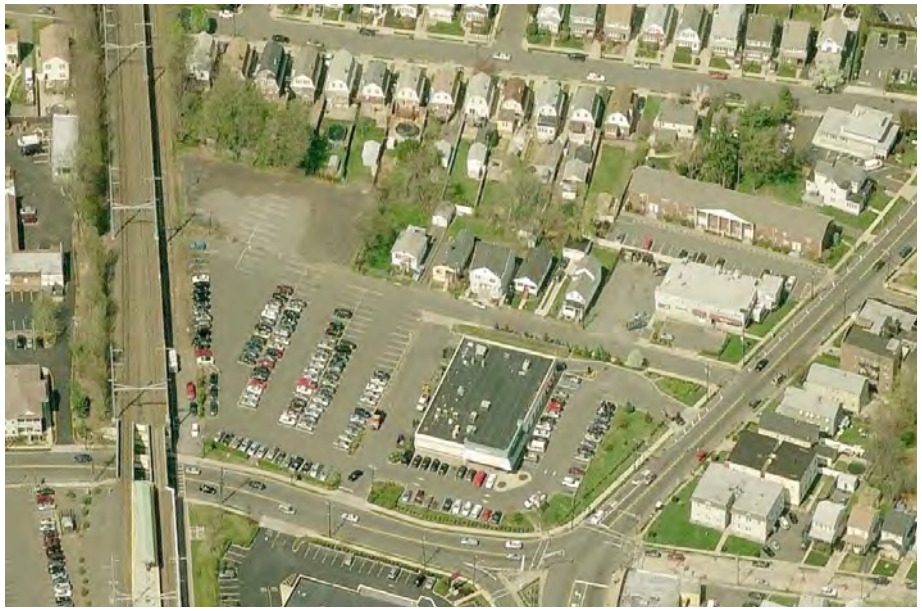
No site plan is shown for this campus, but a range of 50 to 150 new apartments (likely in the form of dormitory rooms) are included in ***Figure 2***, potential residential development yield for downtown

Quick Chek Site on Rahway Avenue

A large site composed of a series of parcels at the northwest corner of Rahway Avenue and Green Street currently contains a Quick Chek store and, to the rear, 140 parking spaces for commuter train users (the Green Street Parking Lot).

The Township is considering a proposal to redevelop these properties, including the dead-end Nielson Street and five houses and a small commercial building along its north side. The site will be subject to a Redevelopment Plan. The basic parameters should allow a mixed-use retail/residential building up to five (5) stories in height, so as to not overwhelm the residential neighborhood to the north. To ensure a critical mass of development and economic feasibility, at least 200 housing units should be permitted within the five stories, with provisions to retain the Quick Chek business within the new building, and optionally, to provide space for another retail or restaurant use in the ground floor.

Quick Chek site: existing conditions



The 140 commuter parking spaces that would likely be lost in part or in whole through this redevelopment would need to be made up elsewhere in downtown Woodbridge. ***Figure 12*** shows an example of how this site could be developed with 224 apartments, 12,000 square feet of retail, and over 100 commuter parking spaces retained on-site.

Train Station Parking Lots

The Woodbridge Train Station has long, narrow parking lots on both sides of the train tracks. To the west of the tracks, north of Main Street, the parking lot is only one bay wide (approximately 60 feet wide, on average), a dimension that makes it difficult to develop any buildings. This parking lot should remain as-is.

FIGURE 12, QUICK CHEK SITE, RAHWAY AND GREEN STREETS

QUICK CHEK SITE REDEVELOPMENT: 224 UNITS, 12,000 SF RETAIL

Five-story building with apartments over 2 levels of structured parking

Approx. 467 parking spaces (312 structured and 155 surface)

224 apartments (216 apts. on levels 2 through 5 plus 8 along Green Street on level 1)

12,000 sq. ft. convenience retail wrapping east side of parking structure. Surface parking of 42 dedicated spaces (3.5/1000 sq. ft.)

113 surface parking spaces available for commuters

312 structured spaces for residential use (1.4 spaces/unit); more could be available through shared parking of commuter spaces

25-foot deep landscaped setback on north end, to keep height away from existing adjacent homes

Main building entrance at corner of Green and Rahway; building “cuts corner” here to preserve viewshed

At-grade apartments wrap the south side of parking structure along Green Street, providing an active frontage.

Landscaped public plaza along Rahway with outdoor seating

Woodbridge's train station parking lots

To the east of the tracks, south of Main Street, the parking lot is wider, averaging about 120 feet wide. While housing or mixed-use development could fit on this parking lot, the location is across the street from a neighborhood of single-family homes. Therefore, it is more appropriate to keep this lot for parking only, or alternately to build three-story townhouses here, if the commuter parking supply can be maintained through shared parking and/or new parking created elsewhere.

Alternately, without any development here, the parking supply could be increased by about 50 to 75 percent by building a single-level parking deck here above the existing parking lot.

Large vacant parcel at center of Middle Segment

Middle Segment

The Middle Segment has a much lower development intensity than the Central Segment, and as such, serves to demarcate the western edge of downtown. The conversion of mostly single-family detached buildings here to office space has progressed in a largely positive fashion, and the goal here focuses on maintaining and strengthening this small-scale residential-style office character and encouraging new public open space. Refer to **Section 2A, Improve Pedestrian Safety and Comfort** and **Section 3B, Define and Strengthen the Unique Identity of Each Segment** for such recommendations.

In addition, ***Figure 36*** later in this document shows an example of an infill project on the largest parcels at the center of the Middle Segment, yielding 13 units and a public park along Main Street. Under current zoning, up to 13 units could be actually be built on this site.

Outer Segment: Hess Site

The Outer Segment is basically a blank slate, due to the Hess Corporation's plans to sell off its tower on Route 9 and adjacent parcels. The Town has defined the 57-acre area on either side of Mutton Hollow Road, between Main Street, US Route 9, and the New Jersey Turnpike as the Hess-Woodbridge Redevelopment Area (see ***Figure 38*** in the **Appendix**).

Per the *Redevelopment Plan* for the area, the Town's goals include:

- Provide for additional housing opportunities to residents;
- Redevelop the area into a vibrant mixed use area, including offices, retail and residential uses;
- Promote environmental sustainability and the use of energy-efficient buildings.

In addition to the basic standards outlined in the *Redevelopment Plan*, proposals for the Hess properties should be judged according to the following goals that will help support a more vibrant downtown Woodbridge:

- A focus on compact, multi-family housing, rather than office or retail or other uses.
- A walkable site plan, with sidewalks on all internal and bounding streets, that provides convenient pedestrian connections to Main Street and downtown.

FIGURE 13, OUTER SEGMENT INFILL STUDY: HESS SITE

HESS SITE REDEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

Residential development with structured parking, limited stand-alone national retailers and large restaurants permitted along Route 9 frontage, with surface parking

Hess tower (office space) wrapped on north facade with low-height fully-glazed lobby to create a more friendly street presence; parking lot replaced by new garage to the southeast

Human-scale, walkable block sizes with sidewalks; block configuration allows for future phased redevelopment of non-Hess parcels

Preserved stream corridor with mature trees as central organizing element, open space feature; park or plaza gathering spaces also provided on each block, framed by buildings

Hess Tower in the Outer Segment

- The provision of centrally-located, high-quality public open spaces shaped and framed by adjacent residential buildings and other active uses.
- Active ground-floor building uses along streets and other public spaces, rather than blank walls or exposed parking garages.
- Efficient, shared use of parking, but at higher ratios than in the Central Segment.
- Retail dining (restaurants, bars, and cafes) permitted only for businesses with over 5,000 square foot floor area, in order to not compete with the independent, boutique-style restaurants envisioned for the Central Segment. If such restaurants are stand-alone buildings, they should be sited along the Route 9 frontage. Refer to the following **Section 1B, Foster a Greater Variety of Uses,** for more information.
- Improved pedestrian crossings along Main Street–under Route 9 and elsewhere–to make the walk downtown safer.

Figure 13 shows an example of how the Hess properties could be redeveloped to meet these goals.

Central open space framed by apartment buildings

1B. FOSTER A GREATER VARIETY OF USES

Figure 14 shows the primary focus streets in the downtown core where it is important to channel street-facing retail uses and additional residents in multi-family housing. The map serves as a guide to the locations in the Central Segment to apply the strategies described in this section. (The Middle Segment is not shown because the land use pattern is mostly uniform along the Main Street corridor. The Outer Segment

Retail uses with outdoor seating

FIGURE 14, ACTIVE GROUND-FLOOR USES AND BUILDING FRONTAGES

LAND USE AND BUILDING FRONTAGE RECOMMENDATIONS

The diagram at left shows the locations where street-oriented buildings with certain uses are most important in the downtown Central Segment. The base of this map is the existing land use pattern of downtown.

The thick red lines designated where mixed use buildings with ground-floor retail and upper-story residential should be concentrated. For the most part, this area comprises Main Street between Amboy and Rahway Avenues. In order to create a compact and continuous retail core, this area should be the first focus for channeling ground-floor retail with multi-story residential above.

The orange areas designate where multi-family housing that is built in a similar street-oriented, pedestrian-friendly format is important in order to frame sidewalks as comfortable walking environments. However, ground-floor retail is optional in these locations, which are further from the core of downtown.

In all these locations, it is important that buildings be built in a street-oriented format, that is: with active ground-floor uses, sited close to the public sidewalk, parking at the rear or internal to the building and hidden from view of the front street, and high transparency of first-floor windows.

Areas of the downtown core that are not highlighted here tend to have established land uses that are likely to continue: parking lots; single-family homes; churches, schools, or other goverment/institutional buildings; open space; or automobile-oriented retail uses that depend on high traffic volumes and ample surface parking.

is not shown because it is largely a blank slate.)

Areas shaded in red should be the first priority focus areas for ground-floor retail with housing above.

Areas shaded in orange would benefit from substantial new residential development. However, ground-floor retail is unlikely to succeed here and would also detract from the concentration along the core blocks of Main Street.

The orange-shaded areas are also important locations to review and possibly increase sidewalk widths, where necessary, through required building setbacks. Sidewalks should be sufficiently wide for a generous unencumbered walking path, plus street trees in generously-dimensioned tree pits.

Castellos' restaurant occupies a new building on Main Street in the Central Segment

Residential Uses

Woodbridge must attract more housing downtown, in order to boost demand for downtown retail and dining, and create more 24/7 activity. The new housing should be higher-density apartments, targeted to empty nesters, young professionals, and seniors aging in place.

Compact, Street-Facing Residential in Central Segment

Developers require a certain critical mass of height and density to make new housing economically feasible, particularly when stringent zoning imposes costly parking requirements. The increased height and lower parking ratios described elsewhere in this *Vision Plan* will help provide a more enticing development market for new housing.

However, rather than taking the form of tall towers surrounded by parking and open space, the new residences must be built in a street-facing, pedestrian-friendly style that enhances the traditional downtown building character. **Section 3B, Strengthen the Unique Identity of Each Segment,** provides more information.

New Residential-focused Neighborhood in Outer Segment

A major cluster of new housing should be built in the Outer Segment. Living within one mile of the Central Segment / downtown area, it will be important for new residents here to be able to safely and enjoyably walk downtown, even if they actually choose to drive: having the choice is an important benefit. Accordingly, streetscape improvements for all three Segments (described in **Section 2A, Improve Pedestrian Safety and Comfort**) are critical for success.

Another requirement for this new neighborhood is to provide centrally-located new open spaces with a variety of green space, hardscape, and landscaping. The siting, framing, and design of these open spaces are critical to creating places that are inviting not just to the immediately neighboring residents, but to the wider community. **Chapter 3** provides open space strategies and design guidelines for the Outer Segment.

Affordable Housing

As a bonus, adding new housing throughout the *Vision Plan* area can help increase the supply of affordable housing through requiring a minimum set-aside or share of units to be affordable.

Retail Uses

More Restaurants/ Cafes / Bars

Increase Sit-Down Dining Options

Downtown does not have many sit-down restaurants, nor places to get a cup of coffee or snack in the middle of the day. Woodbridge needs to attract more of this type of casual dining and cafes downtown so that it can serve as a dining destination. This is Woodbridge's best option for increasing the vitality of downtown.

Encouraging outdoor dining for restaurants and cafes along Main Street will further help enliven the sidewalks and make downtown feel like a place to "see and be seen." **Section 3A, Provide More People Places** provides specifics on permitting outdoor dining in parking lots, front setbacks, sidewalk, and parklets.

While Woodbridge has limited remaining liquor licenses to distribute, the Township should support restaurants along Main Street that follow a "BYOB" policy, whereby patrons may bring their own beer and wine. This will help reinforce the downtown as a destination for dining and cultural entertainment.

Smaller Restaurants in Central Segment, Larger Ones at Hess

The success of making downtown a dining destination depends on having unique, independently- or locally-owned restaurants, rather than the national chains that are found in many other suburban locations. Independent small restaurants should be channeled to downtown, rather than the Hess development area, by requiring that restaurants in the Outer Segment have a minimum floor area of 5,000 square feet and a higher parking ratio than required for restaurants downtown. Large national restaurants will not be able to locate downtown due to the small floor plates and lower parking supply (national chains are often very inflexible in their parking requirements, requiring a very high parking ratio) and will therefore be forced to locate in the Outer Segment.

Adjust Zoning Along Amboy Avenue

In the Town's zoning map, the B-1 zone on the west side of Amboy between Main Street and Heards Brook should be changed to RTM, so that both sides of Amboy Avenue in this area will have the regulations of the RTM zone that are intended to ensure a more pedestrian-friendly environment, complementing each other with matching setbacks and streetscapes.

Office and Clean Industrial

Office and related research / industrial uses are an appropriate and desirable land use for downtown Woodbridge, particularly on upper floors of existing buildings. Offices should be broadly defined to include traditional offices as well as newer uses such as tech start-ups, artisan crafts, and test kitchens.

The presence of office workers would bring needed daytime / lunchtime foot traffic to downtown, bolstering demand for casual dining and coffee establishments along Main Street.

Small upper floor layouts in existing buildings often provide the necessary and relatively affordable Class B or Class C spaces needed by small or fledgling businesses.

In addition, offices should be permitted to lease ground-floor storefront spaces as interim uses until the retail market in downtown Woodbridge is stronger. The caveat for successful use of ground-floor space by offices involves ensuring that the businesses preserve ground-floor

Woodbridge Bowling Center, northwest corner of Main and Route 9

A modern / industrial facade style appropriate for arts or cultural uses as well as retail

transparency and present a friendly and interesting view to the interior from the sidewalk. Some businesses are better suited to this than others Traditional office uses, such as attorneys and insurance companies, may not be appropriate for ground-floor space because they tend to install full blinds on all windows for privacy, and do not have visually interesting interior design or products to display.

A street-friendly ground-floor presence may be accomplished through strict design and use regulations, discussed in more detail in the next section on Arts-related Uses, which share similar goals.

Arts, Cultural, and Community Events

Create a Cluster of Arts Destinations

Woodbridge already has several arts and cultural uses downtown, such as the small storefront gallery space of the Woodbridge Artisan Guild, and numerous parades, festivals, concerts, and other events programmed in the lovely Heards Brook Park and Parker Press Park. At present, arts-related uses are scattered around the town, such as the larger Barron Arts Center on Rahway Avenue. Having a cluster of arts-related uses downtown will help bring visitors and foot traffic, and more customers for restaurants and cafes.

The Township should pursue the arts-related recommendations of the Woodbridge–Rahway Regional Access to the Arts study (2014); for example, a Children's Museum / Activity Center, Theater/Soundstage, and History Museum; art studios, galleries, and live/work spaces.

Bring Community Center Programming Downtown

The current Woodbridge community center is far from downtown, located beyond the Outer Segment in an automobile-oriented format on Main Street west of Woodbridge Center Drive. A new community center satellite location in the Central Segment could bring increased events and activities downtown, particularly recreational and health classes such as yoga or other fitness classes.

The Woodbridge Bowling Center lies across from the Hess Site, at the northwest corner of Route 9 and Main Street. This community amenity's prominent location as a recreational anchor to the western edge of Main Street's downtown can help strengthen the identity of new development at the Hess site.

Allow Arts / Cultural Spaces in Ground Floors instead of Retail

Establishing a critical mass of arts and other creative uses downtown will complement the effort to make Woodbridge a regional dining destination. While Woodbridge's retail market is relatively soft, with some vacancies, arts-related uses can provide interesting storefront-stye spaces that help engage passersby and make downtown a more interesting place to visit, thus spurring more foot traffic and more customers. The key lies in preserving transparency through ground-floor doors and windows and in placing the most public-oriented spaces, such as lobbies and gallery areas, along the streetfront.

Woodbridge should allow arts-related uses to occupy the ground floor in existing and new mixed-use buildings in the Central Segment. Arts-, crafts-, and design- related uses such as galleries, studios, dance and music performance spaces, and even design offices such as architecture offices can be appropriate uses for a first-floor retail space in

FIGURE 15, CITY OF BERKELEY'S CULTURAL FACILITY DENSITY BONUS

REGULATIONS FROM THE CITY OF BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA[1]:

1. The "cultural facility" density bonus shall only be available for projects that dedicate space for fine and performing arts facilities. Fine and performing arts facilities shall be limited to theaters for dance, music, film, plays, or other, similar performing art; galleries or museums for the exhibition of paintings, sculpture, crafts, multi-media, or other, similar art form; schools for fine arts, performance arts, or other, similar discipline; offices for fine art or performing art organizations; or a use determined to be similar in character to the uses described above.

2. To qualify for the arts bonus, at least 50 percent of the project gross floor area must be devoted to residential uses.

3. The tenant of the dedicated arts space must be a non-profit organization.

4. The arts space must be disabled accessible and regularly programmed for public events.

5. Prior to approval, the proposed "arts" tenant shall be reviewed and recommended by the Civic Arts Commission.

6. An arts facility may include ancillary retail or office space.

1 http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/Planning_and_Development/Home/General_Plan_-_Land_Use_Element_Introduction.aspx, Policy LU-19, Downtown Arts Density Bonus

For the Gaia Building in downtown Berkeley, the City awarded the developer, Panoramic Interests, two stories of additional height in exchange for providing 10,000 square feet of space for cultural uses, now used by the Marsh Arts Center.

a downtown environment such as Main Street.

To truly bolster arts space downtown, along Main Street in the Central Segment, the Township could tie the award of an additional, bonus story of building height, beyond that permitted by zoning, to the successful long-term lease of ground floor space to a *non-profit* arts-related use or community space, similar to a program used in the Berkeley, California zoning code (***Figure 15***).

Berkeley's regulations allow non-profits to obtain centrally-located space at below-market rents, and allows developers to fill up the ground floor of their buildings sooner than they might if they had to wait for a traditional retail tenant. The additional height bonus gives developers the financial means to offer below-market rent on the first floor.

The award of a Height Bonus would be for one additional story above the Base Height for a given area. Refer back to **Section 1A, Encourage Intensification**, and ***Figure 5*** for base and maximum heights in the Central Segment.

Design-Related Uses in the Ground Floor Instead of Retail

For-profit design offices such as architecture and graphic design firms typically have street-friendly interior layouts and visually interesting design that creates a compelling storefront presence. These types of office uses should be permitted in ground-floor spaces, on a case by case basic. However, their use should not result in award of a Height Bonus.

Transparency Requirements for Non-Retail Uses

In order to ensure that arts- and design-related uses maintain interesting, pedestrian-friendly storefronts, strict regulations must be promulgated to maintain a transparency and friendly appearance at ground floor, in the same manner as required for retail storefronts. These include:

- At least 50 percent of ground-floor street-facing facades should be glazed with clear, transparent storefront-style windows;
- Ground-floor windows should not be obstructed with blinds, curtains, or signage (except small window signs as permitted in **Section 3C, Design Guidelines**; if shade is desired, an awning or canopy should be installed;
- Private office spaces should not be located at street-facing facades. Rather, the most active areas of the building – including lobbies, gallery spaces, interior cafes and dining areas, libraries, performance spaces, meeting rooms, and circulation areas – should be placed in these most public locations. An interior floor plan and description of the interior design elements and types of programming in the street-facing spaces should be reviewed prior to approving a lease for an arts-related use.
- For certain arts-related uses, providing interesting storefront window display cases, with rotating displays, may be an option rather than windows that give views into the interior of the ground floor.
- The transparency, active uses, and maintenance of attractive storefront window spaces should be documented and required as a long-term condition in the lease.

The full set of ground-floor transparency requirements is provided in **Section 3C, Design Guidelines**.

1C. IMPROVE PARKING SUPPLY AND EFFICIENCY

Existing Conditions

Figure 16 is a table showing the number of off-street parking spaces in the Central Segment, excluding those devoted to privately-owned residences. *Figure 17* show the locations of these spaces. Based on a survey of aerial photography, there are approximately 438 public off-street spaces and 557 private off-street spaces.

In informal visits on weekdays, most off-street lots behind Main Street stores were heavily used, leading to the conclusion that additional development or intensification along Main Street would be difficult without a more efficient solution to parking. On the other hand, surface parking lots outside the immediate Main Street blocks were more often than not empty.

On-street parking on Main Street, as elsewhere, is not metered.

Improve Off-Street Parking Supply in Central Segment

Limited opportunities to make more efficient use of existing parking lots downtown are discussed next.

North James Street

North Side, between Amboy Avenue and Ross Street

Two public parking lots, between Amboy and School Street and North James and Ross Street, have a grade change that makes connection infeasible without regrading.

However, redevelopment of all or most of this block would make it possible to create an efficient parking deck or structure with hundreds of spaces. Refer back to **Section 1A, Encourage Intensification,** and the concept plan in *Figure 8,* for one suggested site plan option.

North James

South Side, between Amboy Avenue and Pearl Street

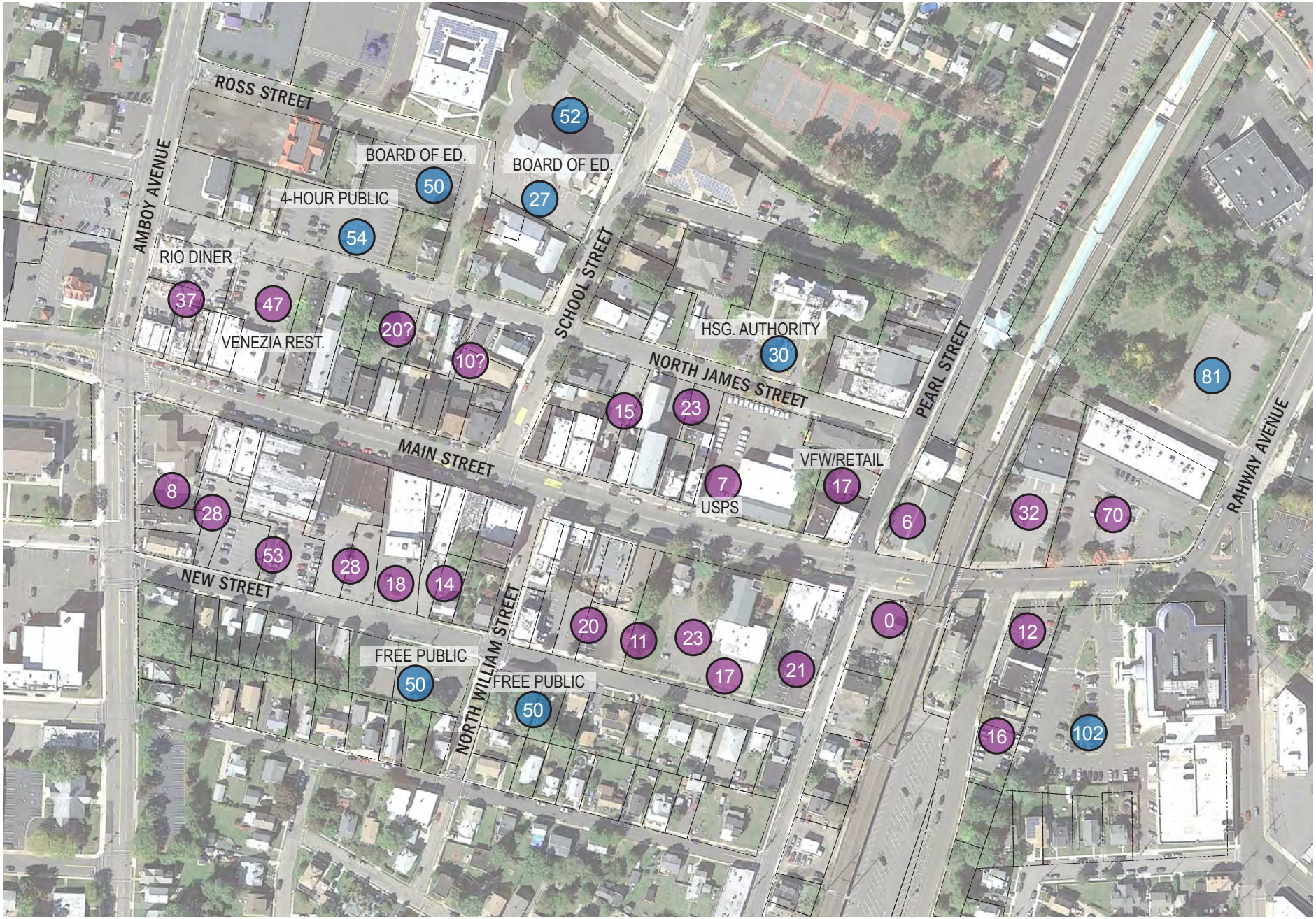
Lots to the north of Main Street, at the back of buildings that front onto Main Street (i.e., between Main and North James, from Amboy to Pearl Street), are difficult to inter-connect because of grade changes (at the western edge of this area), fragmentation by rear out-buildings, and the presence of the Post Office facility. In most locations, the USPS wants to keep its parking area for employees and postal trucks separate and secure, and is not interested in collaborating with its host community.

However, the parking lots here would still benefit from some configuration changes. Where parking spaces abut the sidewalk, low walls and/or landscaping should be added to create a buffer between pedestrians and cars, even if doing so requires removal of the first parking spaces closest to the public right of way. This approach is discussed later in

FIGURE 16, OFF-STREET PARKING BETWEEN AMBOY AND RAHWAY

LOCATION	PUBLIC	PRIVATE	TOTAL
North of Main Street			
Amboy to School Street	183 (incl. Board of Education lot)	114	297
School Street to Railroad tracks	30 (Housing Auth.)	68 (incl. USPS)	98
Railroad tracks to Rahway Avenue	81	102	183
South of Main Street			
Amboy to N. Williams	50	149	191
N. Williams to Railroad tracks	50	96	96
Railroad tracks to Berry Street	102 (Muni. Building)	28	130
TOTALS	**496**	**557**	**1,053**

FIGURE 17, CENTRAL SEGMENT: EXISTING OFF-STREET PARKING SUPPLY



Section 2A, Improve Pedestrian Safety and Comfort.

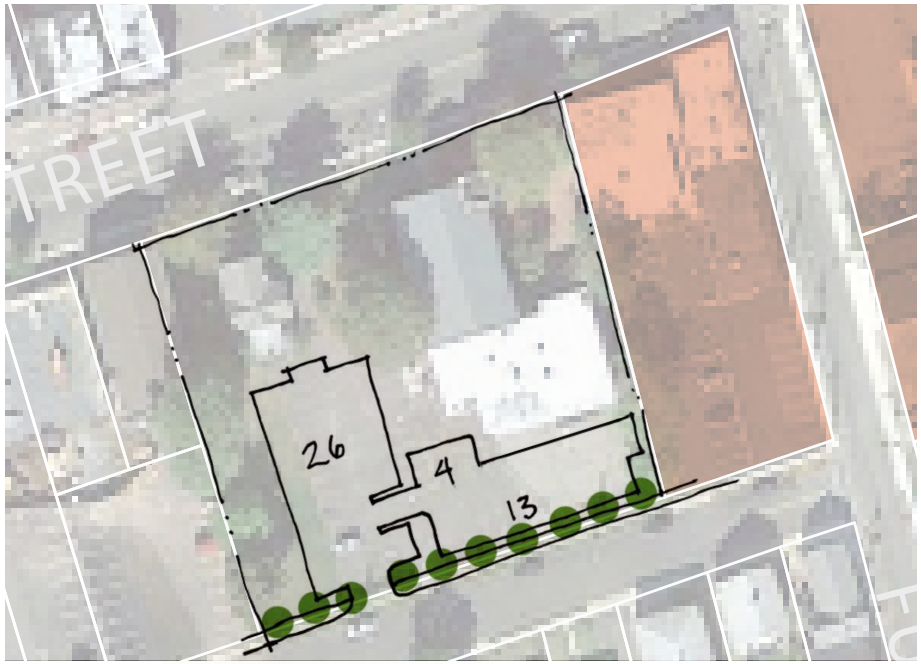
New Street

North Side, between Amboy Avenue and North William Street

Lots to the south of Main Street, between Amboy Avenue and North William Street, are already striped aggressively to create the maximum amount of parking spaces from each separate parcel, but are not interconnected. Due to the dimensions of the parking lots, varying building depths, and inefficiencies that would result in trying to create connected aisles against irregular-depth buildings, restriping them to add internal circulation connections would cause a significant decrease in the number of spaces.

Similar to the recommendation above for the south side of North James, however, parking lots here should have low walls and landscaping added between parking spaces and the sidewalk. This approach is discussed later in **Section 2A, Improve Pedestrian Safety and Comfort**. In addition, ***Figure 29*** in **Chapter 2** shows how a sidewalk should be added at the back of such large parking lots that serve multiple businesses. Both approaches will result in a small loss of spaces, but will greatly improve pedestrian safety, access, and the appearance.

FIGURE 18, IMPROVEMENTS TO CHURCH PARKING LOT ON NEW STREET



North Side, between North William and Fulton Streets

Lots along New Street between North William and Fulton Streets fall into three major ownership clusters:

- Castello's, which has a new parking lot not shown in the aerial photos in this *Vision Plan*. The large parking lot is bordered with a high wall and clearly marked parking spaces.
- The United Methodist Church. The Church's parking lot may be a good shared lot for evening use by diners. ***Figure 18*** shows how the parking lot could be restriped to accommodate 40 spaces, all served from one curb cut.
- The retail cluster at the eastern end of the block is very low intensity, and should be redeveloped with higher-density mixed-use buildings that take advantage of the proximity to the train station. Some of the parking supply will need to be provided on site, and shared parking will surely be required.

On-street parking on Main Street

FIGURE 19, PROPOSED VARIANCES FROM RSIS STANDARDS

Spaces per Dwelling Unit (Minimum)	NUMBER OF BEDROOMS		
	1	2	3
Existing RSIS for Garden and Mid-rise Apts., min. ratio	1.8	2.0	2.1
Existing RSIS for High-rise Apts., min. ratio	0.8	1.3	1.9
Proposed Residential Uses Downtown, min. to max. ratio	0.8 to 1.2	1.3 to 1.7	1.7 to 2.0

Making the Methodist Church parking lot or other parking lots a shared lot for public use may require the Town to shoulder the liability insurance. This may be accomplished through an expanded role for the Main Street Special Improvement District, as discussed later in this section.

South Side, at North Williams Street

The Township owns two parking lots on either side of North Williams, both with about 50 spaces. Currently the lots are available free with no time restriction. Being more than a block from Main Street stores, these parking spaces are best allocated for 4-hour or all-day use, while spaces closer to downtown should have shorter usage restrictions.

Improve On-Street Parking Supply

Additional on-street parking spaces could be added through more efficient use of streets, as follows:

- On New Street, an additional benefit of the above changes to parking lot edges and curb cuts is that about 12 additional on-street parking spaces could be striped on the north side of New Street, between Amboy Avenue and North Williams Street, adjoining the parking lots. These should be signed as public parking for shorter-term use.
- Closure of, or reductions to, wide driveways and curb cuts elsewhere on many streets will also help create more on-street parking spaces.
- On many downtown streets, a large length of street near the intersection corners is striped as off-limits to on-street parking. These areas should be reduced to just the first 15 feet from intersections.
- On other streets, the space for on-street parking may exist, but the availability and legality are not clearly marked through striping or signage.

Amend Parking Requirements

Parking in the Central Segment is governed by the *Main Street Rehabilitation Plan*, which includes very general language, and by the *Land Use Ordinance*'s Section 150-78, Off-Street Parking and Loading, which includes more specific requirements such as parking ratios and sharing options. In the Central Segment, a number of items in the *Land Use Ordinance* should be amended, or overwritten through the *Rehabilitation Plan*, to allow more efficient and shared use of land for parking, and to balance space for cars with pedestrian safety. These include the following.

Parking Configuration

- *Land Use Ordinance*, Section 150-78, Section A(4): Allow parallel parking spaces to be just 9 feet wide, not 10 as currently required, in order to use scarce downtown land more efficiently.
- A(7): Require businesses to provide private walkways adjacent to their buildings, next to parking lots, to improve pedestrian connections and safety between adjacent businesses. Currently this is optional.
- A(10): Require a much smaller driveway return curb radius (5 feet, not 15 feet), and a smaller maximum width (20 feet, not 40 feet) for driveways in the Central Segment, in order to slow driver speed and improve pedestrian safety. The exception should be for Amboy and Rahway Avenues, which rely on faster through-traffic speeds.
- A(17): joint parking facilities should be permitted to allow a total supply *less* than the sum of the individual requirements. This recognizes the fact that downtown, people prefer to park once and walk to more than one destination. Thus, each busi-

ness does not need to provide its own separate parking supply. This change will result in a much lower overall parking requirement, and make infill and intensification more feasible.

- A(18): Sharing of parking facilities should be expanded to encompass any uses with different time of day and/or day of week demands. In particular, this will allow the sharing of parking supply between sit-down restaurants, whose peak demand occurs in evening and weekends, and offices and retail stores; or between residential uses and retail stores. The amount of shared parking overlap should not be fixed at 50 percent maximum, but should be allowed to be based on the actual demand pattern, as shown through a shared parking study.
- A(21): Parking should not be permitted in the front yard of commercial zones in the Central Segment. Presumably, this requirement applies to downtown's RTM, MS Retail / Mixed Use Rehabilitation Zone. This should be specifically prohibited for this zone.
- A(24) Use of off-street parking for activities that boost the pedestrian-friendly appeal of downtown, including outdoor dining, sidewalk sales, farmers markets, and street fairs, should be permitted in the Central Segment with a permit from the Township.

Parking Ratios and Supply

Lower Required Ratios

In a downtown location, onerous (high) parking ratios are often the limiting factor in determining the amount of development that is feasible on a given site, discouraging further infill or intensification. Parking, whether in structure or a surface lot, takes up a high share of development costs, leaving less money for other improvements such as creating a high-quality, attractive building with a better relationship to the public realm.

Structured parking tends to take away building area that could otherwise be used for street-facing retail or residential apartments. Surface parking lots tend to detrimentally increase ambient temperatures and the amount of polluted runoff from a site.

Municipalities have typicallly been most concerned about having an adequate parking supply, rather than other aspects of a project, such as quality public space or a building that complements the streetscape. As a result, most existing parking ratios are minimum requirements, and no cap on the parking supply is provided. Without a cap on the total amount of parking, some developers may build an excessive amount of parking, out of fear of being unable to find tenants or buyers who insist on an abundance of parking.

It is the muncipality's responsibility to balance the individual demands and concerns of each builder with the overall goal of providing a compact, walkable, attractive, and vibrant downtown that places more value on people places than on space for parking cars. In fact, a town that tries to maximize its parking supply downtown, to the detriment of adding more occupied building floor area, will destroy the vitality that would otherwise draw people to come downtown. In order to foster the dense, walkable development and pedestrian-dominated vibrancy characteristic of a successful downtown, parking requirements must be relaxed.

Lower Minimum Parking Ratios

The minimum parking ratios for most uses should be lowered. A later section describes specific reductions by land use type, including residen-

tial and retail, for downtown Woodbridge.

Provide a Maximum Permitted Ratio

Providing maximum parking ratios is as important as providing minimums. As a general rule, the parking supply should not exceed the required minimum by more than ten percent.

RSIS and Residential Parking Ratios

The *Land Use Ordinance* states that parking for residential uses in the Central Segment must follow the state's *Residential Site Improvement Standards* (RSIS). RSIS actually allows and encourages shared parking in a mixed-use development, and the counting of on-street parking supply towards parking requirements; but like many municipalities across the state, Woodbridge may historically have been hesitant to deviate from the generic standards of RSIS.

Crowded parking lots behind Main Street retail, along New Street

Woodbridge's *Main Street Rehabilitation Plan* mentions the option for the Planning Board to permit a waiver from RSIS standards, but stops short of suggesting specific shared parking arrangements or lower parking ratios. This is a critical change for helping downtown to grow and thrive. The following changes are recommended to be made either through the *Land Use Ordinance* or the *Rehabilitation Plan*.

- Section 150-78, B(1), residential uses in mixed-use buildings in the Central Segment should be permitted a much lower parking ratio than permitted in RSIS. A shared parking study should be required for mixed-use buildings in downtown.
- RSIS' residential parking ratios include single-family, garden apartments, mid-rises, and high-rises, none of which reflect the traditional mixed-use downtown style of apartments over retail, or newer dense apartment communities built near trains. Appropriate parking ratios in the Central Segment should reflect the travel behavior of the likely population, which will be self-selected in part by the proximity to the train and the ability to walk to daily needs such as groceries and stores.
- RSIS's existing minimum parking requirements for higher-density residential housing types, and this *Vision Plan*'s suggested ranges of appropriate ratios, are presented in ***Figure 19***. The suggested ranges of parking ratios are based on best practices for smaller downtowns that seek to improve the pedestrian environment and balance the amount of space devoted to parking. While the Woodbridge train station provides an option to driving for some commuters, the reality of Woodbridge's suburban location means that many residents will own a car, if they can; this fact accounts for the high end of the ratio's range.
- In keeping with lower and more flexible parking ratios, allow residential uses to provide just 1.0 space per unit on-site, with any required additional fractional spaces (such as 0.5 space/unit) permitted off-site in a shared parking lot or in any on-street spaces directly adjoining the use in question. The Township already allows non-commercial vehicles to park on-street overnight.

Retail / Restaurant Parking Ratios

- *Land Use Ordinance*, Section B(2)k: Ratios for non-drive in, non-fast food restaurants should be much lower than the current 10 spaces per 1,000 square feet. A more realistic ratio for a suburban downtown restaurant is a minimum of 4 to a maximum of 6 spaces per 1,000 square feet. In support of these lower ratios, patrons can be expected to walk a block or two to a good restaurant in a downtown setting, so not all parking needs to be provided right on-site. Accordingly, combined with an allowance for shared parking and providing some spaces off-site, these lower ratios should help to make additional restaurant uses feasible along Main Street.
- B(2)l: Parking ratios for fast food restaurants are very high (20 spaces per 1,000 square feet). The automobile-oriented format of these uses, which tend to be national chains with inflexible site planning standards, is not appropriate to a downtown location. Therefore, leaving the parking requirements high will discourage their proliferation downtown.
- B(2)m and o: Retail stores and banks should have a much lower parking ratio: 3 spaces per 1,000 square feet, rather than 5 per 1,000. Similar to the recommendations for residential uses, one-third to one-half of the spaces should be permitted to be provided off-site or in any on-street spaces directly adjoining the retail use.

Mixed-Use Parking Ratios

B(2)s: Mixed uses should not be required to provide a total parking supply equal to the *sum* of the separate requirements for each use. Instead, the total parking supply should take into account the different time of day usage patterns of each use, and allow a combined reduction in use.

Entertainment Use Parking Ratios

B(2)t: For theaters, one space per two seats is very high. Many patrons carpool in higher numbers, and a theater may not be fully booked. Many patrons may have already parked elsewhere downtown to eat dinner first, and patrons can be expected to walk a few blocks to the theater. One space per 4 or 5 seats is more reasonable in a downtown setting.

Parking and Loading

Off-street loading spaces should not be required for parcels along Main Street. Rather, depending on the typical demand, a few scattered all-day on-street loading zones should be provided along Main Street, or some on-street parking spaces should be reserved in early morning weekday hours for loading. Many retail businesses rely on small, quick, daily deliveries from small trucks that park on-street or double-park.

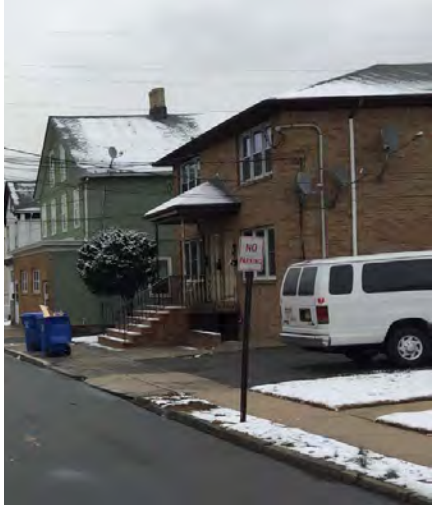
Allocate Parking

The parking supply and demand should be managed and balanced. Recommended solutions include:

Allocate by Time and Location

- Allocate the most convenient spots (on-street spaces on Main Street, for example) for shoppers making quick trips. Consider limiting parking on Main Street to shorter durations (for example, 30 minutes to two-hour parking).
- At parking lots to the rear of Main Street stores, explore limiting visitors' use to two or four hours' duration through signage and enforcement.
- Assign less conveniently-located spots for longer-term (4 hours or more) or all-day use, such as by train commuters.
- Retail employees should be encouraged to park in the spaces furthest from store entries. If fees

Parking restrictions on New Street: no parking on south side; no parking on north side between 11 and 11:30 AM, weekdays, except with residential permit.



are eventually charged for these spaces, business owners could be given a number of free parking passes for their employees, to encourage them to park in these farther-away lots.

- Additional public parking might be created through shared use of parking lots for uses with different time of day demands than retail and dining (such as offices, churches, and day care facilities).

Consider Installing Parking Meters

Parking meters could eventually be added at on-street and public or shared-use off-street lots to facilitate signed time limits and to bring in more revenue for the overall management and supply of downtown parking.

Three-hour parking limit on Main Street, no parking meters

One location where meters might make sense is behind Main Street stores. During weekday morning site visits conducted for this *Vision Plan*, the retail parking lots behind Main Street along New Street were extremely crowded. It appears that this is related to the booming economy: with demand outstripping supply for parking at the NJ Transit parking lots next to the train station, train commuters have started parking in the rear retail lots for the day, since there are no time of use restrictions here, and parking is free. Adding parking meters and/or time restrictions to these New Street lots would help keep these lots available for shoppers, rather than for all-day train commuters.

Similarly, adding parking meters on Main Street would reduce the prevalence of employees parking in the spaces in front of stores, which are most convenient for shoppers and patrons.

Parking meters offer many choices and benefits:

- Parking meters today offer a wide variety of payment options, including coins, credit cards, and passes. Card payments can be made at a centralized kiosk on a block, or within each individual parking meter.
- Parking meters today also greatly simplify enforcement, leading to better compliance. Flashing lights on the meter and/or short-range data transmission to a parking enforcement officer or central collection point allow officers to target the cars that have not paid.
- To ease the public's acceptance of and the transition to parking meters, the meters could have a feature whereby the first period of use (say, the first 15 minutes or first hour) are free as long as the handle is turned at the start of the period.
- Over time, as people begin to accept parking meters, the parking rates are easily manipulated with today's meters to fine-tune the usage in each location. In a successful downtown, a small share of parking spaces should always remain available in order to facilitate turnover, and the adjustment of parking rates helps reach this goal.
- Parking meter revenue may be used to fund downtown improvements such as landscaping, side-

walk cleaning, and weed removal, giving merchants a clear benefit for supporting the addition of meters.

Residential Permit Parking

The Township already has a residential permit parking program for residential neighborhoods next to downtown commercial districts (for example, see photograph of signage along New Street). A resident parking sticker is needed to leave one's car parked on the street for long periods of time (more than 24 hours, in the case of New Street); this is accomplished by prohibiting parking for half and hour a day unless one has a resident parking sticker. The main goal of the current program seems to be the prevention of all-day commuters, other long-term parkers, and abandoned vehicles from using designated city streets.

In the future, growth of downtown commercial floor area could lead to increasing competition for on-street parking spaces on residential streets. In this case, the residential permit parking program could be expanded to further limit use of on-street parking spaces on residential streets by non-residents' use to specific short durations (such as a maximum of 2 or 4 hours). That would allow shoppers and lunch visitors, for example, to park near downtown, while still ensuring the turnover needed to free up spaces for residents' use.

Manage Parking Supply Holistically

Build New Parking Deck or Garage

Figure 20 shows several possible locations where the Town could build a parking deck or garage, which could be used most efficiently through shared parking for a variety of uses downtown. The specific benefits and drawbacks of each location were discussed in **Section 1A, Encourage Intensification** as part of infill site planning studies for each area. To summarize them:

- The most promising parking locations are the two square-shaped mid-block sites (shown in blue) on the north side of North James Street. With selective acquisition and removal of smaller structures, an efficient multi-level parking garage can be created, namely, one that is at least 120 feet by 180 feet, for efficient vertical circulation. There are more retail and civic uses on this north side of Main Street than the south side, so a new parking garage in this area makes sense.
- A location west of the train tracks along New Street could only accommodate one parking deck above the existing rear retail parking lots. The shallow lot size and irregular building depths only permit one double-loaded bay of parking. Due to vertical circulation requirements, adding a deck level would not nearly double the parking supply. This site also faces single-family residences across the street, likely making it a difficult sell.
- East of the train tracks, the awkwardly-sited parking lot in Parker Press Park could be reconfigured as one double-loaded bay of parking along Poillon Street in order to improve visibility to the west side train station entrance and into Parker Press Park from Rahway Avenue.
- Redevelopment of the entire shopping center east of the tracks would offer a rare opportunity for a large, efficient two- or three-level parking garage surrounded by, and hidden behind, a new multi-story, mixed-use development that fronts onto Main Street and Rahway Avenue. The first level of structured parking could be built half a level below grade and extend under the entire site. Development above it must be designed and terraced to preserve pedestrian scale, accessibility, and

FIGURE 20, POTENTIAL LOCATIONS FOR A PARKING DECK

retail visibility. Most of this parking garage would serve the new development, but the northern half, or the first level, could be made available for public and/or train commuter use on a shared or exclusive basis.

- Adding a single-story parking deck over the train station lot south of Main Street, east of the tracks, could probably increase the parking supply here by 150 to 175 percent, but could not double the supply due to inefficiencies in parking ramps. And while additional parking here would benefit commuters, it would not be in the best location to benefit shoppers in the core two blocks of Main Street. This site also faces single-family residences across the street, likely making it a difficult sell.

Shared Parking PILOP

To fund the new shared parking resources downtown, Woodbridge would need to establish a "payment in lieu of parking" (PILOP) program. Funds from off-street and on-street meters, fees, and permits would be used to manage use of the existing parking supply; build new parking resources in the form of shared public lots, decks, and/or garages; improve efficiency and boost pedestrian safety by closing redundant curb cuts and linking adjacent lots; and improve aesthetics through repaving, low walls and fences, and landscaping.

Expand Role of SID to Manage Parking Supply Holistically

In 2007, a Township Ordinance created the Main Street Special Improvement District (SID) for the purposes of securing additional parking in downtown Woodbridge. However, the SID's role and responsibility remain limited.

The Township should partner with the SID, or work on its own, to:

- Conduct a parking study (explained in the next section) to identify and allocate current and future parking spaces throughout downtown
- Change regulations (if necessary) to permit parking requirements to be met through payment of fees into a shared parking pool ("PILOP")
- Allow some or all of required parking supply to be provided in off-site locations.

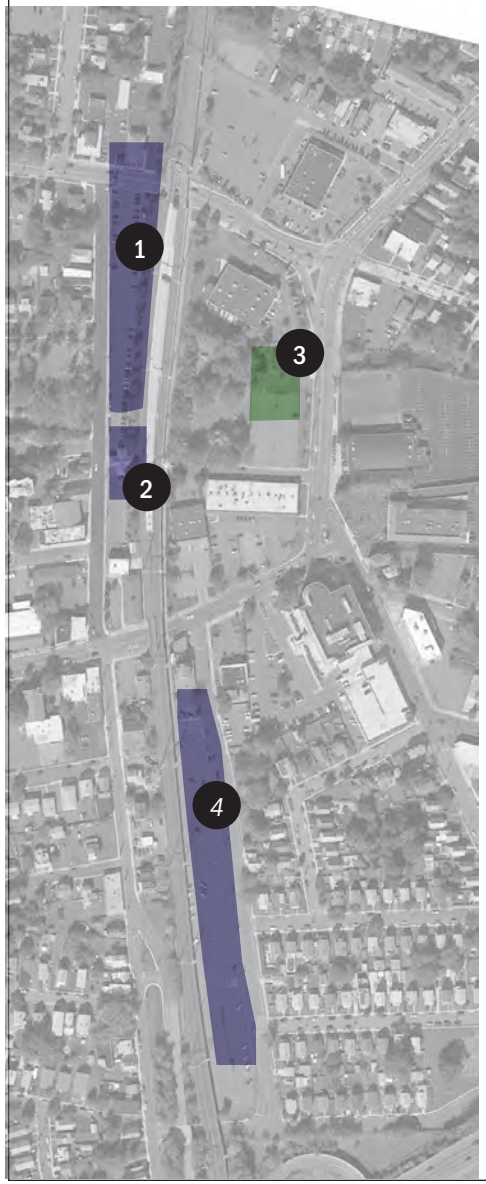
As an option, the SID could be empowered to collect fees for parking and use them to manage shared parking resources. These shared parking resources should include on-street parking spaces; public off-street parking lots, decks and garages; and private off-street parking lots that are deeded to the Township or SID to manage.

For example, in the rear lots to the south of Main Street, existing spaces that might be lost through the addition of sidewalks and low walls and landscaping, as recommended in **Section 2A, Improve Pedestrian Safety and Comfort**, in this *Vision Plan*, would be offset by the granting of shared parking between adjacent uses (park once, walk to multiple destinations). The SID would be able to keep track of the entire downtown parking supply holistically to balance parking in this manner. The SID's role and authorities may need to be expanded to enable these powers.

Conduct a Downtown Parking Study

Woodbridge Township should conduct its own detailed downtown parking study to ensure a holistic, coordinated approach to managing parking downtown. The study would determine the current supply and usage; project an estimated demand if the most promising sites are rebuilt, intensified, or infilled; and determine

FIGURE 21, NEW JERSEY TRANSIT PARKING LOT RESOURCES



NJ TRANSIT COMMUTER PARKING LOTS

Train riders may take advantage of four commuter parking lots near the Woodbridge train station with a total of 500 spaces. Three, totalling 423 spaces, are owned by New Jersey Transit, and one with 77 spaces is owned by the Township of Woodbridge. All lots are available free for general public use after 11 AM on weekdays and all day on weekends. Overnight parking is permitted as well at all lots. Users arriving in early morning to ride the train pay a nominal fee through a daily or quarterly permit.

While all lots are useful downtown parking assets for shoppers, diners, and theater patrons, many of the spaces in the very long Lots 1 and 4 are rather far from Main Street.

The Poillon Street lot may be reconfigured as suggested in Section 1A of this report in order to improve visibility into Parker Press Park and enhance the pedestrian connection from Rahway Avenue to the train station. The Township would like to preserve the bulk of the existing 77 parking spaces here if any redevelopment or reconfiguration occurs.

LOT NUMBER	LOT 1	LOT 2	LOT 3	LOT 4	TOTAL SPACES
Location	**Green & Pearl Streets**	**Pearl Street**	**Poillon Street**	**Eleanor Place**	**All**
Owner:	NJ Transit	NJ Transit	Municipality	NJ Transit	
Standard Spaces:	130	12	77	281	500
Accessible Spaces:	0	9	2	0	11
Evenings:	Free After 11 AM				
Nights:	Parking Allowed				
Weekends:	Free				
On-Street:	Various Restrictions				
Type of Parking:	Permit			Daily & Permit	
Resident:	$120/Quarter			$3/Day Or $120/ Quarter	
Non-Resident:	$120/Quarter			$3/Day Or $120/ Quarter	

a plan for how and where additional parking spaces will be provided. Then, determining whether a particular new development project needs to build additional parking spaces would not necessitate preparing an individual shared parking study, but rather could be determined from the larger picture of downtown parking requirements.

For example, a new mixed-use retail / residential building might require 15 new spaces. The Township could verify whether those spaces already exist in off-street parking lots within a certain distance of the use, or whether the spaces will be built through improvements and new lots by the time the new building is completed. If the spaces are already existing or planned, the Town can indicate that the new parking supply for the new building will be adequate and that no new parking will be required. Rather than providing its own new parking spaces, the new building would simply pay the Township a fee for its share of the downtown parking supply.

Pursue / Promote Shared Use of NJ Transit Lots in Off-Hours

New Jersey Transit owns several surface parking lots around the Woodbridge Station. These lots are available for general use (i.e., not just by commuters) at certain periods of the day and weekend, as summarized in Figure 21. Provided NJ Transit is amenable, the Township should promote this resource, and should count available off-hour spaces towards retail and other commercial demand in its holistic approach to downtown parking. On the other hand, permanent dedication of commuter spaces for overnight use by new residential buildings may require discussions with NJ Transit to ensure that spaces will remain available for such use.

1D. PROGRAM NEW EVENTS DOWNTOWN

Downtown Woodbridge has a lovely, several blocks-long riverfront open space that links to Parker Press Park (host to a weekly farmer's market) and the train station. Civic buildings downtown, all located near Heards Brook, include the Municipal Building, a fire station, the Board of Education offices, and the Ross Elementary School.

The Township takes good advantage of these amenities to strengthen Woodbridge's civic pride and sense of place through activities such as street festivals, parades, fun runs, flea markets, and craft fairs (see partial list in ***Figure 22***). These activities should be continued and expanded to bring people downtown and remind them that downtown Woodbridge is a place to see and be seen.

Linear Events

Linear festivals that encourage people to wander from Main Street stores and dining to the riverfront parks and back strengthen the link between these two major destinations. The Town's linear events in-

FIGURE 22, EXISTING SPECIAL EVENTS IN DOWNTOWN WOODBRIDGE

Linear Walks along Heards Brook and/or Main Street

Woodbridge Street Fair & Craft Show on Main Street

Zombie Walk

Ghost Walk

Halloween Walk

Veteran's Day Parade

Holiday Parade

Holiday Decorating Contest for Residences and Businesses

Festivals in Parker Press Park

Concerts in Parker Press Park multiple days a week. In summer: they have Country Sundays, Oldies Mondays, Classic Rock Tuesdays, Woodbridge Wednesdays (eclectic) and Local Band Thursdays.

Music on Main Street program at Woodbridge Middle School, on Barron Avenue just north of the Central Segment

clude a Columbus Day food festival along Main Street, a Halloween Costume Parade, a Veteran's Day parade, and fun runs.

Figure 23 shows a one-mile loop from Main Street to Heards Brook and back that could be a beginner fitness loop. It could be promoted as a special event, or the Town could sign the route permanently to alert people to this easy and fun fitness route. As a motivation, after walking or running the loop once or a few times, participants can stop off downtown for a coffee.

Street Closures

Outdoor festivals and linear events can benefit from street closures, as shown in ***Figure 23***, including:

- The roads along Heards Brook park are a natural fit for periodic closures, since they are rarely used by through-traffic. They could even be closed to traffic all weekend, every weekend, making them a favored destination for safe walking, biking, roller blading, and picnicking. This is discussed more in **Chapter 3**.
- School Street (between Main Street and East Park Avenue) is also a perfect fit for a festival, with its location linking the midpoint of downtown's Main Street to the riverfront park system. Unlike Amboy or Pearl Street, School Street doesn't have the drawback of nearly-vacant parcels (containing parking lots) on both sides to make it visually unappealing or monotonous.
- Main Street from the train tracks to Amboy Avenue could be closed occasionally for weekend events, when traffic levels are lower. Main Street's configuration, flanked by two-way streets on either side (North James and New Streets) makes it possible to divert through-traffic around a festival.

Markets and Fairs

Farmer's Market in Winter

The Farmer's Market at Parker Press Park could expand its operation to a winter market, with more items such as bread and other baked goods, cheese, egg, and meat, and small-scale arts and crafts sales.

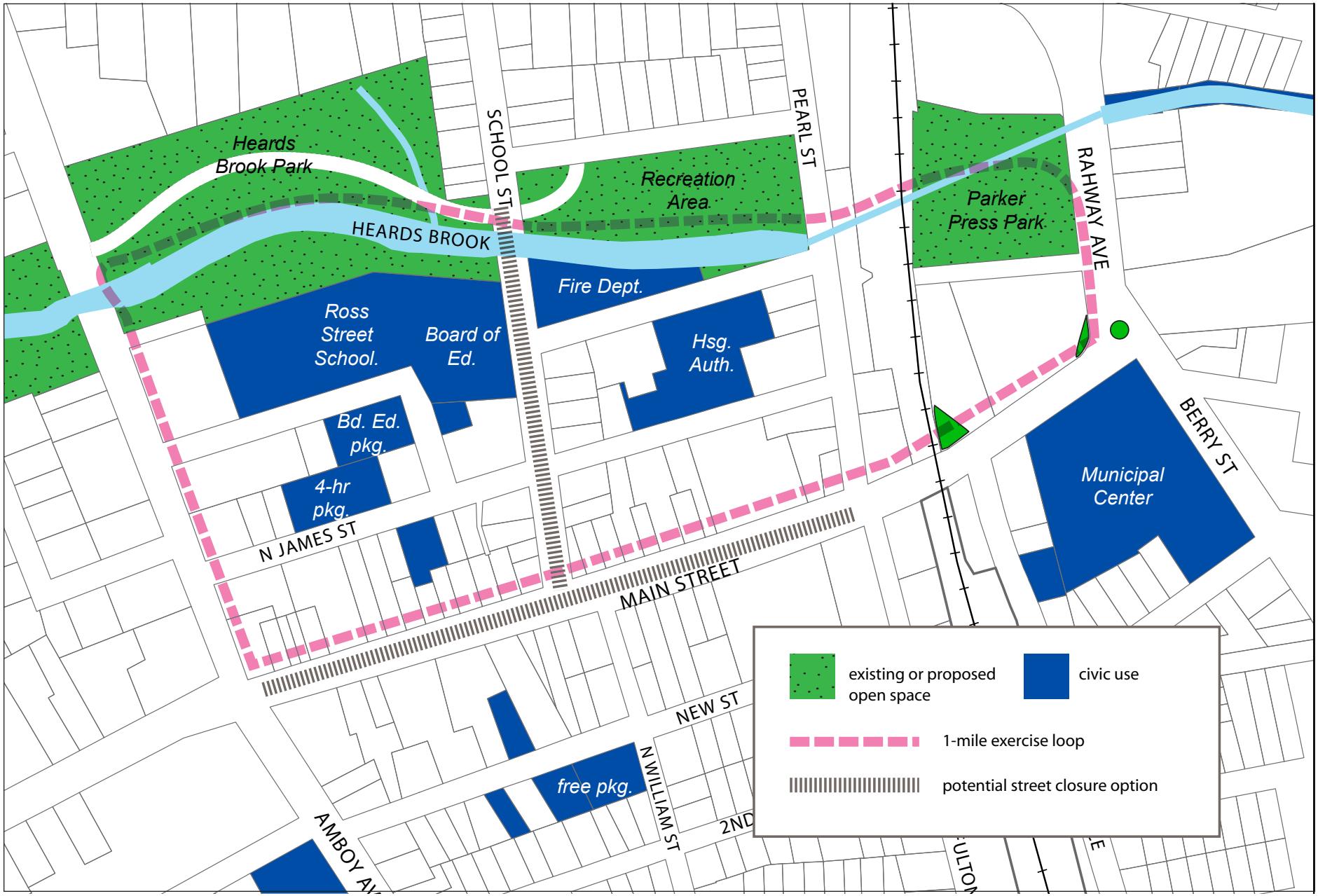
For such cold weather, the market should be moved to a large indoor vacant storefront or vacant civic / cultural building. Doing so is a good way to bring foot traffic to an under-utilized area, until the property is released or rebuilt.

Flea / Crafts Market

The Woodbridge Elks Lodge conducts a twice-weekly flea market at its Lodge at 665 Rahway Avenue, less than a mile from the heart of downtown. Perhaps the Elks could partner with the City to expand their flea market at a more central downtown location, such as Parker Press Park. The focus of this downtown flea market could expand to include a selected inventory designed to appeal to a wider audience.

A flea market showcasing locally-made arts and crafts and food as well as higher-quality used/antique wares could be a very strong weekly activity year-round to complement the farmer's market. For example, in New York City, the Brooklyn Flea market is "curated" to ensure high-quality goods and wares that attract people to visit again and again. People come not just to look at the clothing, jewelry, furniture, and antiques, but to sample innovative, diverse, and high-quality food served from booths and food trucks. After several years, The Flea, as it is known, began to attract so much foot traffic that the entire Fort Greene / Clinton Hill area benefitted, with restaurants seeing more patrons, and spin-off craft sales and markets occurring

FIGURE 23, CIVIC / CULTURAL EVENTS



Street fairs on Main Street in Woodbridge

SOURCES: KUZMA FAMILY CHIROPRACTIC, WOODBRIDGE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

in the vicinity. Its success enabled it to continue in winter inside a prominent vacant landmark building (the Williamsburgh Savings Bank tower), helping to revitalize yet another neighborhood, downtown Brooklyn.

Downtown Dining Events

To strengthen the downtown dining scene, Woodbridge should promote the variety of restaurants downtown, with special event nights such as "restaurant crawl" / tastings, a twice-yearly restaurant week (in which participating restaurants serve a prix-fixe meal for a low set price), or using local restaurants to cater street fairs and other outdoor festivals.

Community Center Programming

As mentioned in **Section 1B, Foster a Greater Variety of Uses**, Woodbridge's Community Center and the Artisan Guild should be tapped to create programming for a satellite Community Center location downtown. Art and music classes might be appropriate downtown, and could tie into efforts to boost the arts (see the *Woodbridge - Rahway Access to the Arts* report).

The Brooklyn Flea market: high-quality antiques and used items, handmade crafts and other goods, and locally-sourced food and drink

BROOKLYN FLEA

2. Improve Connectivity and Wayfinding

The goal of the strategies in this section is the make downtown a safer, easier, and more enjoyable walking environment in order to attract more retail customers from the surrounding neighborhoods, towns, and train station.

2A. IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN SAFETY AND COMFORT

Downtown carries a significant amount of through-traffic during rush hour due to Amboy Avenue being State Route 35 and Main Street being County Route 514. Both of these streets have been configured to move traffic quickly, to the detriment of pedestrian safety and comfort. The following sections describe how to correct this imbalance.

Figure 24 shows the locations for some of the streetscape and traffic calming improvements discussed in this section.

Embrace 'Complete Streets'

Definition

The land devoted to public streets is usually the largest public space in a community. However, for too long, many streets have been designed only to move traffic through quickly, at all costs. The "Complete Streets" movement is a growing national movement to expand our streets to serve all users, not just cars. States and local communities are asking their traffic engineers and planners to redesign their roadways to accommodate safe walking, bicycling, transit, and children, as well as car traffic. In turn, these changes help create more livable public spaces and healthier communities.

Jurisdictional Support

The New Jersey DOT and Middlesex County adopted *Complete Streets* policies in 2009 and 2012, respectively. Woodbridge was in fact ahead of Middlesex County, adopting its Complete Streets Policy in 2011. These policies lend support to the Township's goal of balancing traffic movement with pedestrian and bicycle safety. The text of Middlesex County Resolution 12-1316R is shown in the Appendix in ***Figure 45***. The text of Woodbridge's own Complete Streets resolution is also provided in the Appendix as ***Figure 46***.

Many approaches discussed next in this Chapter fall under the rubric of Complete Streets. Embracing these changes will help improve downtown Woodbridge to be a more pedestrian-friendly, inviting place to be.

Main Street near Amboy

Main Street with wide travel lanes

FIGURE 24, AREAS FOR SIDEWALK WIDENING THROUGH SETBACKS

Widen sidewalks through required setbacks of new buildings, add street trees

Build new sidewalk or pedestrian path

Fill in gaps in sidewalks by closing curb cuts, improve sidewalks by adding low walls and landscaping

STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS AND SIDEWALK WIDENINGS

This diagram shows the location of the physical streetscape improvements described in this Vision Plan:

- Sidewalks should be widened along Amboy Avenue and Pearl/Fulton Streets, and street trees and other landscaping added to help improve pedestrian comfort on these traffic-heavy corridors.
- The sidewalk on the north side of Main Street, east of Amboy Avenue, should be widened, through requiring new buildings to meet a minimum setback, in order to compensate for the lack of an on-street parking buffer in this area with a right-turn lane.
- New sidewalks should be created in the vicinity of Heards Brook.
- Gaps in sidewalks along the rear "parking streets" behind Main Street (North James and New Streets) should be reduced through removal and narrowing of driveway curb cuts. Low walls and landscaping should be added where possible to create a buffer between parking lots and the sidewalk.

Reduce Traffic Dominance of the Right-of-way

Main Street's cartway (the traveled roadway from curb to curb, excluding sidewalks) is very wide (***Figure 25***, top section), and street trees are relatively short and do not create a canopy over the street. As a result, drivers have no visual cues to slow down. The width of the cartway can feel forbidding to cross on foot, especially for the elderly or adults with small children, when fast-moving traffic approaches.

The following changes to the right-of-way are recommended. Some of these are shown in the section at the bottom of ***Figure 25.***

Main Street in the Central Segment

Sidewalks near Amboy Avenue

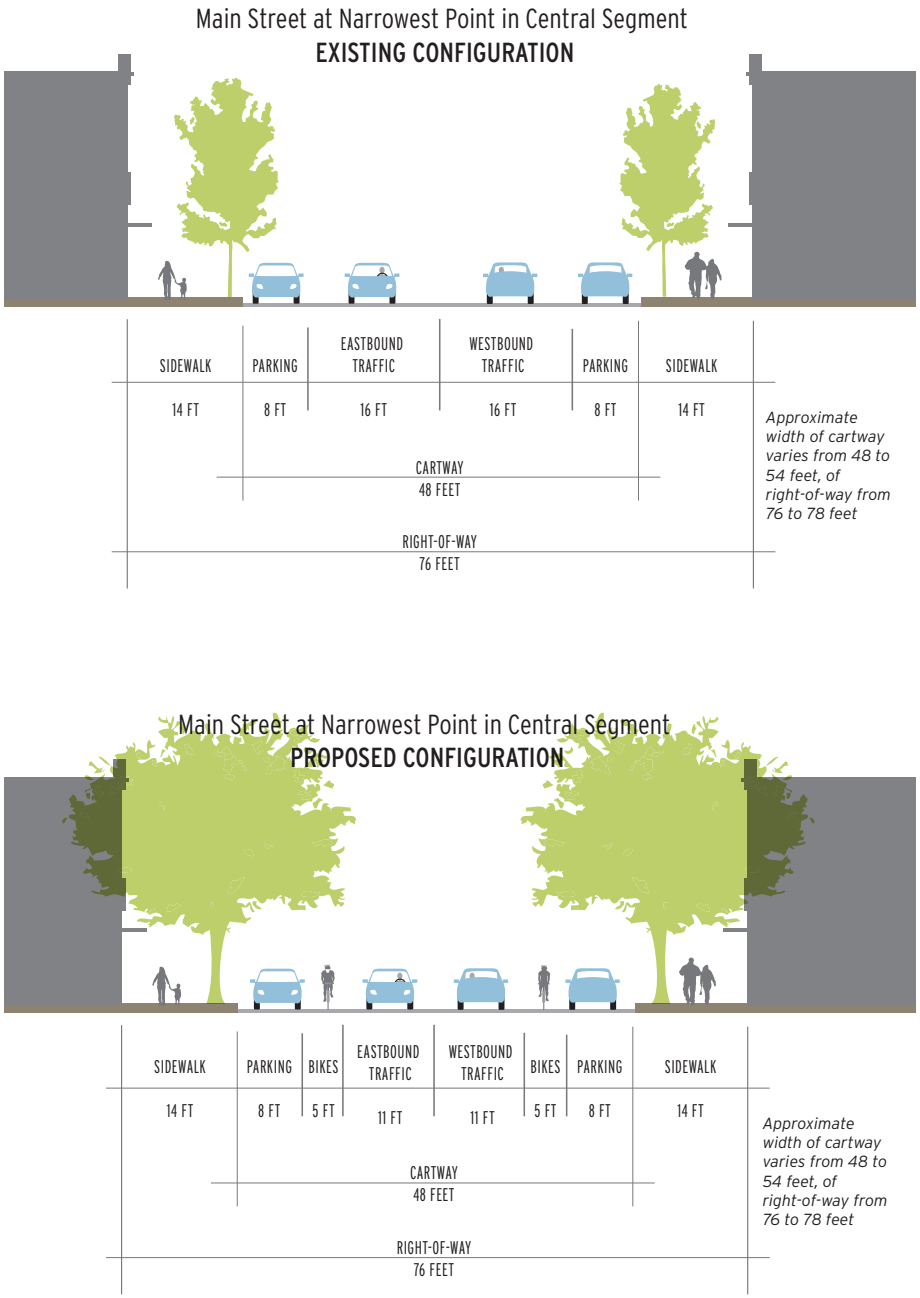
Main Street sidewalks are generously wide on the block between School and Pearl Streets. However, in the block between School Street and Amboy Avenue, Main Street's north sidewalk narrows to an uncomfortable width, and the pedestrian environment is further degraded by the replacement of on-street parking with a right-turn lane from westbound Main Street to northbound Amboy Avenue (***Figure 23***).

Heavy traffic movements make it difficult to replace this right-turn lane with on-street parking, or widen the sidewalk into the roadway. However, the narrow sidewalk may be effectively widened into the private property over time through required setbacks of new buildings. This is shown as an example for the redevelopment of parcels at the northeast corner of Main Street and Amboy Avenue (***Figure 9*** in **Section 1A, Encourage Intensification**). Regulations for sidewalk widening in this location are provided in **Section 3C, Design Guidelines**.

Bike Lanes

Add striped bike lanes along Main Street in the Central Segment, as recommended in the *Woodbridge Bicycle Connect Route Plan* (Sam Schwartz Engineering, April 14, 2015). Adding bike lanes will narrow the defined driving lanes, encouraging drivers to slow down to speeds that are safer for pedestrians. Striped bike lanes should have a minimum width of 5 feet for safety from parked car drivers opening doors into the bike lane.

FIGURE 25, CHANGES TO CROSS SECTION OF MAIN STREET



Examples of painted and textured crosswalks

Crosswalks

Currently, not all intersections have crosswalks, and not all crosswalks are maintained with high-visibility paint. The Township should ensure that all four corners of intersections along Main Street in the Central Segment are boldly striped with crosswalks. Alternating bands of black and white paint, green or blue-painted crosswalks, and/or raised or textured crosswalks all help to alert drivers to slow down and be on the lookout for pedestrians.

Bulb-outs

Bulb-outs are sidewalk extensions into the parking lane at intersections and sometimes at mid-block pedestrian crossing areas. Bulb-outs visually narrow the roadway and shorten crossing distances for pedestrians. Bulb-outs should be added in the 15 to 20 linear feet adjacent to intersections where on-street parking is prohibited. The only location along Main Street between Rahway and Amboy Avenues where they cannot be added is where the right-turn lane exists on westbound Main Street to northbound Amboy. Bulb-outs at Main and School Street will also help reinforce the importance of School Street as a lower-traffic connector to the riverfront park system.

Street tree pits along Main Street are far too small to allow proper growth of the Town's Callery Pear trees.

A survey of the Main Street right-of-way width needs to be conducted before these recommendations can be finalized.

Street Trees

Street trees along Main Street are callery pears (Pyrus calleryana), planted around 1996. Although 20 years old, the trees have not grown as tall as they could, and they fail to create large areas of shade. The trees are planted in tree wells that measure only about 3 feet by 3 feet.

The Township must either help the existing trees to grow larger by enlarging the tree wells (to six feet by ten feet), or plant new trees with better growing conditions. A certified arborist or landscape architect should be engaged to help determine the best approach. Trees should be planted every 30 to 50 feet.

If sidewalks lack sufficient clearance for generously-proportioned tree wells, it may be possible to expand tree planting pits into the parking lane. This works well when parking

Street tree planting pit and bicycle parking racks located in the parking lane. Note the drainage channel near the curb.

SOURCE: FEETFIRSTPHILLY.ORG

spaces on Main Street are metered and therefore designated through striping. Due to the way that cars have an overhang at front and back, a few feet may be 'borrowed' from adjacent parallel parking spaces to carve out an expanded tree well with a low curb, without taking space from the parking areas.

Main Street in the Middle Segment

The pedestrian improvements prescribed for the Middle Segment are intended to make it more uniformly attractive by regulating the type of landscaping in front yard areas, and regulating the number, type, and design of front yard signs. By enhancing the visual appeal of the Middle Segment, it will become a more pleasant environment so that people will walk the short distance from here to downtown.

Bike Lanes

In the Middle Segment, the cartway width appears to be about 44 feet, insufficient for separated bike lanes, parking lanes, and travel lanes. On the other hand, the Township should add shared lane markings ("sharrows") to encourage and protect bicycle use of the wide travel lane. Getting from the Middle Segment to downtown by bicycle should be convenient, pleasant, and safe, especially given the very short travel distance.

Crosswalks

A crosswalk should be added at the center of Main Street in the Middle Segment. While there are no cross-streets at the center of the Middle Segment, fortuitously, the large vacant parcels here, where a public park is recommended (See **Section 3A, Provide More People Places**, and ***Figure 35***), make an ideal location for a bright and high-contrast crosswalk that will improve pedestrian access to the new open space. Ideally, the crosswalk should have a pedestrian-activated signal, but it could also simply have a flashing warning to drivers to be on the lookout for pedestrians.

Street Trees

The Middle Segment is a short distance to downtown, but walking here can feel oppressive on a hot day, with few street trees to provide relief from the sun. Adding taller street trees, and providing better growing conditions for existing trees, will help shade the street here, making it more pleasant to walk downtown. There is sufficient width to add street trees in the public right-of-way, where a generous grass planting strip separates the sidewalk area from the travelled cartway. Trees should be pruned to preserve open views to business storefronts and signage.

Bulb-outs

As discussed above for the Central Segment, the Middle Segment should also have bulb-outs at all intersections, to shorten pedestrian crossing distances.

The Main Street underpass at Route 9 includes narrow sidewalks on both sides.

Below: Birmingham, Alabama engaged an artist to create lighting installations under interstate overpasses to link two districts; the lighting features have become destinations.

PHOTOS FROM REV BIRMINGHAM AND BILL FITZGIBBONS.

Another example of creative murals and lighting along a short underpass

The railroad bridge over Main Street is another opportunity area for decorative nighttime lighting

Main Street in the Outer Segment

Sidewalks

In the Outer Segment, redevelopment of the Hess properties should be contingent on (among other things) creating a wider sidewalk along the south side of Main Street.

Route 9 Underpass

An important asset in linking the Hess site to downtown for pedestrians is the fact that the underpass of Main Street below Route 9 is already sufficiently wide to accommodate a sidewalk.

This underpass may be improved to be more inviting through creative underside lighting, a colorful mural, and signage indicating that downtown Woodbridge is just one-half mile away – a 10-minute walk.

Bike Lanes

No bike lanes are proposed along Main Street in the Outer Segment, because the Route 9 Overpass is not wide enough to safely accommodate bike lanes. Experienced cyclists may, of course, ride this route under Route 9 in mixed traffic.

The **Design Guidelines** for the Hess Site (see **Section 3C**) require that pedestrian and bicycle movements be safely accommodated within the Hess properties, and provide a connection close to Main Street and Route 9. From there, experienced cyclists could make their way to the Middle Segment of Main Street, a safer cycling environment.

Amboy Avenue

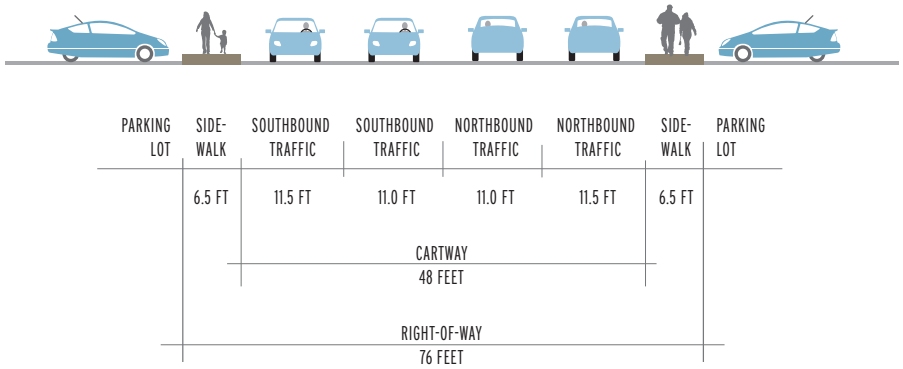
Amboy Avenue is an automobile-dominated State Route. But between New / Grove Streets and Heards Brook, it also plays a role as a western "bookend" to downtown, with restaurants, bakeries, and other commercial uses. Pedestrian safety and comfort could be greatly improved in this stretch.

Sidewalks along Amboy Avenue are particularly dangerous because there is no on-street parking to create a buffer between sidewalks and fast-moving cars. Pedestrian discomfort is aggravated by the development pattern of large parking lots and continuous curb cuts along this stretch, which reduces the potential to feel safe and sheltered on the sidewalk.

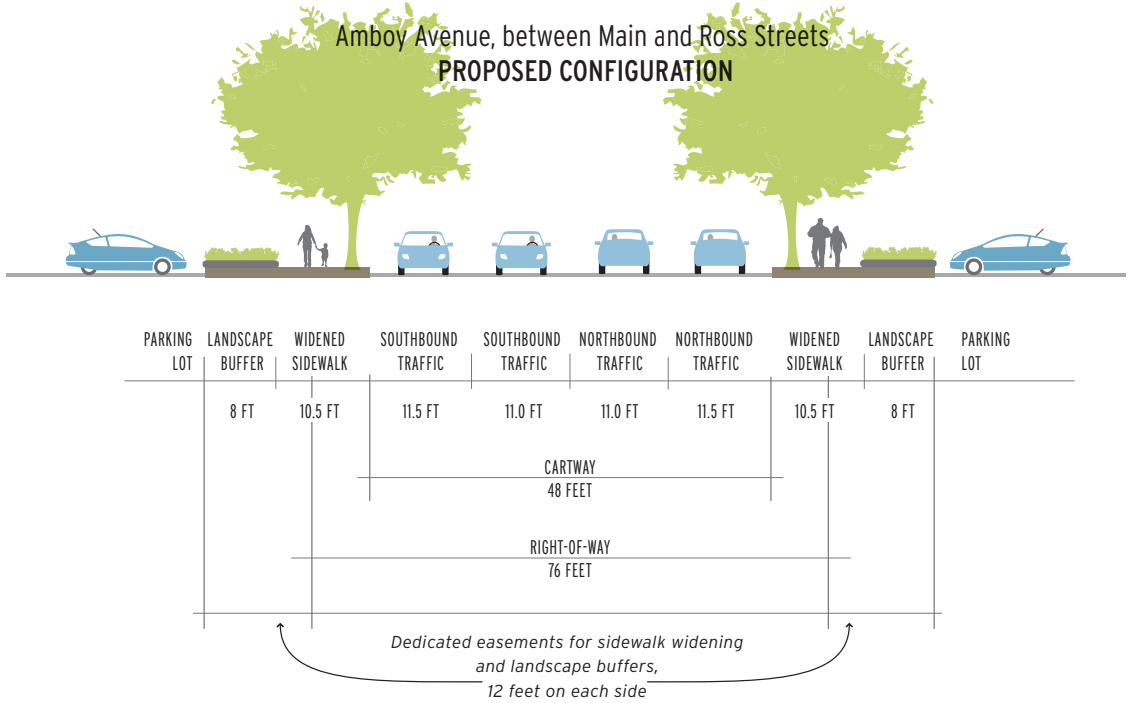
The following recommended changes could be accomplished gradually through redevelopment, and would greatly improve the street for pe-

FIGURE 26, CHANGES TO CROSS-SECTION OF AMBOY AVENUE

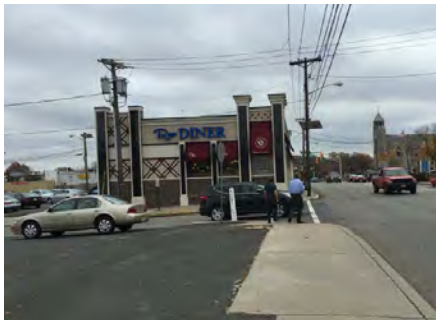
Amboy Avenue, between Main and Ross Streets
EXISTING CONFIGURATION



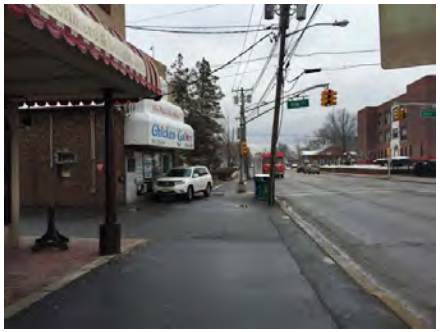
Amboy Avenue, between Main and Ross Streets
PROPOSED CONFIGURATION



Amboy Avenue existing conditions (north of Main Street)



Amboy Avenue existing conditions (south of Main Street)

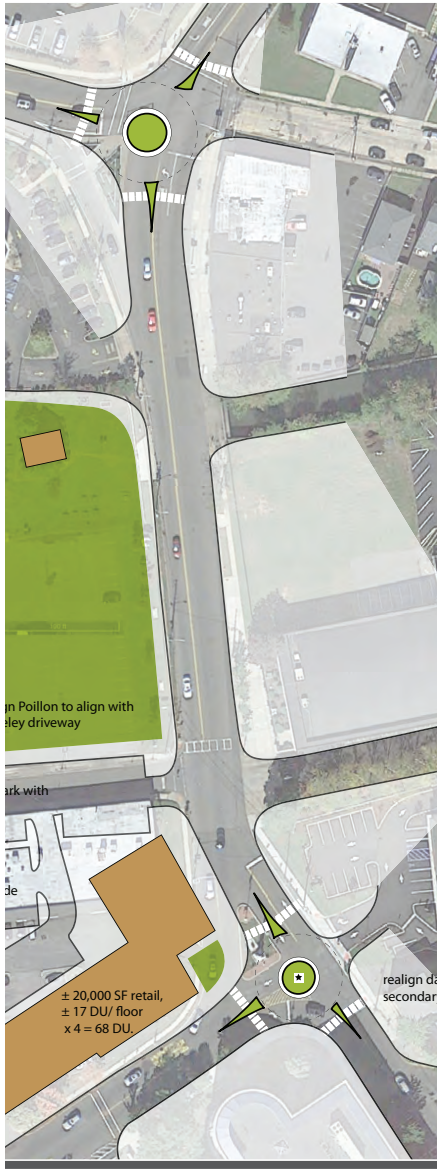


destrians, while still allowing heavy traffic volumes. ***Figure 26*** shows how these might look.

- Require that continuous curb cuts be narrowed to a maximum 20-foot width per property. Multiple curb cuts leading to the same property should be closed so that only one curb cut per street frontage exists (i.e., properties at a corner may have a second curb cut on the side street). Where possible, encourage adjacent properties to share one curb cut.
- Replace areas that contain continuous curb cuts with low walls or fences and landscaping to demarcate the sidewalk from the parking lot.
- If necessary, remove parking spaces that intrude upon the area required for walls, fences, and landscaping.
- Define a 12- to 15-foot easement on private property, adjacent to the public sidewalk on each side of Amboy Avenue, that may be used over time to effectively widen sidewalks and add landscaping.
- Plant street trees at 30 to 50 foot spacing along this section of Amboy Avenue within the front easements.
- While Amboy Avenue lacks on-street parking lanes, bulb-outs should be added where possible on side streets. This makes it easier

Statue off-center at Main and Rahway

FIGURE 27, RAHWAY TRAFFIC CALMING, PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS



Note: sidewalks are not shown in the conceptual plan above, but would be provided on all public streets.

and safer for pedestrians walking along Amboy Avenue to cross side streets.

Each of these changes is discussed more generally below, in the section **"Improve Appearance of Parking Lots and Adjoining Sidewalks."**

Rahway Avenue

Rahway Avenue is the eastern "bookend" to downtown Woodbridge. Like Amboy Avenue, it was designed to encourage fast-moving automobile traffic, and is not a pleasant environment for pedestrians. In particular, the Avenue's intersections with Green and Main Streets feature continuous right-turn lanes and large turning radii that allow cars to travel through intersections at high speeds. The sheer space occupied by these two intersections is out of character with a downtown environment.

Development envisioned and encouraged through this *Vision Plan* will add dozens or hundreds of new residents between Amboy Avenue and the train tracks. These residents, as well as other local populations such as students at Berkeley College and staff at various commercial establishments along this stretch of Rahway Avenue, are important potential patrons for downtown businesses. As such, they should be encouraged to walk downtown through more inviting streetscape designs.

Figure 27 shows suggested changes to the right-of-way for Rahway Avenue. These changes include:

- Convert the two large intersections into traffic circles with a single driving lane and a tighter intersection configuration. Traffic circles are different than older-style automobile-oriented roundabouts. Traffic circles have fairly narrow roadways that force drivers to slow down and pay attention as they merge to enter the circle.

  Figure 28 is a summary provided by the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center, an agency funded by the Federal Highway Administration, regarding the safety of traffic circles for pedestrians and cyclists. (Note that although the Administration's text refers to "roundabouts," the discussion clearly focuses on traffic circles.)
- The existing monument may be relocated to the center of the new traffic circle at Main and Rahway, allowing it to serve as the visual landmark that it was meant to be.
- When the intersection width is narrowed by conversion to a traffic circle, the entire adjacent roadway's cartway (area used by cars) may also be narrowed, and surplus land used to widen adjacent sidewalks for improved pedestrian comfort.
- Street trees should be planted at regular spacing (30 to 50 feet on center) along this portion of Rahway Avenue.
- With conversion to traffic circles, surplus public right-of-way may be given to adjacent property owners with the stipulation that upon redevelopment of the properties, new buildings be sited closer to and framing the circle, and pocket parks or hardscape plazas be created in the area closest to the circle (where for traffic safety, a minimum driver viewing distance must be preserved). See the example in ***Figures 10*** and ***11***, where a new building is oriented to address the new traffic circle at Rahway Avenue and Main Street, and a small pocket park is provided adjacent to the circle as a pedestrian amenity and to preserve a viewshed for drivers turning from southbound Rahway onto westbound Main Street.

FIGURE 28, TRAFFIC CIRCLE (ROUNDABOUT) SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

DO ROUNDABOUTS WORK FOR BICYCLES AND PEDESTRIANS?

A summary provided by the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center, an agency funded by the Federal Highway Administration

Modern roundabouts by their design require motorists to slow down typically to less than 25 mph (40 km/h), and preferably 15 mph (25 km/h) to proceed through the intersection. The literature shows that, given a properly designed single-lane roundabout, motorist and pedestrian safety is almost always improved when compared to conventional intersections. Results regarding cyclist safety are somewhat mixed. Roundabouts have fewer conflict points and lower speeds compared to conventional intersections, resulting in a significant overall reduction in the severity of crashes for all users, although the frequency of some crashes may increase. Multi-lane roundabouts present some challenges to pedestrians, thus reducing the safety effects that roundabouts provide.

As with conventional intersections, a cyclist using a roundabout can proceed either as a motor vehicle or as a pedestrian using the sidewalk and marked crosswalks. If proceeding as a motor vehicle, merging with traffic is required at the entry. This may take some skill and judgment but is not unlike traveling though a conventional intersection. Motorists must detect cyclists upon entry, circulating and exiting so as not to merge into or turn in front of them. As with complex intersections with multiple turn lanes, a multi-lane roundabout also becomes more difficult for cyclists to traverse.

The splitter islands at roundabouts allow pedestrians to cross one direction of traffic at a time. This is a significant advantage over conventional intersections. If motorists do not yield to pedestrians at the crosswalk, pedestrians must select a gap in traffic before crossing. If traffic flow is continuous, choosing a gap may become problematic. At multi-lane roundabouts, the nearside vehicle may yield to pedestrians, but traffic in the adjacent lane may not stop, exposing the crossing pedestrians to a potential crash as they proceed through the first lane into the adjacent.

People who are visually impaired must be able to detect where and when to cross, be able to stay in the crossing area, and detect and exit the crossing. Properly designed and installed curb ramps and warning devices at the sidewalk sides of the crossing and in the splitter island aligned with the crosswalks can help address detecting where to cross and exit. The alignment along with highly visible crosswalk markings can assist pedestrians in staying in the crossing. However, detecting when to cross can be a challenge, particularly for multi-lane roundabouts or roundabouts with continuous traffic flow. Studies are being done to consider devices to create a gap in traffic flow or help people with vision impairments select a gap.

In summary, single-lane roundabouts, in particular, can work well for most cyclists and pedestrians if properly designed and implemented. Lower operating speeds compared to conventional intersections reduce the overall severity of crashes that do occur. Multi-lane roundabouts that would be found on multi-lane roadways are not going to make these corridors work better for cyclists or pedestrians, but their lower operating speeds have some advantage. More work is required to ensure that people who are visually impaired can be well-accommodated at roundabouts.

Source: http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/data/faq_details.cfm?id=3454

Additional Resources

http://www.tac-atc.ca/english/resourcecentre/readingroom/conference/conf2004/docs/s20/Furtado.pdf

http://www.tfhrc.gov/safety/pedbike/pubs/05080/

http://www.tfhrc.gov/safety/00068.htm

http://www.walkinginfo.org/engineering/roadway-roundabouts.cfm

http://www.trb.org/TRBNet/ProjectDisplay.asp?ProjectID=834

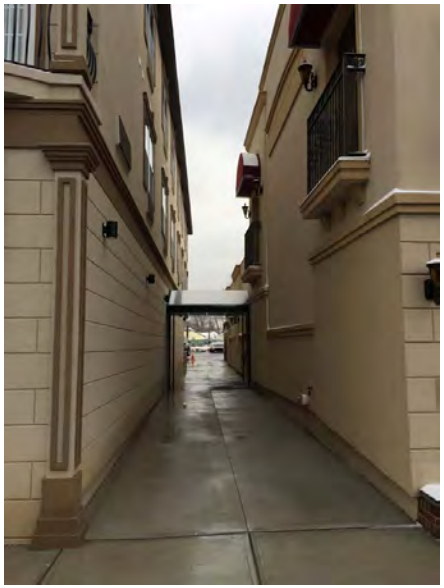
Improve Sidewalks along Main Street

There are three types of conditions along the core of Main Street where gaps make the sidewalk unattractive and uncomfortable for pedestrians: large parking lots and other "empty" lands that border sidewalks, smaller parking lots that border sidewalks, and pedestrian alleys that connect to Main Street. Strategies for each are discussed next.

Infill the Gaps in Streetwall

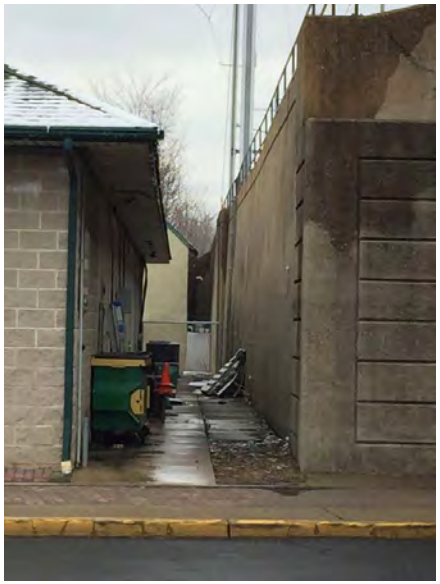
In certain spots, large parcels contain low-density, deep-setback uses that create a break in the streetwall of traditional downtown buildings, disrupting the pedestrian-scaled Main Street ambiance. Such uses are not appropriate to the core of downtown. For example, the Bank of America at Amboy Avenue is a small, single-story building with wide curb cuts, a drive-in teller booth, and a deep setback from Main Street. This and similar properties should eventually be redeveloped with new buildings that relate better to the street and that place active ground-floor uses next to sidewalks.

Existing walkways to rear parking lots could be improved with lighting, landscaping, textured paving, and signage for the rear parking.



Existing parking lots along Main Street should be infilled over time with buildings having active street-facing uses, where possible. In the short term, narrower curb cuts and driveways should be combined with low walls and landscaping to improve the appearance and function of the sidewalk frontage.

Trash and recycling areas in alleys that open onto Main Street should be screened from view with fencing or enclosures.



Existing curb cut along Main Street leads to an interior courtyard with an upholstery business.

Right, pedestrian-friendly alley in Seattle, and an interior courtyard dining area along an alley in Georgetown, Washington DC. Nighttime lighting, decorative signage and banners, outdoor seating, landscaping, and high-quality paving make the narrow spaces inviting. Another critical safety feature is the presence of retail windows and entries along the alleys. Both alleys are designed in a manner that still permits emergency vehicle access.

Wide curb cuts and driveways interrupt Main Street sidewalk at the Woodbridge Municipal Complex

Repurpose Front of Parking Lots

In other locations, a parking lot on a smaller or narrower parcel borders the Main Street sidewalk. These smaller parcels may serve adjoining buildings well, and may be too small to easily redevelop. Rather than waiting for their complete redevelopment, it may be prudent to accept the existence of the parking lots, but "dress them up" with landscaping, seating areas, outdoor dining, and low walls. For example, the front portion of the parking lot for Venezia Ristorante, adjacent to Main Street, could be transformed, as is illustrated in ***Figure 33*** and discussed in **Section 3A, Provide More People Places,** under "Encourage Outdoor Dining Areas."

Improve Alley Appearance

In many spots downtown, narrow pedestrian walkways connect areas behind buildings to Main Street sidewalks. In most cases, these walkways could be greatly improved with signage indicating they lead to rear parking areas; lighting to make them safe and inviting at night; and landscaping or other embellishments to improve their appearance.

When transformed, such alleys can help boost use of rear parking lots and increase permeability through the relatively long two central blocks of Main Street, helping improve the overall pedestrian network. Any mid-block courtyards or other open spaces can help boost the appeal of these alleys, if they gain outdoor dining areas that boost pedestrian traffic and visibility in evenings.

One related and unique condition is where a narrow driveway leads to an upholstery store along Main Street. This driveway has poor visibility to drivers coming out. If the business in this rear area could change to one that would benefit from an outdoor pedestrian space, the driveway alley could be closed to vehicular access

and transformed to a pedestrian walkway.

Here and in similar conditions, the interior courtyard could be reconfigured with outdoor dining, landscaping, and evening lighting, as a charming asset to a restaurant in the same or adjacent parcel. The Township could bring about this transformation proactively, perhaps through ordinance, or wait for a change in business or redevelopment to require the change.

Improve Appearance of Parking Lots and Adjoining Sidewalks

Narrow Existing Curb Cuts

Large, continuous curb cuts exist along much of the length of surface parking lots in the Central Segment. Such curb cuts make it easy for drivers to enter or exit a parking lot at high speeds and with wide turns, endangering pedestrians. They also interrupt the sidewalk, creating an unattractive and unappealing walking environment that discourages pedestrians. To remedy this, curb cuts should be narrowed to the minimum possible for safe circulation: typically 10 feet for one-way traffic, or 20 feet for two-way traffic. Where narrowed, the curb cut should be replaced with a standard curb at the outer edge of the sidewalk that prevents vehicular entry.

One location where this conversion is recommended is along New Street and North James Street, the streets "behind" Main Street in the Central Segment. Here, curb cuts are so wide and frequent that it sometimes feels that the streets lack sidewalks. Curb cuts should be closed so that only one curb cut of maximum 20-foot width is permitted for each property's parking lot. Figure 29 shows how the length of curb cuts along New Street could be reduced by adding landscaped islands and low walls.

Example of a brick-textured crosswalk across a parking garage driveway entrance in Annapolis, Maryland. The textured surface also serves as an ADA-required detectable warning to visually-impaired pedestrians.

SOURCE: DONA SAUERBURGER, ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY SPECIALIST, WWW.SAUERBURGER.ORG

Textured Crosswalks at Curb Cuts

Install brick or other textured material where curb cuts cross the concrete sidewalk to alert drivers to the pedestrian zone.

Add Buffers between Parking Areas and the Public Sidewalk

In many locations downtown, surface parking lots extend right to the back of the sidewalk, making an unattractive walking environment. With no wall, planting bed, or other buffer between the parking lot and the

Narrow asphalt sidewalks along New Street are easily obstructed by trash containers.

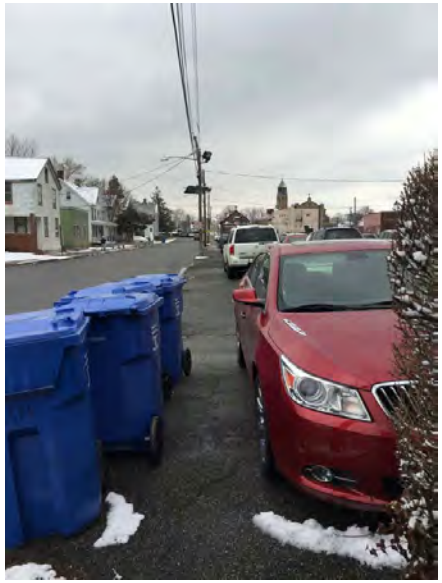
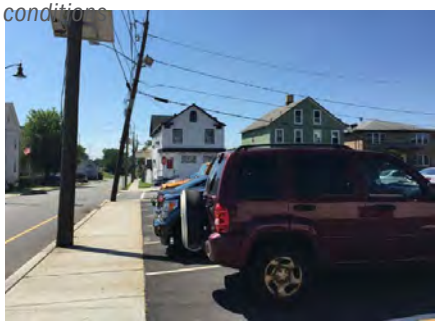


FIGURE 29, PARKING LOT IMPROVEMENTS, NORTH SIDE OF NEW STREET

Fulton Street parking lot frontage (between Main and New Street), existing conditions



The parking lot at Fulton and Main Streets has a very wide central drive aisle, which could be narrowed to create space for a wall along the Fulton Street sidewalk

Parking lot with perimeter wall along sidewalk

FIGURE 30, IMPROVED PARKING LOT FRONTAGE ALONG FULTON STREET

Above, a photo-rendering of the Fulton Street parking lot, amended with low wall and landscaping along frontage

Example of wrought iron fence and landscaping between a parking lot and the sidewalk

sidewalk, some parked cars even hang over into the sidewalk.

In these situations, low walls and/or plantings should be added to provide a buffer to sidewalks.

Parking lot boundaries with the public sidewalk should be defined and enhanced in one of several ways:

Low Walls

Install within private property a low stone or masonry wall. Optionally, also include landscaping on the sidewalk-facing side of wall, or atop the wall. See ***Figure 30*** for an example of a low wall installed in a parking lot along Fulton Street. In this parking lot, the central drive aisle is wider than required, and space there could be shifted to the side to make room for the new wall and/or landscaping.

Low Fences

Where space precludes a wall, a low fence may be acceptable and sufficient. Attractive designs that are appropriate to the particular block, such as wrought iron fencing along Main Street or white picket fences along residential streets, should be used; chain-link fencing should be discouraged.

Examples of rain gardens in an urban sidewalk or parking lot environment

Washington, DC

San Francisco, California

Rain Gardens

A rain garden is a depressed (below the grade of the surrounding paved areas) planting bed or swale that intercepts runoff from a street, sidewalk, plaza, yard, or parking lot. Rain gardens contains numerous plants that withstand periodic soaking and drying, and help clean polluted runoff and return water to the ground.

Portland, Oregon

Parking lot rain garden with breaks in the curbing to allow runoff to enter

Vancouver, British Columbia

Ann Arbor, Michigan

Gaps in sidewalk near Heards Brook

North Park Drive along Heards Brook

Where car traffic may damage gardens, low masonry walls should be included to protect plants from cars, but walls must be perforated or have gaps in order to allow runoff to flow into the rain garden.

Rain gardens are one strategy in the larger movement of "Green Streets" that seeks to reduce urban runoff, help protect water quality in waterways, provide shade to reduce the urban heat island effect, and green our environment. Other strategies include permeable pavement and tree planters to help filter, cleanse, and infiltrate polluted urban runoff.

Rain gardens are wonderful edge buffers to parking lots, but they must be carefully planted to be hardy, able to tolerate de-icing salts, and maintained regularly.

Add Sidewalks between Parking Areas and Buildings

For many buildings along Main Street in the Central Segment, parking spaces in rear lots are maximized to the extent that every square inch of space is given over to cars. Pedestrians must thread their way around parked cars to reach rear store entries. To make a safer pedestrian environment, a continuous and connected sidewalk should be added along the rear of the parking lots in this area, bordering the retail buildings (refer back to ***Figure 29***). This will make it safer and easier for patrons to walk from one store to another, without –particularly valuable for adults pushing small children in strollers, and wheelchair users.

To help pay for these improvements for existing properties, the Township could offer matching grants. When a property changes ownership or undergoes a major renovation, the Township could simply require these improvements. Of course, with wholesale redevelopment or infill of a property, surface parking areas may be converted to a building and/ or structured parking, obviating the need for the walls and landscaping.

Section 3C, Design Guidelines, provides more design requirements for screening and improving parking areas.

Improve Pedestrian Access to Heards Brook

Convenient pedestrian access to the Heards Brook open space corridor in the Central Segment is limited due to the street and lot configuration:

- Between School and Pearl Streets, the Brook is largely hidden behind adjoining uses (the Fire Station on Brook Street and the Township tennis courts/ recreation area on East Park Avenue).
- Between School Street and Amboy Avenue, North Park Drive and South Park Drive border public open space of the Brook. Here, improving the pedestrian access is more feasible.

North Park Drive

North Park Drive provides a quiet, shady respite from the busy traffic and parking lots of Main Street and surrounding areas. However, between School Street and Amboy Avenue, North Park Drive lacks sidewalks. At most times, this is not a problem, for the street has very little traffic, and walking in the middle or side the street is generally safe. However, for families with young children, a street with a possibility of the occasional car means a parent must always keep watch, and children cannot be totally free to run or bike in the street.

One option to improve pedestrian access to the Heards Brook open space is to add sidewalks along North Park Drive. In order to not dis-

turb the mature, tall trees along this road, the sidewalk could be built to the north of the treeline, within the park area.

On the other hand, North Park Drive is itself a beautiful space, lined with a tall canopy of mature trees, and pedestrians like to walk right down the middle of it. Therefore, a broader solution is to close off the street to traffic, and allow the entire street to serve as a pedestrian space. This concept is discussed later in **Section 3A, Provide More People Places.**

South Park Drive

South Park Drive is not continuous; it extends into the middle of the block from Amboy and School Streets about 150 to 200 feet, respectively. The segment extending from Amboy Avenue is located within the Heards Brook open space parcel (as may be seen in the Land Use Diagram for the area, in the **Appendix**), not within the Ross School parcel. The road is interrupted by a gated area used by the Ross School. The school and/or school board park maintenance vehicles here, and no doubt the gate helps with school security

At the Amboy end, South Park Drive only has a sidewalk on the south side, where it borders the former church / veterinary clinic. At the School Street end, South Park Drive only has a sidewalk on the north side, bordering Heards Brook. To improve pedestrian connectivity in this area, South Park Drive's sidewalk should be extended through the length of this block, at least on the Heards Brook side of the road, if not both. This will have to be coordinated with school operations and safety. Perhaps after school hours, and on weekends, the sidewalk could be opened up to the public.

Brook Street

On Brook Street, the sidewalk only extends about 100 feet west of Pearl Street. Brook Street's north side lacks a sidewalk. A sidewalk should be added here as a matter of course, and will help improve visibility of Heards Brook.

Section 2B, Improve Access to and from Train, discusses Brook Street as well.

South Park Drive at Amboy Avenue

South Park Drive at School Street

Street trees help visually narrow the right-of-way on a main street in Natick, Mass.

Street trees create a shady canopy on a main street in West Chester, Penn. Corner bulb-outs help narrow the roadway, shorten pedestrian crossing distances, and slow cars.

Improve Streetscape

To encourage walking from the Outer and Middle Segments to the Central Segment, and between Main Street and the riverfront park system, the appearance of sidewalks throughout downtown must be greatly improved. This will also benefit residents of downtown and adjacent neighborhoods, encouraging them to walk to Main Street for some uses rather than driving elsewhere, and will encourage patrons stopping on Main Street for one purpose to linger and walk about to explore other businesses or destinations downtown.

The following suggestions will help improve all downtown streets.

Street Trees

The existing street trees on Main Street are a species of pear tree. Although over 20 years old, they have not grown to a sufficient height to complement the built environment of Main Street. Whether this is due to the selection of a species, improper planting technique, or poor maintenance, these trees are not much of an asset to downtown.

Street trees along Main Street should be replaced with a species that will create a tall canopy arching over Main Street. This will provide a visual cue to drivers that they are in a traditional, older, downtown environment, where they should slow down. Trees also provide important and pleasant shade on hot summer days, making Main Street more enticing for pedestrians, and reducing glare and heat into storefronts.

New street trees should be planted with generous tree pit dimensions, to ensure their growth, and maintained and pruned to ensure the correct branching pattern. An arborist and landscape architect should supervise the design, selection, and installation of new street trees through a unified planting plan for downtown.

Properly selected and pruned street trees will not block views of storefront windows and facade signage, a common concern of retail owners. In the Middle Segment, street trees may also be trained and pruned to be tall enough to establish a tall-branching pattern that preserves views into open lawn areas and the monument signage upon which the residential-conversion buildings in this area depend.

Street Lights

Upgrade broken and missing streetlights.

Benches

Most benches along Main Street are placed right next to parked cars, and face traffic. Instead, benches should be rotated inwards, so sitters may watch pedestrians rather than cars. Better yet, they should be moved further away from traffic by placing them adjacent to buildings and facing outwards. A bench location at the back of sidewalk, so that one may sit with one's back facing a building, is more comfortable in terms of personal space and breathing room.

Add new benches where bulb-outs or new plazas (see earlier) provide space.

Weeds and Maintenance

Use code enforcement powers to require property owners to pull weeds from sidewalks.

Broken streetlights along Main Street in Woodbridge

Benches facing traffic and located very close to the roadway on Main Street

Weeds in sidewalks

View of Main Street from station walkway, with Quick Chek visible across street

A portion of the station walkway passes between blank walls on both sides

2B. IMPROVE ACCESS TO AND FROM TRAIN

Challenges with Current Configuration

The New Jersey Transit commuter rail station in Woodbridge is an incredible asset to the downtown, but is not playing as big role as it could. For a first-time visitor getting off the train, the signage to downtown is poor, and stepping off the train in any location gives no visual cues that one is just a block or less from a downtown shopping street. For example, from the end of the station walkway at Main Street, the Quick Chek parking lot is one of the most prominent sites. The direct pedestrian connection from the train station to Parker Press Park has promise, but one does not find anything suggesting a proximity to downtown here in the Park – instead, one finds a quiet park and a large parking lot, flanked by the rear service facades of a few large shopping centers.

The fact that the train tracks are surrounded by parking lots or nearly-vacant land on all sides makes it much less inviting to find one's way to Main Street. The walkway on the east side of the train tracks, while attractively paved, can feel desolate and isolated, with no adjoining active uses, such as restaurants, to provide "eyes on the street" for safety. On dark winter afternoons and on early evenings, its isolated character may discourage commuters returning to Woodbridge to walk downtown first (before getting in one's car) for a drink or bite to eat before heading home.

The Potential of Pearl Street

Pearl Street should be an important walking route between the New Jersey Transit train station and the downtown retail core of Main Street. Pearl Street is more open and thus probably perceived as safer than the pedestrian pathway on the east side of the tracks. However, it is not engaging or interesting, due to the parking lots and vacant and low-intensity buildings lining both sides. Pearl Street offers much potential

Pearl Street looking south from the train station entrance area.

for creating an alternate, more visible and interesting walking route between Downtown's Main Street and the train station, particularly since it also links to Heards Brook Park. A rendering of how Pearl Street's streetscape could be transformed is shown in ***Figure 31***.

New Development

New, higher-intensity development on the west side of Pearl Street will help create a more interesting walking environment. Retail uses oriented to serve train riders, such as a coffee shop, a dry cleaners, and a wine shop would be useful here, although there may not be sufficient drive-by traffic to support such retail. However, such uses might do very well right around the corner on Main Street, leaving the primary recommended land use on Pearl Street to be residential apartments that create foot traffic on Pearl Street. An independent restaurant that relies primarily on word-of-mouth rather than drive-by traffic might do well here too, and would help provide the type of activity and visibility in evenings that helps make the area feel safe. ***Figure 6*** and ***Figure 7*** in **Chapter 1** showed examples of infill development along Pearl Street that orients to the street making it more inviting.

Pearl Street today, looking north, just above Main Street

SOURCE: GOOGLE STREETVIEW

FIGURE 31, PEARL STREET, PROPOSED STREETSCAPE CONDITIONS

Below: Pearl Street looking north, just above Main Street, showing widened sidewalks, new street trees, and on-street parking. New development is shown in the background (on the west side of Pearl between Brook and North James Street)

Widened Sidewalks

The existing sidewalks on Pearl Street, north of Main Street, are narrow, approximately 6 to 8 feet wide, including an intermittent grass planting strip on the west side. In order to make Pearl Street serve as an inviting connecting route between the train station and Main Street shops and restaurants, the sidewalk environment needs to be greatly improved, as follows:

- Sidewalks on both sides of Pearl Street between Brook and Main should be widened (through easements into adjoining properties) to create a planting strip area for street trees.
- Decorative brick paving may be used in the planting strip.
- On the east side of Pearl Street, remove the single lane of parallel parking closest to the street in the NJ Transit parking lot, and use the space to expand the sidewalk and add street trees. Similarly, the landscaped strip along the parking lot of the Absolute Eyewear store (at the northeast corner of Main and Pearl) can be used to create a matching wider sidewalk.
- On the west side of Pearl Street, between Brook and Main Streets, require that new development or major renovations provide a five (5) foot easement to be used for sidewalk expansion and street tree planting.

On-Street Parking

Pearl Street's approximately 30-foot cartway can accommodate one lane of traffic in each direction and one lane of on-street parking on one side of the street. The single parking lane should be created on the west side, where it may provide convenient short-term parking for new mixed-use retail buildings on the west side. New development on the west side of Pearl Street should be prohibited from placing any curb cuts on Pearl, so as to maximize the amount of on-street parking possible.

Trees

Street trees should be planted at 30 to 50 feet on center along both sides of Pearl Street. Trees provide shade in summer, and even in winter their height and shape help frame the street, making the street feel more comfortable for pedestrians.

The Potential of Poillon Street

The connection to the train station from lands east of the tracks is not inviting to pedestrians. Main Street east of the tracks is dominated by parking lots, curb cuts, and fast-moving traffic. Poillon Street links to a station entrance, but passes between the back of a shopping center and the Parker Press Park, which is fenced off from Poillon Street.

Redevelopment of the shopping center at Main / Rahway offers potential to make both Poillon and Main Streets into more inviting pedestrian streets. As shown in the examples in **Chapter 1** (***Figure 10*** and ***Figure 11***), new development in this site should place active uses (retail businesses and residential entries) along Main Street, and should help open up the space along Poillon Street to feel less like a canyon or chute, and more like a pleasant route.

Poillon Street today is lined with blank walls, fences, and trash and recycling bins. Photos below look towards the station (top and bottom left) and from the station westwards (bottom right).

The Potential of Brook Street

Brook Street provides a connection from the train station to areas to the west. Unlike North James Street, which provides parking access to rear lots, Brook Street could become a truly lovely street. Looking west, the visual terminus of Brook Street is a handsome old school building now used as the offices of the Woodbridge School Board. The eastern-most portion of Brook Street fronts the Heards Brook open space.

Brook Street, looking west from near the train station. The School Board administration building serves as a focal point to the west end of Brook Street, and can be seen from the NJ Transit parking lot just north of the main train station building.

The train station entrance and parking lot along Pearl Street

Today, a sidewalk exists only on the south side of Brook Street. If its streetscape could be transformed with generous sidewalks and leafy street trees, Brook Street could become a pleasant walking route between the train station and points west.

Brook Street today has large, newer institutional buildings on two sides: Stern Towers senior housing on the south side, and the Fire Department on the north side. In tandem with a new streetscape, the uses in both buildings could be relocated, and the buildings replaced with new development that creates a more street-friendly presence and more pedestrian activity. This in turn will reinforce the focal point of the School Administration building.

New residential uses on the north side of Brook Street could also benefit from proximity to the adjacent open space corridor, and should be designed to relate to the Heards Brook with windows, doors, and a pedestrian walkway at the ground level.

For optimum pedestrian safety, Brook Street should remain a vehicular street with generous sidewalks on both sides. This ensures activity and accessibility. However, if siting new development requires closing the street to traffic, a generous pedestrian right-of-way should be preserved, and active uses should line Brook Street.

Station Area Improvements

Other measures should focus on the station and its parking lots. Small changes here will help improve options for getting to the train without a car, and to encourage riders to visit Main Street after work. They include:

- Provide more centralized, sheltered bicycle parking at a convenient location at the station, in order to increase biking's mode share for access to train.
- Improve train station parking lots with landscaping and better signage indicating hours of use and alternate evening /weekend use.
- Improve lighting and visibility along the station-area walkway on the east side of the tracks for optimal nighttime safety.
- Provide frequent programming to draw more people to use adjoining public parks, which in turn will strengthen the community links to the station.

2C. IMPROVE PUBLIC SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING

Much can be done to attract more visitors downtown by car and to encourage pedestrians to find their way downtown on foot or by bicycle; and once downtown, to explore more.

Welcome Signs

The Township should install entry monument signs in the Outer Segment, where regional roads link to Main Street, with a simple message such as "Welcome to Woodbridge! Downtown This Way"

A welcome message could be painted on or affixed to the Route 9 overpass over Main Street.

Street Signs

For drivers not completely familiar with downtown Woodbridge, the existing short "milestone" style street signs now in use at corners of Main Street in the Central Segment are extremely difficult to read, especially when driving in a car and trying to look out for all the normal obstacles on the road. These signs should be replaced or supplemented with more conventional street signs that are clearly visible to drivers from the middle of Main Street. New signs should utilize reflective lettering, high contrast colors, and large types sizes so as to be readable at 25 miles per hour.

Destination Signs

Downtown Woodbridge needs better destination signs. The current destination signs are dark maroon with small yellow carved lettering. Their small size and dense content are designed for pedestrians, and their colors and typeface suggests a historic district, rather than the contemporary downtown of Woodbridge. On the other hand, they are placed close to roadways, as if drivers are expected to be able to read their small print. Destination signs for drivers need to have concise, simple content, with bold graphics and large arrows.

Signage and visual cues to the Woodbridge Municipal Complex could also be improved. Currently, when viewed head-on from Main Street, the "Municipal Complex" monument sign cannot be seen. Instead, the only clear sign is the

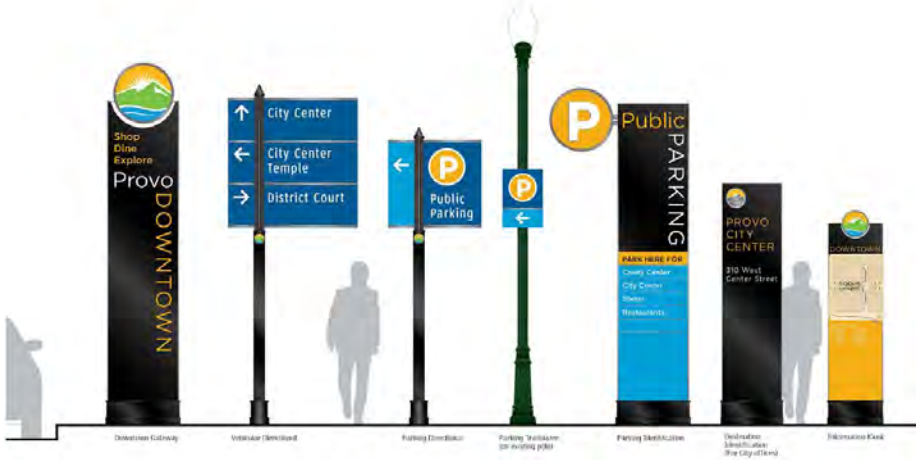
Existing low wooden street signs

Existing destination sign on Main Street

Examples of easier to read destination signs. These are still difficult for drivers to read if speeding, which is why traffic calming must work in tandem with signage changes downtown.

Sample downtown signs with maps, geared towards pedestrians, not drivers

Downtown signage should be planned as a unified system with different scales and formats for pedestrians and drivers, and for identity, destinations, and wayfinding.



Sample destination sign from the San Francisco Botanical Garden. The text is large enough to be readable by drivers from a distance, and a simple symbol and color coding at top tie the sign into the larger signage system for this Garden.

A walking distance sign, designed to inspire more people to consider walking a viable option for shorter trips.

word "POLICE" in larger letters on the building facade. It could be more clear that this building is in fact the town hall. Better pedestrian-scaled signage along the sidewalk would help announce this important building.

Walking Routes

Signage promoting the riverfront walkway system should be installed. Such signage may tie the riverfront route to downtown and the train station as a 1-mile looped recreational trail (refer back to ***Figure 23***).

Walking Distance Signs

New signage should be installed within the future Hess redevelopment, on Main Street adjacent to Hess, and mid-way along the Middle Segment, announcing the proximity to downtown (only 0.75, 0.5, and 0.25 miles, respectively). is an example of a simple signage campaign by a pedestrian safety group. These types of signs are posted throughout a downtown or neighborhood area to encourage walking by helping pedestrians realize how close certain popular destinations are on foot.

3. Strengthen Woodbridge's Sense of Place

The goal of the strategies in this Chapter is to protect and strengthen the physical (built and natural) environment of Woodbridge to create a stronger "sense of place." This may be accomplished through creating more parks, plazas, and other spaces for gathering, relaxing, and people watching; defining what makes Woodbridge unique so as to protect and enhance it; and ensuring that new development enhances the pedestrian environment through design guidelines.

3A. PROVIDE MORE PEOPLE PLACES

The strategies in this section are aimed at creating more outdoor open spaces downtown such as pocket parks and plazas, as well as larger parks ouside the downtown. Having more public open spaces will encourage people to sit, linger, people-watch, and generally spend more time downtown. Quality (of design and siting) matters much more than quantity (size), and this section provides guidelines for ensuring high-quality public spaces.

Create New Pocket Parks and Plazas

In the Central Segment, the stretch of Main Street from the train tracks to Amboy Avenue–the core of downtown–is only 0.25 mile long. Nonetheless, walking here can feel a bit unfriendly because there are no places outside to pause, sit, and rest. Except for a bit of landscaping around the Post Office and the United Methodist Church, all the land is either sidewalks, buildings, or parking lots. The following suggestions will help add meaningful plazas and pocket parks, with seating, landscaping, and shade. Woodbridge should also allow and encourage outdoor seating and dining on sidewalks and in parking lots. Taken together, these small spaces will help make Main Street a softer, more comfortable, welcoming and livable environment.

Build Mini Plazas in Public Right of Way

Along Main and School Streets, the addition of bulb-outs (as explained in **Section 2A, Improve Pedestrian Safety and Comfort**) will create more public space for landscaping and seating. The corner of Main and School is the perfect location for such amenities, being at the center of the downtown retail blocks. As a reference, ***Figure 32***, taken from the *Access to the Arts* study shows how the streetscape along the short central stretch of Main Street between School and North Williams Streets could be transformed with bulb-outs, landscaping, seating and outdoor dining, and textured paving on the sidewalk and crosswalks. Extending the landscaping theme north up School Street will also help draw

Existing conditions at School and Main Streets

FIGURE 32, POTENTIAL CHANGES TO SCHOOL STREET AT MAIN

IMAGE COURTESY ACCESS TO THE ARTS STUDY

pedestrians to the Heards Brook riverfront park area, and could be combined with a planned and signed recreational trail loop through downtown.

Encourage Conversion of On-Street Parking Spaces to Parklets

Although parking is an important resource downtown, there are a few situations in which a parking space being converted to seating or a mini park would be more of an asset.

On Main Street, a dining or food business should be permitted to apply to convert one or two of the on-street parking spaces in front of its storefront to a "parklet" with outdoor seating and landscaping. This is a new trend in streetscaping, and is being pursued in places such as New York City, San Francisco, and Cambridge, Massachusetts.

A cafe or restaurant for which the majority of customers arrive on foot or bike rather than by car can benefit from a front parklet area. It is particularly useful when the sidewalk width is too cramped to allow more than a couple of outdoor seats. The presence of an unusual parklet in a parking space also signals to the world that this is an innovative and popular business, and can be great advertising point for the food and conviviality within.

Importantly, a parklet created from an on-street parking space must remain available for use to the general public, without requiring a purchase from the sponsoring restaurant or cafe. Otherwise, it risks being a privatization of public space.

Encourage Outdoor Dining Areas

In the Public Sidewalk

Along Main Street in the Central Segment, outdoor dining within the sidewalk right-of-way should be allowed and encouraged for restaurants and cafes, provided that adequate sidewalk clearance can be maintained for pedestrians (including strollers and wheelchairs) to pass safely. As shown in ***Figure 32***, only about four (4) feet of width is needed for a small table and two chairs. But in many areas of Main Street, accommodating larger tables may need to wait until old structures are replaced through redevelopment with new buildings that are set back from the public right-of-way to define new, deeper seating areas.

Permitting for such outdoor dining uses should be streamlined. Having outdoor dining signals, in a very visible way, that downtown is a place to see and be seen.

Some businesses that are located around the corner from Main Street, such as La Bonbonnière's Cookie Jar, should be encouraged to relocate to or open additional locations in storefront spaces in one of the central blocks of Main Street. In a larger space, the Cookie Jar business might be able to expand to include interior seating (right now, it is takeout only), and then in good weather it could also provide a few tables and chairs on the sidewalk. Restaurants in the shopping center east of the tracks could relocate or open additional locations on the central two blocks, bringing more foot traffic and outdoor dining areas to this core area.

Example of outdoor dining area in a parking lot

In Off-Street Parking Areas

Parking spaces in private parking lots belonging to a specific business should be permitted to be replaced with outdoor dining areas in decorative plazas with lighting, outdoor climate control such as umbrellas and heat lamps, and landscaping.

One of the best showcase locations for this idea along Main Street is the parking lot for Ristorante Venezia, which extends from the rear of the lot all the way to the Main Street frontage. The parking lot is approximately 39 feet in width (measured parallel to the sidewalk). Converting the first 30 to 40 feet of this space to a dining area (as illustrated in ***Figure 33***) would only remove three to four parking spaces, but would greatly help to reinforce the streetwall along Main Street, and also serve as outdoor advertising (in the form of seating and landscaping) for the restaurant's food. Outdoor dining spaces created in this manner, on private parking lots, do not need to be made available to the general public, but can be restricted to customers of the sponsoring business. However, as a friendly gesture, the front of the din-

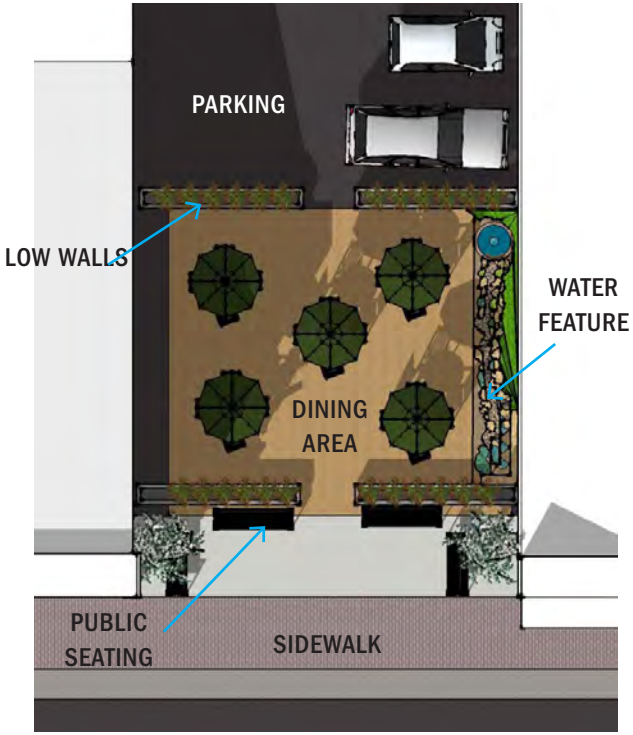
New parklets in parking lanes on main streets (Visalia and San Francisco, California)

FIGURE 33, FRONT OF PARKING LOT CONVERTED TO OUTDOOR DINING

The perspective rendering and top-view plan show the front 40 feet of Ristorante Venezia's parking lot converted to an outdoor dining and area. An 8-foot strip closest to the Main Street sidewalk has benches for cafe patrons or the general public, accented with flowering trees and decorative concrete paving. The rear has sit-down dining tables, a water feature that helps mask traffic noises from Main Street, and a gravel surface. The front and rear of the converted area are flanked by low, landscaped planter walls.

Existing conditions

Existing conditions, view from Main Street



With proposed changes, view from Main Street

ing area could include seating for the public, as shown in the rendering.

Create New Open Spaces through Redevelopment

Required (or Tied to Height Bonus) on Sites over 40,000 SF

New development on parcels over 40,000 square feet (SF) should be required to provide one or more public open spaces (such as a pocket park or a hardscape plaza) in highly-visible, publicly-accessible areas. **Section 3C, Design Guidelines**, provides suggested higher development size thresholds that would trigger an open space requirement.

For projects with land area smaller than 40,000 square feet (SF), the Township could award a bonus of additional building height (one story where permitted; refer back to ***Figure 5***) if a developer provides open open space in a manner that meet the **Design Guidelines** of **Section 3C**.

In either case, such a requirement would apply to site plan areas such as those illustrated in **Chapter 1** for the senior housing and shopping center sites.

An example of small but effective public open spaces is the concept for redevelopment of the shopping center site between the tracks and Rahway Ave (***Figures 13*** and ***14***). Here, a new mixed-use or all-residential building should be required to provide street-facing open spaces for public use in several areas:

- At the southwest end of the parcel, adjacent to the train tracks and station walkway. An open space here will also preserve the existing triangular "view shed" toward the station walkway, helping to keep it open and thus safer.
- At the southeast end of the site, bordering Rahway Avenue and Main Street, adjacent to a suggested traffic circle.
- Along Poillon Street, complementing Parker Press Park and signalling to pedestrians along Rahway Avenue that the train station entrance is here.

For detailed standards for such open space, see **Section 3C, Design Guidelines**.

The existing shopping center site has some landscaped areas, but does not include many useable pedestrian features such as a plaza or seating.

Below, a spacious front plaza with outdoor seating in the front setback of a renovated supermarket in the Rockridge neighborhood of Oakland, California. The street-facing pedestrian entrance is shown here; the supermarket also has a rear entrance and a garage entrance. This plaza increases pedestrian activity in front of this large building and helps visually links the business to the adjacent public sidewalk.

New and Improved Neighborhood Parks

Heards Brook Open Space

This attractive brook-side open space can be an even greater asset to Woodbridge. North and South Park Drive (between Amboy Avenue and School Street) could be closed to traffic on weekends. North Park Drive in this area could eventually be closed every day. The closures would create a significant open space amenity for Woodbridge, whose linear nature would lend itself well to casual strolling, biking, roller blading, winter cross-country skiing, and/or use by young children (with attention to possible bicycle-pedestrian conflicts).

North Park Drive between Amboy and School

North Park Drive should be closed to motorized traffic on weekends on a trial basis. If successful, it should eventually be closed to traffic every day.

South Park Drive between Amboy and School

South Park Drive fronts directly onto the Heards Brook riverfront, in the two blocks on either side of Amboy Avenue. East of Amboy Avenue, the majority of South Park Drive (east of Woodbridge Veterinary Group) is gated and closed to traffic on school days, for safety at the Ross Elementary School.

On South Park Drive, existing vehicular access points (primarily serving the Veterinary Group and school buses) could be relocated to Ross Street, so that the entire stretch of South Park Drive from Amboy to School Street may be permanently closed to motorized traffic.

A Phased Approach

The full closure of North Park Drive to traffic between Amboy and School Street could be done in phases. First, weekend-only closures could be done on a pilot basis. If successful, the closures could be expanded

The street network around Heards Brook

to every day. In the recommended segments, North Park Drive does not ever have significant vehicular traffic.

This phased approach to the road closure has been increasingly popular and successful in park spaces across the country, such as Prospect and Central Parks in New York City, and the riverside Memorial Drive in Cambridge, Massachusetts. In Prospect Park, for example, the closure of major streets through the park to cars began as a weekend pilot, expanded to weekdays except for the afternoon rush hour, and was most recently expanded to a full-time, permanent closure.

Emergency Vehicle Access

Emergency vehicle access to both streets and Heards Brook Park may typically have higher undercarriages. Another solution is to combine a low gate with highly-textured paving – such as cobblestones – installed only in the first 20 to 40 feet of the closed roadway. This helps to slow down any vehicle that does enter the space.

Moveable bollards used to close off a street to routine traffic, while allowing emergency vehicles to lower the bollards if necessary.

Wayfinding

Over time, the riverfront park space may be better linked – physically and visually – to all of downtown through wayfinding signage markers directing people along a recreational loop route to the riverfront parks.

Adjoining Uses

Businesses that border the Heards Brook park (such as the Dunkin Donuts on Amboy Ave) should be encouraged to offer seating next to their property in the park, provided they maintain and clean it. This will help provide more pedestrian activity and vitality in the park.

Character for Each Segment

The existing asphalt roadways on North and South Park Drive could be upgraded with decorative, textured edging. The center portion of the roadway should be preserved as smooth asphalt, for the benefit of cyclists, roller bladers and the like, rather than using cobblestones or other textured paving.

It may be desirable to diversify each side's riverfront park area to play a certain role. For example, one side could have moveable outdoor seating, and one side could have outdoor barbecue areas to encourage picnicking. Landscaping and lighting could also vary in each segment.

For example, the Brooklyn Bridge Park in New York City, while of course a completely different scale

A decorative border to a pedestrian path

A variety of open spaces along a linear waterfront park (Brooklyn Bridge Park)

Existing channelized Heards Brook, in a section with chain link fences

A landscaped concrete stream channel

A more bucolic section of Heards Brook channel in autumn. The trees add much to the character.

and budget than Woodbridge might expect, gives a great example of different design approaches in different stretches.

Stream Channel Naturalization

As a long-term goal, the concrete channel of Heards Brook should be converted back to a natural stream bed. The photo of the Brook in autumn gives a hint of what a naturalized stream bed could look like: the concrete channel is largely covered by fallen leaves, and looks more like a natural stream. The naturalization concept was introduced in the Woodbridge Rahway *Access to the Arts* study. ***Figure 34*** shows an example from a proposed "daylighting' of the Saw Mill River (rendering by Saratoga Associates).

Alternately, the concrete channel could be "dressed up" with strategically-placed stones, boulders, and landscaping, as shown in the example of ***Figure 34***.

Adding trees for shade along Heards Brook will greatly improve the character and aesthetics, and helps to keep summer water temperatures cool, to the benefit of riparian and aquatic life.

FIGURE 34, EXAMPLE OF NATURALIZATION OF STREAM CORRIDOR

RENDERING OF SAW MILL RIVER BY SARATOGA ASSOCIATES

Parker Press Park

The parking lot in Parker Press Park blocks views of the park from Rahway Avenue. Its location is not very convenient for downtown shoppers, being far from Main Street and located between two shopping center developments. Relocating and reorienting this parking lot to an expanded Poillon Road in the form of a double-loaded bay of parking perpendicular to the park (as was shown in ***Figure 14***) will move it somewhat closer to downtown. It will also make it easier for people to cut under the train tracks to reach the area west of the train tracks. The former parking lot area may be turned back into park green space, improving the visibility of the park from Rahway Ave.

This is somewhat different than the recommendation made in the *Access to the Arts* Study, which is shown in ***Figure 35***. That study recommended a new building within Parker Press Park, but it may cut off visibility and access to the park from Rahway Avenue just as the current parking lot does.

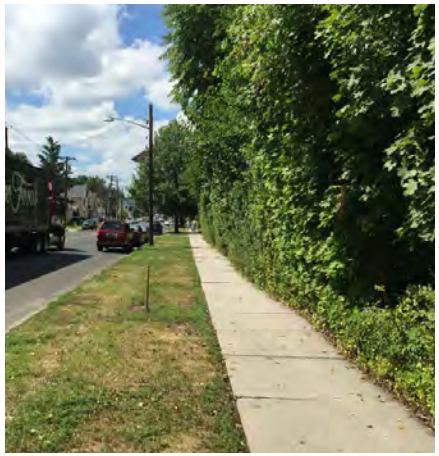
Along its rear and side perimeters bordering the train station pedestrian path and Poillon Street, Parker Press Park is surrounded by chain link fences, about four feet high. No doubt these fences were installed to restrict access to, and crime within, the park. However, they also make it difficult to get into the park (for example, there is no gate into the park from the train station walkway). Paradoxically, they can also make it feel unsafe inside the park because it is difficult to get out, and they make Poillon Street feel like a canyon because it is not connected to the Park. The chain link fences should be replaced with lower fences or very low walls that are easily surmounted by all but the youngest children. Little children will not be able to run into the street, but other people will be able to access the park and its activities (including the farmers' market) more easily. Removing the chain link fences also allows the parking lot that is recommended to be moved from within Parker Press Park to a widened Poillon Street to serve other users, because it is not cut off behind a fence.

FIGURE 35, ACCESS TO THE ARTS SITE PLAN FOR PARKER PRESS PARK

IMAGE COURTESY ACCESS TO THE ARTS STUDY

Fence separating Parker Press Park from station walkway

Wooded frontage on largest parcels of Middle Segment



New Park in Middle Segment

Development on the largest parcels in the Middle Segment may be used to create a new public park that helps break up this long stretch of Main Street. Beyond providing a new public gathering and passive recreation space, the park will encourage more foot traffic along Main Street, helping to link downtown with the Middle and Outer Segments.

Existing Zoning

The existing R-6/OC (High-Density Single-Family / Office Conversion) zone permits single-family homes with accessory office space, a maximum height of 2.5 stories / 35 feet, and a minimum lot size of 6,000 square feet per unit. This allowable building type and intensity (a net density equivalent to 7.26 units/acre) is appropriate for the smaller-scale parcels with existing residential structures that comprise the bulk of this corridor.

Rationale for Change

However, two adjacent larger development parcels in common ownership (totalling 1.88 acres) at the center of the Middle Segment remain vacant. Much of the frontage of these parcels is heavily planted and visually obstructed, conflicting with the open lawn character of the remainder of the Middle Segment.

The current zoning for these two parcels could be used to create a subdivision with 13 single-family lots around a new internal street, which would take up all the site. But these two parcels, on the north side of Main Street, lie right at the center of the Middle Segment, making an intriguing opportunity for a public park. A park here would help break up this long, somewhat monotonous stretch of Main Street, right at its midpoint, making it more inviting to pedestrians both as a through-route for walking downtown and as a stop-off destination for relaxing.

On such parcels, allowing more compact housing types (duplexes and townhouses) at the same current net density of 7.26 units/acre might encourage development, while giving the Township the rationale to require donation of a significant public open space along Main Street. Adding new residential units in this location will also help boost the market for visitors and shoppers downtown, and contribute a bit more foot traffic to this Middle Segment.

Proposed Zoning Changes or Overlay for Larger Parcels

Accordingly, on development sites over 45,000 square feet in the Middle Segment, the following should be required. ***Figure 36*** shows one example of meeting these goals with townhouse units.

- Maximum development density (including the park space) remains 7.26 units per acre (6,000 square feet per unit).
- Maximum height remains 2.5 stories and 35 feet.
- A publicly-accessible open space should be created, and an easement for such deeded to the Township, occupying the entire width of the front of the parcel bordering Main Street, with a depth at least 100 feet. Such open space should be generously landscaped with low plantings, be decoratively paved in some areas, and include a variety of seating areas in sunny and shady areas, and low-level, dark-sky-compliant lighting for safety in evenings. After completion by the applicant, the open space will be maintained by the Township.
- Allow single-family, duplex, and townhouses with no more than eight units in each structure.

FIGURE 36, MIDDLE SEGMENT INFILL STUDY

FOUR DUPLEX BUILDINGS WITH 8 UNITS TOTAL AND A 0.55-ACRE PUBLIC PARK

13 townhouses in two structures of 7 and 6 units; each townhouse has a 2-car garage

Dumpster/recycling area provided

Front 100 feet of lot deeded to Township as 0.55-acre public park, with playground, seating, and landscaping and hardscaped areas, and public parking area with 6 spaces

Buffer landscape plantings around side and rear perimeter of site, and between the park and the residences

The 40 to 50 feet of side yards closest to Main Street remain open, with no tall trees or other landscaping, in order to preserve the open character of this Middle Segment of Main Street

- Each unit should have its own entrance directly to the sidewalk, and stoop.
- Require at least 30 feet separation between each structure.
- Buildings should be set back at least thirty-five (35) feet from all lot lines, so as to minimize appearance of bulk at the property edges.
- Accessory office space would still be permitted as in the existing zoning.
- A stormwater infiltration pond is required on the property, with minimum performance equal to the current pond's capacity. An engineering stormwater management study should be required to confirm that all drainage is contained on-site and/or drains to Main Street. No runoff should impinge on adjacent residential parcels.
- The front 40 feet of the parcel, adjacent to Main Street, should not include any tall trees or other tall landscaping or structures, in order to maintain the open feeling of the Middle Segment.
- The driveway to the rear housing should be located at the side of the development, so as not to bifurcate the park area, and should not exceed 20 feet in width.
- Three parking spaces per gross acre (the entire site area, not just the park area) should be provided for the public park along the entry drive, but should not be located within the front 25 feet of the property.

Example of open space framed by active uses and streets (Maxwells Green community, Somerville Massachusetts)

Park Set-Asides for the Hess Site

The 57-acre Hess Site should be required to provide one or two centrally-located, publicly-accessible parks, that occupy at least 10 percent of the land area. See **Section 3C, Design Guidelines**, for suggested open space requirements for the Hess property.

It is vitally important that the provided parks be centrally located and framed by buildings, rather than simply being a collection of leftover spaces (such as side yards) around buildings. The park should be flanked by new buildings having active ground-floor uses and entries facing the park. A street should surround at least three sides and 60 percent of the park's perimeter, in order to ensure public access to the park and a level of activity that will help keep it safe.

On-street parking should be provided on the streets that surround the park; this ensures that there will be a minimum level of activity around the park at all times. Such on-street parking should be part of the parking supply for the development, rather than extra parking, to ensure that it will be used.

Refer to **Section 1A, Encourage Intensification**, for an illustration of a site plan for the Hess area.

3B. DEFINE AND STRENGTHEN THE UNIQUE IDENTITY OF EACH SEGMENT

This section seeks to define the most positive prevailing building characteristics in the Central and Middle Segments. This information may be used to define appropriate styles and massing for new buildings, a crucial first step in crafting **Section 3C, Design Guidelines**.

Appropriate Styles

Throughout the *Vision Plan* area, the older, prewar buildings tend to be the ones that have endured the test of time and remain attractive and classic. The next section explains some of the reasons. Photos on this and subsequent pages show a few examples of attractive, traditional-style buildings in Woodbridge that provide guidance for new development.

Central Segment

Architectural Form

- Buildings are sited with the narrow end facing the street
- Buildings are narrow, typically 25 to 50 feet wide along the street frontage. Wider buildings are broken into similar dimensions through bay articulation.
- Buildings have retail in the ground floor and apartments or offices overhead.

Materials and Detailing

- The base of a building is highlighted with larger-scale stone,

The Methodist Episcopal Church Parsonage building, a former Quaker Meeting House, is an important historical feature along Main Street. The facade needs extensive restoration and removal of the inappropriate signage board.

Main Street's older buildings have appropriately large ground-floor retail storefront windows, but they are usually obscured by posted signs in windows, and the original entablature area for the retail signage (above the storefront windows) is covered up.

Examples of traditional massing and detailing in the Central Segment, including such elements as vertically-proportioned upper windows, brick facades with stone and plaster accents such as quoins and columns, and deep projecting roof cornices. While all of these examples could be better renovated to respect their original detailing, they still show the positive features that together constitute the feeling of a downtown Main Street.

decorative tilework, or bricks laid in contrasting patterned rows.

- Facades are typically brick, but also plastered masonry.
- On buildings of more than one story, the brick facade is accented with stone features such as columns, quoins at outer corners, or changes in material or brick pattern between levels.

Entries, Windows, and Transparency

- Retail entries are at-grade (this also complies with ADA, the Americans with Disabilities Act).
- Large ground-floor window openings are defined by dimensional architectural features such as columns or pilasters, or recessed volumes, rather than being a plain flat punched opening in a facade. Bottom of windows extend to within 24 inches of grade, unless base of building is strongly defined with a contrasting, visually-heavier accent material, typically stone.
- Upper-story windows have a vertical proportion and are spaced regularly across the facade in all upper stories. Vertically-proportioned windows may be grouped in two's and three's, separated vertical by structural members, to create a wider glazing area.
- Upper-story windows are recessed in the facade, to create shadow lines, and framed by deep sills and lintels.
- Stone and wood trim is used to frame windows and sometimes to create a distinction between building levels.
- Industrial and civic buildings lack large retail storefront windows, but include ample, vertically-proportioned, and regularly-spaced windows on the ground level.

Roof Forms

- Roofs are usually flat; no dormers or mansard roofs are typically used along traditional mixed-use / commercial streets.
- Rooflines are emphasized with deep parapets and/or cornices made of wood or plaster. Cornices are enriched with dentils, brackets, and other elements.

Retail Signage

- A retail signage entablature area is defined by architectural detailing within the first floor, over the storefront windows.
- Retail signage uses hand-painted lettering, carved wood lettering or dimensional, channel-cut lettering.
- Retail signage is lit from above by gooseneck lighting mounted on

An industrial building next to the train tracks in the Central Segment has been rehabilitated as a brewery restaurant. The interior renovation showcases the utilitarian structure and weathered materials of the building, creating a unique and historic character.

the facade. Storefront entries are often recessed within the facade; if flush with the front of the store, a deep awning or canopy is provided above that extends across the width of the storefront.

Middle Segment

- Buildings are oriented with the shorter facade parallel to the street.
- First-level entries are placed a few steps above grade.
- Houses have wide front porches, but on first level only.
- Upper-story windows have vertical orientation and similar proportions.
- Roofs are pitched, in hip or gabled forms, and large areas are broken up with dormers.
- Sloped roof areas have minimum 5:12 height:width ratio of pitch.
- Appropriate facade materials include wood clapboard, wood shingle, and brick.

These residential buildings are good examples of traditional massing and scale in the Middle Segment.

Examples of building massing and detailing that could be more pedestrian-friendly.

Less Desirable Styles

Many newer buildings in downtown Woodbridge have been built in combinations of styles that do not harmonize with the prevailing character. Other, older buildings have been renovated in a style that obscures the original form and character. These buildings do not contribute to the goal of creating attractive and inviting streetscapes.

While downtown Woodbridge has a great diversity of existing unique, independent retail stores, restaurants, and delis, many of them are hidden to the casual or new visitor behind a profusion of window signage and advertisements, or they lack good facade signage announcing the business name.

This section explains some of the specific form and style attributes that are detrimental to downtown's overall character.

Central Segment

Inappropriate Architecture in New Construction and Renovations

- Building mass along the street frontage appears too wide, lacking vertical definition to break up the mass into a series of side-by-side bays
- Storefront windows are too small, and are flat punched openings in the facade that do not relate to enframing architectural elements.
- Storefront windows are glazed with non-transparent glass, or obscured by excessive window signs
- Facade canopies or coverings obscure the architectural detailing of the original sign board entablature area
- Upper-story windows are too small, horizontally-proportioned, too far apart, and/or are flat punched openings in the facade with little or no shadow lines.
- Balconies are used on Main Street facades, a busy commercial street where buildings have not traditionally had balconies.
- Roofs are peaked, rather than flat, and gable slopes are too shallow.
- Mansard roofs are used on a single-story building, visually dominating the low height of the building.
- A flat roof edge is unadorned (no parapets or cornices)

While the above features might be successfully employed on a contemporary or modernist building, they do not sit well on the older buildings or

the newer semi-traditional buildings downtown.

Inappropriate Materials

Generally, materials that are imitations of another material, or poor quality, or applied in a fashion that does not make sense structurally, are inappropriate. Examples include fake stone applied on an archway where real stones used in the same pattern would not work structurally, or fake brick applied to a front facade without wrapping around the corner to a logical break in plane. Other materials are not appropriate to New Jersey's northeast regional styles or climate or are not appropriate to an urban downtown main street. These include:

- Pebbled finish facades
- Unfinished (exposed) concrete masonry blocks
- Wood shingle siding (looks too residential or beach-oriented for a main street)
- Artificial stone cladding
- Stucco facades (more appropriate to warmer Mediterranean or desert climates)

Inappropriate Ground-floor Transparency and Signage

On many buildings along Main Street, a relatively simple correction to the transparency of ground-floor windows would greatly improve the appearance. Problem areas include:

- Curtains, blinds, or interior furnishings used to block views into a retail storefront
- Large proportion of window glazing is obscured by temporary or permanent signage, decals, and logos, making it difficult to see into retail storefronts
- Excessive number of signs are mounted on the facade, above storefront windows, for building tenants, creating visual chaos
- Plastic facade sign boxes with printed letters do not have a high-quality appearance and tend to obscure the building architecture. Furthermore, if internally-lit and having a light-colored background, such boxes create glare.
- Curved canopies and solid box canopies obscure the original sign board fascia area.

Examples of retail windows that are too small, obscured by fritted glass, interior furnishings, or curtains and blinds

Example of too many front lawn signs in a Middle Segment front yard. Two temporary A-frame or sandwich-board style signs compete with the large monument sign.

Front lawn signage with phone numbers for businesses

Example of inappropriate front lawn monument sign in the Middle Segment: too many colors, too many tenants, internally-lit light-colored sign box. In addition, the gravel yard does not fit within the green lawn context of the surroundings.

Middle Segment

Buildings in the Middle Segment are for the most part older traditional single-family homes that have been well adapted to small in-home office uses. However, some newer buildings along Main Street have not respected the prevailing patterns in siting and massing, and as such detract from the overall corridor's appearance.

Inappropriate Architecture in New Construction

- Buildings are too wide compared to the typical scale of the residential buildings
- Buildings are oriented with the wide side of facade towards street
- Low buildings have heavy-appearance mansard roofs

Inappropriate Parking and Access

- Buildings have parking spaces in the front yard setback
- Driveways are overly wide and/or disrupt the middle of a lot
- Driveways pass under buildings

Inappropriate Signage

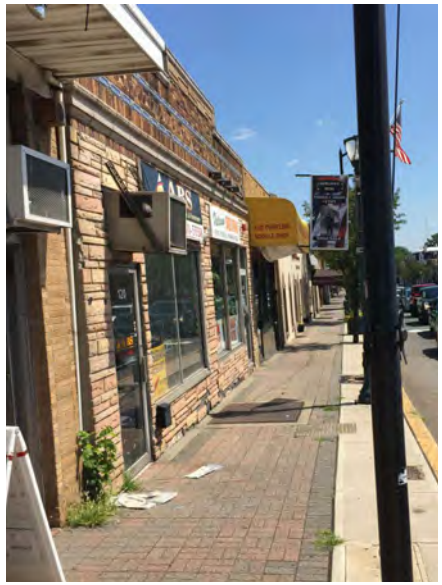
- Too many monument signs in the front yard
- Too much and inappropriate information on monument signs, such as phone numbers, persons' names, brand names of goods or services sold

Inappropriate Landscaping

- Tall trees and other landscaping in front yard that obscures open views to building facade

Example of overly-wide new construction, with long side facing the street, and a drive-in underpass to rear parking.

Facade materials inappropriate to a downtown Main Street include poor-quality artificial stone, artificial brick, wood shingles, and wood clapboard.



Retail facades on which the traditional, prominent retail facade sign "entablature," or enframed area above the storefront windows, has been obscured by inexpensive signage boxes and a wide metal placard.

Retail facades with too much competing ad-hoc signage in the windows. The excessive signage blocks views into the retail storefront and makes walking on the sidewalk less interesting as a result.

3C. DESIGN GUIDELINES

The **Design Guidelines** below are intended to shape new development to create pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, open spaces, and other amenities for the public. They are tailored to the specifics of Woodbridge so that new buildings will contribute to an attractive downtown. They are also intended to improve facades and aesthetics of existing buildings, especially signage clutter, architecture, and transparency.

They include such important considerations as setbacks, stepbacks, ground-floor use restrictions, facade transparency, landscape frontage requirements, parking location, and architectural styles.

Applicability

The Design Guidelines apply to new construction and to major renovations (those requiring a building or signage permit) in the *Vision Plan* area.

They also could be applied to all existing buildings. To permit business owners and land owners time to comply with the new regulations, a 10-year compliance clause could be proposed. A facade improvement grant program would help provide expertise and funding, particularly to the smallest retail business owners.

The word "should" is used throughout these **Design Guidelines**, reflecting that this *Vision Plan* contains recommendations, not adopted ordinance language. However, there are certainly varying degrees of importance within these guidelines. In a more formal document such as a Redevelopment Plan, a distinction is typically made between items that "should" be followed and those that "shall" be required. Absent that, it is the Township's responsibility to ensure that development interprets the guidelines to appropriately follow their spirit and intent.

Site Planning

Streets

Maximum Block Sizes

Block size affects how easy it is for pedestrians to walk from one area to another – the "permeability" of the development pattern. Smaller block sizes allow more walking route options. Smaller blocks also mean more streets to allow traffic to filter through an area without unduly impacting one street.

A block is bounded by vehicular streets on all sides. Block sizes in the Middle and Central Segments are already established by the existing street network. No existing public street should be closed in these areas, as doing so would reduce the walkability of the area.

The maximum block size for new development in the Outer Segment should be 400 feet by 600 feet. Where a larger block dimension is unavoidable due to site planning constraints, pedestrian walkway(s) must be provided to effectively meet the maximum block size standard. Such walkways should be at least 20 feet wide, with a paved walking area of minimum 8 feet in width, and the remainder landscaped or deco-

ratively paved (for example, with textured concrete or cobblestones). Lighting should be provided along the walkway, and active uses (storefront windows, glazed lobbies, and building entries) should front onto the walkway in order to ensure activity and safety.

Connectivity to Surrounding Streets

In tandem with creating walkable block sizes, it is important that the street pattern of new development connect in multiple points to the surrounding existing streets. This ensures accessibility in the larger region—so that residents and workers in surrounding areas will be able to get into and through the new development area easily. Sometimes, adding multiple connections is a means of "healing" breaks in the street grid created by postwar development patterns, which tended to be isolated projects that turned their backs on the surroundings.

Ensuring this neighborhood connectivity is particularly important in regards to connections to Main Street and Mutton Hollow Road in the Outer Segment. In the Outer Segment, vehicular connections to these roads should be made at least every 800 feet.

If adjacent residents or other community members are opposed to the connections, due to fear of traffic or crime, rights-of-way for the connections should still be created. The connecting streets can be dead-end stubs, with a gate that precludes all but pedestrian connections. In this manner, if and when neighboring areas decide that the new project might be acceptable for vehicular connection, the right-of-way already exists. Otherwise, it is nearly impossible to add street connections after development is built out.

Design of New Streets

In the Outer Segment, new streets should all be designed to safely and comfortably accommodate pedestrians. The following standards are recommended:

- Sidewalks should be a minimum of 10 feet wide, including a 5 or 6 feet wide strip for street tree pits. In residential or office areas, a planting strip of lawn or other vegetation should be included within the same strip as the street trees. In commercial (retail) areas, with more parking turnover activity, the area between trees may be paved.
- Internal streets should include on-street parking on at least one side, and preferably on both sides. Parking lanes should be 8 or 9 feet wide maximum.
- To keep traffic speeds low, travel lanes on new local streets should be a maximum of 10 or 11 feet wide. On through streets (such as Mutton Hollow Road), travel lanes may be wider.
- For wide streets that must carry significant vehicular volume, a boulevard treatment is recommended. A boulevard has a center median planted with trees and other vegetation. At crosswalks, the median provides a pedestrian refuge. The trees in the center median also help to visually narrow the vehicular travelway, sending a signal to drivers to slow down.
- Facilities for bicycle travel should be accommodated. A study of potential bicycle routes would need to be prepared. On heavier-traffic streets or on retail-heavy streets, striped bike lanes may be desirable. On local streets with lower traffic levels, formal bike lanes are not necessarily needed, but instead the outside travel lanes should be a few feet wider so as to accommodate cyclists with cars.

Curb Cuts

New curb cuts should be prohibited along Main Street within the Central

A residential boulevard with a green central median. Closely-spaced trees line the median as well as the edges of the roadway.

On-street parking (here, diagonal) narrows roadways and sends a cue to drivers to slow down. It also provides a real and perceptual buffer between moving traffic and pedestrians on the sidewalk.

Bulb-outs and landscaped pocket plazas along a downtown street (Visalia, California)

Near right, acorn-style dual-head pedestrian-scaled street light on Poillon Street. Far right, lantern-style dual-head street light on Main Street

Segment. Instead vehicular driveways should connect to side streets or rear streets.

Existing curb cuts should be consolidated and shared between adjacent uses, where possible.

The maximum width of curb cuts should be 20 feet. However, for parcels with less than 50 feet of road frontage, curb cut width should be narrowed further where possible.

Corner radii of curb cuts should be as narrow as is safe, in order to slow traffic entering from adjoining streets.

Intersection Design

Most accidents occur in intersections, due to the complex and conflicting movements of motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists. However, intersection design can be used to slow traffic, particularly cars making turns, and maximize the safety of pedestrians.

New intersections in the Outer Segment, and changes to intersections in the Central and Middle Segments, should adopt the following design characteristics.

- Corner radii (the radius defined by two sidewalks on perpendicular streets that come together at a corner) at intersections should be as small as possible to slow traffic to a safe speed for making turns. Narrow radii also help shorten the distance that a pedestrian must traverse across a roadway.
- Bulb-outs should be used at intersections where a parking lane exists. Bulb-outs are widenings of the sidewalk, generally within 15 to 25 feet of the corner, in the space that is otherwise occupied by a parking lane elsewhere on the block. Bulb-outs shorten the distance across the street for pedestrians. They visually narrow the roadway at the intersection, giving a visual cue to drivers to slow down and be alert for pedestrians. They also make good spaces for benches and landscaping (although plants must be low or tall enough to not interfere with driver's sight distances).
- All intersections should at a minimum have white striping to designated crosswalks. Crosswalks in areas with moderate to high pedestrian traffic should be prominently marked, for example with zebra stripes, contrasting colors (typically a solid blue or green crosswalk with white borders), or textured or stamped paving.

Street Trees

New street trees should be planted to fill in gaps on all streets within the Central Segment, and along Main Street in the Middle and Outer Segments. Overall, the combination of existing and new trees should result in a spacing of 30 to 50 feet on center.

Tree planting pits should have a minimum dimension of 4 feet wide (or ideally 5 or 6 feet wide) by 10 feet long. A certified arborist or landscaped architect should be consulted to determine appropriate tree species and planting regimen. Taller trees and wider canopies should be selected for wider streets.

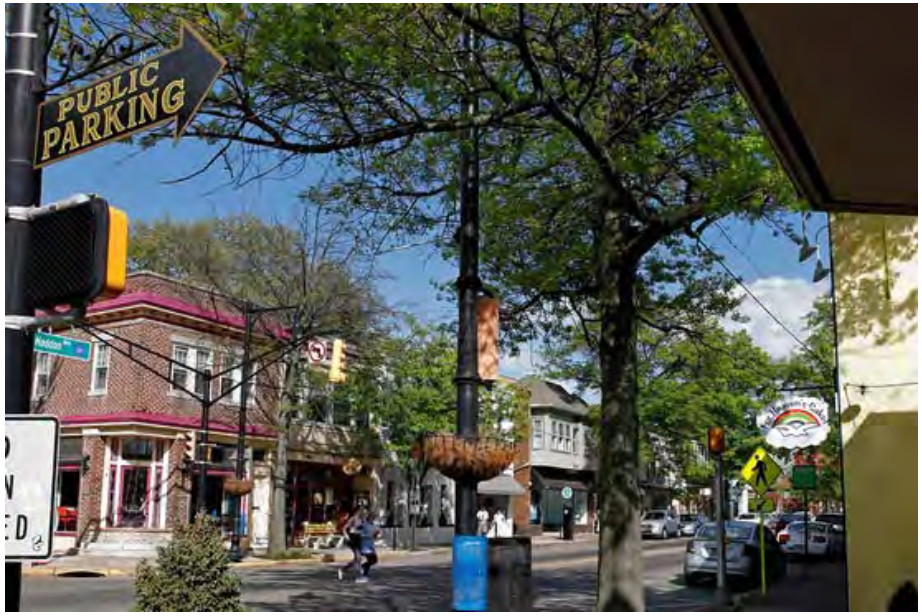
Benches

Benches should be provided on new streets in areas with commercial uses, as well as in residential areas. Attention should be paid to siting the bench to face an interesting viewpoint for the user, ensuring that the user has sufficient and comfortable personal space and separation from vehicular and pedestrian traffic, and that the user feels secure.

Street Lighting

- **Main Street in the Central Segment:** This stretch has two different attractive styles of street lights: one with a high lumiere over the street and a lower pedestrian-scaled lumiere over the sidewalk; and one low acorn-style pedestrian-scaled fixture. Street lighting should be standardized, with a unified design family of lighting standards for posts and fixtures throughout, with the mass and size varying by location and street type.
- **Pearl Street:** The same unified palette of lights on Main Street should be installed on Pearl Street when it begins to be converted to a pedestrian-friendly street with new mixed-use development and wider sidewalks.
- **Heards Brook Area:** Pedestrian-scaled lighting will also be an important addition to streets and walkways along Heards Brook, in order to keep these spaces safer at night. However, street lights should be designed to meet "dark sky" standards (down cast lights, shielded to prevent light shining outwards into adjacent buildings, or upward towards the sky) so that glare and light pollution are minimized.

Downtown Collingswood, New Jersey, showing the impact that large street trees can have on creating a soft, liveable streetscape.



Sidewalk Widening through Redevelopment

As shown in ***Figure 24***, sidewalks in the following locations should be widened by requiring minimum setbacks of new construction.

- **North Side of Main Street, East of Amboy:** Here, a building setback will compensate for the narrow Main Street sidewalk and the lack of on-street parking (see site plan for Main & Amboy, ***Figure 9***, in **Chapter 1**) due to the right-turn lane from westbound Main onto northbound Amboy.

Townhouse residences in Somerville, MA that frame a new central open space and walkway. A road borders one side of this park.

New residential building in Morristown, NJ showing new hardscape plaza created between two buildings. The plaza opens onto the adjoining public street.

- **Amboy Avenue at Main Street:** Along both sides of Amboy Avenue, for the two blocks north of Main Street, private properties should provide a public easement to be used for a planting strip that effectively widens the sidewalk (see ***Figure 26*** in **Chapter 2**).

- **Pearl and Fulton Streets at Main Street:** Along Pearl Street between Main and Brook Streets, and along Fulton Street between Main and New Streets, new buildings should be set back in order to widen the sidewalk (see ***Figure 31***, Pearl Street streetscape).

Open Space

Public Open Space Requirements

Open space set-asides should be required for larger projects, with different requirements based on the size of the project. These requirements should be imposed on all projects over 40,000 square feet in land area.

- For projects with a land area of at least 40,000 square feet but less than 80,000 square feet, provide one or two publicly-accessible open spaces totalling at least seven (7) percent of the project area, each with a minimum dimension of 25 feet in all directions.

- For projects with a land area of at least 80,000 square feet but less than 10 acres (435,600 square feet), provide one or two public open space areas totalling at least ten (10) percent of the project area, each with a minimum dimension of 75 feet in all directions. At least half of the required open space area should be a green space and the remainder may be a plaza or other landscaped hardscape.

- For projects with at least ten (10) acres–this would likely only apply to the Hess site–create a variety of open spaces totalling at least 15 percent of the project area, each with a minimum dimension of 75 feet in all directions. Pre-existing or restored natural open spaces (such as wetlands, forested areas, or riparian corridors) may count towards up to 50 percent of the required open space area. Approximately half of the remaining required open space should be a green space, and approximately half should be plazas or other hardscape areas (such as ball courts).

Each required open space area should be a contiguous and intentionally-formed space, rather than, for example, a collection of leftover spaces such as those formed by the front yard setbacks of buildings.

Height Bonus for Open Space in Smaller Projects

On projects in the Central Segment having a land area of less than 40,000 square feet, the Township could offer a height bonus of one additional building story in exchange for provision of a publicly-accesslble open space (pocket park or plaza). Refer also to **Section 3A, Provide More People Places.**

Definitions

Where required above or used to obtain a height bonus, "green" open space areas should be planted and landscaped with a combination of lawn areas, low plantings, and shade trees. There should be a variety of active and passive areas, sunny and shady areas, seating areas, and pedestrian-scaled lighting.

Where required above or used to obtain a height bonus, plazas should have high-quality, durable and decorative paving, plantings, shade trees, outdoor seating areas, and pedestrian-scaled lighting. Plazas should be located at the grade of the sidewalk, with barrier-free access.

Framing by Active Uses

For safety and vitality, all required open spaces, whether plazas or

parks, should be framed by active uses as follows:

- Plazas and pocket parks should be located adjacent to a public street, where they can help to break up the building mass. Examples include locations in a recessed area or in a courtyard of a building adjoining the street.
- Smaller park or plaza spaces adjoining buildings should be framed by active uses and areas of high transparency, such as retail entries, residential building lobbies, and large windows opening directly onto the space.
- Larger parks should be bounded by public streets on at least two sides or at least 50 percent of the perimeter, whichever is higher. The remainder of the perimeter should be bordered by pedestrian walkways that distinguish the open space from adjacent buildings.

Private Open Spaces

In addition to the public open spaces described above, common or private open spaces should be provided for residents of each new residential building.

Common private open space is shared by all residents of a building, but is not available to the general public. It may take the form of a patio, deck, large porch, or courtyard. It may be located at-grade or on a rooftop area of the building.

Individual private spaces for residential units may be provided as front porches, stoops, patios, or small yards for street-level units that have individual entries; balconies for mid-level units; and terraces or decks for penthouse units or other units where a building stepback creates an adjacent rooftop deck area.

Balconies should be partially or fully recessed into a building facade, to create a more comfortable and sheltered open space.

Natural Features and Open Spaces

For some new development, attention to natural open spaces, particularly wetlands and riparian corridors, is important. This situation occurs along Heards Brook in the Central Segment, and in the Hess properties of the Outer Segment.

Where a property includes or adjoins a wetland, brook, stream, or other water body, the natural feature should be made a feature of the development:

- Green, landscaped parks or other natural open spaces should incorporate and surround the water body, to create a natural buffer to stormwater runoff.
- Streets should be created along all sides of the open spaces that surround the natural feature, to ensure its visibility and accessibility to the public.
- Where site planning makes it impossible to fit a full vehicular roadway, a pedestrian pathway of generous proportions may be used instead. Lighting, low landscaping, and decorative paving accents

Example of open space framed by active uses and streets

should be used to create a high-quality pathway.

- Buildings should be located across the street from the open space, and the building front entries should face the open space. The same transparency and activity standards for building facades along public streets (see below) should be met for buildings that face open space.
- Any existing trees and vegetation adjoining a water body, wetland, or other natural feature should be preserved as much as possible.
- This approach should be used to frame new infiltration ponds and other stormwater management features.

Building Design

Building Placement and Orientation

Framing Streets and Open Space

Buildings should be sited to orient towards streets and open space.

- Where a mixed-use property adjoins Main Street, the main entries to retail space(s) should face and open onto Main Street. The main entries leading to upper-story uses may be located on a side street or internal courtyard.
- Where a property adjoins Pearl Street, the main entries of ground-floor uses must face and open onto Pearl Street, in order to create activity facing the train station. The exception is if the property also adjoins Main Street, in which case the main entries should be on Main Street.
- For properties not adjoining Main or Pearl Streets, the front facade and the main entries to the building may be located on any public street.
- Where a property adjoins a natural open space such as a water feature or wetland, the closest new buildings should face the open space and have its primary pedestrian entrance facing the space. A public street should be sited between the building and the open space, for best visibility and accessibility. Where site planning makes it impossible to fit a full vehicular roadway, a pedestrian pathway of generous proportions may be acceptable. See the earlier section on **Natural Open Spaces**.

Parking Placement

The following guidelines describe where parking is permitted:

- No surface parking is permitted within the front yard of properties. Surface parking should be located to the side of buildings, away from all public streets, or at the rear. The only exception should be for the stand-alone restaurant / retail areas of the Hess site.
- For all development in the R-6/OC Zone of the Middle Segment, parking should not be permitted in the front yard or within 25 feet of a front lot line (versus current *Land Use Ordinance*, section §150-29 R-6 High-Density Single-Family Residential Zone. C.(3)(a)[4]. The only exception should be for the required public or guest parking within the required public park.
- Stand-alone structured parking garages should similarly be located away from public streets, behind active uses such as residences or retail space.
- Standards for structured parking inside a building are provided further below.

Building Setbacks

Buildings should be placed to frame intersections and street corners. Building facades should be located close to street corners, specifically within 50 feet of the property corner.

In the Central Segment, buildings should be sited close to the public

sidewalk in order to frame streets. Specifically:

- **Along Main Street:** building setbacks should be 0 feet, with the exception of areas proposed for effective sidewalk widening (see *Figure 24*).
- The automobile-oriented bank building at the southeast corner of Amboy Avenue and Main Street should be replaced with a building that follows the zero setback of other Main Street buildings.
- **Along Amboy Avenue:** building setbacks of at least 15 feet should be provided to meet the sidewalk widening proposed (see **Section 2A, Improve Pedestrian Safety and Comfort**).
- **Elsewhere in the Central Segment:** building setbacks should follow prevailing setback patterns on the street, but should not exceed 15 feet.

In the Middle Segment, new buildings should respect prevailing setback patterns of adjoining properties and the prevailing front yard pattern of the corridor.

Building Height

Measurement of Height

Building height is expressed both in terms of number of stories and number of fee. Height should be measured as a vertical distance relative to the existing grade at all points.

The maximum height is measured at each point along the perimeter of a building as follows:

- Along Main Street in the Central Segment, height is measured to the top point of the roof, excluding mechanical equipment or parapets. No additional height allowance is given for peaked roofs, because they are not appropriate to this core area of Downtown.
- Elsewhere in the Central Segment and everywhere in the Middle and Outer Segments, height is measured to the highest point of a flat roof (excluding mechanicals and parapets), the deck line of a mansard roof, or the mean height between eaves and ridge for gable, hip and gambrel roofs. This distinction provides an incentive for peaked roofs.

Base Height

The "base height" for buildings is as follows.

- **Central Segment:** follow height diagram provided earlier (*Figure 5*).
- **Middle Segment:** existing height regulations remain.
- **Outer Segment (Hess site):** Maximum base building height is eight (8) stories and 90 feet.

Floor Heights

Allowable base heights are designed to foster high ceilings in ground floor spaces. Generally, ground floors,

A round tower used for architectural emphasis at an important corner at Santana Row in San Jose, California.

New residential development, facing a suburban commuter train station, features a prominent entry tower mass styled like an old train station, as well as a water tower.

Buildings frame a high-quality and comfortable street. Long structures are broken down into bays that give the effect of a downtown streetscape that evolved over time.

particularly those with retail uses, are expected to be 15 to 20 feet in height. Upper story floors, particularly those with residential uses, are expected to be 10 to 11 feet in height, floor to floor.

Duplex units, such as for spaces with mezzanine left levels within an apartment or retail store, are permitted, but should count as two stories.

Additional Height for Architectural Features

Certain features that create architectural interest above the main building roofline should be permitted to exceed the maximum base height in certain locations, as follows:

- Permitted features include, but are not limited to, cupolas, towers, and turrets.
- Permitted features should not exceed 25 feet in length and 25 feet in width, and should not be more than two stories and 20 feet taller than the permitted base height.
- Permitted features should be used sparingly, rather than on every new building. Ideal locations are to create a focal point at the intersection of two major roads, or at the end of a view corridor, or to emphasize an important area such as a train station or an open space feature.

Rooftop Mechanical Equipment

Rooftop mechanical equipment should be screened from view of adjoining streets.

Mechanical and building equipment such as antennas, water tanks, ventilators, chimneys, air conditioning or elevator machinery and structures housing same, are exempted from the height regulations, provided that such structures are set back from all building façades by at least ten (10) feet so as to reduce their visibility from the street.

Similarly, parapets should be exempt from height regulations.

Height Bonus Programs

See **Section 3D, Bonus Programs** for more information.

Building Massing

Roof Shape

Roof shape should follow a building's variation in bays and facade massing. Along Main Street in the Central Segment, flat roofs should be used.

Elsewhere, other roof shapes may be used. Mansard roofs should include frequent dormer windows. Sloped roofs should have a minimum 5:12 vertical:horizontal pitch.

Building Length

Central and Outer Segments: The maximum uninterrupted building length parallel to a public street is 200 feet. In order to create a building longer than 200 feet, a significant setback space such as a courtyard or plaza should be provided along the street frontage to break the building into smaller volumes each less than 200 feet wide, as follows:

- The setback space should be a minimum 25 feet wide and 20 feet deep, and should extend upwards through all levels of the building.
- Retail storefront windows, residential or retail entries, and other features that bring pedestrian activity should be sited to open onto this setback space.
- The setback space should be designed as a public open space, with landscaping, lighting, and seating.
- The area of the setback space may be counted towards any required open space, including that which could be counted to request bonus stories of height.
- Required bay depth, as defined further below, does not by itself constitute a large enough break in building facade to qualify as a setback space that reduces building length.
- **Middle Segment:** The shorter side of a building should be oriented parallel to and face Main Street. The longer dimension should extend back into the site, echoing the traditional massing of single-family homes in the area.

Buildings over Roads

In the Outer Segment only, buildings are permitted to extend over roadways if a tall arch over the roadway is created as an architectural feature. The arch should be at least 20 feet tall at all points, and should include sidewalks on both sides of the roadway that passes under the arch. Lighting and attractive facade materials should be used inside the arch.

Separation between Buildings

Where buildings are adjacent to each other without an intervening street, a minimum separation distance should be provided. The separation between buildings should relate to the height of adjoining buildings, with taller buildings having more separation. Generally:

- Buildings up to three stories should be separated by at least 25 feet.
- Buildings at least four stories tall should be separated by at least 40 feet.
- Active ground-floor uses, pedestrian or vehicular entries, and windows should face onto the space between buildings, in order to create activity in the space.

Building Articulation

Horizontal Articulation: Bays

New buildings should be composed of a series of side-by-side masses through use of bays. The maximum width of a bay should take into account the bay width and scale of nearby buildings, but in all cases bays should not exceed 30 to 60 feet.

The vertical expression of each bay should pass upwards through the entire height of the building, except where an upper-story stepback creates a major break in plane.

A bay is defined as a break in plane of at least one foot in depth, measured perpendicular to the front facade. Bays should also be differentiated through variation in materials, textures, masonry patterns, and fenestration/glazing. Variation in color

Large residential building in Somerville, Massachusetts is built over the project's entry road, and features a generously-proportioned entry arch. The arch is lined with sidewalks, leasing office windows, and residential lobbies on both sides.

Left, mixed-use buildings of various ages in Berkeley, California, showing how new buildings harmonize with old. Buildings have massing broken down with bays and horizontal differentiation, plentiful windows, large ground-floor retail storefront windows, corner elements, and architectural emphasis at the roofline, and other features described in these Design Guidelines for Woodbridge. While the regionally-appropriate material in Berkeley (often stucco) is different than that for Woodbridge (brick), the forms, massing, and detailing should follow the same approaches in both towns.

Below, a new office building in Morristown, NJ showing articulated massing, prominent entries, and sunshade canopies used as architectural elements. The lower floors are emphasized with larger-scale stonework, while upper floors are clad in brick.

may also be used but may not be the only distinguishing feature.

The design and dimensions of bays along one building façade should create a varied articulation; a monotonous repetition of the same bay along a very wide façade should be avoided.

Notwithstanding bay variation, the most prominent articulation of facades should place the focus on major pedestrian entryways and any corner elements.

Vertical Articulation: Base, Middle, and Top

Buildings should be subdivided into a base, middle, and top.

Base: The lower portions of all buildings should be highlighted with a different, and more richly-articulated, architectural treatment.

- For buildings less than 4 stories tall, the base should be emphasized with a contrasting band at the bottom one to four feet of the first level., or across the entire height of the first level.
- For buildings 4 to 6 stories tall, the base is the first level of a building.
- For buildings with 6 or more stories, the base is the first two levels.

For buildings with retail storefronts, the base of the building should have large storefront windows. The pattern of storefront openings within the base should relate to the building's vertical bay pattern. Overhangs, light shelves or straight awnings are encouraged along storefronts and over building entrances.

For buildings with ground-floor residences, the base should be defined by contrasting materials, belt cornices or other horizontal elements, projections and recesses, stoops, and/or canopies or other overhanging element over entryways.

Middle: The middle of the building should be distinguished from the base and top by horizontal belt courses or cornices or changes in material, masonry, or fenestration pattern and proportion.

Top: The top of the building should be emphasized with a parapet wall, balustrade, and/or deep cornice. This applies to consistent rooflines as well as any stepped-back upper-level facades.

- For buildings less than 6 stories tall, the top edge of the top floor should be emphasized.

Below and right, examples of buildings that successfully create an active and engaging street frontage. Projects shown include the Storrs Center in Connecticut, Bethesda Row in Maryland, and Santana Row in San Jose, California.

- For buildings 6 or 7 stories tall, the entire top floor of the building should be emphasized.
- For buildings with 8 or more stories, the top levels of the building should be emphasized.
- On the tallest buildings, the upper levels should be designed with contrasting forms and materials to visually lighten the building mass.

Projections into Setback

Stoops and staircases should not project into the public right of way; therefore, a building must have a setback of sufficient depth to incorporate any stoops or porches.

Allowable projections on any upper-level façade (i.e., not at grade level) include overhangs, cornices, balco-

Mixed-use residential / retail development in San Francisco showing how large buildings are broken into smaller components through recessed courtyards, architectural detailing emphasizing the ground floor, prominent retail entries and windows, and roof detailing.

Examples from Washington, DC and Cambridge, Mass. showing residential building mass broken down through variation in bays as well as different materials and fenestration patterns.

Rendering of a new building showing how a large building mass may be broken down both vertically (with a base, middle, and top) and horizontally (through use of bays). Transparent ground floor spaces and a street-facing orientation further help create a pedestrian-scaled and interesting building. Also shown in this rendering: bulb-outs, prominent crosswalks, and central open space areas.

nies, bow & boxed windows, and bay windows. These elements may project up to three (3) feet into the required minimum setback.

Awnings

Awnings are encouraged for all retail storefronts. All awnings should be constructed and installed so that the placement of the frame and fabric of the awning is integrated into the overall building design; awnings should not conceal or disfigure an architectural feature or detail.

Awning materials should be limited to cloth, canvas and similar materials; metal, plastic, and aluminum awnings are discouraged.

Awnings should have a straight, flat surface; fluted and curved awnings are discouraged. Box awnings (those that are closed at the bottom and sides) are prohibited because they obscure architectural features of the facade.

No awning should extend more than six (6) feet into the public right-of-way from the building façade. No awning should provide less than eight (8) feet clear height above the sidewalk.

Awnings should not project into any roadway, driveway, or parking or loading area.

Upper-Story Building Stepbacks

In buildings of five (5) or more stories, the upper floors of frontages along public streets and open spaces should be stepped back in order to reduce the apparent bulk visible at the street, and ensure sunlight to the surrounding areas.

Required stepbacks should be measured horizontally, relative to the levels below. Specifically:

- Any five-story building mass facing a public street should have the fifth floor stepped back at least three (3) feet with respect to the lower four levels.
- Any six-story building mass facing a public street should have one stepback of minimum five (5) foot depth at the sixth floor, with respect to the lower levels. Stepbacks are not necessary at the fifth or lower floors.
- Any seven- or eight-story building mass facing a public street should have two stepbacks of minimum five (5) feet each with respect to the lower floors, totalling 10 feet, and located within the top two or three floors.

Building Transparency

Building transparency is a concept intended to create a friendly, active presence along a building's frontage. In its simplest form, transparency refers to permeability: the amount of clear window area in a facade, since windows help create a relationship between the public space of the sidewalk and the interior space of a building.

Transparency also refers to a less obvious component of making friendly street frontages: having active uses in the ground floor of buildings, and placement of pedestrian building entries along sidewalks. Both of these components create the energy, activity, and comings-and-goings that make streets and sidewalks lively and vital in a walkable downtown area.

Active Ground Floor Uses

Along Main Street in the Central Segment, buildings should have retail storefronts on the ground floor level, facing Main Street.

Elsewhere, buildings should have retail, commercial, arts, or residential

Awnings should be flat and open at the ends and underside. Valances (the front skirted area) are optional.

Examples of attactive retail storefronts and restored building facades in older, traditional buildings in downtown Bellevue, Kentucky.

uses on the ground floor level facing public streets. (The exceptions are along New and North James Streets, which behind Main Street stores are primarily parking streets, without active uses. Active ground-floor uses are not required along these streets.) Ground-level residential units should include individual entries (such as porches and stoops). Shared entries to lobbies, and building rooms such as gyms or meeting rooms are also good ground-floor uses, provided they maintain transparency to the sidewalk.

Permeability

The following minimum transparency standards apply to buildings on frontages facing public streets, walkways, or open space:

- Minimum 50 percent of the facade area should be glazed on the first level of retail or office buildings.
- Minimum 25 percent of the facade area should be glazed on the first level of all-residential buildings.
- Minimum 25 percent of the facade area should be glazed on upper levels of all building types.

The following restrictions apply to glazed areas on the first level of buildings:

- Window glass should be clear or lightly-tinted. Energy efficient coatings that tint glass are permitted as long as the coating that is closest to clear is chosen to meet the energy criteria.
- Opaque, translucent, or spandrel glass is permitted only where necessary to screen mechanical areas. This type of glass does not qualify towards meeting the minimum transparency standards.
- Colored or stained window glass is permitted only for retail clerestory or transom windows.
- Dark tinted and mirrored window glass is prohibited.

Storefront Window Design

- Retail storefront windows should provide maximum exposure to interior uses. Night security gates, grilles, or any other security covering of windows are prohibited unless they maintain at least 75 percent openness.
- Design for storefronts should reflect the rhythms and proportions of traditional architectural elements found on Main Street, such as large display windows of clear glass, recessed entries, transom windows, storefront cornices, and suitable locations for signs.

Upper-Story Window Design

Along Main Street in the Central Segment, upper-story windows should be vertically-proportioned; clusters of vertical windows within separate frames may be provided to create large expanses of glazing. All upper-story windows should be accented using sill and lintel; punched windows with no decorative edging are prohibited.

Retail Entries

In all locations, retail customer entrances should be highly visible and clearly defined by means of such features as piers, columns, glazing patterns, awnings, porticos, arches, wing walls, and integral planters.

Residential Entries

It is recommended that any and all residential units located on the first level of a building have individual entries to the sidewalk, highlighted with stoops that are at least three steps above grade so as to create a transition between the sidewalk and the private residential space. Individual entries should also have visually-interesting doors with panels and/or glazing; plain, flat doors are prohibited.

At least one shared entry to upper-level residential units is encouraged at every 200 feet or portion thereof of street frontage of each building. Shared entries should include a glazed doorway and an interior lobby, to create a public-private transition area.

Building Materials

Detailing

Buildings should be richly detailed so as to create visually-interesting facades. Architectural features contributing to the detailing may include, but are not limited to the following: recesses, projections, wall insets, awnings, balconies, window projections, porches, stoops, landscape structures or other features that complement the design intent of the structure.

No more than three basic materials, with a variety of textures and accents ,should be used on each façade bay.

Application

Materials should be applied in a logical fashion in keeping with the massing, detailing, and variations in plane of a building.

- Any changes in primary wall material should occur across a horizontal line, with the visually heavier material below the lighter material.
- Facades should be designed so that any expansion joints are rationalized by the logic of the composition.
- At important or highly-visible building corners, the façade materials must be the same on both faces meeting at the corner. These materials must be wrapped around building corners to a rational change in plane, in order to avoid the appearance of a pasted-on application.

Variety across Facades

A building should use the same types of materials and detailing on all street-facing facades.

For facades that do not directly face a public street, a lower level of detailing is permitted, but such facades should use the same materials as on street-facing facades.

Architectural Styles

Central Segment

Along Main Street, new buildings should follow the traditional cues

Examples of ground-floor transparency in mixed-use and retail buildings.

Ground-floor transparency in an older mixed-use building (Raleigh, North Carolina)

Ground-floor transparency in a new mixed-use retail / office commercial building (Cambridge, Massachusetts)

from existing buildings, with historically-appropriate materials such as brick, and stone.

Outside of Main Street in the Central Segment, greater variety in architectural styles is encouraged. However, given the context of existing single-family residential buildings and high number of churches and civic buildings in the Central Segment, it is recommended that new buildings continue to employ traditional materials and styles such as wood shingle, clapboard, brick, stone, gabled roofs, generous front porches, and the like.

Middle Segment

Rehabilitation and infill in the Middle Segment must preserve the historic house/office conversion character. This includes elements such as pitched roofs, front porches, wooden railings, open front lawn areas, narrow driveways, and parking at rear of lots.

Outer Segment

The redevelopment of the Hess properties in the Outer Segment offers the potential to create a new neighborhood with its own character, distinct from the rest of Woodbridge.

Accordingly, no architectural style is prescribed for the Outer Segment. However, all new buildings must meet the criteria for site planning, massing, active ground-floor uses, and other elements critical to creating walkable, pedestrian-friendly, and active communities provided in this *Vision Plan*.

One potential starting point for architectural style here is the remaining Hess headquarters tower. While new buildings do not have to follow this style, they could be designed in a complementary fashion that references some of the tower's features, so that the tower will not look too incongruous.

Parking and Loading

Parking Demand

Minimum and Maximum Ratios

The required minimum and permitted maximum parking supply should be defined for each building or project. Minimum required parking ratios were discussed in **Section 1C, Improve Parking Supply and Efficiency**.

Shared Parking

Buildings along Main Street in the Central Segment should be required to use shared parking to meet the minimum parking supply. Elsewhere, effective reductions in parking requirements through use of shared parking should also be encouraged.

Parking Supply

Surface Parking Lots

Surface parking lots should be located behind or to the side of buildings, away from view of public streets. Surface parking lots should not be permitted within the front yard, although driveways to rear or side parking areas may pass perpendicularly through front yards.

Where an existing surface parking lot adjoins a public sidewalk, the parking lot should be improved with a low wall and landscaping along the sidewalk frontage, as described in **Section 2A, Improve Pedestrian Safety and Comfort**.

In larger parking lots, trees should be planted in landscaped islands around the perimeter and/or across the lot, orchard-style.

Areas of parking lots not expected to be used for most of the year (overflow parking areas) should be paved with porous paving to facilitate groundwater recharge.

Structured Parking Garages

Requirements for treatment of parking garage facades fall into three categories:

Along areas of highest pedestrian traffic, namely: Main Street between Amboy and Rahway; School and Pearl Streets between Main Street and Heards Brook; and building areas bordering the perimeter of plazas, courts, and other smaller-scaled pedestrian-frequented public spaces:

- Structured parking should be hidden from view of designated areas by being located behind residential or retail (or other non-residential) space having a minimum depth of 30 feet (so as to be usable space).

Along areas of moderate pedestrian traffic, namely: public street frontages not specified in the previous paragraph, including New Street and North James Street; along public walkways (but not streets) bordering larger open spaces:

Right: Parking lot with low wall and fence at street perimeter. While no landscaping is provided within this buffer, the regularly-space street trees in the sidewalk further soften the frontage.

- The visibility of exposed parking garage facades should be minimized with **architectural screening** (see below for more details) of the facade.
- **Landscaping** (see below for more details) is also recommended at the base of parking garage levels, to soften the frontage.
- Any exposed parking garage levels that are one-half level below grade (i.e. extending no more than 5 feet above grade) in these locations should also be screened and landscaped in the same manner;

Along areas of low pedestrian traffic or along streets serving primarily a service function, namely: garage frontages along interior lot lines that face internal circulation aisles, loading areas, or parking lots; truck access circulation routes (if any, in the Outer Segment); and automobile-ori-

Right: porous paving (grasscrete) being used in overflow surface parking areas at the Dia Beacon museum in Beacon, New York.

Parking garage in Santa Monica, California with architectural screening at the street frontage. This Vision Plan does not permit this type of treatment along facades that border important streets, walkways, or smaller open spaces, but it is an appropriate treatment along certain street frontages with lower levels of pedestrian activity and along pedestrian walkways (not streets) bordering open space.

ented major arterials and highways (also only in the Outer Segment):

- Exposed structured parking garages may have plain, unadorned facades that fully expose the parking space within the building.

Where required as described above, **architectural screening** of parking garages should conceal views of parked vehicles from public streets and walkways, as follows:

- The facades of parking levels should be architecturally integrated with the building façade, both horizontally and vertically.
- Parking façades should be broken into bays, following the bay patterns of the building above.
- The same type and quality of materials used elsewhere in building facades should be employed for parking level facades.
- All garage openings should mimic the window typology and size of the building in which they are located. Ribbon-style windows and long horizontal string courses are prohibited.
- Garage window openings should be designed to shield possible vehicle head lamp glare and leakage to the outside of the structure, either through opaque or translucent glazing or through grates and grilles.
- Decorative grates and/or fenestration detailing should be used to complement the architecture of the garage facade.

Landscaping such as hedges and flowering plants should be installed at the base of parking garages to further conceal and soften views of parking level facades. Landscaping should include evergreen and deciduous materials so as to be effective year-round. The use of low fences or walls is encouraged in combination with landscaping to further screen the view of parking levels. Suggested fencing type is a low wrought-iron fence, not to exceed three feet in height, or a masonry wall, not to exceed two feet in height.

On-street Parking

On-street parking spaces on streets immediately adjoining a project should be permitted to be counted as available spaces to meet the retail parking supply.

Public Parking Lots

If the Township prepares a comprehensive parking study for downtown Woodbridge, new development should be permitted to pay a fee in lieu of providing on-site parking spaces. The fee would be used by the Township to create and manage shared public parking facilities.

Bicycle Parking

Secure, locked bicycle storage rooms should be provided within each residential or mixed use building for use of residents.

Outside buildings, bicycle racks are encouraged, and should be provided

in a front or side setback area so as not to intrude on the public sidewalk.

Loading and Refuse Areas

Any project containing less than 25,000 square feet of retail space should not be required to provide off-street loading areas.

Any project containing a total of more than 25,000 square feet of retail space should provide at least one (1) off-street loading area, a minimum of 12 feet in width and 30 feet in length.

Building Signage

Retail Signage

Facade Signs

Facade signs should be the largest and most prominent sign announcing a retail business. Facade signs should be placed in the enframed area above storefront windows, and should not obscure architectural features of the building.

Recommended retail facade signage types include painted wooden sign boards, channel-cut internally-lit individual letters, and internally-lit box signs with light-colored lettering against a dark, opaque background.

Hanging Signs

In areas of high pedestrian activity, such as Main Street in the Central Segment, and any new retail core created in the Outer Segment, hanging signs are another recommended signage type.

Hanging signs should hang at right angles to the facade, with a clearance of at least eight feet above the public sidewalk. Wooden and metal signs are recommended, with external gooseneck lighting.

Window and Door Signs

Window and door signs are an important component of retail signage, but must be much more strictly regulated than the current conditions along Main Street.

Window and door signs should be permanently affixed to window glazing by means of hand-painting, silk screening, or vinyl decal stickers. The area encompassed by the outer border of a window sign should not occupy more than 10 percent of the glazed area. The sign content area should be visually permeable, with

Parking garage in North Carolina with landscaped perimeter plantings, attractive brick facade cladding, and greater pedestrian-scale detail at the ground floor.

Examples of facade signage placed properly on the storefront, without obstructing architectural features or windows. The top image is a painted sign board, the bottom shows pin-mounted, channel-cut lettering.

more voids than solid areas, so as to permit clear view into the storefront.

Awning Signs

Lettering is permitted on the front vertical (skirt) panel of awnings.

Lettering and/or business logos are permitted on the upper panel of awnings. The area of the awning panel sign should be limited to 30 percent of the area of the awning panel.

Temporary Signs

Temporary signs are intended to advertise short-term events such as retail sales, properties for rent, or special events. They are not intended to be posted for long periods of time, and they should not be immediately replaced with new temporary signs so as to have the effect of being permanent. The Township's existing regulations should be better enforced.

Signage Lighting

Exterior gooseneck lighting of facade and hanging signs is encouraged.

Office Signage

Monument Signs

Monument signs are an automobile-oriented sign format intended to be legible when driving at higher speeds, and as such, should be permitted only for home-office conversions in the Middle District as well as for any stand-alone office buildings in the Outer Segment. They are not appropriate for mixed-use buildings in areas with the most pedestrian activity.

- Monument signs should only contain the business name, type of business, and street address number. Phone numbers, web addresses, email addresses, slogans or tag lines should not be included. Proprietor or owner names should not be included, unless the person's name is also the legal business name.
- Monument sign dimensions should not exceed six feet long by four feet high.
- Only one monument sign should be permitted per parcel. Where more than one business shares a parcel, business names may be clustered on one monument sign.

Signage Lighting

Monument signs should have exterior lighting, mounted on the ground and pointed upwards to the sign, with cutoff fixtures to minimize spillover glare. Internally-illuminated monument signs should be gradually phased out.

Temporary Signs

The visual prominence of the corridor's monument signs is often reduced by competition from nearby temporary sandwich-board type signs in the Middle Segment; these temporary signs should be more strictly regulated or prohibited entirely.

Signage for Upper-story Uses in Mixed-Use Buildings

For upper-story uses in mixed-use buildings, the following signs should be permitted:

- One wall-mounted sign, to be placed near the main pedestrian entry at the ground level.
- One additional wall-mounted sign to be permitted near entries from parking areas.
- Facade signage on taller buildings may be placed near the roofline or marquee-style along the facade vertically, but should be limited to the business name and the street address number.

Perimeter Identity Signage

At the Hess redevelopment area, project identity signage should be permitted at up to three major entry points to the project. Entry signage could be in the form of a monument sign set within a landscaped area, or could be individual characters pin-mounted on a prominent building feature such a tower.

3D. BONUS PROGRAMS

Elsewhere in this *Vision Plan*, several program options for the Township to permit bonus (additional) building height are suggested. The details of each bonus program may need to be fine-tuned, but the general approach for each is referenced below.

Increased Height Allowance

Bonuses may be combined up to the maximum permitted for the area. Base height and maximum bonusable heights for the Central Segment were shown in ***Figure 5***. No height bonuses are permitted in the Middle Segment. Up to three additional stories are permitted in the Outer Segment.

In Exchange for Ground-floor Cultural Uses

Refer to **Section 1A, Encourage Intensification / Height Allowances** for the potential height bonuses tied to the long-term leasing of ground-floor space to arts-related or community uses.

This bonus may only be used in the Central Segment.

Example of retail window and door signage that preserves views into the storefront

Hanging blade signs in a modern style

In Exchange for Provision of Open Space

Refer to **Section 3A, Provide More People Places** for the potential height bonuses tied to provision of public open space(s) within a new development.

This bonus may only be used in the Central Segment; high-quality open space should be required in the Outer Segment regardless of any height bonuses. For the Middle Segment, changes to regulations to encourage provision of a public park within the remaining largest parcels is proposed (see **Section 3A, Provide More People Places**).

In Exchange for LEED Compliance

A LEED-based height bonus is described next. "LEED" is a United States-based rating system that stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. LEED includes many different programs, targeted to different development types and scales. Among them, and recommended for Woodbridge, are:

- LEED for Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND) integrates the principles of smart growth, urbanism and green building into a national system for holistic neighborhood design. It takes into account transportation options, quality open spaces, walkable destinations and a variety of land uses, progressive stormwater management, total energy use, and other features.
- LEED for Building Design and Construction (LEED BD+C) applies to buildings that are being newly constructed or going through a major renovation. It provides a framework for building a holistic green building, including materials sourcing, energy use, and siting.

LEED certification provides independent, third-party verification that a development's location and design meet accepted high levels of environmentally responsible, sustainable development. For more information on these programs, see the U.S. Green Building Council's website, www.usgbc.org.

Within the Central and Outer Segments, allow a height bonus in exchange for LEED compliance, as follows:

- Central and Outer Segments: permit a height bonus of one to two stories if the building in question is certified LEED for New Construction (LEED-NC). The decision to award one or two stories should be related to the level of LEED-NC attained: certified, silver, gold, or platinum.
- Outer Segment only: Permit a height bonus of one story on all buildings if a project is certified LEED for Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND). This bonus only applies to the Outer Segment because it is the location where an entire neighborhood could be built.
- These two LEED bonuses may be combined in the Outer Segment to yield up to two additional stories for development.

More Compact Building Styles

In the Middle Segment, development on parcels over 45,000 square feet is permitted to use more compact development styles (primarily townhouses), provided the overall density is not exceeded, if public open space of minimum 100-feet depth is created along Main Street. **Section 3A, Provide More People Places**, provides specific details.

4. Implementation

This Chapter suggests who should take responsibility for the different strategies in this *Vision Plan*. It also assigns a short, medium, or long-term time frame to each strategies, to aid in prioritization. Many of these priorities reflect the fact that bringing new residents downtown is the first step that must begin before the market will strengthen for retail and dining uses. But the Township can send a strong signal to current and future residents and business owners that it intends to transform downtown Woodbridge through public realm improvements including streetscape changes, new pocket parks, and pedestrian improvements.

Steps for Town

Short-term (1-2 years)

- Enlarge street tree pits along Main Street to foster better growth
- Finalize and publicize the three bonus programs for additional building height
- Amend *Main Street Rehabilitation and Transit Village Pla*n and *Hess-Woodbridge Redevelopment Plan* to be consistent with this *Vision Plan*
- Amend land use ordinance's / zoning's parking regulations to correspond to the recommendations of this *Vision Plan*
- Issue RFPs to developers, including a copy of this *Vision Plan,* for opportunity sites such as those in Figure 3

Medium-term (3 to 5 years)

- Expand role of SID to help manage downtown parking supply
- Consider installing parking meters along Main Street and adding parking restrictions to public lots
- Build a new parking deck downtown
- With shopping center site redevelopment, reconfigure Parker Press Park's parking lot to be along Poillon Street, and remove fencing at the west and south of the Park
- Conduct a stormwater management feasibility study of the naturalization of Heards Brook in the downtown area
- Test temporary road closures in streets along Heards Brook park
- Implement streetscape changes along Main Street
- Consider a traffic study of signalization and right-of-way changes (such as traffic circles or a "road diet" at Rahway Avenue) for up to 2,250 additional housing units downtown
- Consider accepting a lower traffic level of service standard for downtown intersections, recognizing that healthy, vibrant downtowns will always have some congestion
- Considering setting up a 10-year compliance program for facades and signage improvements along Main Street in the Central Segment, particularly once new residential development begins to be built

Longer-term (5 to 10 years)

- Replace public wayfinding signs with easier to read signs targeted to drivers
- Implement streetscape changes along Amboy and Rahway Avenues
- Discuss sharing of commuter parking lots with New Jersey Transit, and set aside a portion of the parking to meet evening and weekend retail demand for new development
- Improve Pearl and Fulton Streets through sidewalk widening (best to be done when a major new development is underway along the street)
- Close streets along Heards Brook park to traffic permanently (on weekends, or all days)
- Naturalize the Heards Brook concrete channel in the downtown area

Steps for Residents

Short-term

- Build support and educate others about the recommendations of this *Vision Plan*, particularly the concept of more residents downtown
- Advocate for better, pedestrian-scaled design throughout Woodbridge, and help the Township with feedback on projects
- Support and patronize downtown businesses, particularly restaurants and cafes

Medium-term

- Help build community events downtown on Main Street (not just in Parker Press Park) and linking Heards Brook area to Main Street
- Help bring a flea-market style fair with crafts, vintage goods, and local foods to Parker Press Park

Steps for SID

Short-term

- Encourage sharing of parking lot resources and installation of parking meters
- Assist Township in developing a holistic approach to parking management downtown

Medium-term

- Set up Facade Improvement Program grant program with professional expertise assistance. Identify a few demonstration projects, to show storekeepers and property owners how improvements will benefit their business.
- Assist Township to work with Main Street businesses to improve parking lot frontages, add sidewalks along the rear of buildings; fix or infill gaps in the streetwall

Steps for Woodbridge Community Non-profits

Short-term

- Empower Woodbridge Arts Alliance to manage the downtown arts district, and other recommendations as outlined in the *Access to the Arts* study
- Expand the events programmed by the Woodbridge Community Center and others in downtown locations
- Berkeley College: explore adding on-campus housing along Rahway Avenue

Medium-term

- Assist in bringing more arts-related uses to ground-floor spaces of Main Street buildings, including through the suggested height bonus in new buildings for provision of cultural uses

Longer-term

- Bring arts-related uses to specific buildings downtown, including the United Methodist Church

APPENDIX

Sources and Further Reading

- Parcel data records: http://njgin.state.nj.us/oit/gis/NJ_TaxListSearch/
- *Parking Solutions*, American Planning Association, PAS EIP-24, September 2009, available for download at https://goo.gl/YSiGOw
- *Final Report, Downtown Parking Study*, Township of Woodbridge. April 22, 2008 by Neglia Engineering Associates.
- *Main Street Rehabilitation and Transit Village Plan*, June 2008, by Township of Woodbridge
- *Woodbridge Master Plan*, February 2009, by Heyer, Gruel & Associates
- *Woodbridge-Rahway Regional Access to the Arts*, August 2014, by Together North Jersey
- *Hess-Woodbridge Redevelopment Plan*, November 2014 by Township of Woodbridge
- US Green Building Council, www.usgbc.org, for LEED standards
- *Woodbridge Bicycle Connect: Draft Proposed Route Plan*, Exhibit A, by Sam Schwartz Engineering D.P.C., April 14, 2015.

Graphics in this Appendix

- Main Street Rehabilitation and Transit Village Plan Zone Map
- Existing Zoning and Redevelopment / Rehabilitation Plan Areas
- Existing Ownership Patterns
- Existing Land Use and Parcelization
- Recent Aerial Photography
- Adopted Complete Streets Policies

FIGURE 37, MAIN STREET REHAB. AND TRANSIT VILLAGE PLAN MAP

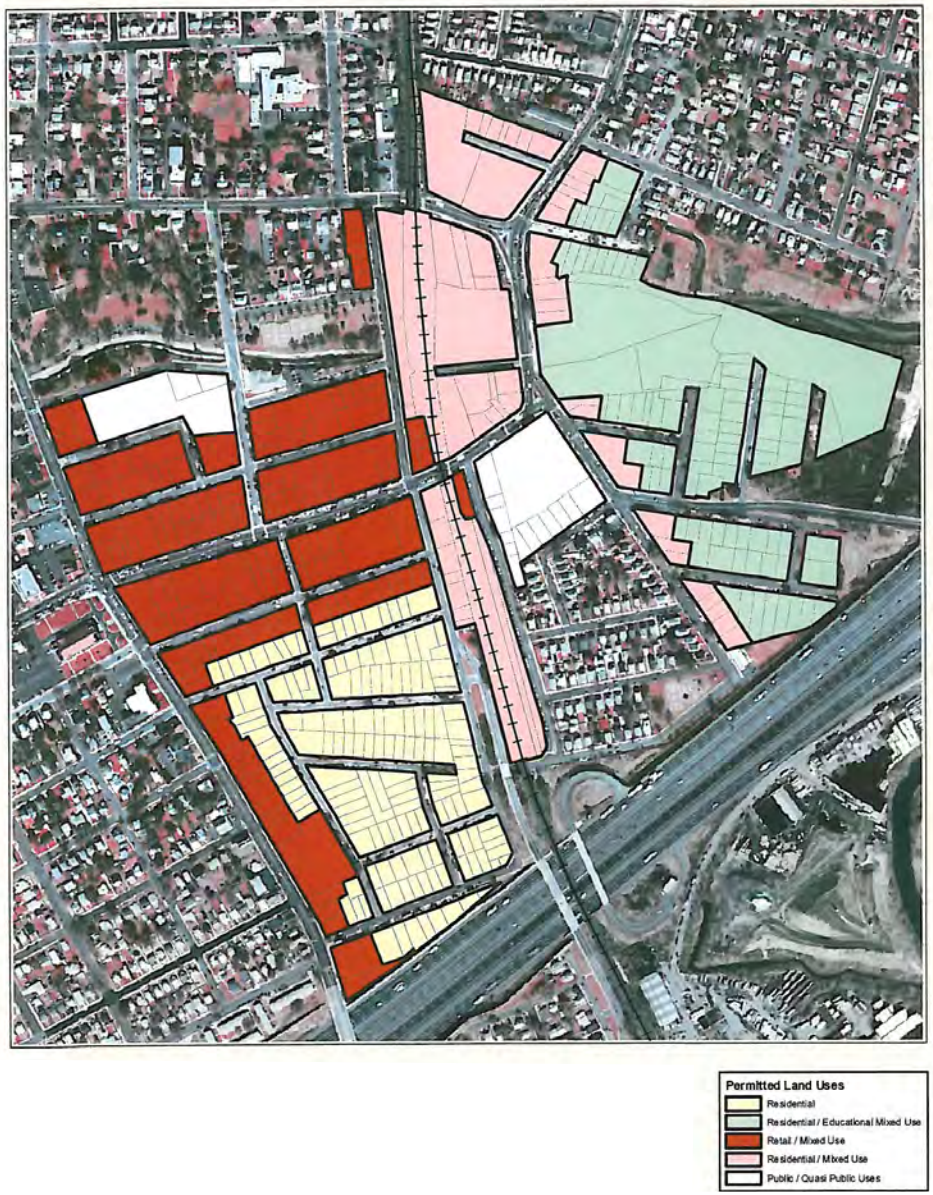
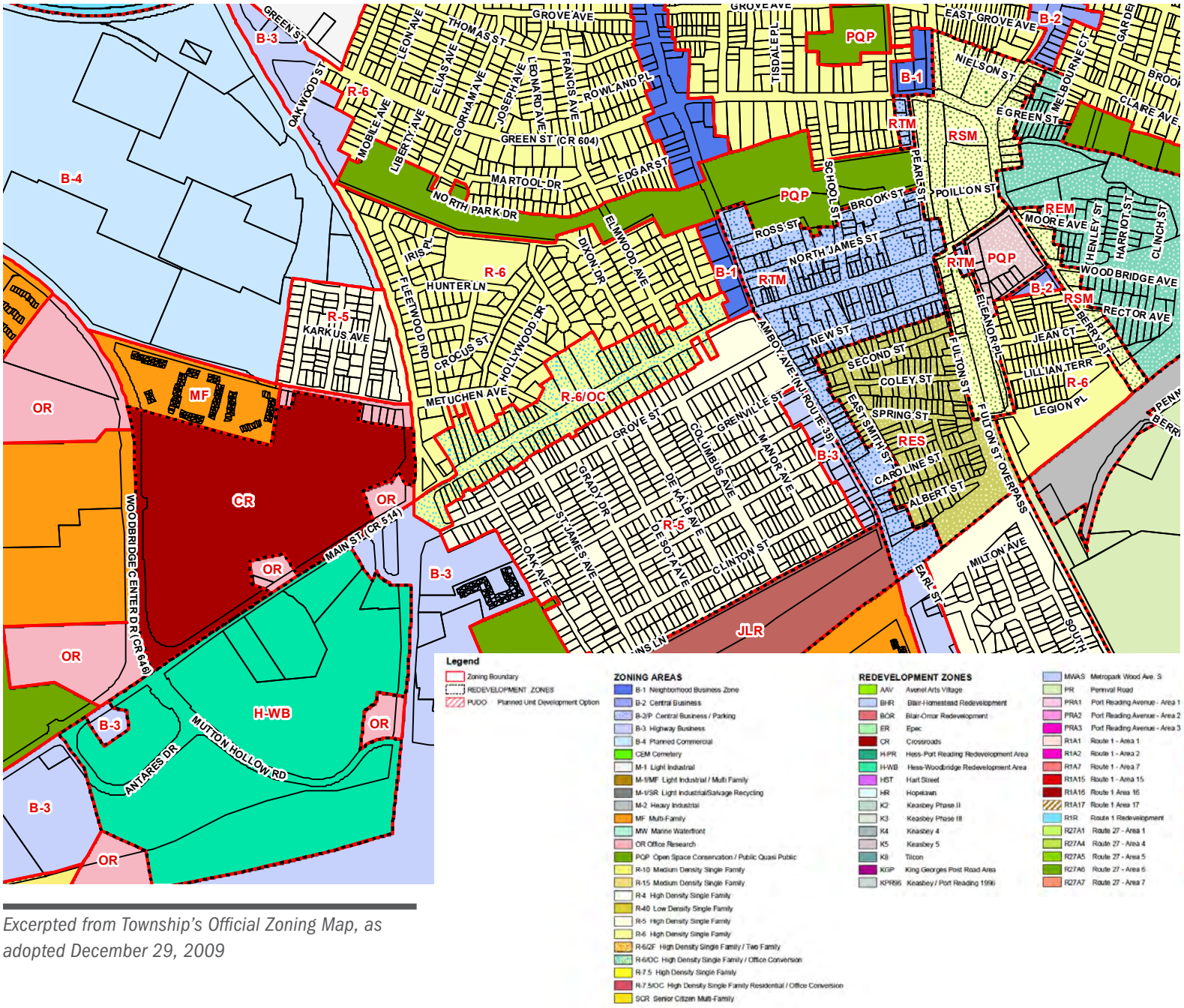


FIGURE 38, EXISTING ZONING AND REDEV. / REHAB. AREAS



Excerpted from Township's Official Zoning Map, as adopted December 29, 2009

FIGURE 39, OWNERSHIP PATTERNS AND MAJOR OWNERS

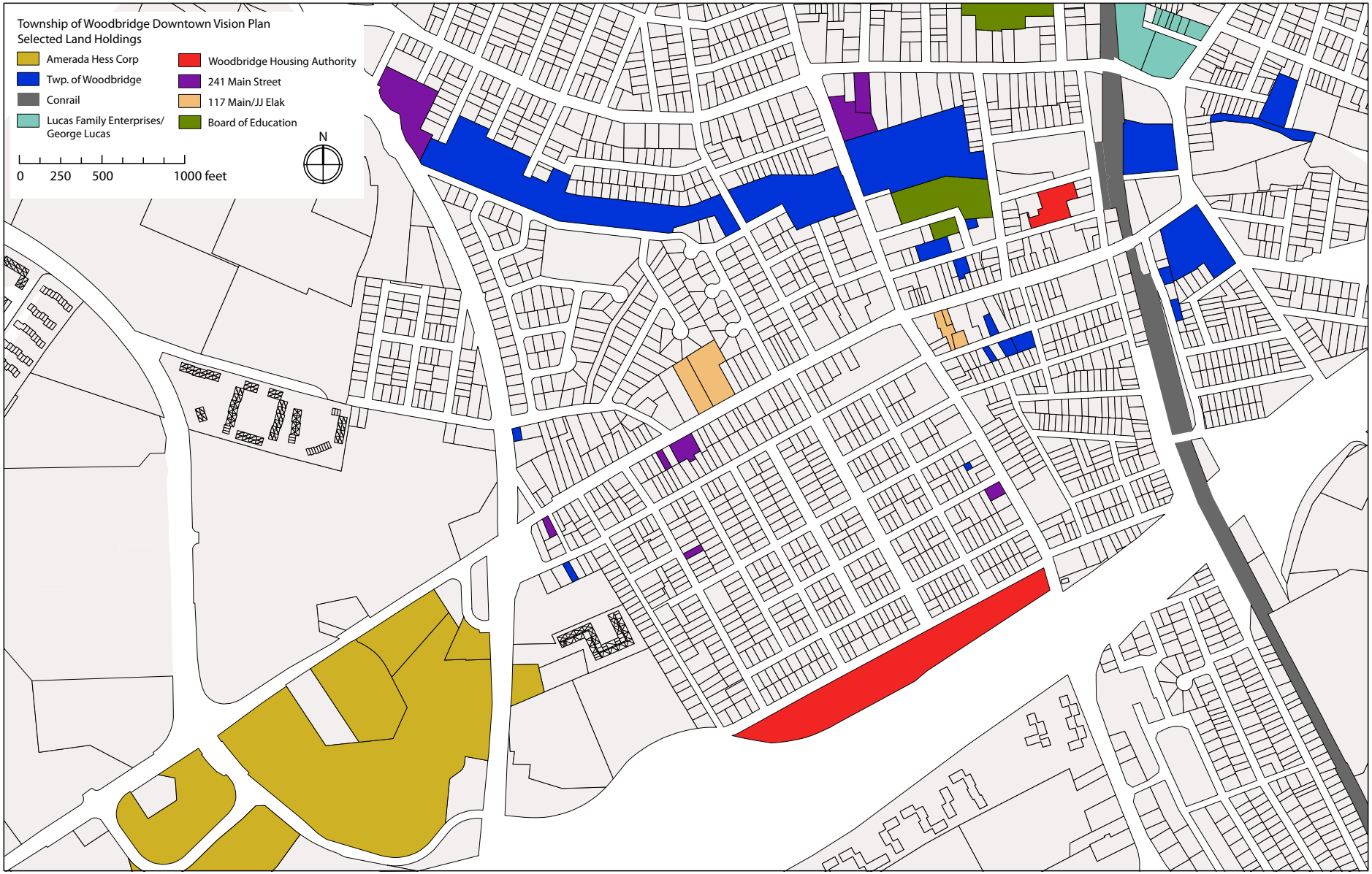


FIGURE 40, EXISTING LAND USES IN CENTRAL SEGMENT

FIGURE 41, EXISTING LAND USES IN MIDDLE SEGMENT

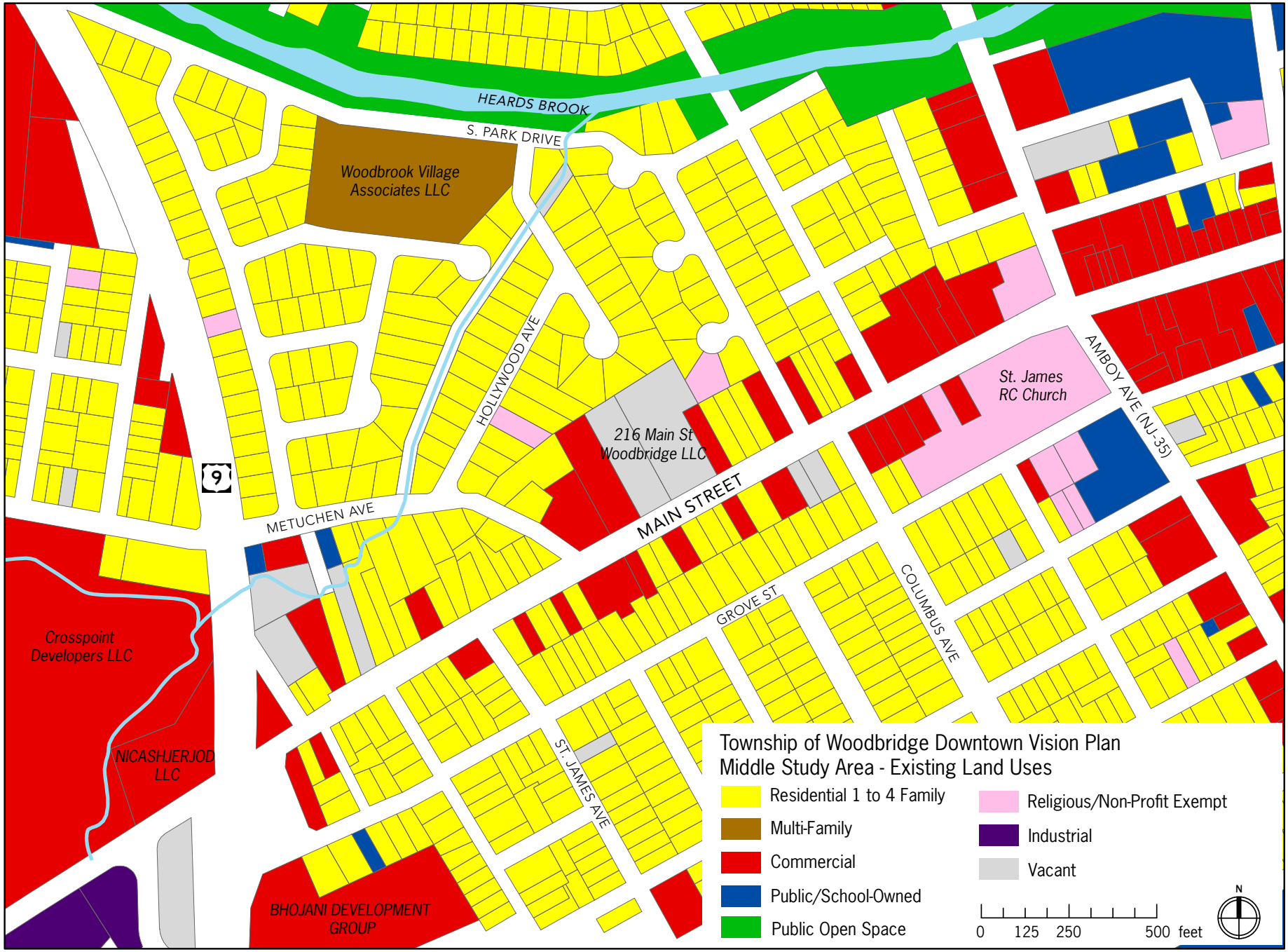


FIGURE 42, EXISTING LAND USES IN OUTER SEGMENT

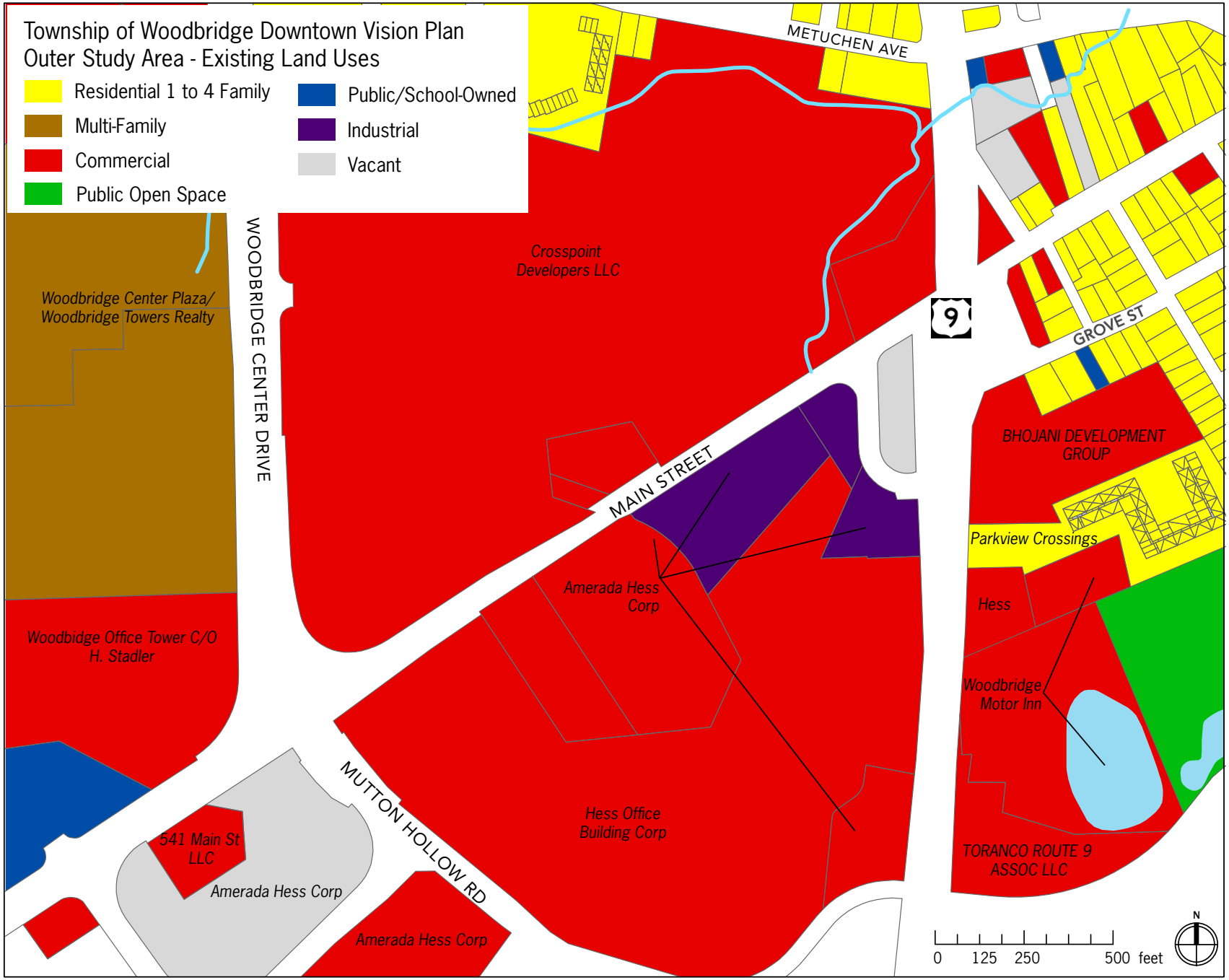


FIGURE 43, AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH AND PARCEL LINES, CENTRAL SEGMENT

Township of Woodbridge Downtown Vision Plan
Central Study Area - Aerial & Parcel View

FIGURE 44, AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH AND PARCEL LINES, MIDDLE SEGMENT

FIGURE 45, AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH AND PARCEL LINES, OUTER SEGMENT

FIGURE 46, MIDDLESEX COUNTY'S COMPLETE STREETS POLICY

Middlesex County

Administration Building
75 Bayard Street
New Brunswick, NJ
08901

Signature Copy

Resolution: 12-1316-R

File Number: 12-1316-R

Resolution to Support the Middlesex County "Complete Streets" Program

WHEREAS, the County of Middlesex is supportive of roadways that safely and comfortably accommodate all road users including motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians and transit riders of all ages and abilities; and

WHEREAS, on December 10, 2009 the Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) signed a new internal policy called "Complete Streets" to ensure that transportation planners and engineers consistently design, construct and maintain State or Federally funded roadways to provide safe access for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users of all ages and abilities; and

WHEREAS, the adoption of the "Complete Streets" policy by the NJDOT was prompted in part to address a significant increase in pedestrian fatalities; and

WHEREAS, the NJDOT Complete Streets Policy Fact Sheet which is included as Attachment A describes in more detail the components of this new NJDOT policy; and

WHEREAS, the Middlesex County Transportation Coordinating Committee passed a resolution on March 23, 2010 recommending the evaluation of a County Complete Streets Program to help promote and enhance improved traffic safety conditions by ensuring that no user is omitted from the design process of a road improvement project; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Chosen Freeholders acknowledges the merits of a Complete Streets design in County projects, thereby promoting traffic safety and encouraging Middlesex County municipalities to adopt similar municipal level complete streets design goals in municipal projects;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders does hereby support Complete Streets Design for consideration that acknowledges the needs of all users including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit users of all ages and abilities in the design, construction and maintenance of Middlesex County roadways.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be sent to the New Jersey Department of Transportation and the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority.

At a meeting of the Board of Chosen Freeholders on 7/19/2012, a motion was made by Ronald G. Rios, seconded by Blanquita B. Valenti, that this Resolution be Adopted. The motion passed. The above is a true copy, as certified by the Clerk of the Board.

Aye: 5 Freeholder Barrett Bellante, Freeholder Deputy Director Rios, Freeholder Tomaro, Freeholder Valenti and Freeholder Director Rafano

Approved as to form and legality: _____
County Counsel

_____
Carol Barrett Bellante

Certified by: _____
Margaret E. Pemberton

FIGURE 47, WOODBRIDGE TOWNSHIP'S COMPLETE STREETS POLICY

22.

RESOLUTION OF TOWNSHIP OF WOODBRIDGE TO ADOPT A COMPLETE STREETS POLICY

WHEREAS, the Township of Woodbridge has been actively promoting environmental sustainability for the health, safety, and welfare of Township residents, and the betterment of the natural environment of the Township, and the environment of the planet; and

WHEREAS, transportation, especially the design of streets, is an important element of environmental sustainability; and

WHEREAS, the Township desires to adopt a Complete Streets Policy that takes into consideration all users of the public right-of-way, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and motorists, of all ages and abilities; and

WHEREAS, Complete Streets improve safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, children, older citizens, non-drivers and the mobility-challenged as well as those that cannot afford a car or choose to live car-free; and

WHEREAS, Complete Streets provide connections to bicycling and walking trip generators such as employment, education, residential, recreation, retail centers and public facilities; and

WHEREAS, Complete Streets promote healthy lifestyles; and

WHEREAS, Complete Streets create more livable communities; and

WHEREAS, Complete Streets reduce traffic congestion and reliance on carbon fuels thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions; and

WHEREAS, Complete Streets make fiscal sense by incorporating sidewalks, bike lanes, safe crossings and transit amenities into the initial design of a project, thus sparing the expense of retrofits later.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF THE TOWNSHIP OF WOODBRIDGE, that the Township does hereby support and promote a Complete Streets by adopting the following policy:

COMPLETE STREETS POLICY

I. Purpose

To plan, design, build, and maintain all roads, where feasible, to meet the needs of all users, including enabling safe access and mobility of pedestrians, bicyclists, transit vehicle users, and motorists of all ages and abilities.

II. Definition

Complete Street is defined as a means to provide safe access for all users by designing and operating a comprehensive, integrated, connected multi-modal network of transportation options.

III. Policy

1. Create a comprehensive, integrated, connected multi-modal network of streets by providing proper connections to bicycling and walking trip generators, such as employment, education, residential, recreational and public facilities, as well as retail and transit centers within the community, where feasible.

2. Provide safe and accessible accommodations for existing and future pedestrian, bicycle and transit facilities.

3. As all streets are different, establish a procedure to evaluate new streets and resurfacing projects for complete streets inclusion according to length of project, local community support, environmental constraints, right-of-way limitations, funding resources and bicycle and/or pedestrian compatibility.

4. Transportation facilities are long-term investments that shall anticipate likely future demand for bicycling and walking facilities and not preclude the provision of future improvements.

5. Address the need for bicyclists and pedestrians to cross corridors. Even where bicyclists and pedestrians may not commonly use a particular travel corridor that is being improved or constructed, they will likely need to be able to cross that corridor safely and conveniently. Therefore, the design of intersections, interchanges and bridges shall accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians in a manner that is safe, accessible and convenient.

8. Design bicycle and pedestrian facilities to the best currently available standards and practices, including the New Jersey Roadway Design Manual, the AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, AASHTO's Guide for the Planning, Design and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities, the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices and others as related.

9. Provisions shall be made for pedestrians and bicyclists when closing roads, bridges or sidewalks for construction projects as outlined in NJDOT Policy #705 -Accommodating Pedestrian and Bicycle Traffic During Construction.

10. Improvements shall also consider connections for Safe Routes to Schools, Safe Routes to Transit, Transit Villages, trail crossings and areas or population groups with limited transportation options.

11. Improvements shall comply with Title VII Environmental Justice, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and complement the context of the surrounding community.

12. Exemptions to the Complete Streets policy shall be presented for final decision to the Municipal Engineer in writing and documented with supporting data that indicates the reason for the decision and are limited to the following:

a) Non-motorized users are prohibited on the roadway.

b) Insufficient space in an existing right-of-way to design a Complete Street.

c) Scarcity of population, travel and attractors, both existing and future, indicate an absence of need for such accommodations.

d) Detrimental environmental or social impacts outweigh the need for these accommodations.

e) Cost of accommodations is excessively disproportionate to cost of project.

f) The safety or timing of a project is compromised by the inclusion of Complete Streets.

g) An exemption other than those listed above must be documented with supporting data and must be approved by the Municipal Engineer.

13. This policy shall be incorporated into the next Master Plan Reexamination report and the adoption

ADOPTED: JULY 12, 2011

I hereby certify that the above is a true and exact copy of the Resolution adopted by the Municipal Council of the Township of Woodbridge at their Regular Meeting held on

JULY 12, 2011.

JOHN M. MITCH, RMC, CMC, CMR
MUNICIPAL CLERK