

Cedar Meadows Redevelopment Plan

Township of Woodbridge
Middlesex County, New Jersey



November 2015

ENDORSED 11/30/2015 by Township of Woodbridge Planning Board

ADOPTED 12/15/2015 by Township of Woodbridge Council

Cedar Meadows Redevelopment Plan

Township of Woodbridge

Prepared by
Township of Woodbridge Department of Planning & Development

Marta E. Lefsky, A.I.C.P., P.P.
License No. 05177

Eric Griffith, A.I.C.P., P.P.
License No. 33LI00622200

Chris Kesici, A.I.C.P., P.P.
License No. 33LI00618600

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
CEDAR MEADOWS REDEVELOPMENT AREA ZONING STANDARDS.....	9
PLAN RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER PLANS	13
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN	17

<i>Figure 1: Redevelopment Area Parcel Map</i>	3
<i>Figure 2: Redevelopment Area Aerial Map</i>	4
<i>Figure 3: Existing Zoning</i>	6

INTRODUCTION

The Cedar Meadows Redevelopment Plan represents a unique opportunity to improve a large parcel of public land in the Avenel section of Woodbridge Township, which has commonly been referred to as the “Warden Home Property.” This plan will foster the transformation of the property into an affordable residential use for seniors to age in place and for the developmentally disabled to reside. This plan also includes an active recreation use component to be utilized by the general public. This Redevelopment Area will be a highly desirable location for people to live and play.

The redevelopment of the Warden Home Property presented unique challenges. In response to the physical and economic conditions at this site, the Township Council requested that the Planning Board evaluate certain properties as a “non-condemnation area in need of redevelopment” on August 19, 2014. Following the Planning Board’s evaluation, the Township Council designated the Warden Home Property as a “non-condemnation area in need of redevelopment” on September 1, 2015. This Plan renames the site as “Cedar Meadows.”

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

According to the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (N.J.S.A. 40:A 12A-1, et. seq.) the Redevelopment Plan shall include an outline for the planning, development, redevelopment or rehabilitation of the project area sufficient to indicate:

- Its relationship to definitive local objectives as to appropriate land uses, density of population and improved traffic and public transportation, public utilities, recreational and community facilities and other public improvements;
- Proposed land uses and building requirements in the project area;
- Adequate provision for the temporary and permanent relocation as necessary of residents in the project area, including an estimate of the extent to which decent, safe, and sanitary dwelling units, affordable to displaced residents will be available in the existing local housing market;
- An identification of any property within the Redevelopment Area proposed to be acquired in accordance with the Redevelopment Plan;

- Any significant relationship of the Redevelopment Plan to:
 - A) The Master Plans of contiguous municipalities;
 - B) The Master Plan of the County in which the municipality is located; and;
 - C) The State Development and Redevelopment Plans adopted pursuant to the “State Planning Act.”

PLANNING CONTEXT

The Township of Woodbridge is 24.2 square miles in size and located in northeastern Middlesex County. The Township of Woodbridge is bordered by Clark Township, the City of Rahway, the City of Linden, and Union County to the north; the Borough of Carteret, the Arthur Kill and the City of Perth Amboy to the east; the Raritan River to the south; and Edison Township to the west.

The Avenel section of the Township is generally bound by the City of Rahway and the City of Linden to the north, the Borough of Carteret to the east, St. Georges Avenue to the west, and the Port Reading Railroad to the south. The Avenel section of the Township consists of residential neighborhoods, commercial uses along Route 1, and industrial uses concentrated in the north-eastern portion of this section of town.

The Cedar Meadows Redevelopment Area is located along Rahway Avenue (County Road 514). The Area consists of one (1) parcel, Block 908.01, Lot 10, with a total area of approximately 15 acres. The Cedar Meadows Redevelopment Area is surrounded by industrial land uses to its north, east, and south. East Jersey State Prison is located west of the Cedar Meadows Redevelopment Area, immediately across Rahway Avenue.

Figure 1: Redevelopment Area Parcel Map

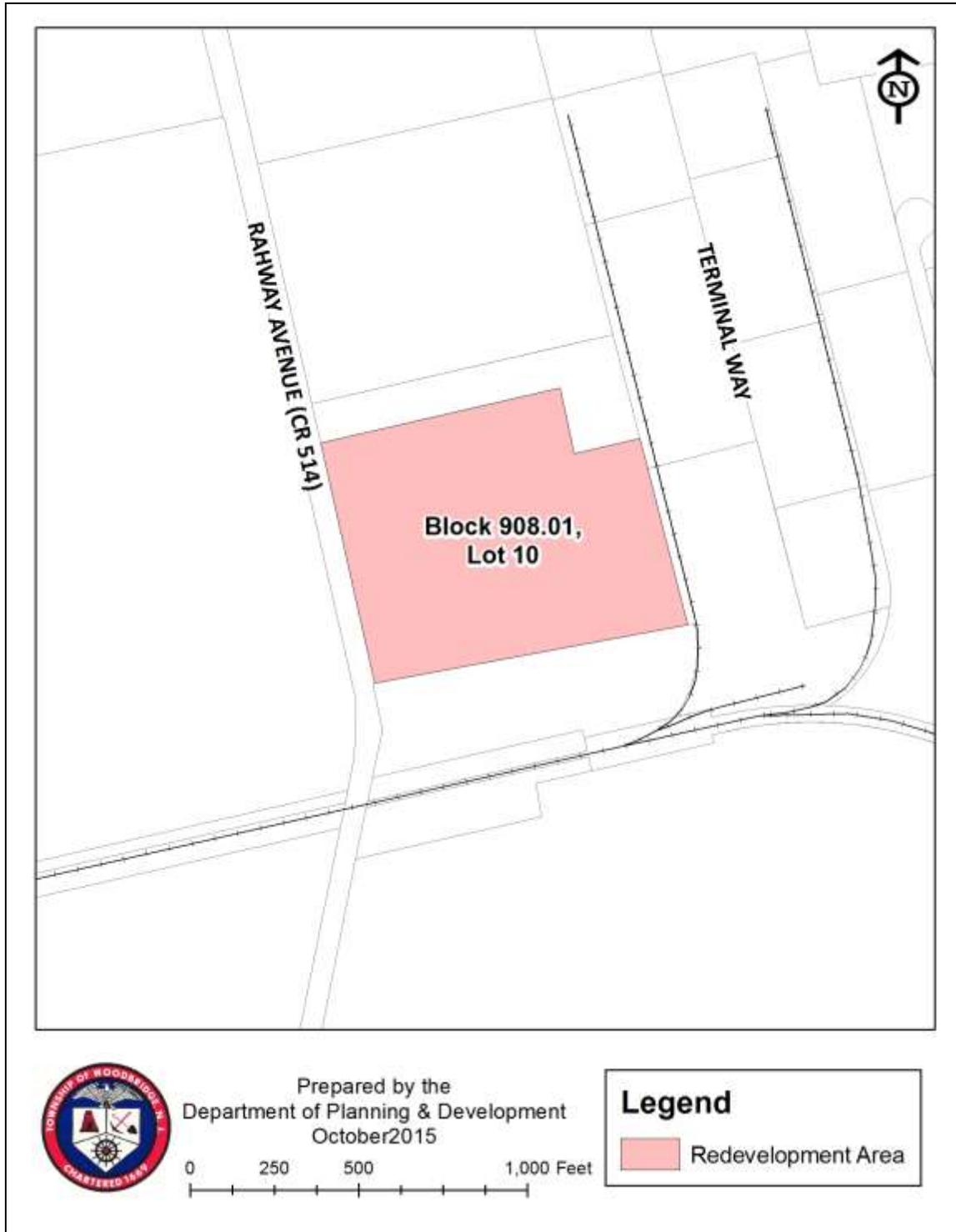


Figure 2: Redevelopment Area Aerial Map



HISTORY OF AVENEL

The Avenel section of Woodbridge Township was once known as “Demarest on the Hill” after the Demarest colonial family. Captain Demarest later founded the community of Avenel which he named after his daughter. Avenel developed as an active residential community with its own schools, churches, and small businesses. Today, a large portion of Avenel remains residential, however, the northern portion of this section of the town exclusively contains light industrial uses and extensive commercial uses are located along Route 1.

MASTER PLANNING AND ZONING DESIGNATION HISTORY

In 2009, the Township Master Plan recognized the existing land use for this area as public property. The Master Plan proposed designation of this area as a PQP Public/Quasi-Public Zone. Currently, the redevelopment area is in the OSC/PQP Open Space Conservation and Public/Quasi-Public zone.

The 1960 Zoning Map depicts the redevelopment area as zoned for industrial use. The industrial zone designation stayed in place until 2010 when it was changed to OSC/PQP Open Space Conservation and Public/Quasi-Public Zone.

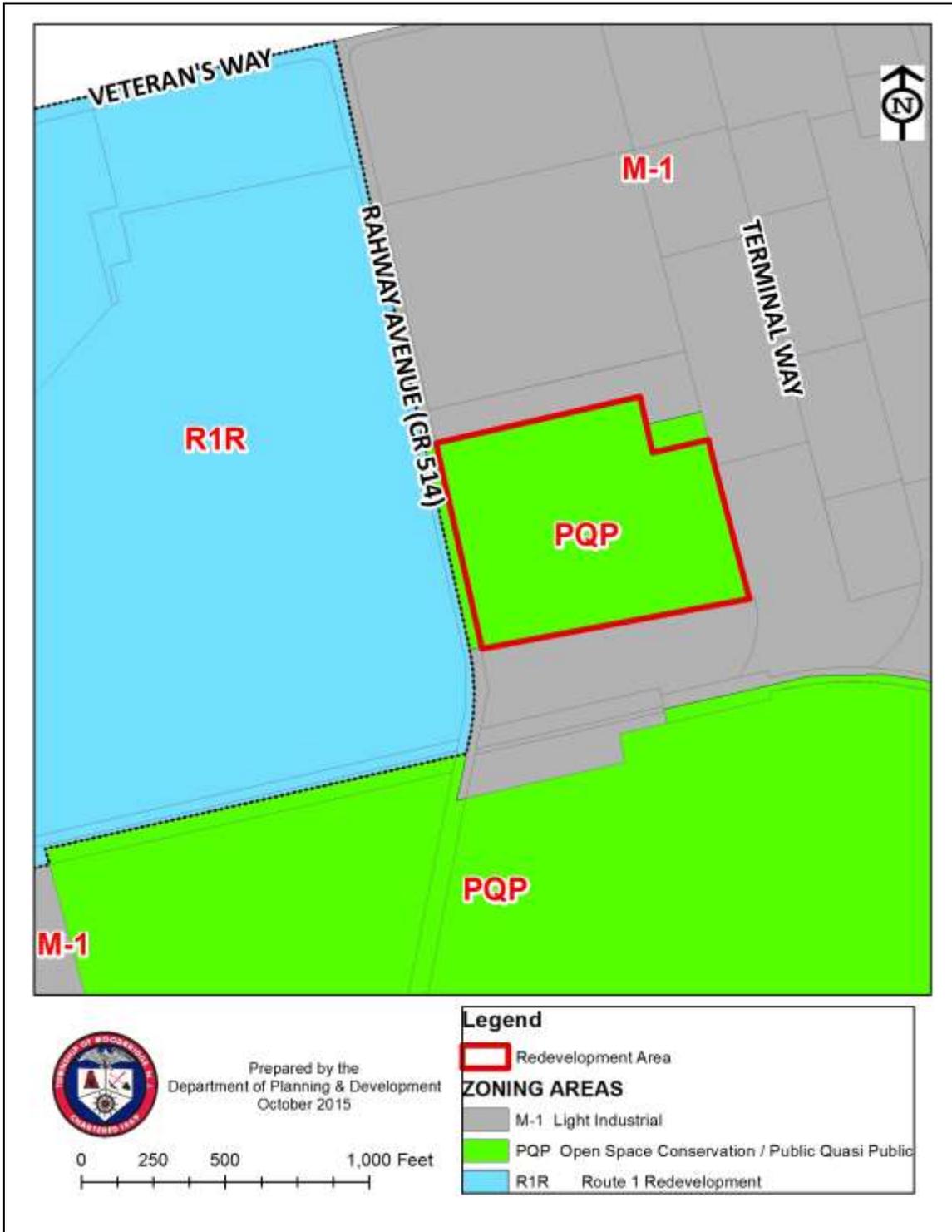
Although zoned for industrial land use for many years, the area was never developed into an industrial site. Located directly across the street from East Jersey State Prison, the property served as the residency of the prison warden and included administrative buildings for the prison.

PLAN GOALS

The overall goal of this Redevelopment Plan is to address the existing conditions that have negatively impacted the Area and comprehensively upgrade the area for redevelopment. The Township aims to reach the following goals:

- To stimulate economic investment in the Area;
- To promote the effective use of all the Redevelopment Area properties and to increase property tax base;
- To develop a safe and modern residential site;
- To improve the physical appearance of the Area;
- To provide housing opportunities for seniors to age in place;
- To provide housing opportunities to the developmentally disabled;
- To provide active recreation opportunities for the general public.

Figure 3: Existing Zoning



RELATIONSHIP OF PLAN TO THE TOWNSHIP LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE (APPLICATION & PROCESS)

The Redevelopment Area shall be redeveloped in accordance with the standards detailed in this Redevelopment Plan. This Plan supersedes the use and bulk provisions of the Township Land Use and Development Ordinance (Chapter 150) for the Redevelopment Area unless specifically referenced. Other Township regulations affecting developments that are in conflict are superseded by this Plan; however, existing engineering standards, performance standards and definitions shall apply.

In connection with site plan or subdivision applications, the Planning Board may grant deviations from the regulations contained within this Redevelopment Plan where by reason of exceptional narrowness, shallowness or shape of a specific piece of property or by reason of exceptional topographic conditions, pre-existing structures and physical features uniquely affecting a specific piece of property, the strict application of any area, yard, bulk or design objective or regulation adopted pursuant to this Redevelopment Plan would result in peculiar and exceptional practical difficulties to, or exceptional or undue hardship upon, the developer or redeveloper of such property. The Planning Board may also grant a deviation from the regulations contained within this Redevelopment Plan related to a specific piece of property where the purposes of this Redevelopment Plan would be advanced by such deviation from the strict application of the requirements of this Plan and the benefits of granting the deviation would outweigh any detriments.

The Planning Board may grant exceptions or waivers of design standards from the requirements for site plan or subdivision approval as may be reasonable and within the general purpose and intent of the provisions for site plan review and/or subdivision approval within the Plan, if the literal enforcement of one or more provisions of the Plan is impracticable or would exact undue hardship because of peculiar conditions pertaining to this site. No deviations may be granted under the terms of this section unless such deviations can be granted without resulting in substantial detriment to the public good and will not substantially impair the intent and purpose of the Redevelopment Plan.

No deviations may be granted which will result in permitting a use that is not a permitted use within this Redevelopment Plan. Any deviations from standards of this Plan that results in a “d” variance pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-70d shall be addressed as an amendment to the Plan rather than via variance relief through the Township’s Zoning Board of Adjustment. An application requesting a deviation from the requirements of this Redevelopment Plan shall provide public notice of such application in accordance with the public notice requirement set forth in N.J.S.A.

40:55D- 12a.&b. All development must be approved by the Planning Board and shall be submitted through the normal site plan and subdivision procedures as identified as N.J.S.A. 40:55D, et seq.

Final adoption of this Redevelopment Plan by the Township Council shall be considered an amendment to the Township of Woodbridge Land Use and Development Ordinance and Zoning Map. Unless otherwise defined in the Plan, terms used in this Plan shall have the same meaning as defined in the Township's Land Use and Development Ordinance.

CEDAR MEADOWS REDEVELOPMENT AREA ZONING STANDARDS

It is the intent of this Plan to encourage the redevelopment of the area into two (2) land uses which will be utilized by the community: (1) additional housing opportunities for the general public and for special populations and (2) recreation uses for the general public.

The following standards contain information pertaining to the purpose of the district; the permitted and accessory uses; bulk standards; and other district-specific standards. The evaluation of any proposal submitted under the Redevelopment Plan shall be based upon sections of this Redevelopment Plan entitled “Relationship of Plan to the Township Land Development Regulations.”

Purpose: The purpose of this Redevelopment Zone is to provide additional residential housing to the Township at an appropriate density and in an appropriate location, and to provide recreation opportunities for the general welfare of the public.

Permitted Uses:

A building may be erected, altered or used and a lot or premises may be occupied and used for any of the following purposes:

- Multi-family dwellings
- Apartment buildings
- Residential housing for the developmentally disabled
- Indoor recreation
- Outdoor recreation
- In addition to the above, any use not inconsistent with the above that is totally similar in purpose, function, character and effort

Accessory Uses:

- Offices connected to the principal use; private garage space for the storage of vehicles operated exclusively as part of a permitted use; signs, fences and hedges, parking and other customary accessory uses and structures which are clearly incidental to the principal structure and use
- Game rooms, party rooms, kitchens, concessions/vendors and all other common uses connected to recreation
- Outdoor gazebos

- Infrastructure constructed in support of any of the permitted primary uses

Bulk Standards:

Principal Building:

- Minimum lot size: 2 acres
- Minimum lot width: 300 feet
- Minimum lot depth: 300 feet
- Minimum front yard setback: 20 feet
- Minimum rear yard setback: 10 feet
- Minimum side yard setback: 10 feet
- Minimum total side yard setback: 20 feet
- Maximum structure coverage: 60%
- Maximum impervious coverage: 80%
- Maximum floor area ratio: 1:1
- Maximum building height: 4 stories or 50 feet

Accessory Buildings and Structures:

- Accessory buildings, infrastructure and uses, shall meet the front setback requirement of a principal building. The side and rear setbacks shall be four (4) feet

Additional Standards:

Off-street parking is required subject to the following conditions:

- At grade, perpendicular parking spaces shall be 9 feet wide x 18 feet long.
- Two-way travel aisles in parking lots shall have a width of 24 feet.
- Auditoriums, recreational establishments or other places of public assembly, including public schools: one parking space for each three fixed seats of capacity, or one space for each three memberships in a swim club, or one parking space for each 100 square feet of gross floor area in cases where the capacity is not determined by the number of fixed seats or swim club memberships.

- Offices, office buildings, office research buildings: one (1) parking space for each three hundred (300) square feet of net floor area (not including common areas).
- Mixed uses: The total requirement shall be the sum of the requirements of the component uses computed separately.
- Residential buildings shall comply with the New Jersey Residential Site Improvement Standards.

Buffering and Landscaping:

- Minimum landscape coverage limits for Redevelopment Zone sites shall be: twenty percent (20%);
- Landscaped area required: In calculating the landscaped areas, the areas of plazas, open pedestrian areas, sitting areas, green roofs, pools and fountains shall be included.
- All setback areas fronting public roadways shall be defined by a combination of decorative fencing and/or landscaping. The landscaped area within should contain a variety of flowering trees, shrubs, perennials, annuals and bulbs to complement the architecture and provide seasonal interest.
- Landscape design should be integrated into overall site design and plans should include a watering and maintenance schedule for each area
- Any dumpster shall be screened from public view with fencing and landscaping.
- All trees to be removed shall be done in accordance with the Township Tree Ordinance.

Lighting:

- Pedestrian, bollard lighting, ground-mounted lighting, or other low glare-controlled fixtures mounted on building or landscape walls shall be used to light pedestrian walkways
- Accent lighting on buildings is encouraged.
- Exterior light fixtures shall be compatible and relate to the architectural character of the buildings on site. Site lighting shall be provided at the minimum level of 0.5 foot-candle to accommodate safe pedestrian and vehicular movements, without causing any off-site glare.
- Parking lot lights shall not exceed 20 (twenty) feet in height and shall contain decorative fixtures.

Site Signage:

- Two (2) monument signs shall be permitted.
- Maximum sign area: 20 square feet per side, with a maximum of two sides allowed.
- Minimum setback: three (3) feet from the property line.
- Maximum sign height: five (5) feet.
- Way finding signage to direct visitors toward parking areas, building identification, and building entrances is permitted as appropriate.
- Façade signs may be affixed to the building and shall occupy no more than 10 percent of the front façade area of the building. Signs may be placed on all exposed sides of the buildings, provided that they do not total more than 10 percent maximum limitation of the front façade.

Outside Storage and Loading:

- No outside storage of materials, raw or finished, shall be stored in any yard or open area.
- Loading and delivery areas shall be separated from residential parking areas.
- Loading areas, and outside storage shall be located at the side or rear of buildings and shall be properly screened from residential uses.

Green Buildings:

- All buildings are encouraged to be LEED-certified or equivalent buildings;
- Proposed energy saving techniques shall be considered as part of architectural plans and renderings;
- New development or rehabilitation of existing buildings should employ green building practices (refer to the Township's Green Building Checklist).

PLAN RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER PLANS

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

The Township of Woodbridge's last comprehensive Master Plan was prepared in February 2009. The Master Plan recommended PQP Public-Quasi-Public zoning for this site. At the time of the writing of the Master Plan, the property was being used as administrative buildings for East Jersey State Prison. PQP Public-Quasi-Public zoning conformed to the land use at the time.

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

- To permit residential uses at appropriate densities in locations accessible to major roadways, commercial services, public facilities and traditional downtown areas.
- To provide sufficient residential opportunities, in locations with access to facilities and services, to help the Township's senior residents age in place.
- To provide sufficient residential opportunities, in locations with access to facilities and services.
- To encourage the provision of convenient well-located community facilities for all residents of the Township.
- To plan for community facilities that will accommodate anticipated future population trends.
- To provide a full range of recreational facilities, both active and passive, to meet the needs of all age groups.
- To continue increasing active recreational opportunities available within the Township.

In 2012, the Woodbridge Township Planning Board adopted a new Master Plan Housing Plan Element and Fair Share Plan as a Master Plan Amendment. The new Housing Plan identified the Warden Home Site ("Site #3) as a location for 80 affordable owner-occupied family units and 28 rental units of supportive and special needs housing for the developmentally disabled.

MASTER PLANS OF ADJACENT MUNICIPALITIES

The Cedar Meadows Redevelopment Area is located in the northern portion of Avenel, close to the City of Rahway. However, the redevelopment area does not abut the City of Perth Rahway and is not anticipated to have an adverse impact to the City of Rahway.

MIDDLESEX COUNTY PLANS

Middlesex County Growth Management Strategy

Between 1990 and 1995, Middlesex County prepared phased Growth Management Strategy to address infrastructure need, regional design and growth management strategies. The County was subdivided into four regions. Woodbridge Township is located in the northeast region, as were all neighboring municipalities.

Phase I of the plan found that large levels of public & private investment were necessary to maintain infrastructure with the highest cost items being maintenance and improvement to sewers, parks and roads.

Phase II of the plan focused on managing actual growth pertaining to five specific case studies. None of the case studies focused on areas of Woodbridge.

Phase III of the study, three primary recommendations were made as part of the Metropark Case Study:

- Traffic congestion inhibits growth in the area. Access to Metropark is limited by the narrow rail underpasses and New Jersey Transit's parking expansion will place an even greater burden on local roads. Transportation management measures should be implemented intensively for this area;
- The NJ Transit parking deck project includes the construction of space for retail facilities to better serve commuter needs. Additional retail development to serve nearby office workers should be evaluated;
- Growth in this study area is limited by increasingly scarce buildable land and the need for increased sewage capacity in the Township. A stormwater management plan should be developed for the entire South Branch of the Rahway River drainage area in order to determine the most effective stormwater control measures.

This Redevelopment Plan is consistent with the recommendations discussed in the Middlesex County Growth Management Strategy and will serve to offer some of “the retail development” contemplated for neighboring office workers.

Consistency with Middlesex County Master Plan

The Cedar Meadows Redevelopment Plan is generally consistent with the elements of the Middlesex County Master Plan, a document that addresses sprawl and sustainability in the region. The Cedar Meadows Redevelopment Plan relates directly to the goals, values and objectives of the Middlesex County Master Plan which aims to:

- Make fuller use of existing transportation lines and facilities. The County Plan anticipated that public transportation would achieve greater significance as a necessary alternative to the private automobile, with its attendant problems of pollution, energy availability, and congestion;
- Find a more feasible alternative to the present situation of “strip” commercial development found on major roads, and single-family homes on unnecessarily large lots;
- “Cluster” future growth around definable town centers and transportation facilities to include commercial and office employment as well as residential, with land use intensity decreasing as distance from the town center increases.

New Jersey State Development & Redevelopment Plan

The Cedar Meadows Redevelopment Plan is consistent and would effectuate the plans and policies of the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP), adopted in 2001. The SDRP is a unique document that guides State-level development and redevelopment policy as well as local and regional planning efforts. This Plan is consistent with the following statewide goals in the SDRP.

- Revitalize the State’s cities and towns;
- Promote beneficial economic growth, development and renewal for all residents of New Jersey;
- Protect the environment, prevent and clean up pollution;

- Provide adequate public facilities and services at a reasonable cost;
- Preserve and enhance areas with historic, cultural, scenic, open space, and recreational value;
- Ensure sound and integrated planning and implementation statewide.

The SDRP also includes a State Plan Policy Map, which divides the state into regions, known as Planning Areas, and includes specific goals for each area.

The Policy Map also identifies “Centers”, locations into which development is to be directed, “Environs,” areas to be protected from future growth. The Township of Woodbridge falls in the ‘Metropolitan Planning Area’ (PA1). The State Plan recognizes that all communities in this planning area are essentially fully developed; hence much of the change in land uses will occur as redevelopment.

The State Plan’s planning objectives for the ‘Metropolitan Planning Area’ includes:

- Providing for much of the state’s future redevelopment;
- Revitalizing cities and towns;
- Redesigning areas of sprawl;
- Protecting the character of existing stable communities.

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

The New Jersey Department of State has been preparing a new State Strategic Plan since 2012. The proposed plan has not been adopted by the State Planning Commission.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

REDEVELOPMENT ENTITY

The Woodbridge Township Redevelopment Agency will serve as the Redevelopment Entity.

Phasing:

- Projects may be developed in phases;
- The phasing may include phased start and completion dates among the various land use components, as well as internal phasing schedules within sections, subject to specific provisions in the redevelopment agreement.

SELECTION OF DESIGNATED DEVELOPERS

Potential redevelopers will be required to submit to the Redevelopment Entity for review and approval prior to the designation of a redeveloper(s) at a minimum:

- Financial responsibility and capability;
- Estimated development cost;
- Estimated time schedule;
- Conceptual site plans including elevations;
- Fiscal impact analysis.

APPOINTMENT OF A DESIGNATED REDEVELOPER

The Redevelopment Entity may select one or more redevelopers to participate in the implementation of the Redevelopment Plan.

As part of the process to be designated a redeveloper, the Redevelopment Entity will negotiate a formal Redevelopment Agreement.

Designation of a Redeveloper(s) by the Redevelopment Entity shall be subject to the execution of an appropriate Redevelopment Agreement.

CONDITIONS IN REDEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT(S)

Each Redevelopment Agreement will be contingent upon the following conditions, restrictions, and/or requirements.

1. Each Redevelopment Agreement will incorporate the pertinent aspects of the selected redeveloper's proposal and will address financial considerations, planning, phasing, development and such other issues as deemed appropriate and/or as required according to state law in order to implement the Redevelopment Plan.
2. A designated redeveloper will be obligated to complete on-site improvements as approved, together with any specified off-site improvements, as may be required in accordance with the Redevelopment Plan and the Redevelopment Agreement.
3. Any necessary deed of conveyance shall include a restriction that the designated redeveloper and his successors or assigns shall devote land to the uses specified in the designated redeveloper's final plan and shall not devote such land to any other uses.
4. No designated redeveloper will be permitted to dispose of property until the issuance of the Certificate of Completion, unless the prior written consent of the Redevelopment Agency has been obtained.
5. No covenant, agreement, lease, conveyance, or other instrument shall be effective or executed by the Township of Woodbridge and the Redevelopment Entity or by the purchasers or lessees from them, or by any successors in interest of such purchasers or lessees, by which land in the Redevelopment Area is restricted as to sale, lease, or occupancy upon the basis of race, color, creed, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, or marital status.
6. The Redeveloper(s) shall pay to the Redevelopment Entity an application fee for consideration of redeveloper as a designated redeveloper and will fund an escrow for the Agency's costs in implementing redevelopment.
7. The Redevelopment Entity and the Township of Woodbridge reserve the the right to terminate any Redevelopment Agreement with a designated redeveloper subject to the terms and conditions of the Redevelopment Agreement.

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

No application for development or redevelopment in the area may be filed with the Planning Board until such time as the applicant has applied for and received a designation as redeveloper from the Redevelopment Entity and has executed a Redevelopment Agreement with the Redevelopment Entity providing for the proposed application. In addition to any requirements of the Agency, major preliminary and/or Final Site Plans and/or subdivisions, with details sufficient to comply with the Municipal Land Use Law and Local Ordinance, shall be submitted for Planning Board review and approval for each development parcel, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1 et seq.

The Planning Board shall require the developer to provide a bond or bonds of sufficient size and duration to guarantee the completion of the various phases of the project in compliance with the requirements of law and planning approvals.

DURATION OF REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

During the time that the Redevelopment Plan is in effect, any party acting as a redeveloper, (as defined in the LRHL) must obtain the approval of the Redevelopment Entity. The Redevelopment Plan will remain in effect for 30 years.

AMENDING THE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

This Redevelopment Plan may be amended from time to time in compliance with the requirements of law, provided that the respect to any land in the project area previously disposed of by the Redevelopment Entity for use in accordance with the Redevelopment Plan, the Entity will notice the owner of such land whose interests may be materially affected by such amendment.