

Route 1: Area 17-Ronson Road Redevelopment Plan

Township of Woodbridge
Middlesex County, New Jersey



Prepared by:
Township of Woodbridge
Department of Planning & Development

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I. INTRODUCTION

This Redevelopment Plan represents an opportunity to improve and better utilize industrial space along Ronson Road in the Iselin section of Woodbridge Township. This plan will foster the transformation of the property into a productive mix of residential and commercial uses near a heavily traveled stretch of Route 1 South and Garden State Parkway. This Redevelopment Area should be a highly desirable location for people to live and work.

The redevelopment of this section of Ronson Road presents unique challenges. This area is currently in the Route One Corridor Redevelopment Area. In response to the physical and economic conditions along the Route One Corridor, including portions of Ronson Road, the Township Council requested that the Planning Board evaluate certain properties as an “area in need of redevelopment” on August 4, 1998, April 6, 1999, and August 3 1999. The Council concluded that the Area did meet the criteria to be designated as “area in need of redevelopment” on November 3, 1999 and adopted the Route One Corridor Redevelopment Plan for the Area.

The redevelopment of the Route One Corridor has continued over the years with new redevelopment plans adopted along Route 1. These areas include Route 1 Area 1, Route 1 Area 2, Route One Area 7, Route 1 Area 15, and Route 1, Area 16. This plan is a furtherance of redevelopment efforts along Route 1.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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

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

- An identification of any property within the Redevelopment Area proposed to be acquired in accordance with Redevelopment Plan;
- Any significant relationship of the Redevelopment Plans to:
 - A) The Master Plans of contiguous municipalities;
 - B) The Master Plan of the County in which the municipality is located; and;
 - C) The State Development and Redevelopment Plans adopted pursuant to the “State Planning Act.”

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 Iselin section of the Township is generally bound by Edison Township to the west, Colonia to the north, Menlo Park Terrace and Woodbridge to the south, and Avenel to the east. The Iselin section of the Township consists of mostly residential neighborhoods, commercial uses along Route 1 and Route 27, and the Metropark Rail Station and its nearby office areas. The subject property is located in an office area near Metropark.

The Route 1: Area 17-Ronson Road Area is located north of Route 1, approximately 0.16 miles from the intersection of Route 1 and Ronson Road. The Area consists of one (1) parcel, having frontage on Ronson Road. The rear of the area abuts the Garden State Parkway. The total acreage of the redevelopment area is approximately over seven acres. The following property comprises the redevelopment area: Block 367, Lot 1.04.

Figure 1: Redevelopment Area Parcel Map



Figure 2: Redevelopment Area Aerial Map



HISTORY OF ISELIN

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

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

MASTER PLANNING AND ZONING DESIGNATION HISTORY

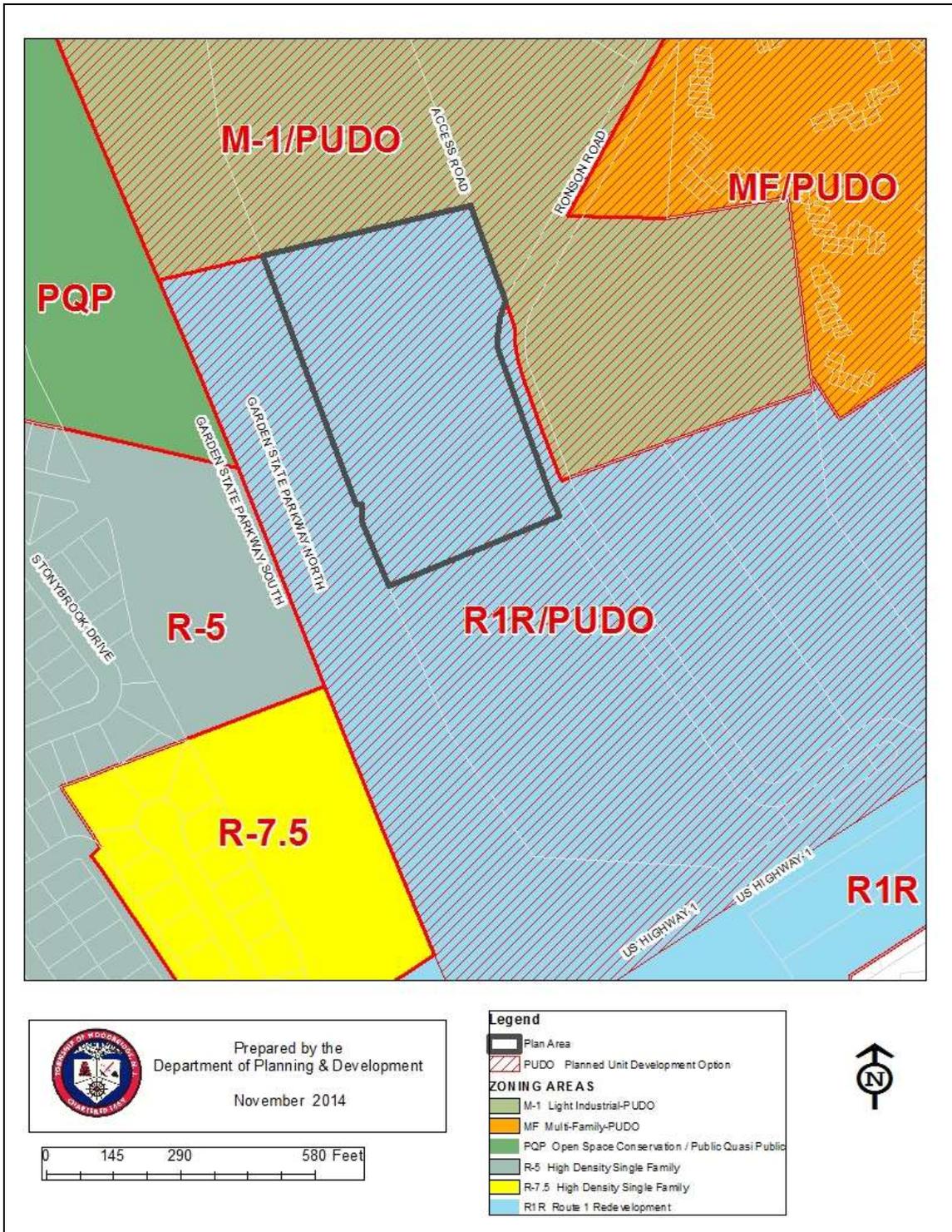
The Township Master Plan recognizes that the current land use for this area is commercial. The current zoning for this area is Route One Corridor Redevelopment with a Planned Unit Development Option (PUDO) overlay. The land use and zoning have not changed since the 2009 Master Plan. The current Master Plan recommends this area continue to be utilized as redevelopment.

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 promote the conservation of energy resources and promote the utilization of renewable energy sources
- To improve the physical appearance of the Area.
- To create compact mixed-use developments

Figure 3: Current 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. 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 overlay zone to the Township of Woodbridge Land Use and Development Ordinance and Zoning Map for this area. Unless otherwise defined in the Plan, terms used in this Plan shall have the same meaning as defined in the Township's Land Use and Development Ordinance.

II. ROUTE 1 RONSON ROAD AREA REDEVELOPMENT AREA ZONING STANDARDS

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

Permitted Uses:

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

- Mid-rise multi-family residential development;
- Neighborhood commercial, including small-scale retail, restaurants/cafes, and service uses such as remote dry cleaning establishments

Bulk Standards:

Principal Building:

- Minimum lot size: 40,000 square feet
- Minimum lot width: 150 feet
- Minimum lot depth: 200 feet
- Minimum front yard setback: 15 feet
- Minimum rear yard setback: 30 feet
 - 25 percent of buildings can have a minimum rear yard setback of 25 feet
- Minimum side yard setback: 25 feet
- Maximum building lot coverage: 40%
- Maximum impervious coverage: 80 percent
- Maximum building height: five stories or 70 feet (inclusive of parking at the grade level)
- Maximum Floor Area Ratio: 2:1
- Minimum distance between buildings and parking areas: 10 feet

Accessory Buildings:

- Accessory buildings for tools and equipment used for maintenance of the grounds which are not attached to the principal building shall not exceed 10 feet in height as measured from the grade to the ridge at the peak of the roof. No side wall of such accessory buildings may exceed eight feet above grade in height. No such shed shall exceed 150 square feet in area. All such accessory buildings shall conform to at least the front setback requirement of the principal building. The minimum side and rear yard setbacks shall be four feet. All other accessory buildings not attached to the principal building shall not exceed 15 feet in height and shall conform to at least the front setback requirement of the principal building. The minimum side and rear yard setbacks shall be four feet
- Those swimming pools less than four feet high shall be enclosed by a permanent fence not less than four feet high with a locked gate. Building permits will be required for all swimming pools, above or below ground, with a water surface area of 250 square feet or over
- Accessory buildings attached to a principal building shall comply with the setbacks of the principal building.
- No truck or commercial vehicle, licensed to transport more than $\frac{3}{4}$ ton rated manufacturer's capacity shall be stored or parked on any lot or portion of a lot.
-

Green Buildings:

- All buildings are encouraged to be LEED-certified 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)

Additional Standards:

Parking:

Off-street parking shall be provided at a minimum rate of:

- 1.8 parking spaces per 1 bedroom dwelling unit (du) and 2.0 parking spaces per 2 bedroom dwelling unit (du) as per the Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS). Parking will be provided on surface lots at grade level under the residential units and/or in attached parking structure(s).
- Three (3) parking spaces for each one thousand (1,000) square feet of gross floor area for commercial uses.

Parking in attached structures is subject to the following limitations:

- Maximum parking structure to be no more than four (4) stories or forty (40) feet
- Parking structure to be located along the right-of-way (ROW) of the Garden State Parkway (GSP); located a minimum of thirty (30) feet from the northwest corner of the site, a minimum of thirty (30) feet from the GSP and a minimum of twenty-five (25) feet from Ronson Road

Circulation:

- Curbs cuts and site driveways shall be sized to accommodate the safe access and egress of large tractor trailers and emergency services equipment

Loading:

- Loading spaces shall be at least 12-feet in width and 50-feet in length.
- Loading may be located within the front yards
- Loading need not be screened from public view
- Each 5,000 square feet of retail requires one (1) loading space

Landscaping:

- Minimum landscaped area required to be 20 percent and shall be in addition to all required buffers. In calculating the landscaped areas, the areas of plazas, open pedestrian shopping malls, sitting areas, pools and fountains shall be included. Landscaping shall be required within paved parking areas.
- 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.

Buffering and Screening:

- Any commercial development that abuts any existing residential development or abuts any parcel planned or zoned for housing development shall be screened from view from the housing site using a combination of fencing, plantings and/or berming
- Any dumpster shall be screened from public view with fencing and landscaping

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.
- Lighting shall be shielded to prevent glare on adjacent properties and from residential uses.
- 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.

- Light poles in this area shall be reviewed and acceptable to the Township of Woodbridge Planning Board.

Utilities:

- Wherever practical, consideration should be given to relocating above ground utilities to underground

Signage:

- Signs shall be in harmony and consistent with the architecture of the building and relate to the features of the building in terms of location, scale, color, lettering, materials, texture and depth.

The following will be permitted:

- Two (2) project identification signs per exit/entrance. Such ground signs shall not exceed five (5) feet in height and shall not exceed twenty (20) square feet in identification lettering. Such signage shall be located no closer than 5 feet to the any property line, and shall not be located within the sight triangle of any intersection or access drive with a public street. The sign shall incorporate the design and materials that match the architecture of the development.
- Wayfinding signage to direct visitors toward parking areas, building identification, building entrances and activity centers is permitted as appropriate. Wayfinding signage shall be no greater than ten (10) square feet per sign.
- One wall mounted sign for commercial uses is permitted per tenant and shall occupy no more than 10 percent of the front façade area of the building.
- One non-digital project identification sign/leasing sign may be permitted. This sign may be a maximum of 12' x 40' in area and may be mounted directly to the building façade (not to protrude more than 12" from the building face). A proposed sign may be externally illuminated only and may be located only on the south or west facing building façade of building located along the Garden State Parkway frontage.

III. PLAN RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER PLANS

RELATIONSHIP TO THE TOWNSHIP MASTER PLAN

The Township of Woodbridge's last comprehensive Master Plan was prepared in February 2009. The Master Plan recommended this area be devoted to redevelopment.

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

- To encourage and control commercial development by limiting regional commercial and office development to major highway corridors.
- To continue attracting premier Retail, Industrial, and Office end users to the Township.
- To expand and protect the Township's ratable base through the attraction and retention of nationally known and respected companies.
- To expand retail and service activities in appropriate locations to meet the future shopping needs of Township residents.
- To permit residential densities in locations to accessible major roadways, commercial services, public facilities and traditional downtown areas.

MASTER PLANS OF ADJACENT MUNICIPALITIES

The Route 1: Area 17-Ronson Road Redevelopment Area is located along Route 1 and not near any adjacent municipalities. This Redevelopment Plan is not expected to have an adverse impact on any adjacent municipalities.

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 Route 1: Area 17-Ronson Road Redevelopment Plan is consistent with the recommendations discussed in the Middlesex County Growth Management Strategy.

Consistency with Middlesex County Master Plan

The Route 1: Area 17-Ronson Road Redevelopment Plan is generally consistent with the elements of the Middlesex County Master Plan, a document that addresses sprawl and sustainability in the region. The Route 1: Area 17-Ronson Road Area 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 Route 1: Area 17-Ronson Road Redevelopment Plan is consistent and would effectuate, the plans and policies of the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP), adopted in 2001. The SDRP is a unique document that guides State-level development and redevelopment policy as well as local and regional planning efforts. This Plan is consistent with the following statewide goals in the SDRP.

- Revitalize the State’s cities and towns;
- Promote beneficial economic growth, development and renewal for all residents of New Jersey;
- Protect the environment, prevent and clean up pollution;
- Provide adequate public facilities and services at a reasonable cost;

- Preserve and enhance areas with historic, cultural, scenic, open space, and recreational value;
- Ensure sound and integrated planning and implementation statewide.

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

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

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

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

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

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

IV. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

REDEVELOPMENT ENTITY

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

Phasing:

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

SELECTION OF DESIGNATED DEVELOPERS

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

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

APPOINTMENT OF A DESIGNATED REDEVELOPER

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

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

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

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

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

CONDITIONS IN REDEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT(S)

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

1. Each Redevelopment Agreement will incorporate the pertinent aspects of the selected redeveloper's proposal and will address financial considerations, planning, phasing, development and such other issues as deemed appropriate and/or as required according to state law in order to implement the Redevelopment Plan.
2. A designated redeveloper will be obligated to complete on-site improvements as approved, together with any specified off-site improvements, as may be required in accordance with the Redevelopment Plan and the Redevelopment Agreement.
3. Any necessary deed of conveyance shall include a restriction that the designated redeveloper and his successors or assigns shall devote land to the uses specified in the 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 right to terminate any Redevelopment Agreement with a designated redeveloper subject to the terms and conditions of the Redevelopment Agreement.

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

An application for preliminary and/or final site plan approval for uses authorized in this Plan may be filed by: (i) a redeveloper designated by the Redevelopment Entity; or (ii) an assignee of the redeveloper as approved by the Redevelopment Entity. In addition to any requirements of the Redevelopment Entity, preliminary and/or final site plans and/or subdivisions, with details sufficient to comply with the Municipal Land Use Law and Local Ordinance, shall be submitted for Planning Board review and approval for each development parcel, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1 et seq.

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.