MERCHANTVILLE TOWN CENTRE EAST STUDY AREA

DETERMINATION OF NEEDS STUDY
And REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

Report to the Merchantville Borough Council
As recommended by the Merchantville Planning Board on August 24, 2004

Edward E Fox III, AICP / NJPP Lic. 510400
Director of Smart Growth
Camden County Improvement Authority

The original of this document was signed and sealed in accordance with N.J.A.C. 13:41-1.3.b.

CCIA 08-13-04

MERCHANTVILLE TOWN CENTRE EAST STUDY AREA

DETERMINATION OF NEEDS STUDY

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MERCHANTVILLE TOWN CENTRE EAST STUDY AREA

I. Introduction

For more than one hundred years, the freight and passenger railroad line between Mount Holly and Camden was a primary focus of the land within the triangle formed by Centre Street, Chestnut Street and East Park Avenue in downtown Merchantville. While businesses thrived on Centre Street, most of the land to their rear east to Gilmore and Franklin avenues remained as freight yards. A few homes and businesses sprang up on East Park Avenue closer to Centre Street south of the freight yards. After rail service ended in 1970s, the yards were converted to vehicular parking by a local bank with drive-through service for customers and the Borough for metered downtown parking. The railroad spur tracks remain in the pavement. In 1990s the Borough removed and landscaped the main railroad tracks between North and South Chestnut avenues to make a greenway and recreational corridor. The Borough also installed a downtown gazebo at the northwest corner of Centre Street and South Chestnut and a paved trail on that portion of the railroad line west of Alexander Avenue.

In the past two decades, Merchantville has concentrated on downtown revitalization by implementing the principles and practices of the New Jersey Main Street program. The successes of this program are quite evident. Businesses and the quality of life are improving in the downtown district, and approaching a critical mass. The new Chestnut Station senior housing apartment building has just opened behind the businesses on the west side of Centre Street. The Borough had designated those properties a redevelopment area and used the redevelopment powers vested in the New Jersey Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (N.J.S.A. 40A:12-1 et seq.) to facilitate the planning, financing and construction of that project.

The Merchantville Borough Council, via Resolution R01-43 dated April 9, 2001, requested the Borough Planning Board to prepare a Redevelopment / Rehabilitation Needs Study for the Town Centre East Study Area in accordance with the New Jersey Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (N.J.S.A. 40A:12-1 et seq.). It did so because it believed that the Town Centre East area contains several dilapidated structures and underutilized properties that may also qualify as an "area in need of redevelopment". If so, the Borough may be able to work with local property owners, businesses and residents, as well as its public, non-profit and private-sector partners to transform the Town Centre East Study Area into a more productive asset for the future public health, safety and general welfare of the community through the redevelopment process.

Earlier this year, the Borough adopted a Determination of Need and a Redevelopment Plan for lots 10 and 12 within the Town Centre East. This report incorporates the findings of that earlier need study and provides analyses and findings for the remainder of the Town Centre East Study Area.

The Borough Council also amended the Town Centre East study area to include several properties on the south side of Park Avenue, including the Niagara Fire Company, the Verizon telephone building and parking lots and the Seventeen East apartment building.

MERCHANTVILLE TOWN CENTRE EAST STUDY AREA

II. Study Area Boundaries

The Town Centre East Study Area contains those primarily commercial properties in Merchantville Borough, identified on Merchantville Borough tax block 29 and 61, in the northeast section of Merchantville's downtown central business district. It also includes Lots 5, 6, 7, 12, 13 and 13.01 of Block 33 on the southern side of Park Avenue. Park Avenue (County Route 621), Center Street (County Route 622) and Chestnut Street bound the roughly 6 acre study area roughly. Today, Merchantville residents commonly call the study area the "Town Centre East." (See **Fig. 1 – Redevelopment Study Area**.)

III. Property Listing and Description

The properties within the redevelopment study area include the following on Blocks 29 and 61 of Plate 13 of the Merchantville Borough municipal tax map. The following lot-by-lot description indicates address, use, owner and other pertinent information about the properties in the study area. The accompanying 2002 aerial photograph shows existing development patterns. (See **Fig. 2 – Major Features**.)

BLOCK	LOTS	ADDRESS	USE	STORIES	OWNER
29	1	25 E. Park Ave.	EMS garage, municipal parking	1.5	Borough
29	2	9 S. Centre St.	Bank	2	PNC BANK
29	3	5-7 E. Park Ave.	Bank addition to lot 2, off-street parking for bank	1	PNC BANK
29	4	9 E. Park Ave.	Spa store, office, 1 upstairs apartment	2	Brickley Estate
29	5	19 E. Park Ave.	Single family detached dwelling	2	RJ Cummins Inc
29	6, 11 & 14	11-15 S. Centre St.	Off-street parking for bank	0	PNC BANK
29	7	25-27 S. Centre St.	Grocery	1, 2	Hanna
29	8, 9 & 15	5-7 S. Centre St.	Off-street parking, drive-through lanes for bank	0	PNC BANK
29	10	1 E. Park Ave.	Café	1	Zafis
29	12	19-21Centre St.	2 Stores, 2 upstairs apartments	2, 3	Zafis
29	13	17 S. Centre St.	Store, 1 upstairs apartment	2	Samshel
29	16	1-3 S. Centre St.	Offices	3	1-3 South Centre LLC
29	17	10 S. Chestnut Ave.	Offices, off-street parking	2	1-3 South Centre LLC
33	5, 6 & 7	16 E Park Avenue	Verizon off-street parking	0	Verizon
33	12	15 E Maple Avenue	Verizon switching station, offices, etc.		Verizon
33	13	17 E Maple Avenue	18-unit apartment building	2	Schultz
33	13.01	22 E Park Avenue	Fire station		Borough
61	4 (p/o)	Railroad	Open Space	0	Conrail (leased to Borough)

MERCHANTVILLE TOWN CENTRE EAST STUDY AREA

IV. Master Plan and Land Use Zoning Plan Review

In December 1999, Merchantville adopted a Master Plan Re-examination Report (November 1997), which confirmed the recommendations of the updated Master Plan. The 1980 Master Plan stressed several points relevant to redevelopment in the Town Centre East Study Area:

1. Revitalizing the downtown central business district using the Main Street program philosophy,
2. Increasing off-street parking by redeveloping vacant and under-utilized land,
3. Correcting the traffic circulation problems at East Park Avenue and Chestnut Street,
4. Redeveloping the rail line for park and recreational uses, and
5. Improving the streetscape and image of the downtown through architectural design control and historic preservation.

The majority of the Town Centre East Study Area is located within the B-1 (Central Business) zoning district, which permits the following uses:

1. Retail sales of goods and services,
2. Travel agencies, real estate offices and opticians,
3. Offices and professional offices, but not on the street level floor along the Park Avenue and Centre Street frontages,
4. Restaurants,
5. Apartments over other permitted uses, but not on the street level floor,
6. Banks and other similar financial institutions, and
7. Senior citizen multifamily buildings.

The B-1 zoning district is within the Borough's downtown historic district where exterior alterations to buildings, i.e., alterations, demolitions and new construction, are reviewed by the historic preservation commission for architectural compatibility.

The two properties that front on Maple Avenue, i.e. Lots 12 and 13 of Block 33, are within the R-4 Multi-Family Residential zoning district, which permits the following uses:

1. Single family dwellings
2. Single family dwellings with home occupations
3. Two-family dwellings (as a conditional use), and
4. Multi-family dwellings (as a conditional use)

The Verizon switching station is a pre-existing, non-conforming use.

V. Statutory Criteria Review

Area in Need of Redevelopment

New Jersey's Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (N.J.S.A. 40A:12-1 et seq.) indicates that a municipal governing body may declare an "Area in Need of Redevelopment" if it determines that the area or the properties within it meet at least one of eight possible statutory criteria. The following are observations and findings of the applicability of each criterion with conditions in the study area.

a. *Buildings have deteriorated or fallen into such a state of disrepair that they constitute a threat to the people who live or work in them;*

b. *Vacant commercial or industrial buildings that are abandoned or have become so obsolete that they cannot be reasonably rented or sold;*

c. *Publicly-owned property that has remained vacant due to its location, remoteness from other developed areas, lack of access, topography, or soil conditions, or privately-owned property that has remained unimproved and vacant for at least ten years for the same reasons;*

d. *Properties have obsolete layout and design, such as the location and relationships of buildings, accessory structures and other site improvements, onsite circulation and parking, land use conflicts and building coverages.*

e. *Underutilization or lack of proper utilization of properties due to property ownership, title, property configuration or other factors;*

f. *An area of five or more acres that has been destroyed or where property values have been materially reduced by a fire or sudden natural disaster;*

g. *Properties are within an Urban Enterprise Zone (UEZ); and*

h. *The designation of the delineated area is consistent with smart growth planning principles adopted pursuant to law or regulation.*

In addition, the statute states:

> *A redevelopment area may include lands, buildings, or improvements, which of themselves are not detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare, but the inclusion of which is found necessary, with or without change in their condition, for the effective redevelopment of the area of which they are a part.*

The properties within the redevelopment study area include the following on Blocks 29 and 61 of Plate 13 of the Merchantville Borough municipal tax map. The following lot-by-lot description correlates the study area properties with the statute's area in need of redevelopment criteria.

MERCHANTVILLE TOWN CENTRE EAST STUDY AREA

BLOCK	LOTS	ADDRESS	USE	CRITERIA
29	1	25 E. Park Ave.	EMS garage and municipal parking	D, E, H
29	2	9 S. Centre St.	Bank	H, Other
29	3	5-7 E. Park Ave.	Bank addition to lot 2 and off-street parking for bank	E, H
29	4	9 E. Park Ave.	Spa store, office, 1 upstairs apartment	D, E, H
29	5	19 E. Park Ave.	Single family detached dwelling	D, H
29	6, 11 & 14	11-15 S. Centre St.	Off-street parking for bank	E, H
29	7	25-27 S. Centre St.	Grocery	D, H
29	8, 9 & 15	5-7 S. Centre St.	Off-street parking and drive-through service lanes for bank	E, H
29	10	1 E. Park Ave.	Café	*
29	12	19-21Centre St.	2 Stores, 2 upstairs apartments	*
29	13	17 S. Centre St.	Store, 1 upstairs apartment	D, H
29	16	1-3 S. Centre St.	Offices	E, H, Other
29	17	10 S. Chestnut Ave.	Offices and off-street parking	E, H, Other
33	5, 6 & 7	16 E Park Avenue	Verizon off-street parking	D, E, H
33	12	15 E Maple Avenue	Verizon switching station.	D, E, H
33	13	17 E Maple Avenue	18-unit apartment building	H, Other
33	13.01	22 E Park Avenue	Fire station	H, Other
61	4 (p/o)	Railroad	Open Space	E, H

* Previously designed under criteria B, D, E and H

Criterion D

Several properties within Block 29 meet this criterion. Two of them, Lots 10 and 12, have already been designated in need of redevelopment due to the deteriorated condition of their structures. Similarly, the stores on Lots 7 and 13, as well as the home on Lot 5, are older, dilapidated structures, which appear to be in need of significant repair and code upgrades. (The owner of Lot 4 is rehabilitating the primary structure with a business office and upstairs apartment currently.) The use of the older accessory garage on Lot 4 as a store and repair shop, combined with the mixed-uses of the primary structure on East Park Avenue, constitute a condition of overcrowding of the site and land use conflicts with the adjacent single-family dwelling and municipal parking facility. The location of the single-family dwelling on Lot 5, by itself surrounded by off-street parking uses, is a historic, but now obsolete land use pattern generating significant land use conflicts. The Borough's off-street parking improvements on Lot 1 are not designed adequately and are in a deteriorated condition in need significant improvement. When combined in such close proximity, these factors are detrimental to safety, health and welfare of the community. Thus, Lots 1, 4, 5, 7, 10 and 13 of Block 29 meet this criterion.

Verizon's primary building at 15 East Maple Avenue, which was designed, built and occupied for more than a half-century by technicians, operators and repair crews, stands mostly vacant with few employees but stacks of computerized switching circuit panels. The building was originally built in the center of town to facilitate customer service and employee accessibility, but

technological changes have made the building's original purpose and rationale for location in the Borough's downtown obsolete, unnecessary and detrimental, in terms of business pedestrian activity, to the general economic welfare of the community. It should be noted that the mechanical equipment and utility functions within Verizon building are extremely valuable in themselves; however, it is the locational relationship of the building use that is obsolete. Lots 5, 6 and 7 of Block 33 on the south side of East Park Avenue have been paved and improved as an off-street parking area for the Verizon (formerly Bell Atlantic and New Jersey Bell) telephone company. They are mostly empty all day and night long. The building and its use are more appropriate in an industrial area than a downtown business or downtown multi-family district. Thus, the primary building and its related parking lots meet criterion D.

Criterion E

Nearly all of the properties within the study area meet this criterion. Many properties, such as Lots 1, 9, 15, 16 and 17 on Block 29 and Lot 4 on Block 61, were carved out of the railroad property, often with very irregular and sometimes restrictive property boundaries. This condition of title and lot configuration has contributed to awkward off-street parking layout patterns and vehicular traffic circulation problems, resulting in a not fully productive use of these properties, and thus, are detrimental to the community's economic welfare. Over the year, the local bank has acquired additional lots in the Town Centre East study area, south of the former railroad property, for employee and customer parking and drive-through service, i.e., Lots 3, 6, 8, 11 and 14. This has effectively restricted access to several properties, such as those on Lots 4, 10, 12 and 13, which must use private easements to service their businesses. To fill this need for surface-level, off-street parking, critical storefronts on Centre Street, Lots 6 and 14, have been demolished, as well as another business on East Park Avenue, Lot 8. The diverse condition of title and ever-increasing demand for off-street parking for each individual business has resulted in a stagnation and not fully productive use of land in the Town Centre East study area. Thus, Lots 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17 of Block 29 and part of Lot 4 of Block 61 meet this criterion.

The Verizon properties, i.e., Lots 5, 6, 7 and 12 on Block 33, also meet this criterion. Verizon is a utility corporation operating across the northeastern United States. It thereby is afforded certain real estate, taxation, and land use control benefits in New Jersey, unlike other property owners in downtown Merchantville, which allow it to essentially warehouse equipment and landbank property that would otherwise be more appropriate in an industrial zone. This has contributed to a stagnating economic condition in the downtown. Although the mechanical equipment within the existing building are valuable "fixed" assets, there is no real need for the off-street parking lots fronting on East Park Avenue, i.e., Lots 5, 6 and 7 of Block 33, to be maintained with the Verizon building on Lot 12.

Criterion H

The Town Centre East Study Area is located within the State Development and Redevelopment Plan's Metropolitan (PA1) Planning Area, an approved sewer service area, surrounded by existing urban development, with sufficient infrastructure capacity for future redevelopment. As such, it is a text-book example of smart growth planning principles articulated by the State Plan for infill development to fulfill local and regional land use needs. The New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan was adopted by the State Planning Commission on March 1, 2001 in accordance with N.J.S.A. 52:18A-196 et seq. Thus, all of the properties within the Town Centre East Study Area meet this criterion.

Other Reasons

The structures on three commercial properties, on Lots 2, 16 and 17, are in good or excellent condition. One may not ordinarily consider them to meet the criteria for an area in need of redevelopment. However, their property configuration and individual needs for employee and customer off-street parking, when combined with similar circumstances and competing needs of other business in the study area, necessitate their inclusion within a redevelopment area to address effectively the identified redevelopment needs in the remainder of the Town Centre East Study Area. The fire station on Lot 13.01 on Block 33 and the adjacent Seventeen East 18-unit apartment building were similarly included so that their respective existing and future off-street parking and stormwater management concerns, and those of the other nearby properties in the redevelopment area, can be addressed through the redevelopment process.

VI. Recommendation

In conclusion, the Merchantville Town Centre East Study Area meets several of the criteria for designation as an "Area in Need of Redevelopment," as described in **V. Statutory Criteria Review** of this report. I, therefore, recommend that the area be so designated by the Merchantville Borough governing body.

During the course of this evaluation, several other properties abutting and neighboring the study area were identified as potentially meeting the criteria for designation of an area in need of redevelopment. Redevelopment designation and planning for these properties should be explored by the governing body.

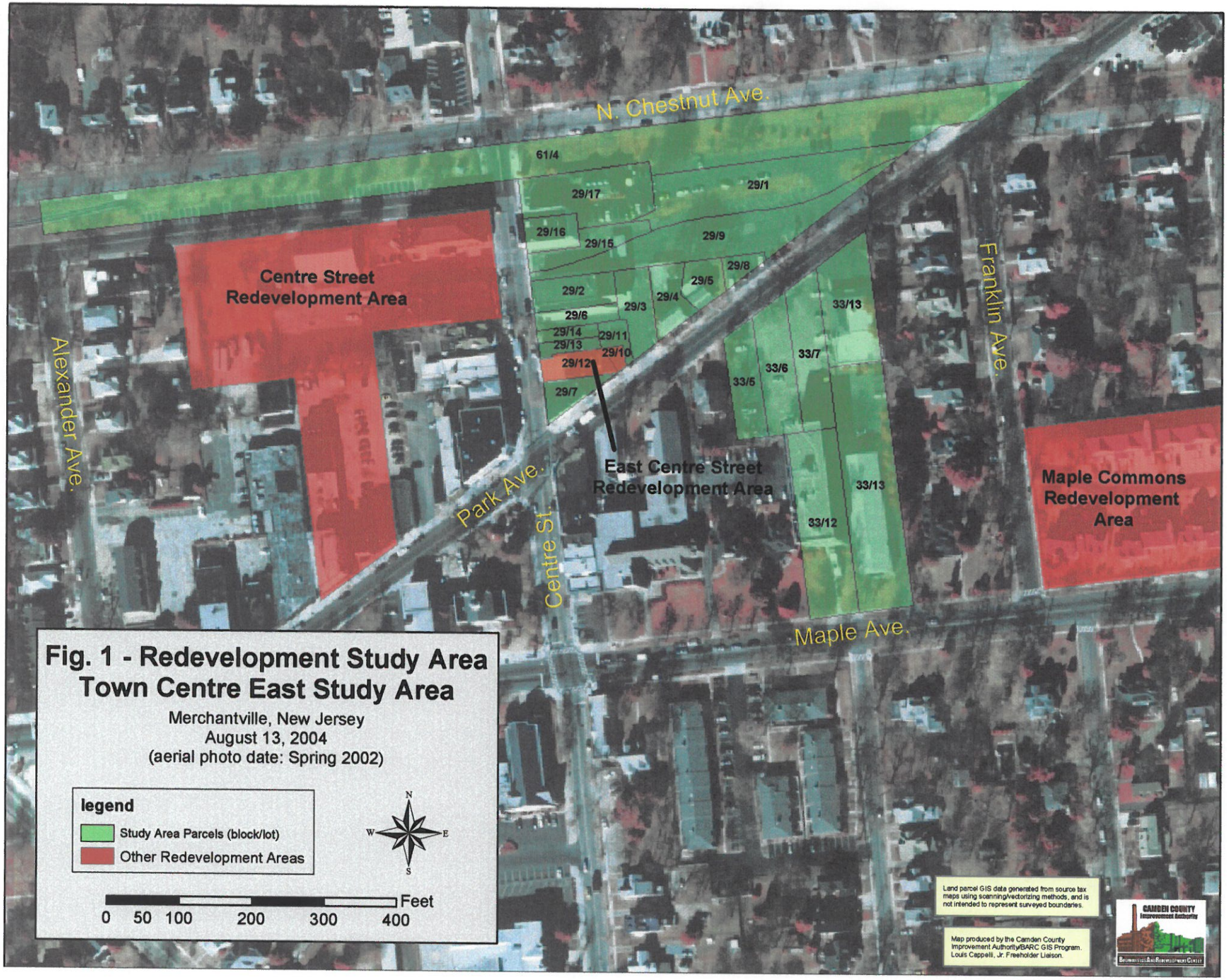
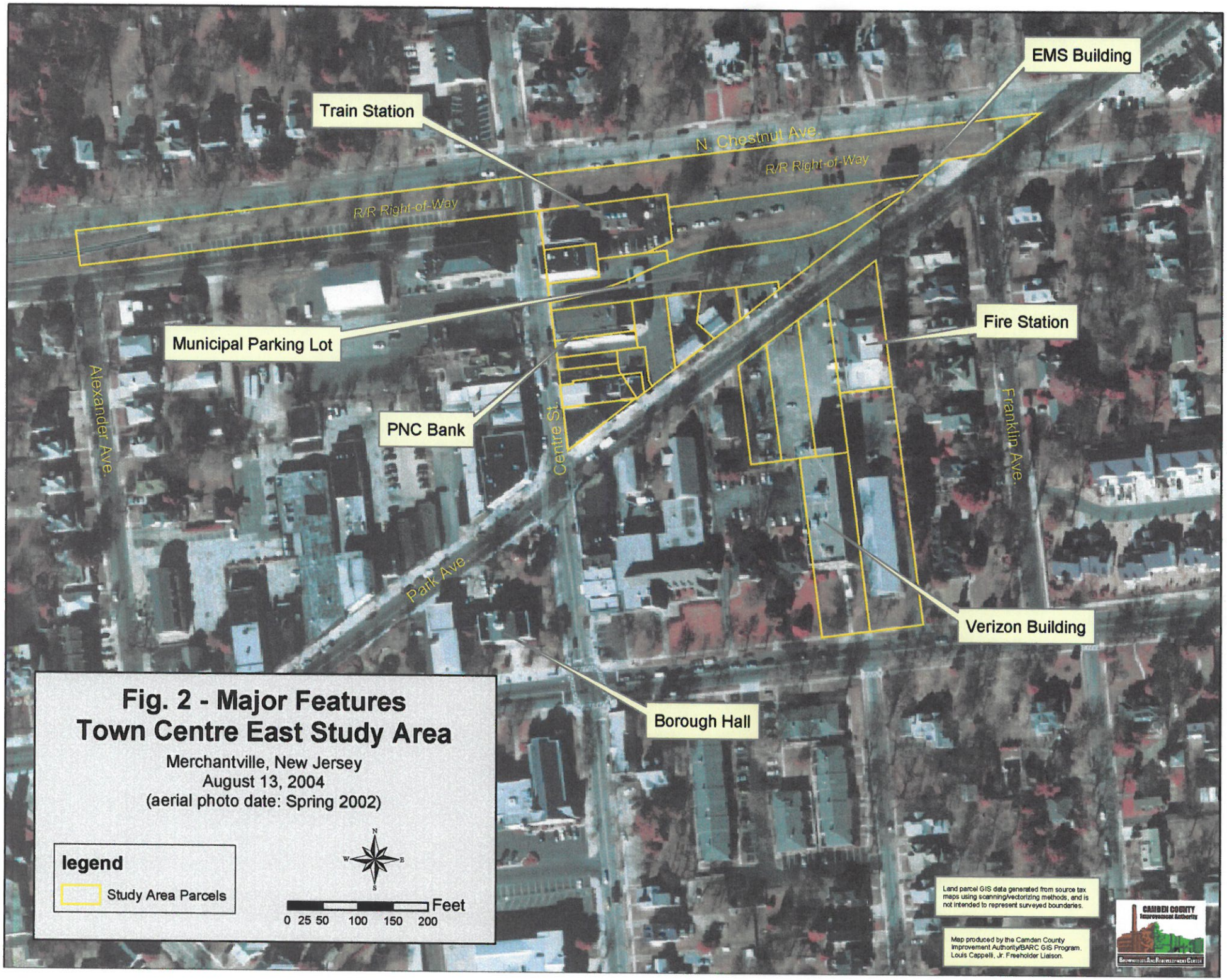


Fig. 1 - Redevelopment Study Area
Town Centre East Study Area

Merchantville, New Jersey
August 13, 2004
(aerial photo date: Spring 2002)


EMS Building
Train Station
N. Chestnut Ave.
R/R Right-of-Way
R/R Right-of-Way
Municipal Parking Lot
Fire Station
Alexander Ave.
PNC Bank
Centre St.
Franklin Ave.
Park Ave.
Verizon Building
Borough Hall
Fig. 2 - Major Features
Town Centre East Study Area
Merchantville, New Jersey
August 13, 2004
(aerial photo date: Spring 2002)
legend
Study Area Parcels
N
W
E
S
Feet
0 25 50 100 150 200
Land parcel GIS data generated from source tax maps using scanning/vectorizing methods, and is not intended to represent surveyed boundaries.
Map produced by the Camden County Improvement Authority/BARC GIS Program. Louis Cappelli, Jr. Freeholder Liaison.
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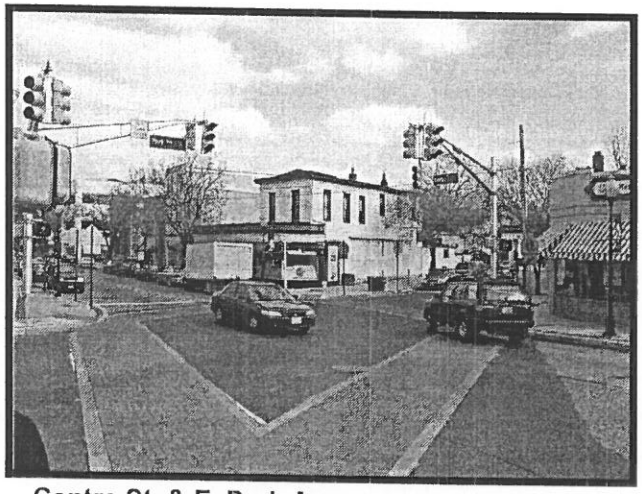
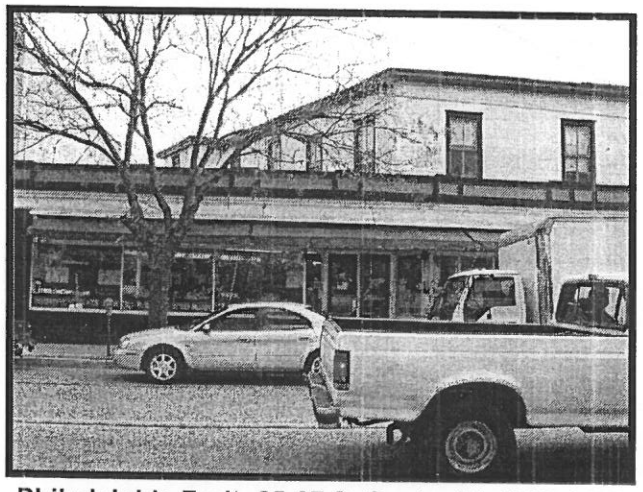
Improvement Authority

Merchantville Town Centre East



Centre St. & E. Park Ave.



Philadelphia Fruit: 25-27 S. Centre St. (B29, L07)

19-21 S. Centre St. (B29, L12)

News Nook: 17 S. Centre St. (B29, L13)

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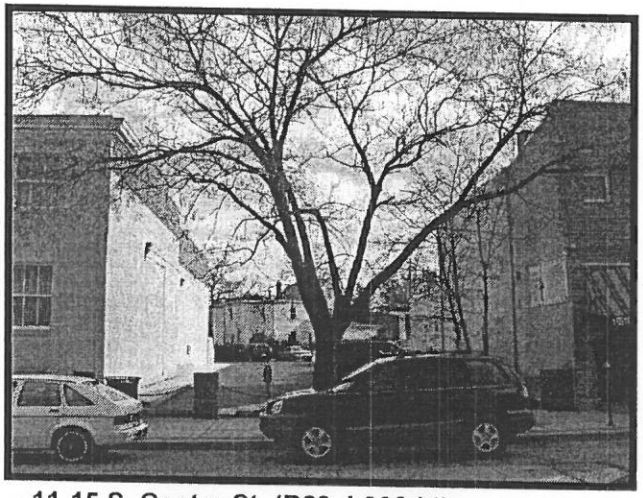
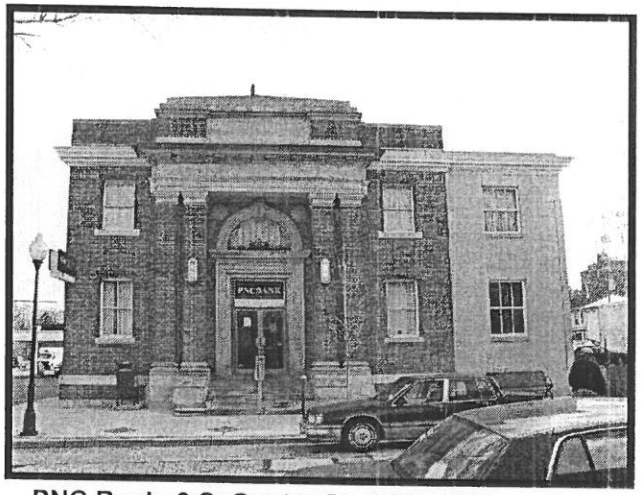
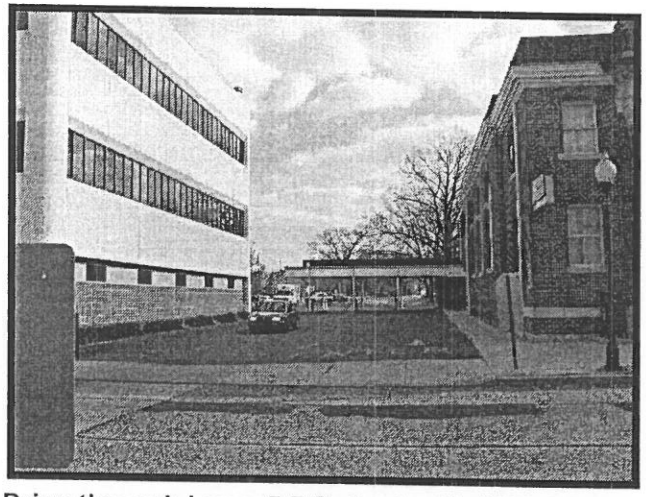
Merchantville Town Centre East



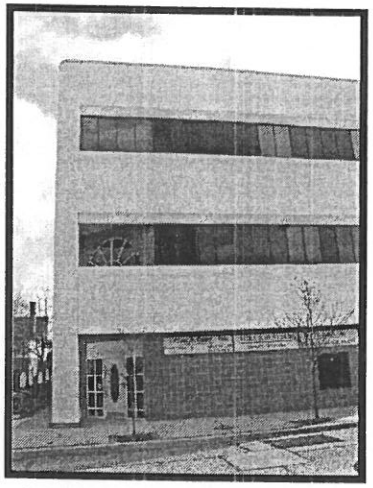
11-15 S. Centre St. (B29, L06&14)



PNC Bank: 9 S. Centre St. (B29, L06)



Drive-through Lane: 5-7 S. Centre St. (B29, L09&15)



1-3 S. Centre St. (B29, L.16)

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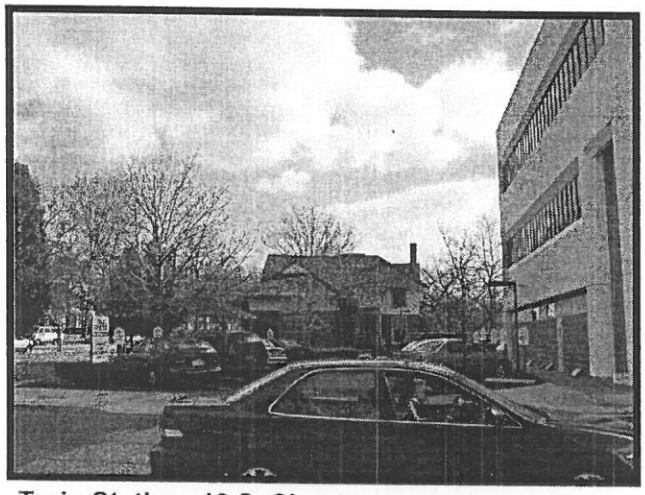
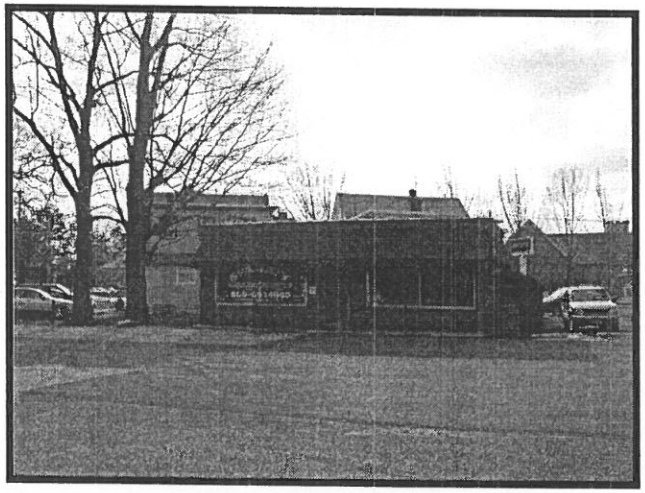
Merchantville Town Centre East

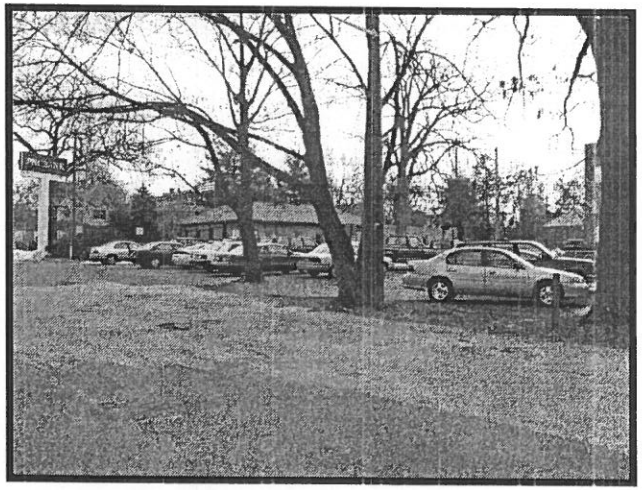


Train Station: 10 S. Chestnut Ave. (B29, L17)

Parking Lot (B29, L17)



Spa Guy: 9 E. Park Ave. Rear (B29, L04)



Parking Lot (B29, L08)

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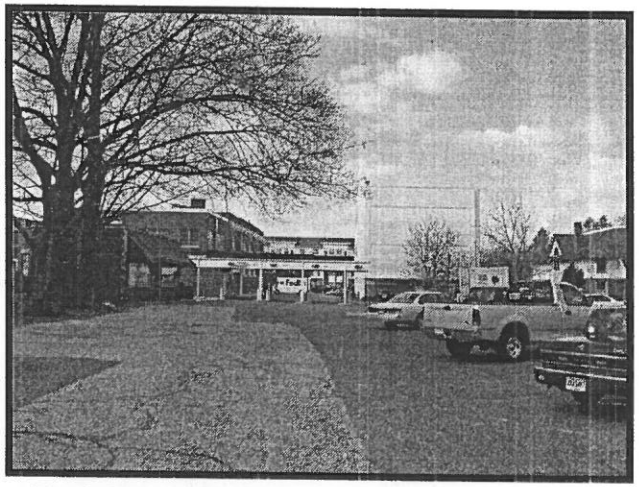
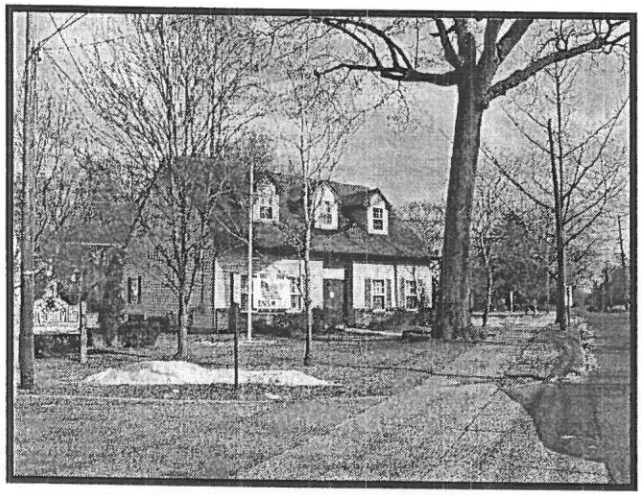
Merchantville Town Centre East

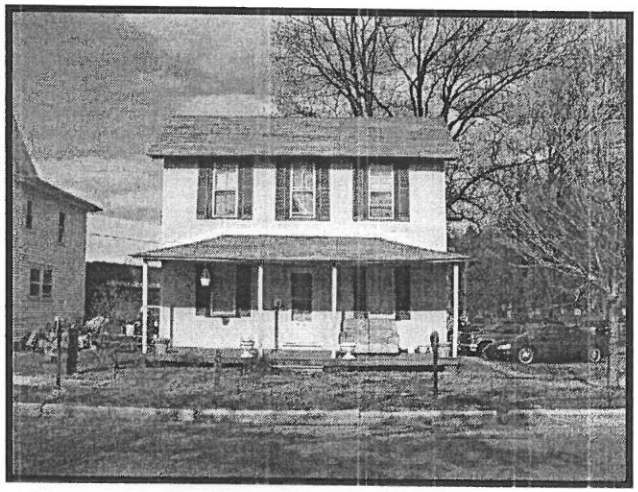
Bank Parking Lot from E. Park Ave. (B29, L09)



Bank Parking Lot interior (B29, L09)



EMS Headquarters: 25 E. Park Ave. (B29, L01)



House: 19 E. Park Ave. (B29, L05)

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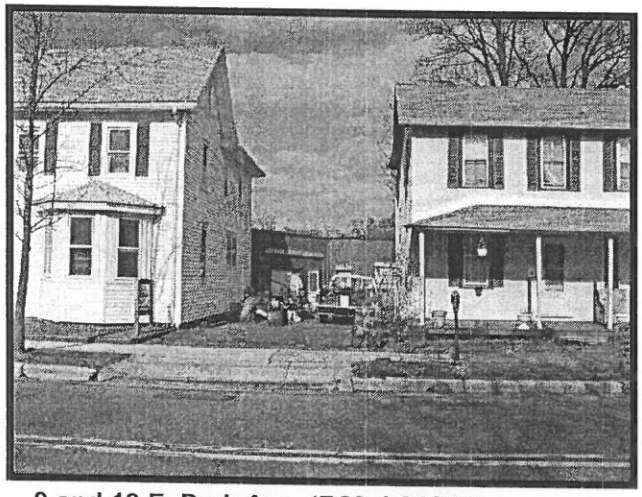
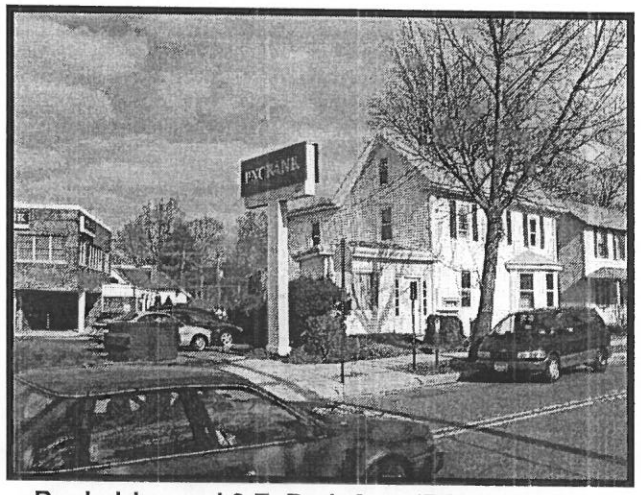
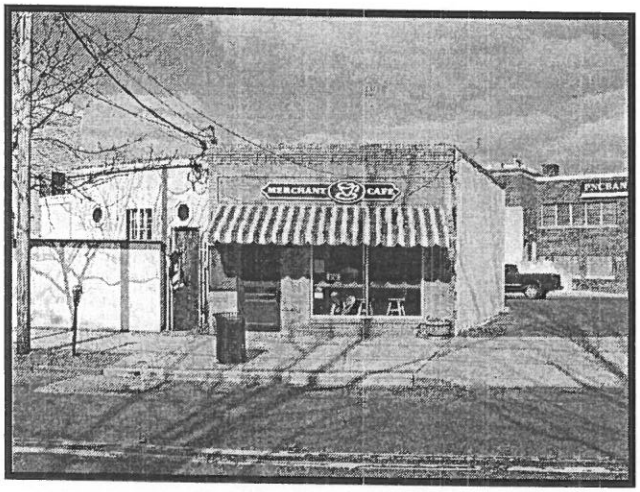
Merchantville Town Centre East



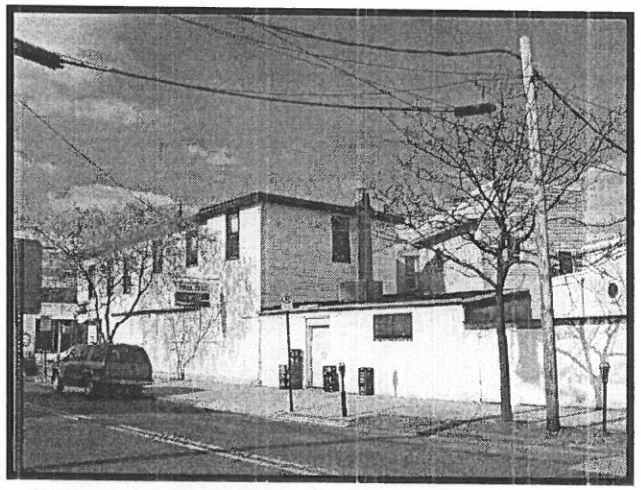
9 and 19 E. Park Ave. (B29, L04&05)



Bank drive and 9 E. Park Ave. (B29, L03&04)



Merchant Café: 1 E. Park Ave. (B29, L10)



Philadelphia Fruit on E. Park Ave. (B29, L07)

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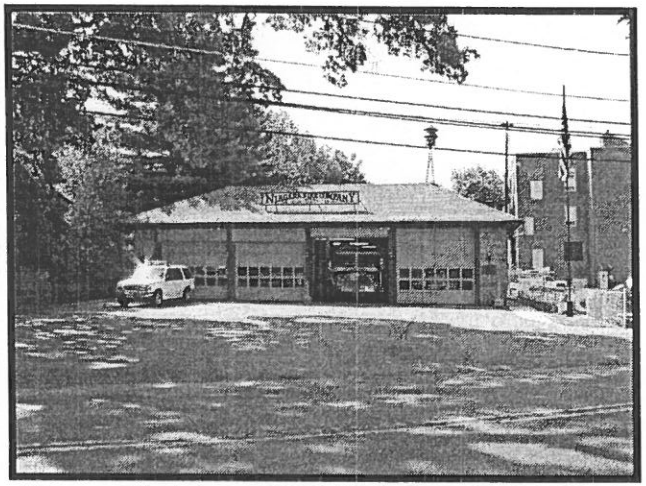
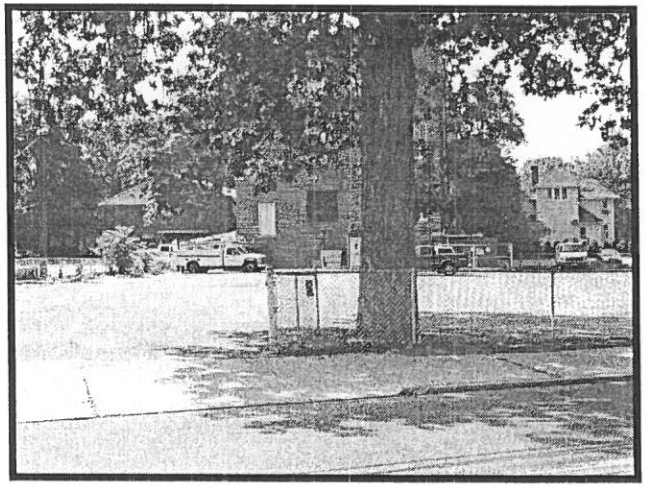
BROWNFIELDS AND REDEVELOPMENT CENTER

Merchantville Town Centre East



Niagara Firehouse, 22 E. Park Ave. (B33, L13.01)

Verizon Parking Lot, E. Park Ave. (B33, L07)



Verizon Parking Lot, E. Park Ave. (B33, L06)

Verizon Parking Lot, E. Park Ave. (B33, L05)

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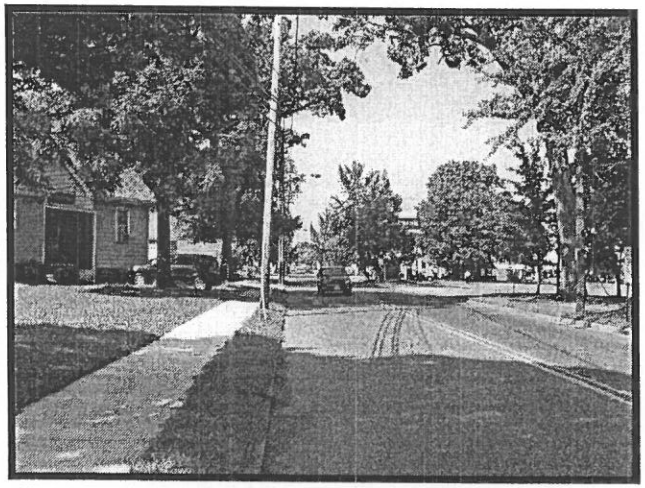
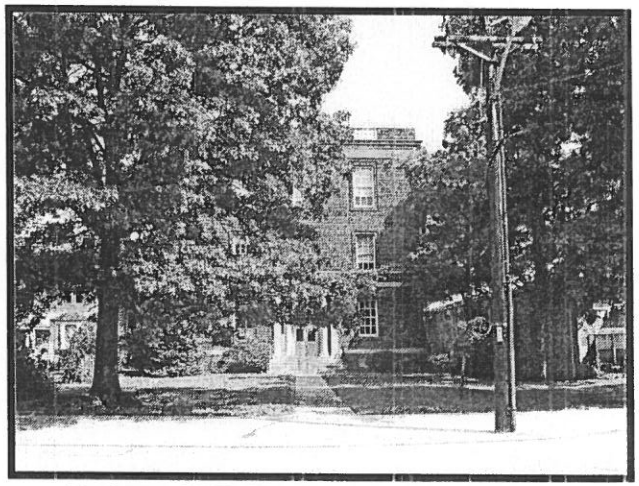
CAMDEN COUNTY Improvement Authority

BROWNFIELDS AND REDEVELOPMENT CENTER

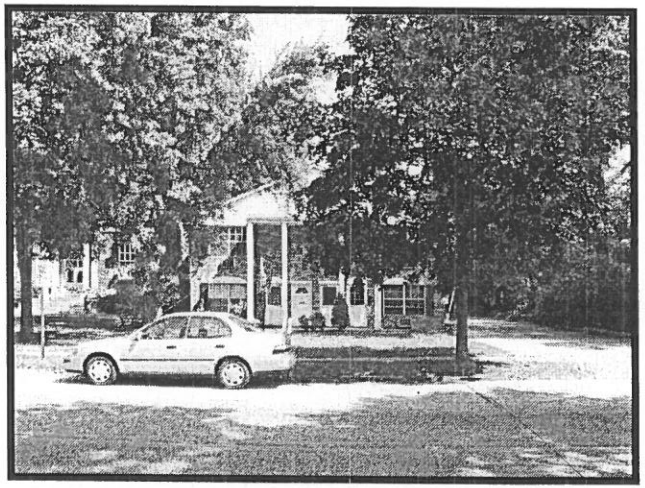
Merchantville Town Centre East



East Park Ave looking towards Centre Street



Verizon, 15 E. Maple Ave. (B33, L12)



Seventeen East Maple Apartments (B33, L13)

camden county Improvement Authority

CAMDEN COUNTY Improvement Authority
BROWNFIELDS AND REDEVELOPMENT CENTER

MERCHANTVILLE TOWN CENTRE EAST STUDY AREA

REDEVELOPMENT PLAN
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MERCHANTVILLE TOWN CENTRE EAST STUDY AREA

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

In December 1999, Merchantville adopted a Master Plan Re-examination Report (November 1997), which confirmed the recommendations of the updated Master Plan. The 1980 Master Plan stressed several points relevant to redevelopment in the Town Centre East Study Area. These five points are the basic goals of this redevelopment plan:

1. Revitalizing the downtown central business district using the Main Street program philosophy,
2. Increasing off-street parking by redeveloping vacant and under-utilized land,
3. Correcting the traffic circulation problems at East Park Avenue and Chestnut Street,
4. Redeveloping the railroad right-of-way for park and recreational uses as an urban greenway, and
5. Improving the streetscape and image of the downtown through architectural design control and historic preservation

The plan is composed of a series of elements and other provisions designed to implement these goals. Each of the elements contains individual objectives to be accomplished by a series of implementation recommendations.

Land Use Element Objectives:

- ☐ Provide opportunities for infill development of housing and commercial uses along with structured off-street parking.
- ☐ Encourage rehabilitation of existing ground floor commercial and upstairs residential uses, and infill of comparable uses.

Civic Design Element Objectives:

- ☐ Design and construct future redevelopment projects in a manner compatible with the existing pedestrian-scale character of historic downtown Merchantville.

Parking and Circulation Element Objectives:

- ☐ Design and construct a downtown mixed-use parking structure to meet existing and future projected parking demands within the downtown area and the demands for additional housing and commercial uses built as part of the parking structure.
- ☐ Improve traffic circulation, on-street parking, pedestrian circulation and signage in Town Centre East Redevelopment Area.

Infrastructure and Utility Element Objectives:

- ☐ Continuation of programmed maintenance and improvement of sanitary sewer, storm sewer and water system infrastructure within the Merchantville Town Centre East Redevelopment Area.
- ☐ Incorporate infrastructure improvements, including upgrade of stormwater management systems, during redevelopment.

Brownfields Element Objectives:

- ☐ Remediate any unacceptable environmental contamination through the redevelopment process.

Open Space and Recreational Development Element: Objectives:

- ☐ Continuation of the Rails to Trails urban greenway in the railroad right-of-way within the Merchantville Town Centre East Redevelopment Area.
- ☐ Increase landscaping to buffer the proposed parking structure.

MERCHANTVILLE TOWN CENTRE EAST STUDY AREA

LAND USE ELEMENT

The Town Centre East Study Area is located within the B-1 (Central Business) zoning district, which permits the following uses:

1. Retail sales of goods and services,
2. Travel agencies, real estate offices and opticians,
3. Offices and professional offices, but not on the street level floor along the Park Avenue and Centre Street frontages,
4. Restaurants,
5. Apartments over other permitted uses, but not on the street level floor,
6. Banks and other similar financial institutions, and
7. Senior citizen multifamily buildings.

The B-1 zoning district is within the Borough's historic preservation district where the local historic preservation commission reviews building demolitions, alterations and new construction for compatibility within the historic district.

The two properties that front on Maple Avenue, i.e., Lots 12 and 13 of Block 33, are within the R-4 Multi-Family Residential zoning district, which permits the following uses:

1. Single family dwellings
2. Single family dwellings with home occupations
3. Two-family dwellings (as a conditional use), and
4. Multi-family dwellings (as a conditional use)

The Verizon switching station is a pre-existing, non-conforming use.
(See **Fig. 3 – Existing Zoning**)

Essentially, the Land Use Plan for the redevelopment area is to provide for infill development along South Centre Street and East Park Avenue, consistent with existing land use standards. Such infill is based on two basic redevelopment principles:

1. The historic properties along South Centre Street should not be demolished,
2. The existing NJDOT railroad right-of-way should be maintained at a 50 foot width to allow for future development of limited access mass transit in the future. Until that time, the ground area should be redeveloped to continue the downtown rails to trails program.

Within Block 29, on the north side of East Park Avenue, future land uses should include an infill mixed-use downtown parking structure with permitted B-1 uses on ground floor fronting East Park Avenue and multi-family residential units above. Considering the basic geometry of parking structures, the redevelopment plan would require the acquisition and demolition of several properties, as well as the relocation of the existing emergency management services (EMS) station. Circulation improvements for the bank's drive-thru service will need to be made, as the proposed mixed-use garage will require taking the bank's existing parking areas and drive-thru lanes.

Within Block 33, on the south side of East Park Avenue, future land uses should include additional housing in the Verizon parking lots along East Park Avenue, providing that the ground floor properties fronting the street be developed for some other permitted B-1

non-residential use. If the fire station were relocated to some other location in the future, that property should be redeveloped in the same fashion. Similarly, if the Verizon utility along East Maple Avenue were relocated, this structure should be converted to multi-family residential uses, as permitted in the R-4 zoning district.

The following chart summaries current and proposed uses in the redevelopment area, including contingency redevelopment plans if certain uses, such as the bank, fires station or telephone utility were to be relocated.

Block	Lot	Address	Current Use	Proposed Uses
29	1	25 E. Park Ave.	Municipal off-street parking	Infill mixed-use parking structure with permitted B-1 uses on ground floor fronting E. Park Ave and multi-family residential uses above
29	2	9 S. Centre St.	Bank	No immediate change; if Bank relocated, convert to permitted B-1 Uses
29	3, 8, 9, 11 & 15	11-15 S. Centre St., 5-7 and 19-21 E. Park Ave.	Off-street parking, Bank addition, drive-thru tellers and lanes	Same as Block 29, Lot 1
29	4	9 E. Park Ave.	Spa store, Office, Upstairs apartment	Same as Block 29, Lot 1
29	5	19 E. Park Ave.	Single family detached dwelling	Same as Block 29, Lot 1
29	6 &14	11-15 S. Centre St.	Off-street parking, Bank addition	Relocated drive-thru teller lanes; if Bank relocated, convert to permitted B-1 Uses
29	7	25-27 S. Centre St.	Grocery	**No Change**
29	10	1 E. Park Ave.	Café	Same as Block 29, Lot 1
29	12	19-21 S. Centre St.	Ground floor retail, Upstairs residential	No Change (part of an earlier redevelopment area project)
29	13	17 S. Centre St.	Ground floor retail, Upstairs residential	**No Change**
29	16	1-3 S. Centre St.	Offices	**No Change**
29	17	10 S. Chestnut Ave.	Offices, Off-street parking	**No Change to existing offices;** Rear off-street parking area Same as Block 29, Lot 1
33	5, 6 & 7	16 E. Park Ave.	Telephone utility off-street parking	Multi-family residential above permitted B-1 uses on ground floor fronting E. Park Ave., and required off-street parking
33	12	15 E. Maple Ave.	Telephone utility switching station	No immediate change; if utility use relocated, convert to a multi-family residential use
33	13	17 E. Maple Ave.	18-unit apartment building	**No Change**
33	13.01	22 E. Park Ave.	Fire Station	No immediate change; if Fire Station relocated, same as Block 33, Lots 5, 6 & 7
61	4	Conrail	Railroad r-o-w, Off-street parking, EMS Station	Recreational trail (50' wide) along N. Chestnut Ave.; Same as Block 29, Lot 1 for remainder

Pre-existing, non-conforming land uses and structures
Continuation of uses not identified as permitted principal, accessory or conditional uses, e.g., single-family residential uses, and the structures occupied by those uses, shall be allowed in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Land Use Law (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1 et seq.) and other pertinent laws. Voluntary and forcible removal of those uses and structures, however, may be occur under the provisions of the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 et seq.), Eminent Domain Act (N.J.S.A. 20:3-1 et seq.), New Jersey Relocation Assistance Law (N.J.S.A. 52:31B-1 et seq.), New Jersey Relocation Assistance Act (N.J.S.A. 20:4-1 et seq.), etc.

Expansion of pre-existing, non-conforming uses, and the structures occupied by those uses is discouraged, as they are inconsistent with and detrimental to the land use policies in the adopted Borough master plan and this Redevelopment Plan. However, due to the anticipated long-term completion of this Redevelopment Plan, the lawful use, improvement, sale and disposal of such properties shall not be prohibited.

Development Standards
Implementation of the redevelopment plan will not require amendments to the existing B-1 or R-4 zoning districts standards, other than those that would permit:

1. Mixed-use parking garages in the B-1 zoning district
2. Redevelopment projects in the B-1 and R-4 zoning districts with up to 100% impervious coverage and up to 60 feet in height.

Redevelopment Objectives

- ☐ Provide opportunities for infill development of housing and commercial uses along with structured off-street parking.
- ☐ Encourage rehabilitation of existing ground floor commercial and upstairs residential uses, and infill of comparable uses.

Implementation Recommendations

- Amend the Land Use Ordinance to permit:
  1. Permit parking garages in the B-1 zoning district
  2. Permit redevelopment projects in the B-1 and R-4 zoning districts with up to 100% impervious coverage and up to 60 feet in height.
- Begin discussions with NJDOT regarding development of air rights in Conrail right-of-way. Amend redevelopment plan, as necessary, if dialogue proves successful.
- Provide private sector incentives for rehab and infill construction of mixed-use buildings along South Centre Street.

CIVIC DESIGN ELEMENT
Because the downtown district is the heart of the Borough, the design of every visual element associated with the Redevelopment Plan should reflect quality and pride – the characteristics that make Merchantville a unique and desirable place to be. It is not the intent of this Redevelopment Plan to establish the architectural character of future buildings, streetscapes and landscapes within the Merchantville Town Centre East Redevelopment Area. The Borough's historic preservation commission should develop these during

the course of the redevelopment program. The following basic civic design guidelines, however, should be considered when developing these guidelines and implementing the redevelopment program.

Buildings and Architectural Design Guidelines

1. Encourage rehabilitation of historic buildings along South Centre Street through compatible adaptive re-use.

2. New buildings should be located to front toward and relate, both functionally and visually, to either South Centre Street or East Park Avenue. Principal entrances to buildings should be on South Centre Street and East Park Avenue.

3. New buildings on South Centre Street should be built up to the sidewalk edge. Setback guidelines for future buildings on East Park Avenue should be prepared upon future determination of general of the alignment, orientation, right-of-way, on-street parking, utility installation and streetscape program for that street, as may be required for the redevelopment of the downtown mixed-use parking structure. Such a structure should ensure compatibility of pedestrian movement in the redevelopment area.

4. Walls should be constructed of masonry, i.e., brick, stone, block, concrete and/or stucco, finished to resemble stone or block. Blank and windowless walls should be permitted only on rear of buildings. Retail frontage should have large display windows with 40 to 60% of the façade transparent.

5. Infill building height, width, scale and cornice articulation on South Centre Street and East Park Avenue should be compatible with other commercial buildings on South Centre Street. Business and directional signage should be predominantly pedestrian in scale and coordinated with the architecture of the buildings.

6. Service areas, loading docks, solid waste and recycling facilities and other service areas should be placed to the rear or side of buildings in visually unobtrusive locations. Additional driveways and vehicular entrances should be prohibited South Centre Street and East Park Avenue. Parking decks should be screened or constructed to resemble residential or commercial building types.

7. All air conditioning units, HVAC systems, exhaust pipes or stacks, elevator housing and satellite dishes and other telecommunications receiving devices should be screened from view from the ground level of the public rights-of-way and adjacent properties, by using walls, fencing, roof elements, parapet walls, architectural enclosures, penthouse-type screening devices or landscaping. All future utility lines should be placed underground or relocated to rear alleys.

Streetscape and Landscape Design Guidelines

1. Future streetscaping of East Park Avenue should be consistent with that of South Centre Street and other enhanced parts of downtown.

2. Street trees along East Park Avenue should be spaced along property lines or in 30-foot intervals and not obscure building entrances, retail display windows, or signage.

3. Sidewalk for East Park Avenue and the Urban Greenway in the railroad right-of-way should be wide enough to accommodate several persons walking abreast.

Redevelopment Objectives

☐ Design and construct future redevelopment projects in a manner compatible with the existing pedestrian-scale character of historic downtown Merchantville.

Implementation Recommendations

- Finalize plans for future vehicular circulation improvement in the Town Centre East Study Area. (See **Parking and Circulation Element**.)
- Adopt and use flexible infill design guidelines for the historic district, including adaptive re-use of historic buildings, where appropriate.
- Continue downtown streetscape and pedestrian improvements along East Park Avenue.

PARKING AND CIRCULATION ELEMENT

In 1988, Merchantville conducted a downtown parking study, which evaluated the current capacity of and projected needs for off-street parking in the B-1 central business zoning district, i.e., Blocks 22, 23, 26 and 29 and a portion of Block 33 along South Centre Street. (Verizon's off-street parking spaces on East Park Avenue were not included in the study.) At that time, there was an existing deficit of 161 off-street parking spaces, with a possible total deficit of 306 off-street parking spaces. (This was also before the construction of the Chestnut Station senior housing project, which substantially altered total off-street parking demands and supply on Block 22.) The study reported that Block 29, the Town Centre East Redevelopment Area, had an existing parking deficit of 10 spaces and a possible deficit of 33 spaces.

Within a few years, the Borough improved a portion of the railroad right-of-way, as recommended by the study, with an additional 34 spaces, thus providing sufficient capacity for existing development in 1988. Any new infill development, increase in density or floor area ratio (FAR) in Block 29 will, by its very nature, generate additional off-street parking demand. This is also the case for redevelopment anywhere in the B-1 zoning district. Without additional off-street parking and alteration of existing on-street parking patterns, future economic redevelopment in downtown Merchantville will choke and stagnate. The scale of the approximately 300-projected space need in 1988 is one that cannot be accommodated by re-arranging existing public and private parking lots and vacant properties. It will require the construction of a downtown mixed-use parking structure. The most appropriate location for such a structure would be on existing vacant land, now used for off-street parking for local offices, the bank, and downtown workers and shoppers in Block 29 – in the Merchantville Town Centre East.

Other circulation issues will need to be addressed in a redevelopment program. For example, the odd intersection of Gilmore, Franklin, North Chestnut and South Chestnut avenues is a current traffic problem. It is further complicated by the use of Gilmore

Avenue as a local bypass and the wide-angle turn of motorists and the NJ Transit 404 bus from westbound Park Avenue onto North Chestnut Avenue. The intensity of the proposed redevelopment, i.e., a mixed-use parking structure, additional housing and retail uses, will require improvement of this intersection, and reconsideration of existing on-street parking and driveways along the streets bordering Block 29. Pedestrian and streetscape improvements, much like that already recently installed along South Centre Street, should be done at the same time, as well as enhancement of directional signage.

Redevelopment Objectives

- ☐ Design and construct a downtown mixed-use parking structure no meet existing and future projected parking demands within the downtown area and the demands for additional housing and commercial uses built with the structure.
- ☐ Improve traffic circulation, on-street parking, pedestrian circulation and signage in the Town Centre East area.

Implementation Recommendations

- Complete traffic demand, design and financing studies for a downtown mixed-use parking structure.
- Complete required traffic circulation studies as part of the site plan process for proposed redevelopment. Such studies should consider: making Gilmore Avenue one-way northbound; installing a rotary or other traffic calming measures at the intersection Gilmore, Franklin, North Chestnut and South Chestnut avenues; and installing four-way stop signs, flashing beacon or other signalized intersection at North Chestnut Avenue and South Centre Street.
- Continue pedestrian improvements in Town Centre East area.
- Design and implement directional signage.
- Coordinate infrastructure improvement design, financing and installation with that of the proposed traffic circulation improvements, parking structure and other redevelopment projects.
- Coordinate stormwater management improvements with redevelopment program.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND UTILITY ELEMENT

Existing water, sewer and roadway facilities serving the Town Centre East Redevelopment Area may require upgrading to meet present and future needs. The Borough of Merchantville Department of Public Works should continue their long-range improvement program to upgrade the sanitary sewer, storm sewer and water systems in the Redevelopment Area for service to existing and new business and to enhance the business attractiveness of the area. Special attention will need to be provided to stormwater management due to the potential amount of increased impervious surfaces and regarding involved in the Redevelopment Plan. Redevelopment projects will be required to participate in on-site and off-tract infrastructure improvements for the Redevelopment Area, in proportion to the size of their projects. Any future redevelopment projects should require relocating all aboveground utilities belowground or in rear alleys.

Redevelopment Objectives

- ☐ Continuation of programmed maintenance and improvement of sanitary sewer, storm sewer and water system infrastructure within the Merchantville Town Centre East Redevelopment Area.

☐ Incorporate infrastructure improvements, including upgrade of stormwater management systems, during redevelopment.

Implementation Recommendations

- Coordinate infrastructure improvement design, financing and installation with that of the proposed traffic circulation improvements parking structure and other redevelopment projects.
- Place aboveground utility lines belowground or behind storefronts in rear alleys in the Town Centre East Redevelopment Area.
- Coordinate stormwater management improvements with redevelopment program.

BROWNFIELDS ELEMENT

The Town Centre East Redevelopment Area has some special environmental issues due to its location in a former railroad freight yard and downtown commercial and light industrial district. Brownfields are properties that are known to be or are suspected to be environmentally contaminated. Concern about unknown contamination and potential responsibility for clean up and remediation has softened private-sector interest in older communities, such as Merchantville Borough. State and Federal environmental laws regulate the transfer of environmentally contaminated properties and require responsible parties to remediate current and historic contamination.

Although the NJDEP has not documented any Known Contaminated Sites (KCSs), several of the former uses within the study area, e.g. freight and coal yard, tin shop, garages, etc., are the types of uses one would generally suspect as areas of potential environmental concern. Realistically, almost every non-residential property in the Town Centre East Study Area Redevelopment Area is a potential brownfield site because:

1. The property is an older industrial or commercial site that processed or used potentially hazardous materials; or
2. The property is a newer industrial or commercial structure that was built atop a cleared and unremediated brownfield site; or
3. The property is a newer industrial or commercial structure that built atop wetlands fill composed of potentially hazardous materials.

Due to their proximity to these other former industrial areas, the two older residential properties on East Park Avenue also may be contaminated from industrial pollutants or typical household health hazards, such as asbestos, lead paint, or underground storage tanks.

The Town Centre East Redevelopment Plan encourages the clean-up and re-use of brownfields properties as part of future redevelopment activities. Because New Jersey's brownfields clean-up requirements have "use-based" standards, remediation of properties that will be kept in non-residential use, such as those proposed in the Land Use Element, will be less severe than those required for housing. NJDEP also permits brownfield structures that are to be rehabilitated for new uses to limit workers' and residents' exposure to contamination through engineering and/or institutional controls, such as encapsulation or restricting access, as an alternative to full contamination removal. Residential uses also may be permitted in former industrial area, after appropriate

necessary remediation is undertaken. All future redevelopment projects should require restrictive covenants in their property deeds to notify future owners of the site's potential contamination, remediation and usage limitations. NJDEP may require this full disclosure in real estate title documents, too.

New Jersey's Spill Compensation and Control Act (N.J.S.A. 58:10-23.11) exempts local governments and agencies that acquire brownfields through foreclosure, condemnation or similar means from liability for past contamination. Thus, the Redevelopment Entity may acquire, hold and work to remediate and redevelop brownfields property without threat of litigation as a responsible party. (Lending institutions financing industrial redevelopment projects are also not liable for past contamination.)

Redevelopment Objectives

☐ Remediate any unacceptable environmental contamination through the redevelopment process.

Implementation Recommendations

- Undertake a NJDEP-acceptable Preliminary Assessments/Site Investigation (PA/SI) analysis for redevelopment area properties to identify and evaluate potential brownfield contamination issues.

- If PA/S's warrant further action, the Borough and/or Redeveloper should initiate involvement in NJDEP's Voluntary Cleanup Program. This program uses non-binding NJDEP Memorandums of Agreement (MOAs) between NJDEP, local public agencies and redevelopers to conduct cleanups by establishing project scopes of work and flexible schedules for remedial activities. (Note: The Voluntary Cleanup Program is not available for properties subject to the New Jersey Industrial Site Recovery Act and underground storage tank regulations or the Federal Superfund program.)

- When the Redevelopment Plan is implemented and as properties are acquired by the Redevelopment Entity, it should continue to explore possible NJDEP Hazardous Discharge Site Remediation Fund grants.

- The Borough and Redevelopment Entity should also explore the feasibility of designating "Environmental Opportunity Zones" (per N.J.A.C. 54:4-3.150 et. seq.) for contaminated sites and creating tax-increment financing plans to pay for remediation over a 10-year period.

- Additional financial incentives may be available from State and Federal brownfields legislation. For example, the NJDEP Brownfields Redevelopment Agreement may allow reimbursement of up to 75% of approved remediation costs financed by State taxes generated by the redevelopment of individual properties.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

The Borough of Merchantville currently leases the former Conrail railroad right-of-way from NJDOT for "rails to trails" recreational use. The lease prohibits the erection of any permanent structures on the property; however, temporary structures, landscaping, and

paving are permitted. The Borough has improved the rail bed west of Alexander Street with a paved sidewalk and installed a gazebo on the western side of the Centre Street intersection. In addition, the Borough has improved a portion of the right-of-way (Block 61, Lot 4) within the study area, next to the municipal parking lot on Block 29, Lot 1, for off-street parking as part of the municipal parking lot. The remainder of the right-of-way remains as a 50-foot wide grass strip.

The Land Use Element indicates that this improved section, which exceeds the standard 50-foot width through the rest of the Borough, be subdivided from the lot and consolidated with other properties in Block 29 to erect a mixed-use parking structure. The remainder of the grassy area, however, should be improved as part of the Borough's Rails to Trails system to increase recreational opportunities in the downtown. These improvements and additional landscaping should be coordinated with the layout and architectural design of the proposed parking structure, as they will be helpful in buffering its presence.

Redevelopment Objectives

- ☐ Continuation of the Rails to Trails urban greenway in the railroad right-of-way within the Merchantville Town Centre East Redevelopment Area.
- ☐ Increase landscaping to buffer the proposed parking structure.

Implementation Recommendations

- Coordinate design and installation of Rails to Trails and landscaping improvements with that of the proposed parking structure.
- See Implementation Strategies in the Camden County Open Space and Farmland Preservation Plan (2004).

MERCHANTVILLE TOWN CENTRE EAST STUDY AREA

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

1. Relationship to Definite Local Objectives:

The purpose of the Town Centre East Redevelopment Plan is to address the economic development, pedestrian and vehicular circulation, off-street parking, urban design/historic preservation, recreation and other community development issues raised in Merchantville Borough's master plan. The Town Centre East Redevelopment Plan, which focuses on redevelopment of the land behind the properties on the east side of South Centre Street, is complimentary to the Centre Street (Chestnut Station) Redevelopment Plan. That plan allowed for the consolidation of properties to construct the Chestnut Station senior housing development behind the properties on the west side of South Centre Street.

The Town Centre East Redevelopment Plan identifies that these uses shall be redeveloped consistent with the B-1 (Central Business) zoning district land use and development standards, and the R-4 (Residential Multifamily) zoning district standards for the two properties fronting on East Maple Avenue. Local pedestrian and vehicular circulation, off-street parking, stormwater management, design and recreation issues are discussed in the Redevelopment Plan, as well. Landscaping, buffering and other site improvement issues shall be addressed through the development review and approval process for individual redevelopment projects, in accordance with the Borough's Land Development Ordinance.

2. Proposed Land Uses and Building Requirements:

The Town Centre East Redevelopment Plan includes a discussion of these requirements. These standards shall be used for the implementation of this Redevelopment Plan, and should be incorporated into the current Borough Master Plan and Land Development Ordinance through their respective statutory amendment processes. Developments, including those requiring site plans and subdivisions, within the Redevelopment Area shall be governed by the respective Merchantville Borough codes regarding such development. The land uses identified within this Redevelopment Plan shall be used as the Redevelopment Area's land use plan, until the Land Development Ordinance is amended to correlate with the Redevelopment Plan.

The Redevelopment Entity, in consultation with the Borough's Planning Board and its Design District Citizens Advisory Committee, shall promulgate building, streetscape and landscape detailed design and improvement standards for development and redevelopment in this Redevelopment Area, which shall be adopted as an amendment to this Redevelopment Plan by the Borough Council through ordinance. These regulations may vary from existing ones, based upon the unique nature of the parcels and the Redevelopment Plan, while being consistent with the objectives of appropriate local, state and federal regulations.

3. Identification of Properties to be Acquired:

Implementation of this Merchantville Town Centre East Redevelopment Plan shall require the acquisition of several properties or portions of them. During the course of the redevelopment program, the Redevelopment Entity also may find the need to acquire additional properties to implement the plan, if circumstances allow or change. The following table indicates which properties are to be acquired or may be acquired. (See also **Fig. 4 – Property Acquisition Map**.)

MERCHANTVILLE TOWN CENTRE EAST STUDY AREA

Block	Lot	Address	Current Use	Proposed Uses	Acquisition	Owner
29	1	25 E. Park Ave.	Municipal off-street parking	Infill parking structure with 4-story Multi-family Residential with permitted B-1 Uses on ground floor fronting E. Park Ave.	NO	Borough
29	2	9 S. Centre St.	Bank	No immediate change; if Bank relocated, convert to permitted B-1 Uses	May be Acquired	PNC Bank
29	3, 8, 9, 11 & 15	11-15 S. Centre St., 5-7 E. Park Ave. and 19-21 E. Park Ave.	Off-street parking, Bank addition, drive-thru tellers and lanes	Same as Block 29, Lot 1	To be Acquired	PNC Bank
29	4	9 E. Park Ave.	Spa store, Office, Upstairs apartment	Same as Block 29, Lot 1	To be Acquired	Brickley Estate
29	5	19 E. Park Ave.	Single family detached dwelling	Same as Block 29, Lot 1	To be Acquired	RJ Cummins Inc
29	6 &14	11-15 S. Centre St.	Off-street parking, Bank addition	Relocated drive-thru teller lanes; if Bank relocated, convert to permitted B-1 Uses	May be Acquired	PNC Bank
29	7	25-27 S. Centre St.	Grocery	No Change	NO	Hannah
29	10	1 E. Park Ave.	Café	Same as Block 29, Lot 1	May be Acquired	Zafis
29	12	19-21 S. Centre St.	Ground floor retail, Upstairs residential	No Change (part of an earlier redevelopment plan)	NO	Zafis
29	13	17 S. Centre St.	Ground floor retail, Upstairs residential	No Change	NO	Samshell Industries
29	16	1-3 S. Centre St.	Offices	No Change	NO	1-3 South Centre Street, LLC
29	17	10 S. Chestnut Ave.	Offices, Off-street parking	No Change to Offices; Rear off-street parking area Same as Block 29, Lot 1	Part of Lot To be Acquired	1-3 South Centre Street, LLC
33	5, 6 & 7	16 E. Park Ave.	Telephone utility off-street parking	4-story Multi-family Residential with permitted B-1 Uses on ground floor fronting E. Park Ave.; Off-street parking for Residential Uses	To be Acquired	Verizon
33	12	15 E. Maple Ave.	Telephone utility switching station	No immediate change; if utility use relocated, convert to Multi-family Residential Use	May be Acquired	Verizon
33	13	17 E. Maple Ave.	18-unit apartment building	No Change	NO	Schultz
33	13.01	22 E. Park Ave.	Fire Station	No immediate change; if Fire Station relocated, same as Block 33, Lots 5, 6 & 7	NO	Borough
61	4	Conrail	Railroad ROW, Off-street parking, EMS Station	Recreational Trail (50' wide) along N. Chestnut Ave.; Same as Block 29, Lot 1 for remainder	Part of Lot To be Acquired	Conrail

4. Relocation Provisions

The Redevelopment Entity will provide displaced households and businesses with the opportunity of relocation within the Borough limits to the fullest extent of the New Jersey Relocation Assistance Law (N.J.S.A. 52:31B-1 et seq.) and the New Jersey Relocation Assistance Act (N.J.S.A. 20:4-1 et seq.). The Redevelopment Entity will interview households and businesses to determine their relocation needs and preferences, and make reasonable efforts to find available comparable housing or business space in the general area.

5. Relationship to the Municipal Land Use Law:

The Town Centre East Redevelopment Plan conforms to the general intent and scope of the Municipal Land Use Law. Redevelopment projects requiring site plan and subdivision approval by the Merchantville Borough Planning Board or Zoning Board of Adjustment will be submitted to the Planning Board for review and approval, in accordance with the New Jersey Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (N.J.S.A. 40A:12-1 et seq.). Those requiring County Planning Board approval will be submitted for their review and approval also.

The land use and development standards provided in the Redevelopment Plan are designed to be primarily consistent with those in the current Borough Land Development Ordinance, however, they have been modified to allow sufficient flexibility for successful redevelopment within the Town Centre East Study Area Redevelopment Area and to permit the development of parking structures. In cases where there is a difference between the standards in the Land Development Ordinance and those in the Redevelopment Plan, the uses and standards specified in the Redevelopment Plan shall supercede those in the ordinance. Uses identified as restricted and prohibited in the Borough of Merchantville and the B-1 (Central Business) and R-4 (Residential Multi-Family) zoning districts shall be restricted and prohibited in the Redevelopment Area, as well. In essence and fact, the uses and standards provided in this Redevelopment Plan shall be considered an overlay zone for the B-1 and R-4 zoning districts.

Expansion of pre-existing, non-conforming uses, and the structures in which they are located, such as single family residential uses, is discouraged, as they are inconsistent with and detrimental to the land use policies in the adopted Borough master plan and this Redevelopment Plan.

6. Merchantville Borough Master Plan:

The Town Centre East Redevelopment Plan has been developed from and is consistent with the Merchantville Borough Master Plan, as updated and amended It has been designed to implement its recommendations.

MERCHANTVILLE TOWN CENTRE EAST STUDY AREA

CONFORMANCE WITH OTHER PLANS

The Town Centre East Redevelopment Plan is consistent with the Intent and Policy Objectives of the Metropolitan Area (PA1) in the 2001 State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP), as well as the SDRP's goals and statewide policies on urban revitalization, economic development, etc. The Merchantville Town Centre East Redevelopment Plan is also generally consistent with the 1971 Camden County Future Land Use Plan, which indicates commercial and industrial uses for this area. The 1972 plan will be superceded by the Camden Metropolitan Regional Plan, which the Walter Rand Institute for Public Policy at Rutgers Camden, Camden County, Camden City, Merchantville Borough and thirteen other suburban satellite municipalities generally north of I-295 are currently developing.

The Merchantville Town Centre East Redevelopment Plan is consistent with the goals and objectives of the draft 2003 Camden Hub Regional Plan. That plan indicates that the Merchantville Central Business zoning district is part of the local "core" where retail, business, civic, residential and mixed-uses should be provided and regionally supported. When completed, this regional plan will be circulated among the participating municipalities and the county for their mutual endorsement and then forward to the State Planning Commission for their endorsement.

This plan also conforms with and incorporates the January 2004 Redevelopment Plan for Block 29 , Lots 10 and 12 in the East Centre Street Redevelopment Area.

REDEVELOPMENT ENTITY AND REDEVELOPER(S)

The Governing Body of the Borough of Merchantville shall designate a Redevelopment Entity to implement this Merchantville Town Centre East Redevelopment Plan and undertake the redevelopment projects in the area designated by this plan as the Town Centre East Study Area Redevelopment Area.

When necessary for the implementation of this plan, the designated Redevelopment Entity shall enter into a contract(s) with a Redeveloper(s) for any construction or other improvements forming part of this Redevelopment Plan.

The Redeveloper shall agree to retain interest in the project until the completion of construction, development and/or improvements of the specific project. The Redeveloper shall agree not to lease, sell or transfer interest or any part thereof without written prior approval of the Redevelopment Entity.

MERCHANTVILLE TOWN CENTRE EAST STUDY AREA

GENERAL PROVISIONS

The following general provisions shall apply to this Redevelopment Plan:

1. Land use provisions and building requirements for the Town Centre East Study Area Redevelopment Area are deemed necessary as minimum requirements in the interest of public health, safety and general welfare. They are intended to provide a frame of reference for physical development of the designated Redevelopment Area and as context for development in neighboring area. Developers and designated redevelopers (hereinafter Redevelopers) may be given flexibility in project planning and design, so long as building and other improvements reflect quality, permanence and physical integration through design elements and quality construction. The Borough of Merchantville cannot anticipate every possible design or land use solution for the variety of issues involved in this Redevelopment Plan. Redevelopment proposals will be evaluated as to how they appropriately achieve the redevelopment goal and objectives of this plan, as outlined in this document

2. The Redevelopment Entity and the Borough of Merchantville Planning Board, and its respective advisory committees, specifically reserve the right to review and approve a Redeveloper's plans, pro forma / marketing analyses, construction documents and specifications, and other development application submission materials that it may deem necessary to determine a project's conformance to the Redevelopment Plan. Such a review also shall be based on submissions to both agencies of a site context plan locating the proposed project in the Redevelopment Area; a site plan; and building elevation. All design changes must be approved by both agencies, or their designees, prior to their execution.

3. As part of the final site plan approval process, the Planning Board may require a redeveloper to furnish performance guarantees pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-53. Such performance guarantees shall be approved by the Borough Engineer and Borough Attorney. The amount of such performance guarantees shall be determined by the Borough Engineer and shall be sufficient to assure completion of improvements within two years of final site plan approval.

4. Interim uses, such as surface parking lots, may be established, subject to finding by the Planning Board that such uses will not have an adverse effect upon existing or contemplated development during the interim use. The Planning Board will determine a time during which the interim use will be permitted. No interim use approval shall be granted for more than two years; extensions may be granted at the Planning Board's discretion for a maximum of two additional two-year periods.

5. Subdivision of lots and tax parcels within the Redevelopment Area shall be in accordance with the requirements of this plan and the Borough's Subdivision Ordinance. Subdivisions or combinations of parcels that conflict with the proposed rights-of-way in the Redevelopment Plan's circulation element shall not be approved.

6. Redevelopers shall comply with the requirements of the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 et seq.).

7. No building shall be constructed over a right-of-way or utility easement in the Redevelopment Area without prior written approval of the Redevelopment Entity and the Borough's Public Works and Code Enforcement offices.

8. Utility easements, when necessary, shall be provided by Redevelopers and approved by the Merchantville's Public Works and Code Enforcement offices. Such easements shall be provided within seven working days after completion of project construction.

9. Any plans or plats approved by the Borough of Merchantville, or its agencies and subsidiaries, prior to the adoption of this Redevelopment Plan shall not be subject to the requirements of this plan.

10. The Redevelopment Entity will agree to ensure compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Title VII as amended in March 1972, and with all the affirmative action requirements of the State of New Jersey, including those required by P.L. 1975 and other regulations issued by the State of New Jersey and the Borough of Merchantville.

PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

Existing water, sewer and roadway facilities serving the Town Centre East Study Area Redevelopment Area may require upgrading to meet present and future needs. The Borough should continue its long-range improvement program to upgrade the sanitary sewer, storm sewer and water systems in the Redevelopment Area for service to existing and future development. Changes to Centre Street and East Park Avenue, both County roads, will require coordination with and approval by the County. Additional studies will be required to evaluate the feasibility of erecting, financing, operating and maintaining any future parking structure. Redevelopers will be required to participate in on-site and off-tract infrastructure improvements for the Redevelopment Area, in proportion to the size of their projects.

TYPES OF PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT ACTIONS

Upon adoption of the Town Centre East Redevelopment Plan, the Redevelopment Entity may proceed with the clearance, re-planning, development and redevelopment of the areas delineated in the plan. In order to undertake and effectuate the purposes of the Municipal Redevelopment and Housing Law and the Borough Master Plan, the Redevelopment Entity may:

1. Undertake redevelopment projects, and for this purpose, issue bonds in accordance with provisions of Section 29 of P.L. 1992, C.29;

2. Acquire privately held parcels and property that area vacant or under-utilized, scattered or under varied ownership, and assemble them into parcels of sufficient size to support redevelopment;

3. Form public-private partnerships for development of the Redevelopment Area;

4. Provide for public improvements necessary to support redevelopment;

5. Select Redevelopers to implement all or part of the projects for this Redevelopment Area, in accordance with this Redevelopment Plan and all applicable local, state and federal requirements;

6. Enter upon any buildings or property in the Redevelopment Area to conduct investigations or make surveys, soundings or test borings necessary to carry out the purposes of this plan;

7. Acquire by condemnation any land or building which is necessary for a redevelopment project, pursuant to the provisions of the Eminent Domain Act of 1971 (N.J.S.A. 20-3-1 et seq.);

8. Clear any owned or acquired area, and install, construct or reconstruct streets, facilities, utilities and site improvements essential to the preparation of sites for use in accordance with the Redevelopment Plan;

9. Prepare, or arrange by contract, for the provision of professional services and the preparation of plans by registered architects and landscape architects, licensed professional engineers or planners, or other consultants, to carry out redevelopment projects;

10. Arrange, or contract with public agencies or Redevelopers, for re-planning, construction or undertaking of any project or redevelopment work, or any part thereof;

11. Negotiate and collect revenue from a Redeveloper to defray the costs of the Redevelopment Entity, including where applicable the costs incurred with bonds, notes or other obligations issued by the Redevelopment Entity, and to secure payment of such revenue as part of any such arrangement or contract;

12. Provide for extension of credit or making of loans to Redevelopers to finance any project or redevelopment work, or upon finding that the project or redevelopment work would not be undertaken but for the provision of financial assistance, provide as part of an arrangement or contract for capital grants to Redevelopers;

13. Arrange or contract with public agencies or Redevelopers, for the opening, grading or closing of streets, roads, roadways, alleys or other such place, or for the furnishing of facilities or for the acquisition by such agency of property options or property rights, or for furnishing of property or services in connection with this Redevelopment Plan;

14. Lease or convey property or improvements to any other party, without public bidding, and at such prices and upon such terms as it deems reasonable, provided that the lease of conveyance is made in conjunction with this Redevelopment Plan, notwithstanding the provisions of any law, rule or regulation to the contrary;

15. Arrange or contract with a public agency for relocation of residents or commerce displaced from or within the Redevelopment Area, pursuant to the Relocation Assistance Laws of 1967 (N.J.S.A. 52:31B-1 et seq.) and the Relocation Assistance Law of 1971 (N.J.S.A. 20:4-1 et seq.);

16. Make, consistent with this Redevelopment Plan, plans for carrying out a program of voluntary repair and rehabilitation of buildings and improvements; and plans for the enforcement of laws, codes and regulations relating to the use and occupancy of buildings and improvements, and the compulsory repair, rehabilitation, demolition or removal of buildings and improvements;

17. Publish and disseminate information concerning the Redevelopment Plan or any area or project noted within;

18. Improve vehicular and pedestrian circulation in the Redevelopment Area through roadway design and redesign, improved signal timing, signage and paving;

19. Improve the infrastructure and streetscape within the Redevelopment Area and on adjacent streets as redevelopment takes place;

20. Improve the condition of public park, trails and other spaces recreational purposes;

21. Demolish acquired vacant residential and non-residential structures that cannot be cost-effectively rehabilitated;

22. Rehabilitate vacant housing for residential use or other purposes; and

23. Develop and adopt design guidelines and a design review process that will govern all new development within the Redevelopment Area.

TIME LIMITS

Redevelopers of specific projects within the Town Centre East Study Area Redevelopment Area shall begin the development of land and construction of improvements within a reasonable period of time to be determined in a contract between the Redevelopment Entity and its designated Redevelopers (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-8(f)).

The provisions and regulations specified in this plan shall continue in effect for a period of seven (7) years from the date of adoption of this plan by the governing body of the Borough of Merchantville, or until the issuance of a Certificate of Completeness from the Redevelopment Entity.

PROCEDURES FOR AMENDMENTS

The Town Centre East Redevelopment Plan may be amended from time to time upon compliance with the appropriate sections of the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (N.J.S.A. 40A-7).

SUPERCEDENCE, REPEAL AND SEVERABILITY

All ordinances or parts of ordinances inconsistent with the Town Centre East Redevelopment Plan are hereby repealed to the extent of such inconsistency only.

If any standards, control, objectives, land uses, permitted uses, and other restrictions and requirements called for in this Redevelopment Plan differ in content from provisions set forth in the Borough of Merchantville Land Development Ordinance or other land development regulations, the provisions in this Redevelopment Plan, unless otherwise specified, shall prevail.

If any provision or regulation of this Redevelopment Plan shall be judged invalid by court or competent jurisdiction, such order or judgment shall not affect or invalidate the remainder of the Redevelopment Plan and the governing body's redevelopment ordinance, which are hereby declared severable and shall remain in full force and effect.

Fig. 3 - Existing Zoning
Town Centre East Study Area

Merchantville, New Jersey
August 13, 2004
(aerial photo date: Spring 2002)

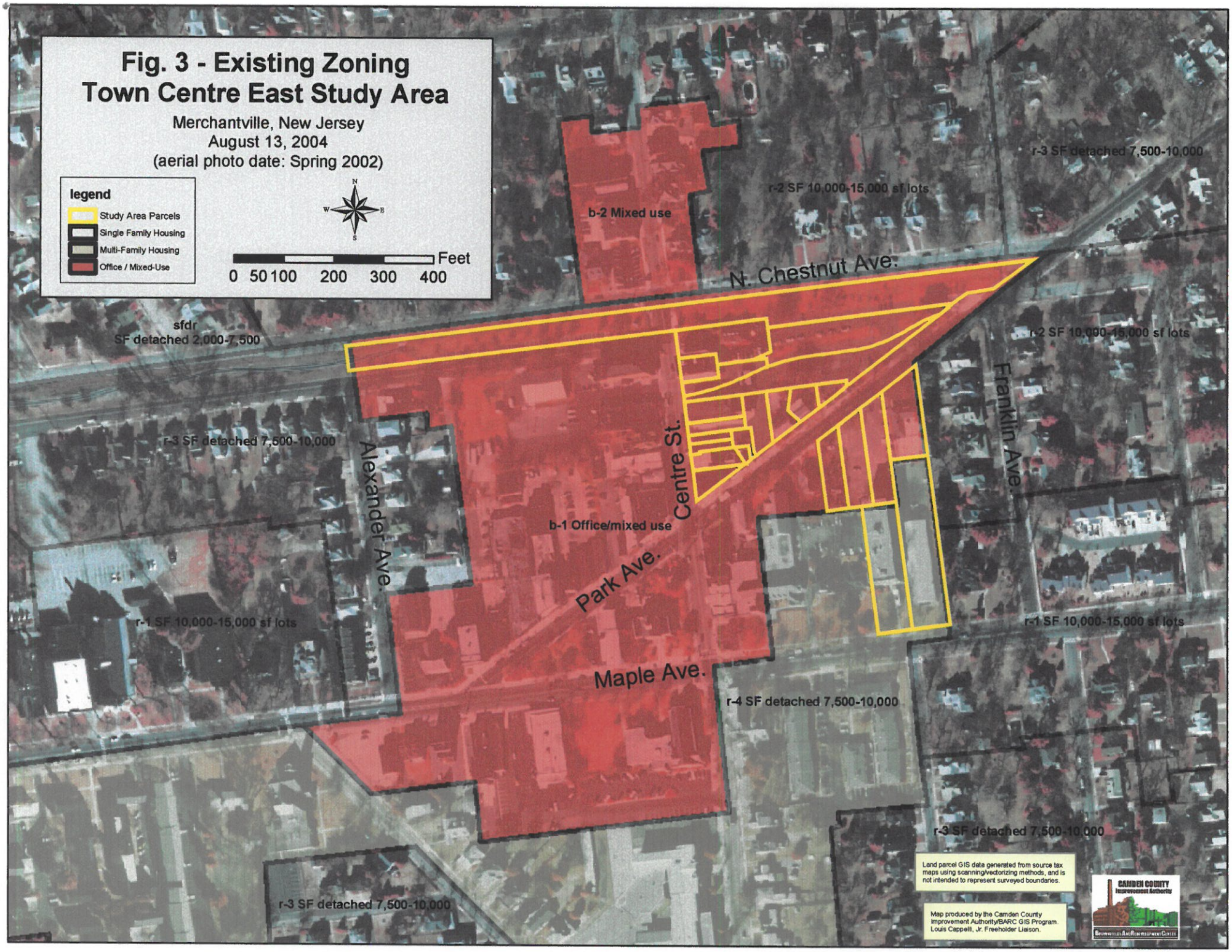

Fig. 4 - Property Acquisition Map
Town Centre East Study Area

Merchantville, New Jersey
August 13, 2004
(aerial photo date: Spring 2002)