Non-Condemnation Area in Need of Redevelopment Investigation

2132 Route 37 Block 38, Lot 4 Manchester Township, Ocean County, NJ



Report Prepared on: February 10, 2020

Adopted by the Planning Board on: _____ Adopted by the Township Council on: _____



Daniel N. Bloch, PP, AICP N.J. Professional Planners License #06107

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Project No. MCP-061 The original of this document has been signed and sealed in accordance with N.J.S.A. 45:14A-12.



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COVER PHOTO SOURCE: NEARMAP

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to determine whether the Study Area, known as Lot 4 in Block 38 within of Township of Manchester, Ocean County, New Jersey, qualifies as a Non-Condemnation Area in Need of Redevelopment, as defined by the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (N.J.S.A. 40:12A-1 et seq., "LRHL"). This analysis has been conducted pursuant to the LRHL, which specifies the criteria that must be met within the delineated Study Area and the process to be undertaken by the Planning Board during the investigation.

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

- a) No area of a municipality shall be determined a redevelopment area unless the governing body of the municipality shall, by resolution, authorize the Planning Board to undertake a preliminary investigation to determine whether the proposed area is a redevelopment area according to the criteria set forth in Section 5 of P.L. 1992 (C.40A:12A-5). Such determination shall be made after public notice and public hearing as provided in subsection b. of this section. The governing body of a municipality shall assign the conduct of the investigation and hearing to the planning board of the municipality.
- b) (1) Before proceeding to a public hearing on the matter, the Planning Board shall prepare a map showing the boundaries of the proposed redevelopment area and the location of the various parcels of property included therein. There shall be appended to the map a statement setting forth the basis for the investigation.

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

The Township Council, in Resolution #19-397, dated November 25, 2019 (see Appendix), requested that the Planning Board undertake a preliminary investigation as to whether the Study Area identified in the resolution is in need of redevelopment pursuant to the LRHL. This resolution does not allow for the use of condemnation. On December 2, 2019, the Township Planning Board passed a resolution (see Appendix) authorizing Maser Consulting P.A. to conduct a preliminary investigation to determine if the Study Area is an area in need of redevelopment pursuant to the LRHL.

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



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

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

Section 40A:12A-7 of the LRHL describes the tool (the redevelopment plan) which specifies how the redevelopment should be planned, in addition to the process through which such a plan is prepared.

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

- Relationship of the project area to local objectives as to appropriate land uses, density of population, improved traffic and public transportation, public utilities, recreational and community facilities and other public improvements.
- Proposed land uses and building requirements in the project area.
- Adequate provision for the temporary and permanent relocation, as necessary, of residents in the project area, including an estimate of the extent to which decent, safe and sanitary dwelling units affordable to displaced residents will be available to them in the existing housing market.
- An identification of any property within the redevelopment area, which is proposed to be acquired in accordance with the redevelopment plan. (Note: not every property in a redevelopment area must be acquired and, in fact, none may be acquired; the redevelopment plan can specify buildings or uses to remain in the redevelopment area and to be incorporated into the future design and development of the area.)
- Any significant relationship of the redevelopment plan to the master plan of contiguous municipalities, the master plan of the county, and the State Development and Redevelopment Plan.
- Existing and proposed locations of public electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

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

This Investigation Report is the culmination of information collected from site visits, analyses of historic aerial images, tax maps, zoning maps and ordinances, Google Maps & Street View (accessed in 2020), Nearmap, environmental reports, and other available historical and official documents and maps. Unless otherwise mentioned, all photos were taken during a site visit on January 9, 2020.



CRITERIA FOR REDEVELOPMENT AREA DETERMINATION

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

- a) The generality of buildings are substandard, unsafe, unsanitary, dilapidated, or obsolescent, or possess any of such characteristics, or are so lacking in light, air, or space, as to be conducive to unwholesome living or working conditions.
- b) The discontinuance of the use of a building or buildings previously used for commercial, retail, shopping malls or plazas, office parks, manufacturing, or industrial purposes; the abandonment of such building or buildings; significant vacancies of such building or buildings for at least two consecutive years; or the same being allowed to fall into so great a state of disrepair as to be untenantable.
- c) Land that is owned by the municipality, the county, a local housing authority, redevelopment agency or entity, or unimproved vacant land that has remained so for a period of ten years prior to the adoption of the resolution, and that by reason of its location, remoteness, lack of means of access to developed sections or portions of the municipality, or topography, or nature of the soil, is not likely to be developed through the instrumentality of private capital.
- d) Areas with buildings or improvements which, by reason of dilapidation, obsolescence, overcrowding, faulty arrangement or design, lack of ventilation, light and sanitary facilities, excessive land coverage, deleterious land use or obsolete layout, or any combination of these or other factors, are detrimental to the safety, health, morals or welfare of the community.
- e) A growing lack or total lack of proper utilization of areas caused by the condition of the title, diverse ownership of the real properties therein or other similar conditions which impede land assemblage or discourage the undertaking of improvements, resulting in a stagnant and unproductive condition of land potentially useful and valuable for contributing to and serving the public health, safety and welfare, which condition is presumed to be having a negative social or economic impact or otherwise being detrimental to the safety, health, morals, or welfare of the surrounding area or the community in general.



- f) Areas, in excess of five contiguous acres, whereon buildings or improvements have been destroyed, consumed by fire, demolished or altered by the action of storm, fire, cyclone, tornado, earthquake or other casualty in such a way that the aggregate assessed value of the area has been materially depreciated.
- g) In any municipality in which an enterprise zone has been designated pursuant to the "New Jersey Urban Enterprise Zones Act," P.L.1983, c. 303 (C.52:27H-60 et seq.) the execution of the actions prescribed in that act for the adoption by the municipality and approval by the New Jersey Urban Enterprise Zone Authority of the zone development plan for the area of the enterprise zone shall be considered sufficient for the determination that the area is in need of redevelopment pursuant to sections 5 and 6 of P.L.1992, c. 79 (C.40A:12A-5 and 40A:12A-6) for the purpose of granting tax exemptions within the enterprise zone district pursuant to the provisions of P.L.1991, c. 431 (C.40A:20-1 et seq.) or the adoption of a tax abatement and exemption ordinance pursuant to the provisions of P.L.1991, c. 441 (C.40A:21-1 et seq.). The municipality shall not utilize any other redevelopment powers within the urban enterprise zone unless the municipal governing body and planning board have also taken the actions and fulfilled the requirements prescribed in P.L.1992, c. 79 (C.40A:12A-1 et al.) for determining that the area is in need of redevelopment or an area in need of rehabilitation and the municipal governing body has adopted a redevelopment plan ordinance including the area of the enterprise zone.
- h) The designation of the delineated area is consistent with smart growth planning principles adopted pursuant to law or regulation.

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



DESCRIPTION OF STUDY AREA

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Study Area, consisting of one parcel known as Lot 4 in Block 38 (See Map 1-Study Area Map), is located at 2132 Route 37 on the westbound side of Route 37. The Study Area is bounded to the west by the Manchester Family Golf Center, to the north by the Leisure Village West residential community, and to the east by Mavis Discount Tire and Spirits Express along Route 37 and a residential subdivision. The Study Area, owned by Faith Realty Group LLC, is 7.62 acres with 260 feet of frontage along Route 37. The site is partially encumbered with environmental constraints, such as critical wildlife habitats, which will be discussed in more detail as a part of the study area evaluation later in this report.

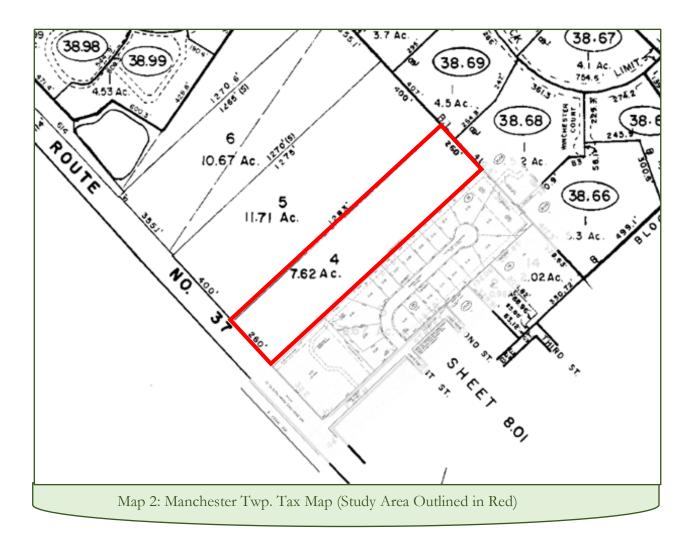




This investigation focuses on whether the Study Area qualifies for designation as an Area in Need of Redevelopment, as such designation can facilitate the redevelopment of neglected parcels.

Generally, a property that is generating normal economic productivity will be developed with improvements that are valued at least as much as the land itself (equal to or greater than an Improvement Ratio of 0.50 or 50 percent).

Properties where the land is worth more than its improvements often indicates that the improvements are old, obsolete, and/or deteriorated. They depreciate rather than appreciate as economically productive properties would. As a vacant parcel, Lot 4 does not have an improvement value and its net value of \$759,000 is entirely comprised of the land value only, though the land value depreciated since 2016, when it was valued at \$909,000.¹



¹ Ocean County Board of Taxation, Tax List Search. http://www.tax.co.ocean.nj.us/frmTaxBoardTaxListSearch Accessed February 7, 2020.



STUDY AREA HISTORY

According to historic aerial imagery, the site remained undeveloped and completely wooded until the 1960s. Tax records indicate that the site was then cleared and a building was constructed in 1968, which can be seen on 1972 aerial imagery. The building on the site existed on the site until 2010 when it was demolished. Imagery from 1986 shows several storage containers housed on the site behind the principal building, which were removed from the site sometime before 1995. There was also a large, circular driveway area behind the building in use until about 2010.

Prior to its demolition in 2010, the building was most recently used by Cooper's Florist. It appears that the building became vacant for a time prior to its demolition (shown in the 2009 Google Maps Street View). In June 2010, the site received Planning Board approval to replace the existing structure with a 11,880-square foot two-story office building. Permit data from the Township shows that the property owner applied for a demolition permit on September 16, 2010, which was issued on September 29, 2010. Supporting documentation for this permit indicates that electric service cables and meters were removed from the site by May 6, 2010.²

The applicant subsequently returned to the Planning Board on June 6, 2011 with a request to include a basement for the building as well as install a temporary septic system on site. Curbing was later installed at the entrance to Route 37; however, the proposed building was never constructed. The lot remains vacant and undeveloped since that time, though evidence from this investigation suggests that the site was used to store or dispose of construction debris.

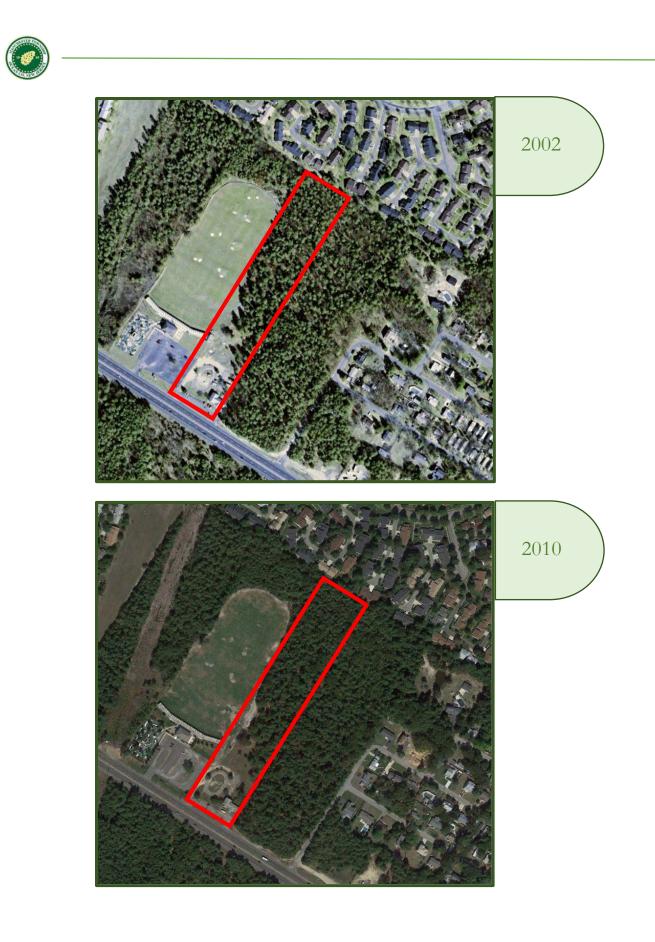
The site also has a history of code violations; one violation was issued on February 11, 2019 for failure to maintain a vacant property, the other violation was issued April 29, 2019 for failure to remove a diseased tree that was deemed hazardous to the public.³ The historic images, found below, were taken from historicaerials.com (1963 – 1986) and Google Earth (1995-2019).

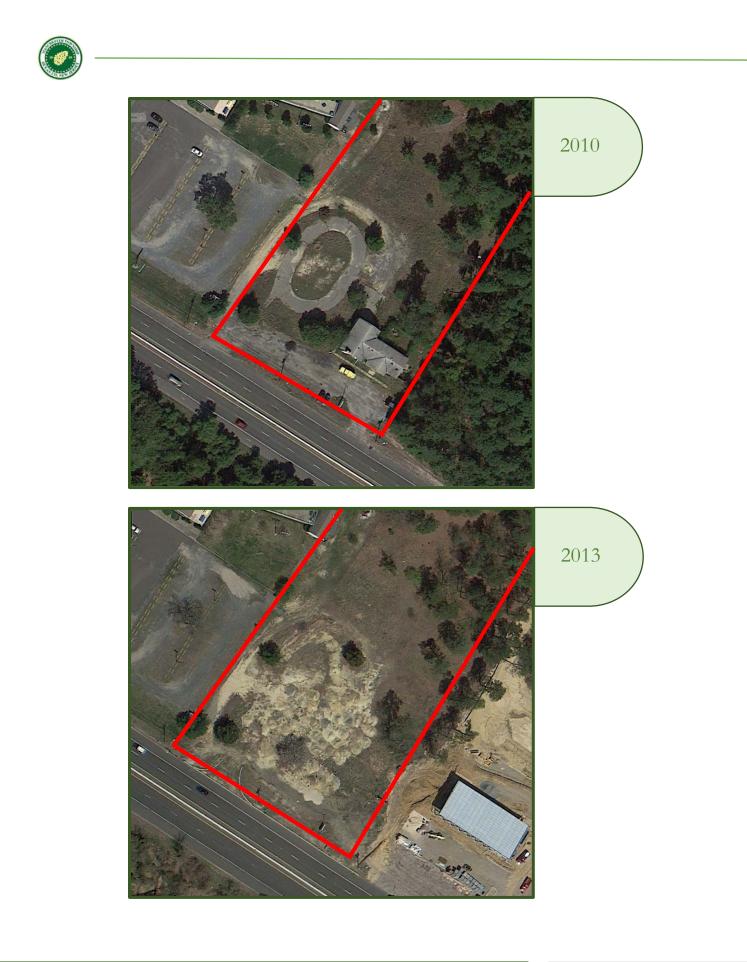
² Demolition permit package to the Township. Includes September 29, 2010 demolition permit, as well as supporting documentation of disconnection: May 6, 2010 Jersey Central Power and Light; August 5, 2010 New Jersey Natural Gas Company; September 15, 2010 Ozane Pest Company; and, August 3, 2010 Manchester Township Department of Public Works.

³ Information obtained through email correspondence with Manchester Department of Inspections, Land Use & Planning on January 16, 2020 as well as a phone conversation with Township Chief Code Enforcement Officer on January 17, 2020.







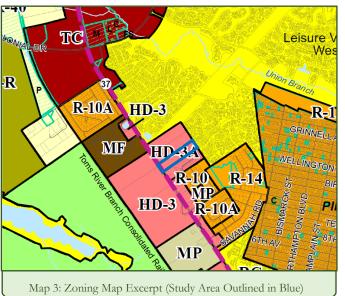








ZONING IN THE STUDY AREA



The Study Area lies entirely within the HD-3A Highway Development Zone District (See Map 3-Zoning Map Excerpt).

Table 1 shows a summary of the permitted uses within the Study Area, and **Table 2** shows select bulk standards for the HD-3A zone. (Both tables have been truncated from the full text provided in Section 245 of the Land Development Ordinance for brevity.)

Table 1—Generalized Permitted and Conditional Uses

Permitted Uses	Conditional Uses
Building and Related Equipment Contractors	Nursing Care Facilities
Miscellaneous Textile Product Mills	Continuing Care Retirement Communities
Retail Bakeries	Child Day Care Services
Men's & Women's Apparel Contractors	General Automotive Repair
Pottery Product Manufacturing	Car Washes
Commercial Printing	Religious Organizations
Surgical Appliance Manufacturing	Public Utilities
Dental Laboratories	Gasoline Stations with Convenience Stores
Shopping Centers	
New and Used Car Dealers	
Furniture Stores	
Supermarkets and Other Food Related Markets	
Health and Personal Care Stores	
Sporting Goods Stores	
Radio Stations and Television Broadcasting	

Table 2—Select Bulk Standards

Standard	Required	
Minimum Lot Area	3 acres	
Minimum Lot Frontage	300 feet	
Minimum Lot Width	300 feet	
Minimum Improvable Lot Area	40,000 square feet	
Minimum Front Yard Setback	100 feet	
Minimum Rear Yard Setback	100 feet	
Minimum Side Yard Setback	*	
Maximum Site Improvement Ratio	0.18	
Maximum Building Coverage	18 percent	
Maximum Lot Coverage	65 percent	
Maximum Building Height	3 stories; 40 feet	
Minimum Floor Area	15,000 square feet	
* Minimum side yard setbacks of HD-3A District are 100 feet along western and northern property lines and 15 feet along eastern property line.		



MASTER PLAN STUDIES

2011 Township Master Plan

The 2011 Master Plan notes that the Land Use Plan Element had been previously amended in 1999 for areas designated HD and HD-2 Highway Development to HD-3 and HD-3A Highway Development, requiring a minimum lot area of 3 acres and 300 feet of frontage along Routes 37 and 70, consistent with NJ Department of Transportation Highway Access Management Plan guidelines.

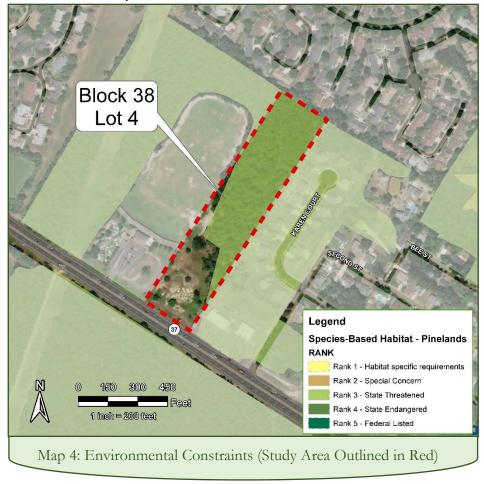
It should be noted, however, that the 2011 Land Use Plan Element cited the 2006 Master Plan, which recommended planned retirement communities be permitted within the CAFRA regulated area of the Township, including the north side of Route 37 between Farm Lane and Leisure Village West currently planned and zoned as HD-3A. Noting the difficulties presented by CAFRA regulations related to business and commercial uses, the Land Use Plan Element and Land Use Map recommended that the subject site be rezoned to RC-3 (Retirement Community 3), permitting multi-family townhouses and flats at a maximum density of 3 dwelling units per acre, on a minimum 20-acre tract. Development would also include an affordable set aside, which could result in a density bonus if a developer exceeded the minimum inclusionary requirement. The recommended RC-3 zone has not been adopted by the Township.



STUDY AREA EVALUATION FOR CONFORMITY WITH REQUIRED REDEVELOPMENT CRITERIA

STUDY APPROACH

An analysis of the Study Area's existing physical characteristics was conducted during a site visit on January 9, 2020. In addition, this study also included an examination and analysis of Township records, historic aerial photographs, the Township Master Plan, environmental constraints, and Zoning Ordinance regulations, as detailed previously in this report. The following map of environmental constraints⁴ (Map 4: Environmental Constraints, below) will be applicable to the property evaluation of the Study Area.



⁴ Mapping is based on publicly available data from the New Jersey Office of GIS, and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's NJ GeoWeb, which was incorporated into the Environmental Constraint Map for this report. This map was developed using NJDEP digital data, but this secondary product has not been verified by NJDEP and is not state-authorized.



PROPERTY EVALUATION

The Study Area has frontage on Route 37. Adjacent to the west of the cleared portion of the Study Area is the Manchester Family Golf Center, and immediately to the east is the Mavis Discount Tire shop, while the wooded portion of the Study Area is adjacent to residential dwellings to the north and east. Evidence of the unfinished development which was approved in 2010 is visible through the curbed entrance to Route 37. (Photo 1). This curbing is largely covered from view by weeds, which poses tripping hazard to pedestrians.

The property is also littered with large mounds (Photo 2), the majority containing constructionrelated materials, such as broken-up concrete and sand. Aerial imagery from Google Earth shows they were placed on the site prior to November 2012. These mounds, also overgrown with weeds, are visible to vehicular traffic along Route 37. The site has trash, construction debris, and heavy scattered throughout. equipment Other deteriorating infrastructure on the site includes portions of fencing (Photo 3), found closer to the wooded portion of the site, which is rusting and becoming weeded over. The site also contains piles of chain link fencing.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS

The site is mapped as being constrained by numerous environmental encumbrances, both natural and resulting from historic uses of the site. The most recent data from NJDEP's Landscape Project (version 3.3) for the Pinelands region suggests that a significant portion of the site contains habitat for a state-threatened wildlife species.









CONFORMITY WITH REQUIRED REDEVELOPMENT CRITERIA

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

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

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

The subject site has limited development potential for the following reasons:

- The property is an attractive nuisance to the public, as evident by the presence of the mounds of debris scattered close to the public right-of-way.
- The existing conditions on the site constitute a social liability; the site is easily accessible to the public, where on-site conditions, such as debris, dumped sharp metal, and heavy equipment create dangerous conditions to residents.
- The site is a privately-owned lot that has remained unimproved and vacant since 2010 when the prior use was demolished. The building was vacant at least since 2009 until its demolition. Therefore, this report finds that the property has been vacant for more than 10 years. The property is not likely to be developed through private investment because the mapping as potential habitat for state-threatened wildlife species creates an added expense in preparing a habitat suitability study of the property as required by the Pinelands Commission.
- The orientation and dimensions of the lot—260 ft. wide by approximately 1,279 ft. long along with the HD-3A Zone's side yard setback requirements limit the development potential of the lot. The 260-foot frontage is nonconforming for the HD-3A zone, where 300 feet is required.
- The Master Plan recognizes the difficulties in building coverage presented by CAFRA regulations related to business and commercial uses on the site. As a result, the Land Use Plan was revised to designate the site as RC-3 (Retirement Community 3); however, a corresponding zoning amendment for an RC-3 district has not been adopted.
- The Site has a history of violations following the demolition of the site, including failure to maintain a vacant property and failure to remove a diseased tree that was deemed hazardous to the public.



STUDY CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The first two findings/declarations of the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-2(a), (b)) are applicable to the Non-Condemnation Area in Need of Redevelopment determination of the Study Area:

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

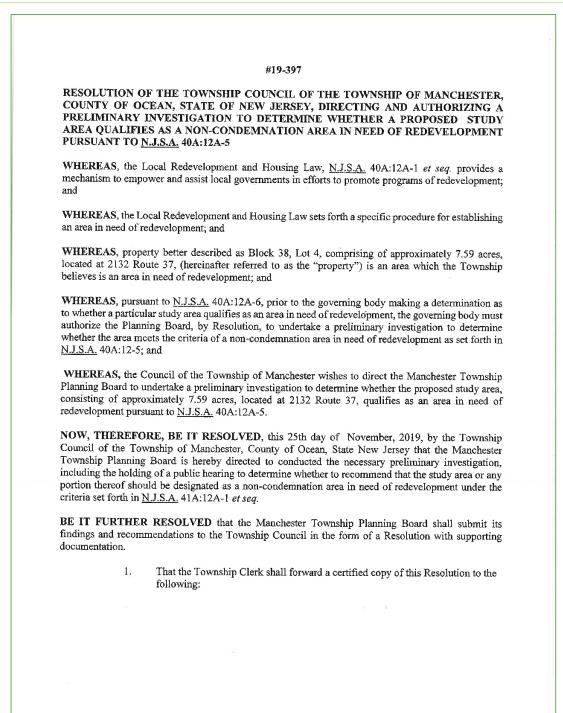
b. From time to time the Legislature has, by various enactments, empowered and assisted local governments in their efforts to arrest and reverse these conditions and to promote the advancement of community interests through programs of redevelopment, rehabilitation and incentives to the expansion and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

As set forth in detail above, the Study Area qualifies as "in need of redevelopment" based on Criteria "c" of the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law of N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-05. This vacant and undeveloped site contains deleterious conditions to residents and the neighborhood. By declaring this parcel in need of redevelopment, development can be incentivized through the preparation of a redevelopment plan that will advance the Township's ability to foster development consistent with its Master Plan and improve the health, safety, and welfare of the Township.



APPENDIX

RESOLUTION



- A. James Maley Jr. 1150 Haddon Avenue, Suite 210 Collingswood, New Jersey 08108
- B. Pasquale Popolizio Zoning Officer
- C. Manchester Township Planning Board
- D. Gregory Hock, Esq. Planning Board Attorney
- E. Township Clerk
- F. Township Attorney

CERTIFICATION

I, Sabina T. Martin, Clerk of the Township of Manchester, County of Ocean, State of New Jersey, do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by the Township of Council at a meeting on the 25th day of November 2019.

martin Sabina T. Martin, RMC

Sabina T. Martin, RMC Municipal Clerk



RESOLUTION OF THE MANCHESTER TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD TO UNDERTAKE A PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION TO DETERMINE IF THE PROPERTY SHOWN AS BLOCK 38, LOT 4 IS AN AREA IN NEED OF REDEVELOPMENT PURSUANT TO N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-6

WHEREAS, the Township Council of the Township of Manchester believes the property identified on the official tax map of the Township of Manchester as Block 38, Lot 4, commonly known as 2132 Route 37 ("property") is an area in need of redevelopment; and,

WHEREAS, prior to making such determination, the governing body must authorize the Planning Board to undertake a preliminary investigation to determine whether the property meets the criteria of a non-condemnation area in need of redevelopment as set forth in <u>N.J.S.A.</u> 40A:12-5; and,

WHEREAS, the Township Council of the Township of Manchester adopted Resolution #19-397 on November 25, 2019 authorizing and directing the Planning Board to undertake a preliminary investigation to determine whether the property is "an area in need of redevelopment" pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-6 of the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Board understands that any designation of the property for redevelopment shall only be as a "Non-Condemnation Redevelopment Area" under <u>N.J.S.A.</u> 40A:12A-6; and

WHEREAS, to assist the Board with its investigation, the Planning Board has determined to direct the Planning Board Planners, Maser Consulting, P.A. to prepare and submit to the Board a map of the properties being studied and a report as to their findings upon an analysis of the applicable statutory criteria; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Planning Board of the Township of Manchester that it authorizes and directs Maser Consulting, P.A., to undertake inspections of the property shown on the municipal tax map as Block 38 Lot 4 and to submit to the Board a map of said area and a report of their findings as to the conditions within the delineated areas with reference to the provisions of <u>N.J.S.A.</u> 40A:12A-5 of the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution certified by the Secretary of the Planning Board to be a true copy be forwarded to:

- a. Sabina T. Skibo, RMC, Clerk of the Township of Manchester
- b. Hon. Kenneth Palmer, Mayor
- c. Angela Koutsouris, Esq., Township Attorney
- d. Gregory J. Hock, Esq., Planning Board Attorney
- e. Daniel Bloch, PP, AICP, Planning Board Planner
- f. Robert Mullin, PE, Planning Board Engineer

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 g. Pasquale Pololizio, Township Zoning Officer
h. James Maley, Jr. 1150 Haddon Avenue, Suite 210 Collingswood, New Jersey 08108

Moved By: Mr. Hudak

Seconded By: Mr. Barron

ROLL CALL VOTE

Those in Favor: Mr. Hudak-yes, Mr. Barron-yes, Chairperson Zolezi-yes Messrs. Finn-yes, Foor-yes, Teague-yes, Stavalo-yes Those Opposed: None

Those Absent: None

Those Not Voting: None

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true copy of a Resolution duly adopted by The Manchester Township Planning Board at its regular meeting on December 2, 2019 in the Manchester Township Municipal Building.

MARIANNE BORTHWI

Secretary of the Board

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