# MASTER PLAN Amendment to the Land Use Element

# BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP SOMERSET COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

Prepared by the Bridgewater Township Planning Board with support by Scarlett Doyle, P.P.

ADOPTED
APRIL 27, 2015

THE ORIGINAL OF THIS REPORT WAS SIGNED AND SEALED IN ACCORDANCE WITH N.J.S.A. 45:14A-12.

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# Table of Contents

			PAGE	
I.	Introducti	ON	4	
П.	The Route 202 Corridor			
III.	STUDY OF R-20 AND M-1 ZONES ON ROUTE 202			
IV.	RECOMMENDED ZONE CHANGES			
V.	MASTER PLAN GUIDELINES FOR CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT			
VI.	RELATIONSHIP TO GOALS OF THE REGIONAL CENTER STRATEGIC MASTER PLAN			
VII.	RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER BRIDGEWATER MASTER PLAN DOCUMENT S			
/Ш.	DEVELOPMENT IMPACT ON ADJOINING MUNICIPALITIES			
IX.	THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT PLAN CONSISTENCY		20	
	Figure 1.	Aerial of route 202 study area	22	
	FIGURE 2.	TAX MAP OF STUDY AREA	25	
	FIGURE 3.	CURRENT ZONING MAP	27	
	FIGURE 4.	Proposed Zoning Map	29	

#### AMENDMENT TO THE LAND USE ELEMENT OF THE MASTER PLAN

#### BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP SOMERSET COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

#### I. INTRODUCTION

The draft periodic Reexamination Report dated March, 2015 was prepared in conformance with the provisions of the Municipal Land Use Law: N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89 and reviewed by the Planning Board . One of the first in a series of recommendations was to initiate a Master Plan study to offer possible zone changes for properties along the highway corridors, including Route 202 in the westerly portion of the township. The Reexamination Report noted need for study of the M-1 industrial zone including the pocket of the R-20 zone on the eastbound side of the highway where it is surrounded by the industrial M-1 zone property known as Thermo-Fisher Scientific. Recommended future study includes all highway corridors within the township in an effort to bring land to a productive use and to create a sustainable tax base for its citizenry.

A goal of this Amendment to the Land Use Element of the Master Plan is to recommend changes which will convert underutilized properties that lie along highway corridors to productive use and provide commercial diversity and heightened streetscape appeal. While this plan discusses land use continuity and beautification, design guidelines for development are recommended to positively impact the utility and value of property.

As noted as a valued underpinning in the Reexamination Report, the goals of the 2005 Master Plan and recommendations of the Regional Center Master Plan are viewed as particularly applicable to the highway corridor environment.

- II. Encourage appropriate development of land use focus areas in the Township that will, within the limits of zoning, return underutilized land to productive use, generate economic development activity, diversify the municipal economic base, create new employment opportunities, and strengthen the tax base.
- III. Require aesthetically pleasing land use design that prefers subtle character in site appearance, particularly along major corridor routes.

Bridgewater recognizes that there are changing needs of society and acknowledges the need for fiscal stability in these changing times. Diversifying its commercial portfolio and strengthening its economy helps Bridgewater protect against dramatic future shifts. At the same time, Bridgewater strives to effect adjustments in zoning that can be accomplished without compromising excellence in development with the township.

With strengthening the assets of Bridgewater in mind, land uses in the westerly area of the Route 202 corridor have been examined by the Planning Board. In constructing the recommendations in this plan, decisions were based on economic realities, existing land uses which were considered to be underutilized, traffic activity generated by existing retail uses across the highway and industrial traffic activity generated by the surrounding industrial use. Embedded in the plan is the continuing desire to maintain the quality of life that Bridgewater residents embrace. After thorough study and upon consideration of the work and input of the Bridgewater Economic Development Advisory Committee, the Planning Board has determined that an amendment of permitted land uses should be considered.

#### II. THE ROUTE 202 CORRIDOR

The population densities, highway access and the strong demographics make Bridgewater an ideal location for retailers. Appropriately located, commercial properties can contribute to the overall benefit of the township, particularly along the highways.

The Route 202 corridor, in the westerly portion of the township, is considered to have potential for increased vitality due to the underutilized nature caused by patchwork land uses and influences of unbuffered heavy industry against small residential lots.

In keeping with the effort of expanded interest in corridor uses, the Planning Board examined the eastbound portion of the Route 202, specifically a 'pod' of residential lots in the R-20 zone identified as Block 163, lots 1, 1.01, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5.01, 5.02, 6, 6.01, 8, 9, 10. The 12-lot residential 'pod' is entirely bounded on the west, south and east by an active industrial distribution facility Thermo-Fisher Scientific. The additional lot (6.01) is a water tower lot.

Across the Route 202 highway from these lots is the Regional Retail Shopping Complex having approximately 1.2 million square feet of retail space. This commercial magnet includes the well-recognized Wegman's Supermarket as well as national chain restaurants, banks, home improvement center and locally-based retail stores. Access into this shopping center is by way of a signalized intersection which includes a private driveway into the Thermo-Fisher Scientific industrial facility. This driveway is locally called Fisher Place.

Thermo-Fisher Scientific is an industrial complex of buildings which is classified as High Hazard under the regulations of the building and fire codes. It operates on a 24/7 basis. Diesel trucks circulate and stage along the haul road which is behind the residential properties. Two of the residential lots are landlocked and utilize easements for access. One of these access points is a driveway that leads through lands owned by Thermo-Fisher Scientific to a five-unit group home that is registered as an affordable housing unit with the Council on Affordable Housing. Another access driveway is to reach a water tower. This driveway runs through lands of an individual residential property. As noted, the traffic signalized intersection of extended Fisher

Place serves the regional shopping center directly across Route 202 North from the R-20 zone, but the intersection does not permit free traffic turning movements from the industrial Thermo-Fisher Scientific site.

The proximity of these lots to the tractor-trailer truck traffic generated from the Thermo-Fisher manufacturing facility, the highway traffic and the robust vehicular activity from the shopping center affect the R-20 residential 'pod' located on the eastbound lane. The uses themselves have not all maintained their residential character. For example, a water tower, a house-cleaning business, a landscape and tree service business and a massage parlor are some of the uses which have been recently placed in this 'pod'.

Vitalization of underutilized and non-compliant properties will benefit Bridgewater residents by increasing the tax base and continuing a theme along the corridor consistent with the welcoming ambiance of the open, creatively-landscaped highway corridors that are the hallmark of Bridgewater Township.

# III.STUDY OF THE R-20 SINGLE-FAMILY AND M-1 LIMITED MANUFACTURING ZONES ON ROUTE 202 NORTH (EASTBOUND)

Developing an economically-viable commercial district along Route 202 was studied by the Bridgewater Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) several years ago. This committee is comprised of Bridgewater residents with expertise in real estate development, architecture and business. The policies in this Master Plan Amendment employ several recommendations drawn from the Economic Development Advisory Committee. The recommendations, which include advice to employ a wide range of uses to serve the public are particularly appropriate for this highway environment and will offer a positive effect on the overall quality of life for Bridgewater residents and its commercial partners. A policy for integrated site design has been suggested to establish consistency in use, access and architecture which are helpful in grounding the conversions to a more productive use.

The Planning Board asserts that use of a drive-through feature for restaurants should be clarified for consistency throughout the township, and specifically within the development options for the study area. It is recommended that the drive-through restaurants be discouraged throughout the township, and therefore the drive-through use is proposed to be specifically excluded from permitted uses for restaurants in the C-7 district.

The study portion of the R-20 and M-1 zone is proposed for intermediate-scale commercial uses within a limited area of land on Route 202 and having direct access to the highway through the signalized intersection of Fisher Place. The development options permit a broad range of retail, service, business and professional offices as well as, banks, financial

institutions, hotels and fuel dispensing facilities, provided that all uses should be designed as part of an integrated planned center.

It is recommended that Block 163 lots 1 (portions), 1.01, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5.01, 5.02, 6, 6.01, 8, 9, 10 be rezoned to a newly-created C-7, Commercial Enterprise Zone. The C-7, Commercial Enterprise Zone includes a development area limited to a maximum of 500 feet from Route 202 North (Eastbound) of all lots in Block 163 lots 1 (portion), 1.01, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5.01, 5.02, 6, 8, 9, 10, but only if all lot areas within the C-7 zone to the east of Fisher Place are consolidated into one lot in an overall and integrated commercial design. Block 163 lot 6.01 is excluded from the requirement of consolidation since the lot supports a potable water tower. The C-7 zone should be limited to include the last residential property on the easterly side of the 'pod', leaving the balance of Block 163 lot 1, which abuts the property lines of residential dwellings along Charlotte Drive, to remain in the M-1 zone.

Lots which lie in the R-20 zone to the east of Fisher Place should not be surrounded by commercial uses simply because an individual residential lot owner does not wish to sell his/her property for uses permitted in the C-7 zone. Therefore, any development which is proposed pursuant to C-7 zone standards should be conditioned on the requirement of lot consolidation of all lots within the boundaries of the C-7 zone.

To the west of Fisher Place, along the frontage of Route 202 North (Eastbound), are vacant industrial lands which are also considered to be suitable for productive uses described for the C-7 zone. This westerly portion of the C-7 zone may be subdivided from the balance of the industrial Block 163 Lot 1, but, like the area to the east of Fisher Place, the subdivided lot must be designed as a single entity, also integrated into a commercial design for site plan purposes. If not subdivided from the industrial Block 163 Lot 1, the property should retain grandfather rights to continue, the right to have facilities enlarged upon the existing lot under the standards of the M-1 Limited Manufacturing zone.

The Board is mindful of the need to maintain the strong neighborhood identity of the Charlotte Drive neighborhood. In support of this need, it is necessary to have a significant physical buffer between the future uses on Route 202 and these Charlotte Drive homes. For this reason, the area of the M-1 zone abutting these properties should remain in the M-1 zone because it includes a significant 100 feet wide buffer requirement. In furtherance of this objective, if the proposed uses ultimately include the option of a hotel, it is strongly urged that the hotel use be confined to the area to the west of Fisher Place, between Fisher Place and the railroad which lies further to the west. Placement of a hotel in this location would not intrude onto the quiet residential properties.

#### IV. RECOMMENDED ZONE CHANGES

1. AMEND §126-301, Zoning Districts to add the district C-7, Commercial Enterprise Zone

#### 2. AMEND §126-302 Zoning Map to reflect the following zone changes.

The following lots fronting on the Route 202 North (Eastbound) are recommended to be rezoned from the R-20 Single-Family zone and a portion of the M-1 Limited Manufacturing Zone, to the newly-created C-7, Commercial Enterprise Zone. The boundary of the C-7, Commercial Enterprise Zone is not fully uniform due to irregular lot confirmation of residential lots located to the east of Fisher Place, but is generally limited to no more than 500 feet from the right of way of Route 202 North (Eastbound).

The lots which comprise the C-7 Commercial Enterprise Zone east of Fisher Place are:

Lot Identification	Approximate Square Feet		
Block 163 Lot 1 (a portion)	24,692 s.f.		
Block 163 Lot 1 (a second portion)	13,238 s.f.		
Block 163 Lot 1.01 (all)	38,518 s.f.		
Block 163 Lot 2 (all)	16,631 s.f.		
Block 163 Lot 3 (all)	18,309 s.f.		
Block 163 Lot 4 (all)	20,000 s.f.		
Block 163 Lot 5 (all)	50,000 s.f.		
Block 163 Lot 5.01 (all)	50,000 s.f.		
Block 163 Lot 5.02 (all)	50,000 s.f.		
Block 163 Lot 6 (all)	73,921 s.f.		
Block 163 Lot 6.01 (all)	10,000 s.f. (water tower)		
Block 163 Lot 8 (all)	19,436 s.f.		
Block 163 Lot 9 (all)	19,418 s.f.		
Block 163 Lot 10 (all)	19,275 s.f.		

To the west of Fisher Place, the C-7 zone should be limited to no more than 500 feet parallel to Route 202 North (Eastbound) and lie to the east of the railroad formerly shown as the Central Railroad of New Jersey Main Line on the most recent township tax maps.

The lot which comprises the C-7 Commercial Enterprise Zone west of Fisher Place is:

Lot Identification Approximate Square Feet Block 163 Lot 1 (a portion) 511,550 s.f.

#### 3. CREATE NEW §126-313.5. C-7, Commercial Enterprise Zone.

The C-7, Commercial Enterprise Zone must be designed to achieve a single, integrated development with a compatible theme in architecture and signage. The following standards for development in the C-7, Commercial Enterprise Zone:

- A. Principal Permitted Uses: The C-7, Commercial Enterprise Zone may include any combination of the following uses in more than one structure:
  - 1) Retail stores and service establishments;
  - 2) Personal service establishments such as, but not limited to, gyms, health clubs, day spas;
  - 3) Food markets;
  - 4) Professional and business offices;
  - 5) Banks and financial institutions;
  - 6) Restaurants, excluding drive-through facilities;
  - 7) Gasoline service stations, limited to fuel dispensing. Greasing, oil changes or any type of automotive repairs are not permitted.
  - 8) Hotels, but only permitted on the area west of Fisher Place and east of the railroad.

#### B. Permitted accessory uses:

- 1) Uses and structures customarily incidental to the principal use.
- 2) Parking
- 3) Signs

#### C Conditional Uses

1) Essential Services.

#### D. Bulk Standards:

- 1) Minimum tract size (Interior Lot) shall be 5 contiguous acres, with all lots to the east of lands known as Fisher Place being required to be merged. That portion of Block 163 lot 1 in the boundary set forth for C-7 development and lying to the west of lands providing the signalized traffic intersection of Fisher Place are not required to be merged with the aforecited lots. Also excluded from the required merger is Block 163 lot 6.01 which is a water tower. The undeveloped portion of Block 163 lot 1 which is located to the west of the residential properties fronting on Charlotte Drive is not included in this C-7 zone.
- 2) Minimum tract size (Corner Lot) shall be 5 contiguous acres, with all lots to the east of lands known as Fisher Place being required to be merged. That portion of Block 163 lot 1 in the boundary set forth for C-7 development and lying to the west of lands providing the signalized traffic intersection of Fisher Place are not required to be merged with the aforecited lots. Also excluded from the required merger is Block 163 lot 6.01 which is a water tower. The undeveloped portion of Block 163 lot 1 which is located to the west of the residential properties fronting on Charlotte Drive is not included in this C-7 zone.
- 3) Minimum lot width (Interior Lot) is 300 feet along Route 202 North (Eastbound).
- 4) Minimum lot width (Corner Lot) is 300 feet along Route 202 North (Eastbound).
- 5) Maximum floor area ratio (FAR) shall be 0.35.
- 6) Maximum improved lot coverage shall be 60%.
- 7) Minimum front yard building setback shall be 200 feet.

- 8) Minimum front yard parking setback shall be 100 feet.
- 9) Fuel dispensing canopy and pumps for fuel distribution shall be set back a minimum of 40 feet from a side property line and 70 feet from a front property line.
- 10) Minimum rear yard building setback shall be 50 feet.
- 11) Minimum side yard for all building setbacks shall be 50 feet.
- 12) Minimum both side yard setbacks for all buildings shall be 100 feet.
- 13) Maximum building height shall be 3 stories and 45 feet;

#### E Other Requirements:

- 1) The intersection of Fisher Place shall be improved to afford full four-way access. In addition, traffic improvements shall be installed to the Route 202 South (Westbound) lane to add an exit from the Towne Center Plaza westbound. This exit is to be created to the West of the Fisher Place/ Route 202 intersection.
- 2) The land known as Fisher Place may continue to be held in private ownership, however the access way shall be maintained with full access and unrestricted access for the industrial site in the M-1 zone as well as for all development in the C-7 zone.
- 3) The C-7 portion of Block 163 lot, 1 east of Fisher Place, must include consolidation of all contiguous lands of Block 163 lots 1, 1.01, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5.01, 5.02, 6, 8, 9, 10 within the limits of the C-7 zone boundary. These lots are to be merged as a precondition for final site plan approval.
- 4) The portion of Block 163 lot 1 which lies west of Fisher Place and 500 feet parallel to Route 202 North (Eastbound) may be subdivided from the balance of the M-1 zoned lot and designed for development as a single, collective entity, in accordance with the C-7 standards. If this portion of the lot remains in its current state and is not subdivided from Block 163 lot 1, the property shall retain the grandfather rights to continue, and the right to expand on the existing lot as though it was still in the M-1 Limited Manufacturing zone. Once this area of the lot is subdivided, all grandfathering rights for the area to the west of Fisher Place shall conform to the C-7, Commercial Enterprise Zone.
- 5) Owners of residential lots located to the east of Fisher Place, who wish not to sell their property for development within the C-7 standards, may retain as expanded grandfather rights to continue the residential use on the property, the right to have the residence enlarged upon and the right to construct accessory buildings on the property using the standards of the R-20 zone.
- 6) The area locally known as Fisher Place is to be made available to offer convenient and unrestricted access to all lands within the C-7, Commercial Enterprise Zone.
- 7) No individual retail building shall exceed 15,000 square feet of gross area.
- 8) More than one principal building shall be permitted on lots within the C-7 zone. The gasoline service station is permitted to be on the same site as a food market or other retail store.
- 9) A landscaped buffer of 50 feet in width is required for properties in the C-7, Commercial Enterprise Zone where it abuts a residential zone or residential use.

- 10) No merchandise, products or other material shall be displayed or stored outside.
- 11) All uses in the development shall have integrated circulation to assure access of all patrons to a single a common traffic-controlled intersection at Route 202 North (Eastbound) and Fisher Place. Some secondary access to Route 202 North may be granted by the Planning Board based on the need for improved and convenient access for emergency services and patrons.
- 12) Wayfinder signage shall be installed to encourage ingress and egress from the signalized intersection at Fisher Place.

#### F. Design Standards:

- 1) Signs for the development shall adhere to a compatible architectural theme which shall be submitted as part of the site plan application and approved by the Planning Board.
- 2) One freestanding sign is permitted on the east side of Fisher Place and one freestanding sign is permitted on the west side of Fisher Place. The area and height shall be regulated by §126-195. The Planning Board may approve an additional monument signs, based upon the need to safely identify businesses at ingress and egress locations.
- 3) One additional freestanding sign shall be permitted for the fuel dispensing station which displays only logo, fuel and cost information. The freestanding sign shall not exceed 100 square feet or 25 feet in height.
- 4) Where the design of a retail shopping complex includes a roof over a common walkway along the front of a building, an additional sign identifying the name of an individual activity occupying at least 500 square feet of habitable floor area may be suspended in perpendicular fashion from the roof over the common walkway. The size of the suspended sign (blade sign) shall be a maximum of 1.5 square feet or as otherwise determined by the Planning Board. In any case, suspended signs shall be no closer than 10 feet at their lowest point to the finished grade below.
- 5) Additional signs or larger or smaller signs may be approved by the Planning Board to be situated within the retail commercial complex, provided that the aggregate square footage of all the signs within the retail commercial complex does not exceed the maximum aggregate square footage allowed Signs (See §126-162 and §126-195).
- 6) Where an individual activity occupying at least 1,000 square feet of floor area has direct access from the outside, a sign identifying the name of the activity shall be permitted to be attached flat against the building on the front wall of the building near the entrance to the activity, with an additional such sign attached to a side wall if the activity is located at the end of a building. The size of each such sign shall be equal to one square foot of sign area per one linear foot of building frontage or building side occupied by the activity.

#### G. General

- 1) All other requirements of §126, Land Use, of the Code of Township of Bridgewater governing development which are not contrary to the provisions specified hereinabove shall be met.
- 2) The Planning Board may require, as a condition of site approval, the entry into a Developer's Agreement with the Township Council, setting forth the factors and conditions to which such site plan approval will be subject. The Developer's Agreement shall be in a form satisfactory to the Township Attorney and Township Council and shall include but may not be limited to provisions relating to the following:
  - a) The phasing and extent of off-tract traffic improvements and other improvements such as landscaping, public sewers and stormwater control, referenced to each proposed phase.
  - b) Integrated circulation to assure that all patrons will have unrestricted access to a single and common traffic-controlled intersection at Fisher Place. This may require cross-easements for abutting properties.
  - c) The developer's obligation to replace existing affordable housing units which would be eliminated as part of the development, as applicable.
  - d) The developer's obligation to comply with site plan approval conditions dealing with signage, building exteriors, landscaping, drainage, security, buffer areas, trash removal and internal driveways and traffic and pedestrian circulation and maintain the project in accordance with the approved site plan.
  - e) That suitable provisions have been made for the completion of development and the providing of on and off-tract improvements required by the conditions and standards and by the terms of the Developer's Agreement.
  - f) That adequate provisions have been made for the joint use of all on-site and offsite improvements by owners of each of the subdivided lots, its tenants and all grantees which improvements are to be used in common.
  - g) That adequate provisions have been made for the maintenance and upkeep of on- site and off-site improvements and the buildings and structures pursuant to the terms of the conditions and standards and Developer's Agreement.
- 4) Future improvements to the subdivided lots shall continue to function as though the lots were a collective unit and that the subdivision had not occurred.

# 4. AMEND § 126-332 Minimum Buffer/Conservation Easement and Recreation Equipment Distance requirements.

Add the following buffer distance for the C-7 zone to this section:

Minimum Buffer/Easement Required (feet)

C-7

Zone

5. AMEND § 126-325 Schedule of Area, Yard and Building Requirements to reflect the regulations noted for the new zone designated as C-7:

Column 1	Zone	<b>C</b> -7
Column 2	Interior Lot Area	5 acres
Column 3	Interior Lot Width	300
Column 4	Corner Lot Area	5 acres
Column 5	Corner Lot Width	300
Column 6	Min. Front Yard	200
Column 7	One Side Yard	50
Column 8	Total Two Side Yards	100
Column 9	Min. Rear Yard	50
Column 10	Accessory Side Yard	40
Column 11	Accessory Rear Yard	40
Column 12	2 Max. Lot Coverage	60
Column 13	Max. Stories Height	3
Column 14	Max. Height in Feet	45
Column 15	Max. Floor Area Ratio	0.35

6. AMEND § 126-325 Schedule of Area, Yard and Building Requirements. Minimum lot width for the M-1 zone is recommended to be amended in order to better reflect lot widths for existing lots on Route 202. The 1.2 million square feet shopping center and the SJP office complex are within the M-1 zone, but are well above the minimum lot width. There are, however, smaller lots which would benefit from having an adjustment to the minimum lot width. The amendment would be compatible with the minimum lot width assigned to more recent zone amendments for properties fronting the highway, such as the GC and HEC zones.

Ordinance Section § 126-325 Schedule of Area, Yard and Building Requirements should be revised to reflect an amendment to Minimum Lot Width requirements for the M-1 zone:

Column 3, Interior Lot Width	300;	(Changed from existing 500 feet)
Column 5, Corner Lot Width	300;	(Changed from existing 500 feet)

#### V. MASTER PLAN GUIDELINES FOR CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT

Corridors establish a perception of the quality of life that Bridgewater offers. The following development guidelines should be employed for non-residential properties to enhance visual appeal for properties fronting on the major corridors. Recommendations have been offered in prior Master Plans, but are included again for emphasis.

• The visual character of major corridors is considered to be an important component in the identity of Bridgewater Township. The Planning Board endorses development guidelines which are intended to aid developers seeking assistance in developing an aesthetically pleasing project. Solid or unarticulated buildings are less desirable. Where practical, the effects of mass and scale or buildings may be reduced by introducing staggered building walls, addition of dormers, or other architectural treatments.

- Buildings with expansive blank walls facing the roadway are less desirable. The building should have the appearance of a functional second story if there is a need to have an interior of building with greater height.
- Building mass should be consistent with the size of the lot. In the case of the Route 22
  corridor, a two-story structure, with mixed non-residential uses, such as retail and
  offices, is seen as a suitable mass for the visual value of the corridor, as opposed to a
  one-story structure.
- Building entries should be readily identifiable through the use of canopies and architectural treatment.
- Vaulted ceilings and roofs are not encouraged if they are not necessary for the function of the proposed use.
- Small-scale elements, such as planter walls and hedges, are encouraged to be clustered around building entrances.
- Larger street-facing building planes over a certain length (e.g., 150 feet) should be broken up into horizontal components.
- Green design standards (e.g., storm water management, rooftop solar, parking lot design, building design) are encouraged
- Visual screening of parked cars in structured parking garages is encouraged through a variety of treatments, such as decorative blocks, landscaping and similar treatments.
- The face of structures which are visible from any roadway should be constructed with brick or stone rather than wood, metal, or cinder block. Drivet or split rib block may be used as an accent, but should be limited to no more than 10% of the façade.
- One dominant material shall be selected and used as a theme for each building on a site.
- Roof design shall be as aesthetically pleasing as possible (e.g. color, material, grouping) to minimize visual impact to adjacent uses and particularly residences.
- Glass windows or some similar architectural treatment shall occupy more than 15% but less than 30% of the front elevation of a building, not including parapet area.
- Design preferences include grille windows and transoms.
- Crown molding, or similar roofline treatments are encouraged.
- Multiple peaks or parapet extensions above the roofline should be minimized.
- Design treatments which do not meet the desired characteristics are:
  - o Large plate glass windows without grilles.
  - o Front yard parking without landscape berms as a buffer.
  - o Massive structures which are out of scale with surrounding area.
  - o Shed, mansard, and highly-sloped roofs are not recommended.
  - o Aluminum siding, metal panels and mirrored glass surfaces are discouraged.
  - O Variations in color on the building should be kept to a minimum and shall be consistent with cohesive façade and signage plan.
  - o Earth tones are preferred. Bold tones should be avoided.
  - o Exterior building wall should be "finished" on sides visible from state highways.

# VI. RELATIONSHIP TO GOALS OF THE REGIONAL CENTER STRATEGIC MASTER PLAN

Although the segment of Route 202, from the westerly line with Branchburg to east of Charlotte Drive are outside the limits of the Regional Center, the highway corridor is considered to be part of land uses which influence the health and vitality of the Regional Center. The strategies noted in the Somerset County Regional Center Strategic Master Plan serve to bolster the overall success by integrating goals with those of the Regional Center. The following are Regional Center strategies which are consistent with the Master Plan recommendations for this section of Route 202:

- Encourage redevelopment in focus areas that will return underutilized land to productive use, improve the quality of life, enhance community character, create new employment opportunities and strengthen the municipal tax base.
- Consider establishment of special design zones and guidelines to promote high quality development.
- Promote new development that is accessible, attractive and safe.
- Ensure that new development includes appropriate landscaping, street furniture, sidewalks and access to mass transit.
- Pursue commercial development to attract tax ratables and reduce the residential tax burden.
- Strengthen the predictability of the business development process to encourage investment in the area.
- Foster diverse business opportunities that strengthen the Regional Center economic base.
- Upgrade and enhance existing infrastructure to sustain and promote economic development.

#### VII. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER BRIDGEWATER MASTER PLAN DOCUMENTS

The Bridgewater Township Planning Board has adopted several Master Plan Amendments and Reexamination Reports which have been developed to maintain Bridgewater's strong neighborhood identity and strengthen its economic base. Even with the evolving nature of society, these goals and objectives have remained solidly embedded in the fabric of the Master Plan Amendments and Reexamination Reports. The findings and recommendations contained in this report are grounded on the review of several Master Plans and periodic Reexamination Reports.

- Master Plan, dated 1990 provides a clear vision for the Township, citing valued policies and objectives for the township.
- Master Plan Amendment and Reexamination Report, dated February 28, 2005 addresses newly-developed policies and development strategies intended to serve as a basis for focused study in an effort to preserve the goals outlined in the 1990 Master Plan and to

further enhance the quality of life in the township through additional sound planning policies.

- Master Plan Amendment and Reexamination Report, dated November 11, 2008 deals
  with impervious coverage and floor area ratio standards to maintain the established
  scale within several zoning districts.
- Master Plan Amendment of the Recreation Element of the Master Plan adopted on May 24, 2010 sets forth a plan for facilities and uses on public lands.
- Master Plan Amendment and Reexamination Report-Economic Element, was adopted on April 13, 2010. This study was developed in response to the Master Plan Amendment and Reexamination Report, dated February 28, 2005, where the study was recommended to, "Encourage appropriate development of land use focus areas in the Township that will, within the limits of zoning, return underutilized land to productive use, generate economic development activity, diversify the municipal economic base, create new employment opportunities, and strengthen the tax base."
- Master Plan Amendment and Reexamination Report-Circulation Element, dated September 2010 studied traffic circulation and modes of transportation throughout the Township which resulted in recommendations to be addressed moving forward.
- Reexamination Report dated February 8, 2011 addressed recommendations for places of assembly.
- Master Plan Reexamination Report, Master Plan Amendment and Redevelopment Plan of December 2, 2014, for redevelopment of underutilized industrial land in the Finderne neighborhood of the township.

Among the goals of the 2005 Master Plan Amendment and Re-examination report and subsequent plans and reports, the following are relevant to economic development along major corridors:

- To preserve the development character and quality of Bridgewater Township.
- To safeguard the tax base, provide for a continuing employment source and tax ratables through appropriate use of non-residential lands.
- To encourage the re-development of large industrial tracts which are no longer viable for industrial or manufacturing uses.
- The township should identify and improve major gateway locations to enhance the image of the community.
- Update the land use plan to address areas where land uses are in transition.
- Evaluate a range of available planning, zoning and implementation tools available to
  the township including but not limited to design standards with the goal of enhancing
  the quality of life for the residents of Bridgewater and to visually improve major
  corridor locations to enhance the image of the community and strengthen its identity.
  Possible improvements to guidelines include signage, landscaping and streetscape
  improvements.

- Protect the quality of life enjoyed by Bridgewater residents;
- Enhance and increase tax ratables through diversity of high-value uses;
- Support existing economic anchors and encourage expansion into new facilities, where appropriate;
- Adjust to the contemporary needs of commerce and Bridgewater residents;
- Encourage long term, sustainable site planning;
- Enable more flexibility in development context and promote economic activity in appropriate locations; and
- Offer building design guidelines, where appropriate.

#### VIII. DEVELOPMENT IMPACT ON ADJOINING MUNICIPALITIES

As required by the M.L.U.L, this Amendment to the Land Use Element of the Master Plan considers the impacts of its recommendations beyond the borders of Bridgewater since actions taken along the Route 202 corridor in Bridgewater could possibly affect adjoining municipalities.

Bridgewater Township borders thirteen municipalities. Implementation of the amendment to the Land Use Element of the Master Plan will not significantly affect the municipalities abutting Bridgewater Township. With the acknowledgement that this Master Plan focuses on a small project which is not abutting any municipal border, the impact on zoning in the abutting municipalities is not viewed as significant.

Somerville Borough is within the Regional Center and the strategies for improved vitality and for fostering a strong identity are shared among Bridgewater, Somerville and Raritan. Zoning which abuts Bridgewater include the business B-5 Highway Business zone at Route 202 which abuts Bridgewater's business zoning. Somerville's R-1 Single Family zone at Cornell Boulevard abuts Bridgewater's residential zoning. To the east and south, the single family zones of R-2 and R-3 along Adamsville Rd. abuts Bridgewater's residential zoning. Somerville's Industrial Districts of I-1 and I-2 are generally consistent with Bridgewater's M-2 zoning, with the exception of a small pocket of R-10 Single Family zoning in Bridgewater. To the south of Union Avenue are Somerville's R-1 and R-3 zones which abut Bridgewater's MPD, Medical Park District. The initiative to return unproductive lands to a useful purpose, as cited in this report, is a commonly-shared goal which would not negatively impact this common border. Route 202 does run through a portion of Somerville Borough, however, impacts would likely be insignificant due to the limited scope of this study area.

<u>Raritan Borough</u> is also within the Regional Center and also endorses strategies to return unproductive land to a useful purpose. This is a commonly-shared goal for the Regional Center. To the west and north of Route 202 are Raritan's Townhouse/Garden Apt. R-5, the Inclusionary Residential District, IRD-1, and the Medium Low Residential R-2 District which abut Bridgewater's residential zones. Along the westerly side south of Route 202 near the study

area is the OM-3 Limited Industrial District which abuts the single family R-20 neighborhood of Charlotte Drive. This is common industrial/residential line is a long-standing land use. On the south of Vanderveer Rd. are Raritan's Inclusionary Residential Overlay IRD-2 and R-1 residential zones which are across from Bridgewater's R20.1 residential zone. On Route 28 are the R-3 and IRD-2 zones. At the intersection of Route 202 and Route 28 is Raritan's Shopping Center B-2 zone which is which is across from Bridgewater's Golf Course Enterprise GCE and Regional Retail C-2 zones. Although there may be some increased traffic on Route 202 from this development, it is expected that no Master Plan recommendations would create a negative impact to Raritan's zone plan due to the limited nature of the study area.

Branchburg Township borders Bridgewater Township to the west and Route 202 and Route 22 are shared by both communities. Branchburg's major border with Bridgewater lies within the Affordable Housing AH-1 zone. Along both sides of the dividing river are large areas of floodplain and parklands which naturally throttle back development. Bridgewater has no policies, objectives, or recommendations which would significantly impact this common border. Although there may be some increased traffic on Routes 22 and 202 as a result of implementing the Master Plan recommendations, it is anticipated that the development at Fisher Place on Route 202 will not create negative impacts to Branchburg's zone plan.

Borough of Manville is a historic community which has experienced extensive redevelopment since the floods caused by Hurricane Floyd in 1999. The Raritan River and its wide floodplains separate Manville from Bridgewater. The Single Family S-100 abut Bridgewater's Single Family R-10 zone. The Industrial I and the Economic Development EED zones in Manville abut Bridgewater's General Manufacturing M-2 zone. There are no direct transportation routes between this distant study area and the Borough of Manville. Bridgewater has no policies, objectives, or recommendations in this Master Plan, which would have an adverse impact on Manville's redevelopment initiatives.

<u>Franklin Township.</u> The substantial barrier of the Raritan River separates Bridgewater Township's M-2 zone from the Franklin Township Agricultural A zone, which stretches the length of the common border. This area of Bridgewater is subject to severe environmental constraints and is separated from the rest of Bridgewater Township by a rail corridor. There are no direct transportation routes between this distant study area and the Township of Franklin. The Master Plan has no recommendations which, if implemented, would negatively impact this common border.

Borough of Bound Brook The Middle Brook and Route 287 provide a sharp edge separating Bound Brook Borough from Bridgewater Township. The Neighborhood Business/Residential NB/R zoning along East Main Street of Bound Brook is a mix of residential and non-residential uses. To the north and south of the Norfolk Southern railroad line is the Industrial Park IP zone which abuts Bridgewater's industrial M-2 zone. There are no direct transportation routes between this distant study area and the Borough of Bound Brook. There are no recommended

policies or zoning changes in the Master Plan which would result in a negative impact on the Borough of Bound Brook.

<u>Middlesex Borough.</u> Along the southeasterly border of Bridgewater Township is a coincidental jurisdictional line with Middlesex Borough. This is an area that wraps around the Borough of Bound Brook and is defined as to its boundary by the Green Brook. This finger-like projection, which is sandwiched between Bound Brook Borough and Middlesex Borough, is primarily residential in nature. There are no direct transportation routes between this distant study area and the Borough of Middlesex. No negative cross-border impacts are expected from the recommendations in this Master Plan.

South Bound Brook Borough. A very small portion of Bridgewater Township touches the Industrial I zone of South Bound Brook Borough. Since there is a strong intervening feature of the Raritan River, there are no roads or facilities which are anticipated to cause a negative effect on the Borough of South Bound Brook due to the distance between the borough and the study area as well as the lack of a convenient transportation route.

Hillsborough Township. A small portion of southern Bridgewater borders Hillsborough Township. The Raritan River forms the boundary between the two townships. The area, proposed for a portion of the Raritan Greenway in Bridgewater, is opposite the Agricultural AG zone in Hillsborough, and is subject to significant environmental constraints on both sides of the border. There are no road networks or proposed facilities which are anticipated to cause a negative effect from the Master Plan recommendations.

Bedminster Township A portion of the northerly section of Bridgewater Township in the R-40 residential zone lies along the jurisdictional line of Bedminster Township, which has the R-10 (10 acre) zone. A small portion in the south of the township lies in a Public P zone and an airport zone. The study area on Route 202 is quite distant from Bedminster Township. There are no negative cross-border impacts anticipated from the recommendations in this Master Plan to affect the township.

Bernards Township lies along the second ridge of the Watchung Mountains. Zoning along the common border with Bridgewater are the Bernards' Public Purpose P-1 and the 2-Acre Residential R-3 zones. These zones abut Bridgewater's R-50 Single Family zone, which is the township's low-density residential zone. Due to the environmental characteristics of the Watchung Mountains, both communities have ordinances in place intending to protect these environmentally sensitive slopes of the Second Watchung Mountain. Due to the lack of a convenient transportation route and the distance of the study area, there are no negative cross-border impacts anticipated from the zoning recommendations to affect the township adversely.

Warren Township. In the northerly portion of Bridgewater and along the common line with Warren Township are primarily found single-family residential uses of Warren's 1.5 Acre

Residential R-65 zone which abuts Bridgewater's R-50 single Family zone. As with Bernards Township, Warren Township has a policy of preservation in areas exhibiting steep slopes, which are exhibited in the area of the borders. There are no negative cross-border impacts anticipated from the zoning recommendations to affect the township adversely.

Green Brook Township Primary access into Green Brook Township is along the major corridor of Route 22 which contains Green Brook's Regional Highway Commercial RHC zone. This commercial zone abuts Bridgewater's commercial Office and Service C-3 zone. In Green Brook, the residential Affordable Housing District AHD zone abuts Bridgewater's Single Family R-50 residential zone. Due to the distance of this study area and the more complex roadway network that leads to Green Brook, there are no negative cross-border impacts anticipated from the zoning recommendations.

# IX . CONSISTENCY WITH THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

The State Development and Redevelopment Plan includes goals and offers recommendations to achieve those goals. This Land Use Element of the Master Plan is consistent with the policies and objectives of the SDRP, as cited in the Bridgewater Reexamination Report, and advances many of the State's policies.

- #1. Revitalize the State's Cities and Towns Revitalize New Jersey's cities and towns by investing wisely and sufficiently in improvements in their infrastructure systems, public spending programs, tax incentives and regulatory programs to leverage private investment and to encourage infill and redevelopment in ways that are consistent with the State Plan's vision and goals.
- #3. Promote Beneficial Economic Growth Promote beneficial economic growth in locations and in ways that improve the quality of life and the standard of living for all New Jersey residents. Provide infrastructure in advance of, or concurrent with, the impacts of new development sufficient to maintain adequate facility standards. Encourage partnerships and collaborative planning with the private sector and capitalize on the State's strategic location, and economic strengths including its existing business enterprises, entrepreneurship, the research and development capacity of its institutions of higher learning, skilled workforce, cultural diversity and logistic facilities in ways that are consistent with the State Plan's vision and goals.

#8 Ensure Sound, Coordinated and Integrated Statewide Planning – Ensure sound, coordinated and integrated statewide planning by using the State Plan as a guide to planning and growth-related decisions at all levels of government in ways that are consistent with the State Plan's vision and goals.

The SDRP Strategies are most brought into focus with the following strategy description:

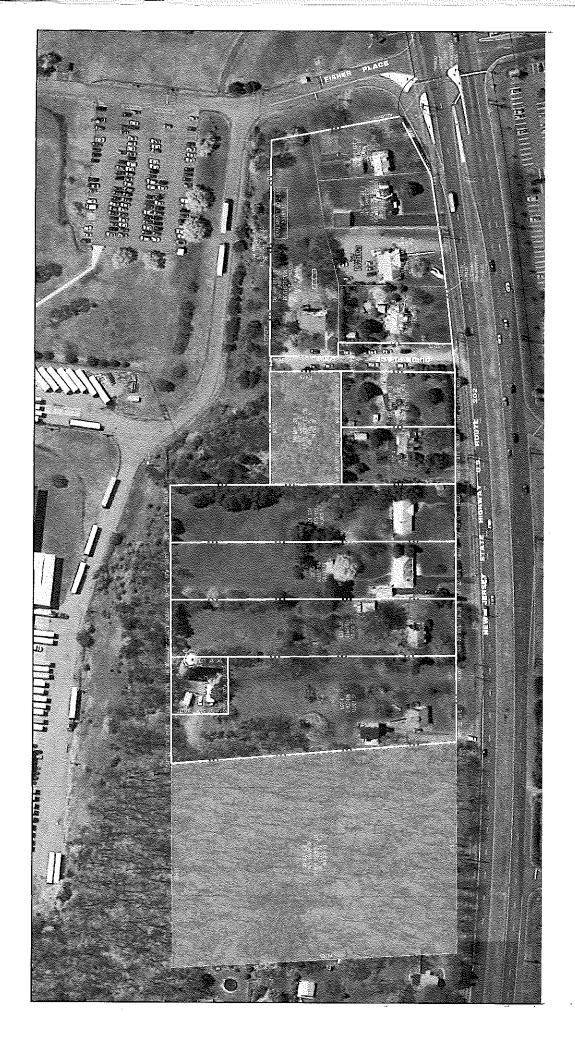
#19 Designing More Sustainable Built Environments – Tailor community design, intensity and form to fit with local needs that may vary from urban centers to first suburbs in need of redevelopment to retrofitting newer suburban communities to center-based development for rural and environmentally sensitive areas to create spatially defined, visually appealing and functionally efficient places with respect to each of those different contexts in ways that help to create a distinctive identity, build to human scale and establish a sense of place that enhances economic viability and includes circulation patterns that facilitate multi-modal transportation alternatives to the automobile in ways that are consistent with the vision and goals of the State Plan.

The State of New Jersey has published the SDRP Policy Map, highlights the planning areas of Bridgewater Township. For the most part, the corridor of Route 202 are characterized as Planning Area 1, the Metropolitan Planning Area; the State Development and Redevelopment Plan's intent for this area includes the following:

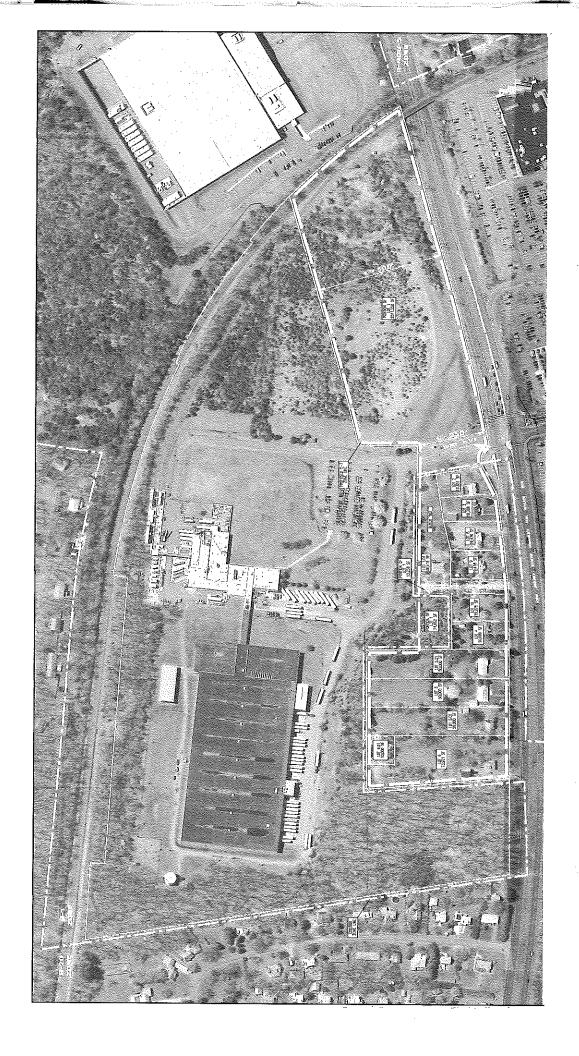
- Provide for much of the State's future development and redevelopment
- Revitalize Cities and Towns
- Take advantage of increased densities and compact building design
- Provide for mixed-use concentrations of residential and commercial activity
- Re-design any existing areas of low-density sprawl

#### FIGURE 1: AERIAL OF ROUTE 202 STUDY AREA

Following is an aerial view of the area of the proposed C-7, Commercial Enterprise Zone area on Route 202 North. The residential R-20 zone properties are to the east of Fisher Place and north of the former Central Railroad of New Jersey Main line. Entirely surrounding this R-20 Single-Family Residential zone is the M-1 Limited Manufacturing Zone occupied by the Thermo-Fisher Scientific industrial complex. The locally known access of Fisher Place is shown on the aerial, creating an intersection with Towne Center Road. There is a traffic light at this intersection. To the top of the aerial view is the Regional Retail Shopping Complex which has 1.2 million square feet of retail space. This site is in the M-1 Limited Manufacturing Zone, which includes a retail development option permitted by ordinance.



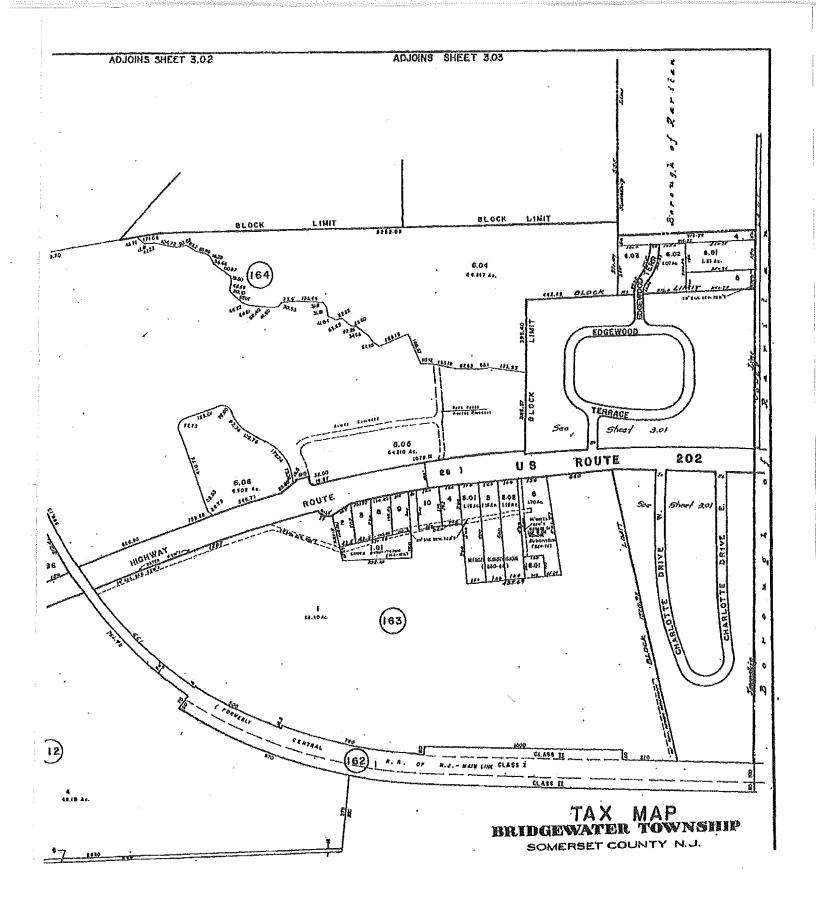
AREA WHICH SHALL REMAIN IN THE M-1 ZONE AND IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE PROPOSED C-7 ZONE. THE SHADED AREA IN THE CENTER OF THE AERIAL VIEW IS AN AREA CURRENTLY IN THE M-1 ZONE WHICH IS TO BE MERGED WITH THE OTHER LOTS AND DEVELOPED IN ACCORDANCE THE AREA ABOVE IS THE RESIDENTIAL AREA TO THE EAST OF FISHER PLACE. THE SHADED AREA ON THE EXTREME LEFT IS AN UNDEVELOPED WITH C-7 ZONE STANDARDS. Lot line depictions and aerial are provided by Dynamic Engineering entitled, Site Area Exhibit, dated 11/26/13



THE OUTLINED AERIAL VIEW ABOVE IS THE PROPOSED C-7 ZONE. THE THERMOFISHER INDUSTRIAL FACILITY IS PROMINENTLY SHOWN IN THE LEFT SIDE OF THE AERIAL VIEW. ALL RESIDENTIALLY-ZONED LOTS ALONG ROUTE 202 TO THE EAST OF FISHER PLACE ARE TO BE MERGED IN ORDER TO BE DEVELOPED IN ACCORDANCE WITH C-7 ZONE STANDARDS.

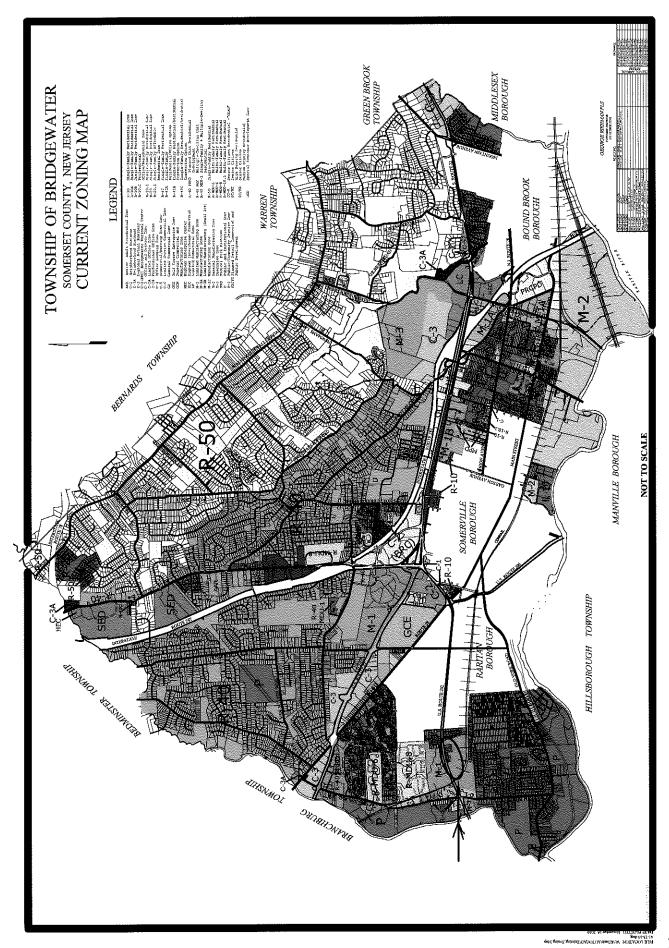
(Lot line depictions and aerial are provided by Dynamic Engineering entitled, Site Area Exhibit, dated 11/26/13)

# FIGURE 2: TAX MAP OF THE STUDY AREA



The properties within the study in Block 163 are shown above. To the north is US Route 202. The railroad property of Block 162 lot 1 forms a physical barrier and border to the westerly side of the proposed C-7 district. Note the location of Charlotte Drive which is buffered by a land area of lot 1 which is not included in the recommendation for zone change.

# FIGURE 3: CURRENT ZONING MAP



## FIGURE 4: PROPOSED ZONING MAP

