

DOWNTOWN FREEHOLD VISION PLAN (2018)



JULY 2018

FREEHOLD PLANNING FOR EMERGING CENTERS



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INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

In 2008, the Borough of Freehold designated a large portion of its downtown as an Area in Need of Rehabilitation and adopted the Freehold Center Core Revitalization Plan (FCCRP) to encourage new development. The plan sought to address a pattern of underutilization and disinvestment in the downtown. While the FCCRP produced some positive changes, it did not spark the kind of wide-spread revitalization the borough had hoped for.

The borough realized that it needed an updated planning document in early 2015, when a developer came to Freehold Borough after making a multi-million dollar investment in a nearby community. After they discussed partnering on a redevelopment project in the Freehold Center Core, local officials realized that **the borough did not have an up-to-date planning document outlining the community's goals for how the borough should grow.** The FCCRP was a good regulatory framework, but lacked a strong vision. Thus, a process was undertaken to articulate a vision for Freehold and define a framework for growth.

First, the borough secured a Technical Assistance Program (TAP) Panel with the support of the Urban Land Institute (ULI) to begin the visioning process. The ULI TAP Panel conducted an analysis of the existing issues and opportunities in downtown, interviewed stakeholders, and presented a written report summarizing its findings.

Following the conclusion of the TAP Panel in the fall of 2016, the borough wrote the **Freehold Borough Community Redevelopment Committee (BCRC) Vision Report**, which presents the borough's goals for how the community

should grow. It established a shared vision, outlined goals, and created consensus on the general means for achieving the vision. Central to this vision was to better leverage the Freehold Center Bus Station as a catalyst for growth in downtown.

NJTPA PROJECT

The borough used the work produced by the TAP Panel to apply to the North Jersey Transportation Authority's (NJTPA) Program for Emerging Centers to continue the planning process for the downtown. Their hope was to achieve Transit Village designation for the area around the Freehold Center Bus Station. The Transit Village Initiative is a program jointly sponsored by the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) and NJ TRANSIT that supports municipalities who want to create transit-oriented development (TOD) around existing transit stations. TOD is understood in this context to be a mixed-use, pedestrian friendly district surrounding existing public transit.

As part of this effort, the borough wanted to explore the creation of a TOD zoning district centered on its bus station, identify TOD-ready projects and sites, and propose improvements to bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. The borough also sought to update the standards in its existing Freehold Center Core Revitalization Plan including, site design, architectural, and parking guidelines, to better align with the Transit Village criteria. NJTPA hired a consultant team to help the borough complete these tasks. This **Downtown Freehold Vision Plan** is the result of that planning effort.

STUDY AREA

First, the consultant team defined a study area that was used to assess the existing conditions and would serve as the general boundary for any proposed recommendations.

The Freehold Center Core area was originally envisioned as the study area; however, it did not include the Freehold Center Bus Station or the surrounding areas. The study area was expanded to a one-third mile radius around the bus station to make the bus station the focal point of the project (**Figure 1**).

Focus Areas

As part of this project, the borough also wanted more specific recommendations for sites with large-scale redevelopment potential within the Freehold Center Core area. The consultant team worked with both stakeholders and the public to identify two focus areas for redevelopment—the Transit Gateway Area and the Courthouse Square Area (**Figure 1**). There was interest in a third area around the Borough Plaza shopping center, but the borough decided not to move forward with this area due to a lack of public engagement with residents and business owners from this area (See “**Develop a Spanish-Language Outreach Plan**” on pg. 29 for more information).

DOWNTOWN VISION PLAN ORGANIZATION

The vision and recommendations provided in this Downtown Freehold Vision Plan are the product of extensive public engagement and an analysis of the existing land use, regulatory, market, and mobility conditions within the downtown.

The plan begins with an **Existing Conditions Summary**, which provides an overview of the findings from the technical analysis and public engagement conducted by the consultant team, published in the previously completed Existing Conditions Report. The Existing Conditions Report included full documentation of the land

use, transportation, economic development, and regulatory conditions. The complete Existing Conditions Report can be found in **Appendix A**.

This is followed by an updated **Vision and Goals** for the downtown. The BCRC Report was the product of intensive stakeholder engagement, but there was never an opportunity to have a large public meeting to discuss the vision, values, and goals in the report. Fortunately, the public engagement process in this planning effort provided that opportunity. The updated vision and goals in this Downtown Vision Plan reflect the feedback from that public engagement process.

Next, a **Toolkit** section outlines the recommendations for Downtown Freehold. This section provides:

- › A top-level approach for achieving the vision, describing how all the proposed projects and policies can work together to achieve the vision
- › Specific details of the recommended projects and policies, organized by subject area

An **Implementation** section provides information about potential funding sources available to the borough.

The plan concludes with **Transit Village Designation** requirements. The location of information that the borough will need to apply for Transit Village designation in the future is provided for each designation criteria.

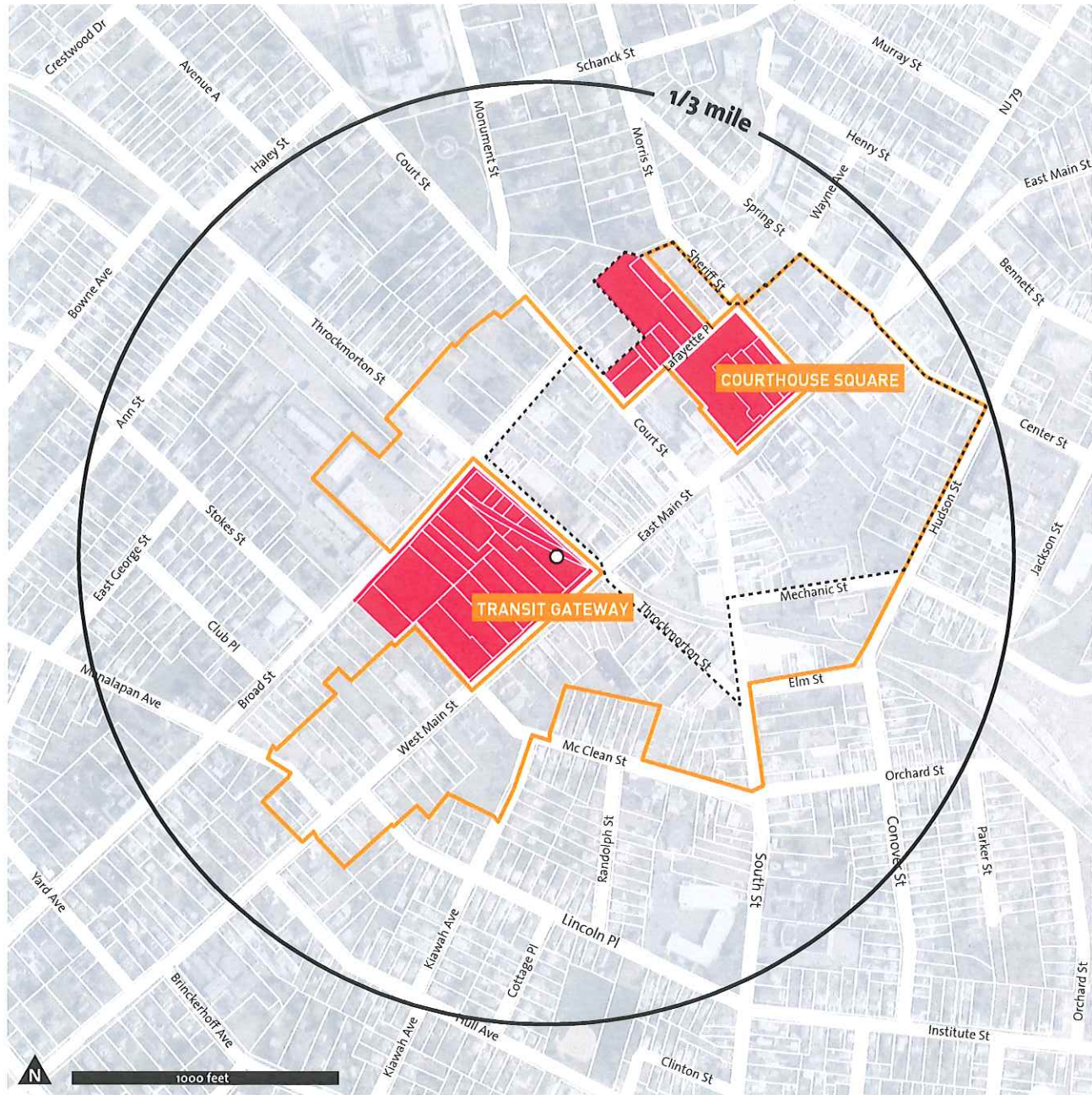
REGULATORY DOCUMENTS

The consultant team developed three regulatory documents as companions to this Downtown Vision Plan. These documents will provide a regulatory framework for rehabilitation and redevelopment in the downtown that is consistent with the vision and goals of this plan. They are:

- › An updated FCCRP, renamed the **Downtown Freehold Rehabilitation Plan**
- › Two area-specific redevelopment plans: the **Transit Gateway Redevelopment Plan** and the **Courthouse Square Redevelopment Plan**

INTRODUCTION

Figure 1: Study Area and Focus Areas Boundary



-  Study Area Boundary
-  Existing Freehold Center Core Boundary
-  Proposed Freehold Center Core Boundary
-  Focus Areas
-  Freehold Center Bus Station

EXISTING CONDITIONS SUMMARY

The existing conditions analysis (**Appendix A**) served as the foundation for the Downtown Vision Plan's recommendations. It included both technical analysis of the regulatory, mobility, demographic, market, and land use conditions by the consultant team, as well as input from stakeholder interviews and a public workshop. A dozen people participated in the stakeholder interviews, and nearly 80 people attended the public workshop. Notably, members of the borough's Hispanic population were largely absent from our public engagement efforts. We recommend the borough continue to engage its Hispanic residents to build consensus on the recommendations from this planning effort and future projects. The following findings emerged as key takeaways from the existing conditions analysis.

REGULATORY ANALYSIS

The public generally supports the vision for downtown articulated in the BCRC Report

Getting public feedback on the BCRC Report was a significant focus of the public outreach process for this project. **Overall, most people felt that the vision and goals in the BCRC Report were consistent with their vision for downtown.** Some issues that public workshop participants and stakeholders felt were missing were: bike improvements, better public spaces and public amenities, more local-serving downtown businesses, and protection of housing affordability in the borough.

The consultant team also found the BCRC Report could be strengthened by restructuring its content. The Vision Report articulates values and goals, but the way they are

presented in the report does not make it clear how the two work together to achieve the vision. Reorganizing and refining these statements would give the borough a better sense for how to proceed with implementation.

The Freehold Center Core Revitalization Plan is a good first step

The consultant team reviewed three regulatory documents that apply to the study area: the Freehold Zoning Ordinance, the Freehold Center Core Revitalization Plan (FCCRP) and the Freehold Historic Preservation Ordinance. The review primarily focused on the FCCRP, as it covers most of the downtown and the borough requested it be updated by the consultant team. Overall, the FCCRP was an excellent first step toward aligning the borough's TOD goals for downtown with supportive zoning regulations. The FCCRP:

- › Expands the permitted uses and building types within the FCC boundaries to include multi-family residential and mixed-use development
- › Prohibits auto-oriented uses that undermine TOD principles
- › Allows for a variety of parking management strategies that reduce the number of required spaces

Despite the strengths of the FCCRP, the consultant team found several issues that should be addressed. First, **the Freehold Center Core boundary does not include the bus station or its surrounding areas.** To better align the FCCRP with the principles of the Transit Village Initiative, boundary should be extended to include the bus station and other areas immediately around the station that would be suitable for transit-supportive uses and design.

The FCCRP leaves several regulations up to the discretion of the Planning Board or negotiations between the board and the developer. This creates uncertainty for the developer by making it more difficult to determine what they can build, which deters investment. At the same time, it reduces transparency to the public about what development is permitted.

The plan also requires two mandatory uses—a parking structure and public plaza—that place a considerable burden on developers without clear incentives in return. The borough will likely need to remove these requirements, provide incentives, or explore developer fees to pay for these amenities in the future.

Finally, **strict architectural and design guidelines create barriers to new development and encourage faux historicism.** New design guidelines should balance the borough's desire for appropriate rehabilitation of existing buildings, context-sensitive design for new buildings, and preservation of Freehold's historic structures.

The FCCRP might not be enough to encourage redevelopment

The results of the revitalization effort in the Freehold Center Core is clear from the quality of East Main Street, the number of new businesses, and the diversity of tenants that have come to downtown over the past 10 years. In general, the public investment in the East Main Street area has paid dividends. **Despite these tangible improvements, the FCCRP is limited in its ability to incentivize transformative, large-scale redevelopment in the downtown.** The borough's success with rehabilitation makes a case for using redevelopment in specific areas that would not otherwise see investment.

MOBILITY AND PARKING ANALYSIS

The quality of the bus station does not match its level of service

Freehold's bus station, once a quaint and active railway station, is now a crowded parking lot that lacks amenities for its patrons. Though the service at this station is relatively high-quality, the Freehold Center Bus Station is

not attractive, comfortable, or convenient. Nine bus routes run through the station at the center of the study area. These routes provide service to both work destinations in the region as well as locations where many people who work in Freehold live. According to NJ TRANSIT Bus Operations, the Freehold station has a high volume of service, serving approximately 2,200 people a day. **With such a high level of service, the bus station could be a transit hub for the region and a strong anchor for new transit-oriented development in downtown Freehold. However, the bus station and surrounding area is in need of significant improvements to realize this vision.**

Stakeholders and residents noted that the poor quality of the bus station discourages ridership. Bus patrons typically stand in the parking lot, exposed to weather when waiting for a bus and when loading. **The bus station lacks basic amenities such as benches, shade, shelters, and ticketing machines that would make using the bus easier and more comfortable.** There is also a lack of landscaping in the station area, creating a barren and sun-baked appearance. As a result, many people do not feel that waiting for the bus here is a pleasant or safe experience. Additionally, the area lacks the pedestrian connections to downtown and other transit-supportive land uses—like housing, public space, or retail—needed to transform this area into a true downtown transit hub.

Private ownership is a barrier to implementation

The station building, the bus operating area, the ice-cream stand, and associated parking areas sit on a privately-owned land. The parcel extends east-west from the Freehold Fire Department's building to the railroad tracks, and north-south from West Main Street towards the borough's fire annex. The borough owns the property to the north of this parcel which extends to Broad Street as well as several other parcels adjacent to the site. The private ownership of the station site will likely be a barrier to implementing transit-related improvements, as all improvements to the bus station will need to be negotiated with the property owner. Depending on the improvements the borough wants to make, it may want to explore the possibility of acquiring the bus station property to streamline future improvements.

Figure 2: Existing Conditions Images - Mobility and Parking



BUS OPERATIONS



BUS STATION FROM MAIN STREET



PARKING OFF MAIN STREET



MARKET YARD PARKING LOT

Better parking management is necessary to support growth downtown

Many people said that poor parking management and wayfinding to available parking creates excessive demand for some parking lots, while others remain empty. There are abundant off-street parking lots throughout the study area and numerous streets where on-street parking is allowed. However, there is a perception that there is not enough parking in downtown because some lots, like the Market Yard Parking Lot, are well-maintained and marked as public parking, while others, like those owned by Monmouth County behind the Hall of Records, are not. In addition, the county reserves a large number of permitted spots for employees on weekdays. The occupied spots make it seem as if parking inventory is low, even though many spots are available to the public after work hours.

It should be noted that few people thought a proposed fee system for parking on Main Street would be successful. However, policies promoting free, abundant parking have led to a proliferation of surface parking lots that occupy valuable land downtown. Moving forward, better parking management could help the borough balance the desire for new development with the demand for parking.

Bicycle infrastructure is lacking

On-street bicycle facilities are noticeably lacking in the study area. Although there is a connection to the Henry Hudson Trail in Freehold, there is no bicycle infrastructure connecting the trail into downtown. Even if the borough wanted to expand the bicycle network, on-street parking occupies much of the space that would be used for bicycle lanes throughout the downtown. Stakeholders and the public felt that extending the bicycle network into the

EXISTING CONDITIONS SUMMARY

study area would improve resident access to the trail and potentially attract bike riders from the region to Downtown Freehold.

LAND USE ANALYSIS

Several Sites Have Potential for Large-Scale Redevelopment

Stakeholders identified three areas around Main Street as potential sites for redevelopment: the Courthouse Square Area, the Transit Gateway Area, and the Borough Plaza Area (**Figure 1**). Due to a lack of public engagement with residents living in the borough Plaza Area, the consultant team decided not to make any recommendations for large-scale redevelopment at this time. (For more information, see **“Develop a Spanish-Language Outreach Plan” on pg. 29**).

The Courthouse Square Area consists mostly of county-owned parking lots, a strip mall, and several other small commercial buildings fronting on Main Street. The site is named after the road that services the parking areas between the county Annex Building and adjacent strip mall. The location has strong potential to activate the street frontage along Main Street, provide new upper floor residential development, and provide better connection and access to the Lafayette Street parking lot for Main Street visitors. Overall, there was broad public support for mixed-use development in this area.

The area around the bus station, the Transit Gateway Area, is also an opportunity for catalytic redevelopment in downtown. Redevelopment in this area should not only address the concerns identified in the mobility analysis, but also ways to transform the underutilized land around the bus station to create a more attractive and active gateway into the downtown.

High-quality public realm improvements should extend throughout the downtown

Public workshop attendees wanted to see more public realm improvements throughout the downtown. Within the Center Core area, recent improvements create a high-quality pedestrian realm, including wide red-brick sidewalks, streetscaping, outdoor cafés, and several

Figure 3: Focus Area Images



hardscaped plazas. Expanding these improvements to other parts of the study area, especially the bus station, would go a long way toward improving the public realm within downtown Freehold. Participants also wanted to see the creation of a large public green space close to the downtown that is more functional than Monument Park, located in front of the county courthouse.

DEMOGRAPHIC AND MARKET ANALYSIS

New development should focus on expanding rental housing options and local-serving retail

Many stakeholders and workshop participants thought there is a diverse group of existing and potential residents who would be attracted to downtown housing and that it would be an appropriate use on Main Street. Stakeholders said **demand for apartments with modern amenities close to downtown has been increasing steadily.**

Freehold is a growing municipality that experienced a 12 percent increase in population between 1990 and 2015. The population increase was largely driven by an influx of Latino residents, primarily of Mexican descent. This demographic shift has not only had a social impact on the borough, but effects on land use and transportation patterns in the downtown area as well. Despite this population growth and new regulations in the Freehold Center Core area that permitted mixed-use and multi-family residential development, there was very little new housing construction during this time.

The age of the housing stock in Freehold is generally considered an asset, but may be a particular challenge for attracting millennials and empty-nesters to the downtown. General trends in New Jersey show that both millennials and baby boomers are drawn to low-maintenance, multi-family housing in walkable areas with enhanced dining and entertainment options. **There is a market for approximately 100 units of high-quality, multi-family housing, consisting of smaller studio to two-bedroom units.** However, many residents considered housing affordability a major asset to living in Freehold, and the borough should be attentive to the impacts new development will have on existing residents.

The retail market for the downtown should capitalize on the resident and daytime population, rather than try to attract national chains. While residents would like to see additional retail options downtown, competition from the Freehold Raceway Mall makes it unlikely for national retail chains to locate along Main Street. From a market perspective, food and beverage establishments and personal service retail are the most viable new uses for Main Street. However, it was also noted that new development in the downtown has primarily catered to regional visitors—who come for “\$15 cocktails”—more than current Freehold residents. This imbalance has been felt by residents who would like to see more local-serving retail, dining, and commercial offerings.

New buildings should complement the existing character of Main Street

When asked to evaluate a series of design tools, participants gravitated toward those that were characteristic of their existing Main Street. There was overwhelming support for architectural design that used façade and roof variation, ground floor transparency, consistency with surrounding buildings, and small front yard setbacks—elements already present on Main Street. Though residents gravitated toward these types of traditional design elements, new development should be carefully designed to complement, not copy, the existing architecture in the downtown.

VISION AND GOALS

The following vision and goals are a revised version of those articulated in the BCRC Report. The language changes reflect new ideas that residents and stakeholders identified during the NJTPA public outreach process. Specific visions for both of the proposed redevelopment plan areas have also been added to the overall vision. The updates will give the borough a clearer direction for future planning efforts, starting with the recommendations and regulatory documents produced as part of this project.

As noted in the introduction (See [“Existing Conditions Summary” on pg. 9](#)), the vision expressed in the BCRC report was overwhelmingly supported by the community. However, before the borough adopts this Downtown Vision Plan, there should be additional public vetting to ensure that the new vision and goals accurately reflect the public’s vision.

VISION

Freehold Borough—the commercial, cultural, social, and historical hub of western Monmouth County—will be a highly desirable and competitively sought after place to live, work, and do business. The east and west sides of Main Street will be connected, re-orienting the downtown around the bus station.

Young professionals, entrepreneurs, empty-nesters, and investors will be attracted to the downtown because of the area’s livability, historical distinction, high-quality retail and entertainment offerings, and unparalleled bus service. At the same time, the borough will work aggressively to ensure that the area remains accessible and inviting to people of different ages, cultures, and incomes.

Steady rehabilitation of existing properties will promote the historic, walkable, and urban character of the downtown. Rehabilitation will enhance and expand retail offerings, create new office spaces, and provide additional housing options. Two major redevelopment initiatives will have catalytic impacts on the downtown: the Transit Gateway Area and the Courthouse Square Area.

In the short term, an improved bus station area will provide a safe and attractive gateway into the borough. New bus station amenities will make waiting for the bus more enjoyable and safe. A road diet will help reduce the speed at which buses travel through the area. In the long term, the area will redevelop adding, a major new public space and opportunities for residential developments. This redevelopment will provide an opportunity Freehold to construct a new, modern Borough Hall. These improvements will transform the area into a critical, high-quality gateway to the downtown.

See [“Transit Gateway Area Vision” on pg. 16](#) for full vision

A major new mixed-use commercial and residential redevelopment along the northern edge of East Main Street will complement the street’s thriving south side. New multi-family residential units will bring needed activity to the area, especially during off-peak times. The area may include the construction of townhomes, a type of development that is growing in popularity but not currently available in the borough. Equally important, the redevelopment will better connect the Lafayette Street Parking Lot to Main Street, helping to unlock this asset. As a result, there will be more activity and better parking access in downtown.

See [“Courthouse Square Area Vision” on pg. 20](#) for full vision

Streetscape designs will integrate furnishings, fixtures, and art, to create an enjoyable walking experience that is both safe and inviting. Small and large public spaces interspersed in the downtown will intentionally foster social interaction and encourage engagement in creative place-making events and activities.

In support of a multi-modal downtown, the borough, county and state will work to ensure that roadways and walkways throughout the area will support high-quality pedestrian and vehicular circulation, seamlessly connecting downtown, the bus station, and the surrounding neighborhoods. A mid-block crossing on West State Street will provide a much-needed opportunity for people to cross from one side of the street to the other. Equally important, the downtown will connect to the Henry Hudson Trail to help establish the borough as a major regional destination.

Parking will be accommodated through urban design techniques that reduce the number of surface lots and minimize the visual nuisances of parking garages and other facilities.

Emphasis will be placed on long-term, sustainable approaches to building design and construction. This will make for a healthier environment and better quality-of-life for all of Freehold Borough's residents.

GOALS*

Connectivity: Downtown Freehold will have a safe, direct, convenient, and aesthetically pleasing complete streets network that provides high-quality infrastructure to support walking, biking, driving, and public transportation.

Entrepreneurship: The borough's local business climate, leadership, and policies will reflect an enthusiastic attitude and growth-oriented outlook that ensures entrepreneurs will have access to the resources and support they need to succeed.

Housing: The downtown will have high-quality modern urban housing that provides immediate access to the area amenities and the bus station.

Transit-Orientation: Development downtown will support and be supported by a high-quality bus station that serves as a safe and attractive gateway into the borough.

Open Space: The downtown will have at least one major high-quality public space that serves the everyday needs of users while being able to accommodate larger special events.

Historic Integrity: Freehold Borough's unique history will be celebrated and supported by local initiatives.

Culture: Arts and cultural resources, amenities, and facilities will create a distinctive local experience that celebrates and attracts a diversity of populations.

Inclusivity: Downtown will be an age-, income-, and culturally-inclusive environment that provides affordable business and living opportunities for the borough's large and growing Hispanic population as well as its aging residents. Residents and stakeholders will actively engage in the exchange of ideas and cultures that invite and encourage participation in community processes.

Quality-of-Life: Residents and visitors will benefit from a healthy community where they enjoy personal security, safe neighborhoods, and access to recreation and open space.

Sustainability: Development projects will meet the economic, environmental and social needs of current residents without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.**

*Goals are not presented in order of importance or weight.

**Adapted from World Commission on Environment and Development (1987). Our Common Future. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

TRANSIT GATEWAY AREA VISION

As illustrated in **Figure 4**, the Freehold Center Bus Station should be a grand gateway to the downtown and serve as an anchor for a strong transit village. The borough to strategically utilize its redevelopment potential to support the construction of:

- › New residential and/or office developments
- › A major public space that could serve the entire downtown and the borough
- › A new Borough Hall
- › A revitalized bus station

Any revitalization of the bus station area will require cooperation with NJ TRANSIT. For more discussion of these issues, see **"Bus Station" on pg. 32.**

Revitalized Bus Station

The former train station is an important historical asset in Downtown Freehold and helps anchor the existing bus waiting area. In the short-term, benches, sheltered waiting areas, expanded sidewalks, loading and unloading areas, landscaping and other improvements will make the station area an asset to the community. **The area will become a safe and welcoming place to wait for a bus, which will likely increase ridership and improve people's first impression of Downtown Freehold.**

The borough will actively work with the owner of the former train station to improve the physical condition of the building while expanding the types of amenities that are available to riders. These improvements will include efforts to better regulate the taxi services that operate adjacent to the building.

As these efforts gain momentum, the borough will lead efforts to construct a "road diet" to reduce the speed of buses along the current right-of-way that runs parallel to the railroad. Traffic through the station plaza will be limited to bus traffic and access to a limited number of customer parking spaces that will serve the station building and Italian ice establishment.

The New Borough Green

A new, half-acre public space will anchor redevelopment in this area. At the core of that space will be the current fire annex, repurposed as a cafe, beer garden, restaurant or other active use (Figure 4). This one-of-a-kind amenity will be a major hit in the summertime when people want to sit outside and have a nice cold drink. Additionally, the green provides opportunities for passive recreation and can be the gathering place for major public events in the borough.

Development Opportunities

The redesign of this area, guided by the Transit Gateway Area Redevelopment Plan, will create opportunities for new development. This area has the potential to be attractive to both office and residential developers. Either use would be an asset. **The redevelopment area has the potential to accommodate up to 70 residential units, 85,000 square feet of office space, or some combination of the two.** These new workers or residents would be critical customers for downtown retailers and would inject vitality into an area that has been disjointed and blighted.

A new Borough Hall and Fire Annex

In addition to the creation of a major new public space, the redevelopment plan envisions the creation of a new, modern Borough Hall. Since the current fire annex will be repurposed as part of the Borough Green, a new fire annex will also be needed. This shed could be located adjacent to the current Fire Station, making it easier for the firefighters to access it.

Bridging Gaps

As a whole, this redevelopment will substantially transform the area from a jumble of parking lots and improvised streets into a place that residents and stakeholders can be proud of. **The project also has the opportunity to link the Borough Plaza area and the downtown.** The Borough Plaza and surrounding condominiums are home to a growing immigrant population. Though this area is close to Main Street, it feels separate from the downtown, whose businesses cater to customers with more disposable income from

Figure 4: Transit Gateway Area Conceptual Site Plan

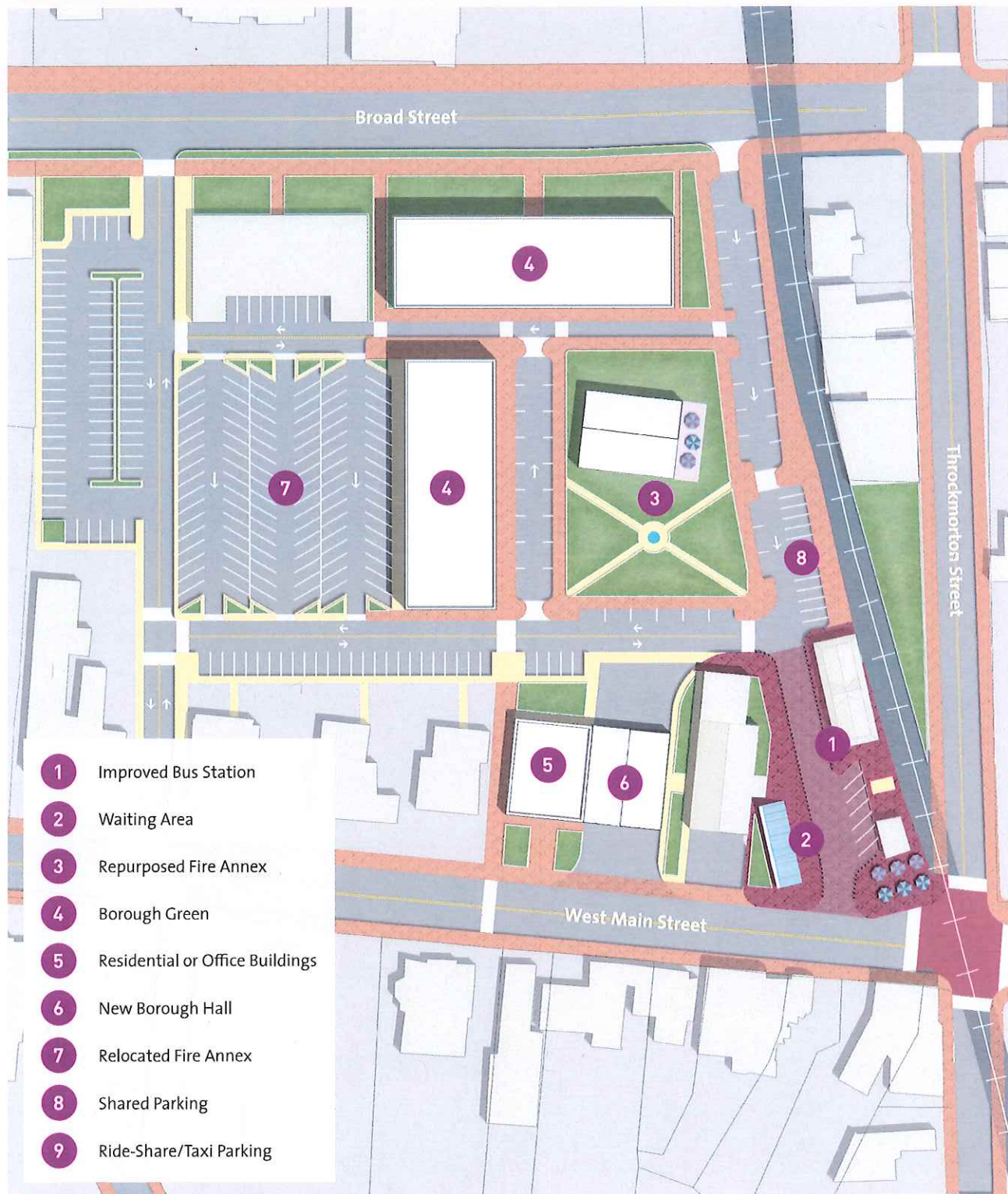


Figure 5: Bus Station Concept

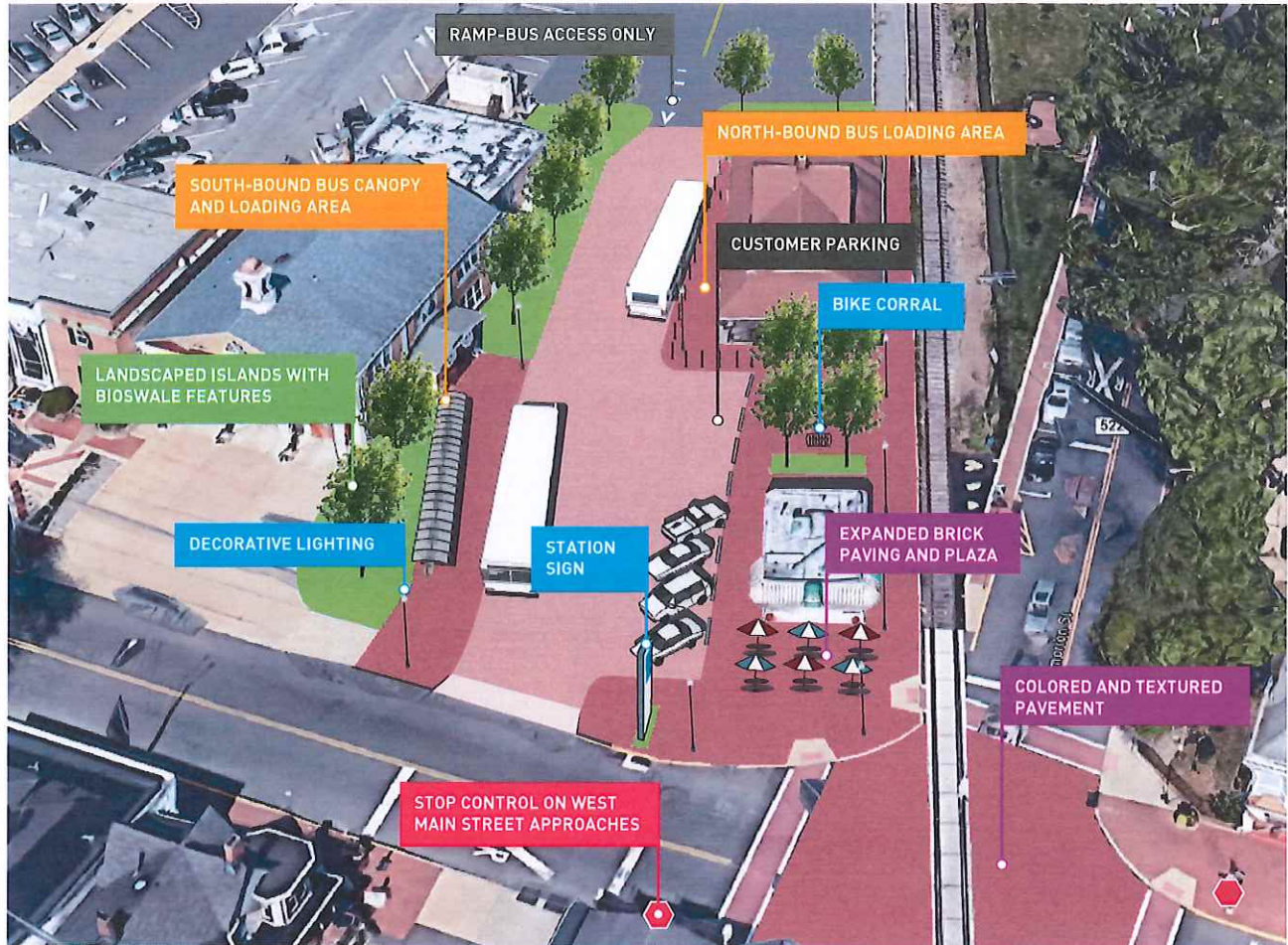


Figure 6: Borough Green Concept



the borough and surrounding county. **The borough must actively engage a diverse group of stakeholders in the implementation of the redevelopment plan** to ensure that this area becomes an inclusive, high-quality area where all residents are comfortable spending time.

Parking

There are currently 272 surface parking spaces in the Transit Gateway Area—this includes 197 spaces for public use and approximately 25 parking spaces for each of the three businesses that face Main Street. This project did not include a parking utilization study, but if the parking of all the land uses in the area were organized in a shared lot, there would only be a demand for 176 spaces, in addition to the need for park-and-ride facilities. A shared lot would address the inefficient use of land and make it easier for downtown visitors to find available parking in one central location.

Going forward, there will be a need for parking for new uses, the park and ride, the school building, existing businesses, Borough Hall, and the Fire Department. New redevelopment would substantially rationalize the parking in the area, improve access, and make wayfinding easier. As shown in **Figure 4**, the redevelopment would create a total of 273 spaces:

- › 25 spaces behind existing businesses
- › 179 spaces in two large lots
- › 5 dedicated municipal parking spaces
- › 14 spaces for taxis and/or ride-share vehicles
- › 7 spaces for Rita's
- › 43 on-street parking spaces in and around the Borough Green

Assuming new development added 70 residential units and a shared parking agreement is reached between all property owners, all uses within the redevelopment area could potentially create the demand for 281 spaces. This is eight more spaces than is shown in **Figure 4**. This deficit could be overcome through a reduction in the number of units developed or agreements to accommodate parking off-site.

The bus station currently has dedicated parking spots for taxis and ride-share vehicles. While the plan includes 14 spaces to accommodate these uses (just north of the bus station), demand may increase in the future. The proposed shared parking strategy should ensure future spots are available for use by taxis or ride-share vehicles on an as-needed basis. Spaces immediately around the bus station can also be used for carpools, as a number of residents reported carpooling to work.

The redevelopment is contingent on the inclusion of land behind three properties that front onto West Main Street. This land is used for private parking for the three businesses. Ensuring that adequate parking is maintained for each of the businesses is critical. This plan proposes 25 spaces directly behind these businesses, which could be reserved for their use. It is likely that they would also require spaces in the large lot behind those spaces.

Thus, **the success of redevelopment in this area will be highly dependent on creating a strong shared parking agreement between the business owners, developer, and the borough.** The use of creative parking management techniques and high-quality wayfinding and signage will be important. The Transit Gateway Redevelopment Plan submitted in conjunction with this plan requires that the developer use shared parking standards.

COURTHOUSE SQUARE AREA VISION

Figure 7: View of Courthouse Square from the American Hotel



Courthouse Square is envisioned as a major new mixed-use development in Downtown Freehold that could attract new residents to the area while expanding the amount of modern, high-quality retail space. The proposal shown in **Figure 7** includes:

- › Nearly 20,000 square feet of modern large-floorplate commercial space
- › Approximately 70 residential condo or apartment units in two multi-family buildings
- › An additional 8 townhomes with two parking spaces on the ground floor

Residential Units

Residential construction will meet a need downtown for high-quality urban living and expand the number of people who shop and dine in the area year-round, especially during off-peak times. The construction of townhomes will introduce a new development type in the area and demonstrate the advantages that denser single-family dwelling can bring to the borough.

Building Form

The proposed redevelopment plans pay special attention to the form of the buildings that front onto Main Street. Currently, Main Street is lined with two- and three-story buildings that do an excellent job of enclosing the space. The redevelopment plan requires that the fourth and fifth stories of any building be stepped back 10 feet from the front facade (**Figure 7**). This setback will reduce the visual impact of the building from the street, making the building feel smaller while allowing for the density necessary to make the project financially viable.

The Courthouse Square Area Redevelopment Plan also requires that building facades be modulated in several ways to better match the current look of Main Street. As in most historic downtowns, individual buildings are not typically wider than 40 feet. As a result, the redevelopment plan requires that the developer make changes in the facade at least every 40 feet that help reproduce that same rhythm. Similar standards apply to the roofline, windows, and other major form elements. In this way, new construction can complement the existing structures.

Figure 8: Courthouse Square Conceptual Site Plan

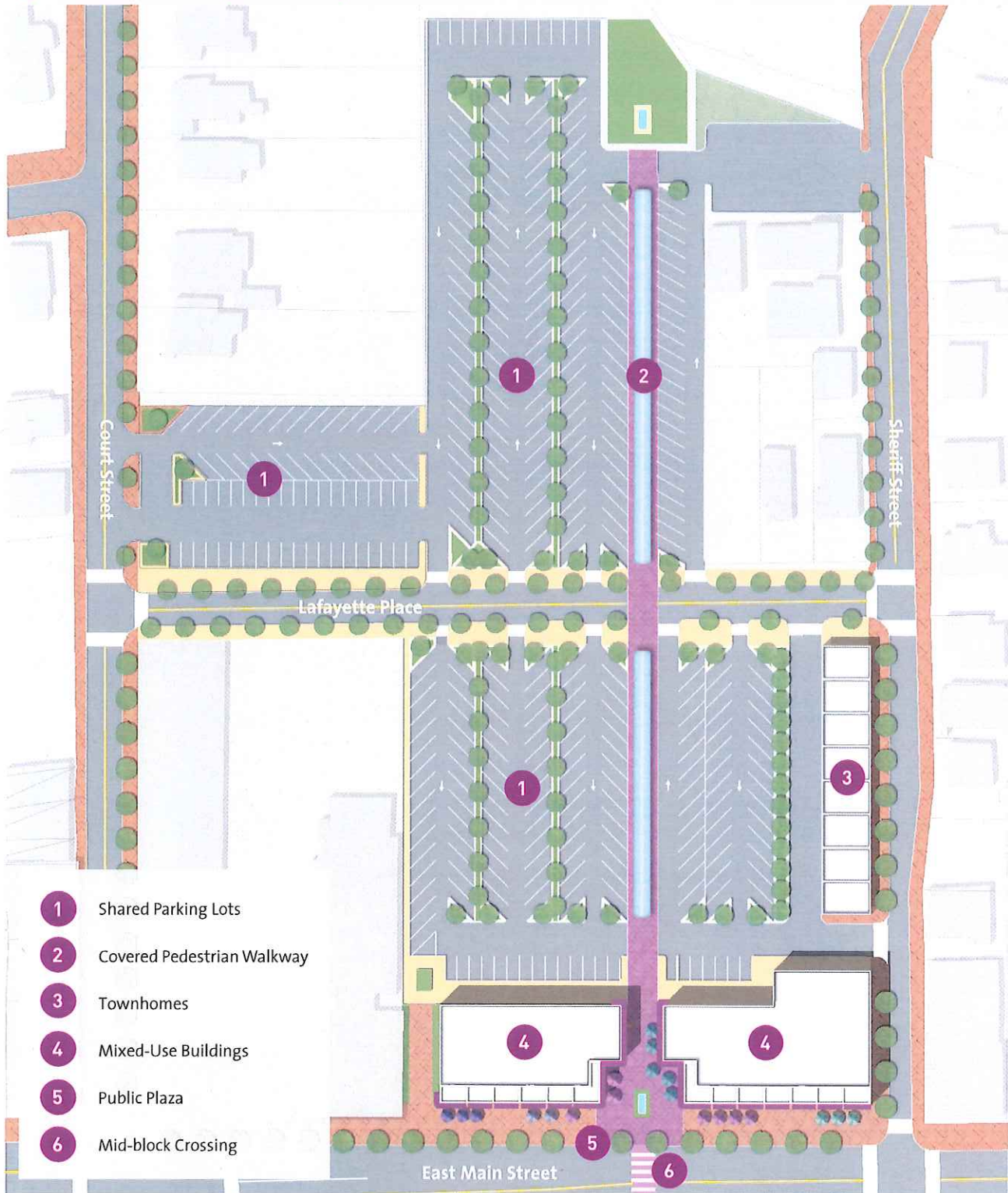
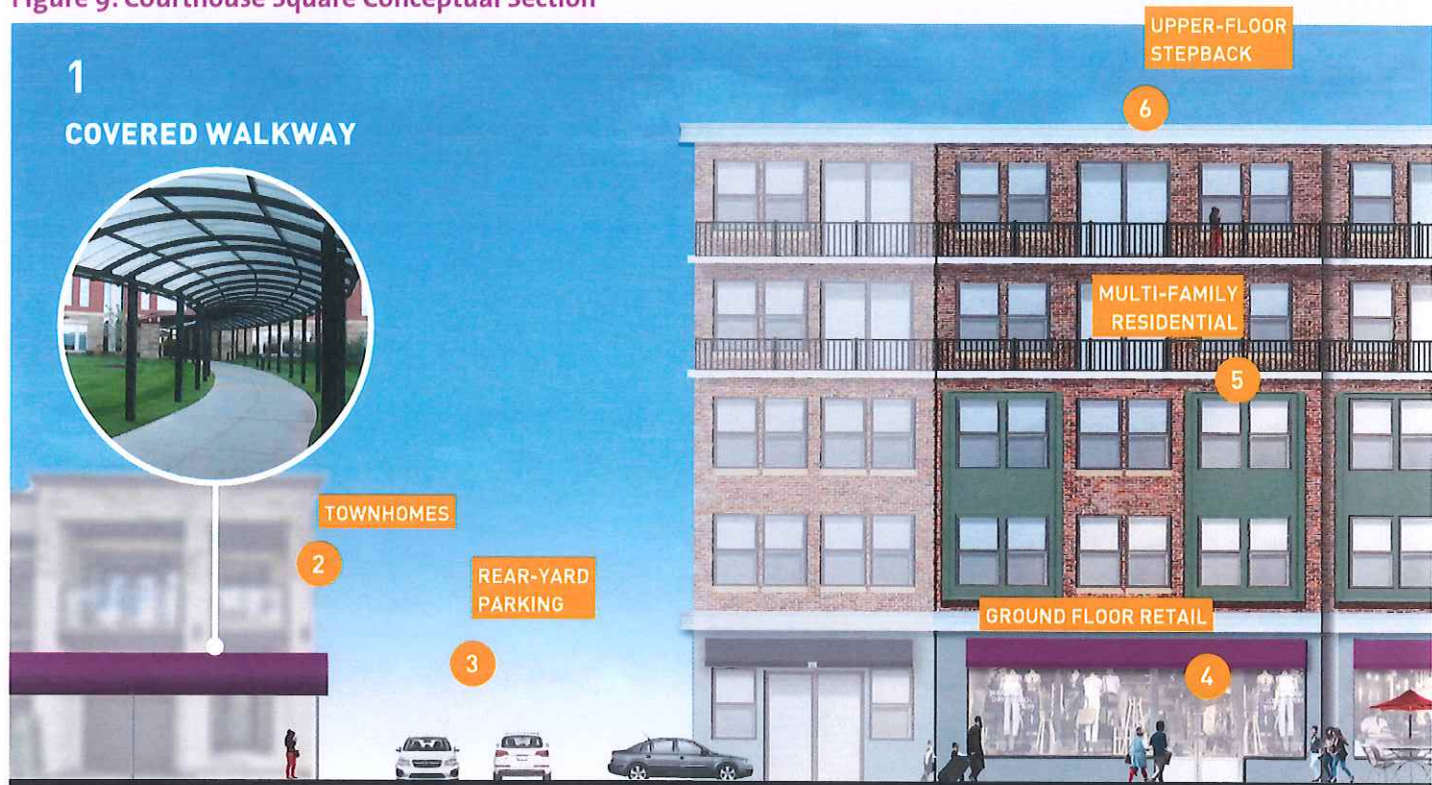


Figure 9: Courthouse Square Conceptual Section



Parking

The redevelopment has the potential to take advantage of the variety of downtown uses to reduce the amount of land dedicated to parking. **A shared parking agreement between the county, proposed commercial tenants, and proposed residential units is key to the development's success.** Since county workers tend to leave the office by 4:30 p.m., and tenants of nearby apartments have higher local parking demand in the evening, these two groups are ideal for a shared parking arrangement.

The new design for the Courthouse Square block would substantially improve the parking inventory in the area. Currently, there are 331 spaces in the parking lots between Lafayette Place and Main Street, but the lots are not connected, and some spaces are dedicated to specific uses. Under the proposed redevelopment, the area could accommodate between 374 and 425 surface parking spaces—an increase of 43 spaces—as well as two parking spaces under each townhome. The variation in the number of spaces depends on how much space will need to be dedicated to stormwater management and landscaping.

The design would also allow for:

- › A major pedestrian walkway that would make the area safer and more accessible
- › Landscaped stormwater management techniques such as bioswales
- › Opportunities to plant trees and shrubs to make the lots more attractive and reduce heat-island effect

7

PUBLIC PLAZA

9

MID-BLOCK CROSSING

SIDEWALK CAFES

8

Street Quality

The quality of Main Street is particularly important to the downtown's successful redevelopment. The intent is to mirror the active and highly successful street facade on the south side of Main Street by requiring:

- › Ample sidewalks (30 feet wide) that allow for café seating and plantings
- › High-quality street furniture and pavings
- › Densely planted street trees
- › Awnings for ground floor commercial spaces
- › Residential units with usable

balconies to provide residents with outdoor space overlooking Main Street

- › Attractive features that invite passerby to dwell in the public plaza
- › Upper-floors of buildings to be set back from the street to allow for large outdoor patios

These elements, combined with the proposed building program, should dramatically change the feel of Main Street along this block. **Instead of having a one-sided street, the area has the potential to feel enclosed and lively with a blend of modern and historical architecture that is unparalleled in the region.**

Connectivity

The construction of a 500 foot covered walkway, connecting the underutilized Lafayette Street parking lot with Main Street, will help unlock this asset. It is recommend that the walkway include art and other amenities that provide visual interest.

The walkway will be required to connect at the site of a mid-block crossing on Main Street, a project the borough is currently working on. This connection will give people parking in the lots a clear, direct line of sight to the heart of Downtown Freehold, making these lots safer to park in, easier to access, and more desirable to use.

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TOOLKIT

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The BCRC Report identified the following guiding principles for how to make Freehold Borough the commercial, cultural, social and historical hub of western Monmouth County. They continue to be excellent advice and provide a top-level understanding for how best to pursue revitalization.

1. Employ a variety of innovative mixed use urban design and land use techniques.
2. Use strategic redevelopment tools to return vacant, parking oriented, abandoned, and/or underutilized properties to more productive uses.
3. Ensure the economic sustainability of the borough by pursuing redevelopment opportunities that increase property values, encourage reinvestment in private property, and diversify the borough's tax base.
4. Encourage cooperative public/private partnerships and investments in amenities, technology, and infrastructure that improve the quality-of-life for all residents.
5. Encourage transit oriented development taking full advantage of the Freehold Center Bus Station's potential.
6. Promote green building and construction practices that provide greater efficiency, environmental resource benefits, and/or cost savings.
7. Provide people with the lasting experience of a safe, healthy, vibrant, livable, pedestrian-friendly community.
8. Accommodate safe, convenient, and ample parking.
9. Incorporate design features and employ creative place-making approaches that reinforce Freehold Borough's role as Western Monmouth County's arts, culture, and entertainment destination.
10. Create a business climate that attracts catalytic projects into the downtown area.

APPROACH

This "Toolkit" provides details on the projects and policies that will help the Borough implement its vision.

While this section presents an order in which recommendations should be implemented, the process will be more complicated and less linear, and the BCRC and the borough will likely have to deviate from this approach based on the availability of funding, regulatory approvals, and interest from the development community, among other things.

The borough should begin by **updating the adopting this Downtown Vision Plan as part of the borough's Master Plan**. Its adoption will provide a legal foundation for all recommendations made going forward and demonstrate to everyone involved that there is strong community consensus on the vision.

Adoption of the Downtown Vision Plan should correspond with a concerted effort by the borough to **develop a long-term outreach strategy to engage the borough's Spanish-speaking population**, especially in the downtown. Engaging this community cannot be done on an ad-hoc basis and will require sustained efforts by borough representatives. Building these relationships now will help

ensure that changes in the downtown are inclusive and receive the necessary input from a population that makes up a considerable proportion of residents.

The Freehold Center Bus Station is located in the heart of downtown and has a high-level of bus service, two important characteristics of a Transit Village. The borough should **pursue Transit Village designation** to unlock additional funding opportunities and technical support for future projects. Transit Village designation improves the borough's chances of receiving grant funding and can be a strong signal to the development community of the borough's interest in redevelopment projects.

A key recommendation of this plan is that the borough **re-orient the downtown around the bus station and make this area a high-quality gateway into downtown**. The Toolkit provides a variety of short-and long-term strategies for how to achieve this recommendation, including public realm improvements and redevelopment strategies. Early efforts to make substantial public realm improvements would send a strong message to developers, residents, and stakeholders that the borough is serious about transit-oriented development.

This effort should be followed by the **adoption of the Downtown Freehold Rehabilitation Plan, the Courthouse Square Redevelopment Plan, and the Transit Gateway Redevelopment Plan**. These three plans have unique purposes. The Center Core Plan is intended to focus attention on rehabilitation of properties that will enhance and expand retail offerings, create new office spaces, and provide additional housing options. This effort will build momentum and allow the borough to leverage larger scale redevelopment efforts, which will take longer to implement. The key, however, is not to facilitate large-scale redevelopment through this plan, a marked change from its original intent.

Instead, the borough should **promote strategic catalytic redevelopment on two key sites: the Transit Gateway Area and the Courthouse Square Area**, each guided through individual redevelopment plans. Should either of these plans be advanced and new buildings and streetscapes built, they are likely to have dramatic impacts on the downtown. However, they are only likely to have such catalytic impacts if the borough has laid the groundwork for change through the Downtown Freehold Rehabilitation Plan.

According to the market analysis conducted as part of this study, the downtown could see demand for approximately 100 new units of small-household growth over this five-year period. The regional growth of the number of one- and two- person households is likely to increase over this time frame, which would lead to the demand for more, and potentially smaller, housing units. These two developments have the potential over the next 10 years to accommodate much of that demand, particularly for young professionals and downsizing seniors.

To help incentivize new residential development on Main Street within existing buildings, the borough should **create an upper-floor residential rehabilitation program**. This program would work in tandem with the development standards in the Downtown Freehold Rehabilitation Plan to create high-quality residential units on Main Street with modern amenities that appeal to renters in today's market. The benefit of creating such a program is that the borough can condition incentives upon quality standards for building interiors that it would not otherwise be able to do through a zoning ordinance or other regulatory document.

While Freehold has a robust parking supply relative to land uses in the downtown, there is a perception of a lack of parking supply which may act as a deterrent to visitors, patrons, and prospective developers. The borough must overcome that perception to support businesses in the downtown and encourage redevelopment. This will require multiple strategies, beginning with the **creation of a parking authority** empowered to improve and oversee the borough's parking assets. Establishing a regulated parking district, under the management of the authority, would allow for the **introduction of demand pricing** that would create a revenue stream for the management and improvement of parking resources.

The borough must work aggressively to bring Henry Hudson Trail users to the downtown, where they can patronize local businesses and witness the exciting progress Freehold is making. The Henry Hudson Trail is a considerable regional recreational resource, extending 24 miles northeast to the Raritan Bayshore region as part of the Monmouth County Parks system. Unfortunately, the trail does not directly connect to Freehold's downtown. This connection will help Downtown Freehold become a destination for walkers, runners, and bike riders throughout the region. The trail connection could also be

an important catalyst for the creation of a comprehensive bike network in Downtown Freehold.

Pedestrians are more likely to walk to and from places they feel provide safe connections to downtown amenities. While many parts of downtown, including the bus station, have sidewalks, the quality of design and pedestrian amenities needs to be enhanced to match those improvements already implemented on East Main Street and in the Market Yard Parking Lot. Such improvements will provide stronger physical and visual connections to Main Street and increase perceptions of walkability in the area. In addition, creating safer crossings at key locations on Main Street is essential to connecting the proposed redevelopment sites to shops, restaurants, and other destinations.

TOOLKIT ORGANIZATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

The recommendations in this Toolkit are organized into the following categories:

- › Administrative
- › Bus Station
- › Rehabilitation and Redevelopment
- › Parking
- › Bike and Pedestrian Improvements

Each proposed recommendation includes a key that show the relative amount of money, effort, and time needed to implement that recommendation. As a general rule, these refer to the amount of costs, effort, and time that the borough would incur in pursuing each strategy and do not refer to the private-sector costs of redevelopment.

Money



Time



Effort



ADMINISTRATIVE

PUBLICLY VET THE DOWNTOWN FREEHOLD VISION PLAN



The borough should continue to solicit public input on the Downtown Freehold Vision Plan to ensure the community supports its goals and strategies for improving Downtown Freehold. The borough could invite the public to an event downtown where they could review the document and discuss implementation. In addition, the borough should consider posting the document online and allowing people to submit written comments. If the Freehold Mayor and Borough Council decide to adopt the Downtown Vision Plan into the Master Plan, then there will have to be a public hearing process which could also serve as a forum for discussion and, if necessary, amendments.

IDENTIFY WAYS TO MEASURE THE GOALS



Both the BCRC Report and the ULI TAP Report identified a lack of a consensus vision as an obstacle that prevented redevelopment from taking place. We suggest that a lack of measurable goals has also prevented redevelopment from moving forward. Measurable goals will allow the borough to track progress and to hold its various members accountable. It will also help the Committee identify what efforts have been successful and where they may need to consider alternative approaches. Although outside the scope of this project, the borough should be able to identify measurable indicators for each goal quickly.

ADOPT THE DOWNTOWN VISION PLAN AS A MASTER PLAN ELEMENT



The borough should adopt this Downtown Freehold Vision Plan as a downtown element of the Master Plan. Doing so will do two things:

- › Fulfill the Transit Village Criteria 3(c) which requires that, “the municipality has provided portions of its master plan that articulate the plan to grow around its transit facility in a transit-supportive manner”
- › Establish the legal foundation for the implementation of the zoning, rehabilitation, and redevelopment changes suggested in this report

DEVELOP A SPANISH-LANGUAGE OUTREACH PLAN



As part of this project, the borough and the consultant team wanted to include the Borough Plaza and the adjacent residential condominiums in the overall revitalization process for downtown. The condominiums are overwhelmingly occupied by Spanish-speaking residents and Borough Plaza has a number of Hispanic-oriented businesses.

Despite efforts to reach out to these residents, few attended the public outreach event. This is not wholly unexpected. People who come from other countries are not always familiar with the public engagement process in the United States. As a result, the idea of showing up to an open house to discuss local development may seem like an unfamiliar concept to many of these residents. It is also possible that some Spanish-speaking residents, even those who are in the United States legally, were afraid to participate given current political climate.

Continuing to actively engage this population is critical to improving the downtown. The borough should consider hiring a consultant who has expertise in engaging

Spanish-speaking communities to develop a plan for improved engagement. This plan should:

- › Support continued efforts to build relationships with community leaders
- › Identify a strategy for engaging Spanish-speaking residents on a long-term, ongoing basis
- › Identify appropriate meeting formats and outreach strategies that are consistent with the culture and expectations of Spanish-speaking residents
- › Support the borough in creating materials for outreach to this community

More information can be found about how to build strong relationships with Latino Communities in "Diálogos: Placemaking in Latino Communities" by Michael Rios and Leonardo Vazquez (Routledge, 2012).



SPANISH LANGUAGE PUBLIC OUTREACH



Source: Group Melvin Design

PURSUE TRANSIT VILLAGE DESIGNATION



Transit Village designation is a way for the borough to demonstrate its commitment to revitalizing and redeveloping the area around the bus station into compact, mixed-use neighborhoods with a strong residential component. The designation could also help make the borough's applications for funding from some state agencies more competitive. In addition, the designation:

- › Gives the borough access to the state agencies that make up the Transit Village Task Force
- › Allows the borough to apply for technical assistance from some state agencies
- › Makes the borough eligible for some grants from NJDOT

By implementing the transit improvements and regulatory recommendations for the Transit Gateway Area, the borough will be closer to a successful Transit Village application. However, the borough will still need to address several criteria in the future, detailed in the **Transit Village** section of this report.

State Agencies that make up the Transit Village Task Force:

Main Street New Jersey

New Jersey Council on the Arts

New Jersey Department of Community Affairs

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

New Jersey Department of Transportation

New Jersey Economic Development Authority

New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency

New Jersey Office of Smart Growth

New Jersey Redevelopment Authority

NJ TRANSIT

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BUS STATION

MAKE THE BUS STATION A HIGH-QUALITY GATEWAY (NEAR-TERM)



The station area is in immediate need of improvement to accommodate users, encourage transit use, and support transit-oriented development. Near-term improvements will likely take several years to materialize and many will need to be negotiated with the property owner.

Figure 10: Near-term Station Improvements



The recommended near-term improvements are (Figure 10):

- 1 **Remove gates** and provide public access to exterior of building.
- 2 **Provide benches and bicycle racks** on the sidewalk below the roof awning. Improve exterior lighting and install cameras to mitigate security concerns around the station.
- 3 **Install a colored pavement overlay** on asphalt adjacent to the Fire Department driveway fence to improve the southbound waiting area.
- 4 **Provide bus shelters** and benches.
- 5 **Provide large concrete planters** with ornamental trees to protect the area.
- 6 **Provide a painted crosswalk** between waiting area and train station building.
- 7 **Expand brick paving and plaza** along the front of the Rita's Italian Ice stand and replace two parking spaces with brick pavement to create a brick plaza area that could accommodate tables and chairs.
- 8 **Install a station sign** within this area.
- 9 **Install colored and textured pavement** at the intersection of Throckmorton and West Main Street to match pavement material within crosswalks at that location.
- 10 **Install stop signs on West Main Street approaches** if analysis of traffic finds it is warranted. These improvements will be integral to the long-term improvements of the station area.

EXAMPLE: TACTICAL PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS

In 2017, Jersey City engaged in a series of short-term tactical pedestrian improvements at six key locations as a demonstration project in support of their Complete Streets planning process. The reclamation of roadway space for pedestrians typically includes installation of:

- › Traffic delineator posts
- › Artistic paint on the pavement in the reclaimed pedestrian areas
- › Planters
- › Tables and chairs

The improvements were well-received by residents and business owners, and the City is currently working to design more permanent installations.

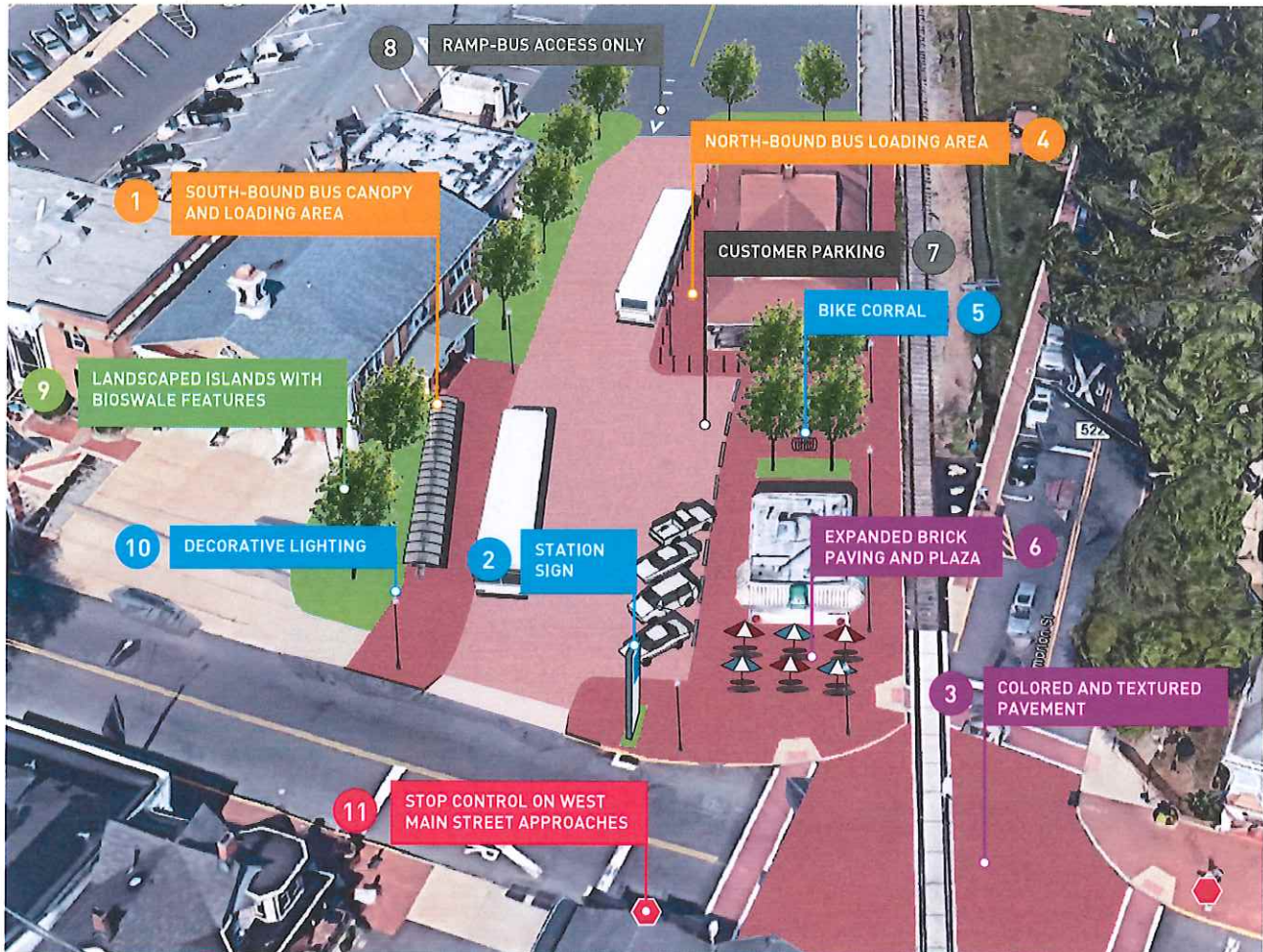


MAKE THE BUS STATION A HIGH-QUALITY GATEWAY (LONG-TERM)



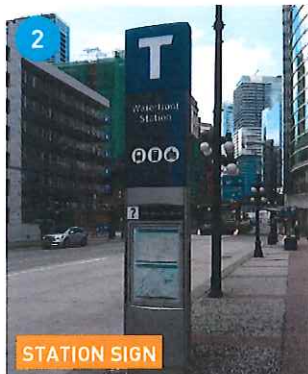
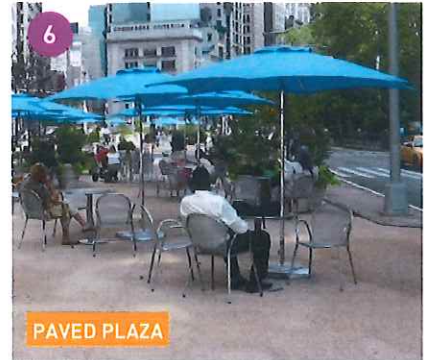
The borough should prioritize making improvements to the station site and bus operations, particularly to encourage transit use and Transit-Oriented Development. To support these aims, the borough should make the following long-term improvements (Figure 11 and Figure 12):

Figure 11: Recommended Long-Term Station Improvements



- 1 Provide a **bus canopy** in the southbound loading area and benches throughout the site for waiting patrons.
- 2 Install a **station sign** that is visible from West Main and Broad Streets.
- 3 Install **colored and textured pavement** to improve safety for pedestrians and strengthen the connection between the station and downtown.
- 4 Create **north and southbound bus loading areas** that do not obstruct traffic flow. Use bollards to separate buses from pedestrians where there is no curb.
- 5 Install **bike corrals** near the station building.
- 6 **Expand brick paving and plaza** to create more pedestrian space near the intersection of Main and Throckmorton Streets.

Figure 12: Example Images



- 7 Restrict **customer parking** near the station to the functional needs of local businesses.
- 8 Control through traffic with roadway pavement markings and materials and **install a ramp for bus-only access** to loading areas. Ticket drivers who cut-through the bus-only access area.
- 9 Improve aesthetics and provide shade with shade trees and **landscape islands with bioswale features**.
- 10 Install pedestrian-scale **decorative lighting**.
- 11 Install **stop signs** at the intersection of Main Street and Throckmorton Streets to create a safe crossing for pedestrians.

OTHER NEW JERSEY BUS STOPS AND STATIONS

There are several other bus stations around New Jersey comparable in size and level of service. Each has significantly more amenities than the Freehold Center Bus Station. The most comparable to the Freehold Center Bus Station is the bus stop on Rutgers University's Livingston Campus, shown below.



Rutgers Bus Stop, Livingston Campus, Piscataway, NJ

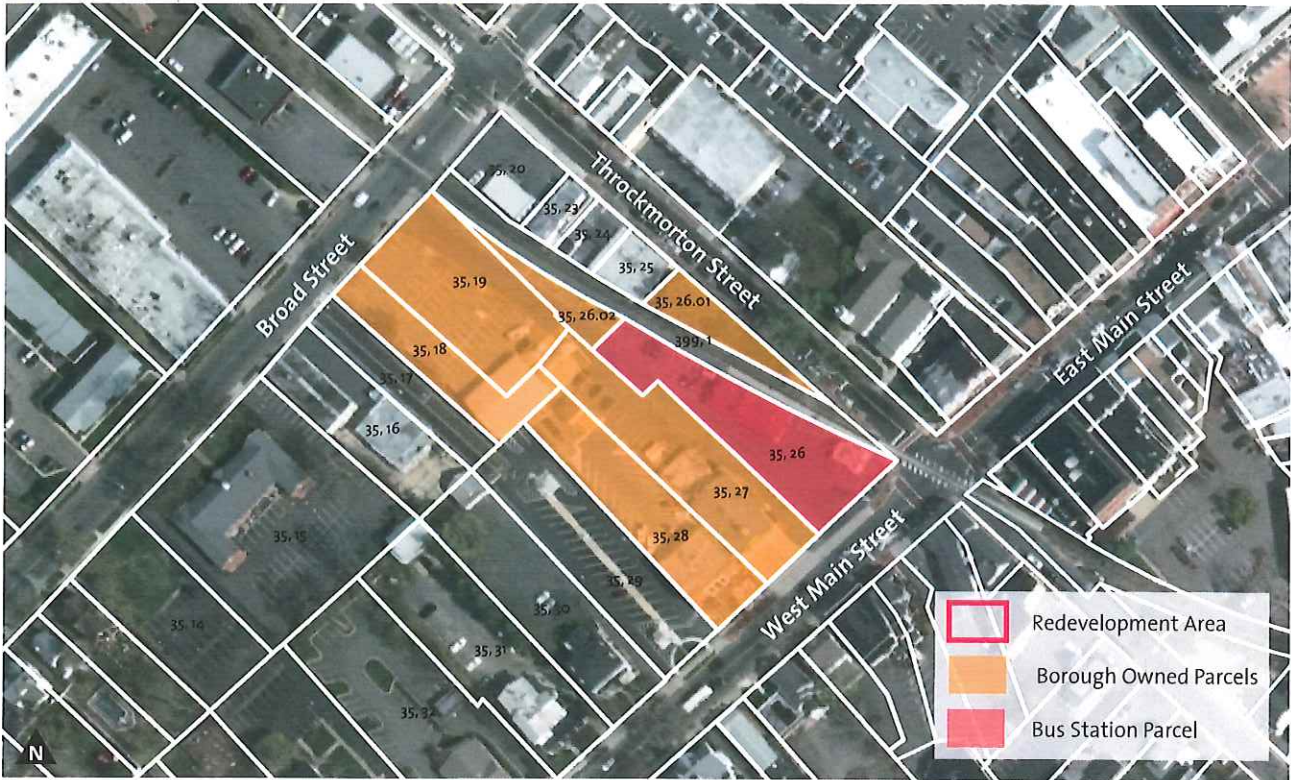
Rutgers' intercampus bus and shuttle system features attractive and modern transit shelters. The example shown in the figure above accommodates eight bus routes and has the following amenities:

- › Modern shelters
- › Garbage and recycling bins
- › Overhead schedule reader

RESOLVE SITE OWNERSHIP



Figure 13: Bus Station Area Parcel Map



The current bus station building and operating area sits on a privately owned parcel (**Figure 13**). Before moving ahead with implementing any of the proposed improvements to the bus station area, the borough will have to first resolve the issue of site ownership. Freehold has some options for addressing this:

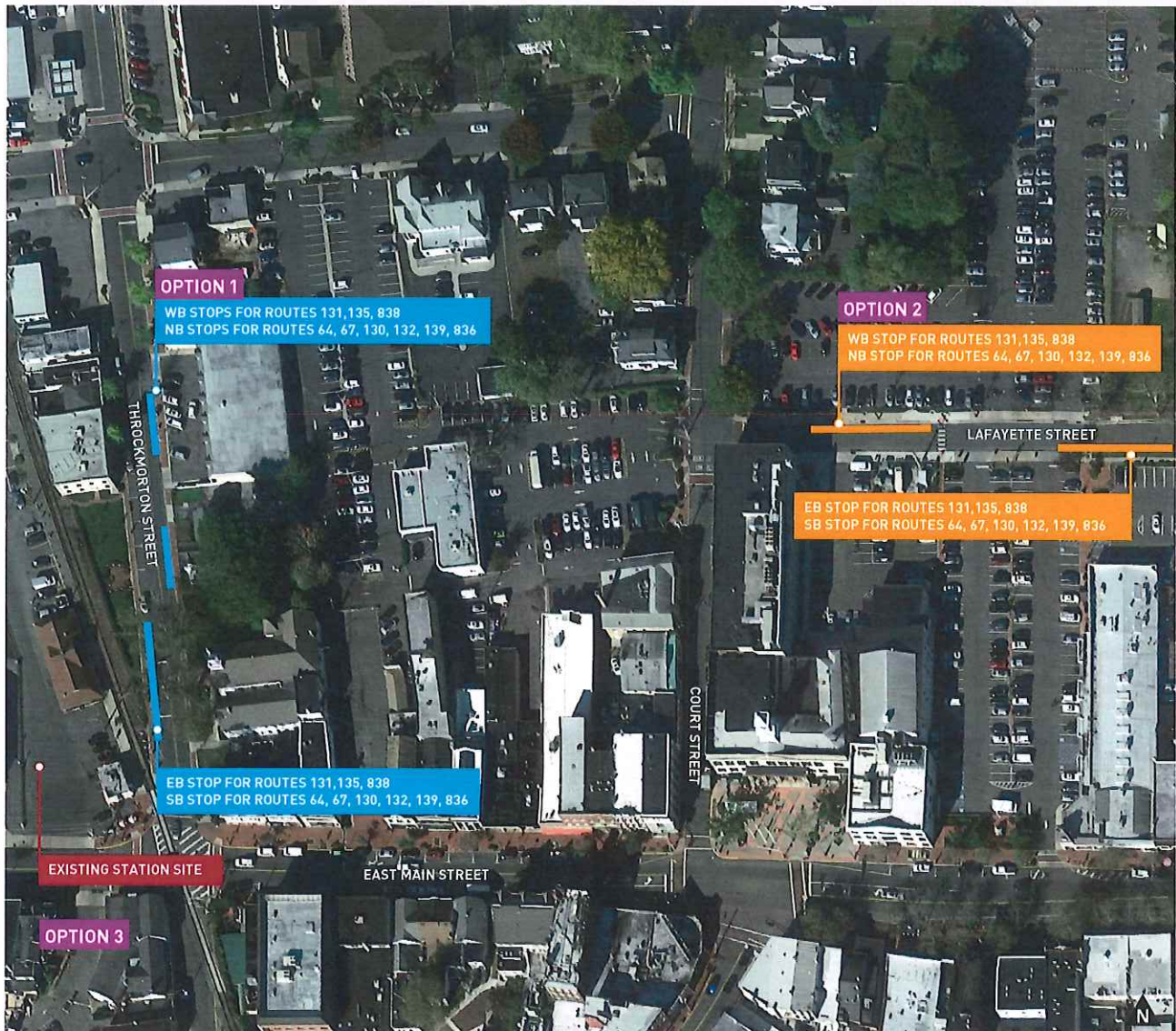
1. The borough could negotiate with the property owner to make upgrades to the area to improve bus operations, most likely at the borough's expense. This should be accompanied with an easement agreement that permits portions of the property to be used by the public for bus operations. A construction easement and maintenance agreement would also need to be put in place if physical improvements are made to the site. This approach may be successful for implementing minor near-term improvements such as the installation of bus shelters, benches, signage, and lighting.
 3. The borough could negotiate a purchase of all land and buildings. If a negotiated purchase is not successful, eminent domain could be used to acquire the property. The building could then be leased to the building operator or future operators. The advantage of acquiring the station building is that it could be improved to provide amenities for transit riders including traditional station functions such as an air conditioned waiting area and bathrooms.
- The borough should consult with NJ TRANSIT to ensure that any improvements to the station building are consistent with the NJ TRANSIT station design guidelines.

The borough should consult with NJ TRANSIT to ensure that any action they take does not adversely impact bus service.

ALTERNATIVE BUS STOP LOCATIONS

As part of this study, the consultant team assessed alternative locations for bus operations because the station property is privately owned (Figure 13 on pg. 37). Ultimately, it is recommended that the bus station remain in its current location. However, the advantages and disadvantages of two other alternative locations are provided here.

Figure 14: Alternative Station Locations



Option 1

Throckmorton Street

Bus operations could be moved immediately east to the other side of the rail line on Throckmorton Street between West Main Street and Broad Street. The street would, therefore, operate as a “transit mall.” This location has the following advantages:

- › The station would be closer to the commercial area of West and East Main Streets and Throckmorton Street
- › Attractive streetscape and landscaping improvements on Throckmorton Street such as brick sidewalks, ornamental lighting, and street trees
- › Allows for bi-directional traffic flow in the proximity of the existing bus routes

The disadvantages of this location include the following:

- › Bus operations may interfere with traffic operations
- › On-street parking would need to be eliminated around bus loading areas
- › Bus operations including noise and emissions may be disruptive to businesses and land uses
- › Narrow right-of-way with little space available for the installation of shelters and benches

Option 2

Lafayette Street

Bus operations could be moved to Lafayette Street between Court Street and Morris Street. Like the first option, the street would operate as a “transit mall.” This location possesses the following advantages:

- › The station would be closer to the commercial area of East Main Street and destinations such as the Monmouth County Hall of Records
- › The station would be adjacent to large municipal parking lots
- › It is a low-traffic area
- › There are few adjacent land uses that would be adversely impacted
- › The potential for claiming parking lot area or islands for the installation of shelters and benches

The disadvantages of this location include the following:

- › Would require significant rerouting of buses
- › The area is somewhat isolated from activity which may lead to security issues or the perception of lack of safety
- › Bus queuing and loading may interfere with parking lot access and egress

Option 3

Existing Location

In comparison to the alternative locations, the existing location is preferential for the following reasons:

- › The proximity of the station to Main Street and the commercial district
- › Existing use of the site and familiarity with operators and users
- › Ease of bi-directional access for buses
- › Historical connection to the train station
- › Proximity to the rail line and the future potential for a return of commuter rail service
- › The borough owns the adjacent parcels
- › Proximity of parking

REHAB AND REDEVELOPMENT

The following section provides a framework for rehabilitation and redevelopment regulation in the downtown. The consultant team has submitted the following plans as a companion to this Downtown Vision Plan:

- › The Downtown Freehold Rehabilitation Plan
- › The Transit Gateway Redevelopment Plan
- › The Courthouse Square Redevelopment Plan

As the name suggests, the Downtown Freehold Rehabilitation Plan is written to support rehabilitation, not redevelopment, throughout the downtown. The Rehabilitation Plan covers an area that is larger than the current Center Core Revitalization Plan, consistent with the goal of making the bus station area the center of the downtown. Alternatively, the two redevelopment plans are intended to facilitate large-scale redevelopment and new construction on two strategic sites within the downtown.

This framework was set up, in part, to respond to the issues identified in the original Center Core Revitalization Plan. Specifically, the plan:

- › Focused primarily on large-scale redevelopment (5 acres or more) without identifying specific sites for that redevelopment, despite the downtown being largely built out
- › Required developers to build expensive facilities, including a parking garage and public space, that made redevelopment cost-prohibitive
- › Was not able to provide the long-term tax incentives that will likely be necessary to encourage large-scale redevelopment in the downtown because the plan covered a rehabilitation area

By refocusing the Center Core Plan on rehabilitation, it provides the borough and property owners an effective tool for supporting the rehabilitation of existing properties. The five-year tax abatements are meaningful to smaller property owners and have less of an impact on municipal revenues. The Downtown Freehold Rehabilitation Plan will support individual property owners who want to:

- › Preserve or enhance historic architectural elements of their building
- › Improve retail offerings
- › Expand the number of residential units downtown
- › Create new office space

The Downtown Freehold Rehabilitation Plan also creates robust standards for property owners who wish to undertake new construction within the Rehabilitation Area. The standards for rehabilitation and new construction are consistent with well-established guidelines for historic districts, such as that:

- › Historic buildings should be preserved
- › New construction and non-contributing buildings should be designed to support the character of the area but not try to mimic historic architectural styles

With this larger framework in place, the rehabilitation plan and redevelopment plans address a major issue with the Center Core Revitalization Plan: they clearly identify major project sites and provide detailed standards for redevelopment that are consistent with market realities and in line with the borough's goals and objectives. As a result, they help address the need that originally sparked much of this planning work: they provide developers clear community-supported opportunities to bring new residential and commercial development into Downtown Freehold in a manner that is consistent with the historic character of the area.

The following recommendations identify the steps needed to implement these plans as well as the vision for the two areas.

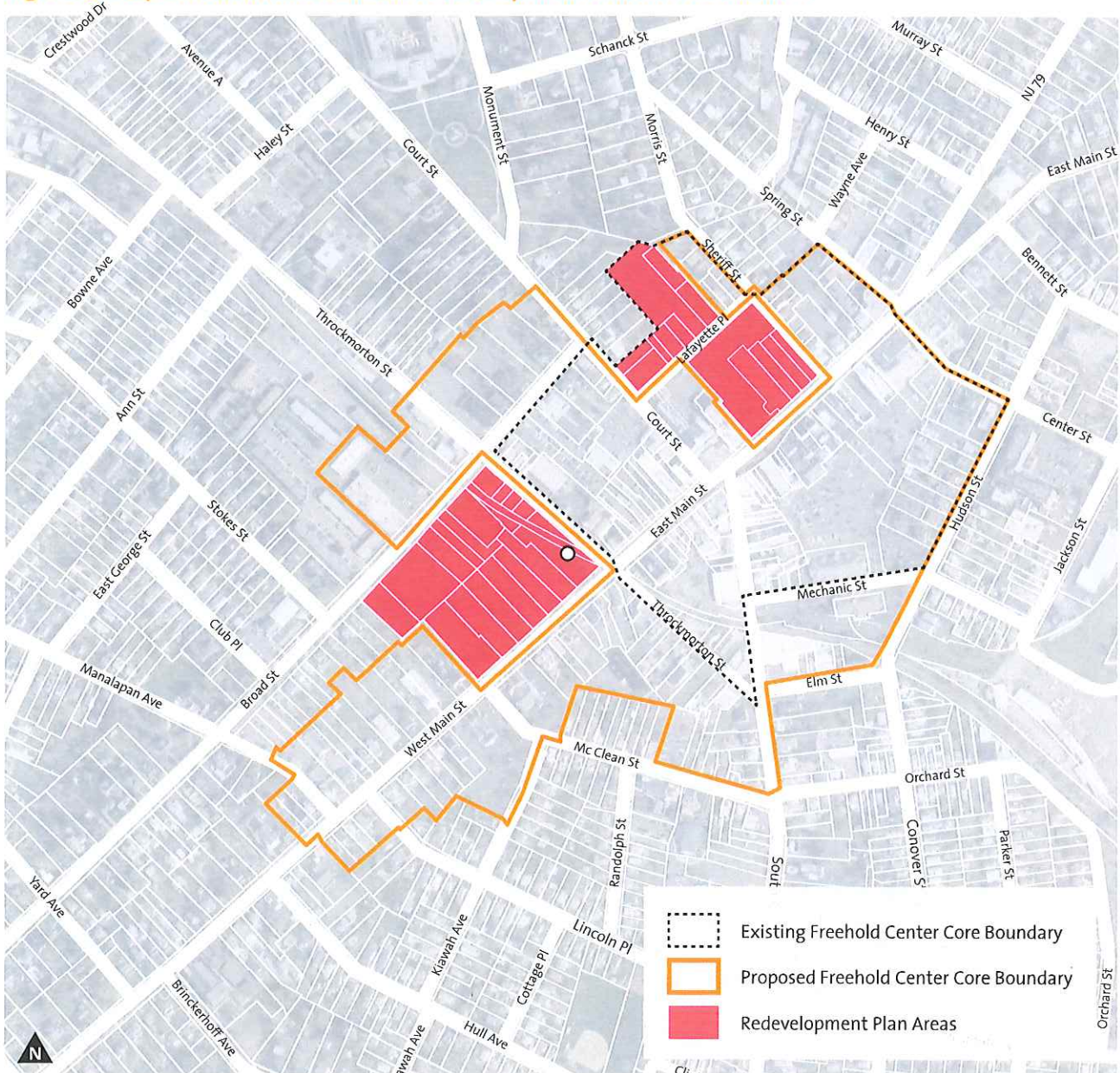
See the “[Redevelopment Handbook](#)” on pg. 51 for more on how to implement the recommendations in this section.

EXPAND AND MODIFY THE AREA IN NEED OF REHABILITATION



The borough should expand and modify the boundaries of the Area in Need of Rehabilitation designation as illustrated in **Figure 15**. The expanded rehabilitation area is consistent with the goal of making the bus station the center of the downtown. Moreover, it allows the municipality to create regulatory standards for a larger area that will help promote the character of these areas. A review of the area suggests that the borough should have no issue expanding the area, but a more detailed analysis is necessary before a determination can be made.

Figure 15: Proposed Rehabilitation and Redevelopment Plan Area Boundaries



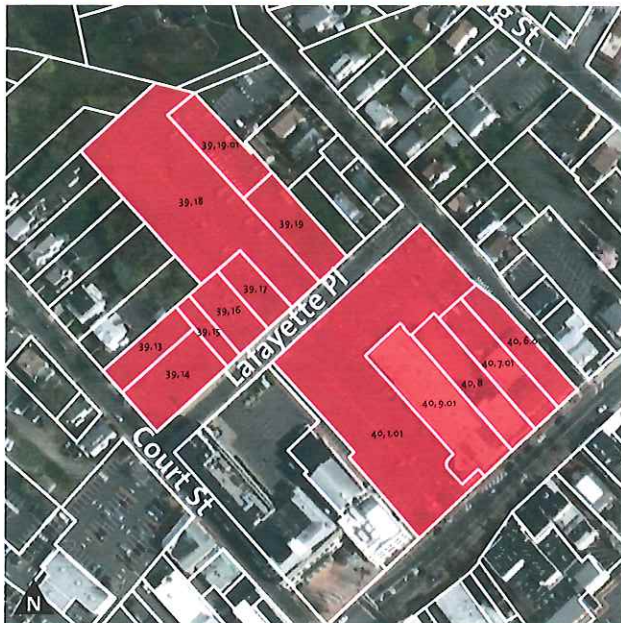
DESIGNATE AREAS IN NEED OF REDEVELOPMENT



The borough should designate the proposed Courthouse Square and Transit Gateway sites as Areas in Need of Redevelopment as illustrated in **Figure 16** and **Figure 17**. Redevelopment designation will give the borough significantly more power to transform these areas as envisioned in this document and the redevelopment plans submitted with this report. However, the criteria for designating an Area in Need of Redevelopment are substantially more difficult to meet than the criteria for rehabilitation. A preliminary review of the two areas suggests that they may meet the criteria, but only an in-depth study can determine if they meet the statutory requirements. Should either of these areas not be eligible for the designation, they most certainly meet the requirements to be deemed an Area in Need of Rehabilitation. In either case, the redevelopment plans included with this plan can still be adopted.

This plan makes no recommendation about whether the borough should reserve the right to use eminent domain, something that must be stated upon adoption of the preliminary investigations.

Figure 16: Courthouse Square Redevelopment



ADOPT REHABILITATION AND REDEVELOPMENT PLANS



Once the designations are in place, the adoption of the three plans should move smoothly. Throughout this process, the borough should meet regularly with property owners to assuage any concerns they may have about the process and implementation. As noted previously, should the borough be unable or unwilling to designate either of the recommended redevelopment areas as Areas in Need of Redevelopment they should designate them Areas in Need of Rehabilitation and adopt the submitted plans to regulate those areas. Rehabilitation designation will still allow the borough to maintain its regulatory control but will limit the incentives it has at its disposal to effectuate the plan.

The borough should update its zoning map to reflect the boundaries of the new rehabilitation and redevelopment areas. This is a step that is often overlooked but is necessary for the plans to replace the underlying zoning and not simply serve as an overlay district.

Figure 17: Transit Gateway Redevelopment Area



OVERCOME OBSTACLES TO REDEVELOPMENT



Courthouse Square Redevelopment

Land Assemblage

Redevelopment of the Courthouse Square Area is dependent on the borough and developer working in close coordination with Monmouth County, which owns most of the land in this area. The county does not sell land but may be amenable to providing ground leases, under the right conditions. For the partnership to be successful, the borough will need to reassure the county that their employees will have access to parking and that they can continue to operate their facilities without impediment.

Private property owners also have investments in their buildings with tenants who are paying rent. The borough must work closely with them to understand their concerns about this project, determine how they will be compensated, and discuss in what other ways they can benefit. These cannot be one-time conversations but, instead, they must be involved in the process from the beginning.

Public Amenity Cost

One of the critiques of the existing Center Core Revitalization Plan is that the requirement to build a parking garage and public plaza places a large financial burden on the developer. While not of similar magnitude, the Courthouse Square Redevelopment Plan requires a redeveloper to build a pedestrian walkway and public plaza. The borough should expect that the developer will want to negotiate how these amenities are supported. The public plaza is likely to provide significant value to the development, and therefore may be less contentious. However, a high-quality walkway is likely to be costly. During the development agreement process, the borough will likely have to consider the use of payments-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILOTs) or other incentives to support its construction.

Transit Gateway Redevelopment

Land Assemblage

Developing the Transit Gateway will require leadership from the borough to coordinate the consolidation of land from many property owners, including private property owners who will have to cede land to the redevelopment area. This is no small task. The borough needs to make it clear to each property owner what the benefits and tradeoffs are so they can make an informed decision. As a result of the complicated land assemblage process, the redevelopment of this area may move at a slow pace.

Public Infrastructure Cost

The borough owns a substantial amount of existing and proposed land and infrastructure in the Transit Gateway Redevelopment Area and will likely maintain it going forward. Understanding both the construction costs as well as the maintenance costs will help ensure that, once built, it remains a major amenity for generations to come.

The use of PILOTs from the developer may help offset some of the costs of public infrastructure such as roads and the park. These investments, especially the park, will make the property more valuable. Nonetheless, it is unlikely that private development will generate anywhere near the level of revenue necessary to subsidize the construction of new streets, a major new public park, as well as substantial investments to the bus station. As such, the borough will have to work closely with the county, state, and non-government entities to identify funding sources to support redevelopment. It is likely that the borough will also have to make investments in this project from its capital budget.

At the same time, the redevelopment of this area does not have to happen all at once. Improvements to the bus station can happen immediately, and there may be opportunities for support from NJ TRANSIT. At the same time, the Borough Green is a much needed public space amenity in the downtown, and the borough may wish to consider whether it is able to spend capital budget funds on its construction.

For more information on the Redevelopment Process, see the "Redevelopment Handbook" on pg. 51

DEVELOP AN UPPER-FLOOR REHAB PROGRAM



The borough should develop an incentive program to encourage the rehabilitation of upper-floor spaces for residential uses. The tax incentives to invest in Main Street are likely to be cost-effective: those looking to move onto Main Street are unlikely to have children in school because of the small size of the units and thus will not place a major financial burden on the town. More people living in the downtown mean more potential customers to support local businesses, including restaurants, convenience retail, and small groceries. Over the long term, a more vibrant Main Street will increase property values and may make it cost-effective for property owners to invest in their upper floors without subsidies.

Minimum Environmental and Quality-of-Life Standards:

The incentive program should require new improvements to meet, at a minimum, the following standards:

- › All appliances should meet a nationally recognized energy efficiency standard
- › All windows should be double-paned and weatherproofed

- › Energy Star (or the like) rated heating and air conditioning systems
- › Insulation that meets the following standards (Attic = minimum R49; Wall = minimum R5 insulation)
- › On-site laundry facilities (not necessarily in-unit)
- › Meeting contemporary electrical code requirements for residential uses

These requirements ensure that new construction is energy efficient which will reduce the cost of living for new tenants. They should not place an undue financial burden on property owners nor make the units so expensive to rent that they price out the very people the borough is wishing to attract. Moreover, units with these amenities will be more competitive in the housing market, and such investments guarantee that rehabilitated units meet a minimum quality standard.

Figure 18: Examples of Types of Improvements to Upper Floor Units



The Upper-Floor Rehabilitation Program should provide the necessary incentives to encourage property owners to comply with these standards. Incentives may include the following:

Tax Abatements: The most important incentive should be 5-year tax abatements provided through Area in Need of Rehabilitation designation. The abatement will be on the increased value of the property as a result of the improvements, and not on the total tax bill for the property.

Architectural Support Services: Many smaller towns have leaned on resident architects to provide free or low-cost architectural and cost estimation services to property owners who want to make improvements. If there is no capacity to provide such specialized services, some towns have hired an architect to provide some generic architectural designs and cost estimation. Individual property owners can cheaply modify these typologies.

Preferred Contractors and Economies of Scale: The borough may wish to consider identifying preferred contractors to undertake the work who can guarantee quality construction. If improvements are coordinated and scheduled – for example, if there is a once-a-year intake, processing, design, and building period - there is a potential for economy-of-scale savings as materials can be bought in bulk. A contractor who knows that they can have multiple projects in one area may be able to reduce costs which can be passed along to the property owners.

Reduce or Eliminate Fees: The borough should consider reducing or eliminating permit fees associated with facade improvements that go through the program. Along with an expedited process and a commitment to working with applicants, these efforts can significantly reduce the cost and, equally important, the hassle of making these kinds of improvements.

National and State Incentives: There are a number of national and state incentives that support property owners who wish to make energy efficient improvements. There are also incentives for historic property rehabilitation, although those are often complex and require specialized knowledge of historic preservation. The program should provide support services to help property owners access these incentives for rehabilitating historic homes and making energy efficient investments in their property. Examples of such programs include New Jersey Clean Energy Program's WARMVantage and COOLVantage rebate programs for heating and cooling improvements, Energy STAR appliance rebate program, federal tax credits for energy efficiency improvements, and savings programs available through utility providers.

AMEND THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION ADVISORY COMMISSION ORDINANCE



The Historic Preservation Advisory Commission ordinance requires Commission review of “all development activities” for:

- › All changes, other than paint, in the exterior architectural appearance of any improvement located in a historic district or of any historic property by addition, alteration or replacement
- › Site plans or subdivisions affecting any improvement located in a historic district or a historic property

This applies to contributing and non-contributing buildings. As detailed in both the Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Program and this Emerging Centers Existing Conditions Report, this has added a cumbersome and costly step to the review process that has prohibited development from proceeding on non-contributing sites.

It is recommended that the Historic Preservation Advisory Commission Ordinance be amended to exclude non-contributing buildings that are within the Rehabilitation and Redevelopment Areas identified in this report.

As expressed by the Department of the Interior in its guide for historic districts, non-contributing buildings should be designed to support the character of the area in terms of form but not try to mimic historic architectural styles.

The two companion redevelopment plans and the Downtown Freehold Rehabilitation Plan provide high-quality form standards that will ensure new construction and renovations contribute to the form characteristics of the district. These standards were not in place previously, making review by the Commission necessary. The ordinances, however, make that unnecessary. Instead, Planning Board review will ensure that all form standards are met.

Eliminating this requirement should reduce both the time and cost of gaining approvals for buildings that are non-contributing without adversely impacting the character of the district.

See “Modern Buildings in a Historic Context” on pg. 48 for an overview of the recommended design standards

To implement these changes, the Commission will have to catalogue which buildings in the historic district are historic and which are not. The Historic Preservation Advisory Commission ordinance includes definitions for “key,” “contributing,” and “non-contributing” buildings, but there is no list of how each of the properties in the historic district is classified. The Commission should undertake a **historic assets study** to determine those classifications. Doing so will help property owners understand which regulations and review standards apply to them.

Figure 19: Historic Downtown Freehold



STREAMLINE THE REDEVELOPMENT PROCESS



The development process under the Center Core Revitalization Plan is overly cumbersome and adds unnecessary cost to development which has prohibited projects from moving forward.

The following provides recommendations on how applications should be approved under the two companion redevelopment plans and the rehabilitation plan:

- › The Freehold Borough Council should be the designated redevelopment entity.
- › All applications should first be reviewed by both a **planning and engineering professional**, whether they be staff or a consultant. Their comments should be submitted to the Redevelopment Entity.
- › The applications should then be reviewed by the **Redevelopment Entity** (which should also be the borough Council). If there are deviations from the plan at this point, the Redevelopment Entity should determine whether or not they are acceptable. If the plan is accepted with deviations, the deviations should be recorded and submitted to the Planning Board.
- › The **Planning Board** should be responsible for reviewing whether the project conforms to the plan, taking into consideration the agreed upon deviations between the applicant and the Redevelopment Entity.
- › If there are no major deviations from the Redevelopment Plan, the applicant should be granted.
- › In instances where the Redevelopment Entity and/or Planning Board support the project but agreed to substantial deviations from the Redevelopment Plan, the applicant should then be issues a permit for construction and the Redevelopment Plan should be amended. The borough Council is responsible for making such amendments.

The above process substantially reduces the time and expense of moving an application through the redevelopment process without impacting the borough's need to provide a complete and thorough review of all applications.

HIRE A REDEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONAL



The borough has benefited from a the work of a number of volunteers and from the support of the NJTPA Planning for Emerging Centers program in creating a vision for Downtown Freehold and to identifying partners who can help move that vision forward. The effort is now at a stage where a redevelopment professional is needed. Implementing the recommendations made in this report will require specialized knowledge and the amount of work required is beyond that which can be expected of volunteers.

The borough should consider hiring an in-house redevelopment specialist or working with an outside consultant. This would likely be a part-time position, but it could shift to full-time as the process evolves. Initially, funding would likely have to come from the borough.

MODERN BUILDINGS IN A HISTORIC CONTEXT

National Guidelines for New Development in Historic Districts

The Secretary of the Interior provides national guidelines meant to provide for the appropriate preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, or reconstruction of historic properties. This includes guidelines for new construction in historic districts that respect the historical context, while allowing flexibility for modern design. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation include the following guidelines for new construction:

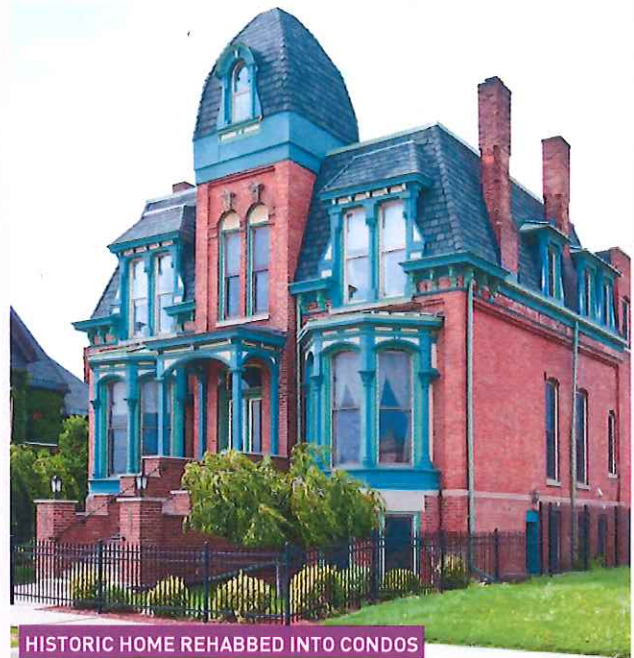
Standard 3: *Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.*

Standard 9: *New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.*

The intent is to recognize and preserve historic buildings as unique examples of a particular architectural style or time period. Historic buildings create a record of the built environment. Copying the style or architectural ornament of historic buildings confuses the historic record of a place and may in turn diminish the value of the historic building or district.

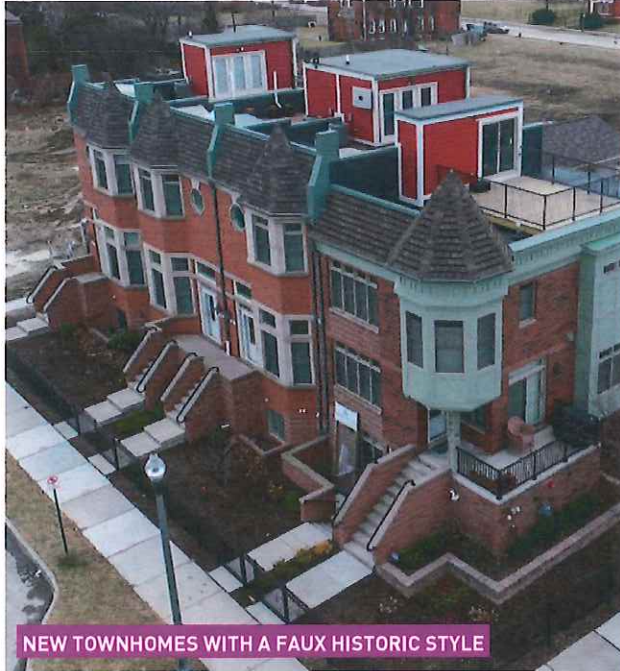
Redevelopment Plan Guidelines

Harmonizing the design of new construction with that of existing buildings in downtown is integral to the success of both redevelopment plans and the rehabilitation plan. The standards in the plan are modeled on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Properties. As such, they discourage property owners from duplicating historic features in an attempt to "fit in" with existing buildings.



Instead, the controls on bulk, building form, and key facade elements in the plans are intended to preserve the character of downtown while allowing for modern construction and design techniques. Such efforts will ensure developers can meet market demands while still reinforcing the existing place character of the Downtown. This is consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's standards, which consider elements like setbacks, building heights, and facade rhythms, as the defining characteristics of a place, rather than a specific architectural style.

The following examples illustrate the differences between two common approaches to modern construction in historic districts.



NEW TOWNHOMES WITH A FAUX HISTORIC STYLE

Not Encouraged: New Development with “Traditional Architectural Style”

Often when historic towns are met with new development proposals, they gravitate towards buildings with a familiar architectural style. However, there is a difference between referencing an older style of architecture and copying it. The type of construction shown above does the latter.

Buildings that try to replicate a historic architectural style rely on copying architectural ornaments and key elements inherent to a specific style and applying them to modern building exteriors. This creates the exterior appearance of a historic building, sometimes with little other consideration for how a building fits within a historic context. It is difficult and expensive to duplicate the quality of materials and craftsmanship that went into the original, which means encouraging this type of development far too often ends up looking like a cheap replica rather than high-quality modern construction that references an older style of architecture.



MODERN TOWNHOMES

Encouraged: Modern Buildings with “Traditional” Form, Massing, and Materials

By contrast, there are many ways modern buildings can use the components of historic buildings to create something compatible, yet current. The primary ways to accomplish this are to use the traditional form and massing of the existing urban fabric as well as similar materials and/or colors, without the stylistic embellishments that a faux historic building would employ.

Buildings should be built to match the existing street wall, or match the setbacks of nearby buildings to the best extent possible. Buildings should have a similar width, or be broken up into smaller bays to match the width of existing buildings. The overall building height or ground floor height can be the same. Next, matching the size, number, spacing, and height of windows across buildings reinforces the established facade rhythms of the historic district. Finally, using similar materials, like brick and horizontal siding, or material colors can also create consistency with existing buildings without directly copying their style.

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REDEVELOPMENT HANDBOOK



REHABILITATION VS. REDEVELOPMENT

The New Jersey Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (LRHL) was created to empower municipalities to redevelop specific areas of the community that have deteriorated and are in need of improvement. The law gives Freehold two major tools to improve areas that have deteriorated: Area in Need of Rehabilitation designation and Area in Need of Redevelopment designation.

Rehabilitation

Designation as an Area in Need of Rehabilitation is a legal term and does not mean that all properties are blighted or in need of significant repair. Instead, an area may be designated if they meet one or more of the following criteria:

- › More than half of the housing stock in the area is at least 50 years old
- › A significant portion of the structures in the area are deteriorated or substandard
- › There is a continuing pattern of vacancy, abandonment to underutilization of properties in the area and a persistent arrearage of property-tax payments
- › A majority of the water and sewer infrastructure is at least 50 years old

Area in Need of Rehabilitation designation allows a municipality to undertake a program of repair and improvement to structures, including providing five-year property tax exemptions and abatements to support redevelopment and rehabilitation of properties. Rehabilitation does not give a municipality the power to acquire property through eminent domain or to provide long-term tax abatements of up to 30 years. These powers are reserved for redevelopment only.

The Area in Need of Rehabilitation designation is inexpensive and relatively easy process. The municipality may adopt a rehabilitation ordinance without a special hearing to property owners impacted, although they may do so if desired. Many municipalities, including Highland Park, have chosen to designate their entire boroughs in need of rehabilitation to support town-wide improvements.

Redevelopment

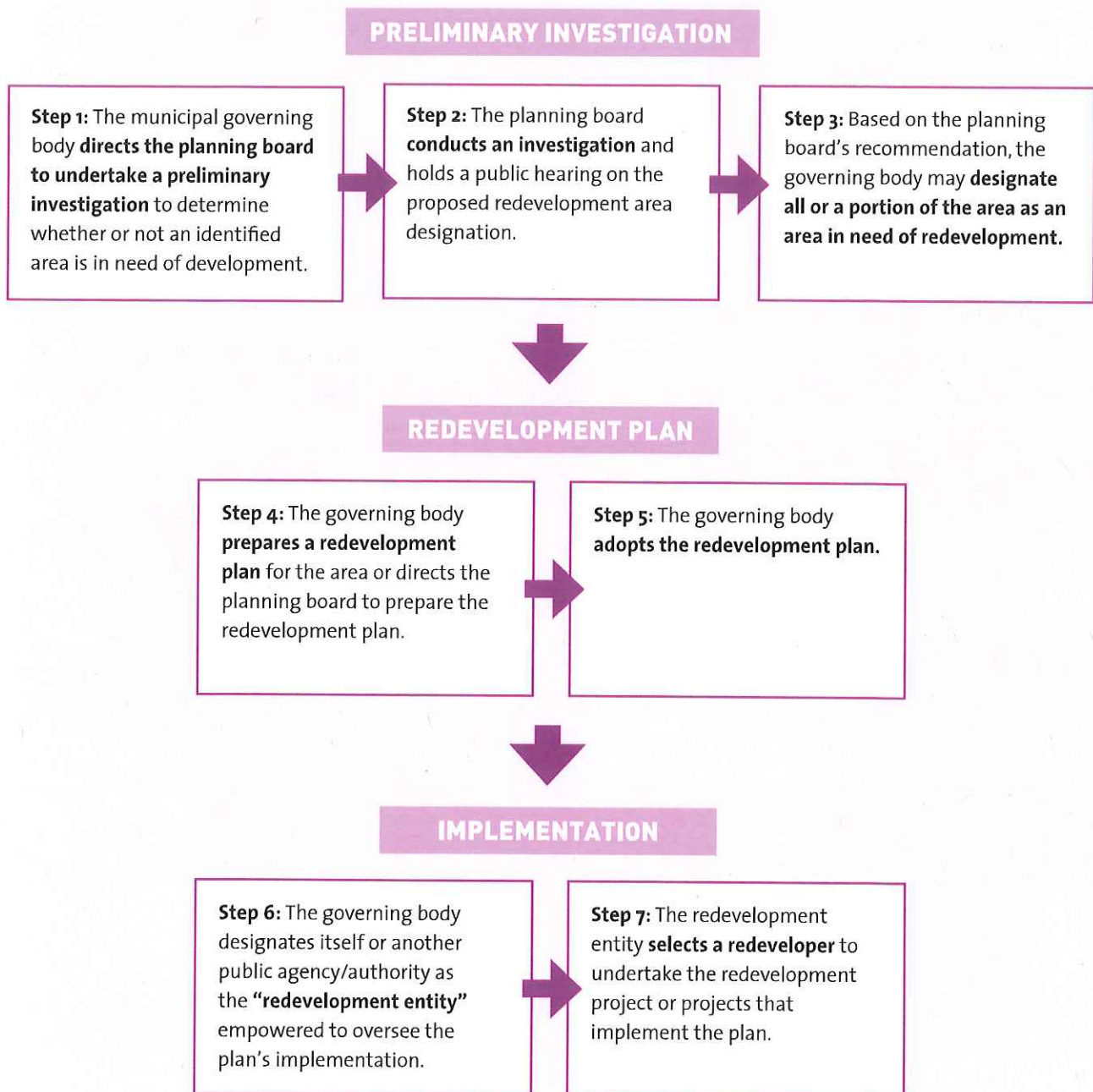
In order to designate an area in need of redevelopment, a municipality must demonstrate that a property meets one or more of the eight designation criteria. Generally speaking, the criteria require a municipality to prove that properties are in serious disrepair, no longer usable in its current form, or a danger to public health and safety. Therefore, the threshold for designation is higher than it is for rehabilitation.

Upon designating properties an Area in Need of Redevelopment the municipality must identify whether it will preserve its right to use eminent domain. The municipality may choose to restrict its ability to use that tool, which often reduces the controversy around redevelopment designation. With Redevelopment Designation, the municipality is able to provide property owners up to a 30-year tax abatement for improvements made to the property.

Upon designating an area in need of Rehabilitation or Redevelopment, the town must then adopt a "redevelopment plan." The wording here is confusing, as a redevelopment plan can cover both rehabilitation and redevelopment areas. The document, adopted by the governing body, defines the municipal objectives for the area in terms of appropriate land uses, public transportation and utilities, recreational and municipal facilities, and other public improvements. Such plans are required by the State for any public acquisition of land for redevelopment purposes to occur.

Redevelopment and Rehabilitation designation may also open up the designated areas to additional incentives at the state level. For more information, please consult the Economic Development Agency website.

THE REDEVELOPMENT PROCESS



ROLES OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE REDEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Role of the Governing Body

1. Authorizes the preliminary investigation by resolution
2. Designates, by resolution, the redevelopment area
3. Adopts, by ordinance, the redevelopment plan
4. Designates the redevelopment entity
5. Appoints commissioners to a redevelopment agency
6. Authorizes tax exemptions and abatements
7. Assists redevelopment entity and redeveloper in implementing redevelopment plan

Role of the Planning Board

1. Conducts the preliminary investigation to determine if an Area is in Need of Rehabilitation/ Redevelopment
2. Holds a public hearing on proposed redevelopment area designations and makes recommendations to the governing body
3. Prepares redevelopment plan or reviews redevelopment plan prepared by governing body
4. Reviews site plan and subdivision applications in a redevelopment area
5. Makes recommendations on the designation of an area in need of rehabilitation
6. Incorporates redevelopment plans into the municipal master plan as part of the master plan reexamination process

Role of the Redevelopment Entity

Once a redevelopment plan is adopted, the redevelopment entity is responsible for overseeing the implementation of that plan. The redevelopment entity can be a municipal governing body, local redevelopment agency, local housing authority, or county improvement agency. The redevelopment entity:

1. Selects the redeveloper(s)
2. Ensures redevelopment projects are undertaken in accordance with the redevelopment plan
3. Exercises redevelopment powers in accordance with redevelopment plan
4. Acquires property through eminent domain
5. Conveys property to redeveloper through sale or lease
6. Provides financial assistance to redevelopers
7. Recommends redevelopment to governing body and planning board

LAND ASSEMBLAGE

There are several ways that land can be assembled for redevelopment. No way is inherently superior to any other. They include, but are not limited to:

1. A single entity can purchase all of the land and either be the developer for the site or contract with a developer to undertake the project. That owner may later subdivide the property and sell individual pieces to other developers who specialize in a specific product, like housing or office buildings. The primary developer is often referred to as the “master developer.” The use of master and subordinate developers is unlikely in Freehold because the projects are relatively small.
2. Property owners may come together to form a partnership, with an agreement for how the costs, risks, and profits are shared. Often, these property owners will not be the actual developer but will contract with one. Such partnerships are often critical when some of the property is owned by a government entity, like the borough or the county.
3. The municipality may purchase land or acquire it through eminent domain. The municipality can then package the properties and transfer them to a developer who is responsible for undertaking the project. The municipality has great latitude on evaluating the qualifications of the developer and designate a developer outside of a competitive bidding process. Moreover, the transfer may happen under whatever terms the municipality deems appropriate, which includes selling the property for less than its market value (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-8c and g; Bryant, *supra*, at 624). If the property is sold to the developer at below market value, then the sale of the property can serve as an incentive to encourage the vision identified in the plan. Ideally, the discount on the property is just enough to make up the difference between what the project costs to develop and what it can generate in profit.
4. The borough could issue a request for proposals and then conditionally designate a redeveloper who submits the best proposal. The request for proposal could include both properties the borough owns and ones they do not. The conditional redeveloper designation signals to the redevelopment community—and property owners—that a preferred redeveloper has been selected. This would provide a framework for property owners to sell properties to a single entity responsible for redevelopment.
5. Finally, property owners, including the municipality and/or county, may also lease the property to a developer for an extended period of time, often 99 years. This lease allows the property owner to maintain physical control over the property while still permitting development on the land.

IMPLEMENTATION

The first step in the redevelopment process is the identification of the redevelopment entity, which is responsible for representing the interest of the municipality during the redevelopment process. In many cases, the governing body is the redevelopment entity, but not always. Improvement authorities and non-government organization may be designated a redevelopment entities.

Then a public or private developer is selected to undertake all or a portion of the redevelopment project. The Local Redevelopment and Housing Law offers a range of options for **selecting a redeveloper** to undertake the redevelopment process. The most common approach is to select a redeveloper through a competitive process in which the municipality or redevelopment entity issues a **request for qualifications (RFQ) and/or request for proposals (RFP)**. However, there is no requirement that the process be competitive and the redevelopment entity may negotiate directly with a specific developer.

Issuing the RFQ/RFP may not lead to immediate interest. However, the process of issuing the request will be an important demonstration that the borough is organized and ready to partner with potential investors. It will then be the responsibility of the borough to generate interest in the project and present it to potential developers who have a history of undertaking similar projects.

The graphics from this plan and companion redevelopment plans illustrate what the borough should expect to see from developers. Nonetheless, these plans are conceptual, and further investigation may identify unforeseen obstacles and opportunities. Therefore, the borough should understand that the redevelopment plans may need to be amended once a developer has been identified.

Once a developer has been selected, and any changes to the redevelopment plan have been made, both sides will enter into exclusive negotiations. The result will be a **redevelopment agreement** which is a contract between the redevelopment entity and the redeveloper. Putting together this agreement requires the use of professionals with strong negotiations skills, legal expertise, and understanding of the complexities of real estate financing.

The goals should be to establish a strong public-private partnership in which each entity plays a mutually agreed upon role. Redevelopment agreements may include:

- › Specific development approval and construction timetables
- › The amount of money to be contributed to the project by way of subsidy from the municipality and equity from the developer
- › Infrastructure improvements to be included, whether to be publicly financed or privately constructed
- › Long- and short-term tax abatements
- › Responsibility for non-construction costs, such as relocation, demolition and environmental clean-up
- › Amount of state funds or other general monies to be contributed to the project
- › Design criteria for development of the project
- › Other items typical of real estate contracts such as default clauses, cure periods, procedures for amendment of the agreement and the like

After the redevelopment agreement is established, the governing body must **designate the redeveloper** by resolution.

Once the redevelopment agreement has been entered into by both parties, construction should proceed according to the timetables established in the agreement. Should the redeveloper fail to perform under a redevelopment agreement, stipulations are made in the agreement that would allow the redevelopment entity to take back the land so it can be pursued by another redeveloper.

UNDERSTANDING TAX-BASED INCENTIVES

Municipalities are sometimes reluctant to use their redevelopment powers because of misconceptions about redevelopment incentives. There are actually a number of financial powers that the redevelopment entity has to support redevelopment—including issuing bonds, borrowing money, or receiving grants to fund projects—but the incentives that get the most attention are tax exemptions or abatements. Both exemptions and abatements seek to incentivize redevelopment when investment is not otherwise likely to happen in an area. There is a common misunderstanding that a tax exemption or abatement waives all taxes a developer must pay on a property for the duration of the abatement period. In reality, the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law caps the amount of property tax relief that can be granted and provides other mechanisms for collecting payments from the redeveloper over the exemption period.

How do tax-based incentives work?

In the case of both exemptions and abatements, tax relief applies only to the full or partial assessed value of any improvement, alteration, conversion, or new construction, but not the assessed land value. The property owner continues to pay taxes on the land throughout the period of the exemption or abatement, in addition to the other taxes or fees set by the redevelopment entity. There are two types of tax-related incentives a municipality can offer: long-term (30-year) exemptions and short-term (five-year) exemptions and abatements.

Long-term exemptions

Long-term tax exemptions may only be granted for projects in a designated redevelopment area. In general, long-term property tax exemptions are most appropriate when (1) the cost of the redevelopment project is significant and (2) the property tax rate applied to the new improvements drives up the cost of development so much that the project is too expensive to sell or lease in the existing market. Long-term exemptions may be granted for up to 30 years from the beginning of the exemption or 35 years from the execution of the written agreement between the redevelopment entity and redeveloper.

A municipality may exempt all or just a portion of the property-taxes owed on the improvements during this period.

Over the term of the exemption, the redeveloper pays an annual fee to the municipality known as a **Payment-in-Lieu-of-Taxes (PILOTs)**. The amount of the PILOT can either be up to 2 percent of the total project value or up to 15 percent of the annual gross revenue of the project. PILOTs may not be lower than the amount of taxes owed on the property prior to redevelopment. The PILOT amount is established in a written agreement between the redevelopment entity and redeveloper prior to redevelopment. Over the term of the abatement, the redevelopment entity sets a “phasing” schedule that steps up payments to the level of full taxation by the end of the exemption period.

Short-term exemptions and abatements

Five-year tax exemptions or abatements may be granted for projects in either an Area in Need of Rehabilitation or Area in Need of Redevelopment. Five-year exemptions and abatements are less complicated than long-term exemptions and are generally more suitable to smaller projects. Abatements may only be granted to residential and multifamily developments and are legally capped based on the type of project. Unlike a long-term exemption, the redeveloper is not required to pay in-lieu fees.

Conclusion

In both cases, the redevelopment entity should ask the redeveloper to provide a fiscal impact analysis that demonstrates why the requested exemption or abatement is needed and proves that it makes economic sense for the municipality.

The above text was adapted from *The Redevelopment Handbook: A Guide to Rebuilding New Jersey's Communities* (2003). Stan Slachetka and David G. Roberts.



PARKING

While Freehold has a robust parking supply relative to land uses in the downtown, there is a perception of a lack of parking which may act as a deterrent to visitors, patrons, and prospective developers. Overcoming that perception to support downtown businesses and encourage redevelopment will require the borough to:

1. Create a parking authority and parking district to manage parking resources
2. Monetize parking supply by shifting longer duration parkers to off-street parking resources
3. Use technology to manage parking
4. Consolidate separate parking resources into pooled parking resources
5. Encourage shared-use parking agreements in the downtown
6. Modify parking lot time limits to distribute parking demand better
7. Improve parking wayfinding and communication materials that assist different types of users in finding the appropriate parking resource
8. Improve the quality of off-street parking to make use of surface lots a more comfortable experience for users



MUNICIPAL PARKING LOT DESIGN

The design for the Queens Borough Hall Parking Lot features a number of elements that enhance the parking experience: payment kiosks, landscaping, and pedestrian pathways. Source: NYCDDC

CREATE A PARKING MANAGEMENT ENTITY AND PARKING DISTRICT



The coordination and management of parking resources is best conducted by establishing a parking management entity that is empowered to regulate parking and enforce parking regulations within an established parking district. Organizationally, the entity could be structured as a parking authority, parking utility, or a parking department. The parking management entity would have jurisdiction over all public parking resources within the established geographic district. We recommend establishing a district boundary that is aligned with but expands upon the Freehold Center Core Redevelopment Area, see **Figure 20**.

Parking Authority

A parking authority has the same geographic boundaries as the city that created it but is “a public body corporate and politic and a political subdivision of the State (of New Jersey).” A New Jersey parking authority has five commissioners who are appointed by the governing body of the municipality (city council or city commissioners) for staggered five-year terms, or seven commissioners with two mayoral appointments and five governing body appointments. A parking authority may employ an executive director and any other professional and staff necessary to manage and deliver parking services to the city’s residents and the general public.

New Jersey parking authorities have considerable statutory authority. N.J.S.A. 40:11A-6 grants parking authorities the powers necessary to carry out and effectuate essential government purposes. Furthermore, parking authorities may:

- › Buy, sell, and/or lease property as a lessee or lessor
- › Construct multi-use projects and parking facilities
- › Borrow money
- › Issue bonds
- › Mortgage or otherwise encumber its assets
- › Enter into contracts
- › Retain earnings

Parking Utility

As an alternative to a parking authority, Freehold may consider the creation of a parking utility. A parking utility has a number of the strengths of a parking authority: executive director, operating budget and debt service separate from the municipality, the ability to generate annual surplus revenue and retain earnings, the ability to set its own rates and fees, and a function strictly limited to providing public parking. Among the limitations associated with a parking utility: limited independence; the executive director usually reports through the city administrator/manager or chief financial officer; the local governing body retains jurisdiction over rates, fees, capital projects, operating budget, and personnel; and parking revenues in excess of annual operating expenses generally are turned over to the city’s general fund.

Parking Department

Parking departments are the least-independent government entity for managing and operating municipal parking resources. A parking department can stand alone and be on par with other municipal departments. Alternatively, it can be a subsidiary of a large department such as public works or police. The advantage of a parking department is the direct control over operations exercised by the mayor as the chief executive of the municipality. All parking fees and revenues, absent a bond agreement to the contrary, are deposited into the city’s general fund and are available for any and all municipal expenses. The disadvantage of a parking department is that the parking entity competes with all other municipal departments for budget approval and operating funds and does not retain annual excess parking revenue in a capital account. Increases of parking fees and rates must be approved by resolution or ordinance of the municipal governing body.

Figure 20: Proposed Parking District Boundary



MONETIZE PARKING SUPPLY



The establishment of a parking district will provide a mechanism for monetizing high-demand parking supply within the downtown. **Charging for parking at certain locations will increase the availability of parking by encouraging parking turnover and will also provide a revenue stream to support enforcement of parking regulations.** Nominal charges, such as \$1 per hour, can be effective in reserving the highest demand parking spaces for the users willing to pay for them. Price sensitive and longer-term parkers can be accommodated in free parking areas with lower parking demand. The provision of free parking resources close to paid parking will ensure that price sensitive parkers are not deterred from visiting the downtown, while changing the perception that there is insufficient parking.

The most valuable parking resources in the downtown are on-street parking spaces along storefronts on West and East Main Street, and other streets with storefronts such as Throckmorton, Court, and South Streets where on-street parking is currently time-limited. **Figure 21** shows the recommended paid on-street parking area and existing on-street parking locations and restrictions.

The borough should consider instituting a paid parking requirement on weekdays between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. If successful, the program could be expanded into the evenings or weekends. The borough may also consider expanding paid parking to streets that currently have two-hour parking limits.

USE TECHNOLOGY TO MANAGE PARKING



According to the International Parking Institute, the top emerging trend in municipal parking is a “move toward innovative technologies to improve access control and payment automation.” Following these trends, technology should be deployed to assist in Freehold’s transition to a monetized parking system. The introduction of paid parking in the downtown does not require the installation, maintenance of, and collection from individual parking meters at each parking space. The use of technology allows for the installation of a small number of parking kiosks (one kiosk typically serves ten or more spaces) rather than individual meters.

These stations provide credit card payment options in addition to coin-based payment. These stations can also be solar powered and provide wireless connectivity; no hard-wiring is required. The manufacturer usually maintains the system in exchange for a small fee per transaction. Remote payment options are also available to the users, which allows users to pay for parking by phone or add time to their length of stay remotely. Many of these systems can also provide real-time information on where parking may be available based upon kiosk and phone application information. Phone applications can be linked to the parking payment network to guide users to areas where parking may be present based upon parking payments. Parking mobile applications can also allow users to pay for parking from their phones and add time remotely.



PARKING TECHNOLOGIES

Figure 21: Paid Parking



On-Street Parking Type

- Unmarked Lane, Unrestricted
- Unmarked Lane, Restricted
- Marked Lane, Unrestricted
- Permit Only
- No Parking

CONSOLIDATE SEPARATE PARKING RESOURCES



Freehold's downtown has dozens of individual parking lots (**Figure 22**) including public lots, private lots available to the public, and private lots for private use. Each of these lots has individual access points, different signs and regulations, and different quality of experiences. Additionally, these lots are not interconnected, requiring parkers to migrate from lot to lot via local roadways when searching for parking or making a trip between businesses in the downtown. To address this issue, parking lots in the downtown should be interconnected and consolidated to the greatest extent feasible.

Multiple mechanisms can facilitate a more interconnected parking system. These include:

- › The purchase of surface parking lots by the borough. Prospective surface lots could be subdivided from improved areas of lots. Adjacent lots could be aggregated into larger lots that are interconnected.
- › Facilitating connections between adjacent parking lots. The borough can play an active role in negotiating new connections between owners of private parking lots.
- › Encouraging shared-use parking agreements. Shared-use agreements should be encouraged between private property owners to allow pooling of parking resources within the downtown.

Figure 22: Parking Lots



ENCOURAGE SHARED-USE PARKING AGREEMENTS



The Freehold Center Core Revitalization Plan allows shared-use parking agreements. Given that the borough currently has a shared-use parking ordinance in place within the Center Core, we recommend the following to encourage the use of this provision:

1. The borough should apply the shared-use parking regulation to the Parking District area.
2. The borough should consider providing a shared use parking agreement template for use by private parties. A sample template is provided in **Appendix B**. This template can be made available on the borough's website. Use of standard agreement forms and storage of that agreement with the borough will enable the borough to monitor and enforce shared use agreements.
3. The borough should provide standard shared-use parking calculations for typical uses allowed in the downtown. The existing ordinance refers interested parties to sources such as the Urban Land Institute which would likely require the engagement of a traffic engineer to provide relevant calculations. A sample calculation table, based upon standards documented by the Urban Land Institute and American Planning Association is provided in **Appendix B**.

MODIFY PARKING LOT TIME LIMITS



All municipal lots in Downtown Freehold, except the Market Yard Lot, restrict parking to a two-hour limit for those that do not hold a parking permit. This places a burden on the Market Yard Lot to accommodate users who need to park for more than two hours. Additionally, there are no lots that would accommodate parking for periods up to four hours. Given the lack of longer-term parking, we recommend **increasing the parking time limit of the Court Street Lot to four hours or more to accommodate longer-term parkers and relieve pressure from the Market Yard Lot.**

Additionally, parking enforcement periods vary from lot to lot. For example, the Market Yard lot allows 3-hour parking Monday through Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. while the Broad and West Main Street Lot allows two-hour parking Monday through Saturday between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. While these nuances may have originated from needs that are unique to each lot, they are confusing to users. As such, **Freehold should consider standardizing the time of day and day of the week that time limits are enforced.** The borough should adopt a standard enforcement period of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

IMPROVE PARKING WAYFINDING AND COMMUNICATION



Wayfinding is a critical aspect of a functional municipal parking system. Highly visible, recognizable signage that provides clear direction and relevant information improves the experience for users and assists drivers with locating municipal parking resources while minimizing excessive searching for a parking space.

While the borough's municipal lots have signage, individual signs are not clearly visible, and signage is not uniform (see **Figure 23**). For example, the Hall of Records Lot is well-signed, with attractive lot name signs and regulatory signs at each entrance. These signs are not, however, easy to see from a distance and are not visible at night because they are not constructed of retro-reflective material. Additionally, the regulatory signs that provide information about the permitted duration of stay and hours of enforcement are only visible to drivers once they begin turning into the parking lot and the placement makes the signs difficult to read while engaged in turning into a parking lot.

Parking signage should be highly visible and uniform in appearance. Signage should be visible at a distance and contain relevant information such as duration of stay. Blue retro-reflective signs with a large white "P" are universally used to designate parking and should be used at Freehold's

municipal parking lots. These signs should be accented with a second sign, placed immediately below the sign described above, that provides information specific to a parking lot. **The borough should use a colored sign that corresponds to a unique color reserved for a specific parking lot.** That sign could be used to convey information regarding parking limits such as "2 HR" for a lot with a two-hour parking limit. **Figure 24** shows an example of this signage.

Users of the downtown parking system would also benefit from an intuitive visual map of the parking network. A simple, color-coded map of parking lot locations and key regulations would be beneficial to users. Color codes used on the map should correspond to signage that is unique to each lot. The parking map could be placed on parking kiosks, produced as a brochure, and made available on the borough's website (**Figure 25**).

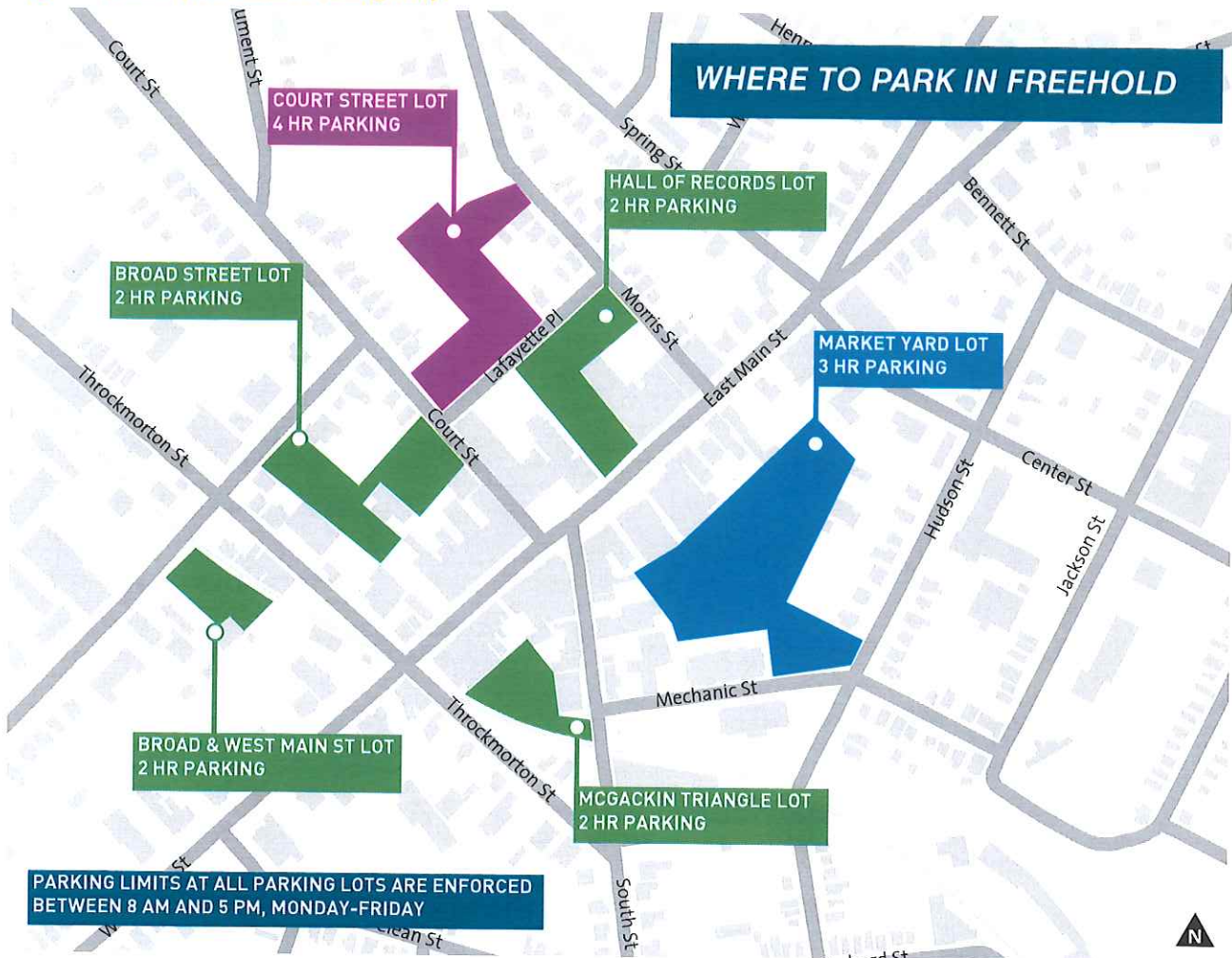
Figure 23: Existing Parking Signage



Figure 24: Proposed Parking Signage



Figure 25: Sample Public Parking Map



IMPROVE THE PARKING EXPERIENCE



In addition to assisting users in finding parking, the parking experience needs to be comfortable and secure. Freehold has a successful model of this in the Market Yard Lot which is well maintained, nicely landscaped, well lit, and bordered by high-quality walkways that present the user with a sense of welcome. Other facilities such as the Broad and West Main Street and Hall of Records lots, while well-maintained, do not benefit from the same level of design.

To encourage use of municipal facilities, **the borough should improve the Broad and West Main Street Lot and Hall of Records Lot.** Recommended improvements

include the extension of walkways through and/or on the perimeter of the parking lots, improvement of lighting, and enhancement of landscaping by providing additional planting islands with trees and flowering plant material. As parking facilities are enhanced or reconstructed in conjunction with redevelopment, the borough should consider implementing Low Impact Development (LID) techniques into its parking assets. LID options for parking lots include pervious pavements and bioswales and/or rain gardens.

See "Low-Impact Development Techniques" on pg. 69

for more information



MARKET YARD LOT IMPROVEMENTS

(Above and Upper Right): The Market Yard Lot features red brick pathways, pedestrian cut-throughs, landscaping, lighting, and other improvements that make parking there appealing and safe.

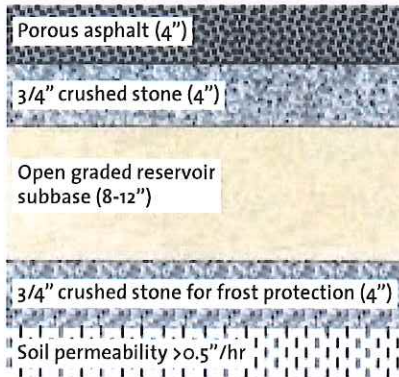


LOW-IMPACT DEVELOPMENT TECHNIQUES

(Bottom Right): Bioswales are just one of the types of Low-Impact Development strategies that can be used to make parking lots more attractive and environmentally friendly.

LOW-IMPACT DEVELOPMENT TECHNIQUES

Pervious pavements are available in multiple material and application types. Those most suitable for parking areas include porous asphalt, poured in place pervious concrete, and precast pervious concrete slabs.



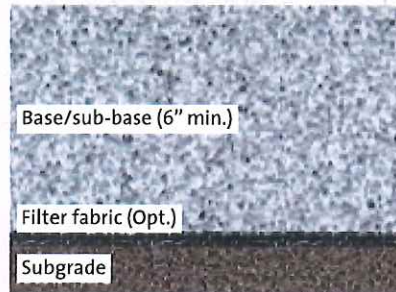
POROUS ASPHALT

Typical section of porous asphalt construction; Tompkins County Soil and Water Conservation Stormwater Program

Porous asphalt

Porous asphalt is a mix that is designed to allow for on-site stormwater infiltration. It has been shown to reduce slipping hazards by absorbing water from the surface in cold climates. It can be installed with the same equipment as traditional asphalt and is designed to have an equal lifespan. Installation involves less labor than is required with pervious concrete. Typical uses of this treatment include parking lots, driveways, walkways. Plowing and poor drainage can shorten the lifespan. Tight parking lots that require many turning movements can cause spalling. This product is also prone to clogging, with leaves and sand reducing the water infiltration rate.

PERVIOUS CONCRETE (4-8")



PERVIOUS CONCRETE

Typical section of pervious concrete installation; Florida Highway Department

Pervious Concrete

Poured in place pervious concrete is similar to a regular concrete mix except that it is porous to allow for stormwater runoff infiltration. This product reduces surface runoff and necessary drainage infrastructure. Its lighter color also aids in keeping the surrounding area cooler than darker pavements. It is designed to have an equal lifespan as traditional concrete. Typical uses of this treatment include parking lots, driveways, and walkways. Proper mix, compaction, and curing time are critical to the success of the pervious concrete application. As a result, installation of pervious concrete is more expensive than traditional concrete as it requires a special mix and an experienced contractor to install it. Additional maintenance is also required.



PRECAST CONCRETE SLAB

Percoa precast concrete slabs; Percoa USA

Precast pervious concrete slabs

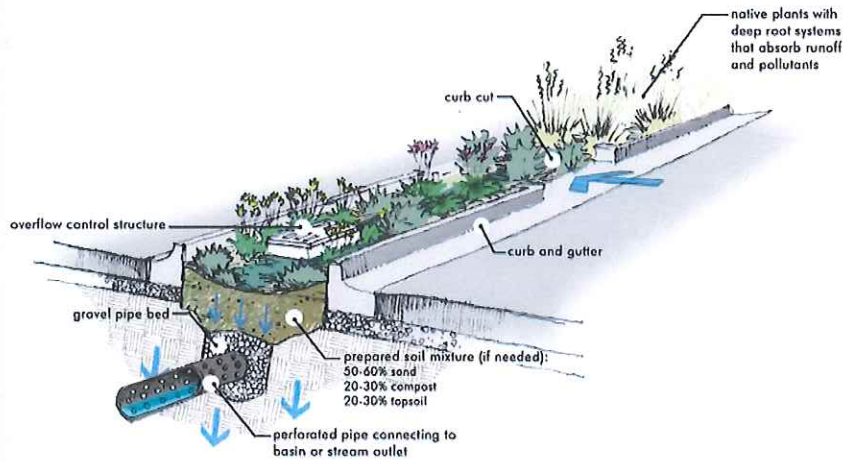
Precast pervious concrete slabs (produced by Percoa USA) are interlocking concrete slabs with the ability to filter stormwater. These eliminate untreated stormwater and mimic the drainage and filtration of bioswales and natural soils. These slabs require little to no maintenance as they are clog resistant due to the construction of the pores. They have been designed with an equal or greater lifespan than traditional concrete and are ready for use immediately after installation. Typical uses of this pavement treatment include parking lots, driveways, walkways and patios, and stormwater runoff basins.

Bioswales

Bioswales are vegetated channels that provide treatment and retention as they move stormwater from one place to another. Bioswales slow, infiltrate, and filter stormwater flows. They are typically used as parking lot islands or in medians, as roadside swales, or as landscape buffers. They provide the following benefits:

- › Treat stormwater using vegetation, soil, and microbes
- › Reduce the total volume of stormwater runoff
- › Increase infiltration and groundwater recharge
- › Can be an aesthetic part of the landscape and increase biodiversity

Areas with poorly drained sites will require an underdrain to remove overflow stormwater. Compacted soils, short runoff contact time, large storm events, and steep slopes reduce the effectiveness of bioswales. Bioswales are inexpensive relative to traditional curb and gutter treatment or underground stormwater systems. Maintenance (seasonal trimming and removal of debris) is required more often, but is much less expensive than that of traditional curb and gutter system maintenance. Bioswales should be planted with a mix of close growing vegetation that is water and salt tolerant. Plants should be selected for their nutrient uptake ability and appropriateness for the site. Use of native plants is recommended.



BIOSWALE COMPONENTS

Typical parking lot bioswale detail; Source: City of New York's Office of Environmental Protection's Standards for Green Infrastructure Guidebook



TYPICAL BIOSWALE PLANT SPECIES

From left to right (top): Common Yarrow, Chokeberry, Yellow Wild Indigo, Coneflower (middle): Japanese Aster, Bee Balm, Perennial Phlox, Goldenrod (bottom): Winterberry, Spicebush, Switch Grass, Little Bluestem

BIKE & PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS

CONNECT THE HENRY HUDSON TRAIL TO DOWNTOWN



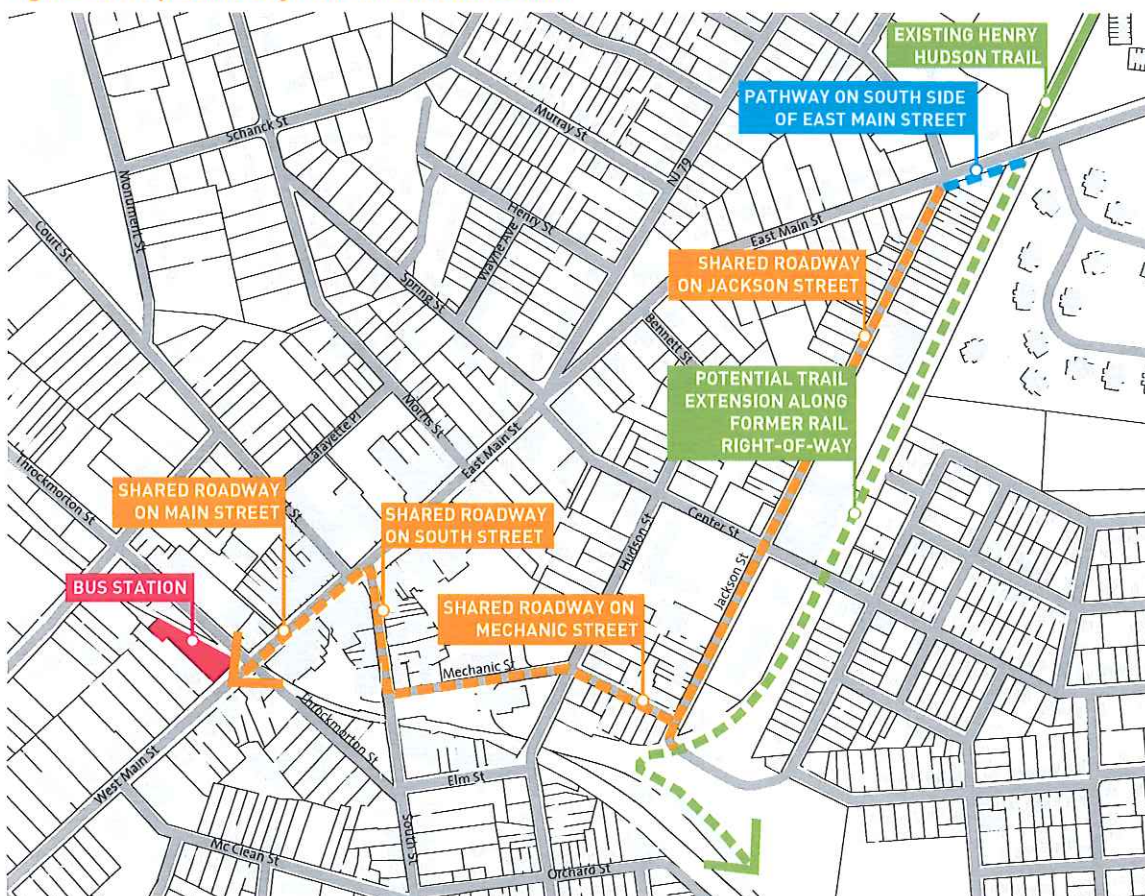
By better accommodating bicyclists downtown, the borough may encourage a market segment that will support local businesses and generate demand for housing and services. To improve bicycle facilities in the downtown, the borough should first consider expansion of the Henry Hudson Trail into downtown as a means of welcoming visitors and creating the potential for bicycle-based tourism. In doing so, the borough can build upon the progress that the Monmouth County Parks Department has already made in extending the Henry Hudson Trail by providing local connections to and from the existing trail and planned trail route.

The recommended strategy for connecting downtown to the Henry Hudson Trail is via an existing NJ TRANSIT right-of-way that passes by a former train station near

the intersection of Jackson and Mechanic Streets (**Figure 26**). From this location, the trail could connect to on-street facilities due to limited rail right-of-way and an active rail line west of that point.

An alternative near-term strategy is to extend the trail along the south side of East Main Street from the existing trailhead to Jackson Street, a low-volume residential street. Wayfinding, “share the road” signage, and “sharrow” markings could be provided to guide cyclists along Mechanic and South Street towards East Main Street and the bus station. This strategy could be implemented at low cost and be immediately effective in guiding bicycle traffic into the downtown. The use of the route and the presence of additional bicyclists in the downtown will provide support for expansion of the trail.

Figure 26: Proposed Henry Hudson Trail Connection



PROVIDE BICYCLE FACILITIES THROUGHOUT DOWNTOWN



In addition to providing a connection between the Henry Hudson Trail and downtown, the borough should consider providing bicycle facilities in the downtown. Bicycles are experiencing a renaissance of popularity, particularly among millennials who often rely upon the bicycle as a means of transportation within a portfolio that also includes walking, transit, and ride sharing and increasingly excludes automobile ownership. The most appropriate facilities for Freehold, given roadway and right-of-way constraints, are shared roadways and striped bicycle lanes.

Development of the bike network comprised of bike lanes and shared roadway marking will be at a lower cost as physical modifications to the roadways are not required. Given the limited amount of right-of-way space, relatively narrow roadways, and presence of on-street parking in Downtown Freehold, the potential for the installation of bike lanes is limited to a few corridors that have space to accommodate striped bike lanes (**Figure 27**). These corridors include:

- › Throckmorton Street between Broad Street and Haley Street and between West Main Street and South Street
- › Broad Street between Manalapan Avenue and Throckmorton Street
- › West Main Street between Hull Avenue and Throckmorton Street
- › South Street between Throckmorton Street and Lincoln Place

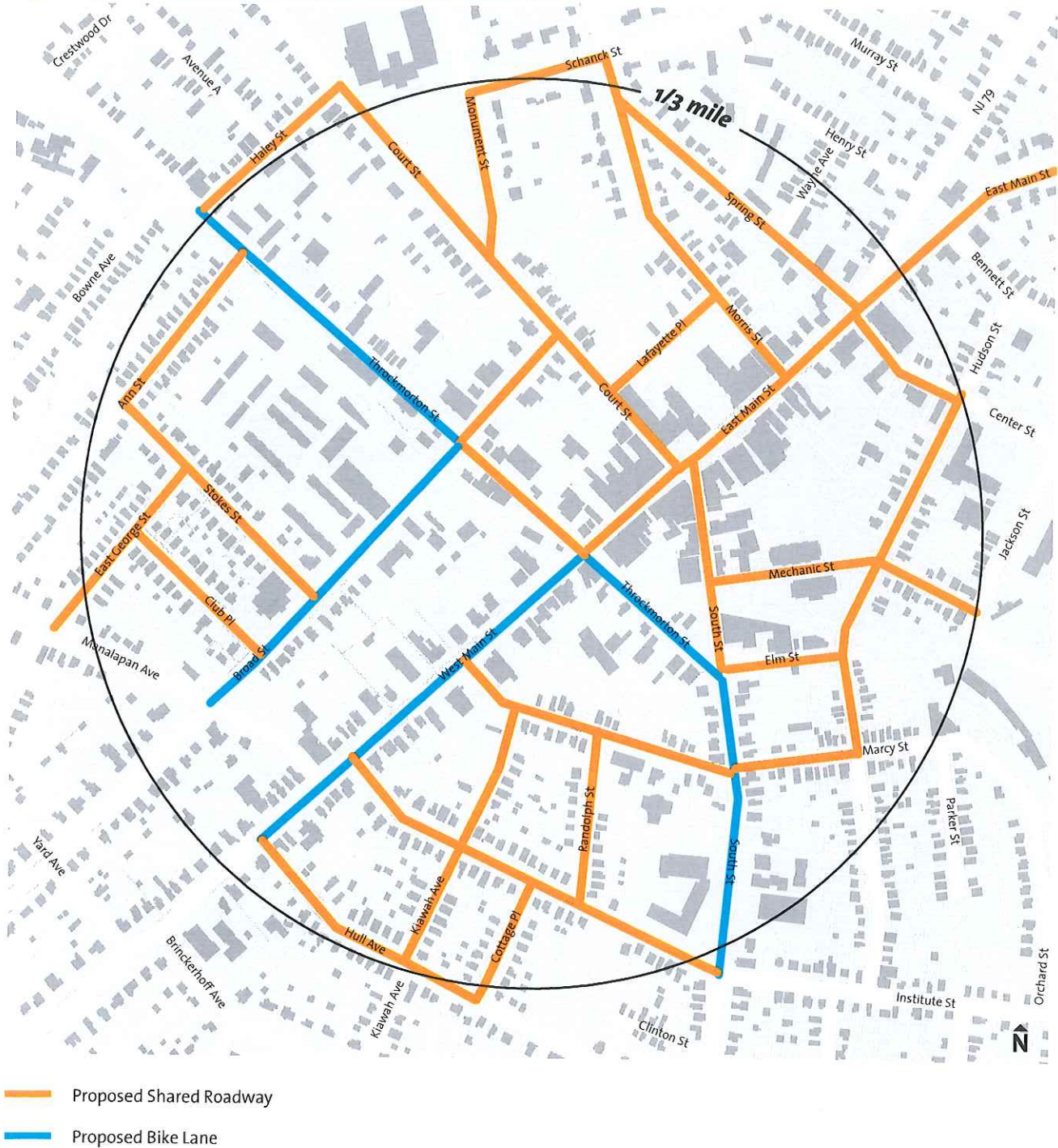
See “Bike Infrastructure Design” on pg. 74 for more details about different types of bike infrastructure.



While only a select portion of the roadway network may be suitable for bike lanes, it is recommended that other roadways within the downtown be studied for shared road pavement markings and signage. The bicycle facilities for the borough’s downtown as envisioned in **Figure 27** will still need to be studied and evaluated further. The borough should conduct a more detailed bike study, engaging both county and municipal officials in order to identify any constraints that will need to be addressed before implementation. Downtown streets recommended for study include:

- › West Main Street
- › East Main Street
- › Throckmorton Street
- › South Street
- › Court Street
- › Broad Street

Figure 27: Proposed Bike Infrastructure in the Study Area



BIKE INFRASTRUCTURE DESIGN

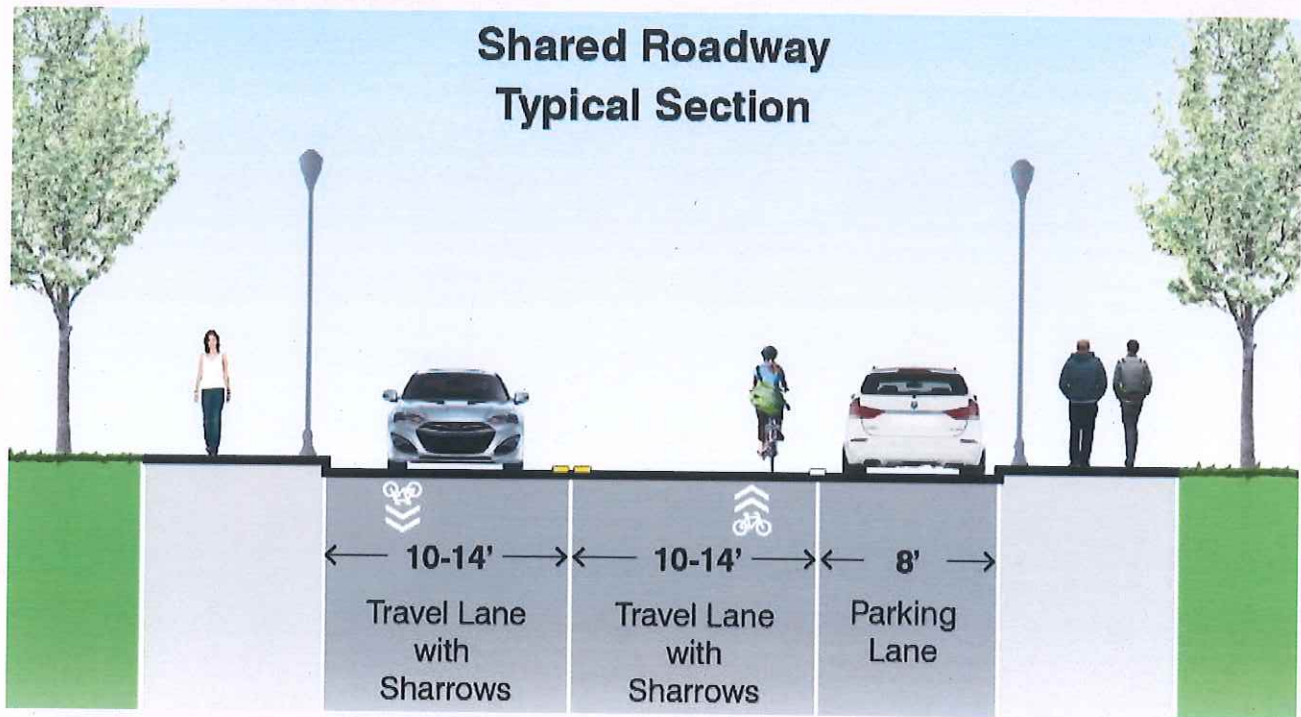


Figure 28: Typical Shared Roadway Section

Shared Roadways

Shared roadways allow bicyclists and motor vehicles to use the same roadway space without any separate right-of-way designations. Shared roadways are delineated by sharrow pavement marking and share-the-road signage. Shared roadways are typically limited to use on local, collector, and minor arterial roadways with a preferred traffic volume of 10,000 vehicles per day or less. The recommended maximum 85th percentile speed for shared roadways is 35 mph or less.

Shared traffic lanes are typically 10-14 feet wide on roads with yellow centerline markings (Figure 28). Sharrows pavement markings should be applied to the roadway

at least every 250 feet, the center of the marking should be placed four feet from the edge of the roadway unless on-street parking is present in which case the marking should be placed 11 feet from the edge of the roadway. The sharrows markings act as both a guide to bicyclists in assisting with wayfinding and roadway positioning and alert motorists to expect the presence of bicyclists. Additionally, the use of the MUTCD R4-11 "Bikes May Use Full Lane" sign should be selectively applied to inform motorists that bicyclists may need to occupy the full traffic lane on a shared road facility.

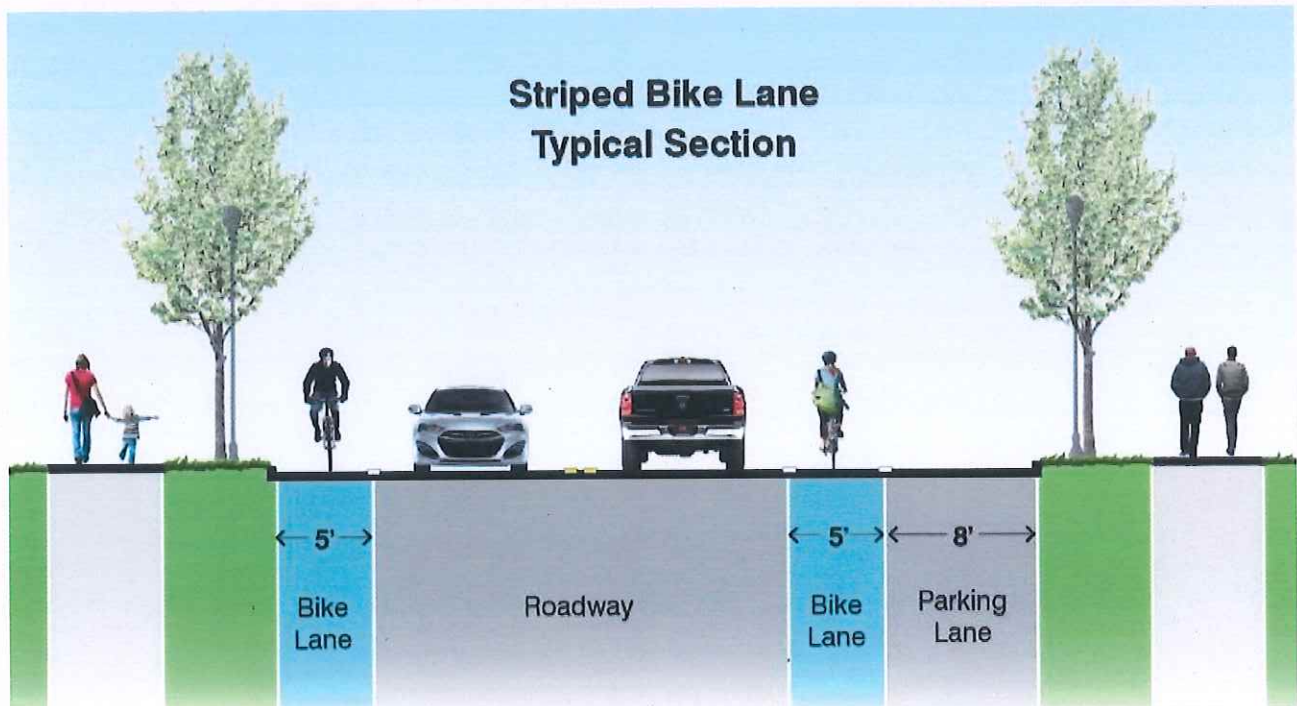


Figure 29: Typical Striped Bike Lane Section

Striped Bike Lanes

Striped bike lanes designate an exclusive space on the roadway for bicycle travel, which is signified by pavement markings, striping, and signage. Striped bike lanes are typically located on the right side of the street (on a two-way street) between a motor vehicle travel lane and the curb, road edge, or parking lane. Striped bike lanes are used on a wide variety of roadways including local, collector, and minor and major arterial roads with a preferred traffic volume of 15,000 vehicles per day or less. The recommended maximum 85th percentile speed for shared traffic lanes is 25 mph or less. Above that speed, a striped bike lane is preferred.

Striped bicycle lanes are typically five to six feet wide and delineated by a six-inch wide white pavement stripe between the traffic lane and bicycle lane (**Figure 29**). Bike lane pavement marking symbols should be applied to the bike lane at intervals no greater than 500 feet apart. The MUTCD R3-17 "Bike Lane Bikes Only" sign is recommended at the beginning of bike lanes and following major intersections but is not required.

IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIVITY



Freehold's downtown has a well-connected pedestrian network with wide sidewalks in commercial areas and amenities such as brick pavement, decorative lighting, street trees, and textured crosswalk treatments. The greatest opportunity within the study area is to extend those treatments into the downtown's municipal parking lots, creating through-block connections in addition to pedestrian facilities around blocks. Additionally, there are multiple opportunities to improve pedestrian crossing of roadways and intersections. Specific improvements include the following recommendations.

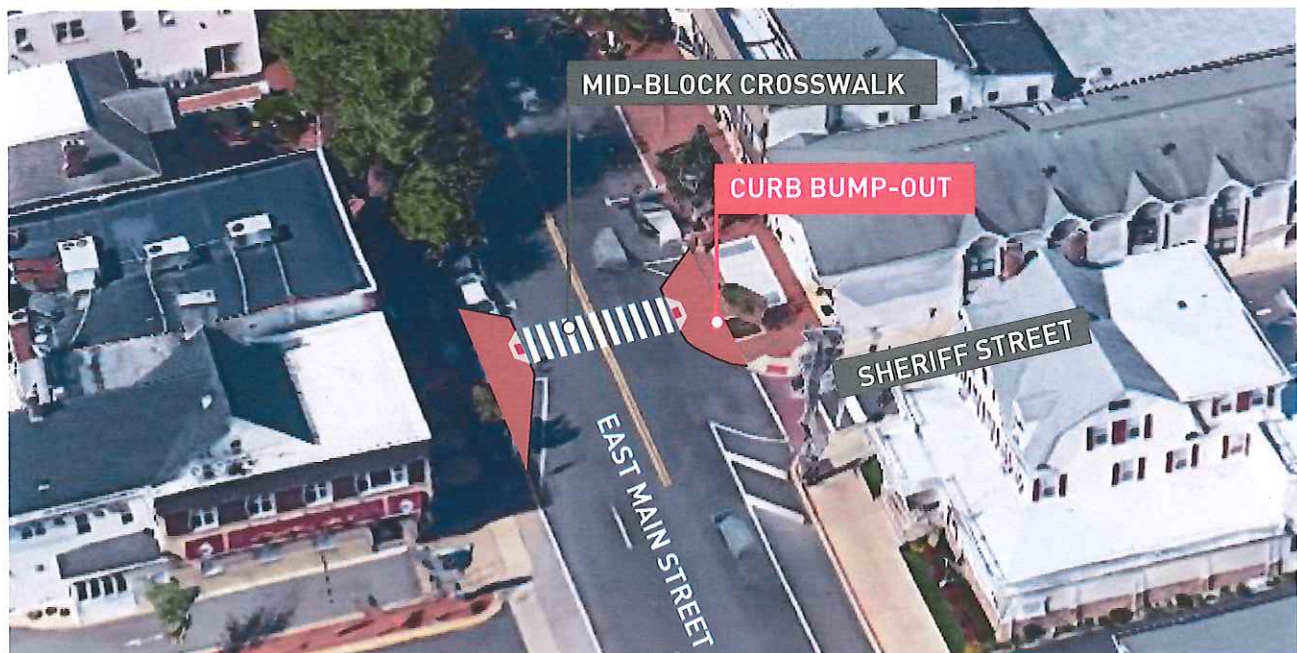
Provide mid-block pedestrian crossings: Install on long blocks such as East Main Street between South Street and Center Street (**Figure 30**) to improve pedestrian safety. Mid-block crossings could be located at the intersection of Sheriff Street and East Main Street or immediately east of the intersection of Courthouse Square and East Main Street. The Sheriff Street intersection is preferable as this location is more centrally located and would be less impacted by westbound traffic queuing caused by the South Street intersection. However, redevelopment of the

Courthouse Square area may make that location more attractive for crossing.

Provide new crosswalks: At the intersection of Monument Street and Court Street.

Provide traffic control at the intersection of West Main Street and Throckmorton Street: Traffic control would greatly improve the safety of crossing pedestrians in front of the bus station. This will require the county to explore whether stop signs or a traffic light is warranted, the approval of which will be subject to a review of crash history, intersection geometry, and peak hour turning movement volumes at the intersection and proximate intersections. Stop signs are recommended as the installation of a traffic signal may more adversely affect traffic operations at the intersection of East Main Street and South Street. Additional recommended improvements include the installation of stamped and colored asphalt at the intersection as a means of providing a visual traffic calming feature and visually connecting the intersection to adjacent brick sidewalks.

Figure 30: Mid-Block Crossing Design



IMPLEMENTATION

STATE INCENTIVES & GRANTS

The State of New Jersey has a plethora of incentives available to developers and property owners, which vary by project size, location, and type. A report that provides a more comprehensive overview of the programs and support available through the EDA is included in [Appendix C](#).

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Grants

The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) was established by Congress in 2012 under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) Act and continued under the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act in 2015. It is funded through the federal Highway Trust Fund. TAP provides federal funds for community based non-traditional projects designed to strengthen the cultural, aesthetic and environmental aspects of the nation's intermodal system.

There are three projects recommended in this report which would likely qualify for TAP funding:

- › Make the bus station a high-quality gateway
- › Improve pedestrian connectivity
- › Provide bicycle facilities throughout the downtown

In order to qualify, projects must fall into one of seven categories. The above projects could qualify under one or more of the following:

- › Design and construction of on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized forms of transportation, example elements may include sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, pedestrian and bicycle signals, traffic calming techniques and lighting.

- › Historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities both land and water such as building structures and canals
- › Community improvement activities, specifically: streetscaping and corridor landscaping

The borough should prioritize the bus station improvements because they are likely to have the largest impact and will send a strong signal that the borough is committed to transit-oriented development.

The TAP program is administered by NJDOT, in partnership with the NJTPA, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) and the South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization (SJTPO).

Invite EDA Staff to Present in Freehold

EDA has staff dedicated to helping municipalities understand their programs. Staff is available to give presentations to local councils, boards, or business communities upon request. The Borough, in partnership with the Downtown Freehold BID, should invite a representative from the EDA to present to local business owners and developers. This presentation could include an overview of the various programs as well as an opportunity for questions and answers.

Support Applicants

Many of the incentive programs provided by EDA require considerable investments on the part of the business. Moreover, they often have lengthy application processes that require considerable documentation. Even small grant programs may be difficult for smaller businesses to navigate. To the greatest extent possible, the borough and/or partnering organization should provide support to applicants who are interested in this process. This support could be provided by a redevelopment specialist, as recommended in **"Hire a Redevelopment Professional"** on pg. 47.

TRANSIT VILLAGE CRITERIA

Moving forward, the borough should be better positioned to apply for the Transit Village program than it was at the beginning of the Planning for Emerging Centers Program. The consultant team has evaluated the borough's status on each of the Transit Village criteria to provide Freehold with outstanding tasks to complete before applying for designation.

The following table identifies each of the criteria and its status. It is important to note that tasks completed during this Planning for Emerging Centers Program study will still need to be formally adopted and/or implemented by the borough to fulfill the criteria.

It is recommended that the proposed Center Core Rehabilitation Area be used as the boundary when the borough applies for Transit Village designation.

TRANSIT VILLAGE CRITERIA

Criteria	Basis for Meeting the Criteria	Responsibility	More Information
1. Attend a pre-meeting application	(a) The municipality has participated in a pre-application meeting with the Transit Village Coordinator no more than six months prior to submitting an application.	Municipal Responsibility	
2. Identify existing transit that serves the municipality	(a) The municipality has identified existing transit that serves the community; either rail, light rail, bus or ferry.	Complete	Existing Conditions Report Chapter 1.6
3. Demonstrate municipal willingness to grow around its transit facility in a transit-supportive manner	(a) The municipality has submitted a resolution by the governing body stipulating its willingness to grow in jobs, housing and population around the transit facility.	Municipal Responsibility	
	(b) The municipality has documented its visioning process, with stakeholder engagement, for the transit village district.	Complete	Existing Conditions Report, Chapter 1.3
	(c) The municipality has provided the portions of its master plan that articulate the plan to grow around its transit facility in a transit-supportive manner.	Municipal Responsibility	See "Adopt the Downtown Vision Plan as a Master Plan Element" on pg. 28
	(d) The municipality has provided a map indicating boundaries of the proposed "transit village district" so that they fall no further than a half-mile radius from the transit facility.	Complete	"Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Grants" on pg. 77
	(e) The municipality has provided a current zoning map identifying all zones in the transit village district along with the applicable zoning codes and land development ordinances.	Municipal Responsibility	See "Adopt Rehabilitation and Redevelopment Plans" on pg. 42
4. Adopt a transit-oriented development (TOD) redevelopment plan and/or a TOD zoning ordinance which includes a residential component	(a) At least one TOD redevelopment plan or TOD zoning ordinance has been adopted that calls for compact, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly, transit-supportive development, including a residential component at a scale and intensity appropriate for the area.	Complete	See "Adopt Rehabilitation and Redevelopment Plans" on pg. 42 and supporting Rehabilitation and Redevelopment Plans
	(b) The municipality has provided a clear map indicating the location of the TOD redevelopment area(s) and/or TOD zone(s).	Complete	"Figure 15: Proposed Rehabilitation and Redevelopment Plan Area Boundaries" on pg. 41
	(c) Each TOD redevelopment plan or zoning ordinance includes or refers to transit-supportive site design guidelines.	Complete	See Downt, Transit Gateway Redevelopment Plan, and Courthouse Square Redevelopment Plan

Criteria	Basis for Meeting the Criteria	Responsibility	More Information
5. Identify individual sites where TOD real estate projects are anticipated	(d) Each TOD redevelopment plan or zoning ordinance includes or refers to transit-supportive architectural design guidelines.	Complete	See Downtown Freehold Rehabilitation Plan, Transit Gateway Redevelopment Plan, and Courthouse Square Redevelopment Plan
	(e) The municipality has enacted and documented a parking management system and/or transit-supportive parking requirements for new development near the transit facility.	Complete	See all recommendations under "Parking" on pg. 59 as well as Downtown Freehold Rehabilitation Plan, Transit Gateway Redevelopment Plan, and Courthouse Square Redevelopment Plan
	(a) The municipality has provided a map showing the location of sites where TOD real estate projects are anticipated. Include description of each (block, lot, address, acreage, current use, ownership, existing zoning, proposed development, etc.)	Municipal Responsibility	See "Figure 15: Proposed Rehabilitation and Redevelopment Plan Area Boundaries" on pg. 41 as well as Downtown Freehold Rehabilitation Plan, Transit Gateway Redevelopment Plan, and Courthouse Square Redevelopment Plan
	(b) The municipality has provided project details and status of projects, from (a) above, that have already been submitted to the planning/zoning board for approvals, and for all other sites provided a summary of proactive steps taken by municipal representatives to help move the project along.	Municipal Responsibility	
	(c) The municipality has made provisions for the production of affordable housing and included the following statement in the land development regulations for each TOD site: <i>"All new development within the transit village district shall adhere to the affordable housing requirements of the State of New Jersey that are in place at the time the development receives municipal site plan approvals."</i>	Partially Completed	Language has been included in all Rehabilitation and Redevelopment Plans. Municipality will be responsible for documenting what provision has been made for the production of affordable housing

TRANSIT VILLAGE CRITERIA

Criteria	Basis for Meeting the Criteria	Responsibility	More Information
6. Identify bicycle and pedestrian improvements	(a) The municipality has demonstrated a commitment to improving the general bicycle and pedestrian friendliness of the transit village district through adopted municipal policies, redevelopment objectives, a bike/ped master plan, a complete streets policy, etc.	Municipal Responsibility	See all recommendations under "Bike & Pedestrian Improvements" on pg. 71
	(b) The municipality has implemented at least one bike/ped infrastructure project in the transit village district such as shared use paths, dedicated bicycle lanes, traffic calming, removal of barriers, sidewalk improvements, etc.	Municipal Responsibility	See all recommendations under "Bike & Pedestrian Improvements" on pg. 71
	(c) The municipality has planned at least one bike/ped infrastructure project in the transit village district such as shared use paths, dedicated bicycle lanes, traffic calming, removal of barriers, sidewalk improvements, etc. If such a project is planned, the municipality must provide plans, funding source and time frame for completion.	Complete	See all recommendations under "Bike & Pedestrian Improvements" on pg. 71
7. Identify Placemaking efforts near transit	(a) The municipality has added value to the station area with at least one existing or planned amenity such as: public park or plaza with seating, civic building, sculpture or statue, ornamental clock, fountain, memorial, information kiosk, wayfinding signage, etc. If an amenity is planned for the future the municipality must provide plans, funding information, implementation details and timeline.	Municipal Responsibility	See all recommendations under "Bus Station" on pg. 32 and under "Bike & Pedestrian Improvements" on pg. 71
	(b) A management organization (such as chamber of commerce, a Main Street organization, improvement district) or other form of organized stewardship is in place or planned for the transit village district. If planned, the municipality must provide a budget, a work plan and time frame for implementation.	Municipal Responsibility	
	<i>Meet at least two of the following:</i>		
	(c) The municipality has documented at least two regularly scheduled community events (farmers markets, street fairs, memorial events, parades or similar) that take place within view of the transit facility.	Municipal Responsibility	
	(d) Steps have been taken to maintain and enhance historic character of the district by establishing at least one of the following: historic design guidelines, historic district or architectural review board.	Municipal Responsibility	

Criteria	Basis for Meeting the Criteria	Responsibility	More Information
	(e) The municipality has documented at least two examples of ongoing arts, entertainment or cultural activities (theater, concerts, poetry readings, arts exhibitions, dance classes, etc.) that take place within half-mile of the transit facility.	Municipal Responsibility	
	(f) If the blocks/streets closest to the transit facility remain pleasantly active after dark, the municipality has provided a list of all businesses, restaurants, stores, etc. within sight of the transit facility that provide “eyes on the street” beyond 5 pm. Provide map and business hours.	Municipal Responsibility	

FREEHOLD PLANNING FOR EMERGING CENTERS



Report prepared for the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority and Freehold Borough by:

Group Melvin Design;
Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.; and
Phillips Preiss Grygiel LLC