

Background

It was brought to OPA's attention by the current owner, Cranbury Brick Yard, LLC that they received a Letter of Interpretation (LOI) from the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) that a portion of Lot 10 is not considered wetlands and that the area is not environmentally sensitive.

The following roads abut Lot 10, to the west - US Highway 130; to the south - Brick Yard Road and to the east - Hightstown Cranbury Station Road.

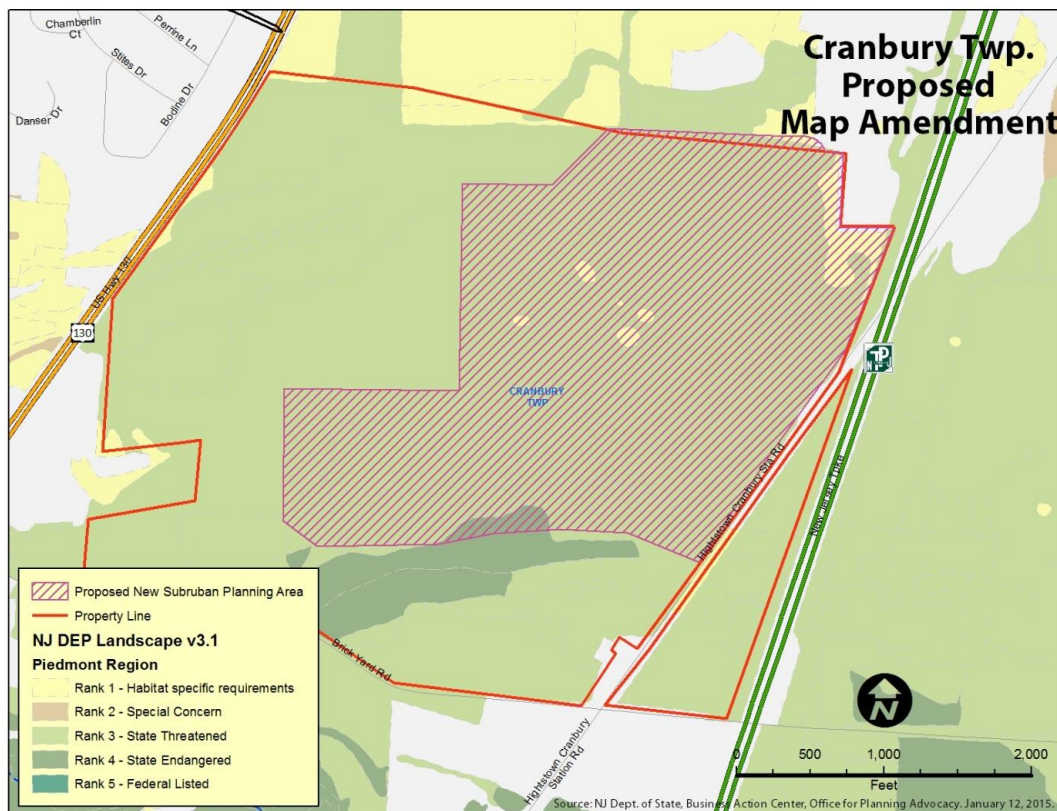
The area under consideration is 175 acres that is part of Block 10, Lot 10 in the Township of Cranbury, Middlesex County. Currently Lot 10 is designated as Rural Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area (PA4B) and adjacent to Suburban Planning Area (PA 2) to the North.

The Township of Cranbury's Zoning Map shows that the subject property and much of the surrounding area are currently zoned as Industrial – Light Impact.

Before World War II, the area was actively farmed. In the 1940's through the 1950's, the previous owner of the property manufactured explosives on the property. After an explosion at the plant, it was closed in 1954. Due to the explosion, dumping, disposal and testing, the property was left an area of Munitions and Explosives of Concern (MEC) which DEP and the Army Corp of Engineers are tasked with overseeing the cleanup.

The subject property was purchased and sold several times since the 1950s until it was acquired by Cranbury Brick Yard, LLC in 2006.

There are minimal environmental constraints on the 175 acres beyond the wetlands from the LOI.



A remedial action work plan (RAWP) was approved by the DEP in 2009 and the remediation of the MEC contaminated areas is underway. The remediation involves a multi-step approach, including soil screening, soil removal, and site engineering controls. The site engineering controls will consist of a fence and supplemental barrier, which includes buildings, parking areas, and roadways.

The property owner received Preliminary Site Plan Approval in 2012 to construct three single story warehouse buildings with office space. The first will consist of 1,325,788 square feet (sf) of warehouse space and 40,600 sf of office. The second proposed building will be 977,003 sf of warehouse and 29,960 sf of office. The third will consist of 433,705 sf of warehouse and 22,470 sf of office.

APPENDIX A

Land Use Permits/Approvals

- NJDEP Flood Hazard Area Line Verification – dated 4 January 2008;
- NJDEP Wetlands LOI – dated 14 August 2008; and,
- NJDEP Remedial Action Workplan Approval – dated 21 April 2009;
- Middlesex County Preliminary Site Plan Approval – dated 18 March 2010;
- Cranbury Township Preliminary Site Plan Approval – dated 2 August 2012;
- Freehold Soil Conservation District – dated 19 December 2012;
- NJDEP Flood Hazard Area Verification and Individual Permit – dated 28 January 2013;
- NJDEP Individual Freshwater Wetland Permit – dated 28 January 2013;
- Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission Development Approval Recommendation – dated 14 November 2013.

The subject property is located immediately adjacent to several existing and planned industrial developments, an active rail line (CSAO/Amboy rail line) and two State highways (i.e., Route 130 and New Jersey Turnpike). The land uses in the immediate vicinity of the subject property include industrial, commercial, agricultural, and residential uses. Industrial and commercial buildings border the subject property to the north, south and west. The subject property is located within the industrial land complex known as the “Area East of Route 130” as described in the Township of Cranbury Master Plan. This large industrial area, located between Route 130 and the New Jersey Turnpike, is intended to provide for similar types of uses resulting in a contiguous land use of industrial, office and warehouse development near the major highways and away from residential development in the Township.

Middlesex County is seeking the inclusion of the approved redevelopment area in the proposed mapped sewer service area of the Lower Raritan-Middlesex County Water Quality Management Plan. This mapping within the wastewater service area will support development consistent with the subject property’s historical industrial use, current zoning, and existing approvals for development.

Outcomes

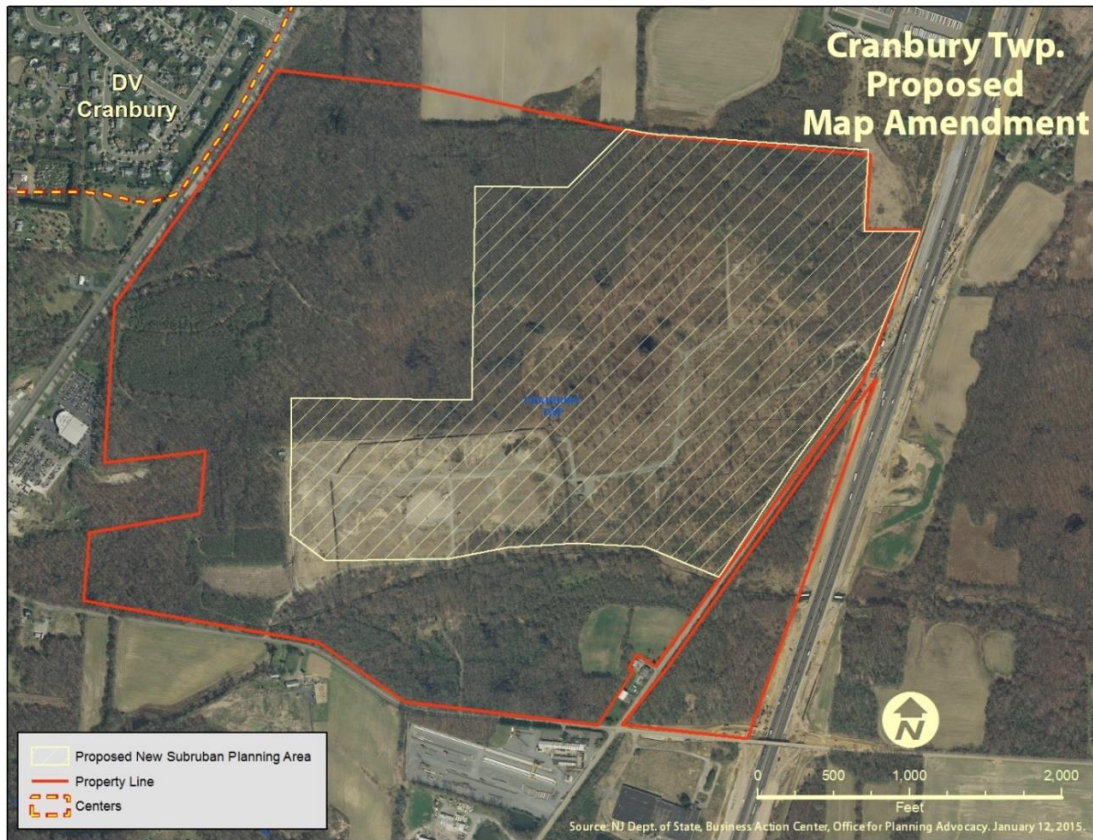
1. Remediation and redevelopment of a brownfield property into a real estate tax generating property where approximately 800 employees will work.

The proposed amendment supports the remediation of the subject property and proper engineering controls to make the subject property safer and healthier for the community, preventing the potential for human contact with MEC on the subject property. The estimated cost of the cleanup is \$30-40 million excluding the final engineering controls (asphalt and concrete). The Proposed Amendment Area has been thoughtfully located in the portion of the subject property that requires remediation, reducing impacts to natural resource areas to the extent practicable. The undeveloped, natural resource areas on Lot 10 account for approximately 236 acres of the entire approximately 390-acre subject property. Of this total, approximately 203 acres will be permanently protected as habitat preservation area.

Remediation of the MEC contaminated areas onsite, which comprises approximately 175 acres, is currently underway. Remediation of the MEC contaminated areas involves a multi-step approach that includes an engineering control-fence (provides access control to the hazard zone), MEC screening and removal, and approximately 122 acres of a MEC engineering control and supplemental barrier to address potential residual contamination and provide a barrier between residual contamination and future land users. The approved RAWP identifies that portion of the property that is currently being remediated through the removal of vegetation, sifting of soils for MEC, and construction of a supplemental barrier to limit potential future MEC exposure. The supplemental barrier will include buildings, parking areas, and roadways.

More than 2.5 million square feet of warehouse space will be built in three buildings at an estimated cost of more than \$100 million.

2. The property will benefit from greater incentives from the Economic Opportunity Act 2013 Part III.
3. Through the Rail Freight Assistance Program Funding (RFAP), a transload facility might be funded for a spur serving at least two customers on the site.



Justification for Consideration

Existing designation – PA 4B

New designation – PA 2

1. The remediation and redevelopment of the property is consistent with Goal 1 to “revitalize the State cities and towns” and Goal 3 of the State Plan, to promote “beneficial economic growth, development and renewal for all residents of New Jersey.”
2. The previous assumption that there were significant wetlands on this portion of the property is inaccurate.
3. Through the remediation more than 203 acres will be permanently protected as habitat preservation area which supports Goal 2 of the State Plan to Conserve the State’s Natural Resources and Systems
4. The Municipality and County have been made aware of and support this proposed amendment.

To view the complete report submitted by the property owner, go to <http://nj.gov/state/planning/docs/map-adendment-cranbury-brick-yard-7-7-2014.zip>

Public Hearing and Public Comment

A public hearing was held on Thursday, February 26, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. at the Cranbury Public Library, 23 North Main Street, Cranbury, NJ 08512. Only one person, Township Committee Member, Glenn Johnson attended the meeting. He reiterated the Township's support for the Planning Area change. We also talked about other planning efforts being considered by the Township and assistance they might need.

No other public comments were received.