

# **Cole & Associates, LLC**

3986 Princeton Pike Lawrenceville, NJ 08648

## **REDEVELOPMENT PLAN**

### **EASTERN CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT**

#### **BOROUGH OF SOMERVILLE SOMERSET COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**

**January 23, 2008**



Borough of Somerville  
Eastern Central Business District  
Redevelopment Plan

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# REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

## EASTERN CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

### I. INTRODUCTION

The Somerville Borough Council has designated the eastern portion of the Borough's central business district an area in need of redevelopment. The redevelopment area was designated after investigations and findings by the Planning Board and presented in a report entitled "Eastern Central Business District Redevelopment Study", dated February, 1999. Since the area has been found to be an area in need of redevelopment, the Borough is authorized by the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 et seq. (hereafter, LRHL), to prepare a redevelopment plan to improve all or a portion of the study area. In the language of the LRHL, a "redevelopment plan" is:

*"...a plan adopted by the governing body of a municipality for the redevelopment or rehabilitation of all or any part of a redevelopment area, or an area in need of rehabilitation, which plan shall be sufficiently complete to indicate its relationship to definite municipal objectives as to appropriate land uses, public transportation and utilities, recreational and municipal facilities, and other public improvements; and to indicate proposed land uses and building requirements in the redevelopment area or area in need of rehabilitation, or both."*

### II. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

In the redevelopment area designation study referenced above, several problems affecting the area were identified. This redevelopment plan is intended to address these problems to the greatest extent practicable. The goals and objectives of the plan include the following:

- To reinforce and support the retail base of the central business district through general redevelopment of the area, promoting an appropriate mixture of retail, service, office and residential uses, prohibiting inappropriate uses, providing additional parking for shoppers, employees and residents, and encouraging aesthetic improvements.
- To eliminate conflicts between various existing land uses either by removal or alteration of such uses. When elimination of such conflicts is not possible, the plan seeks to mitigate such conflicts through use, bulk and buffer regulations.

- To provide improved housing conditions through the development of new dwelling units, including both market-rate and affordable housing.
- To improve vehicular traffic flow and safety by reducing the number of driveway openings and inappropriate on-street parking spaces, by planning for various street improvements, and by promoting transit-oriented development within walking distance of the Somerville rail station and local bus routes.
- To encourage the assembly of undersized parcels in order to accommodate improved use, layout and design of buildings and other improvements.
- To provide incentives for fuller utilization of vacant or under-developed properties.
- To reduce overcrowding of buildings and pavement on undersized lots.
- To promote the creation of additional off-street parking to serve existing and new development within the area.
- To enhance the streetscape through pedestrian improvements such as upgraded pavement, lighting, street trees and planters, benches and similar improvements, and through the installation/relocation of electric, telephone and cable television lines underground.
- To increase property values and tax revenues in the area through general redevelopment of the area.
- To improve the esthetic appearance of the area through general redevelopment, upgraded design, increased landscaping, buffers and screening of unattractive areas.
- To provide incentives for the remediation of existing soil and/or groundwater contamination in the area through redevelopment of contaminated properties.
- To mitigate impacts from flooding by increasing open space along Peter's Brook and through the redesign and redevelopment of flood-prone areas.

### **III. DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS**

The redevelopment plan provides for two layers of development standards. The first, or base, layer is intended to guide the continued use and development of existing properties in the area under current ownership and development conditions. The policies for this layer are intended to permit and encourage minor development changes that are consistent with the overall redevelopment plan, while discouraging and/or prohibiting inconsistent development changes. The standards of the base layer are expected to be the basis for the day-to-day development of most of the properties in the area.

The second, or overlay, layer is intended to guide major redevelopment projects within the area. The overlay standards will apply only if and when a developer acquires larger contiguous blocks of property that provide adequate space for buildings, off-street parking and other improvements in accordance with the plan. A major development is a project that meets the lot, bulk and intensity of development standards as stated in Schedule B-Lot, Bulk & Intensity of Use Standards. The permitted intensity of development for these areas is higher than under the first layer of development standards. In addition, the plan provides for tax abatement for such major redevelopment projects. The specifics of the tax abatement will be described in the redevelopment agreement between the developer and the Somerville Borough.

### **IV. BASE ZONING**

The enclosed map, entitled "BASE ZONING", shows the various districts within the redevelopment area that apply to all development except for major redevelopment projects. The development standards for each of these districts are described below and on the enclosed tables of permitted uses and lot, bulk & intensity of development standards (Schedules A & B).

#### **E-B1 District**

The intent of the E-B1 district is to promote the policies of the B-1 district, except as indicated otherwise herein, until such time that redevelopment occurs pursuant to the overlay district regulations set forth in this redevelopment plan. The regulations for the E-B1 district shall be the same as for the B-1 district in the Land Use Ordinance, Chapter 102, except as otherwise required by this redevelopment plan, as follows:

- A. Permitted Uses. See Schedule A-Permitted Uses & Structures. In addition, accessory uses and structures that are customarily incidental to permitted principal uses shall also be permitted.
- B. Lot, Bulk and Intensity of Use Standards. See Schedule B-Lot, Bulk and Intensity of Development Standards. In addition, the following lot, bulk and intensity of use standards shall supplement or, in case of conflict, supersede the development standards in the schedule:

1. Front yard: minimum 0 feet, maximum 10 feet.
2. Side yard: minimum 0 feet, but if not 0 feet, not less than 12 feet.

### **E-B2 District**

The intent of the E-B2 district is to promote the policies of the B-2 district, except as indicated otherwise herein, until such time that redevelopment occurs pursuant to the overlay district regulations set forth in this redevelopment plan. The regulations for the E-B2 district shall be the same as for the B-2 district in the Land Use Ordinance, Chapter 102, except as otherwise required by this redevelopment plan, as follows:

- A. Permitted Uses. See Schedule A-Permitted Uses & Structures. In addition, accessory uses and structures that are customarily incidental to permitted principal uses shall also be permitted.
- B. Lot, Bulk and Intensity of Use Standards. See Schedule B-Lot, Bulk and Intensity of Development Standards. In addition, the following lot, bulk and intensity of use standards shall supplement or, in case of conflict, supersede the development standards in the schedule:
  1. Front yard: minimum 0 feet, maximum 10 feet.
  2. Side yard: minimum 0 feet, but if not 0 feet, not less than 12 feet.

### **E-B3 District**

The intent of the E-B3 district is to promote the policies of the B-3 district, except as indicated otherwise herein, until such time that redevelopment occurs pursuant to the overlay district regulations set forth in this redevelopment plan. The regulations for the E-B3 district shall be the same as for the B-3 district in the Land Use Ordinance, Chapter 102, except as otherwise required by this redevelopment plan, as follows:

- A. Permitted Uses. See Schedule A-Permitted Uses & Structures. In addition, accessory uses and structures that are customarily incidental to permitted principal uses shall also be permitted.
- B. Lot, Bulk and Intensity of Use Standards. See Schedule B-Lot, Bulk and Intensity of Development Standards.



## **E-PR District**

The intent of the E-PR district is promote the policies of the PO-R district, except as indicated otherwise herein, to preserve and rehabilitate historic and architecturally significant buildings and properties in the district and to promote compatible rehabilitation and development of non-historic buildings and properties in the district. In addition to the policies set forth in this redevelopment plan, the Borough may choose to establish a rehabilitation program and/or historic district regulations for the district as a future amendment of this plan and/or the Land Use Ordinance. The regulations for the E-PR district shall be the same as for the PO-R district in the Land Use Ordinance, Chapter 102, except as otherwise required by this redevelopment plan, as follows:

- A. Permitted Uses. See Schedule A-Permitted Uses & Structures. In addition, accessory uses and structures that are customarily incidental to permitted principal uses shall also be permitted.
- B. Lot, Bulk and Intensity of Use Standards - Professional Office/Mixed Office-Residential Use. See Schedule B-Lot, Bulk and Intensity of Development Standards.
- C. Lot, Bulk and Intensity of Use Standards – Single Family Residence Use. See Schedule B-Lot, Bulk and Intensity of Development Standards.

## **E-R2 District**

The intent of the E-R2 district is to promote the policies of the R-2 district, except as indicated otherwise herein, until such time that redevelopment occurs pursuant to the overlay district regulations set forth in this redevelopment plan. The requirements for the E-R2 district are the same as set forth for the R-2 district in the Borough Land Use Ordinance, Chapter 102 of the Borough Code, except as otherwise required by this redevelopment plan, as follows:

- A. Permitted Uses. See Schedule A-Permitted Uses & Structures. In addition, accessory uses and structures that are customarily incidental to permitted principal uses shall also be permitted.
- B. Lot, Bulk and Intensity of Use Standards – Single Family Residence Use. See Schedule B-Lot, Bulk and Intensity of Development Standards.

## **V. OVERLAY ZONING**

The enclosed map, entitled “OVERLAY ZONING”, shows the various districts within the redevelopment area that are to apply to all major redevelopment projects. The development standards specified below only apply if the redevelopment project meets the lot, bulk & intensity of development requirements stated in the Eastern Central Business District Redevelopment Lot, Bulk & Intensity of Development Standards chart (Schedule B).

The development policies and standards for each of these overlay districts are described below and on the enclosed tables of permitted uses and lot, bulk & intensity of development standards (Schedules A & B).

### **Retail Overlay District**

- A. Permitted Uses. See Schedule A-Permitted Uses & Structures. In addition, accessory uses and structures that are customarily incidental to permitted principal uses shall also be permitted.
- B. Lot, Bulk and Intensity of Use Standards. See Schedule B-Lot, Bulk and Intensity of Development Standards. In addition, the following lot, bulk and intensity of use standards shall supplement or, in case of conflict, supersede the development standards in the schedule:
  - 1. Front yard: minimum 0 feet, maximum 10 feet
  - 2. Minimum each side yard: 0 feet, but if not 0 feet, not less than 12 feet.
- C. Other Requirements. In addition to the general supplemental requirements in this redevelopment plan (see below) the following other requirements shall apply in the Retail Overlay District:
  - 1. All requirements applicable in the B-2 district in the Land Use Ordinance shall apply, except as superseded by this redevelopment plan.
  - 2. On Block 68, lot 17 the developer shall be required to provide a gateway feature at the intersection of Main Street and Park Avenue. The gateway feature shall be designed to provide a visual entry landmark to the central business district.
  - 3. The Redevelopment Plan identifies a portion of Park Avenue to be vacated. Specifically, a portion of the western right of way (abutting the adjoining parcels) shall be vacated, for the entire length of Park Avenue (between East Main & East High Street) as depicted on the attached ECBD Redevelopment Area Public Improvements Map. The width of Park Avenue will be reduced to accommodate two (2) travel lanes; one in each direction and

on street parking on both sides of the street. If the frontage of the proposed development is equal to or greater than 75%, of the entire length of Park Avenue, the developer shall perform the necessary vacation for the entire length of Park Avenue. If the frontage of the proposed development is less than 75 % of the entire length of Park Avenue the developer is required to pay for its fair share of the cost to perform the necessary improvements required to vacate the portion of Park Avenue where the development is located (i.e. the frontage of the development). The terms and conditions how the vacation of Park Avenue will occur shall be pursuant to a redevelopment agreement between the developer and Borough Council.

4. On Block 65, lot 3 the developer shall be required to provide a gateway feature at the intersection of Main Street and Veterans Memorial Drive. The gateway feature shall be designed to provide a visual entry landmark to the central business district.

#### **Retail-Hotel Overlay**

- A. Permitted Uses. See Schedule A-Permitted Uses & Structures. In addition, accessory uses and structures that are customarily incidental to permitted principal uses shall also be permitted.
- B. Lot, Bulk and Intensity of Use Standards. See Schedule B-Lot, Bulk and Intensity of Development Standards. In addition, the following lot, bulk and intensity of use standards shall supplement or, in case of conflict, supersede the development standards in the schedule:
  1. Front yard: minimum 0 feet, maximum 10 feet
  2. Minimum each side yard: 0 feet, except as provided otherwise by the buffer requirements of C.2 below
  3. Minimum both side yards: 0 feet, except as provided otherwise by the buffer requirements of C.2 below
  4. Minimum rear yard: 25 feet, except as provided otherwise by the buffer requirements of C.2 below
  5. Maximum building height: 6 stories or 90 feet, whichever is more restrictive provided, however, that the height of any portion of a building or buildings located within 100 feet of that portion of the E-PR district not located within the Retail-Hotel overlay district shall not exceed one foot for each foot of horizontal distance of such portion from said E-PR district.

### C. Other Requirements

In addition to the general supplemental requirements in this redevelopment plan (see below) the following other requirements shall apply in the Retail-Hotel overlay district:

1. All requirements applicable in the B-2 district in the Land Use Ordinance shall apply, except as superseded by this redevelopment plan.
2. A planted buffer shall be created between any development adjoining a portion of the E-PR district not located within the Retail-Hotel overlay district. The depth of the buffer shall be not less than 25 feet, or one foot for each foot of building height of that portion of the building or buildings located within 100 feet of said E-PR district, whichever is greater.

### Office-Services Overlay

- A. Permitted Uses. See Schedule A -Permitted Uses & Structures. In addition, accessory uses and structures that are customarily incidental to permitted principal uses shall also be permitted.
- B. Lot, Bulk and Intensity of Use Standards. See Schedule B -Lot, Bulk and Intensity of Development Standards. In addition, the following lot, bulk and intensity of use standards shall supplement or, in case of conflict, supersede the development standards in the schedule:
  1. Minimum each side yard: 10 feet, except as provided otherwise by the buffer requirements of C.3 below
  2. Minimum both side yards: 20 feet, except as provided otherwise by the buffer requirements of C.3 below
  3. Minimum rear yard: 25 feet, except as provided otherwise by the buffer requirements of C.3 below
  4. Maximum building height: 5 stories or 75 feet, whichever is more restrictive provided, however, that the height of any portion of a building or buildings located within 100 feet of that portion of the E-B3 district not located within the Office-Services overlay district shall not exceed 3 stories.

### C. Other Requirements

In addition to the general supplemental requirements in this redevelopment plan (see below) the following other requirements shall apply in the Office-Services overlay district:

1. All requirements applicable in the B-3 district in the Land Use Ordinance shall apply, except as superseded by this redevelopment plan.
2. On Block 58, lot 23 the developer shall be required to reserve the eastern portion of the area as open space. The extent of the area and the nature of improvements to be made shall be determined by the Borough Council as part of a redevelopment agreement with the developer. This open space shall be intended as an expansion of the existing parkland to the east and is intended to accommodate flooding by Peter's Brook in the area.
3. Any development on Block 61, lot 1 & 4 shall provide a planted buffer between with Block 61, lot 3. The depth of the buffer shall be not less than 20 feet.
4. The developer on Block 61, lot 8, 9, 10, 17, 18, 19 & 20 shall provide an option to the Borough to acquire and develop the property in accordance with the Borough's emergency services master plan.
5. Any development on Block 65, lot 4 shall provide either open space and/or public parking along the frontage along Veterans Memorial Drive East as determined by the Borough Council as part of a redevelopment agreement with the developer.
6. All developments shall be mixed use and contain a combination of residential/retail, office-services/retail/residential, office-services/residential. The retail component in any building shall be located on either the first and/or second floors. Innovative concepts in which roof and/or top floor of the buildings is proposed for retail will be reviewed on a case by case basis and (at the discretion of the Planning Board) may be found to be consistent with this Plan. In no case will retail located in the middle of the building, surrounded by either residential or commercial floors, be acceptable. The requirement to have all developments mixed use may (at the discretion of the Planning Board) be waived on a case by case basis, if the applicant can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Planning Board that single use is more appropriate.
7. The intent of the mixed use is to allow office-services and residences to attract and support limited retail within the zone and in the immediate areas surrounding the zone. To this end, the retail envisioned within this zone are not destinations but are accessory

uses supported by the critical mass generated by the office-services and residences. Therefore, a maximum retail use of the building is 15% of the buildings gross floor area (GFA). The maximum percent retail use of the building may be increased up to 25% by the Planning Board if the applicant can demonstrate (to the satisfaction of the Planning Board) that the proposed retail will not compete with Main Street businesses, will be supported by the development and the community immediately surrounding the development.

8. The above stated requirements in items C.6 & C.7 are for the overall development. If the development consists of more than building and the uses vary by building, the compliance with the maximum retail percent of the project will be determined by the overall GFA of the development.
9. As reiterated in Section VI. Item F all developments shall satisfy the COAH affordable housing obligation. The COAH affordable housing obligation shall be met onsite unless the Planning Board specifically approves a development that does not include a residential component. The residential obligation shall be 2.5 times the COAH obligation. For example, if a 64,000 office building was proposed, the COAH obligation (using the old Round III methodology) would be 8 units and developer would be required to build a minimum of 20 units of residential (2.5 times the COAH obligation) within the development or ECBD area. If the residential component of the development will be satisfied off site (for cases where the Planning Board approved a non-residential development) by conversion of existing apartments to low and moderate income COAH units, the remaining number of apartments shall be 2.5 times greater than the COAH obligation. See Section VI. Item F for details regarding the COAH obligation.
10. If a mid rise apartment building is proposed the secondary use shall be retail or office-services at the percentage and stipulations reiterated above in C.6 & C.7.

### **Multi-Family Residential Overlay**

- A. Permitted Uses. See Schedule A -Permitted Uses & Structures. In addition, accessory uses and structures that are customarily incidental to permitted principal uses shall also be permitted. Accessory uses and structures that are customarily incidental to permitted principal uses shall also be permitted.
- B. Lot, Bulk and Intensity of Use Standards. See Schedule B -Lot, Bulk and Intensity of Development Standards.
  1. Front yard: minimum 0 feet, maximum 10 feet

**C. Other Requirements**

In addition to the general supplemental requirements in this redevelopment plan (see below) the following other requirements shall apply in the Multi-Family Residential overlay district:

1. All requirements applicable in the R-3 district in the Land Use Ordinance shall apply, except as superseded by this redevelopment plan.
2. The Redevelopment Plan identifies a portion of Park Avenue to be vacated. Specifically a portion of the western right of way (abutting the adjoining parcels) shall be vacated, for the entire length of Park Avenue (between East Main & East High Street) as depicted on the attached ECBD Redevelopment Area Public Improvements Map. The width of Park Avenue will be reduced to accommodate two (2) travel lanes; one in each direction and on street parking on both sides of the street. If the frontage of the proposed development is equal to or greater than 75% of the entire length of Park Avenue, the developer shall perform the necessary vacation for the entire length of Park Avenue. If the frontage of the proposed development is less than 75 % of the entire length of Park Avenue the developer is required to pay for its fair share of the cost to perform the necessary improvements required to vacate the portion of Park Avenue where the development is located (i.e. the frontage of the development). The terms and conditions how the vacation of Park Avenue will occur shall be pursuant to a redevelopment agreement between the developer and Borough Council.
3. Driveways serving residences shall not be permitted from Main Street.

**VI. Supplemental Requirements**

The supplemental requirements stated below are applicable to the Base and Overlay zoning.

**A. Architectural Design**

In addition to any other applicable requirements in the Land Use Ordinance, buildings shall be designed in accordance with the following requirements:

1. Building facades shall be designed in a manner compatible with the existing historical facades on Main Street, particularly as to building materials, colors and textures, building projections and recesses, fenestration, storefront design and roof design, and as set forth in Special Improvement District design

guidelines. Buildings constructed throughout the redevelopment areas should add character to the Somerville and reflect the historic styles found within the Borough and region. High quality materials should be used and these buildings should be designed to achieve a life span of at least 75 years. Acceptable building materials include wood clapboard siding, brick, and decorative concrete, terra cotta, ceramic/glazed tile as well as other natural materials such as marble, granite and cedar shakes. EIFS and other synthetic stucco materials are prohibited. Vinyl siding is discouraged.

2. Buildings shall be built within 10 feet of the property lines facing the street (only applicable to the overlay zoning). This “build to line” results in the creation of “street walls”. Street walls are the vertical plane defined by buildings along the street and they reinforce a pedestrian friendly streetscape. The identity of the redevelopment area shall be shaped by buildings, not parking lots. If the building fronts on a curved street, the building curb cuts are encourage to be on side streets. If this is not possible, the building set back shall accommodate the sight triangle for the curb cuts.
3. Horizontal and vertical differentiation of large façade areas shall be broken down so as to appear as a series of different buildings, each building façade should be of scale of buildings found in Somerville. The horizontal façade shall be spaced a maximum of 50 feet. The design and dimensions of bays shall be varied to create interest. A repetitive pattern shall not be used. The base (lower one level), middle and top of the buildings shall be distinguished from one another by changes in material, masonry, fenestration pattern, trims cornices, etc. The building facades should have a similar alignment of window sills, building lines, floor line, cornice, rooflines and floor to floor spacing.
4. When it is unavoidable that parking garages be visible from streets and other public spaces, the facades shall be designed in a manner compatible with the existing historical facades on Main Street, particularly as to building materials, colors and textures. Ideally the structured parking should be on the first level and/or upper levels of buildings, within the interior of a block or fully below grade so that the parking is hidden from view of streets and other public areas (parking areas located on the first or upper level of buildings would be in the interior of the building and would be screened by ground floor retail or commercial spaces).
5. Parking garages should be integrated with the buildings that they serve so that access is available on multiple levels.



Pedestrian pathways between buildings and parking garages shall be covered and have a minimum width of 10 feet, well lit, and be highly visible.

6. Orient buildings and main building entrances to face streets or other important public spaces, and clearly mark and frame these entrances architecturally with columns, lintels, pediments, canopies or other architectural features. Buildings oriented toward parking lots shall be prohibited.

B. Minimum Habitable Floor Area Per Dwelling Unit

A one bedroom unit shall be a min. of 800 square feet and a two bedroom unit shall be a min. of 1,000 square feet. Habitable floor area shall be measured to the interior face of the walls that define the limits of the apartment/townhouse/patio home and shall exclude common hallways, stair wells, elevator shafts and other common areas, such as (but not limited to) common utility areas, ventilation shafts and chimneys and shall exclude any basement areas.

C. Number of Bedrooms

Each dwelling unit shall contain at least one bedroom, but not more than two bedrooms. At least 35% of all dwelling units shall be one-bedroom units. This requirement is applicable to each redevelopment area at the completion of each phase/area.

D. Parking Requirements.

Parking shall be provided in the base and overlay districts as required by § 102-118. Notwithstanding the foregoing, a mixed-use shared parking approach shall be permitted, which approach may supersede § 102-118B and § 102-118B(7), as appropriate and as determined by the Planning Board, upon the submission of adequate proofs by the developer that such an approach would reduce the parking demand from the development below that which would otherwise be required. All off-street parking spaces shall be provided in structured garages, at the center of a building wrapped by residential, commercial or retail uses, or located at the rear of a building away from view of streets, pedestrian paths and open spaces. No parking is permitted within the front yard setback of any building. The entire ECBD (Eastern Central Business District) Redevelopment Plan envisions Transit Orientated Development (TOD). TOD is compact, pedestrian friendly mixed use development that is located within easy walking distance of the train station (all of the ECBD is located within ½ mile of the train station). The Planning Board will entertain reduction of the parking requirements for TOD upon submission of adequate proofs by the developer.

E. Street and Streetscape Design

In addition to any improvements determined necessary by traffic studies for any redevelopment proposal, the following shall be required:

1. Main Street

- a. Cartway: The cartway width and design shall remain the same as existing before redevelopment, except as determined otherwise by the Board based upon traffic studies and N.J.D.O.T. requirements.
- b. Sidewalk improvements (e.g., pavers, street trees, lighting, planters, etc.) shall be provided and/or maintained consistent with existing sidewalk improvements in the Special Improvement District.
- c. Minimum sidewalk width: 15 feet, measured from the street curb to the building.

2. Veterans Memorial Drive

- a. Minimum number of lanes of travel, including dedicated turning lanes (if any): 3, with the final number to be determined by the Board based upon traffic studies.
- b. Parallel parking shall be provided on both sides of street.
- c. Minimum cartway width, including parking: preliminarily 50 feet, with the final width to be determined by the Board based upon traffic studies.
- d. Dedicated left turn lanes shall be provided as determined by the Board based upon traffic studies.
- e. Sidewalk improvements (e.g., pavers, street trees, lighting, planters, etc.) shall be provided consistent with the existing sidewalk improvements in the Special Improvement District.
- f. Minimum sidewalk width: 8 feet, measured from the street curb to the building.

### 3. Other Streets

- a. Minimum number of lanes of travel, including dedicated turning lanes (if any): 2, with the final number to be determined by the Board based upon traffic studies.
- b. Minimum cartway width: 12 feet per travel/turning lane, plus 8 feet per parallel parking lane, with the final width to be determined by the Board based upon traffic studies.
- c. Special design considerations for delivery access and parking deck access shall be as determined by the Board based upon traffic studies and site plan review.
- d. Minimum sidewalk width: 8 feet, measured from the street curb.
- e. Sidewalk improvements (e.g., pavers, street trees, lighting, planters, etc.) shall be provided consistent with the existing sidewalk improvements in the Special Improvement District.

### F. Affordable Housing Requirements

The developer shall be required to provide for the same number of affordable housing units as the obligation imposed upon the Borough as a result of the development, under the terms of the rules of the N.J. Council on Affordable Housing. This requirement shall be a condition of any site plan approval that the Planning Board may grant. The terms and specifics concerning how such obligation will be addressed shall be pursuant to a redevelopment agreement between the developer and the Borough Council. The Borough will not accept payment in lieu of building the units. The COAH housing units shall be built within the development unless the Planning Board approves a non-residential development. In this case the COAH units shall be built within the ECBD area. In order to avoid a potential stigma associated with a building containing solely COAH housing units, the development containing the COAH housing units shall also contain market rate units. In addition to providing affordable housing units, the developer shall also provide market rate housing. The number of market rate units provided shall be 2.5 times the number of COAH housing units required. Fractions of fair market housing units required shall be rounded up (regardless of where built). The ratio of fair market to COAH housing units may be decreased by the Planning Board on a case by case basis, based upon the unique nature of the situation. The intent of this requirement is that the Borough of

Somerville incurs no additional obligation to provide for affordable housing units under any law as result of the redevelopment identified in this plan. The terms and specifics concerning how such obligation will be addressed shall be pursuant to a redevelopment agreement between the developer and the Borough Council

G. Applicability of Special Improvement District Provisions.

The redevelopment area base districts shall be subject to the requirements of the Special Improvement District (SID) only if the properties are designated as part of the SID. The redevelopment area overlay districts shall be subject to the requirements of the SID in their entirety, and shall be considered to be part of the SID.

H. Phased Development

Phased development and redevelopment shall be permitted, provided that the development and redevelopment of the district shall comply with all applicable regulations at the completion of each phase.

I. Existing Conditions in the Project Area

The entire area of the ECBD was developed over 100 years ago. Any vacant parcels (e.g. Block 61, lot 10,) were previously developed. Given the long history of past uses of these parcels environmental areas of concern (AOC) may exist on some of the lots. Site specific environmental information for each parcel is not currently available. Prior to any development, the developer is encouraged to perform a file search of NJDEP records and perform a PA/SI (preliminary assessment/site investigation), in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:26E, if warranted.

J. Wetlands & Floodplains

Cole and Associates, LLC have reviewed the FIRM (Flood Insurance Rate Map), community panel number 3435C0153E and based upon our review a portion of the ECBD is within the 500 & 100 year flood plains associated with Peters Brook. The approximate parcels within the 100 year flood plain are as follows: the properties along Park Avenue, East Main Street (east of Meadow Street), and along Veterans Memorial Drive (east of Meadow Street). Any development of properties located within the area of the regulatory flood will require a Flood Hazard Area Permit from NJDEP. The revised FIRM was just released (effective date of 9/28/07) and is included herein. The revised FIRM depicts the areas of the area of the 100 year and 500 year flood plains. The NJDEP Flood Hazard Area Rules were just revised and became effective 11/5/07. Under the new rules, filling of the flood plain cannot be performed without removing fill or creating additional flood plain within the same watershed. Peters Brook is a

NJDEP delineated stream and the flood hazard area depicted on the NJDEP map is regulated area. The NJDEP delineated stream map for Peters Brook is attached. This map is based on a an outdated map of the area (e.g. Veterans Memorial Drive is not depicted) while the FIRM map is based on a recent aerial of the area. In this specific case the area of the 500 year flood plain depicted on the FIRM is almost identical to the regulatory flood limit depicted on the NJDEP map. Therefore, almost all development proposed within the area depicted within the 500 year flood plain on the FIRM will require NJDEP permitting.

In addition, based upon our cursory field investigation of the Redevelopment Area and review of available mapping (including NJDEP i-map) freshwater wetlands do not exist within the Redevelopment Area.

K. Stormwater Regulations

Stormwater within the Redevelopment Area is required to comply with the current NJ State Stormwater Regulations (N.J.A.C. 7:8) including, but not limited to stormwater detention per the New Jersey Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS). The type of redevelopment envisioned varies per area and it is anticipated that the redevelopment will be staged over time and that the redevelopment will not occur in one phase. Most of the redevelopment areas contain a predominance of impervious cover. Therefore, the NJDEP requirement of 80% removal of Total Suspended Solids (TSS) may not be applicable since the net increase of impervious surface may be less than one-quarter acre. The stormwater management strategy shall take advantage of the most innovative techniques for passive stormwater management including (but not limited to): bio swales, porous pavement, curbsless parking areas, street micro-basins, parking lot islands, rain gardens, capture and reuse of rain water for non-potable uses.

L. Planning Board Review

Prior to obtaining a construction permit for the redevelopment, site plans shall be prepared in accordance with the Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) and shall be submitted to the Planning Board for review and approval. Any subdivisions of lots within the Redevelopment Plan shall be in accordance with the requirements of the Redevelopment Plan and the subdivision ordinance of the Borough of Somerville.

The Planning Board shall be permitted to refer to the Architectural Review Board (ARB) development plans submitted by the designated redeveloper as part of the development review process. The role of the ARB shall be advisory only and the Planning Board shall not be bound by any comments that may be submitted to it by the ARB. Any

referral from the Planning Board shall be provided in a timely manner such that there is no conflict with the statutory timeframes for the Planning Board to act on the development application. Failure by the ARB to submit comments within the timeframe required shall not affect the Planning Board's ability to act on the development application in accordance with the applicable law.

M. Non-Discrimination Provisions

No covenant, lease, conveyance or other instrument shall be affected or executed by the Mayor and Borough Council of the Borough of Somerville or by a developer or any of his successors or assignees, whereby land within the Redevelopment Area is restricted by the Borough Council of the Borough of Somerville, or the developer, upon the basis of race, creed, color, sexual orientation, or national origin in the sale, lease, use or occupancy thereof. Appropriate covenants, running with the land forever, will prohibit such restrictions and shall be included in the disposition instruments. There shall be no restrictions of occupancy or use of any part of the Redevelopment Area on the basis of race, creed, color, sexual orientation, or national origin.

N. Duration of the Plan

The provisions of this Plan specifying the redevelopment of the redevelopment area and the requirements and restrictions with respect thereto shall be in effect for a period of forty (40) years from the date of approval of this plan by the Borough Council.

O. Deviation Requests

The Planning Board may grant deviations from the regulations contained within the Redevelopment Plan where, by reason for exceptional narrowness, shallowness or shape of a specific piece of property, or by reason of exceptional topographic conditions, preexisting structures or physical features uniquely affecting a specific piece of property, the strict application of any area, yard, bulk or design objective or regulation adopted pursuant to the Redevelopment Plan, would result in peculiar practical difficulties to, or exceptional and undue hardship upon, the developer of such property where the purposes of this Redevelopment Plan would be advanced by a deviation from the strict requirements of this Plan and the benefits of the deviation would outweigh any detriments. Any deviation from use, height or a "d" variance under the MLUL (N.J.S.A. 40-55D-1 et seq.) shall require an amendment to the Plan by the Borough Council. No relief may be granted under the terms of this section unless such deviation or relief can be granted without substantial detriment to the public good and without substantial impairment of the intent and purpose of the Redevelopment Plan. An

application for a deviation from the requirement of this Plan shall provide public notice of such application in accord with the requirements of public notice as set forth in N.J.S.A. 40-55D-12.a and b. No variance from the requirements herein shall be heard by the Board of Adjustment. The Planning Board alone shall have the authority to grant deviations from the requirements of the Plan, as provided herein. Final adoption of this Plan by the Mayor and Borough Council shall be considered an amendment of the Borough Zoning Map.

P. Borough Zoning Ordinances

This Redevelopment Plan shall supersede all applicable sections of the Borough's Zoning Regulations. All other land development regulations shall remain applicable, unless otherwise stated. If any section, paragraph, division, subdivision, clause or provision of this Redevelopment Plan shall be determined by the courts to be invalid, such adjudication shall only apply to the section, paragraph, division, subdivision, clause or provision so judged, and the remainder of this Redevelopment Plan shall be deemed valid and effective.

Q. Procedure for Amending the Approved Plan

This Redevelopment Plan may be amended from time to time upon compliance with the requirements of law. Any party requesting an amendment is required to submit such request to the Borough Council. A fee of \$500 shall be paid by the party requesting such amendment, unless the request is issued from an agency of the Borough. The Borough Council, at its sole discretion, may require the party requesting the amendments to prepare a study of the impact of such amendments, which must be prepared by a Professional Planner, licensed in the State of New Jersey. In addition, the Borough Council, at its sole discretion, may require the party requesting the amendments establish an escrow account with the municipality adequate to allow the Borough to retain a Professional Planner, licensed in the State of New Jersey, to review any proposed amendments to confirm that the intent of the Plan will not be compromised.

R. Street and Site Lighting

All outdoor lighting, including street lamps and accent lighting, shall comply with "dark sky" standards. Dark sky standards are intended to reduce nighttime light pollution. They require that lighting is downcast, illuminates only the intended areas, and does not cause disabling glare that affects driver safety and reduces the visibility of night skies. The light poles and outdoor lighting fixtures shall be decorative. Shoe box type fixtures shall be prohibited. The color and

style of the street poles shall be either identical of very similar to the existing Main Street light poles.

S. Existing & Proposed Utilities

Electric, telephone, cable, water, gas and sewer services exist within the ECBD redevelopment area and the redevelopment area is within a sewer service area. Adequate sewer capacity exists for the proposed redevelopment. All development shall be serviced by underground utilities, overhead wires to the building(s) are prohibited. If the existing poles are in front of the proposed building and the Planning Board finds that utility poles are unattractive and detract from the building façade, the Planning Board reserves the right to require the utility poles to be relocated or the services placed underground. All pad mounted transformers, signal boxes, electrical meters, etc. shall be screened from ground level views by landscaping, fencing or walls. The equipment shall not be installed in the public right of ways of streets but be set back a minimum of 10 feet from the right of way. The equipment shall be located within utility easements and be readily accessible to PSE&G and other utility companies.

T. Rooftop Mechanical Equipment

All rooftop mechanical equipment shall be set back so that it cannot be seen from the street. In addition, all equipment shall be screened with material, color and style consistent with the architecture of the building.

U. Green Building Design

The US Green Building Council (USGBC) has developed a series of standards for evaluating green building design in several categories new and existing office construction, homes, neighborhood configuration, commercial interiors, and educational and other institutional buildings. Development shall meet certification requirements of the USGBC. All buildings shall be designed for LEED-NC certification. A higher level of certification (silver, gold or platinum) is encouraged. Because green building standards are evolving continuously, the Borough reserves the right to adopt future versions of the LEED standards, and to make additional amendments to its green building design requirements.

Green roofs are encouraged on all buildings and can help meet the above LEED certification requirements. Green roofs reduce costs for cooling and heating, increase building insulation, reduce the rate of runoff and stormwater loading, reduce the urban heat effect and enhance urban apartment living.



V. Traffic Impact Reports

Regardless of the streets involved, all developments using the overlay zoning standards shall prepare a traffic impact analysis report on the proposed development. Developments using the base zoning may, at the discretion of the Planning Board, require traffic impact analysis report. If required, the traffic impact analysis report, shall include, but not be limited to, the impact of the proposed development on the adjacent/nearby streets & intersections including level of service analysis, pre and post development, intersection vehicular queuing, and traffic/intersection warrant analysis.

W. Implementing the Redevelopment Plan

The following restrictions and controls on redevelopment are hereby imposed in connection with this Redevelopment Plan:

1. The designated developer(s) shall be obligated to enter into a redevelopment agreement with the Borough prior to the commencement of any Redevelopment Area development and/or improvements as permitted in this Redevelopment Plan.
2. The redeveloper, its successors or assigns, shall develop the land within the Redevelopment Area for the uses specified in this Redevelopment Plan.

X. Street Vacation

The Redevelopment plan identifies Meadow and Center Street to be vacated. Street Vacation will only be entertained by the Borough Council and Planning Board if the developer owns and/or controls all of the property fronting the street and the proposed development is found to be consistent with the requirements and intent of the Redevelopment plan. The Redevelopment Plan also identifies a portion of Park Avenue to be vacated. Specifically a portion of the western right of way (abutting the adjoining parcels) shall be vacated, for the entire length of Park Avenue (between East Main & East High Street) as depicted on the attached ECBD Redevelopment Area Public Improvements Map. The width of Park Avenue will be reduced to accommodate two (2) travel lanes; one in each direction and on street parking on both sides of the street. If the frontage of the proposed development, is equal to or greater than 75%, of the entire length of Park Avenue, the developer shall perform the necessary vacation for the entire length of Park Avenue. If the frontage of the proposed development is less than 75% of the entire length of Park Avenue the

developer is required to pay for its fair share of the cost to perform the necessary improvements required to vacate the portion of Park Avenue where the development is located (i.e. the frontage of the development). The terms and conditions how the vacation of Park Avenue will occur shall be pursuant to a redevelopment agreement between the developer and Borough Council.

## **VII. PROPERTIES TO BE ACQUIRED**

This redevelopment plan intends to encourage developers to acquire a proprietary interest in any property to be redeveloped pursuant to this plan. The redevelopment plan does not propose the acquisition of any property through eminent domain at this time. All property to be acquired shall be through purchase on the open market. Should redevelopment not occur as planned, the Borough reserves the option and the right to amend the redevelopment plan at a future date to provide for the use of eminent domain. Such an amendment would require notice to affected parties and a public hearing pursuant to the provisions in the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 et seq.

Since the current plan does not propose the use of eminent domain to acquire such property, the plan does not provide for any relocation assistance to residents who are displaced by the plan. If such relocation assistance is required to be provided by law, then the developer shall be required to provide for such assistance pursuant to a redevelopment agreement between the redeveloper and the Borough.

The redevelopment plan proposes the construction of multi-family housing within the Multifamily Residential overlay district in the redevelopment area, as well as in the same building with retail and office uses in the Retail, Retail-Hotel and Office-Services districts overlay districts. Apartments are also permitted in the same building with nonresidential use in Retail, Retail-Hotel and Office-Services overlay districts. Single family dwellings are permitted in the E-PR district. The development of all the above stated housing should help to offset the loss of existing housing units within the redevelopment area, and to provide a location where displaced residents may choose to relocate.

## **VIII. RELATIONSHIP TO LOCAL OBJECTIVES**

This redevelopment plan furthers and promotes existing local objectives. The 1990 Master Plan, along with the 1991 Downtown Somerville Vision Plan, are the current master plan documents of the Borough. A Reexamination of the Master Plan and Development Regulations was performed in 1998. Policies and recommendations for the eastern central business district, as stated in the Master & Vision Plan and Reexamination report form a significant portion of the Redevelopment Plan. Although differing in some details and in some locations, this redevelopment plan is largely consistent with the master plan, particularly the following objectives cited in the plan documents:

## **1990 Master Plan**

### The need to improve access to and circulation within the central business district.

The master plan cites intersection conflicts in the area. The extension of Urban Drive (now Veterans Memorial Drive) is recommended in the master plan, and has been completed, in order “to improve CBD traffic flow and enable usable redevelopment parcels to be assembled.” The need to minimize conflicts among vehicular and pedestrian traffic on Main Street, giving priority to the needs of shoppers and pedestrians, is cited. Warren Street is proposed as a potential pedestrian promenade and the possible closure of Meadow Street is recommended.

### The need to address a shortage of off-street parking facilities.

The plan recommends the development of unified landscaped parking facilities linked to business activities by attractive walkways.

### The need for development and redevelopment in the eastern CBD.

The master plan describes the redevelopment area as having “no comprehensive land use pattern” and states that the area “has not developed in the same manner as (the) West Main Street commercial area. The area has not developed in any consistent land use pattern; instead, several different and somewhat incompatible land uses dominate this area.” The master plan calls for public involvement in the development and redevelopment in the eastern CBD that reinforces retail and service functions of the downtown, and redevelopment of under-utilized properties according to a unified revitalization plan. Specific proposals in the master plan are for mixed use redevelopment, medium density townhouse and multi-family residential uses, relocation of the Warren Street firehouse and the Park Avenue rescue squad, and better separation of residential and non-residential uses. Land assembly through the use of eminent domain and public improvements of roads and drainage facilities are also called for in the master plan. The limiting or prohibition of driveway curb cuts along South Bridge Street, Veterans Memorial Parkway and East Main Street is also recommended.

### The need for affordable housing.

In response to State-mandated obligations to provide reasonable opportunities for the development of affordable housing, the master plan proposes a site at the corner of Meadow Street and Veterans Memorial Drive as a 34-unit affordable housing site. An application for an affordable housing development was submitted and then withdrawn, however, and there has been no further development activity on the site since that time.

The site contains contamination from prior uses. Although the redevelopment plan does not continue this designation, the redevelopment plan provides for affordable housing as a part of redevelopment in the area.

The need for preservation of historic sites and districts.

Citing the historic prominence of the Borough within the region, the master plan proposes the establishment of a local historic district encompassing the entire central portion of the Borough, including the entire redevelopment area. The redevelopment plan promotes historic preservation in appropriate locations.

Trend of conversion/demolition of residences to professional office use.

The master plan identifies both benefits and concerns with this trend, and recommends various policies to ensure that professional office development in certain areas minimizes negative impacts. These policies include discouraging assemblage of properties and demolition of existing structures, limiting development to conversion of existing structures, coordinating vehicular access and parking, buffering residential uses, and implementing historic preservation guidelines. Within the redevelopment area, an area along South Bridge Street and Franklin Street is planned for adaptive reuse for professional offices.

**1991 Vision Plan**

The Downtown Somerville Vision Plan is a special planning effort that focuses on the Borough's central business district. The Vision Plan is intended to supplement and complement the 1990 master plan and resulted, in part, from a "deep concern over the economic performance and physical condition of the CBD". Problems and proposals in the plan relevant to the study area include the following:

The need to revitalize and enhance the CBD as a shopping area.

Noting the competition for highway and regional shopping areas, the presence of vacant and underutilized sites, and the presence of vacant or underutilized upper levels in certain buildings, the Vision Plan recommends the revitalization of commercial uses and structures. The plan also proposes the development or redevelopment of key sites as commercial anchors. A commercial anchor is envisioned in the vicinity of Warren Street, and residential anchors in the areas of Hamilton and Meadow Streets and in Block 68 (Main St./Mechanic St./Park Ave.). The creation of high value, high amenity mixed-use developments providing competitive office space, in-town housing, specialty retail and public amenities is envisioned. The Vision Plan also recommends the creation of a destination place through cultural and entertainment offerings.

The need to improve the physical appearance and mix of businesses in the CBD.

Noting that the quality and maintenance of the streetscape is not currently viewed as an amenity for downtown, the Vision Plan recommends streetscape improvements. Also recommended is the development of public or semi-public open spaces within the major anchor developments. Finally, a facade improvement program, infill development, and the development of key anchor sites are seen as addressing this condition.

The need to attract and contain professional offices within the CBD and transition areas.

The Vision Plan promotes this policy as a means to enhance the CBD commercial environment and to prevent further conversion of residential properties within neighborhood settings to professional office use.

The need to improve access to and circulation within the central business district.

In order to address this problem the Vision Plan recommends the extension of Urban Drive to Vanderveer Parkway, as well as the other roadway and intersection improvements identified in the master plan. The plan also proposes the preparation and implementation of traffic management programs and the mitigation of traffic impacts from major developments.

The need to preserve and enhance the residential neighborhoods at the eastern end of the CBD.

Noting that "the Park Avenue and Hamilton Street neighborhoods ... have been somewhat eroded by noncompatible commercial and light industrial uses", the Vision Plan recommends that these neighborhoods be maintained and enhanced by new residential infill development of various types, including the Meadow Street housing project discussed above. The Vision Plan also recommends exploration of the potential for relocating existing homes from sites in the way of new development. The phasing out of inappropriate commercial uses in this area is recommended. Adaptive reuse of the upper floors of existing commercial structures for residential use is also recommended.

## **1998 Reexamination of the Master Plan & Development Regulations**

The Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) requires periodic reexamination of the master plan and development regulations. The reexamination report shall state the following items:

- A. The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of the adoption of the last reexamination report.
- B. The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date.
- C. The extent to which there have been significant changes in the assumptions, policies, and objectives forming the basis for the master plan or development regulations as last revised, with particular regard to the density and distribution of population and land uses, housing conditions, circulation, conservation of natural resources, energy conservation, collection, disposition, and recycling of designated recyclable materials, and changes in State, county and municipal policies and objectives.
- D. The specific changes recommend for the master plan or development regulations, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether a new plan or regulations should be prepared.
- E. The recommendations of the planning board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans adopted pursuant to the “Local Redevelopment and Housing”, (C.40a:12a-1 et seq.) into the land use plan element of the municipal master plan, and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.

In the Central Business District Goal and Policies section of the Master Plan one of the policies was to “emphasize development and redevelopment opportunities in the eastern portion of the Central Business District (CBD) that reinforces retail an service functions of the downtown”. The Reexamination of the Master Plan noted this area is being studied for designation as an area in need of redevelopment, and until a redevelopment plan is adopted for the area a mixed use approach with separate zoning districts should be adopted.

## **IX. RELATIONSHIP TO THE MASTER PLANS OF CONTIGUOUS MUNICIPALITIES AND TO SOMERSET COUNTY MASTER PLAN**

Inasmuch as this redevelopment plan involves the central business district of the Borough, which already exists as a mixed use core for the Borough that has served the region for many years, and since the district is not located in close proximity to any adjacent municipalities, this redevelopment plan is not inconsistent with the master plans of contiguous municipalities. The relationship to the county master plans and related documents is as follows:

### **Somerset County Master Plan Reexamination Report**

The Somerset County Master Plan Reexamination Report was prepared in 1998. The Somerset County Master Plan was adopted by the Somerset County Planning Board on June 29, 1987. The reexamination of the Master Plan was conducted in 1998 to facilitate a formal review of the Somerset County Master Plan and the various elements of the Master Plan. The Somerset County Master Plan Reexamination Report stated a number of recommendations regarding land use. The recommendations are as follows:

1. The development and implementation of a countywide transfer of development rights program to facilitate the re-direction of growth from the environs to centers. The County Planning Board should assist communities to develop land use and zoning policies that reduce development pressure in agricultural and rural areas through the use of development transfer techniques from the environs to centers.
2. County programs and initiatives should encourage and support the development of comprehensive or "Vision" plans for all centers pursuant to center designation and/or plan endorsement by the State Planning Commission. The County Planning Board should continue its support of the Regional Center Planning Process, and facilitate the development of a comprehensive regional center plan. As a first step, the County Planning Board should aid in the development of expanded opportunities for public participation in the regional center planning process and continue to facilitate the Regional Center Design Initiative, being pursued in 1999. Successful local partnerships between developers, multiple levels of government, citizens, special interest groups and non-profits should be publicized, as well as successful local grass roots, community based approaches to area or site specific development and redevelopment. Comprehensive center plans should give special attention to identifying areas for incremental infill and redevelopment and the expansion, upgrade and/or improvement of existing infrastructure improvements necessary to accommodate said development. Targeted uses for these sites, as well as the programs, partnerships and financial resources needed to implement the plan should be

identified. The plan should also address social service, quality of life and other community revitalization concerns.

3. County capital and infrastructure improvements, various county funding programs and activities should be prioritized so as to serve as incentives/rewards for municipalities who adopt ordinances, plans and strategies which result in the re-direction of growth from the rural area to centers, promote brownfield redevelopment and the retrofit of suburban sprawl areas and other countywide planning objectives. The County Economic Development Incentive Program is an example of how county funds are being directed to six older boroughs and two Census Tracts in Franklin Township to enhance local economies.
4. A greater residential component in the majority of the core areas to more town or village like should be adopted. The County Planning Board should work with municipalities to identify appropriate retrofit areas in the County Master Plan. The County Planning Board should support the institutionalization of state and local plans, policies and capital improvement program that facilitate the retrofit of appropriate suburban sprawl areas and increase the growth capacities of existing centers. The application of neo-traditional town planning concepts to new development as well as suburban retro fit areas should be strongly encouraged through the County Master Plan.
5. The regional land use framework should be strengthened to encourage the appropriate distribution of growth amongst centers. Land development in centers should be consistent with the type of center, planning area and corridor within which it is located pursuant to the State Plan, so as to minimize deleterious competition amongst places, maximize regional infrastructure systems, avoid congestion on roadways with capacity constraints, and protect the environment and quality of life countywide. For example, regionally oriented retail centers should be concentrated within the regional center, with direct access to interstate highways and mass transit; convenience shopping and day care centers should be located in village core areas.

The Redevelopment Plan is within a regional center and includes brownfields and infill areas. The Plan incorporates areas of mixed use and shared parking and employs smart growth principals. The Plan is consistent with the recommendations of the Somerset County Master Plan Reexamination report in regards to regional centers.



## **Somerset County Regional Center Strategic Master Plan**

The Somerset County Regional Center Strategic Master Plan was prepared in 2006 and lays out the next steps for the “Bridgewater Core” (Somerville & Raritan Borough and a portion of Bridgewater Township) necessary to achieve the Regional Center Vision. The Plan recommended that redevelopment areas be redeveloped using the following principles:

1. Through redevelopment encourage economic development and desirable reuse of former brownfield sites.
2. Ensure that redevelopment areas, whenever possible are tied closely to the fabric of existing downtowns and Main Street areas.
3. Provide public access through each redevelopment area and connections to all greenways and open space.
4. Ensure that redevelopment planning takes into account the community context of each site and provides connections to the surrounding neighborhood.

The Redevelopment Plan encourages economic development and desirable reuse of the brownfield sites, includes Main Street, provides public access through the redevelopment area, is in context with the surrounding community and, to the extent possible, provides connections to all greenways and open space. The Redevelopment Plan embraces all of the above stated principals.

### **X. RELATIONSHIP TO STATE DEVELOPMENT & REDEVELOPMENT PLAN**

The NJ State Planning Act, established in 1986, created the NJ State Planning Commission and required the Commission to prepare the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP). The SDRP is to be revised and readopted every three years through a process called “cross acceptance”. The initial SDRF was adopted in 1992 and the Borough of Somerville was designated as Metropolitan Planning Area (PA1). The SDRF was last revised in 2001. The criteria for Metropolitan Planning Area- PA1 are as follows:

1. Densities of more than 1,000 persons per square mile;
2. Existing public water and sewer systems, or with physical accessibility to said system, and with access to public transit systems;
3. Adjacent to the Suburban Planning Area;
4. Land Area greater than one square mile;

5. A population of not less than 25,000 people or areas totally surround by land meeting the criteria of a PA1, are geographically interrelated with the Metropolitan Planning Area and meet the intent of that Planning Area.

These criteria fairly describe the Borough of Somerville and therefore its designation as part of the Metropolitan Planning Area is appropriate. In the Metropolitan Planning Area, the State Plan's intention is to:

- provide for much of the state's future redevelopment;
- revitalize cities and towns;
- promote growth in compact forms;
- stabilize older suburbs;
- redesign areas of sprawl; and
- protect the character of existing stable communities.

This redevelopment plan is very much consistent with the intent to “provide for much of the state's future redevelopment,” to “revitalize cities and towns,” to “promote growth in compact forms,” to “stabilize older suburbs” and, to some extent, “protect the character of existing stable communities.”

The SDRP identifies the following policy objectives for the Metropolitan Planning Area:

1. Land Use

Promote redevelopment and development in Cores and neighborhoods of Centers and in Nodes that have been identified through cooperative regional planning efforts. Promote diversification of land uses, including housing where appropriate, in single-use developments and enhance their linkages to the rest of the community. Ensure efficient and beneficial utilization of scarce land resources throughout the Planning Area to strengthen its existing diversified and compact nature.

This redevelopment plan promotes redevelopment and development in the downtown core of Somerville, which has been identified as such by a cooperative regional planning effort, since Somerville, Raritan and a portion of Bridgewater have been designated as a regional center by the State Planning Commission. The redevelopment plan also recognizes and promotes the diversification of land uses in the downtown.

2. Housing

Provide a full range of housing choices through redevelopment, new construction, rehabilitation, adaptive reuse of nonresidential buildings, and the introduction of new housing into appropriate nonresidential settings. Preserve the existing housing stock through maintenance, rehabilitation and flexible regulation.

The redevelopment plan is consistent with this housing policy. The redevelopment plan provides a range of housing choices, including preservation, rehabilitation and new construction. Housing types in the plan include townhouses, apartments, and single-family dwellings.

### 3 Economic Development:

Promote economic development by encouraging innovative land use, site preparation and infill development, public/private partnerships and infrastructure improvements that support an identified role for the community within the regional marketplace. Encourage job training and other incentives to retain and attract businesses. Encourage private sector investment through supportive government regulations, policies and programs, including tax policies and expedited review of proposals that support appropriate redevelopment.

This plan is very consistent with this policy.

### 4. Transportation

Maintain and enhance a transportation system that capitalizes on high-density settlement patterns by encouraging the use of public transit systems, walking and alternative modes of transportation to reduce automobile dependency, link Centers and Nodes, and create opportunities for transit oriented redevelopment. Facilitate efficient goods movement through strategic investments and intermodal linkages. Where appropriate, encourage community economic development and promote complementary uses for airport property such as business centers.

Although not all of the above policies are relevant to Somerville, this redevelopment plan is consistent with much of the SDRP transportation policy. The redevelopment plan encourages a higher density development pattern which, combined with the close proximity to the N.J. Transit rail station and bus routes, will help to maintain and enhance the use of mass transit. The mix of housing and non-residential uses in a downtown environment, along with the streetscape improvements promoted by the plan will help to encourage pedestrian activity.

### 5. Natural Resource Conservation

Reclaim environmentally damaged sites and mitigate future negative impacts, particularly to waterfronts, scenic vistas, wildlife habitats and to Critical Environmental Sites, and Historic and Cultural Sites. Give special emphasis to improving air quality. Use open space to reinforce neighborhood and community identity, and protect natural linear systems, including regional systems that link to other Planning Areas.

The redevelopment plan will promote the reclamation and better use of contaminated properties. The plan also seeks to mitigate future negative impacts from flooding related to Peters Brook and to preserve and enhance the greenway open space associated with the brook. The plan also seeks to preserve and enhance the historic buildings located in the southwest portion of the redevelopment area.

#### 6. Agriculture

Use development and redevelopment opportunities wherever appropriate and economically feasible, to meet the needs of the agricultural industry for intensive agricultural production, packaging and processing, value-added operations, marketing, exporting and other shipping. Provide opportunities for farms, greenhouses, farmers markets and community gardens.

This redevelopment plan does not contain any policies to encourage agriculture, nor are such policies appropriate in Somerville, a fully developed municipality.

#### 7. Recreation

Provide maximum active and passive recreational opportunities and facilities at the neighborhood, local and regional levels by concentrating on the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing parks and open space while expanding and linking the system through redevelopment and reclamation projects.

The redevelopment plan proposes to increase available open space insofar as possible.

#### 8. Redevelopment

Encourage redevelopment at intensities sufficient to support transit, a broad range of uses and efficient use of infrastructure. Promote design that enhances public safety, encourages pedestrian activity and reduces dependency on the automobile.

The redevelopment plan is very consistent with this policy.

#### 9. Historic Preservation

Encourage the preservation and adaptive reuse of historic or significant buildings, Historic and Cultural Sites, neighborhoods and districts in ways that will not compromise either the historic resource or the area's ability to redevelop. Coordinate historic preservation with tourism efforts.

As stated previously, the redevelopment plan seeks the preservation and adaptive reuse of historic sites and structures in a manner consistent with the above policy.

#### 10. Public Facilities and Services:

Complete, repair or replace existing infrastructure systems to eliminate deficiencies and provide capacity for sustainable development and redevelopment in the region. Encourage the concentration of public facilities and services in Centers and Cores.

The redevelopment plan is consistent with this policy.

#### 11. Intergovernmental Coordination

Regionalize as many public services as feasible and economical to enhance the cost-effective delivery of those services. Establish multi-jurisdictional policy and planning entities to guide the efforts of state, county and municipal governments to ensure compatible and coordinated redevelopment.

The Somerset County Regional Center Strategic Master Plan was adopted by all three of the regional center municipalities (Somerville Borough, Raritan Borough and a portion of Bridgewater Township) and communication and coordination of planning efforts is a policy of said Master Plan. The Redevelopment Plan is not in conflict with this policy but does not include proposals for regionalizing public services and for establishing multi-jurisdictional planning entities.

#### **Regional Center Designation**

In May, 1996, the Boroughs of Somerville and Raritan and an adjacent portion of Bridgewater Township were designated a regional center. Regional Centers are defined, (on page 241 of the SDRP) as the following:

- A. It functions as the focal point for the economic, social and cultural activities of its region, with a compact, mixed-use (for example, commercial, office, industrial, public) Core and neighborhoods offering a wide variety of housing types;
- B. It has access to existing or planned infrastructure sufficient to serve projected growth;
- C. It has, within the Center Boundary, an existing (or planned) population of more than 10,000 people in Metropolitan and Suburban Planning Areas;

- D. It has (or is planned to have) a gross population density of approximately 5,000 persons per square mile excluding water bodies (or approximately three dwelling units per acre) or more within the Center Boundary;
- E. It has (or is planned to have) within the Center Boundary, an employment base of more than 10,000 jobs in Metropolitan and Suburban Planning Areas;
- F. It is near a major public transportation terminal, arterial intersection or interstate interchange capable of serving as the hub for two or more modes of transportation; and
- G. It has a land area of one to 10 square miles.

A Regional Center is a mix of residential, commercial and public uses serving a large surrounding area and developed at an intensity that makes public transportation feasible. Centers are the location where much of the growth in New Jersey will occur. "Centers promote community, protect the environment, provide cultural and aesthetic experiences and offer residents a superior quality of life" (SDRP, page 230). The redevelopment plan accomplishes these goals.

### **Regional Center Design Policies**

The Center Design Policies are as follows:

#### **A. Cores:**

Design Cores to be the commercial, cultural, and civic heart of a Center, with multi-story and mixed-use buildings, shared parking, higher intensities and a high proportion of internal trips on foot or by transit. Focus in Cores activities, such as restaurants, retail and services, which generate pedestrian traffic.

The redevelopment plan and policies are consistent with the above design policies.

#### **B. Neighborhoods:**

Design neighborhoods with a distinct identity as the fundamental building block of Centers, with a central focus (shopping, transit service, school or green) and an edge marking transitions. Neighborhoods are characterized by short walking distances from edge to center.

The redevelopment plan is compatible with this policy.

C. Streets and Blocks: Design streets and blocks to:

- maximize connectivity;
- establish a comfortable pedestrian environment;
- function as high-quality public spaces as well as means of circulation;
- balance the needs of different transportation modes, with an emphasis on pedestrian and bicycles;
- serve the needs of everyday users (pedestrians, cars), rather than of occasional users (fire trucks, snow plows);
- minimize cartway width and impervious coverage, while maximizing energy-efficient building sites;
- maximize the use of traffic calming and traditional traffic control devices (roundabouts, T-intersections);
- maximize the sense of enclosure, using continuity of building walls and appropriate building height-to-street-width ratios to reinforce street space in ways appropriate to the block and the neighborhood; and
- reflect adjacent land-use conditions as well as the volume of traffic which the street is expected to carry.

Although the central business district's street and block design is well established, the redevelopment plan policies are consistent with the above design policies.

D. Public Spaces:

Provide within each Center for at least one centrally located, easily accessible and well-designed public space that creates a focal point for the community, along with an appropriate variety of other, smaller public and semi-public spaces to address more limited or neighborhood needs.

The redevelopment plan is generally consistent with this policy, and promotes several small public spaces.

E. Streetscapes:

Encourage quality streetscape treatments that adequately reflect public commitment to the community and its built environment, with trees and other appropriate plant material, statuary, fountains and other features that animate the public and semi-public realm, along with appropriate street furniture.

The redevelopment plan is consistent with this policy.

F. Integrating Large and Small Buildings and Facilities:

Encourage neighborhoods that integrate both large and small buildings and facilities. To achieve a seamless integration of larger facilities into the surrounding neighborhood:

- consider complementary uses to soften transitions from residential to nonresidential;
- design large facilities to resemble a series of smaller buildings;
- calm vehicular access and egress to avoid disruption to pedestrian circulation and to neighborhood activities;
- develop and enforce performance standards to maintain desirable quality of life features;
- provide incentives, where appropriate, for multi-story buildings with smaller footprints, instead of single-story buildings with vast floorplates;
- schedule activities to minimize disruptions to the surrounding neighborhood; and
- maintain a constant dialogue between the neighborhood and the large user and require public involvement in every step of decision making.

The redevelopment plan is consistent with these policies.

G. Building Orientation:

Orient buildings and main building entrances to face streets or other important public spaces, and clearly mark and frame these entrances architecturally with columns, lintels, pediments, canopies or other architectural features. Avoid orienting buildings toward parking lots.

The redevelopment plan is consistent with these policies.

H. Building Height:

Encourage taller buildings to acknowledge the height of neighboring buildings and to echo important horizontal lines by way of setbacks, recesses or other design devices.

The redevelopment plan addresses this design policy in several locations, and the height restrictions are intended to be sensitive to the height of buildings in the area.



I. Building Elevations:

Create visual interest in facade design with rhythms, patterns and decorative elements and by using a variety of modular components. Avoid blank walls, particularly if visible from the public realm.

The redevelopment plan is consistent with this policy.

**In summary, the ECBD Redevelopment plan is generally consistent with the master plan of the Borough, County and State Development and Redevelopment Plan.**

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