

A critical resource that can be used to enhance the revitalization of the Riverfront Recreational District is the incorporation of the area's rich history as part of its redevelopment process. This can be accomplished by:

- Expanding the existing historic district to incorporate historic facilities along the River;
- Creating a system of comprehensive interpretive signage that graphically demonstrates the City's rich history;
- Incorporating a historic walking trail along the River's edge identifying events and places that were significant in the City's history;
- Creating a historically-based rehabilitation design booklet to guide housing restoration within the expanded historic area in a manner which is authentic, yet economic and expeditious;
- Processing the necessary paperwork to be a certified historic area.

To further assure the establishment of the critical mass for the boating and marina industry, it is recommended that the district be expanded northward to an area representing the projected line of Monmouth Street as it intersects the River. This would represent a slight intrusion into the properties currently owned by the Holt Organization. An expansion of these properties would enable the Riverfront Recreational District to establish a critical mass required to assure the success of this area.

Lastly, the vacant parcel directly north of New Fire Station along King Street should be considered for redevelopment with uses that would be consistent with the land uses of the Riverfront Recreational District. The site, which is in the area of .90 acres, is owned by the City. Therefore, it could be designated for a variety of uses to accomplish different goals in support of the Riverfront Recreational District objectives, including:

- Developing the site as a combined park, parking, and housing site, with the latter being used for relocation resources as redevelopment is undertaken in the surrounding neighborhoods;
- Creating a commercial-retail site that would expand the area of influence of the marina restaurant complex at the Old Coast Guard Station;
- Developing the site as a retail-school complex, which would allow for the expansion and relocation of the existing beauty school and free up the present school site for more related marina uses.

D. Starlight Theater Tract Strategic Plan

The 19-acre Starlight Theater tract is located in the southeastern corner of the City, east of the Route 130 corridor and north of Reading Avenue (See Figure E-19). The site consists of a vacant drive-in theater which is assessed at \$926,200. It has 50 feet of frontage on Route 130, but over 1,000 feet of frontage on Reading Avenue, an unimproved paper street.¹⁵ This tract, which has been idle for a number of years, represents a key component in the potential redevelopment of the Route 130 corridor. Inclusion of this site in a potential development equation can lay the foundation for enhancement of the entire Route 130 corridor.

An evaluation of the site and surrounding land use identified several options that may be considered for this parcel as part of a comprehensive economic redevelopment plan which could combine the theater property and the adjacent commercial/apartment uses.¹⁶ These options are:

- Commercial redevelopment, using the Starlight Theater site as a core area and combining it with properties along Route 130;
- A life-care center providing a full spectrum of geriatric care and housing;
- A public works facility and a park/recreational complex, allowing the public works yard to be relocated from its Gloucester Point location to a consolidated facility at this site.

¹⁵The Tax Assessment Map of Gloucester City (Sheet 47) indicated the parcel has a total area of 19.089 acres. The Tax Assessors records list the parcel area as 17.9 acres. A verification will be required, but is not necessary as part of this report. For report purposes it will be assumed that the track is approximately 19 acres.

¹⁶The commercial and apartment properties adjacent to the theater property consist of four (4) separate parcels occupying between 7.518 acres (tax assessors list) to 8.1201 acres (tax map). Eight acres will be used for estimate purposes. The total assessed value of these parcels is \$3,983,000.00 (\$803,900.00 land and \$3,179,100.00 improvements).

FIGURE E-19

**STARLIGHT THEATER TRACT
GLOUCESTER CITY, NJ**

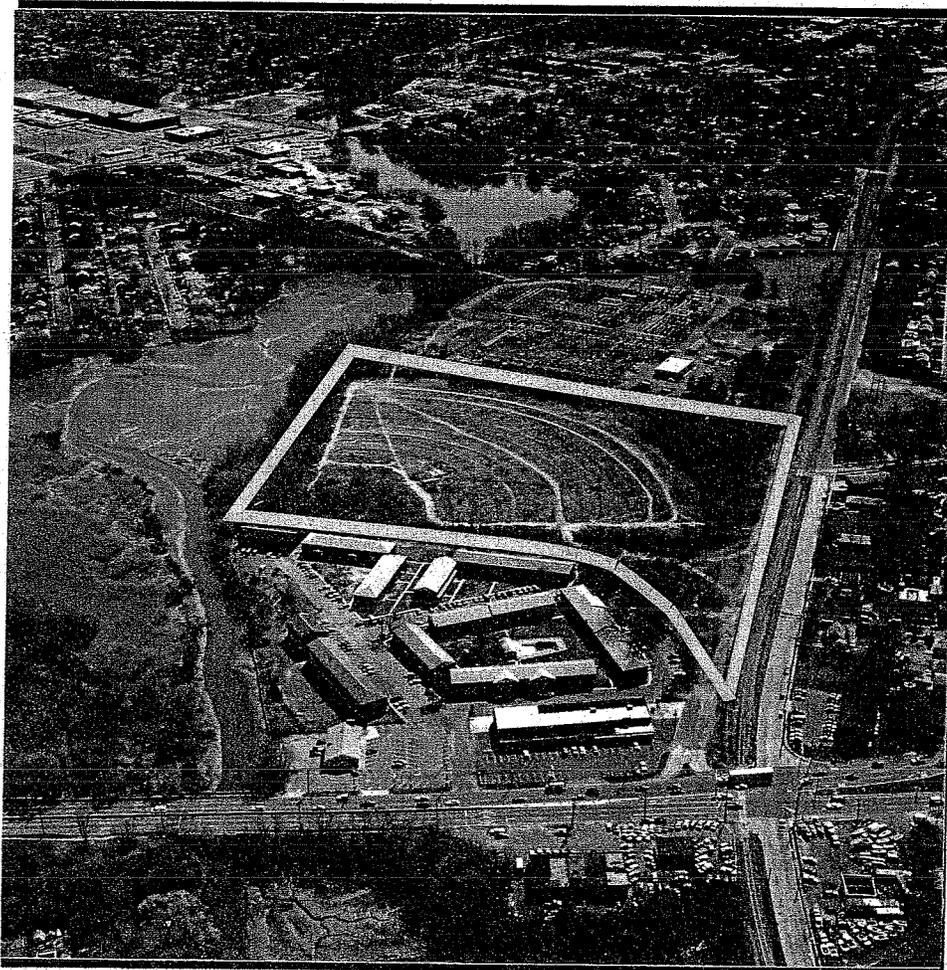


Photo by: Peter P. Karabashian Associates, Inc.

The vacant Starlight Theater (center) is situated on a 19-acre parcel that represents a key component to the potential redevelopment of the Route 130 corridor. Several concepts may be considered as part of a comprehensive redevelopment plan by combining the theater property and the adjacent commercial apartment uses (bottom).

1. Commercial Redevelopment

As shown in Figure E-20, the commercial redevelopment for this portion of the Route 130 corridor takes advantage of the site's location near major regional highways by proposing the redevelopment of the theater property along with adjacent commercial and apartment properties and a complex of retail facilities. This action would require site assemblage, possibly through eminent domain, unless free market forces can be stimulated by incentives offered through the redevelopment process. This concept utilizes a 14% building coverage (164,000 sq. ft.) at an estimated cost between \$6,560,000 (at \$40/sq. ft.) to \$8,200,000 (at \$50/sq. ft.). A 30% building coverage is achieved if estimated that this development would yield approximately 352,800 s.f. of gross floor area at an estimated cost between \$14,112,000.00 (at \$40 per sq. ft.) to \$17,640,000.00 (at \$50 per sq. ft.) for construction costs.

Implementing the commercial redevelopment concept requires the assemblage of fragmented parcels and acquisition of high density residential units that currently lack adequate support facilities. Public action, however, is not recommended unless the appropriate market studies indicate a demand for commercial facilities within the area.

The type of commercial use of the site depends upon a complete market analysis to determine feasibility and use. Conceptually, the ideal use would be one which stimulated the economic upgrading of the other uses along Route 130.

Consideration may be given to a variety of retail discount businesses versus what currently exists. However, if a commercial/retail alternative is sought for this site, simultaneous consideration must also be given to what impact such use would have upon the retail uses along the Broadway Avenue Corridor.

The intent here is to demonstrate that if action is to be taken along Route 130 to enhance the function, access, and visual appearance of this corridor, that a combined public/private effort must be launched. Typically, changes in zoning classifications and visual enhancements of the corridor by the public sector must be matched by the development initiative of the private sector. Usually, the initial development incentives require public inducement through the redevelopment process. By producing conceptual plans for the redevelopment of this corridor, whether it be for the Starlight District or other locations along the corridor, it is hoped that such incentives will stimulate consideration of the redevelopment process by the private sector.