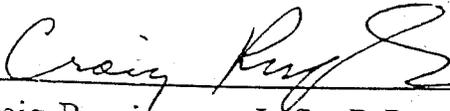


CITY OF GLOUCESTER CITY
REDEVELOPMENT AREA STUDY
AND
REDEVELOPMENT PLAN
OUR FILE #04-14-T-217

GLOUCESTER CITY RAILROAD STATION
PROJECT AREA

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REDEVELOPMENT AREA STUDY

GLOUCESTER CITY RAILROAD STATION PROJECT AREA

Purpose of the Study

This study of the Gloucester City Railroad Station Project Area was undertaken by the City of Gloucester City, Camden County, New Jersey in order to determine the feasibility of creating an area in need of redevelopment and whether those standards are present pertaining to said area as they affect the safety, health, morals, and general welfare of the community. This information is intended to aid the municipality in determining whether the Gloucester City Railroad Station Project Area, as presently constituted, qualifies as a redevelopment area and/or rehabilitation area as defined in New Jersey Statute (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 et seq).

Description of the Gloucester City Railroad Station Project Area

The Gloucester City Railroad Station Project Area is located within the Broadway Avenue commercial corridor between the former Pennsylvania Railroad Seashore Line railroad tracks, now Conrail, and Broadway Avenue. Broadway Avenue is the major north-south street in Gloucester City and functions as the City's main street. The Conrail lines still function as the principal freight rail traffic corridor in the City.

The northern boundary for the project area is Monmouth Street; the eastern boundary is the Conrail railroad track property; the southern property line is Cumberland Street; and the western boundary is generally the rear property line of properties fronting on Champion Road.

The boundaries of the project area are shown on the map herein included. The Gloucester City Railroad Station Project Area is also known as Block 147.01, Lots 1 and 2 and Block 148, Lot 14 on the Gloucester City Tax Maps.

Significant neighboring uses include: the Monmouth Street commercial corridor and City Library to the north; an older residential neighborhood to the east; a self-storage garage complex on the site of the former railroad siding yard and a mixed use residential, commercial, and light industrial corridor along Broadway Avenue to the west. The Gloucester City Railroad Station Project Area contains approximately 1.52 acres. All of these properties are located in the R-1 Low Density residential zoning district and in the proposed RC&S Retail Commercial & Service zoning district.

Description of the Rehabilitation and Redevelopment Program for the Gloucester City Railroad Station Project Area

Rehabilitation and redevelopment projects are proposed to be undertaken for the Gloucester City Railroad Station Project Area under the terms of applicable municipal, State and Federal laws. Under these laws, the component activities of rehabilitation and redevelopment projects may include the acquisition of land, the rehabilitation of buildings, construction or reconstruction of utilities and other site improvements essential to the preparation of the site for uses in accordance with the rehabilitation and redevelopment plans.

The project will consist of several separate redevelopment and rehabilitation projects which, when combined together, form a substantial program for revitalization of the Broadway Avenue Commercial Corridor area. The projects are to occur over a three to five year period.

Rehabilitation of the Old Train Station

The c 1885 historic train station formerly served as the central passenger and freight rail terminal for Gloucester City. The plan provides for exterior rehabilitation of the building and canopy, as well as code upgrades for future mixed office and commercial uses. Work would also include erection of a pedestrian barricade or fence on the eastern end of the canopy to protect users from outcoming railroad traffic. The station would also be designated as a mass transit center with space made available for passengers waiting for public buses as indicated in the adopted Master Plan. The station is noted as a local historic resource in the Master Plan and may be eligible for listing on the state and national register of historic places. Therefore, any work on the building should be done in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal historic preservation regulations.

Redevelopment of a New Commercial Center and Municipal Parking Lot

Work would include construction of a new mixed use retail/commercial center backing up to the railroad lines and fronting onto a new municipal parking lot. This new mixed use development should reinforce the City's downtown economic redevelopment plan by focusing commercial activity in the Broadway Avenue, Monmouth Street and Cumberland Street area as indicated in the Economic / Strategic Plan element of the adopted Master Plan. Provision of parking for downtown shoppers is now primarily restricted to on-street parking, which is limited in number and is the principal cause of traffic congestion and safety hazards on Broadway Avenue. Although this site currently contains a small number of off-street parking spaces adjacent to the old railroad station, the new municipal parking lot would provide a greater number of spaces and would be more convenient to downtown shoppers.

The proposed new and expanded lot would act as a catalyst for future public and private reinvestment on Broadway and the rest of the downtown area. The proposed commercial buildings and associated landscaping should be designed to compliment the historic downtown character of the historic railroad station and surrounding neighborhood and continue the streetscape improvement plan already implemented along Monmouth Street.

Definition of the Term "Area in Need of Redevelopment"

The New Jersey Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5) sets forth seven standards for evaluating a delineated area for redevelopment. When the conditions in an area of a municipality conform to any of the seven qualifications, that area can be properly designated as an Area in Need of Redevelopment by the Planning Board and the City Council. The seven statutory qualifications quoted below are from the Statute:

"A delineated area may be determined to be in need of redevelopment if after investigation, notice and hearing as provided . . . the governing body of the municipality by resolution concludes that within the delineated area any of the following conditions is found":

- (a) The generality of buildings are substandard, unsafe, unsanitary, dilapidated, or obsolescent, or possess any of such characteristics, or are so lacking in light, air, or space, as to be conducive to unwholesome living or working conditions;
- (b) The discontinuance of the use of buildings previously used for commercial, manufacturing or industrial purposes, the abandonment of such buildings or the same being allowed to fall into so great a state of disrepair as to be untenable;
- (c) Land that is owned by the municipality, the county, a local housing authority, redevelopment agency or redevelopment entity, or unimproved vacant land, which has remained so for a period of ten years prior to adoption of the resolution, and that by reason of its location, remoteness, lack of means of access to developed sections or portions of the municipality, or topography, or nature of the soil, is not likely to be developed through the instrumentality of private capital;

- (d) *Areas with buildings or improvements which, by reason of dilapidation, obsolescence, overcrowding, faulty arrangement or design, lack of ventilation, light and sanitary facilities, excessive land coverage, deleterious land use or obsolete layout, or any combination of these or other factors, are detrimental to the safety, health, morals, or welfare of the community;*
- (e) *A growing or total lack of proper utilization of areas caused by the condition of the title, diverse ownership or the real property therein or other conditions, resulting in a stagnant or not fully productive condition of land potentially useful and valuable for contributing to and serving the public health, safety and welfare.*
- (f) *Areas, in excess of five contiguous acres, whereon buildings or improvements have been destroyed, consumed by fire, demolished or altered by the action of storm, fire, cyclone, tornado, earthquake or other casualty in such a way that the aggregate assessed value of the area has been materially depreciated.*
- (g) *In any municipality in which an enterprise zone has been designated pursuant to the "New Jersey Urban Enterprise Zones Act" the execution of the actions prescribed in that act for the adoption by the municipality and approval by the New Jersey Urban Enterprise Zone Authority of the zone development plan for the area of the enterprise zone shall be considered sufficient for the determination that the area is in need of redevelopment . . . for the purpose of granting tax exemptions within the enterprise zone district . . . or the adoption of a tax abatement and exemption ordinance The municipality shall not utilize any other redevelopment powers within the urban enterprise zone unless the municipal governing body and planning board have also taken the actions and fulfilled the requirements prescribed in P.L. 1992, c. 79 (C. 40A) for determining that the area is in need of redevelopment or an area in need of rehabilitation and the municipal governing body has adopted a redevelopment plan ordinance including the area of the enterprise zone.*

By definition, a redevelopment area may also include lands, buildings, or improvements which of themselves are not detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare, but the inclusion of which is found necessary, with or without change in their condition, for the effective redevelopment of the area in which they are a part.

Applicability of State Statute to Area

The information gathered for this report is intended to assist the Planning Board to determine whether the Gloucester City Railroad Station Project Area is described by at least one of the qualifications "(a)" through "(g)" mentioned in the previous section and is therefore an Area in Need of Redevelopment, as the term is defined by the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law. Standard "g" of the qualifications for Area in Need of Redevelopment is not applicable to Gloucester City because the City does not include a State-designated Urban Enterprise Zone.

The properties situated in the project area are characterized by a lack of proper utilization caused by diverse ownership resulting from the historic change in railroad usage in the past few decades. The two properties fronting along the tracks were used as railroad stockyards and as a passenger station until approximately twenty-five years ago when passenger service was discontinued and trucks began to outpace railroads for freight delivery. Since that time, these properties have been grossly underutilized. Although the first floor of the train station is used for municipal offices, the building is dilapidated and in serious need of rehabilitation. The second floor is currently untenable and left vacant. Without substantial investment in rehabilitation and code upgrades, the remainder of the structure will be rendered untenable and a potential threat to public health and safety. The municipal parking lot around the station is also in need of reconditioning and improvement to maximize parking efficiency.

The railyards to the south of the station are predominantly vacant and unimproved, except for the site of a temporary County Health Department office. That office is poorly situated in the middle of the lot, further diminishing the effectiveness of the property for its intended purpose, i.e., public parking. The privately held lot on Cumberland Street appears to have been another lot that was physically related to the former railroad or adjacent industrial uses, but is also a vacant, unimproved lot currently used as a scrap yard.

The properties within the project area meet criteria "a" and "e" of the statutory criteria for an area in need of redevelopment. Specifically, the dilapidated existing railroad station is essentially untenable and not conducive to wholesome working conditions. In addition, the remaining vacant and underutilized land is in a stagnant and unproductive condition which is detrimental to the public health, safety, and welfare and is currently a public nuisance collecting debris and vermin.

REHABILITATION AND
REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

GLOUCESTER CITY RAILROAD STATION
REDEVELOPMENT AREA

Strategic Plan

All rehabilitation and redevelopment activities shall be carried out in full compliance with all relevant City, State, and Federal laws and regulations. The rehabilitation and redevelopment plan for the Gloucester City Railroad Station Project Area shall include the following elements:

A. Planning and Implementation

1. Establish the City Council as the designated Redevelopment Agency for the project area.
2. Retain professional services, as required, to plan, develop, and approve the rehabilitation and redevelopment plans, such as professional planners, engineers, architects, landscape architects, environmental consultants, historic preservation consultants, financial consultants, legal counsel, etc.
3. Acquisition of properties not already owned by the City.
4. Resubdivision of the project area, as may be required, to undertake the proposed development.
5. Lease or sale of properties to a qualified redeveloper, according to law.
6. Application to public and private non-profit historic preservation, transportation, economic development, or other appropriate organizations for technical, financial, or other assistance in implementing the rehabilitation and redevelopment plan.

B. Infrastructure

1. *Replacement of the combined sewer system with separate storm and sanitary sewers.*
2. *Replacement of the existing water supply mains and installation of new extensions, as required.*
3. *Street, traffic control, and drainage improvements along Monmouth and Cumberland Streets and within the project area, as required.*
4. *The redevelopment of a municipal parking lot for the rehabilitated train station building, new commercial center, and adjacent businesses and commercial uses, as part of the revitalization of the Broadway Avenue commercial corridor area, as necessary.*
5. *Provision of natural gas, electric, and communication utilities to and within the project area site, as required.*
6. *Landscape and streetscape improvement of the municipal parking lot and Monmouth and Cumberland Street frontages in concert with the existing Monmouth Street streetscape improvements and the extension of the downtown recreational and heritage trail, as identified in the Master Plan.*
7. *Removal and clean-up of any hazardous wastes or materials on the property including the removal of underground storage tanks, contaminated soil, and other wastes either on-site or within the buildings thereon.*
8. *Erection of barricades or fencing along the railroad frontage or other devices to increase public safety adjacent to the active freight rail line.*

C. Rehabilitation and Redevelopment

1. *Rehabilitation of the c 1885 train station building for flexible leasable office and/or commercial spaces. Space should also be made for a public bus terminal area, as indicated in the adopted Master Plan. Because the train station is listed in the City's 1995 Master Plan as a local historic site and may be eligible for listing in the state and national register of historic places, any rehabilitation of the building should be done in accordance with any applicable state, county, or federal historic preservation regulations.*
2. *Removal of the temporary office trailers of the Camden County Board of Health and relocation to another appropriate site, as may be required under City lease agreements.*
3. *Construction of a mixed use retail, commercial, or service-related office center designed to compliment the historic character of the Broadway commercial corridor and to provide sufficient spacing for a municipal parking lot.*
4. *Development of a municipal parking lot for the use of shoppers to the proposed development, as well as for existing stores in the Broadway Avenue commercial corridor area.*

Relationship to Local Objectives

The Rehabilitation and Redevelopment Plan is consistent with the Master Plan of Gloucester City in terms of land uses and density. The project will have a positive impact on adjoining uses by reinforcing efforts made by Gloucester City to revitalize the Broadway Avenue commercial corridor area and preserving the City's historic buildings, i.e. the Gloucester City Railroad Station, and downtown historic district.

Proposed Land Uses and Building Requirements in the Project Area

The area in question is currently located in the R-L (Low Density Residential) zone which precludes most land use types other than single family detached and twin residences. This area has recently been designated in the adopted Master Plan and the proposed Land Development Ordinance, which has been recommended for approval by the Planning Board, as a RC&S (Retail, Commercial & Service) zone. The RC&S zoning designation is more appropriate to not only these properties, but also for the majority of the parcels within the Broadway Avenue Commercial Corridor area. In fact, the development of low density residential housing on these parcels would be counterindicated considering the proximity of the site to an active freight railroad and core downtown commercial area. It is anticipated that the proposed zoning, which is in accordance with the Master Plan, will be adopted at the beginning of 1997.

In the event that the Redevelopment Agency is unable to obtain all the required funding for the development of these projects, it is recommended that the Redevelopment Agency consider selling these lands to private developers to complete the proposed project plans or other relevant and related plans for development appropriate to these parcels.

Property to be Acquired

Property proposed to be rehabilitated and/or redeveloped under this plan that is not owned by the City of Gloucester City may be acquired by eminent domain, as permitted by law.

Relocation Efforts

All of the property proposed to be redeveloped under this plan is either unoccupied or owned by the City of Gloucester City. City offices are situated within the historic train station. County health offices are located within temporary trailers on a site leased from the City. The Conrail lot to the south of the train station is vacant, as is the lot along Cumberland Street. Therefore, no relocation of residents or businesses is necessary, other than the relocation of government offices during the train station rehabilitation and eventual removal of the temporary trailers, in accordance with the City's lease. It is not anticipated that the City and County offices will return to the project area after the rehabilitation and redevelopment activities are completed. Future leasing arrangements will be determined by the Redevelopment Agency.

Relationship to Other Plans

The properties-in-question are in the Broadway Commercial Corridor area of Gloucester City. There is no significant relationship of this redevelopment plan to the master plans of contiguous municipalities. The redevelopment of this property is included as a key objective in the Land Use, Historic Preservation, Economic/Strategic Plan, Community Facilities Plan, and Circulation Plan Elements of the City's adopted 1996 Master Plan. The project is also consistent with the land use plan of Camden County. The project is consistent with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan policy objectives, particularly land use, economic development, and transportation.

The proposed development is not in conflict with any proposed capital projects that may be required to implement a proposed return of passenger rail service along the railroad through Gloucester City and extending into Gloucester County. The New Jersey Transit Authority study of the proposed rail line did not indicate use or acquisition of any of the properties included in the project area for future development. The proposed uses are not expected to detrimentally impact any existing or future planned freight or passenger rail traffic and shall be designed to actually increase public safety in the vicinity of the railroad line.

Relationship to Zoning Ordinance and Master Plan

The Rehabilitation and Redevelopment Plan is not consistent with the existing zoning ordinance uses and requirements for permitted and conditional uses in the R-L (Low Density Residential) zone, but it is consistent with the proposed RC&S (Retail, Commercial & Service) zone which has been recommended for approval by the Planning Board. The construction of a private parking lot is not a permitted use in the proposed RC&S Zone. However, because the proposed parking lot is to be developed as a municipal lot for the economic revitalization of the adjacent businesses and residences, it is in keeping with the overall purpose of the existing and proposed Zone Plan and the Zoning Ordinance. No revisions to the existing area and bulk requirements of the proposed zoning ordinance are envisioned to implement the Rehabilitation and Redevelopment Plan.

Likewise, the Rehabilitation and Redevelopment Plan is consistent with the Gloucester City Master Plan regarding the overall statement of goals and objectives, land use element, economic/strategic plan element, utilities plan element, community facilities plan element, and circulation plan element.

APPENDIX

GLOUCESTER CITY RAILROAD STATION REHABILITATION
AND REDEVELOPMENT AREA

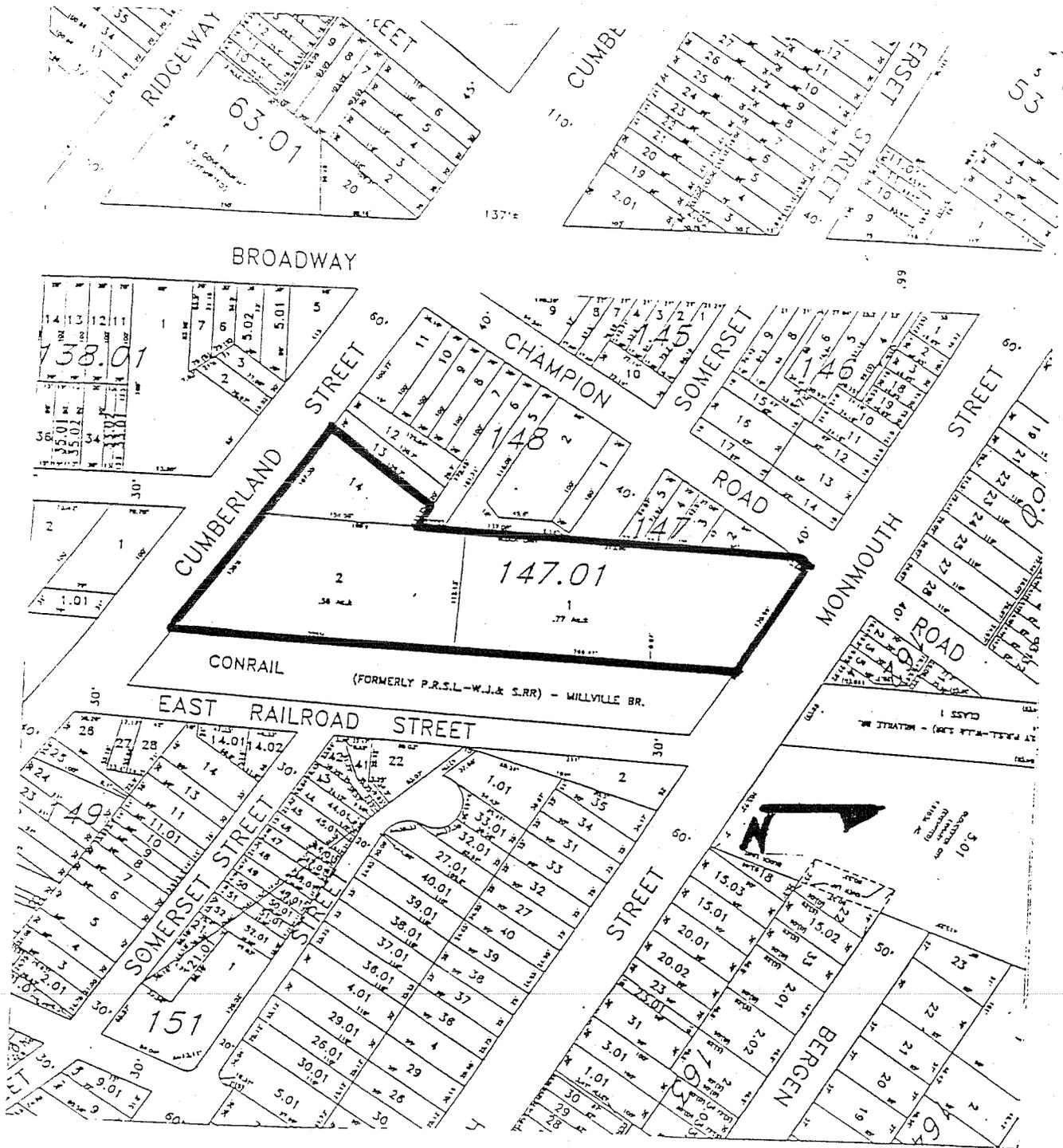


Figure 1: Location Map
GLOUCESTER CITY RAILROAD STATION PROJECT AREA
 (Block 147.01, Lots 1 and 2, and Block 148, Lot 14)