

An aerial map of Gloucester City, New Jersey, showing a grid of residential lots. Two specific lots are highlighted in a solid red color. One lot is located in the upper left quadrant, and the other is a larger lot in the lower right quadrant. The text of the report is overlaid on the map.

Gloucester City Redevelopment Study

Preliminary Investigation Report

Authorized by Resolution #081-2023
adopted on March 27, 2023

***Prepared for the Gloucester City
Planning and Zoning Board
September 27, 2023***



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Redevelopment Study and Preliminary Investigation Report (hereinafter referred to as “the redevelopment study”) is to determine whether certain properties in the City of Gloucester City (City) qualify as an area in need of redevelopment, as defined in the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, P.L. 1992, Chapter 79 (commonly and hereinafter referred to as the “LRHL”).

This report is written pursuant to Section 6 of the LRHL (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-6(a)), which states the following:

No area of a municipality shall be determined to be a redevelopment area unless the governing body of the municipality shall, by resolution, authorize the planning board to undertake a preliminary investigation to determine whether the proposed area is a redevelopment area according to the criteria set forth in section 5 of P.L. 1992, c.79 (C.40A:12A-5). ... The governing body of a municipality shall assign the conduct of the investigation and hearing to the planning board of the municipality.

The Mayor and Common Council of Gloucester City adopted Resolution #081-2023 on March 27, 2023, directing the Planning Board to undertake a preliminary investigation to determine whether certain properties qualify as a “**Non-condemnation Redevelopment Area**” pursuant to the LRHL. A “**Non-condemnation Redevelopment Area**” grants the municipality with all those powers provided by the Legislature for the use in the designated area in need of redevelopment excluding only the use of eminent domain pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1, et seq. The Resolution is included in this report as Appendix A.

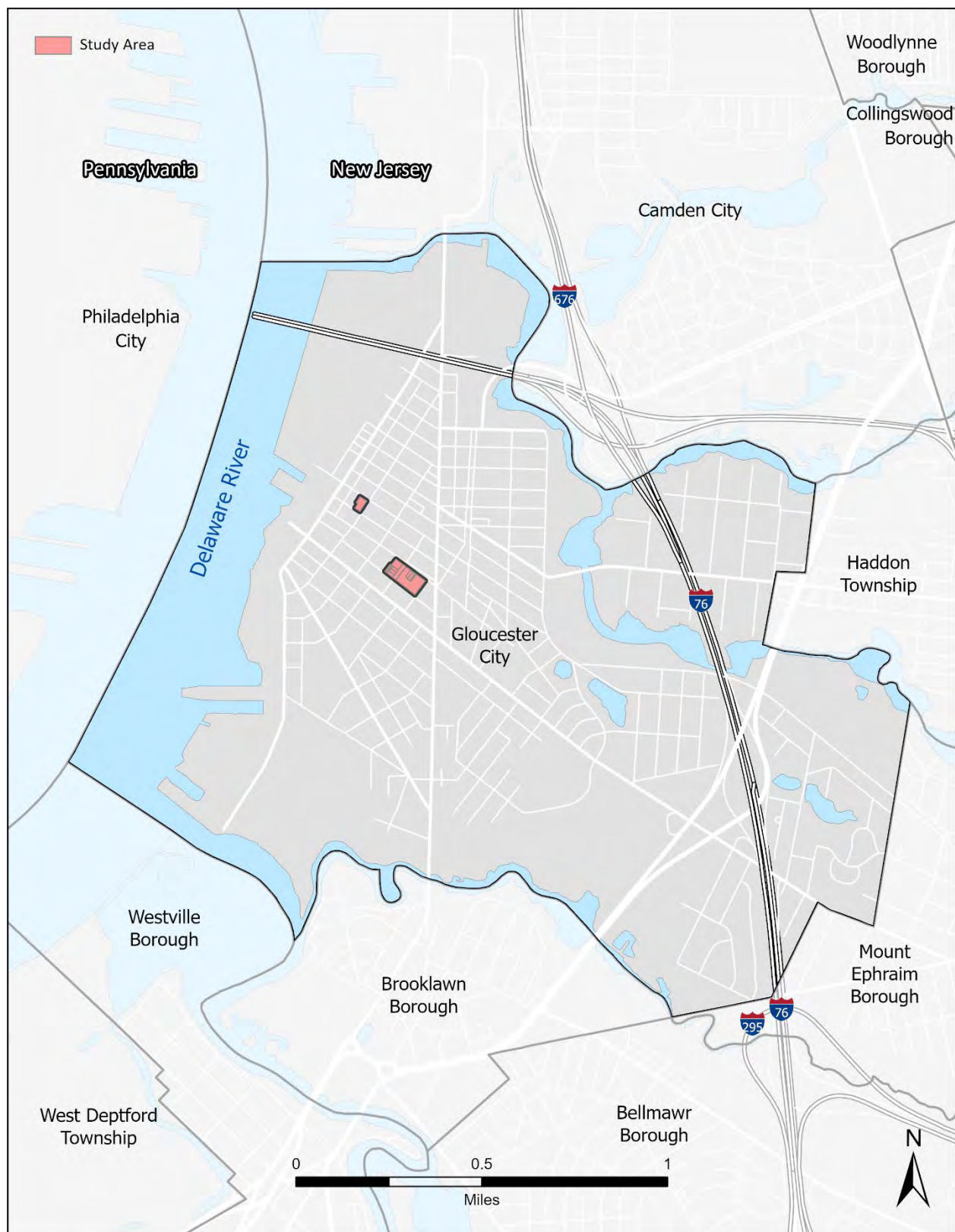
At the direction of the City, this preliminary investigation report includes 12 parcels and one right-of-way (Study Area), which are identified in Table 1 below. The Study Area boundaries are also shown on the accompanying regional context map (Map 1). Given the geographic dispersion, the Study Area is sub-divided into two “Sub-Areas”: the Former St. Mary’s High School Sub Area and the Former Mary Ethel Costello School Sub-Area (Maps 2 through 4).

This report serves as the “statement setting forth the basis for the investigation,” which is required by the LRHL at N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-6(b)(1). In accordance with N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-6(b)(5):

After completing its hearing on this matter, the planning board shall recommend that the delineated area, or any part thereof, be determined, or not be determined, by the municipal governing body to be a redevelopment area. After receiving the recommendation of the planning board, the municipal governing body may adopt a resolution determining that the delineated area, or any part thereof, is a redevelopment area.

Table 1. List of Parcels within Study Area

Block	Lot(s)	Sub-Area
50	1	Former St. Mary's High School
61	1, 17, 17.01, 17.02, 27, 28, 29	Former Mary Ethel Costello School
62	1, 2, 5, 6	Former Mary Ethel Costello School
Atlantic Street ROW		Former Mary Ethel Costello School



Map 1. Regional Context.



Map 2. Study Area Sub-Areas and Previously Designated Areas in Need of Redevelopment.



Map 3. Former St. Mary's High School Sub-Area.



Map 4. Former Mary Ethel Costello School Sub-Area.



Map 5. Aerial of Study Area

2.0 STUDY AREA DESCRIPTION

The Study Area is comprised of 12 parcels and one block of right-of-way within Gloucester City.

The Study Area is separated into two distinct sub-areas to simplify categorization. For ease of reference, these sub-areas are referred to as the Former St. Mary's High School Sub-Area and the Former Mary Ethel Costello School Sub-Area. References to sub-areas are solely for the purposes of this study. The Study Area that is the subject of this report is identified by block and lot numbers in Table 1, all of which were included in the list of properties in Resolution #081-2023.

One (1) parcel (Block 50, Lot 1) covers the Former St. Mary's High School Sub-Area. This property fronts on Burlington Street from Monmouth Street in the north to Somerset Street in the south.

The Former Mary Ethel Costello Sub-Area covers eleven (11) parcels: four (4) parcels in Block 62, which include the former school and the adjacent residential properties on the same block (Block 62, Lots 1, 2, 5, and 6) and seven (7) parcels in Block 61, which include the American Legion building and the adjacent undeveloped parcels (Block 61, Lots 1, 17, 17.01, 17.02, 27, 28, and 29). The Atlantic Street right-of-way between block 61 and 62, extending from Cumberland Street to Ridgeway Street, is also included in the Former Mary Ethel Costello Sub-Area. This sub-area is also bounded by Joy Street to the southeast.

The source of the parcel layer used for mapping in this report is the New Jersey Office of Geographic Information Systems (NJOGIS). Block 61, Lot 17.02 is a narrow parcel that separates Lots 1 and 17.01. It is not shown within the NJOGIS parcel layer but is included in the City's tax maps. Lot 17.02 is therefore not shown on the maps within this report but was identified in the Governing Body resolution and is part of the Study Area.

Additionally shown in Map 2 are previously designated areas in need of redevelopment, which are located to the north and west of the Former St. Mary's High School Sub-Area. Previously designated areas in need of redevelopment are also located to the southeast and southwest of the Former Mary Ethel Costello School Sub-Area. Parcels that were included in previous designations were not included in this Study Area.

The entire municipality was designated as an Area in Need of Rehabilitation pursuant to the requirements of the previous five-year tax abatement statutes in effect prior to the enactment of the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law and in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-14(b). The City's rehabilitation designation remains in effect.

In addition, the Former Saint Mary's High School Sub-Area and a portion of the Former Mary Ethel Costello Sub-Area, including the American Legion building, are in the City's Urban Enterprise Zone (UEZ). This is discussed in more detail in Section 3.4.

2.1 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS

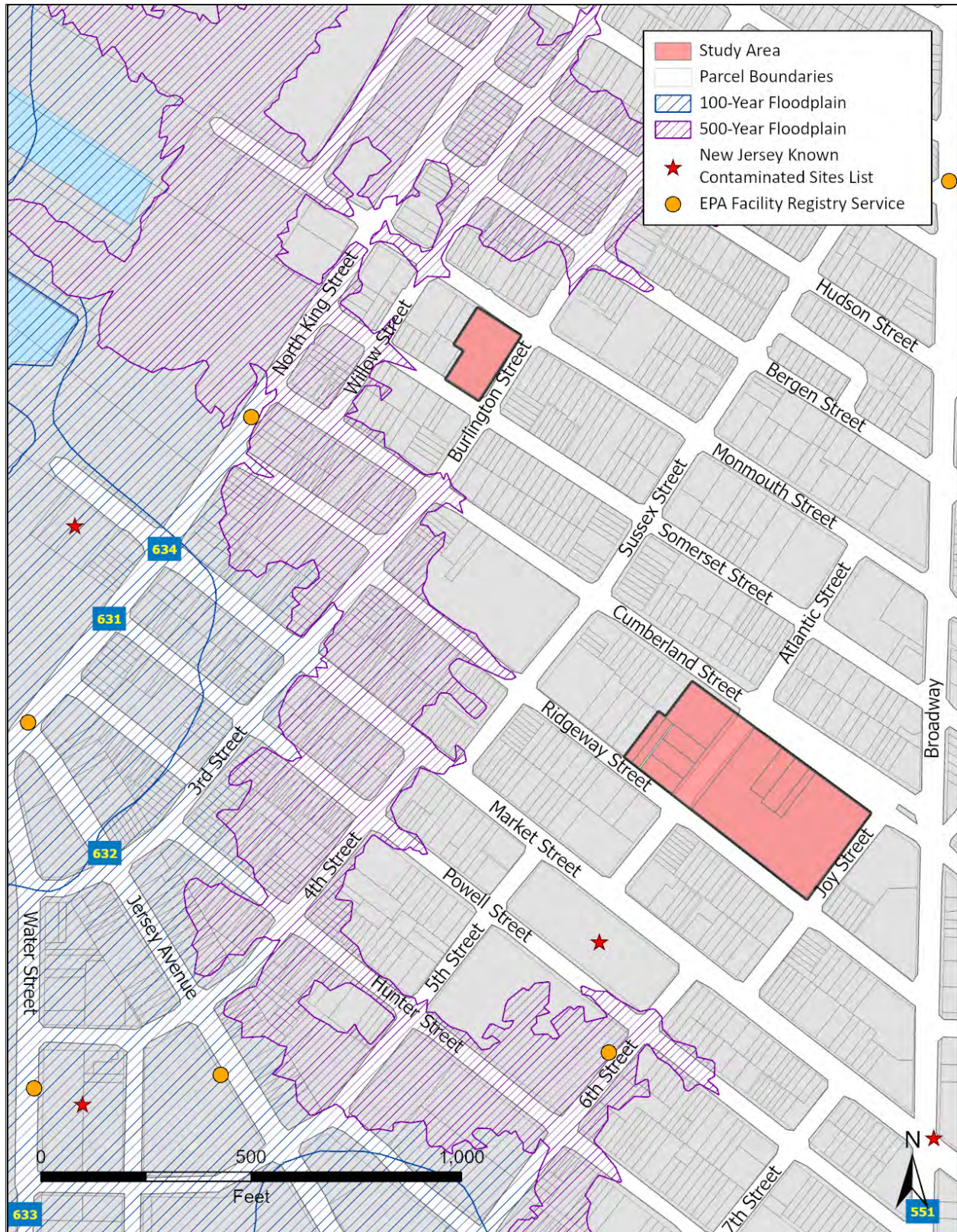
The 100-year floodplain, or the area that is considered to have a 1% chance of flooding in a given year according to current modeling, is the standard measure used to regulate development near waterbodies within New Jersey. The 100-year floodplain extends from the Delaware River onto sections of South King Street and Market Street. The Study Area is not located within the 100-year floodplain.

As coastal flooding becomes more extreme, there is growing evidence to suggest that the real probability of a flood occurring annually in the 100-year floodplain is greater than 1%. The 500-year floodplain, the area determined to have a 0.2% chance of flooding annually according to current modeling, may be a more appropriate indicator to influence decisions regarding land development. While the Study Area is not located within the 500-year floodplain, portions of the 500-year floodplain extend inland less than a block from the Former St. Mary's High School.

Environmental contamination is also present near the Study Area, largely a remnant of the history of industrial uses near the City's waterfront. Areas identified on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Facility Registry Services (FRS) and the New Jersey Known Contaminated Site List (KCSL) are also shown on Map 6. The EPA defines the FRS as "a centrally managed database that identifies facilities, sites or places subject to environmental regulations or of environmental interest."¹ The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) defines Known Contaminated Sites as "those sites and properties within the state where contamination of soil or ground water has been confirmed at levels equal to or greater than applicable standards."² While there are no FRS or KCSL sites within the Study Area, two (2) FRS and three (3) KCSL locations are within 1,000 feet of the study area.

¹ [Facility Registry System | Facility Registry Services | US EPA](#)

² [Known Contaminated Site List for New Jersey | NJDEP Open Data \(arcgis.com\)](#)



Map 6. Environmental Constraints.

2.2 LAND USE ANALYSIS

Existing land uses within the study area were identified using Property Classification taken from MOD-IV tax data from the New Jersey Division of Taxation and confirmed and further refined from field investigation.

The New Jersey Division of Taxation collects and maintains the New Jersey Property Tax Information System known as MOD-IV. The MOD-IV tax data classifies the land use of each tax parcel, among other information collected. MOD-IV data for parcels in New Jersey was combined geospatially by the New Jersey Office of Geographic Information Systems.

As shown in Table 2, Public School (Class 15A), solely comprising the parcel of the former Mary Ethel Costello School, is the property classification that covers the most land within the Study Area, with 1.65 acres, or 48.1% of the total. Church & Charitable (Class 15D), which covers the American Legion property and adjacent parcels, and Commercial (Class 4A), which covers the former St. Mary's High School property, are the next most prominent property classifications, at 0.50 acres (14.6% of total) and 0.44 acres (12.8% of total), respectively. This is followed by Residential (Class 2) at 0.30 acres (8.6% of total) and Vacant (Class 1) at 0.22 acres (6.3% of total), both of which are spread between three (3) parcels.

Rights-of-way, which are also included in the study area, are not considered parcels, and therefore do not have a property classification but field investigation indicates that a portion of the American Legion site extends onto this lot.

Table 2. Property Classification

Property Classification	# Parcels	Acres	% of Study Area
Vacant (Class 1)	3	0.22	6.3%
Residential (Class 2)	3	0.30	8.6%
Commercial (Class 4A)	1	0.44	12.8%
Public School (Class 15A)	1	1.65	48.1%
Church & Charitable (Class 15D)	4	0.50	14.6%
Right-of Way	-	0.33	9.7%
Total	12	3.42	100.0%



Map 7. Property Classification.

2.3 ZONING AND RELATIONSHIP TO ZONING ORDINANCE

The Study Area falls entirely within the Residential Medium (R-M) zone. Table 3 summarizes the area, setback, and building requirements for the R-M Zone. Note that when multiple standards were provided based on the type of use, the strictest standard was used in the table.

Table 3. Schedule of Area, Setback, and Building Requirements (R-M Zoning Districts)

Standard	Requirement
Minimum Lot Area	2,500 ft ² ³
Minimum Lot Width	25 ft ⁴
Minimum Front Yard Setback	8 ft ⁵
Minimum Side Yard Setback	5 ft each
Minimum Rear Yard Setback	25 ft
Maximum Building Height	3 stories / 35 ft
Maximum Impermeable Lot Coverage	35%

Table 4 shows conformance to the R-M zoning district for each of the 12 parcels within the Study Area, identifying parcels that are either an undersized lot (due to width and/or area) or impervious coverage (denoted in the City's zoning tables as "Impermeable Coverage"). Parcels were determined to be undersize by comparing the dimensions of the parcel as recorded in the MOD-IV tax data with the minimum frontage and lot area permitted in the zoning district. Table 5 additionally shows parcels that exceed the impervious coverage permitted within each zone, calculated by spatially analyzing an impervious coverage layer provided by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection using ArcGIS.

³ Listed as "4,000 s.f. Single Family Dwelling, 5,000 s.f. Townhouse Dwelling; 2,500 s.f. Twinhouse Dwelling"

⁴ Listed as "40 ft. Single Family Dwelling, 50 ft. total Townhouse Dwelling, 25 ft. Twinhouse Dwelling"

⁵ Listed as "8 feet of the existing building line for 70% of the block face, whichever is less."

Table 4. Zoning Conformance

<i>Block</i>	<i>Lot</i>	<i>Undersize Lot (Width or Area)</i>	<i>Exceeds Impervious Coverage</i>	<i>Undersize Lot OR Exceeds Impervious Coverage</i>
50	1	No	Yes	Yes
61	1	No	Yes	Yes
61	17	No	No	No
61	17.01	No	No	No
61	17.02	Yes	No	Yes
61	27	No	Yes	Yes
61	28	Yes	No	Yes
61	29	Yes	No	Yes
62	1	No	Yes	Yes
62	2	Yes	Yes	Yes
62	5	No	No	No
62	6	No	Yes	Yes

Four of parcels (33% of the total) within the study area are considered undersize lots, either due to their lot width (minimum 25 feet) or total lot area (minimum 2,500 square feet) not meeting minimum standards of the R-M zoning districts.

Six parcels (50% of the total) in the Study Area exceed the 35% maximum impervious coverage permitted within the zone. Most prominently, the two largest parcels in the Study Area, which cover the Former St. Mary's High School and Former May Ethel Costello School properties (Block 50, Lot 1 and Block 62, Lot 1, respectively), are both almost entirely covered by impervious surfaces.

When considered together, nine (9) parcels (75% of the total) within the Study Area are non-compliant with the existing zoning requirements, either because they do not meet minimum lot frontage or area or they exceed maximum impervious coverage, or both.

It is important to note that this assessment of zoning conformance only considered lot size and impervious coverage. It is likely that nonconformities on additional standards exist that were not captured here, covering both parcels that are already deemed nonconforming and the few remaining parcels that were conforming to lot size and impervious coverage standards.



Map 8. Zoning Compliance for Residential Medium Zoning District.

3.0 PLANNING CONTEXT

3.1 2018 Comprehensive Master Plan

The most recent Master Plan was adopted by Gloucester City in 2018 and lays out the goals and objectives for the future of the City.⁶ This section summarizes the 2018 Master Plan and its relevancy to this Redevelopment Investigation and the consideration of the potential for redevelopment within the Study Area and its sub-areas.

The relevant goal from the 2018 Master Plan is to:

Utilize the resources of government, businesses, and residents to establish the City of Gloucester City as a vibrant residential community with desirable commercial activity, a beautiful waterfront with pedestrian walkways, and clean industries that provide superior employment opportunities to City residents. Restore Gloucester City's economic vitality along the retail corridors of Broadway, U. S. Route 130, King Street and Market Street.

Additionally, relevant policy recommendations in the various elements of the Master Plan are summarized below.

3.1.a Land Use Element

There are several policy goals from the Land Use Element that are relevant to this Redevelopment Investigation. This element incorporated and is in alignment with the Camden County Comprehensive Plan goals for Gloucester City. Gloucester City was identified as a Priority Growth Investment Area (PGIA). A PGIA is an area where significant development and redevelopment will be prioritized. Relevant policy goals for PGIA's are also outlined in the plan. These goals include: to support the vitality of neighborhood main streets as anchors of the community, and to harness the economic and cultural potential of the County's signature destination parks, riverfronts, and open spaces. This Redevelopment Investigation aims to identify areas in need of redevelopment that may assist with meeting these goals in the future.

3.1.b Economic Plan Element

An Economic Plan Element considers all areas of economic development and vitality, including projected employment expected to result from economic development based on the characteristics of the labor pool in the municipality and surrounding areas. The economic outlook for the City showed that it needs to take a proactive approach to redevelopment to capitalize on and share in the forecasts for its neighbors, including the City of Camden. Redevelopment can potentially play a role in taking that proactive approach to economic

⁶ Prior to the adoption of the current Master Plan, the City Master Plans include the 1985 Gloucester City Master Plan, 1995 Gloucester City Master Plan, Land Use Element Revised January 1996, City of Gloucester City Master Plan Reexamination Report adopted September 2002, and Gloucester City Reexamination Report adopted July 2009.

development.

3.1.c Smart Growth Areas

The entirety of Gloucester City was designated a “Smart Growth Area” within the Camden County Comprehensive Plan, which was highlighted in the 2018 Master Plan. This essentially means that Gloucester City has adequate infrastructure to accommodate growth, but may lack assets essential to smart growth development, such as mixed-use centers, multi-modal infrastructure, and parks and recreation areas.

3.1.d Summary

As can be seen above, there are several objectives, policies, and recommendations in the 2018 Master Plan that are relevant to and support the redevelopment of the Study Area.

3.4 Urban Enterprise Zones

Urban Enterprise Zones (UEZ) are areas that have been determined to be a “distressed area within a New Jersey municipality or group of municipalities that offers business and customer benefits to help stimulate local economic activity. The State provides qualified businesses within UEZs with several forms of tax relief incentives”.⁷

As shown on Map 9, Gloucester City has an active UEZ that incorporates portions of the study area.

In accordance with the provisions of paragraph “g” in Section 5 of the LRHL (i.e., the “g” criterion), areas that are within a UEZ qualify as an area in need of redevelopment. However, the redevelopment powers granted to a municipality in a UEZ are limited to the granting of long-term tax exemptions and short-term (5-year) tax abatements and exemptions unless the area otherwise qualifies as an area in need of redevelopment pursuant to one or more of the other statutory criteria in Section 5 of the LRHL. The applicability of the “g” criterion to the study area is described in Section 4.0 of this report.

⁷ [NJ Division of Taxation - Urban Enterprise Zone](#)



Map 9. Urban Enterprise Zone overlapping Study Area.

4.0 STATUTORY CRITERIA

A study area qualifies as being an “Area in Need of Redevelopment” if it meets at least one of the eight statutory criteria listed in Section 40A:12A-5 of the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law:

- 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 a building or buildings previously used for commercial, retail, shopping malls or plazas, office parks, manufacturing, or industrial purposes; the abandonment of such building or buildings; significant vacancies of such building or buildings for at least two consecutive years; 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 that 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 solely 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 lack or total lack of proper utilization of areas caused by the condition of the title, diverse ownership of the real properties therein or other similar conditions which impede land assemblage or discourage the undertaking of improvements, resulting in a stagnant and unproductive condition of land potentially useful and valuable for contributing to and serving the public health, safety and welfare, which condition is presumed to be having a negative social or economic impact or otherwise being detrimental to the safety, health, morals, or welfare of the surrounding area or the community in general.
- 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,” P.L.1983, c.303 (C.52:27H-60 et seq.) 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 pursuant to sections 5 and 6 of P.L.1992, c.79 (C.40A:12A-5 and 40A:12A-6) for the purpose of granting tax exemptions within the enterprise zone district pursuant to the provisions of P.L.1991, c.431 (C.40A:20-1 et seq.) or the adoption of a tax abatement and exemption ordinance pursuant to the provisions of P.L.1991, c.441 (C.40A:21-1 et seq.). 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:12A-1 et al.) 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.

- H. The designation of the delineated area is consistent with smart growth planning principles adopted pursuant to law or regulation.

N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-3 further states that “A redevelopment area may 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 development of the area of which they are a part.” This is commonly referred to as the “Section 3 Criteria.” According to The Redevelopment Handbook, this section allows for the inclusion of properties that do not meet the statutory criteria but are “...essential to be included in the designation to effectively redevelop the area.” Examples of such properties include properties located within and surrounded by otherwise blighted area, property that are needed to provide access to an area to be redeveloped, areas needed for infrastructure or utilities, or properties that otherwise could be determined to be critical to the area’s successful redevelopment.

4.1 Criterion “A”

4.1.a Statutory Criteria

A property meets the “a” criterion for redevelopment if the following applies:

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.

In addition, the “a” criterion is considered when there is a growing lack or total lack of proper utilization of areas caused by the condition of the title, diverse ownership of the real properties therein or other similar conditions which impede land assemblage or discourage the undertaking of improvements, resulting in a stagnant and unproductive condition of land potentially useful and valuable for contributing to and serving the public health, safety, and welfare, which condition is presumed to be having a negative social or economic impact or otherwise being detrimental to the safety, health, morals, or welfare of the surrounding area or the community in general”.

4.1.b Applicability

During site visits, the project team assessed the physical conditions of buildings in the Study Area to review the applicability of the “a” criterion.

The redevelopment study finds that the following properties exhibit conditions that meet the “a” criterion of the statute.

Former St. Mary’s High School Sub-Area

- Block 50, Lot 1

Former Mary Ethel Costello School Sub-Area

- Block 62, Lot 1

The basis for the conclusion that the foregoing properties meet the “a” criterion is provided in Appendix B, and relevant physical conditions are documented in site photographs provided in Appendix C.

4.2 Criterion “B”

4.2.a Statutory Criteria

A property meets the “b” criterion for redevelopment if the following applies:

The discontinuance of the use of a building or buildings previously used for commercial, retail, shopping malls or plazas, office parks, manufacturing, or industrial purposes; the abandonment of such building or buildings; significant vacancies of such building or buildings for at least two consecutive years; or the same being allowed to fall into so great a state of repair as to be untenable.

4.2.b Applicability

To assess the applicability of the “b” criterion, it is necessary to first identify properties that have been used for commercial, retail, shopping malls or plazas, office parks, manufacturing, or industrial purposes. A total of two (2) parcels in the North King Street Sub-Area, eleven (11) parcels in the South King Street Sub-Area, and eight (8) parcels in the Market Street Sub-Area have a MOD-IV property classification assessment of 4A (Commercial). None of the parcels in the study area are assessed as Class 4B (Industrial).

The Study Area contains no areas where a discontinued building or buildings previously used for commercial, retail, shopping malls or plazas, office parks, manufacturing, or industrial purposes were abandoned or demonstrated significant vacancies for at least two consecutive years or were in so great a state of repair as to be untenable. As such, none of the Study Area properties meet the “b” criterion for redevelopment.

4.3 Criterion “C”

4.3.a Statutory Criteria

A property meets the “c” criterion for redevelopment if the following applies:

Land that is owned by the municipality, the county, a local housing authority, redevelopment agency or redevelopment entity, or unimproved vacant land that 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.

4.3.b Applicability

The Study Area contains one property that are owned by the municipality and due to its use

as a public street, it is not likely to be developed through the instrumentality of private capital unless included in the redevelopment area, vacated, and conveyed to a designated redeveloper. The properties are as follows:

Former Mary Ethel Costello School Sub-Area

- Atlantic Street Right-of-Way

4.4 Criterion “D”

4.4.a Statutory Criteria

A property meets the “d” criterion for redevelopment if the following applies:

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.

4.4.b Applicability

During site visits conducted in March 2022 and May 2023, the project team assessed site conditions and overall site layout of Study Area properties to review the applicability of the “d” criterion.

The Redevelopment Study finds that the following properties in sub-areas exhibit conditions that meet the “d” criterion of the statute:

Former St. Mary’s High School Sub-Area

- Block 50, Lot 1

Former Mary Ethel Costello School Sub-Area

- Block 61, Lot 1
- Block 61, Lot 27
- Block 61, Lot 28
- Block 61, Lot 29
- Block 62, Lot 1

4.5 Criterion “E”

4.5.a Statutory Criteria

A property meets the “e” criterion for redevelopment if the following applies:

A growing lack or total lack of proper utilization of areas caused by the condition of the title, diverse ownership of the real properties therein or other similar conditions which impede land assemblage or discourage the undertaking of improvements, resulting in a stagnant and unproductive condition of land potentially useful and valuable for contributing to and serving the public health, safety, and welfare, which

condition is presumed to be having a negative social or economic impact or otherwise being detrimental to the safety, health, morals, or welfare of the surrounding area or the community in general.

4.5.b Applicability

The Study Area contains no areas where issues where the diversity of ownership and property size and configuration impede land assemblage or discourage the undertaking of improvements resulting in stagnant or unproductive condition of the land that would otherwise be valuable for contributing to the public health, safety, and welfare of the City. As such, none of the Study Area properties meet the “e” criterion for redevelopment.

4.6 Criterion “F”

4.6.a Statutory Criteria

A property meets the “f” criterion for redevelopment if the following applies:

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.

4.6.b Applicability

The Study Area contains no areas in excess of five contiguous acres that were impacted by fire events, storms, cyclone, tornado, earthquake, or other casualty that would warrant application of the “f” criterion. As such, none of the Study Area properties meet the “f” criterion for redevelopment.

4.7 Criterion “G”

4.7.a Statutory Criteria

A property meets the “g” criterion for redevelopment if the following applies:

In any municipality in which an enterprise zone has been designated pursuant to the “New Jersey Urban Enterprise Zones Act,” P.L.1983, c.303 (C.52:27H-60 et seq.) 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 pursuant to sections 5 and 6 of P.L.1992, c.79 (C.40A:12A-5 and 40A:12A-6) for the purpose of granting tax exemptions within the enterprise zone district pursuant to the provisions of P.L.1991, c.431 (C.40A:20-1 et seq.) or the adoption of a tax abatement and exemption ordinance pursuant to the provisions of P.L.1991, c.441 (C.40A:21-1 et seq.). 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:12A-1 et al.) 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.

Parcels that only meet the “g” criterion and none of the other statutory criteria qualify as areas in need of redevelopment exclusively for the purposes of granting long-term tax exemptions and short-term (5-year) tax abatements and exemptions. For a municipality to exercise other redevelopment powers within the UEZ, it must be demonstrated that one or more of the other statutory criteria for designating an area in need of redevelopment have been met.

4.7.b Applicability

The following parcels in the Study Area are located within the Gloucester City UEZ and therefore qualify under the “g” criteria:

Former St. Mary’s High School Sub-Area

- Block 50, Lot 1

Former Mary Ethel Costello School Sub-Area

- Block 61, Lot 1
- Block 61, Lot 27
- Atlantic Street Right-of-Way

All of these parcels meet additional criteria for designation as an area in need of redevelopment. Therefore, if these areas are designated by the City as an area in need of redevelopment and a redevelopment plan is adopted for the area, the City would be able to use all of the other applicable redevelopment powers specified in the LRHL in addition to the granting long-term tax exemptions and short-term tax abatements and exemptions.

4.8 Criterion “H”

4.8.a Statutory Criteria

The LRHL provides for the designation of an area in need of redevelopment under the terms of the “h” criterion when:

The designation of the delineated area is consistent with smart growth planning principles adopted pursuant to law or regulation. (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5[h]).

Smart growth is an approach to land use planning that minimizes sprawl and preserves natural areas by guiding development toward locations with existing or planned infrastructure, and appropriate community services and transportation.

4.8.b Applicability

While the municipal Master Plan and County Comprehensive Plan calls for the implementation of smart growth planning principles in the City, no areas within the Study Area were specifically identified for such an approach. As such, none of the Study Area properties meet the “h” criterion for redevelopment.

4.9 Needed for Effective Redevelopment

4.9.a Statutory Language

The LRHL, at N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-3, permits the inclusion of parcels that do not meet the statutory criteria if they are necessary for the effective redevelopment of the area:

A redevelopment area may 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 development of the area of which they are a part.

4.9.b Applicability

Six (6) of the Study Area properties have been found to be needed for the effective redevelopment of the Study Area, as follows:

Former Mary Ethel Costello School Sub-Area

- Block 61, Lot 17
- Block 61, Lot 17.01
- Block 61, Lot 17.02
- Block 61, Lot 27
- Block 62, Lot 2
- Block 62, Lot 5
- Block 62, Lot 6

Block 61, Lot 27 additionally meets the “d” and “g” criteria.

The six (6) parcels determined to be needed for the effective redevelopment of the Study Area without meeting any other criteria comprise roughly 16% of the Former Mary Ethel Costello School Sub-Area (0.49 acres total). Three of the parcels (Block 62, Lots 2, 5, and 6) are collectively bounded on three sides by the Former Mary Ethel Costello School property (Block 62, Lot 1) while three other parcels located to the southeast of the American Legion property (Block 61, Lots 17, 17.01, and 17.02) collectively are surrounded in all directions by parcels and right-of-way that meet criteria for designation as an area in need of redevelopment. Inclusion of these parcels allows for the creation of a contiguous area that will significantly increase the development potential of the sub-area as a whole.

The basis for the conclusion that the foregoing properties are needed for the effective redevelopment of the area is provided in Appendix B.

5.0 CONCLUSION

This report determines that a variety of parcels within the study area meet the statutory criteria for designation in need of redevelopment. The basis for this conclusion is described in the preceding sections of this report.

