

Harrison Township, New Jersey

Amended Redevelopment Plan for Block 52, Lots 8 and 9

Mullica West Apartments

April 4, 2022



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Acknowledgements

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Table of Contents

1.0	Introduction	1
1.1.	Introduction.....	1
1.2.	Description of Site Area	1
1.3.	Summary of Redevelopment Investigation Findings.....	4
1.4.	Redevelopment Goals and Objectives.....	4
2.0	Site Development.....	6
2.1.	Development Program.....	6
2.2.	Design Standards: Architecture	8
2.3.	Design Standards: Site Plan.....	8
2.4.	COAH Regulations.....	8
2.5.	Infrastructure and Public Improvements	8
2.6.	Property Acquisition.....	9
2.7.	Relocation of Displaced Residents and Businesses	9
3.0	Relationship to Other Plans.....	9
3.1.	Relationship to Other Municipal Plans.....	9
3.2.	Relationship to County Master Plan.....	9
3.3.	Relationship to State Development and Redevelopment Plan.....	10
3.4.	Relationship to Development Regulations of the Municipality.....	10
4.0	General Provisions	11
4.1.	Zoning Map Amendment	11
4.2.	Procedure for Amending the Redevelopment Plan	11
4.3.	Validity of Ordinance.....	11
4.4.	Redevelopment Entity.....	11

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The initial Redevelopment Plan adopted on April 17, 2015 described the standards and procedures for the redevelopment of land specified in the Harrison Township Block 52, Lots 8 and 9 Preliminary Redevelopment Investigation document. Whereas the preliminary investigation concluded that the specified area in Harrison Township, Gloucester County, New Jersey qualified to be declared an "Area in Need of Redevelopment", the Redevelopment Plan document set forth the procedural and development guidelines for the redevelopment entity as well as for the chosen redeveloper. This Amended Redevelopment Plan integrates changes proposed to the original plan in order to comply with the 2016 Housing Plan as amended in March 2022 and with the Fair Share Housing Center Settlement Agreement of 2021.

1.2 Description of Site Area

The Redevelopment Area is composed of two parcels, Block 52 Lots 8 and 9, in Harrison Township. The total acreage of the Redevelopment Area is approximately 35.26 acres as measured by tax records available through Gloucester County, and the site is accessible from High Street to the north and NJ Route 45 to the south as illustrated in Figure 1.

Block 52, Lot 8, also known as "Mullica West Apartments" is located in Harrison Township off of High Street. In Tax year 2013, Block 52 Lots 8.01, 8.02, and 11.01 were consolidated with Lot 8 for tax purposes. The total site area for Lot 8 equals 30.06 acres.

Block 52, Lot 9 is located behind Lot 8 and fronts onto New Jersey 45. It measures approximately 5.2 acres. There are currently three structures located on site: a single-family house, a garage, and small utility shed.

Mullica West Apartments (Block 52, Lot 8) is an existing affordable housing complex for families located in Harrison Township, Gloucester County. Mullica West was developed over 30 years ago through the USDA Section 515 Program, and consists of 7 buildings and 168 apartment units with one unit utilized for management and leasing.

The property owner has obtained a professionally prepared capital needs assessment to establish the scope of rehabilitation which will upgrade all apartments to meet construction code requirements, achieve energy star standards for the project, replace all central heat and air conditioning units, replace flooring, and renovate all kitchens and baths. According to the property owner, USDA will provide rental assistance to this project on a year to year basis. However, the property owner has also stated that this rental assistance is in jeopardy and subject to loss without the efforts outlined in the capital needs assessment.

Preservation of Mullica West is essential to maintain affordability for existing and future residents in the Township. Mullica West has consistently maintained over 98 percent occupancy, demonstrating a strong demand for these units. Preservation of Mullica West will not only require that the units remain affordable to low and moderate income residents, but that extensive rehabilitation occur consistent with the items addressed in the Capital Needs Assessment.

Figure 2 identifies the location of the various buildings and improvements on the Mullica West Apartments site.

Figure 1. Aerial of Site



0 200 400 800 Feet



1.3. Summary of Redevelopment Investigation Findings

The analysis presented within this document serves as the basis for the recommendation that Block 52, Lots 8 and 9 qualify as an Area in Need of Redevelopment.

1.3.a. Block 52, Lot 8

The Preliminary Investigation found that code violations and issues identified through a property inspection were severe and represented a substantial detriment to the wholesome living of Mullica West Apartment residents. Substantial work would have to be done to improve ceilings, fix walls, rehabilitate bathrooms and fix kitchens so that they meet basic living standards. In totality the scale of the violations and costs associated with addressing them demonstrated that the Mullica West Apartments are substandard, dilapidated, and obsolescent and therefore met statutory Criterion A for being designated in Need of Redevelopment.

1.3.b. Block 52, Lot 9

The analysis of Block 52, Lot 9 indicated that the shed, garage, and home had deteriorated significantly and that the owner had not undertaken the maintenance to properly address these issues. The result was that all buildings on site met the statutory criteria for being unsafe and/or dilapidated. In addition, the report concluded that the garage and shed were sufficiently outdated in their design and construction as to be considered obsolete for the purposes they were intended to serve.

1.4. Redevelopment Goals and Objectives

At the time that the original Redevelopment Plan was completed, the most recent Master Plan Reexamination had been completed in 2013. A more recent Master Plan Reexamination was completed in 2021. However, the goals of the original redevelopment plan which were derived directly from the relevant Township Master Plan policy and goal statements of the 2013 Reexamination Report remain within the 2021 Reexamination report and therefore no changes have been made to Section 1.4.a. The objectives are derived from applicable master plan elements and also remain consistent with the 2021 Reexamination report.

1.4.a. Township Goals for Planning and Development

- Provide for the continued scenic and low density nature of the Township by guiding development and land uses to protect and enhance the character of the Township. Consider the importance of existing village centers to the present Township landscape and image and develop a land use plan and development regulations which protect their integrity.
- Protect the critical natural features and resources of the Township such as floodplains, woodlands, steep slopes, wetlands, and bodies of water. Use these natural features to organize and separate where necessary different types and intensities of land uses in the Township. Establish controls on the permitted disturbance of critical resources during land development.
- Establish policies governing the development of land that will promote the preservation of views from the roadway and which will retain the visual "rural character" of the community.

It is in the Township's interest to promote high quality development through architecturally compatible design. Establish design guidelines for primary roadways and new developments to enhance the uniformity of the Township.

- Encourage mixed uses such as residential, commercial, and industrial to create a well-integrated community. A mix is encouraged for the convenience of the residents and enhancement of the tax base of the Township. The land use plan and development regulations should be designed to minimize conflicts between activities so that one land use does not adversely affect neighboring land uses.

1.4.b. Residential Development Objectives

- Provide a variety of dwelling unit types and densities to meet the varying needs of the current and future residents of the Township.
- Promote resident safety through design standards for streets, sidewalks, and crosswalks.
- Assure adequate living space for all, providing sufficient land area for each dwelling unit and provide soundly constructed and attractive dwelling units.

1.4.c. Community Image and Attractiveness Objectives

- Promote the attractiveness of new residential development and the maintenance of existing neighborhoods with an attractive street planting program.
- Encourage new development in the existing villages to be compatible to their architectural style and scale of the building.

2.0 Site Development

2.1. Development Program

The overall goal of the original Redevelopment Plan was the rehabilitation of the site's 168 affordable apartments located within 7 residential buildings and including the rehabilitation of the site's amenities, architecture, and circulation and the addition of 48 more affordable units. Total development of the site was 216 units. All units were deed restricted as affordable. The development program for the site accomplished those goals subject to Joint Land Use Board review and approval of the improvements listed in 2.1.a through 2.1.c. The amendment proposed includes the addition of a 96-unit, 100% affordable senior housing building, for a total of 310 units on site. The proposed amendments to the Redevelopment Plan have been added to this program in *italics*.

2.1.a. Apartment Unit Rehabilitation

- Upgrade all apartments to meet modern construction code standards.
- Replace all central heat and air conditioning units.
- Replace flooring.
- Renovate all kitchens and baths.

2.1.b. Apartment Building Rehabilitation

- Preserve all 7 existing apartment buildings in a mix of 1, 2, and 3 bedroom units throughout the site.
- Upgrade exterior facades of existing buildings to be compatible with the character of the Township.
- Construct new residential building to house existing residents on-site during renovations, later to be converted to permanent housing.

2.1.c. Site Upgrades and Amenities

- *Construct a new 96 unit, 100% affordable senior age-restricted development to the north of the existing apartments, that will be consistent in scale, style, and architecture with the existing development.*
- Construct a community building on-site.
- Resurface the existing parking lot.
- Provide additional parking as determined to be needed at site plan review.
- Improve and augment playground / tot lot, location to be determined at site plan review.
- Achieve energy star standards for the project.
- Introduce modern security features.
- Provide off-site sidewalk/path improvements to link the site to the Village of Mullica Hill.
- Provide buffers.

Figure 3. Site Design Illustrative Diagram



*Quality and design of all improvements to be subject to Joint Land Use Board approval.



0 150 300 600 Feet

Figure 3 reflects the redevelopment project area. The figure shows a conceptual land use plan and identifies major features and improvements associated with streets, buffers, open space, building locations, parking lots, and circulation patterns.

2.2. Design Standards: Architecture

The design and location of all buildings shall be subject to review and approval of the Joint Land Use Board for consistency of the goal that building locations and architecture shall be complimentary to the context of the site.

2.3. Design Standards: Site Plan

2.3.a. Buffers

Buffers shall be designed and implemented to the satisfaction of the Joint Land Use Board. Quality and size of buffers to be determined at site plan review by the Joint Land Use Board.

2.3.b. Playground / Tot Lot

Playground / tot lot shall be designed and implemented to the satisfaction of the Joint Land Use Board.

2.3.c. Community Building

A community building shall be designed and implemented to the satisfaction of the Joint Land Use Board.

2.3.d. Site Furniture

Site furniture and lighting shall be designed and implemented to the satisfaction of the Joint Land Use Board.

2.3.e. Stormwater Management

Stormwater management shall be designed and implemented to the satisfaction of the Joint Land Use Board.

2.3.f. Site Landscaping

Site landscaping shall be designed and implemented to the satisfaction of the Joint Land Use Board.

2.4. COAH Regulations

All applications for development for the Block 52 Lots 8 and 9 Redevelopment Area shall comply with all state and local laws as they relate to low and moderate income housing.

2.5. Infrastructure and Public Improvements

2.5.a. Sewage

The Block 52 Lots 8 and 9 Redevelopment Area falls within the existing Sewer Service Area and must be served by public sewer at the developer's expense.

2.5.b. Water

New Jersey American serves Harrison Township and other parts of Burlington, Camden and Gloucester Counties and shall be provided at the developer's expense.

2.5.c. Other Utilities

Any new utility lines constructed to serve the Block 52 Lots 8 and 9 Redevelopment Area will be buried underground in accordance with Harrison Township's ordinances and shall be at the developer's expense.

2.6. Property Acquisition

Block 52, Lots 8 and 9 were declared to be a "Non-Condemnation Redevelopment Area" in the Preliminary Redevelopment Investigation Report.

As of 2013, the Legislature requires that Preliminary Investigations state whether the redevelopment area determination shall authorize the municipality to use all those powers provided by the Legislature for use in a redevelopment area, including eminent domain. Those Redevelopment Areas where the municipality declares it will not use eminent domain are referred to as "Non-Condemnation Redevelopment Areas."

2.7. Relocation of Displaced Residents and Businesses

Prior to the renovation of existing buildings on-site, a new 24 unit residential building shall be constructed. This will allow for the temporary housing of residents as rehabilitation of each existing building takes place, thereby eliminating the need to relocate residents off-site and easing the inconvenience or burden on existing residents during rehabilitation of the existing residential units.

3.0 Relationship to Other Plans

3.1. Relationship to Other Municipal Plans

There is no inconsistent nor adverse relationship between this redevelopment plan and the master plans of adjacent municipalities, as the plan focuses primarily on rehabilitation of the buildings and site features of an existing area at the same density levels. The nearest municipality is South Harrison Township, which is located approximately one mile southwest of the site.

3.2. Relationship to County Master Plan

This amendment remains consistent with the Gloucester County Master Plan which was last adopted in February 1982. The goals of the Master Plan support this redevelopment plan:

- To provide adequate housing opportunities for all portions of the County's population.
- To encourage a growth pattern that will concentrate rather than disperse development throughout the County.

In addition, the land use plan identifies Growth Areas within the county, including "surrounding

Mullica Hill in Harrison Township" (p.78). The plan stresses the importance of these growth areas to guide development into established areas. This helps to lower public infrastructure costs and preserves farmland and natural resources (p.78).

This redevelopment area is located between a municipally owned road, High Street, to the north and a State road, New Jersey Route 45, to the south. In addition, the site is served by a private roadway open to full public access and connects to both High Street and Route 45. The site maintains and upgrades an existing affordable housing stock within close proximity of downtown Mullica Hill.

3.3. Relationship to State Development and Redevelopment Plan

The New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan, adopted pursuant to the State Planning Act, contains a series of smart growth goals and policies and a map which reflects desired growth patterns. The parcel in question is located in Planning Area 3, Fringe Planning Area, where growth is directed at centers in these areas in order to preserve environmentally sensitive lands and open space.

The policy objectives of State Planning Area 3 include the following:

- Focus development and redevelopment in appropriately located and designed Centers to accommodate growth that would otherwise occur in the Environs.
- Provide for a full range of housing choices primarily in Centers at appropriate densities to accommodate projected growth.
- Encourage appropriate redevelopment in existing Centers and existing developed areas that have the potential to become Centers, or in ways that support Center-based development, to accommodate growth that would otherwise occur in the Environs. (2001 State Plan, p. 202, 203)

Redevelopment at this site supports these planning objectives by directing redevelopment into a developed area of the township and directing this housing demand away from the Environs of the Township. With respect to good Smart Growth, Center-based practices, and locating development near community amenities and walkable environments, the site is proximate to Harrison's Historic Mullica Hill and approximately three-quarters of a mile from the Township park and recreation facilities along Commissioners Road. The continued use of the site for affordable housing would maintain and add to the diversity of housing choices in the Township and support Smart Growth practices.

3.4. Relationship to Development Regulations of the Municipality

The regulations that apply to the Redevelopment Area, and as modified by this plan, were adopted

by the Harrison Township Committee and are known as the R-1 Residence-Agricultural Zone District. The regulations for this zone are found in the Township's Combined Land Use Code.

4.0 General Provisions

4.1. Zoning Map Amendment

It does not appear that the Zoning Map of the Township of Harrison has been amended to include this Redevelopment Area (Block 52, Lots 8 and 9) as identified, discussed, and outlined in this document. An ordinance amending the Zoning Map should be adopted.

4.2. Procedure for Amending the Redevelopment Plan

Upon compliance with the requirements of the applicable law, the Township Committee may amend, revise, or modify this Redevelopment Plan, as circumstances may make such changes appropriate. Such circumstances include, but are not limited to, those arising out of a redevelopment proposal by an existing owner of property in the Redevelopment Area. The Township Committee may require the party requesting the amendment to prepare a study of the impact of such amendment, which study must be prepared by a Professional Planner, licensed in the State of New Jersey, and, further, may require such party to establish an escrow account to defray the review costs of Township professionals.

4.3. Validity of Ordinance

If any section, paragraph, division, subdivision, clause or provision of this Redevelopment Plan shall be adjudged by the courts to be invalid, such adjudications shall only apply to the section, paragraph, division, subdivision, clause or provision so judged, and the remainder of this Plan shall be deemed valid and effective.

4.4. Redevelopment Entity

It is strongly recommended that the Township Committee appoint the Planning Board to serve as the redevelopment entity. The Redevelopment Entity shall review all proposals, may request supplemental information, and, at its discretion, determine the acceptability of such submissions and determine whether to proceed with redeveloper designation and negotiation of a redevelopment agreement. All redevelopment agreements will be presented to the Township Committee for review and approval. Once a Redeveloper(s) is/are selected, the Redevelopment Entity will enter into a redevelopment agreement(s). By acting as the Redevelopment Entity, the Planning Board can streamline the process from resolution to construction and ensure that development remains true to the intentions of the Township Master Plan and this Redevelopment Plan.