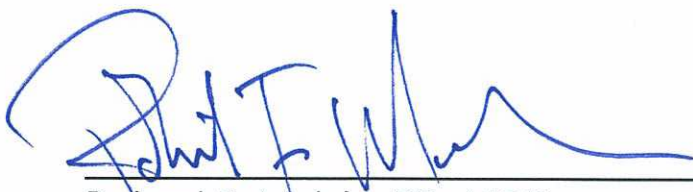


Harrison Township, New Jersey
PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION

BLOCK 4 LOT 1

11/30/2011

Redevelopment Preliminary
Investigation Report
pursuant to Harrison Township Committee
Resolution 196-2011.



Robert F. Melvin, PP, AICP
N.J. Planner License No. 04018

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p.856.251.9989 f.856.202.8007

PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION

BOOK 1121

11/20/01

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Acknowledgements

MAYOR

Louis Manzo

TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

Louis Manzo, Mayor

Dennis Clowney, Deputy Mayor

Don Heim

Robert Shearer

Matt Diggons

PLANNING BOARD

Joseph Pacera, Chairman

Jack McElwee, Vice Chairman

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Bill Madara, Alternate No. 2

PLANNING BOARD SECRETARY

Susanne H. Rhudy

PLANNING BOARD SOLICITOR

Joan Adams, Esquire

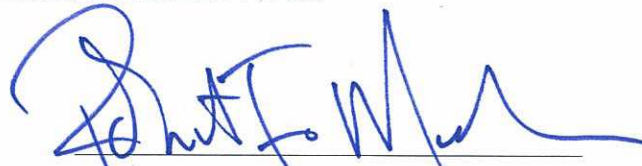
PLANNING BOARD ENGINEER

Justin Gibson, PE

PLANNING BOARD PLANNER

Robert F. Melvin, PP/AICP

prepared by:



Robert F. Melvin, PP/AICP
NJ Planner License No. 04018

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "W. J. Thibault". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "W" and a prominent flourish at the end.

Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction	1
2.0 The Redevelopment Act	2
3.0 Redevelopment Procedure	4
4.0 Current Progress	5
5.0 Existing Conditions	7
6.0 Statutory Criteria for Redevelopment	7
7.0 Applicability of Statutory Criteria to the Redevelopment Area	10
8.0 Conclusion	18

List of Figures

Figure 1: Zoning Map	3
Figure 2: Aerial Map	6
Figure 3: Environmental Constraints	9
Figures 4.1-4.3: 1995-2010 Aerial Photography	11-13
Figure 5: State Planning Areas & Sewer Service Areas	16
Figures 6.1-6.3: Copy of Resolution	19-21

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1.0 Introduction

Harrison Township through Resolution No.196-2011 has requested that Group Melvin Design evaluate Block 4, Lot 1 to ascertain whether this area qualifies under N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5 as an "Area in Need of Redevelopment". Specifically, it was resolved by the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Harrison, that:

- A** The Planning Board of the Township of Harrison be directed to conduct a preliminary investigation to determine whether the area known as Block 4, Lot 1 identified on the Township Tax Map in Harrison Township, is an area in need of redevelopment according to the criterion in N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1, et. seq; the staff of the Planning Board and its consultants be directed to assist the Planning Board in conducting the blight and/or area in need of redevelopment investigation; and
- B** The Township Clerk would forward a copy of the Resolution to the Secretary of the Planning Board for immediate action, and
- C** The preliminary investigation once completed would be submitted to the Governing Body for review and approval in accordance with the provisions of the Redevelopment and Housing Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1, et. seq.

The analysis presented within this document serves as the basis for our recommendation that Block 4, Lot 1, which is located directly east of Route 55 and south of Route 322 in Harrison Township, Gloucester County, New Jersey, is in need of a redevelopment designation and warrants accompanying guidelines that will ensure that the entire area is developed in a manner that adheres to local and state plans, incorporates sound principals of urban planning and design, promotes the public welfare, and contributes to the sustainable economic development of the Township. The land in question equals a total of 28.435 acres.

The area being reviewed falls under the Township's INS Institutional District, which permits governmental uses or buildings as principal uses. These principal uses include municipal administrative or public safety facility, community center, library or park. Permitted conditional uses include hospital, sanitarium, medical or health center, convalescent home, nursing home, or other similar health facility; religious institutions, schools and cemetery and crematorium.

The area around the site area is zoned C-55 Flexible Planned Industrial-Commercial District. The intent of this district is to provide and encourage development of flexible planned industrial sites and planned commercial centers and to promote the orderly and sound development of multi-use areas. Permitted uses include retail sales and services, hotel or motel, offices, the fabrication of products, manufacturing, research and development, warehousing and distribution and many other uses. Conditional uses include drive-thru restaurant, gasoline station and convenience store.

2.0 The Redevelopment Act

New Jersey's Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (LRHL), empowers municipalities and local governments with the ability to initiate a process that transforms underutilized or poorly designed properties into healthier, more vibrant, or economically productive land areas. The process has been used successfully across the state to creatively improve properties meeting statutory redevelopment criteria. Projects approved for redevelopment are often eligible for certain types of technical and financial assistance from the state.

Harrison Township has identified a parcel at Block 4, Lot 1 as an opportunity for redevelopment in accordance with the provisions of the LRHL. This investigation encompasses 28.435 acres located just east of Route 55 and south of Route 322.

Figure 1 contains a Zoning map of the site and its surroundings and shows the location of the lot in question.

Figure 1: Zoning Map





Block 4 Lot 1 is entirely wooded, and has limited access via dirt roads.



The edge of the entirely wooded site sits adjacent to an active farm, owned by Rowan University.

3.0 Redevelopment Procedure

The LRHL requires municipalities to perform a number of steps before it may exercise its Redevelopment powers. This process is meant, in part, to ensure that the Governing Body acts in concert with the goals and objectives of the Township's Master Plan. Recognizing the Planning Board's role as the steward of the Master Plan, these steps require the Planning Board to make recommendations to the Township Committee. The required steps are as follows:

- A** The Governing Body must adopt a resolution directing the Planning Board to perform a preliminary investigation to determine whether a specified area is in need of redevelopment according to criteria set forth in the LRHL (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5). The Township Committee has adopted Resolution No. 196-2011.
- B** The Planning Board must prepare and make available a map delineating the boundaries of the proposed redevelopment area, specifying the parcels to be included in it. This map should be accompanied by a statement setting forth the basis of the investigation.
- C** The Planning Board must then conduct the investigation and produce a report presenting the findings. The Board must also hold a duly noticed hearing to present the results of the investigation and to allow interested parties to give testimony. The Planning Board then may adopt a resolution recommending a course of action to the Governing Body.
- D** The Governing Body may act on this recommendation by adopting a resolution designating the area an "Area in Need of Redevelopment". The Governing Body must make the final determination as to the Redevelopment Area boundaries, although these are typically accepted as recommended by the Planning Board.
- E** A Redevelopment Plan must be prepared establishing the goals, objectives, and specific actions to be taken with regard to the "Area in Need of Redevelopment."
- F** The Governing Body may then act on the Plan by passing an ordinance adopting the Plan as an amendment to Township's Zoning Ordinance.

Only after completion of this process is the Township able to exercise the powers granted to it under the State Redevelopment Statute.

4.0 Current Progress

The Harrison Township Committee adopted a resolution on October 17, 2011 (Resolution 196-2011) instructing the Planning Board to initiate an investigation in accordance with Part "a" above. Together with its accompanying maps, this report is meant to satisfy parts "b", and "c" above.

This analysis concerns an area that totals 28.435 acres comprised of a single lot. The lot is owned by the Township of Harrison. This analysis will determine if this area warrants redevelopment based upon the statutory criteria of the LRHL. This report will conclude by recommending if this lot should be included in any redevelopment designation in order to produce an effective and comprehensive redevelopment plan for the area.

The site area is located in the INS Institutional Zone District. Its property classification is 15C – Public Property. This lot is completely wooded. Currently, there is extremely limited access to the site, with the sole access point from Harrison Township being a narrow dirt path accessed from Neale Road. A connecting dirt path can also be accessed from Glassboro via Martin Luther King Drive.

In neighboring Glassboro, lots adjacent to Block 4 Lot 1 north of the abandoned railroad R.O.W. are zoned Low-Density Residential District R-6, which is meant to encourage larger lot, lower density homes in undeveloped sections of the Borough. Lots adjacent to Block 4 Lot 1 south of the abandoned railroad R.O.W. are zoned Office Park District OP and is intended to provide a modern employment district near a major limited-access highway for offices and other limited non-residential uses, and to encourage development on large tracts in order to gain coordinated site planning for circulation, parking, loading, public facilities and landscaping. Property in Glassboro that sits next to Block 4 Lot 1 is vacant and wooded.

Figure 2 contains an Aerial Photo of the site. Analysis is being presented on the following pages in accordance with the Township Committee's resolution concerning Block 4, Lot 1.

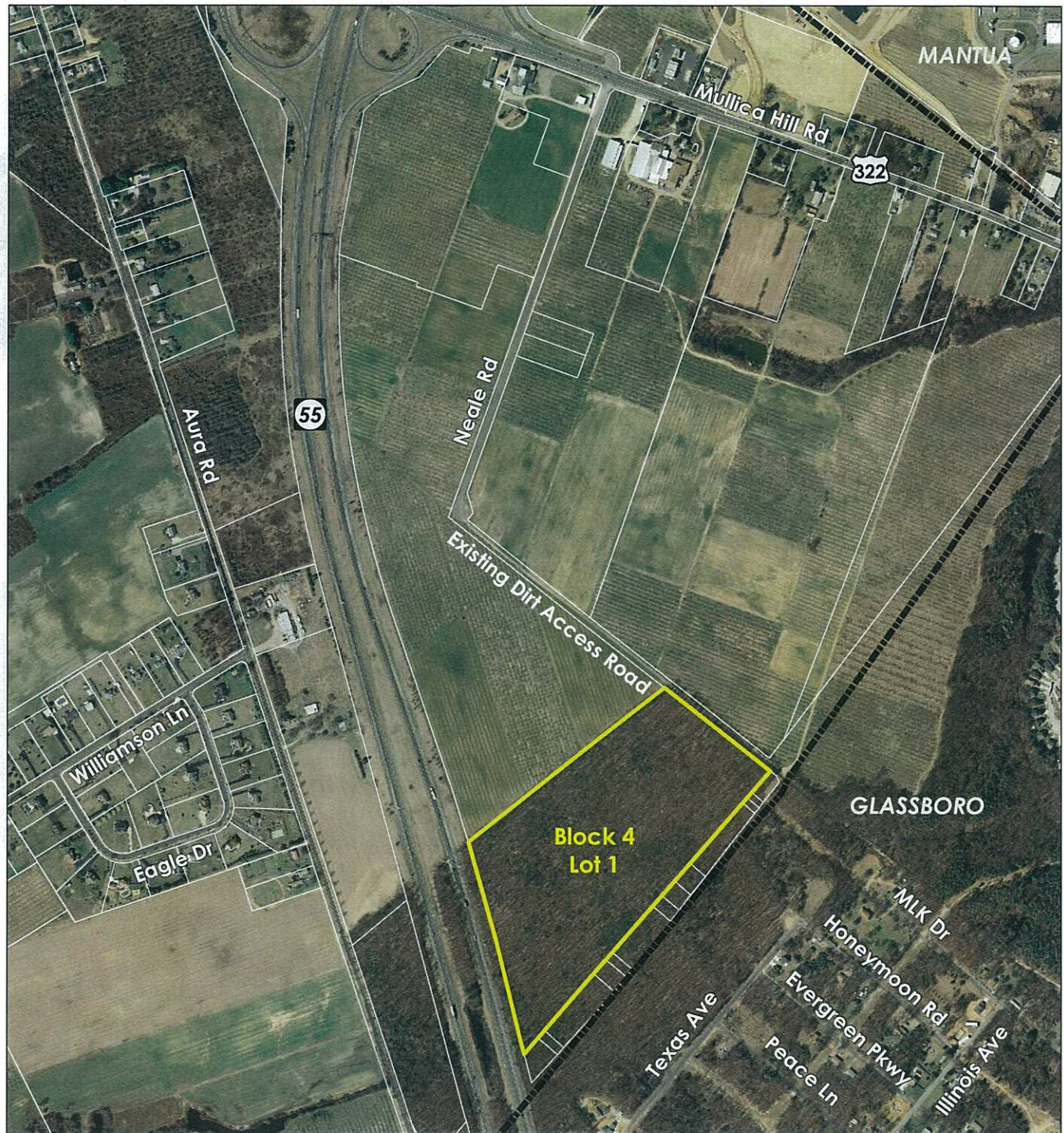


Recently constructed homes in Glassboro fronting along Texas Avenue.

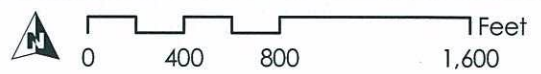


Utility poles running alongside Martin Luther King Drive towards Block 4 Lot 1 in Glassboro.

Figure 2: Aerial Map



Aerial: 2007



5.0 Existing Conditions

The site area is undeveloped and entirely wooded, and sits next to adjacent farmlands in Harrison Township owned by Rowan University, and sits adjacent to wooded, undeveloped land near a residential area in Glassboro. As stated in Section 4.0, access to the site is limited to a narrow dirt path connecting at Neale Road in Harrison Township, and at Martin Luther King Drive in Glassboro. An abandoned railroad R.O.W. runs near this path, as do utility power lines.

Figure 3 shows existing Environmental Constraints.

6.0 Statutory Criteria for Redevelopment

An area qualifies as being in Need of Redevelopment if it meets at least one of the eight statutory criteria listed in Section 5 of the Land Redevelopment and Housing Law (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5). These criteria are as follows:

- 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 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.
- 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.



Neale Road is accessed from Route 322 and ends in a cul-de-sac, at which point the site can be accessed via a dirt road.

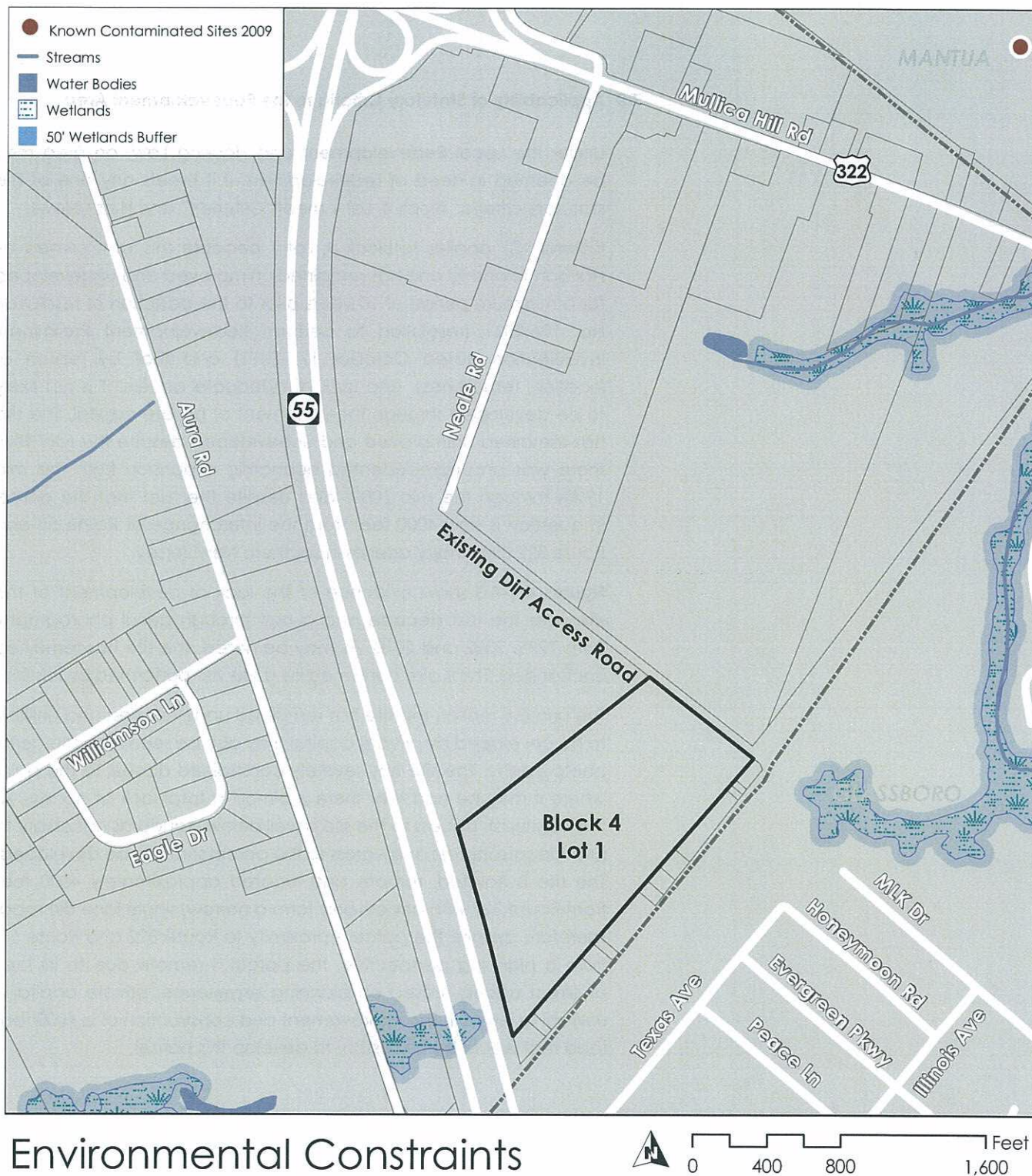


The sole access point to the site from Harrison Township is at the end of Neale Road, and runs parallel to utility poles that stretch into Glassboro.



- E** A growing lack or total lack of proper utilization of areas caused by the condition of the title, diverse ownership of 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," 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.

Figure 3: Environmental Constraints



Environmental Constraints

7.0 Applicability of Statutory Criteria to the Redevelopment Area

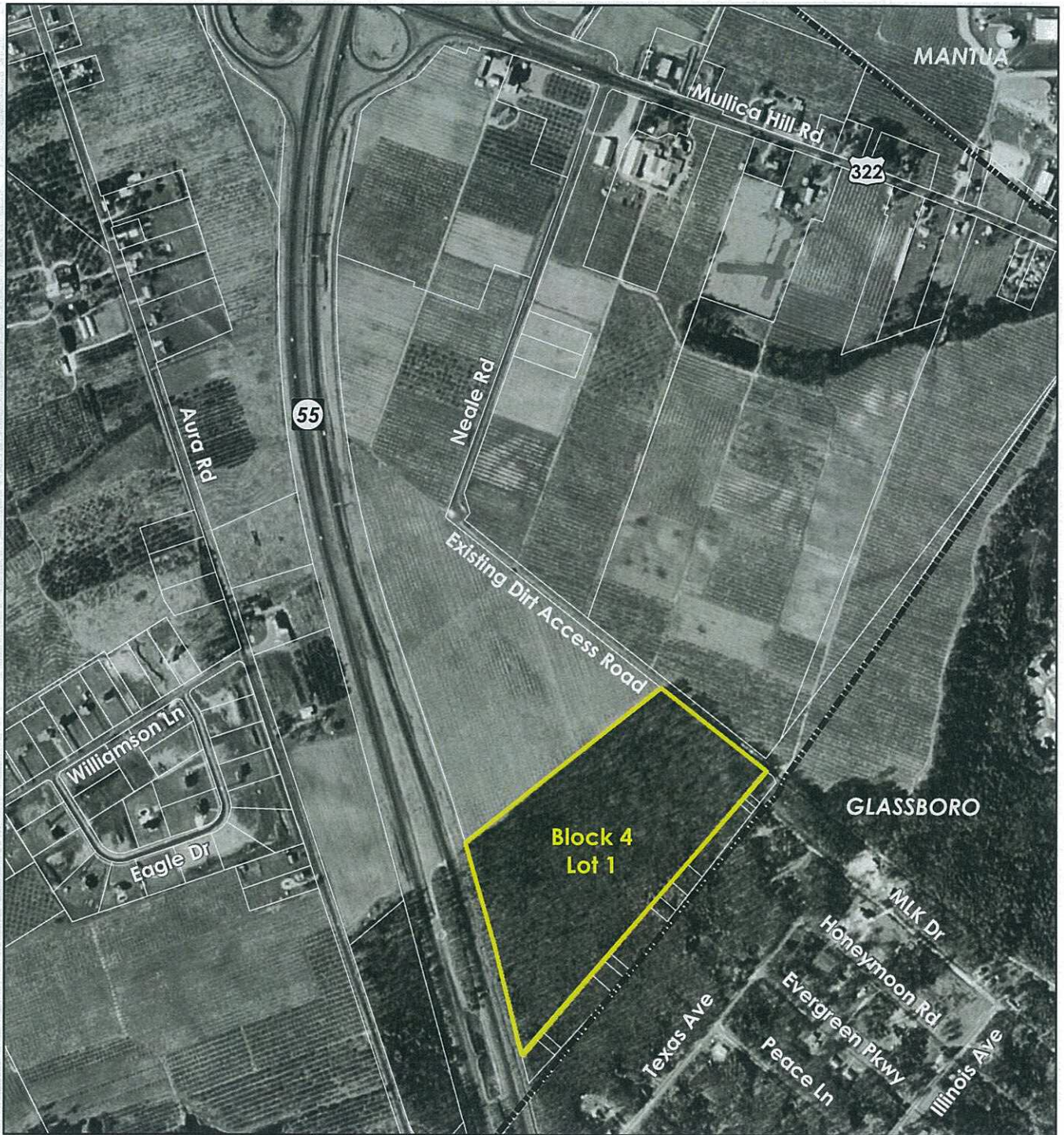
Under the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, an area may be deemed in need of redevelopment if it meets any one of the statutory criteria. Block 4, Lot 1 meets Criteria C and H as follows:

Criteria "C" applies to Block 4, Lot 1 because this lot is owned by Harrison Township and has remained unimproved and undeveloped for a minimum period of 10 years prior to the adoption of resolution No. 196-2011 (resolution to perform Redevelopment Preliminary Investigation dated October 17, 2011) and that by reason of location, remoteness, and lack of adequate access, it is not likely to be developed through the instrument of private capital. The site has remained unimproved and undeveloped despite the fact that there was an unprecedented economic expansion from the mid 1990s through the mid 2000s and despite the fact that the parcel in question is only 4000 feet from the interchange of Route 55 and Route 322, two major arteries in southern New Jersey.

Figures 4.1-4.3 show evidence of the lack of development of the site over the last decade and a half through aerial photography from 1995, 2002 and 2010. As may be noted, the site has remained unchanged. This is also confirmed by a site visit performed by this firm.

The primary reason the site has remained undeveloped and unlikely to be developed by private capital may also be seen from the aerial photography. The site has severely constrained access to the point where it may be said that there is almost a total lack of access. At the very least, access to the site is well below standards necessary to provide safe ingress and egress to the parcel should it be developed. The site is isolated, remote and located approximately 4000 feet from Route 322 with access only from a narrow, single lane dirt road. Therefore despite the parcel's proximity to Route 322 and Route 55, from a planning perspective, the parcel is remote due to its lack of direct access. Based on planning experience, private capital is unlikely to invest in the improvement and construction of a 4000 foot road that would be necessary to develop this parcel.

Figure 4.1: 1995 Aerial Photography



Aerial: 3/25/1995

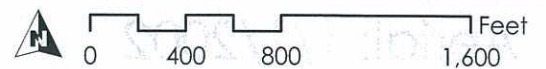


Figure 4.2: 2002 Aerial Photography



Aerial: 1/1/2002

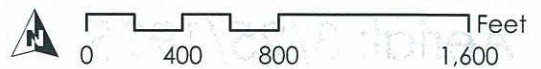
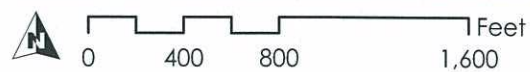


Figure 4.3: 2010 Aerial Photography



Aerial: 4/12/2010



The "H" criterion, Smart Growth Consistency, applies to this parcel. The State Planning Act (N.J.S.A. 52:18A-196 et seq.), adopted in 1985, establishes the framework, for State policies and regulations related to smart growth principles. Among the stated objectives in the Act that serve as this framework are the following:

- A** Protect the natural resources and qualities of the state, including, but not limited to: agricultural development areas, fresh and saltwater wetlands, flood plains, stream corridors, aquifer recharge areas, steep slopes, areas of unique flora and fauna, and areas with scenic, historic, cultural and recreational values;
- B** Promote development and redevelopment in a manner consistent with sound planning and where infrastructure can be provided at private expense or with reasonable expenditures of public funds. This should not be construed to give preferential treatment to new construction;
- C** Identify areas for growth, limited growth, agriculture, open space conservation and other appropriate designations that the commission may deem necessary;
- D** Coordinate planning activities and establish statewide planning objectives in the following areas: land use, housing, economic development, transportation, natural resource conservation, agriculture and farmland retention, recreation, urban and suburban redevelopment, historic preservation, public facilities and services, and intergovernmental coordination.

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. Planning Area 1 (Metropolitan), Planning Area 2 (Suburban) and Centers are the places on the State Plan Policy Map where the bulk of future growth should be directed, according to the Plan. The following language supports this conclusion:

- *Metropolitan Planning Area: PA 1 – Provide for much of the state's future redevelopment...promote growth in compact forms... (2001 State Plan, p. 186)*
- *Suburban Planning Area: PA 2 – Provide for much of the state's future development; promote growth in Centers and other compact forms...Guide development and redevelopment into more compact forms (ibid, pp. 186, 198)*

Centers are the State Plan's preferred vehicle for accommodating growth. (ibid, p. 230) Centers are described as compact communities that have a diversity of housing types, contain a mix of residential, commercial, civic, and open space uses, host a highly connected transportation network that supports alternative modes of travel, and are designed to human scale. Centers have existing or planned infrastructure to support them. They should be linked to each other and to Planning Areas 1 and 2 via transportation systems (i.e. highways and transit corridors). According to the State Plan, Centers are considerably more efficient than sprawl by providing more efficient infrastructure service and preventing wasteful consumption of land.

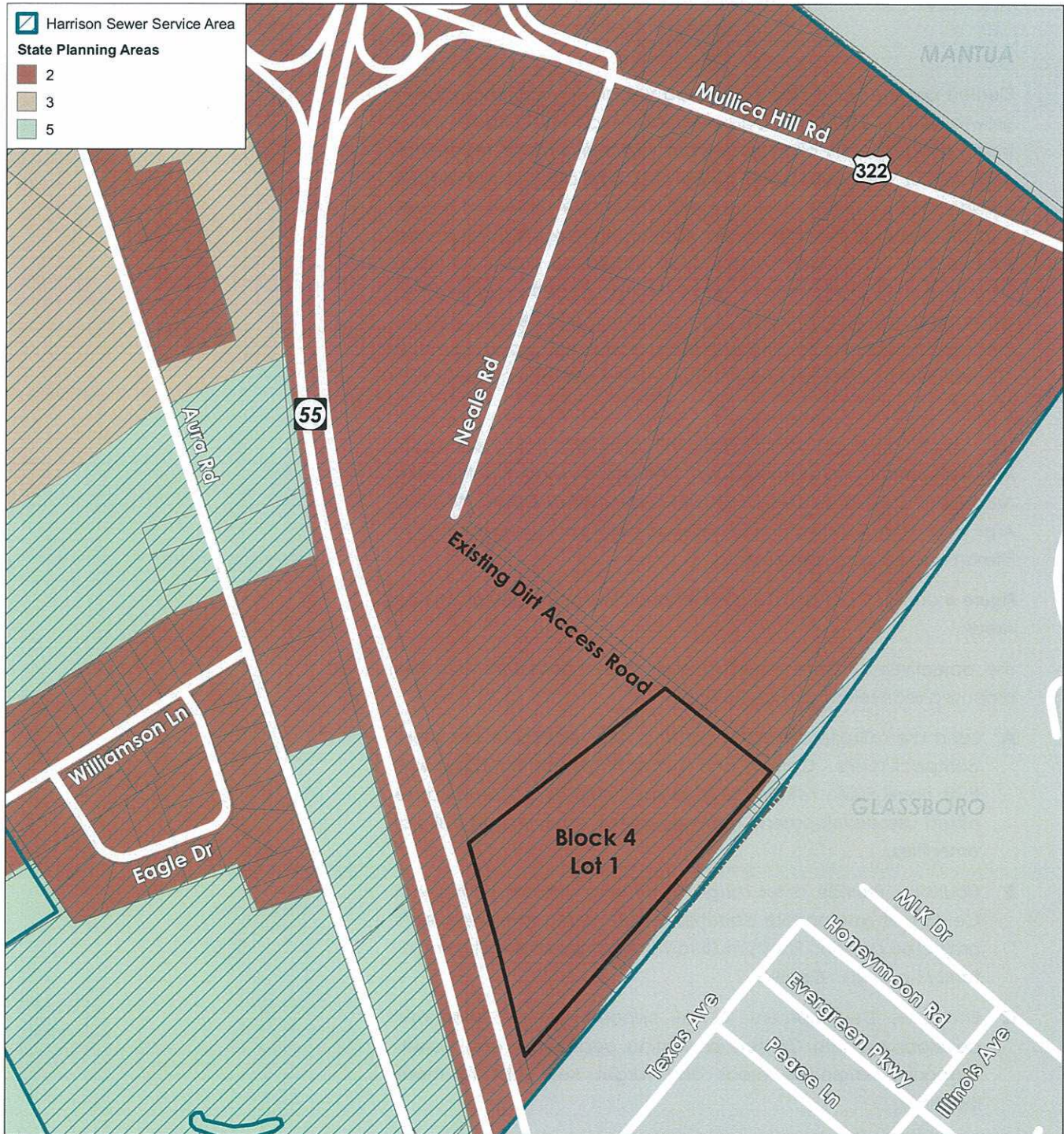
The site in question satisfies the "h" criterion under the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law. The site is located in Planning Area 2, identified as an area for growth under the State Plan. Planning Area 2 continues east for a short distance before merging with PA 1 in Pitman and Glassboro Boroughs.

Figure 5 contains a map of State Planning Areas and Sewer Service Areas.

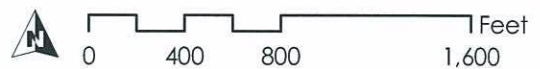
The objectives of State Planning Area 2 are consistent with the proposed redevelopment of the site:

- A** Land Use: Guide development and redevelopment into more compact forms - Centers and former single-use developments that have been retrofitted or restructured to accommodate mixed use development, redevelopment, services and cultural amenities.
- B** Housing: Provide a full range of housing choices primarily in Centers at appropriate densities to accommodate the area's projected growth. Focus multi-family and higher-density, single-family housing in Centers.
- C** Economic Development: Guide opportunities for economic development into Centers or existing pedestrian- and transit-supportive single-use areas and target new jobs to these locations.

Figure 5: State Planning Areas & Sewer Service Areas



State Planning & Sewer Service Areas



-
- D** Transportation: Maintain and enhance a transportation system that links Centers and existing large single-use areas to each other...Emphasize the use of public transportation systems and alternative modes of transportation where appropriate and feasible, and maximize circulation and mobility options (including pedestrian and bicycle connections between developments) throughout.
 - E** Natural Resource Conservation: Conserve continuous natural systems, strategically locate open space, and buffer Critical Environmental Sites. Use open space to reinforce neighborhood and community identity, and protect natural linear systems, including regional systems that link into other Planning Areas.
 - F** Agriculture: Guide development to ensure the continued viability of agriculture and the retention of productive farmland in strategically located agricultural areas and in other adjacent Planning Areas.
 - G** 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.
 - H** Redevelopment: Take full advantage of the opportunities available under the state's redevelopment statutes to promote new Centers and retrofit existing areas with mixed-uses and higher densities.

The site sits proximate to an interchange of two regional highways. Route 55, a State highway, serves as a commuter route for residents in Cumberland and Gloucester Counties working in Camden and the Philadelphia area. Route 322, also a State highway, connects Interstate 95 in Pennsylvania via the Commodore Barry Bridge to Atlantic City and en route, provides connections to the New Jersey Turnpike and to Interstate 295. It is the only major east-west corridor in Gloucester County. Exit 2 of the Turnpike is located in Woolwich Township near the border of Harrison, and approximately 6.5 miles from the site in question.

Finally, designation of the site as an area in need of redevelopment is consistent with the State Planning Act's recognition of intergovernmental coordination in the planning process. Harrison Township is one of three municipalities that were the focus of a recent study by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (Managing Change Along the US 322 Corridor: Land Use & Transportation Issues, Policies & Recommendations, Volume 2: Framework Plan, June 2007). The document calls for coordination of transportation infrastructure improvements and land use decisions throughout the study area in order to address congestion, support economic growth and encourage Smart Growth principles for future development.

8.0 Conclusion

Based on the above analysis and findings, it is concluded that the conditions on Block 4, Lot 1 qualify as an "Area in Need of Redevelopment" as defined in N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5). As described above Block 4, Lot 1 meet several of the following statutory criteria listed in the Local Redevelopment Housing Law (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1):

- **C** Public and Vacant and not likely to be developed through private capital.
- **H** Smart Growth Consistency

The Planning Board, upon adoption of a resolution, hereby recommends to the Governing Body that the Block 4, Lot 1 study area be found to be an "Area in Need of Redevelopment" in accordance with N.J.S.A 40A:12A-5 pursuant to the findings of this report.

Figure 6.1: Copy of Resolution

S Rhudy

RESOLUTION NO. 196-2011

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF HARRISON AUTHORIZING THE HARRISON TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD TO CONDUCT A PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION TO DETERMINE WHETHER CERTAIN PROPERTIES ARE AREAS IN NEED OF REDEVELOPMENT PURSUANT TO N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-4

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-4 authorizes the governing body of any municipality, by resolution, to authorize its Planning Board to conduct a preliminary investigation to determine whether an area of the municipality is in need of redevelopment; and

WHEREAS, the Governing Body has determined that it is in the best interest of the Township to have the Township's Planning Board conduct such an investigation regarding the following Blocks and Lots within the municipality: Block 4, Lot 1; and

WHEREAS, the Governing Body has further determined that a program of redevelopment as defined in N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-3 may be expected to prevent further deterioration and promote overall development of the above described areas within the municipality.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Governing Body of the Township of Harrison, that:

1. The Planning Board of the Township of Harrison is hereby directed to conduct a preliminary investigation to determine whether the aforementioned properties are in need of redevelopment according to the criterion set forth in N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5;
2. The staff of the Planning Board and its consultants shall be directed to assist the Planning Board in conducting the investigation;

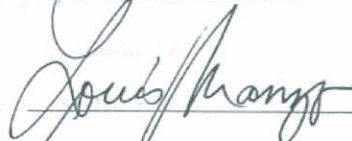
Figure 6.2: Copy of Resolution

3. The Planning Board of the Township of Harrison is hereby directed to study the
aforementioned properties and draft a report/resolution containing its
recommendations and findings; and

4. The results of such preliminary investigation shall be submitted to the Mayor and
Township Committee for review and approval in accordance with the provisions of
N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1, et seq.

ADOPTED at a regular meeting of the Mayor and Township Committee of the
Township of Harrison, County of Gloucester, State of New Jersey held on October 17, 2011.

TOWNSHIP OF HARRISON



LOUIS F. MANZO, MAYOR

ATTEST:



DIANE L. MALLOY, Township Clerk

(TOWNSHIP SEAL)

ROLL CALL VOTE				
COMMITTEE MEMBER	AYES	NAYS	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Mayor Manzo	✓			
Dennis Clowney	✓			
Matt Diggons	✓			
Don Heim	✓			
Robert Shearer	✓			

Figure 6.3: Copy of Resolution

CERTIFICATION NO. 196-2011

The foregoing Resolution was duly adopted by the Township Committee of the Township of Harrison at a meeting held October 17, 2011, at the Harrison Township Municipal Building, 114 Bridgeton Pike, Mullica Hill, New Jersey.


Diane Malloy, Municipal Clerk

