

# BLOCK 57 REDEVELOPMENT INVESTIGATION

HARRISON TOWNSHIP, NEW JERSEY

Preliminary Investigation (Resolution 80-2021)

Non-Condemnation

DRAFT: April 15, 2021

BLOCK 57

LOT 20, LOT 20.01

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### MAYOR

Louis Manzo

### TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

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Donald Heim, Deputy Mayor  
Julie Delaurentis  
John Williams  
Adam Wingate

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prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_



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April 15, 2021

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## **1.0 Introduction**

### **1.1. Study Authorization**

Harrison Township through Resolution No. 80-2021 has requested that Pennoni perform a Preliminary Investigation into Block 57 Lots 20 and 20.01, to ascertain whether this area qualifies under N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5 as an “Area in Need of Redevelopment”

Figure 1 identifies the location and surrounding environs of the Investigation Area.

### **1.2. Summary of Findings**

The analysis presented within this document serves as the basis for the recommendation that Block 57, Lots 20 and 20.02 qualify as Areas in Need of Redevelopment.

The study finds that Block 57 Lot 20 meets Criterion D because of its lack of ventilation and light and because of its obsolete layout and faulty design. Lot 20 also meeting Criterion E because of its lack of proper utilization of the full site area.

The study finds that Block 57 Lot 20.01 meets Section 3 Criteria because this lot is necessary for the proper and full redevelopment of Lot 20.

### **1.3. Non-Condemnation**

Resolution 80-2021 authorized the Study to establish a “Non-Condemnation Redevelopment Area” and the findings of this report are consistent with that authorization.

As of 2013, the Legislature required 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.”

Figure 1. Redevelopment Parcel Blocks and Lots



## **2.0 Redevelopment Law**

### **2.1. Purpose of the Act**

New Jersey's Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (LRHL), empowers municipalities and local governments with the ability to initiate a process that transforms under utilized or poorly designed properties into healthier, more vibrant, or economically productive land areas. The process has been used successfully across New Jersey 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.

### **2.2. 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 Council. 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).
- 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.
- 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 the 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.

Figure 2. Redevelopment Parcel Aerial



## 3.0 Existing Conditions

### 3.1. Description of Site Area

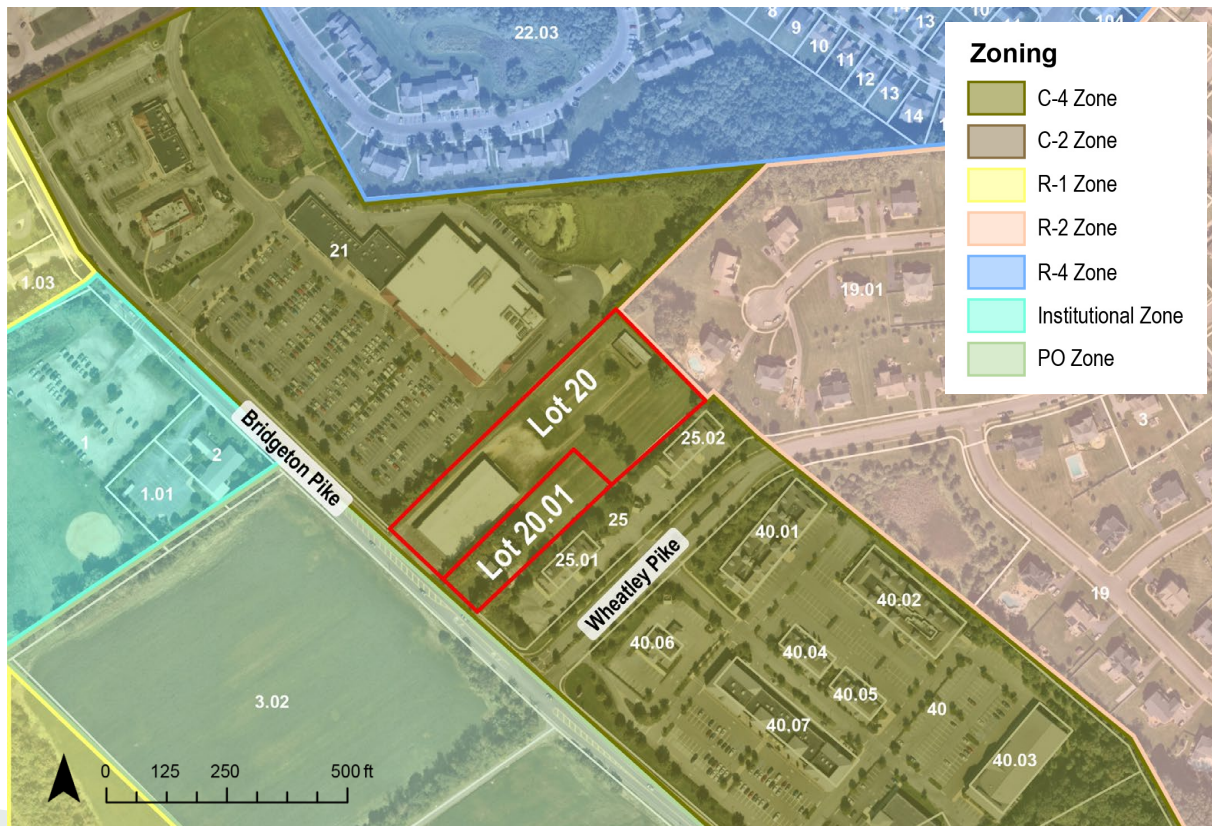
The study area (the site) is located along Bridgeton Pike, between the Mullica Hill Plaza and Wheatley Blvd. The site is currently a vacant retail building. It was formerly used as a furniture store.

The frontage of the parcels is along Bridgeton Pike. Lot 20 is a long and deep parcel and has a small building in the back that is not accessible via a driveway. The back of the site runs up against a residential development with single-family homes. Lot 20.01 is smaller and site just south of Lot 20. It has one residential building on it and it right next to a small commercial site.

A major feature of the study area is that it sits between two larger commercial shopping sites – a Shoprite to the west and a shopping center to the east with many stores including, but not limited to, a bank, paint store, restaurants, fitness center, and office buildings. Directly across from Bridgeton Pike from the site is Block 56, Lots 3.01 and 3.02. Both Lots are Township-owned and were designated as “areas in need of redevelopment” under Resolution 205-2017. They are currently open fields. The parcel to the southeast, Block 57 Lot 20.01, is a residential home.

Block	Lot	Use	Address	Owner	Area
57	20	Commercial	147 Bridgeton Pike	Starr, Senna B C/O Elaine Starr	2.92 acres
57	20.01	Residential	149 Bridgeton Pike	Starr, Senna B C/O Elaine Starr	0.9 acres

Figure 3. Redevelopment Parcels Zoning



## 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 poses 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.
- 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.

Figure 4. Lack of light and windows



## 5.0 Application of Statutory Criterion “D”

### 5.1. Statutory Language

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.

### 5.2. Conditions

#### 5.2.a. Block 57, Lot 20

Pennoni conducted a digital visit of the site in lieu of an in-person visit due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The site was visited via Google Maps and NearMaps, which provides up-to-date drone photography.

##### *Lack of Ventilation and Light*

From the imagery, it is clear that the main building on Block 57, Lot 20 is lacking ventilation and light needed for proper working conditions (Figure 4). The inside is very dark and the only big windows to provide light are on the front of the building, which only serves the main front room.

##### *Deleterious land use, obsolete layout, and faulty design*

The building on Block 57, Lot 20, has been vacant for at least six years. It was previously a single commercial use - a furniture store. In the time since it was built, the zoning code has been updated and the building layout is now obsolete and serves as a safety concern and a barrier to development. Specifically, the current layout of the building and the parking is not workable for any one or group of businesses that might be allowed under the existing C-4 Zoning.

Specifically, under C-4 Zoning, the side yard setback states, “No building may be closer than 50 feet from any side yard lot line. No paved or improved area may be closer than 20 feet to any perimeter property line.” As illustrated in Figure 5, the right-of-way to the west of the building (30 feet) is not wide enough for a two-way driveway and a buffer to allow parking behind the building. This is especially a concern for necessary access to the back of the building - for uses including fire and police safety. The

Figure 5. Setback from the parcel line



back of the building is also likely used as a loading dock. Trucks and trailers can be wide and could prove difficult to move out of the one-way driveway if there is an issue.

The arrangement also forces the current parking lot to be in the front of the building where pedestrians would be walking. The current parking in the front of the building is not safe for drivers or pedestrians. There is no sidewalk for safe accommodation for people walking and it is dangerous for drivers to back out onto such a busy road (Figure 6).

The building on the back of the site is also a faulty arrangement as it is inaccessible via a paved surface (Figure 7).

### 5.3. Conclusion

Based on this evidence, Block 57, Lot 20 meets statutory Criterion D and should be declared an Area in Need of Redevelopment.

Figure 6. Safe accomodation for people walking and driving



Figure 7. Site access for development



## 6.0 Applicability of Statutory Criterion “E”

### 6.1. Statutory Language: Criterion 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.

### 6.2. Conditions

#### 6.2.a. Block 57, Lot 20

##### *Lack of proper utilization*

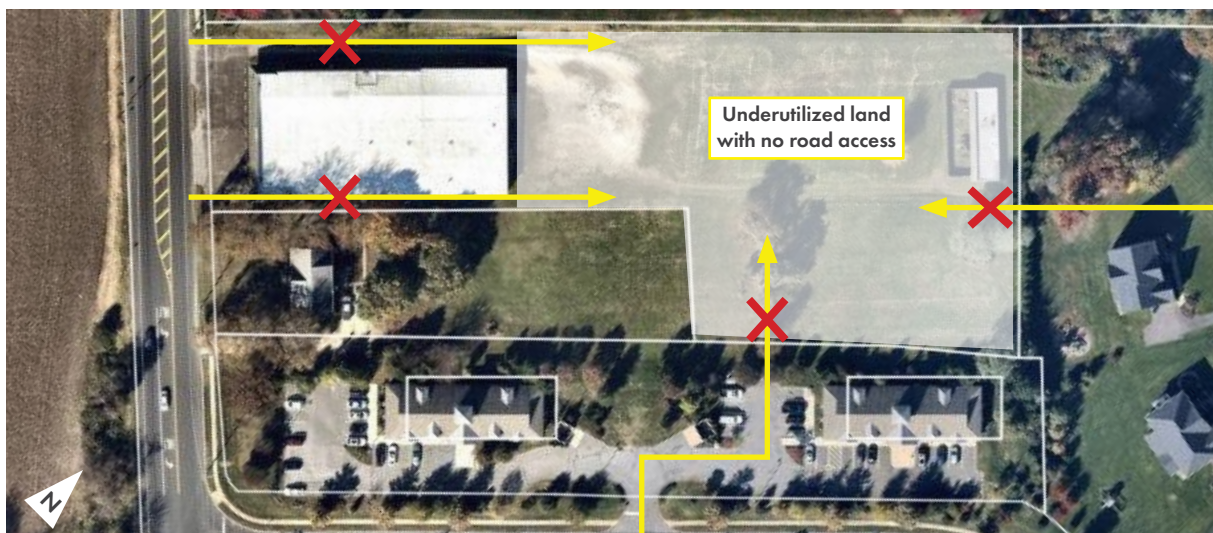
The building on Block 57, Lot 20 serves as a bottleneck for development on the site. As previously mentioned, this parcel is zoned as C-4. The lot is a total of 2.92 acres and the existing building is 20,000 sq ft. This means that the land coverage on the site is only about 15%. The land coverage allowed in the zoning is up to 50%.

With the existing arrangement of the building only 35 feet from the north edge of the parcel and 25 feet from the south edge of the parcel, it would be very difficult or impossible to develop the space behind the existing building. Access to the road through the adjacent Lot 25 is not possible since it is already developed. Access is also not possible through the residential area to the east. (Figure 8).

### 6.3. Conclusion

Based on this evidence, Block 57, Lot 20 meets statutory Criterion E and should be declared an Area in Need of Redevelopment.

Figure 8. Underutilized land and road access



## **7.0 Applicability of “Section 3 Criteria”**

### **7.1. Statutory Language: Section 3 Criteria**

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.

### **7.2. Conditions**

#### **7.2.a. Block 57, Lot 20.01**

*Needed for effective development*

Block 57, Lot 20.01 sits directly south of Lot 20 and is necessary for the full development of Lot 20. According to municipality records and as listed in Section 3.1, Lot 20,01 is under the same ownership as Lot 20 and could easily be sold as together, if necessary. In addition, according to the listing found here: <https://www.loopnet.com/Listing/147-149-Bridgeton-Pike-Mullica-Hill-NJ/18630413>, the two Lots are listed together.

As also described in Section 6.2.a, the existing building on Lot 20 creates a bottleneck for development. Access to Lot 20.01 could help ease access to the site for redevelopment.

### **7.3. Conclusion**

Based on this evidence, Block 57, Lot 20.01 meets Section 3 Criteria and should be declared an Area in Need of Redevelopment.

## **Appendix A - Resolution No. 80-2021**

**RESOLUTION NO. 80-2021**

**RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COMMITTEE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF HARRISON  
AUTHORIZING THE JOINT LAND USE BOARD TO CONDUCT A PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION TO  
DETERMINE WHETHER LOTS 20 and 20.01 IN BLOCK 57 ON THE OFFICIAL TAX MAP OF THE  
TOWNSHIP OF HARRISON QUALIFY AS AN AREA IN NEED OF REDEVELOPMENT**

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**WHEREAS**, the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1, et seq., provides a mechanism to empower and assist local governments in efforts to promote programs of redevelopment; and

**WHEREAS**, the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law sets forth a specific procedure for establishing an area in need of redevelopment; and

**WHEREAS**, N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-6 authorizes the governing body of the municipality by Resolution, to cause its Planning Board to conduct a preliminary investigation to determine whether the proposed area is an area in need of redevelopment according to the criteria set forth in N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed Redevelopment Area (Block 57, Lots 20 and 20.01) determination shall authorize the municipality to use all those powers provided by the Legislature for use in a Redevelopment Area, other than the use of eminent domain; and, as such, the Redevelopment Area shall be established and be referred to as a "Non-Condensation Redevelopment Area"; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township Committee of the Township of Harrison, Gloucester County, has determined that an investigation and inquiry should be made to see if said area is in need of redevelopment pursuant to the aforementioned State Statute; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township of Harrison governing body wishes to direct the Joint Land Use Board to undertake a preliminary investigation to determine whether the following property identified as and consisting of Block 57, Lots 20 and 20.01 qualifies as an area in need of redevelopment pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township Committee considers it to be in the best interest of the Township to directs its Joint Land Use Board to conduct such an investigation regarding said area/property.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Harrison, County of Gloucester and State of New Jersey as follows:

1. The Joint Land Use Board of the Township of Harrison is hereby directed to undertake a preliminary investigation to determine whether Block 57, Lots 20 and 20.01 is a "Non-Condensation Redevelopment Area such that the municipality may use all those powers provided by the Legislature for use in a Redevelopment Area", other than the use of eminent domain, according to the criteria set forth in N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1, et seq.; and

2. The staff of the Joint Land Use Board and its consultants are hereby directed to assist the Joint Land Use Board in conducting the area in need of redevelopment investigation; and

3. The Township Clerk shall forward a copy of this Resolution to the Chairman and Secretary of the Joint Land Use Board for immediate action; and

4. The preliminary investigation, once completed, shall be submitted to the Township Committee for review and approval in accordance with the provisions of the Redevelopment and Housing Law, 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 March 15, 2021.

**TOWNSHIP OF HARRISON**

BY: 

**LOUIS F. MANZO, MAYOR**

**ATTEST:**

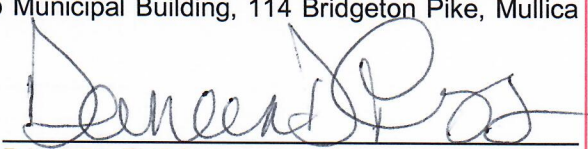


**DANEEN FUSS**  
Acting Municipal Clerk

ROLL CALL VOTE				
COMMITTEE MEMBER	AYES	NAYS	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Manzo	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
DeLaurentis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Heim	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Williams	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Wingate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			

**CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify that the above resolution is a true copy of a resolution adopted by the Township Committee of the Township of Harrison, County of Gloucester, State of New Jersey, at a meeting held by the same on March 15, 2021, in the Harrison Township Municipal Building, 114 Bridgeton Pike, Mullica Hill, New Jersey 08062.



**DANEEN FUSS**  
Acting Municipal Clerk

DRAFTED FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF HARRISON BY:

