# Proposed Master Plan Reexamination Report

Prepared for the Township of Teaneck Planning Board

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# PROPOSED

# MASTER PLAN
# REEXAMINATION REPORT

Prepared for

The Township of Teaneck Planning Board

by

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Under the Municipal Land Use Law (NJSA 40:55 89), at least every six years, or less time than that to the extent that a municipality wishes to review their land use and development policies and regulations, a general reexamination of a municipality's master plan and development regulations by the Planning Board is required. The reexamination report is required to state the following:

a. The major problems and objectives relating to land development in the municipality at the time of the adoption of the last reexamination report.
b. The extent to which such problems and objectives have been reduced or have increased subsequent to such date.
c. The extent to which there have been significant changes in the assumptions, policies and objectives forming the basis for the master plan or development regulations as last revised, with particular regard to the density and distribution of population and land uses, housing conditions, circulation, conservation of natural resources, energy conservation, collection, disposition and recycling of designated recyclable materials, and changes in State, county and municipal policies and objectives.
d. The specific changes recommended for the master plan or development regulations, if any, including underlying objectives, policies and standards, or whether a new plan or regulations should be prepared.
e. The recommendations of the planning board concerning the incorporation of redevelopment plans adopted pursuant to the "Local Redevelopment and Housing Law," P.L. 1992, c. 79 (C.40A:12A-1 et al.) into the land use plan element of the municipal master plan, and recommended changes, if any, in the local development regulations necessary to effectuate the redevelopment plans of the municipality.

The Township of Teaneck last adopted a full Master Plan on April 12, 2007 entitled **Master Plan for the Township of Teaneck** prepared by Birdsall Engineering, Inc. Since then, a major downturn in the economy has had profound impacts on both the real estate market and local government finances, prompting a reevaluation of Teaneck's development policies and regulations, and the need to incorporate recent studies and separately prepared Master Plan Elements. This report is, however, a reexamination of the April 2007 Master Plan. Note that since the Township of Teaneck has no newly-designated or any remaining "areas in need of redevelopment," the latter element (i.e., "e" above) is excluded in this reexamination. The reexamination is in the state-mandated format above, except that two of the elements ("b" and "c" above) have been combined into a single chapter.

Please also note that since the 2007 Master Plan the Township Planning Board adopted a *Comprehensive Plan for Recreation (2008)*, and the *Revised Third Round Housing Element and Fair Share Plan (2008).* These plans are incorporated by reference into this Master Plan Re-examination.

## II. MAJOR PROBLEMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE 2007 MASTER PLAN

### A. OBJECTIVES

The following were the goals and objectives of the 2007 Township of Teaneck's Master Plan.

**Goals:**

1. Advance the purposes of the Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) as contained in NJSA 40:55 D-2;
2. Preserve the character of existing low-density residential neighborhoods forming the predominant character of the Township;
3. Provide zoning protection for existing multifamily housing, and encourage its expansion only in areas where it would not have detrimental effects on single-family residential neighborhoods;
4. Provide a balanced land use pattern and appropriate development controls;
5. Guide appropriate development and growth in a coordinated and managed approach;
6. Strengthen the vitality of existing commercial districts;
7. Preserve, protect and enhance parks and open space while protecting environmentally sensitive, natural, and unique physical features at the same time;
8. Maintain the historic resources and natural beauty of our Township; and
9. Embrace, reflect and bring together the diverse sub-communities within the Township.

**Objectives:**

1. Ensure practical and appropriate development controls in order to preserve and protect open space, conserve the natural landscape and protect the sensitive ecological areas of the Township;
2. Protect neighborhood characteristics including the enforcement of buffer areas between non-residential and residential land uses, between different residential types, and along sensitive ecological areas of the Township;
3. Encourage the revitalization of vacant buildings and encourage the rehabilitation and restoration of brownfields and other contaminated buildings and land;
4. Maintain and upgrade the existing system of parks, recreation and open space to provide for Township residents of all ages, abilities and disabilities consistent with current and projected community needs for recreation and open space;

5. Preserve the high level of public services and encourage the creation of new facilities where necessary, in order to accommodate population changes, economic growth and the changing needs of residents;
6. Provide mechanisms to encourage the needed upgrade of the existing utility infrastructure including public water, stormwater management and wastewater treatment;
7. Provide for the Township's fair share of affordable housing as may be required by law as set forth in the Housing Plan Element;
8. Preserve and enhance the low-density residential character of established neighborhoods, maintain a reasonable balance of housing choices, and provide for in-fill development, adaptive reuse and affordable senior housing.
9. Promote historic preservation efforts that will maintain the Township's unique historic resources as designated;
10. Promote building and site improvements that have reasonable limitations on size, bulk, and site disturbance in relation to the existing fabric of the community;
11. Encourage the development of a circulation system that accounts for roadways, mass transit, pedestrian/bicycle routes, greenway corridors and existing freight and goods movement facilities;
12. Coordinate land uses with transportation facilities, including but not limited to bus stops and parking for resident commuters to facilitate access and encourage alternatives to driving;
13. Promote a diversified economic base;
14. Focus economic development efforts on existing commercial, industrial and office districts and provide support and reinforcement to the four Business Districts to improve their viability;
15. Encourage the sharing of services with neighboring municipalities to lower Township operating and maintenance costs while maintaining or increasing their effectiveness; and
16. Support and promote public participation and awareness on Township Boards and commissions and awareness of all Township issues and initiatives.

## B. MAJOR PROBLEMS

The major problems relating to development in the Township of Teaneck in the prior Master Plan can be summarized as follows:

### 1. Decline in Non-Residential Tax Ratable Base

Since the 1970s, Teaneck experienced an overall erosion in non-residential tax base, especially light industrial uses, while at the same time the value of residential properties significantly increased. As a result, the nonresidential tax ratable base declined significantly and correspondingly, the number

of light industrial jobs also decreased. Also during this period, quasi-public uses, most notably Holy Name Hospital and the Teaneck portion of Fairleigh Dickinson University grew significantly and added employees. Unfortunately, these and other additional nontaxable quasi-public uses, which include houses of worship and civic uses, shifted an increasing burden to residential land uses for real tax property purposes. At the same time, Teaneck's inventory of vacant properties has substantially diminished. As such, there were few opportunities for new development of either nonresidential or residential development to supplement Teaneck's tax ratable base.

### 2. Expansion of Institutions

As the 2007 Master Plan indicated, Holy Name Hospital is located on a relatively small piece of property that is all but built to capacity. As with all major hospitals, the changing needs and technology in the medical field require hospitals to continually expand and upgrade. Options for accommodating an expansion of the hospital include splitting off certain of its functions and locating them off-site, away from the hospital, further intensifying its facilities on the present site, or seeking zoning changes that would allow it to expand into the adjacent single-family residential neighborhood. (All of these options would require variances, rezoning and/or site plan approval.) Other institutions such as houses of worship and their ancillary facilities led to the need to balance the constitutional rights of houses of worship with the potential impacts of these uses on surrounding residential uses.

### 3. Substandard Housing Stock

The 2007 Master Plan indicated that a number of homes in Teaneck were in substandard physical condition jeopardizing the provision of safe, decent and affordable housing to existing and future residents, improvements in aesthetics and neighborhood conditions, and stabilization of market and fiscal conditions.

### 4. Substantial Expansions to or Teardowns of Single Family Homes

The trend for larger single-family homes led to expansions or redevelopment of existing single-family homes to accommodate larger homes that did not respect the existing neighborhood scale, character, and privacy of Teaneck's neighborhoods.

### 5. Economic Development in the Retail Districts

Teaneck has a variety of commercial districts which are different with respect to their collection of retail uses, their physical layout, the extent to which they are pedestrian- or automobile-oriented, and their scale. The 2007 Master Plan indicated that all of these areas could benefit from improvements to their aesthetics, developing a more definitive retail identity, and establishing a stronger market presence.

The Cedar Lane Business District (Cedar Lane from the railroad to Larch Avenue) consisted of mostly single-story buildings and the limited pedestrian and mixed use presence and represented an underutilization of prime real estate space that did not provide for as lively, on-the-street presence on weekday evenings as possible. Merchants and their employees typically occupied the best parking spaces in front of their stores, as opposed to shoppers. Facades and signage were not especially aesthetically attractive. Uncoordinated business hours, with businesses operating according to their own schedules, often frustrated potential customers. The municipal parking available along American Legion Drive was underutilized. Teaneck Road North consisted of retail uses that were too scattered and fragmented and too far apart to promote multi-destinational shopping. The area lacked cohesion and a retail identity. The streetscape and the facades were not particularly attractive or inviting. Teaneck Road's potential for additional retail, office and residential uses may be underestimated due to present conditions. The diverse collection of convenience stores centered on the intersection of Queen Anne Road and DeGraw Avenue was not particularly pedestrian friendly or cohesive, given the width of both Queen Anne Road and DeGraw Avenue and the amount and speed of traffic passing through this intersection. Shoppers typically arrived and departed by car, and parked on the street or in parking lots to the side of the retail stores. The Plaza area had several sections that were considered underutilized; including the large centrally located municipal parking lot, and many single-story retail structures, some in need of façade improvements. The Plaza was in need of visual improvements in the form of cohesive streetscape design and establishment of design guidelines and standards for existing and future development. Alfred Avenue was underutilized.

### 6. Outdated Zoning

The Township's zoning regulations did not correspond to conditions on the ground and several disparate areas of the Township were governed by the same zoning district regulations despite vastly different characteristics. Amendments to the Ordinance were recommended in order to address the necessary setbacks or height restrictions where properties are adjacent to existing residential uses. Among the zones identified in the 2007 Master Plan that required amendment included the following: the R-S Residential Single-Family Detached zone throughout the Township; the Cedar Lane Business District in the B-1 Business-Retail zone; Teaneck Road Business District in the B-R Business-Residential zone; the Queen Anne/DeGraw Avenue District in the B-1 zone; the West Englewood/ the Plaza area in the B-1 zone; the Alfred Avenue Light Industrial Zone; the Palisade Avenue Light Industrial Zone; Block 2402, Lot 1 in both the (LI) Light Industrial and R-S zones; American Legion Drive area; and Block 4102, Lot 26.

### 7. Utilities

If the Township approved additional development or rezoned districts to permit greater density, provisions would need to be taken to assure adequate water supply and sanitary sewer facilities to these areas.

## 8. Circulation

The 2007 Master Plan reiterated all of the traffic improvements recommended in the 1994 Master Plan and provided an indication of whether or not each improvement had been completed. The lack of sidewalks made walking to the schools and the business districts from residential neighborhoods difficult. The bus system required additional parking for riders, relocating or adding new bus stops along routes, and increasing the number of benches, bicycle racks, bus shelters and newspaper stands. The Township does not have a taxi service. Cyclists found it difficult to follow designated bike routes without utilizing a map, instead relying solely on signage to navigate Teaneck's streets. Pedestrian bridges should be maintained.

## 9. Community Services and Recreation

The Municipal complex did not function at optimal efficiency. The Health Department indicated that it needed to increase the number of inspectors as the number of housing units grew. The Department also suggested the need for updated protective gear to respond to hazardous emergencies and for dealing with other occupational hazards. The fire station, with the exception of Station No. 3, was in need of upgrading. There was limited parking supply at the Library because it shares a parking lot with the rest of the Municipal Complex. The DPW needed to upgrade and expand its facilities and to evaluate the potential for expansion and/or relocation to ensure a more efficient operation. The Teaneck schools were operating at capacity.

## 10. Historic Preservation

The Township was in need of an updated inventory of historic resources. The Township did not have any historic districts or design guidelines for new construction in a historic district.

## 11. Recycling

The Township was interested in examining innovative ways to reduce the costs and improve the efficiency of solid waste management.

## 12. Conservation, Recreation and Open Space

Existing recreational facilities needed to be rehabilitated. The Township needed to make efforts to meet the public demand for new recreational facilitates through acquisition. Park staffing and maintenance facilities needed to be increased. Individual park master plans needed to be updated.

## 13. Housing Element

The adopted 2007 Master Plan incorporated by reference the 2005 adopted Housing Element and Fair Share Plan submitted to the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) for Substantive Certification under COAH's third round rules (which were later revoked).

## III. EXTENT TO WHICH PROBLEMS OR OBJECTIVES FROM THE LAST MASTER PLAN HAVE BEEN REDUCED OR INCREASED, AND SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN ASSUMPTIONS, POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES UNDERLYING THE PLAN

### 1. Decline in Non-Residential Tax Ratable Base

The decrease in the Township's non-residential tax ratable base indicated in the 2007 Master Plan remains a substantive issue in Teaneck where the tax burden increasingly falls on the shoulders of the residential taxpayer.

Rezonings recommended in the 2007 Master Plan that were designed to enhance the value in Teaneck's commercial areas has attracted some new non-residential development, but the overall trend of a decreasing non-residential tax base continues. Some areas identified in the 2007 Master Plan for rezoning and/or redevelopment have not been rezoned, and as a result have experienced little or no growth. These include: the Alfred Avenue Light Industrial Area; the Palisade Avenue Light Industrial Area; Block 2401, Lot 1; and Block 4102, Lot 26. The stagnating national economy has also discouraged new development.

Furthermore, the trend is intensified by the dwindling availability of vacant land in the Township, particularly land which can be assembled for a development. In recent years, some of the remaining Township-owned vacant land has been reserved for COAH units and/or dedicated as parkland.

*Land Reserved for COAH Units*

In 2008, the Township adopted a Fair Share and Housing Plan Element of the Master Plan and submitted the plan to the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) to fulfill its fair share obligation under the revised third round rules. As part of its effort to receive substantive certification from COAH, the Township Council adopted a resolution on April 13, 2010 to reserve nine Township-owned vacant sites scattered throughout the Township for 100 percent municipally sponsored affordable housing development to meet future affordable housing needs based upon anticipated future growth projections. These sites included the following:

| Block | Lot | Address | Buildable Acreage | Capacity (dwelling units)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4303 | 1 | 314 Home Street | 0.33 | 2-3 |
| 5002 | 1 | 108 Amsterdam Avenue | 0.23 | 1-2 |
| 5002 | 23 | 89 State Street | 0.34 | 2-4 |
| 5207 | 14 | 43 Sackville Street | 0.14 | 1 |
| 5612 | 11 | 1466 Endicott Terrace | 0.24 | 1-2 |
| 5911 | 1 | 1140 Loraine Avenue | 0.77 | 5-6 |
| 6001 | 1 | 266 Tietjen Avenue | 0.34 | 2-3 |
| 6001 | 3 | 286 Tietjen Avenue | 0.30 | 2 |
| 6001 | 8 | 1091 Webster Avenue | 0.18 | 1 |
| | | **TOTAL** | **2.74** | **17-26 units** |

*The capacity calculations are based first upon COAH's density assignment of 8 dwelling units/acre for Planning Area 1 in which Teaneck is located, as well as an analysis of an appropriate range.

These units may not be needed in the future if the growth anticipated by COAH does not occur, or if the New Jersey Fair Housing Act is substantially amended and lowers the obligation, as some experts in the field predict. It is unclear at this time whether these reserved parcels will continue to be needed for affordable units.

*Parks and Open Space*

Remaining vacant land has also been dedicated for parkland. The *Comprehensive Plan for Recreation* adopted in 2008 and incorporated into this Master Plan by reference lists two newly acquired pocket parks: Stephens Place Pocket Park (Block 5103, Lot 7) and Kipp Street Pocket Park (Block 107, Lot 5). In addition, the plan makes recommendations for Township-owned lots which should be dedicated as parkland, as well as privately-owned parcels which should be acquired by the Township for parkland if and when they become available.

Although reflected in the 2007 Master Plan, because of the decline in municipal revenues and state aid, there is an even greater need today to identify opportunities for the private market to develop vacant sites or redevelop marginal or underutilized sites to increase the Township's tax ratable base.

## 2. Expansion of Institutions

*Fairleigh Dickinson University*

Fairleigh Dickinson University (FDU) has been able, thus far, to accommodate expansion plans within the borders of its campus. In January 2010, FDU received preliminary and final major site plan approval to construct a new student center with dining hall, bowling alley and café within the Teaneck portion of their campus. The Planning Board granted site plan approval subject to certain conditions including the following:

- No further leasing of parking facilities to others—the university previously leased 350 spaces to Hackensack Medical Center
- The current 46,000 square foot student center, which is not located near parking and is not ADA compliant, will be renovated and utilized for University uses such as offices, newspaper, student life, health care services and services for residential students.
- Student Handbooks and Annual Orientation shall include provision that students should be good neighbors to local residents and refrain from on-street parking in adjacent neighborhoods;
- A contact person with contact numbers, to whom neighbors and the Township can direct concerns shall be identified to the Zoning Official each year prior to January 1st ;
- Curbs and sidewalks along River Road should be repaired and reviewed by the Township Engineer; and
- Improvements to the Hackensack River Walkway Greenway which cross FDU's campus shall be accomplished in conjunction with the development including maintaining, replacing or modifying existing access easements. The Greenway work shall be phased according to a phasing plan submitted prior to the issuance of building permits and completed prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.

*Holy Name Hospital*
In March 2010, Holy Name Hospital was renamed Holy Name Medical Center to reflect the institution's growth in services and technology, the doubling of medical staff, and increases in patient volume in recent years. Since the 2007 Master Plan, the new George P. Pitkin M.A. Emergency Care Center and Marian Hall Conference Center housed below the emergency department opened. The George P. Pitkin, MD Emergency Care Center is a 58,000 square foot, 3-story addition which features a 20,000 square foot sub-dividable Conference/Meeting Area, a 20,000 square foot 40-bed Emergency Department and an 18,000 square foot 2nd floor shell space which will house four new operating rooms with needed support space, and approximately 7,000 square feet of renovated areas. In 2009, the State designated the hospital as a Medical Coordination Center (MCC) for Bergen County, one of only nine designated centers in New Jersey. With the addition of the ED, the hospital is equipped to handle large-scale medical emergencies.

The hospital has also split off some of its services and relocated them to off-site locations throughout Bergen County. Holy Name is currently working to establish the new Villa Marie Claire Hospice, a 20-bed inpatient facility to fulfill the growing and critical need for compassionate end-of-life care for terminally ill patients and their loved ones. The facility is located in Saddle River in Bergen County, about 10 miles north of Teaneck.

While the national and regional economy has slowed the hospital's expansion plans somewhat, the medical center wishes to continue to expand but has little land available within Teaneck on which to do so. Expansion has also not occurred, in part, due to the fact that the hospital, while in a Hospital zoning district, is surrounded by the R-S Residential Single Family District which does not permit medical office or other hospital uses.

*Religious Institutions*
The trend of expanding existing houses of worship and their ancillary facilities, or establishing new ones in Teaneck, continues.

While the hospital, university or houses of worship do not directly generate tax revenues for Teaneck because of their tax-exempt status, these institutions do nevertheless generate demand for facilities and services to support them, which do generate tax ratables. Examples of these facilities are medical offices, housing and retail services. The provision of opportunities for these should be a priority of Teaneck in the immediate and long-term future.

### 3. Substandard Housing Stock

As part of the Township's 2008 adopted Fair Share and Housing Plan Element of the Master Plan, the Township conducted an exterior housing survey which indicated that there were fifty-seven (57) housing units in need of rehabilitation in Teaneck. According to Teaneck Building Department officials, in recent years the Township has generally bucked the national trend towards a decline in housing construction permits for new homes and renovations. The number of construction permits issued in recent years has remained steady. In addition, renovation and additions to units adminis-

tered by the Bergen County Housing Authority have also continued, indicating that some units previously identified as substandard have been upgraded in recent years.

No changes to policies or assumptions relating to renovating substandard housing stock seem to be warranted at this time, since the current programs appear to be working well.

### 4. Substantial Expansions to or Teardowns of Single Family Homes

The recent downturn in the real estate market has slowed the impetus for knockdowns and the building of bulky houses in Teaneck, which the 2007 Master Plan indicated could have a deleterious impact on the character of certain neighborhoods. The trend towards building larger homes continues. However, much of the construction of the new larger homes or the expansion of existing homes is now occurring in neighborhoods where the existing housing stock contains larger homes. Thus, these new homes are more contextual with the surrounding homes. The need for such regulations has therefore diminished, and no additional regulations are recommended.

### 5. Economic Development in the Retail Districts

The 2007 Master Plan indicated that most of Teaneck's retail areas could benefit from improvements, including an upgrading of their aesthetics, developing a retail identity, and establishing a stronger market presence. The changes by retail district are described below.

<u>The Cedar Lane Retail District</u> has seen some aesthetic improvements but vacant space persists. The Cedar Lane Special Improvement District (SID) engages in marketing efforts, including a website, to draw customers and businesses to Cedar Lane. Cedar Lane was also rezoned as a result of the 2007 Master Plan from the B-1 Business District to the MX-1 which added some additional permitted uses and increased the permitted height in the corridor to 45 feet/3 stories which helped to bring in some new tenants.

<u>Teaneck Road from Cedar Lane to Tryon Avenue</u> has also seen some aesthetic improvements. However, the corridor is not organized by a SID and façade or streetscape improvements have to be undertaken by individual business owners or landlords rather than through a coordinated effort. This typically occurs when a new business moves in. Since the 2007 Master Plan the B-R zone regulations were amended to encourage upper-floor uses that would enhance the value of underutilized sites. At the same time height restrictions have remained unchanged and additional uses have been added to the list of prohibited uses. As a result, few building owners have reinvested or made significant changes to their buildings.

<u>Queen Anne Road and DeGraw Avenue</u> has seen few changes since the 2007 Master Plan and continues to be a convenience retail corridor primarily serving the residents in the neighborhood. As a result of the 2007 Master Plan, the area was rezoned from the B-1 Business District to the MX-2

zone which added some uses and increased the building height to 45 feet/3 stories which attracted some new tenants.

West Englewood- The Plaza has seen few change since the 2007 Master Plan. Businesses in this area, mainly international and ethnic specialty food stores, typically do very well because it is close to residential neighborhoods. A former gas station property on Queen Anne and State Street is being proposed for redevelopment including retail on the ground floor and multi-levels of residential apartments above.

Redevelopment of Teaneck's downtown and commercial corridors is an even greater priority considering Teaneck's present fiscal situation. Hopefully, once the real estate market begins an upswing, opportunities created by the changes to Teaneck's land use regulations will allow for increased development, providing more employment, housing opportunities, an enlivened commercial sector and a strong tax base.

### 6. Outdated Zoning

As a result of the 2007 Master Plan, the Township made amendments to the following zones:

- RC-3 District- In August 2007, the Township amended the Zoning Code to place a portion of Glenwood Avenue and the air rights above said portion in the RC-3 District (Redevelopment Commercial - Hotel Accessory).
- B-R District- The Township amended the B-R (Business-Residential) Zone which is located in the Teaneck Road business district to restrict buildings 24 feet or two stories in height, and added a number of uses to the prohibited uses list.
- MX-1 District- In November 2007, the Township amended the Zoning Code to re-designate portions of the Cedar Lane and the West Englewood/The Plaza commercial corridor areas from the B-1 (Business-Retail) and the B-2 (Business-Office) to the MX-1 (Mixed Use-1 District). This district is intended to encourage retails sales and personal services oriented to pedestrian shopping on the ground floor, and other commercial activity and residential uses on the upper floors. The maximum building height of principal structures on a lot is 45 feet/three stories.
- MX-2 District- In November 2007, the Township amended the Zoning Code to re-designate portions of the Queen Anne and DeGraw Avenue commercial area from the B-1 (Business-Retail) to the MX-2 (Mixed Use-2 District). This district is also intended to encourage retails sales and personal services oriented to pedestrian shopping on the ground floor, and other commercial activity and residential uses on the upper floors. The maximum building height of principal structures on a lot is 35 feet and three stories.
- MH Medical and Health Facilities Overlay Zoning District- In June 2009, the Township amended the Zoning Code to re-designate Block 5201, Lot 1 from the RS (Residential Single-Family Detached) Zone to the LI (Light Industrial Zone). The Township also amended the Zoning Code to include Block 5201, Lot 1 and Block 5201, Lot 2 (also in the LI Light-Industrial Zone) in the MH Medical and Health Facilities Overlay Zoning District.

Both parcels are owned by the Givaudan Fragrance Corporation. Permitted principal uses in the MH Zone include facilities for out-patient treatment and care, medical support facilities, and medical offices. The bulk requirements for the overlay zone are consistent with the underlying zone.

- RC-2 Redevelopment Zone- In June 2009, the Township rezoned Block 3604, Lots 11, 12 in the Glenpointe area from R-S (Residential Single-Family Detached) to RC-2 (Redevelopment Commercial - Hotel/Motel)

Other amendments to Teaneck's Zoning Ordinance which were recommended in the 2007 Master Plan have not taken place. These include the R-S Residential Single-Family Detached zone throughout the Township; the Alfred Avenue Light Industrial Zone; the Palisade Avenue Light Industrial Zone; Block 2402, Lot 1 in both the (LI) Light Industrial and R-S zones; and American Legion Drive area; and Block 4102, Lot 26. As a result of the 2007 Master Plan, the Township formed a Zoning Subcommittee to look at various zoning issues throughout the Township with the goal of deleting or modifying outdated regulations, and amending or creating new regulations. Specific amendments to the Teaneck Zoning Ordinance which are specifically recommended in this Master Plan Reexamination Report are included in Chapter 4, and relate to providing additional opportunities for medical office development, new hotel development on Route 4 at the Englewood border, and revitalizing properties located at the intersection of Teaneck Road and Fort Lee Road.

## 7. Utilities

There have been no changes with respect to the Township's water supply and sanitary sewer facilities since April 2007, nor are any changes in policies or underlying assumptions recommended at this time.

## 8. Circulation

The 2007 Master Plan recommendations for circulation improvements remain valid. However, these recommendations should be cross-referenced with the *Draft Teaneck Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan* prepared by the Environmental Commission in December 2010.

The Township of Teaneck requested bicycle and pedestrian planning assistance from the New Jersey Department of Transportation – Office of Bicycle and Pedestrian Programs (NJDOT – OBPP) to assist in the development of a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. The Study which was limited to key corridors and roadways within the Township was advanced under the direction of the Teaneck Environmental Commission. Its purpose was to support the Township's goal of improving bicycle and pedestrian facilities, enhancing bicycle and pedestrian accessibility for local and regional destinations, and to develop education initiatives to increase residents' knowledge of recommended bicycle and pedestrian travel practices.

In preparing this plan, the Environmental Commission analyzed reported bicycle and pedestrian accidents, identified bicycle and pedestrian facilities and trip generators, and reviewed Teaneck's current ordinances. From this analysis, on-road bicycle facility improvements, pedestrian facility improvements, a Complete Streets Policy, and an implementation plan were developed.

The draft Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan recommends a range of improvements, as well as recommendations for future study to address the complex and constrained characteristics of Teaneck's urban environment, which includes cartway and sidewalk width constraints (the result of a densely built environment), and high traffic volumes. The primary goal of the Plan is to increase bicycle and pedestrian travel in the Township, thereby improving personal health, traffic conditions, and air quality.

Details provided in the plan include:

- Adopting a "Complete Streets Policy" designed to ensure that future roadway construction projects consider all roadway users. Through this policy, the addition of bicycle lanes, construction of sidewalks, or the upgrading of signals may be considered as part of a roadway improvement project.
- Improved coordination between Teaneck, Bergen County, and NJDOT to advance improvements for bicycle and pedestrian accommodations on roadways inside and around Teaneck.
- Seeking funding for the recommended bicycle and pedestrian projects.
- Maintenance of roadways, including on-road bicycle facilities; education of cyclists and motorists; and the enforcement of traffic laws and statutes—which are important considerations since bicycle ridership and pedestrian volumes will increase as new facilities are created.

Aside from consideration of implementing the recommendations of the Bike Plan, making improvements to Teaneck's circulation system as set forth in the 2007 Master Plan should continue to the extent that they are financially feasible.

## 9. Community Services and Recreation

Township staff is being re-located within the municipal complex. The administrative staff, Township Manager, Township Clerk, Building and Zoning, and Health Departments will all be relocated to the former police station. The areas of the existing municipal building which currently house all of these departments will be used for storage. The former police station is in the process of asbestos abatement and interior renovation. The DPW will remain at its current location for the near future. No changes in assumptions or policies with respect to community services are recommended at this time.

## 10. Historic Preservation

Since the 2007 Master Plan, the Township Council designated two additional sites as historic based upon the recommendation of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC): the George V. Demarest House (12 DeGraw Avenue, Block 3216, Lot 11) which was added to the Township's Official Map in March 2008; and the Ende-Sunderland House (720 Roemer Avenue, Block 1103, Lot 3) which was added to the Official Map in September 2008. One designated site not listed in the 2007 Master Plan is the John I. Post House (790 Old Newbridge Road, Block 1001, Lot 4) which was added to the Official Map in October 2006.

In February 2010, the Township Council declined to designate three Teaneck houses recommended for designation by the Historic Preservation Commission because the owners of all three properties objected to the historic designation. The three properties were 580 Standish Road, 755 Pomander Walk, and 658 Larch Avenue, and all three were included in Bergen County Survey of Historic Sites, as well as in the 1995 booklet, "A guide to Historic Landmarks of Teaneck, New Jersey."

No changes with respect to underlying policies or assumptions related to Historic Preservation are warranted at this time.

## 11. Recycling

The Township continues to examine innovative ways to reduce the costs and improve the efficiency of solid waste management.

## 12. Conservation, Recreation and Open Space

*Open Space and Recreation Plan*

The Township adopted an Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) in 2008 which made specific recommendations for improvements and park acquisitions. The Environmental Commission is in the process of updating the OSRP. Once the Township adopts the OSRP it can also be adopted as a separate, standalone element of the Teaneck Master Plan. The Township continues to make improvements to its existing parks and open space as funding becomes available.

*Hackensack River Greenway*

In addition, the Hackensack River Greenway Advisory Board (the "Advisory Board") appointed by the Township works to design and develop the Hackensack River Greenway through Teaneck. A planning study, completed in 1995, forms the basis for the current efforts.

At present, the Advisory Board has identified three "gap" areas of the Greenway in Teaneck:

1. The first gap area is between the Township-owned 640 River Road property and Pomander Walk. This gap includes private properties.

2. The second gap extends northward from Cedar Lane to Lone Pine Lane near Fairleigh Dickinson University (FDU). The Advisory Board's goal is for the greenway to meander along the river and not go inland as it does at this point.
3. The third gap extends from the north end of Andreas Park to the south end of Brett Park. This gap includes the Township DPW yard and other privately-owned properties.

The Advisory Board has urged the Township to help fill these three "gap" areas in the Greenway by negotiating the provision of Greenway access with the owners and developers of these private properties. The Zoning Code currently requires a buffer along the Hackensack River. The Code defines the buffer as all land a distance of 50 feet from the mean high water line. The buffer area shall consist of natural plant materials and no disturbance of established vegetation is permitted unless there are invasive species or to install a pathway, benches, lighting, and waste receptacles in accordance with standards established by the governing body. This buffer ordinance does not mandate that public access be provided within the buffer. However, access could be acquired during the site plan negotiation process if consented to by the developers or owners. Other means of acquisition would be the outright fee-simple purchase of land, acquisition of an easement for access purposes, or the voluntary deeding of land or right-of-access via easement by the property owners.

The Advisory Board also requests to work with the Planning Board on the maintenance of the Greenway, particularly the portions which traverse the FDU campus. However, as one of the conditions of its Site Plan approval from the Planning Board for its new student center, FDU must make improvements to the Greenway which cross through its campus in conjunction with the development including maintaining, replacing or modifying existing access easements.

Undoubtedly, once the new OSRP is completed and adopted by the Township, changes to the current policies, objectives and assumptions underlying the Open Space and Recreation Element will be forthcoming. Until then, the policies and objectives of the current OSRP will remain in effect.

## 13. Housing Element

In 2008, the Township adopted a Fair Share Plan and Housing Element of the Master Plan and submitted the plan to the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) for Substantive Certification to fulfill its fair share obligation under the revised third round rules. The Township has worked with COAH since the time of submission to provide supplementary documentation necessary for the granting of substantive certification. At this time, COAH's third round has been invalidated by the Courts and the overall status of New Jersey's Fair Housing Act is in question. Thus, at the present time, no changes to the policies or assumptions relating to affordable housing are currently recommended.

## IV. RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO THE MASTER PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

### A. INTRODUCTION

Teaneck has always been a predominantly residential community, with more than 90 percent of its land area devoted to such uses and a similar percentage in terms of the overall real estate valuation. While making it a wonderful community to live in, one of the major drawbacks of this residential bias is the extent to which Teaneck relies upon tax revenues from its residential sector to support the municipal services and the education it provides to its residents and schoolchildren respectively.

In recent years the tax burden on residents has been exacerbated by the economic recession, declining real estate values—housing in particular—and the increasing costs of providing school and municipal services in the face of declining state aid. While the 2007 Master Plan did make several recommendations for changes in zoning to shore up the tax base and to encourage redevelopment and hence enhance the tax base within Teaneck's downtown and outlying retail shopping districts, there are two further opportunities for generating municipal revenues in Teaneck that have become apparent, which would require changes to both the land use designations in the master plan and in the zoning ordinance. These are the potential to allow for the conversion, adaptive reuse or redevelopment of medical office use along the Teaneck Road corridor, driven largely by their proximity to Holy Name Hospital, and the potential for hotel development on the north and south sides of Route 4 adjacent to the Englewood border. Each of these recommendations is discussed in detail below, in Section IV B and IV C below.

Additionally, it has become apparent that three of the four corners at the intersection of Teaneck Road and Fort Lee Road—developed with a Dairy Queen, an Exxon gas station and a former Shell gas station—have had a deleterious impact on the quality of life for neighboring residents. While the existing uses could continue to operate as preexisting, non-conforming uses in the future, the existing zoning of these three parcels needs to be amended to provide for a greater level of protection if they do expand or alter their present operations, or to the extent that such properties are redeveloped for alternative uses. The zoning recommendations for the parcels are examined in Section IV D below.

### B. MEDICAL OFFICE OVERLAY DISTRICT

At page 34 the 2007 Master Plan indicated there was no room for Holy Name Hospital to expand on its existing campus. The Master Plan noted that hospital uses require continuous expansion and upgrading of facilities, and that Holy Name Hospital recently completed one such expansion, but that it was unclear how the hospital will cope with such demands in the future. The Master Plan indicated the following:

> "Options include splitting off certain of its functions, further intensifying its facilities on the present site, or seeking zoning changes that would allow it to purchase and raze neighboring homes, thereby allowing it to expand its physical boundaries. While the Township is not in any position to predict or forecast the hospital's future needs, it may wish to diligently enforce existing zoning regulations, to protect the established character of the abutting low-density residential neighborhood."

No detailed recommendations, however, were made for development in this area to address this issue. Clearly, while the expansion of the hospital itself is an issue beyond the scope of this reexamination to address, particularly since the hospital itself has not revealed its long-term plans or requested an expansion of its boundaries since the 2007 Master Plan was adopted, there is no doubt that the demand for medical office facilities has continued to grow not only owing to Holy Name's expansion, but also nationwide and regionally. In fact, while the demand for additional office space, housing and even retail space has declined substantially since the advent of the recession, the health care sector and expansion of medical office and facilities—both those directly related to or associated with large regional hospitals like Holy Name—as well as smaller, independent medical and health care providers—has continued. Teaneck is therefore in a position to capitalize upon this growth, particularly along the Teaneck Road corridor, where most of the smaller medical offices now exist, and which are proximate to the hospital.

In this respect a study was undertaken of the Teaneck Road corridor, both north and south of Route 4, in fact from Tryon Avenue at its northern-most end, all the way to the Bogota border (Route 80) in the south, and encompassing both business and residential zones. Based upon an analysis of existing current land uses and zoning districts, two things are apparent:

(1) That not all areas of the corridor—sometimes both sides, sometimes just one side—is suitable for medical office additions (e.g., above ground floor retail), or conversion or redevelopment for medical offices; or

(2) a "one size fits all" zoning district would not be suitable, much for the same reason—the variations with respect to existing land uses and zoning.

As a result, it is recommended that two distinct medical office overlay districts be adopted, one over underlying business zones and another over the underlying residential zones, as spelled out below. Essentially, the overlay zones would allow for medical office development, per somewhat different bulk and design standards, in addition to what is permitted in the existing underlying zones.

<u>Area #1: Teaneck Road—North of Route 4</u>

Essentially the area encompasses both sides of Teaneck Road from Route 4 in the south to Tryon Avenue in the north. This area can be treated as a single geographic unit because of the fact that it is currently zoned B-R Special Business Residential. This linear business area is developed with a

number of one-story buildings and some two-story buildings. There is also a five-story office building adjacent to Route 4 on the west side of Teaneck Road. The section of Teaneck Road to the north of Route 4 and south of Tryon Avenue encompasses the entirety of the B-R Special Business-Residential Zone.

At the time the 2007 Master Plan was drafted, this zone allowed for the same permitted uses as specified in the B-1 and B-2 districts, as well as single-family and multifamily uses and the same conditional uses. The Master Plan stated:

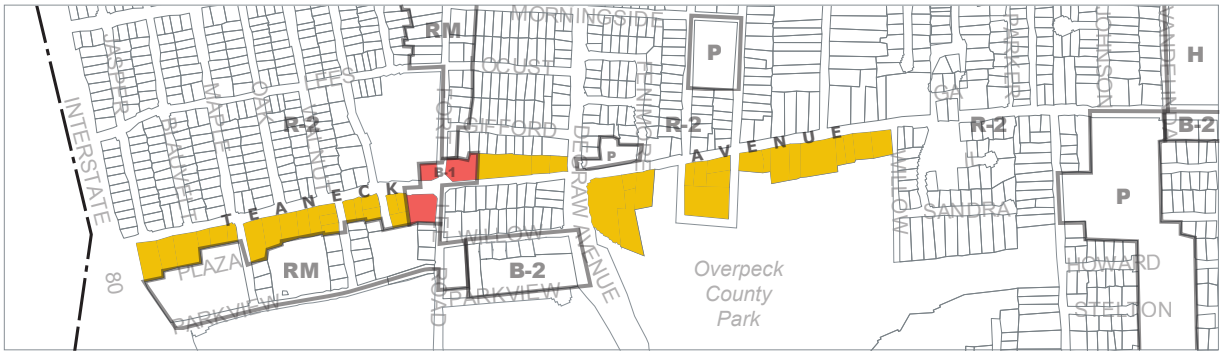
> "The goal for the district is to achieve a balance between the pedestrian and vehicular realm, while increasing the economic vitality of the district by developing new bulk and design standards that encourage mixed-use development, and respect the surrounding neighborhoods."

The 2007 Master Plan Economic Plan Element further promoted changes in this area, noting on page 111:

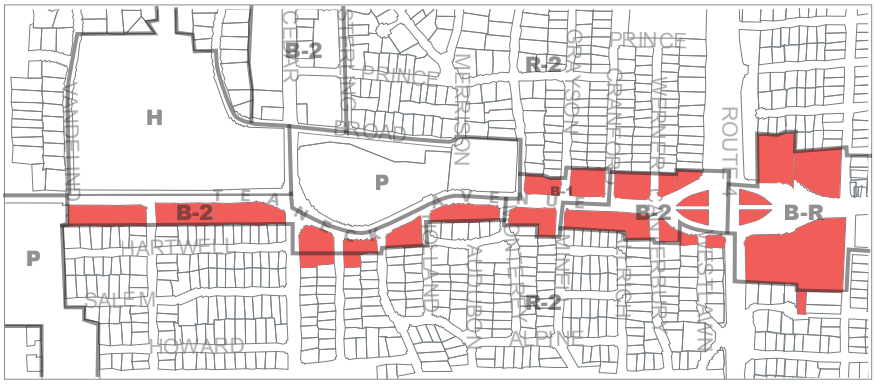
> "Redevelopment incentives in the form of added density, more permissive use and bulk requirements, and a greater maximum building height, could provide opportunities that present zoning regulations do not permit…(E)stablishing new bulk/zoning standards to create consistent setbacks and uses, and to relocate parking in the rear of structures, will aid in transforming the Teaneck Road corridor into a more pedestrian oriented business district."

Some changes were made recently to the B-R zone regulations, including the list of uses permitted and/or prohibited, although these changes did not directly match the Master Plan recommendations. The number of prohibited uses in the zone was expanded substantially. One change that was not made to the lists of permitted uses was to allow mixed-use buildings with upper-floor residential or non-retail commercial uses. In addition, allowing 3-story mixed-use development (ground floor retail, with two levels of residential above) was not adopted. To facilitate the development of medical office development within this portion of the Teaneck Road corridor, this Reexamination Report recommends adding medical office and related medical and health care facilities (such as testing labs, diagnostic facilities, outpatient/same-day surgery, etc.) to be permitted uses within the medical office overlay district which would be mapped over the B-R zone from Tryon Avenue to Route 4 (see Figure 1).

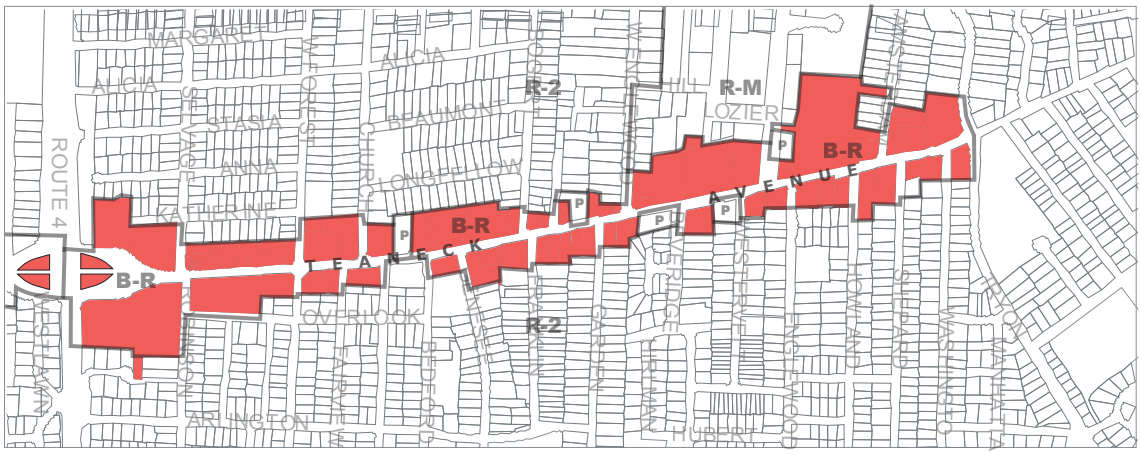
In terms of amendments that were enacted after the 2007 Master Plan was adopted, the permitted building height in this zone was actually reduced from 35 feet to 24 feet. The height for buildings in the Medical Office Overlay Zone north of Route 4 should be retained as 2 stories and 24 feet. Many of the lots in this zone are relatively shallow and abut residential development to the rear. In order to promote medical office redevelopment in this area that includes buildings close to the Teaneck Road with adequate parking in the rear, appropriate buffer area regulations should be considered. Options include reducing the required buffer depth from 25 feet and/or to more explicitly allow a reduced buf-




**1** **Interstate 80 to Vandelinda Avenue**




**2** **Vandelinda Avenue to Route 4**




**3** **Route 4 to Tryon Avenue**

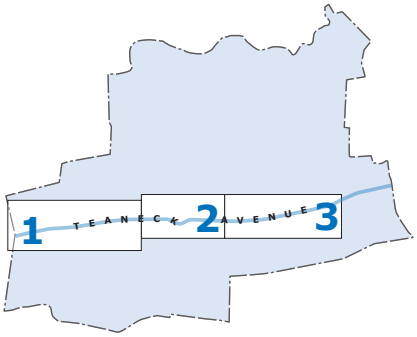
Proposed Medical Office Residential Overlay Zone

Proposed Medical Office Business Overlay Zone

Figure 1:

# Proposed Overlay Zones

Phillips Preiss Grygiel LLC | May 2011




0 500 1,000 2,000 Feet

fer width as long as a year-round screen is provided through a combination of fencing and vegetation.

Area #2: Teaneck Road—South of Route 4 to Vandelinda Avenue

This area is anchored by the Township municipal complex and Holy Name Hospital. There are commercial and mixed-use buildings primarily two stories in height located in the commercial node located to the north of Vandelinda Avenue. This sector is located in the B-1 Business-Retail and the B-2 Business-Office zones, with the exception of the Holy Name Hospital property, which is located in the H-Hospital zone. The B-1 zone portion is limited to the Teaneck Road frontage between Cranford Place and Edgemont Place on the west side of the street and between Minell Place and Commonwealth Drive on the east side of the street.

The predominant commercial zone between Route 4 and Vandelinda Avenue is the B-2 Business-Office District.[1] Permitted uses in the B-2 zone already include medical and dental clinics, as well as other uses such as offices, financial institutions and business schools, funeral homes and municipal, county, state and federal buildings and uses, and conditional uses include nursing homes, as well as residential multi-family and single-family attached dwellings (subject to the limitations set forth in the R-M district), and wireless communications towers and antennas.

In the B-2 zone (and many other non-residential zones), buffers and screening are required in accordance with Section 33-15(s) of the Zoning Ordinance where a property abuts a residential use or district. The minimum required buffer width is 25 feet. This ordinance section does allow some leeway where the available buffer area is less than 25 feet wide. In such cases, the applicant may be required to provide a six-foot high privacy fence or equivalent dense evergreen planting.

Similar to the B-R zone north of Route 4, in order to capitalize upon the presence of the hospital, however, it is suggested that a medical office overlay zone be created to capture some of the development pressure generated by this use (see Figure 1).

The parking requirement for medical offices throughout the Township was recently modified to be less stringent. The former standard of one space per 100 square feet of gross floor area was overly restrictive and hindered the development of this type of use. A more appropriate standard of one space per 200 square feet of gross floor area was therefore adopted. In the proposed overlay zones, no parking would be permitted in the front yard, or within 10 feet of the side lot line. Ground-floor parking with office space above should be permitted, provided the parking is enclosed, and the exterior has the same appearance as the remainder of the building.

[1] Note that only 8 lots within this portion of the Teaneck Road corridor are located in the B-1 zone.

Area #3: Vandelinda Avenue to Route 80

South of Vandelinda Avenue to Route 80, both sides of Teaneck Road are developed primarily with single-family residential uses, although there are exceptions: Thomas Jefferson Middle School, the firehouse, and office uses located at the intersection of Teaneck Road and Degraw Avenue, and the gas stations and Dairy Queen located at the intersection of Teaneck Road and Fort Lee Road. The adaptive reuse or conversion of the homes which front on Teaneck Road in this area of Teaneck can take advantage of their proximity to Holy Name Hospital, as well as their visibility and accessibility along this heavily traveled arterial within Teaneck. As such, their use as medical offices is appropriate. The major concern relating to their conversion or redevelopment as medical offices is twofold:

(1) How their development would impact single-family residential lots to their rear; and
(2) Increases in the bulk or massing of the buildings and their architecture, since this area exhibits the characteristics of a predominantly single-family residential community.

Such concerns can be addressed in two ways:

(1) To limit the mapping of the overlay zone, where the lots fronting on Teaneck Road back up directly to single-family residential properties behind them.
(2) Allow the conversion to medical office use, but by and large, retain the appearance and scale of a single-family residence.

With respect to mapping the overlay zone, moving southward from Vandelinda to Route 80, residential properties fronting on Teaneck Road on the east side of Teaneck Road from Vandelinda (or more accurately south of Thomas Jefferson Middle School to Willow Lane) back up to single-family residential homes and established single-family residential neighborhoods. For this reason, this portion of Teaneck Road would not have the medical office overlay zone adopted. Similarly, on the west side of Teaneck Road from Vandelinda southward all the way to DeGraw Avenue, the single-family lots back up on other single-family lots and neighborhoods. Therefore, the medical office overlay zone would not include this area.

Similar conditions exist on the west side of Teaneck Road between DeGraw Avenue and Fort Lee Road and on the west side of Teaneck Road from Fort Lee Road (Ammann Park) to Route 80. As a result, the areas would not be included in the medical office overlay zone.

Such mapping southwards from Willow Lane to Route 80 then would only include:

(1) The east side of Teaneck Road from Willow Lane to DeGraw Avenue, which area backs up on Overpeck County Park
(2) The west side of Teaneck Road from DeGraw Avenue to Fort Lee Road, which is developed with a professional office and a residential health care facility already, and whose existing character is not in accordance with the present R-S zoning

(3) The east side of Teaneck Road from Fort Lee Road to Route 80, because these lots back up on multi-family residential development located within the R-M Residential Multi-family zone, where the conversion to medical office use would not have a deleterious impact on the quality of life or character of the neighborhood. (See Figure 1 for location of this proposed overlay zone.)

To retain the character of the existing single-family district in this portion of Teaneck, virtually the same bulk regulations as that of the underlying R-S district should be maintained, such as with respect to minimum lot area, width, front, side and rear yards, building coverage and height. The one exception would be lot coverage, since medical offices need greater parking than single-family residential uses. Therefore, instead of a minimum of 40% lot coverage, 75% would be permitted in the overlay zone. However, parking would not be permitted in the front yard—only in the side or rear yard, and in such circumstances, where a parking lot accommodates more than 4 parking spaces, additional fencing and screening would be required. Finally, design requirements would only allow for pitched roof structures, so that the residential appearance would be maintained.

Under the regulations, in most instances, medical office use would be realized through the conversion of existing single-family homes to medical office or to mixed uses, where the lower floor or a portion of the home would be converted to medical offices with the upstairs or remaining portion being utilized as a residence, similar to a home professional office. The only substantial impact would be the provision of a larger paved parking area to the rear of the lot, to accommodate the needs of the employees and patients/visitors. In this way, the medical offices should not have a detrimental impact on the character of those residents who choose to remain, and not convert their home for medical office use.

*

The analysis of the three areas recommended for the medical office overlay zone indicates that a "one size fits all" zoning approach is not appropriate. The height, setbacks, coverage and design of medical offices within existing business zones, i.e., within the existing B-R, B-1 and B-2 zones would not be appropriate if applied over the R-S zone which is currently developed predominantly with single-family homes. Therefore, two medical office overlay zones are recommended: the Medical Office Business Overlay zone, which would be mapped over the B-R, B-1 and B-2 zones, and the Medical Office Residential Overlay zone, which would be mapped over the existing R-S zone.

Consistent with the analysis for areas #1 and #2 above, the proposed bulk regulations for the Medical Office Business Overlay zone is set forth in Table 1 below and consistent with the analysis for area #3 above, the proposed bulk regulations for the Medical Office Residential Overlay zone is set forth in Table 2 below.

## Table 1

## Proposed Medical Office Business Overlay District Bulk Regulations

| | Existing B-R Zone | Existing B-2 Zone | Proposed Medical Office Business Overlay Zone |
|---|---|---|---|
| Minimum lot area | None | 15,000 sq.ft. | 10,000 sq.ft. |
| Minimum lot width | None | 100 feet | 100 feet |
| Minimum front yard setback | Average along same side of street to nearest intersection | 15 feet[1] | 10 feet plus 2 feet for any stories in excess of one story |
| Minimum side yard setback | None | 10 feet | 10 feet |
| Minimum rear yard setback | 20 feet | 20 feet[2] | 20 feet |
| Building coverage | 25% if parking required, 80% if parking not required | 30% | 40% |
| Lot coverage | 80% if parking required, 100% if parking not required | 65% | 80% |
| Building height (principal) | 24 feet/2 stories | 44 feet | 4 stories/50 feet south of Route 4; 2 stories, 24 feet north of Route 4 |
| Building height (accessory) | 15 feet | 15 feet | 15 feet |
| Minimum landscaped area | None | 20% of lot area | 20% of lot area |

1 The minimum front yard setback for a building up to 35 feet in height shall be ⅔ of the height of the building, to the nearest foot. For a building greater than 35 feet in height, the minimum front yard setback shall be 23 feet plus one foot for each foot or fraction thereof of building height in excess of 35 feet. In no case, however, shall the front building line be closer to the street line than the average of existing front yard setbacks along the same side of the street to the nearest intersections.

2 The minimum rear yard depth shall also correlate to the height of the building, in the same proportions as set forth above for front yard setback.

**Table 2**

| | Existing R-S Zone Regulations | Recommended Medical Office Residential Overlay Zone |
|---|---|---|
| Minimum lot area | 7,500 square feet | 7,500 square feet |
| Minimum lot width | 75 feet | 75 feet |
| Minimum front yard setback | 25 (or average setback of lots on street) | 25 feet (or average of setback of lots on street) |
| Minimum side yard width (one)<br>- 60 feet or greater lot width<br>- Less than 60 feet lot width | <br>10 feet or 15% of lot width, whichever is greater<br>7 feet | <br>10 feet or 15% of lot width, whichever is greater<br>7 feet |
| Minimum side yard width, combined | 30% of lot width | 30% of lot width |
| Minimum rear yard depth | 25 feet | 25 feet |
| Maximum building coverage | 25% | 25% |
| Maximum lot coverage | 40% | 75% |
| Maximum building height<br>- Principal building<br>- Accessory building | <br>35 feet<br>15 feet | <br>35 feet, 2½ stories<br>15 feet |

C. HOTEL ZONE

Presently there is only one hotel in Teaneck—the Glenpointe Marriott, located on Frank Burr Boulevard close to the intersection of U.S. Routes 95 and Route 80 adjacent to Overpeck County Park. There are no hotels or bed and breakfast establishments along Route 4, in the Cedar Lane Business District, nor within Teaneck's other retail area such as along the Teaneck Road corridor, Queen Anne Road shopping area or the Plaza. The closest hotels outside of Teaneck are some distance away—the Crowne Plaza in Englewood (on South Van Brunt Street, close to Route 4) and the Best Western Orintani in Hackensack (adjacent to the Riverside Square Mall). Other hotels in the area are located in Fort Lee, Tenafly, Ridgefield Park, Hasbrouck Heights and Paramus.

Because of the concentration of businesses and residents within Teaneck, and in close proximity to the Township, and also because of its short distance from major business and employment centers in New York City and Bergen County, an additional hotel or hotels may be desirable. Hotels which are business-oriented can capture the market for overnight stays of visitors conducting business in the region, and also for family members and friends visiting the area and requiring overnight or weekend accommodations. While the height, size and lot area requirements for such a hotel would preclude their being established within Teaneck's existing retail areas, there are two locations along the Route 4 corridor adjacent to the Englewood border which fulfill the criteria for such a hotel. The parcels in question are lots 26.01 and 27 of Block 4102, contiguous parcels amounting to approximately 2½ acres, located on the south side of Route 4 at the terminus of Hancock Avenue. Lot 26.01 is privately owned and developed with a small professional office, whose owners have indicated a willingness to redevelop the property for a more intensive use. Lot 27 is owned by the

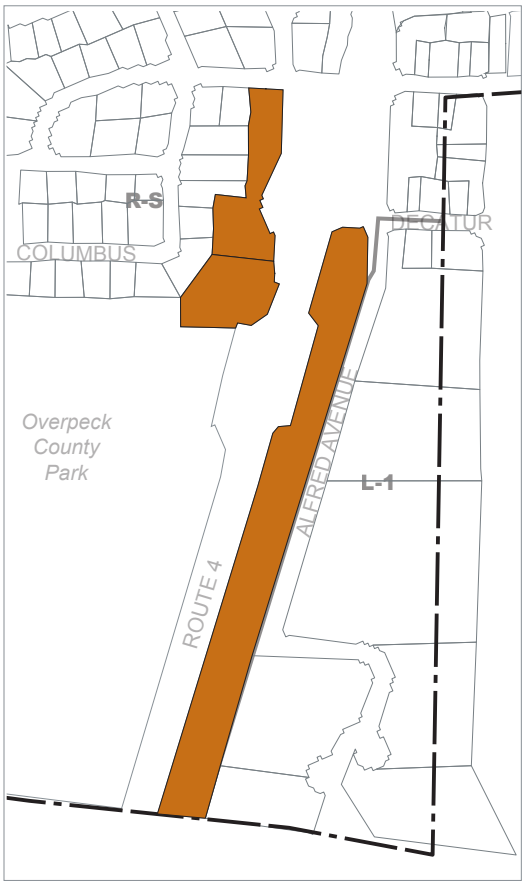
Township of Teaneck. The frontage on Route 4 provides both the accessibility and visibility required for a business hotel that could be utilized for regional-oriented businesses. The size and configuration of the two parcels combined would allow for an appropriately-sized hotel with sufficient land to provide on-site parking and buffering and screening to adjacent uses. The only residential uses proximate to the parcels are the rear of homes oriented to Glen Court. Otherwise, Teaneck's industrial development along Alfred Avenue is directly opposite and the Overpeck County Golf Course is to the east. Moreover, by carefully drafting height, setback and open space and buffering requirements, the potential negative impacts of a hotel on the parcel could be mitigated. To ensure that a quality business hotel is developed on the site, zoning controls would mandate a minimum of 100 rooms, and require that on-site dining facilities, meeting rooms and exercise facilities be provided within the hotel—something that a lesser quality motel or transient lodging hotel cannot offer for economic reasons. Also, to prevent the hotels from being used for transient housing purposes, a limitation on the provision of kitchens/cooking facilities and suites would also be included.

The second parcel, which displays the same attributes, is located directly across the highway, on the north side of Route 4 to the east of Decatur Avenue and south of Alfred Avenue. The parcel is identified as lot 10 of block 6002 and comprises almost 5 acres. Although long and narrow, a creative design for a hotel would allow for its accommodation along with parking and the necessary buffering and open space. The parcel backs up on the aforementioned industrial area, and the closest residences are located at the northeast corner of Decatur and Alfred. Again, appropriate siting requirements could minimize impacts on the residential area. In addition, the development of the parcels would not undermine the greenbelt that presently exists in Teaneck along Route 4. The greenbelt starts to the west of Decatur, and is continuous along Route 4 as it passes through the Township. The presence of these hotels at the far eastern end of Teaneck, adjacent to Teaneck's and Englewood's industrial area on the north side and Overpeck Golf Course on the south side, would not interfere or disrupt the greenbelt as it passes through the remaining part of Teaneck. (See Figure 2 for the proposed location of the H-Hotel zone.)

The proposed hotel rezoning would not only permit a use for which there is a need and demand in Teaneck, but also provide a convenient lodging for guests of Teaneck businesses and residents. It would also help to generate revenues for Teaneck through the sale and/or lease of Teaneck-owned property (property which is not reserved for open space or municipal purposes), through real estate taxes, and through room taxes which would be payable to the Township. This rezoning and new development would help Teaneck to put its fiscal house in order.

A further permitted use in this proposed Hotel zone is recommended. Currently, per section 33-26A(2) of the Township Code, off-premises advertising signs—signs advertising businesses not being conducted on the same premises upon which they are located (also referred to as billboards)—are prohibited throughout Teaneck. Both of the properties for which hotels are recommended to be permitted through amendments to Teaneck's current zoning regulations, are also suitable for the accommodation of such signs. In addition to generating revenues for the Township, a total ban on such signage throughout Teaneck may actually be unconstitutional, and it is possible that some

**4** **Rezone from B-1 to B-2**




**5** **Rezone from R-S to H Hotel**

Figure 2:

# Proposed Rezoned Areas

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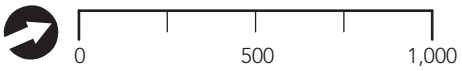


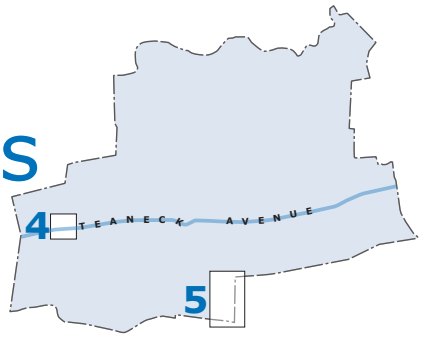

owner of property may be able by variance or litigation to obtain an approval for such a sign in an inappropriate and undesirable location, with greater visual impacts on the community than at the two proposed locations. Therefore, from a master planning viewpoint, it would seem to be both preferable and appropriate to regulate off-premises advertising signs by allowing them in this particular location and subject to standards which control their potential impacts, as opposed to prohibiting such signs altogether.

This reexamination report recommends, therefore, that one off-premises advertising sign be permitted on each of the above properties (one on the eastbound and one on the westbound side), of a size, height and location that would make them all but invisible to the adjacent residential areas, and with regulations pertaining to lighting, landscaping and other regulations which would control other visual and safety aspects.

## D. REZONING OF INTERSECTION OF TEANECK ROAD AND FORT LEE ROAD

Three of the four corners of the intersection of Teaneck Road and Fort Lee Road presently zoned B-1 Business Retail are developed (or until recently in the case of one of the lots) for intensive retail uses. The northwest corner, lot 15 of Block 3216, and comprising of only slightly over a half-acre in size, is developed as a Dairy Queen, a fast food restaurant with window service only. The restaurant is located in a diagonal fashion, close to the front property lines of both Teaneck Road and Fort Lee Road, with the entire remainder of the lot paved over and devoted to on-site parking with the exception of a small portion in the northeast corner). Although fast food restaurants are a permitted conditional use in the B-1 district, the development is non-conforming with respect to front yard setback, lot coverage, location and number of driveways, and with buffering requirements. It is located directly adjacent to single-family residential homes to the north, a residential health care facility to the east and across the street (Teaneck Road) from additional single-family uses. Being in such close proximity to residential uses exposes the residents to the noise, glare and odors associated with such a fast food establishment, including evenings and weekends when residents are home, and the quiet use and enjoyment of their properties are at a premium. Moreover, the uncontrolled nature of the parking lot layout—with open and interrupted access along virtually the entire frontage on both streets so close to a busy intersection, is not a safe condition, and falls substantially short of established traffic engineering standards. As such, any expansion or intensification of the use is not in the best interests of Teaneck. Rezoning this property to allow for a use which is more compatible with the surrounding uses and one which could address the traffic safety aspects is appropriate.

On the southwest corner of the intersection of Teaneck Road and Fort Lee Road, on lot 6 of Block 3303, a property of only 0.218 acres in size is an Exxon gas station with a canopy and gas pumps and a small automobile service building. While the service station is also a permitted conditional use in the B-1 zone, it too is non-conforming with respect to front yard setback, rear yard setback, lot coverage, location and number of driveways, and with respect to buffering requirements.

On the southeast corner of the intersection is a property of about a half-acre, lot 7 of Block 3502, which was formerly developed as a Shell gas station. Currently the former building, gas pumps and canopy have been removed and much of the existing paved surface has been torn up. It is in a very poor state of disrepair and an eyesore to the neighborhood. This property directly abuts single-family residences to the south and west, as well as across Fort Lee Road. The former structure, although now demolished, was also non-conforming with respect to many of the required bulk standards.

Neither of the gas station sites are particularly appropriate in their current location, given the small size, and their proximity to residential uses. Noise, glare, odor and continuous traffic activity on both sides have a substantial detrimental impact on the quality of life in the surrounding residential areas. Like the Dairy Queen, while the Exxon gas station should be permitted to continue as an existing non-conforming use, it is not in the long-term interests of Teaneck to have this establishment expand or intensify its operations. The same can be said of the former Shell site property; a return of the service station would most likely perpetuate or exacerbate their detrimental impacts. For this reason, a rezoning of these properties for more suitable uses is recommended.

The question is what should these properties be rezoned to? Alternative retail uses are likewise inappropriate given the properties' small size and their location in the midst of an otherwise fully established single-family residential neighborhood. However, the B-2 Business Office district would seem to provide for appropriate redevelopment opportunities, which allows office, financial institutions, medical offices and funeral homes as permitted uses, and nursing homes and residential multi-family and single-family attached dwellings subject to the limitations set forth in the R-M Residential Multi-Family district. Such zoning would allow for more intense uses than the surrounding single-family uses, but do provide for uses which are far more compatible with their neighbors than the present intensive retail uses. In addition, it is recommended that the Medical Office Overlay district (of the type that overlays the existing underlying B-2 district) be extended to all three properties. (See Figure 2 for location of proposed rezoning from B-1 to B-2 district.)