

## II. Land Use Plan Element

### Introduction

The Township of Bloomfield is a relatively compact 5.33 square mile municipality located in northeastern Essex County. Bloomfield is characterized as a mature suburban community with a development pattern that is heavily influenced by its unique geography and location within the region. The Township has a linear shape and is bordered by Belleville, Newark and Nutley to the east; Glen Ridge and Montclair to the west; Clifton to the north and East Orange to the south. The mix of uses and density levels found in Bloomfield increase from north to south consistent with its early development as a suburb of Newark and original settlement around the Township Green and Bloomfield Avenue.

Bloomfield’s land use pattern varies widely depending upon the neighborhood, date of development and transportation infrastructure. The northern section of the Township was the last part of the community to be developed and relies on the roadway network for access. It is primarily residential and has a relatively low-density pattern of development. The central section of Bloomfield developed at an earlier date and is served by roadways and mass transit for access. It has a balance of residential and commercial uses with a medium density development pattern. The southern section of the Township was the first to be developed and has an intermodal circulation system with roadways, mass transit and pedestrian/bicycle routes for access. It is mixed-use in character with a higher density pattern of development. The Township’s development pattern is also influenced by its proximity to Newark and New York City as well as its accessibility via the Garden State Parkway and NJ Transit commuter rail lines.

Bloomfield is a densely developed community with a stable population and little remaining vacant land. The Township is almost fully developed with only 164 vacant or undeveloped properties, which accounts for approximately 1.3 percent of all properties in the municipality. This is a decrease in vacant parcels from 254 in 1990 and indicates that the community is approaching full build-out. The Township has a 2000 population of 47,683 and a population density of 8,946 persons per square mile. This represents an increase of 2,622 residents or 5.8 percent over the 1990 population of 45,061. Bloomfield is likely to experience limited growth in the future with most new residential and commercial development occurring within redevelopment areas and on scattered vacant in-fill parcels. Land use policies should be reviewed accordingly to ensure that new development occurs in targeted locations and that established neighborhoods are protected and preserved.

### The Township Vision for 2010

The Township of Bloomfield in 2010 is a prosperous and revitalized community with a desirable quality of life, stable residential neighborhoods, diversified

economy, extensive parks and open space, modern infrastructure and a fully intermodal circulation system. Bloomfield has emerged as a residential destination, employment center, entertainment and shopping venue and transportation hub. The Township's rise to prominence is characterized by population growth, expanding employment and tax ratables, lively mixed-use business districts, well-maintained and interconnected parks and modern community facilities.

Bloomfield in 2010 has established itself as a regional center and community upon which other municipalities model their planning and revitalization efforts. The Township continues to experience population growth since the 2000 U.S. Census as new residents are lured by the outstanding housing stock, highly-rated school system, well developed system of parks and open space, thriving business districts and convenient commute to work. The economic base is expanding due to new private sector investment in commercial districts and the completion of major employment generating projects such as the redevelopment of the Bloomfield Center Central Business District (CBD) and the former Westinghouse site. Bloomfield has maintained the high-level quality of life that distinguishes it from other communities through investments in new parks and community facilities such as the Township Greenway and Township-wide Recreation Center. The transportation and utility infrastructure has been maintained and improved to accommodate existing demand and provide a foundation for future growth and development. As a consequence, the Township in 2010 has made the transition to a dynamic and growing regional center from a mature and stable community with problems typical of inner suburban municipalities.

Bloomfield in 2010 is a fully developed community with a balance of land uses ranging from residential to commercial and industrial as well as parks and open space. The Township is predominantly residential in character with large areas of detached single-family housing and smaller areas of detached two-family housing and multi-family apartment buildings. Residential development is limited primarily to scattered in-fill housing and new rental apartments and owner-occupied townhouses within redevelopment areas. There are significant areas of commercial development, the largest of which is the Bloomfield Center CBD followed by the neighborhood business districts and community shopping centers. Bloomfield in 2010 has a limited amount of industrial activity that is concentrated within the Watsessing industrial area, which is the last remaining industrial district. Heavy industrial uses such as manufacturing have given way to light industrial uses such as assembly, food processing, printing, warehousing/distribution and high technology data centers. The Township has expanded its inventory of parks, recreation and open space by establishing the Township Greenway, developing a Township-wide Recreation Center and creating a new park on part of the former Westinghouse site. The former Westinghouse site has been

redeveloped as a mixed-use complex of retail, professional office, rental apartments and parks, recreation and open space to capitalize on NJ Transit MidTOWN Direct service. The area around the site has been revitalized as a transit village under the Transit-Oriented Development Overlay zone. Finally, the College District has enabled Bloomfield College to remain viable and upgrade its facilities within campus boundaries while protecting non-College uses such as private residences and churches. The mixed-use character of Bloomfield contributes to the quality of life experienced by residents and gives the Township a sense of place and livable scale that separates it from other communities in the region.

### **Land Use Trends**

#### **Development History**

The Township of Bloomfield was a largely rural community until the nineteenth century with a small population, scattered residential development, limited commercial activity and large areas of farmland and woods. Bloomfield evolved into a growing suburban community in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as a result of several historical trends that transformed the region, New Jersey and the U.S. The first is the great wave of international immigration from Europe that generated large population increases in New York City, Newark and surrounding municipalities. This was coupled with the Industrial Revolution that generated significant manufacturing activity and employment growth in communities across the region. Finally, it includes infrastructure investment such as the Morris Canal; Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad; and Bloomfield Avenue streetcar/trolley system. These trends had the sum effect of revolutionizing the Township's demographic composition, economic base and infrastructure system. They also initiated a pattern of growth and development that produced Bloomfield as we know it today, a densely developed suburban community with a sizable population, mixed economy and extensive infrastructure.

#### **Recent Development Trends**

The Township of Bloomfield has experienced moderate growth and limited development during the past decade consistent with its status as a mature suburban community. As a consequence, the land use pattern in Bloomfield has been relatively constant since the 1989 Master Plan. The Township remains predominantly residential in character with the most prevalent land use being residential followed by commercial and industrial as shown in Table II-1. Public and semi-public uses such as parks, open space, religious institutions and other non-profit/exempt parcels comprise most of the remaining land area. Bloomfield has 164 vacant parcels, however, the majority of the remaining vacant land is concentrated in several larger vacant properties such as the Westinghouse site.

Land Use	1990		2000		Change
	Parcels	Percent	Parcels	Percent	Parcels
Residential (4 families or less)	11,472	90.7	11,633	92	+161
Farm	0	0.0	0	0.0	0
Commercial	740	5.9	691	5.5	-49
Industrial	75	0.6	63	0.4	-12
Apartment	100	0.8	90	0.8	-10
Vacant Land	254	2.0	164	1.3	-90
Total Parcels	12,641	100.0	12,641	100.0	0

*Source: Township of Bloomfield*

The most significant change in Bloomfield's land use pattern over the past ten years is the increase in parcels used for residential purposes and the decrease in vacant, undeveloped land. The increase in residentially used properties is attributable to scattered in-fill development, limited minor subdivision activity and adaptive reuse of existing buildings. For example, the Green Brook Gardens townhouse complex on Liongate Drive and conversion of the former Brookside School to an apartment building has occurred since the last Master Plan. The decrease in vacant properties is largely the result of scattered in-fill development and the continued redevelopment of older, obsolete industrial parcels that were vacant or abandoned. For example, the former Macy's warehouse site has been redeveloped with a community shopping center anchored by a Super Stop & Shop grocery store.

Bloomfield's overall land use pattern has remained substantially unchanged during the past 10 years, however, a significant amount of new development has been approved as shown in Table II-2. The Township has approved 160 new units of housing and several hundred thousand square feet of commercial space since 1990. The largest of the approved projects are the 68-unit Green Brook Gardens townhouse complex on Liongate Drive (K. Hovnanian at Fairway Estates) and the 104,425 square foot Home Depot store on Orange Street (Bloomfield Developers, Inc.). Development has occurred throughout Bloomfield, however, the largest approved projects have been located at transitional industrial sites that were either vacant or underutilized. These include the Franklin Square community shopping center at the former Macy's warehouse site, the Glenwood Avenue Plaza shopping center at the former Gordo's warehouse site and the approved 49-unit multi-family apart-

ment at the former Annin Flag site. Careful consideration must be given to the development of the Township’s remaining vacant or underutilized transitional sites because of their relatively large size, proximity to residential neighborhoods and potential impact upon the economy and character of the community. Such sites include the former Westinghouse site on Arlington Avenue, the Scientific Glass site on Liongate Drive and the National Starch site off of Belleville Avenue.

Table II-2 Major Development Approvals, 1990 to 2001 Township of Bloomfield, NJ			
Project Name	Location	Type	Status
Bloomfield Developers, Inc.	60 Orange Street	104,425 s.f. retail store (Home Depot)	Constructed
Newel's Realty Co., Inc.	8 Franklin Street	Retail shopping center (Franklin Square)	Constructed
Shop-Rite Realty, Inc.	1409 Broad Street	58,000 s.f. retail store (Brookdale Shop-Rite)	Constructed
Commerce Bank North	1474-1478 Broad Street	Bank	Under Construction
Mosaic Realty Partners, LLC and Dubrow Management Corp.	79-87, 88 Llewellyn Avenue	49-unit multi-family apartment building (Annin Flag site)	Approved
Gordo's, Inc.	266 Glenwood Avenue	Retail shopping center (CVS Shopping Center)	Constructed
N&R Gencarelli	438 Broad Street	Retail bakery (Gencarelli's Bakery)	Constructed
K. Hovnanian at Fairway Estates	731-737 Broad Street	68-unit residential townhouse complex (Green Brook Gardens)	Constructed
Job Haines Home for Aged People	250 Bloomfield Avenue	Senior assisted living facility	Constructed
Bloomfield Plaza Associates	135 Bloomfield Avenue	14,034 s.f. retail shopping center addition (Bloomfield Plaza)	Constructed
Dominick Tozzo	107 Bloomfield Avenue	Retail stores (Rite-Aid, R&S Strauss)	Constructed
Brookview Estates, Inc.	201 Watchung Avenue	20-unit multi-family condominium (Brookview Estates)	Constructed
Mane Services, Inc.	879 Broad Street	16-unit multi-family apartment building	Constructed
<i>Source: Township of Bloomfield</i>			

Bloomfield has a moderate future growth potential because of its fully developed character and lack of vacant land that is suitable for development. The majority of future growth and development in the Township will be generated by redevelopment activity in Bloomfield Center and at the former Westinghouse site. It is projected that Bloomfield Center has the potential to accommodate several hundred units of new housing and significant amounts of commercial space including retail and offices. The development potential of the former Westinghouse site is unknown at present and requires further evaluation subject to completion of site remediation and imposition of use restrictions by New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP). The development potential of these and other areas is discussed in more detail in the sections of the Land Use Plan that follow. The Land Use Plan Map also identifies the recommended land use categories throughout the Township.

### **Land Use Issues**

The major recommendations of the Land Use Plan are as follows:

1. There are several new land use districts recommended to address changes in land use since 1989, transitional areas and potential revitalization/redevelopment opportunities. The new land use districts include the Single Family Residential Townhouse, Community Commercial, Regional Office, Professional Office/Residential, College, Planned Redevelopment and Transit-Oriented Development Overlay Districts.
2. There are several land use focus areas that are undergoing redevelopment or are being recommended for potential redevelopment. These special focus areas include the Bloomfield Center Central Business District, Planned Redevelopment District (Westinghouse) and Transit-Oriented Development Overlay District.
3. The former South Junior High School is recommended for multi-family residential development as part of the Multi-Family Residential Medium Density District.
4. The Single-Family Residential Townhouse District is recommended for reduced density and building/lot coverage, increased buffers/setbacks and protection of environmentally sensitive areas.
5. The Central Business District is recommended for continued revitalization as a mixed-use, transit-oriented destination under the redevelopment process.
6. The strengthening of the Neighborhood Commercial District is recommended through public-private partnerships, investment in public areas and potential use of the redevelopment process.
7. The Professional Office/Residential District is intended to accommodate areas of mixed office and residential development at the periphery of several business districts.

8. The Industrial District is recommended for further consolidation and reduction because of the continued erosion of the Township's manufacturing base.
9. The College District is recommended to preserve existing non-education uses and accommodate limited growth by Bloomfield College within the boundaries of their traditional "campus."
10. The Planned Redevelopment District recommends the use of the State Local Redevelopment and Housing Law to revitalize the former Westinghouse and Edward's Supermarket sites as a mixed-use area.
11. The Transit-Oriented Development Overlay District is recommended to encourage limited in-fill transit-oriented development in and around Watsessing Center in order to capitalize upon NJ Transit MidTOWN Direct service and promote the revitalization of the area.
12. Several miscellaneous land use recommendations are made including the creation of a critical areas ordinance to protect environmentally sensitive natural features and adjacent areas, permitting a greater range of senior citizen housing in order to meet the needs of the Township's elderly population and reducing building coverage/lot coverage requirements.

## Land Use Plan

### Residential

#### ***Single-Family Residential Low Density District***

The Single-Family Residential Low Density District is intended for detached single-family housing on relatively large lots that gives Bloomfield its suburban residential character. The District acknowledges existing low density residential neighborhoods and provides the opportunity for in-fill development of single-family homes on suitable vacant parcels. These include properties that satisfy minimum bulk requirements, provide adequate access and lack significant environmental constraints. Since the Township is almost fully developed, it is anticipated that future activity in this District will consist primarily of occasional subdivision activity and the development of single-family homes on scattered in-fill lots. In order to preserve the integrity of the District, the intensity of future development, scale and appearance of new housing and intrusion of non-residential uses must be carefully controlled.

#### ***Existing Conditions***

The Single-Family Residential Low Density District is the largest residential district in Bloomfield and encompasses multiple neighborhoods in the northern and central sections of the Township. These include the Brookdale and North End neighborhoods as well as portions of the Brookside, Clark's Pond, Historic Green and Watsessing Heights neighborhoods. The District contains established and stable residential uses characterized by single-family detached houses on large lots with relatively low density levels.

The Single-Family Residential Low Density District corresponds to the R-1A Zone and is a predominantly residential land use district that permits single-family detached residences. The District also permits compatible non-residential uses such as public buildings, utilities and parks. However, it permits offices subject to the requirement that they are professional in nature and occupy a maximum 25 percent of the total floor area of a residence.

The Single-Family Residential Low Density District has the lowest residential density in Bloomfield at 8.7 units per acre. This density level is based upon the minimum required lot area of 5,000 square feet. Current bulk regulations in the District provide for modest yards based upon a minimum front yard setback of 25 feet, rear yard setback of 20 feet and side yard setback of 6 feet. The maximum permitted lot coverage is 25 percent or 1,250 square feet on a typical lot of 5,000 square feet. Most lots in the District are sufficiently large to accommodate garages and adequate off-street parking.

Issues

The Single-Family Residential Low Density District consists of mature and established residential neighborhoods with little remaining vacant land. It is therefore anticipated that future residential development in the District will be limited to occasional in-fill activity. In order to preserve the District's suburban character, it is necessary to ensure that new development is compatible with the existing housing. Issues to be addressed include the appropriateness of permitted non-residential uses, adequacy of bulk regulations, scale and appearance of new housing and consistency with the State Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS).

The Single-Family Residential Low Density District currently permits offices that are professional in nature and that occupy up to 25 percent of a residential structure. This use may be inappropriate since it allows professional offices, such as doctor's offices, with activity levels and parking needs that may be incompatible with established residential neighborhoods. The elimination of professional offices as a permitted use in the R-1A zone should be considered to protect the District from intrusion by non-residential uses.

The Single-Family Residential Low Density District is governed by bulk regulations that limit the scale and intensity of residential development. The District requires a minimum rear yard setback of 20 feet and maximum lot coverage of 25 percent. The setback requirement of 20 feet creates small rear yards and it is appropriate to maintain the required minimum rear yard setback to preserve green space on individual lots. The requirement for maximum lot coverage of 25 percent also remains appropriate, however, a requirement for maximum building coverage should be addressed to regulate building footprint.

The majority of new housing construction in the Single-Family Residential Low Density District has occurred on scattered vacant lots, rather than on lots containing existing residential structures. The Township and the District have not experienced a trend known as “teardowns” where relatively small, older houses in established residential neighborhoods are demolished for significantly larger, new houses that are incompatible with other houses in the area surrounding them. This trend is discouraged because of its negative impact upon the character of established residential neighborhoods. Consideration should be given to zoning changes that address this trend if it occurs in the future.

The RSIS were adopted by the State in 1997 and supercede municipal development regulations concerning street design, parking, water supply, sanitary sewers and stormwater management. The Township zoning ordinance should reflect this change and incorporate the RSIS standards, particularly with regard to off-street parking.

#### Recommendations

1. The permitted uses in the Single-Family Residential Low Density District should be amended to eliminate offices that are professional in nature due to their potential impact upon the character of the District. Consideration should be given to permitting home occupations subject to adequate conditions for maximum floor area, signage and parking.
2. The bulk regulations of the Single-Family Residential Low Density District should be amended to provide for maximum building coverage. Consideration should be given to a maximum building coverage of 20 percent.
3. Bulk and design regulations should be considered to address “teardowns” involving the development of new housing that is out of scale and character with established residential neighborhoods. Such regulations may include building coverage, floor area ratio and building design guidelines.
4. The State RSIS standards should be incorporated into the zoning ordinance to ensure consistency for new residential development.

#### ***Single-Family Residential Medium Density District***

The Single-Family Residential Medium Density District is similar in character and housing stock to the Single-Family Residential Low Density District. The purpose of the Single-Family Residential Medium Density District is to accommodate single-family housing on the type of moderately sized lots that contribute to Bloomfield's compact suburban residential character. The District incorporates existing medium density residential neighborhoods and provides the opportunity for in-fill development of single-family homes on suitable vacant parcels. These include properties that satisfy minimum bulk requirements, provide adequate access and lack significant environmental constraints. It is anticipated that future activity in this District will consist primarily of occasional subdi-

vision activity and the development of single-family homes on scattered vacant lots since the Township is almost completely developed. In order to preserve the integrity of the District, the intensity of future development, scale and appearance of new housing, intrusion of non-residential uses and conversions to multi-family housing must be carefully controlled.

#### Existing Conditions

The Single-Family Residential Medium Density District is one of the largest residential districts in Bloomfield and encompasses neighborhoods throughout the Township. These include the Halcyon Park neighborhood as well as portions of the Ampere, Brookside, Clark's Pond, Historic Green and Watsessing Heights neighborhoods. The District contains established and mostly stable residential uses characterized by single-family detached houses on moderately sized lots with medium density levels. However, a portion of the District in the southern section of the Township has been affected by the illegal conversion of existing housing to two-family and multi-family use. This jeopardizes the integrity of the District and contributes to the transitional nature of the affected neighborhoods.

The Single-Family Residential Medium Density District corresponds to the R-1B Zone and is a largely residential land use district that permits single-family detached residences. The District also permits compatible non-residential uses such as public buildings, utilities and parks. The only exception is offices, which are permitted if they are professional in nature and occupy a maximum 25 percent of the total floor area of a residence.

The Single-Family Residential Medium Density District has the second lowest residential density in Bloomfield at 10.9 units per acre. This density level is based upon the minimum required lot area of 4,000 square feet. Current bulk regulations in the District provide for modest yards based upon a minimum front yard setback of 20 feet, rear yard setback of 20 feet and side yard setback of 6 feet. The maximum permitted lot coverage is 30 percent or 1,200 square feet on a typical lot of 4,000 square feet. Most lots in the District are sufficiently large to accommodate garages and adequate off-street parking.

#### Issues

The Single-Family Residential Medium Density District consists of established and fully developed residential neighborhoods with little remaining vacant land. Future residential development in the District will be limited primarily to occasional in-fill activity. In order to preserve the District's suburban character, it is necessary to ensure that new development is compatible with the existing housing. Issues to be addressed include the appropriateness of permitted non-residential uses, adequacy of bulk regulations, scale and appearance of new housing and consistency with the State Residential

Site Improvement Standards (RSIS). The illegal conversion of housing also needs to be addressed, although this is an enforcement issue rather than planning or zoning function.

The Single-Family Residential Medium Density District currently permits offices that are professional in nature and that occupy up to 25 percent of a residential structure. This use may be inappropriate since it allows professional offices, such as doctor's offices, with activity levels and parking needs that are in conflict with established residential neighborhoods. The elimination of professional offices as a permitted use in the R-1B zone should be considered to protect the District from intrusion by non-residential uses.

The Single-Family Residential Medium Density District is governed by bulk regulations that control the scale and intensity of residential development. The District requires a minimum rear yard setback of 20 feet and maximum lot coverage of 30 percent. The setback requirement of 20 feet results in undersized rear yards and it may be appropriate to increase the required minimum rear yard setback to provide additional green space on individual lots. The requirement for maximum lot coverage of 30 percent should also be reconsidered since it includes all coverage such as the house, driveway, walkways, patios, decks and accessory structures. An increase in maximum permitted lot coverage, however, should be accompanied by a new building coverage requirement in order to adequately control the size and footprint of residential structures.

The majority of new housing construction in the Single-Family Residential Medium Density District has occurred on scattered vacant lots, rather than on lots containing existing residential structures. The Township and the District have not experienced a trend known as "teardowns" where relatively small, older houses in established residential neighborhoods are demolished for significantly larger, new houses that are incompatible with existing houses in the area surrounding them. This trend is discouraged because of its negative impact upon the character of established residential neighborhoods. Applications for residential bulk variances should be monitored to determine if incompatible housing is being developed and consideration should be given to zoning changes if the trend emerges in the Township.

The RSIS were adopted by the State in 1997 and supercede municipal development regulations concerning street design, parking, water supply, sanitary sewers and stormwater management. The Township zoning ordinance should reflect this change and incorporate the RSIS standards, particularly with regard to off-street parking.

The Single-Family Residential Medium Density District has experienced the conversion of existing housing to two-family and multi-family use. This trend has occurred throughout the District but is most pronounced in the southern section

of the Township. It dilutes the single-family and medium density character of the District and threatens the integrity of established residential neighborhoods. The illegal conversion of housing also results in quality of life concerns such as overcrowded housing, increased demand for parking and haphazard building alterations. Consideration should be given to reinforcing the zoning for the District in order to limit illegal conversions.

Recommendations

1. The permitted uses in the Single-Family Residential Medium Density District should be amended to eliminate offices that are professional in nature due to their potential impact upon the character of the District. It is recommended that home occupations be permitted subject to adequate controls on maximum floor area, access, signage and parking.
2. The bulk regulations of the Single-Family Residential Medium Density District should be amended to increase the required minimum rear yard setback and maximum lot coverage. A new requirement regulating maximum building coverage should also be provided. Consideration should be given to a minimum rear yard setback of at least 25 feet, maximum lot coverage of 35 percent and maximum building coverage of 25 percent.
3. Bulk and design regulations should be considered to address “teardowns” involving the development of new housing that is out of scale and character with established residential neighborhoods. Such regulations may include building coverage, floor area ratio and building design guidelines.
4. The State RSIS standards should be incorporated into the zoning ordinance to ensure consistency for new residential development.
5. The zoning for the Single-Family Residential Medium Density District should be reinforced to limit the illegal conversion of existing housing to two-family and multi-family use. Recommended changes include a prohibition on walk-out basements with separate access and attic apartments.

**Two-Family Residential Medium Density District**

The Two-Family Residential Medium Density District is designated for two-family detached housing on larger lots that contribute to Bloomfield’s diverse housing stock and residential neighborhoods. The District contains existing areas of medium density two-family residential development, interspersed with single-family homes, and accommodates limited in-fill development where appropriate vacant parcels are available. Such properties are those that satisfy minimum bulk requirements, provide adequate access and lack significant environmental constraints. There will be little future activity in the District because of the scarcity of available land, however, any new develop-

ment is projected to consist of two-family homes on scattered vacant lots. In order to preserve the character of the District, the intensity of future development, scale and appearance of new housing, intrusion of non-residential uses and conversions to multi-family housing must be carefully controlled. In addition, the parking demand associated with two-family housing requires an examination of how off-street parking is handled.

#### Existing Conditions

The Two-Family Residential Medium Density District encompasses all two-family residential development in Bloomfield and is concentrated in the central and southern sections of the Township. The District includes neighborhoods in Ampere, Brookside, Watsessing and Watsessing Heights. It contains established medium density residential uses characterized by two-family detached houses on relatively large 5,000 square foot lots and smaller 4,000 square foot lots. The majority of neighborhoods in the District are stable, however, several are in transition due to illegal conversions, inadequate property maintenance and absentee ownership. These areas require further attention to strengthen their residential character, preserve the integrity of the District and counteract advancing physical decline.

The Single-Family Residential Medium Density District corresponds to the R-2A and R-2B Zones and is a predominantly residential land use district that permits two-family and single-family detached residences. The District also permits compatible non-residential uses such as public buildings, utilities and parks. It also permits offices, however, that are incompatible with the residential and limited non-residential uses allowed under the current zoning.

The Two-Family Residential Medium Density District has a density that ranges from 17.4 units per acre to 21.8 units per acre depending upon lot size. This density level is based upon the minimum required lot area of 5,000 square feet in the R-2A Zone and 4,000 square feet in the R-2B Zone. Current bulk regulations in the District provide for modest yards based upon a minimum front yard setback of 20 feet, rear yard setback of 20 feet and side yard setback of 6 feet. The maximum permitted lot coverage is 30 percent, which permits 1,500 square feet of coverage in the R-2A Zone and 1,200 square feet of coverage in the R-2B Zone. Most lots in the District are large enough to provide limited off-street parking in a detached garage or side yard driveway.

#### Issues

The Two-Family Residential Medium Density District incorporates established and fully developed residential neighborhoods. Future residential development in the District is likely to consist of occasional in-fill activity and the rehabilitation of existing substandard housing. It is necessary to ensure that new development is compatible with the existing housing in order to preserve the District's medium density suburban character. In addition, the rehabilitation and renova-

tion of existing housing must be accomplished in a manner that is sensitive to adjacent structures and the surrounding neighborhood. Issues to be addressed include the appropriateness of permitted non-residential uses, adequacy of bulk regulations, consistency with the State Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS) and illegal conversion of housing.

The Two-Family Residential Medium Density District currently permits offices that are professional in nature and that occupy up to 25 percent of a residential structure. This use is inappropriate since it allows professional offices, such as doctor's offices, with significant levels of activity and parking needs that may conflict with established residential neighborhoods. The elimination of professional offices as a permitted use in the R-2A and R-2B zone should be considered to protect the District from intrusion by incompatible non-residential uses.

The Two-Family Residential Medium Density District is governed by bulk regulations that limit the scale and intensity of residential development. The District requires a minimum front and rear yard setback of 20 feet and maximum lot coverage of 30 percent. The front yard and rear yard setback requirements remain appropriate given the higher density levels and compact development pattern found in the District. However, the maximum lot coverage requirement of 30 percent should be reevaluated in light of the recommended density and need to accommodate the larger building footprint for a two-family house. Any increase in maximum permitted lot coverage should be accompanied by a new building coverage requirement in order to adequately control the size of residential structures and their relationship to other accessory structures found on a lot.

The RSIS were adopted by the State in 1997 and supercede municipal development regulations concerning street design, parking, water supply, sanitary sewers and stormwater management. The Township zoning ordinance should reflect this change and incorporate the RSIS standards, particularly with regard to off-street parking. A typical two-family house containing three (3) bedrooms in each unit requires 4 off-street parking spaces under RSIS. Careful planning is necessary to ensure that parking requirements do not result in excessive lot coverage and paving of front or rear yards.

The Two-Family Residential Medium Density District has experienced the conversion of existing housing to multi-family use. This trend has occurred throughout the District but is most prevalent in the southern section of the Township where neighborhoods are in transition. From a planning perspective, this is a cause for concern because it alters the medium density, suburban character of the District and threatens the integrity of established residential neighborhoods. The illegal conversion of housing also results in quality of life problems such as overcrowded housing, safety hazards, increased

parking demand and haphazard building alterations. Although illegal conversions are primarily an enforcement issue, consideration should be given to zoning mechanisms that would reduce or mitigate the impact of such conversions.

#### Recommendations

1. The permitted uses in the Two-Family Residential Medium Density District should be amended to eliminate offices that are professional in nature due to their potential impact upon the character of the District. It is recommended that home occupations be permitted subject to adequate controls on maximum floor area, access, signage, parking and density. Careful consideration must be given to the definition of home occupation when the zoning ordinance is revised.
2. The bulk regulations of the Two-Family Residential Medium Density District should be amended to increase the maximum permitted lot coverage. A new requirement regulating maximum building coverage should also be provided. Consideration should be given to providing for maximum lot coverage of 35 percent and maximum building coverage of 25 percent. This is especially the case for the portion of the District in the R-2B Zone.
3. The State RSIS standards should be incorporated into the zoning ordinance to ensure consistency for new residential development. Since a new two-family house with three (3) bedrooms in each unit requires 4 off-street parking spaces, consideration should be given to design standards that prevent the paving over of front or rear yards for parking.
4. The zoning for the Two-Family Residential Medium Density District should be reinforced to limit the illegal conversion of existing housing to multi-family use. Recommended changes include a prohibition on walk-out basements with separate access and attic apartments. Consideration should also be given to targeting enforcement actions and housing rehabilitation programs in those areas where such conversions affect housing conditions, public safety and parking.

#### **Multi-Family Residential Medium Density District**

The Multi-Family Residential Medium Density District is designated for low- and mid-rise multi-family housing on large lots that contribute to Bloomfield's broad range of housing choices and diverse residential neighborhoods. The District acknowledges existing areas of medium density multi-family residential development dispersed throughout the Township. It is proposed to remain within current boundaries, without expansion, because of the lack of available vacant land with sufficient lot area, access and infrastructure. As a consequence, there will be no additional development of multi-family housing in the District. Future activity is anticipated to consist of the rehabilitation and renovation of existing structures, complexes and properties. In order to preserve the character of the District and protect adjacent residential neighborhoods, careful planning is nec-

essary with regard to parking, buffering/screening and density levels. In addition, building and property maintenance are issues at some of the older apartment buildings and complexes in the District.

Existing Conditions

The Multi-Family Residential Medium Density District incorporates all garden apartment and mid-rise apartment house development in Bloomfield and is concentrated in the central and southern sections of the Township. The District includes portions of the Brookside, Forest Hill, Historic Green, Watsessing and Watsessing Heights neighborhoods. It contains established multi-family medium density residential uses characterized by low-rise garden apartment complexes on large lots of 40,000 square feet or greater and individual mid-rise apartment houses on smaller lots. The majority of District is distinguished by well-maintained and attractive multi-family housing, however, some buildings are aging and in need of repair. In addition, building and property maintenance has been a recurring problem at several garden apartment complexes such as Brookside Gardens. Careful consideration must be given to addressing site plan issues such as parking and buffering/screening in order to maintain the generally high quality of housing and protect adjacent residential neighborhoods. It is also necessary to address the problem of building and property maintenance where conditions are sub-standard.

The Multi-Family Residential Medium Density District corresponds primarily to the R-G Zone, although multi-family residential uses are also found in the O, R-2A and R-2A/O Zones. Such uses are also permitted in the M-1 Zone. The District is a predominantly residential land use district that permits garden apartments, single-family residences, two-family residences and townhouses. It also permits offices, banks, warehouses and manufacturing in those sections located within the O and M-1 Zones. These commercial and industrial uses are incompatible with the residential character of the District.

The Multi-Family Residential Medium Density District has a maximum density that ranges from 25 units per acre for garden apartments in the R-G Zone to 40 units per acre for mid-rise apartment buildings in the M-1 Zone. Current bulk regulations for garden apartments in the District provide for a minimum lot area of 40,000 square feet, setbacks between 10 and 30 feet, maximum lot coverage of 30 percent and a maximum height of 2-stories and 30 feet. Current bulk regulation for mid-rise apartment buildings in the District provide for a minimum lot area of 2 acres, setbacks of 10 to 20 feet, maximum lot coverage of 75 percent and maximum height of 60 feet. Most garden apartments are located on large lots with off-street parking while the majority of mid-rise apartment houses are older structures that lack off-street parking.

Issues

The Multi-Family Residential Medium Density District incorporates established and fully developed areas of low- to mid-rise multi-family housing. Future residential development in the District is unlikely, except for the occasional rehabilitation and renovation of existing buildings and properties. The focus is therefore on preserving the integrity of the District, maintaining the generally high quality of existing multi-family housing, addressing site plan issues and encouraging improvements to substandard buildings. A significant issue is the status of the vacant former South Junior High School, which is in the District and has been sold by the Bloomfield Board of Education.

The Multi-Family Residential Medium Density District encompasses existing garden apartments and mid-rise apartment houses with defined boundaries and a limited land area. In order to preserve the integrity of the District, the boundaries delineating multi-family uses and other uses should be maintained and strengthened. This is accomplished by maintaining multi-family uses within District boundaries and through eliminating commercial uses that are currently permitted in the District, such as offices. It is appropriate, however, to permit limited and accessory home occupations to accommodate the increasing number of residents who work from their home. The goal of this recommendation is to protect against the intrusion of commercial and other non-residential uses that are incompatible with the residential character of the District and that have the potential to dilute its attractiveness as a housing option.

The Multi-Family Residential Medium Density District contains garden apartments and apartment houses with density levels, bulk parameters and parking needs that require particular attention to site plan issues. These include setbacks, lot coverage, buffering/screening and amount as well as location of parking. Garden apartment complexes are required to have front, rear and side yard setbacks of 20 feet, 30 feet and 10 feet respectively. These setbacks requirements should be maintained to preserve the existing yards and open space that characterize such uses. Apartment houses do not have a minimum setback requirement, however, existing buildings typically have limited setbacks and small yards. Setback requirements should be considered in order to preserve the limited yard space that exists at many apartment house sites. In addition, the appropriateness of maximum lot coverage requirements should be examined in order to prevent the over-development of sites and any decrease in limited yards and open space.

The Multi-Family Residential Medium Density District consists of garden apartments and apartment houses that are relatively large and located in close proximity to each other. The intensity of use, scale of buildings and surface parking areas make adequate buffering/screening a significant issue. Existing buffer areas, typically side and rear yards, should be preserved and enhanced where possible by requiring a minimum buffer area to adjacent single-family and non-

residential uses or properties. Consideration must also be given to additional standards for screening given the largely developed character of the District and compact development pattern. Effective screening may include landscaping, fences/walls, berms and architectural features that provide a visual barrier.

The Multi-Family Residential Medium Density District contains a broad range of buildings including low-rise garden apartments, mid-rise apartment houses and former non-residential buildings such as Brookside School that have been adaptively reused for multi-family housing. Perhaps the most significant new addition to the District is the former South Junior High School, which is vacant and was recently sold by the Township Board of Education to a private owner. The use of the former Junior High School was identified as an issue in the 1989 Master Plan and remains an important concern because of the relatively large size of the site, its high visibility location on Franklin Street, the proximity of residential uses and the historic art deco design of the building. Residential uses that preserve the existing building and are compatible with adjacent multi-family apartment houses are encouraged.

#### Recommendations

1. Limit the Multi-Family Residential Medium Density District to areas of existing garden apartment and mid-rise apartment house development, with the exception of the former South Junior High School on Franklin Street. The former Junior High School is recommended for adaptive reuse with medium density multi-family residential development at a maximum density of 50 units per acre. Consider use of the redevelopment process to facilitate the adaptive reuse of the site.
2. Consolidate existing garden apartment and mid-rise apartment house development in the Multi-Family Residential Medium Density District into one zone to acknowledge their similarities and regulate their development in a coordinated manner. The new zoning regulations must control density and address critical site plan issues such as setbacks, buffering/screening and parking. Recommended density levels are 25 units per acre for garden apartments and 50 units per acre for mid-rise apartment houses.
3. Preserve the residential character of the Multi-Family Residential Medium Density District by eliminating incompatible non-residential uses such as professional offices as permitted uses. Home occupations should be permitted subject to adequate controls on floor area, access, signage and site design.
4. Encourage and promote the maintenance of existing multi-family housing by providing technical assistance and financial incentives for property owners to improve their buildings and properties. Utilize code enforcement and building inspections to identify building deficiencies

and property maintenance problems.

5. Focus building improvement programs and code enforcement activity in areas where building conditions, property maintenance and site issues such as trash disposal are determined substandard through inspection and zoning violations. Consider a system of annual inspections to supplement the State 5 year system.

### ***Multi-Family Residential High Density District***

The Multi-Family Residential High Density District incorporates the limited areas of existing high-rise apartment house development in Bloomfield. The District consists of two (2) such areas located in Bloomfield Center and the Watsessing Heights neighborhood. Its purpose is to accommodate existing pockets of high-density multi-family residential development and to protect adjacent areas from potential adverse impacts resulting from building height, intensity of use and parking demand. The preservation of existing District boundaries is recommended and additional construction of new high-rise apartment buildings is not anticipated.

### ***Existing Conditions***

The Multi-Family Residential High Density District incorporates all apartment house development in Bloomfield with a height of more than 6 stories. The District is limited in geographic scope to the Troy Towers complex on Conger Street, the Felicity Towers complex on Llewellyn Avenue and Kinder Towers on Hoover Avenue. They are well-maintained buildings that provide affordable and high-quality housing to senior citizens and other residents of the community. Their height and density, however, are characteristic of a more urban pattern of development and are inconsistent with the relatively low-rise and medium density residential development found in most sections of the Township. As a consequence, particular attention to adequate buffering/setbacks, landscaping and off-street parking is necessary at sites within the Multi-Family Residential High Density District.

The Multi-Family Residential High Density District corresponds to the R-H Residential High-Rise Apartment Zone. The District is a predominantly residential land use district that permits detached single-family residences and high-rise multi-family apartment buildings. It also permits compatible uses such as churches, public buildings, utilities, non-profit educational institutions and parks. The District also permits, however, office uses provided they do not occupy more than 30 percent of the floor area of any structure. This commercial use is incompatible with the residential character of the District.

The Multi-Family Residential High Density District has a maximum density that ranges from 45 to 65 units per acre depending upon building height. Buildings that are 6 to 11 stories in height have a maximum density of 45 units per acre and those with a height of 12 stories or more have a maximum density of 60

units per acre. Current bulk regulations for high-rise apartments in the District require a minimum lot area of 40,000 square feet, front yard setback of 35 feet, side yard setback of one-third building height, rear yard setback of one-half building height, lot coverage of 20 percent and building height of 150 feet. The bulk regulations seek to control the unique size and scale of high-rise apartment buildings through excessive setbacks at the expense of urban design and creative architecture. This results in a form of residential development known as “towers in the park” with large buildings surrounded by extensive yards and parking lots. Consideration should be given to revising the bulk regulations so that setback requirements are balanced with new standards for urban design and architecture such as streetscape treatment and building step-backs.

#### Issues

The Multi-Family Residential High Density District incorporates established and fully developed areas of high-rise multi-family housing. It is unlikely that there will be future residential development in the District because of its relatively small size, lack of available land and incompatibility with the low-to mid-rise character of the Township. The primary issues, therefore, are preserving the high quality of existing housing stock, maintaining adequate buffering/screening, providing sufficient parking and mitigating potential impacts upon adjacent areas. This may be achieved through annual inspections of existing buildings, zoning enforcement, coordination with property owners and revisions to the bulk and parking regulations of the zoning ordinance.

#### Recommendations

1. Continue the Multi-Family Residential High Density District to accommodate existing areas of high-rise multi-family residential development within current boundaries.
2. Consider creation of an annual inspection and registration system for multi-family housing as a supplement to the State 5-year inspection system in order to identify and address site issues, encourage property maintenance and enforce zoning and health regulations.
3. Eliminate offices as a permitted use in the R-H Zone because of its incompatibility with the predominant residential character of the Zone.
4. Revise the R-H Zone to permit home occupations as a permitted use subject to regulations governing the nature of such occupations, floor area, signage and access.
5. Amend the R-H Zone to strengthen bulk regulations by providing consistent setback standards, limiting building coverage, controlling floor area ratio, increasing buffer/screening requirements and evaluating the appropriateness of the 150 foot height limit.
6. Develop urban design standards and architectural guidelines for multi-family housing that provide for attractive streetscape treatment, creative building design and improved site layout.

**Residential Townhouse District**

The purpose of the Residential Townhouse District is to accommodate single-family attached housing at densities and in locations that will maintain the suburban residential character of Bloomfield. The District recognizes existing pockets of townhouse development and provides for future townhouse development on appropriate sites. These include areas where land uses are in transition and areas where site constraints make other forms of residential development unsuitable or impractical. Since the Township is almost fully developed, the majority of the Residential Townhouse District consists of in-fill and potential redevelopment sites. Careful consideration must therefore be given to density levels, bulk requirements and site design.

**Existing Conditions**

The Residential Townhouse District is located in the north-central section of Bloomfield in an area bordered by Glen Ridge Country Club to the north, Clark Avenue to the south, the Third River to the east and Broad Street to the west. The District encompasses the former Scientific Glass manufacturing complex, which has been demolished, and consists primarily of vacant land. The only exception is a parcel, known as Green Brook Gardens, that has been developed with townhouses by K. Hovnanian since the 1989 Master Plan.

The Residential Townhouse District is an isolated flag-shaped district that lies within the Third River corridor, which extends more than four miles through the Township from the northern border with Clifton to the eastern border with Belleville. As a result, the District contains sensitive environmental features such as floodplain and wetlands. It is also bordered by an established low density single-family residential neighborhood and open space at the Glen Ridge Country Club. The Residential Townhouse District is further constrained by limited accessibility because the only means of ingress and egress is from Broad Street. The Master Plan, in the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Element, proposes the exploration of a Third River Corridor Greenway to preserve remaining open space along the river, provide for improved flood control and create additional passive recreational opportunities. Future residential development in the District must be sensitively designed to buffer and protect existing natural features, improve flood control and stormwater management and provide for the planned greenway.

**Issues**

The Residential Townhouse District encompasses one of the largest remaining areas of vacant land in Bloomfield and is likely to experience development pressure in the near future. There are, at present, several residential development proposals under consideration for parcels within the District. The current zoning that permits townhouses as a conditional use remains appropriate given the transitional character of the area, the presence of constraints to conventional

single-family residential development and the irregular shape and configuration of the District. Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRC), however, are not appropriate given their scale and the environmental constraints found on-site. There are significant issues associated with townhouse development that must be addressed including density, bulk regulations, buffering/screening, flood control and the planned Greenway.

The Residential Townhouse District permits townhouse development at a density of 11 to 13 units per acre, depending upon lot size. This density level is inappropriate in light of the significant environmental constraints in the District, limited access to Broad Street only and proximity to an established neighborhood of detached single-family homes. A reduction in density is warranted in order to address these constraints and promote residential development that protects sensitive environmental features and is compatible with the scale and character of the surrounding neighborhood.

The Residential Townhouse District permits townhouse development with maximum lot coverage of 70 percent. This consists of 30 percent building coverage, 10 percent accessory building coverage and parking area/driveway coverage of 30 percent. The permitted lot coverage is excessive given the presence of sensitive environmental features and promotes over-development of parcels within the District. In particular, the permitted parking area/driveway coverage of 30 percent encourages the development of surface parking lots. It is therefore appropriate to reduce overall lot coverage in order to limit site disturbance, impervious surfaces and stormwater run-off. Particular attention should be given to reducing permitted parking area/driveway coverage in order to promote the use of garages. The reduction in maximum permitted lot coverage should be coupled with an increase in required usable open space to promote increased passive recreation, "green" space and stormwater infiltration.

The Residential Townhouse District does not currently provide specific requirements for buffering and screening other than the requirement for a 20 foot front yard setback. It is necessary to provide increased buffering and screening requirements in order to preserve and protect sensitive natural features found in the District and adequately screen adjacent residential uses. It is recommended that extensive buffer requirements to on-site critical areas such as floodplain and wetlands be required. Such requirements should match NJDEP requirements for buffers and transition areas given the heavily developed character of the Township and flooding problems that currently exist.

The Residential Townhouse District contains extensive floodplain and experiences flooding during severe rain events, however, the current zoning does not provide for flood control improvements within the Third River corridor.

The site plan and subdivision regulations should be amended to require flood control improvements acceptable to the Township Engineer along portions of the Third River corridor that abut or traverse applicants' properties. Consideration should also be given to the adoption of a critical area ordinance that regulates development in areas containing sensitive environmental features such as floodplain and wetlands.

A Third River Corridor Greenway is being explored through a portion of the Residential Townhouse District. Provision for the greenway should be made in all residential development that occurs in the Residential Townhouse District. It is also important that adequate access and connections be provided to ensure public access and the opportunity for future development of the greenway.

#### Recommendations

The following is a list of recommendations to address issues associated with the Residential Townhouse District:

1. The maximum density in the District should be reduced to 4 to 6 units per acre for units in excess of 2,000 square feet floor area and 6 to 8 units per acre for units less than 2,000 square feet floor area.
2. The maximum permitted lot coverage should be reduced to 55 percent. Possible breakdowns consisting of 35 percent building coverage, 5 percent accessory building coverage and 15 percent parking area/driveway coverage should be considered.
3. Required usable open space should be increased to 1,200 square feet per unit.
4. The required buffer to critical areas such as floodplain and wetlands should be consistent with NJDEP regulations for buffers at 50 to 150 feet depending upon resource classification.
5. A requirement for adequate stream bank protection, erosion control and detangling and other methods of flood control should be provided in conjunction with all residential development in the zone.
6. A critical area ordinance should be developed to regulate development on parcels with sensitive environmental features such as floodplain and wetlands.
7. A requirement for dedication of an easement or land for the Third River Corridor Greenway should be required for all new development abutting the Third River.
8. Consideration should be given to preserving all or part of the District for recreation and open space if funding becomes available.
9. CCRC's should be eliminated as a permitted conditional use in the RT Zone.

#### **Commercial**

**Central Business District**

The area known as Bloomfield Center is designated the Central Business District in recognition of its function as the business, civic and transportation focal point of the Township. The purpose of the District is to provide a mixed-use and transit-oriented center that accommodates a concentration of commercial, residential, parks/open space, public and transportation related uses and facilities. It is intended to be a vibrant, attractive and accessible destination for shopping, entertainment, upscale housing and employment. The District was formerly one of the largest and busiest downtowns in Essex County but is currently in transition because of the loss of retail activity, out-moded commercial space, limited parking and private sector disinvestment. Bloomfield has established a public-private partnership with the Bloomfield Center Alliance to revitalize the Central Business District. The partnership is a multi-faceted and long-term effort to improve conditions in the District and reestablish it as one of the premier downtown destinations in the County.

**Existing Conditions**

The Central Business District is located in the southern section of Bloomfield in an area centered upon the intersection of Bloomfield Avenue and Broad Street known as “Six Points.” This area is the historic center of the Township and has traditionally functioned as a mixed-use downtown. The District encompasses most of the Bloomfield Avenue corridor and is bordered by the Historic Township Green to the north, Toney’s Brook to the south, the vicinity of Berkeley Heights Park to the east and the municipal border with Glen Ridge to the west. It contains major activity centers such as the Bloomfield municipal complex, U.S. Post Office, 2 Broad Street office building, Lost Picture Show movie theater, Home Depot and NJ Transit Bloomfield station. The District is also located in close proximity to Bloomfield College and Watsessing County Park. The Central Business District is accessible from most points within the Township and northern New Jersey/New York City region via Bloomfield Avenue, Broad Street, the Garden State Parkway and pending NJ Transit MidTOWN Direct service on the Montclair Branch/Boonton Line.

The Central Business District contains several zoning districts in keeping with its status as a mixed-use area. Existing uses found in the District include commercial, residential, industrial, public and transportation-related. The largest and most significant zoning district is the B-1 Central Business Zone followed by the B-2 Neighborhood Business, M-1 General Industrial, P Public Use and RA-1 Redevelopment Area Zones. The District is predominantly commercial in character and permits a broad range of such uses including banks, restaurants, hotels, offices, retail stores, service establishments and theaters. It also permits compatible public uses such as government buildings, non-profit schools and parks. The areas within the M-1 Zone, however, permit industrial uses such as manufacturing that conflict

with the established commercial character of the Central Business District. In addition, the B-1, B-2 and M-1 Zones conditionally permit gasoline filling stations and public garages that may be inappropriate within the District. In contrast, there are pockets of residential development located throughout the District that are non-conforming because such uses are not generally permitted under existing zoning. It may be desirable to permit certain types of residential uses that are typically found in downtowns, such as multi-family housing, and to acknowledge the presence of existing residential development.

The Central Business District is comprised primarily of the B-1 and B-2 Zones. These Zones have minimal bulk standards that regulate height only at 160 feet and 35 feet respectively. Consideration should be given to providing additional bulk regulations for lot area, setback, building coverage and buffers. For example, it may be desirable to provide for a *maximum* setback limit or “build-to” line in order to preserve the District’s attractive urban design and streetscape. It may also be appropriate to provide standards for residential density and commercial floor area ratio. Finally, the maximum height limit of 160 feet in the B-1 Zone should be reevaluated in light of existing conditions, the character of development and future redevelopment plans. These issues as well as others such as off-street parking requirements will have to be addressed in conjunction with on-going revitalization and redevelopment efforts.

#### Issues

The Central Business District is a relatively large and transitional land use district that is in the process of being revitalized through a public-private partnership between the Township of Bloomfield and the Bloomfield Center Alliance. The revitalization process also includes other major stakeholders such as Bloomfield College, NJ Transit and the Watsessing Heights Neighborhood Association. One of the first actions undertaken by the partnership was the preparation of a Bloomfield Center Revitalization Report to identify existing conditions, examine major issues and make recommendations for short- and long-term improvements. The Revitalization Report establishes a vision of the District as a lively, mixed-use transit village with a balance of commercial uses, upscale/market-rate housing, improved parking, increased parks and open space as well as a renovated train station, streetscape enhancements and way-finding signage. This vision is to be realized through a phased series of implementation actions, some of which are already underway. The continuation of this process is strongly endorsed and additional revitalization efforts in the Central Business District are encouraged.

The future of the Central Business District will be determined by the revitalization and redevelopment process that is currently in progress. Early successes include the establishment of the public-private partnership, preparation of the Revitalization Report and hiring of a downtown management team. A recent milestone was the establishment of a Special Improvement District (SID) by the

Township in April, 2001 to promote and finance further revitalization efforts. The SID will provide for a District Management Corporation (DMC) to oversee the Central Business District and promote economic development efforts, business retention/recruitment, marketing and special events, increased parking and building and streetscape improvements. This approach to downtown revitalization has proven successful in municipalities across New Jersey.

The Township also took another significant action in December, 2000 when it designated an approximately 14-acre tract in the core area of the District as “an area in need of redevelopment.” A redevelopment plan is currently being prepared that will serve as the master plan and zoning ordinance for this area. The plan will focus on the area’s assets and promote mixed-use redevelopment with a transit-orientation that capitalizes on NJ Transit’s MidTOWN Direct service to New York City, which will begin in late 2001/early 2002. It is anticipated that additional areas of the Central Business District will be revitalized through the redevelopment process. The Land Use Plan supports the vision for Bloomfield Center and the revitalization process that is currently underway but defers to the on-going redevelopment process with regard to specific actions.

#### Recommendations

1. Support the vision for the Central Business District established in the Bloomfield Center Revitalization Report as a mixed-use and transit-oriented destination that is an attractive commercial center, viable and profitable business location and downtown setting worthy of the Township’s residential neighborhoods.
2. Encourage and support the public-private partnership to revitalize the Central Business District through establishment of a SID, creation of a District Management Corporation, business retention/recruitment, marketing and special events, improved parking and building and streetscape improvements.
3. Complete and implement the redevelopment plan for the 14-acre “area in need of redevelopment” located in the core area of the Central Business District.
4. Investigate additional sections of the Central Business District to determine if they qualify as an “area in need of redevelopment” under the State Local Redevelopment and Housing Law.
5. Coordinate with NJ Transit to ensure that the entire NJ Transit Bloomfield Station is repaired and renovated in a comprehensive, rather than piecemeal, manner. Such an approach requires improvements to the public and privately owned sections of the Station.
6. For those sections of the Central Business District outside the redevelopment area, consider revisions to the existing zoning to eliminate

- manufacturing and gasoline filling stations/public garages as permitted uses.
7. For those sections of the Central Business District outside the redevelopment area, consider revisions to the existing zoning that limit retail and services to ground floor locations only.
  8. For those sections of the Central Business District outside the redevelopment area, consider revisions to the existing zoning to permit residential uses such as multi-family apartments and townhouses in appropriate locations.
  9. For those sections of the Central Business District outside the redevelopment area, consider revisions to the existing zoning to further regulate bulk, height and intensity of use.
  10. Revise the definition of personal services and range of permitted service uses to limit the proliferation of inappropriate and undesirable services.

### **Neighborhood Commercial District**

The Neighborhood Commercial District is a series of relatively small scale shopping districts intended to serve the daily needs of Bloomfield residents living in adjacent residential neighborhoods. The District is mixed-use in nature and is characterized by a majority of commercial activity with smaller amounts of residential and public development. Typical uses include retail stores, personal service establishments, restaurants, professional offices, financial institutions, multi-family apartments, branch post offices and public parking. It is distinguished by a compact development pattern, low-rise buildings, pedestrian accessibility and varied streetscape. Neighborhood Commercial Districts may be found in every neighborhood in the Township and most are in fairly good condition. They are community assets, however, that require additional attention in order to maintain their commercial viability, improve physical conditions and protect the adjacent residential neighborhoods that they serve.

### **Existing Conditions**

The Neighborhood Commercial Districts found in Bloomfield contribute to the quality of life experienced by residents and the unique community character that separates the Township from other non-descript and sprawling municipalities without such areas. There are multiple Districts in the Township ranging in size from a commercial building with several storefronts on a street corner to a mix of commercial and residential buildings with public uses spanning several blocks.

The largest Neighborhood Commercial Districts in the Township are located at North Center on Broad Street, Brookdale at the intersection of Broad Street and Watchung Avenue, Watsessing Center on Watsessing Avenue and the eastern Bloomfield Avenue corridor from Willard Avenue to the Belleville/Newark border. Other smaller Districts are found on Belleville Avenue, Broughton Avenue, Carteret Street, Franklin Street and the intersection of Broad Street with Bay Avenue and West Passaic Avenue. They function as an anchor for the surround-

ing neighborhood and provide residents with a local source of convenience retail, personal services, professional expertise, entertainment and an outlet for social interaction.

Bloomfield's Neighborhood Commercial Districts generally coincide with the B-2 Neighborhood Business Zone. Several of the Districts, such as the Brookdale area at Broad Street and Watchung Avenue, are also partially located within the O Office Zone. The B-2 Zone permits commercial uses such as banks, restaurants, gasoline filling stations/public garages, hotels, offices, personal services, retail stores, enclosed storage/warehouses, nursing homes and hospitals. It also permits public/semi-public uses such as government buildings, public utilities, non-profit educational institutions and parks. The O Zone permits commercial uses such as banks, offices, enclosed storage/warehouses and nursing homes as well as public/semi-public uses including churches, government buildings, non-profit educational institutions and parks. Residential uses are not currently permitted in the B-2 and O Zones.

The Neighborhood Commercial District is primarily within the B-2 Zone. The Zone has no bulk standards with the exception of maximum building height of 35 feet. Consideration should be given to providing additional bulk regulations for lot area, setback, building coverage and buffers. For instance, it may be appropriate to require a *maximum* setback limit or consistency with prevailing setback in order to preserve the District's zero lot line development pattern and generally attractive streetscape. It may also be desirable to regulate residential density and commercial floor area ratio. In addition, the maximum lot coverage of 100 percent should be reconsidered given the less intense pattern of development in the District and proximity to established residential neighborhoods. In any event, lot coverage regulations should be accompanied by similar standards for building coverage. The off-street parking may warrant further review to determine if the ratio of one (1) space per 150 square feet of sales area and one (1) space per two (2) restaurant seats remain valid.

#### Issues

The majority of Bloomfield's Neighborhood Commercial Districts are relatively stable and commercially viable. Others, however, are in transition and have experienced economic stagnation and physical deterioration. The major issues in the District include achieving a desirable mix of commercial uses, proliferation of lower-end commercial uses, property and building maintenance, limited parking, lack of streetscape amenities, the appropriateness of residential uses and pedestrian connections to surrounding residential neighborhoods. Another significant issue is the lack of coordinated District management, business retention/recruitment and marketing. The conditions vary

from District to District as summarized in the following alphabetical list of assets and liabilities:

1. *Belleville Avenue*. Assets include the mix of commercial and residential uses, availability of neighborhood-serving commercial uses, presence of older, attractive buildings, mass transit and defined boundaries. Liabilities include auto-oriented uses, incompatible alterations to buildings, disjointed streetscape, limited off-street parking and lack of connections to adjacent community shopping center.
2. *Bloomfield Avenue (Willard Avenue to Belleville/Newark border)*. Assets include the availability of convenience commercial uses, mass transit and scale and character of development. Liabilities include the limited range of commercial uses, proliferation of lower-end commercial uses, auto-oriented uses, higher vacancy rate, older and deteriorating buildings, uncoordinated streetscape, unattractive alterations to buildings, extensive curb cuts and traffic congestion.
3. *Brookdale (Broad Street/Watchung Avenue)*. Assets include the mix of commercial uses, high occupancy rate, mass transit and generally attractive buildings. Liabilities include auto-oriented uses, traffic congestion, limited off-street parking, uncoordinated streetscape, driveway curb cuts and limited pedestrian amenities.
4. *Brookdale (Broad Street/West Passaic Avenue)*. Assets include the mix of commercial and public uses, high occupancy rate, mass transit and attractive buildings. Liabilities include gaps in the street wall, traffic congestion, limited off-street parking, uncoordinated streetscape, unattractive alterations to certain buildings and difficult pedestrian environment.
5. *Brookdale (Broad Street/Bellevue Avenue)*. Assets include the presence of stable commercial uses (professional office, banks), well-maintained and attractive buildings and defined boundaries. Liabilities include auto-oriented uses, reliance on vehicular access, multiple curb cuts, uncoordinated streetscape and lack of pedestrian connections to major commercial uses to the east.
6. *Brookside (Broad Street/Bay Avenue)*. Assets include the mix of commercial uses, availability of off-street parking, proximity to Brookside Park and mass transit. Liabilities include auto-oriented uses, lack of parking at the garden center, uncoordinated streetscape, inconsistent building setbacks and traffic congestion.
7. *Broughton Avenue*. Assets include the availability of small-scale commercial uses, well-maintained buildings, mass transit and generally attractive streetscape. Liabilities include the limited range of commercial uses, dispersed nature of the District, limited parking and intrusion of detached single-family housing.
8. *Carteret Street*. Assets include the compact pattern of commercial development, availability of parking and CDBG funding for streetscape/building improvements. Liabilities include the mix of commercial uses, dete-

riorated condition of building(s), need for façade improvements and uncoordinated streetscape.

9. *Franklin Street.* Assets include availability of neighborhood serving commercial uses, well-maintained and smaller scale buildings and well-defined boundaries. Liabilities include auto-oriented uses, limited off-street parking, disjointed streetscape, inadequate connections to Franklin Square shopping center and difficult pedestrian environment.
10. *North Center.* Assets include the mix of commercial, residential and public uses, high occupancy rate, extensive street frontage, mass transit, public parking lot and attractive older buildings. Liabilities include auto-oriented uses, traffic congestion, narrow sidewalks, uncoordinated streetscape and unattractive alterations to buildings.
11. *Watsessing Center.* Assets include the presence of attractive older buildings, compact pattern of development, NJ Transit MidTOWN Direct service, public parking lot and available buildings and land (Westinghouse) for redevelopment. Liabilities include the proliferation of lower-end commercial uses, high vacancy rate, deteriorated condition of older buildings, poor condition of the NJ Transit Watsessing Station, confusing circulation pattern, lack of redevelopment at the Westinghouse site and uncoordinated streetscape.

#### Recommendations

1. Maintain the boundaries of existing Neighborhood Commercial Districts in order to preserve a viable concentration of commercial uses, protect adjacent residential neighborhoods from commercial intrusion and foster compact, accessible and pedestrian-friendly shopping areas.
2. Incorporate isolated and adjacent O Office Zones into the boundaries of existing B-2 Neighborhood Business Zones where uses and development patterns are compatible, such as those areas in Brookdale near the intersection of Broad Street/Watchung Avenue and Broad Street/West Passaic Avenue.
3. Amend the B-2 Neighborhood Business Zone to eliminate auto-oriented uses as a permitted use including but not limited to gasoline filling stations, auto repair establishments and auto body shops.
4. Amend the B-2 Neighborhood Business Zone to eliminate enclosed storage, warehouses, nursing homes, hospitals and for-profit educational institutions as permitted uses.
5. Amend the B-2 Neighborhood Business Zone to permit multi-family residential uses on the upper floors of buildings as a permitted conditional use. Conditional use standards should provide for adequate off-street parking, screening/buffering and bulk controls. Standards for unit size (floor area, bedrooms), building design, landscaping and

- site layout should also be considered.
6. Provide for improved off-street parking in the Neighborhood Commercial District by a multi-faceted program designed to manage existing parking resources, maximize available on-street parking and increase off-street parking in targeted locations. Recommended approaches to be considered include a permit parking program in high demand areas, installation of parking meters on major commercial streets and the creation of off-street parking lots to serve larger Neighborhood Business Districts.
  7. Enhance the character, visual appeal, marketability and safety of the Neighborhood Commercial District by making streetscape improvements. Recommended improvements include sidewalks, pedestrian-scale lights, street furniture, street trees, landscaping, signage, public art and traffic calming. Potential supplements to municipal funds include CDBG, TEA-21 Transportation Enhancement Grants, NJDOT Local Aid and SID financing.
  8. Increase access to the Neighborhood Commercial District by improving parking conditions, providing way-finding signage, installing traffic calming at key locations, enhancing pedestrian access, linking Districts with mass transit and providing bicycle facilities.
  9. Utilize methods of improving the management of Neighborhood Commercial Districts in cooperation with merchants, property owners, residents and other stakeholders. Issues to be addressed include District oversight, marketing, business retention/recruitment, parking and physical improvements. Possible methods include public-private partnerships, District managers and SID's.
  10. Prepare development plans for targeted Neighborhood Commercial Districts that establish goals/objectives, identify existing conditions, analyze opportunities/constraints, recommend use and bulk controls, target infrastructure/streetscape improvements and list implementation actions/strategies.
  11. Consider the use of the redevelopment process for those Neighborhood Commercial Districts where market conditions and private sector inaction have resulted in disinvestment, physical deterioration and economic stagnation. Evaluate those areas, such as Watsessing Center, that appear to meet the statutory criteria for designation as an "area in need of redevelopment" in order to promote revitalization and private sector investment.

#### Community Commercial District

The Township of Bloomfield has several Community Commercial Districts that are major shopping destinations for retail, services and other compatible commercial uses. The purpose of the District is to accommodate these relatively large-scale shopping facilities, which typically contain a supermarket or other anchor store and smaller commercial uses such as retail stores, personal ser-

vice establishments, restaurants and professional offices. It is distinguished from the Central Business and Neighborhood Commercial Districts by the exclusive presence of commercial uses, reliance upon large, free-standing “big box” structures and auto-oriented access/circulation system. The Community Commercial District is also notable for what it *lacks* including a mix of uses, compact multi-story development and intermodal access/circulation. The District is proposed to remain within its current boundaries without expansion but is recognized for the important function it performs within the Township.

Existing Conditions

Bloomfield’s Community Commercial District is a community-wide resource that provides essential retail and service opportunities for residents of the Township. The District is located in close proximity to most residential neighborhoods and contains large supermarkets, drug stores and specialized retail as well as smaller restaurants, personal service establishments and professional office space that are patronized regularly by residents. It is characterized by sites that contain a large free-standing commercial building(s) with one (1) or more tenants that are setback from adjacent streets and surrounded by large parking lots. In appearance and function, they are large islands of commercial activity surrounded by a less intense mix of residential, commercial and public uses. There are multiple Community Commercial Districts in the Township ranging in size and scale from a single one-story commercial building with one (1) tenant to a mix of one-and two-story commercial buildings with multiple tenants.

There are four (4) Community Commercial Districts in Bloomfield located in or near the Brookdale, Forest Hill, Halcyon Park and Watsessing sections of the Township. The District in Brookdale is located at the intersection of Broad Street with Bellevue Avenue and contains a Shop-Rite supermarket. The Community Commercial District near Forest Hill is located on Belleville Avenue and contains an A&P supermarket, Walgreen’s drug store as well as smaller retail stores. The District near Halcyon Park is located at the intersection of Franklin Street with Watsessing Avenue and contains a Super Stop&Shop supermarket. The Community Commercial District in Watsessing is located at the intersection of Bloomfield Avenue and Grove Street and contains a Staples retail store, Rite-Aid drug store, R&S Strauss auto parts store and smaller retail stores as well as professional offices. There are also several sites that function as community shopping centers such as the Glenwood Avenue Plaza in Watsessing Heights, however, they are incorporated into other land use districts.

Bloomfield’s Community Commercial Districts are located within the B-2 Neighborhood Business, O Office and M-1-O General Manufacturing/Office

Zones. The B-2 Zone is a general commercial zone that permits a broad range of retail, service and office uses as well as public/semi-public uses. The O Zone is a limited commercial zone that permits offices, banks, enclosed storage, warehouses, nursing homes, hospitals and public/semi-public uses. The M-1-O Zone is a hybrid zone that permits a broad range of manufacturing, research laboratories, offices, banks, enclosed storage, warehouses, nursing homes, hospitals and public/semi-public uses. The M-1-O Zones also permits mid-rise apartment buildings, which may not be appropriate for the Community Commercial District.

The Community Commercial District's location in three (3) zones contributes to a complex, inconsistent and substandard system of bulk controls. The B-2 Zone has no bulk standards with the exception of maximum building height of 35 feet and permits relatively intense commercial development. The O Zone has extensive bulk controls that require a minimum lot area of 10,000 square feet, minimum setbacks ranging from 10 to 30 feet, maximum lot coverage of 35 percent and maximum building height of 30 feet. These regulations encourage moderate intensity commercial development. The M-1-O Zone combines the M-1 and O Zone bulk regulations, which are in conflict because they promote moderate intensity commercial development *and* high intensity industrial development. The District's bulk controls are outdated and conflict with type of large-scale "big box" commercial development found within it.

Issues

The Community Commercial District is a relatively strong and established land use district that is economically viable, well-maintained and heavily utilized by residents of Bloomfield. A significant portion of existing commercial development in the District has been constructed in the past decade and most shopping centers are in good condition. Recent examples include the Brookdale Shop-Rite and Franklin Square shopping centers that opened several years ago and replaced obsolete community supermarkets. The Community Commercial District is proposed to remain within the current boundaries of existing large-scale, "big box" shopping center development. As a consequence, the major issues are maintaining the generally high quality of existing commercial development, providing limited opportunities for additions/improvements and addressing site deficiencies.

The Community Commercial District occupies an important niche within Bloomfield by providing residents of the Township with convenience retail opportunities, essential personal services and professional office space. In order to preserve conditions within the District, the zoning ordinance should be updated to permit an appropriate range of uses and provide sufficient incentives for property maintenance and improvements. There will be a need to renovate and possibly expand existing shopping centers within the Community Commercial District as the buildings age and market conditions change. Consideration

should be given to accommodating the need to retrofit aging shopping centers by permitting limited additions and ensuring that bulk regulations provide for balanced coverage, height and setback standards. There is also a need to address site deficiencies typically found at “big box” shopping centers within the District such as poor site layout, excessive lot coverage, inadequate landscaping and limited buffering. Particular attention should be given to site plan and design regulations addressing such issues.

#### Recommendations

1. Create a new zone that recognizes and addresses the unique characteristics of commercial development within the Community Commercial District. Appropriate permitted uses include retail, personal services, professional offices, financial institutions and restaurants.
2. Provide comprehensive bulk standards that regulate lot area, setback, building height, building/lot coverage and buffers to residential uses. Consideration should be given to the use of a *maximum* setback or “build-to” line in order to prevent excessive setbacks that have a detrimental visual impact and a floor area ratio in order to control the intensity of commercial activity.
3. Consider the use of recommended design guidelines to improve the quality of building architecture, site layout, streetscape, circulation and parking. Particular attention should be given to providing adequate landscaping and buffers.
4. Evaluate the adequacy of parking requirements in meeting the demand for off-street parking at community shopping centers. Utilize parking standards that balance the need for off-street parking against the negative environmental, stormwater management and visual impacts of providing excessive parking.
5. Require new development in the Community Commercial District to provide bicycle and pedestrian access in the form of crosswalks, sidewalks and bike racks.
6. Promote the maintenance and improvement of existing shopping centers in the Community Commercial District through regular inspections, zoning enforcement, supportive zoning and public-private cooperation.
7. Encourage property owners in the Community Commercial District to utilize high-quality building design, creative site layout and traditional streetscape elements when retrofitting existing shopping centers.

#### **Regional Office District**

The Regional Office District consists of a single well-defined area located on Broad Street in the northern section of the Township of Bloomfield. The purpose of the District is to recognize and accommodate the existing large-scale corporate office campus known as the Broadacres complex. This complex is characterized by a concentration of corporate offices, relatively large size,

campus-like environment and multi-story buildings. The Regional Office District is an established and stable land use district that is proposed to remain unchanged in area, use and intensity.

#### Existing Conditions

The Regional Office District is located on the eastern side of Broad Street between Bellevue Avenue and Foster Street in the Brookdale section of Bloomfield. The District boundaries coincide with those of the Broadacres office complex, which was first developed in the late 1960's and early 1970's as a suburban office park. It contains the offices of major international corporations such as ABB Lummus Global and Systra Consulting. The District is fully developed with a mix of free-standing low-rise office buildings, surface parking lots and open space.

The Regional Office District is located within Bloomfield's C-1 and C-2 Office and Research Zones. According to the Township Zoning Ordinance, the C-1 and C-2 Zones are intended for large-scale office and research facilities designed in a manner to avoid adverse impacts upon adjacent property and maximize benefits to the community. They permit limited commercial uses such as offices and research laboratories as well as public/semi-public uses. This contributes to the District's homogenous commercial character.

The Regional Office District is a relatively low intensity commercial district consistent with the bulk regulations of the C-1 and C-2 Zones. The C-1 and C-2 Zones require a minimum lot area of 15 acres and 3.5 acres respectively. The minimum setbacks in the C-1 Zone range from 50 feet to 100 feet. Those in the C-2 Zone are a minimum of 40 feet. The maximum lot coverage in the C-1 Zone is 65 percent while that of the C-2 Zone is 80 percent. Both Zones have a maximum building height of 50 feet, which translates into 4 or 5 stories depending upon clear ceiling height. The current bulk regulations promote the District's suburban campus-like setting.

#### Issues

The Regional Office District is notable for its stable and established character that has remained largely unchanged since the 1989 Master Plan. The District is economically strong with a low vacancy rate, well-maintained Class A office space and roster of major corporate tenants. It is one of the premier corporate office locations in Essex County because of its strategic location, outstanding highway access and pleasant suburban campus. The major issues associated with the District are traffic congestion generated by firms, maintaining the overall high quality of office space and protecting adjacent residential neighborhoods.

#### Recommendations

1. Maintain the current boundaries of the Regional Office District in order to protect adjacent residential neighborhoods.
2. Amend the C-1 and C-2 Office and Research Zones to reduce maximum lot coverage from 65 percent and 80 percent respectively. Provide standards for building coverage to supplement lot coverage requirements.
3. Consider the use of floor area ratio controls in order to limit the intensity of commercial development in the Regional Office District, especially as existing buildings and sites are renovated.
4. Encourage the continued renovation and retrofitting of buildings in the Regional Office District in order to maintain Class A office space and preserve the Broadacres office complex as a first-rate corporate office location. Consider zoning amendments that support the improvement of the District such as adjustments to setback, building coverage and floor area ratio requirements.
5. Evaluate the adequacy of off-street parking requirements for office and research laboratory uses in the Regional Office District. Consider permitting structured parking in appropriate locations in order to permit limited building additions and preserve buffers, setbacks and open space.

#### ***Professional Office/Residential District***

The Professional Office/Residential District is one of several mixed-use districts in Bloomfield containing commercial uses interspersed with residential uses. The intent of the District is to recognize those areas of the Township that are in transition from residential to commercial and to maintain a balance of uses in order to preserve residential character while providing for compatible commercial activity. In many cases, the District contains areas that were exclusively residential but whose suitability for housing has been diminished by changes in local conditions. In such circumstances, combining relatively low intensity professional office activity with single-family and multi-family housing often produces a compatible marriage of uses that stabilizes and preserves the character of an area. This approach has been used successfully in the Professional Office/Residential District.

#### ***Existing Conditions***

The Professional Office/Residential District in Bloomfield is typically located on the periphery of existing business districts where formerly solid residential neighborhoods are in transition due to an influx of commercial uses. The District is found in three (3) such transitional locations in the Township on Broad Street and Franklin Street. These include a small area on Broad Street south of Bay Avenue where detached single-family houses have been converted to professional offices with apartments on the upper floors. It also consists of a larger area on Broad Street immediately south of the North

Center business district that extends to the vicinity of Belleville Avenue. In this portion of the District, former residences have been converted to professional offices and the development pattern is highly mixed with offices, retail, restaurants, multi-family apartment buildings and detached single-family houses. The area on Franklin Street is located between John F. Kennedy Drive South and Montgomery Street and contains professional office and multi-family residential uses. Factors that contribute to the shift towards mixed-uses in the District include increasing traffic congestion, intrusion of commercial uses, conversion of single-family residences to multi-family housing and the presence of large, older houses that are often difficult to maintain and operate as residences.

The Professional Office/Residential District contains portions of multiple residential and commercial zones. These include the O Office, R-1A-O, R-2A-O and RG-O Zones. The O Zone is a limited commercial zone that permits offices, banks, enclosed storage, warehouses, nursing homes, hospitals and public/semi-public uses. The others are hybrid zones that permit a broad range of residential uses in conjunction with those uses permitted in the O Zone. The permitted residential uses include detached single-family houses, detached two-family houses and garden apartments. They also permit professional offices occupying a maximum 30 percent of total floor area and public/semi-public uses. The current zoning scheme is obsolete and requires updating because it relies upon hybrid zones comprised of mismatched single-purpose zones, such as the R-1A and O Zones, that do not address the unique characteristics and challenges of the District.

The Professional Office/Residential District lacks a coherent zoning scheme at present, particularly with regard to bulk regulations. These regulations are drawn from the single-purpose zones such as the R-1A and O Zones and do not provide appropriate buffer, setback, building/lot coverage and parking standards for the unique mix of professional offices and residential uses that predominate in the District. The problem is compounded because this mixed-use pattern is found on individual lots as well as throughout the District. The current bulk regulations also fail to address the relationship of commercial to residential uses on an individual lot such as the location of building access, permissible ratio of commercial to residential uses, size of residential units, parking, signage, etc... These types of standards are central to preserving a balance of uses and the residential character that distinguishes the District.

#### Issues

The Professional Office/Residential District is by definition an area undergoing change from residential to commercial in character. A primary goal in Bloomfield is to achieve a desirable mix of residential and commercial uses and maintain, to the greatest degree possible, the residential qualities that make such areas attractive and desirable. Professional office uses are relatively low impact commercial uses that can coexist with established residential uses subject to appro-

appropriate controls on intensity of activity, bulk, site design and the interrelationship of uses. Professional office use has also proven a viable method of preserving large, older residential structures that are difficult to maintain and operate such as the houses on the western side of Broad Street between Park Street and the Township Civic Center. The major issue is therefore providing a new zone with permitted uses, bulk regulations, design standards and parking requirements to address the unique mixed-use character and residential character of the District.

#### Recommendations

1. Maintain the boundaries of the existing Professional Office/Residential District in order to preserve adjacent residential neighborhoods and prevent the intrusion of non-residential uses in residential neighborhoods susceptible to change. These include residential neighborhoods adjacent to the Central Business District and Neighborhood Commercial Districts.
2. Create a new zone to implement the Professional Office/Residential District that permits offices for recognized professions in conjunction with a broad range of residential uses.
3. Regulate the ratio of professional office to residential uses on individual sites in order to preserve the residential character of the Professional Office/Residential District. Consideration should be given to methods such as limits on the floor area of professional offices, target ratios of floor area devoted to professional office versus residential use, limiting professional office use to the first floor of structures or requiring at least one (1) residential unit in each structure proposed for conversion.
4. Evaluate the adequacy of off-street parking requirements in light of current professional office standards and State Residential Site Improvement Standard requirements for residential uses.

#### **Industrial**

The Township of Bloomfield has a limited Industrial District that encompasses the existing areas of industrial activity in the Township. Bloomfield was, at one time, a major industrial center with a broad range of manufacturing, warehouse/distribution, railroad and other intensive uses. The level of industrial activity in the Township has been significantly reduced during the past several decades as firms relocated to lower cost regions, moved production overseas and consolidated operations or went bankrupt. The loss of industrial uses is consistent with economic trends throughout the region and State where service sector activity has replaced manufacturing activity in importance. The intent of the District is to accommodate remaining industrial uses in appropriate locations, reinforce the boundaries of industrial areas to protect adjacent neighborhoods and consolidate industrial activity at sites where access, infrastructure and a concentration of similar uses increase their

viability.

#### Existing Conditions

The Industrial District is concentrated in the southern half of Bloomfield where industrial activity has historically occurred due to the presence of the Morris Canal, Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad and other infrastructure necessary for such uses. The District incorporates several areas where active industrial uses remain including the former National Starch site on Belleville Avenue, Peerless Tube site on Locust Avenue/John F. Kennedy Drive South, Hartz Mountain site on Race Street/West Street and Watsessing industrial area south of Bloomfield Avenue. This represents a significant decrease in land area used for industrial purposes since the 1989 Master Plan. Former industrial areas that have been redeveloped with commercial uses since 1989 include the Schering facility on Orange Street (Home Depot), Macy's site on Franklin Street (Franklin Square), Gordo's site on Glenwood Avenue (CVS) and Conrail depot on Bloomfield Avenue (Rite-Aid/R&S Strauss). Other former industrial areas that are transitional in nature include the Scientific Glass site off of Broad Street and the Westinghouse site on Arlington Avenue. They are designated for non-industrial use and are not included in the Industrial District.

Bloomfield's Industrial District is coterminous with the M-1 General Industrial Zone. The M-1 Zone permits a broad range of heavy industrial and light industrial uses with limited controls on intensity of use and building bulk. It permits manufacturing, research laboratories, banks, commercial parking facilities, gasoline filling stations/public garages, hotels, offices, mid-rise apartments, government buildings, public utilities, non-profit educational institutions and parks. The M-1 Zone bulk regulations require a minimum lot area of 1 acre, minimum setbacks ranging from 10 to 20 feet, maximum lot coverage of 75 percent and maximum height of 60 feet. The zoning regulations reflect an earlier period of industrial activity in the Township and appear to require updating.

#### Issues

The Industrial District contributes to the local Bloomfield economy by providing remaining manufacturing firms with an appropriate location for their intensive business activities. The Township benefits from the employment, income and tax ratables that these industrial uses generate. It is likely, however, that industrial activity will continue to decline in future years because of the continued erosion of manufacturing activity at the regional and State level. The focus should therefore be on preserving remaining industrial uses, consolidating such uses in well-defined and viable areas and reorienting the Township's industrial base towards growth sectors. The Township should also develop a clear policy direction with regard to industrial uses as part of its overall economic development strategy in the event that current manufacturing firms reduce or eliminate their operations.

The Industrial District is implemented through the M-1 Zone, which provides for a broad range of industrial, commercial and residential uses. The M-1 Zone is outdated, however, because of its focus on manufacturing and inadequate bulk regulations which are based upon multi-story industrial buildings. The zoning for the District requires a comprehensive update and should be reoriented towards light industrial and higher technology uses. Consideration should be given to permitting warehouse/distribution, self-storage and high technology internet data centers and “cyber hotels.” Uses such as printing, food processing, light assembly and heavy commercial facilities should also be evaluated. Inappropriate uses such as mid-rise apartments, banks and hotels should also be eliminated as permitted uses in the M-1 Zone.

The bulk regulations for the M-1 Zone contemplate the type of multi-story industrial buildings with limited setbacks and parking that are now considered obsolete. The bulk regulations should be updated to reflect the one-story, high ceiling buildings with extensive floor area and large parking lots that are demanded by the modern industrial market. The standards for setbacks and buffers should also be increased in order to protect adjacent non-industrial neighborhoods. The feasibility of locating a modern industrial park in the Township with a mix of light industrial and office uses should be evaluated. The Watsessing industrial area may be suitable for such a facility because of its relatively large size, transportation infrastructure and available industrial land for assembly.

#### Recommendations

1. Strengthen the Industrial District by consolidating industrial uses in areas where access, infrastructure and a concentration of similar uses increase their viability. Relocate or extinguish industrial uses in areas where such uses conflict with adjacent uses and the non-industrial character of the surrounding area, including Ackerman Avenue off of Broughton Avenue.
2. Revise the M-1 Zone to eliminate mid-rise apartments, banks and hotels as permitted uses.
3. Revise the M-1 Zone to emphasize light industrial uses and permit warehouse/distribution, self-storage and high technology internet data centers and “cyber hotels.” Consider permitting additional light industrial uses such as printing, food processing, light assembly and heavy commercial facilities.
4. Revise the M-1 Zone to strengthen bulk regulations for setbacks, buffers, building/lot coverage and building height.
5. Evaluate the feasibility of establishing a modern industrial park with light industrial uses, administrative offices and limited commercial uses in an appropriate location within the Township. Consider the M-1 Zone

traversed by Arlington Avenue for such a facility.

### **College District**

The purpose of the College District is to recognize the established presence of Bloomfield College and provide for limited growth while protecting existing residential and other non-educational uses in close proximity to the College. The District identifies and reinforces the boundaries of the Bloomfield College campus and directs future growth internally within the campus limits. This will prevent expansion into the adjacent residential neighborhoods that comprise the Bloomfield Green Historic District. This approach also preserves existing uses unrelated to the College within the campus boundaries. Planning for the College District must address permitted uses, bulk regulations, parking requirements and the long-term facility needs of the College in order to promote appropriate and balanced development.

#### Existing Conditions

The College District is located in the southern section of Bloomfield in an area bordered by Liberty Street to the north, Fremont Street to the south, Spruce Street to the east and Franklin Street to the west. The District encompasses the original Bloomfield College Quad on Franklin and Liberty Streets, newer College facilities on blocks to the east and existing pockets of housing and other non-educational uses. It is a fully developed and established neighborhood with a variety of educational, institutional and residential structures with the exception of several small vacant lots. The College District is further distinguished by its close proximity to the Bloomfield Center central business district (CBD), historic Bloomfield Green, Bloomfield municipal building and Garden State Parkway.

The College District is a compact area consisting of approximately 3.5 blocks that is influenced by the significant presence of Bloomfield College, which has an “in-town” rather than self-contained campus. As a result, the District is characterized by a predominance of College uses, a development pattern of College buildings interspersed with residences and other non-College structures, busy public streets that carry local, regional and College-bound traffic and relatively high levels of activity when the College is in session. There are occasional conflicts between the College and non-College uses, however, they are compatible and can co-exist if adequate provision for facilities planning, bulk regulations, parking and site design is made.

The College District is further affected by its location between the Bloomfield Center CBD to the south and the Bloomfield Green Historic District to the north. The District’s boundaries are defined by the informal border that separates it from the commercial uses found in the CBD and the largely single-family residential uses found in the Historic District. From a planning perspective, it is important to delineate these boundaries and limit the District to them in order to accommodate the on-going revitalization of the CBD and preserve the integrity

of the Historic District. It is also necessary, however, to provide adequate physical and visual links so that the College District is connected to the CBD and Historic District.

*Issues*

The College District is a new land use district designed to acknowledge the presence of Bloomfield College within a 3.5 block area bordered by Liberty, Fremont, Spruce and Franklin Streets and protect existing non-College uses located in this area. The District recognizes that the College has existed at this location since the 19<sup>th</sup> century and is likely to remain there for the foreseeable future. It is intended to accommodate limited growth internal to the District so that the College can meet its facilities goals and remain viable as an institution of higher education. The College District is also designed to preserve existing residential and institutional uses in the District and provide increased protection where College uses abut non-College uses. The primary issues with regard to the District are zoning, buffering and screening, parking and a comprehensive master plan for the College.

The College District is currently split by the O Office zone and R-1B Single-Family zone, neither of which permits college-oriented uses such as classrooms, libraries, dormitories, gymnasiums and support services. The Township zoning ordinance also lacks bulk, screening/buffering, parking and building design standards for such uses since they are not permitted in the O and R-1B zones. As a consequence, a use variance is necessary for all new college-oriented development. This hinders the Township's ability to comprehensively plan for appropriate and balanced growth in the District since new development occurs in piecemeal fashion through use variance approval. This problem is further compounded by the lack of bulk, parking and design regulations for college uses and facilities. In order to address this situation, consideration should be given to the creation of a College zone with appropriate use, bulk, parking and building design standards. Such a zone would permit College facilities and existing non-College uses such as detached single-family houses, multi-family apartments and churches. Particular attention should be paid to expanded buffering and screening requirements where College uses abut non-College uses.

The College District is intended to permit a limited amount of internal growth for Bloomfield College while preserving existing non-College uses. The ultimate goal is to provide for appropriate and balanced development in the District. This will, however, require information about the College's facility needs and long-term campus master plan. Towards this end, it is appropriate to require the College to prepare and submit a campus master plan to the Township for review, comment and approval on a regular basis. This will promote balanced and comprehensive planning in the District and encourage coordination between Bloomfield College and Bloomfield Township.

Recommendations

The following is a list of recommendations to address issues associated with the College District:

1. Create a College zone that permits College-oriented uses and detached single-family residences, multi-family apartments and churches as permitted principal uses.
2. Provide bulk, buffering/screening, parking and building design regulations that will promote attractive College-oriented development and protect non-College uses such as detached single-family residences.
3. Require Bloomfield College to prepare and submit a comprehensive campus master plan to the Planning Board for review and approval on an annual basis. All College development must be consistent with the approved campus master plan.
4. Coordinate with Bloomfield College on the design and installation of physical and visual connections between the College campus and Bloomfield Center as revitalization of the CBD progresses.
5. Plan gateway and streetscape improvements at the edge of the District to be implemented by the College to delineate the campus boundaries and enhance its appearance subject to coordination with the Township, local residents and the Historic Preservation Commission.

**Parks and Open Space**

The Parks and Open Space District consists of all parks, recreation facilities and open space located in the Township of Bloomfield. The purpose of the District is to recognize existing areas devoted to parks, recreation and open space. It has a total area of approximately 425 acres, including golf courses, and comprises an estimated 12.5 percent of all land in Bloomfield. The Parks and Open Space District is proposed to remain unchanged because no new facilities have been developed since the 1989 Master Plan.

Existing Conditions

The Parks and Open Space District is located in neighborhoods throughout Bloomfield. Major areas of parks, recreation and open space include Brookdale County Park, Clark’s Pond North/South, Memorial Park, Pulaski Park and Watsessing County Park. In addition to parks, other significant areas include Forest Hill Field Club, Glen Ridge Country Club, Upper Montclair Country Club and several cemeteries. They comprise a balanced, diverse and geographically distributed Parks and Open Space District. There are, however, sections of Bloomfield where such facilities are limited including the northeastern and southeastern sections of the Township. Most parks, recreation and open space areas within the District also experience heavy usage by residents, schools and visitors from other communities.

The Parks and Open Space District is located within two (2) zones, the P Public Uses Zone and the RI Recreational and Institutional Zone. The P Zone permits public uses such as parks, government buildings, non-profit educational institutions and garden apartments. The RI Zone permits golf courses, government buildings, public utilities, non-profit educational institutions and parks. There are no bulk regulations for the P Zone while the RI Zone has bulk regulations that are oriented towards large-scale recreational uses. These include a minimum lot area of 10 acres, minimum setbacks of 50 feet, maximum lot coverage of 10 percent and maximum height of 35 feet.

#### Issues

The Parks and Open Space District contributes to the Bloomfield's suburban character and directly affects the quality of life experienced by residents, businesses and visitors. The District provides residents with a relatively large and evenly distributed system of parks, recreation facilities and open space. There is a need, however, to strengthen the District and evaluate the feasibility of new parks, recreational facilities and open space.

The Parks and Open Space District is implemented through the P and RI Zones, which are primarily public and recreational use zoning districts. In order to protect the integrity of the District, consideration should be given to eliminating garden apartments as a permitted conditional use in the P Zone and increasing the minimum lot area in the RI Zone to greater than 10 acres. The Parks and Open Space District has a limited number of facilities that are heavily utilized by residents, schools and visitors from adjacent communities. The heavy usage affects access to and maintenance of existing parks, recreation facilities and open space. Increased maintenance should be given priority in order to preserve facilities within the District, particularly County parks that have suffered from years of neglect and deferred maintenance. The Parks and Open Space District has a solid foundation of parks, recreation facilities and open space to meet the needs of residents, preserve suburban character and protect environmentally sensitive areas. In order to strengthen the District, proposals for new parks, recreation facilities and open space such as the Township Greenway should be explored.

#### Recommendations

1. Maintain the P Public Uses Zone and RI Recreational and Institutional Zone in order to preserve the Parks and Recreation District.
2. Revise the P Public Uses Zone to eliminate garden apartments as a permitted conditional use.
3. Revise the RI Recreational and Institutional Zone to increase minimum lot area to greater than 10 acres.
4. Advocate for increased maintenance of Brookdale and Watsessing

- County Parks and support the establishment of parks conservancies to facilitate their improvement.
- 5. Maintain the Parks and Open Space District and explore the development of new parks, recreation facilities and open space such as the Township Greenway, Township Recreation Center and community park at the former Westinghouse site.

**Public/Semi-Public**

The Public/Semi-Public District encompasses all major public facilities in the Township of Bloomfield such as Township buildings, School District buildings and certain NJ Transit facilities. The District includes the municipal building, public schools, library, civic center, fire stations, law enforcement building and NJ Transit Grove Street Station/Newark City Subway Base Maintenance Facility. The purpose of the District is to identify and reinforce the location of major public uses. Certain semi-public uses such as places of worship, private schools and fraternal or non-profit organizations are not included because of their relatively small size and dispersed locations. The Public/Semi-Public District is proposed to remain unchanged given the stable and established pattern of such uses.

The primary recommendation for the Public/Semi-Public District is to consolidate the Township Department of Public Works facility at the new building recently purchased on 13 Race Street. The Race Street neighborhood is a transitional area and additional property for a Public Works storage yard should be acquired as it becomes available. The current Department of Public Works facility on Grove Street should be targeted for closure and future redevelopment with a transit-oriented use because of its location across the street from NJ Transit's Grove Street Station.

**Planned Redevelopment District**

The Planned Redevelopment District is one of the largest and most significant areas of vacant and underutilized land in the Township of Bloomfield. The District is located in the Watsessing section of the Township at the intersection of Arlington Avenue and MacArthur Avenue. It is comprised primarily of the former Westinghouse manufacturing complex and a community shopping center that was anchored by Edward's Supermarket and predecessor stores. The Planned Redevelopment District has been inactive and unproductive for more than a decade (10 years) and its future use is of critical concern to the Township because of its large size, deteriorated state, environmental constraints, proximity to residential neighborhoods and significant redevelopment potential. The manner in which it is developed will affect the Watsessing neighborhood and the entire Township and therefore warrants careful consideration of appropriate uses, intensity of activity, density of development, building design, site layout and integration into the surrounding area.

Existing Conditions

The Planned Redevelopment District consists of approximately 17-acres of land that was formerly utilized for industrial and commercial purposes. The District, however, has experienced severe physical decline and economic stagnation as these uses faded and eventually ceased operation or relocated elsewhere. The former Westinghouse site was an active manufacturing facility for most of the twentieth century until the erosion of the Township's industrial base, changes in corporate ownership and the complex's functional obsolescence contributed to its closure. The site was integral to the U.S. government's Manhattan Project to produce nuclear weapons during World War Two and is contaminated as a result. The former Edward's Supermarket site was an active community shopping center that is now largely vacant because of its small size and obsolete design, remote and low-visibility location and the relocation of its anchor tenant to a larger, modern facility on Franklin Street. The District is best characterized as highly transitional because conditions in the Township have changed and the market for, and viability of, previous uses has severely eroded. This suggests that a new approach to the use and development of the District is necessary.

The Planned Redevelopment District is located in the MC Major Commercial Zone. The MC Zone is a large-scale "big box" retail commercial zone that was established as a result of litigation between the previous property owner, Westinghouse, and Bloomfield in the early 1990's. According to the Township Zoning Ordinance, the Zone's purpose is to encourage the development of large-scale commercial uses that will complement the existing commercial uses in the B-1 and B-2 Zones. The primary use in the MC Zone must have a *minimum* gross floor area of 18,000 square feet and permitted uses must include retail stores, offices, banks, restaurants, newspaper printing and government buildings. The Zone encourages the type of "big box" retail power centers often found on major highways and characterized by high-volume retailers in oversized, non-descript buildings surrounded by acres of surface parking lots. This type of commercial development is inappropriate given the District's limited road network, low-visibility, proximity to established residential neighborhoods and location adjacent to the B-1 Central Business District. It also fails to account for changed conditions in Watsessing and Bloomfield, such as the pending introduction of NJ Transit MidTOWN Direct service to New York City, on-going revitalization of Bloomfield Center, need for redevelopment of the adjacent Watsessing Center business district and new Township Master Plan.

The Planned Redevelopment District is also governed by the bulk regulations of the MC Zone. These regulations dictate the type of large-scale, "big box" retail commercial development that is inappropriate given the District's constraints and is incompatible with existing residential neighborhoods and

the Watsessing Center district to the north. The primary bulk controls include minimum lot area of 2 acres, minimum setbacks ranging from 10 to 75 feet, maximum building height of 3 stories/30 feet and maximum building coverage of 20 percent. These standards conflict with the bulk regulations of the adjacent B-2 Neighborhood Business and R-2B Two-Family Zones and are not sufficiently mitigated by site plan and design guidelines. This creates the potential for significant land use conflicts between the District and adjacent areas if current conditions are not addressed.

Issues

The Planned Redevelopment District is a transitional brownfield area that is a remnant of Bloomfield’s industrial past. The District has been vacant and underutilized for more than a decade and its reuse was identified as a major issue in the 1989 Master Plan. Economic and physical conditions have continued to deteriorate since that time to the detriment of the Watsessing neighborhood and the entire Township. The Westinghouse site has remained inactive despite a rezoning to MC Major Commercial because of environmental contamination, infrastructure constraints, changes in property ownership, erosion of the Township’s manufacturing base and a decline in local retail commercial activity. The former Edward’s Supermarket shopping center is largely vacant because of its inadequate size, obsolete design, remote location and loss of the anchor tenant. It is in Bloomfield’s interest to return the District to productive use(s) in order to improve the quality of life in Watsessing, create employment opportunities for residents and generate tax ratables that will strengthen the Township’s financial base. A new approach is required in order to achieve these goals, overcome the constraints to new development and address the changed conditions in the Township.

The Planned Redevelopment District’s current condition makes it an appropriate candidate for the redevelopment process under the State Local Redevelopment and Housing Law. The District is characterized by long-term vacancy, underutilization of land, severe environmental constraints, economic stagnation and physical deterioration. It is unlikely to be returned to an appropriate and fully productive use(s) by the private sector alone because of these and other obstacles. Bloomfield has experience with the redevelopment process and consideration should be given to initiating a study to determine if the District qualifies as an “area in need of redevelopment” under State statute. Such a determination could lead to the preparation of a redevelopment plan that would serve as a targeted master plan and zoning ordinance for the area.

The vision for the Planned Redevelopment District is a mixed-use, medium density, transit-oriented and low- to mid-rise village that is connected to the Watsessing Center business district, compatible with adjacent residential neighborhoods and attractively designed and constructed. A mix of uses is encouraged in order to create a village center and ensure compatibility with the sur-

rounding neighborhood. Uses would include commercial, residential, public/semi-public and parks and open space subject to final site remediation and NJDEP use requirements. The District should have a transit-orientation in order to capitalize on the proximity to NJ Transit's Watsessing Station and MidTOWN Direct service to New York City. Finally, a compact low- to mid-rise development pattern is encouraged in order to create a pedestrian-friendly, suburban scale that complements adjacent residential and commercial areas. This vision, if realized, would build upon the District's assets and contribute to the revitalization of Watsessing as a desirable place to live, work and visit.

#### Recommendations

1. Coordinate with the property owner, Nuclear Regulatory Commission and NJDEP to facilitate and complete the remediation of environmental contamination at the former Westinghouse site.
2. Utilize the redevelopment process under the State Local Redevelopment and Housing Law to promote the reuse and development of the Planned Redevelopment District.
3. Initiate a study to determine if the Planned Redevelopment District qualifies as an "area in need of redevelopment" under State statute. If such a determination is made, prepare a redevelopment plan to serve as the master plan and zoning ordinance for the District.
4. Consider permitting a mix of uses in the Planned Redevelopment District including commercial, residential and parks and open space in order to promote redevelopment that is compatible with the surrounding area, capitalize upon NJ Transit MidTOWN Direct service to New York City and meet community need for additional parks and open space.
5. Consider interim amendments to the MC Major Commercial Zone to provide improved standards for buffering, setbacks, building/lot coverage, landscaping and site design until such time as a redevelopment study is initiated.

#### **Transit-Oriented Development Overlay District**

The Transit-Oriented Development Overlay (TDO) District is a circular area radiating outward from the Watsessing Center neighborhood business district in the Watsessing section of the Township of Bloomfield. The purpose of the TDO District is to preserve existing residential and commercial uses while providing the opportunity for transit-oriented development that capitalizes upon NJ Transit MidTOWN Direct service to New York City from the Watsessing Station. This service is scheduled to begin in late 2001 or early 2002 once NJ Transit completes the Montclair Connection linking the Montclair Branch with the Boonton Line. The District encompasses an area that is transitional in nature with a distressed neighborhood business district, fading industrial

uses and solid but aging housing. It is anticipated that the TDO District will be a catalyst for neighborhood revitalization, quality of life improvements, new private sector investment and the redevelopment of underutilized industrial and heavy commercial sites.

#### Existing Conditions

The Transit-Oriented Development Overlay District is centered upon the NJ Transit Watsessing Station and extends to Bloomfield Avenue in the north, the municipal border with East Orange in the south, Arlington Avenue in the east and the Garden State Parkway in the west. The TDO District currently has a mixed-use character with significant residential development interspersed with commercial, industrial and public/semi-public uses as well as vacant land. The commercial and industrial land uses in the District are in transition due to the ongoing restructuring of the local and regional economy, which has been accompanied by a decline in retail and manufacturing activity. There are also pockets of older and substandard residential uses that require upgrading. As a result, there are significant opportunities for revitalization within the TDO District that will improve housing conditions, create neighborhood commercial activity, replace fading industrial and heavy commercial uses and address quality of life concerns.

The TDO District benefits from the presence of the NJ Transit Watsessing Station and pending MidTOWN Direct service. They are expected to facilitate the revitalization process and generate the demand for neighborhood retail, commuter-oriented services and housing in close proximity to the Station and Watsessing Center. The District therefore encourages transit-oriented development in appropriate in-fill locations with an emphasis on townhouses, market-rate apartment houses, neighborhood retail and personal services that serve existing residents as well as commuters.

The intent of the TDO District is to address changing conditions in the Watsessing section of Bloomfield. The District contains existing heavy commercial and industrial uses in the M-1 General Industrial Zone that conflict with the existing residential neighborhood north of MacArthur Avenue. They often create nuisance impacts and are more appropriately located in areas where there are a concentration of such uses and increased opportunities for buffering. The relocation of heavy commercial uses is desirable, especially since many have limited retail operations that do not require frontage on a major street. The industrial uses are in long-term decline and the remaining manufacturing and warehouse/distribution activity is increasingly concentrated east of Arlington Avenue. This trend has produced a number of vacant or underutilized properties in the District. Creative planning is necessary to address these trends and promote the redevelopment of abandoned or underutilized land.

Issues

There are significant opportunities for redevelopment in the TDO District, especially on those sites containing declining commercial and industrial uses. The majority of these opportunities are found in Watsessing Center and on the former Westinghouse and Edward's Supermarket sites. There are also limited opportunities elsewhere in the M-1 General Industrial Zone and on scattered in-fill parcels throughout the District. Careful site selection and sensitive site planning is required to ensure that redevelopment occurs in appropriate locations and with proper attention to existing residential uses and the established character of the District.

The implementation of the TDO District will occur primarily through the creation of a new overlay zone corresponding to the boundaries of the District. It is important to note that the current base zoning will *remain in place* to protect and preserve established uses located in the R-2B, B-2, M-1, MC and RA-1 Zones. The new overlay zone will simply provide a zoning alternative for transit-oriented development if market demand exists and property owners wish to sell or develop their properties.

The existing infrastructure in the TDO District and arrival of the NJ Transit MidTOWN Direct service makes the District suitable for higher density housing in the form of townhouses and market-rate apartment houses. A maximum density level of 10 to 15 units per acre for townhouses and 35 to 45 units per acre for apartment houses is recommended. The District should have a low- to mid-rise character that accommodates increased density without overwhelming adjacent residential neighborhoods. A maximum height of 4 stories and 45 feet is recommended. Relatively high building and lot coverage standards as well as modest setback requirements are recommended in order to address lot size constraints and promote an attractive suburban streetscape.

A minimum lot frontage of 125 feet and a minimum lot area of 20,000 square feet in the TDO District is encouraged for townhouses and multi-family uses so that there is sufficient size to reasonably accommodate development and still maintain adequate buffering from adjacent residential neighborhoods. Further, any new development should have designs that are compatible with the surrounding area in materials, color and architecture.

New development in the TDO District should attempt to provide adequate off-street parking to meet the needs of residents and tenants while preserving parking in established residential neighborhoods. Parking standards should be evaluated in recognition of the central role that mass transit will have in the District. The State Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS) require an average of 2.3 off-street parking spaces per unit for townhouses and 2 off-street parking spaces per unit for low- to mid-rise apartments. The

Township may wish to evaluate the appropriateness of these standards in light of the District's access to commuter rail and bus service.

The TDO District is also an appropriate location for limited commercial uses that serve residents and commuters but do not compete with Bloomfield Center. Commercial uses that are appropriate in the District include convenience retail, personal services, restaurants and professional offices. This might include newsstands, dry cleaners, attorney's offices, restaurants and cafes. The incorporation of neighborhood commercial uses into the ground floor of larger buildings within Watsessing Center is recommended. Professional offices should be permitted on the upper floors of buildings. The use of corner locations for commuter-oriented neighborhood retail is encouraged while the development of retail strip centers is specifically discouraged. Towards this end, off-street parking is not required for commercial uses of less than 2,000 square feet in the District. Such uses should utilize on-street parking and public parking lots to create the street level pedestrian traffic and activity that is typically found in healthy business districts.

#### Recommendations

1. Maintain the base zoning that is currently located within the boundaries of the Transit-Oriented Development Overlay District in order to protect and preserve established residential neighborhoods and commercial districts. The base zoning includes R-2B, B-2, M-1, MC and RA-1 Zones.
2. Create an overlay zone to implement the Transit-Oriented Development Overlay District. Such an overlay zone should permit a development pattern characterized by mixed-uses, medium density, low- to mid-rise buildings, transit-oriented layout and high-quality design.
3. Improve conditions in Watsessing Center through a public-private partnership with property owners, zoning enforcement/building inspections, streetscape improvements, increased parking, business retention/recruitment and façade upgrades.
4. Coordinate with NJ Transit on improvements to the Watsessing Station including the renovation of deteriorated buildings and structures, improved platforms and stairs, increased signage and lighting, additional landscaping and the reopening of the staircase within the plaza.

#### **Historic District**

The Historic District is one of the earliest settled sections of the Township of Bloomfield and functions as the civic, cultural and historic center of the Township. The District follows the boundaries of the Bloomfield Green Historic District that is listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. It includes significant local landmarks such as the Bloomfield Green, Bloomfield Civic Center, Bloomfield High School, Bloomfield Presbyterian Church, Bloomfield College and numerous Victorian era houses. The purpose of the District is to recognize and protect the historic focal point of the Township and

the contribution it makes to the character and quality of life of the community. The Master Plan proposes to maintain the Historic District as it is currently configured but consideration is given to methods of strengthening protections for those building and properties located within it.

Existing Conditions

The Historic District consists of multiple blocks in the area around the Bloomfield Green bordered by Belleville Avenue to the north, Franklin Street/Liberty Street to the south, Spruce Street to the east and the frontage lots on Broad Street to the west. The District is characterized by a mix of uses including residential, commercial, public/semi-public, institutional and parks and open space. It has a low-rise and low-density pattern of development with the exception of several multi-story apartment houses. There have been relatively few changes in the District since the 1989 Master Plan with the exception of Bloomfield College’s new library and continued acquisition of property within or adjacent to its “campus.” The College is a major presence in the Historic District, however, it has received approval from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for future facility plans. The Township is also a major presence in the District because of its large community facilities such as the Public Library and Civic Center.

The Historic District incorporates several zoning districts including the P Public Use, R-1A Single-Family, R-1B Single-Family, O Office and R-2A-O Single-Family/Office Zones. The P Zone is a public use district that permits government buildings, schools and parks. The R-1A and R-1B Zones are residential districts that permits single-family detached residences and public/semi-public uses. In contrast, the O Zone is a commercial district that permits offices, banks, enclosed storage, warehouses, nursing homes and public/semi-public uses. The R-2A-O Zone is a hybrid district that permits single-family and two-family detached residences as well as those uses permitted in the O Zone. All of the afore-mentioned zones also permit non-profit educational institutions such as schools.

The number and variety of uses in the Historic District contribute to a complex zoning environment. The P Zone has no bulk standards and the future development of public uses in the District is unlikely. The R-1A and R-1B Zones are the lowest density residential districts in the Township. The R-1A Zone requires a minimum lot area of 5,000 square feet, front yard setback of 25 feet, rear yard setback of 20 feet, side yard setback of 6 feet, lot coverage of 25 percent and building height of 35 feet. The R-1B Zone has a slightly higher density and requires a minimum lot area of 4,000 square feet, front yard setback of 20 feet, rear yard setback of 20 feet, side yard setback of 6 feet, lot coverage of 30 percent and building height of 35 feet. The O Zone is coterminous with Bloomfield College, however, a new College Zone is proposed in the Master Plan to address the unique use and bulk requirements

of the College. The R-2A-O Zone, finally, is a hybrid Zone permitting single-family and two-family detached residences combined with office uses. This Zone is recommended to be replaced by a new Professional Office/Residential Zone. Consideration should be given to simplifying the zoning scheme in the District.

### Issues

The Historic District is a unique focal point for Bloomfield that is both a desirable mixed-use residential neighborhood and a bridge to the Township's past. Unlike some historic areas, the District is not a museum but an active, living and changing community of residential, commercial, public/semi-public, institutional and parks and open space uses. The major issues result from the disparate mix of uses, the activity that they generate and the resultant pressure that this exerts on the established character of the District. These issues include preserving the District's residential character, addressing the growth of Bloomfield College, accommodating the need to expand Bloomfield High School, maintaining the Township Green as an open space resource, traffic congestion on major streets and linkages to Bloomfield Center. Several of these issues are being addressed, for example, by the proposed creation of a College Zone to regulate Bloomfield College and the on-going Bloomfield Center redevelopment process. Others must be addressed through careful planning, coordination with major stakeholders and consideration of additional levels of historic review.

### Recommendations

1. Maintain the current boundaries of the Historic District in order to preserve and protect the established character of the area, mixed-use pattern of development and integrity of major historic resources.
2. Amend the R-1A, R-1B and R-2A Zones to eliminate professional offices as a permitted use occupying up to 25 percent of total floor area of a structure. Consider permitting home occupations as a permitted use subject to controls on appropriate home activities, floor area, access and signage.
3. Replace the O Zone with the proposed College District and Zone to regulate uses, intensity of activity and growth at Bloomfield College. The purpose of the District and Zone is to protect and preserve established residential neighborhoods in the District and provide limited opportunity for the College to upgrade facilities within the existing boundaries of its "campus."
4. Replace the R-2A-O Zone with the proposed Professional Office/Residential Zone to regulate the unique hybrid characteristics of the uses found on the west side of Broad Street between Park Street and the Township Civic Center.

5. Coordinate with the Bloomfield Board of Education on future plans to expand Bloomfield High School in order to meet enrollment growth. Consider SHPO review of school expansion plans in order to protect the integrity of the Historic District.
6. Maintain and preserve the historic Bloomfield Green as a park and open space resource providing active and passive recreation.
7. Coordinate with NJ Transit on the location of bus stops and bus recovery locations in order to minimize impacts upon the Historic District and preserve view corridors.
8. The historic preservation ordinance and advisory historic preservation commission, which review development applications in the Historic District and advise the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Adjustment and Mayor and Council, should be continued.

### **Additional Land Use Recommendations**

#### **Environmentally Sensitive Critical Areas**

The Township of Bloomfield is a mature and almost fully developed suburban community with limited remaining vacant land, open space and undisturbed natural areas. The Township contains, however, environmentally sensitive natural features that require protection from encroaching development and additional disturbance. These features include streams, lakes and ponds, floodway, 100-year flood zones, wetlands and steep slopes.

Bloomfield's natural features are often located in close proximity to established residential neighborhoods and commercial districts. During periods of severe inclement weather, the Township's surface water bodies are prone to flooding and causing serious property damage in adjacent developed areas. In order to minimize such damage and protect adjacent developed areas, the preparation of a critical areas ordinance is recommended that will further regulate development in environmentally sensitive areas. Such an ordinance will also have the benefit of helping to preserve the Township's limited remaining natural resources.

#### **Day Care Facilities**

The Township of Bloomfield has experienced an influx of young couples and families that have fueled recent population growth. This increase in couples of child-bearing age and families with young children has also generated increased demand for child care services. The Township's Zoning Ordinance does not currently permit family day care and child care centers as a permitted use in any zone within the Township. The State Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) requires that such uses be permitted in a municipality in order to meet the growing demand for child care throughout the State. Under the MLUL, family day care homes must be a permitted use in all residential zones

and child care centers must be a permitted use in all non-residential zones. It is recommended that the Township Zoning Ordinance be amended to make such uses permitted in compliance with the MLUL.

**Signs**

The quantity and quality of signs can have a direct influence on the appearance, visual impact and character of new development in the Township of Bloomfield. Signs convey an image and message about a particular site and the larger community. They also have the potential to affect how a use and community is perceived, for better or worse. The Township Zoning Ordinance has extensive regulations governing signage. The Ordinance regulates the location, height, area and illumination of proposed signs for new and existing development. It does not, however, regulate the appearance, materials and design of signs. This can affect the quality of signage installed throughout the Township. In recognition of their high visibility, it is recommended that the sign ordinance be further refined to provide new standards for sign design, sign area and sign height.

**Wireless Telecommunication Facilities**

The Township of Bloomfield has a dense residential population, large commercial districts and major transportation routes that represent a large potential market to wireless telecommunication service providers. The major providers are constructing wireless telecommunication networks to serve users throughout New Jersey, including the Township. The development, location and visual impact of such facilities has become an increasingly significant land use issue. Recent case law has established that wireless telecommunication uses may be regulated when a municipality plans and zones for such uses. It is therefore recommended that the Township consider adopting a wireless telecommunications ordinance that regulates their location and establishes standards for bulk, screening, buffering and appearance.

**Senior Housing/Uses**

The Township of Bloomfield has a relatively large population of senior citizen residents who are age 65 and older. Senior citizens often require specialized housing because of limited mobility, fixed income levels, potential health problems and the need for supportive services. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the Township has 6,827 residents age 65 and over which represents 14.3 percent of the total population of 47,683. The aging of Bloomfield’s population is further confirmed by an increase in the average age of residents from 36.8 years in 1990 to 37.1 years in 2000. This trend is projected to continue in the future because senior citizens are living longer and often desire to “age in place” or live in their long-term place of residence. As a result, there is a continuing need to address the housing needs and quality of life concerns of senior citizens. It is recommended that the Township update its Zoning Ordinance to permit the full spectrum of senior citizen housing options from independent living to congre-

gate care and assisted living as well as nursing home facilities. It may be appropriate to make such uses permitted conditional uses in zones where they are compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. Consideration should also be given to making adult medical daycare a permitted use in commercial zones to increase access to services.

**State Residential Site Improvement Standards**

New residential development in the Township of Bloomfield is governed by the State Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS). The RSIS were adopted by New Jersey in January, 1997 and govern any site improvements carried out in connection with a residential development application. According to the State, the standards are intended to create uniform residential site improvement guidelines and ensure predictability in the development process. The rules supersede municipal standards for residential development including parking and took effect on June 3, 1997.

It is recommended that the Township Zoning Ordinance be amended to ensure that site plan, subdivision and design regulations are consistent with the RSIS. Consideration should be given, however, to requesting a waiver from the State parking standards. The creation of parking standards that reflect the unique conditions in the Township such as its dense pattern of development, available mass transit service and limited available land should be considered. A process for seeking de minimus exceptions or waivers from the RSIS should also be established.

**Gateways**

There are numerous areas in the Township of Bloomfield that function as gateways into the Township. They are identified in the Circulation Plan Element. Gateways are principal entry points into a municipality, neighborhood, business district or other section of a municipality. They typically occupy a high visibility location and function as the “front door” to a community. Gateways have the potential to contribute to a unique community identity and convey an image as an attractive place to live, work, visit and invest. It is recommended that the Township identify and improve major gateway locations to enhance the image of the community and strengthen its identity. Possible improvements include new signage, landscaping, streetscape improvements, public art and upgraded land uses. For example, the Garden State Parkway interchange at Bloomfield Avenue (Exit 148) is a major gateway into Bloomfield that would be improved through new signage and landscaping.

**Building Coverage/Lot Coverage**

The Township of Bloomfield is distinguished by its mature suburban character with compact development, relatively high density and limited remaining vacant land. Future development has the potential to influence the Township’s pleasant suburban character depending upon its intensity, bulk coverage and ratio of impervious surface to green space. The Township’s Zoning Ordinance currently regulates and limits total lot coverage on a site, however, it does not regulate building coverage. This creates an incentive to develop parcels of land with large buildings and associated parking lots. The impact of this style of development is a loss of green space, increased density of development and greater stormwater run-off that contributes to flooding and erosion. In order to preserve the Township’s suburban character and sense of open space, it is recommended that the Zoning Ordinance be amended to reduce total permitted lot coverage and regulate the extent of building coverage.

**Community Residences**

Group homes or community residences as defined in the MLUL (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-66.2) are permitted in all residential zones of a municipality under State law. Such uses should be made a permitted principal use in all residential zones when the zoning ordinance is amended. This will ensure compliance with State law provide opportunity for community housing and protect the ordinance from challenge. Consideration should also be given to zoning approaches that address boarding houses and group homes.

**Satellite, Television and Radio Dishes/Antennas**

The Township of Bloomfield has experienced a proliferation of satellite, television and radio dishes and antennas as the use of electronic media and wireless telecommunications has increased. These devices have residential, commercial and institutional applications and are present in most neighborhoods within the Township. They have the potential for negative visual impacts upon adjacent properties and neighborhoods that should be addressed. It is recommended that the Township zoning ordinance be amended to regulate the number, location, height and appearance of such devices. Typical guidelines for such uses are as follows:

1. Number Permitted: one (1) device per lot in residential zones, two (2) devices per lot in nonresidential zones.
2. Location: In the rear or side yard of a residential property or structure. On the roof or the rear yard of a non-residential property or structure.

3. Height: The maximum height limit in zone.

4. Appearance: Neutral colored, small diameter devices in residential zones. The same standard applies in non-residential zones, however, the approving authority may require the use of screening and stealth installation.