
Planning Report

Township of Lopatcong Redevelopment Plan Lot 44 in Block 2

Prepared for: LOPATCONG TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD

under the supervision of:

**George A. Ritter, AICP
Professional Planner
NJ License #2126
AICP #017420**

**May 1, 2003
Revised 5/6/03**

**Adopted pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1, et seq.
The New Jersey Local Redevelopment and Housing Law**

Lopatcong Township Redevelopment Plan
Upper Belvidere Road- Block 2, Lot 44
Lopatcong Township, Warren County, New Jersey

prepared by:

Ritter & Plante Associates, LLC
2019 Chancellor Street Philadelphia, PA 19103

date:

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Revised 5/6/03

under the direction of:

George A. Ritter, P.P., A.I.C.P.
NJ License # 2126
A.I.C.P. No. 017420

prepared for:

Township of Lopatcong
Planning Board

BACKGROUND

The Township Council of the Township of Lopatcong in accordance with the "Local Redevelopment and Housing Law" N.J.S.A.40A:12A-1 et seq. adopted a resolution on November 6, 2002 authorizing the Planning Board to conduct a preliminary investigation, hold hearings and make recommendations as to whether an area of Lopatcong Township known as Block 2, Lot 44 was in need of redevelopment. The area is comprised of 121.88 acres. Ritter & Plante Associates, LLC prepared a planning report for the Planning Board entitled "Lopatcong Township Redevelopment Area" dated February 24, 2003. The Planning Board reviewed the report and after a public hearing recommended to Council that the area be considered for redevelopment. The Township Council upon review of the report and after conducting a public hearing on March 10, 2003 adopted a resolution concluding that the delineated area met the conditions of N.J.S.A 40A:12A-5 and was in need of redevelopment.

After finding the area was in need of redevelopment, the Township Council authorized the Planning Board to prepare a redevelopment plan for the designated redevelopment area (Area). The Redevelopment Plan is to address those criteria set forth in Section 40A:12A-7 of the "Local Redevelopment and Housing Law". The Planning Board upon completing its work shall transmit the proposed plan to the Council for its adoption.

INTRODUCTION

The Phillipsburg School District Board of Education, which includes the Town of Phillipsburg and the sending districts of Alpha, Bloomsbury, Greenwich, Lopatcong and Pohatcong recently completed work on a Five-Year Facilities Management Plan. The study recommended building a new high school to serve the educational needs of the residents of the school district. It was further recommended that the proposed school serve the community by providing additional elements other than its primary use as a high school. Community needs that could possibly be satisfied by these community services might include social, cultural, and recreational services. An investigation was undertaken to identify potential sites suitable for this purpose.

Upon investigation it was concluded that there were no suitable sites available within the Town of Phillipsburg. A prospective site was located in neighboring Lopatcong Township. The property chosen for the new high school borders the Town of Phillipsburg and is known as Lot 44, Block 2 ("Tract" "Area" or "Site") as shown on the tax assessment maps of Lopatcong Township. The School Board successfully negotiated for the purchase of the property. The 121.88-acre Tract was subsequently transferred to the New Jersey Schools Construction Corporation on December 20, 2002 to oversee the development of the community high school on the property. The Lopatcong Township Council upon review and after conducting a public hearing on March 10, 2003 adopted a resolution concluding the Tract met the conditions of N.J.S.A 40A:12A-5 and was in need of redevelopment.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL SETTING

The Redevelopment Area is situated in the northwestern quadrant of Lopatcong Township that is bordered by Harmony Township to the north. The Delaware River and Phillipsburg lie to the west and south of the Area. Marble Hill is the area's dominant physiographic feature. Upper Belvidere Road (County Route 646) is the major arterial road servicing the area.

The Redevelopment Area is located on the southern slope of Marble Hill. The Area is comprised of 121.88 acres of land with 348.5' of frontage on Upper Belvidere Road. Riegel Street borders the Area to the east and Fourth Street to the west. Upper Belvidere Road forms its southern boundary. The Town of Phillipsburg abuts the Area to the south of Upper Belvidere Road, extending west along the southern side of Upper Belvidere Road from Roseberry Street to Clark Street and then northward to the Delaware River.

NEIGHBORHOOD SETTING

The Tract abuts several properties which are dedicated to public and quasi-public uses. The site adjoins a park owned by Lopatcong Township along its southeast boundary. The Township Park contains a pool and other recreation facilities used by the public. In addition, Township and County owned open space adjoins the site along its north boundary.

The northwest property boundary adjoins lands owned by Consumers New Jersey Water Company. The property contains a water reservoir that provides potable water to the residents of Lopatcong Township. Water mains extending from the reservoir cross the subject property.

To the southeast, the side property lines of single-family homes that front on Grandview Avenue and Anna Place abut the property. To the southwest, the site adjoins a residential neighborhood known as Delaware Park that is developed with single-family homes on small lots and contains several vacant parcels and a public

square owned by the Township. Several unimproved streets servicing the Delaware Park neighborhood terminate at the Tract's boundary. To the south, the Site abuts lots developed with office and residential uses with frontage on Upper Belvidere Road.

A vacant parcel of land formerly known as the Russo tract adjoins the Area to the east. It was recently purchased by Lopatcong Township for open space and recreational purposes and is now known as Angelion Park. The park adjoins the public pool and a recreation facility owned by the Township and is identified in the Township's recent Open Space and Recreation Plan that envisions development of facilities to serve both regional and local recreation needs.

THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Plan for the redevelopment Area includes a new high school facility that is to be constructed by The Town of Phillipsburg Board of Education to accommodate 2,000 students. The high school will be based on a concept of Community Schools. The school will not only provide an opportunity for a high quality educational experience for its students but will also include the development of community oriented features within the school and establish important physical and social linkages between the school facility and its surrounding neighborhood. The facility will involve the construction of a 333,000 SF multi- use building that will house a mix of core facilities, general instructional space, labs, physical education, art education, music rooms, health services, and administration.

Vehicular access to the site will be provided by the construction of a new access road at the intersection of Roseberry Street and Upper Belvidere Road. Parking for staff and student parking will be provided adjacent to the high school. Additional parking for visitors, athletic events, and community use will be provided in various locations throughout the property.

Outdoor recreational facilities will include soccer/football, lacrosse/field hockey, and baseball and softball fields. Basketball and tennis courts will also be provided. A utility building for bathrooms, concession, and storage will also be constructed. An outdoor classroom and six acre natural resources preserve will be integrated into the development plan.

The plan will also include the construction of a pedestrian/bike trail that is planned to run from the square in Delaware Park through the Redevelopment Area (high school site) to the community pool, then through Angelion Park, crossing Upper Belvidere Road in the vicinity of Red School Lane. In addition, pedestrian walkways will be established to abutting residential neighborhoods and the abutting Town of Phillipsburg.

THE LOCAL REDEVELOPMENT and HOUSING LAW

The Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (N.J.S.A. 40A: 12A) is the enabling legislation that governs redevelopment projects in New Jersey. The Local Redevelopment and Housing Law defines a “Redevelopment Plan” to mean a plan that is:

“...sufficiently complete to indicate its relationship to definite municipal objectives as to appropriate land uses, public transportation and utilities, recreational and municipal facilities, and other public improvements; and to indicate proposed land uses and building requirements in the redevelopment area or area in need of rehabilitation, or both.”

This report is an outline of the planning activities that formed the basis for the Redevelopment Plan. The Local Redevelopment and Housing Law at 40A:12A-7 provides that a plan shall include the following items:

- (1) Its relationship to definite local objectives as to appropriate land uses, density of population, and improved traffic and public transportation, public utilities, recreational and community facilities and other public improvements.*
- (2) Proposed land uses and building requirements in the project area.*

- (3) *Adequate provision for the temporary and permanent relocation, as necessary, of residents in the project area, including an estimate of the extent to which decent, safe and sanitary dwelling units affordable to displaced residents will be available to them in the existing local housing market.*
- (4) *Identification of any property within the redevelopment area which is proposed to be acquired in accordance with the redevelopment plan.*
- (5) *Any significant relationship of the redevelopment plan to (a) the master plans of contiguous municipalities, (b) the master plan of the county in which the municipality is located and (c) the State Development and Redevelopment Plan.*

THE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

1. Its relationship to definite local objectives as to appropriate land uses, density of population, and improved traffic and public transportation, public utilities, recreational and community facilities and other public improvements.

Land Use Objectives

A description of the community's planning goals and objectives can be found in its Master Plan. Planning documents which were reviewed include the Township of Lopatcong Reexamination Report 2000 dated September 20, 2000, Recreation, Open Space and Trail Element dated June 27, 2001, Lopatcong Township Master Plan Housing Element 1998 Update, and the Township of Lopatcong Master Plan Reexamination Report dated April 15, 1996. The general planning goals of the community were identified in the 1996 Reexamination Report:

“ to promulgate patterns of appropriate population density, variety and design of private and public facilities, while encouraging an appropriate mixture of residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, municipal and agricultural development consistent with the complex needs of Lopatcong Township and contiguous [municipalities] and Warren County”

The Plan for the Redevelopment Area includes a new high school facility that is to be constructed by The Town of Phillipsburg Board of Education. The school will serve the educational needs of the Town of Phillipsburg as well as the sending districts of Alpha, Bloomsbury, Greenwich, Lopatcong, and Pohatcong. The school is intended to accommodate 2,000 students. The high school will be based on a concept of Community Schools. The school will not only provide an opportunity for a high quality educational experience for its students but will also include the development of community oriented features within the school as well as establishing important physical and social linkages between the school facility and its surrounding neighborhood.

The use of the Redevelopment Area for these purposes is consistent with not only the Township's goal to accommodate a mix of uses including public facilities to meet the complex needs of its citizens and those of surrounding municipalities but also furthers the purposes of zoning as defined in the "Municipal Land Use Law". The promotion of the general welfare is one of the purposes of planning and zoning in New Jersey. From this purpose has evolved the concept of uses that inherently serve the public good. Schools have been held to qualify as an inherently beneficial use. More specific objectives evolved in later master plans included the following:

- Development densities and intensities of land use compatible with the physical limitations of the land and the present and future infrastructure capacity.
- Encourage flexible development techniques which will minimize disturbance of sensitive areas and incorporate natural features into the project design.
- Enhance and expand existing recreation facilities.
- Provide and improve access to community and recreation facilities by way of trails, bikeways, and other connecting links.

The proposed use of the Redevelopment Area for development of a high school provides a unique opportunity to not only meet the educational needs of the community but also preserve many of the Tract's natural resources. The development plan has been designed with recognition of the Tract's environmental constraints including its underlying geology, wetlands, and steeply sloping

topography. The proposed development plan, through the careful placement of facilities and the use of development techniques to minimize disturbance of these sensitive natural areas, will succeed in preserving the Tract's wetlands and much of its forest cover.

The proposed use of the Redevelopment Area for the purpose of constructing a new community high school is substantially consistent with the planning goals and objectives of the Township's Master Plan and Zoning and Land Use ordinance. Schools are a permitted use within the existing residential neighborhoods and Redevelopment Area. Linking the proposed school to the social and physical fabric of the community is recognized as one of the primary goals of the Recreation, Open Space and Trail Element of Lopatcong Township's Master Plan.

Population Density

The portions of the Township that border the Redevelopment Area contain established, predominantly residential neighborhoods, originally built as an extension of Phillipsburg. These older neighborhoods contain single-family residences on relatively small lots and have some of the highest population densities in the community. These neighborhoods contain little open space or public parks. The development of the proposed high school will prevent further residential development of the area and provide additional open spaces and the opportunity for outdoor recreation. The large undisturbed stretches of open areas and extensive field game areas associated with the school can only add to the overall visual quality of the neighborhood and strengthen a sense of community.

Traffic and Public Transportation

Primary vehicular access to the Redevelopment Area is from Upper Belvidere Road that is also known as County Route 646. The Lopatcong Township Master Plan has classified Upper Belvidere Road as a minor arterial, which carries high volumes of both through and local traffic. The road functions as an interregional connector linking local roads to the Town of Phillipsburg, Route 22 to the west, Belvidere to the north and Washington Borough to the east. Other local streets

that about the Redevelopment Area and provide access to residential neighborhoods include Anna Place, Grandview Avenue, Park Avenue, and Aurora Street. A review of the Township's 2000 Reexamination Report does not identify any specific traffic issues associated with Upper Belvidere Road or the Redevelopment Area. The Master Plan does identify several general objectives relating to land development:

- Promote design layouts which conserve road capacities of arterial and collector roads, encourage through traffic to use these designated roads and discourage through traffic on local roads.
- Improve internal circulation within and between neighborhoods without attracting through traffic flows, including non-vehicular linkages, such as paths and bikeways.

Development of the area for a high school will not have a significant impact on the already high volumes of traffic using Upper Belvidere Road or on the abutting residential neighborhoods. Much of the anticipated traffic to the proposed high school already traverses the area to reach the existing high school, which fronts on Upper Belvidere Road and its intersection with Route 22 in the Town of Phillipsburg.

The new access to the proposed school will be located on Upper Belvidere Road near its intersection with Roseberry Street. No new points of vehicular access are proposed through any abutting local residential streets.

The impact of constructing this intersection on the flow of traffic on Upper Belvidere Road and the safety of pedestrians that will have to cross the highway to gain access to the new high school is of major concern. This issue did not go unnoticed in the "Community Schools Plan/ Final Report" which was prepared for the Phillipsburg Board of Education:

"The main entrance to the High School site will be located near the intersection of Roseberry Street and Belvidere Road. Accordingly, improved pedestrian crossing will be essential to ensure safety at this busy intersection. Installing a traffic signal with pedestrian crossing directions is recommended, as are crosswalks and appropriate signage to reduce motor vehicle speeds."

This issue was addressed in a formal agreement between Lopatcong Township and the Phillipsburg Board of Education. The agreement requires the installation of sidewalks on the easterly side of Upper Belvidere Road from Fairbanks Avenue to Roseberry Street and on its westerly side from the Lopatcong Pool Road to the entranceway to the high school. In addition, those physical improvements to the roadways in the Township required because of the construction and development of the school will be installed at the cost of the Phillipsburg Board of Education. The improvements may include but are not be limited to road widening, traffic lighting and any general road improvements determined to be necessary for public safety by the State of New Jersey and Warren County Engineer's Office.

Public transportation options are limited. According to the "Community Schools Plan/ Final Report" which was prepared for the Phillipsburg Board of Education, many households lack adequate access to a private motor vehicle. The report identifies New Jersey Transit, which operates minibuss services within the Town of Phillipsburg as one possible provider of public transportation to the Tract. The report recommends the expansion of these services to include all school facilities to facilitate better public access and use of the facilities by the community.

Public Utilities

The property is located within the Lopatcong Township Sanitary Sewer Service Area. An eight-inch gravity main is located within a sanitary sewer easement located on the north side of Upper Belvidere Road in front of the Redevelopment Area. The wastewater flows to the Phillipsburg Sewage Treatment Plant.

Consumers New Jersey Water Company supplies public water through a franchise agreement. The company serves the adjacent residential neighborhoods to the west and south of the Site. Water service is available to serve the proposed redevelopment Tract. Other utilities available to serve the Site include electric, phone, and cable.

Recreational and Community Facilities

The proposed high school will be an integral part of the County and Township parks and open space plan. Public open space and recreation areas including the Warren County Highlands Trail, Angelion Park, and the Lopatcong municipal pool border the Area. Further, the Site is astride the proposed spine of a proposed bike/pedestrian path system that forms the backbone of Lopatcong Township's open space system.

The "2001 Recreation, Open Space and Trail Element Plan" identifies the Marble Hill area which includes the Redevelopment Area as one of three major areas of environmental concern within the Township. This area includes the lands between Upper Belvidere Road and the Delaware River, north of Delaware Park. The Plan recognizes that the goal of preserving Marble Hill as open space is advanced by the development of the high school within the redevelopment area.

"Much of this area is currently being preserved, mainly by the County, as part of the Highlands Trail. It also includes municipally owned lands, the proposed high school and Tract 1[Russo Tract] described above, which is currently being reviewed for Green Acres acquisition."

The Community's open space and recreation objectives are as follows:

- Provide and improve access to community and recreation facilities by way of trails, bikeways and other connecting links.
- Locate municipal recreation and community facilities so that they have access to the main spine trail through the Township.
- Provide recreation facilities to meet the current and future needs of the residents of Lopatcong Township.

The main spine trail is planned to run from the square in Delaware Park, through the Redevelopment Area (high school site), to the community pool, then through the Russo tract, crossing Upper Belvidere Road in the vicinity of Red School Lane. The development plan for the high school envisions the construction of a bike path on a portion the Redevelopment Area that will be owned jointly by the School Board and Lopatcong Township. The bike path will serve the needs of the high school, high school students, and Township residents.

The proposed development of the Redevelopment Area for a multi-functional community high school including recreation facilities supports the Township's goals of providing additional recreation facilities and developing a pathway system to link residential areas to major attractors within and abutting the Township.

2. Proposed land uses and building requirements in the Redevelopment Area.

The Area is divided into three zone districts as shown on the Zoning Map of Lopatcong Township prepared by Maser Consulting P.A. last revised April 2002. The lower section of the property, approximately 8 acres, is zoned R-100 Residential. The middle portion is located in the R-150 district and constitutes about 62 acres of the Tract. The balance of the property, approximately 52 acres, is zoned R-5/2 Residential.

All three residential zones permit the same uses but are differentiated by design standards. Area and bulk standards vary by zone and residential cluster development is permitted as an option in the R-100 Zone and it is mandatory in the R-5/2 district. Clustering is not permitted in the R-150 Zone. Permitted uses include the following:

- Single-family dwellings.
- Assisted living facilities, in the R-100 district only.
- Senior citizen housing complexes, in the R-100 zone only.
- Farms
- Municipal buildings, public schools and nonprofit private schools, parks, playgrounds and recreation areas deemed necessary by the Township.
- Churches and other similar places of worship, except in the R-5/2 zone.
- Public and semipublic buildings such as libraries, museums, transportation stations, other private schools, nonprofit recreational clubs, fraternal organizations, eleemosynary uses and other similar nonprofit uses, except in the R-5/2 district.

There is no need to change the underlying residential zoning within the Redevelopment Area. Municipal buildings, public schools and nonprofit private schools, parks, playgrounds and recreation areas are permitted uses within the three residential zoning districts that overlay the Redevelopment Area. Unfortunately, each zone establishes differing regulations pertaining to the use of

the area for a school. The discussion that follows relates to resolving these conflicting regulations and establishing a unified set of area, bulk and yard requirements to guide the redevelopment of the area for a new high school and recreational facilities.

The R-100 Zone, requires a minimum lot area of 5 acres. The minimum required yards include a 75' front yard, a 40' side yard (80' combined), and an 80' rear yard. A minimum lot width of 300' is required. No maximum building or lot coverage requirement has been established. Buildings cannot exceed a height of 25' or 2½ stories. The R-150 Zone, requires a minimum lot area of 5 acres. The minimum required yards include a 50' front yard, a 40' side yard (80' combined), and a 40' rear yard. A minimum lot width of 300' is required. No maximum building coverage requirement has been established but a maximum of 60% of the lot may be covered by impervious surfaces. The district does not establish a maximum building height. The R-5/2 Zone does not provide for specific requirements relating to the construction of Public buildings or facilities and schools within the zone.

The Redevelopment Plan creates an overlay redevelopment district that will establish uniform development standards to guide the development of the area for school and recreational uses. The overlay redevelopment district will further the comprehensive redevelopment plan by eliminating conflicting regulations and establishing unified design standards through out the area.

The existing R-100, R-150 and R-5/2 zoning designations will be retained but if a discrepancy occurs between the Zoning & Land Use Ordinance and the Redevelopment District regulations, the Redevelopment District regulations shall act as a guide to the design standards which are to be achieved in development of the area for community school use. The overlay district shall be known as The Planned Community School and Recreation District (PCSRD).

The Planned Community School and Recreation District (PCSRD) shall encompass the 121.88 acre Redevelopment Area as established by the governing body of the Township of Lopatcong. The following PCSRD regulations act as a guide to the minimum design standards, which are to be employed in the development of those lands within the PCSRD District as well as all other applicable regulations of the Township's Zoning & Land Use Ordinance:

- Area, Yard, Height and Coverage Requirements. The following design guidelines may apply to the public buildings, recreational facilities and schools located in the Planned Community School and Recreational District:

Tract Standards

Minimum Lot Size	: 5 acres
Minimum Lot Frontage	: 300'
Minimum Lot Width	: 300'
Maximum Lot Coverage	: 40%

Principal Buildings Minimum Yard and Height Limitations

Front Yard	: 100'
Side Yard	: 100'
Rear Yard	: 100'
Maximum Height	: 2½ stories/35'

- Accessory Structures may not be located in any front, side, or rear yard.
- General Regulations:
 - Outdoor recreation facilities. Outdoor recreation facilities shall be designed to minimize their impact on abutting residential neighbors. No playing field, running track, tennis court or seating area for outdoor events, utility building, concession area or parking area shall be located within 100' of a property line.

Site grading. No cut or fill slopes shall be permitted within five (5) feet of a property line. Grading on slopes of 25% or greater should be avoided but when avoidance is not practical the resulting slopes should be retained by walls in order to minimize disturbance of the area. Every effort should be made to maintain the Tract's forested areas and hedgerows. If this is not possible, the use of retaining walls and other creative design techniques is encouraged to minimize the loss of these natural resources.

Retaining walls. No retaining wall should be located within five (5) feet of a property line. Retaining walls over 4' in height should be located no closer to a property line than twice the actual height of the retaining wall as measured at its greatest height. A retaining wall or combination of walls that exceed 10' in height and face a residential dwelling on an abutting property should be landscaped in a manner, which reduces their visual impact on the neighboring dwelling.

Buffers. A landscaped buffer of a minimum width of 25' should be maintained between a residence located on an abutting property and any proposed buildings, outdoor recreation facilities or parking areas.

Site Lighting. Care should be taken to locate activities that are conducted during evening and nighttime hours away from residential neighborhoods. Outdoor lighting should be designed to provide only the minimum amount of light required for the proposed activity. Outdoor lighting should be reduced to the minimum necessary for security during periods of non-use or turned off entirely if public safety is not an issue. All site lighting should be shielded to prevent glare from entering residential areas or homes.

3. Adequate provision for the temporary and permanent relocation, as necessary, of residents in the project area, including an estimate of the extent to which decent, safe and sanitary dwelling units affordable to displaced residents will be available to them in the existing local housing market.

The original site considered for redevelopment included an area of 128.9 acres of land and contained a single-family dwelling used as the primary residence for the former owners. The primary residence and associated outbuildings including a wood barn and smoke house are located along the northwestern boundary of the Redevelopment Area adjacent to the Consumers New Jersey Water Company reservoir. The structures were found to be in good repair and compatible with the proposed uses being considered for the Redevelopment Area. The existing dwelling and outbuildings are located on a 7.078-acre lot (Lot 44.06/Block 2) that was subdivided from the area being considered for redevelopment in September

of 2001. No other residences are located within the remaining 121.88 acre Redevelopment Area. As such, the redevelopment plan will not require the relocation of residents from the project area.

4. Identification of any property within the redevelopment area which is proposed to be acquired in accordance with the redevelopment plan.

The Phillipsburg School District Board of Education, which includes the Town of Phillipsburg and the sending districts of Alpha, Bloomsbury, Greenwich, Lopatcong, and Pohatcong recently completed work on a Five-Year Facilities Management Plan. Upon investigation it was concluded that there were no suitable sites available within the Town of Phillipsburg. A prospective site was located in neighboring Lopatcong Township. The property chosen for the new school borders the Town of Phillipsburg and is known as Lot 44, Block 2 as shown on the tax assessment maps of Lopatcong Township. The School Board successfully negotiated for the purchase of the property. The 121.88-acre Tract was subsequently transferred to the New Jersey Schools Construction Corporation on December 20, 2002 to oversee the development of the community high school on the property. No additional property is to be acquired as part of the Redevelopment Plan.

5. Any significant relationship of the redevelopment plan to (a) the master plans of contiguous municipalities, (b) the master plan of the county in which the municipality is located and (c) the State Development and Redevelopment Plan adopted pursuant to the “State Planning Act”.

The Town of Phillipsburg Master Plan

The Town of Phillipsburg abuts the Area to the south of Upper Belvidere Road, extending west along the southern side of Upper Belvidere Road from Roseberry Street to Clark Street and then northward to the Delaware River. The existing Phillipsburg High School is located at the intersection of Upper Belvidere Road and Route 22 just west of the proposed location for the new facilities within the Redevelopment Area.

The area of Phillipsburg that abuts the Redevelopment Area can be characterized as a residential neighborhood that is very similar in character and population density to those adjacent neighborhoods in Lopatcong Township. The Phillipsburg Master Plan Reexamination Report dated October 1996 does not include policies regarding the need for additional educational facilities or their location requirements. The Town's Land Development Ordinance does provide that schools are a permitted use within those residential neighborhoods that abut the Redevelopment Area. Therefore it can be concluded that the Redevelopment Area is consistent with the Town of Phillipsburg's Master Plan and Land Development Ordinance.

Warren County Master Plan

The Warren County Master Plan does not have specific land use recommendation or policies relating to the area of Lopatcong within which the Redevelopment Area is located. The only reference to the general area is in the Open Space Plan element of the Master Plan dated 1999. The Open Space Plan element identifies the extent of County and State owned lands that have been acquired for open space along the Delaware River and on Marble Hill, which border the Redevelopment Area. These acquisitions are intended to be part of the Highlands Trail that is a cooperative effort of the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, conservation organizations, state, and local governments. When completed, the trail will extend over 150 miles from Storm King Mountain, NY on the Hudson River to Phillipsburg, NJ on the Delaware River.

The use of the Redevelopment Area for a Community School is compatible with the use of the adjoining areas for the Highlands Trail. The development plan for the school includes a substantial set aside of lands for open space purposes and the protection of the sites critical environmental resources. In addition, the development of this tract for public purposes will provide an additional link in the public acquisition of open spaces to protect Marble Hill. Therefore it can be concluded that the Redevelopment Area is substantially consistent with the Master Plan and Open Space Plan element of Warren County.

The State Development and Redevelopment Plan

Phillipsburg is proposed as a Regional Center in The State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP) and is included in the PA1 Planning Area. The Redevelopment Area is located in Lopatcong Township and abuts Phillipsburg along Upper Belvidere Road. It has been included in three Planning Areas—Metropolitan Planning Area (PA1), Rural/Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area (PA4B), and Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area (PA5).

The Metropolitan Planning Area extends from Upper Belvidere Road approximately 600' into the Tract—an area of 8.43 acres. The Rural/Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area includes 81.48 acres and extends from the edge of the PA1 Planning Area through the lowlands of the Site to beyond the crest of Marble Hill. The remaining 31.97 acres of Marble Hill are included in the PA5 Planning Area.

The State Development and Redevelopment Plan establishes land use policies for each of the Planning Areas as follows:

Metropolitan Planning Area (PA1)

- Promote redevelopment and development in Cores and neighborhoods of Centers and in Nodes.
- Promote diversification of land uses, including housing where appropriate and enhance their linkages to the rest of the community.
- Ensure efficient and beneficial utilization of scarce land resources throughout the Planning Area to strengthen its existing diversified and compact nature.
- Complete, repair or replace existing infrastructure systems to eliminate deficiencies and provide capacity for sustainable development and redevelopment in the region.
- Encourage the concentration of public facilities and services in Centers and Cores.

Rural/ Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area (PA4B)

- Enhance economic and agricultural viability and rural character by guiding development and redevelopment into Centers.
- Development and redevelopment in the Environs should maintain or enhance the character of the area.
- Encourage appropriate redevelopment in existing Centers and existing developed areas that have the potential to become Centers.
- Redevelop with intensities sufficient to support transit, a broad range of uses, efficient use of infrastructure, and design that enhance public safety, encourage pedestrian activity, reduce dependency on the automobile and maintain the rural character of Centers.

Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area (PA5)

- Protect natural systems and environmentally sensitive features by guiding development and redevelopment into Centers.
- Development and redevelopment should use creative land use and design techniques to ensure that it does not exceed the capacity of natural and infrastructure systems and protects areas where public investments in open space preservation have been made.

The Redevelopment Plan is substantially consistent with the policies of the SDRP. The SDRP promotes new growth to occur in existing centers where there is sufficient infrastructure capacity or in areas that will become a center. The Redevelopment Area clearly is part of the metropolitan area associated with the Town of Phillipsburg. A significant portion of the area is already included in PA1 and the entire tract is located within the Lopatcong Township Sanitary Sewer Service Area. Sewer and water infrastructure already service the area and the tract has frontage on Upper Belvidere Road, which is classified as a minor arterial street. Further the Redevelopment Plan incorporates many of the policies for development within Planning Areas PA4B and PA5.

The plan for a Community School is designed to enhance the rural character of the area. The inclusion of large areas of open space and the protection of the sites critical environmental resources from development will help to maintain a sense of green within the existing residential neighborhood.

In addition, the development of this tract for public purposes will provide a critical link in the public acquisition of open spaces to protect Marble Hill. Its acquisition will help to protect the substantial investments in open space investments that have been made by the County, Lopatcong Township, and the State in the area.

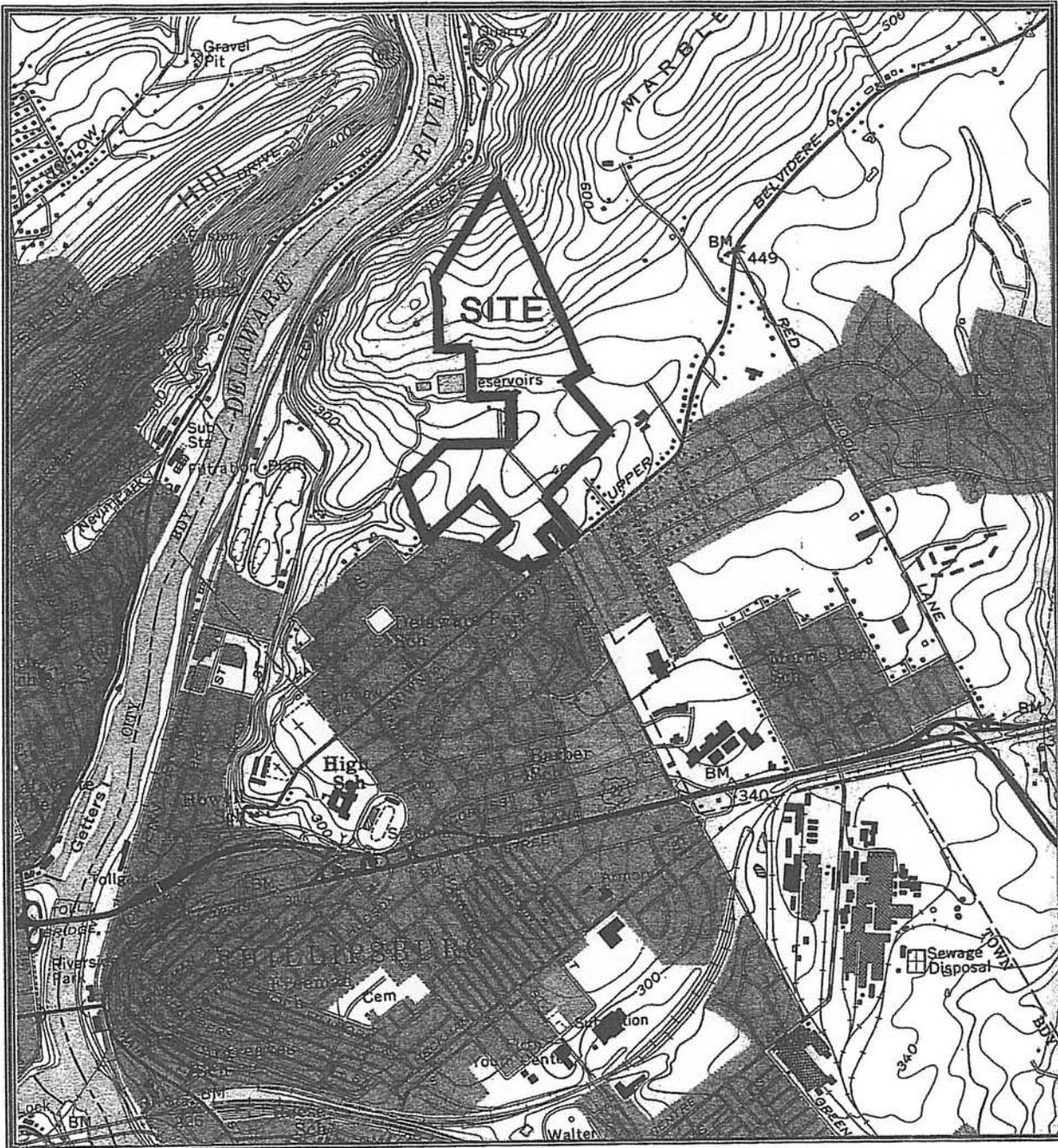
Further the Community School Plan proposed by the Phillipsburg Board of Education is a concept that not only meets the educational needs of its students but is intended to become a social hub and the center of community activities. It will be physically linked to the community by public transit, private vehicles, and a network of sidewalks and bike paths.

SUMMARY

The intent of the Redevelopment Plan is to enable the establishment of a community based multi-use community center, which has as its nucleus a new high school that will serve the Town of Phillipsburg and the sending districts of Alpha, Bloomsbury, Greenwich, Lopatcong, and Pohatcong. The development of the facility is intended to not only meet the educational needs of the Town of Phillipsburg and the sending districts but is to become a center of community life for the surrounding communities. The school will incorporate physical fitness, community sports, performing arts, and media spaces. The school will provided needed meeting space for community activities, organizations, and clubs and will be linked by pedestrian paths, sidewalks and bike paths to the downtown of Phillipsburg and to the existing pedestrian systems in the abutting residential neighborhoods of Lopatcong Township.

Further, the development will preserve the areas wetlands, a large area of woodlands and serve as a critical link in the regional open space system being developed by the County in support of the Highlands Trail which terminates at the Delaware River after crossing Marble Mountain. Its location will also compliment the efforts of Lopatcong Township to develop a unified system of open space centered on existing facilities in the area.

It is therefore concluded based on the evidence above that this Redevelopment Plan within the Township of Lopatcong is substantially consistent with the Lopatcong Township Master Plan, the Town of Phillipsburg Master Plan, Warren County Master Plan and the State Development and Redevelopment Plan pursuant to N.J.S.A: 12A-7.



Location Map
Lopatcong Township, Morris County, NJ
Scale 1"=2000'

REDEVELOPMENT PLAN



LEGEND

CONDITION:	AREA (ACRES):	% of Tract
	0.8	1 %
	1.7	1 %
	9.5	8 %
SLOPES		
	15.2	12 %
	1.9	2 %
OTHER LAND	92.8	76 %
TOTAL	121.9	100 %

LAND USE

CONDITION:	AREA (ACRES):	% of Tract
	91.1	75 %
	30.8	25 %
TOTAL	121.9	100 %

EXISTING ZONING

DISTRICT	AREA (ACRES):	% of Tract
R-100 - RESIDENTIAL ZONE	8.2	7 %
R-150 - RESIDENTIAL ZONE	61.8	51 %
R-5/2 - RESIDENTIAL ZONE	51.9	42 %
TOTAL	121.9	100 %

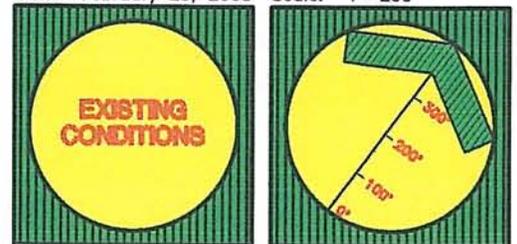
LOPATCONG TOWNSHIP

Morris County, New Jersey
Block 2 Lot 44

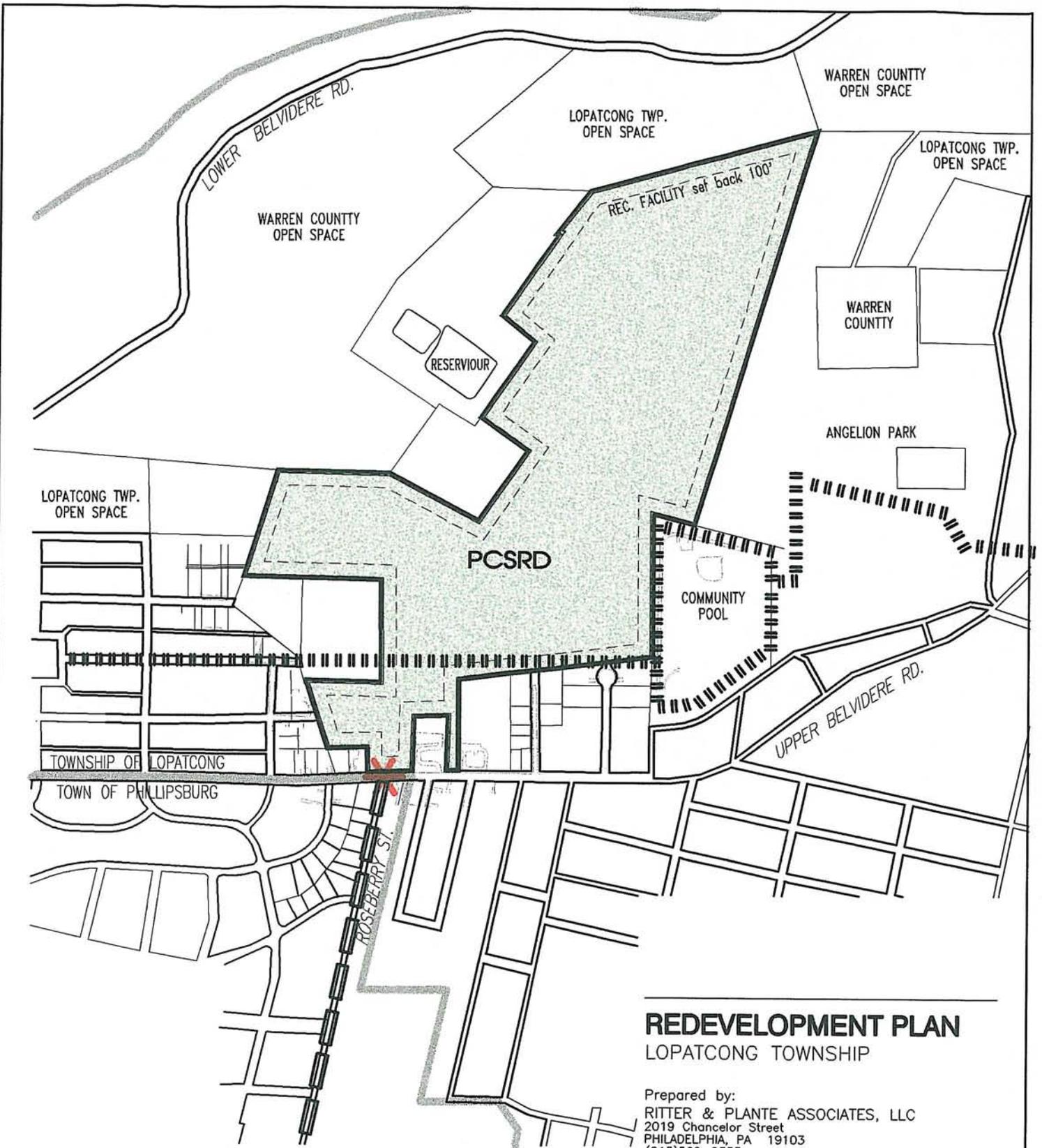
prepared for:
Lopatcong Township
232 South Third Street
Phillipsburg, NJ 08865

prepared by:
RITTER & PLANTE ASSOCIATES, LLC
2019 Chancellor Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Date: February 25, 2003 Scale: 1"=200'



Reference:
Boundary, topographic, and existing features taken from "Minor Subdivision Plat" (December 2000) & "ALTA ACSM Title Survey Plan" (December 2002), prepared by Mace Consulting Engineers of Phillipsburg, NJ.



REDEVELOPMENT PLAN LOPATCONG TOWNSHIP

Prepared by:
 RITTER & PLANTE ASSOCIATES, LLC
 2019 Chancellor Street
 PHILADELPHIA, PA 19103
 (215)569-2333

LEGEND

- PLANNED COMMUNITY SCHOOL AND RECREATION DISTRICT 
- MAIN SPINE BIKE PATH 
- PHILLIPSBURG MASS TRANSIT 
- SITE ACCESS 

Date: May 6, 2003

Scale: 1"=800'

